



Ministry of Housing,  
Communities &  
Local Government



# English Housing Survey

Profile and condition of the English housing stock, 2018-19



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# Introduction and main findings

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1. The English Housing Survey (EHS) is a national survey of people's housing circumstances and the condition and energy efficiency of housing in England. It is one of the longest standing government surveys and was first run in 1967. This report provides findings from the 2018-19 survey.
2. This report examines the English housing stock. It is split into four chapters. The first provides an overview of changes in the age and type of the housing stock by tenure.
3. Chapter 2 examines the condition and safety of the English housing stock focusing on two key indicators: the Decent Homes Standard and the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). The first part of this chapter examines changes in overall housing condition by dwelling type and tenure, using the Decent Homes Standard. The second part examines changes in the safety of homes by tenure and dwelling type using the HHSRS, focusing on the prevalence of specific hazards by tenure and dwelling type.
4. Chapter 3 examines the prevalence of safety features in English homes, focusing on three indicators: carbon monoxide and smoke alarms, and electrical safety features. The first part examines the provision of carbon monoxide and smoke alarms by tenure. It then focuses on how smoke alarms are powered. The second section explores the prevalence of key electrical safety measures by tenure.
5. Chapter 4 explores the quality of housing occupied by different household groups: the age of the HRP; household composition; households with at least one wheelchair user and renters in receipt of Housing Benefit. Firstly, it reports on households living in non-decent homes. Then, for each of these household groups, it reports on reasons for failing the Decent Homes Standard, subjective overheating and overcrowding. Finally, it reports on the prevalence of specific HHSRS hazard for households with someone in the age group most vulnerable to that hazard.

## Main findings

**In 2018, there were 24.2 million homes in England.**

- Most homes (63%) were owner occupied, 20% were privately rented and 7% and 10% were owned by local authorities and housing associations respectively.
- In 1996, 10% of homes were privately rented rising to 20% in 2018. The proportion of social rented homes decreased from 22% to 17% over the same period. Owner occupation declined slightly from 68% in 1996 to 63% by 2018.

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**While the overall profile of the housing stock has not changed much since 1996, the profile of private rented and housing association stock has changed significantly.**

- In the private rented sector, the proportion of homes built post 1980 rose from 8% in 1996 to 27% in 2018, however this remained the tenure with the highest proportion of the oldest homes (in 2018, 33% of privately rented homes were built before 1919).
- The proportion of converted flats in the private rented sector fell from 19% in 1996 to 11% in 2018 while purpose built low rise flats rose from 17% to 23% and high rise flats increased from 1% to 4%.
- The proportion of housing association homes built pre 1919 reduced from 19% to 9% while the proportion built between 1945 to 1964 rose from 12% to 23%.
- The proportion of purpose built low rise flats owned by housing associations decreased from 46% in 1996 to 35% in 2018. Conversely there was an increase in the proportion semi-detached houses (10% to 18%) and bungalows (6% to 10%).
- Many of the changes observed among the stock of housing association homes can be attributed to the Large Scale Voluntary Transfer of local authority housing stock to housing associations, while the changes in the private rented sector is likely attributable to new housing supply, driven by growth in the sector.

**While the proportion of non-decent homes has declined in the last decade, four million households lived in a non-decent home in 2018-19.**

- In 2018, 18% or 4.3 million homes did not meet the Decent Homes Standard. Social rented homes (12%) were less likely to fail the Standard than those in the private sector, particularly those that were privately rented (25%).
- Between 2008 and 2018, the total number of non-decent homes fell by around three million (from 7.4 million to 4.3 million). Although newly built homes improve the overall quality of the housing stock, the existing stock continues to see improvements in the prevalence of non-decent housing.
- In 2018-19, around four million households (17%) in England lived in a non-decent home. Households more likely to be in non-decent homes included those with a HRP aged 65 years or over (19%), those with a HRP aged 35-44 years (19%) and single male households (22%).

**The average cost to make a non-decent home decent (i.e. meet the Decent Homes Standard) is £7,365.**

- Average costs were higher in the private sector; £7,774 and £7,521 for owner occupied and private rented homes, respectively. The average cost to make decent was £5,488 for local authority homes and £4,252 for housing association homes.

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- It is estimated that it would cost around £32 billion to bring every non-decent home to the Standard; most of the money would be needed to remedy non-decency in the private sector (£29 billion).

**Homes most commonly failed the Decent Homes Standard because they had at least one Category 1 hazard. The proportion of homes with such hazards halved between 2008 and 2018.**

- In 2018, 11% of homes had at least one Category 1 hazard, down from 22% in 2008.
- The most common hazard was falls associated with stairs and steps (16% in 2008, 10% in 2018), followed by falls between levels (9% in 2008 and 6% in 2018) and falls on the level (8% in 2008, 5% in 2018).
- For the majority of hazards the most vulnerable people were no more likely to live in a home that put them at higher than average risk. However, households with someone aged 65 years or over were more likely to live in a home with excess cold, and households with children under 14 were also more likely to live in a home with higher than average risk of harm from dampness and mould.

**The majority of households had at least one working smoke alarm.**

- Between 2008-09 and 2018-19, the proportion of households with at least one working smoke alarm increased from 84% to 91%. This increase was observed across all tenures although provision has levelled off in recent years.
- Overall 81% of households reported having a working smoke alarm on every floor of their home in 2018-19.

**Almost two thirds of homes had all five electrical safety features (modern PVC wiring, modern earthing, modern consumer unit casing, miniature circuit breakers and residual current devices).**

- In 2018, 63% of all homes had all five electrical safety features. These measures were more likely to be present in social rented homes than in privately owned homes. Around three quarters of local authority (73%) and housing association (74%) homes had all five features compared with 62% of private rented and 60% of owner occupied homes.
- There was an improvement in the provision of all 5 electrical safety features from 40% in 2008 to 56% in 2013 and 63% in 2018.

## 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 for Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) would particularly like to thank the following people

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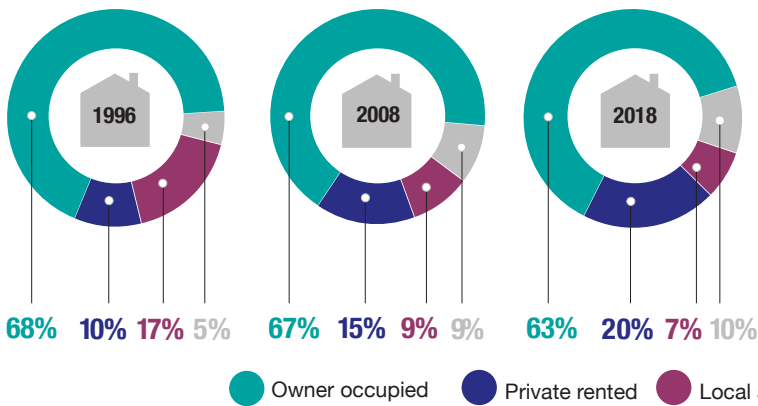
and organisations, without whom the 2018-19 survey and this report, would not have been possible: all the households who gave up their time to take part in the survey, NatCen Social Research, the Building Research Establishment (BRE) and CADS Housing Surveys.

7. This report was produced by Helen Garrett, Molly Mackay and Emma Woods at BRE in collaboration with NatCen Social Research and 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: Hugh Simpson, Housing and Planning Analysis Division, MHCLG. Contact via [ehs@communities.gov.uk](mailto:ehs@communities.gov.uk)

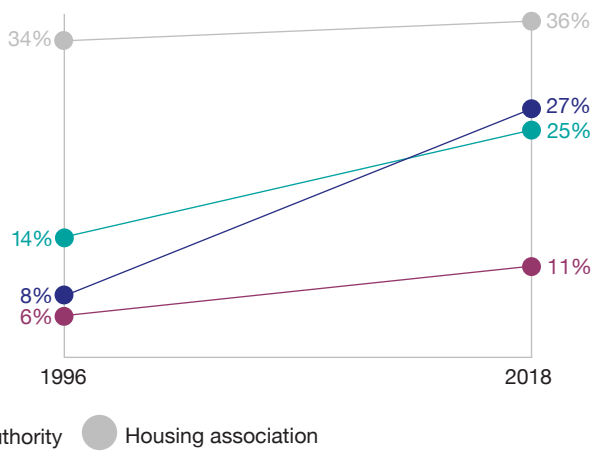
# English Housing Survey 2018-19: Profile and condition of the English housing stock



Changes in the relative size of the tenures have stabilised in recent years.

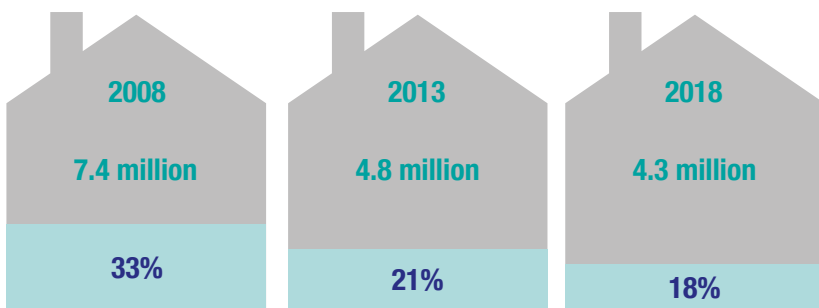


Between 1996 and 2018 the proportion of homes built after 1980 increased in the private rented sector more than other tenures.

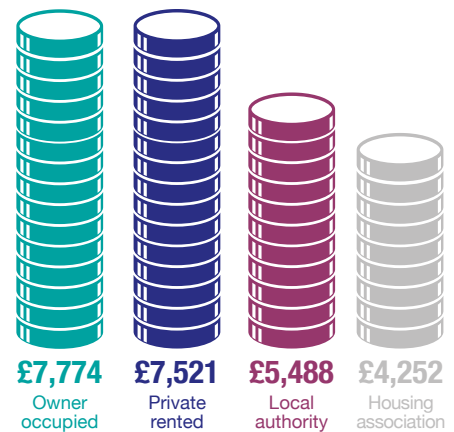


## Stock quality

4.3 million homes did not meet the Decent Homes Standard in 2018, down from 7.4 million in 2008.

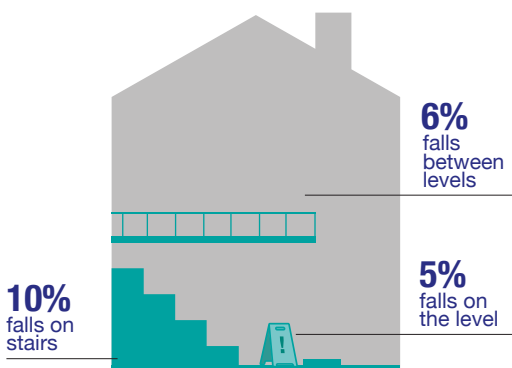


The average cost to make a non-decent home decent was £7,365.

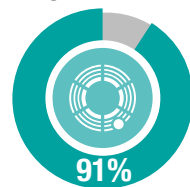


## Stock safety

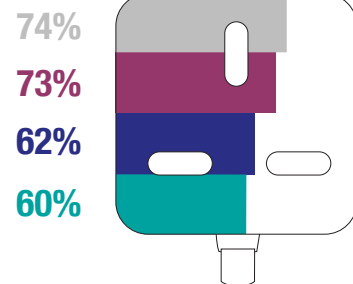
11% of homes had a Category 1 Hazard (the most common reason for failing the Decent Domes Standard). The most common hazards in the home were all associated with falls.



91% of homes had a working smoke alarm.



Most homes had all 5 electrical safety features



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# Chapter 1

## Profile of the English housing stock

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1.1 This chapter profiles the English housing stock in 2018, and how it has changed over time. It examines the characteristics of the housing stock by tenure, dwelling age and dwelling type over 22 years using three timepoints, 1996, 2008 and 2018<sup>1</sup>.

### Tenure

1.2 In 2018, there were an estimated 24.2 million dwellings in England, including vacant homes. Of these 15.3 million (63%) were owner occupied, 4.8 million (20%) were privately rented, 1.6 million (7%) were owned by local authorities and the remaining 2.5 million (10%) were owned by housing associations<sup>2</sup>.

1.3 Between 1996 and 2018, the size of the private rented sector doubled, while the proportion of homes in owner occupation or owned by social landlords declined, though both have not changed much in recent years. In addition, there were more social rented homes than private rented homes in 1996 but this was not the case by 2018; the size of the private rented stock began to exceed the social housing stock in 2013<sup>3</sup>.

1.4 In 1996, 10% of homes were privately rented rising to 15% in 2008 and 20% in 2018. In contrast, the proportion of social rented homes decreased from 22% to 17% over the 1996 to 2018 period. Owner occupation remained at a similar level from 1996 (68%) to 2008 (67%) but declined to 63% by 2018, Figure 1.1.

1.5 The composition of the social rented sector also changed between 1996 and 2018. The housing stock owned by housing associations rose while homes owned by local authorities fell, largely due to Right to Buy<sup>4</sup> and Large Scale Voluntary Transfer (LSVT)<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The 1996 English House Condition Survey (EHCS) is used as it is the closest survey year to provide an approximate 20 year period for analysis.

<sup>2</sup> EHS Headline report, 2017-18, Annex Table 2.1

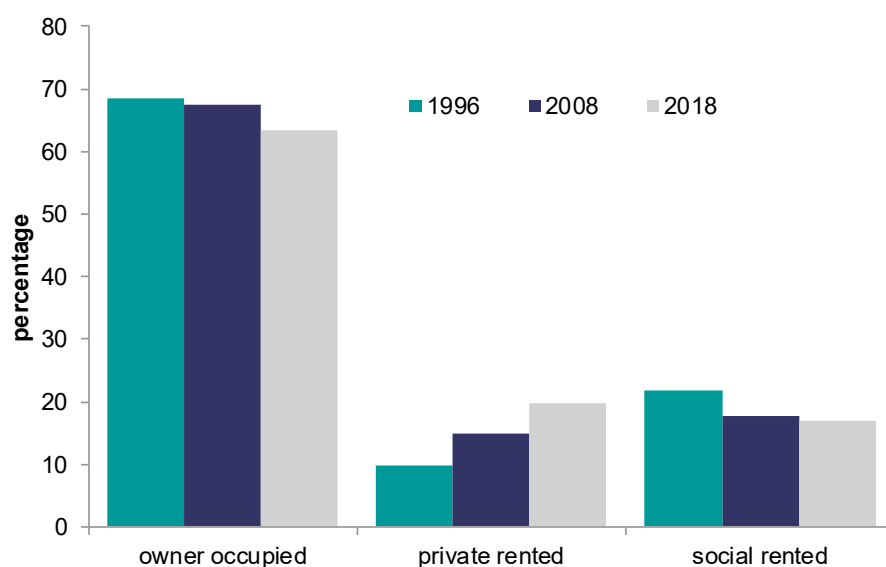
<sup>3</sup> EHS Profile of English housing report 2013, Chapter 1

<sup>4</sup> Right to Buy was introduced in the 1980 Housing Act.

<sup>5</sup> A Large Scale Voluntary Transfer (LSVT) involves the council transferring ownership of its homes with the agreement of its tenants to a new or existing Housing Association.



**Figure 1.1: Dwellings, by tenure, 1996, 2008 and 2018**



**Base:** all dwellings

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

**Sources:**

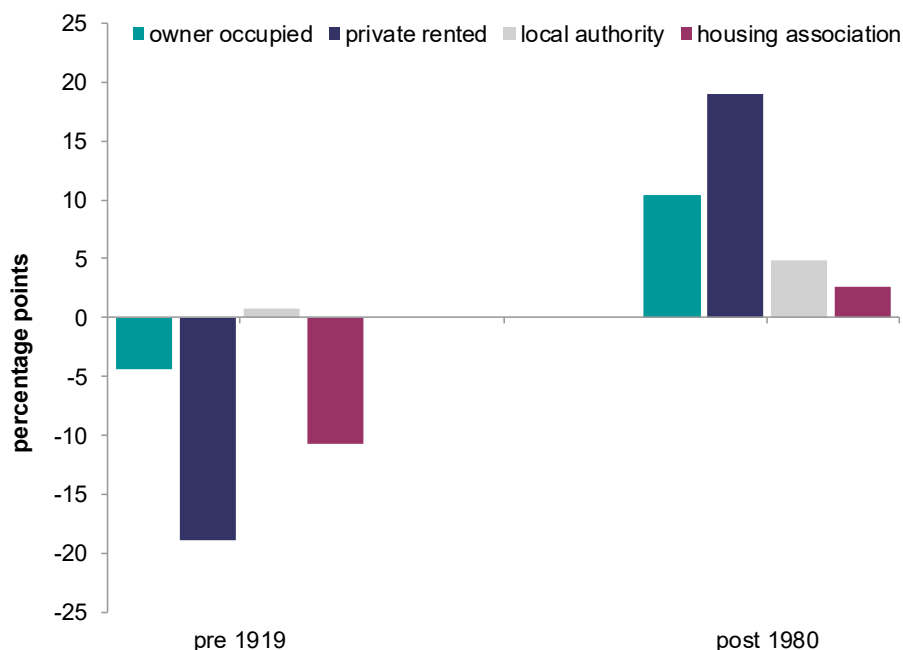
1996: English House Condition Survey, dwelling sample

2008 and 2018: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

### Dwelling age by tenure

- 1.6 Not surprisingly, the proportion of dwellings built post 1980 has increased; up from 13% in 1996 to 26% in 2018, Annex Tables 1.2 to 1.4. It is likely that the rise in newer homes has contributed to the improvements in housing quality examined in Chapter 2 of this report.
- 1.7 One of the most notable changes over the 1996 to 2018 period was the growth of newer dwellings in the private rented sector. The proportion of private rented homes built post 1980 rose from 8% to 27%. Despite this increase, private rented homes were still most likely to comprise of the oldest homes built before 1919 (52% in 1996 and 33% in 2018).
- 1.8 The age composition of the owner occupied and local authority stock varied less over time. However, the proportion of housing association homes built pre 1919 reduced from 19% to 9% while the proportion built between 1945 to 1964 rose from 12% to 23% from 1996 to 2018, the latter reflecting transfer of ownership of former local authority stock through LSVT.

**Figure 1.2: Change in pre 1919 and post 1980 aged homes from 1996 to 2018, by tenure**



**Base: all dwellings**

**Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Tables 1.2 and 1.4**

**Sources:**

1996: English House Condition Survey, dwelling sample

2018: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

### Dwelling type by tenure

- 1.9 Throughout the 1996 to 2018 period over half of owner occupied homes comprised of semi-detached and detached homes, the former a consistent 30% of the stock and the latter rising from 21% in 1996 to 25% in 2018. There was a decrease in the proportion of owner occupied small terraced houses from 13% in 1996 to 8% in 2018, Annex Tables 1.2 to 1.4.
- 1.10 Over the same period, the number of purpose built flats in the English housing stock increased by around 962,000 of which 930,000 entered the private rented sector, either as newly built homes or through transfer from other tenures. In the private rented sector, the proportion of purpose built low rise flats rose from 17% to 23% and the proportion of purpose built high rise flats increased from 1% to 4% of stock.
- 1.11 Although there was a notable decrease in the prevalence of private rented converted flats, down from 19% in 1996 to 11% in 2018, the number increased from 382,000 to 507,000.
- 1.12 Among local authority owned dwellings, purpose built low rise flats have been the most common dwelling type since 1996 (33% in 1996 rising to 37% in

2018). There was a decrease in the proportion of the stock comprising of semi-detached houses (22% in 1996 to 18% in 2018).

- 1.13 Purpose built low rise flats were also the predominant type of home owned by housing associations, although the proportion decreased from 46% in 1996 to 32% in 2008, before rising slightly to 35% in 2018. Conversely there was an increase in the proportion semi-detached houses between 1996 and 2008 (10% to 18%) and in the proportion of bungalows (6% to 10%).

**Figure 1.3: Change in dwelling type, by tenure, from 1996 to 2018**



Base: all dwellings

Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Tables 1.2 and 1.4

Sources:

1996: English House Condition Survey, dwelling sample

2018: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

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## Chapter 2

# Condition of the English housing stock

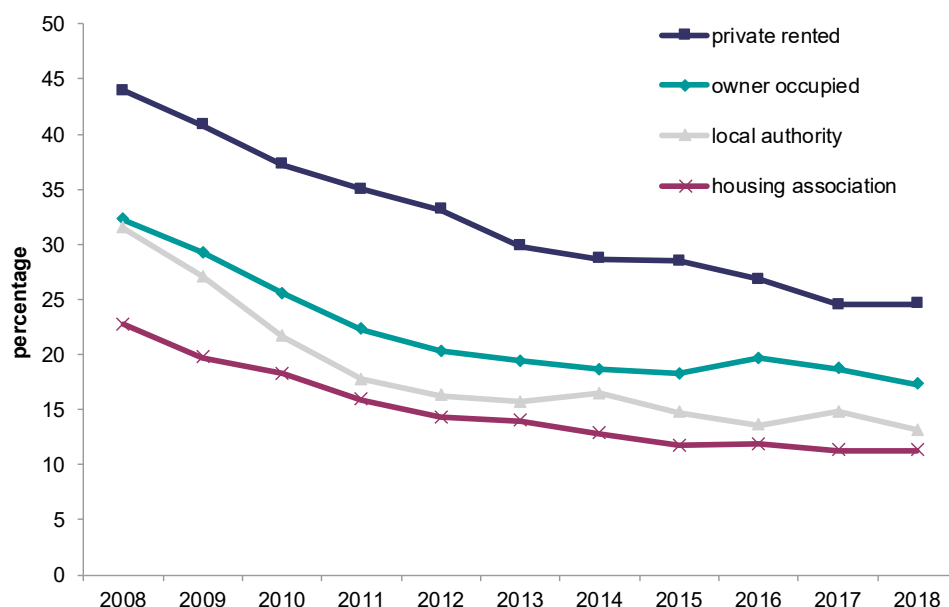
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- 2.1 This chapter provides an overview of the dwelling condition and safety of the housing stock by dwelling characteristics. It comprises two sections. The first examines which dwellings were less likely to meet the Decent Homes Standard, which criterion, or criteria, were most commonly not attained, and the extent to which the reasons for non-decency co-existed. The second section reports on the most common health and safety hazards, assessed under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), in 2008 and 2018.
- 2.2 The EHS 2018-19 Energy efficiency report, published alongside this report, examines two additional indicators of housing quality; the energy efficiency of the housing stock between 2008 and 2018 and the prevalence of damp as reported by households during the 2018-19 interview survey.

### Decent homes

- 2.3 For a dwelling to be considered 'decent' 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
- 2.4 In 2018, 18% or 4.3 million homes did not meet the Decent Homes Standard. Social rented homes (12%) were less likely to fail the Standard than those owned privately, particularly those that were privately rented (25%), Live Table DT3101.
- 2.5 Overall, there was a marked fall in the proportion of non-decent homes from 2008 (33%) to 2018 (18%), but recent trends indicate that the prevalence of non-decency within the stock, and for each tenure, has levelled out, Figure 2.1.
- 2.6 Between 2008 and 2018, the total number of non-decent homes fell by around 3 million, although we cannot quantify the extent of 'churn' into and out of decency. Similarly, some of these non-decent homes may be especially hard to treat, for example, be prohibitively expensive to repair.

**Figure 2.1: Non-decent homes, by tenure, 2008 to 2018**



**Base: all dwellings**

**Note: underlying data are presented in Live Table DT3101**

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

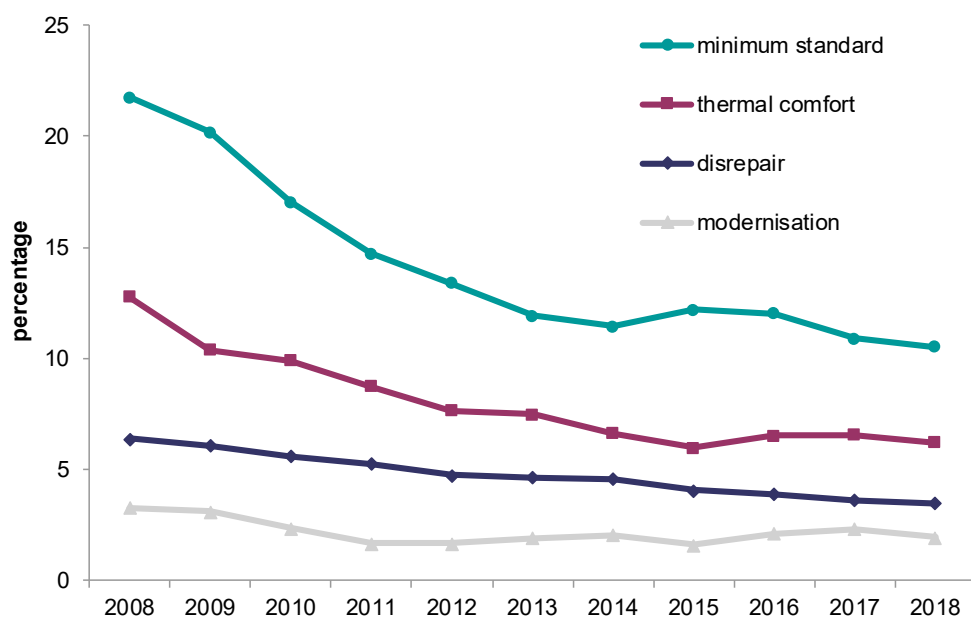
2.7 Generally speaking, owner occupied and socially rented homes had annual falls in the number of non-decent homes. The increase in the overall size of the private rented sector has meant that the number of non-decent homes has changed less, despite the reduction in the proportion that are non-decent.

### Reason(s) for failing the Decent Homes Standard

2.8 The proportion of homes failing each of the four criteria declined between 2008 and 2018, although the rate of the decline has slowed in recent years. Although there was a reduction in the proportion of homes failing either the HHSRS, thermal comfort or disrepair criteria from 2013 to 2018, the rate of change for each criterion was slower compared with the 2008 to 2013 period. The apparent reduction in the proportion of homes failing the modernisation criterion over the 2013 to 2018 period, was not statistically significant, Figure 2.2.

2.9 Having at least one Category 1 hazard was the most common reason for failing the Standard and the proportion of homes with these hazards halved from 22% in 2008 to 11% in 2018. Lack of thermal comfort was present in 13% of homes in 2008, falling to 6% in 2018, Figure 2.2.

**Figure 2.2: Non-decent homes criteria, 2008 to 2018**



**Base: all dwellings**

**Note: underlying data are presented in Live Table DA3201**

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

2.10 Overall, there were improvements for all criteria in every tenure from 2008 to 2013<sup>6</sup>. However, from 2013 to 2018, continued progress for each criterion was less common.

2.11 The main tenure findings for the 2013 to 2018 period were:

- the only statistically significant fall in the proportion of homes failing the HHSRS or thermal comfort criteria occurred in the private rented sector. The proportion of private rented homes failing the HHSRS criterion decreased from 16% to 14%, and the proportion with thermal discomfort fell from 13% to 10%.
- the proportion of homes failing the Standard due to disrepair reduced among owner occupied (from 4% to 3%) and local authority homes (from 5% to 3%).
- there was a reduction in the proportion of local authority and housing association homes failing due to modernisation.

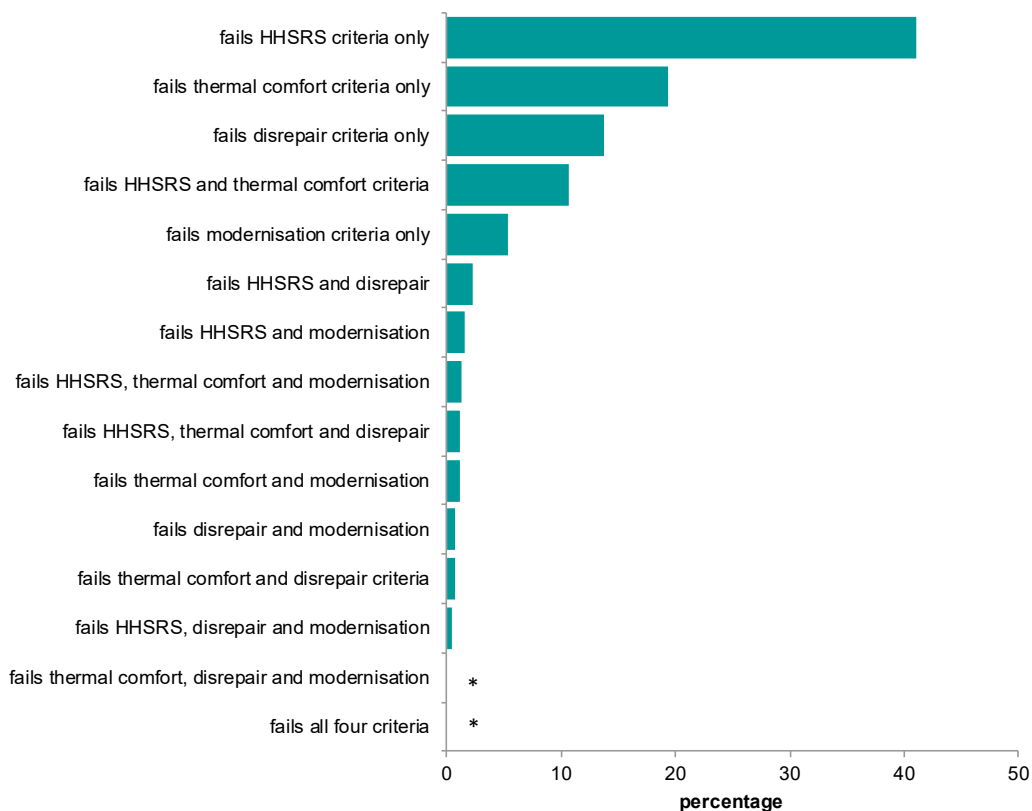
2.12 The findings for disrepair and modernisation demonstrate the cyclical nature of the non-decency. As these criteria are partly or primarily dependent on the ages of building components and facilities, non-decency can never realistically be fully mitigated.

<sup>6</sup> The exception was for housing associations; there was no statistically significant fall in the proportion of homes failing the modernisation criterion from 2008 to 2013.

2.13 Although most non-decent homes in 2018 failed due to one criterion (79%) for the remaining 21% of non-decent homes, reasons for failing the Standard co-existed. A small proportion of non-decent homes (3% or 143,000) failed three or four criteria which equated to less than 1% of the total housing stock, Annex Table 2.1.

2.14 As HHSRS was the most common reason for failing the Standard, it is not surprising that it was, combined with another criterion, the most likely reason for non-decent homes failing for two criteria, Figure 2.3.

**Figure 2.3: Decent Homes Standard criteria failed, 2018**



**Base: all non-decent dwellings**

**Notes:**

1) underlying data are presented in Annex Table 2.2.

2) \* data not included due to small sample size

Source: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

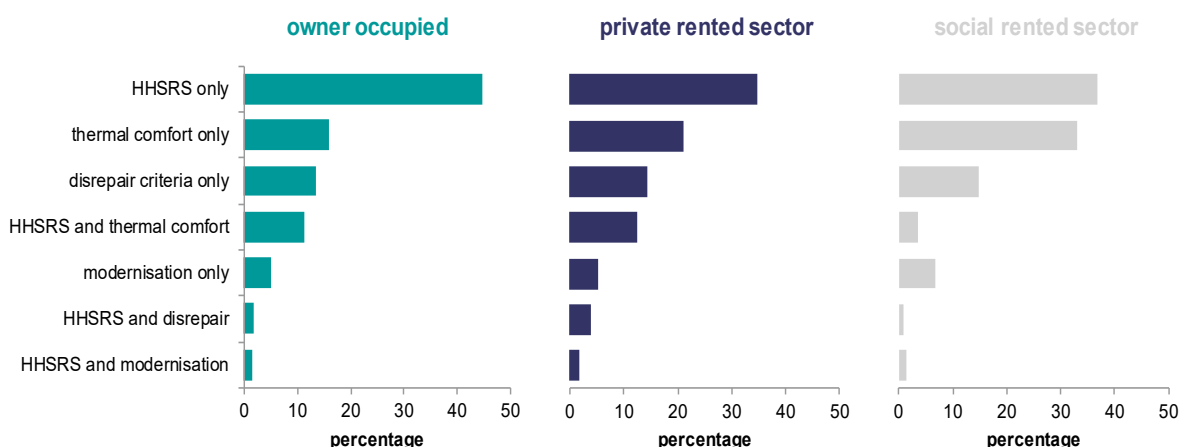
2.15 When the prevalence of multiple criteria for failing the Standard are examined by tenure, many sample sizes are too small to report on. This is because it is rare for dwellings to fail on some multiple criteria, most notably when the HHSRS criterion is met but two or more other criteria are not. This section, therefore, investigates the seven most common reason(s) for non-decency present in each tenure.

2.16 Although the same seven most common reason(s) for non-decency existed for all tenures, the relative prevalence of each varied. Private rented (12%)

and owner occupied (11%) tenures were more likely to comprise of homes failing both the HHSRS and thermal comfort criteria than non-decent homes owned by social landlords (4%), Figure 2.4.

2.17 Private rented homes were also more likely to be non-decent due to failing both the HHSRS and disrepair criteria (4%) than owner occupied (2%) and social sector non-decent homes (1%).

**Figure 2.4: Decent Homes Standard criteria failed by tenure, 2018**



**Base: all non-decent dwellings**

**Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 2.2.**

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

### Number of non-decent criteria failed over time

2.18 From 2008 to 2018, the proportion of non-decent homes failing multiple criteria decreased while those failing a single criterion increased. This reflected improvements in the earlier 2008 to 2013 period when the proportion of homes failing two criteria decreased from 23% to 17%. The fall in proportion of homes failing three or more criteria was statistically significant over the total 10 year period (5% in 2008 to 3% in 2018), Annex Table 2.1.

2.19 The trends for the total non-decent stock were largely mirrored for each tenure although there were some variations in the likelihood of homes failing three or more criteria over time.

2.20 The proportion of private rented and local authority homes failing three or more criteria decreased from 2008 to 2018 (9% to 3% and 4% to two percent<sup>7</sup> respectively). The apparent fall in the non-decent homes failing three or more criteria was not statistically significant for owner occupied and housing association tenures.

<sup>7</sup> The exact percentage has been suppressed in the annex tables to minimise the risk of identifying the small number of dwellings falling into this group.



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## Cost to make decent

- 2.21 The EHS reports an estimate cost of all work needed to bring a dwelling up to the Decent Homes Standard. This work is identified at the time of survey, and costs are adjusted for tenure, region and year of survey<sup>8</sup>.
- 2.22 It is estimated that it would cost around £32 billion to bring every non-decent home up to the Standard; most of the money would be needed to remedy non-decency in the private sector (£29 billion). The average cost to enable a non-decent home meet the Standard was £7,365 in 2018, Annex Table 2.3.
- 2.23 Average costs were higher in the private sector; £7,774 and £7,521 for owner occupied and private rented homes, respectively. The average cost to make decent was £5,488 for local authority homes and £4,252 for housing association homes.

## Non-decency and dwelling age

- 2.24 Although newly built homes improve the overall quality of the housing stock, the existing stock continued to see improvements in the prevalence of non-decent housing. The proportion of non-decent homes among the housing stock built before 1919 fell from 56% in 2008 to 34% in 2018. Despite this improvement, these aged homes were still most likely to fail the Standard in 2018, Annex Table 2.4.
- 2.25 There was a fall in the proportion of non-decent homes for all aged homes from 2008 to 2013 but progress has levelled off in some age bands. From 2013 to 2018 there was no statistically significant fall in the proportion of non-decent homes among dwellings built between 1945 and 1964 and those built from after 1980.

## Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)

- 2.26 The HHSRS<sup>9</sup> is the Government's risk-based assessment tool that identifies hazards in dwellings and evaluates their potential harmful effects on the health and safety of occupants and their visitors. The assessment rates the seriousness of any hazard so that it is possible to differentiate between minor hazards and those where there is an imminent threat of major harm<sup>10</sup>. The most serious hazards are called Category 1 hazards and where these exist in

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<sup>8</sup> For more detail see the section on modelled indicators, Chapter 5 of the English Housing Survey 2018-19 Technical Report, Annex 5.5.

<sup>9</sup> For more information on the HHSRS see the EHS Technical Report 2018-19, Chapter 5, Annex 5.5.

<sup>10</sup> The HHSRS has a scoring procedure (a mathematical formula) that uses the surveyor's assessment of the likelihood of a harmful event occurring due to the hazard and the likely severity of health outcome(s) or harms which would result from that event. The scoring procedure generates a numerical hazard score; the higher the score, the greater the severity of that hazard.

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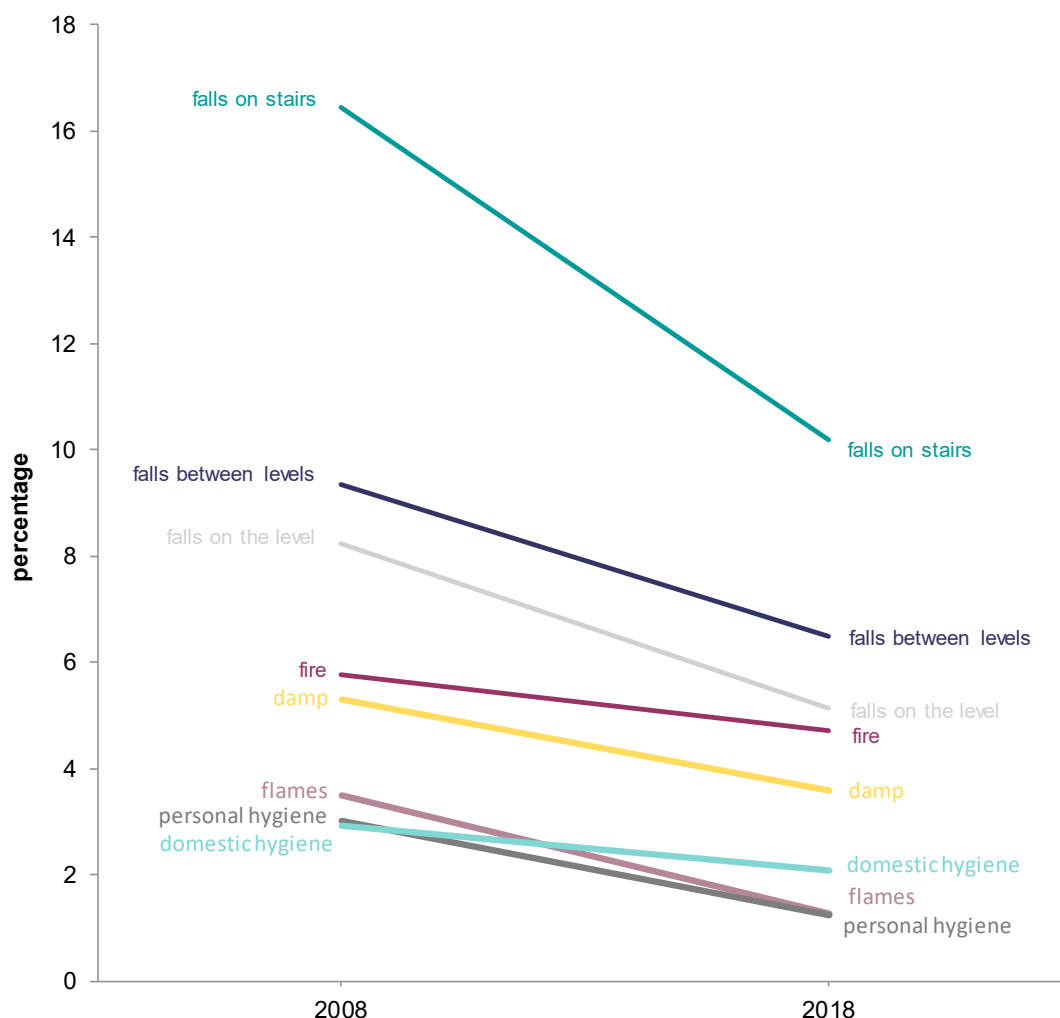
a home, it fails to meet the statutory minimum standard for housing in England.

- 2.27 This section reports on the most common HHSRS hazards that were present in 2008 and 2018. The total number of hazards include all those assessed as having a significantly higher than average risk of harm, not just the most serious Category 1 hazards<sup>11</sup>. Homes with excess cold hazards are analysed separately as the EHS currently only models Category 1 hazards for this risk to health.
- 2.28 Eight HHSRS hazards with significantly higher than average risks of harm were amongst the most common in both 2008 and 2018, and there was a fall in the proportion of homes with each of these hazards over time.
- 2.29 Significantly higher than average risks of harm from falls associated with stairs and steps were most common (16% in 2008, 10% in 2018), followed by falls between levels (9% in 2008 and 6% in 2018) and falls on the level (8% in 2008, 5% in 2018), Figure 2.5.

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<sup>11</sup> Category 1 and other hazards that were assessed as significantly higher than average are listed separately in Annex Tables 2.5 and 2.6

**Figure 2.5: Most common HHSRS hazards, 2008 and 2018**



Base: all dwellings

Notes:

1) uses 26 hazard HHSRS model

2) underlying data are presented in Annex Tables 2.5 and 2.6.

Source: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

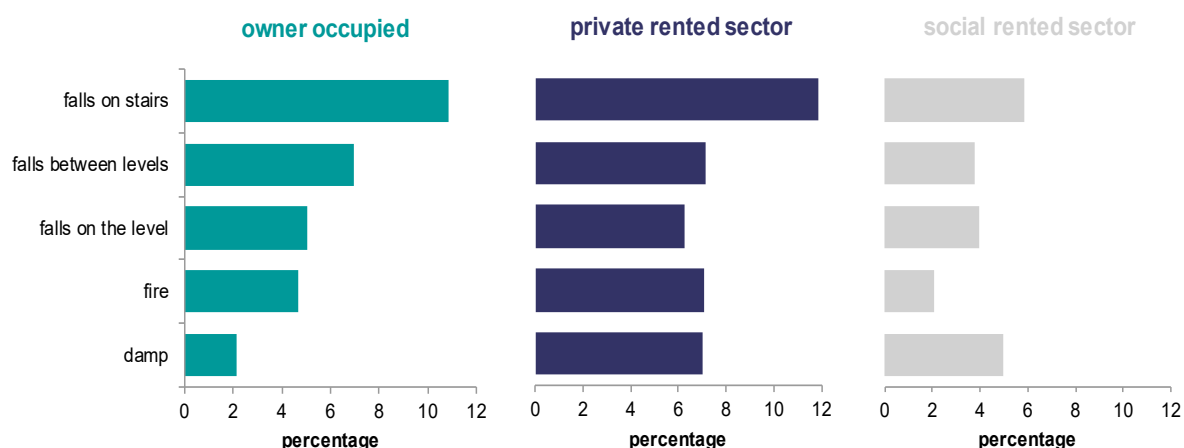
2.30 Living in an excessively cold home was the second most common Category 1 hazard present in 9% of homes in 2008 falling to 3% in 2018<sup>12</sup>, Live Table DA4101.

<sup>12</sup> The method for modelling excess cold has changed over time due to changes in the SAP methodology which underpins the model. In 2018, excess cold used the updated SAP12 variable with the new U values assumptions causing the SAP threshold for excess cold to change (see EHS Technical Report 2018-19, chapter 5). Although this change in SAP and cut-off threshold creates difficulties in reporting on excess cold trends over time, it allows the findings to offer some degree of consistency for those who wish to look at HHSRS over time. The same approach was applied when the EHS moved from SAP01 to SAP05, from SAP05 to SAP09 and from SAP09 to SAP12.

## Five most common HHSRS hazards by tenure and dwelling type

- 2.31 There were variations in the relative prevalence of the top five hazards<sup>13</sup> by tenure in 2018. Falls on the stairs was the most common type of hazard for owner occupied (11%) and private rented homes (12%), but for social homes falls on the stairs and damp and mould hazards were equally common (6% and 5%, respectively), Figure 2.6
- 2.32 Among owner occupied homes, there were statistically significant differences in the relative prevalence of each of the top five hazards, but this was not the case for other tenures.
- 2.33 Aside from falls on the stairs hazards, the other top four hazards were equally likely to exist in private rented homes. In the social sector, fire hazards were less likely to be present than the top three falls hazards and damp hazards.

**Figure 2.6: Most common five HHSRS hazards, by tenure, 2018**



Base: all dwellings

Notes:

1) uses 26 hazard HHSRS model

2) underlying data are presented in Annex Table 2.8.

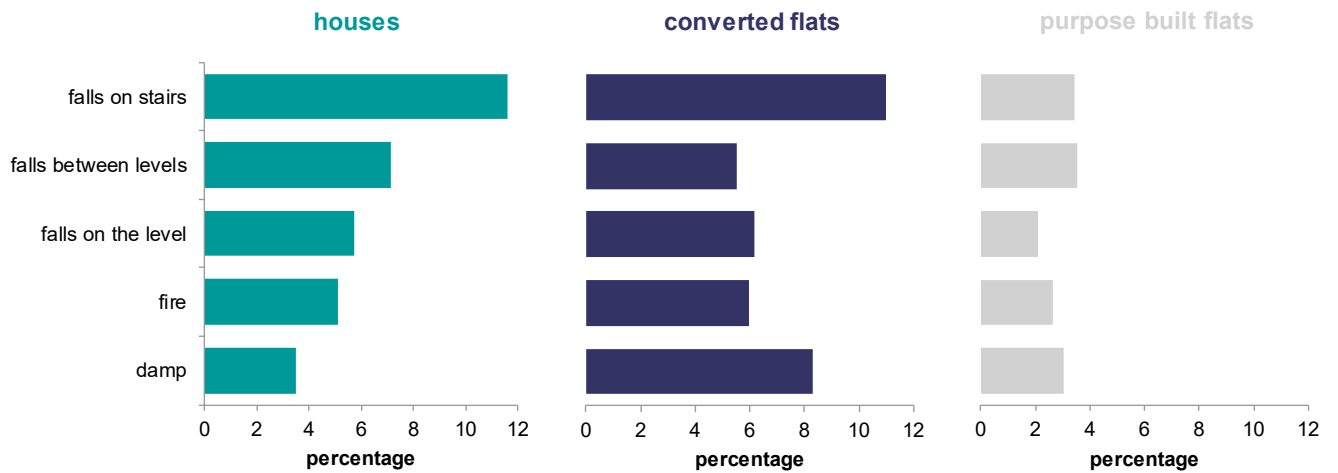
Source: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

- 2.34 There was one notable change in the relative prevalence of hazards between 2008 and 2018 and this arose among social rented homes. In 2008, damp hazards were equally as common as falls on the level and falls between levels hazards. In 2018, however, damp hazards were more likely to occur than falls on the level and falls between levels hazards, Annex Tables 2.7 and 2.8.
- 2.35 For terraced and semi-detached houses falls on stairs hazards were most common in 2018, while falls on stairs hazards were equally as common as falls between levels among detached houses, Annex Table 2.10.

<sup>13</sup> Refers to all hazards with significantly higher than average risks.

2.36 For converted flats falls on stairs hazards were more common than other fall hazards or fire hazards, but not more common than damp hazards. The prevalence of all top five hazards were similar among purpose built flats, Figure 2.7.

**Figure 2.7: Most common five HHSRS hazards, by dwelling type, 2018**



**Base: all dwellings**

**Notes:**

1) uses 26 hazard HHSRS model

2) underlying data are presented in Annex Table 2.10.

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

2.37 For most dwelling types the order of frequency for each hazard changed between 2008 and 2018. However, as many differences between hazards were not statistically significant any changes should be viewed with caution, Annex Tables 2.9 and 2.10.

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# Chapter 3

## Safety measures

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3.1 This chapter reports on the presence of carbon monoxide detectors and fire safety measures in the home and how the provision of these has changed over time. The final section examines trends in the provision of electrical safety features.

### Carbon monoxide and smoke alarms

3.2 In England, landlords must install a carbon monoxide alarm in any room containing a solid fuel-burning appliance such as a wood burner or coal fire and at least one smoke alarm on every floor of the property where a room is used wholly or partly as living accommodation.

3.3 In 2018, 42% of dwellings had a carbon monoxide detector, a rise from 38% in 2017<sup>14</sup> and from 28% in 2015 when this was first reported<sup>15</sup>. These were less prevalent in private rented homes (39%) than in both owner occupied (43%) and social rented homes (43%)<sup>14</sup>.

3.4 Homes with a solid fuel burning appliance were more likely to have a carbon monoxide detector (51%) than dwellings with no solid fuel appliances 41%.

3.5 In 2018-19, 91% of households had at least one working smoke alarm. Provision varied by tenure, and social renters (95%) were more likely to have this feature than both than both owners (90%) and private renters (88%)<sup>16</sup>.

3.6 Between 2008/09 and 2018/19, the proportion of households with at least one working smoke alarm increased from 84% to 91%. This increase was observed across all tenures although provision has levelled off in recent years.

3.7 In 2018-19, around a fifth (22%) of households reported that they never tested their smoke alarm. Renters were less likely to test their alarm; 29% of private renters and 27% of social renters never tested their alarm compared with 18% of owner occupiers<sup>17</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup> EHS Headline report 2018-19, AT2.18.

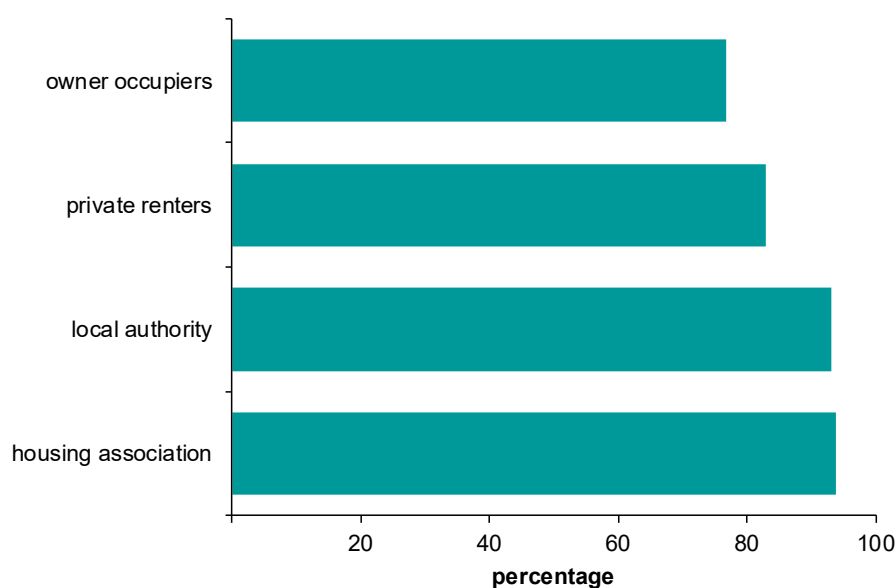
<sup>15</sup> EHS Headline report 2015-16, AT2.18.

<sup>16</sup> EHS Headline report 2018-19, AT2.16.

<sup>17</sup> EHS Headline report 2018-19, AT2.17.

- 3.8 Overall 81%, or 18.8 million, of households reported having a working smoke alarm on every floor of their home in 2018-19. Provision varied by tenure reflecting the different dwelling type profiles in each stock, particularly the relative prevalence of single storey homes, Annex Table 3.1.
- 3.9 Provision of a working smoke alarm on every floor and was highest for social renters; 94% of housing association and 93% of local authority tenants. Private renters (83%) were more likely to have a working alarm on every floor compared with owner occupiers (77%), Figure 3.1.

**Figure 3.1: Working smoke detector on all floors of the home, by tenure, 2018-19**



**Base: all households**

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

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

- 3.10 Not surprisingly provision was higher among households living in single storey homes including bungalows (91%). Although households living in purpose built high rise (93%) and purpose built low rise (92%) flats were more likely to report having a working smoke alarm on every floor than those in converted flats (88%) this difference was not statistically significant.
- 3.11 Among houses, households living in detached houses were most likely to have a working smoke alarm on every floor (83%). Households in semi-detached (76%) and medium to large terraces (75%) were more likely to have this provision than those living in small terraced houses (73%).
- 3.12 Households living in the newest homes built after 1980 (88%) were most likely to have a working smoke alarm on every floor. In contrast those living in the oldest homes built pre 1919 were less likely (75%) to have this provision than

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households in all homes built after 1945 (between 80% and 88%, depending on age of the home).

### **How smoke alarms are powered**

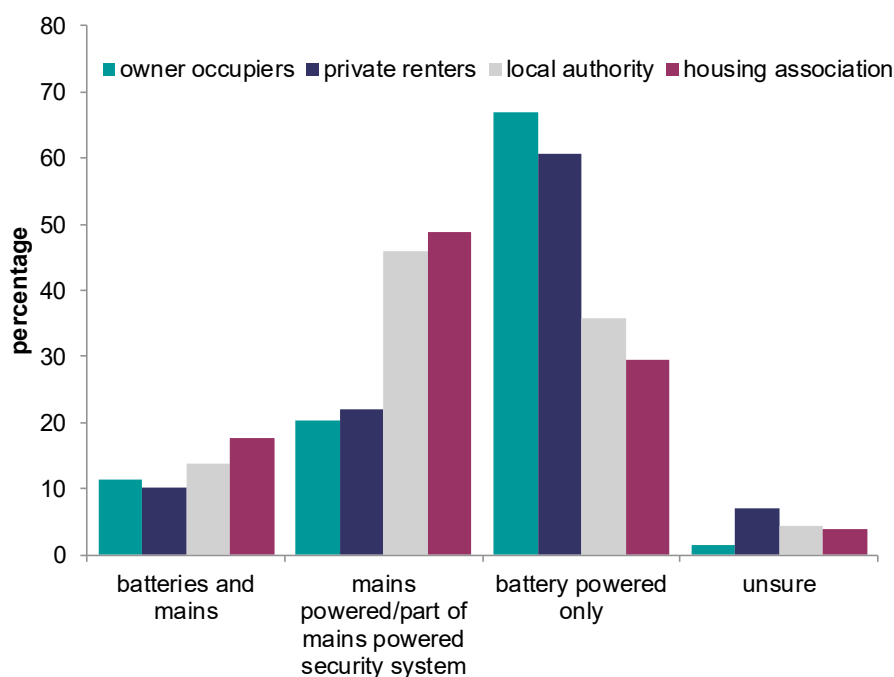
- 3.13 This section examines how households powered their smoke alarms (whether these were working or not). The analysis uses interview data collected over two years (2017-18 combined with 2018-19, and 2009-10 combined with 2010-11) but for ease of reporting is referred to as '2018-19' and '2010-11' respectively.
- 3.14 In 2018-19, households with smoke alarms most commonly reported that these were powered through a battery only (60%). A quarter reported (25%) having mains<sup>18</sup> powered smoke alarms, 12% used a mix of battery and mains power and the remaining 3% of households were unsure about how their alarm was powered, Annex Table 3.2.
- 3.15 Smoke alarms best mitigate the risk of harm from fire if they have a continuous power supply such as mains power with a back-up battery. This section focuses on homes with the greatest potential for improved provision, that is, households whose alarms were powered by batteries only.
- 3.16 There was a notable variation in the provision of battery only powered smoke alarms by tenure, with owner occupiers (67%) most reliant on these. Private renters (61%) were also more likely to have battery powered only alarms than both local authority (36%) and housing association (30%) renters, Figure 3.2.
- 3.17 Interestingly a higher proportion of private renters (7%) did not know how their alarms were powered compared with all other households, particularly owner occupiers (1%).

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<sup>18</sup> Includes part of a mains powered security system



**Figure 3.2: How smoke alarms are powered, by tenure, 2018-19**



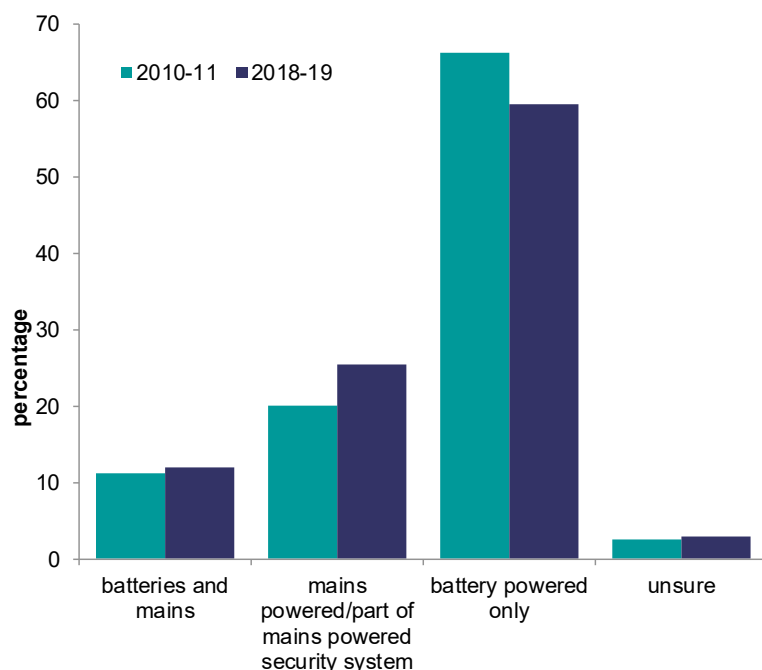
**Base: all households**

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

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

- 3.18 The tenure findings reflect the different mix of dwelling types in each stock and the varied provision of smoke alarm power among each type of home.
- 3.19 Overall, households living in flats (both purpose built and converted) were less likely to have battery powered only alarms than those living in houses and bungalows.
- 3.20 Households living in purpose built high rise flats (33%) were least likely to be reliant on battery only powered smoke alarms than all other households. Similarly, households living in purpose built low rise flats were less reliant on these alarms than households living in houses and bungalows as well as those in converted flats (51%).
- 3.21 The proportion of households with battery only powered alarms was generally similar across all types of houses and bungalows.
- 3.22 Between 2010-11 and 2018-19, there was a fall in the proportion of households using battery powered only alarms from 66% to 60%. Conversely, using mains power became more common, up from 20% to 25%, Figure 3.3.
- 3.23 The proportion of households with smoke alarms powered by a mix of battery and mains was similar in both years as was the proportion unsure about how their alarm was powered.

**Figure 3.3: How smoke alarms are powered, 2010-11 and 2018-19.**



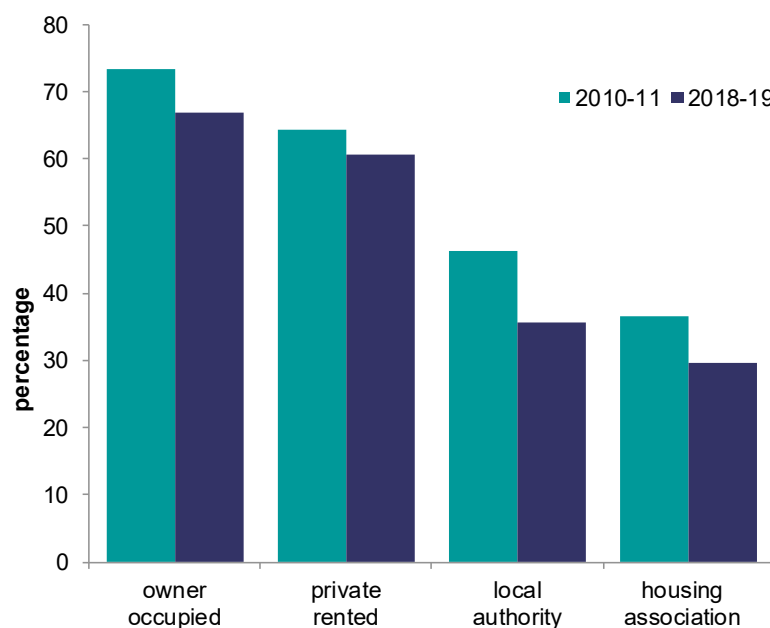
**Base: all households**

**Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Tables 3.2 and 3.3.**

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

3.24 In both 2010-11 and 2018-19, owner occupiers were more likely to have battery powered only alarms than renters, particularly social renters. However, households in every tenure were less likely to have battery powered only alarms in 2018-19 than eight years previously, Figure 3.4.

**Figure 3.4: Battery only powered smoke alarms, by tenure, 2010-11 and 2018-19**



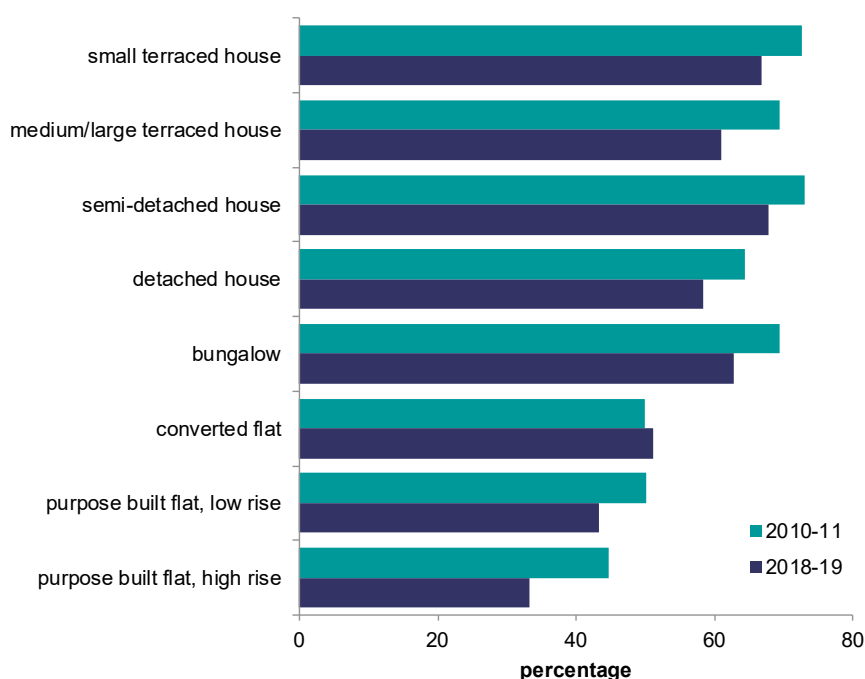
**Base: all households**

**Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Tables 3.2 and 3.3.**

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

- 3.25 Overall, trends in the provision of battery only powered alarms among different types of dwellings were similar in both 2010-11 and 2018-19 with households living in flats less likely to be reliant on these alarms. However, in 2010-11, there were no significant differences in how alarms were powered for households living in each type of flat (both converted and purpose built).
- 3.26 In both 2010-11 and 2018-19 households in detached houses had less reliance on battery only powered smoke alarms than those living in other types of houses and bungalows.
- 3.27 There was a fall in the use of battery powered alarms for households living in all types of home except those living in converted flats. One of the more notable falls was among households living in purpose built high rise flats (45% to 33%), Figure 3.5.

**Figure 3.5: Battery only powered smoke alarms, by dwelling type, 2010-11 and 2018-19.**



**Base: all households**

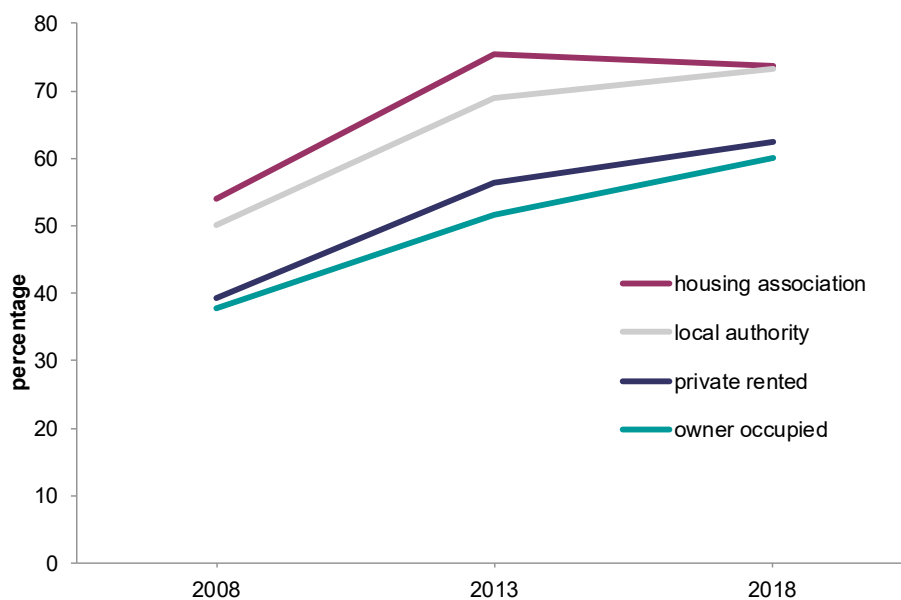
**Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Tables 3.2 and 3.3.**

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

## Electrical safety

- 3.28 Faulty or ageing electrical systems can cause fires and have the potential to cause serious harm, or even fatal electrocution. This section examines the prevalence of five electrical safety features<sup>19</sup> in 2018 and over time.
- 3.29 In 2018, 63% of all homes had all five electrical safety features. These measures were more likely to be present in social rented homes than in privately owned homes. Around three quarters of local authority (73%) and housing association (74%) homes had all five features compared with 62% of private rented and 60% of owner occupied homes, Live Table DA5201.
- 3.30 In both the 2008 to 2013 and 2013 to 2018 periods, there was an improvement in the provision of all 5 electrical safety features from 40% to 56% and 56% to 63% respectively.
- 3.31 The trend of continuous improvement occurred for most tenures. The exception was among housing association owned homes over the 2013 to 2018 period when provision remained unchanged. However, the prevalence of all five safety features had been higher among housing association homes in both 2008 and 2013, Figure 3.6.

**Figure 3.6 Electrical safety, by tenure, 2008, 2013 and 2018**



**Base: all dwellings**

**Note: underlying data are presented in Live Table DA5201**

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

<sup>19</sup> These are: modern PVC wiring, modern earthing, modern consumer unit casing, miniature circuit breakers and residual current devices. It may not be possible for the surveyor to identify the presence of each electrical safety feature (e.g. problems in accessing the garage) so there will be some unknown cases within the dwelling stock.

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## Chapter 4

# Household characteristics and housing quality

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- 4.1 This chapter explores the quality of housing occupied by different household groups: the age of the HRP; household composition; households with at least one wheelchair user; renters in receipt of Housing Benefit<sup>20</sup>. Firstly, it reports on households living in non-decent homes. Then, for each of these household groups, it reports on reasons for failing the Decent Homes Standard, subjective overheating and overcrowding<sup>21</sup>.
- 4.2 To explore subjective overheating, households are asked whether any part of their home gets uncomfortably hot, even when the heating is turned off and the windows are open. The 2018-19 Energy Efficiency report examines the methods households report using to control warm temperatures in their home as well as the dwelling and household characteristics of those who can keep cool during the summer months by just opening the windows.

### Decent homes

- 4.3 In 2018-19, around 4 million households (17%) in England lived in a non-decent home<sup>22</sup>. Overall the likelihood of living in a non-decent home was similar for all ages although HRPs aged 65 years or over (19%) were more likely to live in homes that failed the Standard compared with HRPs aged 55-64 (16%) and HRPs aged 25-34 (15%). HRPs aged 35-44 (19%) were also more likely to live in a non-decent home than those aged 25-34 years, Figure 4.1.

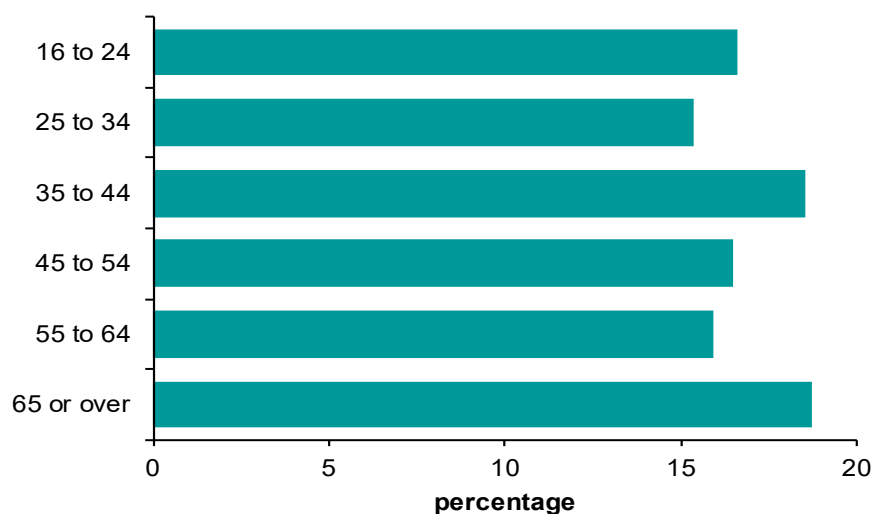
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<sup>20</sup> receipt of Housing Benefit by the HRP or their partner

<sup>21</sup> Levels of overcrowding are measured using the bedroom standard (see Glossary). The bedroom standard calculates the number of bedrooms needed to avoid undesirable sharing, given the number, ages and relationship of the household members.

<sup>22</sup> See chapter 2 for definition of the Decent Homes Standard

**Figure 4.1: Non-decent homes, by age of the HRP, 2018-19**



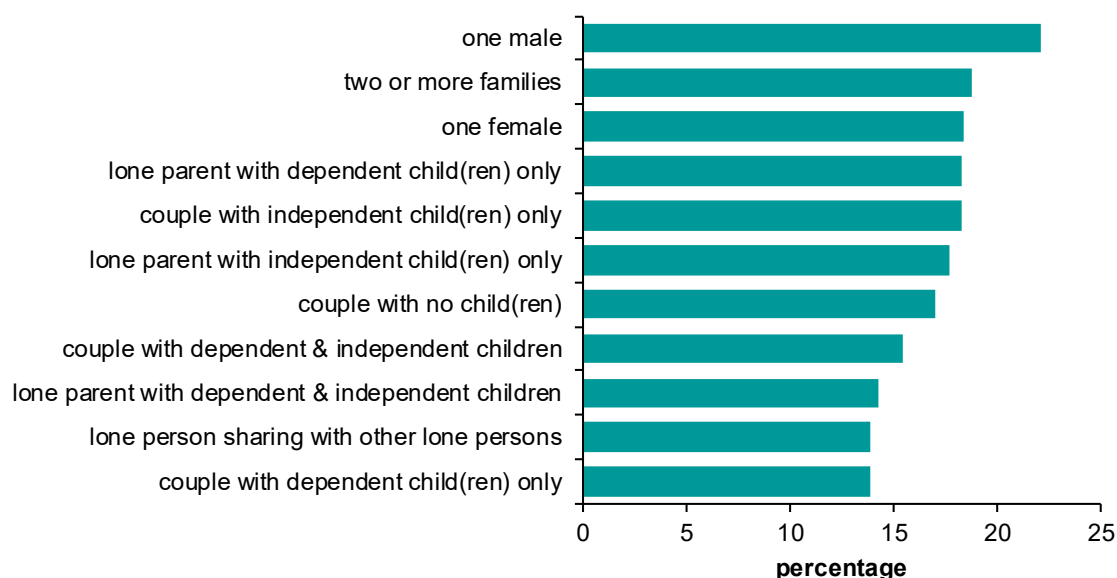
**Base: all households**

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

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

4.4 Lone parents with dependent children only (18%) were more likely to live in a non-decent home than couples with dependent children only (14%). Single male HRP households (22%) were also more likely to live in a home that failed the Standard than some other types of households including single female HRP households (18%) and couples without children (17%), Figure 4.2.

**Figure 4.2: Non-decent homes, by type of household, 2018-19**



**Base: all households**

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

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

- 
- 4.5 Although a higher proportion of households with a wheelchair user (19%) lived in a non-decent home than households without a wheelchair user (17%) this difference was not statistically significant.
- 4.6 Renters in receipt of Housing Benefit were less likely to live in a non-decent home (16%) than other renters (19%). The finding likely reflects the higher proportion of households receiving Housing Benefit in the social sector, where homes were less likely to be non-decent.

### **Age of the household**

- 4.7 The oldest households, those with a HRP aged 65 years or over, were either more likely or equally likely to fail each of the decent homes criteria than younger households. They were also equally likely to report subjective overheating.
- 4.8 HRPs aged 35-44 years (12%), HRPs aged 65 years or over (11%) and HRPs aged 45-54 years (11%) were more likely to live in a home that failed the HHSRS criterion than HRPs aged 16-24 (7%) or aged 25-34 (8%), Annex Table 4.1.
- 4.9 HRPs aged 65 years or over were more likely to live in homes lacking thermal comfort (7%) than all other aged households (all 5%) except HRPs aged 16-24 years (7%).
- 4.10 The likelihood of living in a non-decent home due to disrepair was similar among all age groups but HRPs aged 65 or over (3%) were more likely to live in home that failed modernisation than all other aged households (1% or less).
- 4.11 The risk to health of living in a home with excessive heat is greatest for older households. Overall 7% of households reported feeling uncomfortably hot in their home and the prevalence of subjective overheating was similar for most aged households, Annex Table 4.2.
- 4.12 HRP households aged 65 years or over (less than 1%) were less likely to live in an overcrowded home than all other age groups. Similarly, HRPs aged 55-64 (2%) were less likely to live in an overcrowded home than younger HRPs (4-7% depending on age), Annex Table 4.3.

### **Household composition**

- 4.13 There were variations in the likelihood of failing each criterion of the Decent Homes Standard by household composition. Overall, single households tended to be more likely to live in a home that failed each criterion.
- 4.14 For the HHSRS criterion, lone parents with independent children only (13%) were more likely have at least one Category 1 hazard than couples with dependent children only (9%). Conversely, lone persons sharing with other

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lone persons (7%) were less likely to live in homes failing this criterion than lone parents with dependents (13%), lone parents with independent children (13%), couples without children (11%) and single male households (11%), Annex Table 4.1.

- 4.15 Couples without children (6%) were more likely to live in a home with thermal discomfort than couples with dependent children only (3%) or couples with both dependent and independent children (3%). The proportion of lone parents with dependent and independent children with thermal discomfort was relatively low (less than 1%) compared with many other types of households particularly single male (9%) and single female (8%) households.
- 4.16 Overall a similar proportion of households lived in a non-decent home due to failing the disrepair or modernisation criteria. However, couples with dependent children only (2%) were less likely to live in a home failing the Standard due to disrepair than couples with independent children, single male households, lone parents with dependent and independent children and lone persons sharing with other lone persons (all 5%). Single male (4%) and female (2%) households were more likely to live in a home that lack modern services and amenities than many other types of households.
- 4.17 Although the proportion of households reporting subjective overheating varied most differences were not statistically significant. However, lone parents with dependent and independent children (13%) were more likely to report overheating than lone persons sharing with other lone persons (5%), Annex Table 4.2.
- 4.18 There was more variation in the likelihood of each household type being overcrowded. As children grow older, requirements for rooms will sometimes increase<sup>23</sup> so it is not surprising that households with children can have higher rates of overcrowding. Homes may have been appropriate for that family when the children were younger but become overcrowded as the children age.
- 4.19 Households comprising of two or more families (26%) and lone parents with dependent and independent children (26%), were most likely to live in overcrowded homes, Figure 4.3.
- 4.20 Couples with dependent and independent children (14%) were more likely to live in an overcrowded home than: lone parents with dependent children only (10%); couples who had dependent children only (6%); lone parents with independent children only (5%); couples with independent children only (2%).

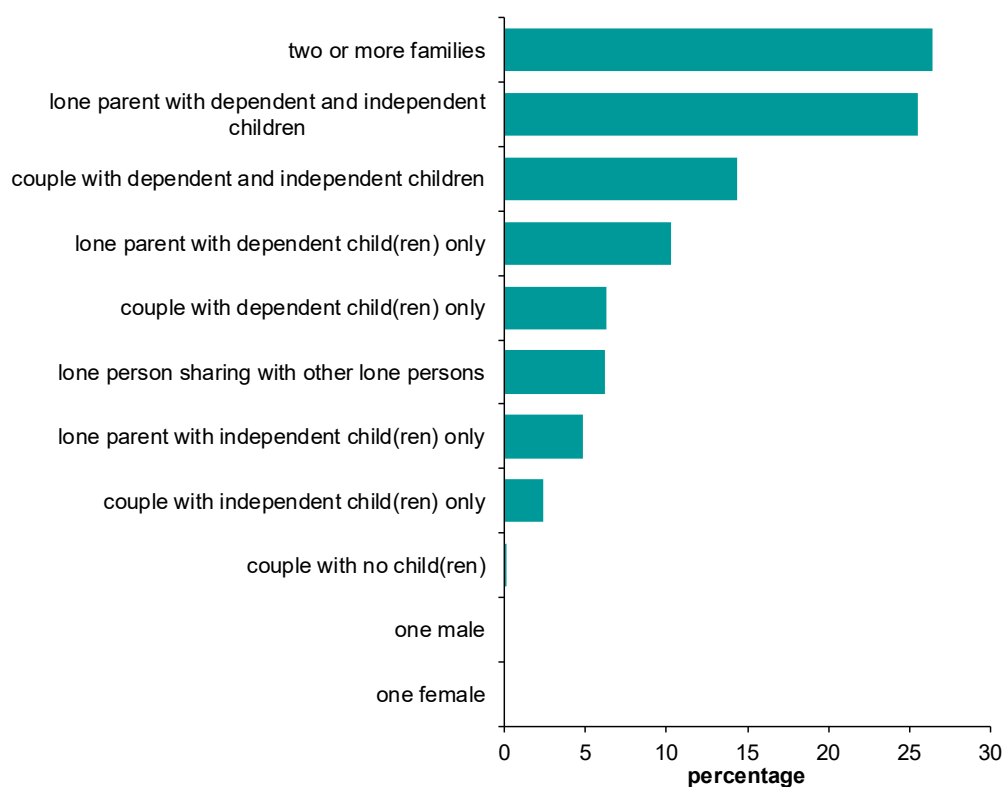
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<sup>23</sup> The bedroom standard requirements include: a separate room for a child over 10 years of age in order to prevent their sharing a room with a household member of the opposite sex; a separate room for household member aged 21 years or more (or a co-habiting or married couple). See Glossary for full details.



4.21 Lone parents with dependent children only (10%) were also more likely to be overcrowded than couples with dependent children only (6%). Similarly, Lone parents with independent children only (5%) were more likely to be overcrowded than couples with independent children only (2%).

**Figure 4.3: Overcrowding, by type of household, 2017-19**



Base: all households

Notes:

1) overcrowding and under-occupation are measured using the bedroom standard (see Glossary)

2) underlying data are presented in Annex Table 4.3

Source: 3 year average based on English Housing Survey data, household sub-sample

### Wheelchair users

4.22 Households with a wheelchair user were less likely to live in non-decent home failing the HHSRS criterion (7%) but more likely to have thermal discomfort (9%) than other households (10% and 6%, respectively), likely reflecting the overrepresentation of wheelchair users in the social sector<sup>24</sup>, Annex Table 4.1.

4.23 There was no difference in the likelihood of households with wheelchair users living in a non-decent home failing either the disrepair or modernisation criteria than other households.

<sup>24</sup> See EHS 2018-19 Accessibility factsheet.

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- 4.24 There was no statistically significant difference between the proportion of households with wheelchair users reporting subjective overheating or living in an overcrowded home than other households, Annex Tables 4.2 and 4.3.

### **Households in receipt of Housing Benefit**

- 4.25 Overall, renters in receipt of Housing Benefit were equally likely to live in a home that failed each of the decent homes criteria aside from thermal comfort. Renters claiming Housing Benefit (6%) were less likely to have thermal discomfort than other renters (8%), Annex Table 4.1.
- 4.26 The difference in subjective overheating between renters in receipt of Housing Benefit (7%) and other renters (6%) was not statistically significant, Annex Table 4.2.
- 4.27 Overcrowding was more common among renters in receipt of Housing Benefit (8%) than other renters (6%), Annex Table 4.3.

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

- 4.28 Potential HHSRS hazards are assessed in relation to the most vulnerable class of person who might occupy or visit the dwelling. For example, for falls on stairs and falls on the level, the vulnerable group is defined as persons over 60 years, and for falls between levels it is children under 5 years old.
- 4.29 The section examines the extent to which a serious HHSRS hazard existed in the homes of households containing someone most susceptible to suffering harm from the hazard in question. The analysis investigates the ten most common HHSRS hazards<sup>25</sup> and Category 1 excess cold hazards in 2018.
- 4.30 For the majority of hazards, vulnerable people were not any more likely to live in a home with a significantly higher than average risk of harm compared to other households. Furthermore, households with someone aged 60 or over were less likely to live in a home with serious risks of falls on the stairs than younger households, Table 4.1.
- 4.31 However, households with someone aged 65 years or over were more likely to live in a home with excess cold. Households with children under 14 were also more likely to live in a home with a significantly higher than average risk of harm from dampness and mould.

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<sup>25</sup> See Chapter 2 of this report and Annex Table 2.5. Analysis includes all hazards with significantly higher than average risks of harm.

## Table 4.1: Significantly higher than average risks of harm by most vulnerable group, 2018

Table 4.1: Significantly higher than average risks of harm, by vulnerable group, 2018

	specified vulnerable age group	vulnerable age groups with significantly worse than average risk (thousands of households)	vulnerable age group with significantly worse than average risk (percentage of households)	proportion of non-vulnerable age group with significantly worse than average risk (percentage of households)
falling on stairs etc.	age 60 or over	833	8.9	10.8
falling on level surfaces	age 60 or over	419	4.5	5.2
fire	age 60 or over	411	4.4	4.9
falls associated with baths	age 60 or over	156	1.7	1.9
falling between levels	age under 5	149	5.5	6.6
flames, hot surfaces etc.	age under 5	28	1.0	1.4
personal hygiene, sanitation and drainage	age under 5	20	0.7	1.2
dampness and mould growth	age under 14	259	4.5	3.3
structural collapse and falling elements	none	304	n/a	n/a
domestic hygiene pests and refuse	none	464	n/a	n/a
excess cold (Category 1 hazard only)	age 65 or over	353	4.8	2.4

Base: all households

Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 4.4

Sources: English Housing Survey, household sub-sample

Base: all households

Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 4.4

Source: English Housing Survey, household sub sample

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# Technical notes and glossary

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## Technical notes

1. Results which relate to the physical dwelling (largely Chapters 1 and 2) are presented for '2018' and are based on fieldwork carried out between April 2017 and March 2019 (a mid-point of April 2018). The sample comprises 12,562 occupied or vacant dwellings where a physical inspection was carried out. Throughout the report, this is referred to as the 'dwelling sample'.
2. Results for Chapters 3 and 4 of this report, which relate to households, are presented for '2018-19' and are based on fieldwork carried out between April 2018 and March 2019 on a sample of 13,431 households. Throughout the report, this is referred to as the 'full household 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

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published annually<sup>26</sup>. A summary of the quality assurance processes for data collection and reporting are provided in the English Housing Survey Headline Report<sup>27</sup>

## Glossary

**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>28</sup>.

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

**Dwelling:** A unit of accommodation which may comprise one or more household spaces (a household space is the accommodation used or available for use by an

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<sup>26</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-housing-survey-quality-report>

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-housing-survey-quality-report>

<sup>28</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.

### Electrical safety:

- **wiring:** this is the cabling from the input electrical supply point, which runs through the meters and consumer units and leading out into the dwelling. The earliest types of wiring used lead or black rubber sheathings to enclose the wires. The danger with this type of cable is the degrading of the rubber: any failure of the insulation can cause the outer covering to become live. Modern wiring is PVC sheathed.
- **earthing:** these are the wires joining the components at the electrical distribution centre. The early forms of earthing wires were unsheathed then later covered with green rubber, then green plastic. In 1977 the colour convention changed and all wires had to be coloured green and yellow.
- **consumer unit arrangement (fuse boxes):** in older systems, each individual electrical circuit was fed through an individual switch and fuse box. From 1960s through to the 1980s, fuses were collected together into a small number of smaller boxes, normally with a switch on the front which controlled all the circuits leading to the box. These boxes were normally fitted with a cover, the removal of which gave access to the fuses hidden inside. From the early 1980s, the newly named consumer unit (some dwellings have two) catered for the whole dwelling and was also designed to accommodate modern safety measures namely circuit breakers and residual current devices.
- **overload protection / miniature circuit breakers (MCBs):** these provide the most modern form of electrical current overload protection by detecting a fault condition and interrupting the current flow. MCBs replaced cartridge fuses and the original wire fuses (these simply melt when overheated) which formed the earliest form of protection.
- **residual current devices (RCDs):** these are designed to break an electrical current very easily by detecting any abnormality in the circuit, for example, through someone touching a live wire. They are normally located in the consumer unit but a separate RCD may exist to protect an additional circuit, for example, an electrical circuit used in the garden.

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**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.

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

The EHS definition of household is slightly different from the definition used in the 2011 Census. Unlike the EHS, the 2011 Census did not limit household membership to people who had the accommodation as their only or main residence. The EHS included that restriction because it asks respondents about their second homes, the unit of data collection on the EHS, therefore, needs to include only those people who have the accommodation as their only or main residence.

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

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

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



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**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>29</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>30</sup> for a list of the hazards covered.

**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. See bedroom standard.

**Thermal comfort:** an assessment from the surveyor as to whether a dwelling has both efficient heating; and effective insulation. Efficient heating is defined as

- any gas or oil programmable central heating
- electric storage heaters; or warm air systems
- underfloor systems

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<sup>29</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/housing-health-and-safety-rating-system-hhsrs-guidance>

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-housing-survey-technical-advice>

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- programmable LPG/solid fuel central heating
  - similarly efficient heating systems which are developed in the future

The primary heating system must have a distribution system sufficient to provide heat to two or more rooms of the home. There may be storage heaters in two or more rooms, or other heaters that use the same fuel in two or more rooms.

Because of the differences in efficiency between gas/oil heating systems and the other heating systems listed, the level of insulation that is appropriate also differs:

- For dwellings with gas/oil programmable heating, cavity wall insulation (if there are cavity walls that can be insulated effectively) or at least 50mm loft insulation (if there is loft space) is an effective package of insulation.
- For dwellings heated by electric storage heaters/LPG/programmable solid fuel central heating a higher specification of insulation is required: at least 200mm of loft insulation (if there is a loft) and cavity wall insulation (if there are cavity walls that can be insulated effectively).

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

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

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

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

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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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July 2020