

Housing Surveys Bulletin

Issue Number 4 – January 2009

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.

This bulletin:

- announces the publication of the 2007 English House Condition Survey (EHCS) Headline Report and provides a summary of the results
- announces the publication of the Survey of English Housing (SEH) Preliminary Report 2007–08 and provides some key findings from the report
- provides an update on the progress of the new English Housing Survey (EHS).

English House Condition Survey



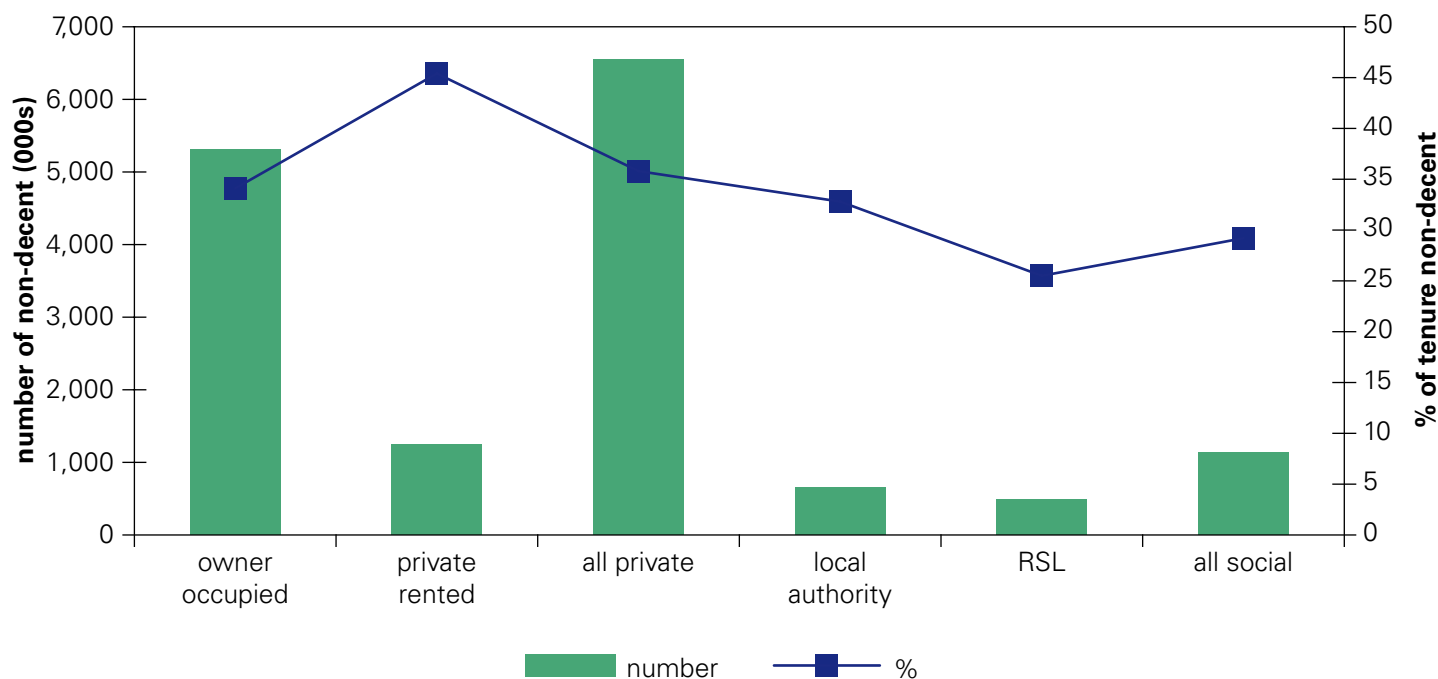
The EHCS 2007 Headline Report is now available. This summary report presents key findings from the 2007 English House Condition Survey and focuses on progress related to key policy areas of housing condition, energy efficiency of the housing stock and quality of the local environment.

Key Findings

Housing condition

- The survey estimates there were 7.7 million non-decent homes in 2007, a little under 35% of the housing stock. The Registered Social Landlord (RSL) stock was least likely to be non-decent (26%) and privately rented accommodation most likely to be non-decent (45%), Figure 1. Overall 1.1 million homes in the social sector were non-decent and social housing was much less likely to be non-decent than privately owned homes (29% and 36% respectively).
- The survey shows no statistically significant change in the number or proportion of the housing stock that was non-decent between 2006 and 2007. Only the private rented sector shows any significant reduction in the proportion of homes that were non-decent (from 47% to 45%).

Figure 1: Number and percentage of non-decent homes by tenure, 2007

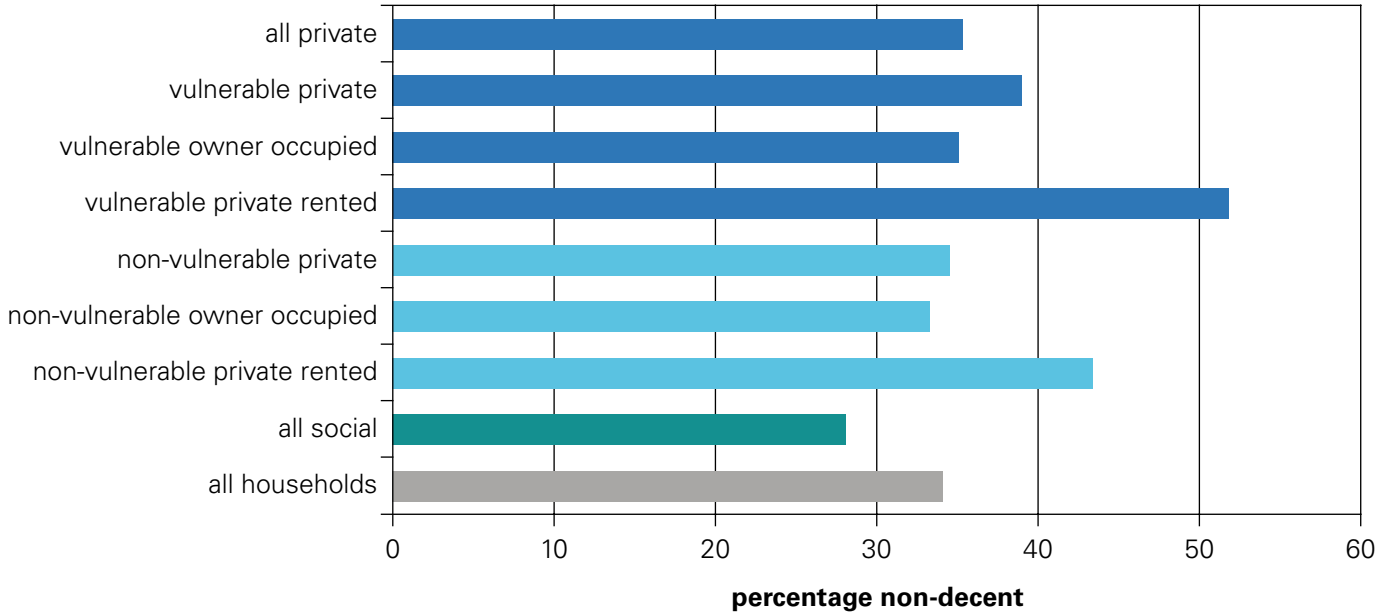


Base: all dwellings

Source: Communities and Local Government, English House Condition Survey

- The most frequent reason homes did not achieve the decent homes standard was the presence of one or more Category 1 hazards under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). Some 4.8 million homes had Category 1 hazards present. Privately owned homes (which account for virtually all housing built before 1919) were almost twice as likely to have Category 1 hazards present compared to social housing (24% compared to 13%).
- Vulnerable households who privately rent their accommodation were more likely to live in non-decent homes compared to vulnerable home owners (52% and 35% respectively), Figure 2. However, from 2006 to 2007 housing conditions improved more for vulnerable households (owners and renters) than for other households living in the private sector.
- Social tenants were less likely to live in non-decent homes in comparison to vulnerable or other households living in the private housing sector.

Figure 2: Percentage of households living in non-decent homes, 2007



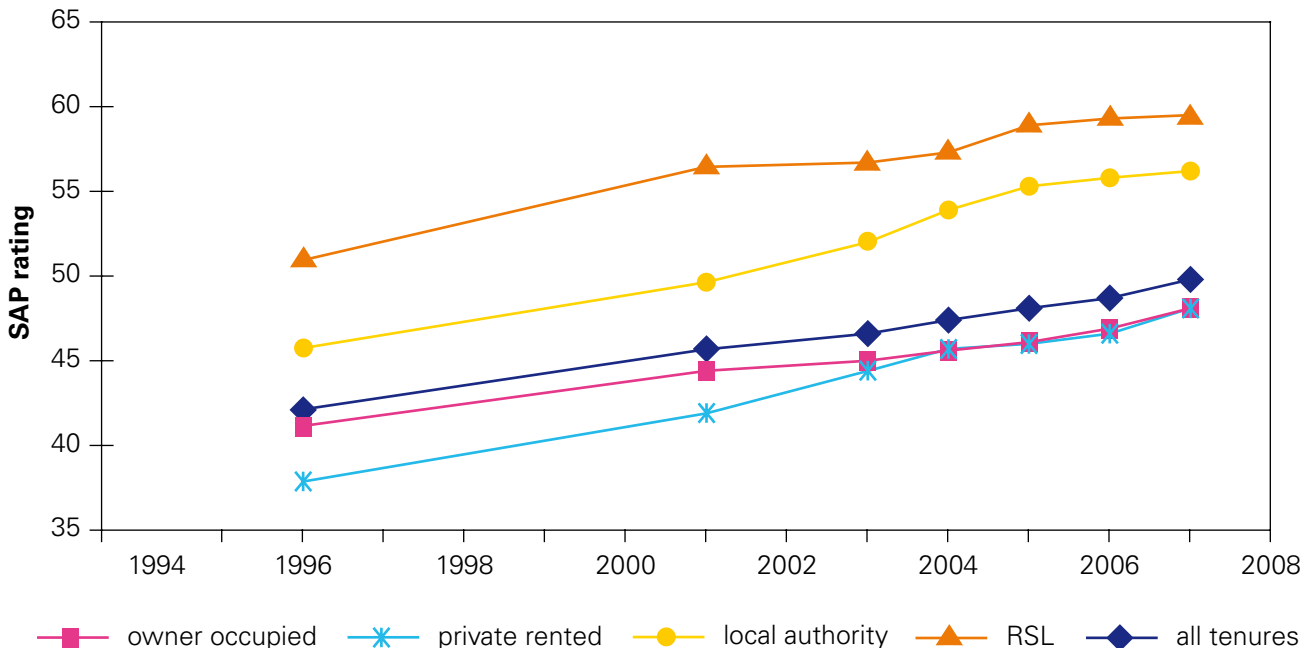
Base: all households

Source: Communities and Local Government, English House Condition Survey

Energy efficiency

- The energy efficiency of homes in England has improved from an average SAP rating of 42 in 1996 to 50 in 2007, Figure 3. Social sector homes are on average much more energy efficient than those in the private sector, and the rate of energy efficiency improvement since 1996 has been greater in the social sector. Over the time period 1996 to 2007, RSL dwellings have consistently had a higher average SAP rating compared to the other three tenures.
- In 1996 owner occupied homes were on average three SAP points better than private rented homes. Private rented homes have caught up with owner occupied homes in terms of average energy efficiency, and in 2007 both tenures had an average SAP rating of 48.

Figure 3: Energy efficiency, average SAP rating by tenure, 1996 – 2007

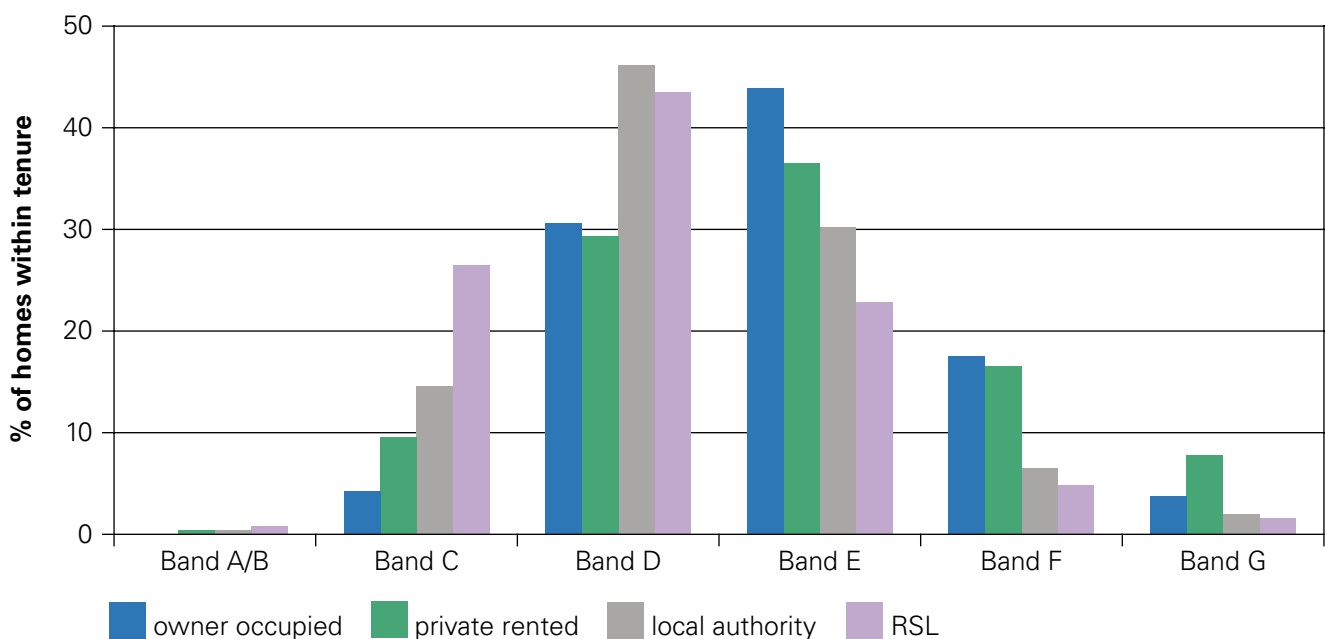


Base: all dwellings

Source: Communities and Local Government, English House Condition Survey

- In 2007, 8% (1.7 million) of homes achieved the highest Energy Efficiency Rating (EER) Bands A to C, 19% (4.3 million) of homes were in the least energy efficient EER Bands F and G, whilst the majority of homes (73%, 16.2 million) fell within the middle EER bands D and E.
- In 2007 the greatest proportion of local authority and RSL dwellings (when split by EER Bands) were categorised as Band D with 46% and 44% respectively, whereas the owner occupied sector and private rented sector had the greatest proportion of homes categorised under the less energy efficient Band E with 44% and 36% respectively, Figure 4. These results emphasise the greater efficiency of social sector homes compared to private sector homes.

Figure 4: Energy Efficiency Rating (EER) Bands by tenure, 2007



Base: all dwellings

Source: Communities and Local Government, English House Condition Survey

Quality of the local environment

- As assessed by the survey, in 2007 just over three million households lived in areas with substantial environmental problems related to upkeep, traffic or utilisation (for example vacant or boarded up houses and shops) in the area surrounding their homes.

EHCS Reporting Details

Work will continue on analysing data from the 2007/08 survey and the 2007 Annual Report is expected to be available in summer 2009 together with an update of the Technical Report. All EHCS information, including results and reports, can be accessed via the EHCS section of the Communities and Local Government website <http://www.communities.gov.uk/ehcs>.

Accessing the EHCS

EHCS anonymised data sets from 2003 to 2006 are available on CD free of charge from CLG together with associated Fuel Poverty variables. The CD includes data sets (in SPSS format), full user documentation and 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.

From spring 2009 the EHCS data sets can also be accessed via the UK Data Archive using the web link <http://www.esds.ac.uk/search/searchStart.asp>.

Survey of English Housing

Survey of
English
Housing

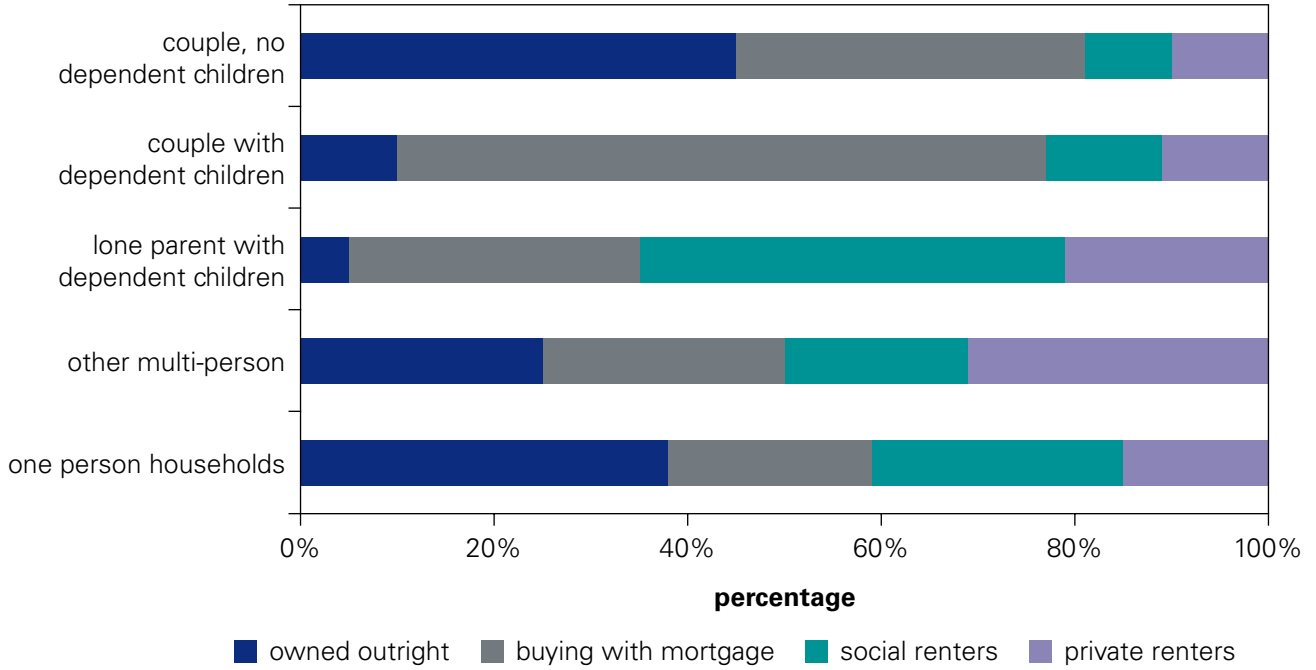
The *Survey of English Housing Preliminary Report: 2007–08* was published in January 2009. It is based principally on data from the Survey of English Housing (SEH) but also uses some data from the Labour Force Survey.

The Preliminary Report provides early findings on key indicators relating to both housing and households – such as trends in tenure; household size and type by tenure; and information on issues such as mortgages and overcrowding. The full report *Housing in England 2007/08*, containing more detailed analysis and a wider range of topics, will be published in autumn 2009.

Key Findings

- **Tenure:** In 2008 there were an estimated 14.6 million owner occupiers in England (68.3% of the total – down from 69.6% in 2007), 3.8 million social renters (17.7% – unchanged) and 3.0 million private renters (13.9% – up from 12.7% in 2007).
- **Household type:** Figure 5 shows the breakdown of household type by tenure in 2008, based on data from the Labour Force Survey. Seventy-six per cent of *couples with dependent children* were owner occupiers. By contrast only 35% of *lone parents with children* were owner occupiers whilst 44% of them were private renters. *One person households* were the most common household type in both the social rented (43%) and private rented (30%) sectors.
- **Household size:** The average household size in 2008 remained unchanged from 2007 at 2.4 persons per household. There was little difference between the tenures.

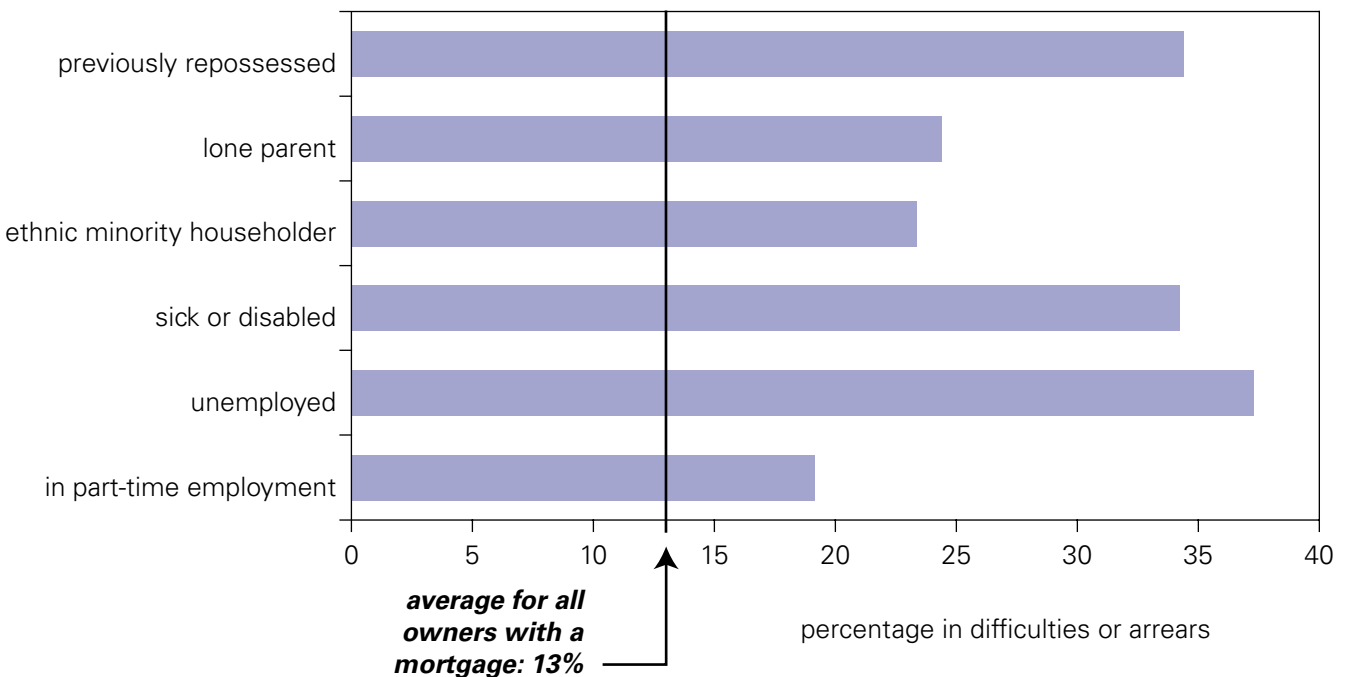
Figure 5: Household type by tenure, England 2008



Source: ONS, Labour Force Survey

- Mortgage type:** Around three quarters of all mortgages held in 2007/08 and taken out since 2001 were repayment mortgages; only 6% were endowment mortgages.
- Mortgage difficulties:** Thirteen per cent of households buying with a mortgage reported either some difficulty in paying the mortgage or that they were in arrears. Over 30% of unemployed households, those with at least one sick or disabled member, and those who had previously been repossessed had some difficulties or arrears, Figure 6.

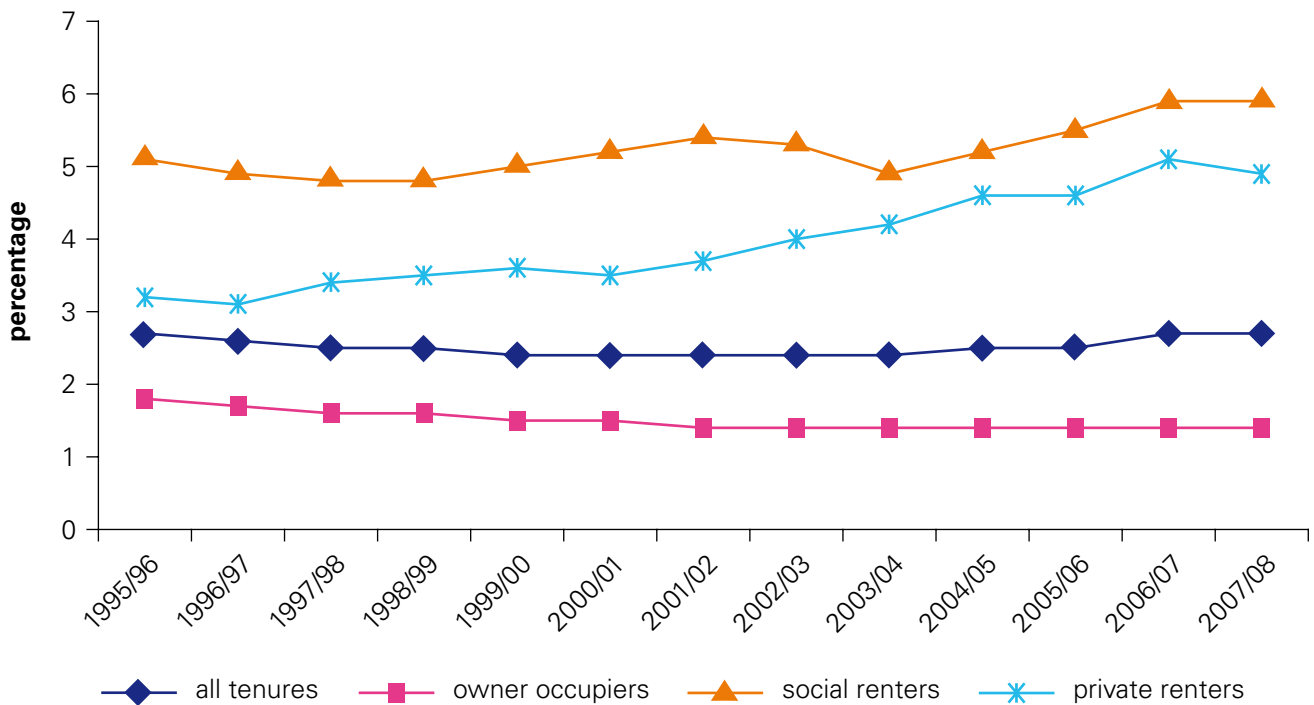
Figure 6: Households buying with mortgage who are in arrears or difficulties, England, 2006/07 to 2007/08



Source: Communities and Local Government, Survey of English Housing

- **Household moves:** Over 2 million households had been resident at their current address for less than one year, though this varied considerably by type of tenure. Forty per cent of private renters had moved during the previous year compared to just 3% of outright owners. Movement within sectors was more common than movement between sectors. Forty seven per cent of all newly-formed households had moved into the private rented sector, 34% into owner occupation and 20% into the social rented sector.
- **Overcrowding:** There were around 565,000 overcrowded households in England – about 2.7% of all households. By tenure, the overcrowding rate was highest in the social rented sector, Figure 7. By region, London not only had the highest overall rate of overcrowding (6.8%) – but also the highest regional rates for individual tenures: 3% of owner occupiers; 12.7% of social renters and 9.8% of private renters.

Figure 7: Trend in overcrowding rates by tenure, England, 1995/96 to 2007/08 (three year moving average)



Source: Communities and Local Government, Survey of English Housing

SEH Reporting Details

The main annual report, *Housing in England 2007–08*, giving more detailed findings and analysis from the 2007–08 Survey of English Housing, will be published in autumn 2009.

From its launch in 1993/94 to its final year in 2007–08, the Survey of English Housing ran continuously for 15 years. Most of the annual datasets are already deposited with the UK Data Archive – and we expect the final dataset to be deposited by the end of September 2009. But in an attempt to provide a more convenient research tool we are currently exploring the feasibility of creating a single dataset, SEH15, comprising all key household variables that were asked as part of the SEH in all (or at least most) of the 15 years. So if a researcher required a time series showing, for instance, the shift in household composition in the social rented sector over the 15 years, this would be much easier to achieve using the SEH15 dataset than by having to run a separate tabulation in each of 15 different annual household datasets.

If we decide to go ahead with the creation of SEH15 it will not be without its challenges – largely because in every survey year there were some changes in the composition of the SEH compared to the previous year. However, it may be possible to create an SEH15 dataset if it is limited to the key variables that appeared in the SEH for most of its 15-year run. Our aim is to attempt to create an initial version of the SEH15 dataset by autumn 2009.

All SEH information, including results and reports, can be accessed via the SEH section of the Communities and Local Government website: www.communities.gov.uk/seh.

English Housing Survey



In April 2008 the EHCS and the SEH were merged to create the English Housing Survey (EHS). Data collection is underway through the ONS Integrated Household Survey (IHS) using an unclustered sample. The survey is designed to deliver results to at least the same level of precision as the previous two surveys.

Fieldwork for 2008/09 is progressing well and first results from the survey will be available early in 2010. Interviews will be conducted with around 17,000 households with around 8,000 properties also receiving a follow up physical inspection to assess the condition and energy efficiency.

Some limited changes are being made to the content of the survey for 2009/10. 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 set of rotating questions are being introduced, covering mortgage and rent arrears, succession tenancies, repossessions, mortgage insurance and reasons for tenancy ending.

We will also be starting work shortly on planning the Private Landlord Survey which is expected to go into the field in autumn 2009.

An EHS web page has been launched to keep users up to date with progress <http://www.communities.gov.uk/english housingsurvey>. This contains a Q&A section which provides more detailed information on the transition, and the background and reasons for the merger. The web pages for all three housing surveys can be accessed via: www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housingresearch/housingsurveys/.

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.

EHCS contact details	SEH contact details	EHS contact details
e-mail: ehcs@communities.gov.uk	e-mail: seh@communities.gov.uk	e-mail: ehs@communities.gov.uk
post: EHCS Project Team Communities and Local Government 2/A2 Eland House Bressenden Place London SW1E 5DU	post: SEH Project Team Communities and Local Government 2/A2 Eland House Bressenden Place London SW1E 5DU	post: EHS Project Team Communities and Local Government 2/A2 Eland House Bressenden Place London SW1E 5DU

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