



Greater London Authority

Children in PRS Accommodation Research Report

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background and objectives

- The Mayor of London is committed to improving private rented sector (PRS) housing, including improving property standards and management practices in the sector and promoting affordability, security and sustainability. Nationally, Government is consulting on increasing security in the private rented sector by ending ‘no-fault’ evictions and abolishing assured shorthold tenancies, having already introduced a ban on letting agent fees.
- In London, the number of children living in PRS housing has grown in recent years, with the latest data suggesting that more than half a million children live in the sector. Previous research into specific PRS housing issues such as overcrowding and non-decent homes has indicated that it can have a negative impact on children’s physical health and educational outcomes (Wilson, 2016, Overcrowded housing, England), however little is known about the impact it has on their sense of security in their living situation.
- The GLA has identified a need to research this subject in more detail, to understand the experiences faced by this growing group.
- Exploratory qualitative research was conducted by YouGov to explore the impact that living in PRS accommodation has on children and their households.

1.2 Research method

- The research comprised of two stages: an initial ‘housing and home’ journal pre-task, followed by follow-up individual / paired depth interviews. The journals were used to capture respondents’ thoughts / experiences of PRS housing ahead of the session, and used to springboard the conversation in the interviews. A one-on-one interview approach – rather than a focus group approach – was considered most appropriate for this research, given the sensitive nature of the topic.
- A mix of paired depth interviews (with parents and children aged under 15) and individual depth interviews (with parents of children aged 15-18, living at home, and with children aged 15-18, living at home) were conducted. Paired in-home depths with parents and children under 15 were conducted to ensure that children felt comfortable enough to share their views, accompanied by their parents. For older children (over 15 years),

individual in-home depth interviews were conducted in order to gain detailed, honest

feedback of their housing situation. One-on-one interviews were felt to be more appropriate than a paired-approach for the older children, as they may have been less vocal or honest in their responses if interviewed with their parents, to protect their parents' feelings. Telephone depth interviews with parents of children aged 15-18 were also included as they were the most effective way to capture feedback from this time-pressured audience.

1.3 Sample and recruitment

- Respondents were recruited via the YouGov panel, and via Viewpoint Field. All respondents were screened prior to taking part using a recruitment screener to check their eligibility for the research. All were living in PRS housing, with one family in temporary accommodation (and another that had previously been in temporary accommodation). The sample comprised a mix of children's age (i.e. under 5s vs 5-14s, vs, 15-18s), ethnicity, SEG and income level. The time they'd lived in their current PRS accommodation was recorded at recruitment stage.
- The recruitment screener also contained questions designed to gauge respondents' levels of satisfaction with their PRS accommodation, their experiences of issues in their PRS accommodation (in terms of the physical building or fixtures and fittings), and their overall levels of security in their PRS accommodation (for more details see appendix, section 6.2). Quotas were used to ensure that at least half of the sample had low satisfaction levels with their accommodation, or experienced issues with their accommodation, and all were mid-low end scorers on the security measure (i.e. displaying mid-lower levels of settled-ness and security), ensuring that a mix of experiences were captured.
- Reflecting the mix of experiences captured, we found that parents and children fell along a spectrum from the least secure '**struggling**' renters, through to the more secure '**managing**' renters. The '**struggling**' renters were generally C2DE, with lower wages, and a poorer financial situation (with limited or no savings, claiming benefits). Their situation was felt to be precarious. '**Managing**' renters were often higher SEG, with professional jobs, living in accommodation for over five years. While they knew there was a chance that they may have to move on in future, most had the financial means (such as savings) to protect them from uncertainty of their position. Indeed, some were saving

for house deposits, with the hope of buying their own property at some point in the future. The majority of our sample fell in the middle of the spectrum – the **'holding on, but worried for the future'** renters – who were in work (often lower paid work, and holding down multiple jobs), sometimes receiving benefits, but still feeling stretched financially.

- In terms of PRS accommodation type, parents and children were living in a variety of PRS accommodation. The majority were living in flats, while a minority were living in houses.
 - The majority of those living in flats in our sample were living in two-three bed flats. In a number of cases, children were sharing bedrooms with their parents, so that other family members could have their own bedrooms (often older boys, grandparents). This was because they couldn't afford a larger flat with more bedrooms, or had to 'make do' with the accommodation available to them, as they had little time to find accommodation before their tenancy ended. Very few of those living in flats had access to their own private garden. While some had access to a shared garden, it was not always appropriate for their children to play in this area (if, for example, it was close to / part of a carpark, or if it was an area where ballgames were prohibited).
 - Those living in houses were in the minority in our sample. Those living in houses were mainly of higher SEG (ABC1), living in two-three bed terraced, semi-detached or detached houses with gardens in the London suburbs. A small number of those living in houses were of a lower SEG, and living in houses in inner city estates.
 - A minority (C2DE) were living in shared accommodation. One family was living in temporary accommodation with several other families, sharing a kitchen / bathroom with other families, and all sleeping in one bedroom. Another two families were living with extended family members (such as grandparents) in the home.
- Fieldwork was carried out between 25th February and 27th March 2019. Thirty interviews were conducted during the research period.

1.4 Reporting

- This report summarises the key themes from across all 30 interviews. Wherever relevant, any differences – by age of child, SEG etc. – have been highlighted in the report. Each section reviews a different element of the PRS accommodation experience.
- The aim of the research was to understand the experience of living in private rented accommodation in more detail, not isolating the unique impact of PRS tenure on children. Therefore some of the issues highlighted in the report are not necessarily unique to the private rental sector. Some, such as the impact of moving home, can affect children regardless of tenure. Others, such as issues with housing quality and over-crowding, we might also expect to see in the social rent sector. Wherever PRS-specific points have emerged, we have highlighted these in the report.

2 Summary of findings

2.1 Journey to PRS accommodation and impacts on children

- Most parents and children in the sample were living in PRS flats, though a smaller number were living in PRS houses. Almost all were living in furnished accommodation. Many had moved just a short distance from their old accommodation to their current PRS accommodation. Those that had lived in their area long-term (over 5 years) were the most 'at home', as they were familiar with local services, facilities and transport links, and had more established social groups. Not all felt part of the community, however, and some had concerns about deprivation and crime in the vicinity.
- Parents and children experienced a range of triggers that prompted the move to their current PRS accommodation with tenancy, housing and living situation triggers being key. Tenancy triggers (such as increased rent, or end of tenancy) and living situation triggers (such as growing family, or change of job) most influenced their move to their current PRS accommodation, though housing factors (such as poor quality housing or a lack of space), also played a role for some. While higher social economic group (SEG) respondents may have had to move for financial reasons (e.g. loss of family home, debt), they felt that they had a choice in where they could live. Most of these respondents had professional jobs (often with higher incomes) so could be more selective about PRS accommodation than their lower income PRS counterparts. However, it should be noted that most of these higher SEG respondents saw PRS accommodation as a 'stop-gap' for them and their families, and felt pressure to buy their own home.
- For parents, the key considerations for selecting their current PRS accommodation, were location, specifically proximity to school and work, as well as access (transport links), safety, and affordability. The family in our sample in temporary accommodation had no control in where they were placed, and struggled to carry on their lives as usual as a result.
- A small number of older children (in particular), felt that their education had been impacted by the move – either as they'd struggled to settle into their new school, or as they were spending so much time commuting. Those that had moved further away from their school (who had moved with their family due to the end of tenancy or a change in

circumstances), complained of longer journeys to and from school, which impacted on the time they had to complete their homework.

- Journeys into current PRS accommodation were felt to impact children, either due to the physical move (having to pack up their old bedroom) or due to the changes to their living and social situation (moving away from friends). As most families stayed in or around the same area they'd lived, the greatest impact was the move itself – unsettling for children in the short-term. However, for older children (especially those in secondary school), the changes to their social situation – moving away from friends and potentially seeing them less regularly – had more of a long-term impact. This was particularly the case for older children moving longer distances. Some took longer to settle into their new home as a result.

2.2 Quality of PRS accommodation and impacts on children

- The suitability and quality of PRS accommodation impacted both parents and their children. Key challenges around suitability included a lack of space (with, for example, siblings and parents and children having to share bedrooms as they couldn't afford larger properties), and a lack of privacy. The lack of privacy was particularly impactful for older children (aged 15-18), who struggled to find the space they needed to invite friends round. Some younger children (aged under 15) also lacked the space to play. Some older children (15-18) struggled to do their homework in their PRS accommodation, given the number of people present, cramped conditions (for example, if there was too little space for a desk), and noise. While children in other types of rented accommodation (for example, social rented accommodation) may also face these challenges, children living in PRS accommodation were often limited with space as their parents couldn't afford to pay rent on a larger property.
- Poor quality housing was an issue for a number of families in our sample. Cold, damp and mould were the most serious quality concern, as they felt to be a constant challenge (in terms of cleaning mould, airing damp rooms, and heating cold rooms). Some parents worried about the impact that cold, damp and mould had on their children's physical health. This was especially concerning for parents with young children (under 15), and with children that had respiratory conditions.

- Only a minority had quality concerns other than damp, but many reported other low-level issues, such as broken fixtures and fittings and outmoded décor. A small number had had also faced issues with faulty electrics, temperamental boilers and leaks. Some parents and children complained of low-level noise pollution, but while this was irritating, it rarely impacted their sleep.
- With regard to landlords, most parents described their landlords as ‘reasonable’ but ‘distant’, and had little interaction with them. Only a minority of parents had very good or very bad relationships with their landlords. While children rarely came into contact with landlords, some older children had been present during (unlawful) unannounced visits, and some had felt unsettled with this invasion of privacy.
- The parents in our sample took a pragmatic approach to reporting issues to their landlords, often choosing to ignore smaller issues, so as not to come across as a ‘difficult’ tenant in case their landlord increased their rent. For many, this behaviour was based on a fear of rent increase (or eviction), rather than past experience of this. However, when serious problems occurred (relating to boilers, electrics, or flooding), they would report issues.
- For benefits claimants in our sample (a minority of respondents), there were some comments on the stigma they’d experienced as a result of their situation. Many of them spoke of the challenges of finding PRS accommodation, as so few landlords were open to benefits claimants, which impacted their choices around quality housing in their price range.

2.3 Security of PRS housing and impact on children

- Parents and children viewed ‘secure accommodation’ in two ways: as accommodation that is physically secure (that is, with locks on the doors and windows), or accommodation that they felt they could live in for the long-term, without fear of eviction, or having to leave. Most parents and older children (15-18), spoke about ‘security’ in the figurative sense, while young children (under 15) spoke about it in the more literal sense (i.e. the flat is secure as we have good locks on the doors).

- While none of the parents we spoke to said they felt 100% settled and secure in their PRS accommodation (as to feel entirely secure in their accommodation they said they would need to own it themselves) they fell across a **'settled'** spectrum, with some more settled than others. **'Struggling'** renters felt least secure, as they were often the most financially challenged, most worried about paying their rent, and of potentially being evicted if they missed their rent payments. **'Managing'** renters generally felt more secure, given their higher SEG and income bracket, and ability to pay rent. Most fell in the middle and were **'holding on, but worried for the future'**, able to pay their rent and bills – just – but worried about how they'd cope if their rent increased.
- The 'precariousness' of their situation was a constant concern for most parents, and some older children (15-18). Older children (15-18) were more likely than their younger siblings to be aware of their parents' concerns, and feel a low-level concern as a result. Some older children (15-18) felt that they needed to keep their feelings to themselves, so as not to upset their mothers or sisters. In extreme cases, older children (15-18) were so anxious about their situation that it had impacted their mental health.
- While parents tried to make their PRS accommodation 'homely' for their children, for example, by adding their own furniture and displaying mementoes, they were often limited in what they could do to the building. For older children (15-18), but especially for younger children (under 15), the inability to decorate (for example, paint their bedroom, tack posters to the walls) or display all of their belongings, had an impact on their ability to settle. For younger children (under 15) being unable to decorate their bedrooms as they wished, reinforced the temporary nature of their situation. This – coupled with the fact that pets were largely prohibited in PRS accommodation – was in stark contrast to what they saw when visiting friends living in their own family homes.
- When thinking about their 'dream home', both parents and children said that their 'dream home' would be one that they owned. For parents, owning a home would mean that they would have security of tenure, and financial security in old age. They would all be looking for a house with enough space for them and their family to live comfortably. Older children (15-18) were looking for space and privacy, and tech-enabled living, while younger children focused on entertainments (big gardens, trampolines, swimming pools), and

pets. Few of the parents and children in our sample thought that their 'dream home' would ever become an actual reality.

3 Journey to PRS accommodation

3.1 Chapter overview

- This chapter describes the living situations of the families in our sample, and the impact of their most recent move into PRS accommodation on their children.

3.2 Triggers to current PRS accommodation

- A range of factors led parents and their children to move to their current PRS accommodation. Trigger factors broadly fell into three categories:
 - ***Tenancy triggers (for example, rent increase, end of tenancy, landlord selling the house),***
 - ***Housing triggers (such as unsuitable or poor quality housing for the family), and;***
 - ***Living situation triggers (including growing family, change of job).***
- Although tenancy and living situation triggers were the most influential factors in prompting their move to their current PRS accommodation, housing triggers played a strong role for some. While a small number moved for positive reasons (for example, because they were moving back ‘home’ to London), many moved because they had to.
- Those that moved due to tenancy issues had to move on for a range of reasons. Some parents and children in this group had to move when their rent increased beyond their means. These respondents were able to pay their rent and bills with their wages / benefits, but when their rent increased they had no buffer to fall back on to fill the shortfall. As a result, they were prompted to look for cheaper accommodation elsewhere. A minority of respondents were forced to move house at short notice when their landlord decided to sell the accommodation, with little time to prepare / search for new accommodation. One family, now living in temporary accommodation, had been served eviction as they were unable to pay their rent. One family was told they had to move out within a month, as the landlord sold the flat without them knowing (which is unlawful). Many of those in the sample – mostly those of lower SEG grade, but also financially challenged ABC1s – also voiced concern about rents rising year on year.

- ***“We knew it was going up for sale and we were hoping to buy it, and they said they were going to sell it in two years’ time, but they sold it after six months of us being there, so we couldn’t get a mortgage to buy it”*** Parent of a child under 15
- ***“We were in that house for seven years, it was a flat above shops, and then he sadly sold the flat...He sold it with us in it, and then he said, “You know, there’s only a month, you need to vacate,” and at the same time that was when my daughter was starting secondary”*** Parent of a child under 15
- Parents and children also moved due to changes to their living situation. A small number had to move when their own personal financial situation left them unable to pay their rent on their previous PRS accommodation (for example, due to redundancy or debt), so they had to find a cheaper alternative. Individuals moved to their new PRS accommodation as they were moving back to London (having lived outside the capital for a period of time), or because they wanted to move to a different area for a change. A number of families (but particularly female lone parents) in our sample had to move into PRS accommodation following the breakdown of a relationship. One woman was concerned that she would have to leave the rented family home (which she and her children had lived in for over 10 years), once her husband stopped paying alimony when her youngest child turned 18 later on in the year.
 - ***“My husband pays rent, and it’s topped up by my mother... My ex pays some rent now, but it will be cut in December”*** Parent of child aged 15-18
 - ***“I had a home and a mortgage before, with my husband [before the divorce]”*** Parent of a child aged 15-18
- Those that moved due to housing issues did so either because the physical building was unsuitable for their needs (for example, as it was too small for the family), or because the housing stock was viewed as too poor quality to live in long-term. Some felt that they had simply ‘outgrown’ their home as their children had grown older, and it was no longer suitable for older male and female children to share rooms. One family had the additional challenge of finding space when the grandmother moved into the family home. Individuals also said that their accommodation was too poor quality to live in safely, due to poor electrics (such as showers / electric sockets), and environmental hazards

(including damp, mould, and poor fixtures and fittings). However, they were hopeful of securing better quality accommodation elsewhere in the PRS.

- ***“Basically, when me and my sister, we were staying in the same room, and my sister’s about three, four years older than me, and I was just growing up. So, my mum and dad were saying, like, they can’t have us two in the same room, it was just getting out of hand”*** Child aged 15-18

3.3 Considerations for current PRS accommodation

- Parents had a number of considerations in mind when searching for and selecting their current PRS accommodation. For all, proximity to school / work was key, while accessibility (to shops / services, and public transport), and security were also important. All of these factors, however, were underpinned by affordability. They were looking for PRS accommodation that was the most suited to them and their families that fell within their budget. Parents tried – where possible – to time their move to fall in the school holidays so that their children, and their education, wouldn’t be disrupted by the move.
- Most limited their housing search to the area in which they lived before (or bordering areas), so that – even if their children had to travel further to school – they could still stay at their school, and be with their friends. This was seen as particularly important for children at secondary school level who were established in their schools. The minority of families that moved to a different area, resulting in their children moving schools, reported some negative impact on their children and their ability to settle (see more, section 3.6). As well as school, accommodation decisions were also shaped by transport links (bus routes / underground), so that parents were still able to commute to work. For the family that was put into temporary accommodation, the distance from the children’s schools, and parents’ jobs, made life very difficult (see more, section 3.6).
- Alongside access to school and work, many (as mentioned in part 3.4) said that services and amenities in the local area, also played a part in their rental decisions. As well as access to high street shops (especially supermarkets), parents were looking for PRS accommodation close by to other amenities, such as parks / green spaces (especially for younger children), to use in lieu of a garden. Parents were also keenly aware of safety and security, looking for PRS housing on quieter roads, wherever possible, in safe and secure neighbourhoods. However, parents (and older children) recognised the challenge

of seeking out 'safe and secure' areas in London, given the prevalence of crime across the capital.

- As noted above, affordability underpinned all decisions around PRS accommodation. Parents were looking for accommodation that was adequate for their family's needs (for example, spacious enough, ideally with enough bedrooms, adequate quality housing stock) that fell within their budget. Given the (often) high rents in London, especially in more desirable areas, they often had to be flexible about where they would live, in order to find affordable rental accommodation. Many had to make compromises (especially on location and size of accommodation) in their search as a result.
- While duration of tenancy was said to be important (with longer tenancies the preference), most said that PRS accommodation was often fixed for a year at a time. This put pressure on them at renewal stage as they expected to see an increase in their rent. Just a minority felt confident that they could stay in their PRS accommodation longer-term, having discussed the feasibility of staying longer than a year with their landlord. Landlords played a limited role in their decision making process.
 - ***"I tried somewhere that we could afford. Where we lived became a lot more expensive. It wasn't possible to find a house, but the landlord of the house that we were renting kept the rent down. Flats were really expensive. I was looking all over the south and the southeast... Things were cheaper"*** Parent of child aged under 15
 - ***"I wanted to be quite safe as well, I wanted to be in a nice area. Just nice neighbours, you know, a pleasant atmosphere"*** Parent of child aged under 15
 - ***"Even here, it is slightly cheaper out here but cheap is not really the word is it in London these days?"*** Parent of child aged under 15
- Most of those in our sample went directly to lettings agents when searching for PRS accommodation. Many parents booked multiple viewings to find the most suitable accommodation for their family, especially if they had limited time to secure new accommodation. Word of mouth was less common, with just one family accessing their current PRS accommodation through a friend's contact.

- Very few had sought out help / advice from independent or charitable organisations or local authorities when searching for their current PRS accommodation. Many looked for accommodation themselves, or with the support of their parents. A small number received financial support from their family or friends (for example, borrowing money from parents), for the deposit for their new PRS accommodation. A small minority had sought out advice from the Citizen's Advice Bureau, or from legal professionals, to understand their rights, if forced to move due to issues with their landlord. Individuals had also spoken to their local authority for assistance (specifically children's services and environmental health).

3.4 Current PRS accommodation

- Most respondents had been living in their current PRS housing for more than a year, and were broadly familiar with the locality as a result. The vast majority of parents and children were able to access local shops and facilities (including parks, cinemas, other entertainments) by foot or by public transport, and could travel to other parts of London when they needed to access a better range of shops and services, as well as to see their friends. Transport accessibility was seen to be of key importance, with many saying that it was important to live in an area with access to transport (bus / underground links), in order to travel to work (parents) and school / college (children).
- While some respondents had been living in the same area long-term (more than five years), or were living in a neighbouring area to one that they'd previously lived in, a sizeable minority were living much further away from the area that they'd lived in before. Individuals had been forced to move further out of central London to take advantage of cheaper rents – often in less appealing areas – away from friends and family and often a tube station. One family was living in temporary accommodation in an area that they were very unfamiliar with and over two hours away from the children's schools and mother's workplace.
- In terms of feeling 'at home' in their area, it was those that had lived in the same flat / house for the long-term (more than five years) that felt most 'at home', especially if they had a good network of friends and family in the area. However, not all felt that they were part of the community that they lived in. This was especially the case for those that had moved to a different area, away from their established social network. It was also the

case for two families living in an area where they were not part of the dominant ethnic group; while they integrated with people in the community, they didn't feel like they were a central part of it. Parents had some concerns about safety and security in the area that they lived in – particularly if they were living in inner-city areas where crime (such as knife crime, muggings and burglary) was not uncommon. This was particularly the case for those that had limited choice in where they could move (due to high rent costs) and had to move to an area where they felt less comfortable, for the lower rent PRS accommodation available. Safety was a particular concern for parents of older children (15-18), who wanted to ensure that their teenage daughters and sons were kept away from harm.

- ***“I like Croydon, but it’s not particularly safe for my daughters walking around... there are half-way houses nearby. It’s not that safe”*** Parent of a child aged 15-18
- ***“Yes it’s pretty quiet apart from the stabbing and the geezer that was done in the shop the other week and the geezer that was done with the hammer over the head... it’s not as safe as it used to be”*** Parent of a child aged 15-18
- ***“The area is deprived... there’s graffiti and knife crime in the area. It’s not looked after”*** Child aged 15-18
- ***“I got mugged the other week and they took my phone. My mum is not letting me get a new phone, as that will just get taken”*** Child aged 15 – 18

3.5 Impacts on children: journey to PRS accommodation

- Some parents felt that their children had been impacted by the move to their current PRS accommodation – either due to the move itself (packing up and saying goodbye to their old house), or due to the changes to their social / living situation (for example, moving away from friends and family). In contrast to those moving into other types of accommodation (for example, rented social housing), children moving to PRS accommodation may feel the ‘temporariness’ of their situation more acutely, as they don't know how long they'll be living there. For most parents, the impact on their children was felt to be short-lived, as their children gradually managed to settle into their new home and location. However, for others in more extreme situations (such as those that had

recently moved into temporary accommodation), the impacts were felt to be more long-term.

- For the majority of children in the sample the greatest challenges were around the physical move: settling into their new home, and having to travel to see their friends and to attend school. Those who moved to PRS accommodation in an area they'd lived in before – rather than to a new borough in a different part of London – were able to adjust most quickly, as they were familiar with the area, the services and facilities available to them, and were often still close by their friends.
- Younger children were better able to settle down into their new home than their older counterparts, who, unsurprisingly, had more established friendship groups and / or links to their area. While they may have felt sad to leave their old house and pack up their belongings, they were often excited at having a new bedroom, and finding new places to play or meet their friends nearby (such as parks, cinemas and shopping centres). Although many younger children (under 15) lived further away from their friends after the move, most still lived locally or in bordering neighbourhoods, so they were still able to see them at the weekends and during school hours, minimising disruption. Only two younger children had to move schools as a result of their house move – transferring early in the autumn term during year seven (secondary school) – and they both took time to settle down, as the rest of the pupils knew each other by this stage. While one of the children settled down relatively easily, it took the other child a year to settle and make friends.
- For older children, the biggest impact faced when moving, was moving away from their friends, and having to make new friends in the area. Some struggled to maintain past friendships as they lived too far away to see them regularly, or couldn't afford to travel to see them as often.
 - ***“The sort of things your friends are doing after school, you can't do after school as you have to make your way home, weekend, you live further so you can't afford to go and see them”*** Child aged 15-18
 - ***“I wouldn't say I've got loads of friends close, but I've got a couple of people I know who live close... but they're not my close friends”*** Child aged 15-18

3.6 Impacts on children: education

- For most of those in our sample, PRS housing was felt to have a minimal impact on education, as few had had to move schools. However, some struggled to do their homework in their PRS accommodation, given the number of people present, cramped conditions, and noise. Individuals also complained of a longer journey to school (as a result of moving to PRS accommodation further away from their school), which meant they had to get up earlier, and arrived home later, which impacted the time they had to complete their homework.

- ***“[My daughter] didn’t have a desk in her bedroom. She did [her homework] on the bed. The TV needed to be turned down as the walls are thin”*** Parent of child aged 15-18

- A small number of older children (in particular), felt that their education had been impacted by the move. Whether they had to move schools, or faced a lengthy commute to their previous school, they often struggled to continue their full time education. One older child found it hard to settle into his new college and struggled with his studies as a result. Another older child had to get up at 6am in his GCSE year to get to his school from his PRS accommodation in a different borough, and his attendance suffered dramatically. At one point his attendance was down to 52% and his teachers were telling him to ‘make more of an effort’. The oldest child of the family living in temporary accommodation was travelling from her PRS accommodation to her school (for two hours), and was very stressed and anxious about the experience. Sharing a bedroom and a bed with 3 family members, she really struggled with her studies at home.

- ***“The last year of GCSEs when we moved here, I had to get up at 6am to travel back to school in Bethnal Green. My sister had just started secondary school and throughout that she was living in a hostel”*** Older child, aged 15-18

4 Quality of PRS housing

4.1 Chapter overview

- This chapter describes the suitability / quality of respondents' current housing, the landlord experience (in terms of interaction and assistance), and the impact that these have on children.

4.2 Suitability / quality of current housing

- Parents and children in our sample spoke about a variety of housing challenges faced with their current PRS accommodation. The key challenges fell broadly into two categories:
 - ***Suitability of accommodation (i.e. suitable for the size of the family, and the family members' key needs), and***
 - ***Quality of accommodation (i.e. suitable quality housing stock)***
- Many parents said they were living in PRS accommodation that failed to meet their family's needs. However, even when this was the case, most were either loath or unable to move into alternative accommodation, because they didn't want to disrupt the family, or because they couldn't afford to move.
- For many, the suitability of current PRS accommodation, was said to be a challenge, with a lack of personal space and privacy an issue (especially for parents and children aged 15-18). Parents felt that it was unsuitable for older male and female siblings to share bedrooms, which resulted in teenage daughters sharing bedrooms (and sometimes beds) with their mothers, or teenage boys sharing bedrooms with younger siblings. The 15-18s sharing with their parents or younger siblings complained about a lack any privacy. The lack of space also put pressure on older children when completing homework, as their bedrooms weren't always conducive to study (due to noise and disruption). Some older children (15-18) also complained that they felt that they couldn't invite their friends to stay as there was too little space, so went to their friend's' houses instead. Individuals felt so ashamed about their rented housing – given its small size – that they avoided inviting friends around altogether (see case study on next page).

- ***“I haven’t really got my own space... I tend to probably end up staying at my friend’s house for a little bit more space, and then I come home... it’s just, I haven’t really got my own space, like, it’s not really ideal”*** Child aged 15-18

Child (aged 15-18), studying

Our respondent lives with his single mother in a three bedroom house – his two sisters recently moved out. When he moved into the house three years ago from living with his uncle, he settled in quickly and enjoyed the extra space and privacy.

But he soon began to feel ‘upset and angry’ that issues with the house were not being fixed by the landlord, including the wooden floors and garden fence. He lives in fear that the house will be broken into due to the broken fence, and he worries that the landlord sometimes lets himself into the house with no warning.

He is embarrassed to bring his friends round as they live in houses which are not ‘falling apart’. This makes him feel like he doesn’t fit in with his friendship group. He believes that he would feel more confident and secure if his mother did own the house.

His dream is to buy his mother a house one day, as he believes she deserves to feel secure after years of living in private rented housing.

“Landlords should care for their customers. We are people and not just money. Should all have good living standards – it is upsetting if not”

“I don’t bring friends around as feel they will judge me because of the house. This upsets me loads”

- For younger children (under 15), it was lack of space – rather than privacy – that was felt to be the biggest issue. Some younger children spoke about finding it difficult to display or play with their toys when sharing a bedroom, as they had so little space. One family said they used to hide their children’s toys and take down their paintings when the landlord inspected the property, to avoid any conflict (as they didn’t want to be accused of impacting the décor by displaying their children’s belongings). Younger children living in flats also spoke about wanting a garden where they had more space to play; even those that had a garden often complained that it was too small, or that it lacked the equipment they’d like or had seen at their friend’s houses. Parents of young children often agreed that an outdoor space would make their PRS accommodation more suitable, as their children would be able to play outside unsupervised (in contrast to the park, where they had to accompany them to ensure they were safe).

- ***“[I’d like] a nice, secure garden, so that they can just go out whenever they want and not have to worry where they might go off from it”*** Parent of child aged under 15

- Alongside suitability of housing, quality of housing was cited as another key challenge. While many were content with the quality of their housing – especially ABC1s in larger, well-built, double-glazed houses – other parents had concerns. Older children (15-18) were often aware of the impact that poor quality housing had, or could have, on themselves and their families. This was particular the case for those that had faced issue with faulty electrics, boilers, or flooding. Many reported minor quality issues, such as broken fixtures and fittings (for example, broken kitchen cupboard doors, broken / worn sofas), which they chose not to report in case the landlord increased the rent. For a minority, it was fear of retaliatory eviction, rather than rent increases, that prevented them from reporting these. A sizeable minority had also experienced more serious problems, such as faulty electrics, faulty electric showers, broken whitegoods (such as washing machines), leaks (especially in flats – either in their own flats, or from the flat above), and boiler issues. In these cases, they sought help from their landlords, or attempted to fix the problems themselves.
 - ***“I report specific things... there have been a few major things, like the back door and broken electric shower, but for the little things I don’t bother”*** Parent of a child under 15
 - ***“I don’t want to push too much in case they increase the rent... an electrician friend checked the electrics and said that it should be upgraded [but] you live with that as if you push it, they might ask you to leave”*** Parent of a child aged 15-18

- For many of those in the sample, cold and damp were also reported as being an ongoing challenge. This was especially the case for those living in flats (particularly older housing stock built between the 1960s and 1980s), where parents and children had bedrooms on exposed end walls. In these cases, parents were forced to tackle spreading mould as best they could, moving furniture away from affected walls, or removing contents from wardrobes positioned against damp walls, to reduce the impact. Several had purchased dehumidifiers (at their own expense), to reduce the moisture in the air in a bid to tackle the mould. This was particularly the case for families in which parents and children had respiratory issues (such as asthma), exacerbated by the damp. Alongside damp, draughts were also a problem for some families, especially where they had old-fashioned sash windows or single glazing where the sealant had started to erode. Parents

complained that they spent more money on heating as a result of this, especially if their children's bedrooms were affected by draughts.

- ***“Our windows are double glazed, but the seal has gone...Pretty much all of them are like that”*** Parent of child aged under 15
- ***“So yes, there's no double glazing and the children's rooms are at the back, so their rooms are particularly cold, like, in the winter. So, we have the heating on more than we need to probably”*** Parent of child aged under 15
- ***“We have so much damp.... So, we've got boxes of things because you can't put wardrobes in there, it's disgusting... You worry about what it is doing to their [child's] lungs, especially where he sleeps”*** Parent of child aged under 15

- Besides building quality issues, parents also mentioned décor when talking about this subject. Décor was often described as basic (for example, magnolia walls, plain wooden floors), and in some cases outmoded and unappealing (due to dated carpets and kitchen cabinets). Although some landlords allowed tenants to decorate to their own taste, many parents were loathed to do so, given the costs involved, and the temporary nature of their tenancy. One parent in the sample spent “an extravagant amount” on landscaping the garden of her PRS accommodation, and gained little benefit from this because the house was sold with little notice. While décor was less of a concern for children, some complained that they couldn't decorate their bedrooms as they'd like, as they couldn't put pictures or posters on the walls, or paint / wallpaper their bedrooms like their friends did. While some parents decorated their children's bedrooms (where allowed, at their own expense), not all were able to, and this, for many children, reinforced the 'temporariness' of their living situation. Some children said they preferred spending time at their friends' houses instead of their own because they felt more 'homely'.

- ***“So, the poorly laid out kitchen and the dated kitchen. There isn't even space for a freezer in it, a proper freezer... which is quite annoying when you've got children”*** Parent of child aged 15-18
- ***“It's got a nice big garden but it is very dated. In the other rooms, you can look it's got, like, 1970's psychedelic carpet”*** Parent of child aged 15-18

- ***“We have to have aesthetic decisions approved, so we can’t use blu-tak on the walls, and we couldn’t paint over the [peeling] wallpaper”*** Child aged 15-18
- ***“I’ve been here for years now but I don’t feel like I can do anything here. I can’t put out my furniture [as it’s a furnished flat], I can’t change the flooring or paint the walls”*** Parent of child aged under 15
- ***“You can decorate but if you want to change the colour you’ve got to get permission and you have to paint it back when you leave. It’s all a bit of an effort really, to do that.”*** Parent of child aged under 15

4.3 The landlord experience

- While a small number of parents had very good or very bad experiences with their landlords, the majority of those in our sample had minimal interaction with them, partly due to the fact that they decided it was too risky to report minor problems. Most parents described their landlords as reasonable, as they’d deal with issues and make repairs when needed, but distant otherwise. Often landlords were seen as ‘one step removed’ from the tenants of PRS accommodation, and a sizeable proportion of our sample had never met their landlord (for example, if the landlord lived overseas), dealing with the letting agency instead. Those dealing with lettings agents said that they were generally easy to deal with, and would deal with any issues raised (although some had to chase for a resolution). While children had minimal contact with landlords, some older children were conscious of them and their impact, especially where their parents had poor relationships with them, or their parents had worries about their tenancy.

- ***“Very strained. Bad communicator. Unreasonable. Invisible. When you do communicate, he’s arrogant, and to get him to communicate, he won’t talk to me, he talks to her and all he’s interested in is, “Why are you ringing me? Where’s my rent?” But, you’ve been paid, so why are you going on about your rent?”*** Parent of child aged under 15
- ***“The amount of things we’ve asked to be fixed and he doesn’t do it”*** Parent of child aged under 15
- ***“She’s unreasonable. There are certain things in her remit to fix, but others – like painting – that are a point blank no”*** Parent of a child aged under 15

- ***“She [the landlord] sent a guy to come and collect the key from the house, illegally trying to evict me. He was knocking the door, and I was scared. I was calling the Environmental Health lady, and she is saying, like, ‘I cannot do anything. You have to call the police.’ So, I wrote to my landlady, ‘If you come asking for the keys and whatnot, I won’t hesitate to call the police’”*** Parent of a child aged under 15

- When dealing with landlords, the greatest challenges were said to be around reporting issues – or deciding when to report issues – and landlord visits / tenancy reviews. Most children only came into contact with landlords if they visited to make repairs, or during tenancy inspections and reviews. While most parents said they were comfortable reporting issues to landlords, most took a very ‘pragmatic’ approach to doing so. For small or recurring issues (such as broken fixtures / fittings, mould / damp), they’d either resigned themselves to living with the issue, or fixed it themselves, so as not to ‘bother’ their landlord. For more serious problems (such as leakages, broken whitegoods), they would go direct to their landlord or letting agency for support. Most said that their landlord would deal with any issues quickly once reported, although some had to chase several times to gain a resolution.
 - ***“We used to have a leak. I’ve even got a hole on top of my boiler. The landlord was, like, ‘Yes, yes, yes,’ and he gave me the upstairs landlord’s phone number. So, basically, I had to deal with it”*** Parent of children under 15

 - ***“Then the shower upstairs is broken so I said about that and he said, ‘Well, you’re lucky to have a shower’”*** Parent of children under 15

- It was clear that many parents thought that if they reported issues frequently, their landlord would blame them for causing the problems by not taking care of the property. There was a strong perception that if landlords saw them as problem tenants – constantly reporting problems and asking for assistance – they would increase their rent, which if too high, would force them to move out. For a smaller number, the fear was that they would be evicted as a result of continually reporting issues, with limited time to find a new home. This power imbalance between landlord and tenant meant that the most financially insecure parents were reluctant to report issues to their landlord ahead of rent reviews, as they were worried about the repercussions it might have on their rent and lease (and

in most serious cases, the potential for eviction). Some children were aware of the impact this was having on their parents, having overheard their parents talking to each other.

- ***“I don’t want to bug [the landlord] regarding a toilet, because I’m scared that he will ask me to leave, ask us to leave, and then that horror of having just one month to find a place with two kids”*** Parent of child aged under 15
- ***“It’s the way the talk to you, yes, their tone, yes. It’s like, ‘Oh, there’s lots of problems with that house,’ ‘Seem to be having lots of problems.’ It just feels that they’re pointing the finger”*** Parent of child aged 15-18
- ***“The bathroom window doesn’t even close properly...we’ve been telling them this and they just pass the blame back and it’s a typical landlord habit, we’ve had it before. It’s expensive for them to fix, so they just blame you”*** Parent of child aged under 15
- ***“My friends were saying, ‘You’re an idiot, why did you beg?’ ‘Because’, I say, ‘Well, I needed a place.’ Nobody will know what my daughter and I are going through. So, I said, ‘Listen, I’ve secured this place.’ Whenever she [landlord] said, ‘Jump’, I’d say, ‘How high?’”*** Parent of child aged under 15

- All spoke about having regular inspections (often six-monthly), when their landlord or the agency would inspect the property to ensure it was being well cared for. However, a minority of parents and children, said that their landlords (and landlord’s employees, such as workmen, or lettings agents), visited more often than required, and (unlawfully) without warning. This could leave parents and children feeling unsettled and even fearful. One parent said that her landlord’s frequent calls and visits asking about rent and about re-signing her tenancy agreement, had left her feeling anxious and stressed. Her partner said that he often dealt with issues himself, or called the landlord himself, rather than let her deal with it as it affected her so badly. Her older child (15-18) was aware of her mother’s anxiety, and knew that it got worse when she worried about the landlord, the flat or rent. One older child (15-18), started to feel concerned after the landlord – who lived in the area – kept dropping round to check on the house without warning. Not only was he worried about his mum’s safety when she was alone and the landlord visited, he

was also worried about their possessions and personal data, which the landlord may come into contact with when checking on the house.

- ***“It’s scary as the landlord does just pop around. It’s not in my control”***
Child aged 15-18
- ***“I’m working with this girl, and she was like, “Oh, we bought a property about three years ago,” and so and so - it was our old house...! She had been there [to view] when we were living there, because the landlord had a spare key!! I felt so uncomfortable knowing she had been let in with us knowing – I was gutted”*** Parent of child under 15
- ***“It just feels like, when is it going to go wrong, he’s going to see and I’m going to have to move out? So it’s like I’m constantly on edge wondering if we’re going to have a home next week sort of thing”*** Parent of child under 15
- ***“She [Mum] gets depressed quite a lot and doesn’t understand, because she thinks about it more, she doesn’t really understand how could this turn out good”*** Child aged under 15

- The small number of families eligible for Housing Benefit or the housing support element of Universal Credit said that this could be a barrier to renting PRS accommodation. Individuals said that they’d been faced with landlords and lettings agents telling them that they weren’t eligible for certain properties because they were benefits claimants, when seeking out PRS property. They were often limited to the cheaper end of the PRS accommodation spectrum, which is all that they could afford given their available funds and benefits. One respondent found that her housing benefit status limited the number of properties available to her when seeking out her PRS accommodation, and had to take ‘what was available’. She felt that – as a single mother on benefits – she had been effected by negative social stereotyping. Another put off claiming universal credit as it required she logged information about her landlord on the application, and she thought he would be notified. It was only when she spoke to an executive at the Job Centre that she discovered her landlord wouldn’t be notified of her change in status, and so she started claiming the benefit.

- ***“I just had to take what was available.... Maybe it’s something to do with a certain stigma. On TV you see these stereotypical ‘Benefits Mums’, and [landlords] think there will be an issue with the rent”*** Parent of a child under 15
- ***“Anyone on benefits landlords won’t give them tenancy. I didn’t start claiming [Universal Credit] until I was absolutely desperate... I didn’t dare do it [apply] as it wasn’t clear if they’ [landlord] would find out... The job centre person said they wouldn’t be contacted. Why ask for [the landlord’s] details?”*** Parent of child aged 15-18
- Regardless of how they felt about their landlord – and the service received – all parents were conscious of the rent they paid, and how this impacted their own finances. Lower SEG and low paid respondents were conscious about rent increases, and their ability to pay if their landlord chose to increase their rent. Few expected to ever save enough money for a deposit to buy a house, but were saving whatever they could to mitigate against future rent increases, for emergencies, or for a deposit for new PRS accommodation if they had to leave. While parents of higher SEG (ABC1) were also mindful of rent increases, they had professional jobs and often had some savings, so were more financially secure. However, they were conscious of the insecurity of renting, and many were saving as much as they could for a deposit so that they could buy a home of their own. All of the parents in the sample were frustrated at the money that they spent on renting, and resentful of the fact that it paid for their landlords’ mortgage, rather than their own. It also meant that they had less disposable income to spend on the family, for example, taking them on holiday and going on day trips.
 - ***“Like I said before, I wouldn’t spend as much money on a holiday or, like, you don’t know exactly what money you have. Well, you know how much money you’ve got, but you want to save as much as you can”*** Parent of child aged under 15
 - ***“I’ve been here for eight years... [But] when you start thinking from the other side, it’s not mine, and every month I pay rent, it feels like I’m throwing money in the bin. What can I do?”*** Parent of child aged under 15
 - ***“There is a little bit of a worry... Especially when people say, “You’re throwing away your money on rent.” They have a point, but what can you do?”*** Parent of child aged under 15

- There were strong calls by many parents for the PRS sector to be better monitored and controlled, to protect PRS tenants. Few realise that are any controls in place to protect tenants at present; few knew about the current controls in place at present. This is a key concern in London, where there's such a high demand for rented property. Those that had had poor experiences with landlords wanted there to be controls in place to ensure that landlords fulfilled their remit effectively (for example, repairing issues in good time, visiting only during designated housing inspections etc.). Many also demanded greater security in terms of longer-term tenancy agreements (such as three-five years), to give them greater confidence that they could stay in their PRS accommodation long-term, without the fear of having to move out with little notice. There were also calls for greater rent-control in the PRS sector. As seen throughout this section, financial pressures left many worrying about yearly increases to rent – and their ability to pay extra costs – and there was a desire for capping to ensure that PRS renters aren't priced out of PRS accommodation.
 - ***"I think the government should be more involved in private renting. I don't know whether there are any caps in prices, rent prices, and things like that. So, more regulation, definitely. Definitely"*** Parent of child aged under 15
 - ***"They need also rent-increase caps, because they can just go up and up. Like, our neighbours, they ended up having to move completely out... They literally had to move just because the landlord, yes, just kept putting the rent up and up and up"*** Parent of child aged under 15
 - ***"People need long term stability. They need to know that they can stay somewhere for five years"*** Parent of child aged under 15
 - ***I think, and I think there should be law to get services all checked, everything checked, so it's safe and not just once in a blue moon, when something goes wrong. That's what it's like at the moment, it could be something major, it could be a fire. You know, the electrics, the water and the gas, all three things, and even the mould issue. They seem to ignore that, and that's a big thing"*** Parent of child aged under 15

- ***“When I came here, one of the cupboards had some mould in and he said, ‘Oh, I’ll send someone over to paint it,’ I said, ‘No, that’s not how you deal with it.’ I ended up doing it myself, that is their answer, we’ll just paint over it. I think that is most landlords, they don’t want to spend money”*** Parent of child aged under 15

4.4 Impacts on children: health

- Some parents felt that their children’s health suffered as a result of the poor quality of their PRS accommodation, while others felt that their children’s wellbeing had been impacted too (especially where they were living in cramped conditions with limited privacy, both key for older children, 15-18). Most parents felt that the impact on physical health was easier to monitor and treat, while wellbeing – including mental health, emotional health and sense of self-worth – could be more challenging to manage, especially during stressful times for the family.
- In terms of physical health, the greatest challenges for children related to cold and damp. In houses where cold and damp were issues, children were limited in which rooms they could spend time in. They often chose to stay in the living room or kitchen to watch TV, do their homework, or play if it was warmer than their own bedroom. Mould was also a concern for a sizeable minority. Not only was it unpleasant to live with, it could also negatively impact children’s health (for example, irritating bronchial issues). One family also had an issue with bed bugs when they first moved to their current PRS accommodation. Some parents and children complained of low-level noise pollution in their PRS accommodation (for example, noisy neighbours, loud music), which was irritating but rarely affected their sleep. It was only in very extreme cases (where children were living in very insecure accommodation, and were worried about their living situation) that children struggled to sleep. One parent and her daughter (aged 15 – full details in case study on next page), who had been served an eviction notice and were fighting the decision, had started to share a bedroom as they were so worried about their safety and security, in case their landlord forced eviction. Every night they pushed furniture against the front door and their bedroom door, but were so worried that both struggled to sleep.

Parent (child aged under 15), working

Our respondent is a single mother; she lives with her daughter (aged 14) in a two bedroom flat. They moved into the flat over ten years ago, after living with extended family, and then friends in a shared house.

She and her daughter have reported a number of issues to the overseas landlord over the years, such as damp, a leaking bath, a dangerous staircase, faulty electrics and a broken garden fences, boiler, bed and washing machine. The landlord is slow to reply and fix the issues. The landlord often blames her for the issues and makes her feel uncomfortable when she inspects the flat every three months.

When she badly damaged her leg after falling down the staircase she had reported to the landlord – their relationship broke down. Due to this fall she couldn't work and fell into rent arrears; she borrowed money from friends and sought help from her MP, council, environmental officer and a recently a solicitor. She now has some financial support from her local authority, for the rent. The landlord tried She is waiting for her court date to fight against the legal eviction notices which have recently been sent by her landlord.

The impact on her daughter is huge; her daughter is scared to sleep alone in case the neighbour round again and she is fearful for her mum's safety. Her daughter has been referred to CAMHS as she has been bed wetting and crying at school.

"I had the School Welfare Officer in to intervene because she [daughter] had a meltdown in the school, and then she was worried that my landlady will attack me in the house or something. She was telling the teacher, 'I have to go back home because mummy is alone'... We had bed wetting issues, because we are terrified"

- Beyond physical health, some parents also felt that their housing situation had affected their children's emotional health. While the impacts were largely minor (for example, low level worry when their parents were worried or stressed about their housing situation), some more serious impacts were reported, especially in older children (15-18). While most thought their young children (under 15) had adjusted well to their current PRS accommodation, some parents were conscious that their children had overheard them talking to their partner or friends about their financial worries or rent concerns, and that it had made their children feel anxious as a result.
- For older children, the impact on emotional health was seen to be a more complex issue, as these children were most aware of any housing – or financial – challenges faced by their parents (such as landlord issues, rent challenges, broken fixtures and fittings). As a result, many of these older children felt a 'low-level' anxiety about their situation, and its impact on their parents and siblings, which effected their overall emotional health. For a minority of older children in the sample, however, their housing situation had more long-lasting effects on their emotional health. Individuals had experienced landlords or others (such as tradesmen, lettings agents) coming into their house unexpectedly / without

permission (unlawfully), and were often affronted by the experience. Some felt insecure in their accommodation as a result, as they didn't know if / when it might happen again. Interestingly, some older children said that they felt they needed to keep their feelings to themselves, so as not to upset their mothers (or sisters) further. They recognised, however, that this may be negatively impacting their emotional health. Three respondents in our sample had experienced mental health issues (including depression, self-harm, eating disorders), during their time in their current PRS accommodation. While children and parents recognised that their mental health conditions were impacted by stress, it should be noted that these young people were experiencing a wide range of stressors (such as family instability, financial worries potentially linked to the affordability of their housing, study concerns), during this time.

- ***“The instability of it [housing situation] impacts my mental health, and also house memories [of happier times for the family]”*** Child aged 15-18
- ***“My daughter is 18 and is conscious of what's going on. She's disclosed she's anorexic and she's very stressed... I was stressed [about the situation] and I cried and I told her [about housing concerns] and she was getting worried”*** Parent of child aged 15-18

5 Security of PRS housing

5.1 Chapter overview

- This chapter describes the extent to which parents and children feel settled and secure in PRS housing, and the impact that feeling settled and secure have on children.

5.2 Feeling settled and secure in PRS housing

- When discussing the topic of ‘secure accommodation’ with parents and their children, no single definition emerged to describe what this meant to them. Parents and their children talked about ‘secure accommodation’ in two ways: either as accommodation that was *physically safe / secure* (i.e. with strong locks, secure windows), or as accommodation that they saw as ‘theirs’ – where they could put down roots, feel settled, and live long-term. The latter definition was used by the majority of parents in our sample, though some children (especially younger children) viewed ‘secure accommodation’ in a more literal sense.
- Physically ‘secure accommodation’ was important for parents and children alike with regards to their PRS accommodation – as it meant that their family would be safe from harm behind bolted doors. This was key for those living in inner city areas (particularly for those living in high crime areas) and for those who had had issues with their landlord (for example, had been visited by their landlord without warning), or been evicted from rented accommodation in the past. However, ‘secure accommodation’ in the more figurative sense, was also important for parents, and for older children (15-18). Many had lived in accommodation before that was familiar and safe, where they felt they could live without fear of eviction, and recognised the positive impact of this.
- When asked to describe how secure they felt in their current PRS accommodation – whether they felt they could live there long-term without risk of eviction / having to move on – very few said that they felt completely secure. However, perceptions of security were influenced by a range of other factors, including the family’s financial situation, length of their current lease, how long they had lived in the area and their relationship with their landlord.

- ***“I feel settled because I’ve lived here for 17 years, but I have no control or freedom... [Secure accommodation] is having your own property. You pay your mortgage and have something to show for it”*** Parent of a child aged 15-18
 - ***“Settled – I’m not 100% settled. We have this space but she [landlord] could at any point come in and take it back”*** Parent of a child aged under 15
 - ***“The meaning of settled. Well, I do have a roof over my head, yes. I’ve been here for eight years. It feels time to time [like] I’m coming home”***
Parent of child aged under 15
- Parents and their children broadly fell along a **‘settled’** spectrum, from the least secure **‘struggling’** renters, through to the more, but not completely, secure **‘managing’** renters. The **‘struggling’** renters were generally C2DE, with lower wages, and a poorer financial situation (with limited or no savings, claiming benefits), and – in the most serious cases – they were dealing with the threat of eviction or living in temporary housing. Their situation was felt to be precarious, and they struggled to settle, as they didn’t know if they’d be able to live in their current PRS accommodations in the long-term, or whether they’d have to move out at the next rent review (see next page for a case study to illustrate this). Two **‘struggling’** renters in the sample were being supported by their older children (15-18), who contributed to the rent if needed.
- ***“I feel more settled than I did in the hostel but not by much. It’s like... is it temporary or not – I’d like it to be temporary”*** Child aged 15-18

Child (15-18), working / studying

Our respondent lives with his mum and sister in a two-bed flat, where they've lived for just under two years. The family used to live in a three bed council house with a garden, but after his parents separated 'everything fell apart' and he, his mum and his sister moved into temporary accommodation in a hostel. They have moved three times in the last four years.

He misses the area that he used to live in, where his friends and grandparents still live, and he doesn't feel part of the community where he lives now. When they first moved to their flat he was doing his GCSEs and had to commute two hours to school everyday (a commute his sister still does now). He now has to get up at 6am each day to get to work on time. His mum and sister are both having counselling for depression and anxiety as a result of the difficult time they've experienced in the last few years.

Despite living in the flat for almost two years he does not see it as his home. The family haven't done anything to the flat to make it more homely as they don't see it as somewhere they want to stay. There is a two-bed sofa in the living room, so if they're all in the house, he goes to his room and sits on a plastic chair as there's not enough space for them to sit together. He finds it depressing sitting at home

"It's somewhere to come back to after work and get your head down. I don't see it as home"

"I'd like a normal house that me and my mum can make our home"

- **'Managing'** renters, were often higher SEG, with professional jobs, living in accommodation for over five years. Many of the parents in this group were satisfied with their living situation, and the size and quality of their house, and were comfortable living there. While they lived with the knowledge that their PRS accommodation didn't belong to them – and that there was a chance that they may have to move on in future – most had the financial means (such as savings) to protect them from uncertainty of their position. Indeed, some were saving hard for deposits, with the hope of buying their own property at some point in the future.
- The majority of our sample fell in the middle of the spectrum – the **'holding on, but worried for the future'** renters – who were in work (often lower paid work, and holding down multiple jobs), sometimes receiving benefits, but still feeling stretched financially. They worried about rent increases forcing them to move elsewhere, which meant they never felt fully settled or secure in their situation.
 - *"Every day it's money. Paying the rent and bills. Before the kids were born I was a full time secretary, then I did jobs to fit around the kids. I have two jobs now"* Parent of child aged 15-18
 - *"I feel unsettled at this point in time... last year I was also unsettled due to the increase in rent"* Parent of child aged 15-18

- ***“I’m lucky that my rent is low but I still struggle to pay the rent and bills”*** Parent of child aged under 15
- Most parents – wherever they fell on the spectrum – tried to make their PRS accommodation feel as homely as possible, to make their children feel relaxed and settled. However, the family in temporary accommodation struggled to do this, given the impermanence of their situation. Some parents felt that the temporary nature of their living situation had an impact on their children, and how settled (or not) they felt. This was especially the case for older children (15-18) who were more aware of their family’s living situation and financial situation (from talking or listening to their parents), than their younger siblings. Older children were more likely to talk about the temporary nature of their accommodation – as they didn’t know how long they’d be living there – while younger children (under 15), spoke about this more in practical terms (i.e. ‘it’s not our house, I can’t paint my bedroom pink’).
- A key observation from the research, was that many of the parents in our sample, especially lower SEG, lower paid parents, were feeling increasingly ‘squeezed’ by their financial and housing situation. Many of the parents in this group – who traditionally would have been social housing tenants – weren’t sufficiently high priority to secure social housing (given the limited supply). As a result, they were forced to rent PRS housing from landlords and were challenged by the high rents and variable housing quality / conditions. A minority of respondents were very negative about the ‘others’ that got ‘priority’ access to social housing, pushing them further down the list.
 - ***“My mum and dad broke up when I was 13 or 14 and that’s when it all started [as we lost our council house]. We had to start the process again. In the space of 3.5 years we moved 3 times”*** Child aged 15-18
 - ***“I thought we could get a council house [with my daughters, after the divorce], I was on the list then I was taken off as they’d changed the criteria”*** Parent of child aged 15-18
 - ***“Those others who come here just with their passport and get a house, whilst I can’t. I actually work and don’t just live off benefits”*** Parent of a child aged under 15

- ***“I was told I will never get a council property. Off the books I was told, “Don’t even bother. You’ll never get one.”*** Parent of a child aged under 15

5.3 Making a house a ‘home’

- Both the parents and children in our sample had a clear idea of what made a house a ‘home’. For parents in particular, the focus was on having enough space for themselves and their children to live in, and for the space to be both warm / well insulated and secure. As per section 4.2, parents also talked about the importance of décor in making a house a ‘home’ – being able to decorate to their own taste, and to furnish it with their own furniture / possessions in particular – were both key. Similarly to parents, older children (15-18s) often focused on space when talking about what made a house a ‘home’. For these children, having their own bedroom which they could make ‘their own’, was the priority. Privacy – a space away from parents and siblings – was also key. As mentioned in previous sections, for younger children (under 15) it was the ability to have their own bedroom, decorated as they would like, that would have the greatest impact. For this group, having a place to display their toys, the space to play, and having pets (rarely allowed by landlords / in tenancy agreements), were all important. Ultimately, however, for parents and their children, the single element that would make their house feel like ‘home’ would be ownership. If their house belonged to them, they’d have complete freedom in what they did to it.
 - ***“[If I owned my property] I could make it my home. I’d hopefully be able to decorate, give her a proper girl’s room”*** Parent of child aged under 15
 - ***“[Secure accommodation] is one you’ve bought, with a low mortgage”*** Parent of child aged 15-18
 - ***“I would have all my teddy bears on show and not in the cupboard”*** Child aged under 15
- When discussing the topic of their ‘dream home’ with parents and children, several key themes emerged. For all, their ‘dream home’ would be one that they owned. Most wanted

a house rather than a flat – large and spacious enough for the family to live in comfortably (with bedrooms for everyone, a garden etc.). Parents and older children (15-18), also focused on security when describing their ‘dream home’, as they were looking for a house that was physically secure (with good locks on the windows and doors), that they would feel safe in. In addition, parents often spoke about warm, light, well-insulated and quiet homes that felt comfortable and welcoming to live in.

- Both parents and older children (15-18), spoke about the importance of access, stating that their ‘dream homes’ would be close to transport links, with school and work easily accessible, along with local services. Along with some of the housing ‘basics’ of space, privacy, safety and security, older children (15-18) also mentioned entertainments, when describing their dream home. Some said they’d like an in-door cinema or TV room in which to watch content on the big screen, or TVs in every room. Individuals also mentioned technology when describing their ‘dream home’, with underfloor heating and the latest equipment / appliances being key (for example, smart home technology). Others were simply happy with a larger house that better suited the needs of their family (for example, fewer stairs for those with mobility issues or families with lots of small children). Some parents summarised their ‘dream home’ in the following housing journal pre-task excerpts.

- ***“Quiet, leafy green neighbourhood with lovely neighbours and community...public transport nearby and easy walk to the shops”*** Parent of child aged 15-18

A parent's dream home...

Things to consider in your dream home?
Location, size, quality of building, quality of
fixture and fittings, security etc.

Please describe your dream K R P H «

Think about things that you are not happy with in your current house/flat, as well as things that you aspire to have more generally when answering this question. If you prefer, feel free to add drawings to your answer to help tell us what you want in an ideal world.

My dream are simple, any house / Flat would do, it just has to be mine, and if it can be achieved with time (good cooler, proper double glazing, normal bath, up to date heating system). Would love a garden so could get a dog or cat for the kids.



YouGov

A parent's dream home...

Things to consider in your dream home?
Location, size, quality of building, quality of
fixture and fittings, security etc.

Please describe your dream K R P H «

Think about things that you are not happy with in your current house/flat, as well as things that you aspire to have more generally when answering this question. If you prefer, feel free to add drawings to help tell us what you want in an ideal world.

One where I would be able to improve all the rooms - decorate as I would like; replace all the white goods; repair/improve any aspects which need sorting.
A home which I know is my home and I couldn't be asked to move at any time.
Ideally I would have a house, rather than a flat with a nice garden.
I like the location & where I live.



YouGov

My dream home...

Things to consider in your dream home:
Location, size, quality of build, fixtures and fittings, security...

I got all this by working hard! Please describe your dream home...

Think about things that you are not happy with in your current house/flat, as well as things that you aspire to have more generally, when answering this question. If you prefer, feel free to add drawings to your answer to help tell us what you want in an ideal home.

My dream home would be situated in a relatively affluent area.
To be detached with 7 bedrooms (with 2 to 3 of them being for storage) and 1 for studying.
The house would have underground heating with tiles as flooring. Have a conservatory
Loads of high-quality appliances that are top-of-the-range.
I would convert the ~~old~~ attic to a cinema with all the latest movies and with game consoles, 3 toilets, 2 kitchens, En-suites in each bedroom.
Security → An iris/finger scanner in case I lose my keys, 2 locks on front doors.

- While parents and older children (15-18) were practical when creating their ‘dream home’, younger children were more creative. Children aged under 15 were much more focused on having space to play (in a big garden, or in their own large bedrooms or playrooms), and on having access to equipment to keep them entertained (a tree house, a climbing frame, a trampoline, or a swimming pool). Pets also featured heavily, with most under 15s saying that their ‘dream home’ would include either dogs, cats, hamsters or rabbits – with space for them to live outdoors (hutches and kennels), and their own indoor spaces. In younger children’s eyes, their ‘dream home’ would be a place where they and their family could live comfortably (for example, in a warm house, with lots of creature comforts), and enjoy some of the things they were currently missing (such as outdoor space, pets).

- **“Rabbit, a swimming pool and a water slide, and a big bedroom. A nice garden with a rabbit and a greenhouse”** Child aged under 15
- **“Three bedrooms, and I have a double cabin bed that I can fit all my teddies on. Cinema room to watch Harry Potter”** Child aged under 15
- **“Garden, pool, lounge and living area and four bedrooms”** Child aged under 15

A child's dream home...



Please ask your child to draw their dream home / help them draw their dream home

Please work with them to make notes about what their dream home would include and, where possible, why they would like the home to have it. There are no right or wrong answers, so please don't worry about writing down an 'accurate' or 'realistic' answer.

Questions to ask to help your child answer: What would you love to have in your home? What do you wish you could change about our current house/flat?

Big garden with an indoor swimming pool. 3 bedrooms and I have a double cabin bed that can fit all my teddies on. Cinema room to watch Harry Potter. It should be 2 or 3 floors but lots of rooms on each floor. In the house we have me, my mum, a dog and 2 guinea pigs. Lots of rooms for specific purposes. Needs to be located near countryside, sea, friends, school, mums work and theatres.

50 metres wide
2 metres deep pool

Luxury tree house perfect for climbing



YouGov

A child's dream home...

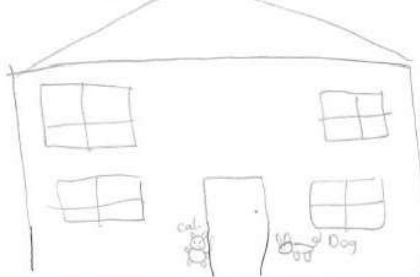


Please ask your child to draw their dream home / help them draw their dream home

Please work with them to make notes about what their dream home would include and, where possible, why they would like the home to have it. There are no right or wrong answers, so please don't worry about writing down an 'accurate' or 'realistic' answer.

Questions to ask to help your child answer: What would you love to have in your home? What do you wish you could change about our current house/flat?

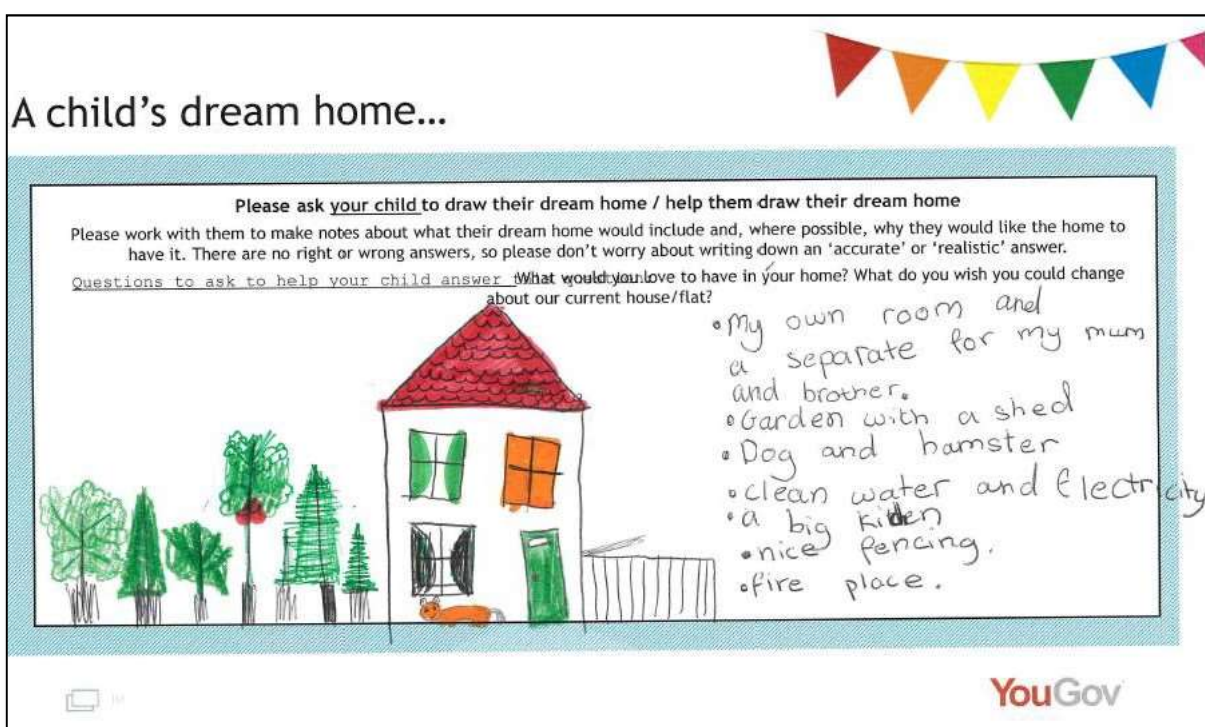
Swimming pool,
Spiral staircase,
a big big garden



Rabbit
Swimming pool and
a water slide. A
big bedroom.
A nice garden with
flowers and a green
house.



YouGov



- As stated above, however, for parents in particular – but for children too – their ‘dream home’ would be something that they owned. While some felt that they may rent a larger house in future – or may even purchase a house outside of London (minority) – few ever expected to own their ‘dream home’.
 - ***“The biggest challenge would be to buy our own house. Now, we’ve been trying for it for ages...”*** Parent of child aged 15-18
 - ***“My dreams are simple, any house / flat would do it just has to be mine”*** Parent of child aged under 15
 - ***“My dream home would belong to us / me... I would be able to decorate it to my own tastes”*** Parent of child aged 15-18

3.5 Impacts on children: feeling settled and secure

- Older children (15-18), in particular, were more aware of the ‘precarious’ and ‘transient’ nature of the accommodation they lived in, which made it difficult to ever fully settle in. Older children (15-18) who could see that their parents were anxious about their housing, living and financial situation found settling particularly difficult. While younger children (under 15) were less aware of the ‘transient’ nature of their accommodation, they were

conscious of the physical manifestation of this, that is the physical constraints of renting, such as not being able to decorate, hang pictures on the walls etc. Being unable to decorate their bedrooms as they wished, reinforced the temporary nature of their situation, especially in contrast to friends living in their own homes.

- Children's ability to settle was also affected by access to established friendship groups, and for children moving a distance away from friends (for example, moving to a new borough), ability to settle into a new area was even more strongly impacted. Especially for older children (15-18s), but also for younger children (under 15) at secondary school, some struggled to maintain friendships as they now had to plan visits, rather than drop by spontaneously after school or at the weekends. Older children often struggled to make new friends when moving to a different part of London, if they didn't have any extended family or other acquaintances in the area. Establishing themselves in a new community was often felt to be difficult when they were older; as there were few social activities that they could get involved in to meet other people. Those with friends in the area, however, were better able to settle having a friendship group to support them during the period of change.

6 Appendix

6.1 Respondent profiles

Respondent number	Respondent type	Age of child	Borough
1	Parent (child 15 to 18)	15yrs	Southwark
2	Parent (child 15 to 18)	17yrs	Lambeth
3	Parent (child 15 to 18)	17yrs	Greenwich
4	Parent (child 15 to 18)	18yrs	Croydon
5	Parent (child 15 to 18)	18yrs	Havering
6	Parent (child under 15)	1,6yrs	Hammersmith
7	Parent (child under 15)	12yrs	Barnet
8	Parent (child under 15)	10yrs	Ealing
9	Parent (child under 15)	1,5yrs	Barnet
10	Parent (child under 15)	10yrs	Lambeth
11	Parent (child under 15)	8yrs	Enfield
12	Parent (child under 15)	12yrs	Bromley
13	Parent (child under 15)	13yrs	Harrow
14	Parent (child under 15)	9yrs	Bromley
15	Parent (child under 15)	14yrs	Hounslow
16	Parent (child under 15)	6yrs	Plumstead
17	Parent (child under 15)	6yrs	Harrow
18	Parent (child under 15)	14yrs	Merton
19	Parent (child under 15)	7yrs	Walthamstow
20	Parent (child under 15)	7,10,13yrs	Newham
21	Child (15-18)	18yrs	Tower Hamlets
22	Child (15-18)	18yrs	Barking & Dagenham
23	Child (15-18)	18yrs	Croydon
24	Child (15-18)	16yrs	Newham
25	Child (15-18)	16yrs	Harrow
26	Child (15-18)	16yrs	Tower Hamlets
27	Child (15-18)	17yrs	Lambeth
28	Child (15-18)	16yrs	Enfield
29	Child (15-18)	15yrs	Enfield
30	Child (15-18)	18yrs	Tower Hamlets

6.2 Screening questions

[profile_lea] {single varlabel="Local Education Authority"} Local Education Authority

- <1> City of London
- <2> Camden
- <3> Greenwich
- <4> Hackney
- <5> Hammersmith and Fulham
- <6> Islington
- <7> Kensington and Chelsea
- <8> Lambeth
- <9> Lewisham
- <10> Southwark
- <11> Tower Hamlets
- <12> Wandsworth
- <13> Westminster
- <14> Barking and Dagenham
- <15> Barnet
- <16> Bexley
- <17> Brent
- <18> Bromley
- <19> Croydon
- <20> Ealing
- <21> Enfield
- <22> Haringey
- <23> Harrow
- <24> Havering
- <25> Hillingdon
- <26> Hounslow
- <27> Kingston upon Thames
- <28> Merton
- <29> Newham
- <30> Redbridge
- <31> Richmond upon Thames
- <32> Sutton
- <33> Waltham Forest

#All must live in one of the above LEAs – record details and aim for a mix of inner / outer London boroughs; monitor numbers

[profile_house_tenure] {single varlabel="House Tenure"} Do you own or rent the home in which you live?

- <1> Own – outright
- <2> Own – with a mortgage
- <3> Own (part-own) – through shared ownership scheme (i.e. pay part mortgage, part rent)
- <4> Rent – from a private landlord
- <5> Rent – from my local authority
- <6> Rent – from a housing association
- <7> Rent – from my local authority – (temporary accommodation)
- <8> Rent – from family/friends
- <9> Neither – I live with my parents, family or friends but pay some rent to them
- <10> Neither – I live rent-free with my parents, family or friends

<11>Other

#All must answer 4 or 7

[parental_status] Are you a parent or guardian of a child that lives with you? Please select all that apply.

<1> Yes, of at least one child aged under 5

<2> Yes, of at least one child aged 5 – 14

<3> Yes, of at least one child aged 15 – 18

<4> Yes, of at least one child aged 19+

<5> None of the above

#All must answer 1, 2, or 3

#Code 1 = audience 1

#Code 2 = audience 2

#Code 3 = audience 3

Ask if answer 1 in parental_status

[child_age1] {multiple} You said that you had at least one child aged under 5. Please tell us how old your child/children are. Please tick all that apply.

<1> Less than 12 months old

<2> 1

<3> 2

<4> 3

<5> 4

#Record

Ask if answer 2 in parental_status

[child_age2] {multiple} You said that you had at least one child aged 5 - 14. Please tell us how old your child/children are. Please tick all that apply.

<1> 5

<2> 6

<3> 7

<4> 8

<5> 9

<6> 10

<7> 11

<8> 12

<9> 13

<10> 14

#Record

Ask if answer 3 in parental_status

[child_age3] {multiple} You said that you had at least one child aged 15 - 18. Please tell us how old your child/children are. Please tick all that apply.

<1> 15

<2> 16

<3> 17

<4> 18

#Record

#Recruit a spread of child's age across all interviews

[lengthinhome] You said that you currently live in accommodation that you rent from a private landlord. For how long have you been living in this accommodation?

- <1> Less than 1 month
- <2> 1 month or more, but less than 6 months
- <3> 6 months or more, but less than 12 months
- <4> 12 months or more, but less than 18 months
- <5> 18 months or more, but less than 24 months
- <6> 24 months or more
- <7> I can't remember

#Recruit a mix of length in home – aim for at least half of interviews to be with people who have been in their accommodation less than 12 months (i.e. code 1-3); **monitor numbers**

[accommodation_type] Which of the following best describes the type of accommodation you live in?

- <1> I / we live in a house
- <2> I / we live in a flat
- <3> I / we live in a bungalow
- <4> I / we live in another type of accommodation

#Record

[accommodation_who] And which of the following best describes who you live with in your current housing?

- <1> I / we live alone
- <2> I / we live with extended family members (e.g. aunt, uncle, grandparent etc.)
- <3> I / we live with other people who are not family
- <4> Other

#Record – where possible, include 2-3 people who live with extended family / other people

[renew_length] which of the following best describes the contract you have on your accommodation?

- <1> I / we have a rolling contract, which is renewed on a month-by-month basis
- <2> I / we have a fixed term contract, which is due to expire within the next 6 months
- <3> I / we have a fixed term contract, which is due to expire within the next 7 – 12 months
- <4> I / we have a fixed term contract which is due to expire within the next 13 – 24 months
- <5> I / we have another type of contract
- <6> I / we don't have a contract on our accommodation
- <7> Don't know

#Record – positive skew towards those who answer 1-3. Where possible, aim to include people who do not have a contract; **monitor numbers**

[housing_statements] On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is not at all agree and 5 is very much agree, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

- [housing_statements_1] I see my current house as my home
- [housing_statements_2] I am very satisfied with my current housing and would be happy to live here for as long as I can
- [housing_statements_3] Our landlord offers me a fair deal
- [housing_statements_4] I think that our accommodation is of good quality

- <1> 1 – not at all agree
- <2> 2
- <3> 3
- <4> 4
- <5> 5 – very much agree

#Aim to include at least half of participants have low satisfaction levels with their accommodation (i.e. code 1-2 on at least 2 measures above)

[housing_issues] Do you experience any of the following in your current accommodation? Please note that your answers will be anonymous and won't be shared more widely (e.g. with landlords), so please be as honest as you can

	Yes, this is a small problem	Yes, this is a big problem	No, this is not a problem	Don't know
Damp				
Poor insulation				
Poor sound proofing				
Housing hazards (e.g. lose wires, unfinished building work etc.)				
Problems with fixtures, fittings or appliances (e.g bath / shower / cooker / boiler etc.)				
Poor temperature control (too cold / too hot)				
Over crowding				
Poor refuse control (e.g. no place to put rubbish / rubbish not cleared)				

#Aim to include at least half of participants who have issues with their accommodation

Ask if answer yes a little problem or yes a big problem to any of the above

[landlord_report] And have you reported these issues to your landlord?

<1> Yes, I have reported all of the issues

<2> I have reported some of the issues, but not all of them

<3> No, I have not reported these issues

#Record

[housing_secure] On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is not at all secure and 5 is very secure, how settled and secure are you in your current accommodation? By settled and secure, we mean to what extent to you think you'll be able to rent this place for as long as you like / you can renew when your contract comes to an end / you are not at risk of eviction?

<1> 1 – not very settled and secure

<2> 2

<3> 3
<4> 4
<5> 5 – very settled and secure
#All to answer 1, 2 or 3

[secure_open] please explain how you feel about your current housing. How satisfied or not are you with your current living situation? How secure or not do you feel in your current accommodation? Please explain your answer and provide as much detail as possible.
#Quality check responses to ensure all have an opinion

[Lifeevent] Have you or your partner experienced any of these “life events” over the previous 12 months?

<1> Loss of job/redundancy
<2> Reduction in working hours against wishes
<3> Bankruptcy
<4> Relationship breakdown/separation
<5> Divorce
<6> Serious illness or accident (of you, partner, or close family member)
<7> Death of a parent, partner or child
<8> Becoming the main carer for a close family member
<9> Moved onto Universal Credit from a different benefit/had to claim Universal Credit
<10> None of these
<99> Prefer not to answer

#1-9 is a sign of potential vulnerability

#Record – aim to include at some who have experienced a life event across interviews, aim to include 1 family that have had to claim Universal Credit

[lost_income] If the main source of income in your household was lost how long could your household continue to cover living expenses for without having to borrow any money or ask for help from friends or family?

<1> Less than a week
<2> More than a week, but less than 1 month
<3> More than 1 month
<4> Don't know
<5> Refused (do not wish to answer)

#1-2 is a potential sign of vulnerability

#Record – aim to include at some who answer 1 or 2 across interviews

#If social grade A/B and on a higher household income they have to score 1 or 2 on [housing_statements] and [housing_secure]

YouGov hold and automatically update the below demographic data on the YouGov panel so don't need to re-ask these questions during recruitment

[ethnicity_new] {single varlabel = "Ethnicity" spd_category="race"} What ethnic group best describes you? Please select one option only. (We ask the question in this way so that it is consistent with Census definitions.)

<1> English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British
<2> Irish
<3> Gypsy or Irish Traveller
<4> Any other White background
<5> White and Black Caribbean
<6> White and Black African

<7> White and Asian
<8> Any other Mixed / Multiple ethnic background
<9> Indian
<10> Pakistani
<11> Bangladeshi
<12> Chinese
<13> Any other Asian background
<14> African
<15> Caribbean
<16> Any other Black / African / Caribbean background
<17> Arab
<18 fixed> Any other ethnic group
<19 fixed> Prefer not to say
#Recruit a mix of ethnicity – at least 6 interviews to be conducted with families who don't answer 1

[profile_work_stat_pdl if 0] {pdl-update profile_work_stat}
#[profile_work_stat_pdl if pdl.profile_work_stat.last > months(6)] {pdl-update profile_work_stat}
#{single varlabel="Employment Status Main"} Which of these applies to you?
<1> Working full time (30 or more hours per week)
<2> Working part time (8-29 hours a week)
<3> Working part time (Less than 8 hours a week)
<4> Full time student
<5> Retired
<6> Full-time carer
<7> Homemaker
<8> Unemployed
#Recruit a mix of those in and out of work

[profile_marital_stat] What is your marital status?
<1> Married
<2> Living as married
<3> Separated (after being married)
<4> Divorced
<5> Widowed
<6> Never married
<7> Civil Partnership
#Record

[Education level] What is the highest level of educational or work related qualification that you currently hold?
<1> Youth training certificate/skillseekers
<2> Recognised trade apprenticeship
<3> City & Guilds certificate
<4> ONC / BTEC
<5> GCSE
<6> Scottish Ordinary/ Lower Certificate
<7> AS level
<8> A level or Higher Certificate
<9> Scottish Higher Certificate
<10> Nursing qualification (eg SEN, SRN, SCM, RGN)
<11> Teaching qualification (not degree)
<12> University diploma
<13> University or CNA first degree (eg BA, B.Sc, B.Ed)

<14> Other – please specify

<19> Don't know

#Recruit a mix

[Social grade]

#At least half to be ABC1

#Those who code A/B must also have an indication of vulnerability in the above questions

[profile_gross_household] {single varlabel="Income - gross household"} Gross HOUSEHOLD income is the combined income of all those earners in a household from all sources, including wages, salaries, pension income, or rents and before tax deductions. What is your gross household income?

<1> under £5,000 per year

<2> £5,000 to £9,999 per year

<3> £10,000 to £14,999 per year

<4> £15,000 to £19,999 per year

<5> £20,000 to £24,999 per year

<6> £25,000 to £29,999 per year

<7> £30,000 to £34,999 per year

<8> £35,000 to £39,999 per year

<9> £40,000 to £44,999 per year

<10> £45,000 to £49,999 per year

<11> £50,000 to £59,999 per year

<12> £60,000 to £69,999 per year

<13> £70,000 to £99,999 per year

<14> £100,000 to £149,999 per year

<15> £150,000 and over

<16> Don't know

<17> Prefer not to answer

#Recruit a mix of income level – positive skew towards those answer 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 or 6

[Age]

#Record – recruit a mix of parent age

