



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Statistical Release: Housing

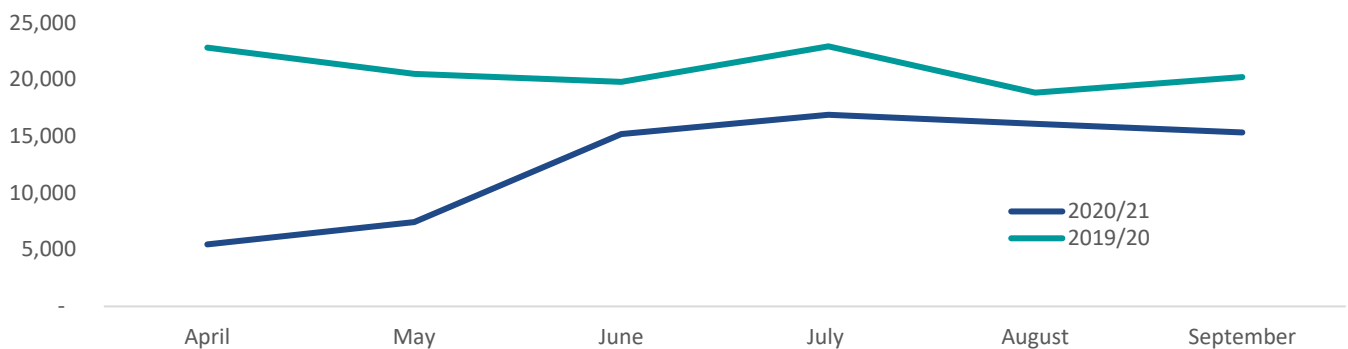
Social Housing Lettings: April to September 2020, England

This release contains data on new social housing lettings in England in the first half of 2020/21, from 1 April 2020 to 30 September 2020. It is being published outside of the usual annual cycle to give insight into the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on new social housing lettings.

Key findings:

- There were 76,000 new social lettings in the first 6 months of 2020/21, a decrease of 49,000 or 39% compared with the same months of the previous year.
- The number of new social lettings in April 2020 decreased to a quarter of the number seen the previous April. Then they rebounded in summer 2020 but to lower levels than in summer 2019.

No. of new social lettings



- First lets of new properties decreased slightly. They comprised 41% of new Affordable lets in the first 6 months of 2020/21 compared to 44% in the same period of the previous year.
- Re-lets of General Needs properties where the previous occupant had died increased (by 5 percentage points to 19% of new lets); re-lets where the previous occupant had been evicted decreased (by 3 percentage points to 3%); and renewals remained stable (3%).
- Properties were vacant for longer, with an average of 29 vacant days in the first 6 months of 2020/21 compared to 17 days the previous year.
- The length of time households were on the waiting list before getting a new tenancy was stable.
- Households new to the social sector increased from 59% to 68% of new lets in 2020/21 (Apr-Sep).
- Lets to people from temporary accommodation increased by 5 percentage points to 16% in 2020/21 (Apr-Sep). Lets to the “statutorily homeless” increased by 4 percentage points to 21% of new lets.
- Domestic abuse was the primary reason for leaving last home for 7% of households (1 percentage point increase). Those asked to leave by family and friends increased from 10% to 12%.
- Employment of lead tenants in new General Needs lets sharply decreased to 36% in April to September 2020, reversing the long-term steady increase from 32% in 2008/09 to 40% in 2019/20.

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Introduction

This release covers new social housing lettings in England in the first 6 months of 2020/21 by local authorities and private registered providers at social and affordable rents, with information on tenants and tenancy type.

The release covers most of the first 6-month period of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, and the English lockdown that was introduced on 23 March 2020 with the collection opening shortly after on 1 April 2020.

About this release

This release is the first publication on new social housing lettings outside of the usual annual publication cycle. The data in this release covers the first half of 2020/21 from 1 April 2020 to 30 September 2020 and has been published to give insight into the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on new social housing lettings.

Data is submitted on an individual case basis, i.e. one record per new letting. A snapshot of the data has been taken as at 8 February 2021 of all records submitted by that date for new lettings starting during April to September 2020. It is likely that further data on this 6-month period will be submitted by data providers after this snapshot but before the usual full-year collection close date. To ensure comparisons to the previous year are like-for-like, we have used 2019/20 (Apr-Sep) data as submitted by a cut-off date of 8 February 2020 for comparisons.

Data presented in this release is as submitted, unless otherwise stated:

- Standard validations and quality assurance have been conducted.
- No weighting has been applied to account for local authority non-response, unlike in the annual release, as the statistical process to create weights would not be robust enough when using partial data.
- No imputation has been applied in order to proxy demographic values when these questions were refused by the tenant, for similar reasons.

Analysis comparing Apr-Sep 2019/20 data against the full 2019/20 dataset showed that the missing records did not introduce substantial bias into the dataset:

- There was a slight shift of 1.3% or less towards new General Needs lets, new Private Registered Provider lets and property re-lets (as opposed to first lets in the social sector).
- There was no real change in all other variables of interest presented in this release.

The findings in this release should be considered in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Key housing-related events are listed below:

23 March 2020	Lockdown in England begins
March 2020	'Everyone In' scheme launched to support the homeless
March 2020	Stay on possession proceedings ("eviction ban") put in place
1 April 2020	Start of the 2020/21 CORE reporting year
April 2020	Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme ("furlough") launched
13 May	Rules on house moves relaxed
June 2020	Lockdown restrictions begin to ease
June 2020	Stay on possession proceedings ("eviction ban") extended
September 2020	Stay on possession proceedings ("eviction ban") lifted
30 September 2020	End of the first 6 months of the 2020/21 CORE reporting year
8 February 2021	Cut-off for the 2020/21 Apr-Sep CORE dataset
31 March 2021	Publication of this release

1. New social housing lettings

This release covers a large part of the first 6-month period of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, and the English lockdown that was introduced on 23 March 2020 with the collection opening shortly after on 1 April. The subsequent 6 months (October 2020 to March 2021) will be captured in the 2020/21 annual release which will be published in Autumn 2021.

In the first six months of 2020/21, there were 76,000 new social housing lettings, a decrease of 39% or 49,000 lets from the first six months of the previous year.

Table 1: In 2020/21 (Apr-Sep) there were 76,000 new social housing lettings, declining since 2019/20 (Apr-Sep)

		2020/21 (Apr-Sep) Number	2020/21 (Apr-Sep) % of total	2019/20 (Apr-Sep) Number	2019/20 (Apr-Sep) % of total	Change Number	Change % change
All	Total new lets	76,458		125,149		-48,691	-39%
Needs type	General Needs	56,362	74%	91,990	74%	-35,628	-39%
	Supported Housing	20,096	26%	33,159	26%	-13,063	-39%
Provider type	Private Registered Providers (PRPs)	60,595	79%	97,293	78%	-36,698	-38%
	Local authorities (LAs)	15,863	21%	27,856	22%	-11,993	-43%
Rent type	Social Rent	65,384	86%	106,353	85%	-40,969	-39%
	Affordable Rent	10,852	14%	18,543	15%	-7,691	-42%
	Rent to Buy	222	0.3%	253	0.2%	-31	-12%

The number of lets for all three rent types fell, with Affordable Rent properties seeing the highest percentage decrease since the first 6 months of 2019/20 (42%). However, the drop in new lettings for Social Rent properties (41,000 decrease) had the largest impact in real terms as these comprise the majority of new lets.

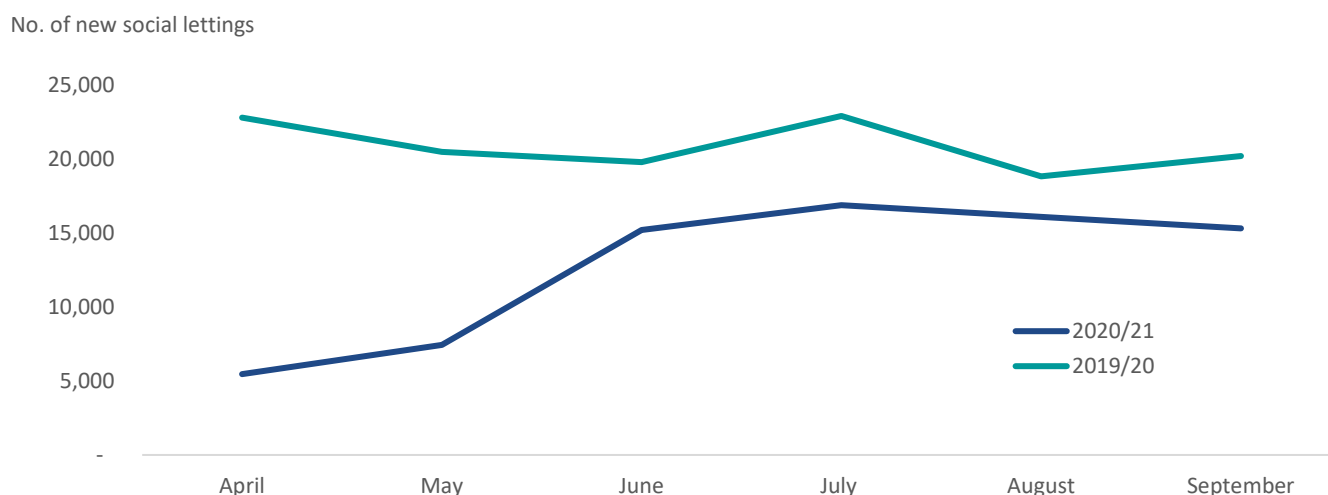
Both General Needs and Supported Housing saw the same proportion decrease, 39%, from the first half of 2019/20, which corresponds to 36,000 fewer General Needs lettings and 13,000 fewer Supporting Housing lettings.

New lets provided by Local Authorities (LAs) saw a larger decrease (43%) between the first 6 months of 2020/21 and the same period of the previous year compared to new lets by Private Registered Providers (PRPs). The relative proportion of new lets, however, remained broadly consistent to the previous year with 79% of new lets coming from PRPs and 21% coming from LAs in the first 6 months of 2020/21.

The types of tenancies made by PRPs and LAs varied considerably, with PRPs accounting for 93% of new Affordable Rent lets compared to 77% of new Social Rent lets. PRPs accounted for 91% of new Supported Housing lets compared to 75% of new General Needs lets.

Monthly trends

Chart 1: In April and May 2020 there was a significant drop in new lettings, with all months showing fewer new lettings than in April to September 2019



The decrease in new lettings was greater in the spring, with new lettings hit hardest in April (5,000 lettings) and May (7,000 lettings) and then recovering during the summer months to a peak in July of 17,000 new lettings. New lettings, however, did not recover to the same level as the previous summer with the 17,000 new lettings in the peak month of July representing a 26% decrease from July 2019 which saw 23,000 new lettings.

The dip in the early months is likely to be explained in large part by the national lockdown, which began on 23 March 2020, with house moves being restricted to only those which were considered to be “reasonably necessary”¹ from 26 March until the rules were relaxed on 13 May 2020. However, the suppression of new lets in the spring does not appear to have led to higher than usual lets in the following months.

¹ <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/coronavirus-advice-on-home-moves/>

In 2019/20 (Apr-Sep), new lettings were broadly stable across each month, whereas 2020/21 (Apr-Sep) saw greater monthly variation. April comprised 7% of all new lets in the first 6 months (compared with 18% for 2019/20) and July comprised 22% (compared with 18% in 2019/20). August saw the least variation from previous year with a 15% decrease (3,000 fewer) in new lettings since the same month in 2019, whereas April saw the most variation with a decrease of 17,000 (76% decrease).

Providers of social housing

Who owns and lets social housing?

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)

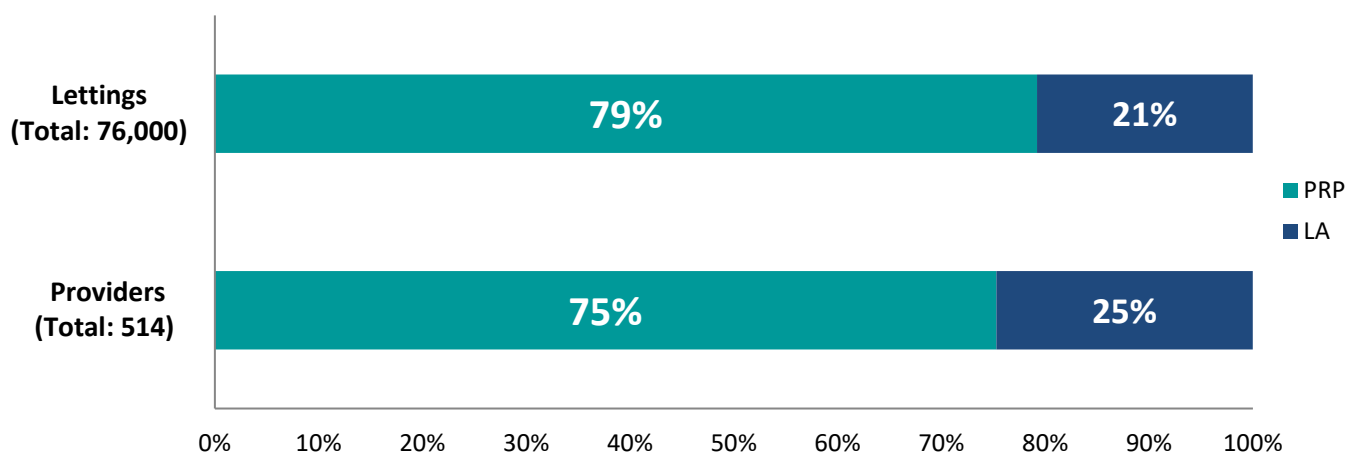
Commonly known as “council housing”. Refers to social housing provided directly by Local Authorities.

Private Registered 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 2, we can see that PRPs accounted for 75% of organisations providing social housing in 2020/21 (Apr-Sep), and provided 79% of new lettings. On average each LA provided 125 new lettings in the first half of 2020/21 compared to the 156 average for PRPs. This represents a change from 2019/20 (Apr-Sep) where LAs provided a higher average number of new lettings than PRPs.

Chart 2: Nearly 8 in 10 new social housing lettings in 2020/21 (Apr-Sep) were by PRPs



Housing type and rent type

What types of social housing are there?

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.

Most 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 74% of all new lettings in the first half of 2020/21. This proportion of General Needs lettings has remained broadly constant for the last 10 years.

Definition: Types of Rent

Social Rent (SR)	Target rents are determined through the national rent regime.
Affordable Rent (AR)	Where the rent to be paid by tenants can be no more than 80% of the market value for the property.
Rent to Buy (RB)	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.

In the first 6 months of 2020/21, 86% of new social housing lettings were let at Social Rents, a large increase on the same months in 2019/20.

The Affordable Rent Programme began in 2011/12 for PRPs and in the following year for LAs. Affordable Rent comprised 14% of all new social lettings in the first 6 months of 2020/21, similar to last year.

The Rent to Buy programme was introduced in 2017/18. Due to the current small number of new lets, Rent to Buy lettings have been excluded from further breakdowns. We will continue to revisit this as the programme continues.

2. Why has the property become available?

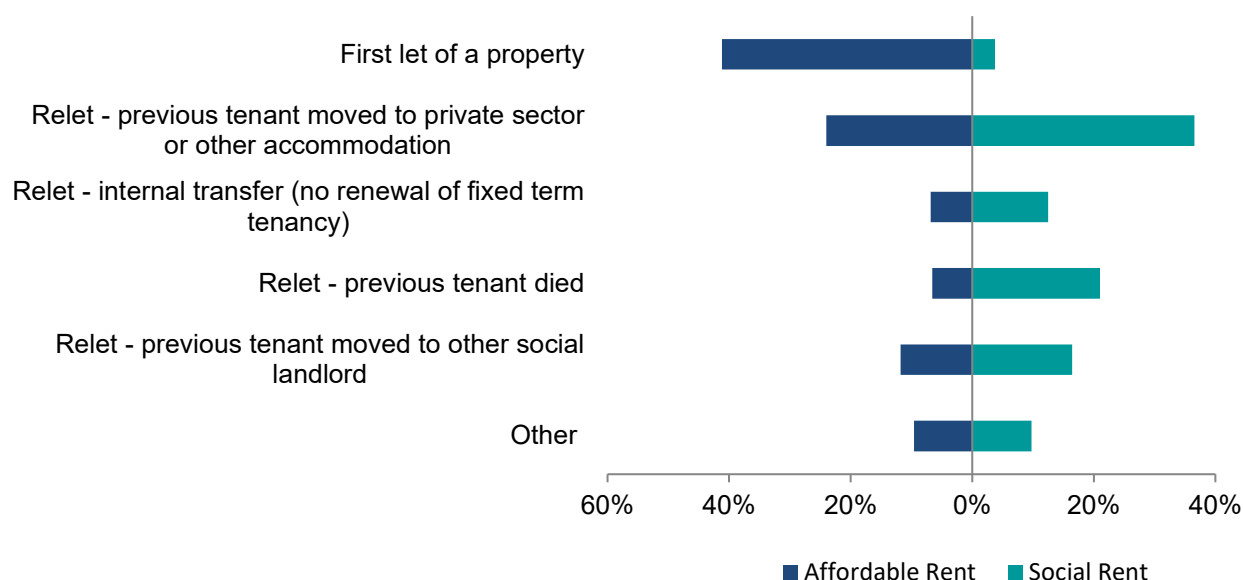
What proportion of properties are first lets of new social housing stock?

Of all new social lets, 9% were in a property that was let for the first time², with the remaining 91% being a re-let of existing social housing stock³.

This split differs considerably by rent type. New lets in Affordable Rent properties were much more likely to be first lets compared to those in Social Rent properties (41% compared to 4%). This is because in recent years government funding has tended to focus mostly on Affordable Rent properties and more delivery through the planning system has been Affordable Rent than Social Rent. The proportion of first lets in Affordable Rent properties fell slightly year on year (for the first 6 months) from 44% to 41%. The fall was particularly marked in Supported Housing Affordable Rent properties, which fell from 22% of total new lets in the first 6 months of 19/20 to 9%⁴ in the first 6 months of 2020/21.

First-let was the most common reason for vacancy for Affordable Rent properties (41%), whereas for Social Rent it was the previous tenant moving to the private sector or other accommodation (37%).

Chart 3: Social Rent properties in 2020/21 (Apr-Sep) were most likely to be vacant because the previous tenant moved to the private rental sector, whilst Affordable Rent properties were most likely to be first lets



² First let includes conversions, acquisitions and rehabilitations as well as new builds. From 2020/21 onwards, it also includes first lets of a leased property.

³ Further information on new additions to housing stock across all tenures is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/net-supply-of-housing>

⁴ The inclusion of first-time leased properties in the 2020/21 definition of 'first lets' makes little difference as these comprised just 0.2% of Supported Housing Affordable Rent lets.

Why did existing social properties become available for re-let?

For General Needs⁵ properties, there has been an increase in the proportion of new lets where the property became available due to the previous tenant dying since the first 6 months of 2019/20 (19% compared to 14%). The proportion is likely to have been affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and subsequent increase in deaths, with a particular increase in the months of April to July 2020⁶.

There has been a decrease in the proportion of new lets where the property became available due to the previous tenant being evicted (3% compared to 6%). The proportion of properties becoming available due to eviction is likely to have been affected by the stay on possession proceedings which started on 27 March 2020 and lasted until 20 September 2020. There were still some properties available due to eviction because the eviction may have taken place before this stay was introduced.

There was also a slight decrease in the proportion of internal transfers (excluding renewals) which has fallen from 14% to 12%. This may be related to government guidance to focus only on house moves which were “reasonably necessary” which was in place from 26 March until the rules were relaxed on 13 May. Renewals remained stable at 3% of all new lettings.

There were some differences in the reasons for property vacancy between Supported Housing and General Needs due to the nature of tenants found in each property type. The most common reasons for each needs type were:

General Needs	Supported Housing
Re-let – previous tenant moved to private sector or other accommodation (35%)	Re-let – previous tenant moved to private sector or other accommodation (33%)
Re-let – previous tenant died (18%)	Re-let – previous tenant moved to other social housing provider (21%)
Re-let – previous tenant moved to other social housing provider (14%)	Re-let – previous tenant died (21%)

For Supported Housing properties, in the first 6 months of 2020/21 just over a fifth of properties were available due to the death of the previous tenant. As Supported Housing is intended for households with specific needs, i.e. the elderly and the vulnerable, we would expect to see a higher proportion of Supported Housing properties available due to the death of the previous tenant than for General

⁵ Until 2019/20 CORE only collected information on reason for property being vacant for General Needs lettings so comparisons to previous year are only for General Needs properties.

⁶

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/bulletins/excesswintermortalityinenglandandwales/2019to2020provisionaland2018to2019final>

Needs (21% compared to 18%). It seems likely that Covid-19 would have had a larger year-on-year effect on Supported Housing occupants due to the nature of the tenants. However, we are unable to compare against the previous year as this data was not available for Supported Housing in 2019/20 (Apr-Sep).

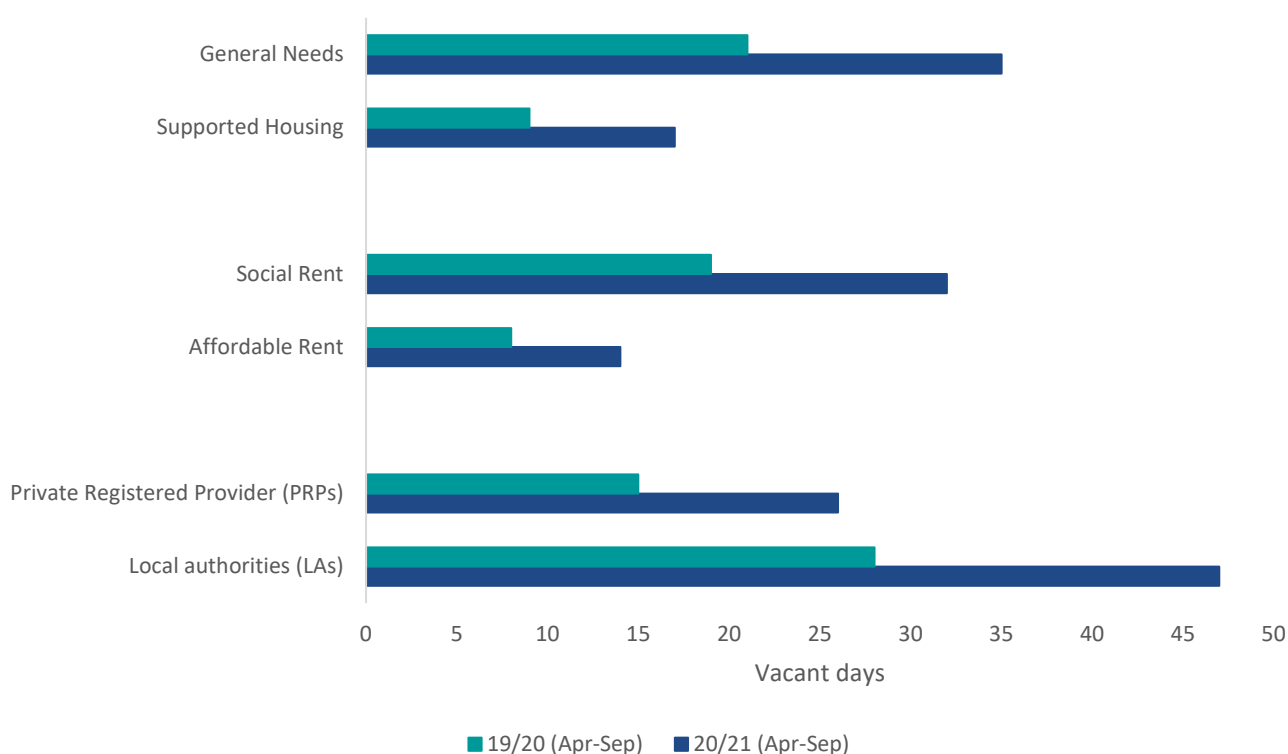
Supported Housing saw a greater proportion of properties available due to the previous tenant moving to another social housing provider (21% compared to 14% for General Needs). This potentially reflects changing support needs of Supported Housing occupants, and the use of licence agreements which do not have fixed end dates.

Supported Housing properties were twice as likely to be available due to the eviction of the previous tenant compared to General Needs properties (6% compared to 3%).

How long were the properties vacant?

Properties were vacant for an average (median) of 29 days before being let. There were differences in the length of time a social property was vacant by the type of property and housing provider:

Chart 4: Affordable Rent properties are vacant for fewer days on average than Social Rent (14 days compared to 32) as a larger proportion are first lets



The difference in number of vacant days between General Needs and Supported Housing stock suggests a higher level of demand for Supported Housing or a lower level of supply. Supported Housing, by definition, requires special adaptations or support services to meet tenant needs so Supported Housing and General Needs stock are not always interchangeable. For further

information on needs types see page 7.

The difference in vacancy periods between rent types is likely to be because more Affordable Rent properties are newly built than Social Rent properties and there is either no vacancy (as they can be agreed before building is completed) or because they are in better condition. For further information on rent types see page 7.

The median vacancy length of 29 days before a social property was let during April to September 2020/21 was a 71% increase on the same months in 2019/20 where properties were vacant for 17 days on average. This change is highly likely to have been driven by the COVID-19 pandemic.

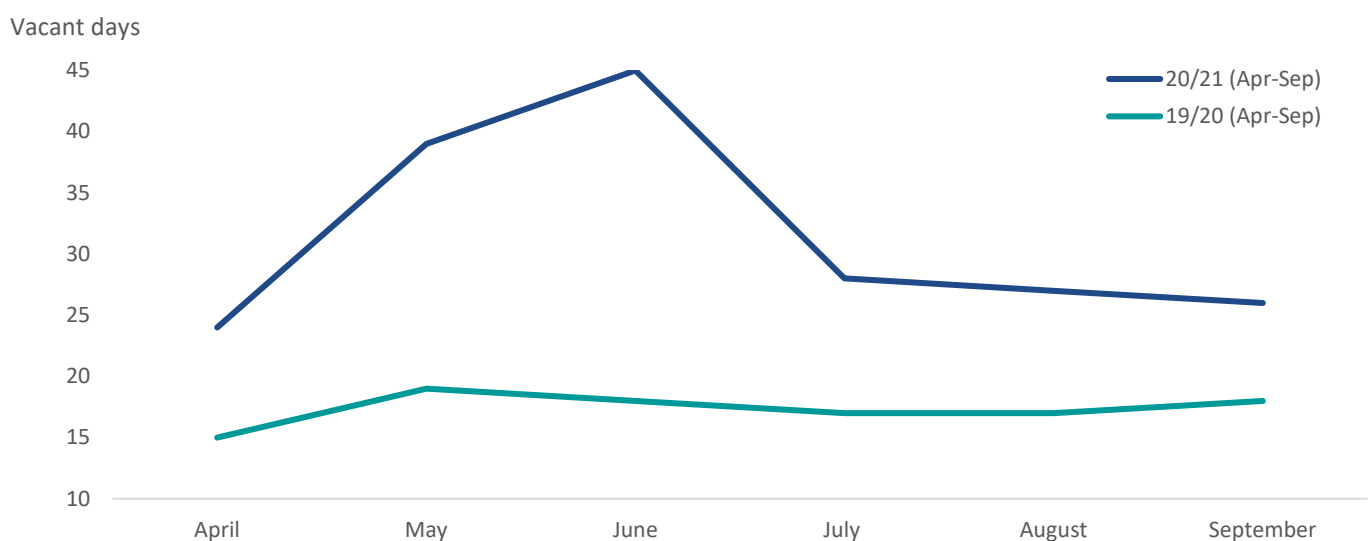
Affordable Rent properties showed the largest increase in vacancy days (75% compared to 68% for Social Rent) since the first 6 months of 2019/20 and Supported Housing properties showed a higher increase (89%) than General Needs (67%).

General Needs Social Rent properties saw the biggest increase (from 22 to 37 days). As these provide the greatest number of new lettings, the long waiting times for this property type will have a larger impact on the overall number of vacant days for all new lets.

Vacancy Days by Month

Vacancy days for new social housing lettings were higher in all 6 months of 2020/21 (Apr-Sep) than in the corresponding months of 2019/20. Vacant days peaked in June when properties were vacant for an average (median) of 45 days, compared to 18 days in the same month of the previous year. Following the easing of lockdown restrictions in June, vacancy days reduced, falling to 26 days in September, although this was still a 44% increase on the 18-day average in the same month of the previous year.

Chart 5: Vacancy days were higher in every month of 2020/21 (Apr-Sep), peaking in June



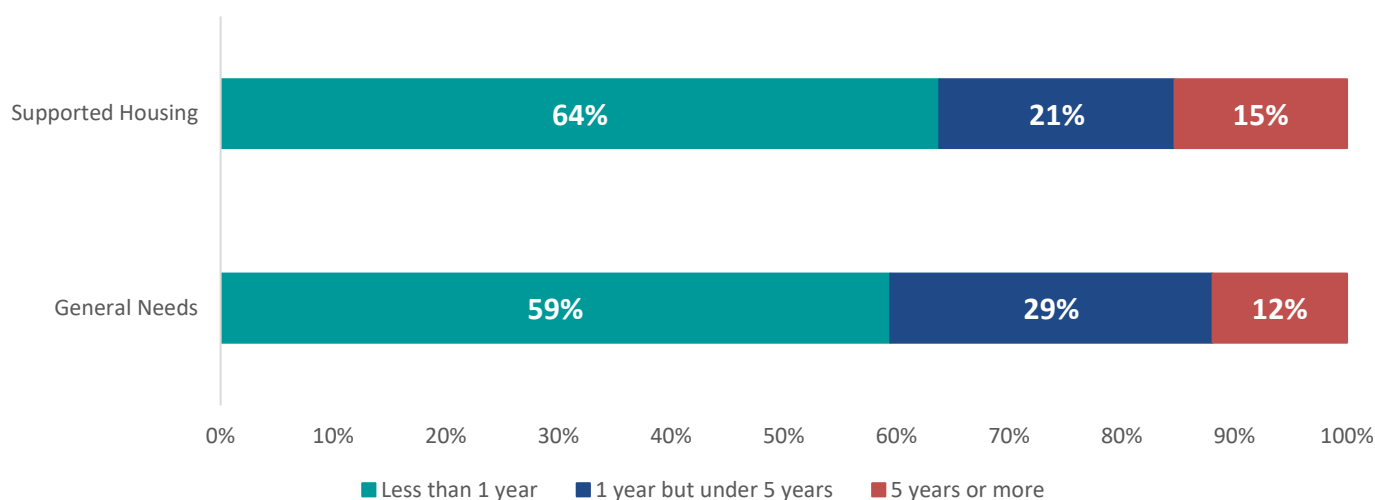
The peak in June was driven by new lets in General Needs Social Rent properties which reached an average of 56 vacant days for PRPs and 70 days for LAs. This represented a 167% and 141% increase respectively compared with June 2019. Overall, vacancy days for General Needs Social Rent properties fell to 32 days by September, but this was still the longest time for any category, and an increase of 9 days on the same month in 2019.

How long were households on the waiting list?

The majority (60%) of households who received a new social housing letting in the first 6 months of 2020/21 were on the waiting list for less than a year in that local authority area, where known. 13% of households were on the waiting list for 5 years or more before getting a social letting in that area. This has remained stable since the first 6 months of 2019/20, at 59% and 14% respectively.

Households entering a new Supported Housing letting were more likely to be on the waiting list for less than a year (64% compared to 59%) but also more likely to be waiting 5 years or more (15% compared to 12%). This has remained stable since the first half of 2019/20, where 63% of households entering a new Supported Housing letting were likely to be on the waiting list for less than a year (compared to 58% for General Needs) and 15% were likely to be waiting 5 years or more (compared to 13% for General Needs).

Chart 6: Households in Supported Housing were more likely to spend less than 1 year on the waiting list



3. How did tenants come to be in a new letting?

Were most new lettings to people from outside of social housing or to existing tenants?

New social lettings include households entering the social rented sector from elsewhere, plus households relocating within the sector or renewing their fixed term tenancy.

Only 32% of households starting a new social tenancy in 2020/21 (Apr-Sep) were existing social tenants renewing or transferring within the sector – 68% entered from outside the sector. The proportion new to the sector represented an increase of 9 percentage points since the first 6 months of 2019/20.

The 76,000 households with a new social housing letting in the first 6 months of 2020/21 equated to approximately 142,000 people – just under 3 in 1,000 people in England⁷.

Reasonable Preference

What are the rules around getting into social housing?

Social housing in England is allocated based on need. By law, every local authority is required to have an allocation scheme for determining priorities between applicants and the procedure to be followed in allocating housing accommodation. See *The charter for social housing residents: social housing white paper*⁸ published in November 2020 for more information.

The Localism Act 2011 gave local authorities the power to set their own qualification criteria. When setting these, local authorities will need to have regard to their duties under the equalities' legislation, as well as the legal requirement to give overall priority for an allocation to people in the "reasonable preference categories".

Definition: Reasonable Preference

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

- Homelessness (or threat of homelessness in the next 56 days)
- Insanitary, unsatisfactory or overcrowded conditions
- Medical welfare
- Hardship

⁷ The Office for National Statistics estimates the population of England was 56,300,000 in June 2019, <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates>

⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-charter-for-social-housing-residents-social-housing-white-paper>

In the first 6 months of 2020/21, 44% of new lettings were to households given priority by a local authority where known⁹, an increase from 41% in the same period of 2019/20. The most common reason was homelessness in both years¹⁰.

Homelessness

In 2020, the government introduced a number of emergency measures to deal with homelessness in light of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The Everyone In¹¹ campaign was launched to bring rough sleepers off the streets and those at risk of sleeping rough into emergency accommodation to protect them from COVID-19. Many of these individuals were placed in hotels and B&Bs that had higher capacity due to restrictions on trade during lockdown. A new letting is only recorded in CORE if a new tenancy contract has been signed and, for General Needs only, if the letting is expected to last at least 2 years.

How many new lettings went to people in temporary accommodation or sleeping rough?

There were 12,000 households in temporary accommodation immediately prior to their new social housing letting (16% of all new lettings in 2020/21 (Apr-Sep)), with another 1,600 households sleeping rough (2%), and 18,000 living with friends and family (23%).

Temporary accommodation comprises hostels, bed and breakfasts, hospitals, prisons and any other unspecified temporary accommodation. This definition is consistent over time for CORE; however, other data sources may use a different definition. For example, the H-CLIC definition¹² is based on local authority action to assist homeless households, and so does not include prisons and hospitals. Within temporary accommodation as recorded in CORE, the largest specified category was bed and breakfasts, which was the previous tenure of 12% of those in temporary accommodation.

Compared to the first 6 months of 2019/20, there were 2,000 fewer households moving from temporary accommodation, but this is an increase of 5 percentage points in terms of proportion of all new lettings (from 11% to 16%) as the total number of new lets fell. There were also 900 fewer households entering social housing following a period of rough sleeping, remaining stable as a proportion of all new lettings.

How many new lettings went to statutorily homeless households?

Definition: Statutorily Homeless

Statutorily homeless

Where a household is accepted as homeless by the local authority. This is the definition of homelessness introduced by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2018 which came into force on 1 April 2018, and includes households granted a prevention, relief or main duty.

⁹ Whether the household was granted reasonable preference was unknown in 27% of lettings.

¹⁰ Households could be granted reasonable preference in multiple categories.

¹¹ Further information on the 'Everyone In' campaign is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/3-2-million-emergency-support-for-rough-sleepers-during-coronavirus-outbreak>

¹² <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statutory-homelessness-in-england-july-to-september-2020>

There were 16,000 new social lettings to “statutorily homeless” households in the first 6 months of 2020/21, compared to 21,000 in the corresponding period in 2019/20. Whilst this a decrease in real terms of 4,400 lets, it represents an increase in proportion of all new lettings from 17% to 21%.

Of the 21% of new lettings to households deemed to be “statutorily homeless”, 9% were owed a prevention duty, 7% were owed a relief duty and 6% were owed a main homelessness duty. This compares to 17% of new lettings in the first half of 2019/20, of which 7% were owed a prevention duty, 5% a relief duty and another 5% a main homelessness duty.

Single males comprised 30% of households deemed to be “statutorily homeless” in 2020/21 (Apr-Sep), up from 28% in the same period of the previous year.

Reason for leaving last settled home

Overall, apart from a slight change in order, the top 5 reasons a household left their last settled home remained broadly stable since 2019/20 (Apr-Sep). The most common reason a household left their last settled home was to move to independent accommodation, which was the same as in the first 6 months of 2019/20. However, domestic abuse, which was the 7th most common reason in 2019/20 (Apr-Sep), has moved up the list to become the 5th most common reason, with 7% of all households leaving their last settled home due to this reason (a 1% increase from the same months of 2019/20). During the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been an increase in demand for domestic abuse victim services¹³ and it is possible that the pandemic has been a factor in the change in ranking of new lettings to households fleeing domestic abuse.

The top 5 reasons were:

20/21 Ranking	Reason	19/20 Ranking
1	To move to independent accommodation (14%)	1
2	Asked to leave by family or friends (12%)	4
3	Property unsuitable because of overcrowding (11%)	2
4	Property unsuitable because of ill health/disability (11%)	3
5	Domestic abuse (7%)	7

The largest change in proportion since the first half of 2019/20 was in households who were asked to leave their last settled home by family and friends, which increased by 2 percentage points from 10% to 12%.

The proportion of households leaving their last settled home due to eviction or repossession has seen a slight decrease of 0.4% from 1.2% in the first half of 2019/20 to 0.8% in 2020/21 (Apr-Sep).

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<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/domesticabuseduringthecoronaviruscovid19pandemicenglandandwales/november2020>

This is likely to reflect the introduction of measures to support both tenants and homeowners, including mortgage payment holidays, a stay on possession proceedings and an extension of notice periods. Some of these evictions and repossessions are likely to have happened prior to these measures being brought in.

Since Supported Housing properties are designed for specific groups with support needs, it is unsurprising that the top 3 self-reported reasons for leaving last the settled home differed between General Needs properties and Supported Housing, with Supported Housing households much more likely to report a reason relating to support needs or ill health/disability.

The top 3 self-reported reasons by housing type were:

General Needs	Supported Housing
To move to independent accommodation (16%)	To move to accommodation with support (25%)
Property unsuitable because of overcrowding (15%)	Asked to leave by family or friends (16%)
Asked to leave by family or friends (10%)	Property unsuitable because of ill health/disability (12%)

Household Composition

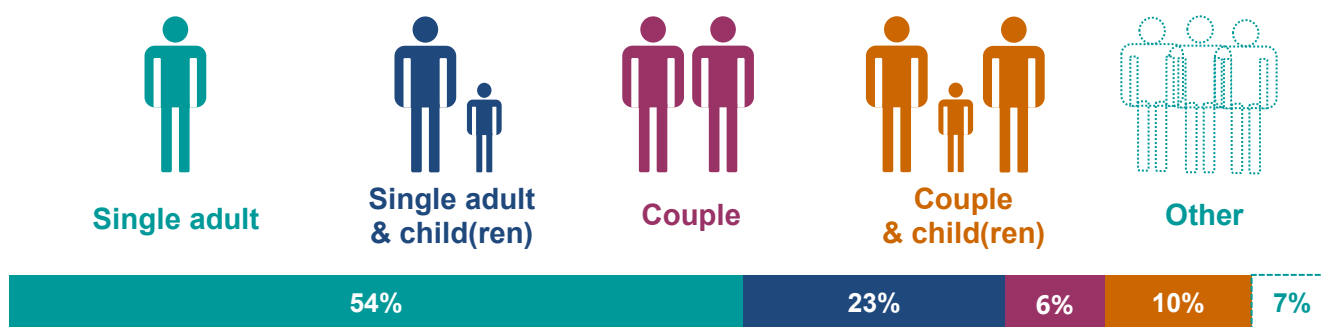
Single male households have remained the most common household composition since the first 6 months of 2019/20, with an increase from 23% to 25% of all new lettings. This increase is likely to be due to the increased focus on housing rough sleepers, of whom the majority¹⁴ are male.

A large majority (77%) of new lettings were to single adults with or without dependent children, (54% without children, 23% with children). This has changed little over the last decade. Of the single parents moving into social housing, 92% were women and 8% men. Approximately one third of new lettings contained at least one child, and 16% contained a couple¹⁵.

¹⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/rough-sleeping-snapshot-in-england-autumn-2020/rough-sleeping-snapshot-in-england-autumn-2020>

¹⁵ "Couple" defined as two adults that are married, civil partners or co-habiting.

Figure 1: Over three quarters of households in new social housing lettings in 2020/21 (Apr-Sep) were led by single adults whilst a third of households contain children¹⁶



How does household composition change depending on the type of letting?

Household composition differs markedly depending on the type of social housing (see Chart 7 overleaf), as various types of support, rent or provider cater to different types of household. The increase in proportion of single male households was more pronounced in Supported Housing, which saw a 3 percentage point increase from 35% of new social housing lettings in 2019/20 (Apr-Sep) to 38% in the same months of 2020/21. This is in comparison to an increase of 1 percentage point for lettings to single males of General Needs properties, from 23% of new lettings to 24%.

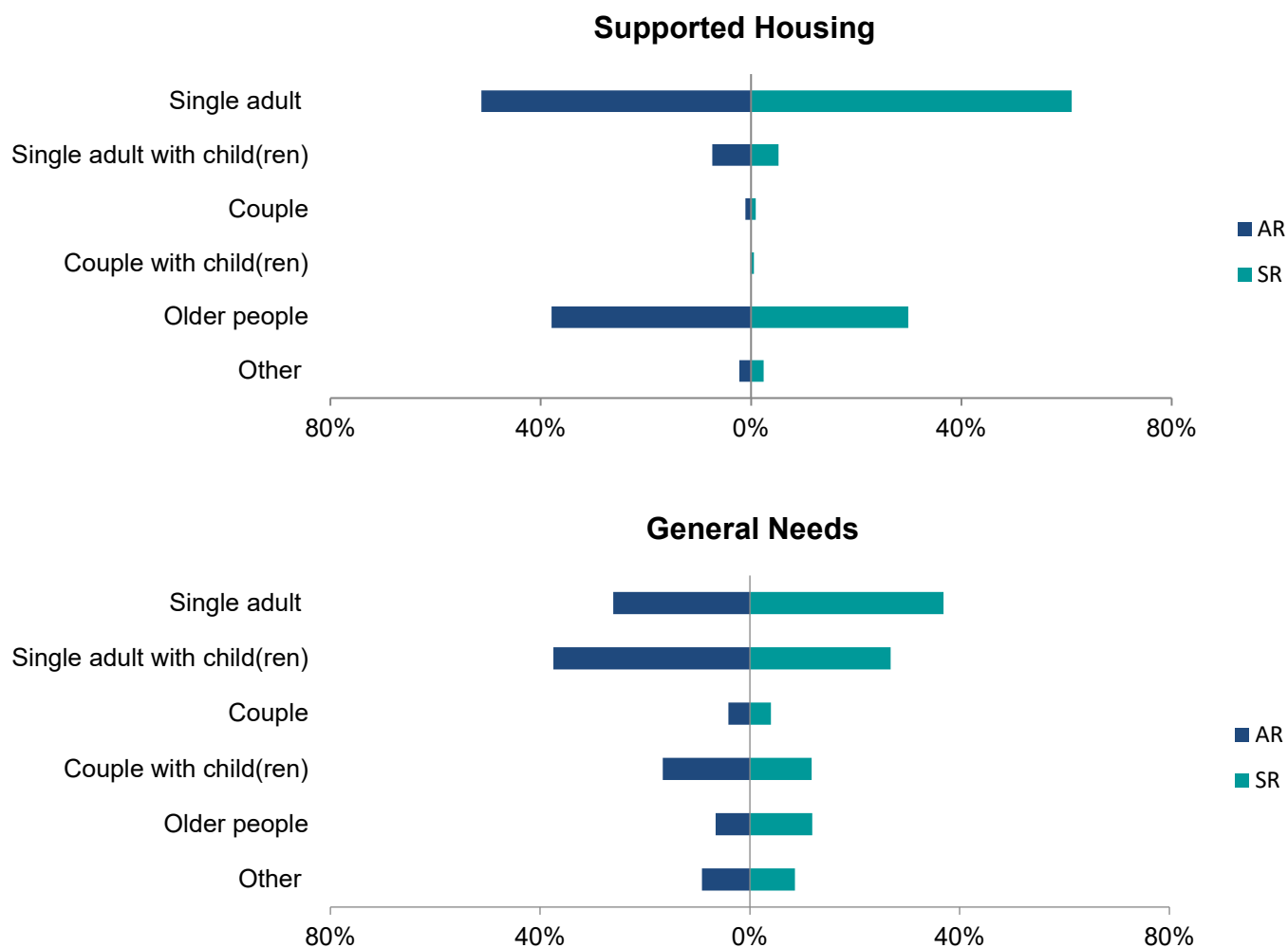
Designed for specific groups in need of support, Supported Housing is almost exclusively let to either older people¹⁷ or young adults with specific needs for adapted housing. In 2020/21 (Apr-Sep), 66% of new Social Rent Supported Housing lettings by LAs were to older people, whereas 65% by PRPs were to single adults.

New General Needs lettings are far more likely to contain children compared to Supported Housing lettings (41% of new General Needs lettings compared to 6% of Supported Housing lettings). For General Needs Social Rent, 39% of new lettings in the first 6 months of 2020/21 contained at least one child, and for General Needs Affordable Rent, 54% of new lettings housed children.

¹⁶ “Other” category may contain some children not captured in the other household types.

¹⁷ “Older people” are defined as any household where the main occupier or their partner is aged 60 years or over.

Chart 7: The vast majority of new Supported Housing lettings in 2020/21 (Apr-Sep) were to older people and single adults



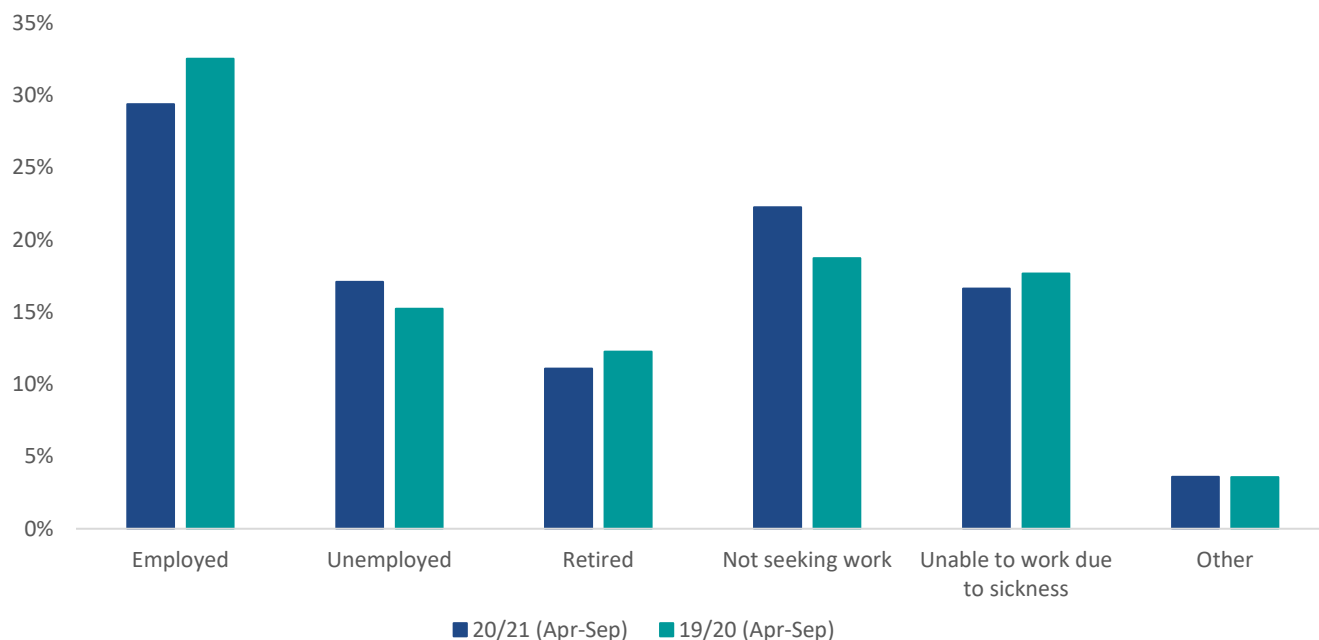
Since the first half of 2019/20, the proportion of new General Needs lettings to households with a single adult or elder (with or without dependent children) has remained broadly stable (increase of 1%), whilst the share of new Supported Housing lettings to single elders has dropped from 29% to 26%.

Economic status

Nearly 3 in 10 lead tenants in new social housing lettings in the first 6 months of 2020/21 were in employment – the most common economic status. 17% were unable to work due to sickness and 11% were retired, reflecting the age profile of social housing and those with specific housing needs. 17% of lead tenants were unemployed. This represents an increase since the first 6 months of 2019/20 when 15% of lead tenants were unemployed.

Chart 8: Nearly twice as many lead tenants in new social housing lettings in 2020/21 (Apr-Sep) were employed than unemployed

Employment Status of Lead Tenant (%)



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 36% for General Needs). Supported Housing has a substantially larger proportion of retired lead tenants (22%, compared to 7% for General Needs).

Has the proportion of tenants in new social lettings in work decreased the last year?

In the first 6 months of 2020/21, the proportion of lead tenants in General Needs lettings who were employed has decreased sharply from 41% to 36%. This is a reversal of the long-term trend, which showed an increase from 32% to 40% between 2008/09 and 2019/20.

Over the first half of 2020/21, lead tenants in General Needs lettings who were unemployed increased by 2 percentage points to 15%, whilst those not seeking work increased by 3 percentage points to 24%. Prior to 2020/21 (Apr-Sep) and looking at full-year data, these proportions had remained relatively stable since 2008/09, with lead tenants who were unemployed increasing by just 1 percentage point to 13% by 2019/20, whilst those not seeking work had decreased by 2 percentage points to 20%.

In Supported Housing new lettings, the proportion in employment remained stable at 8% compared to the first 6 months of 2019/20. However, retired lead tenants decreased by 5 percentage points to 22%, whilst those who were unemployed and not seeking work increased (by 2 and 5 percentage

points respectively). The proportion of retired lead tenants may have been affected by the increased proportion of new social lettings to homeless households, many of whom have support needs but are more likely to be of working age. Those that were unable to work due to sickness decreased from 24% in 2019/20 (Apr-Sep) to 22% in the same months of 2020/21. This was a reversal of the long-term trend, which showed an increase from 17% in 2008/09 to 23% in 2019/20 (full year). 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.

The employment rate of lead tenants aged 16 to 64 years in new social lettings (33%) is far below that of the general population (76%)¹⁸.

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<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/adhocs/12715employmenttotalsemploymentratesandtotalpopulationof16to64yearoldsinenglandbyvariablesapriltoseptember2020>

4. Technical notes

The annual *Social Housing Lettings* statistics series has been badged as National Statistics, the quality mark of government statistics, following assessment by the UK Statistics Authority in 2014.

This one-off report covers only the first 6 months of the 2020/21 reporting year, i.e. new lettings made between 1 April 2020 and 30 September 2020. This release is an experimental use of CORE data, and conclusions drawn here should be regarded as provisional until the annual 2020/21 report is published in Autumn 2020. Differences to the annual process are outlined in the sections below.

We continue to abide by the Code of Practice for Statistics¹⁹ from data collection to publication.

Data collection

Information for 2020/21 in this release reflects data given by providers as at 8 February 2021 for the financial year ending 31 March 2021. 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. CORE was first set up in 1989 for PRPs and its remit expanded to local authorities in 2004.

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. Practice varies in terms of how local authorities and housing associations collect and compile the data that is submitted on the CORE form. Some questions are answered with information recorded at the point of registration, other elements about the type of tenancy and stock are drawn from the providers' own housing management information system, with the remaining CORE-specific questions are asked of tenants by housing officers at sign-up. Guidance notes are available on CORE's [Guides and Manuals](#) page.

Once complete, the CORE records are input online, either manually or directly from their internal systems via a bulk upload. 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 is a "flow" measure of all new social housing lettings which records data at individual tenancy level. CORE does not capture social housing lettings that are continuing – only new lettings. Tenancy details collected are collected at the point of letting.

¹⁹ <https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/code-of-practice/>

New lettings are reported by all registered providers, and voluntarily by those who are not registered with the social housing regulator.

Some types of lettings are excluded from CORE, (see [Guides and Manuals](#)), including:

- 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)

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 tenancies.

This one-off report covers the first half of 2020/21 only. A snapshot of the data was taken as at 8 February 2021 of all records submitted by that date for new lettings starting during April to September 2020. It is likely that further data on this 6-month period will be submitted by data providers after this snapshot but before the usual full-year collection close date.

Analysis comparing 2019/20 (Apr-Sep) data against the full 2019/20 dataset was conducted as a proof of concept to assess the suitability of publishing part-year data.

Appropriateness of using half-year data:

- The volume of new lets varies monthly. Most months in 2019/20 saw 21,000-25,000 new lets, with July and April seeing nearly 27,000 lets but March seeing only 19,000 new lets.
- However, the first half of 2019/20 accounted for roughly half (52.8%) of total new lets that year (148,000 compared to 132,000 in the second half).

Submission rates:

- 85% of records for new lets during April to September 2019/20 were submitted before the February 2020 cut-off.
- There was little difference in completeness by month – it was slightly higher for April to July (85-87%) than in August to September (82%).

Potential for introducing substantial bias into the dataset:

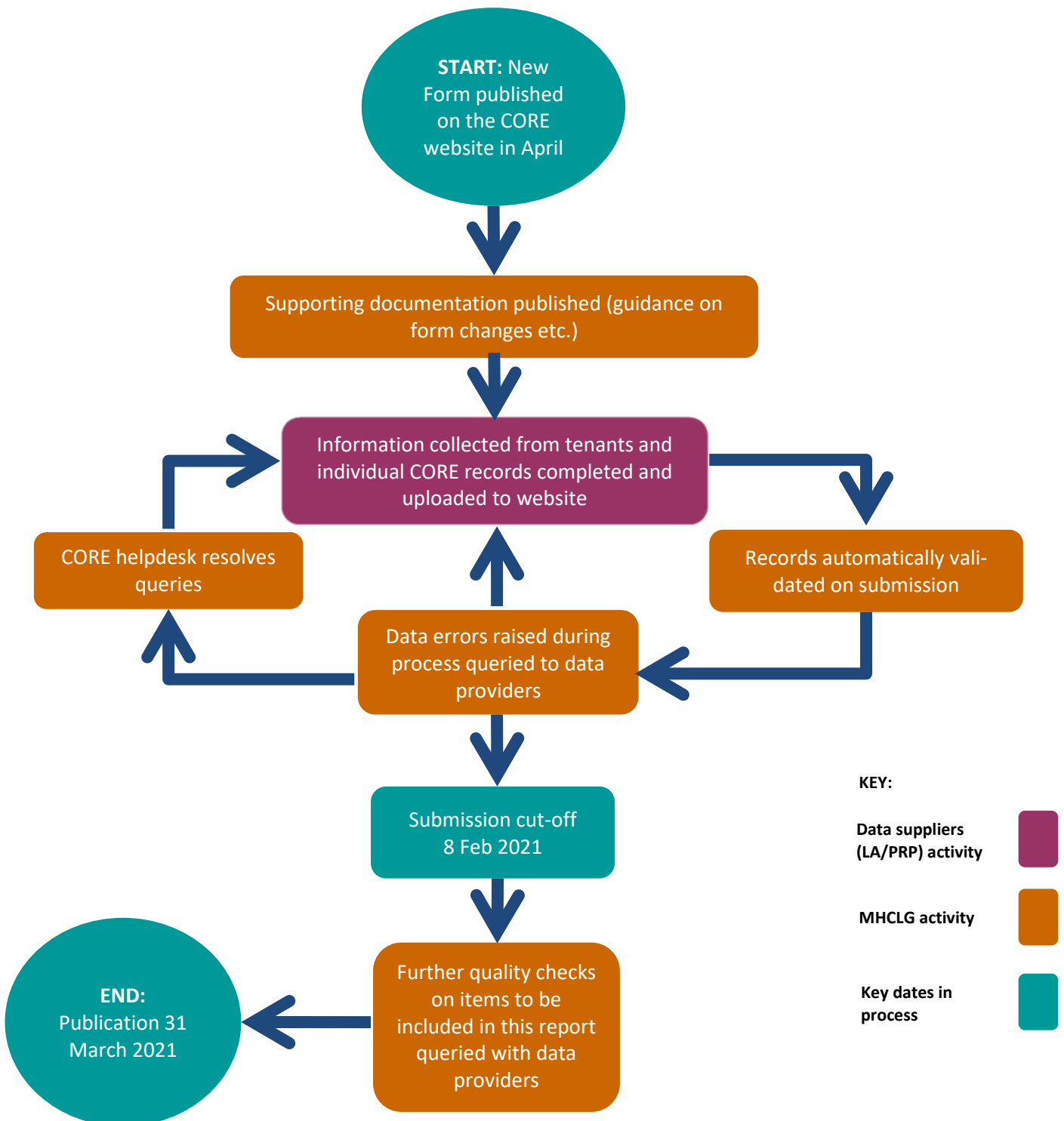
- There was a slight shift of 1.3% or less towards new General Needs lets, new Private Registered Provider lets and property re-lets (as opposed to first lets in the social sector).
- There was no real change in all other variables of interest presented in this release.

The proof of concept concluded that there were no substantial reasons for concern in publishing part-year data for 2020/21. To ensure comparisons to the previous year are like-for-like, we have used the 2019/20 (Apr-Sep) data as submitted by a cut-off date of 8 February 2020 for comparisons.

Data presented in this release is as submitted, unless otherwise stated:

- Standard validations and quality assurance have been conducted.
- No weighting has been applied to account for local authority non-response, unlike in the annual release, as the statistical process to create weights would not be robust enough when using partial data.
- No imputation has been applied in order to proxy demographic values when these questions were refused by the tenant, for similar reasons.

Quality assurance procedure



Further technical information

The technical notes of the most recent annual *Social Housing Lettings* release (2019/20) contain further information on:

- Statistical processing of full-year CORE data, including weighting and imputation
- Users and uses
- Data confidentiality
- Revisions policy
- Related statistics on housing.

These can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/social-housing-lettings-in-england-april-2019-to-march-2020>

The quality report accompanying the annual statistical series also contains further information, including on how the series meets the Code of Practice for Statistics:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/social-housing-lettings-2018-to-2019-quality-report>



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