

The need for Stable Renting in England

February 2016

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Summary

Private renters need homes for the long-term

Private renting used to be seen as a stopgap. It has struggled to shake its image as short-term housing for students, people who travel around for work and young people still trying to get on the housing ladder. But the number of people privately renting has ballooned in recent years. In the last decade it's doubled in size, as more and more people have been priced out of home ownership or unable to get a social rented home.

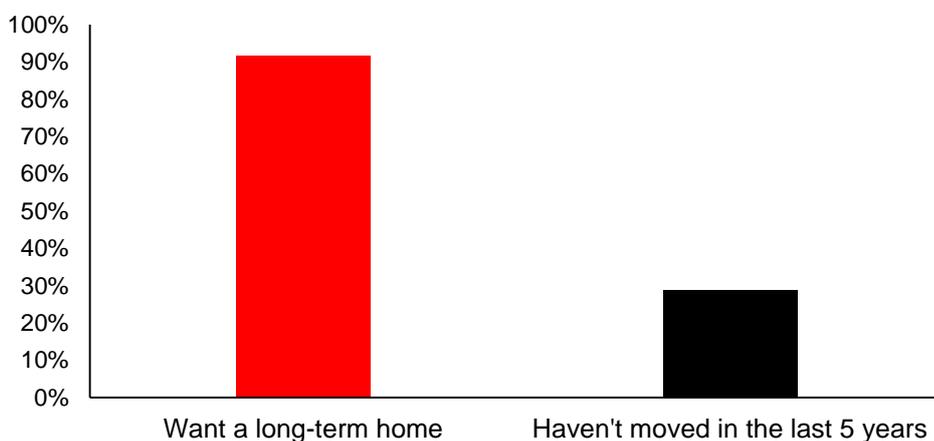
As a result, the type of people renting has changed and so has what they need from it. Many more families now rent – a quarter of all families with children are now growing up in the private rented sector compared to one in ten a decade ago. An increasing number of older people rent – more than a million households over 45 are now private renters.

While short-term private lets may have been suitable in the past, this new generation of private renters want stable, long-term housing. Almost 9 in 10 renters say that being able to stay somewhere for the long-term is an important consideration when they are looking for a home.¹ And for some renters, such as older renters between 45 and 54, it is even more important (97%). For them, being able to stay in a home for long term is more important than its location, condition, size, the neighbourhood that it's in or its proximity to their family and friends.²

But the English private rented sector is very unstable

Despite this overwhelming demand for long-term housing, a stable home is something that the English private rented sector is least able to provide. Only 29% of renting families haven't moved in the last five years compared to the 92% who say that being able to stay somewhere for the long-term is important to them.³

Figure 1: the number of renting families that want to be able to stay in their rented home long-term and the number that get it⁴



¹ 85% of private renters say that being able to stay somewhere for the long-term (e.g. 3-5 years or indefinitely) is either a fairly important or very important consideration when they look for a new home. YouGov for Shelter, base: English private renters: 3792. Survey conducted between 22nd June and 13th July 2015

² YouGov for Shelter, base: English private renters 45-54: 591. Survey conducted between 22nd June and 13th July 2015

³ YouGov for Shelter, base: English private renters with children: 784. Survey conducted between 22nd June and 13th July 2015

⁴ Ibid.

Almost a quarter of renters moved home last year⁵ and 29% of private renters have moved three times or more in the last five years.⁶ This means that private renters are eight times more likely to move than owner occupiers and five times as likely as social renters. In places where the housing shortage is worst, like London, private renting is even less stable.

While some renters move for perfectly understandable reasons, like moving for work, many are forced to move because of the terms on which they rent. Up to a quarter of renters attribute their last move to a factor associated with the short-term nature of renting⁷ and almost one in five renters say that they would have preferred not to move.⁸

Frequent moves are expensive and can have a very negative impact on children

Moving repeatedly can have a profound and damaging impact on renters. A quarter of renters say that they last move strained their finances and more than a third took on some form of debt to pay for it.⁹ What's more, it has a particularly bad effect on those who say they would have preferred to stay in their last home. Almost half of those who would have preferred not to move say that their last move strained their finances.¹⁰

The most worrying negative effects of moving are on the children of renting families, however. These can include everything from feeling stressed or leaving behind friends to being forced to move schools. Recent research by the Royal Society of Arts showed that moving school multiple times "has a devastating impact on pupil's grades",¹¹ so it is particularly worrying that an estimated 65,000 families say that they were forced to move their child's school the last time they moved their private rented home.¹²

There is significant support for the Stable Rental Contract from both renters and landlords

In 2012 we proposed a new form of contract that would give renters the stability they want, without locking them into homes for the long-term. The contract has three key parts:

1. A five year tenancy, within which the tenant can't be evicted without a good reason
2. The opportunity for the tenant to leave the contract at any time during that period, at two months' notice
3. Predictable rent increases, so that the tenant can't be forced out by a big rent hike

In light of the demand for long-term renting, it is perhaps unsurprising that our research shows that renters overwhelmingly say that this sort of tenancy would make renting better for them or for their children. 70% of renters say that they would improve renting, which rises to 72% for London renters and 73% for renting families.¹³

⁵ 24%. English Housing Survey household report, 2013/14, DCLG

⁶ YouGov for Shelter, base: English private renters: 3792. Survey conducted between 22nd June and 13th July 2015

⁷ A quarter of all renters said that their last move was at least in part caused because they were asked informally to leave, because they had agreed a fixed term lease, had been served a legal notice or been hit with a rent increase. YouGov for Shelter, base: English private renters: 3792. Survey conducted between 22nd June and 13th July 2015.

⁸ 18%. Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ 47%. Ibid.

¹¹ *Between The Cracks*, RSA 2013

¹² Estimated using data from the English housing survey and YouGov research for Shelter. Assumptions used – 1.521 million renting families with children in England; 66% have moved within private renting in the last five years; 6.35% had to move their child as a result of their last move. YouGov for Shelter, base: English private renters with children in household: 784. Survey conducted between 22nd June and 13th July 2015

¹³ YouGov for Shelter, base: English private renters: 3792. Survey conducted between 22nd June and 13th July 2015

A significant proportion of landlords also support the use of such contracts. However, few have actually adopted them showing the need for further steps by government to encourage their introduction or for the law to be changed so that they become the new minimum.

Instability in English private renting in numbers

85% of private renters say that being able to stay somewhere long-term is important to them when they choose a rented home.¹⁴

One in four private renters moved rented home in 2013/14¹⁵

29% of private renters have moved three times or more in the last five years, rising to 37% in London¹⁶

A quarter of private renters say their last moved strained their finances¹⁷

36% went into some form of debt to pay for their last move¹⁸

65,000 renting families had to move their children's school as a result of their last move in private renting¹⁹

Seven in ten private renters say that Shelter's Stable Rental Contract would improve renting for them or their children²⁰

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ English Housing Survey household report, 2013/14, DCLG

¹⁶ YouGov for Shelter, base: English private renters: 3782. Survey conducted between 22nd June and 13th July 2015

¹⁷ YouGov for Shelter, base: English private renters: 3530. Survey conducted between 22nd June and 13th July 2015

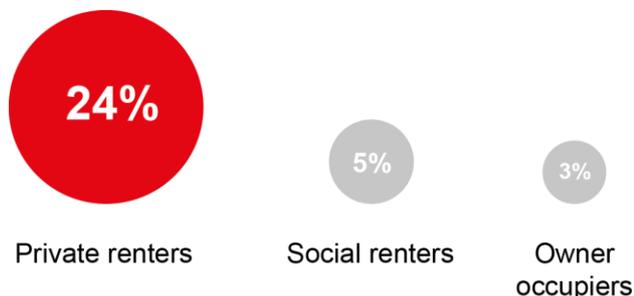
¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Estimated using data from the English housing survey and YouGov research for Shelter. Assumptions used – 1.521 million renting families with children in England; 66% have moved within private renting in the last five years; 6.35% had to move their child as a result of their last move. YouGov for Shelter, base: English private renters: 746. Survey conducted between 22nd June and 13th July 2015

²⁰ YouGov for Shelter, base: English private renters: 3792. Survey conducted between 22nd June and 13th July 2015

Private renting is highly unstable

Figure 2: the proportion of households that moved in 2013/14²¹

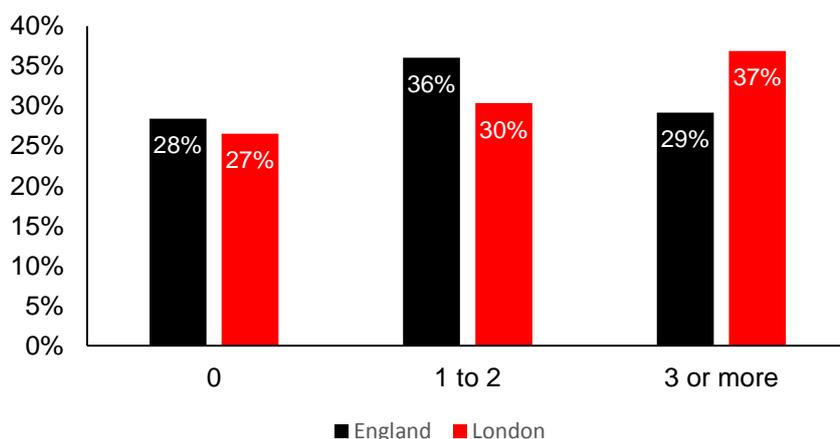


The private rented sector is by far the least stable of any housing tenure. This means that it is the type of housing where people and families are least likely to be able to stay in a home for the long-term and put down roots. Private renters tend to move much more often than either people who own their home or who rent from a council or housing association.

Government statistics show that 1 million private renting households moved to another private rented home in 2013/14. This is almost a quarter of all private renters (24%). By comparison only 3% of owner occupied households moved to another home they owned and only 5% of social renters moved within the social sector.²² So private renters are eight times more likely in any year than owner occupiers and almost five times more likely than social renters.

This instability is not a one-off spike in renters moving. Research conducted by YouGov for Shelter has shown that private renting has been unstable over the long-term. It found that 29% of renters across the country have moved at least three times over the last five years. In London this number rises to 37% (see Figure 3).²³ In line with this, the median number of years that any private renter has lived in their current home is under two years, compared with over ten years for owner occupiers.²⁴

Figure 3: In the last five years, “How many times, if any, have you moved from one privately rented accommodation to another?”²⁵



²¹ English Housing Survey household report, 2013/14, DCLG

²² Ibid.

²³ YouGov for Shelter, base: English private renters: 3792. Survey conducted between 22nd June and 13th July 2015

²⁴ English Housing Survey household report, 2013/14, DCLG

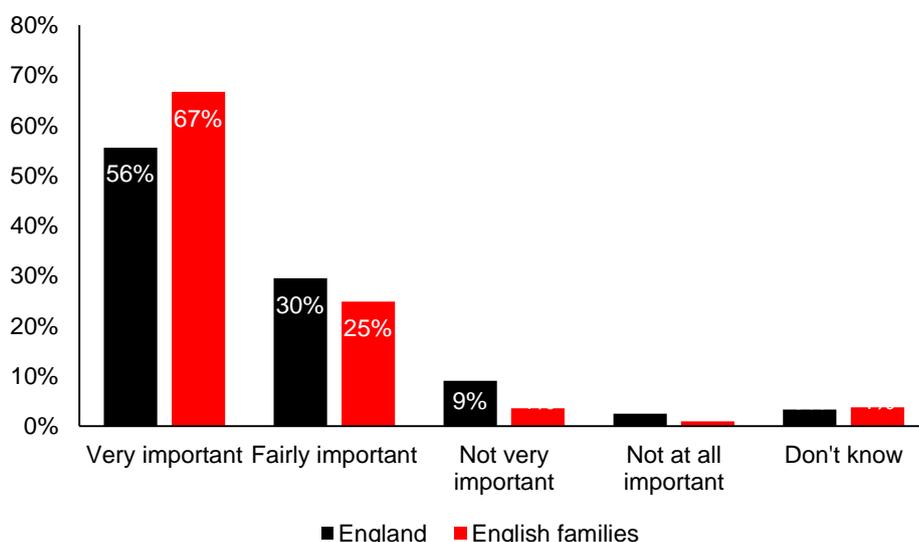
²⁵ YouGov for Shelter, base: English private renters: 3792. Survey conducted between 22nd June and 13th July 2015

Private renters want homes for the long-term

In spite of the instability in the private rented sector, renters overwhelmingly want to be able to find a home where they can stay for the long-term.

Some renters do value the flexibility of renting and don't value long-term housing, but these are a small minority.²⁶ This is best shown through the value that renters place on being able to live in a property for the long-term²⁷ when they look for a new rented home. The majority say that it is very important and in total 85% of private renters say that it is either very or fairly important. Only 3% say that it is "not at all" important.²⁸ In spite of this, less than a third of renting households have lived in their home for 3 years or more.²⁹

Figure 4: Please imagine you were looking for a new private rented property...How important is it that you can live in the property in the long-term (3-5 years or indefinitely)?³⁰



Unsurprisingly, renting families with children value stability even more highly, but they are just as likely to have moved often in the last five years. Almost all families who live in the private rented sector (92%) say that being able to live somewhere for the long term is either very or fairly important to them when they look for a new home. But less than a third (29%) have been able to realise that desire by not moving in the last five years. Almost as many renters with children (27%) have had very unstable housing in the private rented sector and moved three times or more in the last five years.³¹

²⁶ 8% of renters say that they are renting because they like the "freedom and flexibility". YouGov for Shelter, base: English private renters: 3792. Survey conducted between 22nd June and 13th July 2015

²⁷ In our survey we indicate that long-term means 3-5 years or indefinitely.

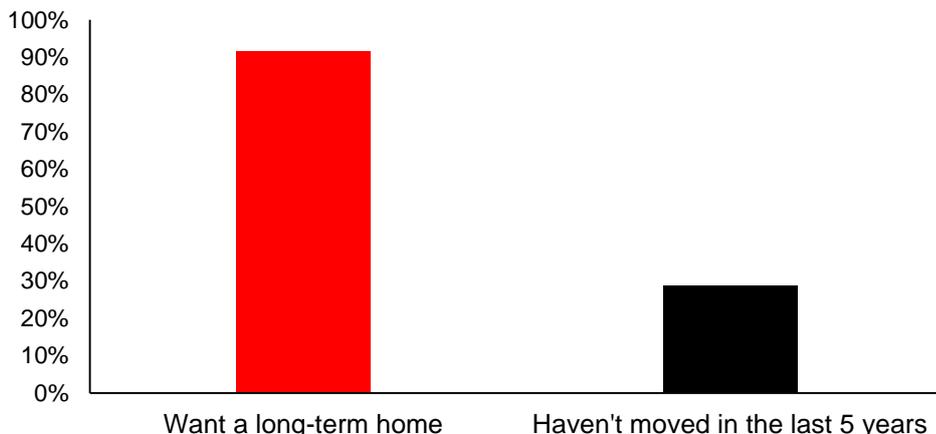
²⁸ YouGov for Shelter, base: English private renters: 3792. Survey conducted between 22nd June and 13th July 2015

²⁹ 32%. English Housing Survey Headline Report 2013/14, DCLG

³⁰ YouGov for Shelter, base: English private renters: 3792. Survey conducted between 22nd June and 13th July 2015

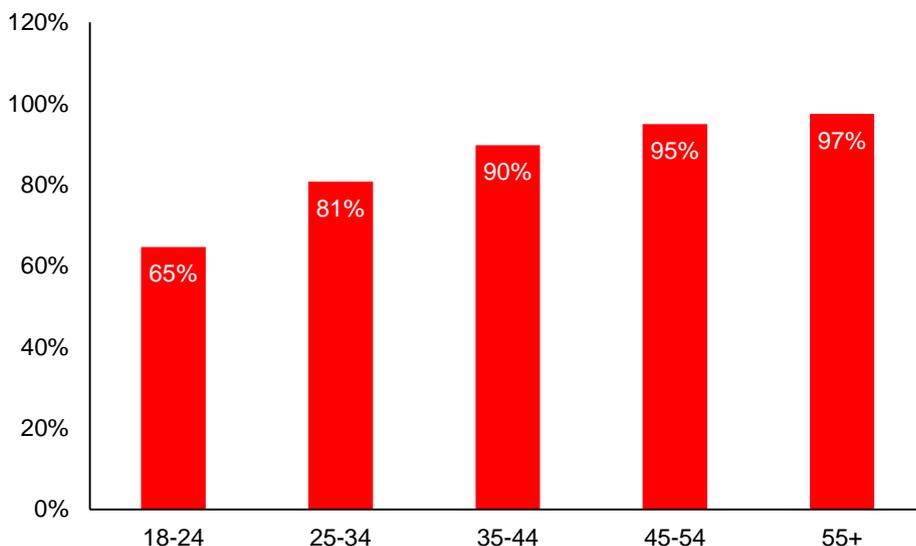
³¹ YouGov for Shelter, base: English private renters with children in household: 784. Survey conducted between 22nd June and 13th July 2015

Figure 1: the number of renting families that want to be able to stay in their rented home long-term and the number that get it³²



Older renters are also more likely to value the opportunity to be able to in a home for the long-term. For example, while an average of 56% of all renters say they think being able to stay somewhere for the long-term is very important, 73% of renters 45-54 think the same. By comparison, this is higher than the proportion of 45-54 year old renters who said that the location, condition or size of a home was very important when choosing a new home, or the neighbourhood that the home was in or its proximity to their family and friends.³³

Figure 5: the net proportion of private renters who believe that being able to stay in a home for the long-term is important when they are looking for a new³⁴



Given the increasing number of older people and families with children who live in the private rented sector, the extra priority that they place on stability is significant. Ten years ago fewer than one in ten families with children were privately renting, but that number is now up to one in four. This has

³² YouGov for Shelter, base: English private renters with children: 784. Survey conducted between 22nd June and 13th July 2015

³³ YouGov for Shelter, base: English private renters 45-54: 591. Survey conducted between 22nd June and 13th July 2015

³⁴ YouGov for Shelter, base: English private renters: 3792. Survey conducted between 22nd June and 13th July 2015

been driven by an increase of over a million more families privately renting.³⁵ Likewise, the number of private renting households over the age of 45 has doubled over the last ten years.³⁶

The law on renting encourages instability

Given the importance that renters place on finding a home for the long-term, the lack of stability in the private rented sector may be surprising. One of the principle reasons for the disparity are the terms on which private renters rent their homes. At least 80% of private tenants rent their homes on contracts of 12 months or less – 40% on a fixed term contract of a year or six months and 39% on a rolling monthly contract or without a formal contract.³⁷

The legal framework is not the only reason that renters are forced to move. Many renters move for reasons that are not associated with the fact that the rent, such as moving for a new job. However, up to a quarter of moves can be directly attributed to the renters' terms. This means that up to a quarter of a million households a year (equivalent to 625,000 people) move within the private rented sector as a direct result of the terms on which they rent their home.³⁸ This closely mirrors the proportion of private renters who say that they would have preferred to stay in their last property, which is 18%.

Renters and landlords want the Stable Rental Contract

To meet the growing need for long-term renting, in 2012 we proposed a new kind of tenancy.³⁹ This new tenancy, which we called the Stable Rental Contract, has three key parts:

1. A five year tenancy, within which the tenant can't be evicted without a good reason⁴⁰
2. The opportunity for the tenant to leave the contract at any time during that period, at two months' notice
3. Predictable rent increases, so that the tenant can't be forced out by a big rent hike⁴¹

Our research shows that renters overwhelmingly say that this sort of tenancy would make renting better for them or for their children. In total, 70% of renting households say that his sort of tenancy would improve renting for them or their children, which rises to 72% for London renters and 73% for renting families.⁴²

³⁵ English Housing Survey Household Report 2013/14, DCLG

³⁶ Taken from household reference person data, English Housing Survey Household Report 2013/14, Annex Table 4.1, DCLG

³⁷ YouGov for Shelter, base: English private renters: 3792. Survey conducted between 22nd June and 13th July 2015

³⁸ 17% of renters say that the principle reason for their last move was either because they were asked informally to leave, because they had agreed a fixed term lease, had been served a legal notice or been hit with a rent increase. A quarter of all renters said that one of these reasons was at least a factor in their decision to move. YouGov for Shelter, base: English private renters: 3792. Survey conducted between 22nd June and 13th July 2015

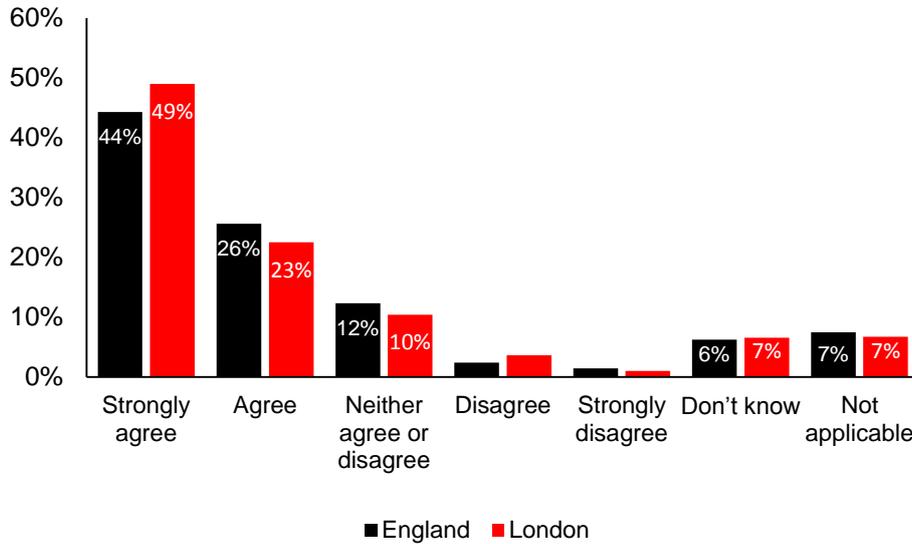
³⁹ See *A Better Deal*, Shelter

⁴⁰ Landlords would still be able to reclaim possession on particular grounds, such as the need to live in the property for themselves

⁴¹ Under the contract, landlords would not be able to increase the rent by any more than inflation in any given year

⁴² YouGov for Shelter, base: English private renters: 3792. Survey conducted between 22nd June and 13th July 2015

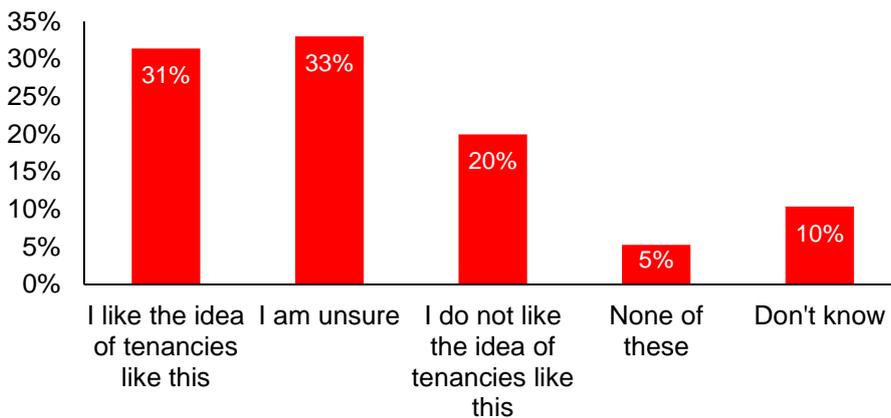
Figure 6: “Having a tenancy that lasts for 3 or 5 years, with predictable rents, which I could get out of with 2 months’ notice would improve renting for me/ my child(ren)”⁴³



Renters don't see the opportunity of a long-term letting as just another factor to be considered alongside price, location, etc. when they are looking for a new home. They want changes to the conditions on which they rent which would make all renting options more stable.

Such tenancy agreements are only very rarely used voluntarily. While some large landlords offer tenancies like this, such as Get Living London on the Olympic Park, they are a small minority. Only 8% of private renters have a tenancy agreement that is longer than 12 months and few of those are likely to have the other features of the Stable Rental Contract (predictable rents, opportunity to break the contract).⁴⁴ In light of this, it is surprising that our research shows significant support among landlords for using such tenancies. 31% of landlords say that they like the idea of these tenancies and would be willing to use them and a further 33% say that they may use them if they saw them working in practice.⁴⁵

Figure 7: The attitudes of landlords to longer tenancies – “Some people and groups are calling for longer term tenancies of three or five years...”⁴⁶



⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ YouGov for Shelter, base: English private renters: 3792. Survey conducted between 22nd June and 13th July 2015

⁴⁵ YouGov for Shelter, base: English landlords: 1006. Survey conducted between 22nd June and 13th July 2015

⁴⁶ Ibid.

Exactly why this interest in using longer tenancies – both from tenants and landlords – fails to translate into them being available is not fully understood. It is likely to be a combination of different things, including a lack of awareness that such agreements are possible within the existing legal framework. The Coalition Government took some modest steps to promote longer tenancies to try to overcome this lack of awareness.⁴⁷ However, practical hurdles still exist for landlords who want to offer longer tenancies, including the proscription of tenancies over 12 months in the terms of most buy to let mortgages. Nationwide is currently the only big mortgage lender that allows buy to let borrowers to use tenancies of longer than a year.

⁴⁷ For example, they produced a model tenancy agreement for longer term leases

The negative impact of instability

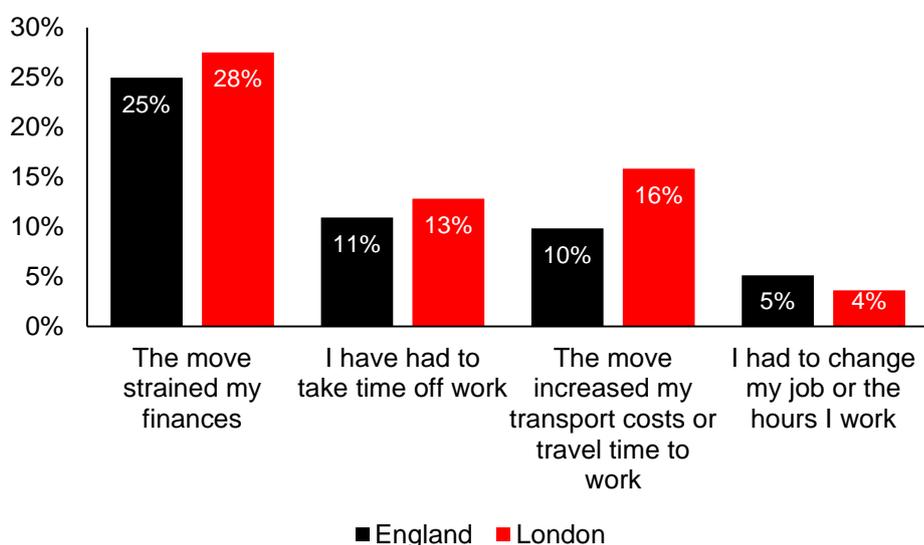
Moving frequently can have serious negative effects on private renters’ lives. These effects break down into three broad categories:

- The economic impact
- The impact on the renter’s private and family life
- The impact on children

In all of the analysis that follows, the principle evidence used is based on what happened *the last time* that renters moved. In Section 1, we showed that the median renter has moved one or two times in the last five years, and that almost 30% of renters have moved three or more times. This means that most renters are likely to have experienced these effects at some point in the last five years and that some renters will have experienced the effects more than once in that period.

The negative economic effects of instability

Figure 8: The economic impact felt by renters the last time they moved⁴⁸



Renters can be affected by a number of different economic impacts, including being forced to take time off work, experiencing increased transport costs or being forced to change job. They are most likely to experience strained finances when they move and this applies to quarter of all renters who say that their last move had this effect.

Although some of this strain may be accounted for by other consequences of moving (such as increased commuting costs), moving costs themselves place a significant financial burden on renters. This is illustrated in Table 1, which shows the median amounts that renters were forced to spend on different moving costs when they last moved.

⁴⁸ YouGov for Shelter, base: English private renters: 3530. Survey conducted between 22nd June and 13th July 2015

Table 1: the cost of moving for renters⁴⁹

Median cost, when charged	Proportion of renters	Median cost
Rent in advance	55%	625.00
Letting agency fees	42%	150.00
A tenancy/ damage deposit	42%	600.00
Removal van hire	41%	100.00
Credit checks	28%	60.00
Other furniture	20%	200.00
White goods'	18%	250.00
Paying double rent	17%	600.00
Cleaning costs	17%	100.00
A bed or sofa	16%	209.70
Other non-refundable cost	15%	100.00
Cost of my insurance(s) went up	8%	50.00
Replacing furniture	8%	300.00
Interim storage	4%	200.00

If renters are unfortunate enough to have to pay double rent (i.e. rent on two properties while they are moving between the two) then the cost is likely to be much higher. The median double rent paid is £600.⁵⁰ Many renters will be forced to pay a number of different moving costs.

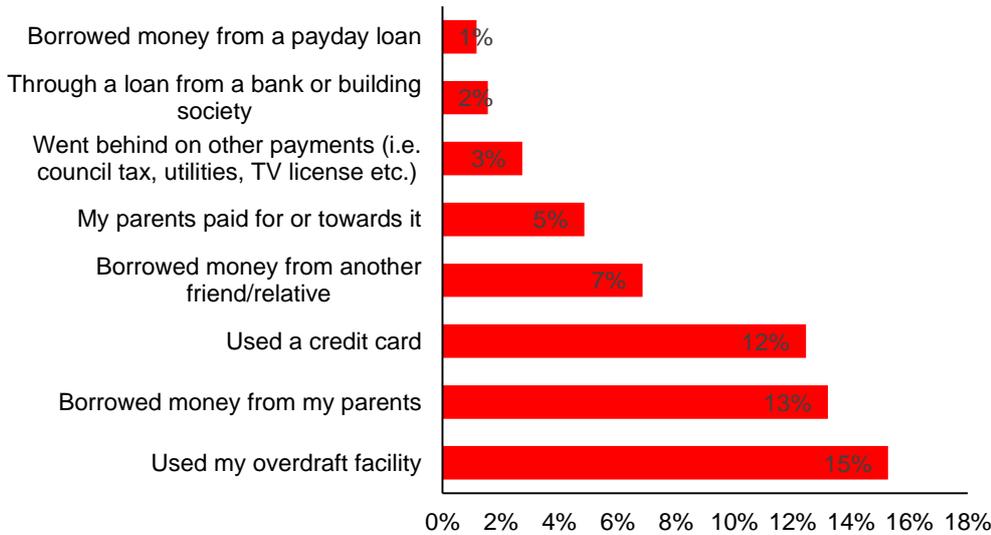
More than a third of renters (36%) are forced into debt or arrears to pay these high costs. Worryingly, this includes 3% who are forced to go behind on payments including so-called 'priority debts', like council tax, utilities and TV license.⁵¹ The consequences of not paying these bills can be prosecution and even imprisonment, which is why they are considered a priority.

⁴⁹ YouGov for Shelter, base: English private renters: 3530. Survey conducted between 22nd June and 13th July 2015

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ YouGov for Shelter, base: English private renters: 3530. Survey conducted between 22nd June and 13th July 2015

Figure 9: The debts incurred by moving renters⁵²



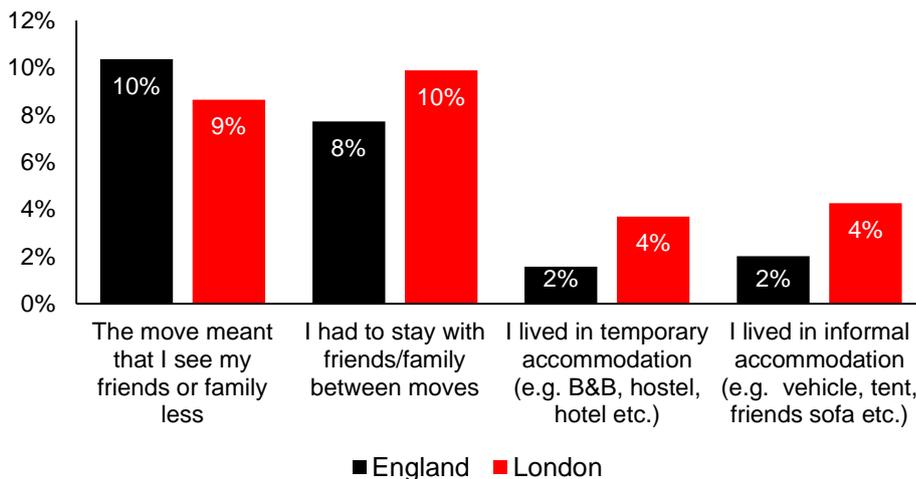
Forced to pay multiple and high moving costs

Lou, Surrey: “It was a £3000 deposit and I didn’t know any better... They forced us to pay for a professional cleaner saying it’s standard, then you have to pay a shed load for the inventory - £90 for one letter! It’s hideously expensive for anyone renting.”

Hadleigh, East Anglia: “In that time, with all the moves we’d not been able to save any money towards a deposit... every time we moved we had to find £2,000, increasing each time, for deposits, searches, admin fees: that sort of thing.”

The negative effects on private and family lives

Figure 9: The impact on renters’ private and family lives the last time they moved⁵³



Renters are not only put under financial pressure. Other changes can affect renters’ private and family lives for the worse. One in ten renters say that they see their family or friends less as a result

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ YouGov for Shelter, base: English private renters: 3530. Survey conducted between 22nd June and 13th July 2015

of moving. Others renters have almost the opposite problem and are forced to move back in with their parents, family or friends between moves.

Seeing family less and other emotional strains

Samantha S, London/Essex *“I don’t drive and the cost of me having to go to London is too much. My mum does come down here every month and I’ve started a playgroup with the baby, so I am slowly getting to know people. But I didn’t know anyone at all when I moved here.”*

Sonia, Hertfordshire: *“It’s definitely affected my relationships. Because when you’re so stressed all the time and so needy, you can push people away, or be too needy - I don’t know which really. I’ve probably done a bit of both.”*

Lou, Surrey: *“I had things like my auntie being critical about the situation and not really understanding it. They’ve got mortgages and so their experiences are very different from mine. I always feared my family’s judgement, which is a bit sad really.”*

The gravest impact on private and family life, however, is for those renters who become homeless, even if only for a short time. Being forced out of a privately rented property is the leading cause of homelessness and our research shows that 2% of renters spent time in temporary accommodation as a result of their last move or lived in informal accommodation.⁵⁴ Both of these proportions double for renters who live in London.

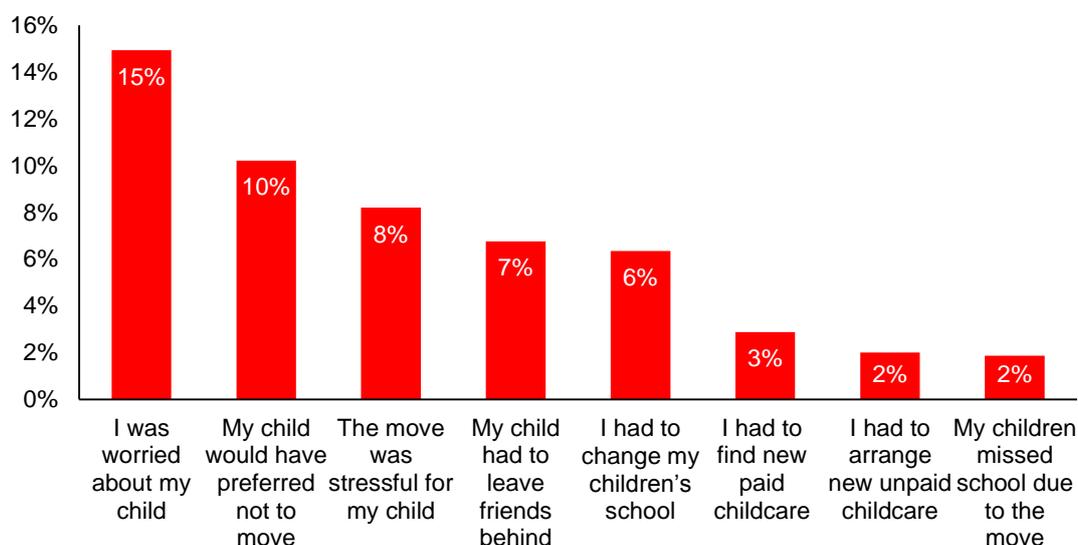
Becoming homeless as a result of losing a rented home

Samantha A, Kent: *“They put us in a hostel, which my sons still refer to as the “blood house”. The first night we stayed there, we saw man sitting in the lounge. He’d been beaten up so bad his eyes were swollen shut, his lips were swollen, he had blood all over him and it was all up the stairs and in the bathroom where he’d tried to wash. My sons went grey and said ‘Mum, please don’t make us stay here.’ But we had no choice.”*

⁵⁴ YouGov for Shelter, base: English private renters: 3530. Survey conducted between 22nd June and 13th July 2015

The negative impact of instability on children

Figure 10: The impact felt by children in renting families the last time they moved⁵⁵



Moving can be particularly hard for renting families because of the potential impact on their child or children.

A significant proportion of renting parents worry about the impact that moving will have on their child, for any number of different reasons, including leaving friends. It is true that children who live in non-private renting families can have similar experiences, but it is important to remember throughout the discussion that follows that it is the frequency of moves, and their involuntary nature, that makes the situation more serious in the private rented sector. 27% of all renting families have moved at least three times in the last five years.⁵⁶

Children need stability

Samantha S, London/Essex: *"We adults we can move and get on with it and make the best out of it, but for children they want to sustain a life, they have their roots and their friends and their family and then to suddenly have to move it affects everything, it affects their education, their social abilities, their freedom, everything really. It's a hard shift for them to make."*

The most serious impact may be for children who are forced to move school. Research by the Royal Society of Arts has shown that moving school multiple times "has a devastating impact on pupil's grades". This research found that children who move three times within their secondary school education are less than half as likely to get 5 A*-C at GCSE than the national average.⁵⁷ 6% of renters with children say that they were forced to move their child or children's school the last time that they moved home.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ YouGov for Shelter, base: English private renters with children in the household: 746. Survey conducted between 22nd June and 13th July 2015

⁵⁶ YouGov for Shelter, base: English private renters: 3530. Survey conducted between 22nd June and 13th July 2015

⁵⁷ *Between The Cracks*, RSA 2013

⁵⁸ YouGov for Shelter, base: English private renters with children in the household: 746. Survey conducted between 22nd June and 13th July 2015

Renters are forced to move their children's school

Samantha S, London/Essex: *“So when we were evicted my children had to move schools. And then they had to change again when we got evicted from there, again because the landlord wanted it back. We’ve moved from East London to Essex. It’s been very hard for the boys.”*

Not captured in the number of parents who have been forced to move their child are the lengths to which parents will go to make sure that their children do not have to move schools. These include spending considerably longer travelling to school or even separating the family.

Renting parents go to extraordinary lengths to keep their child in the same school

Sandy, Surrey: *“I have moved heaven and high water to make sure they stayed at the same schools. They had enough instability in their housing situation so I didn’t want to force them to have to leave their schools as well. I did what I could to stay local to their schools.”*

Samantha A, Kent: *“It was a nightmare because instead of leaving at half past 8 we had to start leaving at 7 o clock in the morning because the journey from there to the school was so busy, but I would prefer to do the journey than mess up all their school – moving house was bad enough, I thought they’d had enough upset so I didn’t want to change their school as well.”*

Samantha S, London/Essex: *“My oldest still goes to his old school and has to stay with my mum in the week as it’s too far - but there’s no spaces in schools around here for him. He really misses being at home, he wants to be here so much, he misses bonding with his little brother...”*

Even where parents have been to these considerable lengths and have been able to keep their child in the same school, moving may still have an effect on their child’s education and behaviour.

Children's education can be affected even if they don't move

Sandy, Surrey: *“When we first moved out my daughter’s school grades dropped a lot. I told the school and they were very supportive. It did affect her behaviour at school she was quite withdrawn and it took her a while to get confident again.”*

Samantha S, London/Essex: *“My second son’s attitude completely changed, his manners, his respect, he was coming home swearing, being rude and not talking to me politely. We’ve got it back in shape now but we went through a very difficult time. It’s taken a while to get used to being here for him.”*

Sonia, Hertfordshire: *“I think my daughter has had a real struggle with moving, such a big change. We’ve had nights of her saying ‘what else can go wrong?’ I’ve tried to instil a positive attitude because we’ve got a place but the insecurity really has affected her, it’s made her anxious and wondering what will happen next. Her self-esteem and confidence has definitely been affected...”*

For some parents this can affect their own mental health and sense that they are doing a good job as a parent. Our research found that 62% of parents wish their children didn't have to live in a private rented sector home.⁵⁹

Renting parents can feel like they are letting down their children

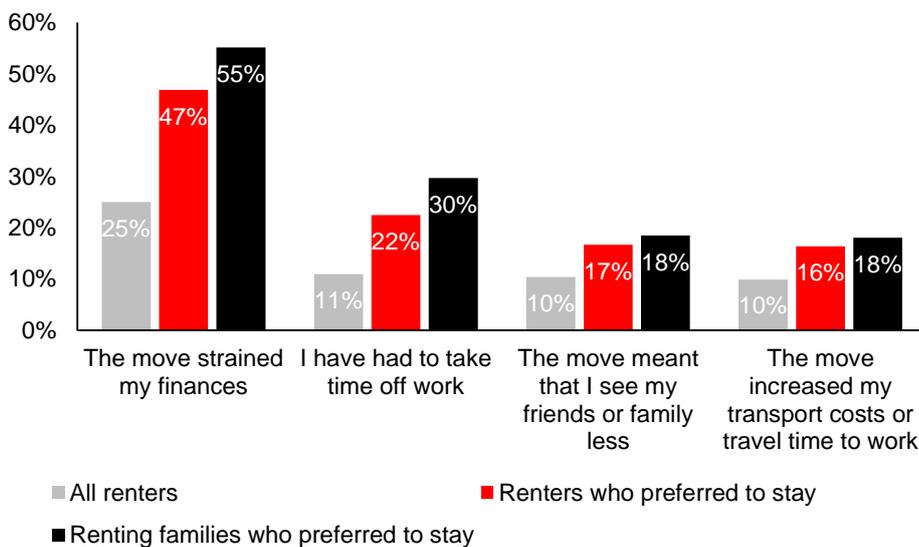
Sonia, Hertfordshire: “It’s even affected my relationship with my daughter because I feel that I’ve let her down that she’s had to go through all this. I get upset when she says ‘why don’t good things happen to us?’ I’ve tried to show her that we’ve got a place now, she has a good school and friends, but I feel I’m over compensating...”

Lou, Surrey: “Kids are very adaptable but of course there’s been terrible guilt on my part, thinking that I’ve inflicted those on my kids – but the moves were out of my control.”

The effects of moving are much worse where renters wanted to stay

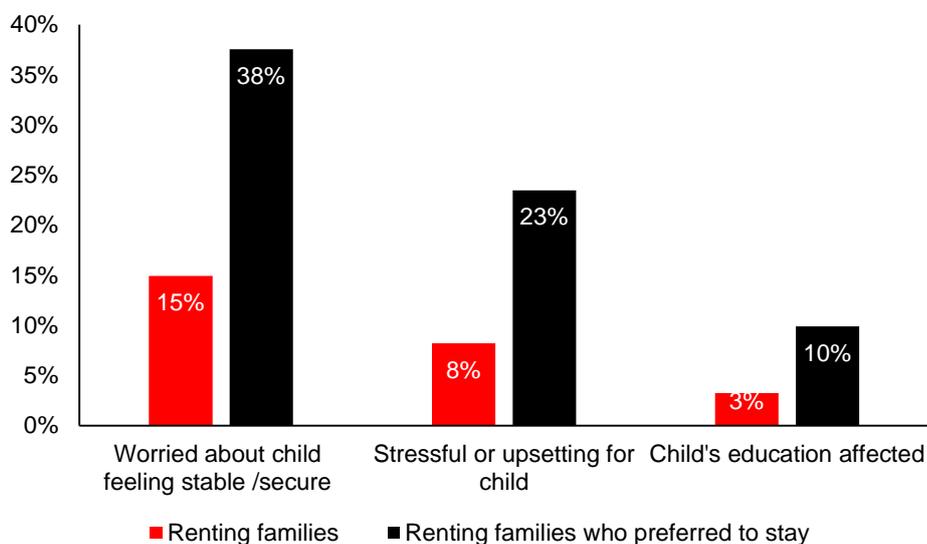
Moving can have a damaging impact for any renter, but the effects of moving are much more likely to have been negative if the renter didn't want to move. For example, while 25% of all renters say that their finances were strained as a result of their last move, this applies to 47% of those who say they would have preferred to stay, and to 55% of those renters with children who said they would have preferred to stay.⁶⁰

Figure 11: the extra impact of moving on renters who would have preferred to stay in their last rented home⁶¹



⁵⁹ 39% strongly agreed and 23% tended to agree with the statement “I wish my children didn't have to live in a private rented home”,
⁶⁰ YouGov for Shelter, base: English private renters: 3530. Survey conducted between 22nd June and 13th July 2015
⁶¹ YouGov for Shelter, base: English private renters: 3530. Survey conducted between 22nd June and 13th July 2015

Figure 12: the extra impact of moving on children of renting families who would have preferred to stay in their last rented home⁶²



Wider use of longer tenancies like the Stable Rental Contract would not only reduce the number of moves, it would also reduce the number of the most damaging moves. It would disproportionately reduce the number of tenants whose budgets were strained as a result of moving or children in renting households who suffered negative consequences.

⁶² YouGov for Shelter, base: English private renters: 3530. Survey conducted between 22nd June and 13th July 2015

Conclusion

In 2012, Shelter called for a new kind of private tenancy to become the norm in England. We called it the Stable Rental Contract and it gives private renters the opportunity to stay in their home for the long-term without locking them into it. It means that they have the benefit of predictable rents and are protected from big rent hikes.

The results of the research laid out in this briefing show that since then the need for these tenancies has only grown. Private renting is becoming the new normal for an ever-larger number of people and looks set to continue that way into the future. More children are growing up in private homes now than for decades and more older people are growing old as private tenants too.

The frequent moves that a large number of private renters experience can be costly and take a serious toll on their private and family lives. They can leave a lasting impression on the education and emotional wellbeing of renters' children. Worst of all, for those renters who don't want to move – who may have little control over it – the impact of being forced to move is much deeper.

Not all renters move because of the short-term nature of the tenancies typically used in private renting. But those tenancies do both directly contribute and indirectly contribute to instability in the private rented sector by defining the power relationship between landlords and tenants and informing the decisions renters make.

In the face of the changing nature of private renters, a change to the terms on which they rent is long overdue.

Our special thanks go to the following people who contacted Shelter about their experience of instability in the private rented sector. Their stories are included in this briefing.



Hadleigh

Hadleigh lives with his wife, two step-children and son in East Anglia. They have lived in the private rented sector for six years. In that period they have moved five times.

Naomi lives in the West Midlands with her three children. They have been private renting for nine years and have had 6 homes in that period.



Lou

Lou lives in Surrey and has two children. She has been living in the private rented sector since 2009 and has moved multiple times since then.

Samantha A lives in Kent with her three children. They have recently been evicted from their private rented home.



Samantha S

Samantha S lives in Essex having been forced to move out of the area where her family lives in East London. She has three children. They have lived in the private rented sector for seven years. When they last moved her eldest son stayed behind with Samantha's mother so that he could stay on at the same school.

Sonia lives in Hertfordshire with her daughter. She was private renting for two years and evicted in retaliation for complaining about the condition of the home.