

Housing facts and fallacies

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Q: We stopped building council homes.

True or false?

According to the National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC) report in May of 2017 there was over 130,000 homes in the local authority housing stock and **40% of them were built less than 20 years ago.**

Q: We need more one bed units and smaller homes in local authority ownership so that people can downsize. In particular in our cities.

True or false?

In the four Dublin local authorities there are nearly 46,000 properties and almost 20% of them (8,600) are one bed homes. The issue also isn't only 'downsizing' as there is considerable over-crowding in these one bed units.

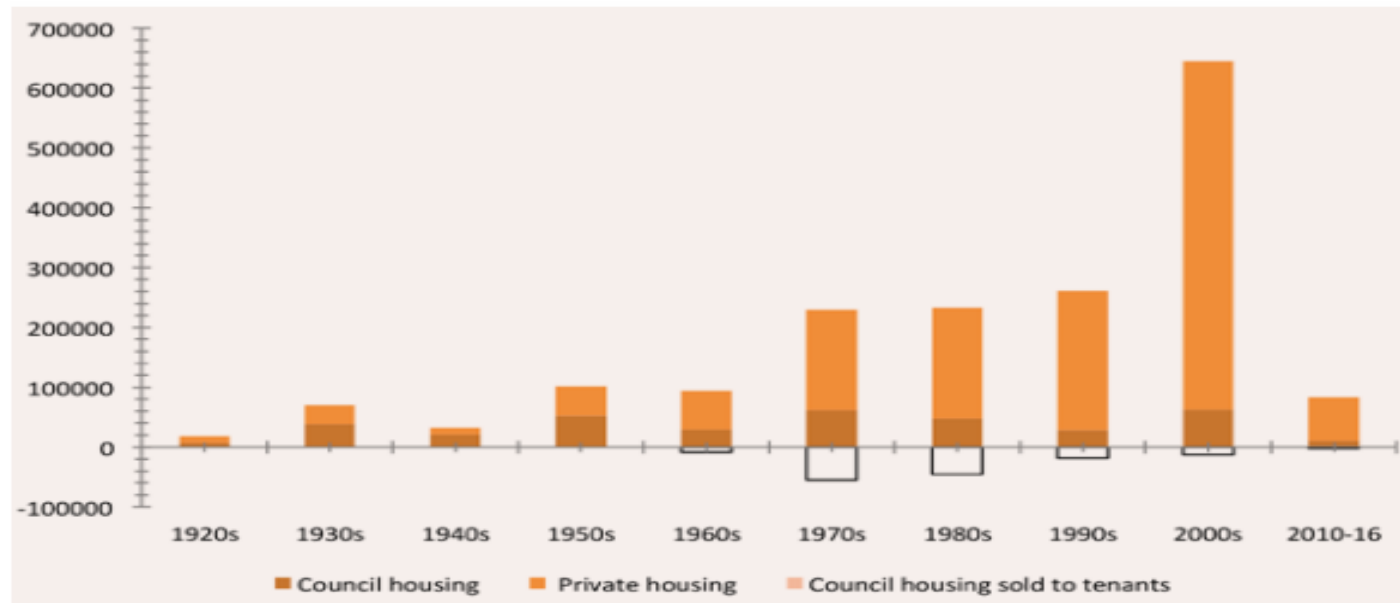
In fact, we have serious overcrowding in one bed homes where 4, 5, and six person households are all crammed into a one bed while in Dublin alone there are 5,000 examples of one person occupying a 2, 3, 4 and even 5 bedroom home.

Social housing is for those who can't afford private housing

True or false?

True and false: If people can't afford social housing then how is it that two thirds of social housing stock was sold to the tenants in them? You can't be both in need of social welfare supports in the form of subsidized housing at the same time as being able to afford to buy the house (even at a discount).

Figure 1.1 Council and private houses built and council houses sold to tenants, 1920s-2016



Source: Norris (2016).

Figure 1.1 also demonstrates that almost two thirds of the total council housing units constructed have been sold to tenants since the policy of 'tenant purchase' was first introduced in the 1930s. This policy has made an important contribution to increasing home ownership among low-income households but it has obviously reduced the number of dwellings available for letting as council housing. However, the council housing sector remains sizeable, particularly in cities - the 2016 census found that 8.7% of all households and 30.4% of all

We should be more like Denmark, the way they do their housing market.

True or false

Danish rates of overcrowding, Danish rates of rent vs disposable income, Danish waiting times for housing etc. are all worse than they are here (see data in later slides)

Everywhere else has more social housing in their markets as a percentage than we do.

True or false?

Ireland is 7th in the OECD for total housing stock that is ‘social housing’. Above Nordic countries like Norway, more than social democracies like Canada, more than other well thought of housing markets like Germany and Luxembourg, we are behind the UK which is also a good example of how ‘not to do’ social housing.

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On the supply side, the most typical form of state intervention is still the provision of social rental housing (either directly or increasingly through support to not for profit housing organizations), however in a number of countries the importance of the sector is decreasing compared to the early 2000s.

Pass cursor over table headings for detailed indicator definition. Click on table headings to order countries on the selected indicator.

Country	Social rental housing stock, %, 2015
Netherlands	34.1
Austria	26.2
Denmark	22.2
France	18.7
United Kingdom	17.6
Finland	12.8
Ireland	8.7
Poland	8.3
Slovenia	6.4
Korea	6.4
New Zealand	5.8
Malta	5.5
Australia	4.9
Norway	4.6
United States	4.3
Canada	4.1
Hungary	4
Germany	3.9
Japan	3.8
Portugal	2
Luxembourg	1.6
Estonia	1.4
Czech Republic	0.5
Latvia	0.2

In places like Sweden you get a better house, quicker, cheaper and with all the good things that come with social housing than you do in Ireland

True or False?

If you don't mind overcrowding perhaps? Sweden: almost 30% over crowded, Denmark: 17%, Germany 14.8%, Finland: 19.8%. In fact almost everywhere does a worse job than we do – but we are guilty of under utilizing social housing. Our housing is more affordable to low income than they are in Denmark, Norway, Sweden & Finland. The overburden (slide not here) is actually on people with mortgages.



We often get caught up by two forces, that of a negativity bias, where we believe things to be worse than they are and the second is of comparative analysis where we don't consider all of the factors that make conditions elsewhere unique to that place.

This isn't saying we can't or should not improve, but to keep perspective while doing so.