

# **Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council Housing Review of Social Housing Lettings Data**

2019

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# **Review of Social Housing lettings data**

## **Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council**

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## Executive Summary

Following stock transfers in 1996 and 2003, Social housing in the Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council (WMBC) area is now owned and managed by Private Registered Providers (PRPs) include a specially formed housing association, Walsall Housing Group (WHG) and the Walsall Association of Tenant Management Organisations (WATMOS) . The local housing authority retains 92 homes for use as temporary accommodation which do not form part of the analysis for this report.

WHG owns and manages 22,000 social homes, which is the majority of social housing stock within the borough. The Council currently has access to at least 50% of the transferred homes, via nomination, through a Stock Transfer Agreement, and varying access to the other PRP owned homes through individual nominations agreements.

The period of the data analysed for this report is 2013/14 to 2017/18. The analysis uses data from a variety of sources, and where appropriate, comments on comparative data for West Midlands Combined Authority area and England.

For 2017/18 there were 2179 social housing lettings in the WMBC area available to new tenants, and 8330 households with live applications on the Housing Register.

The number of social housing lettings decreased by 30% between 2013/14 and 2017/18, while social housing stock numbers increased by just over 3%. Social housing comprised 24% of all housing stock in 2017 within the WMBC area, with owner occupation still the largest tenure at 60%.

In 2017/18, 18% of new social housing tenants were immediately previously living in the private rented sector, which is a reduction of 6% percent from 2016/17, and almost 3% less lettings were made to households who were statutory homeless for the same period, despite an increase in homelessness generally.

The proportion of new lettings to households with the lead tenant in employment for 2017/18 was 33.43% (849) in 2017/18 , a small reduction on the previous two years, with 10.6% (258) of those in part time work, and the number of those seeking employment has increased during the period analysed by 9.43%(550) lower than 2013/14.

The greatest proportion of new lettings, which includes transfers by existing tenants, is grouped together as 'other' and includes lead tenants not seeking work due to illness or disability, or caring responsibility, such as childcare. For 2016/17 this proportion was 36.89% (927).

Lettings during 2017/18 reflected the Borough Population with 23.91% (605) to households with a BME lead tenant. The proportion of homes let to households with Reasonable Preference is at 23.79% (602), and statutory homeless households at 13.91% (352).

The proportion of successful WMBC nominations to PRPs peaked in 2016/17 at 27.86% (746) of all lets, meaning the 50% Transfer Agreement quota is not achieved.

Conclusions are set out below followed by Recommendations designed to ensure that WMBC meets its housing duties.

## Introduction

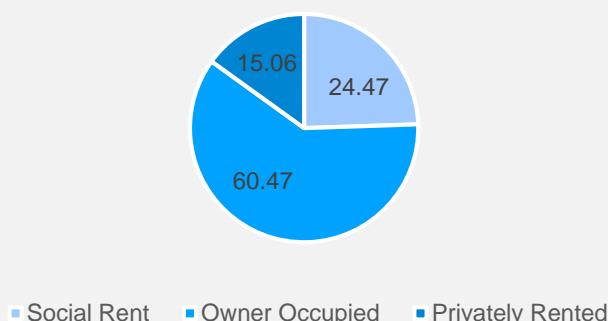
This report contains comprehensive analysis of social housing lettings within the Metropolitan Borough of Walsall to enable the Council to fully understand the impact of their current Allocations Policy, Transfer Agreement and Nominations Agreements with PRPs.

This analysis will enable the Council to determine if these agreements and policy are fit for purpose and effective according to regulatory requirements, including the Housing Act 1996, Part 6 and the Localism Act 2011 as well as to aid in the prevention and relief of homelessness taking account of the Homelessness Act 2002 and Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, and to provide evidence and a rationale to support any changes that are needed at a policy level to ensure future effectiveness.

The data includes all social housing lettings between the years of 2013/14 to 2017/18 and includes new lettings to households who are not currently social housing tenants, and internal transfers, where existing tenants have moved to a new home, usually within the borough, for example due to overcrowding in their existing tenancy. Where possible the data has been separated between new tenants and internal transfers. The data does not include mutual exchanges, where tenants agree to swap homes.

It is widely accepted that there is a shortage of all types of housing in England, not least, affordable housing. Chart 1 shows the Office of National Statistics 2017 estimates of the tenure split of all dwelling stock within the WMBC area, with Chart 2 giving actual numbers.

**Chart 1: % Dwelling stock by tenure : WMBC area 2017**



*Of the 114,720 dwellings within the WMBC area, 245 (28,060) are currently social rented homes.*

Source: Office of National Statistics<sup>1</sup>

**Chart 2: Dwelling stock by tenure (number) : WMBC area 2017**



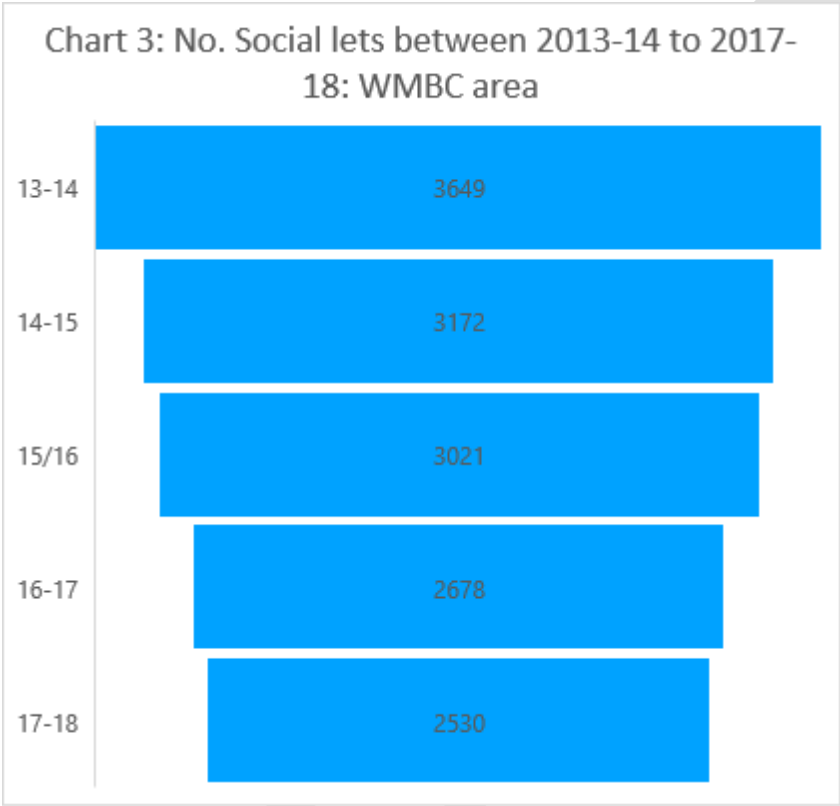
Source: Office of National Statistics<sup>1</sup>

1. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/subnationaldwellingstockbytenureestimates>

Proportions within Walsall are similar to those within the WMCA area as a whole, which has a 1.74% larger private rented sector and a 1.39% less social housing stock. Conversely for the whole of England, while the proportion of owner occupied dwellings is similar to WMBC, the private rented sector at 19.8%, which is greater than the social rented sector at 17.4%.

**Section One: Annual social housing lettings**

The total number of new social housing lettings in Walsall peaked at 3649, in 2013/14, with 539 of those being internal transfers to existing tenants, and there has since been a general downward trend. While new social housing stock has been added to the overall number, the fall in the number of vacant properties available to be let indicates the widening affordability gap between the private rented sector and social rents, and that tenants are remaining in their tenancy for longer than in the past, as moving out of social rented into either home ownership or private renting is now impossible for many households.



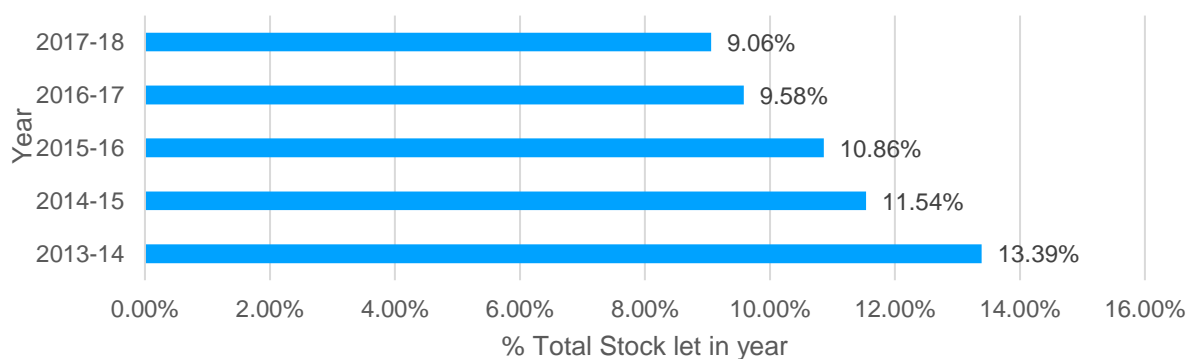
*In 2017/18 there were 2530 new social housing lettings within Walsall, a 30% percent reduction from 2013/14, while Housing Register numbers have more than doubled during the same period.*

Source: CORE data<sup>1</sup>

Chart 3 the total lettings as a percentage of the total social housing stock between 2013/14 and 2017/18, illustrating a year on year reduction in the proportion of homes becoming available to let each year.

1. <https://core.communities.gov.uk/DataCollection/logs/analysis.html>

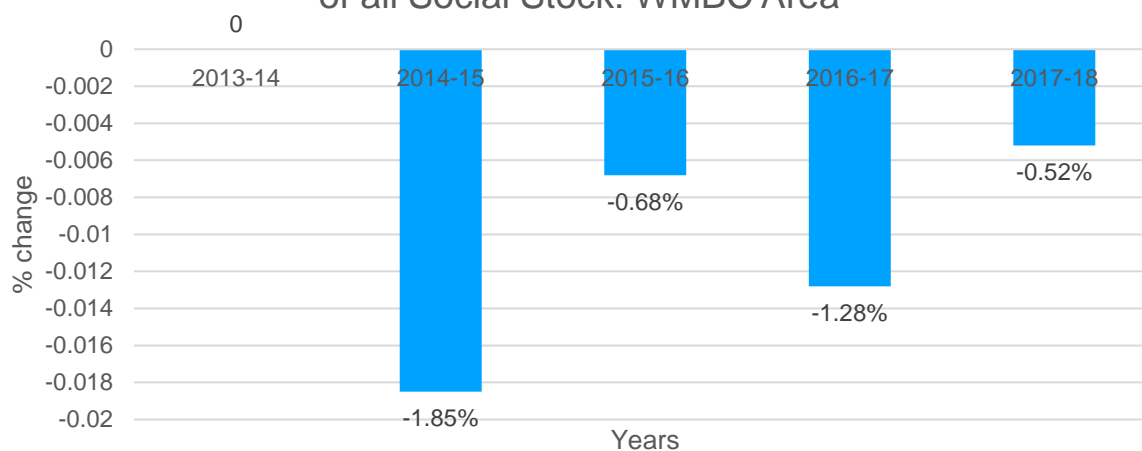
Chart 4: Social lettings as % of all social stock: WMBC area



Source: CORE data<sup>1</sup>

The annual fluctuations in social housing lets shown in Chart 4 are small, with the greatest difference being -1.85% from 2013/14 to 2014/15. These numbers reflect the declining availability of homes to let each year, and even with a robust affordable housing development programme adding to the stock numbers, this is unlikely to change in the short to medium term.

Chart 5: % Annual change in Social Housing lets as a % of all Social Stock: WMBC Area

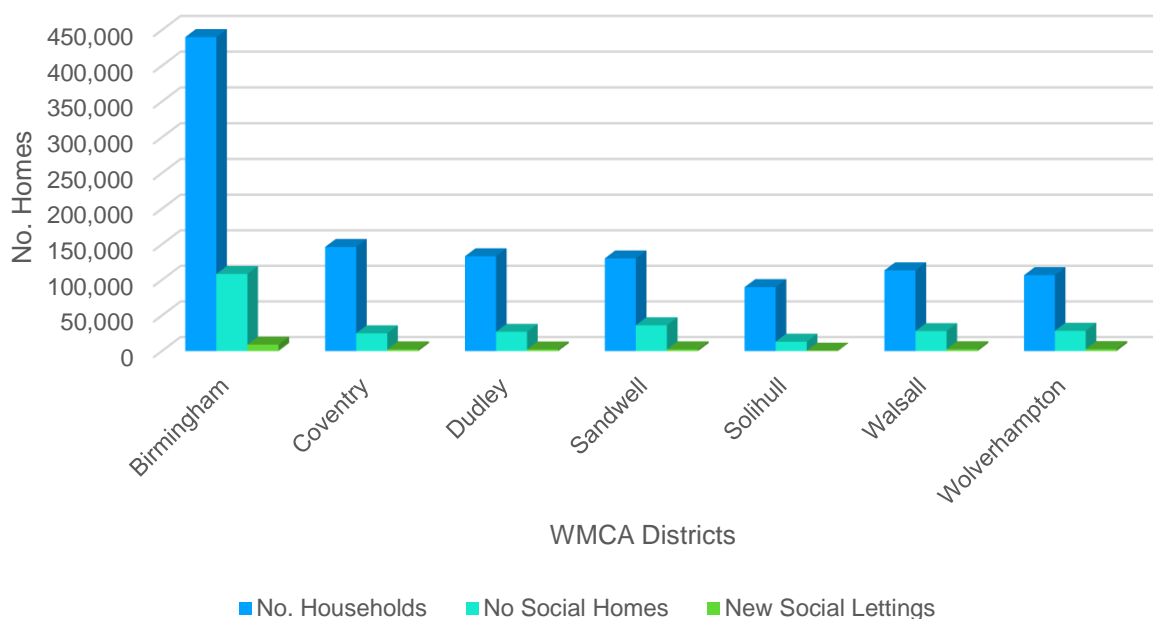


Source: CORE data<sup>1</sup>

1. <https://core.communities.gov.uk/DataCollection/logs/analysis.html>

<sup>1</sup>. <https://core.communities.gov.uk/DataCollection/logs/analysis.html>

Chart 6: No. Households compared with Social Homes and Lettings: WMCA Area 2017/18



Source: CORE data<sup>1</sup>

No. Households compared with Social Homes and Lettings: WMCA Area 2017/18

Area	England	Birmingham	Coventry	Dudley	Sandwell	Solihull	Walsall	Wolverhampton	WMCA
No Households	23,687,000	439997	146199	133181	130147	89743	113397	106668	1159332
No Social Homes	4113000	108270	24910	27010	36170	13130	28030	28480	265990
% Social Homes to total Households	17.45	24.61	17.03	20.28	27.79	14.63	24.71	26.69	22.94
No Social Lettings	312747	8953	2290	2211	2338	534	2530	2684	21540
% Lettings to Total Households	1.32	2.03	1.57	1.66	1.79	0.6	2.23	2.51	1.86
% Lettings to Total Social Homes	7.57	8.27	9.19	8.19	6.46	4.07	9.03	9.42	8.1

Table 1. Source: CORE data<sup>1</sup>

During 2017/18 Walsall had a greater proportion of social homes to the number of households within the borough than both WMCA area and England, at 24.71%. Among the WMCA, only Sandwell and Wolverhampton have a greater proportion. In addition, there was a higher proportion of lettings per household than either England or other WMCA districts, with the exception of Wolverhampton.

Walsall were also at the higher end of the ratio of lettings to social homes at 9.03%, behind Wolverhampton and Coventry, with England trailing at 7.57%.

1. <https://core.communities.gov.uk/DataCollection/logs/analysis.html>

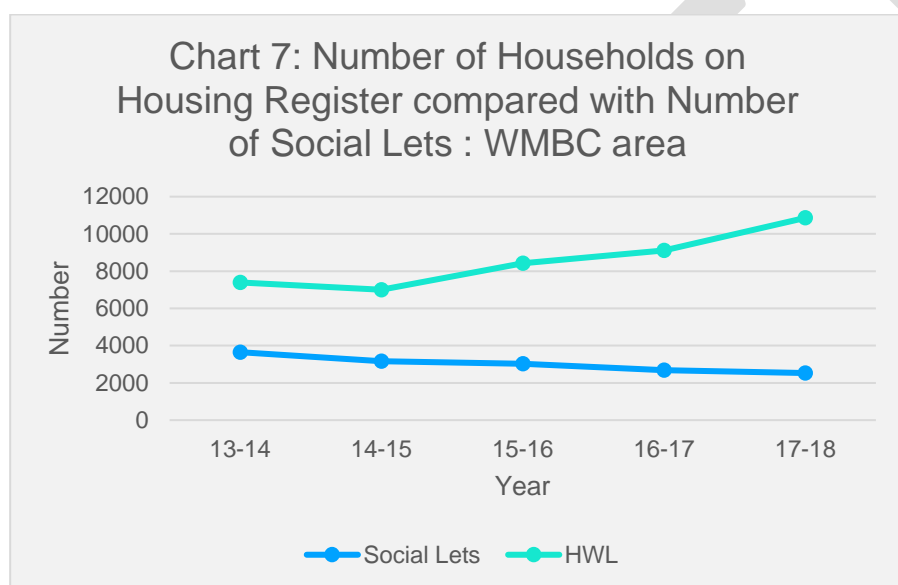


There are a number of tools to help us understand if allocations and lettings policies, both formally agreed with partners and de facto, where agreements are absent. One such measure is the comparison of Housing Register and social lettings data, which for Walsall is currently provided to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government by PRPs.

permitted to allocations policies by the Localism Act 2011

Following the freedoms to tailor allocation priorities to meet local needs and local circumstances within allocations policies introduced in the Localism Act 2011, the Housing Register is no longer the comprehensive data set used to determine total housing need within the Borough. Despite this it does remain a relatively useful tool in providing a strategic overview of need.

Housing Registers across WMCA area are growing, with the exception of Dudley whose numbers have declined. Walsall has the third largest Housing Register within WMCA behind Birmingham and Coventry.



*The Increasing gap between numbers on the housing register and the number of social lets available reflects the national picture.*

Source: CORE data<sup>1</sup>

Number of Households on the Housing Register compared with Number of Social Lets (including Internal Transfers) : WMBC area					
Year	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
<b>Social Lets</b>	3649	3172	3021	2678	2530
(of which Internal Transfers)	(539)	(1086)	(313)	(256)	(251)
<b>HWL</b>	3748	3831	5398	6441	8330

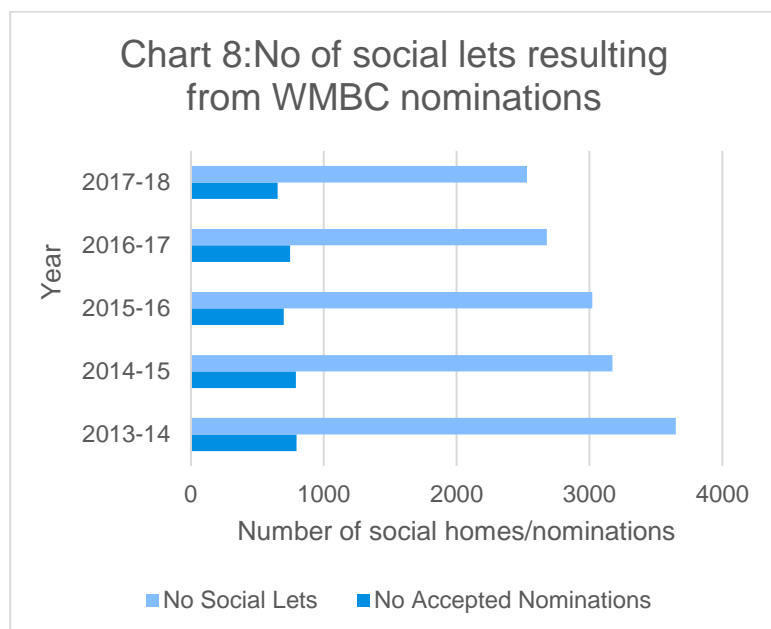
Table 2 Source: CORE data<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <https://core.communities.gov.uk/DataCollection/logs/analysis.html>

As Chart 7, and its supporting Table 2 demonstrates, since 2014/15 the gap is widening, with a reduction in the number of social lets annually, and a significant, steady increase in housing waiting list numbers. This does somewhat reflect the national increase in both private sector

rents and the need for new homes, in particular affordable homes, as well as the inevitable reduced social tenants moving on from social housing.

Although WMBC does not currently hold or manage the Housing Register, there is a 50% nomination target within the Transfer Agreement with WHG, and some nominations access to stock owned and managed by other PRPs operating within Walsall.



Source: CORE data<sup>1</sup>

No Social lets compared to Nominations WMBC 2013/14 to 2017/18			
Year	No Social Lets	No Accepted Noms	% Noms to Lets
<b>2013-14</b>	3649	794	21.76
<b>2014-15</b>	3172	790	24.91
<b>2015-16</b>	3021	698	23.1
<b>2016-17</b>	2678	746	27.86
<b>2017-18</b>	2530	653	25.81

Table 3.

Source: CORE data<sup>1</sup>

The numbers shown in Table 3 are compiled using data supplied to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government through the Continuous Recording of Lettings and Sales in Social Housing in England (CORE) by PRPs.

As can be seen in the table and Chart 8, the proportion of recorded nomination have not changed greatly during the period being analysed, and while the number of social lets have reduced, the highest proportion of successful nominations within the period is 27.86% in 2016/17, which is still well below the 50% agreed.

1. <https://core.communities.gov.uk/DataCollection/logs/analysis.html>

Social housing is broken down into two main types, General Needs Housing and Supported Housing.

**General Needs Housing** is not designed with any special features for a particular client group, and is usually self-contained.

**Supported Housing** is designed specifically with features and facilities to meet the needs of specific client groups, including older people and adults with a physical or learning disability.

The greater proportion of social housing stock in Walsall is General Needs Housing, and the remaining stock is Supported Housing, the majority of which in Walsall, as in most areas of England is older persons.

Social housing is also split by tenure and rent type. The two main types being Social Rent, and Affordable Rent.

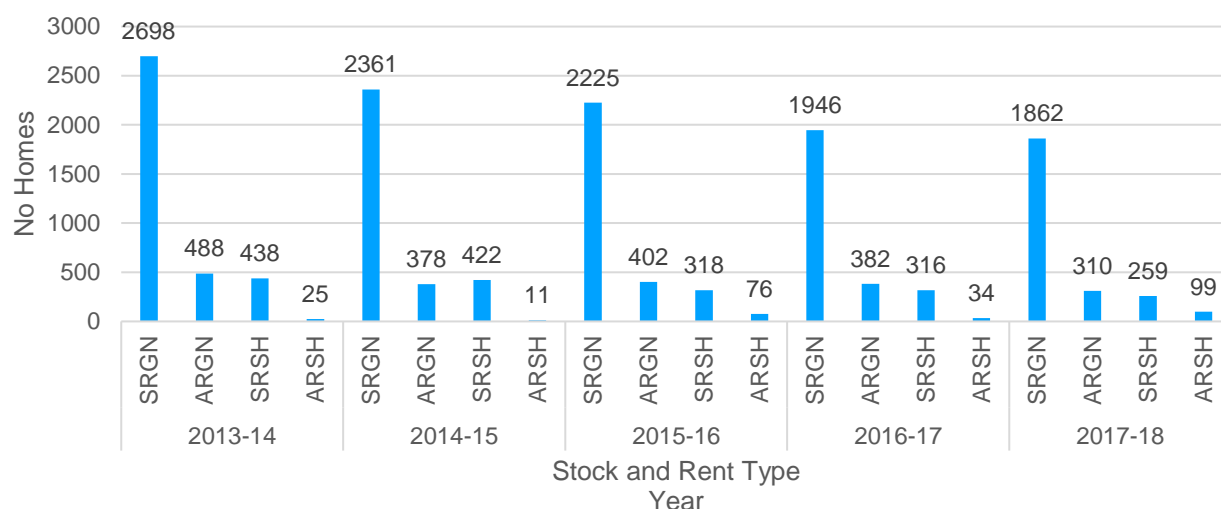
**Social Rented** homes are set on a secure basis with rent set at considerable lower than market rent, designed for those who are most in need or struggling with their housing costs.

**Affordable Rent** differs from traditional social rent are; the ability to set Affordable Rent levels at 80% of local market rents, and to specify the term of the tenancy

The traditional rent type is Social Rented, while Affordable rent is a relatively new tenure deriving from the 2011 Localism Act. A key policy aim of this tenure is to encourage movement out of social housing when the household no longer has the appropriate level of need.

While the Affordable rent levels set are at a maximum of 80% of the market, this can still result in an affordability issue for many households, and has on occasion resulted in private registered providers refusing nominations from councils due to their Affordability Policies. While this practice is still not commonplace, it is something that should be noted for future, particularly in areas where all of the housing stock has been transferred.

Chart 9: Social Lets by Stock and Rent Type : WMBC Area



Key	Description	
<b>SRGN</b>	<i>Social Rent: General Needs</i>	<b>SRSH</b> <i>Social Rent: Supported Housing</i>
<b>ARGN</b>	<i>Affordable Rent: General Needs</i>	<b>ARSH</b> <i>Affordable Rent: Supported Housing</i>

Source: CORE data<sup>1</sup>

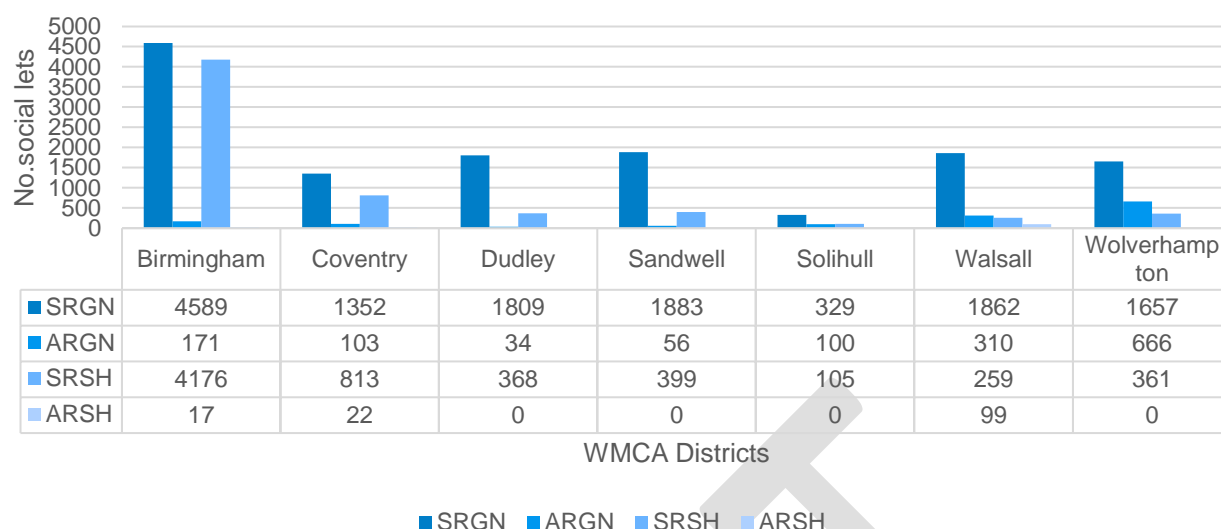
As Chart 9 shows, SRGN is still the most frequently allocated tenancy type for general needs, and SRSH for supported housing for the WMBC area as well as across WMCA, with the proportion of Affordable Rent for both stock types slowly increasing.

It is probable that over time, Affordable Rent will overtake Social Rent for both stock types as the flexibility of length of tenure and the ability to charge higher rents than Social Rent, make this a more attractive tenancy type for PRPs, who are under similar financial pressures to Local Housing Authorities.

With affordable rent levels set at up to 80% of Market Rent, with pressure to maintain social rents at the lowest level possible, the potential for divergence of these rents resulting in the 80% level becoming difficult to afford for some households is an increasing possibility.

1. <https://core.communities.gov.uk/DataCollection/logs/analysis.html>

Chart 10: Total Social Lettings for WMCA Area 2017/18 by rent type



Source: CORE data<sup>1</sup>

Total Social Lettings for England 2017/18 by rent type				
Rent Type	SRGN	ARGN	SRSH	ARSH
England	191255	35631	81551	4310

Table 4 Source: CORE data<sup>1</sup>

## Tenancy lengths

The main types of tenancy used within Walsall are:

Assured or secure, given for the lifetime of the tenant

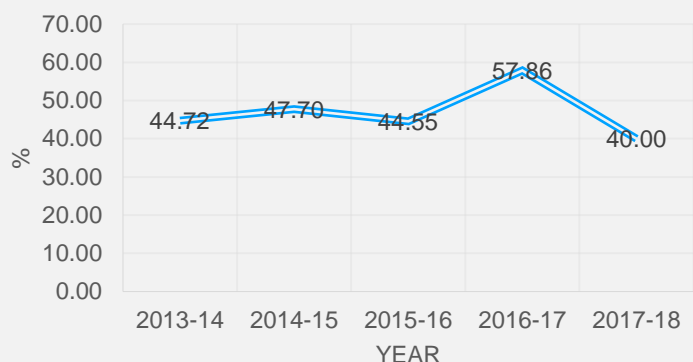
Fixed term or Affordable Rent, awarded for a minimum of 5 years, and a maximum of 20 years

License Agreement, which has no set length or end date, and is mainly used for supported housing, or temporary accommodation, and is not a

The proportion of lifetime, or indefinite length tenancies in the WMBC area has largely reduced year on year in favour of fixed term tenancies, since 2013/14, with the exception of a small increase in 2015/16. The increase in the proportion of fixed term tenancies could be considered inevitable, due to the Localism Act including provision for PRPs and LHAs offer these as an alternative to traditional lifetime tenancies, as the need for the home may change over time, for example for reasons of household income or size.

1. <https://core.communities.gov.uk/DataCollection/logs/analysis.html>

**CHART 11: % NEW LETTINGS WITH INDEFINITE LENGTH TENANCIES**



Source: CORE data<sup>1</sup>

**New tenancies with indefinite length**

Year	No of Lets in Year	No. with indefinite length
2013/14	3649	1632
2014/15	3172	1513
2015/16	3021	1346
2016/17	2678	1882
2017/18	2530	1016

*Table 6*

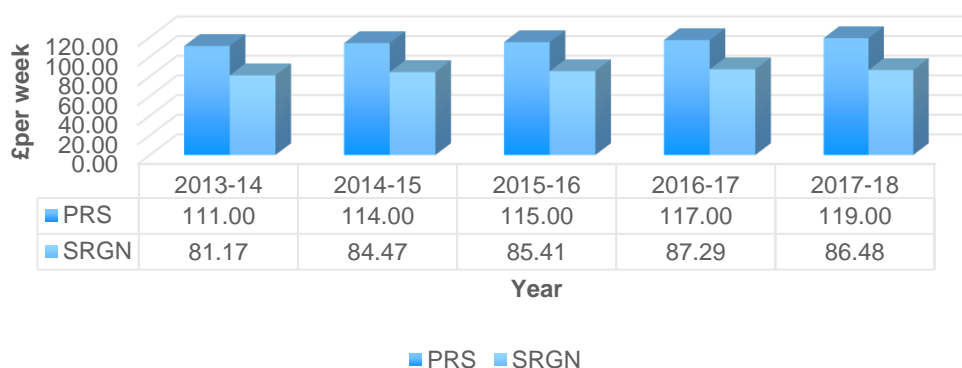
Source: CORE data<sup>1</sup>

## Rent Levels

Since the affordable rent program began in 2011/12, weekly social housing rents have increased annually, ( Chart 12.). Social rent levels are set using a formula which is based on the value of the property plus up to 5%. This 'formula rent' is designed to keep social rents low and affordable, while allowing year-on-year increase to help cover the increasing cost of managing the homes.

Private sector rent levels are market driven, leaving social rented stock a very attractive tenure. Chart 12 compares the mean average weekly rents for each tenure for a two-bedroom home. During the period of analysis, average levels of increase for Walsall are similar for both sectors, however as table 6 shows, the difference in rents is at least £30 each week.

**Chart 12: Social Rents compared with Private Sector Rents - weekly mean average for two bedroom homes : WMBC area**



Source: UK Government Private Rental Market Statistics<sup>2</sup>

- <https://core.communities.gov.uk/DataCollection/logs/analysis.html>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/private-rental-market-statistics#2018>

<b>Weekly rent: mean average for two bedroom homes : WMBC area</b>					
<b>Weekly rent £</b>	<b>2013-14</b>	<b>2014-15</b>	<b>2015-16</b>	<b>2016-17</b>	<b>2017-18</b>
<b>PRS</b>	111.00	114.00	115.00	117.00	119.00
<b>SRGN</b>	81.17	84.47	85.41	87.29	86.48
<b>Difference</b>	30	30	30	30	33

*Table 6 Source: UK Government Private Rental Market Statistics<sup>1</sup>*

One of the greatest concerns for local housing authorities regarding the lack of available social rented housing for low income households is the rising cost of the private rental market. While private landlords vary in type and quality, this market is in great demand and one of the most useful homeless prevention options available to local housing authorities such as WMBC who no longer own their own social housing stock.

Taxation policy and private sector housing regulations are making the sector increasingly unattractive to many landlords, some of whom have already left the market. This already appears to be adding to the demand for social rented housing and is likely to continue.

## Section Two: Who lives in new social housing tenancies

Social housing in Walsall, as in the rest of England is allocated based on need. Lettings or allocation policies must be in line with aforementioned national legislation, and statutory guidance however LHAs may set their own qualification criteria within the parameters of the regulations. This can be challenging for a LHA who has transferred its stock to a PRP, as PRPs will also have their own policies which may not totally accord with that of the LHA, particularly where the housing provider owns and manages homes across several boroughs is required by its Board to adopt a national allocations policy.

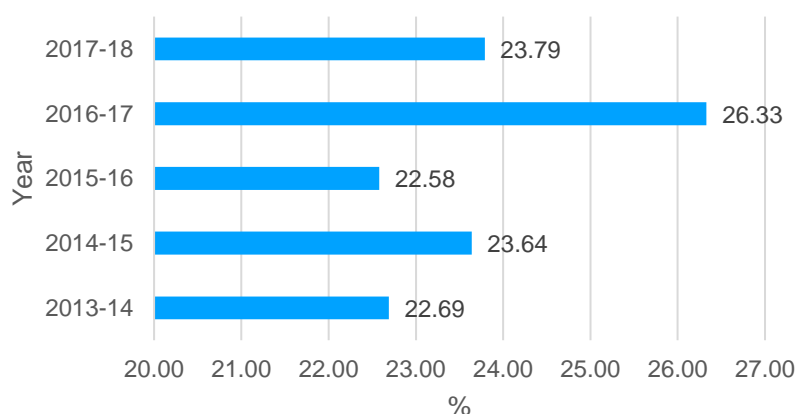
### Reasonable preference.

Local housing authorities must assess applications for social housing to determine whether the applicant household meets the criteria to be given Reasonable Preference. Reasonable Preference is a way of awarding priority for social housing in accordance with the Housing Act 1996 s167(2), if household meets one or more of the following:

- Homelessness, or the threat of homelessness in the next 28 days
- Insanitary, unsatisfactory or overcrowded conditions
- Medical welfare
- Hardship

As you can see from the following Chart 13, lettings to households because of Reasonable Preference is at the lowest level for more than 5 years. It is probable that a number of these tenants awarded Reasonable Preference are internal transfers and that moving to a new tenancy has alleviated hardship or overcrowding. While this is regularly necessary and achievable, a balance must be maintained between the needs of tenants to move within social housing stock and the needs of households in priority need of social housing, supported by the local authority.

Chart 13: % New Tenants housed due to Reasonable Preference



Source: CORE data<sup>1</sup>

No Lets to Households with reasonable preference.

Year	Total Lets	Reasonable Preference
2013-14	3649	828
2014-15	3172	750
2015-16	3021	682
2016-17	2678	705
2017-18	2530	602

Table 7 Source: CORE data<sup>1</sup>

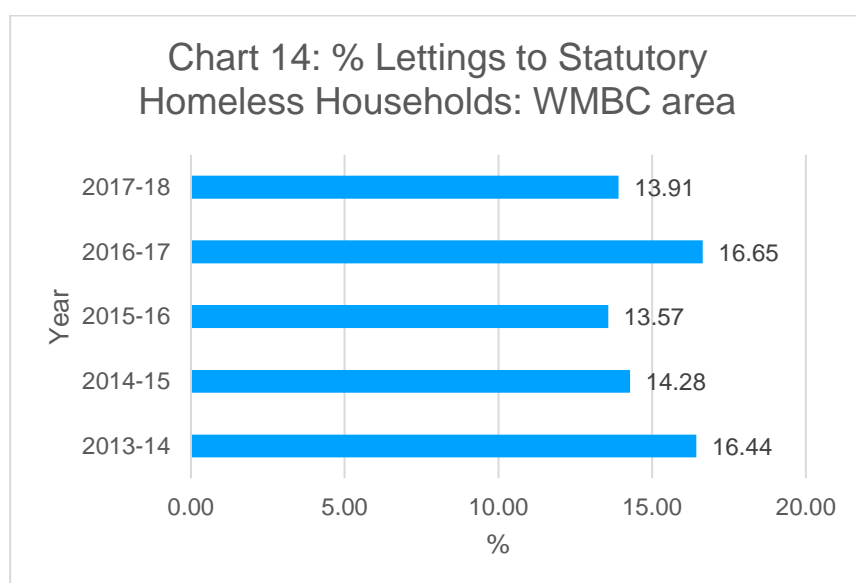
1. <https://core.communities.gov.uk/DataCollection/logs/analysis.html>



## Homelessness

There is also a reduction in the number of Statutory Homeless Households being housed outside of the Reasonable Preference Category despite there being a significant increase in homelessness in England generally and in Walsall.

WMBC owns and manages 92 units of accommodation retained from the stock transfer which are used for temporary accommodation, however the new social housing lettings do not include these homes and they are therefore not part of this analysis..



Source: CORE data<sup>1</sup>

### No Lettings due to Statutory Homelessness: WMBC Area

Year	No. Total Lets	No. Statutory Homeless
2013-14	3649	600
2014-15	3172	453
2015-16	3021	410
2016-17	2678	446
2017-18	2530	352

**Table 8**

Source: CORE data<sup>1</sup>

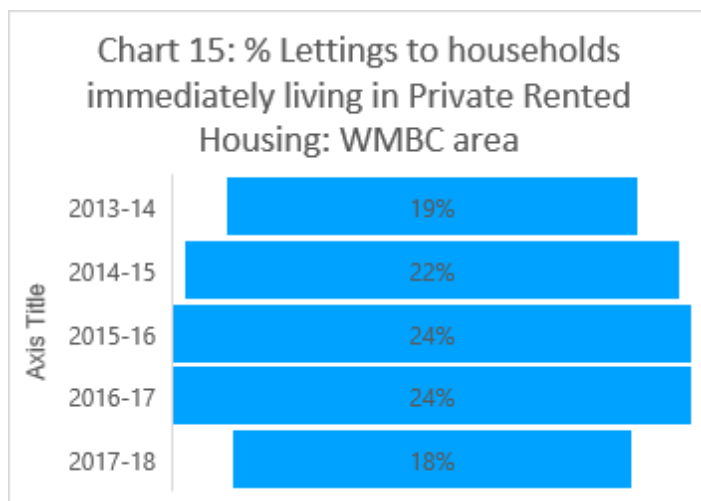
As with Reasonable Preference above, the numbers of homeless households in new tenancies has reduced during 2017/18. During 2017/18. 352 households in new social lettings were previously homeless immediately before the letting, which is 13.91% percent of total lets in the year. This charture fluctuates annually and peaked at 16.65% in 2016/17.

Some of those housed with Reasonable Preference will have been homeless, however the numbers at Chart14 are Statutory Homeless households . The majority of these households are owed the main homelessness duty, which is to be allocated a settled home.

Without an appropriate level of access to social housing, it will become increasingly challenging to meet the requirements of both the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 without expensive alternatives accommodation or prevention solutions.

1. <https://core.communities.gov.uk/DataCollection/logs/analysis.html>

## Households from privately rented accommodation



Source: CORE data<sup>1</sup>

**Number of lettings to households immediately living in Private Rented Housing: WMBC**

Year	Total Social Lets	No of new Social Tenants from PRS
2013-14	3649	685
2014-15	3172	713
2015-16	3021	712
2016-17	2425	573
2017-18	2530	460

**Table 9**

Source: CORE data<sup>1</sup>

With the exception of 2014/15, New tenants housed directly from the private rented sector is greater than the number of internal transfers. There are many reasons why households seek social rented housing, and difficulty in accessing privately rented accommodation of a suitable size, type and standard is one of the main ones.

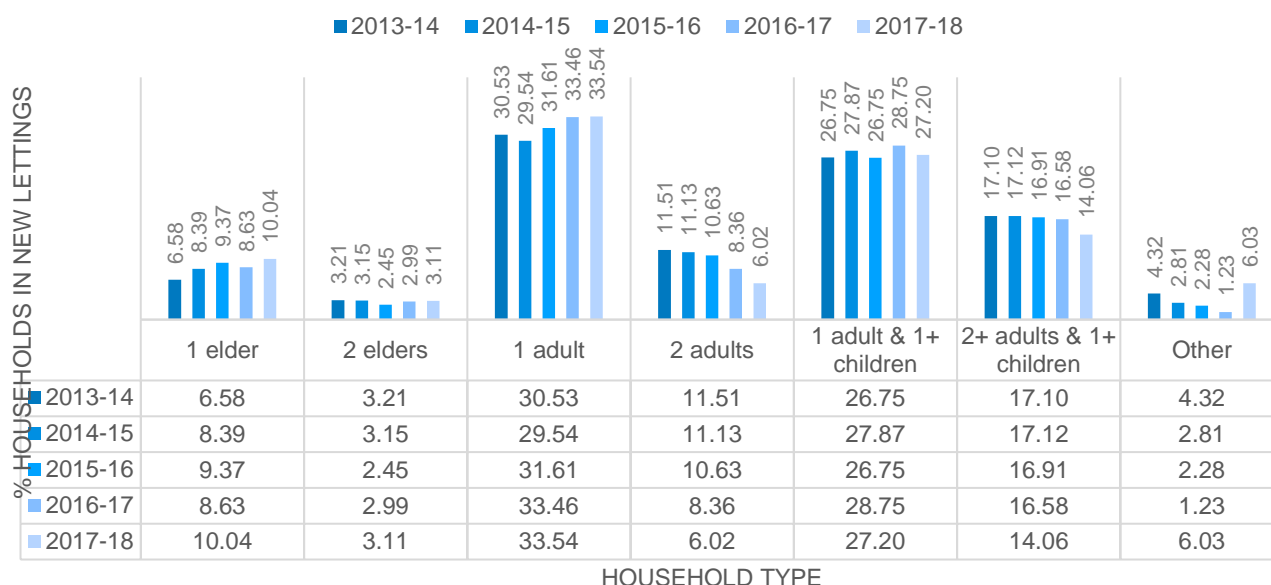
With the perfect set of conditions; low incomes; welfare benefit reform; housing shortage, currently a normality for many, the demand for social housing from households in privately rented homes is set to continue and increase, and understanding the demand will be critical going forward.

## Household composition

Household composition differs generally between Supported Housing and General Needs, as a large proportion of Supported Housing is older persons housing or designed for those young adults with a specific need for adapted housing or support.

1. <https://core.communities.gov.uk/DataCollection/logs/analysis.html>

## CHART 16: HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION OF LETTINGS: WMBC AREA %



Source: CORE data<sup>1</sup>

Household Composition of lettings: WMBC area - Number							
	1 Elder	2 Elders	1 Adult	2 Adults	1 adult + child(ren)	2 adults + child(ren)	Other
2013-14	240	117	1114	420	976	624	158
2014-15	266	100	937	353	884	543	89
2015-16	283	74	955	321	808	511	69
2016-17	231	80	896	224	770	444	33
2017-18	255	79	852	153	691	347	153

Table 10. Source: CORE data<sup>1</sup>

For 2017/18, families with children make up 41.26% of the lettings, with elderly households 13.15%, and couples with no children 14.06%.

Lettings data is not always representative of the level, type and size of need, but rather indicates the availability of stock types. For 2017/18 a large proportion, 70.78% of lettings were to single tenants, 27.2% of those included at least one dependent child. This has not changed greatly since 2013/14. This indicates that the largest proportion of stock size becoming vacant each year are one and two bed homes.

A comparison with Housing Register data by household size would demonstrate how closely the available stock type meets local need.

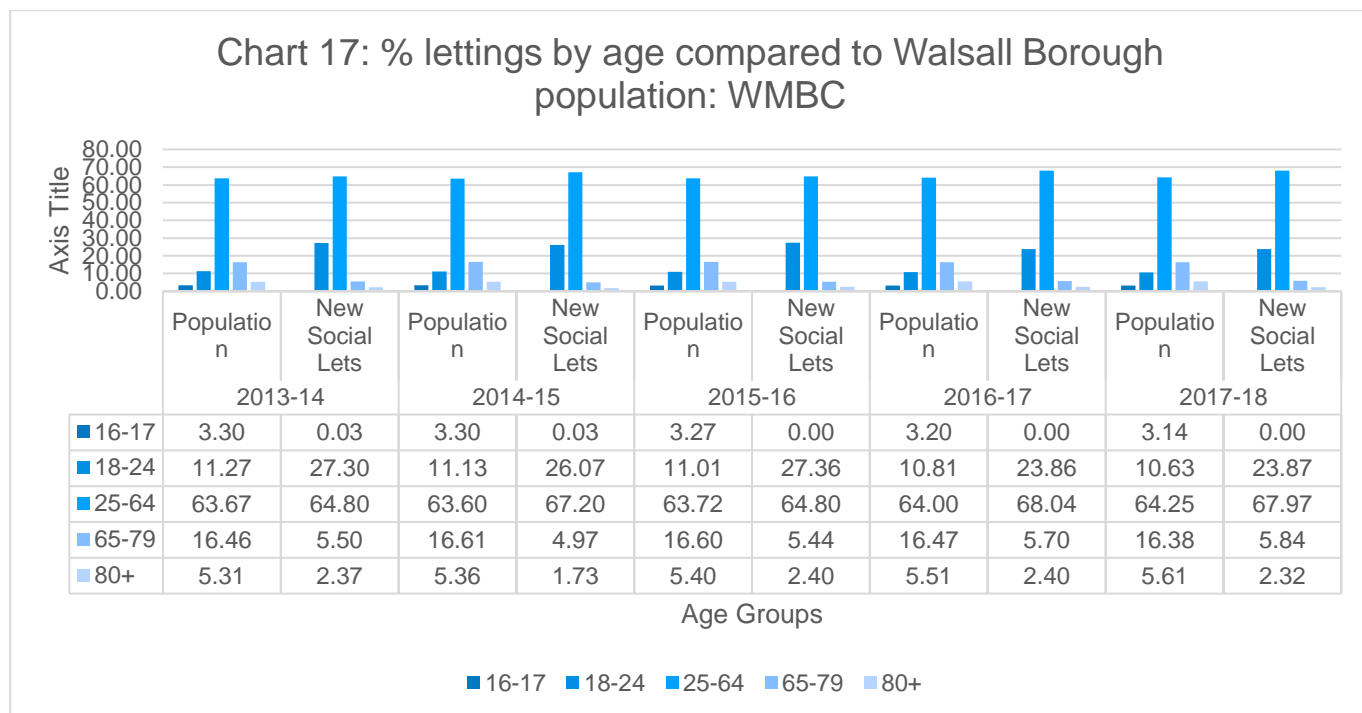
1. <https://core.communities.gov.uk/DataCollection/logs/analysis.html>

### Age

The age profile of new social lettings is generally younger than the borough, with lettings to 18-24 year olds consistently greater than 20% of total lets, while the borough population includes

c11% of this age group. Lettings to the largest group, 25 to 64 year olds, represents an almost identical profile to that of the borough population, but the 65-79 and 80+ age groups represent less than half of the proportion of the borough population. The reasons for these findings are possibly due to the stock profile, with the older age groups often seeking supported housing in the form of older persons homes, and the greater availability of general needs housing, meeting the needs of the 25 p 64 age group.

16 and 17 year old households do not notable feature in this chartures as they are not legally allowed to hold a tenancy because they cannot be held liable for it, and therefore require a guarantor to sign the tenancy with them. For this reason a limited amount of social homes are let to young people of this age.



Source: CORE data<sup>1</sup> and Office of National Statistics<sup>2</sup>

Walsall Age Groups New Lets					
New Lets Age Group	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
16-17	1	1	0	0	0
18-24	996	827	826	639	604
25-64	2364	2132	1957	1822	1720
65-79	200	158	164	153	147
80+	87	54	72	64	59
<b>Total</b>	<b>3649</b>	<b>3172</b>	<b>3021</b>	<b>2678</b>	<b>2530</b>

Table 11  
Source  
CORE  
data

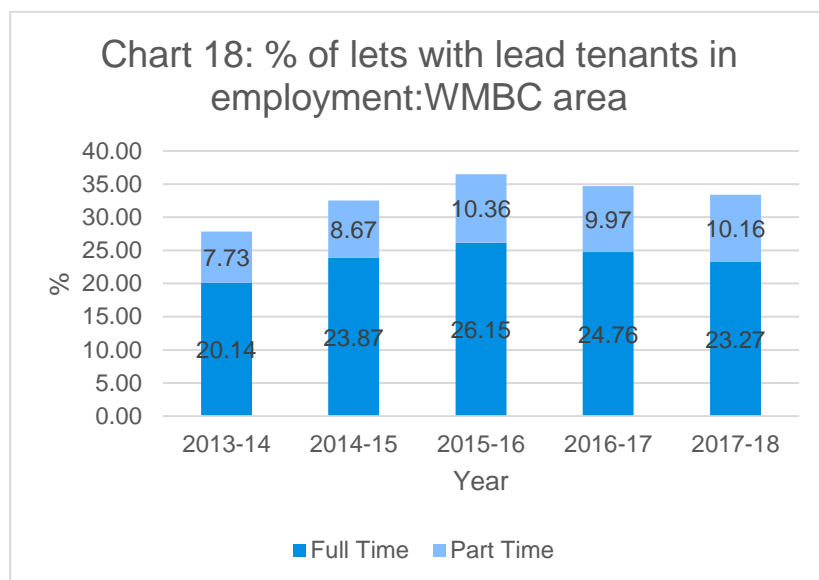
1. <https://core.communities.gov.uk/DataCollection/logs/analysis.html>

2. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/datasets/populationestimatesrevisiontool>

## Economic status

Whether a household is in work, or otherwise contributing to the community, is now a factor in many LHA allocation policies, including WMBC. This criteria is designed to encourage

employment and mobility and help reduce dependency on welfare benefits. Chart 18 demonstrates that levels of employment for new tenants in Walsall have not greatly increased during the period, despite a small spike in both full and part time workers in 2016/17.



Source: CORE data<sup>1</sup>

Number of lets with lead tenants in employment: WMBC area					
	Full Time	Part Time	Seeking Work	Retired	Other
<b>2013-14</b>	735	282	1022	278	1332
<b>2014-15</b>	757	275	675	295	1170
<b>2015-16</b>	790	313	478	271	1169
<b>2016-17</b>	663	267	501	220	1027
<b>2017-18</b>	591	258	472	282	927

Table 12. Source: CORE data<sup>1</sup>

During 2017/18, 34.43% (849) of lead tenants in new social housing were employed, 23.27% (591) of which were working full time. This is the lowest level for over five years.

11.10% (282) were retired, the highest level during the period, and 18.58% (472) were seeking employment. The greatest proportion of tenants for each year are listed as 'other' which includes tenants unable to work due to illness or disability.

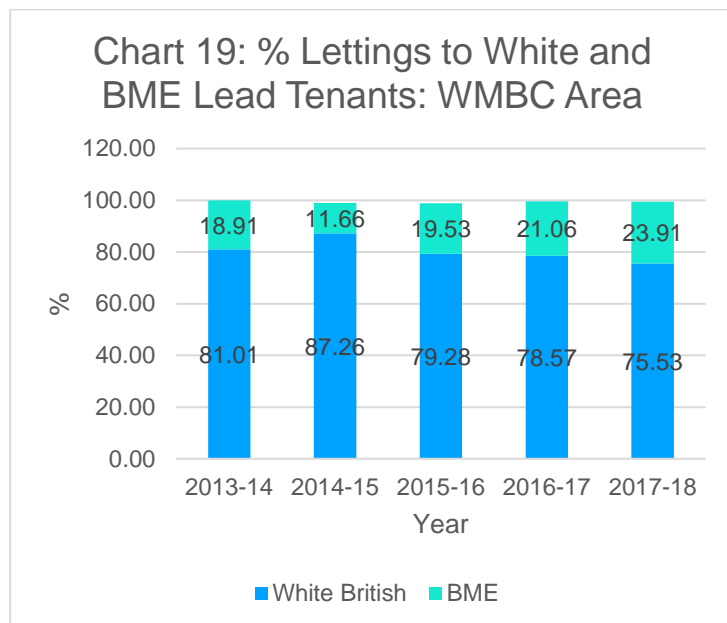
The breakdown of economic activity between new social lettings and internal transfers is not collected and published, therefore it is not currently possible to determine how many new lead tenants are economically active.

1. <https://core.communities.gov.uk/DataCollection/logs/analysis.html>

## Ethnicity

The majority of lead tenants in social lettings throughout the period identified as White, with little change year-on-year. BME households made up 23.91 of new social housing lettings for 2017/18, an increase of 2% from 2013/14.

2017/<sup>118</sup> is the first year that the proportion of lets to BME households reflects the borough population 2011 Census data for Walsall confirms that 23.1% of the households living in Walsall borough are from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups.



Number of Lettings to White and BME Lead Tenants: WMBC Area				
Year	No Lettings	White	BME	Refused to answer
2013-14	3649	2956	690	3.00
2014-15	3172	2768	370	34.00
2015-16	3021	2395	590	36.00
2016-17	2678	2104	564	10.00
2017-18	2530	1911	605	14.00

**Table 13:**  
**Source: CORE data**

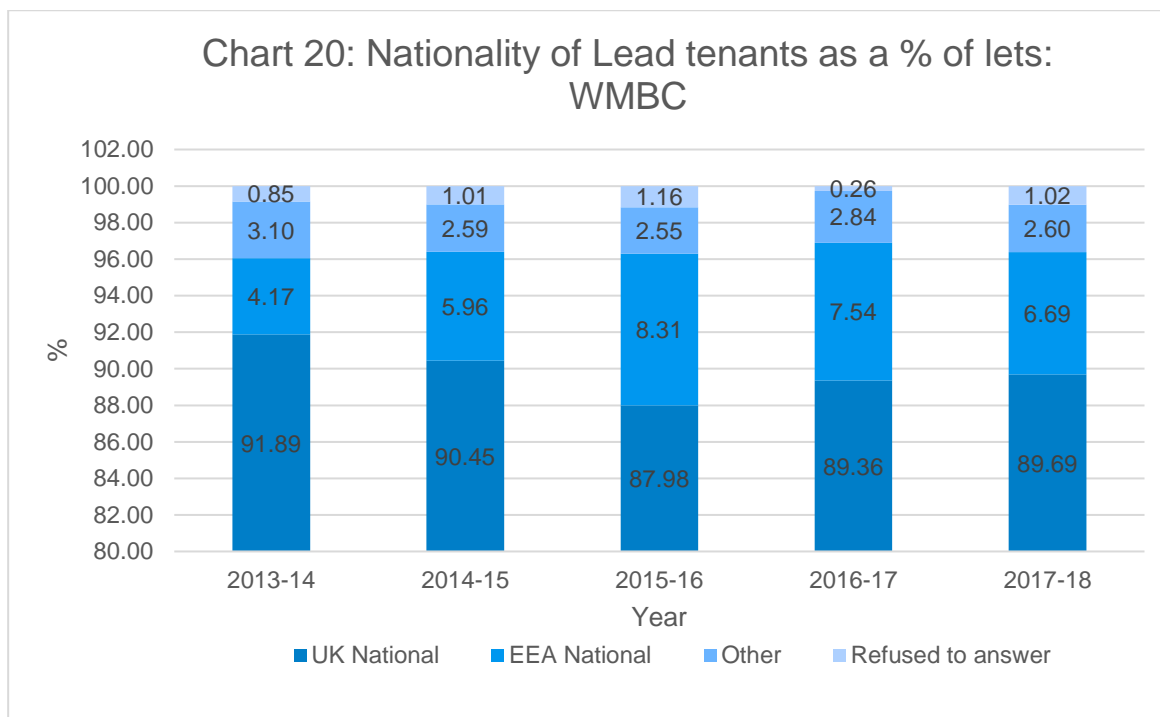
Source: CORE data<sup>1</sup>

## Nationality

The large majority of new lead tenants throughout the period were UK Nationals, with European Nationals comprising 6.69%, and 2.6% from nations outside of the European Economic Area for 2017/18. Of the European nationals, 5.2% were from the 11 Eastern European states that joined the EU from 2004, known as A11 nationals. With some minor fluctuations, these proportions have stayed largely consistent since 2013/14.

The 2011 Census reports that this differs from the borough population with UK National at 90.1%, EEA National at 0.9 % and Other at 5.9%. It is possible that in the 7 years following the completion of the last Census, the population is changing and the proportions have shifted.

1. <https://core.communities.gov.uk/DataCollection/logs/analysis.html>



Source: CORE data<sup>1</sup>

Nationality of Lead Tenants by number of lets: WMBC				
	UK National	EEA	Other	Refused to answer
<b>2013-14</b>	3353	152	113	31
<b>2014-15</b>	2869	189	82	32
<b>2015-16</b>	2658	251	77	35
<b>2016-17</b>	2393	202	76	7
<b>2017-18</b>	2278	170	66	26

Table 14. Source: CORE data<sup>1</sup>

1. <https://core.communities.gov.uk/DataCollection/logs/analysis.html>

## Section 3: Conclusions and Recommendations

### Conclusions:

- The availability of social housing for new tenants is decreasing, in line with the national picture, despite new homes being added to the stock, possibly due to the increasing gap in affordability between private and social rents.
- Prevention of homelessness through an allocation of social rented housing is difficult within Walsall due to the high levels of demand. The Council will find the new prevention duty difficult where there is little affordability in the private rented sector and limited access to social housing stock.
- Employment levels among lead tenants are low, with a large proportion of new tenants working part time or not currently working, and affordability is a growing problem generally.
- There is no comprehensive housing register to monitor against the lettings and nominations. It is therefore not clear if the Transfer Agreement, with specific regard to nominations, is being adhered to.
- As less than 26% of new social lets for 2017/18 are currently reported as being from LHA nominations, and without comprehensive reporting to WMBC regarding the performance of the Transfer Agreement, the Council cannot be certain it is fulfilling its reasonable Preference obligations.
- Levels of tenancy with indefinite length are low compared with previous years. It is possible that this trend will increase year on year and while the general principles of fixed term tenancies are accepted, the rent levels of these tenancies and shorter tenancy length has the potential to cause difficulties with some vulnerable or low income households and additional support may need to be put in place to prevent homelessness.
- The data available on social lettings gives no clear picture of need as lets are driven by stock size. Regular reporting on need and demand is therefore not necessarily available to provide evidence to support housing strategies.,
- It is not clear whether there is monitoring of PRP affordability policies in conjunction with lettings performance, and if these are negatively impacting WMBC, particularly with regard to their homelessness and homelessness prevention duties. This could result in higher homelessness costs to the LHA as they may have reduced access to social rented homes when discharging their homelessness duty, where the household has a low income.

### Recommendations

1. Develop and maintain an effective monitoring system with PRPs for the Transfer Agreement with particular regard to the 50% nominations target.
2. Review and update the Borough Wide Allocations Policy to ensure households with Reasonable Preference have priority access to social homes within the Borough.



3. Review and update agreements with regard to affordability policies for those on the lowest incomes within Walsall, between the council and private registered providers to ensure that social housing is accessible to those on the lowest incomes.
4. Investigate the potential of developing a new overarching Walsall nominations agreement between WMBC and PRPs operating locally to ensure an appropriate number of homeless households, and those with a reasonable preference are given access to social housing.
5. Review current Housing Register management arrangements and develop options to ensure the register is effectively managed.
6. Implement an effective management process, monitoring and reporting arrangements for the register.
7. Investigate the potential with PRPs of a digital single access point for applying for social housing in Walsall to ensure that customers are prevented from having to apply to several organisations for housing and to provide data to support the monitoring of the Housing Register.