

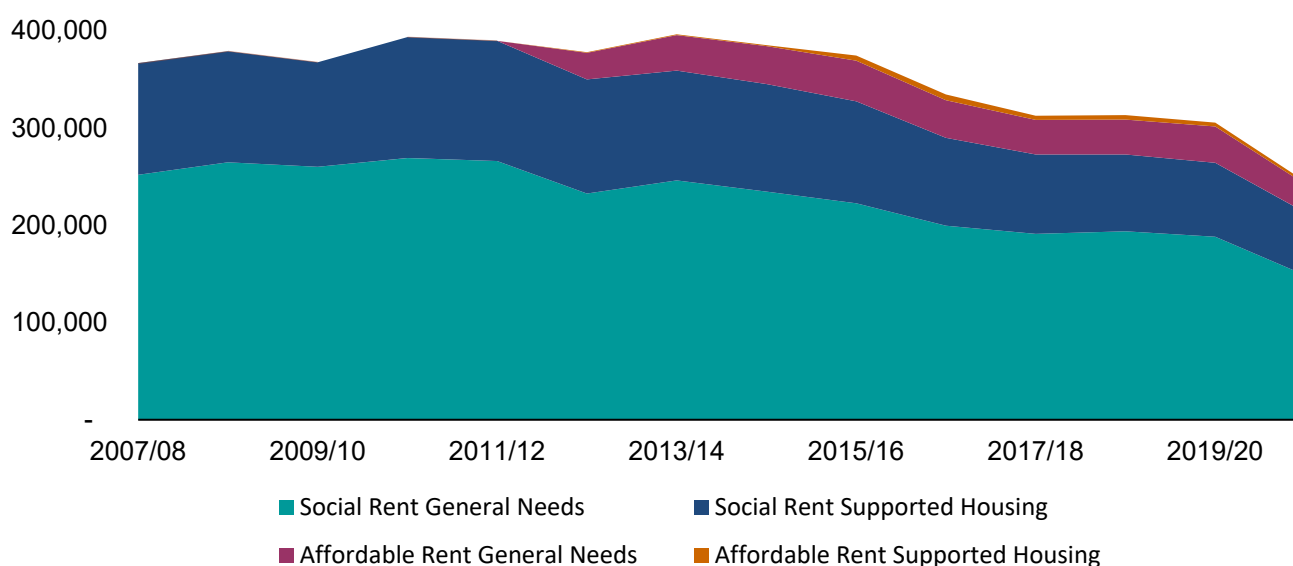


Statistical Release: Housing

Social Housing Lettings: April 2020 to March 2021

In this release:

- There were 246,000 new social housing lettings in 2020/21, a decrease of 20% or 60,000 lets from 2019/20. This follows a steady decline in lettings from the peak of 396,000 in 2011/12. This is likely due to the COVID-19 pandemic and national restrictions introduced in response.
- The number of new social lettings in April 2020 decreased to a quarter of the number seen the previous April. Lettings rebounded in summer and autumn 2020 but to lower levels than in 2019.



- Properties were vacant for longer on average – 28 days in 2020/21 compared to 19 days in 2019/20.
- There were 1.19 million households on local authority waiting lists on 31 March 2021, an increase of 4% from 1.15 million in 2019/20. Over six out of ten of households (61%) with a new social letting in 2020/21 were on the waiting list in that area for less than a year.
- Households new to the social sector comprised 67% of new lets in 2020/21, up from 59% in 2019/20.
- A fifth (20%) of new lettings in 2020/21 were to statutorily homeless households, up from 18% in 2019/20. Households in temporary accommodation immediately prior comprised 15% of new lets.
- Employment of lead tenants of new General Needs lettings decreased to 36% in 2020/21, after steadily increasing from 32% in 2008/09 to 40% in 2019/20. This is likely due to the increase in unemployment associated with the restrictions introduced in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Households in a new General Needs let spent 36% of their income on rent on average, as in 2019/20.

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Date of next release: Autumn 2022

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New social housing lettings in England, 2020/21

How many social housing properties are being newly let?



13% of new lettings are **Affordable Rent** – set at no more than 80% of local market rent



87% of new lettings are **Social Rent** – determined through national rent regime

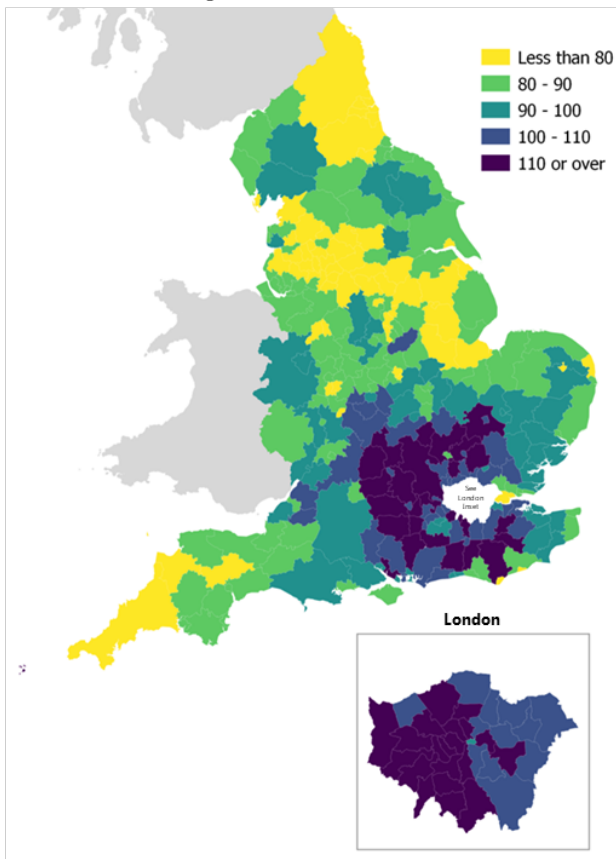
73% of new lettings are **General Needs** – no support arrangements



27% of new lettings are **Supported Housing** – designated support for specific client groups

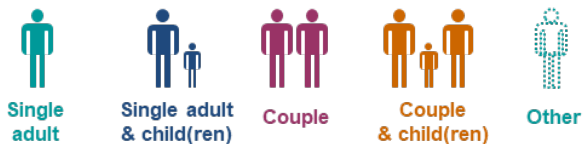
How much is rent in new social housing lets?

Median weekly rents for new social housing lettings are highest in London and surrounding areas



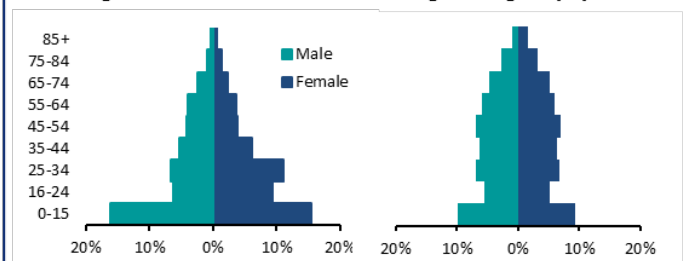
Who is moving into social housing?

Household composition (%) of new lettings

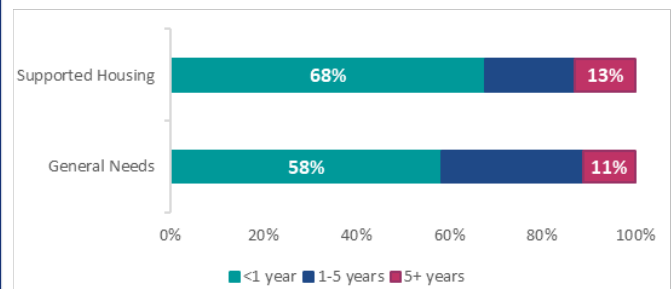


Age of new social tenants

Age of English population



How long were households on the waiting list?



% of new lead tenants in employment

28%
(68,000)

% of new households with indefinite length of tenancy

88%
(217,000)

% of new lettings to White lead tenants

84%
(206,000)

% of new lettings to statutorily homeless households

20%
(49,000)

% of new households from private rented sector

15%
(37,000)

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Introduction

This release covers new social housing lettings in England in 2020/21 by local authorities and private registered providers with information on tenants, tenancy type and length, and rents. It covers new Social Rent, Affordable Rent and Rent to Buy lets, for both general needs and supported housing.

The release covers the first 12-month period of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The data collection for this release opened on 1 April 2020, shortly after the first national restrictions ('lockdown') began in England on 23 March 2020.

The findings in this release should be considered in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Key housing-related events are listed below:

23 March 2020	National restrictions ('lockdown') in England begins
March 2020	'Everyone In' scheme launched to support the homeless
March 2020	Stay on possession proceedings ("eviction ban") put in place
1 April 2020	Start of the 2021/21 CORE reporting year
April 2020	Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme ("furlough") launched
June 2020	Lockdown restrictions begin to ease
June 2020	Stay on possession proceedings ("eviction ban") extended
September 2020	Stay on possession proceedings ("eviction ban") lifted
14 October 2020	New three-tier system of regional restrictions is launched
5 November 2020	Second national lockdown in England begins
2 December 2020	Second national lockdown ends
6 January 2021	Third national lockdown in England begins
March 2021	Restrictions of third lockdown begin to ease

1. New social housing lettings

Executive summary

In 2020/21, there were 246,000 new social housing lettings, a decrease of 20% or 60,000 lets from the previous year. This continues the fall from the peak¹ of 396,000 new social housing lettings in 2013/14 (a 38% decrease), however is a much larger year-on-year decrease than any others since this peak. Social rent tenancies continue to comprise the majority of new lets (87% of new lets), whilst as a proportion of total new lets Affordable Rent products fell slightly and Rent to Buy lets increased slightly compared to 2019/20, making up 13% and 0.3% respectively.

New social housing lettings comprise part of the social rental sector:

- Only 6% of the 4.4 million social properties in England² were let during the year.
- Only 6% of the 4.0 million households in social housing by the end of 2020/21 moved during the year (either into or within the social sector)
- 17% of households in England live in social housing as a whole³.

Housing type and rent type

What types of social housing are there?

Social housing can be broken down in many ways, by the type of organisation, support provided and the rent basis. The tenants in these different groups have different needs and characteristics.

Definition: Types of Housing

Supported Housing (SH)	Housing with special design facilities or features targeted at a specific client group requiring support, for example housing designed for older people.
General Needs (GN)	Covers the bulk of housing stock for rent and includes both self-contained and shared housing. It is stock that is not designated for specific client groups requiring support, or stock that does not have the special design features that are specific to Supported Housing.

Most new social housing lettings are not designed for a specific client group and are thus considered General Needs. These were by far the more common kind of social housing making up 73% of all new lettings in 2020/21. This proportion of General Needs lettings has remained broadly constant

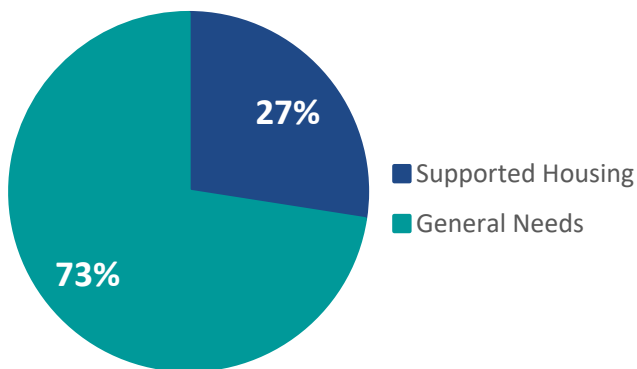
¹ Since CORE data first collected in 2007/08

² Owned by local authorities and Private Registered Providers. Sources: Private registered provider social housing stock and rents in England 2019/20 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/private-registered-provider-social-housing-stock-and-rents-in-england-2019-to-2020>) and Local Authority Housing Statistics data return 2019/20 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/local-authority-housing-data>)

³ English Housing Survey, 2019/20: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-housing-survey-2019-to-2020-headline-report>

for the last 13 years.

Chart 1: Nearly three quarters of new social housing lettings in 2020/21 were General Needs



Definition: Types of Rent

Social Rent (SR)	Target rents are determined through the national rent regime.
Affordable Rent (AR)	Where the rent to be paid by tenants can be no more than 80% of the market value for the property.
Rent to Buy (RB)	Where a discount of up to 20% of all market rent is applied for a single rental period between 6 months and 5 years. During and after that period, the tenant is offered first chance to purchase the property (either shared ownership or outright) at full market value.

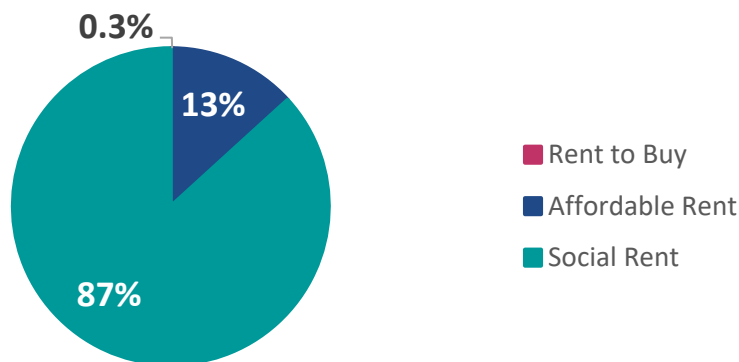
In 2020/21, 87% of new social housing lettings were let at Social Rents.

The Affordable Rent Programme began in 2011/12 for PRPs and in the following year for LAs. Affordable Rent comprised 13% of all new social lettings in 2020/21, similar to last year.

The Rent to Buy programme was introduced in 2017/18. Despite the overall large decreases in new social housing lettings, new Rent to Buy lets slightly increased to a total of 646 in 2020/21 and now make up 0.3% of all new social lettings in 2020/21.

This year is the first year that Rent to Buy have been included as separate breakdowns in this release. Care should be taken when comparing attributes of new Rent to Buy lets against other rent types due to the small number of new Rent to Buy lets.

Chart 2: Nearly 9 in 10 new social lettings in 2020/21 were let at social rent



Providers of social housing

Who owns and lets social housing?

There are two types of social housing providers: Local Authorities and Private Registered Providers. This section describes the key differences between these types of organisations and the lettings they provide.

Definition: Social Housing Providers

Local Authority (LA)

Commonly known as “council housing”. Refers to social housing provided directly by Local Authorities.

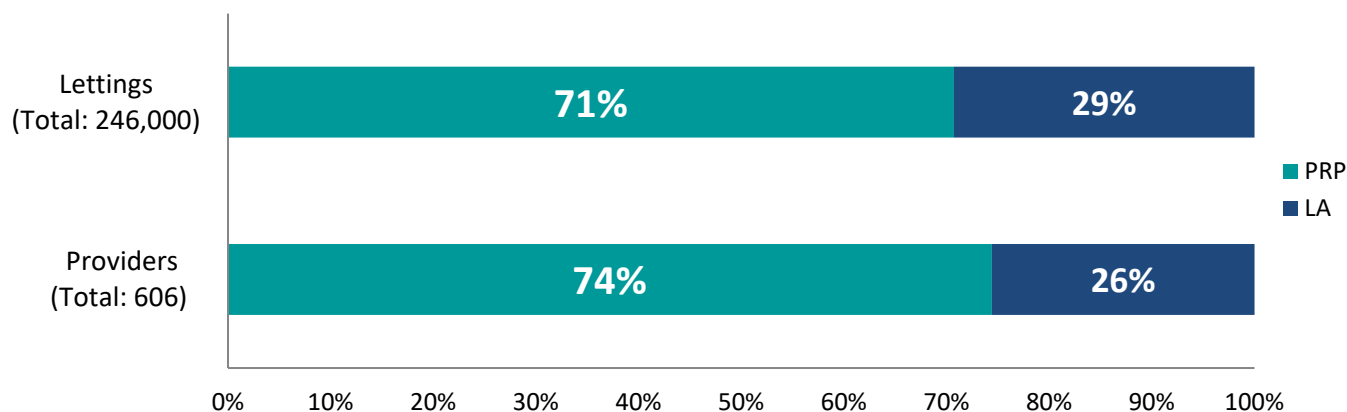
Private Registered Provider (PRP)

Commonly known as “housing associations”. These are providers of social housing who are not LAs and are registered with the regulator of social housing. They are private organisations.

In chart 3 overleaf, we can see that PRPs accounted for 74% of organisations providing social housing in 2020/21, but only provided 71% of new lettings. On average each LA provided 466 new lettings in 2020/21, higher than the 385 average for PRPs. This suggests that the average PRP services fewer households than the average LA.

The 20 largest social housing providers (in terms of new lets) provided 25% of all new lets despite constituting just 3% of all organisations. Of these 20, only two were councils (Leeds City Council and Birmingham City Council).

Chart 3: Over 7 in 10 new social housing lettings in 2020/21 were provided by PRPs



The trend in new social housing lettings over the past decade has been an increase from 2007/08 to a peak in 2013/14 then a decrease until 2020/21. However, the pattern has differed between LAs and PRPs.

New LA lettings fell by a total of 46% over the 10 years to 2020/21 whereas new PRP lettings fell by 33%. In comparison total new social lettings fell by 38%⁴. New lettings had been steadily decreasing in recent years, however this year had the largest year-on-year decrease since this time series began in 2007/08 with a 22% decrease in PRP lettings and 19% decrease in LA lettings.

This can be partly attributed to LA stock shrinking by 11% since 31 March 2010 to 1.58 million units on 31 March 2021⁵. In contrast, PRP stock has grown by 16% during the same period to 2.61 million units on 31 March 2021⁶. In total, since 2008 social housing stock has been increasing each year and now stands at 4.17 million units.

This suggests other factors are responsible for the decline of new social lettings since 2013/14, for example, the widening affordability gap between social and market rents (see page 12).

Chart 4: New PRP lettings kept pace with increasing PRP stock until 2015/16 when lettings

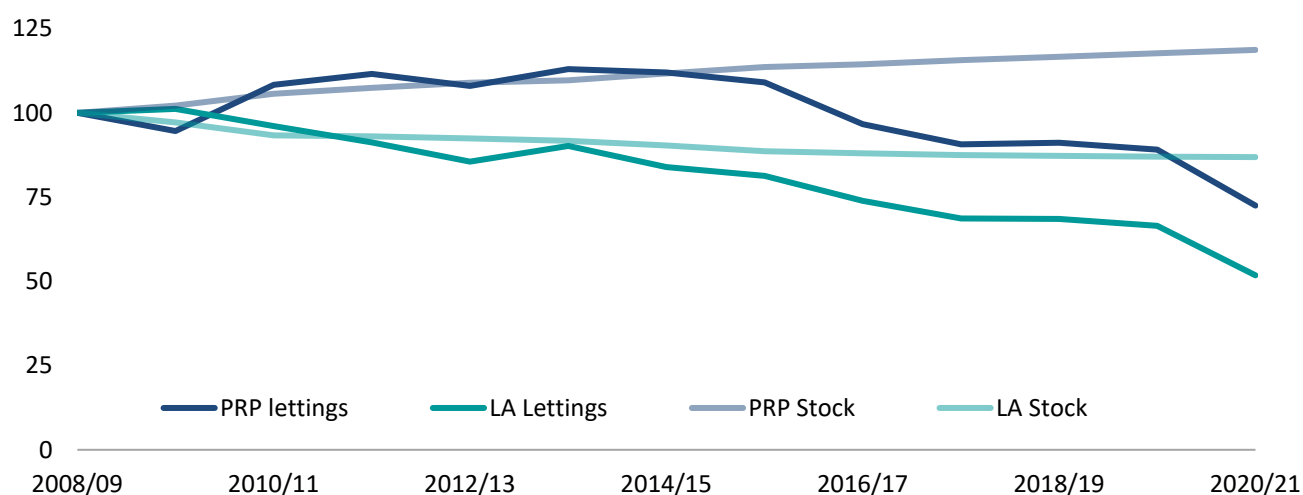
⁴ Accompanying Summary Table 1a

⁵ LAHS – due to sales, including Right to Buy sales, demolitions and other disposals and large-scale voluntary transfers to PRPs.

⁶ SDR – due to large-scale voluntary transfers by LAs.

dropped, whereas LA lettings and stock have both declined since 2008/09

Change over time
(Index: 2008/09 = 100)



Letting types

Table 1: In 2020/21 there were 246,000 new social housing lettings, a 20% decrease from the previous year

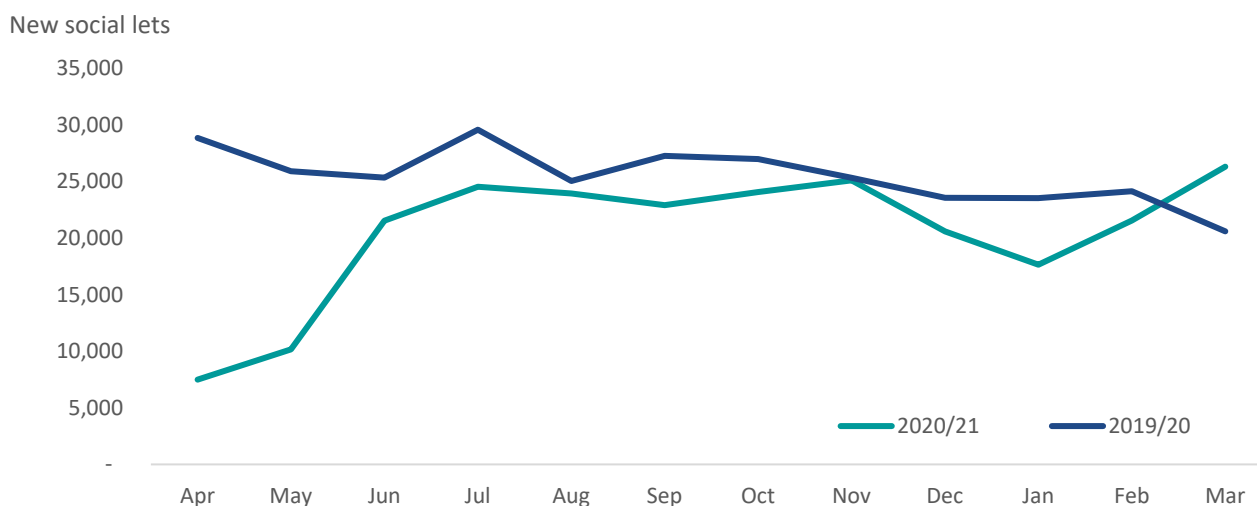
		2020/21 Number	2020/21 % of total	2019/20 Number	2019/20 % of total	Change Number	Change % change
All	Total new lets	245,898		306,187		-60,289	-20%
Needs type	General Needs	178,348	73%	226,274	73%	-47,926	-21%
	Supported Housing	67,550	27%	79,913	27%	-12,363	-15%
Provider type	Private Registered Providers (PRPs)	173,623	71%	213,464	70%	-39,841	-19%
	Local authorities (LAs)	72,275	29%	92,723	30%	-20,448	-22%
Rent type	Social Rent	213,340	87%	264,239	87%	-50,899	-19%
	Affordable Rent	31,912	13%	41,343	13%	-9,431	-23%
	Rent to Buy	646	0.3%	605	0.2%	41	7%

Overall, there were 60,000 fewer new lettings in 2020/21. Over three-quarters of this reduction came from General Needs, with a decrease of 48,000 (21%) from the previous year. The other reductions (12,000 lets) were Supported Housing lets, but since the Supported Housing total is much smaller, this is a 15% decrease from the previous year.

Affordable Rent lettings shrank this year, decreasing by over 9,000 new lettings, a 23% decrease from 2020/21. Social Rent also shrank, with a fall of 51,000 lettings, a 19% decrease. Meanwhile, new Rent to Buy lettings grew by 41, a 7% increase from the previous year.

Monthly trends

Chart 5: Spring 2020 saw a significant drop in new social lettings compared to 2019, recovering in the summer, with another dip in January 2021



Whilst new social lettings were substantially lower in 2020/21 compared to 2019/20, the pattern was not even across the year.

Spring saw the greatest comparative decrease, with the largest drops in new lettings in April (74% fewer lettings than April 2019) and May (61% fewer lettings than May 2019). These months saw the fewest new lets in a month since the start of this time series in 2007/08.

In summer 2020 new lettings returned to the typical trend of a slight year-on-year decrease, but saw another sizeable drop in January 2021 (25% fewer new lettings than January 2020).

March 2021 was the only month where new monthly lettings were greater than the previous year (28% increase from March 2020).

The dip in Spring 2020 is likely to be explained by the national restrictions introduced on 23 March 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, with house moves being restricted to only those

which were considered to be “reasonably necessary”¹ until the rules were relaxed on 13 May 2020. However, the suppression of new lets in the spring did not lead to higher than usual lets during the summer.

The second dip, in January 2021, is likely to be due to the winter reintroduction of some restrictions at that time. However, it is worth noting there were no specific restrictions on house moves during this time and the restrictions continued until March 2021, when monthly lettings had returned to usual levels.

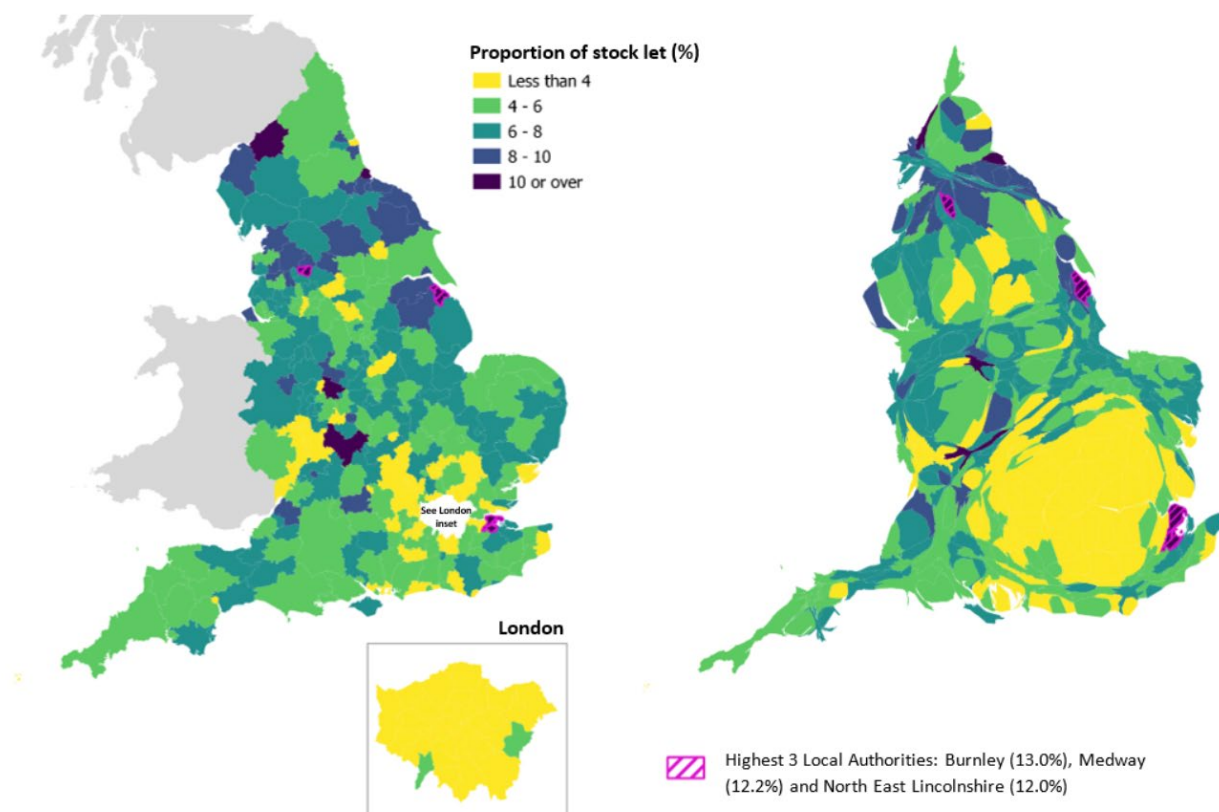
2. Is there a link between new lettings and stock?

The number of new lettings reported through CORE varies across the country, linked to the availability of stock available to let⁷.

Map 1 shows total lettings as a percentage of total stock by local authority area. This illustrates that generally a higher proportion of stock was newly let (turnover of stock) in northern England than in the south. In most areas in and around London, less than 4% of social housing stock were newly let in 2020/21. In comparison, North East Lincolnshire (11.2%), Medway (11.2%) and Burnley (10.9%) were the three local authorities that saw the highest level of turnover in 2020/21.

Local Authority and Private Registered Provider renters lived at their current address for an average of 13.3 years and 9.2 years, respectively. This is considerably longer than the average of 4.2 years in the private rental sector⁸.

Map 1: London was the least active area in England with the smallest proportion of stock let in 2020/21 (Areas in the right-hand map are proportionate to total social housing stock)



Why is there a difference in social stock churn across the country?

⁷ Stock available to let includes existing stock that has become vacant, new builds, acquisitions, and rehabilitations.

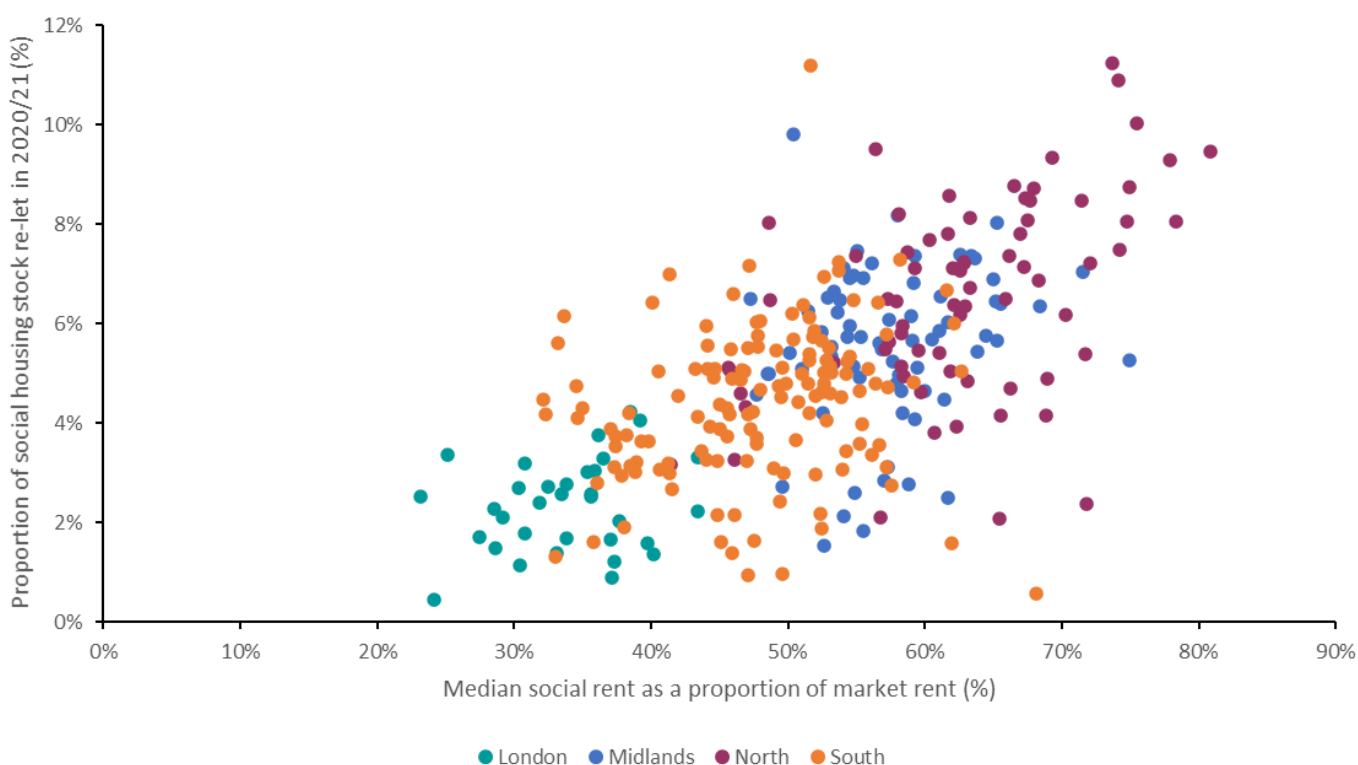
⁸ English Housing Survey headline report 2020/21, Annex Table 1.22

One possible explanation for this higher turnover in the North and Midlands is affordability, as seen in chart 6 below. We can see a widening affordability gap between the social and private rental sectors, especially in London and the South East, which may discourage existing social tenants from moving into private accommodation. As a result, turnover is lower in these areas.

For example, the average private sector rent in London was around £375 per week in 2020/21,⁹ while in the North East, the North West and Yorkshire and the Humber it was less than £150 (England average was £199). The proportion of social housing stock re-let in London during the year was 2%, compared to 7% in the North East, 6% in the North East and 5% in Yorkshire and the Humber – the relative inactivity of the social housing market in London may be linked to the affordability (or lack thereof) of private sector tenancies in the area.

Further information on rents and rent burden can be found in chapter 5.

Chart 6: There was a lower level of churn in existing social housing tenants in London, with churn increasing the further north in the country



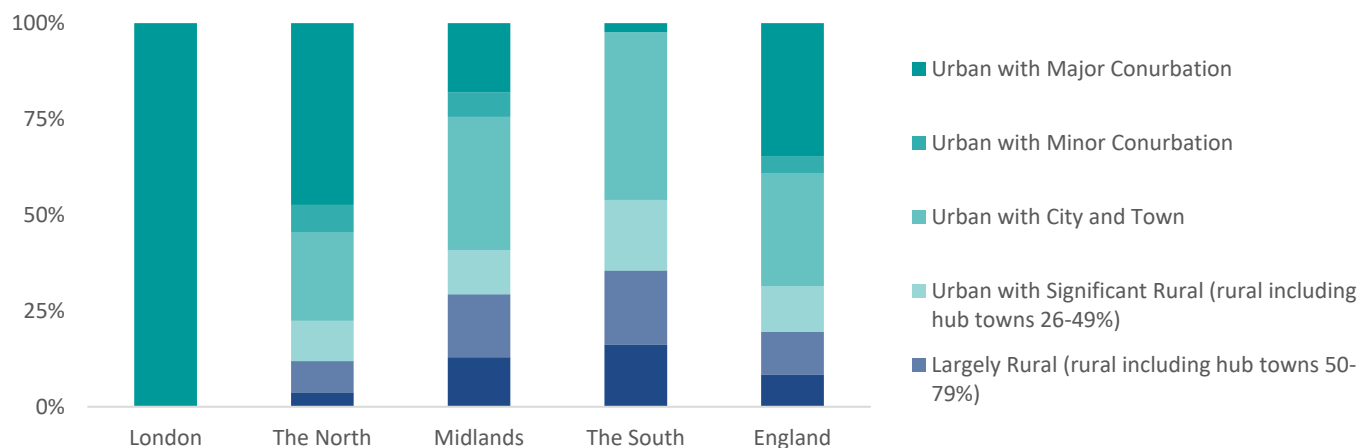
We also see regional variability in the urban and rural spread of new housing lettings, as shown in chart 7 below.

⁹ Office for National Statistics (ONS) <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/private-rental-market-summary-statistics-in-england>

In England, 80% of new social housing lettings were in LAs that are predominantly urban. Chart 7 shows that the further north in the country, the higher proportion of new lettings in urban areas (excluding London which is entirely urban). Outside London, the North West saw the highest proportion of new lettings in Urban and Major Conurbations at 60%. This implies that the high stock churn rate seen in the North is occurring mainly in large urban areas.

The highest proportion of new social lettings in rural areas was the South West at 50%.

Chart 7: Over 80% of new social housing lettings in England in 2019/20 were in predominantly urban areas



Vacant dwellings

How many vacant social housing properties are there?

There were 31,000 vacant LA-owned dwellings as at 31 March 2021. This was a 22% increase on the previous year and the highest since 2009, but still remains relatively low compared to 101,000 vacant dwellings in 1989¹⁰. Of the 31,000 vacant dwellings on 31 March 2021, at least 15,000 were available for letting.

There were 50,000 vacant PRP-owned dwellings as at 31 March 2020, of which 29,000 were General Needs and 21,000 were Supported Housing. This was a 17% increase on the previous year (42,000), continuing the steady increase seen in previous years¹¹. Of the 29,000 General Needs vacant properties, 16,000 were available for letting.

The median number of days a property was vacant before being let was 28 days in 2020/21, nine days longer than in 2019/20. This is likely to be related to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent

¹⁰ LAHS live table 612 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-dwelling-stock-including-vacants>)

¹¹ Private registered provider social housing stock and rents in England, 2019 to 2020 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/private-registered-provider-social-housing-stock-and-rents-in-england-2019-to-2020>)

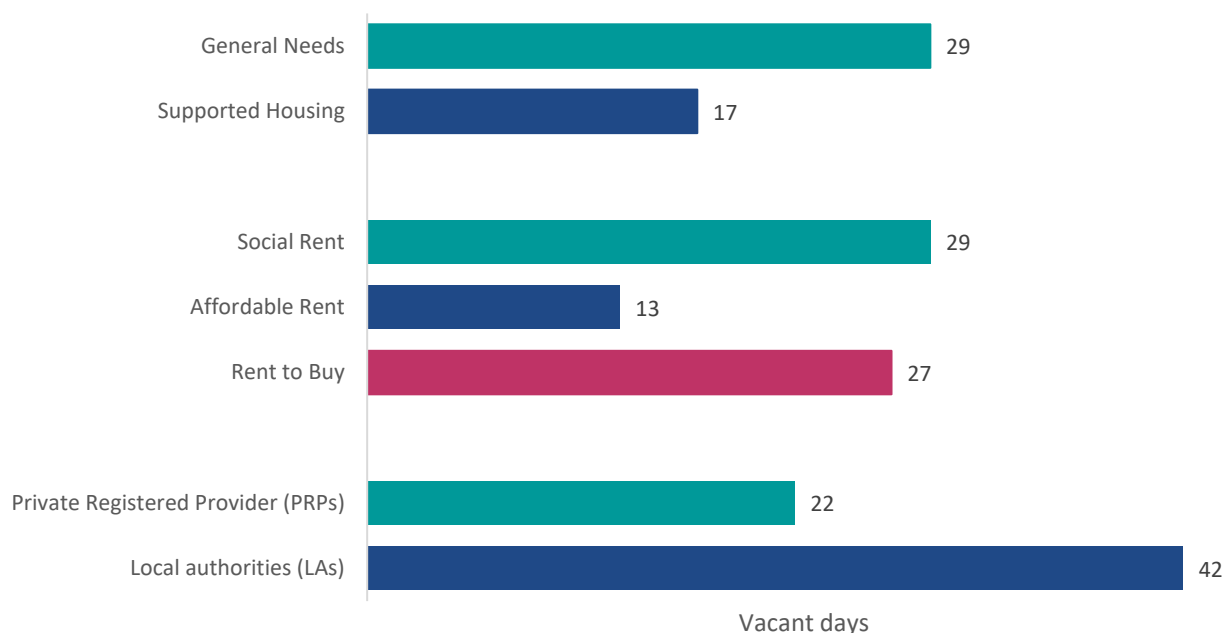
drop in new lettings. With the national restrictions preventing house moves that were not deemed “reasonably necessary”, properties remained vacant for longer than they did in previous years.

How long are social housing properties vacant?

On average, properties were vacant for 28 days before being let in 2020/21. This is an increase from the average 19 days in 2019/20.

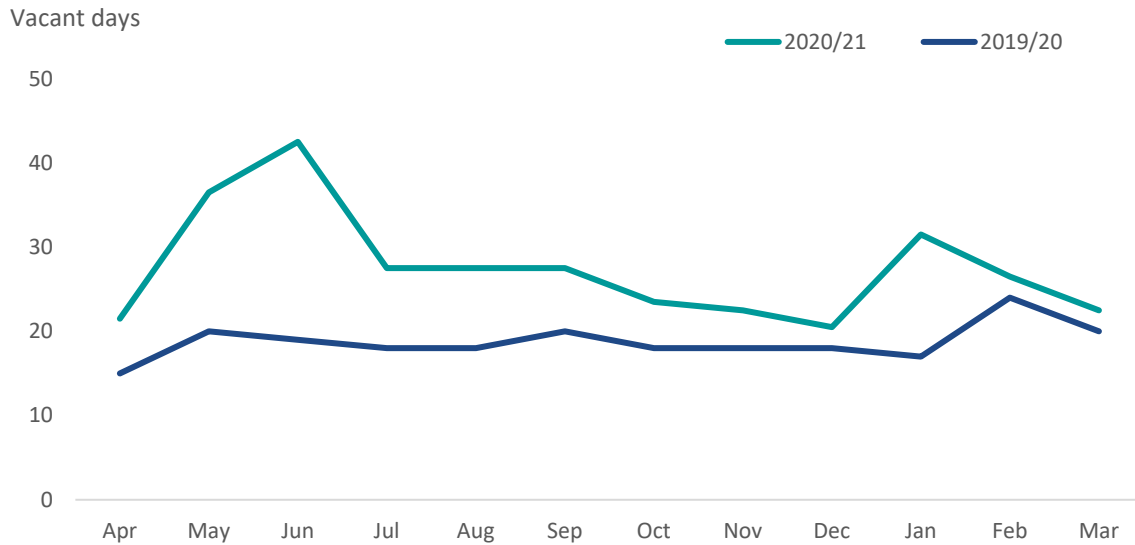
There were differences in the length of time a social property was vacant before being let:

Chart 8: Social properties let by LAs were vacant for nearly twice as long as PRP properties



Supported Housing properties were vacant for 17 days on average before being let, compared to 29 days for General Needs properties. This suggests a higher level of demand for Supported Housing or a lower level of supply. Supported Housing, by definition, in some cases requires special adaptations to meet a tenant’s needs so Supported Housing and General Needs stock are not always interchangeable. For further information on needs types see page 5.

Chart 9: Social properties let in every month of 2020/21 were vacant for more days than in the previous year, peaking in June



The average (median) number of days before a social property was let was higher in all 12 months of 2020/21 than in the corresponding months of 2019/20. Median vacant days peaked in June when properties were vacant for an average of 43 days, compared to 19 days in the same month of the previous year. Following the easing of lockdown restrictions in June, vacancy days reduced, falling to 21 days in December, before increasing again to 32 days in January 2021.

The peak in June 2020 was driven by new lets in General Needs Social Rent properties which reached an average of 52 vacant days for PRPs and 64 days for LAs. This represented a 158% and 119% increase respectively compared with June 2019.

Why were social housing properties vacant before being let?

12% of new General Needs¹² lets in a property were let for the first time¹³, with the remaining 88% being a re-let of social housing stock.

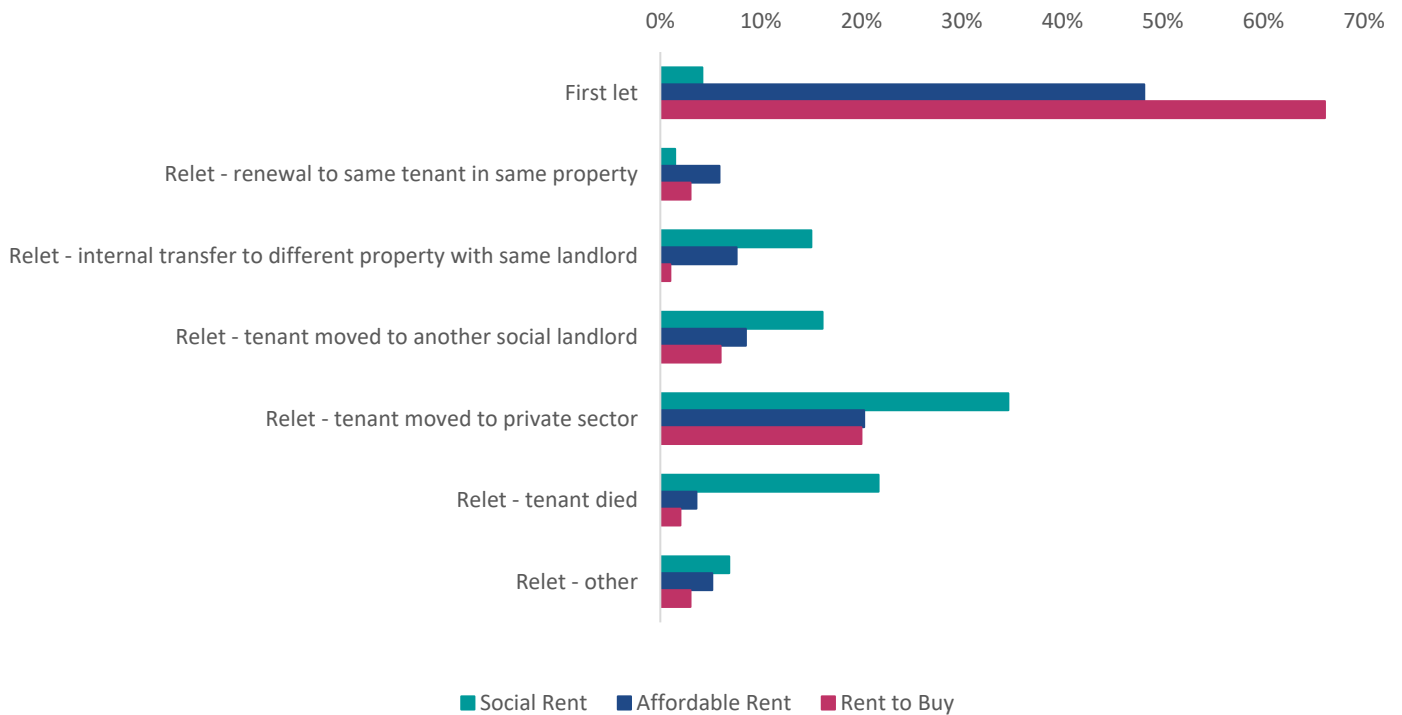
This split differs considerably by rent type. New lets in Affordable Rent properties were much more likely to be first lets compared to those in Social Rent properties (48% compared to 5%). The proportion of Affordable Rent properties that were first lets has increased from 33% (12,000 lettings) since 2013/14.

First-let was the most common reason for vacancy for Affordable Rent properties, whereas for Social Rent it was the previous tenant moving to the private sector or other accommodation (35%).

Chart 10: Social Rent properties in 2020/21 were most likely to be vacant because the previous tenant moved to the private rental sector, whilst Affordable Rent properties were most likely to be first lets

¹² CORE only collects information on reason for property being vacant for General Needs lettings

¹³ First let includes conversions, acquisitions and rehabilitations as well as new builds



For General Needs properties, there has been an increase in the proportion of new lets where the property became available due to the previous tenant dying since 2019/20 (19% compared to 14%). For Supported Housing this figure was 23%, as this is the first year vacancy reasons have been collected for Supported Housing it cannot be compared to 2019/20. These proportions have likely been affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and subsequent increase in deaths.

There has been a decrease in the proportion of new lets where the property became available due to the previous tenant being evicted (3% compared to 6%). The proportion of properties becoming available due to eviction is likely to have been affected by the stay on possession proceedings which started on 27 March 2020 and lasted until 20 September 2020. There were still some properties available due to eviction because the eviction may have taken place before this stay was introduced.

Both internal transfers (excluding renewals) and renewals have remained stable with the previous year at 14% and 3% of new lettings respectively.

There were some differences in the reasons for property vacancy between Supported Housing and General Needs due to the nature of tenants found in each property type. The most common reasons for each needs type were:

General Needs

Supported Housing

Re-let – previous tenant moved to private sector or other accommodation (33%)	Re-let – previous tenant moved to private sector or other accommodation (33%)
Re-let – previous tenant died (19%)	Re-let – previous tenant died (23%)
Relet - internal transfer (excluding renewals of a fixed-term tenancy) (14%)	Relet - tenant moved to other social housing provider (20%)

For Supported Housing properties, in 2020/21 over a fifth of properties were available due to the death of the previous tenant. As Supported Housing is intended for households with specific needs, i.e. the elderly and the vulnerable, we would expect to see a higher proportion of Supported Housing properties available due to the death of the previous tenant than for General Needs (23% compared to 19%). It seems likely that COVID-19 would have had a larger year-on-year effect on Supported Housing occupants due to the nature of the tenants. However, we are unable to compare against the previous year as this data was not available for Supported Housing in 2019/20.

Supported Housing saw a greater proportion of properties available due to the previous tenant moving to another social housing provider (20% compared to 14% for General Needs). This potentially reflects changing support needs of Supported Housing occupants, and the use of licence agreements which do not have fixed end dates.

Supported Housing properties were twice as likely to be available due to the eviction of the previous tenant compared to General Needs properties (4% compared to 2%).

3. How did tenants come to be in a new letting?

Were most new lettings to people from outside of social housing or to existing tenants?

New social lettings include households entering the social rented sector from elsewhere, plus households relocating within the sector or renewing their fixed term tenancy.

A third (33%) of households starting a new social tenancy in 2020/21 were existing social tenants renewing or transferring within the sector – two-thirds (67%) entered from outside the sector.

The most common previous tenures before this new social letting varied by needs type, with households coming into Supported Housing coming from a greater variety of routes. There were proportionally fewer households coming from previous General Needs social tenancies when compared to the previous year, with an increase in the percentages who were previously living with friends or family or in temporary accommodation.

General Needs	Supported Housing
General Needs social tenancy (29%)	Living with family or friends (19%)
Living with family or friends (23%)	Supported Housing (16%)
Private sector tenancy (17%)	Temporary accommodation (16%)

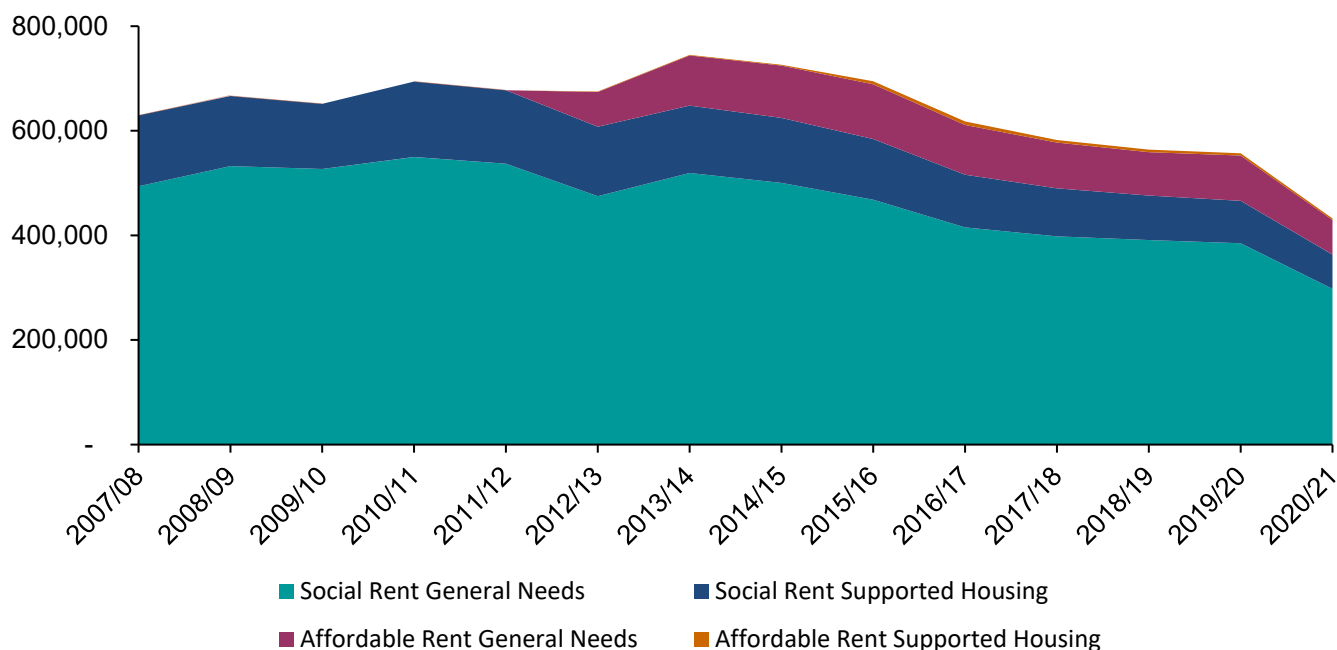
Number of people in new social housing lettings

The 246,000 households with a new social housing letting in 2020/21 equated to approximately 434,000 people – roughly 1 in 130 people in England¹⁴. The number of tenants entering new social housing lettings has decreased by nearly 313,000 (42%) since the peak in 2013/14.

69% of new tenants move into General Needs lettings on a Social Rent basis. The remainder are mainly shared between Social Rent Supported Housing (15%) and, since 2011/12, Affordable Rent General Needs properties (15%).

¹⁴ The Office for National Statistics estimates the population of England was 56,489,800 in March 2021
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates>

Chart 11: Nearly 7 in 10 of people in a new social letting in 20/21 were in a General Needs let on a Social Rent basis



Reasonable Preference

What are the rules around getting into social housing?

Social housing in England is allocated based on need. By law, every Local Authority is required to have an allocation scheme for determining priorities between applicants and the procedure to be followed in allocating housing accommodation. See *The charter for social housing residents: social housing white paper*¹⁵ published in November 2020 for more information.

The Localism Act 2011 gave Local Authorities the power to set their own qualification criteria. When setting these, Local Authorities will need to have regard to their duties under the equalities' legislation, as well as the legal requirement to give overall priority for an allocation to people in the 'reasonable preference categories'.

Definition: Reasonable Preference

¹⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-charter-for-social-housing-residents-social-housing-white-paper>

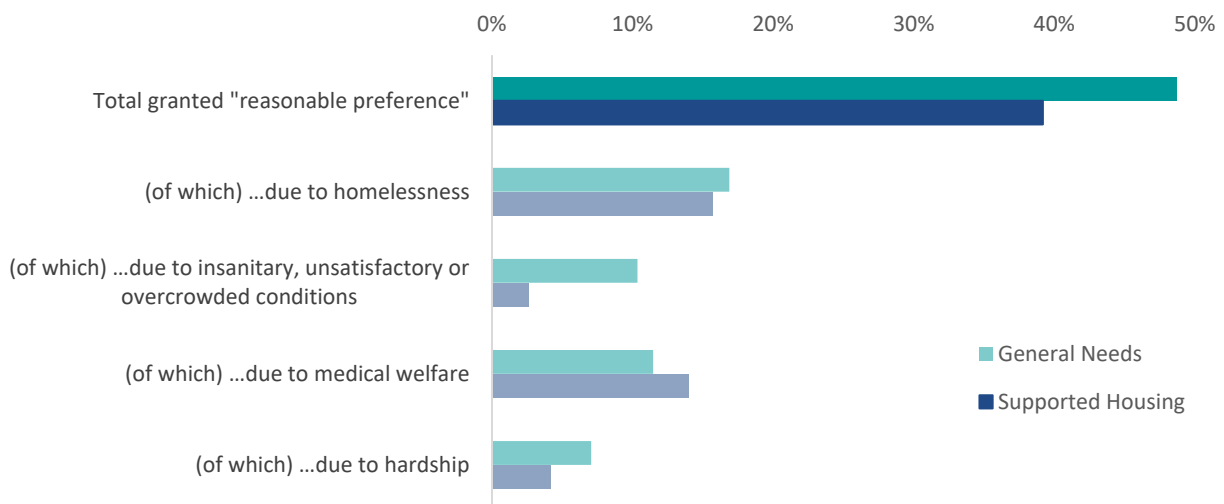
Reasonable Preference

Households must be given 'reasonable preference', i.e. priority, for social housing by the Local Authority if they meet one or more of:

- Homelessness (or threat of homelessness in the next 56 days)
- Insanitary, unsatisfactory or overcrowded conditions
- Medical welfare
- Hardship

In 2020/21, nearly half (47%) of new lettings were to households given priority by a Local Authority where known¹⁶, with the most common reason being homelessness (or threat of homelessness)¹⁷.

Chart 12: Nearly half of new General Needs lets were to households granted priority need compared to almost 4 in 10 households in new Supported Housing lets



Half of new General Needs lets in 2020/21 were made under at least one Reasonable Preference category¹⁸, compared to nearly 4 in 10 new Supported Housing lets. Both of these are increases on the previous year (45% and 35% respectively). Homelessness was the most common reason for both needs types.

¹⁶ Whether the household was granted reasonable preference was unknown in 28% of lettings.

¹⁷ Households could be granted reasonable preference in multiple categories.

¹⁸ Where Reasonable Preference status known

Homelessness

In 2020, the government introduced a number of emergency measures to deal with homelessness in light of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The ‘Everyone In’¹⁹ campaign was launched to bring rough sleepers off the streets and those at risk of sleeping rough into emergency accommodation to protect them from COVID-19. Many of these individuals were placed in hotels and B&Bs that had higher capacity due to restrictions on trade introduced in response to the pandemic. A new letting is only recorded in CORE if a new tenancy contract has been signed and, for General Needs only, if the letting is expected to last at least 2 years.

How many new lettings went to people in temporary accommodation or sleeping rough?

Nearly 36,000 households were in temporary accommodation²⁰ immediately prior to their new social housing letting (15% of all lettings in 2020/21), with another 5,000 households sleeping rough (2%), and 53,000 living with friends and family (22%).

Over the past decade (since 2010/11):

- There were 5,000 fewer households moving from temporary accommodation, but this is an increase of 4% in terms of proportion of all new lettings (as the total number of households getting new social lets fell by 148,000).
- There were 5,000 fewer households entering social housing following a period of rough sleeping, a slight decrease of 0.7% in the proportion of all new lettings.

Temporary accommodation comprises hostels, bed and breakfasts, hospitals, prisons and any other unspecified temporary accommodation. This definition is consistent over time for CORE; however, other data sources may use a different definition. For example, the H-CLIC definition²¹ is based on local authority action to assist homeless households, and so does not include prisons and hospitals. Within temporary accommodation as recorded in CORE, the largest specified category was bed and breakfasts, which was the previous tenure of 11% of those in temporary accommodation.

How many new lettings went to statutorily homeless households?

Definition: Statutorily Homeless

Statutorily Homeless

Where a household is accepted as homeless by the Local Authority. This is the definition of homelessness introduced by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2018 which came into force on 1 April 2018, and includes households granted a prevention, relief or main duty.

Overall, a fifth (20%) of new lettings in 2020/21 were deemed to be “statutorily homeless”, up from 18% in the previous year, and continuing the upward trend from 15% in 2010/11. In 2020/21, 8%

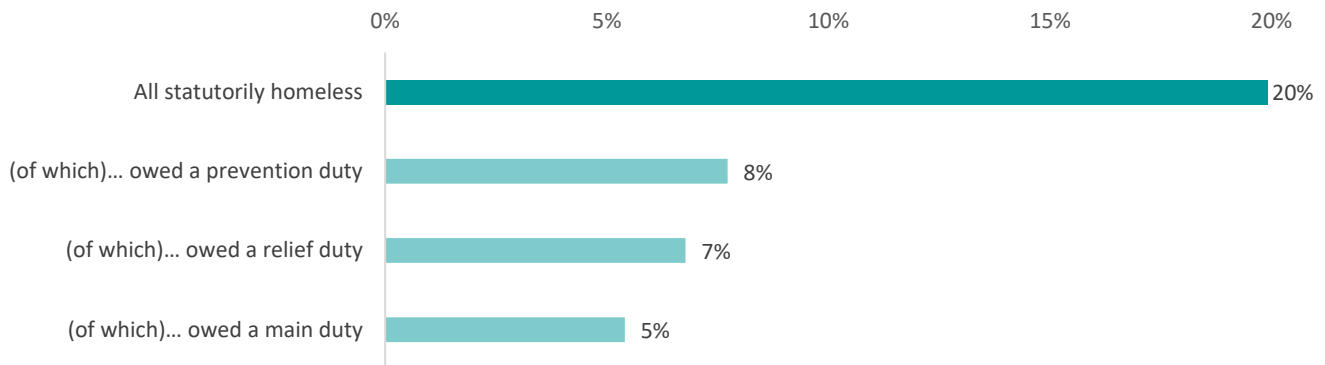
¹⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/3-2-million-emergency-support-for-rough-sleepers-during-coronavirus-outbreak>

²⁰ Temporary accommodation is defined as hostels, bed and breakfasts, hospitals, and prisons.

²¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statutory-homelessness-in-england-july-to-september-2020>

were owed a prevention duty, 7% were owed a relief duty and another 5% were owed a main homelessness duty.

Chart 13: A fifth of new social lettings in 2020/21 were to statutorily homeless households



Vulnerable groups

What about people with disabilities?

New social housing lettings are also allocated to tenants with disabilities:

- In 2020/21, 17% of households included a tenant with a long-term illness or disability which prevented them from working, the same as in 2019/20.
- A fifth (20%) of new lettings were to households with specific disability-related housing needs (such as wheelchair access, mobility aids, or adaptations relating to visual/hearing impairment), an increase of 2% from 2019/20.
- Slightly more households in Supported Housing had specific disability-related housing needs than those in General Needs – 28% of Supported Housing new lets, 18% of General Needs new lets. This was an increase from 21% of Supported Housing new lets and 14% of General Needs new lets in 2019/20.

What about veterans and members of the Armed Forces?

Members of the UK Armed Forces and those recently discharged are exempt from any local connection test that a local authority may use when allocating social housing. This is to ensure they are not disadvantaged in accessing social housing by the need to move from base to base.

Nearly 4,000 households given a new social housing letting in 2020/21 included someone who has served in the Armed Forces, approximately 2% of total lettings, the same proportion as in the previous year. Around 16% of these were injured or disabled as a direct result of serving in the Armed Forces.

Why did tenants leave their last settled home?

The top 3 self-reported reasons for leaving last settled home prior to this tenancy were mostly unchanged from the previous year. These were:

General Needs	Supported Housing
Move to independent accommodation (16%)	Move to accommodation with support (25%)
Leave an overcrowded property (15%)	Asked to leave by family and friends (14%)
Asked to leave by family or friends (10%)	Leave property unsuitable to ill health/disability (13%)

Approximately 7% of households left their last settled home due to domestic abuse – just over 14,000 households. This is an increase of 1 percentage point from the previous year. During the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been an increase in demand for domestic abuse victim services²² and it is possible that the pandemic has been a factor in the change in ranking of new lettings to households fleeing domestic abuse.

Refugees comprised 1.4% of new social housing lettings in 2020/21²³ at just below 2,900 households – this is a slight increase from 1.0% or 2,500 households in 2019/20.

Eviction on a ‘no fault’ basis was the primary self-reported reason for leaving their last settled home prior to this tenancy for 6% of households, a decrease from 7% in 2019/20. This is likely to reflect the introduction of measures to support both tenants and homeowners during the COVID-19 pandemic, including mortgage payment holidays, a stay on possession proceedings and an extension of notice periods.

Inability to afford renewal fees, rent increases or mortgage was given as the primary reason for leaving by 2% of households, with repossession given by 0.3% of households.

Waiting lists

How long is the waiting list for social housing?

There were 1.19 million households on local authority waiting lists on 31 March 2021, a 4% increase compared to 31 March 2020. Since its peak in 2012 the number of households on local authority waiting lists has fallen by 36%.

Local authority waiting list size can be affected by other factors, including reviews by local authorities to remove households who no longer require housing. The frequency of reviews varies

²²

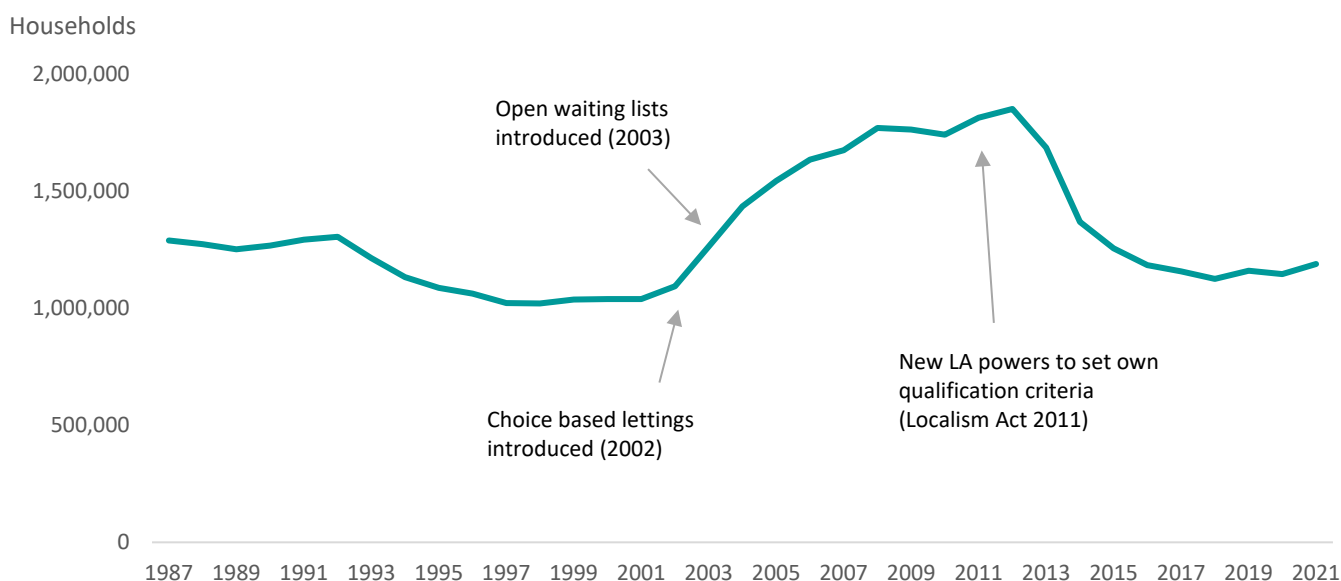
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/domesticabuseduringthecoronaviruscovid19pandemicenglandandwales/november2020>

²³ Please note that this release covers new social housing lettings between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021, and therefore does not capture the impact of Afghanistan resettlement schemes or the Ukrainian crisis

considerably and so the total number of households on waiting lists is likely to overstate the number of households who still require housing. If a household is on a waiting list in more than one local authority, they will be counted twice in the national figure, which will also increase the overcount.

The Localism Act 2011 introduced changes allowing local authorities greater freedom over the way they manage their waiting lists, for example the introduction of a local connections test. This change may be partially responsible for the decrease in the number of households on waiting lists between 2012 and 2020.²⁴

Chart 14: The number of households on at least one local authority’s waiting list has been roughly stable at 1.19 million since 2017 after falling from a peak of 1.85 million in 2012



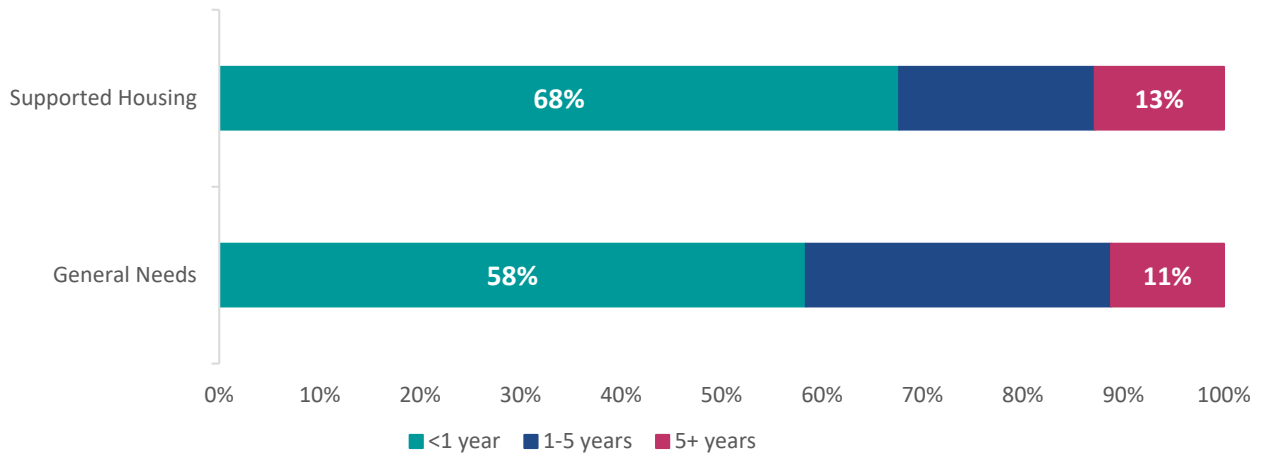
How long were households on the waiting list for their local authority area?

The majority (61%) of households who received a new social housing letting and were new to the social housing sector in 2020/21 were on the waiting list for less than a year in that local authority area. 12% of households were on the waiting list for 5 years or more before getting a social letting in that area.

Households entering a new Supported Housing letting were more likely to be on the waiting list for less than a year (68% compared to 58%), but slightly more likely to be waiting 5 years or more (13% compared to 11%).

²⁴ Local authority housing statistics <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/local-authority-housing-data>

Chart 15: Household with a new Supported Housing let in 2020/21 spent less time on the waiting list



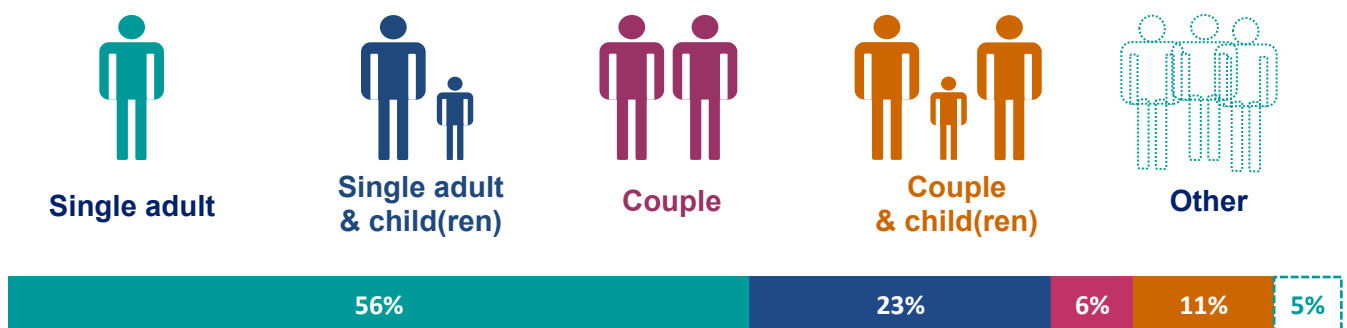
Sole occupant elders (aged 60 years or more) on average spent the least time on the waiting list whilst couples with at least one child spent the longest (64% compared to 45% waiting less than a year). 12% of households including children were on the waiting list in that area for 5 years or more, similar to households without children (11%). However, only 56% of households including children spent less than 1 year on the waiting list, compared to 63% for households without children.

4. Who lives in new social housing lettings?

Household composition

Over three quarters (78%) of new lettings were to single adult led households, (56% without children, 23% with children). This has changed little over the last decade. Of the single parents moving into social housing, 92% were women and 8% men. Almost a third of all new lettings contained at least one child (33%), while 17% contained a couple²⁵. In 2020/21, 4% of new lettings to couples have been to those in same-sex relationships.

Figure 1: Over three quarters of households in new social housing lettings in 2020/21 were led by single adults whilst a third of households contain children²⁶



How does household composition change depending on the type of letting?

Household composition differs quite markedly depending on the type of social housing (Chart 16 overleaf), as different housing caters to different types of households. For instance, older people and those with long-term health conditions are more likely to be in Supported Housing.

In 2020/21, 70% of new Social Rent Supported Housing lettings by LAs were to older people, whereas 64% by PRPs were to single adults. A far greater proportion of households in new General Needs lettings contain children and/or couples – 40% of new Social Rent lettings included at least one child, and 56% for Affordable Rent.

²⁵ “Couple” defined as two adults that are married, civil partners or co-habiting.

²⁶ “Other” category may contain some children not captured in the other household types.

Chart 16: Almost all new Supported Housing lets in 2020/21 were to single adults or older people, with PRPs housing more single adults and local authorities more older people

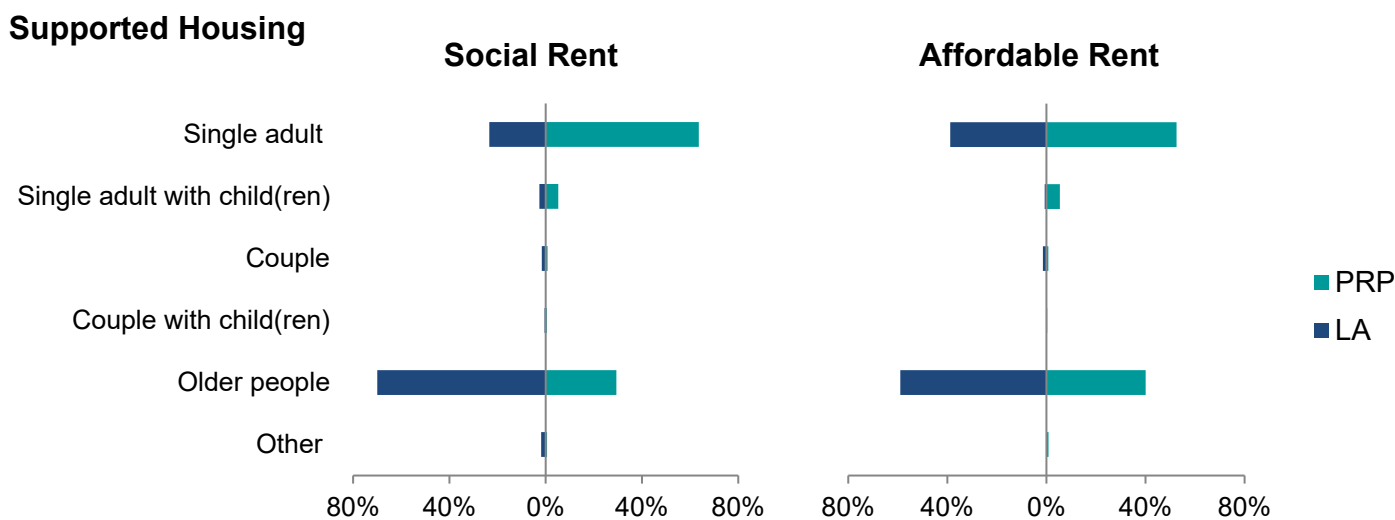
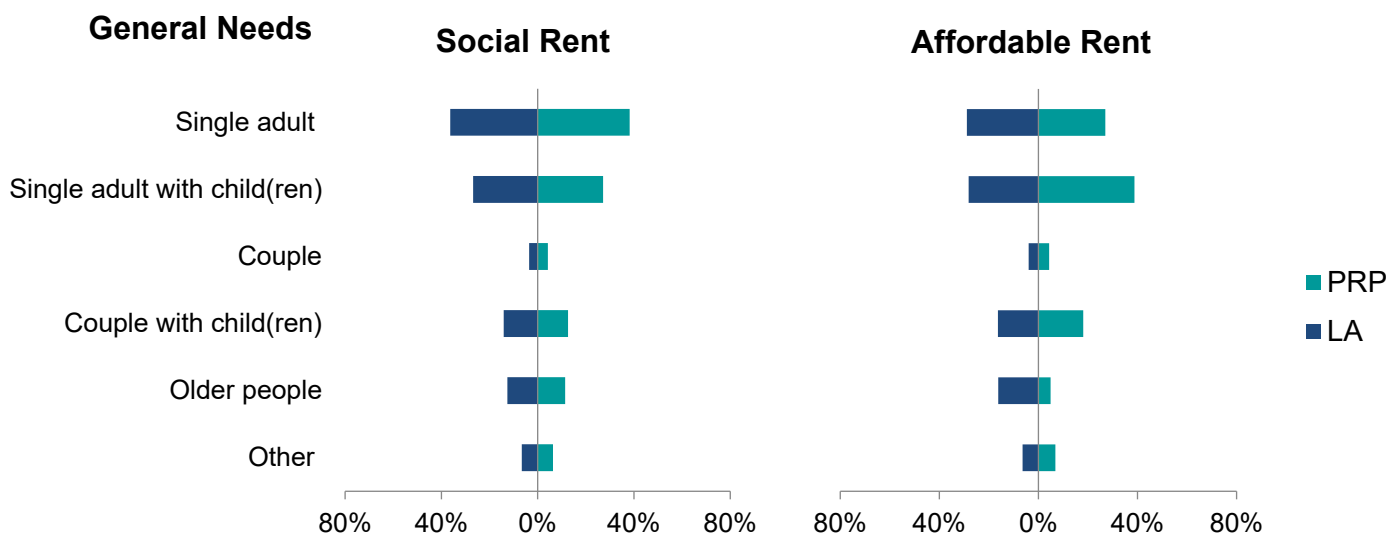


Chart 17: Single adult-led households were most common in new General Needs lets in 2020/21, with a greater proportion of children in Affordable Rent



Since 2013/14, the proportion of new General Needs lettings to households with a single adult or elder (a tenant over the age of 60 with or without dependent children) has risen from 65% to 73%, while new lettings to multiple-adult households have fallen from 35% to 27%. In the same time frame, the share of new Supported Housing lettings to single elders has risen from 27% to 32%, and new lettings to single males has fallen from 39% to 36%.

Age and gender

Are tenants of new social lettings more likely to be younger and female?

The age and gender profile of tenants in new social lettings differs by the type of letting. This is because Supported Housing is aimed at people with specific needs, such as the elderly and the sick or disabled.

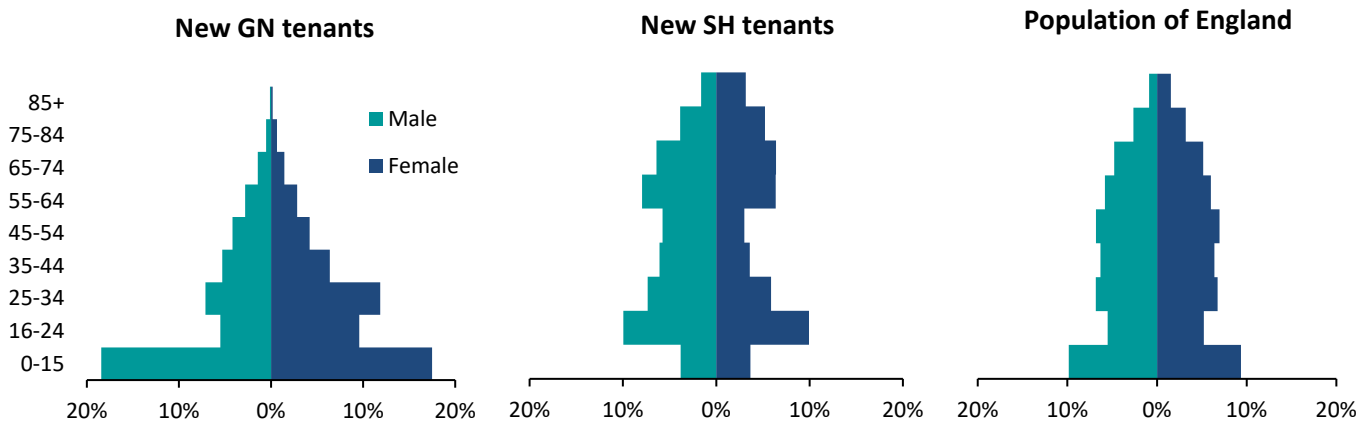
For General Needs new lettings, tenants were more likely to be younger and female than the general population in England²⁷.

- Children aged 0-15 years comprised over a third of people (36%) in new General Needs lettings in 2020/21.
- Under-35s were over-represented in new General Needs lets, at more than two-thirds (70%) of tenants, compared to 43% of the population of England.
- 70% of 16 to 34-year old lead tenants in new General Needs lets were women, likely to be reflecting the priority given to single parents.

For new Supported Housing lettings, tenants were more likely to be over 65 years, as per the special needs requiring Supported Housing.

- Three in ten (30%) new Supported Housing lettings were to the over 65s in 2020/21.
- Of lead tenants aged 25 to 64 years in new SH lettings, 57% were male, likely to be a symptom of the higher incidence of homelessness among men.

Chart 18: Households in new General Needs lettings in 2020/21 were younger than the general population of England whilst those in new Supported Housing lettings were older



²⁷ Office for National Statistics mid-2020 population estimates

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates>

How has the age and gender profile of tenants in new social lettings changed over time?

New social lettings to the young have fallen – new lettings to tenants aged 16 to 24 years fell from 26% to 20% in Supported Housing and remained relatively stable at around 18%% in General Needs, over 2011/12 to 2020/21.

New social lettings to women have increased for General Needs (53% to 62%) but slightly decreased for Supported Housing (50% to 46%) between 2009/10 and 2020/21.

Is the age profile of tenants in new social lettings different to those already in social housing?

Lead tenants in new social lettings tend to be younger than those in the social housing sector as a whole²⁸.

- In the social housing sector as a whole, 46% of lead tenants were aged 55 and over, whilst only 18% were aged 16 to 35 years²⁹.
- In new social letting, these figures are almost reversed, with only 26% of lead tenants aged 55 and over, and 45% aged 16 to 35 years.

This is likely to be because most social housing tenancies are lifetime. Indeed in 2020/21 three-quarters of new social tenancies were lifetime (see chapter 5). On average, social renters have lived in their current home for 11 years – compared to the average of 4 years for private renters³⁰.

Ethnicity

Are some ethnic groups over-represented or under-represented in new social lettings?

The majority of lead tenants in 2020/21 were in the White ethnic group, comprising 84% of new lettings. Black households were over-represented in new social housing lettings, making up 7% of lettings compared to 4% of the English population³¹. Asian households were under-represented, constituting 5% of lettings but 9% of the population. The remaining 3% of new lettings were to households with mixed race lead tenants, slightly disproportionate to the 2% of the English population. This has remained broadly stable over the past decade.

²⁸ The English Housing Survey, used for the whole social housing sector, only has information on the lead tenant

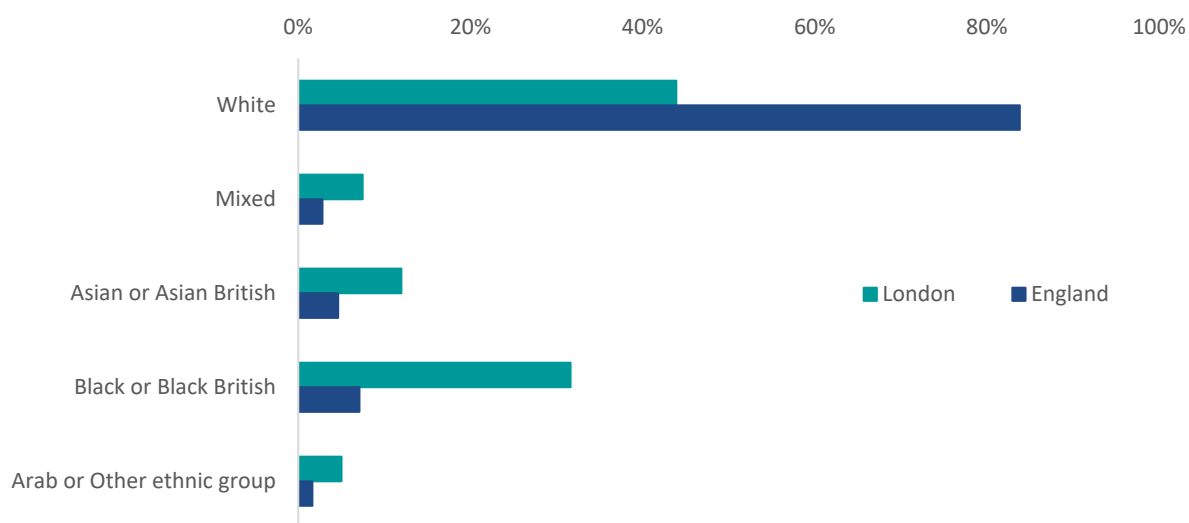
²⁹ English Housing Survey 2020-21, <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/english-housing-survey>.

³⁰ English Housing Survey 2020-21, <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/english-housing-survey>.

³¹ Population denominators by ethnic group, 2019,

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/ethnicity/datasets/populationestimatesbyethnicgroupenglandandwales>.

Chart 19: Under half of new social housing lettings in London were to white households (44%) compared to the national average of 84%



Why are some ethnic groups over-represented and some under-represented?

The over-representation of certain ethnic groups in social housing is at least partly explained by the geographical concentration of these groups in areas where social renting is more common.

The highest number of lettings to households with ethnic minority lead tenants were in large urban areas, e.g. Birmingham with 3,200 lettings, followed by Leeds at 1,000 lettings. Only 5 of the top 10 local authority areas were in London. However local authorities in London allocated a greater proportion of their lettings to households with ethnic minority lead tenants, though the precise ethnic group varied. For instance, 46% of new social lettings in Tower Hamlets were to households with Asian lead tenants whilst in Lambeth and Lewisham 46% were to Black lead tenants.

White lead tenants tended to be older with 15% of tenants aged over 65 whereas for all other ethnic groups this was 7% or lower. Mixed race lead tenants tended to be younger with 61% under 35 years, compared to 44% for white lead tenants³².

Nationality

Are any nationalities over- or under- represented in new social housing lets?

Most lead tenants in 2020/21 were UK nationals (92%). European nationals comprised 4% of lead tenants with the remaining 4% from nations outside the European Economic Area (EEA). This is similar to the composition of nationalities in the English population³³.

³² More detailed breakdowns are at <https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/housing>

³³ Population estimates for England in 2020 were 91% UK national, 5% EU and 4% Non-EU

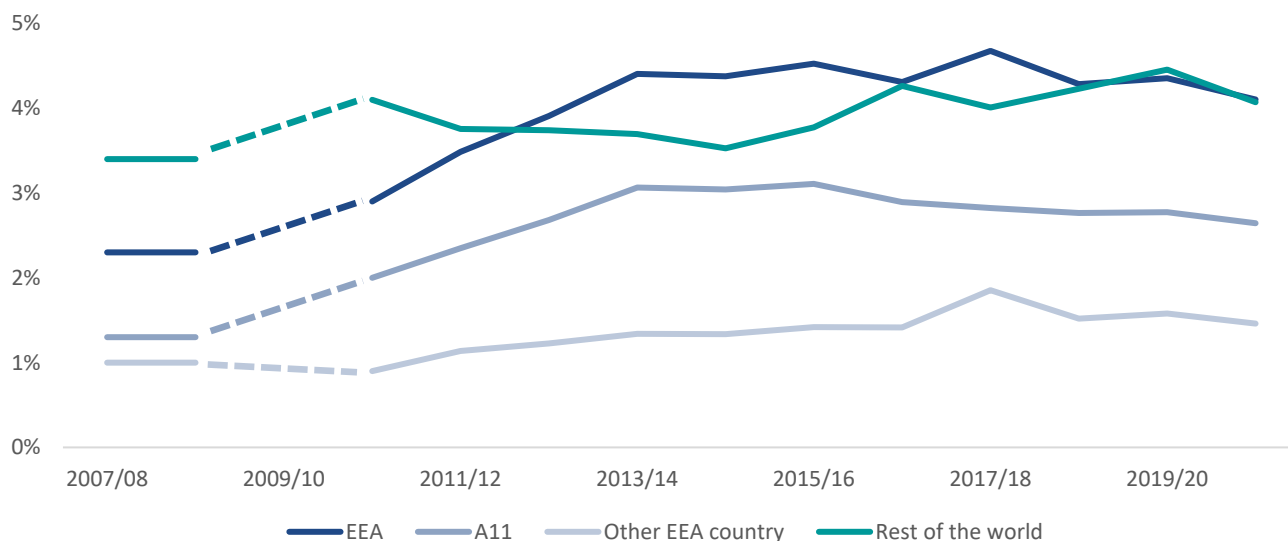
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/internationalmigration>

Of the European nationals 3% were “A11” nationals (from the 11 Eastern European states that have joined the European Union since 2004), 2% from other EEA countries.

New social lettings to UK national lead tenants fell slightly from 94% in 2007/08 to a low of 91% in 2017/18, then grew slightly to 92% in 2020/21. Lettings to EEA nationals and nationals from outside Europe saw the opposite pattern.

Over the last year to 2020/21, the number of new social lets to EEA nationals fell by 24% from 13,000 to 10,000. This should be read in the context that the total number of new social lets decreased by 20% over the same period.

Chart 20: The proportion of new social lets to EEA national lead tenants has slightly dipped from a peak of 5% in 2007/08 after a steady increase in the decade prior³⁴



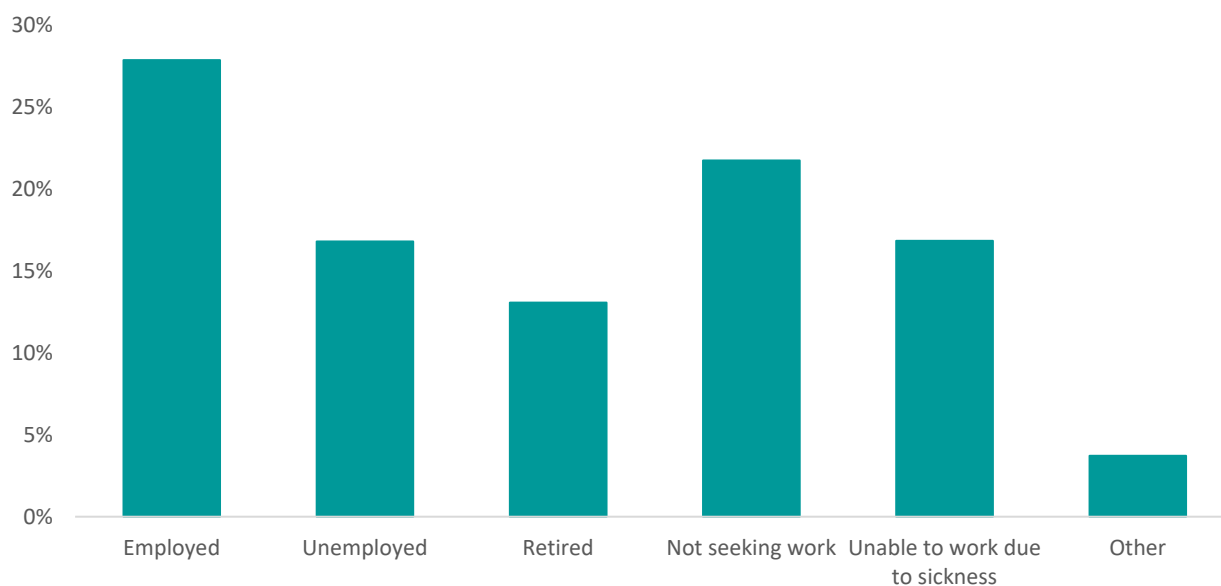
New Supported Housing lettings were slightly less likely to contain EEA nationals, comprising 3% of Supported Housing lettings compared to 4% of General Needs lettings. The proportion of UK nationals in both letting types were the same. Households new to the social sector in 2020/21 were more likely to be non-UK nationals – 9% of households entering the sector were non-UK nationals, as opposed to 6% of those moving within the sector.

Economic status

28% lead tenants in new social housing lettings in 2020/21 were in employment, a decrease from 32% in 2019/20 and the first decrease in this figure after a number of years of steady increases. Despite this it is still the most common economic status. 17% were unable to work due to sickness and 13% were retired, reflecting the age profile of social housing and those with specific housing needs. 17% of lead tenants were unemployed.

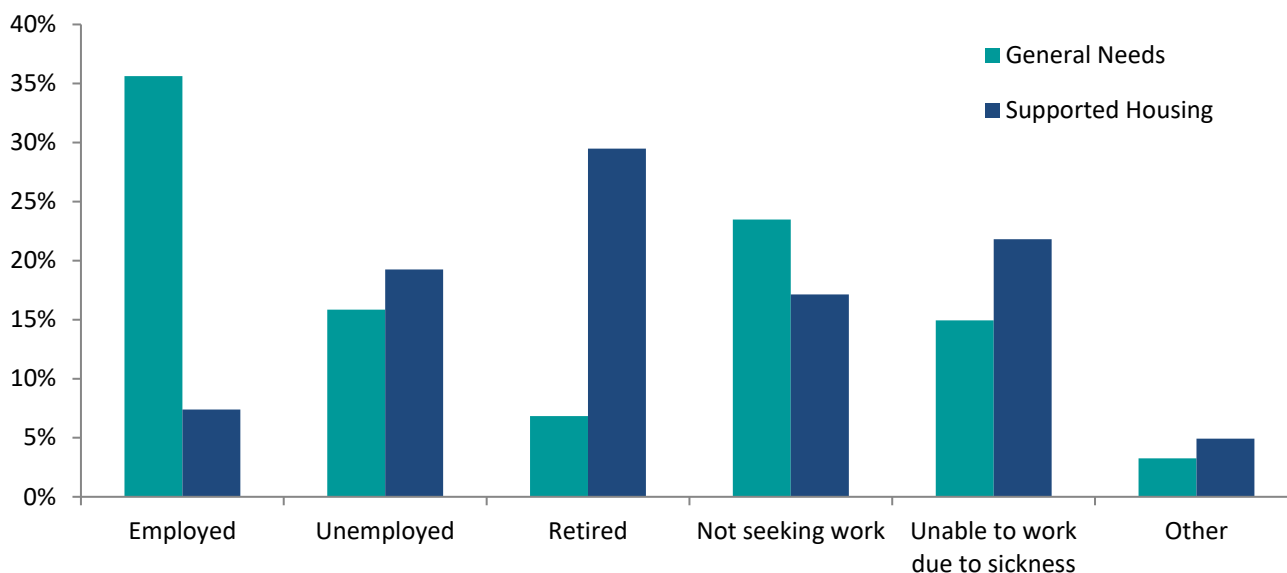
³⁴ Data for 2009/10 was collected as UK or non-UK national so does not provide the disaggregation required here

Chart 21: Fewer than 3 in 10 lead tenants in new social lettings in 2020/21 were employed, with the same proportion unable to work due to sickness as unemployed



The economic status of tenants differs between housing types. Since Supported Housing is specifically designed for tenants with particular needs and tenants have an older age profile, fewer lead tenants are in work (7%, compared to 36% for General Needs). Supported Housing has a substantially larger proportion of retired lead tenants (29%, compared to 7% for General Needs).

Chart 22: Just over a third of tenants in new General Needs tenancies in 2020/21 were employed, compared to 7% in Supported Housing

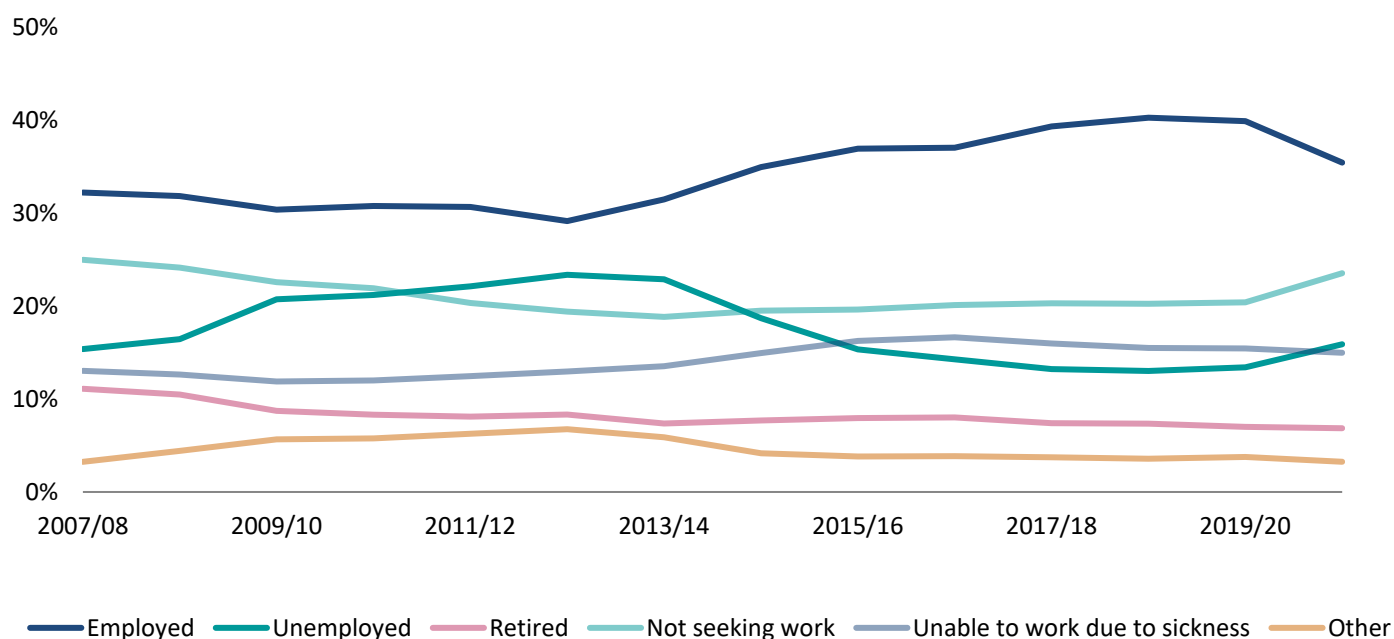


Has the proportion of tenants in new social lettings in work increased over time?

In General Needs new lettings, the proportion of lead tenants who were employed increased from 32% to 40% between 2008/09 and 2019/20, however in the most recent year it fell to 36%. Over the same time period, lead tenants who were unemployed increased by 1 percentage point to 13%, but in 2020/21 increased to 16%. It is likely that the number of lead tenants in work has been affected by the pandemic related increase in unemployment.

In Supported Housing new lettings, the proportions in employment have remained consistent with the previous year; 7% employed, 19% unemployed, 22% unable to work due to sickness and 29% retired.

Chart 23: Employment of lead tenants in new General Needs lets in 2020/21 dropped for the first time in a decade, whilst unemployment rose



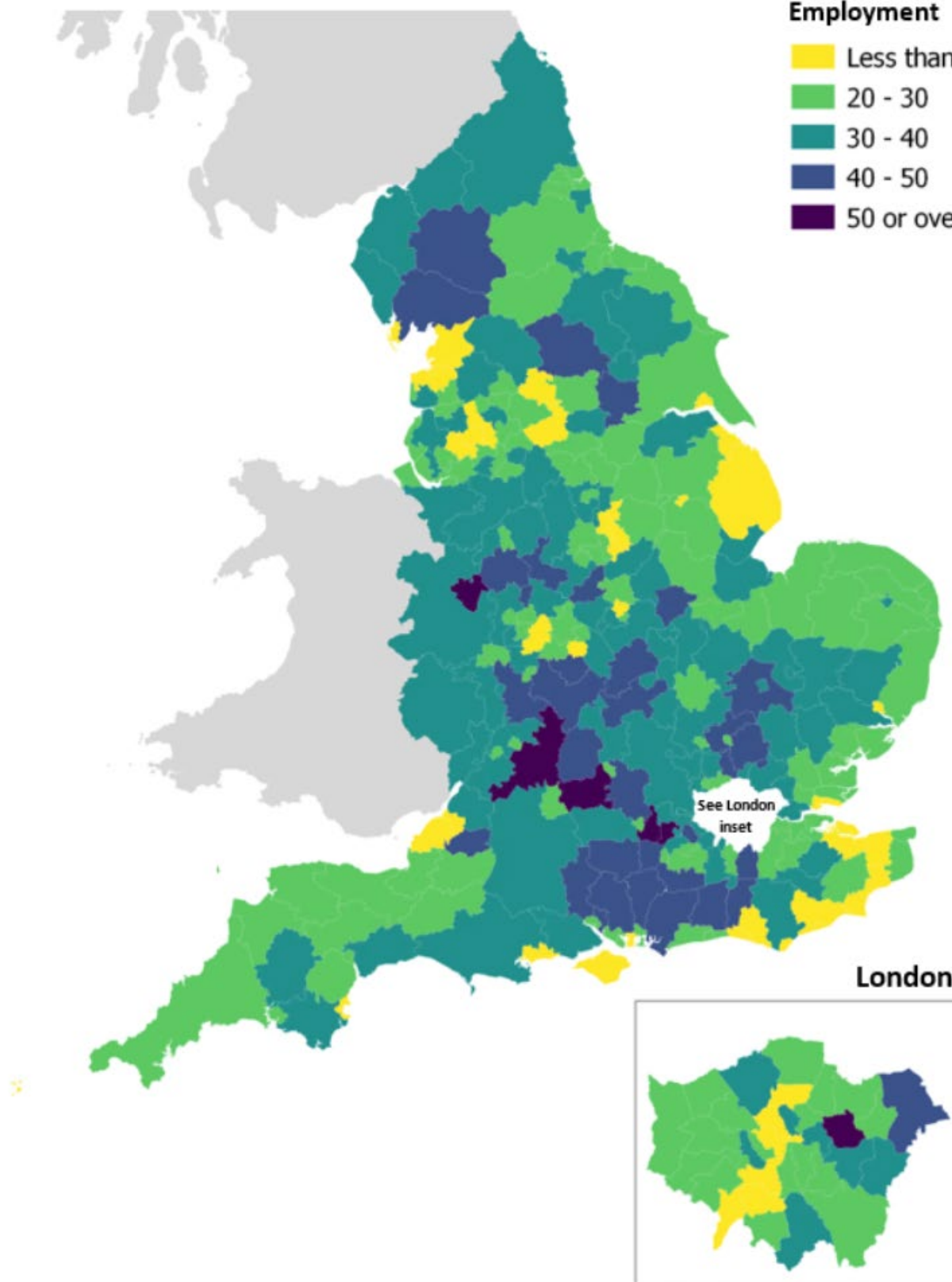
Whether a household is in work or otherwise contributing to the community is a factor in some local authorities' allocation policies. This may affect the employment rates of tenants in new social housing lettings across the country.

Map 2: The proportion of new social lettings to lead tenants in employment was lowest in

coastal areas in 2020/21, reflecting older tenants in these areas

% of Lead Tenants in Employment

- Less than 20
- 20 - 30
- 30 - 40
- 40 - 50
- 50 or over



How does this compare against the social rented sector as a whole and the general

population in England?

Lead tenants in new social lettings made in 2020/21 were less likely to be employed and more likely to be unemployed than lead tenants in the social housing sector as a whole. In new lets, 28% of lead tenants were employed compared to 38% in the whole social sector³⁵. In contrast 17% were unemployed in new lets compared to 11% in the wider sector.

New lets were less likely to be made to retired lead tenants compared to the wider social sector (13% compared to 25%). This is likely to be explained by the use of lifetime tenancies.

The employment rate of lead tenants aged 16 to 64 years in new social lettings (36%) is far below that of the general population (75%)³⁶.

Income and benefits

How much income do tenants in new social housing lets have and how much comes from benefits?

The median net household income (including pensions and benefits) for social housing in 2020/21 was £225 per week, which is a decrease of £6 (or 3%) from the previous year.³⁷ This is the second consecutive year since 2007/08 that median income has decreased, having previously seen an average year-on-year increase of around 7%.

Of households who knew whether they received pensions and/or benefits, 57% got their income solely from pensions and benefits, with a further 22% supplementing their earnings with pensions or benefits and the remaining 21% not claiming pensions or benefits.

Care should be taken before drawing conclusions about the wealth of a household since the income reported here is household income and household compositions differ. In particular, households with lead tenants aged 25-44 years and those with Asian lead tenants tend to have larger households. Geographic location will also have an impact on both income and cost of living.

How does income vary with demographics?

Households with a White lead tenant had the highest median income (including pensions and benefits) in 2020/21 at £231 per week. This was £28 higher than households with a Black lead tenant, £31 higher than households with an Asian lead tenant and £48 higher than households with a mixed-race lead tenant.

For all ethnicities, households with a lead tenant aged 25-44 had the highest median income

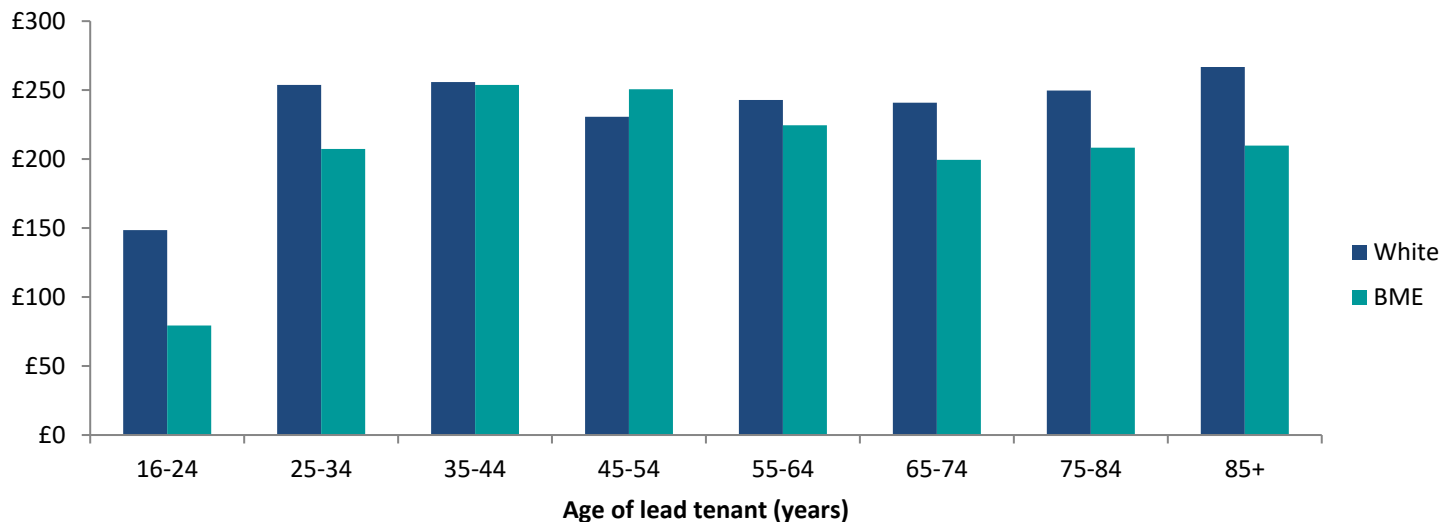
³⁵ Source: English Housing Survey, 2020/2021, Live Table FA3101

³⁶ ONS NOMIS website (<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>), statistics sourced from the Annual Population Survey (APS)

³⁷ Income is self-reported and was available for around half of households in new lets in 2020/21

(including pensions and benefits) whilst households with a lead tenant aged 16-24 had the lowest. Households with White lead tenants had higher incomes than their ethnic minority counterparts at younger ages (£149 per week for White 16–24-year-old lead tenants, £79 per week for ethnic minority groups).

Chart 24: New social lets to households with White lead tenants had higher average household incomes than ethnic minority-led households in almost age groups in 2020/21



5. Tenancy lengths, rents and rent burden

Tenancy type and length

There are five main types of social housing tenancy which can be split into three categories: fixed term, lifetime and licence agreements. Each differ in length and level of security; this in turn has an impact on the types of tenants moving into them.

Definition: Tenancy types

Fixed term	Fixed term tenancies are tenancies of a set length, provided by both LAs (secure flexible) and PRPs (assured shorthold). For general needs, the minimum length is five years (though may be shorter in exceptional circumstances) and the maximum length is 20 years.
Lifetime	These are tenancies given for the lifetime of the tenant and are provided by both LAs (secure) and PRPs (assured).
Licence agreement	These are provided by both LAs and PRPs and are not a formal tenancy. They have no set length or end date and are mainly used for Supported Housing, not General Needs.

How many new fixed and lifetime tenancies were there in 2020/21?

Three-quarters of new social housing tenancies in 2020/21 were lifetime (185,000 tenancies) whilst 12% had a fixed end date (29,000 tenancies)³⁸.

Lifetime tenancies were split into Assured lifetime tenancies (48% of the total, or 117,000 lets) which were mainly let by PRPs, and Secure lifetime tenancies (28% of the total, or 68,000 lets) which were mainly let by LAs. In addition to this a further 12% (29,000) were licence agreements which have no fixed end date.

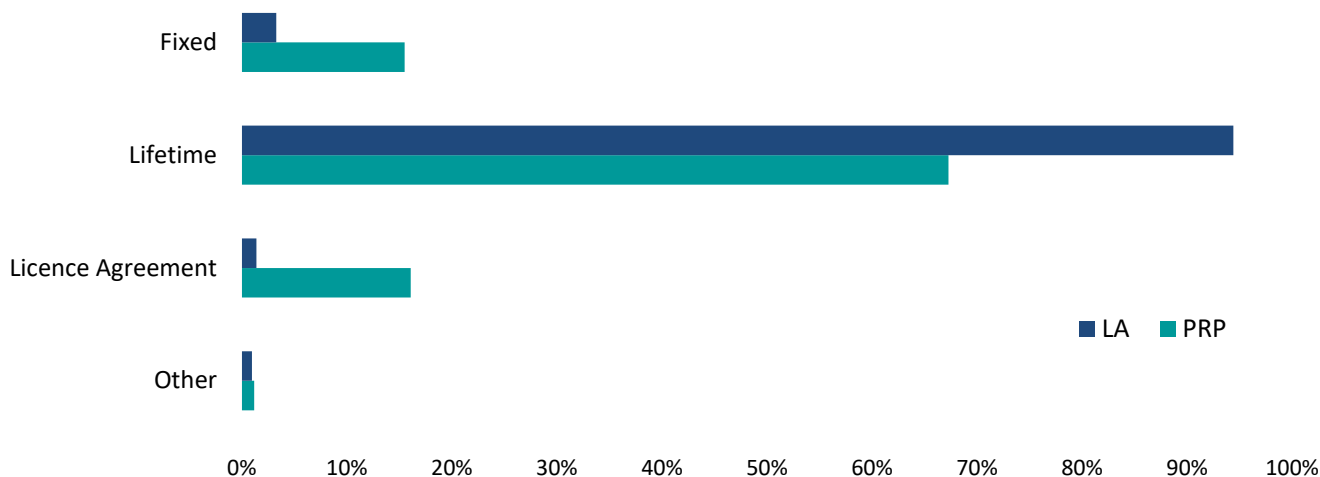
Which provider types were most likely to give a lifetime tenancy?

Local authorities were more likely to provide their tenant with a lifetime tenancy than PRPs. Almost all (94%) of new LA lets were lifetime tenancies, and just 3% were fixed term. This compares to 67% of new PRP lets being lifetime and 15% being fixed term.

However, PRPs provided the highest number of lifetime tenancies as their share of the sector is overall much larger. PRPs provided 117,000 new lifetime social lettings; LAs provided 68,000. PRPs provided almost all (97%) of the 29,000 new licence agreements in 2020/21.

³⁸ General Needs tenancies of less than two years are not collected in CORE as these are deemed “temporary”, thereby reducing the proportion of tenancies of fixed length

Chart 25: Almost all new social lets by local authorities in 2020/21 were lifetime, compared to two thirds of those let by PRPs



PRPs increased their use of lifetime tenancies in 2020/21, with lifetime tenancies rising by 5 percentage points from 62% of new PRP lets in 2019/20 to 67% in 2020/21, the second consecutive annual 5 percentage point rise from 57% in 2018/19. Fixed term tenancies fell correspondingly; from 20% in 2019/20 to 15% in 2020/21.

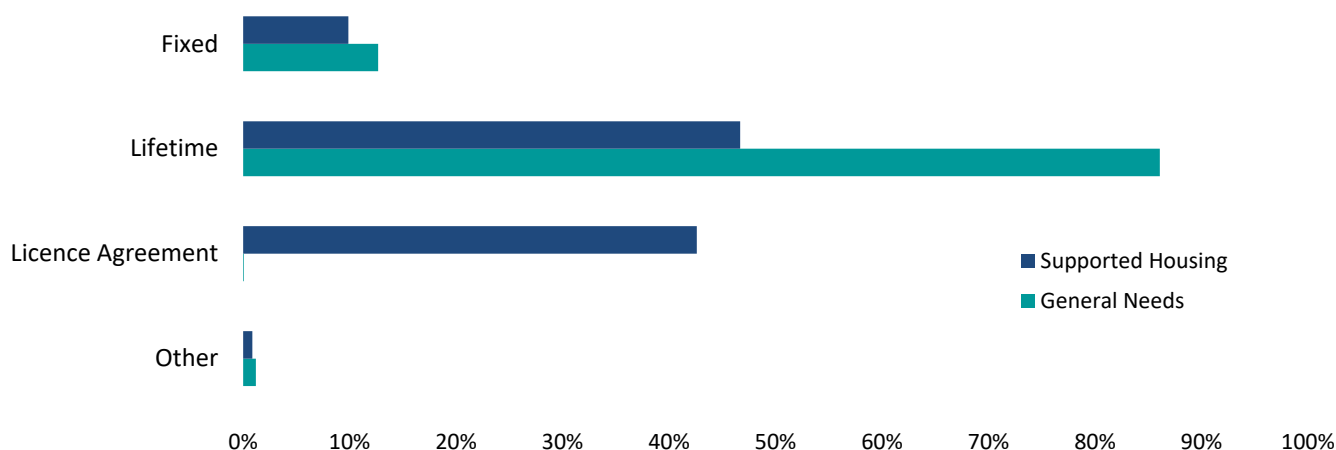
The 2011 Localism Act enabled social housing providers to offer fixed term tenancies. However, the use of fixed term tenancies varies between PRPs and LAs:

- For PRPs the proportion of fixed term tenancies steadily increased to 24% in 2018/19, then dropped to 15% in 2020/21.
- LAs saw a large increase in the proportion of fixed term lettings to 7% in 2014/15, then stayed flat at 7-8% until 2018/19 when it fell to 4% and has remained around this level since, comprising just 3% of new LA lets in 2020/21.

Are there differences between General Needs and Supported Housing?

General Needs lettings have a higher proportion of fixed term tenancies at 13% compared to 10% for Supported Housing, however this gap has narrowed from 16% and 11% respectively in 2019/20. Licence agreements are almost zero for General Needs lettings, whereas they account for 43% of Supported Housing tenancies.

Chart 26: The vast majority of new General Needs tenancies in 2020/21 were lifetime, whilst in Supported Housing lifetime tenancies and licence agreements were roughly equally split



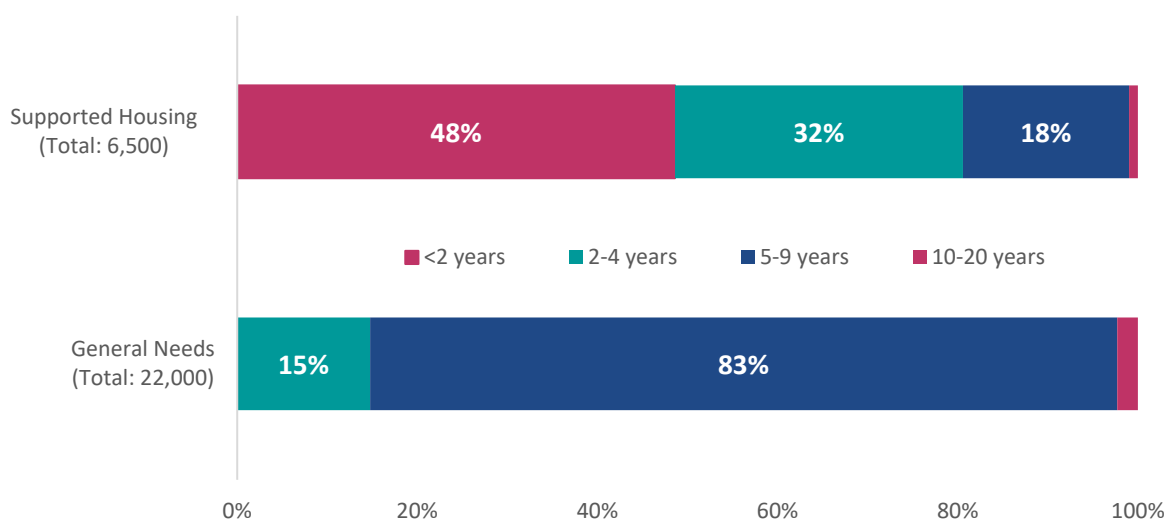
How long are fixed term tenancies?

There were 3,200 Supported Housing tenancies (48%) that had a length of less than two years; General Needs tenancies of less than 2 years are deemed temporary and excluded from CORE.

When considering only fixed term tenancies of 2 years or more, to ensure like-for-like comparison, Supported Housing tenancies were much more likely to be shorter. Only 15% of General Needs tenancies were 2-4 years compared to 62% for Supported Housing, whilst 83% of General Needs tenancies were for 5-9 years compared to just 36% for Supported Housing.

The minimum length of a General Needs fixed term tenancy is set at 5 years, but under exceptional circumstances shorter tenancies may be provided. Supported Housing is more likely to have tenants with the exceptional circumstances to meet the condition, which could explain these differences.

Chart 27: New Supported Housing tenancies in 2019/20 were shorter than General Needs



Rents for new social housing lettings

How expensive is social housing?

The median³⁹ rent for new social housing tenancies in England in 2020/21 was £86 per week, rising slightly from £85 the previous year.

Rents in London were higher than the English average but provided a greater saving compared to market rents. The median rent in London for new social housing tenancies was £114 per week, 33% higher than for the rest of England.

What effect does the rent type have on rent levels?

Rent varies depending on rent type. Affordable rents (as part of the Affordable Rent Programme) are set at up to 80% of market rent, whilst social rents are set via a national regime but are typically lower than affordable rents⁴⁰.

The median Social Rent for a new let in England in 2020/21 was £84 per week, 50% of market rent. In comparison, the median Affordable Rent was £120 per week, which was 71% of market rent.

In London the differences were larger. Median Social Rent for a new London let was £110 per week or 33% of market rent (compared to 50% in England). The median Affordable Rent in London was £172 per week or 52% of market rent (compared to 71% in England).

Chart 28: Average social rent for a new let 2020/21 was 50% of market rent in England and 33% of market rent in London



Do rent levels vary by needs type?

The median weekly rent for new Social Rent Supported Housing lets was £87 in 2020/21 and £83 for new Social Rent General Needs lets. However, for new Affordable lets General Needs were more expensive with median weekly rents of £120 compared to £103 for Supported Housing.

³⁹ Median is used where possible as it is less influenced by individual extremely high or low values. Mean is used instead when comparing between new social lets and all social lets as LAHS publishes means for all social lets.

⁴⁰ See rent type definitions on page 4

As the number of bedrooms is not collected for supported housing it is not possible to compare similar sized properties for rent comparison, however based on the household composition figures (Chapter 4) it is likely that they are smaller an average. Supported housing will have more bespoke services to cater for the needs of the tenants living in the property, the costs of these services will be passed on to the rent cost.

How have rents changed over time?

Since 2011/12 when the Affordable Rent Programme began, all social housing weekly rents have increased, but by less than the market rent increase. Between 2012/13⁴¹ and 2020/21, median Social and Affordable Rents increased by 8% and 14% respectively, whilst median market rent increased by 20%.

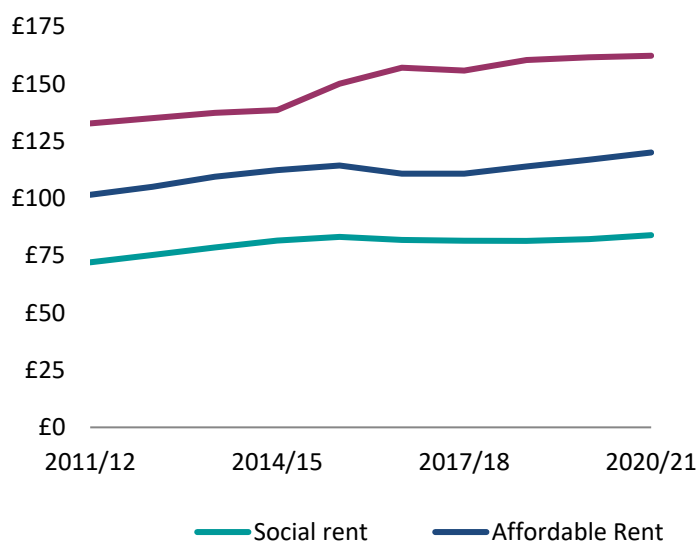
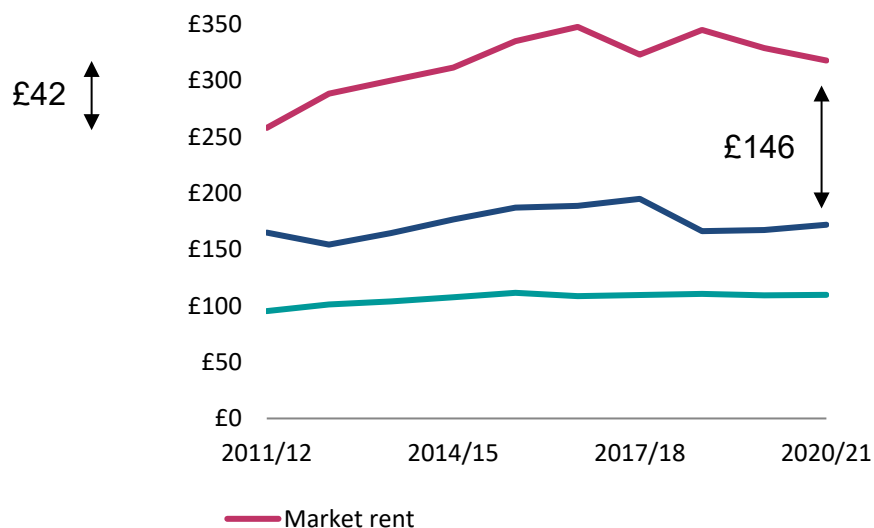
The rental market in London has differed from England. As in England, all rents saw steady increase from 2011/12 to 2016/17. Since then, market rent has generally fluctuated, seeing between a 7% decrease and a 7% increase year-on-year, but remaining stable from 2019/20 to 2020/21. Affordable Rent in London saw a drop of 12% between 2017/18 and 2018/19, before rising 2.5.% in 2019/20 and a further 3% in 2020/21. Social Rents have remained stable in London since 2015/16.

Chart 29: The gap between market rent and Affordable Rent across the country has been widening since 2012/13; by 2020/21 the gap in London was 3.5 times the gap in England

England – median weekly rents

London – median weekly rents

⁴¹ 2012/13 was the first full year in which both LAs and PRPs were able to offer Affordable Rent tenancies, and the first year in which CORE recorded data on Affordable Rent lettings



Are tenants in new social lettings paying lower rents than those already living in social housing?

For new social lettings provided by local authorities in 2020/21, mean⁴² weekly rents were on average £1.10 (or 1%) lower than for all LA lets in 2019/20.

Similarly, mean rents for new PRP Social Rent General Needs lets⁴³ in 2020/21 were £3.95 (or 4%) lower than for all PRP Social Rent General Needs lettings in 2019/20. By contrast, mean rents for new PRP Social Rent Supported Housing lets in 2020/21 were £10.79 (12%) higher than for all PRP Social Rent Supported Housing lets in 2019/20.

Has the gap between rents for new lettings and those already in social housing widened?

For LA lettings, mean weekly rents for new lets have stayed lower than rents for all LA lets each

⁴² Median is used where possible as it is less influenced by individual extremely high or low values. Mean is used instead when comparing between new social lets and all social lets as LAHS publishes means for all social lets.

⁴³ Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistical-data-return-statistical-releases>, SDR Additional Table 2.15. SDR Affordable Rent data is based on gross rent (including service charges) and are therefore not directly comparable with data collected by CORE.

year since 2007/08.

For PRP lettings, we see differences by rent type. For Social Rent General Needs PRP lettings, new lets have consistently had lower mean rents than existing lets since 2012/13. For Social Rent Supported Housing PRP lettings, the reverse is true and mean rents for new lets have historically been higher than for existing lets.

By how much have rents increased over time?

Weekly rents for both new social lettings and the social sector as a whole increased from 2007/08 to 2015/16. Between 2015/16 and 2019/20 average rents for new lets flattened, whereas for the sector as a whole, rents slightly fell (3% for PRPs and 2% for LAs). 2020/21 has shown a reversal of this recent trend, with mean rents for both new lets and whole-sector lets generally increasing from the previous year.

Table 2: From 2007/08 to 2019/20 average weekly rents for new social lettings rose by around 55% whereas rents for all social lettings rose by around 40%

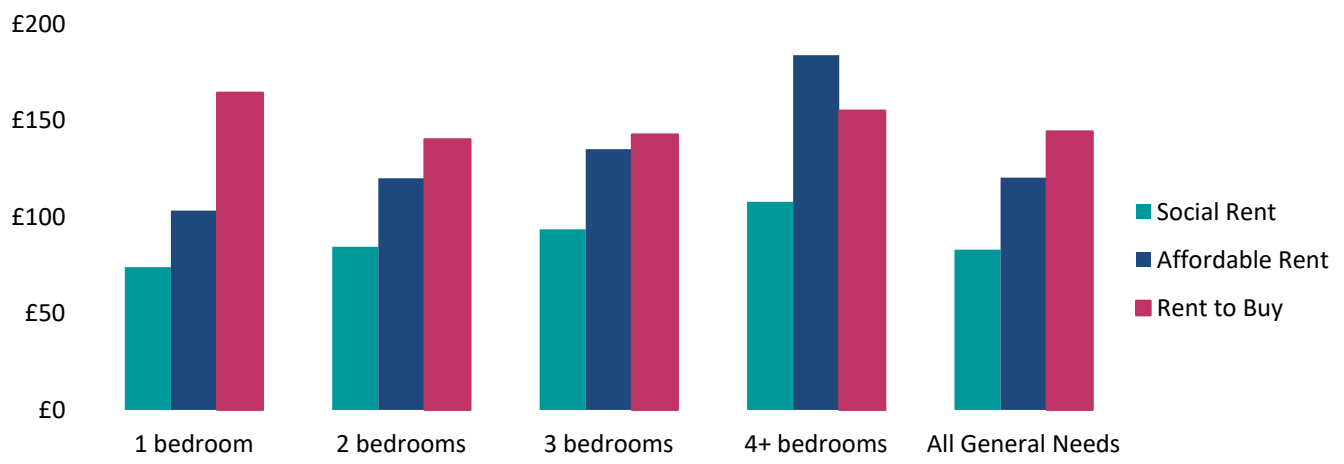
		2007/08 average (mean) weekly rent	2020/21 average (mean) weekly rent	% change
Local authorities (LAs)	New lets	£56.48	£84.59	50%
	All lets	£61.62	£88.27	43%
Private Registered Providers (PRPs) General Needs Social Rent only	New lets	£64.25	£100.96	57%
	All lets	£69.96	£96.60	38%

Number of bedrooms and weekly rent

The number of bedrooms in a property has an impact on the median weekly rent. This is clearly illustrated by the chart below, where in both Social and Affordable Rent, General Needs⁴⁴ properties with one bedroom are by far the cheapest and those with four bedrooms are the most expensive. Four-bedroom properties were 46% more expensive than one-bedroom properties for Social Rent and 78% more expensive for Affordable Rent.

Chart 30: Median weekly social rent for a new tenancy was approximately £37 per week less than Affordable Rent and £61 per week less than Rent to Buy, differing by bedroom size

⁴⁴ General needs only; CORE only collects information on number of bedrooms for general needs properties



Rent burden for new social housing lettings

Definition: Rent burden

Rent burden = $\frac{\text{Rent}}{\text{Income}}$ This is the proportion of the household income spent on rent.

A high level of rent burden means a household has less money to spend on other things. This only considers rent and service charge, not other essentials such as bills and food. Rent burden is calculated for General Needs only⁴⁵.

The way rent burden is calculated has changed for the 2019/20 reporting year and onwards. Rent burden is now calculated for households that are not in receipt of Housing Benefit, as well as households that are. For those receiving Housing Benefit, the income includes the amount of Housing Benefit paid directly to the landlord. This is to allow a valid comparison with the income of households not in receipt of Housing Benefit who pay their rent from their earned income and/or Universal Credit payment.

The median household in a new General Needs let spent 36% of their income on rent in 2020/21. This is unchanged from 2019/20. Historically, there was a steady decline in rent burden from 2013/14 to 2018/19, however the figures from this period are not directly comparable due to a change in calculation method in 2019/20.

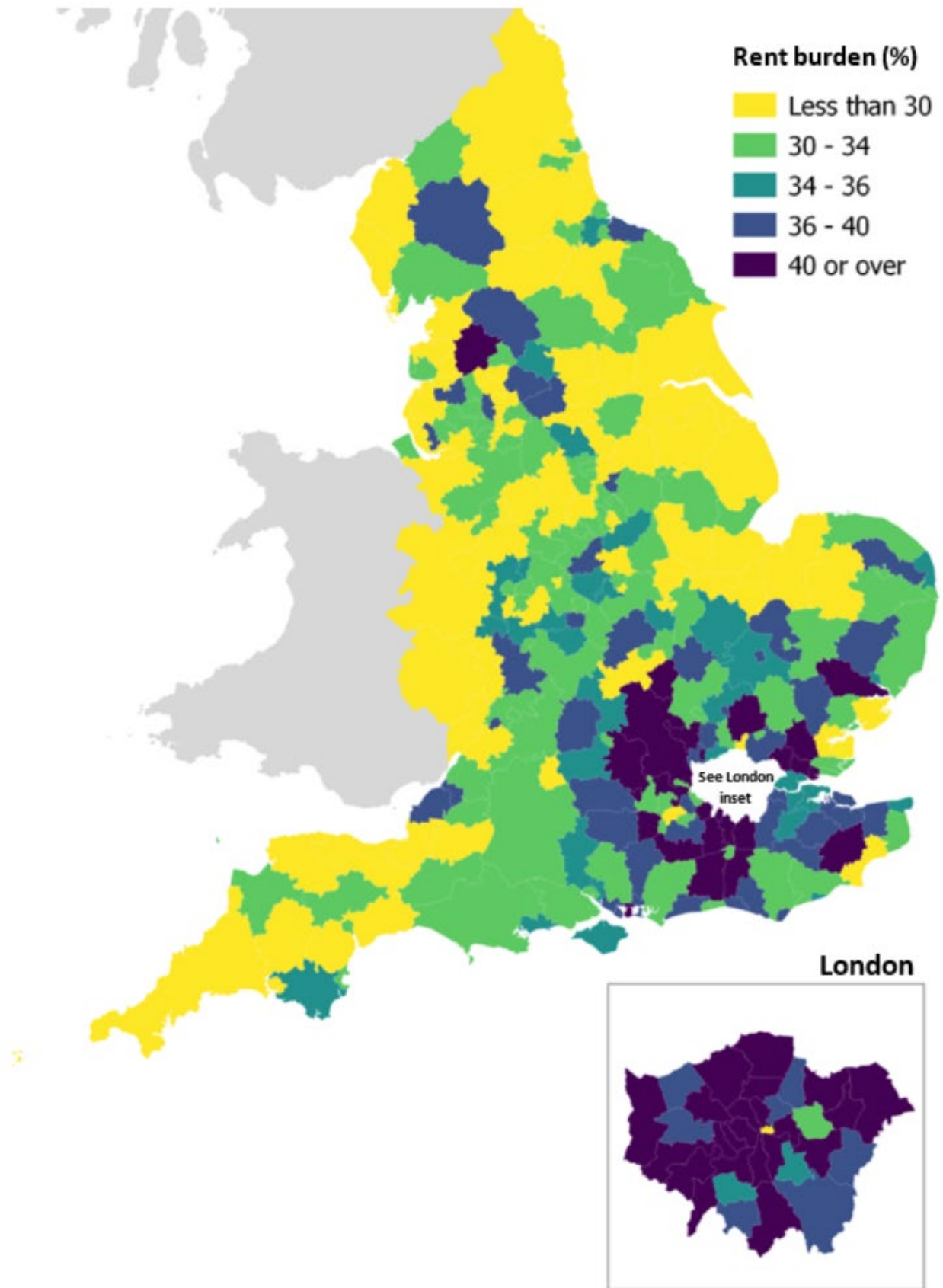
How does rent burden vary across the country?

Rent burden for new General Needs lets was highest in London with households on average spending 51% of their income on rent in 2020/21. In the rest of England, the lowest average spend of household income on rent was seen in the North East and North West (31% and 32%, respectively). This maintains the pattern of London having substantially higher rent burden for new General Needs social lets than other regions of England.

Map 3: The average proportion of household income spent on rent by households in new

⁴⁵ Rent burden can only be calculated for General Needs. The number of bedrooms is required to calculate rent burden and this information is not available for Supported Housing.

General Needs lets is highest in London and the surrounding areas



How does rent burden vary between households?

There was a difference in rent burden by age, where households with lead tenants between 65 to 74 years and those aged over 85 were spending the lowest proportion of their income on rent at 33%, whereas those under 24 years old spent the highest proportion of their income on rent at 47%.

There were slight variations in rent burden between different ethnic groups. Households in new social lets in 2020/21 with White lead tenants had the lowest rent burden, spending 36% of their income on rent, whilst households with Mixed lead tenants had the highest rent burden at 44%.

6. Technical notes

Social Housing Lettings has been badged as National Statistics, the quality mark of government statistics, following assessment by the UK Statistics Authority in 2014. We abide by the Code of Practice for Statistics⁴⁶ from data collection through to publication.

Data collection

Information for 2020/21 in this release reflects data given by providers for the financial year ending 31 March 2021. CORE is a requirement on the Single Data List for local authorities and is a regulatory requirement of the social housing regulator for private registered providers.

Statistics presented in this release are based on the data submitted through the on-line Continuous Recording system (CORE) by private registered providers and local authorities. CORE was first set up in 1989 for PRPs and its remit expanded to local authorities in 2004.

Data providers complete a range of information set out in a form about tenants that are accessing social housing and the property they are letting. Practice varies in terms of how local authorities and housing associations collect and compile the data that is submitted on the CORE form. Some questions are answered with information recorded at the point of registration, other elements about the type of tenancy and stock are drawn from the providers' own housing management information system, with the remaining CORE-specific questions are asked of tenants by housing officers at sign-up. Guidance notes are available on CORE's [Guides and Manuals](#) page.

Once complete, the CORE logs are input online, either manually or directly from their internal systems via a bulk upload. The data are initially validated at the point of entry as they are submitted by data providers, and then undergo further validation and quality assurance processes. These processes are described in the "Data Quality" section.

Data quality

Coverage

The data collected through CORE differs from the social housing data in the *Local Authority Housing Survey* (LAHS) in that CORE is a 'flow' measure of all new social housing lettings which records data at record level, whereas data in LAHS is a 'stock' measure of all social housing stock in local authorities. Some LAHS information is presented in this release to provide context to the information from CORE on new lettings. The associated LAHS live tables will be published on the same day.

The *English Housing Survey* (EHS) also provides social housing lettings data but the statistics are based on a survey and are again a 'stock' measure of social housing stock. CORE data focuses on the tenancy details at the point of letting, and besides property characteristics also collects information on the socio-demographic profile of the household, their housing circumstances and some financial information. CORE does not record any information of social housing lettings that are continuing – only new lettings.

⁴⁶ <https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/code-of-practice/>

Lettings and sales data are reported by all registered providers, and voluntarily by those who are not registered with the social housing regulator. Information is only collected on new lettings or sales, in General Needs or Supported Housing, by financial year.

CORE does not currently collect information on sales from local authorities, with more detail available in the [Social Housing Sales](#) publication.

Some types of lettings are excluded from CORE, (see [Guides and Manuals](#)), including:

- Mutual exchanges (where tenants have exchanged homes)
- Conversions of starter or introductory tenancies to assured or secure tenancies (because the introductory tenancy will have previously been reported to CORE)
- Successions by assignment (where the tenancy has transferred to another person at the request of the sole tenancy)
- Temporary general needs housing (lettings made with a fixed period of less than two years)

More information on the coverage of CORE can be found in the quality report available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/social-housing-lettings-in-england-april-2020-to-march-2021>

Completeness of CORE data

CORE is designed to be a complete census of new social housing lettings provided by local authorities and private registered providers that own social housing stock. Whilst data providers should submit data for all new social housing tenancies, this does not always happen in practice. In addition, not all questions are compulsory so information may be incomplete for some tenancy records. This introduces bias into statistics using the data which we minimise by applying weighting and imputation processes. Weighting is applied to adjust for record level non-response by local authorities. Imputation is applied to compensate for item non-response for both local authorities and private registered providers.

Local authority weighting

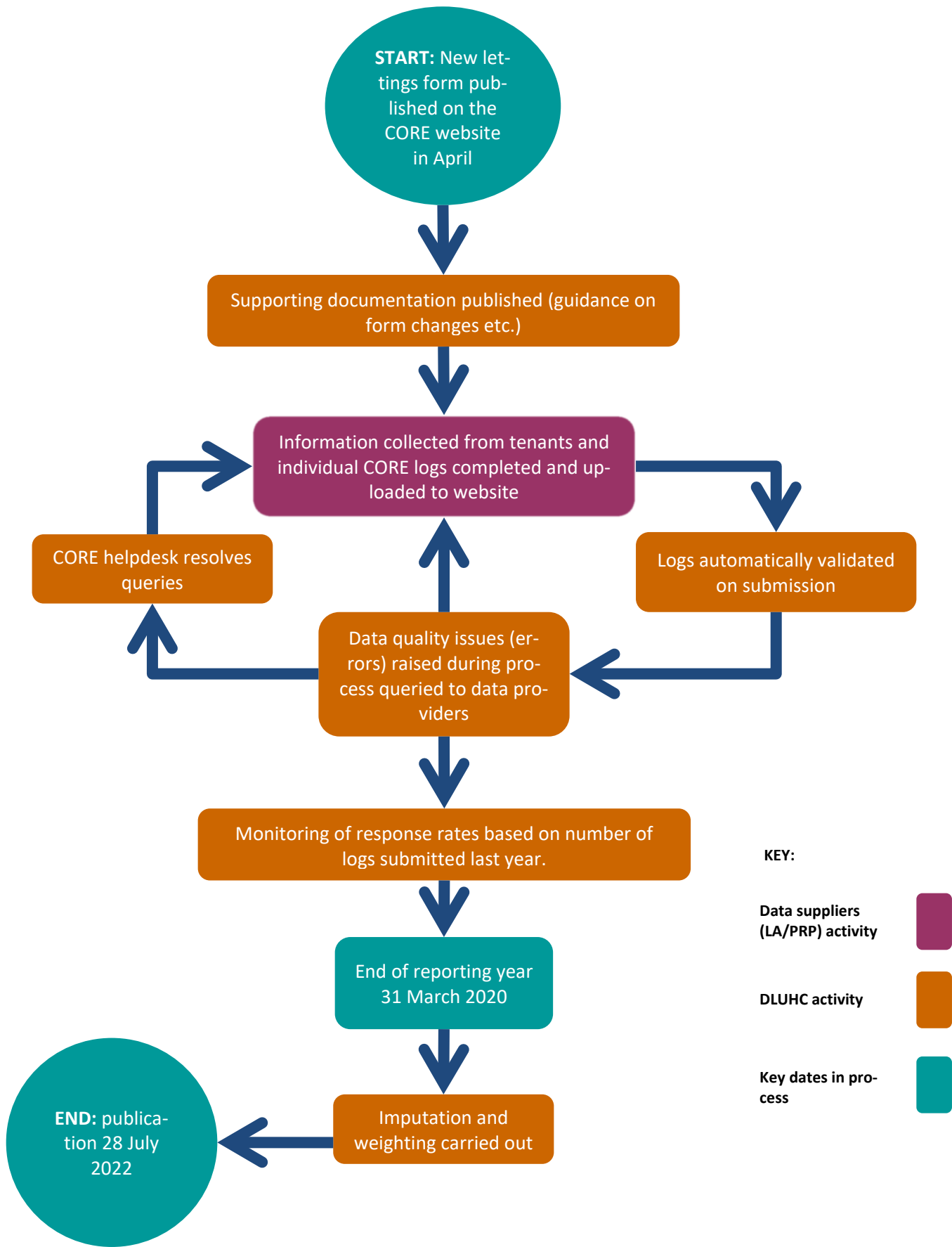
Local authority weights are calculated by reference to the total number of lettings reported to LAHS. Currently weights are not calculated for private rented providers as it is assumed we have a complete response. Weights are also not calculated for Affordable Rents as there were too few lettings of this type for any such calculated weights to be robust.

Imputation of missing items

Some of the questions on the CORE questionnaire are not compulsory. In particular, data on household characteristics may not be available to the housing officer or may be refused by the tenant. In these cases, we impute responses.

Details of the imputation and weighting methodology used are available in the quality report: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/social-housing-lettings-in-england-april-2020-to-march-2021>

Quality assurance procedure



Users and uses

CORE is a unique source of information in providing detailed information about individual tenancies. This record level data enables multi-variable breakdowns, distributional analysis, and construction of small area estimates. For example, it collects information on household characteristics, primary reason for housing, and the source of referral and previous tenure of all recorded lettings.

Policy makers and practitioners regard CORE as an essential tool for monitoring housing costs, assessing affordability and developing policy. CORE data are used:

- For policy monitoring and development, e.g. through detailed local analysis of allocations;
- As a component of the Retail Price Index (RPI) by the Office for National Statistics;
- By other government departments, e.g. forming part of how the Armed Forces Covenant monitors access to social housing for veterans;
- To respond to Freedom of Information requests (FOI) and Parliamentary Questions (PQs).

Non-government bodies also use CORE data. For example:

- Housing providers use analysis of their own data to inform their housing management strategies and to benchmark their own performance;
- Academics, researchers, charities and the public access record level data through the UK Data Archive to better understand social housing issues.

Confidentiality

Since the introduction of the General Data Protection Requirements (GDPR) on 25 May 2018 updates have been made to how data are submitted into the CORE system:

- Data sharing agreement – all CORE data providers must sign a formal data sharing agreement with DLUHC;
- CORE data protection officer – all CORE data providers must set up a CORE data protection officer on the CORE system to electronically sign the data sharing agreement on behalf of their organisation;
- Privacy notice – a new CORE privacy notice must be made available to all new social housing tenants when their data are collected.

All of these steps must be taken for an organisation to submit data into CORE. This ensures that tenants are informed of how their data will be used and that it is being processed securely.

Our disclosure policy⁴⁷ is applied to all internal and external uses of the data, including this statistical release and accompanying products. Record level datasets are available through the UK Data Archive⁴⁸ via one of three types of licence agreement with different levels of data protection to meet different user needs whilst maintaining tenant confidentiality in line with legislation.

Revisions policy

This policy has been developed in accordance with the UK Statistics Authority Code of Practice for Official Statistics and the Department's Revisions Policy:

⁴⁷ <https://core.communities.gov.uk/public/GuidesAndManuals.html>

⁴⁸ Via <http://ukdataservice.ac.uk/get-data/how-to-access>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statistical-notice-dclg-revisions-policy>.

1. Non-scheduled revisions

These are where a substantial error has occurred as a result of the compilation, imputation or dissemination process. Revised products are released as soon as is practicable, alongside an explanatory note on both the cause and impact of the error. Data are clearly indicated in tables as 'provisional' (P) or 'revised' (R).

2. Scheduled revisions

Providers cannot retrospectively submit or revise data after the closedown deadline date for the reporting year. The only scheduled revision is to the weights, currently based on provisional LAHS data, once the final LAHS data are published. Revised weights and estimates are made in the subsequent release in the historic tables.

For example, 2019/20 weights were revised after the publication of final LAHS 2019/20 data in early summer 2020. In this 2020/21 *Social Housing Lettings* release the 2019/20 figures in the time series tables have been revised.

Related statistics

Social housing sales data

The Department's *Social Housing Sales in England* utilising data collected through CORE for sales of self-contained dwellings and re-sales of any part-owned dwellings (shared ownership) from private registered providers are available from:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/social-housing-sales-including-right-to-buy-and-transfers>

Housing stock in England

The Department publishes annual live tables on housing stock and vacancies by tenure at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-dwelling-stock-including-vacants#live-tables>

Private registered provider social housing

The Regulator for Social Housing in England, the separate statutory regulatory body, publishes its annual *Statistical Data Return* (SDR) including the total number of social and affordable lettings and stock, is based on data collected from private registered providers. Available from:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/private-registered-provider-social-housing-stock-and-rents-in-england-2020-to-2021>

Local authority housing social housing

The Department's annual *Local Authority Housing Statistics* (LAHS) data return reports on a wide range of housing related data including total dwellings, lettings and vacant, waiting lists, rents, and

condition of stock⁴⁹, available from:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/local-authority-housing-data>

English Housing Survey (EHS)

The Department's annual *English Housing Survey* (EHS) providing information on the quality and quantity of both social and non-social stock in England based upon a sample of households is at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/english-housing-survey>

Homelessness

The Department's statistics relating to homelessness include quarterly *Statutory Homelessness* and the annual *Rough Sleeping in England*, both available from:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/homelessness-statistics>

Devolved administrations

The devolved administrations of the UK produce and publish their own social housing lettings and sales statistics. These data are not published alongside the England statistics in this release because there are not directly comparable figures across the country due to differences in data collection methodologies and policies.

Wales

- Social housing stock and rent statistics: <https://gov.wales/social-landlord-housing-stock-and-rents>
- Social housing lettings statistics: <https://gov.wales/data-collection-social-housing-lettings>

Scotland

- Local authority social lettings: <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Housing-Regeneration/HSfS/Lettings>
- Social sector summary tables: <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Housing-Regeneration/HSfS/socialhousing>
- Private registered provider social lettings: <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Housing-Regeneration/HSfS/Improvements>
- Social Tenants in Scotland, 2015 <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2017/02/8350>

Northern Ireland

- Social housing statistics including data on tenancies, household, allocations and sales can be found at: <http://www.ninis2.nisra.gov.uk/public/Home.aspx>

⁴⁹ Prior to 2011/12 much of this information was collected through the department's Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix (HSSA).



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