

From 'rightplacing' and 'downsizing' to better  
understanding of the housing needs and  
preferences of your ageing populations

Rehousing programmes for older social housing  
tenants: health-related processes and outcomes

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# The study



- ☐ A suitable home is one of the most important influences on health & wellbeing
- ☐ **Rehousing programmes:** designed to support residents to move to a more suitable home
- ☐ Research in Hackney on how well rehousing programmes for **older social renters** (55+ years; renting from Council or Housing Association) are working

Hackney Council programmes	Mayor of London programmes (Co-ordinated by GLA; supported by Hackney Council)
<b>Downsizing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Elective</b> moves to smaller homes in Hackney</li> </ul>	<b>Housing Moves</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Elective</b> moves to properties across Greater London</li> </ul>
<b>Regeneration</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Non-elective</b> moves (due to demolitions) to homes in Hackney</li> </ul>	<b>Seaside &amp; Country Homes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Elective</b> moves to properties in coastal &amp; rural areas</li> </ul>

Note: Over half (57%) of residents aged 65+ are social housing tenants (Council & HAs)

## What did Hackney Council want to know?

How can the rehousing experiences of older social housing tenants be optimised?

How can desirable outcomes be maximised?



# Methods



## Literature review

What is known/gaps in knowledge



## Postal survey

with older social tenants rehoused under the four schemes



## Photovoice

with older social tenants rehoused under one of the four schemes



## Interviews & focus group

with older non-movers



## Interviews

with policy & practice stakeholders



## Analysis of documents

## Findings



### Interviews with practice-based stakeholders

- ❑ **17** interviewees (original target: n=10)
- ❑ From Hackney & Camden Councils, GLA, Housing Associations, not-for profit, other

### Survey with older social housing tenants

- ❑ Total valid responses: **n=75** (out of 798 + x) → <9.4%  
[D: 20/111=18.0% ; R: 38/628+x=<6.1%; HM: 2/11=18.2%; S&CH: 15/48=31.3%]
- ❑ Respondents: Mixed, with substantial majorities in the W British and age 65-74 categories

### Photovoice with older social housing tenants

- ❑ Total: **n=11** (incl. n=1 no photos; n=1 resident in Camden); (original target: n=16)  
[D: n=2; R: n=6; S&CH: n=3]

### Interviews with non-movers

- ❑ **1** interviewee (original target: n=5)

# Motivations for moving

## Main reasons

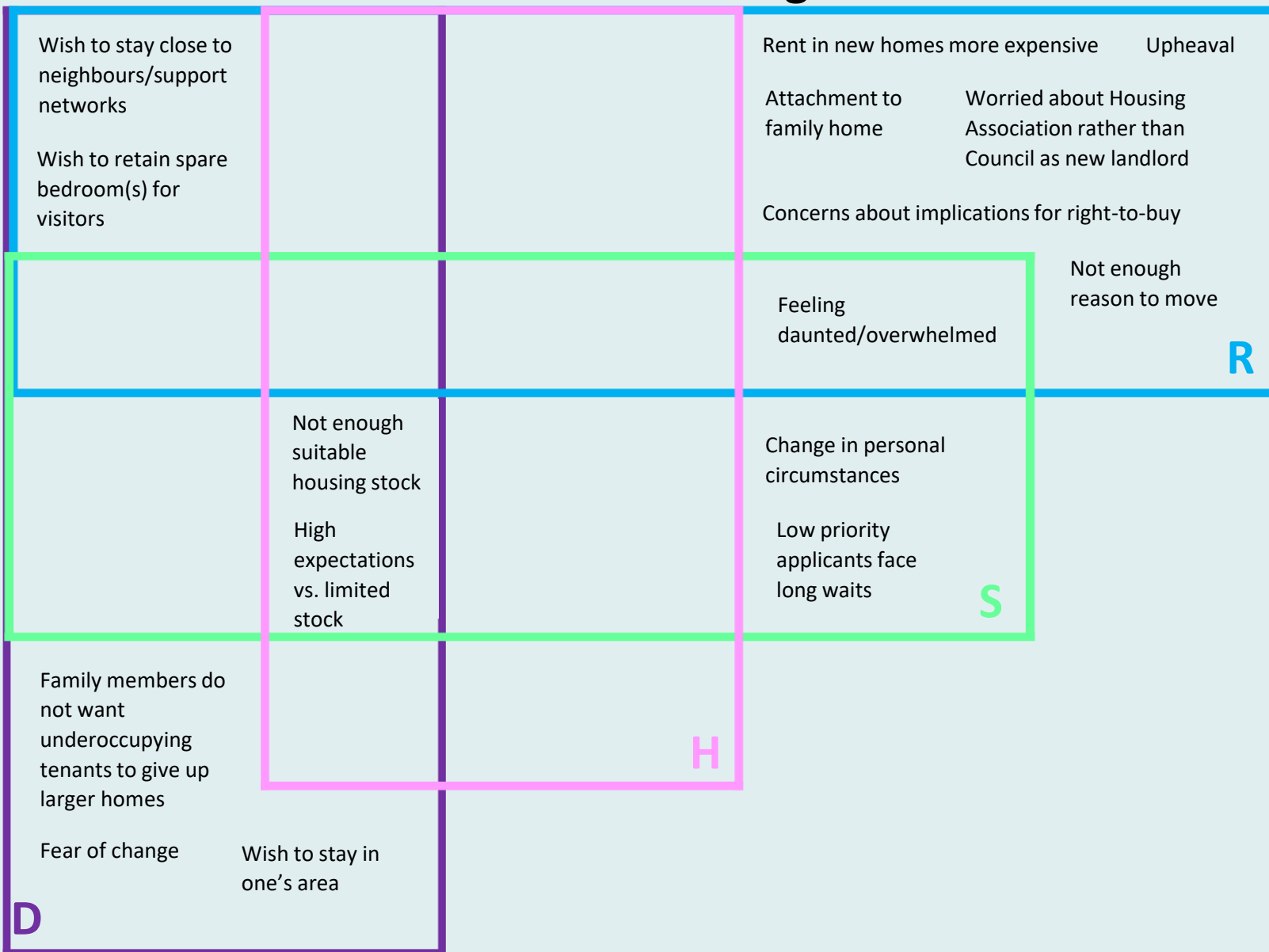
- ☐ Downsizing:
  - Manageability & suitability of one's home
  - Concerns about bills
  - Making one's home available to a larger household
- ☐ Seaside & CH:
  - Dissatisfaction with Hackney/London (overcrowded, polluted, etc.)
  - Wish to downsize
  - No suitable properties available in Hackney
  - Move closer to family
- ☐ Housing Moves:
  - Wish to downsize/upsized
- ☐ Regeneration:
  - **Non-elective** moves
  - Resistance not uncommon, but also acceptance:



*[In the old flats] ... all the damp and everything stained our clothes ... (R007)*

*"Should we go for regeneration? ..." Some people would say, "No, we shouldn't." But if we didn't, we'd be still living with the upsurges in the sink and in the bath. (R020)*

## Disincentives and obstacles to moving



## Process of moving

### Information and communication



- ❑ **Experiences of this were mixed** across the different rehousing programmes
- ❑ Survey suggested there were instances where this had worked well, especially among Regeneration participants. Other data sources highlighted challenges, especially around bills and rent

*... prior to moving I had a lot of trouble finding out what my actual rent was going to be. ... And no one told me there was going to be a service charge, although I did ask before I moved in. (R043)*

*One resident ... was very confused with her bills.... Once they moved over to the new properties, they had to pay for rent, ... Thames Water, ... and ... the electricity bill. ... they didn't realise they [had always been] paying for a water bill, but in their rent. (IV03)*



## Practical aspects of moving

- ☐ In the survey, Regeneration participants in particular highlighted **assistance with this as helpful**
- ☐ Some PV participants provided additional detail

*So Hackney then arranged for the removal company to come in and assess what needed to be done, how many boxes I needed and set up, ... That all went very smoothly. (R039)*

*I had the keys to get in there so I could move stuff over beforehand, and so basically it was only the big stuff that I got them to move when they come in the truck, so it was all sort of done fairly quick. (R045)*



## Personalised support

- ❑ Awareness of importance of personalised support among practice-based stakeholders

*Hackney, over the past few years, I feel have become very customer service orientated ... the one-on-one interaction with the customers ... really does try to circumvent or overcome problems that a customer will have ... (IV04; Hackney Council)*

- ❑ Survey indicated 'support from professional/agencies' as something that worked well for Downsizing and Seaside & Country Homes participants

- ❑ **Some tenants felt well supported, others less so**

*The only help we got was from the housing association we moved to. We got no help from the Mayor of London's office, or from Hackney Council. ... Hackney Council ... were extremely slow in processing our application ... (S10)*



## Outcomes of moving

### Example 1 (female, 55-64, Downsizing)

- ❑ Downsizing was an opportunity to transfer to a different area

*I didn't really want to move. I felt that I needed to ... ..  
Downsizing was never my intention, but it was the result, and  
I was channelled into a scheme in order to facilitate me  
moving out of the 3-bedroom flat.*

- ❑ Process of moving difficult: lengthy; little communication; uncertainty

- ❑ Outcomes mixed:

- Ground floor flat with garden, as preferred – but tenant sees this as being due to 'luck' rather than consideration of her perceived need
- New property smaller than preferred

*It's okay. .... So, it's a little bit bigger than the  
average one person flat. But effectively, I live in  
one room, because it's a kitchen living room.*

**BUT ...**

## Welcome outcomes



### Being able to pursue a hobby

*... you can see a kiln ... I've been a potter on and off ... for the last 20-odd years, but only in education. I thought, "I can afford to get this set up here now. I can do this here. ...*



### Opportunity to support a local organisation

*I have some plant boxes that I bought to support an organisation during last year. I bought plants from that organisation just to support something that was struggling during last year's pandemic to help my garden look nice.*

## Example II (female, 65-74, Seaside & Country Homes/move to Kent)

*I didn't want to be the only one [of the family] left in London, in Hackney, or London, wherever. I just wanted to get out. I used to visit them down here, and I used to think, "God. I would love to live down here." So, I thought, "I'm going to go for it."*

- ❑ Motivations: Moving closer to family (brothers); liked the area where brothers lived

- ❑ Process: Straightforward; quick (giving up a 3-bedroom ground floor flat accelerated her move)

*Three months and I was gone. ... A friend ... came and helped on removal day ... I just drove down, and when I got here, my brothers were here, and their wives, and family, to help me move in. It was so easy, honestly. It was no problem.*

## Welcome outcomes



### Being close to family

*One lady is my sister-in-law, ... and the other lady is ... her friend. We were there for a barbeque with her husband and son. ... In their beautiful, amazing garden. ... We do have quite a lot of fun in the garden, all of us. ... I usually go to my brother's once a week, or they'll come to me ....*

### A garden

*... my garden. I'm quite proud of that, ... I couldn't see the pathway. It was so overgrown. ... gradually, over the last four years, just getting it back into shape, the lawn, and things like that, with a lot of help from my brother. And just enjoying, loving the garden, actually, absolutely loving it.*





## Example III (male, 55-64, Regeneration)

- ❑ View of regeneration of Woodberry Down as necessary

*... the old properties. At the condition they were in with dampness ... and it was a big estate. We would never get decent homes, because it would have cost an almighty amount ... So, the only option I think we had was to develop the site.*

- ❑ Concerns about the effect of regeneration on the community
  - Disruption to existing social networks

*They did split up a lot of people, and it killed the community, ... there was a very tight community here before that, ...*

- The new buildings cater for different tenures, from privately owned luxury flats to social housing → visible differences might have adverse effects on the community

*We want to build one community. We don't want to build two communities, the haves and the have nots.*

## Regeneration as an opportunity for activism - which brings benefits for community & local environment



*That's the multiuse games area ... It's the best thing has happened. ... we had to struggle a bit, but we got there. ... We've got Arsenal coming down, ... they'll train the kids here two evenings a week.*

*... the Wetlands ... years ago, you couldn't go in there ... It's really a unique kind of a place. ... It was a godsend in the pandemic, ... There are flats over there for over a million. I'm living upstairs here in the social rented. ... But regardless of who you are, you can come down and you can walk around and you can sit down.*







## The findings suggest that ...

- 1) more can be done to make **formal information** about the existence of elective rehousing schemes more accessible
- 2) **incentives** can, and often do, work well for tenants
- 3) there is scope for greater consideration of individual tenants' **circumstances & preferences**, to the extent to which this can be reconciled with available resources
- 4) Regeneration in Woodberry Down offers **compensation** that is generous, popular, and achievable. They offer potential for learning for rehousing/regeneration schemes elsewhere
- 5) there are **obstacles** to rehousing. While much is being done to address those (e.g. personalised support), some are very hard to overcome, especially a lack of suitable properties. Looking beyond Hackney enabled several moves that received encouraging feedback (particularly through Seaside & Country Homes), which confirms this scheme as a valuable option for older tenants



- 6) **ongoing communication** with tenants throughout the rehousing process is critical. Much is being done to ensure tenants are well informed (e.g. Housing Officers; Independent Tenant Advisers). Still, perceived gaps remain, e.g. around bills and rent, which suggests there is a case for intensifying communication efforts
- 7) while some tenants felt well **supported**, for others this was not the case. There is awareness among housing providers of the importance of personalised support, and much is already being done to provide this. Timely responsiveness to tenants is one area to explore further for potential improvement
- 8) assistance with the **practical aspects of moving** (e.g. arranging for a removal company) has worked well for a number of participants. This kind of practical support can go a long way to improve the rehousing experience
- 9) while regeneration can bring many benefits, it can also have a disruptive effect on communities. **Community engagement** can achieve much to counter this, and should be encouraged and resourced accordingly



# Thank you!

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