

Survey Design: The pandemic arrears crisis: Private landlord perspectives on the temporary legislation impacting the Private Rented Sector (ES/W002868/1)

Data Collection and Analysis

Given the time-critical nature of the research, the online survey was selected as the primary data gathering method. JISC Online survey software was utilised as it has been approved by the University and is intuitive in use. Access to the survey was provided to respondents via URL, which led directly to the landing page for the survey.

The questionnaire was designed with reference to previous landlord surveys (Crook et al., 2009; Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government, 2019) and best practice. On completion, the survey was piloted both within the University and via members of an advisory group created to support the project.

Responses were downloaded from the JISC Online site and uploaded to SPSS for data cleansing and analysis.

Sample

Due to the time-critical nature of this research, our intention was to issue the survey to a known and broadly representative sample of landlords via SafeDeposits Scotland (SDS), the largest of three Tenancy Deposit Scheme providers operating within Scotland. This method had provided a very positive response during a parallel research project investigating the investment behaviours of PRS landlords (results forthcoming). On this occasion, the initial response was poor, with just 170 survey responses received. SDS were unable to resource further mailshots and, in any event, follow-up mail calls did little to increase response rates in previously issued surveys.

Previous landlord surveys have used a variety of methods to identify their sample: tenancy deposit scheme records (Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government, 2019) which we had already tried; getting landlord details from tenants participating in a household survey (Kemp &

Rhodes, 1997) which we did not have time for; and going through local authorities to use landlord registration databases (Crook et al., 2009).

With time of the essence, we adopted a pragmatic approach, using a variety of channels to increase our response (see table below).

Recruitment streams

Stream	Organisation/Target	Details
1	Tenancy Deposit Scheme Providers	All three Providers offered some support
2	Scottish Association of Landlords	Survey link emailed to membership
3	Local Authority Landlord Registration Units	16 out of 32 authorities offered some degree of support
4	Letting Agents	A few agents provided support
5	Social Media	The survey link was shared on Linked-in Facebook and other social media sites

Each stream required a bespoke communications strategy and the resultant method of recruitment was dictated (in most cases) by the capacity and willingness of the individual organisations approached.

For example, a second Tenancy Deposit Scheme provider, mydeposits Scotland, issued the survey link directly to their landlord database, whereas the third, Letting Protection Scotland, placed a link to the survey on their website. A similar potted approach emerged with local authority Landlord Registration Teams. It should be noted that not all streams reached all landlords potentially within that stream. For example, not all Safe Deposits Scotland landlords have consented to promotional emails. It is also possible that some landlords could have received the survey multiple times, though participants were asked to only complete the survey once.

This mixed approach was successful in generating a substantial response with 1745 landlords from 29 out of 32 local authority areas completing the survey. Thirteen erroneous entries were removed, leaving N=1,732. By providing a different copy of the survey (URL) for each group, we can disaggregate the responses by method of recruitment (see table below).

Recruitment stream completions

Stream	Organisation/Target	Total Reaching Survey	Drop Outs	Completions	Completion Rate (%)
1	Tenancy Deposit Scheme Providers	744	570	174	44%
2	Scottish Association of Landlords	160	112	48	30%
3	Local Authority Landlord Registration Units	3707	2266	1441	39%
4	Letting Agents	109	99	10	9%
5	Social Media	1135	1063	72	6%
Total		5855	4110	1745	30%

Weighting

The data file provided in this archive is unweighted to allow researchers to apply their own analysis. However, for our analysis, we weighted the data. Following Crook et al. (2009), we used four groupings: the major cities, Edinburgh & Glasgow; the next two cities by size, Aberdeen & Dundee, the rest of the Central Belt¹; and remaining (largely rural) areas. In the table below, we compare our raw sample with the known distribution of registered landlords, both based on location of properties rather than landlord's place of residence. Our sample had a degree of over-representation in the 'Aberdeen and Dundee' grouping and under representation elsewhere. The dataset was therefore weighted (as per column D in the table below) to correct for this geographic imbalance.

Response weighting

Column A	Column B	Column C	Column D
Geographical Grouping	% Survey Response	% Registered Landlords	Weighting
Edinburgh & Glasgow	27.0	33.3	1.235
Aberdeen & Dundee	24.2	12.1	0.500
Rest of the Central Belt	12.6	14.2	1.128
Rural Areas	36.3	40.5	1.117

¹ In this case, the central belt refers to the "small central" belt or "lowland triangle" i.e., it incorporates local authorities which have no extensive unpopulated areas.

- Crook, T., Kemp, P., & Ferrari, E. (2009). *Review of the Private Rented Sector: Volume 3: Views and experiences of landlords in the Private Rented Sector*.
www.webarchive.org.uk/wayback/archive/20180518193139/http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2009/03/23140128/24
- Kemp, P., & Rhodes, D. (1997). The motivations and attitudes to letting of private landlords in Scotland. *Journal of Property Research*, 14(2), 117-132.
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- Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government. (2019). *English Private Landlord Survey 2018 Main report*. Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.
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