A National Statistics publication for Scotland

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PEOPLE, COMMUNITIES AND PLACES

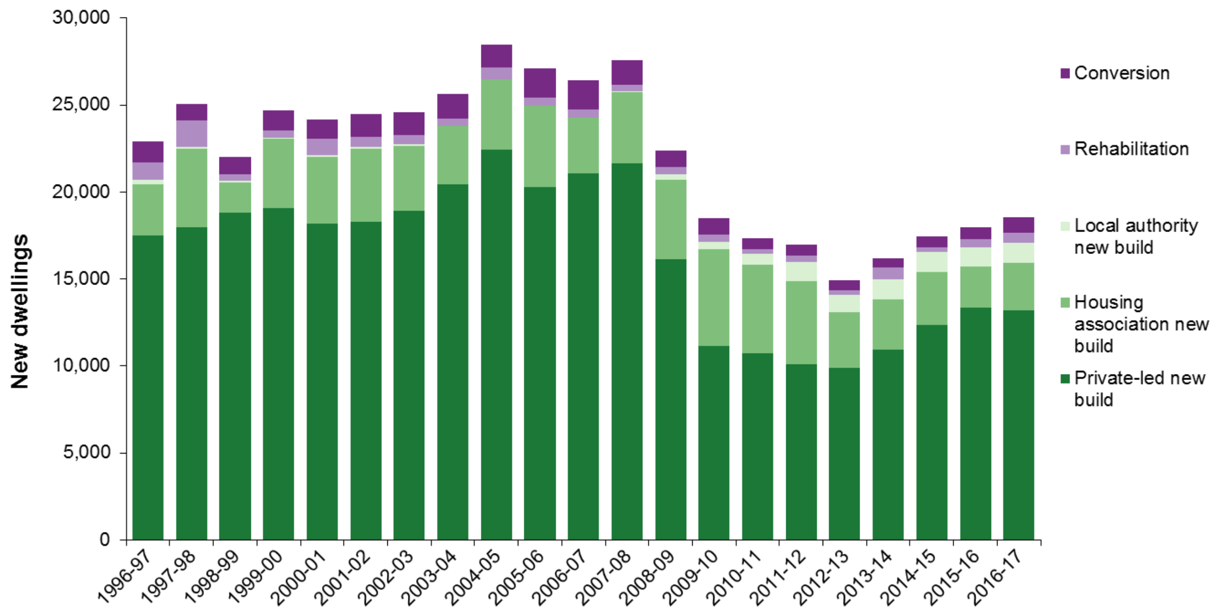
Housing Statistics for Scotland 2017: Key Trends Summary

This publication presents annual statistics up to 31st March 2017 on total new housing supply in Scotland across all sectors, along with information on various elements of local authority housing such as stock, lettings, house sales, evictions, housing lists, and housing for older people and people with disabilities.

The statistics are based on information collected from local authorities and the Scottish Government affordable housing supply database, and are used for a variety of purposes, including for monitoring the National Performance Framework Indicator on increasing the number of new homes in Scotland.

More detailed background tables are available in the updated Housing Statistics for Scotland web tables. A summary of the latest quarterly data on social sector new build and affordable housing is available in the Housing Statistics for Scotland Quarterly Update September 2017. A wider overview of social housing as a whole (i.e. across both housing association and local authority housing) is available in the separate statistical publication Social Tenants in Scotland 2015.

Chart 1: Supply of new housing in Scotland, 1996-97 to 2016-17



In 2016-17:

Housing Supply

18,539 new homes were supplied = **17,078** new build homes were completed + **599** homes were brought back into use through refurbishment + **862** homes were supplied through conversions

17,078 new build completions = **13,187** private-led completions + **2,748** housing association completions + **1,143** local authority completions

The Affordable Housing Supply Programme delivered **7,336** homes

9,308 Affordable Housing Supply homes were started

10,276 Affordable Housing Supply homes were approved

Local Authority Housing

There were **314,816** local authority dwellings

3,510 local authority homes were sold

1% of local authority normal letting stock was vacant

Local authorities made **25,788** permanent lettings

40% of permanent lettings were to homeless households

There were **1,421** local authority evictions or abandonments

There were **162,152** households on local authority or common housing lists

Local Authority Housing Assistance and Licensing

15,289 houses of multiple occupation licences were in force

Scheme of assistance grants totalled **£31.8** million

10,483 scheme of assistance grants were paid to householders

Key Findings for 2016-17

Housing Supply (Private and Public Sector)

New housing supply: New housing supply (new build, refurbishment and conversions) increased by 571 homes (3%) between 2015-16 and 2016-17, from 17,968 to 18,539 units. Housing association new builds increased by 428 homes (18%) and local authority new builds increased by 5 homes, whilst private-led new builds decreased by 182 homes (1%). Refurbishments (rehabilitations) increased by 142 homes (31%) and conversions increased by 178 homes (26%).

New house building: In 2016-17, 17,078 new build homes were completed in Scotland, an increase of 251 homes (1%) on the 16,827 completions in the previous year, the fourth consecutive annual increase and the highest annual number of completions since 2009-10. During the same time-period the number of homes started rose by 626 homes (4%) from 17,765 to 18,391, the fourth consecutive annual increase and the highest annual number of starts since 2008-09.

Affordable housing: (As previously reported on 13 June): In 2016-17, there were 7,336 units completed through all Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP) activity, an increase of 818 units (13%) on the previous year. Approvals increased by 2,331 units (29%) in the latest year to reach 10,276 in 2016-17, and starts increased by 1,626 units (21%) to reach 9,308. This activity represents the first year in the target period to build 50,000 affordable homes, including 30,000 for social rent, over 5 years.

Local Authority Housing

Local authority housing stock: At 31st March 2017, there were 314,816 local authority dwellings in Scotland, a decrease of 1,737 units (1%) from the previous year.

Sales of local authority dwellings: Sales of public authority dwellings (including local authorities with total stock transfers) rose by 68% in 2016-17, to 3,510. This is the fourth consecutive annual increase after years of declining numbers of sales. The increases are likely to be due to the announcement in 2013 that right to buy was to be ended for all tenants, following which the scheme closed to all new applicants in July 2016.

Vacant stock: Local authorities reported 6,164 units of vacant stock at 31st March 2017, slightly lower than the 6,181 vacant units in the previous year. Around a third (38%) of the vacant stock at end March 2017 was normal letting stock, which equates to 1% of normal letting stock that was vacant.

Lettings: During 2016-17 there were 25,788 permanent lettings made, a decrease of 2% compared to 26,258 lettings in the previous year. There were 10,436 lets to homeless households in 2016-17, which equates to 40% of all permanent lets by local authorities.

Evictions: Eviction actions against local authority tenants resulted in 1,421 evictions or abandoned dwellings in 2016-17 (927 evictions, 494 abandoned dwellings). This is up by 9%, or 121 actions of evictions or abandonments, on the 1,300 in the previous year.

Housing lists: Household applications held on local authority or common housing register lists decreased by 3% or 4,970 households to 162,152 at March 2017, the ninth consecutive annual decrease.

Local Authority Housing Assistance and Licensing

Scheme of assistance: There were 10,483 scheme of assistance grants paid to householders in 2016-17, 270 grants (3%) fewer than in 2015-16. Spend on scheme of assistance grants totalled £31.8 million, which is similar to 2015-16. The majority of grants in 2016-17 were for disabled adaptions, 5,967 grants totalling £22.8 million.

Houses in multiple occupation: In 2016-17, 9,668 applications were received in respect of the mandatory licensing scheme for houses in multiple occupation (including new applications and applications for renewal). At 31st March 2017 there were 15,289 licences in force, representing a decrease of 2% over the previous year.

Contents

New Housing Supply

Data on new housing supply informs National Indicator 38 (Increase the number of new homes) which is assessed as part of the Scotland Performs framework.

18,539 new houses were built, refurbished or converted in 2016-17, 571 homes (3%) more than in 2015-16. New housing supply remains well below pre-recession levels and is 33% below the 2007-08 figure of 27,594, however annual supply has increased by 3,629 homes (24%) since 2012-13.

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.

The supply of new housing increased by 571 homes (3%) between 2015-16 and 2016-17. There were 2,748 housing association new build completions in 2016-17, an increase of 428 homes or 18% on the previous year. Local authority new build completions totalled 1,143 homes, a marginal increase of 5 homes compared with 2015-16. A total of 13,187 homes were built by the private sector in 2016-17, a small decrease of 182 homes (1%) from the 13,369 homes built in 2015-16. The number of rehabilitations increased from 457 in 2015-16 to 599 in 2016-17, and the number of buildings converted to housing use also increased by 178 homes from 684 to 862. 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	Conversion	Total housing supply
1996-97	17,492	2,963	241	984	1,244	22,924
1997-98	17,984	4,489	114	1,514	958	25,059
1998-99	18,784	1,753	120	380	958	21,995
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	20,454	3,368	0	410	1,409	25,641
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	21,042	3,231	6	437	1,702	26,418
2007-08	21,663	4,097	28	389	1,417	27,594
2008-09	16,109	4,577	336	427	923	22,372
2009-10	11,133	5,576	413	442	920	18,484
2010-11	10,703	5,111	614	297	591	17,316
2011-12	10,109	4,776	1,114	338	644	16,981
2012-13	9,862	3,244	963	291	550	14,910
2013-14	10,920	2,911	1,140	711	509	16,191
2014-15	12,356	3,064	1,157	224	644	17,445
2015-16	13,369	2,320	1,138	457	684	17,968
2016-17	13,187	2,748	1,143	599	862	18,539

The components of housing supply within each local authority area for 2016-17 are shown in Chart 2. Together Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeenshire and Fife accounted for a over a third of Scotland's new housing supply.

The proportions of housing supply accounted for by each grouping vary by local authority. For example, in Glasgow 42% of the new supply was housing association homes and 32% was from the private led construction. The majority (76%) of the new supply in Edinburgh was from private sector new build with a further 12% from housing association new build and 10% from conversions. Private sector new build accounted for 90% of Inverclyde's new housing supply. West Lothian (23%) and Clackmannanshire (23%) had the highest proportions of their new supply as local authority new build housing.

Link to Housing Supply tables:
http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Housing-Regeneration/HSfS/NewHousingSupply

New House Building

In 2016-17, 17,078 new build houses were completed in Scotland, an increase of 251 homes (1%) on the previous year when 16,827 had been completed, the fourth consecutive annual increase and the highest annual number of completions since 2009-10.

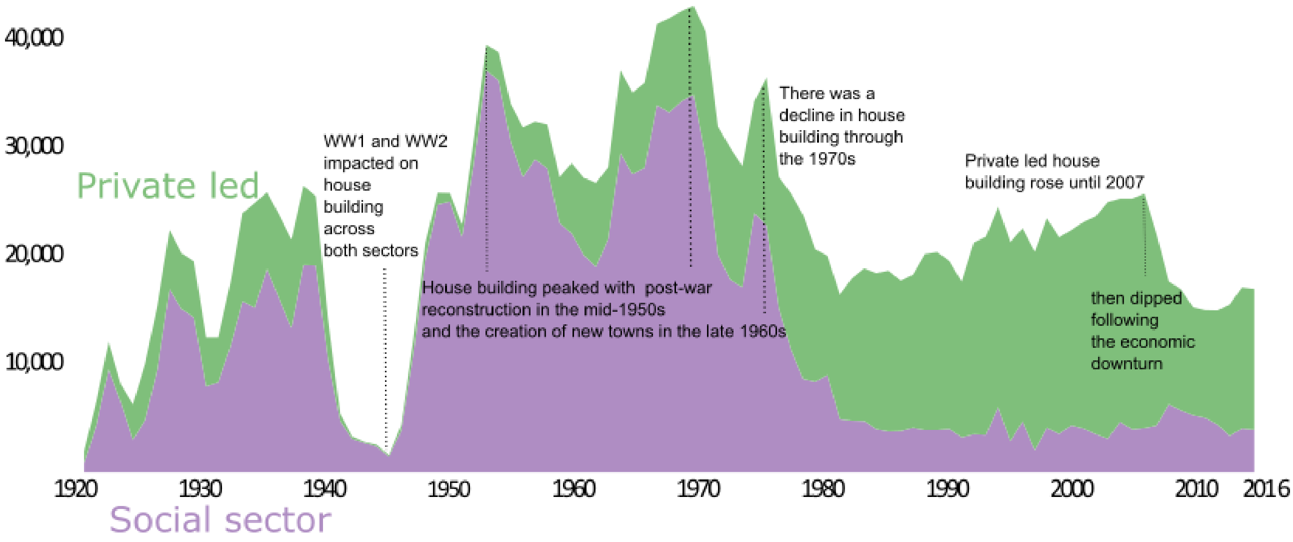
During the same time period the number of new houses started increased by 626 homes (4%) from 17,765 in 2015-16 to 18,391 in 2016-17, the fourth consecutive annual increase and the highest annual number of starts since 2008-09.

Looking just at the new house building element of housing supply 17,078 homes were completed in 2016-17, an increase of 251 homes (1%) on the previous year when 16,827 had been completed. At the same time there was an increase of 626 (4%) in the number of homes on which construction started from 17,765 in 2015-16 to 18,391 in 2016-17. This is the highest number of home starts since 2008-09.

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 house building by private sector and social sector, 1920 to 2016 (calendar years)



The recession hit the private house building industry particularly hard and by 2012-13 starts and completions had fallen by 48% and 54% respectively since 2007-08. The numbers of homes completed by the private sector increased on an annual basis each year since 2012-13[1], except for a small decrease of 1% in the most recent year (2016-17). The number of starts stands at 12,051, down by 9% from 2015-16, and 40% below the number started in 2007-08. Private sector completions meanwhile have decreased by 1% since 2015-16 to 13,187, 39% below the level in 2007-08.

In September 2013 the Scottish Government introduced the Help to Buy (Scotland) scheme which has aimed to support buyers purchasing new build homes and to stimulate the housebuilding industry. Following this, the Help to Buy (Scotland) Affordable New Build and Help to Buy (Scotland) Smaller Developers schemes were launched on 21 January 2016. Further information on the schemes, along with monitoring information setting out numbers of sales, is available at http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Built-Environment/Housing/BuyingSelling/help-to-buy/MonthlyStats.

In general, the number of starts will be a strong indicator of the likely trend in completions over the longer term, but there may well be differences over the short and medium term. These differences depend on factors such as the housing market, economic climate, access to finance, and speed of construction.

A wide range of factors can influence the length of time it takes for a new private dwelling to be constructed, including the type of property (house, flat etc.), and the overall size of the site. Depending on the size of the site, the average time from start to completion of the entire site can range from anywhere between around 1.5 to 2.75 years. Individual homes, or blocks of homes, might be completed in shorter timescales if parts of the site are completed in advance of the rest.

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[1] Note that Chart 3 shows data in calendar years rather than financial years

There were 2,748 Housing Association new build completions in 2016-17 – 18% more than in 2015-16. There were 4,945 Housing Association new build approvals in 2016-17, an increase of 70% on 2015-16. Starts totalled 3,760, an increase of 31%.

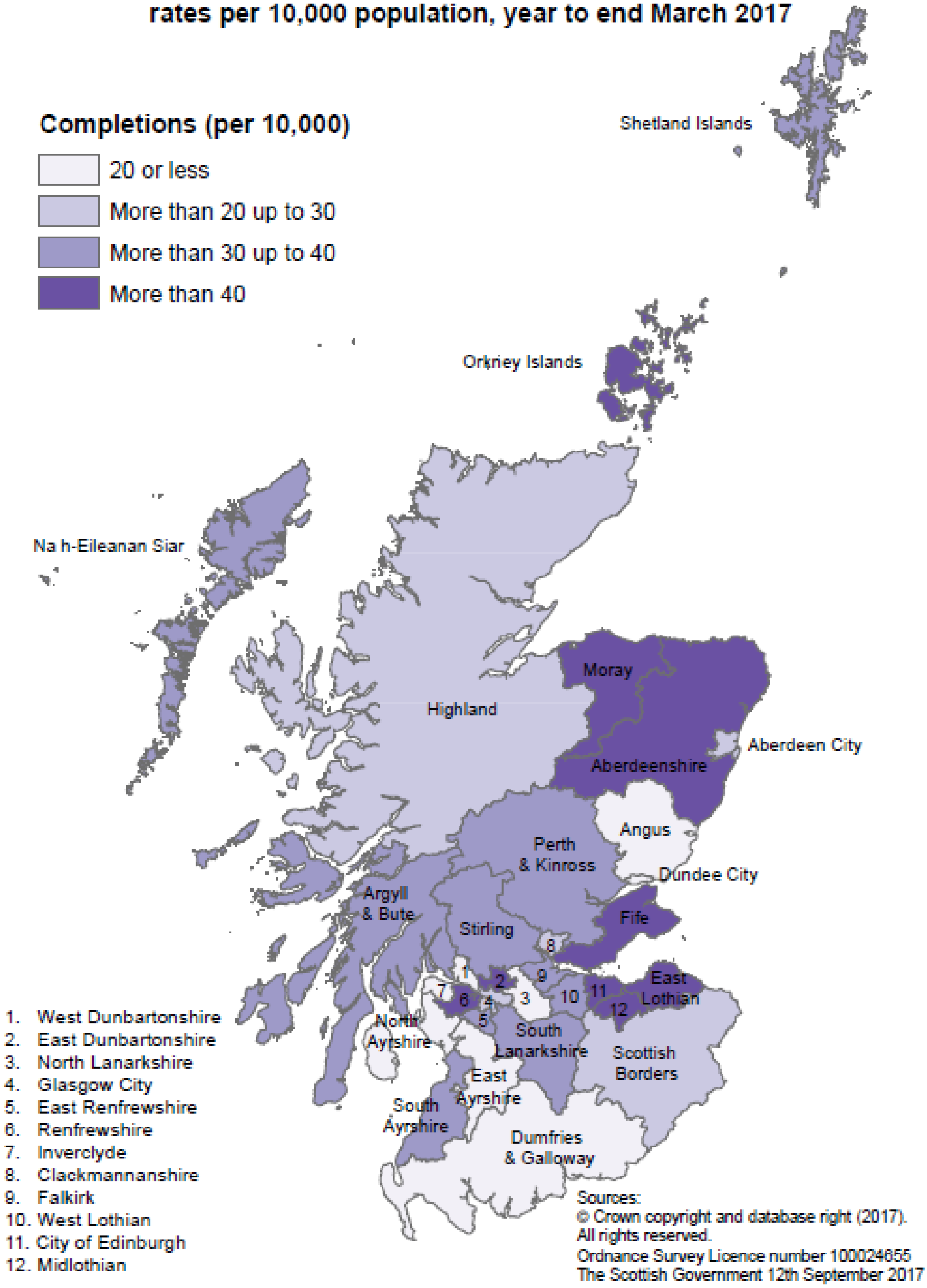
After years of very few local authority new build housing completions in Scotland the Scottish Government's introduction of the Council House Building programme in 2009-10 has seen small but significant numbers of new council houses being built. There were 1,143 local authority completions in 2016-17, which is approximately the same as 2015-16 (5 more houses than the previous year). There were 1,395 local authority starts in 2015-16, 15% less than the previous year.

There are relatively few local authority site completions in recent years on which to base any firm conclusions of average timescales between start and completion. However an average of around 1 to 1.25 years for an entire site be completed seems to be fairly typical, rising to around 2 to 2.5 years for some of the bigger sites. Individual homes, or blocks of homes, might be completed in shorter timescales if parts of the site are completed in advance of the rest.

The map on the following page shows the rates of housing completions in 2016-17 (across all tenures) relative to the population size of each local authority in Scotland. The highest rates were observed in Midlothian, East Lothian, Orkney Islands, Renfrewshire, and East Dunbartonshire.

Link to tables on new builds: http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Housing-Regeneration/HSfS/NewBuild

Map A: New build housing - all sector completions: rates per 10,000 population, year to end March 2017



Affordable Housing

(As previously reported on 13 June 2017): In 2016-17, there were 7,336 units completed through all Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP) activity, an increase of 818 units (13%) on the previous year. Approvals increased by 2,331 units (29%) in the latest year to reach 10,276 in 2016-17, and starts increased by 1,626 units (21%) to reach 9,308.

Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP) activity represents the first year in the target period to build 50,000 affordable homes, including 35,000 for social rent, over the 5 year period from 2016-17 to 2020-21. The Scottish Government's Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP) funds housing for social rent, affordable rent and affordable home ownership. The AHSP 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 AHSP completions statistics have been used to inform the Scottish Government's target to deliver 30,000 affordable homes between 2011-12 and 2015-16 and will be used to inform the target to deliver 50,000 affordable homes between 2016-17 and 2020-21.

The number of units provided through the AHSP 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 2016-17 there were 7,336 units completed through all AHSP activity - this is up by 13% compared to the 6,518 completions in the previous year. The majority (63%) of these are new build houses, and the remaining 37% were off the shelf purchases or rehabilitations.

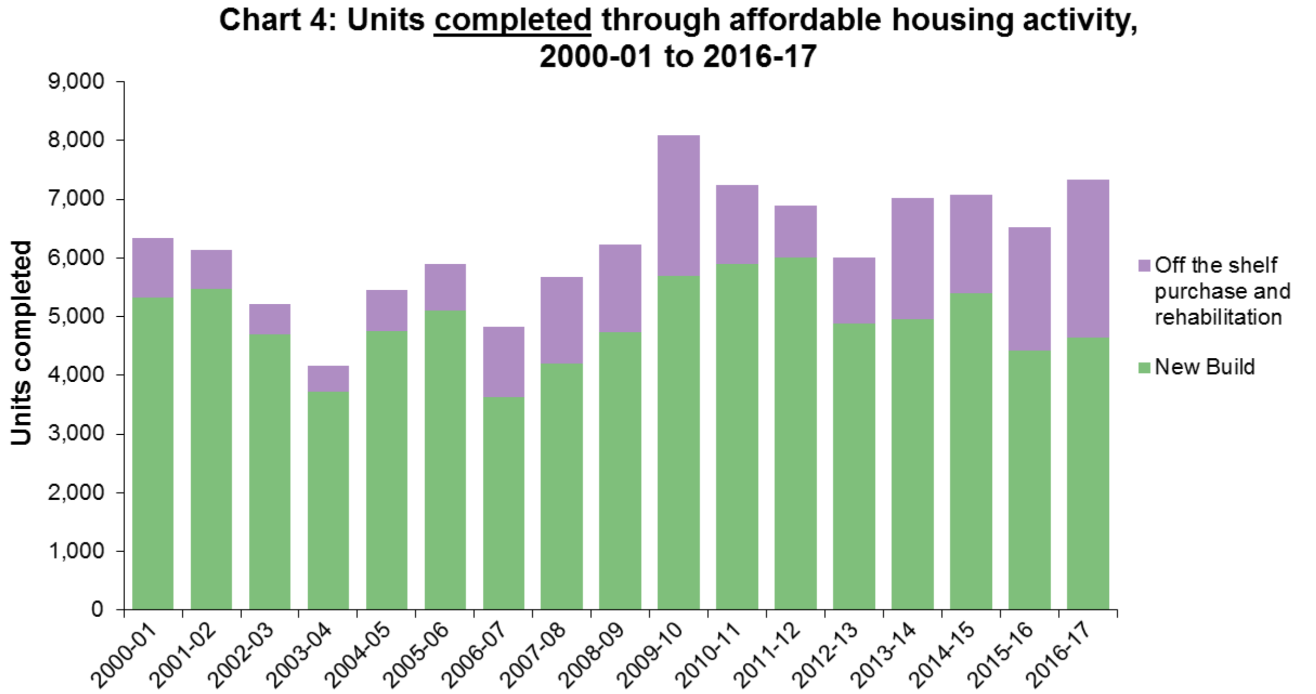
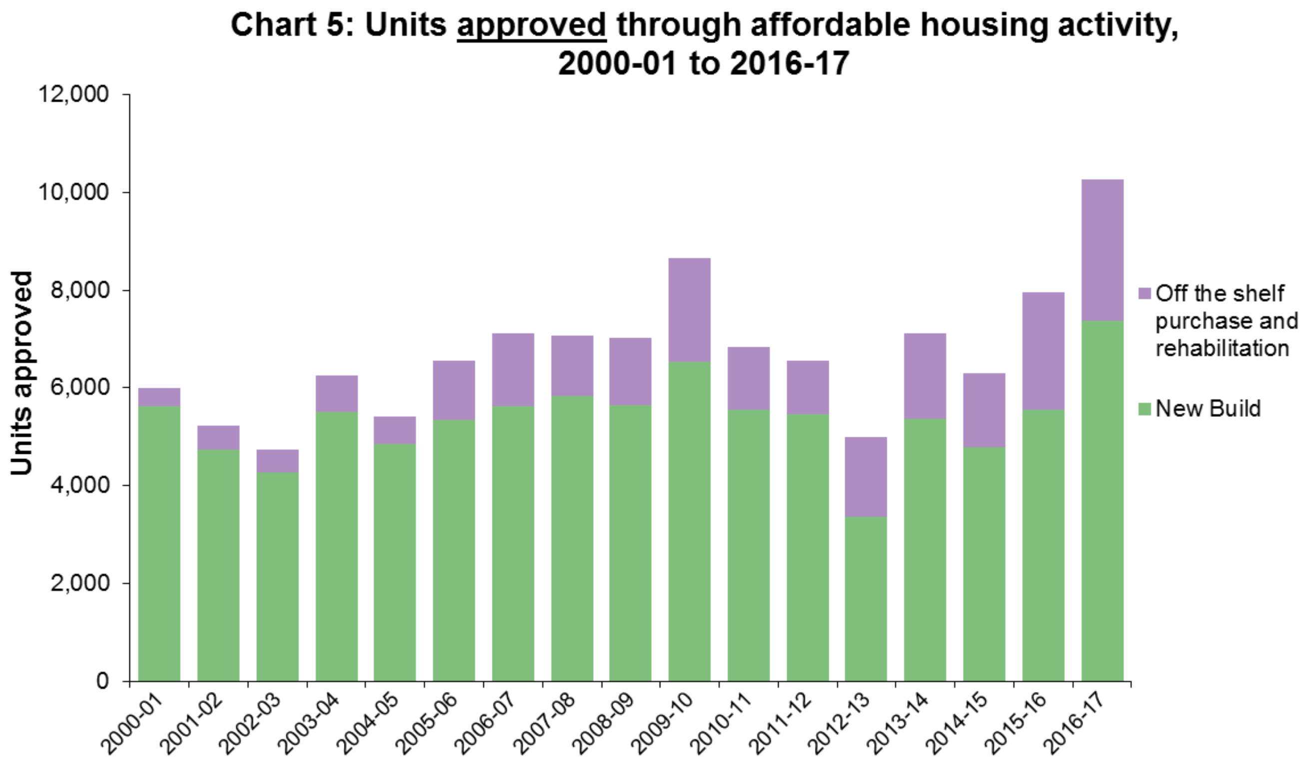


Chart 5 shows that in 2016-17, 10,276 units were approved through the AHSP, representing an increase of 29% from the previous year. Of those, 72% were new build houses and 28% were off the shelf purchases or rehabilitations.



Since 2009-10, data on AHSP site starts has also been recorded. There were 9,308 starts in 2016-17 which was up 21% from 7,682 starts in 2015-16.

Over recent years it is estimated that it can take between 1 to 2 years from approval to completion of an entire new build AHSP site (of which the first 3 to 4 months would typically be the time period from approval to starting). Individual homes, or blocks of homes, might be completed in shorter timescales if parts of the site are completed in advance of the rest.

Link to tables on AHSP: http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Housing-Regeneration/HSfS/NewBuild/AHSPtables

Scottish Government Affordable Housing Supply Programme out-turn reports: http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Built-Environment/Housing/investment/ahip

Statistics on new house building in the other UK nations can be found through the following link to the Department for Communities and Local Government website: http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housingresearch/housingstatistics/housingstatisticsby/housebuilding/livetables/

Stock by Tenure

In 1981, less than 40% of dwelling stock (0.72 million dwellings) was owner occupied. By 2000 this had risen to 63% (1.47 million) although the proportion has fallen again in the last few years so that, in 2015, 58% (1.48 million) of dwelling stock was owner occupied.

The statistics presented in this section are based on March 2015 because this is the latest available Scottish Household Survey (SHS) dataset at the time of this publication. Updated stock by tenure figures for the year 2016 will be published on our web pages alongside this document, when the SHS 2016 is available in late September 2017.

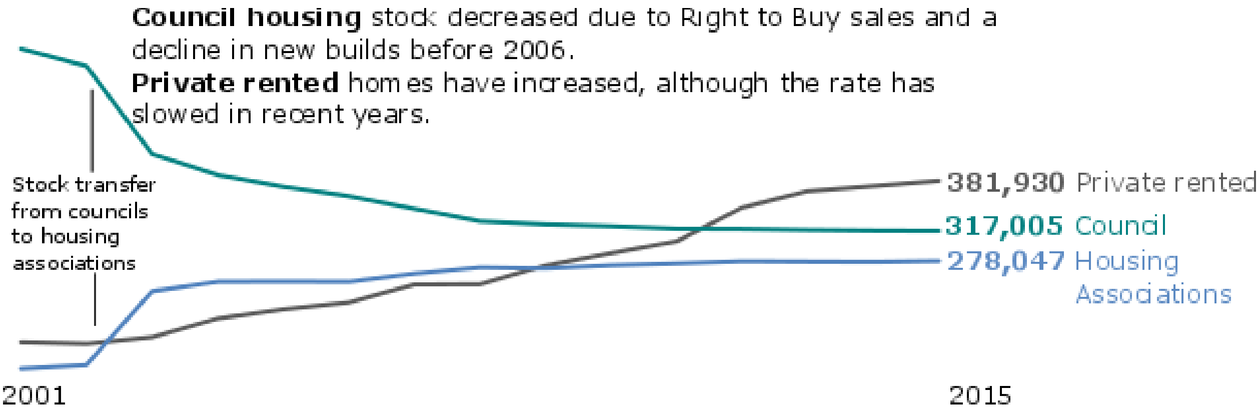
The number of dwellings in Scotland has increased by 551,000 in the last 3 decades from 1.97 million in 1981 to 2.55 million in 2015. This has coincided with an increasing Scottish population and the increased prevalence of smaller households[2].

During this period there have been significant changes in housing tenure. In 1981, less than 40% of dwelling stock (0.72 million dwellings) was owner occupied. By 2000, the number had more than doubled to 1.47 million and accounted for 63% of dwelling stock. In the last 6 years owner occupied stock has fallen from 62% (1.52 million) in 2008 to 58% (1.48 million) in 2015.

[2] http://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/statistics-and-data

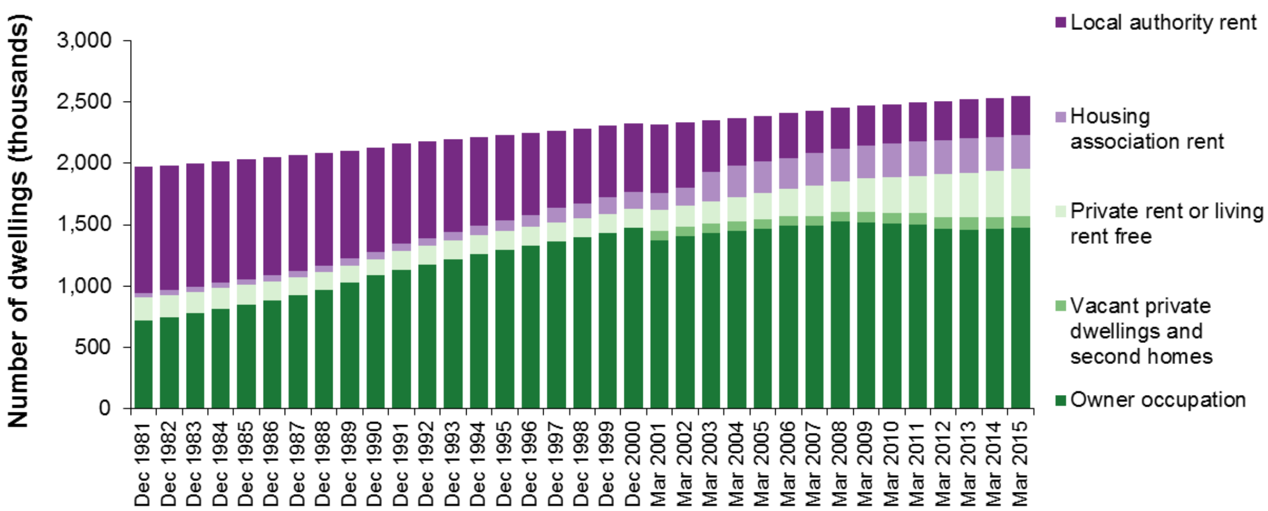
Two factors have contributed to the shift toward owner occupation: the introduction of the right to buy for public authority tenants in 1979 coupled with the decline of local authority new build, and the increased contribution of private sector house building. Chart 6a illustrates the changes in the size of private rented sector stock, compared with councils and housing associations over the 15 year period from 2001 to 2015.

Chart 6a: Numbers of stock by private rented, council housing, and housing associations, 2001 to 2015



The recent reduction in owner occupation has coincided with an increase in the number renting privately or living rent free from 10% (around 248,000 dwellings) in 2008 to 15% (around 382,000 dwellings) in 2015, as shown in Chart 6b. This may have been partly caused by the economic downturn and the difficulty potential home owners have subsequently experienced in securing a mortgage.

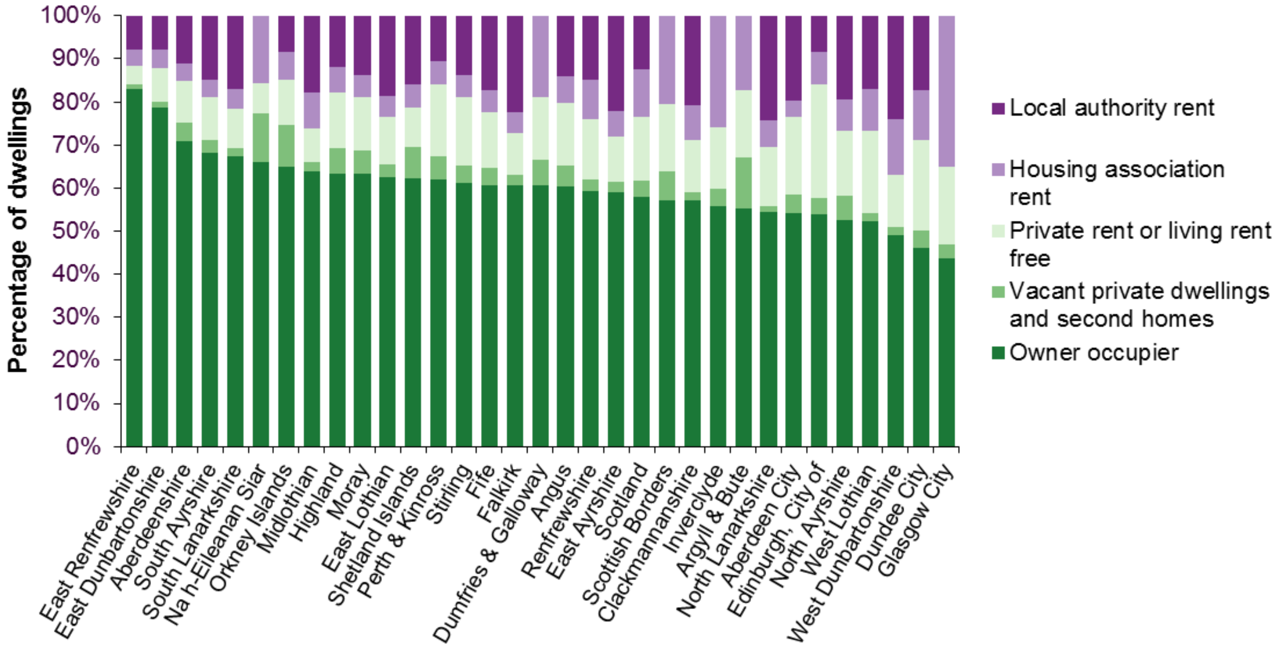
Chart 6b: Estimated stock of dwellings by tenure, 1981 to 2015



Note the change in methodology from March 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.

Local authority level tenure estimates are shown in Chart 7. The rate of owner occupation varies from 83% in East Renfrewshire to 44% in Glasgow. In general, as expected, cities have lower owner occupation rates. The proportion of dwellings rented privately ranges from 4% in East Renfrewshire to 27% 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 12% in East Renfrewshire and East Dunbartonshire to 37% in West Dunbartonshire.

Chart 7: Tenure in Scotland by local authority 2015



Link to tenure tables: http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Housing-Regeneration/HSfS/KeyInfo

The Scottish Household Survey website presents information on housing stock by tenure. Chapter 3 on Housing contains tables on tenure of household by year and by household age group:
http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/16002/PublicationAnnual

Statistics on housing stock in the other UK nations can be found through the following link to the Department for Communities and Local Government website:
http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housingresearch/housingstatistics/housingstatisticsby/stockincludingvacants/livetables/

Local Authority Housing Stock

Local authority stock levels have been decreasing each year since the 1980s, although the rate of decrease has slowed in recent years. As at 31st March 2017 there were 314,816 local authority units, down by 1,737 units (1%) on the previous year.

In line with the trends observed in the tenure chapter above, local authority stock levels have been decreasing each year since the 1980s. This 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 in fact the number of new local authority dwellings being built have shown some increases since 2008. As a result recent decreases in local authority stock levels have correspondingly been fairly small.

Local authority stock levels have decreased by 1,737 from the previous year, to 314,816 units on 31st March 2017. Figures for social sector stock at March 2017 showed that of the 594,600 units, 53% were owned by local authorities. This represents a substantial change since the mid-1990s when public authorities owned nearly 90% of the 783,000 units of social rented stock[3]. The increased contribution of Registered Social Landlords 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.

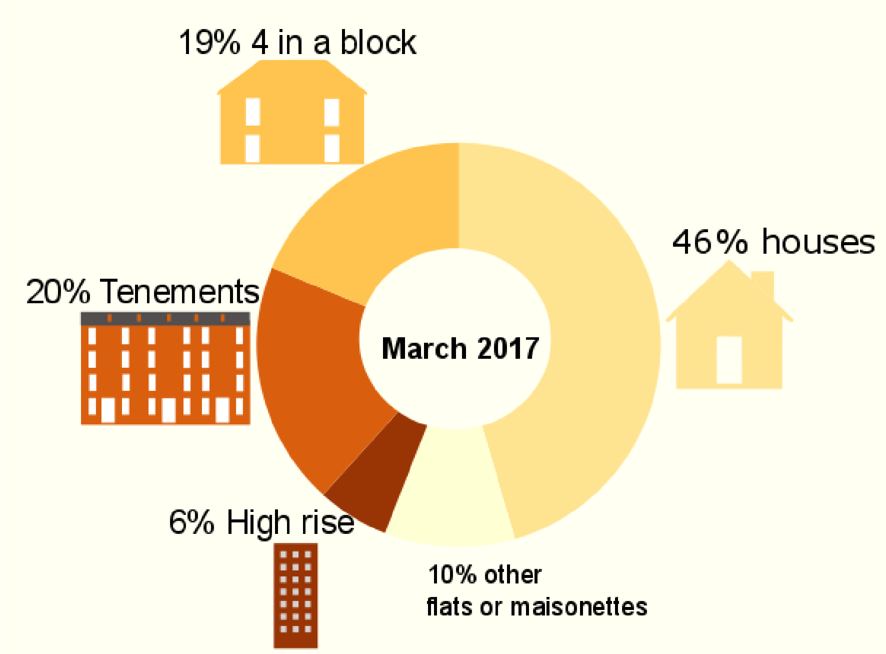
Housing Association for 2014 onwards provided by the Scottish Housing Regulator.

Link to tables on local authority housing stock:
http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Housing-Regeneration/HSfS/Stock

Loooking at local authority owned housing stock by dwelling type, 46% of local authority housing stock at March 2017 were houses. The remaining stock consists of 4 in a block (19%), tenement flats (20%), high rise flats (6%), and other types of flats and maisonettes (10%).

[3] As at December 1995

Chart 8b: Local authority owned housing stock by dwelling type



There were some regional variations in the type of stock held by the different councils. Local Authorities with the highest percentage of houses were Orkney (84%), Shetland (84%), Moray (77%) and Highland (75%). Edinburgh and Renfrewshire had relatively high percentages of their stock as flats (82% and 79% respectively). The highest propertions of stock in high-rise flats were seen in Aberdeen (18%), Edinburgh (15%), and West Dunbartonshire (13%), whilst tenement flats were relatively common in Dundee (51%) and Edinburgh (49%). In both of South Ayrshire, and West Dunbartonshire, 28% of stock was in 4 in a block flats.

Link to tables on stock by type:
http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Housing-Regeneration/HSfS/Stock

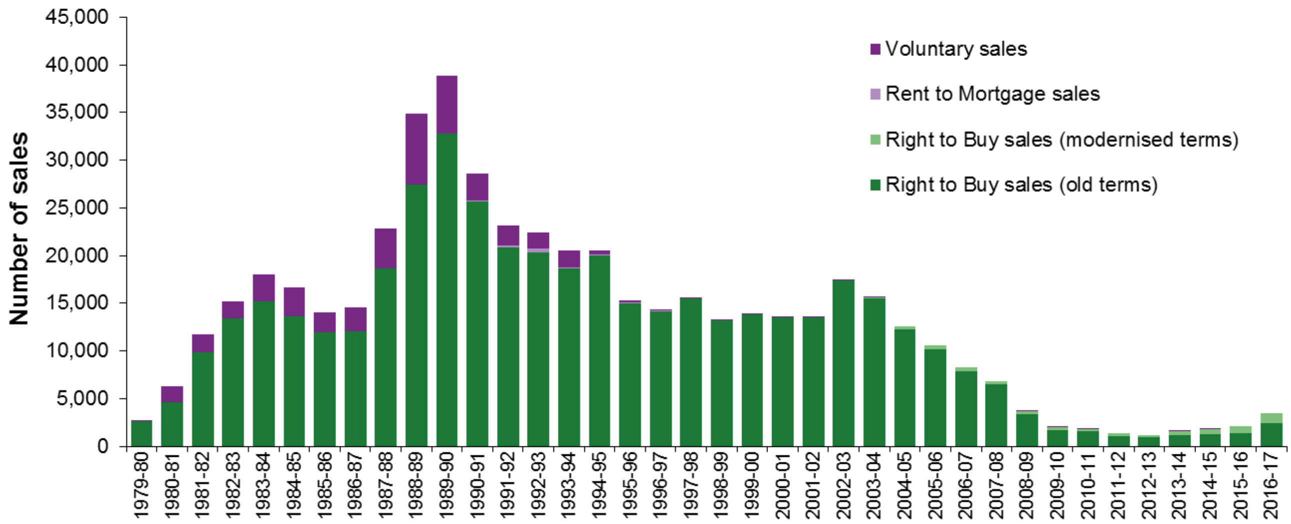
Sales of Local Authority Housing to Sitting Tenants (Right to Buy)

After a small upturn in 2002-03, public authority right to buy sales (including local authorities with total stock transfers) declined consistently to a level of 1,209 in 2012-13, and has been increasing since then.

In 2016-17 right to buy sales increased by 68% from the previous year to 3,510. 32% of 2016-17 sales were under modernised terms.

Chart 9 shows the scale of sales to sitting tenants since the inception of the Right to Buy scheme in 1979.

Chart 9: Sales to sitting tenants of public authority stock



The introduction of Right to Buy legislation in 1979 had a substantial impact on the profile of Scottish housing. Over the years, nearly half a million public sector properties have been sold under the Right to Buy scheme. The annual rate of sales to sitting tenants peaked at just under 40,000 in 1989, at the height of the housing boom. It then fell rapidly in the early 1990s as the housing market crashed, settling at around 15,000 per year from the mid-1990s onwards. Legislation introduced as part of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 then resulted in significant changes in Right to Buy terms for new tenants from 2002-03. Following the change in legislation, new tenants were on modernised terms which in most cases meant they could not buy until October 2007 at the earliest, and on less favourable terms than previously. Further changes to the Right to Buy rules were made in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010. The Act included provisions to end the Right to Buy for new supply social housing and for new tenants from 2nd March 2011. It also introduced more flexibility and local control over the designation of pressured areas.

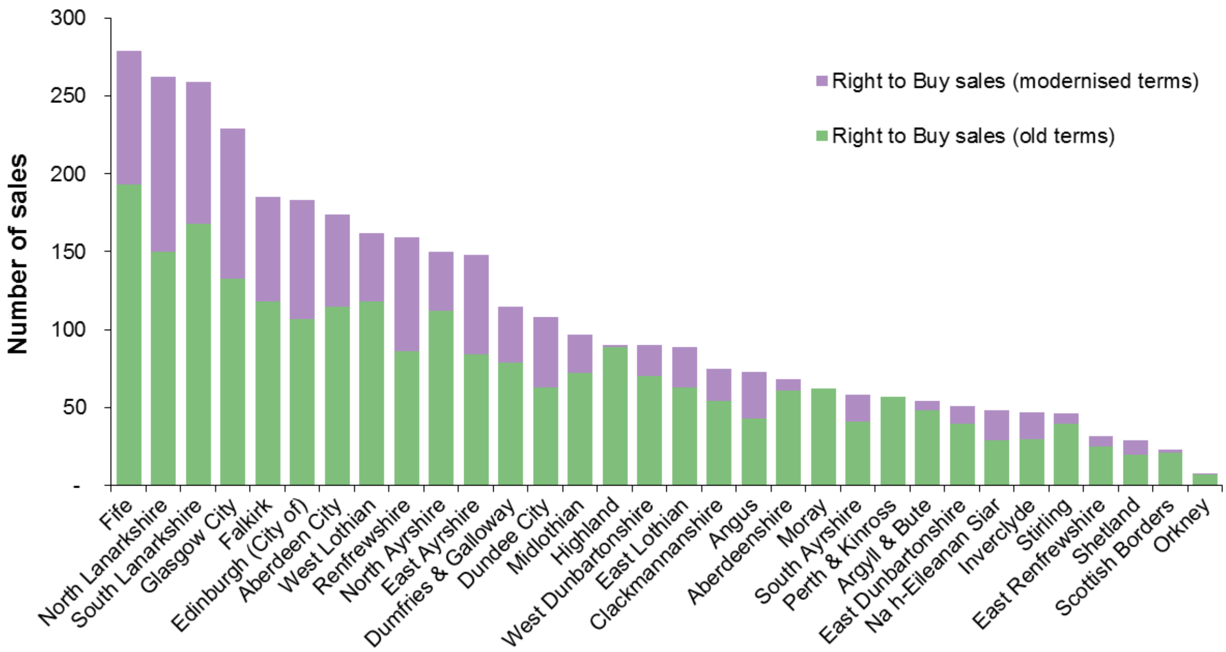
After a small upturn in 2002-03, public authority right to buy sales (including local authorities with total stock transfers) declined consistently to a level of 1,209 for 2012-13. In 2013 the Scottish Government announced that the Right to Buy was to end for all tenants. This is likely to be responsible for the number of sales more than doubling in the latest 4 years, as tenants buy their homes whilst they still have the opportunity. 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, and the scheme subsequently closed to all new applicants on 31st July 2016.

Excluding stock transfer local authorities there were 2,994 Right to Buy sales in 2016-17, which was up 73% on the previous year.

Up to and including 2016-17 there have been 5,554 sales of public authority housing under modernised terms and in the latest year 32% of sales were under modernised terms. This proportion has been steadily rising since their introduction in 2002-03.

Chart 10, below, shows the numbers of sales in each local authority under the old and modernised terms for 2016-17. This chart includes sales of former council houses in local authorities which transferred their stock to housing associations. Fife had the highest number of sales at 279, followed by North Lanarkshire at 262.

Chart 10: Sales to sitting tenants of public authority stock, 2016-17



Link to tables on sales of social sector housing:
http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Housing-Regeneration/HSfS/Sales

Local Authority Vacant Stock

At 31st March 2017 local authorities reported 6,164 units of vacant stock, a slight decrease of 17 units on the 6,181 units in the previous year.

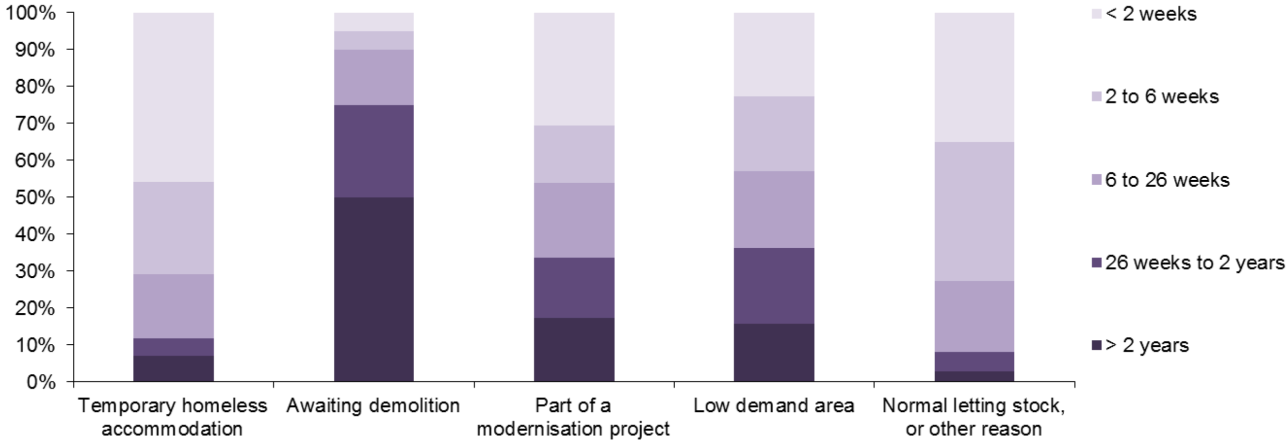
Of this, 25% of units were awaiting demolition, 11% were in a low demand area, 18% were part of a modernisation programme, 8% were used as temporary accommodation for the homeless, and 38% were normal letting stock.

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. At 31st March 2017 local authorities reported 6,164 units of vacant stock, slightly less than the 6,181 in the previous year. This continues the longer term reduction in the number of vacant dwellings, mainly due to falling numbers of stock being set aside to be demolished.

Of the 6,164 units, 25% were awaiting demolition or sale, 11% were in a low demand area, 18% were part of a modernisation programme, and a further 8% were used as temporary accommodation for the homeless. 38% of vacant stock was normal letting stock or other vacant stock, which represents 1% of all local authority normal letting stock.

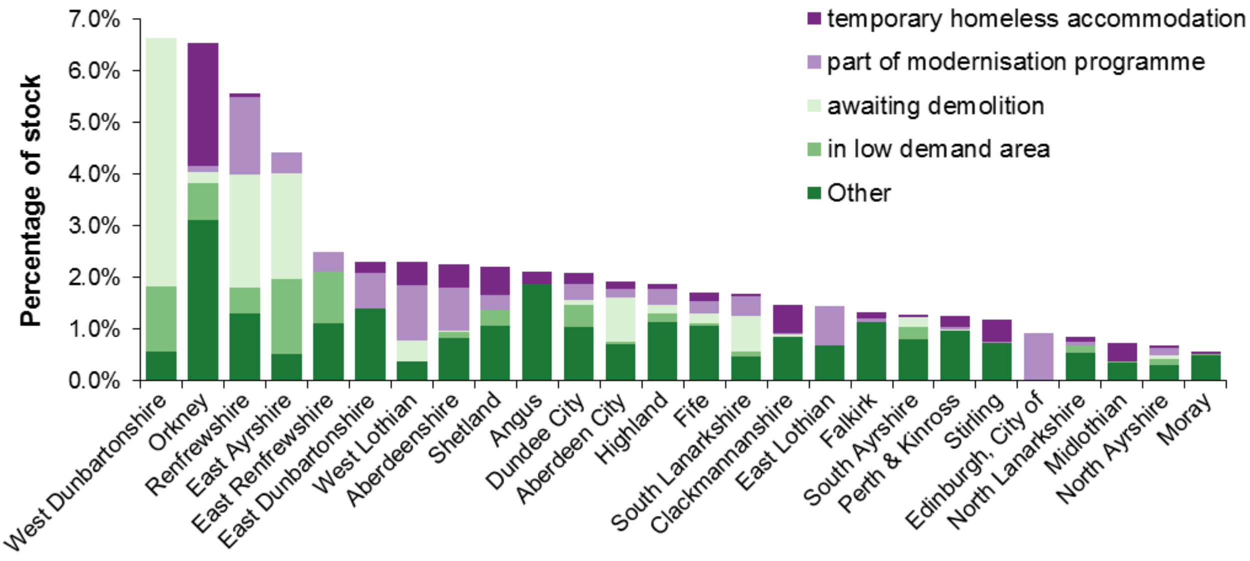
Chart 11 below illustrates that the length of time that properties have been vacant is closely related to the reason for the vacancy. Normal letting stock, or temporary homeless accommodation tends to be empty for less time than other types of vacant stock. For example, at March 2017 just over a third (35%) of vacant normal letting stock had been vacant for less than 2 weeks, and 3% had been vacant for over two years. This compares to half of vacant stock awaiting demolition which was vacant for over 2 years, and just 5% vacant for less than two weeks.

Chart 11: Vacant local authority stock by length of time vacant and reason for vacancy, March 2017



Vacant stock in each local authority area (except those which have transferred their social housing stock) is shown in Chart 12 below. This shows vacant stock, by reason for vacancy, as a proportion of all local authority housing stock.

Chart 12: Vacant local authority stock as a proportion of all local authority stock, March 2017



Link to tables on public authority vacant stock:
http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Housing-Regeneration/HSfS/StockManagement

National Records for Scotland (NRS) produce statistics on occupied and vacant dwellings for all sectors each year at local authority and data zone level:
http://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/statistics-and-data/statistics/statistics-by-theme/housholds/household-estimates

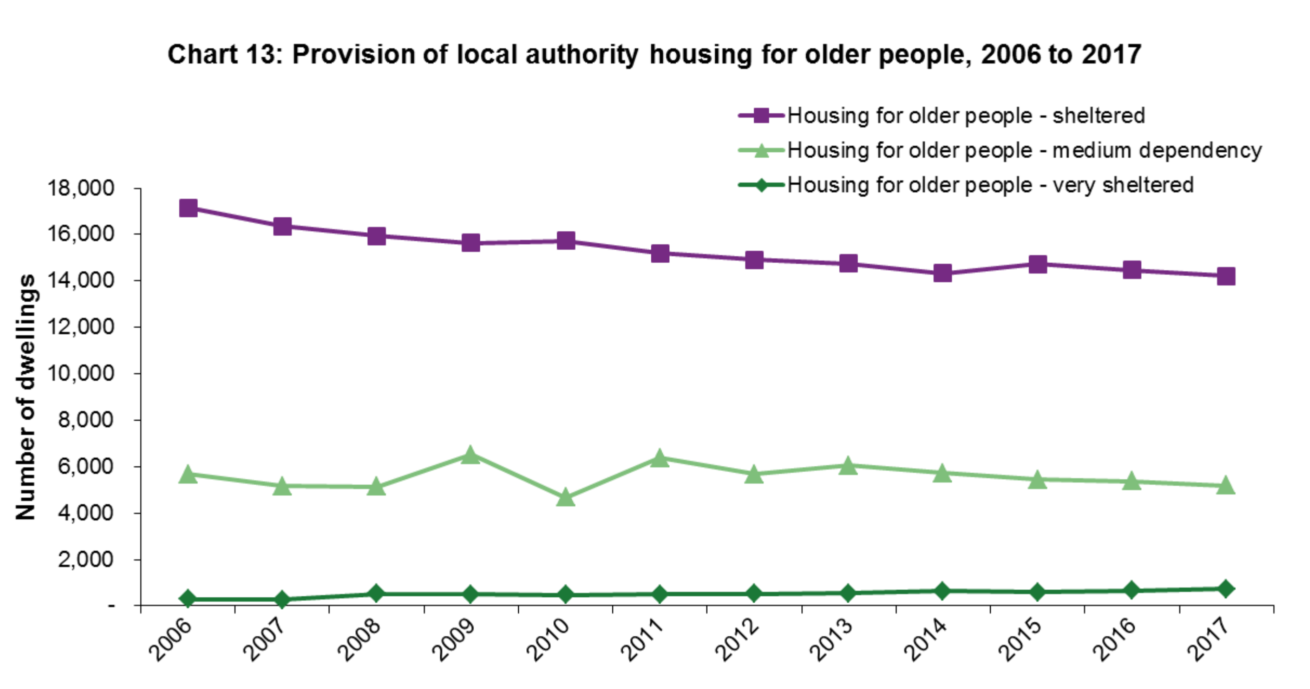
Housing for Older People and People with Disabilities

The number of sheltered, very sheltered and medium dependency houses provided by local authorities has decreased from 23,108 in 2006 to 20,126 in 2017.

The amount of very sheltered accommodation has increased from 290 in 2006 to 725 in 2016, whist the amount of sheltered accommodation has dropped from 17,140 in 2006 to 14,216 in 2017.

Supported Housing is provided by both local authorities and housing associations. In addition, 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.

Local authority figures at 31st March 2017 show that there were 20,126 sheltered, very sheltered and medium dependency houses. The amount of very sheltered accommodation has increased from 290 in 2006 to 725 in March 2017, whist the amount of sheltered accommodation has dropped from 17,140 in 2006 to 14,216 in 2017.



Link to tables on housing for older people and people with disabilities: http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Housing-Regeneration/HSfS/SpecialNeedsHousing

The Scottish House Condition Survey (SHCS) is the a national survey of housing and households undertaken in Scotland as part of the Scottish Household Survey. It combines both an interview with occupants and a physical inspection of dwellings to build up a picture of Scotland's occupied housing stock which covers all types of households and dwellings across the entire country - whether owned or rented, flats or houses. http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/SHCS

The Scottish Health Survey (SHeS) provides a detailed picture of the health of the Scottish population in private households and is designed to make a major contribution to the monitoring of health in Scotland. It is essential for the Scottish Government's forward planning, for identifying gaps in health services provision and for identifying which groups are at particular risk of future ill-health. http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Health/scottish-health-survey

Scheme of Assistance

In 2016-17, councils provided householders with 210,113 instances of help. Most of these (over 90%) were non-financial.

In 2016-17, 10,483 scheme of assistance grants were paid to householders, a 3% decrease (or 270 fewer grants) than 2015-16. Scheme of Assistance grants totalled £31.8 million, which is similar to 2015-16. The majority of these were for disabled adaptions, 5,967 grants which is 8% less than the 2015-16 figure of 6,482. Disabled adaptation grants in 2016-17 totalled £22.8 million which is less than the 2015-16 figure of £23.1 milliion.

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[4] 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 2016-17, 10,483 scheme of assistance grants were paid to householders, which is less than the previous year (a 3% increase or 270 more grants). Scheme of Assistance grants in 2016-17 totalled £31.8 million which is similar to the 2015-16 figure. The majority of these grants were for disabled adaptions, 5,967 grants which is less than the 2015-16 figure of 6,482. Disabled grants in 2016-17 totalled £22.8 million which less than the 2015-16 figure of £23.1 million.

In 2016-17, councils provided householders with 210,113 instances of help. Most of this help (194,802 cases or over 90% of all cases) was in the form of non-financial assistance such as website hits, leaflets or advice. Total spending was almost £43.3 million. 5,967 grants were paid to disabled households totalling £22.8 million. A further 4,516 grants were paid to other households totalling £8.7 million.

[4] Usually 80% of the cost of prescribed adaptation work or 100% where the applicant receives certain benefits.

Link to tables on housing for older people and people with disabilities:
http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Housing-Regeneration/HSfS/SoA

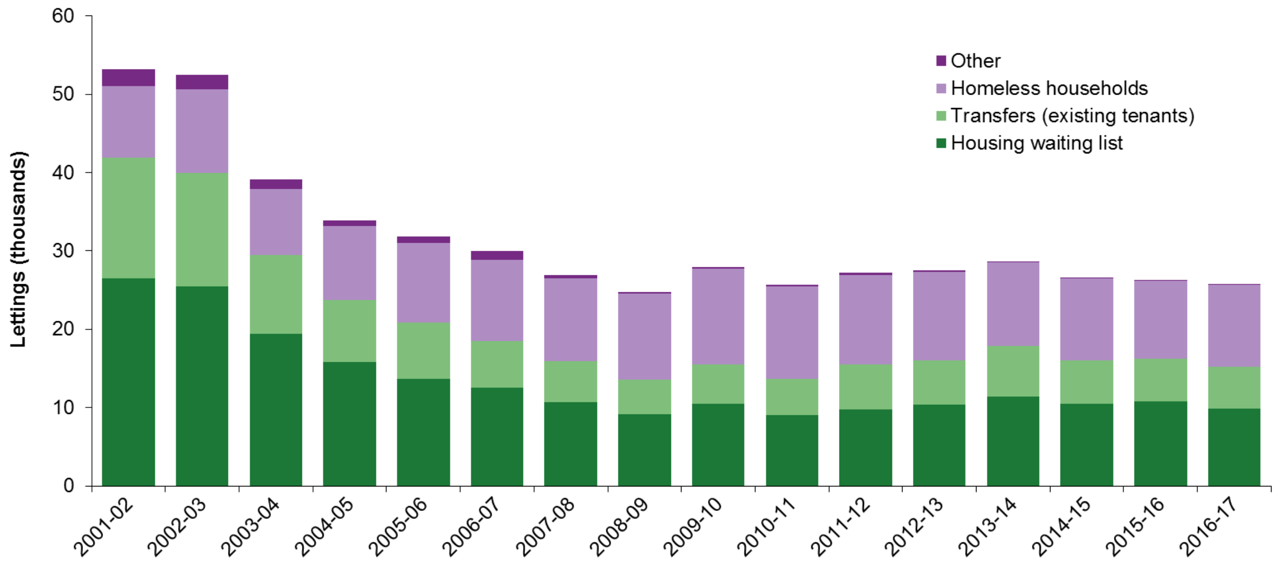
Local Authority Lettings

During 2016-17 there were 25,788 permanent lettings made, a decrease of 2% compared to 26,258 lettings in the previous year.

40% of all local authority lettings made in 2016-17 were to homeless households, compared to 38% in 2015-16. There were a total of 10,436 lettings to homeless households in 2016-17, an increase of 5% on the 9,913 lettings in 2015-16.

Mirroring the falling stock levels, the number of local authority lettings decreased each year throughout the 2000s (Chart 14) until 2008-09. The number of lettings increased slightly each year between 2011-12 and 2013-14 then decreased. During 2016-17 there were 25,788 permanent lettings made, a decrease of 2% compared to 2015-16.

Chart 14: Permanent local authority lettings by source of tenant, 2001-02 to 2016-17

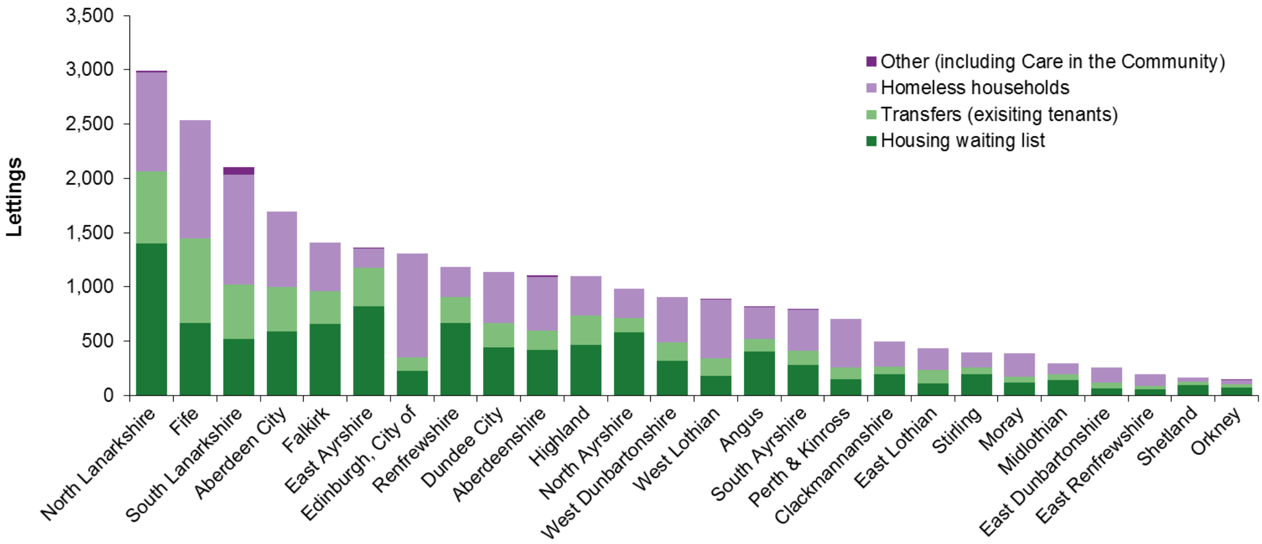


The proportion of lets allocated to homeless applicants is an important indicator in measuring local authorities' capacity to sustain the 2012 homelessness commitment whereby all unintentionally homeless households are entitled to settled accommodation. In 2016-17, 40% of all local authority lettings made were to homeless household, which is slightly higher than the 38% in 2015-16. The number of lettings to homeless households dipped from 10,390 in 2014-15 to 9,913 in 2015-16, however the figure has now increased back up to 10,436.

Of the 25,788 permanent lettings made in Scotland in 2016-17, 25,524 (99%) were for Scottish Secure Tenancies (SST) which are the standard local authority tenancies. Most of the remainder (252) were Short Scottish Secure Tenancies (SSSTs). These can be used by a local authority in place of a SST in certain circumstances. The majority of the SSSTs (83% or 209) were temporary lets for housing support.

Chart 15 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 73% of all permanent lettings in Edinbugh, compared to 13% in East Ayrshire. The proportion of lets made to housing waiting list applicants varied between 17% in Edinburgh, to 60% in East Ayrshire.

Chart 15: Permanent local authority lettings, by source of tenant, 2016-17



More information can be found here: http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2002/08/sst/3

Link to tables on local authority lettings:
http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Housing-Regeneration/HSfS/StockManagement

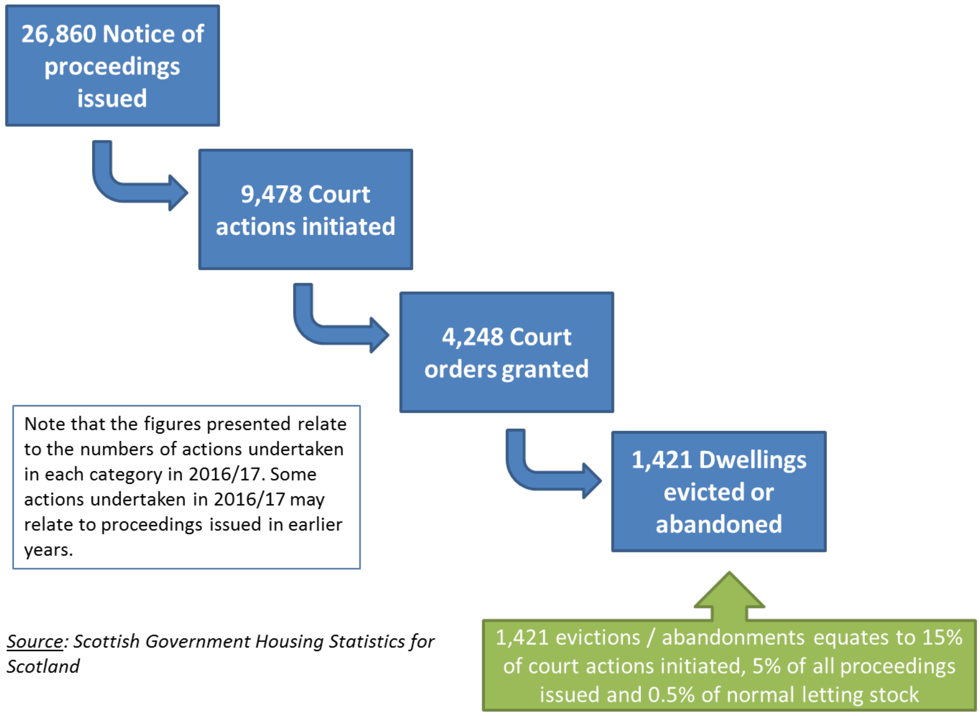
The Scottish Government publishes a range of information on Homelessness, including the number of lets for homeless households, collected through the HL1 return: http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Housing-Regeneration/RefTables

Local Authority Evictions

There were 1,421 tenancy terminations (evictions and abandonments) in 2016-17, an increase of 9% or 121 on 1,300 in 2015-16. Of the 1,421 tenancy terminations in 2016-17, 93% (1,318) were due to rent arrears – a similar proportion to 2015-16 (95%).

The diagram below (Figure A) illustrates the numbers of actions taken in against local authority tenants in 2016-17. There were 26,860 notices of proceedings issued in 2016-17.9,478 proceeded to court, with 4,248 court orders being granted. 1,421 tenances were terminated through an eviction or abandonment of the dwelling.

Figure A: Action taken against council tenants in 2016-17



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.

Chart 16: Eviction actions against local authority tenants, 2001-02 to 2016-17

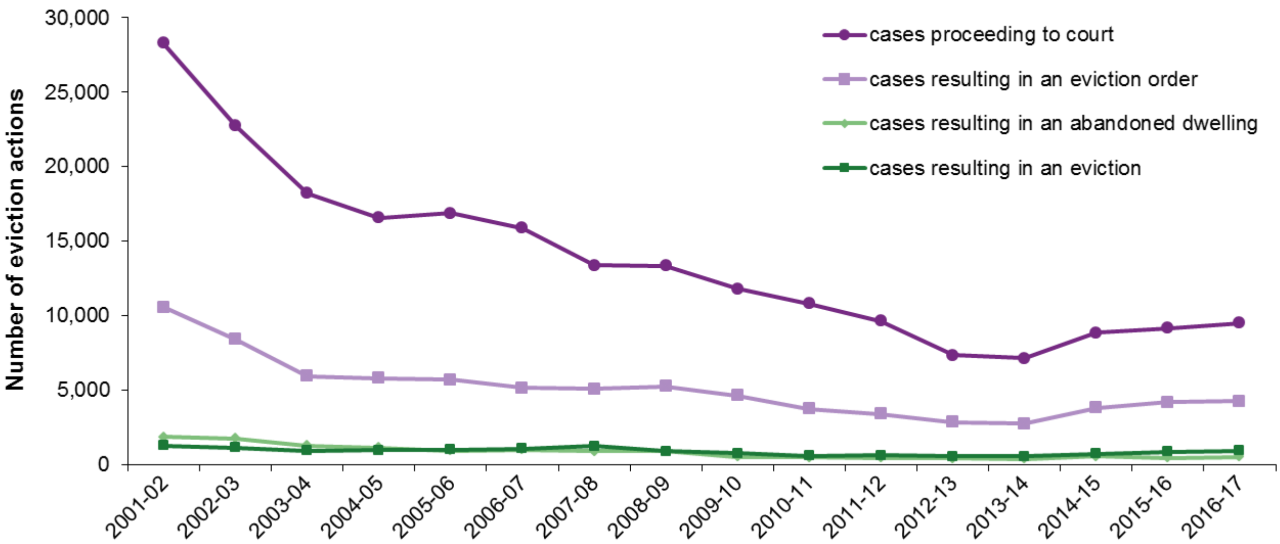


Chart 16 shows there were large reductions in the number of actions against local authority tenants proceeding to court from 28,301 in 2001-02 to 7,127 in 2013-14. This was followed by increases from to 8,857 in 2014-15, to 9,478 in 2016-17.

The number of cases resulting in an eviction order also fell from 10,558 in 2001-02 to 2,728 in 2013-14, but has since increased to 4,248 in 2016-17. Local authority tenancy terminations (i.e. evictions plus abandoned dwellings) as a result of eviction actions have also increased in the latest year. There were 1,421 such terminations in 2016-17 which equates to 0.5% of normal letting stock, down from 3,093 (0.6% of normal letting stock) in 2001-02. Within this, the number of evictions of local authority tenants is 927, which equates to 10% of all cases proceeding to court.

The 56% reduction in the number of notices of proceedings issued for rent arrears cases between 2011-12 and 2014-15 (from 51,886 to 23,009) has been followed by increases in 2015-16 and 2016-17, to 26,488. The number of rent arrears cases taken to court has increased by 7% from 8,761 to 9,397 in the latest year. The number of tenancy terminations for rent arrears (evictions and abandonments) has increased by 7% this year from 1,235 to 1,318. As almost all eviction actions are for rent arrears, similar changes can be observed for the number of eviction actions overall.

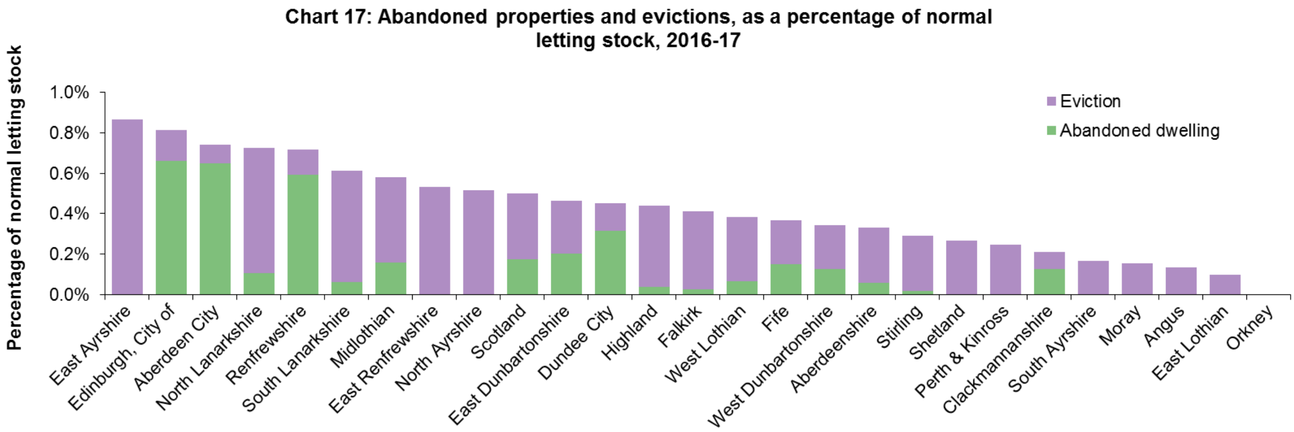


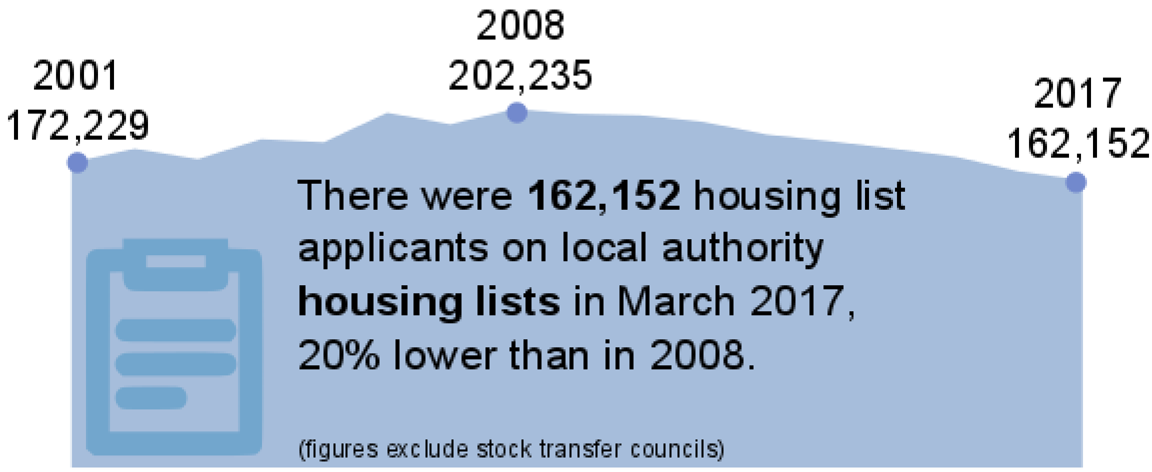
Chart 17 shows that across local authorities there is considerable variation in the rate of evictions or abandoned dwellings in relation to normal letting stock levels. In 2016-17, East Ayrshire had the highest eviction/abandoned dwelling rate at just under 1% of letting stock. Orkney had no evictions or abandonments in 2016-17. Link to tables on local authority evictions:
http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Housing-Regeneration/HSfS/StockManagement

Section 11 legislation gives local authorities early notice of households at risk of homelessness due to eviction and places a duty on landlords (except local authority landlords) and creditors to notify the relevant local authority when they raise proceedings for possession or serve certain other notices. Statistics on this can be found on the Scottish Government website:
http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Housing-Regeneration/RefTables

Housing Lists

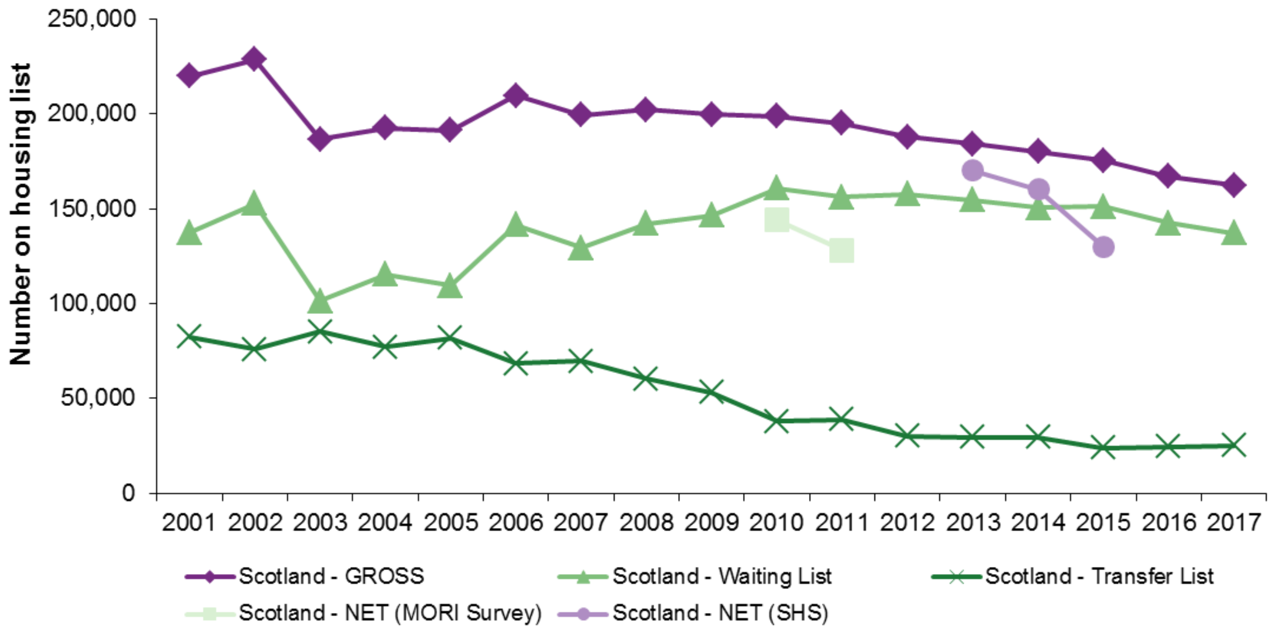
At 31st March 2017, 162,152 applications were recorded on local authority or common housing register housing lists, a 3% decrease, or 4,970 fewer households than 2016, and the ninth consecutive annual decrease.

Chart 18: Number of housing list applicants



Local Authorities reported a total of 162,152 households on local authority or common housing register lists as at 31st March 2017, a 3% decrease, 4,970 fewer households than 2016 and the ninth successive annual decrease. Of these 25,100 are recorded as being on Transfer Lists and 137,100 on Waiting Lists for entry into social housing.

Chart 19: Applications on Housing Register, 2001 to 2017



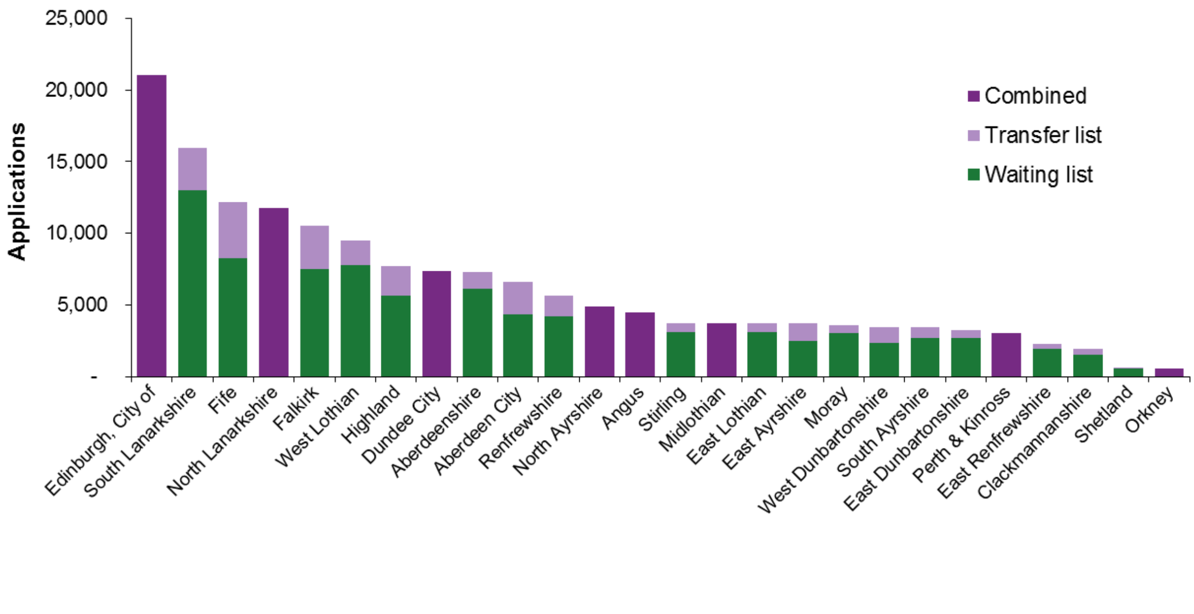
However, 8 out of the 26 local authorities with housing stock did not operate separate waiting and transfer lists. In this report all of the households on the lists of these authorities are treated as being on the waiting lists and none on the transfer list. This means that the Waiting List figure is 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 clearly contributes to the trends illustrated in Chart 19. The chart shows large increases in the number of people on waiting lists until 2010 and large decreases in transfer lists until 2012, whilst the overall total remains more constant although has fallen in recent years.

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 double-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 19 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 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.

Chart 20 shows housing list applicants at 31st March 2017 broken down by local authority.

Chart 20: Applications on Housing Register at 31 March 2017



Link to tables on housing lists:
http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Housing-Regeneration/HSfS/StockManagement

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 are published in SHS Annual Reports:
http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/16002/PublicationAnnual

Official statistics obtained from an 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. The excel tables can be accessed through the following link: http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Housing-Regeneration/HSfS/HousingListSurvey

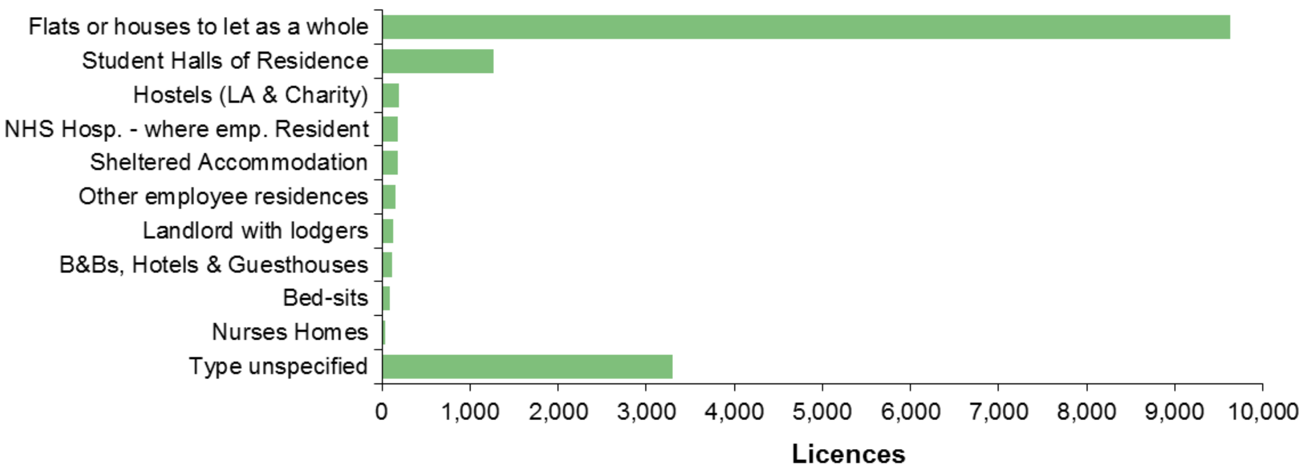
Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO)

The most recent figures as at 31st March 2017 show 15,289 licences in force, 2% higher than the previous year.

The number of licences in force has generally increased since the introduction of the mandatory licensing scheme in 2001. The most recent figures for 2017 show 15,289 licences in force at 31st March, 2% higher than the previous year. Of the licences in force, 87% are accounted for by just five local authorities – Aberdeen City, Dundee City, City of Edinburgh, Fife and Glasgow City. City of Edinburgh alone holds an estimated 39% of Scotland's HMO licences.

Chart 21 below shows the number of licences in force at 31st March 2017, by the type of property. Flats or houses to let as a whole are by far the largest HMO type (63%), with specific student accommodation within halls of residence accounting for a further 8%.

Chart 21: HMO licences in force, by type, March 2017



There were 9,668 applications received in 2016-17, 9% more than the year before. New applications made up 17% of these, and the remainder were applications for licence renewals.

A National Statistics publication for Scotland

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Designation can be interpreted to mean that the statistics: meet identified user needs; are produced, managed and disseminated to high standards; and are explained well.

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How to access background or source data

For the data collected for this statistical bulletin publication:
☐ Most of the data that is collected is made available via Excel webtables at http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Housing-Regeneration/HSfS
☐ For some data items, further details may be made available on request subject to consideration of legal and ethical factors. Please contact housingstatistics@Scotland.gsi.gov.uk for further information.

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