

Private landlords and tenants: their real issues and concerns

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Background

- Based on project evaluating Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) licensing for the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG)
- What is a HMO?
 - There are a number of dwellings that fit the definition ...
 - *Bedsits , Shared houses etc*
- What is HMO licensing?
 - Housing Act 2004 introduced HMO licensing in England – came into force 6 April 2006
 - *Mandatory licensing*
 - License all high risk HMOs “HMOs that comprise three storeys or more and which are occupied by two or more households and the total number occupying the property is five or more”
 - *Additional licensing*
 - License other types of HMOs – LAs apply to Government
 - *Selective licensing*
 - License dwelling in a particular area with low housing demand and or experiencing a problems with anti-social behaviour – LAs apply to Government

Background



- Description of the project
 - Review existing data sources about HMOs
 - Survey of Environmental Health Officer in LAs in England
 - Case studies of 12 Local Authorities
 - *Interviews and focus groups with:*
 - Local authority staff implementing licensing
 - Local authority strategic staff
 - Landlords
 - Tenants
 - Police and ASB officers (Selective licensing only)
 - Other residents in the area (Selective licensing only)
 - Focus on tenants and landlords in the Private Rented Sector (PRS)
- Private Rented Sector (PRS)
 - EHCS 2004 2.3 million homes (11% of housing stock)

Methodology: Type of Housing



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Methodology: Type of Housing



Methodology

- Sources
 - English House Conditions Survey (EHCS)
 - Survey of English Housing (SEH)
- What is the likelihood that these surveys will capture data on “vulnerable” tenants and “unscrupulous” landlords
- Hard to reach groups and the use of proxies
 - Landlords
 - Tenants – the use of pro

Decoding the myth of the rogue landlord

Have you encountered the “Rogue landlord”?



Decoding the myth of the rogue landlord

STEREOTYPE

- Money grabbing
- Exploitative
- Slow to carry out repairs
- Likely to retain deposit
- Enters premises without permission
- Carries out illegal evictions
- Operates outside of the law



Decoding the myth of the rogue landlord

Impact of the stereotype of “rogue landlord”

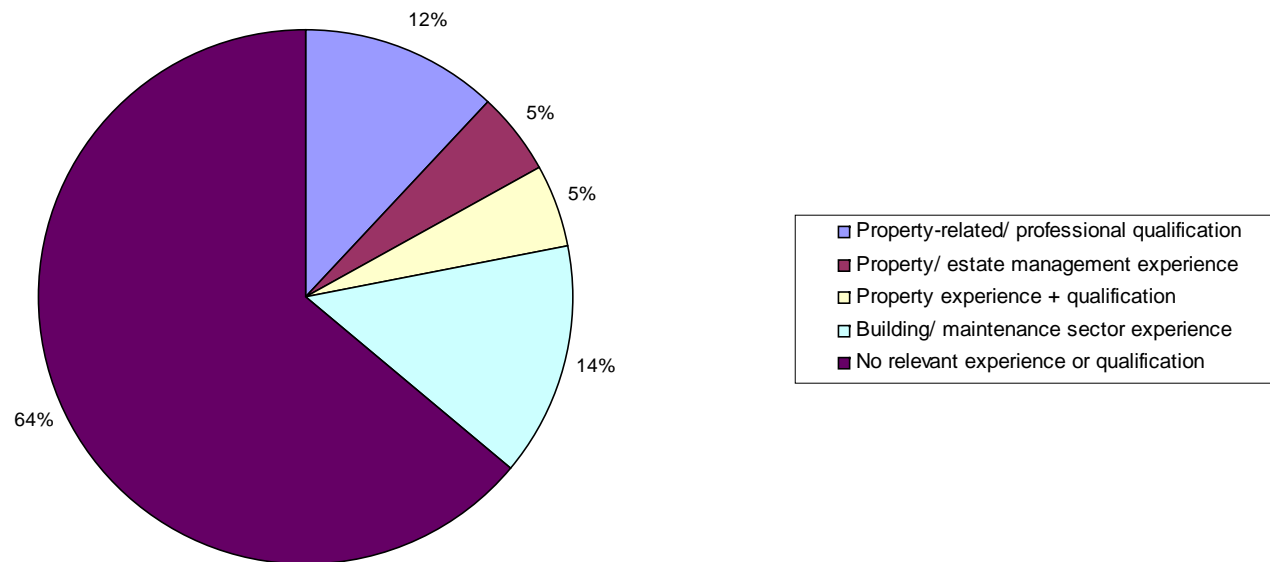
- Over- regulation of PRS
 - HMO licensing
 - Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations **1998**
 - Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 1994
 - Plugs and Sockets etc. (Safety) Regulations 1994
- Limited financial support to landlords
- LA use alternative sources of funding for landlord support services E.g. Neighbourhood Renewal Fund- NRF

Decoding the myth of the rogue landlord

Diversity of landlords

- Naïve landlords – in need of support
- Accidental landlords – inherited portfolio
- Informal landlords – let to family and friends
- Small landlords – ‘muddling along’
- Professional/ accredited landlords

Private individual landlords' experience



Support services for private landlords

- Some LA offer support to landlords
 - Free newsletter
 - Free access to dump it sites throughout the city
 - Free advertising
 - Free list of contractors / companies giving discounts
 - Access to emergency repairs service
 - Access to a dedicated Housing Benefit advice line
 - The House Clean and Clear Service
 - Use of scheme logo on correspondence and advertising
 - Boarding up/security service for empty property
 - Discounts on licensing fees
 - Being part of group repair or environmental improvement regeneration schemes
 - Credit checks on potential tenants
 - Post tenancy visits/inspections

Key issues for landlords

- Over – regulation
- Good landlords penalised whilst bad landlords continue to operate
- Lack of consultation with LA
- Lack of support
- Limitation of grants

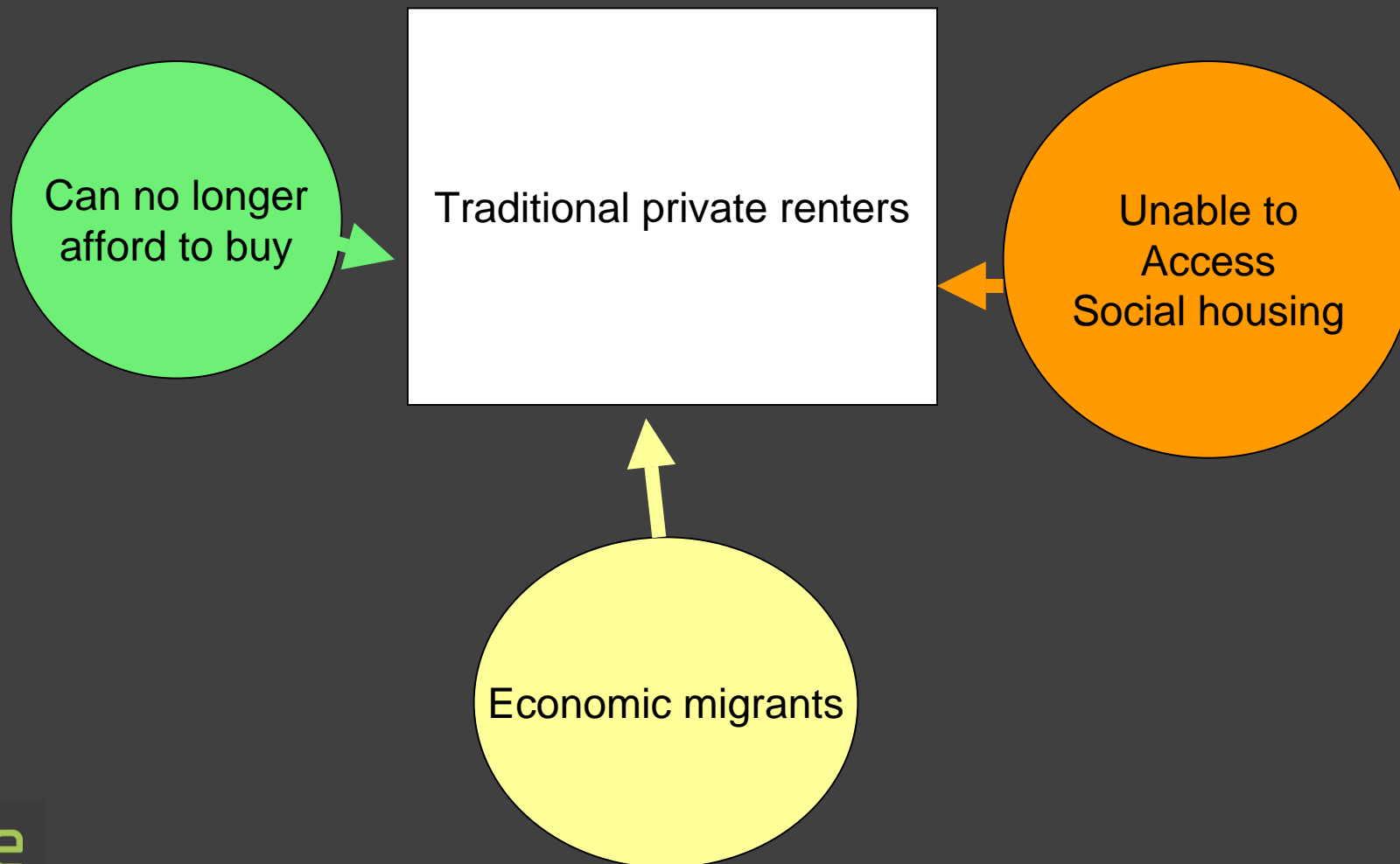
Who are the tenants?



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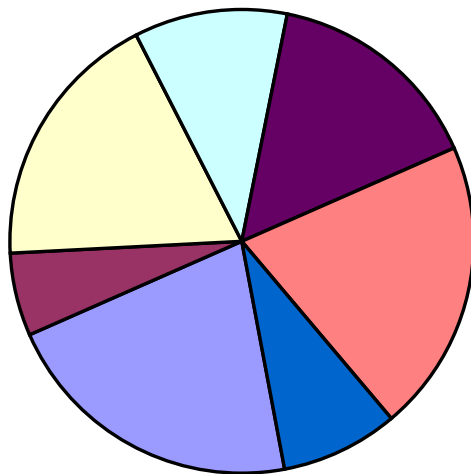


Changes in private renting



Who lives in Private rented housing now?

Households renting privately, 2004 (EHCS)



- couple, no dependent child(ren) under 60
- couple, no dependent child(ren) aged 60 or over
- couple with dependent child(ren)
- lone parent with dependent child(ren)
- other multi-person household
- one person under 60

Key issues for tenants

- Affordability – high rents, HB won't cover rent
- Condition of property – 43% fail Decent Homes
- Getting repairs done - variable
- Harassment and Intimidation - variable
- Security – 6 months assured shorthold
- Supply and choice – severely limited in **most** areas
- Overcrowding – response to high rents and low incomes

The most vulnerable people are in worst housing with the worst landlords

Case study examples - overcrowding



Case study examples - overcrowding



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Case study example – vulnerable tenants in HMOs

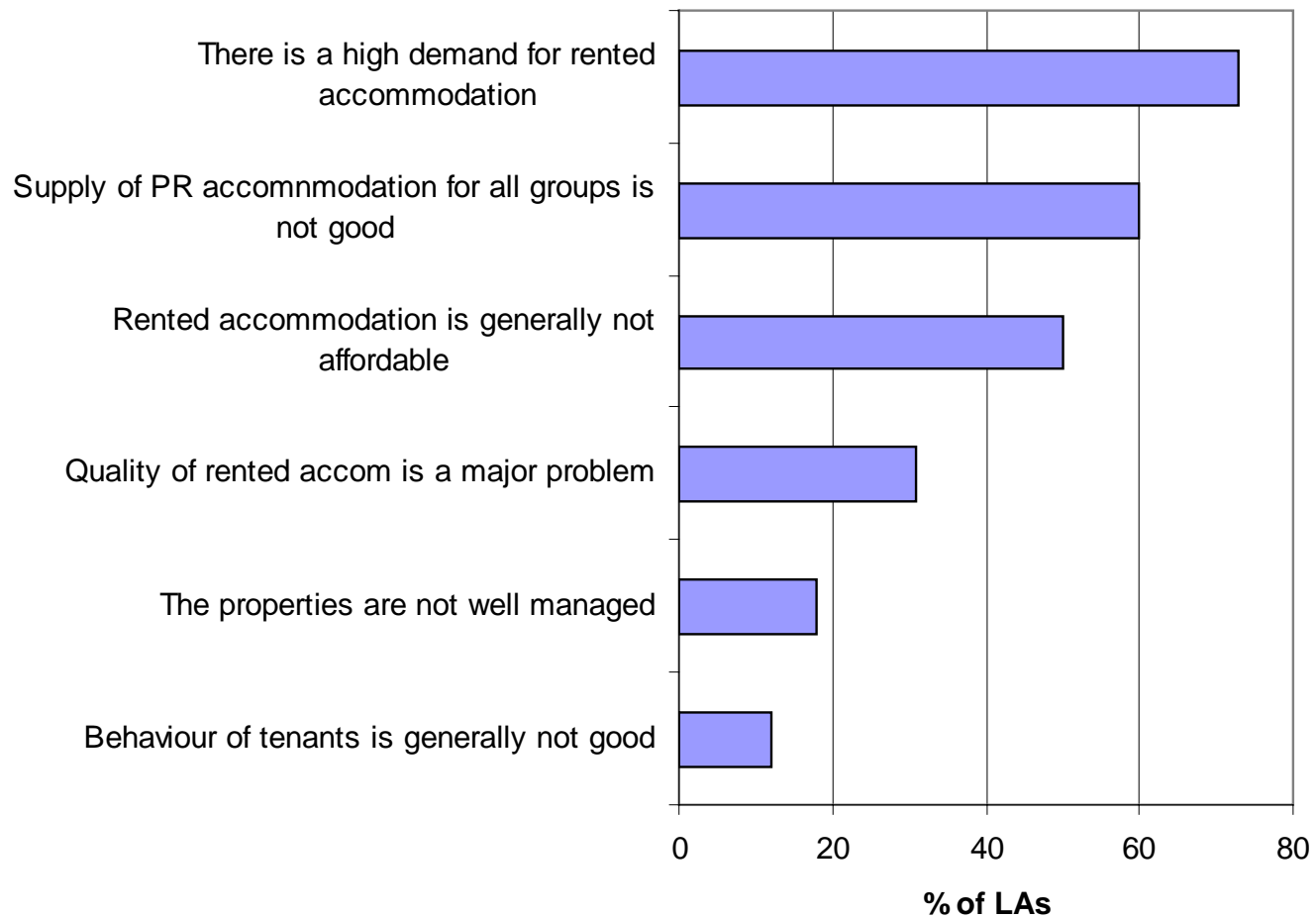


Case study example – vulnerable tenants in HMOs



Local authority views on the Private rented sector

Local authority views (LA survey, 2006)





The real questions that need addressing

- How far is an increase in private renting compatible with promoting sustainable communities?
- How can we provide enough affordable housing?
- Is creating a 'quasi social sector' the best way of housing low income households who cannot access social housing or owner occupation?

The areas where authorities need most support

- Providing support and advice services for landlords
- Communicating with and supporting private tenants

Discussion

- How do we, as researchers, influence research priorities?
- What are the key areas where we need more robust and/or more detailed information?
- What are the best ways to collect this information?
- How can we analyse and present information to emphasise diversity and change so we don't simply replace one set of stereotypes with another?