

APPENDIX B: Consultation, Engagement and Key Findings

The full Bristol Living Rent Commission report, including survey methodology and data, is available [here](#).

1. As part its work, the Commission conducted two 'Bristol Renters' tenant experience surveys. These surveys received around 2,500 responses together.
2. The Commission's first survey invited people to provide their experience of the PRS and invite the submission of written evidence. We received a total of 720 responses to this survey.
3. Eighty-four percent of respondents to the first survey told the Commission that they had reported problems with the condition of a property to a landlord or agent. In 10% of cases where a property issue was reported, the landlord or letting agent increased the rent after resolving the issue.
4. The Commission's second survey invited people in Bristol to give their views on rent control. It started with questions of broad principle – was rent control desirable and what should it be aiming to do – and then went on to look at more detailed questions of design. It asked respondents to rate four example policy designs and select their preferred model. Finally, it gave respondents an opportunity to comment on what other policy and practice changes they thought would help housing affordability.
5. Respondents whose landlord had increased their rent were asked how many times the rent had been raised in the last 12 months. In nearly two thirds of cases the rent had increased once in 12 months. But 19% of respondents reported that their rent had been increased twice and 16% of respondents indicated they had experienced three or more increases during that period.
6. All respondents were asked if they knew how often their landlord was legally allowed to increase their rent. Seven out of ten stated that they did not.
7. Over a quarter of respondents to the survey who had taken on a new tenancy in the last 12 months stated that, to secure a property, they were required to compete with other people to pay more than the advertised rent.
8. Half of survey respondents (48%) experienced the additional financial burden of paying rent in advance, separate from any deposit, just to secure a property.
9. Many of those in favour of rent control focused on rents being too high, rising too fast, or stopping rents being "out of control". Rents were characterised as 'extortionate', 'ridiculous', 'unsustainable' and 'abusive'. There were also references to levels of disposable income after housing costs; people struggling with the cost of living and rents pushing people into poverty; adequate housing as a human right; people being priced out of the city; community stability; and the unscrupulous, profiteering or greedy behaviour of landlords and letting agents.
10. A trend that has been accelerated by the pandemic and the ability for some people to work remotely has been those on higher wages moving to Bristol and commuting once or twice a week to their workplace, which is often London. This can boost the short-term let market, with sites such as Airbnb being used as people search for stopgap accommodation in the city while they look for properties. The growth strategies of the city's universities have also resulted in significant increases in demand as the student population has grown.
11. One specific point raised by several respondents to the rent control survey related to the ability to exit from the PRS. The point made was that many renters pay more in rent for a property than they would have to pay to have a mortgage on that property. One

consequence of this is the difficulty it creates to save for a deposit and get on the housing ladder.

12. The support for building more social housing was widespread among our survey respondents and those who provided written evidence. Many saw the key to the problem as the council or housing associations building more affordable social housing.
13. Survey respondents were asked to rate how important they considered six possible side effects that had been identified during discussions in the Commission's evidence sessions and in the academic literature on rent control (Fig 5.2). Two options were rated as very important by a majority of respondents; avoiding discrimination against certain types of tenants and maintaining the quality of rent controlled properties. On the other hand, only one in five respondents rated "private landlords decide to remain in private renting after rent control policy is introduced" as very important. A similar proportion considered this not at all important.
14. The majority of respondents favoured a rent control system that regulated rents between tenancies as well as within tenancies (Table 5.4). The responses were strongly related to the respondents' stance on the desirability of rent control. More than nine out of ten tenants favoured a system where rents were controlled between tenancies, whereas two thirds of landlords wanted to see a system where control only operated within tenancies.