



Department for
Communities and
Local Government



English Housing Survey

Private rented sector, 2015-16



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Introduction and main findings

1. The English Housing Survey (EHS) is a national survey of people's housing circumstances and the condition and energy efficiency of housing in England. In its current form, 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. It is one of the longest standing surveys in government, with 2017 marking the 50th anniversary since the first survey in 1967.
2. This report presents analysis of households living in the private rented sector, including the demographic and economic profile of private renters, the affordability of living in the private rented sector, housing moves into, within and out of the sector, and the quality of the private rented housing stock.

Main findings

The private rented sector remains the second largest tenure in England, and has grown in the last decade or so.

- In 2015-16, 4.5 million households were renting in the private sector. This represents 20% of all households in England. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the proportion of private renters was steady at around 10%. However, the sector has more than doubled in size since then, and there are now 2.5 million more households in the private renting sector than there were in 2000.

The increase in the size of the private rented sector has been particularly pronounced among younger households who are now more likely to be renting in the private rented sector than to own a home.

- Although younger people have always been overrepresented in the private rented sector, the proportion of younger people in this sector has increased over the last decade. The proportion of those aged 25 to 34 who lived in the private rented sector increased from 24% in 2005-06 to 46% in 2015-16. Over the same period, there was a corresponding decrease in the proportion of people in this age group in both the owner occupied (from 56% in 2005-06 to 38% in 2015-16) and social rented (from 20% in 2005-06 to 16% in 2015-16) sectors.

There has been a large increase in the number of families in the private rented sector, particularly lone parent families.

- The proportion of households living in the private rented sector who had dependent children increased from 30% in 2005-06 to 36% in 2015-16. Given the growth of the private rented sector over this period, this equates to about one million more households with dependent children in the private rented sector.
- This increase was particularly apparent for lone parents with dependent children. Between 2005-06 and 2015-16, the proportion of households in the private rented sector that were lone parents with dependent children increased from 9% to 11%.

An increase from around 229,000 households to 519,000 households. There was a corresponding decrease in such households in social rented sector.

One in five private renters are dissatisfied with their status as a private renter.

- In 2015-16, 21% of private renters were dissatisfied with their status as private renters (9% of whom were *very* dissatisfied with their current status), compared with 10% of social renters and less than 1% of owner occupiers.

Private renters spend a significantly greater proportion of their household income on their housing costs than social renters, but are less likely to be in arrears.

- On average, households in the private rented sector spent 35% (including Housing Benefit) of their income on rent. Social renters spend, on average, 28%.
- Some 9% of private renters were either currently in arrears or had been in the previous 12 months, compared with 25% of social renters.

Churn in the private rented sector is higher than in other sectors.

- In 2015-16, 787,000 households moved within the private rented sector (i.e. from one privately rented home to another) and 196,000 new households were created. There were 187,000 moves into the sector, of which 72%, (135,000) were from owner occupation. There were 256,000 moves out of the sector, with 67% (172,000) of these moving to owner occupied accommodation and 84,000 moving into the social rented sector.

Most private renters move because they want to but one in ten was asked to leave by their landlord.

- When asked about their most recent move, most private renters said that their last tenancy ended because they wanted it to (73%). A tenth (11%) said that their landlord or agent ended the tenancy.
- Among those private renters who had moved in the last three years because their landlord had asked them to, roughly two thirds (63%) were asked to leave because the landlord wanted to use or sell the property.

While the energy efficiency and quality of the private rented sector has improved, standards lag behind the social rented sector.

- In 2015, the average SAP rating among private rented homes was 60. This average rating was similar to owner occupied homes, although the distribution of EER bands varied. Overall the private rented stock was less energy efficient than the social rented stock which had an average SAP rating of 67. This difference is partly explained by the private rented sector having an 'older' housing stock which is generally less well insulated.
- Over a quarter (28%) of private rented homes failed to meet the Decent Homes standard in 2015. The comparative figure for social sector rented sector was 13%. Although the private rented sector has always performed less well than

other tenures using this measure of housing quality, there was a marked improvement in the proportion of non-decent private rented homes over the 2006 to 2013 period from 47% to 30%. Since then the proportion of non-decent homes in the sector has remained virtually unchanged.

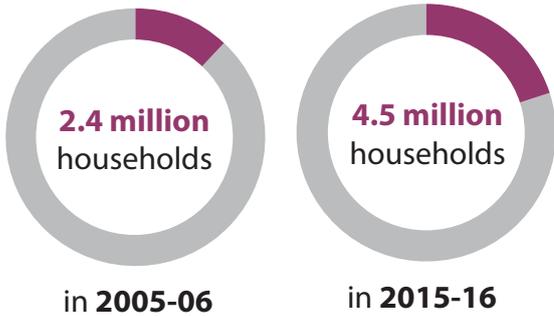
Acknowledgements and further queries

3. Each year the EHS 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 the following people and organisations, without whom the 2015-16 survey and this report, would not have been possible: all the households who gave up their time to take part in the survey, NatCen Social Research, the Building Research Establishment (BRE) and CADS Housing Surveys.
4. This report was produced by Aimee Huchet-Bodet and Charlotte Saunders at NatCen Social Research and Helen Garrett, Busola Siyanbola and Justine Piddington at BRE in collaboration with DCLG.
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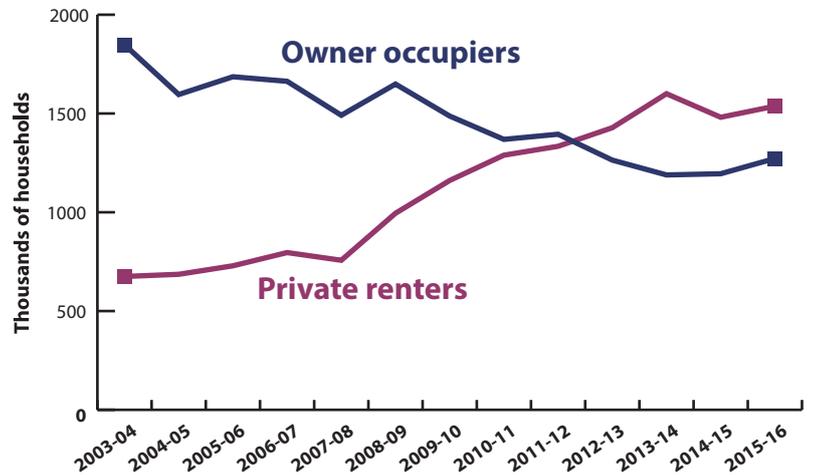
Private Rented Sector

20%

of households live in the **private rented sector**, up from **12%** in 2005-06



25-34 year olds are more likely to be private renters than owner occupiers



Families

The number of households in the private sector who had **dependent children** has increased



2005-06

673,000
families with **dependent children**

An increase from

30%
in 2005-06

36%
in 2015-16

(proportion of households)

2015-16

1.6 million
families with **dependent children**

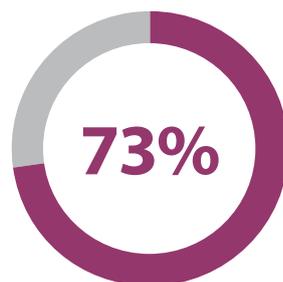
Household churn



There is more churn in the private rented sector than in other sectors

Private renters had, on average, lived in their current home for

4.3 years

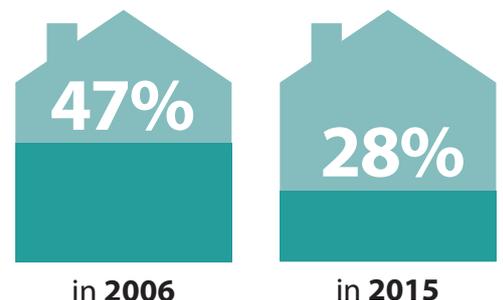


of private renters moved because **they wanted to**

House condition

The energy efficiency and quality of the private rented sector housing stock has improved

The proportion of **non-decent homes** in the private rented sector has declined



Chapter 1

Profile of private renters

- 1.1 This chapter presents the demographic profile of people living in the private rented sector. Whenever possible comparisons are made with those living in other tenures, especially with those renting in the social sector.
- 1.2 In 2015-16, 4.5 million households were renting in the private sector. This represents 20% of all households in England. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the proportion of private renters was steady at around 10%. However, the sector has more than doubled in size since then, and there are now 2.5 million more households in the private renting sector than there were in 2000¹.

Age

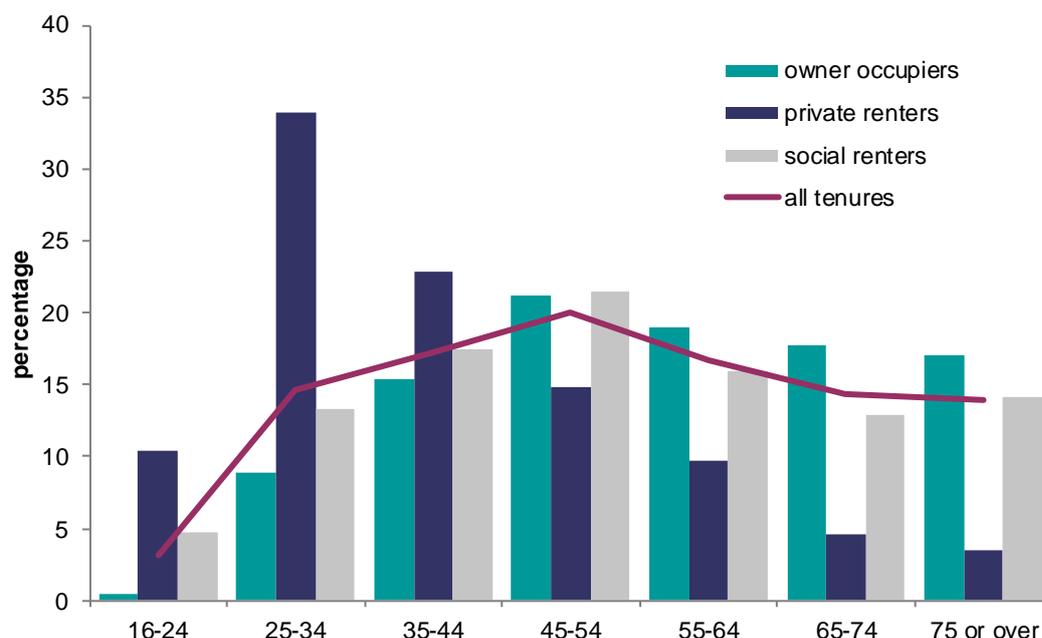
- 1.3 Private renters are younger than social renters and owner occupiers. In 2015-16, the average age of household reference persons (HRPs²) in the private rented sector was 40 years (compared with 52 years for social renters and 57 years for owner occupiers)³. About two thirds (67%) of private rented sector HRPs were aged under 45 compared with 36% of social renters and 25% of owner occupiers, Figure 1.1 and Live Table FA1201.

¹ See English Housing Survey Headline Report, 2015-16 Annex Table 1.1

² In the private rented sector, the HRP is the 'householder' in whose name the accommodation is rented. See the glossary for further information.

³ See English Housing Survey Social Rented Sector Report, 2015-16 Annex Table 1.1

Figure 1.1: Age of HRP, by tenure, 2015-16



Base: all households

Note: underlying data are presented in Live Table FA1201

Source: English Housing Survey, full household sample

1.4 Although younger people have always been overrepresented in the private rented sector, the proportion of younger people in this sector has increased over the last decade. The proportion of those aged 25 to 34 who lived in the private rented sector increased from 24% in 2005-06 to 46% in 2015-16. Over the same period, there was a corresponding decrease in the proportion of people in this age group in both the owner occupied (from 56% in 2005-06 to 38% in 2015-16) and social rented (from 20% in 2005-06 to 16% in 2015-16) sectors⁴.

Sex

1.5 In 2015-16, 61% of households in the private rented sector had a male HRP. The predominance of male HRPs is in part due to the way the HRP is defined and is also observable among owner occupiers (64% of owner occupied households had a male HRP)⁵. Female HRPs were more prevalent in the social rented sector where 56% of households had a female HRP, Annex Table 1.1.

⁴ See English Housing Survey Headline Report, 2015-16 Annex Table 1.4.

⁵ While in the private rented sector, the HRP is the 'householder' in whose name the accommodation is rented, in the case of joint tenants, the person with the highest income is taken as the HRP. As men, on average, tend to have higher incomes than women, men are more likely than women to be HRPs.

Health and disability

- 1.6 In 2015-16, 23% of households in the private rented sector included at least one member who had a long-term illness or disability, lower than the proportion of such households in the social rented sector; where 49% of households included someone with a long-term illness or disability. Among owner occupiers, 29% of households had at least one member with a disability or long-term illness. Although this is higher than in the private rented sector, this might be due to the fact that owners are in general older than renters and therefore might have age-related illness or disability, Annex Table 1.2.

Ethnicity and nationality

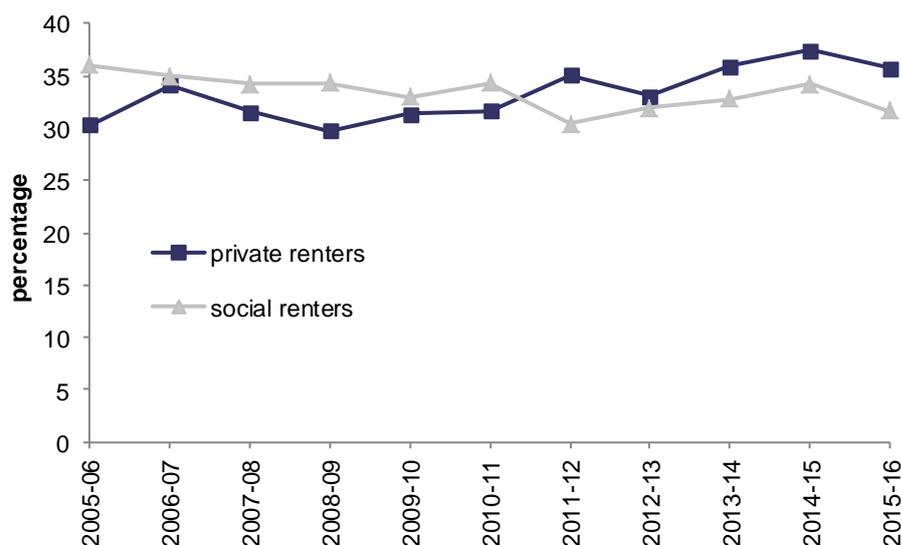
- 1.7 The majority of private renters (82%) identified as white. However, with 18% of private renters identifying as Black or minority ethnic, the private rented sector was more ethnically diverse than the owner occupied sector (8%). However, analysis of ethnicity across tenure groups is likely to be confounded by factors such as geography and age, Annex Table 1.4.
- 1.8 Compared with other tenures, the private rented sector had the highest proportion of households with non-UK or Irish national HRPs. In 2015-16, a quarter (25%) of all privately renting households had a non-UK or Irish National HRP, compared with 8% in the social rented and 3% in the owner occupied sector, Annex Table 1.5.

Household type and size

- 1.9 Single adult households (without children) were the most prevalent household type in the private rented sector, and comprised 27% of all households in the sector in 2015-16, Annex Table 1.6. The majority of these single person households (62%) were single men, Annex Table 1.7.
- 1.10 Women predominate among lone parent households. In the private rented sector, 89% of lone parents with dependent children and 74% of lone parents with independent children were women.
- 1.11 While the private rented sector had similar proportions of couples with and without children (24% and 23% respectively), it was the tenure with the highest proportion of households with children overall. In 2015-16, more than a third (36%) of all private rented sector households had at least one dependent child, compared with 32% of households in the social sector and 26% of households in owner occupation, Annex Table 1.8.

1.12 The proportion of households living in the private rented sector who had dependent children increased from 30% in 2005-06 to 36% in 2015-16. Given the growth of the private rented sector over this period, this equates to about one million more households with dependent children in the private rented sector. Over the same period, the proportion of social renting households that had dependent children decreased from 36% to 32%⁶, Figure 1.2.

Figure 1.2: Households with dependent children, social and private rented sectors, 2005-06 to 2015-16



Base: all households

Note: underlying data are presented in English Housing Survey Headline Report, 2015-16 Annex Table 1.5

Sources:

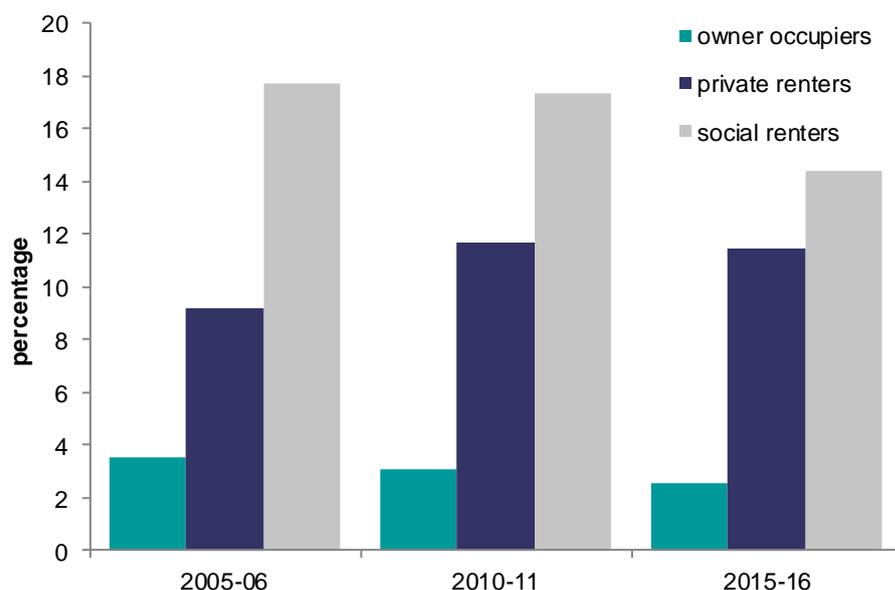
2005-06 to 2007-08: English House Condition Survey, full household sample

2008 onwards: English Housing Survey, full household sample

1.13 The increase in the proportion of households with dependent children in the private renting sector was particularly apparent for lone parents with dependent children. Between 2005-06 and 2015-16, the proportion of private renting households that were lone parents with dependent children increased from 9% to 11%. An increase from around 229,000 households to 519,000 households. There was a corresponding decrease in such households in social rented sector from 18% to 14% (from around 686,000 households to 564,000 households), Figure 1.3 and Annex Table 1.9.

⁶ English Housing Survey Headline Report, 2015-16 Annex Table 1.5

Figure 1.3: Lone parents with dependent children, by tenure, 2005-06, 2010-11 and 2015-16



Base: all households

Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 1.9

Sources:

2005-06: Survey of English Housing, full household sample

2010-11 and 2015-16: English Housing Survey, full household sample

1.14 Not surprisingly considering the prevalence of single person households and couples without children, 60% of private rented sector households comprised one or two people. However, in 2015-16, there was an average of 2.5 members in each household in the private rented sector, Live Table FA1211.

Economic activity

1.15 The majority (74%) of private renters were working, with 62% in full-time work and 12% in part-time work. This is higher than the proportion of owner occupiers (61%) and social renters in work (42%). This is perhaps not surprising considering the age profile of the sector. Smaller proportions of private renters were retired (8%), in full-time education (5%) or unemployed (4%), Live Table FA1301.

1.16 While those in full-time education formed only a minority of private renters (5%), the private rented sector was the most common tenure among those in full-time education, with 77% of those in full-time education living in the private rented sector, Live Table FA1301 and Annex Table 1.10.

NS-SEC (National statistical socio-economic classification) and ACORN⁷

- 1.17 The fairly diverse socio-economic profile of the private rented sector was reflected by the relatively even distribution of households across the NS-SEC and ACORN categories, Annex Tables 1.11 and 1.12.
- 1.18 In 2015-16, 24% of private renters were in 'lower managerial and professional occupations'. This is the NS-SEC category where private renters were the most likely to be found.

Satisfaction with current accommodation, repairs and maintenance and status as a private renter

- 1.19 As with other tenures, the majority of private renters were satisfied with their current accommodation (82%). Private renters were less likely to be *dissatisfied* with their accommodation than social renters (10% compared with 13%). Some 8% of private renters were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (compared with 6% of social renters), Annex Table 1.13.
- 1.20 Among households in the private rented sector who had repairs or maintenance carried out by their landlord, 18% were dissatisfied with the way repairs and maintenance were done on their home. This is lower than the proportion of social renters dissatisfied with the repair and maintenance of their homes (22%), Live Table FA5423.
- 1.21 Compared to social renters and owner occupiers, private renters were the least satisfied with their current tenure status. In 2015-16, 21% of private renters were dissatisfied with their status as private renters (9% of whom were very dissatisfied with their current status), compared with 10% of social renters and less than 1% of owner occupiers, Annex Table 1.14.

⁷ See the glossary for further information on NS-SEC and the ACORN classification of neighbourhoods.

Chapter 2

Housing costs and affordability

- 2.1 This chapter explores the affordability of the private rented sector by looking at average rents, average incomes and then the average proportion of household income spent on rent. It then examines private renters' ability to pay their rent, receipt of housing benefit, whether they had been in arrears during the previous year, the reasons for arrears and any savings they had. Some comparative information is provided for households in other tenures.
- 2.2 The 'Housing costs and affordability' and 'Mortgagors' reports, published alongside this report, provide more detailed analysis on housing affordability across all tenures.

Income

- 2.3 In 2015-16, the average (mean) income for the HRP and their partner in the private rented sector was £602 per week while the median was lower, at £473 per week. The mean income for HRP and their partner in the private rented sector was higher compared with the equivalent among social renters (£349 per week), but lower when compared with mortgagors (£1,071 per week)⁸.
- 2.4 In many households, particularly in the private rented sector where house sharing is more prevalent, it is not sufficient to just report the HRP and partner income as other household members may be contributing to housing costs. Based on all household income (i.e. the income of all the members of the household), the average (mean) income was £673 per week for private renters compared with £394 per week for social renters and £1,136 per week for mortgagors.
- 2.5 Private renters were fairly evenly spread across the income deciles, though slightly more were in the lowest five income deciles than the highest five (57% compared with 43% on either of the measures of income)⁹.
- 2.6 Also for both measures of income, the percentage of mortgagors in the lowest five income deciles was much lower in comparison with private renters. However more than 80% of social renters were in the lowest five income

⁸ See English Housing Survey Housing costs and affordability report, 2015-16 Annex Table 2.1.

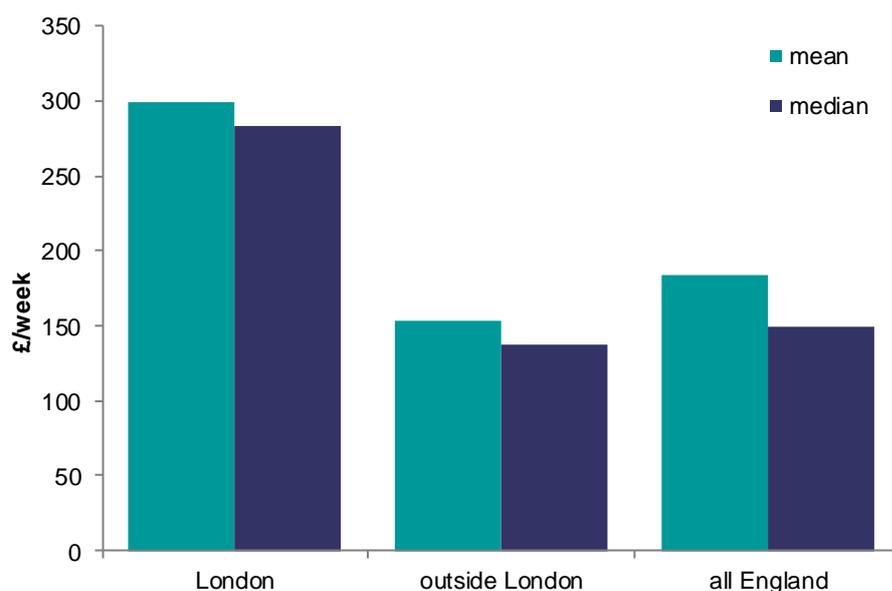
⁹ See English Housing Survey Housing costs and affordability report, 2015-16 Annex Table 2.3

deciles on either of the measures of income. This likely reflects the different socio-economic profile of social renters¹⁰.

Rent

2.7 The average (mean) weekly rent in the private sector was £184. The weekly average was far higher in London (£300) compared with locations outside London (£153). Average median rents were slightly lower, Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1: Mean and median rents in the private rented sector, 2015-16



Base: all private renters

Note: underlying data are presented in English Housing Survey Headline Report, 2015-16 Annex Table 1.12

Source: English Housing Survey, full household sample

2.8 The average weekly rent for private renters (£184) exceeded the average weekly cost of a mortgage (£159). Average weekly social rents were notably lower; £95 for local authority renters and £106 for housing association renters¹¹.

Proportion of income spent on housing costs

2.9 A simple measure of housing affordability has been derived by calculating the average proportion of income spent on housing. Housing-related costs, such as water and fuel bills, insurance, maintenance costs and council tax are not included in the calculation. As house sharing is more prevalent in the private rented sector, the all household income measure is used. Income is taken to

¹⁰ For more on economic status across tenures, see English Housing Survey Headline Report, 2015-16 Annex Table 1.3.

¹¹ See English Housing Survey Housing costs and affordability report, 2015-16 Annex Table 1.1.

be the gross weekly household income, including and excluding Housing Benefit.

- 2.10 On average, households in the private rented sector spent 35% (including Housing Benefit) of their income on rent. If Housing Benefit is excluded, this increases to 41%¹².
- 2.11 There were marked differences in the proportion of income spent on private renting in and outside London. Private renters in London spent, on average, 45% of their income (including Housing Benefit) on rent rising to 54% when any Housing Benefit is excluded. Outside of London, the comparative figures were 32% and 38%, Figure 2.2.

Figure 2.2: Rent as a proportion of household income, London and outside London, 2015-16



Base: all private renters paying rent

Note: underlying data are presented in English Housing Survey Housing costs and affordability report, 2015-16 Annex Table 3.2

Source: English Housing Survey, full household sample

Ability to pay rent

- 2.12 Overall, 71% of private renters¹³ found it fairly or very easy to pay their rent while 29% found it fairly or very difficult to pay their rent, Annex Table 2.1.
- 2.13 Difficulty with paying the rent was a more prevalent issue among some groups. These include unemployed private renters (53% of whom found it difficult to pay their rent), ethnic minority private renters (42%), private

¹² See English Housing Survey Housing costs and affordability report, 2015-16 Annex Table 3.2.

¹³ Analysis excludes private renters whose rent is entirely covered by Housing Benefit.

renters in London (41%), households with dependent children (40%) and female renters (33%).

Housing Benefit

- 2.14 Housing Benefit is a means-tested benefit provided by the state to low income households living in the private and social rented sectors. The benefit is usually administered by the local authority in which the property is located. This section explores the take up of Housing Benefit by households in the private rented sector.
- 2.15 In 2015-16, around a quarter (24%) of private renters received Housing Benefit. This equates to about 1.1 million households, including 240,000 (5%) who had their full rent covered by Housing benefit. Over half (59%) were receiving Housing Benefit at the start of their tenancy, Annex Table 2.2.
- 2.16 Over half (54%) of private renters who were not in work and 13% of private renters who worked either full or part-time, received Housing Benefit¹⁴.

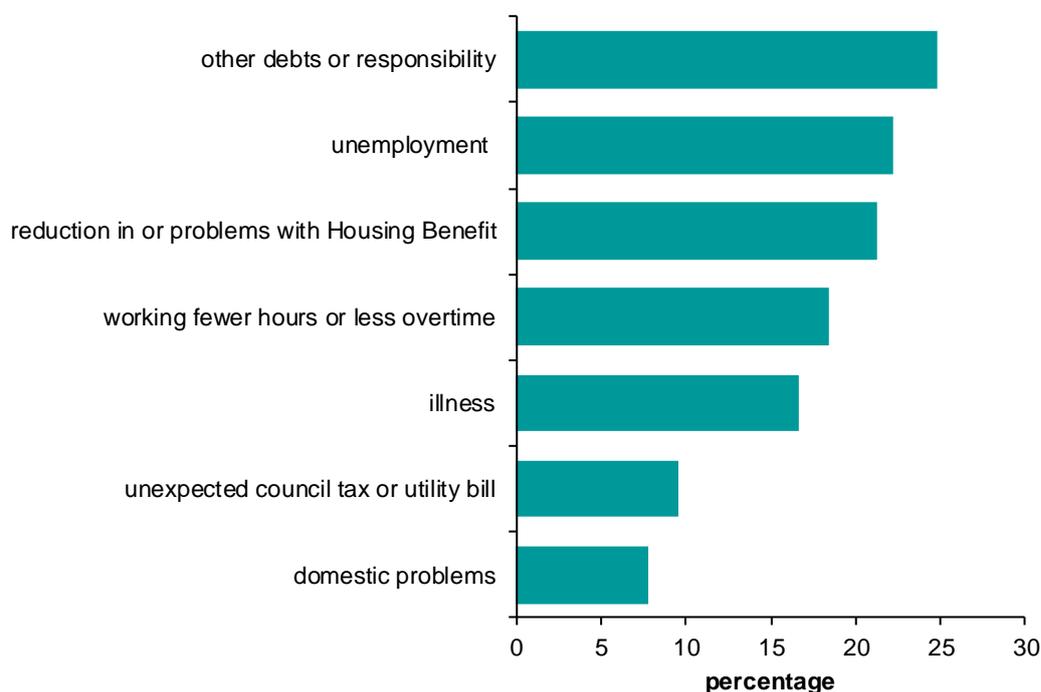
Rent arrears

- 2.17 Overall, 9% of private renters were either currently in arrears or had been in the previous 12 months (around 376,000 households), Annex Table 2.3.
- 2.18 Being in arrears was most prevalent among the following types of private renters; couples with independent children (19%), households which included someone with long-term illness or disability (18%), those aged 35 to 44 (13%), families with dependent children (12%) particularly lone parents with dependent children (18%) and female HRPs (12%).
- 2.19 Rent arrears were less common among private renters than social renters; around 25% of social renters were either currently in arrears or had been in the previous 12 months¹⁵.
- 2.20 For private renters, the most commonly cited reasons for arrears, were 'other debts or responsibilities' (25%), 'unemployment' (22%) and 'reduction in (or problems with) Housing Benefit' (21%), Figure 2.3.

¹⁴ See English Housing Survey Headline Report, 2015-16 Annex Table 1.16.

¹⁵ For more information on rent arrears, including findings over time, see English Housing Survey Headline Report, 2015-16 Annex Table 1.14.

Figure 2.3: Reasons for rent arrears in the private rented sector, 2015-16



Base: all private renters paying rent (where rent is not fully covered by housing benefit) and in arrears
Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 2.4
Source: English Housing Survey, full household sample

Savings

- 2.21 This section explores any savings private renters may have. It should be noted that the data gathered on savings by the EHS will differ from those captured by the Family Resources Survey¹⁶ which asks more detailed questions on the economic circumstances of respondents.
- 2.22 Roughly two thirds (66%) of private renters indicated that they had no savings. Among those who do have savings and were able to provide information on the value of these, 41% had savings of less than £5,000 while 12% had savings in excess of £50,000, Annex Table 2.5.

¹⁶ See <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/family-resources-survey> for further information.

Chapter 3

Housing history and future buying expectations

- 3.1 This section explores the previous housing experiences of people currently living in the private rented sector. Respondents were asked about the details of their current tenancy agreement and last tenancy within the private rented sector. These responses were analysed to identify any differences across social or demographic groups. It then briefly examines future buying expectations.

Length of time in private rented sector

- 3.2 Respondents were asked how long they had lived in the private rented sector in the most recent spell, even if they had lived at different addresses. A quarter of private sector tenants had lived in the private rented sector for less than two years, a quarter for more than two years, but less than five years, quarter for between five and nine years and quarter for 10 years or more, Annex Table 3.1

Length of time in current accommodation

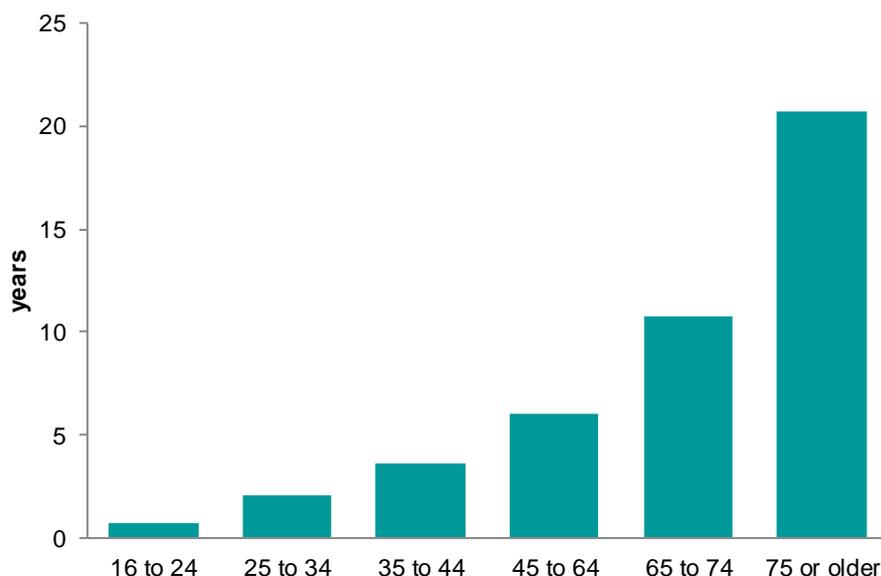
- 3.3 Private renters had lived in their current home for an average of 4.3 years. This was shorter than social renters, who had lived in their current home for an average of 11.6 years, or for owner occupiers who had lived in their current homes for an average of 17.8 years.
- 3.4 About a quarter (26%) of private renters had lived in their current accommodation for less than a year while one in ten (10%) had lived in their current home for 10 years or more, Annex Table 3.2.

Age

- 3.5 Not surprisingly, the youngest renters (those aged 16 to 24) had lived in their current home for the shortest time, on average just 0.7 years. This may reflect the high proportion of students in this group who live in private rented accommodation during the academic year as well as a large proportion of new households formed when young adults leave home, Figure 3.1 and Annex Table 3.3.

3.6 The oldest groups (those aged 65 to 74 and 75 or older) have average current tenancies of 10.7 years and 20.8 years respectively. Since 1997 assured shorthold tenancies have only guaranteed tenants the right to remain in a single home for six months. The higher average length of tenancy in older groups might reflect the fact that these groups contain residents with a regulated tenancy which pre-dates the Housing Act 1988.

Figure 3.1: Mean length of residence in current accommodation (years), by age, 2015-16



Base: all private renters

Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 3.3

Source: English Housing Survey, full household sample

Employment status

3.7 Full-time workers had lived in their current home for an average of 3.4 years, a much shorter period than the average 13.9 years that retirees had lived in their homes. This is likely to be driven by age, with more, older retirees living in homes with a regulated tenancy than younger full-time workers, Annex Table 3.4.

Household size and type

3.8 Larger households had a shorter average residence length than smaller households. Single people living alone in the private rented sector had an average current residence length of 5.6 years while households with six people or more had lived in their homes for an average of 3.2 years, Annex Table 3.5.

3.9 Households in the private rented sector with dependent children had lived in their current home for an average of 3.4 years, while households without children had a slightly longer average length of current residence at 4.8 years. This may be a reflection of the fact that families have moved more recently to

accommodate their changing needs (e.g. to get more space), Annex Table 3.6.

Length of initial tenancy agreement

3.10 The majority (81%) of private renters reported that their initial tenancy agreement was for 12 months or less (just over one third (36%) said they had an initial agreement of six months while 45% said that their initial tenancy agreement was for 12 months)¹⁷. Longer (18 month) initial contracts were comparatively rare and only reported by 4% of private tenants, Annex Table 3.7.

Household size

3.11 Six month initial tenancies were common among single person households (41%). This is significantly higher than the 25% and 26% of five and six person households respectively that began on a six month tenancy agreement, Annex Table 3.8.

Housing moves

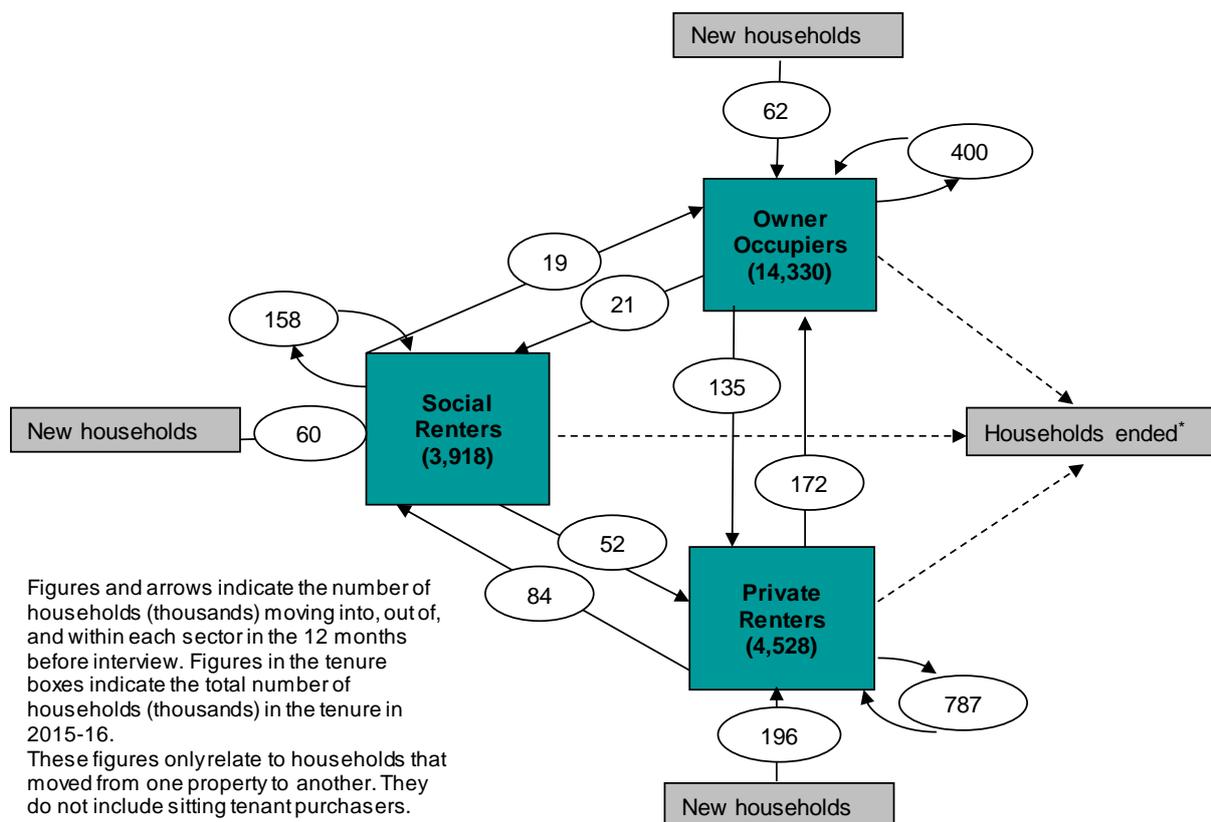
3.12 In 2015-16, across all tenures, 2.1 million households had moved home in the previous 12 months. Of these, 317,000 were new households, 1.3 million (63%) were moves within tenure and the remaining 483,000 were moves between tenures¹⁸.

3.13 The greatest number of household moves occurred within, into or out of the private rented sector. In total, 787,000 households moved within the tenure (i.e. from one privately rented home to another) and 196,000 new households were created. There were 187,000 moves into the sector, of which 72%, (135,000) were from owner occupation. There were 256,000 moves out of the sector, with 67% (172,000) of these moving to owner occupied accommodation and 84,000 moving into the social rented sector, Figure 3.2.

¹⁷ Length of tenancy is self-reported. Respondents were not asked to check their tenancy agreement to verify.

¹⁸ English Housing Survey Headline Report, 2015-16 Annex Table 1.19

Figure 3.2. Housing moves, by tenure, 2015-16



Base: all households

Notes:

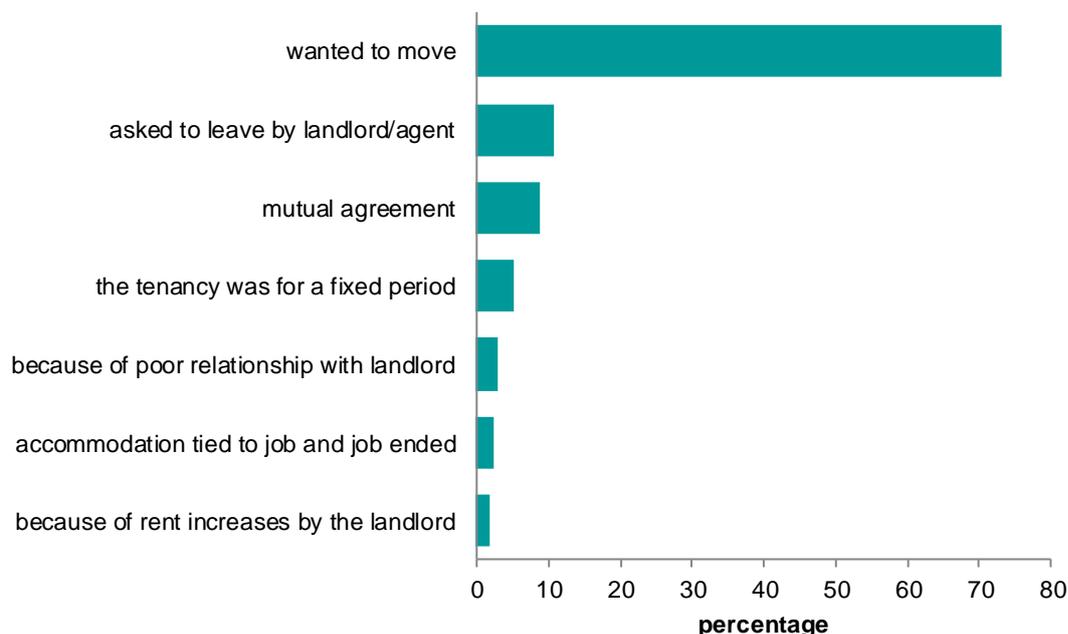
- 1) underlying data are presented in English Housing Survey Headline Report, 2015-16 Annex Table 1.19
- 2) a small number of cases with inconsistent responses have been omitted
- 3) * the survey cannot identify the number of households which have ended

Source: English Housing Survey, full household sample

Why last tenancy ended

- 3.14 When asked about their most recent move, most private renters said that their last tenancy ended because they wanted it to (73%). A tenth (11%) said that their landlord or agent ended the tenancy, Figure 3.3 and Annex Table 3.9.
- 3.15 Smaller proportions left the property by mutual agreement (9%), because their tenancy was for a fixed period (5%), because of a poor relationship with the landlord (3%), because of rent increases by the landlord (2%), or because their accommodation was tied to a job which ended (2%).

Figure 3.3: Reason last tenancy ended, private renters, 2015-16



Base: all households in the private rented sector who had moved in the last three years

Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 3.9

Sources: English Housing Survey, full household sample

Household type

- 3.16 Households with dependent children were more likely to say their last tenancy ended because of a poor relationship with the landlord than households without dependent children (5% compared to 2%). They were also less likely than households without dependent children to say that they left by mutual agreement (5% compared to 11%), Annex Table 3.10.
- 3.17 Where respondents cited several reasons for having moved, they were asked to say what their main reason was. The two most common responses were because they wanted to move to a smaller, larger or better accommodation (26%) or for reasons related to their job (17%). Family and other personal reasons accounted for 15% of moves with another 12% moved because they wanted to move to a better neighbourhood and 9% because their landlord made them, Annex Table 3.11.
- 3.18 Households with dependent children were more likely to move because they wanted a smaller, larger or better house (37% compared to 20% of households without children), Annex Table 3.12.
- 3.19 Among the 11% of private renters who had moved in the last three years because their landlord had asked them to, roughly two thirds (63%) were asked to leave because the landlord wanted to use or sell the property, Annex Table 3.13.

Social housing waiting lists

- 3.20 Some 7% of households in the private rented sector included at least one person who was on a social housing waiting list, Annex Table 3.14.
- 3.21 The proportion of households including someone on a council or housing association waiting list was higher among households with dependent children. Three times as many households with a dependent child (12%) contained someone on a council or housing association waiting list as households without a dependent child (4%), Annex Table 3.15.

Future buying expectations

- 3.22 In 2015-16, 59% of private renters (2.6 million households) expected to buy at some point in the future. This proportion was higher than for social renters, of whom 27% (1.0 million households) expected to buy.
- 3.23 Between 2014-15 and 2015-16, there was no change in the proportion of private renters who expected to buy¹⁹, though the proportion of social renters who expected to buy increased from 24% to 27%.
- 3.24 Those who did not expect to buy were asked why, and those who gave more than one reason were asked their main reason. Among private renters who did not expect to buy, 69% said that they did not expect to be able to afford it. Of those who gave more than one reason, 70% said affordability was their main reason, up from 56% in 2008-09²⁰.

¹⁹ The apparent increase between 2014-15 and 2015-16 in the proportion of private renters who expect to buy (from 57% to 59%) is not statistically significant.

²⁰ For full analysis of renters' buying expectations see English Housing Survey Future home owners report, 2015-16 Annex Tables 1.1, 1.2, 1.29 and 1.30.

Chapter 4

Dwelling condition and energy efficiency

4.1 In 2015, the private rented sector comprised of 4.7 million homes, 20% of the total housing stock. Around 479,000 (10%) of these homes were vacant at the time of the survey, Live Table DA1101. This chapter examines the overall energy efficiency of the private rented sector and the condition of these homes using a number of housing quality indicators; the Decent Homes standard, the level of disrepair, the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) and electrical safety. The final section explores the prevalence of working smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors. For all of these measures the performance of the private rented sector is compared with other tenures.

Energy efficiency

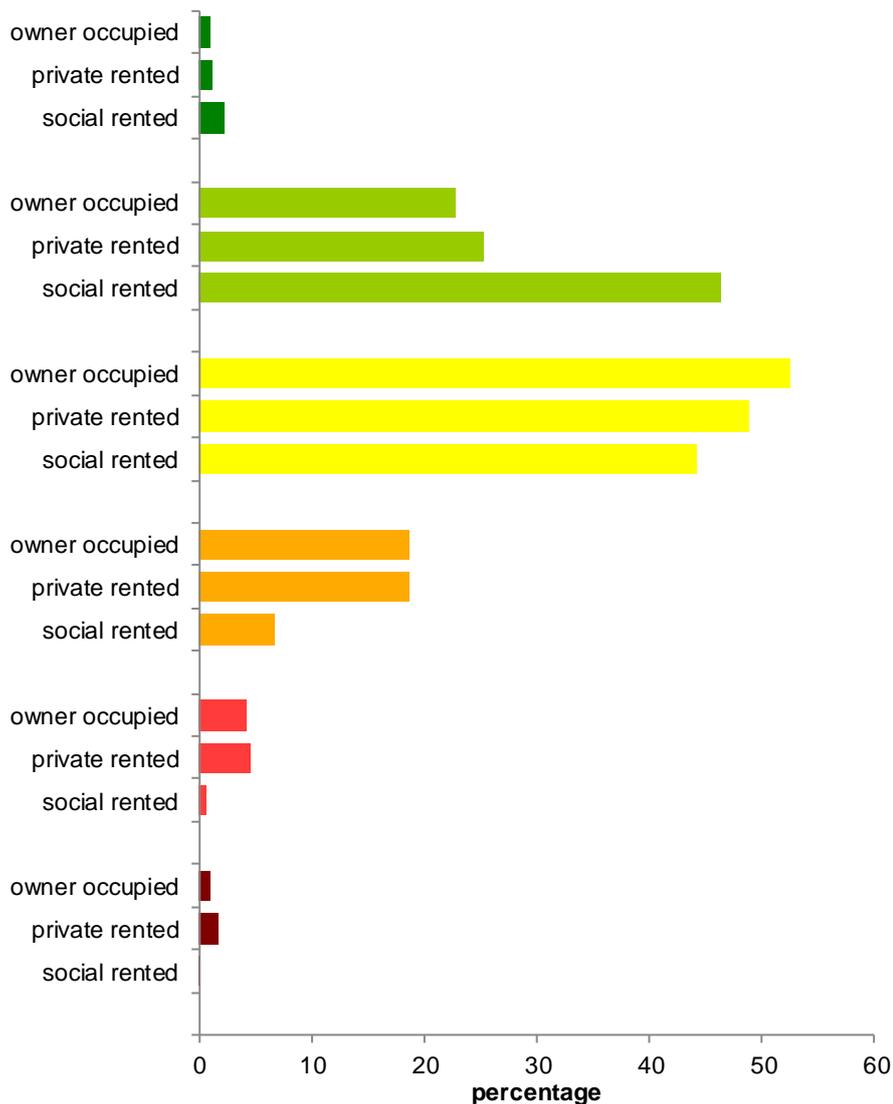
- 4.2 The Government's Standard Assessment procedure (SAP) monitors how energy efficient a dwelling is and allows comparisons between different dwellings to be made. SAP is expressed on a scale from 1 (very inefficient) to 100, where 100 represents zero energy cost. The Energy Efficiency Rating (EER) is derived by classifying the SAP ratings into an A to G banding system where band A represents low energy costs and band G represents high energy costs²¹.
- 4.3 In 2015, the average SAP rating among private rented homes was 60. This average rating was similar to owner occupied homes, although the distribution of EER bands varied. Overall the private rented stock was less energy efficient than the social rented stock which had an average SAP rating of 67. This difference is partly explained by the private rented sector having an 'older' housing stock which is generally less well insulated, Annex Table 4.1.
- 4.4 Measures to improve the energy efficiency of domestic private rented properties in England were introduced in 2015²². From 1 April 2018, private sector landlords must ensure that their properties have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of at least band E before granting a tenancy to new or existing tenants. By 1 April 2020, all private rented homes (including those with existing tenancies) must have a minimum EPC band E rating. The regulations include a number of exemptions to the minimum standard.

²¹ For further information on SAP see English Housing Survey Technical Report, 2015-16.

²² The Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) (England and Wales) Regulations 2015

- 4.5 Around 6% (298,000) of private rented homes had an EER rating band F or G in 2015. A similar proportion of owner occupied homes had these lowest energy efficiency bands but the proportion was notably lower for social sector homes (1%), Figure 4.1.
- 4.6 At the other end of the scale around a quarter of the private rented stock (26% or 1.3 million) had the highest EER bands of A to C, a slightly higher proportion than owner occupied homes (24%), but a much lower proportion compared with the social sector (48%).

Figure 4.1: Energy efficiency rating bands, by tenure, 2015



Base: all dwellings

Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 4.1

Source: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

Dwelling condition

Decent Homes²³

4.7 Over a quarter (28%) of private rented homes failed to meet the Decent Homes standard in 2015. The comparative figures for the owner occupied and social sectors were 18% and 13% respectively. Although the private rented sector has always performed less well than other tenures using this measure of housing quality, there was a marked improvement in the proportion of non-decent private rented homes over the 2006 to 2013 period from 47% to 30%²⁴. Since then the proportion of non-decent homes in the sector has remained virtually unchanged.

Disrepair

4.8 The following analysis uses EHS standardised basic repair costs in square metres (£/m²) to provide comparative levels of medium term disrepair for each tenure. This repair cost indicator is different to that used to calculate whether a home meets the repair criterion of the Decent Homes standard²⁵.

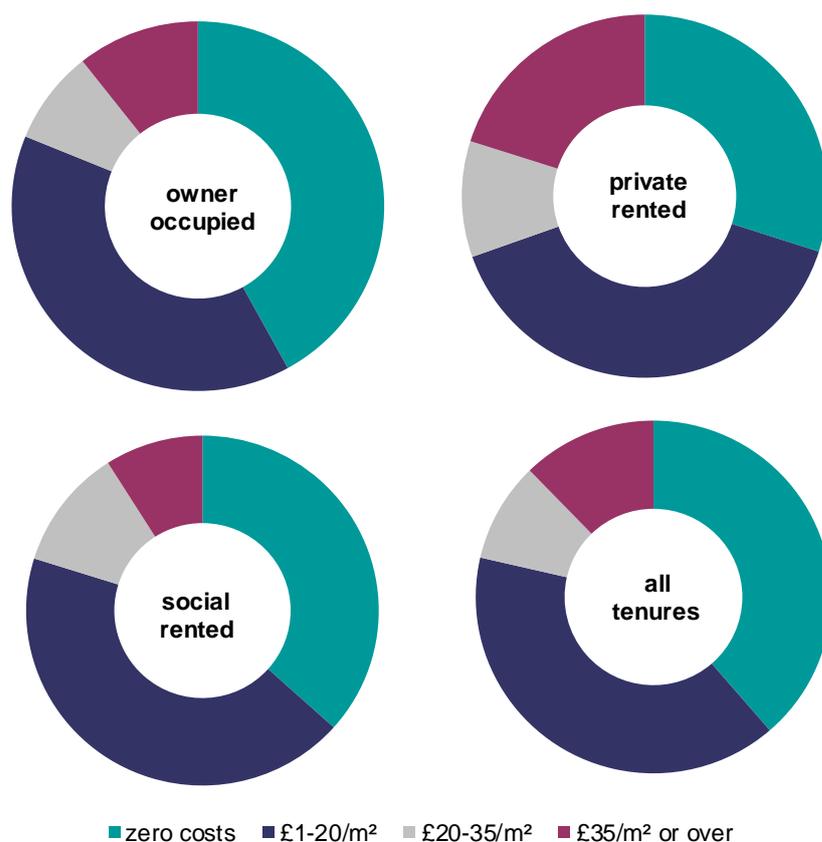
4.9 In 2015, 30% of private rented homes had no repair costs but 20% had serious levels of disrepair of £35/m² or over, Figure 4.2.

²³ For further information on the Decent Homes standard see English Housing Survey Technical Report, 2015-16.

²⁴ See English Housing Survey Headline Report, 2015-16 Annex Table 2.3

²⁵ See English Housing Survey Technical Report, 2015-16 for further information

Figure 4.2: Distribution of standardised basic repair costs, by tenure, 2015



Base: all dwellings

Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 4.2

Source: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

4.10 Overall, private rented homes were less well maintained compared with other housing stock. Owner occupied and social rented homes were more likely to have no required repair work and less likely to have serious levels of disrepair of £35/m² or over.

4.11 Despite this relatively poorer performance for private rented dwellings, there have been marked improvements in the level of disrepair within the sector since 2001; details can be found in Chapter 1 of the English Housing Survey 'Potential for stock improvements' report, published alongside this report.

Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)

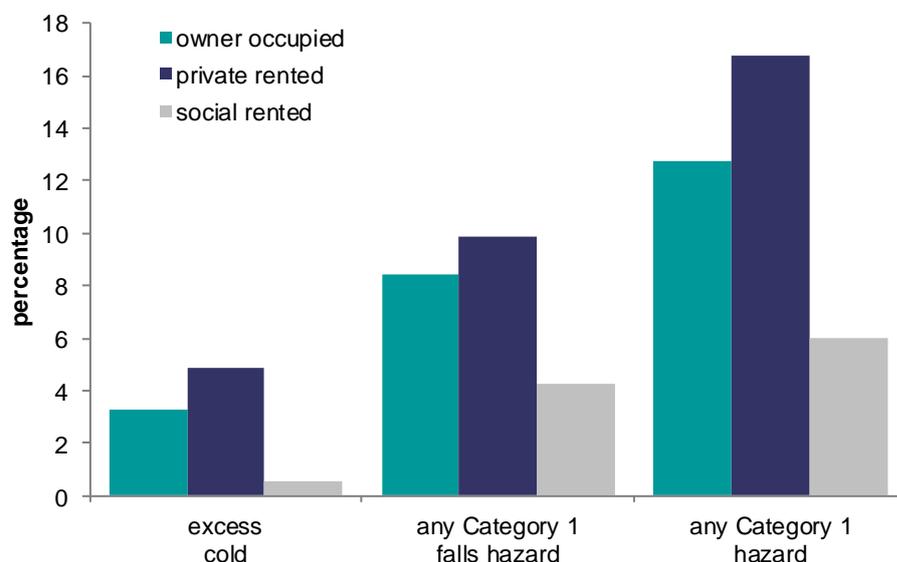
4.12 The HHSRS is a risk-based assessment tool that identifies hazards in dwellings and evaluates their potential effects on the health and safety of occupants and their visitors, particularly vulnerable people. It is used to assess whether a dwelling meets the statutory minimum standard for housing in England²⁶. This section firstly explores the most common types of hazard;

²⁶ For further information on the HHSRS see English Housing Survey Technical Report, 2015-16.

excess cold and falls before reporting on the prevalence of any Category 1 hazard.

- 4.13 In 2015, 10% of private rented homes failed to meet the statutory minimum standard for housing due to the serious risk of harm from a fall. This proportion was similar for owner occupied homes (8%) but higher than social rented homes (4%), Figure 4.3.
- 4.14 Living in a cold home can have a significant adverse effect on the physical and mental well-being of occupants. The EHS estimates whether a dwelling poses a threat to health arising from sub-optimal indoor temperatures using SAP. In 2015, 5% of private rented homes had a risk of excess cold, a higher proportion than both owner occupied (3%) and social rented homes (1%).
- 4.15 In view of the above findings it is not surprising that a higher proportion of private rented dwellings (17%) had at least one Category 1 hazard compared with owner occupied (13%) and social sector homes (6%). There are likely to be several reasons for this including the different distributions in the age and type of dwellings in each sector; for example, older homes which are more prevalent in the private rented sector, tend to be less well insulated. The private rented sector also has the highest proportion of converted flats which tend to suffer from poorer dwelling design and lower energy efficiency. The above findings on disrepair also show that the social rented stock was generally better maintained.

Figure 4.3: Category 1 hazards, by tenure, 2015



Base: all dwellings

Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 4.2

Source: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

Electrical safety²⁷

- 4.16 The EHS records the presence of five key electrical safety features; modern wiring, modern earthing, a modern consumer unit arrangement, miniature circuit breakers for overload protection and residual current devices which break electrical circuits when an ‘abnormality’ is detected such as a person touching a live wire.
- 4.17 By law, private landlords must ensure electrical installations and wiring are maintained in a safe condition throughout the tenancy²⁸. In 2015, 60% of private rented homes had all five of these safety features. Although this provision was lower compared with the social sector (75%), it was similar to owner occupied homes (58%), Annex Table 4.2.

Smoke alarms

- 4.18 Landlords are responsible for providing a working smoke alarm for each floor level at the start of each new tenancy; thereafter responsibility for on-going smoke alarm testing rests with the tenant²⁹.
- 4.19 In 2015-16, 83% of private renters had at least one working smoke alarm. They were less likely to have a working smoke alarm than social renters (94%) or owner occupiers (89%)³⁰.

Carbon monoxide detectors

- 4.20 The EHS now records information on the presence of carbon monoxide detectors. In 2015, 21% of all private rented homes had this feature compared with 28% of social rented and 31% of owner occupied dwellings³¹.
- 4.21 This analysis has been refined to examine the prevalence of carbon monoxide detectors in homes where there is a potential risk of carbon monoxide poisoning; all homes with a mains gas supply, and all homes using solid fuel, oil, bottled gas or liquid petroleum gas for primary or secondary heating or hot water heating.
- 4.22 Using this approach, around 24% of private rented homes had a carbon monoxide detector, which was lower than the provision in both social rented and owner occupied dwellings (32%), Annex Table 4.3.
- 4.23 From October 2015, private sector landlords are required to have a carbon monoxide detector in any room containing a solid fuel burning appliance (e.g.

²⁷ 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.

²⁸ Additional requirements for houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) will apply.

²⁹ With regards to HMOs, the main legislation is the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

³⁰ See English Housing Survey Headline Report, 2015-16 Annex Table 2.16

³¹ See English Housing Survey Headline Report, 2015-16 Annex Table 2.18

a coal fire, wood burning stove). In 2015, 25%³² of private rented dwellings with a solid fuel appliance had a carbon monoxide detector³³. As so few dwellings, particularly those in the social sector, have solid fuel appliances, it is not possible to provide tenure comparisons.

³² See English Housing Survey Headline Report, 2015-16 Annex Table 2.18

³³ This report is based on data collected from April 2014 to March 2016 and therefore includes a time period before the relevant legislation came into force.

Technical notes and glossary

Technical notes

1. Results for the first three chapters of this report, on households, are presented for '2015-16' and are based on fieldwork carried out between April 2015 and March 2016 on a sample of 13,468 households. Throughout the report, this is referred to as the 'full household sample'.
2. Results in the last chapter of the report, which relate to the physical dwelling, are presented for '2015' and are based on fieldwork carried out between April 2014 and March 2016 (a mid-point of April 2015). The sample comprises 12,351 occupied or vacant dwellings where a physical inspection was carried out. Throughout the report, this is referred to as the 'dwelling 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/collections/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.

Weighting methodology

6. The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) revised the weighting process on the English Housing Survey (EHS) going forward from 2015-16. The aim of the revision was to improve the stability of year-on-year estimates including household numbers. This new approach to weighing was approved by 'external' experts on the EHS Technical Advisory Group.
7. The improved weighting methodology was necessary because the initial weighted household counts increased considerably between 2014-15 and 2015-16 (by

361,583 additional households, 344,921 of which were in the private rented sector). The provisional 'grossed' dwelling and household estimates showed that, between 2014-15 and 2015-16, there were two additional households for every one additional dwelling (the number of dwellings increased by 180,814). This appeared implausible when compared with an expected household growth of up to 200,000 per year as indicated by the Household Projections³⁴.

8. NatCen (the current EHS contractor) investigated and advised that some of the year-on-year variation in the initial weighted household counts was due to sampling variation in the data used in the weighting. The household weights are dependent on estimates of 'dwelling-to-household' ratios, which are subject to sampling variation. (This differs from the weighted dwelling counts that are controlled to 'external' DCLG estimates of dwellings by tenure and region.)
9. 'Dwelling-to-household' ratios vary by tenure and by year, Table T.1. In 2015-16, the average ratio increased from 1.0062 to 1.0129, resulting in a large increase in the grossed household counts between 2014-15 and 2015-16.

Table T.1: Dwelling-to-household ratio by tenure, 2013-14 to 2015-16

all households

	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16 (before revision)
owner occupiers	1.0039	1.0013	1.0013
private rented	1.0600	1.0239	1.0670
local authority	1.0092	1.0103	1.0053
housing association	1.0091	1.0033	1.0079
total	1.0139	1.0062	1.0129

Source: English Housing Survey, full household sample

10. To reduce the year-on-year variation, the dwelling-to-household ratio was re-calculated by smoothing across two years of the EHS (2015-16 and 2014-15). The revised (smoothed) weights were used for producing the published EHS findings³⁵. Smoothing across two years was preferred to smoothing across more years because the EHS sample uses a two year cycle whereby England is divided into 1,808 primary sampling units (PSUs) and interviewing takes places in the same 904 PSUs every other year.
11. When smoothed across two survey years, the average dwelling-to-household ratio reduced from 1.0129 to 1.0096, Table T.2. To assess the stability of the new methodology in producing less variable ratios across years, the 2014-15 ratio

³⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/household-projections>

³⁵ Both the household and the dwelling weights were revised because the dwelling-to-household ratio also has a minor role in the computation of the latter. The impact of the revision of the dwelling weights was very small.

was also re-calculated using the same methodology (i.e. smoothing over 2 years: 2013-14 and 2014-15). As can be seen in the table below, the ratio appears quite stable (1.0100 in 2014-15 compared with 1.0096 in 2015-16).

Table T.2: Dwelling-to-household ratio by tenure, 2013-14 to 2015-16

<i>all households</i>	2014-15	2015-16
owner occupiers	1.0012	1.0022
private rented	1.0467	1.0425
local authority	1.0087	1.0102
housing association	1.0049	1.0059
total	1.0096	1.0100

Source: English Housing Survey, full household sample

12. This new approach to weighting was approved by external experts on the EHS Technical Advisory Group. It is considered to be the most robust and practical solution to the year-on-year inconsistencies observed in the household estimates. We expect to continue to smooth the weights in future waves of the EHS. The EHS team at DCLG, with NatCen and the EHS Technical Advisory Group, will review the further options to improve the weighting methodology. If you would like to share your views on the EHS weighting strategy, please contact: ehs@communities.gsi.gov.uk.

13. More detail on the EHS methodology can be found in the technical report³⁶.

Glossary

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

Assured shorthold private tenancy: This type of tenancy is where the landlord can regain possession of the property six months after the beginning of the tenancy, as long as they provide the tenant with two months' notice.

Assured private tenancy: This type of tenancy is where the tenant has the right to remain in the property unless the landlord can prove they have grounds for possession. The landlord does not have an automatic right to repossess the property when the tenancy comes to an end.

Basic repair costs: Basic repairs include urgent work required in the short term to tackle problems presenting a risk to health, safety, security or further significant

³⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/english-housing-survey-technical-advice>

deterioration plus any additional work that will become necessary within the next five years. See Chapter 5, Annex 5 of the Technical Report for more information about how these are calculated and assumptions made.

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

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

The detailed definition for each of these criteria is included in *A Decent Home: Definition and guidance for implementation*, Department for Communities and Local Government, June 2006³⁷.

Dependent children: Any person aged 0 to 15 in a household (whether or not in a family) or a person aged 16 to 18 in full-time education and living in a family with his or her parent(s) or grandparent(s). It does not include any people aged 16 to 18 who have a spouse, partner or child living in the household.

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

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

Dwellings that do not meet these conditions are unshared dwellings.

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

³⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-decent-home-definition-and-guidance>

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

- **working full-time/part-time:** full-time work is defined as 30 or more hours per week. Part-time work is fewer than 30 hours per week. Where more than one answer is given, 'working' takes priority over other categories (with the exception that all those over State Pension Age (SPA) who regard themselves as retired are classified as such, regardless of what other answers they give).
- **unemployed:** this category covers people who were registered unemployed or not registered unemployed but seeking work.
- **retired:** this category includes all those over the state pension age who reported being retired as well as some other activity. For men the SPA is 65 and for women it is 60 if they were born before 6th April 1950. For women born on or after the 6th April 1950, the state pension age has increased incrementally since April 2010³⁸.
- **full-time education:** education undertaken in pursuit of a course, where an average of more than 12 hours per week is spent during term time.
- **other inactive:** all others; they include people who were permanently sick or disabled, those looking after the family or home and any other activity.

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

Electrical safety:

- **wiring:** this is the cabling from the input electrical supply point, which runs through the meters and consumer units and leading out into the dwelling. The earliest types of wiring used lead or black rubber sheathings to enclose the wires. The danger with this type of cable is the degrading of the rubber: any failure of the insulation can cause the outer covering to become live. Modern wiring is PVC sheathed.
- **earthing:** these are the wires joining the components at the electrical distribution centre. The early forms of earthing wires were unsheathed then later covered with green rubber, then green plastic. In 1977 the colour convention changed and all wires had to be coloured green and yellow.
- **consumer unit arrangement (fuse boxes):** in older systems, each individual electrical circuit was fed through an individual switch and fuse box. From 1960s through to the 1980s, fuses were collected together into a small number of smaller boxes, normally with a switch on the front which controlled all the circuits leading to the box. These boxes were normally fitted with a cover, the removal of

³⁸ For further information see: www.gov.uk/browse/working/state-pension

which gave access to the fuses hidden inside. From the early 1980s, the newly named consumer unit (some dwellings have two) catered for the whole dwelling and was also designed to accommodate modern safety measures namely circuit breakers and residual current devices.

- **overload protection / miniature circuit breakers (MCBs):** these provide the most modern form of electrical current overload protection by detecting a fault condition and interrupting the current flow. MCBs replaced cartridge fuses and the original wire fuses (these simply melt when overheated) which formed the earliest form of protection.
- **residual current devices (RCDs):** these are designed to break an electrical current very easily by detecting any abnormality in the circuit, for example, through someone touching a live wire. They are normally located in the consumer unit but a separate RCD may exist to protect an additional circuit, for example, an electrical circuit used in the garden.

Energy efficiency rating: A dwelling's energy costs per m² of floor area for standard occupancy of a dwelling and a standard heating regime and is calculated from the survey using a simplified form of SAP. The energy costs take into account the costs of space and water heating, ventilation and lighting, less cost savings from energy generation technologies. They do not take into account variation in geographical location. The rating is expressed on a scale of 1-100 where a dwelling with a rating of 1 has poor energy efficiency (high costs) and a dwelling with a rating of 100 represents zero net energy cost per year. It is possible for a dwelling to have a SAP rating of over 100 where it produces more energy than it consumes, although such dwellings will be rare within the English housing stock.

The detailed methodology for calculating SAP to monitor the energy efficiency of dwellings was updated in 2012 to reflect developments in the energy efficiency technologies and knowledge of dwelling energy performance. These changes in the SAP methodology were relatively minor compared with previous SAP methodology updates in 2005 and 2009. It means, however that a SAP rating using the 2009 method is not directly comparable to one calculated under the 2012 methodology, and it would be incorrect to do so. All SAP statistics used in reporting from 2014 are based on the SAP 2012 methodology and this includes time series data from 1996 to the current reporting period (i.e. the SAP 2012 methodology has been retrospectively applied to 1996 and subsequent survey data to provide consistent results in the 2013 and following reports).

Energy efficiency rating (EER) bands: The 1-100 SAP energy efficiency rating is also presented in an A-G banding system for an Energy Performance Certificate, where Band A rating represents low energy costs (i.e. the most efficient band) and Band G rating represents high energy costs (the least efficient band). The break points in SAP (see below) used for the EER Bands are:

- Band A (92–100)

-
- Band B (81–91)
 - Band C (69–80)
 - Band D (55–68)
 - Band E (39–54)
 - Band F (21–38)
 - Band G (1–20)

Energy Performance Certificate (EPC): Based on current energy performance the EPC provides a range of indicators, such as whether the property would benefit in terms of improved performance from a range of heating, insulation and lighting upgrades and the likely performance arising from the application of those measures.

The EPC assessment is based on a simplified form of the energy efficiency SAP known as reduced data SAP (RdSAP). Following revisions to the way that RdSAP software implements improvements as part of the EPC production process, a new EPC methodology has been applied to the EHS 2015 data. Several additional improvement measures have been added to the methodology, and for some existing measures the criteria and/or improvement specification has changed (see the Technical Report for further information).

The EHS currently provides the following EPC based indicators, calculated using the survey's own approach to SAP (see the Technical Report for further information):

- **current and post improvement performance:**
 - *energy efficiency rating (EER) and bands*
 - *environmental impact rating (EIR) and bands*
 - *primary energy use (kWh/m²/year)*
 - *energy cost (£/year) for space heating, water heating, lighting and renewables*
 - *CO₂ (carbon dioxide) emissions (tonnes/year)*
- **improvement measures:** The Technical Report provides a list of improvements specified in the updated EHS methodology. These include loft insulation measures, wall and floor insulation measures, boiler upgrades, solar water heating, glazing and lighting measures. They are also listed in the relevant Annex Table.
- **the notional costs of installing the recommended measures:** The EHS also estimates the notional costs of installing each of the recommended measures and the total cost of applying all the recommended measures to the dwelling stock. The methodology for estimating these costs has also been revised (see the Technical Report for further information).

Ethnicity: Classification according to respondents' own perceived ethnic group.

Ethnic minority background is used throughout the report to refer to those respondents who do not identify as White.

The classification of ethnic group used in the EHS is consistent with the 2011 Census. Respondents are classified as White if they answer one of the following four options:

1. English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British
2. Irish
3. Gypsy or Irish Traveller
4. Any Other White background

Otherwise, they are classified as being from an ethnic minority background.

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

Gross income of the HRP and partner: The gross annual income of the HRP and partner from wages, pensions, other private sources, savings and state benefits. This does not include any housing related benefits or allowances. This measure is divided by 52 to calculate weekly income. Income is presented in quintiles throughout this report (see income quintiles definition – below).

Gross household income: The gross annual income of all adults living in a household from wages, pensions, other private sources, savings and state benefits. This does not include any housing related benefits or allowances. This measure is divided by 52 to calculate weekly income. Income is presented in quintiles throughout this report (see income quintiles definition – below).

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

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

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

same, the older is taken as HRP, or if they are the same age, HRP is the first listed on the questionnaire.

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

- couple no dependent child(ren)
- couple with dependent child(ren)
- couple with dependent and independent child(ren)
- couple with independent child(ren)
- lone parent with dependent child(ren)
- lone parent with dependent and independent child(ren)
- lone parent with independent child(ren)
- two or more families
- lone person sharing with other lone persons
- one male
- one female

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

Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS): A risk assessment tool used to assess potential risks to the health and safety of occupants in residential properties in England and Wales. It replaced the Fitness Standard in April 2006.

The purpose of the HHSRS assessment³⁹ is not to set a standard but to generate objective information in order to determine and inform enforcement decisions. There are 29 categories of hazard, each of which is separately rated, based on the risk to the potential occupant who is most vulnerable to that hazard. The individual hazard scores are grouped into 10 bands where the highest bands (A-C representing scores of 1,000 or more) are considered to pose Category 1 hazards. Local authorities have a duty to act where Category 1 hazards are present, and may take into account the vulnerability of the actual occupant in determining the best course of action.

For the purposes of the decent homes standard, homes posing a Category 1 hazard are non-decent on its criterion that a home must meet the statutory minimum requirements.

The EHS is not able to replicate the HHSRS assessment in full as part of a large scale survey. Its assessment employs a mix of hazards that are directly assessed by

³⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-communities-and-local-government/series/housing-health-and-safety-rating-system-hhsrs-guidance>

surveyors in the field and others that are indirectly assessed from detailed related information collected. For 2006 and 2007, the survey (the then English House Condition Survey) produced estimates based on 15 of the 29 hazards. From 2008, the survey is able to provide a more comprehensive assessment based on 26 of the 29 hazards. See the EHS Technical Note on Housing and Neighbourhood Conditions⁴⁰ for a list of the hazards covered.

Income (equivalised): Household incomes have been ‘equivalised’, that is adjusted (using the modified Organisation Economic Co-operation and Development scale) to reflect the number of people in a household. This allows the comparison of incomes for households with different sizes and compositions.

The EHS variables are modelled to produce a **Before Housing Costs (BHC)** income measure for the purpose of equivalisation. The BHC income variable includes:

Household Reference Person and partner’s income from benefits and private sources (including income from savings), income from other household members, housing benefit, winter fuel payment and the deduction of net council tax payment.

An **After Housing Costs (AHC)** income is derived by deducting rent and mortgage payments from the BHC measure.

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

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

Median income: the amount that divides the income distribution into two equal groups, half having income above that amount, and half having income below that amount.

New household: Where neither the household reference person (HRP) nor their spouse/partner occupied the HRP’s previous permanent accommodation, in either of their names. The EHS does not differentiate between previous accommodation within England and outside of England (including abroad).

Non-dependent children: any person aged over 18 or those aged 16-18 who are not in full-time education living in a family with his or her parent(s) or grandparent(s).

⁴⁰https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/211302/Housing_and_Neighbourhood_Conditions.pdf

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

SAP: The energy cost rating as determined by Government's Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) is used to monitor the energy efficiency of dwellings. It is an index based on calculated energy costs for a standard heating regime and is expressed on a scale of 1 (highly inefficient) to 100 (highly efficient with 100 representing zero energy cost). It is possible for a dwelling to have a SAP rating of over 100 where it produces more energy than it consumes although such dwellings will be rare within the English housing stock.

The method for calculating SAP was comprehensively updated in 2005 and in 2009 with an update of a more minor nature in 2012. This new SAP 2012 methodology is used in this report.

Socio-economic groups: The EHS uses the eight-class version of the National Statistics Socio-economic Classification (NS-SEC). The eight classes are:

- Higher managerial and professional occupations
- Lower managerial and professional occupations
- Intermediate occupations (clerical, sales, service)
- Small employers and own account workers
- Lower supervisory and technical occupations
- Semi-routine occupations
- Routine occupations
- Never worked or long-term unemployed.

No EHS respondent is assigned to the last class because the survey does not collect enough information to code to someone as never worked or long-term unemployed.

Substantial disrepair: Standardised basic repair costs of more than £35/m². Standardised repair costs measure repair costs expressed in pounds per square metre of floor area

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).

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

In accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 the United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, signifying that they are fully compliant 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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