

JSNA Health and Wellbeing Profile 2023/24

Housing

Summary points

- Affordability is a problem in Bristol, with house prices rising faster than nationally and much faster than average incomes. The cost of the cheapest homes in Bristol are now ten times higher than the annual earnings of lower income households.
- The private rented sector has reduced to 27.4% of housing stock compared to 30.3% in 2020 according to the Building Research Establishment (BRE).
- This reduced stock has led to an increase in a huge demand for housing in the private rented sector, leading to increased rents.
- There is a serious shortage of affordable housing in the city.

Housing Stock

In 2021, there were 191,638 households in Bristol. Almost two thirds (64.7%) of households live in houses or bungalows and the remaining third (35.2%) live in flats – either purpose-built block of flats, conversions or shared houses. In England and Wales (E&W) as a whole, a higher proportion of households live in houses or bungalows (77.9%) and a lower proportion live in flats (21.7%). The remaining 0.1% (184) were households that lived in a caravan, or other mobile or temporary structure (E&W 0.4%).

Accommodation type varies greatly across the city: Central ward 93% and Hotwells and Harbourside ward 80% have the highest percentage of flats in the city, whilst Filwood ward 89% and Hengrove and Whitchurch Park ward 86% have the highest percentage of houses.

Tenure

In 2021, 54.8% of households in Bristol owned the accommodation they lived in (E&W 62.5%), 44.9% rented their accommodation (E&W 37.3%) and 0.25% of households lived rent free (E&W 0.13%).

The data on accommodation tenure can be broken down further to show that:

- 25.2% of households owned the accommodation they lived in outright (E&W 32.8%)
- 29.7% owned their accommodation with a mortgage or loan or shared ownership (E&W 29.7%)
- 26.2% rented their accommodation privately (E&W 20.3%)
- 18.7% were in the social rented sector (ie through a local council or housing association) (E&W 17.1%)

Overcrowding and underoccupancy

Occupancy rating provides a measure of whether a household's accommodation is overcrowded or underoccupied. An occupancy rating of minus 1 or less implies that a household has fewer bedrooms than the standard requirement, plus 1 implies that they have more bedrooms than required, and 0 implies that they met the standard required.

In Bristol, 9,684 (5.1%) households had fewer bedrooms than required (E&W 4.3%) and so are considered to be overcrowded. Across the city the proportion of overcrowded households varies considerably, with more than a fifth of households considered to be overcrowded in St Philips (25.6%), St Pauls Grosvenor Road (23.7%), Easton Road (20.8%) and Cabot Circus (20.2%) (Figure 1).

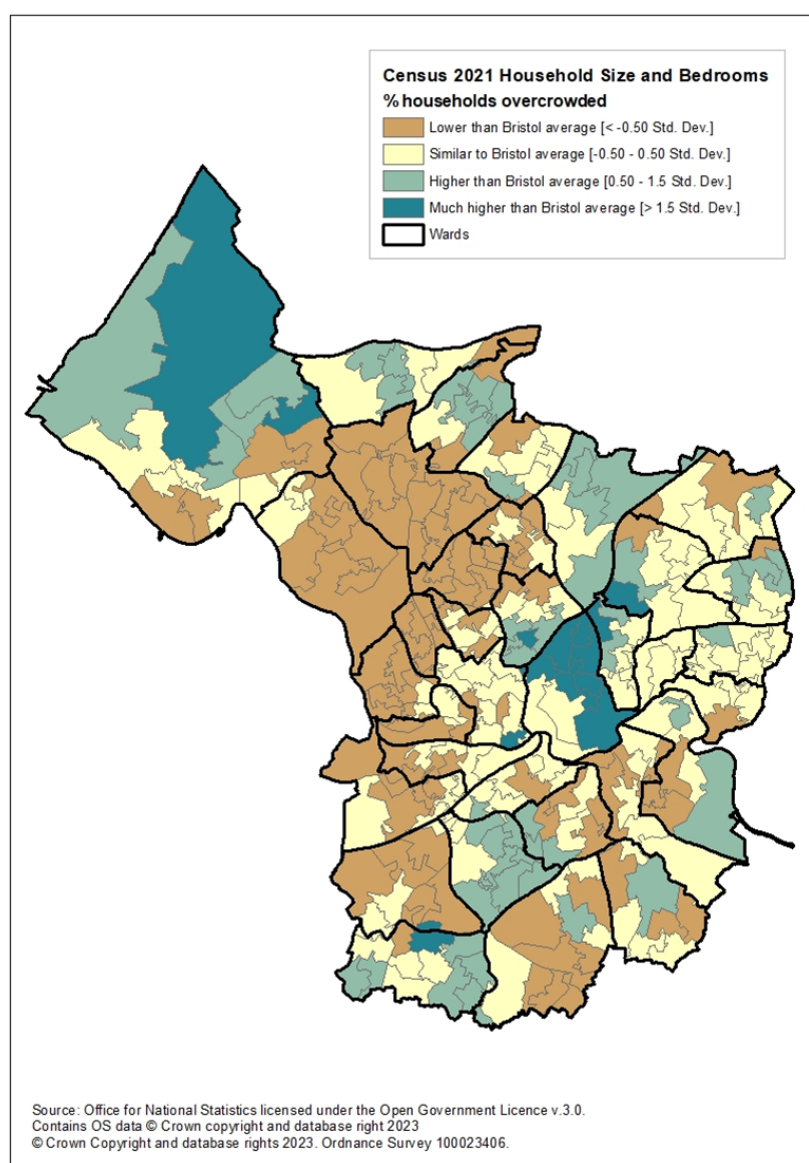


Figure 1: Overcrowding - households with one or fewer bedrooms than required to meet the bedroom standard
Source: ONS Census 2021

House Prices & Affordability

House prices in Bristol continue to rise rapidly. Since the year 2000 Bristol house prices have either been lower or similar to the national average but at the end of 2013 Bristol house prices started to increase at a greater rate than nationally (Figure 2).

In the year ending September 2022, the average house price in Bristol was £330,000, £62,000 higher than the England and Wales average of £268,000. Over the last decade, average house prices in Bristol increased by almost 90% (+£155,000) compared to a 51% increase in England and Wales (+£90,000)¹.

Earnings in Bristol are similar to the national average and other English Core Cities, but as house prices are significantly higher this results in affordability issues. ONS calculate “affordability ratios” annually which measure the relationship between house prices and earnings. Fig 2 shows the relationship between the price of the cheapest homes and the lowest level earnings of people living in Bristol.

The affordability ratio for Bristol reached a high of 10.29 in 2021 but fell slightly to 10.00 at the end of September 2022². The ratio increased from 2002 until the 2008 recession when it took a dip, but then continued to increase, escalating from 2015 onwards. The ratio means that the cost of the cheapest homes in Bristol are ten times the annual earnings of lower income households. Bristol has the highest affordability ratio of all the Core Cities in England and Wales³. Of all the Core Cities only Bristol and Manchester have affordability ratios higher than the England ratio of 7.28 (Figure 3).

¹ [Housing affordability in England and Wales Statistical bulletins - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/housing/bulletins/housingaffordabilityinenglandandwales)

² [Housing affordability in England and Wales Statistical bulletins - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/housing/bulletins/housingaffordabilityinenglandandwales)

³ Data for Glasgow (a Core City) not available

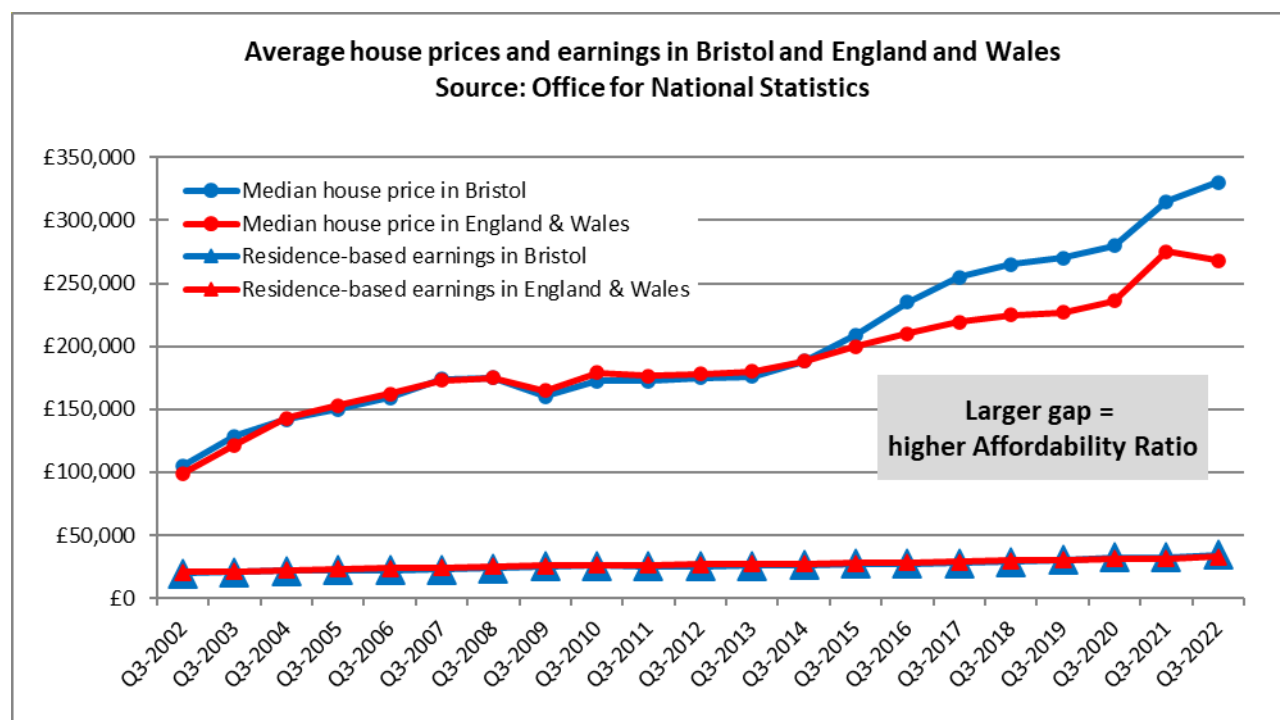


Figure 2: Average house prices and average earnings – Bristol and England and Wales

Source: ONS Ratio of median house price to residence-based earnings, 2002 to 2022

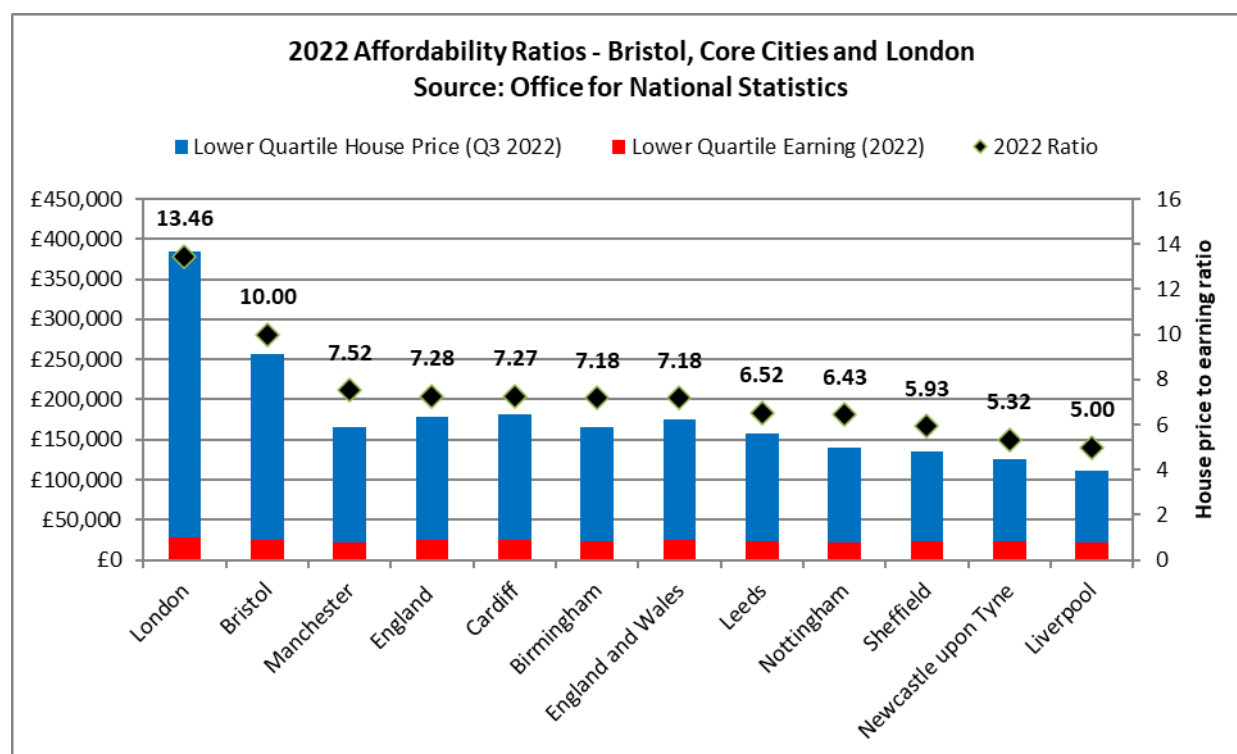


Figure 3: Affordability Ratios in 2022 – Bristol, Core Cities and London

Source: ONS Ratio of lower quartile house price to residence-based earnings, 2002 to 2022

Private Rented Sector (PRS)

The Bristol private rented sector is growing in cost. Between April 2021 and March 2022 the average Bristol rent had risen to £1,286 a month⁴ (8 years previously the average rent was £814 a month).

The Bristol Quality of Life⁵ Survey 2022/23 looked at the issue of housing. In comparison to home owners, housing association and local authority tenants, private tenants were significantly less satisfied with the cost of their rent or mortgage. They were also least satisfied with the cost of heating their homes and the security of their tenure.

For satisfaction with the cost of rent or mortgage:

- Housing association tenants were most satisfied (61.0%)
- Private tenants were least satisfied (30.0%)

For the cost of heating their home:

- Housing association tenants (29.7%) were the most satisfied
- Private tenants were least satisfied (17.9%)

For security of tenure:

- Home owner occupiers were the most satisfied (89.7%).
- Private tenants were the least satisfied (57.8%)

Satisfaction with the cost of rent or mortgage and satisfaction with the cost of heating homes has decreased significantly over the last two years, reflecting the impact of the cost of living crisis, and is experienced across all housing tenure. In 2020, 51.6% were satisfied with the cost of heating homes reducing to 21.6% in 2022. 60.1% were satisfied with the cost of rent or mortgage payments in 2020, reducing to 49.5% in 2022

For the foreseeable future, private renting will remain the default option for many households. No longer just the tenure for younger people. Many who cannot access homeownership or social housing now using PRS and some just as the tenure of choice for the flexibility it gives them or lower costs if accessing shared housing.

There is an increasing 'affordability gap' as house prices continue to rise. In an already challenging market, the shortage of housing supply means that high or even higher prices to rent or buy are likely to continue.

Bristol has a very successful programme of reducing empty homes and bringing them back into use. Many properties bought back into use have gone into the private rented sector, so the Empty Property team ensure that the landlords of these properties adhere to good management practices and the property meets minimum standards.

⁴ Valuation Office Agency, [Private rental market summary statistics – April 2021 to March 2022](#)

⁵ See www.bristol.gov.uk/qol

Equalities data:

Limited equalities data is available and is not representative of the Private housing or Private rented sector. Census 2021 housing statistics by equalities groups will be added the next time this page is updated.

Further data / links / consultations:**[Bristol Census Dashboards](#)**

The Bristol Corporate Strategy 2018-2023: Under the Fair and Inclusive Key Commitment, the Strategy recognises that a warm, secure affordable home provides a springboard to achieving a high-quality life. It acknowledges that the Private Rented Sector (PRS) continues to grow, bringing issues such as the insecurity of short-term tenancies and for some poor conditions or tenancy management. The strategy brings together representatives of different housing sectors at the Bristol Homes Board to provide leadership across a range of housing issues, including the private rented sector.

Bristol's One City Plan - Raising Standards in the Private Rented Sector: Under the One City Plan there is a target to improve PRS standards through discretionary licensing "to increase property standards in the private rented sector - are significantly improved from 2018 following work with landlords and tenants through discretionary licensing".

The [Building Research Establishment \(BRE\) Bristol Housing Stock Report, October 2020](#). The BRE were commissioned to undertake a study of the private housing stock in the city, with particular emphasis on the PRS.

Date updated: April 2023

Date of next update: April 2024