

Statistical bulletin

# Private rental affordability, England, Wales and Northern Ireland: 2024

Private rent prices by country and English region, expressed as a percentage of gross monthly income of private renting households. Part of our additional measures of housing affordability series.

Contact:  
Housing Analysis team  
[better.info@ons.gov.uk](mailto:better.info@ons.gov.uk)

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# 1 . Main points

- Private renters on a median household income could expect to spend 36.3% of their income on an average-priced rented home in England, compared with 25.9% in Wales and 25.3% in Northern Ireland in 2024.
- Private rental affordability has fluctuated since 2016 but remained above the 30% affordability threshold in England, while it moved below the threshold over time in Wales to reach similar levels to Northern Ireland.
- Private rental households' incomes have increased faster than rents in all three countries since 2016; but since 2021, as rents started increasing more rapidly, different patterns emerged with incomes increasing faster than rents in England but increasing slower than rents in Wales and Northern Ireland.
- London's private rental affordability ratio was 41.6% in 2024, keeping England's affordability ratio above the 30% affordability threshold, despite most English regions being below the threshold.
- In England and Wales, two-thirds of Local Authorities (LAs) (68.7%, or 217) had an average rent that was below the affordability threshold in 2024, similar to the previous year.
- The LAs with the least "affordable" rents were all in London; the least affordable LAs outside London were urban centres such as Bristol, Bath and North East Somerset, Brighton and Trafford, or areas with high numbers of commuters to London (Sevenoaks and Watford).

Please be aware that average rental prices are not comparable with those from before 2023 because of a change in methodology. For more information, please see [Section 8: Data sources and quality](#).

## 2 . Private rental affordability explained

To interpret the findings in this release, it is helpful to be aware that:

- "average" refers to mean rent prices (modelled using an internationally recognised hedonic double imputation approach); while the median is used for incomes
- incomes are the gross monthly incomes of private-renting households
- we consider an area is "affordable" if a private-renting household would spend the equivalent of 30% or less of their gross income on rent (for new or existing tenancies) – referred to here as the affordability ratio
- this private-rental affordability measure covers households who have already succeeded in affording a private-rented home
- the flexibility of the private rental market often enables households to adjust their rent when their financial circumstances change

Further information is available in our [Private rental affordability, England, Wales and Northern Ireland quality and methodology information \(QMI\)](#) and in [Section 8: Data sources and quality](#).

This analysis is part of a series of [alternative measures of housing affordability](#), including our [Housing purchase affordability, UK bulletin](#), designed to accompany our [annual housing affordability statistics bulletin](#).

## 3 . Private rental affordability by country

In Financial Year Ending (FYE) 2024, the average private rental affordability by country was:

- 36.3% of private-renting household income in England (£1,232 monthly rent compared with £3,396 monthly income)
- 25.9% of private-renting household income in Wales (£702 rent compared with £2,713 income)
- 25.3% of private-renting household income in Northern Ireland (£751 rent compared with £2,974 income)

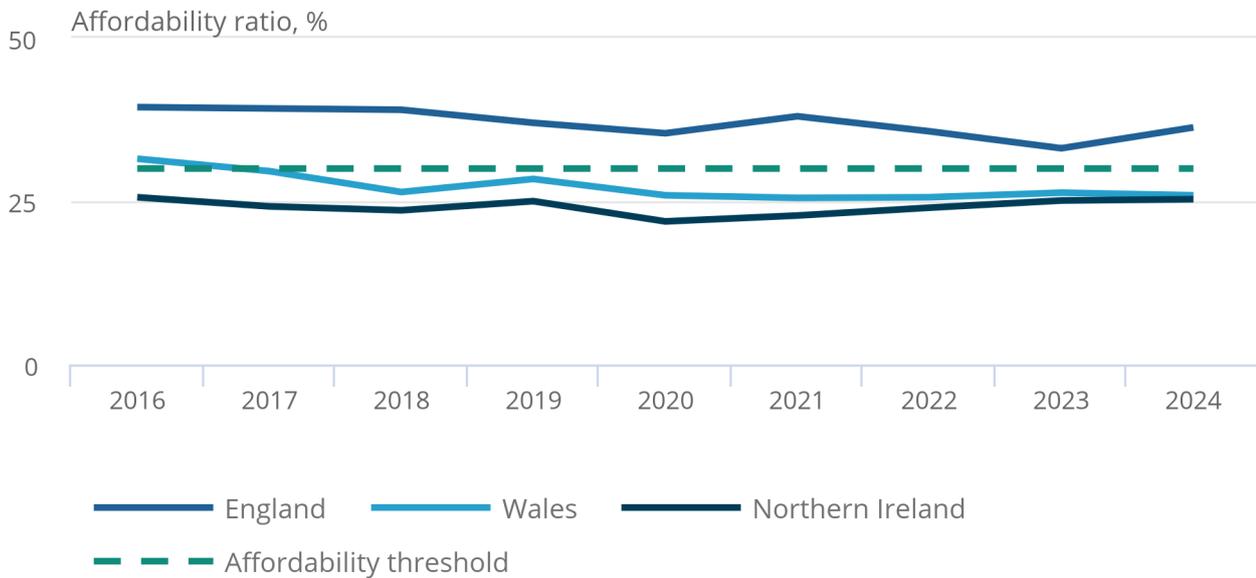
This made rents in Northern Ireland and Wales below the affordability threshold in FYE 2024, and rents in England above it.

**Figure 1: Private rents have been consistently above 30% in England, below 30% in Northern Ireland, and usually below 30% in Wales**

Percentage of median private renting household income equivalent to average rent, by country, financial year ending (FYE) 2016 to FYE 2024

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Percentage of median private renting household income equivalent to average rent, by country, financial year ending (FYE) 2016 to FYE 2024



Source: Private rental affordability, England, Wales and Northern Ireland from the Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Northern Ireland private rents data are for advertised new lets.

Private rent affordability levels and trends differ between the countries:

- England has been above this affordability threshold (30% of income) for the entirety of the series (FYE 2016 to FYE 2024) with both increases and decreases since FYE 2020
- Wales has been below the threshold since FYE 2017 and stable since FYE 2020
- affordability ratios in Northern Ireland have remained below the threshold throughout the series, but modest rises since FYE 2020 have led it to converge with the affordability level in Wales

As explained in previous editions of our [private rental affordability statistical bulletin series](#), the most important factors of private rental affordability over time are that:

- incomes of private-renting households have fluctuated more than rents
- private renter incomes have increased faster than rents in all three countries over the series
- rents have increased more quickly since FYE 2021, resulting in different patterns of private rent affordability; incomes increased faster than rents in England, but increased slower than rents in Wales and Northern Ireland

## 4 . Affordability in English regions

In financial year ending (FYE) 2024, the most affordable region in England was the North East, with average rent prices of £641 per month, or 19.8% of private-renter household income. This was followed by the East Midlands, and Yorkshire and The Humber.

London was the least affordable, with rents of £1,957 per month, or 41.6% of private-renter household income.

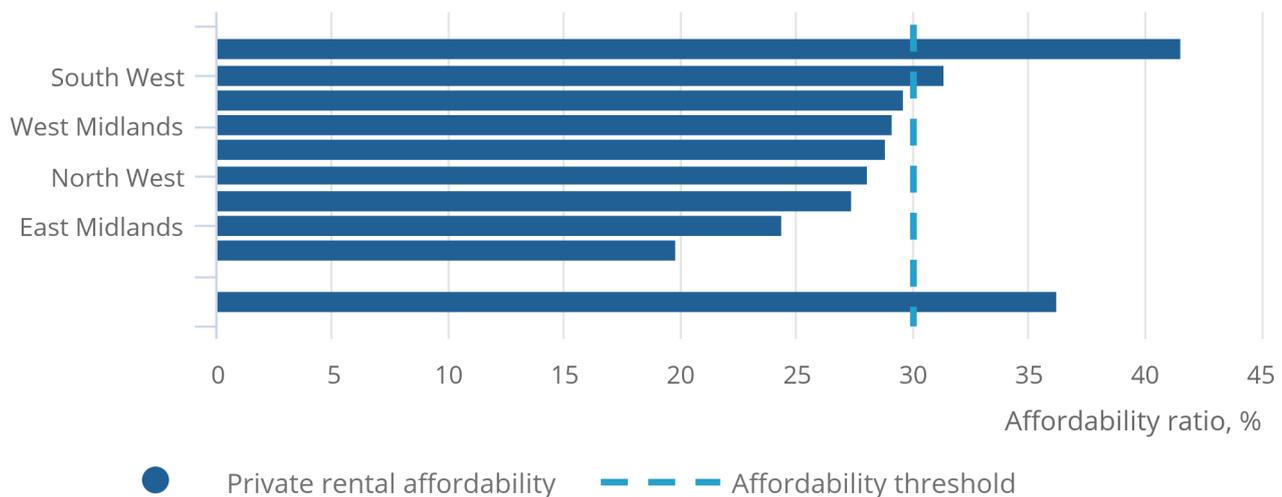
Figure 2 shows that the affordability ratio for England is heavily influenced by London, with the highest number of private renting households and the most expensive rents.

### Figure 2: Private rents were above the affordability threshold in FYE 2024 for England, mainly because of high ratios for London

Percentage of median private renting household income, equivalent to average rent, by region, financial year ending (FYE) 2024

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Percentage of median private renting household income, equivalent to average rent, by region, financial year ending (FYE) 2024



Source: Private rental affordability, England, Wales and Northern Ireland from the Office for National Statistics

The datasets accompanying this release show that average rents have been between 38.5% and 57.0% of private-rented household incomes in London since FYE 2016. In other regions they have remained between 19% and 36%.

Our [Housing affordability for local areas in England and Wales: 2020 article](#) and [Housing affordability in England and Wales: 2024 bulletin](#) show that there are wide variations within regions, and smaller geographies are useful for exploring affordability.

## 5 . Affordability in English and Welsh local authorities

Our [Private rent and house prices, UK: July 2025 bulletin](#) provides local authority rent price estimates for England and Wales. There are no official estimates of local authority household income by tenure, but for these purposes we have modelled them using local authority level estimates of workers' earnings, so we can publish the resulting affordability ratios.

As these are [official statistics in development](#) using modelled median private-renting household incomes for local areas in England and Wales, caution should be used, especially when looking at year-on-year changes, as we cannot say if differences between areas are [statistically significant](#). The method is described further in our [Private rental affordability, England and Wales Quality and Methodology Information \(QMI\)](#) and [Section 8: Data sources and quality](#).

In Financial Year Ending (FYE) 2024:

- out of 316 local authority (LA) areas in England and Wales, 217 (68.7%, or two-thirds) had an average rent that was 30% or below, similar to the previous year
- the most affordable LA was Hartlepool (15.9% of median income)
- the least affordable was Kensington and Chelsea (74.3% of median income), which has been the least affordable in all nine years

### Figure 3: The North East and East Midlands had the most affordable rents and the lowest range of affordability ratios

Range of private rental affordability ratios in local authority English regions and Wales, financial year ending (FYE) 2016 to FYE 2024

Figure 3 shows that in FYE 2024:

- of the nine English regions, London had the highest proportion of "unaffordable" LAs, all 32 areas being above the affordability threshold for eight of the nine years
- in other regions, more than half of the local authorities had rents below the affordability threshold
- of the 24 Welsh LAs, 22 (91%) had an average rent that was below the affordability threshold and two (9%) were above the affordability threshold (Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan)
- the North East and the East Midlands were the most affordable regions and had the lowest range of affordability ratios (12 and 13 percentage point difference between the most and least affordable LAs)

### Figure 4: Private rent is less affordable in and around London, commuter areas, and urban areas with students

Private rental affordability ratios, by local authority, England and Wales, financial year ending (FYE) 2016 to FYE 2024

Figure 4 shows that in FYE 2024:

- 7 of the 10 most affordable LAs were in the North East, with one each in Wales, the East Midlands, and the North West
- the top 10 LAs with the least affordable rents were all in London
- the LAs with the least affordable rents outside of London were either urban centres such as Bristol, Bath and North East Somerset, Brighton and Trafford, or areas with high numbers of commuters to London (Sevenoaks and Watford)

As described in [Section 8: Data sources and quality](#), this edition uses a different source of data to model incomes. This gives different patterns to the previous edition, partly because the Employee earnings in the UK: 2024 bulletin allows us to use the earnings of people who work in a specific area. Previously, we could only use the earnings of people who live in a specific area, the definition used in our [Earnings and employment from Pay As You Earn Real Time Information, UK \(RTI\) bulletin series](#).

## 6 . Data from other statistical producers

Our [Private rent and house prices, UK bulletin](#) includes more recent rent levels, or rents by property type and number of bedrooms.

Our [Household Costs Indices \(HCIs\) for UK household groups bulletin](#) shows changes in prices of goods and services by tenure type.

Our [UK private rented sector: 2018 article](#) brings together existing UK data sources on the private rented sector (PRS).

Our [Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators bulletin](#) includes a monthly UK measure of the [affordability of new tenancies](#) from a private supplier, PriceHubble. This shows that new tenancies cost 27.3% of tenant incomes in September 2023 compared with 36% in this series. The reasons for differences include use of means or medians for rent. Those estimates are less delayed than this series, showing a rise to 29.1% in the latest estimates from May 2025.

## 7 . Data on private rental affordability

[Private rental affordability, England, Wales and Northern Ireland](#)

Dataset | Released 18 August 2025

Percentage of total monthly household income spent on private rent by UK country, English region and local authority, financial years ending 2016 to 2024.

## 8 . Data sources and quality

All sources and methods are described in more detail in our [Private rental affordability, England, Wales and Northern Ireland QMI](#).

The estimates in this bulletin are not directly comparable with previous editions. We have changed the way we compare rents and incomes, using September based rents to better represent a financial year.

Furthermore, we have changed the source we use to model Local Authority level estimates. In the 2023 edition, we used our [Earnings and employment from Pay As You Earn Real Time Information, UK \(RTI\) series](#). From this edition onwards, we have chosen to use our [Employee earnings in the UK statistical bulletins](#), which use data from the Annual Survey for Hours and Earnings (ASHE).

## Private rents

Private rent prices are republished from our [Private rent and house prices UK: July 2025 bulletin](#), which contains the Price Index of Private Rents (PIPR). PIPR contains estimates for the UK and each individual UK country. This product is the successor to all our previous sources – our [Private rental market summary statistics in England \(PRMS\) bulletin](#), and data supplied by [Rent Officers Wales](#) and the [Northern Ireland Housing Executive](#).

This new series makes a number of improvements over PRMS, using administrative property attributes data. It therefore provides a statistically robust sample, covering new and existing rents. They are [official statistics in development](#) and are subject to revisions, including if improvements in the methodology are identified.

As described in our previous [Private rental affordability bulletin](#), the new average estimates are typically higher priced due to using a mean rather than a median. They cannot currently provide lower quartile rents that were available in PRMS. Further quality information for the rental statistics can be found in our [Price Index of Private Rents QMI](#).

In England and Wales, achieved rents data are collected for both new and existing tenancies. In Northern Ireland, rents data are for newly advertised lets.

We are aware of user demand to include UK and Scotland estimates into our future releases, and we are working towards it.

## Regional incomes

Incomes for private renting households are calculated using gross median income data from the [Department for Work and Pensions Family Resources Survey \(FRS\)](#), using the household file obtained from the [UK Data Service](#).

We only include private renting households for furnished or unfurnished properties. This ability to estimate income by tenure is an important strength of the FRS. We use a grossing factor weight to adjust for potential bias in responses to the FRS and to allow us to create regionally weighted estimates.

Sample sizes are low at the regional and Wales levels, and caution must be taken with year-on-year changes or differences between areas. It is not possible to provide the statistical significance of income estimates.

Further quality information for the income statistics can be found on the [FRS information page](#).

## Local authority incomes

To create the local authority level incomes, we have used earnings estimates from our [Employee earnings in the UK: 2024 bulletin](#), which uses data from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) to scale the FRS incomes. The data used in the Employee earnings in the UK bulletin are classified as accredited official statistics. For this release we used the most recent Employee earnings in the UK statistics at time of publication.

The earning data is provided by employers and is based on Pay As You Earn (PAYE) data. PAYE, and therefore ASHE, does not cover self-employment income or income from other sources such as pensions, property rental, and investments. We therefore have to assume that earnings and income levels have the same relationship in each area.

For each local authority, the respective FRS regional income is multiplied by the local authority (LA) to region ratio of earnings from ASHE to derive a modelled income. Unlike previous releases, the ASHE earnings for the modelled income are made from an average over two years. This was to better match the other sources' time scale. This income is then divided by the PIPR rent figure for the local authority to arrive at an affordability ratio.

$$FRS \text{ Regional income} \times \left( \frac{\text{Averaged ASHE LA earnings}}{\text{Averaged ASHE Regional earnings}} \right) = \text{Modelled income}$$
$$\frac{\text{Modelled income}}{\text{PIPR rent}} = \text{Affordability ratio}$$

For example, Hartlepool local authority in the North East. The FRS income for the average renting household in the North East in Financial Year Ending (FYE) 2024 was £3,244 per month. The annual ASHE LA earnings for Hartlepool was £32,313 in 2023 and £32,947 in 2024, giving average earnings of £32,630. The ASHE Regional earnings for the North East was £31,104 in 2023 and £32,960 in 2024, giving average earnings of £32,032.

$$£_{3,244} * \left( \frac{£_{32,630}}{£_{32,032}} \right) = £_{3,305}$$

In FYE 2024, the average renting household in Hartlepool could expect to pay £524 rent monthly. On a modelled household income of £3,305, this makes rent 15.9% of their income. This means Hartlepool in FYE 2024 was "affordable", as this is below the 30% threshold.

The resulting modelled incomes therefore come with additional [uncertainty](#), over and above that of the regional income estimates. Further quality information is available in our [methodology for monthly earnings and employment estimates](#).

## Private rental affordability

To show the affordability of private renting, we calculate what proportion of monthly income the monthly rent is equivalent to. We deem an area to have private rent that is affordable if it is equivalent to 30% or less of the median income of private renting households. We are not able to obtain median rents, and this reduces the comparability with the median incomes used.

A limitation of the affordability calculation is that, while the PIPR does adjust for property size, the income data do not adjust for household size. For example, while a one-bedroom flat in a region may be affordable for a family, it may not be suitable. These differences will also vary between countries and regions.

To a large extent, this private-rental affordability measure covers households who have already succeeded in affording a private-rented home – as most homes are rented through agencies or landlords who often apply an upfront affordability test. The flexibility of the private rental market often enables households to adjust their rent when their financial circumstances change.

Other estimates of private rental affordability available for countries of the UK are listed under the "Coherence and comparability" subsection of Section 5: Quality characteristics of the data in our [Private rental affordability, England and Wales Quality and Methodology Information \(QMI\)](#). These include estimates from the [English Housing Survey](#), which shows the median proportion of income spent on housing by tenure. They also include the [Wellbeing of Wales: national indicator 49](#), which shows the income spent on housing costs by tenure.

## 9 . Related links

### [Housing affordability in England and Wales: 2024](#)

Bulletin | Released 24 March 2025

Data on house prices and annual earnings to calculate affordability ratios for national and subnational geographies in England and Wales on an annual basis.

### [Housing purchase affordability, UK: 2023](#)

Bulletin | Released 9 December 2024

Ratios of house prices to annual disposable household incomes, by decile, for countries of the UK and regions of England. Part of our additional measures of housing affordability series.

### [UK private rented sector: 2018](#)

Article | Released 18 January 2019

Brings together existing UK data sources on the private rented sector (PRS) to assess comparability, coherence and data limitations.

### [Rent affordability in the affordable housing sector: literature review](#)

Article | Released 17 June 2019

Information on definitions and measures of social rent affordability, the relationship between housing and poverty, rents in the affordable housing sector, the role of the mid-market rent sector and policies with an impact on rent affordability.

### [Private rent and house prices, UK](#)

Bulletin | Released 16 July 2025

The Price Index of Private Rents (PIPR) measures private rent inflation for new and existing tenancies. The UK House Price Index measures house price inflation.

### [Family Resources Survey: financial year 2023 to 2024](#)

Bulletin | Released 27 March 2025

An annual report that provides facts and figures about the incomes and living circumstances of households and families in the UK.

## 10 . Cite this statistical bulletin

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