

Concealed Households

Housing Evidence Base Briefing Note 28 (BN28)

Summary

The NPPF is clear that in order 'to boost significantly the supply of housing, local planning authorities should use their evidence base to ensure that their Local Plan meets the full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in the housing market area'.

Statistics on concealed households are often used as an indicator of housing demand. DCLG research into estimating household need identifies concealed households as family units or single adults living within other households who may be regarded as potentially separate households that may wish to form given an appropriate opportunity.

Concealed Families: An assessment of market signals in Cornwall has identified the proportion of concealed families as an indicator that is different to other comparator areas and might suggest that the housing requirement should be adjusted upwards. Available evidence confirms that the proportion of concealed families in Cornwall is higher (1.7%) than that of other local authorities (Devon 1.5% and Wiltshire 1.1%) in the South West and of the South West regional average (1.4%).

It might be considered reasonable to adjust the housing requirement upwards by some 500 dwellings as this would 'theoretically' reduce the proportion of families that are concealed in Cornwall down to the South West average (i.e. instead of their being 1.7% of families concealed there would be 1.4%).

Single Adults: Information is difficult to find on young people continuing to live with their parents who would like to set up their own home at a local level. The number of families containing children that are all non dependent does give an indication of how the numbers have changed over time, bearing in mind that many of these non dependent children do not want to set up their own home. The number of families containing children that are all non dependent has increased by almost 17% from 17,650 in 2001 to 20,575 in 2011.

In terms of single people living in the parental home there were 17,471 couple household including one or more other adults with no dependent children in 2010 and this type of household was predicted to increase by about 17% to 20,476 households by 2030. However, predictions do not provide specific information on how lone parents with non dependent children are likely to change over time so this figure provides only a partial picture of what might happen in the future in terms of households contain non dependent children.

Due to the lack of information on the number of single people living in the parental home that may wish to form their own household, it is not considered reasonable to make any assessment in terms of an uplift of the housing target.

Key Facts

There were 2,750 concealed families in Cornwall in 2011 which equates to 1.7% of all households.

The proportion of concealed families in Cornwall is higher than in comparator authorities, and suggests that the housing requirement be adjusted upwards by some 500 dwellings.

The number of families containing children that are all non dependent has increased by almost 17% from 17,650 in 2001 to 20,575 in 2011.

The number of families containing non dependent children is predicted to continue to increase to 2030.

Source: Census, DCLG 2012 based Household Projections.

National Policy

The National Planning Policy frameworkⁱ (NPPF) in paragraph 49 makes it clear that in order 'to boost significantly the supply of housing, local planning authorities should use their evidence base to ensure that their Local Plan meets the full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in the housing market area'. A Strategic Housing Market Needs Assessment^{BN2} is advocated as the means by which the full need for housing is determined.

The Housing Strategy for Englandⁱⁱ is clear that 'the problems we face are stark – we have not built enough new homes for more than a generation and the impact of the credit crunch has simply compounded this challenge'.

National Planning Practice Guidance on the 'Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment'ⁱⁱⁱ supports local planning authorities in objectively assessing and evidencing development needs for housing (both market and affordable). This guidance states that 'the household projection-based estimate of housing need may require adjustment to reflect factors affecting local demography and household formation rates which are not captured in past trends...The assessment will therefore need to reflect the consequences of past under delivery of housing. As household projections do not reflect unmet housing need, local planning authorities should take a view based on available evidence of the extent to which household formation rates are or have been constrained by supply.' The guidance goes on to say that 'indicators on overcrowding, concealed and sharing households, homelessness and the numbers in temporary accommodation demonstrate un-met need for housing. Longer term increase in the number of such households may be a signal to consider increasing planned housing numbers.'

NPPG guidance goes on to state that 'appropriate comparisons of indicators should be made. This includes comparison with longer term trends (both in absolute levels and rates of change) in the housing market area, similar demographic and economic areas and nationally. A worsening trend in any of these indicators will require upward adjustment to planned housing numbers compared to ones based solely on household projections.... In areas where an upward adjustment is required, plan makers should set this adjustment at a level that is reasonable....'

National Context

Statistics on concealed households are often used as an indicator of housing demand. DCLG^{iv} research into estimating household need identifies concealed households as family units or single adults living within other households^{BN32} who may be regarded as potentially separate households that may wish to form given the appropriate opportunity. This report concludes that about 0.8% of households in England contain concealed couple or lone parent families; 2.1% of households contain concealed singles living with a family unit, while another 0.8% of households consist of several unrelated single persons within the same household. Many of those who are effectively homeless live in concealed households - households which neither own nor rent the property that they are living in, and most of these people do not have dependent children.^v

Key points arising from Office for National Statistics^{vi} research into concealed families recorded in the 2011 Census include:

- There were 289,000 concealed families in 2011 compared to 170,000 in 2001 which represents 1.8% and 1.2% respectively of all families in households.

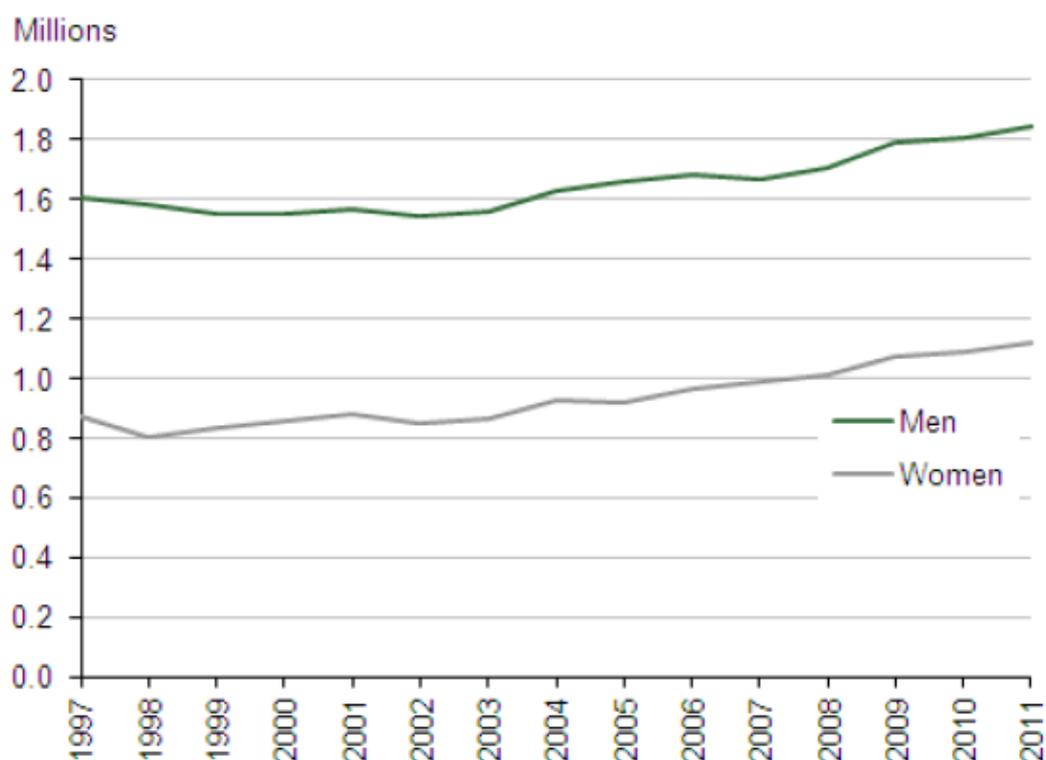
- Concealed families increased at ten times the rate of unconcealed families between 2001 and 2011 (70% increase in concealed families compared with a 6.6% increase in unconcealed families).
- 44% of concealed families, some 128,000, in 2011 were couples with no children living in the family.
- Concealed families were younger than unconcealed families – over half of concealed families had a Family Reference Person aged less than 35 years of age compared to less than 20% of unconcealed families.

This report shows that there is considerable regional and local variation in the proportion of families that are concealed and that this may be related to the ethnicity of the local population and also the relative costs and availability of housing.

Another Office for National Statistics^{vii} report on families and households identified multi-family households as the fastest growing household type in the UK increasing by 39% between 2003 and 2013.

The following chart^{viii} indicates how the number of men and women aged 20-34 living with parents has increased nationally between 1997 and 2011. This report goes on to state that the number of people continuing to live with their parents has increased by 20% since 1997 despite the number of people in this age group staying largely the same. This chart also shows that the sustained increase in numbers started from around 2003 and this is the time when house prices started to rise.

Figure 1: Men and women aged 20-34 living with parents, UK, 1997-2011



Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics

Notes: This report goes on to say that one in four men and one in seven women nationally aged 20-34 lived with their parents in 1997 and that this had increased to one in three men and one in six women by 2011.

Definitions

Concealed Families: a concealed family can be a couple or a single parent family living in a multi-family household where the family reference person (FRP) is not the household reference person (HRP). Each family living in a household includes a FRP identified on the basis of economic activity and age characteristics (lone parents are automatically the FRP). In a one-family household the FRP is also the HRP, and in households where there is more than one family, the HRP is selected from the FRP based on economic activity, age and then order on the census form. Concealed families will include:

- Young adults living with a partner and/or child/children in the same household as their parents;
- Older couples living with an adult child and their family;
- Unrelated families sharing a household.

A single person cannot be a concealed family. Therefore one elderly parent living with their adult child and family or an adult child returning to the parental home is not a concealed family and must be analysed in a different way.

Concealed households: are family units or single adults living within other households, who may be regarded as potential separate households which may wish to form given an appropriate opportunity. An operational definition for concealed households often comprises couples, lone parent families, and adult singles (other than never-married children of main family unit) living within other households. A broader definition could include adult children of the main family unit, perhaps above an age threshold.

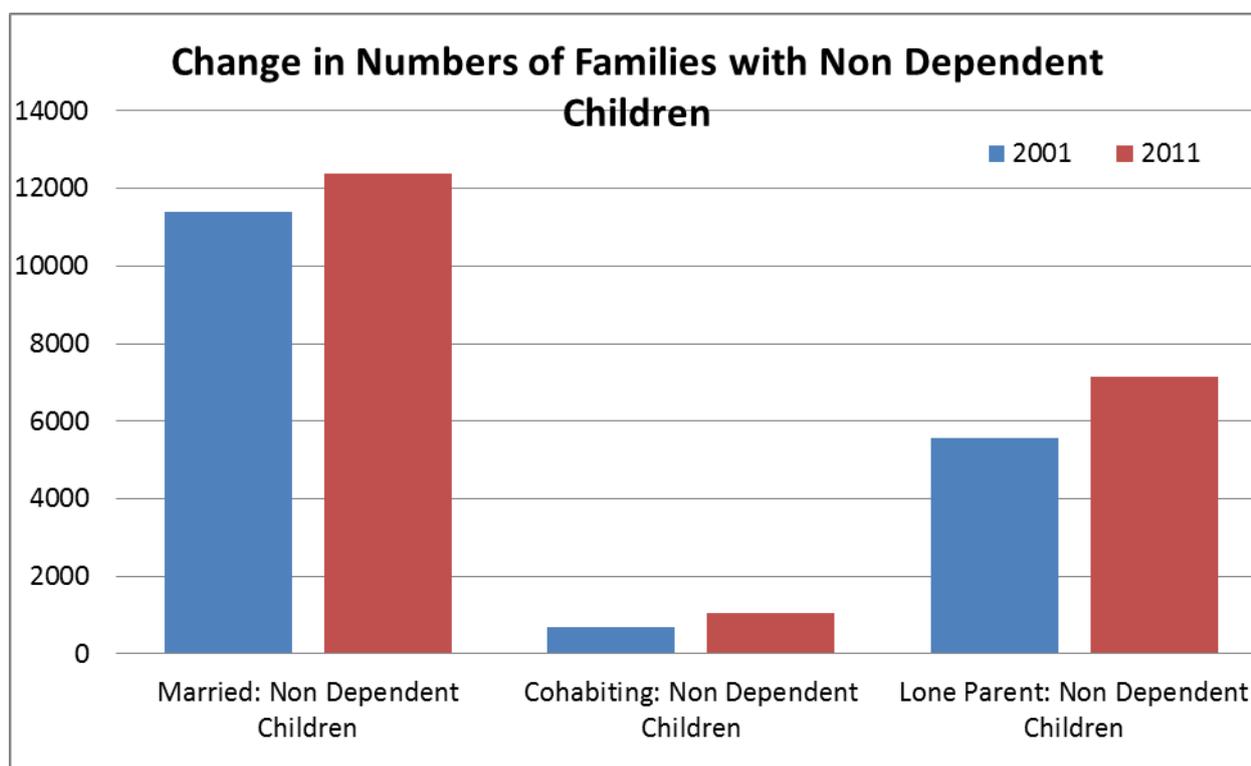
Past Trends for Concealed Families

In terms of the South West, the proportion of concealed families^{ix} has increased from 0.9% in 2001 to 1.4% in 2011 compared to an increase from 1.2% in England & Wales in 2001 to 1.8% in 2011.

Note 1: Data is not available for Cornwall on concealed families in previous Census releases.

Past Trends for Young People Living in the Parental Home

Information is difficult to find on young people continuing to live with their parents who would like to set up their own home at a local level. The number of families containing children that are all non dependent does give an indication of how the numbers have changed over time, bearing in mind that many of these non dependent children do not want to set up their own home. The number of families containing children that are all non dependent has increased by almost 17% from 17,650 in 2001 to 20,575 in 2011, as shown in the graph below.



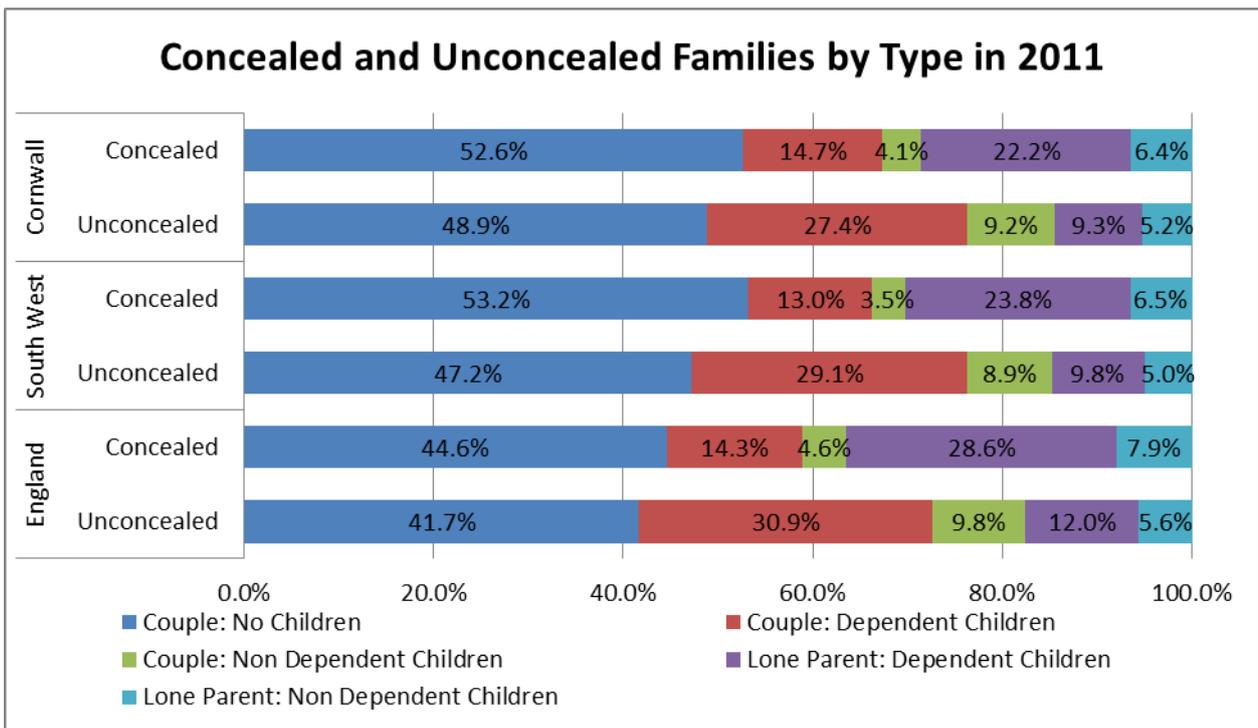
Current Trends in Concealed Families

The 2011 Census^x provides us with details on concealed families in Cornwall, and the following table compares the area with the regional and national averages. Although the proportion of households that are concealed in Cornwall is slightly lower than the national average, the proportion is higher than the regional average.

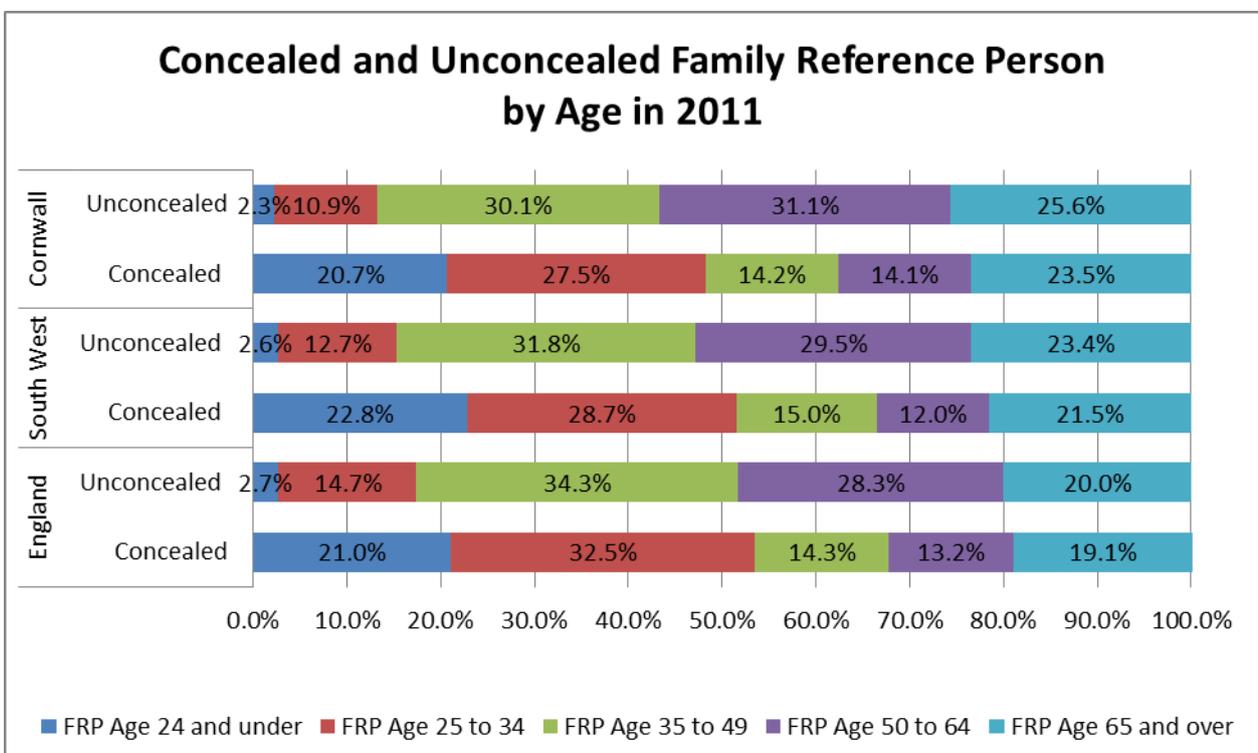
Area	All Families	Concealed Families	Percentage Concealed
Cornwall	158,686	2,748	1.7%
South West	1,528,147	20,995	1.4%
England & Wales	15,764,000	289,000	1.8%

In 2011, the majority of all families were couple families. In Cornwall this amounted to some 85.3% of all families, compared to 85.1% across the South West and 81.7% on average for England. Concealed couple families also represented the largest proportion of concealed families, but the proportion of all concealed families was lower – 71.4% in Cornwall compared to 69.7% for the South West and 63.5% across England.

Lone Parent families represented a significant proportion of concealed families compared to unconcealed households. In Cornwall, lone parent families accounted for 28.6% of all concealed families compared to 17.6% in unconcealed families. This pattern can be seen across the South West and England, and is indicative of the issues faced by lone parent families in being able to access their own homes and the corresponding necessity of having to live as part of another family.

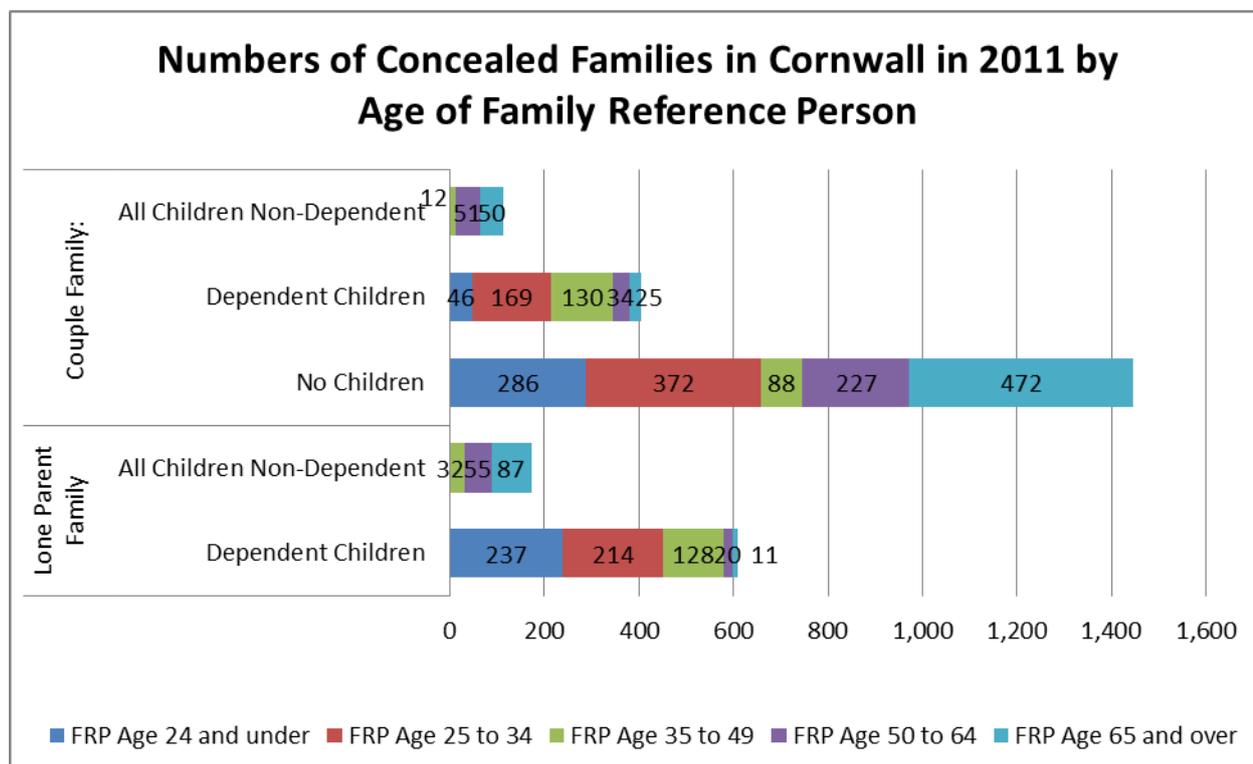


Age can also be used to show how concealed family types can differ from unconcealed family types. The graph below very clearly shows that those concealed families aged less than 35 years of age comprise a significantly higher proportion of concealed families than they do in unconcealed families. For Cornwall, concealed families with the family reference person aged less than 35 represents 48.2% of concealed families whilst they represent just 13.2% of unconcealed families, and this pattern is true for both the South West (51.5% and 15.3%) and England (53.5% and 17.4%).



Given the above evidence, it is not surprising that it is couples with no children that make up the majority of this type of family, with significant numbers in both the younger and older age groups. There are also significant numbers of younger lone

parent families - 74% of concealed lone parent families with dependent children are aged less than 35 years of age compared to 53.2% of concealed couple families with dependent children.



Current Trends in Single Young People Continuing to live with their Parents

The transition to independent living^{xi} has become more protracted than in previous generations and increasing numbers of young people are continuing to live with their parents rather than move to a home of their own, which can have implications on well-being^{BN6}. Unlike previous generations, young people's experiences are very different and they are more subject to 'boomeranging' between leaving home and independence.

There is little evidence available locally to identify the number of single young people that cannot form their own households and therefore continue to live with their parents. In 2011 there were almost 20,600 households where all the children were non-dependent, i.e. aged 16 or more (unless they are aged 16-18 and in full time education), although many of these young adults will not be considering setting up their own home.

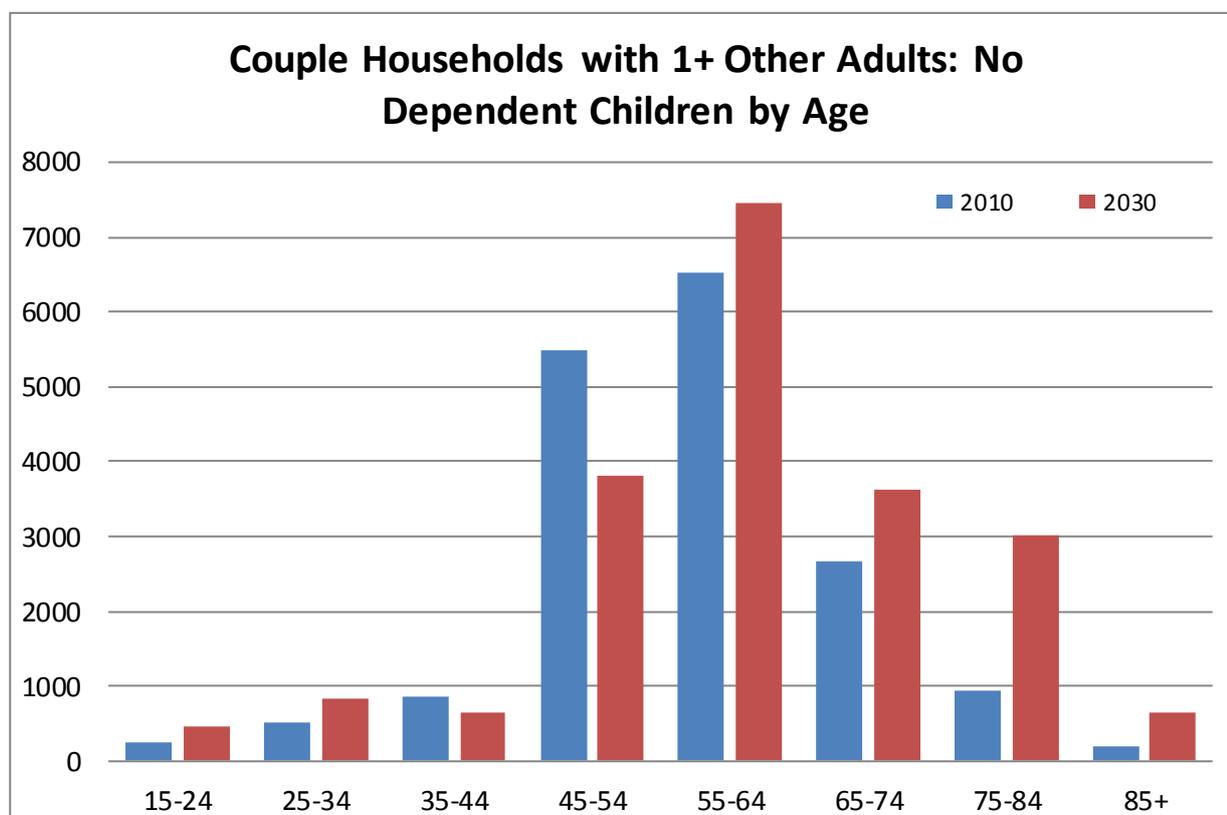
Anticipated Future Impact on Households

The latest long term household projections are 2012 based^{xii} and these give an indication of how households are likely to change between 2010 and 2030 (the Local Plan time period). However, these projections do not include any predictions relating to concealed families.

Note 2: The 2012 based household projections combined the Isles of Scilly with Cornwall so the following graphs are for Cornwall & the Isles of Scilly.

In terms of single people living in the parental home there were 17,471 couple household including one or more other adults with no dependent children in 2010 and this type of household was predicted to increase by about 17% to 20,476 households

by 2030. Please note that predictions do not provide specific information on how lone parents with non dependent children are likely to change over time so this provides only a partial picture of what might happen in the future in terms of households contain non dependent children.



Concealed Families as a Market Signal

The specific authorities that are used as comparators to Cornwall to identify any worsening trends in market signals^{BN24} are as follows. A comparison will also be made to the regional and national figures wherever possible to set a wider context:

- Devon – a county authority in the South West and neighbouring authority;
- Wiltshire – a county authority in the South West which became a unitary in 2009 at the same time as Cornwall;
- Plymouth – as one of Cornwall's partner SHMNA authorities and neighbouring authority;
- South Hams – as one of Cornwall's partner SHMNA authorities;
- West Devon - as one of Cornwall's partner SHMNA authorities and neighbouring authority.

Cornwall (1.7% of all families) does show differences in terms of concealed families when compared to the South West average of 1.4% and the England average of 1.8%. In terms of the other comparator areas the level of concealed families in Devon stands at 1.5% and for Wiltshire the figure was 1.1%. Cornwall's partner SHMNA authorities indicate that the number of families that were concealed was 1.3% in Plymouth, 1.3% in South Hams and 1.6% in West Devon.

The figure for Cornwall is slightly higher than for the two other comparator authorities in the South West and the SHMNA authorities. As a consequence the Council accepts that it is reasonable to take this into account when considering if the housing target should be adjusted upwards.

In terms of concealed families the Council considers that it might be considered reasonable to adjust the housing requirement upwards by some 500 dwellings as this would 'theoretically' reduce the proportion of families that are concealed in Cornwall down to the South West average (i.e. instead of their being 1.7% of families concealed there would be 1.4%).

Risk Assessment

This analysis of the requirement for different housing types and tenures does not fully take into account the impact of the Government's programme of Welfare Reforms^{BN22} due to using data that pre-dates the introduction of the reform process. In terms of those claiming benefits for housing, welfare reform changes that came into effect in April 2014 set a cap on the level of employment related benefits that can be received which may have a knock on effect on the ability of households that may wish to set up on their own to access housing. It is likely to be some time before we know what the overall impact will be of welfare reform.

Use in Cornwall Local Plan

Housing mix is part of the context for housing and as such is included in general housing papers including:

- Housing Topic Paper (February 2011) accompanied the Core Strategy Options Report - <http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/planning/planning-policy/adopted-plans/cornwall-local-plan-strategic-policies/core-strategy-options-report/>
- Housing Topic Paper (January 2012) accompanied 'Our Preferred Approach for a Core Strategy' - <http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/planning/planning-policy/adopted-plans/cornwall-local-plan-strategic-policies/our-preferred-approach-for-a-core-strategy-and-options-and-preferred-options-for-minerals-energy-and-waste/> and the Cornwall Local Plan: Strategic Policies Pre Submission Version - <http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/planning/planning-policy/adopted-plans/cornwall-local-plan-strategic-policies/strategic-policies-pre-submission-stage/>
- BN13 Housing Mix, Type and Tenure accompanied the Cornwall Local Plan: Strategic Policies Proposed Submission Version and Schedule of Focussed Changes - <http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/planning/planning-policy/adopted-plans/cornwall-local-plan-strategic-policies/strategic-policies-proposed-submission-version/>

Examination Findings

No examination findings specifically relating to concealed households have been identified to date.

Associated Briefing Notes

BN2 – Housing Market and the Strategic Housing Market Needs Assessment

BN6 – Why do we Need to Build More Homes?

BN22 – Welfare Reform

BN24 – Market Signals

BN32 – Other Households

Further Information

1. What does the 2011 Census tell us about concealed families living in multi-family households in England & Wales? <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/census/2011-census-analysis/what-does-the-2011-census-tell-us-about-concealed-families->

[living-in-multi-family-households-in-england-and-wales-/sty-what-does-the-2011-census-tell-us-about-concealed-families.html](#)

2. Young Adults living with parents in the UK 2011

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/family-demography/young-adults-living-with-parents/2011/young-adults-rpt.html>

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- ⁱ [DCLG \(2012\) National Planning Policy Framework](#)
 - ⁱⁱ [DCLG \(2011\) Laying the Foundations: a housing strategy for England](#)
 - ⁱⁱⁱ DCLG (2014) Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment
 - ^{iv} [DCLG \(2010\) Estimating Housing Need](#)
 - ^v Poverty.org.uk (2011) The Poverty Site: Homelessness
 - ^{vi} Office for National Statistics (2014) What does the 2011 Census tell us about concealed families living in multi-family households in England and Wales?
 - ^{vii} [Office for National Statistics \(2013\) Families and Households 2013](#)
 - ^{viii} [Office for National Statistics \(2012\) Young adults living with their parents in the UK 2011](#)
 - ^{ix} Office for National Statistics (2014) What does the 2011 Census tell us about concealed families living in multi-family households in England and Wales?
 - ^x [Office for National Statistics \(2013\) 2011 Census Table LC1110EW](#)
 - ^{xi} [Office for National Statistics \(2012\) Measuring Young People's Well-Being 2012](#)
 - ^{xii} [DCLG \(2015\) 2012 Based Sub National Household Projections](#)