


March 2023

Amber Valley Borough Council &
Derbyshire Dales District Council
**Private Rented Sector
Research – Final Report**



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1. Executive summary

- 1.1. Altair Consultancy and Advisory Services Ltd (“Altair”) was commissioned by Derbyshire Dales District Council (“DDDC”) and Amber Valley Borough Council (“AVBC”) (together “the Councils”) to design and undertake research on the private rental sector (“PRS”) in their respective local authority areas.
- 1.2. Both DDDC and AVBC are seeking to understand how they can better understand the PRS across the region, and what role they can play in contributing to the improvement of the PRS for tenants, landlords and homeless prevention services.
- 1.3. Both DDDC and AVBC are currently taking a holistic approach to the PRS and are aware of the challenges of the sector and the importance of raising standards in light of the issues facing both tenants and landlords.
- 1.4. Altair undertook a resident survey, a landlord survey, resident focus groups, resident interviews and stakeholder interviews to form the research base for the Options Appraisal Workshop.
- 1.5. The research identified three areas within the PRS that have a significant impact on tenants. The three areas are:
 - Property condition – with 26.7% of tenants living in non-decent homes in DDDC and 28.5% of tenants living in non-decent homes in AVBC.
 - Security of tenure – 53% of tenants responding to the survey said that they were concerned about security of tenure.
 - Affordability of accommodation – 43% of tenants responding to the survey identified that their current rent is unaffordable and 70% identified that they could not afford their rent if it was increased.
- 1.6. In January 2023, Altair conducted an Options Appraisal Workshop with representatives from both councils. Altair provided a series of 15 options for the councils to consider, with both authorities making an assessment of the options after the workshop of the suitability, feasibility and acceptability (“SFA”) of each option. Some of the options discussed at the workshop were already being delivered by one or both authorities and the options workshop was seen as an opportunity to refresh existing approaches and to consider potential new areas of activity.
- 1.7. Based on the SFA scores and discussions from the workshop, the following options were rated most highly (scoring more than ten out of a possible 15) by both authorities:
 - Advice and Information.
 - Multi-Agency Working.
 - DASH and DLC Services.
 - Ethical Lettings Agency.
 - Inspections.
- 1.8. The following options were graded highly by DDDC (more than ten out of a possible 15) with AVBC grading them lower (less than ten out of a possible 15):
 - Advertising PRS Properties on Home Options.
 - Council to Provide PRS Accommodation.
 - Council Accreditation Scheme.

1.9. The following option was graded highly by AVBC (more than ten out of a possible 15) with DDDC grading it lower (less than ten out of a possible 15):

- Evidence Database.

1.10. Altair has made six recommendations for both councils, one recommendation for AVBC and one recommendation for DDDC. Our recommendations are formed on the issues identified within the research in relation to affordability, security of tenure and home condition, our knowledge of the PRS sector across both council areas and our understanding of best practice for Local Authority interventions for the PRS.

Summary of recommendations:

No.	Recommendation	AVDC	DDDC
1	Advice and information	✓	✓
2	Proactive inspections	✓	✓
3	Ethical lettings agency	✓	✓
4	Multi-agency working	✓	✓
6	Full assessment of DASH, DLC and in house council accreditation schemes	✓	✓
7	Dedicated complaints service for PRS tenants	✓	
8	Exploration of the delivery of PRS accommodation		✓

2. Introduction and approach

2.1. About this project

- 2.1.1. Altair was commissioned by DDDC and AVBC to design and undertake research on the PRS in their respective local authority areas.
- 2.1.2. DDDC and AVBC are seeking to address issues of quality, price and management that are contributing to homelessness and unsuitable housing for households. Whilst the local authorities have some data, there is limited knowledge about the extent and nature of the PRS across DDDC and AVBC.
- 2.1.3. DDDC and AVBC are, therefore, looking to develop a sound research base and to develop an approach for engaging with the PRS across their local authority areas and develop new or updated PRS strategies.
- 2.1.4. The intended outcomes of the research are to understand and engage with the sector, to seek to improve the quality of accommodation, develop good management practices, and reduce the levels of homelessness coming from the sector.

2.2. Approach

- 2.2.1. Altair's research involved a mixed research approach including the following primary and secondary research methods:
 - **Policy review:** Altair issued a documentation and information request, which included relevant datasets held by DDDC and AVBC, research undertaken previously, and relevant policies and strategies. The review of the provided documentation was further supplemented with a desktop review of key data sources.
 - **Desktop research and data analysis:** Initial data analysis was conducted to present an overview of the PRS in DDDC and AVBC. This included information (as available) on key players, private renter demographic data, landlord types, size of sector, stock type, and affordability. Further desktop research was undertaken in January, following the anticipated release of latest census data.
 - **Resident online survey:** As part of the data collection and desktop analysis, Altair issued an online tenant survey to hear from those currently living in private rented homes about their experiences of living in this type of accommodation and their aspirations for the future. The purpose of the survey was to obtain the views and feedback of residents. We received 173 responses, split by 51% in Derbyshire Dales and 49% in Amber Valley.
 - **Landlord online survey:** We also issued an online survey for PRS landlords to understand their experience of providing private rented accommodation and their plans for the future. The survey was designed to mirror the questions and themes asked within the tenant survey to compare the perspectives of landlords and tenants on the issues. We received 17 individual responses which covered c.20 properties across each of the authorities. It should be acknowledged that, given the small sample of respondents, the results could not be validated to reflect the regional sector as a whole, however the views from landlords aligned with the findings obtained from the other phases of this research.
 - **Focus groups and interviews:** The surveys were followed by a tenant focus group focussed on getting input from tenants in the PRS. The first focus group session was attended by 14 residents and the by 7 residents. Additionally, we adapted our approach to conduct tenant interviews due to poor attendance and

limited tenant engagement during the second focus group session. In total, 8 resident interviews were held, all of whom were from the Derbyshire Dales local authority area. The interviews and focus groups primarily focused on the 'as-is' state, including what works well, what challenges there are, the emerging themes and served as an opportunity to discuss potential solutions.

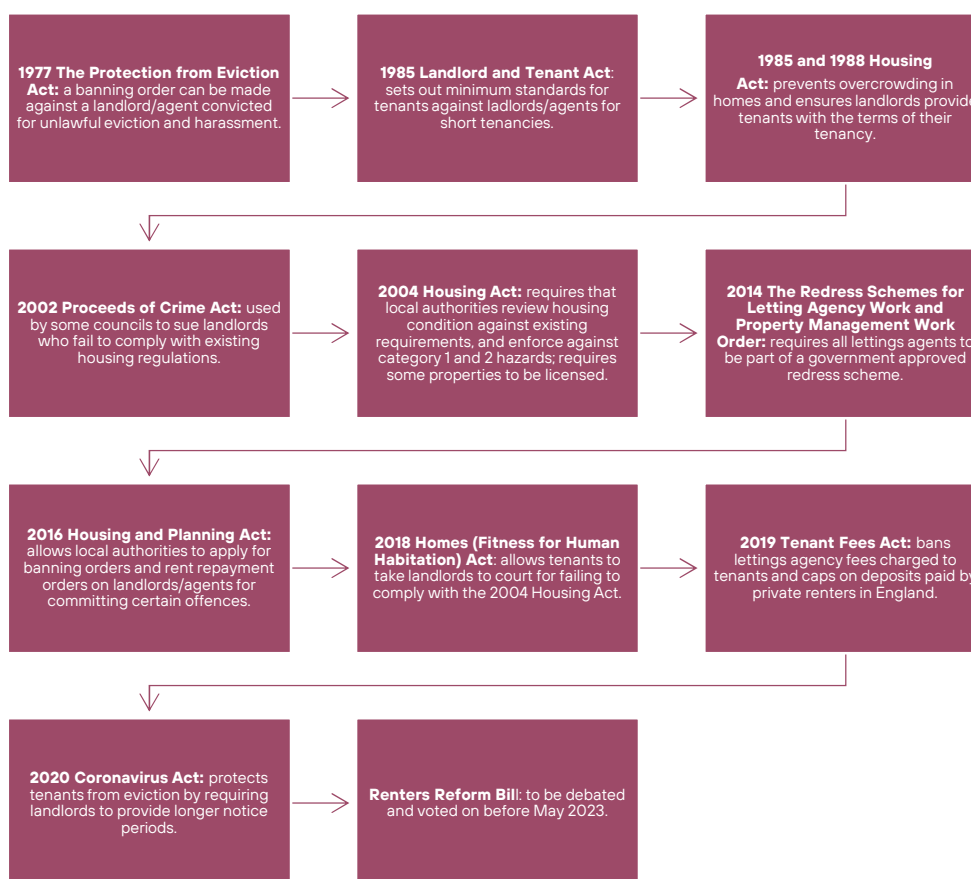
- **Stakeholder interviews:** In parallel to the online surveys and focus groups, a stakeholder map was formulated, identifying key stakeholder groups for engagement. Altair undertook 7 interviews with key stakeholders put forward by DDDC and AVBC, gathering various views on PRS across the two local authority regions. These stakeholders included council officers, resident representative groups and local charities. The full list of stakeholders interviewed is in Appendix 2.
- **Interim report:** Having completed the focus groups, interviews and surveys, Altair issued an interim report to the project steering group highlighting the initial findings of the emerging themes ahead of the options workshop.
- **Options appraisal:** Drawing from relevant literature and research, we developed a set of potential interventions that the Councils could implement to address and improve the issues identified within their PRS. We then undertook a desktop review of other local authorities of a similar size and context to DDDC and AVBC to understand other approaches taken to deal with the challenges identified, and the successes and failures of these approaches. These options were then tested with key stakeholders from DDDD and AVBC in an interactive workshop. Using our Suitability, Feasibility and Acceptability ("SFA") options analysis framework, the stakeholders identified the preferred interventions which has informed the recommendations within this final report. The workshop was designed to allow discussion between the stakeholders attending on the SFA scorings of each option, the strengths and weaknesses of the options and any relevant considerations for the Councils in relation to implementation.
- **Final report:** Based on the feedback given from the interim report and workshop, this final report has been drafted to present the recommended options to both Councils.

2.2.2. In total, 202 residents, 17 landlords and 14 stakeholders (including stakeholder interviewees and options appraisal workshop attendees) participated in this research.

3. National picture

3.1. Current PRS approach

- 3.1.1. 5 million households privately rent across England and Wales¹. In the main, PRS accommodation is provided to households with an Assured Shorthold Tenancy, set by a fixed term of between six months and two years.
- 3.1.2. According to the National Census 2021, there is an increase in the proportion of households that rented their accommodation, from 34.3% (8.0 million) in 2011, to 37.3% (9.3 million) in 2021. Of these 20.3% (5.0 million) rented their accommodation privately, which is an increase from 16.7% (3.9 million) in 2011.
- 3.1.3. The Homelessness Reduction Act (2017) has outlined that those awarded a prevention duty can have that duty discharged if the applicant has suitable accommodation available for at least six months. The result of the legislative change in 2017 means that those awarded a duty could be discharged into the PRS on an assured shorthold tenancy.
- 3.1.4. Key legislative changes to protect tenants' rights:



¹Office of National Statistics, 2022, [Housing, England and Wales: Census 2021](#)

3.2. Overarching policy changes for the PRS

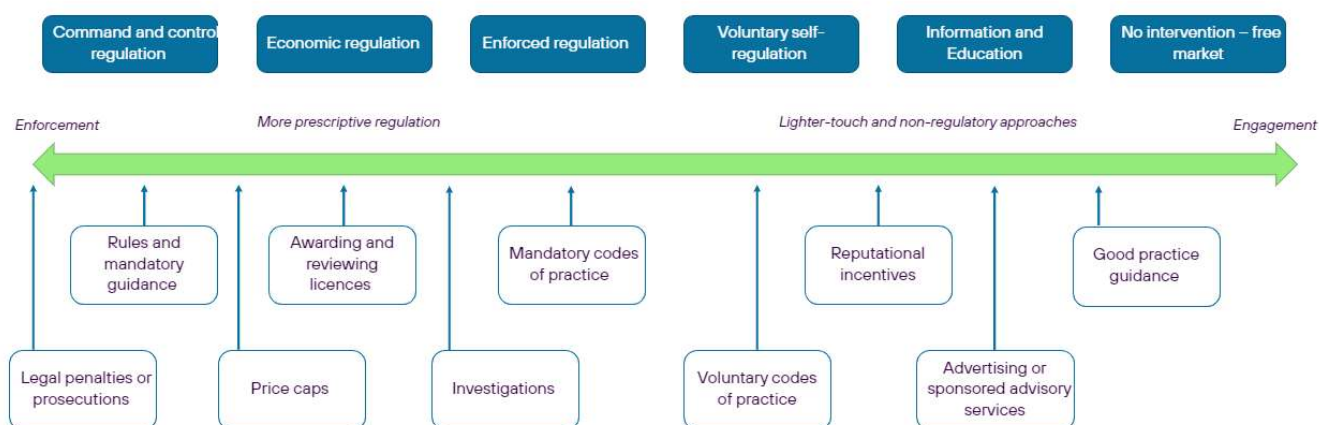
In June 2022, the Department for Levelling up, Housing and Communities (“DLUHC”) published the White Paper – A Fairer Private Rented Sector, announced as the Renters Reform Bill in the Queen’s Speech. This shows the Government’s commitment to an overhaul of the PRS. It is our understanding that the current Government remains committed to the changes outlined in the white paper and is set to vote on the Bill in this parliamentary session, before May 2023. The white paper outlines key areas of potential policy change to include the following:

- Extension of the Decent Homes Standard (“DHS”) to the PRS.
- Abolition of the use of Section 21 notices, “no fault” as a route to eviction.
- Ability to challenge unjustified rent increases.
- An Ombudsman covering all private landlords.
- Stronger enforcement powers for local councils.
- A ban on ‘No DSS’ practices.

3.3. Local Authorities relationship with the PRS

- 3.3.1. The PRS is the second largest tenure in England and has grown in the last 20 years. The proportion of PRS households has more than doubled since 1996-97, and the overall size of the PRS has increased over this time from 2.1 million households in 1996-97 to around 4.4 million households in 2022.
- 3.3.2. While the quality of privately rented housing has improved over the past 20 years, a number of rogue landlords knowingly rent out unsafe and substandard accommodation. Local authorities play a vital role in ensuring that tenants in the PRS have access to safe and good quality housing.
- 3.3.3. Local authorities which have well-managed PRSs have developed a clear strategy supported by policy, process and resource which is aligned to their local circumstances.
- 3.3.4. Good practice principles of PRS that can help to drive up standards in local authorities include:
- Understanding the local PRS and identifying the main issues.
 - Reviewing the agreed policies and procedures to make sure they are effective to the local context.
 - Communicating and engaging with tenants and landlords to educate them on their rights and responsibilities as well as sending a strong and clear message to rogue landlords that they are not welcome in the sector.
 - Proactive inspection and management of the sector to ensure the local landlords uphold their duties responsibly, and tenants feel safe in their accommodation.
 - Acting with enforcement powers to improve neighbourhoods where it is required.
- 3.3.5. The diagram below highlights the range of regulatory interventions available to local authorities ranging from enforcement to engagement.

Diagram 1: Regulatory interventions available to local authorities



Source: National Audit Office analysis

3.4. Property condition and the extension of the DHS to the PRS

3.4.1. A recent consultation has been held in relation to extending the DHS, which currently only applies for social rented accommodation, to private rented accommodation in England. The consultation ran from September 2022 to October 2022. To date, there hasn't been a formal response to the consultation.

3.5. Progress to date

3.5.1. Since the launch of the white paper and the series of changes within Government and the re-appointment of Michael Gove as Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, Gove has committed to progress the ambitions set out in the white paper and the drafting of the Renters Reform Bill. However, there is yet to be a timetable established.

3.6. Damp and mould

3.6.1. Following the tragic death of Awaab Ishak in Rochdale and the subsequent coroner's report which identified that the two-year-old died of a respiratory condition caused by prolonged exposure to mould in his family's housing association flat, there has been increased scrutiny about the degree of damp and mould across both the social and private rented sectors.

3.6.2. Local authorities have been approached by DLUHC to provide a description of the activity that has been taken over the last 3 years to address damp and mould hazards in the PRS and how they plan on prioritising the issue, with an initial response due by 30th November 2022 and a full response by 27th January 2023.

3.7. An overview of both councils' current approach

3.7.1. Both DDDC and AVBC have a positive working relationship with Derbyshire City Council Public Health and, working closely with Derbyshire City Council, they developed a stock condition database based on a combination of modelled and real data. This work has potential for both councils to further develop their understanding of stock condition across their areas.

3.7.2. AVBC currently has a 10-year private rented plan. The private rented plan considers the wider role of PRS accommodation in meeting housing need for those who would be

unable to access social housing. The private rented plan sets out AVBC's strategy for PRS, including AVBC's approach to enforcing standards, when necessary.

3.7.3. Both authorities have delivered a programme focussed on informing landlords about the expectations of the minimum energy performance requirements. This was done through targeted engagement with those landlords owning lower performing properties.

3.7.4. Both councils have a relatively small student population resulting in low levels of HMOs. Our research has found that in any event HMOs are generally of a good standard and that enforcement action is rarely required.

4. Property condition findings

4.1. Literature/data review

4.1.1. The data from both AVBC's 2022 Modelled Stock Condition Survey (SCS) and DDDC's 2021 SCS of the PRS in their respective local authority regions highlighted the size of the PRS relative to the overall housing sector in each region.

4.1.2. As Figure 1 and Figure 2 below demonstrate, AVBC has a slightly larger PRS than DDDC with 5,564 PRS properties to DDDC's 4,264. However, DDDC's PRS contributes to a larger proportion of the overall housing stock in the region making up 12.3% of the total housing stock, compared to AVBC's PRS properties contributing 9.6% of the overall stock.

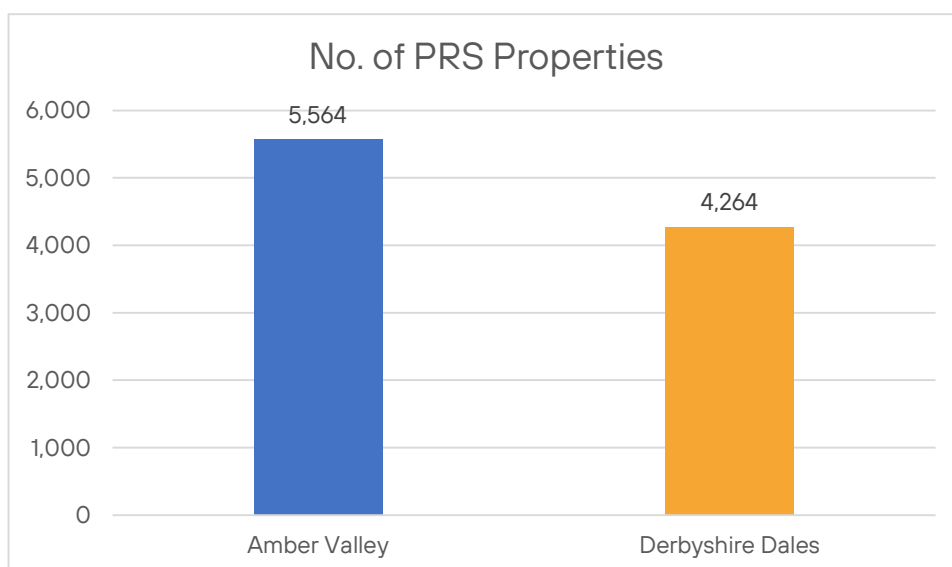


Figure 1: Number of PRS properties in Amber Valley and Derbyshire Dales

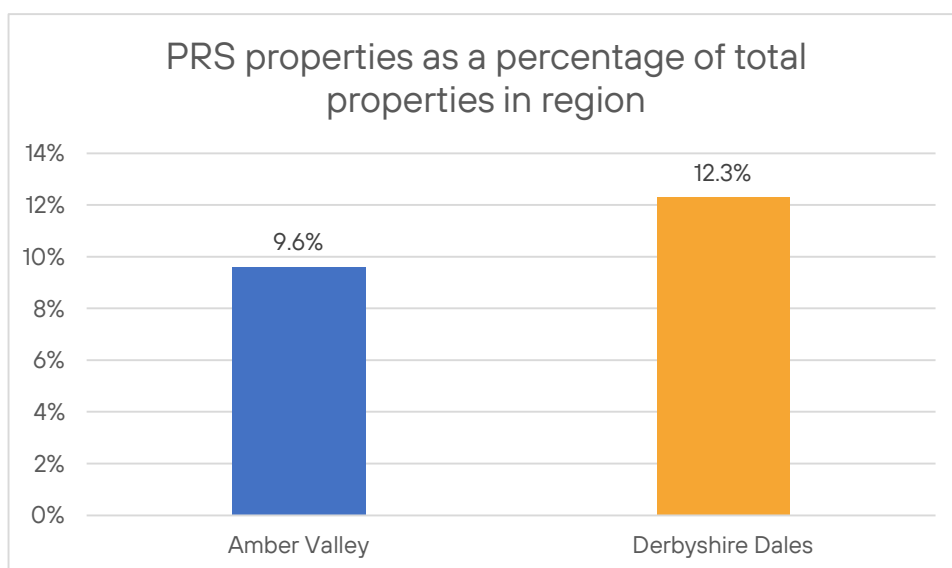


Figure 2: PRS properties as a percentage of the total properties in Amber Valley and Derbyshire Dales

- 4.1.3. Figure 3 highlights the difference in property age between PRS properties in the AVBC and DDDC local authority areas from the respective SCS's.
- 4.1.4. Nearly half of all PRS properties in DDDC were built pre-1918, where as only around a third of AVBC's PRS properties were built in the same period. Overall, PRS stock in AVBC was newer than DDDC.
- 4.1.5. Our conversations with residents from DDDC also highlighted how property age, particularly in conservation areas, were a contributing factor towards poor property conditions and the inability to resolve certain property condition issues.

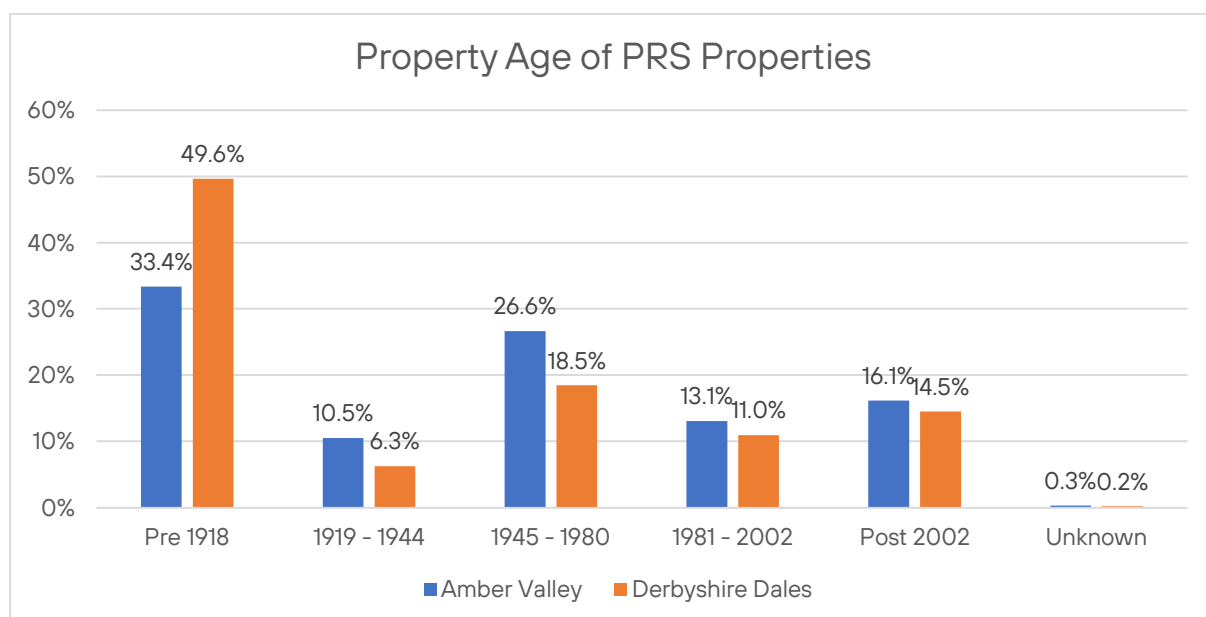


Figure 3: Proportion of PRS properties by age across Amber Valley and Derbyshire Dales

- 4.1.6. Figure 4 highlights the proportion of PRS properties that fail the DHS across the two authorities and provides a breakdown of the reasons.
- 4.1.7. The proportion of non-decent PRS properties was slightly higher in AVBC compared to DDDC but was relatively similar overall.
- 4.1.8. The chart also highlights that the proportion of non-decent homes that failed due to HHSRS category 1 cold and/or damp hazards, HHSRS category 1 fall hazards, and thermal comfort was higher in PRS properties in DDDC than in AVBC. The proportion of PRS homes failing the DHS due to modern facilities and disrepair was similar across both local authorities.

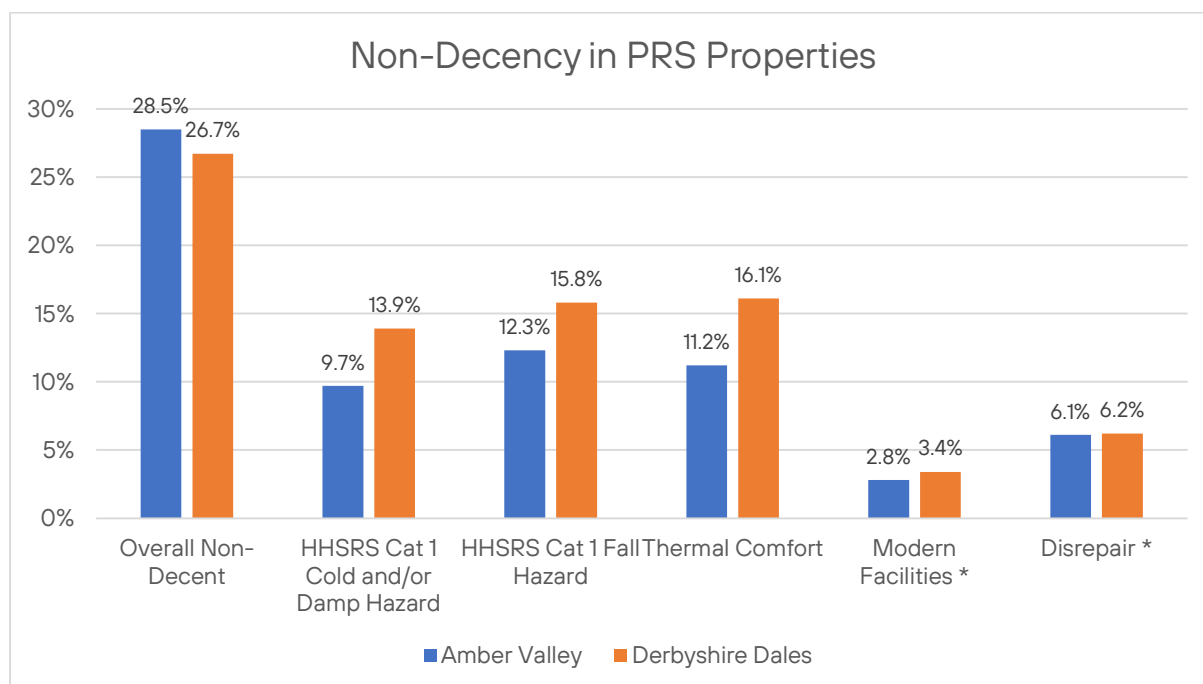


Figure 4: Proportion of non-decent PRS homes across Amber Valley and Derbyshire Dales

4.1.9. It should be noted that the data used for 'Modern Facilities' and 'Disrepairs' for DDDC was taken from DDDC's 2019 SCS as the summary data from DDDC's 2021 SCS provided to us did not include the figures for these categories.

4.1.10. The SCS data and accompanying reports provided by the Councils provided a picture of the size of the PRS, but also highlighted that there were issues with property conditions. We therefore wanted to explore tenant's experiences of their property condition further within our primary research.

4.2. Resident survey

4.2.1. As part of the resident survey, we asked a series of questions to explore the quality of homes, the extent of the property condition issues and how respondents' landlords have reacted to the reported issues.

4.2.2. Of the 173 survey respondents, landlords managed 58% of their properties compared to letting agents managing 40% of them.

4.2.3. When asked how much they agree or disagree with the statement "the condition of my home is of good quality", 40% of survey respondents said they either 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' with the statement, whilst 35% said they 'agree' or 'strongly agree'.

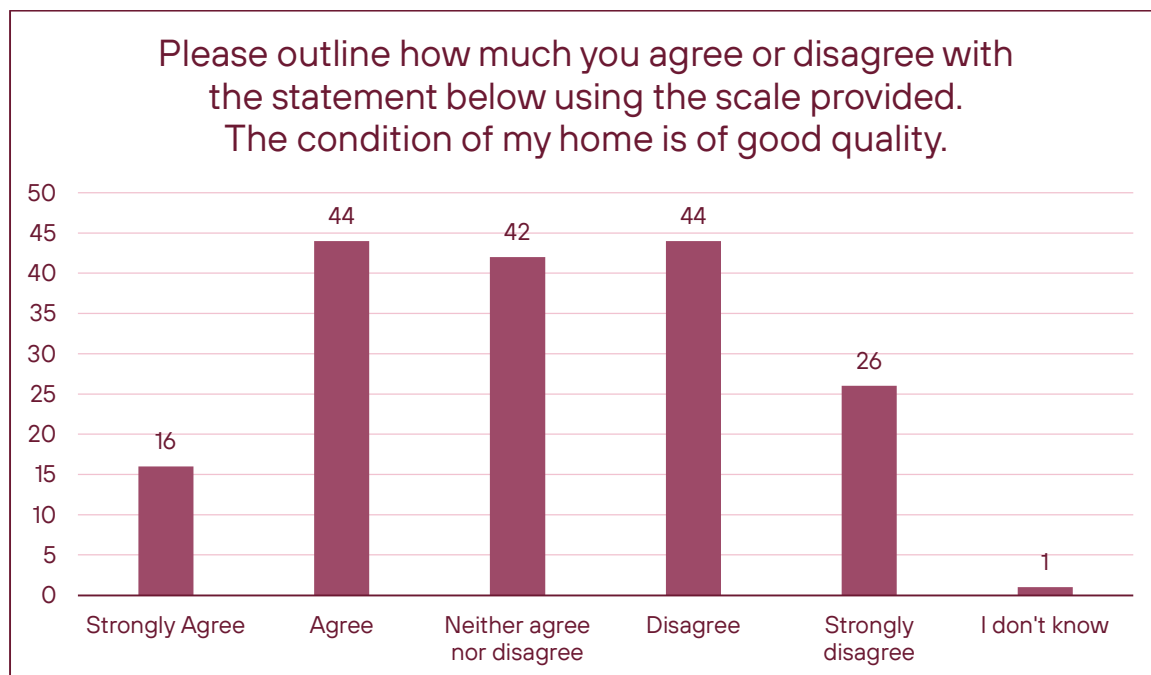


Figure 5: Response to question 'Please outline how much you agree or disagree with the statement below using the scale provided. The condition of my home is of good quality.'

4.2.4. The qualitative feedback from respondents to describe the quality of their home similarly had a mixed response. Heating and insulation of properties was a commonly noted improvement needed.

4.2.5. 77% of survey respondents said they had reported issues to their landlords in the last six months. Respondents were asked to select what their issue(s) were related to. The results of this were the following (note that respondents could select more than one issue):

- Doors and Windows - 37%
- Heating and Hot Water - 34%
- Damp and Leaks - 22%
- Structural Issues - 21%
- Gas and Electrical Safety – 14%
- Drainage – 9%
- Pests – 5%
- Fire Safety – 3%

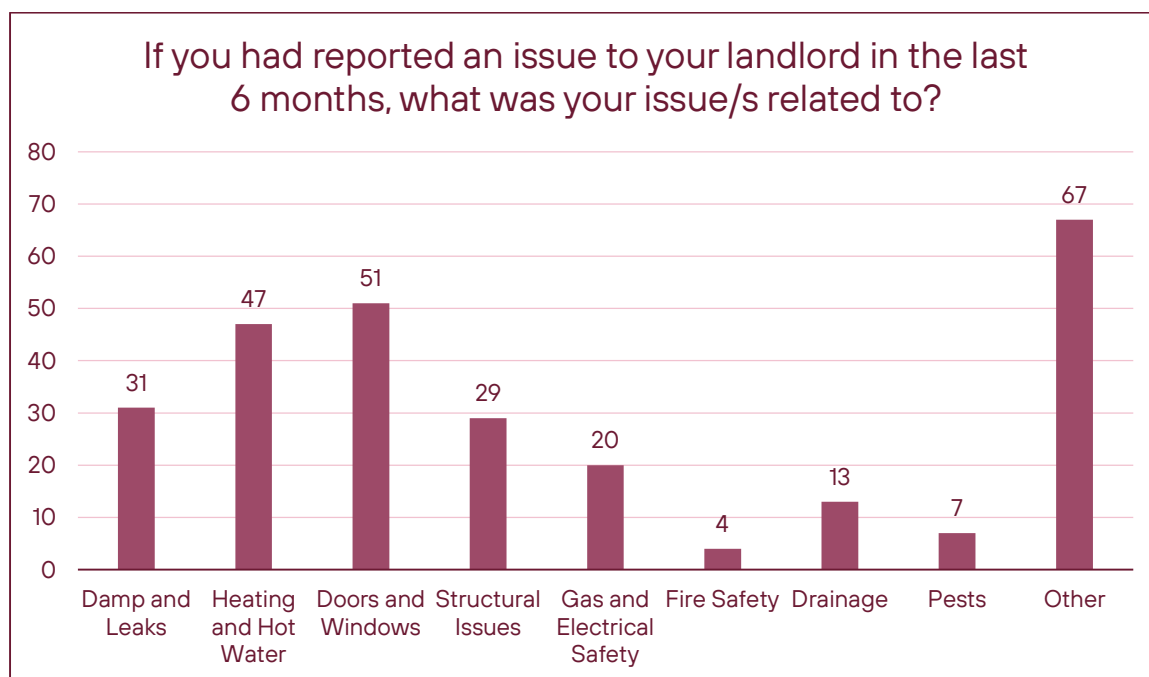


Figure 6: Response to question 'If you had reported an issue to your landlord in the last 6 months, what was your issue/s related to?'

- 4.2.6. The survey question also allowed respondents to select 'other' and enter their answer into a free text box if their issue was not included in the answer options. The responses were wide ranging but tended to be more specific or focused issues within the themes of the answers above.
- 4.2.7. Respondents were asked how satisfied they were that their issue(s) had been resolved. 34% of respondents said they were either 'very satisfied' or 'somewhat satisfied' that their issue was resolved and 42% said they were either 'very dissatisfied' or 'somewhat dissatisfied'.

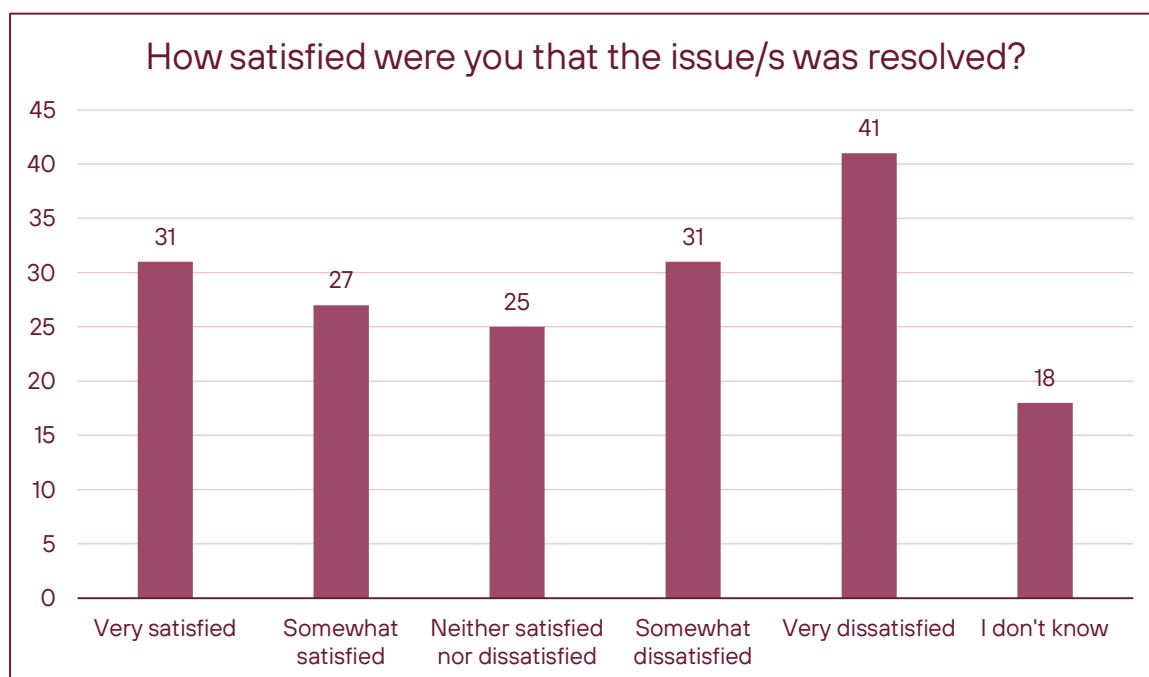


Figure 6: Response to question 'How satisfied were you that the issue/s was resolved?'

4.3. Resident focus group

4.3.1. The challenges relating to PRS home conditions that were discussed at the resident focus group centred around poor repairs services. Some attendees highlighted the lack of value in maintenance fees/charges for their properties. Others felt that landlords do not inspect or know the extent of the condition of their properties and are therefore not motivated to help address issues.

4.3.2. A solution to these issues that were suggested at the focus group were to create an agreement between the landlord and tenant so that the tenant can have reduced rent if they undertake maintenance and repairs themselves. However, it was felt that issues with responsibility and accountability could occur if the landlord is not satisfied with the work undertaken.

4.4. Resident interviews

4.4.1. Our interviews with residents sought to understand the experiences and the issues identified in the resident survey. In particular, in relation to understanding the condition of their property and any anecdotal issues and challenges they could provide.

4.4.2. Issues that interviewees had experienced in their homes varied and included damp, heating, leaks, electrics, plumbing and poor quality carpets.

4.4.3. Several interviewees explained that they lived in older properties and the age of their property had caused issues to its condition. Some of the interviewees lived in conservation areas which meant they were unable to make structural changes to the properties as they were listed.

4.4.4. Only a few of the interviewees had regular inspections from their landlord, although most highlighted that they had a good relationship with their landlord in spite of this.

4.5. Stakeholder engagement

- 4.5.1. Stakeholder interviews similarly highlighted that landlords do not regularly inspect their properties and are often unaware of the standard of their properties. We were informed that when landlords are made aware of property condition concerns by the Councils, they were generally quick to respond and rectify concerns.
- 4.5.2. It was also noted within the stakeholder interviews that some tenants are often too scared to report issues as they are concerned about the impact of requesting repairs on their rent and security of tenure.
- 4.5.3. An interviewee from the Communities team at AVBC highlighted to us that some of the more serious property issues they have seen are with residents who don't complain e.g. basic maintenance like doors not having locks. The same officer also highlighted that there are some residents who do not complain to authorities about the condition of their property as they are concerned that by reporting property condition issues would risk their landlord seeking possession of their home.
- 4.5.4. Our interview with an Environmental Health Officer (EHO) at DDDC highlighted that damp and mould is the most commonly reported issue to them. However, they rarely issue enforcement notices as the issue is rarely as a result of the property but instead is typically because of the living conditions of the resident. Falls from height, fire/gas safety and excessive cold were noted by stakeholders as the most common issues with properties reported to them. The EHO also highlighted that a significant amount of properties in the DDDC are Grade 1 or 2 listed buildings in conservation areas which meant there were limitations to what work could be undertaken to address structural issues.

4.6. Landlord engagement

- 4.6.1. In the landlord survey, we asked what the landlords' plans are for their properties in (i) the next year and (ii) the next five years. Some respondents highlighted that they were going to be undertaking repairs and maintenance work before reletting. The most noted the works that landlords are looking to undertake in the next five years were insulation and energy efficiency works.
- 4.6.2. Landlords provided qualitative feedback that they found it difficult to get significant repairs/maintenance works completed on properties because the 3 months council tax 'grace period' is not long enough.
- 4.6.3. 82% of landlord survey respondents said they regularly plan a programme of improvement works or repairs. These works ranged from new kitchens, improving energy efficiency/insulation, cosmetic works e.g. painting and redecorating, new roofs, new boiler/central heating.
- 4.6.4. Some of the results from the landlord survey were in stark contrast to the feedback we had heard from residents and stakeholders, for example:
 - 47% of landlord survey respondents had received reports of problems with a property in the last six months. This is on contrast to the resident survey, where 77% of survey respondents said they had reported issues to their landlords in the last six months.

- 65% of respondents said they conduct routine, non-emergency inspections on their properties. Feedback from residents and stakeholders was that landlords do not tend to make regular inspections.

4.7. Conclusion

- 4.7.1. Our findings from the initial data and document review highlighted that issues with property condition was a common theme within the PRS in both local authority regions.
- 4.7.2. Qualitative and quantitative feedback from the resident survey further emphasised that poor quality property conditions was a frequent issue for residents. There were a wide range of issues with PRS properties fed back to us by residents, with many being unsatisfied with the service or resolution they had received from their landlord.
- 4.7.3. Stakeholders also reiterated the range of property issues found and how landlords are often not aware of the condition of their properties.
- 4.7.4. In contrast, feedback from landlords highlighted that they have planned repairs and maintenance works on their properties and are conducting regular inspections but are not receiving as high volume of reports of problems with their properties as residents have indicated. However, given that these landlords engaged in the consultation, it could be assumed they are more active in their property management than other landlords in the region.

5. Security of tenure findings

5.1. Literature/data review

- 5.1.1. From the data provided by both local authorities, the main reason for a loss of a settled home in both DDDC and AVBC was the end of a private rented assured shorthold tenancy (“AST”). In AVBC, this accounted for 284 of the 478 accounted losses of settled homes between April 2019 to March 2022. In DDDC, this accounted for 134 of the 242 losses in the same period.
- 5.1.2. Looking further into the factors behind this, the main reason for the loss of these tenancies across both local authorities was due to landlords wishing to sell or re-let their properties. In AVBC, 190 of the 284 losses of PRS ASTs was due to no fault evictions and in DDDC, no fault evictions caused 89 of the 135 losses.
- 5.1.3. It was clear from the initial data review that security of tenure was an area we wanted to explore further in our primary research.

5.2. Resident survey

- 5.2.1. In the resident survey, we firstly sought to understand people’s experience in the PRS and their future living aspirations.
- 5.2.2. Figure 7 highlights how long respondents had been renting in the PRS, with 58% of respondents having lived in the PRS between 5-20 years.

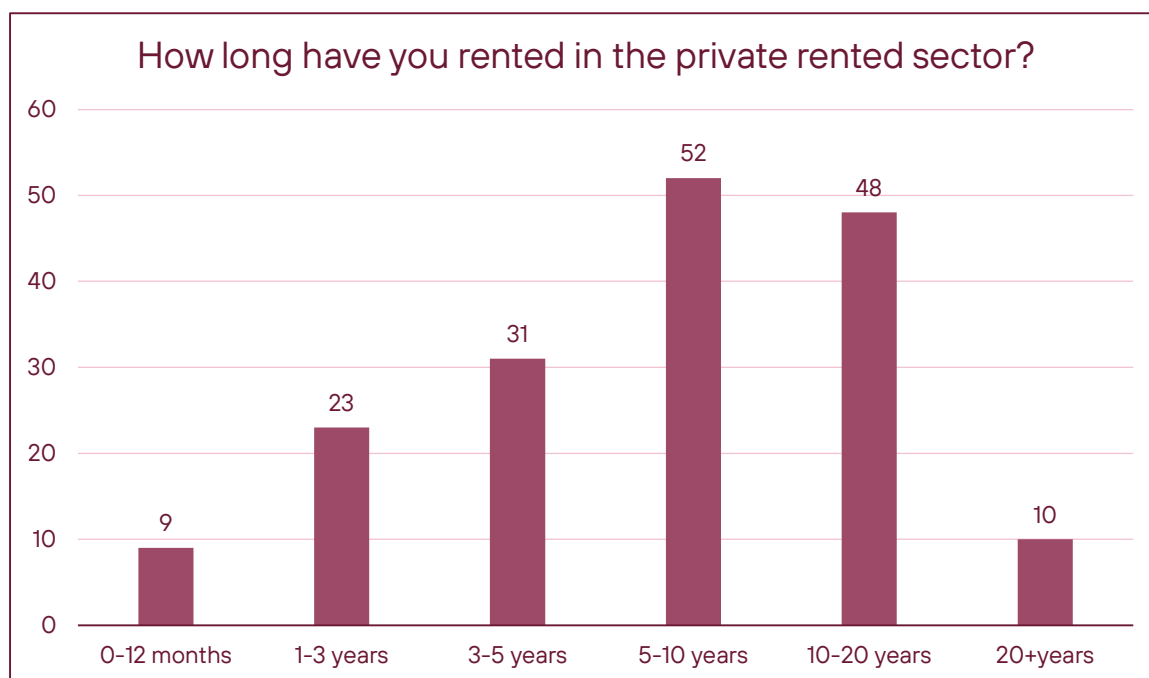


Figure 7: Response to question ‘How long have you rented in the private rented sector?’

- 5.2.3. We then asked how long survey respondents were planning to rent in the PRS. 23% said between 0-12 months, 21% said between 1-20 year, 11% said over 20 years and 45% were not sure about how long they plan to rent in the sector.
- 5.2.4. Survey respondents were then asked which sector they plan to find a home in once they stop renting in the PRS. 55% were looking to go into the social rent sector, 16%

home ownership and 19% did not know which sector they would be living in afterwards. Only 5% of respondents intended to stay in the PRS.

5.2.5. The main barrier for nearly half of respondents to leave the PRS was being on the social housing waiting list. Given that the survey was advertised on both Councils' HomeOptions pages, this may have led to such a high result. The affordability of purchasing a home was the main barrier for nearly a quarter of the respondents.

5.2.6. From here we wanted to explore issues with security of tenure, in particular around their tenancy contract and their concerns about being evicted.

5.2.7. 15% of respondents did not have the option to break their contract before it expires, whilst 44% were unsure if their contract has a break clause in it.

5.2.8. On the other hand, 12% of respondents did not have an option to extend their tenancy before it expires. Whilst 40% of respondents did have option to extend, 47% were unsure if they did have an option.

5.2.9. An emerging theme within our questions around security of tenure was that a large proportion of respondents did not know about key aspects of their tenancy contract. For example, 28% of respondents did not know the length of their tenancy.. Qualitative feedback in the survey highlighted that some respondents did not have a tenancy contract set up with their landlord at all.

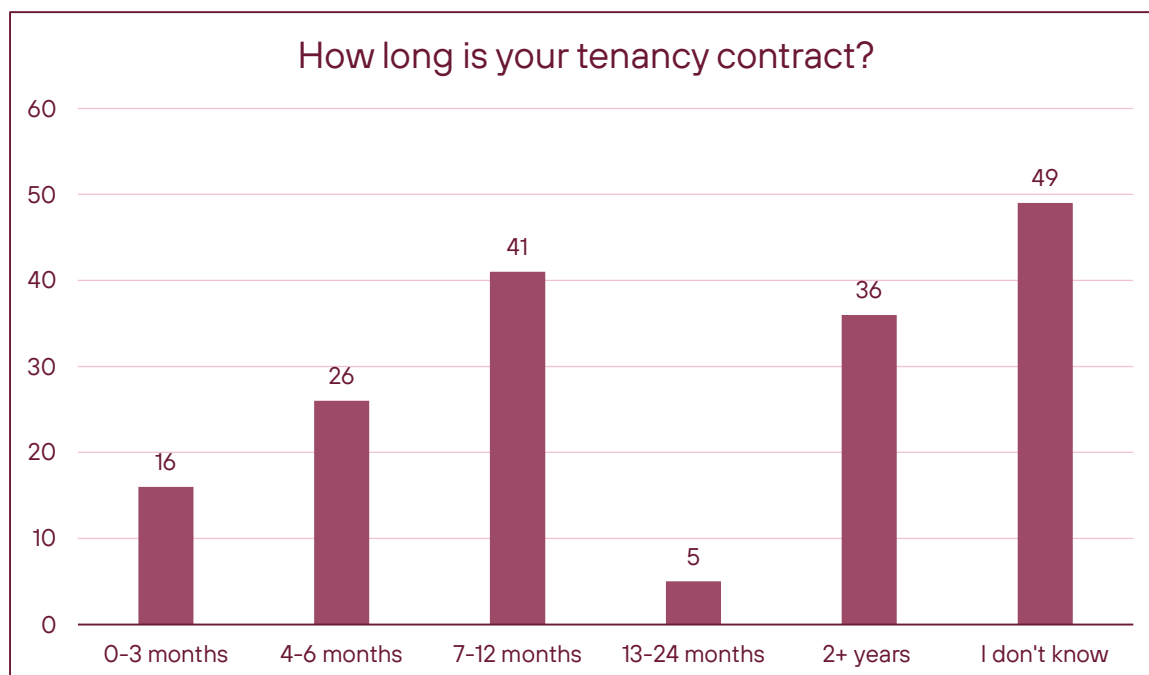


Figure 9: Response to question 'How long is your tenancy contract?'

5.2.10. We then asked respondents how much they agreed or disagreed with the statement 'I am concerned about the security of my tenure'. The results of the survey question are highlighted in Figure 10 and show that 53% of respondents 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that they were concerned about the security of their tenure. Qualitative feedback in the survey indicated that residents were particularly concerned about being served a Section 21 notice from their landlord or being evicted for being unable to pay their rent.

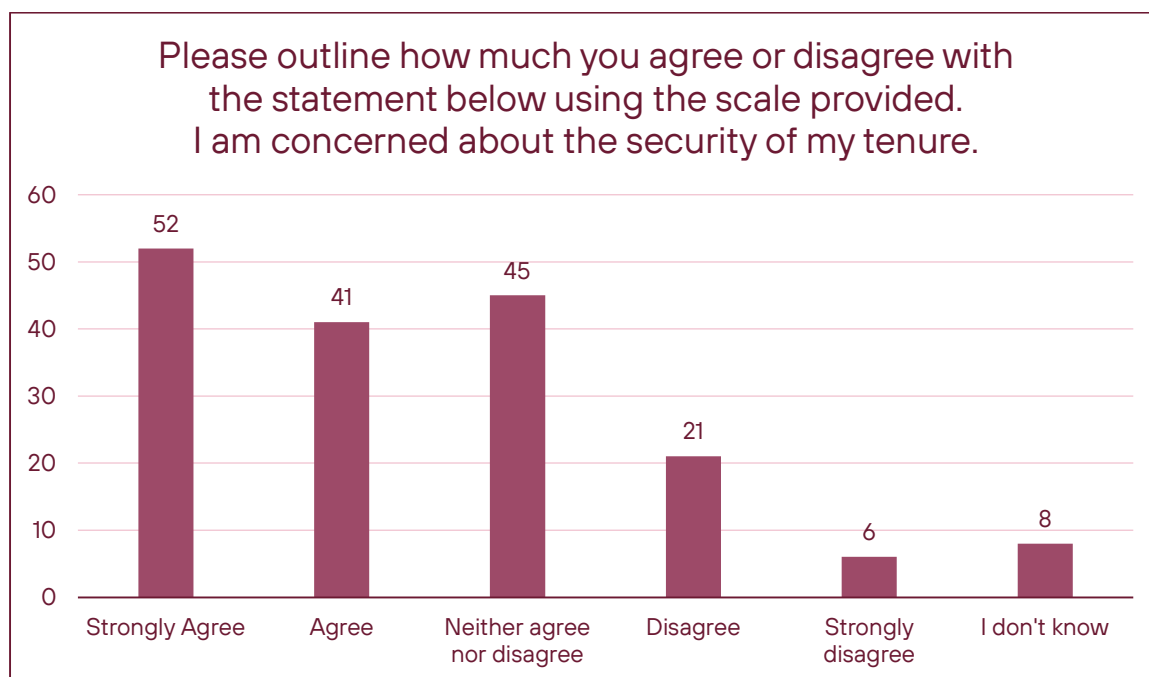


Figure 10: Response to question 'Please outline how much you agree or disagree with the statement below using the scale provided. I am concerned about the security of my tenure'

5.2.11. Finally, when asked where they would go for external advice/support in relation to their tenancy, 55% of respondents said they would go to Citizens Advice Bureau and 20% to their local Council.

5.3. Resident focus group

5.3.1. The challenges relating to security of tenure that were discussed at the resident focus group centred around short-term tenancy agreements. Many residents felt that they were not given any choice if they could not afford rent increases and would be forced to be evicted.

5.3.2. In the resident focus group, attendees sought interventions that bridged the relationship between the landlord and tenants in order to improve security of tenure.. There was acknowledgment that DASH's 'call before you serve' service useful in addressing this.

5.4. Resident interviews

5.4.1. In our interviews with residents, we sought to further understand their experiences and concerns around security of tenure in the PRS.

5.4.2. 5 out of the 8 resident interviewees either had a monthly rolling contract with their landlord or did not have a contract at all. However, these interviewees were not concerned about their security of tenure as they all had good relationships with landlord or had been given no indication that they were looking to sell.

5.4.3. The interviewees property's that were found through the landlord directly, social media, or word of mouth tended to have either a rolling contract or no contract at all. As a result, their relationship with their landlord tended to be more informal and personable.

5.4.4. One of the interviewee's property was owned by an estate which meant they were very unlikely to ever sell the property and therefore were unconcerned about their security of tenure.

5.5. Stakeholder interviews

5.5.1. Our interviews with key stakeholders highlighted that security of tenure was an issue stakeholders had witnessed with residents throughout the PRS.

5.5.2. The interviewee from the Citizens Advice Bureau noted that, given the time it takes to find a property, even six-month ASTs are not secure enough for residents.

5.5.3. Several of the interviewees explained that long-term tenancy agreements are not guaranteed as landlords can serve a Section 21 notice if the tenant has been in the property less than 12 months.

5.5.4. It was also highlighted that residents were often too scared to complain about issues with their properties to their landlord as they were scared of being evicted or the impact on their security of tenure.

5.5.5. Finally, it was noted that finding a suitable property in the PRS within the 2 months' notice period can be a struggle for households given the lack of supply in the region.

5.6. Landlord survey

5.6.1. In the landlord survey we wanted to explore the factors that may lead a landlord to evict a resident or sell their PRS property.

5.6.2. Only 24% of survey respondents said they would let a property to a household who has been homeless and only 53% of respondents said they would accept a household paying rent through state benefits.

5.6.3. We asked what the length of tenancy contracts that landlords typically offers to residents. 29% of respondents offered 6-month contracts or less, 42% offered between 7-24 month contracts and 29% offered tenancy contracts over 2 years.

5.6.4. We then asked what the landlords' plans are for their PRS properties in the next year. Only one landlord said they were planning to sell their property in that time. In relation to their plans over the next five years, several respondents said their decision on whether to keep the property in the PRS or not would depend on incoming government regulation, legislation and taxation. For those who were planning to leave the PRS, they cited increased regulation, taxation and government disincentives as the main reasons for leaving.

5.6.5. When asked to rank the biggest challenges facing landlords in the PRS, respondents chose the following as their top answers:

- Changing legislative landscape
- Increased material and repairs costs
- Increased interest rates
- Buy-to-let tax increases

5.6.6. In regard to the recent increase in interest rates, just over half (53%) of respondents said it was likely to impact their ability to be a landlord in the PRS. On the other hand, 24% of respondents said it was unlikely to impact them.

5.6.7. Finally, we asked respondents to rate how much they have been impacted by the increase in buy-to-let taxes, with 1 being 'no impact at all' and 10 being 'significantly impacted'. The responses to this question averaged at 5.6.

5.7. Conclusion

5.7.1. Our findings from the initial data and document review highlighted that landlords selling or re-letting properties, and no-fault evictions were a common reason for the loss of tenancies within the PRS of both local authority regions.

5.7.2. The results of the resident survey indicated that the majority of the respondents from the PRS were concerned about the security of their tenure. Qualitative feedback from the resident survey and focus group further highlighted that short-term ASTs and increasing unaffordability of PRS properties have contributed to residents' anxiety about their tenure security.

5.7.3. Our interviews with stakeholders also highlighted that some residents' concerns around their security of tenure leads them to not report other issues with their tenancy such as unaffordable rent levels and poor property condition. The interviews also revealed that finding a suitable property within the 2 months' notice period can be a struggle for households given the limited supply of affordable PRS properties.

5.7.4. Resident interviews and the landlord survey highlighted that short-term or monthly rolling tenancy contracts were common across the local authorities.

5.7.5. Changes to the legislative and financial landscape for landlords is increasingly impacting landlords' ability to serve and remain in the PRS across the two local authority regions. In turn, this is impacting on the security of tenure for residents..

6. Affordability findings

6.1. Literature/data review

- 6.1.1. Data provided by both the local authorities showed that a significant number of applicants on the Councils' housing registers were currently living in the PRS.
- 6.1.2. In AVBC, 525 of the 1,914 applicants on AVBC's housing register are living in private rented accommodation which equates to 27% of the total applicants. Similarly, 237 of the 1,005 applicants on DDDC's housing register are currently private renting, which equates to 23% of the total applicants.
- 6.1.3. Across both of the local authorities, there were a combined 59 ASTs in the PRS that were ended due to rent arrears between April 2019 and March 2020.
- 6.1.4. Given the context of cost-of-living crisis, increase in mortgage rates and inflation on rent prices nationally, as well as the initial findings from the data review, it was clear that affordability was a theme we wanted to explore further.

6.2. Resident survey

- 6.2.1. In order to gain an understanding of affordability issues within the PRS, we first wanted to understand the monthly income that is spent on rent. As such, we asked what the income of the respondent's household is per year. 63% of respondent's annual household income was £25k or under, and 27% earned between £25k and £50k as a household.
- 6.2.2. Survey respondents were also asked what percentage of their monthly income is spent on rent. The results are highlighted in Figure 11 below. The majority of respondents spent 40%-50% of their monthly income on rent. 18% of respondents spent 20%-29%, and a similar split of respondents (17%) spent 30%-39%.

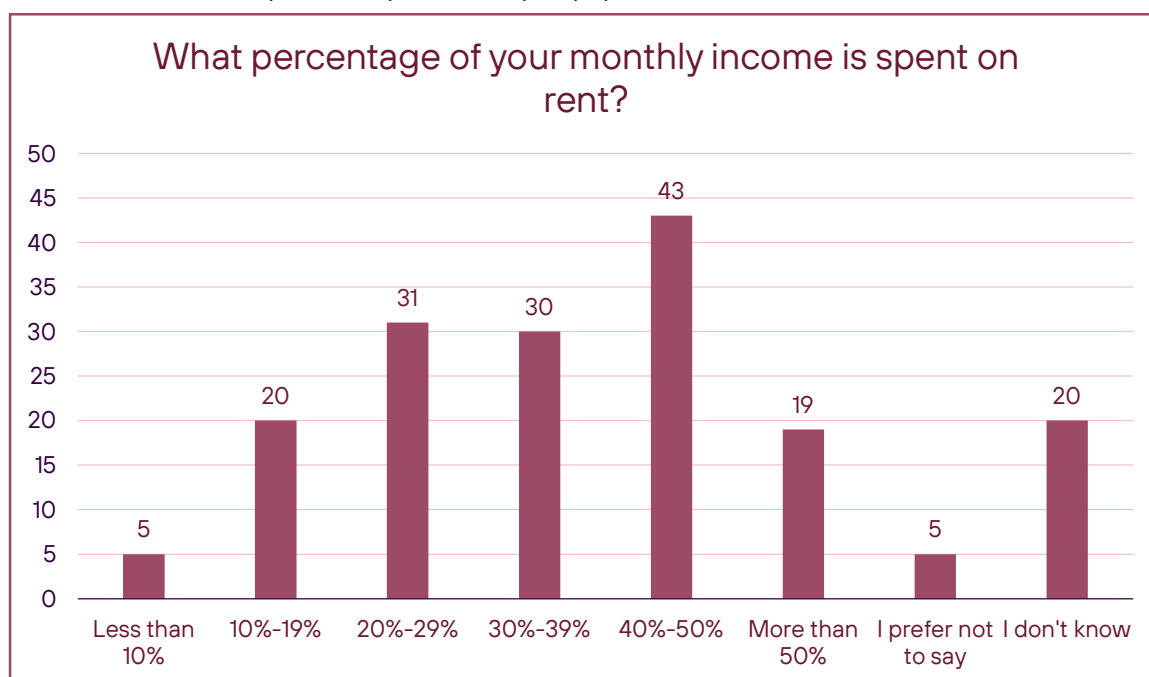


Figure 11: Response to question 'What percentage of your monthly income is spent on rent?'

6.2.3. When asked how much they agree or disagree with the statement “my current level is affordable”, 43% of respondents felt their rent level was not affordable compared to the 30% of respondents who felt their rent level was affordable.

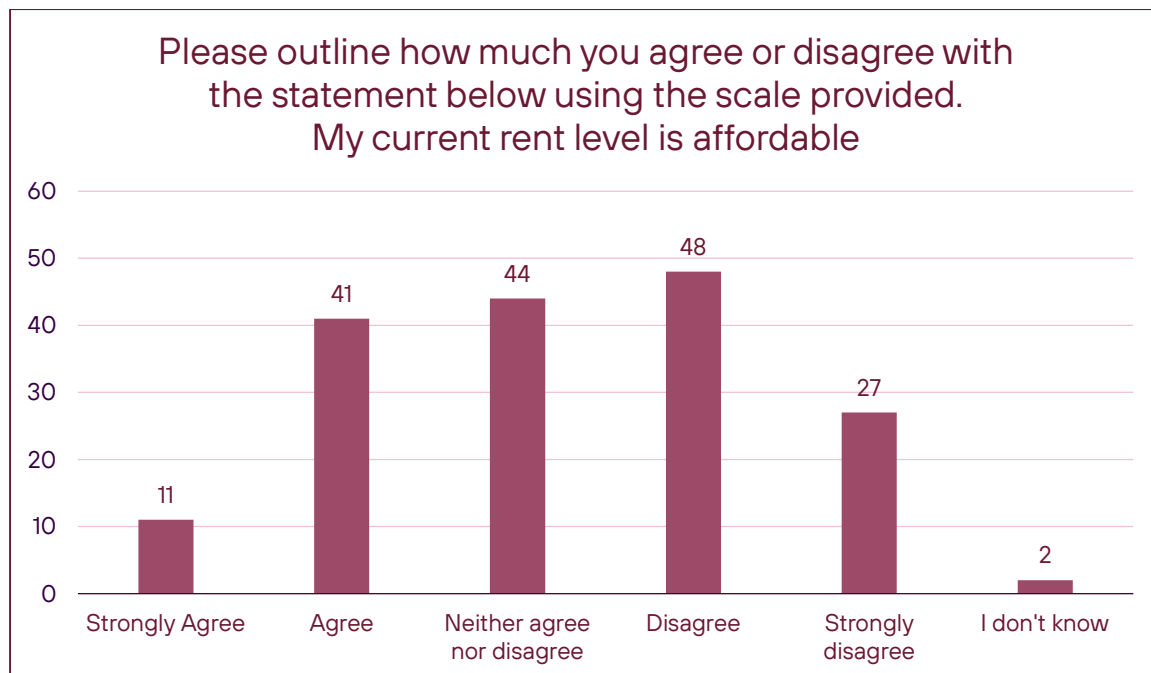


Figure 12: Response to question ‘Please outline how much you agree or disagree with the statement below using the scale provided. My current rent level is affordable.’

6.2.4. Respondents were also asked how much they agree or disagree with the statement “my current rent level is good value for money”. 42% of respondents disagreed with the statement and only 31% agreed that their rent was good value for money.

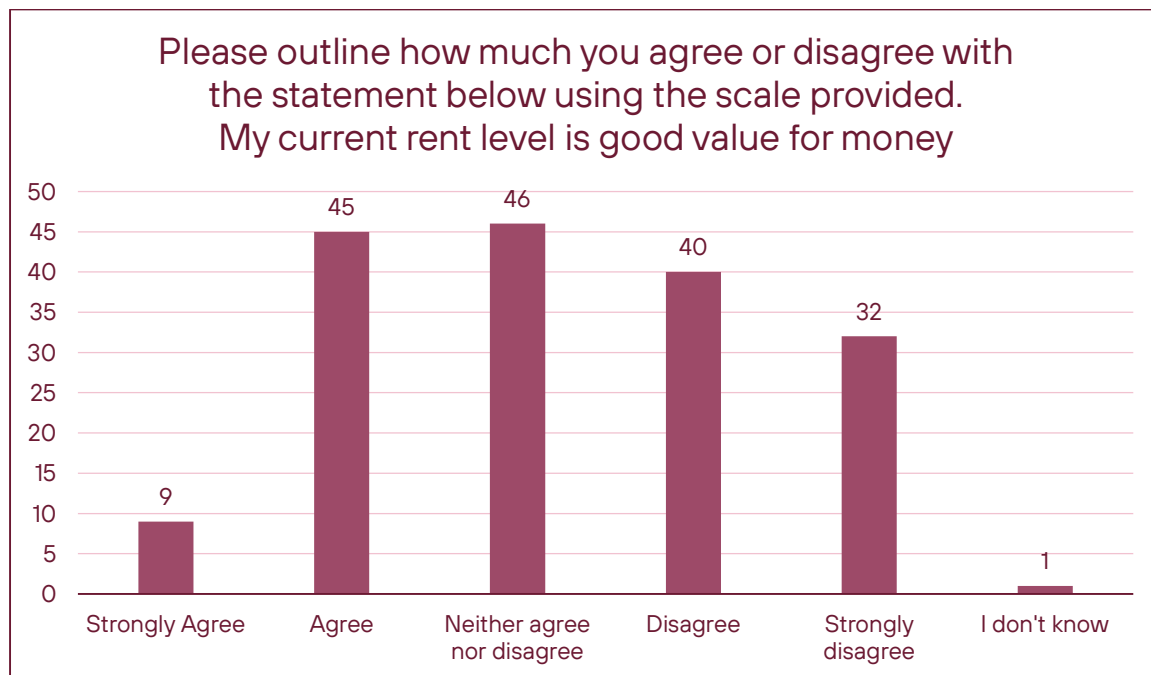


Figure 13: Response to question ‘Please outline how much you agree or disagree with the statement below using the scale provided. My current rent level is good value for money.’

6.2.5. Finally, figure 14 below shows the results from the survey question asking how likely respondents would be able to afford an increase in their rent levels. 70% of respondents answered that they would be unlikely to afford an increase in rent if their landlord decided to increase rents. Whilst only 14% said they are likely to be able to afford an increase.



Figure 14: Response to question 'If your landlord decides to increase the rent, how likely are you to be able to afford an increase in rent levels?'

6.3. Resident focus group

6.3.1. Qualitative feedback from the resident focus group noted that the recent spike in rental prices have become unaffordable for many and residents often feel powerless when landlords increased their rents. As a result, the rental price spike has significantly impacted resident's concerns on the security of their tenure.

6.4. Resident interviews

6.4.1. Several of the resident interviewees had experienced an increase in rent levels recently for the first time in a number of years. Despite this, the majority of the residents we interviewed felt that their rent was affordable, particularly given the scarce amount of PRS properties in the area.

6.4.2. Two of our interviewees had previously used or were in the processing of applying for Universal Credit to cover the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) for their rent, both noting that their landlord had been supportive and considerate of their financial situation when doing so.

6.5. Stakeholder interviews

6.5.1. Our discussions with key stakeholders reiterated that private rented properties in the region are not affordable for many.

- 6.5.2. A particular source of the unaffordability was due to LHA rates not being able to fully cover rents. In particular, the freeze of LHA against the backdrop of increased inflation, interest rates and national rent levels have inflated the unaffordability of PRS properties for those who receive LHA. This is issue that is impacting the PRS nationally too.
- 6.5.3. Several of the stakeholders interviewed felt that LHA rates are not high enough to incentivise landlords to rent at that level and therefore there is a scarcity of affordable private rental properties in the region. One stakeholder described that they had spoken to estate agents in the area who regularly receive 20-30 applications for the one-bed properties they let.
- 6.5.4. We were also told that some of the affordability difficulties for residents derive from not being allocated any social housing and therefore being stuck in the PRS as they have no alternative.
- 6.5.5. The Benefits Manager from DDDC highlighted to us that limited employment options in the borough mean that there is mainly an elderly population in the local PRS. They estimated that around half of the residents on housing benefits are elderly. The interviewee also highlighted that engagement with landlords regarding housing benefits has previously been a struggle.

6.6. Landlord survey

- 6.6.1. In the landlord survey, we wanted to understand the views of landlords on the affordability of their properties in the area.
- 6.6.2. Landlords felt positively about the affordability of their properties, with 88% of landlord survey respondents agreeing that that the rent level of their properties are affordable to tenants, as well as 94% of respondents agreeing that their rent levels were good value money.
- 6.6.3. When asked about how likely they would be to increase rents in the next 12 months, 41% of respondents said they were likely to increase, whilst 24% said they were unlikely to increase rents.
- 6.6.4. Respondents were asked to rank the most important factors to them when considering possible tenants. The overall results from the respondents ranked the factors in the following order:
1. Ability to pay rent on time
 2. Reference from current or previous landlord
 3. Length of time they want to occupy the property
 4. Tenant employment status
 5. Ability to pay deposit
 6. Legal status of prospective tenant
 7. Amount of money offered per month
- 6.6.5. As mentioned in the 'Security of Tenure Findings' section, 53% of landlord survey respondents said they would accept a household paying rent through state benefits.

6.6.6. Qualitative feedback from the landlord survey also highlighted that landlords felt there was no incentive from central or local government for them to rent out at the LHA rate and tax changes have made it harder to sell.

6.7. Conclusion

6.7.1. Our initial findings from the data review highlighted that affordability was a common issue for residents in the region and national PRS.

6.7.2. The outcomes of the resident survey and focus group session emphasised that, for many, renting in the PRS is unaffordable. In particular, the recent spike in rental prices has further inflated affordability issues for residents in the PRS.

6.7.3. Our interviews with stakeholders also reiterated that the freeze on LHA and lack of incentives from central or local government for landlords to rent out at LHA has impacted on the affordability of the sector.

6.7.4. This was supported by feedback from the landlord survey which highlighted that landlords felt disincentivised to rent properties at LHA rates and in the PRS as a whole.

7. Options workshop

7.1. Introduction

- 7.1.1. In January 2023, an options workshop was held with officers of DDDC and AVBC. The aim of the session was to develop and assess potential options designed to address the issues identified in the research; affordability, security of tenure and home condition. Attendees were asked to rate each option presented based on suitability, feasibility and acceptability.
- 7.1.2. This section sets out more details of the procedure for the workshop, the options presented and voting results.

7.2. Overview of the workshop

- 7.2.1. The workshop began by highlighting the learning so far and then presented a set of options that had been developed from this research base.
- 7.2.2. Each option was presented with an overview description of the option, the identified strengths, weaknesses and considerations, and for some options, a case study was also provided.
- 7.2.3. After the workshop, attendees were provided with a slide pack and asked to reflect on the options and make an assessment using the suggested criteria for suitability, feasibility, and acceptability as outlined in Table 1:

Table 1: Suitability, Feasibility and Acceptability Criteria

Criteria		
1	Suitability	How suitable or effective is each option for DDDC and AVBC, its context and its objectives? Will it address identified issues?
2	Feasibility	Is the option implementable in practice with reasonable expectations for resource? Is it practical? Is it affordable?
3	Acceptability	How acceptable is the option to stakeholders? (Including Council members, Council departments, landlords, tenants and wider stakeholder groups). Scores should include wider acceptability and not a single stakeholder group.

- 7.2.4. The combined 1-5 scores for suitability, feasibility, and acceptability of each option gave an overall score out of 15.

7.3. Options discussed

- 7.3.1. The options presented at the workshop were as follows:

Option 1 – Advice and Information

The Council publish information on a dedicated, user-friendly web page on private rented accommodation for local landlords and tenants in order to advertise the support the Council can provide and to provide information on the PRS within the region.

This could include: local standards, examples of good practice, promoting awareness of responsibilities, regulatory information updates, advice on repairs improvements, provide links to local landlord groups, information on illegal eviction.

Option 2 – Advertising PRS Properties on Home Options

The Council utilise their Home Options platform to advertise private rented properties in the region.

Option 3 – Dedicated Complaints Service for PRS tenants

Provision and advertisement of information for PRS tenants on how to process a complaint to the council/stakeholders about key issues with their property/landlord. This involves:

- Improved comms for PRS tenants to access support from the Council (i.e. accessing inspections, environmental health, homelessness services and CAB/Shelter).
- Multiple channels to make the complaint (phone, digital).
- Clear complaints procedures for tenants to follow.
- Rapid response process to route relevant service who can action and track the complaint effectively and ensure a swift resolution.

Option 4 – Evidence Database

The Council to research and create a data base to obtain a better picture of the local PRS which can be used in future to identify the key issues and apply the right interventions. Both councils have an evidence database of stock condition.

Option 5 – Multi-Agency Working

Local authority departments and other agencies working in the area, tackle rogue landlords by reporting issues collaboratively, and making connections between enforcement of other illicit activities. The following teams may be able to identify hotspots of rogue landlord activity: complaints, planning enforcement, anti-social behaviour. Other agencies such as the police, local health partners and fire and rescue service can offer insight into areas where rogue landlords may be prevalent.

Option 6 – Ethical Lettings Agency

The Council create a lettings agency that supports landlords to provide high quality accommodation, whilst minimising risks to landlords through robust management approach. It aims to strike a balance to make sure privately-owned homes benefit society and generate profits for landlords.

Option 7 – Increased Capacity

Increase capacity within the Council's Housing Standards Team to enable more resource to investigate and take enforcement action on landlords who rent out substandard properties and fail to comply with housing legislation. Both councils have received funding from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to increase capacity within their Housing Standards Team.

Option 8 – Council to Provide PRS Accommodation

The Council provide its own PRS accommodation. If the Council are unable to improve existing PRS properties, there is an option for the Council to create its own stock. The

Council will ensure that tenancies are offering on ASTs for a minimum period to ensure security of tenure.

Option 9 – DASH and DLC Services

The Council invests in support services which include DASH and Derbyshire Law Centre (DLC).

DASH Services is a joint-working initiative with local authorities, property owners, landlords and tenants. DASH aims to improve housing conditions, with a particular emphasis on the PRS.

Option 10 - Council-led Accreditation Scheme

The Council designs and introduces its own tailored accreditation scheme to address the key local issues.

Option 11 – Landlord Register

The Council holds a voluntary registration system of landlords that can be used as a tool to gather information on the local landlords and their portfolios. Landlords' individual register number would be used in all transactions relating to each letting.

Option 12 - Additional Licencing for HMO's

Along with mandatory licencing which seeks to target those Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) that are at the highest risk, local councils can introduce additional licencing.

Option 13 – Selective Licencing for PRS

The Council can introduce a Selective Licencing Scheme to ensure that all private rented properties within a designated area are required to be licenced. Such a scheme would require landlords of properties within a Selective Licencing Area to seek a licence from the Council enabling an inspection of the property and providing the Council with the opportunity to work with the landlord to remedy poor housing conditions or management deficiencies.

Option 14 – Inspections

The Council increase the number of reactive inspections, if they have received a complaint, or proactive inspections to gather evidence and identify any action that may need to be taken.

Option 15 – Stronger Enforcement Approach

Council to impose a strong enforcement and inspection regime. For example, increasing the number of Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) inspections taking place, increasing the number of notices issued and/or increasing the fines/penalties for the notices. Both councils have received funding from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to enhance their enforcement approach.

7.4. Ratings and discussion

7.4.1. The tables below highlight the average scorings given by attendees for suitability, feasibility and acceptability, and the overall score for each option.

- 7.4.2. For Option 2 (Advertising PRS Properties on Home Options), it was highlighted by attendees that there is a risk that tenants perceive PRS homes to be to a minimum quality standard if placing bids through a council platform.
- 7.4.3. For Option 4 (Evidence Database) attendees raised concerns that the management of such a database would require a significant amount of resource. Resourcing was also highlighted as a concern for Option 7 (Increased Council Staff Capacity), with both councils identifying that it is unlikely for additional roles and costs to be accepted in the current operating environment.
- 7.4.4. Comparisons were raised between Option 6 (Ethical Lettings Agency) and Option 8 (Council to Provide PRS accommodation) with some identifying that Option 6 as a similar, yet lower risk solution in comparison to Option 8.
- 7.4.5. The operational implications of Option 15 (A Stronger Enforcement Approach) were raised in the session, including concerns about the engagement with landlords in the context of a notice served, including the potential risk of eviction for the tenant.
- 7.4.6. The results are shown in Table 2 and Table 3.

Table 2: AVBC options appraisal assessment

Amber Valley					
No.	Option	Suitability	Feasibility	Acceptability	Overall Score
1	Advice and information	4.2	4.2	3.8	12.2
2	Advertising PRS Properties on Home Options	3.4	3.2	3.2	9.8
3	Dedicated Complaints Services for PRS Tenants	2.8	3.4	3.4	9.6
4	Evidence Database	3.8	3	3.2	10
5	Multi-Agency Working	4.4	4.4	4.2	13
6	Ethical Lettings Agency	3.8	3.4	3.2	10.4
7	Increased Council Staff Capacity	4	2.4	3.4	9.8
8	Council to Provide PRS Accommodation	2.8	2	2.6	7.4
9	DASH and DLC Services	4	4	3.8	11.8
10	Council Accreditation Scheme	2.4	2.2	2.8	7.4
11	Landlord Register	3.2	2.2	3	8.4
12	Additional Licensing for HMOs	1.6	2.2	2	5.8
13	Selective Licensing for PRS	2.2	2	2.2	6.4
14	Inspections	4.2	3.4	3.8	11.4
15	Stronger Enforcement Approach	2.4	3	2.8	8.2

Table 3: DDDC options appraisal assessment

Derbyshire Dales					
No.	Option	Suitability	Feasibility	Acceptability	Overall Score
1	Advice and information	5	5	5	15
2	Advertising PRS Properties on Home Options	4	3	3	10
3	Dedicated Complaints Services for PRS Tenants	3	2	2	7
4	Evidence Database	2	3	4	9
5	Multi-Agency Working	4	3	4	11
6	Ethical Lettings Agency	4	2	4	10
7	Increased Council Staff Capacity	4	2	3	9
8	Council to Provide PRS Accommodation	4	3	3	10
9	DASH and DLC Services	5	4	4	13
10	Council Accreditation Scheme	4	3	4	11
11	Landlord Register	2	2	3	7
12	Additional Licensing for HMOs	2	2	3	7
13	Selective Licensing for PRS	3	3	3	9
14	Inspections	4	4	4	12
15	Stronger Enforcement Approach	3	3	3	9

7.5. Conclusion

7.5.1. The options workshop made several recommendations to the Councils around possible interventions for the PRS, ranging from engagement and education, in-house council initiatives, voluntary regulation, and mandatory regulation and enforcement. Attendees were asked to rate these on suitability, feasibility and acceptability (SFA).

7.5.2. Based on the SFA scores and discussions from the workshop the following options were rated most highly (more than ten out of a possible 15) for both authorities:

1. Advice and Information.
2. Multi-Agency Working.
3. DASH and DLC Services.
4. Ethical Lettings Agency.
5. Inspections.

7.5.3. The following options were graded highly by DDDC (more than ten out of a possible 15) with AVBC grading them lower (less than ten out of a possible 15):

1. Advertising PRS Properties on Home Options.
2. Council to Provide PRS Accommodation

3. Council Accreditation Scheme.

7.5.4. The following option was graded highly by AVBC (more than ten out of a possible 15) with DDDC grading them lower (less than ten out of a possible 15):

1. Evidence Database

8. Recommendations

8.1. Our approach to the recommendations

- 8.1.1. Our recommendations take account of the SFA scoring by both councils; however, this has not been the only driver. Rather, our recommendations are also formed on the issues identified within the research in relation to affordability, security of tenure and home condition, our knowledge of the PRS sector across both council areas and our understanding of best practice for Local Authority interventions for the PRS.
- 8.1.2. Our recommendations are set out in Table 4 and have been split into whether the recommendation should be taken forward by an individual council or both councils.

Table 4: Recommendations

No.	Recommendation	AVDC	DDDC
Recommendations currently being delivered by both councils which may benefit from a refresh			
1	Advice and information – both councils should review the information that they publish for landlords and tenants. Information should be on a dedicated, user-friendly web page to advertise the support the Council can provide and to provide information about the PRS within the region.	✓	✓
2	Dedicated complaints service for PRS tenants AVDC should further explore a dedicated complaints service for PRS tenants. This recommendation has a strong relationship with recommendations 1 and 6, all three recommendations should be considered in parallel.	✓	
3	Multi-Agency working – both authorities should consider how to apply a multi-agency working approach to address rogue landlords and property condition issues. Consideration should be given to how to apply a multi-agency approach to better understanding the relationship with health and housing, specifically the impact of damp and mould to asthma rates across both areas.	✓	✓
4	Full assessment of DASH, DLC and in house council accreditation schemes – both authorities should conduct an assessment of current DASH and DLC services, including identifying service gaps, (such as the provision of support for property condition), the impact of services to landlords and tenants and the associated costs. A comparison should be made to an in-house accreditation service by cost and impact.	✓	✓

Recommendations for the delivery of property condition interventions (in consideration of the DLUHC funding available to both councils)			
5	Proactive inspections – both authorities to create a schedule of proactive inspections based on data already known by the councils, alongside other data sources identified through multi-agency working. The proactive inspection regime should be supported by communications and engagement with landlords and tenants about the inspection purpose and potential outcomes.	✓	✓
6	Increased staff capacity – to increase staffing capacity to support the schedule of proactive inspections. Due consideration should be given to the capacity of new and existing roles.	✓	✓
7	Regular reviewing of outcomes – both councils should regularly review the learnings from proactive inspections and consider whether other interventions are required to further support the PRS (i.e., whether licencing schemes should be considered at a later date)	✓	✓
Recommendations for new PRS interventions not currently delivered by one or both councils			
8	Ethical lettings agency – both authorities should further explore the option of an ethical lettings agency to address the issues identified in this paper. Both authorities should explore whether other neighbouring authorities that may wish to partner.	✓	✓
9	Exploration of the delivery PRS accommodation- DDDC should further explore the option of delivery of PRS accommodation through the provision of a local housing company, at arms-length by the council.		✓

Appendix 1 – Options case studies

Option 1 case study - Advice and Information

Derby City Council

- The Housing Standards Team produces a regularly updated report on its activities in the private rented sector. It includes a detailed guide on its approach to enforcement covering, for example, its procedures on addressing serious hazards, minor hazards, the use of prohibition orders and charges. It is available on the local authority website and is targeted at landlords and lettings agents.

Option 3 case study – Dedicated Complaints Service for PRS Tenants

Plymouth – Triaging, ‘different level interventions’

- Initial contact - an in-depth telephone conversation with the tenant, which includes discussing defects, advice on security of tenure, how to approach the landlord and asking questions to determine the level of risk.
- A letter from council - write to the landlord asking him/her to address the tenant's concerns. They found that this resolved about 50% of cases to the tenant's satisfaction.
- Serious concerns - a prioritised visit will be made, and appropriate action taken.

Option 4 case study – Evidence Database

Examples of data elements:

- Owner occupation, council tax names registered, council tax names liable, single person discount, student exemption.
- Ex local authority property sold under right to buy, local authority housing placements, housing association owned property.
- Planning applications.
- Building regulation approvals and breaches.
- Frequency of turnover of occupants.
- Benefits - who has claimed against an address, number of claims against address.
- Electoral roll data against an address.
- Census data.
- Police call outs against an address.
- Anti-Social Behaviour Orders placed against an address.
- Large rubbish collections or removals against an address.

Option 5 case study – Multi-Agency Working

‘Leeds Neighbourhood Approach (LNA)’

- Leeds City Council developed the ‘Leeds Neighbourhood Approach (LNA)’ project which addresses both housing conditions and the needs of the households and community. It proactively targets small areas of the city on a street-by-street basis based on intelligence, stock condition, levels of empty homes and identifiable community needs. The LNA is a partnership approach, led by the Private Sector Housing team. The approach involves a wide range of partners to deliver change in their local area.

- All rented properties within the designated area are inspected by the Private Sector Housing team to ensure consistency. All owner/occupiers are invited to take part with help and advice provided on property maintenance. All landlords, agents and empty home owners are invited to work with the partnership to improve the area. Any owner who does not come forward within the six-week amnesty is dealt with formally using whatever legislation is appropriate.

Option 6 case study – Ethical Lettings Agency

Hartlepool Borough Council

- Hartlepool Borough Council operates a Social Lettings Agency (SLA) which provides similar services to a commercial letting and managing agent. It works with landlords and tenants to help establish and sustain tenancies. The SLA aims to provide quality and affordable housing management services and access to a range of in-house skills and expertise.

Option 7 case study – Increased Capacity

Housing Standards Team

- Complaints
- Customer Service Centre
- Enforcement
- Environmental Health
- ASB Team
- Homeless services
- Other support (Age UK, Citizen Advice)

Option 8 case study – Council to Provide PRS Accommodation

Guildford Borough Council (GBH)- North Downs Housing (NDH)

- NDH is the housing trading arm of GBH. NDH was set up by the Council but is a separate legal entity managed by independent directors.
- Its purpose is to enable the Council to offer a wider range of housing products and solutions to those who for whatever reason find access to purely market-based options a challenge.
- The company delivers homes for rent and homes for sale but is principally focus on the lower quartile of the housing market including the rental sector.
- As of 2021, more than 80% of all councils owned housing companies. While some are dormant, many operate successfully today. These organisations are being used in different ways, whether that is for pure development, housing management, purchasing Section 106 properties, or buying street properties for rent.

Option 10 case study – Council-led Accreditation Scheme

The Coventry Landlord Accreditation Scheme

- This is a free voluntary self-regulating scheme that landlords and lettings agents are encouraged to join. It incorporates free training on a variety of regulations and reduced fees for property licensing. In addition, landlords can advertise themselves as being accredited by the council. The benefits of the scheme for all parties, including tenants, include better property conditions, higher management standards and more tenant-considerate behaviour in relation to neighbours. It also helps to reduce misunderstandings and disputes between landlords and tenants.

Option 11 case study – Landlord Register

Rent Smart Wales (landlord registration):

- Since 23 November 2015, all Landlords with privately rented property let out on a domestic tenancy in Wales are legally required to register with Rent Smart Wales in order to comply with the law.
- The landlord registration is valid for 5 years.

Scottish Landlord Register:

- Private landlords in Scotland are legally required to apply for registration with their local authority. Operating as an unregistered landlord is a criminal offence.

Option 14 case study – Inspections

Powers to inspect:

- Section 239 and 240 of the Housing Act 2004

Powers of entry:

- Section 239 and 240 of the Housing Act 2004 give local authorities the power to enter a home to obtain information for enforcement action.
- Officers are required to give 24 hours' notice in most instances.
- If entry is refused or immediate entry is required because of an imminent risk to health and safety, officers should obtain a warrant from the Justice of the Peace.

As an exception, officers may enter and take action in certain circumstances where a warning would make an inspection insignificant.

Option 15 case study – Stronger Enforcement Approach

Evidence - In 2021:

- Local authorities performed an average of 135 HHSRS inspections per year, significantly below the average number of complaints.
- Activity varied substantially, with 25 local authorities responsible for 50% of all HHSRS inspections.
- 3,679 improvement notices are issued annually, with 9% of HHSRS inspections leading to an improvement notice.
- However, usage of this notice is concentrated, with 20 local authorities responsible for 50% of notices.
- Two local authorities performed most of the emergency remedial actions over the last three years. Over half performed no emergency remedial action at all.
- Follow-up enforcement is extremely low with around 1% of HHSRS inspections leading to criminal prosecution.

Appendix 2 – Full reading list, interviews and session attendance

Documents Provided by the Councils

Amber Valley Borough Council

- Private Rented Plan
- Amber Valley Borough Council Stock Condition Report 2019
- Map of HMOs in Amber Valley
- Non-Public HMO Register
- AVBC - Reasons for Registration
- AVBC – Home Options Data
- AVBC - PRS Approaches & Reasons (Apr 2019 – Mar 2020)
- Stock Condition Survey Master Database
- Supported Accommodation Breakdown

Derbyshire Dales District Council

- Copy of Derbyshire Dales 2021 SCS Database Master
- Derbyshire Dales District Council Stock Condition Survey Report (2019)
- Home Options Data
- DDDC - PRS Approaches & Reasons (Apr 2019 – Mar 2020)
- Case Studies for Private Rented Research
- Renewal Policy 2020-2023

External Source List

The list of external sources we used inform the research is as follows:

- DASH Services– Options for Improving Housing Standards
- Department for Communities and Local Government - Improving the PRS and Tackling Bad Practice - A Guide for LAs (2015)
- Department for Communities and Local Government - Rogue Landlord Enforcement - Guidance for Local Authorities (2019)
- Local Government Association – DASH East Midlands (2020)
- Local Government Association - Improving the PRS - A Guide for Councils (2020)
- National Audit Office - Regulation of Private Renting (2021)
- Office of National Statistics – Census 2021 (2022)
- University of York - The Evolving Private Sector (2018)
- Derby City Council Cabinet – ITEM 13 (2022)

Stakeholder Interviewees

We interviewed the following individuals for our stakeholder engagement:

- Housing Options Service Manager - Age UK Derby & Derbyshire
- Head of Communities - Amber Valley Borough Council

- Decent and Safe Homes (DASH) Manager - DASH Services
- Housing Solutions Officer - Derbyshire Dales District Council
- Environmental Health Officer - Derbyshire Dales District Council
- Benefits Manager - Derbyshire Dales District Council
- Projects and Services Manager - Derbyshire Districts Citizens Advice

Derbyshire Law Centre were contacted for an interview but we were unable to arrange one in the timeframe required.

Surveys Response Rate, Interview Attendance and Focus Group Attendance

- **Resident Survey:** 173 responses in total. 84 responses from Amber Valley and 89 responses from Derbyshire Dales
- **Resident Focus Groups:** Focus group held on 16th November had 14 attendees. The second focus group on 17th November had 7 attendees.
- **Landlord Survey:** 17 responses in total. 5 responses from Amber Valley and 12 responses from Derbyshire Dales.
- **Stakeholder Interviews:** 7 stakeholders were interviewed.
- **Resident Interviews:** 8 residents were interviewed. All of the interviewees lived in Derbyshire Dales
- **Options Workshop:** 7 stakeholders attended the options workshop in total. 5 stakeholders were from Amber Valley Borough Council and 2 stakeholders were from Derbyshire Dales District Council

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