



Ministry of Housing,  
Communities &  
Local Government



# English Housing Survey

Social rented sector, 2017-18



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# Introduction and main findings

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## Introduction

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. It is one of the longest standing government surveys and was first run in 1967.
2. This report is split into four chapters. The first chapter presents a profile of households living in the social rented sector, the second chapter reports on housing costs and affordability, while the third chapter covers housing history and future aspirations. The fourth chapter covers dwelling conditions and energy efficiency in the social rented sector.

## Main findings

**The social rented sector is home to more vulnerable groups than other tenures, likely due to the way social housing is allocated on the basis of need.**

- In 2017-18, 54% of households in the social rented sector had at least one household member who had a disability or long-term illness, compared to 31% of owner occupiers and 23% of private renters.
- Lone parents made up a greater proportion of the social rented sector (22%) compared to the private rented sector (14%) and owner occupiers (6%).
- There was a higher proportion of social renters in the lowest income quintile (46%) compared to private renters (19%) and owner occupiers (13%).

**The social rented sector has the highest rate of overcrowding, and the lowest rate of under-occupation; both increased between 2016-17 and 2017-18.**

- 8% of households in the social rented sector were living in overcrowded accommodation, up from 7% in 2016-17 and the highest level recorded since 1995-96. Lower proportions of private renters (6%) and owner occupiers (1%) live in overcrowded accommodation.
- One in ten (10%) households in the social rented sector were under-occupying their home (i.e. have two or more spare bedrooms). Under-occupation was more prevalent in the private rented sector (15%) and among owner occupiers (54%).
- For social renters, the rate of under-occupation increased from 8% in 2016-17 to 10% in 2017-18.

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### **The majority of social renters are satisfied with living in the social rented sector.**

- The majority of social renters (83%) said they were satisfied with their current tenure. This was higher than the proportion of private renters who said they were satisfied with living in the private rented sector (69%), but lower than owner occupiers (98%).

### **While the majority of social renters are satisfied with their accommodation, those who rent from a local authority have lower levels of satisfaction than those who rent from a housing association.**

- While the majority of social renters (80%) were satisfied with their current accommodation, satisfaction was lower among those who rent from a local authority than those who rent from a housing association (78% compared with 82%).
- Among those who live in local authority housing, satisfaction with accommodation was lower if the property did not meet the Decent Homes Standard (70% compared with 80%). This was not true for social renters who rent from a housing association.

### **Most social renters are satisfied with the repairs and maintenance carried out in their homes. The most common reasons for dissatisfaction are related to issues with the landlord.**

- In 2017-18, 66% of social renters said they were satisfied with the repairs and maintenance carried out in their homes. Satisfaction with repairs and maintenance was higher among private renters (73%).
- 26% of social renters were dissatisfied with repairs and maintenance. The most common reasons were that the landlord is slow to get things done (33%), the landlord not bothering (24%), the landlord doing the bare minimum (15%) and maintenance work being of poor quality (13%).

### **Compared with the private rented sector, there are relatively few household moves in the social rented sector, and the reasons for moving are different.**

- In 2017-18, 245,000 households in the social rented sector had moved home within the last 12 months. Some of these were previously living in another social rented dwelling while others had moved into the tenure. In comparison, there were 614,000 household moves into and within the owner occupied sector and 1.2 million into and within the private rented sector.
- Social renters were more likely than private renters to move because of the size of their home, e.g. 15% moved to have a larger house while 4% moved to smaller accommodation (compared with 11% and 2% respectively of private renters). Meanwhile, social renters were less likely to have moved for job related reasons (3% compared with 18% of private renters).

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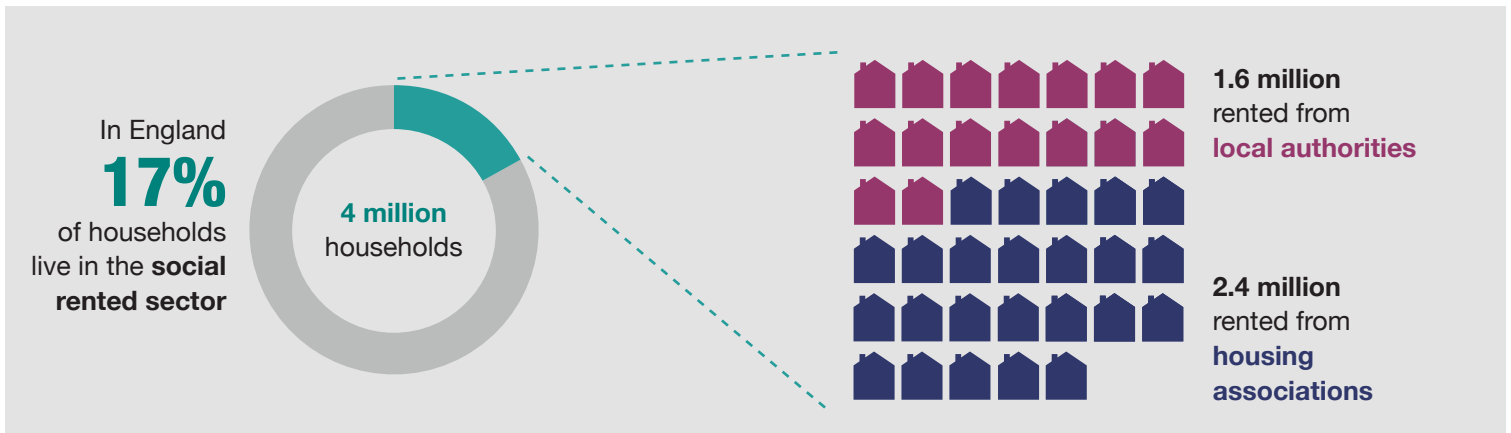
**Homes in the social rented sector are less likely to have poor housing conditions and more likely to have key dwelling electrical safety features than other homes, particularly those in the private rented sector.**

- The social rented sector had a lower proportion of non-decent homes (13%) compared to the private rented (25%) and owner occupied sector (19%).
- Social rented homes were less likely to have at least one category one hazard (6%) compared to privately rented (14%) and owner occupied homes (11%).
- Social rented homes were less likely to have serious disrepair (11%) compared to privately rented homes (19%)
- Almost three quarters (73%) of social rented homes had all five safety features compared with 60% of owner occupied and 61% of privately rented homes.
- Social renters were more likely (95%) to have a working smoke alarm than private renters and owner occupiers (both 89%).
- Social rented homes were also more energy efficient than privately rented and owner occupied homes. The average SAP rating for social homes was 68 compared with 61 for both owner occupied and private rented homes.

## 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 for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) would particularly like to thank the following people and organisations, without whom the 2017-18 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 Joseph Cant at NatCen Social Research and Helen Garret at BRE in collaboration with 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.gov.uk](mailto:ehs@communities.gov.uk).
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## Social rented sector

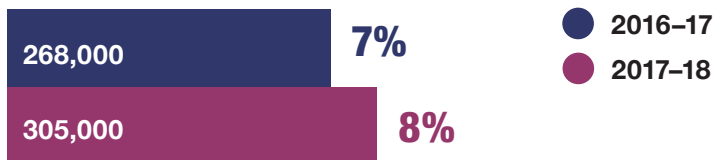


### The sector houses more vulnerable groups than other sectors



### Overcrowding is increasing

overcrowded



### Under-occupation (ie having two or more spare bedrooms) is also up

under-occupied

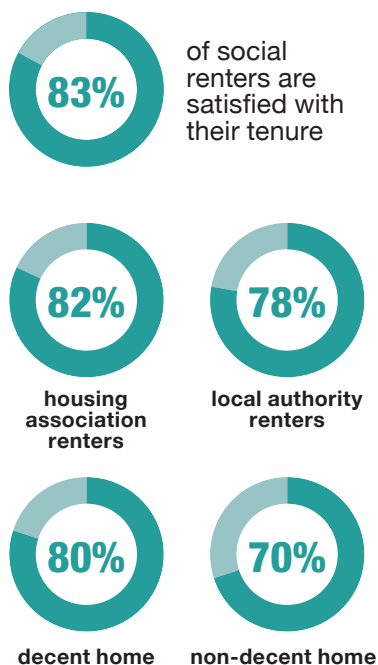


### Satisfaction with accommodation and tenure



Housing association renters are more **satisfied with their current accommodation** than local authority renters

**Satisfaction is lower** among local authority renters who live in **non-decent homes**



### Satisfaction with repairs and maintenance

Most social renters are satisfied with the **repairs and maintenance** carried out in their homes.



The most common reasons for dissatisfaction are related to **issues with the landlord**



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# Chapter 1

## Profile of social renters

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- 1.1 This chapter provides a profile of the people living in the social rented sector. The social rented sector is made up of those renting their home from local authorities and housing associations. This chapter provides an overview of the whole sector.
- 1.2 Comparisons between local authority and housing association tenants are discussed where there were relevant differences, otherwise it should be assumed these groups were similar. Where possible relevant comparisons are made with those living in other tenures, especially the private rented sector.

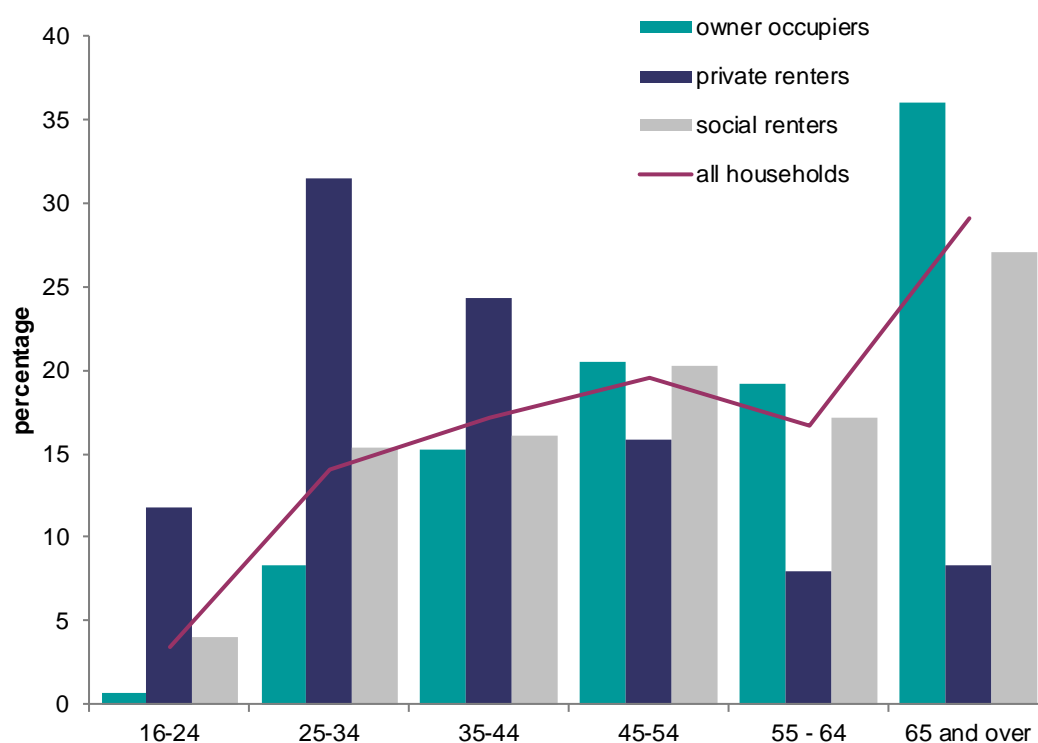
### Age

- 1.3 Social renters were older than private renters and slightly younger than owner occupiers. In 2017-18, the average age for household reference persons (HRPs)<sup>1</sup> in the social rented sector was 53 years old, compared to 40 years old for private renters and 57 years old for owner occupiers.
- 1.4 A higher proportion of social renters (27%) were aged 65 or over compared to private renters (8%) but this was a lower proportion than among owner occupiers (36%), Figure 1.1.
- 1.5 While there was no significant difference in the overall mean age of local authority renters and housing association renters, there were some differences in their age profiles. Local authority renters were more likely to be aged 45-54 (23%) than housing association renters (19%). Local authority renters were less likely to be aged 25 to 34 years old (14%) than housing association tenants (17%), Annex Table 1.1.

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<sup>1</sup> 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, 2017-18**



Base: all households

Note: underlying data are presented in Headline Report Annex Table 1.3

Source: English Housing Survey, full household sample.

## Sex

- 1.6 Households in the social rented sector were more likely to have a female HRP than a male HRP. In 2017-18, 55% of social renters had a female HRP compared to 45% with a male HRP. This was higher than the proportion of female HRPs in the private rented (40%) and owner occupied sectors (38%).
- 1.7 Across the population, a greater proportion of households have a male HRP (59%). Therefore, it is notable that the majority of HRPs in the social rented sector are women. Allocation based on need means those with lower incomes and lone parents are more likely to be eligible for social housing, attributes which are more prevalent among women, Annex Table 1.2.

## Household type and children

- 1.8 The way social housing is allocated means the social rented sector has a different profile to other tenures in terms of household types. For example, single person households and lone parents were more common in the social rented sector than in other tenures.



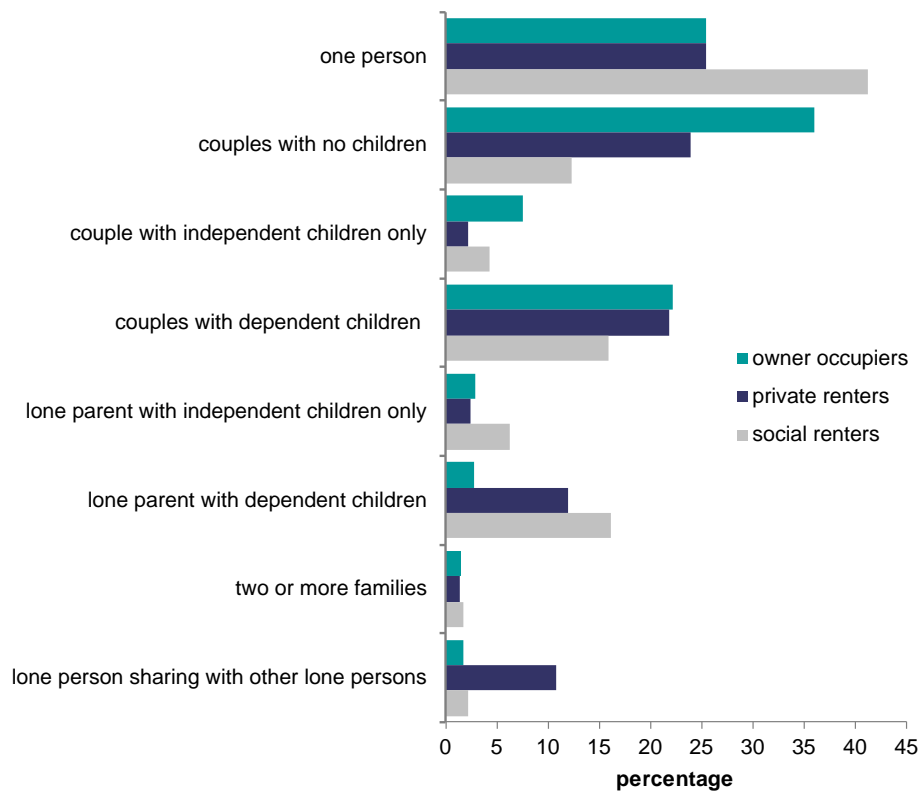
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- 1.9 Single person households were the most common household type in the social rented sector representing 41% of households, compared with 25% of both owner occupied and private rented sector households.
- 1.10 Lone parents were the second most common household type in the social rented sector ahead of couples with children at third most prevalent. Lone parents with dependent children or independent children, accounted for 22% of households in the sector (compared to 14% of households in the private rented sector, and 6% in owner occupation).
- 1.11 Multi-person sharing households, including two or more families or lone persons sharing with other lone persons, accounted for 4% of households in the social rented sector. This was lower than the proportion of such households in the private rented sector (12%),<sup>2</sup> Figure 1.2.
- 1.12 Overall, around two thirds (67%) of social renters lived in households without dependent children<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> English Housing Survey, 2017-18 Headline Report, Annex Table 1.3

<sup>3</sup> English Housing Survey, 2017-18 Headline Report, Annex Table 1.5

**Figure 1.2: Household type, by tenure, 2017-18**



**Base: all households**

**Note: underlying data are presented in Headline Report Annex Table 1.3**

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

## Ethnicity and nationality

- 1.13 The majority (92%) of social renters were UK or Irish nationals. Social renters were more likely to be UK or Irish nationals than those in the private rented sector (74%), but less likely than owner occupiers (96%).
- 1.14 A higher proportion of social renters (4%) were EU nationals than owner occupiers (2%), but a substantially lower proportion than private renters (17%), Annex Table 1.3.
- 1.15 The majority of households in the social rented sector had a white HRP (83%). Housing association tenants were more likely to have a white HRP (85%) than local authority renters (81%)<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> English Housing Survey, 2017-18 Headline Report, Annex Table 1.3

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## Religion

- 1.16 Around two thirds (69%) of social renters had a religion. Social renters were more likely to have a religion than private renters (62%), but less likely than owner occupiers (72%).
- 1.17 The most prevalent religion among social renters was Christian (60%). Those expressing they had no religion were the next largest group (31%), followed by social renters who were Muslim (6%).
- 1.18 A smaller proportion of housing association renters were Muslim (5%) than local authority renters (7%). There was no significant difference in the prevalence of those who were Hindu or members of 'other religions', among housing association renters and local authority renters (both 2%), Annex Table 1.4.

## Long-term illness and disability

- 1.19 In 2017-18, there were an estimated 2.1 million households in the social rented sector (54%) where at least one household member had a disability or long-term illness.
- 1.20 The prevalence of households where at least one household member had a disability or long-term illness was higher in the social rented sector than all other tenures, with 31% of owner occupiers and 23% of private renters having a household member who had a long-term illness or disability. This partly reflects the way social housing is allocated on the basis of need, Annex Table 1.5.

## Economic activity

- 1.21 In 2017-18, 41% of social renters were in work; 27% in full-time work and 14% in part-time work; 5% of social renters were unemployed. The proportion of social renters who were inactive<sup>5</sup> was 25%; and 28% were retired. The rest were in full-time education (1%).
- 1.22 A higher proportion of social renters were economically inactive than private renters (8%) and owner occupiers (3%). Social renters were also more likely to be retired than private renters (8%), but less likely than owner occupiers (36%)<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> This includes those who have a long-term illness or disability and those who are looking after the family or home

<sup>6</sup> English Housing Survey, 2017-18 Headline Report, Annex Table 1.3

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

- 1.23 The profile of social renters in terms of economic activity was reflected in the NS-SEC composition of the group. Overall the majority of social renters were in semi-routine or routine occupations (55%), this was higher than the proportion of private renters (30%) and owner occupiers (18%).
- 1.24 Social renters working in managerial or higher managerial roles stood at 16%. This was lower than the proportion of private renters (38%) and owner occupiers (52%) who worked in managerial and higher managerial positions.
- 1.25 The proportion of social renters working as small-employers or own account workers was 9%. This was lower than private renters (13%) and owner occupiers (11%), Annex Table 1.6.

## Income

- 1.26 Social renters were concentrated in the lower income quintiles. Overall, 72% of social renters were in the bottom two income quintiles for household income (46% in the lowest income quintile and 26% in the second lowest).
- 1.27 Overall a higher proportion of social renters were in the lowest income quintile than private renters (19%) and owner occupiers (13%). Conversely, only 2% of social renters had an income in the highest income quintile. In comparison, 14% of private renters and 26% of owner occupiers were in the highest income quintile<sup>7</sup>.

## Satisfaction

### Satisfaction with current accommodation

- 1.28 The majority (80%) of social renters were either very or fairly satisfied with their current accommodation. This was a lower proportion than those in the private rented (83%) or owner occupied sectors (95%).
- 1.29 A larger proportion of housing association renters said they were satisfied with their current accommodation (82%) than local authority renters (78%), Annex Table 1.7.

### Satisfaction with tenure

- 1.30 The majority of social renters (83%) said they were satisfied with their current tenure. This was higher than the proportion of private renters who said they

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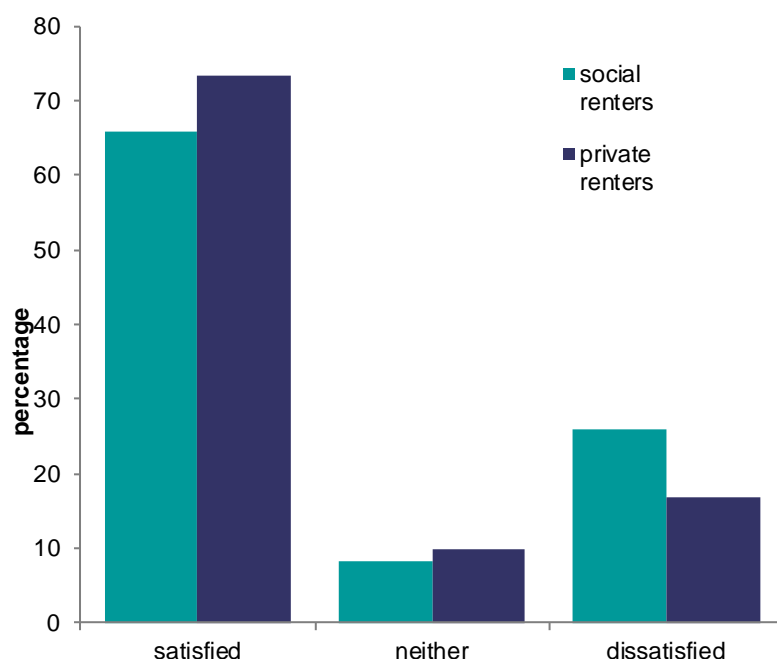
<sup>7</sup> English Housing Survey, 2017-18 Headline Report, Annex Table 1.3

were happy with the private rented sector (69%), but lower than owner occupiers (98%), Annex Table 1.8.

### Satisfaction with repairs and maintenance

1.31 In 2017-18, two thirds of social renters (66%) said they were satisfied with the repairs and maintenance carried out in their homes; lower than the proportion of private renters who were satisfied with repairs and maintenance (73%), Figure 1.3, Live Table FA5423.

**Figure 1.3: Satisfaction with repairs and maintenance, by tenure, 2017-18**



**Base: all social and private renters**

**Note: Underlying data are presented in live table FA5423**

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

- 1.32 Of the 26% of social renters who said they were dissatisfied with repairs and maintenance carried out by their landlords, the most common reasons were the landlord being slow to get things done (33%) or the landlord not bothering (24%). This was followed by those who said the landlord did the bare minimum (15%) and maintenance work being of poor quality (13%).
- 1.33 While the four most commonly cited reasons for dissatisfaction with repairs and maintenance were the same for local authority and housing association renters, a higher proportion of housing association renters said the landlord was too slow to get things done (37%) than local authority renters (29%).
- 1.34 While both social and private renters most commonly cited the same reasons for dissatisfaction with repairs and maintenance, social renters were more likely to say the work done was of poor quality (13%) than private renters (6%), Annex Table 1.9.

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## Satisfaction with housing services provided by landlord

- 1.35 In general, social renters were satisfied with the housing services provided by their landlord. However, satisfaction with housing services was lower among social renters than among private renters (71% compared with 75%), Annex Table 1.10.
- 1.36 The majority of social renters (71%) felt that services provided by their landlord over the last two years had not changed much. The proportion who said services had improved stood at 11% while 18% said services had become worse over the last two years, Annex Table 1.11.

## Overcrowding and under-occupation

- 1.37 Levels of overcrowding and under-occupation in homes are measured using the bedroom standard (see glossary). This relates to the number of bedrooms available for the people in the household, factoring in their sex and age. Overcrowding relates to those who do not have enough bedrooms, while under-occupation describes where a property has two or more spare bedrooms.
- 1.38 Since the number of overcrowded households 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.

### Overcrowding

- 1.39 In 2017-18, 8% of homes in the social rented sector were overcrowded, the highest level recorded since 1995-96. This is higher than the proportion who lived in overcrowded conditions in the private rented (6%) and owner occupied (1%) sectors<sup>8</sup>.

### Under-occupation

- 1.40 Meanwhile, 10% of homes in the social rented sector were under occupied (i.e. had two or more spare bedrooms), up from 8% in 2016-17<sup>9</sup>. Under-occupation was less prevalent in the social rented sector than other tenures (15% of privately rented homes and 54% of owner occupied homes were under-occupied in 2017-18).

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<sup>8</sup> English Housing Survey, 2017-18 Headline Report, Annex Table 1.21

<sup>9</sup> English Housing Survey, 2017-18 Headline Report, Annex Table 1.22

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## Perceptions of discrimination in the social rented sector

- 1.41 Respondents were asked to say whether they thought they would be treated better, worse or the same as people of other races by a number of institutions, including council housing departments and housing associations. These questions measure peoples' perceptions, so it is not necessary for the respondent to have had direct contact with the institution to answer them.
- 1.42 In 2017-18, 10% of all households (including owner occupiers, social and private renters) thought they would be treated worse than people of other races by council housing departments or housing associations. The majority (64%) thought they would be treated the same while 4% said they would be treated better. About a quarter (23%) said they didn't know.
- 1.43 Among social renters, 71% thought they would be treated the same as people of other races; 12% thought they would be treated worse while 2% thought they would be treated better.
- 1.44 Social renters were more likely than owner occupiers to say they would be treated worse than people of other races by council housing departments and housing associations (12% compared to 9%). Similarly, social renters were less likely to say they would be treated better than people of other races (2%) than those in the private rented sector or owner occupiers (both 4%), Annex Table 1.12.
- 1.45 Broadly speaking, perceptions of discrimination by council housing departments or housing associations did not vary by ethnicity, with those from an ethnic minority background no more likely to say that they thought they would be treated worse than people of other races than white people.
- 1.46 There was some variation across tenures. In particular, social renters from an ethnic minority background were more likely to think that council housing departments and housing associations would treat them worse than people of other races than private renters from an ethnic minority background (9% compared with 4%).
- 1.47 Meanwhile, white people in the social rented sector were more likely to think that council housing departments and housing associations would treat them worse than people of other races than white owner occupiers (12% compared with 10%), Annex Table 1.13

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## Chapter 2

# Housing costs and affordability

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2.1 This chapter explores housing costs and the affordability of the social rented sector. It presents average incomes, average rent and the proportion of income spent on rent. The chapter also presents receipt of Housing Benefit before examining how social renters pay their energy bills.

### Income

2.2 In 2017-18, the average gross weekly household income of social renters was £408. This was lower than the average income of private renters (£728) and owner occupiers (£941). There were no significant differences in the mean weekly income for housing association renters (£412) and local authority renters (£404). Annex Table 2.1.

2.3 Younger and older social renters had the lowest average weekly incomes. A larger proportion of the youngest and oldest social renters were in the lowest income quintile than any of the other age groups (71% of 16 to 24 year olds and 61% of those aged 65 or over). Social renters aged 55 to 64 were the group with the third highest proportion in the lowest income quintile (53%). There were no significant differences between any other age group, Annex Table 2.2.

2.4 When grouping those aged under and over 45, housing association renters aged under 45 had higher mean weekly household incomes than local authority renters (£472 per week compared to £420 per week), Annex Table 2.3.

### Savings

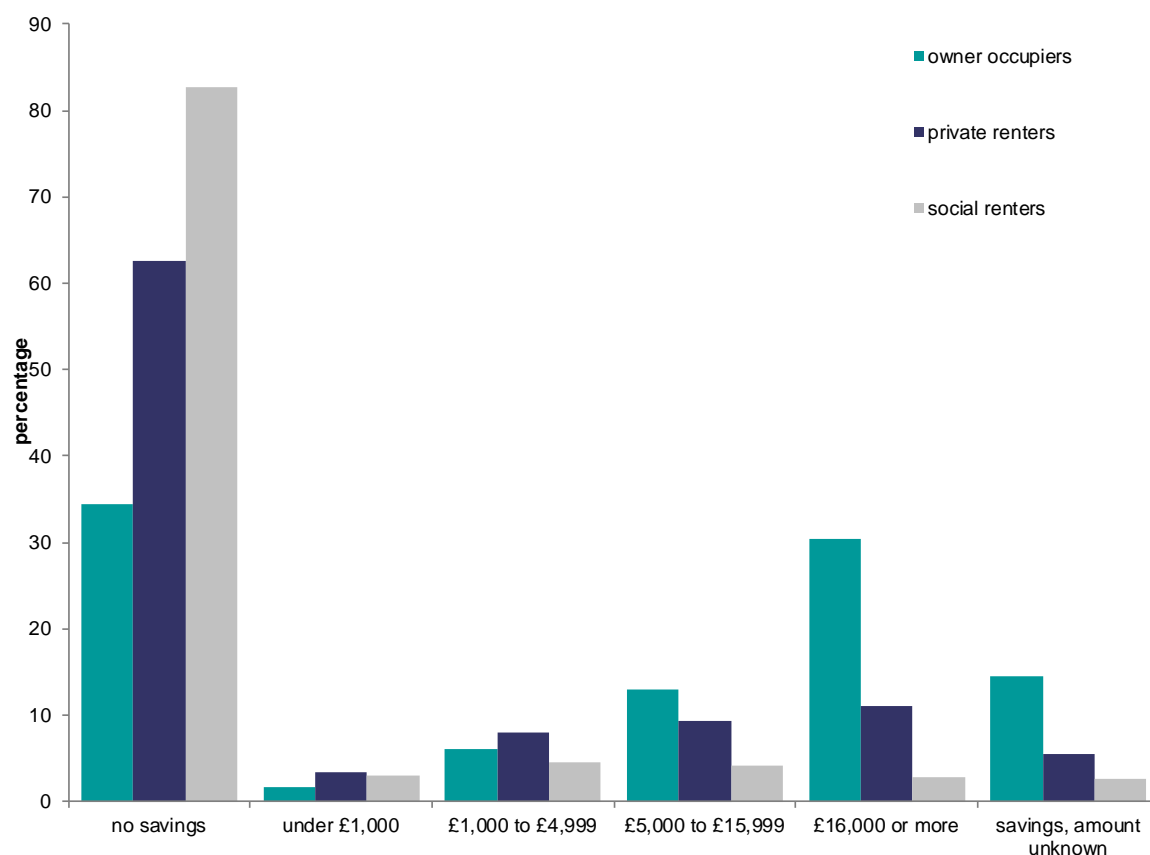
2.5 The majority of social renters (83%) did not have any savings or investments. Overall, a larger proportion of social renters had savings between £1,000 and £5,000 (5%) and between £5,000 and £16,000 (4%) than those who had savings under £1,000 (3%), £16,000 or over (3%), or those who savings amount is unknown (3%), Figure 2.1 and Annex Table 2.4.

2.6 Of those with savings who stated the amount, 52% had savings under £5,000 and 20% had savings under £1,000, 5% had a high level of savings (£50,000 to £149,999).

2.7 A smaller proportion of social renters had savings (17%), compared to owner occupiers (66%) and private renters (37%), Annex Table 2.5.



**Figure 2.1: Savings amounts, by tenure, 2017-18**



**Base: all households**

**Note: underlying data presented in Annex Table 2.4**

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

2.8 Social renters aged 65 or over were more likely to have savings (32%) than any other age group in the social rented sector.

2.9 Social renters aged 25 to 34 were the age group least likely to have any savings (6%). This group was less likely to have savings than those of the same age in the private rented sector (39%), Annex Tables 2.6 and 2.7.

## Rent

2.10 Social renters paid an average (mean) of £103 per week in rent (excluding services but including Housing Benefit). Housing association renters paid an average of £107 compared to £97 for local authority renters. Social renters' rent was lower than in the private sector where an average of £193 was paid per week.

2.11 Social renters in London paid on average £133 per week compared with £96 per week outside London. Housing association renters' average weekly rent

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payment was £139 per week inside London and £100 outside London. Local authority renters paid on average £127 a week in London, and £87 outside London.

- 2.12 The difference between rent amounts inside and outside London was smaller for social renters than for private renters. In 2017-18, the average rent paid by social renters in London was £133 per week compared to £96 per week outside London. This is compared to private renters in London who paid an average £312 per week, almost twice the average paid outside London (£158 per week)<sup>10</sup>.

## Housing Benefit

- 2.13 Housing Benefit is a means-tested benefit provided by the state to low income households living in the two rented sectors. The benefit is usually administered by the local authority in which the rented property is located.
- 2.14 In 2017-18, 60% of social renters received Housing Benefit to help with the payment of their rent. Among those in receipt of Housing Benefit, 54% said it exactly covered their rent. Housing association renters were more likely to say their Housing Benefit exactly covered their rent (56%) than local authority renters (50%), Annex Table 2.8.

## Age

- 2.15 Older social renters were more likely to receive Housing Benefit. Overall, 71% of social renters aged 65 or over received Housing Benefit, compared to 55% of those under 65, Annex Table 2.9.

## Economic status

- 2.16 Of social renters receiving Housing Benefit, 20% were in full-time or part-time work, 34% were retired and 45% were economically inactive<sup>11</sup>. There was no significant difference in the distribution of economic status between local authority and housing association renters, Annex Table 2.10.

## Region

- 2.17 The proportion of social renters living in London who received Housing Benefit was 58%. This was not significantly different to the proportion elsewhere in England (60%). The same applies for both housing association and local authority renters, Annex Table 2.11.

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<sup>10</sup> English Housing Survey, 2017-18 Headline Report, Annex Table 1.12

<sup>11</sup> Economically inactive includes those who were unemployed, in full-time education and 'other inactive'.

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## Household type

- 2.18 Of those receiving Housing Benefit in the social rented sector, about half (49%) were single person households. Lone parents, with either dependent or independent children, accounted for 26% of social renters receiving Housing Benefit. Couples with either dependent or independent children accounted for 12% of social renters who receive Housing Benefit. There was no significant difference in the distribution of different household types between local authority and housing association renters, apart from couples with non-dependent children, Annex Table 2.12.
- 2.19 Overall, 61% of social renters without dependent children received Housing Benefit. This was a greater proportion than the proportion of social renters with dependent children who received Housing Benefit (56%), Annex Table 2.13.

## Proportion of income spent on rent

- 2.20 This section examines the relative average affordability of the social rented sector compared with other tenures. 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.
- 2.21 Overall social renters spent 37% of their income on housing costs (excluding Housing Benefit). When Housing Benefit was included, this proportion decreased to 28%. Local authority renters paid a smaller proportion of their income on rent than those in housing association homes. Including Housing Benefit, local authority renters paid an average of 27% of their income on rent compared to 29% of income for housing association renters, Annex Table 2.14.
- 2.22 Benefit payments had a larger impact on the proportion of income spent on rent for social renters than private renters. When excluding benefits, there was no significant difference in the average proportion of income spent on rent between social and private renters. When including Housing Benefit however, social renters paid a lower average proportion of income on rent (28%) than private renters (33%), Annex Table 2.14 and Annex Table 2.15.

## Region

- 2.23 Social renters in London spent a greater proportion of income on housing than the rest of England whether including Housing Benefit or not. Housing benefit reduced the proportion of income spent on housing costs in both London and the rest of England. When including Housing Benefit, the proportion of income social renters living in London spent on housing costs was 34%, down from

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48% when not including benefit. This was higher than the proportion of income spent on rent for social renters outside London when including Housing Benefit (27%) and not including Housing Benefit (34%), Figure 2.2.

- 2.24 Housing association tenants living outside London spent a larger proportion of their income on rent than local authority renters living outside London, both including and excluding benefits. Excluding benefits, housing association tenants outside London paid an average of 36% of their income on rent compared to 32% for local authority tenants. When including Housing Benefit, this dropped to 27% for housing association tenants and 25% of income for local authority tenants. Including or excluding Housing Benefit, there were no significant differences in the proportion of income spent on rent between housing association and local authority tenants living in London, Annex Table 2.14.
- 2.25 When including Housing Benefit, social renters spent a smaller proportion of income on rent than private renters both in London and in the rest of England. When including Housing Benefit, social renters living in London spent 34% of their income on housing costs, compared to private renters who spent 42%. Similarly, social renters across the rest of England spent 27% of their income on housing costs, compared to private renters who spent 30%, Annex Table 2.14 and Annex Table 2.15.

**Figure 2.2: Social renters' rent as a proportion of household income, London and outside London, 2017-18**



**Base: all social renters**

**Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 2.14**

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

## Age

- 2.26 The very youngest social renters spent the largest proportion of their income on rent. When not including Housing Benefit, social rented households with a HRP aged 16 to 24 spent 54% of their income on rent, this was higher than all other age groups. Similarly, when including Housing Benefit households with a HRP aged 16 to 24 spent 37% of their income on rent, higher than all other age groups.
- 2.27 Apart from the very youngest (16 to 24 year olds), older social renters tended to spend a greater proportion of income on rent. Excluding Housing Benefit, social renters in age groups 55 and over (55 to 64 year olds spent 40% and those 65 and over spent 37%) spent a larger proportion of their income on housing costs than those in age groups between 25 and 54 (25 to 34 year olds spent 33%, those aged 35 to 44 spent 34% and 45 to 55 year olds spent 36%).
- 2.28 When including Housing Benefit the pattern was similar with social renters in age groups over 55 paying a greater proportion of income on rent (55 to 64 year olds spent 29% and those 65 and over spent 29%) than those who were under 55 (25 to 34 and 35 to 44 year olds spent 26% and 45 to 54 year olds spent 27%). Although, there was no significant difference in the proportion of

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rent between those aged 45 to 54 (27%) and those aged 55 to 64 (29%), Annex Table 2.14.

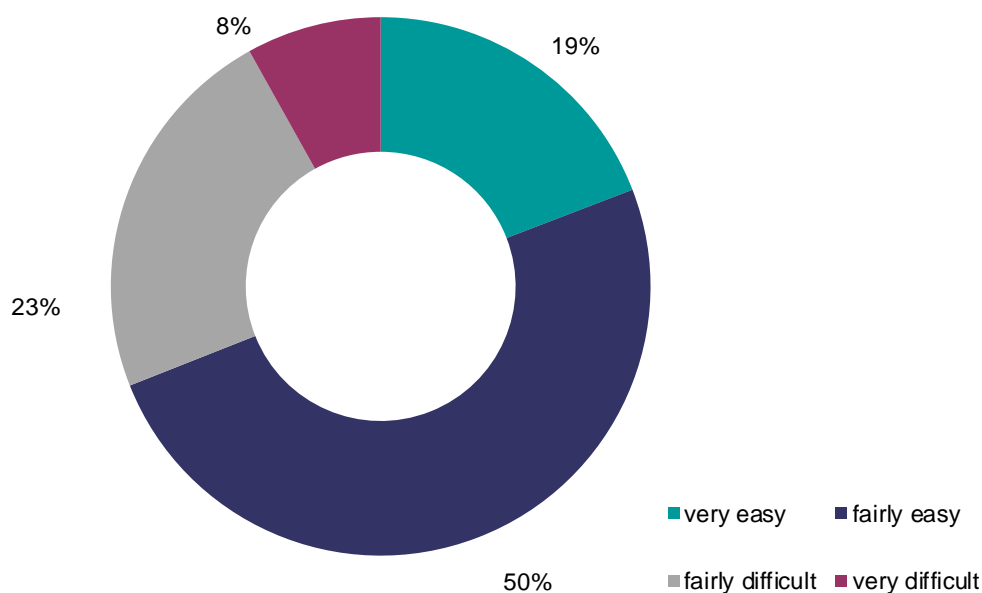
### Household Type

- 2.29 Single person households spent the greatest proportion of household income on rent, more than any other household type in the social rented sector. Excluding benefits, single person households in the social rented sector spent an average of 51% of their income on rent. After taking Housing Benefit into account this dropped to 35%.
- 2.30 Social renters with dependent children spent a smaller proportion of income on rent than those without dependent children. Including Housing Benefit, social renters with dependent children spent an average of 23% of their income on housing, compared to social renters without dependent children who spent 30%. Similarly, when excluding Housing Benefit social renters with dependent children spent an average of 28% of their income on rent, compared to 41% for those without dependent children, Annex Table 2.14.

### Ability to pay rent

- 2.31 After receiving Housing Benefits, 69% of social renters said they found it easy to pay their rent; much the same as the proportion of private renters who found it easy to pay their rent (71%). Most shared owners found it easy (85%), Figure 2.3 and Annex Table 2.16.

**Figure 2.3: Ease of paying rent after benefits, social rented sector**



**Base: all rent paying social renting households, whose rent is not entirely covered by Housing Benefit**

**Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 2.16**

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

## Payment of gas and electricity bills

2.32 There are three main ways households can pay for their gas and electricity: direct debit, standard credit and prepayment meters. The most common method of payment for social renters for electricity and gas was using prepayment meters (46% and 45% respectively), which was higher than private renters (21% for both electricity and gas) or owner occupiers (4% for electricity and 3% for gas)<sup>12</sup>, Annex Table 2.17.

2.33 While direct debit has previously been the least expensive way of paying for gas and electricity, the latest figures from BEIS show this is no longer the case, with prepayment bills similar to direct debit bills. Standard credit remains the most expensive option<sup>13</sup>.

<sup>12</sup> These proportions vary from those published by BEIS in their Quarterly Energy Prices, section on payment methods in <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/quarterly-energy-prices-june-2018>. This is due to differences in methodology as the BEIS data is collected directly from energy companies. EHS respondents may not be aware of their payment type, for example thinking that standing order (classed as standard credit) is a type of direct debit.

<sup>13</sup> Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, Quarterly Energy Prices, June 2018

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## Chapter 3

# Housing history and future aspirations

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3.1 This chapter explores the housing history of social renters and looks at their future housing aspirations. It also describes how and why people moved in and out of the social rented sector. Where relevant, comparisons are made with other tenures, particularly the private rented sector.

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

#### Current accommodation

3.2 On average social renters had been in their current accommodation for 11.9 years. Local authority tenants had been in their accommodation for an average of 13.4 years and housing association renters an average of 10.9 years<sup>14</sup>.

3.3 Local authority tenants tended to have lived in their current home for longer than housing association tenants: 51% of local authority tenants had lived in their home for 10 years or more compared to 40% of housing association renters who had lived in their home for 10 years or more, Annex Table 3.1.

3.4 Social renters were more likely to have been in their current accommodation for over a decade (44%) than private renters (10%), but less likely to have done so than owner occupiers (64%)<sup>15</sup>.

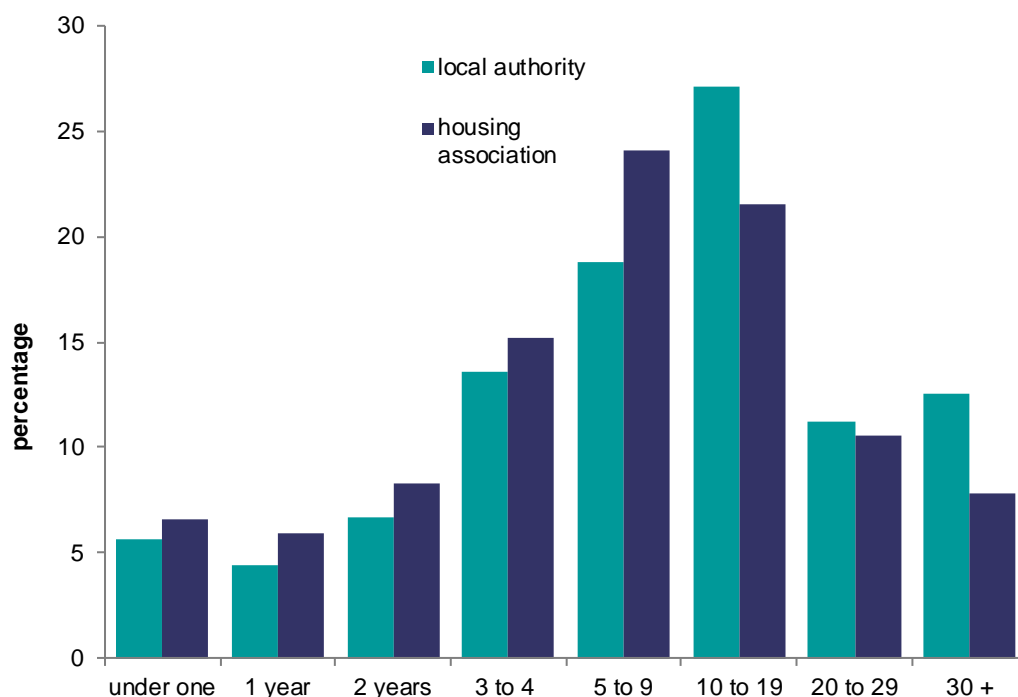
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<sup>14</sup> English Housing Survey, 2017-18 Headline Report, Annex Table 1.18

<sup>15</sup> English Housing Survey, 2017-18 Headline Report, Annex Table 1.18



**Figure 3.1: Number of years in the current home, social rented sector, 2017-18**



**Base: all social rented households**

**Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 3.1**

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

### Length of time in the social rented sector

3.5 On average, social renters had lived in the social rented sector for longer than private renters had lived in the private rented sector. The majority of social renters had been in the tenure for 10 years or more (61%), compared to private renters (26%). A smaller proportion of social renters had been in the tenure less than two years (9%) compared to the private rented sector (23%)<sup>16</sup>, Annex Table 3.2.

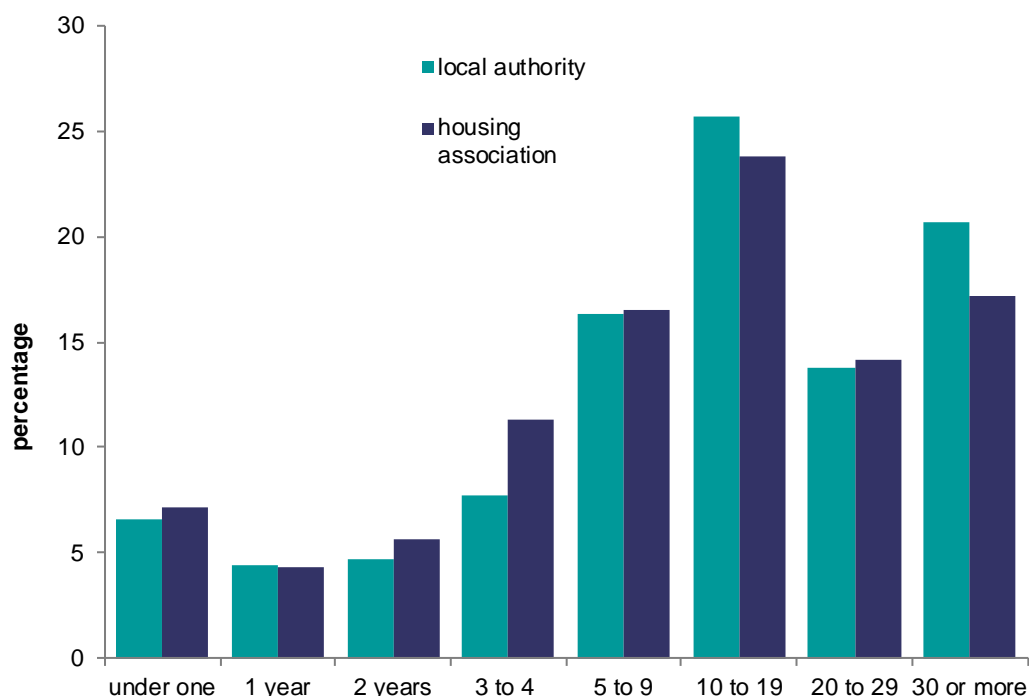
3.6 Local authority tenants were more likely than housing association tenants to have lived in the social rented sector for 30 years or more. A quarter (25%) of local authority tenants had lived in the social rented sector for 30+ years, compared to 18% of housing association tenants. Similarly, 65% of local authority tenants had been social renters for 10 or more years, higher than the proportion of housing association renters (58%).

3.7 Local authority renters were less likely to have been in the tenure for less than five years (19%) compared to a quarter of housing association tenants. This is perhaps unsurprising as the newest dwellings – which are therefore more

<sup>16</sup> English Housing Survey, 2017-18, Private Rented Sector, Annex Table 3.2

likely to be rented by new residents in the sector – were mostly owned by housing associations<sup>17</sup>, Figure 3.2 and Annex Table 3.2.

**Figure 3.2: Number of years in the social rented sector, 2017-18**



**Base: all social rented households**

**Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 3.2**

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

## Household moves

3.8 The social rented sector was the tenure with the fewest household moves. In 2017-18, 245,000 households in the social rented sector had moved home within the last 12 months. Some of these were previously living in another social rented dwelling while others had moved into the tenure. In comparison, there were 614,000 household moves into and within the owner occupier sector and 1.2 million into and within the private rented sector.

3.9 A total of 139,000 household moves in the social rented sector were internal, accounting for 57% of moves. The number of moves between housing association and local authority homes were small and are therefore not discussed in this report.

3.10 Overall, 106,000 households had recently moved into the social rented sector. Of these 29,000 were new households (12% of moves in the sector), 11,000

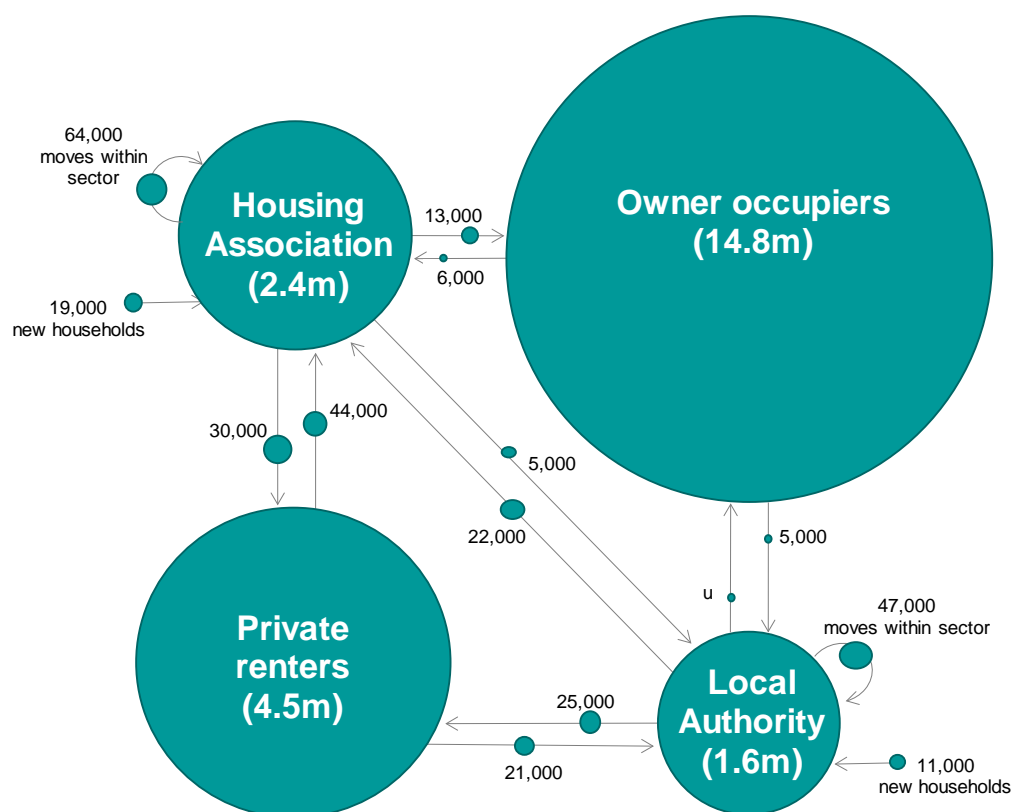
<sup>17</sup> English Housing Survey, 2017-18 Headline report, Annex Table 2.1.

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were previously owner occupiers (5% of moves in the sector) and 65,000 households were previously private renters (27% of moves in the sector).

- 3.11 Fewer households had moved out of the social rented sector than in. Of the 73,000 households that moved out of the sector in the last year, 55,000 moved into the private rented sector; the remaining 18,000 moved into owner occupation, Figure 3.3 and Annex Table 3.3.

Figure 3.3: Household moves, by tenure, 2017-18<sup>18</sup>



Base: all households resident less than a year

Notes:

- 1) figures and arrows indicate the number of households moving into, out of, and within each sector in the 12 months before interview. Figures in the tenure circles indicate the total number of households in the tenure in 2017-18.
- 2) these figures only relate to households that moved from one property to another. They do not include sitting tenant purchasers or households that have bought their home under Right to Buy. In 2017-18, 20,891 social renters bought their home under Right to Buy.
- 3) underlying data are presented in Annex Table 3.3
- 4) a small number of cases with inconsistent responses have been omitted
- 5) survey cannot identify the number of households which have ended
- 6) u indicates sample size too small for reliable estimate

Source: English Housing Survey, full household sample.

## Reasons for moving and for considering moving

3.12 All social renters who moved in the last three years were asked the reasons why they moved. Moving to a larger house was mentioned by 20% of social

<sup>18</sup> While the number of local authority households who moved into the owner occupied sector is too small to report, we do know that 12,059 local authority households exercised their right to buy in 2017-18. There were 8,832 housing association households who exercised their right to buy in 2017-18 (for more information see [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/759385/LT\\_67\\_8.xlsx](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/759385/LT_67_8.xlsx)). However, this chart only includes households who physically moved from one property to another, and therefore does not include social rented households who bought under Right to Buy.

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renters as a reason for moving. This was greater than the proportion of all other reasons, apart from the previous accommodation not being suitable and 'other reasons' (both 18%), neighbourhood and other family/personal reasons (both 16%), Annex Table 3.4.

### **Main reason for moving**

- 3.13 Those who stated more than one reason for moving were then asked about their main reason for moving. The most common reason cited by social renters was to have a larger house (15%). This was followed by social renters saying they moved due to 'other reasons' (14%), due to their previous accommodation being unsuitable (11%), and due to family/personal issues (11%) between the three options.
- 3.14 Social renters were less likely to have moved for job related reasons (3%) than private renters (18%) and owner occupiers (5%).
- 3.15 Social renters were more likely to move because of the size of their home than private renters. A greater proportion of social renters moved to have a larger house (15%) compared to private renters (11%), whilst 4% moved for smaller house compared to 2% of private renters. There was no significant difference between social renters and owner occupiers who moved for these reasons.
- 3.16 Social renters were also more likely to move due to issues with the suitability of their accommodation than private renters and owner occupiers. Overall, 11% of social renters moved because their previous accommodation was unsuitable, compared to 2% of private renters and 1% of owner occupiers. Similarly, 4% of social renters moved primarily because their previous accommodation was in poor condition. This was higher than the proportion of owner occupiers who moved for the same reason (1%), although there was no significant difference between the proportion of social and private renters (3%) who had moved for this reason.
- 3.17 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 7% of social renters and higher than the proportion of current owners who moved from their previous accommodation for the same reason (1%). Although, there was no significant difference between the proportion of private renters (9%) and social renters who were evicted from their previous accommodation.
- 3.18 Few social renters moved for marriage or to live with someone else, accounting for only 1% of moves. This was lower than the proportion of private renters (7%) and owner occupiers (4%) who moved for marriage or to live with someone else, Annex Table 3.5.

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## Reasons for moving from the private rented sector

- 3.19 Social renters who had moved into the social rented sector from the private rented sector in the last three years were asked for the reasons why they had moved. Nearly two thirds (63%) had moved out of choice while 23% said one of the reasons was being asked to leave by their private landlord. Smaller proportions mentioned other reasons including 'mutual agreement' (8%), a poor relationship with the landlord (7%), rent increase (5%), and ending of a fixed term tenancy (3%), Annex Table 3.6.
- 3.20 Social renters who said they were asked to leave by their landlord were then asked about the reason for their eviction. The predominant reason for those who then went into the social rented sector was that the landlord wanted to sell or use the property (68%), Annex Table 3.7.

## Expectations to move in next six months

- 3.21 Relatively few households expected to move in the next six months. Social renters were slightly more likely to expect to move (6%) over the next six months than owner occupiers (4%), but less likely than private renters (20%).
- 3.22 Of social renters who expected to move within the next six months, the most common reason cited was to move to a larger house or flat (45%). This was followed by 40% who said they wanted to move to nicer accommodation, and 33% who said they wanted to move to a better neighbourhood and more pleasant area.
- 3.23 Local authority tenants who expected to move within the next six months were more likely to move to get a larger home (55%) compared to housing association tenants (40%), Annex Table 3.8.

## Waiting lists

- 3.24 Overall 313,000 (8%) social rented households had at least one member of the household on a social housing waiting list. Social renters were more likely to have a member of the household on a waiting list than private renters (6%) and owner occupiers (less than 1%), Annex Table 3.9.
- 3.25 Households with a younger HRP were more likely to have someone on a social housing waiting list than those aged over 35. Overall, 12% of social renters where the HRP was under 35 had a household member on a social housing waiting list compared to 7% of households with a HRP aged 35 or over, Annex Table 3.10.
- 3.26 Social renters with dependent children were more likely to have a household member on a social housing waiting list (13%) compared to those who did not have dependent children (6%), Annex Table 3.11.

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## Length of wait

- 3.27 Social renters who had been in their home for 10 years or less were asked how long they were on a social housing waiting list before they were allocated their property. Overall, 75% of social renters were allocated their current home within one year, and 61% allocated their home in less than six months.
- 3.28 Housing association renters were more likely to have been allocated their current home within one year (78%) than local authority tenants (70%). Similarly, 55% of local authority tenants were allocated their home within six months, lower than the proportion of housing association tenants allocated their current home within the same period of time (64%). Just under half of housing association tenants (48%) were allocated their home within three months, this was higher than the proportion of local authority tenants who were allocated their home within three months (35%), Annex Table 3.12.
- 3.29 Reported time to be allocated current home varied among some demographic groups. Social renters on the social housing waiting list with dependent children were more likely to have been on the register for less than six months (56%) than those without dependent children (65%), Annex Table 3.13.

## Buying expectations

- 3.30 Renters were asked if they expected to buy in the future. A quarter (25%) of social renters expected to buy a property in the UK at some point in the future. This was lower than the proportion of private renters who expected to buy (58%).
- 3.31 Among those social renters who expected to buy, 14% expected to buy within the next two years. Local authority renters who expected to buy were more likely to say they would buy within the next two years (18%) than housing association tenants (11%). Social renters who expected to buy were less likely than private renters to expect to buy within the next two years (14% compared to 26%).
- 3.32 Over half of social renters who expected to buy had an expectation to buy their current home (51%). Local authority tenants had a greater expectation to buy their current home (59%) than housing association renters (46%). Social renters had a greater expectation to buy their current home (51%) than private renters (14%)<sup>19</sup>.

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<sup>19</sup> English Housing Survey, 2017-18 Headline report, Annex Table 1.10

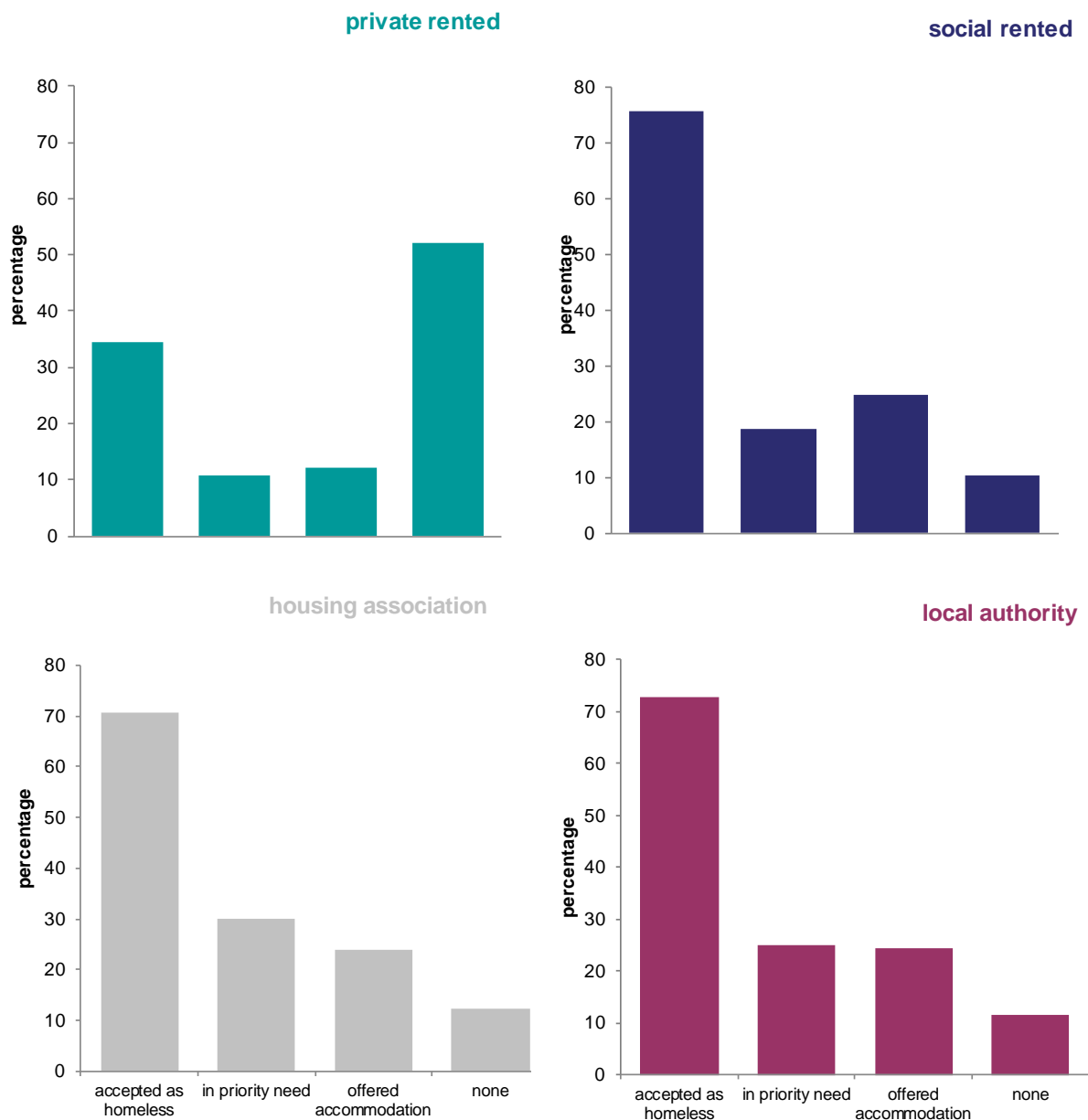
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## Homelessness

- 3.33 This section explores the experiences of homelessness in the social rented sector. It looks at how many social renters were previously at risk of becoming homeless, their journey through applications to be considered homeless and the outcome of this.
- 3.34 One in ten (10%) current social renters (about 395,000 households) said they had contacted the council at some point in the last few years because they were about to become homeless. This was split between 170,000 local authority and 225,000 housing association tenants.
- 3.35 Of those who had contacted the council because they were about to become homeless, 87% (339,000) said they asked the council to consider them as homeless (147,000 local authority and 192,000 housing association tenants), Annex Table 3.14.
- 3.36 The majority (73%) of social renters who contacted the council and asked to be considered homeless were accepted as homeless, 25% were considered in priority need and 24% were offered accommodation.
- 3.37 Looking across tenures, social renters were more likely than private renters to be accepted as homeless (73% compared to 35%) when presenting to the council, considered in priority need (25% compared to 11%) and offered accommodation (24% compared to 12%), Annex Table 3.15.



**Figure 3.4: Outcome of applications for homelessness, 2017-18**



**Base: all renters who applied to be considered homeless**

**Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 3.15**

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

3.38 Social renters who were offered accommodation after contacting the council requesting to be considered as homeless were offered various types of accommodation. Emergency accommodation accounted for the largest proportion of accommodation type offered (44%) with a greater proportion than those who were offered their current home (26%), temporary accommodation (20%) and long-term council accommodation (6%).

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- 3.39 Of the social renters who were also accepted as homeless after asking the council to consider them as homeless, 44% were offered emergency accommodation. This was higher than the proportion who were offered temporary housing (22%), Annex Table 3.16.
- 3.40 Of social renters who were accepted as homeless, 57,000 had moved into the sector over the last three years. A total of 188,000 households living in social rented accommodation that had been accepted as homeless in the past were previously in the social rented sector or in their property for more than three years.
- 3.41 Of those social renters accepted as homeless, 8% were new households, 13% previously lived in the private rented sector and 2% were previously owner occupiers, Annex Table 3.17.

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# Chapter 4

## Dwelling condition and energy efficiency

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4.1 This chapter explores the overall dwelling condition, dwelling safety and energy efficiency of the 4.1 million social rented sector homes<sup>20</sup>. Dwelling condition is examined using three housing quality indicators: Decent Homes Standard, damp and disrepair. Dwelling safety is assessed through the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), electrical safety, the presence of working smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors. For all the measures, the social rented stock is compared with other tenures.

### Overview

4.2 Overall, social rented homes were less likely to have poor housing conditions and more likely to have key dwelling safety features than other homes, particularly those in the private rented sector, Figure 4.1.

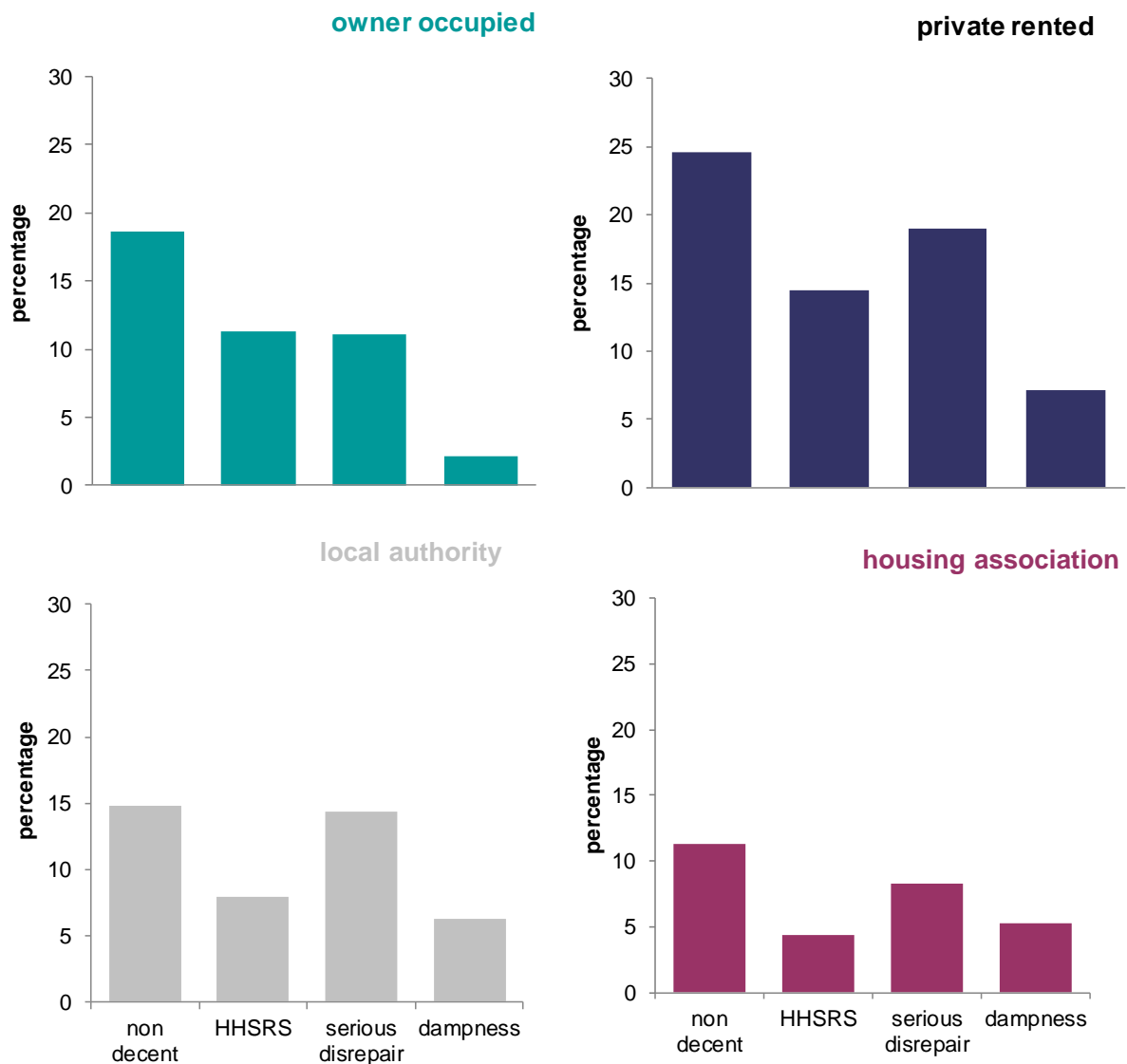
4.3 There are many reasons for better housing conditions among social rented dwellings including the different dwelling age and dwelling type profiles of social homes compared with those in the private sector. The social rented stock for example, has a lower proportion of the oldest pre-1919 built homes which tend to have greater disrepair and are more likely to fail the statutory minimum standard for housing<sup>21</sup>. Other factors include housing investment through Decent Homes work and planned/responsive repair programmes by social landlords.

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<sup>20</sup> English Housing Survey, 2017-18 Headline Report, Annex Table 2.1.

<sup>21</sup> As assessed by the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). See 'Dwelling Safety' section of this chapter.

**Figure 4.1: Poor housing conditions, by tenure, 2017**



Base: all dwellings

Note: underlying data are presented in Live tables DA3201, DA4101, DA5101, DA5201.

Source: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

## Dwelling condition

### Decent Homes<sup>22</sup>

4.4 The social rented sector had a lower proportion of non-decent homes. In 2017, 13% of social rented homes (516,000) failed to meet the Decent Homes Standard compared with 19% of owner occupied and 25% of private rented

<sup>22</sup> See English Housing Survey, Technical Report 2017-18 Annex 5.5 for more information on the Decent Homes Standard.

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homes. Among social rented homes, housing association dwellings were less likely to be non-decent (11%) than those owned by local authorities (15%)<sup>23</sup>.

- 4.5 On the whole, social renters were satisfied with their accommodation, irrespective of whether it met the Decent Homes Standard. There was no significant difference in the proportion of social renters in decent homes who were satisfied (80%) compared to social renters in non-decent homes (75%), Annex Table 4.1.
- 4.6 The findings were similar for housing association renters as satisfaction was equal (80%) for those living in decent homes or non-decent homes (80%). Local authority renters in decent homes were, however, more likely to say they were satisfied (80%) than those in non-decent homes (70%).

### **Damp**

- 4.7 Overall, social rented homes were more likely to have damp problems than owner occupied homes, although dampness was most prevalent among privately rented dwellings.
- 4.8 In 2017, 6% (229,000) of all social rented homes had dampness compared with 2% of owner occupied homes and 7% of private rented homes. However, within the social rented stock, only housing association owned homes (5%) were less likely to have damp problems than private rented homes<sup>24</sup>.
- 4.9 The English Housing Survey Headline Report, 2017-18, examines trends in the prevalence of damp problems over time. In addition, chapter 2 of the EHS 2017-18 Stock profile and condition report examines damp problems in greater depth, including the prevalence of damp reported by households as part of the interview survey.

### **Disrepair**

- 4.10 To provide comparative levels of medium term disrepair for each tenure, the following analysis uses EHS standardised basic repair costs in square metres (£/m<sup>2</sup>)<sup>25</sup>.
- 4.11 Overall, the average level of disrepair was similar among social rented and owner occupied homes, but notably lower than the private rented sector. In 2017 the average cost of disrepair among social rented and owner occupied

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<sup>23</sup> English Housing Survey, 2017-18 Headline Report, Annex Table 2.2. The English Housing Survey, 2017-18 Headline Report examines Decent Homes trends over time, and chapter 2 of the EHS 2017-18 Stock profile and condition report examines the characteristics of non-decent homes in greater detail, including the reasons for failing the Standard and the number of criteria failed.

<sup>24</sup> English Housing Survey, 2017-18 Headline Report, Annex Table 2.5.

<sup>25</sup> See English Housing Survey Technical Report, 2017-18, Chapter 5 Annex 5.5, for further information. This repair cost indicator is different to that used to calculate whether a home meets the repair criterion of the Decent Homes Standard.

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homes was (£13/m<sup>2</sup>), compared with £22/m<sup>2</sup> for private rented homes, Live table DA5201.

- 4.12 Over a third of social rented homes had no repairs (38%) while 11% had serious level disrepair of over £35/m<sup>2</sup>. Although a similar proportion of owner occupied homes had serious disrepair (11%) to social rented homes, a higher proportion had no repair costs (46%). Overall privately rented dwellings had the highest levels of disrepair with 19% having serious disrepair over £35/m<sup>2</sup>.

## Dwelling safety

### Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)

- 4.13 The HHSRS is a risk-based assessment tool that identifies hazards in dwellings and evaluates their potential effects on the health and safety of occupants and their visitors.
- 4.14 In 2017, 6% (234,000) of social homes had at least one Category 1 hazard compared with 11% of owner occupied and 14% of private rented homes. Within the social rented sector, housing association homes (4%) were less likely to have Category 1 hazards than homes owned by local authorities (8%)<sup>26</sup>.
- 4.15 The most serious risks of harm from living in an excessively cold home<sup>27</sup> or from falls were also less prevalent among social homes (Live Table DA4101).
- 4.16 The lower prevalence of Category 1 hazards in social rented homes is partly due to the stock having the highest proportion of purpose built flats which tend to be more energy efficient and present less serious risk of falls associated with stairs and steps.

### Electrical safety

- 4.17 Provision of all five key electrical safety features<sup>28</sup> was markedly higher in the social rented sector than other tenures. Almost three quarters (73%) of social rented homes had all five safety features compared with 60% of owner occupied and 61% of privately rented homes, Live table DA5201<sup>29</sup>.

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<sup>26</sup> English Housing Survey, 2017-18 Headline Report, Annex Table 2.3.

<sup>27</sup> The EHS estimates whether a dwelling poses a threat to health from excessive cold by using its SAP rating.

<sup>28</sup> The five measures are modern wiring, modern earthing, a modern consumer unit arrangement, miniature circuit breakers for overload protection and residual current devices which break electrical circuits when an 'abnormality' is detected such as a person touching a live wire.

<sup>29</sup> DA5201 also provides data on the prevalence of each safety measure by tenure and other dwelling characteristics.

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## Smoke alarms

4.18 Social renters, especially housing association renters, were more likely to have a working smoke alarm in their home. In 2017, 95% of all social renters (housing association (96%), local authority, (93%)) had a working smoke alarm compared with 89% of owner occupiers and 89% of private renters<sup>30</sup>.

## Carbon monoxide alarms

4.19 In 2017, social rented (37%) and owner occupied (39%) homes were more likely to have a carbon monoxide detector than private rented dwellings (35%), irrespective of whether the home used a solid fuel appliance<sup>31</sup>.

## Energy efficiency

4.20 The EHS uses the Government's Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) to monitor the energy efficiency of a dwelling and allows comparisons to be made between different homes<sup>32</sup>.

4.21 In 2017, social rented homes were, on average, more energy efficient than homes in the private sector. The average SAP rating for social homes was 68 compared with 61 for both owner occupied and private rented homes<sup>33</sup>.

4.22 The distribution of social rented homes across energy efficiency bands (EER) bands also differed from homes in the private sector. In particular, there was a higher proportion (52%) of social rented homes in the highest SAP EER bands A-C than owner occupied (25%) or private rented (27%) homes. Social rented homes also had a lower proportion of homes (1%) in the lowest SAP EER bands F -G than both owner occupied (6%) and private rented (6%) homes<sup>34</sup>.

4.23 These findings largely reflect that the social rented sector contained a higher proportion of flats; these are generally more energy efficient as they have less exposed surface area (external walls and roofs) through which heat may be lost. The social stock is also generally younger (Live table DA1101) and better insulated (Live table DA6201).

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<sup>30</sup> English Housing Survey, 2017-18 Headline Report, Annex Table 2.16.

<sup>31</sup> English Housing Survey, 2017-18 Headline Report, Annex Table 2.18.

<sup>32</sup> see SAP entry of the Glossary for further details.

<sup>33</sup> English Housing Survey, 2017-18 Headline Report, Annex Table 2.6.

<sup>34</sup> English Housing Survey, 2017-18 Headline Report, Annex Table 2.7.

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# Technical notes and glossary

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## Technical notes

1. The first three chapters of this report, on households, are presented for '2017-18' and are based on fieldwork carried out between April 2017 and March 2018 on a sample of 13,395 households. Throughout the report, this is referred to as the 'full household sample'.
2. Results in the fourth chapter of the report, which relate to the physical dwelling, are presented for '2017' and are based on fieldwork carried out between April 2016 and March 2018 (a mid-point of April 2017). The sample comprises 12,320 occupied or vacant dwellings where a physical inspection was carried out. Throughout the report, this is referred to as the 'dwelling sample'.
3. 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".
4. 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.
5. 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 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.



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## Glossary

**Acceptance as 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.

**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.

**Category 1 hazard:** The most serious type of hazard under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). Where such a hazard exists the dwelling fails to reach the statutory minimum standard for housing in England.

**Decent home:** A home that meets all of the following four criteria:

- it meets the current statutory minimum standard for housing as set out in the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS – see below).
- it is in a reasonable state of repair (related to the age and condition of a range of building components including walls, roofs, windows, doors, chimneys, electrics and heating systems).

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- it has reasonably modern facilities and services (related to the age, size and layout/location of the kitchen, bathroom and WC and any common areas for blocks of flats, and to noise insulation).
  - it provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort (related to insulation and heating efficiency).

The detailed definition for each of these criteria is included in *A Decent Home: Definition and guidance for implementation*, Department for Communities and Local Government, June 2006<sup>35</sup>.

**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.

**Dwelling:** A unit of accommodation which may comprise one or more household spaces (a household space is the accommodation used or available for use by an individual household). A dwelling may be classified as shared or unshared. A dwelling is shared if:

- the household spaces it contains are 'part of a converted or shared house', or
- not all of the rooms (including kitchen, bathroom and toilet, if any) are behind a door that only that household can use, and
- there is at least one other such household space at the same address with which it can be combined to form the shared dwelling.

Dwellings that do not meet these conditions are unshared dwellings.

The EHS definition of dwelling is consistent with the Census 2011.

**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.

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<sup>35</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-decent-home-definition-and-guidance>

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- **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 2010<sup>36</sup>.
  - **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.

**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:

1. English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British
2. Irish
3. Gypsy or Irish Traveller
4. Any Other White background

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

**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

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<sup>36</sup> For further information see: [www.gov.uk/browse/working/state-pension](http://www.gov.uk/browse/working/state-pension)

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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.

**Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS):** A risk assessment tool used to assess potential risks to the health and safety of occupants in residential properties in England and Wales. It replaced the Fitness Standard in April 2006.

The purpose of the HHSRS assessment<sup>37</sup> is not to set a standard but to generate objective information in order to determine and inform enforcement decisions. There are 29 categories of hazard, each of which is separately rated, based on the risk to the potential occupant who is most vulnerable to that hazard. The individual hazard scores are grouped into 10 bands where the highest bands (A-C representing scores

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<sup>37</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/housing-health-and-safety-rating-system-hhsrs-guidance>

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of 1,000 or more) are considered to pose Category 1 hazards. Local authorities have a duty to act where Category 1 hazards are present, and may take into account the vulnerability of the actual occupant in determining the best course of action.

For the purposes of the decent homes standard, homes posing a Category 1 hazard are non-decent on its criterion that a home must meet the statutory minimum requirements.

The EHS is not able to replicate the HHSRS assessment in full as part of a large scale survey. Its assessment employs a mix of hazards that are directly assessed by surveyors in the field and others that are indirectly assessed from detailed related information collected. For 2006 and 2007, the survey (the then English House Condition Survey) produced estimates based on 15 of the 29 hazards. From 2008, the survey is able to provide a more comprehensive assessment based on 26 of the 29 hazards. See the EHS Technical Note on Housing and Neighbourhood Conditions<sup>38</sup> for a list of the hazards covered.

**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.

**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.

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<sup>38</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-housing-survey-technical-advice>

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**Marital status:**

- **single**, that is never married and never registered in a same-sex civil partnership,
- **married**, or in a registered same-sex civil partnership
- **separated**, but still legally married or in a same-sex civil partnership,
- **divorced**, or formerly in a same-sex civil partnership which is now legally dissolved
- **widowed**, or a surviving partner from a same-sex civil partnership

**Method of payment for energy:** There are three main ways households can pay their energy bills: direct debit, standard credit and prepayment meters. The EHS gives respondents a number of options to choose from:

- (1) Direct debit (including online direct debit)
- (2) Payment on receipt of bill by post, telephone, online or at bank/post office
- (3) Standing order
- (4) Pre-payment (keycard, slot or token) meters
- (5) Included in rent
- (6) Frequent cash payment method (i.e. more frequent than once a month)
- (7) Fuel direct/direct from benefits
- (8) Fixed Annual Bill (however much gas/electricity is used) e.g. StayWarm

These options are then grouped into the three main types as follows:

- **Direct debit:** option 1, 5, 7 and 8
- **Standard credit:** option 2, 3 and 6
- **Prepayment meters:** option 4

There is also an 'other – specify' category in the EHS questionnaire, kept as 'other'.

**New household:** Where neither the household reference person (HRP) nor their spouse/partner occupied the HRP's previous permanent accommodation, in either of their names. The EHS does not differentiate between previous accommodation within England and outside of England (including abroad).

**Non-dependent children:** any person aged over 18 or those aged 16-18 who are not in full-time education living in a family with his or her parent(s) or grandparent(s).

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**Older households:** Households where the oldest person in the household is aged 55 or over.

**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.

**Private registered providers (PRPs):** private registered providers refer in this document to private providers of social housing in England that are registered with the social housing regulator (from 1st April 2012 this is the Homes and Communities Agency's Regulation Committee). These were previously termed Registered Social Landlords or housing associations. This term excludes local authority registered providers.

**Right to Buy scheme:** The Right to Buy scheme gives secure tenants in a local authority home the opportunity to buy their home at a discount. In order to qualify for the scheme a social tenant must have lived for a total of at least three years in a public sector tenancy.

The scheme is also available to assured tenants of non-charitable housing associations who have transferred with their homes from a local authority as part of a stock transfer. In this case the tenants is said to have a 'preserved Right to Buy'.

The Government has plans to extend Right to Buy to housing association tenants and are currently running a Voluntary Right to Buy pilot scheme amongst a small number of housing associations.

**Recent movers:** Households which moved into their current home in the last 12 months. This includes both new and continuing households, but does not include sitting tenant purchasers.

**SAP rating:** See the entries for the Standard Assessment Procedure and Energy Efficiency Rating

**Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP):** The Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) is the methodology used by the Government to assess and compare the energy and environmental performance of dwellings. The SAP is used to calculate the energy efficiency rating (EER) of dwellings, also known as the SAP rating. The EER is an index based on calculated energy costs for a standard heating regime and is expressed on a scale of 1 (highly inefficient) to 100 (highly efficient with 100 representing zero energy cost). It is possible for a dwelling to have a rating of over 100 where it produces more energy than it consumes, although such dwellings will be rare within the English housing stock.

Reduced Data SAP (RdSAP) was introduced in 2005 as a lower cost method of assessing the energy performance of existing dwellings. RdSAP is used in the calculation of the energy ratings on the Energy Performance Certificate, a document

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which is required every time a home is put up for sale or rent. Since the 2015 survey, the EHS has provided a number of indicators on energy performance calculated using an approach which is in line with RdSAP 2012 version 9.92. To ensure that the findings in this report are as compatible as possible with energy performance assessments and certificates issued in England during 2017-18, the energy performance findings presented in this report were calculated using RdSAP version 9.92.

**Social housing rents:** Most social housing rents are calculated according to 'rent restructuring' policy, introduced in 2001. The overall intention of the policy was that similar properties in similar areas should have similar levels of rents. The formula calculates rents for each individual property based on 30% of the relative property values at 1999 levels, 70% on relative local earnings and the size of the property. The formula rent had been increased annually at the rate of Retail Price Index inflation at the previous September + 0.5% until 2015-16 when it was increased by CPI +1%.

In 2012, the Government introduced Affordable Rent as another main type of social housing rents, which can be set at up to 80% of the market rate of the property, inclusive of service charges.

Between 2016-17 and 2019-20, social housing rents will be reduced by 1% a year, for four years except from supported housing, almshouses, community land trusts and fully mutual housing co-ops which will be excepted during the first year.

There is also a different arrangement for rents for intermediate rent properties (which falls within the statutory definition of social housing).

**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.

**Substantial disrepair:** Standardised basic repair costs of more than £35/m<sup>2</sup>. Standardised repair costs measure repair costs expressed in pounds per square metre of floor area



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**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.

**Younger households:** Households where the oldest person in the household is aged less than 55 years.

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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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