

**South East London  
Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2009:  
Additional Study of Social Rented Households  
Requiring and Occupying Larger Dwellings**

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# Section 1: Requiring and Occupying Larger Social Rent Dwellings

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## Introduction

- 1.1 Opinion Research Services (ORS) was commissioned by local authorities in South East London to undertake Housing Requirements Studies in each borough and a Strategic housing market Assessment for the sub region. The local authorities involved in the project are Bexley, Bromley, Greenwich, Lewisham and Southwark.
- 1.2 The study drew on a wide range of secondary data sources. Primary data was also collected through a household survey based on a random probability sample. The Household Survey was conducted between June 2007 and November 2008 and a total of 7,250 households were interviewed on a face to face basis. Non-response issues were addressed by a comprehensive statistical weighting process.
- 1.3 The following number of interviews were conducted at the given times in each of the boroughs:
  - 1,250 interviews in Bexley; (May-June 2008)
  - 1,250 interviews in Bromley; (October-November 2008)
  - 1,500 interviews in Greenwich; (July-August 2008)
  - 1,500 interviews in Lewisham (June-July 2007)
  - 1,750 interviews in Southwark (January-March 2008)
- 1.4 This document represents an additional study analysing two key groups in the social housing sector:
  - Households currently overcrowded in social housing with incomes of over £27,600 per annum who require dwellings with 3 or more bedrooms
  - Households currently in social housing with incomes of over £27,600 per annum who are currently occupying dwellings with 3 or more bedrooms.
- 1.5 These groups of households have the potential to be able to afford to meet housing costs set above social rent levels. Therefore, if appropriate and affordable intermediate housing products can be delivered, it may be possible to relieve some of the pressure on the social housing sector by allowing these households to access alternative tenures.
- 1.6 It should be remembered that these two groups will not be mutually exclusive, i.e., some households will be both occupying dwellings with 3 or more bedrooms and will also be overcrowded. However, for the purposes of this study we will analyse each in turn.

## Overcrowded Households Requiring Larger Dwellings

- 1.7 The household survey indicates that a total of 3,270 households in the social rented sector in South East London are currently overcrowded while having a household income of at least £27,600 per annum. Figure 1 shows that nearly half of the households are currently located in Southwark.

Figure 1  
**Number of Overcrowded Households in Social Rent Requiring 3+ Bedroom Dwellings with an Household income of £27,600 per annum by Borough** (Source: South East London Household Survey 2007-08)

Borough	No. Households
Bexley	120
Bromley	450
Greenwich	650
Lewisham	600
Southwark	1,450
<b>South East London Total</b>	<b>3,270</b>

- 1.8 Figure 2 shows that for nearly 80% of these households they have 1 bedroom too few when compared with the bedroom standard set out in the 2004 Housing Act. However, over 20% have 2 or more bedrooms too few.
- 1.9 Nearly half of the currently overcrowded households require a 3 bedroom dwellings with 40% requiring 4 bedrooms. Over 10% require 5 or more bedrooms when assessed under the bedroom standard.

Figure 2  
**Scale of Overcrowding** (Source: South East London Household Survey 2007-08)

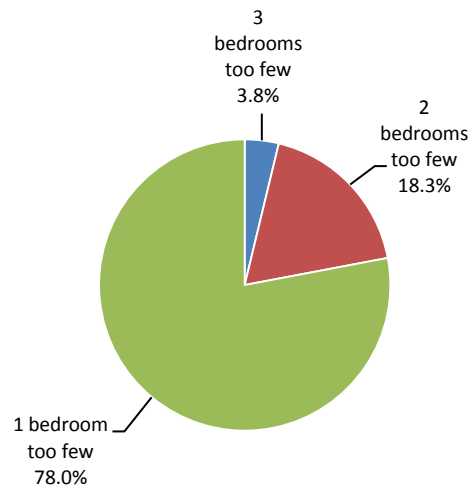
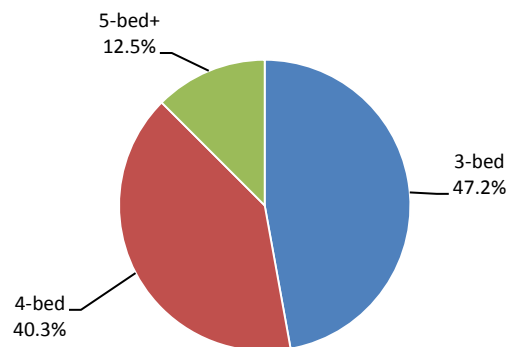
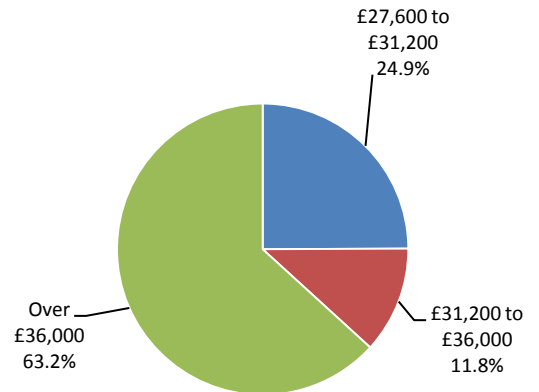


Figure 3  
**Number of Bedrooms Required** (Source: South East London Household Survey 2007-08)



1.10 Around a quarter of the overcrowded households who require 3+ bedrooms have household incomes in the range £27,600-£31,200, while 63% have incomes over £36,000 per annum. This equate to over 2,000 households across South East London.

Figure 4  
Household income (Source: South East London Household Survey 2007-08)



1.11 Figure 5 shows the relationship between household income and number of bedrooms required.

Figure 5  
Bedrooms Required by Household Income (Source: South East London Household Survey 2007-08)

Household Income	3 Bedrooms	4 Bedrooms	5+ Bedrooms	Total
£27,600 to £31,200	410	350	60	810
£31,200 to £36,000	80	250	60	390
Over £36,000	1,050	720	290	2,070
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,540</b>	<b>1,320</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>3,270</b>

1.12 However, while there are over 3,000 households who are overcrowded in the social rented sector who have household incomes of more than £27,600 annum almost none of these households has any savings (Figure 6). This would make secure a mortgage for intermediate housing products difficult.

Figure 6  
Number of Overcrowded Households in Social Rent Requiring 3+ Bedroom Dwellings with an Household income of £27,600 per annum by Household Savings (Source: South East London Household Survey 2007-08)

Savings	Total
None	3,200
£0 -£999	30
£1,000-£2,999	0
£3,000-£4,999	0
£5,000-£14,999	30
£15,000+	0
<b>South East London Total</b>	<b>3,260</b>

1.13 The two main household types who are overcrowded in their current accommodation and require 3+ bedrooms are adult couples with children and groups of adults. Further analysis of the data set indicates that many of the groups of adults are comprised of adult children living with their parents. Therefore, a possible solution to the overcrowding of these households is for the adult children to leave home. However, the current housing market in London makes this an expensive option while there is little chance of employed single person households being allocated their own social rented property.

1.14 Nearly 50% of the households have a respondent who is White British, while nearly 30% have a Black respondent.

1.15 Of all the households, 61.7% express a desire to move, while 38.3% did not want to move. However, it may be the case that some of these households reported that they did not want to move because they were aware that there was a lack of alternatives for them to move to.

Figure 7 Household Type (Source: South East London Household Survey 2007-08)

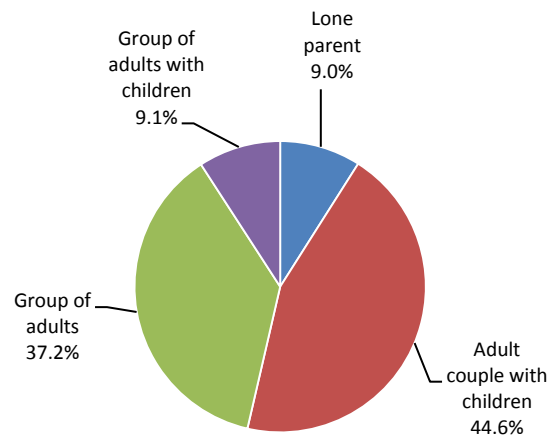


Figure 8 Ethnicity of Respondent (Source: South East London Household Survey 2007-08)

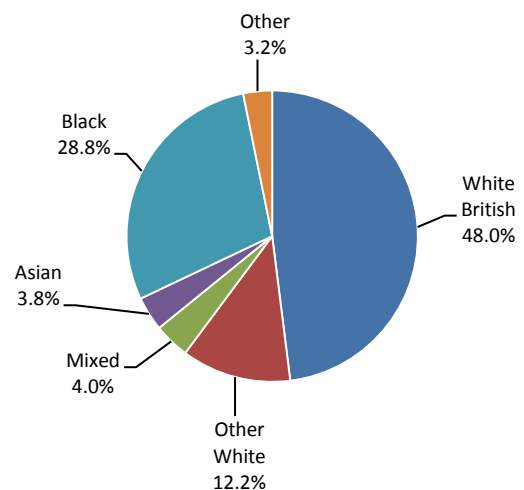
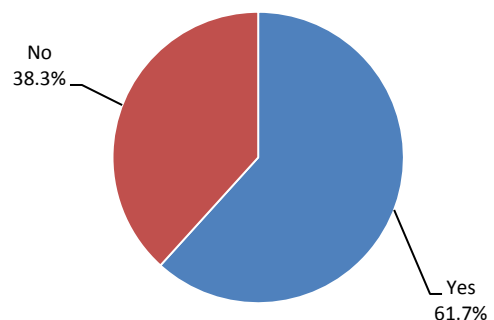
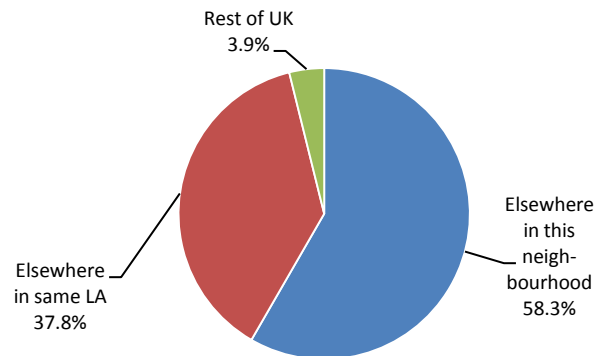


Figure 9 Want to Move (Source: South East London Household Survey 2007-08)



1.16 Of the households who want to move, almost all wished to stay in the same borough, with a majority wanting to stay in the same neighbourhood (Figure 10).

Figure 10  
Move to Where (Source: South East London Household Survey 2007-08)



### Higher Income Household in Larger Dwellings

1.17 The previous section focused upon current social rented households who required larger dwellings. This section focuses upon households with incomes of at least £27,600 per annum who are currently occupying larger social rented properties.

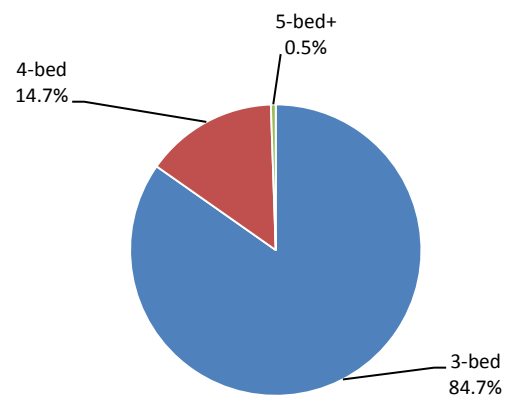
1.18 In total, 9,400 households with incomes of at least £27,600 per annum occupy social rented dwellings with at least 3 bedrooms in South East London. Figure 11 shows the distribution of these households, with more in Southwark and Greenwich.

Figure 11  
Number of Households in Social Rent Occupying 3+ Bedroom Dwellings with an Household Income of £27,600 per annum by Borough (Source: South East London Household Survey 2007-08)

Borough	No. Households
Bexley	640
Bromley	1,860
Greenwich	2,450
Lewisham	1,700
Southwark	2,750
<b>South East London Total</b>	<b>9,400</b>

1.19 Figure 12 shows that nearly 85% of these households occupy 3 bedroom dwellings, with 15% occupying 4 bedroom dwellings and a small number having 5 or more bedrooms.

Figure 12  
Number of Bedrooms (Source: South East London Household Survey 2007-08)



1.20 Of the households occupying larger social rented properties, around 15% are overcrowded when assessed against the bedroom standard as set out in the 2004 Housing Act. In total this represents around 1,300 households who are both occupying larger social rented units and are overcrowded. 39% have sufficient bedrooms for their needs, while Nearly 50% of all households with higher incomes in larger social rented properties have more bedrooms than they technically require.

1.21 This is reflect in Figure 14 which shows that nearly 10% of the households technically only require a single bedroom, while 36% require 2 bedrooms. Therefore, there is tremendous potential to free larger social rented units if households who are currently under-occupying the stock can be provided with an incentive to move.

1.22 The household incomes of the households concerned are shown Figure 15. This shows that nearly 70% have incomes of over £36,000 per annum,

Figure 13  
Scale of Overcrowding or Under Occupation (Source: South East London Household Survey 2007-08)

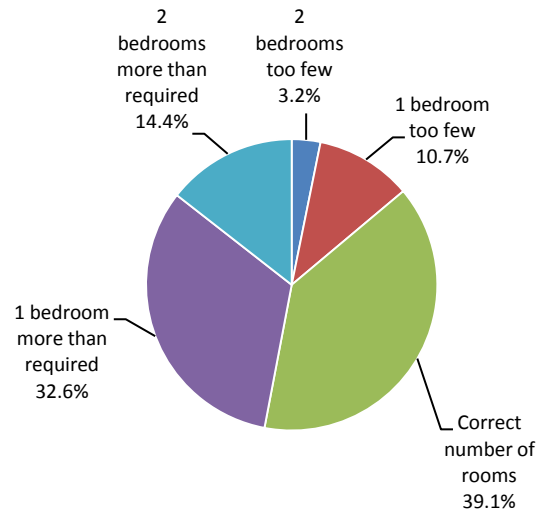


Figure 14  
Number of Bedrooms Required (Source: South East London Household Survey 2007-08)

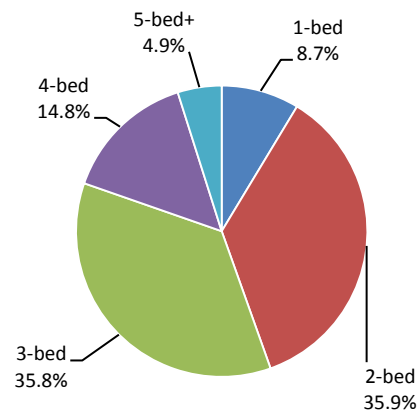
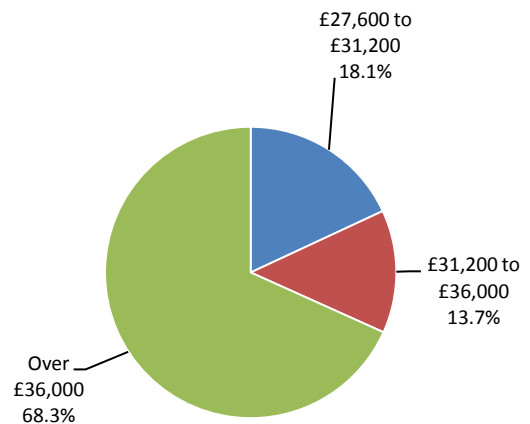


Figure 15  
Household income (Source: South East London Household Survey 2007-08)



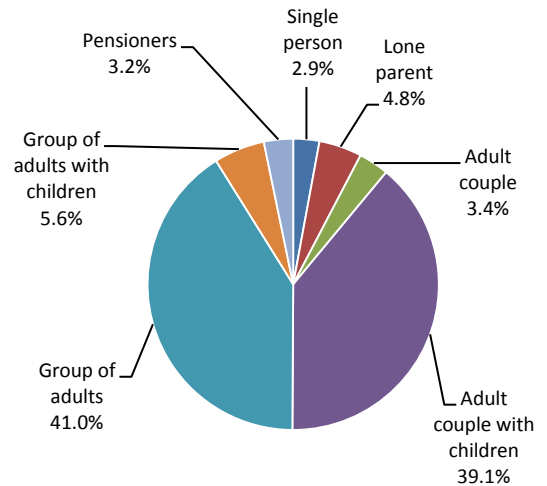
1.23 Figure 16 shows the relationship between bedrooms required and household income which highlights potentially how many households could downsize to vacate larger social rented properties.

Figure 16  
Bedrooms Required by Household Income (Source: South East London Household Survey 2007-08)

Household Income	1 Bedroom	2 Bedrooms	3 Bedrooms	4 Bedrooms	5+ Bedrooms	Total
£27,600 to £31,200	270	630	390	350	60	1,700
£31,200 to £36,000	0	430	510	280	60	1,280
Over £36,000	540	2,310	2,460	760	340	6,420
<b>Total</b>	<b>810</b>	<b>3,380</b>	<b>3,370</b>	<b>1,390</b>	<b>460</b>	<b>9,400</b>

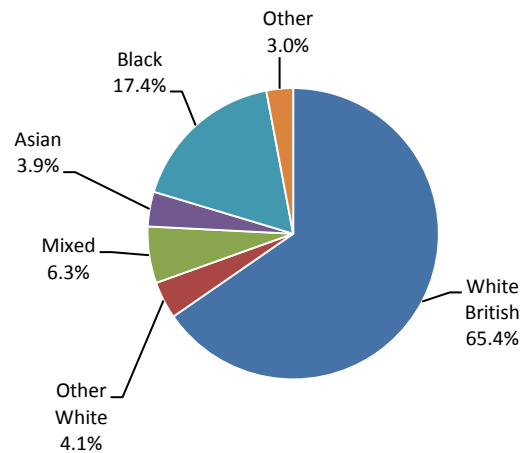
1.24 In terms of household type, the majority of households are either an adult couple with children or a group of adults who are again principally parents living with adult children.

Figure 17  
Household Type (Source: South East London Household Survey 2007-08)



1.25 The ethnicity of the household respondent shows two thirds are White British with smaller shares from the Black and Other White groups.

Figure 18  
Ethnicity of Respondent (Source: South East London Household Survey 2007-08)



- 1.26 Only 30% of higher income households occupying 3+ bedroom social rented properties want to move. This again may reflect a lack of alternatives with households not looking to move because of a lack of affordable alternative.
- 1.27 Of those who do want to move, the majority again want to stay in the same borough with many also looking to move to other boroughs in South East London. Many also wish to move to the rest of the UK, mainly the South East of England, which may reflect a desire to move into owner occupation by seeking lower house prices outside London.

Figure 19  
**Want to Move** (Source: South East London Household Survey 2007-08)

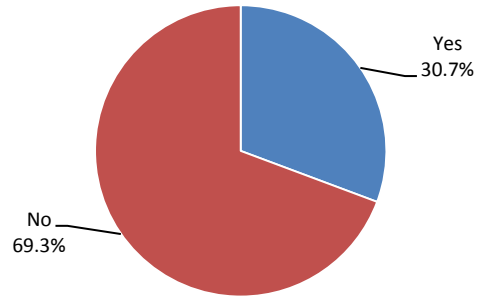


Figure 20  
**Move to Where** (Source: South East London Household Survey 2007-08)

