

Trends in housing tenure relating to fertility and abortion. Scotland and England & Wales.

Since the 1970s, there has been a considerable transition from social housing to privately owned housing that followed from the ‘right-to-buy’ scheme in the 1980s. This is strongly associated with the decline in the birth rate and the increase in the abortion rate. Couples with children are now much more exposed to the financial strains of finding a family-type dwelling that is privately owned.

The table for Scotland shows how social renting declined from 53 per cent in 1971 to 22 per cent in 2022. In parallel with this trend is the decrease in the total fertility rate which declined from 2.53 in 1971 to 1.33 in 2022. There is an inverse association with abortion whereby the total abortion rate doubles from 0.2 per woman in Scotland in 1971 to 0.4 in 2022. There is a high negative correlation -0.88 with social housing and abortion and a high positive correlation 0.76 with fertility.

Similar trends are apparent in England and Wales. But the impact has been less because social housing in Scotland has been more the norm than in England and Wales. The table shows a decreasing social renting from 28 per cent in 1971 to 17 per cent in 2021, which is correlated negatively -0.93 with abortion and positively with the declining fertility 0.54.

	Scotland					
	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011	2022
Social rented housing % (Census)	53	56	40	27	24	22
Total abortion rate per woman	0.20	0.28	0.33	0.36	0.36	0.40
Total fertility rate per woman	2.53	1.84	1.69	1.49	1.69	1.33
Correlation (social housing and TAR)				-0.88		
Correlation (social housing and TFR)				0.76		

	England and Wales					
	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011	2021
Social rented housing % (Census)	28	31	23	19	18	17
Total abortion rate per woman	0.29	0.36	0.45	0.51	0.51	0.55
Total fertility rate per woman	2.37	1.80	1.82	1.63	1.93	1.55
Correlation (social housing and TAR)				-0.93		
Correlation (social housing and TFR)				0.54		