



1. Purpose of this paper

This paper reports on key findings from the 2011 Census on bedroom occupancy ratings for households in Poole. It examines, in detail, overcrowding and under-occupation in households in Poole by tenure and household composition. It can be regarded as supplementing the previously published Census Theme Papers on *Housing Tenure* and *Families and Households*, both of which can be viewed [here](#).

2. Key Points:

- Of the 63,530 households in Poole, 1,854 (2.9%) were considered to be overcrowded, having fewer bedrooms than the notional number recommended by the bedroom standard. (The corresponding figure for England & Wales was 4.7%.)
- Overcrowding was most common among rented households, with 7.5% of socially rented households and 5.9% of privately rented households in overcrowded homes, compared to only 1.4% among owner occupied households.
- There were 45,769 (72.0%) households with at least one spare bedroom, of which 23,486 had one spare bedroom and further 22,283 had two or more spare bedrooms.
- More than 8 in 10 (83.7%) owner occupied households had at least one spare bedroom, compared with 49.6% among privately rented households and only 33.4% among socially rented households.
- Nearly three in five (59.1%) of socially rented households had the notional number of bedrooms for the size of the household and composition of people living there. This was the highest across the tenure categories.
- Of the overcrowded households in Poole over two thirds (68.9%, 1,277) were households with dependent children.

3. Introduction

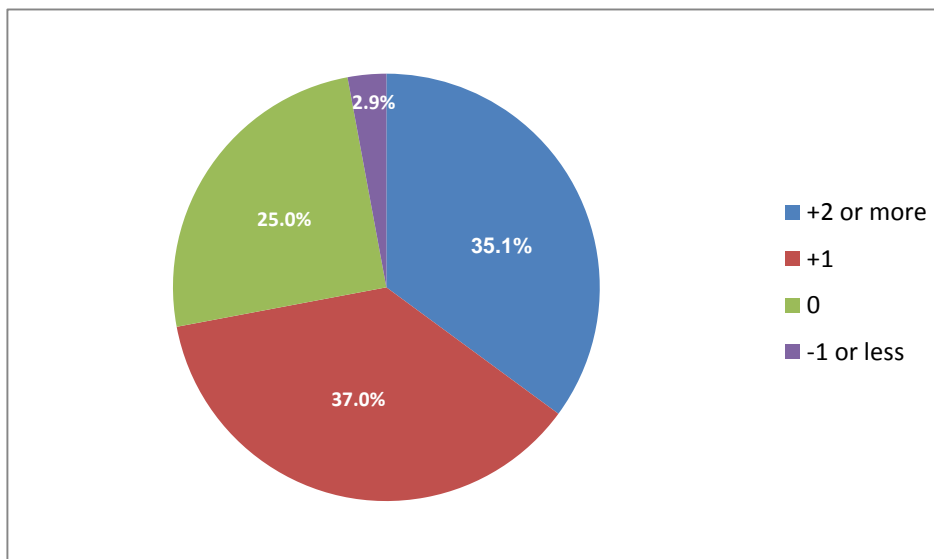
Information on bedroom occupancy rating was collected in the 2011 Census for the first time. For each household, one of four bedroom occupancy ratings is derived by subtracting the notional number of bedrooms recommended by the bedroom standard (a recommended notional number of bedrooms for each household, based on the size of the household, age, sex, marital status and relationship among members of the household) from the number of bedrooms actually available. Interpretation of occupancy ratings is as follows:

- Occupancy rating of zero: implies that a household has the precise notional number of bedrooms recommended by the bedroom standard, for the number and composition of people living within the household.
- Occupancy rating of -1 or less: indicates that a household has at least one bedroom too few for the number and composition of people living in the household and is considered overcrowded by the bedroom standard.
- Occupancy rating of +1: indicates that a household has one bedroom more than is recommended for the number and composition of people living in the household and is considered under-occupied by the bedroom standard.
- Occupancy rating of +2 or more: indicates that a household has two or more bedrooms more than is recommended for the number and composition of people living in the household and is also considered under-occupied.

The [Appendix](#) contains detailed information on the bedroom standard.

Figure 2 shows the proportion of all households in Poole having various occupancy ratings:

Figure 1. Occupancy ratings, all households in Poole



Source: Census 2011

4. Occupancy ratings by tenure

We now examine the distribution of households within each tenure category, across the various occupancy ratings.

Table 1: Count and percentage of households by occupancy rating for bedrooms and tenure

	Occupancy rating				All
	+2 or more	+1	0	-1 or less	
All households, count	22283	23486	15907	1854	63530
All households, %	35.1	37.0	25.0	2.9	100
Owned (including shared ownership), count	20251	17648	6708	652	45259
Owned (including shared ownership), %	44.7	39.0	14.8	1.4	100
Social rented, count	646	1797	4330	551	7324
Social rented, %	8.8	24.5	59.1	7.5	100
Private rented or living rent free, count	1386	4041	4869	651	10947
Private rented or living rent free, %	12.7	36.9	44.5	5.9	100

Source: Census 2011

Under-occupation within Tenure Categories

- **More than 8 in 10 owner occupied households have a spare bedroom**

More than 8 in 10 owner occupied households (83.7%, 37,899), had at least one spare bedroom. This compares with half of households privately rented (49.6%, 5,427) and just over one third in socially rented households (33.4%, 2,443)

There was a large difference in the percentage of households with two or more spare bedrooms across the tenure categories, with owner occupied households, at 44.7%, more than three times as likely as private renters (12.7%) and more than four times as likely as social renters (10.9%) to be in this category.

The percentage of households with only one spare bedroom was less varied across the tenure categories, at 39.0% of owner occupied households, 36.9% of private renters and 24.5% of social renters.

Reasons why owner occupied households are more likely to be under-occupied compared to rented households could include:

- Some home owners whose children have moved out of the family home may feel more inclined to continue living there than other tenures in this situation. They may feel a stronger “bond” with the property, or see it as an investment.

- It may be more difficult and expensive for owner occupied households to change homes than for rented households to do so.

Overcrowding within Tenure Categories

- **Nearly two thirds of all overcrowded households in Poole were either privately or socially rented**

Of the 1854 households with an occupancy rating of -1 or less, nearly two-thirds (64.8%) were rented, while the remaining 35.2% were owner occupied. Among those renting, there were 651 households in the private sector and a further 551 in the social sector.

Within the tenure categories, owner occupied households had the lowest percentage of overcrowded households, at only 1.4% while privately and socially rented households had 5.9% and 7.5%, respectively.

The reasons for the prevalence of overcrowding among rented households compared with owner occupied may include:

- An inability of these households to afford to rent homes with more bedrooms.
- Some renters may decide to remain in cheaper, smaller homes while they save towards a mortgage.
- There may a shortage of suitable properties for larger families seeking to rent.

Zero occupancy rating within Tenure Categories

- **Three out of five socially rented households had the recommended number of bedrooms for their size and composition**

One in four households (25.0%), 15,907 in Poole had an occupancy rating of zero, indicating that they had the notional number of bedrooms for the composition of people in the households, based on the bedroom standard. Of this number, 9,199 (57.8%) were rented, while 6,708 (42.2%) were owner occupied.

Within the tenure categories, nearly three out of five over half (59.1%) of households socially renting had zero occupancy rating, the highest among the tenure categories. Just over 4 in 10 privately rented households (44.5%) had zero occupancy rating, while owner occupied households had the lowest percentage of households (14.8%) in this category.

Reasons why socially and privately rented households were the most common in this occupancy rating category compared with owner occupiers could include:

- Social housing is allocated on the basis of need.

- Private renters may choose not to pay the additional cost of having unused bedrooms; in addition, they may find it easier to find alternative accommodation should their circumstances change.

5. Occupancy ratings by household composition

We now examine the distribution of household types within each tenure for different occupancy ratings.

Household composition among under-occupied households

We begin by examining those households with at least one spare bedroom, i.e. the occupancy rating is one or more. This is summarised in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Household composition by tenure for households with at least one spare bedroom (Percentages)

	All households	Owner occupied	Socially rented	Privately rented
With dependent children	20	19	19	23
Lone Parent	3	2	9	7
Couple	16	16	9	15
Other	1	1	1	1
Without dependent children	80	81	81	77
One person	31	29	42	37
Lone Parent	3	3	7	1
Couple	43	46	30	32
Other	3	3	3	7
TOTAL	100	100	100	100

Source: Census 2011

Of the 45,769 households with spare bedrooms in Poole 2011, four out of five were households without dependent children. Couples without dependent children (43%) and one-person households (31%) were the most common household types with spare bedrooms.

Across all tenure categories, households without dependent children were the most likely to have spare bedrooms than those with dependent children, however, there were differences in the most common household type. Couples without dependent children (46%) were the most common household type among owner occupied households with spare bedrooms. This supports the conjecture made earlier that when children leave owner occupied homes the owners are more likely to continue living there than other tenures. Note that one person

households were the most common among socially (42%) and privately (37%) rented household to have a spare bedroom.

Household Composition among overcrowded households

We now examine overcrowding, i.e. those households with an occupancy rating of -1 or less. This is summarised in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Household composition by tenure for overcrowded households (Percentages)

	All households	Owner occupied	Socially rented	Privately rented
With dependent children	69	69	74	65
Lone Parent	17	9	26	17
Couple	30	32	31	27
Other	22	27	17	20
Without dependent children	31	31	26	35
One person	0	0	0	0
Lone Parent	7	8	9	3
Couple	6	8	7	2
Other	19	16	10	30
TOTAL	100	100	100	100

Source: Census 2011

Of the 1,854 overcrowded households in Poole over two thirds (69%) contained dependent children while the remaining 31% were without dependent children.

Couples with dependent children were the most common household type among overcrowded households accounting for 3 in 10 (30%) such households while lone parents with dependent children accounted for 17% of such households them and other households with dependent children accounted for just over one in five (22%) of them.

Among overcrowded households without dependent children, those in the 'other' household category were the most common household type, accounting for nearly a fifth (19%) of overcrowded households. This household type includes multi-person and student households.

Of all socially rented households that were overcrowded nearly three in four (74%) had dependent children, and while nearly 7 in ten (69%) of overcrowded owner occupied households had dependent children. However, for privately rented households, only 65% of those overcrowded had dependent children.

Among overcrowded households that were socially rented, couples with dependent children (31%) was the most common household type, whereas 'other households' without dependent children, at 30%, was the most common household type among those privately rented. Couples with dependent children were also the most common household type among overcrowded owner occupied households, accounting for 32% of them.

Household Composition among those with zero occupancy rating

Finally in this section we examine those households which have exactly the number of bedrooms deemed suitable by the bedroom standard. This is summarised in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Household composition by tenure for households with the "deemed" number of required bedrooms (Percentages)

	All households	Owner occupied	Socially rented	Privately rented
With dependent children	40	43	30	45
Lone Parent	12	6	14	19
Couple	25	32	15	24
Other	3	5	2	3
Without dependent children	60	57	70	55
One person	31	21	50	29
Lone Parent	5	7	5	3
Couple	15	18	13	12
Other	8	10	3	11
TOTAL	100	100	100	100

Source: Census 2011

The most common type of household in Poole with zero-occupancy rating was one person households: (31%) of all zero-occupancy rated households were in this category. This was followed by couples with dependent children, who accounted for one in four (25%) of such households.

The most common household types with zero occupancy rating vary across tenure categories. Among owner occupied households, one in three (32%) of households with this occupancy rating were couples with dependent children. One in two (50%) of households in the socially rented sector with zero-occupancy rating were single person households.

6. Occupancy ratings and the elderly

We now examine households with an occupancy rating of two or more that are occupied by at most two persons all of whom are aged at least 65. Our motivation for carrying out this exercise is to examine the conjecture that a significant proportion of households in Poole are in large houses occupied by elderly residents with more spare bedrooms than they “need”.

There were 22,283 households in Poole with at least two spare bedrooms. One in three of these (7,417) were households with at most two persons all of whom were aged 65 or over. Of these, 95% were owner occupied households. Table 5 summarises the data.

Table 5: “Elderly” households with at least two spare bedrooms

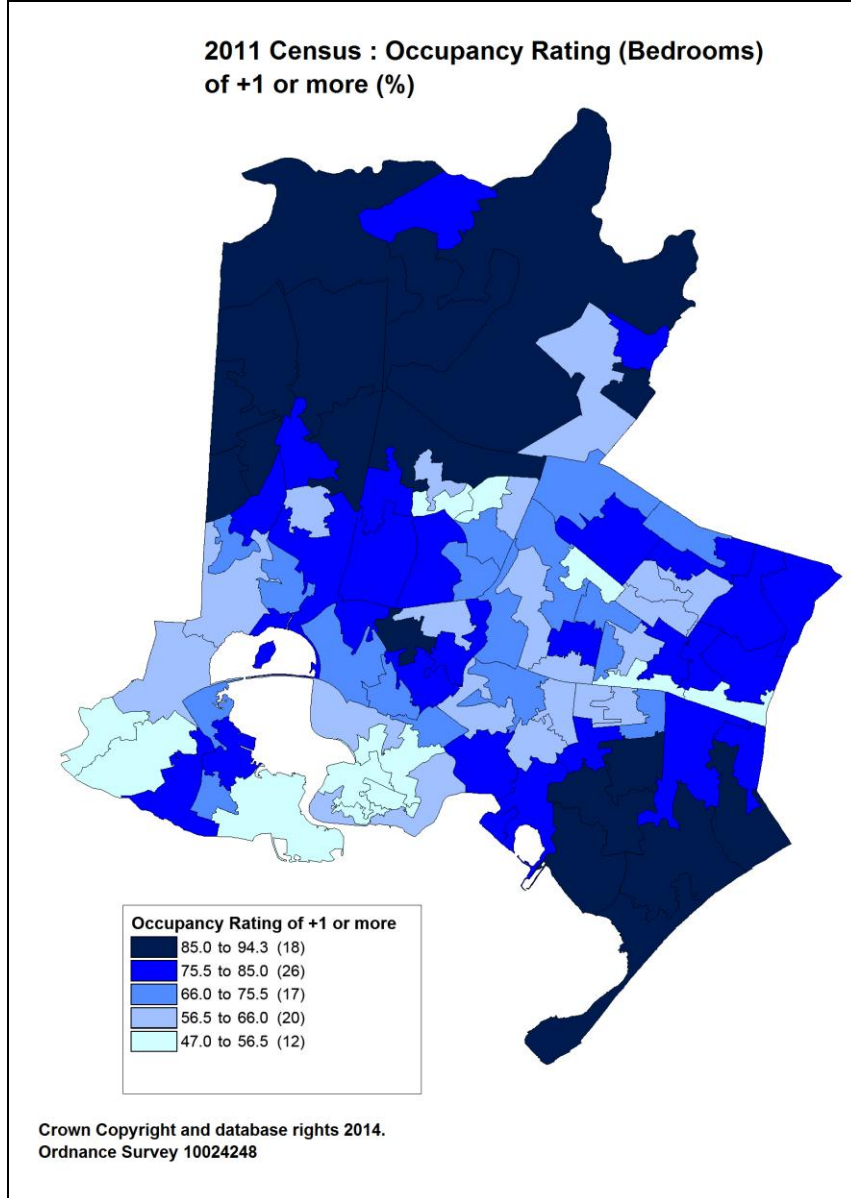
	All households	Owner occupied	Socially rented	Privately rented
Single person aged 65+	3384	3123	125	136
Couple, each person aged 65+	4033	3896	69	68
TOTAL	7417	7019	194	204

Source: Census 2011

7. Spatial Analysis

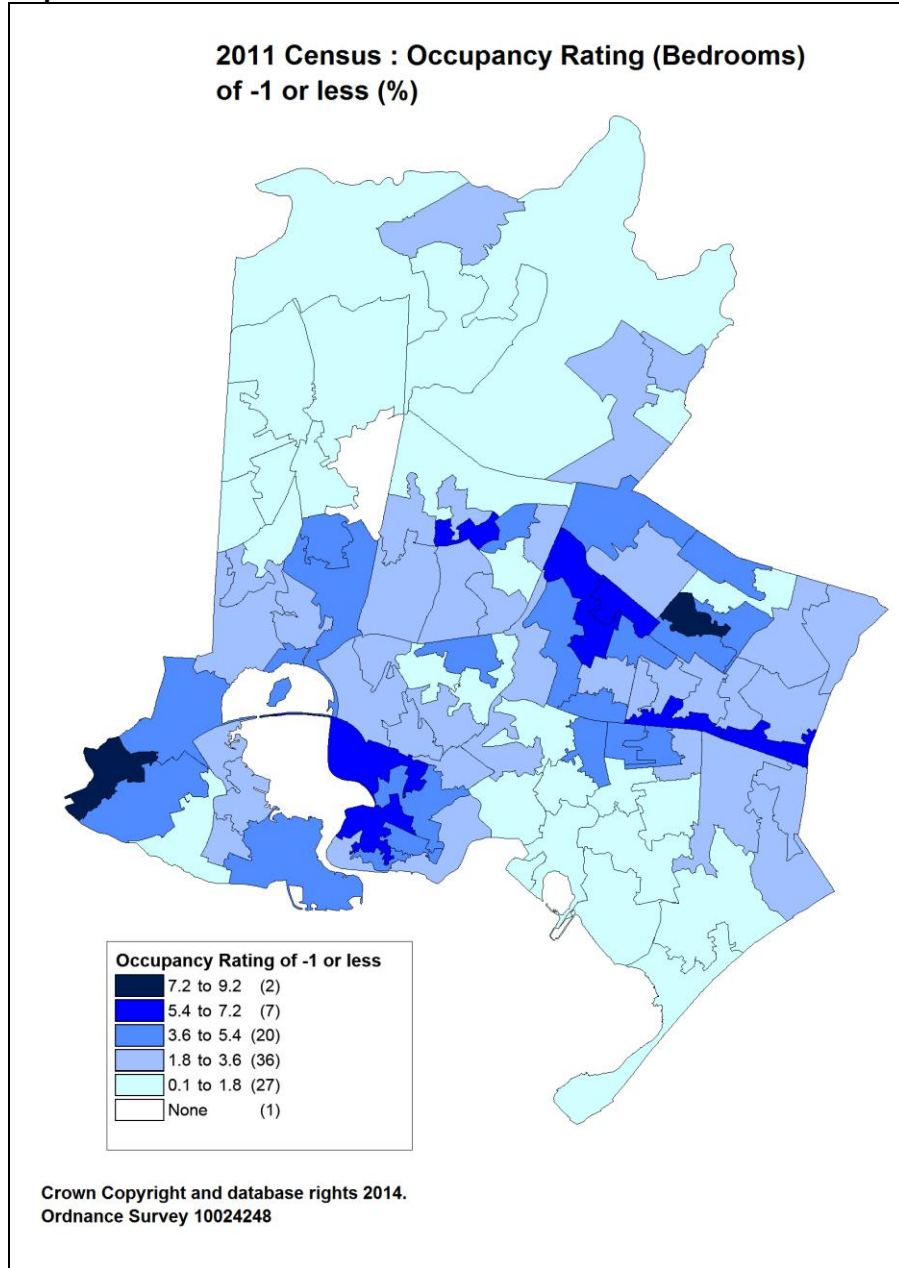
Maps 1 and 2 below show the distribution throughout Poole of households that have at least one spare bedroom and those which are overcrowded (at least one bedroom short of the bedroom standard requirements). The most affluent areas such as Canford Cliffs and Broadstone have the highest proportion of households with spare bedrooms and the least affluent areas such as Bourne Estate and Turlin Moor the highest proportion of households that are overcrowded. The areas on the maps are Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs), of which there are 93 in Poole.

Map 1: Households with at least one spare bedroom, percentage



Source: Census 2011

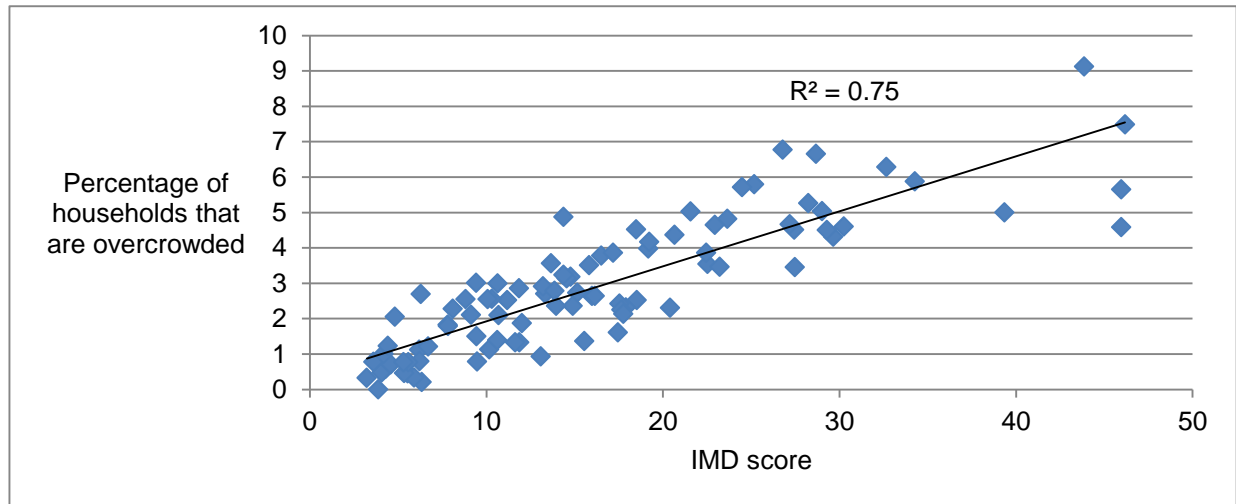
Map 2: Households that are overcrowded



Source: Census 2011

Each LSOA has an Index of Multiple deprivation score – the higher the score the more deprived the neighbourhood. Figure 2 below shows the relationship between overcrowding and deprivation at LSOA level. Three quarters of the variation in overcrowding can be “explained” by deprivation using simple linear regression.

Figure 2: Overcrowding and Deprivation



Source: Census 2011, English Indices of Deprivation, 2010

8. Appendix: The Bedroom Standard

1. The Housing (Overcrowding) Act of 2003 defines the bedroom standard as: “(4) For the purposes of the bedroom standard a separate bedroom shall be allocated to the following persons—

- (a) A person living together with another as husband and wife (whether that other person is of the same sex or the opposite sex)
- (b) A person aged 21 years or more
- (c) Two persons of the same sex aged 10 years to 20 years
- (d) Two persons (whether of the same sex or not) aged less than 10 years
- (e) Two persons of the same sex where one person is aged between 10 years and 20 years and the other is aged less than 10 years
- (f) Any person aged under 21 years in any case where he or she cannot be paired with another occupier of the dwelling so as to fall within (c), (d) or (e) above.”

Note that while the 2011 Census uses the bedroom standard definition stated above, the Housing Act of 2003 also takes account of uninhabitable bedrooms and rooms with less than 50ft² floor space in determining bedrooms or rooms available to a household. The census does not collect this information and it is therefore not used in deriving the 2011 Census bedroom occupancy ratings.

9. Data sources and further reading

In this paper we have examined what appears to us to be questions of interest. Readers with other questions are advised in the first instance to visit [this](#) page at Nomis, where they can download all the data files used in this exercise and others.

Data from 2001 can be downloaded from [this area](#) of Nomis. Data from 2001 and 2011 can also be downloaded from the [Neighbourhood Statistics](#) website, though this is less versatile than the Nomis alternative. A similar paper analysing occupancy rates at a national level (England & Wales) can be found at the [census analysis page](#) of the Office for National Statistics.

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poolepartnership@poole.gov.uk

For further details or queries about this report please contact Charles Arthurs,
Corporate Research Team.
Tel. 01202 633388 or email c.arthurs@poole.gov.uk