

Research Report

Survey of Private Landlords

February 2016

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Summary

The crucial role of landlords

The number of people and families living in private rented homes has tripled since the turn of the 21st century, an unprecedented change in the way we live. Correspondingly, the number of people letting out homes has increased too - there has been a well-documented 'buy to let boom', and there are estimated to be around 2 million private landlords.

These landlords play a crucial role in providing homes, both now, and in the future, yet very little is actually known about them¹. To help us to understand landlords better, Shelter, via the YouGov panel, and with support from British Gas, have carried out the largest and most representative survey of private landlords since 2010, with a total sample of 1,071 UK landlords, 948 of whom were letting mainly in England.

A cottage industry

We found the ultimate cottage industry, with most landlords surveyed only letting one home (59%) and nine out of ten letting out less than five homes. Only 4% describe it as their full-time job and only 12% are registered as a business. As many as a quarter could be described as 'accidental landlords' in that they inherited property or are letting out somewhere they ideally wanted to sell, and did not plan to become a landlord.

Good relationships

The survey reveals many positive stories: The vast majority of landlords trust and get on well with their tenants, particularly those that deal directly with them, rather than via an agent and at least nine out of ten comply with the law on gas safety. Many landlords have taken steps to ensure their tenants are safe, despite not being required to by law – nearly half had an annual electrical safety check carried out, just over half have Carbon Monoxide (CO) detectors, and 87% smoke alarms, fitted in all properties².

Inconsistent standards

However, the survey results also reveal a worrying lack of professionalism and an inconsistency in standards in many different ways:

- More than a fifth of landlords surveyed (21%) agreed or were neutral on 'I sometimes struggle to keep my properties in a good state of repair'. 17% of landlords surveyed said they never inspected the homes they let out, and did not employ a full service agent, meaning spotting repair issues was effectively delegated to tenants.
- A substantial proportion (38%) were not, or didn't know if they were complying with the law on Energy Performance certificates, and smaller proportions seem not to be

¹ The only two major published studies looking at a cross section of landlords in the last five years are the [DCLG Private Landlords Survey \(2010\)](#), and [Shelter/ NatCen analysis of the Wealth and assets Survey](#) (2008-10 data). These are valuable, but limited and becoming out of date.

² At the time of the survey, only a very small proportion of landlords (those in mandatory licenced HMOs and smoke alarms in Scotland only) were legally required to have electrical safety certificates, smoke alarms or CO detectors. However, soon, smoke alarms and CO detectors (in solid fuel burning rooms) will be required in all countries, and landlords in Scotland will be required to carry out electrical safety checks.

complying with more serious legal requirements such as gas safety checks (8%) and not always protecting deposits (5%).

- Outside of gas safety, knowledge of the law is fairly poor, although this is not necessarily a bad thing, with many thinking things are legally required when they are not. Awareness of upcoming laws on smoke and CO detectors and energy efficiency ratings was low, although non-compliance is likely to be very low.
- Nearly a quarter (23%) were not totally confident they were paying enough tax.
- Eight out of ten landlords surveyed have never been a member of a trade body or any kind of registration scheme. Although cause and effect cannot be proven, the survey points to a clear association between being a member of a trade body or registration scheme, and being more likely to follow the law and good practice on things such as tenant safety and protecting deposits.

Finances and rents

The majority of landlords surveyed are doing well financially - nearly eight in ten (78%) are in pre-tax profit when rent is compared to total costs and most of these (41% of all landlords surveyed) say they are making 'a lot more'. The average pre-tax profit among those making one, was just over £650 per month. A substantial proportion of landlords (45%) had no outstanding mortgages on any of the homes they let out.

Just over half of landlords (53%) increased the rent the last time they set up or renewed a tenancy. Rent increases are mainly driven by a perception that the market is going up, and pressure from letting agents, with increasing costs appearing to be a lesser factor.

Challenges

This is not to say that landlords do not face significant challenges – the incidence of repair and maintenance problems is very common with over half of landlords having encountered one in the last year. One in ten landlords surveyed had to deal with a tenant in arrears of two months or more in the last year, and one in six had taken steps to remove a tenant in the last three years, although this rarely went as far as court.

Access to a home

The way in which landlords decide who to let to is subject to the same laws on discrimination as any other business or service provider. However, there are various forms of legal discrimination: 42% of landlords surveyed had an outright bar on letting to HB claimants and a further 21% preferred not to let to them. Families with children were barred by just under one in five, and a further 17% preferred not to let to them. It appears that a landlords own circumstances may influence who they let to – landlords surveyed who have children at home themselves were more open with their policies on letting to both children and HB claimants.

Four in ten landlords (41%) that did not delegate fully to a letting agent admitted that it is 'natural for prejudices and stereotypes to come into letting decisions'. This is alarming enough, but when landlords reaction to the new 'right to rent' law requiring them to carry out checks on the immigration status of all new tenants, was tested, more than four in ten (44%)

of those making letting decisions said the new law would make them less likely to let to people and families who ‘appear to be immigrants’.

It is understandable that many landlords, especially those relying on rental income to live, will be highly risk averse when it comes to who to let to. But it is unacceptable that so much discrimination, be it legal, illegal, or in a grey area, appears to be taking place now, and looks likely to increase with the introduction of ‘right to rent’, when so many people and families are relying on private landlords to house them.

Progressive landlords

Finally, the survey results allow us to see a more rounded and representative picture of landlord opinion than is perhaps sometimes presented in the media. Many landlords are open to a number of improvements and changes to renting:

- Nearly two thirds (64%) are at least willing to try longer tenancies if they see them in action, and there is no evidence in the survey of any significant exodus of landlords from Scotland and Wales if longer tenancies are brought in there, as proposed.
- Supporters of a new law requiring electrical safety checks for all rented homes in England outnumber opponents by 2:1.
- The majority do not agree that ‘there are already too many laws and regulations covering private renting’
- Many landlords sympathise with tenants - those agreeing ‘I wouldn’t want to be a private renter myself’ outnumber those disagreeing by over 2:1
- Over eight in ten landlords want tougher penalties for rogue landlords

Conclusion

The survey reveals many aspects of private renting need to be improved if it is to meet the needs of the increasing, and increasingly varied renter population. Our proposals for reform of the private rented sector can be found in our flagship reports:

[Safe and Decent Homes](#) – an examination of what can be done to improve PRS conditions

[A Better Deal](#) – our proposal for a new Stable Rental Contract to make renting more secure

You can also find regular commentary from our experts on our [policy blog](#)

Join our campaign to fix private rented housing [here](#).

Background and method

A survey of 1,071 private landlords across the UK was carried out by YouGov on behalf of Shelter in June and July 2015. The survey was supported by British Gas, as part of the [Shelter and British Gas partnership](#) to improve a million private rented homes. A survey of private tenants (due to be published in April 2016) was carried out at the same time. Once published, we recommend reading both reports to get the full picture of the sector.

The landlords in this survey were drawn from YouGov's panel of over 350,000 people. Every panellist who identified themselves as letting out residential property in the UK that they did not live in themselves was invited to take the survey. Respondents did not know the Survey was being carried out by Shelter. The survey covered a broad range of topics, and has been combined with the panellist information already held by YouGov, allowing significant extra analysis on top of the results from the questions themselves.

Areas covered include how people became landlords, their financial position, problems with repairs and tenants, their knowledge of and compliance with the law and their opinion on a range of issues relating to private renting.

Very little is known about the demographic profile of landlords in the UK, so it is not possible to weight the survey results to be representative of all landlords. The results should be viewed, and quoted as 'landlords surveyed', although the report often refers to 'landlords' for expediency. The size of the sample for this survey, the way it is drawn, and its similarity to the profile the last official Government survey of private landlords found, gives us confidence that we have a very good representation of the private individual/ couple landlord sector in the UK. Additionally, as so little is known about the demographics of landlords, the results we have on this are in themselves a valuable insight, so long as they are used with appropriate caution.

These surveys provide Shelter with the understanding and evidence we need to base our media, campaigning and Service provision on. But we also wish to provide a resource for others – policy makers, journalists, students and the public - to gain insight on private renting, which has seen such a dramatic increase in size over the last decade, and is set to play an even greater role in housing future generations.

The maximum margin of error on results in this survey, using the full base, is +/- 3%, so differences of 5% - 6% are needed between results for them to be significant. Not all results will add to 100%, either because of the exclusion of some responses from the chart or table (i.e. don't know or 'others'), because multiple responses were allowed, or simply because of rounding. The full results tables will be published on YouGov's website in spring 2016.

Similar iterations of this survey have been carried out before, and corroborate the findings here, but cannot be directly compared or trended due to the changing nature of the sample between surveys, and inability to weight.

Who are landlords?

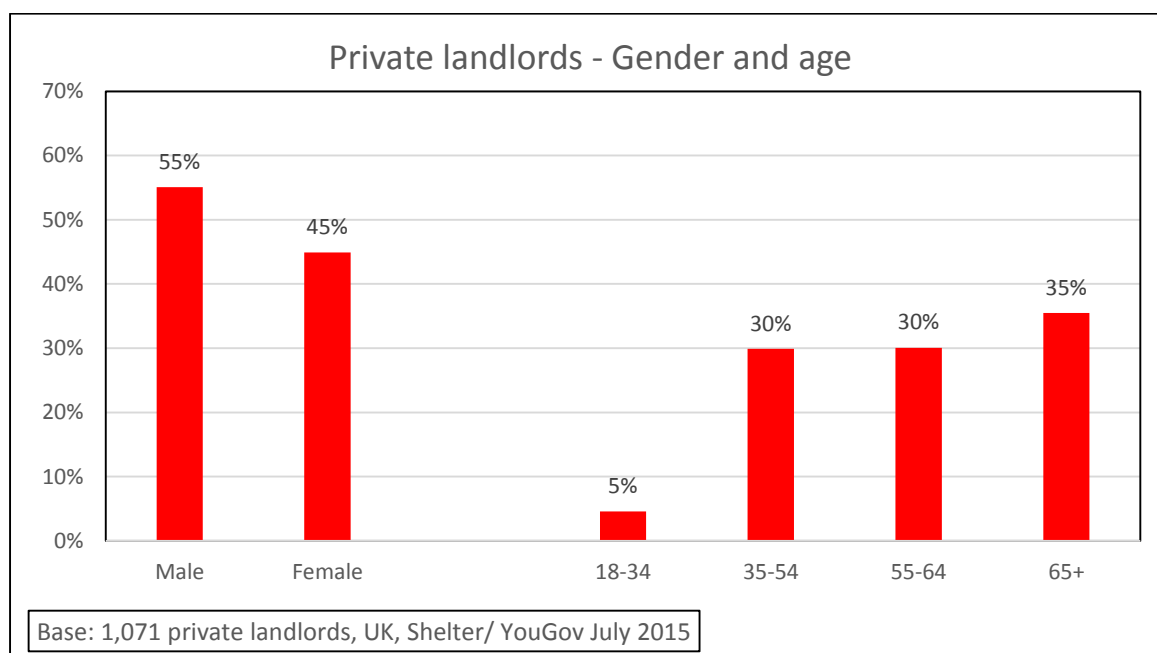
This section focuses on the demographic profile of the landlords surveyed, mainly using the panel information held by YouGov on the respondents. As mentioned in the background and methods section, very little is known about the actual demographics of private landlords, so we cannot be certain our sample is representative. However, it gives a unique insight into the likely profile of small landlords, if used with appropriate caution.

Key findings:

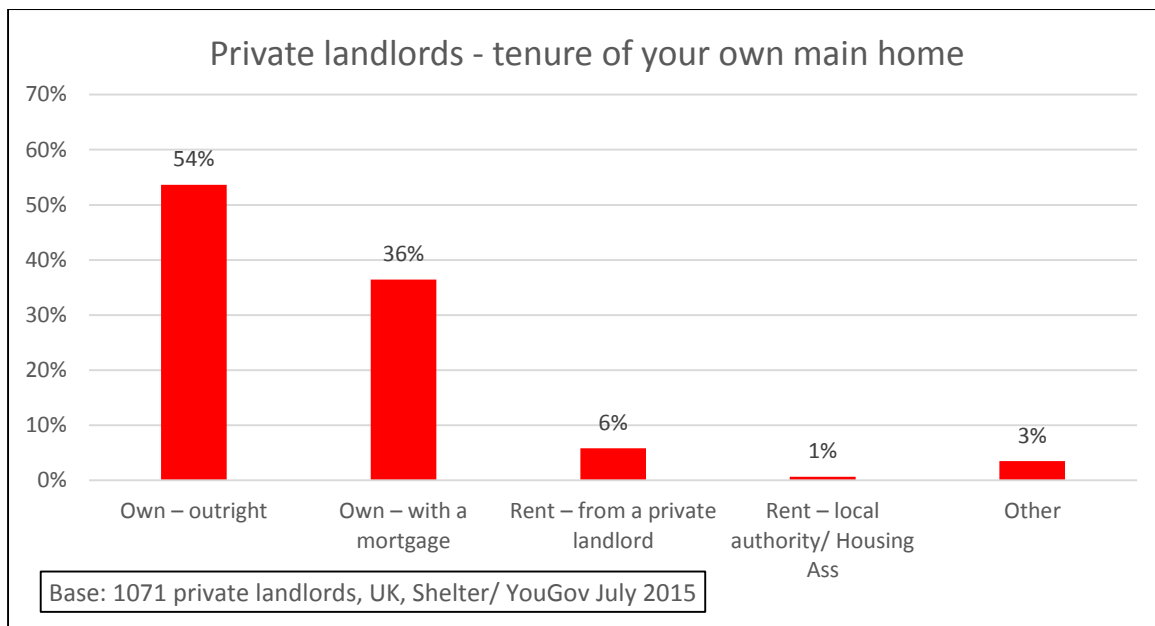
- The landlords surveyed have an older and more affluent profile than the wider population, with 39% being retired, and two thirds being 55 or older.
- The landlords surveyed split fairly evenly by gender with 45% female.
- Nine out of ten own their own home.
- London seems to have a higher rate of ‘long-distance’ landlords, who let, but don’t live there.

Detailed findings:

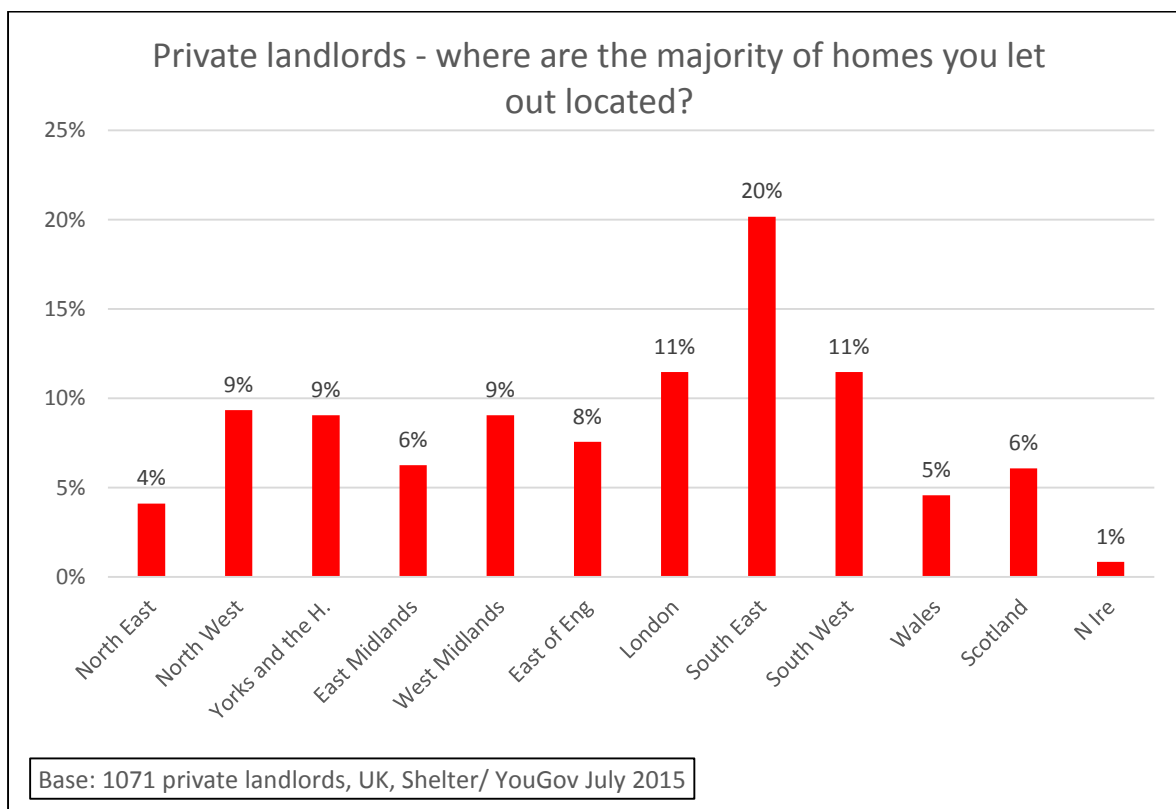
The chart below shows the gender and age profile of the landlords surveyed.



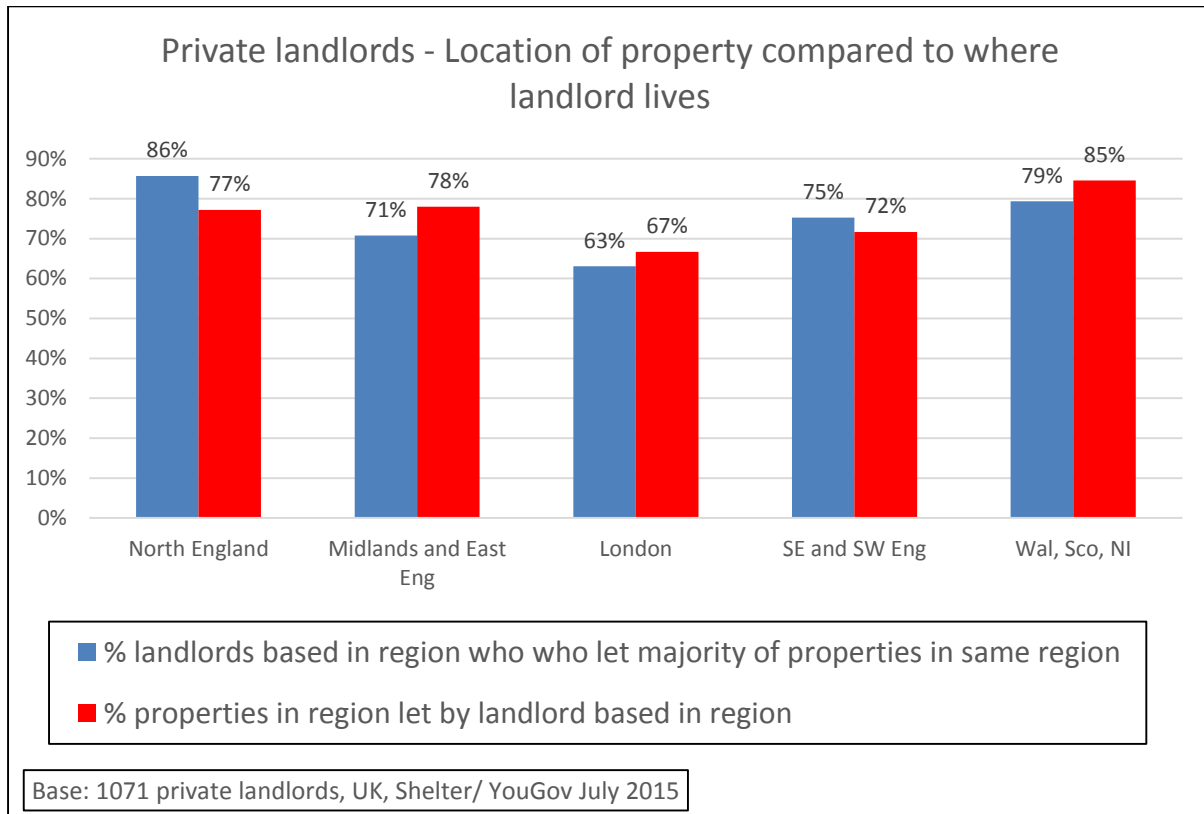
The vast majority of landlords surveyed lived in a home they owned themselves (54% owned outright, 36% mortgaged), but there were 6% who lived in a private rented home as well as letting one out, and this is shown below.



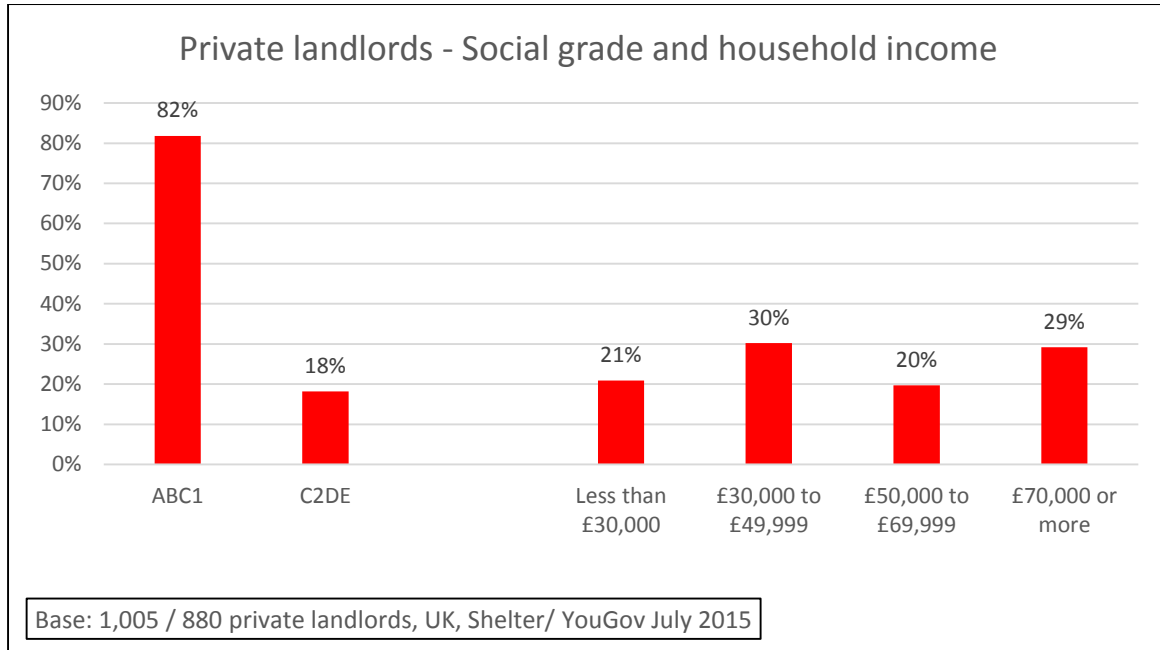
The chart below shows the geographic spread of properties let by the landlords surveyed. South East England was most common area for landlords to let the majority of properties in (20%) followed by London (11%) and South West (11%). Landlords letting in London appear to be under represented in the survey, but this could partly be due to a greater proportion of larger corporate landlords there, who are not captured in the survey.



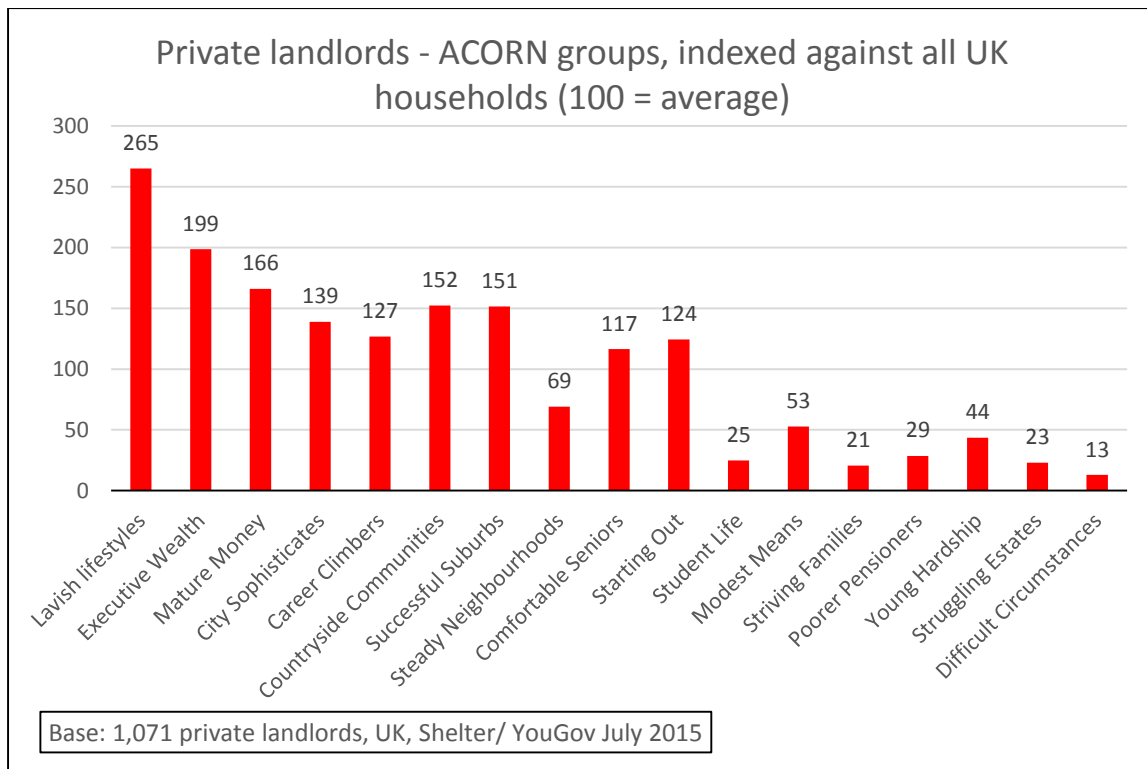
The following chart shows the extent to which landlords let in the same region that they are based. This is only an approximation of ‘long-distance landlords’, but there is a clear indication that properties in London are more likely than elsewhere to be let by landlords not living in London, and that London based landlords are more likely to let outside their region than those based elsewhere. Over the whole sample, 75% of properties were let by a landlord living in that same region.



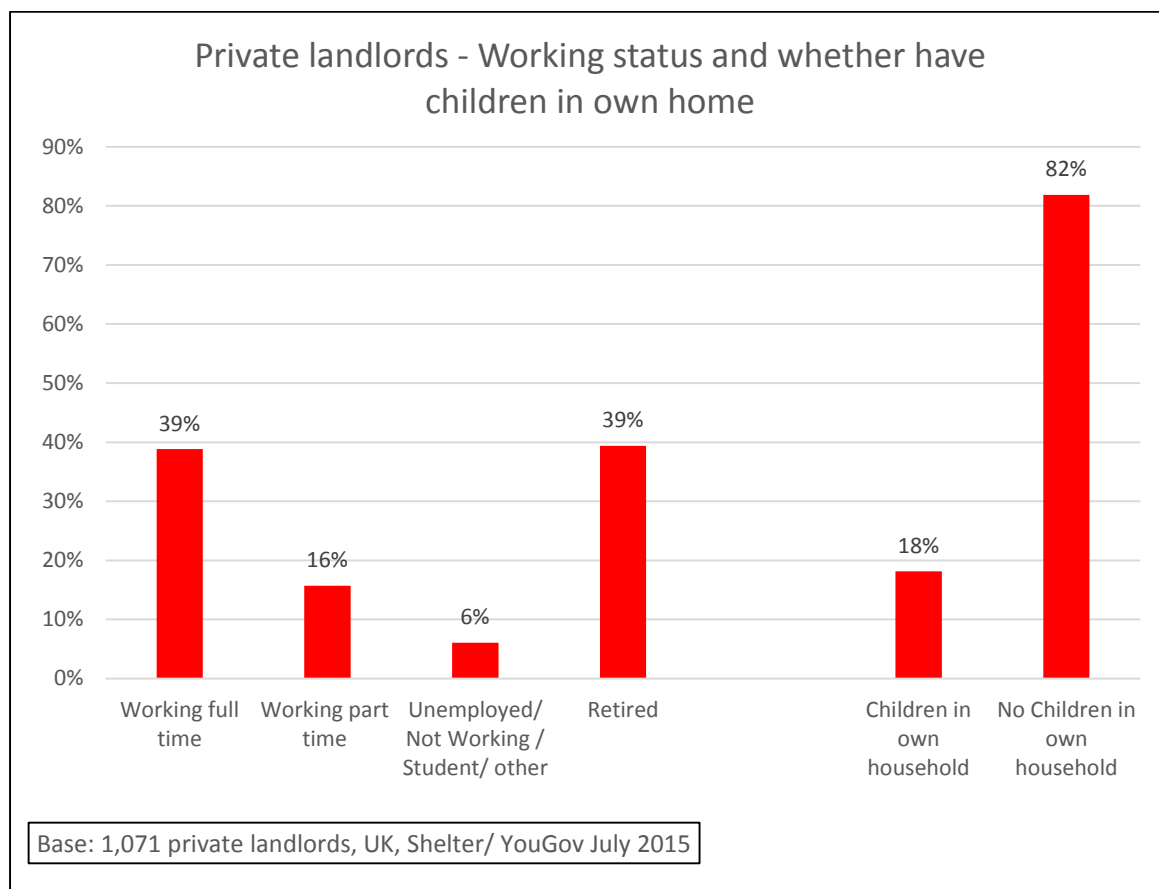
The chart below shows that the landlords surveyed had a high income and social class profile. Median household income, at around £50,000, is around double the equivalent figure for private renters.



ACORN is a classification of residential neighbourhoods, which is broadly stratified by wealth, income and education level, and is produced by [CACI](#). Reflecting the results above on income and social class, the chart below shows that the private landlords surveyed over-index on the higher ACORN groups, and are much less likely to be found living in neighbourhoods lower down the classification. City Sophisticates is the one ACORN group where both private landlords and tenants seem to over-index.



The chart below shows the working and family status of the landlords surveyed. Landlords tended to either be in full-time work, or retired. Reflecting the high number of older people, the proportion with children living in their own household was below average.



Landlord, property and tenant types

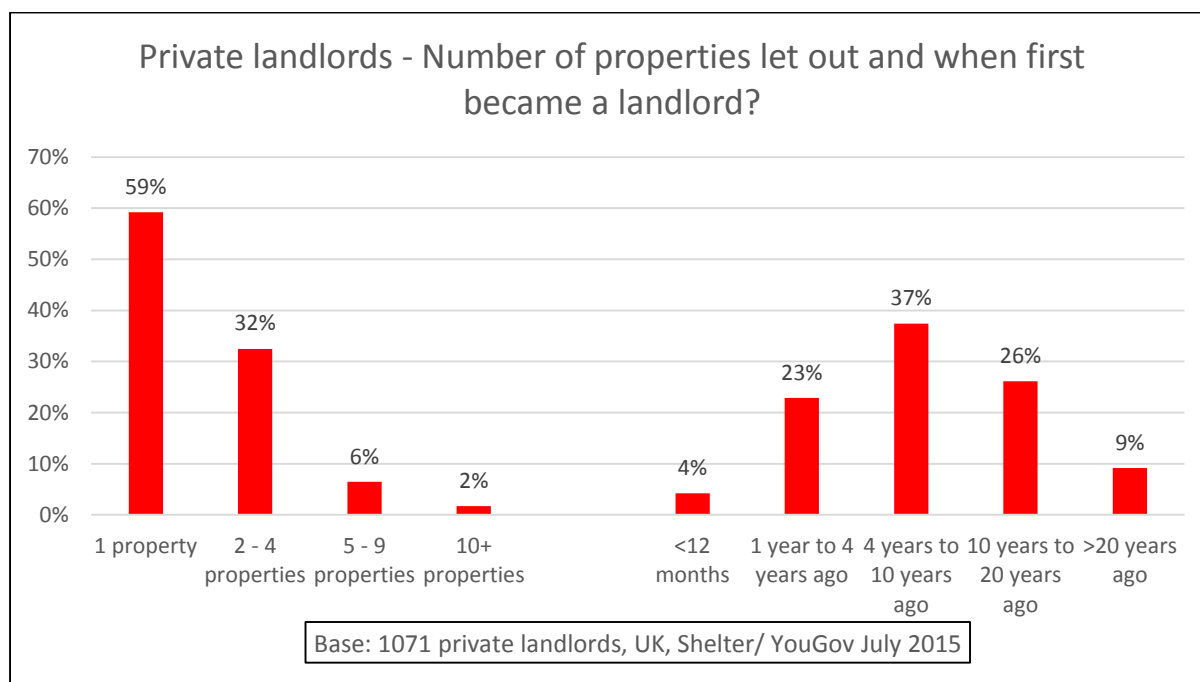
This section focuses on the different types of landlord found in the survey, examining things such as the size of their business, use of letting agents and whether they are an ‘accidental landlord’. It then goes on to examine the types of home that the landlords surveyed were letting out, and the types of tenant they are currently letting to.

Key findings:

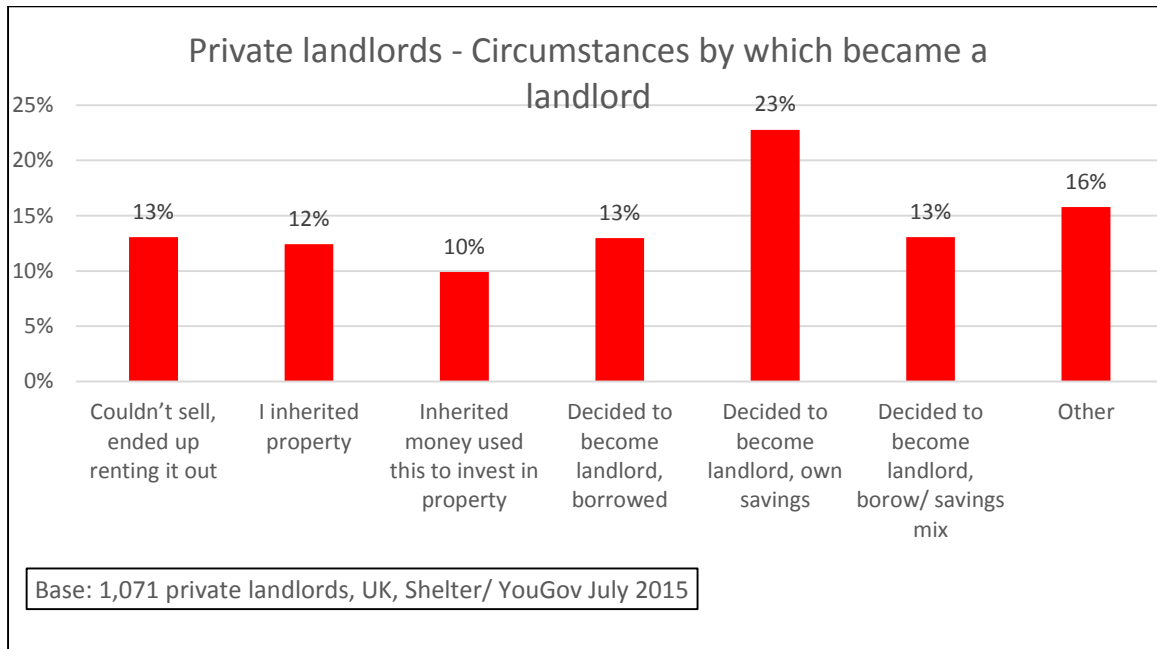
- The vast majority of landlords surveyed are letting out a small number of homes (92% are letting less than five, 59% just one).
- Their reasons for becoming a landlord are mixed, with a quarter ‘accidental’ in that they inherited property or are letting out somewhere they ideally wanted to sell. Hardly any landlords (4%) describe being a landlord as their full-time job.
- Just over half (54%) are using a letting agent on all the homes they let, with most of these (73%) getting a full service from their agent.
- Nine in ten landlords (89%) surveyed were letting their home(s) to individual households, with a tenth (11%) in the shared or HMO market. One in five (21%) are letting to tenant(s) claiming Housing Benefit, with these split evenly between those working and not.

Detailed findings:

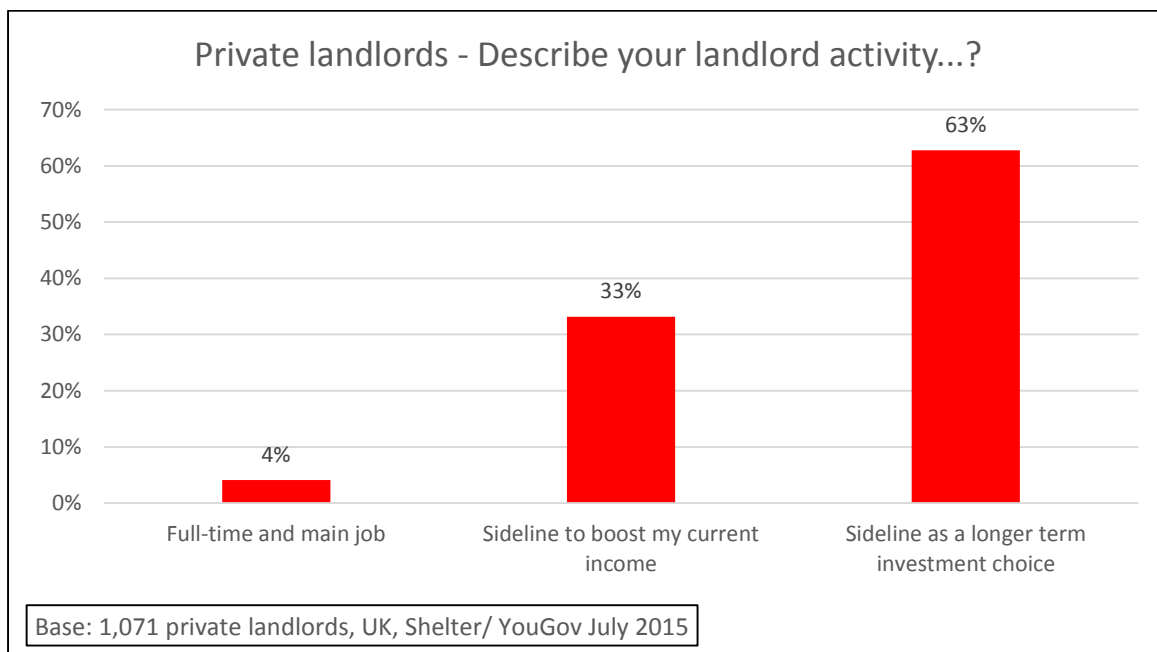
The chart below shows that the majority of landlords were letting out just one property (59%). A further third (32%) were letting out between two and four homes, with only 8% having a portfolio of 5 or more homes. The amount of experience as a landlord was well spread.



The following chart shows that a quarter (25%) of landlords surveyed could be described as ‘accidental landlords’ – they either inherited property (12%), or are letting out a home they wanted to sell but couldn’t (13%). The rest had become a landlord more proactively, with half (49%) deciding to become a landlord with their own finances, or borrowed finances and a further 10% inheriting money and buying property with it.



The chart below shows how landlords described their approach to being a landlord.



The chart above shows that only 4% of landlords described being a landlord as ‘my main, full-time job’. A third (33%) said it was a side-line to boost income, but the majority (63%) saw it as a side-line with a view to a longer term investment.

Landlords were then asked about their use of letting agents, the results are shown below:

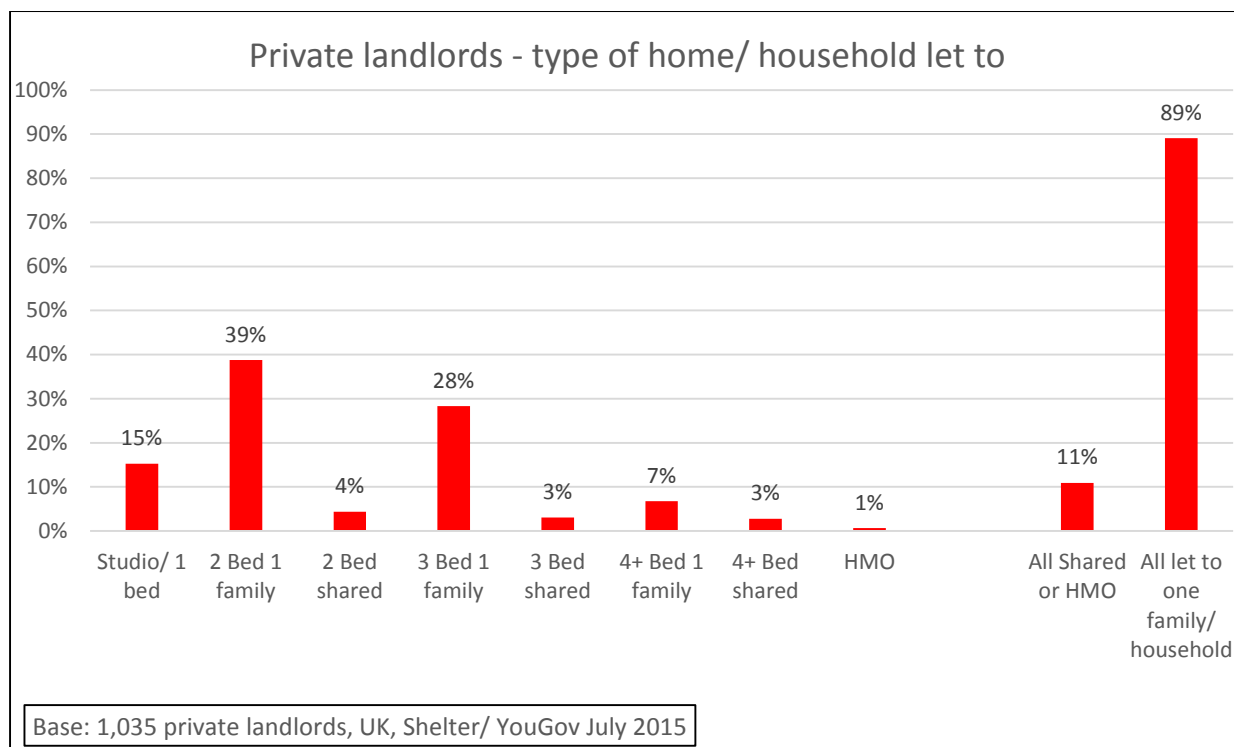


The chart above shows that just over half of landlords surveyed (54%) used a letting agent on all their properties, 9% used one for some of their properties and 37% did not use an agent at all. Of those employing an agent, most (73%) were getting a full management service, with the remainder using agents to find tenants and/ or collect the rent, but not manage their property.

Use of agents appears slightly more common among those with just one property, and those with newer build properties. Landlords letting to HB/ LHA claimants were less likely to use an agent, but this may be more to do with letting agent policies on letting to households receiving Housing Benefit, or landlords using agents being less likely to know their tenants' claimant status.

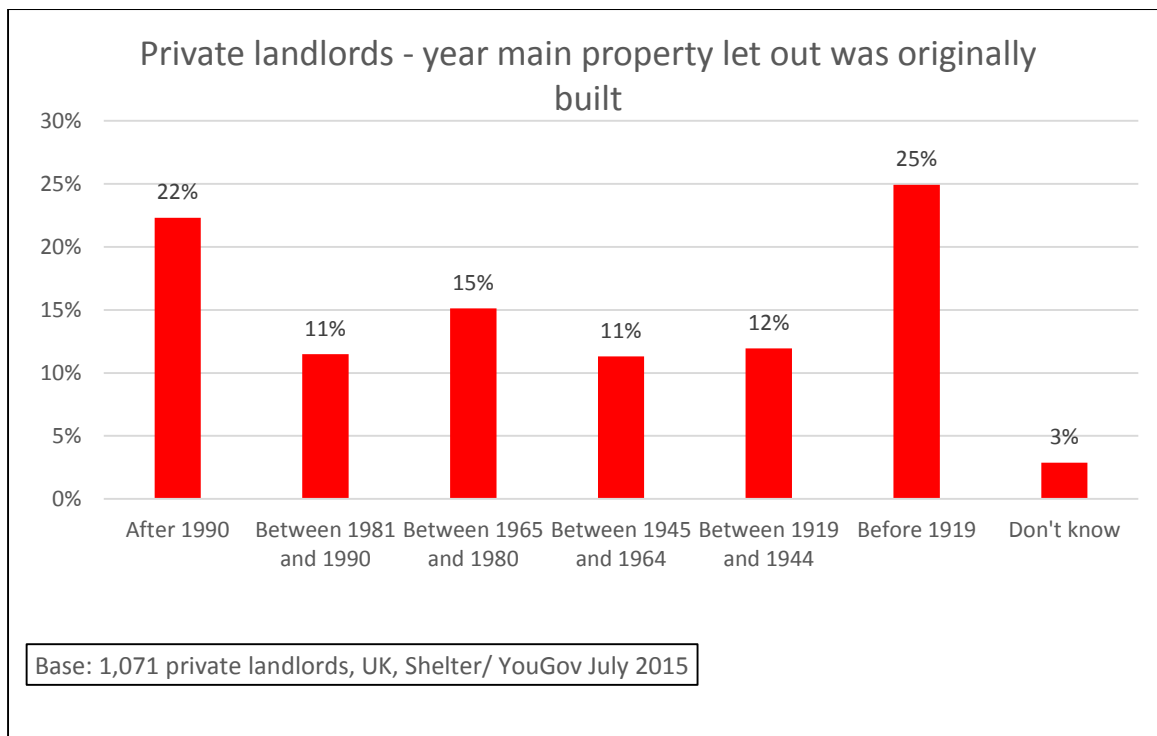
The chart below shows the type of household that landlords surveyed said they were letting to; if landlords were letting more than one home they were asked to think of the one that provided most income³. The majority of landlords were letting a two bedroom (41%) or three bedroom home (32%), with 14% letting a one bed or studio and 10% letting a home with four or more bedrooms. Only 1% said they were letting a property which falls under the licensable HMO definition.

³ In this instance ‘family’ just means household and not necessarily a family with children.

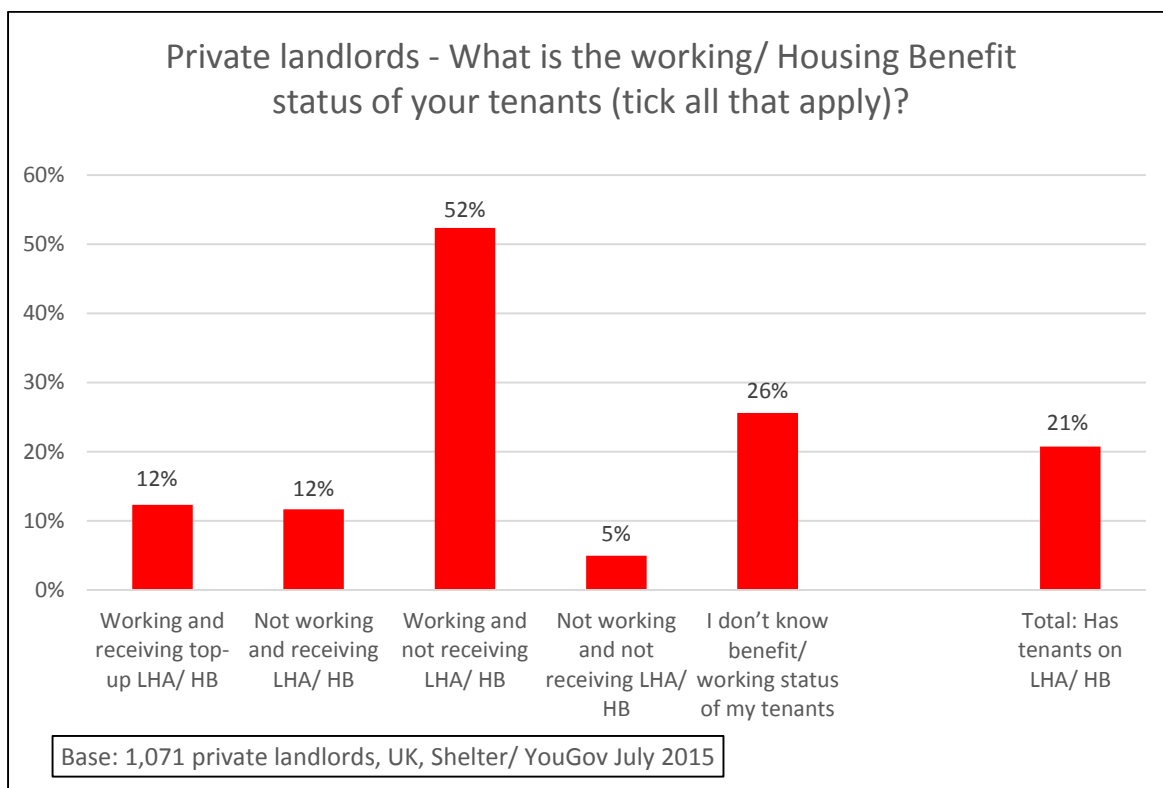


Separate questions showed that close to four in ten (38%) landlords surveyed were letting to at least one family with children, 29% said they had tenants who were over 40 years old and only 5% were letting to students. This is broadly in line with what the English Housing Survey and Census says about the profile of households that are renting privately.

Landlords were then asked about the age of the homes they let out. The chart below shows that just over one in five landlords (22%) said the majority of their properties were newly built (post 1990s). However, at the other end of the age scale, 25% said the majority of their properties were built before 1919. The English Housing Survey indicates that the profile of properties let by landlords in our survey is likely to be slightly newer than in reality (18% post 1990, 32% pre-1919).



The chart below shows what landlords told us about the working and HB/ LHA status of their tenants. Just over one in five (21%) of landlords said they had tenants who were currently claiming HB/ LHA, and these split evenly with half working and receiving ‘top-up’ LHA, and half not in work.



Letting to a household receiving LHA appears to be more common among landlords operating in the North, and among those with more properties, more experience, those not using an agent on all of their properties, and those that are, or have been members of trade bodies.

The majority of landlords surveyed (63%) were letting unfurnished homes, with 13% partly furnished and 20% fully furnished.

Landlord Finances and tax

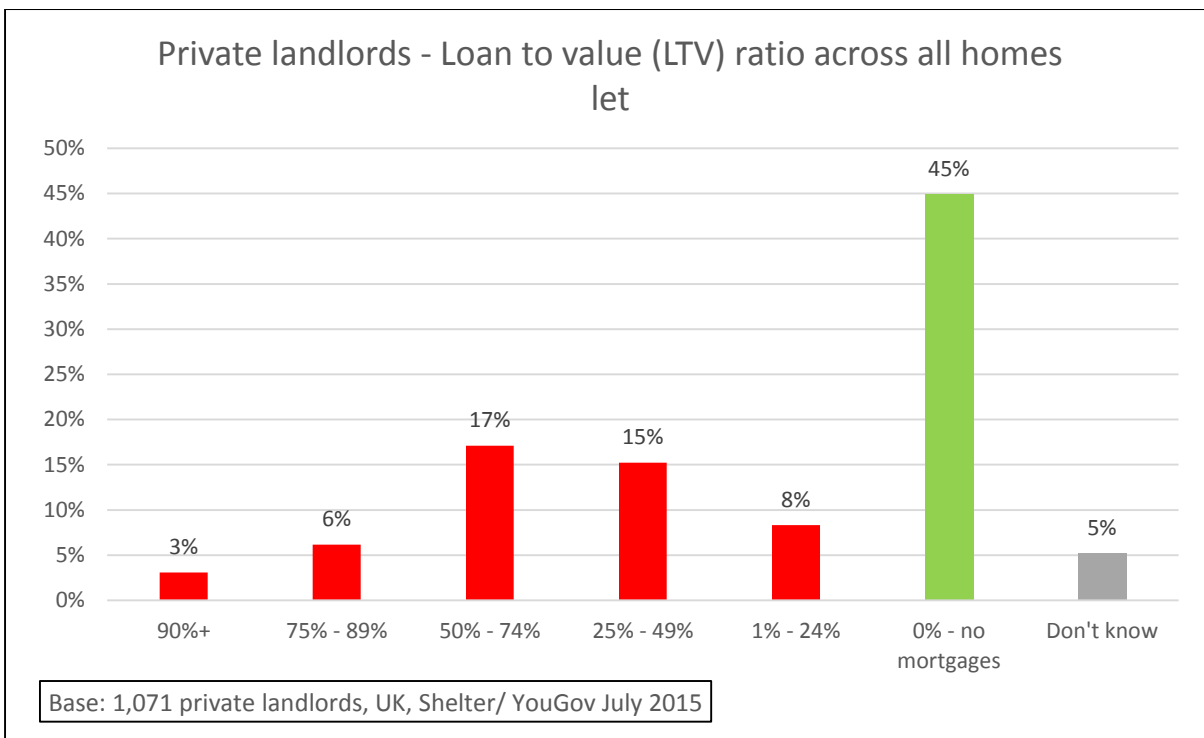
This section focuses on the financial position of landlords, including their profits, plans to expand and their tax arrangements.

Key findings:

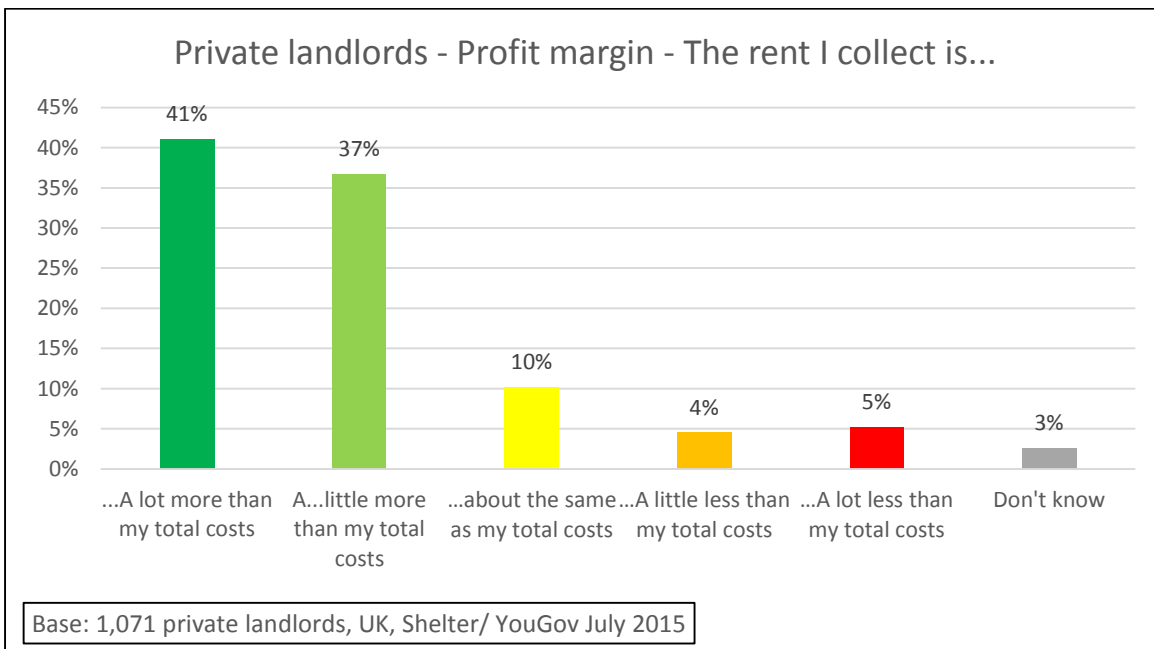
- 45% of landlords surveyed had no outstanding mortgages on the homes they let out
- Nearly eight in ten (78%) were in pre-tax profit with most of those (41% of all landlords surveyed) saying they 'make a lot more in rent than my total costs'. One in ten said they made a loss, when comparing rental income to total costs.
- Landlords surveyed collected an average of £1,143 per month in rent (median £750), and the average profit margin among the 78% in profit was £651 per month (median £450).
- Nearly a quarter of landlords surveyed (23%) did not agree strongly that they were paying the full amount of tax they are liable for on their rental income. Landlords not totally confident that they were paying the right amount of tax were much less likely to have included rental income in their last tax return.
- A small, but significant minority (8%) of landlords are planning on using the new rules on accessing pensions to invest in their landlord business.

Detailed findings:

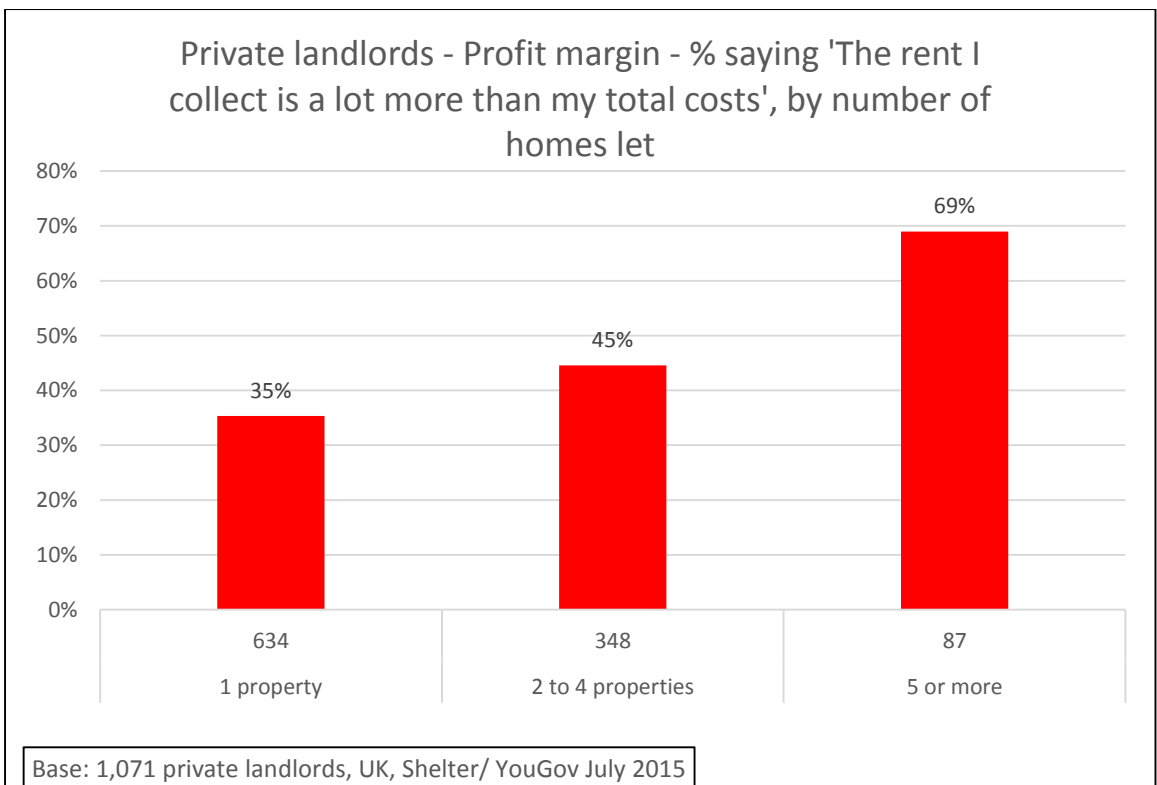
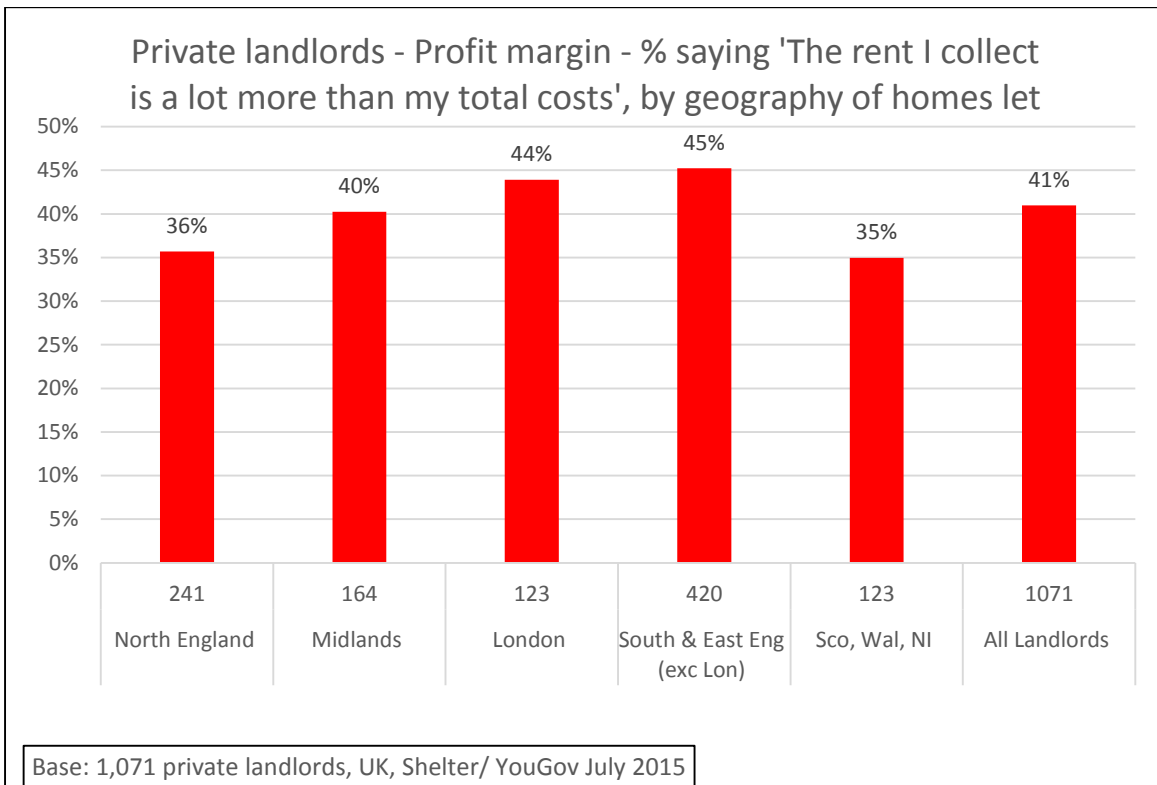
The chart below shows the loan to value ratio landlords had on the homes they let out. This is the amount of outstanding mortgage, compared to the value of the homes. More than 4 in ten (45%) of landlords have no outstanding mortgages on any of the homes they let and nearly a quarter (24%) had outstanding mortgages that were between 1% and 49% of the value of their portfolio. This means that over two-thirds of landlords (68%) had mortgages that were less than half the value of the homes they let.

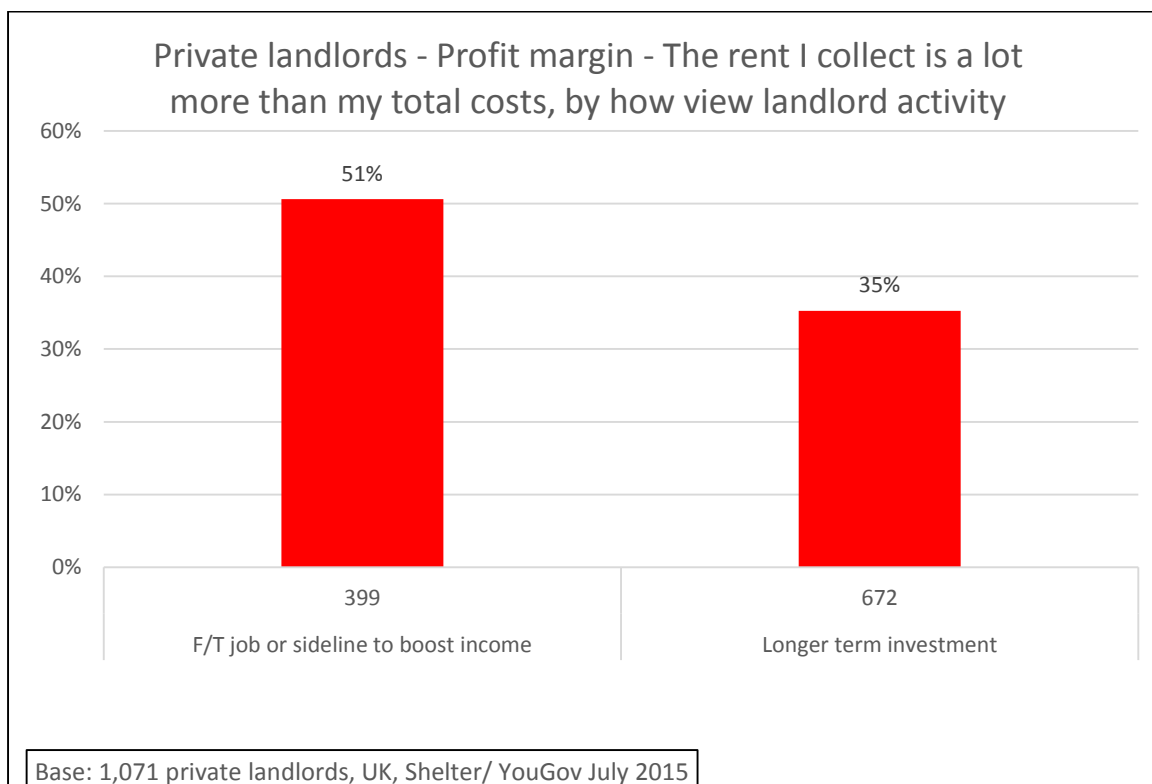
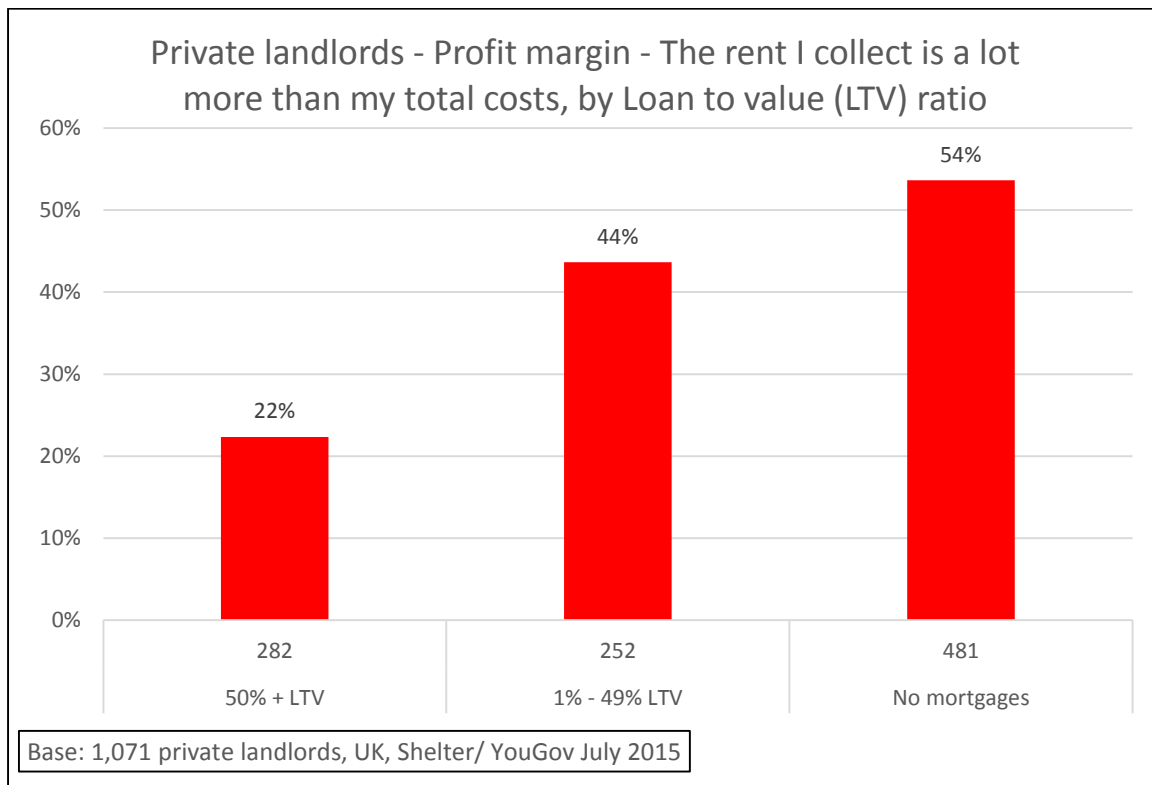


The chart below shows that just under 8 in 10 (78%) of landlords surveyed said they were in pre-tax profit - the rent they collect is more than their total costs (mortgage, insurance, maintenance etc.). These split fairly evenly between those saying the rent is ‘a lot more’ than their costs (41%) and ‘a little more’ (37%). One in ten said they were collecting less in rent money than their outgoings, with the same proportion breaking even.



The charts that follow show the proportions of various types of landlord that said they were making ‘a lot more’ in rent compared to costs:



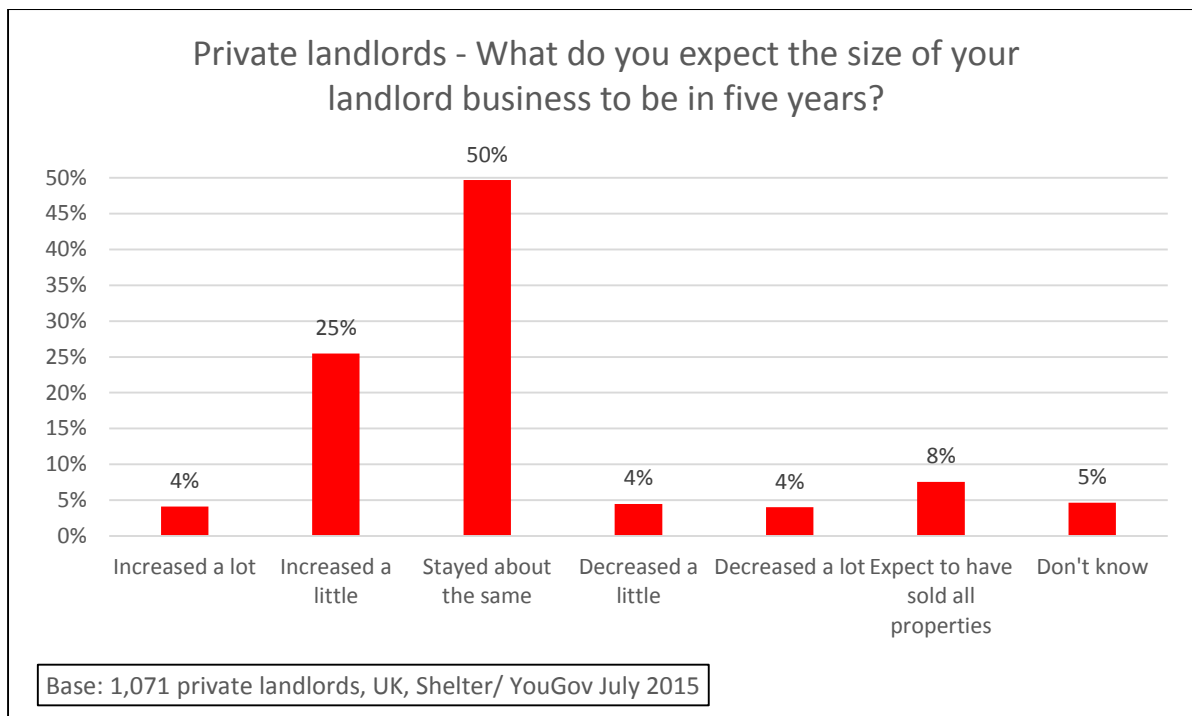




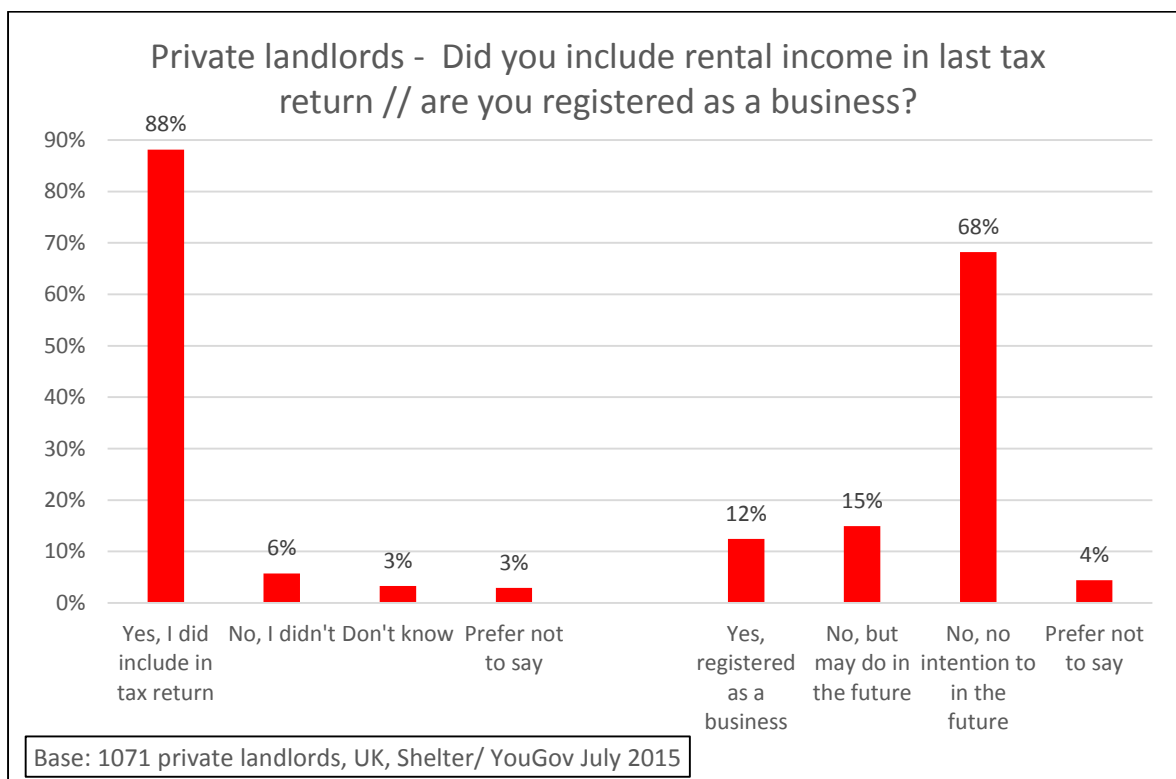
The series of charts above show that landlords with more properties and lower borrowing are most likely to make larger profit margins. The way a landlord views their activity also seems to be linked to profitability – those who see it as a long term investment are less profitable than those whose primary aim is to boost income, or view it as their full time job. The geographic differences are small, although Landlords operating in the South and East of England seem a little more likely to be making larger profits than those in the North, Scotland Wales and Northern Ireland.

The survey also revealed that Landlords letting to benefit claimants, and landlords who had carried out a repair this year were no less likely to be profitable than average. The average profit margin among the 78% of landlords making a pre-tax profit was £651 per month (median £450). The average total rent collected, by all landlords surveyed, was £1,143 per month (median £750).

Landlords were then asked about their business expectations in five years from now. The chart below shows that optimists (those who think they will acquire more properties over the next 5 years) outnumbered pessimists (those who think they will own less or not be a landlord in five years) by 2:1 (30% vs. 16%). But half of the landlords surveyed (50%) felt they would have the same number of homes in five years.

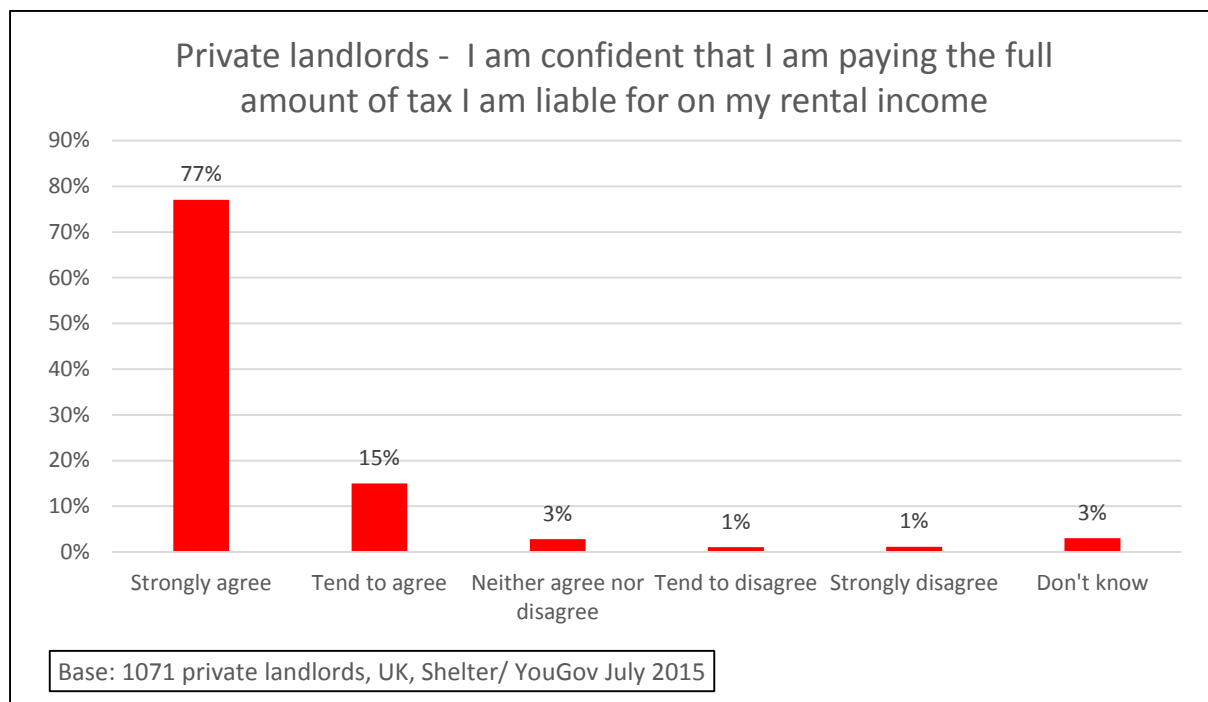


The chart below shows the results of two questions, firstly whether or not rental income was included in the last tax return, and secondly whether they are registered as a business. Most landlords surveyed (68%) were not registered as a business, and had no intention of doing so.

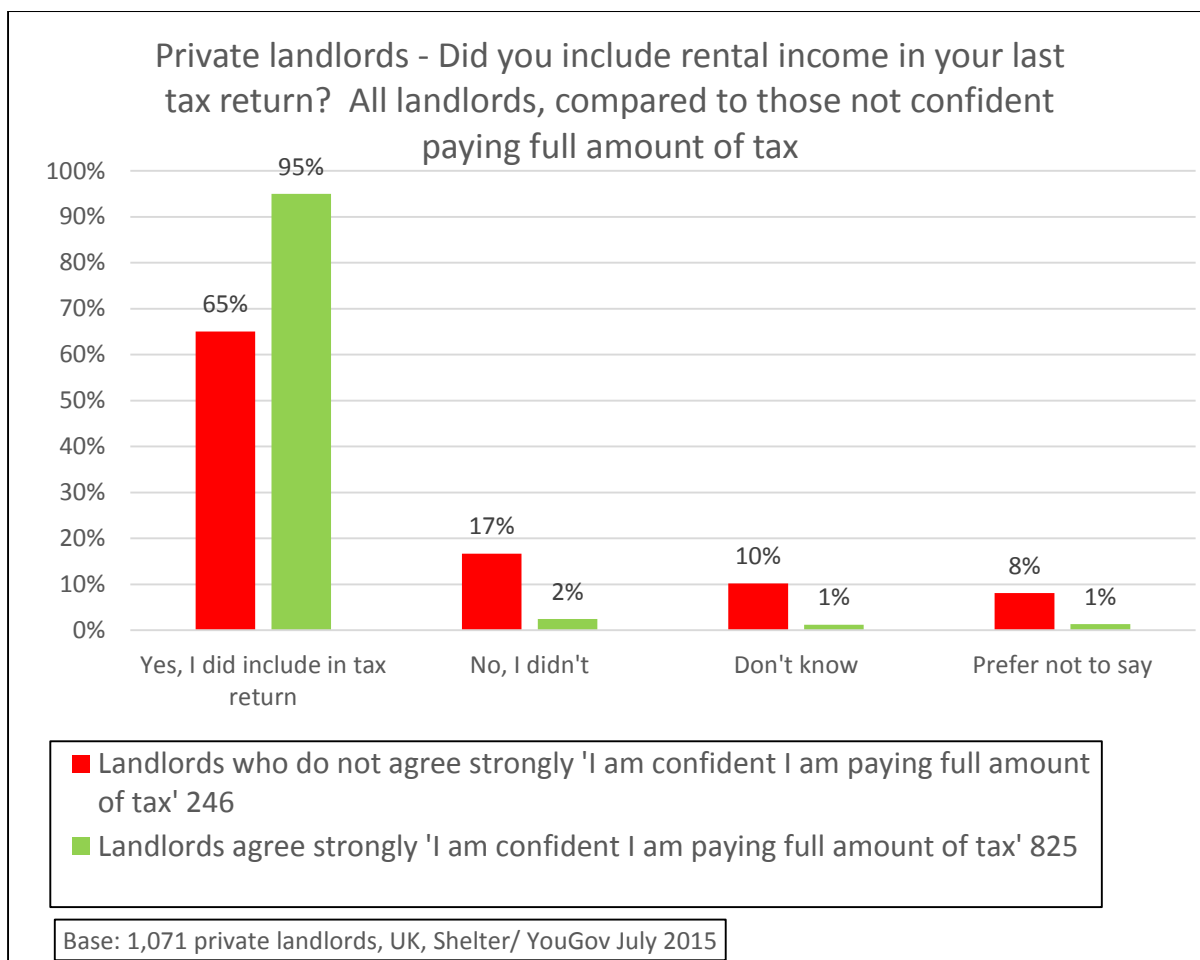


Landlords were then asked whether they were confident that they were paying the full amount of tax they were liable for on their rental income.

Whilst landlords taking part in the survey are assured of anonymity and confidentiality, the answers given on tax should be treated with more caution than others, and compliance is much more likely to be over-estimated than under-estimated.

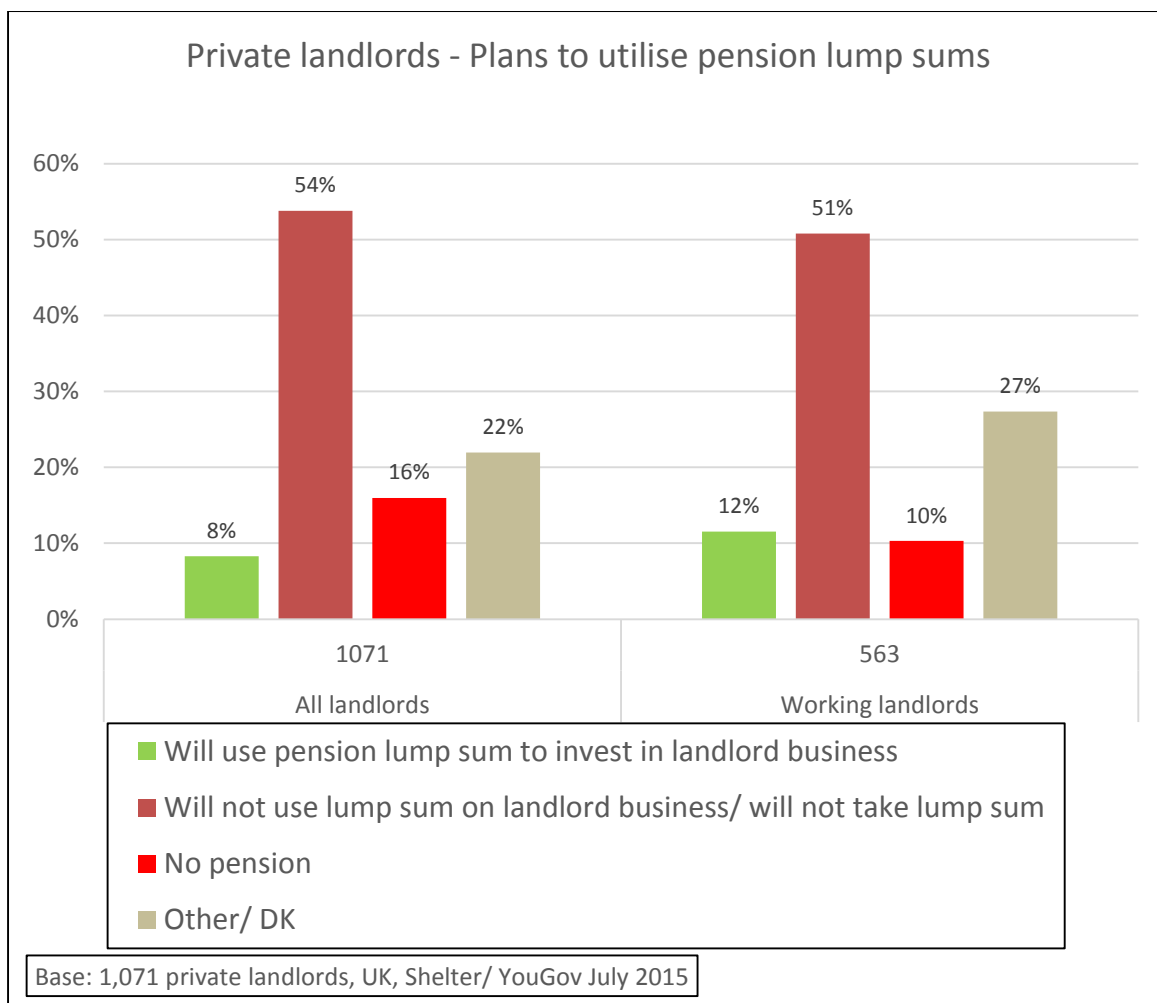


The chart above shows that close to one in four (23%) landlords surveyed were not totally confident that they were paying the full amount of tax they should be. The chart below compares the answers on tax returns between landlords fully confident they are paying all the tax they should be, to those that are not:



Private landlords are not necessarily required to submit a tax return or declare their rental income on it – it will depend on how much rent they collect and their individual circumstances. It should not be assumed that those not including it in their tax return are doing anything wrong. However, the chart above clearly shows that landlords who were not fully confident that they were paying the full amount of tax on their rental were less likely to have submitted a tax return, so there would appear to be a link between these things.

New pension rules allowing people to withdraw lump sums early came into place in April 2015. The media have reported that this could ‘fuel another buy to let boom’, so we asked landlords whether they planned to invest money withdrawn from pensions into their business, see chart below.



The chart above shows that 8% of all landlords said they would utilise pension money to invest in their landlord business, rising to 12% among landlords that work, and 14% among those aged 35-54 (not shown).

The 8% of landlords that were planning to invest pension money were fairly evenly divided between those that were planning to buy more homes, those that were planning to maintain or repair the homes they had, and those that said they would do both. Investment in property conditions is welcome, but an increase in landlords buying up homes in popular areas runs the risk of further inflating house prices and pushing out first time buyers. The proportions of landlords saying they plan to invest pension money in the survey may not be as high as suggested by the media, but could still mean hundreds of thousands of homes being bought by private landlords.

Increasing the rent

This section looks at how often landlords increase the rent when setting up or renewing a tenancy, and the reasons for these rent increases.

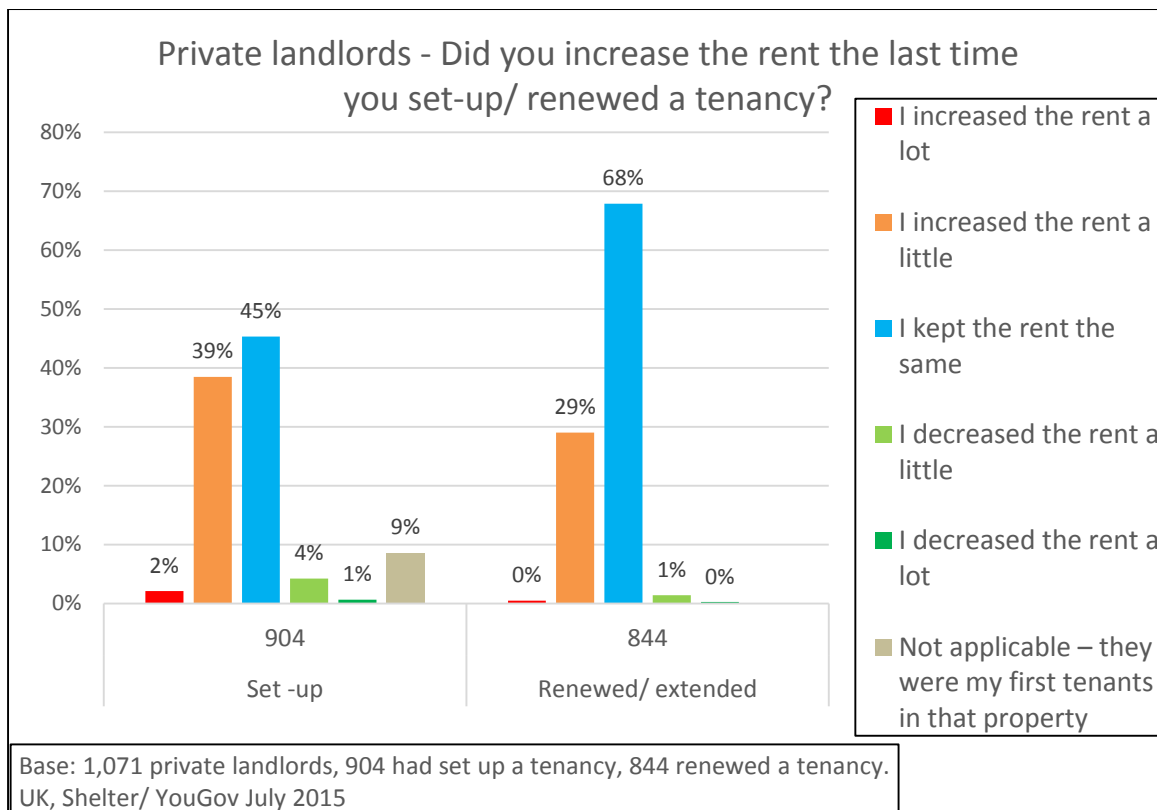
Key findings:

- Around half (48%) of landlords increased the rent the last time they set up or renewed a tenancy (or both).
- Increasing the rent when a new tenancy is set up (41%) was more common than increasing the rent at renewal (30%).
- The most commonly cited main reason for increasing the rent were ‘the market is going that way’ (32%) and ‘my letting agent advised me to’ (26%), with the latter being the top reason among landlords employing an agent (37%).
- Increasing general costs are a factor in rent increases for some landlords (18% gave it as the one main reason for increasing the rent, plus 10% said it was to cover refurbishment), but this does not seem to be the main driver of rent increases.

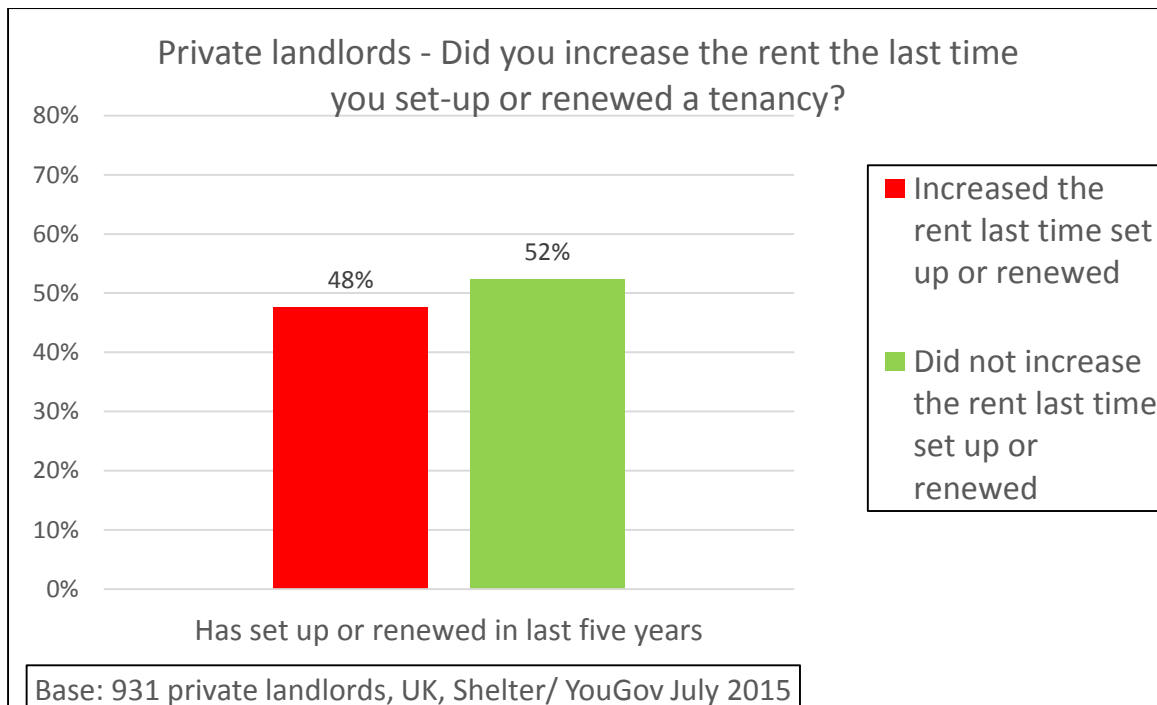
Detailed findings:

Four in ten (41%) had set up a new tenancy in the last 12 months, 84% had in the last five years. Similar proportions (49% and 79%) had renewed an existing tenancy in the last year, or five years.

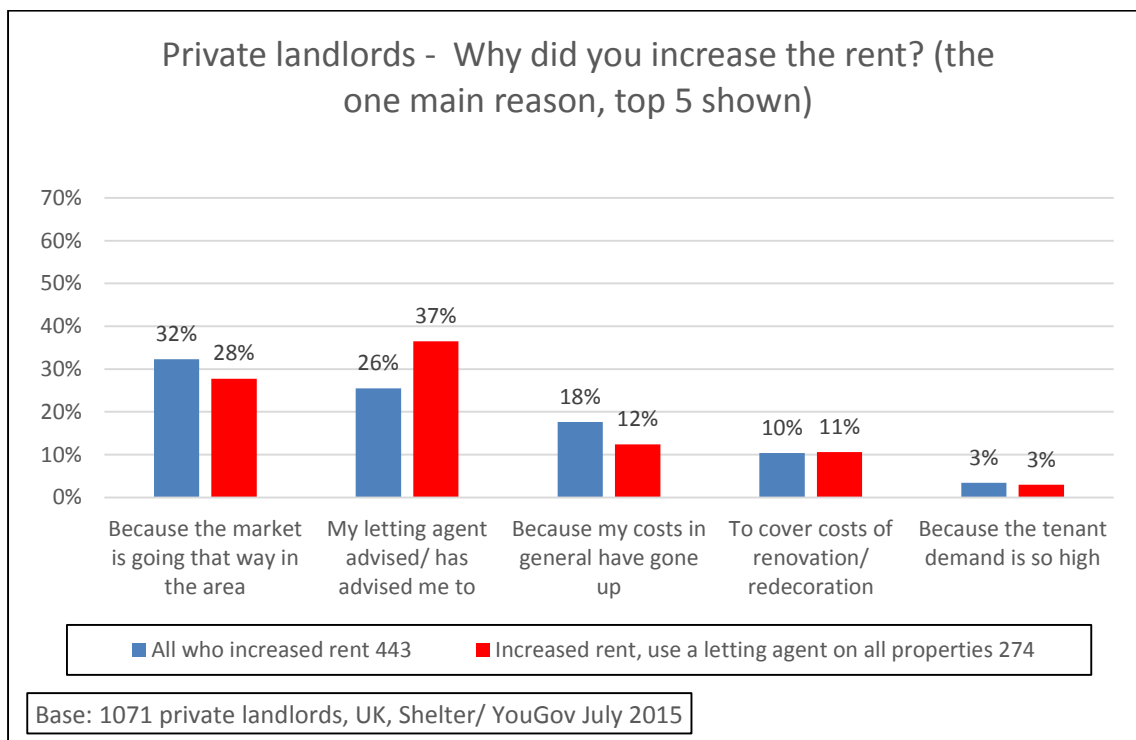
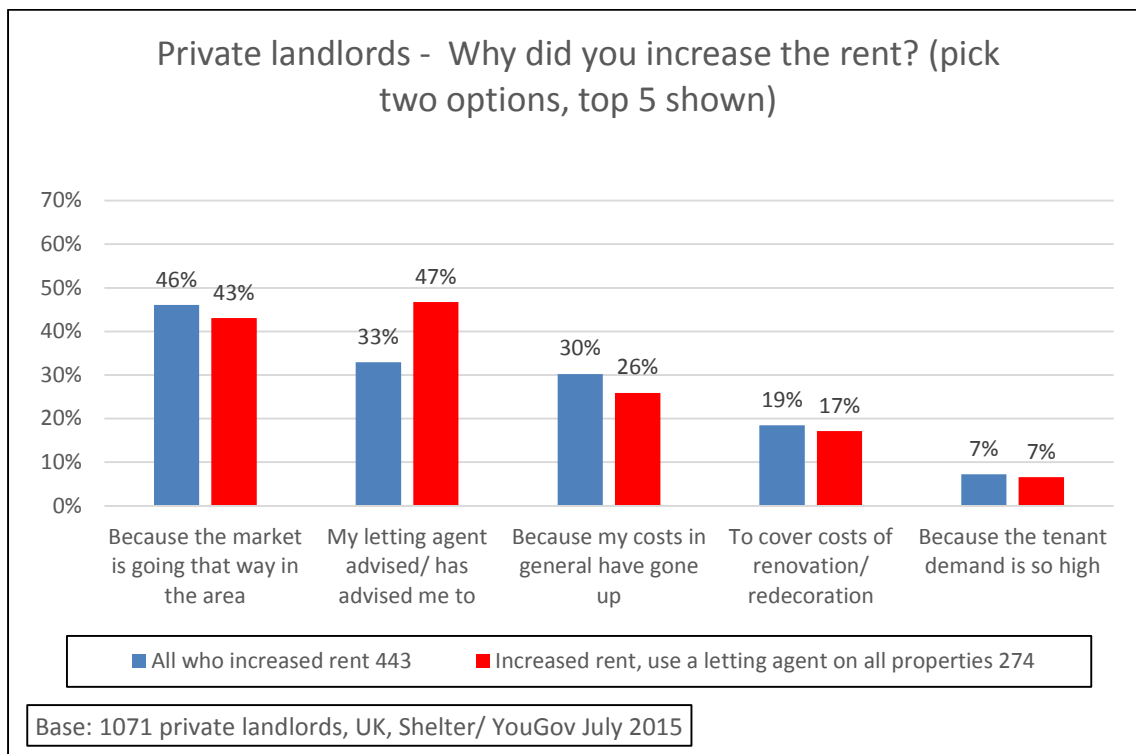
The chart below shows rent increases among those who had set-up or renewed a tenancy in the last five years. Just over four in ten (41%) had increased the rent last time they set up a tenancy, and 45% kept it the same. Increasing the rent was less common for renewals, but close to a third (30%) said they had increased the rent at their last renewal, see chart below.



The chart below combines landlords who have set up or renewed a tenancy in the last 5 years, and shows that just under half (48%) increased the rent the last time they did one of these things.



Landlords were then given a list of possible reasons for increasing the rent and were asked firstly to pick two that were factors in their last decision to increase the rent, and then to pick the one main reason. The results to these two questions are shown in the chart below, with landlords who use a letting agent shown alongside all landlords who had increased the rent.



The charts above show that although increasing costs are a factor for some landlords, the perception that rents are rising in the area, and pressure from letting agents, seem to be the most significant drivers of rent increases. The charts also show that being advised to increase the rent by an agent is the top reason among those landlords who use a letting agent. Most letting agents stand to gain from high tenant churn and regular rent increases, and the role they play in rent inflation is clearly substantial.

Landlords ticking ‘other reason’ on this question were invited to leave an open text answer on why they increased the rent. Many landlords pointed out that they hadn’t increased the rent for many years, but one landlord simply wrote:

“Because I can”.

Safety and legal requirements

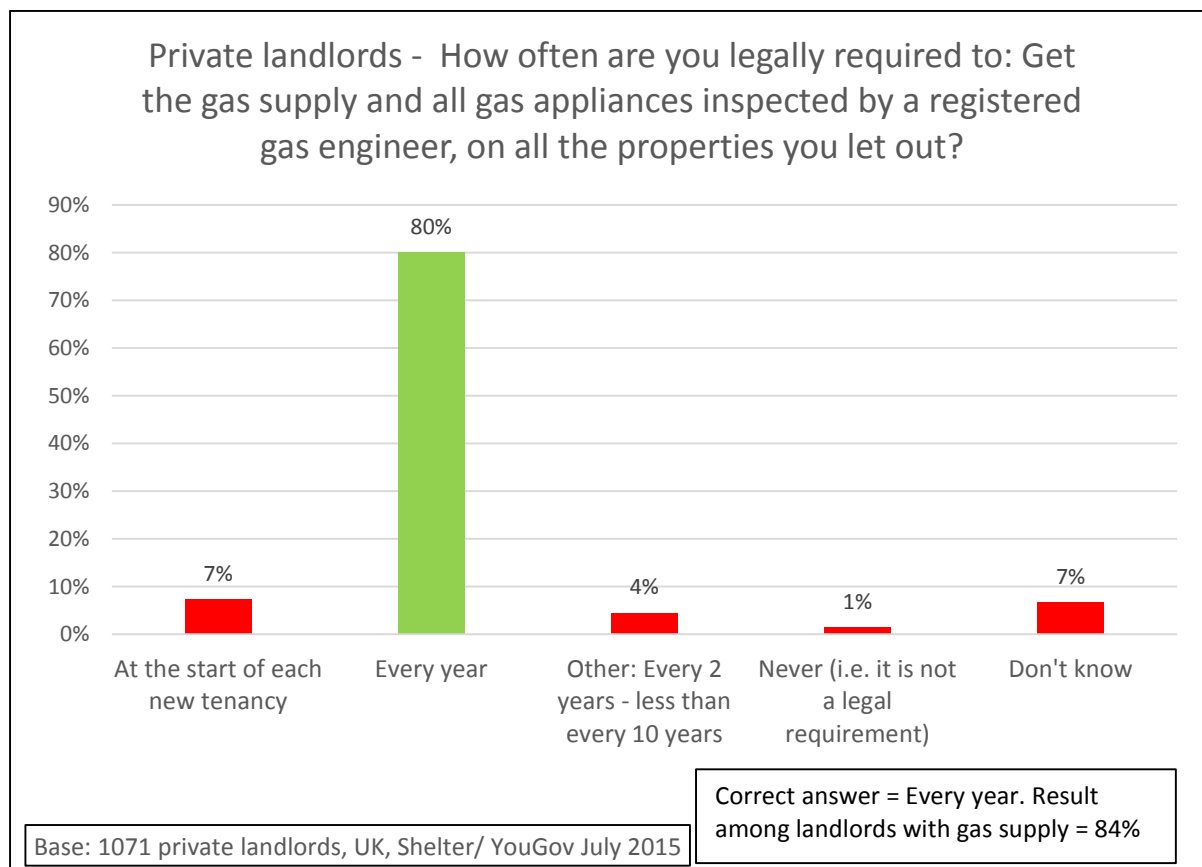
This section looks at what landlords know about the law, and then how they act in practice on legal and safety requirements. Gas safety, electrical safety, Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs), smoke alarms and carbon monoxide (CO) detectors are all covered. Of these, apart from a small number of exceptions, landlords are only required to have a gas safety certificate (CP12), and an EPC. But, this is changing: landlords in Scotland will soon be required to have a qualified electrician carry out annual checks, and smoke alarms and CO detectors (in rooms with solid fuel) will soon be legally required in all private rented homes in the UK.

Key findings:

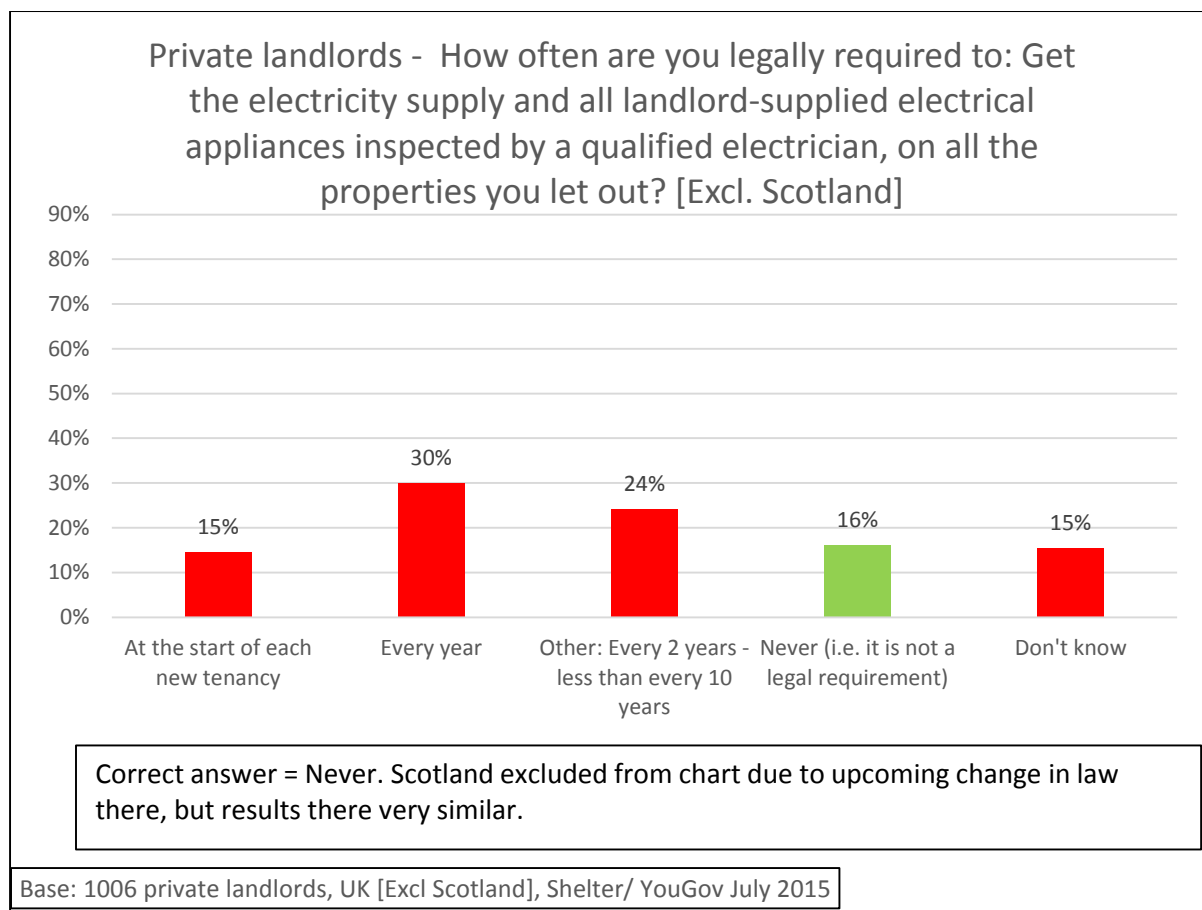
- Aside from gas safety, the landlords surveyed had a fairly poor knowledge of what is and isn't a legal requirement for landlords. However, this can be positive in that many landlords think that electrical safety checks are legally required for all rented homes in the UK, when in fact only a small proportion are.
- Awareness of upcoming laws, such as the requirements on smoke alarms and CO detectors in rooms with solid fuel, was fairly low.
- Compliance with the law on gas safety is very high, but 10% of landlords with gas (8% of all surveyed) either didn't have, or didn't know if they had an active CP12 certificate.
- Compliance with the law on EPCs was much lower (62%), most likely driven by low awareness of this law.
- Given they are not legal requirements aside from in a very small number of cases, fairly high proportions of landlords said they had smoke alarms on every floor (87%), regular electrical safety checks (45%) and CO detectors (51%) on all properties.
- More landlords with the majority of properties in England support a law on regular electrical safety checks than oppose (51% compared to 23%). Support is particularly strong among those that are already carrying out the checks.
- 5% of landlords appear to be in breach of the law by taking but not protecting tenancy deposits, with a further fifth, potentially in breach as 'my letting agent does this, but I don't have the documents'.
- Less than half (41%) of landlords surveyed agreed that 'there are already too many laws and regulations covering landlords', with most not agreeing.

Detailed Findings:

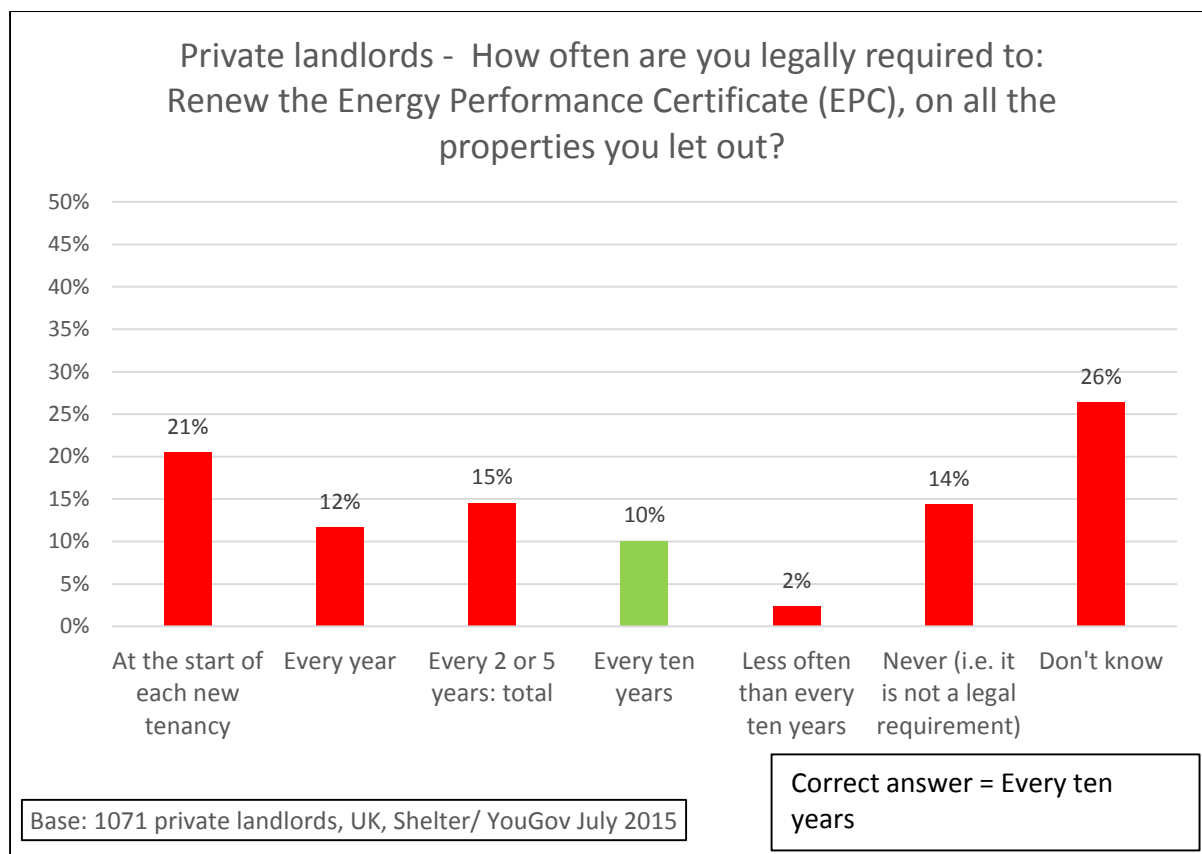
The chart below shows that four in five (80%) of landlords surveyed were able to correctly state that gas safety certificates need renewing every year. Most of the remaining 20% thought it was at the start of every tenancy (7%), or just did not know (7%). If this is rebased to just those who say they have gas in their main property, 84% correctly stated ‘every year’.



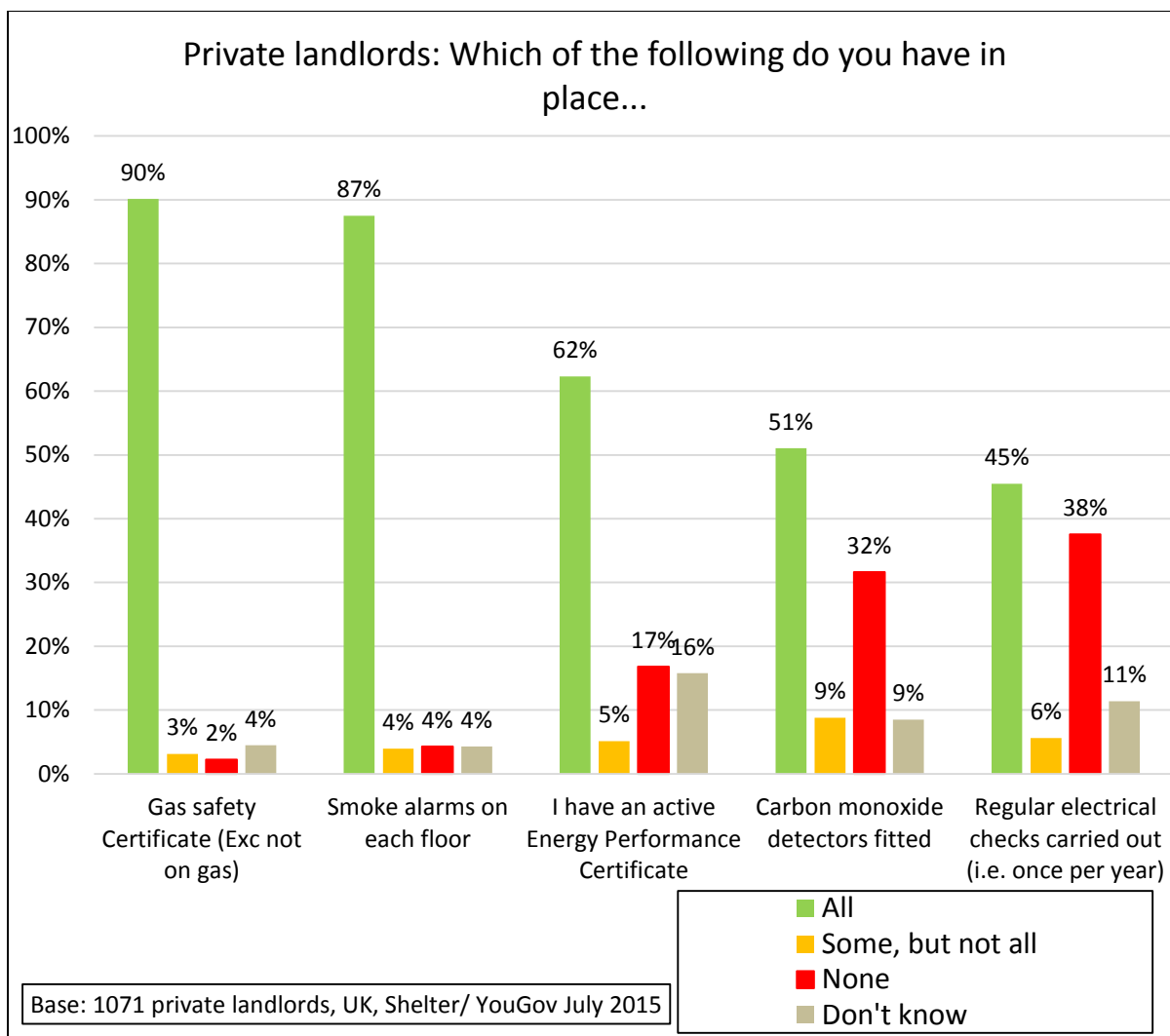
As stated above, unless they are letting a certain type of property (HMOs, and only 1% in the survey were letting these), landlords are not legally required to get electrical safety checks carried out, although this is being introduced in Scotland. The chart below shows that this is not well known by landlords, and only 16% correctly stated this. Most landlords think electrical safety checks are a legal requirement already, with nearly a third (30%) saying it needs to be done every year, and 15% saying it was required at the start of every tenancy.



Similarly, the chart below shows that knowledge on the legal requirement to renew EPCs was very weak, with only 10% correctly stating it needs to be done every ten years. Landlords were split fairly evenly between those thinking it needed to be renewed more often than this (47%), and those thinking it was not legally required (14%) or just not knowing at all (26%).



Landlords were then asked a series of questions on what they are actually doing in practice, in the homes they let out. The results are set out in the chart below, with landlords not letting homes with gas excluded from the base on that particular question:



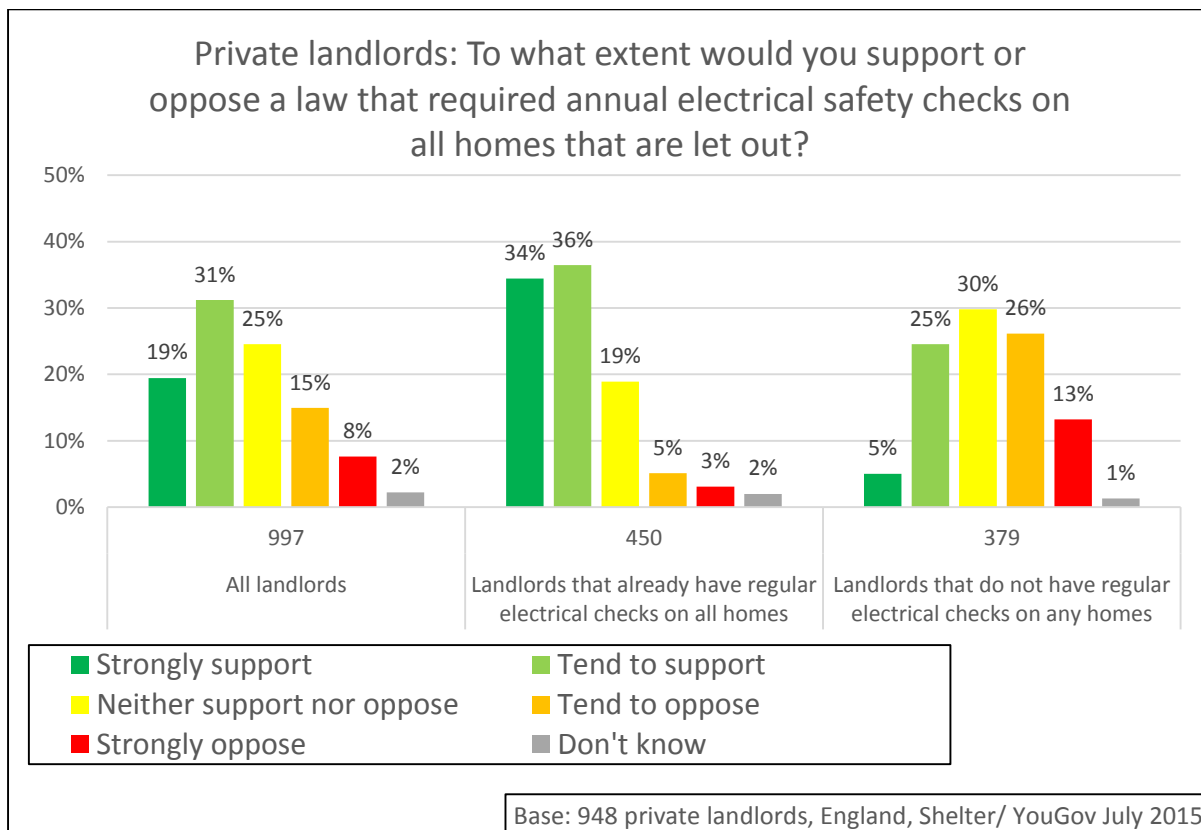
The chart above shows that one in ten landlords (10%) letting homes with gas either didn't have, or did not know if they had, an active gas safety certificate for the homes they let out. This is consistent with previous surveys we have conducted, and equates to 8% of all landlords surveyed.

Almost as many (87%) of landlords said they had smoke alarms in all the homes they let out, even though this isn't yet law. This is a similar level to that recorded by the English Housing Survey (82%). However, significantly less (62%) have an active EPC, even though this is legally required.

Just over half of landlords surveyed had CO detectors in all the homes they let out and only slightly less (45%) are having regular electrical safety checks carried out. Even when new laws do come in, it will still only be a small proportion of landlords that are legally required to have these (electrical safety for landlords in Scotland, and CO detectors for around 5% who have solid fuel.)

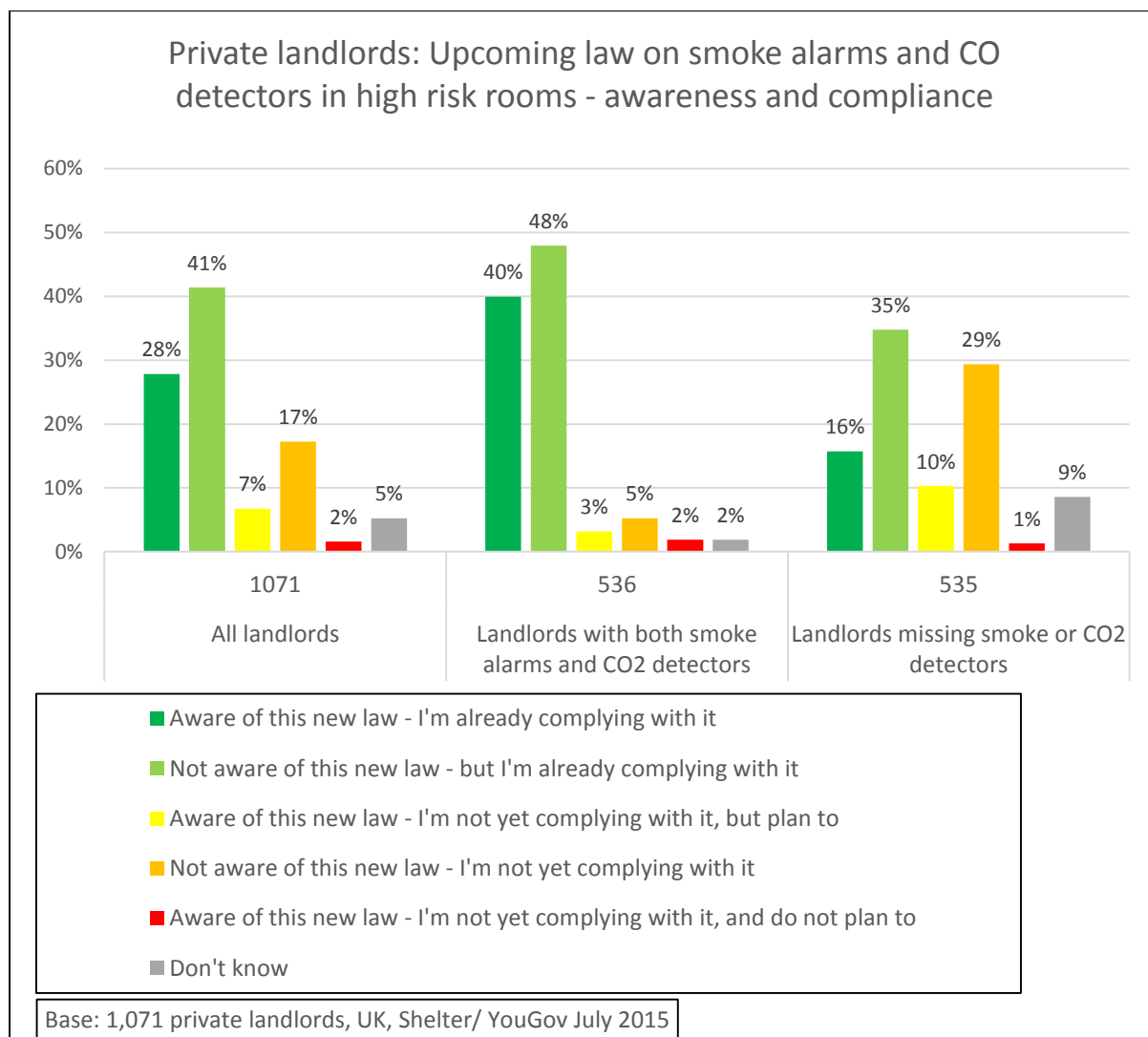
Shelter and many others, including the Electrical Safety Council have called for all rented homes to be subject to an annual electrical safety check, but as mentioned above, this is only currently planned for Scotland. Landlords with the majority of their properties in England

were asked whether they supported a law on regular electrical safety checks. The chart below shows that supporters of legislation on this outnumbered opponents by more than 2:1 (51% supported; 23% opposed). Support is particularly strong among landlords that are already having the checks carried out (70% support, 8% oppose), whereas opinion is divided among those that are not. It is unusual to see a majority of landlords supporting a legal change like this, and the case for this to be law across the UK seems overwhelming.



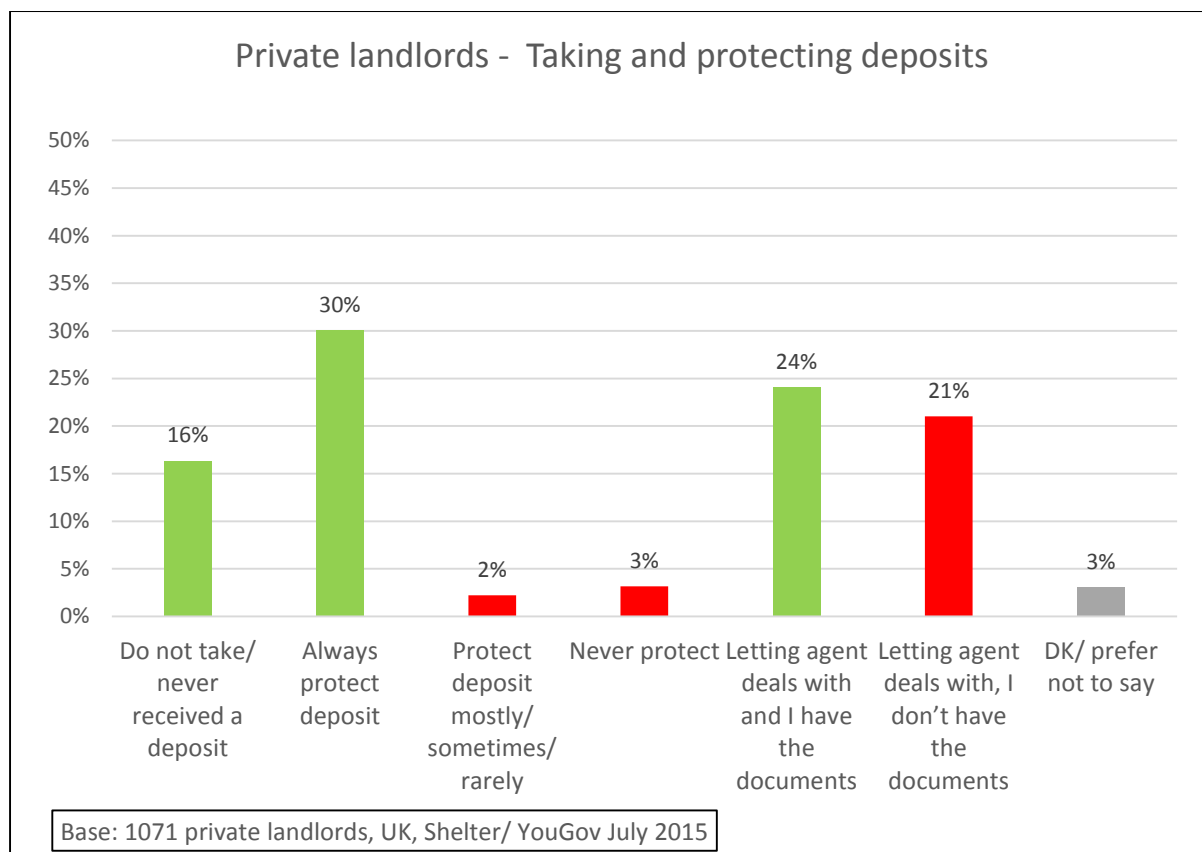
Legislation has been passed requiring landlords to have working smoke alarms on all floors of all the homes they let, and CO detectors if the home uses solid fuel (which the English Housing Survey estimates to be around 5% of private rented homes). This comes into effect in 2015 in Scotland and early 2016 in England and Wales.

The chart below shows that awareness of the new law is quite low - 36% were aware of the new law, 59% were not, plus 5% said 'don't know'. Over two thirds of landlords surveyed (69%) said they were already complying with the law on smoke alarms and CO (even if not necessarily actually aware of the new law). A quarter (26%) said they were not yet compliant.



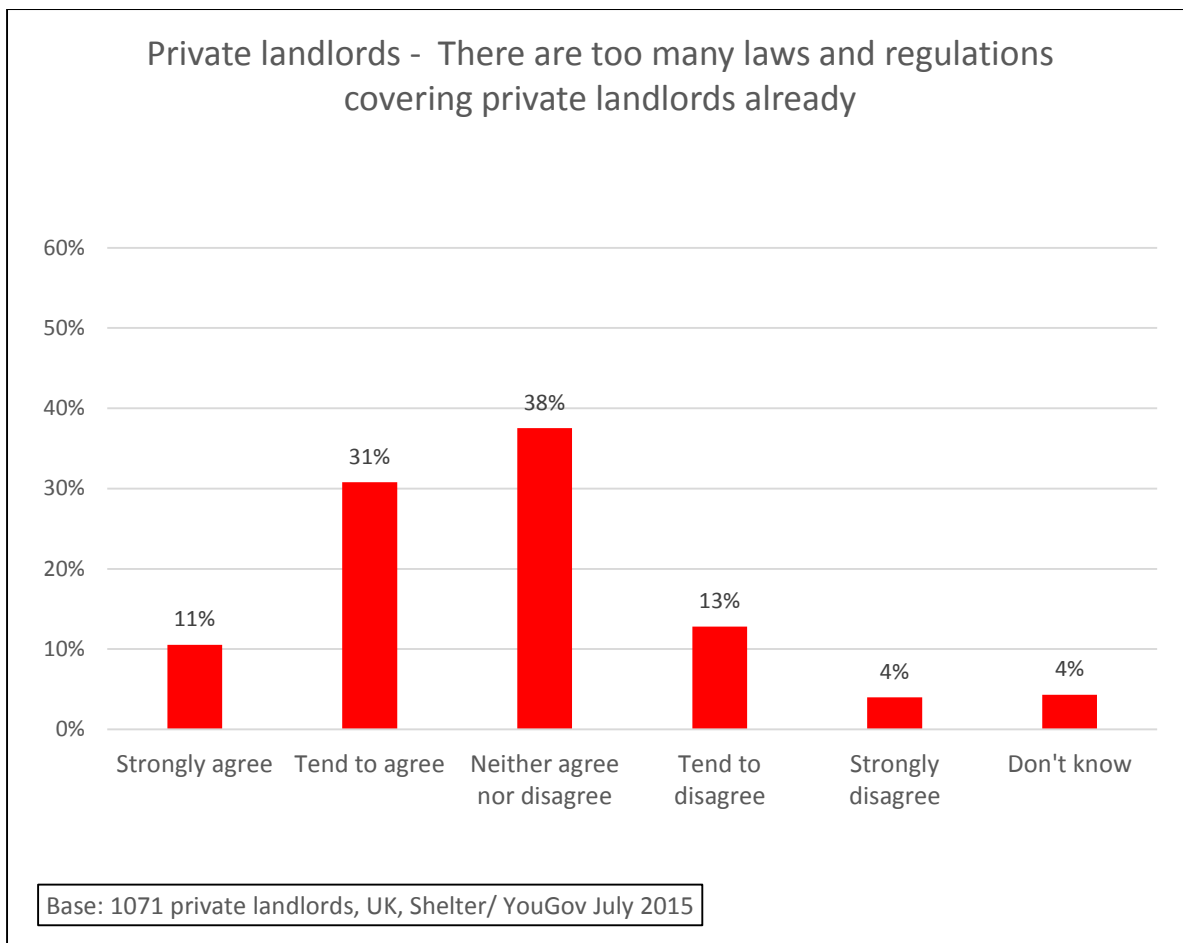
In reality non-compliance is likely to be significantly less than a quarter. Some landlords seem confused - around a fifth of those who said they were not complying said they had smoke alarms and CO detectors in all properties they let, in previous answers on the survey. Additionally, many of those who think they are not yet complying due to being without CO detectors, will not actually have solid fuel burners, which are only estimated to be present in around 5% of homes. The confusion is not ideal, but the outcome could be positive in that the law will drive an increase in CO detectors in rental homes well over and above those that are legally required to have them.

If a landlord receives a damage deposit from a tenant, they have been legally required to place it in an approved scheme, since 2007. For a while the legal position was slightly different in Scotland to the rest of the UK (the Scottish law was retrospective, for example), but the position is now the same in all of the UK – if a landlord has taken a deposit, it must be protected, and landlords should have the documentation, and ensure that their tenants do too. The chart below shows how landlords said they dealt with deposits.



The chart above shows that 5% of landlords admitted taking deposits and not always protecting them in an approved scheme. A further 20% said that although their letting agent looked after this, they had no documentation about the deposit – which is likely to technically be in breach of the law.

Landlords were asked if they felt there were already too many laws and regulations covering private landlords. More agreed (41%) than disagreed (17%), but almost as many (38%) were neutral, and barely more than one in ten (11%) agreed strongly.



Repairs and conditions

This section examines experiences of repairing and maintaining homes, approaches to identifying these issues, the extent to which landlords think they are on top of maintaining their properties, and which types are most likely to be struggling with repairs.

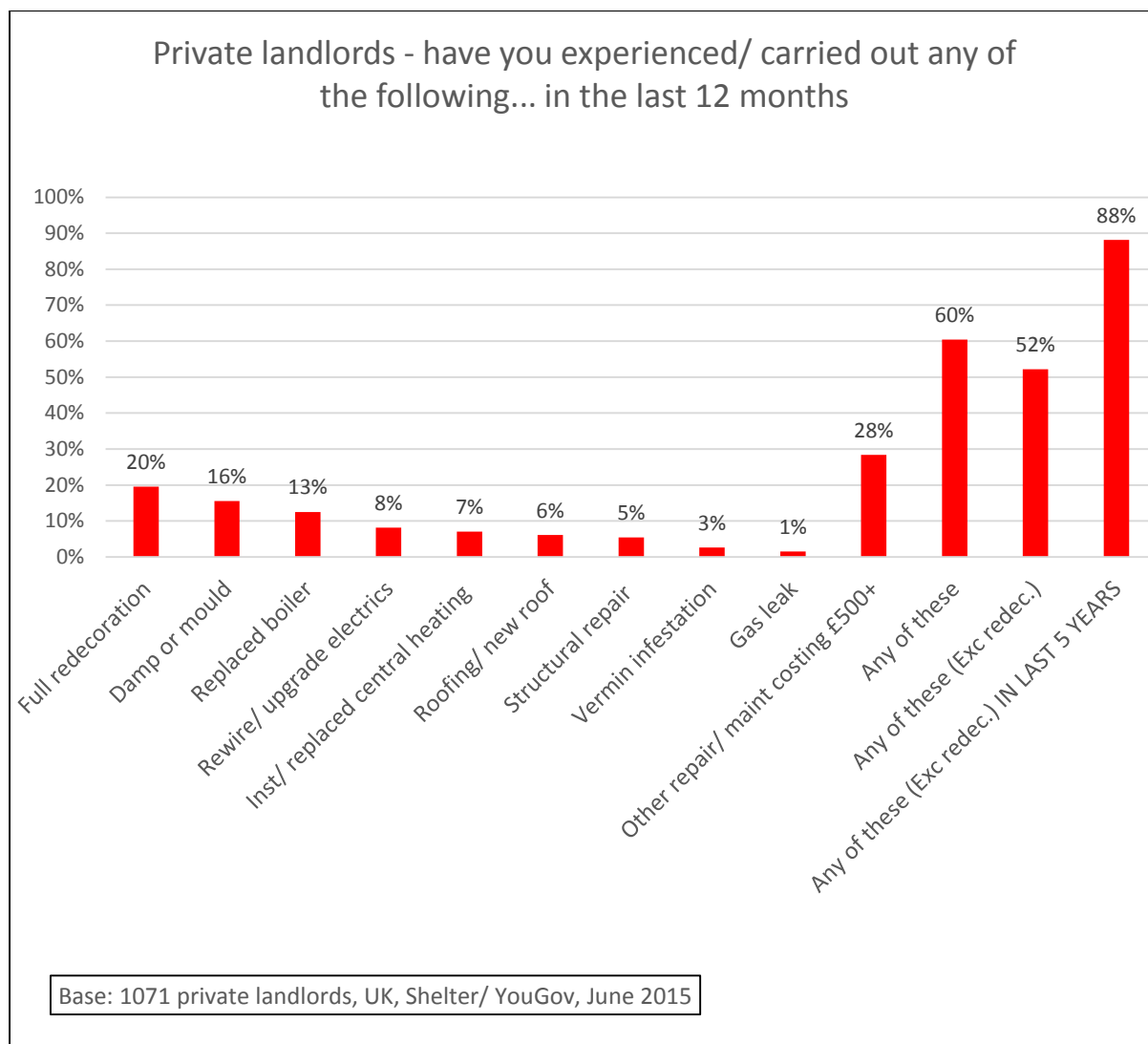
Key findings:

- Most landlords have some kind of insurance policy or savings to cover the event of a significant repair being needed to one of the homes they let out, but 17% did not.
- Experiencing a problem with a property and carrying out repairs or maintenance was very common among landlords – 52% had experienced one of a range of problems with the property in the last year, 60% had experienced a problem and/ or redecorated in full.
- One in six landlords (17%) are not inspecting their properties for repair issues, and do not employ an agent giving a full service on all their properties, effectively leaving the job of noticing and reporting problems to their tenants.
- 7% of landlords surveyed admitted that they sometimes struggled to keep their homes in a good state of repair, with a further 13% neutral on this.
- The financial circumstances of landlords seem associated with struggling to keep up with repairs, but it is also associated with other areas of questionable practice, such as not inspecting properties and not being confident on tax.

Detailed findings:

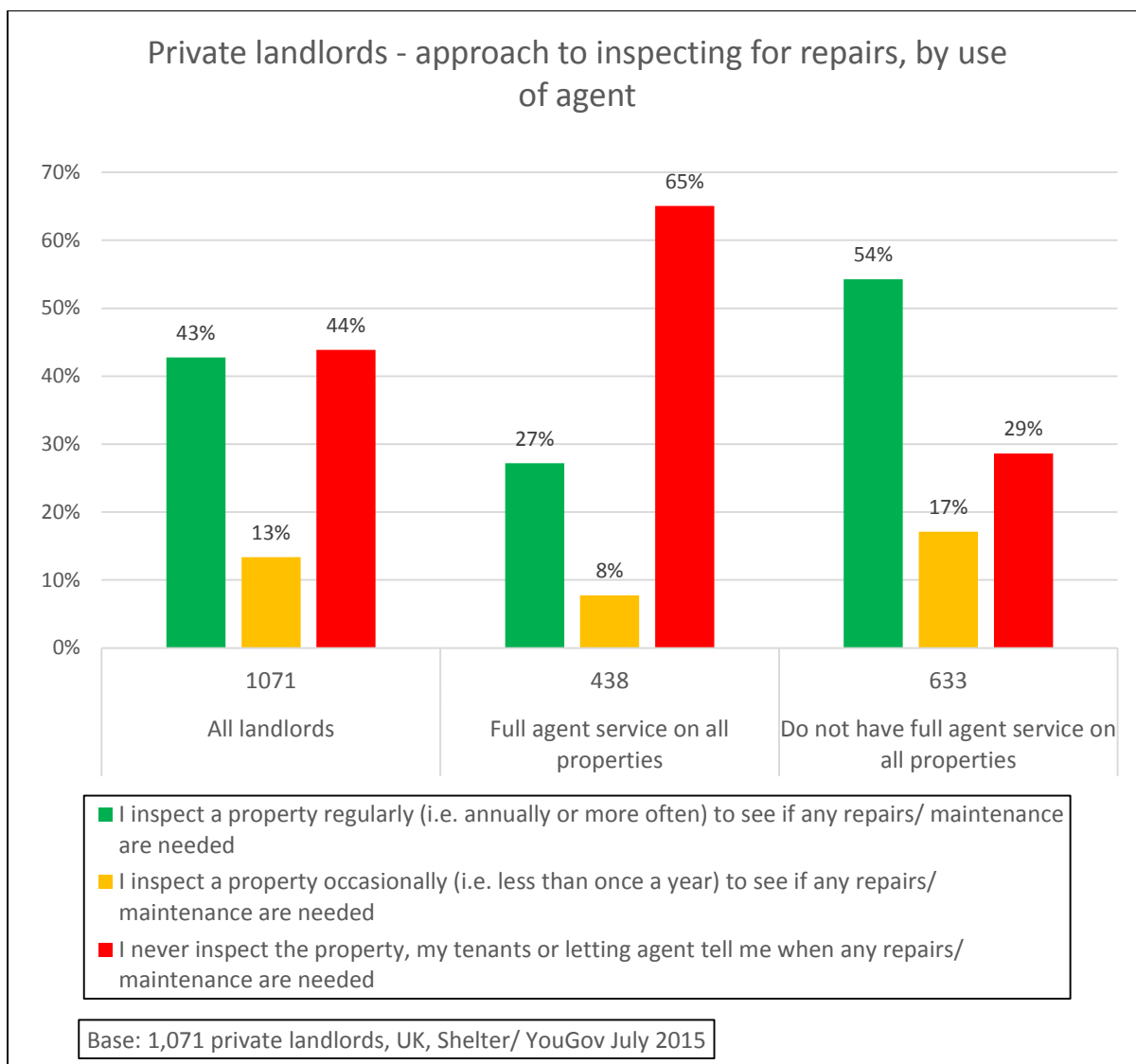
The majority of landlords seem quite well prepared to cover maintenance costs – 27% have insurance policies covering problems with heating, appliances or structural defects. Close to two thirds (63%) were either setting money aside regularly for repairs, or already had enough money saved up to cover a major repair. However, 17% did not have any finances in place to cover repairs. Of these, a third planned to, but two thirds did not.

Landlords were asked whether they had experienced a range of repair and maintenance issues, with the results shown in the chart below.



The chart above shows that landlords encountering problems with a home they let out, and carrying out maintenance or repairs, is very common, with just over half of landlords saying they had done this at least one this year, even if we exclude redecoration. Almost nine in ten had experienced this at least once in the last five years, meaning it is very unusual for a landlord not to encounter a maintenance or repair problem at all.

The chart below shows how landlords said they approached identifying repairs that needed carrying out. Responses were split – 43% inspected properties themselves at least annually, but a similar proportion (44%) said they never checked, and left it to tenants or letting agents to report any repair issues. The remaining 13% checked properties themselves, but less than annually.

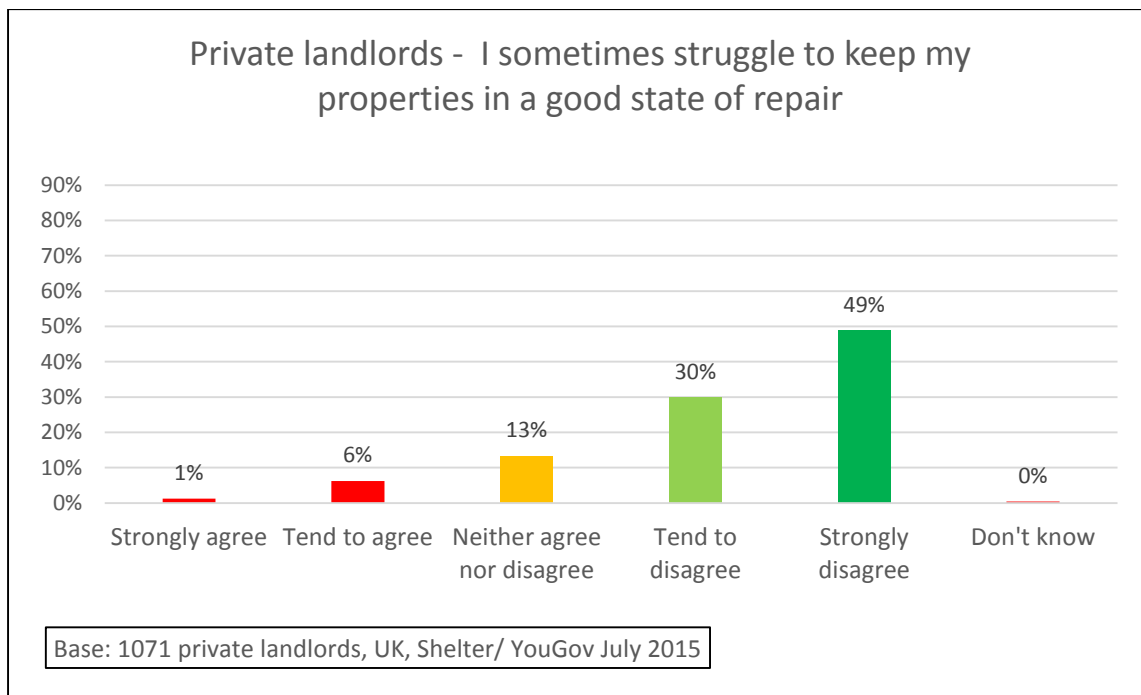


If a good letting agent is employed, it should not be problematic for a landlord to delegate responsibility for inspecting their homes to them, and the chart shows that two thirds of landlords (65%) who have a full service from agents do this. However, 29% of the landlords who do not use a full service from a letting agent on all the homes they let, effectively said they leave responsibility for noticing repair and maintenance issues entirely to their tenants.

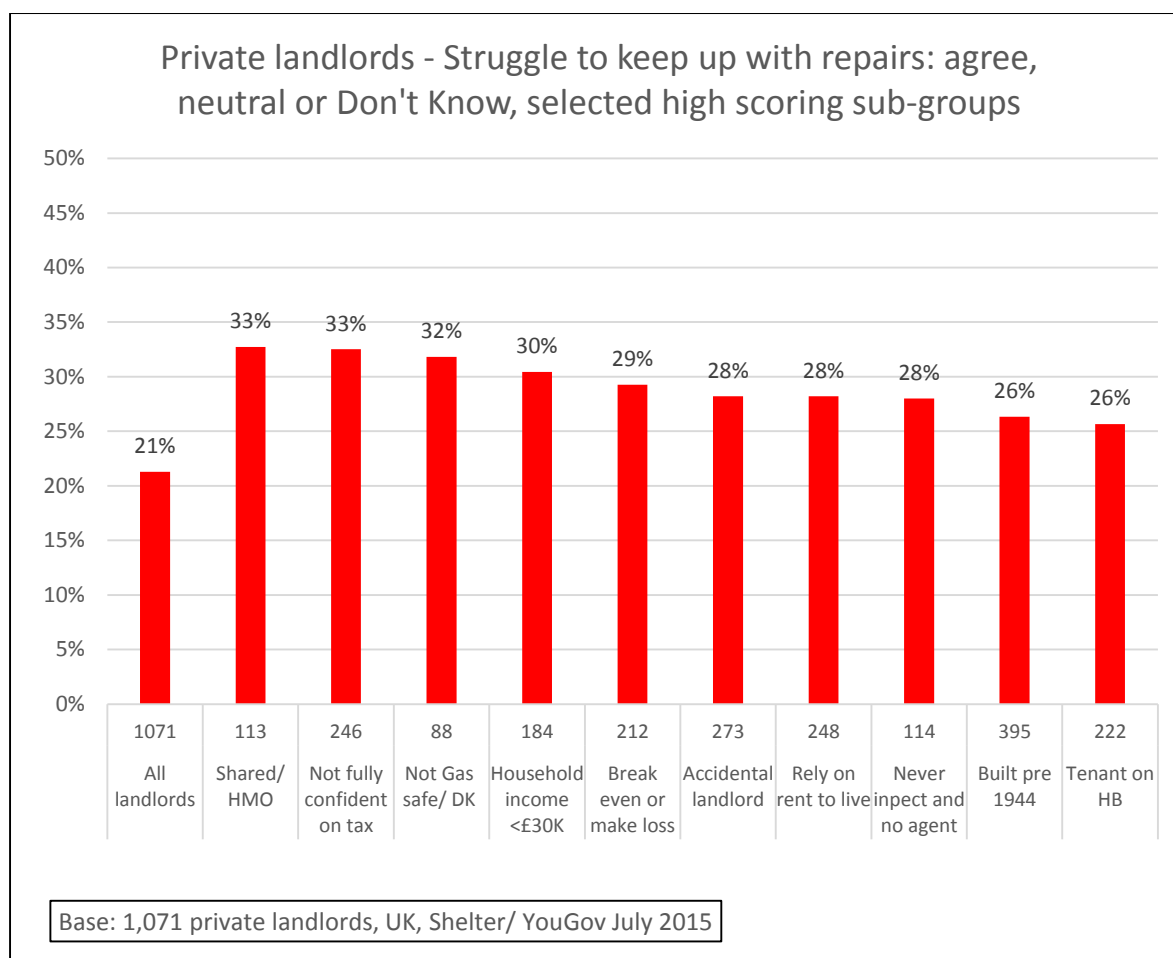
This means that 17% of all landlords surveyed did not inspect the homes they let out themselves and did not receive a full service from letting agents. Whilst tenants would be expected to report major and obvious repair issues, and indeed their tenancy agreement will often state this, they cannot be expected to do this thoroughly, and it is concerning that so many landlords (letting the equivalent of hundreds of thousands of homes) are delegating this responsibility.

Landlords were then asked whether or not they struggled to keep up with repairs. Although the survey was fully confidential, we would expect this to be an underestimation, as landlords are likely to understate this due to its sensitivity. Additionally, the very worst landlords are unlikely to be on the YouGov panel. The chart below

shows that just over a fifth (21%) agreed or were neutral on struggling to keep up with repairs.



The chart below shows some of the types of landlord that were most likely to agree be neutral, or say 'don't know' to the statement 'I sometimes struggle to keep my properties in a good state of repair'.



The chart above shows a complex picture of the possible underlying factors behind landlords struggling to keep up with repairs, and suggests a combination of factors drive this. There is an association between not keeping up with repairs and other indicators of being a ‘bad’ or even ‘rogue’ landlord – not having a gas safety certificate, not being certain you are paying the full amount of tax, leaving inspection solely down to tenants, and operating in the shared or HMO market. However, financial circumstances also appear to be a driver of falling behind on repairs – less profitable landlords, those with lower household incomes and those who relied on rental income to live all seem more likely to struggle to keep up with repairs. The age of the private rented stock is often cited as being the main factor in the higher rates of properties in poor conditions in the sector, but the results above suggest that this is only one part of the picture and many other factors are at play.

The chart below shows that the vast majority of landlords surveyed (81%) agree that there should be tougher punishments for the worst landlords. In a separate question, 93% of landlords surveyed agreed that ‘rogue landlords give good landlords a bad name’.

Access to a home

This section examines how landlords manage access to the homes they let. It looks at policies barring certain groups, what landlords ask for when setting up a tenancy, and examines the reasons why some landlords do not let to Housing Benefit claimants in detail. At the end of the section, awareness and likely responses to the new legislation on landlords carrying out 'Right to Rent' immigration checks on new tenants are tested.

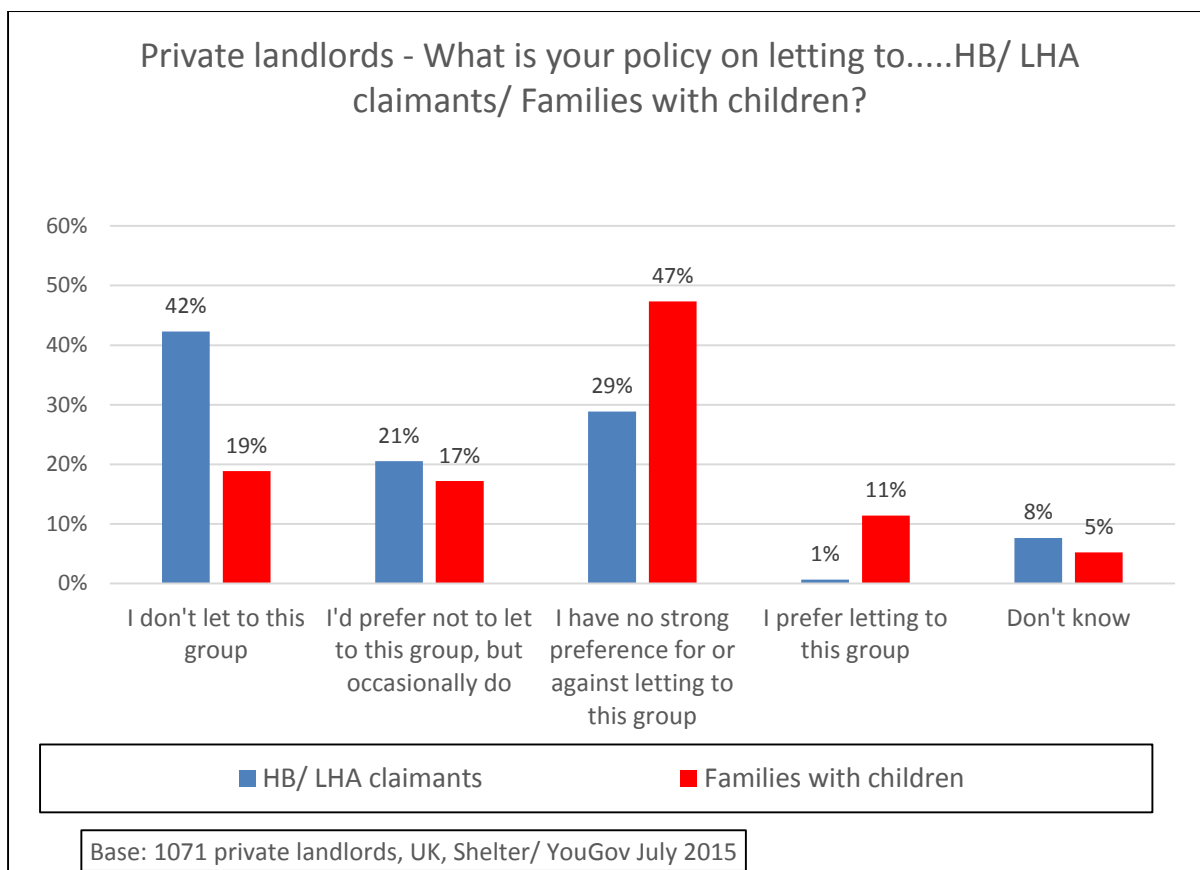
Key findings:

- 63% of landlords surveyed would prefer not to let to HB claimants, with 42% operating an outright bar.
- 36% preferred not to let to families with children, with 19% operating an outright bar.
- Landlords who have children at home themselves appear to be more accepting of families and HB claimants, suggesting personal circumstances may influence letting decisions
- The reasons for not letting to households claiming HB are a mix of actual bad experiences, anecdotes from the media and other landlords, and practical things like it being a condition of the mortgage not to let to this group.
- Schemes that mitigate the risk of non-payment of rent appear to be most likely to persuade landlord to let to households claiming HB
- A high proportion (40% of those making some letting decisions, 37% of all landlords) admit that it is natural for prejudices and stereotypes to come into letting decisions.
- 44% of landlords making letting decisions said that the new 'Right to Rent' law requiring immigration checks on all tenants would make them less likely to let to people 'who appear to be/ I perceive to be immigrants', with a similar proportion saying they will be less likely to let to people without British passports.

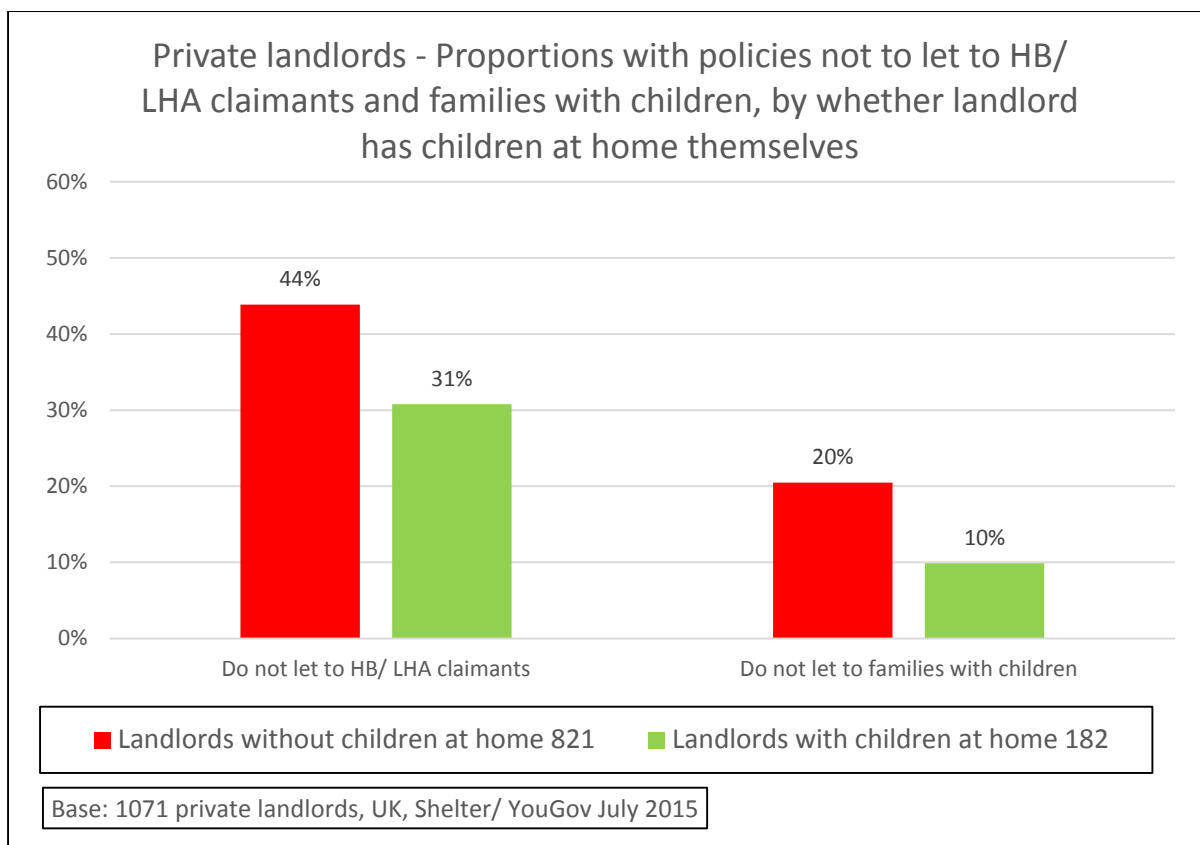
Detailed Findings:

The chart below combines the results of two questions on policies for letting to, firstly Housing Benefit claimants (blue bars), and secondly families with children (red bars). The chart shows that over four in ten (42%) have a policy of not letting to people on LHA/ HB and a further 21% say they prefer not to, but occasionally do, adding up to close to two-thirds (63%) of landlords surveyed either barring or preferring not to let to households receiving HB/ LHA. One in five (19%) of landlords surveyed had a policy of not letting to households with children, with a further 17% preferring not to.

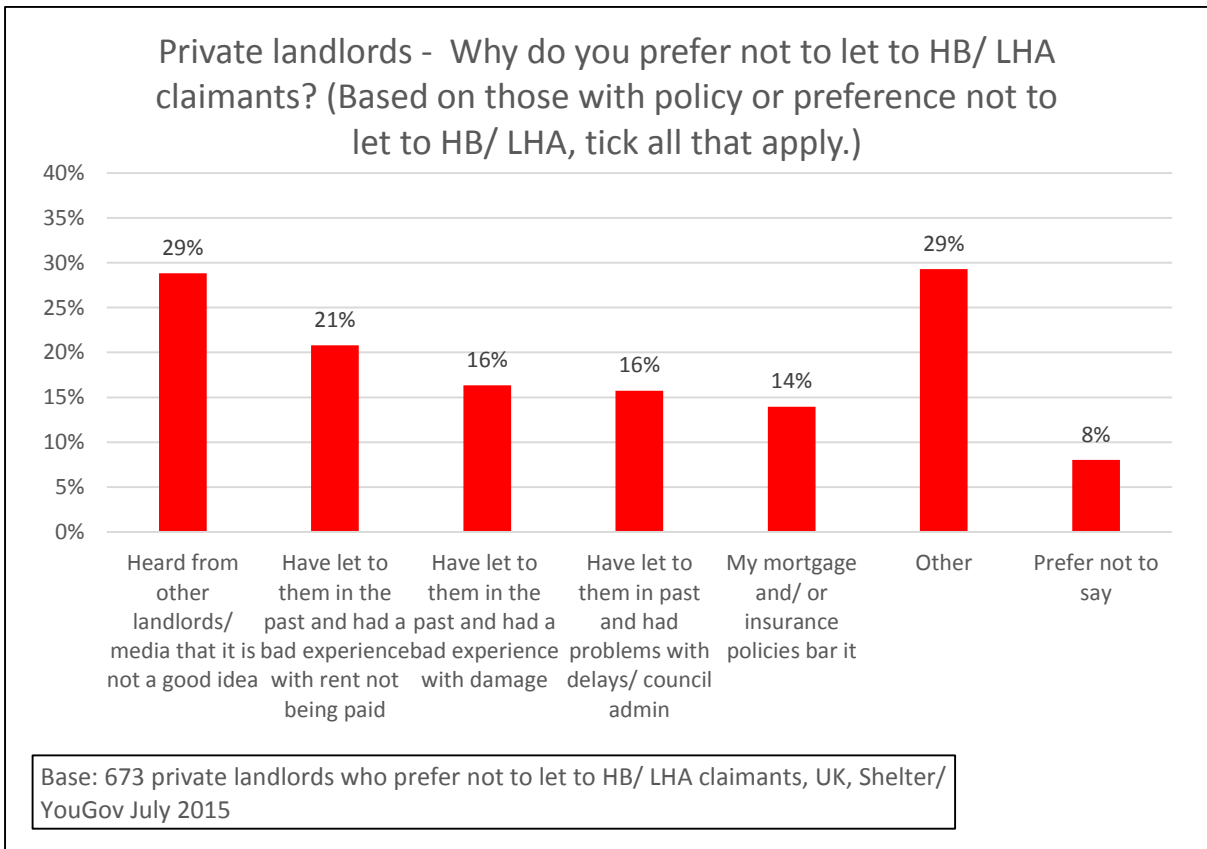
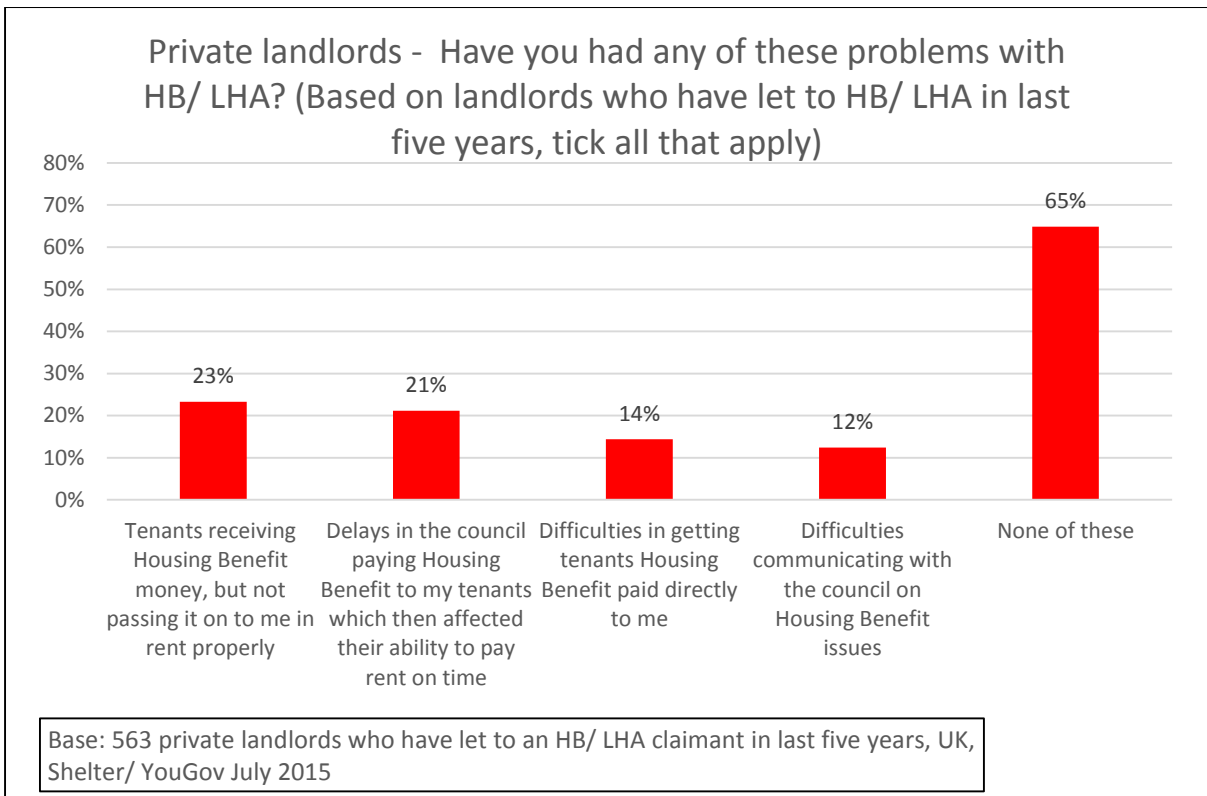
This demonstrates how families and particularly households claiming Housing Benefit have the pool of properties available to them significantly restricted, even before affordability is considered.



The chart below examines landlord policies on letting to families and HB claimants, by whether or not they have children in their own household. It appears that landlords with their own children at home are more open to letting to families, but also to households claiming HB.



The exclusion of households claiming Housing Benefit is a long-standing feature of the private rental market, typified by the phrase ‘No DSS’ appearing in advertisements. Landlords were asked a number of questions to better understand problems they have had, the reasons behind their preference to avoid letting to households claiming Housing Benefit, and what may incentivise them to do so in the future. The results of these are shown in the charts below.

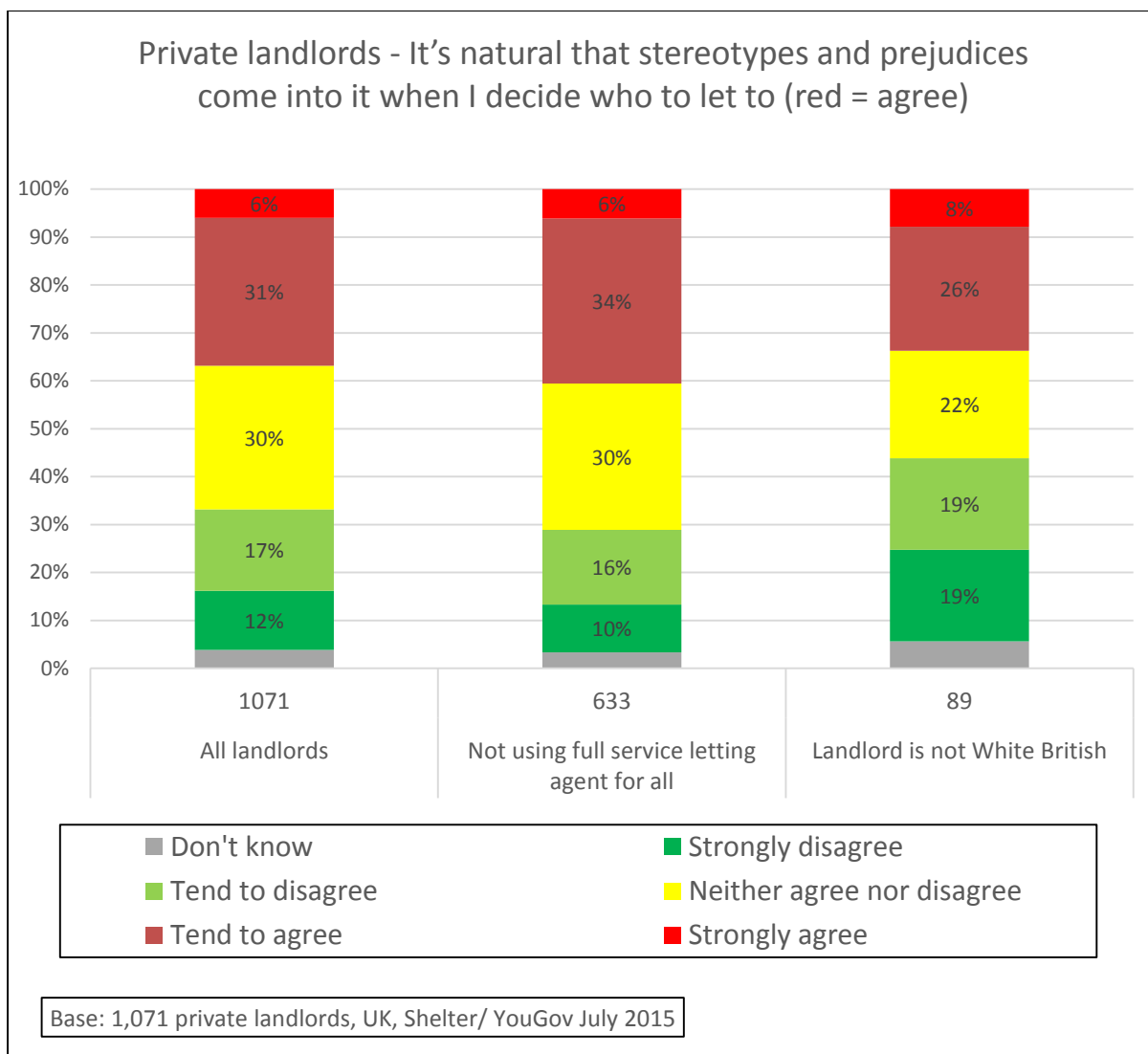


The two charts above show that three main factors seem to lie behind reticence to let to people claiming HB – actual bad experiences, anecdotes and media stories and practical issues like it being a condition of the mortgage not to let to this group. While this last reason is probably the smallest of the three, it should be much easier to tackle, and Shelter have successfully lobbied large financial services companies on [this](#).

A number of propositions that could make letting to HB claimants more appealing were put to landlords who had said previously that they preferred not to let to this group. Four in ten (40%) said that nothing would make them more likely to let to HB claimants, for the rest, the most persuasive factors were 'If the rent was paid in advance by the council' (43%) and 'If the council provided some kind of insurance against unpaid rent' (37%).

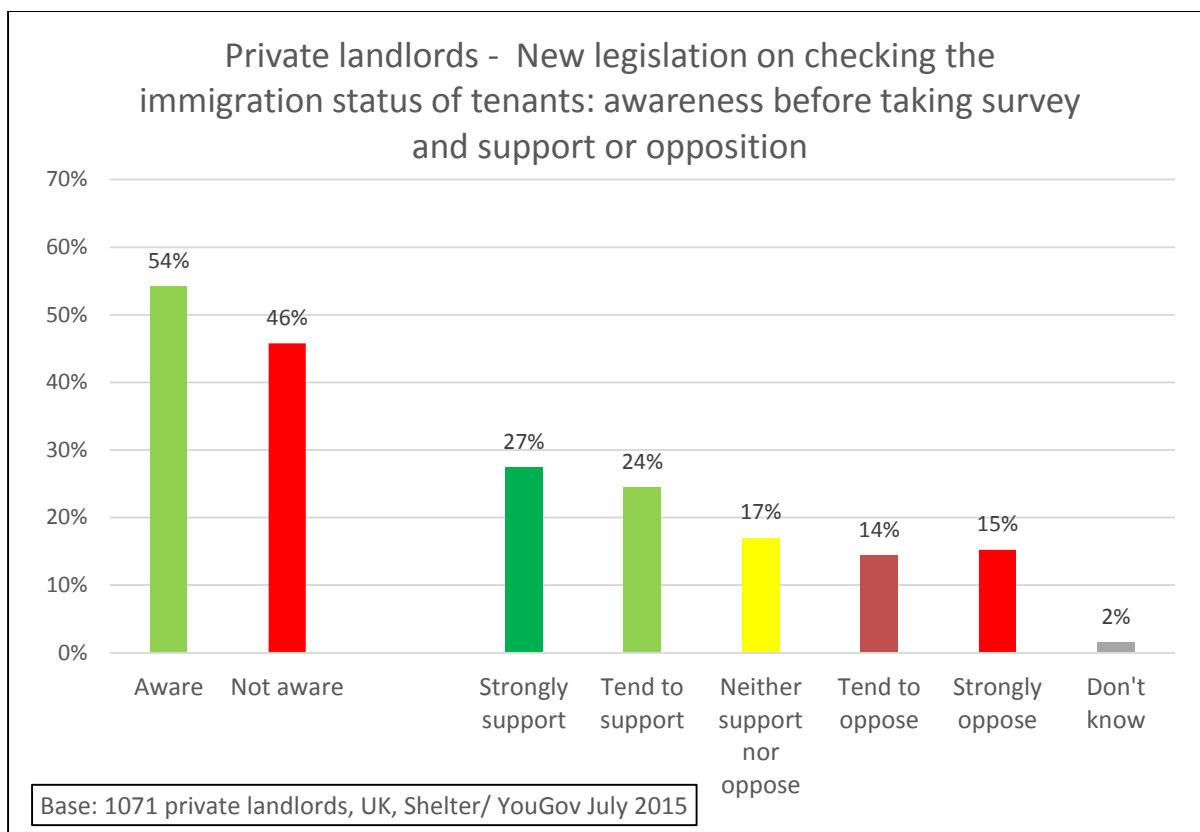
The survey then moved on to examine other forms of possible discrimination in the rental market. Landlords were asked to rate their agreement with 'It's natural that stereotypes and prejudices come into it when I decide who to let to'. Over a third (37%) agreed with this, (albeit only 6% agreed strongly) indicating that the appearance of a tenant may be a factor in many letting decisions. Similar numbers disagreed (29%) or were neutral (30%).

The chart below shows this, and also the results among all non-white landlords, where although seemingly slightly lower, agreement is still very common, suggesting that the prejudices are likely be varied. The chart also shows results among landlords not delegating everything to a letting agent, to show that these attitudes are just as prevalent among landlords making letting decisions themselves.

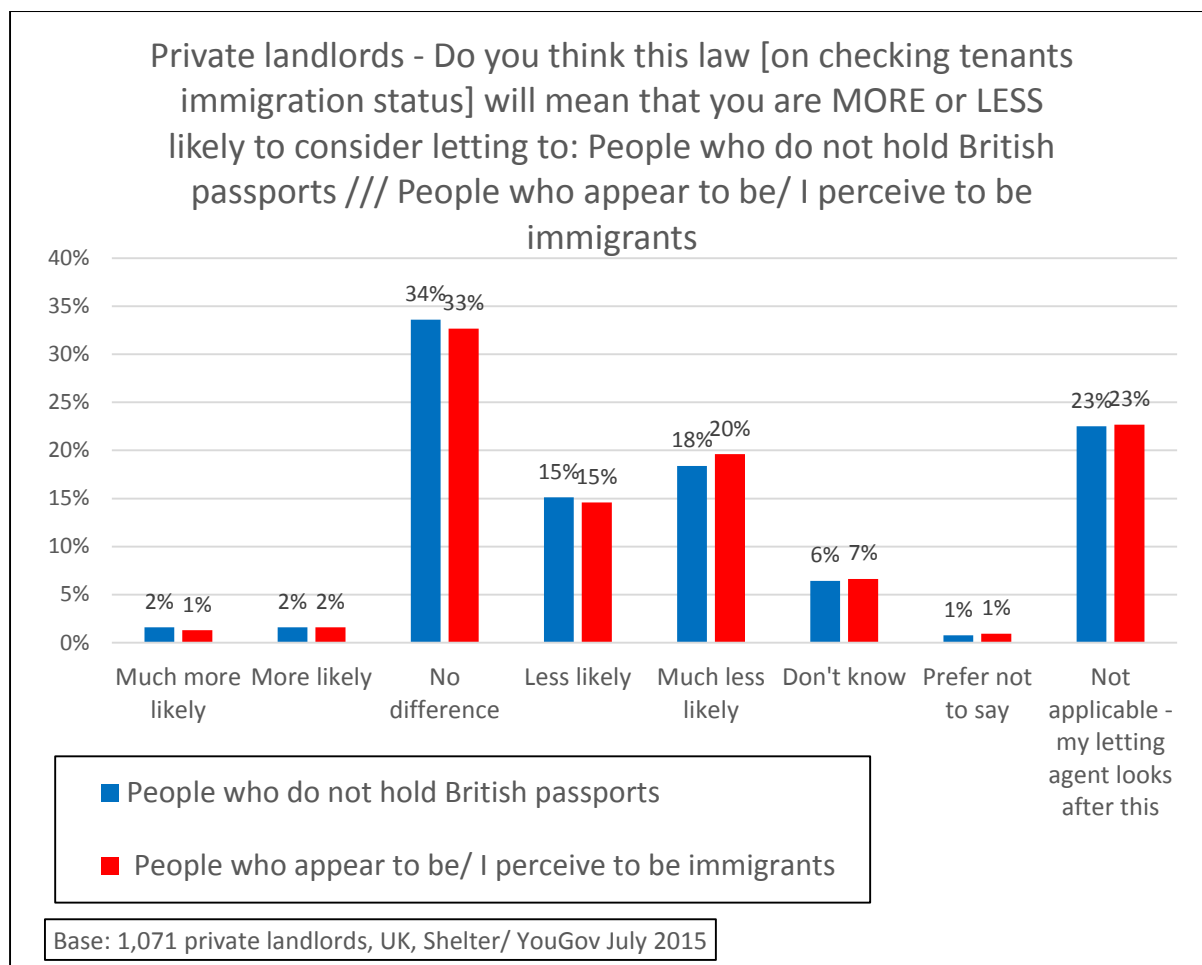


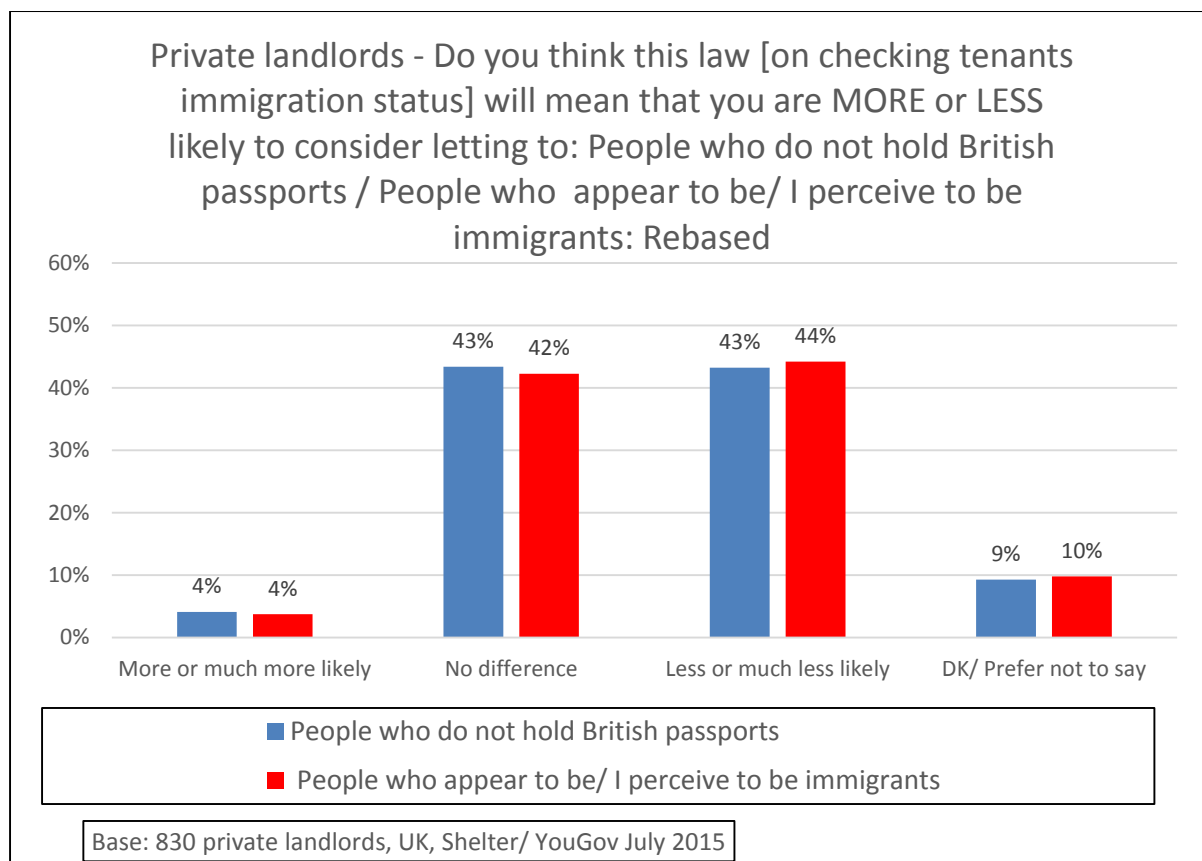
New legislation has been enacted requiring landlords to check the immigration status of all new tenants they let to, with a small number of exceptions. This is known as the 'Right to Rent'. At the time of the survey, the law was only in force in certain parts of the West Midlands, but is being rolled out across the UK in 2016. Landlords were told about the new law, and asked a number of questions on it.

The chart below shows that just over half of landlords surveyed (54%) were aware of this law before the survey, 46% were not, despite wide reporting of it in the media. Landlords are on the whole supportive of the law – 52% support against 30% oppose.



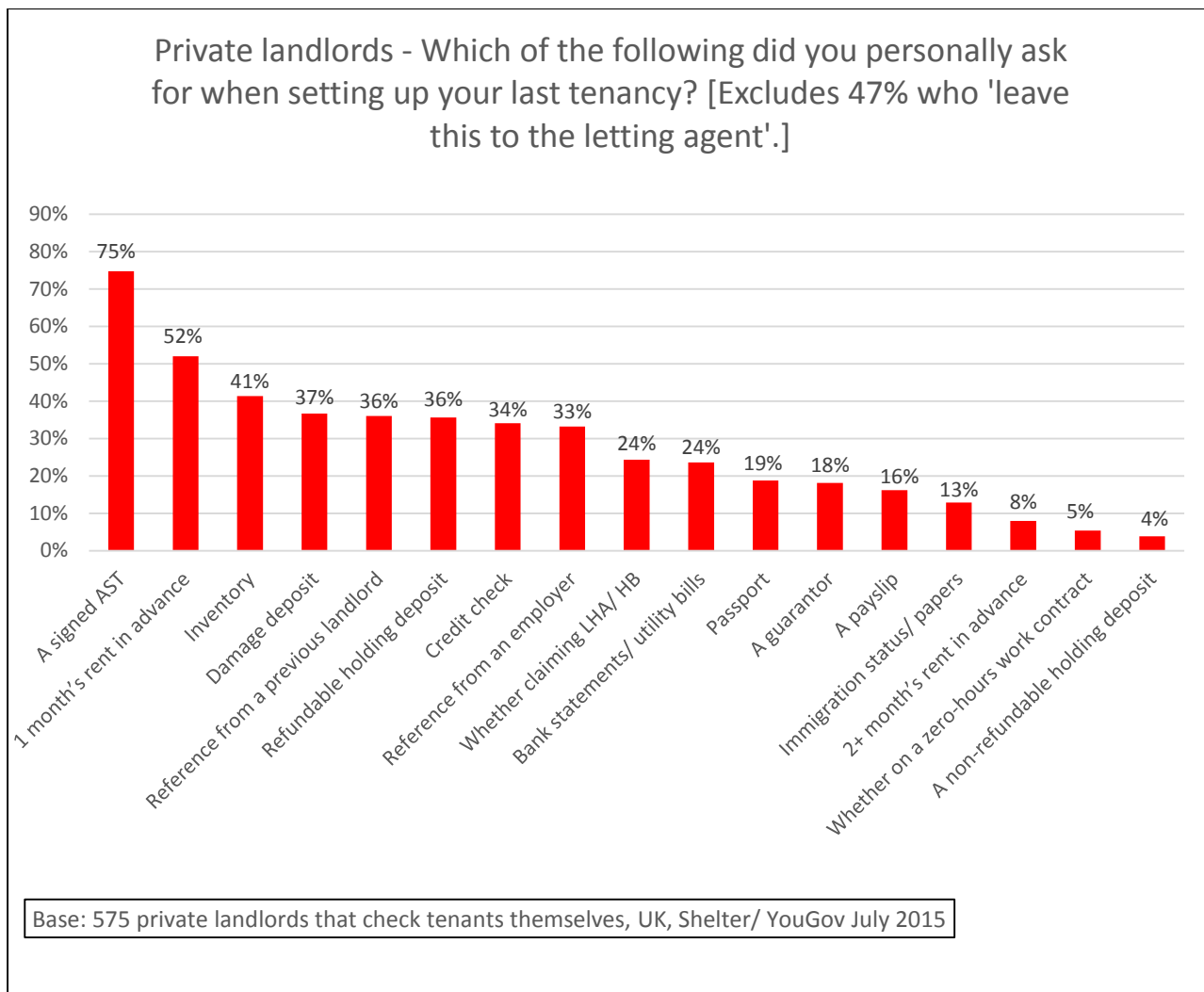
Awareness is higher among landlords with more properties, but, surprisingly, appears lower in the West Midlands, the only area at the time of the survey where the new law had been rolled-out, than in most other regions, although the sample size means this is inconclusive. Landlords were then asked how this new law was likely to affect the way they make their letting decisions. Two statements were tested with landlords. Firstly the impact on letting to people without British passports, which in itself should not exclude a tenant, so long as they are able to provide other documents showing they have a legal right to reside in the UK. Secondly we asked about ‘People who appear to be/ I perceive to be immigrants’, which should never be a reason to exclude a tenant, and would run against the stated intention of the law. The results are shown in the two charts below, with the second chart being based just on those that said they input to letting decisions themselves and did not leave it to their agent.





In the [impact assessment](#) for this new law, the Government identify the risk of discrimination against people not appearing British, and give the mitigation as being online and telephone advice for legal migrants and landlords. It is important to note that law itself does not discriminate - all new tenants are treated equally and are subject to 'Right to Rent' checks before a tenancy is signed. However, these survey results provide strong evidence of severe unintended consequences – large numbers of landlords who do not consider letting to people who do not 'appear British', to be 'on the safe side'. Investigative research such as that featured on the [Dispatches programme](#) in 2013 has shown that discrimination in the rental market often takes subtle rather than overt forms, such as tenants being told a property is no longer available, when in fact it is, and the evidence here suggests that this new law will exacerbate this.

At present, though, only one in five landlords (19%) surveyed who carry out their own checks on tenants were asking to see passports and only 13% said that they asked for immigration documents. This appears higher in the West Midlands, where 'right to rent' is being trialled, but is still well below half of landlords who do tenant checking. The chart below shows what landlords said they had asked for, the last time they set up a new tenancy.



The results above should be viewed with some caution – the tenancy they are referring to may have been set up some time ago, and we are relying on the recall of landlords. It is likely that many of the landlords saying they ask for a refundable holding deposit actually mean the damage deposit, as the terminology is similar and other evidence suggests that landlords acting without an agent are far more likely to get damage deposits than holding deposits from tenants. Notwithstanding the caveat on landlord recall, it is surprising how low the level of checks on tenants seems to be, and suggests that moving to a regime where all tenants must be checked will be hard for some landlords.

Relationship with tenants

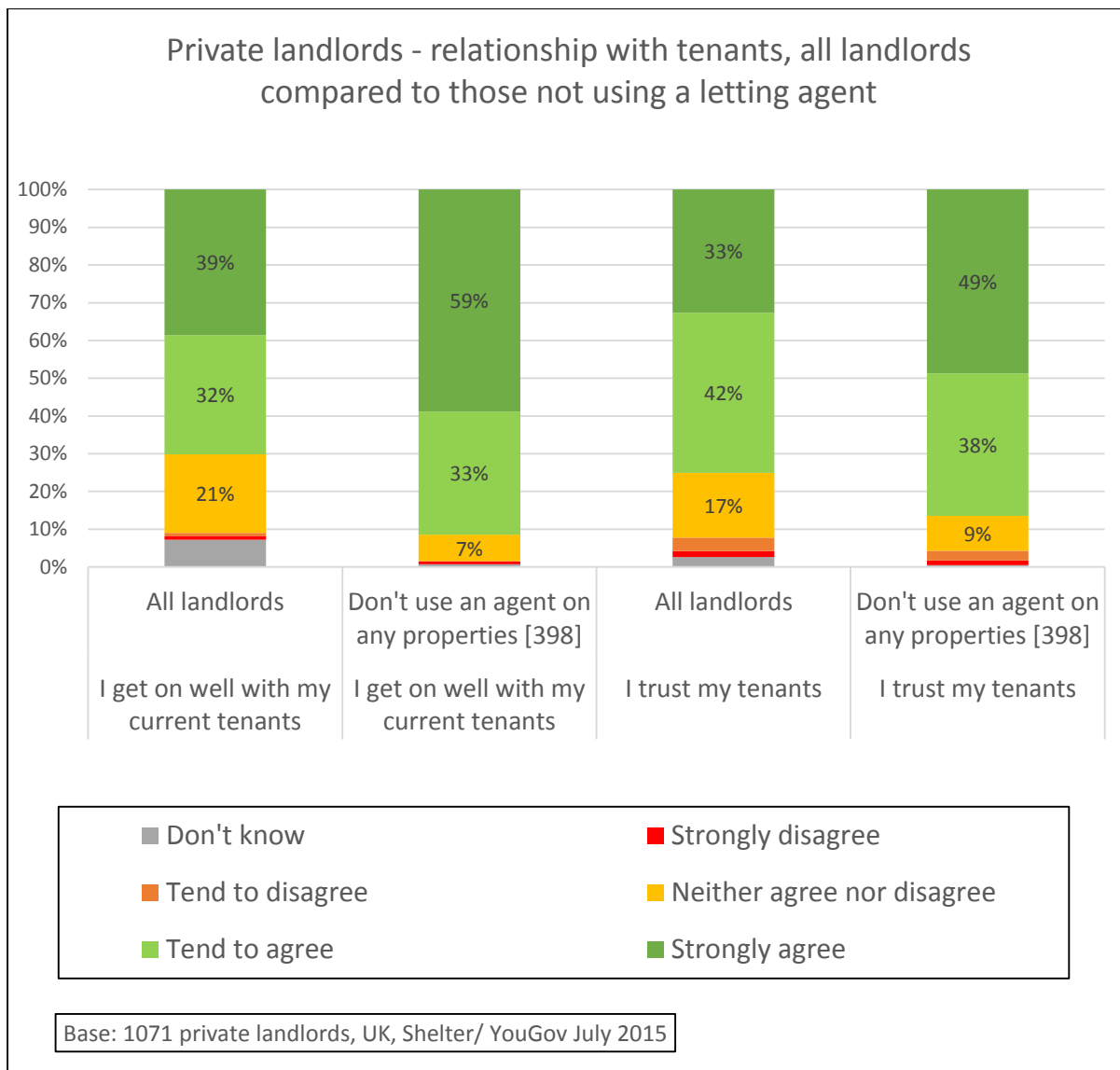
Trust and a good relationship between tenant and landlord are a vital component of a successful tenancy for both. This section explores problems landlords have had with tenants, how they go about removing tenants, and how good their relationships with them are.

Key findings:

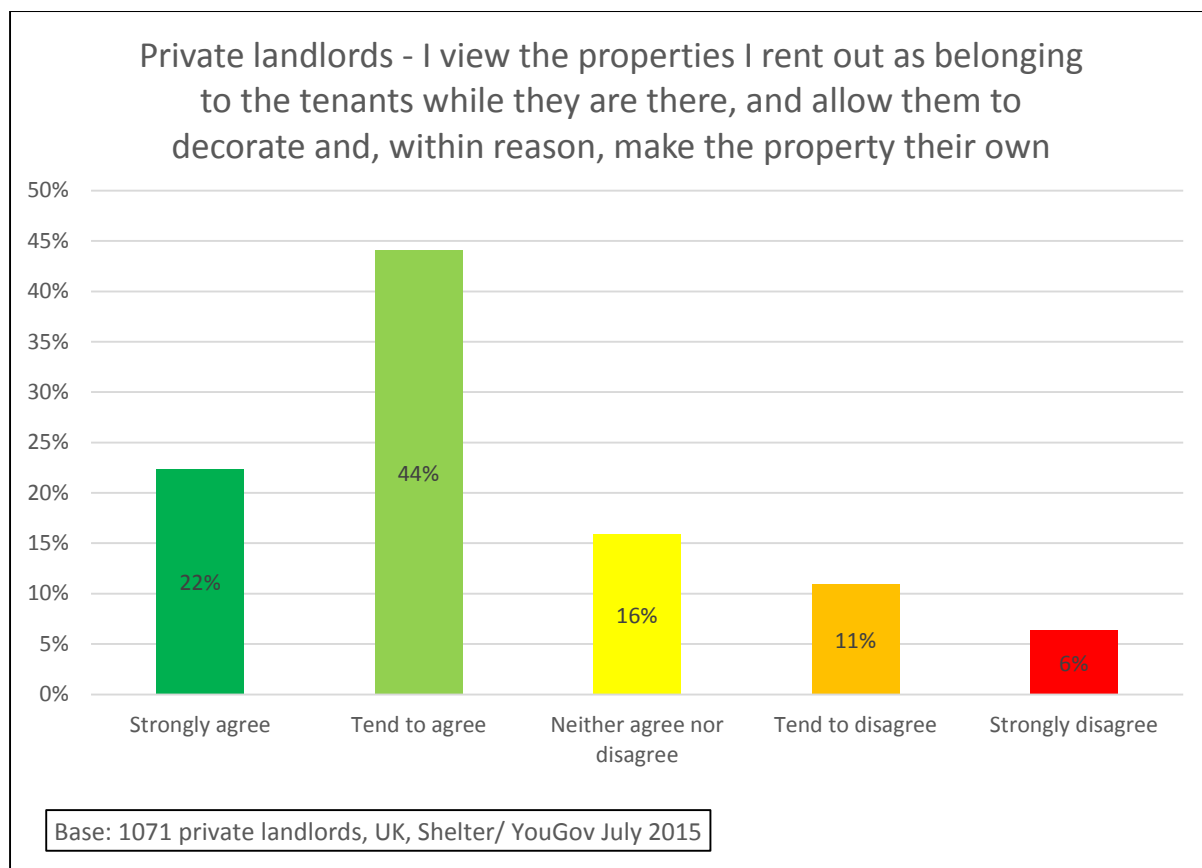
- A big majority of landlords say they trust (75% agree) and get on with (70% agree) their current tenants. As would be expected, relationships seem closer when landlords are not employing letting agents and dealing more directly with tenants themselves.
- Most landlords view the properties they let as belonging to the tenant, while they are living there, and allow them to ‘make it their own’ but a third did not agree with this.
- One in ten landlords surveyed had experienced a tenant being in arrears of two or more months, in the last 12 months, and giving leeway on rent was fairly common too – 11% had done it in the last 12 months, 21% in the last five years.
- One in six (16%) of landlords said they had taken steps to remove a tenant in the last three years, with only a minority (22%) of those ending up in court.

Detailed findings:

The chart below shows that the majority of landlords surveyed agree that they trust (75%) and get on with (70%) their tenants, with small proportions disagreeing (2% - 5%). Results are significantly higher among landlords dealing directly with their tenants, than those employing an agent, which is likely to be due to familiarity with the tenants, when dealing with them directly.

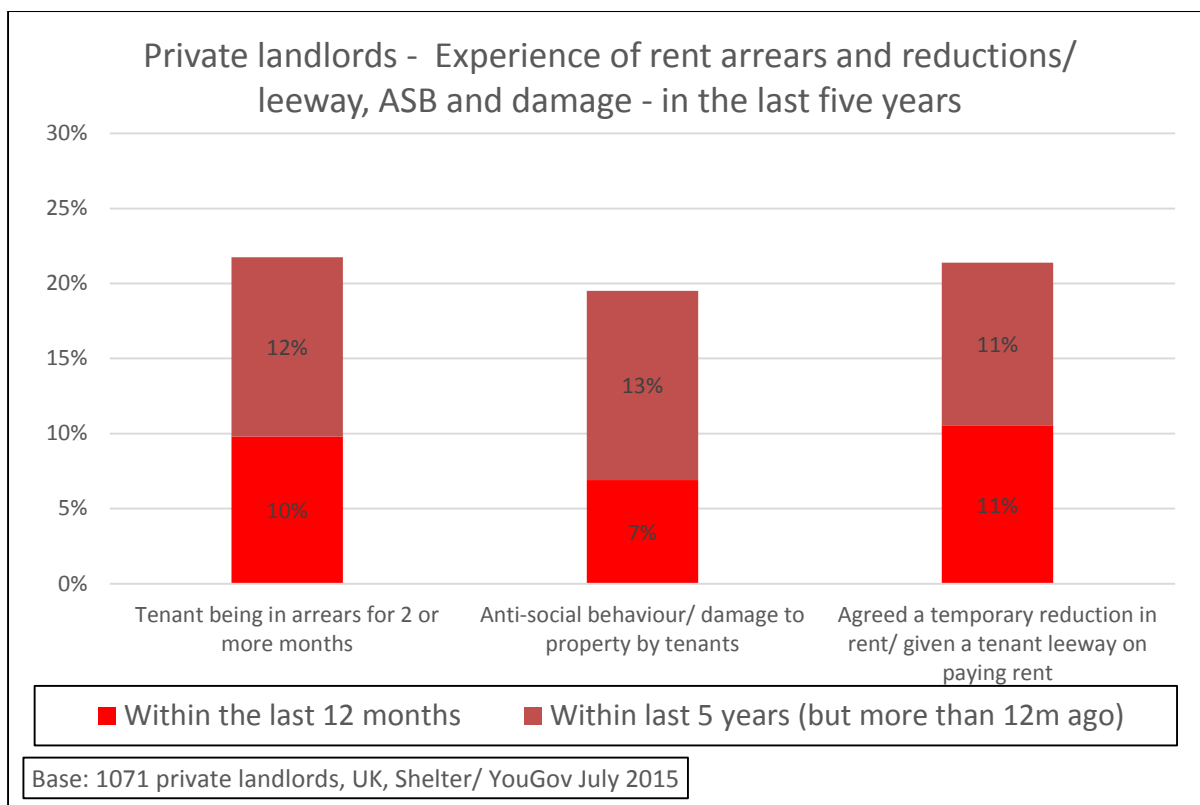


Most landlords (66%) agree that the properties they rent out belong to the tenants while they are there, and allow them to decorate and, within reason, make the property their own, but a significant minority – 17% disagreed with this, and strong agreement only stood at 22%, see chart below.



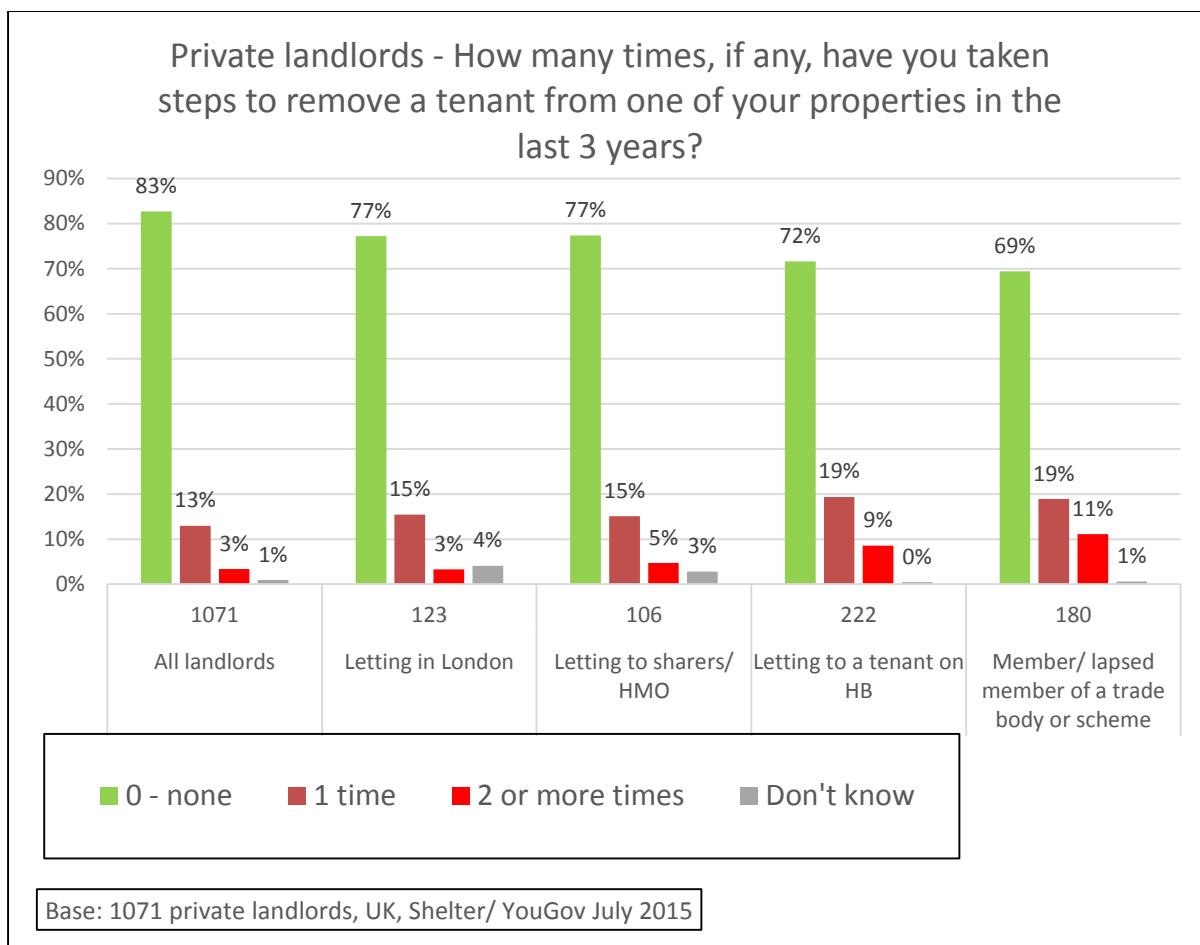
Most also agree that they have a ‘business with customers, not just an investment’ – 59%, with 14% disagreeing and a quarter neutral.

The chart below shows that a tenth of landlords surveyed had a tenant in arrears of two or more months in the last 12 months and 7% had experienced anti-social behaviour or damage to their property.



The chart above also shows that one in ten (11%) landlords surveyed said they had given a tenant a temporary reduction in rent or leeway on the payment date in the last 12 months, and one in five (21%) had done this at least once in the last five years. In a separate question, 28% said they had given more than one month’s leeway on rent at least once since they began letting.

Landlords were asked whether they had taken steps to remove a tenant, in the last three years. The chart below show the results for a number of types of landlord:



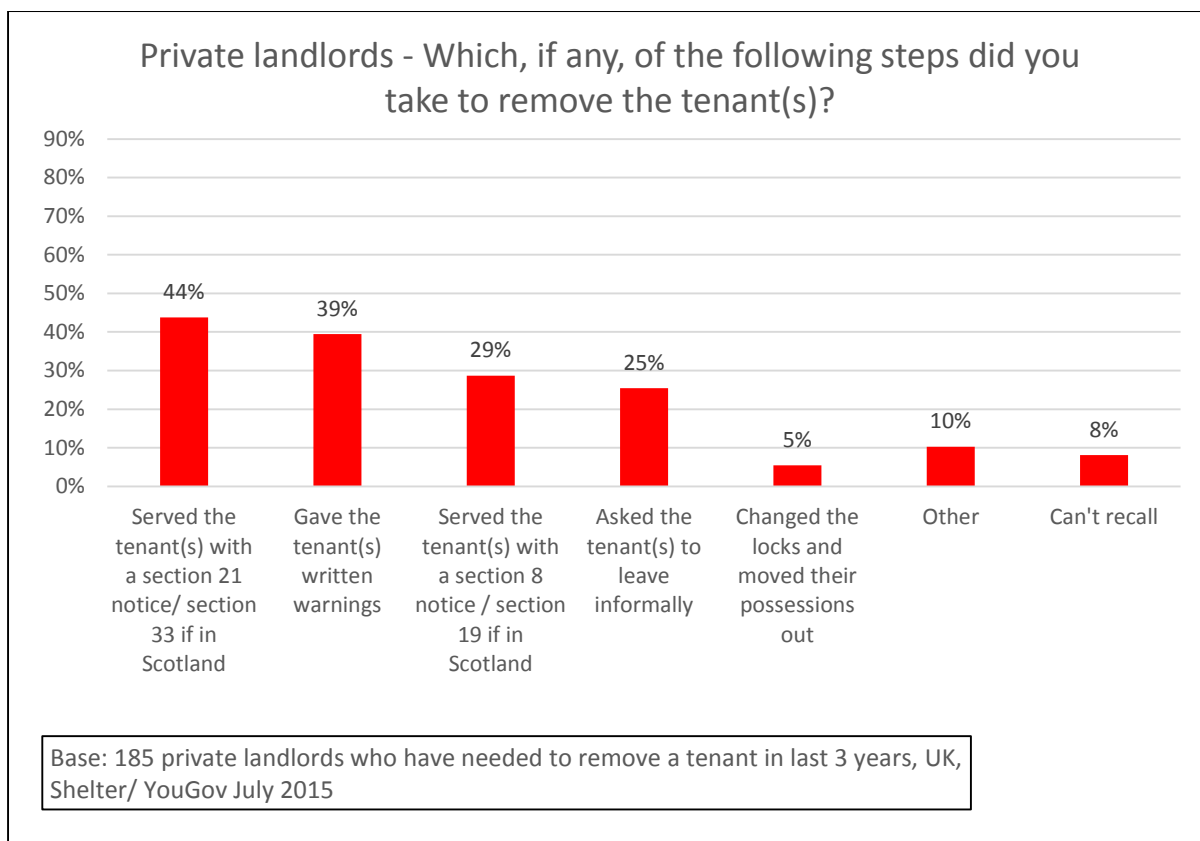
The chart above shows that one in six landlords (16%) said they had had to take steps to remove a tenant once or more in the last three years. There is an indication that landlords surveyed who were in London, or in the sharers market were more likely to remove tenants, but the only statistically significant differences are in the HB and trade body/ scheme member groups. Some of the likely reasons for the higher rate among landlords letting to people and families receiving HB/ LHA are shown in the Access to a home section. The reasons for the higher rate among trade body/ scheme members is harder to explain, but it could be that when an issue like this comes up for a landlord, it acts as a trigger to them joining a trade body.

The chart below shows the reasons landlords gave for removing tenants. Rent arrears of over two months (46%) or anti-social behaviour/ damage to the property (26%) were by far the most common reasons given, but in 9% of cases, the main reason was to do with either the landlord needing to sell, move in or get a higher rent, which the existing tenant wouldn't pay:



The results given by landlords above are markedly different to those given by tenants who left a home at the behest of their landlord or agent, where most said it was because the landlord was selling up (the report of our tenants survey will be published in spring 2016). It could be that the types of tenant leaving because of lengthy arrears or anti-social behaviour are under-represented in the tenant survey, but the difference is so large that this seems an area where perceptions are very different among tenants and landlords.

The chart below shows the steps landlords surveyed said they took to remove a tenant:

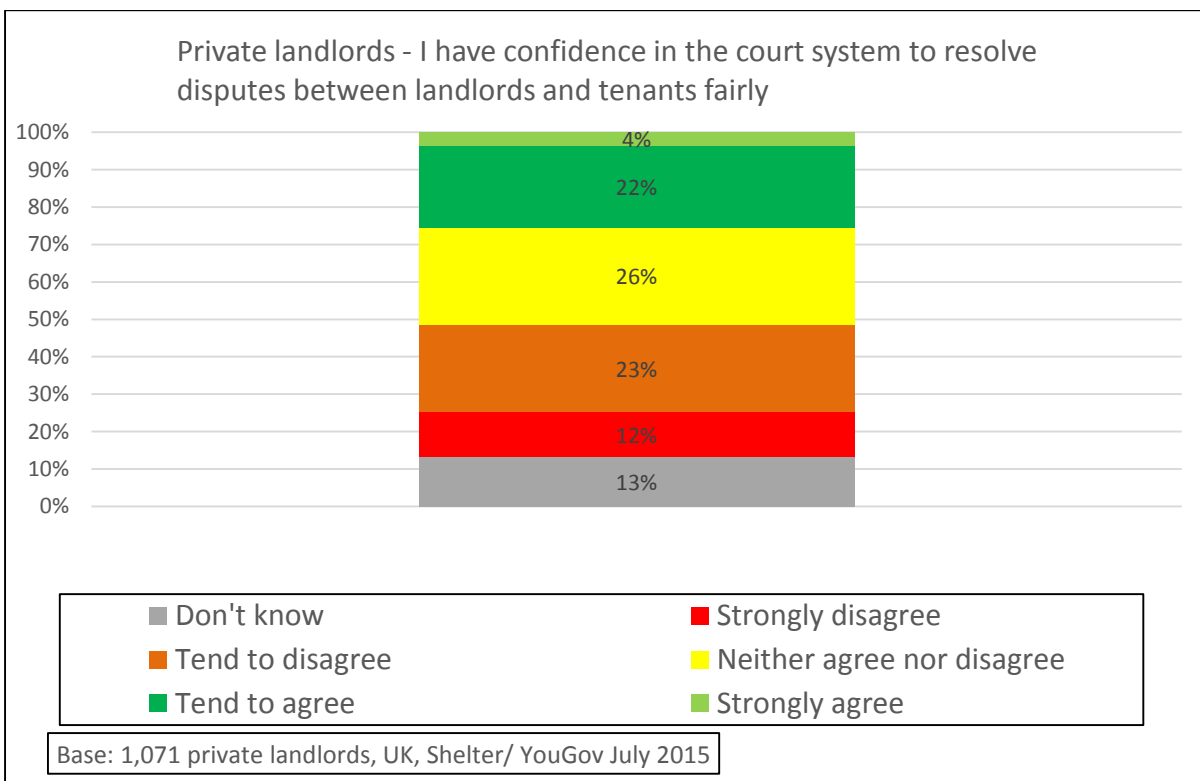


The chart above shows that landlords used a mix of formal and informal steps to remove tenants. One in twenty (5%) of the landlords who had removed a tenant in the last three years admitted they had ‘Changed the locks and moved their possessions out’, which would be illegal in most circumstances.

The chart below shows what landlords said happened next. In the majority of cases tenants left before the case came to court:

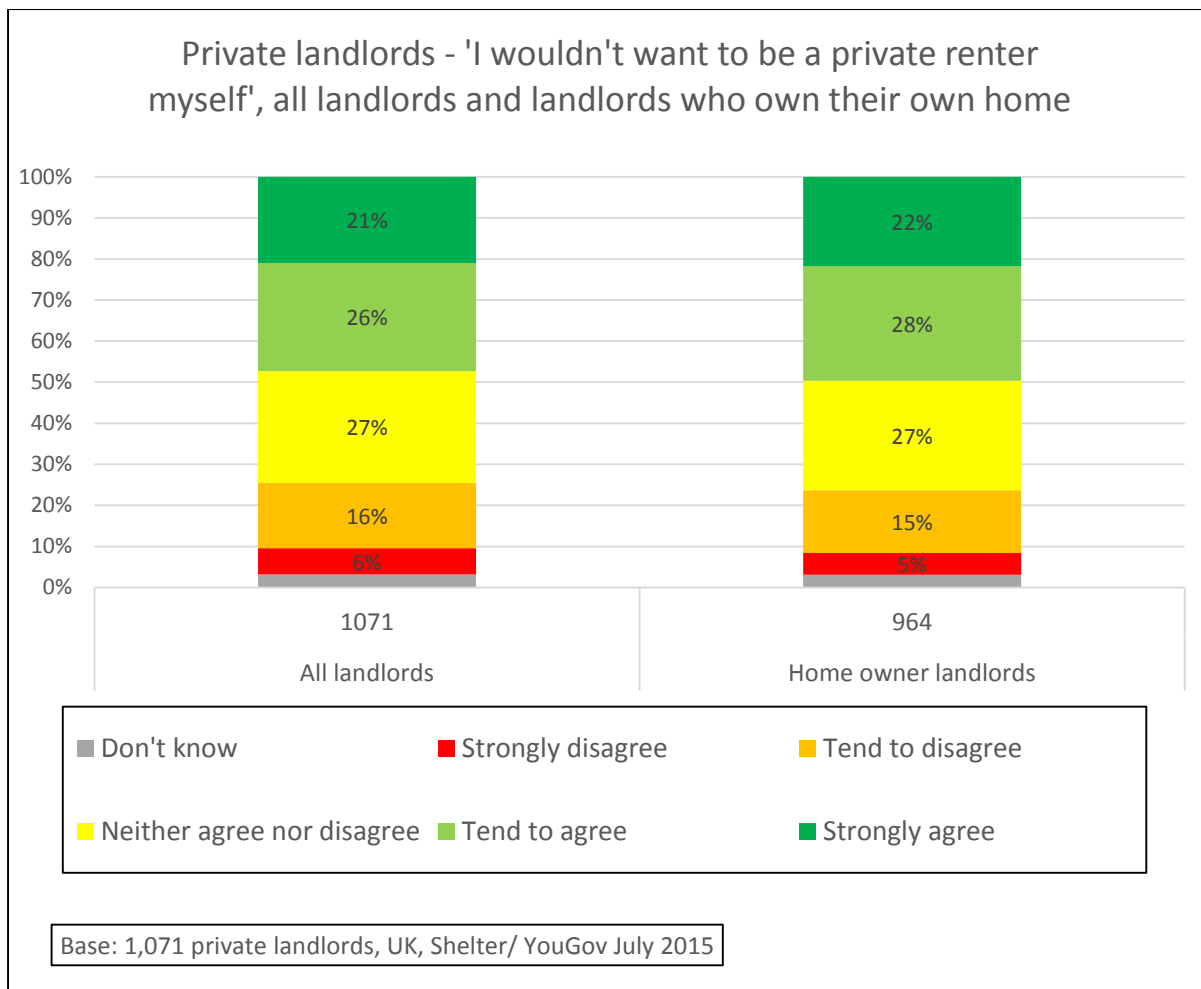


All landlords in the survey were then asked for their opinion on the court system, and this is shown below:



The chart above shows that, on the whole, landlords do not have a great deal of confidence in the court system – 35% disagreed that they had confidence in it, compared to a quarter agreeing (but only 4% strongly), and a quarter were neutral. It should be noted this will be based on perception rather than experience for most landlords.

Finally, in this section, landlords were asked to what extent they agreed with the statement ‘I wouldn’t want to be a private renter myself’. The chart below shows that around half (47%, 50% among those that own their own home) agree, and only one in five disagree, suggesting that many landlords have sympathy towards their tenants and an appreciation of their situation.



Longer tenancies

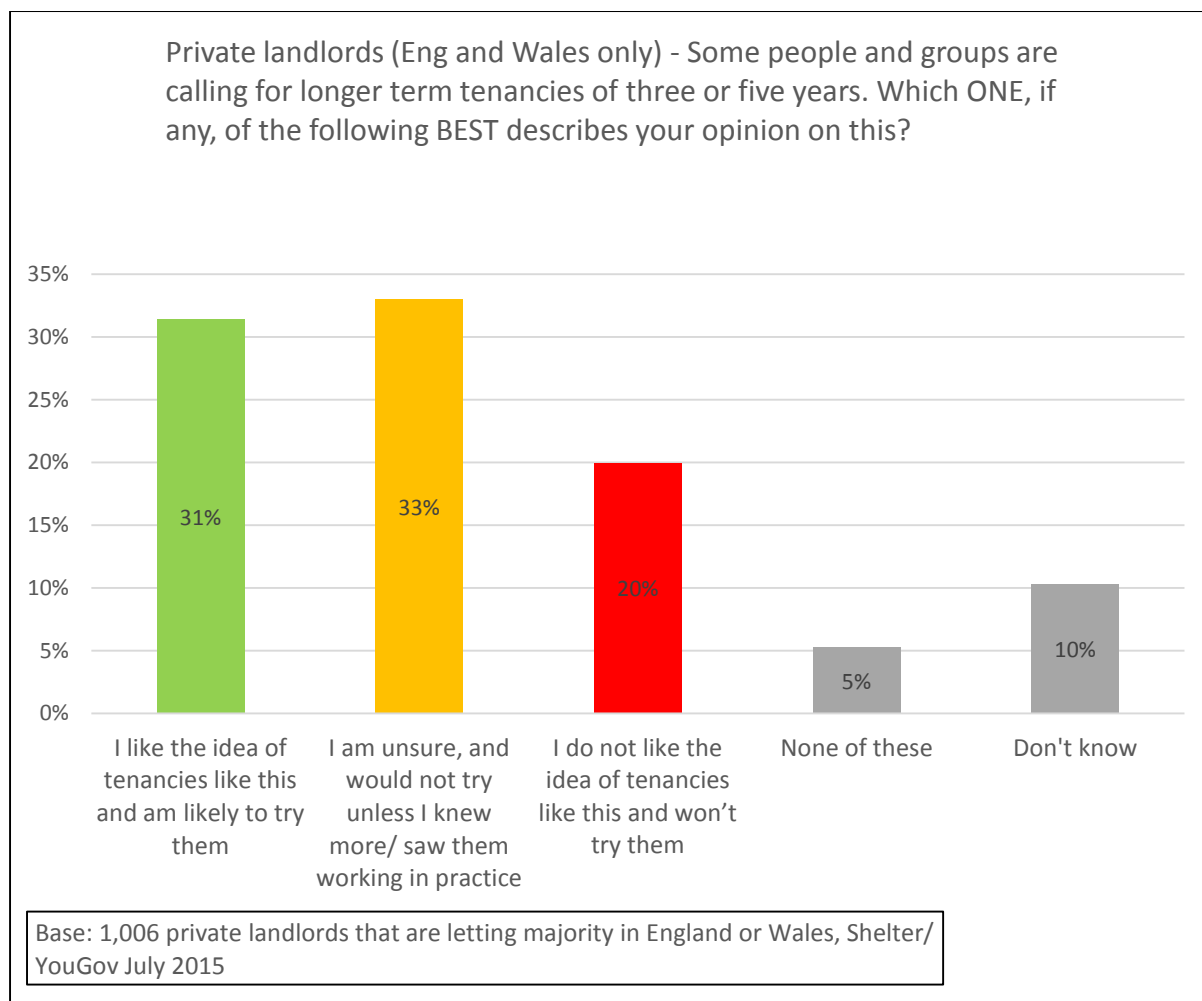
This section examines the views of landlords on longer term tenancies. There are currently well progressed proposals to establish longer tenancies as the default in Wales and Scotland (in Scotland indefinite private tenancy terms are proposed). England is in a different position – while a number of political parties included plans for longer tenancies in their general election campaigns, the current administration has no plans to introduce them.

Key findings:

- Views on longer tenancy terms were finely balanced, but perhaps surprisingly positive – about a third say they like the idea and would try them, a similar proportion are unsure and would like to see them work in practice first, and the final third either reject them or don't know where they stand. In total, only a quarter of landlords with an opinion rejected the idea outright.
- Only a small proportion (12%) of landlords surveyed in Scotland and Wales said that they would reduce or move their landlord business if longer or indefinite tenancies are brought in there, as is proposed, suggesting that changes to tenancies there will only cause minimal disruption to the market.

Detailed findings:

Landlords in England and Wales were asked their opinion on longer tenancies of three or five years (landlords in Scotland were excluded from this, as indefinite tenancies are being proposed there). Nearly a third of landlords surveyed (31%) said these tenancies appealed to them and they would like to try them out. Only one in five landlords (20%) rejected this type of tenancy outright, with another third (33%) saying they were unsure and would not try until they had been seen in practice, see chart below.



The results in the chart above suggest that around two-thirds of landlords could be open to the concept of offering longer term tenancies (if we assume some of those saying don't know, will be open to considering them) – of which, roughly half might adopt, half may follow. Landlords in Scotland were asked about indefinite tenancies, which are proposed there. Just over a fifth said they would use them (22%), 29% were unsure and 34% rejected them. It is likely that the fact that indefinite tenancies are almost certainly being introduced in Scotland, lies behind the less positive result here, although the sample size is also small (65 letting majority of homes in Scotland).

The chart below shows that if the results for all parts of the UK are combined, and don't knows and 'other' are excluded, 37% were positive towards more secure tenancies, 39% were unsure and would only try if they were seen to work in practice and a quarter rejected the idea completely.

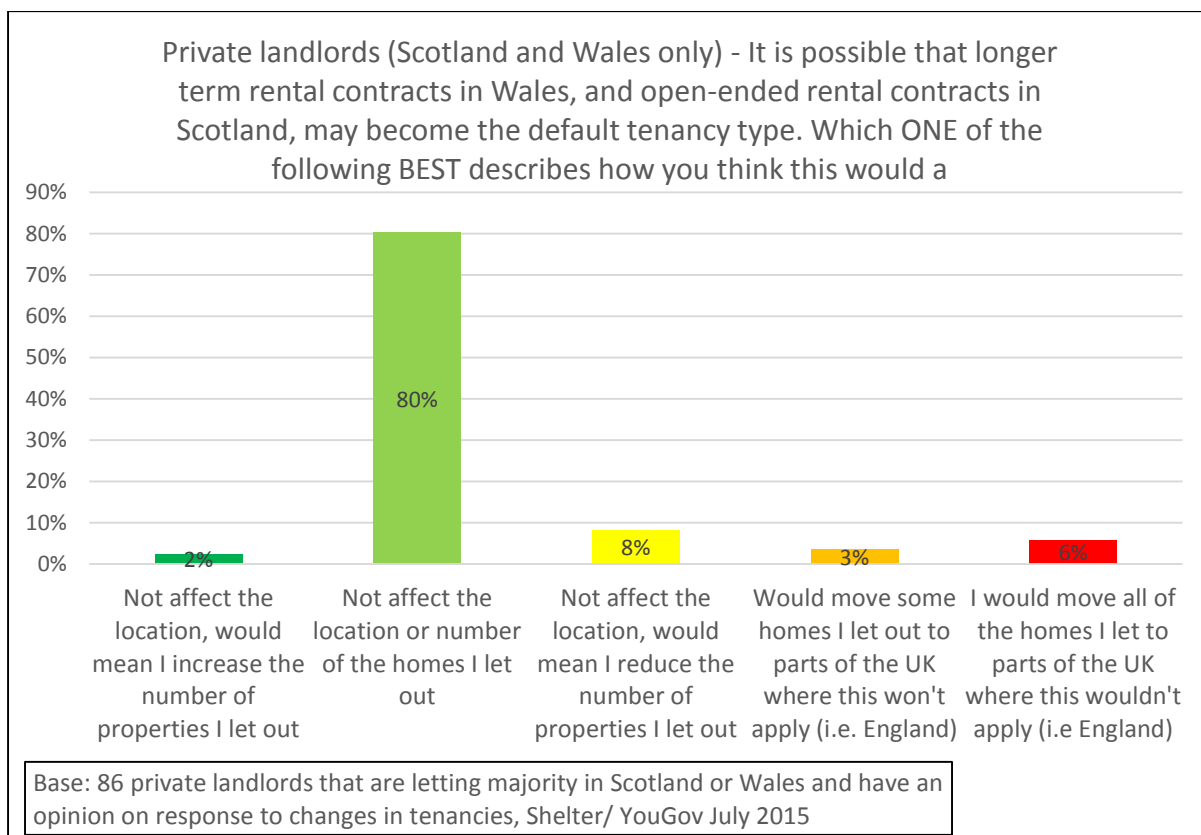
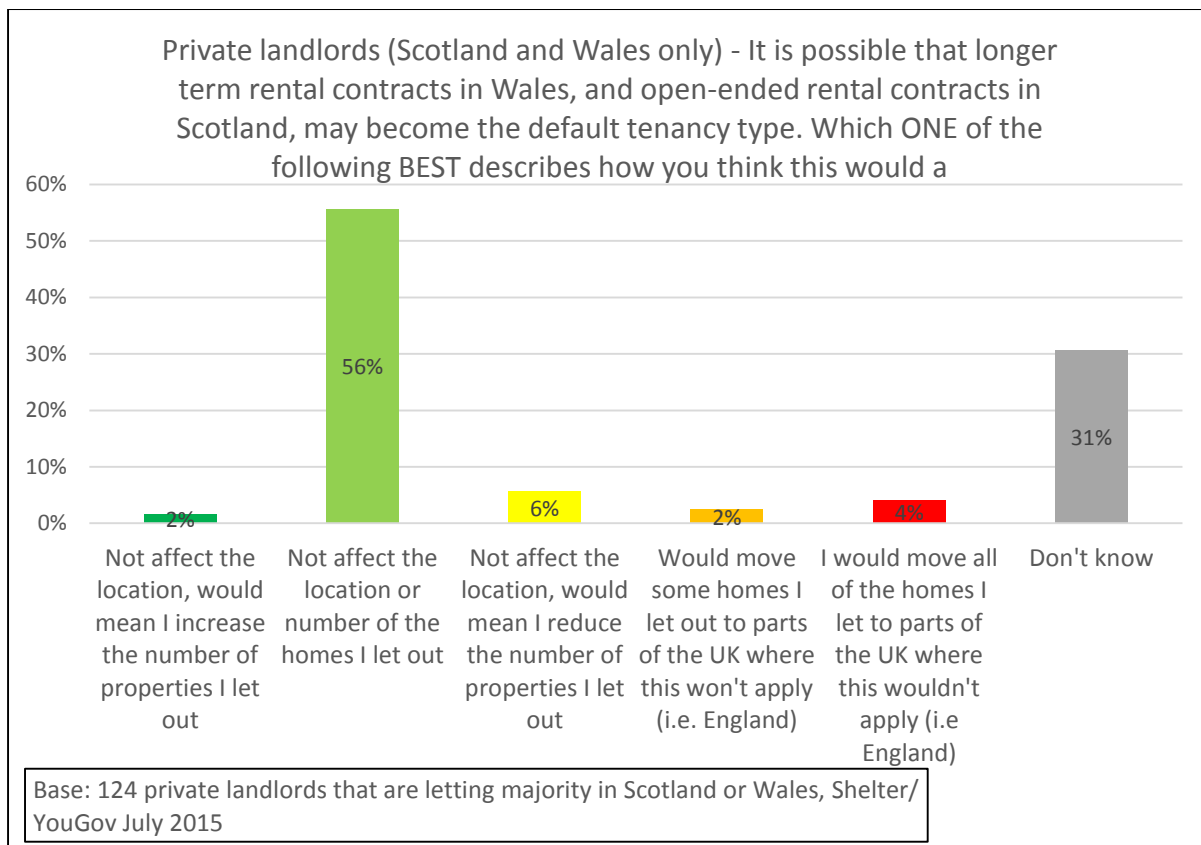


The types of landlord appearing most likely to be positive towards longer tenancies include: Those letting in North England, younger landlords, and landlords with children themselves. The results above show substantial interest in longer tenancies from landlords and suggests that using incentives, easing administration or just promoting them could prompt a significant increase in their use. However, they also show that at least a quarter of landlords would likely never offer these, unless legally compelled to.

As mentioned above, it is possible that England, Scotland and Wales could soon have very different tenancies for renters, with Scotland moving towards indefinite tenancy terms, Wales a three or five year period, but no change expected in England, with 6 or 12 months fixed terms expected to continue to be the norm.

Given this, there has been some concern in Scotland and Wales that landlords there may choose to shift their business to England. To test this, landlords letting in Scotland and Wales were asked whether and how the proposals to bring in longer tenancies there would affect their business as a landlord.

The two charts below show the results of this, the second one with the 31% answering 'Don't Know' excluded.



The charts above show that only a very small minority of private landlords are likely to exit the Wales and Scotland markets, if longer tenancy terms are introduced there, and more than eight in ten landlords who know how they will react, will stay put or even increase their portfolios as a result.

Trade bodies, registration/ licensing and getting help

There are numerous trade bodies and associations for landlords, such as the NLA and RLA. If landlords are letting certain types of properties (HMOs), or are letting in a specially designated area, they will need to obtain a landlord license from their local council, but this only covers a very small proportion of UK landlords. In Scotland, landlords are now required to register with their local council, but this is a very new requirement, and in London there is a voluntary [landlord accreditation scheme](#), although [take up seems low](#).

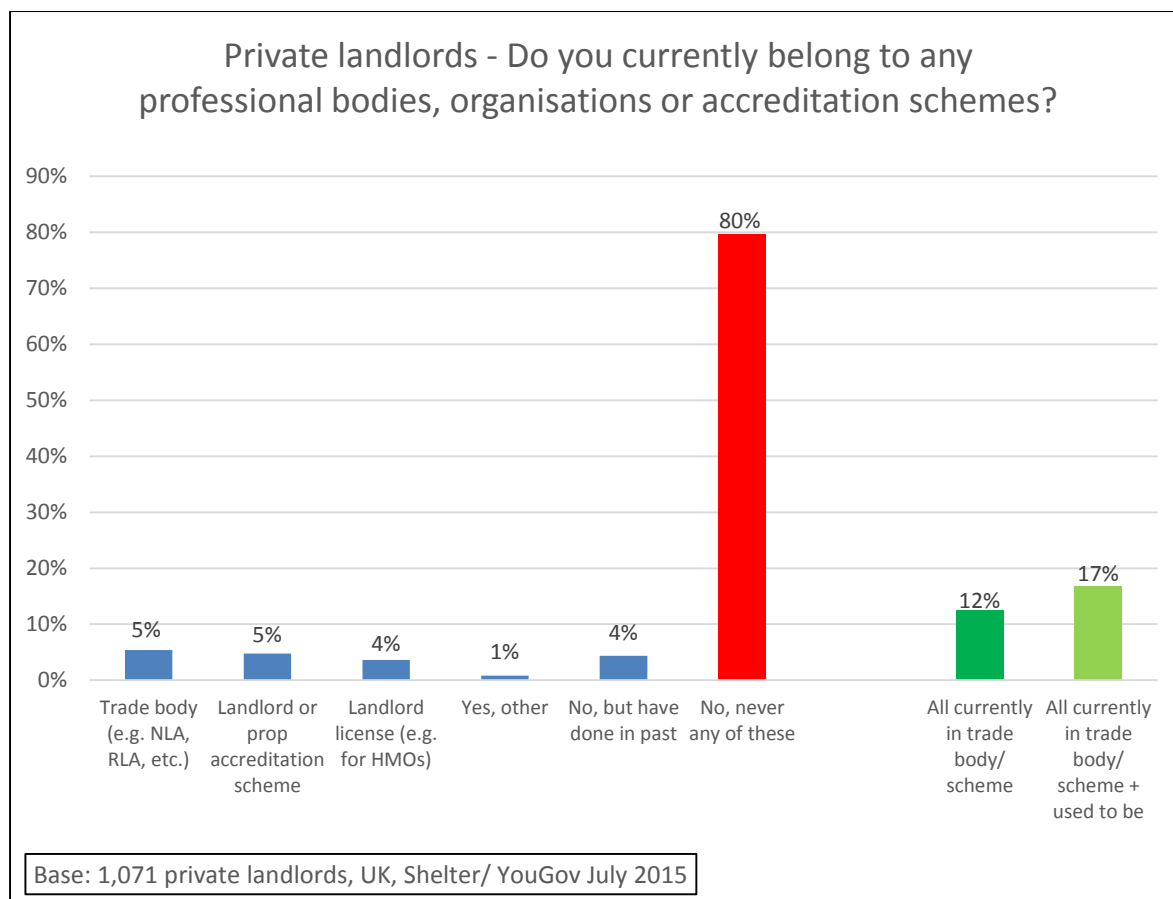
This section looks at how many landlords are signed up to the variety of schemes and trade bodies, and their motivations for being a member, and not. It then goes on to compare results on safety and legal measures between landlords who are, and are not, members of trade bodies and schemes.

Key findings:

- Most landlords surveyed (80%) had never been a member of a trade body, or licensed, registered or accredited in any way as a landlord. One in eight (12%) were current members.
- Becoming more professional, and getting support with problems were the main reasons given by landlords for joining a trade body or registration type scheme. Nearly a third said it was because they were legally required to, which is high given not that many landlords are legally required to.
- By far the main reason for not being a member of a trade body or registration type scheme was 'there is no incentive/ benefit to me', with cost only a barrier for 7%.
- Landlords that are members or registered in some way seem more likely to follow the law and good practice on a number of aspects of being a landlord, such as protecting deposits and having electrical safety checks carried out.

Detailed findings:

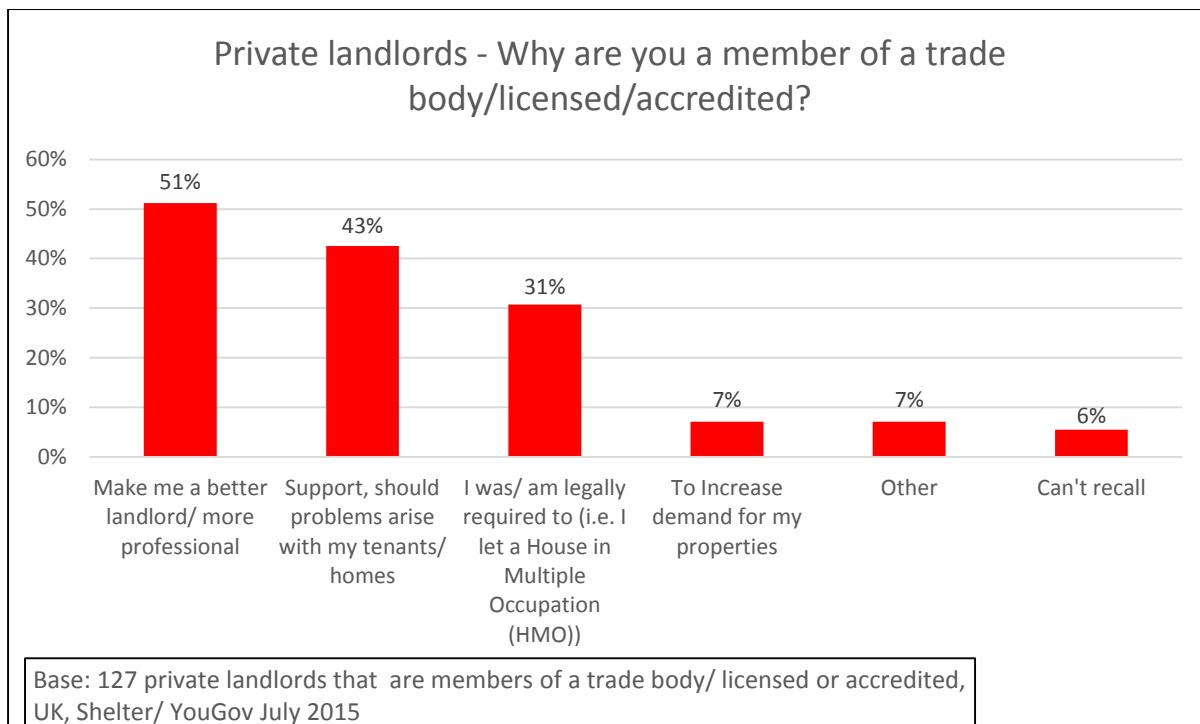
The chart below shows that one in eight landlords surveyed (12%) said they were currently either members of a trade body, or held an accreditation or license. Eight in ten (80%) have never been a member of any trade body or held any licence or accreditation.



Landlords with more experience and bigger portfolios appear most likely to be members of a trade body or scheme. The rate was much higher in Scotland, where registration with the council is now legally required although around half the 72 landlords letting in Scotland still said they had never been a registered/ accredited.

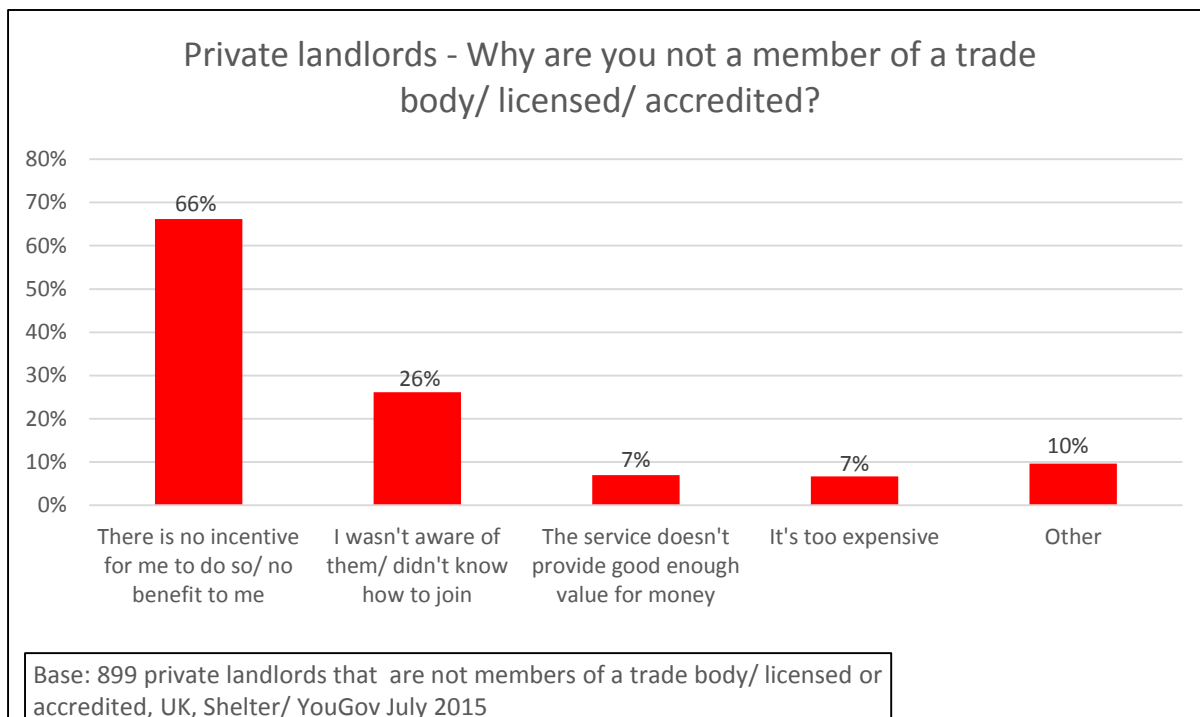
At the time of the survey, there was no legal requirement for landlords in Wales to be registered, but a new law requiring them to has now been [introduced](#). Although only 49 landlords in Wales were surveyed, the survey indicates this will be a big change for them – only 4% were currently a member of a trade body or scheme.

Landlords who indicated they were in a trade body, or licensed/ accredited/ registered in some way were asked why they had done this, and the results are shown below.

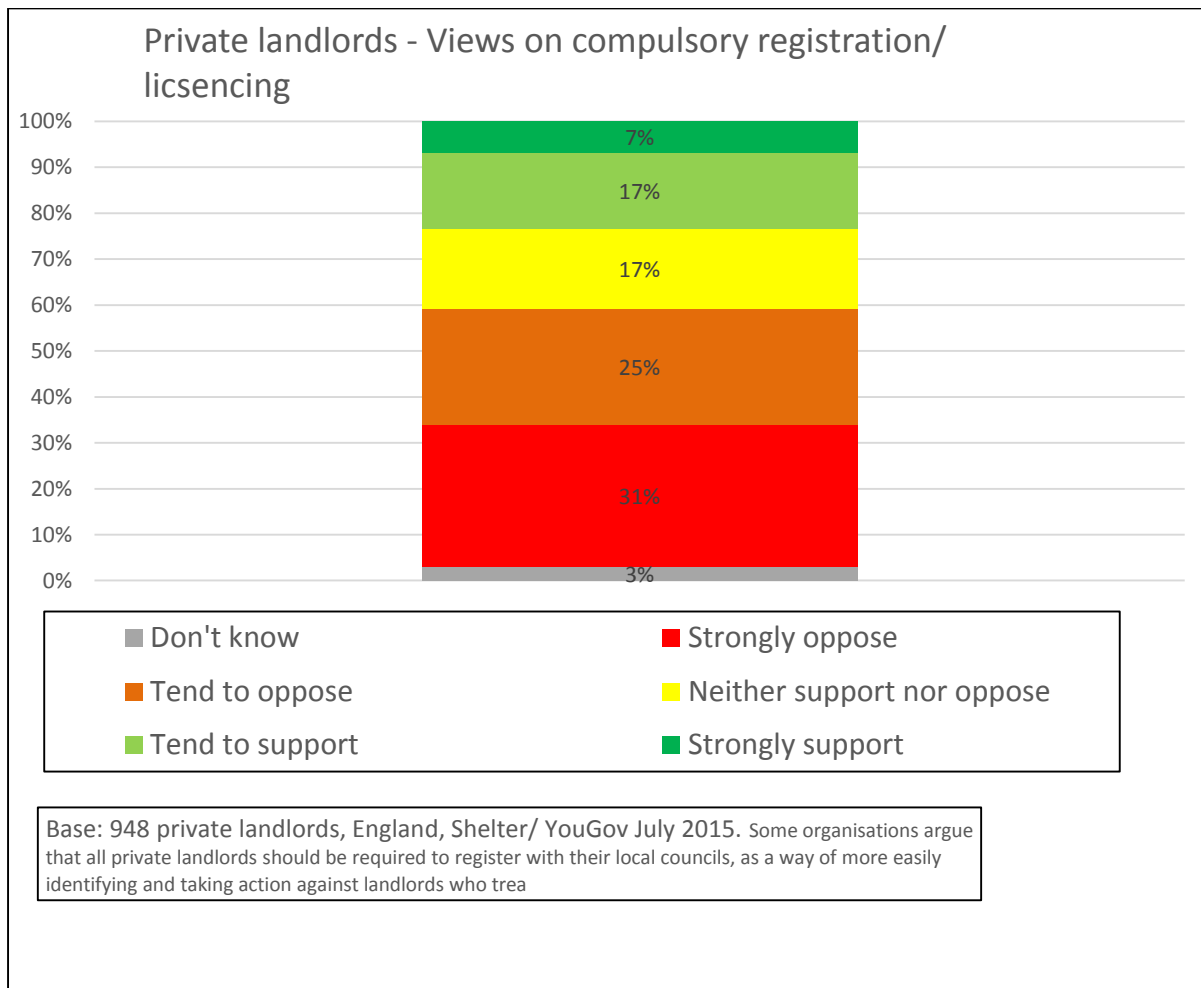


The proportion saying ‘because I was legally required to’ (31%) is high in the chart above, given that not very many landlords in England and Wales are actually required to be. Landlords who were not currently members of a trade body or licensed/ accredited/ registered in some way were asked why they were not.

The chart below shows that ‘There is no incentive for me to do so/ no benefit to me’ was the top answer by far, at 66% and only 7% said it was because it was ‘too expensive’.



Landlords in England were asked if they would support a law requiring all private landlords to register with their local councils. The results are shown below, with the full explanation landlords were given appearing in the box at the bottom of the chart.



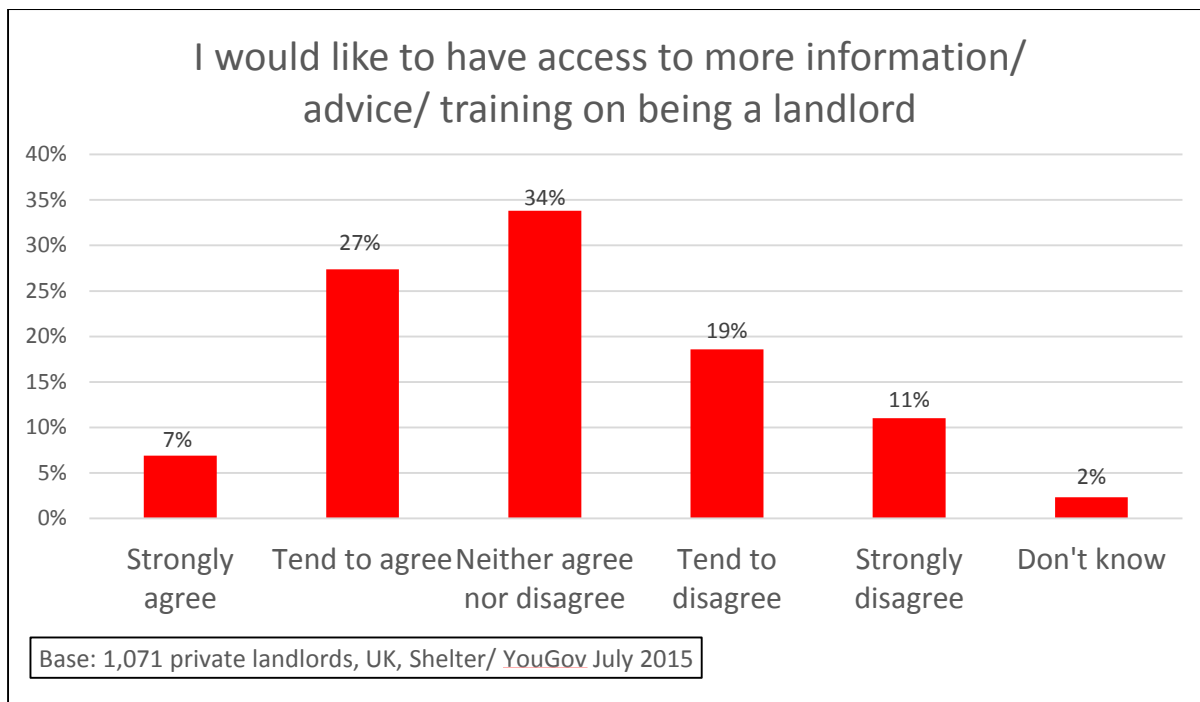
Most landlords (56%) opposed registration, but a quarter (24%) supported it and 17% were neutral.

The chart below shows the results to previous questions on compliance with legal and safety requirements, by whether or not the landlord is, or has ever been a member of a trade body or scheme.

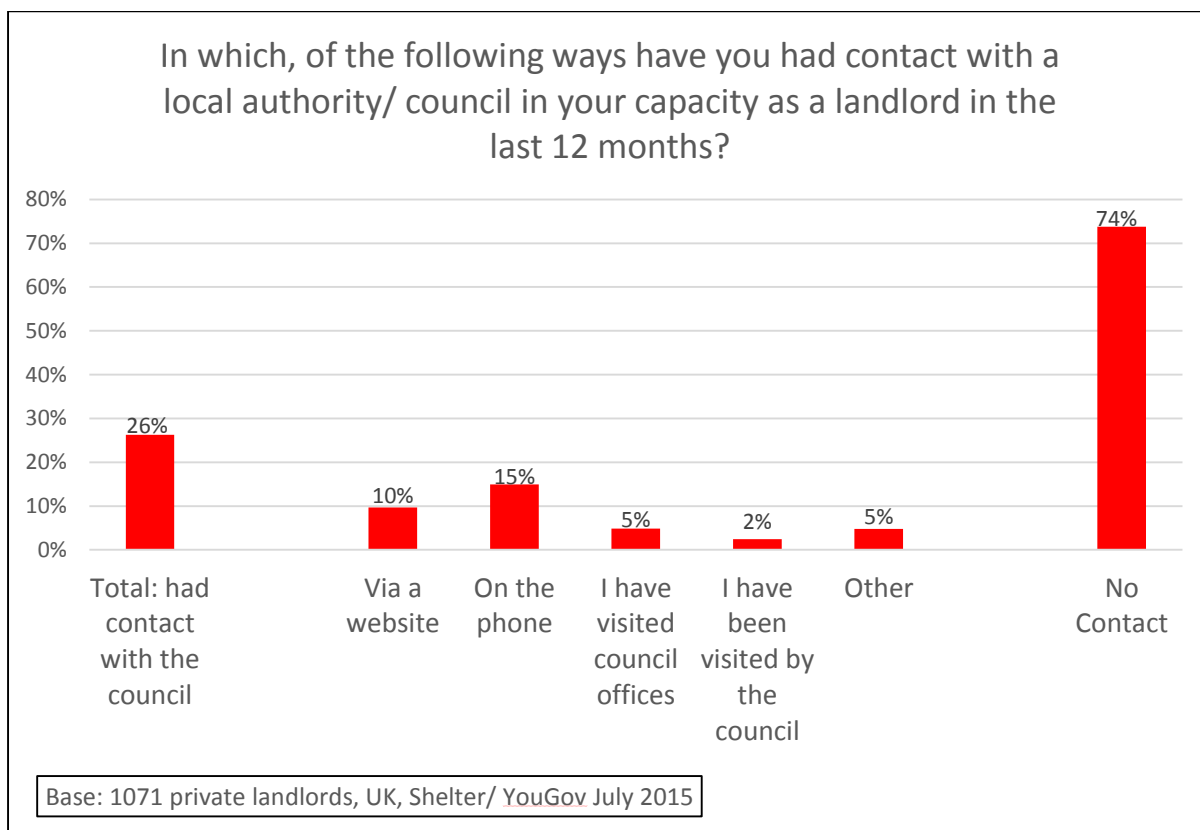


Whilst the differences are not huge, and being in a trade body or registration scheme clearly does not guarantee a landlord will comply with the law, there does appear to be a clear association between being a member of a trade body or scheme, and complying with the law, and following good practice.

There was an appetite for more information and training among many landlords, and this is shown in the chart below:



And, as shown in the chart below, just over a quarter of landlords (26%) had been in contact with their council this year on a landlord-related matter:



Energy Efficiency

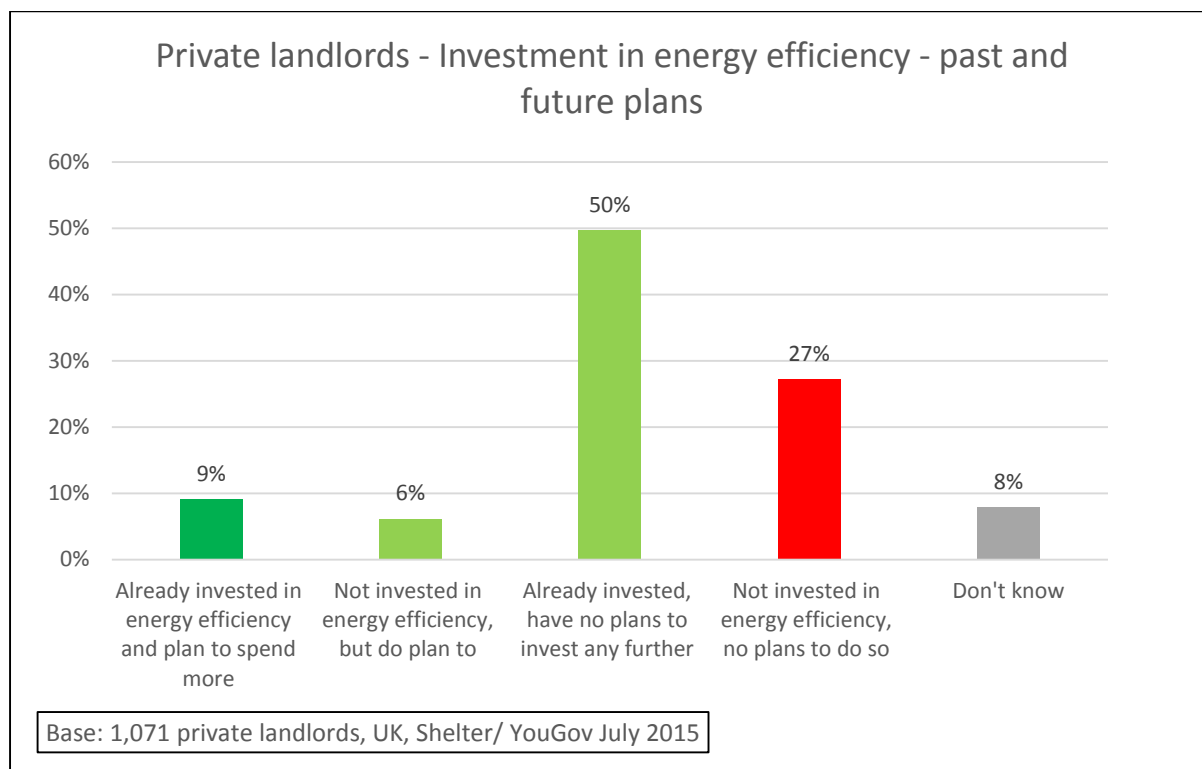
This section shows the results of a range of questions on energy efficiency. Official statistics show that private rented homes are the least likely to be energy efficient, and successive Governments have promoted numerous schemes in recent years to try to improve this.

Key findings:

- Most landlords feel that they have already invested all they need to in energy efficiency (50%) or have not and do not plan to (27%), with 15% indicating this is something they will be investing more on in the next three years.
- Awareness of the upcoming law requiring private rental homes to be at least band E on energy efficiency is low at a quarter (24%). A substantial proportion of landlords (34%) do not know whether they comply with this, although official figures suggest the vast majority will.

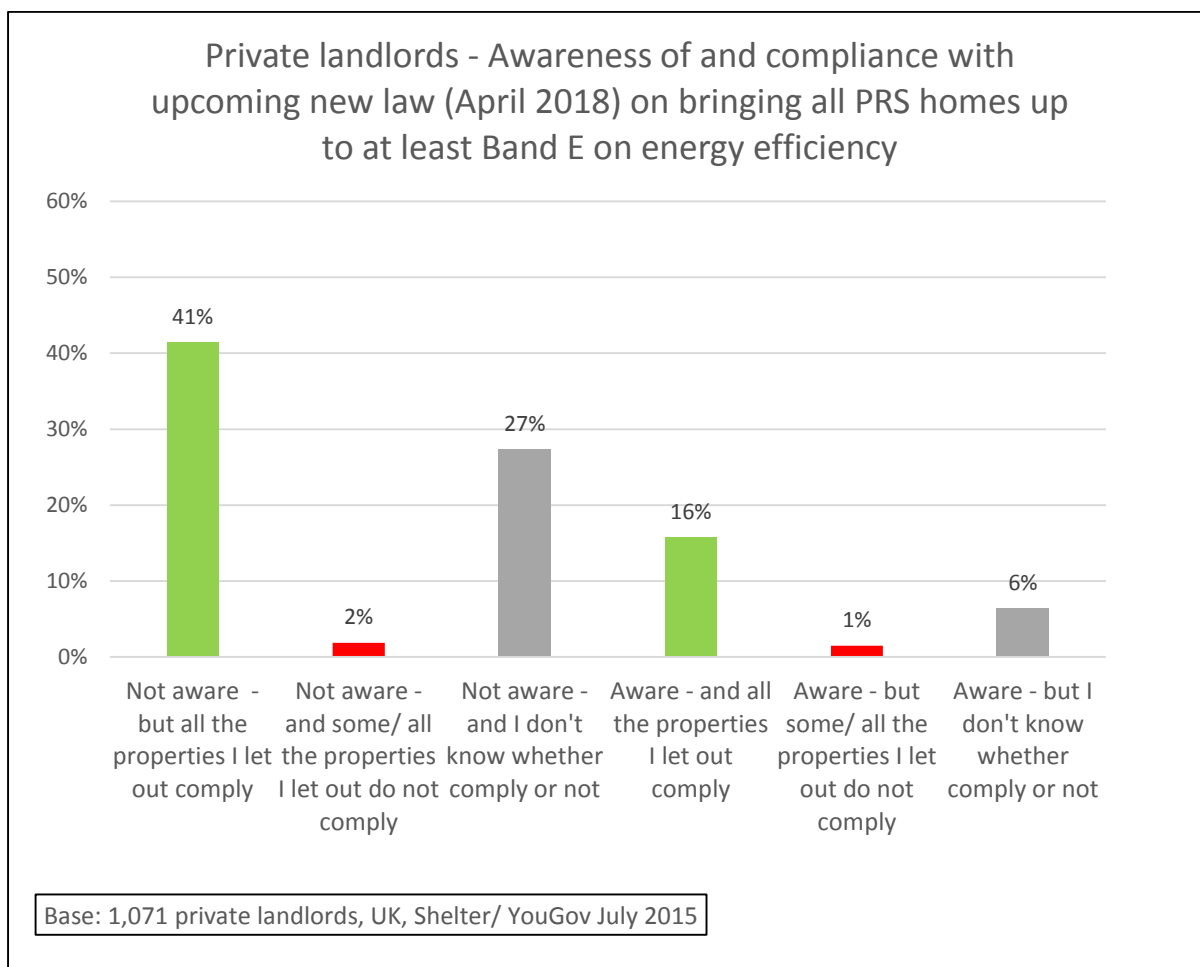
Detailed findings:

The chart below shows the position of the landlords surveyed on investing in energy efficiency:



One in seven (15%) of landlords surveyed said they planned to invest more in energy efficiency for the homes they let out. More than half of these were landlords who had already invested but wanted to do more. Just over a quarter and a third of landlords appear to reject energy efficiency.

An upcoming law will require all properties being let privately to be at least band E on energy efficiency. Landlords were asked about their awareness of this new law and whether they thought they were already complying or not, the results are shown in the chart below.



The chart shows that awareness was low – only 24% said they had heard about this law, 71% had not (the remainder said ‘none of these’). Only 3% of landlords surveyed could definitively say that they had properties where the energy efficiency rating was worse than band E, but around a third (34%) did not know whether or not the homes they let will need bringing into line with this law or not. According to the Survey of English Housing, just under 10% of private rented homes are below band E, so for most landlords who don’t know, this will just be a case of establishing that the property does comply, rather than having to take any remedial action.

Landlords who did not know what energy efficiency band the homes they let were in, or knew they had some below band E were then asked about their plans on finding out and complying if necessary. Reflecting the low awareness of this new law, most (53%) did not know when they would check this. Close to a fifth (18%) said they were not going to do anything at all about this, although this is likely to change if awareness rises. Most of the rest (17%) were planning on finding out and complying if need be by the end of 2016, 12% were planning on leaving it until 2017 or beyond.

Finally, landlords were asked about their awareness and use of energy efficiency schemes, such as Warm Homes and the Green Deal. Only just over half (52%) of landlords were aware of schemes like this. 10% had used one of them and 18% expressed an interest in using them in the future.

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