



Ministry of Housing,  
Communities &  
Local Government



# English Housing Survey

Private rented sector, 2019-20



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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 running government surveys and was first run in 1967.
2. This report focuses on the private rented sector and is split into four chapters. The first chapter gives an overview of households in the private rented sector, including demographic characteristics, overcrowding and under-occupation, and levels of satisfaction.
3. The second chapter focuses on housing costs and affordability in the private rented sector, including rent, income, the proportion of income spent on rent, as well as savings, difficulty paying rent and rent arrears.
4. The third chapter examines housing histories and aspirations to buy, including time spent in current accommodation and in current tenure, reasons previous tenancies ended, and histories of homelessness.
5. Finally, chapter four focuses on the private rented housing stock, and presents findings about decency, safety and energy efficiency in the private rented sector.

## Main findings

### **Nearly one in five households in England live in the private rented sector, making it the second largest tenure.**

- Just over 4.4 million households live in the private rented sector in England, 19% of all households. By comparison, 17% (4.0 million) live in the social rented sector and 65% (15.4 million) are owner occupiers.
- The number and proportion of private rented households has declined from 20% and 4.7 million households in 2016-17.

### **Renters are more likely to live in overcrowded accommodation than owner occupiers, and ethnic minority households in the private rented sector are more likely to be overcrowded than white households.**

- 7% of private rented and 9% of social rented households are overcrowded, compared with 1% of owner occupied households. Overcrowding in the private rented sector increased further during the COVID-19 pandemic. In November to December 2020, 15% of households in the private rented sector were overcrowded<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> English Housing Survey, Household Resilience Study: Wave 2, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/household-resilience-study-wave-2>

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- In 2019-20, 13% of privately rented households with an ethnic minority HRP<sup>2</sup> were overcrowded, compared with 7% of privately rented households with a white HRP.

**Private renters spend a higher proportion of their household income on rent than social renters. This proportion is highest for those who live in London.**

- On average, private renters spent 32% of their household income, including Housing Benefit, on rent. The average for social renters was 27%.
- Private renters in London spend an average of 42% of their household income on rent. The same figure for social renters in London is 30%.

**Private renting households with one adult were more likely to be in arrears than households with two or more adults.**

- At 13%, lone parents were around twice as likely as couples with dependent children (at 6%) to have been in arrears at some point over the past year.
- At 8%, one person households were nearly three times as likely than couples without children (at 3%) to have been in arrears at some point over the past year.

**Despite the fact they have lower relative incomes, private rented households with HRPs from the oldest and youngest age groups are less likely to report having difficulty with rent payments.**

- Nearly a half of privately renting households aged 16 to 24 (49%) and more than four fifths (82%) of those 75 and older are in the lowest two income quintiles. The figure for those aged 35 to 44 is 37%.
- About 16% of those aged 16 to 24 and 14% of those aged 75 and over report difficulty with rent. This compares with more than a third of those aged 35-44 (31%) and those aged 45 to 64 (32%).

**The majority of households who had moved from privately rented accommodation had ended their last tenancy because they wanted to. Social renters whose last tenancy was in the private rented sector were more likely than those who moved within the private rented sector to have been asked to leave their last tenancy by their landlord or agent.**

- Three quarters of private renters (76%) said that their last tenancy ended because they wanted to move. 8% of current private renters report being asked to leave their last tenancy by a landlord or agent.
- About two thirds (69%) of social renters who were last private renters moved because they wanted to. About one fifth (22%) of current social renters say they were asked to leave their privately rented tenancy by a landlord or agent.

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<sup>2</sup> The HRP (household reference person) is the person in whose name the accommodation is owned or rented.

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**Younger private renters are more likely than older private renters to expect to own a home in the future.**

- More than three quarters of private renters aged 16 to 24 (78%) and those aged 25 to 34 (77%) say they expect to buy a home in the future.
- The expectation to buy tapers off in older age cohorts – just under two thirds of those aged 35 to 44 (65%), two fifths of those aged 45 to 64 (41%) and just over a tenth of those aged 65 to 74 (12%) eventually expect to buy.

**Private renters in receipt of Housing Benefit are more likely to live in a non-decent home than those not in receipt of Housing Benefit. The converse is true for social renters.**

- 29% of private renters in receipt of Housing Benefit live in a non-decent home, compared to 21% of private renters not receiving Housing Benefit.
- For social renters, 11% of households receiving benefit live in non-decent accommodation, compared to 14% of social renters not in receipt of benefit.

**The average cost to bring a privately rented dwelling to EPC C is more than for a social rented dwelling, but less than the average for owner occupied homes.**

- The average cost to bring a privately rented dwelling up to EPC C is £7,646. This is compared to £5,979 for a social rented dwelling, or £8,579 for owner occupiers.
- The total estimated costs to bring all privately rented dwellings in England that are currently EPC D or lower up to EPC C is £21.5 billion.

## Acknowledgements and further queries

6. Each year the English Housing Survey relies on the contributions of a large number of people and organisations. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) would particularly like to thank the following people and organisations, without whom the 2019-20 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.
7. This report was produced by Melanie Doyle at NatCen Social Research and Justin Allen at BRE in collaboration with MHCLG.
8. If you have any queries about this report, would like any further information or have suggestions for analyses you would like to see included in future EHS reports, please contact [ehs@communities.gov.uk](mailto:ehs@communities.gov.uk).
9. The responsible analyst for this report is: Chauncey Glass, Housing and Planning Analysis Division, MHCLG. Contact via [ehs@communities.gov.uk](mailto:ehs@communities.gov.uk)



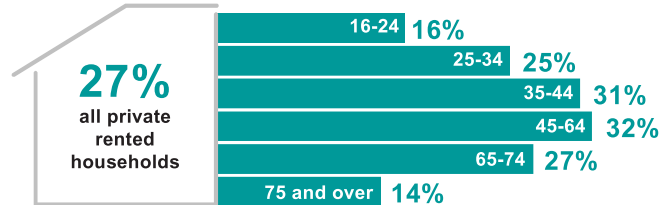
# Private rented sector

Nearly one in five households in England live in the private rented sector



Just over 4.4 million households live in the private rented sector in England, 19% of all households. 17% (4.0 million) live in the social rented sector and 65% (15.4 million) are owner occupiers

Private rented households in the oldest and youngest age groups are less likely to report having difficulty with rent payments



Private renters spend a higher proportion of their household income on rent than social renters



Private renters

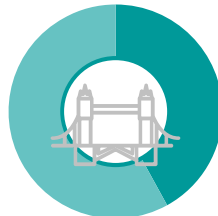


Social renters



Owner occupiers

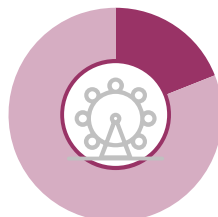
The proportion of household income spent on rent is highest for those who live in London



Private renters



Social renters



Owner occupiers

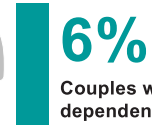
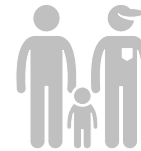
Private renting households with one adult were more likely to be in arrears than households with two or more adults



Lone parents



One person households



Couples with dependent children

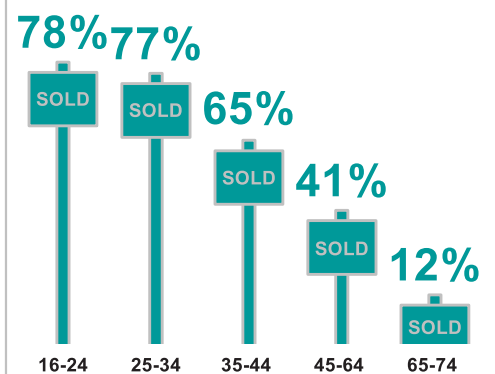


Couples without children

Privately rented dwellings where someone in the household receives Housing Benefit were more likely to be non-decent than those where no one was in receipt of Benefit. The reverse is true for social renters



Younger private renters are more likely than older private renters to expect to own a home in the future



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# Chapter 1

## Profile of private renters

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- 1.1 This chapter provides a demographic profile of private renters. It also covers measures of overcrowding and under-occupation, perceived discrimination in the private rented sector and levels of satisfaction with tenure and accommodation.
- 1.2 In 2019-20 there were just over 4.4 million households in the private rented sector in England, accounting for 19% of households. The size of the private rented sector has declined since 2016-17 (20%, 4.7 million households) but did not change between 2018-19 and 2019-20<sup>3</sup>.
- 1.3 The private rented sector is larger than the social rented sector (4.0 million households, 17%), and smaller than the owner occupied sector (15.4 million households, 65%).

### Age of HRP

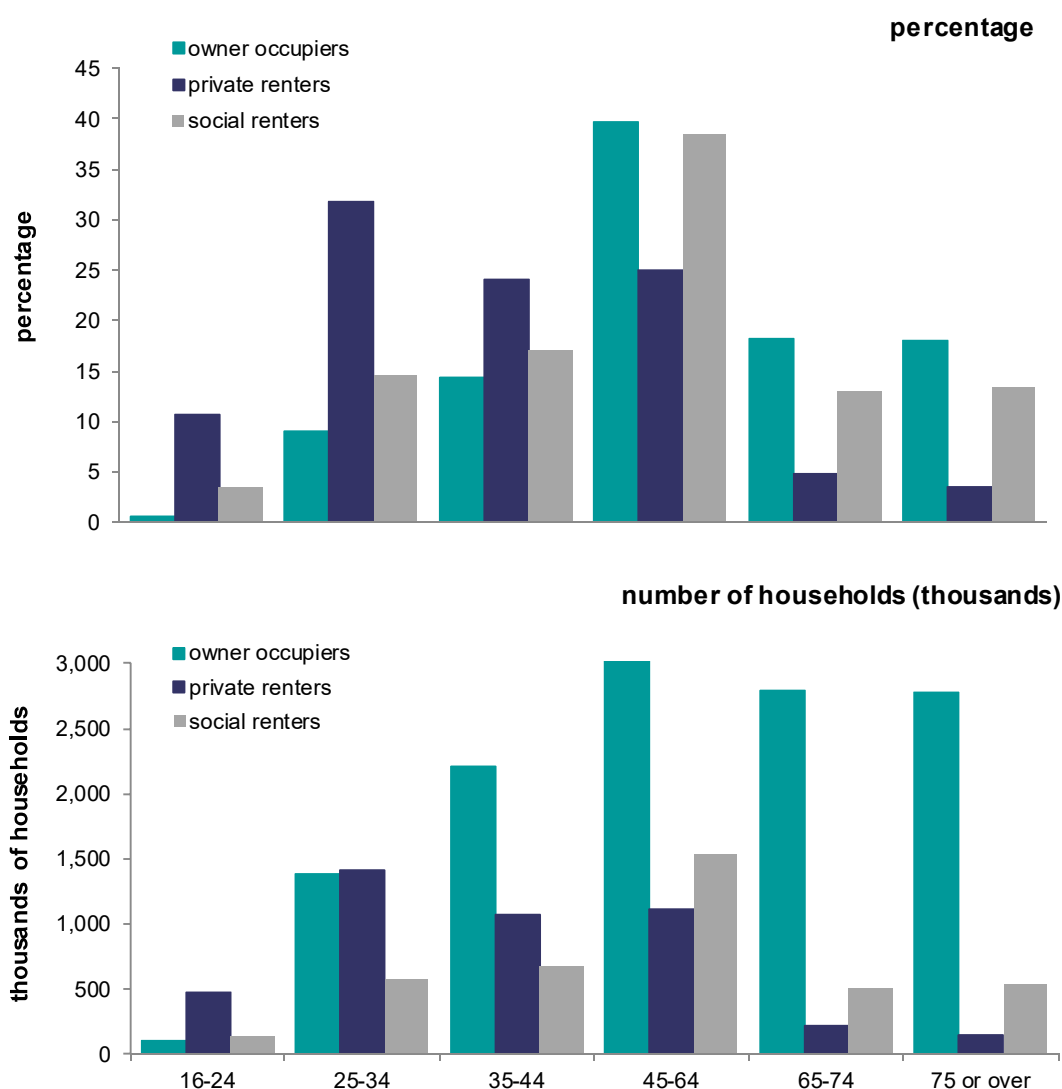
- 1.4 The age distribution of private renters is based on the age of the Household Reference Person (HRP)<sup>4</sup>. With a mean age of 41 years, private renters tend to be younger than social renters (53 years) and owner occupiers (58 years), Annex Table 1.1.
- 1.5 The age profile of private renters reflects this. The most common age group is 25 to 34 year olds, who account for almost one third (32%) of private rented households.
- 1.6 Adults of retirement age make up only a small proportion of private renters: 5% are aged 65 to 74, and 3% are 75 or over. However, while proportions are small, they correspond to approximately 371,000 households of retirement age living in private rented accommodation, Annex Table 1.2, Figure 1.1.

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<sup>3</sup> English Housing Survey, 2019-20 Headline Report, Annex Table 1.1, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-housing-survey-2019-to-2020-headline-report>

<sup>4</sup> The Household Reference Person or HRP is 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.

**Figure 1.1: Age of HRP, by tenure, 2019-20**



Base: all households

Note: Underlying data are presented in Annex Table 1.2

Source: English Housing Survey, full household sample

## Household type and size

- 1.7 On average, private rented households are larger (2.5 persons) than owner occupier (2.4 persons) and social rented households (2.3 persons)<sup>5</sup>.
- 1.8 The most common household types for private renters were one person households (26%), followed by couples with dependent children (24%) and couples without children (22%).

<sup>5</sup> English Housing Survey, 2019-20 Headline Report, Annex Table 1.3, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-housing-survey-2019-to-2020-headline-report>



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- 1.9 Over half of private rented households were one adult households: one person households (26%), lone parents with dependent children (11%) and lone persons sharing with other lone persons (10%), Annex Table 1.5.
- 1.10 Households with dependent children account for over one third (36%) of private rented households, almost 1.6 million households. A higher proportion of private rented (36%) and social rented (34%) households contain dependent children than do owner occupied households (25%), Annex Table 1.6.

## Long-term illness and disability

- 1.11 One quarter (25%) of private rented households – over one million households – had a member with a long-term illness or disability.
- 1.12 The prevalence of long-term illness and disability among private rented households is lower than for social renters (54%) and owners (31%).
- 1.13 The English Housing Survey 2019-20 Home Adaptations report (part of this series) provides a detailed analysis of adaptations to homes made in households which include one or more persons with a long-term limiting illness or disability. Overall, the majority (75%) of private rented households that required adaptations lived in suitable accommodation, and half (50%) lived in accommodation where all of the required adaptations had been made<sup>6</sup>.

## Ethnicity and nationality

- 1.14 Overall, 18% of private rented households had a HRP with an ethnic minority background, most commonly Black (4%), Indian (3%), Pakistani or Bangladeshi (3%) and other ethnic minority groups (8%).
- 1.15 The proportion of private rented households with an ethnic minority background (18%) is comparable to the social rented sector (19%), but higher than for owner occupiers (10%)<sup>7</sup>.
- 1.16 The majority of private renters are from the UK and Ireland (72%). However, private renters are more likely than other tenures to come from EU countries (18%, compared with 4% of social renters and 2% of owners) or countries

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<sup>6</sup> English Housing Survey, 2019-20 Home Adaptations Report, Annex Table 1.3 and Annex Table 3.1, <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/english-housing-survey#2019-to-2020>

<sup>7</sup> English Housing Survey, 2019-20 Headline Report, Annex Table 1.3, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-housing-survey-2019-to-2020-headline-report>

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outside the EU (11%, compared with 5% of social renters and 2% of owners), Annex Table 1.8.

- 1.17 Looking at the tenure profile within each nationality group, households from the EU (63%) and other countries outside the EU (51%) were more likely to be in private rented accommodation than those from the UK or Ireland (15%), Annex Table 1.9.

## Religion

- 1.18 Private renters were most likely to have no religion (46%) or to be Christian (42%). Around 7% of private renters were Muslim. Other religions were less common, each accounting for 2% or less of private renters.
- 1.19 Compared with other tenure groups, private renters were more likely to have no religion (46% private renters, 36% owners, 38% social renters) and less likely to be Christian (42% private renters, 57% owners and 53% social renters).
- 1.20 Private renters (7%) and social renters (7%) were more likely to be Muslim than owners (4%), Annex Table 1.10.

## Sexual orientation

- 1.21 In all tenures, 2-3% of Household Reference Persons (HRPs) reported they were lesbian, gay, bisexual, or identified with another LGB+ orientation. There were no significant differences by tenure, Annex Table 1.11. Overall, there were 450,000 households where the HRP reported they were lesbian, gay, bisexual or had another LGB+ orientation, including 97,000 households (3%) in the private rented sector.

## National Statistics Socio-economic Classification

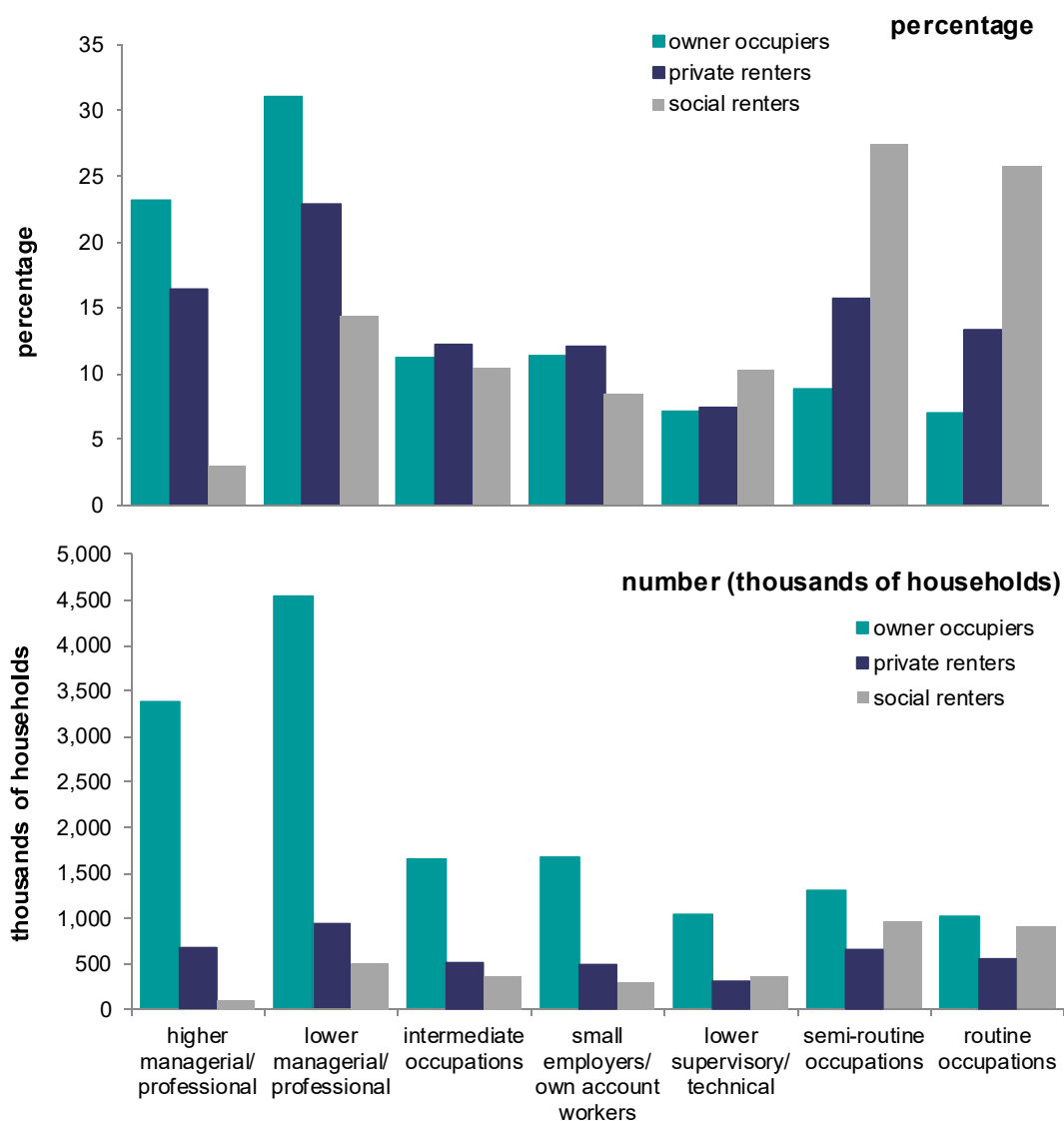
- 1.22 For socio-economic group, the EHS uses the eight-class version of the National Statistics Socio-economic Classification (NS-SEC)<sup>8</sup>. Compared with other tenures, private renters were more evenly spread across NS-SEC categories.

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<sup>8</sup> The EHS uses the eight-class version of the National Statistics Socio-economic Classification (NS-SEC). The eight classes are: higher managerial and professional occupations; lower managerial and professional occupations; intermediate occupations (clerical, sales, service); small employers and own account workers; lower supervisory and technical occupations; semi-routine occupations; routine occupations; never worked or long-term unemployed. No EHS respondent is assigned to the last class because the survey does not collect enough information to code to someone as never worked or long-term unemployed.

1.23 Private renters were most commonly in lower managerial and professional (23%), higher managerial and professional (16%) and semi-routine occupations (16%), Annex Table 1.12, Figure 1.2.

**Figure 1.2: NS-SEC, by tenure, 2019-20**



Base: all households

Note: Underlying data are presented in Annex Table 1.12

Source: English Housing Survey, full household sample

## Economic activity

1.24 In 2019-20, over three quarters of private renters were working, either full-time (67%) or part-time (10%). Private renters were more likely than owners (52%) or social renters (31%) to be in full-time work.

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- 1.25 Private renters (8%) were less likely to be retired than owners (35%) or social renters (25%), although retired households still accounted for 343,000 private rented households, Annex Table 1.13.

## Income

- 1.26 The EHS contains two measures of income – household income, and HRP and partner income, referred to as ‘joint’ income. Household income will include the income of all adult members of household. Joint income will include just that for the HRP and their partner. For private renters, household income provides a better measure of income than joint income, as private rented households are more likely than other tenures to include multiple adults sharing and contributing to the household income.
- 1.27 Weekly gross household income shows a relatively even distribution, with around one fifth of private renters in each income quintile, except for the highest income quintile (16%).
- 1.28 Around 42% of private renters were in the lower two income quintiles, compared with 31% of owners and 71% of social renters, Annex Table 1.14.

## ACORN

- 1.29 ACORN is a segmentation tool which categorises the UK’s population into demographic types. Acorn provides a general understanding of the attributes of a neighbourhood by classifying postcodes into a category, group or type (see Glossary for further details).
- 1.30 Compared with other tenures, private renters showed a relatively even distribution across ACORN groups<sup>9</sup>. Private renters were most likely to be in the financially stretched category (25%), followed by comfortable communities (22%), urban adversity (21%) and rising prosperity (19%). They were least likely to be affluent achievers (11%), Annex Table 1.15.

## Type of tenancy and length of initial tenancy agreement

- 1.31 The majority of private renters (83%) had an assured shorthold tenancy. A further 4% had an older ‘assured’ tenancy’, Annex Table 1.16.
- 1.32 Initial tenancy agreements for private renters were typically 12 months or less: 54% of private rented households had an initial tenancy agreement of 12

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<sup>9</sup> See the glossary for a description of the ACORN classification and its categories.

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months, and a further 31% had an initial agreement lasting 6 months, Annex Table 1.17.

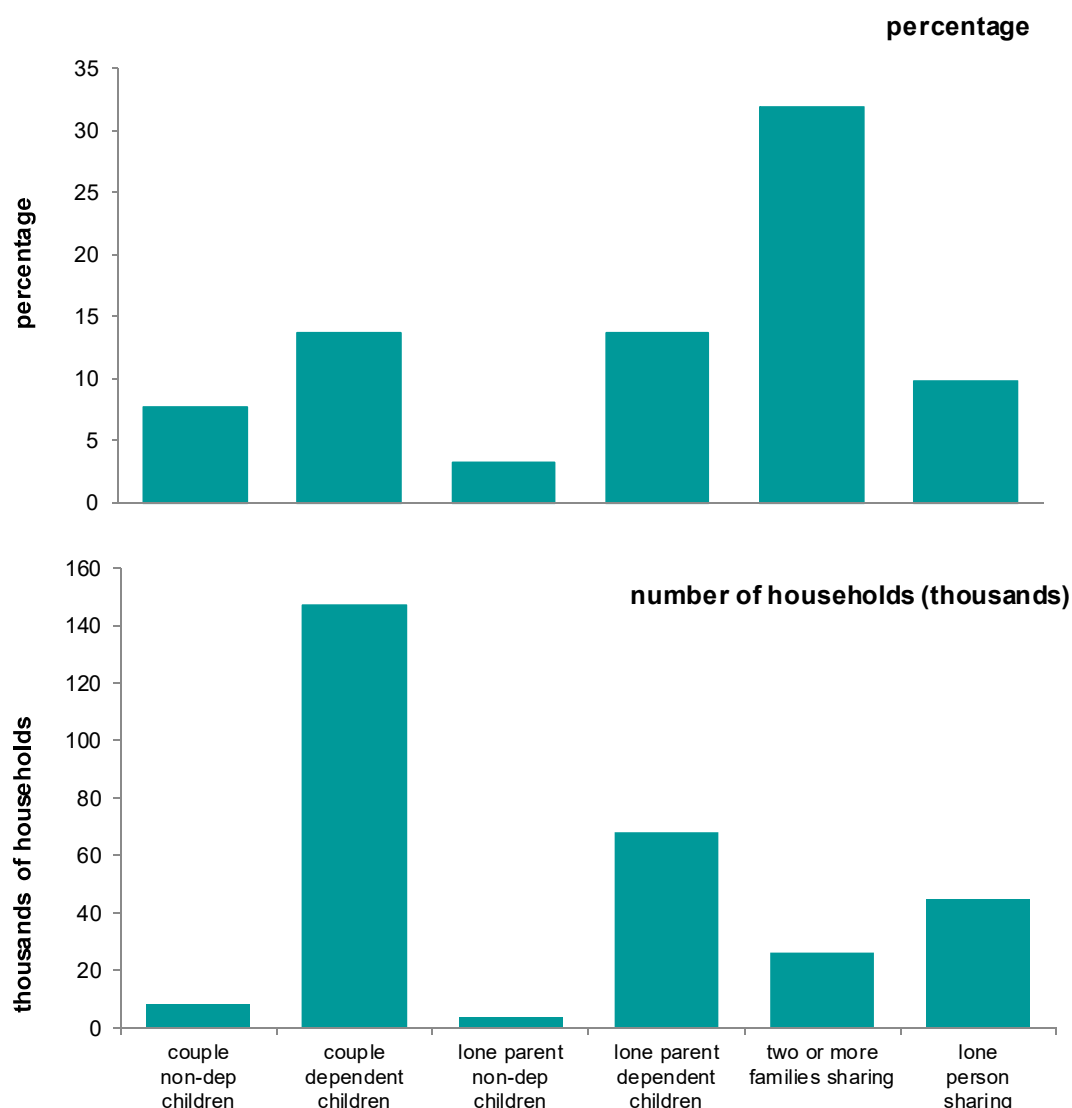
## Overcrowding and under-occupation

- 1.33 Levels of overcrowding and under-occupation are measured using the bedroom standard (see glossary). This is the difference between the number of bedrooms needed to avoid undesirable sharing (given the number, ages and relationship of the household members) and the number of bedrooms actually available to the household.
- 1.34 Renters were more likely than owners to live in overcrowded accommodation: 7% of private renters and 9% of social renters lived in overcrowded accommodation, compared with 1% of owners, Annex Table 1.18.
- 1.35 Among private renters, overcrowding was most common in family households, particularly those with dependent children. Of those in the private rented sector, 32% of households with two or more families sharing, 14% of lone parents with dependent children, and 14% of couples with dependent children lived in overcrowded accommodation. Together these three categories make up 242,000 overcrowded family households. Couples with dependent children were more likely than those with older, non-dependent children (8%) to be overcrowded, and both were more likely to be overcrowded than couples with no children (less than 1%), Annex Table 1.19.
- 1.36 There is evidence that overcrowding in the private rented sector increased over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic. The EHS Household Resilience Study, a longitudinal survey of respondents to the 2019-20 EHS, found that overcrowding among private rented households increased from 7% to 15% in November to December 2020. The increase in overcrowding in the private rented sector is linked to household size. Nearly one fifth (17%) of private rented households increased in size by at least one person since surveyed in 2019-20<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> English Housing Survey, Household Resilience Study: Wave 2, Annex Tables 42b and 43a, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/household-resilience-study-wave-2>

**Figure 1.3: Overcrowded private rented sector households, by household type, 2019-20**



**Base: all overcrowded private rented households**

**Notes:**

- 1) overcrowding base on average of three years data combined
- 2) underlying data are presented in annex table 1.19
- 3) 0 or 0% shows where no cases exist in sample but does not necessarily mean this group does not exist in the population. However, one person households cannot, by definition, be overcrowded.

Source: 2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20: English Housing Survey, full household sample

- 1.37 Private renters in London (15%) were more likely to live in overcrowded accommodation than those in other regions (2% to 6%), Annex Table 1.19.
- 1.38 Private rented households with an ethnic minority background (13%) were more likely to be overcrowded than white households (7%), and around one third of overcrowded private rented households were ethnic minority households (36%), Annex Tables 1.19 and 1.20.

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- 1.39 Overall, 15% of private rented households were under-occupied (ie: had two or more spare bedrooms), compared with 10% of social rented households and 52% of owner occupied households, Annex Table 1.21.

## Satisfaction

### Satisfaction with current accommodation

- 1.40 The majority of private renters were satisfied with their current accommodation (83%). They were more likely to be satisfied than social renters (78%), but less likely than owners (95%), Annex Table 1.22.
- 1.41 Levels of satisfaction varied by region, ranging from 80% in the North West to 86% in the North East, Annex Table 1.23.

### Satisfaction with tenure

- 1.42 Private renters were the least likely to be satisfied with their tenure: 70% of private renters were satisfied with their tenure, compared with 80% of social renters and 98% of owners, Annex Table 1.26.
- 1.43 For private renters, satisfaction with tenure was highest in the North East (83%) and lowest in the South East (64%). Relatively low levels of satisfaction were also reported in London (66%), the South West (66%) and East Midlands (66%), Annex Table 1.27.

### Satisfaction with local area

- 1.44 The majority of private renters (84%) were satisfied with their local area. Satisfaction with local area varied across regions, ranging from 77% in the North West to 92% in the East of England, Annex Table 1.28.

### Satisfaction with repairs and maintenance

- 1.45 Private renters (75%) were more likely to be satisfied with repairs and maintenance than social renters (66%), Annex Table 1.24.
- 1.46 Levels of satisfaction with repairs and maintenance varied by region, ranging from 71% in the East of England to 80% in Yorkshire and the Humber, Annex Table 1.25

### Reasons for dissatisfaction with repairs and maintenance

- 1.47 The three most common reasons for private renters being dissatisfied with repairs and maintenance were: the landlord not bothering about repairs or maintenance (35%), the landlord being slow to get things done (25%) or doing the bare minimum (15%), Annex Table 1.29.

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## Complaints

- 1.48 In 2019-20, 15% of private renters – around 683,000 private rented households – had considered making a complaint to their landlord or letting agent, Annex Table 1.30.
- 1.49 Of those private renters who considered making a complaint, 43% made a complaint to the landlord and 40% complained to the letting agent<sup>11</sup>. A further 22% did not make their complaint, Annex Table 1.31.
- 1.50 White private renters and those with an ethnic minority background were equally likely to make a complaint: 41% of white renters and 46% of ethnic minority renters complained to the landlord, while 41% of white renters and 38% of ethnic minority renters complained to the letting agent, Annex Table 1.32.
- 1.51 Less than half (45%) of private renters who had made a complaint were happy with the response to their complaint: 26% were happy with all of the response and 19% with some of the response. Over half (55%) were not happy with the response, Annex Table 1.33.
- 1.52 The proportion not happy with the response was similar for ethnic minority (53%) and white (56%) private renters, Annex Table 1.34.
- 1.53 Among those who complained, around 11% escalated their complaint to someone other than the landlord or letting agent, Annex Table 1.35.

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<sup>11</sup> For this question, a respondent could have said they complained to both their landlord and letting agent.



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# Chapter 2

## Housing costs and affordability

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2.1 This chapter explores the affordability of the private rented sector by looking at average income and rent and the proportion of income spent on housing costs, including the proportion of private renters in the lowest two income quintiles spending 30% or more of their income on rent. It also looks at receipt of Housing Benefit, ease of paying rent and whether private renters have savings.

### Income and rent

2.2 Private renters had a wide range of income levels. For private renters as a whole, household income was relatively evenly distributed across the income quintiles with around one fifth of private renters in each quintile, except for the highest income quintiles where the proportion of private renters was lower (16%)<sup>5</sup>. However, the pattern varied for different subgroups of private renters.

2.3 Income distribution varied by region reflecting a North-South gradient, with incomes generally lowest in the North and highest in London. Average weekly income was lowest in the North East (mean weekly income £427, median £390) and highest in London (mean £1,136, median £879), Annex Table 2.1.

2.4 Private renters in the North East were most likely to be in the lowest income quintile (46%, compared with 11% to 30% in other regions). By contrast, private renters in London (35%) were more likely to be in the highest income quintiles than those in other regions (17% or less), Annex Table 2.2.

2.5 Income levels also varied by age, with lower levels of income among the oldest and youngest age groups. Mean weekly income was lower among older adults aged 65 to 74 (mean weekly income £503) and 75 and over (mean £382) than those aged 16 to 64 (mean ranged from £660 to £893), Annex Table 2.1.

2.6 Reflecting mean income, older private renters were also more likely to be in the lowest income quintile: 41% of private renters aged 65 to 74, and 58% aged 75 and over were in the lowest income quintile, compared with 27% or less for younger age groups, Annex Table 2.3.

2.7 Income for private renters also varied by household type, tending to be lower among single adult households and those with dependent children. One person households and lone parents had the lowest income (mean weekly

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income was £423 for lone parents with dependent children, and £474 for one person households. Couples with dependent children (mean weekly income £884) had a lower income than couples with no children (mean weekly income £1,175), Annex Table 2.1.

- 2.8 Among private renters, one person households (46%) and lone parents with dependent children (38%) were most likely to be in the lowest income quintile, Annex Table 2.4.

## Rent

- 2.9 Mean rent for private renters (£201 per week) was nearly two times that of social renters (£103 per week).
- 2.10 Mean weekly rent tended to be higher among those with higher levels of income. Mean rent increased with increasing income quintile, from £148 per week in the lowest income quintile to £322 per week in the highest.
- 2.11 At a regional level, mean weekly rent ranged from £117 per week in the North East, to £342 per week in London.
- 2.12 On average, older adults had the lowest weekly rent: mean weekly rent was £169 for adults aged 65 to 74, and £158 for those aged 75 and over. Rent for private renters in these age groups were, however, higher than those for social renters in the same age groups (£97 for social renters aged 65 to 74, £93 for social renters aged 75 and over), Annex Table 2.6.

## Proportion of income spent on rent

- 2.13 The proportion of income spent on rent is based on household income including Housing Benefit. For private renters, household rather than joint income best represents the total income available, as private rented households are more likely to be shared households with multiple, unrelated adults contributing to the household income and sharing rental costs<sup>12</sup>.
- 2.14 On average, private renters spent almost one third (32%) of their household income on rent. This was higher than for social renters (27%).
- 2.15 The proportion of income spent on rent ranged from 24% in Yorkshire and the Humber to 42% in London and was higher among private renters living in London (42%) than other regions, except the North East (34%) where there is no significant difference.

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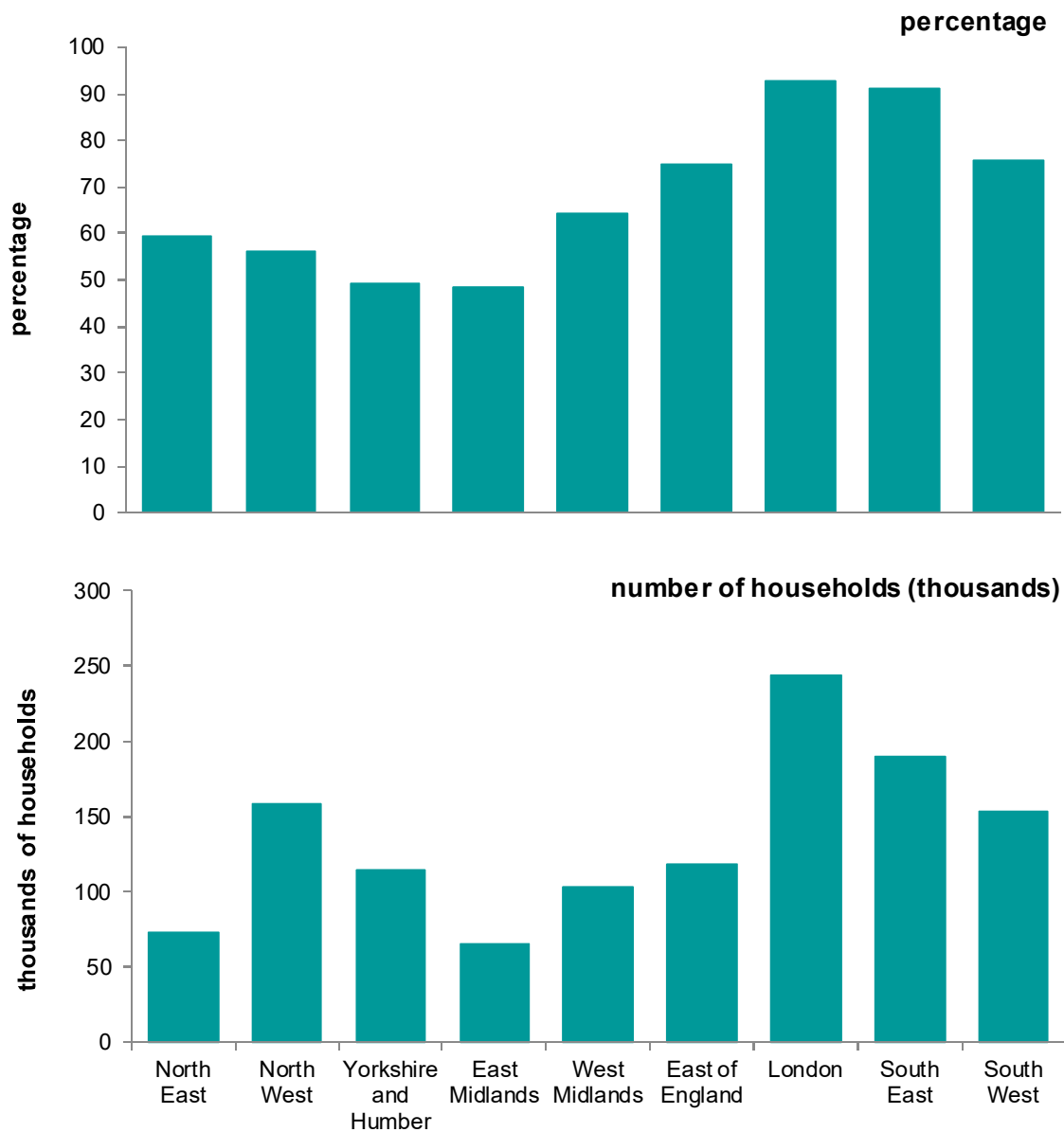
<sup>12</sup> For more detail on the distinction between joint and household income, see paragraph 1.26 of this report.

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- 2.16 Private renters who worked full-time spent a lower proportion of their income on rent (25%, compared with 40% or more for other groups). Private renters in full-time work account for around two thirds of private renters, 3 million households, Annex Table 2.5.
- 2.17 Unsurprisingly, the proportion of income spent on rent decreased in households with higher incomes, from 56% for those in the lowest income quintile to 18% in the highest.
- 2.18 Single income households typically spent a higher proportion of their income on rent, with proportion of income spent on rental costs ranged from 22% for couples with no children to 41% for one person households.
- 2.19 Among families with dependent children, lone parents spent the highest proportion of income on rent (37%), higher than for couples with dependent children (28%), Annex Table 2.7.

## 30/40 indicator

- 2.20 The 40/30 indicator is a measure of affordability which shows the proportion of households in the bottom two income quintiles – the lowest 40% of income – spending more than 30% of their income on housing. The underlying assumption is that households that have a higher income and spend more than 30% on rent are able to more easily do so and have a higher residual income for other living costs. This is not necessarily the case for households with low income. The 30/40 indicator therefore provides an indication of the extent to which high housing costs present a problem, and households might be in housing stress.
- 2.21 Over two thirds (69%) of private renters in the lower two income quintiles spent 30% or more of their income on rent. This group represents 1.2 million private rented households with low income and high rental costs.
- 2.22 In terms of regional variation, there was a higher proportion of private renters in lower income groups with high rental costs in the South of England than in the North. The majority of lower income renters in London (93%) and the South East (91%) had proportionately high rental costs, as did around three quarters of those in the East of England (75%) and the South West (76%), Figure 2.1.

**Figure 2.1: 30/40 ratio of housing affordability for private renters, by region, 2019-20**



**Base: private renters in lowest and second lowest income quintiles**

**Notes:**

1) 30/40 ratio shows the proportion of private renters in the lower two income quintiles – the lowest 40% of incomes – spending more than 30% of their income on rent

2) underlying data are presented in Annex Table 2.8

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

2.23 The proportion of private renters in the lowest two income quintiles paying more than 30% of their household income on rent gradually increased with age, from 63% of those aged 25 to 34 to 76% of those aged 75 and over. The exception is the youngest age group of 16 to 24 year olds, where three quarters of those with low income (76%) had high rental costs, Annex table 2.8.

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## Receipt of Housing Benefit

- 2.24 One in five (20%) private rented households receive Housing Benefit.
- 2.25 Receipt of Housing Benefit was higher in North East (43%) and North West (30%) than other regions (21% or lower).
- 2.26 Private renters who were unemployed (67%) or 'other' inactive<sup>13</sup> (75%) were most likely to receive Housing Benefit. However, around half (48%) of private renters in part-time work also received Housing Benefit.
- 2.27 Among different household types, receipt of Housing Benefit ranged from 3% for lone persons sharing to 62% for lone parents with dependent children. Lone parents with dependent children (62%) were more likely to receive Housing Benefit than other household types (30% or less).
- 2.28 The proportion receiving Housing Benefit increased with age, from 13% of private renters aged 16 to 24, to 34% aged 65 to 74 and 35% aged 75 and over, Annex Table 2.9.

## Rent arrears

- 2.29 Around 8% of private renters reported that they had been in rent arrears over the past year: 3% were currently in arrears, and 5% had been in arrears in the past 12 months, Annex Table 2.11.
- 2.30 Private renters were less likely than social renters to have had any arrears in the past year (8% private renters, 23% social renters), Annex Table 2.10.
- 2.31 Private renters in London were most likely to report any arrears in the past year (11%), with arrears in other areas ranging from 4% in the East of England to 9% in the South East.
- 2.32 Arrears were highest among unemployed private renters (23%, compared with 14% or lower for other employment groups) and around 10% of this group – 11,000 households - were currently in arrears.
- 2.33 Rates of current arrears among private renters in full-time work (2%) appear relatively low but, as two thirds of private renters are in full-time work, this group accounts for 46,000 private rented households in full time work and currently in arrears.
- 2.34 Rent arrears were associated with having a lower income. Households with any arrears in the past year increased from 3-4% of private renters in the two

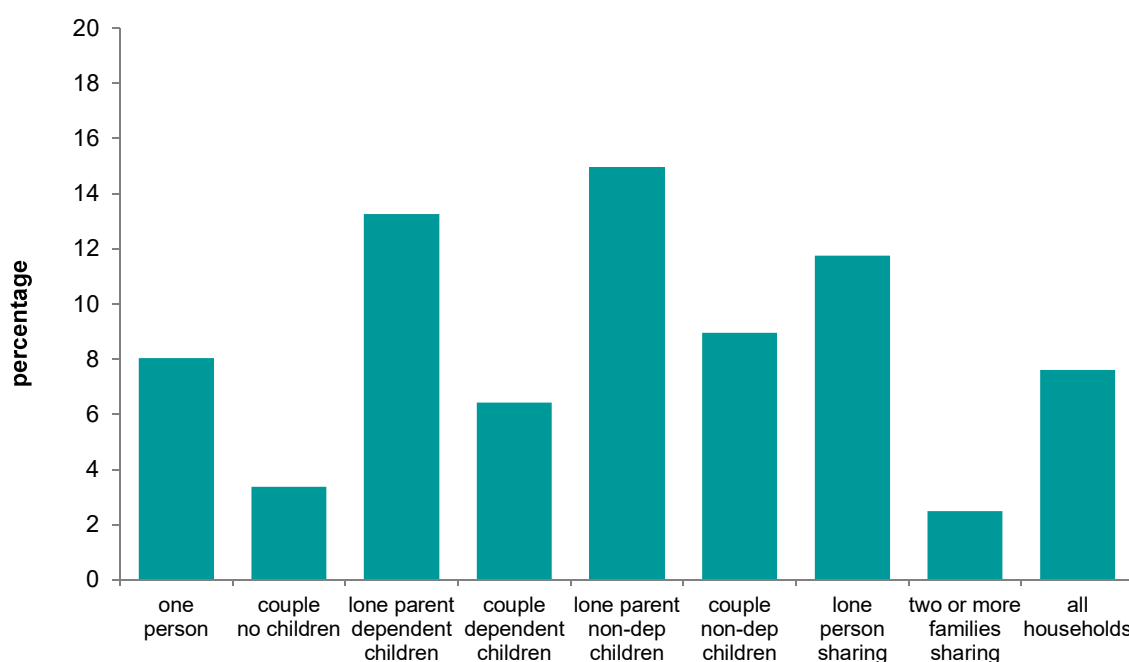
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<sup>13</sup> The 'other inactive' group includes people who are permanently sick or disabled, and those looking after the family or home, for example. Retired HRPs fall into a separate category.

highest income quintiles, to 10% in the second lowest income quintile and 13% in the lowest income quintile.

- 2.35 In the two lower income quintiles, around 191,000 private rented households reported any arrears in the past year, of which 67,000 households were currently in arrears.
- 2.36 Households with single adults – lone parents, one person households, and lone sharers – were more likely than households with couples to have had rent arrears in the past year. Lone parents with dependent children (13%) were around two times as likely as couples with dependent children (6%) to have rent arrears, and one person households (8%) were more likely than couples with no children (3%). Lone persons sharing with others (12%) also had a relatively high likelihood of arrears, as did lone parents with non-dependent children (15%), Annex Table 2.11, Figure 2.2.

**Figure 2.2: Any rent arrears in the past year among private renters, by household type, 2019-20**



**Base: all private renters**

**Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 2.11**

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

- 2.37 Private renters who received Housing Benefit (14%) were more likely to have had arrears in the previous 12 months than those who did not receive housing benefit (6%), Annex Table 2.10.
- 2.38 As with overcrowding, the proportion of private renters in rent arrears increased over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, as indicated in the first two waves of the EHS Household Resilience Study. The proportion of those

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currently in arrears increased from 3% in 2019-20, to 7% in June-July and to 9% in November to December 2020<sup>14</sup>.

## Ease of paying rent

- 2.39 Nearly three quarters (73%) of private renters found it easy to afford their rent and over a quarter (27%) of private renters found it difficult to pay their rent. This is the same as social renters (73% found it easy to pay their rent, and 27% found it difficult), Annex Table 2.12.
- 2.40 The proportion of private renters who found it difficult to pay their rent varied by region, from 20% of private renters in Yorkshire and the Humber to 35% in London.
- 2.41 Compared with private renters in full-time work, private renters in other groups were more likely to find it difficult to pay their rent: 48% of unemployed private renters, 40% of those in part-time work and 39% of other inactive found it difficult to pay their rent, compared with 24% in full-time work.
- 2.42 The highest levels of difficulty by household type were reported by couples with dependent children (49%) and lone parents with non-dependent children (45%), and the lowest by couples with no children (14%). Around one in three households containing couples with non-dependent children (31%) and couples with no children (33%) reported difficulty in paying rent.
- 2.43 Households with a lower household income were more likely to report difficulty paying rent. Unsurprisingly, private renters in the lowest (36%) and second lowest (40%) income quintiles were more likely to report difficulties in paying rent than those in higher income quintiles (27% or less).
- 2.44 Although the youngest and oldest renters were more likely to have low income and high rental costs (see 30/40 ratio) these groups were least likely to report difficulties in paying rent (16% aged 16 to 24, and 14% aged 75 and over found it difficult to pay their rent).
- 2.45 Private renters aged 35 to 44 (31%) and those aged 45 to 64 (32%) were most likely to report difficulties. This might reflect the likelihood that renters in these age groups may have higher non-housing living costs – childcare costs for example, Annex Table 2.13.

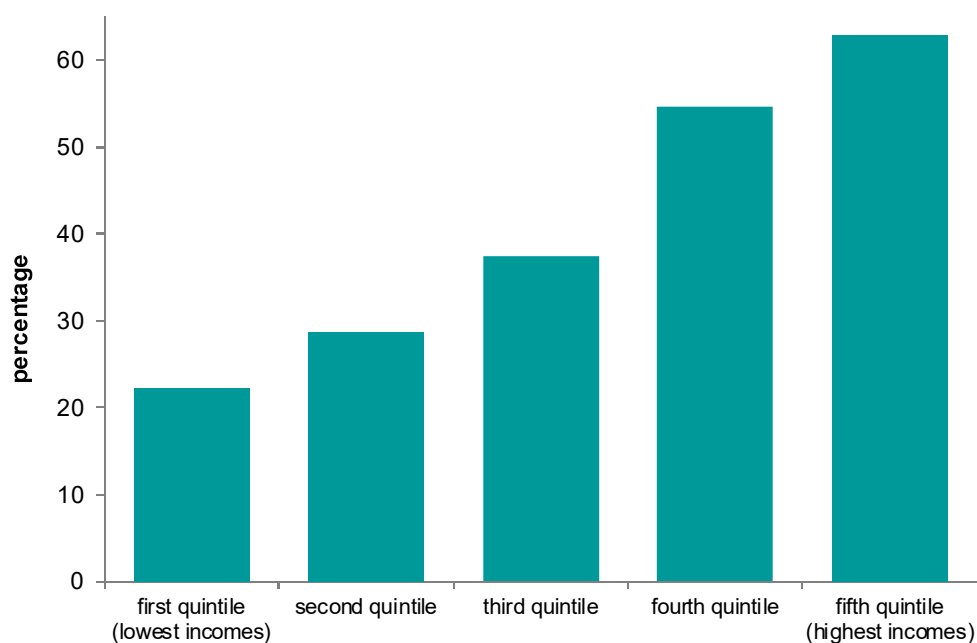
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<sup>14</sup> English Housing Survey, Household Resilience Study: Wave 1, Annex Table 16b, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/household-resilience-study-wave-1>; and English Housing Survey, Household Resilience Study: Wave 2, Annex Table 16b, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/household-resilience-study-wave-2>.

## Savings

- 2.46 Overall, 40% of private renters had some savings. They were more likely than social renters (20%) to have savings, but less likely than owner occupiers (68%).
- 2.47 Private renters in the East of England (47%) were most likely to have savings, and those in the North East least likely (17%). In the East of England, London, the South East and the West Midlands over 45% of private renters had savings.
- 2.48 Private renters in full-time work (45%), retired households (44%) and those in full-time education (46%) were more likely to have savings than other groups, Annex Table 2.14.
- 2.49 Among different household types, private renting couples with no children were most likely to have savings (57%) and lone parents with dependent children were least likely (13%).
- 2.50 Having a higher income was associated with having savings: the proportion of private renters with savings increased from 22% of households in the lowest income quintile to 63% in the highest income quintile, Figure 2.3.

**Figure 2.3: Presence of savings for private renters, by income quintile, 2019-20**



**Base: all private renters**

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

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



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2.51 Presence of savings varied by age, although the pattern is less clear than for income. Older private renters were generally more likely than younger groups to have savings, with levels ranging from 34% of 35 to 44 year olds to 54% of those aged 75 and older. For older private renters, savings are likely to be needed to cover housing and living costs, Annex Table 2.14.

## Lodgers

2.52 A small proportion (1%) of private rented households had paying lodgers – around 66,000 households, Annex Table 2.15.

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## Chapter 3

# Housing history and future housing aspirations

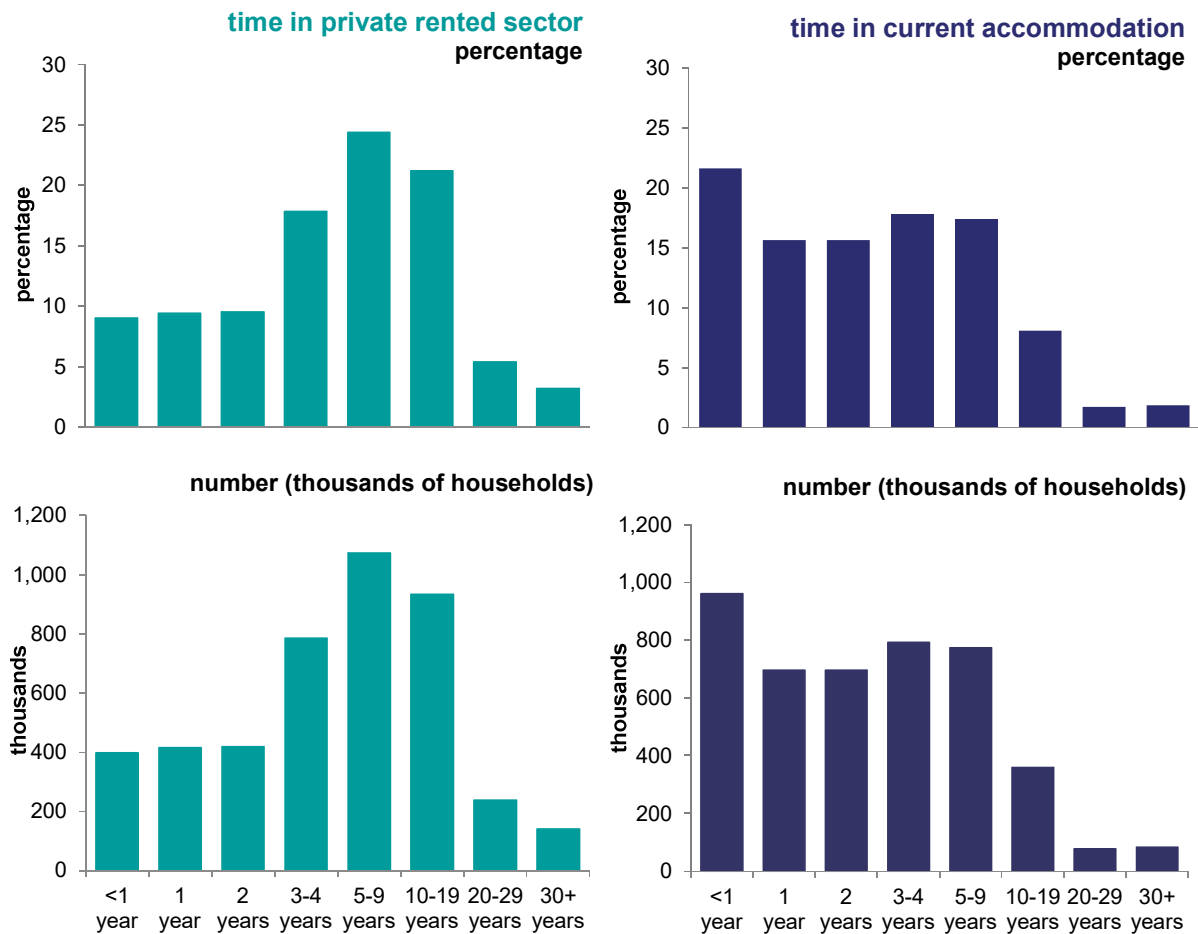
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- 3.1 This chapter describes housing history and future housing aspirations. As well as looking at time in current tenure and housing moves between tenures, current accommodation, tenancy type, homelessness and buying expectations are also explored.

### Current accommodation and tenure

- 3.2 Private renters had lived in their accommodation for 4.3 years on average. Length of time in current accommodation was considerably shorter than for social renters (12.2 years) or owner occupiers (17.4 years).
- 3.3 More than half (53%) of private renters had lived in their current accommodation for two years or less and private renters were more likely than other tenures to have lived in their current home for this length of time (20% of social renters and 14% of owners had lived in their current home for two years or less), Annex Table 3.1.
- 3.4 Average length of residence increased with age from a mean of 1.3 years for private renters aged 16 to 24, to 5.7 years for those aged 45 to 64 and to 17.5 years for private renters aged 75 and over, Annex Table 3.2.
- 3.5 Although time in current accommodation was relatively short, time in tenure appeared longer indicating that private renters were moving home within the private rented sector. Most private renters had rented from private landlords for a continuous period of three years or more: 18% had been private renters for three to four years, 24% for five to nine years and 30% for ten years or more, Figure 3.1.

**Figure 3.1: Private renters' time in private rented sector and in current accommodation, 2019-20**



**Base: all private renters**

**Notes:**

1) underlying data for time in tenure are presented in Annex Table 3.3

2) underlying data for time in current accommodation are presented in Annex Table 3.1

3) for time in tenure, two categories from the table (30-39 years and 40+ years) have been combined to a single category (30+ years)

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

3.6 Not surprisingly, older people reported living in the private rented sector for longer than younger people. The majority (94%) of young renters, aged 16 to 24, have been in private rented accommodation for less than 5 years. Older renters reported a longer period of private renting, with 17% of those aged 65 to 74, and 22% of those aged 75 and over renting for 30 years or more, Annex Table 3.3.

## Housing moves

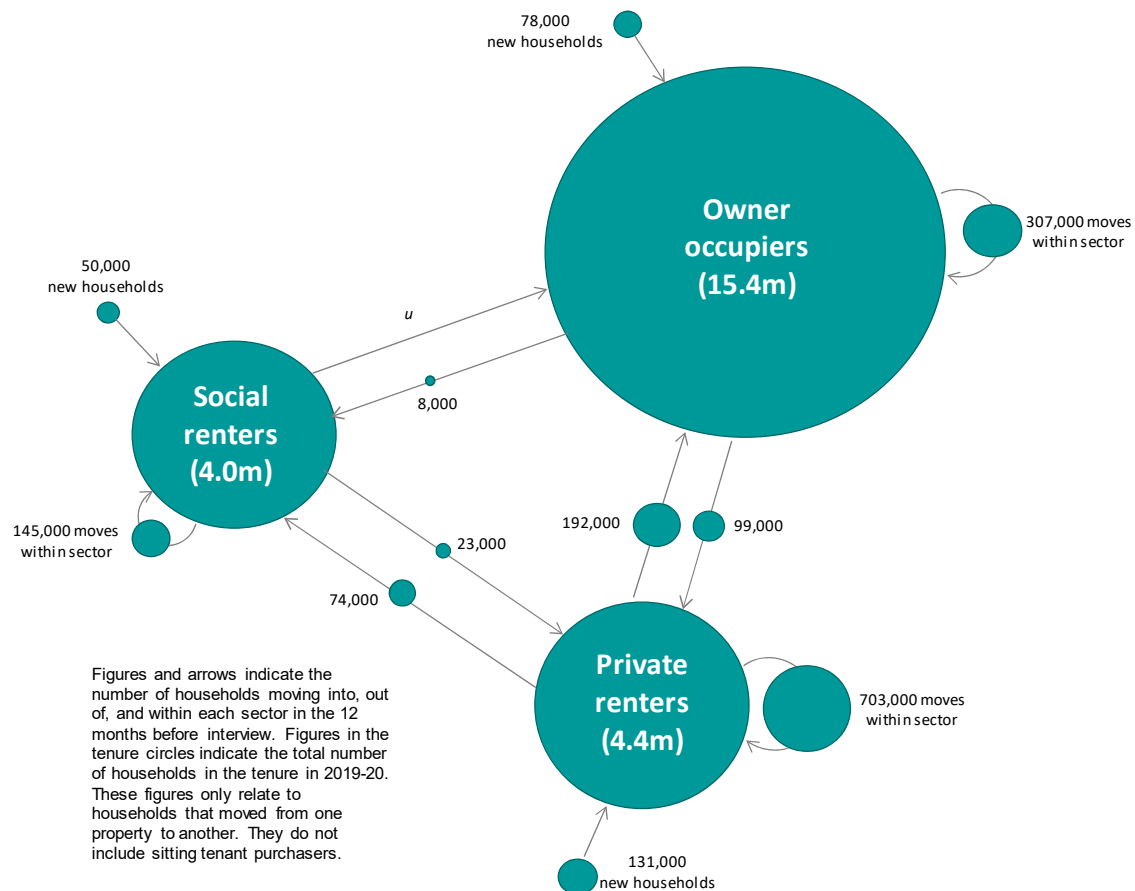
3.7 Private renters were more likely than other tenures to have moved within the last year. Overall, nearly a million (956,000) private rented households had

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been resident in their current accommodation for less than a year, compared with 578,000 owner occupied households and 277,000 social rented households.

- 3.8 Private renters were more likely to move within the same tenure, to other private rented accommodation, than other tenures. Within tenure moves accounted for around three quarters (74%) of private rented sector moves within the past year but were less prevalent for social renters (52%) and owner occupiers (53%).
- 3.9 In 2019-20, there were 131,000 new households in the private rented sector, accounting for around half of all new households – there were 258,000 new households across all tenures. Within the private rented sector, new households accounted for 14% of housing moves in the past year, Annex Table 3.4, Figure 3.2.

**Figure 3.2: Household moves, by tenure, 2019-20**



**Base: household reference persons resident less than a year**

**Notes:**

- 1) underlying data are presented in Annex Table 3.4
- 2) a small number of cases with inconsistent responses have been omitted
- 3) survey cannot identify the number of households which have ended
- 4) u indicates sample size too small for reliable estimate

Source: English Housing Survey, full household sample

3.10 Despite the relatively high number of new households and private renters remaining in the private rented sector, the size of the private rented sector has declined since 2016-17<sup>15</sup>.

## Reasons for moving

3.11 For those whose previous home was in the private rented sector (i.e. owner occupiers, private and social renters who had recently moved from private rented accommodation to their current home) the main reasons for moving

<sup>15</sup> English Housing Survey, 2019-20 Headline Report, Annex Table 1.1 and Chapter 1, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-housing-survey-2019-to-2020-headline-report>

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were: job related reasons (14%), wanting to buy (13%) and to move to a larger home (12%), Annex Table 3.5.

- 3.12 Households currently living in private rented accommodation who had moved within the past three years, most commonly reported job related reasons (16%) or to move to a larger house (11%), Annex Table 3.6.

## Reasons last tenancy ended

- 3.13 The majority (78%) of households who moved from privately rented accommodation in the past year ended their last tenancy because they wanted to move. However, some households reported reasons that suggested they had not ended their tenancy by choice, including being asked to leave by the landlord (8%), by mutual agreement (9%) or because the tenancy was for a fixed period (8%).
- 3.14 When current tenure – the tenure private renters had moved to – was taken into account, the reasons for ending the previous private rented tenancy differed by current tenure. Private renters who had moved to private rented accommodation (76%) and those who had moved to social rented accommodation (69%) were less likely to have moved through choice than those who bought their own home (86%).
- 3.15 Around 8% of private renters who moved from another property in the private rented sector were asked to leave by their landlord (57,000 households). This was a lower proportion than for social renters, more than one fifth (22% or 16,000 households) of whom moved from the private rented sector because they were asked to leave a privately rented tenancy, Annex Table 3.7.
- 3.16 For private renters, the most common reason for being asked to leave, or evicted, is because the landlord wanted to sell the property (65%), Annex Table 3.8.

## Satisfaction with service at end of tenancy

- 3.17 Among private renters who had a previous private tenancy, 65% were satisfied or very satisfied with the service provided by the landlord or agent at the end of the tenancy, Annex Table 3.9.
- 3.18 When reasons for ending the tenancy were taken into account, there were some differences in satisfaction associated with different reasons for moving (although it is worth noting that respondents could give more than one reason for ending a tenancy). Those who had been asked to leave were more likely to be dissatisfied or very dissatisfied (36%) than those who moved because

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they wanted to (20%) or by mutual agreement with the landlord (13%), Annex Table 3.10.

## Satisfaction with service of landlord or agent

- 3.19 Private renters were asked how satisfied they were with the services provided by the landlord or, if they rented through a letting agency, letting agent from first contact to the day they moved into the property. Overall, private renters were satisfied or very satisfied with the service provided by their landlord or letting agent (85%), Annex Table 3.11.
- 3.20 Among private renters who rented through a letting agency, 79% were satisfied or very satisfied. Levels of satisfaction with services provided by letting agents were lower than levels of satisfaction with services provided by landlords, Annex Table 3.12.

## Refused tenancy because of benefit receipt

- 3.21 Among private renters currently in receipt of Housing Benefit, almost one in ten (9%, 81,000 households) said they were told by a landlord or agent that they could not rent a property because they received benefits, Annex Table 3.13.

## Homelessness and waiting lists

- 3.22 Overall, 5% of private renters – around 222,000 households – reported they had experienced being homeless in the last few years, including rough sleeping, staying in a hostel, in temporary accommodation or with friends or family because they had lost their home and had no accommodation to go to.
- 3.23 Private renters were less likely than social renters (9%) to report experience of homelessness, but more likely than owners (less than 1%), Annex Table 3.14.
- 3.24 Around 6% of private renters reported being on the social housing waiting list (254,000 households). They were less likely than social renters (9%) to be on the social housing waiting list, and more likely than owners (less than 1%), Annex Table 3.15.

## Buying expectations

- 3.25 Over half (59%) of private renters expected to buy a home in the UK in the future, and private renters were twice as likely as social renters (28%) to expect to buy, Annex Table 3.16.

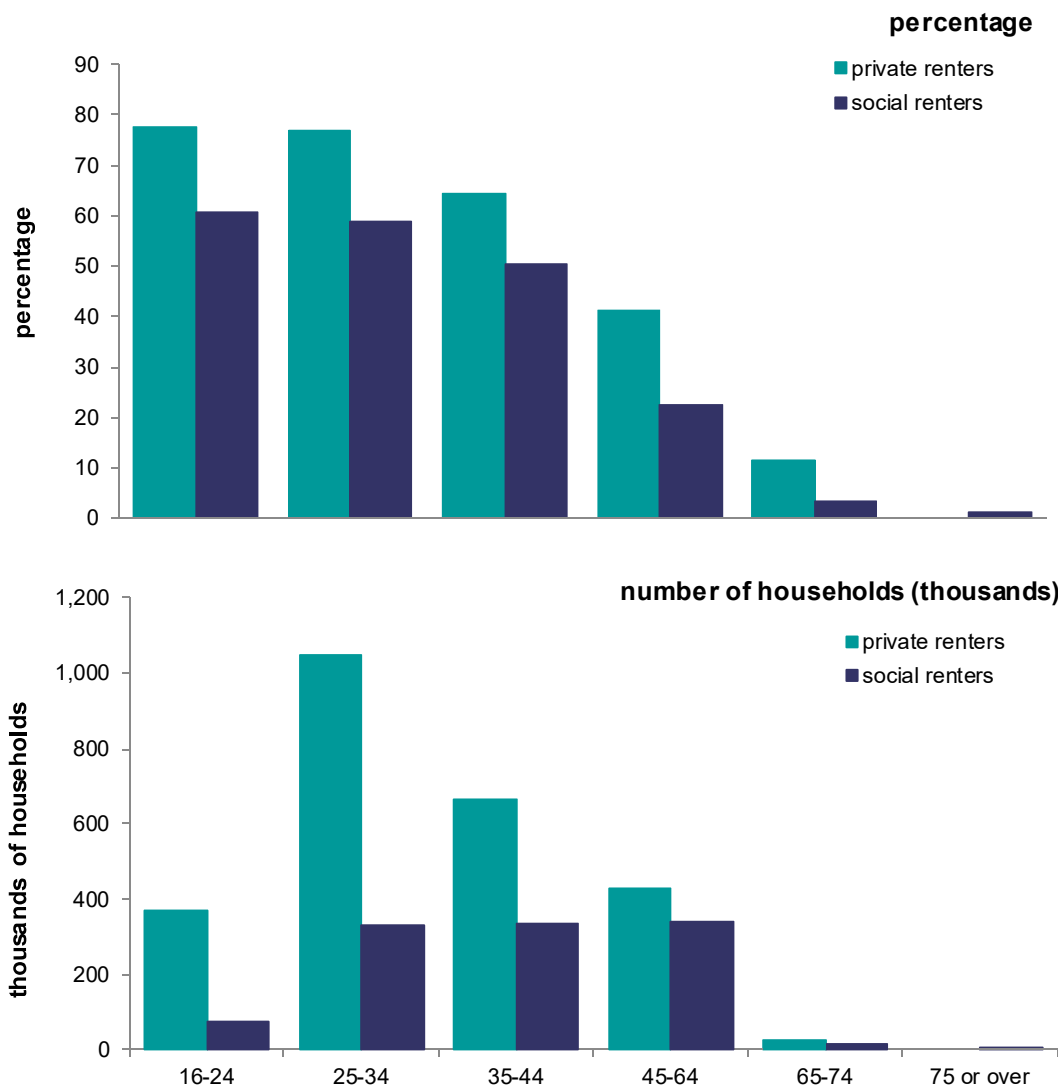
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- 3.26 Private renters who expected to buy reported a wide range of time frames for doing so: 27% planned to buy within 2 years, 35% within 2 to 5 years and 27% within 5 to 10 years<sup>16</sup>.
- 3.27 The different buying expectations and time frames are likely to reflect a number of factors including demographic (eg age, marital status, geographic location) and financial characteristics (eg stability and level of income, levels of savings). The pattern of buying expectations by age, ethnicity, income and savings is explored below.
- 3.28 Younger private renters under 35 were most likely to expect to buy in future and the proportion expecting to buy declined with age from 77-78% of private renters aged 16 to 34, to 41% of those aged 45 to 64, and 12% of private renters aged 65 to 74. The highest number of private renters expecting to buy were in the 25 to 34 age group where just over one million households expected to buy a home in the future.
- 3.29 The profile of buying expectations with age was similar for social renters, although the number of private and social renters expecting to buy appeared different for private and social renters, reflecting the different size and age profile of the two tenure groups, Figure 3.3.

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<sup>16</sup> English Housing Survey, 2019-20 Headline Report, Annex Table 1.20, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-housing-survey-2019-to-2020-headline-report>



**Figure 3.3: Proportion and number of renters who expect to buy, by tenure and age of HRP, 2019-20**



**Base: all renters**

**Notes:**

- 1) based on age of HRP, the person in whose name the accommodation is owned or rented
- 2) underlying data are presented in Annex Table 3.16
- 3) excludes a small number of renters who already own

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

3.30 Buying expectations increased with increasing income, from 37% of private renters in the lowest income quintile to 71%-72% in the two highest income quintiles. Private renters in the top two income quintiles were almost twice as likely as those in the lowest income quintile to expect to buy. The number of private renters reflected buying expectations as well as the number of private renters in each income quintile, and varied between 318,000 in the lowest income quintile, to 644,000 in the third income quintile.

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- 3.31 On the whole, ethnic minority (61%) and white (59%) private renters were just as likely to expect to buy a home in the future.
- 3.32 For both ethnic minority and white groups, private renters were more likely than social renters to expect to buy in the future, although the difference between private and social renters appeared less marked for ethnic minority (61% private renters and 50% of social renters expected to buy) than white (59% private renters, 23% social renters) households.
- 3.33 Buying expectations were higher among private renters with no savings (54%) than those who had savings (46%). This apparently contradictory pattern may reflect age profile: younger renters are more likely to plan to buy in future but have not had a chance to save yet, while older renters may have decided not to buy and are saving for another purpose, like retirement, Annex Table 3.16.
- 3.34 The COVID-19 pandemic impacted the proportion of those who expected to buy a home. When asked in June to July 2020 as part of the EHS Household Resilience Study, fewer private renters (49%, compared to 59% in 2019-20) expected to buy their own home at some point in the future<sup>17</sup>.

## Barriers to ownership

- 3.35 The most common reason given for not expecting to buy was not being able to afford to buy a home in the UK: 68% of private renters who did not plan to buy gave this reason. Private renters were less likely than social renters (78%) to mention cost of buying as a barrier.
- 3.36 In 2019-20, other financial concerns were also mentioned as barriers to home ownership, including fears about job security (11%), being in debt (10%) and the cost of repairs and maintenance (7%).
- 3.37 However, private renters also expressed more positive reasons such as the flexibility of renting (11%) and liking their current home (15%), Annex Table 3.17.

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<sup>17</sup> English Housing Survey, Household Resilience Study: Wave 1, Annex Table 39b, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/household-resilience-study-wave-1>

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## Chapter 4

# Dwelling condition and energy efficiency

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4.1 This chapter describes the quality of private rented homes in 2019-20 by examining dwelling conditions: non-decent homes, the Housing, Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)<sup>18</sup>, vacant homes, deprivation, smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors. It also looks at current energy performance and the potential to raise minimum energy efficiency standards to Energy Efficiency Rating (EER) band C<sup>19</sup>. Throughout the chapter comparisons are made with other tenures.

### Non-decent homes

4.2 For a dwelling to be considered 'decent' under the Decent Homes Standard it must:

- meet the statutory minimum standard for housing under the HHSRS. Homes with a Category 1 hazard under the HHSRS are considered non-decent
- be in a reasonable state of repair
- have reasonably modern facilities and services
- provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort

4.3 In 2019, the private rented stock had the highest proportion of non-decent homes (23%, 1.1 million) whereas the social rented sector had the lowest (12%, 504,000). Among owner occupied homes, 16% (2.5 million) failed to meet the Standard<sup>20</sup>.

### Age of occupants, long-term illness and length of residency

4.4 Overall, private rented households with older people were more likely be non-decent, a trend also found among owner occupiers. In 2019-20, 31% of privately rented households in which the oldest person was aged 60 years or

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<sup>18</sup> For further information on the Decent Homes Standard and the HHSRS, see Chapter 5 of the English Housing Survey 2019-20 Technical Report, Annex 5.5

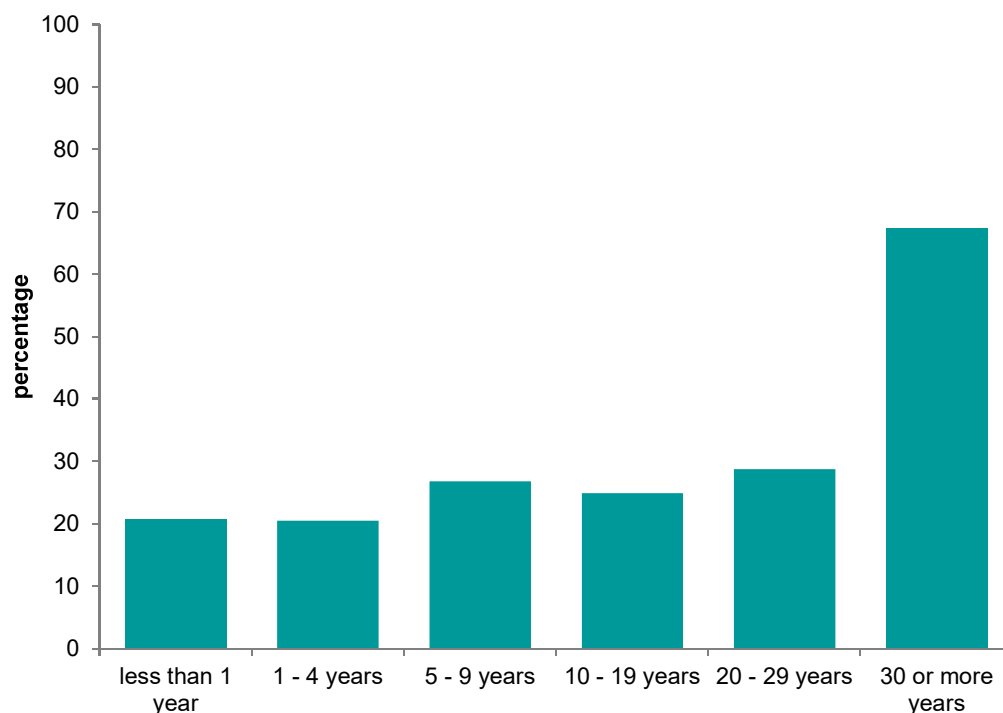
<sup>19</sup> For further information on the energy efficiency rating of dwellings, see Glossary or Chapter 5 of the English Housing Survey 2019-20 Technical Report, Annex 5.6

<sup>20</sup> English Housing Survey, 2019-20 Headline Report, Annex Table 2.3. Analysis includes both occupied and vacant homes, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-housing-survey-2019-to-2020-headline-report>

over lived in a non-decent home compared with 22% for those in which the oldest member was under 60 years, Annex Table 4.5.

- 4.5 For private rented households that contained someone with a long-term illness or disability, there was no significant difference in the likelihood of living in a non-decent home. In contrast, owner occupiers were more likely to live in a non-decent home if their household contained a member with a long-term illness or disability. For social renters, the reverse was observed.
- 4.6 Although there were few private renters who resided in their property for more than 30 years (83,000 – see Annex table 3.1), this group, which tend to comprise of older households, was considerably more likely to live in a non-decent home (67%), compared with all other households with a shorter length of residency, Figure 4.1.

**Figure 4.1: Non-decent homes in the private rented sector by length of residency, 2019-20**



Base: all private renters

Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 4.5

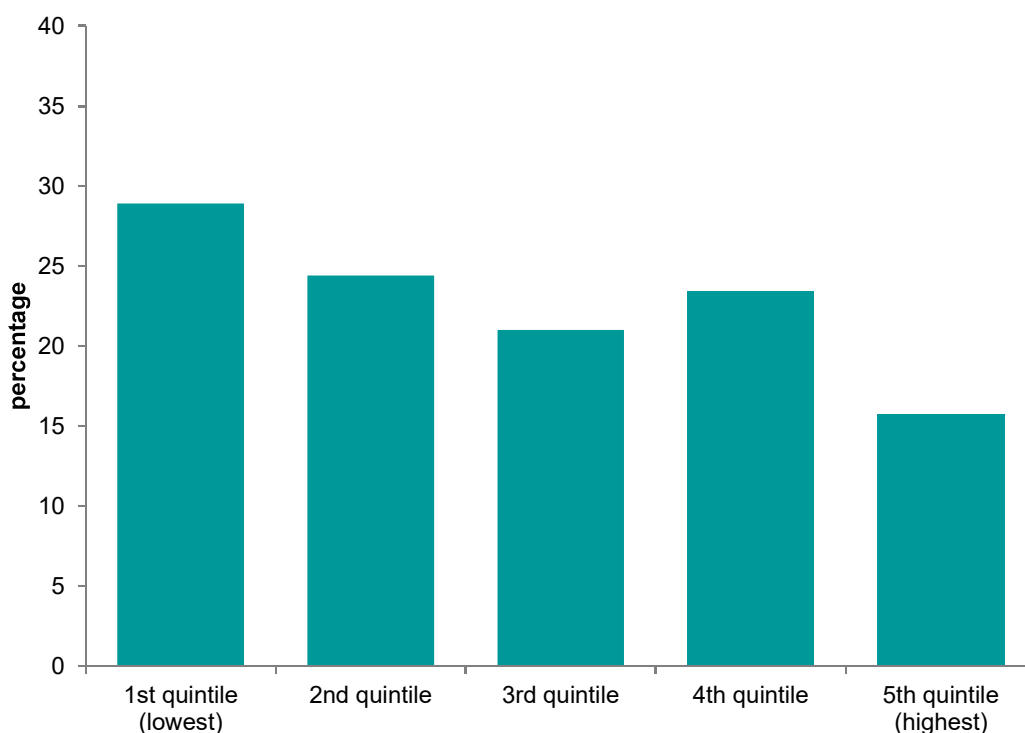
Source: English Housing Survey, household sub sample

### Income and employment

- 4.7 Household income and economic activity (linked to age of the household occupants) were also related to the likelihood of living in a non-decent home.

Private renters in the highest income quintile<sup>21</sup>, were less likely to live in non-decent homes (16%) than those in the lowest (29%), second (24%), and fourth (23%) quintiles, Figure 4.2.

**Figure 4.2: Non-decent homes in the private rented sector by income quintiles, 2019-20**



**Base: all private renters**

**Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 4.5**

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

- 4.8 Similarly, private renters living in poverty were more likely to live in non-decent housing (30%, 233,000) than those not in poverty (22%).
- 4.9 Private renters in receipt of Housing Benefit were more likely to live in a non-decent home (29%, 356,000), than other households (21%). The reverse was observed among social renters, where households in receipt of housing benefit were less likely to live in a non-decent home (11%), than other households (14%).
- 4.10 Private renters with no economically active members<sup>22</sup> (34%, or 229,000 households) were more likely to live in a non-decent home than households with at least one economically active member (20%).

<sup>21</sup> Analysis for income and living in poverty is based upon an income measure that is 'equivalised' before housing costs are taken into account. See Chapter 5 of the English Housing Survey 2019-20 Technical Report, Annex 5.4.

<sup>22</sup> See Glossary. Group includes all those over the state pension age who reported being retired, people who were permanently sick or disabled and those looking after the family or home.

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## Ethnicity

- 4.11 Private renters with an ethnic minority background were not significantly more likely to live in non-decent housing compared to white renters. However, this was not the case for other tenures. In contrast, black HRP social renters were more likely to live in a non-decent home (18%), than white (11%) or Asian (7%) HRPs.

## Housing, Health and Safety Rating System

- 4.12 The Housing, Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) is a risk-based assessment that identifies hazards in dwellings and evaluates their potential effects on the health and safety of occupants and their visitors, particularly vulnerable people. The most serious hazards are called Category 1 hazards and, where these exist in a home, it fails to meet the statutory minimum standard for housing in England.
- 4.13 In 2019, 13% (619,000) of private rented dwellings contained at least one Category 1 hazard. This was a higher proportion compared with owner occupied (10%, 1.6 million) and social rented (5%, 217,000), dwellings<sup>23</sup>.
- 4.14 As the most common reason for private rented homes failing the Decent Homes Standard was the presence of any Category 1 hazard<sup>24</sup>, it is not surprising that the overall patterns of Category 1 hazards by household characteristics were very similar to those found for non-decent homes, Annex Table 4.5.

## Cost to make decent and cost to make safe

- 4.15 The EHS reports an estimated cost of all work needed to bring a dwelling up to the Decent Homes Standard. On average it would cost £7,912 to make a non-decent private rented home meet the Standard. This was similar to the average for owner occupiers living in non-decent homes, £7,832, whereas social renters had the lowest average cost, £5,077, Annex Table 4.1.
- 4.16 There were some differences in the average cost to make a non-decent home meet the Standard by dwelling type and by region. Private renters in purpose-built low-rise flats had a lower average cost to make decent, of £5,991, compared with households in semi-detached homes, £10,016, Annex Table 4.6.

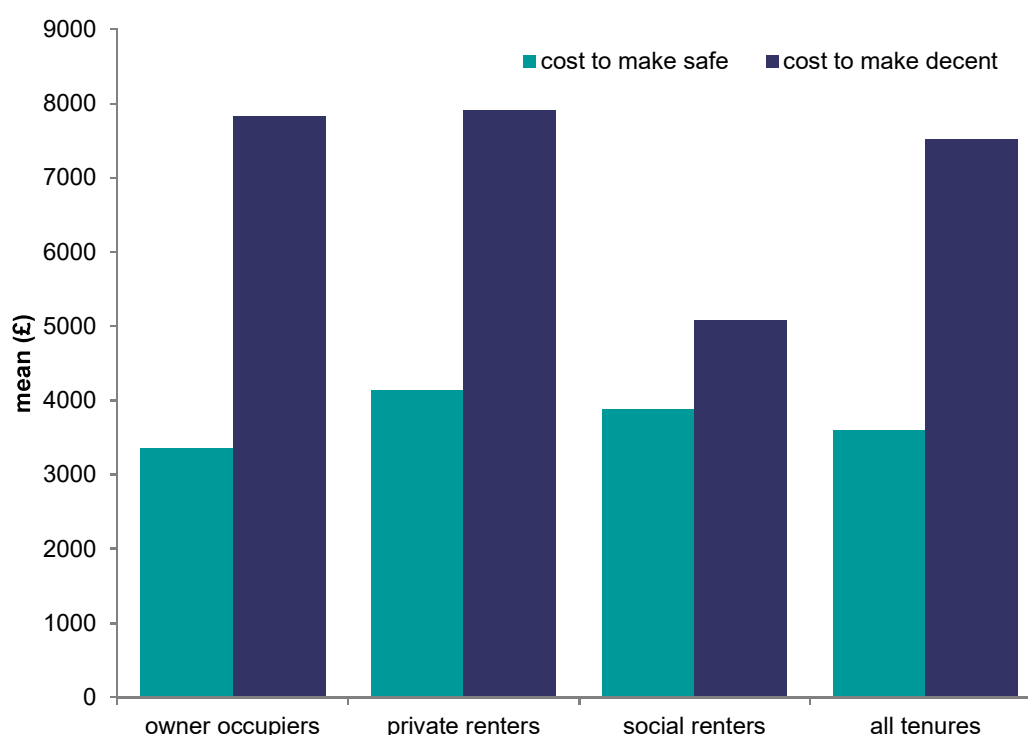
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<sup>23</sup> English Housing Survey, 2019-20 Headline Report, Annex Table 2.4. Analysis includes both occupied and vacant homes, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-housing-survey-2019-to-2020-headline-report>

<sup>24</sup> See EHS Live Table DA3201

- 4.17 Private renters living in the North West region of England had higher average costs to make decent at £10,569, compared with households in the North East at £6,021.
- 4.18 The EHS also reports an estimated cost of all work needed to mitigate Category 1 hazards (known as cost to make safe) so that the subsequent risk of harm is no worse than average for the age and type of the dwelling.
- 4.19 Unlike the cost to make decent, there was no significant difference in the average cost to make safe between the different tenures. On average it would cost a private sector landlord £4,133 to mitigate all Category 1 hazards which is only 52% of the average £7,912 cost to make decent, Figure 4.3.

**Figure 4.3: Average cost to make safe and cost to make decent by tenure, 2019-20**



**Base:** all households living in non-decent homes and all households living with Category 1 hazards

**Note:** underlying data are presented in Annex Table 4.1

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

## Vacant homes

- 4.20 Overall, 5% (1.1 million) of dwellings in England were vacant<sup>25</sup> in 2019. Private rented dwellings were notably more likely to be vacant (10%,

<sup>25</sup> Both properties in between lets and those that are vacant for a longer period are classified as vacant on the EHS. For more information, see the glossary.

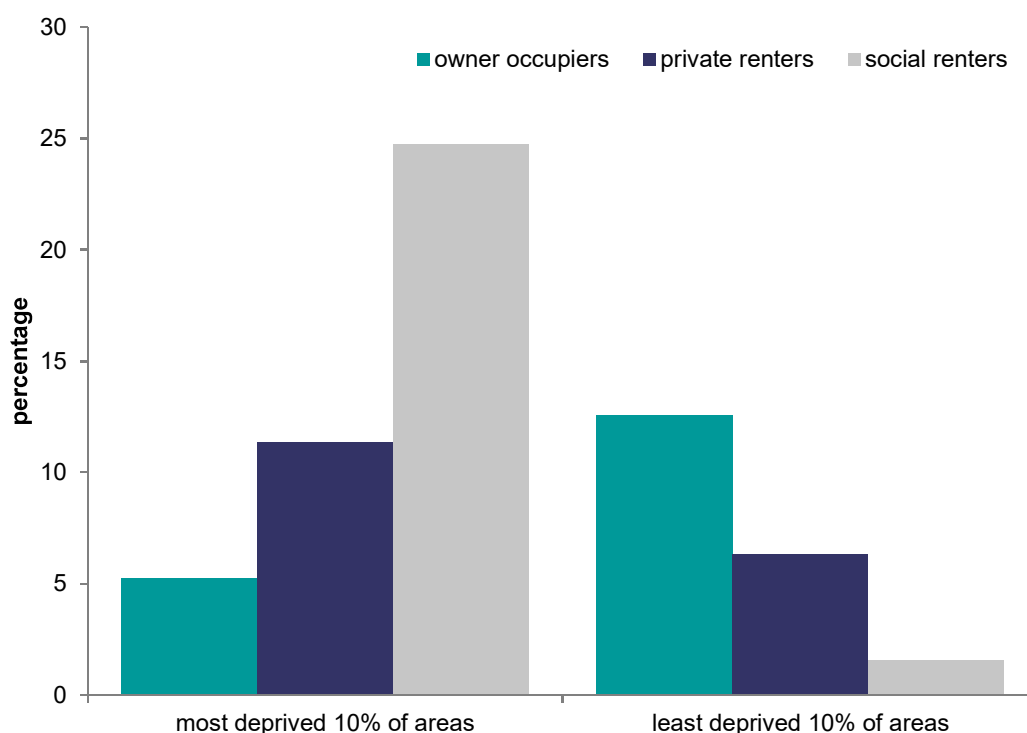
484,000), whereas owner occupied, and social rented dwellings had similar proportions of vacant dwellings (3% and 4% respectively)<sup>26</sup>.

## Deprivation

4.21 Overall, private renters lived in areas that were more evenly distributed across each level of deprivation compared with owner occupiers and social renters. Private renters (6%) were, however, more likely to live in the least deprived 10% of areas in England than social renters (2%), but less likely compared with owner occupiers (13%)<sup>27</sup> Figure 4.4.

4.22 Private renters (11%), were less likely than social renters (25%) to live in the most deprived 10% of areas, although more likely than owner occupiers (5%).

**Figure 4.4: Most and least deprived areas, by tenure, 2019-20**



Base: all households

Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 4.2

Source: English Housing Survey, full household sample

<sup>26</sup> English Housing Survey, 2019-20 Headline Report, Annex Table 2.1, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-housing-survey-2019-to-2020-headline-report>

<sup>27</sup> The analysis uses the new 2020 Index for Multiple Deprivation. The underlying data therefore differs from the English Housing Survey, 2019-20 Headline Report, Annex Table 2.1, which uses the 2015 Index for Multiple deprivation, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-housing-survey-2019-to-2020-headline-report>



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## Smoke alarms<sup>28</sup>

- 4.23 In 2019-20, 91% of all households had at least one working smoke alarm. Private renters (89%) were less likely to have at least one working smoke alarm compared with both social renters (96%) and owner occupiers (91%)<sup>29</sup>.
- 4.24 Households in dwellings built before 1919 (85%) and built between 1945 and 1964 (84%) were less likely to have at least one working smoke alarm, compared with those living in homes built between 1981 and 1990 (92%) and after 2002 (92%), Annex Table 4.7.

## Carbon monoxide detectors

- 4.25 In 2019, 44% of all dwellings had a carbon monoxide detector. Dwellings with a solid fuel burning appliance, such as a coal fire or wood burning stove, were more likely (52%) to have a carbon monoxide detector than dwellings with no solid fuel appliance (43%)<sup>30</sup>.
- 4.26 Since October 2015, if a private rented property has a solid fuel appliance, it must also be fitted with a carbon monoxide detector. Overall, 42% of private rented homes had a carbon monoxide detector. Among dwellings with a solid fuel appliance, 47% had a carbon monoxide detector. While other tenures had a slightly different level of provision of carbon monoxide detectors, none of these differences were significant; this was also the case for differences between tenure for dwellings with a solid fuel appliance.

## Energy efficiency

- 4.27 The English Housing Survey (EHS) uses the Government's Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP 2012) to monitor the energy efficiency of homes through the calculation of a SAP energy efficiency rating (EER).
- 4.28 The EER is also converted into an A to G banding system, where band A represents high energy efficiency and band G represents low energy efficiency<sup>31</sup>. The EER is the primary rating presented on an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC).

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<sup>28</sup> The analysis for the overall prevalence of working smoke alarms by tenure uses the EHS 2019-20 full household sample. Analysis for the age and type of home uses the combined year physical and interview data.

<sup>29</sup> English Housing Survey, 2019-20 Headline Report, Annex Table 2.17, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-housing-survey-2019-to-2020-headline-report>

<sup>30</sup> English Housing Survey, 2019-20 Headline Report, Annex Tables 2.19, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-housing-survey-2019-to-2020-headline-report>

<sup>31</sup> See Glossary for more information about EER also known as SAP

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- 4.29 In 2019, private rented dwellings had an average energy efficiency rating of 64, as did owner occupied dwellings. The average SAP rating of social rented stock was higher at 69<sup>32</sup>. The lower rating is largely because the private rented sector has a higher proportion of the ‘oldest’ and generally less well-insulated housing stock than the social sector<sup>33</sup>.
- 4.30 The distribution of dwellings in each EER band also varied by tenure. In the private rented sector, 38% of dwellings were in the highest EER bands A to C, compared with 61% of social rented sector dwellings. Almost half (47%) of private rented dwellings were in EER band D, 11% were in EER Band E, and the remaining 4% had the poorest energy efficiency (EER bands F or G)<sup>34</sup>.

## Cost to make energy efficient

- 4.31 The Government has set an aspiration for as many homes as possible to be EER Band C by 2035 where practical, cost-effective and affordable<sup>35</sup>. The following analysis explores the potential of the private rented stock to meet this aspiration through the installation of Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) recommended energy improvement measures.
- 4.32 The potential installation of each energy efficiency improvement measure is modelled only where an EPC assessment would recommend its installation. The model does not assess the relative ease or the cost-effectiveness of installation. However, each measure is only recommended for installation if that measure alone would result in the SAP rating increasing by at least 0.95 points<sup>36 37</sup>.
- 4.33 Of the 2.9 million private rented homes with an EER rating of D or lower<sup>38</sup>, 97% (2.8 million) had the potential to be improved to at least EER Band C, Annex Table 4.3. The total cost to improve all these homes was estimated to be around £21.5 billion, with an average cost of £7,646, Annex Table 4.4. The average cost to improve a private rented home to at least EER Band C was

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<sup>32</sup> English Housing Survey, 2019-20 Headline Report, Annex Tables 2.7, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-housing-survey-2019-to-2020-headline-report>

<sup>33</sup> See live tables DA1101 (stock profile) and DA6201 (insulation)

<sup>34</sup> English Housing Survey, 2019-20 Headline Report, Annex Tables 2.8, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-housing-survey-2019-to-2020-headline-report>

<sup>35</sup> See the Clean Growth Strategy for more information at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/clean-growth-strategy>

<sup>36</sup> The energy efficiency of these dwellings may be improved using other methods not recommended as standard by an EPC. For more details on the EPC methodology see Chapter 5 of the English Housing Survey 2019-20 Technical Report, Annex 5.6

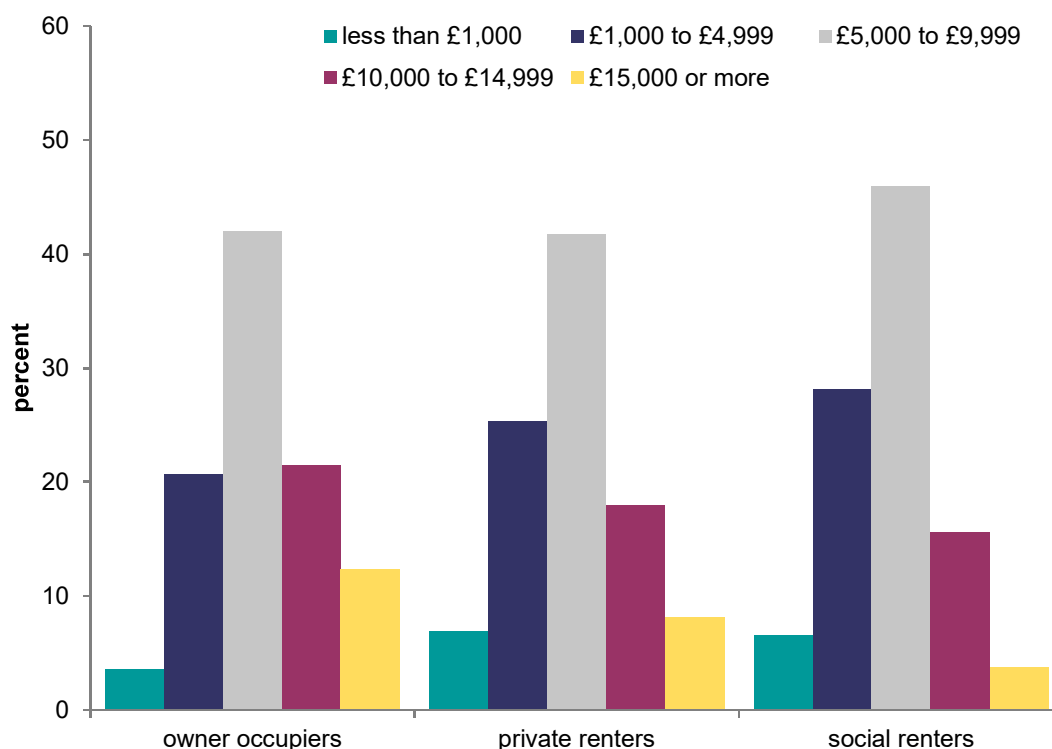
<sup>37</sup> Further information about this analysis by tenure and household characteristics can be found in the English Housing Survey Energy Efficiency Report 2019-20.

<sup>38</sup> English Housing Survey, 2019-20 Headline Report, Annex Tables 2.8, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-housing-survey-2019-to-2020-headline-report>

higher compared with social rented homes (£5,979), but lower compared with owner occupied homes (£8,579).

4.34 The energy efficiency improvement costs in the private rented sector were most commonly estimated to fall between £5,000 and £10,000 (42%), while almost a third of dwellings could be improved for under £5,000. At the other end of the scale, 733,000 (26%) homes would cost more than £10,000 to improve to at least EER Band C, and 8% of homes would require £15,000 or more, Figure 4.5.

**Figure 4.5: Distribution of costs to improve to EER band C by tenure, 2019-20**



**Base:** all dwellings able to be improved to EER Band C

**Note:** underlying data are presented in Annex Table 4.9

**Source:** English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

4.35 The relationship between the costs needed to improve less energy efficient homes to an EER band C and costs required to make a non-decent home meet the Decent Homes Standard is difficult to determine. These are two different measures of housing quality, but there could be some overlap between the two, as excess cold or poor energy efficiency could mean a dwelling is non-decent. However, the reasons for a home failing the Decent Homes Standard may be unrelated to poor energy efficiency (for example a home may fail the Standard due to serious disrepair to amenities or external building elements).

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# Technical notes, data quality and glossary

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## Technical notes

1. Results for the first section of this report, on households, are presented for '2019-20' and are based on fieldwork carried out between April 2019 and March 2020 on a sample of 13,332 households. Throughout the report, this is referred to as the 'full household sample'.
2. Results in the second section of the report, which relate to the physical dwelling, are presented for '2019' and are based on fieldwork carried out between April 2018 and March 2020 (a mid-point of April 2019). The sample comprises 12,300 occupied or vacant dwellings where a physical inspection was carried out. Throughout the report, this is referred to as the 'dwelling sample'.
3. The reliability of the results of sample surveys, including the English Housing Survey, is positively related to the unweighted sample size. Results based on small sample sizes should therefore be treated as indicative only because inference about the national picture cannot be drawn. To alert readers to those results, percentages based on a row or column total with unweighted total sample size of less than 30 are italicised. To safeguard against data disclosure, the cell contents of cells where the cell count is less than 5 are replaced with a "u".
4. Where comparative statements have been made in the text, these have been significance tested to a 95% confidence level. This means we are 95% confident that the statements we are making are true.
5. Additional annex tables, including the data underlying the figures and charts in this report are published on the website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/english-housing-survey> alongside many supplementary live tables, which are updated each year (in the summer) but are too numerous to include in our reports. Further information on the technical details of the survey, and information and past reports on the Survey of English Housing and the English House Condition Survey, can also be accessed via this link.

## Data quality

6. 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 updated and published annually<sup>39</sup>. A summary of the quality assurance processes for data collection and reporting are provided in the English Housing Survey Headline Report<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-housing-survey-quality-report>

<sup>40</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-housing-survey-2019-to-2020-headline-report>

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## Glossary

**ACORN:** a classification of residential neighbourhoods developed using a series of modelling algorithms. ACORN groups households, postcodes and neighbourhoods into six categories, 18 groups and 62 types, according to age, household composition, facilities, household size, income, marital status, mode of travel to work, occupation, ownership of car, ownership of home, etc. MHCLG matches ACORN data onto the EHS datasets to classify households into the following categories for analysis:

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

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occupations. The housing is a mix of low rise estates, with terraced and semi-detached houses, and purpose built flats, including high rise blocks. Properties tend to be small and there may be overcrowding. Over half of the housing is rented from the local council or a housing association.

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

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

**Assured shorthold private tenancy:** This type of tenancy is where the landlord can regain possession of the property six months after the beginning of the tenancy, as long as they provide the tenant with two months' notice.

**Assured private tenancy:** This type of tenancy is where the tenant has the right to remain in the property unless the landlord can prove they have grounds for possession. The landlord does not have an automatic right to repossess the property when the tenancy comes to an end.

**Basic repair costs:** Basic repairs include urgent work required in the short term to tackle problems presenting a risk to health, safety, security or further significant deterioration plus any additional work that will become necessary within the next five years. See Chapter 5, Annex 5 of the Technical Report for more information about how these are calculated and assumptions made.

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

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

**Cost to make decent:** The cost of carrying out all works required to ensure that the dwelling meets the Decent Homes standard. This is the estimated required expenditure which includes access equipment (e.g. scaffolding and prelims). It is adjusted to reflect regional and tenure variations in building prices.

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

- 
- it meets the current statutory minimum standard for housing as set out in the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS – see below).
  - it is in a reasonable state of repair (related to the age and condition of a range of building components including walls, roofs, windows, doors, chimneys, electrics and heating systems).
  - it has reasonably modern facilities and services (related to the age, size and layout/location of the kitchen, bathroom and WC and any common areas for blocks of flats, and to noise insulation).
  - it provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort (related to insulation and heating efficiency).

The detailed definition for each of these criteria is included in *A Decent Home: Definition and guidance for implementation*, Department for Communities and Local Government, June 2006<sup>41</sup>.

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

**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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<sup>41</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-decent-home-definition-and-guidance>

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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.

**Dwelling age:** The date of construction of the oldest part of the building.

**Dwelling type:** Dwellings are classified, on the basis of the surveyor's inspection, into the following categories:

- **small terraced house:** a house with a total floor area of less than 70m<sup>2</sup> forming part of a block where at least one house is attached to two or more other houses. The total floor area is measured using the original EHS definition of useable floor area, used in EHS reports up to and including the 2012 reports. That definition tends to yield a smaller floor area compared with the definition that is aligned with the Nationally Described Space Standard and used on the EHS since 2013. As a result of the difference between the two definitions, some small terraced houses are reported in the 2014 Housing Supply Report as having more than 70m<sup>2</sup>.
- **medium/large terraced house:** a house with a total floor area of 70m<sup>2</sup> or more forming part of a block where at least one house is attached to two or more other houses. The total floor area is measured using the original EHS definition of useable floor area which tends to yield a small floor area compared with the definition used on the EHS since 2013.
- **end terraced house:** a house attached to one other house only in a block where at least one house is attached to two or more other houses.
- **mid terraced house:** a house attached to two other houses in a block.
- **semi-detached house:** a house that is attached to just one other in a block of two.
- **detached house:** a house where none of the habitable structure is joined to another building (other than garages, outhouses etc.).
- **bungalow:** a house with all of the habitable accommodation on one floor. This excludes chalet bungalows and bungalows with habitable loft conversions, which are treated as houses.



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- **converted flat:** a flat resulting from the conversion of a house or former non-residential building. Includes buildings converted into a flat plus commercial premises (such as corner shops).
  - **purpose built flat, low rise:** a flat in a purpose built block less than six storeys high. Includes cases where there is only one flat with independent access in a building which is also used for non-domestic purposes.
  - **purpose built flat, high rise:** a flat in a purpose built block of at least six storeys high.

**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>42</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.

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

**Energy cost:** The total energy cost from space heating, water heating, ventilation and lighting, less the costs saved by energy generation as derived from SAP calculations and assumptions. This is measured in £/year using constant prices based on average fuel prices for 2012 (which input into the 2012 SAP calculations) and do *not* reflect subsequent changes in fuel prices. Energy costs for each dwelling are based on a standard occupancy and a standard heating regime.

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<sup>42</sup> For further information see: [www.gov.uk/browse/working/state-pension](http://www.gov.uk/browse/working/state-pension)

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**Energy efficiency rating (EER, also known as SAP rating):** A dwelling's energy costs per m<sup>2</sup> of floor area for standard occupancy of a dwelling and a standard heating regime and is calculated from the survey using a simplified form of SAP. The energy costs take into account the costs of space and water heating, ventilation and lighting, less cost savings from energy generation technologies. They do not take into account variation in geographical location. The rating is expressed on a scale of 1-100 where a dwelling with a rating of 1 has poor energy efficiency (high costs) and a dwelling with a rating of 100 represents zero net energy cost per year. It is possible for a dwelling to have an EER/SAP rating of over 100 where it produces more energy than it consumes, although such dwellings will be rare within the English housing stock.

The detailed methodology for calculating SAP to monitor the energy efficiency of dwellings was updated in 2012 to reflect developments in the energy efficiency technologies and knowledge of dwelling energy performance. These changes in the SAP methodology were relatively minor compared with previous SAP methodology updates in 2005 and 2009. It means, however that a SAP rating using the 2009 method is not directly comparable to one calculated under the 2012 methodology, and it would be incorrect to do so. All SAP statistics used in reporting from 2013 are based on the SAP 2012 methodology and this includes time series data from 1996 to the current reporting period (i.e. the SAP 2012 methodology has been retrospectively applied to 1996 and subsequent survey data to provide consistent results in the 2013 and following reports).

**Energy efficiency rating (EER)/SAP bands:** The 1-100 EER/SAP energy efficiency rating is also presented in an A-G banding system for an Energy Performance Certificate, where Band A rating represents low energy costs (i.e. the most efficient band) and Band G rating represents high energy costs (the least efficient band). The break points in SAP (see below) used for the EER Bands are:

- Band A (92–100)
- Band B (81–91)
- Band C (69–80)
- Band D (55–68)
- Band E (39–54)
- Band F (21–38)
- Band G (1–20)

### **Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs):**

An Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) indicates the energy efficiency of the dwelling. The assessments are banded from A to G, where A is the most efficient in terms of likely fuel costs and carbon dioxide emissions. An EPC is required whenever a dwelling is newly constructed, sold or let. The purpose of an EPC is to show prospective tenants or buyers the energy efficiency of the property. The requirement for EPCs was introduced in phases and fully implemented for domestic properties by autumn 2008. EPCs are valid for 10 years.

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Based on current energy performance the EPC provides a range of indicators, such as whether the property would benefit in terms of improved performance from a range of heating, insulation and lighting upgrades and the likely performance arising from the application of those measures. For further information on how the EHS models this, see the Technical Report for further information and also the EPC Improvements Modelling Review report:

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

### **EPC modelling in the EHS:**

The EHS EPC assessment is based on a simplified form of the energy efficiency SAP known as reduced data SAP (RdSAP). Following revisions to the way that RdSAP software implements improvements as part of the EPC production process, a new EPC methodology has been applied to the EHS data since 2015. Several additional improvement measures have been added to the methodology, and for some existing measures the criteria and/or improvement specification has changed (see the Technical Report for further information and also the EPC Improvements Modelling Review report: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/english-housing-survey-technical-advice#methodology-reports>).

The EHS currently provides the following EPC based indicators, calculated using the survey's own approach to:

- **current and post improvement performance:**
  - *energy efficiency rating* (EER) and bands
  - *environmental impact rating* (EIR) and bands
  - *primary energy use* (kWh/m<sup>2</sup>/year)
  - *energy cost* (£/year) for space heating, water heating, lighting and renewables
  - CO<sub>2</sub> (carbon dioxide) emissions (tonnes/year)
- **improvement measures:** The Technical Report provides a list of improvements specified in the updated EHS methodology. These include loft insulation measures, wall and floor insulation measures, boiler upgrades, solar water heating, glazing and lighting measures. They are also listed in the relevant Annex Table.
- **the notional costs of installing the recommended measures:** The EHS also estimates the notional costs of installing each of the recommended measures and the total cost of applying all the recommended measures to the dwelling stock. The methodology for estimating these costs has also been revised (see the Technical Report for further information).

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

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**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.

**Excess cold (HHSRS Category 1 hazard):** Households living in homes with a threat to health arising from sub-optimal indoor temperatures. The assessment is based on the most vulnerable group who, for this hazard, are those aged 65 years or more (the assessment does not require a person of this age to be an occupant). The EHS does not measure achieved temperatures in the home and therefore this hazard is based on dwellings with an energy efficiency rating of less than 35 based on the SAP 2001 methodology. Under the SAP 2009 methodology, used for the 2010- 2012 EHS reports, the comparable threshold was recalculated to be 35.79 and the latter was used in providing statistics for the HHSRS Category 1 hazard. Since 2013, the EHS Reports have used the SAP 2012 methodology and the comparable excess cold threshold has been recalculated to 33.52.

**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.

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

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

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

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**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 in poverty:** a household with income below 60% of the equivalised median household income (calculated before any housing costs are deducted). Income equivalisation is the adjustment of income to take into account the varied cost of living according to the size and type of household (see the EHS Technical Report, Chapter 5, Annex 4 for further information).

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

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

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

**Housing Benefit:** A benefit that is administered by local authorities, which is designed to assist people who rent their homes and have difficulty meeting their housing costs. Council tenants on Housing Benefit receive a rent rebate which means that their rent due is reduced by the amount of that rebate. Private and social

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housing tenants usually receive Housing Benefit (or rent allowance) personally, although sometimes it is paid direct to the landlord.

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

The purpose of the HHSRS assessment<sup>43</sup> is not to set a standard but to generate objective information in order to determine and inform enforcement decisions. There are 29 categories of hazard, each of which is separately rated, based on the risk to the potential occupant who is most vulnerable to that hazard. The individual hazard scores are grouped into 10 bands where the highest bands (A-C representing scores of 1,000 or more) are considered to pose Category 1 hazards. Local authorities have a duty to act where Category 1 hazards are present, and may take into account the vulnerability of the actual occupant in determining the best course of action.

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

The EHS is not able to replicate the HHSRS assessment in full as part of a large scale survey. Its assessment employs a mix of hazards that are directly assessed by surveyors in the field and others that are indirectly assessed from detailed related information collected. For 2006 and 2007, the survey (the then English House Condition Survey) produced estimates based on 15 of the 29 hazards. From 2008, the survey is able to provide a more comprehensive assessment based on 26 of the 29 hazards. See the EHS Technical Note on Housing and Neighbourhood Conditions<sup>44</sup> for a list of the hazards covered.

**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.

**Indices of deprivation:** the English indices of deprivation 2015 are based on 37 separate indicators, organised across seven distinct domains of deprivation which are combined, using appropriate weights, to calculate the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2015 (IMD 2015). The seven domains are:

- Income deprivation
- Employment deprivation
- Health deprivation and disability
- Education, skills and training deprivation
- Crime

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<sup>43</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/housing-health-and-safety-rating-system-hhsrs-guidance>

<sup>44</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-housing-survey-technical-advice>

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- Barriers to housing and services
  - Living environment deprivation

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. Every such neighbourhood in England is ranked according to its level of deprivation relative to that of other areas<sup>45</sup>.

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

**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.

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

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

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

**Plot:** The EHS records a number of details relating to the land immediately surrounding a dwelling, referred to as the dwelling's plot. The plot may be private (exclusive access) or shared (shared access, for example where a block of flats have a shared garden). The plot may consist of hard landscaping (e.g. concrete, tarmac, paving, gravel), soft landscaping (e.g. lawn, flower/vegetable beds), or a combination.

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

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

- North East

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<sup>45</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2015>

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

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

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

Reduced Data SAP (RdSAP) was introduced in 2005 as a lower cost method of assessing the energy performance of existing dwellings. RdSAP is used in the calculation of the energy ratings on the Energy Performance Certificate, a document which is required every time a home is put up for sale or rent. Since the 2015 survey, the EHS has provided a number of indicators on energy performance calculated using an approach which is in line with RdSAP 2012 version 9.92, since then a newer version has been released (version 9.93). In 2018 the methodology moved to using RdSAP version 9.93, which includes updated U-Values for cavity, solid and stone walls, both insulated and uninsulated, between age bands A and E. In addition to this methodological change, there have also been a number of improvements made to the energy model, such as aligning the calculation of ventilation parameters with RdSAP conventions and incorporating more detailed data into the modelling of water heating parameters. These updates were applied to dwellings from the 2018/19 EHS survey, making the 2019 combined year dataset the first dataset with these changes applied to both years. As such the full effect of this is seen in 2019 and is estimated to increase SAP by 0.7 SAP points, compared to 2017.

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

- Higher managerial and professional occupations
- Lower managerial and professional occupations



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

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

**Tenancy Deposit Protection (TDP) schemes** : Since the 6th April 2007 in England when a deposit is provided by a tenant to a landlord for an assured shorthold tenancy, all landlords (or their agents) are legally required to register that deposit with a TDP scheme. There are two models of tenancy deposit protection. Landlords can choose to protect deposits in either a custodial scheme (where the deposit is held by a TDP scheme), or an insurance-backed scheme (where the landlord or agent retains the deposit but pays a fee to the scheme which insures against the landlord or agent unlawfully retaining the deposit). All three schemes offer both custodial and insurance-backed protection. The three government-backed TDP schemes operating in the UK are:

- Deposit Protection Scheme
- Tenancy Deposit Scheme
- mydeposits

**Tenure:** In this report, households are typically grouped into three broad categories known as tenures: owner occupiers, social renters and private renters. The tenure defines the conditions under which the home is occupied, whether it is owned or rented, and if rented, who the landlord is and on what financial and legal terms the let is agreed.

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

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

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

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

**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.

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

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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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