

**Research project:**  
*Rehousing older social housing tenants*

**Housing LIN HAPPI Hour**

02 November 2021 (virtual event)

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# The study

- In progress (01/2020-03/2022). Funded by National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) School for Public Health Research (SPHR)
- Focus on **rehousing schemes** (n=4)  
for **older social housing tenants** (55+ years)  
in **London Borough of Hackney**
- Collaboration with Hackney Council
  
- Appropriate housing is fundamental to health and wellbeing
- Rehousing schemes are an important means to support older social housing tenants to move to more suitable homes
- In Hackney/London, over half (57%) of residents aged 65+ are social housing tenants -> potential for rehousing schemes to reach a sizeable part of Hackney's older population



# The rehousing schemes



## Hackney Council schemes

### Downsizing

**Elective** moves to smaller homes, commonly existing properties

### Regeneration

**Non-elective** moves (due to demolitions) to homes that can be smaller/equivalent/ larger, commonly new builds

## Mayor of London schemes (supported by Hackney Council)

### Housing Moves

**Elective** moves to properties across Greater London for social housing tenants of all ages

### Seaside & Country Homes

**Elective** moves to properties in coastal & rural areas for social housing tenants aged 55+

## Questions asked by Hackney Council

How can we optimise the rehousing experiences of older social housing tenants?

How can we maximise desirable outcomes?



## Research questions

What **motivates/incentivises** older social housing tenants to move through a rehousing scheme?

How have they experienced the **process** of moving?

What have been the health-related **outcomes** of their moves?



**Study aim:** To inform efforts to improve rehousing schemes and their outcomes, and make them attractive to older tenants

## Methods



Literature review



Document analysis



Interviews

with practice-based stakeholders



Survey

with rehoused older social housing tenants



Photovoice

with rehoused older social housing tenants



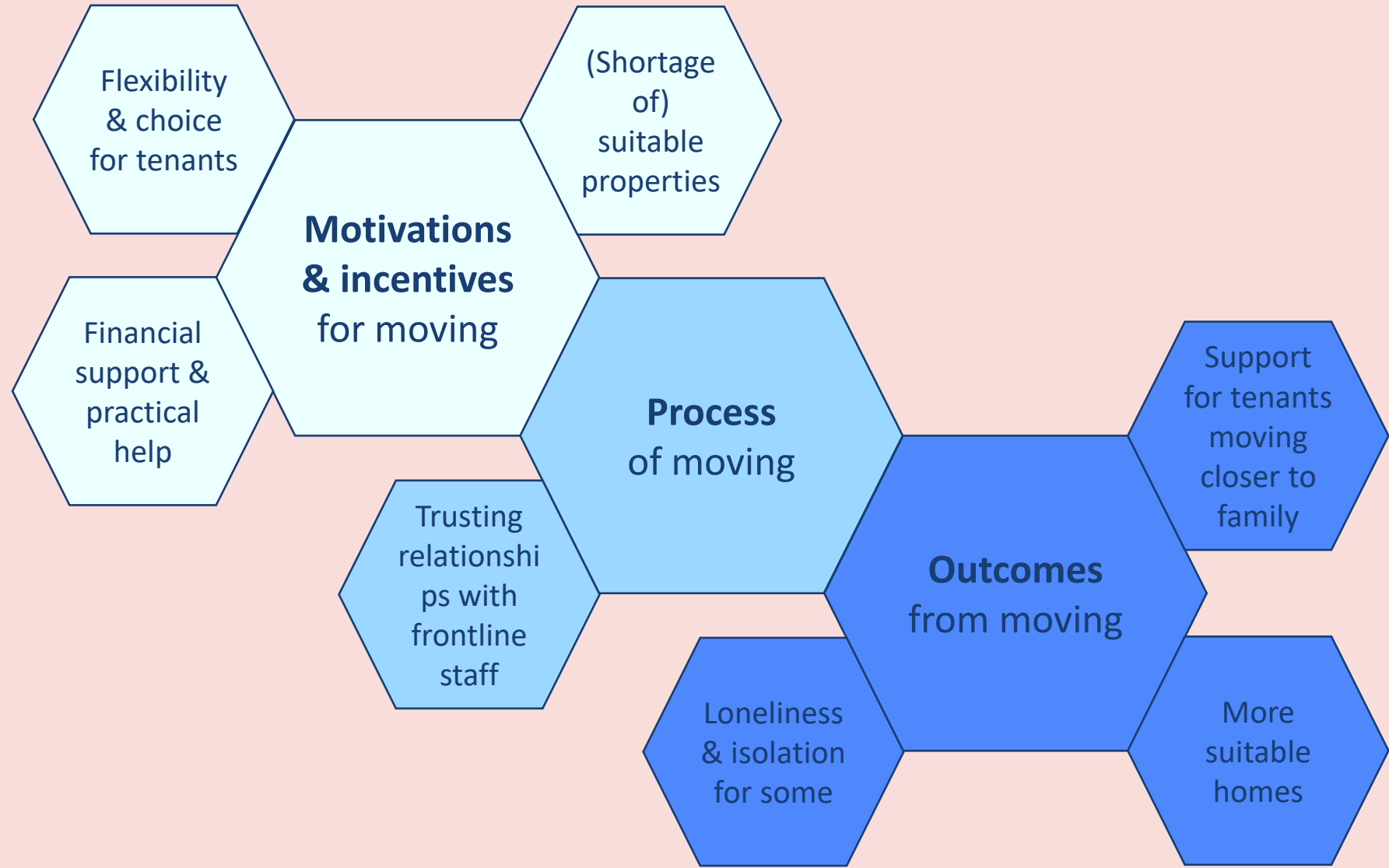
Interviews

with older non-movers – interested in moving, but then decided against it

## Findings (preliminary)

Interviews with practice-based stakeholders

Participants: n = 17



## Survey with rehoused tenants

Participants: n = 75/798 (9.4%)



## Process of moving

### What worked out well?

	D	R	HM	S&CH
Support from professionals/agencies	●●●			●●
Information	●	●●●●		●
Support from family	●			●
Viewing properties online	●			
Financial support		●●●●		●
Assistance with removal process		●●●●●●		●
Communication			●	
Not much/nothing	●			●●

### What was difficult?

	D	R	HM	S&CH
Challenging experience of professionals/agencies involved	●●●		●	●●●●
(Aspects of) removal process	●●	●●●●●●		●
Emotional attachment to previous home	●			
Challenging experience of entire rehousing process	●			●
Getting one's preferred property	●			
Lack of information		●●		
Viewing properties (logistics)				●
Delays				●
Not enough time to move		●●		●
Not much/nothing		●●●●●●		●●●●

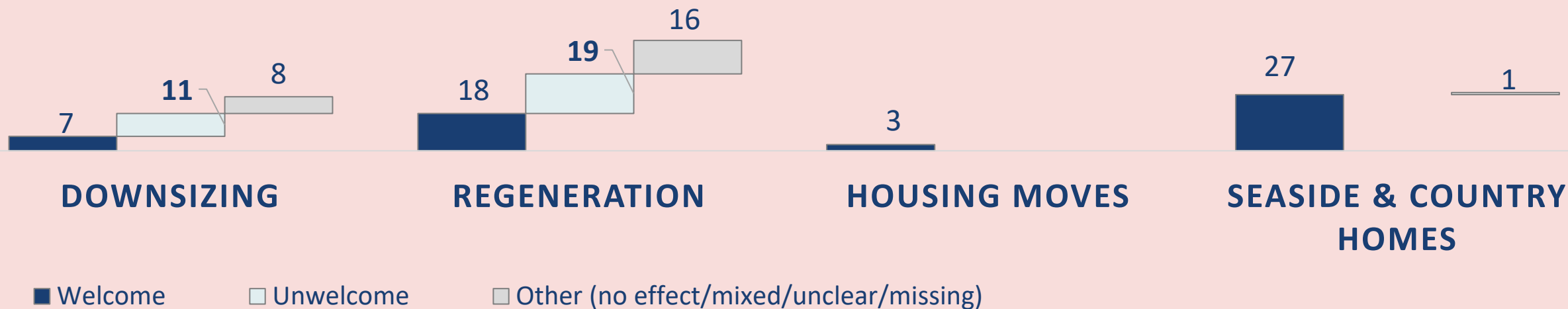


## Health-related effects of moving

Most commonly mentioned:

- Broad *unwelcome* health-related effects
- Challenging features of new home

• No unwelcome health-related effects mentioned



• Broad *welcome* health-related effects

• Health-enhancing features of new home

• Health-enhancing features of one's new environment

## Photovoice with rehoused tenants

- Participants take photographs that capture their experiences of moving
- Talk about their photographs in an **interview** and a **focus group**
- Photographs are displayed in an end-of-project **exhibition**

**Participants:** n=9 (1/D; 5/R; 3/S&CH)



## Regeneration (male, 60s)

### *Motivations for moving*

*... that flat was one of the first to be demolished. ...  
We were eventually transferred ... to this newbuild.*



### *Process of moving*

*They supplied vans and everything ...it was quite well planned. We moved in quite easily.*

### *Outcomes/home*

*It was a dream really, to move into a nice, comfortable place ... lots of light ... there wasn't damp, [or] water running down the walls.*

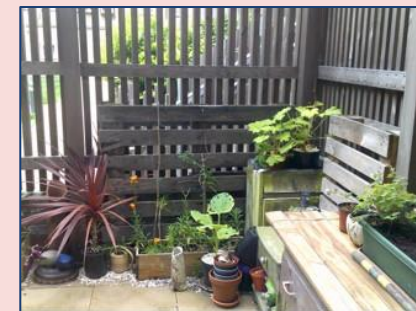
## Downsizing (female, 60s)

### *Motivations for moving*

*I didn't really want to move. ... I felt that my presence wasn't very accepted by some people in that community ... [I have] disabilities, and I also have a very particular appearance. So, it meant I was the target of a bit of fun, a bit of intimidation, and [as] a woman ... you weren't treated with any respect, ...*

### *Outcomes/health & community*

*It has not done for me what I thought it might in terms of improving my quality of life ... Hackney seems to be quite a young person's borough now. ... some of the older people ... are getting a little bit left behind.*



### *Outcomes/home*

*... my garden, ... that's really the only thing that has improved for me.*

## Seaside & Country Homes (male, 65) (moved from Hackney to Exmouth; wife with disability)

### ***Motivations for moving***

*...my wife, she felt like a prisoner in Hackney. She actually spent the last four years in her bedroom. ... she just grew to hate the place. To me, I just felt I was getting more and more hemmed in, becoming less of a person, stress levels were going through the roof.*



### ***Outcomes/health***

*Here, I just feel like a human being again.*

### ***Outcomes/environment***

*The sunset is looking directly down the road. They're unbelievable. They're some of the best in the country.*

## Interviews with non-movers

Participant: female, 75 (former Housing Officer for Hackney Council)

Flat too big & difficult to manage -> plans to downsize

Husband dies

Further (less proactive) attempts to downsize, then paused

Lives in 2-bedroom flat

Views properties:

- stairs & more stairs
- damp
- dim
- narrow
- noisy

*I said: "There's dampness there." The Housing Officer said: "You're being too fussy."*

*I've been here 42 years. ... [my daughter was] raised there, and [her] room is so special to me ... It's a load of sensitive memories ... It's very difficult.*

*I will have moments when I think: "This [moving] is too much. I just cannot cope with this sort of thing anymore."*

### Key issues:

- Unsuitable properties
- Unhelpful Housing Officer
- Emotional attachment to current home
- Moving is daunting/overwhelming

## Some key points so far ...

- Fundamental distinction: elective/non-elective moves -> not all tenants had a choice
- Different kinds of support for the rehousing process are available (e.g. financial; support from professionals). They are valued by tenants across the different schemes
- There is scope for improvements, e.g. around tenants' experiences of professionals/agencies involved in the rehousing process
- Outcomes for tenants are mixed. No apparent pattern of welcome/unwelcome outcomes based on whether tenants chose to move (e.g. Downsizing) or whether they had no choice (Regeneration)
- Overwhelmingly positive evaluation by participants who left Hackney/London
- Rehousing experiences are complex and diverse -> ensure that rehousing schemes maximise responsiveness to individuals and personalised support
- Findings relevant beyond Hackney



# Thank you!

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