

## PEOPLE, COMMUNITIES AND PLACES

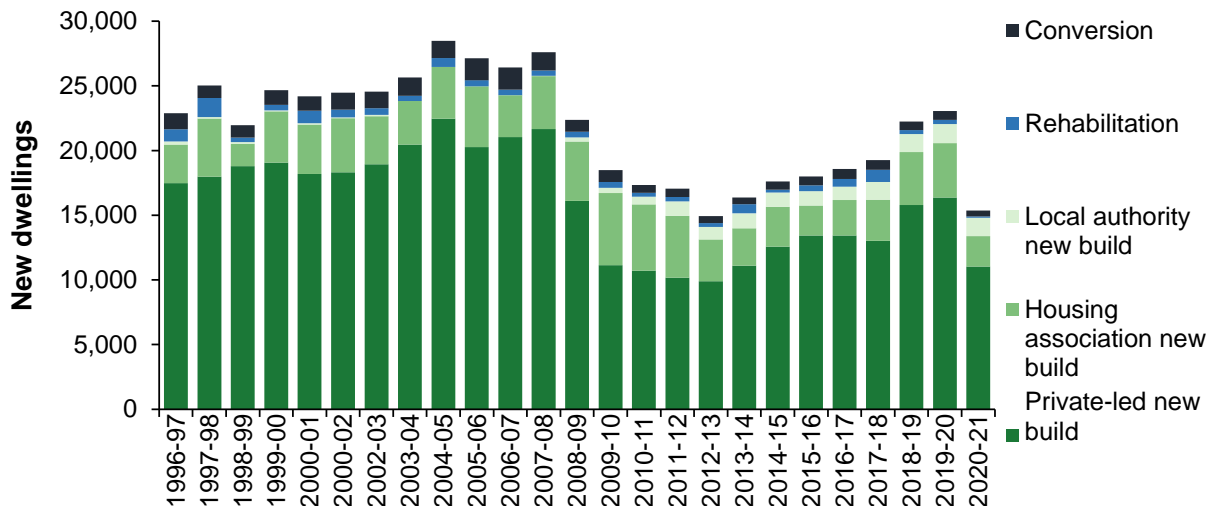
# Housing Statistics for Scotland 2020 and 2021: Key Trends Summary

This is an annual compendium publication which brings together newly collected figures from local authorities on council housing stock and housing management with previously published figures on new housebuilding and affordable housing supply. It also includes figures from other sources, such as housing association stock levels from the Scottish Housing Regulator, with the aim of producing a comprehensive summary of housing statistics in Scotland.

This publication presents annual statistics up to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 on total new housing supply in Scotland across all sectors, along with information on various elements of local authority housing such as stock, lettings, evictions and housing lists, as well as latest stock by tenure estimates to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020.

This release incorporates figures covering the latest two years of annual figures since the previous 2019 key trends publication, with the 2020 and 2021 publications having been delayed due to the impacts of COVID-19 on data provision and staff resourcing. Note that the figures presented for the year 2020-21 will reflect impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic period, where these have impacted on levels of housing supply and various aspects of local authority housing across this period.

**Chart 1:** Total supply of new housing in Scotland decreased by 33% in 2020-21 due to the impact of Covid-19 construction lockdown measures between mid March and late June 2020



More detailed background Excel tables are available on the [Housing Statistics webpages](#), along with [information on data quality and sources used](#). A separate summary of the latest quarterly data on new housebuilding and affordable housing is available in the [Housing Statistics for Scotland Quarterly Update March 2022](#).

## Key Findings

### Total Housing Supply (new build, rehabilitations and net conversions)

- **New housing dwellings from conversions in 2020-21:** Newly collected figures from local authorities show that there were 452 all-sector net new housing dwellings from conversions in 2020-21, a decrease of 223 homes (33%) on the 675 net new dwellings in 2019-20, with levels of conversions activity in 2020-21 being affected by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Total new housing supply in 2020-21:** Total new housing supply in 2020-21 was 15,360 homes, based on combining the newly collected figures on net conversions with previously published figures on all-sector new housebuilding completions and affordable housing supply rehabilitations. This is a decrease of 7,687 homes (33%) on the 23,047 homes in 2019-20, and is the first annual decrease in total new housing supply since 2012-13, reflecting the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic across different types of housing supply activity.
- **As reported on in previous quarterly housing statistics releases:** The financial year 2020-21 also saw decreases in completions for housing association new builds by 1,840 homes (44%), private-led new builds by 5,344 homes (33%), local authority new builds by 57 homes (4%), and refurbishments by 223 homes (67%). However the more recent 12 month period to June 2021 has seen an increase of 1,751 homes (10%) in all-sector new housebuilding completions compared with the previous year.

### Stock by tenure

- **Stock by tenure:** As at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020, there were an estimated 2.6 million dwellings in Scotland, with an estimated 58% of dwellings being owner occupied, 4% being vacant or second homes, 15% being private rented or where the household is living rent free, and 23% being social rented properties. These estimates are based on combining together a range of available data for the year 2020 on total dwellings, vacant dwellings and social housing stock, along with survey estimates of the proportions of private rented and owner occupier households.

### Local Authority Housing (based on newly collected figures from local authorities, although some associated trends have previously been reported on through separate Scottish Housing Regulator COVID-19 reporting)

- **Local authority housing stock:** As at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 there were a total of 318,369 local authority dwellings, an increase of 1,461 (0.5%) on the 316,908 dwellings in 2020, and the third consecutive annual increase in local authority stock since 2018. Separate figures from the Scottish Housing Regulator show

that housing association stock increased by 1,539 (0.5%) to 292,951 dwellings over the year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021, which results in total social sector housing stock of 611,320 dwellings as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021, compared to 608,320 dwellings in the previous year.

- **Vacant stock:** As at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021, local authorities reported 9,813 units of vacant stock, up by 1,482 units (18%) on the 8,331 units in the previous year, with some of this increase likely to have been due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. There were increases in vacant normal letting stock (by 883, or 26%, from 3,454 to 4,337), vacant units awaiting demolition (by 245 units, or 12%, from 2,069 to 2,314), vacant units awaiting modernisation (by 369, or 25%, from 1,499 to 1,868), and vacant stock used as temporary accommodation for homeless (by 5 units, or 1%, from 780 to 785), whilst vacant low demand stock decreased by 20 units or 4%, from 529 to 509.
- **Lettings:** During 2020-21 there were 19,630 permanent local authority lettings made, a decrease of 6,376 lets (25%) compared to the previous year, with the total number of lets made likely to have been impacted on by COVID-19 restrictions. Of all the local authority lettings made in 2020-21, 48% were to homeless households, a higher proportion than in 2019-20 (42%). Correspondingly, 29% of lets made in 2020-21 were to housing waiting list households, a lower proportion than in 2019-20 (34%).
- **Evictions:** There were 32 local authority tenancy terminations (evictions and abandonments) in 2020-21, a decrease from the 1,151 terminations in 2019-20 due to restrictions on evictions brought in due to COVID-19 legislation. The majority (75% or 24) of these terminations were due to rent arrears as opposed to antisocial behaviour or other reasons, although this percentage is lower than in 2019-20 (97% or 1,222).
- **Housing lists:** At 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021, 178,260 applications were recorded on local authority or common housing register housing lists, an 8% increase on the 164,946 applications in 2020, with the figure in the latest year likely to have been impacted on by the COVID-19 pandemic, given the reduction in the overall number of local authority lets during 2020-21 due to COVID-19.

### **Local Authority Housing Assistance (based on newly collected figures from local authorities)**

- **Houses in multiple occupation:** As at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 there were a total of 14,862 licences in force, of which over 9 in 10 are accounted for by just six local authorities – Aberdeen City, Dundee City, City of Edinburgh, Fife, Glasgow City, and Stirling.
- **Scheme of assistance:** In 2020-21, 4,516 scheme of assistance grants were paid to private home owners, a 42% decrease (or 3,207 fewer grants) than 2019-20. Scheme of Assistance grants totalled £18.5 million, which is around £8 million less than in 2019-20. The majority of these were for disabled adaptations, 3,092 grants, which is 40% less than the 2019-20 figure of 5,132. Disabled adaptation grants in 2020-21 totalled £13.5 million, which is a decrease on the 2019-20 figure of £20.6 million.

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## New Housing Supply

15,360 new houses were built, refurbished or converted in 2020-21, 7,687 homes (33%) fewer than in 2019-20. This is the first annual fall since 2012-13, and is the lowest figure recorded since 2012-13, reflecting the impact of COVID-19 restrictions on housebuilding. Before the pandemic, new housing supply had reached its highest point since the financial crisis in 2008, with 23,047 new homes built, refurbished, or converted in 2019-20. This was, however, 16% below the 27,594 new supply in 2007-08.

New housing supply comprises the following elements:

- **new house building:** houses completed by or for housing associations, local authorities or private developers for market sale, below market rent or low cost home ownership;
- **rehabilitation:** houses acquired by housing associations and refurbished either for rent or low cost home ownership. Refurbishment of private dwellings funded wholly or partly through the Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP); and
- **conversion:** net new dwellings created by conversion from non-housing to housing use or by alterations to existing dwellings in all tenures.

Note that this measure of new housing supply doesn't take into account any dwellings removed from the housing stock through demolitions. Annual figures on demolitions are published in the [Conversions and Demolitions Excel webtables](#). However these demolitions figures are not comprehensive and we advise that they should be considered as a minimum level of demolition activity in Scotland. This is due to local authorities differing in their ability to provide information on demolitions across tenures other than for local authority housing stock.

The total supply of new housing decreased by 7,687 homes (33%) between 2019-20 and 2020-21.

As reported on in previous quarterly housing statistics releases, there were 2,364 housing association new build completions in 2020-21, a decrease of 1,840 homes or 44% on the previous year. Local authority new build completions totalled 1,411 homes, a decrease of 57 homes (4%) compared with 2019-20.

A total of 11,023 homes were built by the private sector in 2020-21, a decrease of 5,344 homes (33%) from the 16,367 homes built in 2019-20.

The number of rehabilitations decreased from 333 in 2019-20 to 110 in 2020-21, and the net number of buildings converted to housing use decreased by 223 homes from 675 to 452 See Table 1 below and Chart 1 (page1).

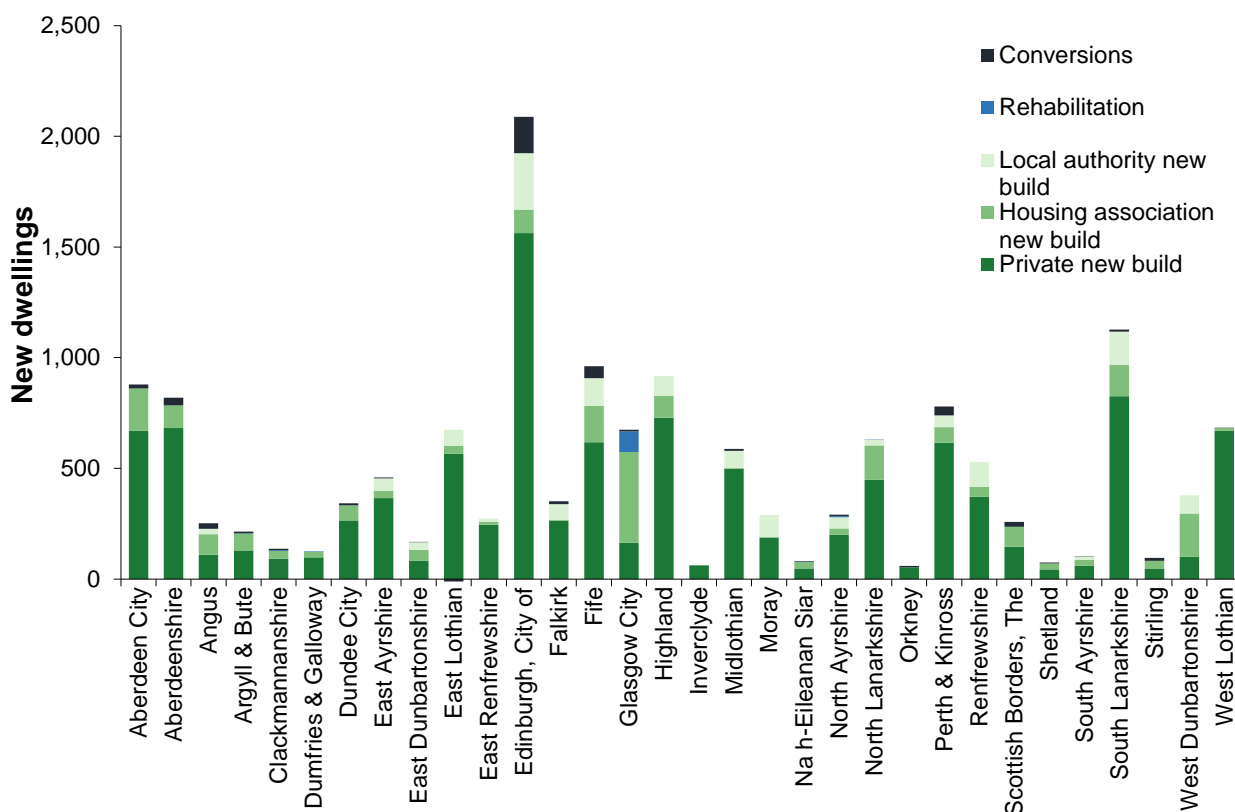
**Table 1:** Components of new housing supply in Scotland

	Private new build	Housing association new build	Local authority new build	Rehabilitation	Net conversion	Total housing supply
1996-97	17,492	2,963	241	936	1,244	22,876
1997-98	17,984	4,489	114	1,478	958	25,023
1998-99	18,784	1,753	120	344	958	21,959
1999-00	19,074	3,964	69	413	1,151	24,671
2000-01	18,195	3,804	112	971	1,103	24,185
2001-02	18,309	4,197	65	597	1,311	24,479
2002-03	18,938	3,715	94	514	1,305	24,566
2003-04	20,456	3,368	0	410	1,409	25,643
2004-05	22,449	4,024	0	677	1,336	28,486
2005-06	20,260	4,698	0	469	1,695	27,122
2006-07	21,043	3,231	6	437	1,702	26,419
2007-08	21,663	4,097	28	389	1,417	27,594
2008-09	16,111	4,577	336	427	923	22,374
2009-10	11,139	5,576	413	442	920	18,490
2010-11	10,713	5,111	614	297	591	17,326
2011-12	10,178	4,776	1,114	338	644	17,050
2012-13	9,892	3,244	963	291	550	14,940
2013-14	11,088	2,911	1,140	711	509	16,359
2014-15	12,565	3,064	1,116	224	644	17,613
2015-16	13,433	2,320	1,104	457	684	17,998
2016-17	13,424	2,754	1,018	599	791	18,586
2017-18	13,033	3,170	1,370	946	739	19,258
2018-19	15,789	4,086	1,392	316	665	22,248
2019-20	16,367	4,204	1,468	333	675	23,047
2020-21	11,023	2,364	1,411	110	452	15,360

The components of housing supply within each local authority area for 2020-21 are shown in Chart 2. Together Edinburgh, South Lanarkshire, Fife, Highland, Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, and Perth & Kinross accounted for almost half (49%) of Scotland's new housing supply.

The proportions of housing supply accounted for by each grouping vary by local authority. For example, in Glasgow 61% of the new supply was housing association homes, 14% from rehabilitation, and 24% from private led construction. The majority (75%) of the new supply in Edinburgh was from private sector new build with a further 5% from housing association new build and 12% from local authority new build. Private sector new build accounted for 100% of Inverclyde's new housing supply. Moray (35%) had the highest proportions of their new supply as local authority new build housing.

**Chart 2:** Edinburgh, South Lanarkshire, Fife, Highland, Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, and Perth & Kinross accounted for almost half (49%) of Scotland's new housing supply in 2020-21



Further detailed figures are available in the [Housing Supply Excel webtables](#).

## New Housebuilding

The new housebuilding figures for 2020-21 have been included in this section to show the contribution of new housebuilding to new housing supply up to 2020-21, however note that these financial year based figures were first published in the [Quarterly Housing Statistics update on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2022](#). This quarterly release also included the most recent figures up to end June 2021 for all-sector and private-led new housebuilding, and up to end September 2021 for social sector new housebuilding.

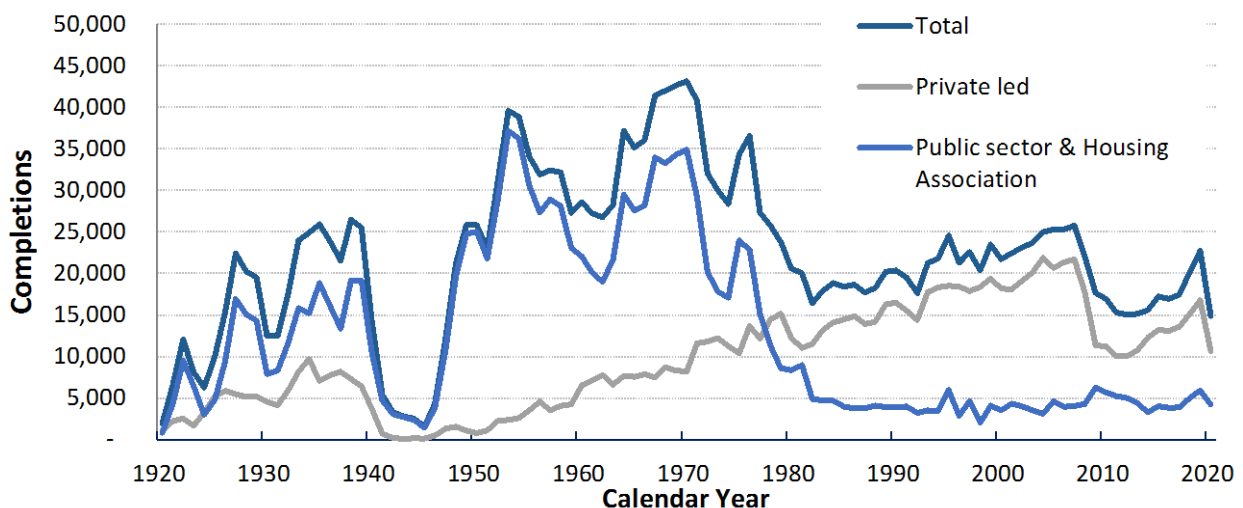
**In 2020-21, 14,798 new build houses were completed in Scotland, a decrease of 7,241 homes (33%) on the previous year when 22,039 had been completed, the first fall after seven years of increasing completions since 2012-13.**

During the same time period the number of new houses started decreased by 7,774 homes (31%) from 25,279 in 2019-20 to 17,505 in 2020-21.

The late 1960s and early 1970s saw about 41,000 to 43,000 new houses completed each year. This was primarily due to programmes of post-war reconstruction and slum clearances which saw huge numbers of, predominantly public sector, housing being built.

Throughout the 1970s and early 1980s the level of new build fell and fewer than 20,000 homes were completed each year throughout much of the 1980s. This was caused by a large decline in the number of social sector houses being built. Meanwhile the number of new private houses was generally on the rise and continued to increase until the economic downturn in 2008. By 2007-08 private sector new build represented around 84% of all completions compared to between 3% and 7% in the early part of the 1950s.

**Chart 3:** New housebuilding output has been impacted on by various factors in the past, such as the Second World War, post-war reconstruction activity, the creation of new towns, the economic crisis in 2007, and most recently the coronavirus pandemic (note that this chart presents calendar year figures)





The recession in 2008 hit the private house building industry particularly hard, and by 2012-13 starts and completions had fallen by 47% and 54% respectively since 2007-08. The numbers of homes completed by the private sector generally increased on an annual basis each year between 2012-13<sup>1</sup> and 2019-20, before falling by 33% to 11,023 in 2020-21 due to COVID-19 restrictions. The number of starts stands at 13,406, down by 21% from 2019-20.

There were 2,364 Housing Association new build completions in 2020-21, 44% less than in 2019-20. There were 2,759 Housing Association new build approvals in 2020-21, a decrease of 55% on 2019-20, reflecting the impact of coronavirus on housebuilding.

After years of very few local authority new build housing completions in Scotland the Scottish Government's introduction of the Council House Building programme in 2009-10 has seen significant numbers of new council houses being built, though this too has been impacted by COVID-19 in the most recent year. There were 1,411 local authority completions in 2020-21, which is 57 houses (4%) less than in 2019-20. There were 1,340 local authority starts in 2020-21, 905 houses (40%) fewer than the previous year.

The map on the following page shows the rates of housing completions in 2020-21 (across all tenures) relative to the population size of each local authority in Scotland. The highest rates were observed in East Lothian, Midlothian, Perth & Kinross, and West Dunbartonshire, with rates of more than 40 homes per 10,000 of population. The lowest rates were observed in Inverclyde, Dumfries & Galloway, Stirling, Glasgow City, and South Ayrshire, with less than 10 completions per 10,000 people.

Further detailed figures are available in the [new housebuilding Excel webtables](#), along with the [new build housing starts and completions Open Data tables](#).

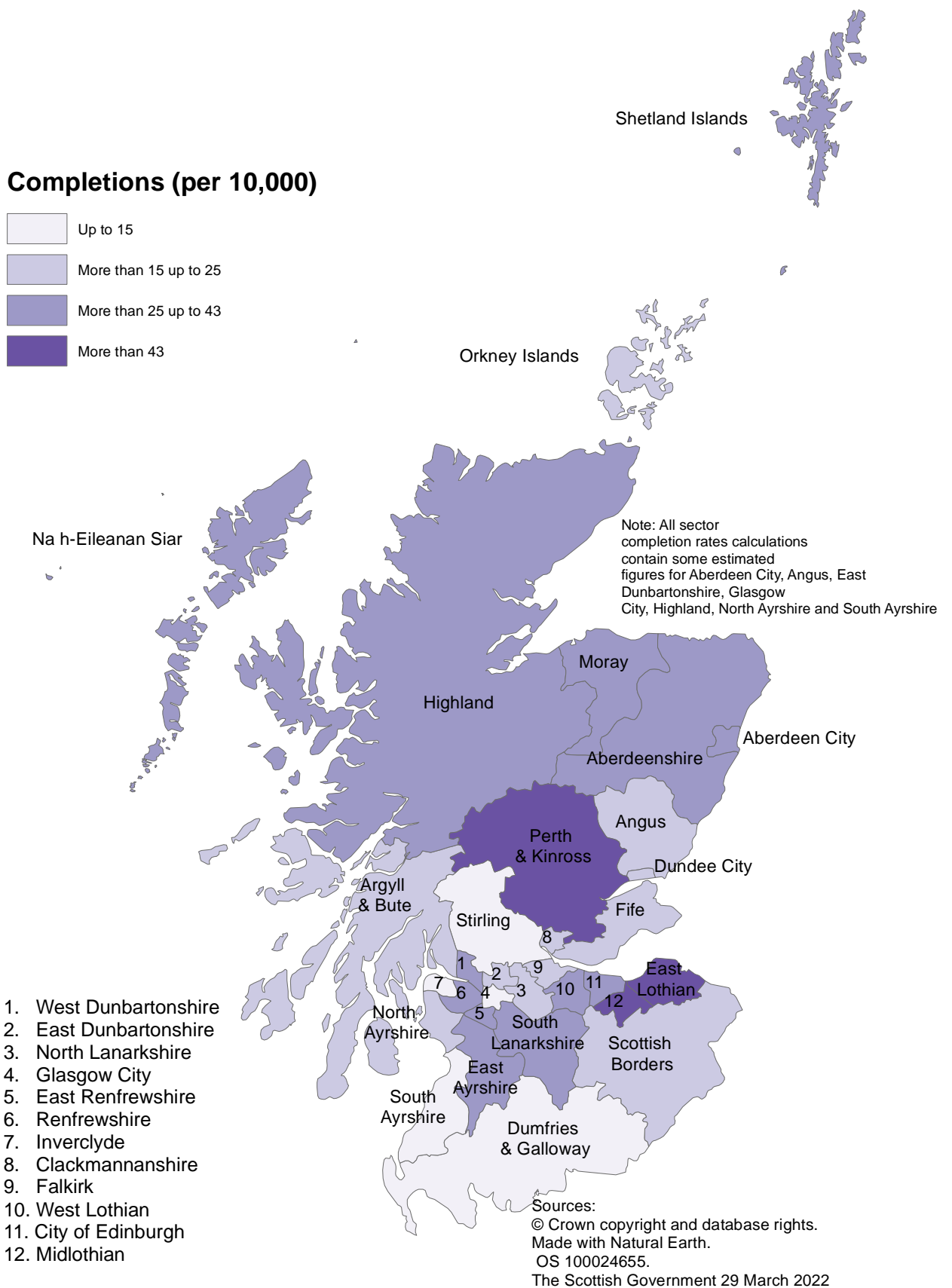
Latest commentary and charts on all-sector new build housing activity to end June 2021, including comparisons to other UK countries, is available in the [Housing Statistics for Scotland Quarterly Update March 2022 publication](#).

The latest published quarterly figures show that there were 18,974 all-sector new build homes completed in Scotland in the year to end June 2021, an increase of 10% (1,751 homes) on the 17,223 completions in the previous year. Increases in the latest year were seen across private-led completions (12% or 1,495 homes) and local authority completions (83% or 876 homes). Housing association completions however dropped by 17% or 620 homes.

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<sup>1</sup> Note that Chart 3 shows data in calendar years rather than financial years

**Map A: New build housing – All Sector completions: rates per 10,000 population, year to end March 2021**



## Affordable Housing Supply

The affordable housing supply figures for 2020-21 have been included in this section to show the contribution of affordable housing to new housing supply up to 2020-21, however note that these financial year based figures were first published in the [Quarterly Housing Statistics update on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2021](#), and the most recent figures to end December 2021 were published in the [Quarterly Housing Statistics update on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2022](#).

**In 2020-21, there were 6,477 units completed through all Affordable Housing Supply Programme activity, a decrease of 2,819 units (30%) on the previous year. Approvals decreased by 5,003 units (39%) in the latest year to reach 7,883 in 2020-21, and starts decreased by 1,423 units (16%) to reach 10,149.**

Affordable housing supply statistics reflect the number of affordable homes delivered that have received some form of government support through loans, grant or guarantees. The Scottish Government's Affordable Housing Supply Programme funds housing for social rent, affordable rent and affordable home ownership. The Programme funds both new build activity and other activity to increase affordable housing supply, for example off the shelf purchases, open market shared equity (OMSE), rehabilitations and support provided to home owners through the Home Ownership Support Fund (mortgage to rent and mortgage to shared equity).

The number of units provided through the Affordable Housing Supply programme are illustrated in the charts below. Approvals are measured when funding approval is granted for all dwellings on a site. Completions are recorded when all dwellings on a site are completed.

Chart 4 shows that in 2020-21 there were 6,447 units completed in total - this is down by 30% compared to the 9,296 completions in the previous year, with activity levels affected by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The majority (73%) of these were for social rent, 14% were for affordable rent and the remaining 13% were for affordable home ownership.

**Chart 4:** 6,447 affordable housing supply units were completed in 2020-21, which is down by 30% on the year before due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

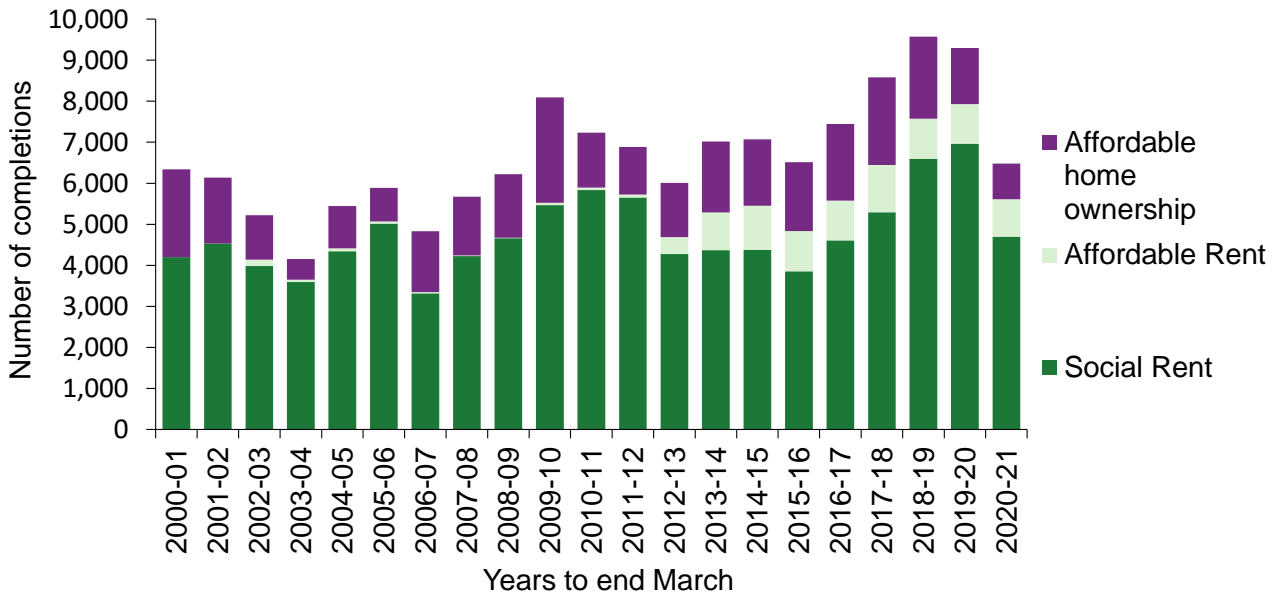
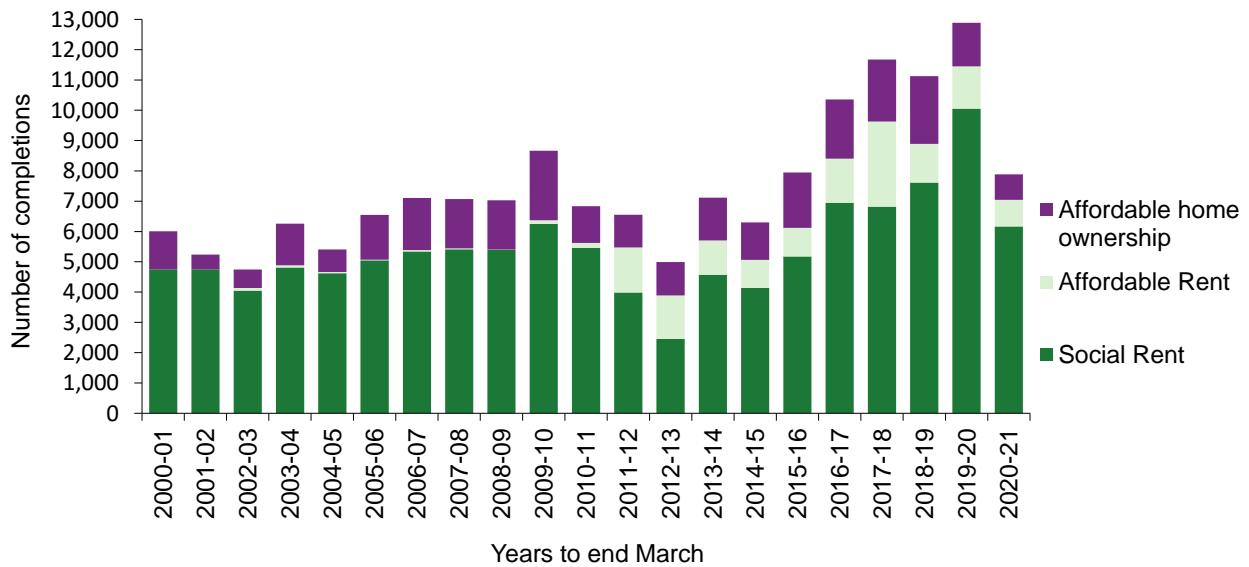


Chart 5 shows that in 2020-21, 7,883 units were approved, representing a decrease of 39% from the previous year. Of those, 78% were for social rent, 11% were for affordable rent, and 11% were for affordable home ownership.

**Chart 5:** Of the 7,883 affordable housing supply units approved in 2020-21, 78% were for social rent



Since 2009-10, data on AHSP site starts has also been recorded. There were 10,149 starts in 2020-21 which was down 16% from 12,045 starts in 2019-20.

Further detailed figures are available in the [Affordable Housing Supply Excel webtables](#), along with the [Affordable Housing Supply Programme Open Data tables](#).

Latest commentary and charts on Affordable Housing Supply Programme activity to end December 2021, including comparisons to other UK countries, is available in the [Housing Statistics for Scotland Quarterly Update March 2022 publication](#).

The latest published quarterly figures to end December 2021 show that the total number of affordable homes completed in the 12 months to end December 2021 was 9,211. This is an increase of 35% (2,412 homes) on the 6,799 affordable homes completed in the previous year. The total number of homes approved in the 12 months to end December 2021 was 8,398. This is a decrease of 17% (1,763 homes) on the 10,161 homes approved in the previous year.

Financial Year Local authority level figures are published separately in [Scottish Government Affordable Housing Supply Programme Out-Turn Reports](#).

## **Stock by Tenure to end March 2020**

**As at 31st March 2020, there were an estimated 2.6 million dwellings in Scotland, with an estimated 58% of dwellings being owner occupied, 4% being vacant or second homes, 15% being private rented or where the household is living rent free, and 23% being social rented properties.**

Note within this section that figures presented on the number of privately rented and owner occupied dwellings should be treated as approximate estimates given that these are based on survey data from the Scottish Household Survey, from which there will be a margin of error associated with the results. In addition, estimates for the owner occupier and rented privately categories for the year 2020 are not directly comparable to previous years, due to the change in the methodology of the Scottish Household Survey in 2020 due to the pandemic period.

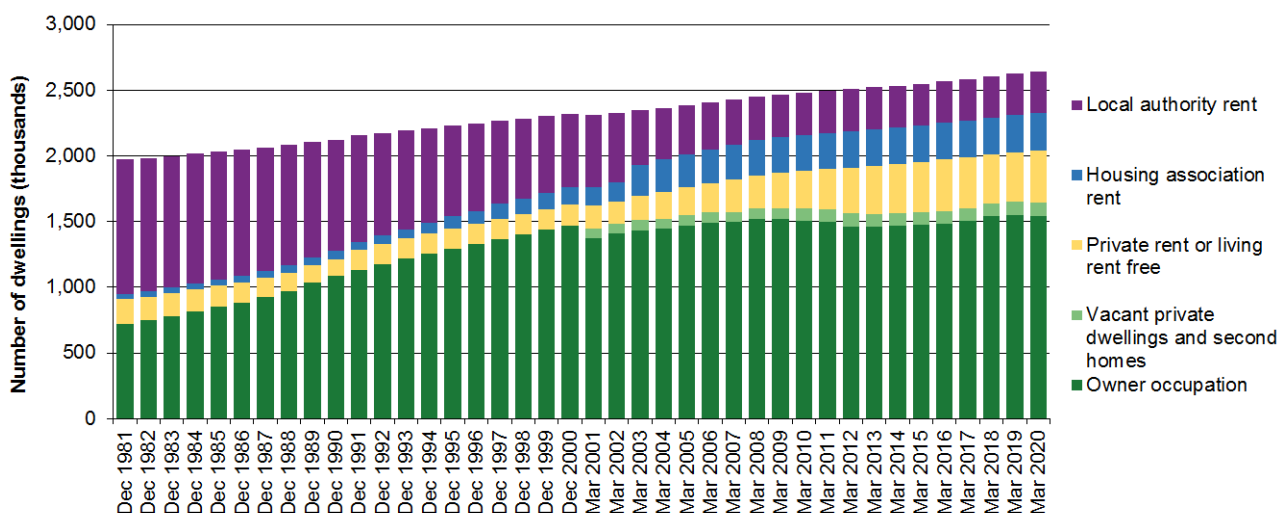
This differs from the figures presented on the number of social rented dwellings, which are based on administrative counts of units of stock held by local authorities and housing associations, and therefore are likely to be more accurate counts of the exact numbers of dwellings.

The number of dwellings in Scotland has increased by 675,000 (34%) over the last 4 decades, from 1.97 million in 1981 to 2.65 million in 2020. This has coincided with an increasing Scottish population and the increased prevalence of smaller households.

Chart 6 presents trends from 1981 across all tenure types. This shows the substantial increase in owner occupation between 1981 and 2001, and the corresponding decrease in local authority rented dwellings, with the reduction in local authority stock over this period generally attributed to tenants buying their homes under Right to Buy, transfers of stock to housing associations, and a decline in the number of new local authority dwellings being built.

Over the more recent period since 2008, it can be seen that the reduction in owner occupation between 2008 and 2014 has coincided with an increase in the number of households renting privately or living rent free from 10% (around 248,000 dwellings) in 2008 to 15% (around 382,000 dwellings) in 2015. This may have been partly caused by the economic downturn and the difficulty potential home owners have subsequently experienced in securing a mortgage. Although the number of households renting privately or living rent free has remained relatively stable over more recent years.

**Chart 6:** There were an estimated 2.6 million dwellings as at March 2020, with an estimated 58% of dwellings being owner occupied, 4% being vacant or second homes, 15% being private rented or where the household is living rent free, and 23% being social rented properties<sup>2</sup>



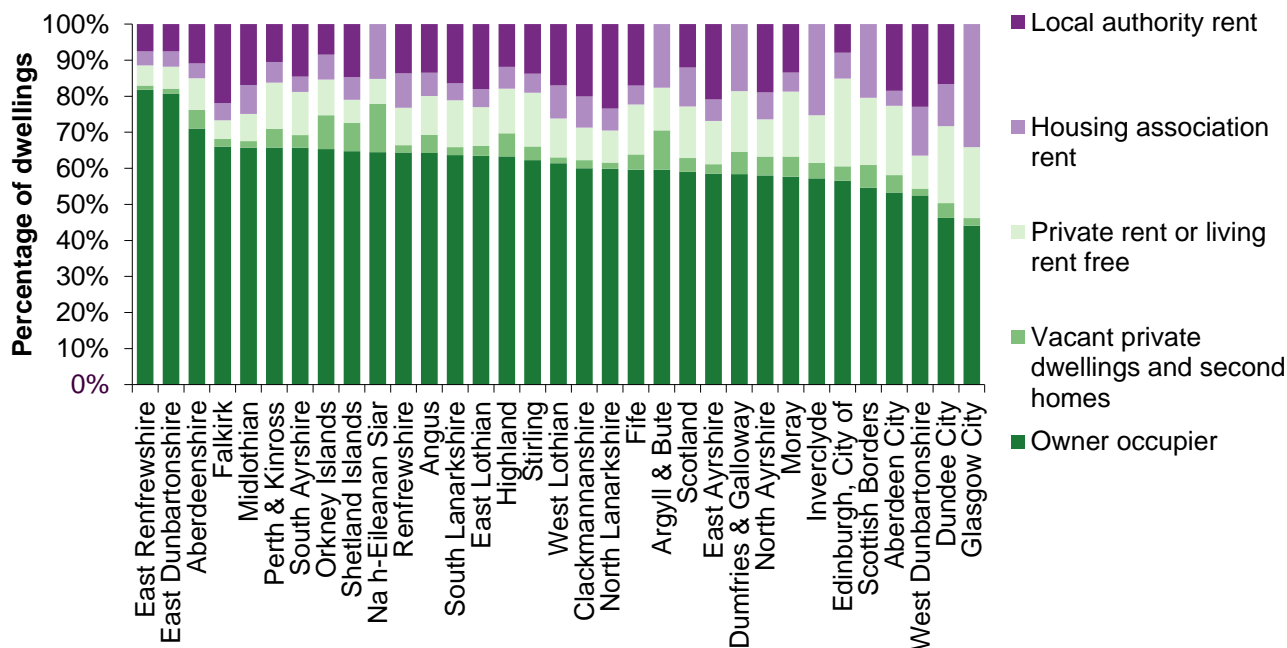
Local authority level tenure estimates are shown in Chart 7, based on latest available local authority level figures for the year 2019. The rate of owner occupation varies from 82% in East Renfrewshire to 44% in Glasgow City. In general, cities have lower owner occupation rates.

The proportion of dwellings rented privately is estimated to range from 5% in Falkirk to 24% in Edinburgh, with cities tending to have higher rates of households in the private rented sector.

Percentages of households that are social renting range from 11% in East Renfrewshire to 34% in Glasgow and 36% in West Dunbartonshire.

<sup>2</sup> Note the change in methodology from March 2001. For the years following 2001, Scottish Household Survey data is combined with dwelling counts of occupied and vacant property (National Records of Scotland data) to split privately owned stock into owner occupied, private rented and vacant. Social rented stock counts provided by local authorities and the Scottish Housing Regulator. Estimates for the owner occupier and rented privately categories for the year 2020 are not directly comparable to previous years, due to the change in the methodology of the Scottish Household Survey in 2020 due to the pandemic period

**Chart 7:** Tenure estimates by local authority area in 2019 show that the rate of owner occupation varies from 84% in East Renfrewshire to 45% in Dundee City



Further detailed figures are available in the [Stock by Tenure Excel webtables](#).

Separate Scottish Household Survey estimates of the proportions of households by tenure up to the year 2019 are published in the [SHS Data Explorer](#). In addition, [Scottish Household Survey results for the year 2020](#) have recently been published, although these results can't be directly compared to previous years due to the impacts of the change to a telephone survey approach due to the pandemic. There are also no local authority level results available for the year 2020, due to the much smaller sample sizes achieved in this survey year.



## Local Authority Housing Stock

Local authority stock levels have decreased since the 1980s, before beginning to plateau in the 2010s, as shown in Chart 6 in the previous section. Following this, local authority stock levels have been increasing every year between 2018 and 2021. As of 31st March 2021 there were 318,369 local authority units, up by 1,461 units (0.5%) on the 316,908 units in 2020.

The drops in the years since the 1980s can be attributed to 3 main factors:

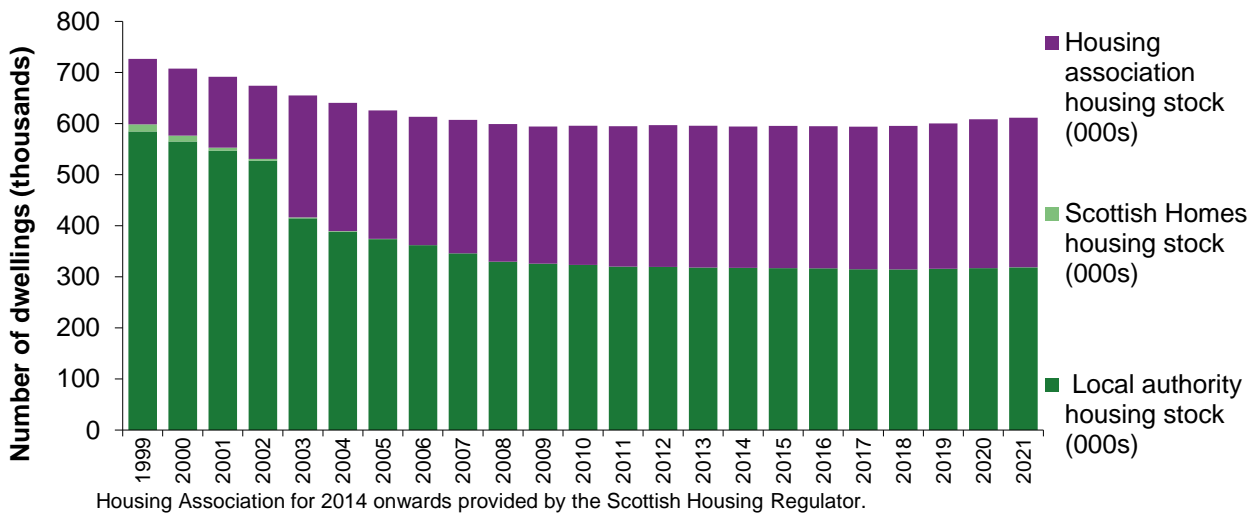
- tenants buying their homes under Right to Buy
- transfers of stock from public authorities to Registered Social Landlords (RSLs)
- a decline in the number of new local authority dwellings being built.

In general these factors have become less significant in recent years, and the provision to end Right to Buy with a two year notice period was included in the Housing (Scotland) Act which received Royal Assent on 1st August 2014, with the scheme subsequently closing to all new applicants on 31st July 2016. Further details of previous trends in Right to Buy sales are available in the [Sales of Social Sector Housing Excel webtables](#).

In addition to this, the Scottish Government's introduction of the Council House Building programme from 2009-10 onwards has seen significant numbers of new council houses being built in the years since this. As a result, local authority stock levels have been increasing every year since 2018.

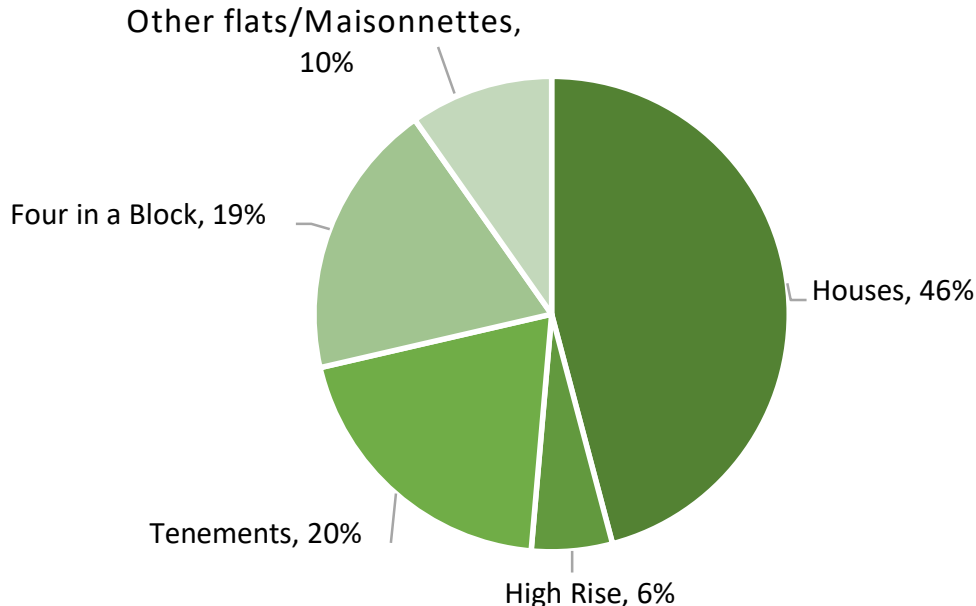
Local authority stock levels have increased by 1,461 units (0.5%) from 316,908 in 2020, to 318,369 units on 31st March 2021, and which compares to housing association stock of 292,951 as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021. This represents a substantial change since the mid-1990s when public authorities owned nearly 90% of the 783,000 units of social rented stock as at December 1995. The increased contribution of housing associations to the social rented sector is reflected in their rising stock levels since the late 1990s. Chart 8a below shows recent trends in the ownership of social rented housing stock.

**Chart 8a:** Local authority stock has increased slightly in the latest year to 318,369 homes in 2021.



Looking at local authority owned housing stock by dwelling type, 46% of local authority housing stock at March 2021 were houses. The remaining stock consists of 4 in a block (19%), tenement flats (20%), high rise flats (5%), and other types of flats and maisonettes (10%).

**Chart 8b:** Nearly half of local authority owned dwelling stock were houses at 46% as at March 2021



There were some regional variations in the type of stock held by the different councils. Local Authorities with the highest percentage of houses were Shetland (84%), Orkney (83%), Moray (76%) and Highland (73%).

Edinburgh and Renfrewshire had relatively high percentages of their stock as flats (81% and 78% respectively).

The highest proportions of stock in high-rise flats were seen in Aberdeen City (18%), Edinburgh (15%), and West Dunbartonshire (11%), whilst tenement flats were relatively common in Dundee (52%) and Edinburgh (51%).

In West Dunbartonshire, 29% of stock was in 4 in a block flats with South Ayrshire and West Lothian following up with 28% and 27% respectively.

Further detailed figures are available in the [local authority housing stock Excel webtables](#).

## Local Authority Vacant Stock

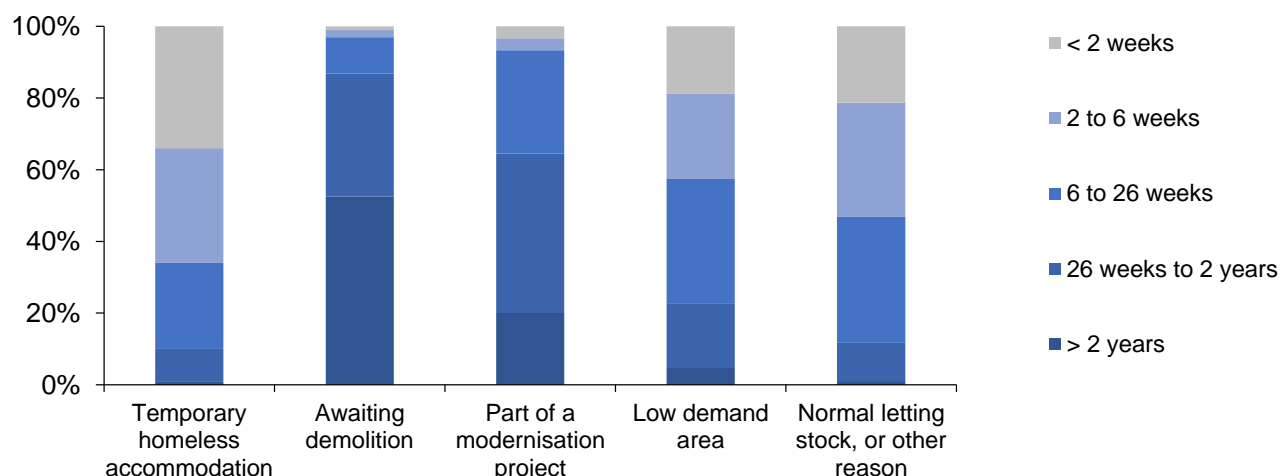
**As at 31st March 2021, local authorities reported 9,813 units of vacant stock, an increase of 18% (1,482 units) on the 8,331 units in the previous year.**

There were increases in the number of vacant units awaiting demolition (an increase of 245 units, or 12%, from 2,069 to 2,314) and vacant normal letting stock (an increase of 883, or 26%, from 3,454 to 4,337), with vacant units in low demand areas dropping by 20 from 529 to 509 and vacant units used as temporary accommodation for the homeless increasing by 5 from 780 to 785. Although vacant units used as temporary accommodation for the homeless increased 64% (304 units) between 2019 and 2020. There was also an increase in the number of vacant units as part of a modernisation programme (an increase of 369, or 25%, from 1,499 to 1,868).

Local authority dwellings can be vacant for a variety of reasons, such as being part of a planned disposal or modernisation/repair programme, or being in low demand areas. Of the 9,813 units, 24% were awaiting demolition or sale, 5% were in a low demand area, 19% were part of a modernisation programme, and a further 8% were used as temporary accommodation for the homeless. Of the vacant stock, 44% was normal letting stock or other vacant stock, which represents 1% of all local authority normal letting stock.

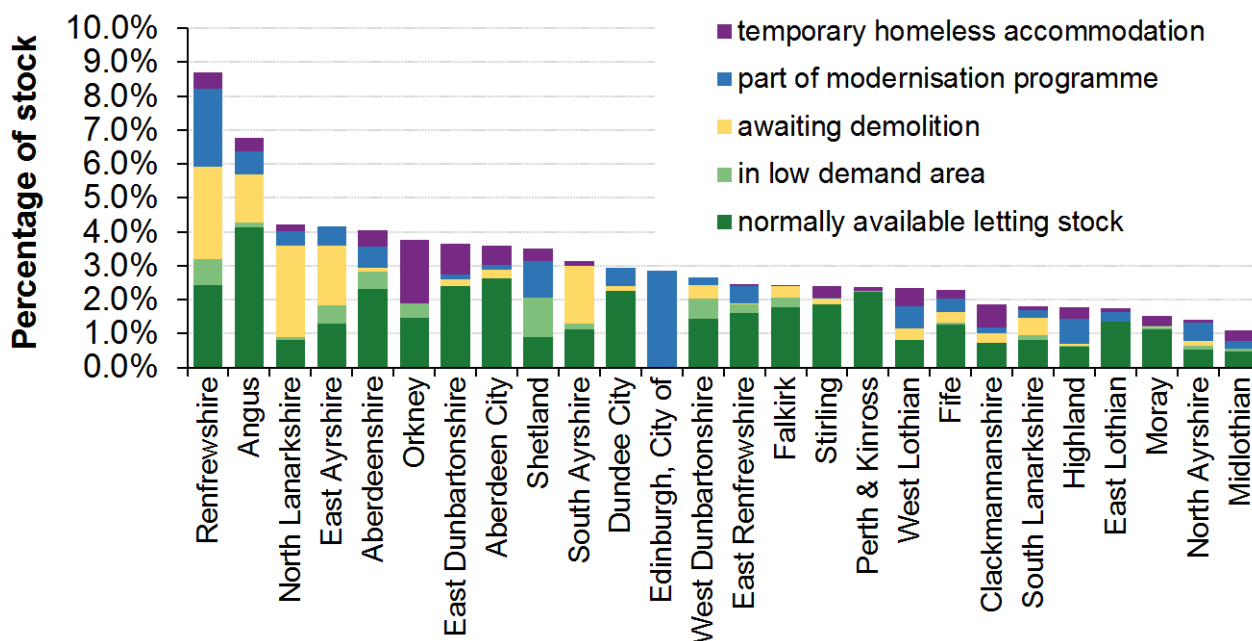
Chart 9 below illustrates that the length of time that properties have been vacant is closely related to the reason for the vacancy. Normal letting stock, or temporary homeless accommodation tends to be empty for less time than other types of vacant stock. For example, at March 2021 20% of vacant normal letting stock had been vacant for less than two weeks, and only 1% had been vacant for over two years. This compares to just over half (52%) of vacant stock awaiting demolition which was vacant for over two years, and just 1% vacant for less than two weeks.

**Chart 9:** In 2020-21 52% of vacant stock awaiting demolition has been vacant for more than 2 years, and 34% of vacant stock used as temporary accommodation for the homeless has been vacant for less than 2 weeks

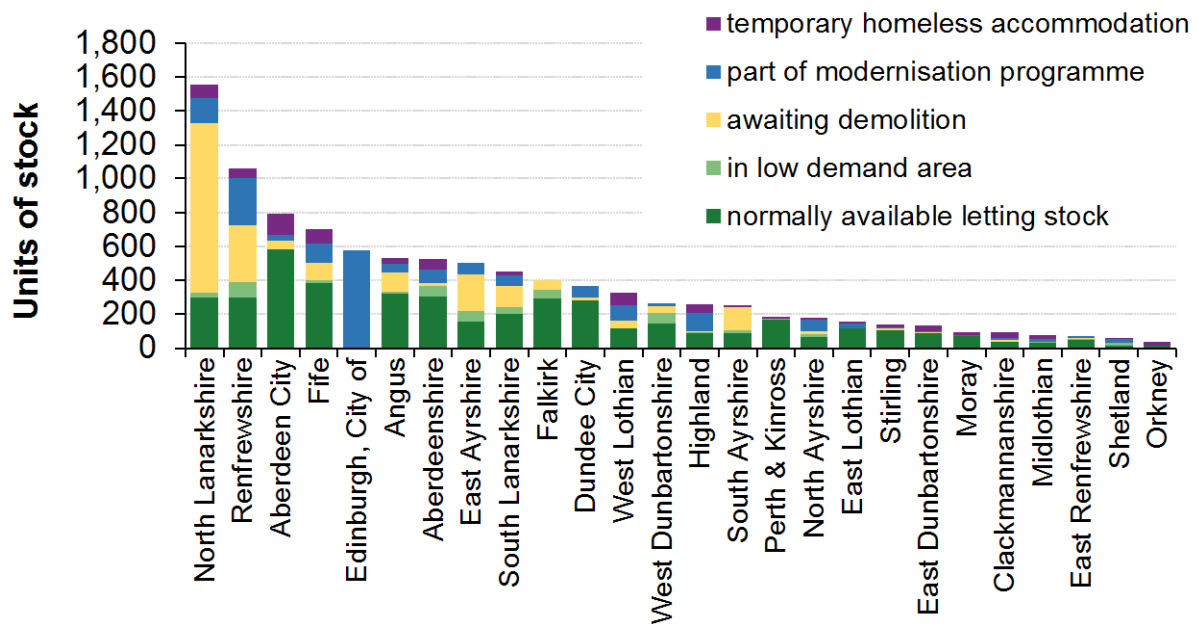


Vacant stock in each local authority area (except those which have transferred their social housing stock) is shown in Chart 10a and Chart 10b. Chart 10a shows vacant stock, by reason for vacancy, as a proportion of all local authority housing stock. This shows that total vacant stock as a proportion of all stock varied between 8.7% in Renfrewshire and 1.1% in Midlothian. Chart 10b is based on the same data but presents absolute numbers of units of vacant stock instead of proportions. This shows that total vacant stock varied between 1,555 units in North Lanarkshire to 36 units in Orkney.

**Chart 10a:** The types of vacant local authority stock as a proportion of local authority stock varied between each local authority in 2020-21



**Chart 10b:** The amount and types of vacant local authority stock varied between each local authority in 2020-21



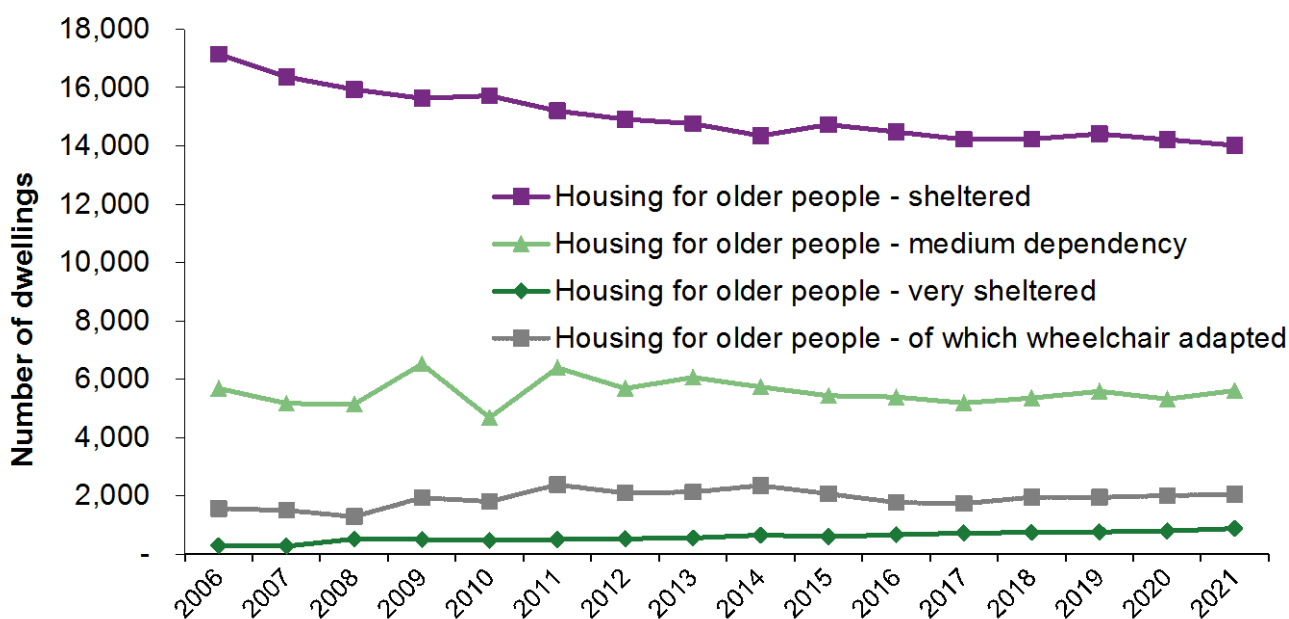
Further detailed figures are available in the [public authority vacant stock Excel webtables](#)

## Housing for Older People and People with Disabilities

The number of sheltered, very sheltered and medium dependency houses provided by local authorities has increased by 0.8% in the latest year from 20,319 homes in 2020 to 20,500 homes in 2021.

In addition to the housing for older people and people with disabilities provided by councils, councils provide or commission housing support services to help meet specific housing needs of older and other vulnerable people to give them the opportunity to continue to live in their own homes. Housing for people with variable needs is currently mainly classified as very sheltered, sheltered, medium dependency, wheelchair and ambulant disabled, although figures can vary from year to year as dwellings may be adapted to suit the particular needs of tenants, or re-classified by providers.

**Chart 11:** The provision of local authority housing for older people increased by 10% for very sheltered properties and 5% for medium dependency properties in 2020-21, whilst the number of sheltered properties has decreased by 1%. The provision of housing for older people of which wheelchair adapted has increased by 2%, although note that the number of homes in this category cuts across the total number of homes contained in the other main housing for older people categories.



Further detailed figures are available in the [housing for older people and people with disabilities Excel webtables](#).

## Scheme of Assistance

**In 2020/21 4,516 scheme of assistance grants were paid to householders, a 42% decrease (or 3,207 fewer grants) than 2019-20. Scheme of Assistance grants totalled £18.5 million, which is around £8 million less than in 2019-20. The majority of these were for disabled adaptations, 3,092 grants which is 40% less than the 2019/20 figure of 5,132. Disabled adaptation grants in 2020-21 totalled £13.5 million which is a decrease on the 2019-20 figure of £20.6m.**

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 introduced a new Scheme of Assistance, which replaced the previous system of private sector home improvement grants. The scheme also aims to encourage home owners to take more responsibility for the condition of their homes, to ensure that private housing in Scotland is kept in a decent state of repair.

Home owners are primarily responsible for their own property under their title deeds, but local authorities have statutory powers to maintain and improve the general condition of private sector housing in their area. If an owner needs help to look after their home, the Scheme of Assistance allows local authorities broad discretionary powers to provide assistance. This assistance can be provided through advice and guidance, practical help, or through financial assistance by way of grants or loans. It is for the local authority to determine what kinds of assistance are made available on the basis of local priorities and budgets.

Local authorities must provide assistance to owners who have been served a statutory work notice requiring them to bring a house into a reasonable state of repair. Local authorities must also provide assistance by way of grant<sup>3</sup> for most work to adapt homes to meet the needs of disabled people, other than for home extensions. All other assistance is discretionary. Under the Scheme of Assistance local authorities must prepare a statement providing information about the assistance that is available locally.

In 2020-21, councils provided householders with 295,503 instances of help. Most of this help (284,022 cases or 96% of all cases) was in the form of non-financial assistance such as website hits, leaflets or advice. Total spending across grants and spending on missing shares, other cases and administrative costs etc, was almost £27.8 million, of which £18.5 million was accounted for by grants approved. Of these grants, 3,092 were paid to disabled households totalling £13.5 million; a further 1,424 grants were paid to other households totalling £4.9 million.

Further detailed figures are available in the [Scheme of Assistance Excel webtables](#).

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<sup>3</sup> Usually 80% of the cost of prescribed adaptation work or 100% where the applicant receives certain benefits



## Local Authority Lettings

During 2020-21 there were 19,630 permanent lettings made, a decrease of 6,376 lets (25%) compared to the previous year, with the total number of lets made likely to have been impacted on by COVID-19 restrictions.

Note that some figures on the number of local authority lets across the 2020-21 financial year have been published by the Scottish Housing Regulator as part of monthly and quarterly COVID-19 Dashboard reporting since the beginning of the pandemic period. The figures being reported in this section therefore cover some of the trends already reported by the Scottish Housing Regulator over recent months, although there are some minor differences in the exact figures presented due to the different data collection and quality assurance processes undertaken.

Of all the local authority lettings made in 2020-21, 48% were to homeless households, a higher proportion than in 2019-20 (42%). Correspondingly, 29% of lets made in 2020-21 were to housing waiting list households, a lower proportion than in 2019-20 (34%).

Mirroring falling stock levels, the number of local authority lettings decreased each year throughout the 2000s (Chart 12) until 2008-09. The number of lettings increased slightly each year between 2011-12 and 2013-14, then decreased before remaining relatively steady each year until 2019-20.

During 2020-21 there were 19,630 permanent lettings made, a decrease of 6,376 lets or 25% on the 26,006 permanent lettings in 2019-20.

**Chart 12:** 9,488 permanent local authority lettings were to homeless households compared to 4,378 for transfers for existing tenants and 5,627 for those on housing waiting lists in 2020-21.

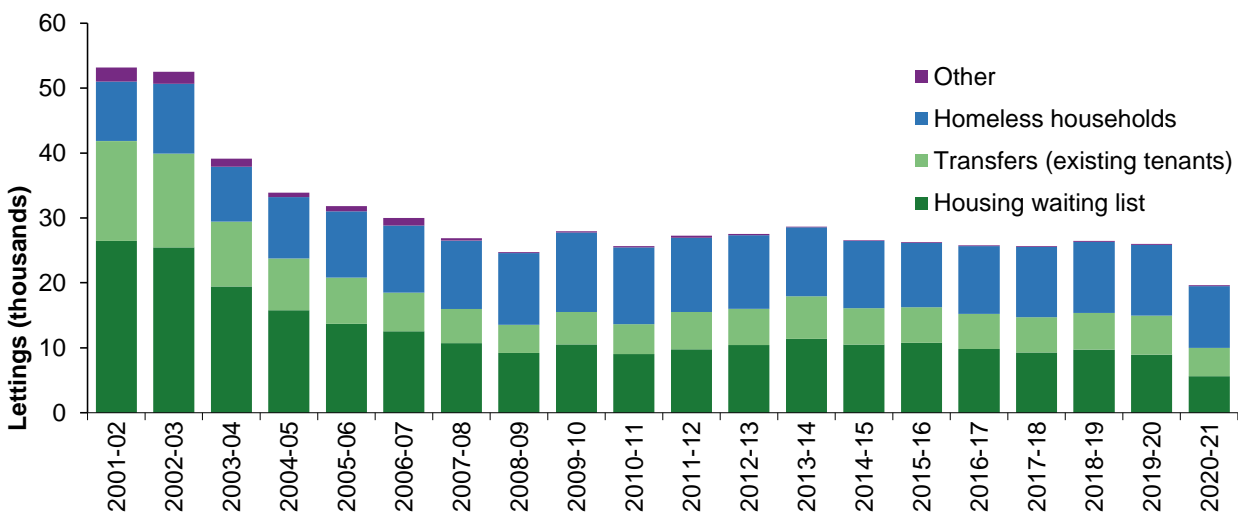
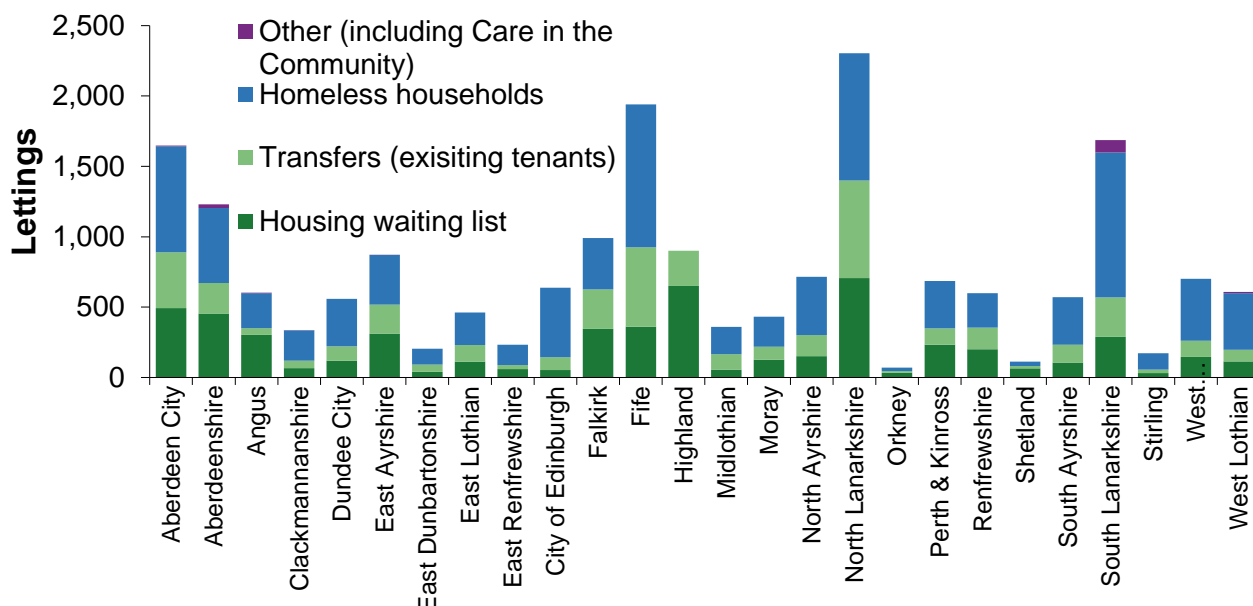


Chart 13 shows that there were some regional variations in the proportion of permanent lettings by source of tenant. For example, lets to homeless households made up 77% of all permanent lettings in Edinburgh, compared to 28% in Shetland. The proportion of lets made to housing waiting list applicants varied between 8% in Edinburgh, to 72% in Highland

**Chart 13:** The number of permanent local authority lettings by sources of tenant in 2020-21 varied in each local authority



Further detailed figures are available in the [local authority lettings Excel webtables](#).

The Scottish Government also publishes a range of information on [Homelessness Statistics](#), including the number of lets for homeless households, collected through the HL1 return.

## Local Authority Evictions

There were 1,151 tenancy terminations (evictions and abandonments) in 2019-20, a decrease of 20% or 289 on 1,440 in 2018-19. This then fell to 32 in 2020-21, due to restrictions on evictions brought in through COVID-19 legislation.

Of the 1,151 tenancy terminations in 2019-20, 97% (1,112) were due to rent arrears – a similar proportion to 2019-20 (96%). In 2020-21, this was 9% (3).

Note that figures on the number of local authority evictions for across the 2020-21 financial year have been published by the Scottish Housing Regulator as part of monthly and quarterly COVID-19 Dashboard reporting since the beginning of the pandemic period. The figures being reported in this section therefore cover trends already reported by the Scottish Housing Regulator over recent months, although there are some minor differences in the exact figures presented due to the different data collection and quality assurance processes undertaken.

The diagram below (Figure A) illustrates the numbers of actions taken in against local authority tenants in **2019-20**. There were 24,552 notices of proceedings issued. Of these, 7,231 proceeded to court, with 3,033 court orders being granted; 1,151 tenancies were terminated through an eviction or abandonment of the dwelling. Within a typical year, the number of court orders being granted would usually be higher than the number of tenancies terminated due to the a proportion of the tenancies having a resolution put in place prior to the court order being implemented.

**Figure A:** A total of 24,552 notice of proceedings were issued in 2019-20 with 1,151 dwellings evicted or abandoned in the same year

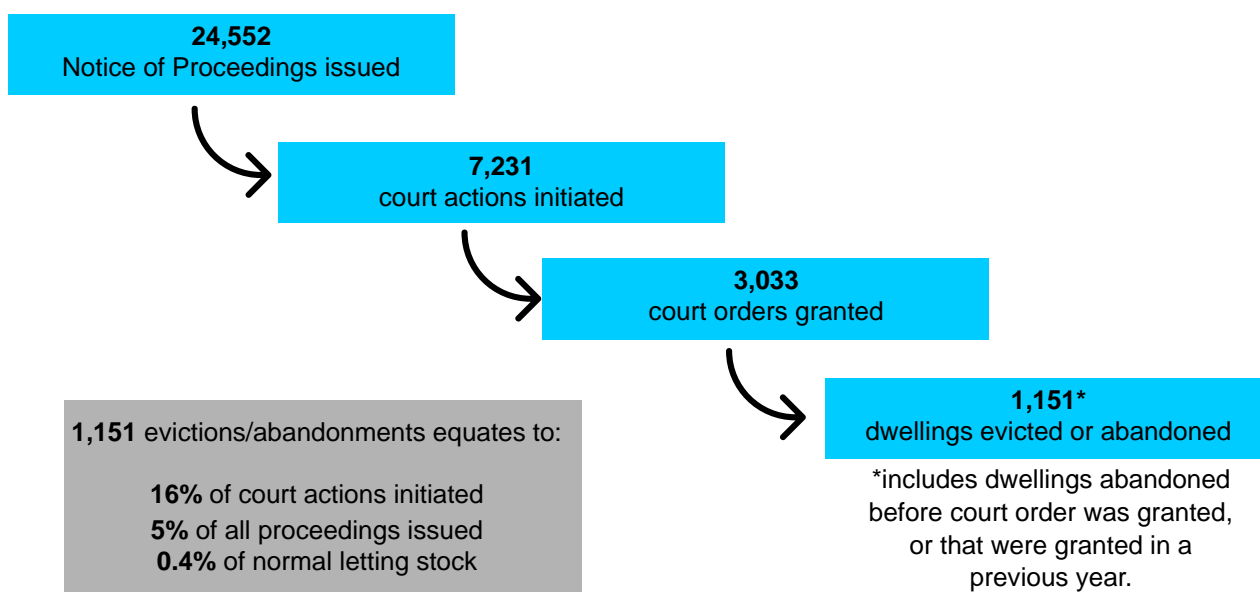
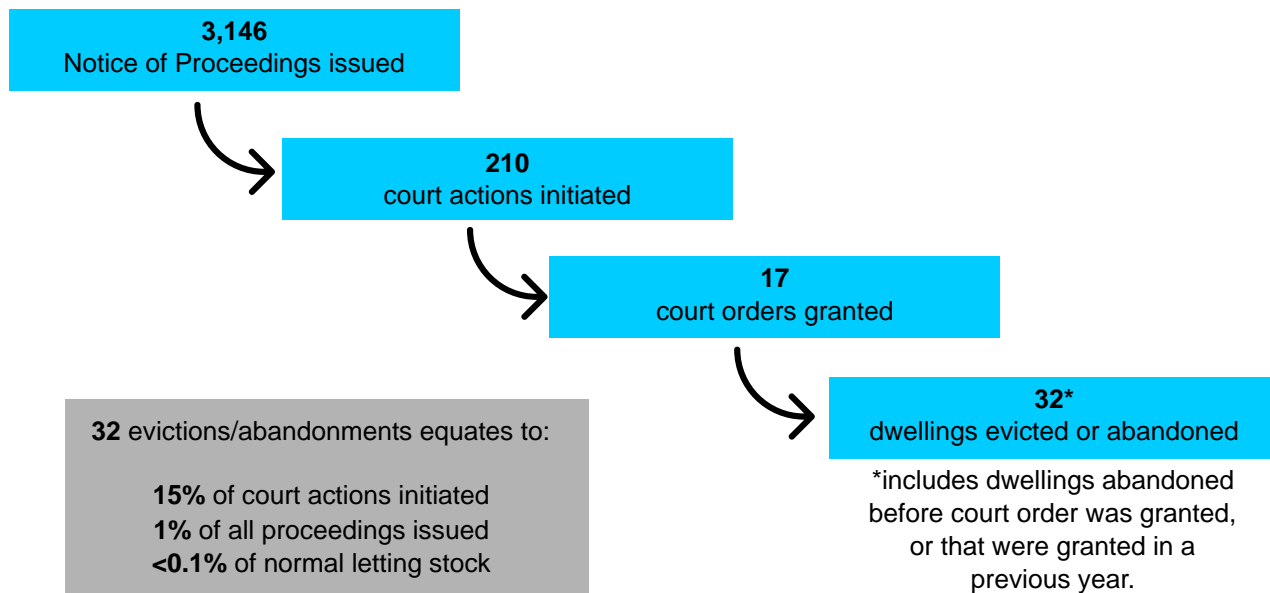


Figure B illustrates the same figures for **2020-21**. 3,146 notices of proceedings were issued, with 210 proceeded to court and 17 court orders being granted; 32 tenancies were terminated through an eviction or abandonment of the dwelling,

although 21 of these tenancies terminated were due to abandonment of the dwelling, which may have occurred prior to the court order being granted or that were granted in a previous year.

**Figure B:** A total of 3,146 notice of proceedings were issued in 2020-21 with 32 dwellings evicted or abandoned in the same year



Pre-action requirements to strengthen the protection of tenants facing eviction for rent arrears came into force on 1st August 2012. Pre-action requirements require social landlords to have exhausted all attempts to resolve the arrears with the tenant before taking action to evict. The changes have therefore generally had a much bigger effect on the early stages of an eviction action (notice of proceedings issued) than on the later stages.

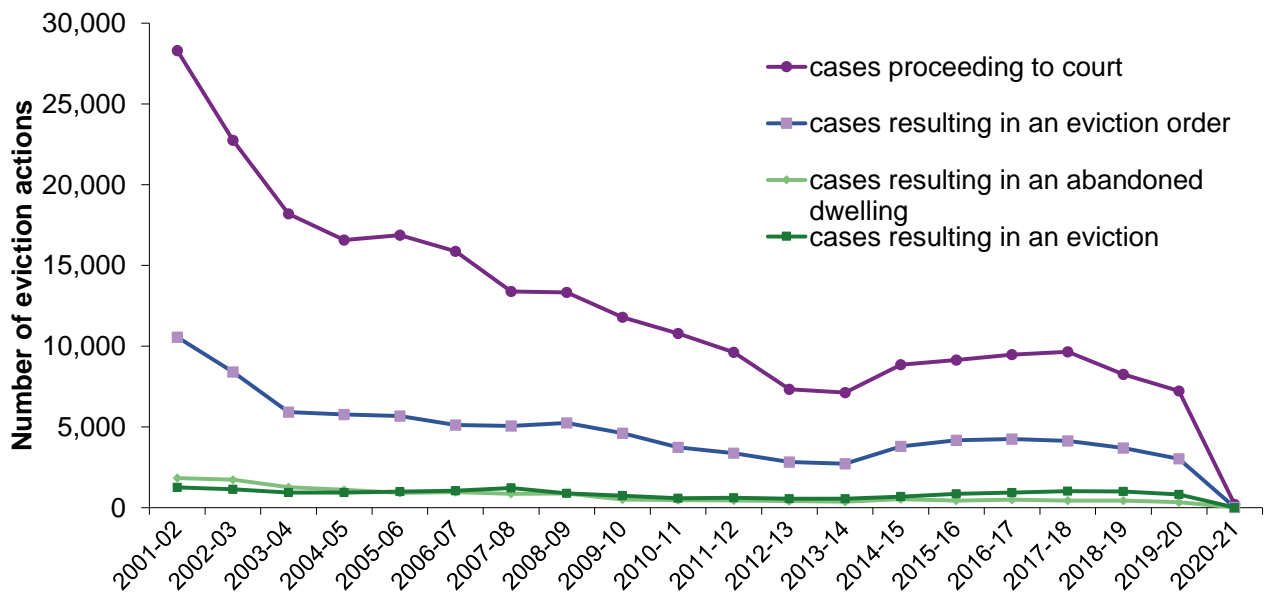
Notice periods for evictions were extended to 6 months for most types of evictions on April 7<sup>th</sup> 2020 in response to the coronavirus pandemic. An eviction ban followed on December 11<sup>th</sup> 2020 that remained in force until 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2021, which meant that only in exceptional circumstances, such as serious anti-social or criminal behaviour, could eviction orders be enforced. As a result, only 11 evictions against council tenants were recorded in 2020-21, with a further 21 properties abandoned.

Chart 14 shows there were large reductions in the number of actions against local authority tenants proceeding to court from 28,301 in 2001-02 to 7,127 in 2013-14. This was followed by increases each year up to 9,648 in 2017-18. This has then fallen in each subsequent year, dropping to 7,231 in 2019-20, and to 210 in 2020-21.

The number of cases resulting in an eviction order followed a similar pattern, falling from 10,558 in 2001-02 to 2,728 in 2013-14, but then increasing to 4,248 in 2016-17. This has then decreased each year since, reaching 3,033 in 2019-20, and 17 in 2020-21.

Local authority tenancy terminations (i.e. evictions plus abandoned dwellings) as a result of eviction actions have decreased in the latest two years. There were 1,151 such evictions or abandonments in 2020-21, and just 32 in 2020-21.

**Chart 14:** Evictions against local authority tenants in 2019-20 showed 12% less cases proceeding to court, 18% less cases resulting in an eviction order and 22% less cases resulting in an abandoned dwelling. The eviction restrictions in 2020-21 resulted in very few cases proceeding to court.

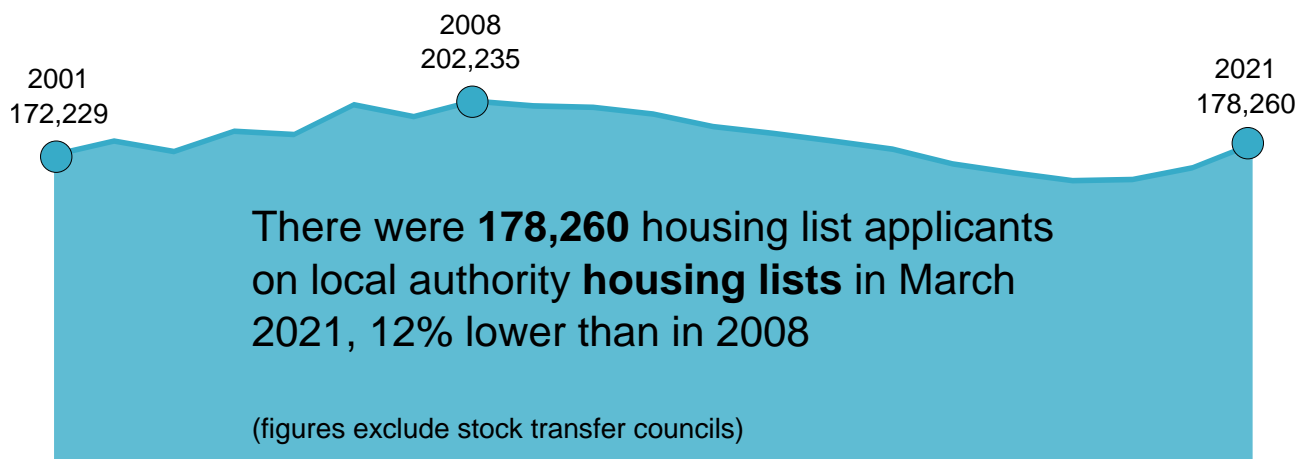


Further detailed figures are available in the [local authority evictions Excel webtables](#).

## Housing Lists

At 31st March 2021, 178,260 applications were recorded on local authority or common housing register housing lists, an 8% increase, or 13,314 more households than 2020, with the figure in the latest year likely to have been impacted on by the COVID-19 pandemic given the reduction in the overall number of local authority lets during 2020-21 due to COVID-19, although the latest figure is 12% below the 202,235 applications recorded in 2008.

**Chart 15:** Number of housing list applicants

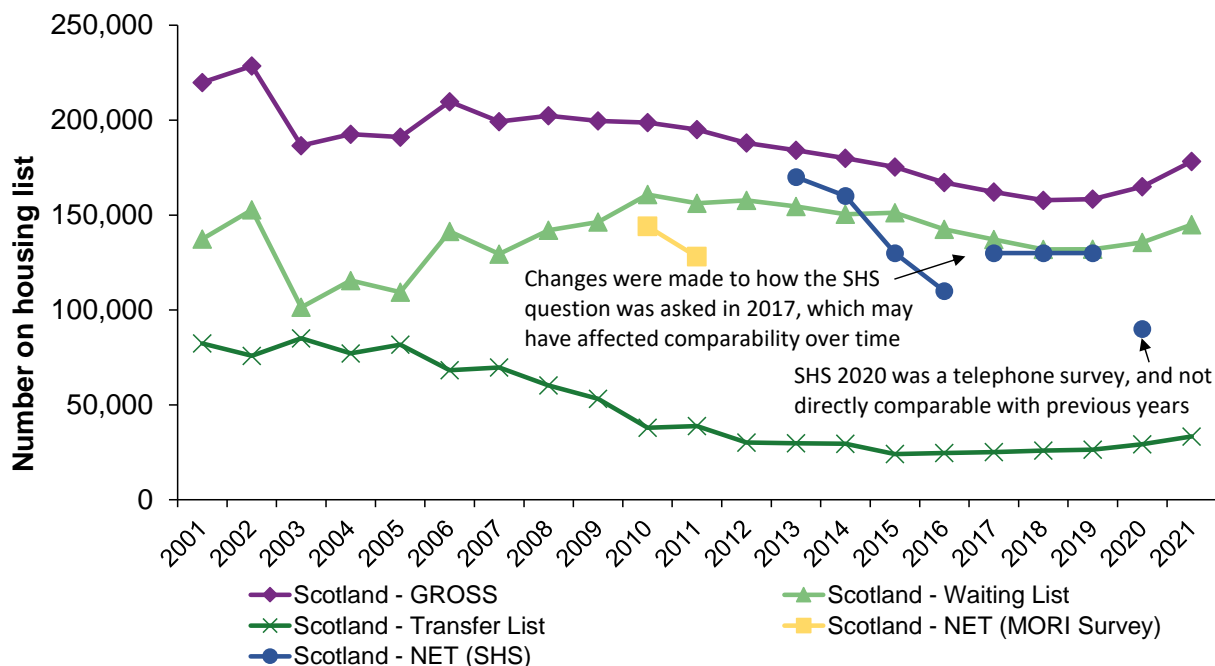


Of the 178,260 households on local authority or common housing register lists, 33,400 were recorded as being on transfer lists and 144,900 on waiting lists for entry into social housing.

However, 7 out of the 26 local authorities with housing stock did not operate separate waiting and transfer lists. In this report, all of the households on the lists of these authorities are treated as being on the waiting lists and none on the transfer list. This means that the waiting list figure is over-estimated and the transfer list figure is under-estimated. Also, the separate reporting of waiting and transfer lists by local authorities has changed over time, which means the historic trends are not consistent or reliable. This contributes to the trends illustrated in Chart 16.

The chart shows a gradual drop in the total number of applicants on a local authority or common housing register list between 2008 and 2018, after which the number of applicants has since increased each year to 2021, with the figure in the latest year likely to have been impacted on by the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Chart 16:** At 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021, 178,260 applications were recorded on local authority or common housing register housing lists, an 8% increase, or 13,314 more households than 2020.



While numbers of applications may be recorded accurately within each authority, there is difficulty in recording actual numbers of people wishing to access all social housing and also in determining their current tenure.

In addition to the multiple-counting of people who apply to more than one local authority, households often apply for both council and RSL housing in their desired area, although this has become less of an issue over time due to the increase in the number of Common Housing Registers.

Some applicants may no longer need a social house if, for example, they take up tenancies with other housing providers, however they may not be removed from the housing list immediately. Chart 16 shows, alongside the figures collected for this publication, survey estimates from the Scottish Household Survey (SHS) and MORI.

The SHS and MORI estimates are population based, which means they cover all households on housing lists in Scotland, whereas those related to Local Authority and Common Housing Registers do not include the 6 local authorities (including Glasgow) which have transferred all of their housing stock to Registered Social Landlords.

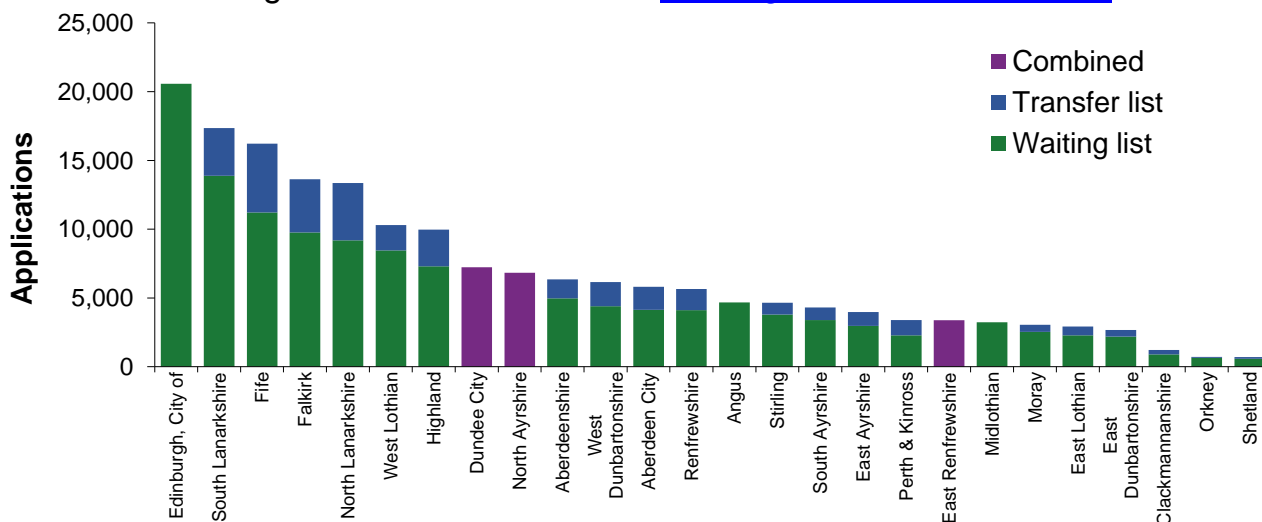
In addition, the MORI and SHS estimates asked respondents whether they were on any housing lists, so they are not affected by the double counting issue.

The SHS and MORI results may therefore provide a more realistic estimate of applicants on housing lists in Scotland, although they are based on sample surveys of private residential properties and so may exclude some people living in communal establishments or in particular types of temporary accommodation.

A question about being on a housing list was introduced to the SHS in 2013 and these questions are asked of the random adult part of the survey. However, note that changes were made to the 2017 questions with the aim to better capture households who are using choice based lettings when seeking social housing, and the 2020 survey was conducted by telephone due to COVID-19 restrictions. These may affect comparisons over time, and therefore some caution should be used when comparing results to earlier years. Results for 2020 show that an estimated 90,000 (4 per cent) of households were on a housing list.

**Chart 17:** The number of applicants on waiting lists and transfer lists varied in each local authority, but the majority of local authorities had a lower number of applicants on the transfer list

Further detailed figures are available in the [housing lists Excel webtables](#).



The Scottish Household Survey has asked a question since 2013 on whether the random adult interviewed is on a housing list. Scotland and local authority estimates up to the year 2019 are published in the [SHS Data Explorer](#). In addition, [Scottish Household Survey results for the year 2020](#) have recently been published, although these results can't be directly compared to previous years due to the impacts of the change to a telephone survey approach due to the pandemic.

Official statistics obtained from an [Ipsos MORI Omnibus Survey](#) carried out in February 2011 estimate the number of households which contain someone who is currently on a social housing list. These statistics provide an estimate which eliminates the double counting included in the administrative data collected annually from councils and housing associations.



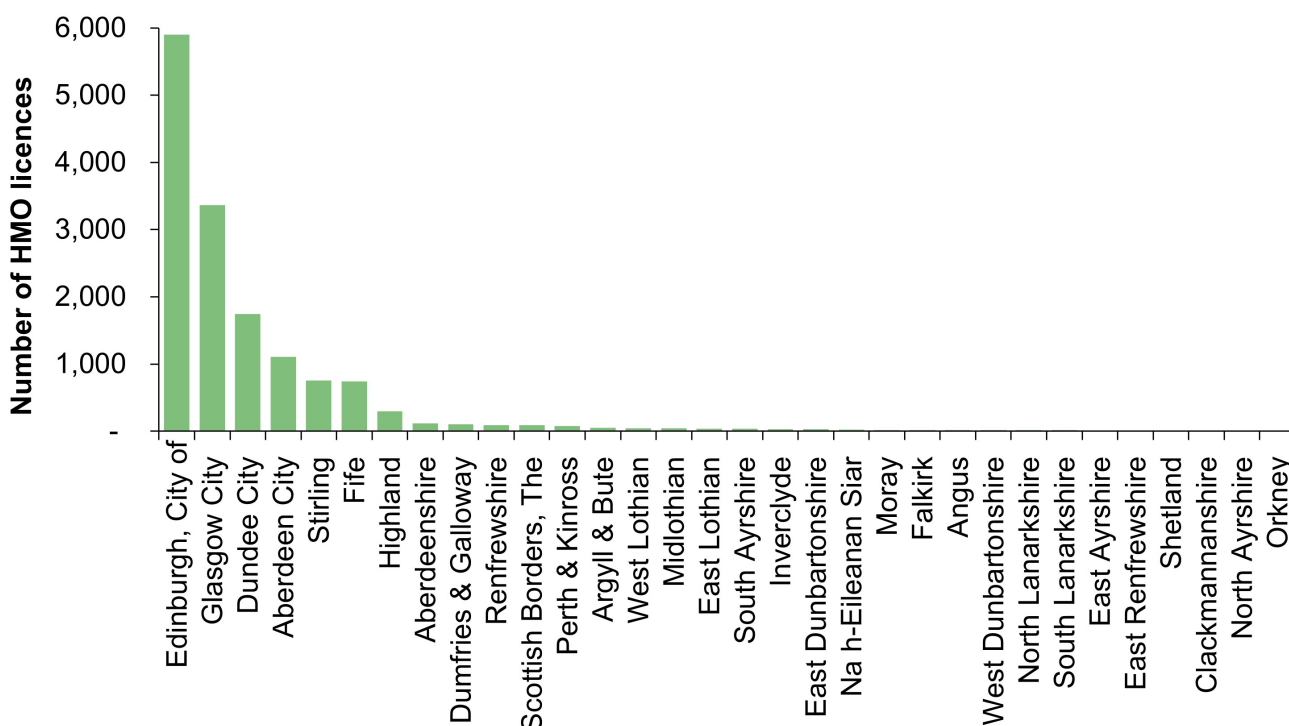
## Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO)

A house in multiple occupation (HMO) is a property that is shared by three or more people who are members of more than two families. It can also be known as a house share. HMO landlords must have a licence from the local authority. This ensures that the property is managed properly and meets certain safety standards.

**The most recent figures as at 31st March 2021 show 14,862 licences in force.**

Of the licences in force, 92% are accounted for by just six local authorities – Aberdeen City, Dundee City, City of Edinburgh, Fife, Glasgow City, and Stirling. City of Edinburgh alone holds an estimated 40% of Scotland’s HMO licences shown in Chart 20 below.

**Chart 18:** Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee, Aberdeen, Stirling and Fife accounted for 92% of all HMO licences in force in Scotland



There were approximately 9,334 applications received in 2020-21, 1% more than the year before. New applications made up around 13% of these, and the remainder were applications for license renewals.

Further detailed figures are available in the [HMO Excel webtables](#)

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ISBN 978-1-80435-420-9 (web only)

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Produced for The Scottish Government by APS Group Scotland, 21 Tennant Street, Edinburgh EH6 5NA  
PPDAS1075082 (05/22)