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Evaluation of Leasing Scheme Wales: interim report

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Evaluation of Leasing Scheme Wales: interim report

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Alma Economics combines unparalleled analytical expertise with the ability to communicate complex ideas clearly.

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Views expressed in this report are those of the researcher and not necessarily those of the Welsh Government

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Glossary

Acronym/Keyword	Definition
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
EPC	Energy Performance Certificate
HMO	House in Multiple Occupation
LHA	Local Housing Allowance
LSW	Leasing Scheme Wales
PRS	Private Rented Sector
ONS	Office for National Statistics
ORP	Optimised Retrofit Programme
RSL	Registered Social Landlord
RSW	Rent Smart Wales
VOA	Valuation Office Agency
Section 66	Duty to help to prevent an applicant from becoming homeless (Housing (Wales) Act 2014)
Section 73	Duty to help to secure accommodation for homeless applicants (Housing (Wales) Act 2014)

1. Introduction

Aims of Leasing Scheme Wales

1.1 The objectives of Leasing Scheme Wales (referred to as ‘the scheme’ or ‘LSW’ hereafter) are as follows:

- Improving access to affordable¹ and good quality homes in the Private Rented Sector (PRS) for those in receipt of benefits, including Universal Credit, through the removal or reduction of risks that property owners may perceive as likely to arise during a tenancy (e.g., perception of risk of rent arrears, void periods, and damage to the property).
- Achieving longer term security of accommodation for tenants at risk of homelessness by providing accommodation for a period of between 5 and 20 years.
- Providing tailored and regular support to help tenants maintain their tenancy, during the scheme and in the future. It is envisaged that this will include support and advice on how to live successfully and independently in settled accommodation, including money management training.
- Reducing stigma and cases of discrimination. Successful participation in the scheme will demonstrate that with the right support there need be no greater risk associated with renting properties to those on low incomes or receiving benefit contributions towards their housing costs.
- Improving the standard of those properties in the PRS which are part of the scheme. This will be achieved through the provision of financial assistance to bring properties that are to be let under the proposed scheme up to an agreed minimum standard.
- The Welsh Government target is to secure 1% of PRS accommodation in each Local Authority area signed up to the scheme by the end of year 5 (2027). To achieve this, participating Local Authorities are set an indicative annual target, which will increase each year to meet the overall 1% total. In year one, the target was set at 5% of the 1% to allow time for Local Authorities to secure resources and engage with, and promote the scheme to, property owners.

¹ Affordable housing is defined by the Welsh Government in “Affordable housing provision: April 2022 to March 2023” as housing where secure mechanisms are in place to ensure that it is accessible to those who cannot afford market housing.

- 1.2 The scheme seeks to support Local Authorities in discharging their housing duties (particularly Part 2 Housing (Wales) Act 2014 duties) to help people who are experiencing homelessness (Section 73) or are at risk of homelessness (Section 66). The scheme also aims to expand the choice of good quality, affordable housing options available to prospective tenants.
- 1.3 The key features of Leasing Scheme Wales include:
- Incentives being offered to property owners for bringing properties up to the mandatory quality standard required to join the scheme (or for meeting desirable criteria if a property already meets all mandatory criteria). These include a grant of up to £5,000, Optimised Retrofit Programme (ORP) funding (specifically to enhance a property's Energy Performance Certificate, or EPC, rating), and an empty property grant of up to £25,000 (depending on the length of lease).
 - Residential property owned by private property owners being leased to a Local Authority for a fixed duration of between 5 and 20 years. The lease includes a break clause which can be activated by the owner 2 years into the lease term with 12 months' notice. Activating this requires any grants and loans to be repaid by the property owner.
 - Rent is payable by the Local Authority to the property owner at the level of the applicable Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rate for the term of the lease. Setting the rent at LHA rate ensures the affordability of housing on the scheme as these rates are then used to calculate Housing Benefit. LHA rates are decided by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) using information provided by the Valuation Office Agency (VOA). The Welsh Government cannot influence the setting of LHA rates.²
 - Ongoing support should be provided to tenants by the Local Authority, either directly or through partner organisations.
- 1.4 Participating Local Authorities can claim 10% of the relevant LHA rate each month as a management fee. Furthermore, according to Welsh Government staff supporting the implementation of the scheme, participating Local Authorities can receive up to £36,000 in funding for staff and administration and then further funding for tenancy support.

² [Local Housing Allowance Guidance](#)

- 1.5 After an initial pilot across three Local Authorities (with an extension to an additional three in September 2020 as a response to COVID-19) ending in March 2022, the scheme was rolled out nationally.³ At the time of conducting the research for the baseline process evaluation presented in this report (June to October 2023), 16 Local Authorities across Wales were participating in the scheme. Whilst the scheme is national, it does require Local Authorities expressing interest and signing up, hence not all 22 Welsh Local Authorities are currently participating.

Key differences between LSW and the PRS Leasing Scheme pilot

- 1.6 The original PRS Leasing Scheme pilot grant of up to £2,000 plus an available interest free loan of up to £8,000 was replaced by the grant of up to £5,000, ORP funding, and the empty properties grant of up to £25,000 (depending on lease length).
- 1.7 Additionally, the original maximum lease length of 5 years was increased to 20 years for the national rollout of the scheme (minimum leases of 5 years remained the same) demonstrating the aim of providing long-term affordable housing.
- 1.8 Finally, the rent rate for the original PRS Leasing Scheme pilot was set at the LHA rate minus 10% (which was retained by Local Authorities to cover administrative costs), so that property owners in the scheme were paid 90% of the relevant LHA rate per month. Following feedback obtained during the evaluation of the PRS Leasing Scheme pilot, the rent rate was raised to 100% of the relevant LHA rate for the national rollout of the scheme. As a result, Local Authorities now claim the 10% for administrative costs from the Welsh Government.

Aims and structure of the evaluation of the national rollout of Leasing Scheme Wales

- 1.9 Alma Economics was commissioned by the Welsh Government in January 2023 to undertake a 3-year evaluation of Leasing Scheme Wales. The aim of the evaluation is to understand how it has been operating as a national scheme, including identifying what is working well and what challenges there have been to implementation, its expected impacts on stakeholders (Local Authorities, property owners and tenants), and its contribution to the government's overarching housing

³ [Evaluation of the Private Rented Sector Leasing Scheme Pilot](#)

goals. The evaluation will inform a set of recommendations put forward to the Welsh Government regarding the scheme's operation in the future.

1.10 As part of this evaluation, Alma Economics have completed the first two phases of work – the scoping and baseline process evaluation phases. In these phases, information was gathered from property owners, tenants, and participating Local Authorities, which is presented within this interim report.

1.11 The overall structure of the evaluation (encompassing the completed phases and the remaining two phases) is as follows:

- Phase 1 (January 2023 – April 2023): Project inception and scoping, during which the project plan was confirmed with the Welsh Government, contextual information was provided, and fieldwork tools were developed.
- Phase 2 (April 2023 – February 2024): Baseline process evaluation which included a baseline survey for (both participating and non-participating) property owners and tenants; interviews and focus groups with property owners, tenants, and participating Local Authorities; and quantitative analysis of monitoring data. In this report, interim recommendations are put forward in order to inform the scheme and the fieldwork approach going forward.
- Phase 3 (March 2024 – February 2025): Emerging impact evaluation, which will include follow-up as well as additional engagement with property owners, tenants, and Local Authorities on the scheme including any Local Authorities with reservations about joining the scheme.
- Phase 4 (February 2025 – February 2026): Process evaluation, which will be conducted in the same style as previous phases but with a focus on obtaining a greater sample size and being able to indicate whether findings have changed over the course of the evaluation and why.

2. Methodology

This section outlines the methodological approach for Phases 1 and 2 of the evaluation which have been undertaken to date. All fieldwork for Phases 1 and 2 was conducted remotely (virtually or via phone).

Scoping (Phase 1)

2.1 The purpose of Phase 1 was to build understanding of the policy context, the objectives of the scheme, any changes since the pilot scheme was implemented, the key stakeholders to engage, and the data to access for this research. Therefore, this phase was split into two activities:

- A desk-based review of materials shared by the Welsh Government and, later by scoping interview participants. These included factsheets, guidance documents and progress reports.
- Three scoping interviews with Welsh Government officials involved in the scheme or complementary departments.

2.2 Insights from Phase 1 were used to inform the next phase of research activities, including the development of research materials (surveys and discussion guides).

Baseline process evaluation (Phase 2)

2.3 A range of stakeholders were engaged to complete the baseline process evaluation. The table below shows the total number of stakeholders engaged per stakeholder type and type of research activity, and the following paragraphs provide more information on what each type of research activity entailed and how stakeholders were recruited on each occasion.

Table 2.1 Numbers of stakeholders participating per stakeholder group and activity

Stakeholder group	Individuals participating through interviews or focus groups	Individuals participating through surveys
Local Authority representatives	25	Not applicable
Scheme-participating property owners	6	45
Non-scheme-participating property owners	21 ⁴	1,535

⁴ Includes 1 individual who submitted their experiences and thoughts in writing via email.

Scheme-participating tenants	1	6
Non-scheme-participating tenants	0	1

Surveys of scheme-participating and non-scheme-participating property owners and tenants

- 2.4 Based on the desk-based review and scoping interviews, research materials were created including Welsh and English versions of property owner and tenant surveys (for both scheme-participating and non-participating individuals within these groups). The surveys also had a section at the end to register interest for further participation in the research (in the form of an interview or focus group).
- 2.5 The Welsh Government provided Alma Economics with contact details for participating Local Authorities, who supported the research in a number of ways including through attending interviews, sharing monitoring data capturing progress within the scheme, and distributing the surveys and a call for interviews to those participating in the scheme within their Local Authority area.
- 2.6 The property owner survey was open online from 13th June 2023 until 6th August 2023. The tenant survey was open online for a longer period of time, from 13th June 2023 until 20th September 2023, to allow for more Local Authorities to share the survey. The option of completing the tenant survey over the phone was also offered in case respondents had difficulties accessing the online version.
- 2.7 In total, there were 1,587 responses in English and 20 responses in Welsh to the property owner survey. Of these, 318 property owners also registered interest in engaging in further research activities.
- 2.8 The participation of tenants was more challenging and was characterised by a low response rate when compared to the response rate of non-scheme-participating property owners as well as the level of engagement with the research from scheme-participating property owners. To boost the participation of tenants, the survey was extended to be open for a longer period of time, and scheme-participating Local Authorities were asked to send reminders to tenants housed under the scheme. In total, there were seven responses in English and no responses in Welsh to the tenant survey. An additional three scanned-in paper copies of completed surveys from tenants were sent in, but the format of the survey (i.e., using skip logic so that

respondents would only answer questions relevant to them) meant that printing out and completing the survey on paper was not viable, so these had to be disregarded. Of these respondents, four tenants also registered interest in further engagement.

2.9 Quantitative data analysis was carried out on survey responses, which is presented in following sections of this report.

Focus groups and interviews with property owners

2.10 Due to high demand, 90-minute focus groups were used as the primary engagement activity for property owners, with 30-minute interviews being offered to those who could not or did not want to attend the focus groups. These activities were conducted between August and September 2023, and options to engage in Welsh or English were offered.

2.11 One focus group with four participants, as well as two interviews, were conducted with property owners currently or previously participating in the scheme. Among non-participating property owners, 17 property owners attended two focus group sessions, three attended individual interviews, and another who had previously been rejected from the scheme submitted a written document with their views.

2.12 All focus groups and interviews followed a semi-structured approach, covering experiences and knowledge of the scheme, motivations or deterring factors to joining, as well as possibilities for future improvements. Later sections of this report outline emerging findings from focus groups, interviews, and written submissions. These findings are presented separately for scheme-participating and non-scheme-participating property owners.

2.13 Note that rent levels under the scheme being set at the LHA rate was discussed as part of our interviews and focus groups with scheme-participating and non-scheme-participating property owners (as it was with Local Authorities; see below). However, LHA rates will be increased to the 30th percentile of local market rents in 2024-2025, as announced in the Autumn Statement 2023 (UK Government, 2023). Stakeholder perspectives throughout this report should be read as reflecting their views on LHA rates as these were at the time of their participation in the research. The increase in LHA rates is anticipated to have a positive impact on the scheme's uptake, and this will be monitored in subsequent phases of the evaluation.

Interviews with tenants

- 2.14 All four tenants who had registered interest in further engagement were contacted and invited to take part in a 30-minute interview in either Welsh or English. The opportunity was also offered to tenants who had not filled in the survey first through their Local Authority, but no tenants chose to engage this way.
- 2.15 It proved difficult to arrange interviews, with two tenants not responding to multiple follow-ups and one not able to participate due to being involved in ongoing legal proceedings. Therefore, only one interview was completed with a tenant participating in the pilot scheme.

Interviews with Local Authorities and monitoring data

- 2.16 All 16 participating Local Authorities were contacted to arrange individual or group interviews of 60-minutes with staff implementing the scheme.
- 2.17 Of these 16, one Local Authority did not respond to the request, despite follow-ups from both the Alma Economics and Welsh Government project teams. A further two declined to take part at this time as they felt they were too early in their implementation of the scheme to meaningfully contribute. Therefore, a total of 13 interviews with participating Local Authorities were completed.
- 2.18 All 16 participating Local Authorities were also asked to share monitoring data for the most recent quarter at the time, of which 13 shared data with us. The remaining three were unresponsive to this request despite follow-ups.
- 2.19 Quantitative data analysis was carried out on the monitoring data, which is presented in subsequent sections of this report.

Next steps

- 2.20 The next steps for Phases 3 and 4 are discussed in detail in the last chapter of this report, "Recommendations and considerations".

3. Input from Local Authorities

Key insights from Local Authority (LA) interviews:

- There was an even split of LAs stating that recruiting property owners was either easy or difficult. Most commonly, property owners were said to be accidental owners and/or own their property outright.
- Positive feedback obtained by LAs from property owners included guaranteed rent, non-structural repairs being covered, and the hands-off management approach (among other factors). Negative feedback included rent being set at the LHA rate, lease lengths being too long, and grants not being a draw when properties are in good condition (among other factors).
- Demand across the scheme is highest for 1-bed properties and 5-6 bed, family properties. However, most properties coming onto the scheme are 2-3-beds.
- Most LAs survey properties in-house which is working well for now, though some discussed issues of bottlenecks and not being able to find contractors.
- Most LAs manage properties in-house too, some are stock-holding authorities or can tap into resources from their other housing schemes.
- Tenants are being identified through housing registers as intended by the scheme. LAs stressed the importance of matching the right tenants to the right properties to ensure sustainable tenancies.
- Tenancy support is mostly provided in-house and is dependent on individual tenants' needs, though it is common for the support worker to work across multiple housing schemes.
- The Welsh Government was said to be responsive and supportive. Some LAs wanted more support with mortgage lenders not allowing properties onto the scheme, and increased information and training more generally.

Overall thoughts of Local Authorities:

- Strengths – providing much needed affordable housing, new ORP funding, improving property standards, and bringing empty properties back into use.
- Areas to improve – funding for staffing (to pay existing staff and/or hire new staff working on LSW), time-consuming administrative tasks, and LHA rental rate competitiveness to market rates.

- Lessons learned – taking time when first implementing the scheme, communicating with other participating LAs, multi-departmental collaboration, and seeing the bigger picture.

Analysis of scheme monitoring data

- 3.1 Local Authorities in the scheme share monitoring data with the Welsh Government on a quarterly basis as part of their claim forms. Within Phase 2 of the research, participating Local Authorities shared with the research team key indicators from the monitoring data used in the claim forms submitted to the Welsh Government in September 2023. Monitoring data will be collected by the research team twice per year (in March and September) across all Phases of the research, therefore a more comprehensive analysis of Local Authorities' progress within LSW will be undertaken as the scheme evolves and be reflected in future research outputs.
- 3.2 Alma Economics received monitoring data from September 2023 from 13 out of the 16 scheme-participating Local Authorities. Of these, all but one Local Authority submitted complete responses.
- 3.3 The table below presents the average responses across Local Authorities.

Table 3.1 Average responses of Local Authorities

Question category	Question	Average
Number of properties	Number of properties brought on this quarter	1.31
	Total number of properties on scheme	6.92
Number of bedrooms	Number of 1-bedroom properties	2.62
	Number of 2/3-bedroom properties	3.62
	Number of 4+ bedroom properties	0.62
Number of tenants	Number of tenants	4.62
	Number of households with children	3.31
Empty properties	Number of properties previously classed as empty	4.08
Grants	LSW grant claim this quarter	8,908
	ORP funding claim this quarter	4,767
	Number of grants issued this claim	2.25
Length of leases	5-year leases	5.62
	6–10-year leases	0.46
	11–15-year leases	0.54
	16–20-year leases	0.23
EPC ratings	EPC rating E	0.77
	EPC rating D	2.85
	EPC rating C	3.00
	EPC rating B	0.31
	EPC rating A	0.00

3.4 Cardiff brought on the most properties in the quarter of the survey (8), followed by Anglesey (4). In total, Cardiff had the most properties on the scheme (42), followed by Pembrokeshire (10), and Conwy (9).

3.5 As shown in the table below, all of Anglesey’s properties were brought on in the quarter of the survey.

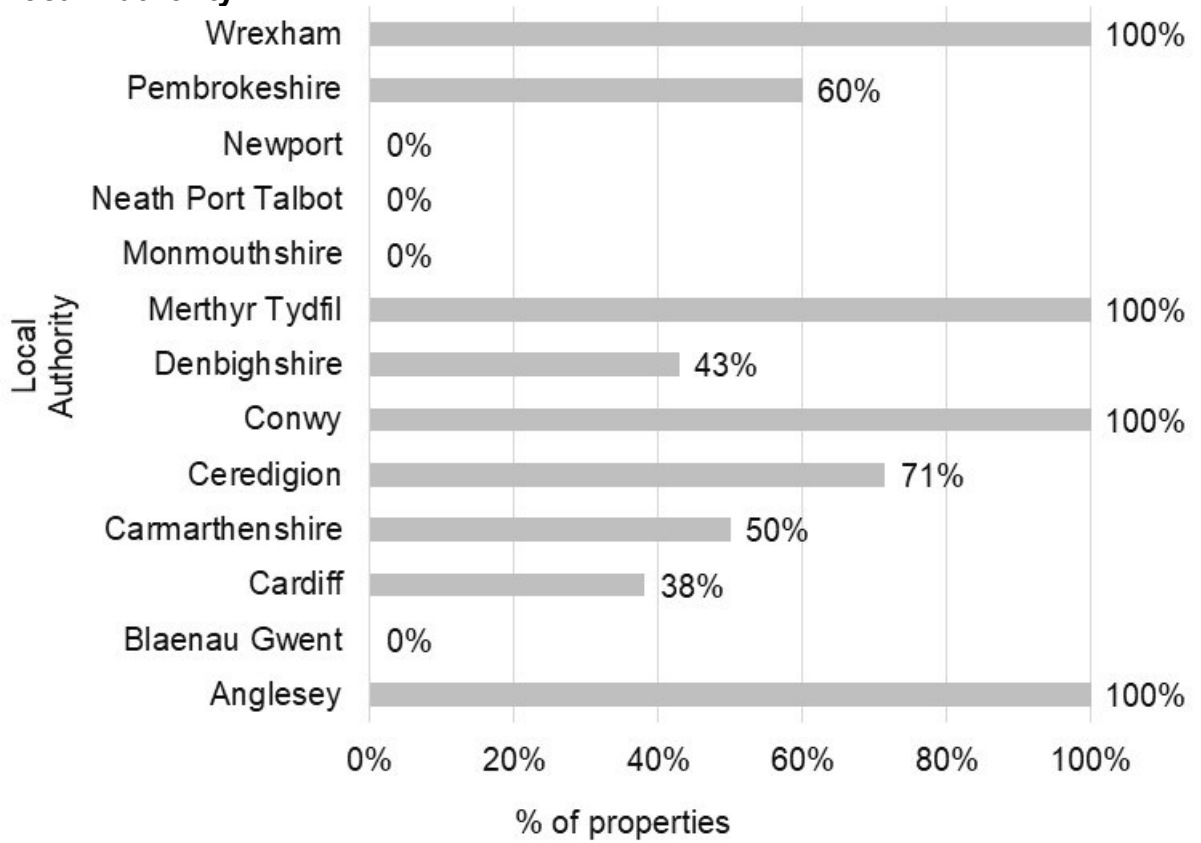
Table 3.2 Number of properties by Local Authority, brought on this quarter and total

	Number of properties brought on this quarter (November 2023)	Total number of properties on scheme (November 2023)
Anglesey	4	4
Blaenau Gwent	0	0
Cardiff	8	42
Carmarthenshire	0	2
Ceredigion	1	7
Conwy	0	9
Denbighshire	2	7
Merthyr Tydfil	0	1
Monmouthshire	0	0
Neath Port Talbot	0	0
Newport	0	0
Pembrokeshire	1	10
Wrexham	1	8
Total	17	90

3.6 Cardiff had the highest number of tenants (14) as well as the highest number of households with children (23).

3.7 Cardiff also had the highest number of properties previously classed as empty (16, compared to 1,391 total chargeable empty properties in Cardiff in 2023 (StatsWales, 2023)), followed by Conwy (9, compared to 828 total chargeable empty properties (ibid)), and Wrexham (8, compared to 303 (ibid)). However, Anglesey, Conwy, Merthyr Tydfil, and Wrexham had the highest percentage of total properties previously classed as empty (100%).

Figure 3.1 Percentage of total properties previously classed as empty, by Local Authority



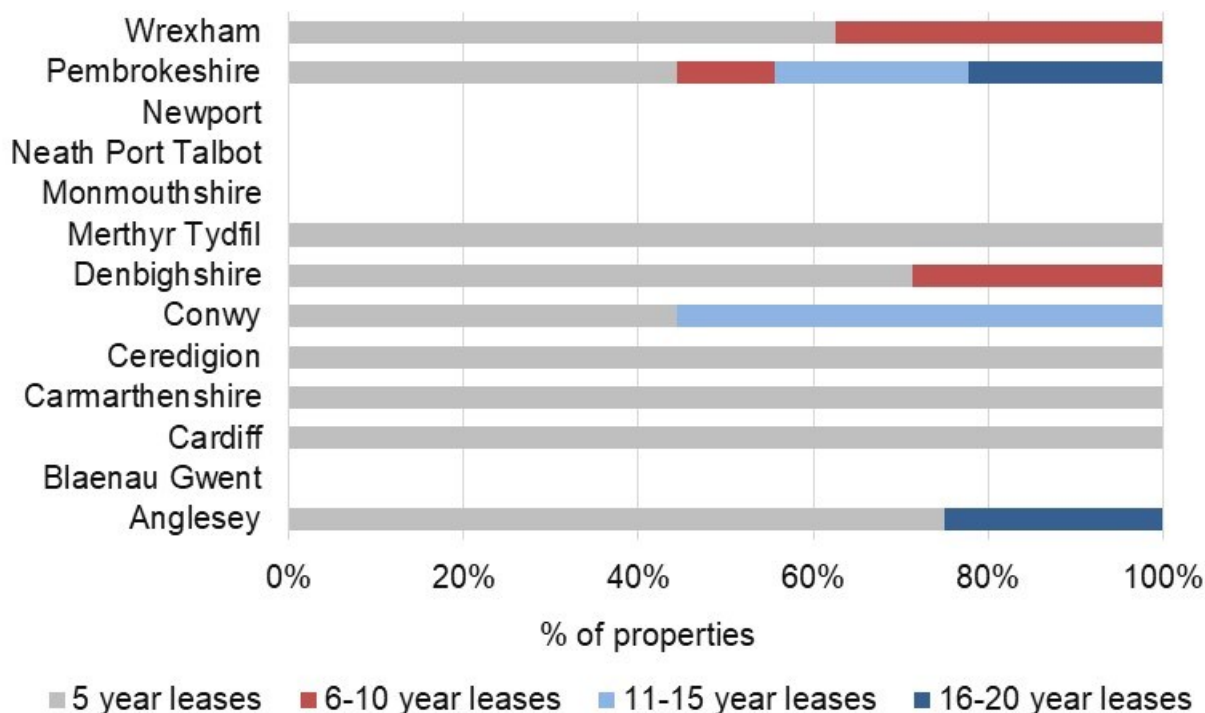
3.8 Cardiff had both the highest LSW grant (£44,996) and ORP funding (£39,348) claims for Quarter 2, as well as the highest number of grants issued (14).

Table 3.3 LSW grant and ORP funding claims in Quarter 2 (November 2023), by Local Authority

	LSW grant claim this quarter	ORP funding claim this quarter	Number of grants issued this claim
Anglesey	£0	£0	0
Blaenau Gwent	£0	£0	0
Cardiff	£44,996	£39,348	14
Carmarthenshire	£0	£0	0
Ceredigion	Unavailable	Unavailable	Unavailable
Conwy	£9,999	£362.25	2
Denbighshire	£2,742	£5,000	2
Merthyr Tydfil	£0	£0	0
Monmouthshire	£0	£0	0
Neath Port Talbot	£0	£0	0
Newport	£0	£0	0
Pembrokeshire	£44,161	£7,545	7
Wrexham	£5,000	£4,950	2

3.9 The following chart presents the breakdown of lease lengths by Local Authority. Cardiff, Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, and Merthyr Tydfil use exclusively 5-year leases. Conwy is the only Local Authority where 5-year leases are not the most common lease length, as 56% of leases will last 11-15 years.

Figure 3.2 Breakdown of lease lengths by Local Authority (% of all properties in Local Authority)



3.10 The most common EPC rating across participating Local Authorities was C (9/13 Local Authorities), followed by D (6/13). None of the properties received an EPC rating of A. Carmarthenshire had the highest EPC ratings as all their properties were rated either B or C. Ceredigion was second in the EPC ranking, with 71% of their properties classed as B or C. Most properties in Wrexham (63%), Conwy (67%), and Cardiff (62%) had EPC ratings of D or below.

Table 3.4 EPC ratings by Local Authority (% of all LSW properties in Local Authority)

	EPC rating A	EPC rating B	EPC rating C
Isle of Anglesey	0%	0%	25%
Blaenau Gwent	N/A	N/A	N/A
Cardiff	0%	2%	36%
Carmarthenshire	0%	50%	50%
Ceredigion	0%	29%	43%
Conwy	0%	0%	33%
Denbighshire	0%	0%	43%
Merthyr Tydfil	0%	0%	100%
Monmouthshire	N/A	N/A	N/A
Neath Port Talbot	N/A	N/A	N/A
Newport	N/A	N/A	N/A
Pembrokeshire	0%	0%	90%
Wrexham	0%	0%	38%

Interviews with scheme-participating Local Authorities

The Welsh Government provided Alma Economics with contact details for the 16 participating Local Authorities in the scheme. All were contacted with the opportunity to attend a virtual, 60-minute interview to share insights on how they had found implementing the scheme so far. This included where the scheme had been working effectively as well as where it could be improved. In total, 13 out of the 16 Local Authorities participated, with one being unresponsive and another two declining to take part at the current phase. The findings shared within these interviews are outlined below.

Roles and responsibilities

3.11 The roles of those interviewed varied from PRS Officers to Team Leaders of Housing Options/Solutions to Senior Surveyors and Property Developers. The number of staff working on the scheme in some capacity also varied by Local Authority, but teams were consistently quite small. Staff most often worked on the

scheme alongside their other roles with their Local Authority. There were a couple of instances where interviewees worked on the scheme as their sole role, but this was rare.

- 3.12 Most Local Authority interviewees expressed that the number of team members was sufficient to manage the scheme for now. They also identified that the workload can be time-consuming (particularly on the administrative side) but is manageable. They often said that they would consider hiring more staff as their target numbers of properties on the scheme increased and the scheme progressed (particularly staff who could focus solely on the scheme), but they also mentioned that this would be reliant on an increase in staffing budget from the Welsh Government.
- 3.13 Almost all interviewees spoke about the need to include broader Local Authority departments (financial, legal, housing, etc.) to implement the scheme. Of those asked about their ability to meet Welsh language requirements, interviewees either said that they could cover basic Welsh but have the resources to access extensive Welsh language skills if needed, or they said that they would like to offer this but there is an issue of resources across the Local Authority.

Impact of external events

- 3.14 When asked about the impact that various external events have had on the implementation of the scheme, many interviewees commented on the Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016 (coming into effect December 2022). Interviewees described the Act as having caused confusion among Local Authorities with regard to which type of contract they could rent to tenants on, which had led to some authorities pausing their implementation of the scheme. The Act was also said to have caused concerns among some property owners not on the scheme, as a result of which they sold their properties and reduced portfolios.

“[I]t’s basically been painting a very bleak picture for landlords.”

- 3.15 Interviewees also talked about the current cost-of-living crisis which was said to have generally caused a lack of affordable housing and generated greater demand for the scheme from tenants. Multiple interviewees stated that market rates had increased to the point where LHA rates that were once acceptable to property owners are now no longer acceptable. Another Local Authority commented that the crisis had meant more contract holders were in arrears.

“I think the biggest impact now is obviously this cost of living and this relentless interest rate rising [...] and sadly, you know, people are starting to feel the pinch.”

- 3.16 Another key topic of discussion were issues regarding mortgages, which were also brought up in discussions with scheme-participating property owners. This included interviewees stating that property owners are often not given permission by their mortgage lenders to take out a mortgage for properties on the scheme. One Local Authority described how some property owners had been switching mortgage lenders to join the scheme in order to combat this. More generally, mortgage rates going up as well as changes to tax rules on offsetting mortgages were also said to have encouraged property owners to sell rather than continue to lease their properties either privately or through the scheme.
- 3.17 When asked about refugee inflows⁵ and their possible impacts on the scheme, most interviewees stated that their Local Authority had designated teams and channels to deal with refugees, so this had not had an impact on the scheme. However, one Local Authority said that the war in Ukraine had led to property owners getting in touch with them about the scheme to see whether they could help Ukrainians moving to the UK through LSW.
- 3.18 The COVID-19 pandemic was also said to have caused delays in implementation and barriers to collaboration for the Local Authorities that were implementing the scheme (or the preceding PRS pathfinder scheme) during this time, but this impact has since lessened.
- 3.19 Two Local Authorities mentioned that EPC regulations increasing in the future could create barriers to joining the scheme for some property owners.⁶ Another issue that was brought up was that second homes and holiday lets were presenting challenges for the supply of affordable housing more generally.
- 3.20 Lastly, several interviewees expressed that it was the accumulation of events rather than one single event that was having an effect on implementation of the scheme, as well as reducing the supply of affordable housing in general while increasing demand for it.

⁵ Particularly under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP), the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS), the Ukraine Family Scheme, and the Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme.

⁶ Note that the UK Government has since announced its intention not to proceed with the introduction of new minimum standards for rental properties.

“There’s pressure on the local market from all parts of the [housing] sector, so everyone’s fishing from the same pond.”

Recruitment of property owners

3.21 When asked about how easy or difficult Local Authorities were finding recruitment of property owners onto the scheme, there was an almost even split of opinions between interviewees. Some interviewees described having weekly expressions of interest from property owners and not having been set high enough target numbers by the Welsh Government to cope with this demand. Therefore, interviewees spoke about being selective with the properties onboarded onto the scheme and the allocation of grants not having yet been necessary. These Local Authorities described making decisions based on which kinds of properties are most in-demand, for example, selecting based on the number of bedrooms or location. Other Local Authorities discussed either waiting for additional funding from the Welsh Government to take on more properties or having already received permission to go over their target numbers, as long as the Welsh Government were updated.

3.22 The most common types of property owners interested in the scheme that Local Authority interviewees mentioned were accidental property owners and those who owned their properties outright. Two Local Authorities even expressed that they had property owners on the scheme who would actively seek out properties to buy and rent through the scheme. Other Local Authority interviewees who described the recruitment process as being easier caveated that it was more difficult in the beginning and that the scheme showed slow growth early on but is progressing well now.

“I wouldn’t say it’s easy, but we are finding that the current market is kind of allowing landlords to come to us and to look at our product.”

3.23 Some Local Authority interviewees described having a more difficult time of recruiting property owners for the scheme, with one often-cited reason being mortgage lenders not providing permission for property owners to join, preventing onboarding from moving forward. A couple of Local Authority interviewees expressed frustration at this issue not having been researched by the Welsh Government in advance and at not having been provided with a list of mortgage lenders who would accept the scheme. Another Local Authority interviewee

expressed that obtaining quotes for improvement work post-COVID-19 can be difficult but is easier when property owners have their own contacts for tradespeople.

- 3.24 One Local Authority interviewee expressed that due to low numbers of onboarded properties on the scheme at the moment and the individuality of the process, they could not identify any trends yet.

Feedback from property owners

- 3.25 Local Authority interviewees were also asked what feedback property owners had given on the scheme's leasing arrangements. Positive points were the guaranteed rent and an automatic increase in rent if/when the LHA rate increases, as well as voids being covered and rent arrears not affecting them (as the responsibility for this lies with the Local Authority). Other positives included all non-structural repairs being covered by the scheme and property owners being handed back the property at the end of the lease in the same condition as at the start. Several Local Authority interviewees expressed that property owners had been "saved" from having to sell properties due to the additional requirements introduced through the Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016 or, in the case of some owners of empty properties, from having to secure Rent Smart Wales (RSW) licensing. Finally, one interviewee also mentioned improving energy efficiency and the access to ORP funding as a positive of the scheme, and another mentioned property owners having problems with previous tenants. Overall, the "hands-off" approach appeared to be (from the perspective of Local Authorities) extremely attractive to property owners.

- 3.26 However, Local Authorities also received negative points of feedback from property owners – the most significant being the rental rate being set at the LHA rate. For most interviewees, the LHA rate was said to be the main, and sometimes only, barrier to property owners wanting to join the scheme. These Local Authority interviewees expressed that the LHA rate does not match up with the market rates (this being a particular issue in more affluent areas) or mortgage interest rates.

"If a landlord does contact me with an interest in the scheme, I will initially mention the LHA rate and unfortunately 9 times out of 10 they don't want to go any further".

- 3.27 Local Authority interviewees also identified where property owners were not all keen on the longer lease lengths, including where economic uncertainty for the future

limited their appeal. Local Authorities who previously described finding it difficult to recruit property owners onto the scheme said that where properties were in good condition, the grants were not a big draw for property owners. A couple of Local Authority interviewees also mentioned delays with onboarding and a lengthy, formal process for property owners to go through, potentially putting them off. Other negative feedback identified by Local Authority interviewees included property owners still being responsible for communal areas and fire safety so it being less “hands-off” for owners of flats, as well as the minimum standards being too high and property owners not being involved in tenant selection.

- 3.28 To combat the negative perceptions around the LHA rate in particular, some Local Authority interviewees described the need to package the offer in a more appealing way. For example, leading discussions with the rental rate first and foremost, and then quickly following this with listing the benefits of the scheme.

“So we sort of have to give them [property owners] the negative quickly and then do the rosy glow of all the positives afterwards, which seems to keep their interest [...]”.

Advertising

- 3.29 Whether or not Local Authority interviewees stated that their Local Authority had advertised the scheme in some way was largely dependent on the amount of “organic” interest they were receiving from property owners and their target number of properties.
- 3.30 Of those Local Authorities who had not advertised the scheme, interviewees said that interest had been generated purely through word-of-mouth. Their reasons for having not advertised included not having had a need to advertise yet, not having the capacity to deal with the influx of expressions of interest advertising would create or having advertised in the past but no longer needing to.
- 3.31 Of those Local Authorities who had advertised the scheme, interviewees discussed having done so through a variety of means. The most common included on their Local Authority website, on social media, and through mailshots and forums. Other channels mentioned by Local Authority interviewees included community newspapers and local magazines, posters on the backs of buses, and letters sent out to empty properties. One Local Authority interviewee stated that they will consider all means of advertisement, especially to capture elderly property owners

too. Another interviewee said their Local Authority had created branding for all of their PRS schemes (including LSW) separate to their usual Local Authority branding in order to resemble a high street letting agents more closely.

Demand for properties

- 3.32 When asked about demand for affordable housing and whether or not there were enough private rented sector properties to meet this demand, the vast majority of Local Authority interviewees said no.
- 3.33 Local Authority interviewees described an unprecedented demand for affordable housing in general, with temporary accommodation, including bed and breakfasts, being “maxed out” and there being an inability to move tenants on quick enough. One interviewee stated that supply is falling dramatically, and another said that property owners were able to charge three times the LHA rate for their properties and so did not “need” the scheme. Another Local Authority interviewee felt that despite having met targets, doing so was getting harder.
- “We’ve not seen the crisis of homelessness quite so overwhelming as what we’re seeing at the moment”.
- 3.34 One Local Authority interviewee expressed that they felt there were enough properties to meet demand for the moment, and another said that there were enough private rented sector properties in general but not enough specifically on the scheme.
- 3.35 Local Authorities were also asked which housing types were most in demand in their areas. The majority of Local Authority interviewees stated that this was 1-bed, single accommodation and some also stated that larger properties (e.g., 5–6-beds) for families were in high demand. Local Authority interviewees brought up the issue that for larger properties of more than 4-bedrooms, the property owner would have to take a substantial loss of earnings if joining the scheme, as the LHA rate is capped at 4-bedrooms. Some Local Authority interviewees said that they were in need of all kinds of properties. One Local Authority interviewee also commented that location was the biggest determining factor for housing on the scheme, with rural properties being much less in demand. There also appeared to be a discrepancy between the type of property most in demand in the Local Authorities (i.e., mostly 1-beds but also larger properties) and those joining the scheme, as

Local Authority interviewees most commonly described getting 2–3-bedroom properties through the scheme.

Surveying properties

- 3.36 Almost all Local Authorities who addressed this issue surveyed properties for the scheme in-house. Most followed a similar pathway from expression of interest and the sharing of more information (either by phone or factsheet) to surveyors going out to assess the property and drawing up a schedule of works, which is then passed onto the property owner. Many interviewees described Environmental Health Officers being involved in the inspection, but this was not always the case.

“There is a lot of liaison between [point of contact] and the landlord [...] about what needs to be done, what can be done, and making sure they are on board with it, so it’s their decisions really we’re just facilitating it more than anything at this stage”.

- 3.37 Some Local Authorities would have their surveyors gather quotes for the work and others would ask the property owner to do so. When it was the Local Authority who gathered quotes, interviewees shared that this can often be difficult and sometimes lead to delays. Two Local Authority interviewees said that it was hard to find contractors and one Local Authority interviewee commented that this was especially the case in more rural locations. Another said that their Local Authority liked to obtain more than one quote which could also be a challenge.
- 3.38 Some Local Authority interviewees spoke about the overall surveying process being subject to bottlenecks and delays due to a general lack of resources. Local Authorities with fewer numbers of properties onboard typically said that the surveying process was working fine for now, but that this was potentially only because there were low numbers of properties to survey.
- 3.39 Only one of the Local Authorities who addressed this issue stated that they used external resources, in this case an external surveyor, as doing this in-house had been a “nightmare”.

“At the start it was a bit of a nightmare. We tried to keep it internal, but then with their [the surveyors’] normal day-to-day stuff they just couldn't maintain the amount of surveys we needed to do.”

- 3.40 When asked about whether properties typically met the mandatory requirements, and, if not, what the most common failings were, answers amongst Local Authority interviewees were quite mixed. Most of the time it was said that properties were generally in good condition, with only minor works needed to bring them onto the scheme. Where work was identified as being necessary to bring properties onto the scheme, interviewed Local Authorities shared a variety of reasons, for example, EPC rating, damp, electrics, fire safety (including new Renting Homes (Wales) Act conditions that fire alarms must be hardwired), garden fencing, decoration, etc. One Local Authority interviewee stated that most properties were rejected only due to their low target numbers rather than the properties failing to meet mandatory requirements.
- 3.41 One particular mandatory requirement that a few interviewed Local Authorities commented on was the space standards for bedrooms on the scheme.⁷ The Local Authority interviewees that spoke about this described these standards as often being too restrictive. For example, where they had a property that they wanted to house a family in but could not do so due to the bedroom being slightly too small for the child. This led to frustrations among Local Authorities who felt they could help more families who needed affordable accommodation if they could be more flexible in deciding whether bedrooms were suitable for children on a case-by-case basis.

“What we’re finding is actually in quite a few of our properties we’re not putting the person who is in most urgent need into that property.”

Managing properties

- 3.42 A large majority of Local Authorities who answered questions on how they manage properties on the scheme stated that properties are managed in-house or commented that this would be done in-house once they have onboarded their first property. Of those Local Authorities who currently manage in-house, interviewees mostly said that this was running smoothly, and that the in-house resources were sufficient for now. They did express, however, that this could be due to having low, manageable numbers of properties on the scheme at the moment and that it could become an issue as the scheme grows. Most Local Authorities had management teams and resources that spanned several leasing schemes that LSW-specific properties could “piggyback” onto. In some cases, there was just one point of

⁷ Note that space standards as defined by [the Welsh Housing Quality Standard \(WHQS\)](#)

contact for the scheme who carried all management responsibilities, albeit where property numbers were lower.

“[N]ext year it’s a big jump [in target numbers]. I’m probably going to be getting maintenance issues every day with some properties. It could get to the point where we might have to look into more manpower.”

- 3.43 Those who were already stock-holding authorities with prior experience of managing properties were said to have more relevant knowledge and resources. A couple of interviewees from non-stock-holding authorities expressed that it was more difficult for them due to the specific issue of DWP not recognising them as a landlord. This means that when tenants are receiving Universal Credit, the Local Authority does not have access to the online portal which holds their “journal”⁸, and their Universal Credit for rent comes through either without a reference or goes to the tenant before the Local Authority, in which case tenants will sometimes spend it before it can be paid as rent.
- 3.44 Local Authority interviewees who were asked about the 10% management fee claimable from the Welsh Government said that it was a positive and a good incentive for Local Authorities. However, one interviewee commented that the claims form for the Welsh Government can be time-consuming with lots of repetition.
- 3.45 For those Local Authorities who used external resources to manage their scheme properties, one said that they use a Registered Social Landlord (RSL) to manage all temporary accommodation leases. They commented that this involved repairs and maintenance, out-of-hours contact, managing antisocial behaviour, etc. Another interviewee said that in their stock-holding Local Authority the majority of building maintenance was done by external contractors, with just a small proportion carried out internally.

Identifying tenants and finding suitable properties

- 3.46 Local Authority interviewees stated that tenants come from Local Authority housing registers where tenants have already been determined to be at risk of homelessness and have a housing need (as is intended by the scheme). Sometimes Local Authority interviewees would access this register themselves in

⁸ The journal is an area within online Universal Credit accounts which holds a complete record of activities undertaken while users have applied for and claimed Universal Credit.

order to identify suitable tenants for the scheme, but more commonly they would work alongside a Housing Team in their Local Authority (Housing Options, Housing Solutions, Home Finders, etc.) who would nominate tenants to be considered.

3.47 Almost all Local Authority interviewees commented on the fact that close collaboration and regular meetings with their Housing Team was essential to the process. Some Local Authority interviewees even stated that they shared the same physical space within their offices which made this communication easier. This collaboration was also said by a few Local Authority interviewees to mean that those involved could see the “bigger picture” and help a tenant even if this ended up being through an alternative scheme.

“I think one of the benefits for us is that we're all one team and so we're [...] effectively sitting alongside the Housing Options service who are dealing with homelessness and housing duty.”

3.48 Local Authority interviewees then went on to discuss the process of matching tenants to properties available on the scheme. Key considerations when assessing tenants and properties that were mentioned included (i) tenants being “PRS ready” and able to sustain a longer length of lease, (ii) properties matching the bedroom need of the tenants, (iii) affordability, (iv) the locations of properties (e.g., not wanting to place tenants in properties away from their support networks, jobs, and schools, and additionally for rural properties consideration of public transport access), and (v) past antisocial behaviour or criminal records. Local Authority interviewees mostly described the process of matching tenants to properties as smooth and working well, though some mentioned it could be a time-consuming task to find the right matches.

3.49 Ensuring sustainability of the tenancy was said to be key for both the Local Authority and the tenant. It was also mentioned that as word can spread about a “bad tenancy” among property owners, future interest in the scheme might also rely on suitable matches of tenants to properties. Another point made was that some Local Authorities could not afford to get into debt over missed payments, so ensuring affordability and “PRS readiness” for tenants were seen as important.

“It is really about trying to make that tenancy sustainable in whatever way we can and usually that is about identifying the best fit based on the tenant [...]”.

Tenancy support

- 3.50 When asked about how tenants were supported within the scheme, a large majority of Local Authorities said this was done in-house, with only a few stating that this was done through a mix of in-house and external support, or solely external support. This included where Local Authorities with no properties on the scheme at the time of the interview stated how support would be offered in the future. Those who would outsource their support externally would do so through Housing Support Grant commissioned providers that are already providing support to tenants in non-LSW housing schemes.
- 3.51 Overall, Local Authority interviewees commented that support provided is entirely dependent on tenants' individual needs but went on to give examples of support that they had provided previously or are currently providing as part of the scheme. This included pre-tenancy support, setting-up utilities and council tax, furniture packs, managing finances and debt advice, rent rescues and support for rent arrears, emotional support, access to Discretionary Assistance Funding, and signposting resources.
- “It [support] is very dependent on the individual’s needs [...] but affordability would be there, this sort of common ground in that they can only afford LHA”.
- 3.52 Local Authorities often said that this support was provided by a support officer, with most stating that this support officer worked across multiple housing schemes within the Local Authority. It was rarer to find a support officer dedicated solely to LSW, though a few Local Authorities expressed that this would be something they would want in the future as demand and target numbers of properties on the scheme increase.
- 3.53 A large majority of Local Authority interviewees stated that the tenants they currently had on the scheme did not have complex needs and so accessed more “generic” and less intensive support. Of those who did have tenants with more complex needs (or those who had planned for this scenario in the future), types of more intensive support included occupational therapists, disability support, children’s services, mental health support, crisis intervention, substance use support, domestic abuse support, and prison re-settlement. Commonly, interviewees that mentioned these types of support stated that even though their current support is offered in-house, tenants who required more intensive support would likely be referred to a third-sector support organisation for these specific services.

3.54 Those Local Authority interviewees asked about the regularity of ongoing support provided most commonly stated that support was more intensive at the beginning of the tenancy and then lessened as the tenant settled in. However, ongoing support did occur regularly even after this initial intensive start, for example, with regular visits from support officers and quarterly inspections. One Local Authority said they would bring in a third-party provider if more regular support was required. These Local Authorities also stated that they would continue to assess tenants' needs as they are subject to changes over time.

Partners and collaboration

3.55 There was an even split between those Local Authorities who carried out all scheme activities entirely in-house and those who collaborated with partner organisations on some aspect of the scheme. For those Local Authorities with partners, it varied on which aspect this was, for example, some interviewees expressed using partners for surveying properties or maintenance and repairs throughout the tenancy. Others collaborated with external organisations on tenancy support, and the remaining Local Authorities had used partners to advertise the scheme on various forums. Sometimes these partners were RSLs. Most commonly, Local Authorities spoke about good working relationships with their partners. The only challenge shared was where a Local Authority interviewee said that their partner had needed education about the processes of the scheme and the differences with other similar schemes that they were more familiar with.

Collaboration with the Welsh Government

3.56 Local Authorities were also asked about their experiences collaborating with the Welsh Government and answers were mostly positive. Local Authority interviewees would often say the Welsh Government had been “responsive”, “supportive”, and “helpful”. They spoke about regular meetings with the Welsh Government team as well as having opportunities to discuss emerging problems and, where problems were put forward, these being solved quickly and creatively. A few Local Authorities noted that there had been some changes to the Welsh Government's LSW team but expressed that this had not impacted on their delivery of the scheme.

“They're here to support us, and it feels like they genuinely do want houses on the scheme [...] which gives us a little boost in confidence and morale as well. It's not like fighting against anyone. It's really supported.”

3.57 Some challenges that were brought up by Local Authority interviewees included where the Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016 had caused confusion among Local Authorities and they felt that more information sharing and guidance on a uniform approach across Local Authorities to addressing this within the scheme was needed. Another issue that was mentioned within Local Authority interviews was where respondents felt that the Welsh Government could do more to aid them on the issue of mortgage lenders not granting property owners permission to join the scheme – for example, through having conversations with mortgage lenders themselves. Local Authority interviewees also called for more assistance on the legal aspects of the scheme, especially where Local Authorities had less experience with housing-specific legislation. In addition, one Local Authority expressed that they wished they had received some training prior to implementing the scheme and said that they would take the opportunity to attend training even now.

“It was literally like jumping off the cliff and not knowing what was at the bottom, but we got through it. I'm not saying that that was at fault of the Welsh Government, but I think having training on what the scheme entailed would have been very, very beneficial prior to actually introducing the scheme.”

Flexibility

3.58 In addition, Local Authorities were also asked about their views on the level of flexibility granted to Local Authorities in implementing the scheme. Most Local Authority interviewees who were asked this question said that they were happy with the level of flexibility. They cited reasons such as already feeling they have a high enough degree of flexibility or appreciating the need for standardisation of the scheme's implementation across the Local Authorities. Local Authorities who were newer to the scheme particularly enjoyed the stronger sense of rigidity provided in guidance for implementing the scheme. As Local Authorities became more comfortable and confident in implementation, they appreciated increased flexibility.

3.59 Of those Local Authority interviewees who stated that they would like increased flexibility, the majority said this would be useful for negotiating rental rates, for example, having an extra 10-20% on top of the LHA rate to offer to property owners, particularly where there is high demand for a property type or where the property is of particularly high standard. One Local Authority wondered about the potential to escalate benefits as the length of lease increases to encourage longer-term leases,

and another questioned whether incentives for property owners could be tailored to each Local Authority. However, the Local Authorities expressing these opinions did caveat that this approach may be difficult to implement in practice.

“Our private rental market is very different to say [other Local Authority] so I think it’s kind of having that blanket approach, which on paper sounds really good, but isn’t the kind of thing that’s going to bring landlords necessarily onboard here [...]”.

- 3.60 Other aspects of the leasing arrangements that Local Authorities wanted more flexibility with, but were brought up less frequently, were the space standards for children’s bedrooms and the need for toilets to be no more than one floor away from bedrooms. These Local Authority interviewees caveated that proper due diligence and risk assessments would be carried out before any of these standards were lowered.

Conclusions: Strengths

- 3.61 Local Authority interviewees were lastly asked for their conclusive thoughts about the scheme overall, including the overarching strengths. Of those asked this question, Local Authority interviewees commonly identified the scheme providing much needed affordable housing for those in need and opening up a new avenue for those who cannot access social housing as the main strength.

“I think it’s the fact that it’s obviously providing much needed affordable accommodation for client groups that have a housing need. I think it’s a fantastic product.”

- 3.62 Other overall strengths included the grant funding being particularly attractive for property owners (ORP funding being named frequently) as well as the scheme improving property standards and bringing empty properties back into use. One Local Authority also mentioned that it is saving some properties from being sold. Other strengths Local Authorities felt were applicable to property owners included properties being maintained and returned to them in their original state, guaranteed rent, voids being covered, and the scheme expanding the offers available to them.
- 3.63 Some Local Authorities spoke about team collaboration as being a strength of the scheme. For example, having a workforce dedicated to its implementation, close team support, and funding for Local Authorities to hire staff were all mentioned.

Conclusions: Areas to improve

- 3.64 Local Authority interviewees were also asked what they believed to be the overall weaknesses and areas to improve of the scheme, with those being asked this question commonly discussing funding and resources. Some Local Authorities stated that whilst funding for staffing is sufficient for now, it will present an issue as numbers of properties on the scheme increase. Other Local Authorities felt that the funding for staffing and allocation of voids is already insufficient, with one interviewee worried about a large overspend in the future. Administrative tasks, such as quarterly claims forms or the back and forth of legal documents, were said to require lots of time and resource. One Local Authority also discussed difficulties in recruitment and retention of staff leading to a lack of continuity of knowledge.⁹
- 3.65 Another common issue cited within Local Authority interviews was the LHA rate and its comparison to market rent levels. Local Authorities stated that the LHA rate could not compete with market rents and said there needed to be a better balance between the scheme's rental offer and that of social housing or market rents. The LHA rate was said to be one of the biggest obstacles in recruiting property owners for the scheme, and interviewees called for this to be increased in order to improve uptake.
- 3.66 In addition, several interviewees mentioned uncertainty and a lack of information as an area to improve for the future – for example, uncertainty around what happens to tenants when leases are over.¹⁰ Local Authorities called for more training in general and further information around complying with the Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016 and future legislative changes. There was also said to be a lack of understanding on property owners' behalf regarding property standards and legal requirements which can present a challenge, so further education in the open PRS market was also called for.

Lessons learned

- 3.67 Finally, Local Authorities were also asked about the lessons learned so far in implementing the scheme. This included asking interviewees what advice they

⁹ Note that Chapter 7: Recovering losses of the *Leasing Scheme Wales - Scheme Guidance for lead organisations* includes information on options for funding and resources.

¹⁰ Note that Section 6.4 of the *Leasing Scheme Wales – Scheme Guidance for lead organisations* includes information on end of tenancies.

would give to Local Authorities just starting out on the scheme or to the Welsh Government.

- 3.68 One lesson learned commonly discussed by interviewees was the need for Local Authorities to take their time and fully prepare when starting the scheme. This included taking time to familiarise with the whole process, understand legal documents before signing, produce paperwork and checklists, and ensure all resources needed are in place. Some interviewees commented that getting internal processes in place can be time-consuming, but that Local Authorities should not rush. One Local Authority questioned whether the Welsh Government could assist more with legal resources (examples given being drawing up leases and offering a pool of legal representatives).

“[...] the thing is, if you're a new Local Authority that's thinking about coming onboard, I think you've got to do your homework and you've got to make sure that you've got the resources in place to administer the scheme [...]”

- 3.69 Local Authorities also emphasised the importance of communicating with other participating Local Authorities and sharing resources and knowledge. Peer Support Group meetings (organised by Local Authorities themselves and split regionally into North, South, and Mid/West) were said to be useful by a few Local Authorities as they offer the opportunity to discuss shared issues and share resources. It was said, however, that Local Authorities can have very different experiences across the country.

“I think another thing that really helped me within the scheme is actually discussing things with other Local Authorities [...] they've shared information with me and I have found that sort of invaluable really [...]”

- 3.70 Additionally, Local Authorities also offered advice to other Local Authorities with regard to the workforce implementing the scheme. For example, it was said to be beneficial to have enough officers in place to step in in case of absence, but the ongoing issue of staff recruitment and retention was brought up to caveat this. The importance of multi-department collaboration and the merging of specialities (for example, between housing, corporate, and legal departments) was also cited as important. As corporate and legal departments were said to be particularly risk-adverse, it was also noted that having these departments onboard to support implementation was crucial.

- 3.71 The onboarding of property owners onto the scheme was another area where Local Authorities cited many lessons learned. Some Local Authority interviewees spoke about the need for effective marketing and the challenge of making this appealing to a variety of motivations, with one Local Authority stating that the scheme requires continual marketing. For those who have received lots of interest in the scheme, another Local Authority mentioned that, despite this, it is not always easy to meet targets in the early years of implementation. A few Local Authority interviewees also emphasised that Local Authorities should ensure property owners are made fully aware upfront of all arrangements of the scheme and that expectations should be managed. This included ensuring that written mortgage lender consent is obtained before the process is continued. Finally, Local Authority interviewees also said it was important to not be afraid to reject unsuitable properties, and to take advantage of any flexibility offered by the Welsh Government.
- 3.72 Interviewees also noted lessons learned around moving tenants into scheme properties which included the fact that, as the overall process can be time-consuming and subject to delays, it is important to move tenants in as quickly as possible, as well as to have a support worker in place straight away. It was also said by Local Authority interviewees that tenancy support can require a lot of resources, for example where housing officers need to keep on top of tenancies even when there are no current problems, but that tenancy support funding is capped at £100,000 per Local Authority regardless of the number of tenants on the scheme. One resource that a Local Authority stated would be useful would be a moving in and moving out guide for tenants.¹¹
- 3.73 Lastly, Local Authorities discussed lessons learned in terms of seeing the bigger picture and the scheme overall. Advice for Local Authorities starting on the scheme included understanding the product on offer and what can be reasonably achieved. Advice for the Welsh Government included talking to officers on the ground implementing the scheme to understand implementation from their perspective as well as providing more regular updates to participating Local Authorities.

“I suppose another lesson learned really [...] is that bigger picture of who you’re trying to help, you know, and what problem you are trying to resolve with this and therefore what properties do you need to do it?”

¹¹ Note that guidance applicable to tenants housed under LSW can be found in [A Home in the Private Rented Sector: A Guide for Tenants in Wales](#).

4. Input from property owners

Insights from property owners' survey:

- The majority of respondents were non-scheme-participating property owners (97%) compared to scheme-participating property owners (3%), but they shared similarities in weighted average age (58-years and 60-years respectively). They were also similar in having mostly leased property privately for 10+ years, renting out between 0-5 properties, and mostly leasing terraced housing.
- Of non-scheme-participating property owners, 27% were aware of the scheme before the survey and 26% had heard about it through RSW, whereas 40% of scheme-participating property owners had heard about it through Local Authority communications.
- The main motivation for joining the scheme for scheme-participating property owners was the Local Authority management of the property, whereas the main barrier for non-scheme-participating property owners was the rent offer being too low and being able to secure better rent in the private market.
- Of scheme-participating property owners, 40% of scheme properties fell within the Mid/West Peer Support Group region, 87% of lease lengths were 5-7 years long, and 69% had been offered funding to improve their property.

Insights from focus groups and interviews with property owners:

- Common motivations or attractive features between both scheme-participating and non-scheme-participating property owners were: (i) guaranteed rent payments, (ii) management of the property by Local Authorities, (iii) the property being returned in the same condition as when onboarded, and (iv) helping those in need.
- The primary challenge discussed was the rental rate being too low and not competitive with private market rents.
- Future improvements suggested included making rent more competitive, better communication channels with Local Authorities, and focusing the scheme on onboarding empty properties (among other things).

Survey distribution and response rates

- 4.1 Alma Economics distributed a survey to property owners in Wales through participating Local Authorities and a targeted RSW mailshot.¹² The survey ran from 13th June to 6th August 2023, and received 1,607 responses.
- 4.2 Analysis was conducted only on the answers of respondents who explicitly confirmed their understanding of the terms of participation and agreed to proceed with the survey. As a result, the final sample consisted of 1,580 respondents. Number of responses per question however varied depending on: i) skip logic embedded in the survey, which filtered subsequent questions based on participants' responses and therefore not all respondents were eligible to answer all questions, and ii) the number of responses per person allowed per question, with multiple choice questions where multiple answers were enabled reporting the total number of answers selected, not the total number of respondents.¹³ Survey respondents were not obliged to answer all questions relevant to them and where respondents chose to skip questions, this has also affected the total number of responses received.
- 4.3 Survey findings are further illustrated with key graphs throughout this chapter, whereas additional graphs can be found in Annex A at the end of this report.
- 4.4 The survey received responses from property owners operating across all 22 Local Authorities in Wales. The most commonly selected Local Authority where respondents were leasing properties was Cardiff (14%)¹⁴, followed by 8% operating in Swansea and Rhondda Cynon Taf.

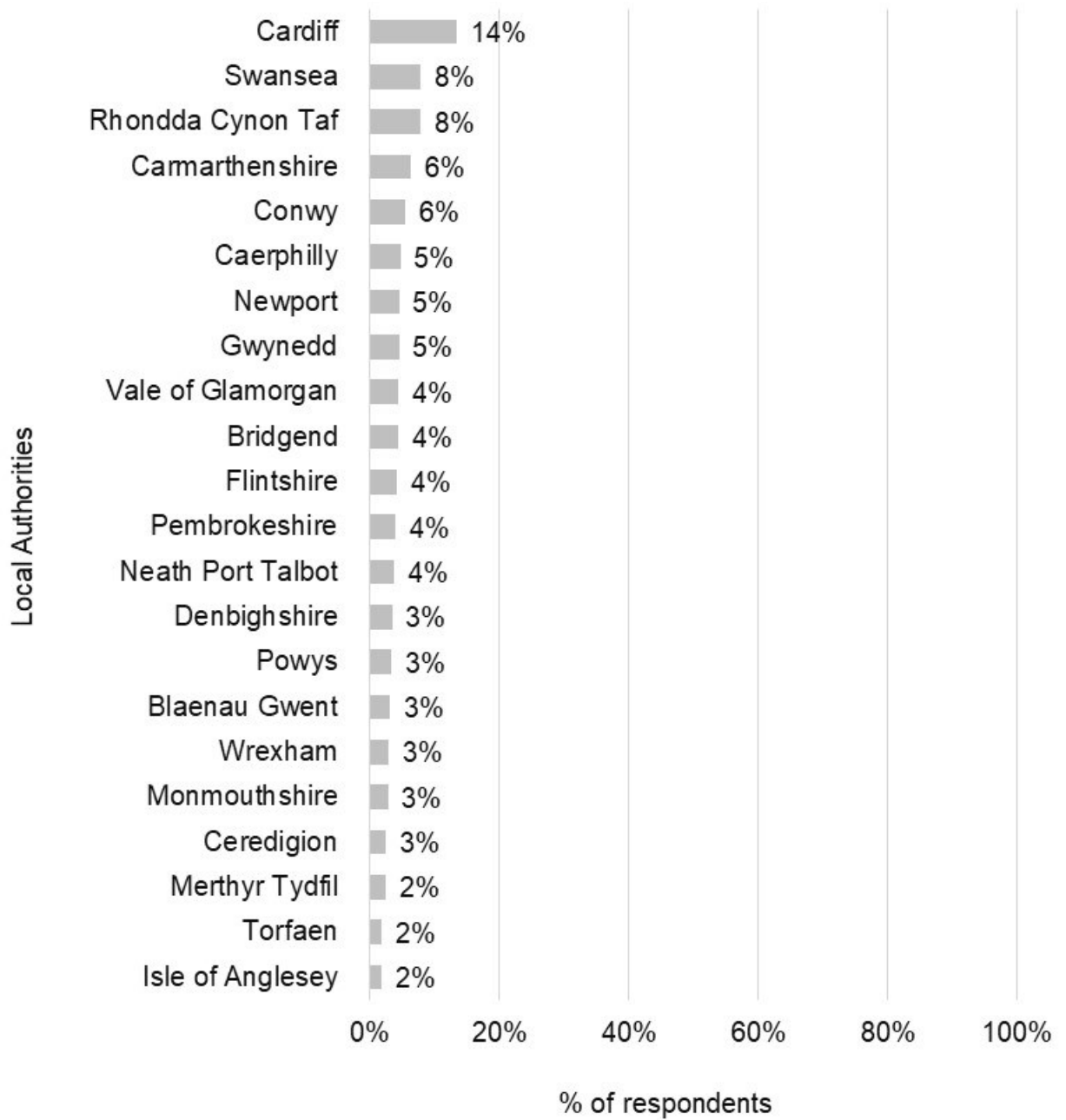
¹² The mailshot was delivered to registered and unregistered landlords with correspondence addresses and/or properties registered in all Wales.

¹³ A copy of the survey questionnaire can be found in Annex B at the end of this report.

¹⁴ In multiple choice questions where respondents could select more than one option, the percentages are quoted with respect to the number of responses for each question instead of the number of respondents.

Figure 4.1 Breakdown of respondents by Local Authority (%) (n=1580)

Scheme-participating property owners



- 4.5 A small minority of respondents, 3% (45 respondents out of 1580), identified as scheme participants, while the remaining 1,535 respondents were not scheme participants¹⁵. The weighted average age of scheme participants responding to our survey was 60 years old.
- 4.6 Most of the scheme participants were between 55-64 years old (38% or 15 out of 40 respondents, compared to 27.2% in Wales in 2023), followed by those aged 65-74

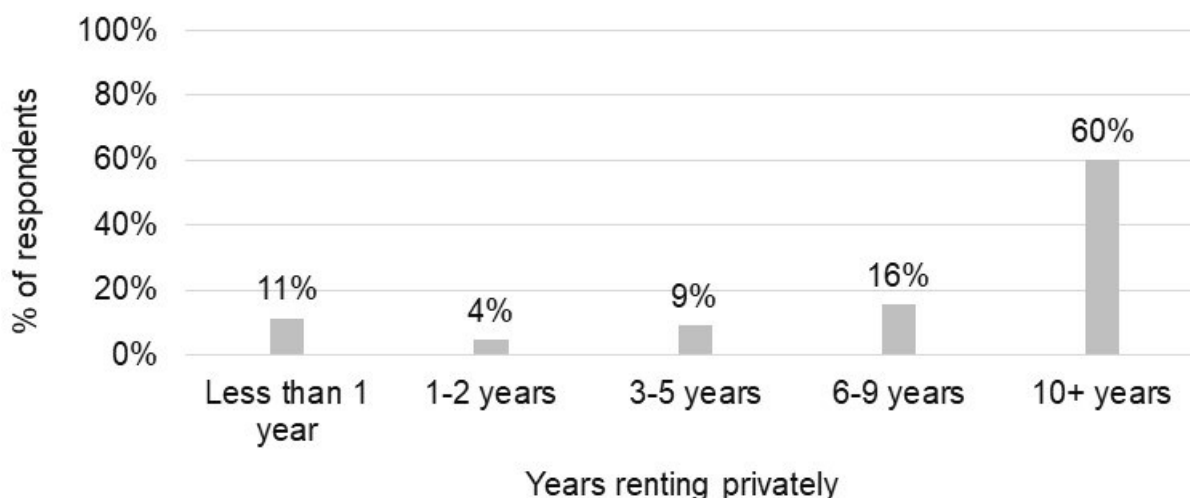
¹⁵ Three of these respondents were excluded from the analysis because they identified as scheme participants in Local Authorities that had not joined the scheme at the time of the survey. This may suggest a confusion between LSW and other leasing schemes operated by Local Authorities.

(20% or 8 out of 40 respondents) years old¹⁶. Participants aged 35-44 and 75 years old and over were equally common (13% or 5 out of 40 respondents, compared to 16.8% aged 35-44 years old), followed by 10% (or 4 out of 40 respondents, compared to 16.8% in Wales) of responding scheme participants who were 45-54 years old, and 3% (or 1 out of 40 respondents, compared to 6.7% in Wales) who were 25-34 years old. None of the participants selected the age range of 16-24 years old, while 5% (or 2 out of 40 respondents) of respondents to this question preferred not to disclose their age.

Wider property portfolio questions

- 4.7 As shown in the following chart, the majority of scheme participants (60%, 27 out of 45 respondents) have been renting property privately for more than 10 years. Of the remaining, 16% (7 out of 45 respondents) have been renting for 6-9 years, while 11% (5 out of 45 respondents) have been renting for less than a year.

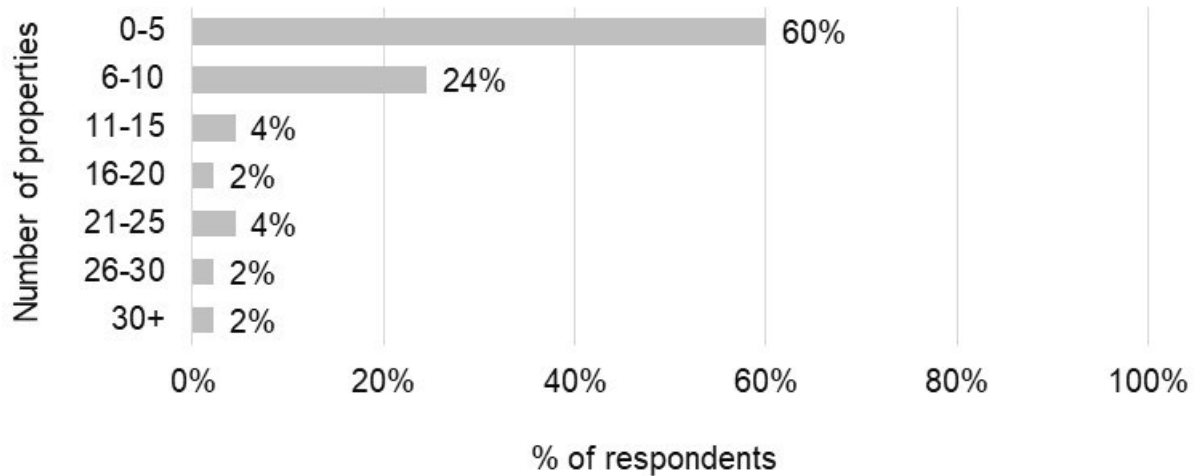
Figure 4.2 Breakdown of scheme participants by years renting privately (%) (n= 45)



- 4.8 The following chart shows the total number of properties rented out privately by scheme participants at the time of the survey (both on and off the scheme). The majority of respondents (60%, 27 out of 45 respondents) rent out 0-5 properties, followed by around a quarter renting out 6-10 properties (24%, 11 out of 45 respondents). The weighted average number of properties rented out was 7.

¹⁶ Our analysis follows Office of National Statistics ([ONS, 2021](#)) age classification 8d.

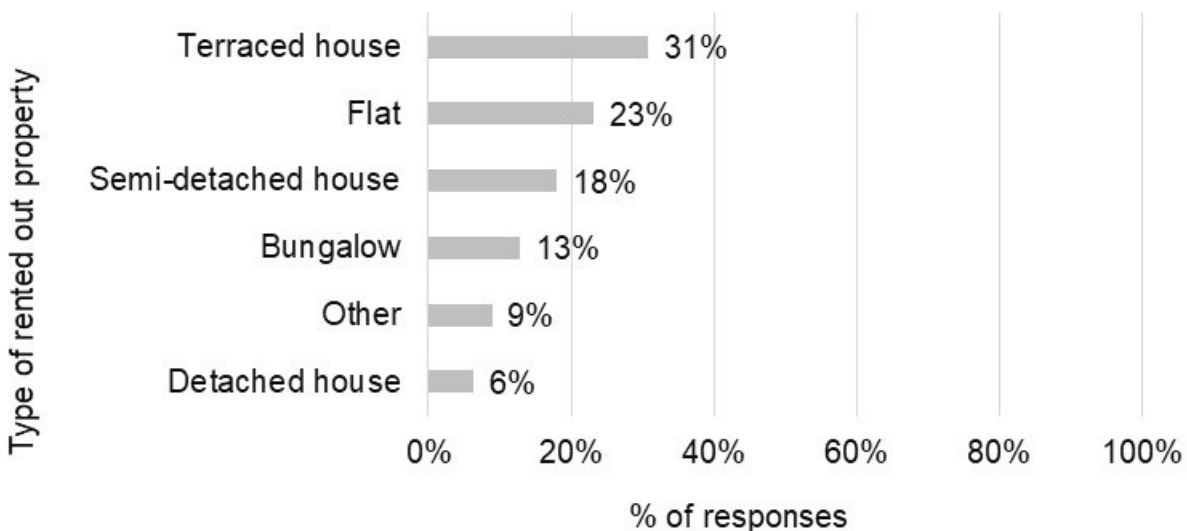
Figure 4.3 Breakdown of scheme participants by number of rented out properties (%) (n=45)



4.9 The vast majority of scheme participants surveyed (82%, 37 out of 45) indicated that none of the properties in their portfolio were vacant at the time of the survey. A considerable minority of surveyed scheme participants (11%, 5 out of 45) had one property vacant, while the maximum number of vacant properties for any one scheme participant was two (selected by 7% of respondents to this question, 3 out of 45).

4.10 The most common type of rented property owned by scheme participants surveyed was terraced houses (31%, 24 out of 78), followed by flats (23%, 18 out of 78), and semi-detached houses (18%, 14 out of 78).

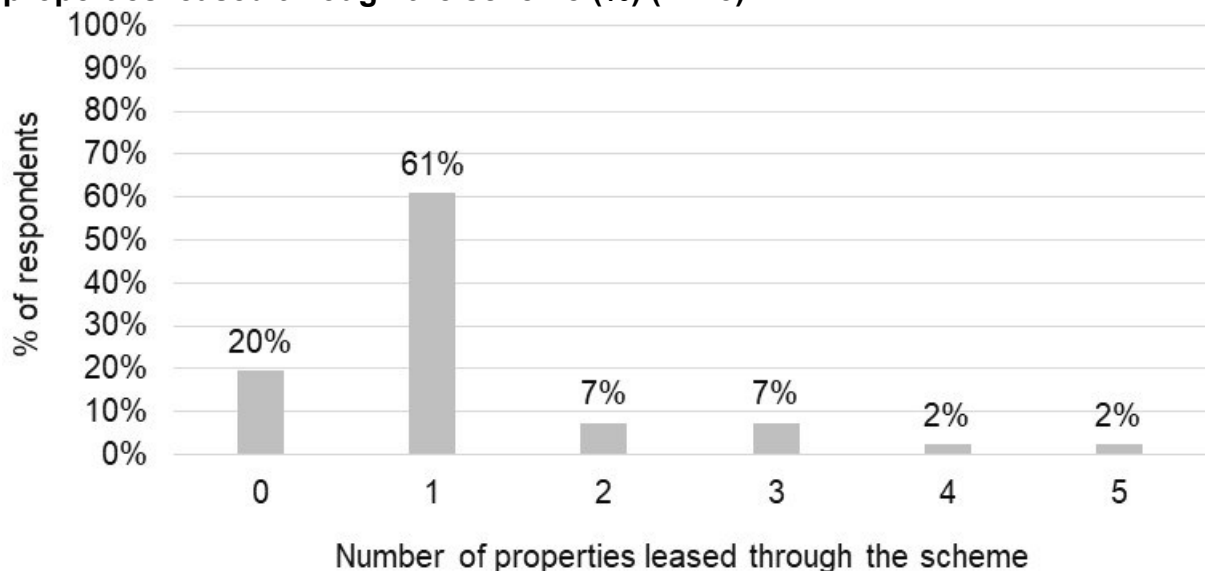
Figure 4.4 Breakdown of scheme participants by type of property rented out (%) (n=78)



Scheme-specific questions

- 4.11 A high number of surveyed scheme participants (40%, 14 out of 35) indicated that they found out about the scheme through communications from their Local Authority. The second most common method of finding out about the scheme was word of mouth (31%, 11 out of 35) followed by the RSW property owners' forum (20%, 7 out of 35).
- 4.12 The majority of respondents (61%, 28 out of 45) are leasing only one property through the scheme, compared to the 7 properties privately rented out on average, as per the survey respondents. A considerable minority (20%, 9 out of 45) were not leasing any properties through the scheme at the time of the survey.

Figure 4.5 Breakdown of surveyed scheme participants by number of properties leased through the scheme (%) (n=45)

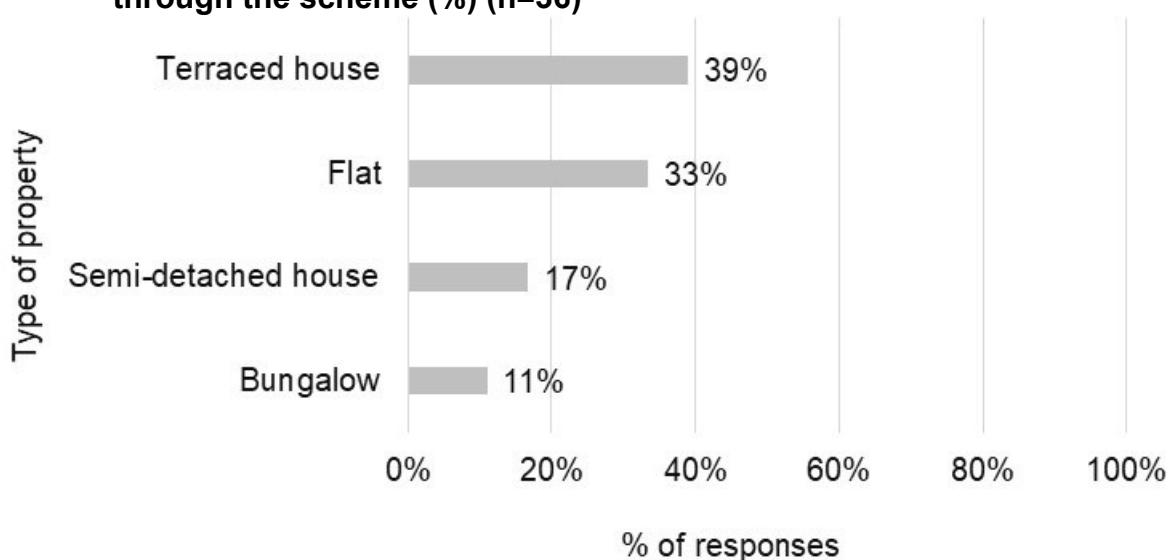


- 4.13 A considerable share of respondents (37%, 13 out of 35) misinterpreted the question on the start date of leasing through the scheme and likely answered referring to the start day of property leasing regardless of whether the leasing was through LSW, considering their responses predated 2020. Again, there is also the likelihood of some confusion between LSW and other leasing schemes operated by Local Authorities. A smaller share of respondents (14%, 5 out of 35) may have answered with the day they started leasing through the PRS Leasing Scheme pilot, as they gave responses ranging between 2020-2021.
- 4.14 Of the respondents offering valid responses (49% of all respondents to this question, 17 out of 35), 47% (8 out of 17) indicated they started leasing through the scheme in 2023, while the remaining 53% (9 out of 17) started in 2022.

4.15 The responses indicated that most properties leased out through the scheme fall within the Mid/West LSW Peer Support Group region (40%, 14 out of 35 responses), as shown in the chart below. This analysis is presented at LSW Peer Support Group level instead of the level of individual Local Authorities to avoid disclosing respondents' identities, given the small number of scheme participants in the survey sample.¹⁷

4.16 Surveyed scheme participants indicated that the most common type of property rented out through the scheme was terraced houses (39%, 14 out of 36), followed by flats (33%, 12 out of 36) and semi-detached houses (17%, 6 out of 36).

Figure 4.6 Breakdown of scheme participants by type of property leased through the scheme (%) (n=36)



4.17 The vast majority of lease lengths (87%, 27 out of 31) agreed with the Local Authorities were reported to last between 5-7 years. The second most commonly agreed lease length was 8-10 years (6%, 2 out of 31), followed by 11 years and over (6%, 2 out of 31).

4.18 In terms of motives provided for leasing through the scheme, the most commonly selected motive amongst surveyed scheme participants was that the Local Authority would take on property management (28%, 15 out of 53). The second most common motive was the security of rent (23%, 12 out of 53), followed by the willingness to provide affordable housing for those in need (19%, 10 out of 53).

4.19 Most surveyed scheme participants felt that the process for joining the scheme was neither easy nor difficult (43%, 18 out of 41). The majority of remaining respondents

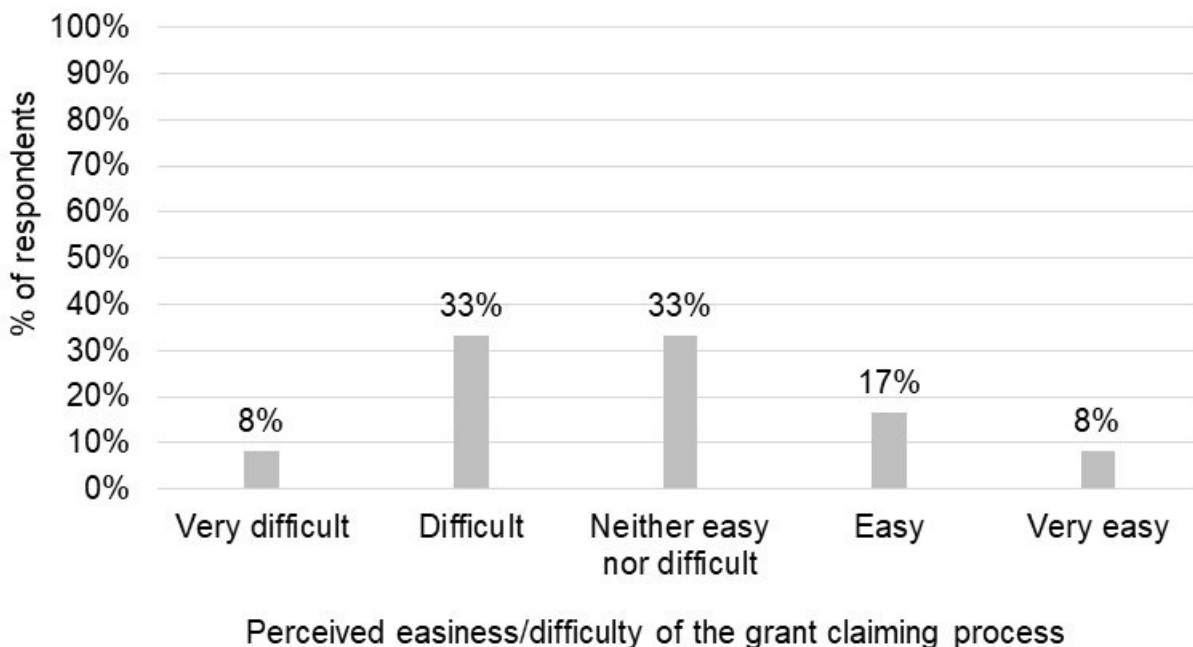
¹⁷ The same approach has been followed for analysing the survey responses of tenants housed through the scheme (see next chapter). Avoiding disclosure of identity and focusing on takeaway messages for the use of Peer Support Groups were again the main drivers.

had positive views on the joining process, as 22% (8 out of 41) viewed the process as easy and 16% (7 out of 41) believed it was very easy.

4.20 The majority of responding scheme participants were largely satisfied with the support offered by their Local Authority before and during the scheme onboarding, with 24% stating satisfied (10 out of 42) and another 24% very satisfied (10 out of 42). Furthermore, 29% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (12 out of 42) and a total 24% had some dissatisfaction to report, of which 13% (6 out of 42) reported being very dissatisfied and 11% (4 out of 42) just dissatisfied.

4.21 The majority of scheme participants surveyed (69%, 27 out of 39) have been offered a grant for their property to meet the scheme minimum standards and support works contributing towards an improved EPC rating. There was an equal split in grant claimants' experience, with 33% of scheme property owner respondents sharing that the grant claiming process was difficult (4 out of 12), and another 33% finding the process neither easy nor difficult (4 out of 12). Of the remaining responses from surveyed scheme participants, 25% had found the process to be easy (2 out of 12) or very easy (1 out of 12), and only 8% very difficult (1 out of 12).

Figure 4.7 Breakdown of scheme participants by experience of claiming the grant (%) (n = 12)

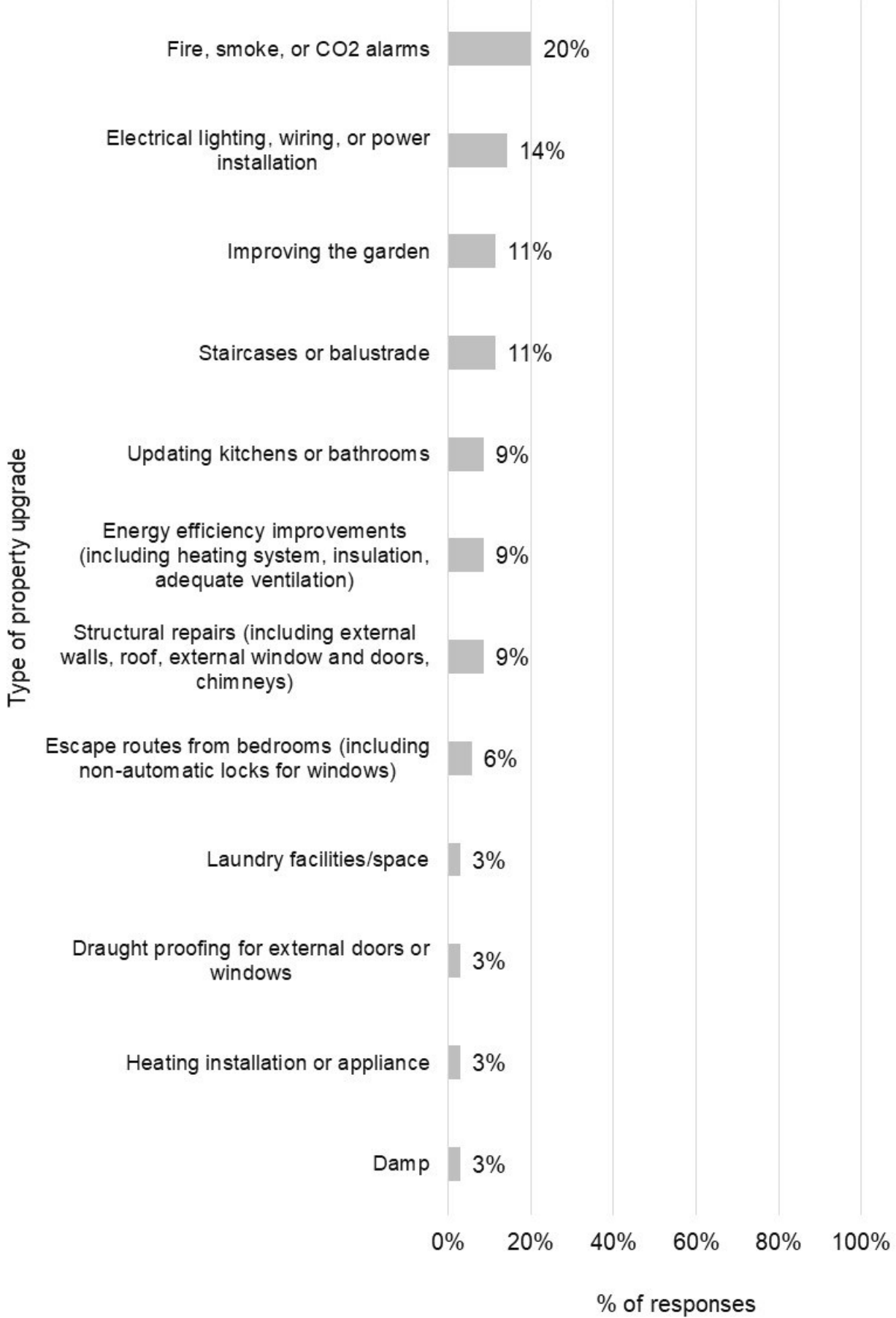


4.22 Most participating scheme property owners (67%) had at least one property classed as empty before joining the scheme (8 out of 12). Of those scheme participants responding that they had at least one empty property and who answered the

question about the value of the grants they received to bring their property up to the agreed standard, the majority (57%) received up to £5,000 while the remaining 43% received up to £9,999.

- 4.23 The majority of responding scheme property owners (83%) had not applied for ORP funding for works towards an EPC C rating at the time of the survey (10 out of 12). Of those responding scheme property owners that had applied for ORP funding, all stated that they found the process to claim ORP funding difficult.
- 4.24 Of those respondents not using grant funding at all, the majority (54%, 19 out of 35) selected the reason for that being that they were not aware there was grant funding. Furthermore, 26% (9 out of 35) did not apply for grant funding because their properties already met all the mandatory quality standards, whereas another 11% (4 out of 35) stated that the properties met all the desirable quality standards.
- 4.25 The chart below shows the breakdown of upgrades the nominated properties underwent or will undergo to be brought up to standard. Responses to this question included scheme participants who have applied for any type of grant relevant to their properties (starting grants up to £5,000, empty properties and ORP funding). The most commonly reported upgrade concerned fire, smoke, or CO2 alarms (20%, 7 out of 35), followed by electrical lighting, wiring, or power installation (14%, 5 out of 35). The next most common upgrades were staircases or balustrades as well as garden improvements (joint third at 11% of responses, 4 out of 35).

Figure 4.8 Breakdown of scheme participants by property upgrades (%) (n = 35)



Further research with property owners on the scheme

4.26 Upon conclusion of the survey, property owners had the option to express their interest in further engagement with the research team. Four respondents participated in the focus group of scheme-participating property owners (three of whom were current scheme participants¹⁸) and two scheme-participating property owners participated in one-to-one, virtual interviews. Scheme participants owned between one and five properties in total across five different Local Authorities, one of which was rented through the scheme respectively.¹⁹

Background and property information

4.27 One responding scheme-participating property owner explained that they took on a property which had previously been vacant for a long period and was in a neglected state. A second responding scheme-participating property owner similarly explained that they bought a property which had previously been empty and in need of renovation which they could afford by applying for the grants as part of the scheme. The participant further explained that, given the property's location in a deprived area of Wales, the LHA rate did not diverge substantially from open market rental income as was the case for other participants. Other responding scheme-participating property owners explained that, while having owned the property already before joining the scheme, their main motivation was to support disadvantaged people and families by providing affordable housing via the scheme instead of renting the property out on the open market.

4.28 One central motivation for all responding scheme-participating property owners was the guarantee that the property was to be returned to the property owner in its original state. This was felt by respondents to provide a sense of safety and certainty without which property owners would likely not have joined the scheme. It was felt by respondents that Local Authorities would have more leverage with tenants than private landlords, especially in the case of arrears or unpaid bills, whereas property owners felt that they were exposed to higher risks on the private market.

¹⁸ The fourth respondent had participated in a previous Local Authority-run scheme and stayed throughout the focus group to offer perspectives.

¹⁹ Given low numbers of properties registered with the scheme in several Local Authorities, disclosing names of Local Authorities would disclose participants' identities and is thus omitted in the report.

- 4.29 A further motivation to join the scheme amongst responding scheme-participating property owners was the guarantee of rent payments from the moment of contract signature, regardless of whether the property is occupied. A third central motivation for responding scheme-participating property owners alongside the guaranteed rent was not being responsible for day-to-day management of the property. Negative experiences with local estate agents were cited, leading to responding scheme-participating property owners expressing hope for a more positive experience with Local Authorities instead.
- 4.30 Responding scheme-participating property owners also shared how they had first learned about the scheme – three had heard about it from a friend, but all reported it was difficult and unclear how to find further information. One of the responding scheme-participating property owners could not find any information on the scheme in their Local Authority themselves so they proceeded to email their Local Authority several times where staff members seemed unaware of the scheme before they were later able to find the correct point of contact. Another two scheme-participating property owners obtained information successfully but reportedly struggled to find the right contact within their Local Authorities. Once the responsible Local Authority contact was identified, the following process was described as helpful and effective, with one property owner receiving advice on which properties were suitable for buying before property owners had to decide whether to join the scheme or not. This support was described by property owners as valuable. This Local Authority was said to have since started distributing leaflets regarding who is responsible for which area of work, which was described as helpful.
- 4.31 Four respondents reported a five-year lease length and one respondent reported ten years. Among those with five-year leases, one responding scheme-participating property owner would have preferred a longer lease but was not offered a longer option, a second responding scheme-participating property owner explained that this lease length was their decision given the grant amount obtained and calculated across the five years with rent at the LHA rate worked well for them financially, and a third was keen to extend the lease after the five years should all go well. No responding scheme-participating property owner was offered the 20-year option, whereas they were furthermore made aware that the available grants depended on the lease length.

Experiences with the scheme

- 4.32 Responding scheme-participating property owners emphasised the direct support they had received from Local Authorities was perceived as reassuring and helpful. A specific example discussed during the focus group was the asbestos and general surveys (e.g., damp) being covered by the Local Authority free of charge after an initial meeting confirming interest in taking the property onto the scheme.
- 4.33 Grants offered through the scheme were identified by participating property owners as a further vital support component. One participating property owner explained that they did apply for a grant and were contacted shortly after by the Local Authority. They described the process as “smooth” with a survey carried out quickly and free of charge, after which quotes for construction costs had to be obtained as part of mandatory requirements. However, the same respondent also explained that they had received no paperwork from the Local Authority contractually confirming their intention of taking the property onto the scheme. This was perceived as causing uncertainty and concern over the lack of a binding agreement and guarantee by the Local Authority despite assurances via email that the property would be needed on the scheme. Other participating property owners described their experiences with the grant as stressful, given that grants were paid back retrospectively, with property owners having to pay out of pocket first, and the process subject to delays. One participant did not take up any grants given the property did not require refurbishing to be leased through the scheme.

Challenges and concerns

- 4.34 The primary challenge highlighted by all participating property owners was the view that the LHA rate was too low, especially when compared to some local market rates. Examples provided by participants included a difference of up to £300 per month between the LHA and open market rates for their current properties. Property owners emphasised their concerns over the cost-of-living crisis and their own dependence on rental properties as part of their income or retirement plans. Participating property owners were furthermore unsure as to whether any increase in the LHA would immediately be applied to the rent payments they received. Additionally, property owners made the point that with such low monthly payments, they were unable to cover basic maintenance and repair costs. Despite this, some property owners were willing to continue renting their property through the scheme in order to continue helping those in need. However, other participating property

owners explained that they would likely have to re-consider once entering retirement and being dependent on the income from the properties.

- 4.35 Further challenges identified by several participating property owners included a lack of clarity around what is needed from property owners to have their properties onboarded successfully. Two responding scheme-participating property owners in particular mentioned that lengthy delays in the process, particularly in the beginning, had been disappointing and led to a loss of income. Several participants highlighted that the current level of bureaucracy was too high, frequently leading to delays and insecurity over progress. This was further exacerbated by a lack of responsiveness of Local Authorities and miscommunication throughout the initial phase and onboarding process. Experiences outlined included not receiving confirmation of acceptance into the scheme in writing until the moment of handover, reportedly resulting in insecurity and stress for property owners.
- 4.36 A third core challenge pointed out by participating property owners were requirements regarding EPC classifications. Participants raised concerns that, when interacting with Local Authorities, issues relating to their EPC were not covered by Local Authorities and thus had to be paid for by property owners. Furthermore, participants were told that should issues be identified during the surveys paid by Local Authorities, they themselves would remain privately liable to repair damages. Given the number of requirements, property owners explained that it was at times easier to sell their property rather than commissioning the required works.
- 4.37 Further concerns were raised around mortgage lenders not approving mortgages if a property owner is planning to rent the property to a Local Authority, including under the scheme – an issue that was also brought up within discussions with Local Authorities. One specific example discussed by participating property owners was a case of a property having to be withdrawn from joining the scheme close to the official contract start, given objections by the mortgage company following concerns over properties often getting damaged if rented through the Local Authority. The owner instead proceeded to rent the property privately since the purchase would not have been possible otherwise. In response, participants recommended that a guarantee should be provided by the Local Authority, guaranteeing rental income and maintenance. Alternatively, it was recommended by scheme-participating property owners that the Welsh Government should work with mortgage lenders to

bring (some of) the mortgage companies onto the scheme to support prospective property owners.

Suggestions for future changes

- 4.38 When discussing suggestions for future adjustments or changes to the scheme, participating property owners highlighted several points. They explained that under the current lease agreement, as property owners, they were still responsible for all insurance updates and payments. Given the high costs of insurance (participants estimated this to be around 60-70% of a month's rent), this is factoring into their decision and the economic viability of letting their property under the scheme, particularly considering they can achieve higher rents that cover a larger proportion of insurance costs when renting privately. Furthermore, property owners emphasised that in order to update insurance policies, they would need to be kept updated and informed better on the state of their property if they are expected to administer insurance matters in the future.
- 4.39 In line with challenges when contacting Local Authorities and identifying the right member of staff, participating property owners suggested ensuring emails would reach posts rather than individual staff members to ensure continuity in cases of staff changes or absence. Other participants added that there should be a dedicated email inbox for property owners only and the need for increased links with RSW. One participating property owner mentioned that more general guides and checklists should be made available to property owners, using less jargon and simpler language.
- 4.40 Participating property owners reported having been told by their Local Authority that at the end of the scheme (once the five- or ten-year lease expires), they would have to keep previous tenants in their property. Participating property owners strongly felt that they would want to decide themselves who to rent their property to once exiting the scheme and, should previous tenants stay in the property, then the Local Authority should continue to manage the property. Similarly, responding scheme-participating property owners made wider points about feeling uninformed about the end of their respective tenancies, how the administration of contract conclusion would work, and what their rights were.
- 4.41 Participating property owners therefore concurred that a more structured process from the moment of expressing interest to join the scheme until the point of exiting was needed. Administrative processes should be less dependent on personal

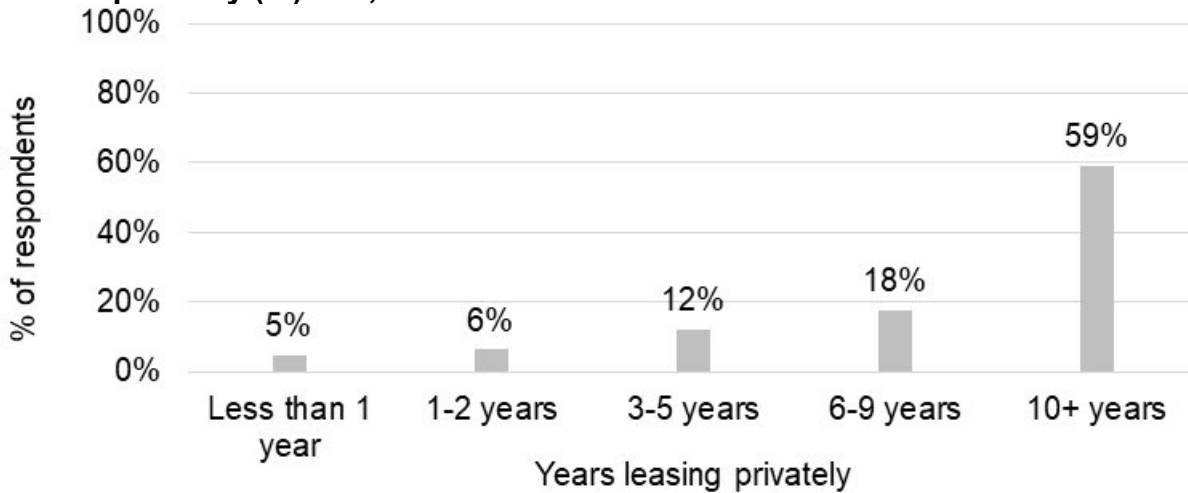
contacts with Local Authorities, participating property owners felt, and timescales should be communicated clearly in advance and adhered to.

- 4.42 In line with the most frequently expressed challenge – the low level of the current LHA rate – responding scheme-participating property owners made several suggestions for future improvements. Some were wider, such as that the LHA should increase in line with inflation, while others more specific to their leases, such as that they should be offered gradual rent increases as property owners, with payments set at a level that makes it possible for them to operate, cover larger maintenance costs, or pay their mortgages where applicable.
- 4.43 Finally, responding scheme-participating property owners proposed that the Welsh Government should focus increasingly on empty housing and bringing such units onto the scheme. This is because they argued that the grants offered can support the upgrading of empty properties more so than non-empty properties in good condition. It was also suggested that receiving rent payments equal to the LHA may be more readily accepted by owners of empty properties.

Non-scheme-participating property owners

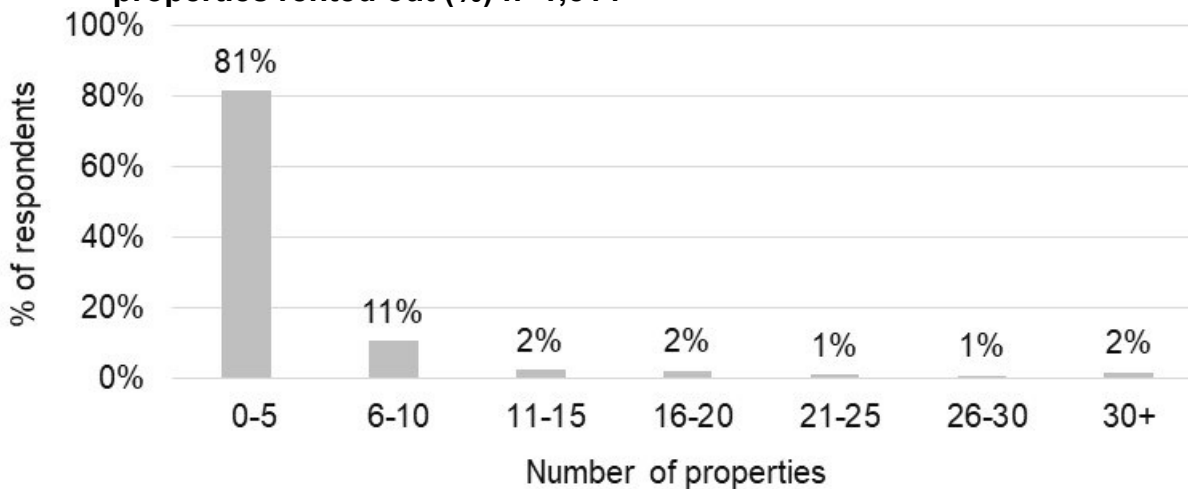
- 4.44 The weighted average age of respondents not participating in the scheme (58 years old) was slightly lower than the respective average age of scheme participants (60 years old).
- 4.45 Similar to the respondents participating in the scheme, the most frequently represented age group amongst responding non-participating property owners was 55-64 years old (37%, 495 out of 1,346), followed by those aged 65-74 (19%, 257 out of 1,346) and 45-54 (19%, 253 out of 1,346) years old. A minority of respondents (7%, 100 out of 1,346) were aged 35-44 years old, followed by 5% of respondents who were 75 years and over (70 out of 1,346), and 2% who were 25-34 years old (33 out of 1,346). A significant minority of respondents (10%, 133 out of 1,346) preferred not to disclose their age.
- 4.46 Similar to scheme participants, most respondents not participating in the scheme (59%, 906 out of 1,529) have been renting privately for 10 years or more. A significant minority (18%, 271 out of 1,529) have been renting for 6-9 years, followed by 12% who have been renting privately for 3-5 years (184 out of 1,529).

Figure 4.9 Breakdown of non-scheme participants by number of years renting privately (%) n=1,529



4.47 The majority of respondents not participating in the scheme (81%, 1,226 out of 1,514) were renting out between 0-5 properties at the time of the survey, similar to the scheme participants. A significant minority (11%, 167 out of 1,514) rented out 6-10 properties, whereas 2% (30 out of 1,514) reported renting out more than 30 properties at the time of the survey²⁰.

Figure 4.10 Breakdown of non-scheme participants by the number of properties rented out (%) n=1,514

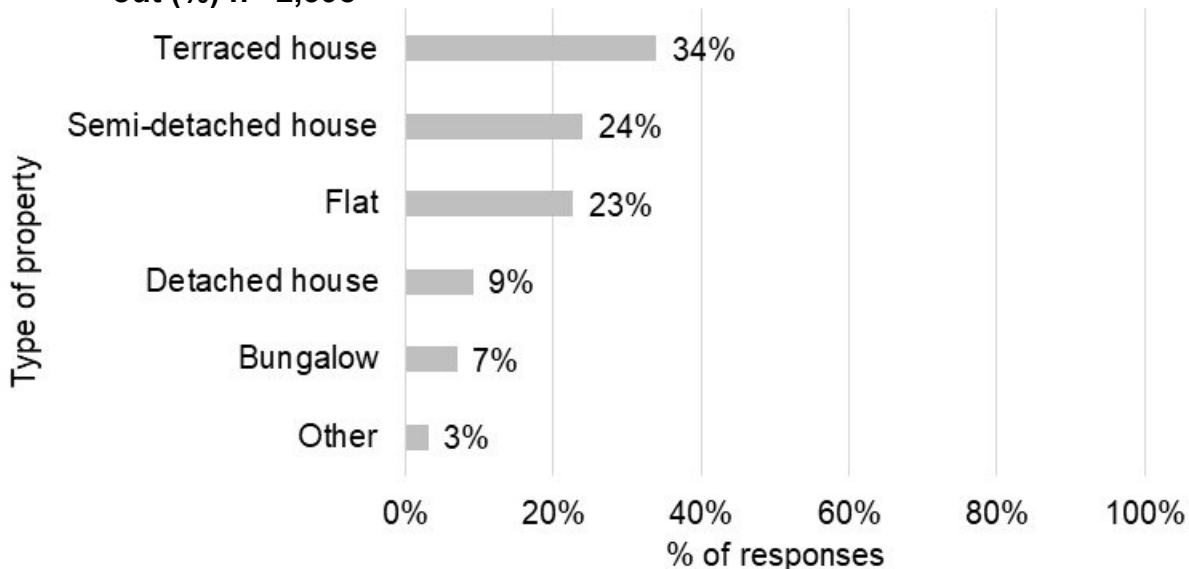


4.48 Similar to scheme participants, most respondents (83%, 1,256 out of 1,513) had no vacant properties at the time of the survey, while 12% (182 out of 1,513) had only one vacant property. However, while scheme participants had at most two vacant properties, a few non-participants (>0%, 5 out of 1,513) had 10 or more vacant properties.

²⁰ Note that this 2% may include letting agencies.

- 4.49 Similar to scheme participants, the respondents not participating in the scheme most commonly rent out terraced houses (34%, 811 out of 2,398), semi-detached houses (24%, 573 out of 2,398), and flats (23%, 542 out of 2,398).
- 4.50 A few respondents were renting out other types of properties, the most common being Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs). Other responses included townhouses, shops with flats above, and maisonettes.

Figure 4.11 Breakdown of non-scheme participants by type of property rented out (%) n= 2,398

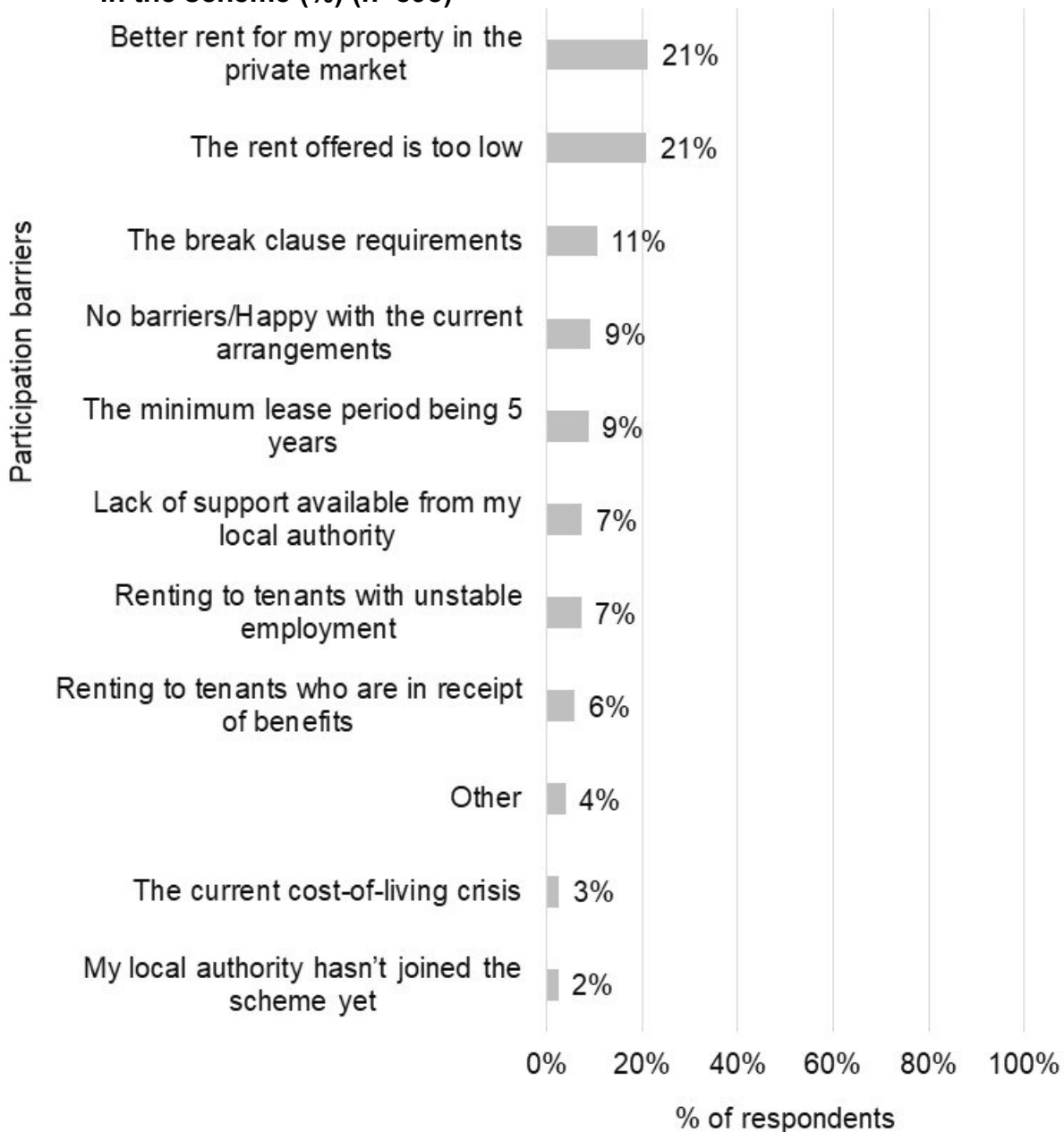


- 4.51 Notably only 27% of non-participants (398 out of 1,472) were aware of the scheme before the survey. Furthermore, only 26% of non-participants (101 out of 390) had seen the scheme advertised. The most common²¹ source of advertisement according to respondents was through the RSW website, whereas a significant number of respondents mentioned they had seen an online ad without offering any additional details. Other, less frequently mentioned by participants, advertisement sources included social media posts, Local Authorities, emails, and landlord forums.
- 4.52 Figure 4.12 presents the most common barriers to participating in the scheme according to non-participating property owners. The most commonly mentioned barrier (21%, 190 out of 898) was the belief that owners could secure better rents for their properties in the private market, while a similar proportion (21%, 187 out of 898) of responses indicated that the rent offered on the scheme is too low.
- 4.53 A few respondents (4%, 35 out of 898) mentioned other reasons for not participating in the scheme that were not included in our set of reasons they could initially

²¹ We do not provide exact quantifications of the frequency of each advertisement, as this was an open text question.

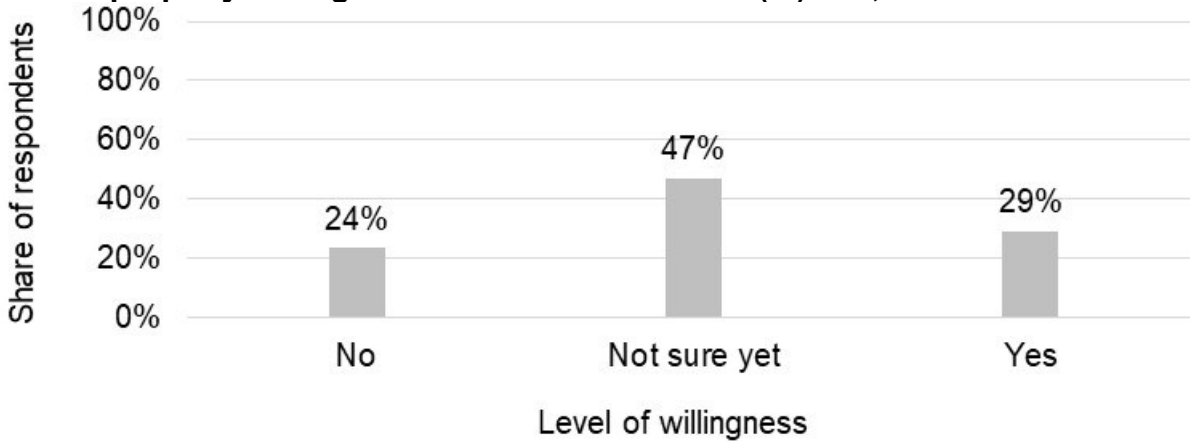
choose from. The most frequently raised reasons were having existing tenants in the property and lacking trust in aspects of the scheme. In particular, most of the respondents highlighting a lack of trust referred specifically to the Welsh Government. A significant minority of respondents highlighted that they did not participate in the scheme due to lack of relevant information.

Figure 4.12 Breakdown of non-scheme participants by barrier to participating in the scheme (%) (n=898)



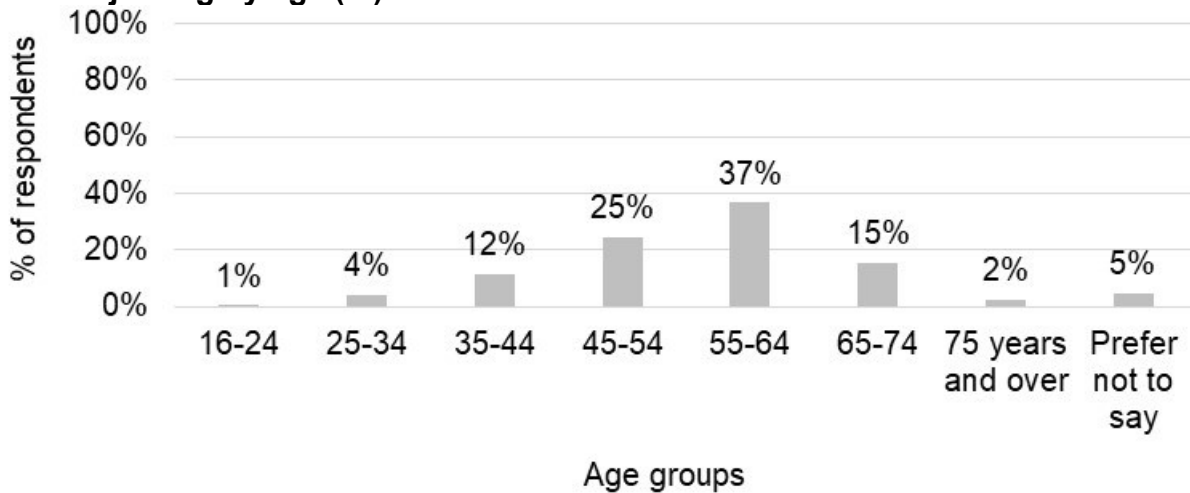
4.54 Lastly, almost half of the non-scheme-participating property owners responding to the survey (47%, 690 out of 1,462) were unsure on whether they would consider leasing a property through the scheme in the future. Approximately a third (29%, 428 out of 1,462) were positive about joining in the future, while 24% were negative (344 out of 1,462).

Figure 4.13 Breakdown of non-scheme participants by willingness to lease a property through the scheme in the future (%) n=1,462



4.55 Most of the responding non-scheme property owners who would consider joining the scheme in the future²² (37%) were between 55-64 years old (136 out of 371). Almost a quarter (25%) were 45-54 years old (91 out of 371), followed by 15% who were 65-74 years old (57 out of 371).

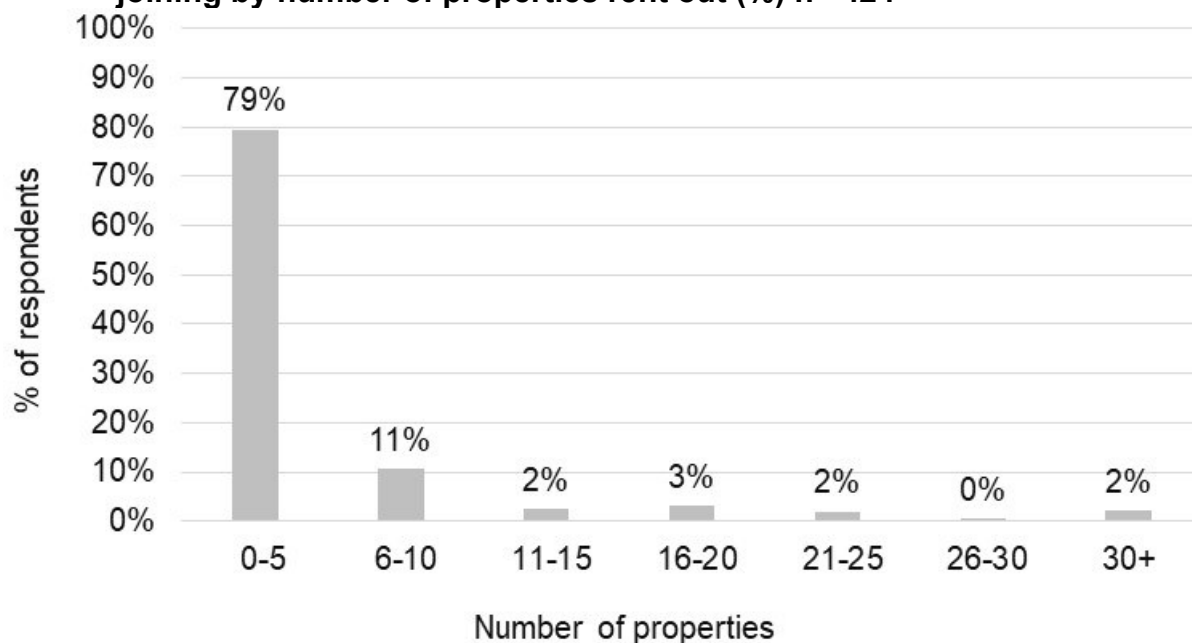
Figure 4.14 Breakdown of non-scheme participants who would consider joining by age (%) n= 371



4.56 The majority of responding non-scheme property owners who would consider joining (79%, 337 out of 424) have 0-5 properties rent out, followed by 11% who have 6-10 properties (45 out of 424).

²² The following graphs are based on respondents answering “yes” to the question on whether they would consider leasing a property through the scheme in the future. These are crosstabulations of previously analysed questions, not additional questions asked in the survey.

Figure 4.15 Breakdown of non-scheme participants who would consider joining by number of properties rent out (%) n= 424



Further research with non-scheme-participating property owners

Background and property information

- 4.57 Two focus groups totalling 17 participants and three one-to-one, virtual interviews were undertaken with non-participating property owners. One further property owner submitted their experiences and thoughts in writing via email. Participants shared their experiences and views from a wide range of backgrounds, ranging from accidental landlords with one property to owners of over 15 separate properties and professional estate agents.
- 4.58 Of those asked about their motivation to attend the stakeholder fieldwork for this research, a number of respondents reported feeling dissatisfied with the state of the rental sector and current policy in Wales. Some respondents expressed interest in joining the scheme or had attempted to join in the past, while others explained their attendance through their opposition to the scheme.

Understanding and views of the scheme

- 4.59 Participants were asked about their understanding and views of the scheme in general as well as specific aspects of it. Many of their views on the positive aspects of the scheme chimed with those expressed by scheme-participating property owners. For example, both groups mentioned (i) guaranteed rent, (ii) management of the property by the Local Authority, (iii) having the property returned in the same condition it entered the scheme in, (iv) the available grants, and (v) supporting those with a housing need as positives of the scheme. One positive aspect of the scheme that non-scheme-participating property owners also mentioned was having no vacancies in the property during its time on the scheme.
- 4.60 A number of participants reported not having heard of the scheme previously or expressed their lack of insights into the scheme's details. Another group of property owners expressed their confusion over why the scheme does not exist in some Local Authorities or their own Local Authority. Further doubts were expressed over who they would be letting the property to legally (between the Local Authority or the future tenant via the scheme).
- 4.61 When asked whether they would consider applying to the scheme, the majority of responding non-participating property owners answered that they would not, primarily citing the low rent understood as being equivalent to the LHA rate. Participants explained their understanding that they could receive up to 50% below market rates for their properties if leased through the scheme. This was seen as not providing value for money nor covering basic repairs and maintenance costs. Responding non-participating property owners added that they would expect increases in the LHA rate in line with inflation and that rent payments should be increased throughout the applicable five- or ten-year lease²³.
- 4.62 Responding non-participating property owners furthermore raised concerns over a lack of trust in Local Authorities, often citing previous experiences of not having received responses to their enquiries. This led them to conclude that they lacked trust in the effective management of properties through Local Authorities in addition to having worries over a lack of regular inspections of the property by Local Authorities (or external organisations that Local Authorities have partnered with). Instead, responding non-participating property owners recommended dedicated

²³ Note that LHA rates are decided by DWP using information provided by VOA and are not influenced by the Welsh Government [Local Housing Allowance Guidance](#)

staff members within Local Authorities to improve responsiveness and management quality.

Suggestions for future changes

- 4.63 Finally, responding non-participating property owners were asked whether they had any suggestions for the future or any improvements to the scheme. The most frequent answer highlighted the importance of competitive rents received if joining the scheme. Similar to those scheme-participating property owners interviewed as part of this research, the non-scheme-participating property owners unanimously saw the LHA rate as being set too low, often preventing them from covering basic costs in advance and throughout the tenancy (e.g., insurance). Responding non-participating property owners were split over what rent levels would be acceptable. On the one hand, some property owners argued that given the higher risks and uncertainty over tenants, the scheme should pay above the market rent level. On the other hand, a different group of responding non-participating property owners explained that they would be willing to accept rents which are 10-20% below the market rate, given savings with property management and no vacancy periods.
- 4.64 In summary, participants widely agreed that the low level of the LHA meant that the scheme was only attractive to basic properties with low standards for which the available grants counterbalanced low rent levels. No incentive to join the scheme was identified for those owning well-maintained properties or larger properties. This led a number of responding non-participating property owners to conclude that the scheme was “well-intended” but did not currently work for them and their properties.
- 4.65 A further suggestion for improvement concerned the length of leases. Alternative lease lengths of three years were suggested, as well as shorter break clauses of six to 12 months, especially in cases of emergencies or financial concerns²⁴.
- 4.66 Another issue raised by a responding non-participating property owner was that empty properties were charged higher council tax, including while in the process of joining the scheme or carrying out renovations to then join the scheme. It was instead recommended to exempt properties from this if credibly being in the process of joining the scheme.

²⁴ Note that this may lead to inconsistencies with the aims of the scheme to provide more secure tenancies.

- 4.67 A couple of responding non-participating property owners shared suggestions similar to those of scheme-participating property owners, such as increasing access to information about the scheme and improving timeliness of communication from Local Authorities.
- 4.68 Finally, responding non-participating property owners recommended focusing the scheme on properties currently vacant rather than on active property owners. This could be achieved via incentives, such as Value Added Tax (VAT) exemptions for renovating properties which are to be added to the scheme.

5. Input from tenants

Insights from tenants' survey

- A low number of tenants participated in this phase of the research, not surprising considering the early stages of the scheme's implementation. Engagement with tenants will be prioritised in subsequent phases of the evaluation.
- Tenant survey respondents were most commonly between 25-34 years old or 45-54 years old, white, and female. Most resided in North and South Peer Support Group regions. The vast majority were renting a property through the scheme at the time of the survey and less than half had heard about the scheme through their Local Authority.
- The most commonly selected advantages of the scheme among scheme-participating tenants were tenancy support and the affordability of rent.
- Of those renting a property through the scheme, half expected to stay in the property for 5-7 years, and there was an even split between those most commonly renting flats or terraced housing.
- Of those renting a property through the scheme, the majority felt the scheme had met their housing need and a different majority felt that renting through the scheme had a positive effect on their wellbeing.
- Most scheme-participating tenants were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, or very satisfied with the housing quality on the scheme.
- Most scheme-participating tenants were satisfied or very satisfied with the tenancy support received on the scheme.

Survey findings

- 5.1 The tenants' survey was distributed through Shelter Cymru and scheme-participating Local Authorities and received seven online responses.²⁵ Another three responses were submitted in paper format, but the print version of the survey could not accommodate the built-in skip logic and tenants did not answer all the right questions. Therefore, these three paper responses had to be disregarded in the

²⁵ Given the low numbers of tenants who participated in this research and considering the early stages of the scheme's implementation, engagement with tenants will be prioritised in subsequent phases of the evaluation.

data analysis. Additionally, at the time of distributing the survey, seven Local Authorities had between 0 and 5 tenants currently renting through the scheme and another four had between 5 and 10.²⁶

- 5.2 The most common age groups among responding tenants were 25-34 years old and 45-54 years old (percentages suppressed due to low response numbers). All respondents were of white ethnicity and most of them (percentages suppressed due to low response numbers) were female.
- 5.3 Most respondents (percentages suppressed due to low response numbers) did not have a disability. In the context of this question, disability was defined as any type of physical or mental impairment that considerably impacts individuals' ability to carry out normal daily activities for a long period of time.
- 5.4 Half of the respondents indicated that they live in households with 3 people, including themselves. Households of 1, 2, and 4 people were all equally common in the sample.
- 5.5 Households with no members under 18 and those with 3 members were equally common amongst respondents, while a smaller number of respondents indicated there was 1 member under 18 in their household.
- 5.6 Most respondents resided in Local Authorities within the North and the South Wales Peer Support Group regions. The remaining respondents resided in the Mid/West.
- 5.7 The vast majority of respondents were renting a property through the scheme at the time of survey.
- 5.8 Only one respondent was not a scheme participant at the time of survey. This respondent was satisfied with the quality of their current housing and was aware of the scheme despite not seeing it advertised. The respondent would consider joining the scheme in the future and as a barrier to participating indicated their Local Authority not having joined the scheme.

Questions specific to scheme-participating tenants

- 5.9 Most responding found out about the scheme through their Local Authority.

²⁶ The survey also included a number of self-assessment questions, on a scale from 0-10, where both participating and non-participating tenants were asked about their wellbeing, aiming to assess the impact of housing conditions (LSW properties compared against other properties) on tenants. However, due to low response numbers, such a comparison was not feasible and therefore the answers to these questions are not discussed in this report.

- 5.10 The most commonly selected scheme advantages were the tenancy support included in the scheme and the affordability of rent. The least frequently selected advantage was secured housing, while the long-term lease offered was selected in just under a quarter of cases.
- 5.11 Half of the respondents expected to stay in their scheme-leased property for 5-7 years. A significant share of respondents mentioned they were unsure as to the duration of their stay in the property rented through the scheme.
- 5.12 Respondents were equally split between those renting flats or apartments and those renting terraced houses through the scheme.
- 5.13 Half of the respondents were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the quality of their housing, while a smaller proportion were very satisfied.
- 5.14 The majority of respondents felt the scheme had met their housing needs. Similarly, the majority of respondents, though not the same respondents across both questions, felt that renting through the scheme has had a positive effect on their wellbeing.
- 5.15 All scheme-participating tenants responding to the survey were receiving support from their Local Authorities in relation to renting. The most commonly selected option was health and wellbeing support, followed by other forms of support outside the multiple-choice options provided ²⁷, and furniture packs.
- 5.16 Overall, satisfaction rates with the tenancy support received through the scheme were high amongst scheme-participating tenants. Half of respondents were satisfied, whereas a smaller proportion were very satisfied. There were no participants dissatisfied with their tenancy support.

Tenant experience

- 5.17 After completing the survey, tenants had the opportunity to express their interest in a short interview with our team. Additionally, participating Local Authorities were asked to share the interview opportunity with the tenants they had on the scheme at the time. Four tenants expressed interest in an interview, but in the end only one interview was made possible.
- 5.18 The tenant interviewed shared their experience renting through the scheme and thoughts on the scheme onboarding process, the condition of their rented property

²⁷ Participants mentioned help with rent arrears and property maintenance.

and the level of upgrades required, tenancy support, and impact of housing on wellbeing. Important insights were also provided regarding information sharing and communication channels, and how these can be improved particularly when Local Authorities outsource property management to subcontractors. Data from this tenant interview will be thematically analysed alongside additional interviews with tenants that will be held in upcoming phases of the evaluation, aiming to reach comprehensive and representative conclusions regarding tenant experience across the scheme.

6. Recommendations and considerations

Recommendations for further implementation of LSW

- 6.1 A set of recommendations deriving from the findings of the baseline process evaluation can be found below. Note, however, that to decide on their feasibility and applicability, these will have to be benchmarked against the wider housing policy landscape in Wales as well as capacity across Local Authorities. Therefore, the recommendations below are provided for further consideration and not as applicable steps that are ready to follow.

Enhancing communication and information made available on the scheme

- 6.2 The availability of information on the scheme was raised as a challenge by property owners interested to join. It was also indicative that non-participating property owners who joined the focus groups treated them as information sessions and attempted to find out more about the scheme that way (though the research team would remind participants of the purpose of the focus groups throughout their duration). In particular:

- Making the scheme more widely known, with selling points for interested property owners showcasing how its strengths outnumber its perceived weaknesses (e.g. how secured rent and management of the property being taken care of balance against rent at the LHA rate). Better communication about what the scheme entails and how it works will also help avoid any confusion between LSW and other locally operated leasing schemes, whereas clarity over the terms and conditions of the scheme can subdue concerns over how it is centrally managed.
- Identifying key points of contact within each Local Authority (participating and non-participating) and making this information clearly available in the public domain so interested property owners know where to address enquiries. This will also enable swifter communication between Local Authorities and interested property owners which, if successful, could counteract mistrust and concerns raised by property owners about the handling of properties by Local Authorities.
- Raising awareness within the private rented sector about what good quality housing means and more specifically the required property standards under

LSW. This will not only ensure there are no surprises for those interested in leasing their properties through the scheme, but can also have a long-term impact by better educating property owners in the private sector and thus ameliorating quality of housing in Wales. Awareness raising could take the shape of public engagement events organised at the Local Authority level, during which Local Authority representatives will also have the opportunity to hear any thoughts or concerns of property owners renting privately, following which they can tailor advertising and recruitment for LSW (and other leasing schemes where available or appropriate) to meet the characteristics of their local population of property owners. Findings of the survey of non-scheme-participating property owners conducted as part of the baseline process evaluation can be used to inform about target groups and the key characteristics to be considered when designing public engagement events with property owners renting privately (i.e. 77% of non-scheme-participating property owners who would consider joining the scheme in the future were above 45 years old, while 79% of non-scheme-participating property owners who would consider joining the scheme have up to five properties that they rent privately).

Increasing resources and support for Local Authorities

6.3 Thoughts on the improvement of the scheme as expressed by Local Authorities and property owners engaged in this research shared some common features regarding how the structure of the scheme can be made better for the scheme's implementation to be more efficient. These are reflected in the following recommendations:

- Providing Local Authorities with more resources to handle the legal aspects of the scheme, such as clarifications over how the Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016 impacts LSW, further guidance on the end of tenancies, as well as practical tools such as templates for leases and a pool of legal representatives.
- Supporting Local Authorities with ready-made tools that can streamline having properties onboarded and tenanted across Wales. This can range from checklists for property owners and factsheets for tenants, to a list of mortgage lenders that have in advance confirmed with the Welsh Government that they

are willing to support properties on the scheme. The latter in particular would simplify the onboarding of properties for Local Authorities and help avoid disagreements with property owners that occur as a result of delays, but would require the Welsh Government to engage directly with mortgage lenders and raise awareness about the scheme among them.

- Increasing funding for staff within Local Authorities to be working exclusively on the scheme's implementation would facilitate recruitment and retention, particularly as the number of onboarded properties increases in the coming years. Instead of having staff juggling multiple roles within their Local Authority, as tends to be the case at the moment, having LSW-dedicated staff within Local Authorities would also help ensure that communication with and support of tenants and property owners is more regular, and the scheme realises its full potential in each local area.

Upscaling incentives for interested property owners

6.4 LHA rates will be increased to the 30th percentile of local market rents in 2024-2025, as announced in the Autumn Statement 2023 (UK Government, 2023). Considering that the properties on the scheme are leased at the LHA rate, this is expected to reduce concerns over the appropriateness of the LHA rate and the gap there is in several local areas with market rates, as expressed by property owners contributing to this phase of the research.

6.5 However, from research findings available so far, there appear to be additional ways to incentivise different types of property owners to explore their participation in the scheme:

- Target recruitment to owners of vacant properties, as leasing these properties through the scheme can lead to personal (i.e. property upgrade) as well as societal benefits for Wales (i.e. upgrading housing standards in the country). Note, however, that to ensure vacant properties are up to standard before being tenanted through the scheme, more thorough scrutiny and checks will be required, thus resulting in Local Authorities using more resources for the onboarding of empty properties.
- Considering feedback from owners with properties already up to standard who felt that the scheme did not have any incentives applicable to them, combined with how well the move from leasing at the LHA rate -10% (PRS Leasing

Scheme pilot) to the full LHA rate (LSW) was perceived, in the long term it could be explored to offer a rent rate above the LHA to those property owners whose properties are in good condition and do not need to make use of the grants offered under the scheme. To ensure that the properties leased under the scheme remain affordable even in this case, it could be explored whether it is feasible to have the LHA top-up subsidised by the Welsh Government. This option can be further informed by monitoring the onboarding of properties after increases in LHA rates have been put into effect, which can be achieved through the monitoring data collected and analysed as part of this evaluation.

Next research steps into the evaluation of LSW

6.6 Given the engagement achieved and the data collected in the first two phases of the research, we propose the following activities for Phase 3 (March 2024 – February 2025):

- Conducting short, follow-up interviews with participating Local Authorities already interviewed in Phase 2. This way, the research team will capture progress or changes in those Local Authorities as the scheme implementation advances, yet with minimal time commitments for the latter.
- Conducting longer interviews with participating Local Authorities that were not ready to be interviewed in Phase 2 as well as any additional Local Authorities that have joined the scheme in the meantime. For these interviews we will be using the same discussion guides as used in Phase 2, with any necessary tweaks to capture wider scheme updates if needed, so that the project results in a comprehensive baseline for all Local Authorities on the scheme. Engagement will also take place with any Local Authorities that have considered joining the scheme but decided against it or remain sceptical about it to understand the reasons behind this.
- Collecting monitoring data twice yearly (March and September of each year) from participating Local Authorities which, as the sample size of properties increases, will allow for a segmentation analysis that highlights differences in progress between rural and urban areas as well as the different regions in Wales.
- Targeting engagement with tenants and property owners to reach out to more scheme participants. Following the engagement of non-participating property

owners with Phase 2 of the project, the research team has acquired a solid understanding of the reasons and challenges that keep property owners from joining the scheme – these have been discussed throughout this report.

- At the same time, while the survey was a highly successful method to mobilise non-participating property owners to contribute to this research, it was less successful in getting the attention of participating property owners and even more so that of participating tenants. Therefore, as the number of properties on board the scheme is expected to increase while this research is at Phase 3, the research team will liaise more closely and more frequently with contacts within the Local Authorities to primarily identify tenants willing to contribute to the research, given the low engagement in Phase 2. The same will apply for property owners on the scheme, so their input in the evaluation can be increased. Should there be property owners pulling out of the scheme in certain Local Authorities, they will be also invited to share their experiences as part of the evaluation. Due to the vulnerability of the tenants on the scheme, engagement with them will take place through one-to-one interviews. Engagement with property owners will depend on response rates, with high numbers being facilitated by conducting focus groups in lieu of one-to-one interviews.

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Annex A – Additional graphs from property owners' survey

Figure 1.1. Breakdown of scheme participants by number of vacant properties (%) (n= 45)

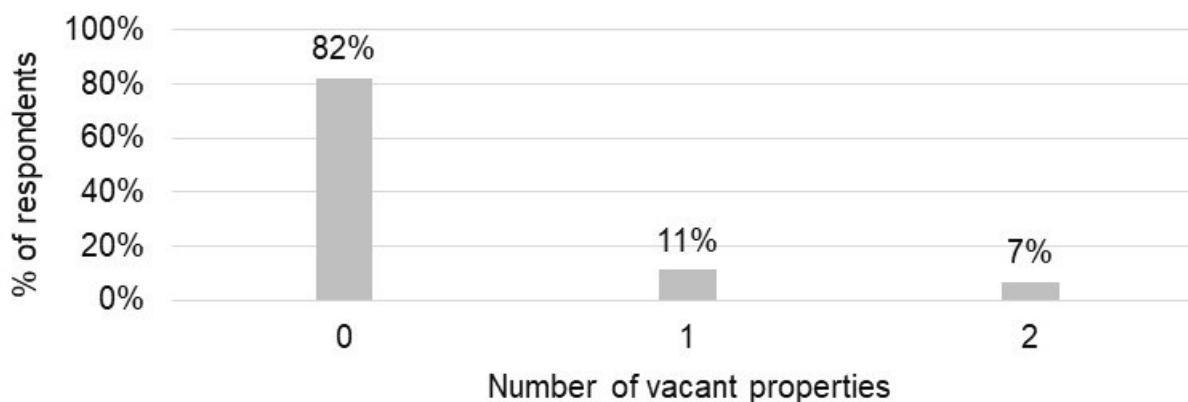


Figure 1.2. Breakdown of scheme participants by means of finding out by the scheme (%) (n=35)

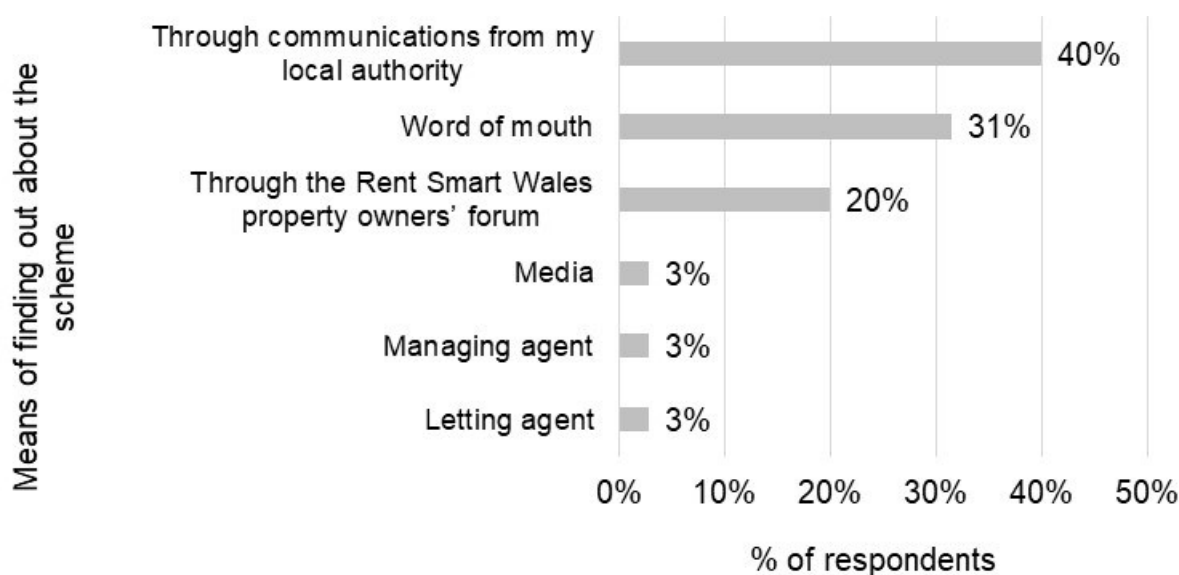


Figure 1.3. Breakdown of scheme participants by region of properties (%) (n=35)



Figure 1.4. Breakdown of scheme participants by agreed lease length (%) (n=31)

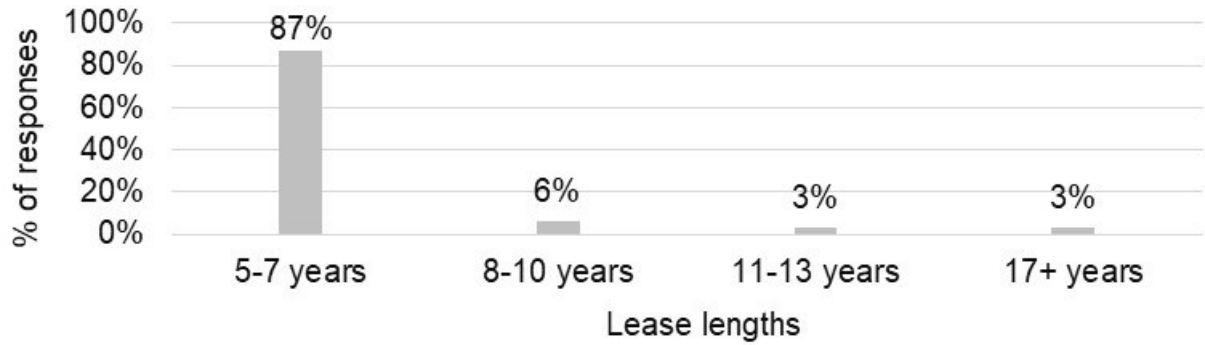


Figure 1.5. Breakdown of scheme participants by motives for leasing through the scheme (%) (n=53)

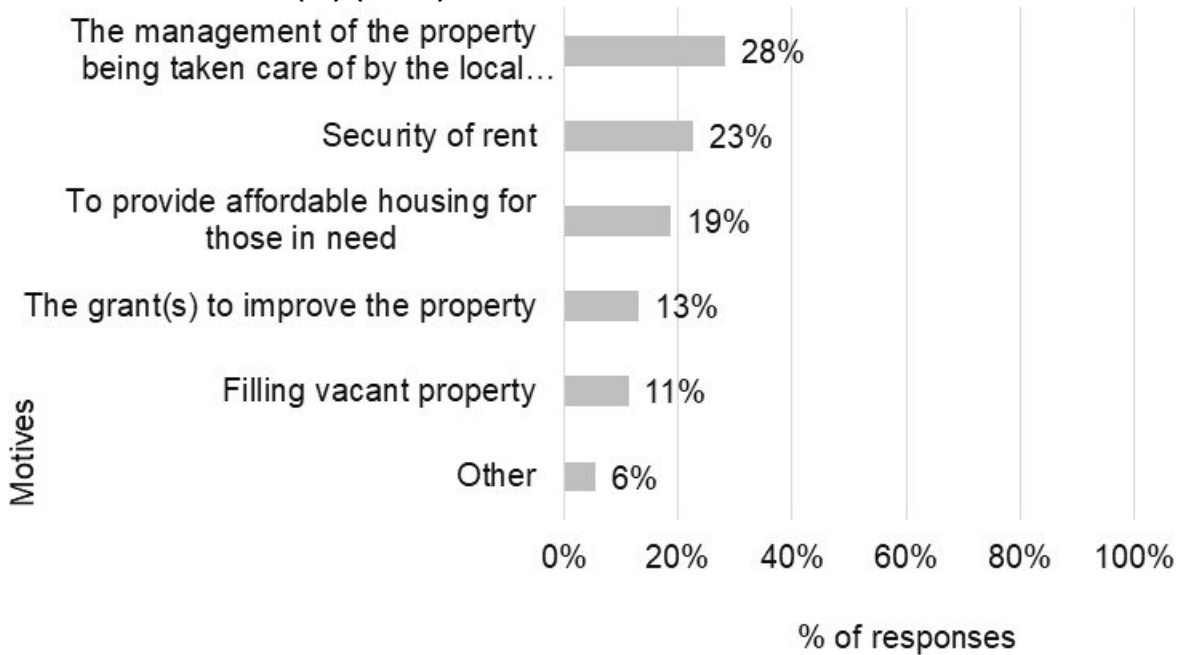


Figure 1.6. Breakdown of scheme participants by experience of joining the scheme (%) (n=41)

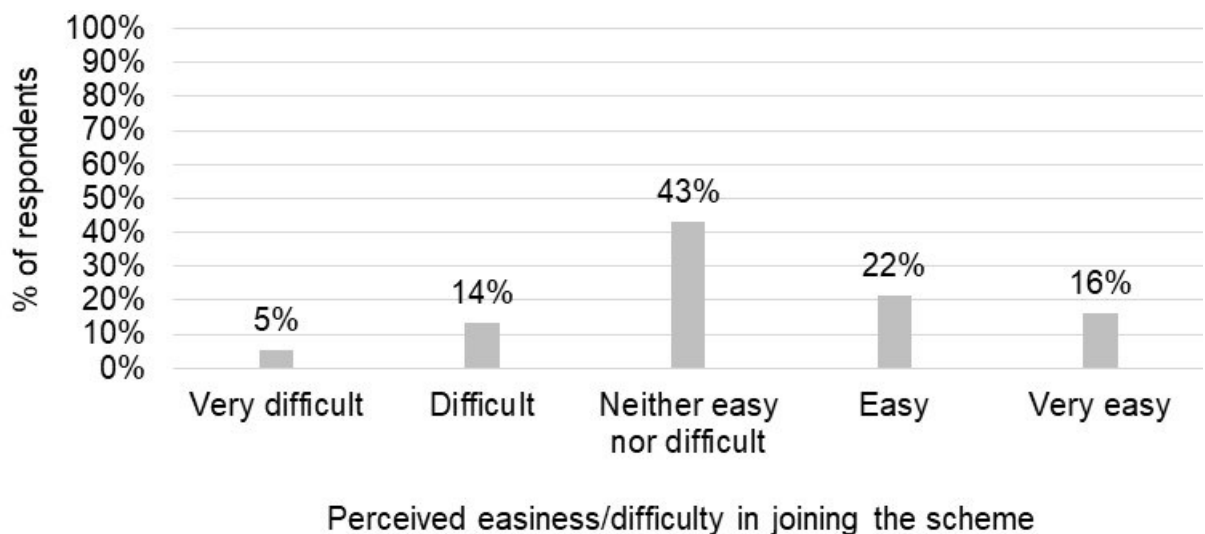


Figure 1.7. Breakdown of scheme participants by satisfaction with Local Authority support (%) (n=42)

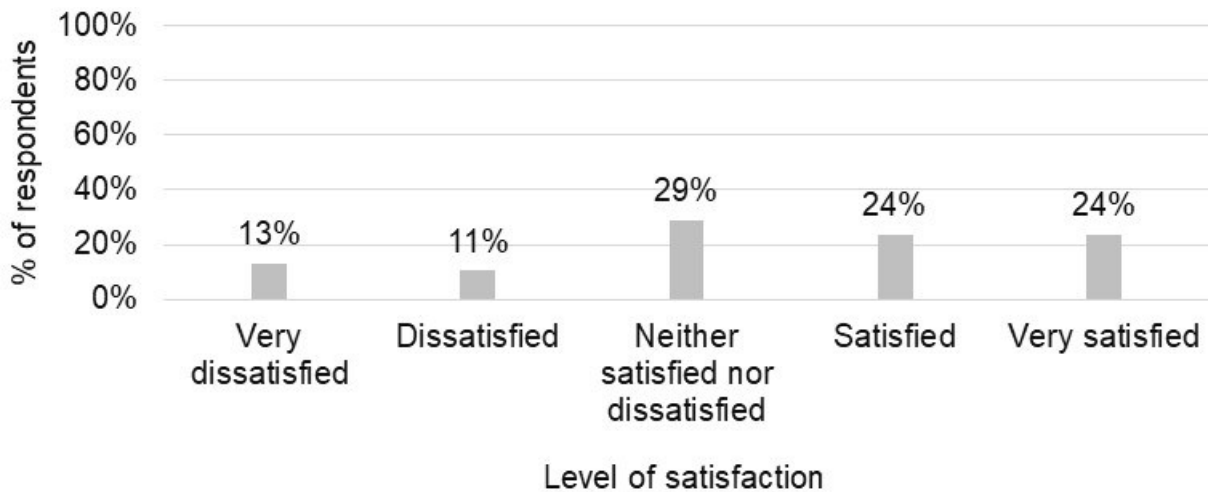
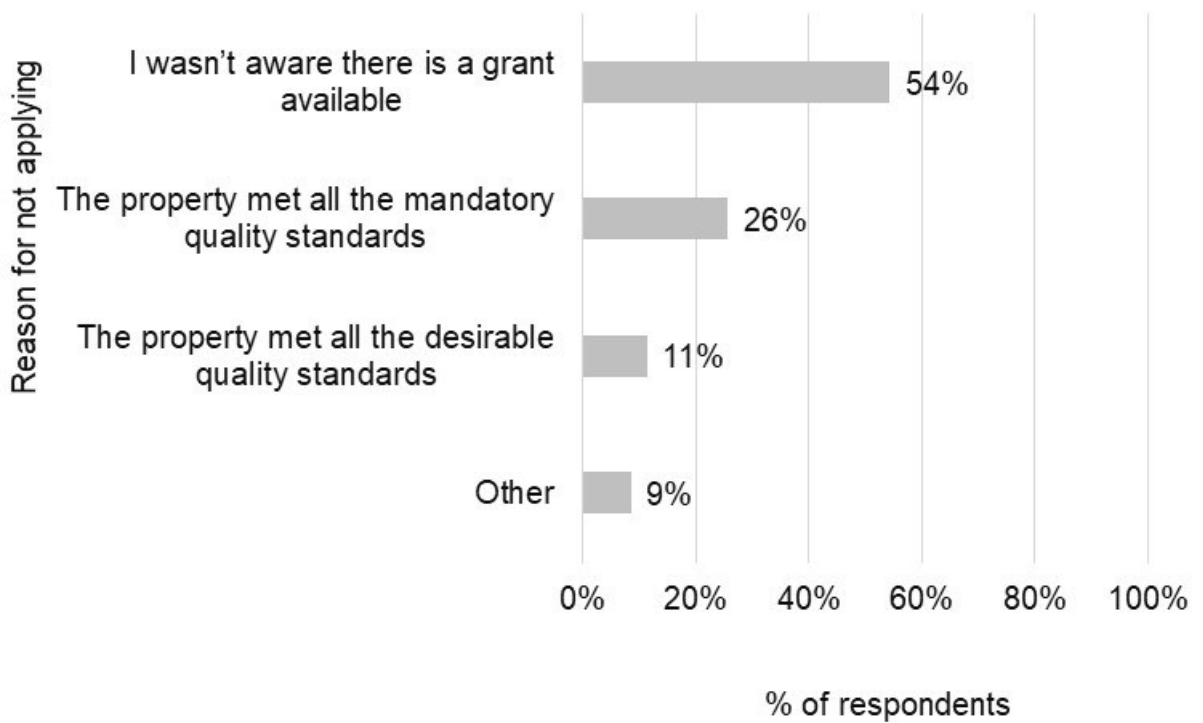


Figure 1.8. Breakdown of scheme participants by reason for no grant funding (%) (n= 35)



Annex B – Research materials used for the Baseline Process Evaluation

Local Authority discussion guide for interviews

Overview

1. Can you describe your role within your local authority?
2. Can you describe your role with regards to Leasing Scheme Wales?
3. Can you describe the structure of the team that works on the scheme within your local authority?

Prompt A: How many staff members? Is this sufficient?

Prompt B: Do they work solely on the scheme or alongside their everyday roles?

Prompt C: Can the team meet Welsh language requirements?

Prompt D: Do you consider hiring more staff members as the scheme upscales?

4. Have you found that ongoing external events (e.g. refugee crises, cost-of-living crisis, Covid-19 etc.) have impacted upon your implementation of the scheme?

Prompt A: Has there been an impact on demand and waiting lists?

Prompt B: Has there been a change in characteristics of tenants in the scheme?

Property owners

5. Do you find that recruiting property owners to join the scheme is an easy or difficult process?

Prompt A: What, if any, are the main challenges of this process?

Prompt B: How do you decide which property owners to include in the scheme?

Prompt C: How has your LA advertised the scheme?

6. What feedback have property owners provided about the leasing arrangements of the scheme (i.e. 5-20 year leases, rental payments of LHA rate, etc.)?

Prompt A: Has this been mostly positive or mostly negative?

Prompt B: What appears to be the most attractive feature for property owners?

Prompt C: What appears to be the main barrier for property owners?

Prompt D: Did you have any property owners who had expressed interest eventually dropping off?

Properties

7. Do you find there are enough Private Rented Sector properties to meet the demand of the scheme?

Prompt A: Are there any geographical areas that are in particularly high demand?

Prompt B: Are there any housing types that are in particularly high demand?

Prompt C: If so, what is causing this demand? (e.g. holiday lets, student population, increase in digital nomads post-Covid)

8. Do you find that surveying properties is an easy or difficult process?

Prompt A: What, if any, are the main challenges of this process?

Prompt B: How many surveyed properties meet all mandatory requirements?

Prompt C: What are some of the most common failings?

9. Do you find that managing properties is an easy or difficult process?

Prompt A: Do you claim the management fee of 10% the LHA rate from the Welsh Government for any of these properties? If so, how do you find this process?

Prompt B: Do you have the capacity for managing properties in-house, or do you outsource it to another organisation?

10. How many of the properties have applied for the available grants? i.e.:

1. The initial capital grant
2. Additional funding for empty properties
3. The ORP funding for working towards an EPC C level, through a fabric first approach

Prompt: Have there been any properties the property owners of which had applied for any of these grants but were unsuccessful in their applications?

Tenants

11. How do you assess if tenants' needs are suitable for the scheme?

Prompt A: How are tenants prioritised within the same duty of care – how do you go about selecting which tenants are offered Leasing Scheme Wales properties?

Prompt B: What, if any, are the main challenges of assessing tenants' needs in relation to the scheme?

12. What support do you offer to tenants on the scheme?

Prompt A: Do most tenants accept the support?

Prompt B: What outcomes, if any, have you observed as a result from support?

Prompt C: Do you contract out the support or provide it in-house?

13. How are tenants with protected characteristics or complex needs being supported in particular?

Partners and collaboration

14. Are you currently partnering with Registered Social Landlords, Local Housing Authorities, or third sector organisations to deliver Leasing Scheme Wales?

Prompt A: What responsibilities do your partners have in the scheme?

Prompt B: How do you decide who to partner with?

Prompt C: How have you found collaborating with partners?

15. How have you found working with the Welsh Government on the Scheme?

Prompt A: Do you feel you receive the support and guidance you need?

Prompt B: Are you happy with the level of flexibility you have as a local authority in implementing the scheme? Would you like to have more or less of flexibility?

Prompt C: How do you find the communication channels?

Conclusion

16. In your opinion, what are the overall strengths of the scheme?

17. In your opinion, what are the overall challenges of the scheme?

18. Are there any emerging lessons learnt that you would like to share at this stage of implementing the scheme?

Prompt A: Any advice for other local authorities considering joining the scheme?

Prompt B: Any advice for the Welsh Government as the scheme rolls out in the future?

Debrief

Have you got any other comments or questions before we finish?

As part of this research we would also like to bi-annually collect monitoring data from local authorities, would this be something you could help with? More details to follow over email.

Property owner survey

Introduction

Alma Economics has been commissioned by the Welsh Government to evaluate the national rollout of the Leasing Scheme Wales (hereafter 'the scheme'). The scheme is funded by the Welsh Government and managed by local authorities, offering property owners the opportunity to lease their properties to local authorities for guaranteed rental payment for 5 to 20 years. The aim is to improve access to the private rented sector (PRS), provide longer term security of accommodation, offer affordability, provide support, improve housing standards, and contribute to reducing homelessness. You can read more about it here: [Leasing Scheme Wales: Guidance](#).

As part of this research, the following short survey will help us to better understand the scheme's development, operation, and impacts. This will include collecting information on what types of property are leased through the scheme, participation in grant schemes, motivations and barriers to participation, and perceived impacts of the scheme. This survey mainly consists of multiple-choice questions and will take you between 5 and 10 minutes to complete. The survey will close on 06/08/2023, 23:45.

Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary and all questions asked are optional. The personal data we collect from you (age and local authority) are captured to help us understand how the scheme can be improved for different groups of people.

At the end of the survey, you will have the option to opt in for a follow-up interview, where as a property owner you will have the opportunity to discuss in more detail how the scheme has or hasn't worked for you. If you are interested, you will need to share with us your name and email address. Please note that this information will only be used to contact you in case you are selected for an interview, and it will not be associated with your answers.

The downloaded dataset will be stored securely electronically by Alma Economics. Access to the online responses as well as the downloaded dataset is restricted to the research team. Responses and the dataset will not be shared with external parties.

You can find more information about how your data will be stored and used for the purposes of this research, here: [link to Privacy Notice]

There is a progress bar at the bottom of each page showing you what proportion of the survey you have covered. Please note that there is no option to save your progress and resume later, so please make sure you go through all questions and pages, and you select 'Submit' before closing your browser.

If you have any questions or you would like more information about this research, please contact the Project Manager, Lawrence Newland, at lawrence.newland@almaeconomics.com.

1. Please confirm you have read the information above and that you are happy to proceed with the survey:

I have read and understand the terms of participation as these are outlined above, and I agree to proceed with the survey.

Yes/No

Survey questions

Location and demographics

2. What is your age?
 - [Enter up to two digits]
 - Prefer not to say
3. Which local authority do you currently operate in? If operating in more than 1 local authorities, select all that apply.
 - Blaenau Gwent
 - Bridgend
 - Caerphilly
 - Cardiff
 - Carmarthenshire
 - Ceredigion
 - Conwy
 - Denbighshire
 - Flintshire
 - Gwynedd
 - Isle of Anglesey

- Merthyr Tydfil
- Monmouthshire
- Neath Port Talbot
- Newport
- Pembrokeshire
- Powys
- Rhondda Cynon Taf
- Swansea
- Torfaen
- Vale of Glamorgan
- Wrexham

Property portfolio

For the questions in this section please think about all properties you currently rent out. This means all properties you are renting out within the scheme (if you are a participant) and outside of the scheme.

4. How long have you been renting property privately?
 - Less than 1 year
 - 1-2 years
 - 3-5 years
 - 6-9 years
 - 10+ years

5. How many properties do you currently rent out?
 [Fill in number from 0-1000]

6. How many of your properties are currently vacant?
 [Fill in number from 0-1000]

7. What kind(s) of property do you rent out? Please select all that apply.
 - Flat/apartment
 - Terraced house
 - Semi-detached house

- Detached house
- Bungalow
- Commercial
- Other [Please specify]

Participation in scheme

8. Are you currently participating within the scheme?

- Yes [Proceed to question 9]
- No [Skip to question 26]

Participating property owners

9. How did you find out about the scheme?

- Through communications from my local authority
- Through the Rent Smart Wales property owners' forum
- Through the Landlords Association
- Word of mouth
- Other [please specify]

10. How many properties are you leasing through the scheme?

[Fill in number from 1-1000]

11. When did you start leasing your property? If leasing more than one property through the scheme, insert the date you had your first property officially onboard the scheme.

[Input date]

12. In which local authority is the property (or properties) you are leasing through the scheme? If you have joined the scheme in more than 1 local authorities, select all that apply.

- Blaenau Gwent
- Bridgend
- Caerphilly

- Cardiff
- Carmarthenshire
- Ceredigion
- Conwy
- Denbighshire
- Flintshire
- Gwynedd
- Isle of Anglesey
- Merthyr Tydfil
- Monmouthshire
- Neath Port Talbot
- Newport
- Pembrokeshire
- Powys
- Rhondda Cynon Taf
- Swansea
- Torfaen
- Vale of Glamorgan
- Wrexham

13. What kind(s) of property are you leasing through the scheme?

Please select all that apply.

- Flat/apartment
- Terraced house
- Semi-detached house
- Detached house
- Bungalow
- Other [Please specify]

14. What length of lease have you agreed with your local authority? If leasing more than one property through the scheme and lease lengths vary, please select all that apply.

- 5-7 years
- 8-10 years
- 11-13 years
- 14-16 years
- 17+ years

15. What motivated you to lease your property (or properties) through the scheme?

Please select all that apply.

- Filling vacant property
- The grant(s) to improve the property
- Security of rent
- The management of the property being taken care of by the local authority
- To provide affordable housing for those in need
- Other [Please specify]

16. How easy or difficult was the process of joining the scheme?

- Very easy
- Easy
- Neither easy nor difficult
- Difficult
- Very difficult

17. How satisfied are you with the support provided by your local authority before and during your onboarding onto the scheme?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied

- Very dissatisfied

Grants and incentives

18. Have you been offered a grant for your property to meet the scheme minimum standards and to support works contributing towards an improved EPC rating?

- Yes [Proceed to **question 19**]
- No [Skip to **question 25**]

19. How easy or difficult was the process to claim the grant?

- Very easy
- Easy
- Neither easy nor difficult
- Difficult
- Very difficult

20. Was your property (or any of your properties on board the scheme) classed as an empty property prior to joining the scheme?

- Yes [Proceed to question 21]
- No [Skip to question 22]

21. How much grant funding to bring the property up to the agreed standard did you or do you expect to receive?

- Up to £5,000
- Up to £9,999
- Up to £14,999
- Up to £19,999
- Up to £25,000
- Don't know

22. Did you apply for ORP funding for works towards an EPC C rating?

- Yes [Proceed to **question 23**]
- No [Skip to **question 24**]

23. How easy or difficult was the process to claim ORP funding?

- Very easy
- Easy
- Neither easy nor difficult
- Difficult
- Very difficult

24. Please select which of the upgrades listed below your property (or properties) underwent or will undergo to be brought up to standard in order to be leased through the scheme. Please select all that apply.

- Structural repairs (including external walls, roof, external window and doors, chimneys)
- Damp
- Staircases or balustrade
- Fire, smoke, or CO2 alarms
- Heating installation or appliance
- Electrical lighting, wiring, or power installation
- Improving the garden
- Energy efficiency improvements (including heating system, insulation, adequate ventilation)
- Draught proofing for external doors or windows
- Updating kitchens or bathrooms
- Escape routes from bedrooms (including non-automatic locks for windows)
- Provision of lobby/entrance area
- Laundry facilities/space
- Furniture to meet sufficient space requirements
- Provision of storage space
- Provision of necessary physical aids
- Other [Please specify]

- Don't know

25. [If not offered grant] Why did you not apply for grant funding? Please select all that apply.

- The property met all the mandatory quality standards
- The property met all the desirable quality standards
- I wasn't aware there is a grant available
- Other [Please specify]
- Don't Know

Non-participating property owners

[Participating property owners should skip this section]

26. Were you aware of the scheme before this survey?

- Yes [Proceed to question 27]
- No [Skip to question 30]

27. Have you seen the scheme advertised?

- Yes [Proceed to question 28]
- No [Skip to question 29]

28. Where have you seen the scheme advertised?

[Short text answer]

29. What barriers, if any, have stopped you from leasing a property through the scheme? Please select all that apply.

- The minimum lease period being 5 years
- The rent offered is too low
- I can secure better rent for my property in the private market
- The break clause requirements (meaning that the break clause can only be activated by the property owner or local authority 2 years after the commencement of the lease and requires a 12 months' notice)
- Renting to tenants who are in receipt of benefits

- Renting to tenants with unstable employment
- The current cost-of-living crisis
- Lack of support available from my local authority
- My local authority hasn't joined the scheme yet
- No barriers have stopped me from leasing a property through the scheme / happy with the current arrangements to rent my property
- Other [Please specify]

30. Would you consider leasing a property through the scheme in the future?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure yet

Concluding questions

31. As part of this research, we are also conducting one-to-one follow-up interviews with property owners. These interviews will be held remotely (online or via the phone) and will last up to 30 minutes. The purpose will be to obtain more detailed feedback about how the scheme has or hasn't worked for property owners in order to improve the scheme. There are several interviewing phases in this project, starting in June 2023 and concluding in June 2025. We would like to ask you whether you would be interested to be considered for an interview within this timeframe. (Select only one)

- Yes, I would like to be invited to an interview anytime within the next year
- Yes, I would like to be invited to an interview anytime within the next two years
- No, I would not like to be invited to an interview

32. **[If would like to be invited to an interview]** Please provide your name and email address for us to contact you if you are happy to be considered for an interview.

[Write up to 100 words]

Property owner discussion guide for interviews

Participating property owner questions

1. Can you tell me about the properties you are leasing through the scheme?

Prompt A: Number of properties?

Prompt B: Type of properties (including priorly empty properties)?

Prompt C: What proportion of your entire property portfolio is leased through the scheme?

Prompt D: How long are the lease lengths? (If different lease length per property, ask for a detailed breakdown and the rationale behind this)

Prompt E: In which local authority (or local authorities) are they located?

Prompt F: How long have you been a property owner?

2. What motivated you to participate in the scheme?

Prompt: How did you find out about the scheme?

3. How easy or difficult was the process of leasing a property on the scheme?

Prompt A: How long did onboarding take?

Prompt B: Did you have to make any changes to your properties before joining?

4. How do you feel about the leasing arrangements?

Prompt A: Rental payments of LHA rate: how does this compare to market rates in your area?

Prompt B: Local authority management of properties?

Prompt C: Length of leases being 5-20 years?

5. Have you applied for any grants via the scheme and how did you find this process?

Prompt: Was the amount substantial enough to cover the expenses?

6. What support, if any, have you been offered by your local authority?

Prompt A: What was the support? Were you satisfied with this level of support?

Prompt B: Are there any additional kinds of support you would like in the future from the scheme?

7. What concerns, if any, do you have about your participation in the scheme?

Prompt: Has the current cost-of-living crisis affected your participation? In what ways?

8. In what ways would you improve the scheme if you could?

Prompt A: What features would you add?

Prompt B: What features would you remove?

Prompt C: Any advice for local authorities implementing the scheme?

Non-participating property owner questions

1. Can you tell me about your current property portfolio?

Prompt A: Number of properties?

Prompt B: Type of properties (including empty properties)?

Prompt C: Which local authority (or local authorities) are your properties located in?

Prompt D: How long have you been a property owner?

2. How familiar are you with the scheme?

Prompt A: How did you find out about the scheme? Was it advertised anywhere?

Prompt B: Is the scheme currently available in your local authority?

3. Would you consider applying for this scheme?

Prompt [if yes]: Have you expressed interest in your local authority?

Prompt [for both yes/no]: Have you found any barriers to applying or in getting your application processed?

4. What features of the scheme, if any, are attractive to you?

Prompt A: Secured rent?

Prompt B: Your property being managed for you?

Prompt C: Anything else?

5. Which features of the scheme, if any, have put you off participating, or can potentially put you off from participating in the future?

Prompt A: Are you able to achieve better rental payments at market rate?

Prompt B: How do you feel about renting to those in receipt of benefits, or to people with non-stable employment?

Prompt C: Are the lease lengths too long?

Prompt D: Has the current cost-of-living crisis affected your decision to not participate in the scheme?

Prompt E: Lack of confidence in local authority management of properties?

6. To the extent that you are familiar with the details of the scheme, is there anything that you would change or improve, particularly if this could increase the chances of you participating?

Prompt A: What features would you add?

Prompt B: What features would you remove?

Prompt C: Any advice for local authorities implementing the scheme?

Debrief

Have you got any other comments or questions before we finish?

Property owner discussion guide for focus groups

Participating property owner focus group questions

Fact-finding

1. Could you share with the group some basic information about the properties you are leasing through the scheme?

Prompt A: Number and type of properties?

Prompt B: Formerly empty properties?

Prompt C: How long are the lease lengths?

Prompt D: What proportion of your property portfolio is leased through the scheme?

2. What motivated everyone here to participate in the scheme?

Prompt A: Guaranteed rent?

Prompt B: Grants?

Prompt C: Management of property by local authority?

Prompt D: To provide affordable housing for those in need?

Prompt E: Other?

3. How easy or difficult was the process of leasing a property on the scheme?

Prompt A: How long did onboarding take?

Prompt B: (where applicable) What do you feel slowed down onboarding?

Prompt C: What challenges did you encounter in the process?

4. How do you feel about the leasing arrangements?

Prompt A: Rental payments of LHA rate: how does this compare to market rates in your area?

Prompt B: Local authority management of properties?

Prompt C: Length of leases being 5-20 years?

5. Have you applied for any grants via the scheme and how did you find this process?

Prompt A: What upgrades were you hoping to complete through the grants?

Prompt B: Was the amount enough to cover the expenses? Did you complete all upgrades as planned?

Prompt C: How did you find the application process?

6. What support, if any, have you been offered by your local authority so far?

Prompt: Are there any additional kinds of support you would like in the future from the scheme?

Their views

7. What concerns, if any, do you have about your participation in the scheme?

Prompt: Has the current cost-of-living crisis affected your participation? In what ways?

8. In what ways would you improve the scheme if you could?

Prompt A: What features would you add?

Prompt B: What features would you remove?

Prompt C: Any advice for local authorities implementing the scheme?

Prompt D: How could more property owners be motivated to join the scheme?

Debrief

9. Is there anything we haven't discussed so far that you would like to mention?

Non-participating property owner questions

Warm-up

Could everyone introduce themselves and tell us a little about their property portfolio?

Prompt A: Number of properties? Types of properties?

Prompt B: Which local authority (or local authorities) are your properties located in?

Prompt C: How long have you been a property owner?

Prompt D: Do you currently own any empty properties and, if so, what steps(if any) have you taken to fill them?

Thank you all for sharing. Now we will move on to have a discussion specifically about the Scheme. As we are aware that not all of you will necessarily be familiar with the details of the Scheme, before we get started, I am going to give you a quick overview.

Note: Chair to provide a 5-minute overview of LSW, using as supporting material a fact sheet provided by the WG.

Experience applying

Has anyone here considered applying for this scheme?

Prompt [if yes]: Have you expressed interest with your local authority?

Opinions on LSW

What features of the scheme, if any, are most attractive to you?

Prompt A: Secured rent?

Prompt B: Your property being managed for you?

Prompt C: Grant to improve state of property maintenance?

Prompt D: Other?

Which features of the scheme, if any, have put you off participating, or can potentially put you off from participating in the future?

Prompt A: Are you able to achieve better rental payments at market rate outside the scheme?

Prompt B: Are the lease lengths too long? Are you concerned about the break clause?

Prompt C: Lack of confidence in local authority management of properties?

Improvements to LSW

To the extent that you are familiar with the details of the scheme, is there anything that you would change or improve, particularly if this could increase the chances of you participating?

Prompt A: What features would you add?

Prompt B: What features would you remove?

Prompt C: Any advice for local authorities implementing the scheme?

Debrief

Is there anything we haven't discussed so far that you would like to mention?

Tenant survey

Introduction

Alma Economics has been commissioned by the Welsh Government to evaluate the national rollout of the Leasing Scheme Wales (hereafter 'the scheme'). The scheme is funded by the Welsh Government and managed by local authorities, offering property owners the opportunity to lease their properties to local authorities for guaranteed rental payment for 5 to 20 years. The aim is to improve access to the private rented sector (PRS), provide longer term security of accommodation, offer affordability, provide support, improve housing standards, and contribute to reducing homelessness. You can read more about it here: [Leasing Scheme Wales: Guidance](#).

As part of this research, the following short survey will help us to better understand the scheme's development, operation, and impacts. This will include what types of property are leased through the scheme, motivations and barriers to participation, and perceived impacts of the scheme. This survey mainly consists of multiple-choice questions and will take you between 5 and 10 minutes to complete. The survey will close on 20/09/2023, 23:30.

Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary and all questions asked are optional. The personal data we collect from you (such as age, sex, ethnicity, disability status, and local authority) is captured to help us understand how the scheme can be improved for different groups of people and in different areas across Wales.

At the end of the survey, you will have the option to opt in for a follow-up interview, where as a tenant will have the opportunity to discuss in more detail how the scheme has or hasn't worked for you. If you are interested, you will need to share with us your name and email address. Please note that this information will only be used to contact you in case you are selected for an interview, and it will not be associated with your answers.

The downloaded dataset will be stored securely electronically by Alma Economics. Access to the online responses as well as the downloaded dataset is restricted to the research team. Responses and the dataset will not be shared with external parties.

You can find more information about how your data will be stored and used for the purposes of this research, here: [link to Privacy Notice]

There is a progress bar at the bottom of each page showing you what proportion of the survey you have covered. Please note that there is no option to save your progress and resume later, so please make sure you go through all questions and pages, and you select 'Submit' before closing your browser.

If you have any questions or you would like more information about this research, please contact the Deputy Project Manager, Dr Eleni Kotsira, at eleni.kotsira@almaeconomics.com.

1. Please confirm you have read the information above and that you are happy to proceed with the survey:

I have read and understand the terms of participation as these are outlined above, and I agree to proceed with the survey.

Yes/ No

Survey questions

Location and demographics

2. What is your age? (Select only one)
 - [Enter up to two digits]
 - Prefer not to say
3. What is your sex? (Select only one)
 - Female
 - Male
 - Neither male nor female
 - Prefer not to say
4. What is your ethnic group? (Select only one)
 - White/ White British
 - Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups
 - Asian/Asian British

- Black/African/Caribbean/Black British
 - Other ethnic group
 - Prefer not to say
5. Do you have a disability? By disability we mean any type of physical or mental impairment that considerably impacts your ability to carry out normal daily activities for a long period of time.
- Yes
 - No
 - Prefer not to say
6. Including yourself, how many people currently live in your household?
[Insert up to two digits]
7. How many of your household members are people under the age of 18?
[Insert up to two digits]
8. Which local authority are you currently residing in? (Select only one)
- Blaenau Gwent
 - Bridgend
 - Caerphilly
 - Cardiff
 - Carmarthenshire
 - Ceredigion
 - Conwy
 - Denbighshire
 - Flintshire
 - Gwynedd
 - Isle of Anglesey
 - Merthyr Tydfil
 - Monmouthshire

- Neath Port Talbot
- Newport
- Pembrokeshire
- Powys
- Rhondda Cynon Taf
- Swansea
- Torfaen
- Vale of Glamorgan
- Wrexham

Wellbeing

This section includes some questions about your wellbeing. Answering these questions will help us understand the impact housing conditions have on tenants.

Please answer the next four questions on a scale from 0-10, where 0 is 'not at all' and 10 is 'completely'.

9. Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?

[Scale 0-10]

10. Overall, to what extent do you feel that the things you do in your life are worthwhile?

[Scale 0-10]

11. Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?

[Scale 0-10]

12. On a scale where 0 is 'not at all anxious' and 10 is 'completely anxious', overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday?

[Scale 0-10]

Participation in scheme

13. Are you currently renting a property through the scheme?

- Yes [Proceed to **question 14**]
- No [Skip to **question 26**]

Participating tenants

[Non-participating tenants will skip this section]

14. How did you find out about the scheme?

[Short text answer]

15. What do you see as the advantages in joining the scheme? Please select all that apply.

- Affordability of the rent paid through the scheme
- Tenancy support included in the scheme
- Quality of housing offered through the scheme
- Long-term lease offered through the scheme
- Secured housing
- Other [Please specify]

16. When did you move into the property you are currently renting through the scheme?

If you have not yet moved in, but you are in the process of doing so, insert your planned moving-in date.

[Input date]

17. Do you know how long you will be staying in the property rent through the scheme?

- 5-7 years
- 8-10 years
- 11-13 years
- 14-16 years
- 17+ years
- Don't know

18. What kind of property do you rent through the scheme?

- Flat/apartment
- Terraced house
- Semi-detached house
- Detached house

- Bungalow
- Other [Please specify]

19. How satisfied are you with the quality of housing on the scheme?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

20. Do you feel that the scheme has met your needs with regards to your housing situation?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure/Don't know

21. Do you feel that renting through the scheme has had an effect on your overall wellbeing?

- Yes – Positive
- Yes – Negative
- No effect
- Unsure/Don't know

Tenancy support

22. Are you receiving support from your local authority in relation to renting your home?

- Yes [Proceed to **question 23**]
- No [Skip to **question 25**]

23. What kind(s) of support are you currently receiving and/or have received thus far in the scheme? Please select all that apply.

- Support applying for benefits
- Support with managing my tenancy

- Support with managing my finances
- Support with finding or keeping employment
- Health and wellbeing support
- Furniture packs
- Other [Please specify]

24. How satisfied are you with the support you are receiving and/or have received thus far in the scheme?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

25. [If no support] Why are you not receiving tenancy support? (Select only one.)

- I wasn't aware there is such support available
- I have heard of this support, but it wasn't offered to me
- I did not accept the support
- Other [Please specify]
- Don't know

Non-participating tenants

[Participating tenants will skip this section]

26. How satisfied are you with the quality of your current housing?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

27. Were you aware of the scheme before this survey?

- Yes [Proceed to **question 28**]
- No [Skip to **question 31**]

28. Have you seen the scheme advertised?

- Yes [Proceed to **question 29**]
- No [Skip to **question 30**]

29. Where have you seen the scheme advertised?

[Short text answer]

30. What barriers, if any, have prevented you from renting a property through the scheme? Please select all that apply.

- The rent is unaffordable
- I would have to move out of my local area
- I am not eligible for renting through the scheme
- Lack of support available from my local authority
- My local authority hasn't joined the scheme yet
- I couldn't find a property suitable for my housing needs through the scheme
- No barriers have prevented me from renting a property through the scheme / happy with the current arrangements to rent through the scheme
- Other [Please specify]

31. Would you consider renting a property through the scheme in the future?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure yet

Concluding questions

32. As part of this research, we are also conducting one-to-one follow-up interviews with tenants. These interviews will be held remotely (online or via the phone) and will last up to 30 minutes. The purpose will be to obtain more detailed feedback about how the scheme has or hasn't worked for tenants in order to improve the

scheme. There are several interviewing phases in this project, starting in June 2023 and concluding in June 2025. We would like to ask you whether you would be interested to be considered for an interview within this timeframe. (Select only one)

- Yes, I would like to be invited to an interview anytime within the next year
- Yes, I would like to be invited to an interview anytime within the next two years
- No, I would not like to be invited to an interview

33. **[If would like to be invited to an interview]** Please provide your name and email address for us to contact you if you are happy to be considered for an interview.

[Write up to 100 words]

Tenant discussion guide

Participating tenant questions

1. Can you tell me about the property you are currently renting?
Prompt A: In which local authority is it located?
Prompt B: What size and type of property are you renting?
Prompt C: How long is the lease length?
Prompt D: Is the rent affordable for you?
Prompt E: Do you like your current accommodation? Why/why not?
2. Can you tell me how you came to be a tenant through the scheme?
3. How do you feel about the renting arrangements?
Prompt A: 5-20 year lease lengths? Renting at LHA rate? Local authority managing properties?
Prompt B: Do these arrangements meet your housing needs?
Prompt C: Do you expect your housing needs to change in the future, with this having an impact on how the renting arrangements can meet them?
4. What type(s) of support are you receiving during your tenancy?
Prompt A: Support with managing your finances, managing your tenancy, finding and keeping employment, etc.?
Prompt B: Who provides this support? (in-house local authority, third sector etc.)
Prompt C: Do you feel this level of support is sufficient?
Prompt D: Did you receive any pre-tenancy support?
Prompt E: What additional kinds of support would you like in the future?
5. Would you consider renting through the scheme to have had a positive, negative, or no affect on your wellbeing?
Prompt: Of course, there are broader challenges that might have affected your wellbeing. In particular, do you think that the Covid-19 pandemic and the current cost-of-living crisis have impacted your wellbeing in any way?
6. What concerns, if any, do you have about renting a property through the scheme?

7. In what ways would you improve the scheme if you could?

Prompt A: What features would you add?

Prompt B: What features would you remove?

Prompt C: Any advice for local authorities implementing the scheme?

Non-participating tenant questions

1. Can you tell me about your current housing situation?

Prompt A: What size and type of property are you renting?

Prompt B: How long is the lease length?

Prompt C: Is it affordable for you?

Prompt D: Do you receive any kind of support with your tenancy?

Prompt E: Do you like your current accommodation? Why?

2. Would you consider your current housing situation to have had a positive, negative, or no affect on your wellbeing?

Prompt: Of course, there are broader challenges that might have affected your wellbeing. In particular, do you think that the Covid-19 pandemic and the current cost-of-living crisis have impacted your wellbeing in any way?

3. How did you find out about the scheme?

Prompt A: Have you seen it advertised?

Prompt B: Is the scheme currently available in your local authority?

4. Would you accept if you were offered a rental property through this scheme?

Prompt [if yes]: Have you expressed interest in your local authority?

Prompt [for both yes/no]: Have you found any barriers to participating in the scheme?

5. What features of the scheme, if any, do you feel are most beneficial for tenants?

Prompt A: LHA rent rate?

Prompt B: Tenancy support, and if so, which elements?

Prompt C: Anything else?

6. Which features of the scheme, if any, do you feel are least beneficial to tenants?

Prompt A: Types and quality of housing provided?

Prompt B: Affordability?

Prompt C: Anything else?

7. To the extent that you are familiar with the details of the scheme, is there anything that you would change or improve, particularly if this could increase the chances of you participating?

Prompt A: What features would you add?

Prompt B: What features would you remove?

Prompt C: Any advice for local authorities implementing the scheme?

Debrief

Have you got any other comments or questions before we finish?