

## Topic summary : Housing :

dwelling type, tenure, rooms, overcrowding and under-occupancy

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Planning Information, Planning and Building Standards,  
Services for Communities, The City of Edinburgh Council

• EDINBURGH •  
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*This report is based on 2011 Census data published by National Records of Scotland (formerly General Register Office Scotland)*

*Whilst reasonable care has been taken in the analysis and presentation of this data, the report is offered for general guidance only and users should undertake their own verification if used for business critical purposes.*

*Detailed Census results together with further information on definitions, methodologies etc. are available from the 'Scotland's Census 2011' web site : <http://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/en/>*

2011 Census :  
**Topic Summary : Housing**

**List of Contents**

paras.

1 – 4	Introduction
5 – 13	Summary : key findings
14 – 25	Dwelling type
26 – 37	Tenure
38 – 43	Rooms
44 – 48	Occupancy rating

## Introduction

1. This report summarises key characteristics and trends for Edinburgh in respect of housing stock as revealed by the newly released findings from the 2011 Census.
2. It concentrates on city level data and examines the main changes which have occurred since the last Census in 2001. It also compares Edinburgh with other cities and local authorities both in Scotland and England and Wales.
3. Note that local level characteristics and variations between different parts of Edinburgh are summarised elsewhere in a series of 'profiles' for council wards, neighbourhood partnership areas and community council areas.
4. The main findings are set out below under the following headings:
  - dwelling type
  - tenure
  - rooms
  - occupancy rate

## Summary: key findings

5. Edinburgh's housing is relatively **high density in character**, with a large proportion of tenements and flats. This has helped to maintain a **compact city** where residents are mostly within easy reach of jobs, shops and services, which in turn encourages sustainable travel modes including walking, cycling and public transport.
6. The compact city theme is reinforced by other findings from the census. For example, see the Council's separate census topic report on Transport and Travel, which shows how sustainable travel has been increasing well in excess of the national trend; also the report on population distribution and density in Edinburgh, which shows how the population in and around the centre of the city has been increasing.
7. The large number of households living in flats also creates unique challenges, for example in terms of waste collection and recycling, adaptability for an ageing population, property maintenance, and potential inter-neighbour disputes (noise, smell etc.).
8. Some 147,500 households, or nearly two-thirds of the total, live in **flatted accommodation** (flats, tenements, maisonettes, apartments, bedsits etc.). This is an increase of 14% from the 2001 figure of 129,500.
9. Despite the prevalence of flatted accommodation, three quarters of households live in dwellings with four or more rooms. This suggests a reasonable availability of good size housing in the city. Based on conventional **occupancy ratings** there is little evidence of over-crowding. Indeed the majority of households in Edinburgh (132,000 or 59%) live in dwellings which are considered

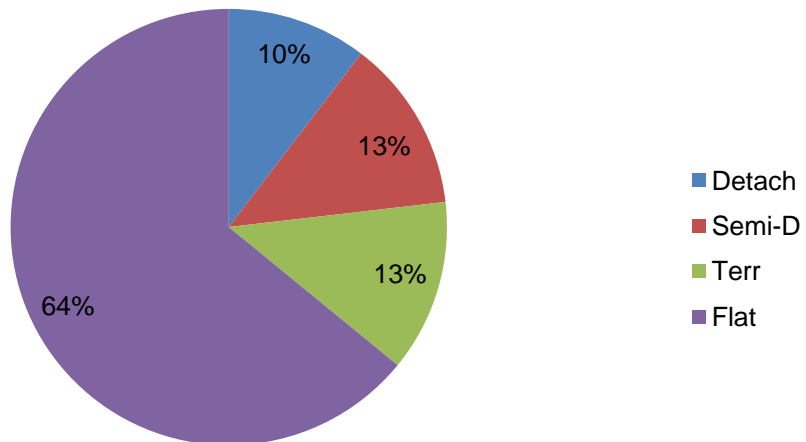
to be '**under-occupied**' (i.e. which have an occupancy rating of -1 or less). Under-occupancy is now the norm for the majority of households throughout Scotland. (See main report for further details on occupancy rating definitions and methodology).

10. However, Edinburgh has the lowest under-occupancy level among the four largest Scottish cities. Furthermore, occupancy ratings have not indicated a shift towards under-occupancy as much as in other Scottish local authorities. The average number of **rooms per person** in dwellings is slightly below the national average (2.2 in Edinburgh compared with 2.3 in Scotland), and Edinburgh is the only local authority in Scotland not to have seen an increase in the number of rooms per person since 2001.
11. Most households in Edinburgh (59% or 131,500) **own their own home**. However, the number of owner-occupier households fell by 6% between 2001 and 2011.
12. The number of households in **social rented accommodation** (Council and other) has grown slightly from 36,700 in 2001 to 38,000 in 2011, and now accounts for 17% of all accommodation. Within this figure there has been a decline in Council-rented housing offset by an increase in other social housing.
13. However, **renting from private landlords** has grown even more rapidly, almost doubling from 25,600 in 2001 to 49,900 in 2011 and hence overtaking social renting in volume terms. 22% of all households in the city now rent their accommodation from private landlords.

## **Dwelling type**

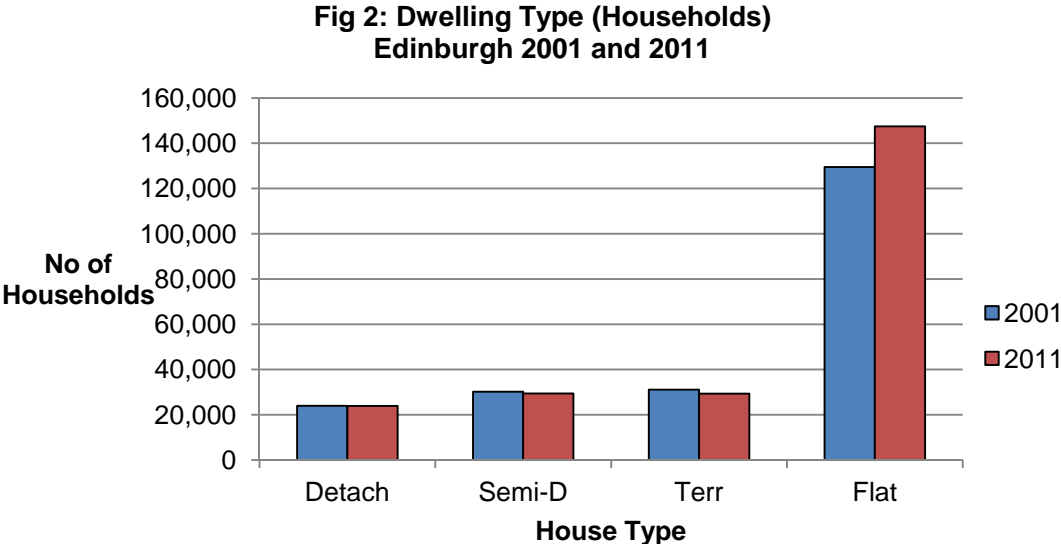
14. The 2011 Census shows that virtually all (99.9%) of the 230,000 households in Edinburgh live in an unshared dwelling, that is all the rooms including the kitchen, bathroom and toilet are behind a door that only one household can use. This pattern mirrors the situation across the rest of Scotland. Only 78 (less than 0.1%) of all households occupy shared dwellings, i.e. where more than one household has access to use the same dwelling space.
15. Figure 1 shows that the most common dwelling type in Edinburgh is flatted accommodation. This is a broad category which encompasses purpose-built tenements, flats, maisonettes and '4 in a block' housing as well as bedsits, apartments, flats converted from business or other premises, and flats within operational business premises. This type of accommodation is home for 64% of all households in Edinburgh, amounting to some 147,500. Terraced and semi-detached housing each account for a further 13% of households (approximately 29,400 in each case), while the remaining 10% live in detached houses.

**Fig 1: Dwelling Type (Households)  
Edinburgh 2011**



16. The proportion of households in flatted accommodation is higher than anywhere else in Scotland apart from Glasgow (72%) and is well in excess of the Scottish average (37%), which itself is higher than the average for England & Wales (22%). Glasgow and Edinburgh have far higher proportions living in flats than any major city in England or Wales, including Inner London (51%).
17. Over 7,600 flats in Edinburgh are conversions of other properties not originally built as flats (including bed-sits etc.). This is a larger number than in any other Scottish local authority, although Argyll & Bute has the highest proportion of such conversions.
18. The pattern for non-flatted housing (i.e. detached, semi-detached and terraced housing) is the inverse of the above, amounting to just 36% in total compared with a Scottish average of 63%.
19. Edinburgh has the 3<sup>rd</sup> lowest proportion of detached houses in Scotland (10%), above West Dunbartonshire (9%) and Glasgow (4%). This is less than half the Scottish average (22%). It has the 2<sup>nd</sup> lowest proportion of semi-detached housing, marginally above Glasgow (both cities 13%, cf. Scottish average 22%).
20. The city is ranked 8<sup>th</sup> lowest in Scotland for terraced housing, with Glasgow and a number of rural local authorities falling below the Edinburgh figure of 13%
21. Neighbouring Lothian local authorities tend to complement Edinburgh's housing stock and have relatively high proportions of semi-detached and terraced housing in particular. For example 29% of all households in Midlothian and 27% in East Lothian live in semi-detached properties (ranking 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> respectively out of 32 Scottish local authorities). West Lothian and Midlothian have higher proportions of terraced housing than any other Scottish local authorities (30% and 29% respectively cf Scottish average of 19%).

22. Since 2001 the number of households living in flats has increased by 14% from 129,500 to 147,500. Meanwhile there has been a 3% fall in the number of households in other (non-flatted) housing (see Figure 2). It is suspected, however, that much of this decline may be due to anomalies in the previous (2001) census, whereby people living in 4-in-a-block properties interpreted that they were living in semi-detached houses rather than flats. This was tightened up in 2011 to clarify that such properties are classified as flats. (This change will also have helped to boost the number of households living in flats).

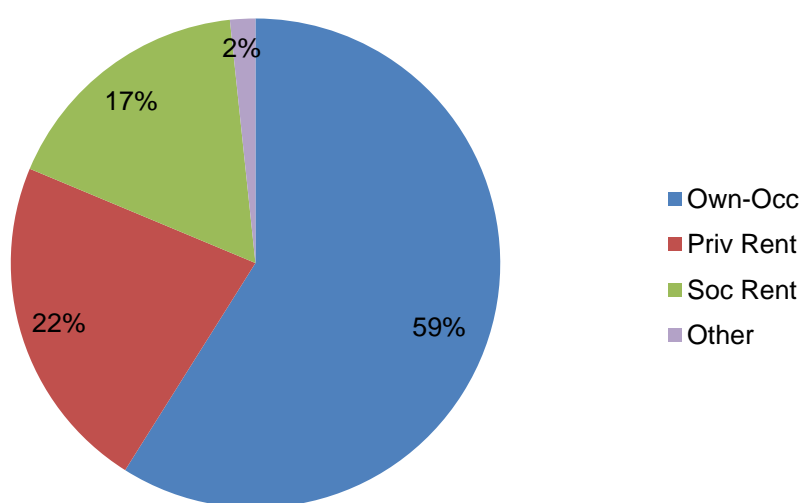


23. Based on information provided by census enumerators on properties for which no census questionnaire was returned, it is estimated that there are 7,100 unoccupied household spaces or 3 per cent of the total of 230,000 household spaces. Of these, 5,000 are assessed as being vacant, for example new builds or other accommodation awaiting new occupants, with 2,100 classed as second homes or holiday homes.
24. Edinburgh and the surrounding Lothian authorities all have low vacancy rates compared with the Scottish average (Edinburgh 2.2%, East Lothian 2.0%, Midlothian 1.8%, West Lothian 1.8% cf. Scotland 2.6%). The highest vacancy rates – all in the region of 4% - are in Inverclyde, Moray and Argyll & Bute.
25. Despite being the second largest tourist destination in the UK, the proportion of 2<sup>nd</sup> homes / holiday homes in Edinburgh is relatively low at just 0.9%, compared to a Scottish average of 1.5%. Three Scottish local authority areas have a far higher rate than anywhere else in Scotland : Argyll & Bute (9.0%), Eilean Siar (6.0%) and Highland (5.7%).

## Tenure

26. The majority of households in Edinburgh, 131,500 or 59%, live in owner-occupied accommodation (see Figure 3). This is slightly below the Scottish figure of 61%. However home ownership levels in Edinburgh are higher than in the other three largest Scottish cities (Glasgow 45%, Dundee 50% and Aberdeen 57%).
27. The owner-occupier figure incorporates 71,000 households who own their property with a mortgage or loan (32%) and 60,500 who own their properties outright (27%).

**Figure 3: Tenure of Households (% composition)  
Edinburgh 2011**

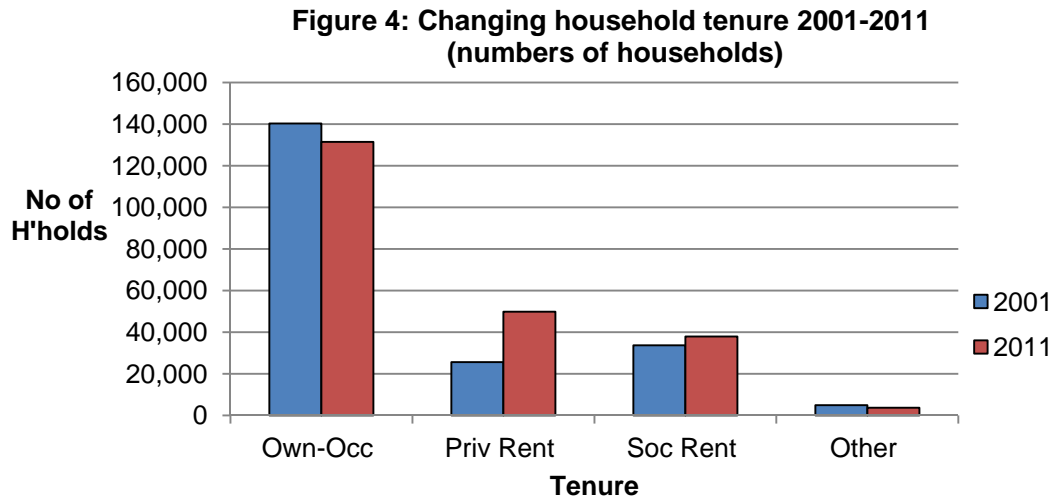


28. Well over one fifth of households (49,900 or 22%) in Edinburgh now live in privately rented accommodation (Figure 3). This includes 45,700 who rent from a private residential landlord or a letting agency, and 4,200 who have other non-social renting arrangements (e.g. renting through work). Edinburgh has the highest proportion of households in private rented accommodation in Scotland – approaching twice the national average of 12% and significantly higher than the other large Scottish cities (Dundee 19%, Aberdeen 17%, Glasgow 17%).
29. Demand for private rented accommodation has grown rapidly since the 2001 census, when it stood at just 12.6%. There are likely to be a number of factors contributing to this. Since the onset of the banking crisis in 2008 and the subsequent recession many people (in particular potential first time buyers) have struggled to raise a sufficiently large deposit to secure a mortgage. The strength of the private rental market has brought in an increasing number of buy-to-let investors over recent years, leading to an increased availability of private rental homes for tenants. With lengthy waits for social housing accommodation, the increased speed at which private rented accommodation can be obtained continues to sway many people who are looking to rent. The universities in Edinburgh have also traditionally created significant demand although this market



is now being addressed to some extent through the provision of purpose-built student accommodation by the relevant institutions.

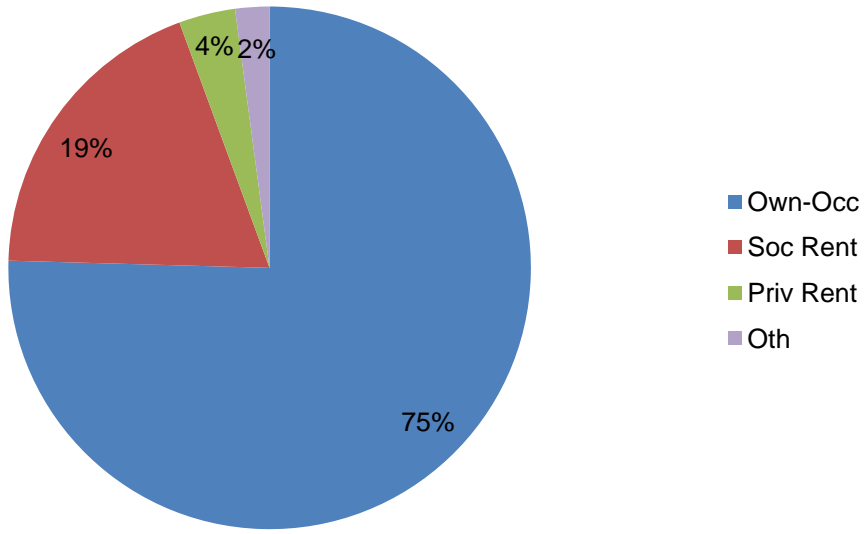
30. Since 2001 private renting has in fact become more prevalent than social renting in Edinburgh. (Social renting includes renting from the Council and other registered social landlords). Although the social rented sector has grown slightly since 2001 (from 36,700 to 38,000 households), it has been outpaced by the growth in private renting, which almost doubled from 25,600 households in 2001 to 49,900 in 2011. This is illustrated in Figure 4 below.



31. In total, 17.0% of Edinburgh households now rent from a social landlord (Figure 3). This is a very small increase in proportional terms from the 2001 figure of 16.5%. The level of social renting in Edinburgh is well below the Scottish average of 24%, and in fact Edinburgh has the 5<sup>th</sup> lowest proportion of any Scottish local authority (above East Renfrewshire, East Dunbartonshire, Orkney Islands and Aberdeenshire).
32. The 17% social renting figure includes some 9% who rent from the local authority (20,300 households) and 8% who rent from other social landlords (17,700 households). Since 2001 there has been a shift from the former to the latter, with 12% renting from the Council at the time of the 2001 Census. However, this decrease in local authority renting has been less than in many other parts of Scotland. Across Scotland as a whole the proportion of households renting from the local authority fell significantly during this period from 22% to 14%.
33. Six Scottish local authorities in Scotland are recorded as having no council tenants, as a result of stock transfers to housing associations at various times in the past. This clearly boosts the 'other' social renting sector in the same local authority areas (Glasgow, Inverclyde, Scottish Borders, Dumfries & Galloway, Argyll & Bute, and Eilean Siar).

- 34. The number of Edinburgh households renting from non-Council social landlords has grown from 11,850 in 2001 to 17,650 in 2011. This is perhaps an indication that registered social landlords have helped to fill the gap caused by the decline in the availability of local authority housing (partly resulting from 'right-to-buy' sales to tenants).
- 35. The 2011 Census recorded that 1% of households in Edinburgh live in 'rent free' accommodation.
- 36. The census provides analysis of tenure where the 'household reference person' (previously the 'head of household') is of retirement age, i.e. 65+. For Edinburgh this reveals that three quarters in this group are owner-occupiers (see Figure 5). The city has the 5<sup>th</sup> highest proportion of owner-occupier households in this age group in Scotland. Glasgow has the lowest proportion (51%).
- 37. A significant proportion (nearly one fifth) of retirement age households live in social housing. The proportion in Glasgow is considerably higher, at 44%.

**Figure 5: Tenure of Households  
where the Household Reference Person is aged 65+  
Edinburgh 2011**

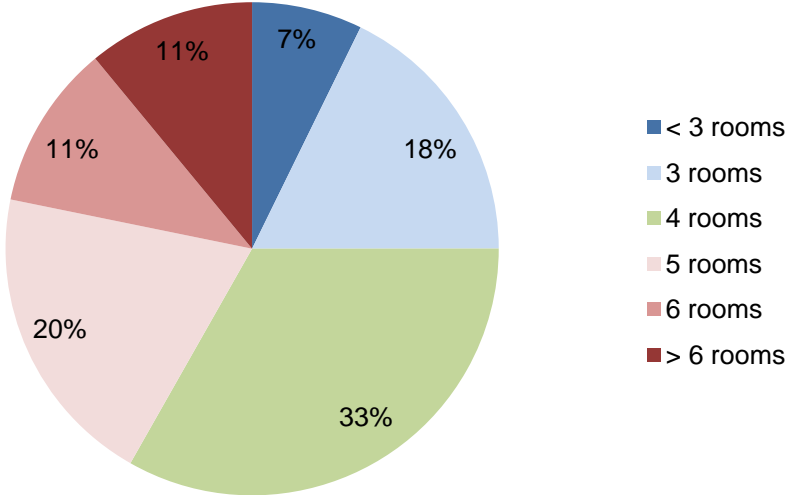


**Rooms**

- 38. The Census asked respondents to state how many rooms were available for use only by their household. This was based on a very specific definition of 'rooms' which includes kitchens, living rooms, utility rooms, bedrooms, studies and conservatories but excludes bathrooms, toilets, halls or landings and rooms that could only be used for storage such as cupboards. If two rooms had been converted into one, this was counted as one room.

39. Each household in Edinburgh has an average of 4.6 rooms compared with 5.0 for Scotland. In Scotland, figures for local authorities ranged from 4.2 in Glasgow City to 5.7 in both Aberdeenshire and Eilean Siar. Figure 6 shows that three quarters of households in Edinburgh live in dwellings of four rooms or more.

**Fig 6: Proportion of households with different number of rooms available for their exclusive use, Edinburgh 2011**



40. In common with the other main cities in Scotland, Edinburgh has a much lower proportion of households occupying dwellings with 5 rooms or more and a higher proportion with fewer rooms. For example, it has the second highest proportion of households occupying properties with only two rooms behind Glasgow.

41. The average number of rooms per household in Edinburgh has fallen slightly since 2001, when it was 5 rooms per household.

42. Figure 7 shows that since 2001 there have been increases in all sizes categories of rooms per household except one room. The most significant increases have been in the smaller size categories (three and four rooms per household). This trend reflects, at least in part, the continuing fall in average household size.

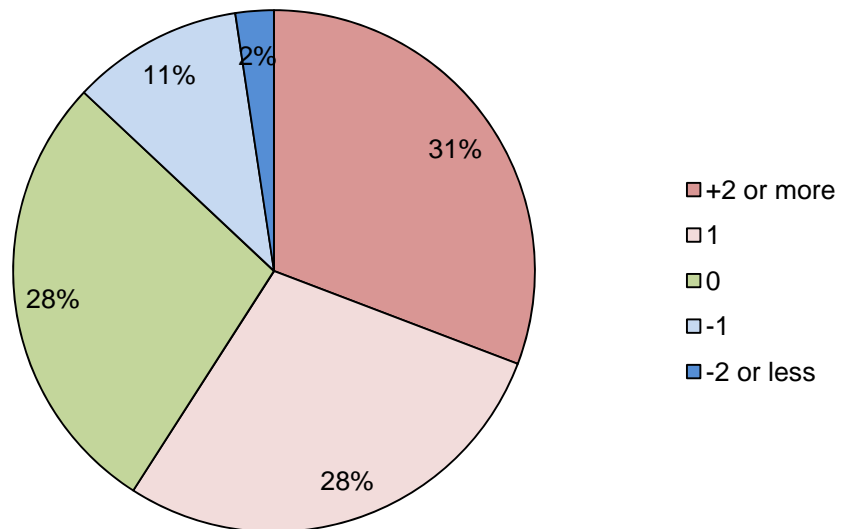
43. The average number of rooms *per person* in Edinburgh (2.2) is slightly lower than the Scotland figure of 2.3. Averages range from 2.1 in Glasgow City to 2.6 in Eilean Siar and Orkney Islands (Figure 8). Edinburgh enjoys a higher room provision compared with the other three largest Scottish cities. However, it is the only council area in Scotland where the average number of rooms per person has not increased since 2001. (Note: these ratios of rooms per person are based solely on the population living in households, i.e. excluding those who live in communal establishments).



occupancy rating of +1 means that there is one room more than required for the people living in the household. The occupancy rating is calculated by subtracting the notional number of rooms required from the actual number of rooms. In deriving the notional number of rooms a household requires, a standard formula is used which takes account of the ages and genders of household members and their relationships to each other.

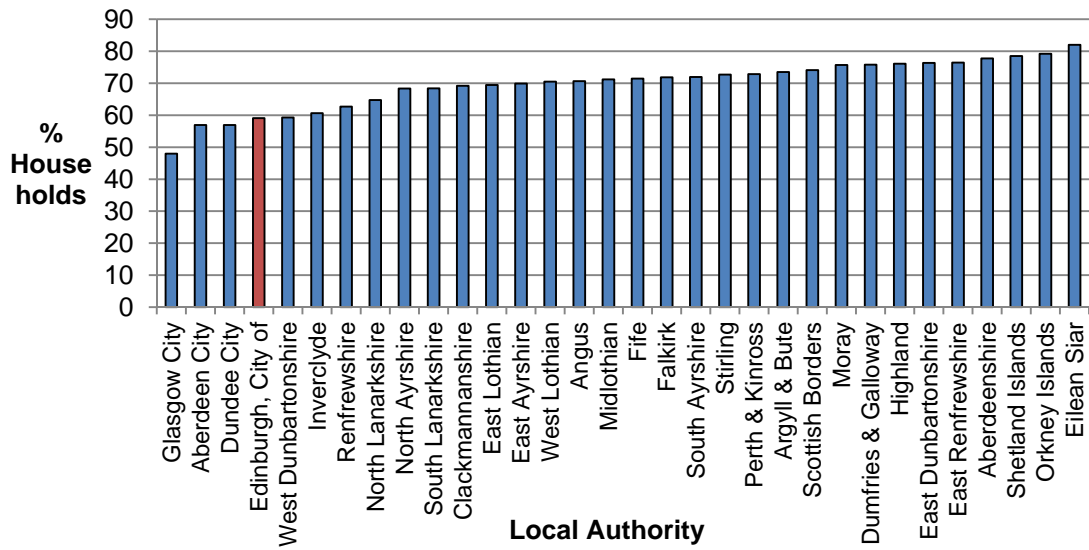
45. Figure 9 shows that the majority of households in Edinburgh (59% or 132,000) are living in dwellings which are considered to be under-occupied in 2011. This is lower than the Scotland wide proportion of 66%. The figure comprises 63,000 (28%) with an occupancy rating of +1, and 69,000 (31%) with an occupancy rating of +2 or more.

**Fig 9: Density of persons per room (occupancy rating)  
Edinburgh 2011**



46. A relatively small proportion of households in Edinburgh are living in dwellings which are considered to be 'over-occupied'. Only 29,000 (13%) of households in Edinburgh are living in dwellings which have an occupancy rating of -1 or less although this is still higher than the figure for Scotland as a whole which is 9%. The figure comprises 24,000 (11%) with an occupancy rating of -1, and 5,000 (2%) with an occupancy rating of -2 or less. 62,000 or 28% of households in the city have a 'neutral' occupancy rating, i.e. they are neither under or over-occupied. This is higher than the Scottish average of 25%.
47. This pattern of occupancy is typical of Scotland's larger cities. As might be expected, the lowest proportion of under-occupied households (i.e. occupancy rating of +1 or more) are in the cities. Figure 10 shows that Edinburgh has the fourth lowest under-occupancy rate behind Dundee, Aberdeen and Glasgow. In contrast, the more rural authorities have much higher rates, Eilean Siar having the highest.

**Figure 10: Occupancy rating of +1 or more  
% of households in under-occupied accommodation Scotland**



48. Since 2001, occupancy ratings in Edinburgh have not changed significantly (see Figure 11), although there has been a very slight shift towards under-occupation. However, the proportion of households with an occupancy rating of +2 (indicating over-occupation) increased at a lower rate in Edinburgh compared with the rest of Scotland over this period i.e. 0.69% compared with 5% during this period.

**Fig 11: Occupancy rating Edinburgh, 2001 and 2011**

