

# Households in Scotland by housing tenure: Scottish Household Survey, 2024

February 2026

# Introduction

This publication describes some of the data collected through the Scottish Household Survey (SHS) broken down by housing tenure. Topics covered include households by tenure, characteristics of households by tenure, housing satisfaction by tenure and the number of households on social housing waiting lists.

The supporting excel spreadsheet contains further topics broken down by housing tenure than covered in the commentary of this publication and where sample sizes allow results can be found by local authority area.

The commentary focuses on overall categories of housing tenure (private rented sector, social rented sector, and owner-occupied households) rather than sub-categories. In some instances, the data is available for sub-categories (owner occupied – owned outright, owner occupied – buying with loan, social rented – local authority, and social rented- housing associations/co-op/charitable trust) within the accompanying supporting excel tables.

## An Official Statistics Publication for Scotland

These statistics are official statistics. Official statistics are statistics that are produced by crown bodies, those acting on behalf of crown bodies, or those specified in statutory orders, as defined in the [Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007](#).

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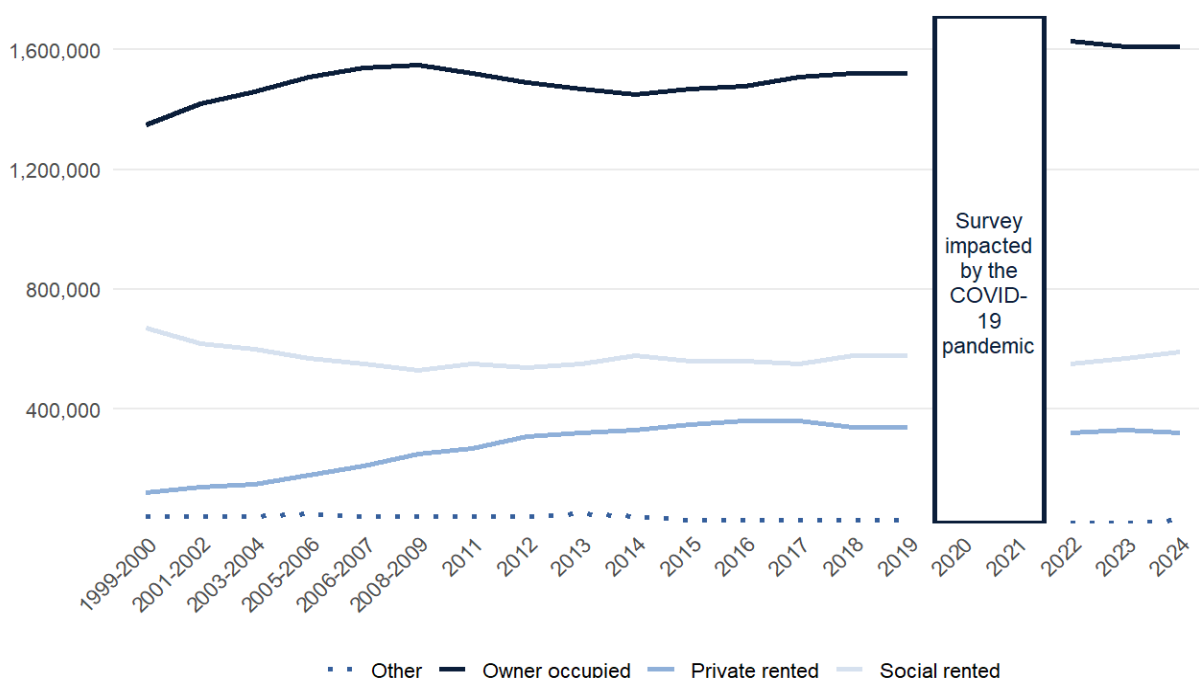
More information about Scottish Government statistics is available on the [Scottish Government website](#).

# Key points

- Between 1999/2000 and 2024, there was an increase of 260,000 owner occupied households and an increase of 200,000 private rented households. Whereas social rented households decreased by 80,000 – which will be mainly related to the decrease in local authority stock through the Right to Buy initiative.
- In 2024, 28% of households in the social rented sector report managing well financially, compared with 65% of households in owner occupied households and 44% of privately rented households
- 81% of households in social rented properties reported being very/fairly satisfied with their housing in 2024, compared with 85% in private rented properties and 96% in owner occupied properties.
- 5% of all households reported to be on a housing list in 2024, equating to an estimated total of nearly 115,000 households on a housing list. An additional 10,000 (0.4%) households had applied for social housing using a choice based letting system or similar within the last year.

# Households by tenure

**Chart 1: Number of households by housing tenure, 1999/2000 to 2024, Scotland**



**Note:**

1. Underlying data can be sourced in Table 1.02 in the supporting documents.

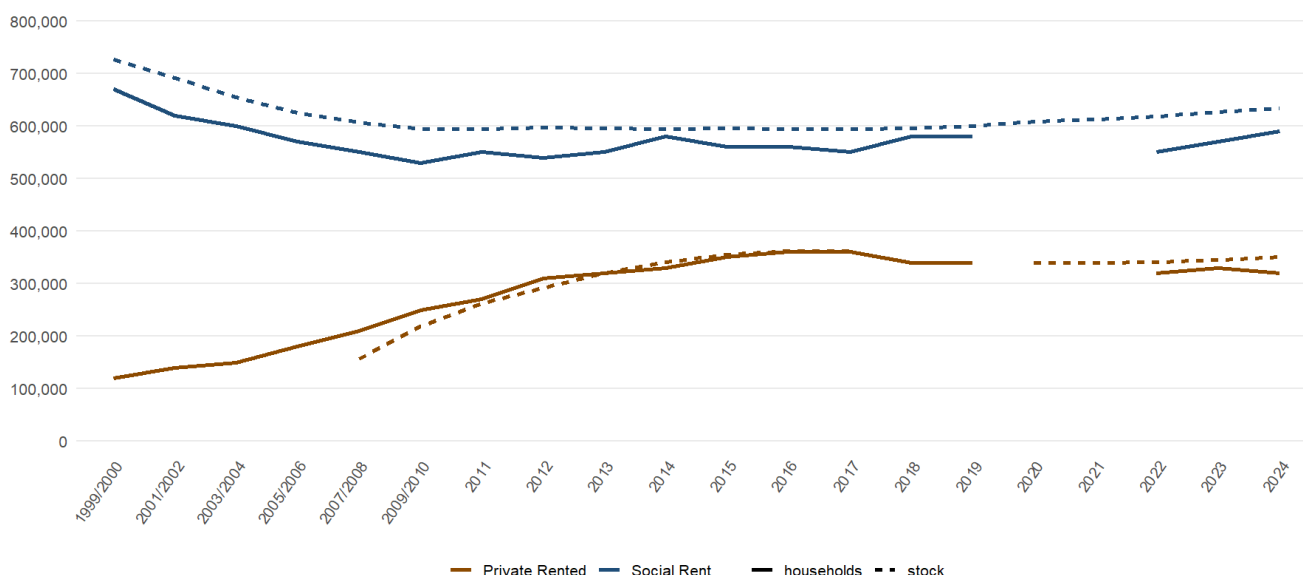
The total number of households in Scotland increased from 2.18 million households in 1999 to 2.55 million households in 2024. Chart 1 shows how the number of households in the private rented, social rented, and owner-occupied households has changed over this period. Since 1999/2000:

- owner occupied households increased by 19% (+260,000 households)
- private rented households increased by 167% (+200,000 households)
- social rented households decreased by 12% (-80,000 households). This decrease will be mainly related to local authority housing stock decreasing from the 1980's due to the Right to Buy initiative (ceased in 2017). Social housing stock decreased by 13% between 1999 and 2024), as illustrated in Chart 2.

When comparing households by housing tenure data, it is useful to consider trends in housing stock – this comparison for social and private rent is presented in Chart 2. There may be a combination of reasons why the household data is lower than housing stock (in particular for social rented households). Including any possible slight bias in the sample that are not accounted for in the weights and the fact that there will naturally be empty housing stock (so no households residing in the property) at any point in time:

- It is apparent from [local authority empty \(or void\) housing stock data](#) that there has been an increase in empty local authority stock between 2019 and 2024, with a decrease in 2025. This type of data is collected less frequently for housing associations. The [registered-social-landlords-empty-homes-at-28-february-2025-report-and-data.pdf](#), shows that 1.6% of homes were empty
- The 2022 SHS report noted caveats relating to a small tenure bias, with the private rented and social rented sectors slightly under-represented. Tenure results from Scotland’s Census 2022, published since then, indicate that owner occupation was slightly over-represented in SHS 2022 relative to the Census, with renting correspondingly under-represented. A similar pattern of bias may therefore also be present in the 2024 SHS results.

**Chart 2: Number of properties and households in the social and private rented sector, 1999/2000 to 2024, Scotland**



**Notes:**

1. Private rented stock as per the Scottish Landlord Register, mostly as per December each year. Data are not available in 2018 and 2019 due to data quality issues ([Housing statistics: Scottish Landlord Register data - gov.scot](#))
2. Social rented stock as per administrative data collected from local authorities and housing associations. ([Local authority total and vacant housing stock, Scotland, March 2024 - gov.scot](#))
3. Households as per Scottish Household Survey, data not available in 2020 and 2021 as the Covid-19 pandemic affected data collection.

# Characteristics of households by tenure

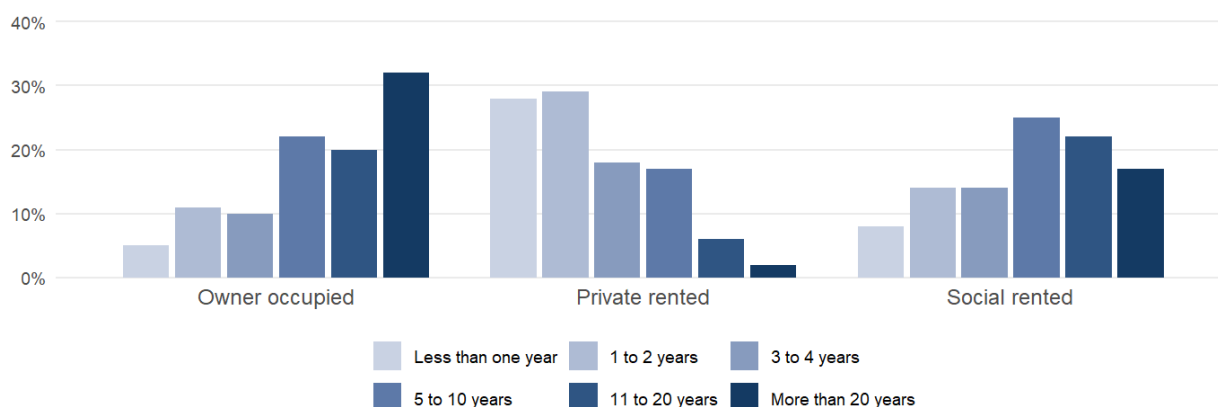
Figure 1: Household characteristics broken down by housing tenure, Scotland, 2024

	Owner occupied	Private rented	Social rented	Other	All
<b>Number of households</b>	1,610,000	320,000	590,000	30,000	2,552,388
<b>Age of the highest income householder (Table 1.13)</b>					
16 to 34	11%	50%	18%	23%	18%
35 to 59	43%	38%	45%	33%	43%
60 or over	46%	13%	37%	44%	40%
<b>Ethnicity of the random adult (Table 1.17)</b>					
White: Scottish	77%	47%	80%	63%	73%
White: Other British	13%	16%	6%	8%	12%
White: Other (inc. polish)	5%	15%	6%	12%	7%
Minority Ethnic Groups (inc. Asian)	4%	23%	7%	17%	8%
<b>Whether the household has someone with a long-term physical or mental health condition or illness (Table 1.43)</b>					
No	66%	74%	42%	62%	61%
Yes	34%	27%	59%	39%	39%
<b>Economic status (Table 1.25) of the random adult</b>					
Self employed	7%	6%	3%	6%	6%
Employed full time	43%	48%	26%	36%	40%
Employed part time	10%	9%	10%	8%	10%
Looking after the home or family	2%	3%	8%	11%	4%
Permanently retired from work	31%	6%	21%	23%	25%
Unemployed and seeking work	1%	4%	6%	3%	3%
At school	2%	2%	2%	0%	2%
In further/higher education	3%	17%	2%	3%	5%
Gov. work or training scheme	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
<b>Household type (Table 1.12)</b>					
Single adult	14%	32%	31%	34%	20%
Small adult	20%	31%	12%	12%	19%
Single parent	2%	6%	11%	1%	5%
Small family	14%	11%	8%	11%	12%
Large family	5%	5%	5%	8%	5%
Large adult	10%	8%	7%	4%	9%
Older smaller	19%	3%	7%	8%	14%
Single pensioner	16%	5%	20%	23%	16%

Household characteristics vary by housing tenure, as presented in Figure 1. When comparing the owner occupied, private rented, and social rented households, variations in 2024 include:

- the age of the highest income householder tended to be higher in owner occupied households (46% reported being 60 or over) compared with private rented households (13% reported being 60 or over).
- 23% of adults in the private rented sector reported being in a minority ethnic group, compared with 4% in owner occupied households.
- 59% households in the social rented sector reported having someone with a long-term physical or mental health condition or illness compared with 27% in the private rented sector.
- 63% of random adults in households in the private rented sector reported self-employment or (part or full time) employment compared with 39% in the social rented sector. There was a higher proportion of random adults unemployed and looking for work in social rented households (6%) compared with other tenures. There was a higher proportion of random adults retired from work in owner occupied households (31%) compared with other housing tenures.
- 23% of households in social rented households had a child in it, compared with 21% in owner occupied households. This figure varies by tenure if you look at further breakdowns of single parent households, small and large family households. For example, 11% of social rented households have single parents in compared with 2% in owner occupied households. Please refer to the glossary for more information on household type definitions.

**Chart 3: Length of time in current property by housing tenure, 2024**

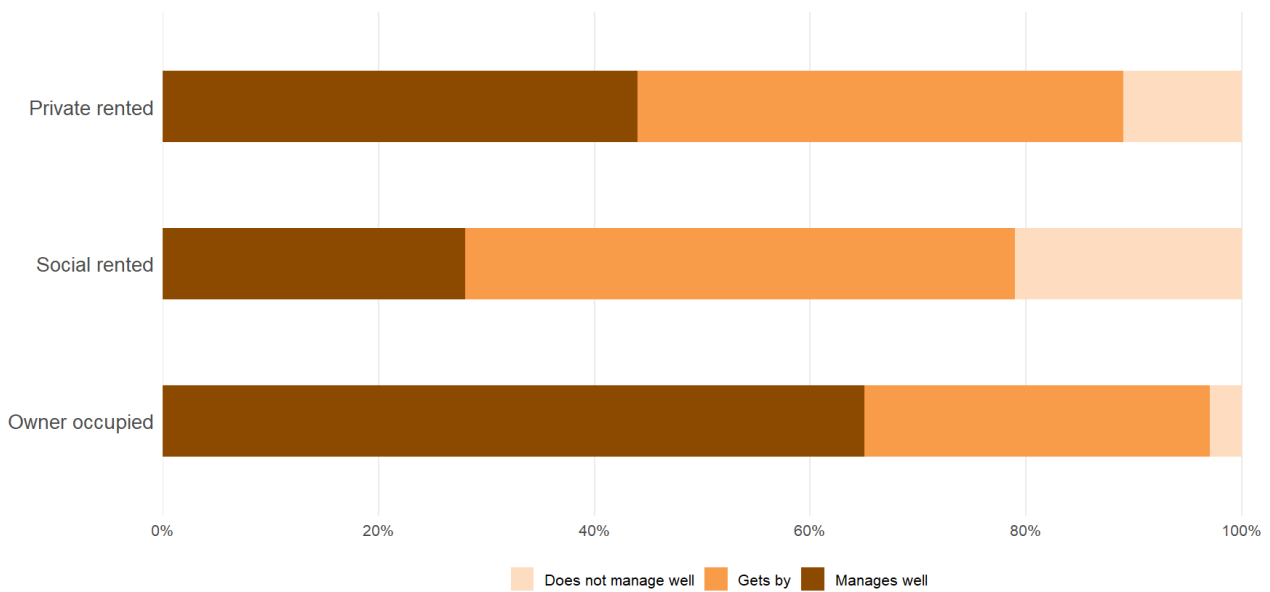


Note:

2. Underlying data can be sourced in Table 1.19 in the supporting documents.

Chart 3 shows that 57% of households in the private rented sector have been in their property for 2 years or less. This compared with 16% of owner-occupied households and 22% in social rented households. These proportions have changed over time, as illustrated for private rented sector households (71% in 1999/2000 to 57% in 2024) in Table 1.62 in the supporting documents.

**Chart 4: Financial management by housing tenure, 2024**



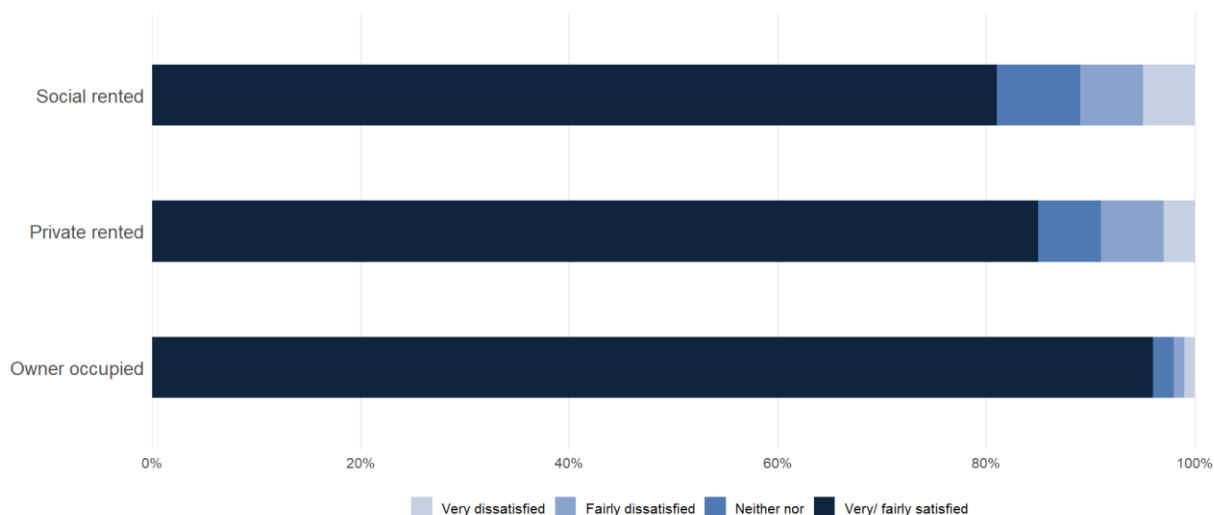
**Note:**

1. Underlying data can be sourced in Table 1.16 in the supporting documents %

Chart 4 shows that 28% of households in the social rented sector report managing well financially, compared with 65% of households in owner occupied households and 44% of privately rented households. 'Gets by' was the most common answer to how households are managing financially for households in the social (51%) and private rented (45%) housing tenure. Whereas, for households in owner occupied households the most common answer was manages well.

# Housing satisfaction and neighbourhood rating by tenure

Chart 5: Housing satisfaction by housing tenure, 2024



Note:

1. Data for 2024 is found in Table 1.33 in the supporting excel document.

Chart 5 illustrates that the majority of households in each housing tenure are very/fairly satisfied with their housing in 2024. However, the proportions differ by housing tenure:

- 81% of households in social rented properties reported being very/fairly satisfied, compared with 85% in private rented properties and 96% in owner occupied properties.
- 12% of households in social rented properties reported being very/fairly dissatisfied, compared with 9% in private rented properties and 2% in owner occupied properties.

The majority of households rated their neighbourhood as a very or fairly good place to live. Again, this varied by housing tenure (97% for owner occupied, 94% private rented, 85% social rented; Table 1.34 in the supporting excel document).

# Households on social housing waiting lists

Figure 2: Households on social housing lists by housing tenure, Scotland, 2024

	Owner occupied	Private rented	Social rented	All
Total number of households	1,610,000	320,000	590,000	2,552,388
Yes, on a housing list (Table 1.43)	1%	8%	13%	5%
Yes, the household has applied for social housing under a choice based letting scheme, or similar, in the last year (Table 1.47)	0	0.1%	2%	0.4%
<b>The main reason for household being on a housing list (Table 1.52):</b>				
Threatened with homelessness	N/A	12%	8%	8%
To move to my own property away from parents/partner etc.	N/A	7%	7%	8%
Can't afford current housing/would like cheaper housing	N/A	33%	4%	11%
To move to a different area - anti-social/safety concerns in current area	N/A	3%	11%	8%
To move to a different area - to be nearer family and friends	N/A	2%	10%	8%
To move to a different area - to a better area	N/A	5%	7%	6%
To move to a different area - for work opportunities	N/A	2%	0%	1%
To move to a different area - school catchment area	N/A	1%	0%	0%
To move to a different area - other reason (specify)	N/A	0%	0%	0%
To move to a different property - bigger/smaller	N/A	19%	32%	27%
To move to a different property - need adaptations	N/A	6%	6%	7%
To move to a different property - need ground floor access	N/A	6%	6%	6%

Figure 2 shows that the proportion of households on a housing list was higher among households living in the social rented sector (around one in eight) than among households living in the private rented sector (around one in twelve) in

2024. This includes social rented households seeking to move to a different social rented home.

In total, 5% of all households reported to be on a housing list in 2024, equating to an estimated total of nearly 115,000 households on a housing list. An additional 10,000 (0.4%) of households had applied for social housing using a choice based letting system or similar within the last year.

Figure 2 also shows that for social rented households on a housing list to move to another social rented property, the most commonly reported reported reason was to move to a bigger or smaller property (32%). For private rented households on a housing list, the most commonly reported reason was that they could not afford current housing or would like cheaper housing (33%).

# Glossary

- Random adult: Information is collected focusing on the attitudes and experiences of a randomly selected adult member of the household. This produces data representative of the Scottish adult population resident in private households.

## Household type:

- A **single adult household** contains one adult aged 16-64 and no children.
- A **single parent household** contains one adult of any age and one or more children. It should be noted that the definition of a single parent does not make any distinction between situations where a child has regular contact and/or partly resides with their other parent and a child who solely resides with and is cared for by one parent.
- A **single older household** contains one adult of pensionable age (65 or over) and no children.
- A **small family household** contains two adults of any age and one or two children.
- An **older smaller household** contains one adult aged 16-64 and one of pensionable age and no children, or two adults of pensionable age and no children.
- A **large adult household** contains three or more adults and no children.
- A **small adult household** contains two adults aged 16-64 and no children.
- A **large family household** contains two adults of any age and three or more children, or three or more adults of any age and one or more children.

# Data and Methodology

1. This publication provides commentary on data collected through the Scottish Household Survey (SHS) on households by housing tenure. More information on the methods used to collect these data and quality assurance are published here: [About the Scottish Household Survey - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/about-the-scottish-household-survey)
2. In 2020 and 2021 the Covid-19 pandemic effected data collection, therefore there is a break in the timeseries in terms of comparable data.
3. In the 2022 SHS report there were caveats included related to a slight bias in the private rented and social rented sector. The tenure results from Scotland's Census 2022 have now been published. Owner occupation appears to be slightly over-represented in SHS 2022 compared to the 2022 Census, and renting slightly under-represented. The same was true, but to a slightly greater extent, in SHS 2011 compared to the 2011 Census. This suggests that the SHS 2022 tenure results are comparable to those from

SHS 2019 and earlier. Please refer to the [2024 methodology and fieldwork outcomes report](#) for more information.

4. No statistical tests were conducted to look at differences in terms of statistical significance.

## Tell us what you think

We are always interested to hear from our users about how our statistics are used, and how they can be improved.

### Enquiries

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