**Beyond Generation Rent: understanding the aspirations of private renters aged 35-54**

**Project Information**

*Abstract*

Much academic and popular attention has been paid to ‘Generation Rent’ – a growing group of young people who are trapped in the private rented sector (PRS) due to challenges in accessing other housing tenures. Yet much less is known about the experiences of older, middle-aged renters (MARs). This is a key gap given the recent growth of the sector. Once a housing tenure associated with students and young professionals the PRS is now increasingly housing a more diverse range of tenants including families with children. Yet renters over 35 remain a relatively understudied group by comparison. This study aims to address this gap in the evidence through qualitative enquiry. It is led by researchers from the Universities of Stirling and Glasgow as part of the activities of the UK Collaborative Centre for Housing Evidence (phase I).

*Methods*

Study involved 17 in-depth telephone interviews with private renters aged 35-54 living in either Scotland or England, who were not in full-time education. In addition to the interview, participants also provided photos of their home to both act as discussion points and to provide additional data to complement the interview: a method known as photo-elicitation. All but two of the participants provided images. These proved a useful complement to the qualitative interview and a helpful prompt for discussion.

Participants were recruited through social media and through contacting gatekeeper agencies (e.g. Shelter, Acorn). In total we recruited 10 participants from England and seven from Scotland. The age of participants ranged from 37 to 52 and included six men and eleven women. Three participants shared their home, with the remainder either being single households, couples, or households with children. Three-quarters of the sample reported renting privately for more than 10 years. Our participants were drawn from a range of financial backgrounds, with some finding things difficult and others reporting feeling quite comfortable. Five participants reported an illness or disability. More detail on the sample is provided in the accompanying datafile; sensitive data is not provided at the individual level.

Ethical approval was given by the University of Stirling and all data has been anonymised.