Chapter 1
Stock profile

This chapter examines the overall profile of the English housing stock in 2012 in terms of age, type, number of bedrooms and location. It then explores how the profile of the housing stock including vacant homes has changed since 1996. Finally, it profiles newer homes built after 2002, indicating which types of homes may be under or over represented when compared with the rest of the housing stock. Further information on the profile of the English housing stock is available from the live web table DA1101.

Dwelling type, age and location

1.1 In 2012, there were 22.7 million dwellings in England. Of these, 65% (14.8 million) were owner occupied, 18% (4.1 million) were privately rented and the remaining 17% (3.8 million) were rented from social landlords. Within the social sector, there were 2.0 million housing association homes, slightly more than local authority homes, which totalled 1.8 million[1], Annex Table 1.1.

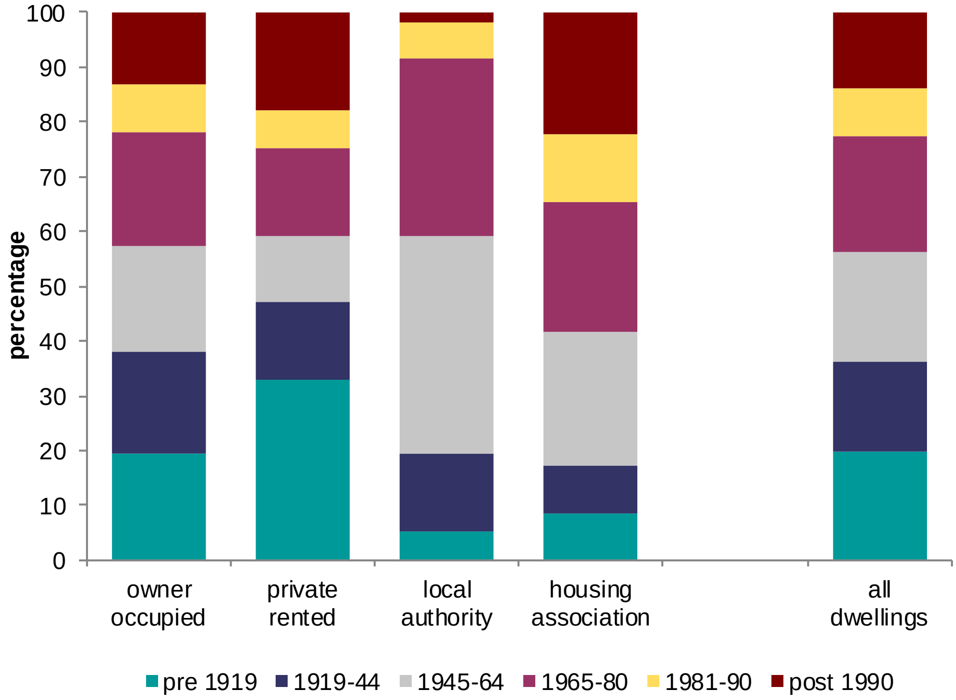
1.2 The vast majority (97%) of occupied homes consisted of single family homes, and the remainder included lodgers (1%) and other types of shared home, Annex Table 1.2.

1.3 Some 20% of all dwellings were built before 1919 whilst 14% of the stock was built after 1990. The private rented sector had the largest proportion of homes built before 1919 (33%). Housing associations had the largest concentration of homes built after 1990 (22%). In contrast to housing associations, local authorities had the lowest proportion of homes built after 1990 (2%), which partly reflects the differing capacity to build between these two tenures[2]. The largest proportion of local authority stock was built between 1945 and 1964 (40%), Figure 1.1.

[1] Local authority dwellings include those managed by Arms Length Management Organisations (ALMOs) as these dwellings are still owned by the local authority

[2] When Right to Buy (RTB) came into force, spending restrictions were also introduced on local authorities, which prevented the sector building new houses with the revenue created from RTB sales. Housing associations did not operate under the same restrictions. However from April 2012, under the reinvigorated Right to Buy, local authorities are now able to keep the receipts from additional Right to Buy sales to pay off debt and fund replacement affordable housing.

Figure 1.1: Age of housing stock, by tenure, 2012

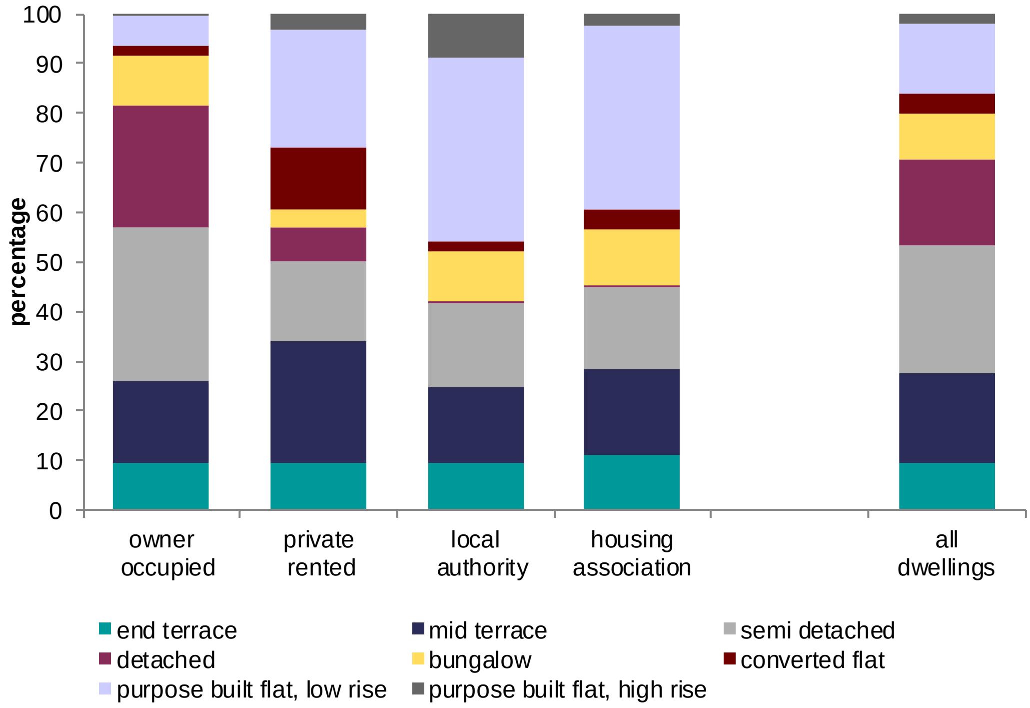


Base: all dwellings
Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 1.1
Source: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

1.4 The majority of properties in England were either terraced (28%) or semi-detached houses (26%). Some 17% were detached houses and 9% were bungalows. The remaining 20% of homes were flats, mainly purpose built low rise flats (14%), Annex Table 1.1.

1.5 As with dwelling age, the profile of homes varied by tenure. The largest proportion of flats was found in the social sector, particularly among the local authority stock (48%). The concentration of high rise flats was particularly high among local authority homes (9%) compared with all other tenures. In contrast, just 9% of all owner occupied homes were flats. The private rented sector contained the largest proportion of converted flats (13%). Some 31% of owner occupied homes were semi-detached houses and a further 25% were detached houses, Figure 1.2.

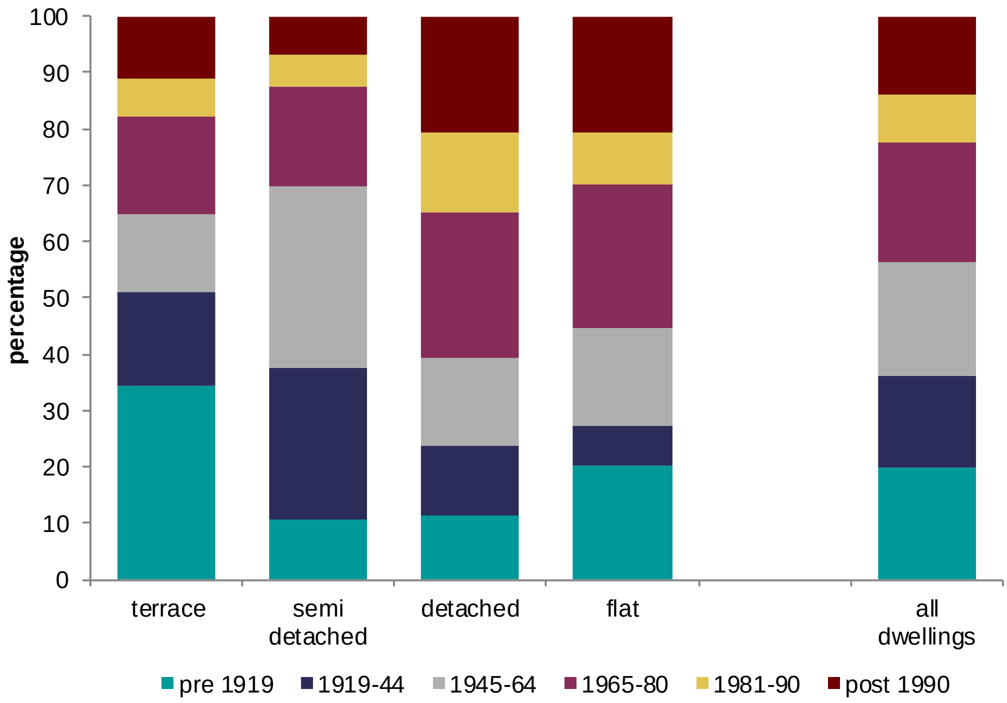
Figure 1.2: Dwelling type, by tenure, 2012



Base: all dwellings
Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 1.1
Source: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

1.6 The type of dwelling was linked to dwelling age. Some 35% of terraced homes were built before 1919 whilst 7% of these homes were built from 1981 to 1990. The largest proportion of detached dwellings and flats (26%) were built between 1965 and 1980 and a further 21% of these dwelling types were built after 1990, Figure 1.3.

Figure 1.3: Dwelling age, by dwelling type, 2012

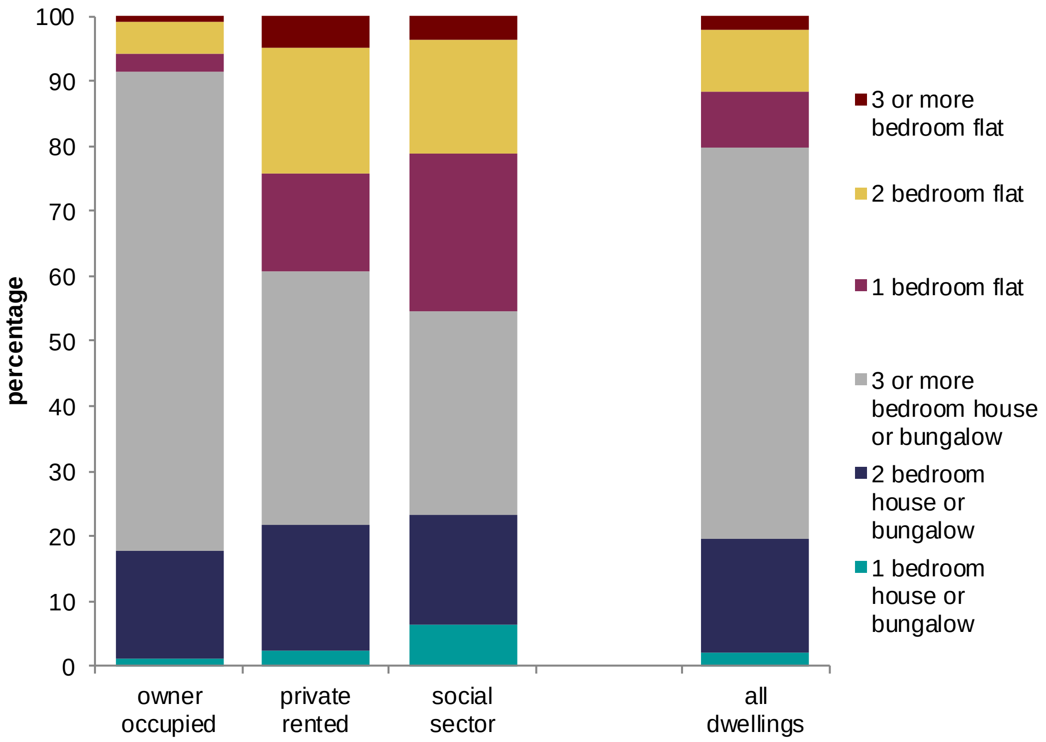


Base: all dwellings
Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 1.3
Source: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

1.7 Overall, 60% of all dwellings were houses or bungalows with three or more bedrooms. These homes were, however, over represented among owner occupied homes (74%) and were far less common within the social sector (31%) and private rented sector (39%), Figure 1.4.

1.8 Some 10% of all dwellings were two bedroom flats and 9% were one bedroom flats. However, nearly one quarter (24%) of social sector homes were one bedroom flats and a further 17% were two bedroomed flats. Only 2% of the total social sector stock consisted of 3 bedroomed flats. The social sector had a higher proportion of one bedroom homes (31%) than both the private rented sector (18%) and, most notably, the owner occupied sector (4%).

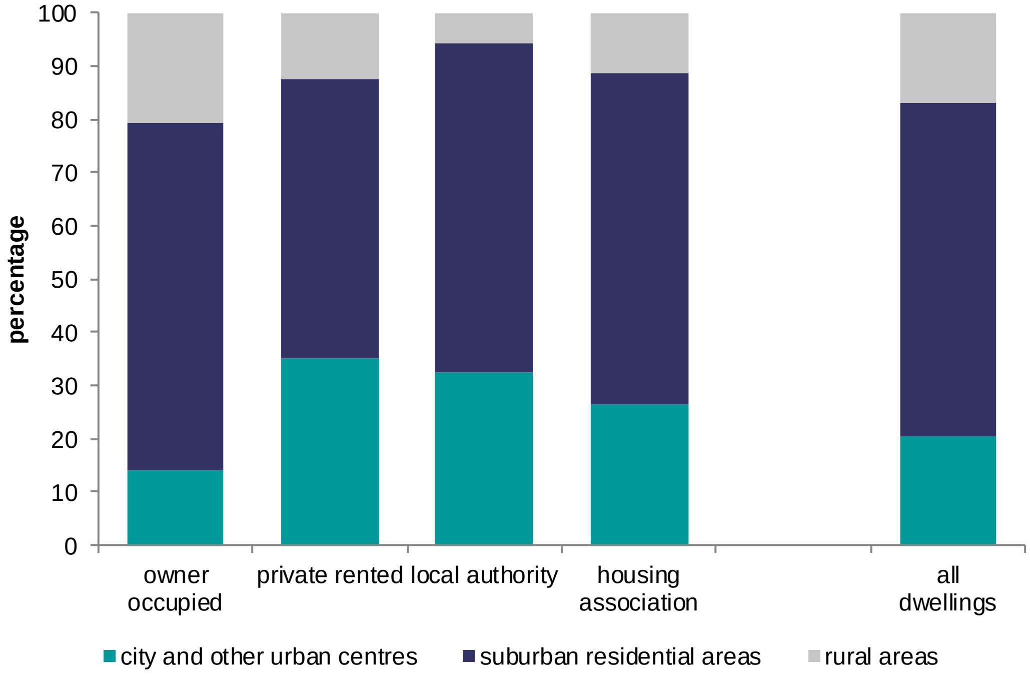
Figure 1.4: Number of bedrooms and dwelling type, by tenure, 2012



Base: all dwellings
Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 1.4
Source: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

1.9 The majority of dwellings were situated in suburban residential areas (62%), 21% were in cities and other urban centres and the remaining 17% were in rural areas. Private and social rented dwellings were more likely to be found in urban centres than owner occupied properties, Figure 1.5.

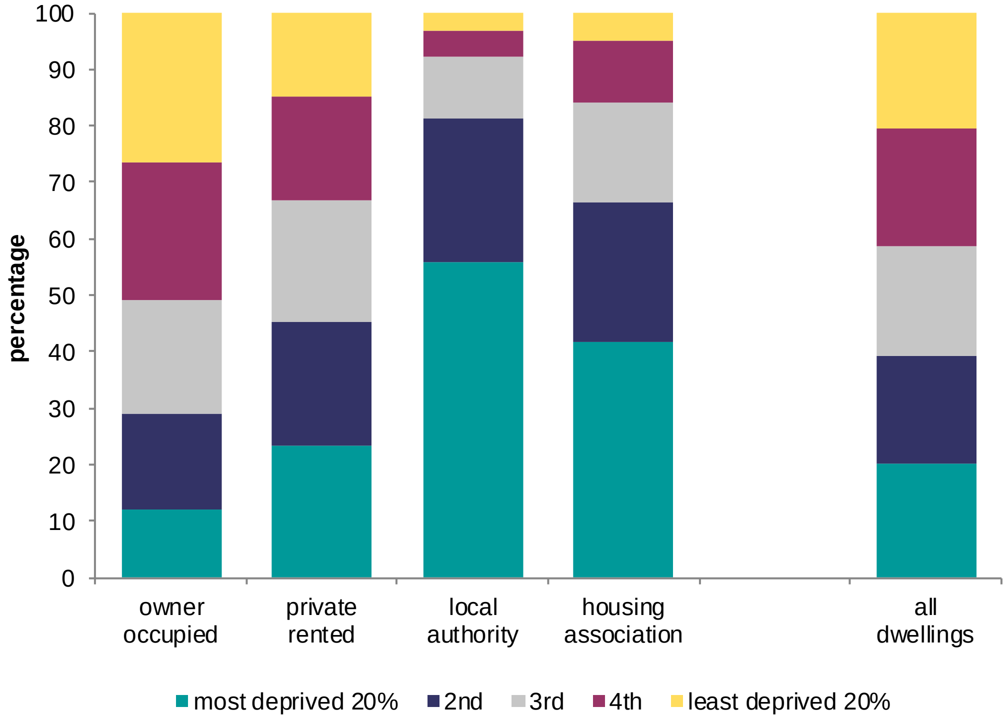
Figure 1.5: Type of area, by tenure, 2012



Base: all dwellings
Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 1.5
Source: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

1.10 Deprivation was strongly related to tenure. Local authorities (56%) and housing associations (42%) had a significantly higher proportion of their stock located within the 20% most deprived areas of England. Furthermore some 3% and 5% respectively of these homes were located in the least deprived 20% of areas. Private rented dwellings were more evenly spread across each of the deprivation bands. Some 12% of owner occupied homes were located in the most deprived areas, Figure 1.6.

Figure 1.6: Deprivation area, by tenure, 2012



Base: all dwellings
Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 1.5
Source: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

Changes in the English housing stock since 1996

1.11 Changes in the tenure distribution of the stock have important implications for many aspects of housing policy and other areas, such as mortgage lending and house building. While annual changes can be difficult to interpret, tenure trends are more evident when viewed over a longer period.

1.12 From 1996 to 2012, there were some notable changes in the number and profile of dwellings in the different tenures, particularly in each of the rented sectors. The number of owner occupied homes remained relatively constant since 1996, though peaked around 2006 before dropping back slightly.

1.13 The number of private rented homes more than doubled from 2.0 to 4.1 million between 1996 and 2012. The pace of growth in the private rented sector was particularly marked between 2006 and 2012. This increase arises from a combination of factors including:

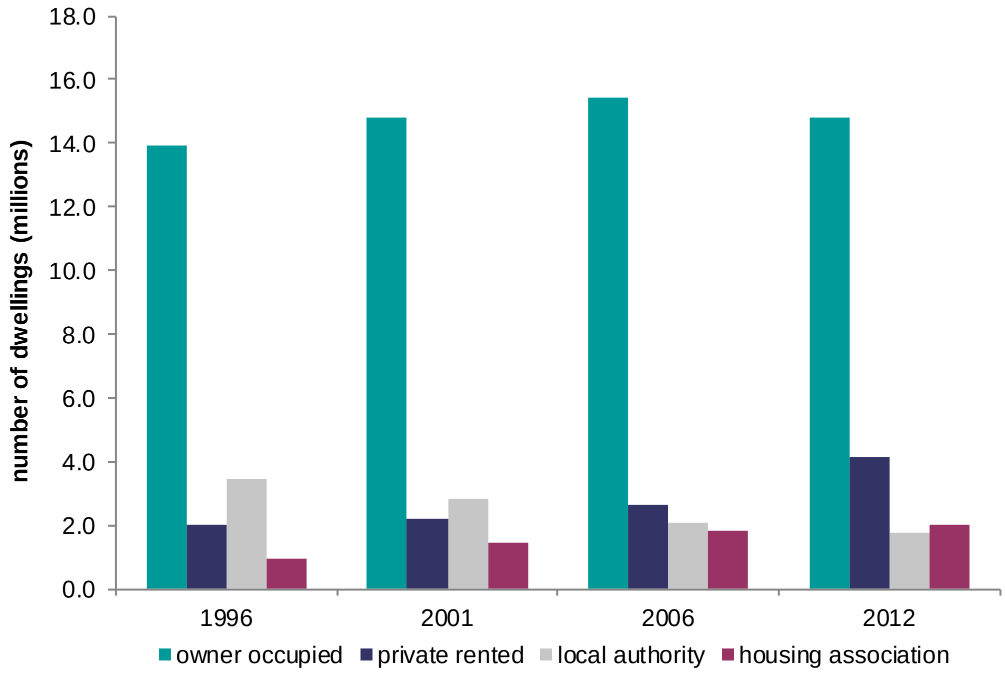
- new build homes and former owner occupied homes (including ex Right to Buy homes) moving into this sector
- the increasing costs of owner occupation, making this tenure less viable for first time buyers

- the limited availability of social sector homes

1.14 There were significant changes in the social rented sector between 1996 and 2012. From 1996 to 2012, the number of local authority homes fell from 3.5 million (17% of the stock) to 1.8 million (8% of the stock). Over the same period, the number of housing association homes more than doubled from around 900,000 to 2 million, Figure 1.7.

1.15 This is partly because the ownership of many local authority dwellings was transferred to housing associations through Large Scale Voluntary Transfers (LSVT) and partly because of new building undertaken by housing associations. An estimated 533,000[3] local authority homes were purchased by their sitting tenants through Right to Buy between 1996 and 2012. There was a downward trend in the number of Right to Buy sales per year between 2006 and 2012, but Right to Buy sales have generally increased since April 2012[4].

Figure 1.7: Trends in dwellings, by tenure, 1996-2012



Base: all dwellings
Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 1.6
Sources:
1996-2006: English House Condition Survey, dwelling sample;
2012: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

[3] DCLG Statistical dataset, Live Tables on social housing sales, Table 678, https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-social-housing-sales
[4] DCLG Right to Buy sales, May 2014, https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/right-to-buy-sales-in-england-january-to-march-2014

Owner occupied homes

1.16 The number of owner occupied homes rose and fell between 1996 and 2012. The recent decline in owner occupation has occurred alongside the growth of the private rented sector. Owner occupied homes comprised 65% of the stock in 2012, down from 68% in 1996, Annex Table 1.6.

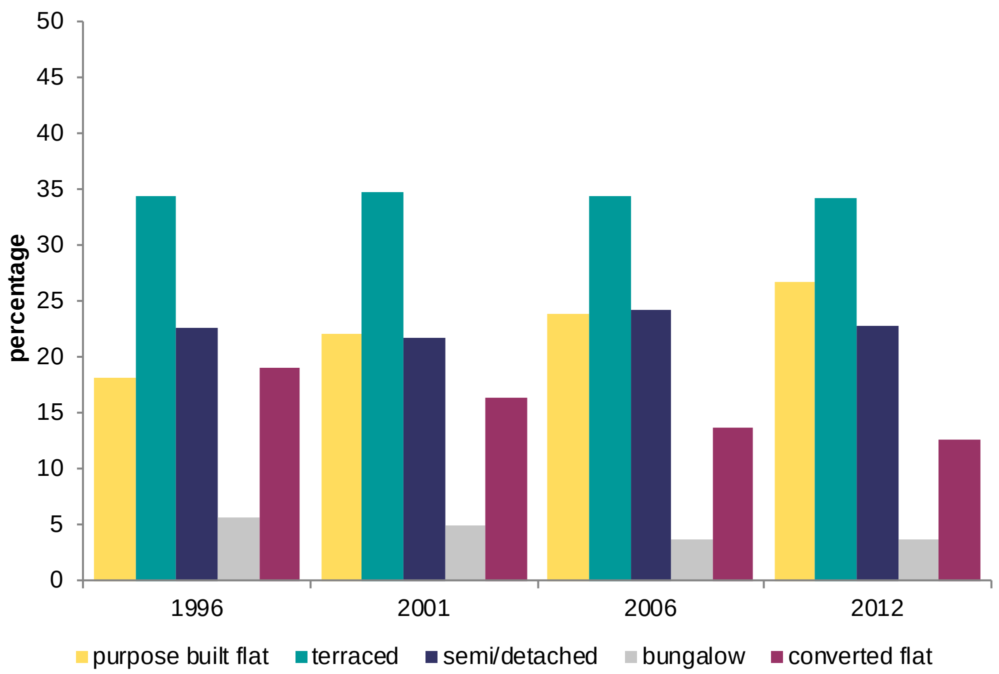
1.17 As the profile of owner occupied homes has changed very little since 1996, the rest of this section will examine the changes that have occurred within the rented sectors in relation to the age, type and location of homes.

Private rented homes

1.18 There was a marked change in the dwelling age profile of private rented homes since 1996. This tenure had a large increase in both the number (170,000 in 1996 to 1 million in 2012) and proportion of homes built after 1980 (from 8% in 1996 to 25% in 2012). As a result, the proportion of dwellings built before 1919 fell from 52% to 33%, Annex Table 1.7.

1.19 Whilst the proportion of terraced houses, semi or detached houses and bungalows in the private rented sector remained relatively constant, there was a reduction in the proportion of converted flats (from 19% to 13%) and an increase in the proportion of purpose built flats (18% to 27%), Figure 1.8.

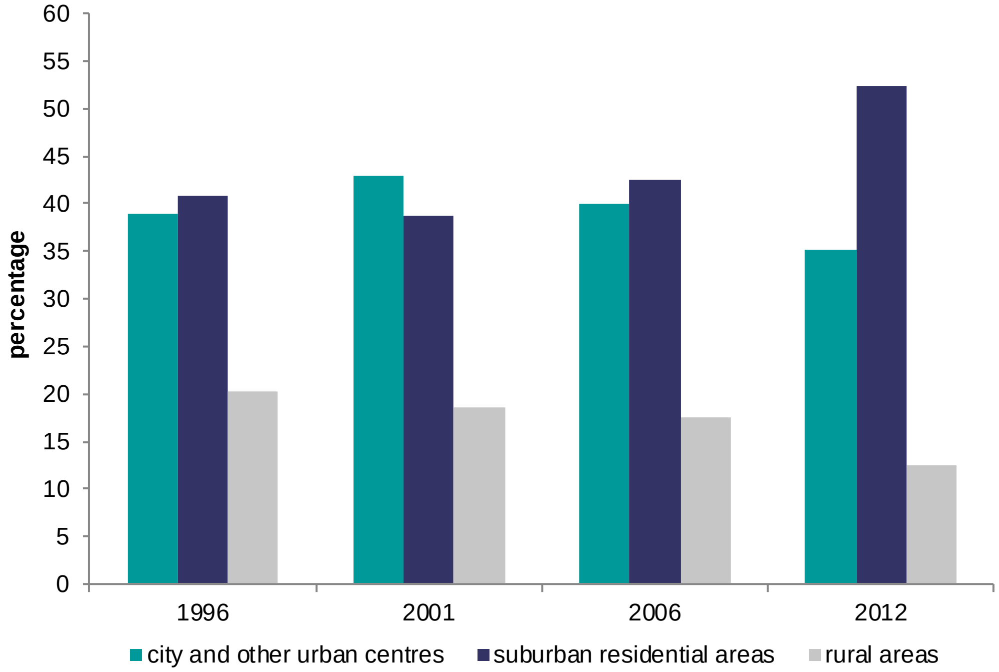
Figure 1.8 Dwelling type, private rented, 1996-2012



Base: all private rented dwellings
Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 1.7
Sources:
1996-2006: English House Condition Survey, dwelling sample;
2012: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

1.20 Although there was a rise in the number of privately rented homes in all types of areas, growth was less marked in rural locations. Consequently, the proportion of privately rented homes located in rural areas fell from 20% in 1996 to 12% in 2012. The number and proportion of private rented homes rose most markedly within suburban residential areas from around 800,000 (41%) to 2.2 million (52%), Figure 1.9.

Figure 1.9 Type of area, private rented dwellings, 1996-2012

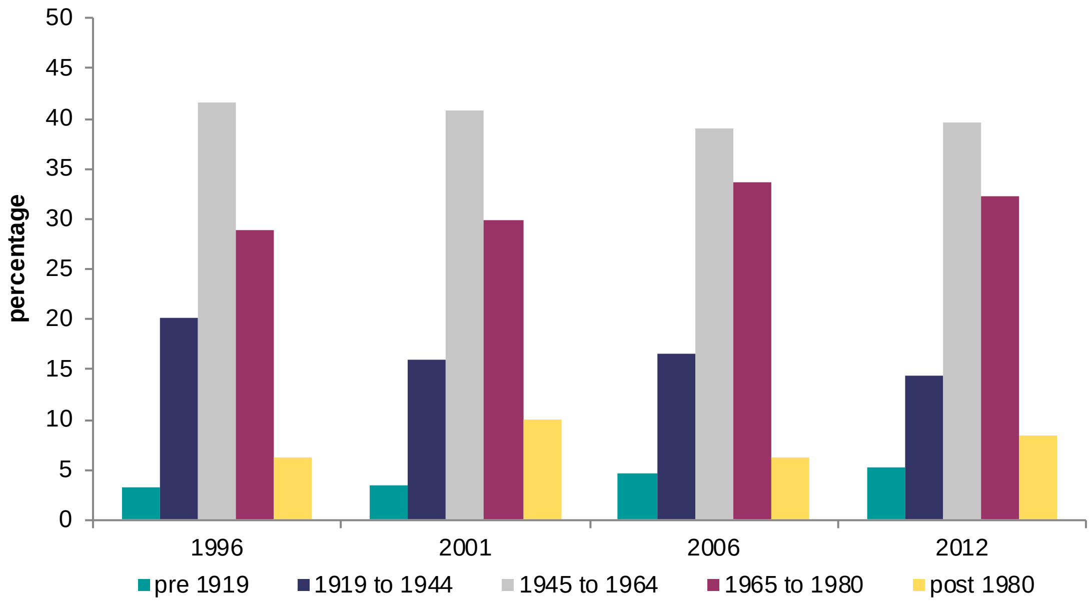


Base: all private rented dwellings
Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 1.7
Sources:
1996-2006: English House Condition Survey, dwelling sample;
2012: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

Local authority homes

1.21 The reduction in local authority housing stock between 1996 and 2012 resulted in a shift in the age distribution, with a fall in the proportion of homes built from 1919 to 1964 (62% to 54%) and an increase in proportion of homes built after 1965 (35% to 41%), Figure 1.10

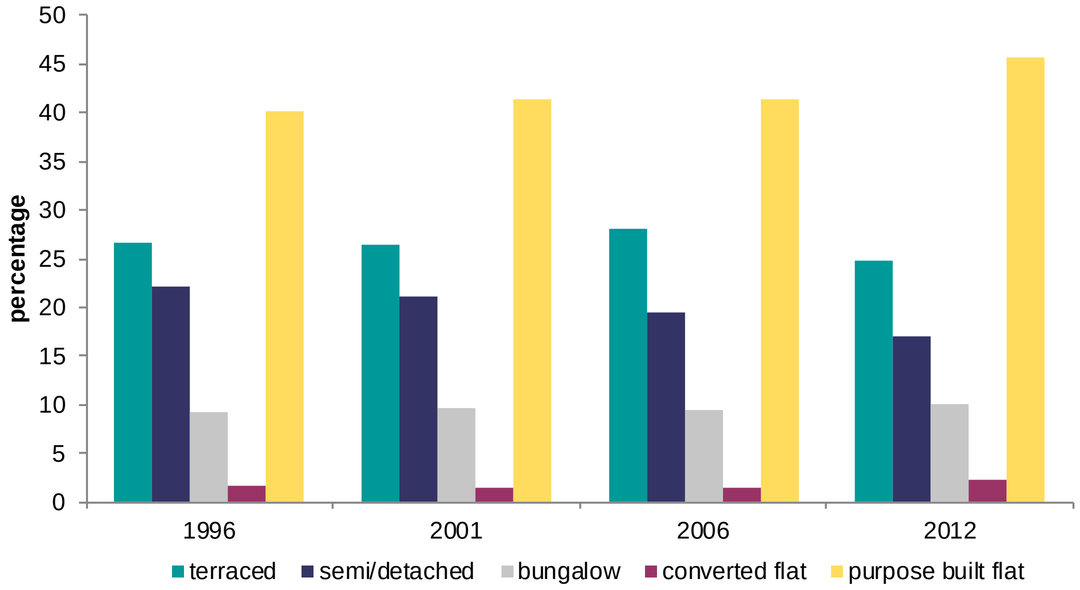
Figure 1.10 Dwelling age, local authority, 1996-2012



Base: all local authority dwellings
Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 1.8
Sources:
1996-2006: English House Condition Survey, dwelling sample;
2012: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

1.22 The fall in the number of local authority homes also changed the distribution of dwelling type. The majority of dwellings taken out of the local authority sector were houses and bungalows, so there was a significant rise in the proportion of purpose built flats (from 40% to 46%), Figure 1.11.

Figure 1.11: Dwelling type, local authority, 1996-2012



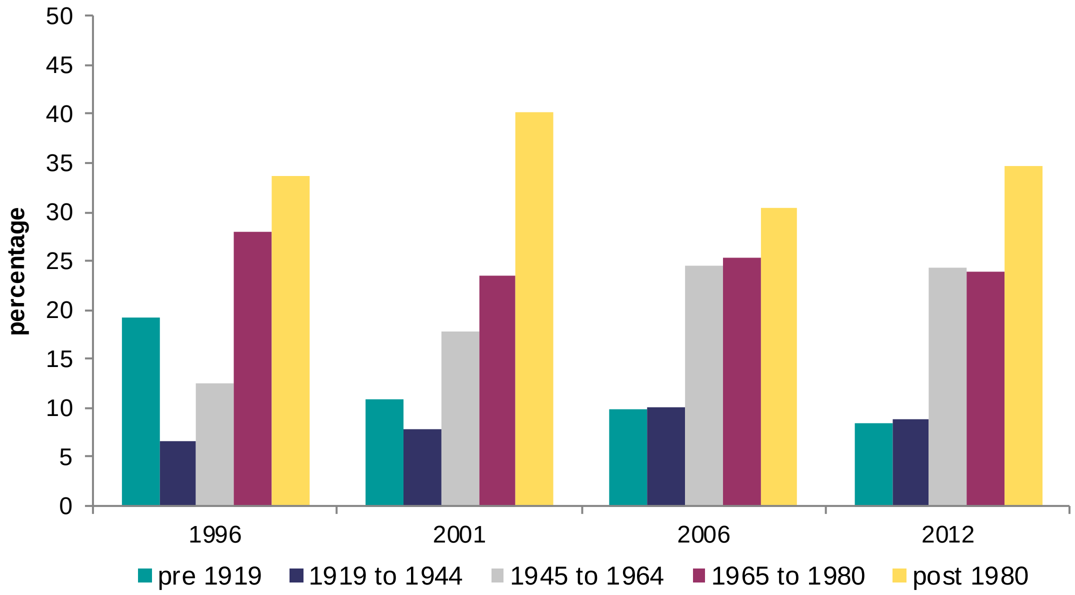
Base: all local authority dwellings
Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 1.8
Sources:
1996-2006: English House Condition Survey, dwelling sample;
2012: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

1.23 Of the 368,000 local authority homes located in rural areas in 1996, about one quarter (99,000) rural homes remained under local authority ownership in 2012. As a result, there was a significant fall in the proportion of local authority homes in rural areas (from 11% to 6%). While the proportion of homes located in suburban residential areas was fairly constant over this period, there was a rise in the proportion of homes located in cities and other urban centres from 25% to 33%. These findings are consistent with the increased concentration of purpose built flats within this tenure, Annex Table 1.8.

Housing association homes

1.24 The growth of the housing association sector through large scale voluntary transfer (LSVT) and new building has also resulted in marked changes in the profile of this sector. As the local authority sector grew rapidly from 1945 to 1964, it is not surprising that LSVT resulted in a large increase in homes built during this period within the housing association stock (up from 12% to 24%). The proportion of the oldest pre 1919 stock decreased from 19% to 8%, Figure 1.12.

Figure 1.12: Dwelling age, housing association, 1996-2012

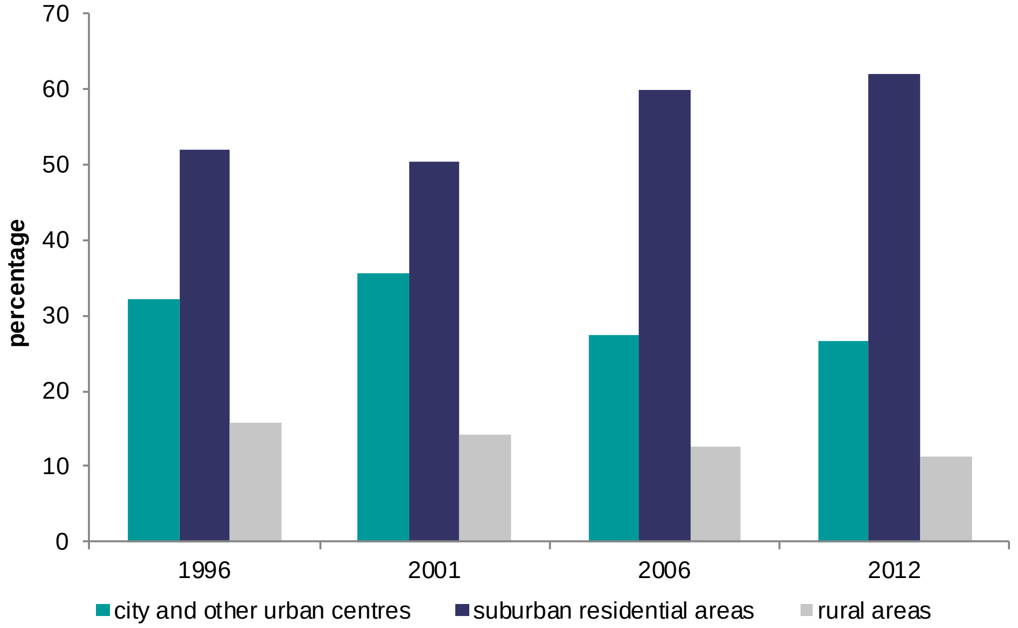


Base: all housing association dwellings
Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 1.9
Sources:
1996-2006: English House Condition Survey, dwelling sample;
2012: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

1.25 Since 1996, the main shifts in the dwelling type profile of housing association homes arose among semi-detached houses which increased from 10% of the stock to 17%, and among purpose built flats, which were reduced from 48% of the stock to 39%. These changes are also largely due to the transfer of stock from local authorities, Annex Table 1.9.

1.26 Whilst the growth of this tenure was evident in all types of area, there was a significant expansion of housing association homes located in suburban residential areas. As a result, the proportion of housing association stock in these locations rose from 52% to 62%, Figure 1.13.

Figure 1.13: Type of area, housing association dwellings, 1996-2012



Base: all housing association dwellings
Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 1.9
Sources:
1996-2006: English House Condition Survey, dwelling sample;
2012: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

Vacant homes[5]

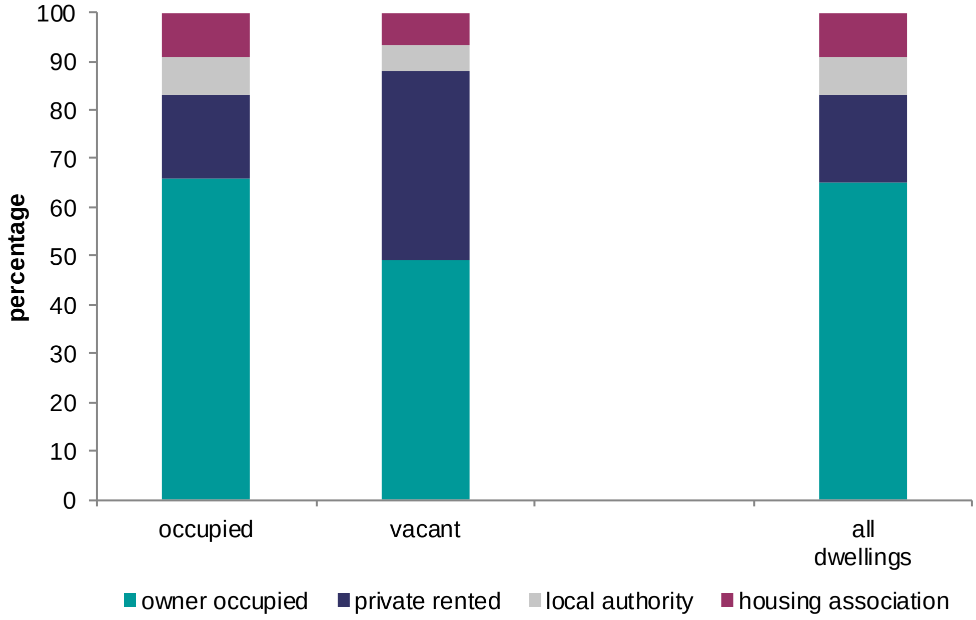
1.27 Homes may become vacant for a number of reasons, for example, as part of the process of being sold, or due to a gap between tenancies. Vacant homes can, however, degrade quickly and become expensive to repair and return to use. Vacant properties restrict the supply of housing and contribute to housing shortages. Given the recognised need for housing in England, keeping vacant stock to a minimum is therefore desirable. Vacant homes had a different profile to occupied dwellings and these differences are explored in this section. Derelict homes are not surveyed as part of the EHS[6].

1.28 There were 1.0 million vacant dwellings in England at the time of the survey. Of these, 494,000 (49%) were owner occupied and 122,000 were in the social

[5] The assessment of whether or not a dwelling is vacant is made at the time of the interviewer's visit. Clarification of vacancy is sought from neighbours. Surveyors are required to gain access to vacant dwellings and undertake full inspections.
[6] The assessment of whether a dwelling is derelict is made by a trained surveyor. These dwellings would normally be unsafe to enter to allow a full physical survey to be undertaken.

rented sector (12%). The private rented sector was over represented among vacant homes: this tenure comprised 39% of vacant homes (390,000), compared with 17% of occupied homes. Vacancy rates tend to be higher among privately rented homes because there is a much higher turn round of occupants in this sector than for owner occupation or social renting, Figure 1.14

Figure 1.14: Occupied and vacant dwellings, by tenure, 2012



Base: all dwellings
Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 1.10
Source: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

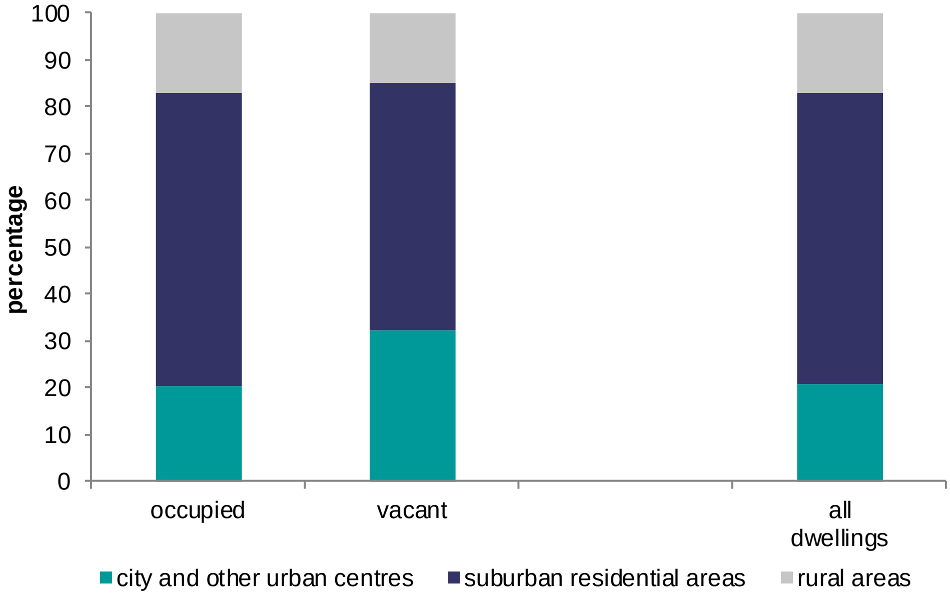
1.29 Homes built before 1919, flats, homes with one or two bedrooms and homes in city and urban centres were over represented in the vacant stock. Around a quarter (26%) of empty homes were built before 1919. Interestingly, 12% of empty homes were built after 1990. The comparable figures for occupied homes were 19% and 14% respectively, Annex Table 1.10.

1.30 Among vacant homes, 38% were flats compared with 20% of flats in occupied stock. This may be because flats are more likely to be rented, which have more changes of occupancy than owner occupied dwellings, increasing chances of vacant periods, Annex Table 1.10.

1.31 Around half (48%) of vacant dwellings consisted of properties with three or more bedrooms compared with 63% for occupied homes. Some 33% of vacant homes had two bedrooms and 19% had one bedroom; the equivalent proportions for occupied stock were 27% and 10% respectively, Annex Table 1.10.

1.32 As with occupied dwellings, the majority of vacant properties were located in suburban residential areas (53%). The proportion of vacant properties in city and other urban centres (32%) was far higher than the proportion of these homes within the occupied stock (20%). This was due to the relatively higher prevalence of vacant privately rented homes, flats and older dwellings, which were more likely to be located in city and urban centres.

Figure 1.15: Occupied and vacant dwellings, by type of area, 2012



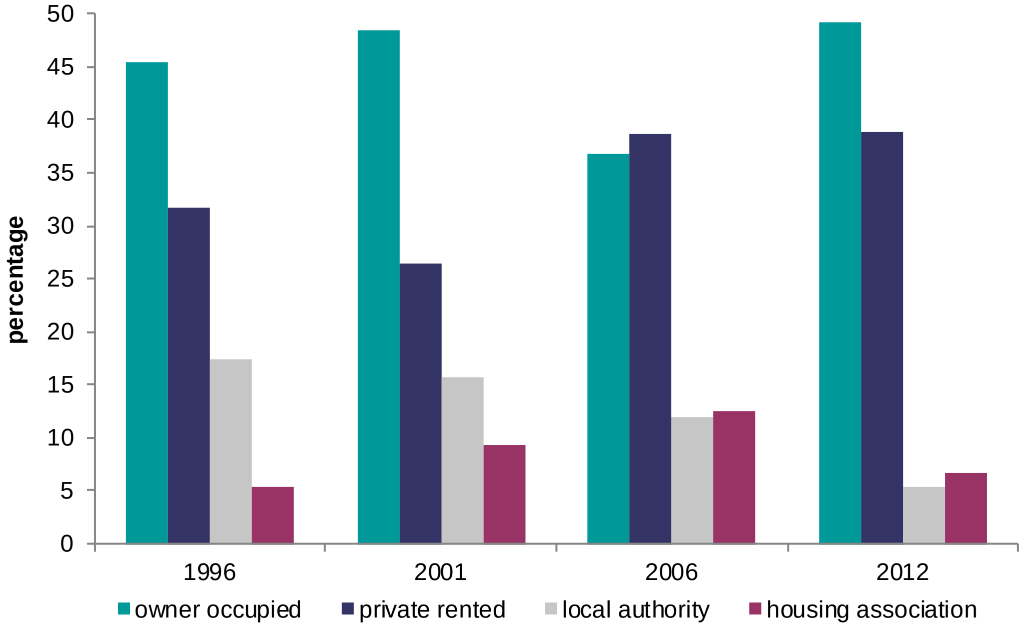
Base: all dwellings
Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 1.10
Source: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

Changes in vacant homes since 1996

1.33 Whilst the number of vacant homes increased from around 800,000 to 1.0 million since 1996, the proportion of vacant homes within the stock remained constant at around 3 or 4%. There were, however, some notable changes in the distribution of these homes by tenure and other dwelling characteristics.

1.34 Similar to the trend for all dwellings, the proportion of privately rented homes in the vacant stock rose between 1996 and 2012 (from 32% to 39%), and the proportion of empty local authority homes reduced (from 17% to 5%). Both local authorities and housing associations generally have very high demand for their homes and may also have their own performance targets to maximise the use of their stock. This likely explains the continuous lower concentration of vacancy within the social rented sector, Figure 1.16.

Figure 1.16: Trends in vacant dwellings, by tenure, 1996-2012

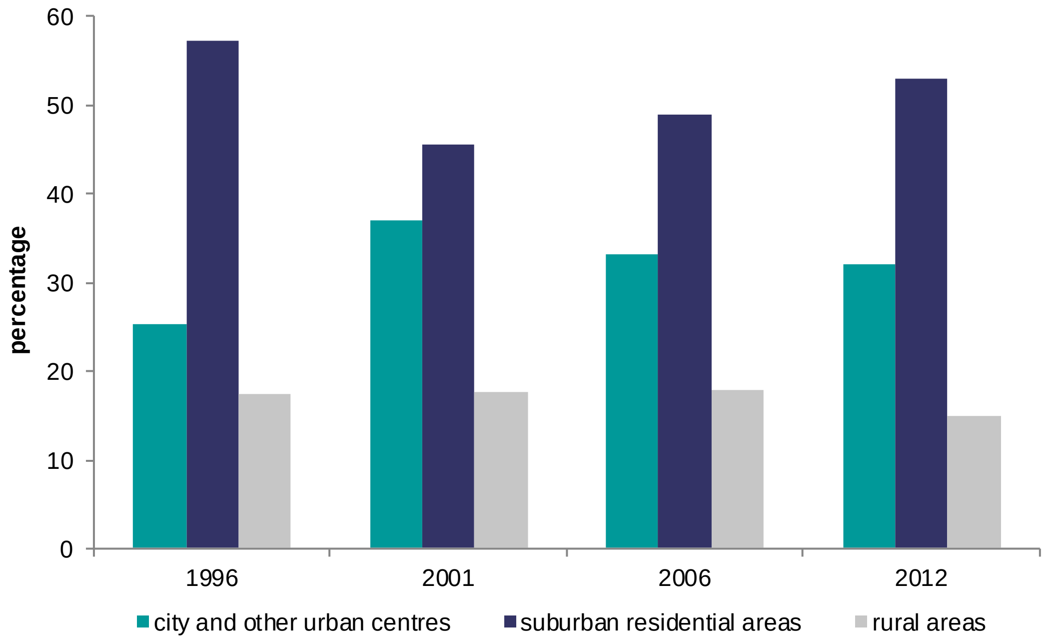


Base: all vacant dwellings
Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 1.11
Sources:
1996-2006: English House Condition Survey, dwelling sample;
2012: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

1.35 As in the occupied stock, the proportion of homes built before 1919 was reduced within the vacant stock from 35% to 26%, due to the impact of new home building. The proportion of homes built after 1980 increased within the vacant stock from 9% to 22%, Annex Table 1.11.

1.36 The distribution of vacant homes by type of area fluctuated a little over this period, although the proportion of vacant homes in city and urban areas rose overall (from 25% to 32%). The fall in the proportion of vacant homes in suburban residential areas from 57% to 53% is not statistically significant, Figure 1.17

Figure 1.17: Trends in vacant dwellings, by type of area, 1996-2012



Base: all vacant dwellings
Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 1.11
Sources:
1996-2006: English House Condition Survey, dwelling sample;
2012: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

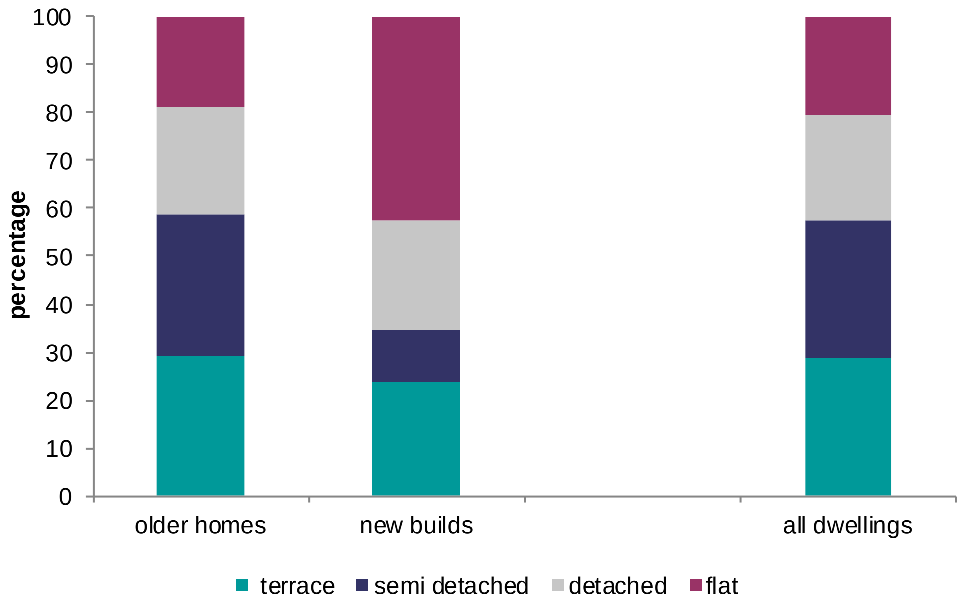
New builds

1.37 This section looks at the profile of the newest homes built after 2002, and examines how their characteristics may differ from the rest of the housing stock. It should be noted the characteristics of homes built after 2002 may be very similar to those in other categories e.g. those built in the 1990s, but the 2002 threshold was chosen to capture the newest homes where sample sizes allowed for useful analysis. For the rest of this section, those homes built after 2002 will be referred to as 'new builds', and the housing stock built up to and including 2002 referred to as 'older homes'.

1.38 Of the 22.7 million dwellings in England, 1.3 million were new builds (6%). The majority of these homes were owner occupied (57%) but almost a third (30%) were in the private rented sector, reflecting the rapid growth of the tenure. The remaining 13% were social rented homes, Annex Table 1.12.

1.39 A large proportion of new builds were flats (43%), noticeably higher than the proportion of flats among older homes (19%). Conversely, the proportion of semi-detached homes among new build stock was much less (11%) than the proportion among older homes (29%).

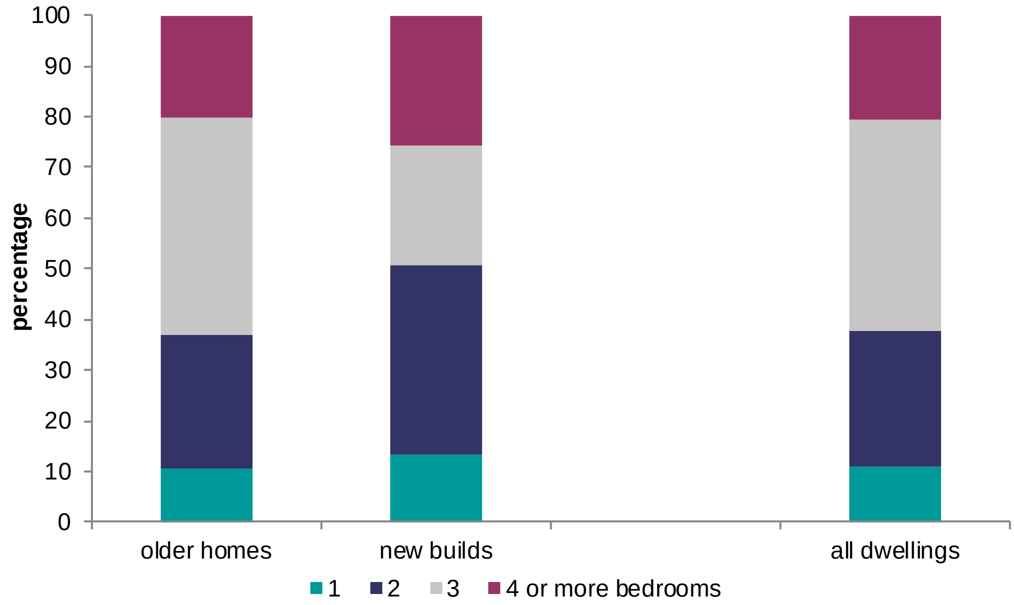
Figure 1.18: New build and older homes, by dwelling type, 2012



Base: all dwellings
Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 1.12
Source: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

1.40 The distribution of the number of bedrooms among new builds also differed from those of older homes. Over a third (37%) of new homes had two bedrooms, higher than the proportion (26%) in older homes. Conversely, the proportion of new build three bedroom properties (24%) was lower compared with older homes (43%). The proportion of new builds with four or more bedrooms (26%) was higher than in older homes (20%), Figure 1.19.

Figure 1.19: New build and older homes, by number of bedrooms, 2012

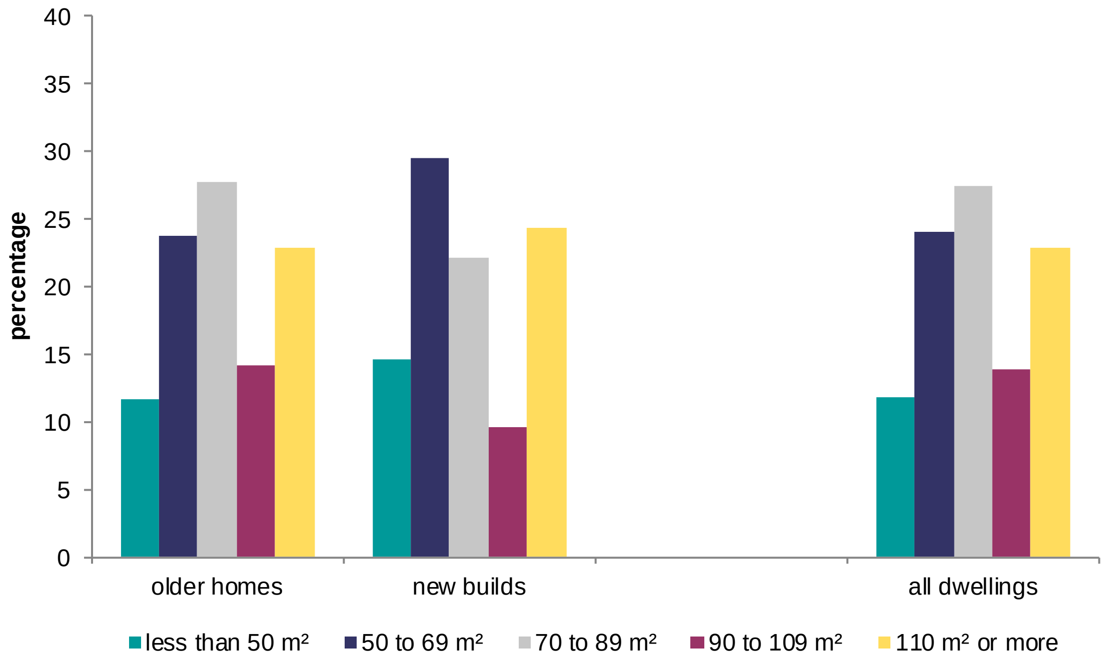


Base: all dwellings
Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 1.12
Source: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

1.41 The distribution of new builds across different types of area was broadly similar to that of older homes. Some 61% of new builds were in suburban residential areas and 15% were in rural areas. The proportion of new builds in city and other urban centres was slightly higher (24%) compared with older homes (20%), Annex Table 1.12.

1.42 The average total floor area[7] in new build homes was 96m² and the average for older homes was 92m². However, a number of very large homes over 110m² among new build homes has resulted in this higher average size. The distribution of the banded total floor area of new build properties differed from that found in older dwellings. Some 44% of new build homes had a useable floor space under 69m^2, greater than the proportion found in older dwellings (35%). Around one quarter (24%) of new builds were 110m² or more in size, similar to the proportion found in older homes (23%).

Figure 1.20: New build and older homes, by banded floor area, 2012



Base: all dwellings
Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 1.12
Source: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

[7] See Chapter 5 of English Housing Survey 2012 to 2013: Household Report for further analysis on floor area.