

# Housing Surveys Bulletin

## Issue Number 3 – November 2008

A newsletter for users of Communities and Local Government's Housing Surveys: Survey of English Housing; English House Condition Survey; and the English Housing Survey.

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This bulletin:

- announces the publication of the 2006 English House Condition Survey (EHCS) Annual Report and provides a summary of the results;
- provides key findings from the *Housing in England 2006/07*, the annual report of the Survey of English Housing 2006/07 and;
- provides an update on the progress of the new English Housing Survey.

## English House Condition Survey



**The EHCS 2006 Annual Report was published on 25 November, 2008. This report focuses on findings related to key policy areas for decent homes, Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), energy performance, poor quality neighbourhoods and disparities in living conditions. For the first time the 2006 annual report presents findings on a broader range of energy performance indicators for the housing stock, which cover CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and provide an indication of how much improvement potential exists, in addition to energy efficiency. The 2006 report also covers problems of damp, serious condensation and mould, and the services and amenities of the housing stock.**

## Key Findings

- There were 7.7 million non-decent homes in 2006 (using the updated definition of the standard which includes the HHSRS) of which 6.6 million were privately owned, with the remaining 1.1 million being social housing.
- In 2006, 4.7 million (22%) homes had one or more Category 1 hazards under the HHSRS. The two most common Category 1 hazards in the housing stock were excess cold (homes that are difficult or expensive to treat) and falls (both of which were found in 11% of all homes).

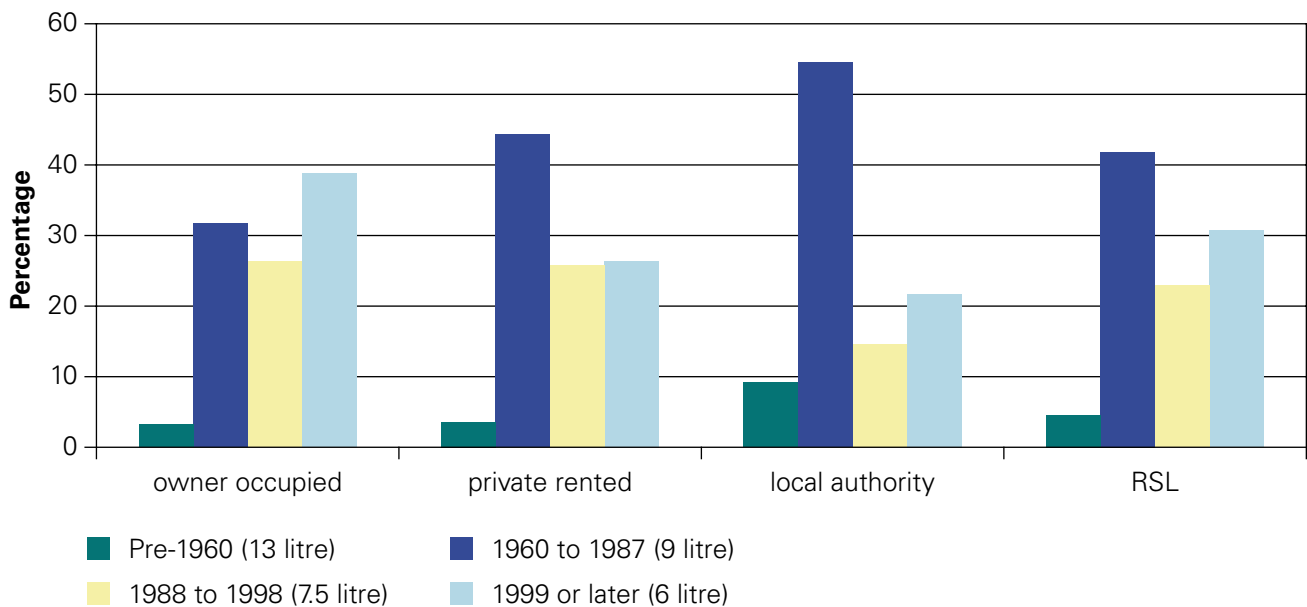
- The energy performance of the social sector was substantially better than the private sector, with the gap widening. However, even within the social sector there was considerable room for further energy efficiency improvements.
- The average home's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions associated with heating, ventilation and lighting requirements were 6.7 tonnes/year. Some 2 million homes emitted less than 3 tonnes/year, whilst 2.8 million homes emitted more than 10 tonnes.
- Around one in ten households living in neighbourhoods with the worst upkeep and behavioural problems said they could trust no-one in their area compared to one in twenty-five of those households living elsewhere.

## Stock profile and amenities

In 2006, there were 22 million homes in England. Some 15 million were owner-occupied, while 2.6 million were privately rented, local authorities and RSLs accounted for 2.1 million and 1.8 million respectively. The stock was split into five age categories: pre-1919, 1919-1944, 1945-1964, 1965-1980 and post-1980, with approximately one fifth of the stock falling into each age category.

The local authority stock was relatively poor compared with all other tenures regarding water consumption arising from the use of older, larger capacity WC cisterns (flushing accounts for around 30% of water consumption in the home). Owner occupied homes were the most likely of the tenures to have smaller volume modern cisterns (Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Age of WC by tenure, 2006**



**Base: all dwelling**

**Source: Communities and Local Government, *English House Condition Survey, 2006***

## Decent Homes

Using the original definition of the decent home standard (which included fitness) there has been continued improvement for the stock as a whole and within each housing sector. Under the updated definition of decent homes, social housing was less likely to be non-decent (29%) than private sector housing (36%).

Private sector vulnerable households (those in receipt of the principle means tested/disability benefits and tax credits) were twice as likely to live in homes with Category 1 hazards compared to social tenants: 26% and 12% respectively.

For the first time a range of ‘treatability’ issues were identified and modelled using the 2006 findings from the survey. The results suggest that, from a total non-decent stock of 7.7 million, nearly 5.4 million homes were ‘straightforward’ to treat.

## Damp and mould growth

There had been some reduction in the proportion of homes with damp since 1996, but around 2.1 million homes (10%) still had damp problems.

Around 140,000 households with infants (aged below 5) and 75,000 households with people aged 75 or more, lived in homes with serious condensation or mould problems.

## Energy measures and performance

For the stock as a whole, energy performance improved over the decade from 1996 with the proportion of homes achieving the most efficient Band A to C ratings increasing from 2% to 7% and the proportion with the lowest Band G rating falling from 9% to 4%.

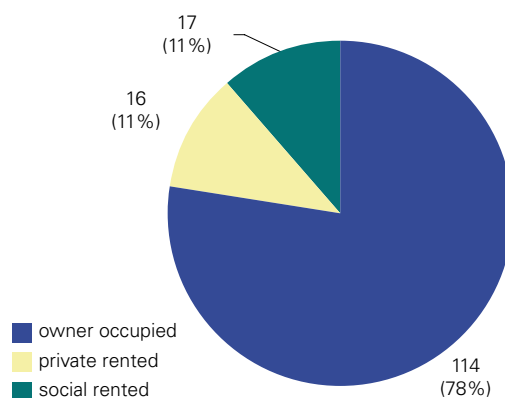
Social housing performed better in terms of energy performance and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions compared to other sectors (see Figure 2). The social sector comprised 18% of all homes and 16% of the population, but accounted for only 11% of the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions associated with heating, ventilation and lighting requirements. Over the decade from 1996, the owner occupied stock made the least progress of all tenures in improving energy efficiency. The private rented sector remained polarised between some of the worst and some of the best housing in terms of energy efficiency; overall it had become as energy efficient as the owner occupied stock.

**Figure 2: Average and total CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, and percentage of homes with low and high emissions by tenure, 2006**

a) average CO<sub>2</sub> by tenure & % of tenure producing low/high emissions



b) total CO<sub>2</sub> (millions tonnes) per year by tenure (and as % of all)



Base: all dwellings

Source: Communities and Local Government, *English House Condition Survey, 2006*

## Neighbourhood problems and disparities in living conditions

Households living in areas of predominantly local authority housing were three times more likely than those living in other areas to reside in a neighbourhood with 'worst' upkeep or behavioural problems.

There was a marked contrast in the relative housing conditions of vulnerable private sector households compared to social tenants, with the former much more likely to live in homes that were non-decent (41% compared to 28%).

## Accessing the EHCS

The 2006 EHCS anonymised public data set is now available free of charge from Communities and Local Government on CD together with the associated 2006 Fuel Poverty variables. The CD contains the 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006 data sets (in SPSS format) with full user documentation plus key variables from 1996 and 2001 to support time series analysis. You can request your free copy by sending your contact details to [ehcs@communities.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:ehcs@communities.gsi.gov.uk).

In order to maximise accessibility to the EHCS data the data sets are also being deposited with the **UK Data Archive**. All the above data sets should be available through them from early 2009 using the web link <http://www.esds.ac.uk/search/searchStart.asp>. The anonymised public data sets will allow users to undertake their own analysis at national and regional level.

Communities and Local Government wishes to maximise accessibility to these important housing data sets while still strictly adhering to the undertakings it gives to all respondents to the survey that their information will be treated in confidence. Communities and Local Government are therefore exploring the option of depositing the EHCS and SEH data sets together with small area geographic identifiers with the **Virtual Microdata Laboratory** which is managed by the Office for National Statistics. This opens up the possibility for approved researchers to access these data under supervised conditions to undertake a wider range of analysis and data matching than is possible from anonymised data sets. The ONS closely supervise access to, and outputs from, any data sets held at the VML to prevent any disclosure of information. Discussions are still underway with the VML but it is hoped the EHCS and SEH data sets will both be deposited by spring 2009.

## Future EHCS publications

Work has now started on analysing data from the 2007/08 survey. The provisional timetable for the remaining EHCS publications is given below.

<b>Publication</b>	<b>Expected date</b>
English House Condition Survey – 2007 Headline Report	January 2009
English House Condition Survey – 2007 Annual Report	Summer 2009

# Survey of English Housing

Survey of  
English  
Housing

*Housing in England 2006/07* was published in September 2008. This report is based principally on data from the Survey of English Housing (SEH). It follows on from the *2006/07 Survey of English Housing Preliminary Results* published in December 2007, providing more detailed analysis and a wider range of topics.

The report is based on information from the 17,849 households interviewed for the Survey of English Housing in the year beginning April 2006. It also contains some analysis of housing-related data from the Labour Force Survey and the Family Resources Survey.

## Key Findings

- Owner occupation continues to be the most common **housing tenure** in England. In 2007 there were 14.7 million (70%) owner-occupier households, 3.8 million (18%) social renting and 2.7 million (13%) privately renting.
- **Renting** was more prevalent in London than in any other region of England: 24% of London households were social renters, 20% were private renters, whilst 56% were owner occupier households.
- The proportion of younger householders (aged 25-29) in **private rented accommodation** has doubled, from 19% in 1993 to 36% in 2007.
- Nearly half of recent **first-time buyers** had previously been renting privately, and three quarters were under 35 years of age.
- The number of **second homes** abroad had more than doubled over the past ten years, from 115,000 in 1996/97 to 248,000 in 2006/07. Over the same period the number of second homes in England had risen by about 20% to 241,000.

## Overcrowding

Table 1 shows the number of overcrowded households by tenure, and the rate of overcrowding, by Government Office Region. These estimates are based on data from the 3 year period April 2004 to March 2007 and so represent the average position over that time period. This method is used due to the small number of overcrowded households in each annual sample.

In England as a whole 2.7% of households lived in overcrowded conditions. Regionally, London had the highest rates of overcrowding, both overall (6.6%) and by tenure. The lowest rate of overcrowding (1.5%) was found in the South West.

**Table 1: Overcrowding<sup>1</sup> by region and tenure, England, 2004/05 to 2006/07 (3 year average)**

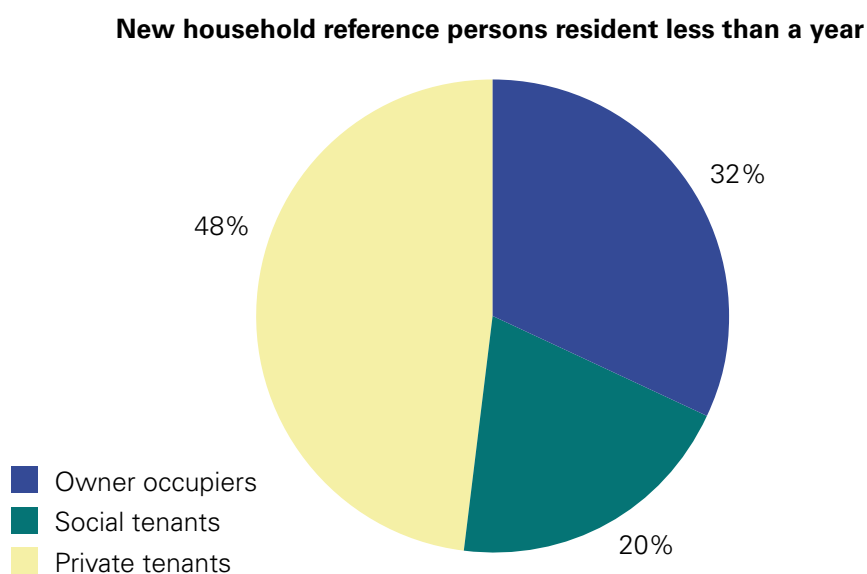
Government Office Region	tenure				all tenures	tenure			
	owner occupiers	social renters	private renters			owner occupiers	social renters	private renters	
	<i>'000 households</i>					<i>percentages</i>			
North East	7	9	3	19	0.9	3.4	3.0	1.7	
North West	33	19	12	64	1.6	3.6	4.5	2.3	
Yorkshire & the Humber	19	11	7	37	1.3	2.8	3.1	1.8	
<b>North</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>2.0</b>	
East Midlands	11	13	6	29	0.8	4.1	3.4	1.6	
West Midlands	29	21	10	61	1.9	4.5	4.9	2.8	
<b>Midlands</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>2.3</b>	
East	19	15	8	42	1.1	4.1	3.3	1.8	
London	47	98	59	203	2.7	12.2	10.5	6.6	
South East	23	31	12	66	0.9	6.6	2.8	2.0	
South West	12	12	9	33	0.8	4.2	3.0	1.5	
<b>South</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>344</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>8.1</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>3.2</b>	
<b>England</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>554</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>2.7</b>	

Source: Communities and Local Government, *Survey of English Housing*  
<sup>1</sup> Overcrowded i.e. one or more bedrooms *below* the "bedroom standard"

## New households

Eighteen per cent of all those who had moved during the 12 months prior to being interviewed had formed new households. Figure 3 shows that 48% of new households moved into the private rented sector, 32% became owner-occupiers (mostly mortgagors) and 20% moved into the social sector.

**Figure 3: Current tenure of new households, England, 2006/07**



Source: Communities and Local Government, *Survey of English Housing*

The formation of new households has declined across all age groups since the survey began in 1993/94. The overall decline in the level of new household formation may be due to demographic changes, such as the ageing population. The number of new households headed by someone under the age of 25 declined from 255,000 in 1993/94 to 187,000 in 2006/07.

## Social renters

A feature of the social rented sector over recent years has been the transfer of housing stock from local authorities to housing associations. Where this has happened (housing association) tenants often still think of themselves as ‘council tenants’ and respond accordingly to interview questions. Consequently, although the overall figures for the social sector may be considered robust, the split between LA and HA has tended to underestimate the number of HA tenants. Because of this ongoing problem, many tables in the report only provide the overall social sector figures. The split has been retained where there is a significant difference between the characteristics of the two groups.

**Table 2: Household type and economic activity of renters, England, 2006/07**

	social renters	private renters
<b>Household type</b>		<i>percentages</i>
Couple, no dependent children	17	28
Couple with dependent children	15	16
Lone parent with dependent children	17	9
Other multi-person household	8	14
One adult aged under 60	18	25
One adult aged 60 or over	25	8
Total	100	100
<b>Economic activity of HRP</b>		
Working full-time	22	59
Working part-time	9	9
Unemployed	7	4
Retired	32	10
Permanently sick or disabled	15	5
Other economically inactive	15	12
Total	100	100
<b>Average gross weekly income of household reference person (and partner, if any)</b>	<b>234</b>	<i>£ per week</i> <b>464</b>
<b>Base (number of households)</b>	<b>3,997</b>	<i>thousands</i> <b>2,556</b>
<b>Source: Communities and Local Government, <i>Survey of English Housing</i></b>		

Table 2 compares the household type and economic activity of social and private renters in 2006/07. There was a higher proportion of couples with no dependent children in the private rented sector than in the social sector, 28% compared to 17%. The social sector however contained a much higher proportion of single adults aged 60 plus than the private rented sector, 25% compared to 8%.

Whilst 59% of private renters were working full-time, only 22% of social renters were in full-time work. The average gross weekly income of the household reference person (and partner, if any) in the private rented sector was almost double that of social renters, £464 compared to £234, in 2006/07.

## Errata

Three errors have been found in the recently published report *Housing in England 2006/07*. These will be corrected in the web version but users who have hard copies should note the following:

*Table 1.12: Gross annual income of HRP (and partner) by tenure* – the mean and median values are the 05/06 values. All counts and percentages in the main part of the table are correct.

*Table 1.13: Tenure by ethnic group of HRP* – contains the 2005/06 data.

*Chart 7.3: Overall satisfactions with landlord* – the labels in the legend have been reversed i.e. the ‘very satisfied’ category has been labelled ‘very dissatisfied’.

We are currently investigating the implications of a problem with the definition of the tenancy type variable for private rented tenancy groups. This has affected some values in Tables 5.2 (web table S519) and 5.18 (web table S556), and in web tables S512 and S541. Users who wish to use these tables are advised to contact us via the contact details provided at the end of this Bulletin.

We apologise for these errors.

## LFS data

ONS issued revised LFS datasets for each year from 1997 onwards in late August 2008. At that stage the report was already with the typesetters and it was not possible to revise all the LFS tables it contained without substantially delaying the publication. The main tenure trend table, Table 1.1, was revised but all other LFS tables are based on the previously issued datasets. There will therefore be some small inconsistencies in table totals.

## Future SEH publications

Work has now started on analysing data from the 2007/08 survey. The provisional timetable for the remaining SEH publications is given below.

<b>Publication</b>	<b>Expected date</b>
SEH Preliminary Results 2007/08	January 2009
Housing in England 2007/08	September 2009
2005/06 SEH dataset available from UK Data Archive	January 2009
2006/07 SEH dataset available at UK Data Archive	February 2009
2007/08 SEH dataset deposited at UK Data Archive	September 2009

# English Housing Survey



## Successful launch

The new English Housing Survey (EHS) was successfully launched in April 2008 and brings together the key features of the Survey of English Housing and the English House Condition Survey.

The survey also forms part of the wider ONS Integrated Household Survey and is based on an unclustered sample which will deliver greater precision for many survey measures.

Interviews are being conducted with around 17,300 households a year. Response so far this year has been on target at around 60%. All the key topics from the SEH and EHCS have been included although some are not covered in as much detail as previously. Other topics will be covered on a rotating basis once every two or three years to reflect emerging policy priorities.

Around 8,000 properties where an interview has been conducted also receive a physical inspection by a professional surveyor to assess the condition and energy efficiency of the home. There have been some teething problems with gaining permission for the surveyor visit and the surveyor appointment booking system is being reviewed for next year. We still however expect to meet the 8,000 target this year. For the first time, data collection for the physical survey has been automated through the use of digital pen technology. Surveyors can now download their surveys to a dedicated web site and receive instant feedback on any missing or conflicting data entries. These can then be reviewed by the surveyor before being submitted to the data base.

Content of the survey for 2009/10 will be largely unchanged. Some additional questions on energy micro-generation units such as wind turbines are being added to the physical survey to improve the evidence available on the extent to which these are being used. Questions on water metering are also being re-introduced. For the household interview a new 'rotating module' will be introduced and discussions are underway with key stakeholders to identify priorities.

First published results from the survey will be available early in 2010. It is expected that the EHS data sets will be also be made available through both the UK Data Archive and the Virtual Micro Data Laboratory.

## Contacts

The Housing Surveys Bulletin will be published regularly giving summaries of findings, updates on progress, outlining methodological issues and setting out plans for analysing and disseminating results. If you would like to be added to our electronic mailing list for the Bulletin, want further information on the surveys or have any comments to make, please contact one of the teams.

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