



**Briefing 16/32 August 2016**

## **English Housing Survey: Key Findings 2014-15**

To: All Chief Executives, Main Contacts and APSE Contacts in England

For information only to Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales

### **Key Issues:**

The purpose of this briefing is to advise APSE members on the key statistics for local authorities from the most recent English Housing Survey. Figures have been taken from:

- The English Housing Survey Headline Report 2014-15 [\[link\]](#)
- The Housing and Well-Being Report 2014 [\[link\]](#)
- The Energy Report 2014 [\[link\]](#)
- The Housing for Older People Report 2014-15 [\[link\]](#)
- The Housing Stock Report 2014-15 [\[link\]](#)
- The Social Rented Sector Report 2014-15 [\[link\]](#)
- The First Time Buyers and Potential Home Owners Report 2014-15 [\[link\]](#)
- The Adaptions and Accessibility Report 2014-15 [\[link\]](#)
- The Smoke Alarms in English Homes Report 2014-15 [\[link\]](#)
- The Private Rented Sector Report 2014-15 [\[link\]](#)

### **1.0 Introduction**

This briefing sets out the key statistics for local authorities from the English Housing Survey reports released on 21 July 2016.

The English Housing Survey is a continuous national survey commissioned by the Department for Communities and Local Government. It collects information about people's housing circumstances and the condition and energy efficiency of housing in England. It has 2 component surveys: a household interview, and a physical inspection of a sub sample of the properties.

Information on the English Housing Survey can be accessed directly by clicking here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/english-housing-survey>

### **2.0 Overview of the social rented sector**

- The private rented sector remains slightly larger than the social rented sector (4.3 million to 3.9 million).
- The quality of social rented stock improved for all households between 2006 and 2014, and the social sector had the lowest proportion of non-decent homes (14%) across all sectors.

### 3.0 Local authority housing stock

- The average life satisfaction score for local authority renters is 7.1 where the average across all types of tenancy is 7.6 (this is likely due to an increased number of people in this sector who are unemployed, long-term sick or carers).
- The proportion of housing stock owned by local authorities has fallen from 17% to 7% from 1996 to 2014.
- Only 9% of local authority stock was built after 1980, compared with 36% of housing association homes; only 1.5% of this was built between 1991-2002 and 0.8% post 2003.
- 8% of local authority renters lived in overcrowded homes (compared with 5% of housing association renters); 54% of local authority renters had the appropriate number of bedrooms (compared to 58% of housing association renters).
- 5% of local authority homes had damp problems, with 0.9% rising damp, 1.5% penetrating damp and 3.9% condensation/mould.

Below is an overview of the types and age of dwellings local authorities have:

<b>Local authority dwelling type, 2014</b>		
Houses	Small terrace	11.6%
	Medium/large terrace	15.5%
	Semi detached	17.7%
	Detached	0.3%
	Bungalow	9.9%
Flats	Converted flat	1.4%
	Purpose built flat, low rise	35.3%
	Purpose built flat, high rise	8.3%
<b>Local authority dwelling age, 2014</b>		
Pre 1919		3.6%
1919-1944		15.8%
1945-1964		39.6%
1965-1980		31.5%
1981-1990		7.1%
1991-2002		1.5%
Post 2003		0.8%

- 92% of local authority renters had at least one working smoke alarm; worryingly, 27% of social renters and 18% of owner occupiers had never tested their smoke alarm.

#### **4.0 Rent and benefits**

- 42% of social sector tenants rented from a local authority (compared to 83% in 1994-15).
- Rents for local authority tenants had a mean of £93 per week (compared to a mean of £102 per week for housing association tenants).
- Housing Benefit was received by 63% of social renters, which is higher than the 59% reported in 2008-09's survey. In 2014-15, this averaged at £80 per week, which is £28 lower than the average amount received by private renters. The average weekly Housing Benefit has increased since 2008-09 by £18 for social renters.
- Social renters have an average length of residence of 11.4 years (compared to 4.0 years in the private sector).
- The number of social renters who expected to buy their current home increased to 52% (with 65% of social renters expecting it would be 5 years or more before they did so). 24% of social renters expected to buy property at some point in the future. Among renters not expecting to buy, 2/3 said affordability was their main barrier to home ownership.

#### **5.0 Energy and energy ratings**

- The mean SAP rating for local authority households is 65.6 (up from 47.6 in 1996)
- Electricity - 69% of all households paid by direct debit, 15% paid by standard credit and 16% paid by prepayment.
- Gas – 62% of all households paid by direct debit, 13% by standard credit and 13% by prepayment.
- Prepayment meters – 50% of social renters had prepayment meters, 46% of lone parents with dependent children and 31% of those in the lowest income quintile.
- 93.2% of local authority households had central heating, 5.9% had storage heaters and 0.9% had fixed room/portable heaters.
- 10.9% of local authority households had standard boilers, 3.8% had back boilers, 9.1% had combination boilers, 12.1% had condensing boilers, 49.9% had condensing-combination boilers and 14.1% had no boilers.
- Approximately 1 in 5 households found it difficult to meet their heating/fuel costs; households with prepayment meters, lone parents, social renters and those with the lowest income were more likely to find it difficult to meet their heating/fuel costs.
- Older people had less energy efficient homes than younger households, and those aged 85 and over had the lowest energy efficiency.
- 30.3% of eligible local authority dwellings would benefit from hot water cylinder insulation, 28.1% would benefit from cavity wall insulation and 15.6% would benefit from loft insulation (all are lower cost EPC recommended measures).

- 79.9% of eligible local authority dwellings would benefit from a storage heater upgrade, 26.1% would benefit from a boiler upgrade and 9.4% would benefit from a hot water cylinder thermostat (all are higher cost EPC recommended measures).

Below is an overview of local authority household energy efficiency rating bands and wall insulation in local authority dwellings:

<b>Local authority energy efficiency rating bands, 2014</b>	
A/B	1.3%
C	41.2%
D	47.8%
E	8.4%
F	0.9%
G	0.4%

<b>Wall insulation in local authority dwellings, 2014</b>		
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Cavity walls with evidence of insulation	853	70.0%
Post-1990 cavity walls with no evidence of insulation	16	1.3%
Cavity with insulation	870	71.3%
Cavity uninsulated	350	28.7%
<b>Ease of installing insulation in cavity walled homes (local authority homes), 2014</b>		
Standard fillable	221	70.5%
Hard to treat cavity	129	29.5%

## 6.0 Accessibility of housing

- 22.7% of local authority households with a long-term disability said they live in unsuitable accommodation.
- 47.0% of local authority households require one or more adaptations to be installed.
- The most common adaptations required from the sample of households needing an adaptation in local authority households were: grab/hand rail inside (36.2%), bath/shower seat or other bathing aids (26.3%), shower to replace bath (24.9%), special toilet set or other aids to use toilet (21.4%) and ramp outside the house/block (21.1%).

Below is an overview of the visitability of local authority households:

<b>Local authority households accessibility, 2014</b>	
The four accessibility features that provide visitability include:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. level access to the entrance,</li> <li>2. a flush threshold,</li> <li>3. sufficiently wide doorsets and circulation space, and</li> <li>4. a toilet at entrance level.</li> </ol>	
<b>Number of visitability features present in local authority households:</b>	
None	23.1%
One	31.9%
Two	20.5%
Three	18.1%
All Four	6.5%
<b>Dwellings could be made fully visitable with:</b>	
Minor works	8.3%
Moderate works	42.1%
Major works	26.6%
Not feasible to make fully visitable	22.9%

## 7.0 Older households

- The majority of older households were owner occupiers (76%), with 62% owned outright (compared to 9% of younger households).
- Older households lived in larger homes than younger households (the opposite was true in 1996), older households were also more likely to be a lone household.
- 38% of older households lived in detached homes or bungalows, 23% in terraced houses and 15% in flats (compared to 16% detached homes or bungalows, 34% terraced houses and 24% flats for younger households respectively).
- Older households were less likely to have moved in the last 3 years (only 9% compared to 36% of younger households).
- Older people had a high level of satisfaction with their households (94% of older households were satisfied, compared to 86% of younger households).

- 97% of older households who under-occupied their homes were satisfied with their accommodation.
- Those over 75 and over with a long-term limiting disability were least likely to state their accommodation was unsuitable for their needs (12%).

## **8.0 APSE Comment**

APSE welcomes the release of the English Housing Survey 2014 and 2014-15 reports and the contribution they make to informing local authorities of their progress against the challenges of improving the standard of social housing, meeting energy efficiency targets and the quality of life of the tenants in their constituencies.

This year's batch of reports highlights several interesting trends:

- The results show the progress made by local authorities on reducing the number of non-decent homes and improving energy efficiency.
- Despite improving energy efficiency in households, a significant portion of social renters (50%) are still using prepayment measures, one of the most expensive energy payment methods (thus they may not be benefitting fully from the energy improvement works).
- The results show how far local authority house building has fallen behind housing associations and other builders since the 1980s.
- Highlights why older people are likely not downsizing to supported accommodation, with high levels of satisfaction reported especially by those under-occupying their homes.
- The average age of first time buyers has increased from 30 to 33, and they also have higher incomes and need more help with funding deposits than was required 20 years ago.

The above all present challenges for local authorities to reinvigorate housebuilding, find ways to move people away from expensive energy payment methods, to encourage older people to move into more appropriately sized accommodation (with support available, should they need it), to provide the means for first time buyers to get their feet on the property ladder and to ensure that those with long-term disabilities are supported with appropriate accommodation (and that any required adaptations are carried out).

As APSE's recent research with the TCPA has demonstrated the on-going lack of council housing is generating significant problems in the housing market. Councils clearly have an important role in both meeting housing needs for social homes for rent as well as acting as a market regulator in driving up standards in the rented sector. The stark decrease in both homes being built by councils and the overall market share of the rented sector supports the APSE and TCPA research findings which suggests the UK would greatly benefit from councils building more and better homes for social rent.

APSE's housing seminar 2016 will explore the condition of homes, progress in delivering effective housing maintenance services and the role of local authorities in housing management and delivery on the 6-7 October at the Leeds Marriott Hotel.

APSE provides a regular Housing, Construction and Building Maintenance advisory group for its members. If you would be interested in attending these meetings, please sign up [here](#) for more information.

Garry Lee  
Research and Coordination Officer