



# Private registered provider social housing stock in England – sector characteristics and stock movement

2019-2020



Version 1.0 – February 2021

Responsible statistician: Amanda Hall

Queries and feedback: [enquiries@rsh.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@rsh.gov.uk) or 0300 124 5225



# Introduction

**Private registered provider social housing stock in England – sector characteristics and stock movement** outlines the stock owned and managed by private registered providers (PRPs). It is part of the statistical data return (SDR) statistical release series.

This document is supplemented by **technical notes and definitions** and **data quality and methodology** notes. These notes provide additional information on our data collection and cleansing processes; key limitations with the data and provide additional context for the statistics presented.

Additional tables and data are also available along with tools allowing for the interrogation of the data at both a PRP and geographical level.

## Coverage

These statistics provide information on social housing owned and managed by PRPs at 31 March each year. Unless otherwise stated, all figures in this document refer to stock located in England. The definitions used within the release are consistent with the way data was collected each year. The term unit used in this release includes self-contained units and non-self-contained bedspaces.

## National Statistics status

These statistics are considered by the United Kingdom Statistics Authority (UKSA) regulatory arm (the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR)) to have met the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value, and are considered a national statistic. For more information see the **data quality and methodology note**.



## Key

Introduction

The tabs to the left of the page provide the index for the note.



Provide information about key methodological considerations (see notes for more information).

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Identify the table from which data is drawn. Tables are available from the 2020 data release page.



# Key facts

## 96% of stock owned by large PRPs

The 256 large PRPs (those owning 1,000 or more units of social housing) represented 18% of the total PRP population in 2020. The majority of PRPs (82%) are small (owning fewer than 1,000 units of social housing).

## For-profit providers nearly double their stock

The 49 for-profit providers reported 9,313 units of social stock in 2020, nearly double that in 2019 (5,342). The growth has been predominantly in low cost home ownership (from 2,425 in 2019 to 5,144 in 2020).

## Right to buy activity higher than in recent years

There were 5,908 sales under the various right to buy/acquire schemes. This is a 20% increase from the 4,929 sales reported in 2019 and a result of a large increase in voluntary right to buy sales.

## Inter-group transfer activity remains high

Transfer activity has remained relatively stable since 2019, with 121,178 transfers of social rented stock in 2020. PRPs modifying their group structures through mergers or restructuring is the main driver.



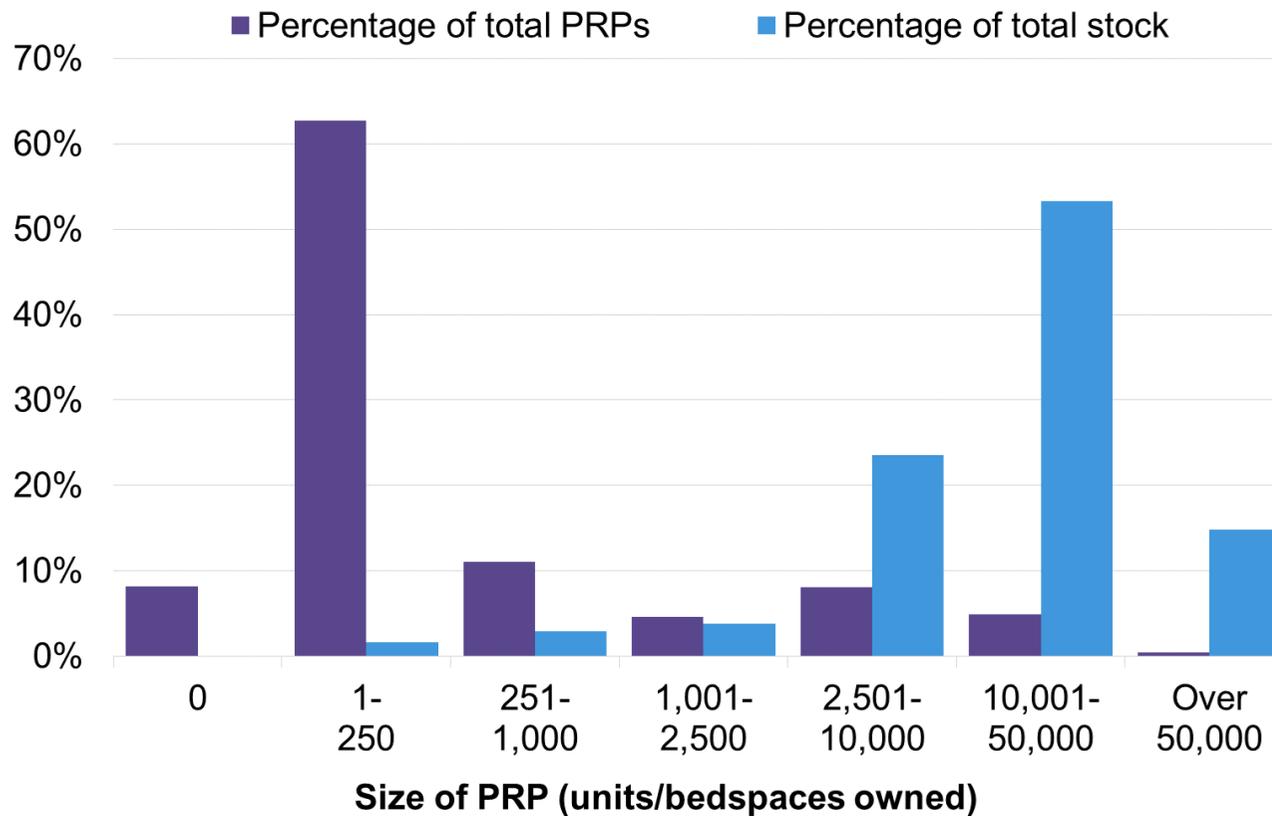
# Size of PRPs and stock ownership

96% of stock in the sector is owned by PRPs who own 1,000 or more units each.

82% of PRPs own fewer than 1,000 social units each.

Six PRPs own 50,000 or more units of stock each.

### Number of PRPs and stock owned by PRP size 2020



Many PRPs operate in group structures and the total number of stock held within some of these groups will be higher than the individual PRPs presented here. Further information on the number of PRPs in group structures can be found later in this briefing note.

There are a variety of factors behind why 8% of PRPs own no stock. This band will include PRPs who are in the process of deregistering, newly registered PRPs yet to gain stock and a large number of PRPs that are the non-stock holding parent organisations of group structures that own stock.

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Section based on weighted data.

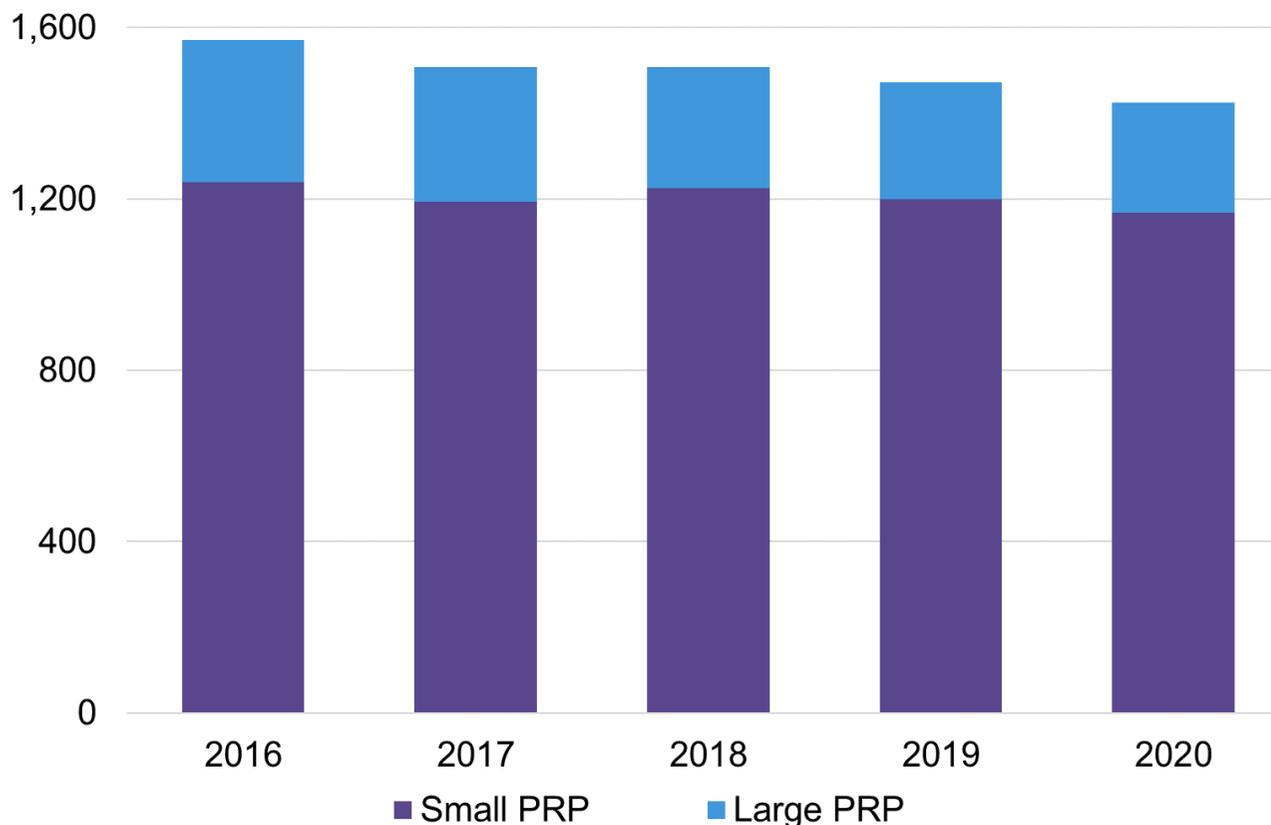


# PRP numbers 2016-2020

There has been a steady decline in the number of PRPs registered with us since 2016 (from 1,570 to 1,424).

Small providers, those owning fewer than 1,000 units each, consistently account for about 80% of PRPs each year.

### Number of private providers registered with RSH (2016-2020)



The fall in the number of private providers registered with us between 2016 and 2020 (1,570 to 1,424) is mainly driven by a number of mergers seen over the last five years.

These mergers (like group structure establishment) are primarily driven by a desire to share strengths, or complementary specialities or to become more efficient.

Proportionately, small providers (those owning fewer than 1,000 units each) account for slightly more of our registered population in 2020 than in 2016 (82% compared to 79%).

T3.1a

Section based on weighted data.



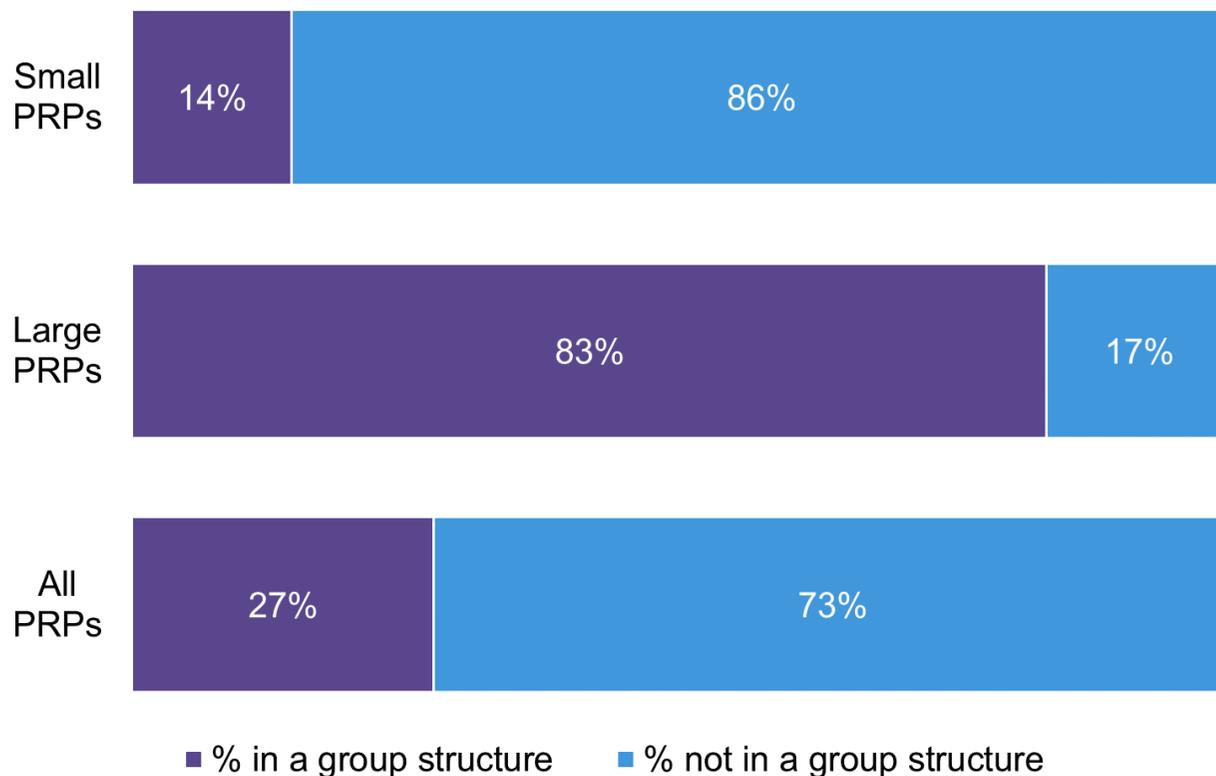
# Group membership

A very slightly smaller proportion of PRPs are in a group structure in 2020 (27.4%) than in 2019 (28.8%).

83% of large PRPs (83%) are in group structures.

PRPs in groups own 90.2% of all social stock, slightly less than in 2019 (91.9%).

## Group membership by PRP size 2020



PRPs can operate on an individual basis or as part of a group structure. Group structures vary considerably, some comprising only registered providers and others comprising registered providers and non-registered entities.

PRPs may enter into group structure arrangements for a variety of reasons. Group structures may be established to undertake commercial activities within one or more subsidiaries; in others it may be to merge operations (perhaps to share strengths, or complementary specialities or to become more efficient) while maintaining individual corporate identities within a group structure.

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Section based on unweighted data.



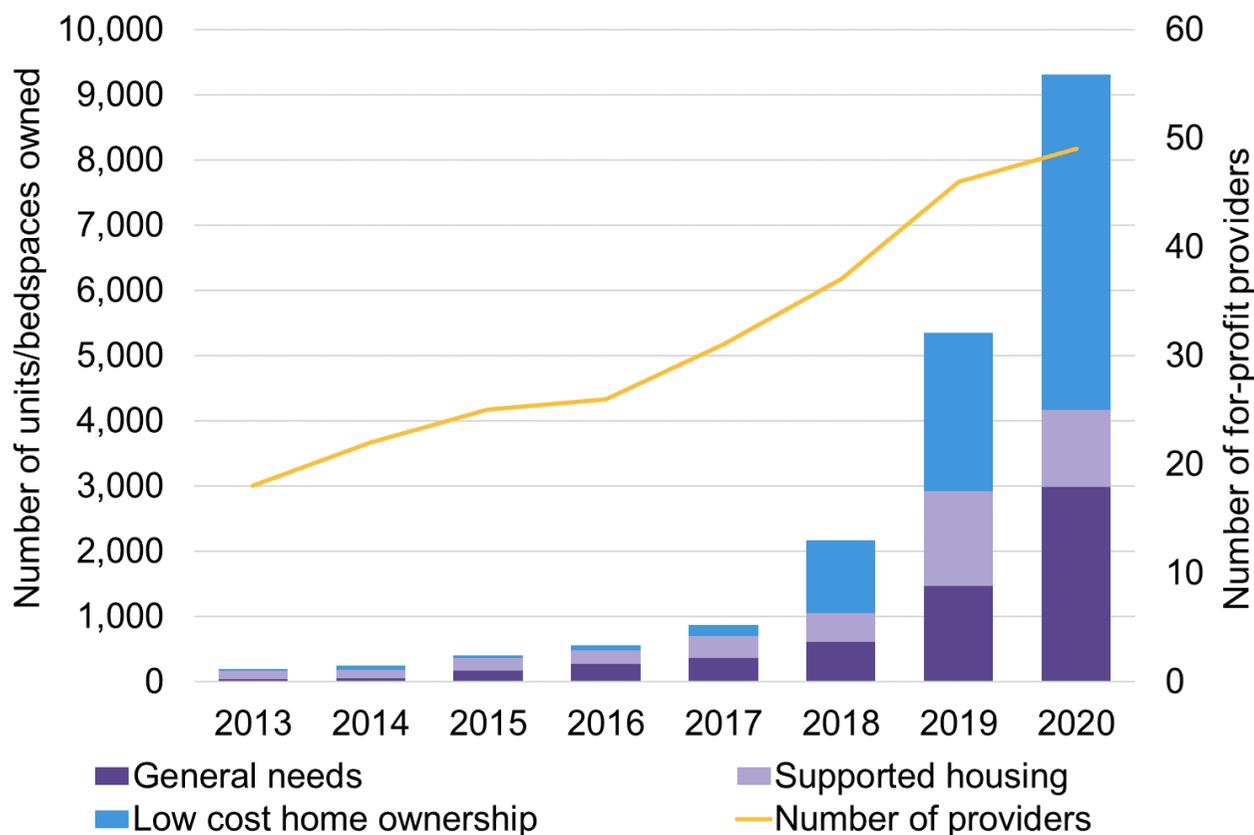
# For-profit providers

For-profit providers owned 9,313 units of social stock in 2020, nearly double that in 2019 (5,342).

The growth has been predominantly due to a doubling of LCHO.

For-profit providers only own 0.3% of all social stock and 8 do not own any stock.

### For-profit providers and owned units 2013 to 2020



Over half of the social units owned by for-profit providers is low cost home ownership (LCHO). One for-profit provider reported owning 65% of this (3,342 LCHO units out of the for-profit total LCHO of 5,144).

This is the fastest growing stock type for the for-profit providers, with a year-on-year increase of 112% (2,719 units). This growth also accounts for over a fifth of the total LCHO growth in the PRP sector between 2019 and 2020.

For-profit providers are a relatively new type of social housing provider and were first permitted by the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008. The first for-profit provider was registered with us in 2010. In 2020, 49 for-profit providers submitted SDR data (up from 46 in 2019).

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Section based on unweighted data.

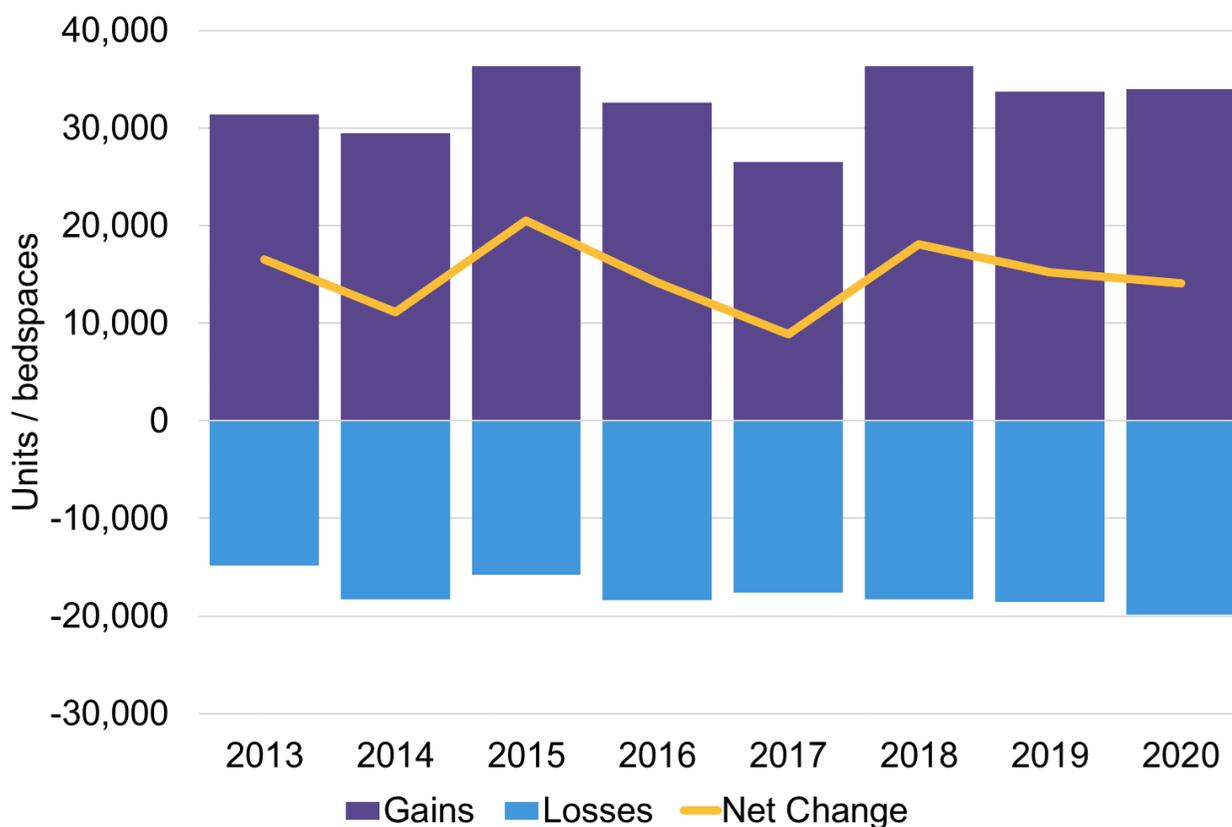


# Low cost rental stock gains and losses

Large PRPs reported a net gain of 14,098 units of low cost rental stock in 2020.

There are cycles in the gains of low cost rental units due to the phasing of funding and delivery priorities under various funding programmes.

### Low cost rental stock movement 2013 to 2020 (units)



The phasing of funding and delivery priorities under the Shared Ownership and Affordable Homes Programme 2016-2021 (SOAHP) and precursor programmes are the key drivers behind this pattern. It should be noted that the initial offering under SOAHP was focused almost exclusively on home ownership products.

**!** Section based on data from large PRPs only. Includes intermediate and Affordable Rent units.

Note that changes in low cost home ownership (LCHO) stock are not covered in this briefing note. More information on LCHO can be found in the **private registered provider social housing stock in England - stock profile**.

Figures in this section will be lower than the year on year change in low cost rental stock reported in the **private registered provider social housing stock in England - stock profile** due to this note only covering large PRPs. These figures do not include stock transferred to PRPs during the year.

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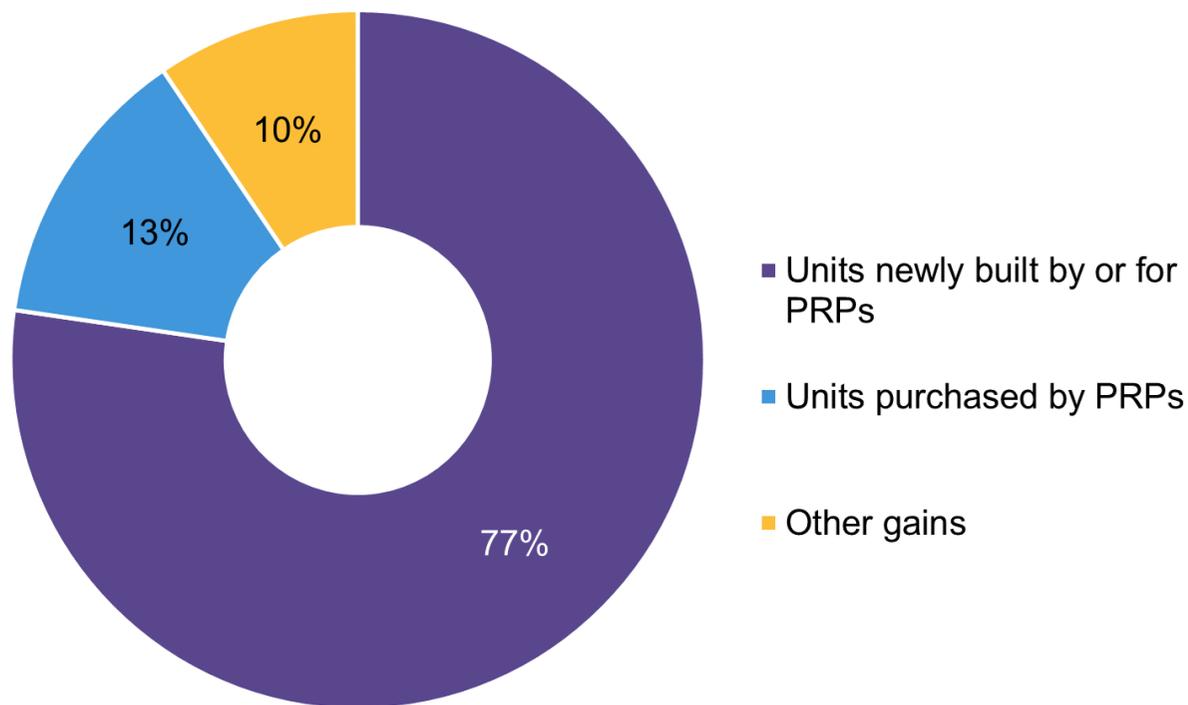


# Low cost rental stock gains 2020

Large PRPs built 26,266 units of low cost rental stock in 2020, with 77% of the gain a result of this new build activity.

Low cost rental stock purchased by large PRPs fell by 36% to 4,498 units in 2020.

### Low cost rental stock gains by source 2020 (%)



Some new stock built under section 106 affordable housing requirements may be classed as 'purchased' in the SDR data, due to providers purchasing these units from developers once they are completed.

PRPs recorded 3,221 units of low cost rental stock as 'other gains' during 2020. This category will include acquisitions made through conversions from other tenures, lease reversions and units gained through remodelling and subdivision of existing stock.

**!** Section based on data from large PRPs only. Includes intermediate and Affordable Rent units. PRPs only record gains directly made during the year. Where a merger of PRPs takes place within a year, some unit gains (including new builds) are shown at the annual return as a transfer only. See **technical notes** for more information.

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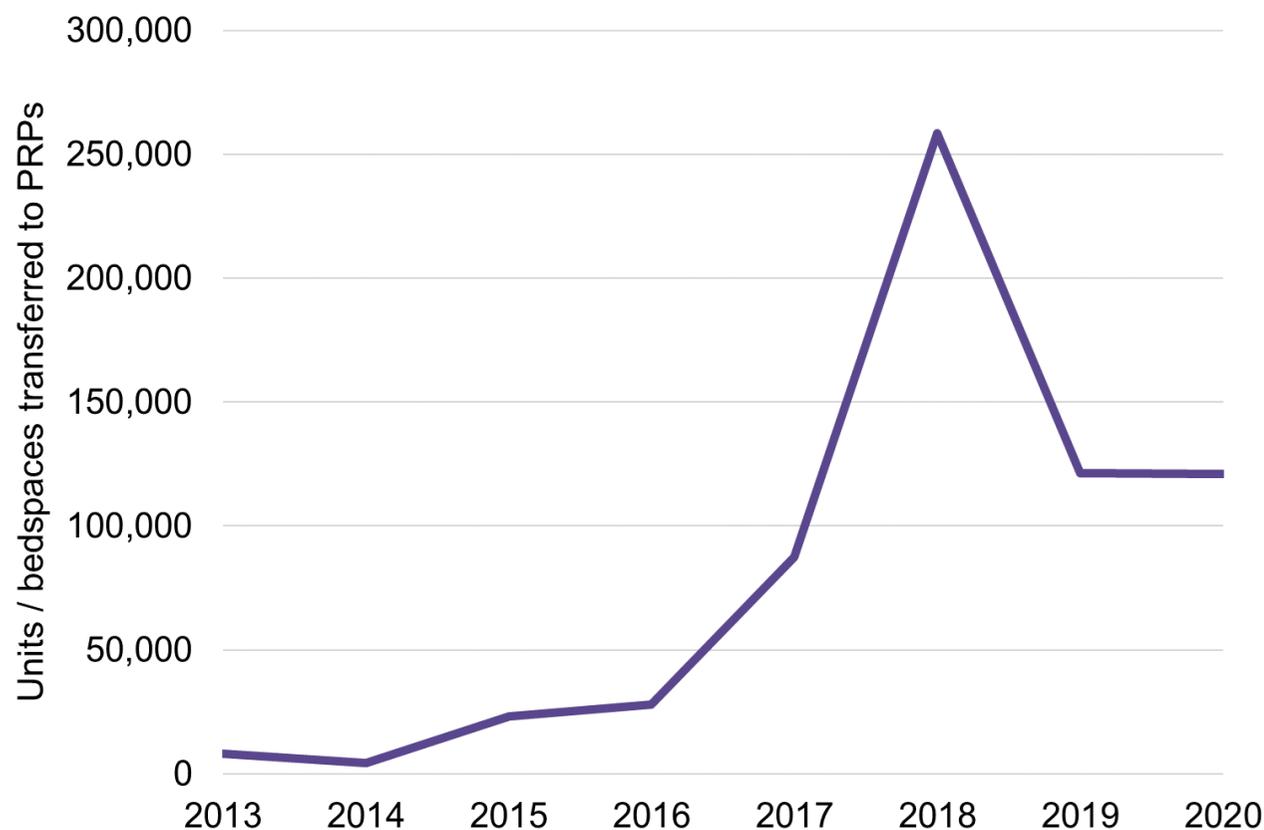
# Transfers of low cost rental stock

121,178 transfers of low cost rental stock took place in 2020, very slightly fewer than in 2019 (121,376).

Transfer activity in 2020 is due to movements within the PRP sector as no LSVTs occurred in 2020.

Four PRPs reported over 10,000 transferred units each, with one PRP reporting 38,424 units (31% of all transferred units).

### Low cost rental units transferred to PRPs 2013 to 2020



No large scale voluntary transfers (LSVT) of stock occurred in 2020, so there were no major additions to stock from outside of the PRP sector. The large numbers of transfers in the past three years appear to have been driven by PRPs modifying their group structures.

**!** Section based on data from large PRPs only. Includes intermediate and Affordable Rent units.

This data shows the total number of unit transfers and not the number of unique units/bedspaces that have been transferred. Therefore, if the same unit is transferred more than once within a given period it will be recorded multiple times. These data cover units transferred from all sources, including those transferred within and those transferred in from outside the existing PRP social housing stock (e.g. from LA providers). See **technical notes** for more information.

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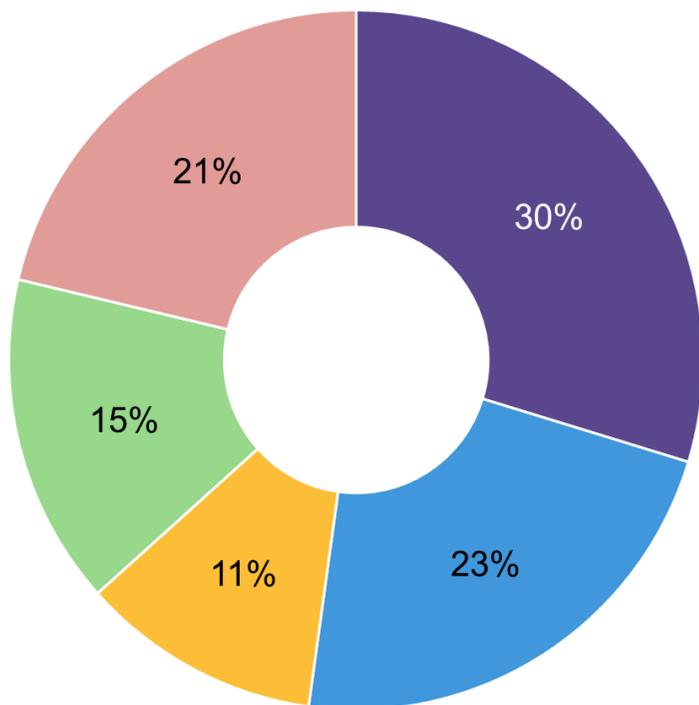
# Low cost rental stock losses 2020

Just over half of all losses were sales to tenants under various schemes (10,379 units).

The various right to buy or acquire schemes accounted for 5,908 sales (30%). This is a 20% increase on 2019.

2020 saw the highest number of sales under right to buy or acquire since 2012.

Low cost rental stock losses by type 2020 (%)



- All right to buy/ acquire sales
- LCHO, homebuy and other sales to sitting tenants
- Demolitions
- Sales for non-social use
- Other losses

Out of the 5,908 right to buy or acquire sales in 2020, 1,227 (21%) were voluntary right to buy sales. This large increase (from just 37 in 2019) is driven by the funding and delivery of the Midlands pilot of voluntary right to buy. This pilot launched in 2018 and aimed to fund the discounted sales of c.3,000 homes over a two year period.

PRPs recorded 4,236 units lost through 'other' means during 2020. This includes units lost through lease reversions, remodelling of existing stock and units permanently removed from consideration for letting by the PRP.

**!** Section based on data from large PRPs only. Includes intermediate and Affordable Rent units. PRPs only record losses directly made during the year. If a merger of PRPs takes place within a year, units lost by a PRP that has deregistered or which became a small PRP will not be captured. See **technical notes** for more information.

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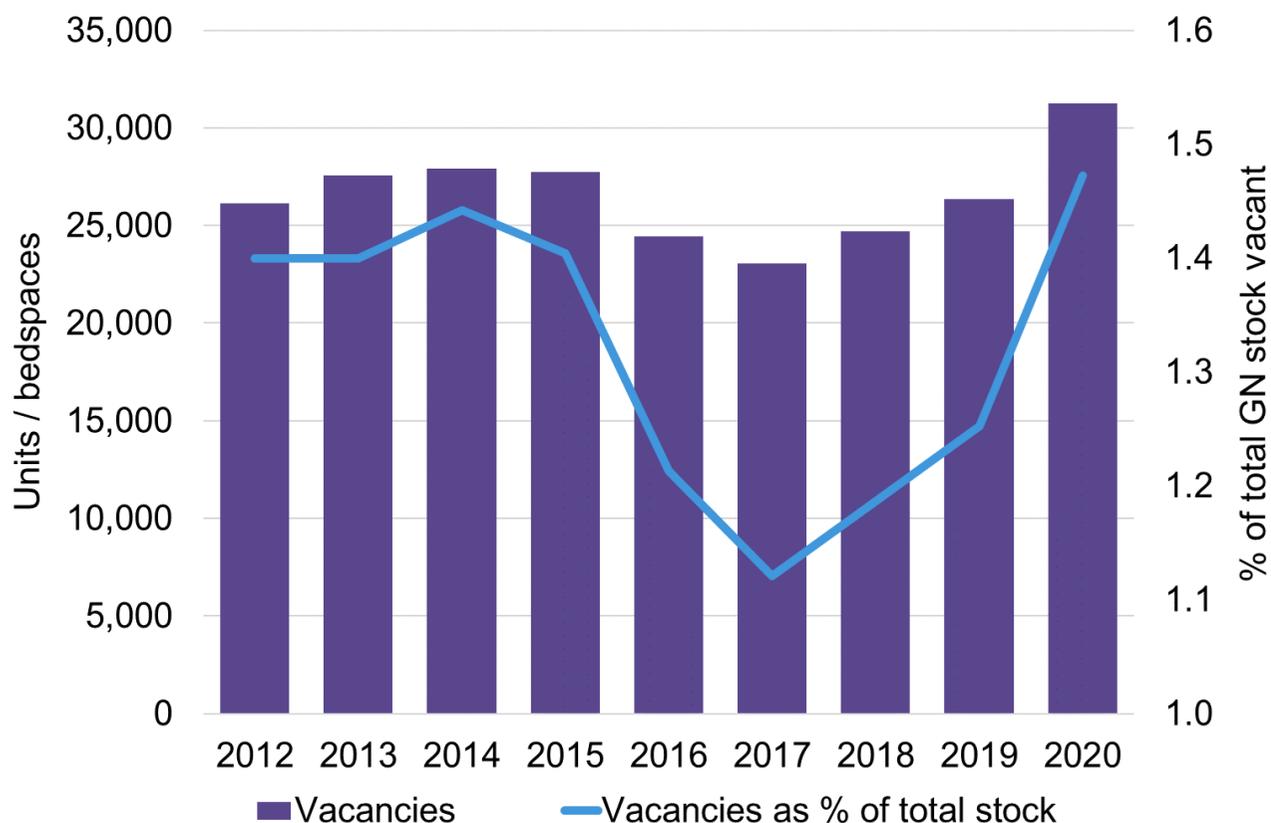


# General needs vacancies

Large PRPs reported 31,250 general needs low cost rental vacancies, an increase of nearly 5,000 units from 2019.

The percentage of total general needs stock vacant on 31 March marginally increased when compared to the same date in 2019 (from 1.3% to 1.5%).

### General needs low cost rental vacancies 2012 to 2020



The vacancy data reported in the SDR relates to units vacant on 31 March each year.

In 2020 the first national lockdown due to the Coronavirus pandemic began on 23 March. The build up of concern over the spread of the virus and instructions to vulnerable people to minimise contact with others shortly before this, and the formal measures introduced on the 23 March may have had some impact on lettings activity and consequently on the level of vacancies reported.

For more information on recording of vacancies see earlier releases.

**!** In 2020 providers were guided to not consider the coronavirus as a reason to record units as unavailable for letting. For more details see **technical notes**.

**!** Section based unweighted data from all PRPs and includes intermediate and Affordable Rent units.

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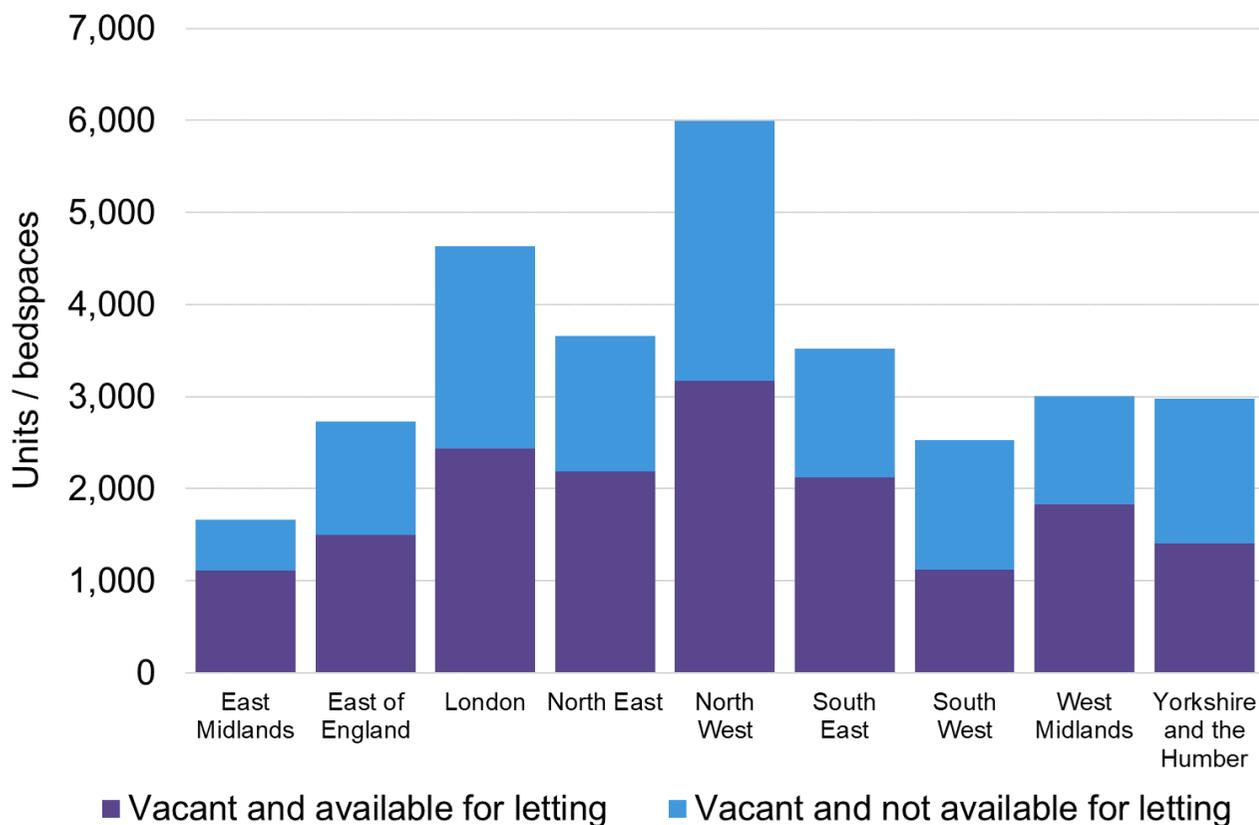


# General needs vacancies

The North West had the most vacant self-contained general needs low cost rental units in 2020. However, this is also the region with the most stock.

Vacancies in East Midlands increased by 63%, rising from 1,019 vacant units in 2019 to 1,666 in 2020.

### Vacant self-contained general needs low cost rental units by region 2020



Nationally, 0.8% of total self-contained general needs low cost rental stock is reported as available for letting and 0.7% as unavailable.

This is slightly higher than in 2019 (where 0.6% of units fell into each category).

This slight increase in vacant units may be related to the early response to the Coronavirus pandemic (see page 11 for more details).

**!** Section based on data from large PRPs. Includes intermediate and Affordable Rent units. Figures in this section are lower than the total vacancies for 2019 listed earlier in the report as those contain both self-contained and non-self-contained units. See **technical notes** for more information.

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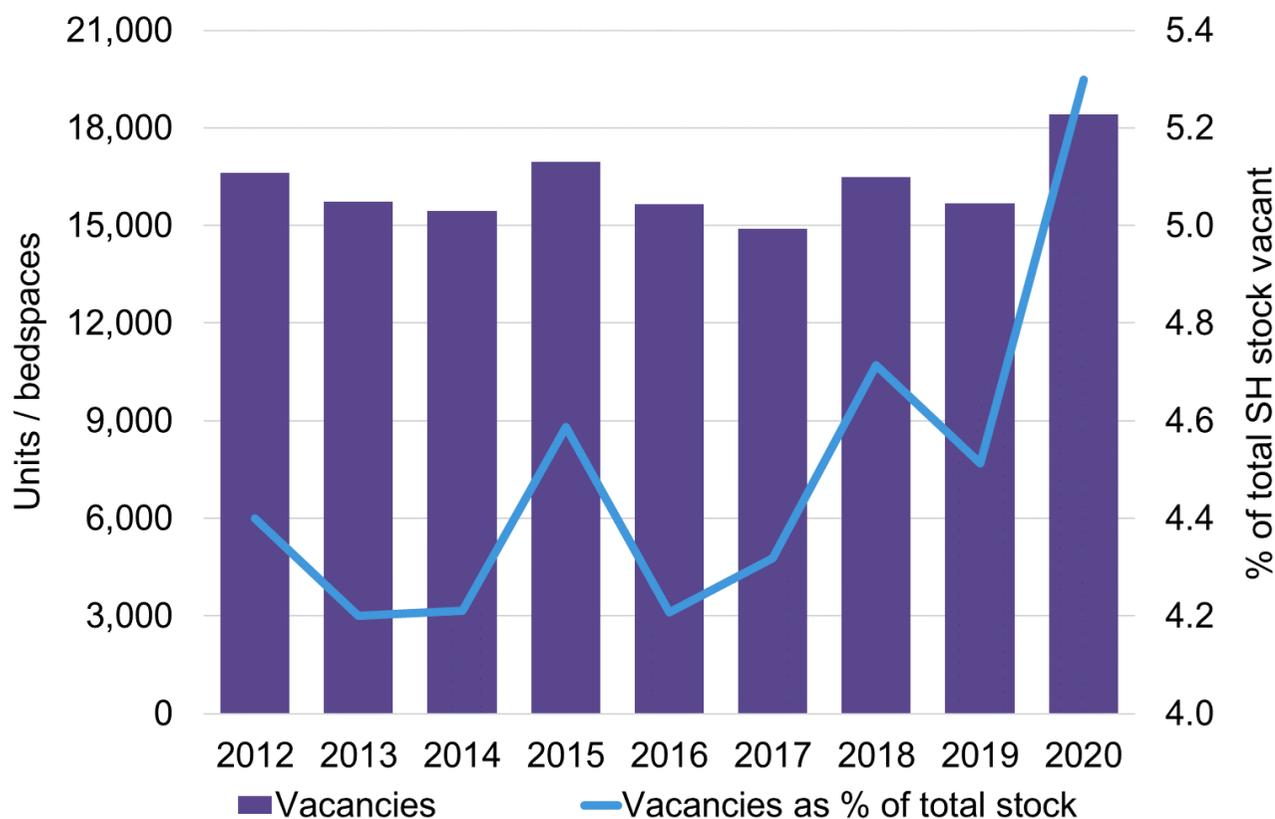


# Supported housing vacancies

5.3% of supported housing low cost rental units owned by large PRPs were vacant on 31 March 2020. This was a higher proportion than any of the previous years.

There were 18,411 units of supported housing low cost rental reported as vacant. This was an increase of 2,732 units from 2019.

### Supported housing low cost rental vacancies 2012 to 2020



The higher percentage of supported housing vacancies compared to general needs vacancies within each year may be due to some supported housing units being reserved for (and awaiting letting to) specific client groups. This may also explain the volatility in the absolute number of vacant supported housing units.

This increase in vacant units reported on 31 March 2020 may also be related to the early response to the Coronavirus pandemic (see page 10 for more details). With supported housing targeted at some of the most vulnerable people in England, it would not be surprising to see a larger impact on letting activity and consequently on the vacancies for supported housing than for general needs.

Section based unweighted data from all PRPs and includes intermediate and Affordable Rent units.

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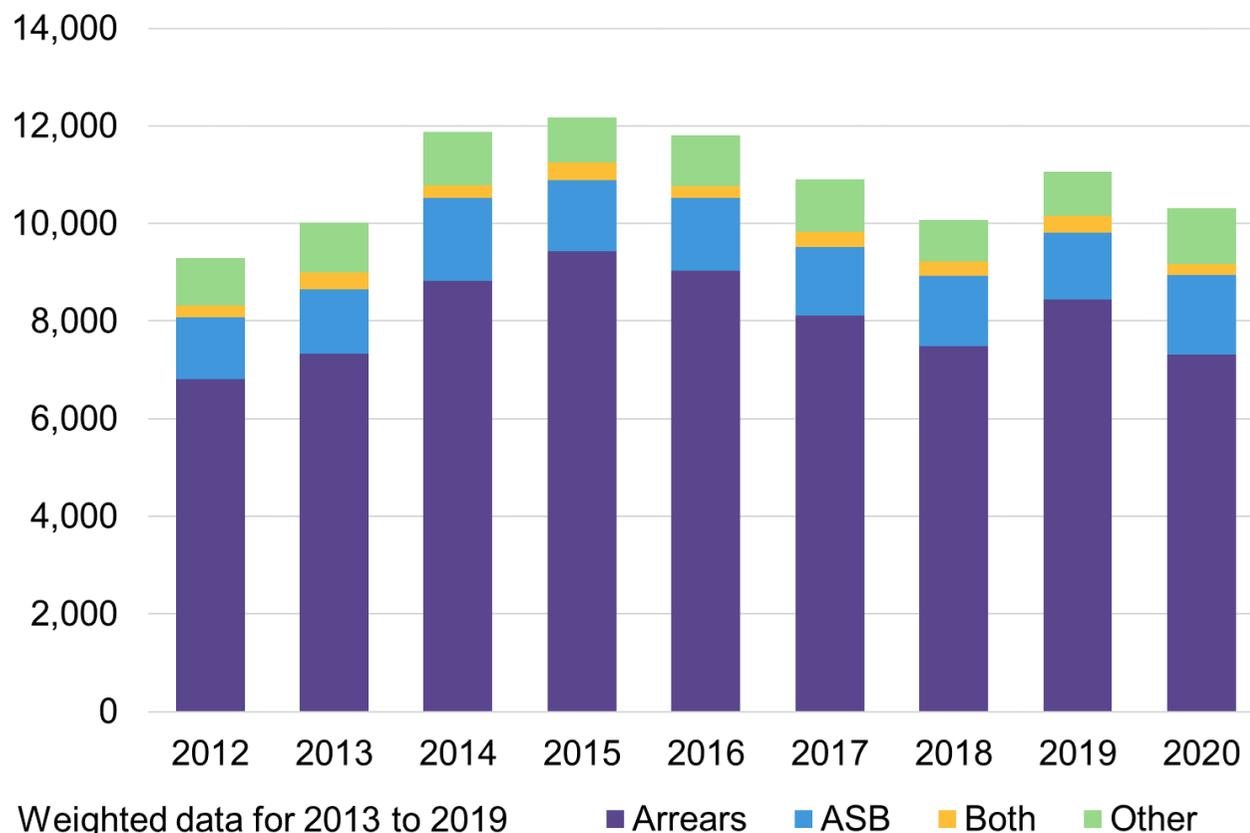


# Evictions

Large PRPs reported carrying out 10,311 evictions in 2020. This represents a near 7% decrease from the 11,068 evictions in 2019 (weighted).

More than two thirds of evictions were for arrears but the number of evictions for arrears were 13% lower than in 2019 (weighted).

## Evictions by PRPs 2012 to 2020



The apparent reduction in overall evictions between 2019 and 2020, includes a 13% reduction in evictions for arrears (8,434 to 7,323).

This reduction is unlikely to be a result of the Coronavirus pandemic response. Guidance on handling evictions during the pandemic was not released by the government until 28 March (3 days before the end of the 2020 reporting period) (see **technical notes** for more details).

**!** Section based on data from large PRPs only. Includes intermediate and Affordable Rent units. Submission of data on evictions was optional for large PRPs until 2020. Weighting was applied to account for non-responses in years prior to 2020 (with the exception of 2012 as a response rate could not be determined). The response rate to the optional questions on evictions fluctuated each year, resulting in a variable weighting effect. An apparent trends in weighted figures since 2012 should be viewed with a degree of caution. See **technical notes** for more information.

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T3.12



# Notes

## Background

These statistics are based on data gathered in the SDR survey. This survey collects data that we believe is included in the PRPs administrative or management systems. We consult with PRPs to ascertain which data items are present in systems and work to minimise the overall burden placed on data providers requesting data already collected.

We use the SDR data extensively as a source of administrative data to inform our operational approach to regulating the economic standards (see **data quality and methodology note** for more details). The United Kingdom Statistics Authority (UKSA) encourages public bodies to use administrative data for statistical purposes, as such, we publish these data annually.

## Governance of data and statistics at RSH

The statistician responsible for the publication of these statistics is also responsible for the SDR data collection and the cleansing of incoming SDR data; working with PRPs to directly address anomalies within the data submissions and producing the final data set and statistics.

All SDR data is stored and analysed within password-protected government secure networks and access to the sector level analysis work undertaken on the data is restricted until after publication (PRP level data is accessed by our staff as part of operational work). Further information on the data quality assurance processes employed by RSH is provided in **data quality and methodology note**.

Contact information submitted by PRPs in the Entity Level Information section is redacted within the release. This contact information is not publicly available. We hold no other administrative data that can be made available for use in statistics. However, we publish a range of summary data from other information collected. These are available from our website (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/regulator-of-social-housing>).

## Accounting for missing data

In 2014, following consideration of alternative methods and discussions with the National Statistician's Office and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) (then DCLG), we selected weighting to account for the small proportion of missing data. The impact of weighting on data for the 2020 SDR is shown in supplementary tables (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/private-registered-provider-social-housing-stock-in-england-2019-to-2020>). The overall effect of weighting on the final totals is relatively minor, which is as expected, given that small PRPs own a small proportion of stock and had a response rate of 94.5% in 2020.



# Notes – glossary of terms

## Affordable Rent

Affordable Rent homes are those made available (to households eligible for low cost rental housing) at a rent level of no more than 80% (inclusive of service charges) of local market rents. Affordable Rent homes can be either newly built, acquired from other PRPs or converted from existing low cost rented homes, but only where they form part of an agreement with Homes England or the Greater London Authority. They can be either general needs or supported housing. See also [London Affordable Rent](#).

## Evictions

A tenancy brought to an end by the execution of a warrant of possession by court bailiffs. Eviction does not include abandonment, even where a property is abandoned in the period between a warrant of possession and the execution of that warrant. All evictions effected during the year are included, regardless of the year in which the possession order or warrant of possession itself was obtained, the type of tenancy to which it relates, or whether the original possession order was an outright, postponed or suspended possession order. Evictions from immediate licenses are also included.

Evictions that have not been effected during the year, regardless of the date of the possession order or warrant of possession, are excluded.

## For profit providers

A provider whose objects may not contain a reference to the provision of social housing or whose constitution allows it to trade for a profit (this might be expressed as an ability to distribute dividends to shareholders, or pay out its surpluses to other organisations etc.) or whose objects allow it to carry out activities that are not linked to housing provision, or any combination of these. There are no standard regulatory requirements in relation to the constitutions of for-profit providers – although specific requirements may be necessary as assessed at the point of registration.

## General needs housing

General needs housing covers the bulk of housing stock for rent. It includes both self-contained units and non-self-contained bedspaces. General needs housing is stock that is not designated for specific client groups or delivered under specific investment programmes.



# Notes – glossary of terms

## Group parent

An entity defined as the parent body of another organisation where it: (a) owns more than half the nominal value of the share capital in that other organisation; or (b) has the power to appoint or remove all or some of the board members of the governing body of that other organisation.

## Group structure

For the purpose of the SDR and this release, PRPs are defined as being members of a group structure if they are subsidiaries and associates of one another within the meaning of those terms as set out in Section 271 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008.

## Housing for older people

Properties made available exclusively to older people and that fully meet the definition of supported housing specified in the Welfare Reform and Work Act (2016) and regulations made under it.

## Large PRPs

For the purposes of the SDR release this includes all PRPs that complete the 'long SDR form'. These are PRPs that own 1,000 or more social housing units/ bedspaces.

## London Affordable Rent

London Affordable Rent (LAR), was introduced in 2016 by the Mayor of London. LAR units are Affordable Rent units in London let at or below the weekly rent benchmarks set by the GLA. For more information see <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/housing-and-land/homes-londoners-affordable-homes-programmes/homes-londoners-affordable-homes-programme-2016-2023>.

## Low cost rental

The term low cost rental is used in these statistics to denote any stock which meets the definition of low cost rental accommodation in the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008. It must be available for rent, with a rent below market value, and in accordance with the rules designed to ensure that it is made available to people whose needs are not adequately served by the commercial housing market.



# Notes – glossary of terms

## Non-self-contained unit (bedspace)

A non-self-contained unit will consist of an area in a hostel/ dormitory or other similar entity or a room or rooms (within a block of flats, sheltered scheme, house in multiple occupation or similar entity) which is/ are private to the tenant but which require sharing of some or all living, cooking, bathroom or toilet amenities. When counting non-self-contained units, PRPs record the number of areas for which an individual tenancy can be issued, not the number of occupants. All non-self-contained units are recorded in the SDR as bedspaces.

## Owned stock

A PRP owns property when it: (a) holds the freehold title or a leasehold interest (of any length) in that property; and (b) is the body with a direct legal relationship with the occupants of the property (this body is often described as the landlord). No non-residential properties should be reported in the SDR. In earlier data collections (RSR), a minimum period of lease (21 years) was stated. Stock held on shorter leases will have been counted as stock managed but not owned in these earlier collections.

## Private registered providers (PRPs)

PRPs refer in this document to providers of social housing in England that are registered with the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) and are not local authorities (this is the definition of PRP in the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008).

## Self-contained unit

A self-contained unit is one in which all the rooms (including kitchen, bathroom and toilet) in a household's accommodation are behind a door which only that household can use and therefore allows that household exclusive use of them. Some self-contained units, especially flats, may have some common areas (such as a shared entrance hall) or services (such as a central boiler for heating and/ or hot water).

## Small PRPs

These are PRPs that own fewer than 1,000 social housing units/ bedspaces and that complete the 'short SDR form'.

## Social housing

Social housing is defined in the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 sections 68-77. The term covers low cost rental, low cost home



# Notes – glossary of terms

ownership and accommodation owned by PRPs as previously defined in the Housing Act 1996.

## Social stock

Social stock is used in these statistics to denote the total number of low cost rental and low cost home ownership units. Social stock figures do not include social leasehold units or any other stock type. Total social stock figures represent the number of self-contained units plus bedspaces.

## Supported housing

Units can only be counted as supported housing if they meet the definition of supported housing specified in the Welfare Reform and Work Act (2016) and regulations made under it. The fact that a tenant receives support services in their home does not make it supported housing.

## Transfers

PRPs are directed to include all properties that another organisation (including PRPs or LAs) have transferred to them for social rent, where the ownership has been transferred from one organisation to another by lease or transfer of the freehold. This includes properties transferred within a group structure.

The SDR records the number of times a unit has been transferred and not the number of unique units/ bedspaces transferred as the same unit may be transferred more than once within a given period.

## WRWA

References to the WRWA are references to the Welfare Reform and Work Act (2016). This, and regulations made under it, have introduced significant changes to the way rents are set within the social housing sector, and providers should review their rent policies and stock definitions in light of legislation. The legislation is available at <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2016/7>.

## Why not have your say on our statistics in 2021/22?

Email feedback to [enquiries@rsh.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@rsh.gov.uk) or rate how this document meets your needs.



All needs met



Some needs met



No needs met



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or write to:

Regulator of Social Housing  
Fry Building  
Marsham Street  
London SW1P 4DF

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