



Department for Levelling Up,  
Housing & Communities



# English Housing Survey

Owner occupier leaseholders, 2020-21



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# Contents

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Introduction and main findings

Chapter 1: Profile of owner occupier leaseholders

Chapter 2: Financial profile of owner occupier leaseholders

Technical notes and glossary

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# Introduction and main findings

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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.

## Impact of COVID-19 on the English Housing Survey

2. The 2020-21 English Housing Survey data was collected during the COVID-19 pandemic which necessitated a change in the established survey mode. Face-to-face interviews were replaced with telephone interviews and internal inspections of properties were replaced with external inspections, where the inspection was restricted to an assessment of the exterior of the dwelling and supplemented by information about the interior of the dwelling the surveyor collected (socially distanced) at the doorstep. Ordinarily such changes would not be done without thorough testing to examine the impact on survey response rates, data collection and reporting. Given that such testing was not possible, it is not clear to what extent changes observed in 2020-21 are the result of the change in mode, or real change (e.g. a change in people's housing circumstances as a result of COVID-19).
3. These issues are exacerbated by the fact that the composition of the EHS achieved sample changed significantly between 2019-20 and 2020-21. For example, in 2020-21, there were significantly more outright owners and fewer renters in the sample. There was also a skew toward older respondents (aged 65 and over), and fewer households with children than in 2019-20. These changes may be the result of changing housing circumstances, but it is also likely that household circumstances prevented some households from taking part in the survey during the pandemic (e.g. home schooling, caring responsibilities, and ill health and well-being meant that some households would be less inclined to take part in the survey).
4. There were also some data we were unable to collect at all, e.g. data on the condition of the homes that relies on a surveyor's assessment of the inside of a home. More information on the impact of COVID-19 on the English Housing Survey can be found in the Technical Report<sup>1</sup>.

## This report

5. This report focuses on owner occupier leaseholders; that is owner occupiers who own the home that they live in on a leasehold basis (referred to throughout the report as leaseholders).

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/english-housing-survey-technical-advice#technical-reports>

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6. The report has two chapters. The first provides a profile of owner occupier leaseholders and how they compare to other owner occupiers. In particular, it examines the demographic characteristics of leaseholders, satisfaction with accommodation, and the type and location of their homes.
  7. Chapter 2 explores the financial circumstances of owner occupier leaseholders, compared with other owner occupiers. It looks at employment status, average income, amount of savings, and the proportion of income spent on housing costs. It also looks at regional differences.

## Main findings

**There are 15.4 million owner occupiers in England, of which 2.3 million are leaseholders.**

**Leaseholders are younger, more likely to be female and more likely to have a qualification of degree level or higher than other owner occupiers. They are less satisfied with their accommodation and have, on average, lived in their property for a shorter time.**

- 22% of leaseholders were aged under 35, compared with 10% of other owner occupiers
- 47% of leasehold households have a female household reference person (HRP<sup>2</sup>). Among other owner occupiers, 38% have a female HRP.
- 55% of leaseholders have a degree level qualification or higher, compared with 46% of other owner occupiers.
- Leaseholders had, on average, lived in their home for 6 years, compared with 13 years for other owner occupiers.

**Leaseholders are more likely to be first time buyers, tend to live in more deprived areas, and are less likely to live in rural areas.**

- 51% of leaseholders were recent first time buyers (i.e. had bought in the last three years) compared with 32% of other owner occupiers.
- 19% of leaseholders lived in the most deprived 20% of areas, compared with 7% of other owner occupiers; 17% were in the least deprived 20% of areas compared with 26% of other owner occupiers.
- Leaseholders were less likely to live in rural areas (6%) than other owner occupiers (22%).
- In England, 42% of the leaseholders live in London and the South East. Another 22% live in the North West.

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<sup>2</sup> The household reference person (HRP) is the person in whose name the accommodation is owned or rented. In the case of joint ownership or tenancy, it is the person who earns the most.

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**Leaseholders are more likely to be in work than other owner occupiers, but earned less on average. Even so, they spent the same proportion of income on their mortgage and had a similar amount of savings.**

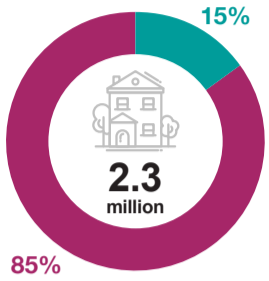
- The average (mean) weekly gross household income among leaseholders was £913, almost £100 lower than the average for other owner occupiers (£1,008).
- A higher proportion of leaseholders were in full-time work (56%) than other owner occupiers (49%). A further 8% of leaseholders were in part-time work.
- The proportion of income leaseholders spent on their mortgage was a fifth (20%), a similar proportion to other owner occupiers.
- Almost a fifth of leaseholders (19%) reported having no savings, while almost half (47%) reported having more than £5,000 in savings. The proportion did not significantly differ for other owner occupiers.

## Acknowledgements and further queries

8. Each year the English Housing Survey relies on the contributions of a large number of people and organisations. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) would particularly like to thank the following people and organisations, without whom the 2020-21 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.
9. This report was produced by Justine Piddington at BRE and Monica Bennett at NatCen Social Research in collaboration with DLUHC.
10. 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@levellingup.gov.uk](mailto:ehs@levellingup.gov.uk).
11. The responsible analyst for this report is: Stephen Pottinger, Housing and Planning Analysis Division, DLUHC. Contact via [ehs@levellingup.gov.uk](mailto:ehs@levellingup.gov.uk).



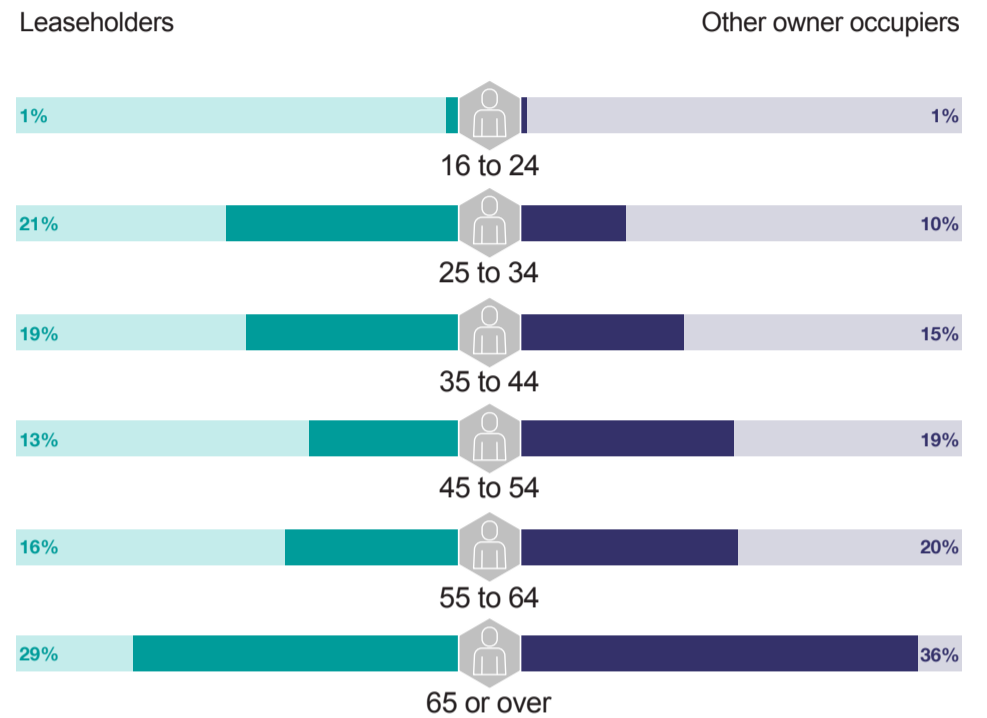
## Owner occupier leaseholders



**15%** Owner occupiers leaseholders  
**85%** Other owner occupiers

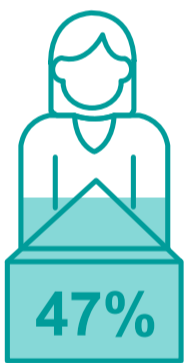
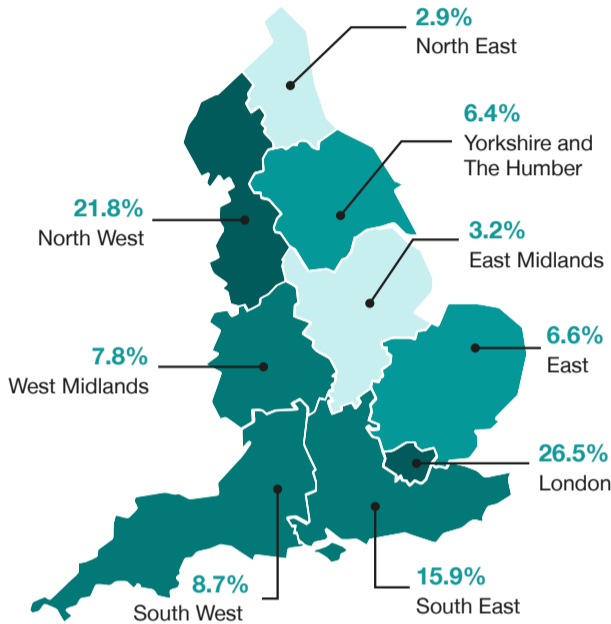
**2.3 million owner occupier leaseholders in England (15% of all owner occupiers)**

**22% of leaseholders were aged under 35, compared with 10% of other owner occupiers**



**42%** of leaseholders live in London and the South East.

**22%** live in the North West.



Leaseholders



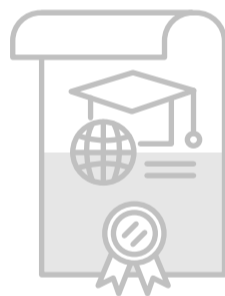
Other owner occupiers

**Leasehold households are more likely to have a female household reference person**

\*the household reference person is the person in whose name the accommodation is owned.



Leaseholders



Other owner occupiers

**Leaseholders are more likely to have a degree than other owner occupiers**



Leaseholders



Other owner occupiers

**Leaseholders have lower incomes than other owner occupiers**

**A higher proportion of leaseholders were in full-time work than other owner occupiers**

■ Leaseholders ■ Other owner occupiers



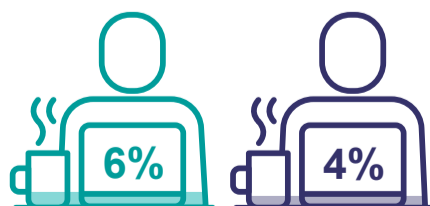
Full-time work



Part-time work



Retired



Other, including unemployed, in full-time education or economically inactive



6 years

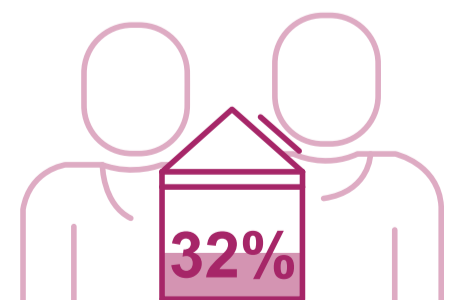
13 years



**The median length of time leaseholders had lived in their home was 6 years, compared with 13 years for other owner occupiers.**



Leaseholders



Other owner occupiers

**51% of leaseholders were recent first time buyers compared with 32% of other owner occupiers**

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# Chapter 1

## Profile of owner occupier leaseholders

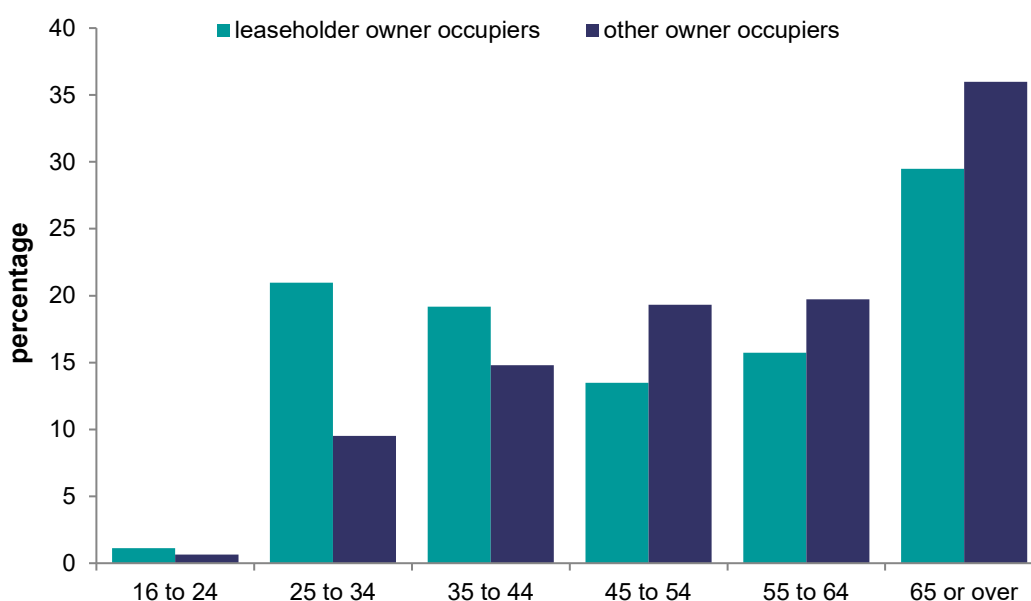
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- 1.1 There are different ways that households can own their house or flat. Two of the most common types of ownership are freehold and leasehold. Freeholders own the property and the land it stands on, either with or without a mortgage. Leaseholder owner occupiers, who can also own their home with or without a mortgage, do not own the land and typically pay a service charge and ground rent. They have the right to occupation and use of their home for a long period, known as the 'term' of the lease and the lease can be bought and sold during this term.
- 1.2 This chapter will provide a profile of leaseholder owner occupiers who made up 15% of all owner occupiers in 2020-21. It reports on their demographic characteristics, satisfaction with their accommodation and the type and location of their homes. All other types of owner occupiers are treated as one group for comparison. For ease of reading, in this chapter, leasehold owner occupiers will be referred to as leaseholders.
- 1.3 In comparison to other owner occupiers, leaseholders tended to be younger, were more likely to be first time buyers, live in flats, live in more deprived areas and be less satisfied with their accommodation.

### Demographic characteristics

- 1.4 There are 15.4 million owner occupiers in England, of which 2.3 million are leaseholders.
- 1.5 Overall, leaseholders had a younger age profile than other owner occupiers. Leaseholders were more likely to have a HRP aged 25 to 34 (21%) or 35 to 44 (19%) compared with other owner occupiers (10% and 15% respectively). Although the greatest proportion of leaseholders had a HRP aged 65 years or over (29%), this was also the case for other owner occupiers (36%), who were more likely to have a HRP in this age range, Figure 1.1.

**Figure 1.1: Age of HRP, leaseholders and other owner occupiers, 2020-21**



**Base: all owner occupiers**

**Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 1.1**

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

- 1.6 Both leaseholders and other owner occupiers were more likely to have a male than a female HRP. Just over half (53%) of leaseholder HRPs were male compared with 62% of other owner occupier HRPs, so consequently leaseholders were more likely to have a female HRP, Annex Table 1.1.
- 1.7 The proportion of households with a White HRP and those with an ethnic minority HRP was similar among leaseholders and other owner occupiers, 91% and 93% respectively for households with White HRPs.
- 1.8 Both leaseholders and other owner occupier households were more likely to have a HRP and/or partner with a degree or higher qualification (55% and 46% respectively) than they were to have another type of qualification or no qualification. Leaseholders were more likely to have a degree level or above qualification than other owner occupiers. Around one quarter of both types of owner occupiers held no qualifications<sup>3</sup>.
- 1.9 Leaseholders were no more likely to have anyone in their household with a long-term illness or disability than other owner occupiers (25% and 29% respectively).
- 1.10 The majority of leaseholders were very satisfied with their accommodation, as was the case for other owner occupiers. However, the proportion of very satisfied leaseholders (55%) was lower compared with other owner occupier

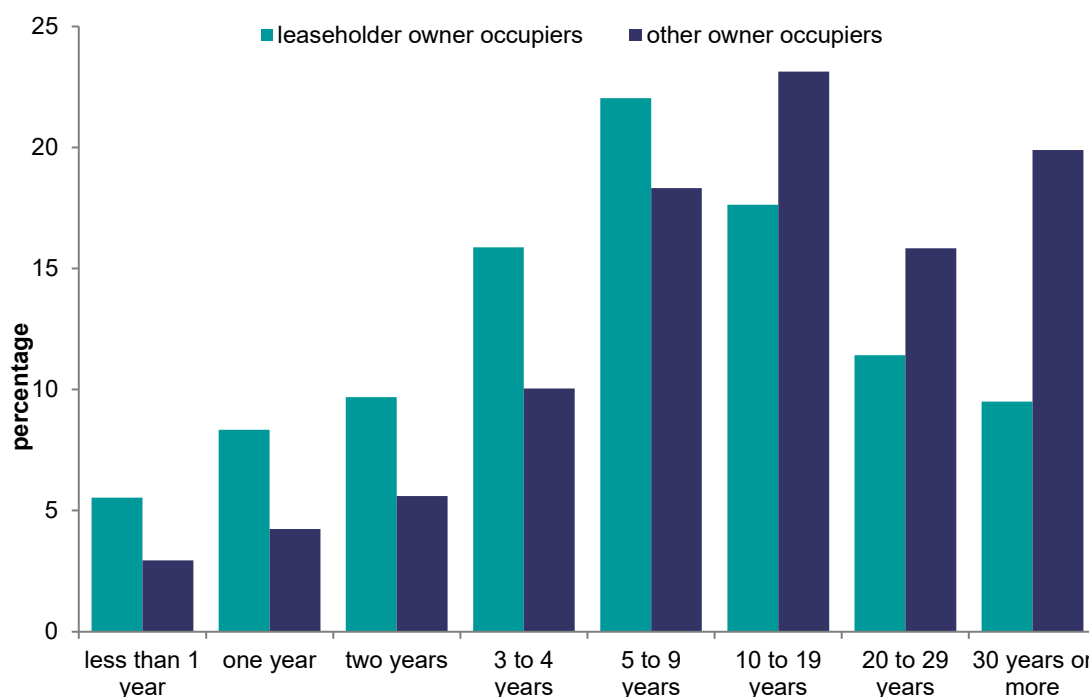
<sup>3</sup> This category also included all HRPs/partners aged 70 or over who were not asked about qualifications.



households (69%). Relatedly, the proportion dissatisfied was greater among leaseholders than other owner occupiers (7% compared with 3%).

- 1.11 Leaseholders had generally lived in their home for a shorter length of time than other owner occupiers. Some 14% of leaseholders had lived in their home for one year or less. This was almost double the proportion (7%) of other owner occupiers living in their home for the same period.
- 1.12 A notably higher proportion of leaseholders (61%) had lived at their accommodation for less than ten years compared with other owner occupiers (41%). Conversely, only around one in ten (9%) leaseholders had lived in their home for 30 years or more compared to a fifth (20%) of other owner occupiers. This trend was probably in part a reflection of the younger age profile among leaseholders, Figure 1.2.

**Figure 1.2: Length of residence, leaseholders and other owner occupiers. 2020-21**



**Base:** all owner occupiers

**Note:** underlying data are presented in Annex Table 1.2

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

- 1.13 The median length of residence was 6 years for leaseholders and 13 years for other owner occupiers, Annex Table 1.2.

## Ownership features

- 1.14 Leaseholders were more likely to own their home with a mortgage (55%) than own it outright (45%). The opposite trend was evident for other owner

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occupiers, with 45% owning with a mortgage and 55% owning outright, Annex Table 1.3.

- 1.15 Leaseholders were no more likely to be first time buyers (51%) than previous buyers (49%). That is, buyers who had bought a home for the first time in the last three years and had not owned a property previously. However, leaseholders were more likely to be first time buyers than other owner occupier households (32%), Annex Table 1.4.
- 1.16 As many as 8% of leaseholders could not recall the length of their lease at the time they purchased the property. A further 8% had leases of 70 years or less at time of purchase whereas 45% had a leasehold term between 71 and 120 years. Almost a fifth (18%) had leases of 500 years or longer at time of purchase. The median length of lease was 112 years, Annex Table 1.5.

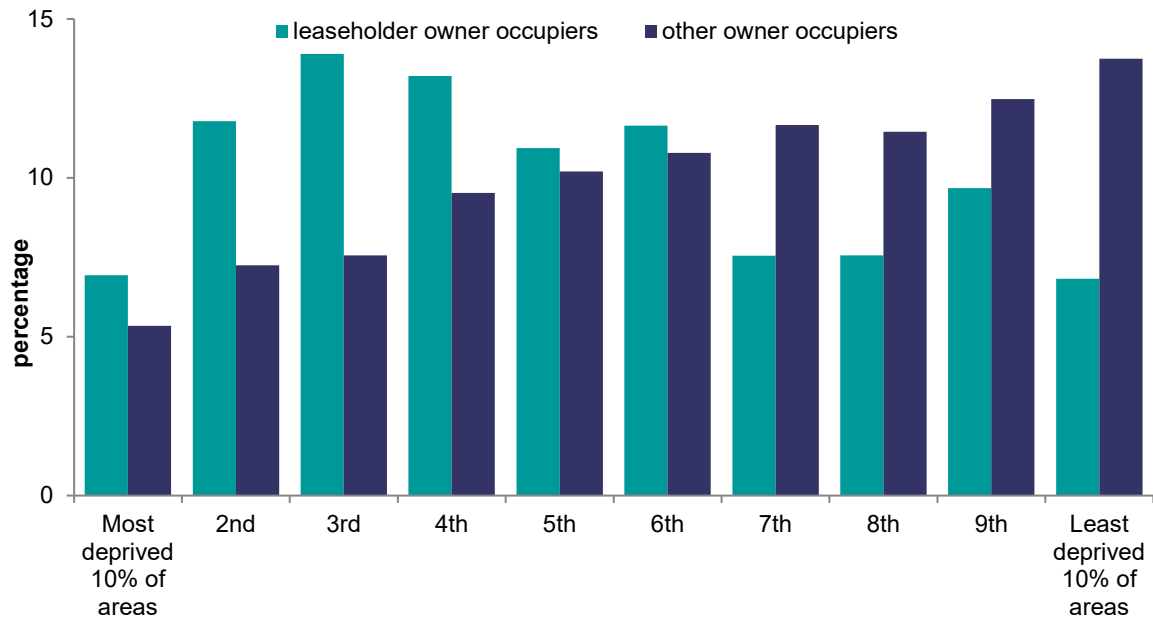
## Accommodation type and location

- 1.17 Leaseholders were more likely to live in flats; 61% lived in low rise flats and a further 9% lived in high rise flats, of six or more storeys. Conversely, the vast majority (99%) of other owner occupiers lived in houses, Annex Table 1.6.
- 1.18 Although leaseholders (7%) were no more likely to be living in the most deprived 10% of areas than other owner occupiers (5%), they were more likely to be living in the most deprived 20% of areas (19% compared with 13%)<sup>4</sup>. Fewer than a fifth (16%) of leaseholders lived in the least deprived 20% of areas compared with around a quarter (26%) of other owner occupiers, Figure 1.3, Annex Table 1.7.

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<sup>4</sup> The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) is the official measure of relative deprivation in England. This is an overall measure of multiple deprivation experienced by people living in an area and is calculated for every Lower-layer Super Output Area (LSOA), or neighbourhood, in England. All neighbourhoods in England are then ranked according to their level of deprivation relative to that of other areas.

**Figure 1.3: Level of area deprivation, leaseholders and other owner occupiers, 2020-21**



**Base: all owner occupiers**

**Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 1.7**

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

1.19 Leaseholders were more likely to live in some regions than others with the highest proportions in London (27%) and the North West (22%). The finding for London likely reflects the higher proportion of flats in this region<sup>5</sup>. There was also a higher proportion of leaseholders in the South East (16%) compared with most other regions, Figure 1.4.

1.20 In contrast, only 9% of other owner occupier households lived in London, with higher proportions living in the South East (18%) and in the North West (13%), Annex Table 1.7.

<sup>5</sup> English Housing Survey, 2020-21 Headline Report, Annex Tables 2.1

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-housing-survey-2020-to-2021-headline-report>

**Figure 1.4: Regional distribution of leaseholders, 2020-21**



**Base: all owner occupiers**

**Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 1.7**

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

1.21 Leaseholders were less likely to live in rural areas (6%) than other areas. However, they were as likely to live in cities and urban areas or suburban residential areas (44% and 50% respectively). Leaseholders were more likely to live in cities than other owner occupiers (16%), but less likely than their counterparts to live in suburban and rural areas, Annex Table 1.8.

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## Chapter 2

# Financial profile of owner occupier leaseholders

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- 2.1 This chapter provides an overview of the financial circumstances of leaseholder owner occupiers, compared to the financial profile of other owner occupiers. It looks at employment status, average income, amount of savings, and the proportion of income spent on housing costs. It also looks at regional differences, comparing those within London with those in the rest of England.
- 2.2 Overall, there were not substantial differences in the financial circumstances of leaseholders and other owner occupiers. Key differences related to employment status and income.

### Employment status

- 2.3 Over half (56%) of leaseholders were in full-time work. When combined with those in part-time work (8%), the overall proportion of leaseholders in work was 64%. A further 30% were retired. Other owner occupiers were less likely to be in full-time work (49%), and more likely to be retired (37%) than leaseholders, Annex Table 2.1.
- 2.4 Leaseholders in London were more likely to be in full-time work (69%) than those outside of London (51%) and less likely to be retired (11%) than those outside of London (37%). This is likely a reflection of London's younger age profile.
- 2.5 Within London, a higher proportion of leaseholders were in full-time work than other owner occupiers (51%), and a smaller proportion of leaseholders were retired than other owner occupiers (34%). For the rest of England, there were no significant differences when comparing the proportion of leaseholders in full-time work or retirement to the proportion of other owner occupiers. However, other owner occupiers were more likely to be in part-time work (10%) compared to leaseholders (6%).

## Financial status

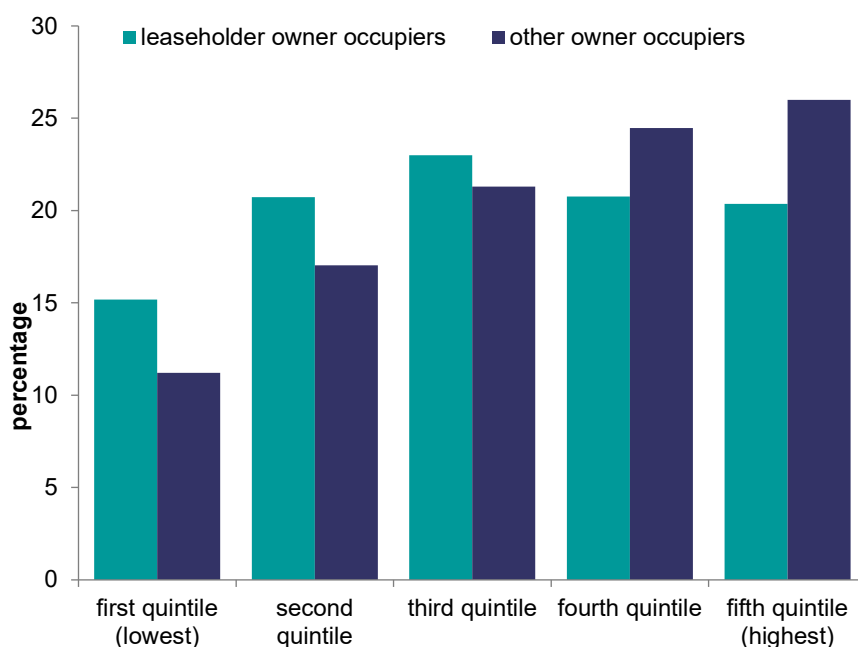
### Average weekly income

- 2.6 The average weekly gross household income among leaseholders was £913 (median £713), which was significantly lower than among other owner occupiers (mean £1,008, median £819). Annex Table 2.2.
- 2.7 Londoners generally have a higher income than those in the rest of England, and this is reflected here. Leaseholders in London had a higher weekly household income (mean £1,392, median £1,065) than those outside of London (mean £740, median £647).

### Income quintiles

- 2.8 One in five (20%) owner occupier leaseholders were in the highest income quintile, a further 21% and 23% were in the second highest and the middle income quintiles, respectively. Annex Table 2.3.
- 2.9 Other owner occupiers were more likely to be in the highest income quintile (26%) than leaseholders (20%), and leaseholders were more likely to be in the lowest income quintile (15%) than other owner occupiers (11%; at the 95% level), Figure 2.1.

**Figure 2.1: Household income of leaseholders and other owner occupiers, 2020-21**



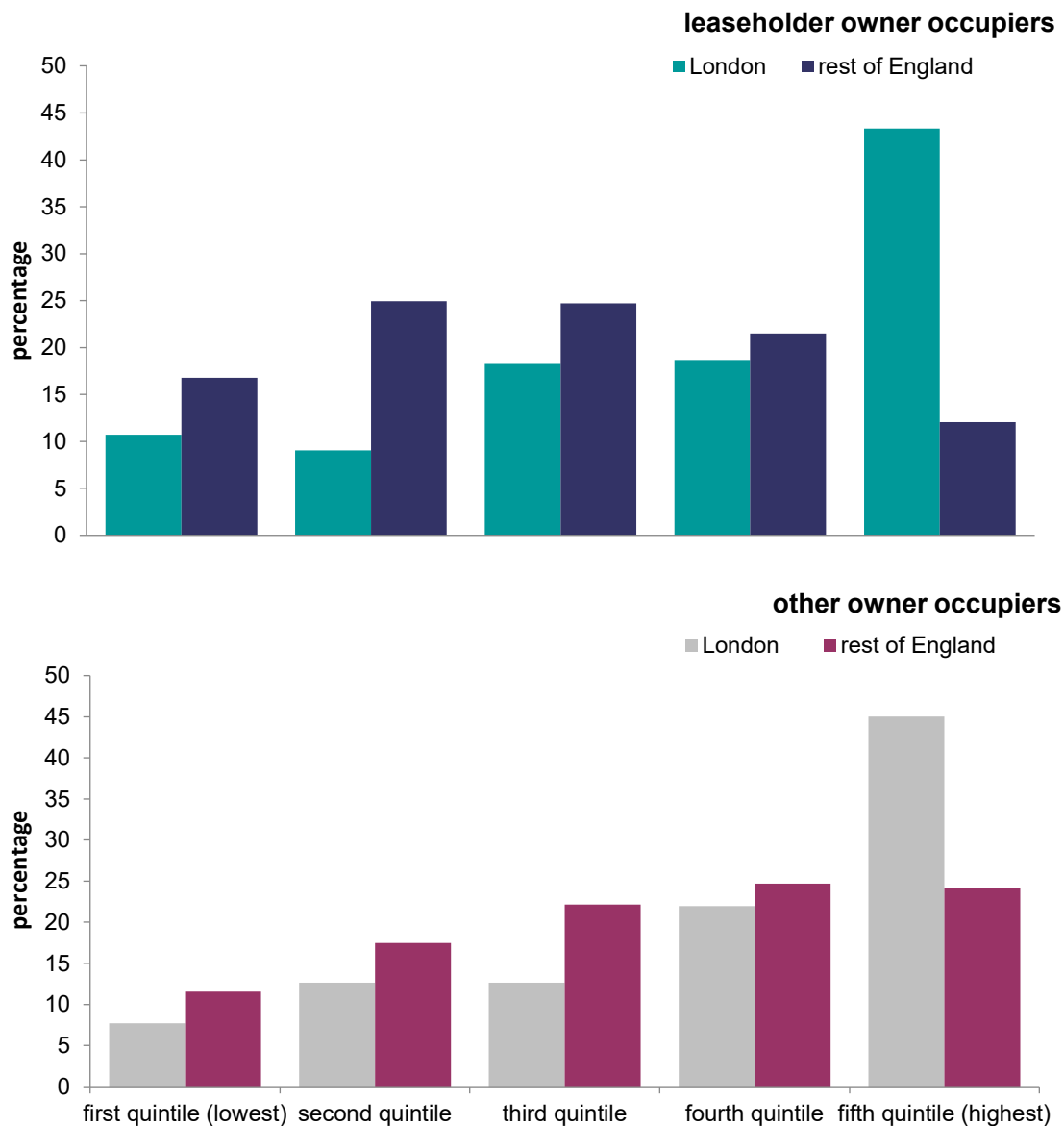
Base: all owner occupiers

Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 2.3

Sources: 2020-21 English Housing Survey, full household sample

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- 2.10 As expected, in London, a higher proportion of both types of owner occupier were likely to be in the highest income quintile (43% of leaseholders and 45% of other owner occupiers). This was significantly higher than in the rest of England (12% of leaseholders and 24% of other owner occupiers). Proportions of leaseholders in the lowest income quintile did not significantly differ between London (11%) and the rest of England (17%), Figure 2.2.
- 2.11 In London, there were no significant differences in the income profile of leaseholders and other owner occupiers. However, in the rest of England, a significantly larger proportion of leaseholders (17%) were in the lowest income quintile than were other owner occupiers (12%). Furthermore, the proportion of leaseholders in the highest income quintile (12%) was significantly lower than for other owner occupiers (24%).

**Figure 2.2: Household income of leaseholders and other owner occupiers by region, 2020-21**



**Base: all owner occupiers**

**Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 2.3**

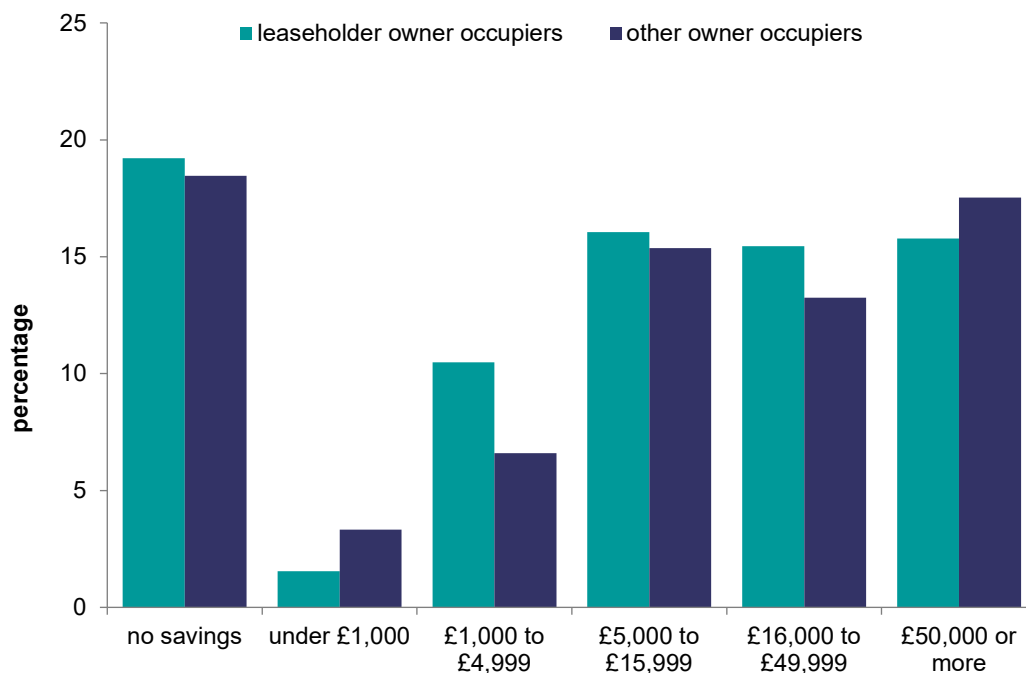
**Sources: 2020-21 English Housing Survey, full household sample**

## Savings

- 2.12 Overall, the amount of savings held by leaseholders and other owner occupiers did not differ substantially, Figure 2.3
- 2.13 Almost a fifth of leaseholders (19%) reported having no savings, while almost half (47%) reported having more than £5,000 in savings. Overall, 16% had £50,000 or more in savings. These proportions did not significantly differ for other owner occupiers, Annex Table 2.4.



**Figure 2.3: Amount of savings held by leaseholders and other owner occupiers, 2020-21**



**Base: all owner occupiers**

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

**Sources: 2020-21 English Housing Survey, full household sample**

2.14 There were no significant differences in the amount of savings of leaseholders and other owner occupiers in London. Findings were similar for the rest of England, with the exception of leaseholders being less likely to have a savings amount under £1,000 (1%) than other owner occupiers (3%), and more likely to have a savings amount between £1,000 and £4,999 (12%) than other owner occupiers (7%).

## Proportion of income spent on mortgage

2.15 Leaseholders spent an average of one fifth (20%) of their household income on their mortgage, much the same as other owner occupiers. This proportion did not significantly differ by region, Annex Table 2.5<sup>6</sup>.

## Service charges and ground rent payments

2.16 The average weekly service charge for leaseholder owner occupiers was £32 (equivalent to an annual amount of £1,658; weekly median £23). There was

<sup>6</sup> This proportion is based on household income, which includes all adults in the household. Outright owners are excluded as they have no mortgage costs.

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no significant difference in service charge amount between London and the rest of England, Annex Table 2.6.

- 2.17 The average weekly ground rent was £4 (equivalent to an annual amount of £213; weekly median £2). There was no significant difference in ground rent amount between London and the rest of England, Annex Table 2.7.

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# Technical notes and glossary

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## Technical notes

1. Results for the majority of this report, on households, are presented for '2020-21' and are based on fieldwork carried out between April 2020 and March 2021 on a sample of 7,474 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 but are too numerous to include in our reports.
5. A more thorough description of the English Housing Survey methodology is provided in the Technical Report which is published annually<sup>1</sup>. The 2020-21 Technical Report includes details of the impact the COVID-19 on the 2020-21 survey. A full account of data quality procedures followed to collect and analyse English Housing Survey data can be found in the Quality Report, which is also updated and published annually<sup>2</sup>.

## Glossary

**Area type in the household sample:** All households are classified in the household sample according to the [2011 Rural-Urban Classification for Small Area Geographies](#):

- **urban:** includes a built up area with a population of more than 10,000 people

- 
- **rural:** includes town and fringe, village, hamlets and isolated dwellings

**Area type in the dwelling sample:** At the physical inspection, the surveyor makes an assessment of the area surrounding the dwelling and classifies it according to the following categories:

- **city or other urban centre** which includes
  - *city centre:* the area around the core of a large city.
  - *other urban centre:* the area around towns and small cities, and also older urban
- **suburban residential:** the outer area of a town or city; characterised by large planned housing estates.
- **rural** which includes:
  - *rural residential:* a suburban area of a village, often meeting the housing needs of people who work in nearby towns and cities.
  - *village centre:* the traditional village or the old heart of a village which has been suburbanised.
  - *rural:* an area which is predominantly rural e.g. mainly agricultural land with isolated dwellings or small hamlets.

**Deprived local areas:** These are Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) scored and ranked by the 2015 [Index of Multiple Deprivation](#) (IMD).

Seven domains of deprivation which can be experienced by people are combined to produce the overall IMD. These seven domains relate to:

- Income deprivation
- Employment deprivation
- Health deprivation and disability
- Education skills and training deprivation
- Barriers to housing and services
- Crime
- Living environment deprivation

LSOAs are statistical geography providing uniformity of size. There are 32,844 in England and on average each contains around 1500 people or 650 households. These ranked areas have been placed into five groups of equal numbers of areas, from the 20% most deprived area on the index, to the 20% least deprived.

**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

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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.
- **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>4</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.

**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.

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**First time buyer:** First time buyers are defined as households that have purchased a property that is their main home in the last three years, and in which neither the HRP or partner have previously owned a property. It includes households who have purchased their property outright as well as those who are buying with the help of a mortgage or loan.

**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.

**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.

**Median income:** the amount that divides the income distribution into two equal groups, half having income above that amount, and half having income below that amount.

**Owner occupiers:** households in accommodation which they either own outright, are buying with a mortgage or as part of a shared ownership scheme.

**Region:** A nine region classification is used to present geographical findings, as follows:

- North East
- North West
- Yorkshire and the Humber
- East Midlands

- 
- West Midlands
  - East
  - London
  - South East
  - South West

**Storeys:** The number of storeys *above* ground i.e. it does not include any basements.

**Vacant dwellings:** The assessment of whether or not a dwelling is vacant is made at the time of the interviewer's visit. Clarification of vacancy is sought from neighbours. Both properties in between lets and those that are vacant for a longer period are classified as vacant on the EHS. Surveyors are required to gain access to vacant dwellings and undertake full inspections.

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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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