



Department for
Communities and
Local Government



English Housing Survey

Housing Stock Report, 2014-15



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Introduction and main findings

1. The English Housing Survey is a national survey of people's housing circumstances and the condition and energy efficiency of housing in England. It was first run in 2008-09. Prior to then, the survey was run as two standalone surveys: the English House Condition Survey and the Survey of English Housing.
2. This report provides the findings from the 2014-15 survey. It describes the nature of the housing stock in England in 2014 and examines changes in the main characteristics of the stock over time.

Main findings

There were around 23.4 million occupied and vacant homes in England in 2014. The most prevalent type of home was an owner occupied house in a suburban location.

- The majority of the homes were owner occupied (63%), 20% were private rented and 7% and 10% respectively were local authority and housing association stock.
- Houses predominated the stock (42% of dwellings were semi-detached or detached houses, 29% terraced houses, 9% bungalows). Purpose-built and converted flats accounted for 16% and 4% of the stock respectively.
- Homes in England were mostly located in suburban areas (61%), 22% were in city or urban centres and 18% were in rural areas.
- A fifth of the stock was built before 1919 and 24% was built after 1980.

The main trend in the housing stock was the growth of the private rented sector between 2005 and 2014.

- The number of private rented homes rose by over 2.0 million between 2005 and 2014, increasing this sector's share of the stock from 11% to 20%.
- The growth of the private rented sector was evident across all types and age groups of dwellings as well as in all types of locations.

Another notable change was the gradual fall in the number of owner occupied homes between 2005 and 2013 after a period of steady growth. The proportion of the total housing stock that was owner occupied in 2014 was not

significantly different compared with the stock for 2013 so the decline in owner occupation seems to have abated.

There was a steady decline in the number of local authority homes between 1996 and 2014. That fall was contrasted by a steady growth in housing association stock

- The proportion of the housing stock owned by local authorities fell from 17% to 7% over the 1996 to 2014 period while the proportion owned by housing associations rose from 5% to 10%.

The proportion of vacant homes in England has remained relatively constant between 2005 and 2014. Vacant homes were more likely to be older and in the private rented sector.

- Just over 1.0 million homes were vacant in 2014 (5% of the stock).
- A tenth of private rented homes (456,000) were vacant compared with between 3% and 4% of homes in the other tenure groups.
- While between 3% and 5% of homes built after 1919 were vacant, 7% of homes built before 1919 (349,000) were vacant.

Around 1.3 million new homes were built between 2005 and 2014. Flats were relatively prominent among new homes compared with older homes. The higher prevalence of flats among new homes was evident in all tenure types.

- Over half of the new homes were owner occupied (57%), 24% were in the private rented sector and 19% were social rented homes.
- A notable proportion of the new homes were flats (44% compared with 18% among older homes).

Homes had an average usable floor area of 94 square metres in 2014. Owner occupied homes were generally larger. The difference in average usable floor area by tenure was evident in all types of dwellings except for small terraced houses.

- The average internal floor space of owner occupied homes was 106m² compared with 77m² for private rented and 67m² for social rented homes.
- Owner occupied homes were more likely to have five or more habitable rooms compared with rented homes in equivalent size dwellings.

Homes built between 2005 and 2014 were smaller compared with older homes, but there has not been a steady decline, over time, in the size of homes.

- The average usable floor area of homes built during the 1980's was not significantly smaller compared with the average for homes built in 1965-80. In addition, the average floor area of homes built from 1990 (92m²) was larger compared with homes built over the 1945 to 1990 period (the average of the latter ranged from 84m² to 88m²).

Owner occupiers were more likely to live in an under-occupied home than to live in a home that matched their housing need as calculated by the bedroom standard. On the other hand, renters, especially social renters, were more likely to live in a home which matched their housing need than in an under-occupied home. The prevalence of overcrowding was higher in the rented sectors than among owner occupiers.

- Half of owner occupiers lived in an under-occupied home while 13% lived in a home that matched their housing need.
- Over half of social renters (56%) and 45% of private renters lived in a home which matched their housing need. The proportion of social and private renters living in an under-occupied home was respectively 9% and 14%.
- Just 1% of owner occupiers lived in an overcrowded home compared with 5% of private and 6% of social renters.

About 1.3 million homes have been converted in some way. Nearly 6.9 million have had at least one extension and 5.5 million have received some form of building improvement.

- The homes that have been converted form a relatively small proportion of the stock (6%). A much higher proportion of the stock has been extended (30%) or had improvements (24%).

Homes built before 1919 were more likely to have undergone conversion, extension or improvement. Private rented homes were more likely to have been converted while owner occupied homes were more likely to have had extension or improvements.

- Among homes built before 1919, nearly a quarter (23%) have been converted; just under half (49%) have undergone extension and 42% have had some form of improvement.
- About one in ten (13%) private rented homes have been converted compared with 4% of owner occupied or social sector homes.

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- Over a third (38%) of owner occupied homes have had at least one extension. The corresponding figures for private and social rented homes were 23% and 5% respectively.
 - Building improvements have taken place in 26% of owner occupied homes, compared with 22% of private rented and 16% of social rented homes.

Acknowledgements and further queries

3. Each year the English Housing Survey relies on the contributions of a large number of people and organisations. The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) would particularly like to thank all the households who gave up their time to take part in the survey, NatGen Social Research, the Building Research Establishment (BRE) and CADS Housing Surveys, without whom the 2014-15 survey and this report, would not have been possible.
4. This report was produced by Helen Garrett and Busola Siyanbola at BRE in collaboration with DCLG.
5. If you have any queries about this report, would like any further information or have suggestions for analyses you would like to see included in future EHS reports, please contact ehs@communities.gsi.gov.uk.
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Chapter 1

Trends in housing stock

- 1.1 This chapter examines the trends in the tenure, age, type and location profile of homes and vacant dwellings in England. The key themes explored are the impact of the growth in the private rented sector and changes within the social sector stock.¹

Profile of the English housing stock

- 1.2 There were around 23.4 million occupied and vacant homes in England in 2014. The majority of those homes were owner occupied (63%), 20% were private rented while 7% and 10% respectively were local authority and housing association stock. Houses predominated the stock (42% of dwellings were semi-detached or detached houses, 29% were terraced houses, 9% were bungalows). Purpose built and converted flats accounted for 16% and 4% of the stock respectively. Homes in England were mostly located in suburban areas (61%), 22% were in city or urban centres and 18% were in rural areas. A fifth of the stock (20%) was built before 1919 and 24% was built after 1980, Annex Table 1.1.

Changes in the housing stock by tenure since 1996

The private sector

- 1.3 Two trends were evident in the private sector housing stock. The first was the marked rise in the proportion (11% to 20%) of private rented homes between 2005 and 2014, Figure 1.1. That produced an increase of over 2.0 million private rented homes. The growth in the private rented sector was probably related to older homes moving into the sector as well as a notable number of newer homes purchased for rental by investors.
- 1.4 The second trend was the gradual contraction of the owner occupied sector between 2005 and 2013 after a period of steady growth. That decline was mainly due the expansion of the private rented sector. That fall resulted in a contraction of the proportion of the total housing stock which was owner occupied (the owner occupation rate). However, the owner occupation rate in 2014 (63%) was not significantly different compared with the rate in 2013 so the decline in owner occupation seems to have abated, Annex Table 1.2.

¹ More detailed information on the profile of the English housing stock in 2014 is available in the live web table DA1101.

Over the longer period (1996 to 2014), the changes in the owner occupied sector resulted in the reduction of around 574,000 owner occupied homes to 14.8 million.

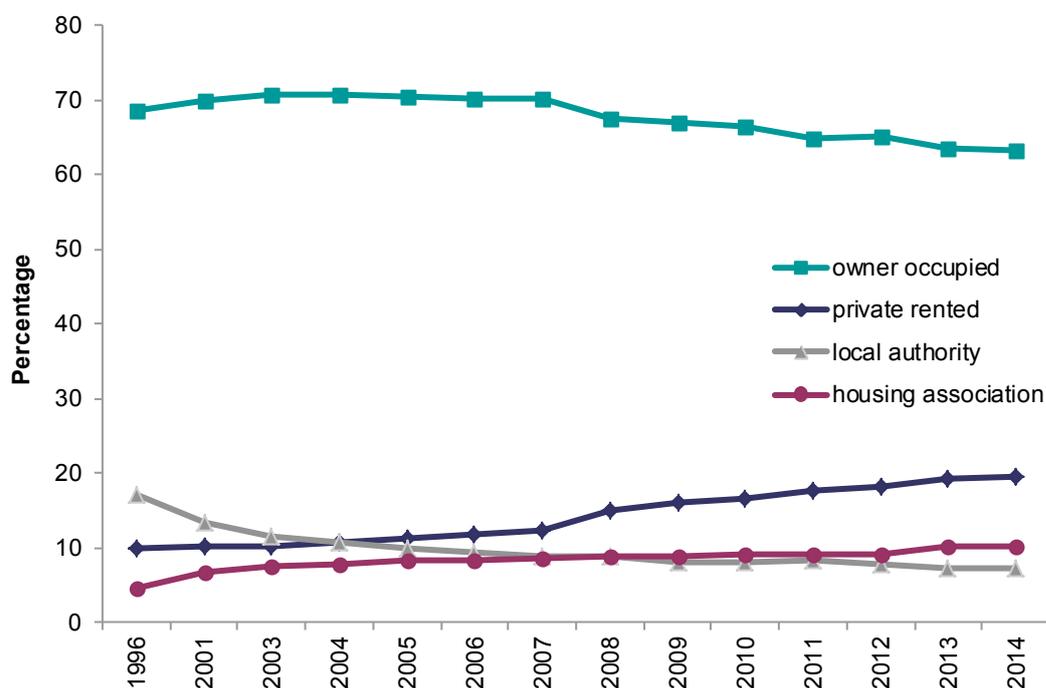
The social sector

- 1.5 There was a steady decline in the number (nearly 1.8 million) of local authority homes between 1996 and 2014. That fall was contrasted by a steady growth in housing association stock (around 1.4 million). As a result, the proportion of the total housing stock owned by local authorities fell from 17% to 7% over the 1996 to 2014 period while the proportion owned by housing associations rose from 5% to 10%, Figure 1.1.
- 1.6 The primary reasons underpinning the decline in local authority stock were Large Scale Voluntary Transfers (LSVT)² and Right to Buy (RTB). LSVTs were the main reason for the growth of the housing association sector. DCLG figures³ indicate that housing associations built over 394,000 homes between 1996 and 2014 but some of those were sold into the private sector under low cost home ownership schemes. Some housing association stock was also sold through preserved RTB sales. The combined effect of these changes was a reduction in the share of the stock in the social sector from 22% in 1996 to 17% in 2014, Annex Table 1.2.

² A Large Scale Voluntary Transfer (LSVT) involves the local authority transferring ownership of its homes with the agreement of its tenants to a new or existing Registered Housing Provider/Housing Association.

³ See DCLG Live table 209: permanent dwellings completed, by tenure and country
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-house-building>.

Figure 1.1: Housing stock, by tenure, 1996 to 2014



Base: all dwellings

Notes:

1) underlying data are presented in Annex Table 1.2

2) There was no change in owner occupation between 2013 and 2014, so the decline in owner occupation seems to have abated.

Sources:

1996 to 2007: English House Condition Survey;

2008 onwards: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

1.7 As will be shown in later sections of this chapter, the changes in the tenure profile described above were evident across all types and age groups of dwellings as well as in all types of locations, Figure 1.2.

Change in the age profile of the stock since 1996

1.8 Due to the construction of new homes, the number of homes built after 1980 rose by 2.8 million between 1996 and 2014 to 5.5 million, thus increasing the proportion of the total housing stock accounted for by homes in this group from 13% to 24%. Other observable changes to the pre-existing stock were mainly demolitions or changes in dwelling use but the scale of these were relatively small compared with new build activities, Annex Table 1.3.

1.9 Although the English stock is becoming 'younger' through the building of new homes, in 2014, one fifth of the dwelling stock was built before 1919. The number of these oldest homes has been constant throughout this period, at around 4.7 million. This has implications for the upkeep of the stock as older

homes tend to be less energy efficient, suffer from greater disrepair and are less likely to meet the minimum standard of housing⁴.

Figure 1.2: Dwelling age by tenure, 1996 and 2014



Base: all dwellings

Notes:

- 1) underlying data are presented in Annex Table 1.4
- 2) figures may not add to 100% due to rounding
- 3) OO =owner occupied, PRS=private rented sector SRS=social rented sector
- 4) pictures from BRE photo library

Sources:

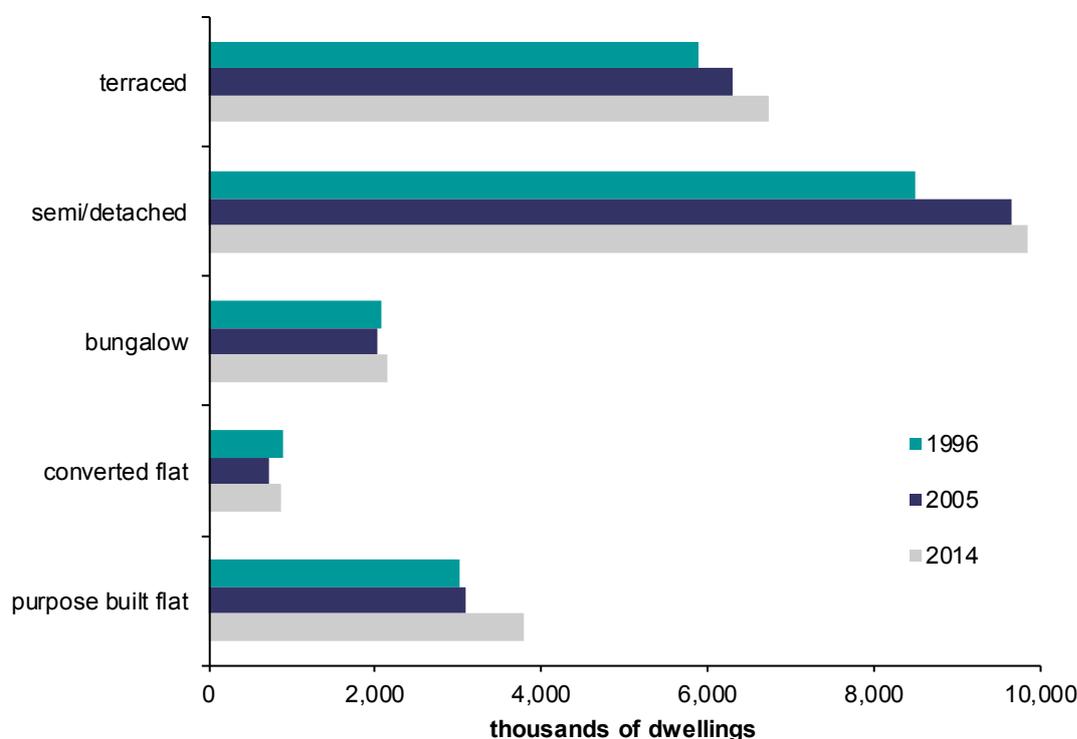
- 1996: English House Condition Survey;
2014: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

Changes in the dwelling type profile of the stock since 1996

- 1.10 Around 1.3 million of the 3.0 million homes added to the housing stock between 1996 and 2014 were either semi-detached or detached houses; the vast majority of this growth occurring from 1996 to 2005. The number of terraced houses rose steadily, by around 850,000 over the same period, and there was a marked growth in the number of purpose built flats from 2005 to 2014 (an additional 709,000 homes). The number of bungalows increased only very slowly and the number of converted flats remained virtually unchanged, Figure 1.3.
- 1.11 Overall, the proportional share of each type of dwelling within the stock has remained fairly constant since 1996. (The dwelling type profile of the stock is shown in the beginning of this chapter.)

⁴ See EHS live web tables DA7101, DA5201 and DA4104 respectively.

Figure 1.3: Types of dwellings, 1996, 2005 and 2014



Base: all dwellings

Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 1.5

Sources:

1996 and 2005: English House Condition Survey;

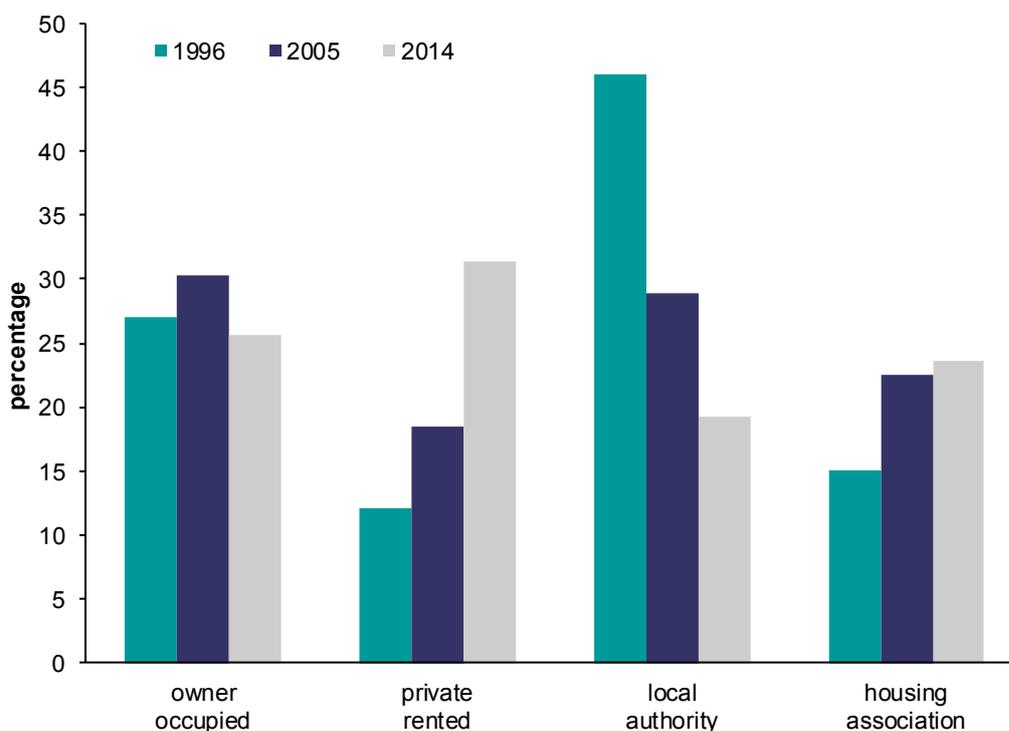
2014: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

Changes in the tenure profile of different types of dwellings

- 1.12 The growth of the private rented sector compared with the owner occupied sector was evident among converted flats and all types of houses except bungalows, Annex Table 1.5.
- 1.13 The main change for bungalows arose in the social sector; a reduction in local authority stock which was compensated by the rise in housing association owned bungalows, mainly as a result of LSVT. The fall in local authority stock and the rise in the stock owned by housing associations were also observed among other types of houses.
- 1.14 In 1996, 61% of purpose built flats were in the social sector but this proportion had reduced to 43% by 2014. There were several reasons for this change. First, the number of purpose built local authority flats declined by around 660,000 resulting in a fall of this sector's share of the stock from 46% to 19%. Second, the growth in housing association stock did not fully compensate for the loss of local authority stock and lastly, there was a marked growth of

private rented homes; a rise from 12% to 31% of purpose built flats. This growth was partly caused by more new homes, local authority stock bought through RTB going into the rental market and the general growth of the private rented sector, Figure 1.4.

Figure 1.4: Changes in tenure profile of purpose built flats, 1996, 2005 and 2014



Base: all dwellings

Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 1.5

Sources:

1996 and 2005: English House Condition Survey;

2014: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

Location of the housing stock, 1996 to 2014

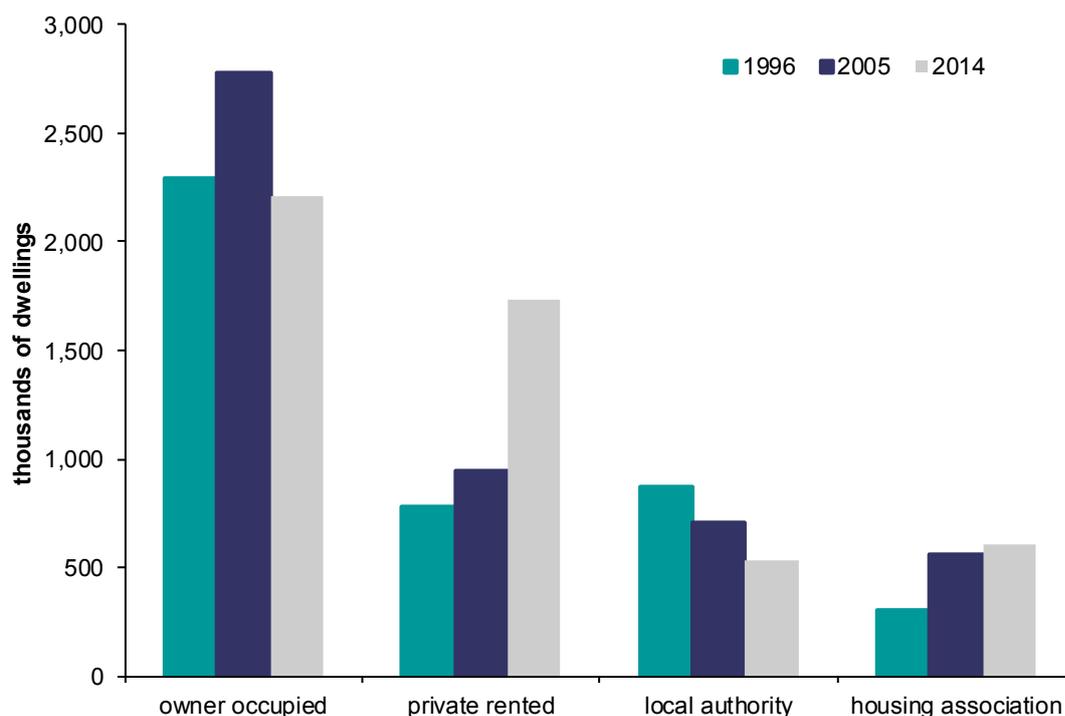
1.15 From 1996 to 2014, the proportion of homes located in urban⁵ and suburban areas have remained roughly similar but there appears to have been a slight fall in the proportion of homes found in rural areas. This may be caused by the reclassification of some rural locations as suburban areas due to new housing developments in the rural fringe, Annex Table 1.6.

1.16 Within urban locations⁵ the most notable change was the rise in the private rented stock from 18% to 34% (an additional 952,000 homes). The number of owner occupied homes first rose between 1996 and 2005 but then declined;

⁵ Analysis includes the London area which is also investigated separately.

as a result, the proportion of urban homes that were owned fell from 54% to 43% over the whole of the 1996 to 2014 period. There was a fall in the number of dwellings owned by local authorities (334,000) and the proportion of this stock halved from 20% to 10%. Despite the growth of housing association stock (by 306,000), the overall size of the social sector in urban areas reduced from 28% to 22%, Figure 1.5.

Figure 1.5: Dwellings in cities and urban areas, by tenure, 1996, 2005 and 2014



Base: all dwellings

Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 1.7

Sources:

1996 and 2005: English House Condition Survey;

2014: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

- 1.17 Suburban areas also had a marked growth in private rented dwellings, almost a tripling in the number of homes, from 816,000 to around 2.3 million (a rise from 7% of the suburban stock to 16%). As in urban locations, the number of owner occupied homes rose between 1996 and 2005 but then fell from 71% to 66% over the whole of the 1996 to 2014 period. The number and proportion of local authority homes declined during this period but this was mainly offset by growth in the housing association sector, Annex Table 1.7.
- 1.18 The proportion of private sector homes in rural areas rose from 87% to 90% during this period. While the number of owner occupied homes remained fairly steady there were an additional 184,000 private rented homes. Within the social sector, rural local authority stock fell by around 70%, from 368,000 to 104,000 homes while housing association homes rose by 138,000.

The housing stock in London

- 1.19 As with other urban areas, owner occupation was generally less prevalent in London. Although the number of owner occupied homes in London was similar in 1996 and 2014, at around 1.6 million, this sector's share of London homes fell from 56% to 48%, due to the movement of dwellings into the private rented sector which almost doubled in size from 15% to 28%. This movement into private renting was most pronounced after 2005, Annex Table 1.7.
- 1.20 The local authority stock in London fell by around 220,000 homes although this was largely offset by the rise (179,000) in housing association homes as a result of LSVTs and the construction of new homes by housing associations.

Changes in vacant homes since 2005

- 1.21 Bringing vacant homes back into use is one way to meet future housing demand. Empty homes can also be a blight on local communities, attracting vandalism and squatting. These homes can quickly fall into disrepair and longer term vacant homes may become derelict and/or prohibitively expensive to bring back into use. Derelict homes are not, however, surveyed as part of the EHS. DCLG produces additional statistical information on vacant homes⁶.

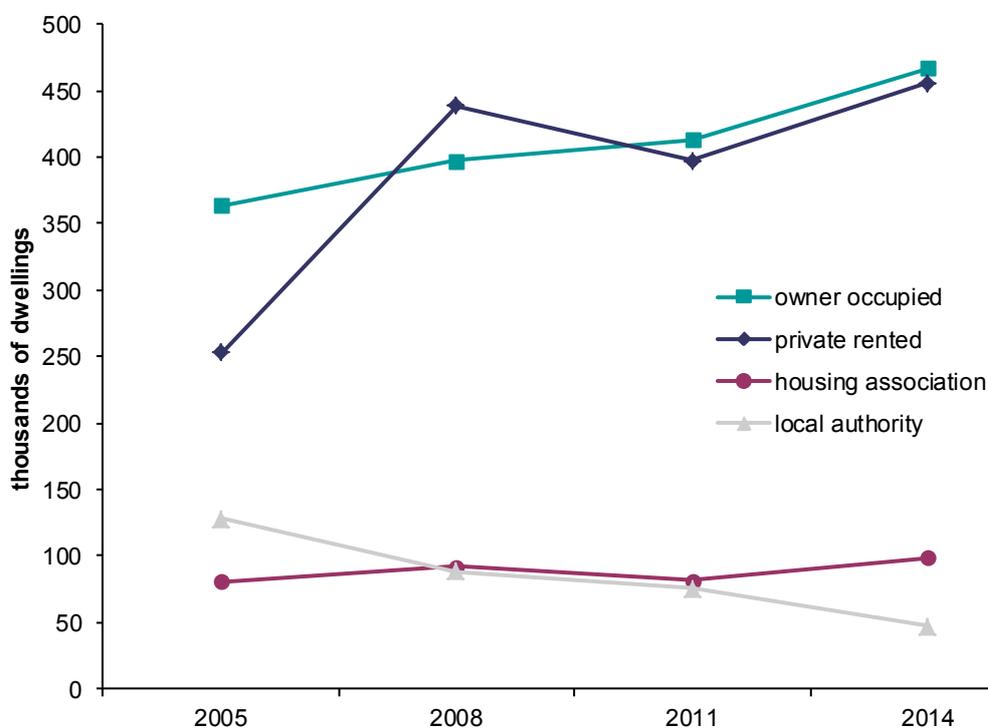
Tenure profile

- 1.22 In 2005, there were 824,000 vacant homes which increased to over 1.0 million in 2014. The number of vacant homes in the private rented sector rose from 253,000 in 2005 to 456,000 in 2014. In contrast, the number of local authority vacant homes fell and the number owned by housing associations was largely unchanged despite the growth in this sector's housing stock, Figure 1.6.
- 1.23 The proportion of vacant homes within the stock remained relatively constant throughout this period, at between 4% and 5%. The prevalence of vacant homes among owner occupied (between 2% and 3%) and housing association homes (between 4% and 5%) also remained fairly constant over time. Vacant homes were more common in the private rented sector, at around 10%, although the rate was slightly higher in 2008 (13%). The higher prevalence of vacant homes in the private rented sector may partly be related the higher turnover of properties in the private rented sector. This is because properties in between lets are classified as vacant on the EHS. The proportion of vacant homes among the local authority stock reduced steadily from 6% to 3% but it is beyond the scope of the EHS to explore whether that was due to

⁶ DCLG Live tables on dwelling stock (including vacants), Table 615. The definition of vacants is different from that used in the EHS and takes vacant figures from Local Authority Council Tax base, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-dwelling-stock-including-vacants>.

growing demand or to improvements in the management of the stock, Annex Table 1.8.

Figure 1.6: Vacant dwellings by tenure, 2005 to 2014



Base: all dwellings

Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 1.8

Sources:

2005: English House Condition Survey;

2008 onwards: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

Dwelling type

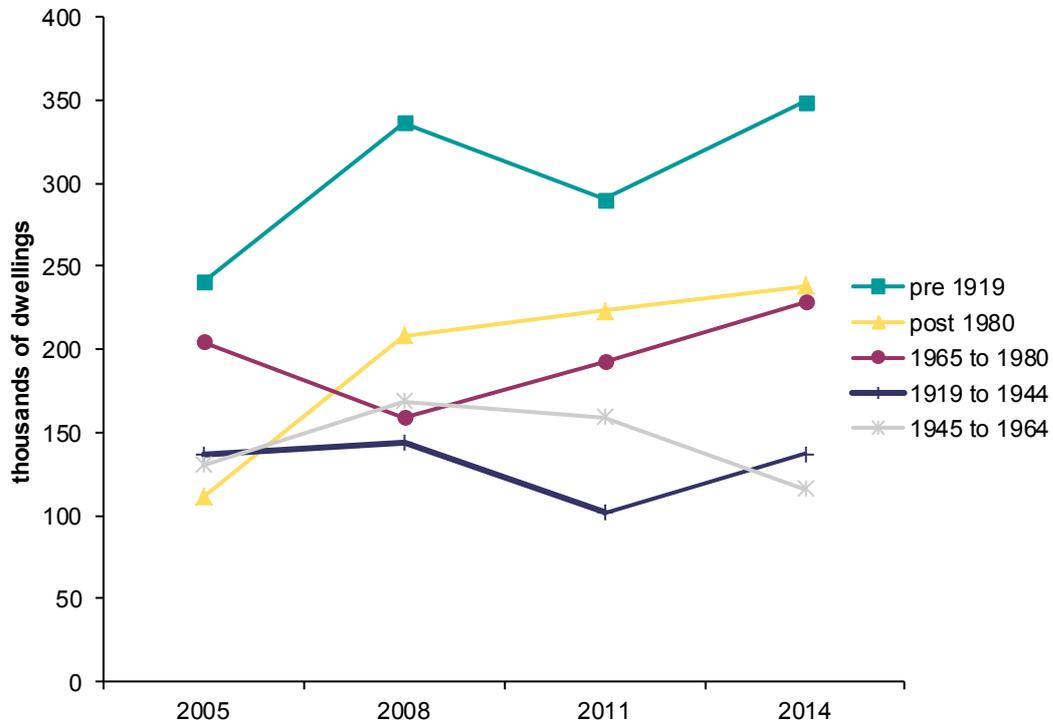
1.24 The prevalence of vacant homes was fairly similar over time among terraced houses, semi-detached/detached houses and converted flats but some changes were evident among purpose built flats and bungalows. From 2005 to 2014, there was a slight fall in the proportion of vacant purpose built flats from 8% to 6% and a slight rise in the proportion of vacant bungalows from 3% to 6%, Annex Table 1.8.

Dwelling age

1.25 Older homes, built before 1919, are more prone to be vacant (7% in 2014 compared with between 3% and 5% of other homes). Over the 2005 to 2014 period the number of vacant dwellings among these oldest homes rose by around 108,000 (from 241,000 to 349,000). The largest numerical rise in vacant homes was found in homes built after 1980; an increase of 127,000 (112,000 to 238,000) from 2005 to 2014, predominantly during the 2005 to

2008 period, Figure 1.7. It is beyond the scope of the EHS to explore the reasons for these differences.

Figure 1.7: Vacant dwellings by dwelling age, 2005 to 2014



Base: all dwellings

Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 1.8

Sources:

2005: English House Condition Survey;

2008 onwards: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

Chapter 2

Recently built homes

2.1 As the number of households in England is projected to rise, more housing will be required in order to accommodate this growth. This chapter profiles the newest homes to help assess whether they are meeting projected 'housing requirement'. In this chapter, 'new homes' are defined as homes built within ten years of the year of the survey, that is homes built in or after 2005.

Characteristics of recently built homes

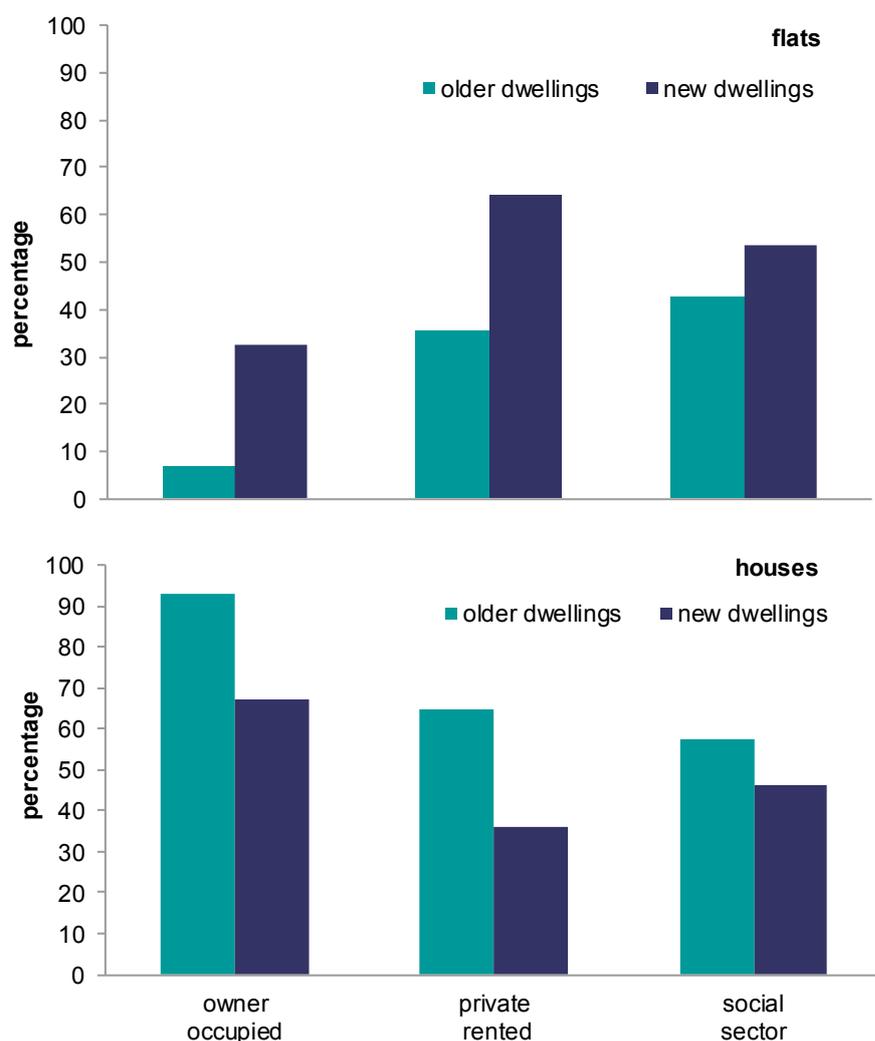
Tenure

2.2 In 2014, around 1.3 million of the dwellings in the English stock (6%) were new homes built in or after 2005. Over half of these homes were owner occupied (57%) and almost a quarter (24%) were in the private rented sector. The remaining 19% were social rented homes, the majority of which were owned by housing associations, Annex Table 2.1.

Dwelling type

- 2.3 A large proportion of new homes were flats (44%), far higher than the proportion found among older homes (18%), Annex Table 2.1.
- 2.4 The relatively higher proportion of flats among new homes was evident for all three tenures types particularly among private sector homes. Flats comprised 33% of owner occupied new homes compared with just 7% of the older stock. They also comprised 64% of new private rented homes compared with 35% of older stock, Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1: New and older homes by dwelling type and tenure, 2014



Base: all dwellings

Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 2.2

Source: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

Number of habitable rooms in new homes

2.5 Overall, new homes were more likely to contain fewer habitable rooms⁷ than older homes. Just less than half (44%) of these homes contained three or fewer habitable rooms compared with roughly one quarter (23%) of older homes. Although the proportion of new and older homes with six or more habitable rooms was similar, new homes had a lower proportion of dwellings with either four or five habitable rooms. These findings are likely to be a reflection of the high prevalence of flats among the new homes, Annex Table 2.3.

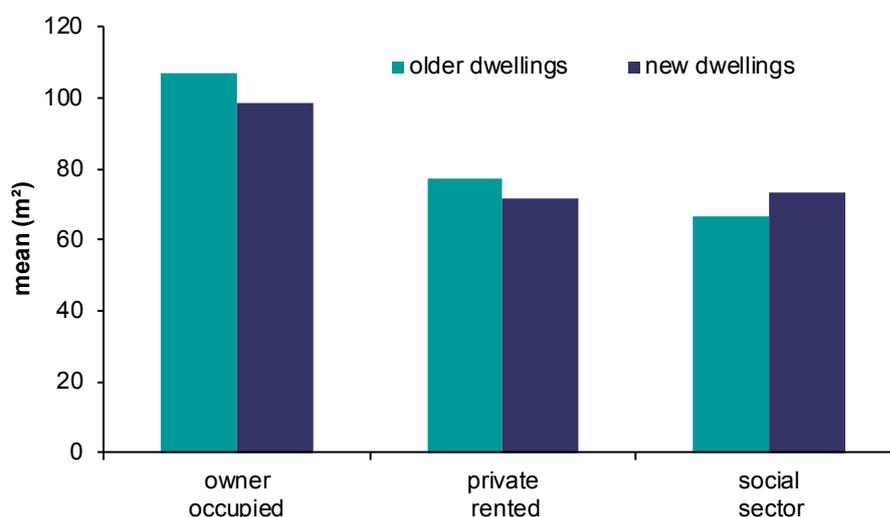
⁷ This is the total number of rooms, including bedrooms, in the dwelling that offer 'living accommodation'. Also includes kitchens where there is additional space to provide dining area large enough to accommodate a table and chairs, and a fully converted room in the loft space even where it can only be reached by a fixed ladder or unsafe staircase.

- 2.6 These patterns for the total stock were largely mirrored in the owner occupied sector, where new homes with three or fewer habitable rooms comprised one third (33%) of dwellings compared with 12% of older homes. Although the proportion of owner occupied homes with four or six habitable rooms was similar for both new and older homes, the proportion with five habitable rooms was lower among new homes (32% compared with 16%).
- 2.7 There was also evidence that private rented homes contained fewer habitable rooms. Almost two thirds (65%) of private rented new homes had three or fewer habitable rooms compared with 37% of the older stock.

Usable floor area of new homes

- 2.8 Average usable floor area⁸ was lower among new homes (87m²) compared with older homes (94m²). That difference was also evident in both the owner occupied and private rented sectors. In contrast, new social sector homes had a higher average usable floor area (73m²) compared with older social homes (67m²), Figure 2.2.
- 2.9 The average usable floor area of older private rented homes was larger (77m²) compared with that in the social sector (67m²). This was not the case among new homes; the average usable floor area was similar for both of the rented sectors. This indicates that the size of dwellings in social rented sector has, on average, caught up with the private rented sector.

Figure 2.2: Average usable floor area in new and older homes, by tenure, 2014



Base: all dwellings

Notes: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 2.4

Source: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

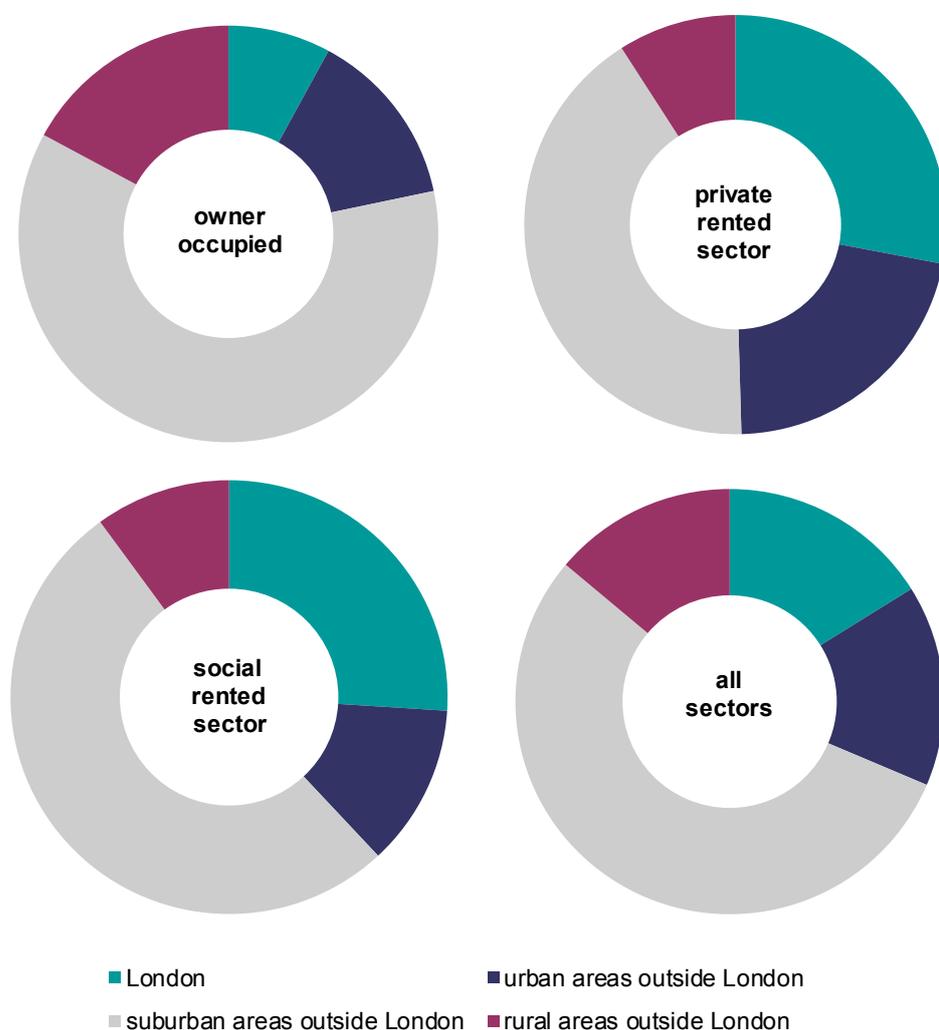
⁸ The definition of usable floor area used in this report is aligned with the Nationally Described Space Standard.

Location of new homes by tenure

2.10 New homes in the private and social rented sectors were more likely to be located in the London area than new owner occupied homes. While just 8% of owner occupied new homes were located in London, 28% of new private rented home and 26% of social rented homes were in the capital, Figure 2.3.

2.11 The distribution of homes in locations outside the capital also varied by tenure. Privately rented new homes (22%) were more likely to be located in urban areas than social sector new homes (12%). Owner occupied new homes were most likely to be situated in suburban and rural locations compared with new rented homes.

Figure 2.3: Location of new homes by tenure, 2014



Base: all new homes

Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 2.5

Source: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

Chapter 3

Space standards

- 3.1 This chapter explores the size of English homes from a range of perspectives. It also examines how well the occupied housing stock meets households' requirements in terms of available bedrooms and the prevalence of extensions, conversions and improvements to the total housing stock.

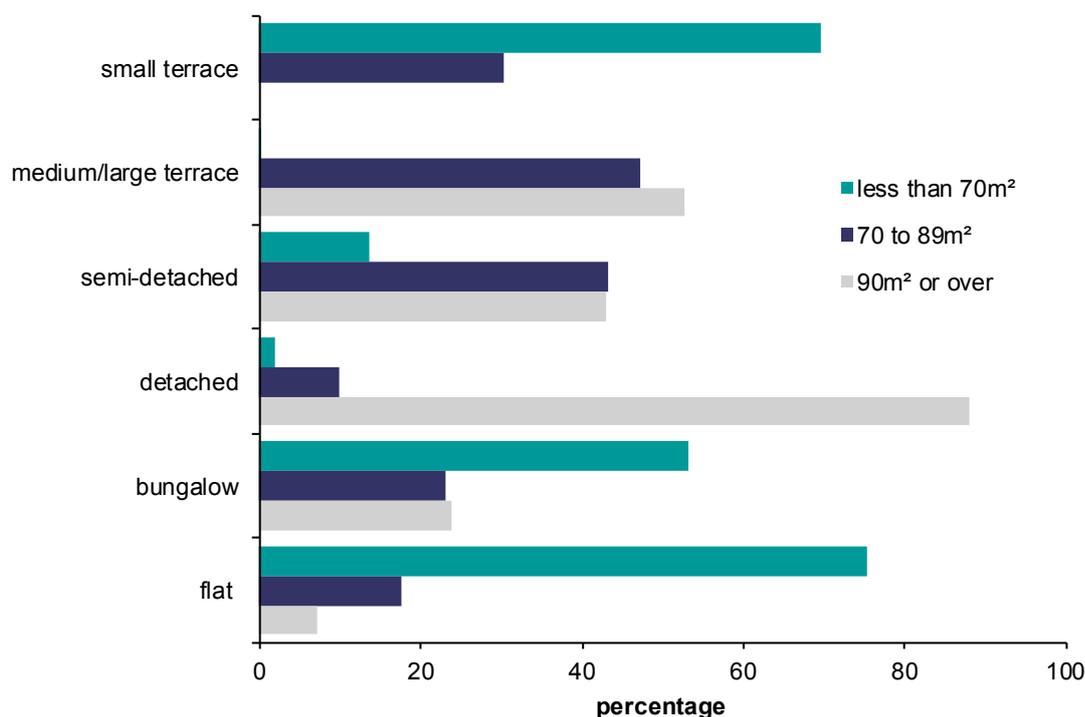
Floor space

- 3.2 In 2014, homes had an average usable floor space of 94 square metres. Around 31% had less than 70m² and 39% had at least 90m² of usable floor area, Annex Table 3.1.

Internal space by dwelling type

- 3.3 On average, the size of England's 2.4 million smaller terraced houses was 64m² in 2014. Larger terraced houses had an average floor area of 101m²; this average was higher than that found among semi-detached homes (96m²). The usable floor space of just under half of larger terraced houses were between 70 and 89m² (47%) and over half (53%) had at least 90m² of internal space, Annex Table 3.1
- 3.4 While the average available floor area of semi-detached homes was 96m², the size of these homes varied greatly; 14% had less than 70m², 43% had between 70 and 89m², and 43% 90m² or more. Detached homes tended to be the largest, with an average 147m² of usable floor area. The majority of these homes (88%) had at least 90m² of usable floor space.
- 3.5 On average, bungalows had larger floor areas (77m²) than small terraces (64m²) and had a lower proportion of the smallest homes (less than 70m²), 53% compared with 70% among small terraces.
- 3.6 The average sized flat was 61m², slightly lower than the average for small terraced houses. Flats were most likely (75%) to have less than 70m² of internal space compared with all other types of homes. Only 7% of flats had over 90m² of internal space.

Figure 3.1: Banded floor area by dwelling type, 2014



Base: all dwellings

Note:

- 1) underlying data are presented in Annex Table 3.1
- 2) all small terrace houses had a floor area of less than 90m²
- 3) the proportion of medium/large terrace houses with a floor area of less than 70m² is not shown because the sample is too small to provide a reliable estimate.

Source: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

Habitable rooms and bedrooms

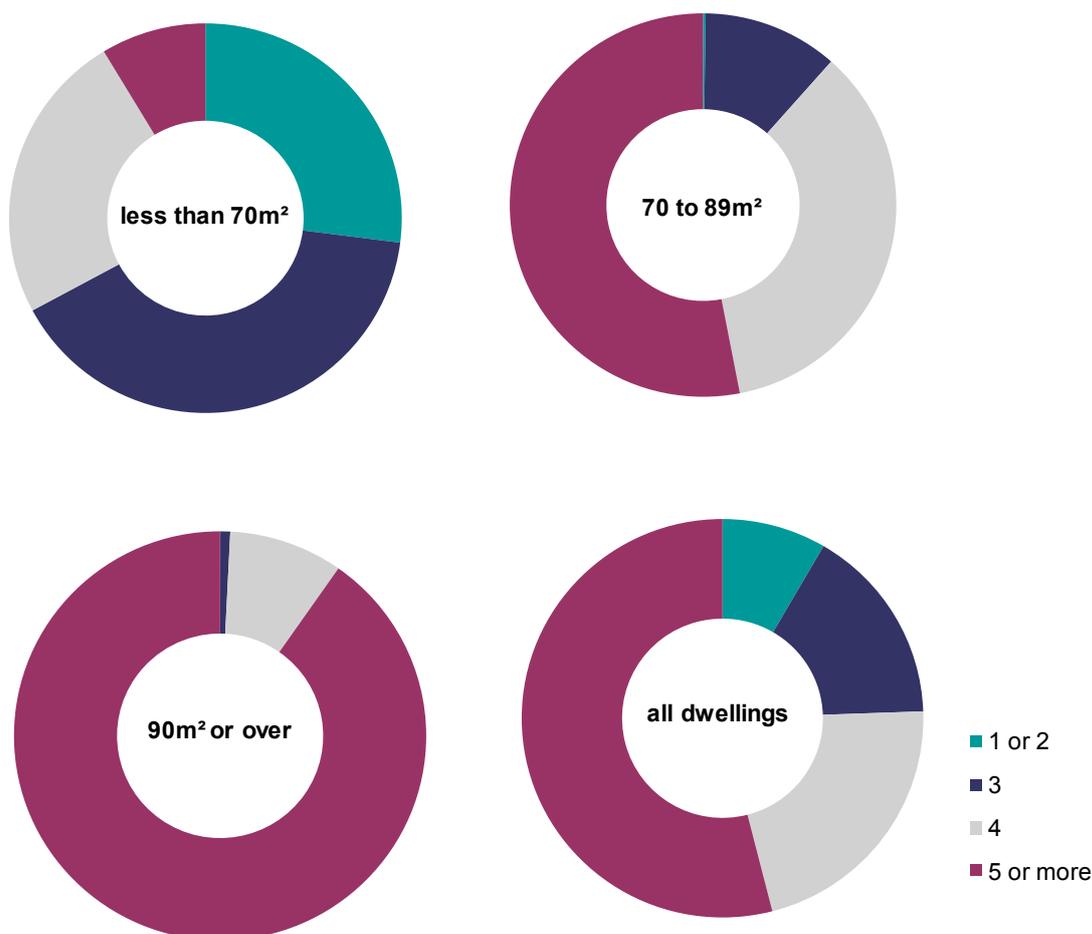
3.7 Information on the number and types of rooms in homes can help assess the suitability of the stock at accommodating demographic trends and people's expectations.

Habitable rooms by floor area

3.8 Overall, over half of English homes (54%) had five or more habitable rooms while 8% consisted of two or fewer habitable rooms.⁹ Most of the smallest homes (of less than 70m²) had three habitable rooms (40%). For medium sized homes (of 70-89m²), just over half (53%) had five or more habitable rooms, whereas 90% of largest homes (over 90m²), had at least five or more habitable rooms, Annex Table 3.2.

⁹ A habitable room is one that offers 'living accommodation' in a dwelling. It includes bedrooms, fully converted loft spaces even where they can only be reached by a fixed ladder or unsafe staircase as well as kitchens if there is additional space to provide a dining area large enough to accommodate a table and chairs (typically an area 2m² additional to kitchen space).

Figure 3.2: Number of habitable rooms by floor area, 2014



Base: all dwellings

Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 3.2

Source: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

Habitable rooms by dwelling type

- 3.9 Small terraced houses most commonly (46%) had four habitable rooms (the traditional two up two down) while around one quarter (24%) had five or more habitable rooms. In contrast, around three quarters (73%) of larger terraced houses had five habitable rooms or more. The findings for semi-detached houses were largely similar to those for larger terraced homes, Annex Table 3.2.
- 3.10 The vast majority of detached houses had five or more habitable rooms (93%). Most commonly, bungalows had three habitable rooms or fewer (39%), 30% had four habitable rooms and 31% had five or more of these rooms.
- 3.11 Roughly one third of flats (34%) had two or fewer habitable rooms and just under half (45%) consisted of three habitable rooms.

Number of bedrooms by dwelling type

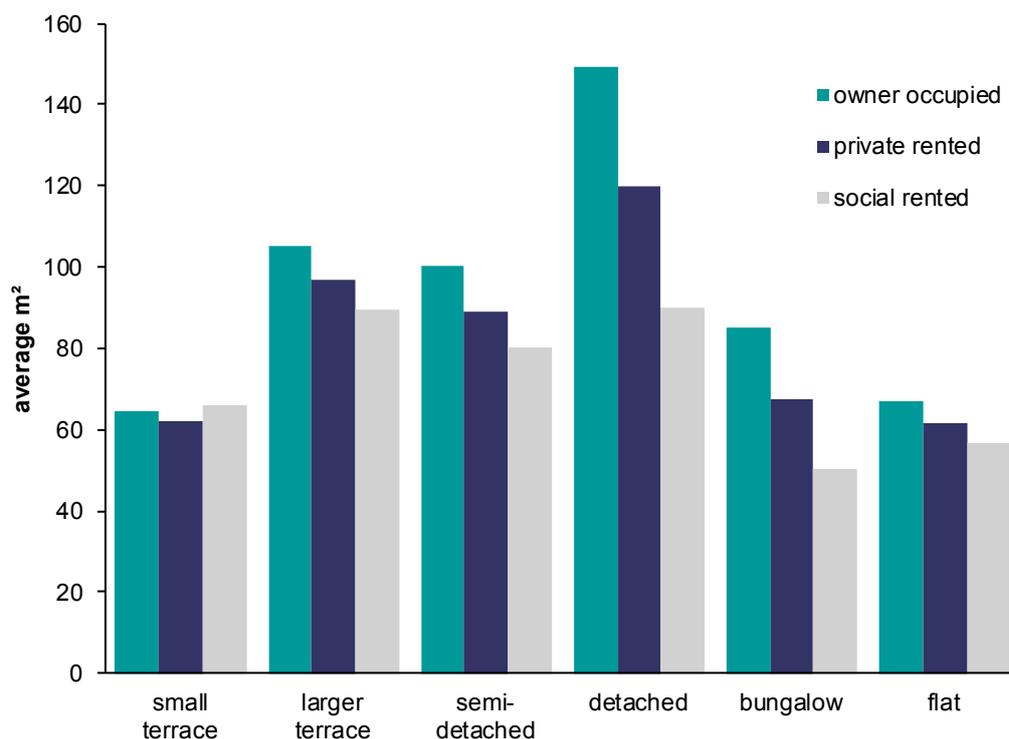
- 3.12 Small terraced houses most commonly (59%) had two bedrooms.¹⁰ Not surprisingly, larger terraced houses tended to have more bedrooms than smaller terraces; 62% of larger terraces had three bedrooms, and a further 23% had four or more bedrooms. A similar overall pattern was seen for semi-detached houses; 69% had three bedrooms and 18% had four or more bedrooms, Annex Table 3.3.
- 3.13 Most detached homes (63%) had four or more bedrooms, reflecting their larger size, while 50% of bungalows had two bedrooms. Just over half (51%) of flats contained two bedrooms, 39% had one bedroom and the remaining 10% had three or more bedrooms.

Usable space by tenure

- 3.14 Owner occupied homes were generally larger in size; with average usable floor space of 106m² compared with 77m² for private rented homes and 67m² for social sector homes. This difference by tenure was observable among all dwelling types except for small terraced houses, Figure 3.3.
- 3.15 Overall, owner occupied homes were most likely to have five or more habitable rooms than rented homes of an equivalent size, Annex Table 3.5.
- 3.16 Among the smallest homes (less than 70m²), the proportion with four or more habitable rooms was notably higher in owner occupied homes (44% compared with 31% of private rented homes and 21% of social sector homes). Owner occupied medium-sized homes of 70 to 89m² were more likely to have five or more habitable rooms (58%) compared with roughly half of rented homes (47% of private rented and 45% social rented).
- 3.17 The vast majority (92%) of the largest homes (90m² or over) that were owner occupied had five or more habitable rooms compared with the equivalent sized social sector (79%) and private rented homes (84%).

¹⁰ The EHS classifies rooms according to their original function rather than their current use. If a family have converted one of their three bedrooms into a study, the dwelling would still be classed as a three bedroom dwelling.

Figure 3.3: Average floor area by dwelling type and tenure, 2014



Base: all dwellings

Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 3.4

Source: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

Internal space in different aged homes

3.18 Some external reports suggested that England's 'modern' homes are not as big as its oldest homes and the more immediate post war stock.¹¹ In addition, Chapter 2 has shown that average usable floor area was lower among homes built between 2005 and 2014 compared with the older housing stock. However, the findings presented in this section will show that the picture is less clear cut¹².

Average floor space in different aged homes

3.19 Although the average usable floor area was highest among the oldest homes built before 1919 (107m²), there is no clear evidence to conclude that each cohort of English homes is, on average, smaller than the cohort before it. The average usable floor area of homes built during the 1980's was not

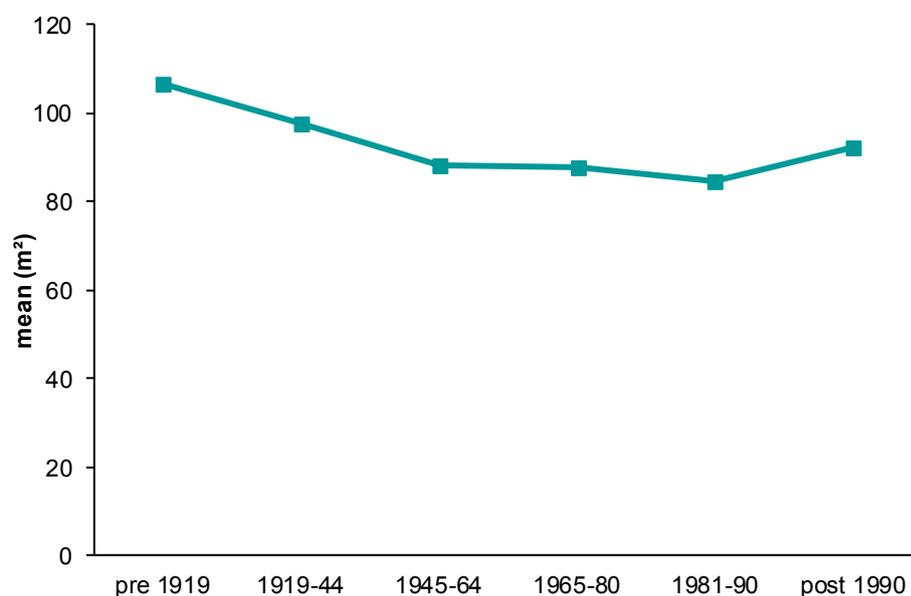
¹¹ see, for example, RIBA, The Case for Space, 2011

<https://www.architecture.com/files/ribaholdings/policyandinternationalrelations/homewise/caseforspace.pdf>

¹² Assessing the relative size of different aged dwellings is not straight forward because of the mix of the types of homes built in different periods varies. Extensions, conversions and housing improvements also alter the size of homes. This section examines the internal space available in different aged homes in 2014, not when they were built. So for homes that have been converted, extended or improved, the internal space included is the space after the conversion, extension or improvement.

significantly smaller compared with homes built in the preceding 1965 to 1980 period. In addition, the average floor area of homes built after 1990 (92m²) was larger compared with homes built between 1945 and 1990 (the average of the latter ranged from 84m² to 88m²), Figure 3.4

Figure 3.4: Average floor area by age of dwelling, 2014



Base: all dwellings

Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 3.6

Source: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

Habitable rooms in different aged homes

3.20 Due to the changing expectations and requirements of our homes over time, for example, higher demand for en-suite bathrooms, utility rooms, a study for home working, one key question is whether we are trying to fit more rooms into our newer homes. The mix of the types of homes built in different periods will have an impact on the number of habitable rooms available.

3.21 The proportion of homes with five or more habitable rooms was notably higher among homes built in the interwar period (68%) compared with other aged homes (less than 55%). This finding likely reflects the mix of dwellings built in the interwar period¹³ and the propensity for older dwellings to be extended and altered to make them better at meeting the needs of modern living (see section below). Housing built between 1981 and 1990 was least likely to contain five or more habitable rooms (44%), Annex Table 3.6.

¹³ 2013 figures on the number of each type of home built by dwelling age are available in EHS 2013: Profile of English housing report, Chapter 1 Annex Table 1.2, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-housing-survey-2013-profile-of-english-housing-report>.

Housing need

Housing need by number of bedrooms

- 3.22 This section examines the relationship between the number of bedrooms needed by the household to avoid undesirable sharing (given the number, ages and relationship of the household members) and the number of bedrooms actually available to the household. This is estimated in the EHS using the 'bedroom standard', Box 1.
- 3.23 Just over a quarter of households (26%) lived in homes which met their housing need. That is, they had the same number of bedrooms as the standard requires. Some 71% of households had at least one spare bedroom; this figure includes 36% of households who were under-occupying their home (i.e. had a least two spare bedrooms). Roughly 3% of all households lived in overcrowded homes (one or more bedrooms below the bedroom standard for their household), Figure 3.5.
- 3.24 Owner occupiers were more likely to live in an under-occupied home (50%) than to live in a home that matched their housing need as calculated by the bedroom standard (13%). In contrast, renters, especially social renters were more likely to live in a home which matched their housing need than in an under-occupied home. Among social renters, 56% lived in a home which matched their housing need while 9% were in an under-occupied home. The corresponding figures for private renters were 45% living in a home which matched their housing need compared with 14% in an under-occupied home.
- 3.25 The prevalence of overcrowding was also higher among the rented sectors (5% for the private rented sector and 6% for the social rented sector) than among owner occupiers (1%).

Box 1: Overcrowding and under-occupation

Levels of overcrowding and under-occupation are measured using the bedroom standard (see Glossary). This is essentially the difference between the number of bedrooms needed to avoid undesirable sharing (given the number, ages and relationship of the household members) and the number of bedrooms actually available to the household.

Since the number of overcrowded households included in each survey year is too small to enable reliable overcrowding estimates for any single year, data from the three most recent survey years were combined to produce the bedroom standard estimates in this section.

Figure 3.5: Bedroom standard by tenure, 2014-15



Base: all households

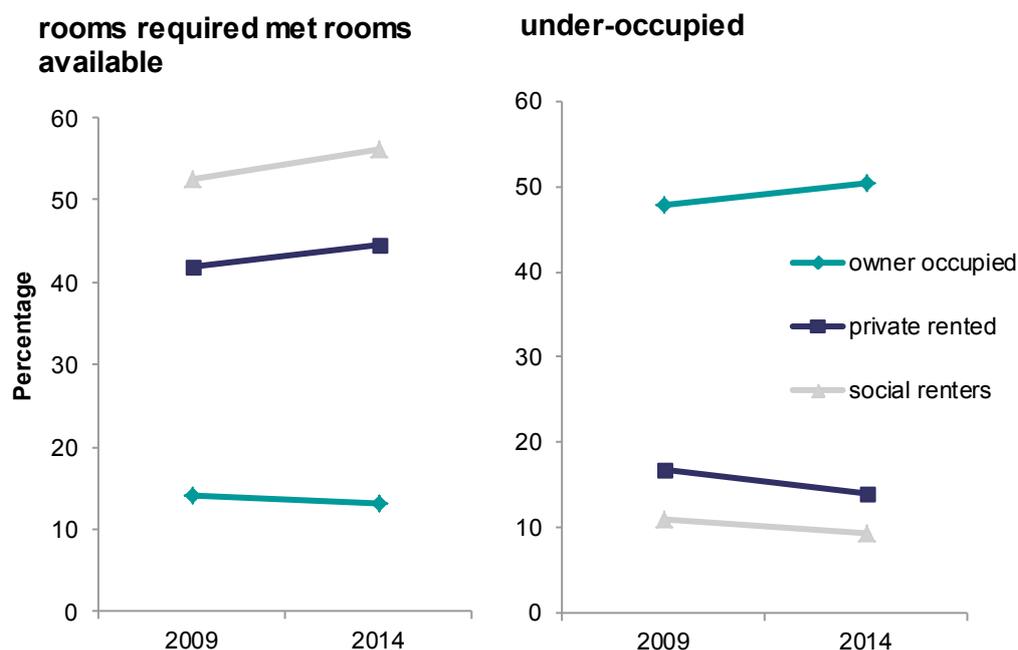
Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 3.7

Source: English Housing Survey, full household sample

3.26 Since 2009-10, the proportion of households living in homes which met their housing need has increased marginally from 25% to 26%.¹⁴ The increase was mostly due to the rise in the proportion of private and social renters living in homes which met their housing needs and a corresponding fall in the proportion of renters living in homes with two or more spare bedrooms. The trend in the rented sector was not repeated in the owner occupied sector; the proportion of owner occupied households living in homes with two or more spare bedrooms has increased since 2009-10, Figure 3.6.

¹⁴ English Housing Survey Household Report, 2009-10, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6718/1937206.pdf

Figure 3.6: Bedroom standard by tenure, 2009-10 and 2014-15



Base: all households

Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 3.7

Source: English Housing Survey, full household sample

Conversions, extensions and improvements

3.27 Some stock can pose problems regarding its design, construction and costs of maintenance, so we would expect conversions, extensions and/or improvements to help remedy these issues. Also, the extent of improvement activity may reflect rising standards in our homes and our expectations of what our homes should provide.

Conversions

3.28 Roughly 1.3 million homes (6% of the total stock) had been converted in some way. By 2014, 13% of private rented homes¹⁵ had been altered, compared with only 4% of both owner occupied and social sector homes, Annex Table 3.8.

3.29 London had a higher proportion of homes which had been converted in some way (9% compared with 5% outside London). The different mix of housing types and ages of home in the capital together with the high demand for homes has probably led to the higher levels of alterations in London.

¹⁵ The EHS cannot identify whether alterations in this sector were undertaken by landlords or whether homes with existing alterations had subsequently moved into the rental sector.

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- 3.30 Almost a quarter of homes built before 1919 (23%) had been subject to some form of conversion, a far greater proportion than all other aged homes.
- 3.31 In terms of recent activities, just over 300,000 homes had been altered from 1996¹⁶, with nearly half of these (49%) occurring in the private rented stock, perhaps reflecting the increasing demand in this sector over the last 20 years, Annex Table 3.9.

Extensions

- 3.32 Extensions include work to create additional space for living purposes or to add amenities. These were far more common in the housing stock than conversions, with 6.9 million homes having at least one extension added by the time of the survey; this equated to 30% of the stock, Annex Table 3.8.
- 3.33 Owner occupied homes were far more likely to have had an extension; 38% of the owner occupied sector had one or more extensions. Nearly one quarter of private rented homes (23%) had at least one extension, whereas only 5% of social rented homes had additional space added.
- 3.34 London homes were less likely to have received added space (27%) compared with homes outside the capital (30%).
- 3.35 Just under half of homes built before 1919 and homes built from 1919 to 1944 (49%) had received at least one extension while 29% of homes built from 1945 to 1964 and 23% of homes built from 1965 to 1980 had been extended.
- 3.36 Of those homes with extensions, 39% had been completed since 1996 (2.7 million)¹⁷, a likely reflection of modern expectations of the design of our homes, for example, bigger kitchens, storage space, en-suite bathrooms, loft conversions. In some cases, particularly when house prices are rising, it may be cheaper for households to extend than to move home. The vast majority of these more recent extensions occurred in owner occupied homes (88%), Annex Table 3.9.

Improvements

- 3.37 Almost a quarter of homes (24%) (5.5 million) had had some form of building improvement work; from relatively minor improvements (such as rearrangement of internal space or over-cladding of walls) to complete refurbishment and replacement of the structure of the home, Annex Table 3.8.
- 3.38 The highest levels of improvement work were seen in the owner occupied sector (26%). Within rented homes, there was a lower level of improvement

¹⁶ This is the most recent date of work (aside from work in progress) recorded by the EHS.

¹⁷ This figure has been calculated by dividing these 2.7 million homes by the total number of extensions, 6.9 million (in Annex Table 3.7).

activity in the social sector (16%) compared with the private rented sector (22%).

- 3.39 Not surprisingly, the older the home, the greater the likelihood of it having had some form of improvement work. By 2014, improvements had been undertaken in 42% of homes built prior to 1919.
- 3.40 Over 2.6 million completed improvements had been undertaken since 1996 and an additional 243,000 were in progress at time of survey. Since 1996, 370,000 improvements were completed in the private rented sector, a similar number to the social sector (393,000), Annex Table 3.9.

Technical notes and glossary

Technical notes

1. With the exception of the findings reported in the section on housing needs, the results presented in this report relate to the physical dwelling. They are presented for '2014' and are based on fieldwork carried out between April 2013 and March 2015 (a mid-point of April 2014). The sample comprises 12,297 occupied or vacant dwellings where a physical inspection was carried out. Throughout the report, this is referred to as the 'dwelling sample'.
2. Findings in the section on housing needs in Chapter 3 relate to households. They are presented for '2014-15' and are based on fieldwork carried out between April 2014 and March 2015 on a sample of 13,174 households. Throughout the report, this is referred to as the 'full household sample'.
3. Where the numbers of cases in the sample are too small for any inference to be drawn about the national picture, the cell contents are replaced with a "u". This happens where the cell count is less than 5. When percentages are based on a row or column total with unweighted total sample size of less than 30, the figures are italicised. Figures in italics are therefore based on a small sample size and should be treated as indicative only.
4. Where comparative statements have been made in the text, these have been significance tested to a 95% confidence level. This means we are 95% confident that the statements we are making are true.
5. Additional annex tables, including the data underlying the figures and charts, are published on the website:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-communities-and-local-government/series/english-housing-survey> alongside many supplementary tables, which are updated each year (in the summer) but are too numerous to include in our reports. Further information on the technical details of the survey, and information and past reports on the Survey of English Housing and the English House Condition Survey, can also be accessed via this link.

Glossary

Area type: At the physical inspection, the surveyor makes an assessment of the area surrounding the dwelling and classifies it according to the following categories:

- **city or other urban centre** which includes

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- *city centre*: the area around the core of a large city.
 - *other urban centre*: the area around towns and small cities, and also older urban areas which have now become part of a metropolitan area.
 - **suburban residential**: the outer area of a town or city; characterised by large planned housing estates.
 - **rural** which includes:
 - *rural residential*: a suburban area of a village, often meeting the housing needs of people who work in nearby towns and cities.
 - *village centre*: the traditional village or the old heart of a village which has been suburbanised.
 - *rural*: an area which is predominantly rural e.g. mainly agricultural land with isolated dwellings or small hamlets.

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

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

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

Conversion: An alteration to the original construction which affects the total number of dwellings in the housing stock, for example, conversion of a house into two or more flats.

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

- the household spaces it contains are 'part of a converted or shared house', or

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

Dwellings that do not meet these conditions are unshared dwellings.

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

Dwelling age: The date of construction of the oldest part of the building.

Dwelling type: Dwellings are classified, on the basis of the surveyor's inspection, into the following categories:

- **small terraced house:** a house with a total floor area of less than 70m² forming part of a block where at least one house is attached to two or more other houses. The total floor area is measured using the original EHS definition of usable floor area, used in EHS reports up to and including the 2012 reports. That definition tends to yield a smaller floor area compared with the definition that is aligned with the Nationally Described Space Standard and used on the EHS since 2013. As a result of the difference between the two definitions, some small terraced houses are reported in the 2014 Housing Stock Report as having more than 70m².
- **medium/large terraced house:** a house with a total floor area of 70m² or more forming part of a block where at least one house is attached to two or more other houses. The total floor area is measured using the original EHS definition of useable floor area which tends to yield a small floor area compared with the definition used on the EHS since 2013.
- **end terraced house:** a house attached to one other house only in a block where at least one house is attached to two or more other houses.
- **mid terraced house:** a house attached to two other houses in a block.
- **semi-detached house:** a house that is attached to just one other in a block of two.
- **detached house:** a house where none of the habitable structure is joined to another building (other than garages, outhouses etc.).
- **bungalow:** a house with all of the habitable accommodation on one floor. This excludes chalet bungalows and bungalows with habitable loft conversions, which are treated as houses.
- **converted flat:** a flat resulting from the conversion of a house or former non-residential building. Includes buildings converted into a flat plus commercial premises (such as corner shops).

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- **purpose built flat, low rise:** a flat in a purpose built block less than six storeys high. Includes cases where there is only one flat with independent access in a building which is also used for non-domestic purposes.
 - **purpose built flat, high rise:** a flat in a purpose built block of at least six storeys high.

Habitable room: A room in the dwelling that offers 'living accommodation'. Includes bedrooms, kitchens if there is additional space to provide a dining area large enough to accommodate a table and chairs (typically an area of 2m² in addition to kitchen space). A fully converted room in the loft space is classified as a habitable room even if it can only be reached by a fixed ladder or unsafe staircase.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Tenure: In this report, households are typically grouped into three broad categories known as tenures: owner occupiers, social renters and private renters. The tenure

defines the conditions under which the home is occupied, whether it is owned or rented, and if rented, who the landlord is and on what financial and legal terms the let is agreed.

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

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

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

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

Usable floor area: The total usable internal floor area of the dwelling as measured by the surveyor, rounded to the nearest square metre. A new modelling approach adopted since the 2013 report uses assumptions aligned with the Nationally Described Space Standard which was published as part of the Housing Standards Review. It excludes integral garages, balconies, stores accessed from the outside only and the area under external walls. The area remaining represents the total of all room areas, hallways and circulation space including cupboards and stairs. The area under internal partition walls is also included. Loft space is not included unless the loft is habitable, with a fixed stair in place to access it. Dwellings are also grouped into the following five categories:

- less than 50m²
- 50 to 69m²
- 70 to 89m²
- 90 to 109m²
- 110m² or more.

Vacant dwellings: The assessment of whether or not a dwelling is vacant is made at the time of the interviewer's visit. Clarification of vacancy is sought from neighbours. Both properties in between lets and those that are vacant for a longer period are classified as vacant on the EHS. Surveyors are required to gain access to vacant dwellings and undertake full inspections.

Key differences between EHS and SEH data

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

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

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

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

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

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

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

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