

Overcrowding

Key points:

- At the time of the 2011 Census, 5,800 households in Cornwall were in overcrowded accommodation (defined as having fewer bedrooms than required), 2.5% of all households.
- Overcrowding is more prevalent in social and private rented accommodation than owner occupied.
- Cornwall's rates of overcrowding are lower than the England and Wales average.
- There are areas in Cornwall where overcrowding is more prevalent; Newquay, Camborne/Redruth and Penryn have the highest rates of overcrowding.
- Lower income households are more likely to be in overcrowded accommodation.
- National research suggests that overcrowding has a detrimental effect on physical and mental health and is more likely to impact lower income households and ethnic minority households.

Background

Overcrowding has two definitions, as outlined in [Part X of the Housing Act 1985](#):

- The Room Standard: the number of persons sleeping in a dwelling is not sufficient for the household.
- The Space Standard: when the number of persons sleeping in a dwelling have insufficient space.

The English Housing Survey (EHS) produces an annual estimate of overcrowding based on the 'bedroom standard' and is the main measure of overcrowding for England. Data from the EHS is not available for local authority areas, however overcrowding is recorded for local areas in the Census.

Research undertaken by Shelter in the 2005 report '[Full House](#)'¹ highlighted that overcrowding was detrimental in the following areas; family relationships, child development and education and health.

In 2020, the Health Foundation² found that people in lower income households are more likely to be in overcrowded accommodation.

In Cornwall, enforcement of overcrowding is undertaken by Cornwall Council's Private Sector Housing team as part of the Enforcement Policy³.

¹ https://england.shelter.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/39532/Full_house_overcrowding_effects.pdf

² <https://www.health.org.uk/news-and-comment/charts-and-infographics/overcrowding-is-highest-for-those-with-low-incomes>

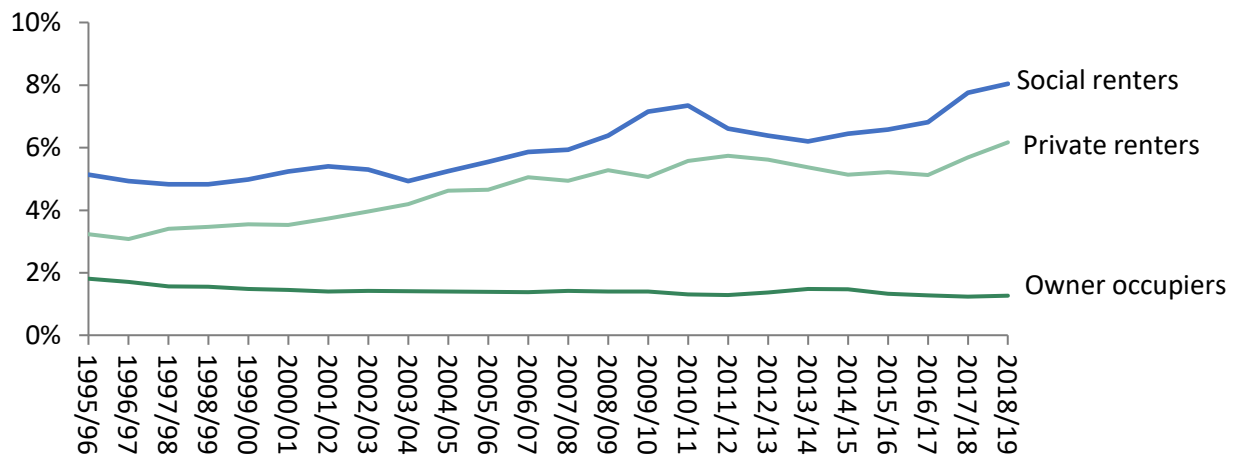
³ <https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/housing/private-housing/policies-and-strategies/>

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Overcrowding in England

The EHS 2018-19⁴ found that 3% of households were overcrowded in England, overcrowding is more common in rented households, ethnic minority households, and is more prevalent in London. Overcrowding rates are also increasing in the PRS and social rented sectors.

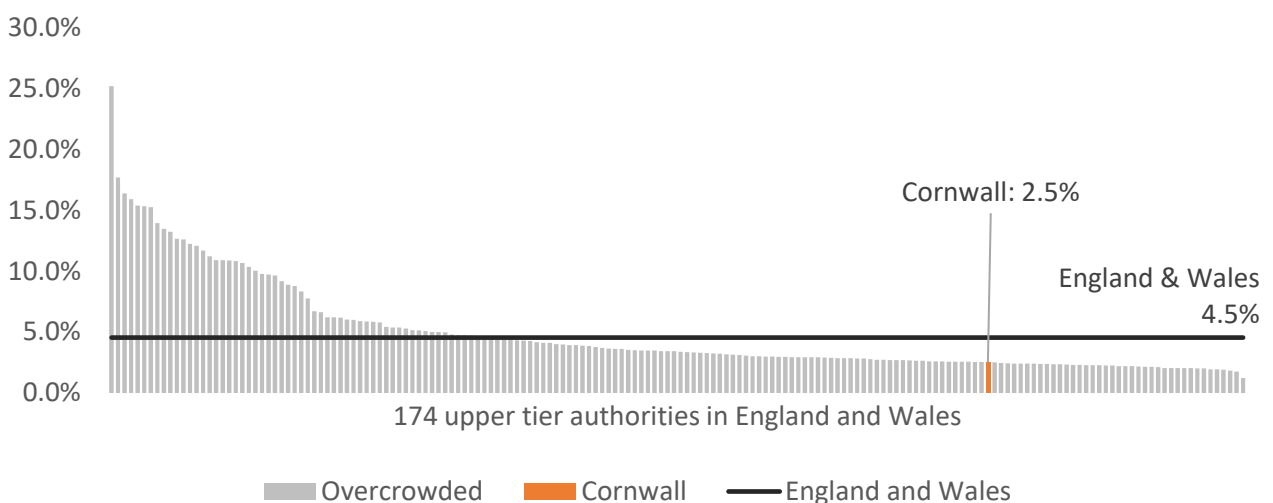
Household overcrowding by tenure, English Housing Survey



Overcrowding in Cornwall

In 2011, 2.5% of households in Cornwall were estimated to be overcrowded according to the number of bedrooms compared to the size and composition of households. This is lower than the average for England and Wales.

Overcrowded Households (bedrooms)



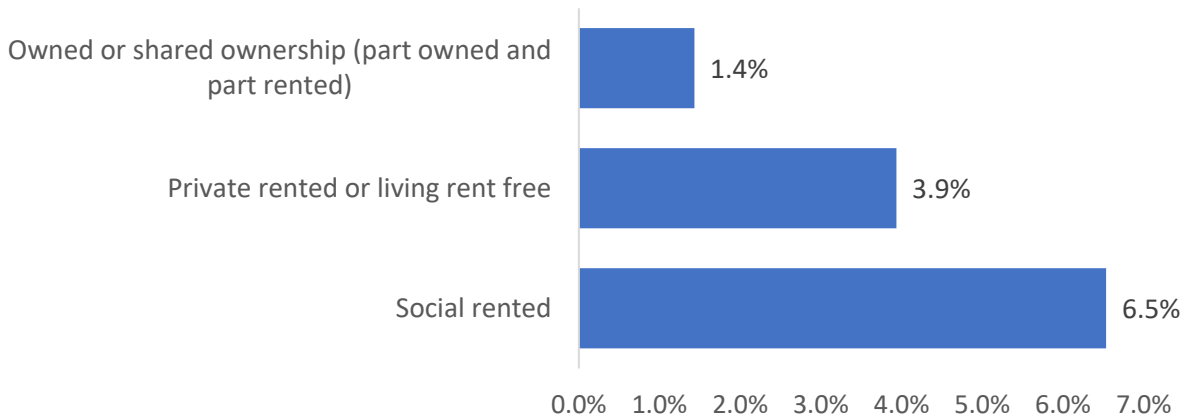
⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-housing-survey-2018-to-2019-headline-report>

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Overcrowding by tenure

By tenure, those in social rented housing were most likely to be overcrowded (have fewer bedrooms than required).

Overcrowded Households (bedrooms) by tenure, 2011 Census



Overcrowding by local area

Rates of overcrowding are highest in Camborne/Redruth, Newquay and Penryn.

Overcrowding (Bedrooms)

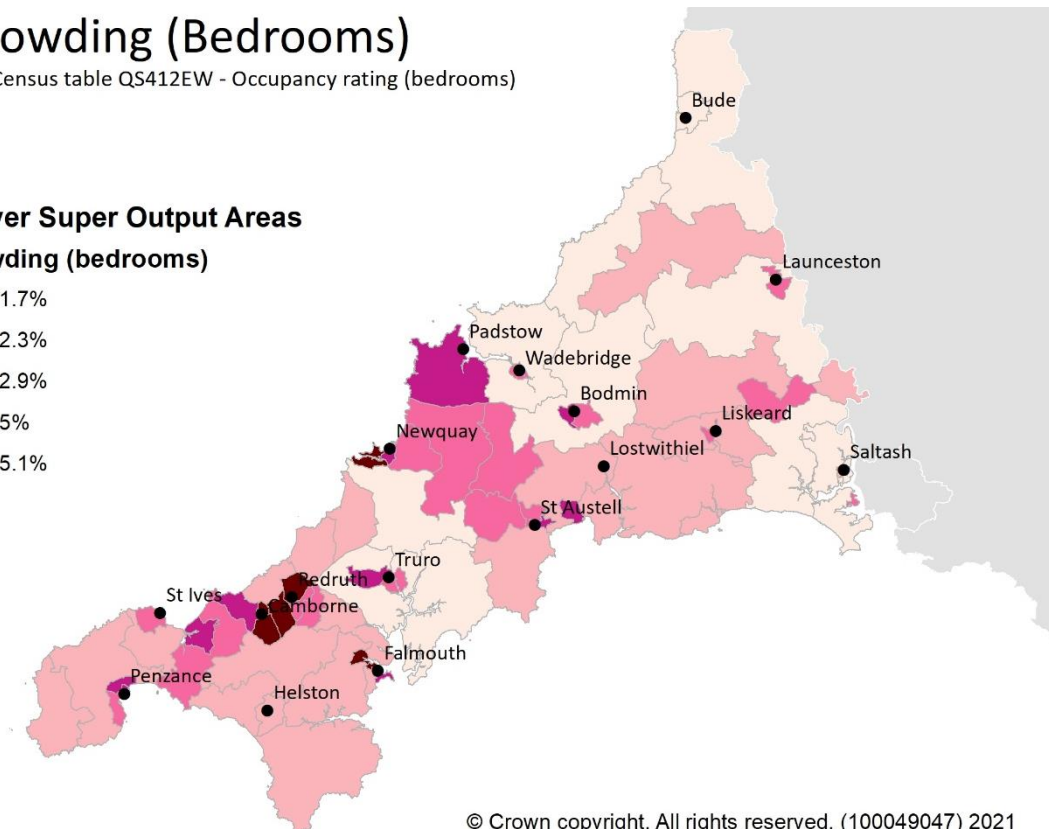
Source: 2011 Census table QS412EW - Occupancy rating (bedrooms)

Legend

Middle Layer Super Output Areas

% overcrowding (bedrooms)

- 0.7% - 1.7%
- 1.8% - 2.3%
- 2.4% - 2.9%
- 3% - 3.5%
- 3.6% - 5.1%
- Towns



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Links to further information

- [ONS 2011 Census analysis: General Health in Over-crowded and Under-occupied households](#)
- [English Housing Survey](#)
- [Commons library research briefing Overcrowded Housing \(England\) March 2020](#)