Chapter 3
Dwelling condition and safety

3.1 This chapter provides an overview of the dwelling condition and safety of the housing stock in 2013 and how this has changed over time. Five key indicators of dwelling condition are examined:

- disrepair
- the incidence of damp and mould
- electrical safety
- health and safety hazards assessed under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)
- Decent Homes standard.

It summarises the performance of different types of dwellings, including vacant dwellings, in respect to these indicators. Lastly a summary of poor housing conditions is provided which examines the extent to which homes have a combination of these problems.

Disrepair to dwellings

3.2 This section firstly examines the level of disrepair within the whole stock, and then investigates which types of dwellings have the highest levels of disrepair. It then examines how the overall level of disrepair within the stock has changed over time.

Cost of dealing with disrepair

3.3 For the EHS, the cost of dealing with disrepair is examined in two ways: 'required expenditure', and 'standardised costs'. 'Required expenditure' costs reflect the actual cost for each individual property; these costs incorporate geographic 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 dwelling types, whilst removing the effects of size and area (see Box 3.1). The EHS distinguishes between three different levels of repairs needed at a dwelling (see Box 3.2). The analysis in this chapter focuses chiefly on basic repair costs (urgent repairs and repairs required in the medium term).

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 2013 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 (i.e. the number of dwellings covered by a theoretical contract) 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. When making such comparisons among different dwelling characteristics, it would be more appropriate to use 'standardised repair costs' as explained below.

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 Midlands 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 number of dwellings in 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.

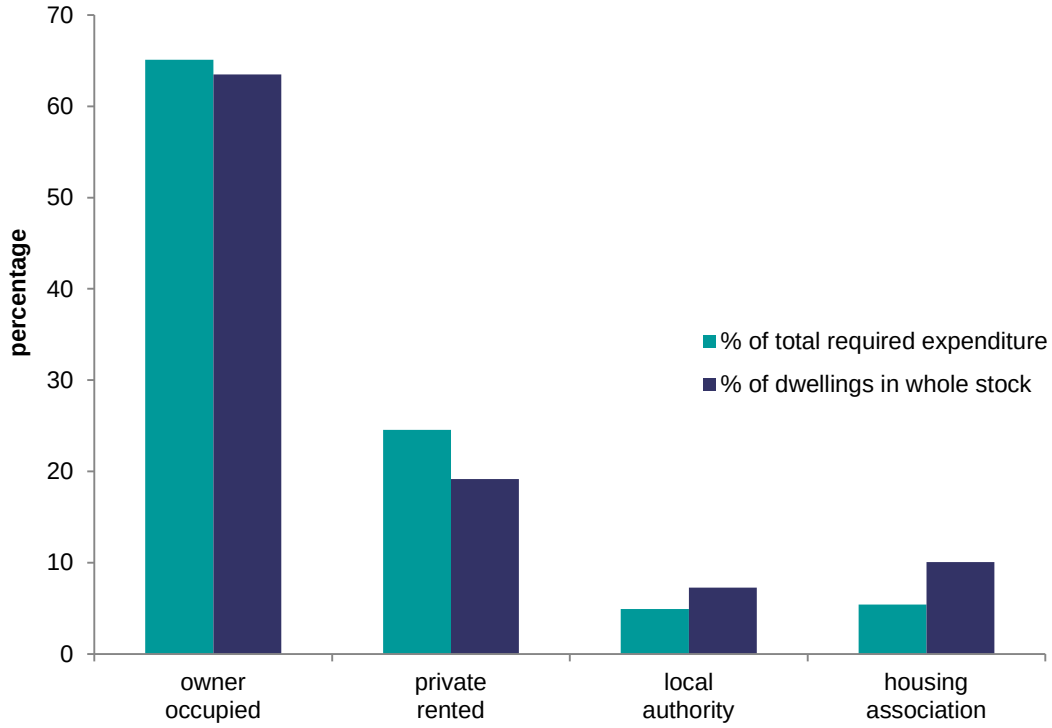
Comprehensive repairs - the above two categories, plus any replacements the surveyor has assessed as being needed in the next 10 years. This measure provides a better basis for identifying work which would form part of a planned programme of repair by landlords.

3.4 The first section of the analysis examines the distribution and average required costs of the work necessary to remedy disrepair within the housing stock and how these vary by dwelling characteristics. These costs help to give some idea of the likely level of investment needed for different types of homes, but without taking into account differences caused by size and area.

3.5 It is estimated that the full cost to carry out all basic repairs across the stock was around £36 billion in 2013, an average cost of £1,563 per dwelling. If more comprehensive repairs were undertaken for the planned maintenance of building elements that require attention within the next ten years, this cost would rise to around £94 billion, an average cost of £4,054 per dwelling, Annex Table 3.1 and Table 3.1.

3.6 Owner occupied dwellings accounted for the largest proportion (65%) of total basic repair costs, but similar to the sector's share of the total stock, and the private rented sector accounted for 25% (larger than this sector's share of the total stock, 19%). The proportion of total basic repair costs for both local authority and housing association homes was less than their share of the whole stock, Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1: Distribution of dwellings and total expenditure required for basic repairs, by tenure, 2013



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

3.7 The private rented sector had the highest average repair costs for urgent (£1,342) and basic repairs (£2,000) compared with all other tenures. Average comprehensive repair costs were similar for private rented and owner occupied homes but greater than social sector homes. The social sector had the lowest average costs, ranging from £685 (urgent repair cost) to £2,278 (for comprehensive repair) per dwelling. The latter finding reflects the impact of on-going responsive repairs programmes, the works undertaken as part of the Decent Homes programme, and the relatively higher proportion of purpose built flats, which have lower average repair costs (see para 3.11) in the social sector, Table 3.1.

3.8 For all types of disrepair, average costs increased with dwelling age. Furthermore pre 1919 built homes comprised 41% of total basic repair costs (Annex Table 3.1). There was also variation across different dwelling types; urgent and basic repairs costs were highest for converted flats (£1,725 and £2,491 respectively) and comprehensive repairs highest for semi and detached homes (£4,812). Purpose built flats had the lowest average repair costs, Table 3.1.

3.9 Repair costs for vacant dwellings were a lot higher compared with occupied homes. A long term vacancy may arise in part due to a dwelling being in a

poor state of disrepair but empty homes can deteriorate more rapidly, for example, due to undetected urgent disrepair or vandalism, Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Average required expenditure per dwelling, by dwelling characteristics, 2013

all dwellings

	urgent repairs	basic repairs	comprehensive repairs	*sample size*
			£ per dwelling	
tenure				
owner occupied	1,042	1,603	4,414	*4,994*
private rented	1,342	2,000	4,471	*2,590*
social rented	685	932	2,278	*4,914*
dwelling age				
pre 1919	2,046	3,169	6,792	*1,990*
1919 to 1944	1,510	2,323	5,852	*1,903*
1945 to 1964	938	1,351	3,967	*3,053*
1965 to 1980	619	858	2,886	*2,800*
post 1980	279	428	1,499	*2,752*
dwelling type				
all terraced	1,134	1,692	4,215	*3,722*
semi and detached	1,093	1,742	4,812	*4,359*
bungalow	975	1,369	3,894	*1,179*
converted flat	1,725	2,491	4,551	*441*
purpose built flat	596	765	1,806	*2,797*
occupancy status				
occupied	878	1,392	3,899	*12,008*
vacant	4,368	5,133	7,301	*490*
all dwellings	**1,037**	**1,563**	**4,054**	***12,498***

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

Comparative levels of disrepair within different types of dwellings using standardised repair costs

3.10 For most types of home average standardised basic repair costs were highest in the private rented sector. Repair costs for vacant homes were highest among owner occupied dwellings (£74/m² compared with £33/m² in the social sector and £31/m² in the private rented sector). This is likely because the owner occupied sector contained a higher proportion of longer term empty homes which tend to be older[1], Table 3.2.

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

3.11 For owner occupied and private rented sectors, purpose built flats had the lowest levels of disrepair ranging from £7/m² to £10/m². Across the whole stock the highest standardised basic repair costs were for converted flats (£25/m²), rising to £31/m² in the private rented sector, Table 3.2.

3.12 The level of disrepair increased with dwelling age and this relationship was evident across all tenures, Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Average standardised basic repair cost by dwelling characteristics and tenure, 2013

all dwellings

	owner occupied	private rented	social rented	all dwellings
				£ per m²
type of vacancy				
occupied	10.7	18.3	11.6	12.3
vacant	73.6	30.8	32.7	50.1
dwelling type				
all terraced	15.9	22.6	13.5	17.1
semi and detached	10.7	19.4	15.0	12.0
bungalow	18.3	19.6	10.8	16.8
converted flat	17.3	31.3	19.0	25.4
purpose built flat	7.1	10.4	10.4	9.5
dwelling age				
pre 1919	24.0	32.9	23.9	26.7
1919-44	20.9	25.3	18.6	21.4
1945-64	11.8	18.6	13.1	12.9
1965-80	6.0	10.1	11.0	7.6
post 1980	3.1	5.5	6.3	4.2
all dwellings	**12.7**	**19.6**	**12.3**	**14.0**
sample size	*4,994*	*2,590*	*4,914*	*12,498*

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

3.13 In 2013, local authority homes had the lowest proportion of dwellings (24%) with no repairs expenditure, particularly when compared with owner occupied homes (41%). At the other end of the scale, for dwellings needing repairs in excess of £65/m², private rented homes had the highest proportion (8%) compared with 4% for all other tenures, Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2: Standardised basic repair costs, by tenure, 2013

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 2013

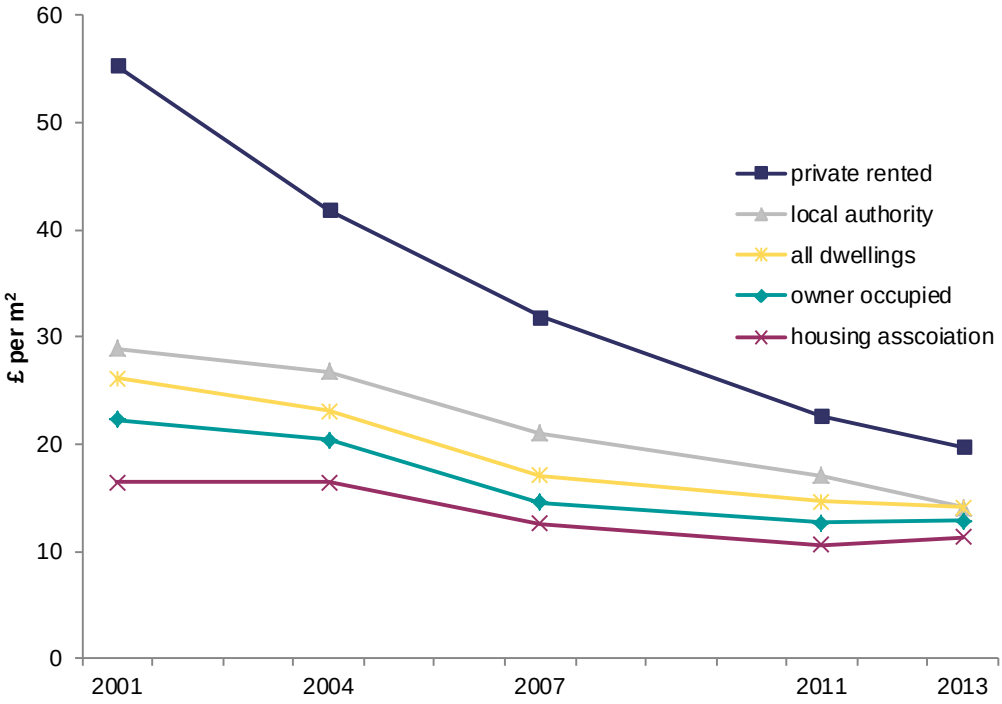
3.14 This section examines changes in the amount of disrepair within the whole stock since 2001, highlighting which tenures and ages of homes have seen the least and greatest improvement. The analysis uses the basic standardised repair costs (£/m²) converted to 2013 prices using the Building Cost Information Service (BCIS) National Index[2]. This rebasing of costs allows for a time series of comparative analysis of repair costs, since it removes the impact of building cost inflation/ deflation.

[2]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.

3.15 Since 2001, the average basic repair cost for the whole stock reduced by 46% from £26/m^2 to £14/m^2, suggesting that there have been improvements in how dwellings have been maintained over time, Figure 3.3.

3.16 Although average repair costs have always been significantly higher for private rented homes, these costs fell by around 64% from £55m² to £20m². Average repair costs fell least sharply for housing association homes but levels of disrepair have always been lower in this sector owing to it having a larger proportion of newer homes, Figure 3.3.

Figure 3.3: Mean basic standardised repair costs by tenure, 2001-2013



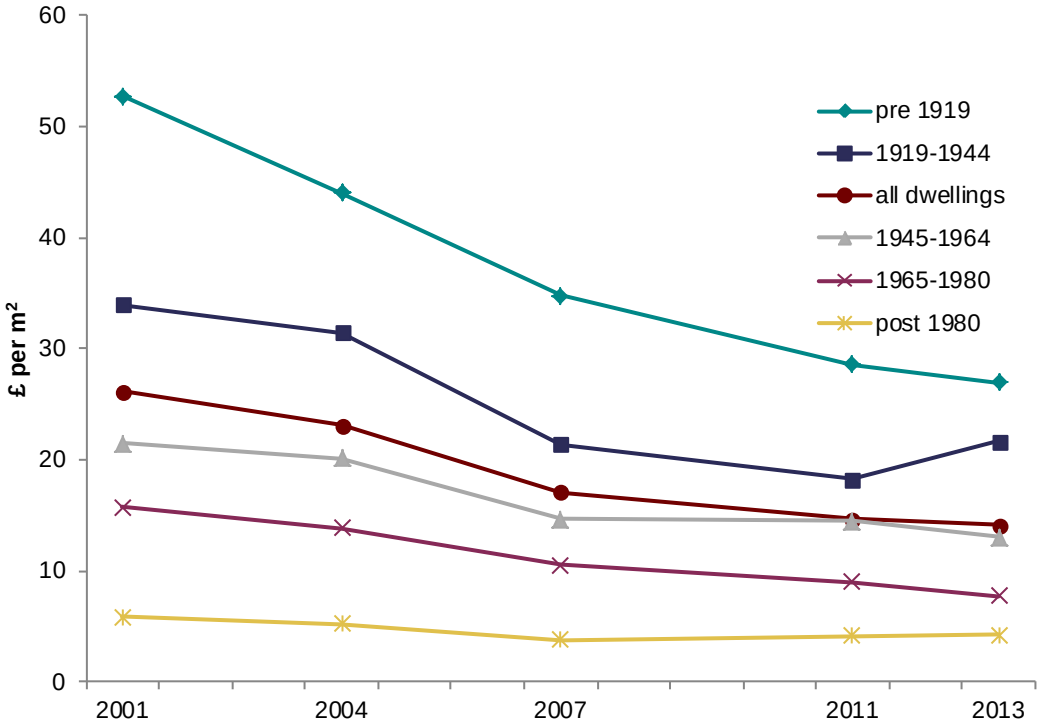
Base: all dwellings
Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 3.3
Sources:
2001 to 2007: English Housing Condition Survey, dwelling sample;
2008 onwards: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

3.17 Many vacant homes may be in a relatively poorer condition before they became empty i.e. the poor conditions led them to become vacant. Equally it may be the case, especially for long term vacant homes that these dwellings deteriorate more rapidly due to, for example, vandalism or undetected faults. Vacant homes have, therefore, always had notably higher levels of disrepair, although these have reduced over time from £69/m^2 to £51 m², Annex Table 3.3.

3.18 Average repair costs for the oldest dwellings built before 1919 were markedly higher over the 2001-2013 period, but did fall from £53/m² to £27/m². Whilst average repair costs also fell for all other ages of homes, the biggest

percentage fall occurred for homes built between 1965 and 1980, reducing by over 50% from around £16 m^2 to £8/m², Figure 3.4.

Figure 3.4: Mean basic standardised repair costs by dwelling age, 2001-2013



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 Dampness encourages the prevalence of house dust mites and mould and fungal growth which all pose a risk of poor health if left untreated. Dampness can also lead to the rapid deterioration of the fabric of the dwelling, creating further problems and more expensive repairs to the property.

3.20 This section investigates the incidence of damp in 2013 including the three types of damp that can be present in homes (rising damp, penetrating damp and serious condensation and mould growth). It then examines the incidence of damp in homes occupied by certain key household groups: households including people who are potentially vulnerable on account of their age, long term illness or disability, and groups which tend to be disadvantaged such as ethnic minorities and those in poverty[3]. Finally it examines the incidence of damp over time. Additional data on the incidence of any damp by different

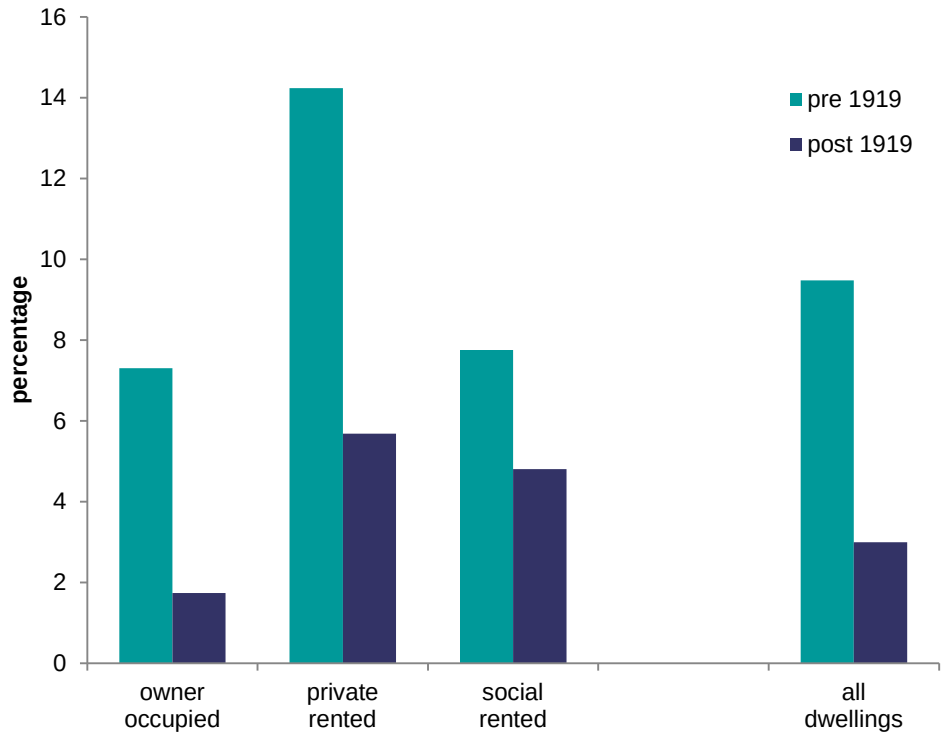
[3] see Glossary for definitions

dwelling and household characteristics can be found in the web tables DA5101 to DA5103[4].

3.21 Around 1.0 million dwellings (4%) had a problem with damp in one or more rooms in 2013. The most common type of damp affecting dwellings was serious condensation and mould growth, present in 3% of homes. Penetrating damp (2%) and rising damp (1%) were less common, Annex Table 3.4.

3.22 The likelihood of damp being present in a dwelling varied by dwelling characteristics including tenure and dwelling age. Across the whole stock older homes built before 1919 were far more likely to have damp (9% compared with 3% for all post 1919 built homes). This is mainly due to older dwellings having higher levels of disrepair and being less energy efficient. This finding on the relationship between dwelling age and incidence of damp was found in the private sector, which comprised the vast majority of the total housing stock. The private rented sector had the highest proportion of homes with damp (8%) and this rose to 14% among pre 1919 built homes, Figure 3.5 and Annex table 3.5.

Figure 3.5: Incidence of any damp by tenure and dwelling age, 2013



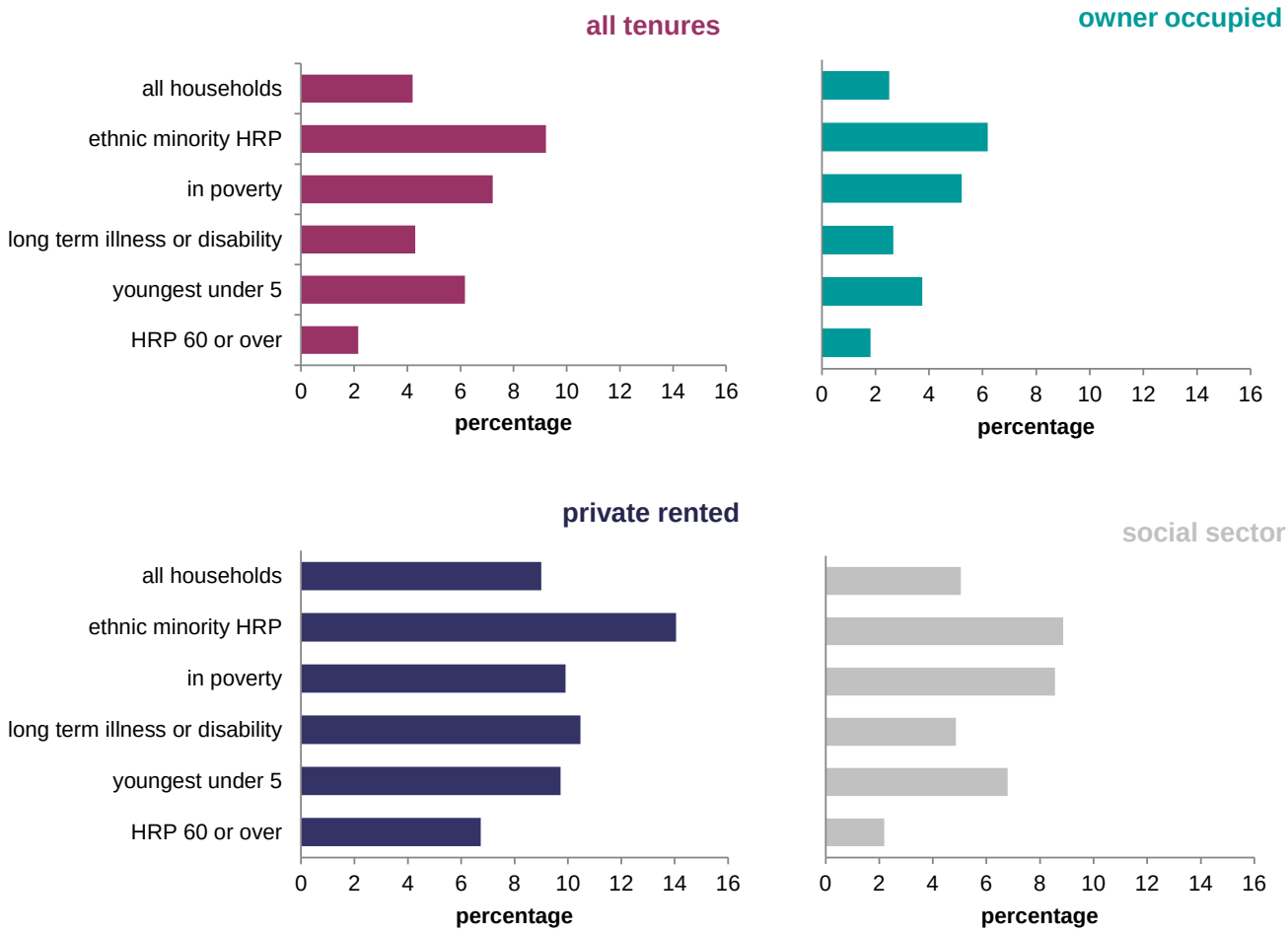
Base: all dwellings
Notes:
1) the difference in the incidence of damp between pre 1919 and post 1919 social rented homes was not statistically significant, in part due to the small sample size for pre 1919 social rented dwellings.
2) underlying data are presented in Annex Table 3.5
Source: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

[4] https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/dwelling-condition-and-safety

3.23 Overall 4% of households had damp present in their property. Households where the HRP was over 60 years of age (2%) were less likely to have problems with damp than all households. Conversely, households where the youngest child was under 5 years (6%), households in poverty (7%) and ethnic minority HRP households (9%) were more likely to have problems with damp, Figure 3.6

3.24 Ethnic minority HRP households were more likely to live in a damp home irrespective of their tenure compared with all households In England. Households in poverty, however, were more likely to live in a damp home compared with all households if they were owners or social sector tenants but not if they were private renters. The differences in the incidences of damp between all households and those where the youngest child was under 5 years were not found to be statistically significant within each tenure, Figure 3.6

Figure 3.6: Households living in dwellings with any damp problem, by household groups, 2013



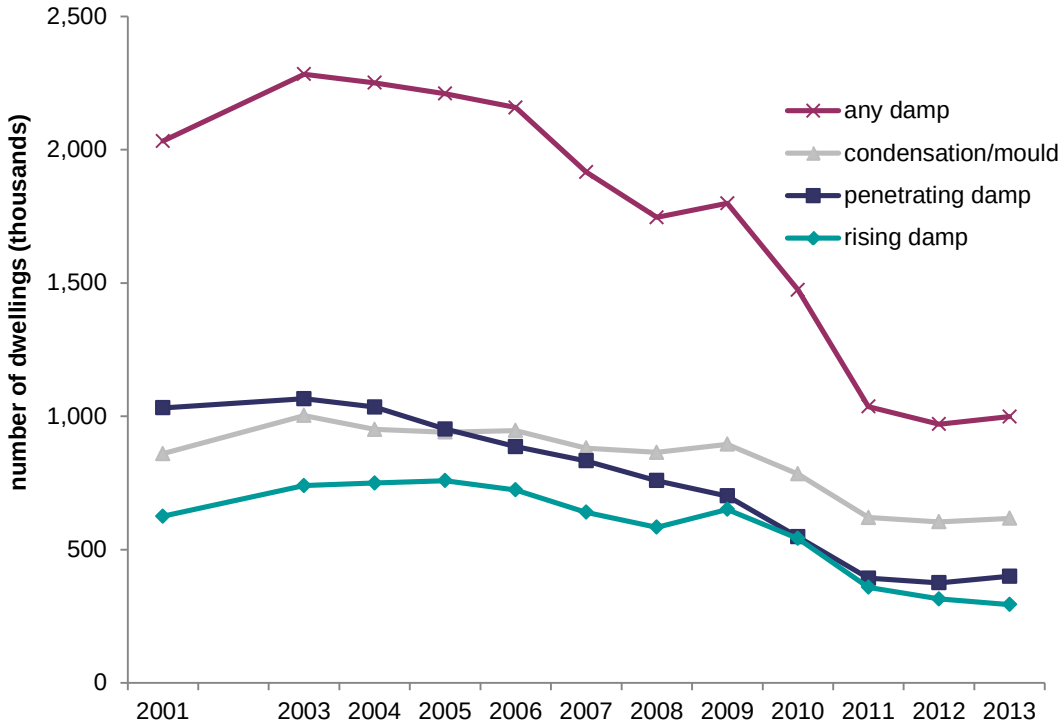
Base: all households
Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 3.6
Source: English Housing Survey, household sub-sample

Damp and mould over time

3.25 From 2001, there was a fall in the number of dwellings with each type of damp, particularly penetrating damp which reduced from 1.0 million in 2001 to around 400,000 in 2013, Figure 3.7.

3.26 The overall reduction in any form of damp from 2.0 million homes (10%) to 1.0 million (4%) is mainly due to the overall improvement in the maintenance of dwellings, as examined earlier in this chapter, and due to improvements in the energy efficiency of homes (see Chapter 1 of the Energy efficiency of English housing). Despite this increase in energy performance, the incidence of serious condensation and mould decreased at a slower rate, falling from 860,000 to 618,000 homes over this period. This is likely to be partly attributable to how occupants behave in their homes, for example not creating an adequate airflow by keeping their windows closed too often, Figure 3.7.

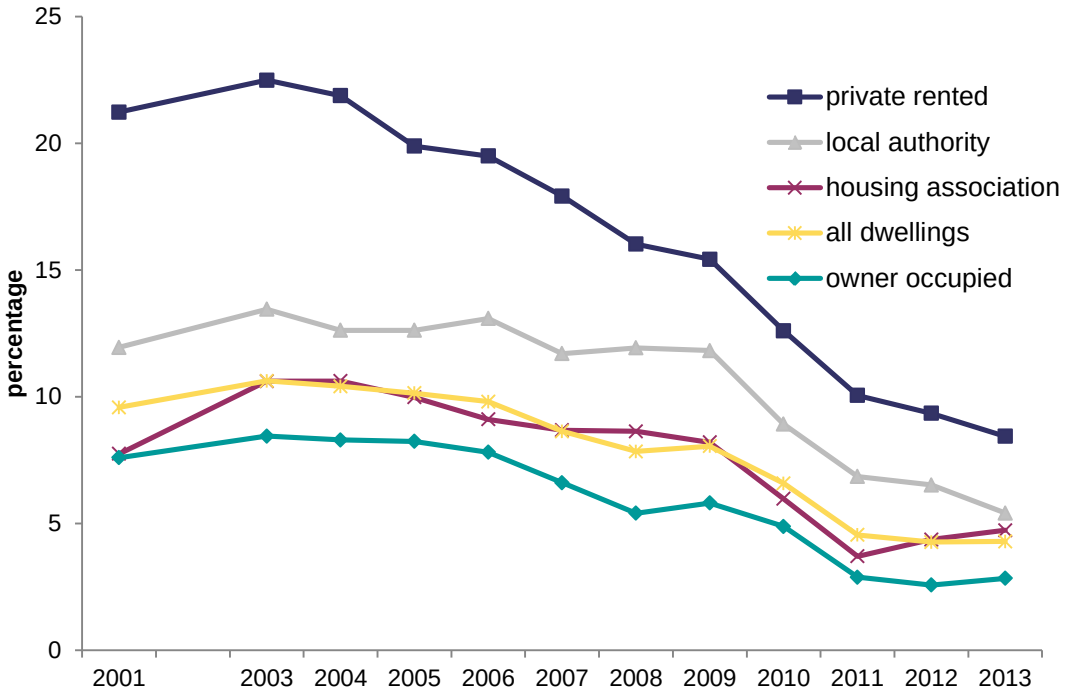
Figure 3.7: Incidence of each type of damp, 2001-2013



Base: all dwellings
Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 3.4
Sources:
2001 to 2007: English Housing Condition Survey, dwelling sample;
2008 onwards: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

3.27 Between 2001 and 2013, the most marked decrease in the presence of damp occurred in private rented homes (from 21% to 8%), although the proportion of dwellings with damp in this sector was still higher than in other tenures in 2013, Figure 3.8.

Figure 3.8: Any type of damp problem by tenure, 2001-2013



Base: all dwellings
Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 3.7
Sources:
2001 to 2007: English Housing Condition Survey, dwelling sample;
2008 onwards: English Housing Survey

Electrical safety

3.28 Electricity plays an essential role in how our homes operate but aging and faulty electrical systems could cause a fire and have the potential to cause serious harm, or even fatal electrocution. This section examines the incidence of five key areas of electrical safety in 2013[5] within the whole stock and by tenure before investigating the provision of these over time[6].It then examines the provision of electrical safety features in 2013 by the age of the household. Additional information on the prevalence of electrical safety features are in the live web tables DA5201 to DA5203[7].

3.29 In 2013, almost all homes in every tenure (98-99%) had modern PVC wiring throughout. In addition, 94% of homes had modern earthing wires, although

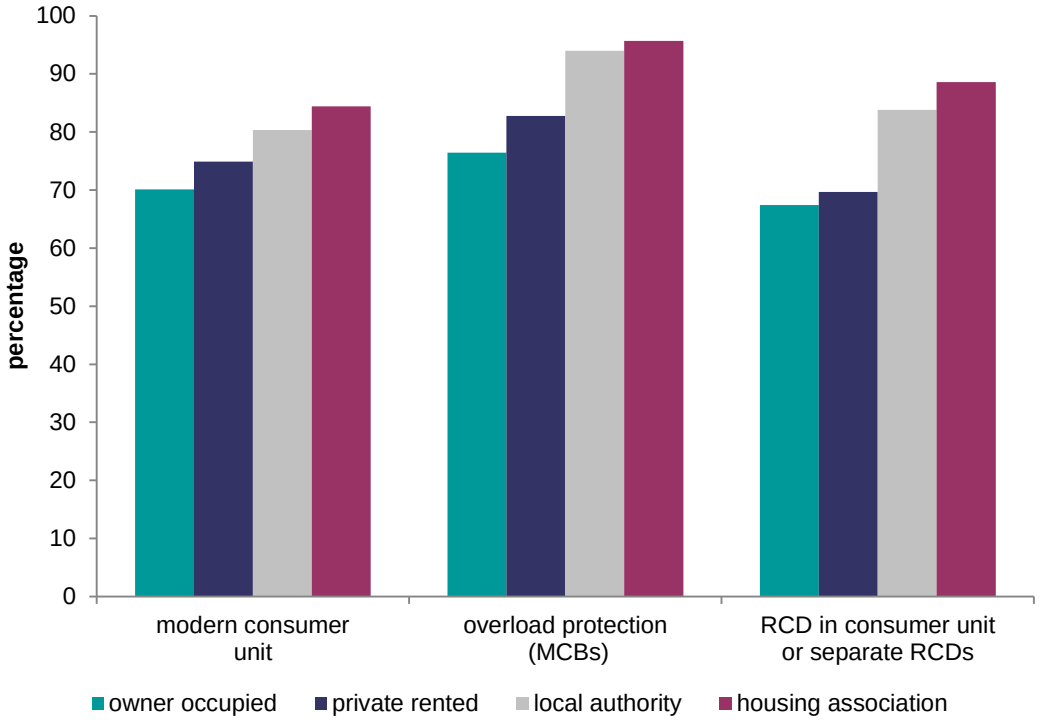
[5] modern PVC wiring, modern earthing, modern consumer boxes, miniature circuit breakers and residual current devices
[6] It may not be possible for the surveyor to identify the presence of each electrical safety feature e.g. due to problems accessing a garage, so there will be some unknown cases. For 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
[7] https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/dwelling-condition-and-safety

provision was slightly higher among social sector homes (97-98%), Annex Table 3.8.

3.30 Modern consumer units were present in 73% of homes; these units comprise one or two accessible boxes which accommodate Miniature Circuit Breakers (MCBs), Residual Current Devices (RCDs), various timers or off-peak supply controllers. MCBs, which provide overload protection, were present in 81% of homes and RCDs, which break electrical circuits when an 'abnormality' is detected such as a person touching a live wire, were present in 71% of homes, Annex Table 3.8.

3.31 The presence of these three features varied by tenure. Provision of each feature was higher in social sector homes than in the private sector. Within the private sector provision was not as high among owner occupied homes. This is likely to be due to landlords in both the private and social sector having legal obligations to ensure electric safety[8], Figure 3.9

Figure 3.9: Dwellings with modern consumer units and electrical protection measures by tenure, 2013

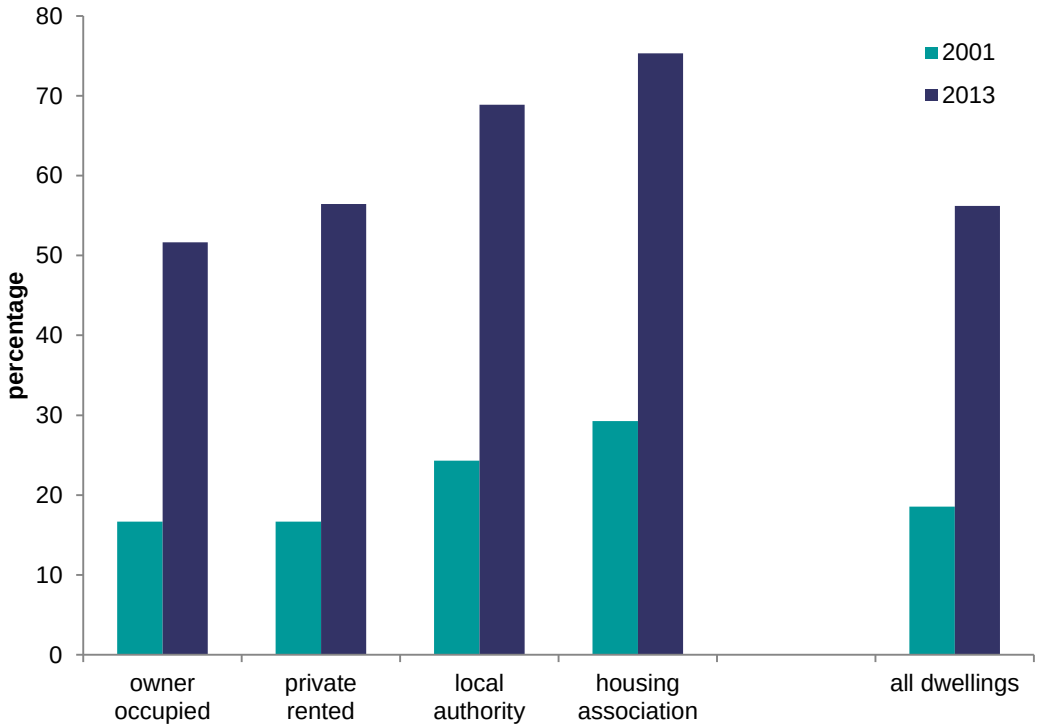


Base: all dwellings
Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 3.8
Source: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

[8] 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.

3.32 In 2013 over one half of all homes (56%) had all five safety features a marked increase in provision compared with the 2001 position when 19% of homes had all five features. Large increases in this provision were evident across all tenures, Figure 3.10.

Figure 3.10: Dwellings with all five electrical safety measures, by tenure, 2001 and 2013



Base: all dwellings
Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 3.8
Sources:
2001: English House Condition Survey, dwelling sample;
2013: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

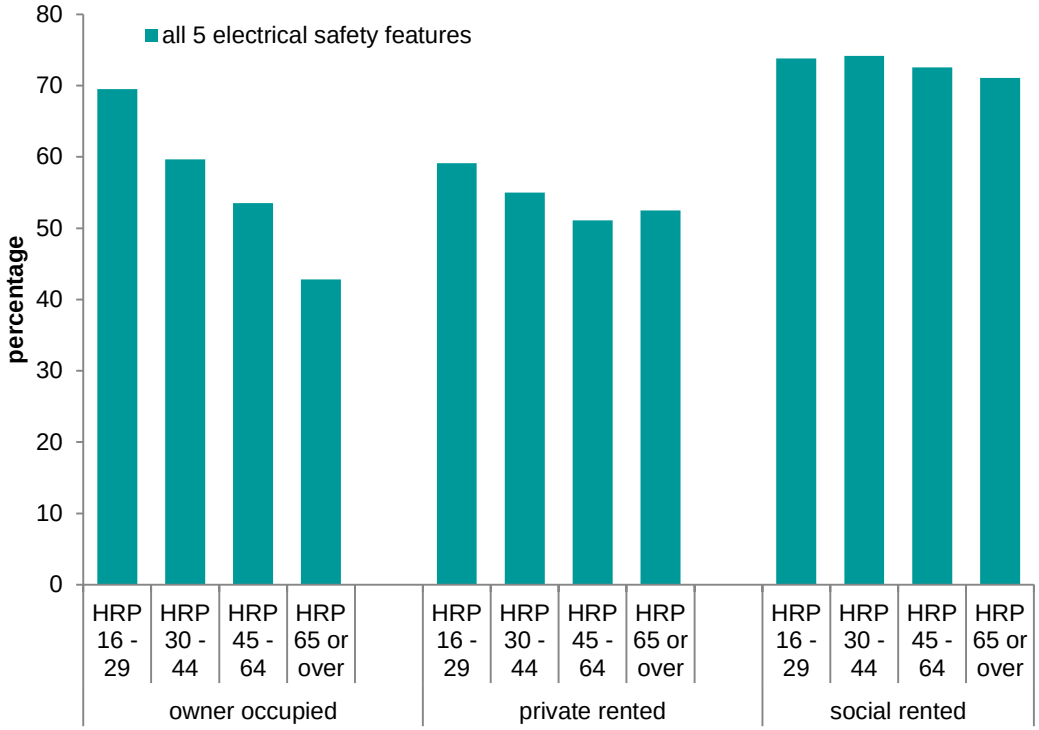
3.33 This section examines the prevalence of electrical safety features by age of the HRP. Evidence suggests that some older people are disproportionately at risk from electrical safety hazards since the presence of all 5 electrical features in a home reduces as household age increases.

3.34 Overall some 56% of households had all five electrical safety features, but this proportion was lower for households aged 65 years or over (48%). Households aged 16 to 29 years were most likely to have all five measures (64%), Annex Table 3.9.

3.35 These findings are mainly driven by the differences evident among owner occupied homes, which comprised the largest proportion of the total housing stock. Some 70% of households where the age of the HRP was 16-29 years and an owner occupier had all five electrical safety features. This was notably higher compared with 43% of households where the HRP was 65 years or more and an owner of their home, Annex Table 3.9.

3.36 Differences by the age of the HRP in the private rented sector were less marked, likely owing to landlord requirements to ensure that electrical installation in a rented property is safe when tenants move in and maintained in a safe condition throughout duration of the tenancy. Provision was similar among all social sector households regardless their age, again due to the various legislative requirements placed on social landlords, Figure 3.11.

Figure 3.11: Provision of all five electrical safety measures, by age of HRP and tenure, 2013



Base: all households
Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 3.9
Source: English Housing Survey, household sub sample

Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)

3.37 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[9] . The live web tables DA4101 to

[9] Surveyors working on the EHS receive extensive training and support to help ensure their HHSRS assessments are consistent and robust (see chapter 5, Annex 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

DA4103[10] provide data on the incidence of any hazard and the most common types of hazards within the total housing stock.

3.38 In 2013, some 2.8 million dwellings (12%) had at least one Category 1 hazard, of which 460,000 (2% of the total stock) had two or more of these hazards. The most common Category 1 hazards were those associated with falls (on stairs, between levels, on the level and those associated with baths). These affected around 1.6 million dwellings (7%). The next most common hazard was excess cold affecting 1.0 million dwellings (4%). Dwellings with any of the remaining 21 Category 1 hazards (covered by the survey) were less common, affecting around 560,000 homes (2%), Annex Table 3.10.

3.39 Generally speaking the incidence of these hazards increased with dwelling age; some 29% of homes built before 1919 had at least one Category 1 hazard. The private rented sector had the highest proportion (17%) of Category 1 hazards compared with other tenures. This is partly because this sector had the highest proportion of homes built before 1919 and the highest proportion of converted flats, 23% of which had a Category 1 hazard, Annex Table 3.11.

Changes over time

3.40 This section examines overall changes in the incidence of any Category 1 hazards within the housing stock since 2008[11], highlighting which types of dwellings have seen the greatest improvement. In addition to sampling variations there is a degree of surveyor variability to be expected for HHSRS assessments. Also the methodology to assess Category 1 excess cold was changed in 2010 and 2012; this meant that a small number of dwellings failed excess cold under one methodology and not the other, and vice versa. These changes in methodology means that time series findings should be treated with a degree of caution.

3.41 The incidence of any Category 1 hazards in dwellings reduced from 23% in 2008 to 12% in 2013. There were improvements across all tenures, particularly within the private rented sector; a reduction of 14 percentage points (from 31% to 17%). Despite this progress the private rented sector continued to have a higher proportion of hazards. Social sector homes continued to have the lowest incidence of these hazards, partly due to the relatively high proportion of flats in the sector, Figure 3.12.

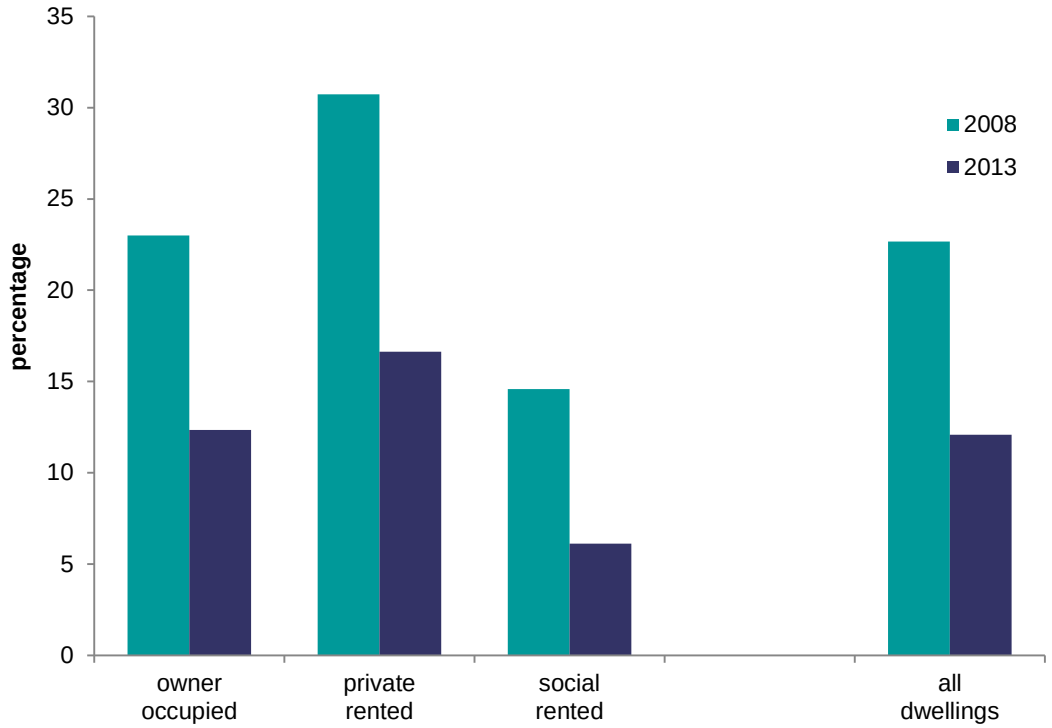
3.42 The decrease in the most serious Category 1 hazards is likely to be due to a combination of factors such as: the improvement in the energy efficiency of homes across all tenures, which can reduce the risk of excess cold; the work

[10] https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/dwelling-condition-and-safety

[11] 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

associated with the Decent Homes programme in the social sector; and local authority enforcement action against private landlords where these hazards exist.

Figure 3.12: Dwellings with any Category 1 hazard by tenure, 2008 and 2013

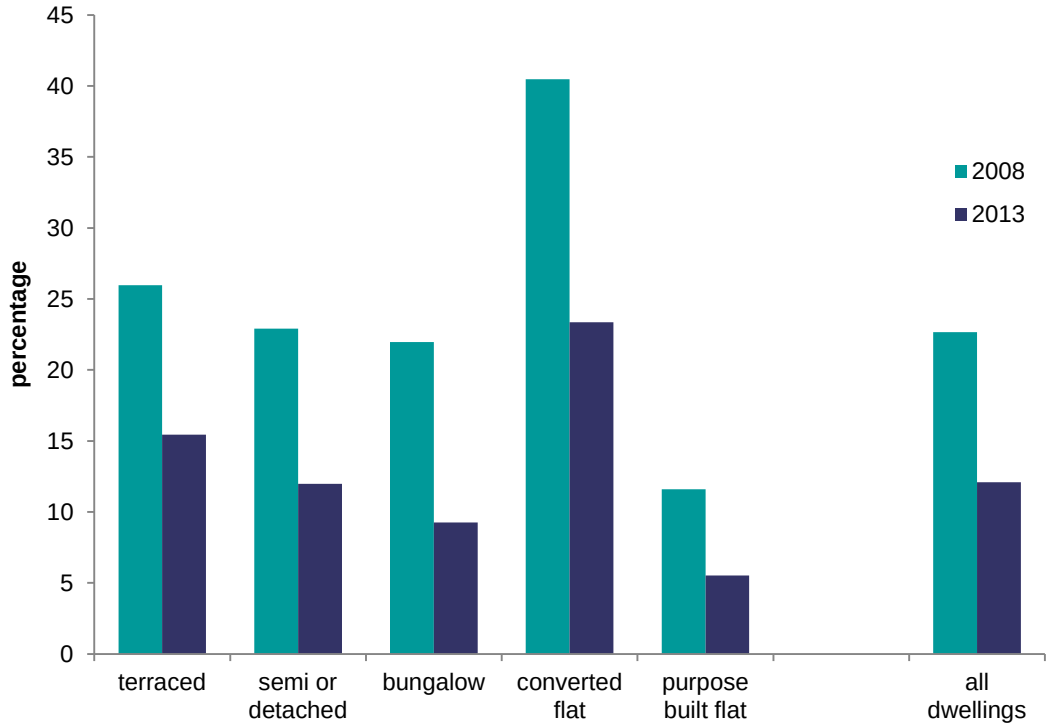


Base: all dwellings
Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 3.12
Source: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

3.43 Improvements were evident among all ages of homes. Category 1 hazards in the oldest pre 1919 homes reduced from 45% to 29%, Annex Table 3.12.

3.44 One of the most marked reductions in the incidence of the most serious hazards occurred among converted flats down from 40% to 23% of homes. Converted flats vary a good deal in their internal layout, which is often poor compared with purpose built flats, for example, the required exit route in the event of fire necessitating passage through a kitchen area. Throughout this period purpose built flats had the lowest proportion of Category 1 hazards (12% - 6%), Figure 3.13.

Figure 3.13: Dwellings with any Category 1 hazard by dwelling type, 2008 and 2013



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

Decent Homes

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

3.45 For millions of social sector tenants the Decent Homes programme has helped to raise the quality of their homes and for some, their quality of life. This investment into the social sector has had additional benefits such as assisting in the reduction of carbon emissions through the installation of energy efficiency measures, and the reduction of any serious HHSRS hazards. Through tenure comparisons, this section examines both the incidence of non-decency and the reasons for non-decency (see Box 3.3), in 2013 and over time. Additional information of the incidence of non-decent

homes among different dwellings and households can be found in web tables DA3201 to DA3203[12].

3.46 In 2013, around 4.8 million homes (21% of all dwellings) failed to meet the Decent Homes standard. Non-decent homes were far more likely to exist in privately rented homes (30%) highlighting the large scope for housing improvements in this sector. The proportion of non-decent homes was lowest in the social sector (15%) reflecting the vast investment in improving the quality of social housing since the inception of the Decent Homes programme, Annex Table 3.13.

3.47 The oldest homes built before 1919 had the highest proportion of non-decent homes (40%). Other types of dwellings with higher rates of non-decency were converted flats (40%), vacant homes (33%) and homes in city and other urban areas (28%), all of which contained a higher proportion of older homes. Although London had a relatively higher proportion of older homes, the proportion of non-decent homes here was similar to the rest of England, likely due to the relatively higher proportion of purpose built flats in the capital, Annex Table 3.13.

Non-decent dwellings in 2013 - reasons for non-decency

3.48 Of the total 4.8 million non-decent dwellings, 79% failed on one of the Decent Homes criteria, 17% on two with the remaining 4% failing on three or all four criteria. Annex Table 3.14

3.49 The most common reason for non-decency was the presence of any Category 1 HHSRS hazard[13]; these were present in 2.8 million homes (58% of all non-decent homes). Some 1.7 million homes failed to meet the thermal comfort (36% of non-decent homes), around 1.1 million homes failed to meet the disrepair component (22% of non-decent homes) and 443,000 homes (9% of non-decent homes) failed due to the lack of modern facilities[14]. This pattern varied by tenure, Annex Table 3.15.

3.50 Owner occupied and private rented non decent homes showed a fairly similar pattern of reasons for failure to each other. Most failed on HHSRS followed by thermal comfort, disrepair and then modern facilities. For local authority homes also most failed on HHSRS but at a lower rate than owner occupied and private rented homes. The proportion failing on thermal comfort was also lower in local authority homes compared with owner occupied or private rented sector homes but the rates for disrepair and modern facilities were higher, Figure 3.14.

[12] https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/dwelling-condition-and-safety
[13] The HHSRS figures here and in the rest of this chapter relate to just the 15 hazards covered by EHS since 2006. The figures are therefore slightly lower than those presented in the HHSRS section above.
[14] percentages do not sum to 100% as dwellings can be non-decent due to failing more than 1 criterion

3.51 In the housing association sector, non-Decent Homes were most likely to fail due to lack of thermal comfort (49%). This sector's non-decent homes were less likely to fail on the repair criterion compared with all other tenures, Figure 3.14.

Figure 3.14: Non decent homes - reasons for failing to meet the standard, 2013

Base: all non- decent dwellings
Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 3.15
Source: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

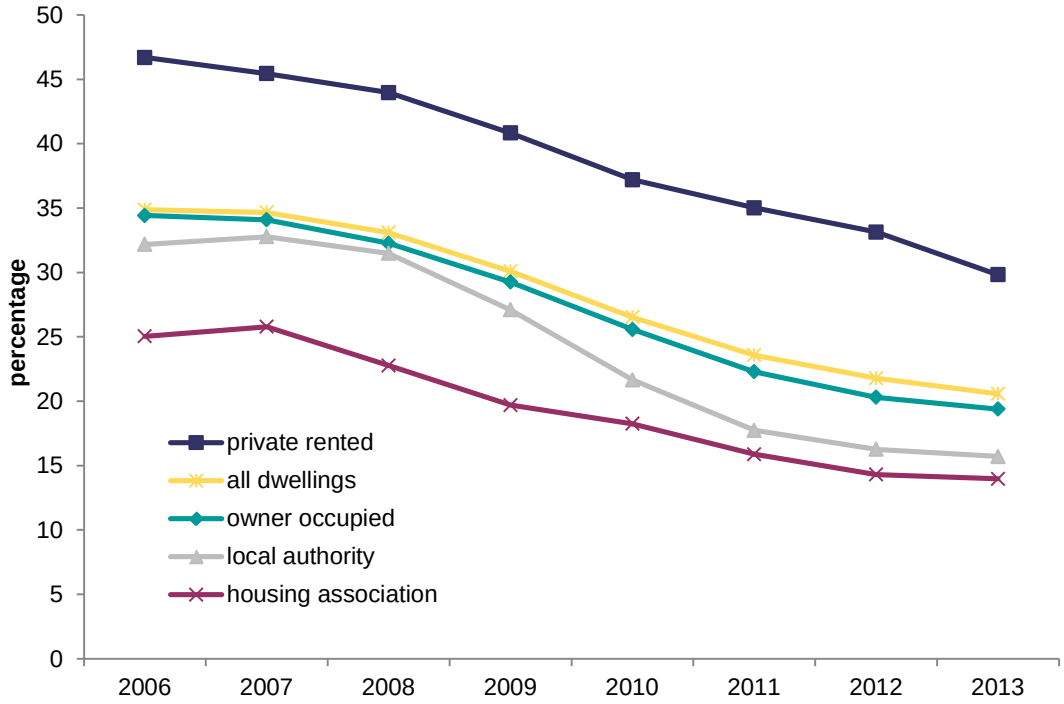
Trends over time

3.52 It is only possible to produce a consistent time-line back to 2006 because the definition of Decent Homes was updated in this year, when the Fitness Standard was replaced by the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) as the statutory criterion of decency.

3.53 Across the whole stock, the proportion of non-decent homes fell from 35% in 2006 to 21% in 2013. The proportion of non-decent local authority stock reduced by over a half from 32% in 2006 to 16% in 2013. Notable improvement was also seen in the private rented sector, where the

percentage of non-decent homes fell from 47% to 30% over the same period. There was a lower rate of reduction among housing association homes, although the incidence of non-decency has always been lowest in this sector, Figure 3.15.

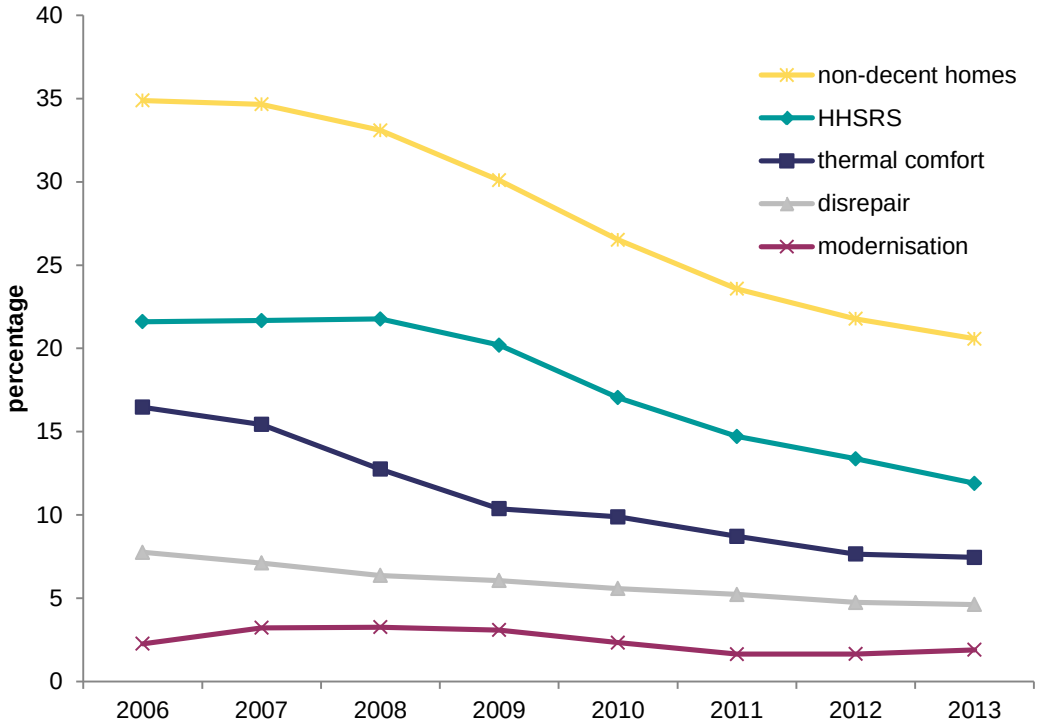
Figure 3.15: Dwellings failing the Decent Homes standard, by tenure, 2001-2013



Base: all dwellings
Notes:
1) from 2006 - decent homes model incorporated HHSRS instead of unfitness
2) 2006 – 2009 uses SAP05
3) 2010 – 2012 uses SAP09
4) 2013 uses SAP12
5) underlying data are presented in Annex Table 3.16
Sources:
2001 to 2007: English House Condition Survey, dwelling sample;
2008 onwards: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

3.54 Since 2006, there have been significant reductions in the proportions of homes failing on all decent homes criteria, including modernisation. The largest improvements were evident for the HHSRS criterion (down from 22% to 12%) and failing the thermal comfort criterion (down from 16% to 7%), Figure 3.16.

Figure 3.16: Dwellings failing different components of the Decent Homes standard 2006 – 2013



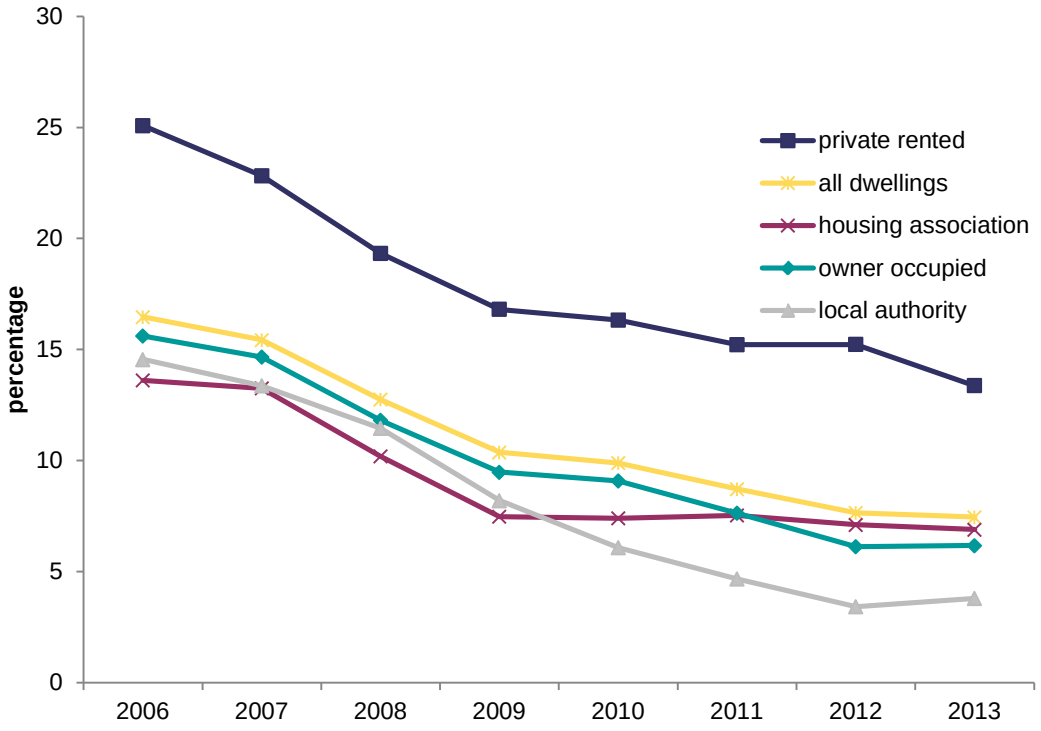
Base: all dwellings
Notes:
1) from 2006 - decent homes model incorporated HHSRS instead of unfitness
2) 2006 – 2009 uses SAP05
3) 2010 – 2012 uses SAP09
4) 2013 uses SAP12
5) underlying data are presented in Annex Table 3.17
Sources:
2006 to 2007: English House Condition Survey, dwelling sample;
2008 onwards: English Housing Survey, 2010 dwelling sample

3.55 The following analysis looks at the tenure time trends for the three components of Decent Homes that reduced most notably over time: HHSRS, thermal comfort and disrepair.

3.56 Across the stock, the proportion of dwellings failing the HHSRS component reduced markedly from 22% to 12%. Improvement was evident for all tenures. There was a similar rate of improvement in the proportion of homes failing the HHSRS component for local authority homes (down 7 percentage points from 14% to 7%) and housing association homes (down 6 percentage points from 11% to 5%). There was a higher rate of improvement within the private sector; the proportion of owner occupied homes failing this component reduced by 10 percentage points from 22% to 12% whilst the proportion for private rented sector homes fell by 14 percentage points from 31% to 16%. Nonetheless, both owner occupier and private rented homes were still more likely to fail this component of Decent Homes in 2013, Annex Table 3.18.

3.57 The proportion of all homes failing the standard due to lack of thermal comfort reduced by over one half (from 16% to 7%) over the 2006 to 2013 period. Local authority homes showed the largest improvements in thermal comfort: the proportion failing the Decent Homes standard for this component decreased from 15% to 4%. Improvement in the private sector was lower and in 2013 this sector still had a notably higher proportion of homes lacking reasonable thermal comfort, Figure 3.17.

Figure 3.17: Dwellings failing the thermal comfort component by tenure 2006 – 2013



Base: all dwellings
Notes:
1) 2006 – 2009 uses SAP05
2) 2010 – 2012 uses SAP09
3) 2013 uses SAP12
4) underlying data are presented in Annex Table 3.19
Sources:
2006 to 2007: English House Condition Survey, dwelling sample;
2008 onwards: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

3.58 Overall, the proportion of dwellings failing the disrepair component fell from 8% to 5% between 2006 and 2013. Interestingly the private rented sector had the greatest improvement; the percentage of homes failing on disrepair fell from 14% in 2006 to 7% in 2013. Less improvement on this component occurred among housing association homes, where the proportion fell from 4% to 3%, Annex Table 3.20.

Summary of poor housing conditions

3.59 This section summarises the incidence of four key measures of poor housing examined in this chapter: substantial disrepair[15], serious damp and mould, Category 1 HHSRS hazards and non-decency. Using these indicators, it examines the prevalence of multiple poor housing problems, as these problems co-exist for a significant number of dwellings. Statistics on the occurrence of each of these four housing conditions by dwelling and location characteristics are provided in Table 3.3.

3.60 Dwellings in the private rented sector were more likely to have each of the four poor housing measures, whereas housing association dwellings were least likely. This is mainly because privately rented dwellings have a higher proportion of older dwellings, which were far more likely to have each of these poor housing conditions. The social sector performed better than the private sector for all poor housing measures including the incidence of serious dampness in homes, Table 3.3.

3.61 Unsurprisingly, vacant dwellings had a higher incidence of these poor housing conditions compared with occupied homes, particularly with regards to substantial disrepair (26% compared with 10% respectively), Table 3.3.

3.62 There was a general relationship between poor housing and dwelling age; the oldest homes built before 1919 were far more likely to have each of these indicators of poor housing. This was most evident for the incidence of non-decency and Category 1 hazards, Table 3.3.

3.63 Dwelling location also impacted on the likelihood of poor housing conditions; dwellings in suburban and residential areas were less likely to have any of the four problems than dwellings in urban or rural areas. However, there was generally more similarity between London and the rest of England, with the exception of serious dampness. This was more prevalent in London (7% compared to 4% in the rest of England, Table 3.3) likely due to the higher incidence of older homes and other factors such as overcrowding; 8% of London homes were below the bedroom standard compared with 2% of homes in other parts of England, Annex Table 3.21.

[15] basic standardised repair costs of over £35m²

Table 3.3: Different types of housing condition problems by dwelling characteristics, 2013

all dwellings

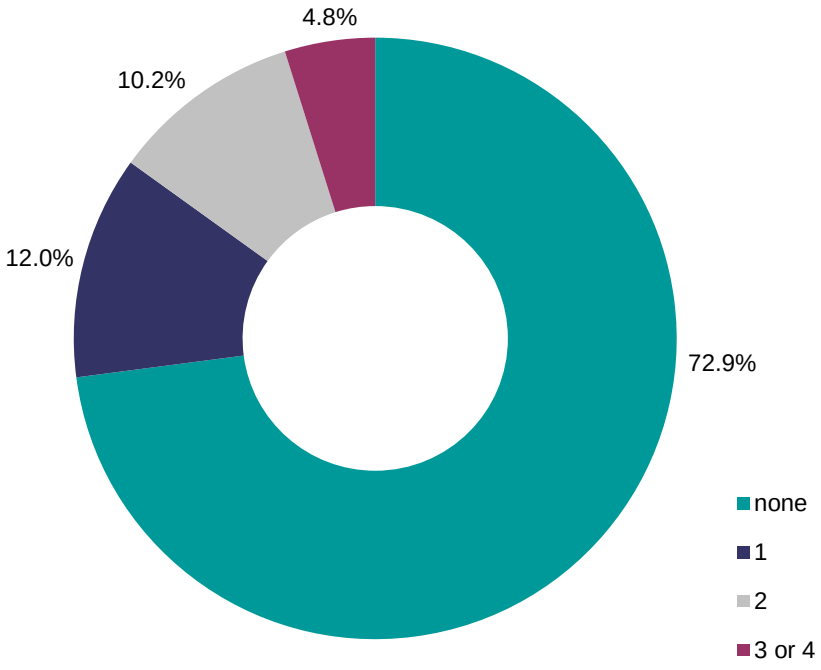
	any Category 1 hazard	non-decent	damp in one or more rooms	substantial disrepair	sample size
				percentages	
tenure					
owner occupied	12.3	19.4	2.8	9.4	*4,994*
private rented	16.6	29.8	8.4	17.6	*2,590*
all private sector	**13.3**	**21.8**	**4.1**	**11.3**	***7,584***
local authority	7.5	15.7	5.4	11.1	*2,214*
housing association	5.2	14.0	4.7	8.4	*2,700*
all social sector	**6.1**	**14.7**	**5.0**	**9.6**	***4,914***
type of vacancy					
occupied	11.7	20.0	4.1	10.2	*12,008*
vacant	19.4	33.1	8.3	26.3	*490*
dwelling age					
pre 1919	29.0	40.1	9.5	24.0	*1,990*
1919-44	13.3	24.1	5.2	15.9	*1,903*
1945-64	8.1	16.6	3.2	9.9	*3,053*
1965-80	9.1	17.5	2.4	4.8	*2,800*
1981-90	4.7	17.6	2.8	4.4	*1,058*
post 1990	1.5	1.5	1.1	1.5	*1,694*
dwelling type					
small terraced house	14.1	24.3	6.7	16.2	*1,406*
medium/large terraced house	16.2	25.0	6.9	14.6	*2,316*
semi-detached house	12.2	18.9	3.2	11.8	*2,916*
detached house	11.6	14.9	1.2	5.8	*1,443*
bungalow	9.3	16.4	1.8	8.4	*1,179*
converted flat	23.4	40.0	10.0	23.4	*441*
purpose built flat, low rise	5.5	20.1	5.3	7.1	*2,461*
purpose built flat, high rise	5.6	16.1	2.1	2.3	*336*
area type					
city and other urban centres	16.6	27.7	7.3	15.2	*2,792*
suburban residential areas	9.0	16.8	3.4	9.6	*7,778*
rural areas	17.1	25.0	3.9	10.5	*1,928*
region					
London	12.2	21.1	7.0	11.9	*1,604*
rest of England	12.1	20.5	3.8	10.8	*10,894*
all dwellings	**12.1**	**20.6**	**4.3**	**11.0**	***12,498***

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

Dwellings with multiple poor housing conditions

3.64 There were 17.0 million homes (73%) in England that did not have any of the four key measures of poor housing. Of the 6.3 million homes with poor housing measures 2.8 million (12% of total stock) had just one measure, 2.4 million (10% of the total stock) had two and the remaining 1.1 million (5% of the total stock) had 3 or 4 measures, Figure 3.18.

Figure 3:18: Number of poor housing measures, 2013



Base: all dwellings
Notes: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 3.23
Source: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

3.65 The private rented sector had the highest proportion of homes with some measure of poor housing (40%), and it was also far more likely to have three or four measures (9%). Owner occupied and social sector homes both had a lower proportion of homes with some measure of poor housing (23-24%), but owner occupied homes were more likely to have two or more measures (14% and 9% respectively), Annex Table 3.23.

3.66 Half of converted flats (50%) had at least one poor housing measure, higher than any other dwelling type, and 11% had 3 or 4 measures. Terraced homes also had a high proportion of poor housing (33%). Bungalows, semi-detached and detached houses had the highest proportion of dwellings with no poor housing indicators (77-79%), Annex Table 3.23.

3.67 Older homes were more likely to have one or more key poor housing measures; half (50%) of pre 1919 dwellings had at least one key measure

compared with10% of post 1980 dwellings. The proportion of homes with 3 or 4 measures of poor housing was lowest for homes in suburban residential areas (3%) compared with those in urban (8%) and rural areas (6%). The proportion of homes with poor housing was similar for homes in London and other parts of England, Annex Table 3.23.