

Scottish House Condition Survey

Key Findings Infographic Summary 2019

A National Statistics publication for Scotland



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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**These topics can be explored in more detail
in the [2019 Key Findings report](#)**

What is the SHCS?

The Scottish House Condition Survey (SHCS) is at the centre of Scotland's evidence based approach to policy-making.

It provides the only nationally representative data on fuel poverty, energy efficiency and house conditions. This gives essential evidence for key policies including fuel poverty and climate change.

The SHCS consists of an interview with householders and a physical inspection of the dwelling they occupy, which provides a picture of Scotland's occupied housing stock.

The physical data about the dwelling is recorded by surveyors trained to collect detailed information on housing characteristics.

In 2019, 2,997 households participated in both the interview and physical inspection part of the survey.

The Scottish House Condition Survey is a unique and powerful data set for examining the condition and characteristics of Scotland's housing stock alongside the views and experience of the people living in those dwellings





Key Attributes of
the Scottish
Housing Stock

SECTION ONE

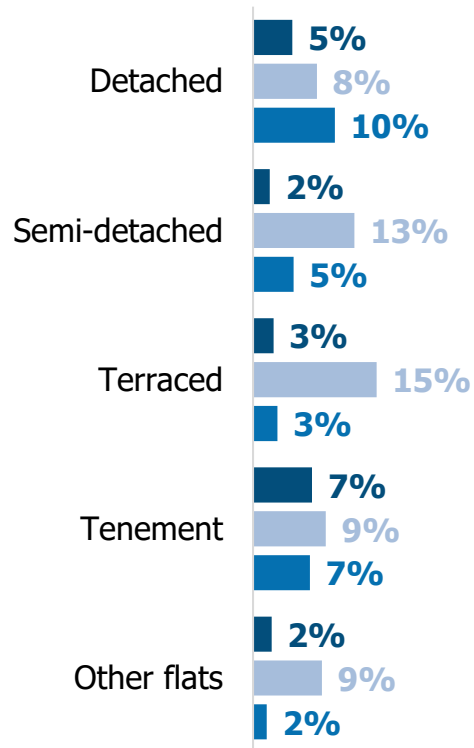
The Housing Stock in Scotland is Diverse

The age of construction and the built form of a dwelling has consequences for energy performance, running costs and living conditions.

Some of the most common types of housing were:

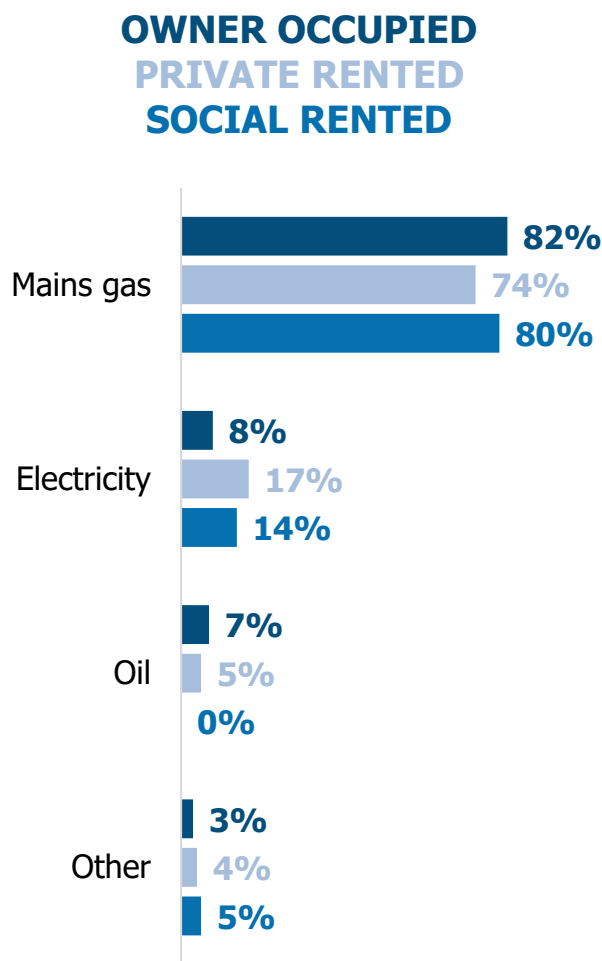
- Old (pre-1919) detached houses (5%; 122,000) and tenement flats (7%; 184,000).
- More modern post-1982 detached houses (10%; 255,000) and tenements (7%; 177,000).
- Post-war terraced houses (14%; 353,000 built between 1945 and 1982).
- Semi-detached houses, common across all age bands and accounting for around 20% of the stock alone.

BUILT PRE-1919
BUILT BETWEEN 1919 AND 1982
BUILT POST-1982



Across Scotland, houses were more common than flats and more modern, post-1982 dwellings were now more common than older pre-1919 dwellings

Mains Gas is the Most Common Heating Fuel



The most common primary heating fuel in Scotland was mains gas, with 81% of dwellings using mains gas for heating.

Rented homes, in both the private and social sectors, were more likely to use electricity as their primary heating fuel than those in the owner occupied sector.

Oil heating was not a feature in the social sector. However, 4% of social dwellings used communal heating which was very uncommon in the private sector.

Around 17% of dwellings in Scotland were estimated to be outside the coverage of the gas grid



The numbers in the bar chart might not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Rural and Urban Dwellings Tend to be Different

In 2019, half (50%) of rural dwellings were detached houses, compared to 17% of urban dwellings.

Consequently rural dwellings also tended to be bigger than urban dwellings. On average, 31% larger.

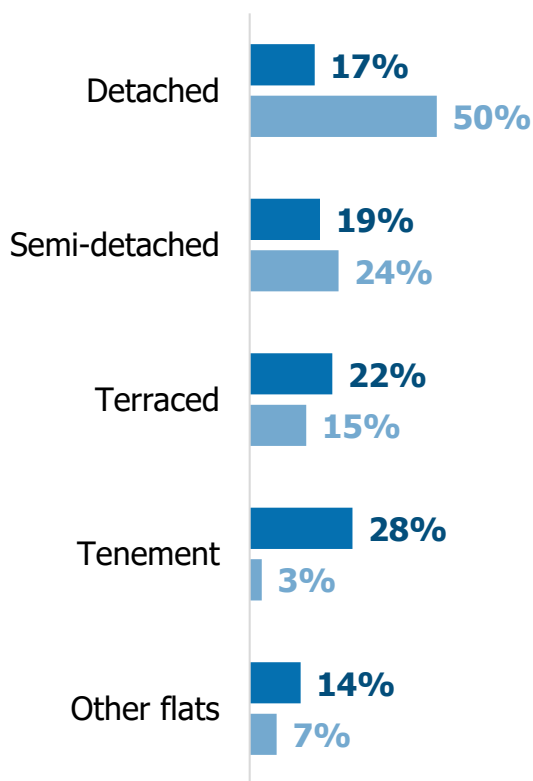
The size of the internal floor area has implications for the heating requirements of a dwelling. Larger dwellings require greater heat inputs and therefore cost more to heat. This has a direct impact on fuel poverty.

Primary heating fuel also varied by geographic location. 89% of dwellings in urban locations used mains gas as their primary heating fuel compared to 40% of those in rural locations. By contrast, rural households were more likely to use electricity and oil.



PROPORTION OF URBAN DWELLINGS

PROPORTION OF RURAL DWELLINGS



20% of rural dwellings used electricity as their primary heating fuel and 28% used oil

compared with 9% and less than 1% for urban dwellings



Energy Efficiency

Section Two

Energy Efficiency in Scotland has Improved

The proportion of dwellings achieving the highest energy efficiency ratings (EPC Band C+) has increased from 24% in 2010 to 51% in 2019.

The energy efficiency of Scotland's dwelling is measured by the Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) which is periodically reviewed by the UK government to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

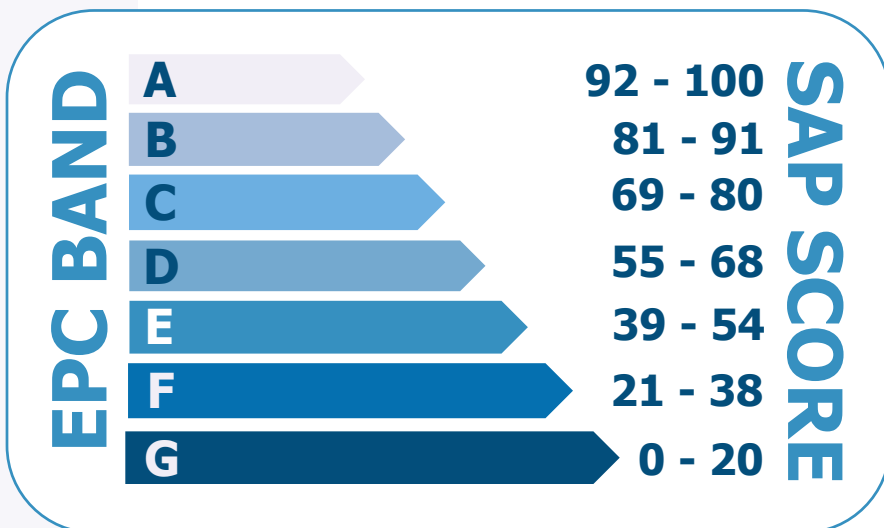
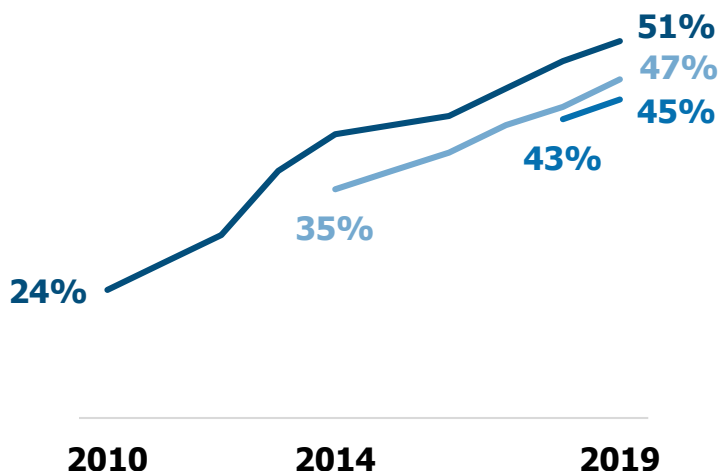
Buildings are given a score between 1-100 which places them in an EPC band. A higher rating, or a band closer to A, means the home has higher energy efficiency.

While different SAP versions are not directly comparable, the trend of improvement was also seen using the more recent SAP versions.

The dwellings in the lowest energy efficiency bands were more likely to be pre-1919, detached, use heating fuels other than gas, or be in the private rented sector.

Proportion of Dwellings in Scotland in EPC Bands ABC

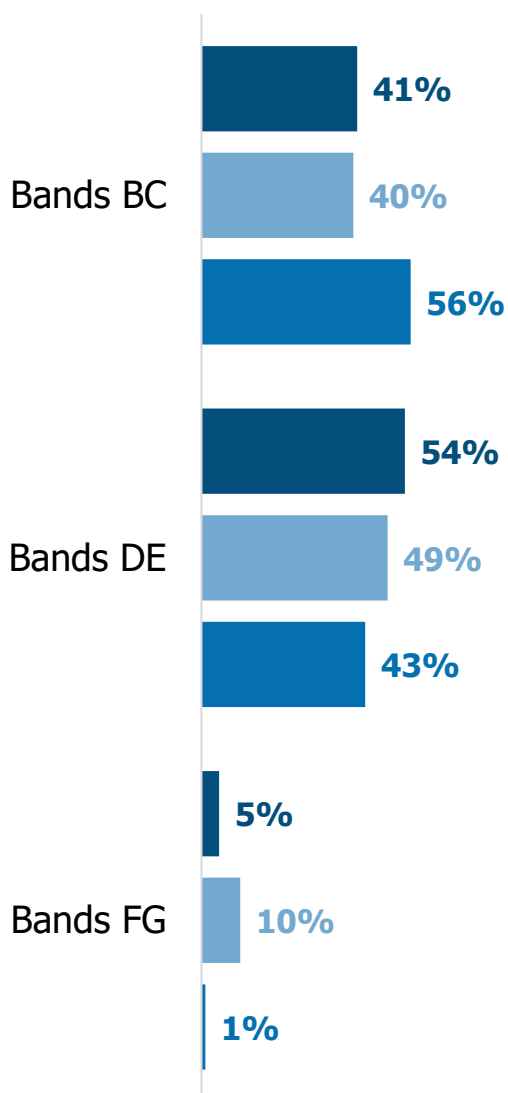
SAP 2009
SAP 2012 (v9.92)
SAP 2012 (v9.93)



Energy Performance Varies by Tenure

Proportion of...

OWNER OCCUPIED
PRIVATE RENTED
SOCIAL RENTED



In 2019, social sector homes had the highest overall energy performance rating.

56% of dwellings in the social rented sector were rated as band C or above.

This could be driven by the Scottish Housing Quality Standard and the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing which introduced minimum energy efficiency levels for that sector.

Among private rented dwellings, 40% were in band C or above. This sector has the greatest proportion of dwellings in the lowest EPC bands (10% in band F or G).



The Environmental Impact of Homes has Decreased

The Environmental Impact Rating (EIR) of Scottish dwellings has gradually increased over time.

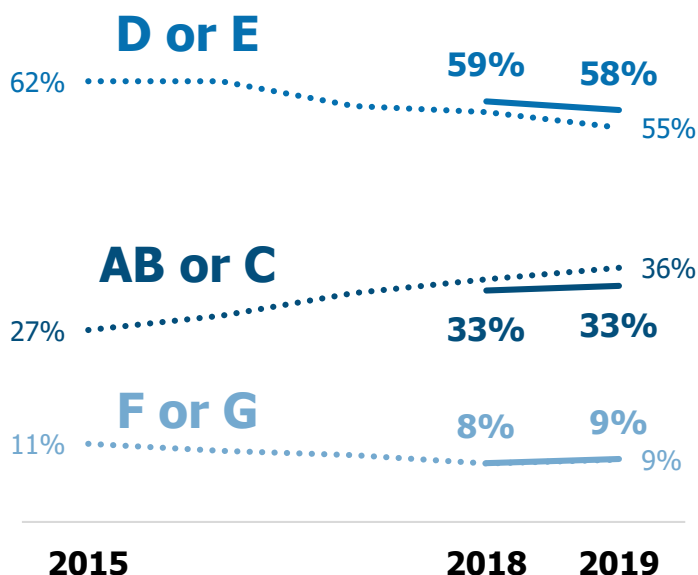
The EIR represents the impact of a dwelling in terms of carbon emissions associated with fuels used for heating, hot water, lighting and ventilation.

A higher rating, or a band closer to A, means the home has a lower environmental impact.

33% of dwellings had an EIR of band C or above in 2019 (using SAP 2012 v9.93), compared with 27% in 2015 (using SAP 2012 v9.92).

Proportion of Dwellings in Scotland in EIR Bands:

..... Using SAP 2012 (v.9.92)
 ——— Using SAP 2012 (v9.93)

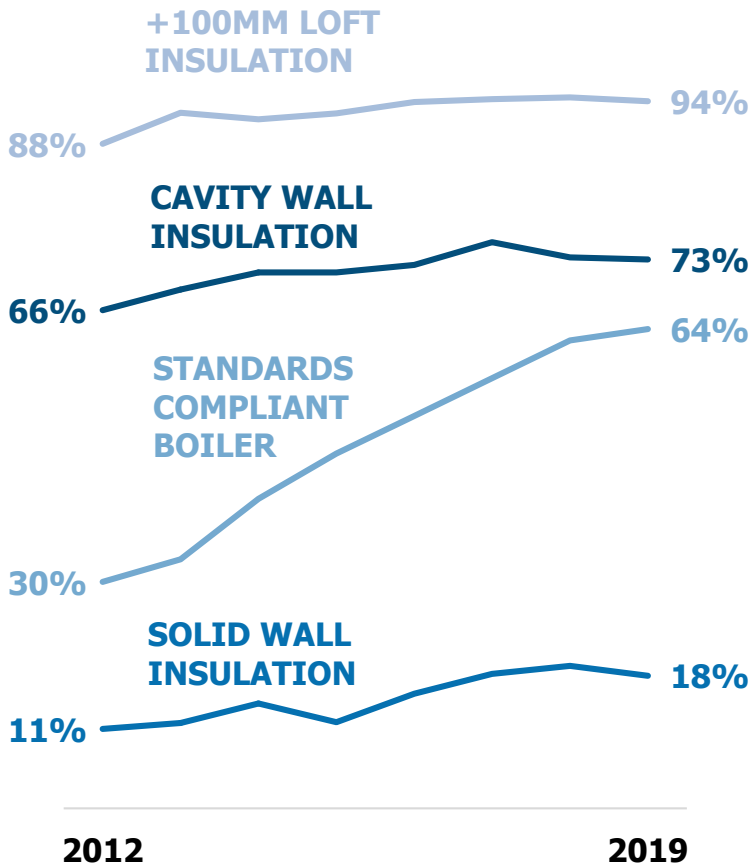


Average modelled carbon emissions for all dwellings in Scotland decreased from 80 kg/m² in 2014 to 73 kg/m² in 2019

Most of this change happened before 2017

Factors Affecting Energy Efficiency

Proportion of Dwellings with...



The share of dwellings in Scotland with insulated walls and lofts, and standard compliant boilers has increased since 2012. These are essential for better energy performance.

The largest increases in installation of insulation took place between 2012 and 2015 for cavity walls and lofts and between 2012 and 2017 for solid walls with rates of insulation remaining stable in recent years.

Levels of insulation (both loft and wall) were higher in the social sector than in the private sector. 70% of homes in the social sector had wall insulation compared to 55% in the private sector.

The share of homes with insulated lofts increased from 88% of dwellings in 2012 to 94% in 2019

To a thickness of 100mm or more



In the private sector, 63% of lofts were insulated to 200 mm or more compared to 71% in the social sector.

SHCS surveyors may not always be able to identify the presence of cavity wall insulation, hence the figures might underestimate the extent of cavity wall insulation and overall levels on insulation.



Fuel Poverty

SECTION THREE

What is Fuel Poverty?



Fuel costs are more than 10% of the households income, after housing costs are deducted



The income remaining after deducting housing, fuel costs, childcare costs, and some benefits, cannot provide an acceptable standard of living

In order for a household to be fuel poor, the following two conditions have to be true:

1. The fuel costs of the household has to be more than 10% of the household's total income after housing costs.
2. After housing costs, fuel costs, potential childcare costs and benefits for a care need or disability have been deducted, the remainder of the household's income is less than 90% of the UK Minimum Income Standard – a measure of an acceptable standard of living.

When calculating the Minimum Income Standard, an uplift is applied for households in remote rural, remote small town and island areas.

A household would count as being in extreme fuel poverty when these conditions are true, but the fuel costs take up more than 20% of the household income, after housing costs are deducted.

Fuel Poverty has Remained Stable in Recent Years

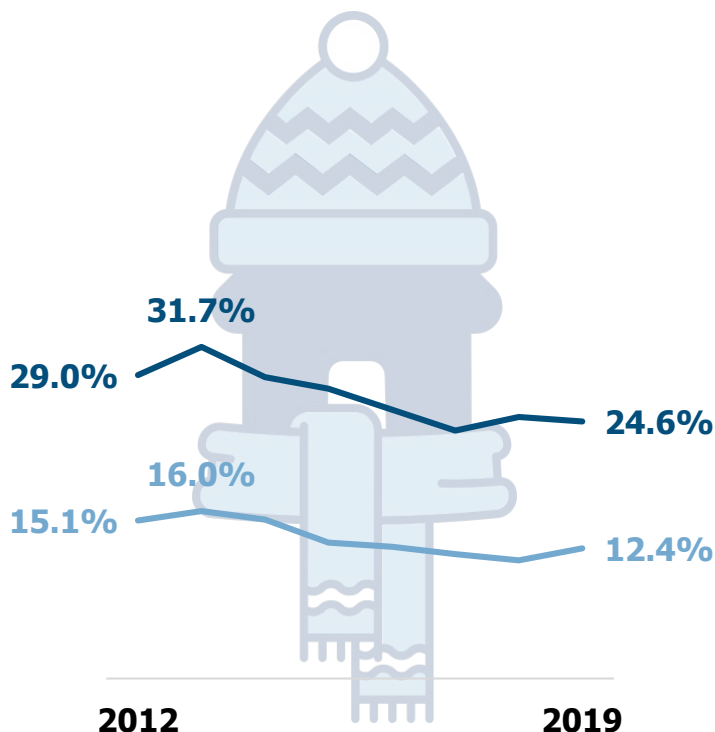
The proportion of households living in fuel poverty in 2019 was 24.6%. This is similar to the rate since 2016, but a reduction from the peak of 31.7% in 2013.

Similarly, the proportion of households in extreme fuel poverty has remained stable since 2015, although the 2019 rate of 12.4% is a decrease from the peak of 16.0% in 2013.

The Scottish Government have set targets to eradicate fuel poverty. The 2040 targets are that:

- no more than 5% of households in Scotland are in fuel poverty, and;
- no more than 1% of households in Scotland are in extreme fuel poverty.

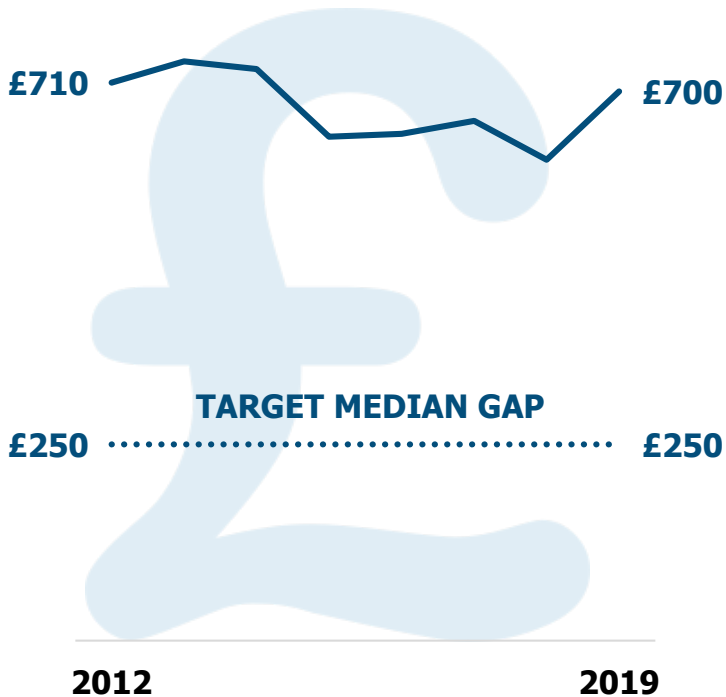
HOUSEHOLDS IN FUEL POVERTY HOUSEHOLDS IN EXTREME FUEL POVERTY



In 2019, an estimated 613,000 households were in fuel poverty in Scotland,
of which an estimated 311,000 households were in extreme fuel poverty.

The Fuel Poverty Gap has Increased

MEDIAN FUEL POVERTY GAP
(adjusted for 2015 prices)



The median fuel poverty gap (adjusted for 2015 prices) increased from £610 in 2018 to £700 in 2019.

Although it was similar to the median gap in 2012 to 2017.

Where a household is in fuel poverty, the fuel poverty gap is the annual amount that would be required to move the household out of fuel poverty.

The increase between 2018 and 2019 reflects the overall increase in domestic fuel prices in 2019 and hence the increase in modelled running costs.

The Scottish Government target is that by 2040, the amount needed for a fuel poor household to move out of fuel poverty should be no more than £250 adjusted to take account of changes in the value of money since 2015.

73% of fuel poor households were also income poor in 2019

Key Household Characteristics of Fuel Poor Households

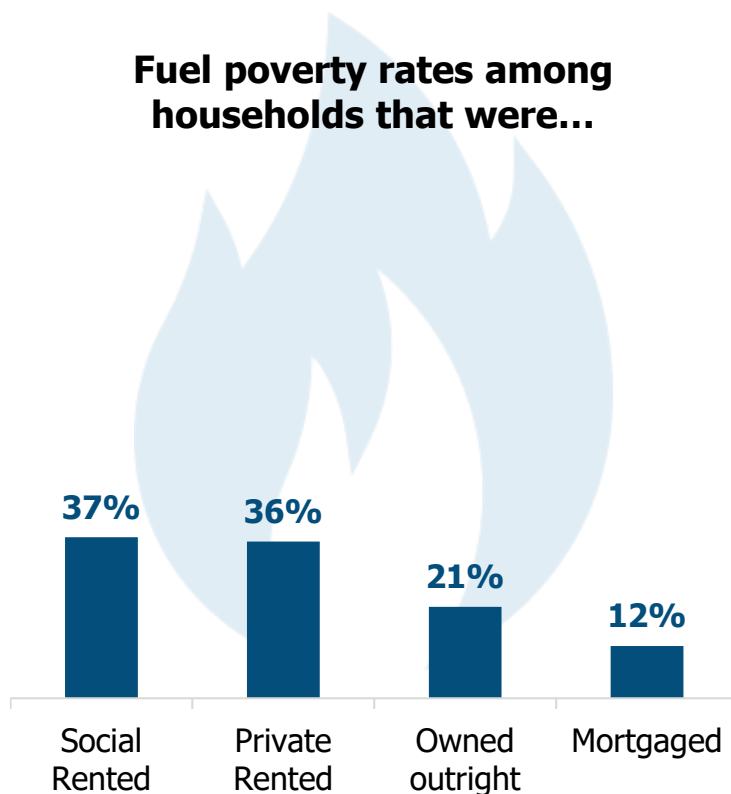
Fuel poverty rates were lowest for those with a mortgage and highest for those renting in the social and private sector.

Overall rates of fuel poverty differed between the social (37%) and private sector (20%) although rates of extreme fuel poverty were similar (14% and 12%, respectively) in 2019.

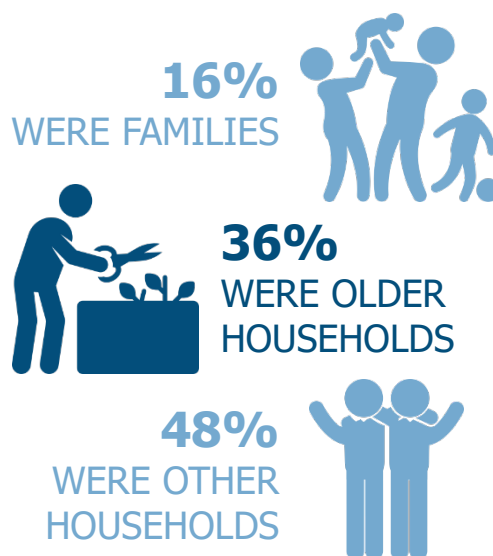
Families have lower fuel poverty rates (17%) than older households (27%) and other households (27%). The same holds true for extreme fuel poverty rates, 5%, 14% and 15% respectively.

Fuel poverty and extreme fuel poverty had a strong association with income. Households in the lower income bands had the highest rates of fuel poverty with 96% of households in the lowest income band (<£200 per week) being fuel poor and 74% being extreme fuel poor.

Fuel poverty rates among households that were...



Among fuel poor households...



Key Dwelling Characteristics of Fuel Poor Households



**43% OF THOSE
USING ELECTRICITY
WERE FUEL POOR**

**28% OF THOSE
USING OIL WERE
FUEL POOR**



**22% OF THOSE
USING GAS WERE
FUEL POOR**

**31% OF THOSE USING OTHER
FUEL TYPES WERE FUEL POOR**

Levels of fuel poverty (43%) and extreme fuel poverty (33%) among households using electricity as their primary heating fuel remained the highest.

The lowest rates of fuel poverty were associated with higher energy efficiency standards: 20% for households living in post-1982 dwellings and those with an EPC rating A-C.

Households with a pre-payment meter (36%) had higher fuel poverty rates compared to those without a PPM (22%).

Fuel poverty in remote rural areas increased from 33% in 2018 to 43% in 2019. This reflects the high proportion of rural households which use electricity and other fuel types, and the increase in these fuel prices since 2018.

The same patterns hold true for rates of extreme fuel poverty across these dwelling characteristics.

In 2019, fuel poverty rates were higher in rural areas (29%) than urban areas (24%)

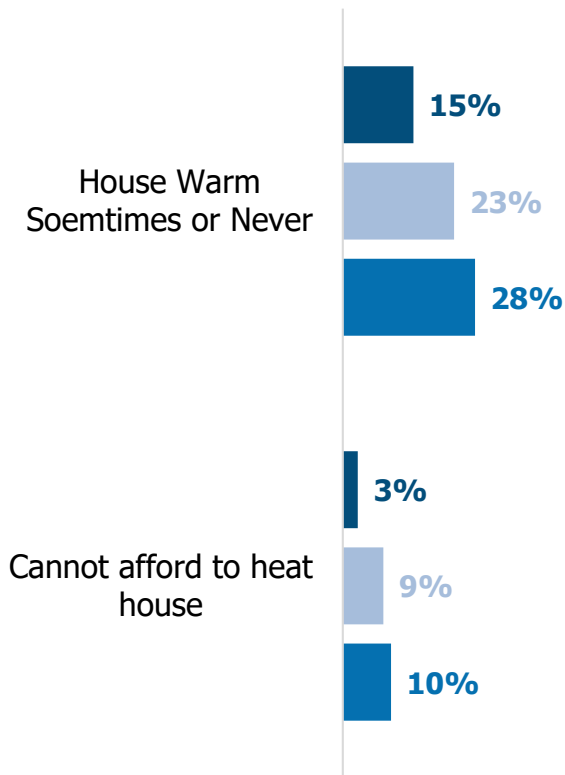


Energy Perceptions

SECTION FOUR

Some Struggle to Keep Warm at Home in Winter

NOT IN FUEL POVERTY IN FUEL POVERTY IN EXTREME FUEL POVERTY



17% of households found that their heating keeps them warm enough 'only some of the time' or 'never' in winter – with a quarter of this group reporting this to be a 'serious problem'.

4% of all households report that their homes were difficult to heat because they cannot afford to heat them.

Fuel poor households and extreme fuel poor households were more likely to have difficulties staying warm in winter.

Fuel poor and extreme fuel poor households were also more likely to report affordability problems.

8% of fuel poor households report that not being able to keep their home warm in winter was a serious problem



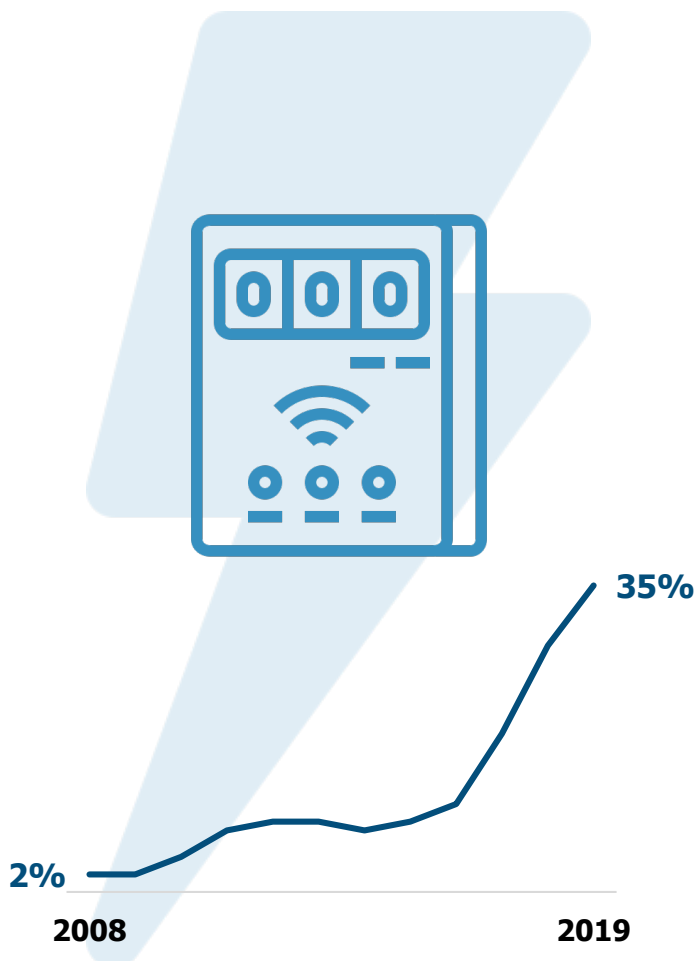
The main reasons why people found their homes difficult to heat related to poor energy efficiency: poor or inadequate heating (13%), or draughty dwellings (12%) followed by poor insulation and needing new windows (7% each).

More Homes are Monitoring Their Energy Use

An increasing number of households in Scotland have energy monitoring devices installed in their homes – this figure increased from 2% in 2008 to 35% in 2019.

A similar proportion of fuel poor (60%) and extreme fuel poor (59%) households monitored their energy use “very” or “fairly closely” compared to non-fuel poor households (56%) in 2019.

However, fuel poor and extreme fuel poor households were less likely to own a monitoring device; 32% of fuel poor and 28% of extreme fuel poor households compared to 36% of all other households despite the overall increase in energy monitoring devices.



57% of households in Scotland monitored their energy use very or fairly closely in 2019

This is a long-term increase from 44% in 2008 but similar to 2018



Housing Conditions

SECTION FIVE

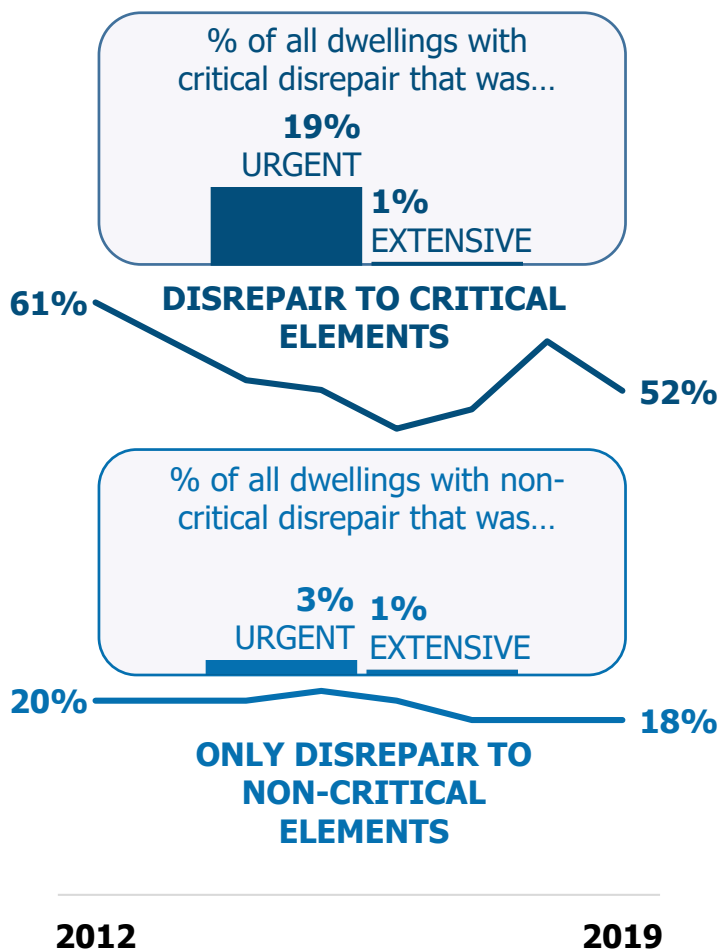
Fewer Homes have Disrepair to Critical Elements

Disrepair to critical elements, central to weather-tightness, structural stability and preventing deterioration of the property, stood at 52% in 2019.

Less than half of these (19% of all dwellings) required urgent disrepair to critical elements and just 1% had extensive disrepair (covering at least a fifth of the element area) to critical elements. These dwellings may also experience instances of disrepair to non-critical elements.

18% of dwellings had disrepair only to non-critical elements, with 3% of dwellings requiring some urgent repair and 1% with extensive disrepair to non-critical elements, similar to 2018.

Local authority (66%) and private rented sector (65%) properties had the highest levels of disrepair to critical elements.



Levels of disrepair to critical elements decreased from 57% in 2018 to 52% in 2019. This is similar to 2017 levels

Few Buildings Fall Below the Tolerable Standard

The Tolerable Standard is a "condemnatory" standard. In other words, it is not reasonable to expect people to continue to live in a house that falls below it

Older buildings built before 1919 represent 53% of the dwellings that fell below the Tolerable Standard in 2019

2% (or 40,000) of dwellings in Scotland fell below the Tolerable Standard in 2019.

Longer term this represents an improvement from 4% in 2012.

The tolerable standard consists of 12 criteria, and if the dwelling fails on any one criteria it is deemed as falling below the standard. Dwellings which failed the tolerable standard in 2019 most commonly did so because they were:

- not free from rising/penetrating damp (13,000 or 33% of below standard dwellings);
- not satisfactorily insulated (8,000 or 21% of below standard dwellings);
- had unsatisfactory provision for lighting, ventilation or heating (8,000 or 21% of below standard dwellings).

Fewer Dwellings have Fallen Below the SHQS

The Scottish Housing Quality Standard demands that social landlords make sure their tenants' homes are in a good state of repair, energy efficient, healthy, safe and secure.

While landlords in other sectors are under no obligation to comply to the standard, data is still collected in all sectors to allow for comparisons.

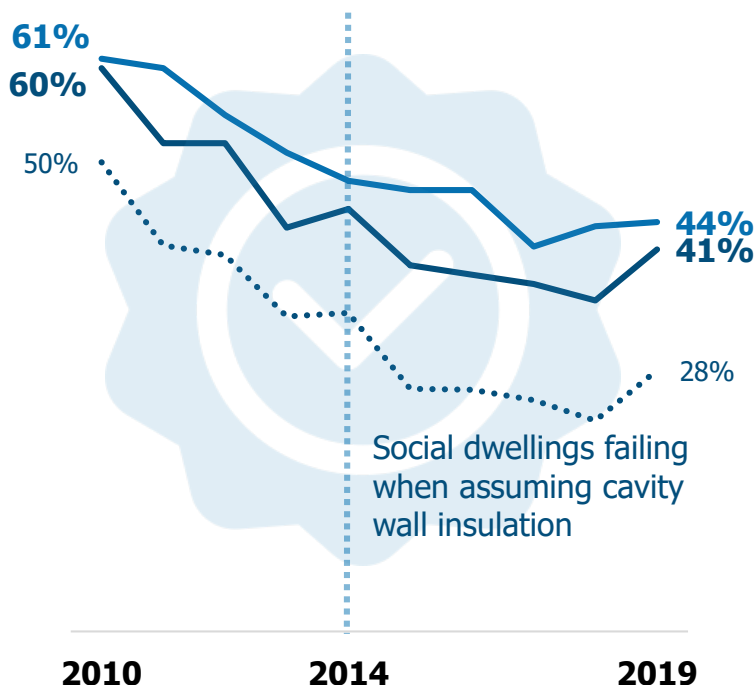
The SHQS is made up of five criteria. 83% of social sector failures in 2019 were due to failing a single criterion, most commonly the Energy Efficient criterion.

SHCS surveyors may not always be able to identify the presence of cavity wall insulation. If it is assumed that all social dwellings have insulated cavity walls where this is technically feasible, the failure rate would lower to 28%.

The dashed line in graph represents a change in methodology in 2014, meaning that numbers before and after are not directly comparable. SHCS statistics do not allow for abeyances (where work cannot be undertaken for social reasons) and exemptions (not possible to achieve for technical, cost or legal reasons).

PRIVATE DWELLINGS FAILING THE SHQS

SOCIAL DWELLINGS FAILING THE SHQS



The SHQS failure rate in the social sector was 41%, representing no change from 2018
 This has fallen from 60% in 2010

Contact Details

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Do you want to be consulted about statistical collections or receive notification of publications? Please register your interest at www.gov.scot/scotstat

For more information on any of the topics discussed in this report, please see our [2019 Key Findings Report](#)

