

Who is allocated a social home? 2024/25

Briefing

May 2026

Background

This briefing draws on government lettings data to create a picture of who currently gets access to social housing in England.

We provide a summary of how social homes are allocated in the appendix.

Summary

Looking across the households who accessed a social letting in the year 2024/25, we can see that:

- Nearly 44% are working-age single people.
- Just under 28% are families with children (either single or dual parent).
- Just over a third have come from other social housing.
- More than 28% were statutorily homeless prior to receiving their social letting.
- More than 40% are either in or actively seeking work.
- Nearly 60% are in receipt of either Housing Benefit or the housing element of Universal Credit.
- Nearly 89% are of UK national identity.
- Just over 11% include somebody with a disability or access-related housing need.

Data

New lettings in social housing are recorded through the CORE (continuous recording) system in England. When a social housing provider makes a letting, the details are recorded and submitted to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), which then publishes aggregated data. The data in this briefing was accessed via the [published tables](#) relating to 2024-25.

Household composition

Household type	Number	%
Single person (up to 65)	115,454	43.9%
Single person with children	53,469	20.3%
Couple with children	19,744	7.5%
Couple with no children	7,769	3.0%
Older single person or couple	31,256	11.9%
Other household types	15,736	6.0%
Prefers not to say	19,512	7.4%
Total	262,940	100%

The largest group of households getting access to social housing are those consisting of single people below retirement age. Nearly 44% of households getting a letting fell into this category. Families with children accounted for 27.8% of the total, the second largest group (split out in the table above into couples and single parents).

Previous situation

Housing situation	Number	%
General Needs social tenancy	73,183	27.8%
Supported housing	18,628	7.1%
Owner occupation (private or shared ownership)	3,513	1.3%
Private sector tenancy	37,182	14.1%
Living with family / friends	43,414	16.5%
Temporary accommodation	39,057	14.9%
Rough sleeping	4,759	1.8%
Other	43,211	16.4%
Total	262,947	100.0%

Just over a third of households (34.9%) had come from other social housing – either general needs or supported housing. Meanwhile 16.7% had come from explicitly homeless situations, either temporary accommodation or rough sleeping. However, it is notable from the next set of figures that this does not account for everyone experiencing homelessness; some people will have come straight from other tenures through the homelessness system.

Homelessness

Homelessness status	Number	%
Statutorily homeless	74,521	28.3%
Not statutorily homeless	188,421	71.7%
Total	262,942	100%

As noted above, although 16.7% of households had come from explicitly homeless situations, the categories in the “Previous situation” question mask the true extent of homelessness amongst these households; here we can see that actually 28.3% of them had come to social housing through the statutory homelessness route.

Economic status

Status	Number	%
Full time work (30 hours or more)	42,887	16.3%
Part time work (less than 30 hours)	31,800	12.1%
Jobseeker	33,557	12.8%
Retired	34,089	13.0%
Not seeking work	58,114	22.1%
Unable to work because of long-term sickness or disability	51,810	19.7%
Other	10,686	4.1%
Total	262,943	100.0%

This table shows that more than 40% of these households were either in work (28.4%) or actively seeking work (12.8%). Another third (32.7%) were either retired or unable to work for health or disability reasons.

Housing Support

Claiming	Number	%
Housing Benefit	48,778	18.6%
Universal Credit housing element	107,539	40.9%
No housing related benefits	31,906	12.1%

Don't know	74,719	28.4%
Total	262,942	100.0%

Nearly 60% of these households are reported as being in receipt of either Housing Benefit or the housing element of Universal Credit; however the true figure is likely to be higher given the figure of 28.4% being reported as “don’t know”.

National Identity

Identity	Number	%
UK national	233,198	88.7%
EEA countries	9,830	3.7%
All other countries	19,916	7.6%
Total	262,944	100.0%

New lettings mostly go to UK nationals, nearly 89% in this time period.

Disability or access related housing needs

Disability	Number	%
Yes	29,745	11.3%
No	185,276	70.5%
Don't know	47,918	18.2%
Total	262,939	100.0%

While 11.3% of these households are known to include somebody with a disability or access related housing needs, the true figure is likely to be higher given the 18% reported as “don’t know”.

Reason for loss of accommodation

Reason	Number	%
Asked to leave by family or friends	21,108	8.0%
Could no longer afford rent or mortgage	3,471	1.3%
Death of household member in last settled accommodation	1,983	0.8%
Decanted from another property owned by this landlord	3,340	1.3%
Discharged from long stay hospital or similar institution	1,223	0.5%
Discharged from prison	1,621	0.6%
Domestic abuse - other	11,712	4.5%
Domestic abuse - previous joint tenancy with partner	3,683	1.4%
Don't Know	44,541	16.9%
End of social or private sector tenancy - evicted due to anti-social behaviour (ASB)	437	0.2%
End of social or private sector tenancy - evicted due to rent arrears	800	0.3%
End of social or private sector tenancy - evicted for any other reason	2,397	0.9%
End of social or private sector tenancy - no fault	23,680	9.0%
Hate crime	462	0.2%
Left home country as refugee	4,696	1.8%
Loss of tied accommodation	1,291	0.5%
Other	10,007	3.8%
Other problems with neighbours	4,959	1.9%
Property unsuitable because of ill health or disability	22,703	8.6%
Property unsuitable because of overcrowding	20,751	7.9%
Property unsuitable because of poor condition	5,581	2.1%
Racial harassment	138	0.1%
Relationship breakdown (non-violent) with partner	10,152	3.9%
Repossession	633	0.2%
Tenant prefers not to say	14,236	5.4%
To move nearer to family, friends or school	7,291	2.8%
To move nearer work	955	0.4%
To move to accommodation with support	12,232	4.7%
To move to independent accommodation	22,792	8.7%
Under occupation (no incentive)	2,394	0.9%
Under occupation (offered incentive to downsize)	1,674	0.6%
Total	262,943	100.0%

Appendix: How social homes are allocated

Social housing is allocated according to a national legal framework that is administered at a local level. Allocations are largely determined by local authorities; housing associations work in partnership with them by providing some of their homes for local authorities to nominate new tenants to.

Eligibility

The allocations system is governed by Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996 and the associated [statutory guidance](#). Every local authority must have a published allocation scheme which sets out who is eligible, how applicants are prioritised and how homes will be offered. Many local authorities will choose to have a local connection requirement.

As a rule, those people who are subject to Immigration Control are not eligible.

Prioritisation and reasonable preference

Local authorities must prioritise those people who are assessed as having a “reasonable preference” which includes people who: are homeless or at risk of homelessness; are overcrowded or living in unsuitable accommodation; have medical or welfare needs; or need to move to avoid hardship.

Banding, points systems and choice based lettings

Many local authorities will use a banding or points-based system to rank applicants on the waiting list. Those households with greater priority will be placed into higher bands. These are typically based on need rather than simply time spent waiting. As such those with lower levels of need will often wait for far longer periods of time.

The most common system used for allocating social homes is choice-based letting where homes available to let are advertised to applicants who can then bid on available homes. The higher up a household is in a banding system, or the more points they have been awarded, the more likely they are to be successful.

A significant number of homes are also allocated via direct lets where households, typically with a high level of or a particular need, will be directly allocated a home.

Housing associations

Housing associations own and manage the majority of social homes, and work with local authorities to help meet housing need by making their homes available via the local authority’s allocation framework. This is typically governed by a signed nominations agreement.