



Ministry of Housing,  
Communities &  
Local Government

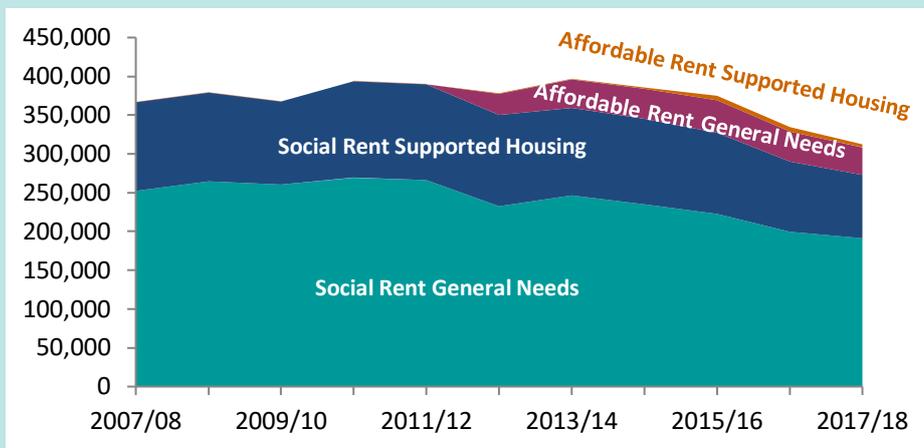
# Social Housing Lettings: April 2017 to March 2018, England



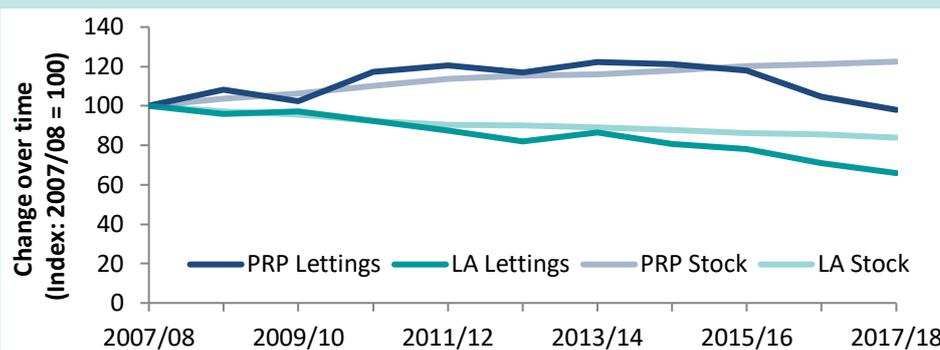
## Housing Statistical Release

28 November 2018

- There were a total 313,000 new social housing lettings in 2017/18, a 6% decrease on the previous year. 1 in 94 people in England moved in social housing in 2017/18.



- New social housing lettings decreased by 15% whilst stock increased by 5% from 2007/08 to 2017/18. New lettings comprised 7% of stock in 2017/18, similar to the past decade.



- Two-thirds of new social housing lettings in 2017/18 were to tenants not living in social housing immediately previously. Statutorily homeless households comprised 18% of lettings.
- Three-quarters of new social housing households in 2017/18 were led by single adults, with 31% of lead tenants employed.
- Black households were over-represented in social housing, whilst Asian households were under-represented.
- Average rent for a new social letting in 2017/18 was £83 per week with households spending 34% of their income on rent.
- Two thirds of new social lettings in 2017/18 were lifetime.

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### What this report covers:

New social housing lettings in England by local authorities and private registered providers at social and affordable rents, with information on tenant characteristics, tenancy type and length, rents and rent burden.

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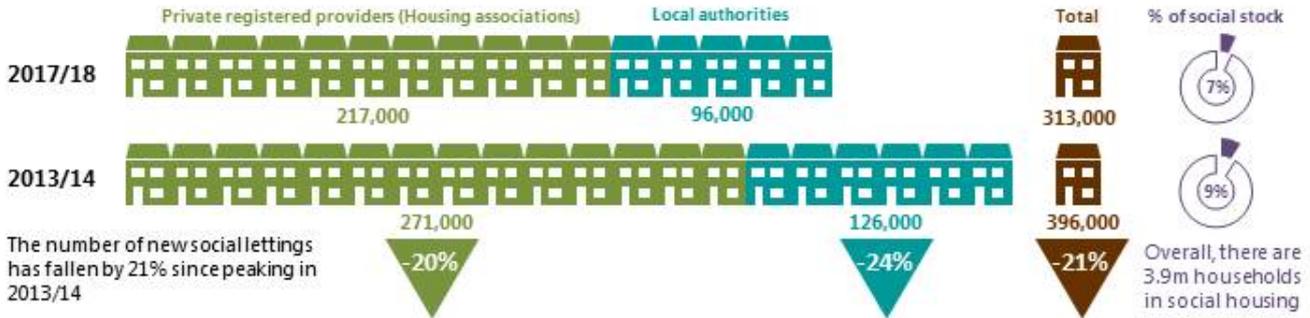
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### Date of next publication:

Autumn 2019

# New social housing lettings in England, 2017/18

## How many social housing properties are being newly let?



13% of new lettings are **Affordable Rent** – set at no more than 80% of local market rent



87% of new lettings are **Social Rent** – determined through national rent regime

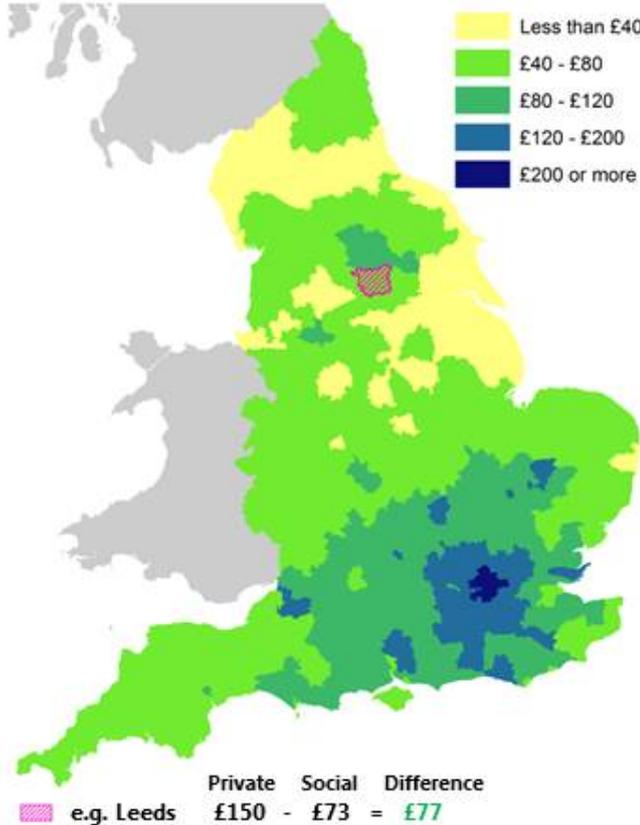
73% of new lettings are **General Needs** – no support arrangements



27% of new lettings are **Supported Housing** – designated support for specific client groups

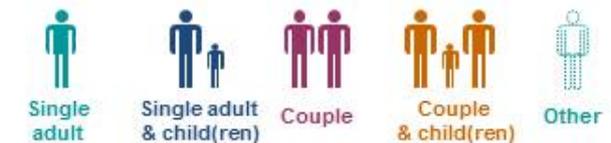
## How affordable is social housing?

Average difference between weekly rent for new Social Rent General Needs households and private sector rents (social rent lower)

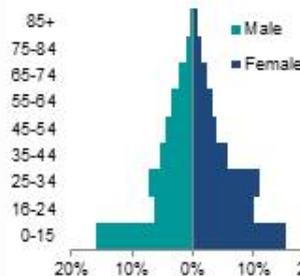


## Who is moving into social housing?

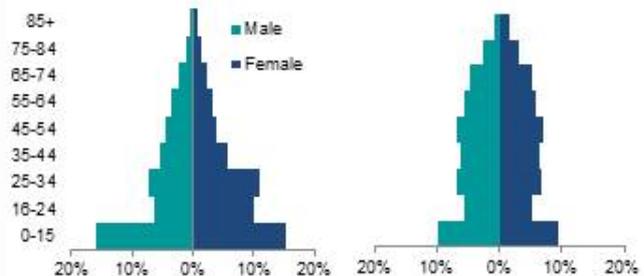
Household composition (%) of new lettings



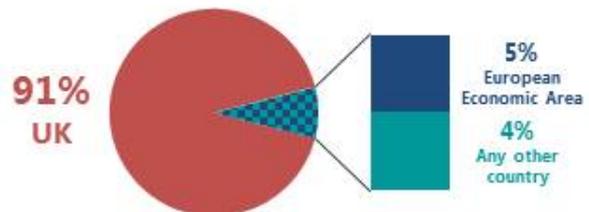
Age of new social tenants



Age of English population



Nationality of lead tenant (%) in new lettings



% of new lead tenants in employment



% of new households with indefinite length of tenancy



% of new lettings to White lead tenants



% of new lettings to statutorily homeless households



% of new households from private rented sector



For more information: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/social-housing-lettings-in-england-april-2017-to-march-2018>

Other sources: Local Authority Housing Statistics, Statistical Data Return, English Housing Survey, Private rental market statistics, Population estimates

# 1. Annual social housing lettings

In 2017/18, there were 313,000 new social housing lettings, a 6% decrease from the previous year. This continues the fall from the peak<sup>1</sup> of 397,000 new social housing lettings in 2013/14 (a 21% decrease).

New social housing lettings comprise part of the social rental sector:

- Of the 4.4 million social properties owned by local authorities and Private Registered Providers in England<sup>2</sup>, 7% were let to new tenants during the year.
- Of the 23.1 million households in England, approximately 3.9 million were social renters<sup>3</sup> (17%).

This release provides information on the characteristics of the tenants and tenancies for these new social housing lettings only.

The social rental sector accounted for 15% of all home moves in England, with 2.1 million households moving home across all tenures<sup>3</sup>.



313,000 new social lettings

## Lettings and stock

Map 1 shows total lettings as a percentage of total stock<sup>4</sup>, by local authority area, illustrating a generally higher proportion of stock were newly let (turnover of stock) in northern England than in the south. In many areas in and around London, less than 4% of social housing stocks were newly let in 2017/18, compared with areas such as Lancaster (15.3%), Burnley (13.5%) and Bradford (13.5%) which are the three local authorities that saw the highest levels of turnover in 2017/18.

<sup>1</sup> Since CORE data first collected in 2007/08

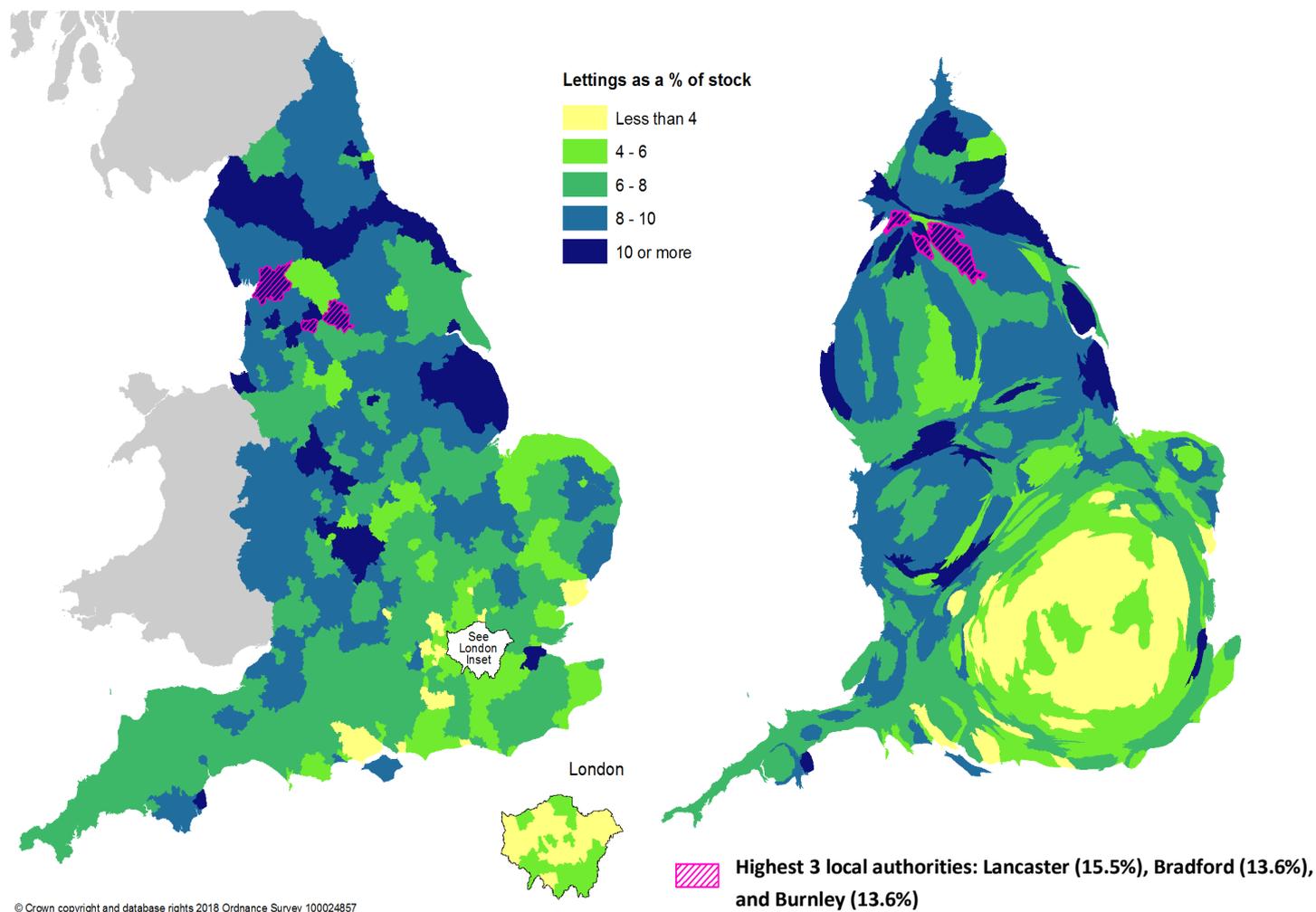
<sup>2</sup> Statistical Data Return (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistical-data-return-statistical-releases>) and Local Authority Housing Statistics data return 2017/18 – to be published in January 2019 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/local-authority-housing-data>)

<sup>3</sup> English Housing Survey, 2016/17

<sup>4</sup> Number of unit / bed spaces in a property

## Map 1: The social housing sector was more active in the North and West Midlands than in London in 2017/18

(Areas in the right-hand map are proportionate to total social housing stock)



## Social housing providers

There are two types of social housing providers: Local Authorities and Private Registered Providers. This section describes the key differences between these types of organisations and the lettings they provide.

### Definition: Social Housing Providers

#### Local Authority (LA)

Commonly known as “council housing”. Refers to social housing provided directly by Local Authorities.

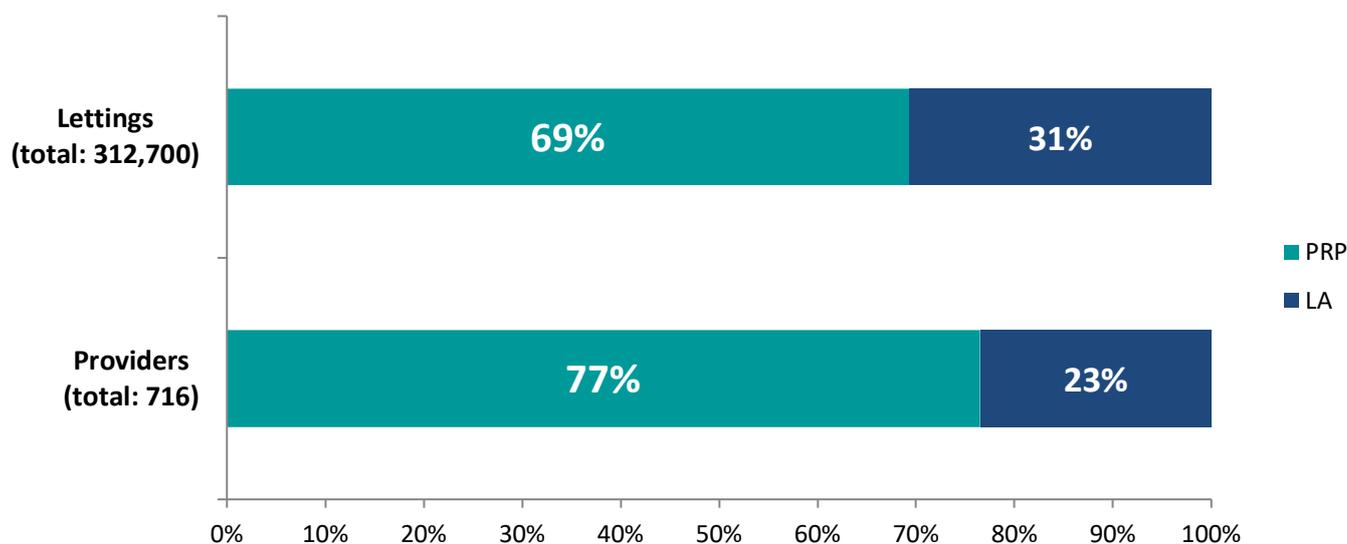
#### Private Rented Provider (PRP)

Commonly known as “housing associations”. These are providers of social housing who are not LAs and are registered with the regulator of social housing. They are private organisations.

In chart 1 below, we can see that PRPs accounted for 77% of providers of social housing in 2017/18, but only provided 69% of new lettings. On average each LA provided 570 new lettings in 2017/18 which is substantially higher than the 396 average for PRPs. This suggests that the average PRP services fewer households than the average LA.

Overall there are more than 1,400 PRPs in England (60% of which have been active for over 25 years), compared to 165 stock-owning local authorities<sup>5</sup>.

**Chart 1: Nearly 7 in 10 new social housing lettings in 2017/18 were by PRPs**



The total number of new social housing lettings peaked in 2013/14, and since then there has been a steady downward trend.

LA lettings in particular fell 34% over 10 years to 2017/18, which can in part be attributed to LA stock shrinking by 15%.<sup>6</sup> In contrast, PRP stock has grown by 25% during the same period,<sup>7</sup> which suggests other factors are responsible for the recent decline in new social lettings.

One explanation could be a fall in the number of vacant properties available to be re-let. A widening affordability gap between the social and private rental sectors, especially in London and the South East, discourages current social tenants from moving into private accommodation. As a result, turnover is lower in these areas.

For example, the average private sector rent in London was around £350 per week in 2016/17,<sup>8</sup> while in the North and Midlands it was around £125. The proportion of social housing stock re-let in London during the year was 4%, compared to 9% in the North or Midlands – the relative inactivity of the social housing market in London is presumably linked to the affordability (or lack thereof) of private sector tenancies in the area.

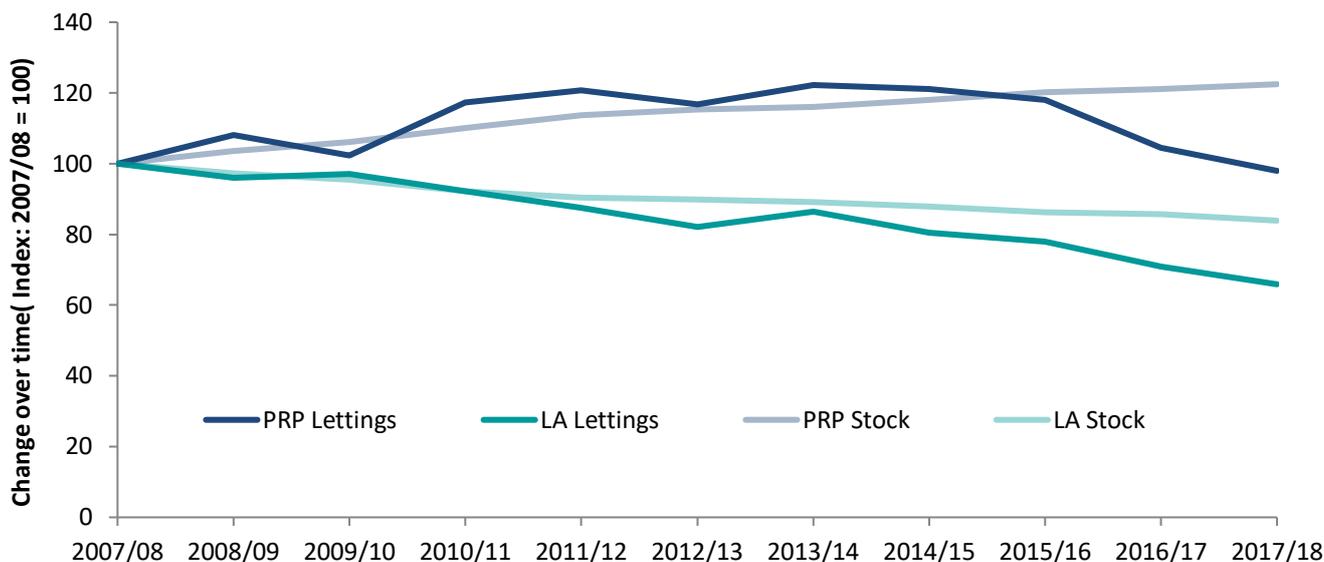
<sup>5</sup> Statistical Data Return (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistical-data-return-statistical-releases>) and Local Authority Housing Statistics data return 2017/18 – to be published in January 2019 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/local-authority-housing-data>)

<sup>6</sup> LAHS – due to Right to Buy sales and large scale voluntary transfers to PRPs.

<sup>7</sup> SDR – due to large scale voluntary transfers from LAs.

<sup>8</sup> Valuation Office Agency (VOA) <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/private-rental-market-statistics>

**Chart 2: New lettings by PRP's have fallen in the decade up to 2017/18 whilst stock rose, whereas both LA new lettings and stock fell**



## Housing type

Social housing can be broken down in many ways, by the type of organisation, support provided and the rent basis. The tenants in these different groups have different needs and characteristics.

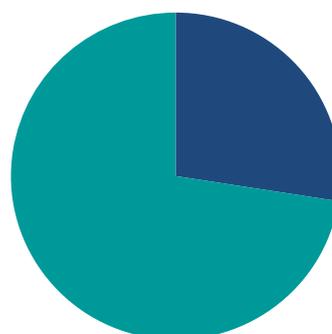
### Definition: Types of Housing

**Supported Housing (SH)** Housing with special design facilities or features targeted at a specific client group requiring support, for example housing designed for older people.

**General Needs (GN)** Covers the bulk of housing stock for rent and includes both self-contained and shared housing. It is stock that is not designated for specific client groups requiring support, or stock that does not have the special design features that are specific to Supported Housing.

The majority of new social housing lettings are not designed for a specific client group and are thus considered General Needs. These were by far the more common kind of social housing making up 73% of all new lettings in 2017/18. This proportion of General Needs lettings has remained constant around 70% for the last 10 years.

**Chart 3: Nearly three-quarters of new social housing lettings were General Needs in 2017/18**



**73%** of new lettings were **General Needs**

**27%** of new lettings were **Supported Housing**

## Definition: Types of Rent

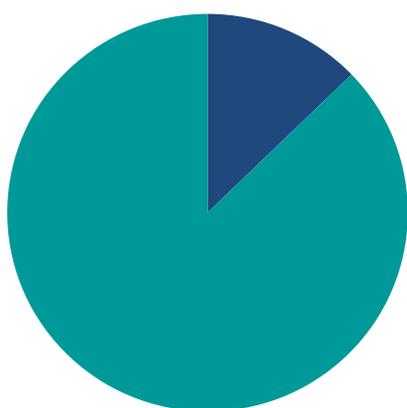
<b>Social Rent (SR)</b>	Target rents are determined through the national rent regime.
<b>Affordable Rent (AR)</b>	Where the rent to be paid by tenants can be no more than 80% of the market value for the property.
<b>Rent to Buy (RB)</b>	Where a discount of up to 20% of all market rent is applied for a single rental period between 6 months and 5 years. During and after that period, the tenant is offered first chance to purchase the property (either shared ownership or outright) at full market value.

87% of new social housing lettings were let at Social Rents.

The Affordable Rent Programme began in 2011/12 for PRPs and in the following year for LAs. The number of new lettings on an Affordable Rent basis increased to a peak of 47,000 in 2015/16 then fell to 40,000 in 2017/18. Whilst the number of new Affordable Rent lettings decreased by 6% in 2017/18, as a proportion of all new lettings, Affordable Rent has remained the same as last year at 13%.

The Rent to Buy programme was introduced this year with a total of 240 new social housing lettings of this type in 2017/18. Due to the current small number of Rent to Buy lettings these have been excluded from further breakdowns. We will revisit this as the programme continues.

**Chart 4: Almost 9 in 10 new social housing lettings were at Social Rents in 2017/18**



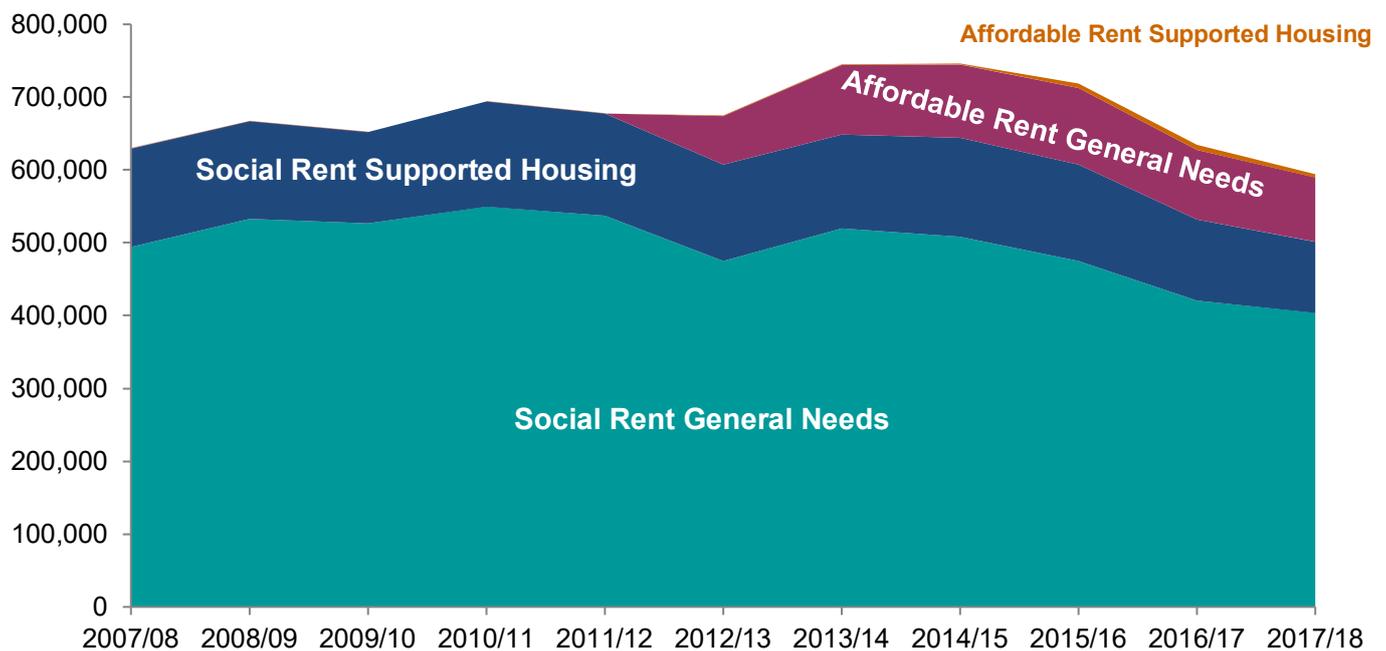
**87%** of new lettings are **Social Rent**

**13%** of new lettings are **Affordable Rent**

**< 0.1%** of new lettings are **Rent to Buy**

In 2017/18, around 595,000 people in 313,000 households moved into a new social housing letting – this equates to 1 in 94 people in England.<sup>9</sup> In keeping with the recent fall in lettings, the number of tenants entering social housing has decreased by more than 150,000 (20%) since 2014/15. Illustrated in Chart 5, around two-thirds (68%) of new tenants move into General Needs lettings on a Social Rent basis. The remainder are mainly shared between Social Rent Supported Housing (16%) and, since 2011/12, Affordable Rent General Needs properties (15%).

**Chart 5: Over two thirds of new tenants move into General Needs lettings on a Social Rent basis in 2017/18**



<sup>9</sup> The Office for National Statistics estimates the population of England was 55,619,400 in mid-2017, <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates>.

## 2. Who lives in new social housing tenancies?

Social housing in England is allocated based on need. Local authorities set their own policies for allocations, but these must be in line with national legislation, regulations and statutory guidance. For example, local authorities may set their own qualification criteria but guidance encourages them to include a residency test requiring people to have lived in the area for at least 2 years.

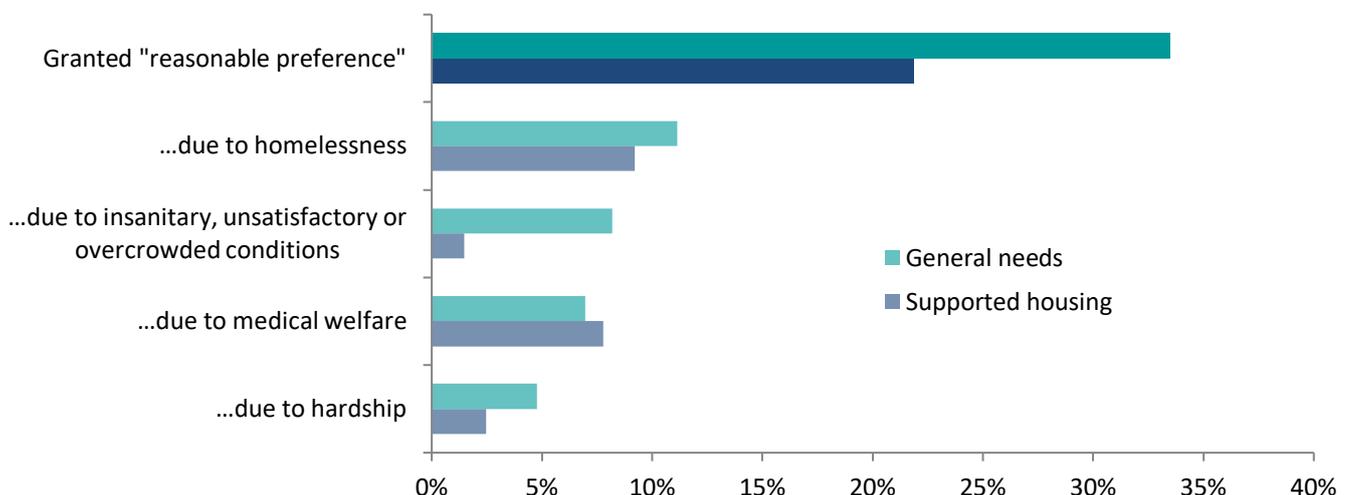
### Definition: Reasonable Preference

**Reasonable Preference** Tenants must be given 'reasonable preference', i.e. priority, for social housing by the local authority if they meet one or more of the following:

- Homelessness (or threat of homelessness in the next 28 days)
- Insanitary, unsatisfactory or overcrowded conditions
- Medical welfare
- Hardship

In 2017/18, almost a third (30%) of new lettings were to households given priority by a local authority<sup>10</sup>, with the most common reason being homelessness (or threat of homelessness).

**Chart 6: A third of General Needs households were granted priority need compared to a fifth of households in Supported Housing**



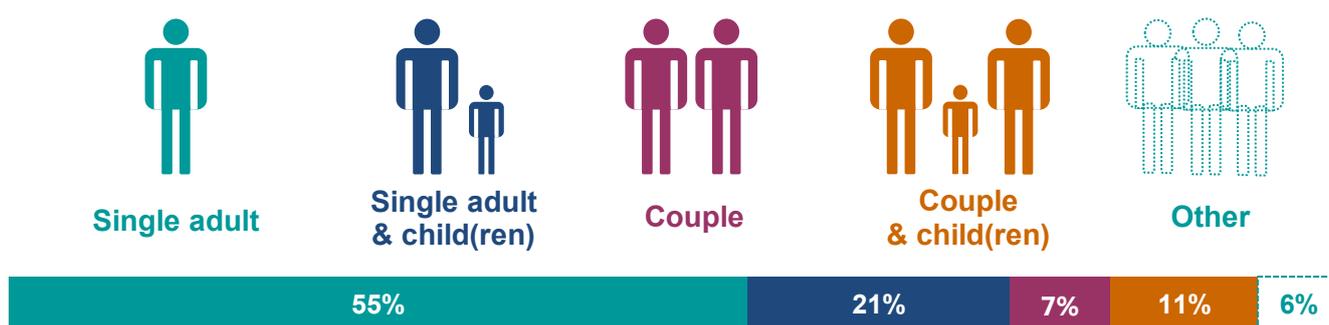
Nearly two-thirds of households starting a tenancy in 2017/18 moved into social housing from outside the sector – only 37% were existing social tenants relocating within the sector. A fifth of households previously lived with family or friends whilst 16% moved from the private rented sector, unchanged from the previous year.

<sup>10</sup> Whether the household was granted reasonable preference was unknown in 22% of lettings.

## Household composition

A large majority (76%) of new lettings were to single adults with or without dependent children, as shown in Figure 1. This has changed little over the last decade. Of the single parents moving into social housing, 93% were women and 7% men. A third of new lettings contained at least one child, and 1 in 5 contained a couple.<sup>11</sup> Since 2010/11, around 2% of lettings to couples have been to those in same-sex relationships.

**Figure 1: Three quarters of households in new social housing lettings in 2017/18 were led by single adults whilst a third of households contain children<sup>12</sup>**



Household composition differs quite markedly depending on the type of social housing (Chart 7), as various types of support, rent or provider cater to different types of household.

Designed for specific groups in need of support, Supported Housing is almost exclusively let to either older people<sup>13</sup> or young adults with specific needs for adapted housing. In 2017/18, 72% of new Social Rent Supported Housing lettings by LAs were to older people, and 62% by PRPs were to single adults. The reason LAs and PRPs tend towards different household types is likely to be a consequence of possessing facilities designed specifically for those client groups (e.g. local authorities' support arrangements for older people).

General Needs lettings are more evenly distributed among the household types compared to Supported Housing lettings. In particular, a far greater proportion contains children and/or couples. 41% of new Social Rent General Needs lettings in 2017/18 contained at least one child, and 24% a couple. A majority (59%) of Affordable Rent General Needs lettings housed children, with single parents their most common household type (35% of Affordable Rent General Needs lettings).

<sup>11</sup> "Couple" defined as two adults that are married, civil partners or co-habiting.

<sup>12</sup> "Other" category may contain some children not captured in the other household types.

<sup>13</sup> "Older people" are defined as any household where the main occupier or their partner is aged 60 years or over.

**Chart 7: The majority of new Supported Housing lettings by local authorities in 2017/18 were to older people, compared General Needs where lettings were more evenly distributed**



Since 2013/14, the proportion of new General Needs lettings to households with a single adult or elder (with or without dependent children) has risen from 65% to 70%, while new lettings to multiple-adult households has fallen from 35% to 30%. In the same time frame, the share of new Supported Housing lettings to single elders has risen from 27% to 31%, and new lettings to single males has fallen from 39% to 34%.

## Age & sex

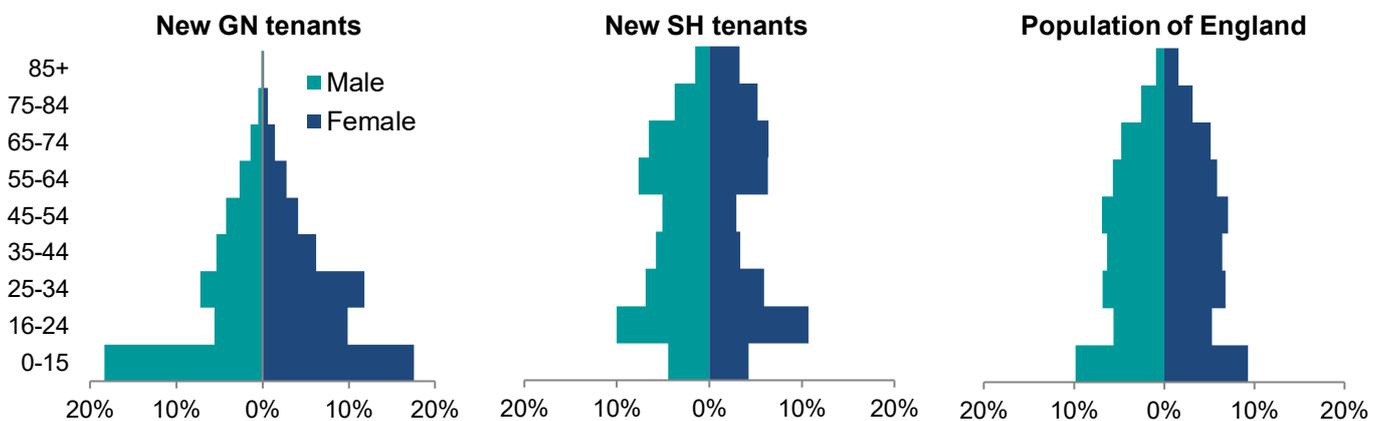
As shown in Chart 8, the age profile of new General Needs tenants is much younger than that of the English population. Over a third (36%) of people entering GN lettings in 2017/18 were children (0-15). Under-35s were over-represented in social housing, comprising more than two-thirds (70%) of new GN tenants, compared to 44% of the population of England. There was an imbalance in sexes among 16-to-34-year-olds, 63% of which were women. This is likely a result of the priority given to single parents by social housing providers; 93% of whom were mothers.

The age profile of new Supported Housing tenants reflects the purpose of this type of accommodation – 74% of people entering SH lettings in 2017/18 were either young adults (16-34) or older people (55+). Of 25-to-64-year-old tenants in new SH schemes, 58% were male. This is likely to primarily be a symptom of the higher incidence of homelessness among men.

Since 2011/12, the proportion of new social housing tenants aged 16-to-24 has steadily fallen; their share of new Supported Housing tenants has decreased from 26% to 21%, and new General Needs tenants of the age group has fallen from 19% to 16%.

The population in new General Needs lettings has become slightly more female since 2009/10, rising from 53% to 55% of new tenants. In contrast, new Supported Housing lettings have contained slightly more male tenants in recent years (52% in 2017/18), after having an even share a decade ago.

**Chart 8: Households in new General Needs lettings in 2017/18 were younger than the general population of England<sup>14</sup> whilst those in new Supported Housing lettings were older**



Most lettings continue to be made to younger people. Close to half (46%) of all new lead tenants in 2017/18 were 16-35, and 24% were 55-or-over. These statistics only involve new lettings made during the year – the social sector as a whole is largely made up of older lead tenants and figures from the English Housing Survey show that 42% of lead tenants in social housing are aged 55 and over, and only 19% are aged 16-35.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Office for National Statistics mid-2017 population estimates,

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates>.

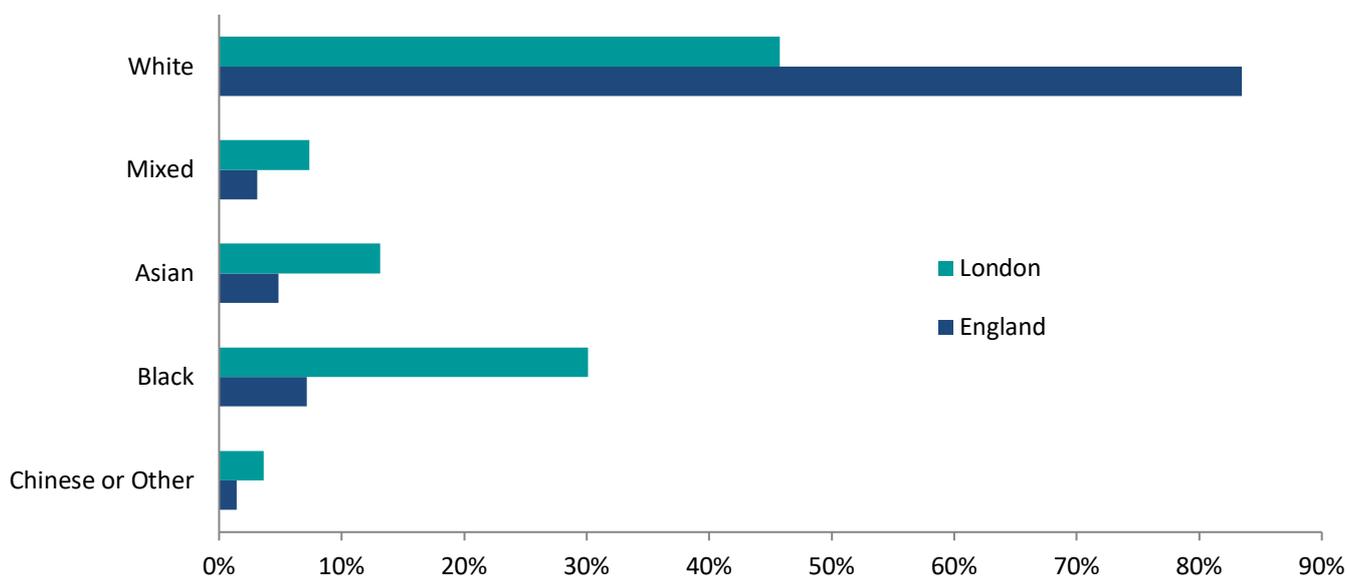
<sup>15</sup> English Housing Survey 2016-17, <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/english-housing-survey>.

The age discrepancy between new and older lettings highlights that most social housing tenancies are indefinite (or lifetime). A considerable proportion of the sector consists of households who live in the same letting for a long period of time. On average, social renters have lived in their current home for 11 years – to put that into perspective, the average for private renters is 4 years.<sup>16</sup>

## Ethnicity

The majority of lead tenants in 2017/18 were in the White ethnic group, comprising 83% of new lettings. Black households were over-represented in new social housing lettings, making up 7% of lettings compared to 4% of the English population<sup>17</sup>. Asian households were under-represented, constituting 5% of lettings but 7% of the population. The remaining 3% of new lettings were to households with mixed race lead tenants. This remained unchanged over the past decade.

**Chart 9: Under half of new social housing lettings in London were to white households (46%) compared to the national average of 83%**



The overrepresentation of certain ethnic groups in social housing is at least partly explained by the geographical concentration of these groups in areas where social renting is more common. The highest number of lettings to households with BME lead tenants was in large urban areas outside of London. Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield appeared in the top 10 for all four BME ethnic groups<sup>18</sup>, with Leeds appearing three times<sup>19</sup>. No local authority in London appeared more than once.

However local authorities in London allocated a greater proportion of their lettings to households with BME lead tenants. Over half of new lettings in Tower Hamlets were to households with Asian

<sup>16</sup> English Housing Survey 2016-17, <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/english-housing-survey>.

<sup>17</sup> Population denominators by ethnic group, 2017, <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates>.

<sup>18</sup> Black, Asian, Mixed race, Chinese or Other ethnic groups

<sup>19</sup> Exception was the Chinese and Other ethnic group

lead tenants. Nearly half of new lettings in Lambeth were to households with black lead tenants with another five London local authorities allocating over 40% of new lettings to black households.

White lead tenants tended to be older with 27% of tenants aged over 55 whereas for all other ethnic groups this was fewer than 15%. Mixed race lead tenants in particular tended to be younger with 63% under 35, compared to 45% to 48% for all other ethnic groups.

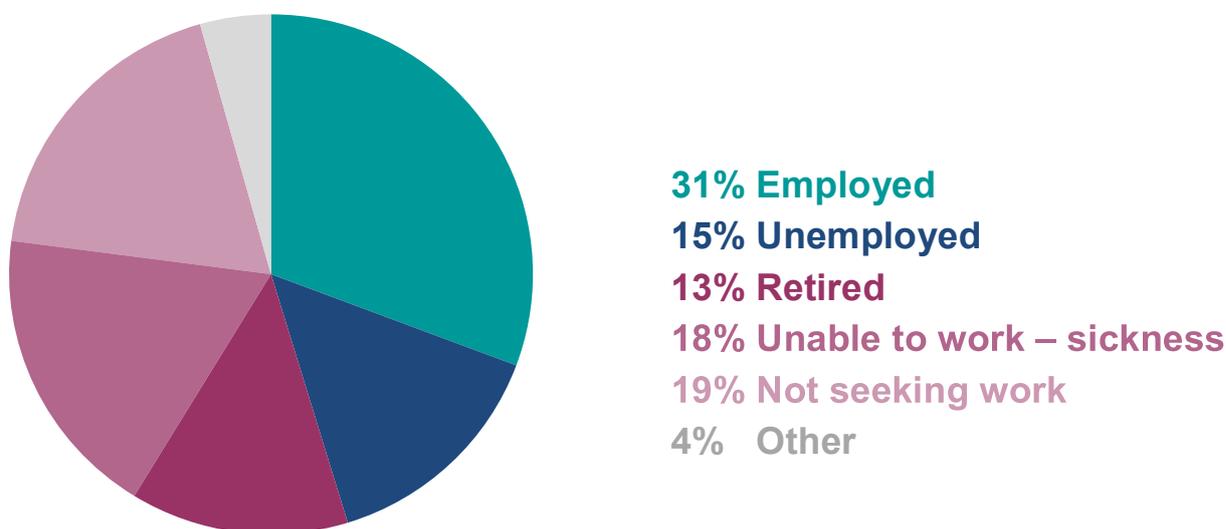
More detailed breakdowns of new social housing lettings by ethnicity are available through the Racial Disparity Unit's website at <https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/housing>

## Economic status

Over 3 in 10 lead tenants in new social housing lettings in 2017/18 were in employment – the most common economic status. Another fifth were unable to work due to sickness and 13% were retired, reflecting the age profile of social housing and those with specific housing needs. 15% of lead tenants were unemployed.

However the employment rate of 16-to-64-year-old lead tenants (35%) is far below that of the general population (76%)<sup>20</sup>.

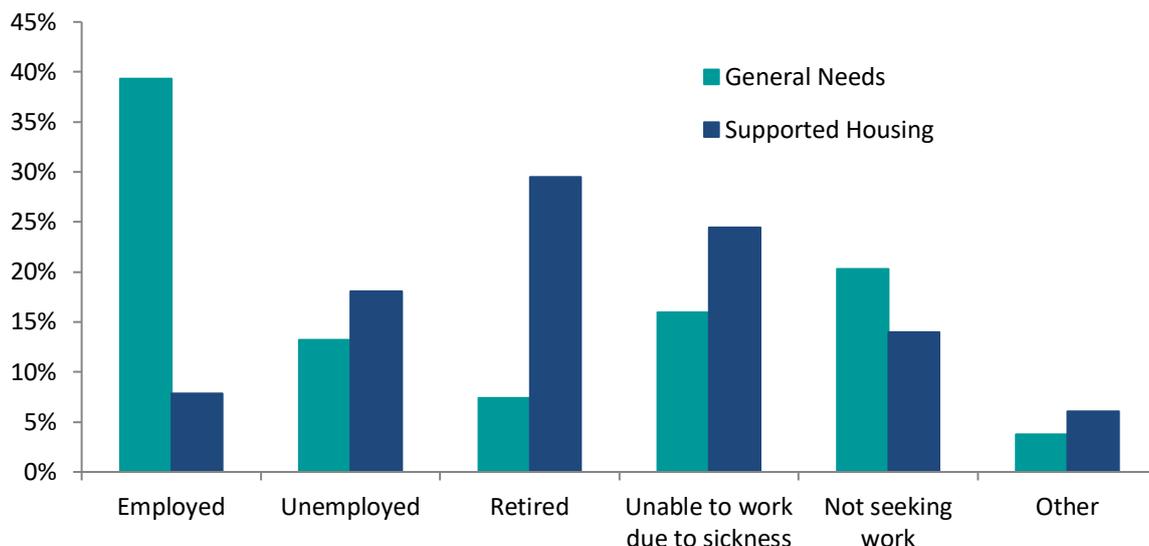
**Chart 10: Twice as many lead tenants in new social housing lettings in 2017/18 were employed than unemployed**



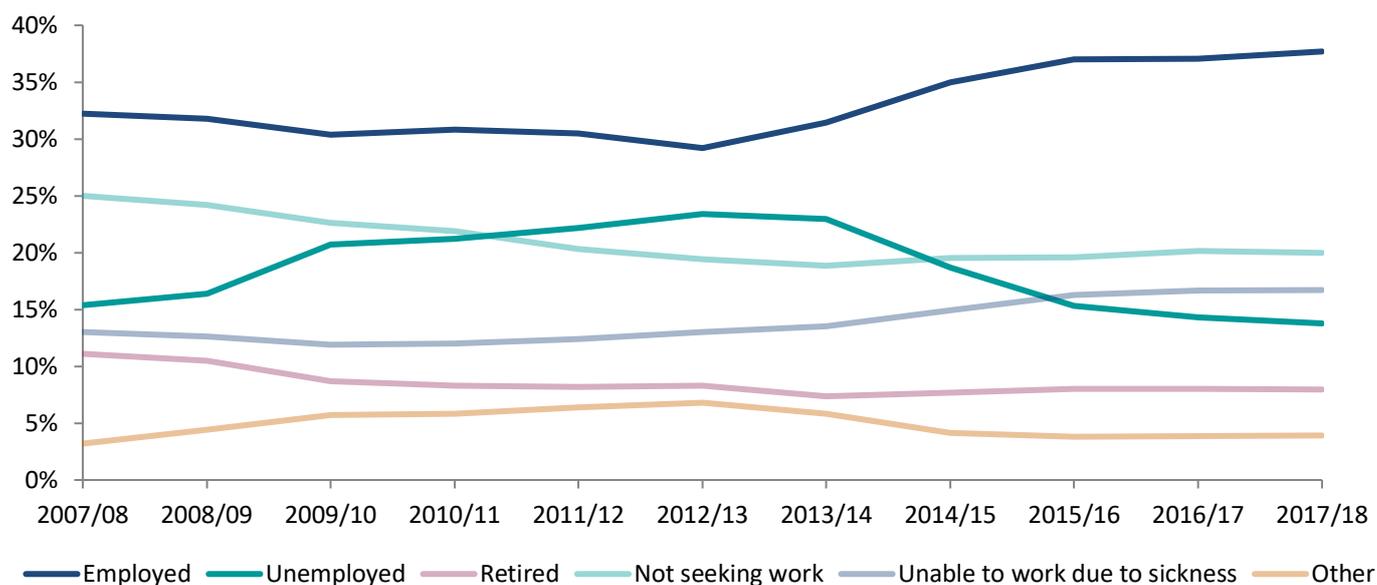
The economic status of tenants differs between housing types. Since Supported Housing is specifically designed for tenants with particular needs and tenants have an older age profile, fewer lead tenants are in work (8%, compared to 39% for General Needs). Supported housing has a substantially larger proportion of retired lead tenants (30%, compared to 7% for General Needs).

<sup>20</sup> ONS NOMIS website (<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>), statistics sourced from the Annual Population Survey (APS)

**Chart 11: Nearly 4 in 10 lead tenants in new General Needs tenancies were employed in 2017/18, whilst in new Supported Housing tenancies less than 1 in 10 were employed**



**Chart 12: The proportion of lead tenants in new social housing lettings in 2017/18 who were employed reached the highest point in the last decade, with unemployment at its lowest**



In General Needs new lettings, the proportion of lead tenants who were employed increased from 32% to 39% between 2007/08 and 2017/18. Over the same time period, lead tenants who were unemployed increased by 5 percentage points to 20%, whilst those not seeking work decreased by 5 percentage points to 20%.

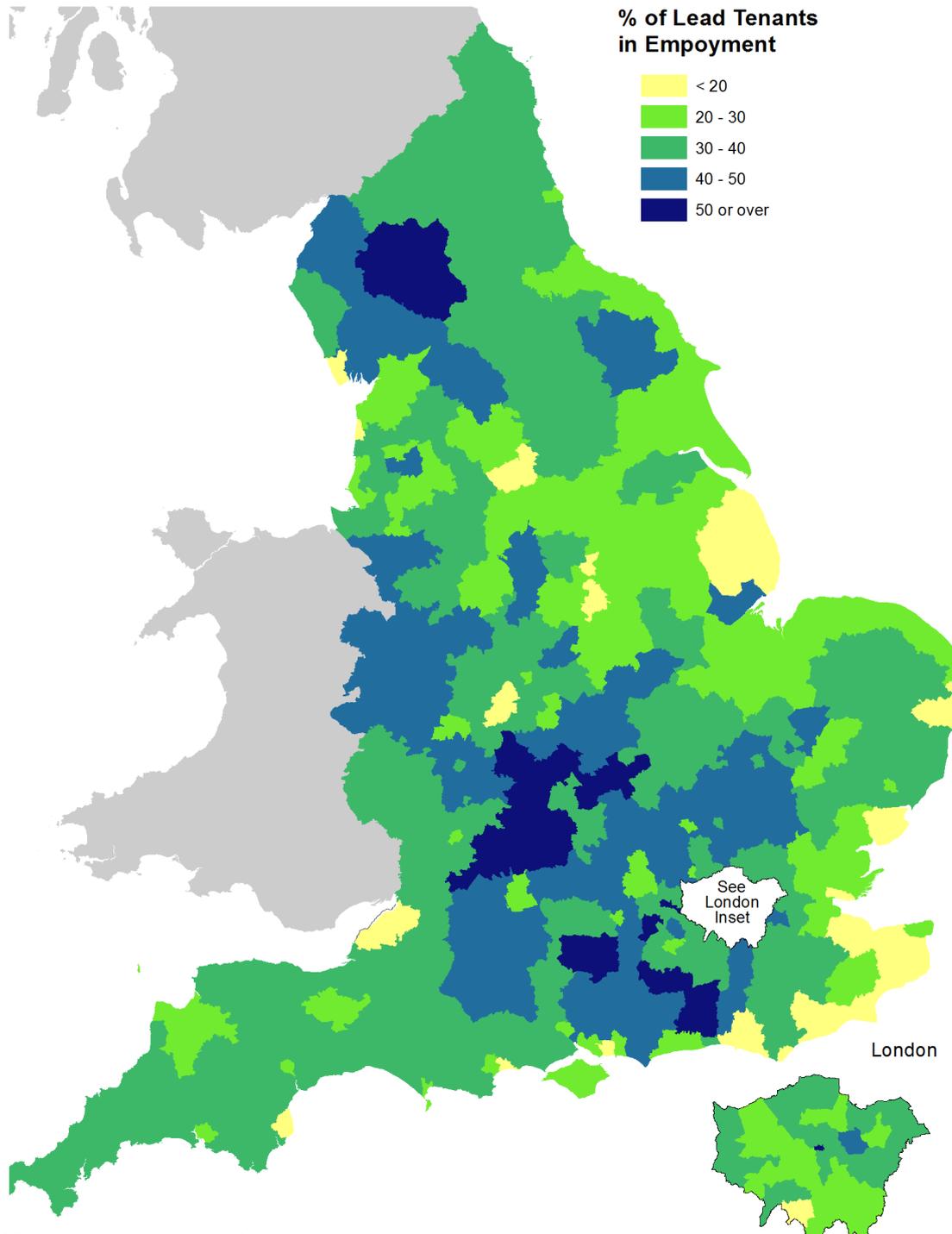
In Supported Housing new lettings, the proportion in employment slightly increased from 6% to 8% between 2007/08 and 2017/18. Unemployed and retired lead tenants each decreased, whilst those unable to work due to sickness increased from 17% to 24%.

For some ethnicities these statistics were quite different. The highest levels of employment were

found in Black (38%) and Asian (37%). There were much higher levels of retirement in white households (15%) than any other ethnic group where the second highest was Chinese with 7%.

Whether a household is in work or otherwise contributing to the community is a factor in some local authorities' allocation policies. This may affect the employment rates of tenants in new social housing lettings across the country.

**Map 2: The proportion of new social housing tenants in employment was lowest in coastal areas in 2017/18**



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Ordnance Survey 100024857

## Income and benefits

The median household income (including pensions and benefits) for social housing in 2017/18 was £221 per week, with differences by gender, age and ethnicity<sup>21</sup>.

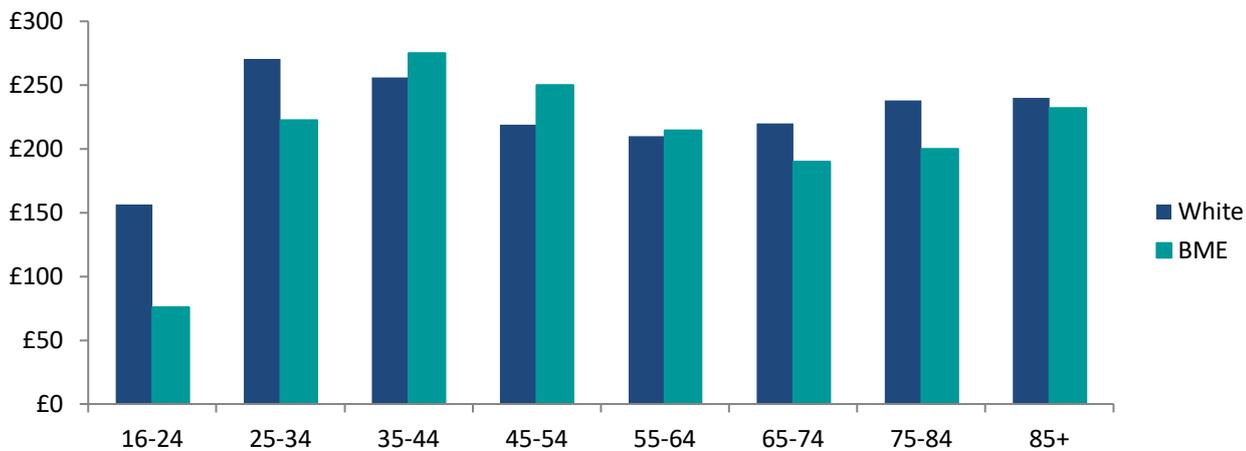
Just over half (52%) of households get their income solely from pensions and benefits, with a further 20% supplementing their earnings with pensions or benefits and the remaining 28% not claiming pensions or benefits.

The median weekly income (including pensions and benefits) for households with white or Asian lead tenants was £20 per week higher than those with black lead tenants, and £50 per week higher than those with mixed race lead tenants or those from the other ethnic group.

For all ethnicities, households with a lead tenant aged 25-44 had the highest median income (including pensions and benefits) whilst households with a lead tenant aged 16-24 had the lowest. Households with white lead tenants had the highest income at younger ages, whilst those with mixed race or Asian lead tenants had the highest income of the over 55s.

Care should be taken before drawing conclusions about how 'well off' a household is since income reported here is household income and household compositions differ. In particular, households with lead tenants aged 25-44 and those with Asian lead tenants tend to have larger households. Geographic location will also have an impact on cost of living.

**Chart 13: White lead tenants aged under 35 and over 65 had higher household income (including pensions and benefits) than BME tenants in 2017/18**



**Figure 2: Households with female lead tenants had on average £35 per week more in income (including pensions and benefits) than male-led households.**



<sup>21</sup> Income is self-reported and was available for 55% of households in new tenancies in 2017/18.

## Nationality

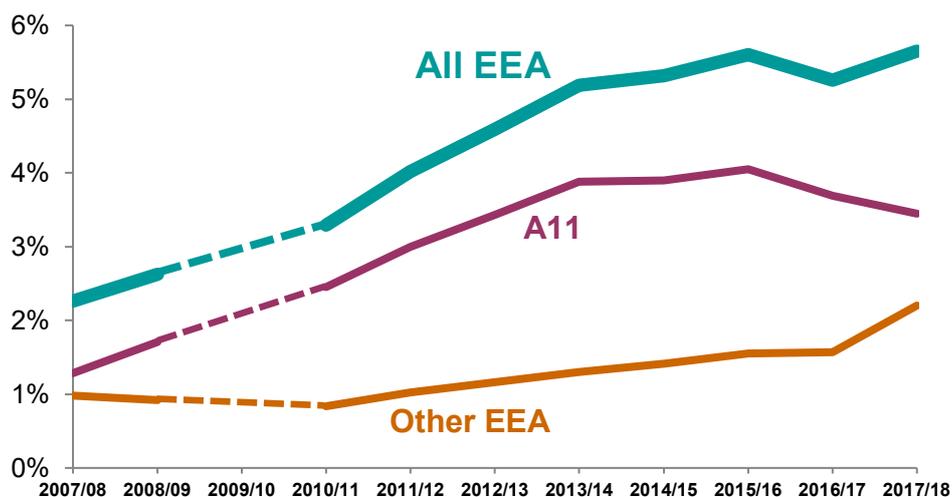
The vast majority of lead tenants in 2017/18 were UK nationals (91%). European nationals comprised 5% of lead tenants with the remaining 4% from nations outside the European Economic Area (EEA). This is similar to the composition of nationalities in the English population.<sup>22</sup>

Of the European nationals 3% were “A11” nationals (from the 11 Eastern European states that have joined the European Union since 2004),<sup>23</sup> 2% from other EEA countries<sup>24</sup>.

New Supported Housing lettings were less likely to contain EEA nationals, comprising 2% of Supported Housing lettings compared to 6% of General Needs lettings. Households new to the social sector in 2017/18 were more likely to be non-UK nationals – 10% of households entering the sector were non-UK nationals, as opposed to 6% of those moving within the sector.

As shown in Chart 14, the proportion of Social Rent General Needs lettings to EEA nationals has progressively grown from around 2% to 6% since 2007/08, driven largely by a rise in tenants from the A11 countries. Lettings to UK nationals have simultaneously fallen from 94% to 90%.

**Chart 14: The proportion of General Needs Social Rent lettings to EEA nationals has increased steadily since 2007/08 to a peak of 6% in 2017/18<sup>25</sup>**



Refugees comprised 0.7% of new social housing lettings in 2017/18 at just over 2,000 households – the same proportion since 2007/08.

<sup>22</sup> Population estimates for England in 2017 were 90% UK national, 3% A11, 3% other EEA, and 4% non-EEA, <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/internationalmigration>.

<sup>23</sup> A11 countries are the A8 (Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia) plus Bulgaria and Romania from 2008/9, and Croatia from 2014/15.

<sup>24</sup> Other EEA countries are: Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland. Ireland has been included from 2014/15.

<sup>25</sup> Data for 2009/10 did not distinguish foreign nationals amongst A8, EEA and other nationalities.

## Vulnerable households

### How many households were previously homeless, sleeping rough or in temporary accommodation?

Around 7,000 households were rough sleeping immediately prior to their new social housing letting (2% of all lettings in 2017/18), with another 33,000 in temporary accommodation<sup>26</sup> (11%) and 66,000 living with friends and family (21%).

The number of households entering social housing following a period of rough sleeping has decreased by 3,000 over the past decade, although as a proportion of new lettings this has remained unchanged. There were 10,000 fewer households moving from temporary accommodation over the past 10 years, a slight decrease of 1%. The proportion of households previously living with friends and family decreased from 25% to 21% over the past decade, a drop of almost 27,000 households.

#### Definition: Statutorily homeless<sup>27</sup>

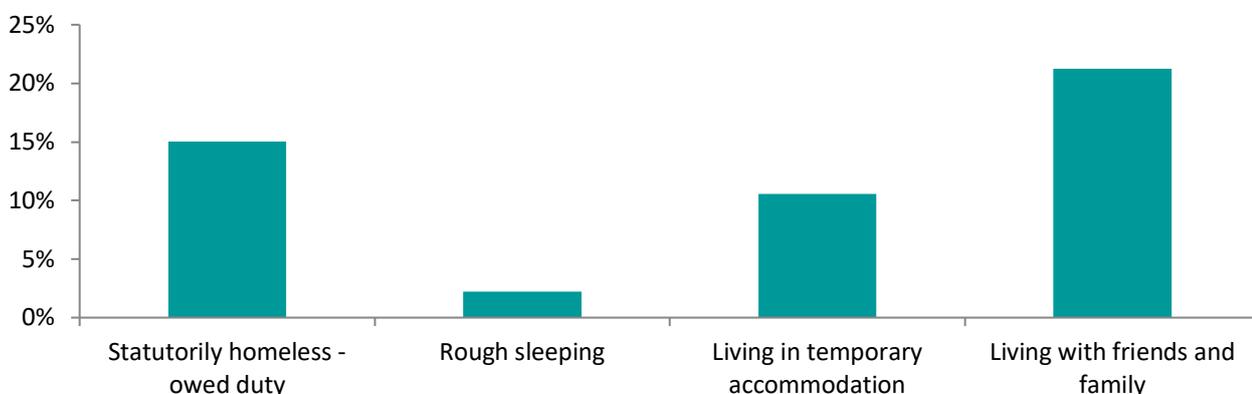
**Statutorily homeless** Where a household is accepted as homeless by the local authority. This is the definition of homelessness before the Homelessness Reduction Act 2018<sup>28</sup> which came into force on 1 April 2018, i.e. after the 17/18 period to which the data here relates.

**...and owed duty** ...and falls into a priority need group and is deemed unintentionally homeless (or threatened with homelessness within 28 days)

**...and not owed duty** ...but does not meet the criteria to be owed duty

Overall, 15% of new lettings in 2017/18 were deemed to be “statutorily homeless” and owed a main homelessness duty to be allocated a settled home, with another 3% deemed “statutorily homeless” but not owed a duty.

#### Chart 15: “Statutorily homeless” households made up 15% of new social lettings in 2017/18.



<sup>26</sup> Temporary accommodation is defined as hostels, bed and breakfasts, hospitals and prisons.

<sup>27</sup> As defined in the Housing Act 1996

<sup>28</sup> <https://gss.civilservice.gov.uk/guidances/mhclg-homelessness-statistics-user-forum/>

## What do we know about other vulnerable groups?

New social housing lettings are also allocated to tenants with disabilities. In 2017/18, 18% of households contained a tenant with a long-term illness or disability which prevented them from working. 16% of new lettings were to households with specific disability-related housing needs (such as wheelchair access, mobility aids, or adaptations relating to visual/hearing impairment).

Members of the UK Armed Forces and those recently discharged are exempt from any local connection test that a local authority may use when allocating social housing. This is to ensure they are not disadvantaged in accessing social housing by the need to move from base to base.

Nearly 7,000 households given a new social housing letting in 2017/18 included someone who has served in the Armed Forces, approximately 2% of total lettings. Of these 19% left the Armed Forces in the last 5 years and 14% were injured or disabled as a direct result of serving in the Armed Forces. Approximately 5% of households left their last settled home due to domestic abuse – 15,000 households – remaining constant over the past 10 years.

Eviction on a 'no fault' basis was the primary self-reported reason for leaving their last settled home prior to this tenancy for 4% of households. Inability to afford renewal fees, rent increases or mortgage was given as the primary reason for leaving by 2% of households, with repossession given by 0.7% of households.

The most common self-reported reasons for leaving last settled home prior to this tenancy were:

General Needs	Supported Housing
Move to independent accommodation (15%)	Move to accommodation with support (23%)
Leave an overcrowded property (15%)	Asked to leave by family and friends (13%)
Leave property unsuitable to ill health/disability (9%)	Leave property unsuitable to ill health/disability (11%)

# 3. Tenancy lengths, rents and rent burden

## Tenancy type and tenancy length

There are five main types of social housing tenancy which can be split into 3 categories; fixed term, lifetime and licence agreements. Each differ in length and level of security; this in turn has an impact on the types of tenants moving into them.

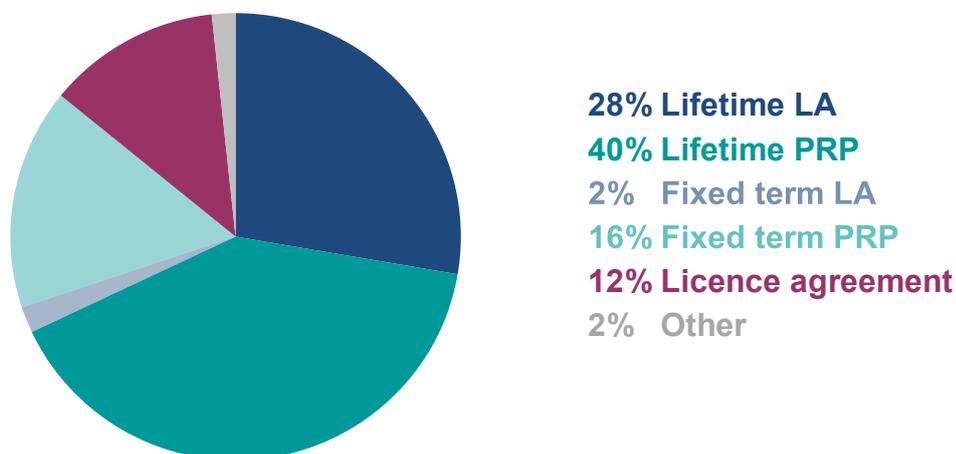
### Definition: Tenancy types

<b>Fixed term</b>	Fixed term tenancies are of a minimum of five years (two years in exceptional circumstances) and a maximum of 20 years. They are provided by both LAs (secure flexible) and PRPs (assured shorthold).
<b>Lifetime</b>	These are tenancies given for the lifetime of the tenant and are provided by both LAs (secure) and PRPs (assured).
<b>Licence agreement</b>	These are provided by both LAs and PRPs and are not a formal tenancy. They have no set length or end date and are mainly used for Supported Housing, not General Needs

### How many new fixed and lifetime tenancies were there in 2017/18?

In 2017/18 68% (212,600) of new social housing tenancies were lifetime tenancies with 40% (126,000) of all tenancies being Assured (mainly PRP) and 28% (86,600) were Secure lifetime tenancies (mainly PRP). In addition to this a further 12% (38,900) were licence agreements which have no fixed end date, meaning only 18% (56,000) of new social housing tenancies being fixed length. The proportion of new lettings being provided on a fixed term tenancy has not changed from last year.

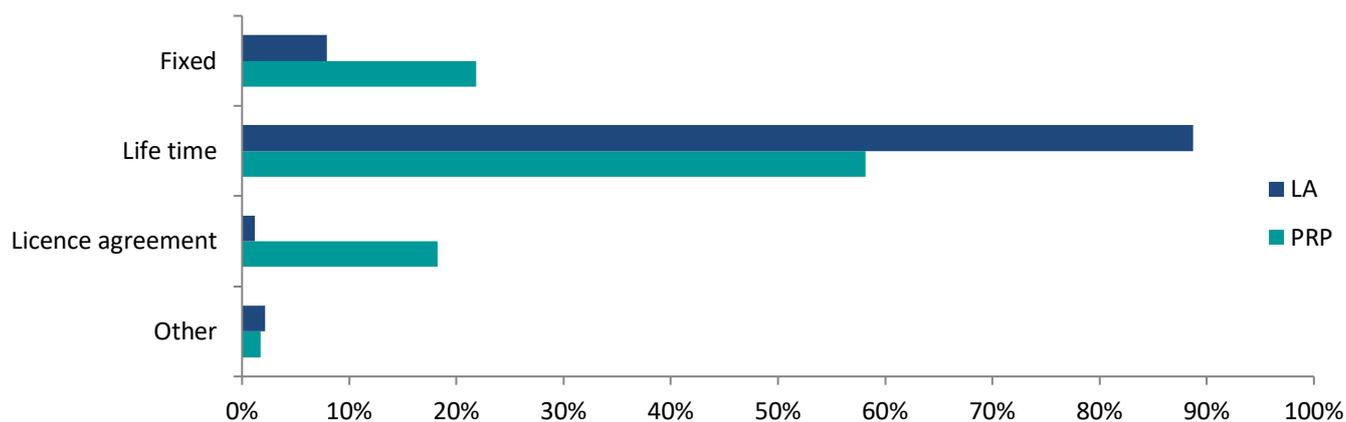
**Chart 16: Two thirds of new social housing lettings in 2017/18 were lifetime tenancies whilst 1 in 5 had a fixed end date**



## Which types of organisations were most likely to provide a lifetime tenancy?

Although PRPs provided 47% more life time tenancies in 2017/18 with 135,000 compared to LAs 92,000. When looking at the percentage of total PRP or LA lettings it becomes clear that in 2017/18 LAs were more likely to provide a new tenant with a life time tenancy than a PRP. Of all LA new social housing lettings in 2017/18, 89% were life time tenancies, and just 8% were fixed term. This compares to PRPs where 58% of their new tenancies were life time and 22% were fixed term. PRPs provided 97% of the 43,000 licence agreements provided to new tenants in 2017/18.

**Chart 17: Almost 90% of new tenancies let by local authorities in 2017/18 were lifetime, compared to 60% of those let by PRPs**

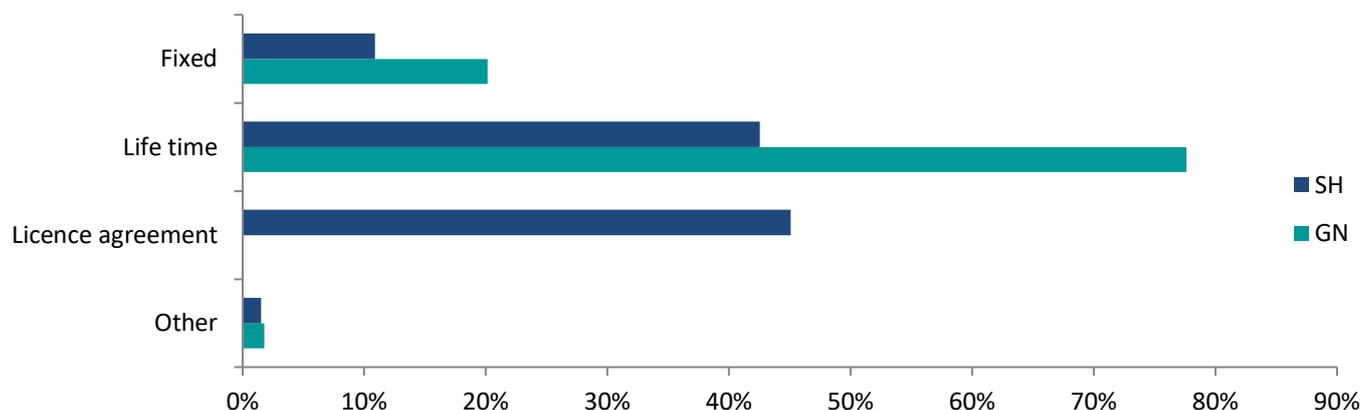


The increase in the proportion of fixed term tenancies being provided is due to the 2011 Localism Act which enabled social housing providers to offer fixed term tenancies. However the use of fixed term tenancies between PRPs and LAs. For PRPs the proportion of fixed term tenancies increased until 2016/17 to 22% and has remained constant since. For LAs there was a large increase to 7% in 2014/15, but since then the proportion has been constant at 8% of lettings.

## Are there differences between General Needs and Supported Housing?

General Needs lettings have a higher proportion of fixed term tenancies 20% compared to 11% for supported Housing. Licence agreements are almost zero for General Needs lettings, where they account for 45% of Supported Housing tenancies.

**Chart 18: The vast majority of new General Needs tenancies in 2017/18 were lifetime whilst in Supported Housing lifetime tenancies and licence agreements were equally common**



### How long were the 56,000 new fixed term tenancies in 2017/18?

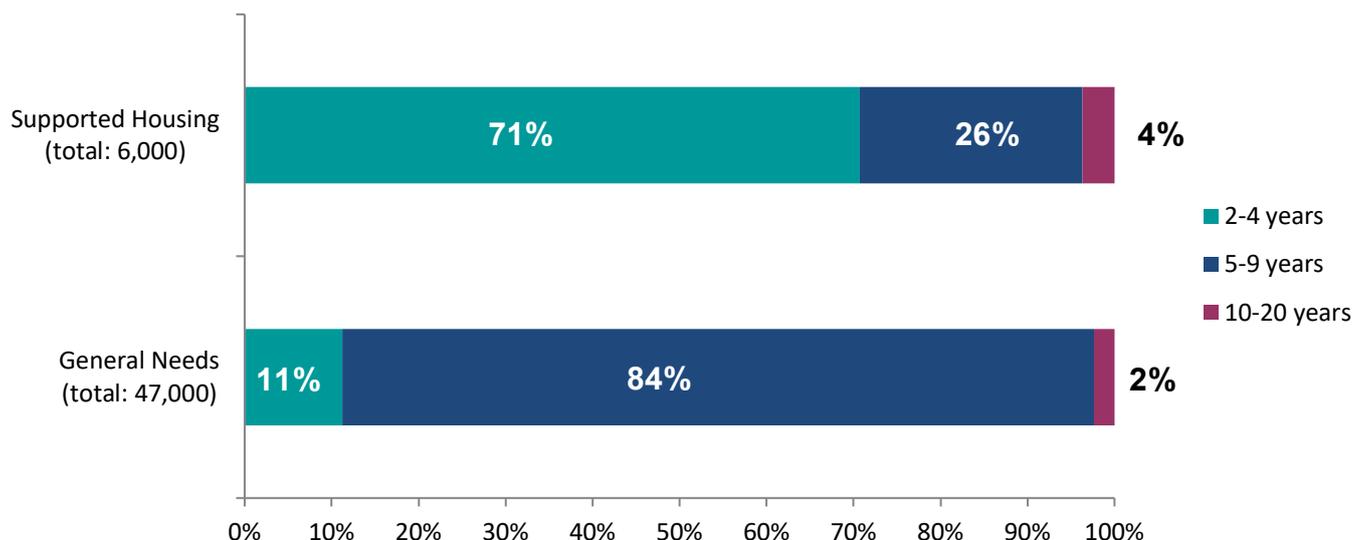
There were 3,000 Supported Housing tenancies (34%) that had a length of less than two years; General Needs tenancies of this length are not collected through CORE as they are considered temporary.

Of the 53,000 fixed term tenancies that were two years or longer, the average length of a Supported Housing fixed term tenancy was three years, compared to five years for General Needs. The difference in tenancy lengths is also seen in Chart 19 where 71% of Supported Housing fixed tenancies had length 2-4 years, compared to 11% General Needs tenancies.

The minimum length of a fixed term tenancy is set at 5 years, but under exceptional circumstances shorter tenancies may be provided. Supported Housing is more likely to have tenants with circumstances meeting this condition, which could explain the difference in tenancy length.

Tenancy lengths were fairly consistent between Social and Affordable Rents.

**Chart 19: New Supported Housing tenancies in 2017/18 were shorter than General Needs**



## Rents for new social housing lettings

### How expensive is social housing?

The median rent for new social housing tenancies in England in 2017/18 was £83 per week, which is £1.50 lower than the previous year. Social Rent was on average 52% of market rent (£82 per week), whilst Affordable Rent was on average 71% of market rent (£111 per week).

Rents in London were higher than the English average but provided a greater saving compared to market rents. The median rent in London for new social housing tenancies was £111 per week, 35% higher than for the rest of England. Social Rent was on average 33% of market rent (£108 per week), whilst Affordable Rent was on average 60% of market rent (£195 per week).

**Chart 20: Affordable Rents for new lettings were higher than Social Rents in 2017/18, with the difference greatest in General Needs, but both were substantially lower than market rent**



### How have rents changed over time?

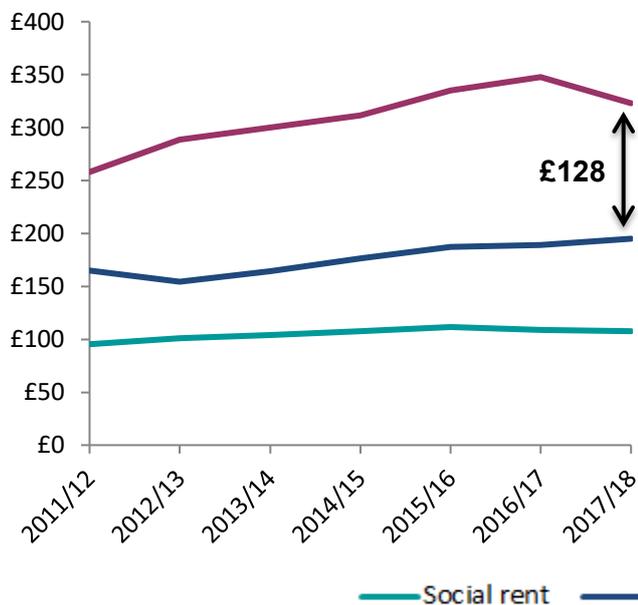
Since 2011/12, when the Affordable Rent Programme began, all social housing weekly rents have increased, but by less than the market rent. Between 2011/12 and 2017/18, Social Rents increased by 13%, Affordable Rents increased by 18% whilst market rent increased by 25%.

The rental market in London differed from England. Affordable Rent outside of London increased by 9% compared to 18% in London. Over the same period market rent increased by 17% outside London and 25% in London. The increase in Social Rent was the same within and outside of London (13%).

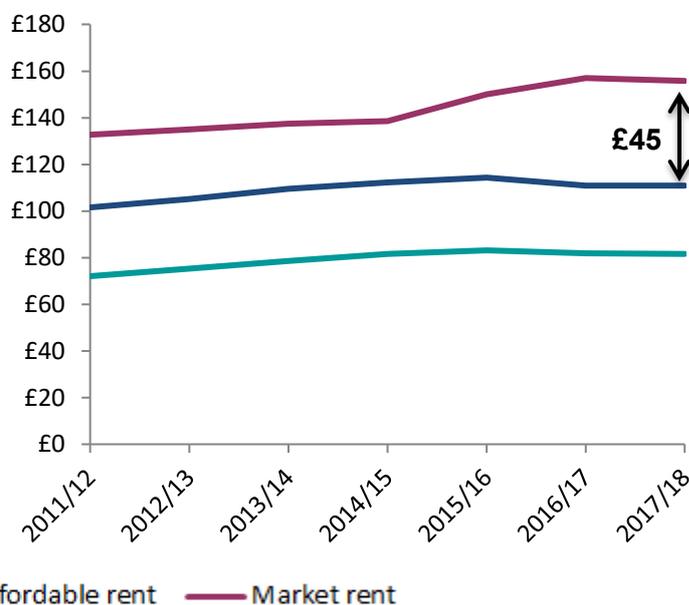
Since 2016/17, median weekly rents in both England and London remained broadly flat except in London where median Affordable Rent saw a 3% rise whilst market rent fell by 7%. In 2017/18, the median General Needs Affordable Rent in London was 60% of market rent, up from 54% in 2016/17.

**Chart 21: Affordable Rents for new lettings in London increased slightly between 2012/13 and 2017/18 but slower than the rise in market rents, whilst Social Rents remained steady**

**London – median weekly rents**



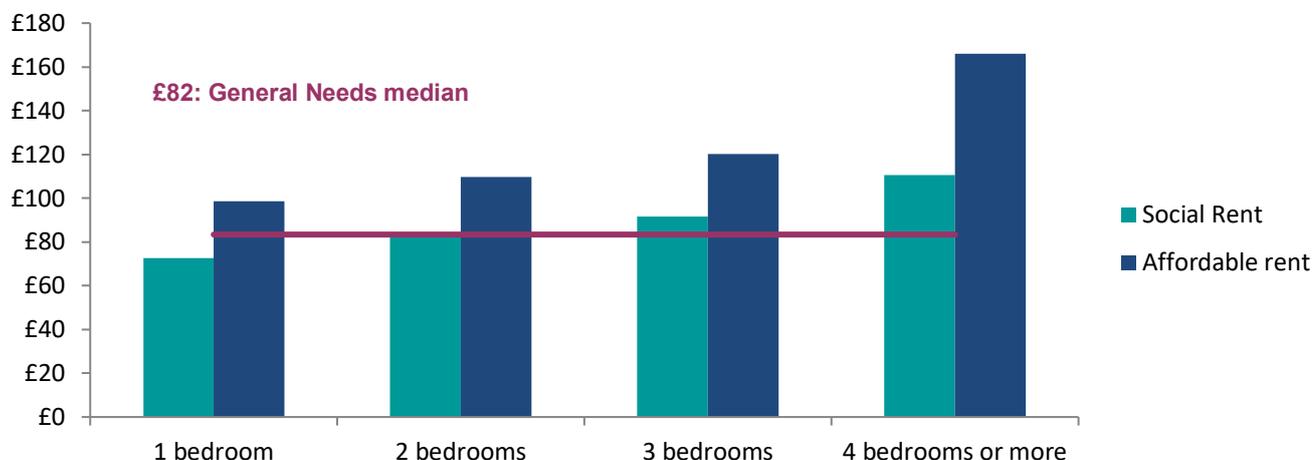
**England – median weekly rents**



**Number of bedrooms and weekly rent**

The number of bedrooms in a property has an impact on the median weekly rent. This is clearly illustrated by chart 22, where in both Social and Affordable Rent, General Needs<sup>29</sup> properties with one bedroom are by far the cheapest and those with four bedrooms are the most expensive. Four bedroom properties were 52% more expensive than one bedroom properties for Social Rent and 68% more expensive for Affordable Rent.

**Chart 22: Median weekly rent increased by approximately £10 per week for each bedroom in new General Needs tenancies in 2017/18 (up to 3 bedrooms)**



<sup>29</sup> General needs only; CORE only collects information on number of bedrooms for general needs properties.

# Rent burden for new social housing lettings

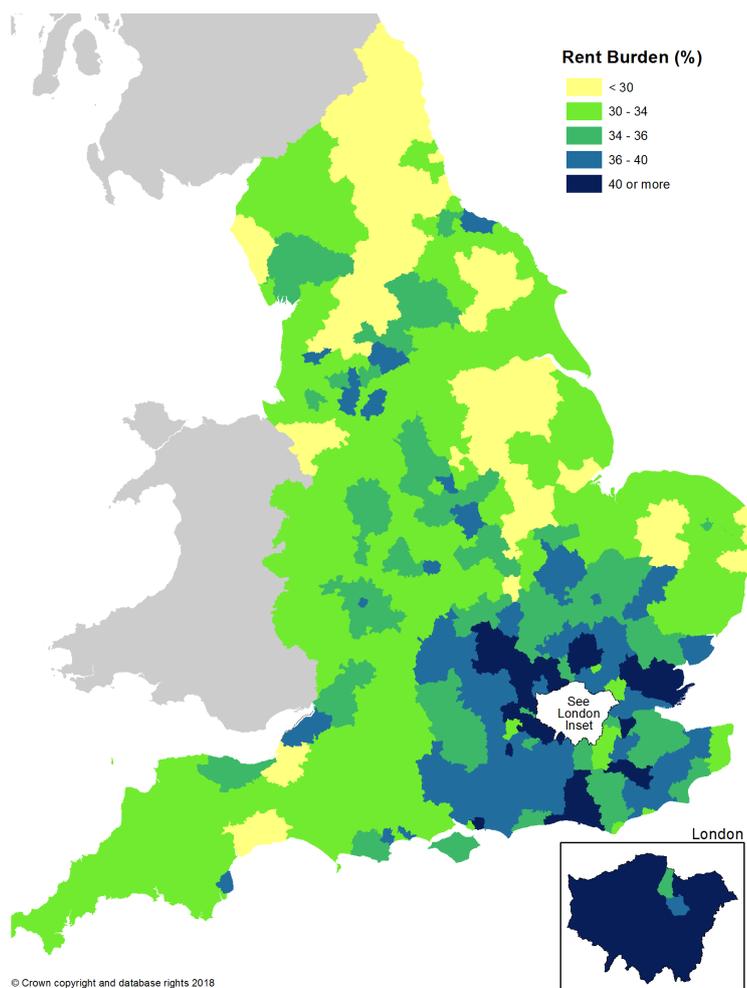
## Definition: Rent burden

**Rent burden** =  $\frac{\text{Rent}}{\text{Income}}$  This is the proportion of the household income (including benefits) spent on rent. A high level of rent burden means a household has less money to spend on other things. This only considers rent, not other essentials such as bills and food. General Needs only<sup>30</sup>.

On average, households spent 34% of their income on rent in 2017/18. Rent burden in 2017/18 returned to the same level as in 2008/09 following an increase to 38% in 2012/13.

Rent burden was highest in London with households on average spending 44% of their income on rent in 2017/18. In the rest of England, the average spend on rent was between 31% and 37% of household income.

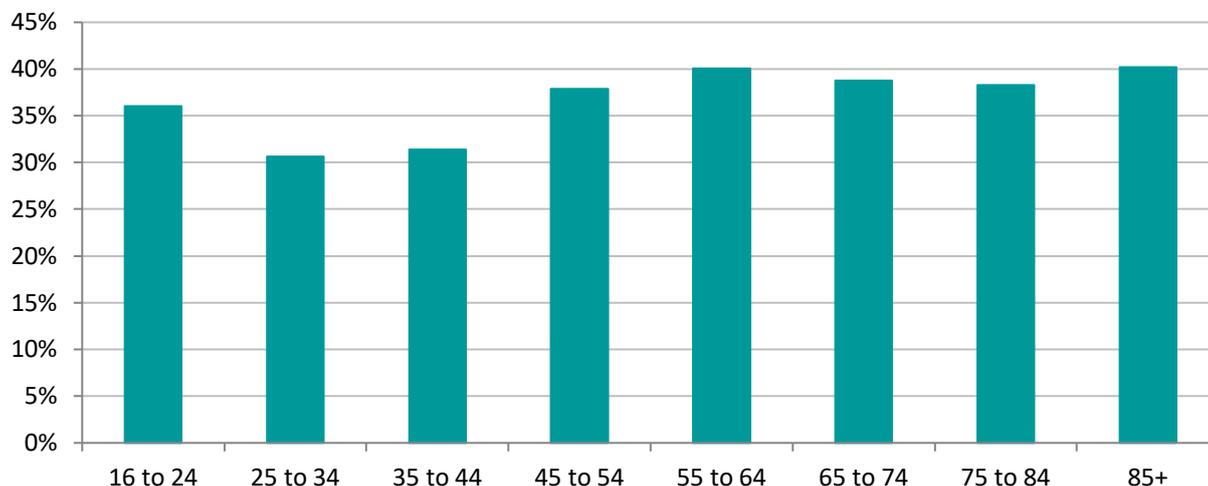
**Map 3: The proportion of household income spent on rent is highest in London and the surrounding areas**



<sup>30</sup> Rent burden can only be calculated for General Needs. The number of bedrooms is required to calculate rent burden and this information is not available for Supported Housing.

There was a difference in rent burden by age, where households with lead tenants of typical working age (25–44) were spending the lowest proportion of their income on rent (31%), whereas the over 85s spent the highest proportion of their income on rent (40%).

**Chart 23: The proportion of household income spent on rent was highest for the households with a lead tenant over 55 in 2017/18**



There were slight variations in rent burden between different ethnic groups. Households where the lead tenant was black, mixed race or from the ‘other’ ethnic group spent 36% of their income on rent, whilst households with Asian or white lead tenants spent 33% and 34% respectively.

## Reason for letting and re-let times

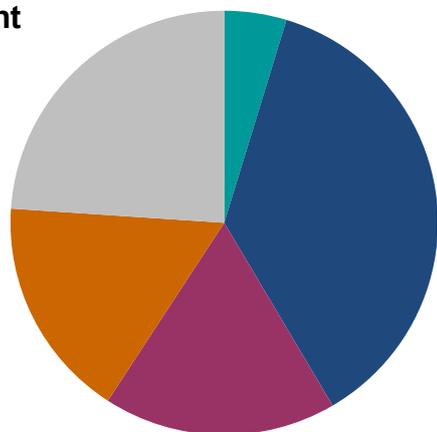
### Why were social housing properties vacant before being let?

The most common reason given for the property being vacant prior to a general needs<sup>31</sup> social rent letting was because the previous tenant had moved to the private sector or other accommodation (35%) – see table 2E. Previous tenants being evicted was given as a reason for the property being available to let for 7% of General Needs Social Rent lettings. Nearly half (42%) of General Needs Affordable Rent PRP properties were first lets in 2017/18, remaining stable after an increase from 2013/14. For the second year running, this proportion was higher for LA properties (49%), up from just over a quarter (26%) in 2015/16. First let’s are newly built, converted, rehabilitated or newly acquired properties. See accompanying tables 2f and 2g for further details.

<sup>31</sup> CORE only collects information on reason for property being vacant for General Needs lettings.

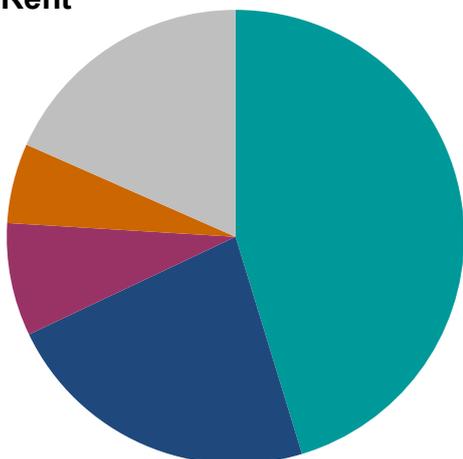
**Chart 24: Social Rent properties in 2017/18 were most likely to be vacant because the previous tenant moved to the private rental sector, whilst affordable properties were most likely to be first lets<sup>32</sup>**

**Social Rent**



- 5% First let of property<sup>1</sup>
- 37% Relet – previous tenant moved to private sector or other accommodation
- 18% Relet – internal transfer (no renewal of fixed term tenancy)
- 17% Relet – previous tenant died
- 24% Other

**Affordable Rent**



- 45% First let of property
- 23% Relet – previous tenant moved to private sector or other accommodation
- 8% Relet – internal transfer (no renewal of fixed term tenancy)
- 6% Relet – previous tenant died
- 18% Other

**How long were social housing stock empty before being let?**

The median number of days a property was vacant before being let was 18 days in 2017/18, this is a small rise from 17 days in 2016/17.

General needs housing was vacant for a median of 21 days in 2017/18, which was a slight decrease of a day on the previous year. This is over twice as long as the median 10 days vacant for Supported Housing in 2017/18, which suggests there is a higher level of demand for Supported Housing or a lower level of supply. Supported Housing in some cases requires special adaptations to meet a tenants needs. LA properties were vacant, for a median of 28 days compared to 15 for PRP’s. Social Rent housing are vacant for a median of 20 days, this is twice as long as Affordable Rent properties. This is likely due to the fact that Affordable Rent properties are more likely to be newly built and so in better condition.

<sup>32</sup> First let includes conversions and acquisitions as well as new builds

## 4. Technical notes

*Social Housing Lettings* has been badged as National Statistics, the quality mark of government statistics, following assessment by the UK Statistics Authority in 2014. We abide by the Code of Practice for Statistics<sup>33</sup> from data collection through to publication.

### Data collection

Information for 2017/18 in this release reflects data given by providers for the financial year ending 31 March 2018. CORE is a requirement on the Single Data List for local authorities and is a regulatory requirement of the social housing regulator for private registered providers.

Statistics presented in this release are based on the data submitted through the on-line Continuous Recording system (CORE) by private registered providers and local authorities. Data providers complete a range of information set out in a form about tenants that are accessing social housing and the property they are letting.

Data providers complete a form in a face to face interview with the tenant and then either manually input the data to CORE; or input the data into their own data collection systems before submitting their files to CORE. For each question asked in the interview, guidance notes are included in the form and are also available in the [Guides and Manuals](#) page of the CORE website. The data are initially validated at the point of entry as they are submitted by data providers, and then undergo further validation and quality assurance processes. These processes are described in the “Data Quality” section.

### Data quality

#### Coverage

The data collected through CORE differs from the social housing data in the *Local Authority Housing Survey* (LAHS) in that CORE is a ‘flow’ measure of all new social housing lettings which records data at record level, whereas data in LAHS is a ‘stock’ measure of all social housing stock in local authorities. The *English Housing Survey* (EHS) also provides social housing lettings data but the statistics are based on a survey and are again a ‘stock’ measure of social housing stock. CORE data focuses on the tenancy details at the point of letting, and besides property characteristics also collects information on the socio-demographic profile of the household, their housing circumstances and some financial information. CORE does not record any information of social housing lettings that are continuing – only new lettings.

Lettings and sales data are reported by all registered providers, and voluntarily by those who are not registered with the social housing regulator. Information is only collected on new lettings or sales, in General Needs or Supported Housing, by financial year.

CORE does not currently collect information on sales from local authorities, with more detail available in the [Social Housing Sales](#) publication.

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<sup>33</sup> <https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/code-of-practice/>

Certain types of lettings are excluded from CORE, as detailed in the [Guides and Manuals](#) page. These include:

- Mutual exchanges (where tenants have exchanged homes)
- Conversions of starter or introductory tenancies to assured or secure tenancies (because the introductory tenancy will have previously been reported to CORE)
- Successions by assignment (where the tenancy has transferred to another person at the request of the sole tenancy)
- Temporary general needs housing (lettings made with a fixed period of less than two years)

More information on the coverage of CORE can be found in the quality report:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/social-housing-lettings-2017-to-2018-quality-report>

### **Completeness of CORE data**

CORE is designed to be a complete census of new social housing lettings provided by local authorities and private registered providers that own social housing stock. Whilst data providers should submit data for all new social housing tenancies, this does not always happen in practice. In addition, not all questions are compulsory so information may be incomplete for some tenancy records. This introduces bias into statistics using the data which we minimise by applying weighting and imputation processes. Weighting is applied to adjust for record level non-response by local authorities. Imputation is applied to compensate for item non-response for both local authorities and private registered providers.

#### Local authority weighting

Local authority weights are calculated by reference to the total number of lettings reported to LAHS. Currently weights are not calculated for private rented providers as it is assumed we have a complete response. This assumption will be reviewed for the 2018/19 publication next year. Weights are also not calculated for Affordable Rents as there were too few lettings of this type. This will also be investigated in the upcoming year.

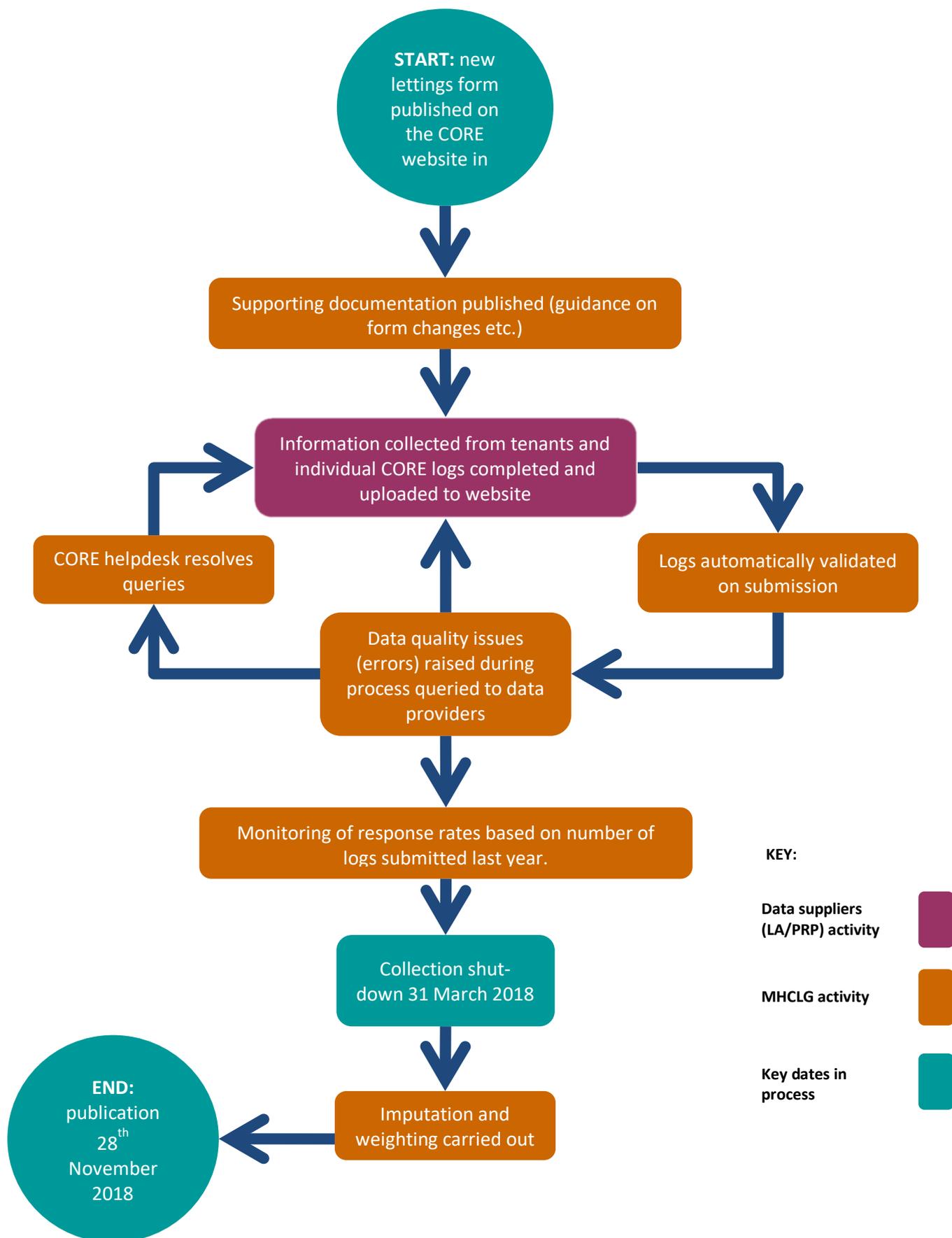
#### Imputation of missing items

Some of the questions on the CORE questionnaire are not compulsory. In particular, data on household characteristics may not be available to the housing officer or may be refused by the tenant. In these cases, we impute responses.

Imputation levels are low – in 2017/18 we imputed less than 2% for age and sex of the lead tenant and 5-7% for economic status, ethnicity and nationality of lead tenant. Each year we impute slightly fewer responses as we receive slightly more complete data.

Details of the imputation and weighting methodology used are available in the quality report: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/social-housing-lettings-2017-to-2018-quality-report>

# Quality assurance procedure



## Users and uses

CORE is a unique source of information in providing detailed information about individual tenancies. This record level data enables multi-variable breakdowns, distributional analysis, and construction of small area estimates. For example, it collects information on household characteristics, primary reason for housing, and the source of referral and previous tenure of all recorded lettings.

Policy makers and practitioners regard CORE as an essential tool for monitoring housing costs, assessing affordability and developing policy. CORE data are used:

- For policy monitoring and development, e.g. through detailed local analysis of allocations;
- As a component of the Retail Price Index (RPI) by the Office for National Statistics;
- By other government departments, e.g. forming part of how the Armed Forces Covenant monitors access to social housing for veterans;
- To respond to Freedom of Information requests (FOI) and Parliamentary Questions (PQs).

Non-government bodies also use CORE data. For example:

- Housing providers use analysis of their own data to inform their housing management strategies and to benchmark their own performance;
- Academics, researchers, charities and the public access record level data through the UK Data Archive to better understand social housing issues.

## Confidentiality

Since the introduction of the General Data Protection Requirements (GDPR) on 25 May 2018 updates have been made to how data are submitted into the CORE system:

- Data sharing agreement – all CORE data providers must sign a formal data sharing agreement with MHCLG;
- CORE data protection officer – all CORE data providers must set up a CORE data protection officer on the CORE system to electronically sign the data sharing agreement on behalf of their organisation;
- Privacy notice – a new CORE privacy notice must be made available to all new social housing tenants when their data are collected.

All of these steps must be taken for an organisation to submit data into CORE. This ensures that tenants are informed of how their data will be used and that it is being processed securely.

Our disclosure policy<sup>34</sup> is applied to all internal and external uses of the data, including this statistical release and accompanying products. Record level datasets are available through the UK Data Archive via one of three types of licence agreement with different levels of data protection to meet different user needs whilst maintaining tenant confidentiality in line with legislation.

To access CORE record level data see: <http://ukdataservice.ac.uk/get-data/how-to-access>

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<sup>34</sup> <https://core.communities.gov.uk/public/GuidesAndManuals.html>

## Revisions policy

This policy has been developed in accordance with the UK Statistics Authority Code of Practice for Official Statistics and the Department's Revisions Policy:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statistical-notice-dclg-revisions-policy>).

### 1. Non-scheduled revisions

These are where a substantial error has occurred as a result of the compilation, imputation or dissemination process. Revised products are released as soon as is practicable, alongside an explanatory note on both the cause and impact of the error. Data are clearly indicated in tables as 'provisional' (P) or 'revised' (R).

### 2. Scheduled revisions

Providers cannot retrospectively submit or revise data after the closedown deadline date for the reporting year. The only scheduled revision is to the weights, currently based on provisional LAHS data, once the final LAHS data are published. Revised weights and estimates are made in the subsequent release in the historic tables.

For example, 2017/18 weights will be revised after the publication of LAHS 2017/18 in January 2019. When the 2018/19 *Social Housing Lettings* release is published in Autumn 2019 the 2017/18 figures in the time series tables used will be revised.

In 2016/17 *Social Housing Lettings* was published after LAHS and so used final LAHS data when creating weights. There has been no need to revise the previous years' weights in this release.

## Related statistics

### Open data

Some variables will also be made available as linked data via DCLG's Open Data Cabinet to improve the accessibility of the datasets. The data will be available by selecting 'CORE - Social Housing Lettings' from: <http://opendatacommunities.org/data/housing-market>

### Social housing sales data

The Department's *Social Housing Sales in England, 2017/18* also published today, utilising data collected through CORE for sales of self-contained dwellings and re-sales of any part-owned dwellings (shared ownership) from private registered providers are available from:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/social-housing-sales-in-england-2017-to-2018>

### Housing stock in England

The Department publishes annual live tables on housing stock and vacant by tenure at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-dwelling-stock-including-vacants#live-tables>

## Private registered provider social housing

The Regulator for Social Housing in England, the separate statutory regulatory body, publishes its annual *Statistical Data Return* (SDR) including the total number of social and affordable lettings and stock, based on data collected from private registered providers at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statistical-data-return-2017-to-2018>

## Local authority housing social housing

The Department's annual *Local Authority Housing Statistics* (LAHS) data return reports on a wide range of housing related data including total dwellings, lettings and vacant, waiting lists, rents, and condition of stock<sup>35</sup>, available from:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/local-authority-housing-data>

## English Housing Survey (EHS)

The Department's annual *English Housing Survey* (EHS) providing information on the quality and quantity of both social and non-social stock in England based upon a sample of households is at:

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

## Homelessness

The Department's statistics relating to homelessness include quarterly *Statutory Homelessness and Prevention and Relief* and the annual *Rough Sleeping in England*, both available from:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/homelessness-statistics>

## Devolved administrations

The devolved administrations of the UK produce and publish their own social housing lettings and sales statistics. These data are not published alongside the England statistics in this release because there are not directly comparable figures across the country due to differences in data collection methodologies and policies.

### Wales

- Social housing stock and rent statistics:  
<http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/social-housing-stock-rents/?lang=en>
- Social housing lettings statistics:  
<http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/social-housing-lettings-data-collection/?lang=en>

### Scotland

- Local authority social lettings:  
<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Housing-Regeneration/HSfS/Lettings>
- Social sector summary tables: <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Housing-Regeneration/HSfS/socialhousing>
- Private registered provider social lettings:  
<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Housing-Regeneration/HSfS/Improvements>
- Social Tenants in Scotland, 2015 <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2017/02/8350>

### Northern Ireland

- Social housing statistics including data on tenancies, household, allocations and sales can be found at: <http://www.ninis2.nisra.gov.uk/public/Home.aspx>

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<sup>35</sup> Prior to 2011/12 much of this information was collected through the department's Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix (HSSA).

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