

Landlord Survey 2021

Privacy and Confidentiality

We know how busy you are but the research team at the University of Hull would like to ask you to take fifteen minutes to complete this online survey. It forms part of a larger independent research study (kindly funded by the [ESRC](#)) which aims to learn more about the court system's response to the COVID-19 pandemic in housing possession cases and which aspects of the new arrangements we might want to take forward into the post-pandemic era. With the Ministry of Justice and the Housing Law Practitioners' Association as research partners, there is real potential for this project to ensure that the voice of landlords is heard in the future reform of the possession process.

By drawing on your experience of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on your rent arrears management policies and practice, whether before or during the COVID-19 pandemic, the hope is that the research team, led by [Dr Lisa Whitehouse](#), will be able to find ways to improve the processes involved for landlords, tenants and the court system.

Before taking part in this study you might like to know that:

- data gathered in this study will be stored anonymously and securely;
- all personal information will remain confidential and all efforts will be made to ensure that you cannot be identified (unless the law demands otherwise);
- keeping your personal data confidential is required under the EU General Data Protection Regulation. The data controller for GDPR purposes is the University of Hull.
- by completing this survey you voluntarily consent to participate in the project but you can withdraw at any time without giving reasons and you will not be penalised for withdrawing nor will you be questioned on why you have withdrawn; and
- the answers provided by participants in the survey may be used in reports, publications and other research outputs and will be archived on open sources such as the [UK Data Service](#) and the [UKRI 'Gateway to Research'](#) but all participants will remain anonymous throughout.

On the next few pages you will find a series of questions which we would ask you to complete in as much detail as you can. Please feel free to leave any questions you do

not wish to answer blank.

To proceed please click 'next' to be taken to the 'Participant Information Sheet' which will tell you more about the project.

You can find out more about the project [here](#) and on Twitter at [@homemattersEngland](#) and [@homemattersCymru](#). If you have any questions about the survey, you can email us at:

homematters@hull.ac.uk

We would like to thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

Participant Information Sheet

Home Matters Survey

Before you decide to take part in this study it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. A member of the team can be contacted if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Purpose of the study

This study aims to find out more about the experience of people who have fallen into arrears with their rent or mortgage payments. The hope is that the research team will be able to find ways to improve the processes involved and thereby assist some occupiers in keeping their homes.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been approached for the reason that you might be able to provide valuable data on the issues raised by the project.

Do I have to take part?

Taking part in this survey is entirely voluntary. Refusal to take part in it or to withdraw from it at a later date will involve no penalty or loss, now or in the future.

What will happen to me if I take part?

You will be asked to complete a short questionnaire. It will include questions relating to matters such as your experience of the possession process.

Are there possible disadvantages and/or risks in taking part?

The research team does not consider there to be any reasonably foreseeable disadvantages or risks in taking part in this study.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

The research team would like to make it clear that you will receive no direct benefit from completing the questionnaire. The potential benefits arising from it might include improvements to the processes involved in dealing with people who fall into arrears.

Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?

All information collected about you will be kept strictly confidential. All data will be identified only by a code, with personal details kept in a locked file or secure computer with access only by the immediate research team.

What will happen to the results of the research project?

The results of this study will be published in 2021/22 and you will be able to obtain a copy from the research team. The findings of the study will be presented at conferences and written up in journals and books. The data will be archived on publicly accessible resources such as the [UK Data Service](#) and the [UKRI 'Gateway to Research'](#) but will be presented in an anonymous format so you will not be identified in any report or publication.

Who is organising and funding the research?

The study is being organised by the Principal Investigator [Dr Lisa Whitehouse](#) who is a member of the Law School at the University of Hull. The research is funded by [the Economic and Social Research Council](#).

Ethical review of the study

The project has received ethical approval from the University of Hull.

Contact for further information

For further information please email us at: homematters@hull.ac.uk

Should you have any concerns about the conduct of this research project, please contact the Secretary, Faculty of Business, Law and Politics Research Ethics Committee, University of Hull, Cottingham Rd, Hull, HU6 7RX; Tel No (+44) (0)1482 463536.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information.

I have read, understood, and agree to all of the above, and I give my consent to proceed.

* Required

☐ Yes

☐ No

Information About Your Role and/or Organisation

Are you a: * *Required*

- ☐ Private Landlord
- ☐ Local Authority Representative
- ☐ Non-profit Registered Provider
- ☐ For-profit Registered Provider
- ☐ Other

If you selected Other, please specify:

Your role

What is your role within the organisation?

Where are your tenants located (please tick all that apply)? Please note that this research relates only to England and Wales.

- ☐ National coverage
- ☐ London
- ☐ South East England
- ☐ South West England
- ☐ Wales
- ☐ West Midlands
- ☐ East Midlands
- ☐ Eastern England
- ☐ Yorkshire and North Lincolnshire
- ☐ North East England
- ☐ North West England

Please feel free to offer more detail about your role within the organisation or your experience of working in the rented housing sector more generally:

The Impact of the Pandemic

Please summarise how your organisation responded to the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in terms of tenants in arrears:

Has the number of tenants in arrears increased as a result of the pandemic?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Has the extent of rent arrears increased as a result of the pandemic (e.g. do tenants in arrears now owe more than under pre-COVID conditions)?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Please feel free to offer more detail regarding how the pandemic has impacted on your tenants, particularly in respect of rent arrears:

Should the £20 addition to Universal Credit payments be retained beyond the current end date?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Other

If you selected Other, please specify:

Please feel free to expand on your answer here:

Do you have knowledge or experience of the 'Breathing Space/Debt Respite' Scheme?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Please feel free to expand on your answer regarding the Breathing Space/Debt Respite Scheme here (e.g. is the Scheme welcome or not):

Numbers of Possession Claims

How many possession claims has your organisation initiated on the grounds of rent arrears since March 2020?

- ☐ 0
- ☐ 1-10
- ☐ 10-20
- ☐ 20-30
- ☐ 30-40
- ☐ 40-50
- ☐ More than 50

Is this an increase or a decrease on the pre-pandemic volume of cases?

- ☐ Increase
- ☐ Decrease

What factors in particular have impacted on the volume of cases/the ability to initiate possession claims since March 2020 (e.g. extended notice periods):

Tenant engagement

Based on your experience, what proportion of your tenants would you say tend to respond to your efforts to communicate with them about their rent arrears after the first means of contact:

- ☐ 0%
- ☐ Around 10%
- ☐ Around 10-20%
- ☐ Around 20-30%
- ☐ Around 30-40%
- ☐ Around 40-50%
- ☐ Around 50-60%
- ☐ Around 60-70%
- ☐ Around 70-80%
- ☐ Around 80-90%
- ☐ Around 90-100%

What proportion of your tenants tend to respond to your efforts to communicate with them about their rent arrears only after several attempts to contact them:

- ☐ 0%
- ☐ Around 10%
- ☐ Around 10-20%
- ☐ Around 20-30%
- ☐ Around 30-40%
- ☐ Around 40-50%
- ☐ Around 50-60%
- ☐ Around 60-70%
- ☐ Around 70-80%
- ☐ Around 80-90%

- ☐ Around 90-100%

What proportion of your tenants tend to respond to your efforts to communicate with them about their rent arrears only after a notice is served:

- ☐ 0%
- ☐ Around 10%
- ☐ Around 10-20%
- ☐ Around 20-30%
- ☐ Around 30-40%
- ☐ Around 40-50%
- ☐ Around 50-60%
- ☐ Around 60-70%
- ☐ Around 70-80%
- ☐ Around 80-90%
- ☐ Around 90-100%

What proportion of your tenants tend to respond to your efforts to communicate with them about their rent arrears only after court action is initiated:

- ☐ 0%
- ☐ Around 10%
- ☐ Around 10-20%
- ☐ Around 20-30%
- ☐ Around 30-40%
- ☐ Around 40-50%
- ☐ Around 50-60%
- ☐ Around 60-70%
- ☐ Around 70-80%

- ☐ Around 80-90%
- ☐ Around 90-100%

What proportion of your tenants tend to respond to your efforts to communicate with them about their rent arrears at the court and not before:

- ☐ 0%
- ☐ Around 10%
- ☐ Around 10-20%
- ☐ Around 20-30%
- ☐ Around 30-40%
- ☐ Around 40-50%
- ☐ Around 50-60%
- ☐ Around 60-70%
- ☐ Around 70-80%
- ☐ Around 80-90%
- ☐ Around 90-100%

What proportion of your tenants tend to respond to your efforts to communicate with them about their rent arrears at the warrant stage and not before:

- ☐ 0%
- ☐ Around 10%
- ☐ Around 10-20%
- ☐ Around 20-30%
- ☐ Around 30-40%
- ☐ Around 40-50%
- ☐ Around 50-60%
- ☐ Around 60-70%

- ☐ Around 70-80%
- ☐ Around 80-90%
- ☐ Around 90-100%

What proportion of your tenants never respond to your efforts to communicate with them about their rent arrears:

- ☐ 0%
- ☐ Around 10%
- ☐ Around 10-20%
- ☐ Around 20-30%
- ☐ Around 30-40%
- ☐ Around 40-50%
- ☐ Around 50-60%
- ☐ Around 60-70%
- ☐ Around 70-80%
- ☐ Around 80-90%
- ☐ Around 90-100%

Reasons for non-engagement

There is evidence to suggest that a significant number of tenants do not engage with their landlord or the legal process despite the threat of eviction. Are you aware of the reasons as to why some tenants do not engage? If so, what are those reasons:



Experience of the Possession Process

Do you have experience of the legal process of housing possession, either before or after the COVID-19 pandemic? * *Required*

☐ Yes

☐ No

Experience of the Revised Possession Process

Do you have experience of the measures put in place by the court system in response to the pandemic, i.e. the 'Overall Arrangements' (e.g. Review Date meetings, Substantive Hearings, etc.)? * *Required*

☐ Yes

☐ No

Private Landlords: Your experience

Please feel free to offer some details about your experience of being a private landlord (e.g. years as a landlord, number of properties rented, etc.):

Where are your tenants located (please tick all that apply)? Please note that this research relates only to England and Wales.

- ☐ National coverage
- ☐ London
- ☐ South East England
- ☐ South West England
- ☐ Wales
- ☐ West Midlands
- ☐ East Midlands
- ☐ Eastern England
- ☐ Yorkshire and North Lincolnshire
- ☐ North East England
- ☐ North West England

Private Landlords: The Impact of the Pandemic

Please explain how the pandemic has impacted on you and your tenant(s), particularly in respect of rent arrears:



Please summarise how you have responded to the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in terms of tenants in arrears:



Private Landlords: Breathing Space Initiative

Do you have knowledge or experience of the 'Breathing Space/Debt Respite' Scheme?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Please feel free to expand on your answer regarding the Breathing Space/Debt Respite Scheme here (e.g. is the Scheme welcome or not):

Private Landlords: Reasons for non-engagement

There is evidence to suggest that a significant number of tenants do not engage with their landlord or the legal process despite the threat of eviction. Are you aware of the reasons as to why some tenants do not engage? If so, what are those reasons:



Private Landlords: Eviction Claims

How many possession claims (eviction claims) on the grounds of rent arrears have you initiated during your time as a landlord? * *Required*

- ☐ 0
- ☐ 1-10
- ☐ 10-20
- ☐ More than 20

What factors in particular have impacted on your ability to initiate a possession claim (e.g. extended notice periods):

Private Landlords: Eviction Claims During COVID

How many possession claims (eviction claims) on the grounds of rent arrears have you initiated since March 2020?

- ☐ 0
- ☐ 1-10
- ☐ 10-20
- ☐ More than 20

The Review Date Meeting

If you have experience of the Review Date meeting process, how did you participate (please tick all that apply):

- ☐ By telephone
- ☐ Face to Face
- ☐ Online platform (e.g. Zoom, Skype, etc.)
- ☐ Other

If you selected Other, please specify:

What would be your preferred method of participating in Review Date meetings?

- ☐ By telephone
- ☐ Face to Face
- ☐ Online platform (e.g. Zoom, Skype, etc.)
- ☐ A mixture of the above
- ☐ Other

If you selected Other, please specify:

Have you experienced any particular difficulties in participating in Review Date meetings (e.g. technological problems):

Are you aware of possession orders being made by the judge at the Review Date stage?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Please feel free to expand on your answer here:

If your case(s) did not proceed to a 'Substantive Hearing' please explain why not:

Overall, do or did you find the Review Date meeting(s) helpful?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Please feel free to explain your answer to the question above here:

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The 'Substantive Hearing'

Do you have experience of a 'Substantive Hearing' under the Overall Arrangements (i.e. a fifteen minute hearing before a judge at court)? * *Required*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Unsure

Experience of the 'Substantive Hearing'

Were you or your representative able to negotiate with the tenant or their representative before the Substantive Hearing?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Other

If you selected Other, please specify:

As a result of the new arrangements (e.g. the electronic bundle of enhanced information, the marking of cases as 'COVID-19' cases, etc.) does the judge receive (as compared with pre-COVID cases):

- ☐ More information
- ☐ Less information
- ☐ About the same
- ☐ Not able to comment
- ☐ Other

If you selected Other, please specify:

Please feel free to expand on your answer here (e.g. judge receives more information but much of it is irrelevant):

In your opinion, is the additional time given to Substantive Hearings under the Overall Arrangements being used effectively?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Sometimes

Please feel free to expand on your answer here:

To what extent if any have the Overall Arrangements given rise to different outcomes compared to pre-COVID hearings, e.g. more or fewer outright possession orders, adjournments, etc.?

Overall

Which, if any, of the temporary changes made within the legal process of possession in response to the COVID-19 pandemic should be retained for the future (please tick all that apply)?

- ☐ The Review Date
- ☐ The Substantive Hearing (28 days later)
- ☐ The extended time for Substantive Hearings
- ☐ The use of remote means of communication at the Review Date
- ☐ Remote Substantive Hearings
- ☐ The electronic bundle of enhanced information
- ☐ The ability to mark cases as 'COVID-19 cases'

Please feel free to expand on your answer here (e.g. reasons for retaining certain aspects or not):

Do you consider the Overall Arrangements to have been an effective response to the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Effective/ineffective in parts

Please feel free to expand on your answer here:



What other aspects, if any, of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic should be reinstated or retained for the future (e.g. extended notice periods)?



General Feedback on the Possession Process

What aspects, if any, of the possession process would you like to see changed?



Mediation

Do you consider mediation to be appropriate in:

- ☐ All housing possession cases
- ☐ Some housing possession cases
- ☐ Not appropriate in any housing possession cases

Please feel free to expand on your answer here:

In particular, do you consider mediation to be appropriate in possession claims based on rent arrears?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Unsure

Please feel free to expand on your answer here:

Do you have experience of the Mediation Pilot Scheme? * *Required*

- ☐ No
- ☐ My one case was referred and I agreed to the mediation
- ☐ My one case was referred but I did not agree to the mediation
- ☐ More than one case referred and I/we agreed to them all
- ☐ More than one case referred and I/we agreed to none of them
- ☐ More than one case referred and I/we agreed to some of them

Mediation Refused

Please explain the reasons why you did not consent to mediation here:

Please tick the box below to move to the next section * *Required*

☐ Next Section

Cases referred for mediation

How many of the cases you have been involved with have been referred to the Housing Possession Mediation Pilot Scheme? *Optional*

- ☐ 1-4
- ☐ 5-9
- ☐ 10-14
- ☐ 15-19
- ☐ 20 or more

What is your answer above based on?

- ☐ Recorded data
- ☐ An educated guess

The Mediation Pilot Scheme

How was the mediation(s) conducted (please tick all that apply)?

- ☐ By telephone
- ☐ Face to Face
- ☐ Online platform (e.g. Zoom, Skype, etc.)
- ☐ Other

If you selected Other, please specify:

What was the outcome of the mediation process?

Did you think that outcome was fair?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Unsure

Please feel free to expand on your answer here:

Did you find the mediation process useful?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Please feel free to expand on your answer here:

Do you think the current Mediation Pilot should be:

- ☐ Retained as it stands into the future
- ☐ Retained but in a reformed format for the future
- ☐ Discarded

Please feel free to explain the reason(s) for your answer here (e.g. what reforms would you like to see?):

Looking to the Future

What measures are needed within the rented housing sector to address the implications of the pandemic, particularly in respect of rent arrears:

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Any comments (final question)

You have been brought to this page as you either did not consent to take part in this research or you have reached the end of the survey. Regardless of the reason, please feel free to offer any further comments about this survey or your experience of eviction cases here:

Final page

Thank you for taking the time to answer these questions.

If you have any questions regarding this survey or would like to see a copy of the results then please email us at homematters@hull.ac.uk.
