



PRESS RELEASE

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Private renters increase while home ownership flat lines, finds new report

More people are renting their homes from private landlords than ever before, says a detailed new report on ownership in Britain over the last thirty years.

It reveals that thirty years ago 61% of the UK's households owned their own home. The number increased through the 1990s but dropped off from the year 2000 and stands once again at 61%, says the report, *Unfinished Business The Ownership Agenda, thirty Years On*, published by the independent think tank ResPublica and trade body Co-operatives UK.

The main shift in the ownership of the UK's housing stock is around rented accommodation, with the number of households renting from private landlords doubling in thirty years. In 1985 30% of households rented from public landlords, and 9% from private landlords. Today the emphasis has changed, with 22% renting from private landlords and 9% from public.

Today's report coincides with a landmark speech by Margaret Thatcher to the 1985 Conservative Party Conference thirty years ago, in which she set out an aspiration for an economy over which ownership is shared widely – “where three out of four families own their home; where owning shares is as common as having a car; where families have a degree of independence their forefathers could only dream about.”

The report, which analyses data on the ownership of Britain's businesses and households since 1985, identifies further important trends in ownership over the last thirty years.

- After an initial increase in the late 1980s, individual share ownership has halved; and only 11% of the total value of UK traded shares is now owned by individuals.
- What has displaced it is foreign ownership. At the end of the 1980s, 13% of the total market value of UK shares was foreign owned. Now it is over half, 53%.
- Share ownership has not reached the level of car ownership of 1985, let alone of today - 76% of households own a car or van now; only 19% of adults own shares.
- The numbers of people who are self-employed has risen dramatically in recent years to an all-time high, with 15% of the workforce now self-employed.
- Family ownership remains prevalent, with around two thirds of small business owners describing their business as family owned.
- With 14.9 million members, there are more co-operative business owners in the UK than there are individual shareholders.

Gareth Swarbrick, the chief executive of Rochdale Boroughwide Housing, said:

“Over the past 15 years a range of models have been developed to give tenants and the wider community ownership of social landlords.

“These models seek to create financially sustainable organisations with owners who act as custodians of community assets. In the case of RBH our model enables tenants and employees to work together to shape how our mutual is run and how decisions are made.”

Phillip Blond, Director of ResPublica, said: “Lady Thatcher’s vision of an economy with widespread ownership has not yet been realised. This is a major fault line in our society because where there is ownership there are stakeholders creating decent civilised communities. If we want people and places to flourish we must have mass ownership. It is only where there is ownership that people want to protect and care for what they own, creating a legacy for themselves, their children and their communities. At the moment we are failing to extend economic ownership to everyone, ownership is an unrealisable dream for too many. Welfare has failed to save the poor from their lot, only the possibility of mass ownership offers the possibility of ending poverty, this is our dream and this should be the aim of all our policy.”

Ed Mayo, secretary general of Co-operatives UK, the network for Britain’s thousands of co-operatives and mutuals, said: “Ownership is fundamental – it gives people an emotional and a financial stake. Alongside other models, co-operative offer an effective way to give people ownership over the things that matter, whether in their local communities, their workplaces or businesses at large.”

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Notes to editor

Co-operatives UK is the network for Britain’s thousands of co-operatives. Together we work to promote, develop and unite member-owned businesses across the economy. From high street retailers to community owned pubs, fan owned football clubs to farmer controlled businesses, co-operatives are everywhere and together they are worth £37 billion to the British economy.

www.uk.coop

ResPublica is an independent non-partisan think tank based in Westminster that seeks to establish a new economic, social and cultural settlement for the United Kingdom. Its interventions in public policy and public debate have been decisive, and ResPublica’s ideas have been adopted by politicians of all parties.

‘Unfinished Business The Ownership Agenda, 30 years on’ is A ResPublica Essay. The Essays are an open and independent public platform for ideas, discussions and debate.

<http://www.respublica.org.uk>

Rochdale Boroughwide Housing (RBH) is the UK’s first tenant and employee co-owned mutual housing society, with 14,000 homes throughout the local area. By working together we provide better places for our members, tenants and employees to live and work. Drawing

on the area's rich co-operative heritage, our unique model places members at the heart of decision-making, allowing everyone to enjoy a sense of security and belonging in places we make great together.

<http://www.rbh.org.uk>

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