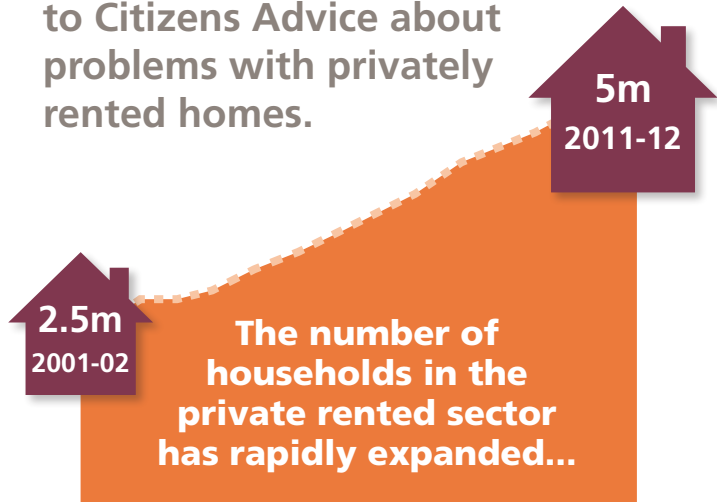


Barometer



The private rented sector is a market where consumers have relatively little protection. An increasing number of people are coming to Citizens Advice about problems with privately rented homes.



...and for the first time the number of private rented households has overtaken the social rented sector.

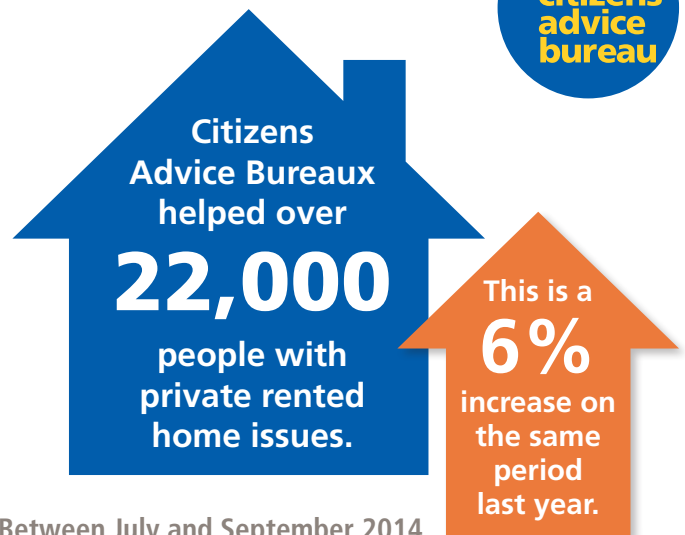


Brian Walsh Housing specialist at Croydon CAB

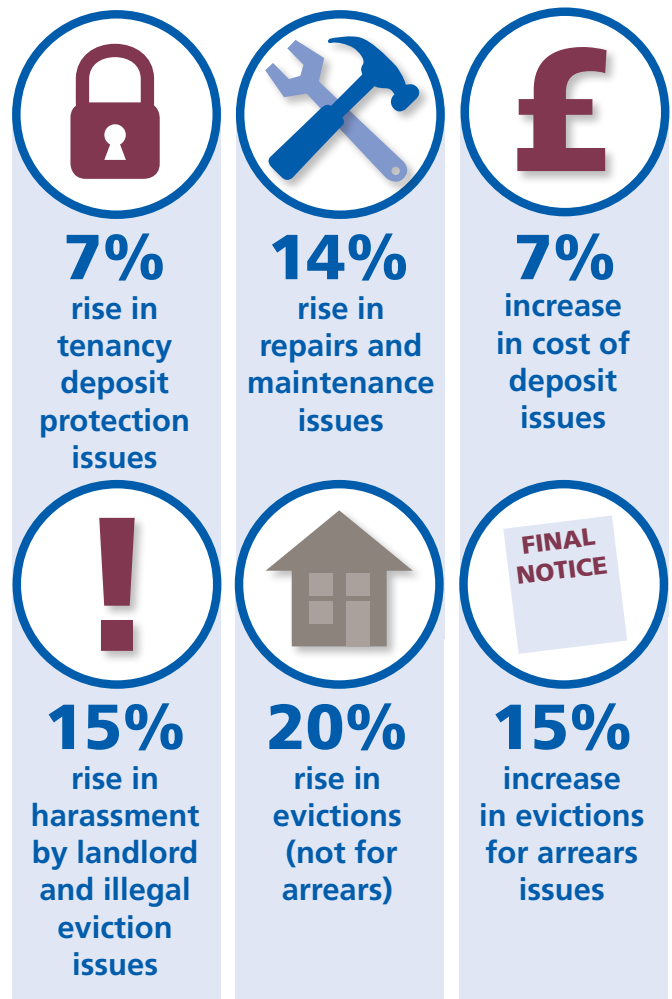
Tenants are stuck between a rock and a hard place. There's no way they can afford to buy their own home and waiting lists for social housing, even if they are eligible, are very long. Tenants can be vulnerable to unscrupulous landlords. Many have to live in poor conditions whilst still having to pay increasingly high rents. And if they complain they find themselves at risk of being legally evicted for no reason.

There needs to be a lot more regulation, both of landlords and of letting agents – people need more protection.

1 in 10
clients at Croydon CAB have a private rented sector issue



Between July and September 2014



Between July and September 2014



One third of private rented properties in England do not meet the Government's decent home minimum standard

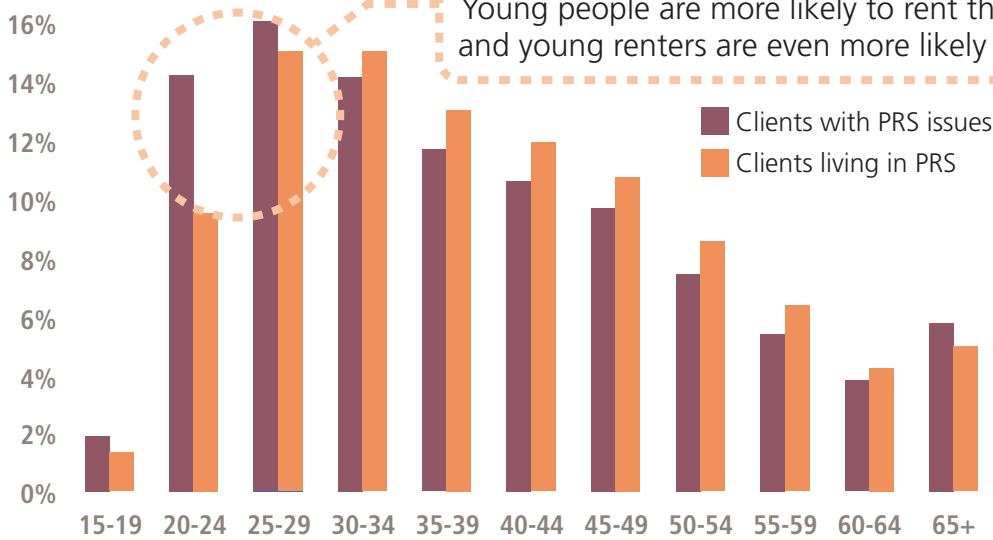
Case study:

Amy* and her husband moved into a two-bedroom rented flat as they wanted to start a family.

Soon after she discovered she was pregnant the flat was damaged in a fire caused by an electrical fault. When she pursued their landlord to carry out repairs he told them they had to move out as he wanted to sell the flat.

We thought we had a long term option in our current place but instead it looks like we may have to leave the area and our support network as we can't afford anywhere else. Financially it has also hit us hard as we put our savings into a deposit and first month's rent and now we have to borrow money to move.

* name has been changed



Young people are more likely to rent than older people – and young renters are even more likely to run into problems.

Of clients with private rented sector issues:

2 in 5
have dependent children

Expert view:

James Plunkett, Citizens Advice

The private rented sector is a hard place to make a home. Despite one in five people now renting privately, the sector is still relatively weakly regulated for an industry of this size. Renters live at the whim of landlords, often on short-term contracts and in poor conditions, with some too scared to complain for fear of a 'revenge eviction'. Meanwhile, rogue letting agents, high fees and problems reclaiming deposits are still all too familiar as features of rental life.

The same is not true in other countries. While the UK housing market has transformed over 30 years England has failed to keep up, as Wales and Scotland have introduced more regulation. Consumers are now, in many ways, better protected when buying a toaster than when renting a family home. It's high time renters' rights are brought up to a decent 21st century standard.



Average price per month of a two-bedroom rented property