Research findings:

Experiences of those aged 50+ in the private rented sector

YouGov Omnibus Poll March 2018
Key Points

- Both the number and proportion of people aged 50+ living in the private rented sector has reached a record high in recent times, at 1.13m in 2015/16\(^i\) (compared to 651,000 in 2008/9\(^i\)).

- Amongst those paying rent or a mortgage, private renters (44%) are the most likely to have borrowed money or cut back on spending in the last 12 months in order to meet their payments. Seventeen per cent of private renters have cut down on food and or heating.

- Renters are less likely to have savings and investments for retirement- just under a third (31%) of those who rent from a private landlord have no savings or investments for retirement.

- Just under half (46%) of those aged 50+ across all tenures said they did not have all the adaptations they needed to be as independent as they would like. More than half (54%) of those who do not have all the adaptations they need have fallen or are afraid of falling inside or around their home, while the majority of those who need adaptations (59%) have been living without them for more than a year.

- Only 58% of private rented sector households who have moved in the last three years wanted to. A quarter (25%) of those aged 50+ who had moved had been asked to leave by their landlord.
1. Background

The number of people aged 50+ living in the private rented sector has reached a record high in recent times, at 1.13m in 2015/16\textsuperscript{iii} (compared to 651,000 in 2008/9)\textsuperscript{iv}. This equates to nine per cent of the population aged 50 and over (compared to 6 per cent in 2008/9). While the vast majority of those aged 50+ own their own home, the growing number and proportion of those living in the private rented sector, with insecure tenancies, rising rents and no asset wealth\textsuperscript{v}, is often hidden.

Figure 1

To explore this issue further, the National Housing Federation commissioned YouGov to run 10 questions as part of their daily Great Britain Omnibus\textsuperscript{vi}. The questions ran on four consecutive polls between the 27 March and the 3 April to achieve a sample of 3936 adults aged 50+ in England. Findings in this briefing are reported for England only.
The questions were designed to help understand:

- The types of income and savings people aged 50+ living in all tenures have for retirement
- The financial choices and sacrifices people make to pay their rent or mortgage
- The suitability of homes across all tenures for those aged 50+
- Waiting times for adaptations and the impact of not having necessary adaptations on independence and quality of life

This briefing also draws on evidence from the English Housing Survey.

2. Findings

Current income and rent payments

Figure 2

Which, if any, of the following BEST describes the type of income you/you and your partner currently receive?

- A salary from employment or self-employment
- Benefits
- A state pension
- A private pension
- Rental income from family or friends living in my home
- Income from other investments (e.g. stocks, shares, rent you may receive from any properties you do not live in etc.)
- Other
- Don’t know
As part of the poll, those aged 50+ were asked about the type of income they currently receive. Figure one shows how types of income vary by tenure. In addition to asset wealth, those who own their home outright are significantly more likely to have income from a private pension (63%) and from investments (21%) than those who rent in any tenure. This is also true post retirement age (65+) and amongst those aged 50+ and retired.

Figure 3

% of those aged 65+ still in employment by tenure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tenure</th>
<th>% of 65+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Own – outright</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Own – with a mortgage</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent – from a private landlord</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent – from my local authority</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent – from a housing association</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Past retirement age, owner occupiers with a mortgage (26%) and private renters (21%) are more likely to still be in employment than outright owners (12%), those who rent from a local authority (10%) and those who rent from a housing association (10%).
Those who own their home outright also have greater amounts saved than those living in other tenures, with half (50%) having savings of £10,000 or more and a fifth (19%) having savings of £100,000 or more. In terms of savings, private renters are only marginally better off than social renters, with 17% having savings of £10,000 or more, compared to 10% who rent from a local authority and 14% who rent from a housing association.
Figure 5

Thinking about the last 12 months (i.e. since March 2017)... Which, if any, of the following have you done in order to pay your rent or mortgage?

- Not applicable - I have not done anything in particular to pay my rent or mortgage: 67%
- Cut down on other spending: 19%
- Cut down on food and/or heating: 13%
- Used savings: 11%
- Cut down on seeing family and friends: 8%
- Used credit cards or an overdraft: 8%
- Sold things I owned: 7%
- Borrowed money from a family member (excluding from children): 4%
- Taken out a loan or mortgage from a bank or other lender: 2%
- Borrowed money from friends: 2%
- Borrowed money from my children: 2%
- Cut down on paid help with shopping, laundry and/or cleaning: 1%
- Cut down on paid help with washing, dressing and/or preparing meals: 1%
- Don’t know/can’t recall: 1%
- Other: 2%

% of 50+s who pay rent or mortgage

0% 20% 40% 60% 80%

Figure 6

Thinking about the last 12 months (i.e. since March 2017)... Which, if any, of the following have you done in order to pay your rent or mortgage? Private rented sector

- Not applicable - I have not done anything in particular to pay my rent or mortgage: 55%
- Cut down on other spending: 28%
- Used savings: 18%
- Cut down on food and/or heating: 17%
- Cut down on seeing family and friends: 13%
- Sold things I owned: 10%
- Used credit cards or an overdraft: 10%
- Borrowed money from a family member (excluding from children): 7%
- Borrowed money from friends: 4%
- Borrowed money from my children: 3%
- Taken out a loan or mortgage from a bank or other lender: 2%
- Cut down on paid help with shopping, laundry and/or cleaning: 2%
- Cut down on paid help with washing, dressing and/or preparing meals: 1%
- Don’t know/can’t recall: 1%
- Other: 2%

% of 50+s who rent from a private landlord

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60%
While the majority (67%) of those aged 50+ have not had to borrow money or adjust their spending to meet their rent or mortgage payments in the last 12 months, nearly a third (32%) have had to either cut back or borrow to cover their housing costs. Amongst those paying rent or a mortgage, private renters (44%) are the most likely to have borrowed money or cut back on spending in order to meet their payments. This compares to around a third of social tenants (31% of housing association tenants and 32% of local authority tenants). Seventeen per cent of private renters have cut down on food and or heating to meet their payments, compared to 13% of all those with rent and mortgage payments. Twelve per cent of private renters have borrowed money from friends or family, compared to six per cent of those with rent and mortgage payments.

**Savings for retirement**

**Figure 7**

Which, if any, of the following types of savings or investments do you/you and your partner have in place to support you during your retirement?

- Savings
- Premium bond investments
- Investments (including property)
- An employer, private or state pension scheme
- Other
- Don’t know
- Not applicable - I do not plan to retire
- Not applicable - I/ me and my partner do not have any savings or investments to support retirement

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Contact name: Rebecca Harpley  
Job title: Research Analyst  
Direct line: 020 7067 1033  
Email: rebecca.harpley@housing.org.uk

Lion Court  
25 Procter Street  
London WC1V 6NY  
info@housing.org.uk

www.housing.org.uk
Just under a sixth (15%) of those aged 50 and over said they had no savings or investments to support retirement, rising to nearly half of local authority tenants (49%) and two fifths (42%) of housing association tenants. Just under a third (31%) of those who rent from a private landlord have no savings or investments for retirement.

A secure income for retirement is particularly important for tenants in the private rented sector to be able to pay rising market rents. Between 2011 and 2017 the average private rent rose by 21% in England, to £852 per month.\textsuperscript{vii}
Suitability of homes

Figure 9

Do you currently have all the adaptations in your home that allow you to be as independent as you like?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>% of 50+s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes, I do</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, I don't</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 10

Previously you said you don’t have all the adaptations in your home that allows you to be as independent as you like. Which, if any, of the following are reasons for this?

- I would need to pay for the adaptations myself and they would cost too much money: 37%
- I have only recently needed adaptations: 21%
- I do not know who to contact about making adaptations: 20%
- I am waiting for the adaptations to be made: 9%
- I am awaiting an assessment or decision from the council on funding: 6%
- I have not asked my landlord if the adaptations can be made: 5%
- I have decided I do not want to make the adaptations: 4%
- I have asked the landlord and they will not allow the adaptations: 3%
- I do not know who to contact about making adaptations: 37%
- I have only recently needed adaptations: 21%
- I do not know who to contact about making adaptations: 20%
- I am waiting for the adaptations to be made: 9%
- I am awaiting an assessment or decision from the council on funding: 6%
- I have not asked my landlord if the adaptations can be made: 5%
- I have decided I do not want to make the adaptations: 4%
- I have asked the landlord and they will not allow the adaptations: 3%

% of 50+s who do not have all the adaptations they need

Contact name: Rebecca Harpley
Job title: Research Analyst
Direct line: 020 7067 1033
Email: rebecca.harpley@housing.org.uk

Lion Court
25 Procter Street
London WC1V 6NY
info@housing.org.uk

www.housing.org.uk
Figure 11

Thinking about the consequences of not having all the adaptations you need in your home to be as independent as you like... Which, if any, of the following currently applies to you?

- I leave my home less often than I would like to
- I have fallen over inside or around my home
- I am afraid of falling inside my home
- I see my family and friends less often
- I wash less often than I would like to
- I am unable to get upstairs independently
- I am unable to wash independently
- I am unable to get in and out of my home independently
- I am restricted to using certain rooms in my home
- I leave my bed less often than I would like to
- I am unable to use the toilet independently
- I prefer not to say
- Not applicable - there are no consequences in particular that...
- Don’t know
- Other

% of 50+s who do not have all the adaptations they need
Adaptations - such as handrails, stair lifts, ramps and accessible doorways - support people with disabilities and long-term health conditions to remain independent in their own homes. While adaptations are needed across all tenures, the English Housing Survey has shown that homes in the private rented sector are more difficult to adapt than housing association and local authority homes because of the age of the housing stock viii. The same analysis of the English Housing Survey also showed that private renters of any age with a long-term limiting disability were the most likely to feel that their accommodation was unsuitable for their needs (32%), compared to 22% of housing association tenants and 23% of local authority tenants.

As part of the poll, those aged 50+ were asked if they needed adaptations to their home. They were also asked about the impact that not having necessary adaptations had on their day to day life. Just under half (46%) of those aged 50+ across all tenures said they did not have all the adaptations they needed to be as independent as they would like. More than half (54%) of those who do not have all the adaptations they need have fallen or are afraid of falling inside or around their home, while the majority of those who need adaptations (59%) have been living without them for more than a year.

**Length of tenancies for private renters**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length of Tenancy</th>
<th>% of 50+s who need adaptations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to 3 months</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 3 months but up to 6 months</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 6 months but up to 12 months</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 12 months but up to 18 months</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 18 months</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know/can’t recall</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Figure 12**

Approximately how long have you been living without all the adaptations you need?
The majority of 50+ households (63%) in the private rented sector have short term tenancies known as assured shorthold tenancies. While churn is higher in the private rented sector than other tenures, 50+ households are much more likely to have lived in their home for more than five years than younger renters - 51% of 50+ households have lived in their home for more than five years, compared to 18% of under 50s. Of those who have moved in the last 3 years, those aged 50+ were also less likely to have wanted to move (58% compared to 75% of under 50s). Correspondingly, a quarter (25%) of those aged 50+ who had moved had been asked to leave by their landlord, compared to nine per cent of under 50s.
Notes and references

i National Housing Federation analysis of data from the English Housing Survey 2015-16.


iii National Housing Federation analysis of data from the English Housing Survey 2015-16.


v See also the National Housing Federation’s report on demographic change and housing wealth available here: https://www.housing.org.uk/resource-library/browse/demographic-change-and-housing-wealth/

vi The National Housing Federation commissioned a number of questions on the YouGov Plc. Omnibus Poll.

All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 9,050 adults, of which, 3,936 were adults aged 50 and over who live in England. Fieldwork was undertaken between 27th March - 3rd April 2018. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 18+).

