



“Getting a move on”:

**Tenant experiences of the rehousing process in Transformational
Regeneration Areas**

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Contents

Chapter	Title	Page
1	Background	3
2	Study aims, objectives and methods	4
3	The decision to demolish and relocate residents	6
4	The application and allocation process for rehousing	10
5	The move	18
6	Relocation outcomes	20
7	Conclusion	27
	References	30
	Appendix: Interview topic guide	31

Chapter 1 Background

Glasgow Housing Association (GHA) is currently in the process of rehousing tenants from over 20,000¹. GHA properties as part of a 15-year demolition and clearance programme. This programme started at the time of the transfer of the city's housing stock from Glasgow City Council (GCC) to the GHA in 2003 and forms part of GHA's wider regeneration plans. It is closely linked to reprovisioning plans, and aims to support the GCC Local Housing Strategy (LHS) and the GHA Asset Management Strategy. At the time of this study, mid-2011, over 13,000 GHA properties had been demolished².

The GoWell project has been studying the process of regeneration in three of the city's Transformational Regeneration Areas (TRAs) since 2005: Shawbridge; Sighthill; and Red Road. This has involved conducting interview surveys with residents living in the TRAs, as well as surveys of those who have moved out through clearance. Reports on the experiences and quality of life of these two groups have been published over the past two years^{3,4}.

In relation to the 'Remainers' (those continuing to live in the TRAs) we found that intentions to move home had strengthened over time, though not just for demolition reasons. Meanwhile, satisfaction with their homes had declined among Remainers, while satisfaction with their neighbourhoods remained unchanged.

Among the 'Outmovers' (those who had relocated to other areas due to clearance), we found higher levels of residential satisfaction and a stronger sense of community, post-move, compared with the experiences of Remainers. Outmovers reported reasonably high levels of choice about the movement process (in terms of the areas and properties they moved to), but also significant levels of problems in regard to being kept informed about when and where they would move, as well as with high levels of movement costs.

Having gathered survey evidence about the outcomes of relocation, we wished to understand what lay behind these findings by investigating the clearance process itself. How was clearance carried out by GHA as an organisation and by housing staff working for Local Housing Organisations managing the areas and housing stock to be cleared? And what were tenants' experiences of the process?

Chapter 2 Study aims, objectives and methods

Study aims and objectives

The principal aim of this study was to understand how the process of clearing occupants from multi-storey blocks, in preparation for demolition, worked in practice.

The subsidiary objectives of this aim were to understand the following:

- What were the tenants' experiences of the clearance and relocation process? Did they understand the process? Did they think the process was fair, and responsive enough to their needs?
- What factors serve to make moving easier or more difficult for individual households?
- Do tenants view the outcomes of their relocation in positive and/or negative terms?
- Have tenants' views about relocation changed over time?

Study methods

The study comprised in-depth interviews with tenants who had been relocated and with housing staff. This report covers the tenant experience of clearance. There is an accompanying report on the findings from the staff interviews⁵. All interviews were conducted in the period June to November 2011 in participants' homes.

Tenants were asked about the following topics (the topic guide is included in the appendix to this report): views about moving prior to relocation; the process of finding a new home; the practicalities of the move itself; likes and dislikes about their current home and area; social and family changes since the move.

Relevant documents on policy and practice were also reviewed, including Glasgow Housing Association (GHA) policy statements and policy reviews, and local rehousing strategies and clearance reports.

Tenant sample

Ten tenants were interviewed for this study, spread across the three Transformational Regeneration Areas (TRAs) prior to moving. All interviewees were secure tenants who had been relocated in the past three years; secure tenants make up the majority of households in clearance areas. In-depth interviews were conducted in tenants' homes, and all participants received a £20 supermarket voucher to thank them for giving up their time for the study.

There are small numbers of owners in clearance areas, as well as significant numbers of temporary tenancies (mostly asylum seekers and homeless lets); the views and experiences of these groups are not reflected in this study.

Tenants were recruited to the study by a variety of means:

- Four tenants were recruited by letter from a list of names provided by the Local Housing Organisations (LHOs) of tenants who had been involved in recent and past clearances.
- Two tenants were recruited by contacting households participating in another study within the GoWell programme.
- One tenant was recruited by contacting a local residents' group to help identify people who had been relocated from the area.
- Three tenants were recruited by telephone, after they had been spoken to by LHO staff about the study and said they were willing to be contacted.

Of the ten tenants, six had been rehoused in the previous six months and the remaining four were rehoused two to three years previously. Seven of the interviewees were female and three were male. They ranged in age from their 30s to their 60s. Eight were White Scottish, one African and one East European. Four were single person households; three were single adults with children; and three were couples with children (two with adult children and one with dependent children). Most of those interviewed had lived in their flat or the area for a long time, ranging from five to 24 years, prior to moving.

Changing residential circumstances in the sample

In terms of changes in residential circumstances, the sample had the following characteristics:

- All ten had lived in multi-storey blocks prior to rehousing.
- Seven of the ten moved to new build properties (though one of these moved to a newly-built property which had had one previous occupant but was reported to be in 'walk in condition').
- Four of the ten moved to properties with gardens: two moved to houses and two moved to four-in-a-block flats. The remaining six moved to flats: five to tenement flats and one to another multi-storey flat.
- Two of the ten moved to another RSL as landlord, whilst the remaining eight moved to another property managed by an LHO within the GHA federation (not necessarily the same LHO).

Chapter 3 The decision to demolish and relocate tenants

Involvement in decision-making

Most tenants interviewed had not been involved in the consultation process on plans for the area, and had only a vague awareness of this having taken place. Most tenants seemed surprised when they were asked about their involvement in looking at demolition proposals and options for the area. They saw this as something for Glasgow Housing Association (GHA) to decide, and then let them know the outcome. In the group we interviewed, some would have liked more of a say (in particular those who were against the demolitions) while others did not want to be involved.

Respondents knew that meetings had been held, but most chose not to attend (even though they had the opportunity to do so). The main reasons given were:

- They knew the blocks would probably come down, and preferred to wait for official confirmation of this before getting involved. They didn't seem to see the process as something they should get involved in.

Tenant 6 said that *"they had meetings in the library but I didn't go. I knew they were coming down at some point, so I just waited to hear"*.

- They felt that the decision to demolish had already been taken and it would be a waste of time attending meetings. One tenant said they had taken part in a consultation exercise several years ago, but didn't believe tenants had been listened to.
- Neighbours were attending and they could get all the information they needed from them.

Three tenants did attend meetings however, and said that they had been well-organised and informative. Two of the tenants attended through their involvement in a residents' group, which staff had suggested was common, with those attending usually being tenants who are already active in the community.

Attendance at meetings seemed to vary. Tenant 8 attended one meeting, but due to the large numbers attending did not feel confident enough to contribute. On the other hand, Tenant 9 said that, while the meeting was useful, attendance from residents was very poor.

The general view of tenants was that the decision to demolish had been taken a while ago by GHA, the consultation meetings were only to discuss the detail of this, and that it took too long for GHA to then confirm this and start the clearances. Many of the tenants felt that from their perspective the process took too long, with tenants frequently saying that people knew the multi-storey blocks were coming down but it took a few years for them to be told.

Tenant 5 said that *“there was talk of them coming down four years ago, but then it took ages”*.

Tenants mostly saw their involvement in the process as starting at the point when they received a letter confirming the clearance. None of the tenants were surprised when they received the letter confirming demolition. While many were unsure where they had heard about the decision, they were all aware of the proposals a long time before it was confirmed. This seemed to be through a mixture of neighbours, public meetings and newsletters.

Tenant 4 said that people knew through *“the word on the street”* but *“it took a few years until I got an official letter”*.

These comments about a lack of involvement in the decision-making about the multi-storey blocks, and the length of time taken to confirm decisions, should be seen against the backdrop of the process whereby GHA carried out Housing Future Assessments on selected multi-story blocks over a five-year period, which were technical, economic and housing demand assessments that did not generally involve tenants, and took time to complete.

Tenants unhappy with the decision

Four of the ten tenants interviewed were initially unhappy with the decision to demolish. Three of these were over 65 which, according to staff, was common. The three retired tenants said that, when they received the letter, they did not want to move. They had lived in the flats a long time, liked their homes, had friends there, and had a lot of memories there.

Tenant 1 said that *“I didn’t want to leave, and didn’t know where I wanted to go”*.

Tenant 2 said that the LHO *“were trying to do better for us”* but that *“I liked my flat, for personal reasons, and I liked the concierge, and I had friends in the flats”*.

Tenant 3 said that s/he didn’t want to move because it *“seemed like too much upheaval”* and s/he was *“in a comfortable rut”* there. However after the initial shock s/he *“accepted it, and thought we needed to do it”*.

The other tenant who did not want to move had been in the area for a much shorter time, having lived in the area for five years. However, the area was seen as home, and an area *“where I had made friends and everyone supported each other”* (Tenant 8).

The main reasons given for not wanting to move were:

Tenants liked the **security** of being high up in the multi-storey blocks and of having a concierge. Some seemed to see it as a very basic form of sheltered housing,

knowing they could *“always buzz if there was a problem”* (Tenant 1). However this varied, with tenants from one multi-storey block saying that it wasn't an issue as they had no concierge based in their block anyway.

Tenants felt **settled** and *“hadn't expected to move again”* (Tenant 3). They had been there a long time and liked their homes and the memories they had there. The thought of the upheaval of moving was also a concern.

Older tenants often had **friends** in the flats and they were concerned about not being as close to them. One tenant said that she had a friend of over 40 years and they went to each other's flats to do their hair, and she would miss that.

Tenants happy with the decision

The other six tenants were initially happy with the decision to demolish. The main reasons given for being happy with the decision were:

Clearance provided an **opportunity to move**. Most of the tenants said that they would not have been able to move if it hadn't been for clearance, so it was a great opportunity for them. Tenant 7 said that *“I was flying when I heard – I wouldn't have got a move otherwise”* and Tenant 9 had been trying to move for the previous two years without success. Tenant 4 said that *“because of the points system I wouldn't have got a move without it – other people had already taken private lets just to get out”*.

Another driver was having **problems with neighbours**. The main reason given for wanting to move was problems with other tenants in the flats. Tenant 6 described the multi-storeys as *“a dumping ground for druggies, refugees and asylum seekers – no proper family would take one”*, while a tenant in another area said that s/he *“hated it there”*. Tenant 9 said that there were *“a lot of problematic people – alcoholics, people on benefits”*.

In addition to problems with people in the blocks, tenants often mentioned the **poor condition of the properties**. Tenant 7 described the housing as *“falling apart – if it rained, water came in at the wall and went across the ceiling”* while Tenant 9 said that the flat was *“extremely cold, it just didn't retain any heat”*.

Some tenants also said that they thought the demolitions and **subsequent regeneration would improve the areas** and so were a positive move. Tenant 6 said that *“high rises are not a way to live, the demolitions will improve the area”* and Tenant 4 said that *“if the regeneration happens it should look lovely”*.

However, while some tenants were pleased with the decision, some still had concerns over how it would affect them. Tenant 10 described the reaction as *“50/50*

– it was good that I could move and get a house hopefully, but I was stressed about where we would end up and about having to make the decision”.

Summary

- Tenants did not generally have an expectation that they would be involved in decision-making about demolition or the nature of subsequent regeneration.
- This was either because they saw the demolition decision as GHA’s sole responsibility, or because they considered that the decision to demolish had already been taken in principle, and that consultation was about finer details rather than fundamentals. The former view may partly reflect past experience as a public sector tenant, with no expectation of tenant involvement in such decisions. Indeed, tenants reported choosing not to attend meetings where they could have had some involvement in the process.
- There was a view that decision-making took too long; that residents knew the blocks were going to be demolished and wanted to have that confirmed sooner.
- Some tenants were initially unhappy with the decision to demolish the multi-storey blocks. These tended to be older tenants who were settled in the area and had friends nearby. They also felt safe in the multi-storey blocks with a concierge service.
- Most of those interviewed were initially happy with the decision to demolish, primarily because it gave them an opportunity to move out of the area, which they would not have had otherwise. The main reasons for wanting to move were the poor physical condition of the flats and buildings, but more than this the fact that the multi-storey blocks had been occupied by a range of “problematic people”.

Chapter 4 The application and allocation process for rehousing

Interview and application form

Clearance tenants should receive a letter giving official notice of the demolition and rehousing, and inviting them to an interview to discuss their options. At this interview they should complete a housing application form which records their needs and preferences, and note if they would be interested in new build housing if they qualify.

While all of the tenants had received letters informing them of the decision, one had not been invited to an interview. Tenant 4 said *“I was sent an application form in the post to complete myself and send back to the office”*. This meant that the tenant had less information on how to complete the form and what could be included. They said that *“it would have been better to go over it with a Housing Officer and talk through areas etc”*. It was understood by the tenant that, in their area, only those who would qualify for new build were invited to an interview. Those applying for core stock did this by post. The tenant believed from talking to others that this was common practice, though Glasgow Housing Association (GHA) later confirmed to the researchers that everyone should have had an interview and that this must have been a one-off case.

Of the nine tenants invited to an interview, six were aware of having completed a housing application form, while three said that they had not done this.

The experience of the tenants varied depending on the area and the staff involved in the interview.

- In one area, tenants had been sent the application form in advance to look over. They then went in and discussed their different options with the staff, completed the form, and were told at that point if they were likely to qualify for new build. Tenant 1 said that the process was very straightforward, and that *“anything you asked they were able to answer”*.
- In another area, tenants were less clear about how the process worked. Tenant 5 said that *“You just went into the office and talked about what you were looking for. I was told I would get new build, and then they send your name in”*.

In the same area, Tenant 6 said that *“I got a ‘phone call asking me to come into the office to discuss rehousing, not a letter. I didn’t fill in an application – I wouldn’t have had to because I’m already a tenant. They just said I would qualify for new build because I’d been in the flat fifteen years, and asked where I would like. They only talked about GHA new build in this area, I didn’t know I could try to move to a different area. I might have liked other areas if I’d known”*.

While some tenants were not aware of having completed application forms, most said they found the staff helpful in completing the form, and that they were asked about their housing preferences and these were taken into account. However, the extent to which this happened again seemed to vary across areas and depended on individual staff:

- Most tenants were asked about the **areas** they would move to. However, while all were offered a say in areas, many (like Tenant 6 above) were not aware that they could move out of their current part of the city. Most tenants would also have liked more information on areas they could have moved to.
- While **size of property** is usually based on need, some single tenants were told that they could apply for two-bedroom properties if they were interested, and were pleased with this option.
- **New build** options were also discussed. Most were told if they were likely to qualify (based on their length of tenancy), and if they were, were asked if they would be interested in this and in which areas.

Most tenants said that there was a lack of communication from the housing staff after the initial interview. Those who received updates had called the office and asked what was happening themselves. Tenants saw this as a serious concern, feeling that they were living with a great deal of uncertainty. Tenant 4, who had been asked to apply by post and had not attended an interview, said that *“the application form goes in and you hear nothing until you get an offer. It would be much better if you heard something – even a call to say the application had been received and what the process was”*. The process involved in finding someone an alternative home should, according to GHA procedures, be explained at the rehousing interview, and it may be the case that tenants do not recall this account. However, it was also the case that GHA could communicate more regularly with tenants awaiting rehousing, particularly in circumstances where alternative accommodation has yet to be found.

The allocations process

After attending an interview and completing an application form, tenants should be allocated housing in one of two ways. For existing stock, the tenant should be allocated a property through the computerised allocations system using their ‘clearance priority’, with length of tenancy determining who is given preference among those for whom the available property is suitable in terms of size, type and area. As new build housing becomes available from the re-provisioning programme, priority among qualifying clearance tenants should be decided by their length of tenancy, with nominations then made to the developing Registered Social Landlord(RSL). Housing Officers have some flexibility in allocating existing stock to

ensure good management of the area, and other RSLs will rehouse nominees based on their own allocations policy.

However, the tenants interviewed did not have a clear understanding of how this process worked, and often seeming confused by how their allocation had been made. They felt that they didn't know when they would be moved, or why other people were being rehoused before them. For many, it was not clear who moved first or why. A few tenants felt that Housing Staff had too much say in who was housed, with Tenant 5 saying that "*Housing Officers play God*". However Tenant 3 said that, after being unhappy initially that some people were getting a quicker move, s/he later realised that this was because they were accepting flats and not houses.

In addition to housing needs and preferences, the other factor that might be taken into account was tenants' behaviour, but only in terms of rent arrears and antisocial behaviour (where legal action is being taken). However, tenants interviewed referred to other factors which they believed played a role in who was allocated the best properties or who was rehoused quickest. Tenant 1 thought that, as well as length of tenancy, "*your rent being up-to-date and being a good neighbour*" were looked at when making allocations. However, it seemed to be accepted that being a 'good tenant' played a role in allocations, and tenants saw this as fair.

Many tenants felt that the Housing Officer should be able to tell them the date housing would become available in advance. While this should usually be the case for those accepted for new build developments, allocations to existing stock are dependent on other properties of the correct size and area becoming available and so it is difficult for housing staff to predict when this will happen. Perhaps more information for tenants on how this works for existing stock would be useful.

Offers of new build

As with the application process, tenants' experiences of allocations varied.

In one area, the process worked as described by staff. Tenants were contacted again about six months after their initial meeting and invited to another interview to discuss new build options. They were asked which areas they were interested in, and were told where they were likely to get an offer. Later on in the process they were given the opportunity to view a show home and choose details of their new property such as kitchen units, tiles and so on. The timescales varied, depending largely on when the new build became available. Tenant 1 said that it took about two years from the initial clearance letter to moving in, for Tenant 2 it took about one year and for Tenant 3 it took just seven months. Throughout the process Tenant 1 said "*I could either 'phone the office or go in, it was easy, there was always someone to speak to*".

The four tenants moving to new builds from the other areas said that the process was less clear. In one area tenants were not aware of having completed an application form, describing a system where they were told that they would qualify for a new build dwelling in the area and were then asked if they were interested, and in which ones. While the tenants were happy to have received new build properties, they would have liked to have been housed in different areas and felt that this option had not been discussed with them. One tenant had been asked for an input into aspects of the new build properties such as kitchens, but the other tenant (who was moving to a different LHO) had not. S/he also said that requests to move to a particular floor – due to the age and health of the household – were not met.

In the other study area, tenants had mixed views of the process. While for one tenant the process worked as described, with three offers made for properties in a selected area, mistakes had been made with the application form of Tenant 10, with Clearance Priority not being given. This only came to light when a relation who worked in Housing noticed that the tenant's name had not come up for a property that it should have, therefore meaning an offer was missed. However, the offer of new build came about from the tenant hearing of a friend moving to the scheme and calling to ask for details. The process was then described as excellent, with the new RSL being extremely helpful and accommodating to requests.

Tenants also mentioned delays with new build developments being an issue. While they accepted that delays were often unavoidable, they said that communication with tenants was poor, with tenants not being told that the entry date had changed until very close to the time.

Offers of existing stock

For the three tenants moving to existing stock, the process varied. The tenants moving to another RSL and to improved GHA stock, received offers of housing much as described by the housing staff. However, for the non-GHA stock it was not clear how the allocation had been made.

The tenant moving to unimproved GHA stock (through the tenant's choice to remain in the area) had discussed the detail of the move, including the floor level wanted and the possibility of an additional bedroom. The tenant was then allocated a property in the usual way when this became available.

Accepting offers of accommodation

Most of the tenants interviewed felt that their rehousing needs and preferences had been met to a reasonable level. Where this was not the case, it was because the housing they required was not available where they would have liked to be

rehoused. In particular, one area had no new build or improved housing, so tenants wanting to stay locally had either to move nearby or move to unimproved stock.

We asked tenants about the amount of choice they had in the process and the pressures they might be under to accept a property. Tenants interviewed did not generally feel under any pressure from staff to accept early offers. However, Tenant 7 felt under pressure to accept the first offer made. After turning this down, however, there was no pressure to accept the next two offers and s/he felt able to wait for something s/he was happy with.

Where tenants felt stressed, they said that this was not caused by pressure from staff but from worries they had about making the decision and organising the move, or concerns about being left in the blocks after everyone else had moved out.

Tenant priorities in accepting offers

The main priorities of tenants in accepting rehousing offers are discussed below.

Most tenants said that the **area** was the main consideration when noting their preferences, with **safety** being their main concern. However, there were a number of other considerations including having friends nearby, working in the area, children going to school in the area, and good transport links. Tenant 4, who moved to existing stock, said that the area would have been a deciding factor above new build, especially with having a son – *“I want somewhere it’s safe for him to go out and get home again at night. Before I wouldn’t let him walk at night, he had to get taxi, but now he can walk home safely”*.

As mentioned by staff, many tenants wanted to stay in the local area. Of the ten interviewed, six said that this was their first preference, although it was not always possible. These six often mentioned feeling safer there, or other areas being less safe, as the reason. As they often described problems of crime and antisocial behaviour where they were, the impression was that for many tenants it was “better the devil you know”, or a lack of confidence that made them stay locally.

For the other four tenants the clearance was seen as an opportunity to move to better areas, with most expressing a strong desire to live elsewhere.

Linked to consideration of areas, tenants said that concerns over who their **neighbours** would be was a major factor when considering rehousing offers. Tenants referred to some areas of new build where they believed all the problem tenants had been housed and said that they would not have accepted rehousing there. This was sometimes in the same area as they were in, and in very similar house types. Tenant 4 said that, while initially wanting a new build and not qualifying, the people being housed there were *“unsavoury types”* and it would not have been a good move.

Tenants referred back to stricter allocation policies of the past, which often involved a home visit and interview, and felt this had meant the flats were better places to live. Tenant 4 said that *“in 1985 you were interviewed, and tenants were vetted. That doesn’t happen now, and the people who moved in caused problems”*. While the constraints on social housing have meant that RSL allocations tend to go to tenants in most need (and often with social problems) tenants were keen to go back to a time when this was not the case, and saw more balanced communities as one of the most important factors in changing their areas through relocation.

Several tenants referred to the people and not the housing being the problem. Tenant 5 said *“it doesn’t matter where you stay, it’s the people they put in”*. Of course, it should be recognised that in a situation of clearance, everyone living in the blocks to be demolished has to be accommodated somewhere through the process.

Tenants who had lived in multi-storey blocks for a long time often had concerns about moving to other **house types**. Tenant 1 said *“I wasn’t keen to move because of the lack of security”*. This was for a number of reasons: being above ground level, having secure doors and landings, and having a concierge. Nonetheless, none of those interviewed who expressed these concerns chose to move to another multi-storey block, all deciding that new build properties were worth changing house type for. However, Tenant 3 chose an upstairs flat to avoid being on the ground floor for safety reasons.

While offers are usually based on the **size of property** required by the household, some single tenants were offered two-bedroom properties where available because of the shortage of smaller units. Tenant 3 said that there were only two one-bedroom properties in the whole development. This was the case for all single tenants in the survey. While this was not their main concern when moving, they saw it as an added bonus.

Tenants said that **changing landlord** did not concern them if they were being offered the area and house type they wanted. Tenant 1 said that *“if they’re there and do repairs, then that’s all you need”*. The only tenant who had a preference would have moved from GHA, saying that *“I would have changed landlord if I could have”* (Tenant 5).

New build or existing stock

While most tenants said that they expressed an interest in new build initially, this decision was not as clear-cut as would perhaps be expected. The following factors influenced their decision on whether to apply for this or not:

Area was the main concern for tenants, and for a new build to be accepted it had to be in an area that the tenant was willing to move to. Where tenants had prioritised a new build over a move to another area they now suggested that, while happy with their move and not wanting to move again, they would give the area greater consideration if they were making the decision again. This was due to the continuing problems of antisocial behaviour and crime in the area that they felt they hadn't given enough thought to, prior to moving.

While **house type** was not mentioned frequently by tenants, there was often an assumption that new build housing meant front and back doors or at least four-in-a-block housing and was therefore preferred by tenants. In two areas where the new build was mainly tenement properties, tenants said that they were happy they had not been housed there.

Where new build **timing** was going to involve a lengthy wait and an interim move, all of the tenants interviewed said they would choose existing stock.

Perhaps surprisingly, some tenants said they were unsure if they wanted a **garden** or not. While this did not seem to play a big role in the decision, it was something they had given thought to.

Summary

- Most of the tenants found the housing staff helpful in completing the application form for rehousing.
- Most tenants felt that their rehousing needs and preferences had been met to a reasonable degree.
- Tenants did not feel under any pressure from housing staff to accept early offers of alternative accommodation.
- Tenant descriptions of the application process sometimes differed from that of the staff. In particular, not all tenants could recall attending an interview or completing an application form, though most reported these things. In one area, there was a suggestion that interviews were used only for tenants interested in new build properties.
- One of the tenants' main concerns was the lack of communication from housing staff after the initial interviews. This left tenants living with uncertainty. Communication was also a problem where new build developments were behind schedule and entry dates for rehousing were delayed.

- Tenants wanted housing staff to be able to tell them when their new housing would become available.
- It was not clear to tenants why some people got moved sooner than others. Either they did not understand the prioritisation criteria, or they could not make the connection between the stated criteria and the moves which they observed. Again, it would seem that uncertainty and perhaps a degree of suspicion is created by lack of regular updates and communication about rehousing.
- Tenants suspected that broader criteria of who was a 'good tenant' played a part in rehousing prioritisation, but they accepted this as fair, even though they did not understand how it operated precisely.
- Area was the most important consideration for tenants in accepting offers of accommodation. Most, but not all, tenants wanted to stay in the local area. But some tenants reported that the option of moving to other parts of the city was not discussed with them by housing staff. Some tenants who had moved into new build housing locally were dissatisfied with continuing problems of crime and antisocial behaviour and said they would give the area more consideration if they had the choice again, and that they wished new build housing had been available in other areas.

Chapter 5 The move

The move itself was seen as quite straightforward by most tenants, although often stressful and time-consuming. In particular, tenants who were working said that it was difficult to organise. However tenants also mentioned that, while it was an emotional time, the move brought back memories and was often a positive experience. These comments are probably similar to sentiments that would be felt in relation to many house moves, whether involving relocation or not.

Removals

All of the tenants interviewed carried out the move themselves. Some hired vans or removal companies, others moved items themselves or with the help of friends or family. The friend of one tenant used a shopping trolley for smaller items because the new property was close by.

One tenant suggested that it would be helpful to have a handyman type service available for tenants for small tasks such as fitting a washing machine or cooker. While the tenant was able to do this himself, he said that it would be a struggle for many tenants. GHA does indeed have a service of this type (the Handyperson Service) available for all disabled tenants and those over 60⁶.

Another tenant suggested that clearer information should be provided on what has to be removed from the property. After handing back the keys, the tenant found out that there would be charges for items left in the flat, and had had to contact the local MP in order to be allowed back to remove things. It was felt that this should be made clearer to tenants during the clearance process.

None of the tenants interviewed were aware of the option of the Local Housing Organisation (LHO) arranging removals for them; something that staff had mentioned, although this is dependent on the needs of the tenant and so not all of those involved in relocation would necessarily have been notified.

Keys

Tenants were given additional time to access their property after their termination date to assist them with the move. This would not normally happen as other tenants would be moving in. The time given varied from tenant to tenant, but was usually two to four weeks. While this was seen as helpful, some tenants felt that the time was too short, while others said they were told “*we had as long as we wanted*” (Tenant 6).

Home loss and disturbance payments

Most tenants said that these payments were very welcome and were adequate to cover the costs of the move. This was particularly the case in new build properties. Where these didn't cover the costs, it was usually because tenants had taken the decision to buy new furniture for their property, and they did not expect these costs to be covered for them. Tenant 1 said that *"it didn't cover everything, but that's up to the individual. It's because they bought other things for the move"*.

Those moving to existing stock often found that they had higher costs and more work to carry out, although this varied. One property in particular was in very poor condition, with the tenant having to plaster the walls and ceiling and repaint the flat. The tenant said that the payments did still cover the costs however.

Where tenants had outstanding rent arrears, these were deducted from the payments. Tenant 4 said that the deductions meant that *"it was a bit of a struggle to decorate as I didn't get the full amount, but it's a fair amount to give people"*.

One tenant said that an amount had been deducted from his payments and that he had been told this was his first month's rent. He was told that this had to be paid in advance and, as he was on Housing Benefit which was paid in arrears, this would be deducted from his home loss and disturbance payment. His Housing Officer was looking into this issue.

Summary

- There were few reports of difficulties in moving, with most people describing it as a fairly straightforward process.
- Tenants were unaware that the LHO could help to organise removals where assistance was needed, though none reported any difficulties in arranging their own removals.
- Tenants made two suggestions whereby the LHO could make the move easier for tenants:
 - Offering a handyman service for some tenants to use when moving into a new property. This is currently available to disabled tenants and those over 60, but not to all tenants in relocation circumstances.
 - Providing clearer information on what has to be removed from the old property.
- Tenants seemed satisfied with the level of home loss and disturbance payments made, and felt that these covered the costs involved in moving.

Chapter 6 Relocation outcomes

Views on the dwelling

Tenants' views about their new properties may be influenced by their experience of their previous homes. While tenants talked about the poor physical condition of the multi-storey blocks in general, the main concerns most had with their previous property were dampness and heating; this echoes what we have found in our longitudinal qualitative study of families in multi-storey blocks⁷ Tenant 4 described his/her son wearing a hat and scarf in his old room to keep warm, even with the heating on constantly.

Seven of the ten tenants interviewed had moved into new build housing and three into existing housing stock. Four of the ten were now in houses with gardens (including one which was a four-in-a-block flat). Therefore, the sample of tenants for this study of the clearance process is not reflective of all those rehoused, since most people to date have been rehoused into existing housing stock.

Eight of the ten tenants were still Glasgow Housing Association (GHA) tenants at the time of the interview, though some had moved from one Local Housing Organisation (LHO) to another. Two had moved to rent from another Registered Social Landlord (RSL). The landlord was not a deciding factor for any of the tenants when considering offers of accommodation.

New build dwellings

For most tenants moving to new builds, the move had meant an improvement in the physical condition of their property which they were extremely happy with. Tenant 7 said *"I love the house, I'm so happy with it. When I came to see it I was in tears, I was just walking from room to room with my eyes all swollen"*.

Most of these tenants also said that they would not move again, and that they were *"here forever"* (Tenant 10) or *"here for life, I'm not moving again"* (Tenant 5).

The positive factors mentioned about new build dwellings included the warmth, space and garden in the new housing, as well as the quality of the kitchen and bathroom. Several older tenants expressed regret that the new housing had not been available when they had children at home, talking in particular about having a garden.

Generally, tenants did not mention any negative aspects of the property unless asked, and then often had to think hard about it. However, one of the negative aspects mentioned by several tenants was the lack of storage space (often due to an

extra toilet being added) and, in particular, the fact that no shelves had been put in cupboards.

One tenant also still had concerns about security, feeling very vulnerable about being on the ground floor. Another tenant said that taking a corner property was a mistake as its situation and design (having “blind spots” from the window) meant that antisocial behaviour and thefts from the garden were more of a problem.

Existing dwellings

While the condition of existing stock varied, most tenants were happy with their new property, including the tenant who had chosen to move to an unimproved multi-storey block. While this was very similar to the previous housing of this tenant, the different position of the flat meant that it was much warmer.

One property, however, was in very poor decorative condition. While the kitchen and bathroom were recently improved, all the doors in the property with the exception of one had holes in them, and the general decoration was very poor. Tenant 8, however, still preferred the new property, saying it was a better size, had more storage and better ventilation in the bathroom.

Rent and utility bills

Rent levels were not discussed with tenants prior to the move. Those who paid rent directly only found out the new rental amount at the sign-up stage. However, while they said more notice would have been helpful, this was not usually a big issue for the tenants, even where there had been an increase.

In some cases, rent levels decreased for tenants, although this would often be coupled with an increase in Council Tax. This seemed surprising, as tenants were moving from housing which was in the poorest condition, and which was seen as the lowest demand house type. However, tenants said that the GHA rent structure as experienced in their previous homes had been out of date and often unfair which explained the discrepancies.

Tenants were generally unsure about the changes in costs for utilities in their new properties, but said that they were much warmer and easier to heat. Tenant 1 said that *“the multis were freezing the whole time and it cost a fortune to heat them”*. This comfort gain was true for new build and existing housing. Some tenants seemed to think that they would be paying more as they now had gas as well as electricity, but this was based on the fact that they were expecting to receive two bills, not on the amounts charged. However, Tenant 3 said that, although there was now gas and electricity to pay for, it worked out cheaper than before. Another tenant was sure the

costs would be cheaper as s/he rarely needed the heating on due to the energy-efficient design.

Views on the area

Five of the ten tenants were rehoused in the immediate or surrounding area of their previous home, four were rehoused in the same part of the city (e.g. north), and one tenant had moved to another part of the city.

Previous area

While some tenants had not initially been keen to move home, most tenants described the area they had been in previously as suffering from severe social and physical problems. Tenant 6 said *"I couldn't get out quick enough"* and described locking themselves in at night as people would come to the door at 3am *"full of drugs"*. Tenant 7 said *"I'm really happy I don't stay in that dump anymore"*. Other tenants described their previous areas as *"a zoo"*, *"a nightmare"* and *"a prison sentence"*.

Even those who had not wanted to move said that the areas had deteriorated in recent years, usually due to the people being housed there. While they still had an attachment to the area, this often seemed to be based on an earlier period.

The main issues for most of those interviewed were safety and the people being housed in the areas. The flats and surrounding area were seen as a dumping ground for the worst tenants, creating problems of crime and antisocial behaviour. Tenant 4 talked about various problems in the area including football on the landing at 1am, drug dealers, and regular sectarian singing and shouting during the night. The latter incident was reported to the LHO but reportedly no action was taken.

However other less serious issues were also raised, with one tenant mentioning litter as a serious problem in the area.

Areas of new build housing

Tenants who had moved into new build developments generally said that they had good communal stairs and neighbours, but they also said that they were the lucky ones, and that other parts of the street or neighbourhood had all the problem tenants together. Tenant 5 said *"it's quiet here, there are no junkies at this end of the street"* while Tenant 1 said that there was a problem with kids drinking and destroying things at the other end of the road. This was the case in two of the study areas. Any issues they had were from people passing through and the wider area, not from their immediate neighbours.

The problems discussed varied, but consisted mainly of antisocial behaviour in the street (noise, fighting, drinking in the street late at night) and crime (theft of items from gardens, and a stolen car driven into a property). Tenant 3 said *“I love this house Monday to Friday, but not at the weekend. Before I would go out for cigarettes late at night, but now I won’t”*.

Tenants in one of the developments said that their expectations of new build areas had perhaps been too high. When moving from the multi-storey blocks to new builds, they had expected the problems of antisocial behaviour and crime to be less obvious than in the flats. However, they now realised that the same people were there, but just in a different type of housing, so the same issues were perhaps inevitable. They also said that being in low-rise housing meant that they were perhaps more aware of the problems than they had been as they could hear the noise and see trouble in the street from their windows, when previously they had been much higher up. However, despite these issues, the tenants were still glad that they had moved and were extremely happy with the outcome.

Not all tenants in new developments shared these concerns, with three tenants not having any problems. Tenant 7 said that *“the biggest difference is it’s so peaceful, it’s like night and day. Even at the weekend. It’s great for noise”*.

Areas of existing housing

The two tenants who had moved to existing stock outwith the clearance areas generally had a better experience of the wider area, feeling safer and having fewer concerns about crime and antisocial behaviour. This included a tenant who had not wanted to be rehoused and had moved to a different part of the city, away from friends and support. Both areas that these tenants moved to had more amenities close by and had a lower concentration of social housing, and the tenants felt that the areas were safer and had fewer social problems. Tenant 4 said *“life here is far better. I have peace of mind – it’s a nicer area, and I’ve no worry about the house being broken into, or safety”*.

The tenant who had moved to unimproved stock within the clearance area had retained a positive view of the area as a whole. Despite its problems, it was hoped that the regeneration proposals and demolition of the worst blocks in terms of both housing and problem tenants would see the area improve.

The future regeneration of the areas, the perceived lack of progress with this, and the time taken was raised frequently by tenants as a concern with clearances. There were a number of factors raised in relation to this.

The first concern was that the length of the discussions had meant that tenants had to live in very poor housing conditions for a long period prior to rehousing. During this

period, very little, if any, work was carried out on repairing the properties meaning they deteriorated badly. Tenants also felt that, due to the uncertainty, they could not spend money themselves on their homes, exacerbating the situation.

A concern raised by many residents was the lack of progress since they had been rehoused, with many of the flats still standing, often with other tenants in them. This was a particular issue for tenants who did not want to move, and as a result felt like they had been moved out for little reason. This was the case even though tenants said that they were glad they had moved and were happy in their new properties.

The final issue raised by tenants was the lack of new build housing and other development in the area, and therefore the lack of new build rehousing options at the time of their move. Indeed, the GHA reprovisioning programme to provide replacement new build homes for tenants relocated through clearance was slower to get started than expected, and did not keep pace with clearanceⁱ.

Of course, many of these comments reflect the complexity of any regeneration process that involves housing stock assessments, the rehousing of large numbers of people, and the involvement of other partner organisations from the social and private sectors. All, against the backdrop of an economic downturn.

Parks and open spaces

While private gardens were viewed positively by tenants, many of those interviewed expressed concerns about open spaces and parks. These were seen as attracting antisocial behaviour, usually linked to alcohol. Tenants would rather have no garden and park areas if this meant they could avoid these problems.

Similarly, areas where there were no children in the building and no play parks which could attract young people were seen as positive by tenants. This was not only by older tenants, but by those in their 40s and those with grandchildren or children themselves.

Community and neighbours

ⁱ Slow progress on GHA's new build programme was commented on by the regulator, with the expected completion date for the programme delayed beyond the original target of 2010/11. The regulator also remarked on an ineffective link between the planning of new build and demolitions. See: Scottish Housing Regulator (2007) *Glasgow Housing Association Inspection Report*, Chapter 4: paras.3.1-3.4.

While some tenants talked about losing a sense of community, for most this did not seem to be linked directly to the clearance move. Most indicated that this was something from the past that had no longer existed in the blocks prior to rehousing, usually due to changes in the way properties were allocated in recent years. While tenants wanted to see a sense of community again in their areas, most did not see it as possible without a change to more mixed communities. Tenant 3 said that *“the problem is the allocations now, they’re not careful in how they’re selected and they put them all together”*. The house type was not seen as relevant to this.

Most tenants did not say that moving away from neighbours was an issue, and few had stayed in touch with their previous neighbours. Where they had, this tended to be people in the flats they were friends with who they continued to see socially anyway, and they did not feel that the move had affected this. Tenant 2 said that being in a four-in-the-block flat now meant that s/he was closer to his/her neighbours than s/he had been in the multi-storey flats.

There were some tenants, however, who felt that they had less social contact since the move, particularly the older tenants. Tenant 1 said that, in the flats, people had daily contact, even if it was just with the concierge, and that it was lonelier in the new development. Despite this, s/he said s/he was glad s/he had moved and wouldn’t want to go back now.

Changing views of the move

Tenants’ views of their move changed over time. Surprisingly, this was evident even with tenants who had moved only a few months previously.

Positive change: Some tenants who had been opposed to, or concerned about, a move to a new area found that, after just a few months, they felt settled and were glad they had moved. Tenant 8 said that *“I have come to like this area, and I’m glad now that I moved. In the block before you had all manner of people, good and bad. Here there are only six flats in the stair, and they’re all decent people”*. Tenant 1 said *“I’m glad now that it happened, but at the time I would have stayed”*.

Negative change: Others who had been pleased about a move to new build in their existing area found that they were experiencing similar problems with the wider area to those they had experienced in their previous property. Tenants who had been in their new properties longer said that the same problems existed as before, even though their housing was of better quality and they were happy with the property itself. While fear of crime seemed to be an issue in some cases, in many instances tenants reported experiencing or witnessing crime and antisocial behaviour.

Summary

- Those who had been rehoused were generally very happy with their new homes and would not wish to return, or to move again. Things people particularly liked about their new homes were more space, warmth and comfort, and the quality of the kitchen and bathroom. Gardens, where available, were also popular.
- Negative aspects of the new homes, for some tenants, were insufficient storage space, and feelings of insecurity and vulnerability now that they were living on the ground floor.
- Tenants would benefit from clear, earlier notice of the rental charge for the home they were going to move into, as well as guidance on the likely utility costs.
- Most tenants moved very local to their previous location, though not usually within the same neighbourhood. Most tenants did not see moving away from their previous neighbours as an issue; some kept in touch with their old neighbours. Those respondents who reflected on a loss of community did not link this to the clearance process, but rather to social changes that had taken place in the multi-storey prior to regeneration.
- Some of those who had moved into new build developments expressed surprise that they still experienced antisocial behaviour in the neighbourhood. They attributed several reasons for this: the social composition of the area was not very different to their previous location; they were possibly more aware of antisocial behaviour due to being on ground level and in a street; and their expectations of change prior to the move might have been too high.
- Despite these comments, tenants were still glad they moved and were generally pleased with their immediate neighbours in the new development. Older tenants indicated that they had less social contact since the move, indicating that some people might benefit from a degree of social support after rehousing.
- Even though they were happy with their move, tenants were concerned about the lack of progress in redeveloping their previous neighbourhood. This seemed important in making them feel their move was worthwhile.

Chapter 7 Conclusion

This final chapter reflects on the main research objectives we set ourselves at the start of the study.

Tenants' experience and understanding of the process

In the early stages of the process, the tenants interviewed had little expectation or desire to be involved in decisions about the demolition of the multi-storey blocks. This was either because they thought this should be Glasgow Housing Association's (GHA's) decision, or because they thought the decision had already been made in principle to demolish the blocks, prior to any discussion with residents.

However, the tenants' main complaint about the early stages of regeneration was that it took too long to officially notify them of the fact that their blocks were to be demolished. They wanted a quicker timeline at this stage in the process.

Tenants' descriptions of the rehousing process sometimes differed from that of housing staff, with not everyone able to recall going through an interview or completing an application form, though this was not a cause of complaint by tenants.

The rehousing process was described by both staff and tenants as a very localised phenomenon, focused on the immediate area and its surroundings. Most tenants wanted to live locally after rehousing, but some tenants who moved into new build housing reported that they would have liked to consider other areas, if the option to do so had been discussed with them – it is not clear whether they felt this at the time or only afterwards.

Tenants did not understand how prioritisation operated in practice in the relocation process; they did not understand why some people moved sooner, and others later, and suspected that other factors in addition to length of tenancy (which they were aware of) were involved. It would seem that while staff liaised with tenants about their individual cases, tenants had some desire to receive more information about progress with the rehousing process as a whole.

Tenants believed that a broader interpretation of being a 'good tenant' was involved in rehousing prioritisation, taking it beyond the issue of serious antisocial behaviour to include upkeep of one's garden and communal areas, and being polite to housing staff. Tenants supported this approach.

In general, the tenants' view was that housing staff had been helpful in the process and that the tenants' rehousing needs and preferences had been met to a reasonable degree through relocation.

Making moving easier for tenants

While moving was stressful, either because things had to be organised for the move or simply because a decision had to be made about where to go, the tenants' situation was eased by the fact that they did not feel under pressure from housing staff to accept early offers. This seems to be a uniformly positive aspect of the relocation process.

In several respects, the improvements tenants sought that would have made things easier for them related to communication by GHA or the Local Housing Organisation (LHO):

- There was not enough communication between the initial interview and the first offer of alternative accommodation. Tenants would have particularly liked some indication of when they might expect to move.
- Where movement to a new build development was delayed, tenants complained that they were not told this soon enough.
- Some tenants were unclear what they had to remove from their old property, and the consequences of not doing so.
- Tenants appeared ill-informed about the changes to their rent levels that would result from relocation, and the issue of rents did not appear to form part of the consideration of rehousing options. Tenants under-occupying properties after relocation may now face difficulties following recent welfare reforms.

The other issue warranting better communication with relocated tenants was that of the regeneration of their former neighbourhoods. At this stage in their settling in (one to three years after moving), relocated tenants expressed awareness of slow progress in the demolition and redevelopment process and wondered what was happening, or due to happen, with their former neighbourhoods. This seemed to be because they were still concerned about their former neighbourhoods, having lived there for some time and forming an attachment, and because they wanted to know that their move was worthwhile in the broader scheme of things. There is a case, therefore, for GHA to be more open with tenants in regeneration areas about issues of progress and the difficulties faced in progressing a complex redevelopment processⁱⁱ.

ⁱⁱ The regulator identified a number of difficulties with the progress of regeneration through both demolitions and new build by GHA. These included issues of planning and performance, practical difficulties, and costing and funding problems within the GHA Business Plan. See Scottish Housing Regulator (2007) *GHA Inspection Report*, Chapter 4: paras 3.1-3.8 and Chapter 5. para. 3.9.⁸

Tenants' views on the residential outcomes

Most tenants were happy with their new homes, since they had managed to leave behind problems of dampness and poor heating in favour of warm homes with better quality kitchens and bathrooms. Tenants were unsure if they would be paying more or less for fuel in their new homes. For those who moved to houses, having a garden was particularly valued. The main downside mentioned by tenants who moved into new build dwellings was a shortage of storage space.

Tenants experienced a quandary about the rehousing location. They were clear that the area was a more important consideration than the dwelling in terms of their relocation preferences. While they complained about crime and antisocial behaviour in their previous dwelling and neighbourhood, they nonetheless preferred to be relocated locally, partly because they were uncertain about feelings of safety in other areas. Those tenants who had moved into new build housing in the local area expressed dissatisfaction about continuing antisocial behaviour problems in the area, if not in their development then in their immediate surroundings. They were also more aware of antisocial behaviour issues now that they lived at ground level and could see the street, rather than living higher up in a multi-storey block. Tenants who moved to other locations were the ones to describe fewer social problems after their relocation.

Relocated tenants raised an issue that was also identified by housing staff, namely that relocation of tenants to existing or new build housing in the local area had not yet produced more mixed communities, something which the tenants desired and some expected to be an outcome from the regeneration process. This concern partly reflects the context of an economic downturn post-2008, which slowed the regeneration process and curtailed the involvement of the private sector in constructing new housing that could have contributed to creating more mixed communities.

Changing views over time

Relocated tenants exhibited changes of views in both directions: some of those initially opposed to demolition and rehousing were soon afterwards glad it had happened. Equally, some of those who looked forward to the process, while still pleased with their new dwelling, expressed disappointment that the social quality of the neighbourhood had not changed as much as they expected and that crime and antisocial behaviour issues persisted post-move.

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Appendix

Topic guide for interviews with tenants who have moved

Before the move

How long had you lived in your previous home? Or, in that area?

Had you been wanting to move home in any case? If so, why?

How did you find out, or know, that you would have to move house?
Did you understand or agree or disagree with why you had to move?

How did you feel about it at the time? Were you glad to be moving, upset about it, or anxious?

What worried you the most about having to move?

What pleased you the most about the prospect of moving?

How long did you wait to move, between being officially told you had to move, and actually moving?

- Was that too long a time for you, or not long enough?

Did your views about moving change at all during the time you were waiting to move?

Getting a new home

How did the process work for finding a new home for you?

- Did the housing staff come to talk to you about where you might live in the future? Was that one conversation or several?
- How was any assessment done of what size and type of house you needed, or of what area you might live in?
- Did you get to say what you wanted or preferred?
- What kinds of options or choices were you given about the house you might move to?
- Did you need, or would you have preferred more options? Why?
- Did you refuse any offers of a house made to you? If so, why?
- What influenced your choice or acceptance of the offer of a new home?
- Did you feel under pressure to accept something? If so, why?

How did you find being kept informed about when and where you were going to move? Were you kept well enough informed? How were you kept informed about things?

How would you describe the way the housing staff dealt with you about moving?

Moving home itself

Was the move itself difficult in any way, or easy to do?

How did you move your belongings? On your own, or with help?

What was the most difficult thing about moving?

Was moving expensive for you? Did you get any financial help with that?

What condition was this house in when you got here?

Your current home

Are you pleased with this house? Why?

Are there things you particularly like about it?

Or things you dislike about this house, or things you find difficult about it?

Is it more or less expensive to rent and to run than your previous home?

Compared with your previous house, what has made the biggest difference to you, or your family, from living in this house?

Your current area

Is this area near or far from where you were before?

How is it different to where you were before?

What things do you particularly like about living in this area?

What things do you dislike about living around here?

Which do you prefer, this area or the area you lived in before?

What has made the biggest difference to you, or your family, from living in this area?

Social and other changes

Do you still have any of the same neighbours as before you moved?

How, if at all, do you keep in touch with your previous neighbours?

How do you get on with your current neighbours here?

- Are your neighbours similar people to you, or different? Do you like that?

Have you made any new friends or acquaintances since moving here?

- If yes, how did you get to know them?

Has anyone in your family been particularly affected by moving house, either in a positive way or in a negative way?

- If so, who has been affected and how?

Would you say your life has changed in any way, for better or worse, since moving here?

- If yes, why would you say that's happened?

Overall feelings

How do you feel now about having moved and about living here? Was it a good thing for you to have done or not?

How do you feel about where you lived before, and having moved from the area and people there?



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