

The housing registers in Kent: 2022 to 2023

This data is collected and published in June 2024 by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) through the Local Authority Housing Statistics (LAHS) returns.

NOTE: within this bulletin “Kent” refers to the Kent County Council area which excludes Medway

Further Information

Kent Analytics
Kent County Council
Invicta House
Maidstone
Kent
ME14 1XQ

Email:
research@kent.gov.uk

Phone: 03000 41 74 44

[Kent Facts & Figures](#)

This bulletin presents information on households that were on the housing register in Kent during the financial year 2022 to 2023.

Summary

- At 31st March 2023, there was 15,592 households on the housing registers of the local authorities in Kent, compared to 16,001 one year ago (-409, -2.6%).
- Of the households on the housing register in Kent, 7,034 required a 1 bed property, 4,187 required a 2 bed property, 3,222 required a 3 bed property and 1,137 required a property with 4 or more bedrooms.
- 10,495 households (67.3%) of all households on the registers were classified as being in a “reasonable preference” category. These households were either homeless; or owed a duty by the local council or were living in unsatisfactory conditions or needed to move on medical grounds.
- Just under half (49.4%) of the households in the “reasonable preference” category were living in unsatisfactory housing conditions and almost a third (31.9%) needed to move on medical grounds.

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Introduction

Housing Registers, also known as housing waiting lists, are lists of households waiting to be housed, and are generally managed by the local authority in partnership with local Housing Associations (HAs). However, a few local authorities do not operate in this way. Although some Kent local authorities no longer own any housing stock of their own, they work in co-operation with local Housing Associations (HAs) and Private Registered Providers (PRP).

In general people over sixteen years of age who already live within the local authority area and are not subject to immigration control are able to apply to join the housing register.

Residents from outside the local authority area can also join the register but, in most cases, they will be awarded less priority. All applicants will be assessed and if successful will be placed in a band depending on their assessed level of housing need.

Following assessment, any available properties in all the participating authorities and associations will be advertised on a regular basis and applicants will be able to express an interest (this is called 'bidding'). Although there is no longer a legal requirement to keep waiting lists, many local authorities have chosen to do so in order to keep abreast of housing need, demand and to plan for appropriate measures on affordable housing for the future.

Many local authorities have in place a 'Choice Based' Lettings Scheme (CBL), all Kent local authorities operate this system. A Choice Based Lettings Scheme is the Government's preferred way to allocate Council properties and those of partner Registered Social Landlords. This type of scheme allows applicants to decide for themselves which, if any, homes to express an interest in.

Anyone requiring social housing needs to contact the local authority where they live or HA or PRP to register their requirements and situation. Where local authorities and HAs operate a common register of household requirements individual situations will be considered along with other applicants on the list. However, HAs are independent bodies and can keep their own waiting lists.

Information in this bulletin has been collected and published by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) formerly known as the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) through the annual Local Authority Housing Statistics (LAHS). Some imputation is undertaken to take account of missing data in order to provide regional and national aggregates.

Households on housing registers as at 31 March 2023

As at 31 March 2023, there were 15,592 households on the housing registers of the twelve local authorities in Kent. There were 4,515 households on the Medway Unitary Authority housing register. This brings the total for Kent & Medway combined to 20,107.

Of the twelve local authorities in Kent, Canterbury had the highest number of households on their register with 2,809, which accounts for 18.0% of the Kent total. Sevenoaks had the lowest number of households on their register with 677, which accounts for 4.3% of the Kent total.

Of the 15,592 households on housing registers in Kent 45.1% required a 1 bed property, 26.9% required 2 bed properties, 20.7% required 3 bed properties and 7.3% required a property with more than 3 bedrooms.

The proportion of households in need of a one-bedroom property was highest in Thanet at 60.6%. Gravesham had the highest proportion of households needing a two-bedroom property (34.7%) and needing a property with four or more bedrooms (14.7%). Dartford had the highest proportion of households needing a three-bedroom property (35.4%).

See table 1 and table 2 for details.

Table 1: Households by bedroom requirement on housing registers: 2022 to 2023

Area	Total households	1 bedroom	2 bedrooms	3 bedrooms	4 or more bedrooms
England	1,283,022	603,723	343,905	216,268	67,500
Kent	15,592	7,034	4,187	3,222	1,137
Ashford	1,221	644	236	256	85
Canterbury	2,809	1,429	821	444	115
Dartford	984	262	318	348	56
Dover	1,526	778	404	258	86
Folkestone & Hythe	1,686	791	477	295	111
Gravesham	822	241	285	175	121
Maidstone	1,105	440	197	384	84
Sevenoaks	677	262	227	125	63
Swale	1,433	552	391	289	201
Thanet	1,293	784	272	190	47
Tonbridge & Malling	1,208	552	325	227	104
Tunbridge Wells	828	299	234	231	64
Medway	4,515	1,877	1,403	918	317

Source: DLUHC: Local Authority Housing Statistics data returns, England 2022-2023: released June 2024:
Table presented by Kent Analytics, Kent County Council

Table 2: Proportion of households by bedroom requirement on housing registers: 2022 to 2023

Area	Total households	% 1 bedroom	% 2 bedrooms	% 3 bedrooms	% 4 or more bedrooms
England	1,283,022	47.1%	26.8%	16.9%	5.3%
Kent	15,592	45.1%	26.9%	20.7%	7.3%
Ashford	1,221	52.7%	19.3%	21.0%	7.0%
Canterbury	2,809	50.9%	29.2%	15.8%	4.1%
Dartford	984	26.6%	32.3%	35.4%	5.7%
Dover	1,526	51.0%	26.5%	16.9%	5.6%
Folkestone & Hythe	1,686	46.9%	28.3%	17.5%	6.6%
Gravesham	822	29.3%	34.7%	21.3%	14.7%
Maidstone	1,105	39.8%	17.8%	34.8%	7.6%
Sevenoaks	677	38.7%	33.5%	18.5%	9.3%
Swale	1,433	38.5%	27.3%	20.2%	14.0%
Thanet	1,293	60.6%	21.0%	14.7%	3.6%
Tonbridge & Malling	1,208	45.7%	26.9%	18.8%	8.6%
Tunbridge Wells	828	36.1%	28.3%	27.9%	7.7%
Medway	4,515	41.6%	31.1%	20.3%	7.0%

Source: DLUHC: Local Authority Housing Statistics data returns, England 2022-2023: released June 2024: Table presented by Kent Analytics, Kent County Council

Households in the reasonable preference category

Local authorities assess each application for a place on the housing register and place certain households in a “reasonable preference category”. This means that they will be placed higher up the register and so will be housed more quickly than those who do not qualify for this category. It is possible for a single household to fall into more than one of the criteria listed in the reasonable preference category. The criteria for the reasonable preference category include:

- Homeless households
- Households who are owed a duty by the local authority to which they are applying
- Households who are occupying insanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions
- Households who need to move on medical or welfare grounds
- Households whose failure to move would cause hardship to themselves or to others

There are two additional preference groups: -

- Households in reasonable preference groups with urgent housing needs
- Households in reasonable preference groups with member of the Armed Forces community.

On the 31 March 2023 there were 10,495 households within the reasonable preference category in Kent. This accounts for 67.3% of all households on the housing registers in Kent and is considerably higher than the proportion seen in England as a whole (45.4%).

The proportion of households in this category varies across the local authorities within Kent. Ashford had 1,221 households on the register and 96.9% are in the reasonable preference category. Sevenoaks had the lowest proportion and number of households within the reasonable preference category with 21.4% or 145 households.

Canterbury had the highest number of households within the reasonable preference category with 2,809. This accounts for 70.5% of all households on their register. See table 3 for details.

Table 3: Households within reasonable preference category

Area	Total households	Reasonable preference households	% Reasonable preference households
England	1,283,022	582,514	45.4%
Kent	15,592	10,495	67.3%
Ashford	1,221	1,183	96.9%
Canterbury	2,809	1,979	70.5%
Dartford	984	808	82.1%
Dover	1,526	970	63.6%
Folkestone & Hythe	1,686	659	39.1%
Gravesham	822	659	80.2%
Maidstone	1,105	1,036	93.8%
Sevenoaks	677	145	21.4%
Swale	1,433	1,332	93.0%
Thanet	1,293	435	33.6%
Tonbridge & Malling	1,208	805	66.6%
Tunbridge Wells	828	484	58.5%
Medway	4,515	728	16.1%

Source: DLUHC: Local Authority Housing Statistics data returns, England 2022-23: released June 2024
Table presented by Kent Analytics, Kent County Council

In Kent, almost half of the households granted reasonable preference were living in unsatisfactory housing conditions. (49.4%, 5,180 households). It is worth remembering that is possible for a single household to fall into more than one of the criteria listed in the reasonable preference category.

Eight of the twelve local authorities in Kent had a majority of households granted reasonable preference due to this reason. Of the four remaining local authorities the highest proportion of households were granted reasonable preference for the following reasons: Canterbury (medical or welfare grounds), Maidstone (owed a duty), Sevenoaks (households with urgent housing needs) and Swale (medical or welfare grounds).

Households with reasonable preference due to medical or welfare grounds account for the 2nd largest proportion of Kent households on housing registers (31.9%). Thanet had the highest proportion of households with reasonable preference due to medical or welfare grounds (77.5%) and Canterbury had the highest number of households with reasonable preference due to medical or welfare grounds (657).

Households with reasonable preference due to homelessness account for the 3rd largest proportion of Kent households on housing registers (16.0%). Thanet had the highest proportion of households with reasonable preference due to homelessness (49.0%) and Canterbury had the highest number of households with reasonable preference due to homelessness (602). See table 4 and table 5 for details.

Table 4: Households in reasonable preference category on Local Authorities' housing registers as at 31 March 2023

Area	Total households	Homeless	Owed a duty	Unsatisfactory housing conditions	Medical or welfare grounds,	Failure to move would cause hardship (to themselves or to others).	Households with urgent housing needs	Members of the Armed Forces community
England	582,514	88,597	100,612	277,594	152,010	24,147	64,040	2,801
Kent	10,495	1,680	1,202	5,180	3,346	132	623	18
Ashford	1,183	104	73	867	315	17	218	4
Canterbury	1,979	602	22	602	657	96	-	-
Dartford	808	80	140	546	140	2	22	1
Dover	970	338	0	402	230	0	124	0
Folkestone & Hythe	659	6	135	294	218	0	61	2
Gravesham	659	71	53	420	115	0	-	-
Maidstone	1,036	11	406	389	224	6	0	0
Sevenoaks	145	56	0	1	112	7	122	0
Swale	1,332	0	207	526	592	4	58	0
Thanet	435	213	83	404	337	0	1	1
Tonbridge & Malling	805	162	54	391	198	0	10	10
Tunbridge Wells	484	37	29	338	208	0	7	0
Medway	728	309	151	49	218	1	143	0

Source: DLUHC: Local Authority Housing Statistics data returns, England 2022-23: released 27 June 2024: Table presented by Kent Analytics, Kent County Council

Table 5: Proportion of households in reasonable preference category on Local Authorities' housing registers at 31 March 2023

Area	Total households	% homeless	% owed a duty	% unsatisfactory housing conditions	% medical or welfare grounds,	% failure to move (to themselves or to others).	% households with urgent housing needs	% members of the Armed Forces community
England	582,514	15.2%	17.3%	47.7%	26.1%	4.1%	11.0%	0.5%
Kent	10,495	16.0%	11.5%	49.4%	31.9%	1.3%	5.9%	0.2%
Ashford	1,183	8.8%	6.2%	73.3%	26.6%	1.4%	18.4%	0.3%
Canterbury	1,979	30.4%	1.1%	30.4%	33.2%	4.9%	-	-
Dartford	808	9.9%	17.3%	67.6%	17.3%	0.2%	2.7%	0.1%
Dover	970	34.8%	0.0%	41.4%	23.7%	0.0%	12.8%	0.0%
Folkestone & Hythe	659	0.9%	20.5%	44.6%	33.1%	0.0%	9.3%	0.3%
Gravesham	659	10.8%	8.0%	63.7%	17.5%	0.0%	-	-
Maidstone	1,036	1.1%	39.2%	37.5%	21.6%	0.6%	0.0%	0.0%
Sevenoaks	145	38.6%	0.0%	0.7%	77.2%	4.8%	84.1%	0.0%
Swale	1,332	0.0%	15.5%	39.5%	44.4%	0.3%	4.4%	0.0%
Thanet	435	49.0%	19.1%	92.9%	77.5%	0.0%	0.2%	0.2%
Tonbridge & Malling	805	20.1%	6.7%	48.6%	24.6%	0.0%	1.2%	1.2%
Tunbridge Wells	484	7.6%	6.0%	69.8%	43.0%	0.0%	1.4%	0.0%
Medway	728	42.4%	20.7%	6.7%	29.9%	0.1%	19.6%	0.0%

Source: DLUHC: Local Authority Housing Statistics data returns, England 2022-23: released June 2024: Table presented by Kent Analytics, Kent County Council

Households on the housing register: 2014 – 2023

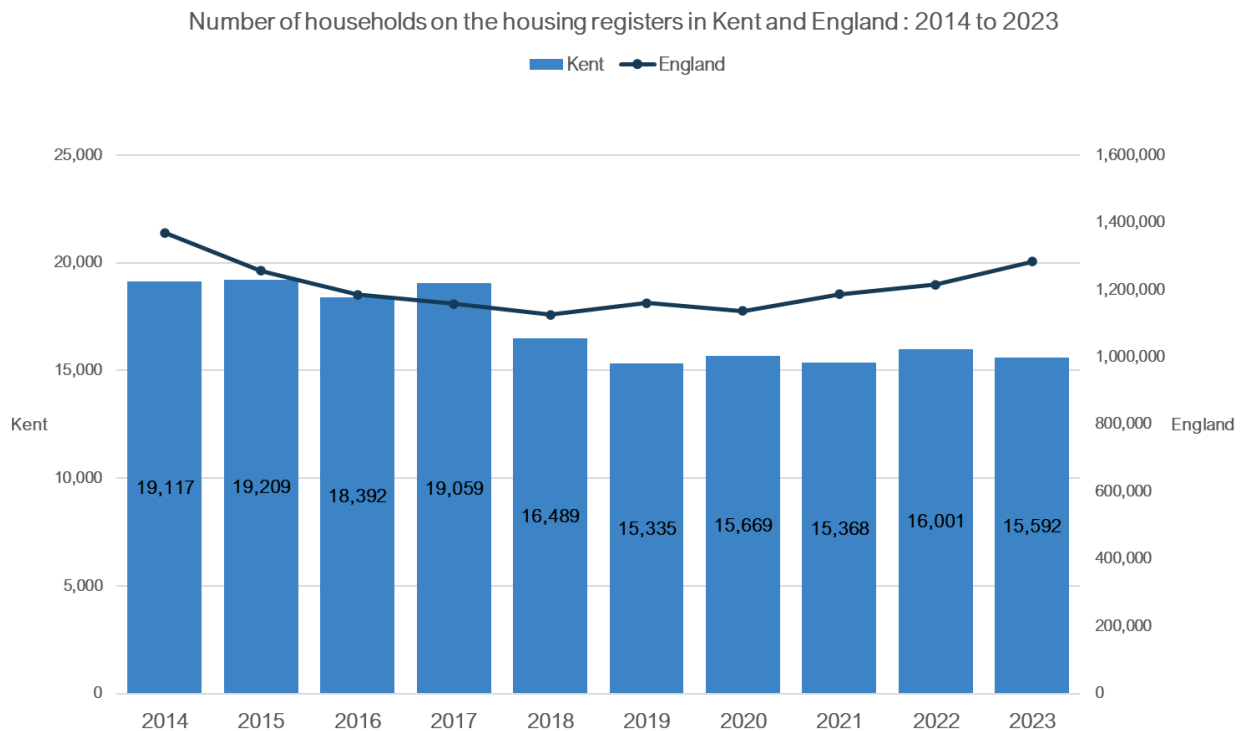
Up to 2013 the total number of people on local authority housing registers throughout England was steadily increasing, when changes to legislation from the Localism Act 2011 took effect. This act allowed local authorities to set their own rules about who can apply to be on a housing register or waiting list.

One of the changes meant that a household could only apply to one local authority. As a result of these changes there was a significant drop in the number of people on all local authority waiting lists.

The number of households on the housing register in Kent steadily increased from 2001 to 2013 when the highest number of households occurred (36,016). As a result of the changes mentioned above, there was a marked fall in households on the housing register in Kent in 2014.

Between 2014 and 2017 the number remained steady until 2017 when there was another drop. Since then the number has fluctuated around the 16,000 mark. As at 31 March 2023, there were 15,592 households on the housing registers of the local authorities in Kent. This is a decrease from the 2022 figure of 16,001.

Chart 1: Number of households on local authority housing waiting lists at 31 March 2023



Source: DLUHC: Local Authority Housing Statistics data returns, England 2014-23: released 27 June 2024: Chart presented by Kent Analytics, Kent County Council

The number of households on the housing register within each of the twelve local authority districts in Kent, and in Medway Unitary authority has fluctuated over the past ten years. Seven of the twelve local authorities, had fewer households on the housing register in 2023 compared with 2022 (Ashford, Dartford, Gravesham, Sevenoaks, Thanet, Tonbridge & Malling and Tunbridge Wells). However, all the local authorities, except Ashford and Swale, have seen a reduction in the number on the housing register in 2014 when compared with 2013.

Table 6: Time series of households on housing registers: 2014 to 2023

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
England	1,369,273	1,256,575	1,184,750	1,158,034	1,126,173	1,160,261	1,137,234	1,185,971	1,214,724	1,283,022
Kent	19,117	19,209	18,392	19,059	16,489	15,335	15,669	15,368	16,001	15,592
Ashford	1,451	1,254	1,609	1,572	1,129	1,074	1,077	1,246	1,294	1,221
Canterbury	1,734	2,269	2,595	2,709	2,314	1,983	2,268	2,547	2,809	2,809
Dartford	666	850	963	1,064	1,134	785	829	962	1,029	984
Dover	2,061	2,194	2,076	1,939	1,603	1,300	1,417	1,681	1,481	1,526
Folkestone & Hythe	2,857	2,592	1,768	1,454	1,028	1,209	1,150	1,170	1,394	1,686
Gravesham	2,083	3,156	3,276	3,629	2,399	1,595	1,906	1,196	1,030	822
Maidstone	1,288	1,460	785	719	618	776	851	840	891	1,105
Sevenoaks	551	715	633	803	755	484	655	838	754	677
Swale	3,652	827	1,119	1,085	1,102	1,407	1,313	1,213	1,397	1,433
Thanet	634	1,443	1,518	2,156	2,423	2,593	2,032	1,607	1,551	1,293
Tonbridge & Malling	1,036	1,346	1,062	989	1,148	1,242	1,242	1,171	1,410	1,208
Tunbridge Wells	1,104	1,103	988	940	836	887	929	897	961	828
Medway	18,773	19,320	20,651	19,905	9,303	4,419	3,216	3,026	3,743	4,515

Data for Tonbridge & Malling in 2020 are imputed by DLUHC. These data should not be seen as an estimate for the individual authority but is given on an authority basis to allow custom totals to be constructed.

Source: Live Table 600 Numbers of households on local authorities' housing waiting lists, by district: England 1997-2023, DLUHC.

Table presented by Kent Analytics, Kent County Council

Related documents

Further information related to social housing can be found via the following links.

The [Deprivation & Poverty](#) webpage contains further information on homelessness.

- Topics include: -
- Indices of Deprivation
- Poverty
- Homelessness
- Unemployment and benefits

The [Housing Statistics](#) webpage contains more information on housing.

- Topics include: -
- New housing
- House and land prices
- Housing stock