Chapter 3
Dwelling condition and safety

This chapter provides an overview of the dwelling condition and safety of the housing stock in 2012 and how this has changed over time. It examines five key indicators of dwelling condition: disrepair; the prevalence of damp and mould; electrical safety; the most serious hazards assessed under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) and the Decent Homes standard. It summarises how different types of dwellings, including vacant dwellings, perform in respect to these indicators and how this has changed over time. Finally it provides a summary of poor housing conditions by examining the extent to which homes have a combination of problems.

Disrepair to dwellings

3.1 The 2011 EHS Homes Report[1] examined the expenditure required to deal with disrepair to key elements within the stock, such as external features and amenities costs. As none of these findings is likely to have changed significantly, this analysis is not repeated in this year's report. This section examines the level of overall disrepair within the whole stock by key dwelling indicators, before investigating which types of dwellings have the highest levels of disrepair. Finally, it examines how the overall level of disrepair has changed over time.

Cost of dealing with disrepair

3.2 The cost of dealing with disrepair is examined in two ways: 'actual' or 'required expenditure', and 'standardised costs'. 'Required expenditure' costs reflect the actual cost for each individual property; these costs incorporate regional and tenure factors and are not adjusted for dwelling floor area, so will be higher for larger dwellings. An index of disrepair, referred to as 'standardised repair cost' is used to compare repair costs for different dwellings, regardless of size, tenure and area, on the same basis (see Box 3.1). The EHS distinguishes between three different levels and types of repairs needed at a dwelling (see Box 3.2). The analysis in this chapter mainly focuses on basic repair costs (the day to day maintenance of homes).

[1] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-housing-survey-2011-homes-report

Box 3.1: Repair cost measures

Required expenditure - total cost per dwelling in pounds that represents the best estimate of what the specified work would actually cost in 2012 prices. These costs are influenced by regional variations in prices and assume different project sizes for work to houses in different tenures. In the owner occupied and private rented sector the contract size for work to houses is taken to be one. In the social rented sector, the contract size is taken as the number of dwellings on the estate, unless the house is not on an estate when it is assumed to be a street property with a contract size of one. For flats, the contract size for exterior works is the size of the block regardless of tenure. This measure assumes that all work is carried out by contractors who operate to health and safety regulations. The costs do not include any VAT or mark up for profit. These costs should not be used for assessing differences in condition between different tenures or dwelling types as they vary according to dwelling size, tenure and location.

Standardised repair costs - a measure of disrepair which expresses costs in pounds per square metre of floor area (£/m²) based on prices for the East Midland region (where prices can be regarded as a mid-point in the range of regional prices). Under the standardised repair cost measure it is assumed that all work is undertaken by contractors on a block contract basis. For flats, the size of the contract is assumed to be the whole block. For houses, regardless of tenure, it is taken as a group of five dwellings, representing costs that are more typical of those which may be incurred by a landlord organising the work on a planned programme basis. By reducing costs to a £/m² basis the effect of building size on the amount of disrepair recorded is removed. Standardised repair costs should *not* be used as an indication of the actual expenditure required to remedy problems.

Box 3.2: Categories of repair measured in the survey

Urgent repairs - work which needs to be undertaken to tackle problems presenting a risk of health, safety, security or further significant deterioration in the short term; examples include leaking roofs, broken locks to external doors, and cracked socket covers.

Basic repairs - any urgent repairs plus additional visible work to be carried out in the medium term (within five years). These do not include replacement of building elements nearing the end of their life where the surveyor has recorded that this action could be delayed by more than five years.

Comprehensive repairs - the above two categories, plus any replacements the surveyor has assessed as being needed in the next 10 years. This measure provides a better basis for identifying work which would form part of a planned programme of repair by landlords.

3.3 The total cost to carry out all basic repairs across the stock was around £33 billion, an average cost of £1,471 per dwelling. If additional work was undertaken for planned maintenance of building elements that need attention within the next ten years (comprehensive repairs), this cost would rise to some £83 billion, an average cost of £3,674 per dwelling, Table 3.1.

3.4 The distribution of the total costs between the tenures was broadly similar for all types of repair work. The social rented sector, however, accounted for just 10-11% of the total costs for all categories of repair, even though it comprised a higher proportion of all dwellings (17%), Annex Table 1.6. The private rented sector accounted for around a quarter of all urgent and basic repairs (24-25%), but 20% of all comprehensive repairs.

3.5 Average costs varied greatly across different tenures for all types of repair, and these costs were notably higher among privately rented dwellings. For example, an average basic repair cost of £1,962 compared with housing associations homes, at £778 per dwelling.

Table 3.1: Required expenditure to remedy disrepair, by tenure, 2012

all dwellings

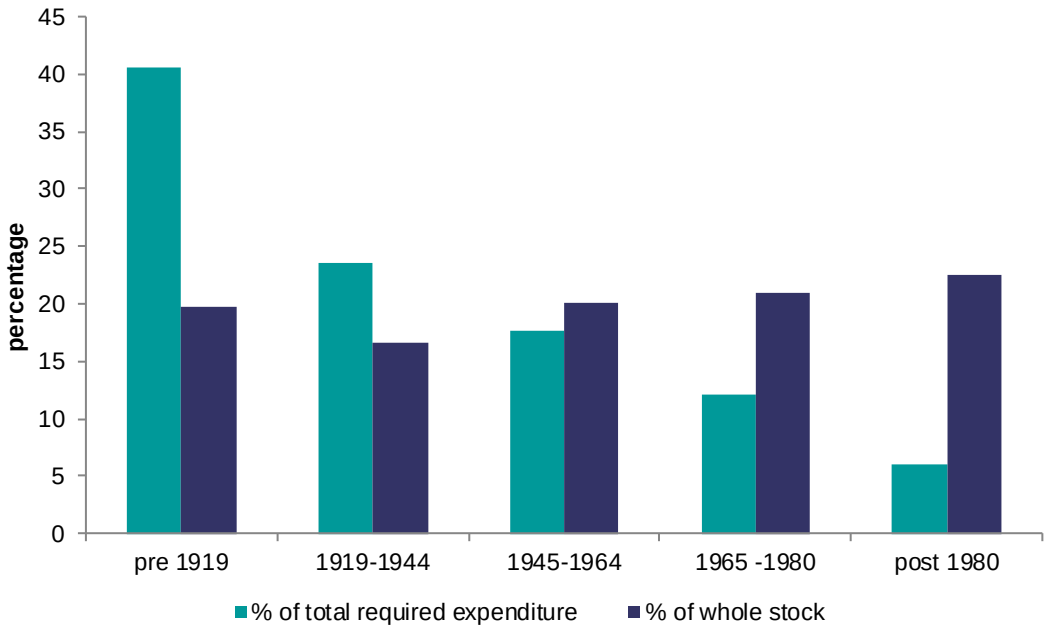
	owner occupied	private rented	local authority	housing association	all dwellings
mean expenditure per dwelling (£)					
urgent repairs	983	1,354	768	558	995
basic repairs	1,485	1,962	1,015	778	1,471
comprehensive repairs	3,946	4,120	2,364	1,946	3,674
total expenditure (£ billion)					
urgent repairs	14.5	5.6	1.4	1.1	22.6
basic repairs	21.9	8.1	1.8	1.6	33.4
comprehensive repairs	58.3	17.0	4.2	4.0	83.5
sample size	*5,314*	*2,683*	*2,280*	*2,486*	*12,763*

Base: all dwellings
Source: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

3.6 Although vacant homes comprised 4% of the total stock (see Chapter 1), the total basic repair cost for these dwellings was around £4.0 billion, 13% of the total cost of basic disrepair to the stock, Annex Table 3.1.

3.7 Dwellings built before 1919 accounted for 41% of the total expenditure for basic repairs, even though these homes made up only 20% of the whole stock. Figure 3.1 shows a correlation between total basic repair costs and the age of dwellings, with the share of total expenditure lower in more modern dwellings. Properties built after 1980 comprised 23% of the stock, but only accounted for 6% of the total basic repair costs, Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1: Distribution of total expenditure required for basic repairs and whole stock, by dwelling age, 2012



Base: all dwellings
Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 3.1
Source: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

Disrepair within different types of dwellings

3.8 Average standardised repair costs were generally higher for all types of privately rented homes, with the exception of vacant properties. The highest repair costs among vacant dwellings were owner occupied properties, £66/m² compared with £29/m² in the private rented sector, Table 3.2. Owner occupied vacant properties may have higher levels of disrepair due to a combination of reasons including:

- a greater proportion of older dwellings and houses within this stock
- a likely higher proportion of longer term empty homes (these are more likely to be older homes)[2]

3.9 Vacant homes had higher levels of disrepair among all tenures. This may be because these homes were in poor condition before becoming vacant, so

[2] See 'Vacant Dwellings in England, The challenges and costs of bringing them back into use', BRE FB25, Bracknell, HIS BRE Press 2010

become less attractive for future occupation. Empty dwellings may deteriorate more rapidly, for example, due to undetected urgent disrepair or vandalism.

3.10 Converted flats had the highest levels of disrepair among rented homes, with an average cost of £27/m² for all tenures. The lowest level of disrepair for private rented homes was found among purpose built flats, £11/m².

3.11 Newer dwellings had lower levels of disrepair and this trend was evident across all tenures. In terms of location, whilst standardised repair costs were highest in the private rented sector for all types of areas, levels of disrepair were more similar for owner occupiers and social rented homes within suburban and rural areas.

3.12 Properties in the most deprived areas had higher repair costs across all tenures compared with those in the least deprived areas. The largest difference occurred within the private sector, where the average standardised costs were £10-15/m² higher in the most deprived areas than those in the least deprived areas.

Table 3.2: Standardised basic repair cost, by dwelling characteristics and tenure, 2012

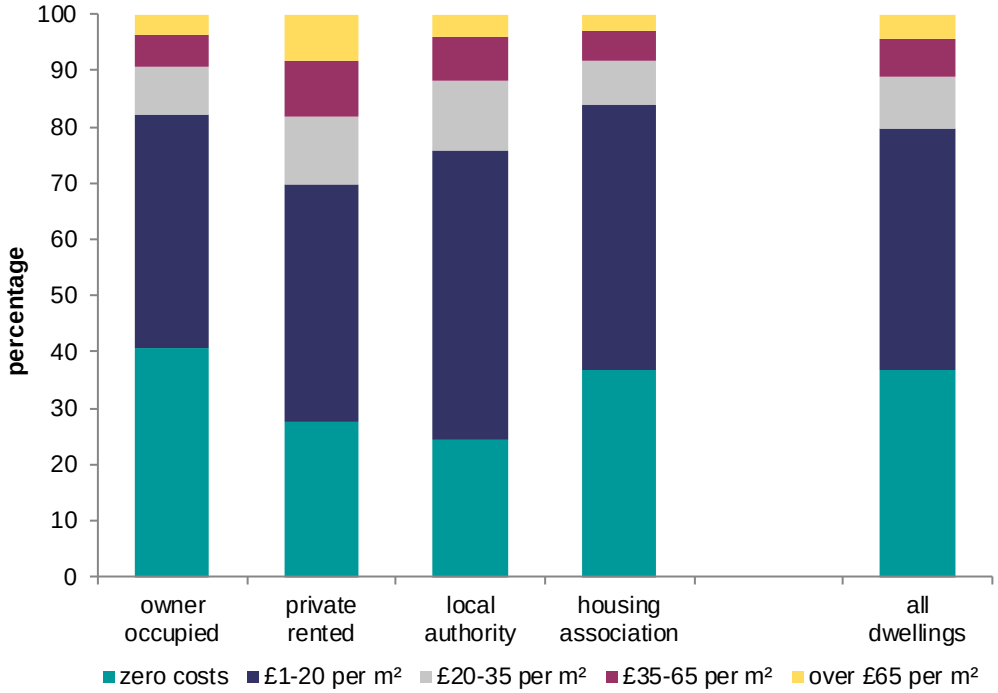
all dwellings

	owner occupied	private rented	social rented	all dwellings
				£ per m²
type of vacancy				
occupied	10.8	20.1	12.0	12.6
vacant	65.6	29.2	36.9	48.0
dwelling type				
all terraced	15.7	24.4	13.8	17.3
semi and detached	10.8	20.4	16.1	12.1
bungalow	17.2	22.9	10.4	16.2
converted flat	18.8	34.3	18.5	27.4
purpose built flat	6.9	10.5	11.0	9.8
dwelling age				
pre 1919	24.2	35.8	23.2	27.6
1919-44	19.1	25.4	19.0	20.1
1945-64	11.8	18.5	14.2	13.2
1965-80	6.9	12.6	10.6	8.5
post 1980	3.1	5.4	7.2	4.3
type of area				
city and other urban centres	17.3	25.4	13.1	18.8
suburban residential areas	11.6	17.3	12.8	12.6
rural areas	12.9	23.6	11.4	14.2
level of deprivation				
most deprived 20% areas	19.5	27.3	13.6	18.8
least deprived 20% areas	9.5	12.1	9.4	9.9
all dwellings	**12.6**	**21.0**	**12.8**	**14.2**
sample size	*5,314*	*2,683*	*4,766*	*12,763*

Base: all dwellings
Source: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

3.13 The owner occupied sector had the highest proportion of homes that required no repairs (41%) compared with other tenures, particularly local authority homes (24%). The private rented sector had the largest proportion of properties needing repair works in excess of £35/m² (18%), which included 8% of homes with costs over £65/m², Figure 3.2.

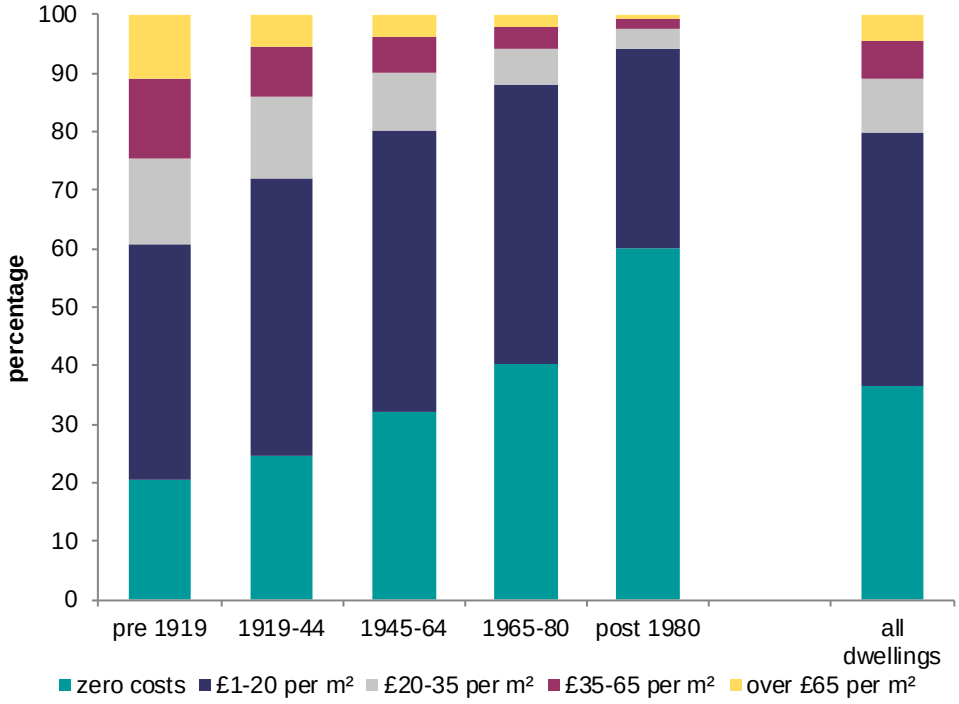
Figure 3.2: Standardised basic repair costs, by tenure, 2012



Base: all dwellings
Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 3.2
Source: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

3.14 Not surprisingly, dwelling age also had a significant impact on repair costs. Properties built after 1980 had the largest proportion of homes with zero repair costs (60%) and the smallest proportion of repairs over £35/m^2 (3%). Properties built before 1919 had the largest proportion of the highest repair costs with a quarter (25%) of these properties needing repairs costing more than £35/m^2, including 11% with costs over £65/m^2, Figure 3.3

Figure 3.3: Standardised basic repair costs, by dwelling age, 2012



Base: all dwellings
Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 3.2
Source: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

Change in disrepair over time from 2001 to 2012

3.15 The following analysis examines overall changes in the amount of disrepair in the stock since 2001, highlighting which tenures and ages of dwellings have seen the greatest and least improvement. The analysis uses the basic standardised repair costs (£/m²) converted to 2001 prices using the Building Cost Information Service (BCIS) National Index[3]. This rebasing of costs to 2001 allows for comparative analysis of repair costs to be made over time, since it removes the impact of building cost inflation/ deflation. As annual change in the level of disrepair arises from random fluctuations related to sampling and measurement effects, the section focuses on overall trends from 2001 onwards rather than annual differences.

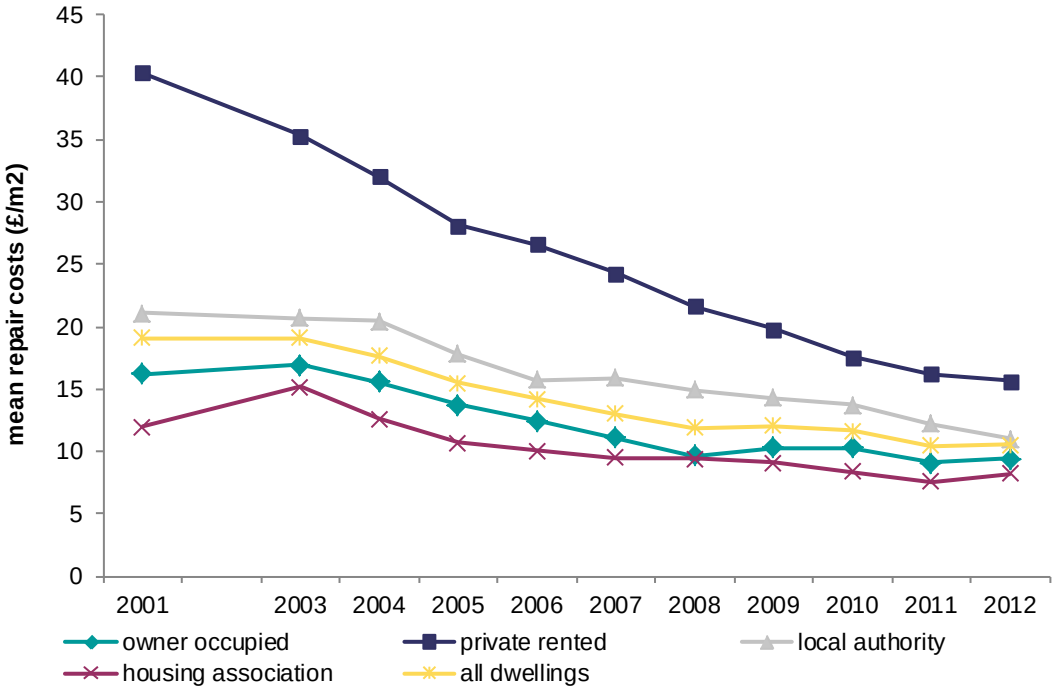
3.16 Since 2001, the average basic repair cost for all tenures reduced from £19/m^2 to £11/m^2, suggesting that there have been general improvements in how dwellings have been maintained over time, Figure 3.4.

3.17 The largest reduction in average repair costs occurred in the private rented sector, where costs fell by over 50% from £40m² to £16m², although it is important to note that average repair costs have always been significantly higher for these homes. Average repair costs fell far less sharply for housing

[3] The BCIS is the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors' Building Cost Information Service. The data provides an inflation factor for building costs enabling the cost of disrepair in the housing stock in any given year to be measured against a baseline cost.

association homes for most of this period, but disrepair has always been lower in this sector owing to it having a larger proportion of newer homes, Figure 3.4.

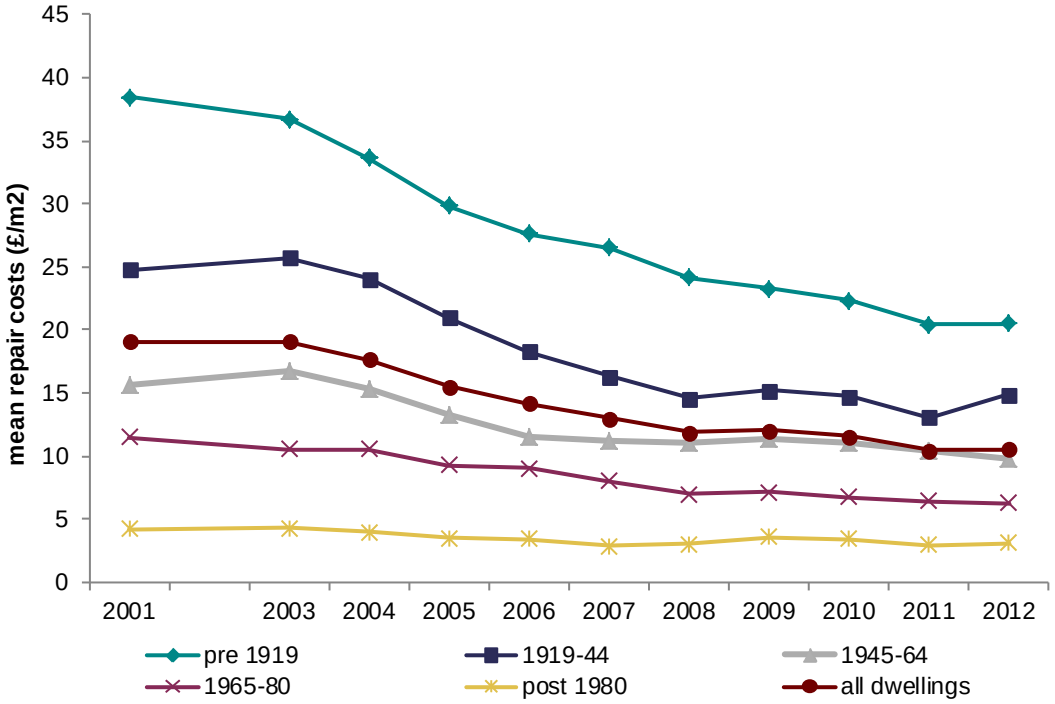
Figure 3.4: Mean basic standardised repair costs, by tenure, 2001-2012



Base: all dwellings
Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 3.3
Sources:
2001 to 2007: English Housing Condition Survey, dwelling sample;
2008 onwards: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

3.18 Dwellings built before 1919 had a marked fall in average repair costs between 2001 and 2012, falling from £38/m² to £21/m², although repair costs for these older dwellings continue to be much higher compared with newer homes. There was very little change over time to the repair cost for dwellings built after 1980 where levels of disrepair in 2012 were not significantly different to those in 2001, Figure 3.5.

Figure 3.5: Mean basic standardised repair costs, by dwelling age, 2001-2012



Base: all dwellings
Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 3.3
Sources:
2001 to 2007: English Housing Condition Survey, dwelling sample;
2008 onwards: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

Damp and mould

3.19 Damp, cold housing encourages the growth of mould and mites. Mites feed on moulds and both can increase the risk of respiratory illnesses in some people if left untreated. Damp may also have a negative impact on the fabric of the dwelling, leading to its rapid deterioration and the development of additional problems that increase the costs of repair.

3.20 This section first examines the prevalence of any damp in different types of households and how this may vary according to the tenure of the home. It then investigates the prevalence of the three types of damp that can present in homes (rising damp, penetrating damp, serious condensation and mould growth, Figure 3.6) and how the prevalence of these has changed over time. Finally it examines the prevalence of any damp over time within the whole stock and by tenure.

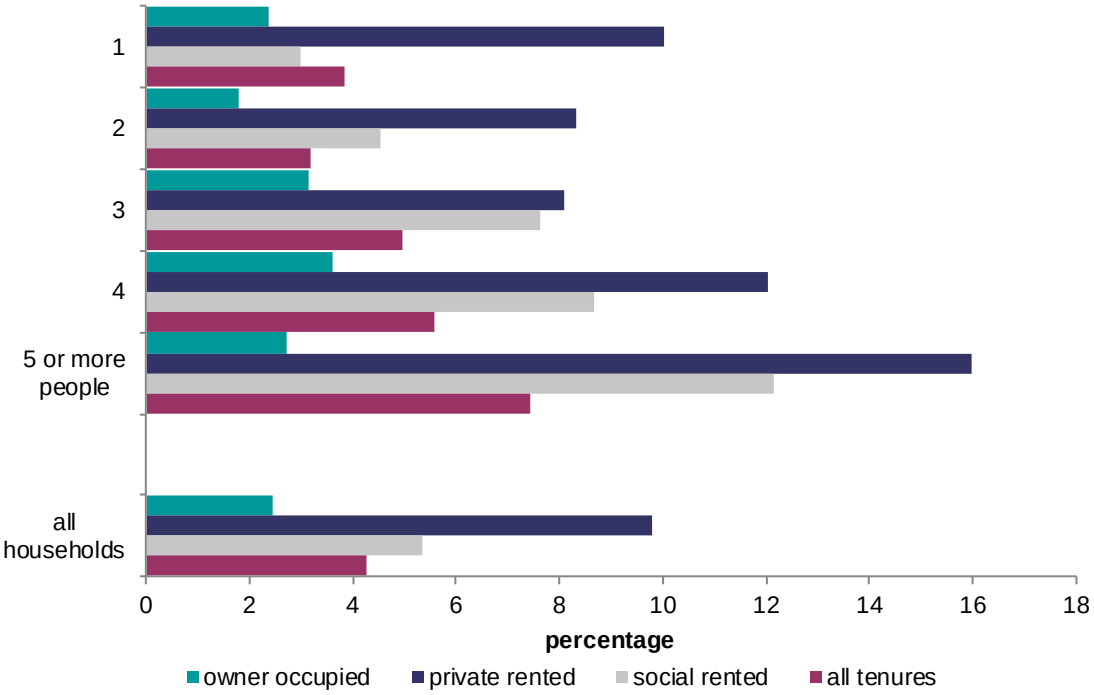
Figure 3.6: Homes with different types of damp

Top left: condensation and mould growth, caused by a mixture of inadequate heating and lack of room ventilation
Top right: rising damp caused by water from the ground which has entered the brickwork
Bottom: penetrating damp caused by water entering the pointing of the walls and cracks in the masonry
Source: BRE photo library

Additional data on the prevalence of any damp by different dwelling and household characteristics can be found in the web tables DA5101 to DA5103.

3.21 In 2012, 4% of households lived in a property with some form of damp. Generally, the larger the household, the greater the likelihood of living in a damp home. Higher levels of occupancy may increase the likelihood of condensation arising through, for example, the greater number of showers/baths taking place in the home. However, the position was somewhat complex with factors such as tenure interacting with findings on household size. Damp was, for example, far more common for all privately rented households, but damp was more evident among single private renters (10%) than private renters with 2 or 3 household members (8%). This would suggest that factors such as the degree of disrepair, the ability to heat a home and occupier lifestyles all play a part in determining the prevalence of damp, Figure 3.7.

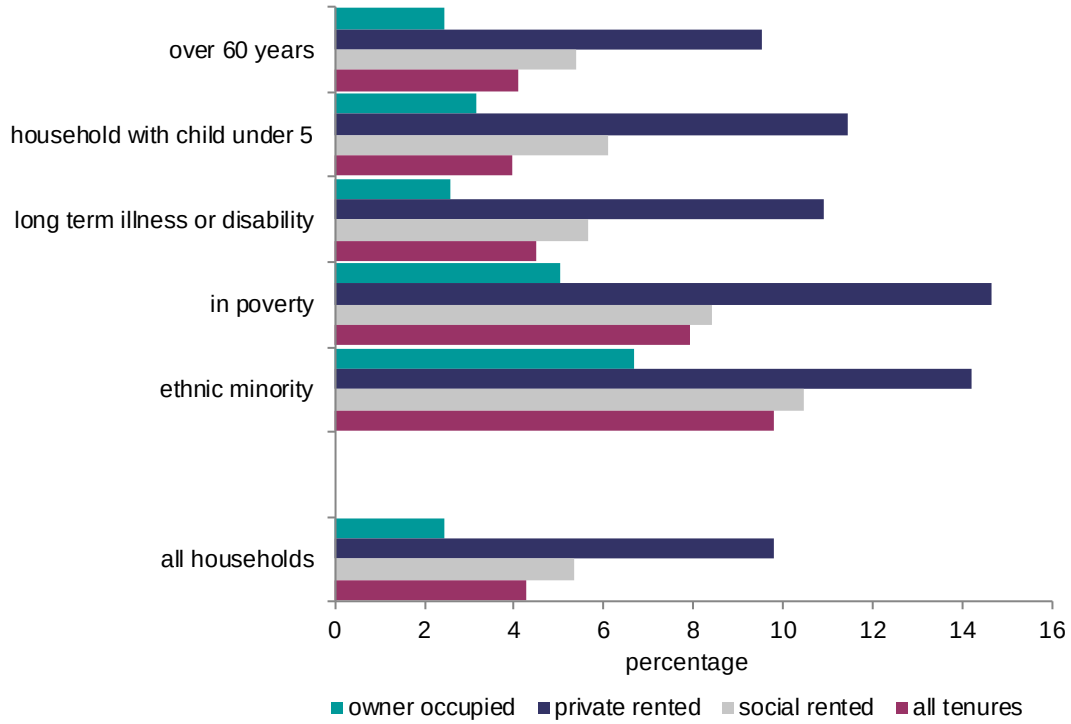
Figure 3.7: Households living in dwellings with any damp problems, by household size, 2012



Base: all households
Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 3.4
Source: English Housing Survey, household sub-sample

3.22 Many household groups who may be considered vulnerable on account of their age or long term illness or disability were no more likely to live in a damp home than all households in England (4%). However, households in relative poverty (8%) and ethnic minority households (10%) had a higher prevalence of damp. For all vulnerable groups, including those with very young children, the likelihood of living in a damp home was notably greater within private rented accommodation, Figure 3.8.

Figure 3.8: Households living in dwellings with any damp problems, by household groups, 2012



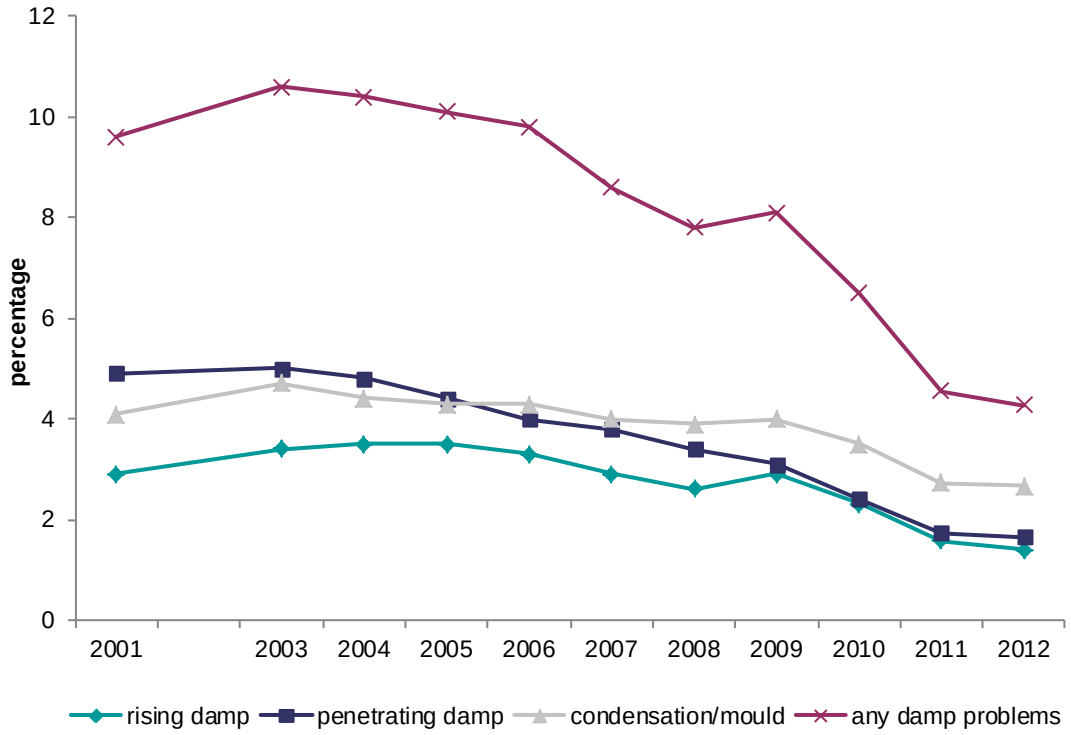
Base: all households
Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 3.4
Source: English Housing Survey, household sub-sample

Types of damp

3.23 In 2012, around 1.0 million (4%) of dwellings had some damp problems. The most common type of damp was serious condensation and mould growth, present in 3% of dwellings. The presence of penetrating damp and rising damp were less common (2% and 1% respectively), Figure 3.9.

3.24 From 2001, there was a decrease in the prevalence of all types of damp. The largest decrease was in the proportion of dwellings with penetrating damp, which was the most common form of damp in 2001, from 5%, to 2% in 2012. This reduction is likely to be due to the overall improvement in the maintenance of dwellings, Figure 3.9.

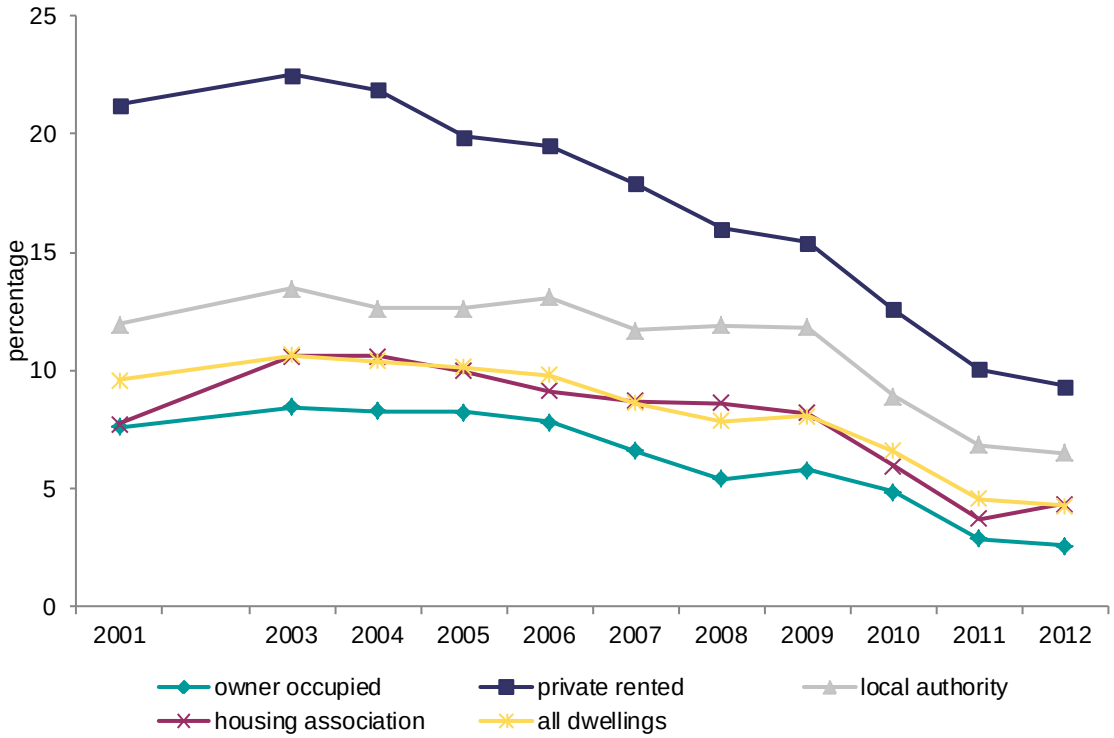
Figure 3.9: Trends in types of damp, 2001-2012



Base: all dwellings
Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 3.5
Sources:
2001 to 2007: English Housing Condition Survey, dwelling sample;
2008 onwards: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

3.25 In 2012, 4% of dwellings had damp problems, down from 10% of dwellings in 2001. This decrease was largely driven by a large decrease in the proportion of privately rented dwellings having damp problems (from 21% to 9%), although the prevalence of damp problems remains higher in the private rented sector than in other tenures, Figure 3.10.

Figure 3.10: Trends in any type of damp, by tenure, 2001-2012



Base: all dwellings
Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 3.6
Sources:
2001 to 2007: English Housing Condition Survey, dwelling sample;
2008 onwards: English Housing Survey

Electrical safety

3.26 All electrical systems have the potential to cause harm, and potential injuries include electrocution (non-fatal or fatal), electric shock and burns. This section examines the prevalence of five key areas of electrical safety[4] within the whole stock and by tenure and then investigates whether the provision of these has changed over time[5].

3.27 In 2012, virtually all homes, irrespective of tenure (97-98%) had modern PVC wiring throughout. In addition, some 93% of homes had modern earthing wires. This latter provision was higher among social sector homes (96-97%), Annex Table 3.7.

3.28 Some 72% of homes had modern consumer units, comprising one or two accessible boxes designed to receive overload and personal protection

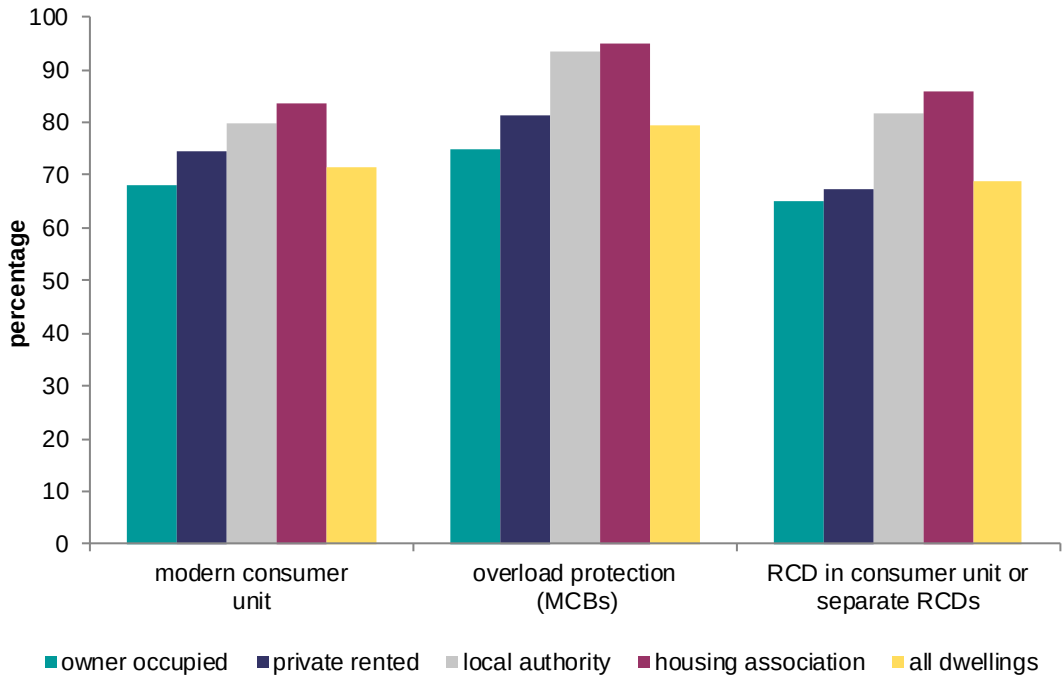
[4] Modern PVC wiring, modern earthing, modern consumer boxes, miniature circuit breakers and residual current devices

[5] It may not be possible for the surveyor to identify the presence of each electrical safety feature e.g. due to problems accessing a garage, so there will be some unknown cases. For this analysis, these unknown cases have not been redistributed according to the profile of other dwellings so as not to inflate the prevalence of these features within the stock

devices, various timers or off-peak supply controllers. The most modern form of overload protection, Miniature Circuit Breakers (MCBs) were evident in 79% of homes. Residual Current Devices (RCDs), which break electrical circuits when an 'abnormality' is detected such as a person touching a live wire, were found in 69% of homes, Annex Table 3.7.

3.29 The provision of modern consumer units, MCBs and RCDs varied by tenure. Among private sector homes, electrical safety provision was generally higher for privately rented homes compared with owner occupied homes[6]. This is probably due to legislation placing obligations on landlords to ensure that electrical systems and supplied electrical appliances are safe[7]. Provision of these safety features was higher among social rented homes, particularly in relation to MCBs and RCDs, Figure 3.11.

Figure 3.11: Modern consumer units and electrical circuit protection, by tenure, 2012



Base: all dwellings
Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 3.7
Source: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

3.30 Interestingly, vacant homes had a similar provision of electrical safety features to occupied homes. For example, RCDs were present in 72% of empty homes and 69% of occupied homes, and all five safety features were present in 57% of empty homes and 54% of occupied homes, Annex Table 3.8.

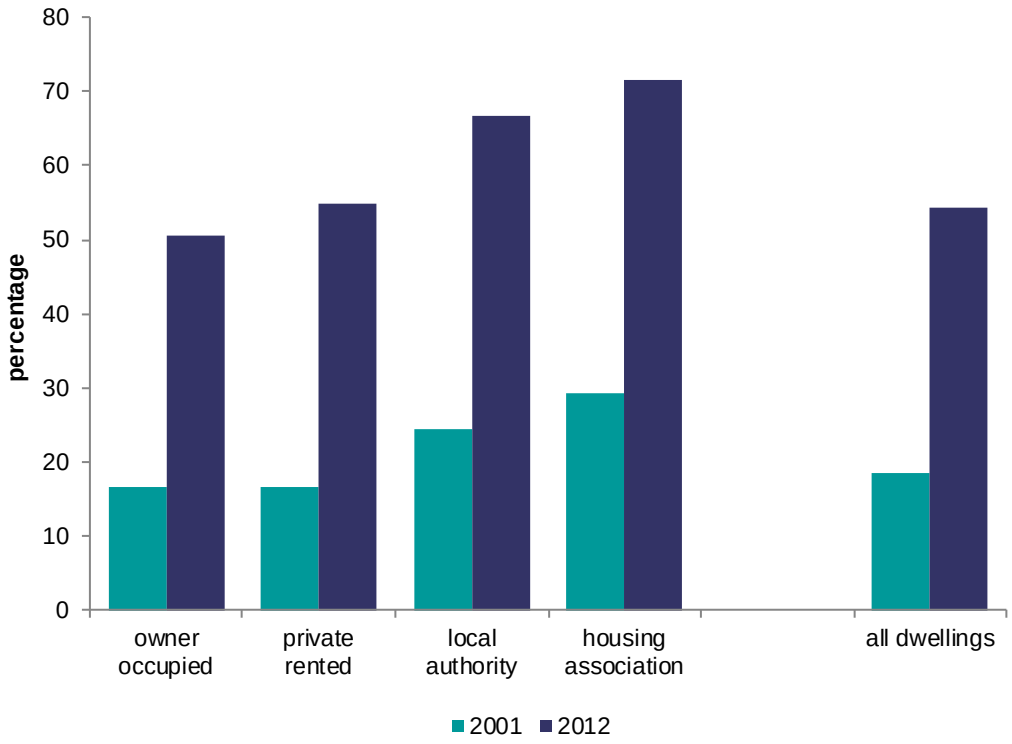
[6] The difference in the provision of RCDs within the private sector was not statistically significant

[7] By law, private landlords must ensure electrical installations and wiring are maintained in a safe condition throughout the tenancy. For HMOs, landlords are required to have fixed electrical installations inspected and tested at intervals not exceeding 5 years by a qualified electrician. A certificate must be obtained.

3.31 Just over half of all homes (54%) had all five safety features in 2012 highlighting the large remaining scope for improvement within the stock. There was, however, a significant rise in the provision of all five safety features over time, from 19% in 2001. There was improved provision of all safety features except modern wiring (already high in 2001). The proportion of homes with modern consumer units rose from 32% in 2001 to 72% in 2012, and the provision of MCBs rose from 48% to 79% over the same period, Annex Table 3.7.

3.32 The overall improvement in the provision of all electrical safety measures was evident among all tenures, especially among social rented homes. The improvement in social sector is likely the result of modernisation work undertaken under the Decent Homes programme, Figure 3.12.

Figure 3.12: Dwellings with all five electrical safety measures, by tenure, 2001 and 2012



Base: all dwellings
Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 3.7
Sources:
2001: English House Condition Survey, dwelling sample;
2012: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)

3.33 The HHSRS is a risk-based assessment that identifies hazards in dwellings and evaluates their potential effects on the health and safety of occupants and

their visitors, particularly vulnerable people. The EHS assesses 26 out of the 29 hazards covered by the HHSRS[8].

3.34 In 2012, 3.1 million dwellings (14%) had at least one Category 1 hazard, with around 500,000 (2%) homes having two or more of these hazards. The most common types of such hazards were falls (on stairs, between levels, on the level and those associated with baths), affecting 1.8 million (8%) dwellings, followed by excess cold present in around 1.0 million homes (5%). Other Category 1 hazards were far less common within the housing stock: around 600,000 (3%) dwellings had Category 1 hazards relating to one or more of the other 21 hazards covered by the survey, Annex Table 3.9.

3.35 The private rented sector was most likely to have any Category 1 hazard (19%), in contrast with only 7% of dwellings in the social rented sector. These findings are partly linked to the differences in tenure stock profiles, for example, the social sector has a higher proportion of newer homes and purpose built flats, which are less likely to have Category 1 hazards.

3.36 Category 1 hazards were more prevalent in older dwellings. Homes built before 1919 had by far the highest proportion of these hazards (31%). The higher prevalence of Category 1 hazards in the oldest dwellings is not surprising given the relatively poor level of insulation in many of these older homes combined with the fact that they are more likely to have a steep or winding staircase. Older homes were also more likely to have higher levels of disrepair, which will affect a number of other hazards such as damp and mould growth.

3.37 Converted flats (26%) and terraced houses (17-18%) had a higher rate of Category 1 hazards compared with other types of dwelling, particularly high rise (10%) and low rise (6%) purpose built flats.

Changes over time

3.38 This section examines overall changes in any Category 1 hazards within the housing stock since 2008[9]. These findings need to be considered with some caution since annual changes in Category 1 hazards may arise from random fluctuations related to sampling effects and a degree of surveyor variability is to be expected for HHSRS assessments. Furthermore, the methodology to model Category 1 excess cold was changed in 2010.

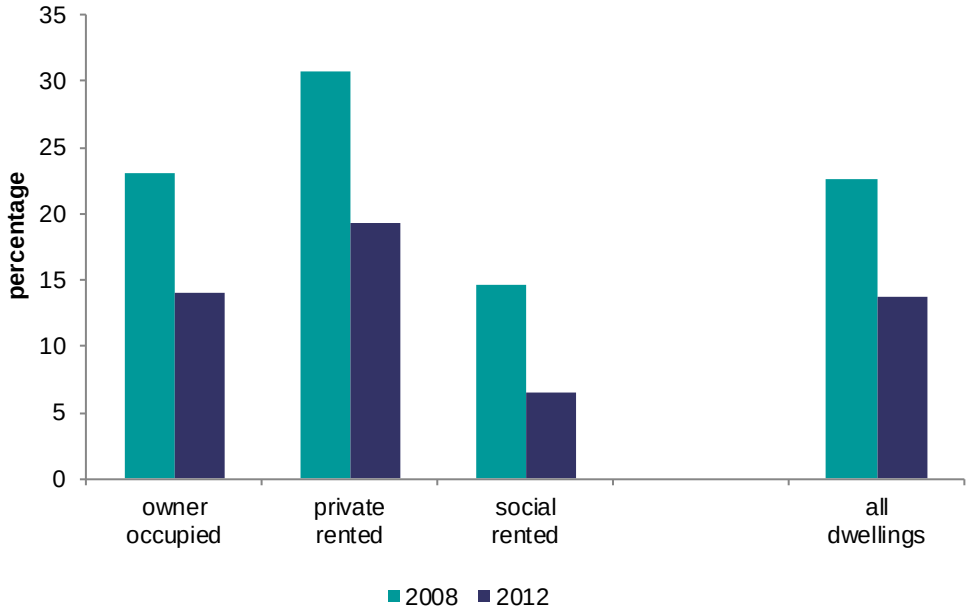
[8] Surveyors working on the EHS receive extensive training and support to help ensure their HHSRS assessments are consistent and robust (see chapter 5 of the 2012-13 EHS Technical Report). While these measures ensure a good level of consistency in judgements, some surveyor variability is to be expected. See also 2011-12 EHS Technical Advice Note on surveyor variability https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/211310/Surveyor_variability.pdf

[9] The 2006 and 2007 English House Condition Surveys collected data on fewer hazards (15) at this time, so HHSRS data from these surveys have not been included for this analysis.

3.39 There was a marked decrease in the prevalence of any Category 1 hazards from 2008 to 2012 (from 23% to 14%). Improvement was evident for all tenures. Even though the social rented sector had the lowest prevalence of Category 1 hazards in 2008, the proportion of these homes with these hazards has fallen by 55%, from 15% to 7%, Figure 3.13. This apparent decrease in Category 1 hazards for all tenures is likely due to a combination of factors.

- Action by councils, homeowners and landlords to improve energy efficiency in dwellings which have positively impacted on remedying excess cold hazards within the stock.
- Works associated with the Decent Homes programme in the social sector, which have not only improved energy efficiency but mitigated other hazards such as those associated with falls, domestic and personal hygiene and electrical safety.
- Local authority enforcement action against private landlords where serious hazards exist.
- Local housing renewal programmes.

Figure 3.13: Any Category 1 hazard, by tenure, 2008 and 2012

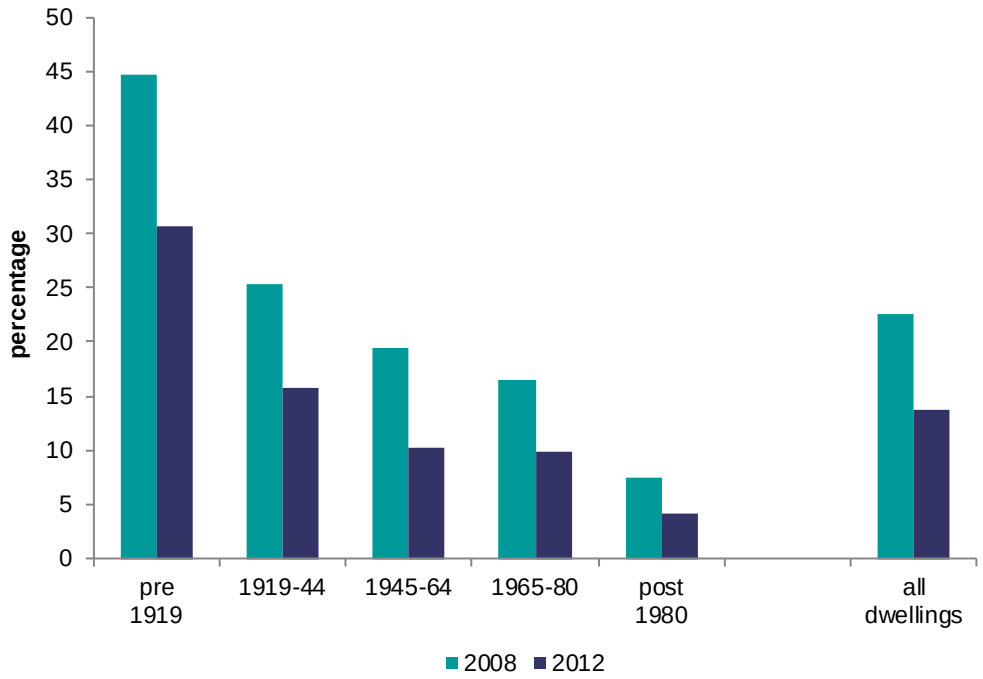


Base: all dwellings
Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 3.10
Source: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

3.40 Improvement was also evident among all types of dwellings, most notably among converted flats, which were predominant in the private rented sector. The prevalence of any Category 1 hazards for these homes fell from 40% to 26%, Annex Table 3.10. All ages of dwellings also had a lower prevalence of

Category 1 hazards in 2012 compared with 2008. Although the oldest homes built before 1919 saw marked improvement over this period, a fall in the prevalence of hazards from 45% to 31%, these homes continue to perform relatively poorly compared with more modern homes, Figure 3.14.

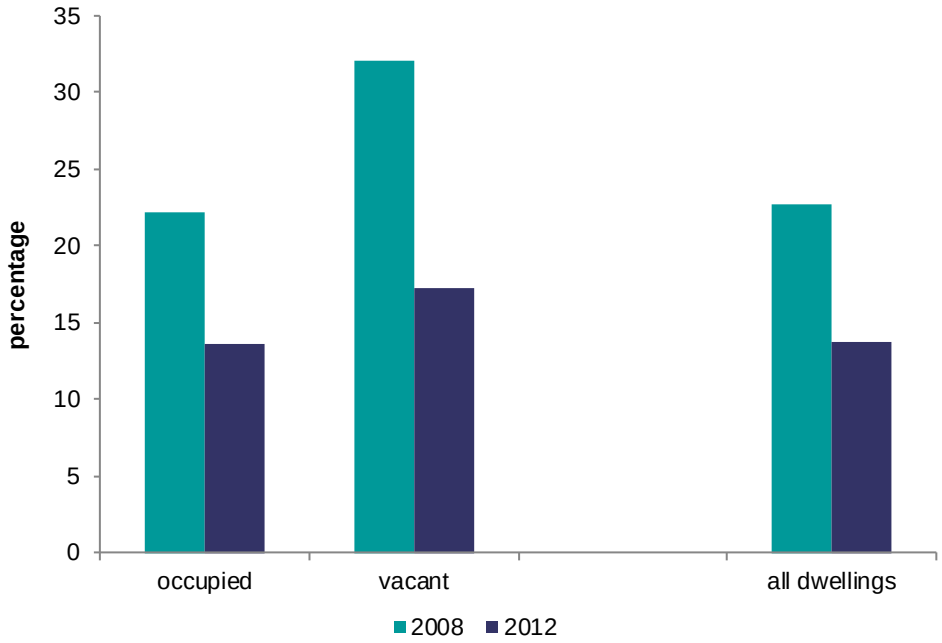
Figure 3.14: Any Category 1 hazard, by dwelling age, 2008 and 2012



Base: all dwellings
Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 3.10
Source: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

3.41 Although the prevalence of Category 1 hazards decreased for both occupied and vacant dwellings between 2008 and 2012, vacant dwellings were most improved (from 32% to 17%). This has resulted in a narrowing gap between vacant dwellings and occupied homes in 2012 in terms of the relative prevalence of the most serious hazards, Figure 3.15.

Figure 3.15: Any Category 1 hazard, by vacancy, 2008 and 2012



Base: all dwellings
Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 3.10
Source: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

Decent Homes

3.42 Improvement and remedial work required to meet specified standards of decency not only improves the housing conditions of people living in these homes, it may also have additional benefits such as reduced carbon emissions through improved energy efficiency and the mitigation of any HHSRS hazards that may exist.

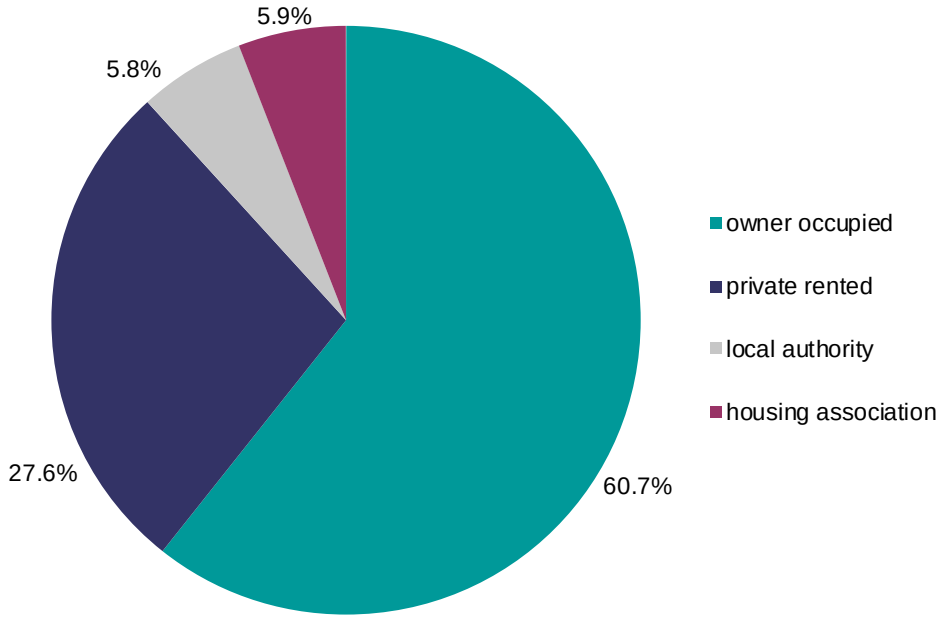
3.43 This section examines the prevalence of non-decent dwellings within the English housing stock in 2012, and the reasons for non-decency. It then looks at those households most likely to live in a non-decent home and how this likelihood varied by tenure. Finally, the section examines the prevalence of non-decency over time. Additional information of the prevalence of non-decent homes among different dwellings and households can be found in web tables DA3201 to DA3203.

Box 3.3: For a dwelling to be considered 'decent' it must:

- meet the statutory minimum standard for housing (the Housing Health and Safety System (HHSRS) since April 2006), homes posing a Category 1 hazard under the HHSRS are considered non-decent
- be in a reasonable state of repair
- have reasonably modern facilities and services
- provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort

3.44 In 2012, around 4.9 million homes (22% of all dwellings) failed to meet the Decent Homes standard. Of these, 88% were in the private sector (61% in owner occupied sector and 28% in the private rented sector), Figure 3.16

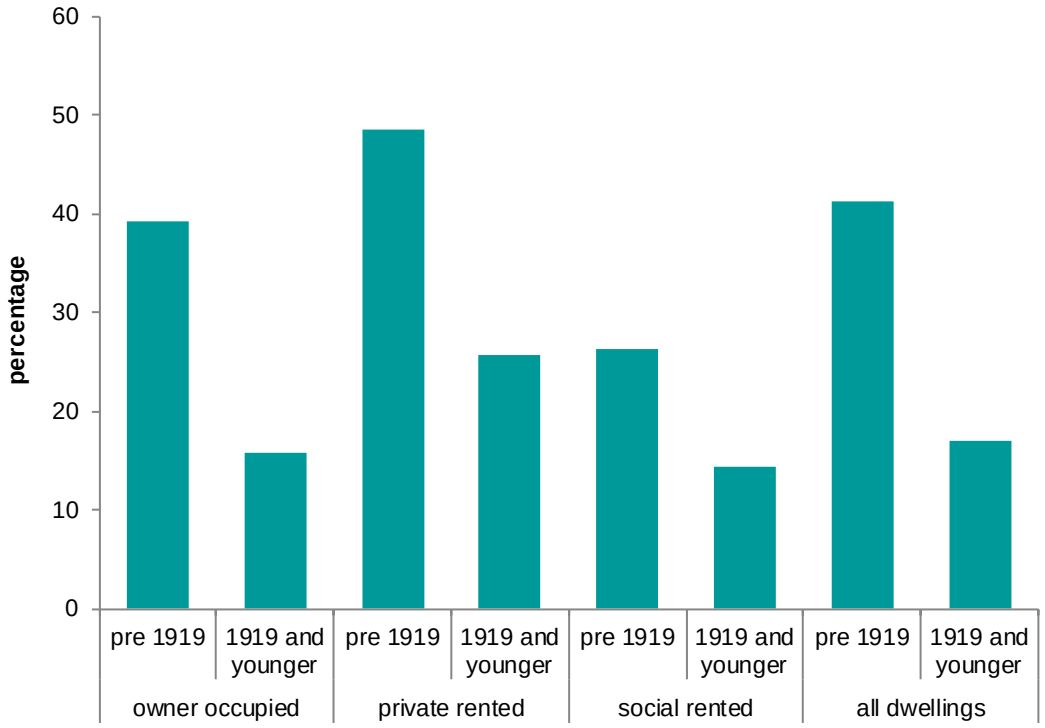
Figure 3.16: Non-decent homes, by tenure, 2012



Base: all non-decent dwellings
Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 3.11
Source: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

3.45 Older dwellings built before 1919 were most likely to fail the Decent Homes standard (41%). This finding was evident among all tenures. The private rented sector had the highest proportion of non-decent homes built before 1919 (49%), Figure 3.17.

Figure 3.17: Non-decent homes, by dwelling age and tenure, 2012



Base: all dwellings
Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 3.12
Source: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

3.46 Converted flats were also more likely to fail the Decent Homes standard (39%). This is related to their age as most were built before 1919. A higher proportion of vacant dwellings (28%) were non-decent compared with occupied dwellings (21%), reflecting higher levels of disrepair and Category 1 HHSRS hazards among empty homes, Annex Table 3.13.

3.47 There was no clear correlation between non-decency and areas of deprivation. Similar rates of non-decency were found for all areas, with the exception of the least deprived 20% of areas where 15% of homes were non-decent.

3.48 Ethnic minority households and households in relative poverty were more likely to live in non-decent housing. A quarter of households with an ethnic minority HRP (25%) lived in non-decent homes compared with 21% of white households, Annex Table 3.14

3.49 Ethnic minority households in the private rented sector were more likely to live in a home that failed the Decent Homes standard (34%) than ethnic minority households who lived in the social rented sector (17%), Annex Table 3.15.

3.50 Some 26% of households in relative poverty lived in non-decent homes compared with households not in poverty (21%), Annex Table 3.14. Again,

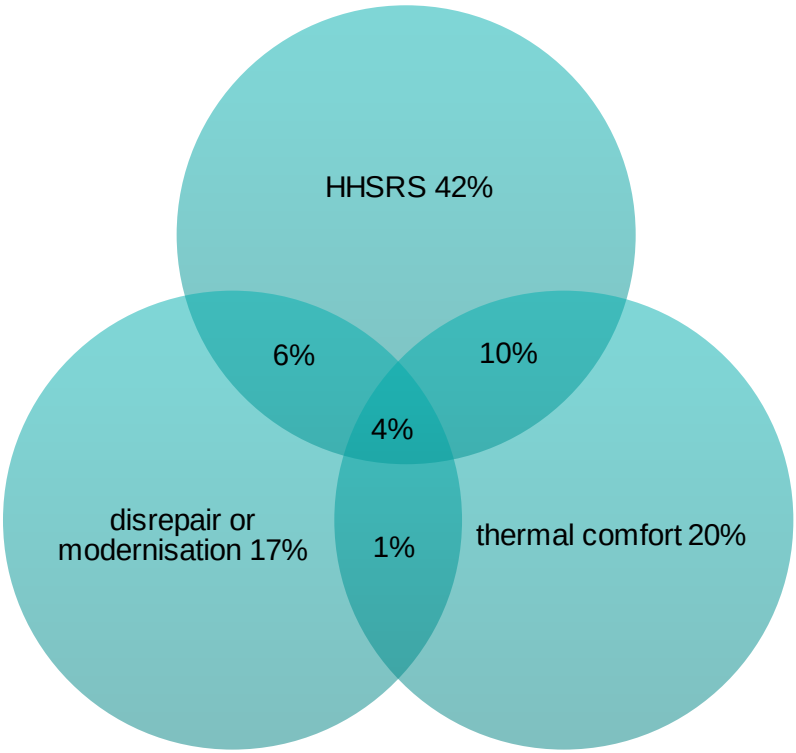
these households were more likely to live in non-decent homes if privately renting (38%), Annex Table 3.16.

Reasons for non-decency

3.51 Of the 4.9 million homes that failed the Decent Homes standard, the most common reason for non-decency was the presence of any Category 1 HHSRS hazard, found in 3.0 million homes (61% of all non-decent homes). Failure to meet the thermal comfort criterion was the next common reason, present in 1.7 million homes (35% of non-decent homes). Some 1.1 million homes failed to meet the disrepair component (22% of non-decent homes) and 380,000 homes (8% of non-decent homes) failed due to the lack of modern facilities[10], Annex Table 3.17.

3.52 Whilst the vast majority of non-decent homes failed to meet the standard on one criterion, a fifth (21%) of these homes failed to meet two or more of the criteria[11], Figure 3.18.

Figure 3.18 Reason for failing Decent Homes standard, 2012

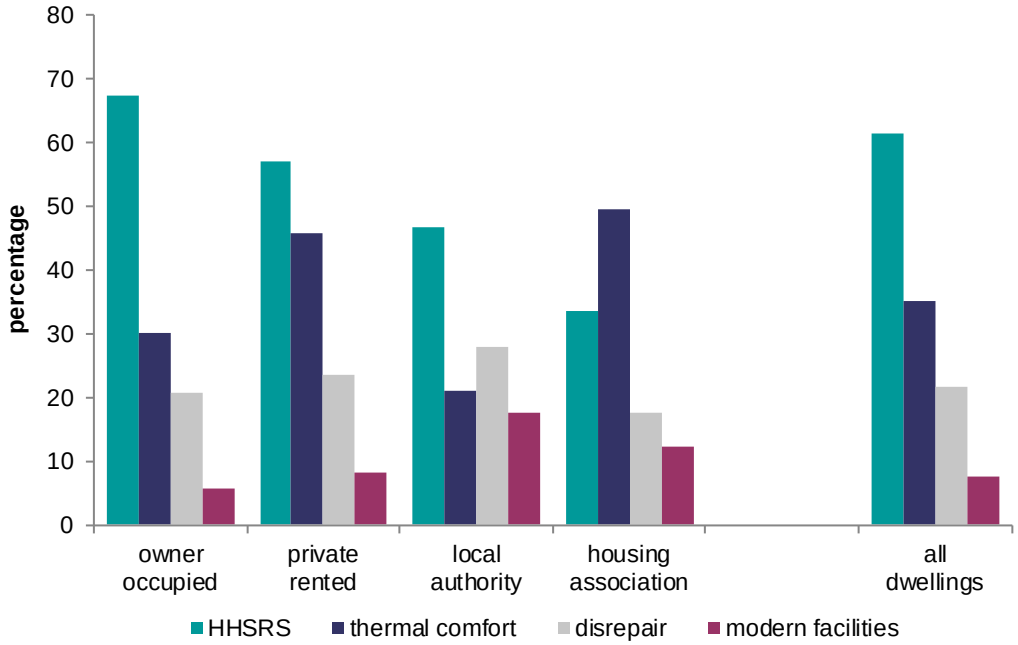


Base: all non-decent dwellings
Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 3.18
Source: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

[10] Percentages do not sum to 100% as dwellings can be non-decent due to failing more than 1 criterion
[11] As the sample size for dwellings failing all four criteria is small, the modernisation and disrepair criteria have been combined to form a single criterion.

3.53 The reasons for failing the Decent Homes standard varied across different tenures. The pattern of failure was similar for owner occupied and private rented non-decent housing and to the non-decent stock as a whole. Although the housing association sector contains a higher proportion of newer homes, these findings show the marked potential for installing or improving insulation within this sector and among private rented homes, Figure 3.19.

Figure 3.19: Reason for failing Decent Homes standard, by tenure, 2012



Base: all non-decent dwellings
Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 3.19
Source: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

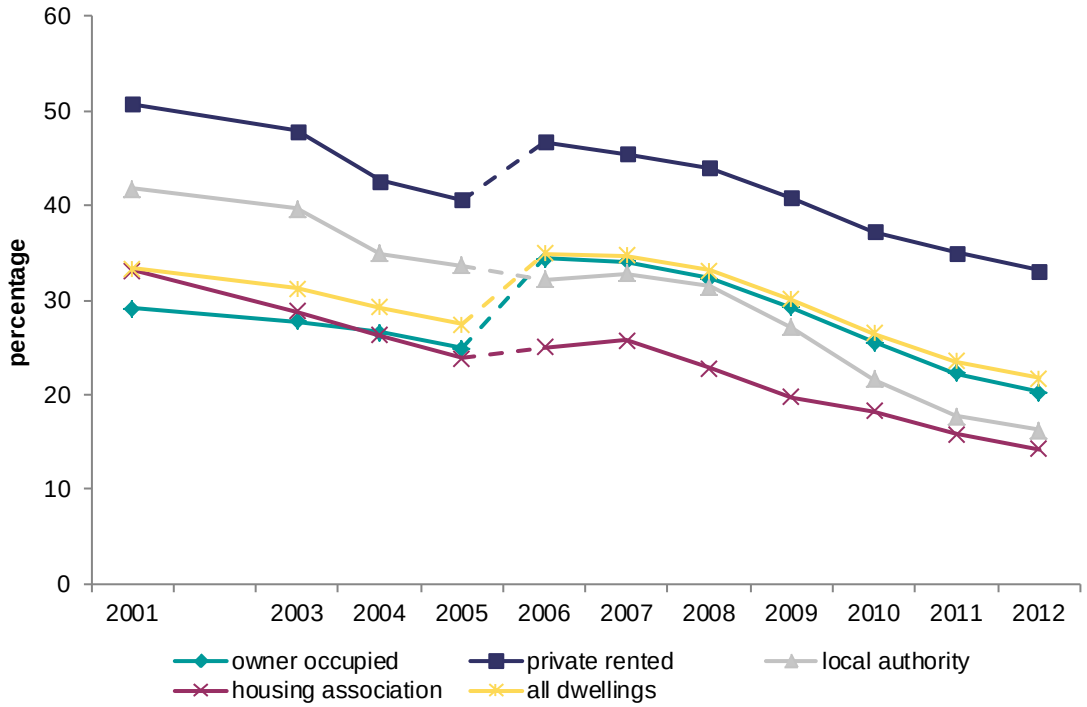
Trends over time

3.54 For this analysis, it is not possible to produce consistent Decent Homes time-line back to 2001 as the definition of Decent Homes was updated in 2006, when the HHSRS replaced the former Fitness Standard as a statutory criterion of decency. Nonetheless, the proportion of dwellings failing the Decent Homes standard reduced across the whole housing stock from 33% in 2001 to 27% in 2005. Since 2006, when 35% of all dwellings failed the updated standard under the revision definition, the rate of non-decency has decreased more steadily to 22% in 2012, Figure 3.20.

3.55 As the social housing sector was required to meet set standards of decency by 2010, it is not surprising that the local authority stock showed the greatest reduction in the proportion of non-decent homes over this period, falling from 32% in 2006 to 16% in 2012. Although less improvement was seen among housing association homes (an 11 percentage point reduction) over the same period, non-decency was far less common among these homes in 2006 (25% falling to 14% in 2012). Despite reductions in the prevalence of non-decency

over time (from 47% in 2006 to 33% in 2012), privately rented homes continued to have the highest rates of non-decency in 2012, Figure 3.20.

Figure 3.20: Dwellings failing the Decent Homes standard, by tenure, 2001-2012



Base: all dwellings
Notes:
1) from 2006 - Decent Homes model incorporated HHSRS instead of unfitness
2) 2010 - uses SAP09 instead of SAP05
3) underlying data are presented in Annex Table 3.20
Sources:
2001 to 2007: English House Condition Survey, dwelling sample;
2008 onwards: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

Summary of poor housing conditions

This section summarises the prevalence of four key measures of poor housing examined in this chapter: substantial disrepair[12], serious damp and mould, Category 1 HHSRS hazards and non-decent. The second part of this section examines the prevalence of multiple poor housing conditions given that these problems co-exist for a significant number of dwellings.

3.56 Table 3.3 provides information of the prevalence of each of these four housing conditions by dwelling and location characteristics. Given the previous findings in this chapter, it is not surprising that private rented homes performed worse for all four poor housing measures compared with all other tenures. Within the social sector housing association dwellings were least

[12] Basic standardised repair costs of over £35m².

likely to have each of these problems compared with local authorities, with the exception of non-decency. This finding likely reflects the greater proportion of newer built homes among housing association homes.

3.57 Not surprisingly, vacant dwellings had a higher prevalence of these problems than occupied dwellings, with the exception of serious dampness, where the difference was not statistically significant. This difference was particularly evident in respect to serious disrepair (26% compared with 10% respectively).

3.58 The oldest homes were far more likely to have each poor housing indicator than other homes. Given that converted flats and homes in city and rural areas had a relatively higher concentration of these oldest homes, it is not surprising that these homes also performed relatively worse for all key measures compared with other types of homes and those in suburban areas.

3.59 There was no clear correlation between the degree of deprivation and poor housing conditions. However, there was a marked contrast between homes in the least deprived areas and those in the most deprived areas. For example, 6% of dwellings in the least deprived areas were in substantial disrepair, compared with 16% in the most deprived areas, Table 3.3.

Table 3.3: Housing condition problems, by dwelling characteristics, 2012

all dwellings

	any Category 1 hazard	non-decent	damp in one or more rooms	substantial disrepair	sample size
				percentages	
tenure					
owner occupied	14.1	20.3	2.6	9.3	*5,314*
private rented	19.3	33.1	9.3	18.4	*2,683*
local authority	7.9	16.3	6.5	11.8	*2,280*
housing association	5.4	14.3	4.4	8.2	*2,486*
type of vacancy					
occupied	13.6	21.5	4.2	10.3	*12,269*
vacant	17.2	28.1	5.8	25.9	*494*
dwelling age					
pre 1919	30.7	41.3	10.1	24.7	*2,109*
1919-44	15.8	25.4	5.3	14.2	*1,936*
1945-64	10.2	17.7	2.8	10.0	*3,044*
1965-80	9.9	18.7	2.5	5.7	*2,904*
1981-90	6.3	17.9	2.7	4.4	*1,096*
post 1990	2.9	2.8	0.7	1.5	*1,674*
dwelling type					
small terraced house	18.2	29.1	6.9	16.7	*1,323*
medium/large terraced house	16.5	25.0	6.6	13.9	*2,356*
semi-detached house	13.5	20.1	2.6	11.4	*2,985*
detached house	13.4	15.7	1.6	5.9	*1,506*
bungalow	12.3	17.7	2.2	9.0	*1,189*
converted flat	25.6	38.9	11.6	24.6	*476*
purpose built flat, low rise	6.0	20.5	5.1	7.3	*2,550*
purpose built flat, high rise	10.4	24.8	3.3	4.3	*378*
area type					
city and other urban centres	18.4	28.7	8.0	15.4	*2,922*
suburban residential areas	10.2	17.7	3.1	9.7	*7,985*
rural areas	21.0	28.4	4.2	10.8	*1,856*
deprived local area					
most deprived 20% of areas	14.7	24.4	7.3	15.7	*3,904*
2nd	15.2	23.6	5.6	12.5	*2,652*
3rd	16.2	24.7	4.5	12.2	*2,234*
4th	14.4	21.5	2.6	9.2	*2,055*
least deprived 20% of areas	8.5	14.9	1.4	5.8	*1,918*
all dwellings	**13.7**	**21.8**	**4.3**	**11.0**	***12,763***

Base: all dwellings
Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 3.21
Source: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

Dwellings with multiple poor housing conditions

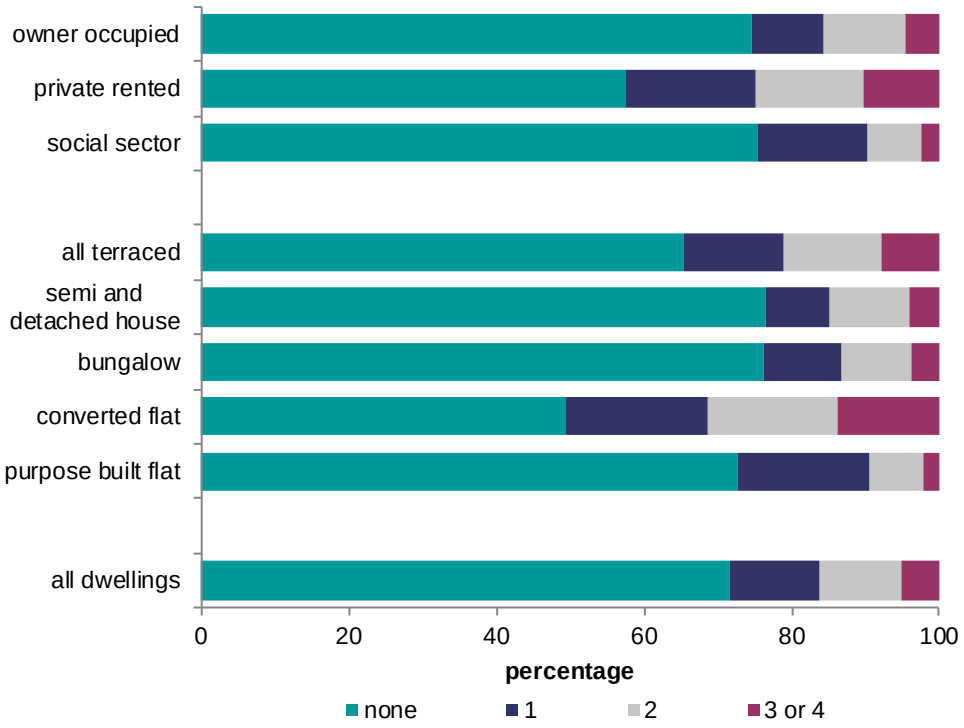
3.60 Using the above indicators of poor housing, this section examines the prevalence of multiple poor housing problems, as these problems do not always exist in isolation.

3.61 Overall, 16.3 million homes (72%) in England did not have any of the key poor housing measures. Some 2.7 million homes (12 %) had one poor housing measure, 2.5 million (11 %) had two measures and around 1.2 million 5% had three or four poor housing measures, Figure 3.21.

3.62 Whilst a similar proportion of social rented and owner occupied homes (25%) had some measure of poor housing, some 42% of privately rented homes had some form of poor housing. Furthermore, privately rented homes were far more likely to have multiple condition problems, for example, 10% of these homes had 3 or 4 problems compared with 5% of owner occupied homes and 2% of social rented homes.

3.63 Bungalows, semi-detached and detached houses had the highest proportion of dwellings with no poor housing indicators (76-77%). In contrast, around half of converted flats had one or more indicators of poor housing (51%). These homes were also more likely to have 3 or 4 poor housing indicators (14%) compared with all other types of homes, Figure 3.21.

Figure 3.21: Multiple poor housing problems, by tenure and dwelling type, 2012



Base: all dwellings
Notes: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 3.22
Source: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

3.64 Around half of pre 1919 dwellings (51%) had one or more key poor housing measures. Newer dwellings generally had lower proportion of homes with any measure of poor housing. Vacant homes had a higher prevalence of 3 or 4 measures of poor housing (13%) than occupied homes (5%). The proportion of homes with 3 or 4 measures of poor housing was slightly higher for homes located in cities and urban areas (9%) and rural homes (7%) compared with suburban residential (4%), Annex Table 3.22.