



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government



English Housing Survey

Social rented sector, 2016-17



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Introduction and main findings

1. The English Housing Survey (EHS) is a national survey of people's housing circumstances and the condition and energy efficiency of housing in England. In its current form, it was first run in 2008-09. Prior to then, the survey was run as two standalone surveys: the English House Condition Survey and the Survey of English Housing. It is one of the longest standing surveys in government, with 2017 marking the 50th anniversary since the first survey in 1967.
2. This report focuses on the social rented sector. It is split into three chapters that explore the landscape of social rented accommodation, that is, housing owned and managed by local authorities and housing associations (sometimes referred to as private registered providers). The first chapter presents the profile of households living in the social rented sector. The second analyses housing costs and affordability, while the third chapter covers housing history and future housing aspirations. Where possible, trends since 1996-97 are explored.

Main findings

The social rented sector is the smallest tenure in England- home to 3.9 million households.

- In 2016-17, the social rented sector accounted for 17% of households in England. It is the smallest tenure in England, after the private rented (20% of all households) and owner occupied sectors (63% of all households). The size of the sector has not changed much in the last decade, but has declined over the longer term.

The composition of the social sector has changed in recent years, with more households now renting from housing associations than local authorities.

- In 2008-09, the social rented sector accounted for 18% of households with 9% (2.0 million) renting from housing associations and 9% (1.9 million) renting from local authorities. In 2016-17, 10% (2.4 million) rented from housing associations, 7% (1.6 million) from local authorities.

Because of the way that social housing is allocated, the sector houses more vulnerable groups than other sectors.

- 50% of households in the social rented sector had at least one member with a long-term illness or disability. This is noticeably higher than in other tenures: 29% of owner occupier households and 23% of private renter households fell into this category.
- The social rented sector also has a higher proportion of lone parents than other sectors; and three quarters (75%) of social renters were in the two lowest income

quintiles (43% of private renters and 29% of owner occupiers were in the lowest two income quintiles).

Over the last decade, the proportion of social renters in work has increased

- In 2016-17, 43% of social renters were working: 29% in full-time work; 13% in part-time work. In 2006-07, 31% of social renters were in work (22% in full-time work; 9% in part-time work).

Overcrowding is more prevalent in the social rented sector, and has increased in the last 20 years. Under-occupation is less prevalent and has decreased.

- In 2016-17, 7% of households in the social rented sector (268,000) and 5% of the private rented sector (231,000) were living in overcrowded accommodation. Just 1% of owner occupied households (183,000) were overcrowded.
- Between 1996-97 and 2016-17, the proportion of social renters living in overcrowded accommodation increased from 5% to 7%.
- In 2016-17, 8% of social rented households (314,000), 15% of private rented households (694,000) and half (51%) of owner occupied households (7.3 million) were under-occupied.
- While under-occupation among owner occupiers increased between 2006-07 and 2016-17 (from 47% to 51%), over the same period under-occupation decreased in the rented sectors (from 17% to 15% in the private rented sector and from 11% to 8% in the social rented sector).

Most social renters are satisfied with their accommodation and with the way their landlord carries out repairs. However, levels of satisfaction are generally lower than in other tenures.

- While the majority of households were satisfied with their accommodation, social renters had lower levels of satisfaction (81% were very or fairly satisfied) than private renters (84%) and owner occupiers (95%).
- Social renters were the least satisfied with how the landlord carried out repairs and maintenance, with 66% of social renters either very or fairly satisfied compared with 72% of private renters.

While social renters spend a lower proportion of their income on rent than private renters, they are more likely to be in arrears.

- On average, social renters spent 28% of their household income (including Housing Benefit) on their rent (compared with 34% of household income for private renters).
- In 2016-17, 25% of social renters were either currently in rent arrears or had been in arrears in the last year, up from 14% in 1996-97. For private renters, 9%

were either currently in rent arrears or had been in arrears in the last year in 2016-17, up from 7% in 1996-97.

The proportion of social renters who expect to buy has continued to increase.

- In 2016-17, 30% of social renters (1.2 million households) stated that they expected to buy a property at some point in the future.
- While this is lower than the proportion of private renters who expect to buy (60%), the proportion of social renters who expected to buy increased from 27% to 30% between 2015-16 and 2016-17.

Acknowledgements and further queries

3. Each year the English Housing Survey relies on the contributions of a large number of people and organisations. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) would particularly like to thank the following people and organisations, without whom the 2016-17 survey and this report would not have been possible: all the households who gave up their time to take part in the survey, NatCen Social Research, the Building Research Establishment (BRE) and CADS Housing Surveys.
4. This report was produced by Hollie Jones and Aimee Huchet-Bodet at NatCen Social Research in partnership with researchers at MHCLG.
5. If you have any queries about this report, would like any further information or have suggestions for analyses you would like to see included in future EHS reports, please contact ehs@communities.gsi.gov.uk.
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Social rented sector



Vulnerable groups

The sector houses more vulnerable groups than other sectors



50% of households had at least one member with a **long-term illness or disability**



24% of households were **lone parent families**

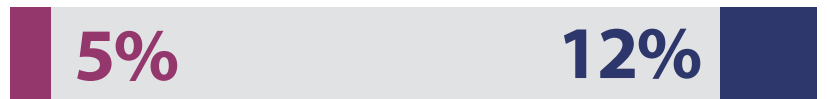


75% of households were in the **two lowest income quintiles**

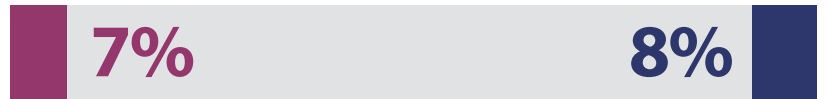
Overcrowding and under-occupation

Overcrowding has increased in the last 20 years, while under-occupation has decreased

1996-97



2016-17



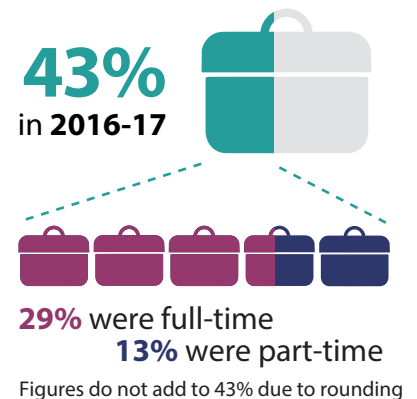
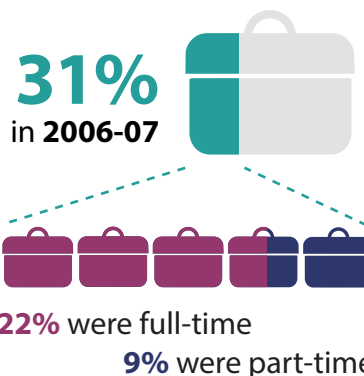
Expectation to buy

The proportion of social renters who expect to buy has continued to increase



Work

Over the last decade, the proportion of social renters in work has increased



Chapter 1

Profile of social renters

- 1.1 This chapter presents the profile of the people living in the social rented sector, i.e. renting their homes from either a housing association or a local authority. Wherever possible comparisons are made over time and with households living in other tenures, and especially with those renting in the private sector.
- 1.2 In 2016-17, the social rented sector consisted of 3.9 million households, or 17% of all households in England. The size of the sector has not changed much in the last decade, but has declined over the longer term.
- 1.3 The social rented sector is the smallest tenure in England, after the private rented (20% of all households) and owner occupied sectors (63% of all households).
- 1.4 The composition of the social sector has changed in recent years. In 2008-09, the social rented sector accounted for 18% of households with 9% (2.0 million) renting from housing associations and 9% (1.9 million) renting from local authorities. In 2016-17, 10% (2.4 million) rented from housing associations, 7% (1.6 million) from local authorities¹.

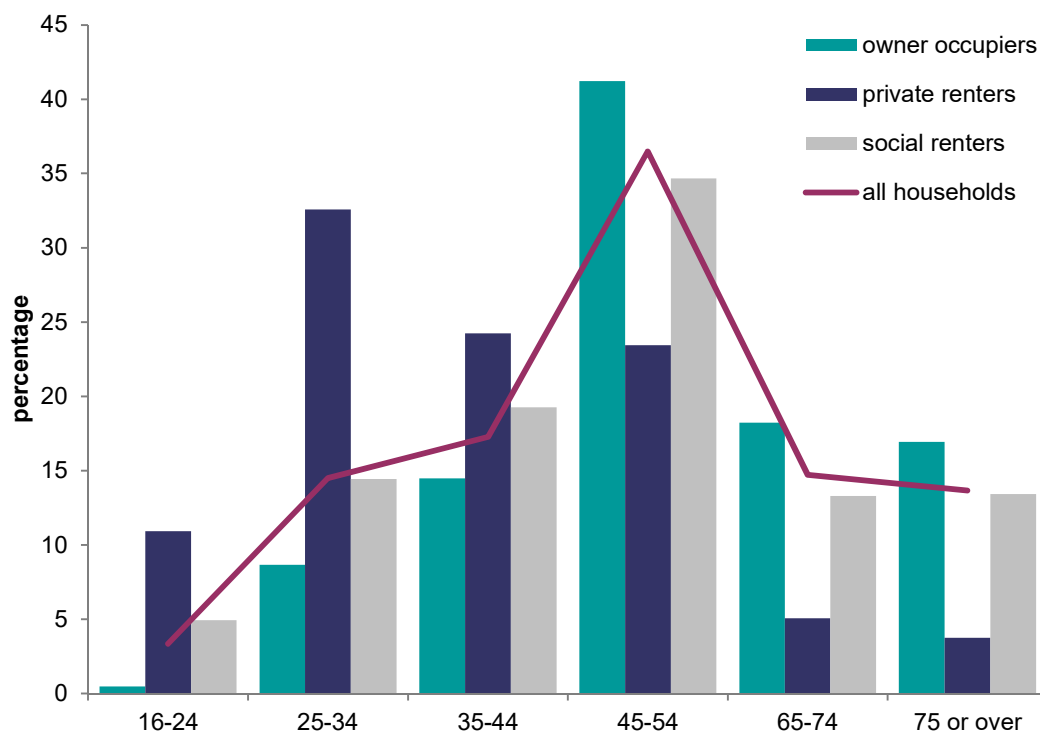
Age

- 1.5 Social renters tend to be older than private renters and slightly younger than owner occupiers. In 2016-17, the average age for household reference persons (HRPs)² in the social rented sector was 52 years old, compared to 40 years old for private renters and 57 years old for owner occupiers.
- 1.6 In 2016-17, the most prevalent age group in the social rented sector were households with a HRP aged 45-64 (35%). This was also the case 20 years ago, though the proportion has increased (in 1996-97, 25% of social renters were aged 45-64 years), Annex Table 1.1.

¹ English Housing Survey, 2016-17 Headline report, Annex Table 1.1.

² In the social rented sector, the HRP is the 'householder' in whose name the accommodation is rented. See the glossary for further information.

Figure 1.1: Age of HRP, by tenure, 2016-17



Base: all households

Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 1.1

Source: English Housing Survey, full household sample

Sex

- 1.7 In 2016-17, 58% of households in the social rented sector had a female HRP. This is higher than in other tenures; 42% of private rented sector households and 37% of owner occupied households had a female HRP. This is unsurprising as lower incomes and lone parenting – both of which are more prevalent among women – mean women are generally more likely to be eligible for social housing which is allocated on the basis of need.
- 1.8 This pattern was also replicated in 2006-07, when 55% of HRPs in the social rented sector were women. In 1996-97, 45% of social renting HRPs were female. While this is likely in part due to how the HRP was previously defined, the proportion of female HRPs in the social rented sector in 1996-97 was still considerably higher than either the private rented sector (28%) or owner occupiers (19%), Annex Table 1.2.

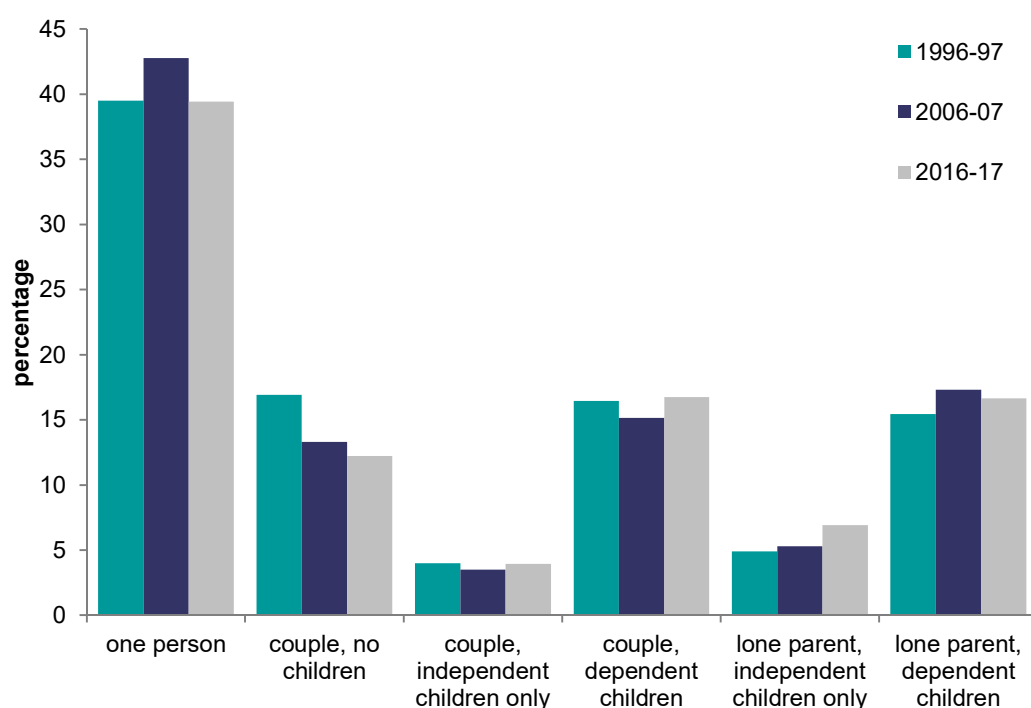
Household type and size

- 1.9 Due to the way social housing is allocated, the profile of the social rented sector differs from other tenures in terms of household types. People living on

their own (single person households) and lone parents were more prevalent among social renters than among owner occupiers and private renters.

- 1.10 Single person households continued to be the largest household type for social renters, as was the case in 1996-97 and 2006-07. In 2016-17, 39% of all social rented households were single person households, compared with 26% of owner occupied and 27% of private rented sector households. There was a slight decrease in the proportion of single person households in the social rented sector over the last 10 years, from 43% in 2006-07.
- 1.11 There was no change between 2006-07 and 2016-17 in the prevalence of social renters who were couples with dependent children, independent children only, or lone parents with dependent children, Figure 1.2.

Figure 1.2: Household types among social renters, 1996-97, 2006-07 and 2016-17



Base: all social renters

Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 1.3

Sources:

1996-97 and 2006-07: Survey of English Housing;

2016-17: English Housing Survey, full household sample

- 1.12 Over the last 20 years the proportion of lone parents with independent children only has increased among social renters, from 5% in 1996-97 and 2006-07 to 7% in 2016-17. Over the same period, the proportion of social renters who were couples with no children decreased from 17% to 12%, Annex Table 1.3.

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- 1.13 While single person households were the most prevalent household type in the social rented sector, there were on average 2.3 individuals per social home. This was similar to the average number of individuals living in other tenures, with an average of 2.5 individuals in the private rented and 2.4 individuals for owner occupiers³.

Economic activity

- 1.14 In 2016-17, 43% of social renters were working: 29% in full-time work; 13% in part-time work⁴. Over the last two decades, the proportion of social renters in work increased from 30% in 1996-97 to 31% in 2006-07, then to 43% in 2016-17⁵. The proportion of social renters who were economically inactive increased from 23% in 1996-97 to 28% in 2006-07 and then decreased to 21% in 2016-17⁶.
- 1.15 The proportion of social renters who were in full-time education or unemployed did not change between 2006-07 and 2016-17. However, between 1996-97 and 2006-07 there was an increase in the proportion of social renters in full-time education and a decrease in those who were unemployed.
- 1.16 Despite the increase in the proportion of social renters in work, the employment rate of social renters remains lower than other tenures. Nearly three quarters (74%) of private renters and 61% of owner occupiers were in full or part-time work in 2016-17⁷, Annex Table 1.4.

NS-SEC (National statistical socio-economic classification)⁸

- 1.17 The profile of social renters in terms of economic activity was reflected in the NS-SEC composition of the group. In 2016-17, 56% of social renters were in routine and semi-routine occupations. In comparison, 29% of private renters and 18% of owner occupiers were in these categories. Only 2% of social renters were in higher managerial or professional occupations, compared to 15% of private renters and 20% of owner occupiers.
- 1.18 Between 2006-07 and 2016-17, there was an increase in social renters who were small employers and own account workers (6% to 8%). There was also an increase in social renters in lower managerial and professional

³ See Live Table FA1211 for number of people living in household by tenure, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/tenure-trends-and-cross-tenure-analysis>

⁴ Figures do not sum to 43% due to rounding

⁵ Samples include those not of working age

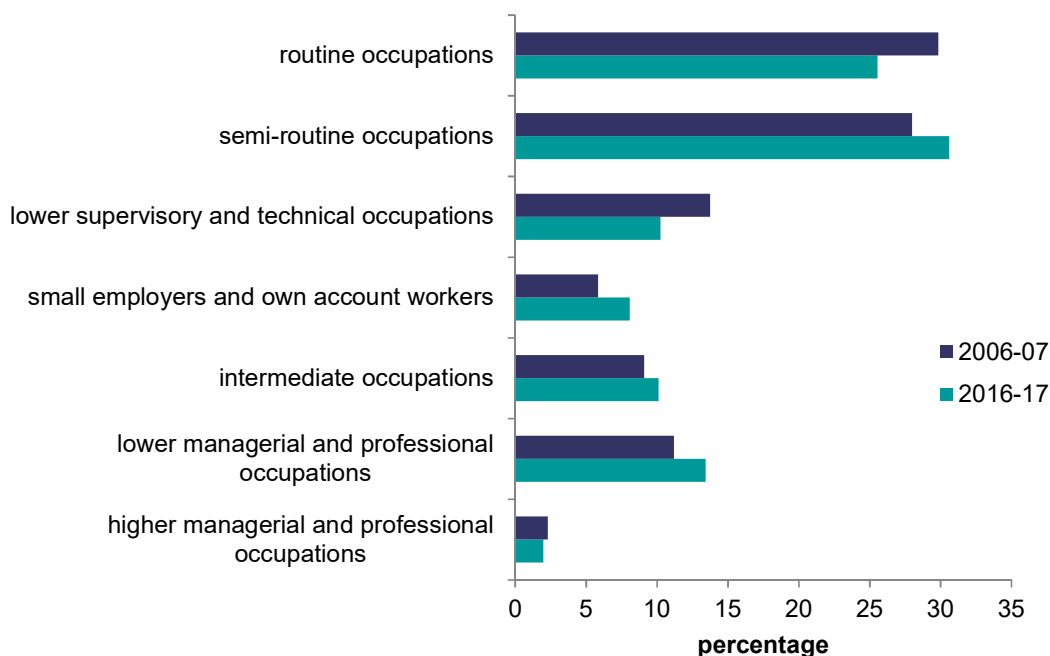
⁶ This group includes people who were permanently sick or disabled, those looking after the family or home and in any other activity

⁷ English Housing Survey, 2016-17 Headline report, Annex Table 1.3.

⁸ See the glossary for further information.

occupations (from 11% in 2006-07 to 13% in 2016-17), Figure 1.3 and Annex Table 1.5.

Figure 1.3: NS-SEC of HRPs in the social rented sector, 2006-07 and 2016-17



Base: all social renters

Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 1.5

Sources:

2006-07: Survey of English Housing;

2016-17: English Housing Survey, full household sample

Income

1.19 In 2016-17, the average (mean) gross weekly income of social renters was £403. This was lower than the average income of private renters (£696) and owner occupiers (£884)⁹.

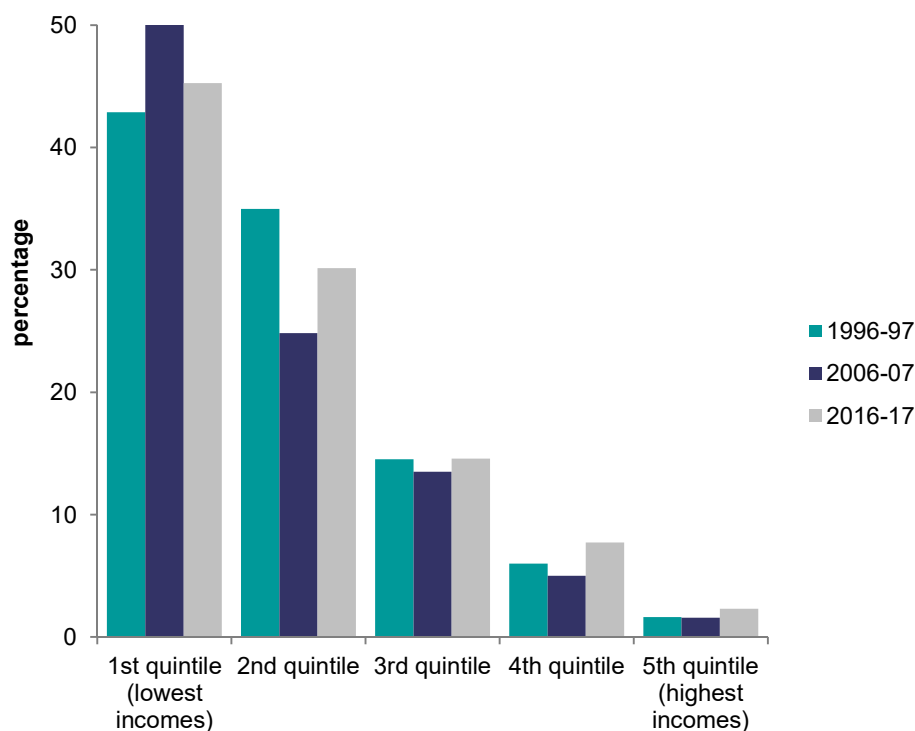
1.20 All households in the EHS sample are divided into five equal groups based on their income (i.e. those in the bottom 20%, the next 20% and so on). These groups are known as quintiles. This division more easily allows us to compare the relationship between income and other characteristics of home owners.

1.21 In 2016-17, three quarters (75%) of social renters were in the two lowest income quintiles. This is a higher proportion than in other tenures; 43% of private renters and 29% of owner occupiers were in the lowest two quintiles.

⁹ See Live Table FA1341 for gross weekly income of household by tenure, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/tenure-trends-and-cross-tenure-analysis>

1.22 While this was also the case in 2006-07, the distribution of social renters between these two quintiles has changed. In 2016-17, 45% of social renters were in the lowest income quintile, down from 55% in 2006-07. Meanwhile, the proportion in the second quintile increased from 25% to 30%. Whilst there was an apparent increase in the proportion of social renters in the highest income quintile between 2006-07 and 2016-17, this was not statistically significant, Figure 1.4 and Annex Table 1.6.

Figure 1.4: Weekly gross HRP and partner income (quintiles), social renters, 1996-97, 2006-07 and 2016-17



Base: all social renters

Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 1.6

Sources:

1996-97 and 2006-07: Survey of English Housing;

2016-17: English Housing Survey, full household sample

Long-term illness and disability

1.23 Half (50%) of households in the social rented sector had someone in the household with a long-term illness or disability. This is compared to 29% of owners and 23% of private renters. The proportion of households in the social rented sector who had someone with a disability or long-term illness did not increase between 2006-07 and 2016-17, Annex Table 1.7.

Ethnicity and nationality

1.24 The majority (82%) of households in the social rented sector had a white HRP. Compared with households renting from a local authority, households renting from a housing association were more likely to have a white HRP (85% compared with 78%), Annex Table 1.8.

1.25 The majority (91%) of social renters were UK or Irish nationals, with a higher proportion of UK or Irish nationals renting from housing associations than local authorities (93% compared to 88%), Annex Table 1.9.

ACORN

- 1.26 Using the ACORN classification of neighbourhoods¹⁰, half (50%) of all social renters were living in neighbourhoods considered to be in 'urban adversity'. This is higher than in other tenures: 22% of private renters and 9% of owner occupiers fell into this category. There were also more local authority renters living in 'urban adversity' (54%) than housing association renters (47%).
- 1.27 Over a third (37%) of social renters were living in 'financially stretched' neighbourhoods, a higher proportion than both owner occupiers (16%) and private renters (22%).
- 1.28 At the other end of the ACORN classification scale, only 2% of social renters were living in neighbourhoods of 'affluent achievers' compared with 13% of private renters and 32% of owner occupiers.
- 1.29 Among social renters, local authority and housing association tenants had a slightly different ACORN profile. For example, 3% of those living in local authority properties lived in areas classed as 'rising to prosperity' compared to 5% of those in housing association homes. Meanwhile, 4% of local authority households lived in areas classed as 'comfortable communities' compared to 7% of housing association households, Annex Table 1.10.

Overcrowding and under-occupation

- 1.30 Levels of overcrowding and under-occupation are measured using the bedroom standard (see glossary). This is the difference between the number of bedrooms needed to avoid undesirable sharing (given the number, ages and relationship of the household members) and the number of bedrooms actually available to the household.
- 1.31 Since the number of overcrowded households included in each survey year is too small to enable reliable overcrowding estimates for any single year, data from the three most recent survey years were combined to produce the overcrowding estimates in this section.
- 1.32 Overcrowding was more prevalent in the rented sectors than in the owner occupied sector. In 2016-17, 7% of households in the social rented sector (268,000) and 5% of the private rented sector (231,000) were living in overcrowded accommodation. Just 1% of owner occupied households (183,000) were overcrowded.

¹⁰ See the glossary for further information.

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- 1.33 Between 1996-97 and 2016-17, the proportion of social renters living in overcrowded accommodation increased from 5% to 7%.¹¹
- 1.34 In contrast, under-occupation – where a household has two or more spare bedrooms – was more prevalent amongst owner occupiers than renters. In 2016-17, half (51%) of owner occupied households (7.3 million) were under-occupied compared with 8% of social rented households (314,000) and 15% of private rented households (694,000).
- 1.35 While under-occupation among owner occupiers increased between 2006-07 and 2016-17 (from 47% to 51%), over the same period under-occupation decreased in the rented sectors (from 17% to 15% in the private rented sector and from 11% to 8% in the social rented sector)¹².

Satisfaction with current accommodation, with repairs and maintenance, and status as a social renter

- 1.36 In general, the majority of households were satisfied with their accommodation. However, social renters had lower levels of satisfaction (81% very or fairly satisfied) than private renters (84%) and owner occupiers (95%)¹³.
- 1.37 Social renters were the least satisfied with how the landlord carried out repairs and maintenance, with 66% of social renters either very or fairly satisfied compared with 72% of private renters¹⁴.
- 1.38 The most common reasons social renters were dissatisfied with the way their landlord dealt with repairs and maintenance were because the landlord was slow to get things done (28%), the landlord does the bare minimum (22%), and the landlord does not bother (19%). These were also the main reasons that private renters and owner occupiers were dissatisfied¹⁵, albeit in a slightly different order, Annex Table 1.11.
- 1.39 Since 2006-07, there has been no change in the proportion of social renters expressing satisfaction or dissatisfaction with how their landlord carries out repairs¹⁶.

¹¹ English Housing Survey, 2016-17 Headline report, Annex Table 1.20.

¹² English Housing Survey, 2016-17 Headline report, Annex Table 1.21.

¹³ See Live Table FA5401 for satisfaction with accommodation, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/attitudes-and-satisfaction>

¹⁴ See Live Table FA5423 for satisfaction with the way the landlord carries out repairs and maintenance, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/attitudes-and-satisfaction>

¹⁵ Owner occupiers that were leaseholders were asked about their satisfaction with how the freeholder carries out repairs.

¹⁶ See Live Table FT5421 for trend in satisfaction with the way the landlord carries out repairs and maintenance, by tenure, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/attitudes-and-satisfaction>

1.40 When renters were asked if they thought the housing services provided by their landlord had changed in the last two years, 71% of social renters said that housing services had not changed much, 14% reported that services had got better, while 15% reported that services had got worse, Annex Table 1.13.

Chapter 2

Housing costs and affordability

2.1 This chapter explores housing costs and affordability for the social rented sector by looking at average incomes, average rents and then calculating the average proportion of household income spent on rent. It also examines how easy or difficult social renters find it to pay their rent, receipt of Housing Benefit, whether they had been in arrears during the previous year, the reasons for arrears and any savings they had. Some comparative information is provided for households in other tenures. Where possible, trends since 1996-97 are also explored.

Income

2.2 For the purposes of analysing income, two measures are used. The first is 'joint' income – the combined income of the HRP and their partner (where applicable). The second measure is household income, which takes into account the income of all adults in the household. For both measures it is not known which members of the household contribute to the rent or mortgage. For the household measure, it is assumed that all household members contribute to the rent or mortgage; for the HRP and partner measure, it is assumed that only the HRP and partner contribute.

2.3 In 2016-17, the average weekly joint income for social renters was £354. The average weekly household income was £403. As expected, this was lower than private renters' and owner occupiers' average weekly joint income (£617 and £824 respectively).

2.4 There was no significant difference between the mean weekly household income of those renting from a local authority (£397) compared to a housing association (£407), Annex Table 2.1.

Rent

2.5 In 2016-17, the average (mean) total weekly rent excluding the cost of services for social renters was £102. Social renters who rented from housing associations paid slightly more: £105 compared with £97 for local authority renters. In comparison, private renters paid an average of £192 per week, Annex Table 2.2.

Proportion of income spent on rent

- 2.6 This section examines the relative average affordability of the social rented sector compared with other tenures, and whether it has changed over time. To do this, a simple measure of housing affordability was created by calculating the average proportion of gross weekly income spent on rent payments. Housing-related costs such as energy bills and insurance are not included in the calculation.
- 2.7 The affordability measure looks at housing costs as a proportion of gross income to give an indication of relative affordability across tenures. Housing costs as a proportion of households' net income will differ from the figures presented here, and the proportion would be higher. In addition, this measure includes any Housing Benefit received. However, as Housing Benefit is often paid directly to landlords, the income measures will include an amount specifically designated for housing costs in the case of recipients of Housing Benefit. Therefore, the income measure presented in this chapter should not be interpreted as how much actual income households have to spend, but rather as an indicative measure of the average affordability.
- 2.8 Overall, when looking at joint income, social renters spent 41% of their income on housing costs (excluding Housing Benefit). When Housing Benefit is included, this proportion decreases to 31%. For household income, these proportions are 37% and 28% respectively, Annex Table 2.3.
- 2.9 The proportion of joint income (excluding Housing Benefit) spent on housing costs increased between 1996-97 and 2006-07, from 41% to 45%, and has decreased in the last 10 years to 41%. When Housing Benefit was included, there was no significant difference over time, Annex Table 2.3. It is not possible to examine how the proportion of household income has changed over the last 20 years as household income data were not collected in 1996-97 and 2006-07.

London/elsewhere in England

- 2.10 Social renters in London spent a higher proportion of their household income on rent than social renters elsewhere in England. Looking at household income excluding Housing Benefit, those in London spent an average of 46% of their income on rent, compared with 35% spent by social renters elsewhere in England. When taking Housing Benefit into account this difference was less pronounced, though those in London still paid more (33% compared with 27%), Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1: Rent as a proportion of household income, London and elsewhere in England, 2016-17



Base: all social renters

Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 2.3

Sources: English Housing Survey, full household sample

2.11 As expected, the proportion of joint income (excluding Housing Benefit) spent on rent was also higher for social renters in London than elsewhere in England (52% compared with 38%). When including Housing Benefit, however, there was no significant difference between London and elsewhere in England.

2.12 Social renters in London also paid a higher proportion of their joint income on rent than the rest of England in 1996-97 and 2006-07. This was the case when Housing Benefit were included or excluded, Annex Table 2.3.

Household type

2.13 When examining the proportion of household income (excluding Housing Benefit) spent on rent by household type, single person households spent the highest proportion of their income on housing costs (51%). Lone parents with dependent children spent 39% of their household income on rent, compared with all other groups where housing costs accounted for 18% to 29% of household income.

2.14 As you might expect, the proportion of income spent by couples with dependent children was higher when Housing Benefit was excluded (23 % of joint income excluding Housing Benefit, compared to 20% when Housing Benefit included. For household income these figures were 22% and 19%).

2.15 Similarly, when comparing couples with dependent children to lone parents with dependent children (excluding Housing Benefit) the latter group paid

more of their joint income on rent (23% for couples with dependent children and 41% for lone parents with dependent children). This is unsurprising given the additional income of the second person in a couple with dependent children. When Housing Benefit is taken into account, these figures were 31% for lone parents and 20% for couples, Annex Table 2.3.

Ability to pay rent

- 2.16 All renters and shared owners were asked how easy or difficult they found it to pay their rent. Over two thirds (68%) of social renters reported that it was easy to pay their rent; much the same as the proportion of private renters who found it easy to pay their rent (69%). Most (97%) shared owners found it easy.
- 2.17 The apparent difference between the proportion of social renters who found it easy to pay their rent between 2006-07 and 2016-17 is not statistically significant, Annex Table 2.4.
- 2.18 Not surprisingly, social renters in full-time work were less likely to find it difficult to afford their rent than those who were unemployed – 29% of those in full-time employment found it difficult to afford their rent, compared to 54% of those who were unemployed, Annex Table 2.5.

Housing Benefit¹⁷

- 2.19 In 2016-17, 59% of households in the social rented sector received Housing Benefit, down from 65% in 1996-97. Of those social renters who receive Housing Benefit, just over half (51%) said that it fully covers their rent. Data on this are not available for 1996-97 or 2006-07, Annex Table 2.6.
- 2.20 Of social renters receiving Housing Benefit, 36% were in full-time or part-time work, 31% were retired, and 23% were economically inactive, Annex Table 2.7.

Rent arrears

- 2.21 In 2016-17, 25% of social renters were either currently in rent arrears or had been in arrears in the last year, up from 14% in 1996-97. A lower proportion of private renters were either currently in rent arrears or had been in arrears in the last year (9%, up from 7% in 1996-97), Annex Table 2.8.

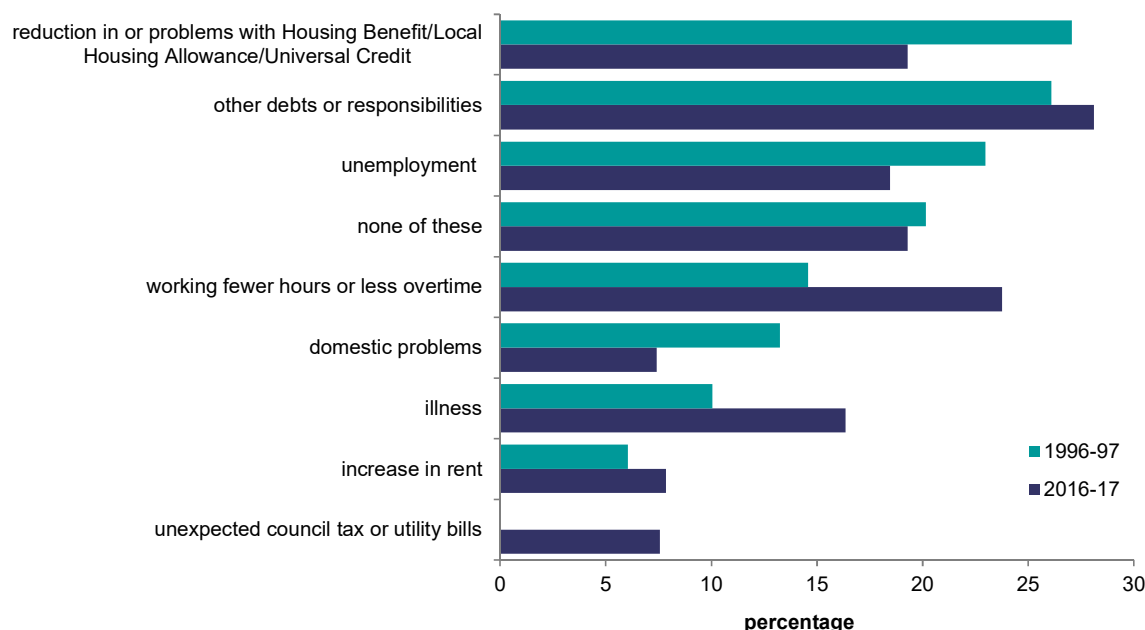
¹⁷ The figures for social renters who received Housing Benefit also include individuals who received Universal Credit. This is due to small sample sizes for the latter group until the programme is fully rolled out across England.

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- 2.22 Social renters in London were no more likely to be in arrears than social renters outside of London, Annex Table 2.9.
- 2.23 Social renters in receipt of Housing Benefit were more likely to be in arrears or to have been in arrears in the last year than those not in receipt of Housing Benefit (30% compared with 21%).
- 2.24 When looking at the proportion of social renters in receipt of Housing Benefit who were currently in rent arrears, 33% were in part-time work, 29% were economically inactive and 19% were unemployed. One in ten (10%) were in full-time work, Annex Table 2.7
- 2.25 Lone parents were more likely to be in arrears than other household types; 42% of lone parents with dependent children were either currently in arrears or had been in the last 12 months. Couples without children were the least likely to be in arrears (11% were either currently in arrears or had been in the last 12 months).
- 2.26 Younger social renters were more likely to be in arrears than older social renters. For example, 6% of those aged 65-74 were either currently in arrears or had been in the last year, compared with 38% of those aged 16-24, Annex Table 2.9.
- 2.27 Apparent differences in the proportion of social renters in each income quintile that were in arrears or had been in the last year were not statistically significant.

Reasons for arrears

- 2.28 For social renters, the most frequently cited reasons for being in rent arrears were other debts or responsibilities (28%), or working fewer hours/less overtime (24%). Meanwhile, 19% of social renters said they had fallen into arrears due to reduction in or problems with Housing Benefit, local housing allowance or universal credit, Annex Table 2.10.
- 2.29 In 1996-97, 27% of social renters said their arrears were due to problems with Housing Benefit, 26% said it was due to other debts and responsibilities, and 23% due to unemployment. Social renters who were in rent arrears due to working fewer hours or less overtime showed the biggest increase from 1996-97 (15%) to 2016-17 (24%), Figure 2.2.

Figure 2.2: Reasons for rent arrears in the social rented sector, 1996-97 and 2016-17



Base: all social renters who pay rent and who were in arrears or had been in the last year

Notes:

1) underlying data are shown in Annex Table 2.10 and 2.11

2) 'unexpected council tax or utility bills' was not a response option in 1996-97

Sources:

1996-97: Survey of English Housing;

2016-17: English Housing Survey, full household sample

2.30 Among those social renters who said they were in arrears due to a reduction in or problems with Housing Benefit, local housing allowance or universal credit, 27% had problems with the new benefit system/caps and 25% had problems with delays. A further 45% said their benefits had been 'reduced for other reasons' not mentioned in the question, Annex Table 2.12.

Savings

2.31 Compared with owner occupiers and private renters, social renters were least likely to have savings. In 2016-17, 18% of social renters had savings or investments, compared with 67% of owner occupiers and 36% of private renters, Annex Table 2.13.

2.32 When they did have savings, social renters tended to have lower amounts saved. Among social renters with savings, 51% had savings of less than £5,000, compared with 33% of private renters and 16% of owner occupiers.

2.33 Higher levels of savings were also less common among social renters than for other tenures: substantial savings of £16,000 or more were reported by 19% of social renters, 30% of private renters and 59% of owner occupiers, Annex Table 2.14.

Chapter 3

Housing history and future aspirations

3.1 This chapter explores the housing history of social renters, as well as their future housing aspirations, and describes the circumstances under which people enter and leave the social rented sector. Comparisons over time give an insight on the changing profile of the social rented sector over the last 20 years. Where relevant, comparisons are also made with the private rented sector to provide additional contextual information.

Length of time in the social rented sector and in current accommodation

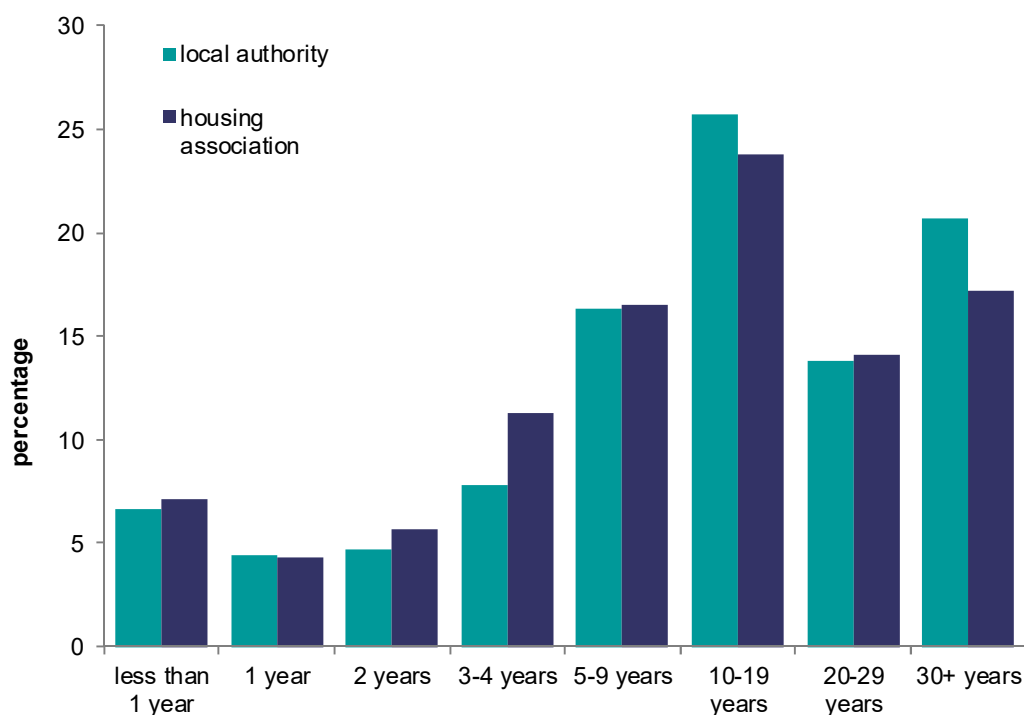
3.2 On average, social renters have lived in the social rented sector for longer than private renters have lived in the private rented sector. For example, more than half (57%) of social renters had lived in the social rented sector for 10 or more years while 27% of private renters have lived in the private rented sector for 10 or more years¹⁸.

3.3 Local authority tenants tend to have lived in the social rented sector for longer than housing association tenants: 21% of local authority tenants have been in the social rented sector for 30 years or longer compared to 17% of housing association tenants. This is perhaps not surprising since the newest dwellings – which are therefore more likely to be rented by newcomers in the sector – were mostly owned by housing associations¹⁹, Annex Table 3.1 and Figure 3.1.

¹⁸ English Housing Survey, 2016-17 Headline report, Annex Table 1.18.

¹⁹ English Housing Survey, 2016-17 Headline report, Annex Table 2.1.

Figure 3.1: Number of years in the social rented sector, 2016-17



Base: all social renters

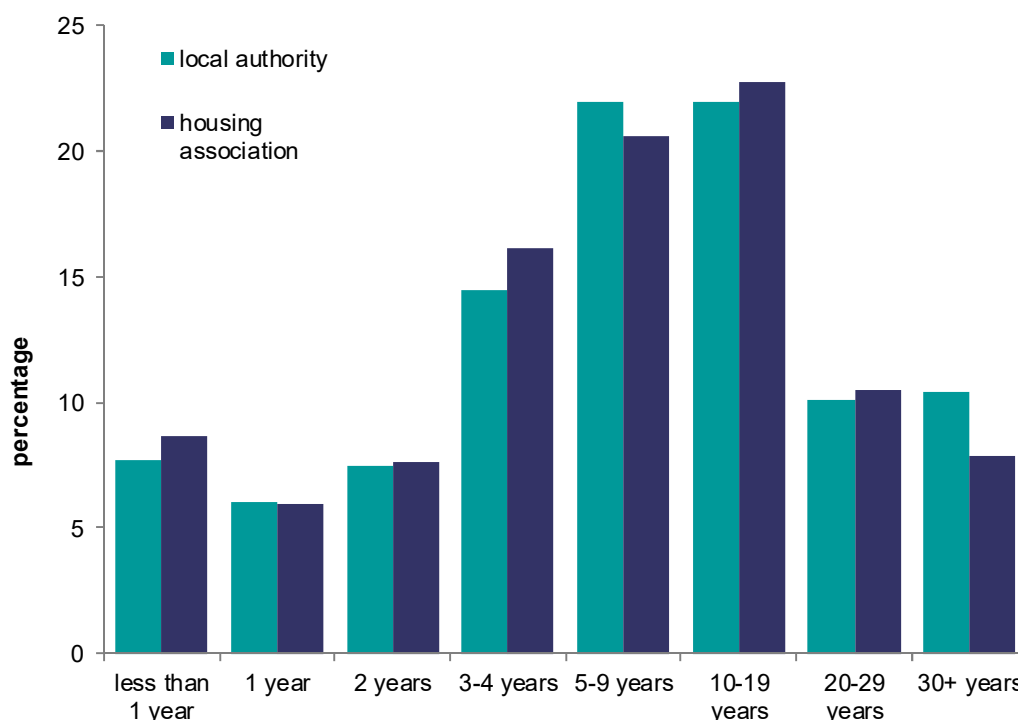
Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 3.1

Source: **English Housing Survey, full household sample**

- 3.4 Social renters were more likely than private renters to have lived in their current dwelling for a longer time. Social renters had lived at their current address for an average of 11.3 years, while for private renters the average length of residence was 3.9 years¹¹.
- 3.5 Households renting from local authorities had, on average, been living in their current home for longer than those renting from a housing association (12.0 years on average for local authority tenants compared with 10.8 years for housing association tenants)²⁰.

²⁰ English Housing Survey, 2016-17 Headline report, Annex Table 1.17.

Figure 3.2: Number of years in current home, social rented sector, 2016-17



Base: all social renters

Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 3.2

Source: English Housing Survey, full household sample

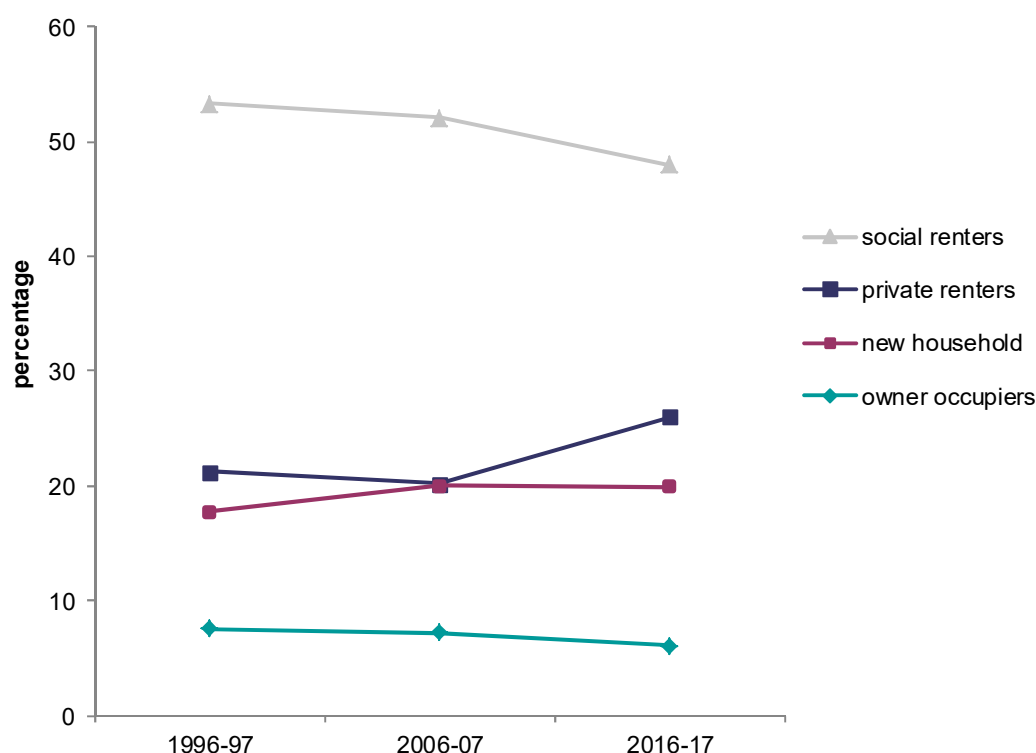
Household moves

- 3.6 The social rented sector is the tenure with the fewest household moves. In 2016-17, 326,000 households in the social rented sector had moved home in the previous 12 months. Some of these were previously living in another social rented dwelling while others had moved into the tenure. By way of comparison, there were 625,000 households moving into the owner occupier sector and about 1.2 million into the private rented sector²¹.
- 3.7 Almost half (48%) of moves in the social rented sector were internal, with 156,000 households moving within the sector. Moves between local authorities and housing associations were very limited and are not discussed in this report. By comparison, internal moves within the private rented sector accounted for 72% of all the moves in this sector¹².
- 3.8 In 2016-17, 65,000 new households entered the social rented sector, accounting for 20% of the households who recently moved in this tenure. By comparison, 149,000 new households entered the private rented sector (13% of the households who recently moved in this tenure).

²¹ English Housing Survey, 2016-17 Headline report, Annex Table 1.19.

- 3.9 In the last 20 years, the number of moves into and within the social rented sector has almost halved. In 1996-97, there were 598,000 moves into and within the social rented sector, down to 397,000 in 2006-07 and down again to 326,000 in 2016-17.
- 3.10 The proportion of households moving into the social rented sector from the private rented sector decreased from 21% of all movers into the social rented sector in 1996-97 (127,000 households) to 20% in 2006-07 (80,000 households) before increasing slightly to 26% in 2016-17 (85,000 households), Figure 3.3 and Annex Table 3.3.

Figure 3.3: Previous tenure of recent movers in the social rented sector, 1996-97, 2006-07 and 2016-17



Base: social renters resident in their dwelling for less than a year

Notes: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 3.3

Sources:

1996-97 and 2006-07: Survey of English Housing;

2016-17: English Housing Survey, full household sample

Homelessness

- 3.11 Among current social renters, 438,000 people (HRPs or their partners) said they had contacted the council in the last few years because they were homeless or about to become homeless. As a result of contacting the council, 84% (367,000) formally asked the council to consider them as homeless; 73%

(267,000) of these were accepted as homeless. We do not know the tenure of the individual at the time they contacted the council, Annex Table 3.4.²²

Reasons for moving and for considering moving

- 3.12 Social and private renters indicated different reasons for moving home²³, reflecting the different demographic and socio-economic profiles of each tenure. Social renters were, for example, more likely than private renters to mention family or personal reasons (15% of social renters mentioned it as their main reason for moving compared to 6% of private renters). However, private renters were more likely than social renters to say that they moved to start living together as a couple (5% of private renters compared to 1% of social renters).
- 3.13 Private renters were more likely to mention job-related reasons for moving than social renters (mentioned as the main reason by 16% of private renters compared with 2% of social renters). This difference is perhaps not surprising considering that 74% of private renters were in employment (full or part-time) compared to 43% of social renters²⁴.
- 3.14 Having a larger house/flat was mentioned as the main reason for moving by both social and private renters (it was the main reason for 11% of social renters and for 13% of private renters). This is consistent with the fact that 7% of social renters (268,000 households) and 5% of private renters (231,000 households) lived in overcrowded dwellings in 2016-17.²⁵
- 3.15 A small but significant proportion of all renters said they moved because they were evicted from their previous accommodation. This was the main reason to move for 8% of social renters and for 10% of private renters, Annex Table 3.5.
- 3.16 The proportion of households reporting being evicted has remained stable since 1996-97. As this question has changed (some response options were added and combined over the years)²⁶ analysis over time should be interpreted with caution, Annex Table 3.6.
- 3.17 Social renters were also asked if there were any reasons for which they had considered moving in the previous 12 months, choosing their answers from a list of pre-defined options. The most common reason mentioned was 'moving to a larger house' (the main reason for 13% of social renters), followed by

²² Please also note that it is not possible to precisely assess when the claim took place as respondents were asked the following: "May I just check, in the last few years, have (you/HRP) ever contacted the council because you were homeless or about to be homeless".

²³ Renters who had moved within the last three years were asked for their reason for moving. If they gave several reasons, they were then asked what the main reason was.

²⁴ See Chapter 1 of this report.

²⁵ English Housing Survey, 2016-17 Headline report, Annex Table 1.20.

²⁶ In 1996-97, 'evictions' were grouped with 'Had to leave tied accommodation/took job with tied accommodation'. This category was not included in 2016-17.

'having a nicer accommodation' (7%), 'to move to a better neighbourhood or a more pleasant area' (7%), and 'to be closer to family or friends' (5%).

- 3.18 However, more than half of social renters (51%) said that none of these reasons applied, which can either mean that they couldn't choose any of these reasons in the list, or perhaps more likely that they had not considered moving in the previous 12 months, Annex Table 3.7.
- 3.19 This is consistent with the fact that only a small percentage of social renters expect to move from their current dwelling; in 2016-17, 7% of social renters expected to move in the next six months, Annex Table 3.8.
- 3.20 In the social rented sector, moving to nicer accommodation was the most common reason mentioned by those who expect to move in the next six months (mentioned by 33%). It was followed by 'moving to a larger house/flat' (30%), 'moving to a better neighbourhood/area' (21%) and 'to be closer to family and friends' (20%)²⁷, Annex Table 3.9.

Waiting lists

- 3.21 In 2016-17, there were 618,000 households with at least one member on a council and/or housing association waiting or transfer list – this represents 3% of all households in England²⁸.
- 3.22 In the social rented sector, 8% of all households (297,000 households) had a member on a waiting list, making it the tenure with the most households with a member on a waiting list. In comparison, there were 274,000 households in the private rented sector (6% of all private rented sector households) and 46,000 households in the owner occupier tenure (less than 1%), Annex Table 3.10.
- 3.23 In the social rented sector, households with younger HRP's were more likely to include a household member on a waiting list. In 2016-17, 11% of households with a HRP aged 16-34 included a person on a waiting list, compared to only 7% of households with a HRP aged 35 or over.
- 3.24 Not surprisingly, larger households and households with dependent children were also more likely than others to include member(s) on a waiting list. While 5% of both single-person and two-person households had a member on a waiting list, 18% of households with six members or more did. Similarly, 13% of households with dependent children had a member on a waiting list compared with 5% of those without dependent children, Annex Table 3.11.

²⁷ 26% of social renters expecting to move in the next six months said it was for another reason.

²⁸ MHCLG also publishes council and housing association waiting list data, <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/local-authority-housing-data>

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- 3.25 Social renters who had been in their current home for less than 10 years were asked how long they had been on a waiting list prior to being allocated their property. More than half of respondents (56%) said they waited less than six months and 72% waited less than a year.
- 3.26 Local authority tenants were more likely to report longer waiting times than housing association tenants. In 2016-17, 67% of local authority tenants reported waiting more than three months compared to 57% of housing association tenants.
- 3.27 Reported time on waiting list also varied among demographic groups. Older people were more likely to be housed in the social sector quickly than younger people. Almost half (48%) of people aged over 65 said they had been on a waiting list for less than three months compared with 37% of people aged under 65.
- 3.28 Households with dependent children and households with a HRP from an ethnic minority background were more likely to report a longer time on a waiting list than other households. In 2016-17, 65% of households with dependent children reported waiting for more than three months (compared to 58% of other households) and 68% of households with a non-white HRP reported waiting for more than three months (compared to 59% of households with a white HRP).
- 3.29 Noticeable differences in waiting time were also visible by region, reflecting the fact that people tend to be on waiting lists for longer in areas of high demand (such as London and the South East). In the North East and in the North West, 39% and 47% of households reported waiting for more than three months respectively. In comparison these proportions were 63% in the East, 67% in the South East and 72% in London, Annex Table 3.12.

Buying expectations

- 3.30 In 2016-17, 30% of social renters (1.2 million households) stated that they expected to buy a property sometime in the future. This is noticeably lower than in the private rented sector where 60% of households (2.7 million) said they did. However, between 2015-16 and 2016-17, the proportion of social renters who expected to buy increased from 27% to 30%.²⁹
- 3.31 Social renters who stated they expected to buy were also less likely than private renters to expect to do so in the short term. In 2016-17, 15% of social renters expected to buy within the next two years compared to 26% of private renters.

²⁹ English Housing Survey, 2016-17 Headline report, Annex Table 1.11.

3.32 However, social renters were much more likely than private renters to expect to buy their current dwelling (13% compared with 47% of social renters). This was particularly the case for local authority tenants; 60% of those with buying expectations who were renting from local authorities expected to buy their current dwelling, compared to 39% of those renting from a housing association³⁰.

³⁰ English Housing Survey, 2016-17 Headline report, Annex Table 1.10.

Technical notes and glossary

Technical notes

1. Results for this report, on households, are presented for '2016-17' and are based on fieldwork carried out between April 2016 and March 2017 on a sample of 12,970 households. Throughout the report, this is referred to as the 'full household sample'.
2. The reliability of the results of sample surveys, including the English Housing Survey, is positively related to the unweighted sample size. Results based on small sample sizes should therefore be treated as indicative only because inference about the national picture cannot be drawn. To alert readers to those results, percentages based on a row or column total with unweighted total sample size of less than 30 are italicised. To safeguard against data disclosure, the cell contents of cells where the cell count is less than 5 are replaced with a "u".
3. Where comparative statements have been made in the text, these have been significance tested to a 95% confidence level. This means we are 95% confident that the statements we are making are true.
4. Additional annex tables, including the data underlying the figures and charts in this report are published on the website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/english-housing-survey> alongside many supplementary live tables, which are updated each year (in the summer) but are too numerous to include in our reports. Further information on the technical details of the survey, and information and past reports on the Survey of English Housing and the English House Condition Survey, can also be accessed via this link.

Glossary

Acceptance of homeless: local authorities have a responsibility for securing accommodation for households who are in priority need, eligible (certain categories of persons from abroad are ineligible) and are homeless through no fault of their own. A household satisfying these criteria is said to be 'accepted as homeless', or more formally as 'accepted as owed a main homelessness duty'.

Families with children and households that include someone who is vulnerable, for example because of pregnancy, old age, or physical or mental disability, have a priority need for accommodation.

ACORN: a classification of residential neighbourhoods that groups households, postcodes and neighbourhoods into six categories, 18 groups and 62 types, according to age, household composition, facilities, household size, income, marital status, mode of travel to work, occupation, ownership of car, ownership of home, etc. This information is matched with EHS data, and the following categories are reported:

- **Affluent achievers:** some of the most financially successful people in the UK. They live in wealthy, high status rural, semi-rural and suburban areas of the country. Middle aged or older people, the 'baby-boomer' generation, predominate with many empty nesters and wealthy retired people.
- **Rising prosperity:** generally younger, well educated, and mostly prosperous people living in our major towns and cities. Most are singles or couples, some yet to start a family, others with younger children. Often these are highly educated younger professionals moving up the career ladder. Most live in converted or modern flats, with a significant proportion of these being recently built executive city flats. Some will live in terraced town houses. While some are buying their home, occasionally through some form of shared equity scheme, others will be renting. While many have good incomes not all might yet have had time to convert these into substantial savings or investments.
- **Comfortable communities:** all life stages are represented in this category. Many areas have mostly stable families and empty nesters, especially in suburban or semi-rural locations. Generally people own their own home. Most houses are semi-detached or detached, overall of average value for the region. Incomes overall are average, some will earn more, the younger people a bit less than average. Employment is in a mix of professional and managerial, clerical and skilled occupations. Educational qualifications tend to be in line with the national average.
- **Financially stretched:** a mix of traditional areas of Britain. Housing is often terraced or semi-detached, a mix of lower value owner occupied housing and homes rented from the council or housing associations, including social housing developments specifically for the elderly. This category also includes student term-time areas. Unemployment is above average as are the proportions of people claiming other benefits.
- **Urban adversity:** this category contains the most deprived areas of large and small towns and cities across the UK. Household incomes are low, nearly always below the national average. The numbers claiming Jobseeker's Allowance and other benefits is well above the national average. Levels of qualifications are low and those in work are likely to be employed in semi-skilled or unskilled occupations. The housing is a mix of low rise estates, with terraced and semi-detached houses, and purpose built flats, including high rise blocks. Properties tend to be small and there may be overcrowding. Over half of the housing is rented from the local council or a housing association.

More details available at: <https://acorn.caci.co.uk/downloads/Acorn-User-guide.pdf>

Arrears: If the HRP or partner are not up to date with rent or mortgage payments they are considered to be in arrears.

Bedroom standard: The ‘bedroom standard’ is used by government as an indicator of occupation density. A standard number of bedrooms is calculated for each household in accordance with its age/sex/marital status composition and the relationship of the members to one another. A separate bedroom is allowed for each married or cohabiting couple, any other person aged 21 or over, each pair of adolescents aged 10-20 of the same sex, and each pair of children under 10. Any unpaired person aged 10-20 is notionally paired, if possible, with a child under 10 of the same sex, or, if that is not possible, he or she is counted as requiring a separate bedroom, as is any unpaired child under 10.

This notional standard number of bedrooms is then compared with the actual number of bedrooms (including bed-sitters) available for the sole use of the household, and differences are tabulated. Bedrooms converted to other uses are not counted as available unless they have been denoted as bedrooms by the respondents; bedrooms not actually in use are counted unless uninhabitable.

Households are said to be overcrowded if they have fewer bedrooms available than the notional number needed. Households are said to be under-occupying if they have two or more bedrooms more than the notional needed.

Dependent children: Any person aged 0 to 15 in a household (whether or not in a family) or a person aged 16 to 18 in full-time education and living in a family with his or her parent(s) or grandparent(s). It does not include any people aged 16 to 18 who have a spouse, partner or child living in the household.

Economic status: Respondents self-report their situation and can give more than one answer.

- **working full-time/part-time:** full-time work is defined as 30 or more hours per week. Part-time work is fewer than 30 hours per week. Where more than one answer is given, ‘working’ takes priority over other categories (with the exception that all those over State Pension Age (SPA) who regard themselves as retired are classified as such, regardless of what other answers they give).
- **unemployed:** this category covers people who were registered unemployed or not registered unemployed but seeking work.
- **retired:** this category includes all those over the state pension age who reported being retired as well as some other activity. For men the SPA is 65 and for women it is 60 if they were born before 6th April 1950. For women born on or after the 6th April 1950, the state pension age has increased incrementally since April 2010³¹.

³¹ For further information see: www.gov.uk/browse/working/state-pension

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- **full-time education:** education undertaken in pursuit of a course, where an average of more than 12 hours per week is spent during term time.
 - **other inactive:** all others; they include people who were permanently sick or disabled, those looking after the family or home and any other activity.

On occasions, **full-time education** and **other inactive** are combined and described as **other economically inactive**.

Ethnicity: Classification according to respondents' own perceived ethnic group.

Ethnic minority background is used throughout the report to refer to those respondents who do not identify as White.

The classification of ethnic group used in the EHS is consistent with the 2011 Census. Respondents are classified as White if they answer one of the following four options:

- English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British
- Irish
- Gypsy or Irish Traveller
- Any Other White background

Otherwise, they are classified as being from an ethnic minority background.

Full-time education: Full-time education is education undertaken in pursuit of a course, where an average of more than 12 hours per week is spent during term time.

Gross income of the HRP and partner: The gross annual income of the HRP and partner from wages, pensions, other private sources, savings and state benefits. This does not include any housing related benefits or allowances. This measure is divided by 52 to calculate weekly income. Income is presented in quintiles throughout this report (see income quintiles definition – below).

Gross household income: The gross annual income of all adults living in a household from wages, pensions, other private sources, savings and state benefits. This does not include any housing related benefits or allowances. This measure is divided by 52 to calculate weekly income. Income is presented in quintiles throughout this report (see income quintiles definition – below).

Household: One person or a group of people (not necessarily related) who have the accommodation as their only or main residence, and (for a group) share cooking facilities and share a living room or sitting room or dining area.

The EHS definition of household is slightly different from the definition used in the 2011 Census. Unlike the EHS, the 2011 Census did not limit household membership to people who had the accommodation as their only or main residence. The EHS

included that restriction because it asks respondents about their second homes, the unit of data collection on the EHS, therefore, needs to include only those people who have the accommodation as their only or main residence.

Household reference person (HRP): The person in whose name the dwelling is owned or rented or who is otherwise responsible for the accommodation. In the case of joint owners and tenants, the person with the highest income is taken as the HRP. Where incomes are equal, the older is taken as the HRP. This procedure increases the likelihood that the HRP better characterises the household's social and economic position. The EHS definition of HRP is not consistent with the Census 2011, in which the HRP is chosen on basis of their economic activity. Where economic activity is the same, the older is taken as HRP, or if they are the same age, HRP is the first listed on the questionnaire.

Household type: The main classification of household type uses the following categories; some categories may be split or combined in different tables:

- couple no dependent child(ren)
- couple with dependent child(ren)
- couple with dependent and independent child(ren)
- couple with independent child(ren)
- lone parent with dependent child(ren)
- lone parent with dependent and independent child(ren)
- lone parent with independent child(ren)
- two or more families
- lone person sharing with other lone persons
- one male
- one female

Housing Benefit: A benefit that is administered by local authorities, which is designed to assist people who rent their homes and have difficulty meeting their housing costs. Council tenants on Housing Benefit receive a rent rebate which means that their rent due is reduced by the amount of that rebate. Private and social housing tenants usually receive Housing Benefit (or rent allowance) personally, although sometimes it is paid direct to the landlord.

Income (equivalised): Household incomes have been 'equivalised', that is adjusted (using the modified Organisation Economic Co-operation and Development scale) to reflect the number of people in a household. This allows the comparison of incomes for households with different sizes and compositions.

The EHS variables are modelled to produce a **Before Housing Costs (BHC)** income measure for the purpose of equivalisation. The BHC income variable includes:

Household Reference Person and partner's income from benefits and private sources (including income from savings), income from other household members, housing benefit, winter fuel payment and the deduction of net council tax payment.

An **After Housing Costs (AHC)** income is derived by deducting rent and mortgage payments from the BHC measure.

Income quintiles: All households are divided into five equal groups based on their income (i.e. those in the bottom 20%, the next 20% and so on). These groups are known as quintiles. These can be used to compare income levels of particular groups to the overall population.

Large Scale Voluntary Transfer: A Large Scale Voluntary Transfer is the voluntary transfer of ownership of all or some of a local authority's tenanted and leasehold homes to a private registered housing provider, registered by the Social Housing Regulator, in return for a payment for the value of that stock.

Long-term limiting illness: This is consistent with the core definition of disability under the Equality Act 2010. A person is considered to have a disability if they have a long-standing illness, disability or impairment which causes substantial difficulty with day-to-day activities.

Overcrowding: Households are said to be overcrowded if they have fewer bedrooms available than the notional number needed according to the bedroom standard definition. See bedroom standard.

Socio-economic groups: The EHS uses the eight-class version of the National Statistics Socio-economic Classification (NS-SEC). The eight classes are:

- Higher managerial and professional occupations
- Lower managerial and professional occupations
- Intermediate occupations (clerical, sales, service)
- Small employers and own account workers
- Lower supervisory and technical occupations
- Semi-routine occupations
- Routine occupations
- Never worked or long-term unemployed.

No EHS respondent is assigned to the last class because the survey does not collect enough information to code to someone as never worked or long-term unemployed.

Tenure: In this report, households are typically grouped into three broad categories known as tenures: owner occupiers, social renters and private renters. The tenure defines the conditions under which the home is occupied, whether it is owned or

rented, and if rented, who the landlord is and on what financial and legal terms the let is agreed.

- **owner occupiers:** households in accommodation which they either own outright, are buying with a mortgage or as part of a shared ownership scheme.
- **social renters:** this category includes households renting from Local Authorities (including Arms' Length Management Organisations (ALMOs) and Housing Action Trusts) and Housing Associations, Local Housing Companies, co-operatives and charitable trusts.

A significant number of Housing Association tenants wrongly report that they are Local Authority tenants. The most common reason for this is that their home used to be owned by the Local Authority, and although ownership was transferred to a Housing Association, the tenant still reports that their landlord is the Local Authority. There are also some Local Authority tenants who wrongly report that they are Housing Association tenants. Data from the EHS for 2008-09 onwards incorporate a correction for the great majority of such cases in order to provide a reasonably accurate split of the social rented category.

- **private renters:** this sector covers all other tenants including all whose accommodation is tied to their job. It also includes people living rent-free (for example, people living in a flat belonging to a relative).

Under-occupation: Households are said to be under-occupying their property if they have two or more bedrooms more than the notional number needed according to the bedroom standard definition. See bedroom standard.

Universal Credit: This is a single, means-tested working-age benefit; paid to people whether in work or not. Over time it will replace:

- Child Tax Credit;
- Housing Benefit;
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance;
- Income-based Job Seekers Allowance;
- Income Support; and
- Working Tax Credit.

For more information, see: <https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit>.

Waiting list: The main route into social housing is through a waiting list which is operated by the local authority. An individual or household must apply for social housing. Applicants are then assessed against rules set individually by each local authority but which by law must give priority to certain types of people, being people in identified housing need. These rules decide whether they qualify to go onto the waiting list and their level of priority.

In accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 the United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, signifying that they are fully compliant with the Code of Practice for Statistics.

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods, and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

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