

## Single Person Households

### Housing Evidence Base Briefing Note 31 (BN31)

#### Summary

The National Planning Policy Framework states that 'to deliver a wide choice of high quality homes, widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities, local planning authorities should: plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends, market trends and the needs of different groups in the community (such as but not limited to, families with children, older people, people with disabilities, service families and people wishing to build their own homes)'.

There were 32,153 one person households in Cornwall in 1981 and this number had increased by 115% to 69,269 by 2011. There was a 47% increase in pensioner one person households and a huge 295% increase in other one person households. In 2011, 76% of all one person households were aged 50 or more.

The 2012 based household projections predicted that one person households would increase by about 15% between 2010 and 2030. One person households aged 65 and under were predicted to remain at a fairly stable number whereas one person households aged 65 or more were estimated to increase by 30%.

In terms of the type of housing required to meet increasing numbers of one person households, these households are as likely to over occupy (i.e. have spare bedrooms) their homes as other types of households are. The latest projections would suggest that in addition to housing currently occupied by one family household there is a need for an extra:

- 2,596 x 1 bedroom;
- 4,426 x 2 bedroom;
- 4,309 x 3 or more bedroom.

In terms of the tenure of one person homes using the latest projections and the same tenure split as in 2011 this could equate to a need for an extra:

#### Key Facts

Since 1981, the number of pensioner one person households has increased by 47% - the number of other one person households has increased by almost 300%.

In 2011, one person households made up 30.6% (69,269) of all households (230,389 households) in Cornwall. 76% of these one person households were aged 50 or more.

One person households are predicted to continue to increase: those aged 65 and under will remain fairly stable number whereas those aged 65 or more are predicted to increase by 30% between 2010 and 2030.

*Source: Census, DCLG Household Projections.*

Additional Number of Dwellings Required by 2030 by Tenure			
	Owned/Shared Ownership	Social Rented	Private Rented/Living Rent Free
<b>1 Bedroom</b>	208	1,402	1,064
<b>2 Bedrooms</b>	1,726	1,505	1,726
<b>3 Bedrooms</b>	2,284	517	862

## National Context

The NPPF<sup>i</sup> (paragraph 50) states that 'to deliver a wide choice of high quality homes, widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities, local planning authorities should: plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends, market trends and the needs of different groups in the community (such as but not limited to, families with children, older people, people with disabilities, service families and people wishing to build their own homes); identify the size, type, tenure and range of housing that is required in particular locations, reflecting local demand'.

National Planning Practice Guidance has been made available to guide the 'Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment'<sup>ii</sup> and this guidance includes an element on how the needs for all types of housing should be addressed. 'Once an overall housing figure has been identified, plan makers will need to break this down by tenure, household type (singles, couples and families) and household size. Plan makers should therefore examine current and future trends of:

- The proportion of the population of different age profile;
- The types of household (e.g. singles, couples, families by age group, numbers of children and dependents);
- The current housing stock size of dwellings (e.g. one, two+ bedrooms);
- The tenure composition of housing'.

This guidance goes onto identify specific types of housing and the needs of different groups such as the private rented sector, people wishing to build their own homes, family housing, housing for older people and households with specific needs.

## Local Context

Cornwall Council's Housing Investment Plan<sup>iii</sup> has set a number of priorities which include two that directly relate to housing mix, types and tenures:

- Priority 2: Supporting older and disabled people - the needs of older people are changing. In line with national trends Cornwall's population is getting older as average life expectancy continues to rise. By 2031 over one in four people will be over 65. Typically, people's preference is to remain in their own homes and often this requires homes to be adapted. But in other cases, new forms of supported housing and specialist provision are needed. Cornwall needs to ensure that our housing offer is able to respond to these demographic challenges in a way which reflects people's wishes and dignity as they grow older.
- Priority 4: Creating Sustainable Communities - We will ensure that housing activities contribute towards social wellbeing and make a difference to deprived and excluded communities

## Definitions

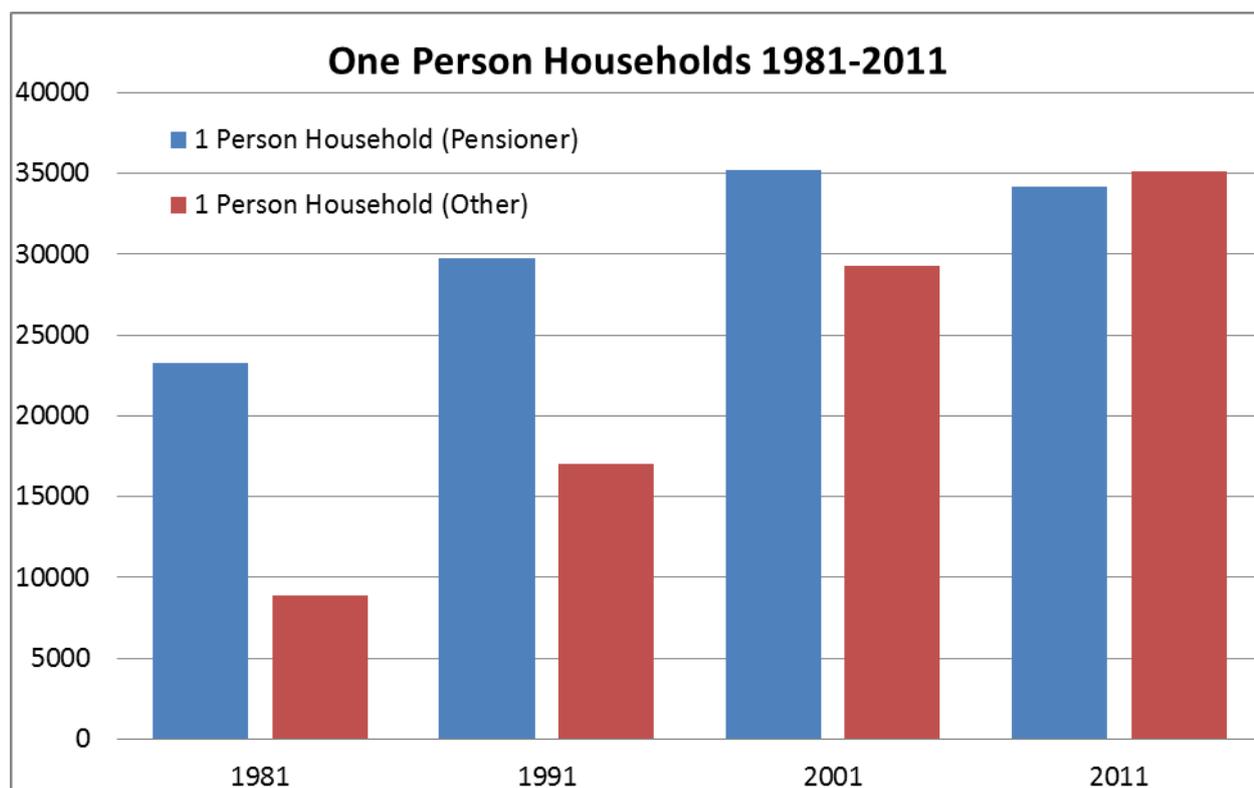
**Households:** part of the definition of a household refers to one person living alone. A household must contain at least one person whose place of usual residence is at the address.

**Older households:** generally refers to households where all members are aged 55 or more.

## Past Trends

Household types are described as comprising couples (with or without children), lone parent families, single, and multi person households and the census has provided some information on these types of households. Changes to household types over

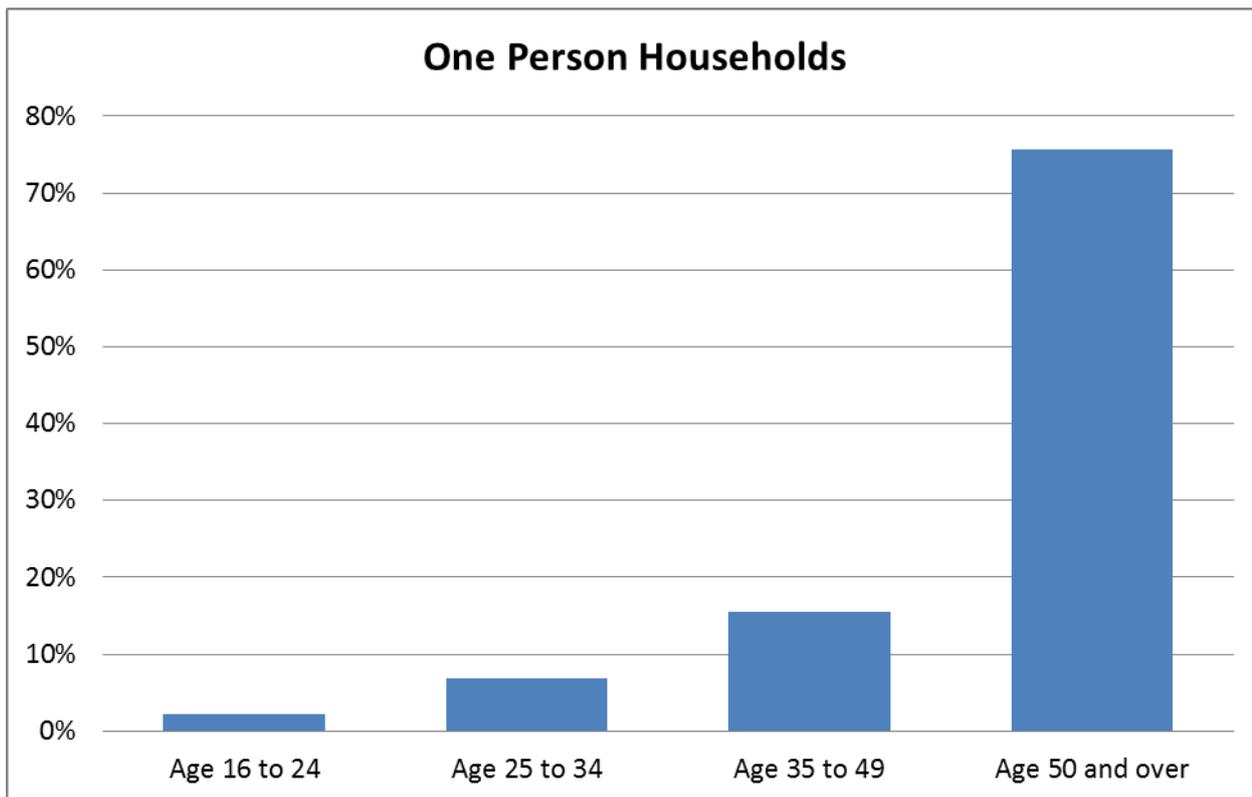
time has not been consistently reported in Census data but the following graph gives an indication of some of the main changes experienced, such as an increase in 1 person households in the under pension age group. 1 Person pensioner households have risen over time but have been fairly constant between 2001 and 2011 which is due to better life expectancy rates, the move through of the 'baby boomers' and more 'pensioner' households remaining as couples. There were 32,153 one person households in Cornwall in 1981 and this number had increased by 115% to 69,269 by 2011. There was a 47% increase in pensioner one person households and a huge 295% increase in other one person households.



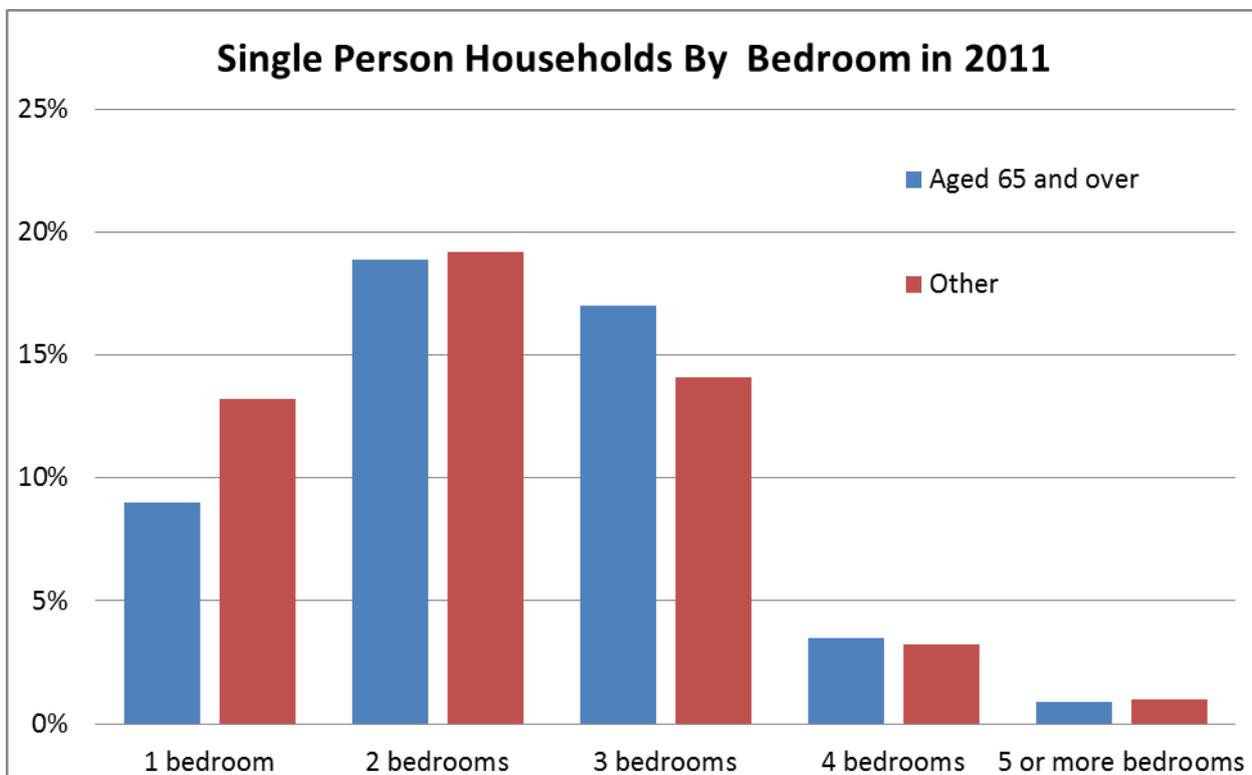
## Current Trends

In 2011<sup>iv</sup> one person households made up 30.6% (69,269) of all households (230,389 households) in Cornwall.

The vast majority (76%) of these households are aged 50 and over as shown in the graph below. This could be due to a number of factors including separation, divorce or the death of a partner. The inability of some 'younger' households to set up their own households<sup>BN28</sup> due to the current economic situation may to some extent have suppressed levels in these age groups. Younger households are also more likely to be forming family<sup>BN30</sup> households.



In terms of the bedrooms currently occupied by one person households, the following graph provides detail by household type:



As is the case with the majority of households <sup>BN13</sup> in Cornwall, single person households are as likely to 'under occupy' their homes according to official definitions. The graph below clearly demonstrates that that this is so for both those aged above and below 65 years of age. One person households under 65 years of age are more

likely to live in one bedroom properties (i.e. an occupancy rating of 0) than those aged 65 or more.

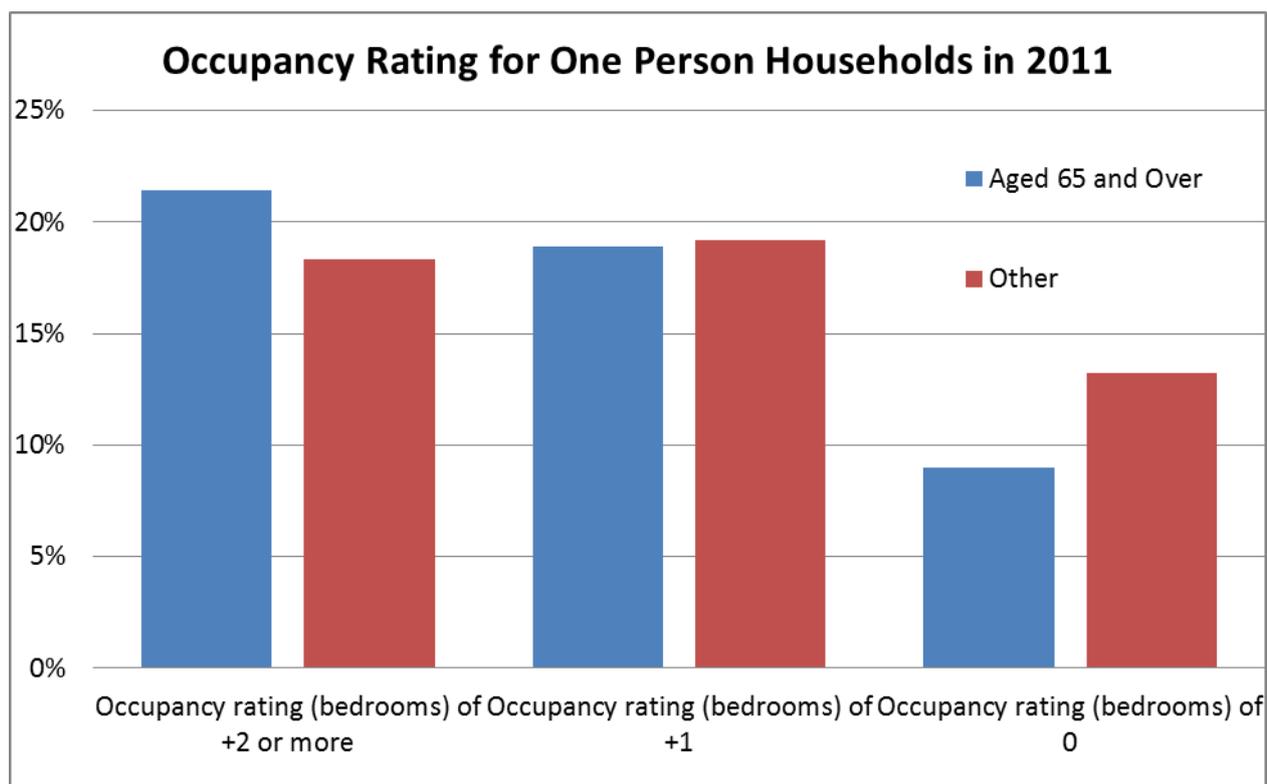
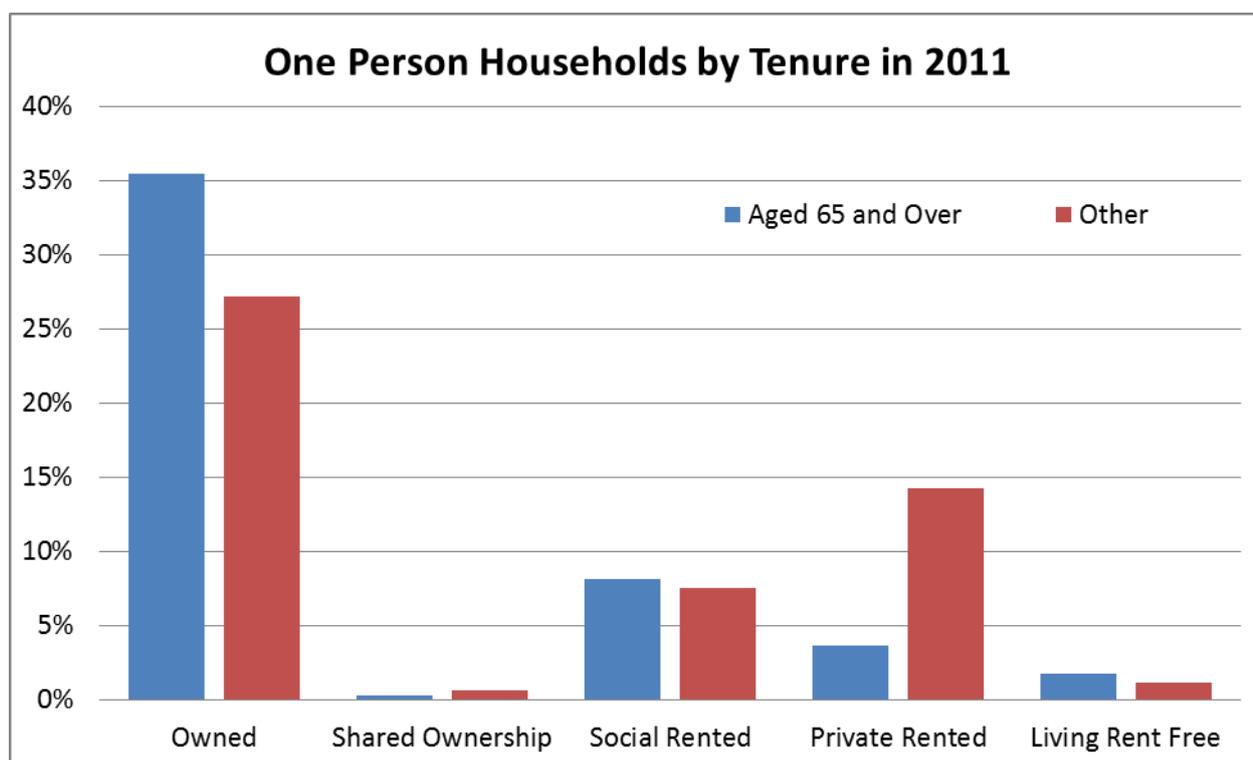


Table 1 gives an indication of how many spare bedrooms one person households had in 2011 by tenure for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly:

	<b>Owned/Shared Ownership</b>	<b>Social Rented</b>	<b>Private Rented/Living Rent Free</b>
<b>No Spare Bedrooms</b>	8%	54%	41%
<b>1 Spare Bedroom</b>	39%	34%	39%
<b>2+ Spare Bedrooms</b>	53%	12%	20%

In terms of the tenure occupied by one person households in 2011, the graph below shows detail by household type. It is clear that older households are more likely to own their homes, whereas a significantly larger proportion of younger one person households are more likely to privately rent their home.



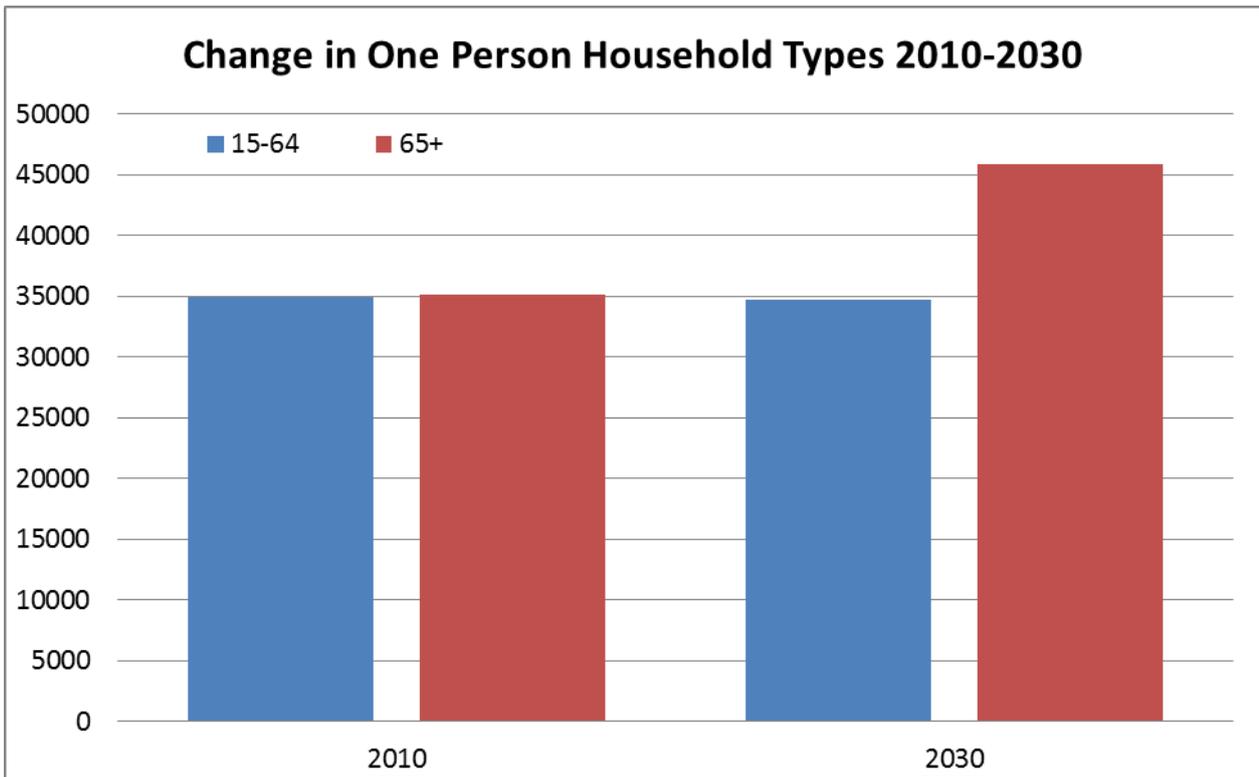
### Anticipated Future Numbers of One Person Households

The latest long term household projections are 2012 based<sup>v</sup> and these give an indication of how one person households are likely to change between 2010 and 2030 (the Local Plan time period). There were estimated to be about 70,000 one person households in 2010 (which is slightly higher than the number actually present in 2011) and this number of households was predicted to rise by about 15% to around 80,600 one person households by 2030. The number of male one person households is predicted to increase by almost 18% and the number of female one person households is predicted to increase by just over 13%.

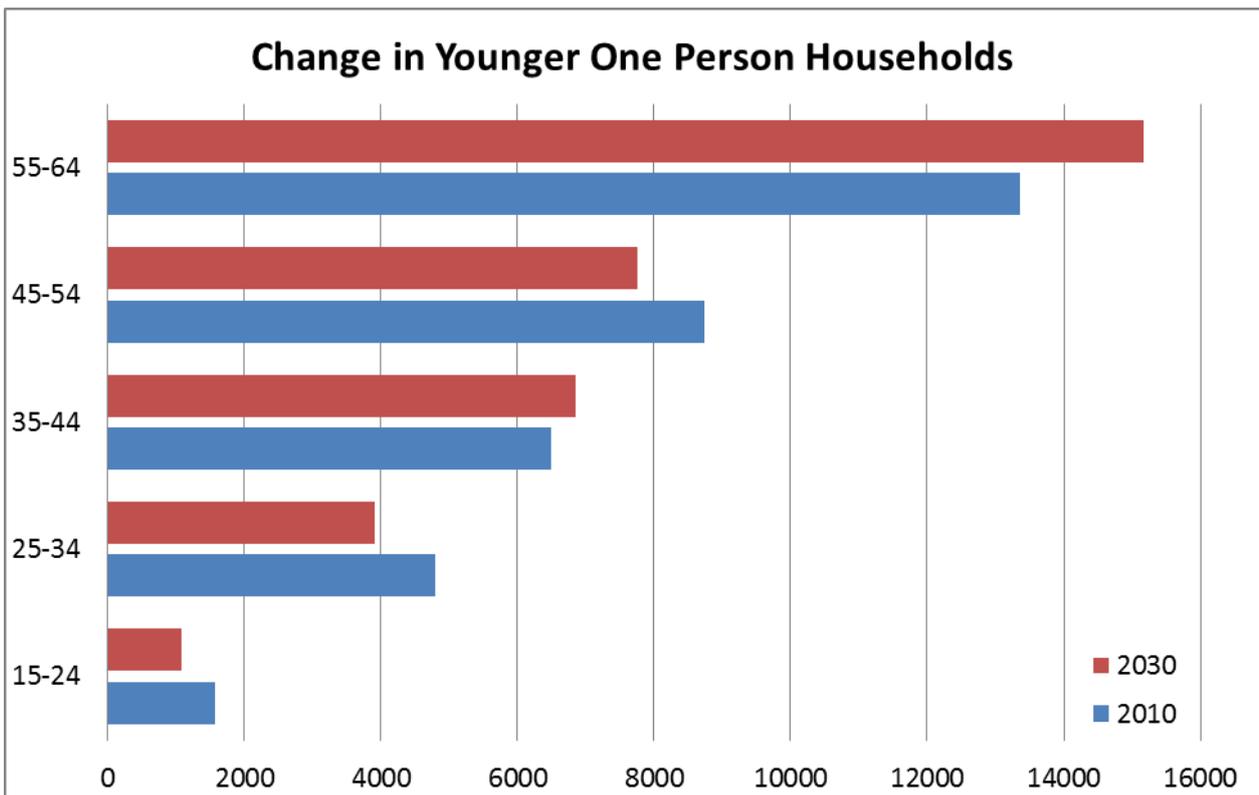
One person households aged 65 and under are predicted to remain fairly static whereas one person households aged 65 or more are estimated to increase by just over 30% as shown in the graph below.

**Note 1:** The 2012 based household projections combined the Isles of Scilly with Cornwall so the following graphs are for Cornwall & the Isles of Scilly.

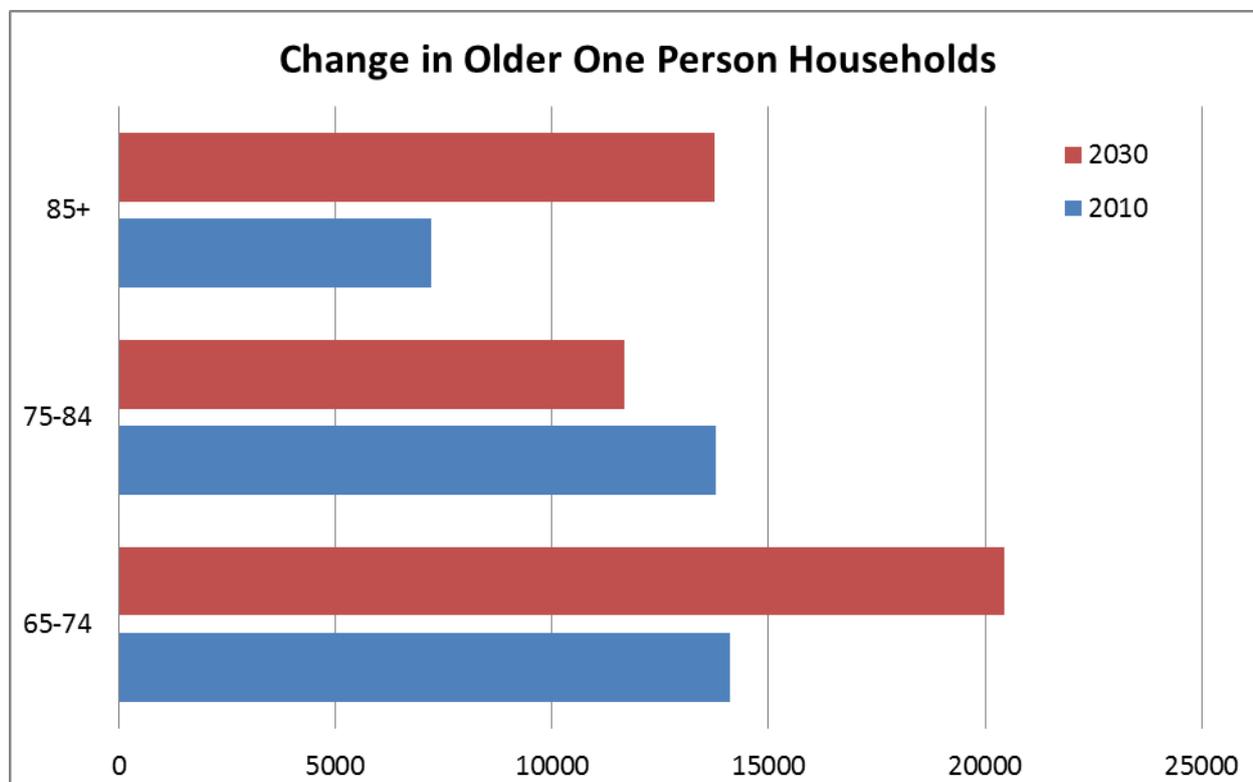
**Note 2:** Recent Government initiatives, including those to increase the number of homes that will be affordable to first time buyers, may make it easier for younger households to set up their own home earlier than recent trends would predict is possible – and therefore these figures should be treated as indicative only.



The following two graphs show how one person household are predicted to change in terms of numbers between 2010 and 2030 by age group. There are predicted to be less one person households in the 15-34 age groups and this is likely to be as a result of the inability of younger households to be able to set up their own homes due to affordability and other issues. The predicted drop in those aged 45-54 may be due to the delay in younger people being able to set up their own households, and that when they do they are more likely to set up as a family household than as a single household.



The largest increases in numbers are those in the older age groups, with the most significant increase being in the 85+ age group of around 90%, and are likely to be the result of increased life expectancy. The decrease in numbers in the 74-85 categories is likely to be as a result of improving life expectancy amongst couple households.



### Anticipated Future Impact on Housing

The type of housing that a person wants to occupy in the majority of cases does not correlate with the type of housing that they need, and if a household can afford to have more space than they need they will do so. This is explained in more detail in the occupancy table in the Briefing Note on Housing Mix Types and Tenures <sup>BN13</sup>. Around 80% of households in Cornwall technically under occupied their property in 2011 according to 'official' definitions of occupancy rates. In reality most people like to have at least one spare bedroom if they can.

If we use the occupancy rates from table 1 above and apply them to future numbers of one person households (80,600) using the same proportions based on a 63% owned, 16% social rented and 21% private rented split we would need:

	Owned/Shared Ownership	Social Rented	Private Rented/Living Rent Free
No Spare Bedrooms	4,062	6,964	6,940
1 Spare Bedroom	19,803	4,385	6,601
2+ Spare Bedrooms	26,912	1,548	3,385

Table 3 identifies the number of bedrooms that could hypothetically be required as a minimum for use by one person households in 2030. At this moment in time, some older people will remain in their family home because of a lack of appropriate

alternative accommodation<sup>BN23, BN27</sup> and if this situation improves there may be less of a need for larger homes for some one person households in the future.

Bedrooms	Number in 2011	Number in 2030	Difference
<b>1 Bedroom</b>	15,370	17,966	+2,596
<b>2 Bedrooms</b>	26,363	30,789	+4,426
<b>3 Bedrooms</b>	27,536	31,845	+4,309

Table 4 provides some information on the tenure of additional properties that could be required by single person households in the future using the tenure and occupancy figures as at 2011. Since most of the growth in single person households is predicted to be within those aged 65 or more, if more appropriate and attractive older persons accommodation is made available to these older households then the number of larger properties required is likely to reduce.

	Owned/Shared Ownership	Social Rented	Private Rented/Living Rent Free
<b>1 Bedroom</b>	208	1,402	1,064
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## 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<sup>BN22</sup> as the figures used are from 2011. In terms of those claiming benefits for housing, welfare reform changes that came into effect in April 2013 now penalise those that have more bedrooms than they require and a cap has been set on the level of employment related benefits that can be received which may have a knock on effect on the ability to access housing. It is likely to be some time before we know what the overall impact will be of welfare reform but one likely outcome is an increased demand for smaller bedroom properties and less likelihood of those in social and private rented accommodation having spare rooms.

## 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-and-schedule-of-focussed-changes/>

[policy/adopted-plans/cornwall-local-plan-strategic-policies/strategic-policies-proposed-submission-version/](#)

## Examination Findings

No examination findings specifically relating to housing mix have been identified to date.

## Associated Briefing Notes

BN13 – Housing Mix, Type and Tenure

BN22 – Welfare Reform

BN23 – Accessible Housing: Age and Health Impacts on Housing Mix

BN27 - Specialist Housing for Older People

BN28 – Concealed Households

BN30 – Households with Dependent Children

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<sup>i</sup> [DCLG \(2012\) National Planning Policy Framework](#)

<sup>ii</sup> [DCLG \(2014\) Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment](#)

<sup>iii</sup> [Cornwall Council \(2012\) Building homes, sustaining jobs and lives: Cornwall's investment plan for housing 2012-2016](#)

<sup>iv</sup> [Office for National Statistics \(2011\) Census 2011: various tables](#)

<sup>v</sup> [DCLG \(2015\) 2012 Based Sub National Household Projections](#)