



Research into Houses In Multiple Occupation in Cambridge

Research Findings

March 2013

Prepared for Cambridge City Council



This work has been conducted in accordance with ISO 20252, the international standard for market and social research



Table of Contents

1. Executive Summary	1
2. Background & Methodology	3
2.1 Background.....	3
2.2 Methodology	3
3. Profile of residents taking part in the household survey	5
4. The HMO Market.....	8
4.1 Perceptions of the HMO market in Cambridge	11
5. Motivations for Living in HMOs	13
5.1 Perceived benefits of Living in HMOs.....	14
5.2 Future aspirations	15
5.3 Barriers to Achieving Future Ambitions.....	17
6. Management Arrangements	19
6.1 Management Concerns	20
7. General Conditions/ Characteristics of Properties.....	22
8. Understanding Residents' Grievances	23
8.1 Physical condition of properties.....	23
8.2 Social issues.....	26
8.3 Sharing facilities	27
8.4 Reasons for moving frequently	27
8.5 Wider Community Issues.....	28
9. Conclusions & Recommendations	32
Appendix A – Questionnaire.....	34
Appendix B – Focus Group Discussion Guide	47



1. Executive Summary

This section provides a brief summary of the key results from the market research which **mruk** conducted with tenants in Houses with Multiple Occupation (HMO) on behalf of Cambridge City Council.

Cambridge City Council commissioned **mruk**, an independent market research organisation, to undertake in-home interviews with a total of 152 tenants and 4 focus groups with tenants, to seek their levels of satisfaction, motivations for living in HMOs, aspirations for the future and overall perceptions of HMOs in Cambridge.

Perceptions of HMOS

- Most tenants tended to feel that there were enough properties. However they felt that choice was reduced because physical conditions vary drastically, meaning that many were not seen as suitable. Tenants also identified a split between student and non-student properties, which further reduced availability. Accommodation was generally thought to be harder to find close to the start of academic terms, due to a high demand amongst students.
- Rents in Cambridge were seen as high. Rents for HMOs were not seen as disproportionately higher than other accommodation types. HMOs were actually viewed as one of the most affordable forms of accommodation in Cambridge, with many citing this as a primary benefits.

Motivations for living in HMOs

- Residents saw HMOs as the most cost-effective and convenient type of accommodation available to them. Such properties allow tenants to live fairly centrally and were seen as substantially cheaper than buying a property or renting privately in self-contained properties. While alternative arrangements were preferable, residents felt they were currently unattainable due to financial constraints. Earning more or being in long term relationships were the main ways residents felt they would be able to move out of HMOs.
- Other benefits of HMOs included the social value they bring to tenants and being able to share responsibility (e.g. physical maintenance and bills).
- Residents were willing to an often did tend to move from property to property as and when necessary. Though moving was not always desirable, it was accepted that due to the nature of HMOs, this is something residents may have to consider more often than they would like.
- Factors contributing to residents moving within the HMO market included physical conditions and social environment, as they tended to shape residents experiences and satisfaction levels.
- Students tended to live in properties with more occupants than did non-students.

Management arrangements

- Residents' satisfaction with their management conditions was determined by the responsiveness of their landlord and their ability to resolve grievances.
- There were some differences between landlord types. Those with letting agents tended to feel their needs were better taken care of because agents were incentivised to do so



(given that they were paid by both landlords and tenants). In particular students felt agents were more likely to look after their interests than landlords, who were often seen to neglect student properties.

- Those with private landlords felt they benefited from not paying any extra fees to agents. Many also liked the personal relationship they had with landlords, though some did worry about approaching them too often and whether this may lead to rent increases. Non-students were particularly concerned about this.
- Overall, the main differences between residents' satisfaction with the management of properties was due to how well concerns were addressed.

General structure and condition of properties

- Most residents had reported problems in the past 12 months. The most common problems experienced by all were plumbing and heating issues.
- Residents were particularly concerned about physical conditions that they felt compromised health and safety.
- There was a perception that student properties tended to have more problems relating to the physical condition of the property. They tended to report a wider range of physical problems than non-students.
- There was a general sense that waste storage and collection could be improved. Residents felt that their properties tended to generate more waste and that the number of bins allocated to each house could be increased.



2. Background & Methodology

2.1 Background

Cambridge City Council commissioned **mruk** research to assist the Council in its attempts to better understand how Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) function. With HMOs estimated to make up approximately 12% of housing stock in Cambridge, the Council was keen to understand this segment of the housing market.

This research was part of a broader aim to assess the HMO market. Its objective was to look specifically at smaller HMOs about which the Council has less information – i.e. those not requiring planning permission or subject to mandatory licensing. Dwellings targeted were those: occupied by three or more unrelated residents without a live-in landlord, and where basic amenities are shared. These shared amenities are significant spaces such as kitchens and bathrooms.

The Council was keen to explore the views of residents living in these smaller HMOs as part of a larger project to understand how HMOs operate, how they contribute to the housing market in Cambridge, and some of the wider issues which a large HMO market might raise.

The research covered the physical condition of the properties, levels of satisfaction with management and maintenance, motivations for living in HMOs, residents' aspirations for the future and wider perceptions of HMOs in Cambridge.

The Council's brief was to explore the following:

- How smaller HMOs fit into the housing market in Cambridge – who is living there, why, where they have come from, tenant aspirations etc.
- Tenants' perceptions of the physical condition of these homes – repairs required, safety standards etc.
- The quality of management of this type of dwelling
- Other issues experienced by tenants.



2.2 Methodology

The quantitative phase of the research was conducted during January and February 2013. This involved 152 in-home interviews with residents of HMO properties. The Council provided addresses for dwellings across the City that had been identified as potentially being smaller HMOs.

mruk sent letters to households explaining the nature of the research and informed residents that **mruk** fieldworkers may visit each dwelling and seek to conduct the interview.

Residents were screened at the start of the interview to ensure the property was less than 3 storeys high, the occupants were unrelated to each other, the landlord/owner lived elsewhere and that facilities such as bathroom and kitchen were shared.

Interviews were conducted across 14 wards in Cambridge and lasted 10 minutes on average. Interviews were spread across weekdays and weekends at various times of the day to ensure a good spread of both students and employed tenants were included in the research. Tenants who completed the survey were given the opportunity to be entered into a prize draw for a chance to win a £50 high street voucher.



In addition, those who were willing were asked if they wanted the opportunity to take part in focus group discussions. We suggested conducting some qualitative research to complement the quantitative work. This is particularly helpful to understand the ‘whys’ and uncover reasons behind the patterns displayed in the existing quantitative data.

Focus group participants were initially recruited from the quantitative stage; we then recruited additional participants in-street using a recruitment questionnaire to boost numbers. The qualitative focus groups were conducted on 19th and 20th March 2013. A total of 24 tenants took part in the discussions. To thank them for their time and to cover any expenses resulting from having taken part, participants were given a £25 incentive for taking part. The group design is shown in the table below:

GROUP	RESIDENT TYPE	RECRUITMENT CRITERIA	OTHER CRITERIA
1	Student	Had physical problems with their home (yes at Q11 and/or Q12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Good spread in terms of demographic characteristics ▪ Good spread in terms of residents with a private landlord and rent via letting agents
2	Student	Poorly managed property (Includes no at Q7 or Q8, doesn't work at Q9 or No/Don't know at Q10)	
3	Non student	Had physical problems with their home (yes at Q11 and/or Q12)	
4	Non student	Poorly managed property (Includes no at Q7 or Q8, doesn't work at Q9 or No/Don't know at Q10)	

Please note that the results of qualitative research should be treated with caution due to the small sample size.



3. Profile of residents taking part in the household survey

The demographic profile of residents who took part in the quantitative survey is illustrated below. Survey quotas were used to ensure that results were robust among both students and non-students.

Table 1: Demographics

	Total (152)	Students (87)	Non-Students (65)
Employment Status			
Employed full time	34%	-	78%
Employed part time	1%	-	3%
Self employed	2%	-	5%
In full time education	57%	100%	-
Unemployed and looking for work	4%	-	9%
Permanently sick/disabled	1%	-	2%
Looking after the home	1%	-	2%
Long term unemployed	1%	-	2%
Total (after rounding)	100%	100%	100%
Gender			
Male	58%	57%	58%
Female	42%	43%	42%
Total (after rounding)	100%	100%	100%
Age			
16-24 years	63%	86%	32%
25-29 years	18%	9%	31%
30-44 years	15%	5%	29%
45-59 years	3%	-	8%
Total (after rounding)	100%	100%	100%
Illness or Disability			
Yes	2%	-	5%
No	98%	100%	95%
Total (after rounding)	100%	100%	100%
Ethnic Group			
White British	61%	67%	54%
Other	39%	33%	46%
Total (after rounding)	100%	100%	100%
Area			
Romsey	23%	22%	25%
Petersfield	23%	32%	11%
Coleridge	13%	11%	14%
Elsewhere	41%	34%	51%
Total (after rounding)	100%	100%	100%

Base: All Respondents (152)

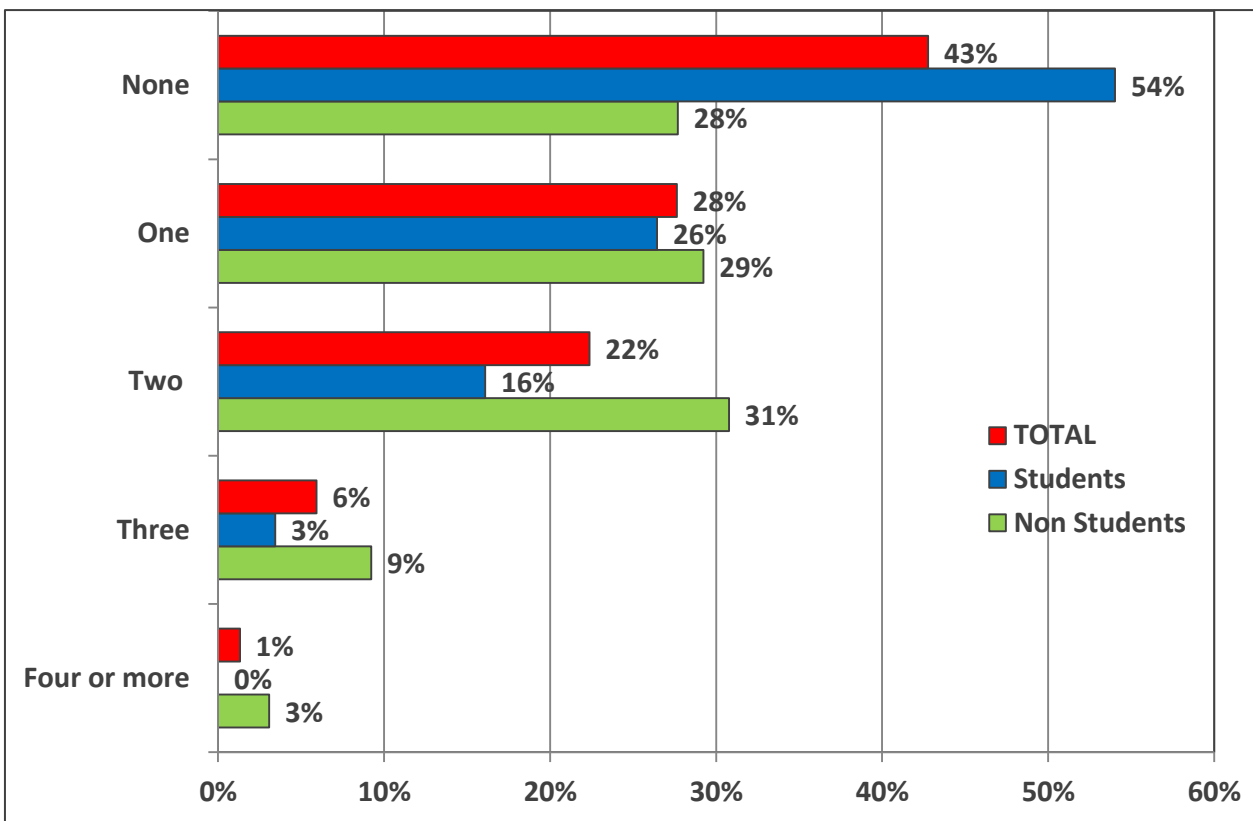
Q Ref: Various

Source: mruk



Just over half of all respondents reported that a vehicle was owned by their household (57%). Not surprisingly, having a vehicle was more common within non-student properties. Over half of students reported residents in their dwelling not having one (54%) compared to just 28% of non-students. (Note the University of Cambridge does not allow its students to have cars, but this does not apply to students of Anglia Ruskin University living in private rented accommodation). The majority of households with cars were likely to have one or two only as illustrated below. Surprisingly tenants with 5 or more other occupants in the property were most likely to have no vehicles in the property (49%). Two in five properties with 2 or 3 occupants had one vehicle compared to one in five properties with five or more occupants.

Figure 1: Number of vehicles owned by occupants (with cars in household)



Base: All Respondents (152)

Q Ref: Q33

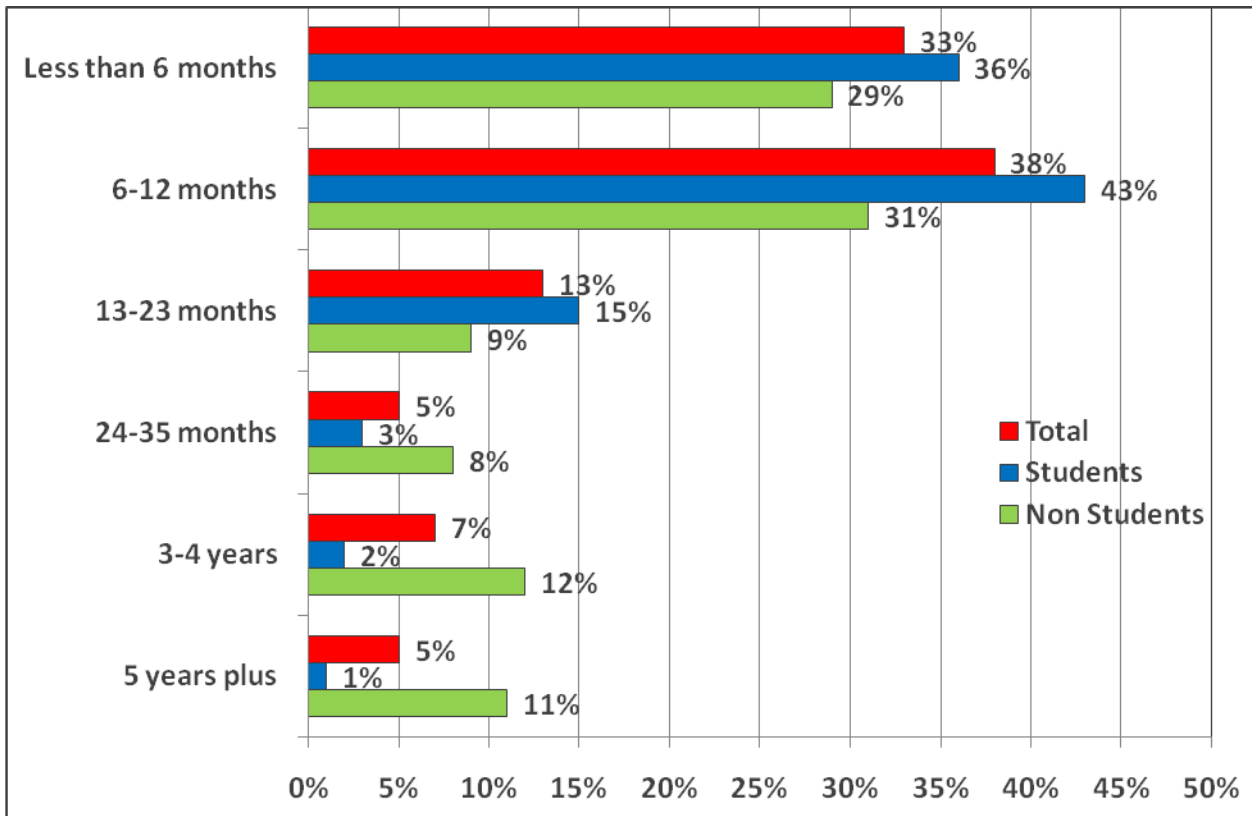
Source: mruk



A third of residents had lived in their current property for less than 6 months (33%). A further 38% had lived in their HMO property for 6-12 months and only 13% had lived there for 13-23 months.

Just less than a fifth (17%) of tenants had lived in the property for 2 years or more. This figure was considerably higher amongst non-students than students (31% and 6% respectively).

Figure 2: Length of time in property



Base: All Respondents (152)

Q Ref: Q6

Source: mruk



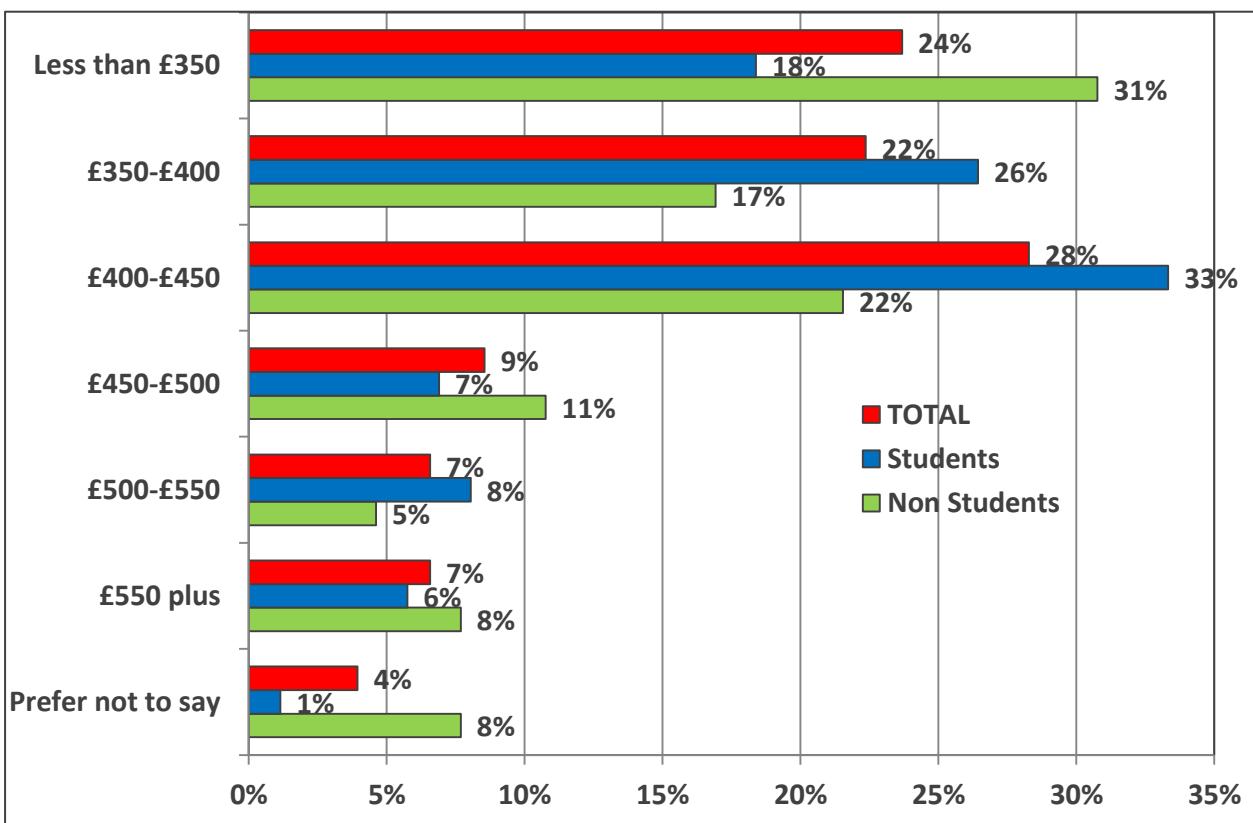
4. The HMO Market

The majority of residents had lived in Cambridgeshire prior to moving into their current accommodation (62%).

This was more common amongst students than non-students (67% and 55% respectively). In addition, non-students were more likely than students to be foreign residents (17% and 7% respectively). (This may be partly due to international students being more likely to use the Universities' accommodation services).

The vast majority were renting independently, with just 5% of residents receiving housing benefits.

Figure 3: Rent paid each month (including service charge)



Base: All Respondents (152)

Q Ref: Q11

Source: mruk

As shown in the chart above, the majority of all respondents paid less than £450 in rent. However there were differences between the amount paid by students and non-students. The most common rent level paid by students was £400-450 per month (33%), but was much lower for non-students, at less than £350 (31%) as illustrated above. This indicates that students may be less inclined, or have less time at the start of term, to shop around for a property on a lower rent. It may also suggest that there is a higher demand closer to students' place of study for properties which enables landlords to charge higher rents in student catchment areas.



Students living in Romsey, Petersfield and Coleridge were most likely to have paid between £400 and £449 rent per month (between 34% and 43%) compared to only 13% of respondents living 'elsewhere'. Tenants living 'elsewhere' in Cambridge were more likely to have paid a lower rent of less than £350 (33%) than those in Petersfield (14%) and Coleridge (5%). This reflects the higher proportion of students in Petersfield, although not in Coleridge.

Tenants of private landlords were most likely to pay less than £350 rent each month (29%). This compared to 14% who let from a letting agent. Letting agencies were most likely to charge rents of between £350 and £449 per month (58%, compared to 48% of private landlords).

Residents of other ethnic groups were more likely to pay less than £350 rent (34%) when compared to White British tenants (17%).

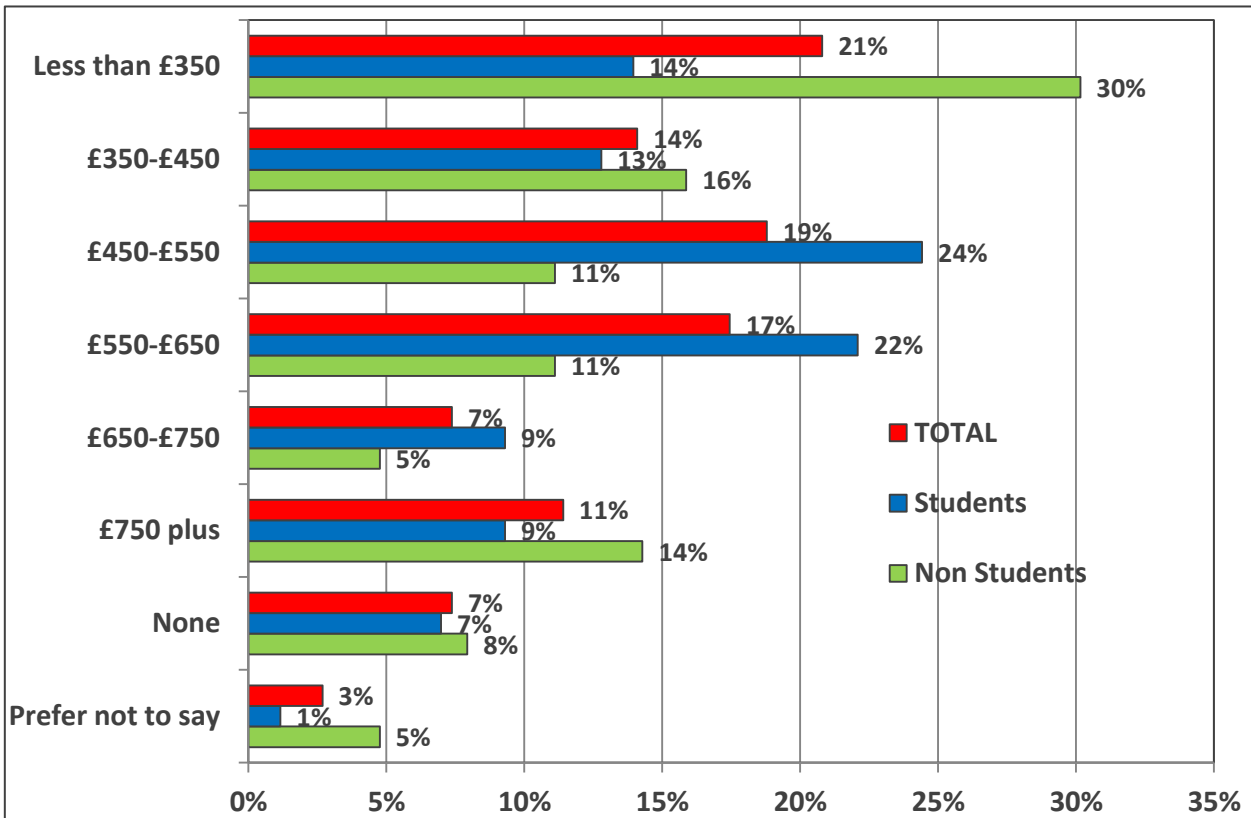
Length of residency also seemed to have an impact on the amount of rent paid by tenants; those who had lived in the property for over 12 months were more likely to have paid a lower rent, of less than £350, than those who had lived in the property for less than 6 months (38% and 14% respectively). This suggests that landlords may in some cases be happy to limit rent rises for existing tenants, e.g. to keep void rates down, but increase rents to align with market prices when rooms are re-let.

Base sizes are too low to review the amount of deposit paid by unemployed respondents and those with a disability.



As shown below, students tended to pay higher deposits, with just under half paying between £450 and £650 (46%). This correlates to the slightly higher rents being paid by students, as the Council's experience is that deposits tend to be charged at a rate equivalent to a month or a month and a half's rent. Comparatively, the most common amount paid by non-students was less than £350. However, non-students were more likely to pay £750 or more compared to students (14% and 9% respectively), which again is likely to relate to more non-students renting rooms at rents of more than £550.

Figure 4: Amount of refundable deposit paid



Base: All Respondents (152)

Q Ref: Q12

Source: mruk

Residents who paid less than £400 in rent each month were also most likely to have paid a lower deposit. Of those who paid less than £400 rent, 36% paid less than £350 as a deposit; 19% paid between £350-£449 deposit and a further 19% paid between £450-£549 as a deposit. Only a fifth of tenants who paid less than £400 rent had to pay a deposit of more than £550.

Tenants who had a higher rent level (£400 or more) were more likely to have paid higher deposits. A fifth paid between £450-£549 deposit; a further 27% paid £550-649 deposit and some 18% paid over £750 deposit.

As with rent amounts, length of residency also seemed to have an impact on the amount of deposit paid by tenants; those who had moved into the property within the last 6 months were more likely to have paid a higher deposit, of more than £350, than those who had lived in the property for more than 12 months. Only 10% of those who have moved into their property in the last 6 months had paid less than £350 deposit, compared to 30% of those who have lived in their property for more than 12 months.



There were some notable differences in deposit amounts paid by ethnic groups. White British tenants were most likely to have paid between £450 and £649 deposit (43%, compared to 25% of tenants in other ethnic groups). Other ethnic tenants were most likely to have paid less than £350 deposit (32%, compared to 13% of White British tenants). Again, this correlates with rent levels for other ethnic groups.

Tenants of private landlord were most likely to have paid less than £449 as a deposit (41%), compared to tenants who rented from letting agents (22%). Letting agents were also more likely to have charged tenants £750 or more for a deposit when compared to private landlords (18% and 9% respectively).

Overall, only a quarter of residents had paid fees such as admin, credit checks, tenancy sign-ups, or renewal in the past 12 months (25%). This figure was significantly higher amongst students than non-students (32% and 15% respectively). Of those that had paid fees, the majority had paid less than £100 (60%). Non-students appeared to have paid more, with half having paid more than this.

Of those tenants who had paid admin fees, 24% had resided in the property for less than 6 months and 37% for between 6 and 12 months.

Over half of tenants in properties let by an agent had paid admin fees (51%), compared to just over one in ten tenants in a privately rented HMO (13%) although these findings need to be treated with caution due to low base sizes.

Over a third of White British tenants (35%) said that they had paid admin fees. This compared to very few tenants from other ethnic groups (8%).

There were very few respondents who were unemployed or disabled so findings amongst these groups cannot be compared.

4.1 Perceptions of the HMO market in Cambridge

There was a general consensus amongst residents that there were enough HMO properties available in Cambridge, but that quality differed substantially. (Although anecdotal evidence outside of this research suggests that this may not always be the case in reality, particularly at the beginning of the academic year). Many properties were not seen to be suitable due to poor living conditions.

“I’ve never heard of anyone not being able to find somewhere. However, there are also a lot of bad houses, with things like front door locks not working properly etc.” (Student)

“It’s the luck of the draw. I pay similar rent to my friends who live in the flat next door, but our property is much nicer. They have rats and other defects. I feel bad for them but feel really lucky that I like where I live.” (Student)

“There are a lot of properties available but it’s hard to find the right one. It took me a while but I have found one which is quite nice and I pay a similar rent to other places I lived before. which weren’t so nice.” (Non-student)

Residents also drew distinctions between student and non-student properties. Firstly, this was in terms of availability. It was commented that some properties were only rented to



students and others only to non-students. Secondly in terms of conditions, students generally felt that their properties tended to be of lower quality.

“There are lots of properties but you can’t apply for some. Some will just not take students at all. I would like to live in some of these as they are quite nice, but I think the landlords want to keep students and non-students separate.” (Student)

“There are lot of properties but choice can be limited as some are student-only houses, so the number you have to select from is reduced.” (Non-student)

There were also general concerns about the availability of properties at different times of the year, depending on academic terms. Residents reported difficulties finding properties when term time started due to the volume of students requiring accommodation.

Residents generally felt that rents in Cambridge were high, but did not feel that those of HMOs were disproportionate to other accommodation types. Many commented that rents in the City were some of the highest in the UK. They did feel that some savings could be made by moving slightly further away from the City or in households with more people, but accepted that overall they would have to pay a premium to live in Cambridge.

“Cambridge is a really popular City and rents are only second to London, I think. I used to live in the North and paid almost half of what I currently do for a much better place. But this is where I want to be right now, so I just have to accept that it’s different here.” (Non-student)

“You can make some savings if you live with more people. You save on Council tax and bills, so that helps. But it is still more expensive than living in other areas in the UK.” (Student)

“It is expensive, but I think the prices of HMOs are better than some accommodation types in Cambridge.” (Non-student)



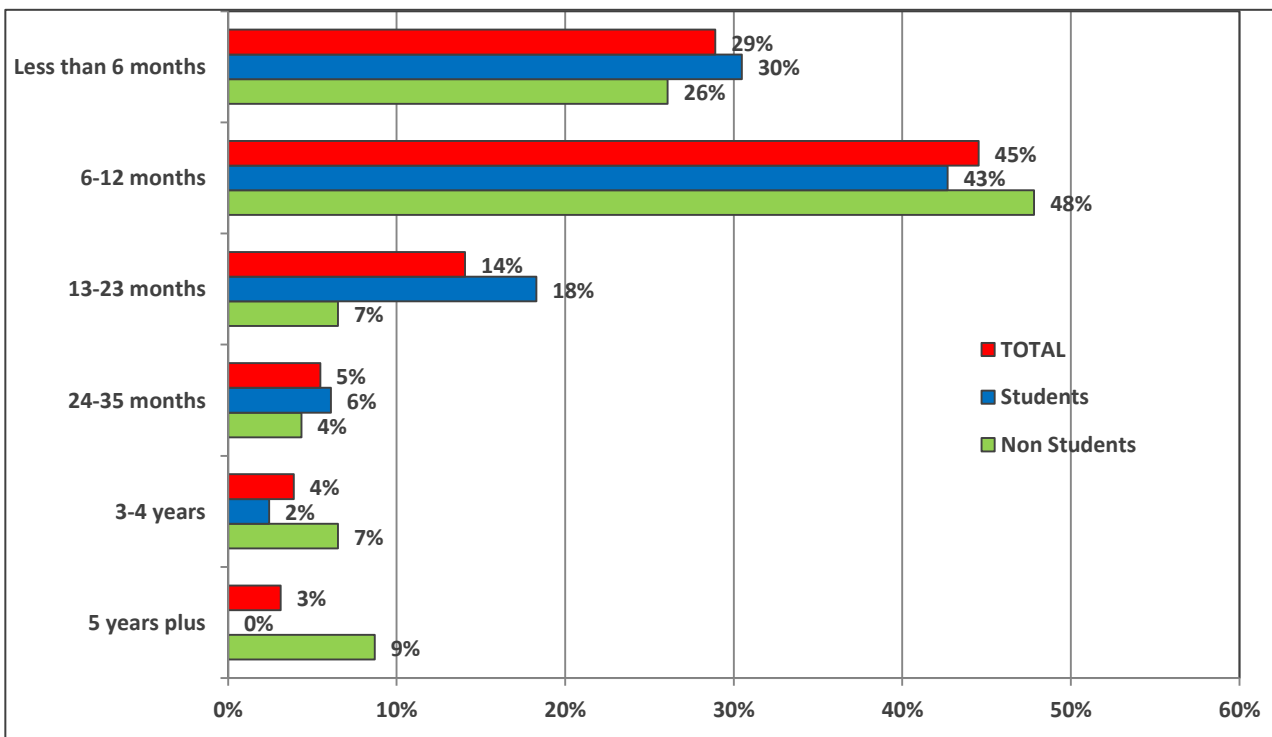
5. Motivations for Living in HMOs

The majority of residents living in Houses in Multiple Occupation moved to their current home to be closer to their job or their place of study (64%). A higher proportion of students (69%) than non-students (57%) moved to be closer to their place of education/employment. Those residing in Petersfield were most likely to have moved for this reason (71%), whilst those in Romsey were least likely (54%). Less than one in ten tenants moved to be closer to friends and family (7% overall, including 5% of students and 11% of non-students). Just less than a quarter of residents overall (24%) said they moved for another reason.

With approximately three quarters expecting to stay at their current home for 12 months or less (74%), residents appeared to move or be open to moving fairly frequently. Findings between students and non-students were fairly consistent amongst those expecting to stay in their property for 12 months or less.

Nearly one in ten non-students expected to stay in their current HMO property for 5 years or more, whilst none of the students interviewed expected to stay for that length of time.

Figure 5: Length of time expect to stay in current property



Base: All Respondents excluding don't know (128)

Q Ref: Q8

Source: mruk

While residents may not stay in individual properties for extended periods of time, they seemed keen to remain in HMOs. The majority (66%) stated that they would live in shared housing out of choice. Though selection was high amongst both groups, it was higher amongst students (75%) when compared to non-students (54%).



5.1 Perceived benefits of Living in HMOs

Residents in the focus groups pointed out a number of benefits that made HMOs attractive forms of accommodation for them currently. Across both the student and non-student groups, the reduced cost of living in an HMO, as opposed to renting alone/buying, was the most significant benefit.

For many of the residents we spoke to, living in an HMO was the only viable way of being able to afford to live in Cambridge. The central location of HMOs was also felt to enable residents to live closer to either their offices or university buildings however it is likely that this benefit relates to being centrally located, rather than being a benefit of the type of property itself.

A prominent common benefit amongst students and non-students was the social benefit of HMOs. Several of the residents we spoke to had chosen to move into HMOs because they wanted to either live with friends or to meet new people.

“I think the prospect of any of us being able to buy a house is pretty impossible.” (Student)

“It’s nice always having someone around; it also makes the house feel more secure because there’s usually someone there.” (Non-student)

Another key benefit, for both students and non-students, was the reduced hassle compared to living alone or buying a house. Most of the residents we spoke to liked the fact that they could split the HMO related responsibilities amongst the group of people living there. ‘Chores’ such as corresponding with the landlord, organising bill payments etc. were examples of the shared maintenance and responsibility of living in an HMO.

“We all take responsibility for a separate bill each; one internet, another one water.” (Student)

“It’s much less hassle than being a home owner. You don’t have to worry about buying a house – getting all the lawyers involved, selling it at the end and worrying about whether or not the value is going to depreciate and all the other legal stuff involved.” (Student)

Students also noted that living in HMOs allowed them to have more freedom than living in university accommodation, and this type of accommodation was often cheaper than halls of residence. Some students mentioned that university staff had helped them to find HMOs.

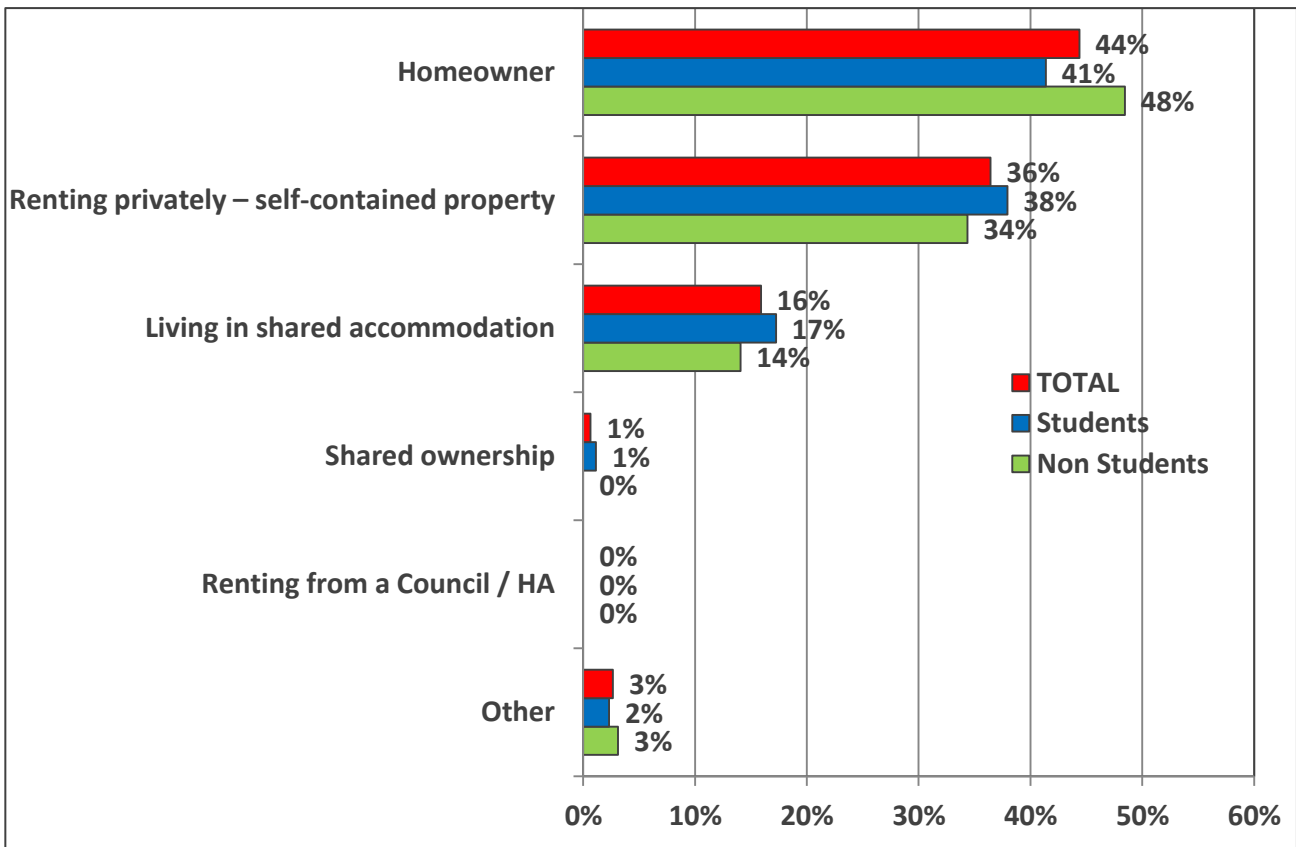
Both students and non-students also felt that another benefit of HMOs was the fact that they didn’t feel ‘tied down’; that is to say, that they could leave at relatively short notice, given the short-term nature of most HMO contracts.



5.2 Future aspirations

While residents did recognise many benefits, upon looking deeper, it appears that choosing to live in HMOs may be more out of necessity than a strong preference for this accommodation type above others. When asked what they would ideally like their housing situation to be in the next three to five years, just under half of all residents (44%) said they would like to be a homeowner. Many were also keen to be renting privately in self-contained properties (36%), but far fewer would want to be living in shared accommodation (16%) as illustrated below in Figure 6.

Figure 6: What would you like your housing situation to be in three-five years?



Base: All Respondents (152)

Q Ref: Q16

Source: mruk

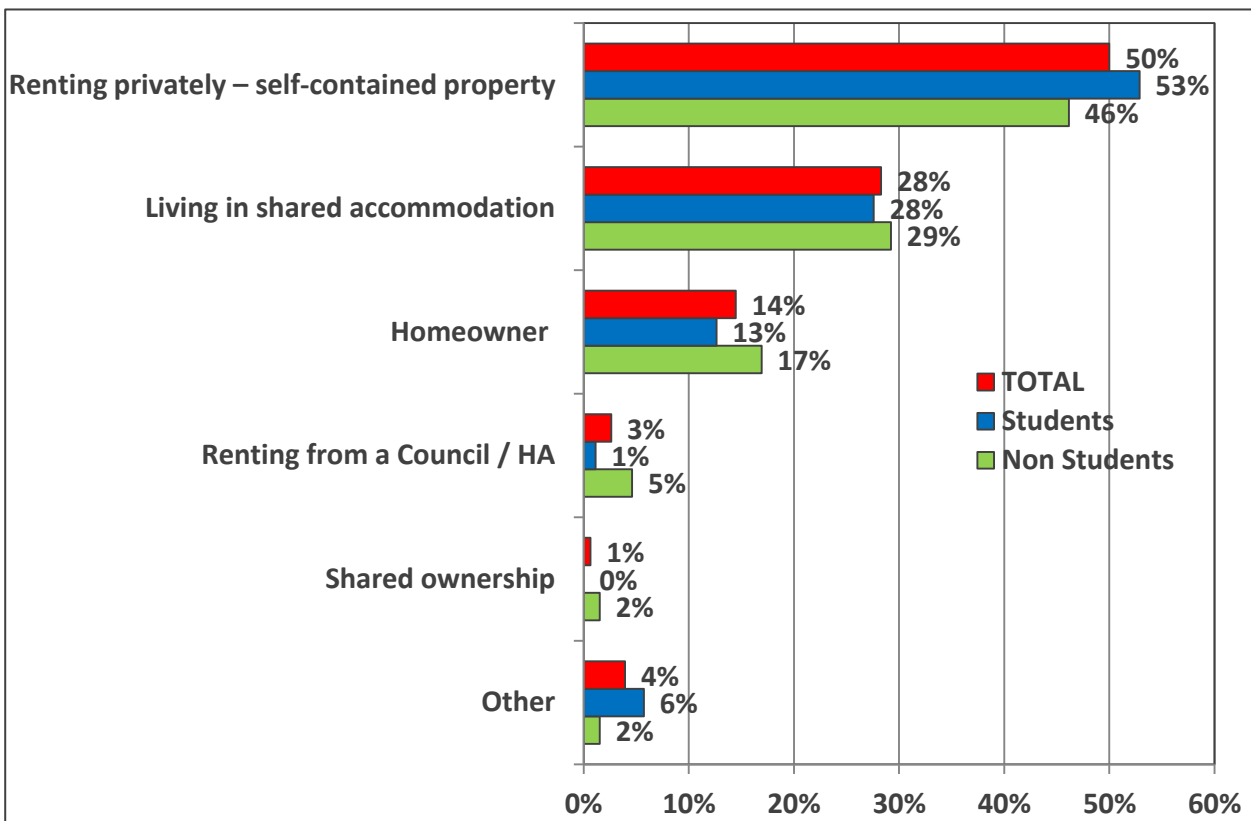


There was, however, a vast difference between their ideal circumstance and what residents felt was achievable. When asked what they ‘expected’ their housing situation to be in the next three to five years, very few felt they would actually be homeowners (14%). The majority felt they would be renting, with 50% expecting to be renting privately and the remainder living in shared accommodation (28%). Of those tenants who said they would like to be homeowners, only a third actually expected to be homeowners within the next few years, 42% expected to be renting privately and 22% expected to still be living in shared accommodation. Whilst no respondents aspired to rent from a Council or Housing Association, 5% expected to be.

Although considerably fewer people thought they would be able to achieve home-ownership compared to those who would like to, only 5% expressed an interest in shared ownership. It’s not clear whether this is because shared ownership is an unpopular option, or whether residents don’t know enough about the product.

More males than females expected to be homeowners in the next few years (19% and 8% respectively). There were few differences between the expectations of students and non-students as illustrated below in Figure 7.

Figure 7: What do you expect your housing situation to be in three to five years?



Base: All Respondents (152)

Q Ref: Q17

Source: mruk



5.3 Barriers to Achieving Future Ambitions

Residents who took part in the focus group discussions were particularly keen to speak about what they felt was or would prevent them from attaining their ideal accommodation type. The majority wanted their own properties, but felt that financial constraints would prevent them from achieving this. They felt that properties in Cambridge were too expensive for them to afford alone. Residents identified a trade-off between wanting their own property and a desire to be located centrally. Most felt that they could only afford a property outside of the City, meaning that they may have to commute long distances. While this was not seen as ideal, many felt that it was an option that they would have to consider if they did want to be homeowners. However, it was not something they were in a hurry to do

Renting privately in a self-contained property was seen as an intermediary step. It would guarantee more freedom and privacy, but would still allow residents to be relatively centrally located. However, the majority doubted whether they could afford this, as rents were seen as far higher for self-contained properties than HMOs.

“I would love to live somewhere where there were less people. This would really allow me to focus and get my work done, but this really isn’t something I can afford right now.” (Student)

“I would love my own one-bed, but can’t afford it. I would even settle for a two-bed flat where I could live with just one other person. This would be a bit more personal and make me feel like I had my own place.” (Non-student)

Long-term relationships were seen as one way residents could move out of shared accommodation. It was thought that combined incomes would allow residents to purchase properties or move in to privately rented properties. However, even then, some doubted their ability to afford alternative housing arrangements to HMOs.

“I would only be able to move out if I was in a relationship. If there were two of us we could afford a place of our own, but I couldn’t do this on my own right now.” (Student)

“My boyfriend and I would love to live together, but right now we just can’t afford to rent a place for the two of us on what we currently earn.” (Non-student)

“I knew one guy, someone I used to live with, who was 50 and still living in shared housing. He never got married or anything so ended up staying there because he couldn’t afford anything else. I don’t want that to happen to me.” (Non-student)



While students identified similar barriers to non-students, the latter appeared to be more immediately concerned about these. All residents tended to see shared accommodation as a means to an end, but non-students displayed greater anxiety about when they would be able to move on to the next stage of their lives. Many felt that they were getting to an age and stage in their lives when they wanted to move in to alternative living arrangements, but were unsure if this would be possible.

“I would love to have my own place but I just don’t know if that will happen. I work as hard as I possibly can, but I still can’t afford to move in to a one bed, or even a place with less people.” (Non-student)

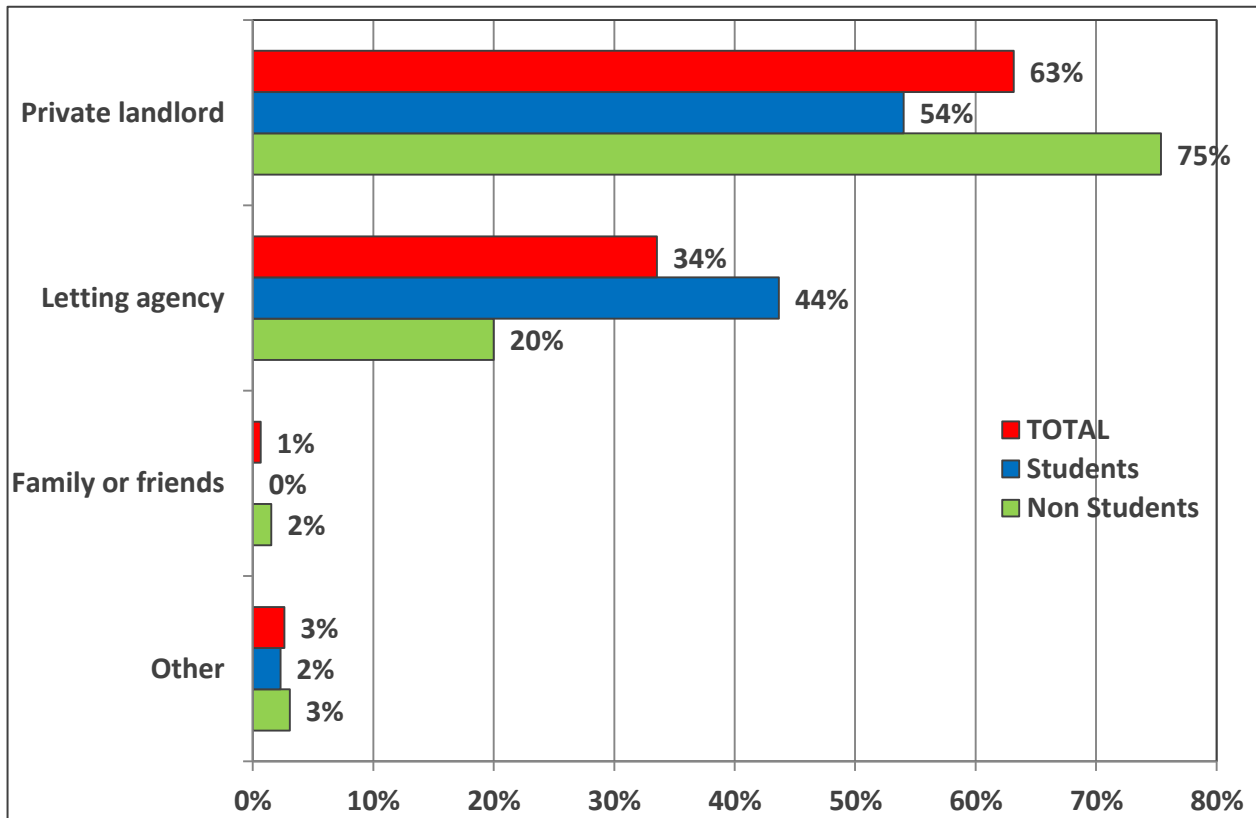
“I see shared accommodation as something people live in when they are young. I don’t want to stay here too long as I’m starting to get older.” (Non-student)



6. Management Arrangements

Overall, the majority of residents were renting through private landlords (63%). There were noticeable differences between students and non-students in terms of landlord type. Non-students were more likely to have private landlords, with three quarters stating this compared to just over half of students (54%). Students were more likely than non-students to be renting through letting agents, with just under half doing so (44%), compared to a fifth (20%) of non-students.

Figure 8: Landlord type



Base: All Respondents (152)

Q Ref: Q18

Source: mruk

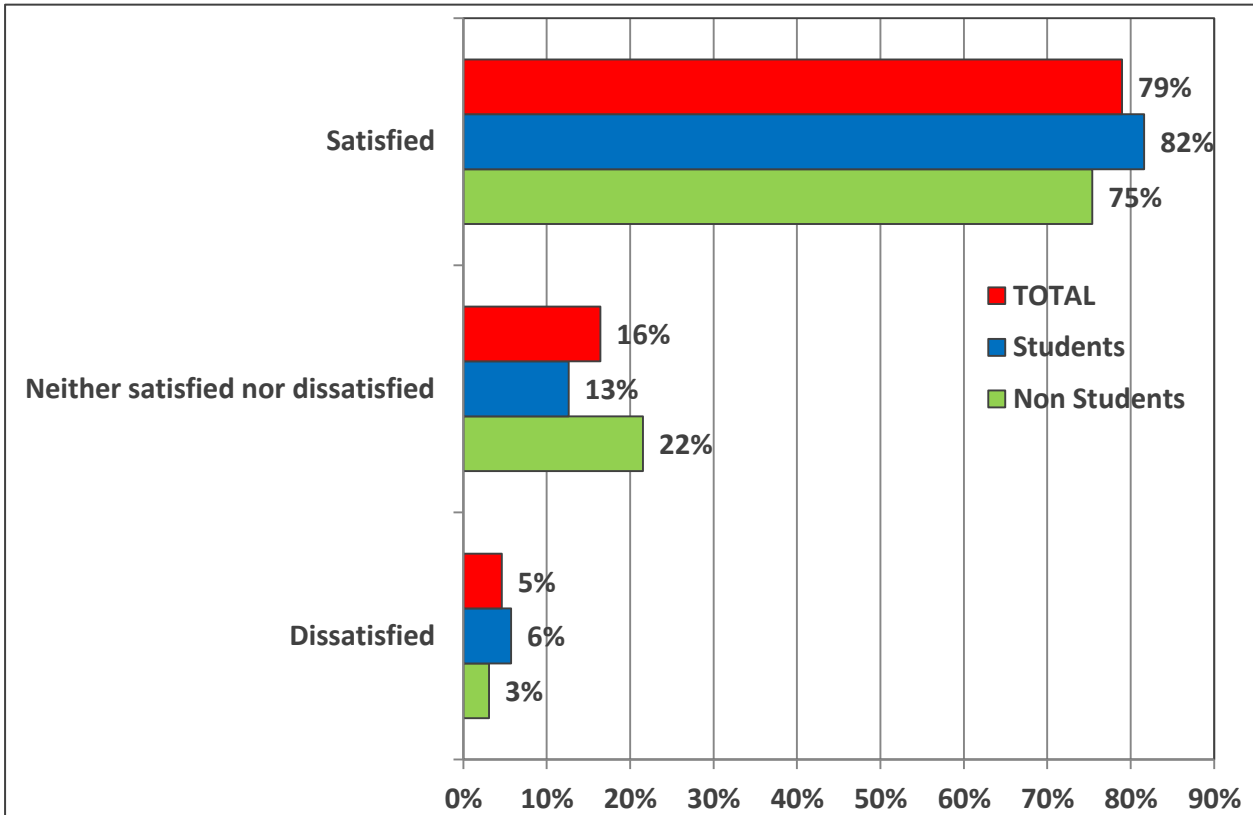
There was high awareness of who to contact if residents had any complaints to address with management, with almost all knowing how to do this (97%). Residents were also well informed of their rights and responsibilities. Almost all had received at least basic written information explaining these (98%). There were no notable differences by landlord type or among different resident groups.

Slightly less than three quarters of residents were covered by Deposit Protection Schemes (73%), although this was higher for students (80%) than non-students (63%). Supporting this, those in privately rented accommodation were less likely to have been given a Deposit Protection Scheme receipt than those renting through a letting agent (69% and 81% respectively) reflecting the high proportion of students who rent through letting agents.



Levels of satisfaction with the management of the property were high, with over three quarters of residents feeling satisfied (79%). Expressed dissatisfaction with how the property was managed was very low (5%).

Figure 9: Satisfaction with how the property is managed



Base: All Respondents (152)

Q Ref: Q36

Source: mruk

Perhaps surprisingly, satisfaction with how the property was managed differed significantly by landlord type. Tenants renting from a private landlord were notably more satisfied than those renting from a letting agent (86% and 63% respectively).

6.1 Management Concerns

Although levels of satisfaction were high in the quantitative analysis, tenants in the focus groups identified a number concerns about the management of their properties. Overall, there were differences in satisfaction between those with private landlords and those renting from letting agents, as well as between students and non-students.

While residents knew how to contact management and felt they were responsive, satisfaction was generally lower in terms of their ability to resolve issues. Residents with letting agents generally liked the fact that issues were dealt with professionally. They felt confident that if they reported a problem, agents would have the relevant people available to address this. Not having to wait for individual landlords was seen as increasing the likelihood of problems being solved.



While residents felt that they incurred extra fees by going through letting agents, they were willing to accept this as a necessity because this was seen as making the maintenance process easier. In particular, some students felt that letting agents offered more reliability and protection than individual landlords because the latter were seen to be more likely to neglect student properties.

“I don’t think landlords care very much about student-only accommodation. At least you know that letting agents will try and help as you are paying them. I find them to be quite helpful.” (Student)

“We just call the agent and they send their handy man to fix the problem. Sometimes it takes a while, but at least we know that it is in their hands.” (Non-student)

“The agents have a key so we just give them permission to come in. We don’t have to do very much at all.” (Non-student)

“I feel more secure with an agent. I know we pay extra fees, but I think it’s a necessary evil as it means that things get done. The landlord is paying them to be an intermediary so they have an incentive to act.” (Non-student)

However, due to the extra costs associated with this landlord type, residents did feel particularly aggrieved by letting agents that were less efficient.

“They are just making money out of us and doing very little in return.” (Student)

“They are paid to be the intermediary and get things done, but we just end up going around in circles. We have now decided just to contact our landlord directly, as he is more responsive.” (Non-student)

Regarding private landlords, satisfaction was very much dependent on the individual landlord. Broadly speaking, the reason why residents found private landlords desirable was because they did not have to pay agency fees. However, they were less satisfied by those who were seen as unresponsive or not particularly accommodating. Some felt that some problems were prioritised over others, depending on what the landlord identified as important, and not necessarily due to what residents thought. Some, particularly non-students, were concerned about contacting private landlords too frequently. They worried that this may strain relationships or cause them to increase rents.

“It depends what your landlord’s like and which company you’re with. My first landlord was private and if I had a problem, I’d just call him and he’d come round and fix it.” (Student)



“We do contact the landlord a lot and he is nice. But I just worry about contacting him too often. He may think all we do is complain and get sick of us. Or he may put our rent up if he has to make a lot of repairs.” (Non-student)

Overall, while there were differences amongst student and non-student groups in terms of their satisfaction with different landlord types, levels of satisfaction were impacted by the same factors. Where they felt their concerns were taken seriously and acted upon, they were generally satisfied (regardless of whether their landlord was a letting agent or private landlord).

7. General Conditions/ Characteristics of Properties

Students generally tended to live in properties with a higher number of occupants; with 78% living in houses where four or more rooms were used as bedrooms compared to 51% of non-students. Overall, 79% of students lived with four or more people, whilst 59% of non-students lived in this situation.

Almost all residents had working fire alarms (90%). The vast majority had gas central heating systems (95%) and had gas safety certificates that had been issued in the past 12 months (94%). The majority also felt they had enough bins for waste and recycling (88%). Those with 5 or more occupants in the property were more likely to have said there weren't enough bins for recycling (25%).



8. Understanding Residents' Grievances

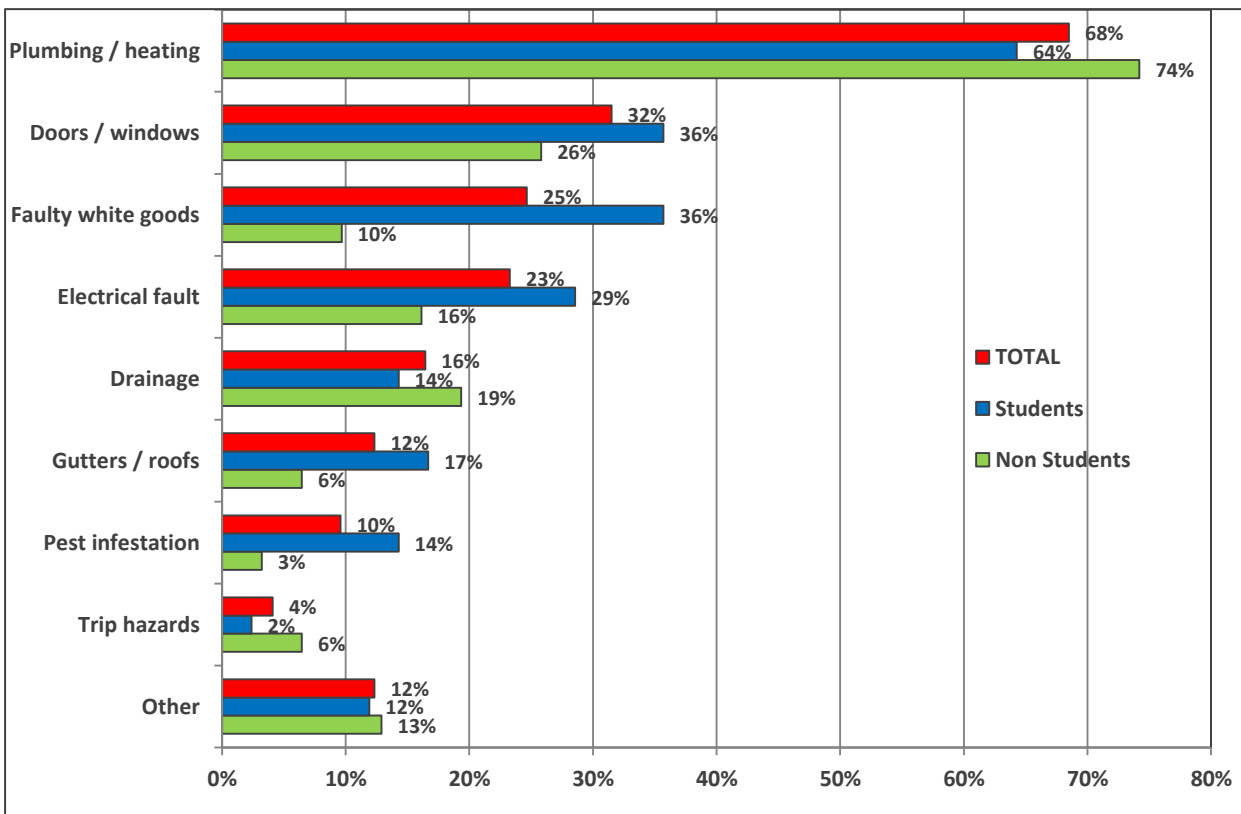
8.1 Physical condition of properties

Almost two thirds of residents had reported problems with repairs in the past year (64%). There were no significant differences between student and non-student properties. White British tenants were significantly more likely than other ethnic groups to have reported a repair (74% and 47% respectively).

Of those that had problems, the vast majority had reported plumbing/ heating faults (68%), which correlates with the higher levels of complaints the Council tends to receive about these sorts of faults. Other problems were less likely to have been reported, however students were generally more likely to experience these. Problems that appeared to affect students substantially more included doors/ windows (36%), faulty white goods such as cookers/ fridges (36%), gutters/ roofs and pest control (14%).

Problems with damp and mould were also fairly common amongst all HMO residents (40%), although these were also slightly more common amongst students than non-students (44% and 36% respectively). White British tenants were also more likely to have had problems with damp (45%) than other ethnic group tenants (33%). Other repair problems were also more likely amongst properties including White British residents (57%) when compared to other ethnic group residents (35%). It's not clear whether the conditions of properties occupied by other ethnic groups are in fact generally better, or whether expectations amongst some people within this group may be lower.

Figure 10: Types of problems faced



Base: All Respondents who have had other repair problems (73)

Q Ref: Q30

Source: mruk



There were some notable differences by landlord type. Those in properties managed by landlords were less likely to have had problems with damp and mould than letting agent tenants (36% and 53% respectively). Other problems in the building were also more common in letting agent properties (69%) than private rents (36%). Condition of the property does not seem to correlate with the rents charged by letting agents.

As mentioned earlier, base sizes amongst unemployed respondents and those with a disability were too small to comment. Findings varied amongst the small numbers that had been interviewed.

Residents in the focus groups were particularly concerned with how the physical conditions of properties impacted on how comfortable their homes were. They also expressed more serious concerns over how these impacted on health and safety.

Issues such as dampness, poor insulation and pest problems were not only seen as inconvenient, but as directly putting residents at risk. Residents also identified defective security equipment, such as door locks, as being a prominent concern.

Students were particularly worried about poor conditions. Many tended to feel that HMOs dedicated only to students were in worse physical condition.

“The heater in my flatmate’s room has not been working for weeks and they have done nothing about it, even though it’s freezing. It is far too cold for him to be sleeping in there.”(Student)

“They think they can get away with it because we are students. The landlords don’t really take care of properties. We have rats and were never told about this when we moved in. It turns out they have been there since before we moved in, but the landlord did not tell us. This was unfair.” (Student)

Our back door is just not secure. I really worry that anyone could just knock it down. Security is the most important thing for me.” (Non-student)

While residents felt that furnishings tended to be old, they accepted that this may be the nature of HMOs. They did not expect landlords to provide brand new furniture, but did feel that slightly better quality items were preferable.

“The sofa is just old and does not smell nice. As a result, it isn’t comfortable and I barely ever use it.” (Student)

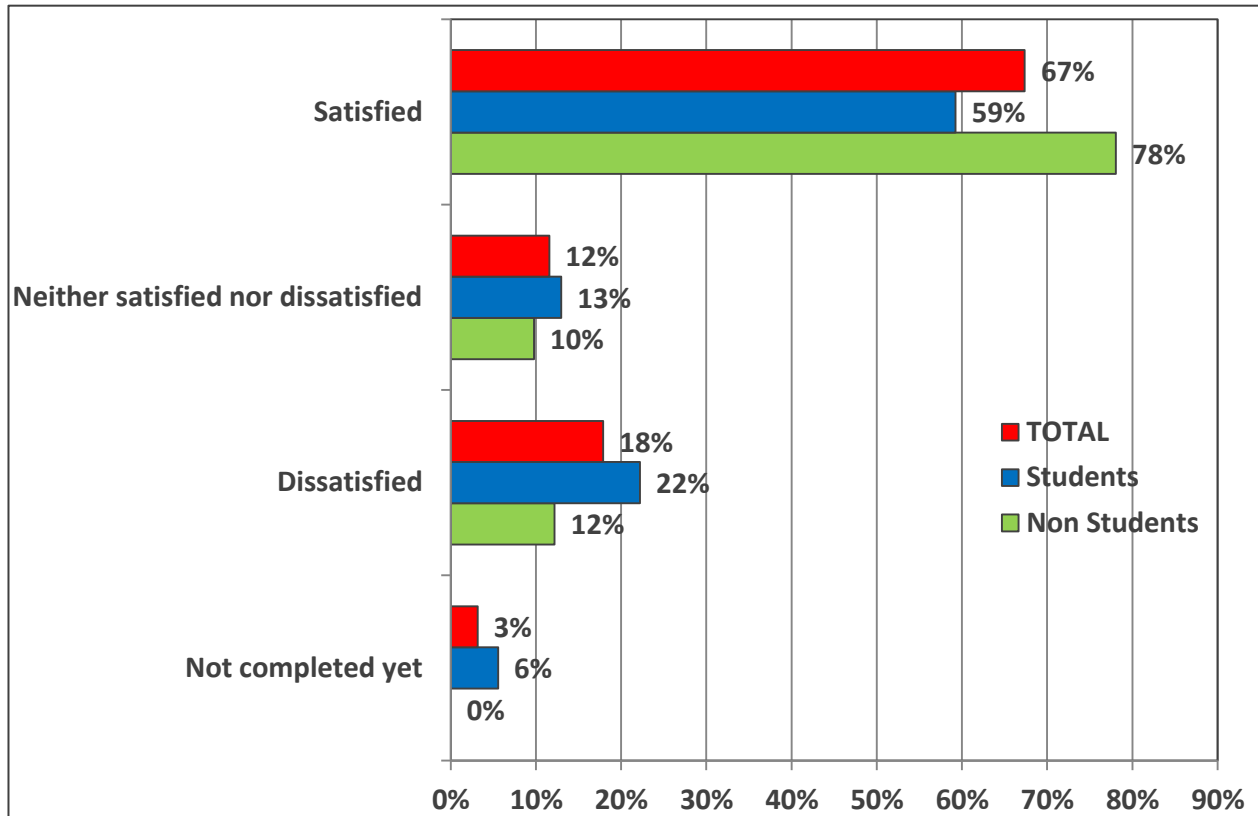
“My bed is a bit old but it’s ok. I’m not planning to be in this property forever so I’m not going to financially invest in buying new furniture here. My current bed does the trick for now.” (Non-student)

Despite the problems stated, the vast majority of all residents felt that the general conditions of their property was good (72%). There were no notable differences between students and non-students.



Satisfaction with how problems were solved was also generally high, with 67% stating that they were satisfied. There were substantial differences between the proportion of students and non-students who were satisfied (59% and 78% respectively). Furthermore, students were more likely to feel dissatisfied than non-students (22% and 12% respectively) as illustrated below in Figure 11.

Figure 11: Satisfaction with how problems were dealt with by landlords & letting agencies



Base: All Respondents who have reported repairs (95)

Q Ref: Q32

Source: mruk

Satisfaction with how problems were dealt with varied by length of residency, with those who had recently moved into the property in the last 6 months expressing the highest levels of satisfaction (86%). This compares to just over half of tenants who had lived in the property for between 6 to 12 months who were satisfied with how the problems were dealt with (54%).

Some 80% of letting agent tenants had reported repairs. This compared to only 55% of tenants in a private rent. Satisfaction that these problems were dealt with satisfactorily was significantly lower amongst tenants in properties let by an agent than private landlords (49% and 80% respectively).

Findings do not vary significantly by ethnic group. A slightly higher proportion of respondents aged 30-44 years were satisfied with how problems had been dealt with when compared to respondents aged between 14-24 years (86% and 63% respectively, although please treat results with caution due to the low base sizes).



8.2 Social issues and community impact

While the social aspect of HMOs was identified as an important benefit, residents in the discussions felt that this was very much dependent on the type of people they lived with. Some reported personality differences between flatmates being reasons for not socialising together as much as they would like. Others complained about messy or inconsiderate housemates making the environment less desirable.

“My housemate brings people back to the flat late and starts playing music really loudly when the rest of us are asleep.” (Non-student)

“My flatmates just make a mess. There is no point in saying anything anymore. I have just resolved in my mind that if I want to live in a clean place, I just need to clean it myself, or else nothing will get done.” (Non-student)

“We used to get on quite well when we first moved in. We would socialise together a lot. But as months have gone by, it has become clear that some of us in the house are very different. As a result, none of us tend to hang out together in the house anymore.” (Student)

“I’ve just picked the wrong type of people to live with – they’re just not my kind of people. They leave mess everywhere and don’t care about me trying to get to sleep at night.” (Student)

In particular, students complained about different lifestyles and study schedules being disruptive. Some students who were further into their academic studies had moved in to accommodation with non-students, as they felt that this was a more stable environment. Some more junior students were hoping to do the same in coming years. However, as previously mentioned, they were concerned about whether this would be possible as they generally viewed some landlords or residents as being reluctant to accept students. An alternative solution was seen as living with friends who they knew they got on with.

“I’m in my third year now and I live with non-students. I got lucky because I am a mature student so they took me in. This is really good for me. It’s a nice property and the people are professional, so I can really concentrate.” (Student)

“I’m here to study and I really don’t want to deal with people throwing parties all the time. I know I am only in my first year of university, but this environment really doesn’t appeal to me. I’m here to study. I really can’t wait to get out of here next year.” (Student)



“I think the people shape your experience of living in shared housing. Obviously the surroundings have to be clean and safe, but if you get on with the people you live with it makes it much better. I’m lucky because I have moved in with my friends. Though they are also students, we are all very similar and have similar lifestyles, both socially and in terms of our studies.” (Student)

Students in their first year of university tended to feel that who they lived with at this stage was generally down to luck and circumstances. Some expressed feeling almost desperate to move in to accommodation when they first arrived, with some only meeting their flatmates on the day. Some had used university websites that helped students find flatmates. As such, these students generally seemed more comfortable with moving as and when they needed to.

“I don’t get on with my housemates. But I moved here two weeks before my course started and I really needed to find somewhere to stay. This will do for now, but I will definitely find somewhere better for my second year.” (Student)

“I met my current flatmates on the day, having used student accommodation websites. I got lucky because we generally get on.” (Student)

8.3 Sharing facilities

Grievances around sharing facilities related to personal space and coordinating the use of household amenities. Residents were generally comfortable sharing with other people, but felt that spaces could sometimes get crowded if multiple people were using them (e.g. when cooking dinner). Most seemed to have a system for using facilities, in particular bathrooms, with people often having allocated time-slots. However problems did arise if some flatmates did not stick to their allocation or if they had guests.

There were also some concerns over a lack of privacy due to sharing common areas, but residents did feel confident that they had complete privacy in their own rooms. They did not feel housemates would unnecessarily intrude on them here. While these issues did sometimes cause inconvenience, they were generally seen as common problems faced by residents in HMOs and so were not major concerns.

“My flatmate is meant to go in the shower at 7:40 for 20 minutes. But sometimes if she has had a really busy day the day before, she will take 40 minutes, and that gets us all late.” (Student)

“It’s hard because sometimes I want to have guests over and cook dinner, but then everyone may be cooking at the same time. It just makes it hard to entertain.” (Non-student)

“Our kitchen and bathroom are so small that I really can’t keep much in there. I have to store all of my toiletries in my room. But I guess that is to be expected because there are so many of us.” (Non-student)



both physical and in terms of the social environments, but did not want to move unless they had to.

As a result, many seemed willing to accept the flaws of their current properties until they were in a position to move. Non-students appeared to be more concerned about this. This may be because they tend to be more settled in their lives and may not want the disruption of moving constantly; also students may be more inclined to want to remain living with their friends.

“We put up with our landlord because we know we’re not paying that much.” (Student)

“I tried to move out at one point but I’d have either had to find another person to move in or pay two rents or something.” (Student)

“I get on with most of my housemates. There are some that I don’t like, but I just put up with them. I like my place and I don’t really want to find anywhere else right now.” (Non-student)

8.5 Wider community issues

Residents were mostly living in areas with a mix of accommodation types, including both HMOs and residential houses. Overall, they did not identify any specific benefits of living in areas where there was only shared accommodation, nor did they express a desire to live in such an area. Furthermore, the diversity of properties was generally seen as an advantage. Students valued the fact that it made them feel as though they were living in a real-world environment; somewhat detached from student life.

The majority did not tend to socialise with neighbours who were also living in shared accommodation. In many cases they had never met their neighbours. This was mainly because residents felt that the profile of tenants could differ substantially due to their appeal to such a broad tenant audience and due to many tenants only residing at an address for a short period of time. Because of this perceived diversity, they did not necessarily believe that they were likely to have that much in common with their neighbours.

“I want to live in the real world. I don’t really want to be around other students all the time. I feel like I’m too mature for all of this and don’t want to live in some sort of student/ party environment.” (Student)

“There is a real mix of different types of people that live in other shared houses around us. I mean we are all so different in my own house and don’t all get on, so it’s unlikely that I would have lots in common with most of the other people.” (Student)



“There is a high-turnover of people in shared housing. People move every six months, so even if you wanted to, it would be hard to get to know them.” (Non-student)

“We tried to introduce ourselves to our neighbours but we don’t really know them. There isn’t much camaraderie where we live.” (Student)

However, while residents liked living in areas with different accommodation types, they felt that this did lead to some problems. They identified conflicts between residents in shared accommodation and other residents; some of which were due to incidents that had occurred and others due to general negative perceptions of those living in shared accommodation..

The most common incidents were around noise levels, with many residents having experienced complaints from neighbours about these. It was accepted that noise levels were sometimes higher in shared accommodation therefore respondents were not overly critical of neighbours who complained. There was a sense among all residents that students in shared accommodation were noisier. Some students were themselves frustrated by inconsiderate housemates who were the reason for complaints being made.

“There is one person in our house who is very inconsiderate and gets us a lot of complaints because of playing loud music. I feel bad for our neighbour and understand why she complains. I don’t think she has a prejudice towards students, but I can see why she or someone else might complain if people are inconsiderate like my flatmate.” (Student)

“I think student houses do tend to be noisier, but only because they have more opportunities to relax and party than the rest of us do.” (Non-student)

“I think we can be noisier than other houses if we are having gatherings. There are five of us that live here and if we all invite friends, there are likely to be a lot of people attending, so this can lead to louder parties.” (Non-student)

However, though many residents had experienced complaints from neighbours or had themselves complained about noise from other shared accommodation, they felt that some residents perceived the problem to be more pronounced than it actually was. Many thought this was due to an inherent stigma, with residents from other types of accommodation assuming that they were more likely to be disruptive.



“It depends. I don’t think it’s all student houses that are noisy. When I was living with students I found that our neighbours, who were a family, were noisier than us.” (Non-Student)

“I think people who own their houses stereotype us and think we will be noisy. I don’t think this is necessarily true though.” (Non-Student)

“I think there is a stigma attached to us and so people who own houses won’t make an effort. I think they think we are noisy and temporary, so won’t introduce themselves to us.” (Non-student)

Recycling and rubbish collection were also prominent issues. Having multiple people under one roof was seen to lead to more waste generation, and residents complained about having too few recycling and rubbish bins to address this.

Problems also related to storage of waste materials. Residents felt that, because recycling facilities were often stored in communal spaces, these areas could become messy because nobody took responsibility to their maintenance. Also, residents often tended to use or see others using bins belonging to other households if they ran out of space, which could lead to bins overflowing.

“I think these types of houses may accumulate more rubbish than others, so recycling and bins do become a problem. There are five of us and we all get take-aways a lot so the bins are constantly overflowing with food containers.” (Student)

“People often put their rubbish in other people’s bins because they don’t have space. This happened to us and the rubbish people didn’t take them because they were overfilled.” (Non-student)

“It gets really messy in the communal areas because you don’t know whose responsibility it is to take care of these. A few times I have just tidied up myself because, otherwise, it doesn’t get done.” (Non-student)

There were generally few issues with parking, but those problems that did occur related to parking permits. Most residents were not given allocated parking spots by their landlords and, as such, they tended to park far away in areas where permits were not required. While this was inconvenient, residents generally felt they were able to get a space without too much difficulty. However those who lived in areas not requiring permits were concerned about a permit system being implemented in future, and the impact this would have on residents.



“My property does not come with a parking space. I do not have a permit either so I park a bit further away, where you don’t need one.” (Student)

“Parking generally isn’t an issue. I always tend to find a space. But sometimes in the evenings I struggle, when everyone is back from work and I have to park quite far away.” (Non-student)

“Parking is fine for me right now as we don’t need permits. But I hear that they are thinking of introducing them, which would be really bad as I don’t know where I would park then.” (Non-student)



9. Conclusions & Recommendations

Residents felt that there were a sufficient number of HMOs available in Cambridge. However the suitability of properties was impacted by quality and resident type. Residents felt that many properties had poor physical condition and so they would not wish to live in them. They also felt that the selectivity of landlords meant that choice was limited (i.e. some only accepted students while others only accommodated non-students). Encouraging landlords to accept both students and non-students would broaden the range of accommodation options available to all residents, although may lead to other problems which would need to be considered (such as the implications this may have on Council tax exemptions).

Property management plays an important part in determining residents' satisfaction with living in HMOs. The vast majority were either renting through letting agents or private landlords. The benefits of letting agents were identified as professionalism and efficiency. Given that they were financially incentivised through fees paid by both residents and landlords, they were perceived to be more motivated to help. They were also thought to be able to offer greater support in the form of dedicated maintenance staff, which private landlords weren't able to offer. Students also felt that letting agents offered extra reassurance because private landlords were seen to neglect student properties. In contrast, private landlords were generally thought to be better at developing personal relationships with tenants. The fact that they requested no extra fees was also advantageous. Clearly there are currently perceived disparities between the ways in which both landlord types deal with their tenants, which the Council could investigate further.

Overall, irrespective of landlord type, satisfaction was dependent on responsiveness and ability to resolve problems. Residents complained that while landlords were often responsive, problems often took time to be resolved, with some never being addressed (at least, in the eyes of the tenant). Some, particularly non-students, said they often felt reluctant to report problems to private landlords too often because they did not want to burden them. They worried that doing so may strain relationships or even lead to landlords increasing rents to compensate for the cost of repairs. Those who felt they were not being provided with a high quality service by letting agents were particularly unhappy because of the costs associated with renting in this way. The Council may be able to help manage residents' expectations by supporting landlords to give the appropriate advice to tenants regarding issues that may arise.

Physical problems with properties were common grievances. Issues with plumbing and heating and dampness were commonly reported by all. Residents felt the physical condition not only impacted on how comfortable they felt in their homes, but also their health and safety. There was a general sense amongst students that their properties tended to be in worse physical condition than that of other tenant groups. Residents also cited waste storage and collection as an area for improvement. They felt their properties tended to generate more rubbish than non-HMOs, but that there were currently not any special provisions in place to help manage this.

Results also suggest that residents from white ethnic backgrounds were more likely to raise a repair problem with a landlord. This suggests that those from other ethnic backgrounds might be experiencing barriers to making doing this as experiences of all tenants seem relatively comparable in other ways. This might include language and cultural barriers which the Council might be able to assist in resolving.



The social environment also shaped residents' experiences. They highlighted the importance of finding the right housemates. Students who were early on in their academic studies tended to find it harder to find suitable housemates. Many were using websites that were dedicated to helping students find accommodation, but experiences of these were mixed. The Council may wish to look into this process to better understand how such websites operate and see if it would be possible to encourage website providers to improve this information (e.g. by providing centralised advice).

While rents were generally seen as high in the City, HMOs were identified as the most affordable forms of accommodation available. The Council should also recognise the many other benefits that HMOs offer to their tenants. Residents were able to identify specific benefits of HMOs that made them attractive forms of accommodation, beyond their cost-saving benefit. The social environment that HMOs offered was particularly important. Residents also felt that such accommodation removed burden that might be found if living elsewhere. For example, all financial responsibilities and household chores were shared between household members.

Residents were willing to move homes relatively frequently with few living at a particular address for longer than a year or two before moving to another. This is perhaps unsurprising given the number of factors that can influence their experiences and satisfaction levels.

Non-students were particularly concerned about their future housing prospects should they want to remain living in the City Centre. Financial barriers were the main concern and the Council may be able to help address such anxieties by giving residents further support such as by providing detailed information around accommodation options available or creating tenant forums to discuss this issue.



Appendix A – Questionnaire

Project number	12181M
Project name	Cambridge City Council
Questionnaire title	HMO Survey
Questionnaire type	Face-to-face
Questionnaire version	Final

Check type	Date	Checked by
Initial version check	17/01/2013	RC
Design QC check	22/01/2012	CM
Programming QC check	22/01/2013	CM
Trial run (for time & flow) of final client version	22/01/2013	DM
Check of final version to be sent to client	23/01/13	DM
Check of final client-approved, pre-field version	23/01/13	DM

NAME

JOB NUMBER

1	2	1	8	1	M
---	---	---	---	---	---

ADDRESS

INTERVIEWER
ID NUMBER

--	--	--	--

POSTCODE

TELEPHONE

Good morning/afternoon/evening. My name is _____ from **mruk** research limited. We have been asked by Cambridge City Council to carry out a survey to understand the issues around living in housing with multiple occupants. You have been selected at random for this survey, and I wonder if I could ask you some questions? It should take approximately 10 minutes depending upon your responses, and all the answers you give will be kept completely confidential. You will be entered into a prize draw for a chance to win a £50 high street gift voucher.

This interview has been conducted within the Code of Conduct of the Market Research Society.

INTERVIEWER SIGN

INTERVIEWER PRINT

DATE OF INTERVIEW



	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
JOB NUMBER	1	2	1	8	1	M
	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)		
INTERVIEWER ID NUMBER						
	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)		
START TIME						
	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)		
FINISH TIME						

This interview has been conducted within the Code of Conduct of the Market Research Society.

INTERVIEWER SIGN _____

INTERVIEWER PRINT _____

DATE OF INTERVIEW _____



SCREENING QUESTIONS

Q1	Is the property less than 3 storeys high?	(19)	ROUTE
	Yes	1	Q2
	No	2	THANK & CLOSE
Q2	Are the occupants unrelated to each other?	(20)	ROUTE
	Yes	1	Q3
	No	2	THANK & CLOSE
Q3	Does the owner/landlord live elsewhere?	(21)	ROUTE
	Yes	1	Q4
	No	2	THANK & CLOSE
Q4	Do you share facilities? By this we mean a kitchen, bathroom or toilets?	(22)	ROUTE
	Yes	1	Q5
	No	2	THANK & CLOSE
Q5	SHOWCARD 1: Which of the following best describes your working status?	(23) (24)	ROUTE

A	Employed full time (30 + hours per week)	0	1	Q6 ENSURE GOOD MIX OF STUDENTS & NON STUDENTS
B	Employed part time (10 to 29 hours per wk)	0	2	
C	Self employed, with employees	0	3	
D	Self employed, no employees	0	4	
E	On a government training scheme	0	5	
F	In full time education	0	6	
G	Unemployed and looking for work	0	7	
H	Permanently sick/disabled	0	8	
I	Retired	0	9	
J	Looking after the home	1	0	
K	Economically inactive for other reason	1	1	
L	Long term unemployed	1	2	
	Refused/ prefer not to say	1	3	



HOUSING MARKET

Q6	SHOWCARD 2: How long have you lived here?	(25)	ROUTE
	Less than 6 months	1	Q7
	6-12 months	2	
	13-23 months	3	
	24-35 months	4	
	3-4 years	5	
	5 years plus	6	
	Unsure	7	

Q7 Where did you moved from? Please write in Town or Postcode. If moved from abroad please write in Country **ROUTE**

WRITE IN TOWN: _____ (26) (27) Q8

(28) (29) (30) (31) (32) (33) (34)

WRITE IN POSTCODE

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

WRITE IN COUNTRY: _____ (35) (36)

Q8	SHOWCARD 2: How long do you expect to stay in this house?	(37)	ROUTE
	Less than 6 months	1	Q9
	6-12 months	2	
	13-23 months	3	
	24-35 months	4	
	3-4 years	5	
	5 years plus	6	
	Don't know	7	

Q9 What was the main reason for moving in here? SINGLE code only (38) **ROUTE**

To set up own home	1	Q10
Nearer job/ new job/place of study	2	
Nearer family/ friends	3	
Previous property unsuitable (ill health/ poor condition/ overcrowding etc)	4	
Couldn't afford rent/mortgage	5	
Relationship breakdown	6	



Eviction/ repossession	7
Other	8

Q10	Do you receive housing benefit?	(39)	ROUTE
	Yes	1	Q11
	No	2	

Q11	SHOWCARD 3: How much rent (including services charges) do you pay each month? Please choose one of the following bands	(40)	ROUTE
-----	---	------	--------------

A	Less than £350	1	Q12
B	£350-£399	2	
C	£400-£449	3	
D	£450-£499	4	
E	£500-£549	5	
F	£550 plus	6	
	Prefer not to say	7	

Q12	SHOWCARD 4: How much refundable deposit did you pay to your landlord/ agency? Please choose one of the following bands	(41)	ROUTE
-----	---	------	--------------

A	Less than £350	1	Q13
B	£350-£449	2	
C	£450-£549	3	
D	£550-£649	4	
E	£650-£749	5	
F	£750 plus	6	
	Prefer not to say	7	

Q13	In the past 12 months, have you paid any other fees such as an admin, credit check, tenancy sign-up, or renewal fee?	(42)	ROUTE
-----	--	------	--------------

	Yes	1	Q14
	No	2	Q15



Q14 **SHOWCARD 5:** How much in fees did you pay to your landlord/ agency over the past 12 months? Please choose one of the following bands

(43)

ROUTE

A	Under £50	1
B	£50-£99	2
C	£100-£149	3
D	£150-199	4
E	£299-£249	5
F	£250-£299	6
G	£300 plus	7
	Prefer not to say	8

Q15

Q15 If you had a choice would you live in a shared house?

(44)

ROUTE

Yes

1

Q16

No

2

Q16 What would you **like** your housing situation to be in three-five years? Prompt if necessary

(45)

ROUTE

Living in shared accommodation	1
Renting privately – self-contained property	2
Homeowner	3
Renting from a Council/ Housing Association	4
Shared ownership (i.e. where you own a percentage of the property but pay rent on the other part)	5
Other	6

Q17

Q17 What do you **expect** to be your housing situation in three-five years? Prompt if necessary

(46)

ROUTE

Living in shared accommodation	1
Renting privately – self-contained property	2
Homeowner	3
Renting from a Council/Housing Association	4
Shared ownership/equity share (i.e. where you own or pay a mortgage on a percentage of the property but pay rent on the rest)	5
Other	6

Q18



MANAGEMENT & CONDITIONS

Q18	SHOWCARD 6: Which of the following is your current landlord?	(47)	ROUTE
	Private landlord	1	Q19
	Commercial landlord	2	
	Letting agency	3	
	Family or friends	4	
	Other	5	
	Don't know	6	
Q19	Do you know who manages the property?	(48)	ROUTE
	Yes	1	Q20
	No	2	
Q20	Do you know who to complain to if problems arise?	(49)	ROUTE
	Yes	1	Q21
	No	2	
Q21	Do you have basic written information on rights and responsibilities? (e.g. a management pack, tenancy agreement, on rent book etc).	(50)	ROUTE
	Yes	1	Q22
	No	2	
	Don't know	3	
Q22	Have you been given a receipt for your deposit from one of the Deposit Protection schemes?	(51)	ROUTE
	Yes	1	Q23
	No	2	
	Don't know	3	
Q23	How many rooms in the building are used as bedrooms?	(52)	ROUTE
	One	1	Q24
	Two	2	
	Three	3	
	Four	4	
	Five or more	5	
	Don't know	6	



Q24	How many occupants live in the building?	(53)	ROUTE
	One	1	Q25
	Two	2	
	Three	3	
	Four	4	
	Five or more	5	
	Don't know	6	
Q25	Does the property have a fire alarm system that works?	(54)	ROUTE
	Yes it works	1	Q26
	No it doesn't work	2	
	Don't know if it works	3	
	Doesn't have a fire alarm system	4	
	Don't know if we have one	5	
Q26	Does the property have a current gas safety certificate issued in the last 12 months?	(55)	ROUTE
	Yes	1	Q27
	No	2	
	Don't know	3	
	No gas supply	4	
Q27	What type of heating does the property have?	(56)	ROUTE
	Gas central heating	1	Q28
	Electric (including storage heaters)	2	
	Oil	3	
	Solid fuel (for example wood, coal)	4	
	Other central heating	5	
	No central heating	6	
Q28	Have you had any problems with damp or mould in the building?	(57)	ROUTE
	Yes	1	Q29
	No	2	
	Don't know	3	



Q29	Have you had any other repair problems in the building?	(58)	ROUTE
	Yes	1	Q30
	No	2	Q31
	Don't know	3	
<hr/>			
Q30	What type of problems have you had? MULTICODE		ROUTE
	Plumbing/ heating	1 (59)	Q31
	Drainage	1 (60)	
	Electrical fault	1 (61)	
	Gutters/ roofs	1 (62)	
	Doors/ windows	1 (63)	
	Trip hazards	1 (64)	
	Faulty white goods (cooker/ fridge etc)	1 (65)	
	Pest infestation	1 (66)	
	Other	1 (67)	
<hr/>			
Q31	Have you, or anyone else in the building, reported repairs to your landlord/ managing agent in the last year?	(68)	ROUTE
	Yes	1	Q32
	No	2	Q33
	Don't know	3	
<hr/>			
Q32	SHOWCARD 7: Have these problems been dealt with satisfactorily?	(69)	ROUTE
	Satisfied	1	Q33
	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	2	
	Dissatisfied	3	
<hr/>			
Q33	How many vehicles are owned by occupants in this property?	(70)	ROUTE
	None	1	Q34
	One	2	
	Two	3	
	Three	4	
	Four or more	5	
	Don't know	6	



Q34	Do you have enough bins for waste and recycling?	(71)	ROUTE
	Yes	1	Q35
	No	2	
Q35	SHOWCARD 8: How would you rate the general condition of the property?	(72)	ROUTE
	Good	1	Q36
	Neither good nor poor	2	
	Poor	3	
Q36	SHOWCARD 7: How satisfied are you with how the property is managed?	(73)	ROUTE
	Satisfied	1	Q37
	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	2	
	Dissatisfied	3	
Q37	Do you have any further comments?		ROUTE
	_____	(74)	(75)
	_____	(76)	(77)
	_____	(78)	(79)
	No	9	9
			Q38

GENERAL PROFILE

Q38	Interviewer to code gender	(80)	ROUTE
	Male	1	Q39
	Female	2	



Q39	SHOWCARD 9: Which of the following age bands do you fall into?	(81)	ROUTE
	16-24	1	Q40
	25-29	2	
	30-44	3	
	45-59	4	
	60-69	5	
	70-79	6	
	80-84	7	
	85+	8	
	Refused	9	

Q40	Do you have any long-term illness, health problem or disability which limits your daily activities or the work you can do?	(82)	ROUTE
	Yes	1	Q41
	No	2	

Q41 **SHOW CARD 10:** How would you describe your ethnic group? (83) (84) **ROUTE**

WHITE	British	0	1	Q42
	Irish	0	2	
	Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0	3	
	Any other White background	0	4	
MIXED	White & Black Caribbean	0	5	
	White & Black African	0	6	
	White & Asian	0	7	
	Any other mixed background	0	8	
ASIAN OR ASIAN BRITISH	Indian	0	9	
	Chinese	1	0	
	Pakistani	1	1	
	Bangladeshi	1	2	
	Any other Asian background	1	3	
BLACK OR BLACK BRITISH	Caribbean	1	4	
	African	1	5	
	Any other Black background	1	6	
OTHER ETHNIC GROUP	Arab	1	7	
	Other	1	8	
Refused		1	9	



Q42	Interviewer to code area	(85)	ROUTE
	Romsey	1	Q43
	Petersfield	2	
	Coleridge	3	
	Elsewhere	4	
Q43	Thank you for sparing the time to help us with this study. Would you like to be entered into the prize draw for a chance to win £50? You will need to provide contact details which will be passed to the Council, however please note your answers will be kept completely confidential.	(86)	ROUTE
	Yes	1	Q45 & SIGN DECLARATION 1
	No	2	Q44
Q44	We are also conducting some further discussions as part of this research in early March. Residents will be given an incentive for participating. Would you be interested in getting involved with this?	(87)	ROUTE
	Yes	1	SIGN DECLARATION 2
	No	2	THANK & CLOSE

IF RESPONDENT WOULD LIKE TO ENTER THE PRIZE DRAW PLEASE COMPLETE CONTACT DETAILS AND SIGN DECLARATION 1.

IF RESPONDENT WOULD LIKE TO PARTICIPATE IN FURTHER DISCUSSIONS PLEASE COMPLETE CONTACT DETAILS AND SIGN DECLARATION 2.

TITLE: **INITIALS:** **SURNAME:**

ADDRESS:

POSTCODE:

TELEPHONE: Home
Mobile



EMAIL ADDRESS:

DECLARATION 1

I agree that **mrुक** may pass on my name, address and phone number to Cambridge City Council as I would like to be entered into the prize draw.

SIGNED:

DATE:

DECLARATION 2

I agree that **mrुक** may contact me as I am interested in participating in further discussions for Cambridge City Council in March.

SIGNED:

DATE:

THANK RESPONDENT & CLOSE



Appendix B – Focus Group Discussion Guide

CHECK TYPE	INITIAL VERSION CHECK	CHECK OF FINAL VERSION TO BE SENT TO CLIENT
DATE	13/03/2013	14/03/13
CHECKED BY	SH & DM	RC

Section 1 – Introduction and Warm-up (5 minutes)	
Setting the scene / ground-rules	<p>Good afternoon/evening, my name is _____ from mruk, an independent market research company. We are working on behalf of Cambridge City Council, to find out about residents' experiences of living in Houses in Multiple Accommodation.</p> <p>The discussion will last around an hour and we would like input from everyone in the group. It's important to note that there are no right or wrong answers, we simply want to hear your views.</p> <p>I will be recording the discussion, this is simply to help me write up my notes later on. We are bound by the Data Protection Act and the Market Research Society Code of Conduct, which means that everything we discuss tonight will be treated completely confidentially and anything you say will not be attributed to you personally.</p>
Round the table introduction	<p>Going round the table – please can you tell me your name and how long you've been living in Cambridge, as well as how long you have lived in shared accommodation?</p>
Section 2 – Motivations for living in HMOs (15 minutes)	
Current motivations	<p>What are your main reasons for living in shared accommodation? Please probe on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Convenience of location ▪ Lack of other options ▪ Cost effectiveness ▪ Other
Aspirations for the future	<p>How long do you envisage staying where you live? In the future, do you envisage yourself living in shared accommodation? Why / Why not?</p> <p>Probe to understand whether this is impacted by life-stage and whether this is an intermediary step between moving out of their family home and finding their own property.</p> <p>If you plan to move in future, where would you ideally like to move to next? Probe for type of housing and location, and reasons for this.</p> <p>Are there any barriers to achieving this?</p>



Section 3 – Satisfaction with living in HMOs (15 minutes)

Benefits	<p>What do you perceive to be the main benefits of living in shared accommodation? <i>Write up on flip chart</i></p> <p>Probe on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Probe on financial savings ▪ Social value ▪ Other <p><i>Once all benefits have been discussed rank the top 3 or 5 preferences on flip chart</i></p>
Drawbacks	<p>What do you perceive to be the main drawbacks of living in shared accommodation? <i>Write up on flip chart</i></p> <p>Probe on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ costs of renting ▪ Personal space ▪ Quality of accommodation (probe on aspects referring to) <p><i>Once all drawbacks have been discussed rank the top 3 or 5 on flip chart</i></p>

Section 4 – HMOs in Cambridge (20 minutes)

Prioritising services	<p>I would now like to ask you about what you think about the provision of shared accommodation in Cambridge:</p> <p>Probe on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The number of properties ▪ Convenience of locations ▪ What type of people do you think live in them (i.e. students, young professionals, migrants etc) ▪ How affordable is this type of accommodation? ▪ Affordability compared to other areas in the UK (if known) ▪ Affordability compared to other accommodation options in Cambridge
Personal experiences	<p><i>Moderator, in this section probe to understand differences between those searching independently and those through letting agents.</i></p> <p>How easy or difficult was finding a suitable property?</p> <p>Once you found a property, how easy or difficult was the process of moving in?</p> <p>Do you often experience problems that require you to call management to solve these? If so who do you call?</p> <p>Generally, how easy do you find this process?</p> <p>What, if any, are the main challenges associated with this?</p> <p>How comfortable do you feel raising grievances?</p> <p>How responsive do you feel management are?</p> <p>Have you ever experienced any coordination challenges between</p>



	housemates? If so please can you give me an example?
Perceptions and problems	<p>What are the main problems you face with living in shared accommodation? How do you overcome these issues? What is your perception of the physical condition of your home? Probe on: Repairs Safety standards</p>
Wider community issues	<p><i>If not already mentioned...</i> I would now like you to have a think about any potential issues which HMOs can raise in relation to the wider community. Have you ever had any issues with the wider community? Probe for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Parking issues ▪ Has recycling been a problem ▪ Complaints from neighbours <p>Have you had any issues with other people in your building, or people living in other HMOs in your area? (Probe as above)</p> <p>If you have experienced any of these issues would you mind telling us a little bit about what happened? How have the issues you have experience been dealt with?</p>
Section 5 – Wrap-Up (5 minutes)	
Anything else	That is all I wanted to go through with you today, is there anything else that you would like to discuss on this topic that we didn't mention?
Close	Thank and close