

More than 4 in 10 renters (42%) now claim Housing Benefit

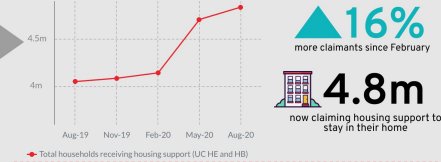
New statistics show a worrying rise in the number of renters claiming Local Housing Allowance (LHA) and the housing element of Universal Credit



- More than 1.9 million private renters are now claiming housing support
- Up 36% since February
- New 'Covid claimants' struggling to pay rent

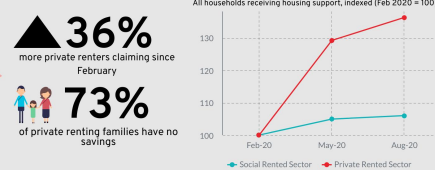
1 All renters need more support

The main increase in claimants took place between February to May. However, despite lockdown measures easing over the summer, the number of households in need continued to increase. This is particularly concerning given the re-introduction of lockdown measures, and the worsening unemployment rate we have seen since then.



2 Private renters are most affected

Since February 2020, there has been a spike in the number of private renters claiming housing support.



3 Welfare support is not enough

Welfare support is not enough for at least a quarter of households. Coronavirus has eroded welfare support: at the start of lockdown, the government agreed to restore LHA rates back to 2011 levels to cover the bottom 30% of private rents in every local market. This was a very welcome and necessary step. However, the effects of coronavirus have eroded welfare support. With 42% renters in the private sector now claiming housing benefit, it is not possible for all of them to find homes they can afford.



 More than **four in ten** private renters now claim housing benefit.

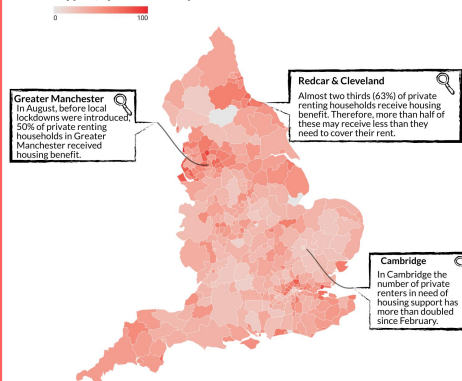
 Housing Benefit only covers the cheapest 3 in 10 homes

4 Renters are affected all over the country

The new statistics show that renters are affected in nearly every corner of the country. But there are particularly high numbers of private renters claiming housing support in the North East and in London.

In a quarter of areas in England, more than half of private renting households receive housing benefit.

Proportion of private renting households in receipt of housing support, by local authority



Map data: © Crown copyright and database right 2019 - Created with Datawrapper

'I was furloughed in March and now we're struggling. I've not been able to pay the whole rent because I did some food shopping instead. I couldn't pay the council tax and did apply for a reduction, but now they've sent me a bill wanting almost £250 a month. I can't pay as I'm the breadwinner as my husband is too poorly to work but not entitled to help. It's getting so much worse - we're having to decide between food or rent.' - **Nicola, Leigh**

Sources:

The proportion of private renters claiming housing benefit is an estimate based on combining administrative data from the DWP with population estimates published by HCLG (the English Housing Survey), and by the Office for National Statistics. The numbers are an estimate due to survey limitations, and as there are a small number of households with more than one housing benefit claimant. However this number is likely to be small. For accuracy we have used only data published by the UK government. Numbers of claimants of housing benefit, at the housing element of Universal Credit is from DWP statistics, accessed 10th November 2020. Population estimate for England is from English Housing Survey, English private rented households: Annex Table 11. Trends in housing benefit claimants, 1980 to 2019-20. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-housing-survey-2019-20-21-headline-report> (2018/19).

Population estimates for local authorities is from: ONS, Sub-national Dwelling Stock by Tenure Estimates, Table 1b Counts of dwelling stock by tenure by local authority, England, 2012 to 2018
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/subnationaldwellingstockbytenureestimates>

The proportion of private renting families who have no savings is from the EHS, Annex Table 2.12: Savings by tenure and household type, 2018-19 <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-housing-survey-2018-to-2019-housing-costs-and-affordability>