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SOCIAL HOUSING

Gryd's Council Housing Solar Rankings 2026: Which Regions Are Leading and Which Are Falling Behind?

Which regions are fitting solar to their council stock, and which have barely started.

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The UK's transition to cleaner, lower-cost energy is accelerating, but not everyone is benefiting equally.

New analysis from the Gryd Council Housing Solar Index reveals substantial differences in solar deployment across the UK, highlighting where councils have successfully scaled rooftop solar programmes and where adoption remains limited. It also identifies the regions making the fastest progress, offering insight into how local policy, funding and housing stock characteristics can influence rollout rates.

Compiled from Freedom of Information requests to local authorities, the index offers one of the most comprehensive snapshots of council solar deployment in the absence of any central government dataset.

The Gryd Council Housing Solar Index 2026

Gryd's research shows that 7.8% of privately owned and tenanted homes now have solar systems installed, compared with 5.8% of council homes nationally. Yet council housing in Wales and Scotland surpasses private homeowners: 10% and 8.6% of their council homes are equipped with solar respectively – demonstrating local authorities' potential to lead the UK's transition to clean home energy.

Despite remarkable progress in some regions, hundreds of thousands of social housing tenants remain without access to one of the most effective technologies for lowering household electricity costs.

By comparing performance across regions, the Index provides a clearer picture of how evenly the benefits of solar are being distributed across social housing and where further investment may be needed to close the gap.

Which regions are leading solar adoption in council housing?

One of the most striking findings from Gryd's Social Housing Solar Index 2026 is that some of the strongest-performing regions are located in parts of Britain that don't typically receive the highest levels of sunshine.

North West Wales leads the UK by a considerable margin, with one-third of council homes now equipped with rooftop solar. North East Wales follows in second place, while Scotland's Aberdeen and North East region ranks third.

Top 5 Regions for Council Solar Adoption

RANK	REGION	SHARE OF COUNCIL HOMES WITH SOLAR
1	North West Wales	33.8%
2	North East Wales	21.7%
3	Aberdeen & North East	13.0%
4	Highlands & Islands	9.0%
5	Southern Wales	8.1%

Southern Wales recorded one of the most notable improvements during the past year, increasing from just 0.3% of council homes with solar panels to 8.1%. Scotland's Highlands and Islands also made significant gains, with solar adoption nearly doubling from 4.7% to 9%.

In England, the East Midlands emerged as a standout performer. The number of solar-powered council homes in the region almost doubled in a single year, accounting for one-third of all newly reported local authority solar installations nationally.

Most Improved Regions

RANK	REGION	CHANGE OVER PAST YEAR
1	East Midlands	+90% (4,875 → 9,625 homes)
2	Southern Wales	0.3% → 8.1%
3	Highlands & Islands	4.7% → 9.0%

London remains at the bottom of the rankings

At the other end of the scale, some regions continue to report very limited solar adoption in council housing.

London has the lowest proportion of solar-powered council homes in the UK, with just 1.6% of properties fitted with rooftop solar. This can largely be attributed to London's higher proportions of high-density and multi-storey social housing than most regions, limiting the number of properties that are suitable for conventional rooftop solar installations on individual dwellings.

Several other regions also remain well below the national average.

Bottom 5 Regions for Council Solar Adoption

RANK	REGION	SHARE OF COUNCIL HOMES WITH SOLAR
1	London	1.6%
2	Edinburgh & Lothians	2.7%
3	South East Wales	2.8%
4	South West Wales	2.9%
5	Yorkshire & Humber	3%

Without clear visibility of deployment numbers, it's impossible to measure progress or identify where parts of the country might be getting left behind in the clean energy transition.

The rankings highlight significant regional variation in council solar deployment across the UK, with some local authorities making rapid progress while others continue to face structural, financial and housing stock-related barriers to rollout.

With social housing tenants among the most vulnerable to fuel poverty – with the least ability to act independently when costs rise – tracking where solar is and isn't reaching them is the first step to closing that gap.

Closing the UK's solar divide

Findings from Gryd's Council Housing Solar Index suggest the UK's clean energy transition risks becoming increasingly uneven unless investment in social housing accelerates.

As the pressure to improve social housing energy efficiency grows, funding models are likely to become an increasingly important part of the conversation. Public funding will remain essential, but emerging financing approaches could also help councils and housing providers accelerate deployment at a scale that current budgets struggle to support.

The challenge for policymakers, local authorities and the wider energy sector is not simply increasing the number of solar panels installed. It is ensuring that the financial and environmental benefits of the energy transition are shared across all housing tenures, rather than becoming concentrated among those who can afford to invest first.

Without faster progress in social housing, the gap between regions may continue to widen just as energy affordability becomes an even more pressing national issue.

Looking to accelerate solar deployment across social housing?

Gryd works with local authorities and housing associations to deploy solar and battery technology without the need for significant upfront capital investment, making it easier to scale retrofit programmes and deliver benefits to tenants sooner.

If you are exploring ways to increase solar adoption across your social housing stock, speak to the Gryd team to learn how fully funded solar solutions can support your housing and sustainability objectives.

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