Of the 24.5 million households recorded in the 2001 Census, 466,000 (1.9%) had more people than rooms. About 1 million households – 4.3% – had one or two people living in eight or more rooms. Areas with a high rate of overcrowding tend to have a low number of ‘underoccupied homes’.

This does not imply that people in households that have been classified as ‘underoccupied’ are doing something wrong. However, the analyses do show the geographical divide between people who live in overcrowded conditions and those who live in relatively spacious accommodation. These two groups tend to live in different areas.

Both maps in each figure represent the same places, shaded identically. The map on the left is a cartogram – each area is shown in proportion to the size of its population in 2001. The largest area is London, since it has the highest population of any of the places. The map on the right shows the actual boundaries of the areas.