
Chapter 5

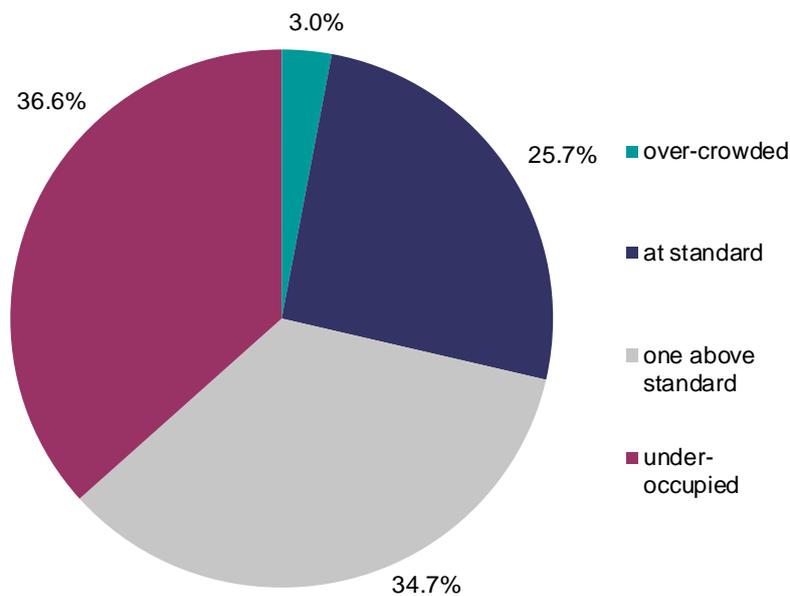
Space

This chapter reports on the space available to households in England in 2012-13. The chapter starts by exploring the issue of overcrowding and under-occupation using data drawn from the household interview element of the English Housing Survey (EHS). The remainder of the chapter then uses data from the physical survey to look at floor area, outdoor space and parking provision, and finally bedroom size.

Overcrowding and under-occupation

- 5.1 This section looks at the rate of under-occupation and overcrowding. As the population both increases in size and changes in profile (for example, there being proportionately more single person households and older people), the rate of overcrowding or under-occupation may change. This has implications for the types of new homes that need to be built.
- 5.2 In this report, the 'bedroom standard' is used to measure levels of overcrowding and under-occupation. The standard is the number of bedrooms required by a household to avoid undesirable sharing (based on the number, ages and relationships of the household members). This is then compared with the number of bedrooms that are available to the household. An under-occupied household is one that has at least two bedrooms more than needed. An overcrowded household is one that has fewer bedrooms available than required. See the glossary for more details.
- 5.3 The number of overcrowded households interviewed in each survey year is too small to provide reliable estimates for a single year. Therefore, in this section of the report, data from the three most recent years of the survey have been combined.
- 5.4 Under-occupation is considerably more common than overcrowding. Using the 2010-13 data, 3% of all households (652,000) were identified as overcrowded, whereas 37% of households were under-occupying their accommodation. Of the remaining households, 26% were at the bedroom standard, and 35% had one bedroom above standard, Figure 5.1.

Figure 5.1: Overcrowding under-occupation, average 2010-11 to 2012-13



Base: all households

Notes:

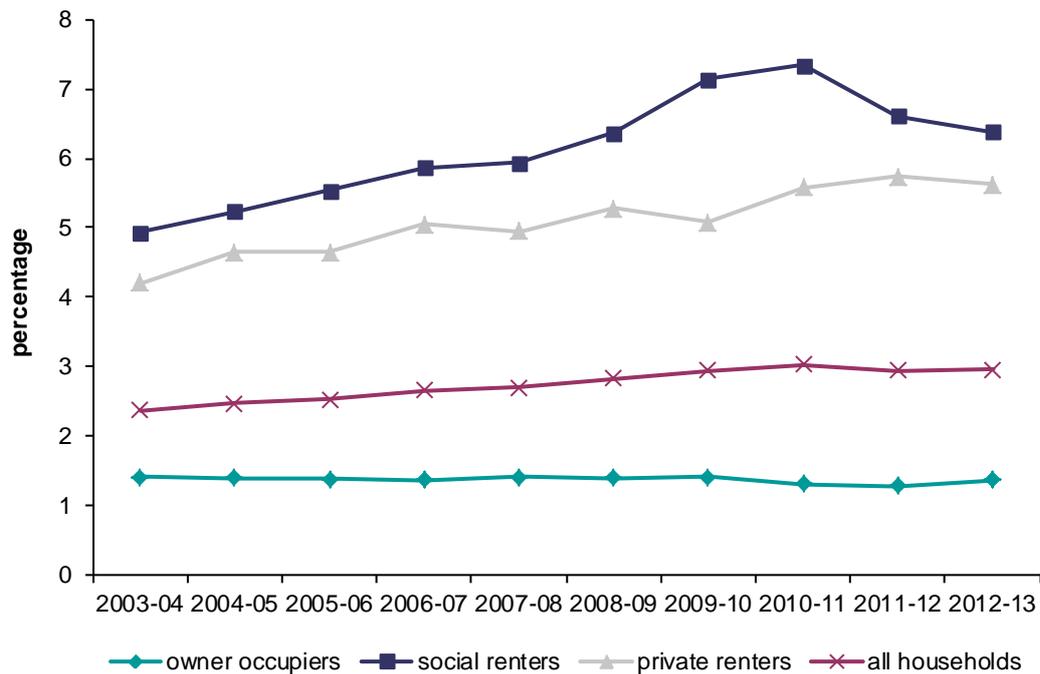
1) underlying data are presented in Annex Table 5.1

2) overcrowding and under-occupation are measured using the bedroom standard (see glossary)

Source: 3 year average based on English Housing Survey data 2010-11 to 2012-13, full household sample

- 5.5 The Localism Act 2011 introduced new measures to reduce overcrowding in social housing including extra funding for local authorities to support social tenants who wish to downsize.
- 5.6 The findings from the EHS show that overcrowding in the social rented sector has decreased in the last 2 years from 7% in 2010-11 to 6% in 2012-13, Figure 5.2.
- 5.7 However, the rate of overcrowding across all tenures has stayed at 3% over the same period.
- 5.8 In the private rented sector, the overcrowding rate has increased gradually from 4% in 2003-04 to 6% in 2012-13, but it has not changed significantly in the past 2 years. Overcrowding in the owner occupied sector has remained stable at 1% for the last ten years.

Figure 5.2: Overcrowding rates by tenure, three year moving average 2003-04 to 2012-13



Base: all households

Notes:

- 1) underlying data are presented in Annex Table 5.2
- 2) three year averages are the average of the three years up to and including the labelled date
- 3) overcrowding and under-occupation are measured using the bedroom standard (see glossary)

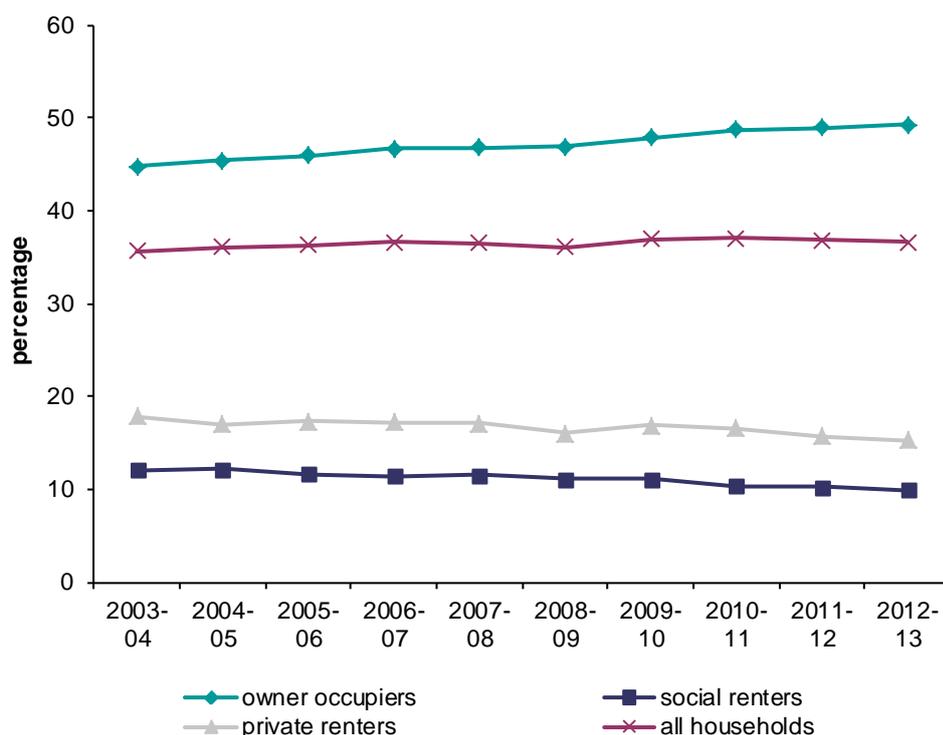
Sources:

- 2003-04 to 2007-08: Survey of English Housing;
 2008-09 onwards: English Housing Survey, full household sample

5.9 Under-occupation was more prevalent in 2012-13 than overcrowding, with over 8.0 million households (37%) living in under-occupied homes. Over 7.0 million of these households were owner occupied, which is around half (49%) of all owner occupied households. The under-occupied rate was lower in both the renting sectors: at 15% (582,000) in the private rented sector and 10% (374,000) in the social rented sector.

5.10 The overall rate of under-occupation across all tenures in England has remained constant for the last 10 years. During the same period, the rate of under-occupation amongst owner occupiers has increased from 45% to 49%. In both the social and private rented sectors, there have been slight decreases in under-occupied dwellings between 2003-04 and 2012-13, Figure 5.3.

Figure 5.3: Under-occupation rates by tenure, three year moving average 2003-04 to 2012-13



Base: all households

Notes:

- 1) underlying data are presented in Annex Table 5.3
- 2) three year averages are the average of the three years up to and including the labelled date
- 3) overcrowding and under-occupation are measured using the bedroom standard (see glossary)

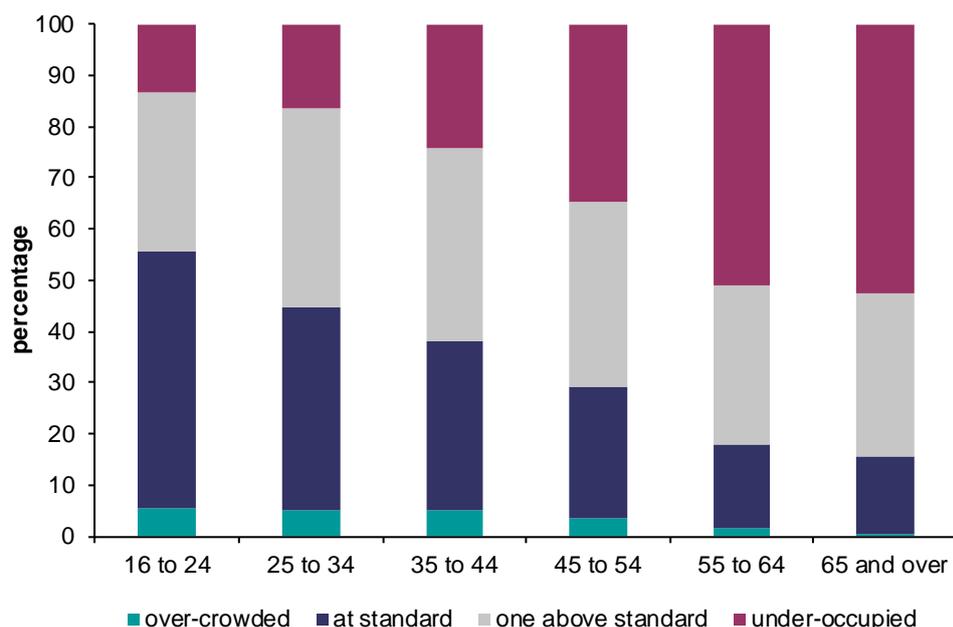
Sources:

- 2003-2004 to 2007-08: Survey of English Housing;
 2008-09 onwards: English Housing Survey, full household sample

Age

- 5.11 The level of overcrowding is higher in households with younger HRPs, whereas under-occupation is more common in households with older HRPs.
- 5.12 Overcrowding was more common for households with younger HRPs (16-34 year olds; 5%) compared to those with the oldest HRPs (55 and over; 1%). Younger HRPs (42%) were also more likely to have the standard number of bedrooms than older HRPs (16%), Figure 5.4.
- 5.13 The number of households with one above the standard number of bedrooms is also higher for younger HRPs (37%) than older HRPs (32%).
- 5.14 In contrast, the level of under-occupation increases by age-group of HRP, up to the age of 55. Around half of households with an HRP aged 55 and over (52%) were under-occupied, whereas only 16% of 16-34 year olds lived in under-occupied accommodation.

Figure 5.4: Overcrowding and under-occupation by age of the HRP, three year average 2010-11 to 2012-13



Base: all households

Notes:

1) underlying data presented in Annex Table 5.1

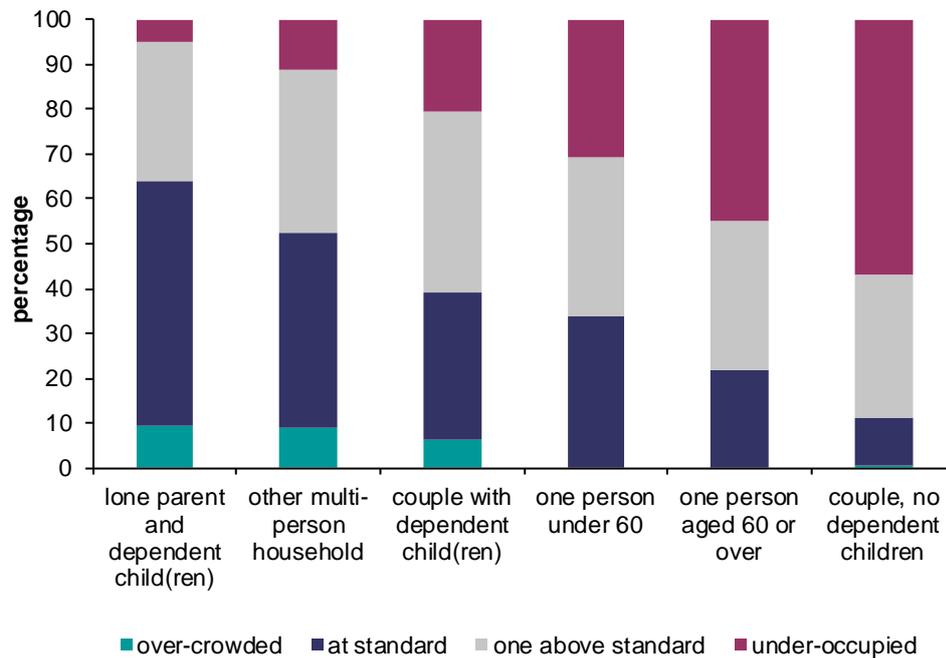
2) overcrowding and under-occupation are measured using the bedroom standard (see glossary)

Source: 3 year average based on English Housing Survey data 2010-11 to 2012-13, full household sample

Household type

- 5.15 Lone parents with dependent children (10%) and other multi-person households (9%) were more likely to live in overcrowded accommodation than couples living with dependent children (7%) or without dependent children (1%), Figure 5.5.
- 5.16 Lone parents with dependent children were the least likely to live in under-occupied accommodation (5%). Occupancy ratings were quite different for couples. Around a fifth (21%) of couples with dependent children and almost three fifths (57%) of couples with no dependent children were under-occupying their homes.
- 5.17 More than a third (38%) of one person households lived in under-occupied accommodation. Of these, people aged over 60 (45%) were more likely to under-occupy their homes than those under 60 (31%).

Figure 5.5: Overcrowding and under-occupation by household type, three year average 2010-11 to 2012-13



Base: all households

Notes:

1) underlying data presented in Annex Table 5.1

2) overcrowding and under-occupation are measured using the bedroom standard (see glossary)

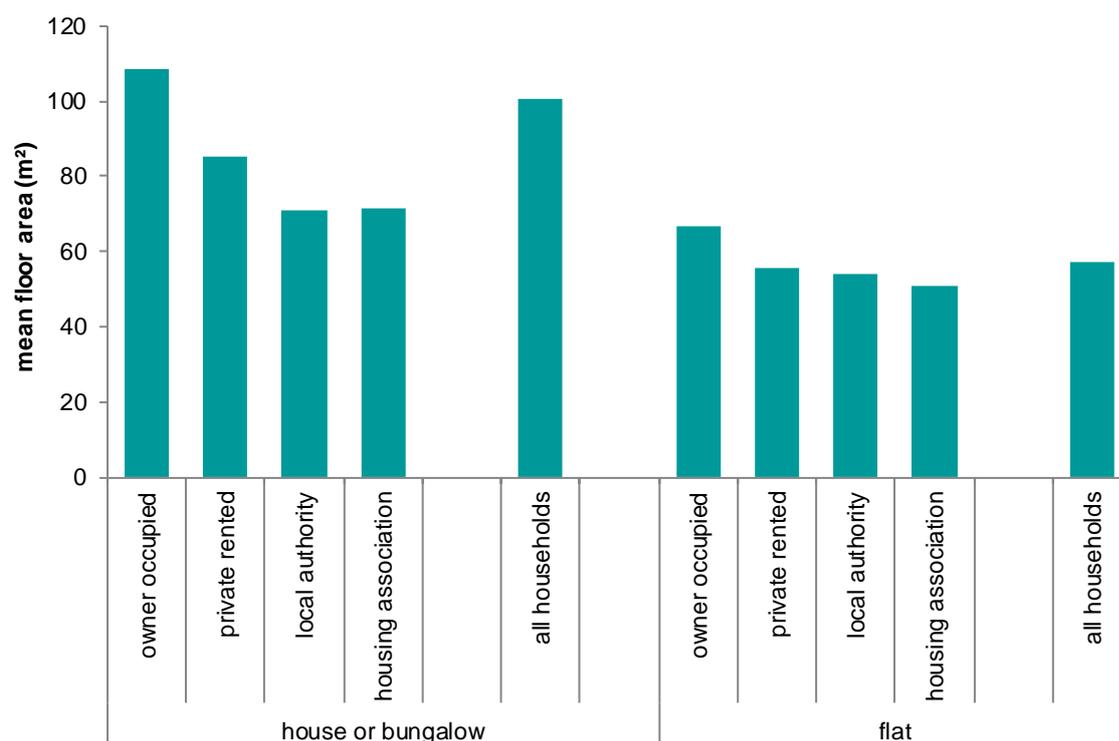
Source: 3 year average based on English Housing Survey data 2010-11 to 2012-13, full household sample

Useable floor area

5.18 On average each household had a total usable floor area of 92m² in 2012, roughly equivalent in size to one third of a tennis court. However, this average size varied by tenure, from 105m² for owner occupiers to 74m² for private renters and 63m² for both local authority and housing association tenants, Annex Table 5.4.

5.19 This disparity was particularly evident for households living in houses or bungalows (an average of 108m² for owner occupiers to 71m² for social renters). Average floor area for households living in flats was similar for all renters with a range of only 5m² across the rented tenures in flats, compared with 14m² for those in houses, Figure 5.6.

Figure 5.6: Floor area, by tenure and dwelling type, 2012



Base: all households

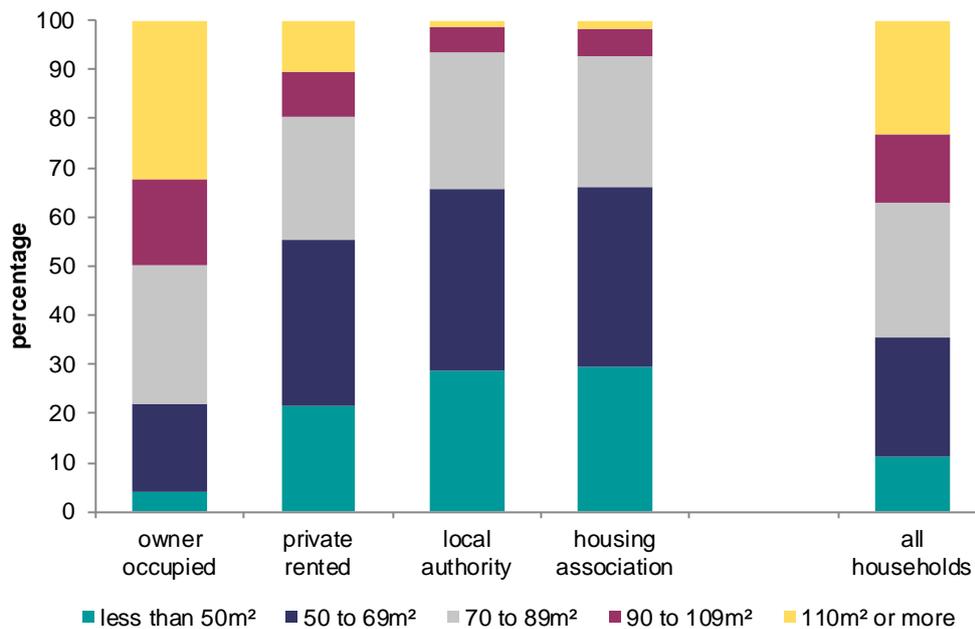
Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 5.4

Source: English Housing Survey, household sub-sample

5.20 While 11% of households had a floor area of less than 50m², almost a quarter (23%) of households had a floor area of at least 110m². Almost one third (32%) of owner occupiers had the largest homes of at least 110m² and only 4% lived in homes of 50m² or less. Conversely, all social renters were far more likely to have the smallest homes of less than 50m² (29%) and only 2% lived in homes with at least 110m² of floor area. This is mainly because social renters were more likely to reside in flats, which were generally smaller in size. There were also very few detached homes within the social sector¹. Around one fifth (21%) of private renters lived in homes of less than 50m² and 11% lived in homes of at least 110m², Figure 5.7.

¹ See Chapter 1 of the EHS Profile of English Housing report, 2012.

Figure 5.7: Floor area, by tenure, 2012



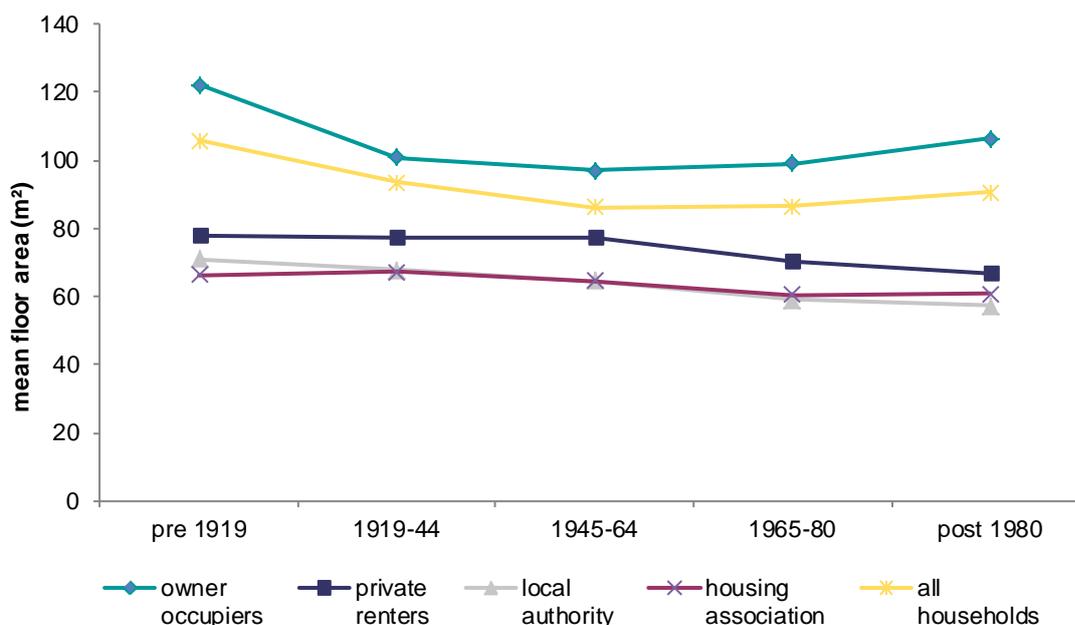
Base: all households

Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 5.5

Source: English Housing Survey, household sub-sample

5.21 The average floor area for households varied according to the age of the home they lived in. Households living in the oldest homes built before 1919 had the largest average floor area (106m²). The range in average floor area varied most for owner occupiers, from 122m² in dwellings built before 1919 to 97m² in dwellings built from 1945 to 1964, Figure 5.8.

Figure 5.8 Floor area, by dwelling age and tenure, 2012



Base: all households

Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 5.4

Source: English Housing Survey, household sub-sample

5.22 It appears that the average floor area for households has decreased over time, with newer homes generally having lower average floor areas. The position is far more complex, taking into account a number of factors:

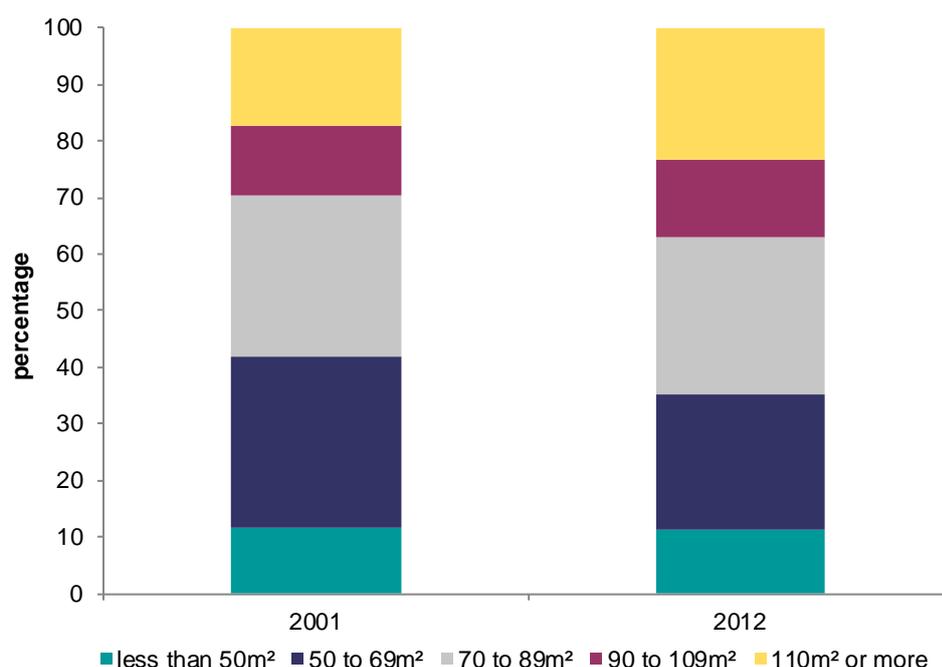
- The distribution of the types of homes in each period, particularly the proportion of flats that tend to be smaller in size.
- Demolition of some of the oldest private sector homes as part of, for example, housing renewal and regeneration schemes, which will impact on the average floor area for this age of dwellings.
- Over the years, conversions to add extra space may have occurred in older homes, for example, loft conversions or extensions of living space, which will also impact on average values.
- The movement of homes between tenures, for example, the transfer of former local authority homes to the owner occupied sector through Right to Buy. Houses and bungalows comprised the majority of these homes so there has been a significant rise in the proportion of purpose built flats, which tend to be smaller in size, among local authority tenants².

5.23 There was some change in the distribution of floor area between 2001 and 2012, Figure 5.9. The proportion of households living in the smallest homes of 50m² or less has remained unchanged over this period, but the proportion of households living in the larger homes of at least 110m² rose from 17% to 23%. This finding is partly due to the growing proportion of detached homes built after 1990³.

² See Chapter 1 of the EHS Profile of English Housing report, 2012.

³ See Annex Table 1.3 and Chapter 2 of the 2012 EHS Profile of English Housing report.

Figure 5.9 Floor area, 2001 and 2012



Base: all households

Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 5.5

Source: English Housing Survey, household sub-sample

- 5.24 These findings did, however, vary by tenure. During this period, a higher proportion of owner occupiers lived in the largest sized homes of at least 110m² (23% in 2001 to 32% in 2012). In contrast, the proportion of private renters living in these largest homes fell from 13% to 11%, Annex Table 5.5.
- 5.25 The proportion of housing association tenants living in homes of 50m² or less fell from 36% in 2001 to 29% in 2012. During the same period, the proportion of local authority tenants living in these smallest homes increased from 24% to 29%. This may be due to the change in the distribution of dwelling types within this stock over time⁴.

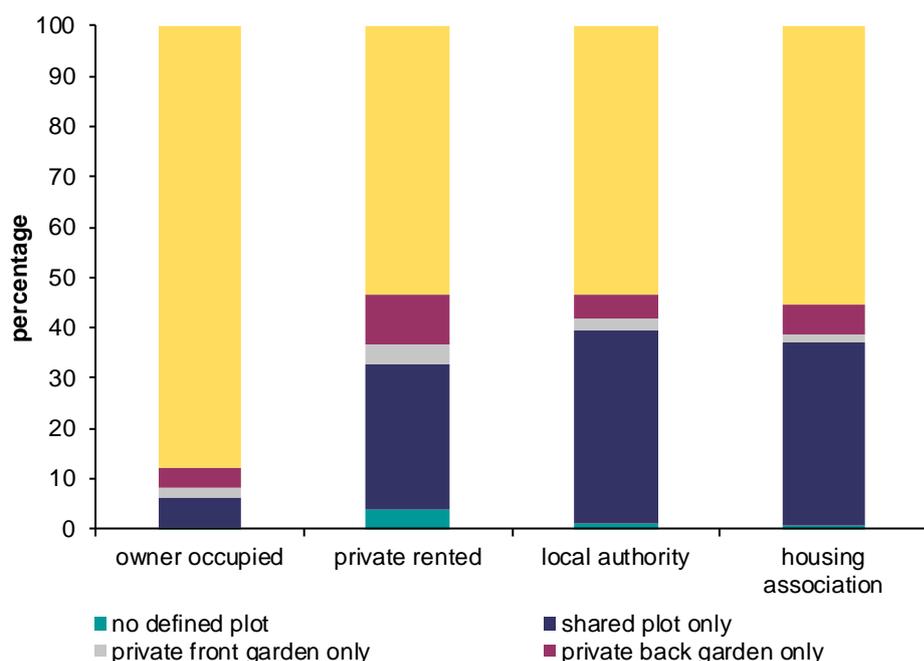
Outdoor space

5.26 In 2012, 94% of owner occupied dwellings had a private front and/or back garden compared with 67% of private rented, 61% of local authority and 63% of housing association dwellings, Figure 5.10.

5.27 Only 1% of all dwellings had no defined plot.

⁴ See Chapter 1 of the 2012 EHS Profile of English Housing report.

Figure 5.10: Outdoor space, by tenure, 2012



Base: all dwellings

Note: underlying data presented in Annex Table 5.6

Source: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

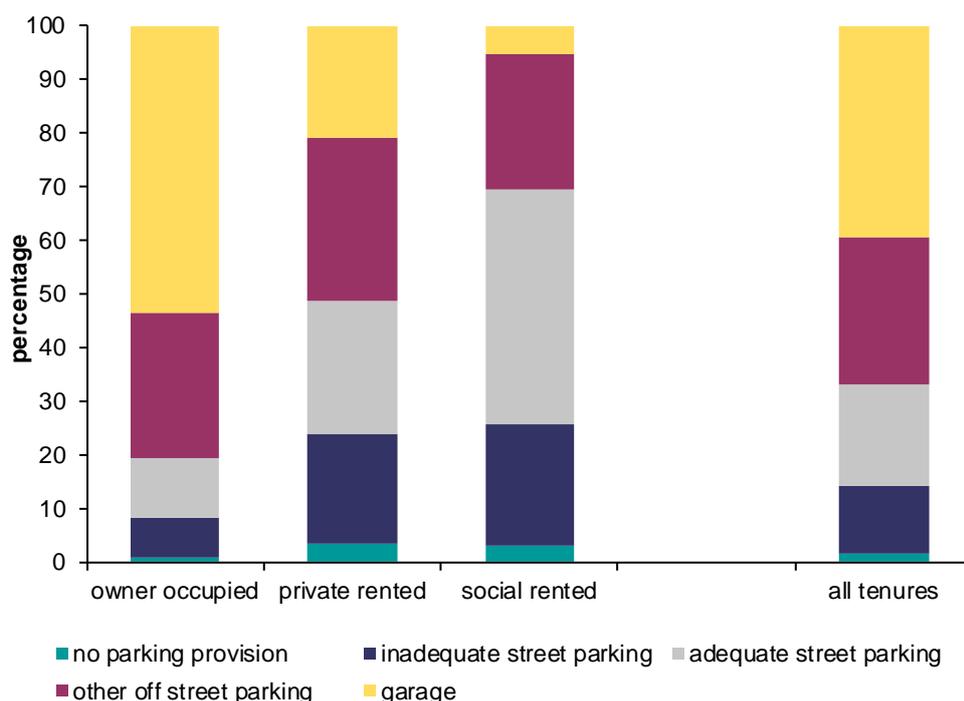
Parking

- 5.28 Two-fifths of homes had the use of a garage in 2012 and 46% had off street parking or adequate street parking⁵. Around 12% had inadequate street parking⁶ and 2% had no parking provision, Figure 5.11.
- 5.29 Only 8% of owner occupied dwellings had either inadequate street parking or no parking provision compared with 24% of private rented dwellings and 26% of social rented dwellings. Over half (54%) of owner occupiers had a garage compared with 21% of private renters and only 5% of social renters.

⁵ Parking is generally available outside or adjacent to the survey house/flat or block of flats for the household and any visitors. The road is sufficiently wide to allow easy passage of traffic.

⁶ Difficult to park outside the survey house/flat or block of flats, for example, due to the volume of cars competing for places, or due to legal restrictions on parking.

Figure 5.11: Parking provision, by tenure, 2012



Base: all dwellings

Note: underlying data presented in Annex Table 5.7

Source: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

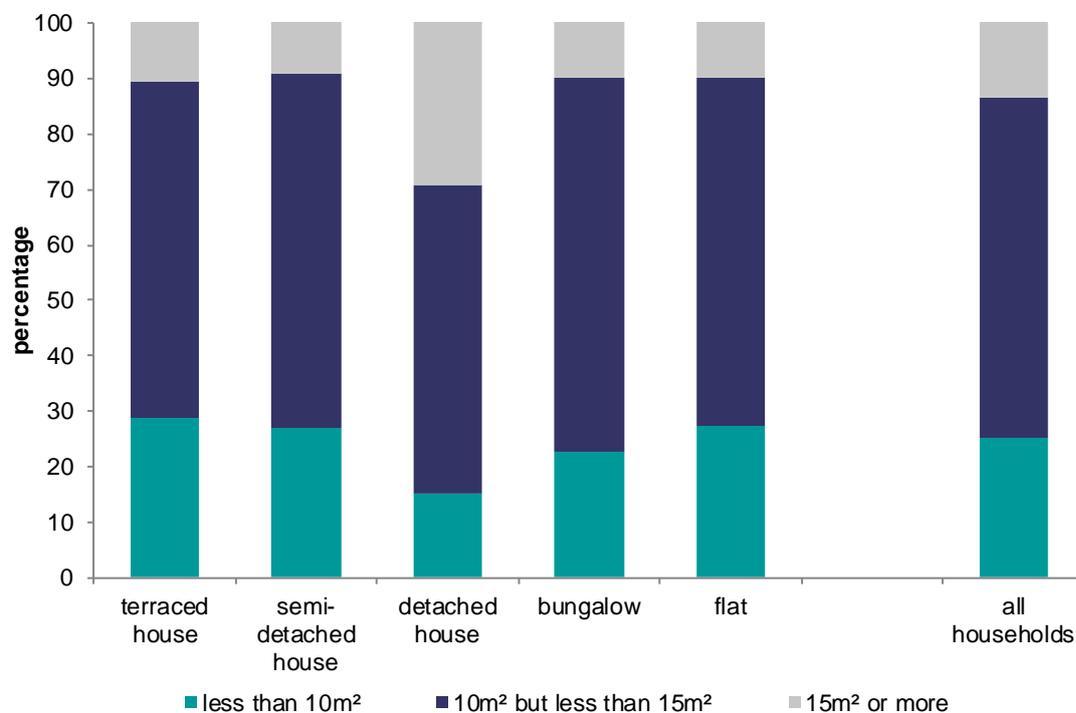
Size of bedrooms

- 5.30 During the EHS physical survey, room dimensions for one bedroom are recorded. Where more than one bedroom is present, the bedroom selected by the surveyor should be representative of them all in terms of its size and condition. Where possible it should also have a different aspect (front and back, and left and right) to the main living area.
- 5.31 Consequently the survey bedroom will not always be the main bedroom at the home, making any comparative analysis of bedroom size between different types of dwellings and households problematic. Results from the following analysis should, therefore, be treated with caution⁷.
- 5.32 Not surprisingly, average bedroom sizes were higher for households living in detached homes (14m²). Average bedroom size was similar for all other types of homes (12m²), Annex Table 5.8.
- 5.33 A bedroom size of 15m² or more was most common in detached houses (29%) compared with flats, bungalows, semi-detached and terraced houses (9 to 10%). The highest proportion of homes with bedroom size of under 10m²

⁷ See Chapter 5 of the technical report for details of the modelling for this analysis.

was for terraced houses (29%), semi-detached houses and flats (27%), Figure 5.12.

Figure 5.12: Bedroom size, by dwelling type, 2012



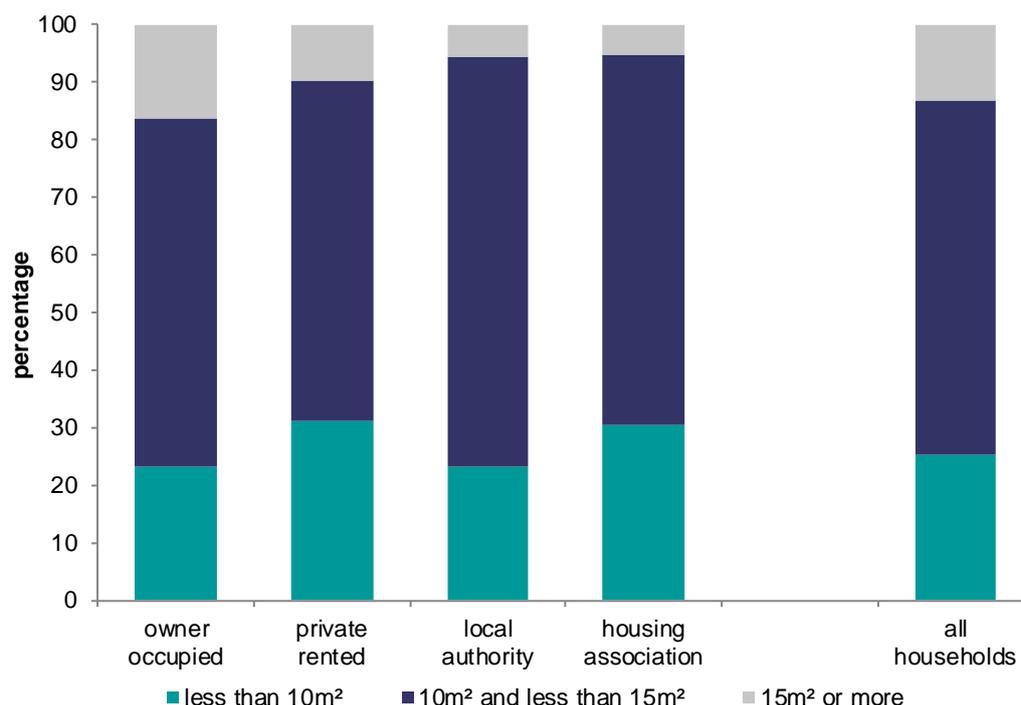
Base: all households

Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 5.9

Source: English Housing Survey, household sub-sample

5.34 The average bedroom size for owner occupiers was 12m², whereas average sizes for renters were around 11m², Annex Table 5.10. Owner occupiers were more likely to have larger bedrooms over 15m² (16%), in contrast with private and housing association renters where 31% of bedrooms were under 10m², Figure 5.13.

Figure 5.13: Bedroom size, by tenure, 2012



Base: all households

Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 5.9

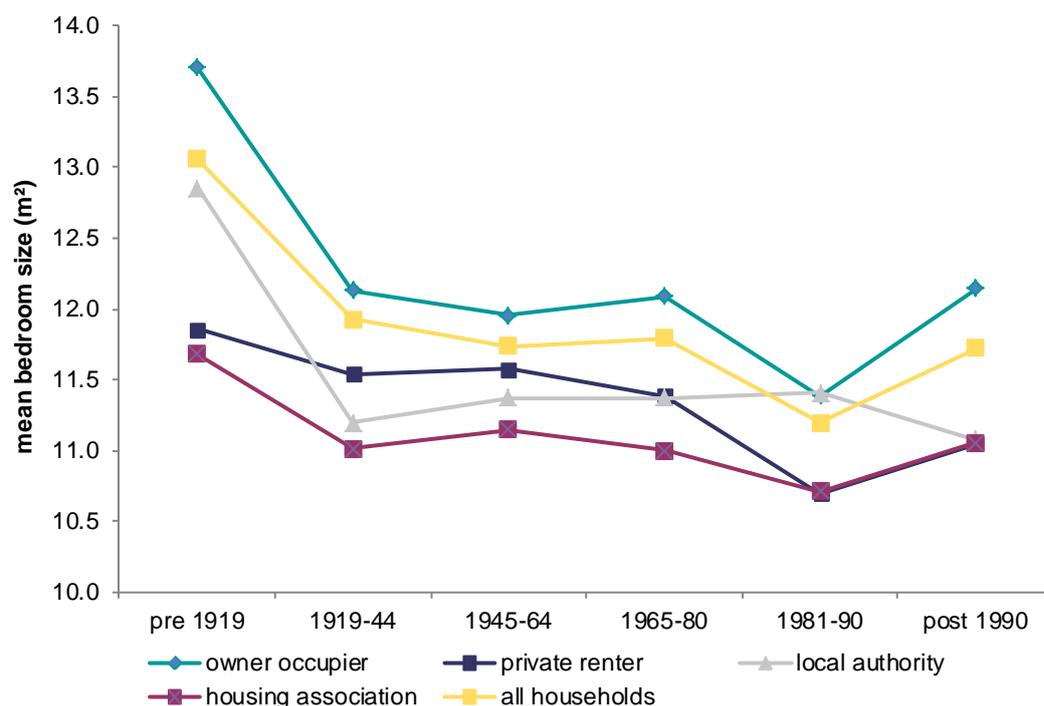
Source: English Housing Survey, household sub-sample

5.35 Households in the oldest homes built before 1919 had the highest average bedroom size (13m²). Most other ages of homes had a very similar average bedroom size of 12m². Average bedroom size was smaller (11m²) for homes built between 1981 and 1990, possibly reflecting the ending of Parker Morris standards in 1980⁸, which had stipulated minimum house sizes for specific dwelling types, Annex Table 5.10.

5.36 These findings in average bedroom sizes for different dwelling ages were evident for all tenures. Average sizes increased for homes built after 1990, with the exception of local authority dwellings. This may be due to the change in dwelling profile within the local authority housing stock, with fewer family houses and a higher proportion of flats, which generally have smaller bedrooms, Figure 5.14.

⁸ Homes for today & tomorrow (Ministry of Housing and Local Government, published in London by Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1961).

Figure 5.14: Bedroom size, by tenure and dwelling age, 2012



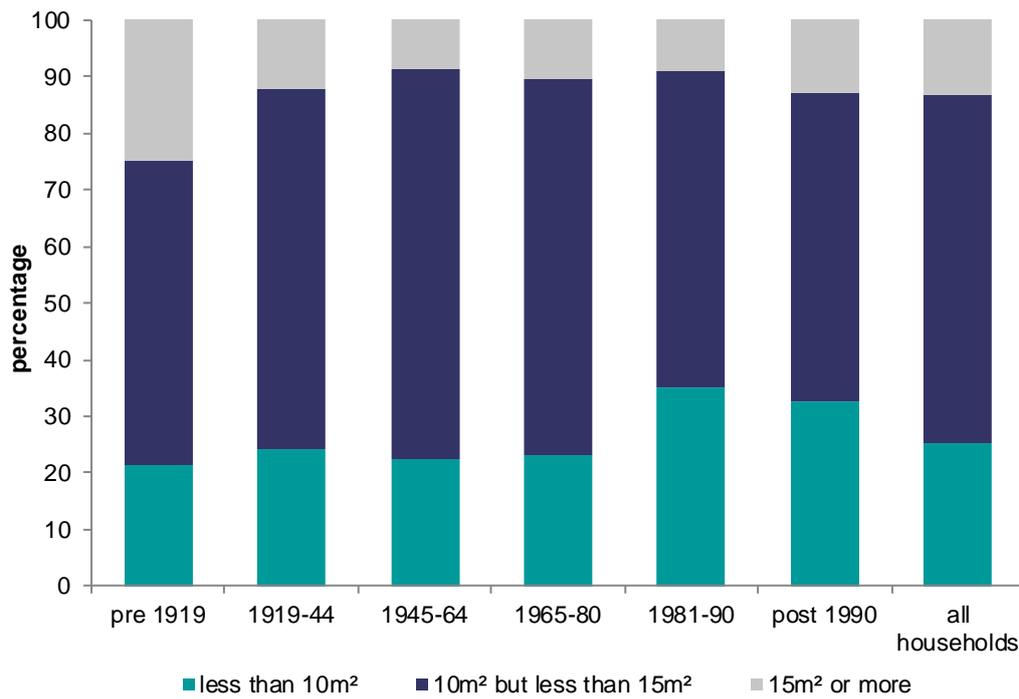
Base: all households

Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 5.10

Source: English Housing Survey, household sub-sample

5.37 Just under a quarter of households who lived in homes built prior to 1981 had bedrooms of under 10m² (21-24%). This proportion was higher, however, for households who lived in homes built from 1981 (33-35%). The oldest homes built before 1919 were far more likely to have the largest bedrooms of 15m² or more (25%). The proportion of households with bedrooms of 15m² or more ranged from 9 to 13% for homes of other ages, though only a significant difference between homes built from 1945-64 and post 1990, Figure 5.15.

Figure 5.15: Bedroom size, by dwelling age, 2012



Base: all households

Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 5.9

Source: English Housing Survey, household sub-sample