
Chapter 2

Services, amenities, services and accessibility

This chapter examines key services and amenities present in the English housing stock in 2012. It focuses on mains services, water meters, secondary amenities and security. It also examines some key features that enable homes to be more accessible to occupants (and their visitors) and how easy it would be to adapt dwellings to improve accessibility.

The English Housing Survey Homes Report 2011 contains information about the age of kitchens, bathrooms and WCs; none of these are likely to have changed significantly by 2012. Readers should, therefore, refer to this report for details on the age of these amenities. Additional findings relating to amenities and services can be found in web tables DA2101 to DA2303.

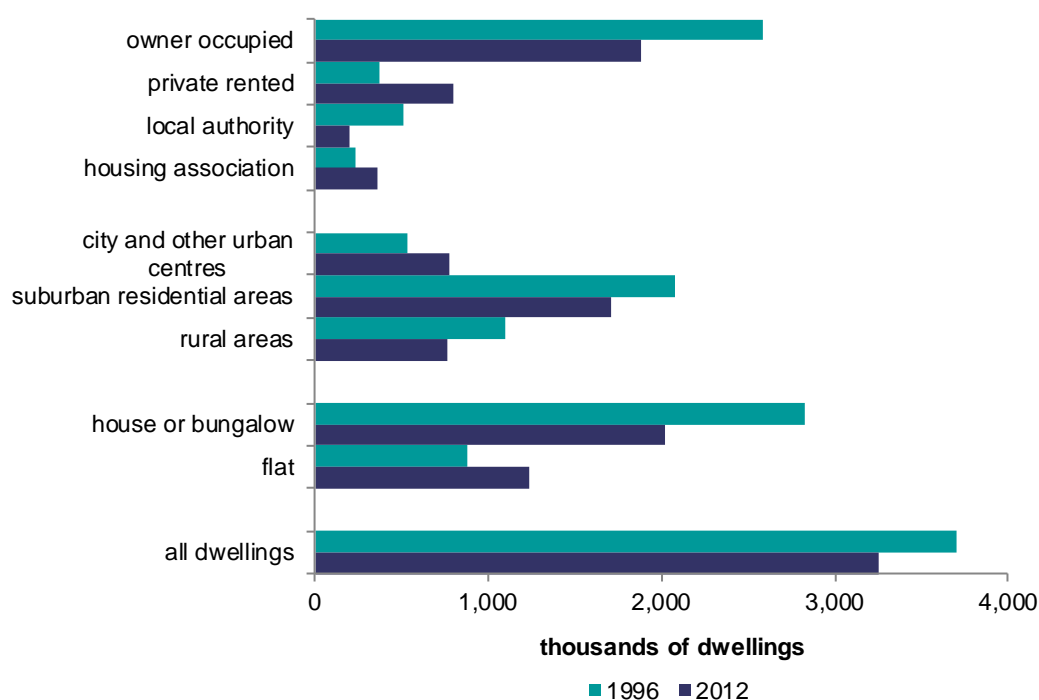
Mains services

Electricity

- 2.1. In 2012 virtually all homes had a mains electricity supply, unchanged since 1996, Annex Table 2.1.
- 2.2. The overall proportion of dwellings with an off peak electricity supply¹ declined from 18% (3.7 million) in 1996 to 14% (3.3 million) in 2012. Although the presence of an off peak electricity supply decreased overall between 1996 and 2012, the number of homes with this provision increased among private rented and housing association homes, flats and within city and urban centres during this period. This finding likely reflects the large proportion of flats built in recent years (see Chapter 1 of this report), Figure 2.1.
- 2.3. Virtually all homes with storage heating had an off-peak electricity supply in 2012 (97%), a rise from 90% in 1996, Annex Table 2.2. Most electric storage heaters use electricity to 'charge up' overnight and then release heat during the day, so off-peak electricity supply is more cost-effective.

¹ See the glossary for more on off peak electricity supply.

Figure 2.1: Off peak electricity, by dwelling characteristics, 2012



Base: all dwellings

Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 2.2

Sources:

1996: English House Condition Survey, dwelling sample;

2012: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

Mains gas

2.4. In 2012 86% of homes had a mains gas supply, up from 82% in 1996. The increase was evident across all tenures, with the largest rise seen in the housing association sector where the proportion of homes with mains gas increased from 68% in 1996 to 81% in 2012. Homes in rural areas were least likely to have a gas mains supply throughout this period (61% in 1996 and 64% in 2012). The proportion of houses or bungalows with a mains gas supply increased from 85% in 1996 to 91% in 2012, Annex Table 2.3.

Mains drainage

2.5. In 2012, 97% of homes had mains drainage, an increase from 91% in 1996. In 1996 and 2012, the lowest proportions of homes with a mains drainage system were found in rural locations and in homes built before 1919. In 2012 these proportion of these homes with mains drainage was 84% and 91% respectively, Annex Table 2.1.

Water meters

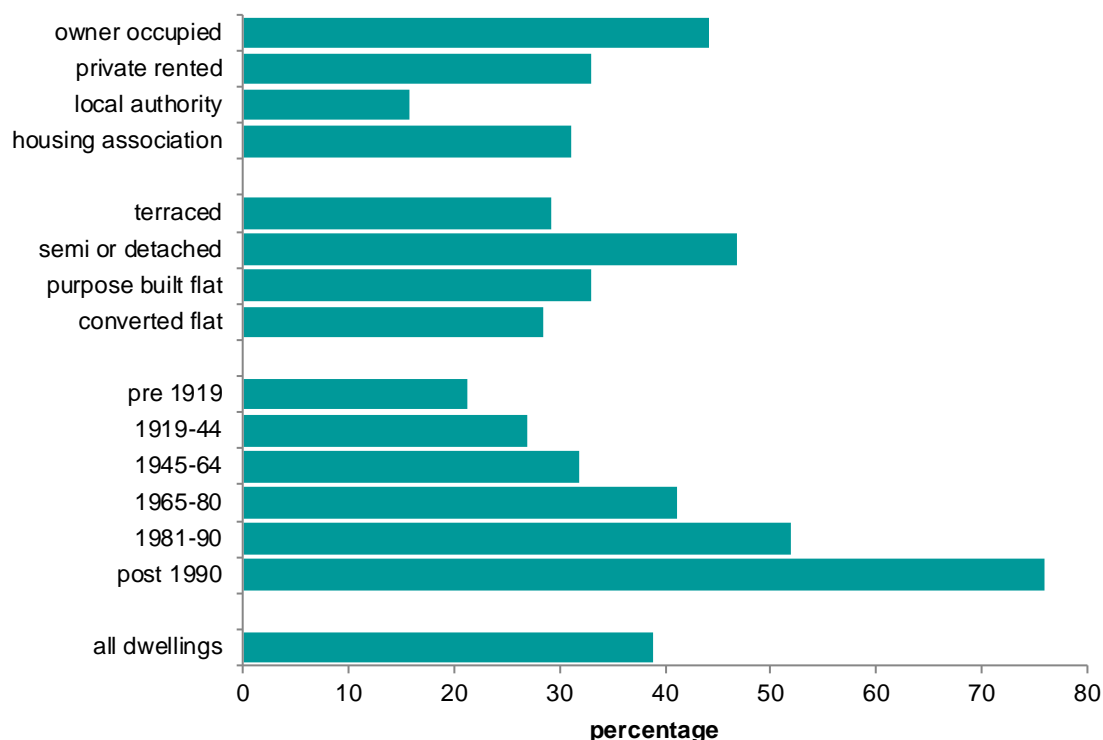
2.6. The Water Industry Act 1999 introduced the right to remain on an unmetered charge. Domestic customers paying on an unmetered basis have a legally

protected right to choose whether or not they are charged for water according to a meter in their current home. The Act also introduced the right for customers to have a meter installed free of charge where it is practical for the water company to do so and does not entail excessive costs. Companies have had discretionary powers to install meters in all new homes since 1990, although if operating area is an 'area of water scarcity' the company can be given the right to compulsorily meter all its customers over the next ten years in order to reduce overall demand for water.

- 2.7. In 2012, around 8.4 million occupied homes had water meters² (39%). Water meter provision varied by dwelling characteristics. Owner occupied homes (44%) were most likely to have water meters whilst local authority properties (16%) were least likely. Local authority homes were more likely to be flats, which may not be suitable for metering due to the practical difficulties of isolating the water supply to an individual property. The difference may also be due to some local authorities collecting water rates alongside the rent, Annex Table 2.4.
- 2.8. Water meters were more prevalent in homes built after 1990 (76%) than in other dwelling ages. Around half (47%) of detached and semi-detached homes had water meters, compared with 28% of converted flats and 33% of purpose built flats. As cited above there may be practical difficulties in monitoring water use in individual flats where one water pipe leads into the block, or in the case of a converted flat, into the original house, Figure 2.2.

² The EHS has collected data on water meters since 2009 from the household questionnaire in the physical survey. The analysis in this report excludes vacant homes (note that vacant homes were included in base for the 2011 Homes report so the percentages are not directly comparable). Before 2009, the data was collected in the full household survey but it is not possible to directly compare figures, as there are differences in the question wording and sample coverage.

Figure 2.2: Water meters, by dwelling characteristics, 2012



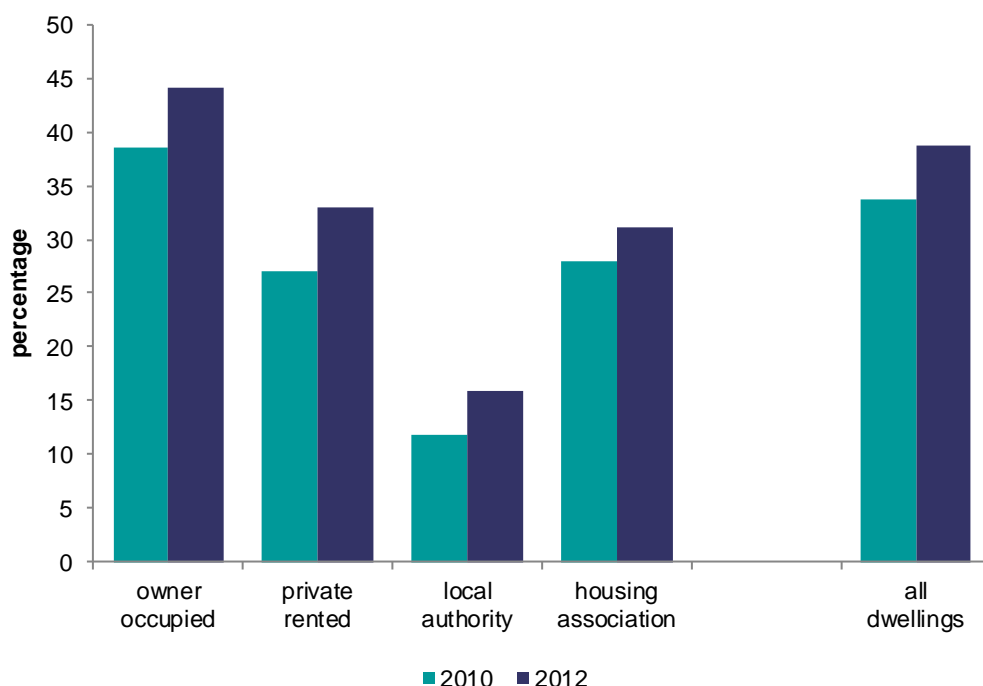
Base: all occupied dwellings

Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 2.4

Source: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

- 2.9. Those households most likely to have a water meter were those aged 65 years and over (50%), single households aged over 60 (49%) and couples with no dependent children (42%). Lone parents with dependent children (29%) and other multi-person households (26%) were least likely to have a water meter. These findings are partly due to the distribution of these households by tenure; older households are more likely to be owners whilst lone parents are more likely to be renters. However, the position is somewhat complex given that the majority of multi-person households are also owner occupied. Generally, the larger the household, the lower the prevalence of a water meter. This may suggest that smaller households were more confident about making financial savings through being metered, Annex Table 2.5.
- 2.10. From 2010, there was an increase in the proportion of dwellings with a water meter from 34% to 39% in 2012. This increase was evident among all tenures, but most notable in the private rented sector where this rose from 27% in 2010 to 33% in 2012, Figure 2.3

Figure 2.3: Water meters, by tenure, 2010 and 2012



Base: all occupied dwellings

Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 2.4

Source: 2010 and 2012, English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

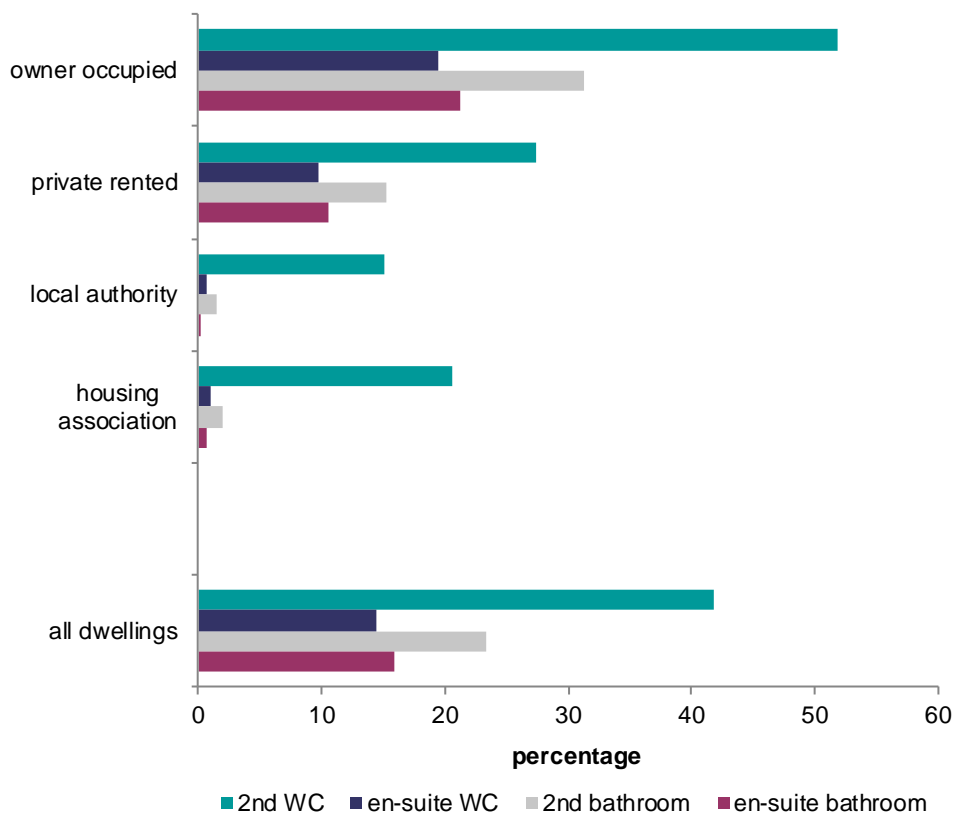
2.11. There was little discernible change in the pattern of water meter provision since 2010, with the findings presented above similar to those found in that year, Annex Table 2.4.

Secondary amenities

2.12. The number, type and arrangement of WC facilities in dwellings are important to ensure adequate personal hygiene, especially for larger households or those who share these amenities with other households.

2.13. In 2012, 42% of homes had a second WC and of these, 35% were en-suite. In addition, some 23% of homes had a second bathroom or shower, of which 68% were en-suite. The presence of secondary amenities in the home varied by tenure. Owner occupiers were far more likely to have any of the secondary amenities including an en-suite than renters. For example, some 52% of owner occupied homes had a second WC and 31% had a second bathroom. In contrast, a second WC was present in 15% of local authority homes and in 21% of housing association homes, Figure 2.4.

Figure 2.4: Secondary amenities, by tenure, 2012



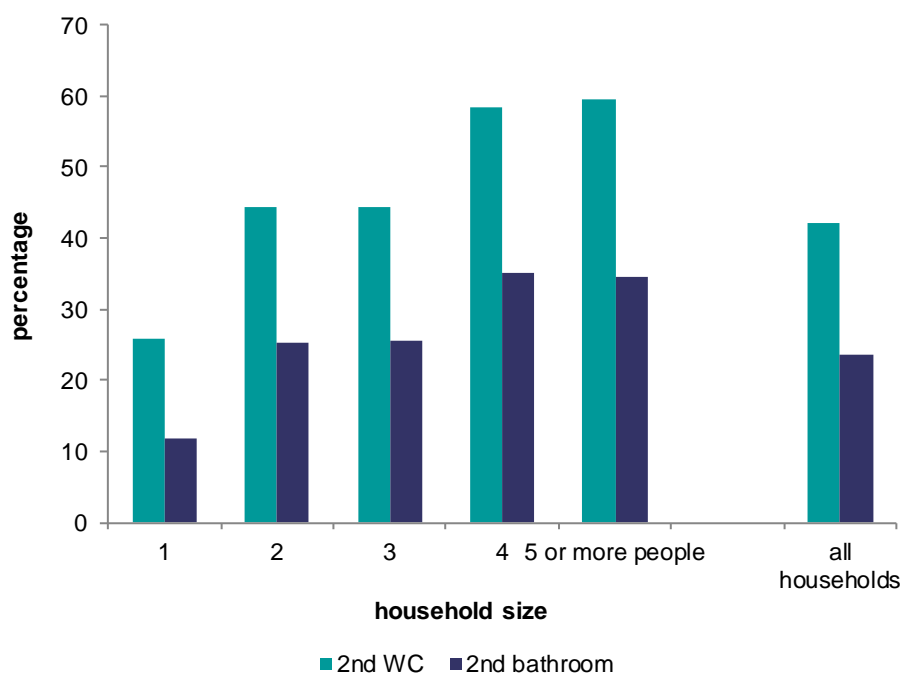
Base: all dwellings

Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 2.6

Source: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

2.14. Larger households were more likely to have secondary amenities. For example, 60% of households with 5 or more people had a second WC compared with 26% of single person households. However, the relationship between household size and the provision of secondary en-suite facilities was less clear: 2 or 3 person households had a similar likelihood of having en-suite facilities at their home compared with the largest households of five people or more, Figure 2.5.

Figure 2.5: Secondary amenities, by household size, 2012



Base: all households

Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 2.7

Source: English Housing Survey, household sub-sample

Accessibility of dwellings and disability adaptations

2.15. The EHS physical survey assesses the presence of a number of features that enable dwellings to be more accessible for people with disabilities, including wheelchair users. This section firstly examines the prevalence of each of these features within the housing stock in 2012. It then examines the ‘visitability’ of homes, defined based on four key accessibility features (see Box 2.1), by tenure, age and type for 2012 and how this compares with 2007. Finally, it investigates how easy it would be to adapt homes to provide all four visitability features where they do not already exist.

2.16. In 2012, 74% of homes had no change in floor level or trip steps at entrance level, 63% of homes had a WC at entrance level, 56% had a room at entrance level that would be suitable for a bedroom and 39% had a bathroom at entrance level. Just 17% of homes had level access or a wheelchair accessible WC at entrance level. Around a quarter of all homes had the following features: sufficiently wide door and circulation space (26%) or a flush threshold to the main entrance (24%). Some 21% had straight stairs of sufficient width (900mm) with landings, required for safe and accessible use, Annex Table 2.8.

Visitability of dwellings

Box 2.1: Visitability: four key features

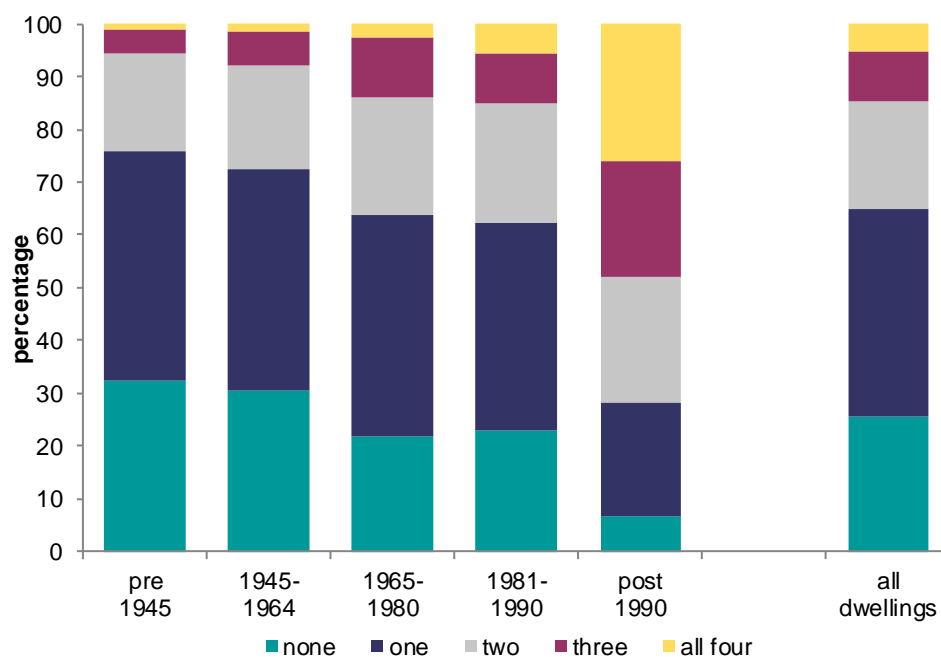
Visitability comprises four key features which are considered to be the most important for enabling people with mobility problems to either access their home or visit someone else's home. These four features form the basis for the requirements in part M of the Building Regulations, although the EHS cannot exactly mirror the detailed requirements contained there.

1. **Level access:** For all dwellings with a private or shared plot, there are no steps between the gate/pavement and the front door into the house or block of flats to negotiate. This includes level access to the entrance of the survey module (i.e. a group of flats containing the surveyed flat). Dwellings without a plot are excluded from the analysis as access is, in effect, the pavement/road adjacent to the dwelling.
2. **Flush threshold:** a wheelchair can be wheeled directly into the dwelling from outside the entrance door with no steps to negotiate and no obstruction higher than 15mm.
3. **Sufficiently wide doors and circulation space:** the doors and circulation space serving habitable rooms, kitchen, bathroom and WC comply with the requirements of part M of the Building Regulations.
4. **WC at entrance level:** there is an inside WC located on the entrance floor to the dwelling.

2.17. Overall, 17.0 million dwellings (75%) had at least one of these visitability features, however, only 1.2 million dwellings (5%) possessed all four of the key features (see Box 2.1) for full visitability. Of those with fewer than four features, 9% of all dwellings had three features, 21% had two and 39% had one. The remaining 5.8 million dwellings (25%) had none of the four visitability features, Annex Table 2.9.

2.18. The likelihood of a home being fully visitable varied by age, tenure and type. Not surprisingly, owing to the requirements of modern building regulations, homes built after 1990 were most likely to be fully visitable (26%). Conversely homes built before 1945 (32%) and those built between 1945 and 1964 (30%) were more likely to have no visitability features, Figure 2.6.

Figure 2.6: Visitability, by dwelling age, 2012



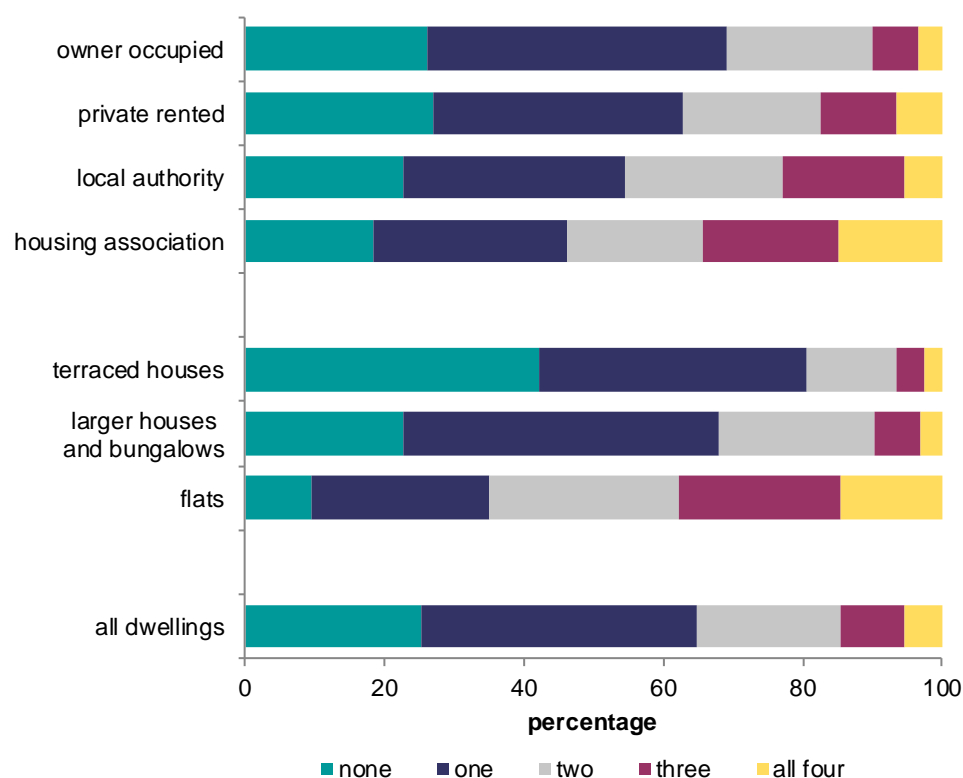
Base: all dwellings

Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 2.9

Source: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

2.19. Housing association homes, which have the highest proportion of the newest homes built after 1990, and flats (15%) were most likely to have full visitability. Overall, local authority homes performed better than those in the private sector. This is most likely due to the higher proportion of purpose built flats within the local authority stock. Terraced houses (42%) and those in the private sector (26-27%) were most likely to have none of the four accessibility features, Figure 2.7.

Figure 2.7: Visitability, by tenure and dwelling type, 2012



Base: all dwellings

Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 2.9

Source: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

2.20. Almost half a million more dwellings were fully visitable in 2012 than in 2007 when around 740,000 (3%) homes contained all four required features. The most marked improvements were among homes built after 1990 where 14% of homes were fully visitable in 2007, rising to 26% in 2012. Full visitability also improved among all flats (9% to 15%) and among privately rented homes (3% to 7%). The proportion of homes with none of the four accessibility features reduced over this period from 27% to 25%, Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Visitability, by tenure, dwelling type and age, 2007 and 2012

all dwellings

	number of visitability features						sample size 2007	sample size 2012
	2007	2012	2007	2012	2007	2012		
	none		1 to 3		all 4			
	<i>percentages</i>							
tenure								
owner occupied	27.4	26.2	70.6	70.2	2.1	3.6	7,893	5,314
private rented	29.4	27.0	68.0	66.3	2.7	6.7	2,369	2,683
local authority	25.8	22.7	69.1	71.7	5.2	5.6	3,635	2,280
housing association	20.1	18.3	67.2	66.7	12.7	15.0	2,320	2,486
dwelling type								
terraced house	43.2	42.3	55.6	55.2	1.2	2.5	4,775	3,679
larger houses and bungalows	22.3	22.6	75.1	74.3	2.6	3.2	7,844	5,680
flats	14.4	9.5	76.2	75.9	9.4	14.6	3,598	3,404
dwelling age								
pre 1945	33.1	32.5	66.1	66.5	0.7	1.0	5,769	4,045
1945-64	31.0	30.5	67.6	68.0	1.4	1.5	3,868	3,044
1965-80	22.5	21.6	74.6	75.7	2.8	2.7	3,855	2,904
1981-90	20.6	23.1	72.6	71.4	6.7	5.5	1,324	1,096
post 1990	10.9	6.8	75.0	67.4	14.1	25.8	1,401	1,674
all dwellings	26.8	25.4	69.8	69.3	3.4	5.3	16,217	12,763

Base: all dwellings

Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 2.9

Sources:

2007: English House Condition Survey, dwelling sample;

2012: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

Difficulty of adapting homes to make them visitable

2.21. In assessing the degree of difficulty in adapting dwellings to provide all four visitability features in 2012, the scope and nature of the work required has been classified into a straightforward four-point scale outlined in Box 2.2. As the findings are very similar for both 2007 and 2012, this analysis examines the most recent position³.

³ The English House Condition Survey 2007 report, Chapter 4, contains more detailed analysis of the 2007 position on a wider range of accessibility features:

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20121108165934/http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/corporate/statistics/ehcs2007annualreport>.

Box 2.2: Scale of difficulty in adapting homes to make them visitable

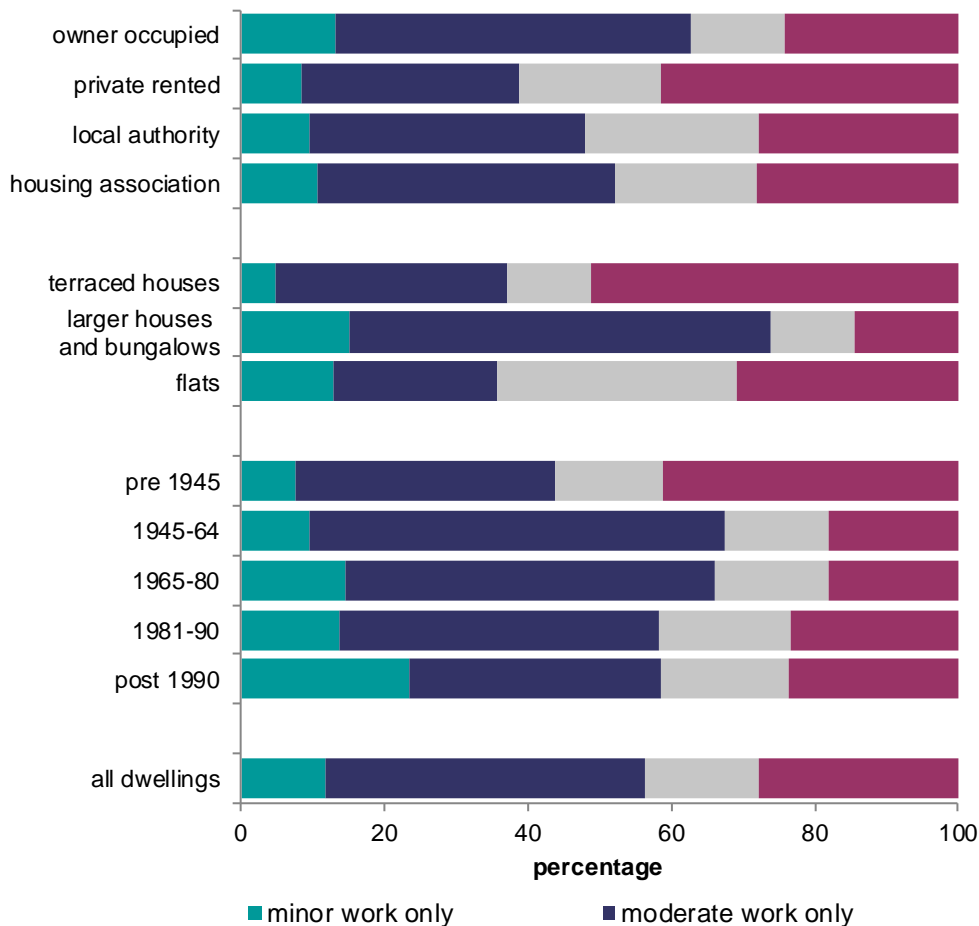
Each dwelling is classified according to the highest degree of difficulty of the required work, for example, if work to provide a flush threshold is minor but providing a WC at ground floor involves building an extension, the dwelling is classed as requiring major works in order to make it fully visitable.

1. **Minor work** - no structural alterations required. Costs likely to be under £1,000. Examples include replacing a door and frame to create a flush threshold or installing a ramp for level access.
2. **Moderate work** - rearrangements of internal space required that will involve removing internal partitions and/or increasing size of doorways. Costs are likely to be in the region of £1,000-£15,000 depending on the size of dwelling and the precise nature of the work. Examples include:
 - internal structural alterations such as using an integral garage, storage cupboard or larder to create a WC at entrance level. This will likely involve partitioning off existing rooms together with associated works to water supplies, wastes and heating.
 - removing some wall partitions (where this does not contravene fire regulations) to create sufficient width for internal doorways or hallways.
3. **Major work** - building extensions required. Works will be in excess of about £15,000 and the precise amount will depend on the size of the extension to be built, the scale of work to water and drainage services and ground conditions. A home, for example, may require an extension for a downstairs WC.
4. **Not feasible** - it is not physically possible to carry out the necessary work. For example, this could be due to the physical impossibility of building an extension or installing a ramp up to the front door.

- 2.22. Of the 21.5 million homes (95%) that were not already fully visitable, around 2.5 million (12%) could comply by carrying out minor work and a further 9.6 million (45%) could comply with moderate work. Visitability could only be achieved in 3.4 million (16%) homes through major (and more problematic) works and a further 6.0 million (28%) homes were considered simply not feasible to make visitable, Annex Table 2.10.

2.23. The relative ease of adaptability varied considerably for different types of homes. Those built after 1990 were much more likely to require only minor works, to make them fully visitable (24%). In contrast, the homes most likely to be classed as not feasible to make fully visitable were terraced houses (51%), privately rented homes (42%) and homes built before 1945 (41%), Figure 2.8.

Figure 2.8: Level of work to provide all four visitability features, by tenure, dwelling type and age, 2012



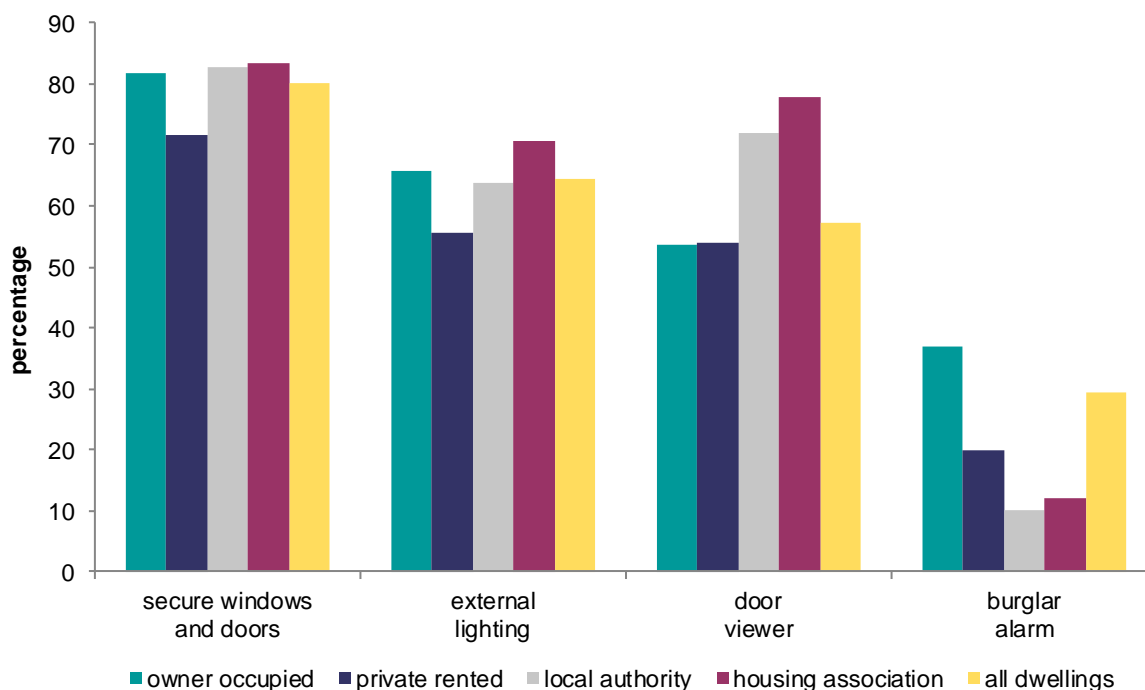
Base: all dwellings that are not currently fully 'visitable'
Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 2.10
Source: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

Security

2.24. This section looks at key security measures present in homes in 2012 and how these varied across tenure. These measures are: security provided by windows and doors (in terms of ease of physically breaking into the dwelling); door viewers; burglar alarms; external lighting; and controlled door entry systems for flats with common areas.

- 2.25. The proportion of homes with secure windows and doors⁴ in 2012, were at similar levels among owner occupied, local authority and housing association homes (82-83%). The presence of this feature was less common among privately rented homes (72%), highlighting the greater potential for improvement in this sector, Figure 2.9.
- 2.26. The proportion of door viewers present within owner occupied and privately rented homes was very similar (54%) but the provision of this security feature was notably higher in housing association (78%) and local authority homes (72%). These findings may be due to many social landlords establishing a door replacement programme, for example, as part of Decent Homes work, Figure 2.9.
- 2.27. A burglar alarm was present in 30% of homes in 2012. This measure was notably higher among owner occupied homes (37%). In contrast just 10% of local authority homes had this security feature, Figure 2.9.
- 2.28. There was a higher proportion of external lighting to private entrances or shared areas for housing association homes (71%) whilst this feature was least likely to be present in the private rented sector (56%). A similar proportion of owner occupied and local authority homes (64-66%) had this feature, Figure 2.9.

Figure 2.9: Security measures, by tenure, 2012



Base: all dwellings

Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 2.11

Source: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

⁴ See Glossary for definition

Controlled entry systems in flats with common areas

- 2.29. There were about 3.5 million flats with shared common areas in 2012 and of these 2.6 million (77%) had a controlled door entry system for additional security. Housing association flats were most likely to benefit from this feature (84%) whilst this feature was less prevalent within the private rented sector (71%), Annex Table 2.12.
- 2.30. Overall, 93% of these door systems were working at the time of the survey. Again this varied by tenure with 90% working in private rented sector compared with 96% for owner occupied homes, Annex Table 2.13.