

# THE IMPACT OF COST RENTAL HOUSING IN IRELAND: SECURITY & AFFORDABILITY

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Funded by the Housing Agency's Research Support Programme,  
in partnership with Clúid Housing, Respond & Tuath Housing



What are the  
impacts of Cost  
Rental on  
residents' well  
being?

Analysed  
through the  
lenses of  
affordability,  
security & home,  
and place

**RESEARCH  
QUESTION**

# RESEARCH DESIGN

Administrative data provided by AHB project partners (n=551)

Survey administered to total population of CR, 17.2% response rate (n=95)

In depth qualitative interviews with residents (n=28)

Expert interviews with those involved in provision of CR, & policy design/implementation

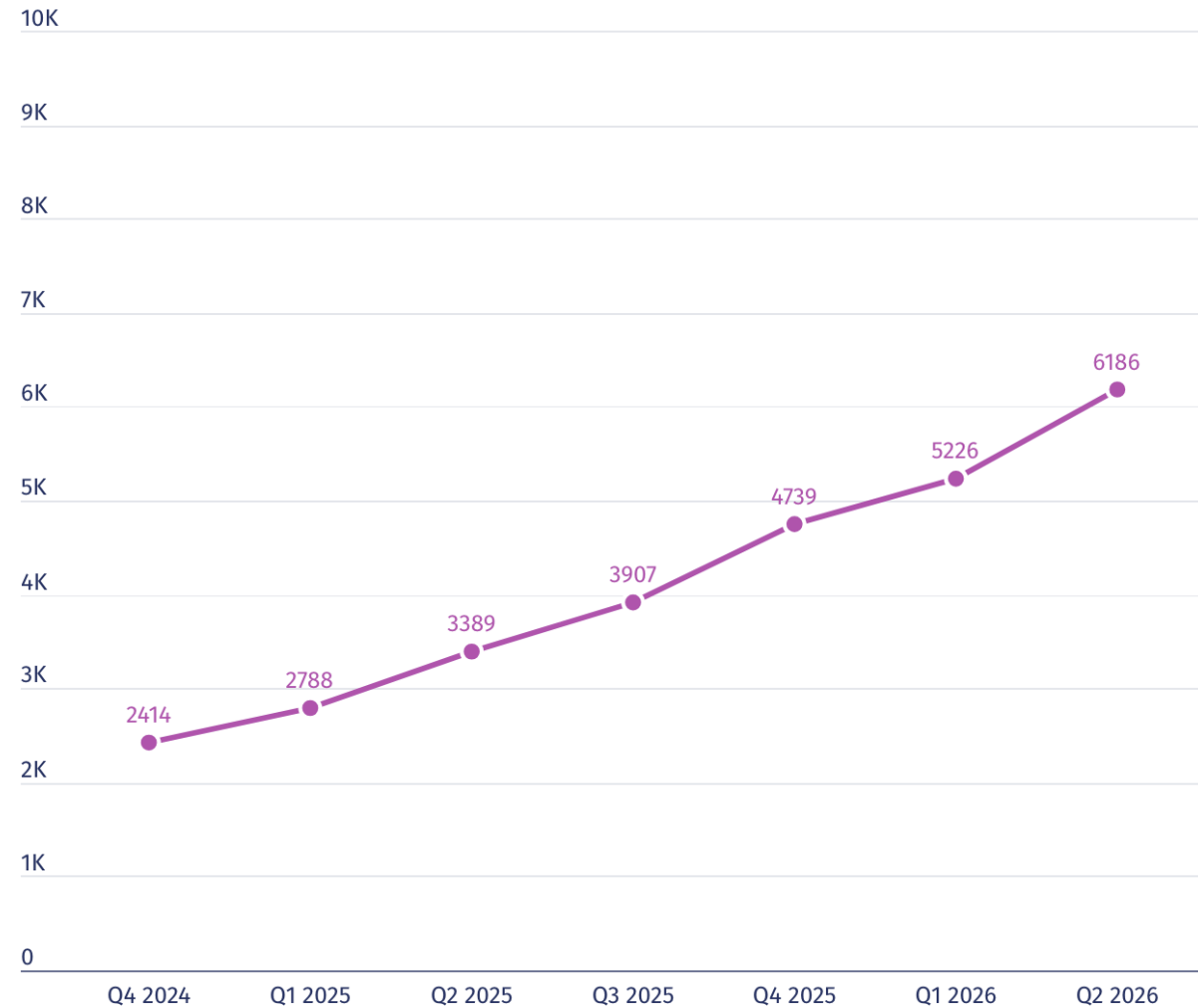
# GROWTH OF COST RENTAL

Research conducted in 2023 at early stages of roll out of Cost Rental housing.

Estimated 551 tenanted Cost Rental units provided by AHBs.

Most tenancies in relatively early stages.

Q4 2024 - Q2 2026

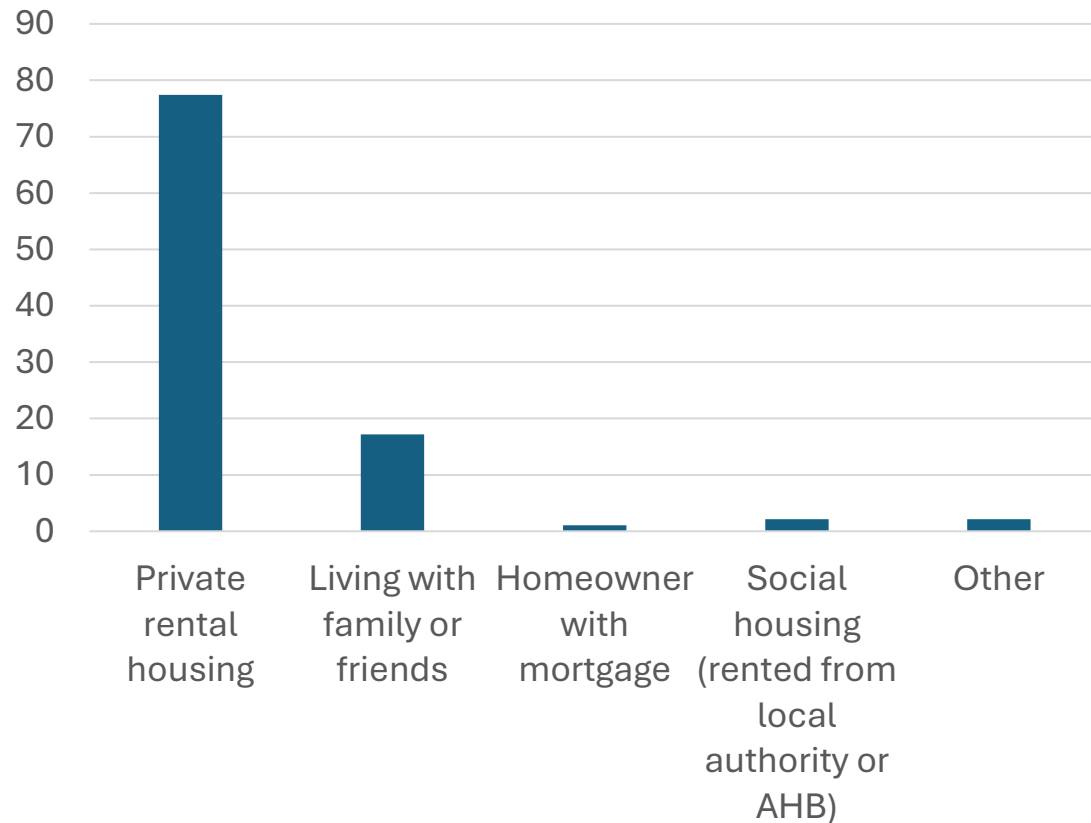


● Total number of private tenancies excluding Cost Rental tenancies

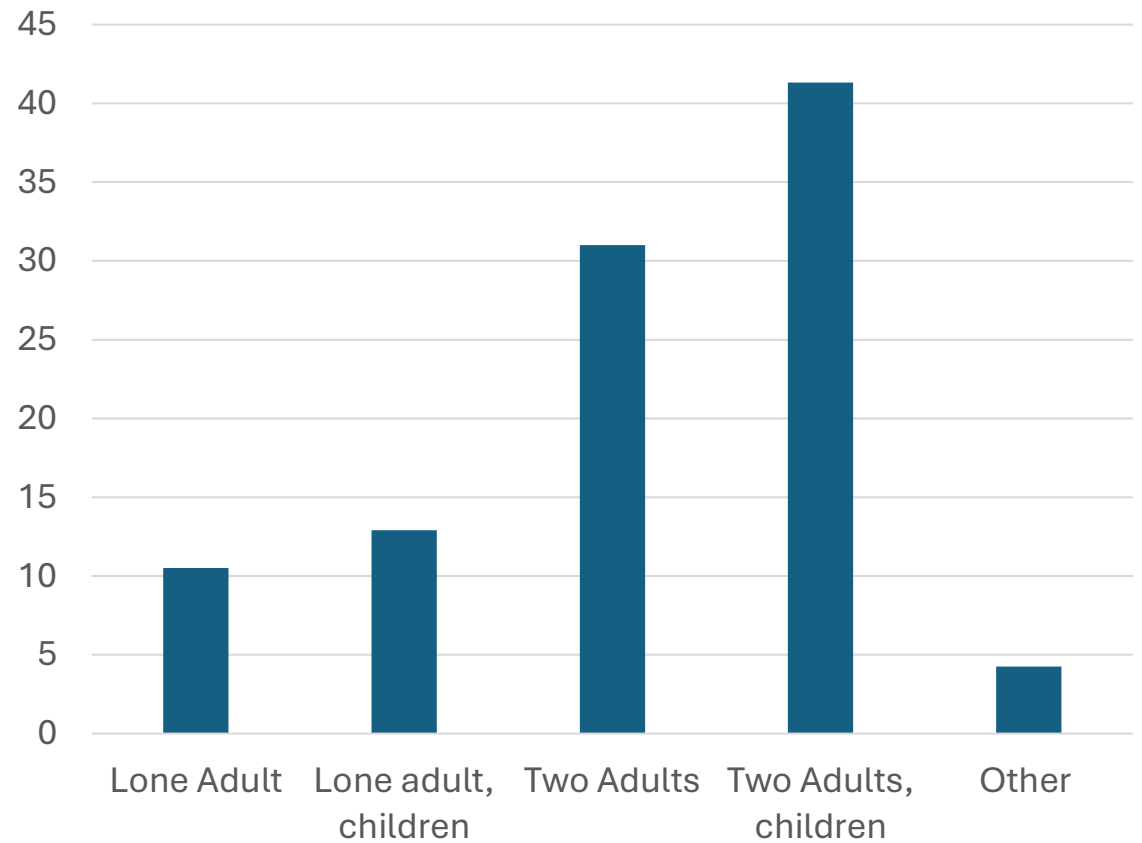
RTB Register data

# RESIDENT PROFILE: HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION

Previous housing

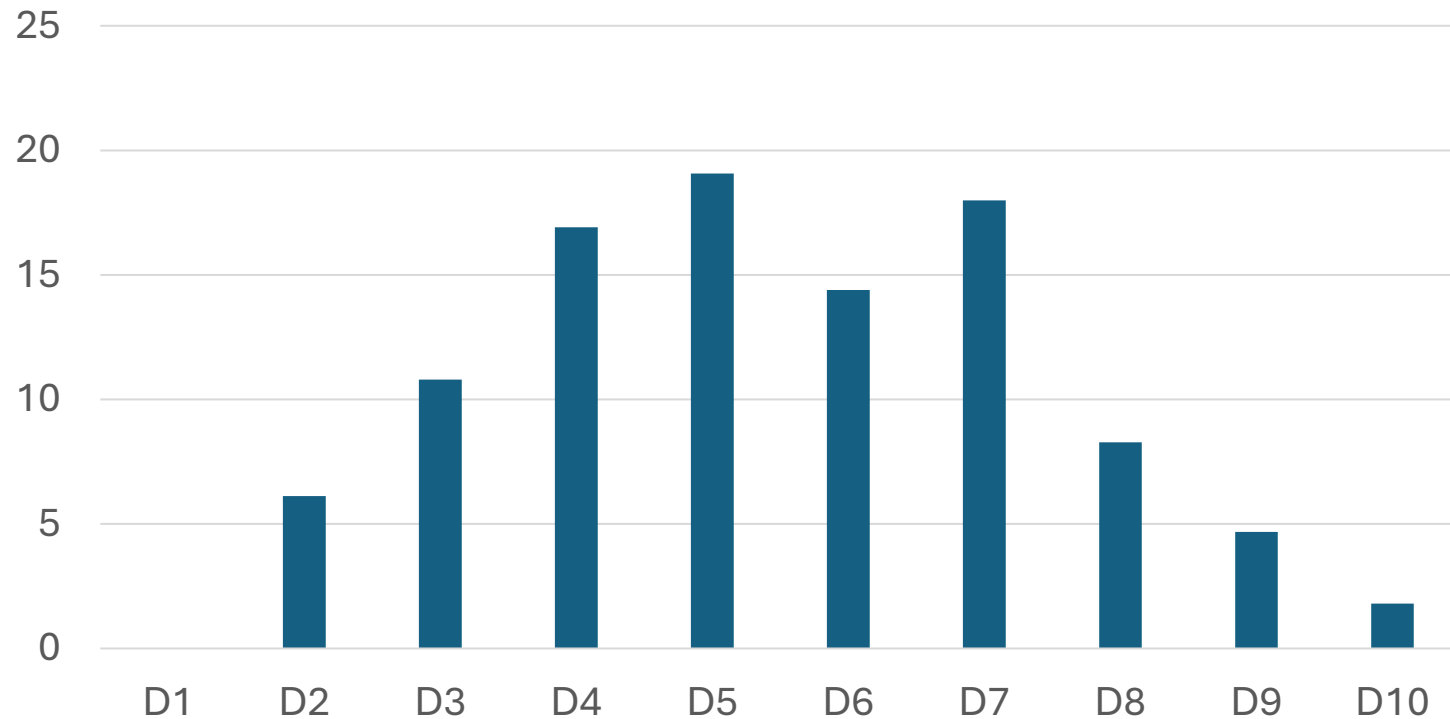


Household composition



# AFFORDABILITY

Location of tenants in income distribution

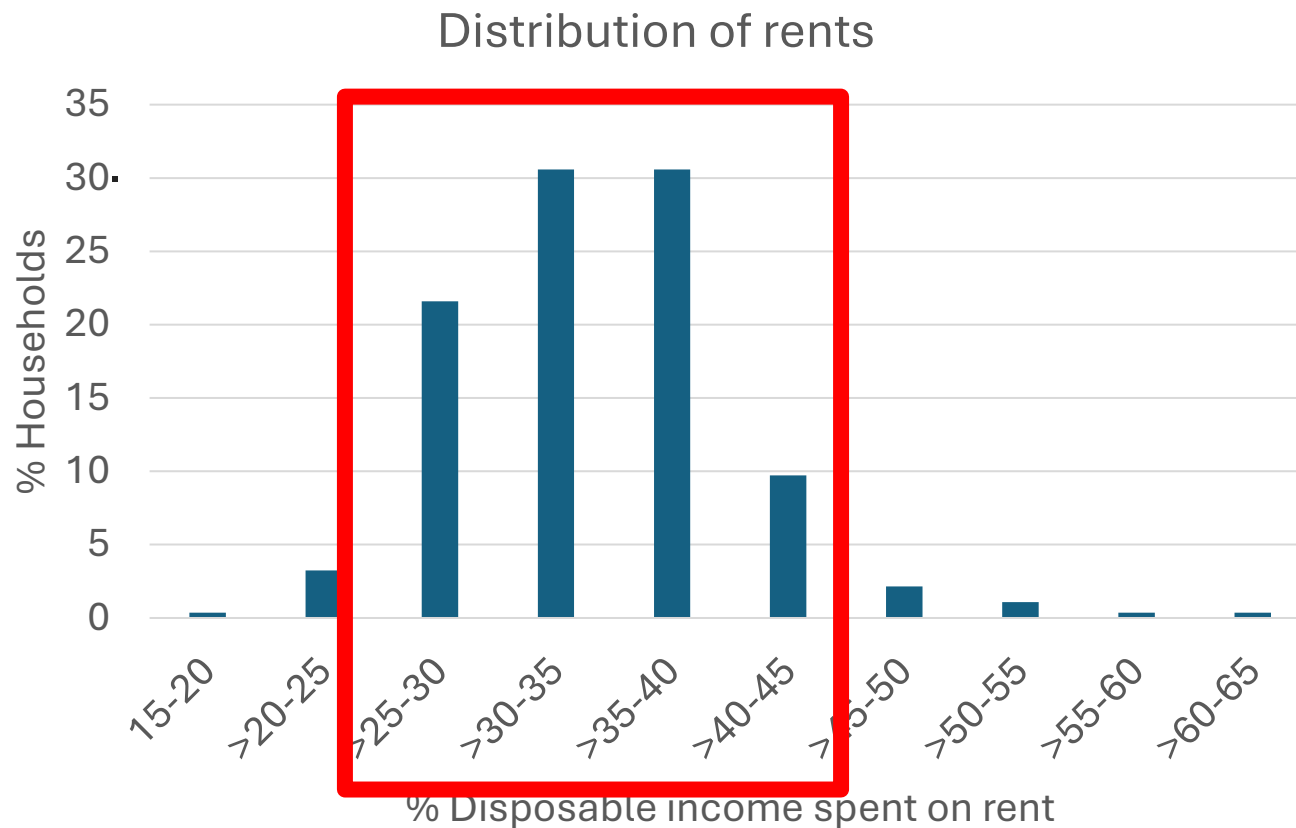


70% of  
adults  
in FT work

€42,384

Median household  
disposable income

# AFFORDABILITY



Average Rent =  
34.5% of household  
net income

Basic income  
ratio measure  
(30% & 35%  
threshold)



'30/40'  
income ratio  
measure

AFFORDABILITY

# AFFORDABILITY: 30% THRESHOLD

Basic measure

75% pay rent  
greater than 30% of  
disposable income

30/40 measure

33% pay rent  
greater than 30%  
disposable income

# AFFORDABILITY: 35% THRESHOLD

Basic measure

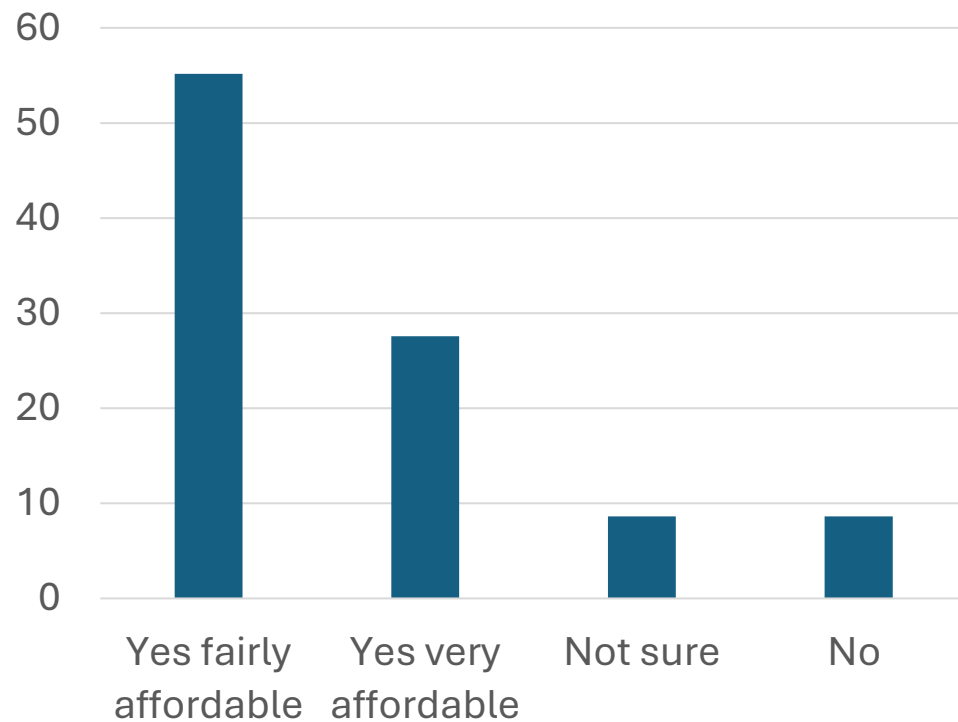
55% pay rent  
greater than 35% of  
disposable income

30/40 measure

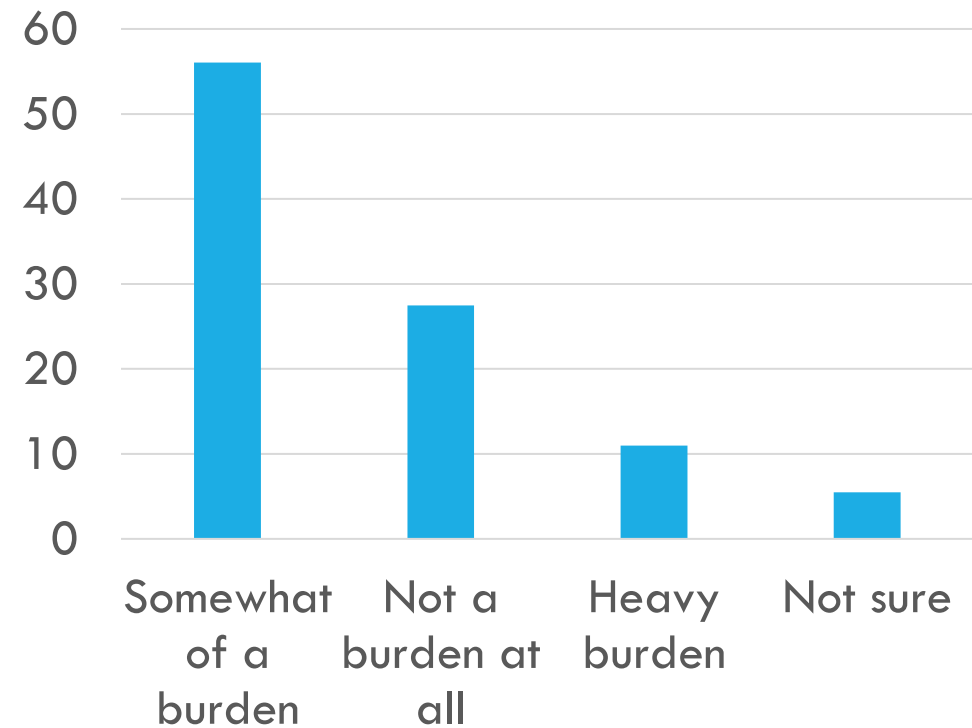
25% pay rent  
greater than 35%  
disposable income

# AFFORDABILITY

Consider rent affordable



Consider rent to be burden



# AFFORDABILITY

Cost rental typically larger, newer and better quality than previous accommodation

- provides secure, professionally managed housing
- typically lower than comparable current asking rents
- designed to achieve affordability over medium & long term
- impacts wider market as well as residents



# SECURITY / HOME

Overall CR extremely successful in creating secure 'homes', sense of belonging and ownership – providing a “forever home” (Josephine, Cost Rental Tenant).

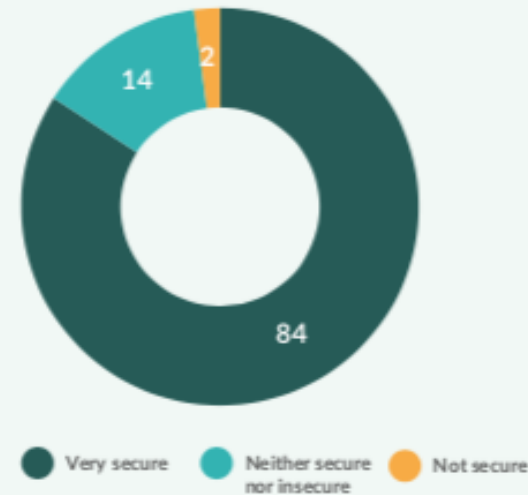
Survey: 80% of residents feel very secure, 73% say they ‘never’ or ‘rarely’ worry about eviction.

Security allows residents to focus on other areas of life and plan for future.

“I think [cost rental housing] changed my life. It pulled me forward, it put me that step forward to do things and to create a family. I think that's a huge change.”  
(Marcin, Cost Rental Tenant)

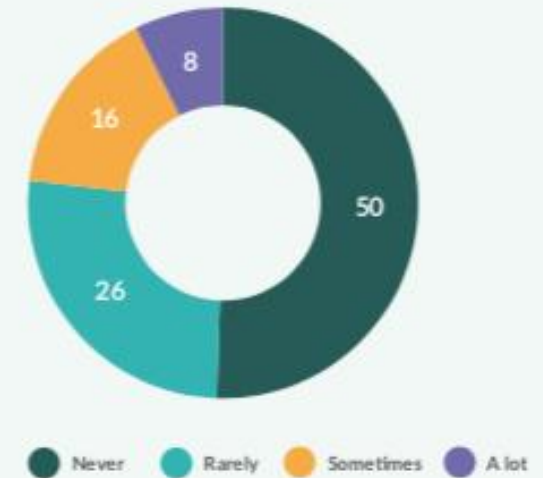
“So you can feel like you can really put roots down in where you are, invest in your local area, and think of your children's future around you.” (Joseph, Cost Rental Tenant)

Figure 4.18 Describe your security of tenure



Source: Online survey.

Figure 4.19 Worry about being evicted?



Source: Online survey.

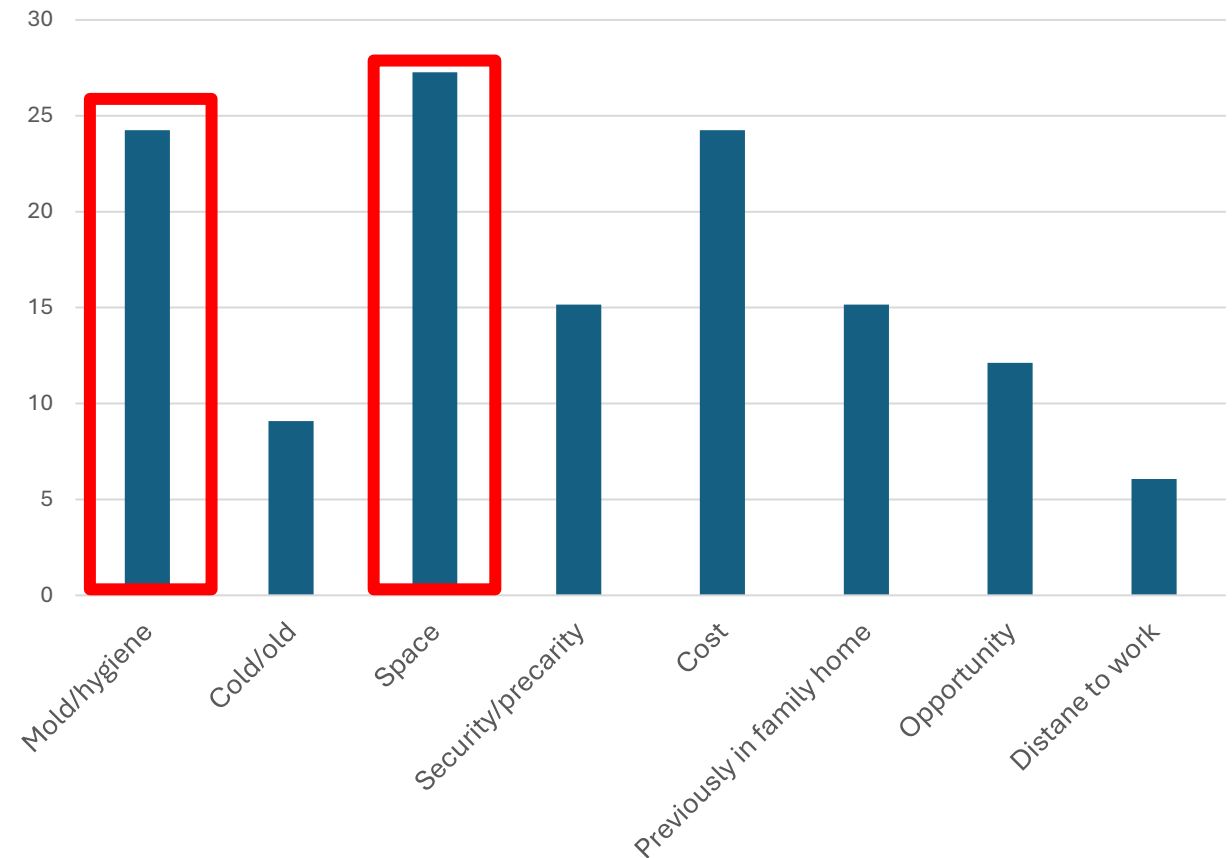
# SECURITY / HOME: 3 PILLARS

Resident interviews emphasized 3 pillars, often compared to negative experiences of PRS.

## 1. Tenancy arrangements

- Long-term tenancies
- Control and autonomy (unfurnished nature of dwelling; ability to make changes to dwelling)

Open-ended reasons for leaving previous place

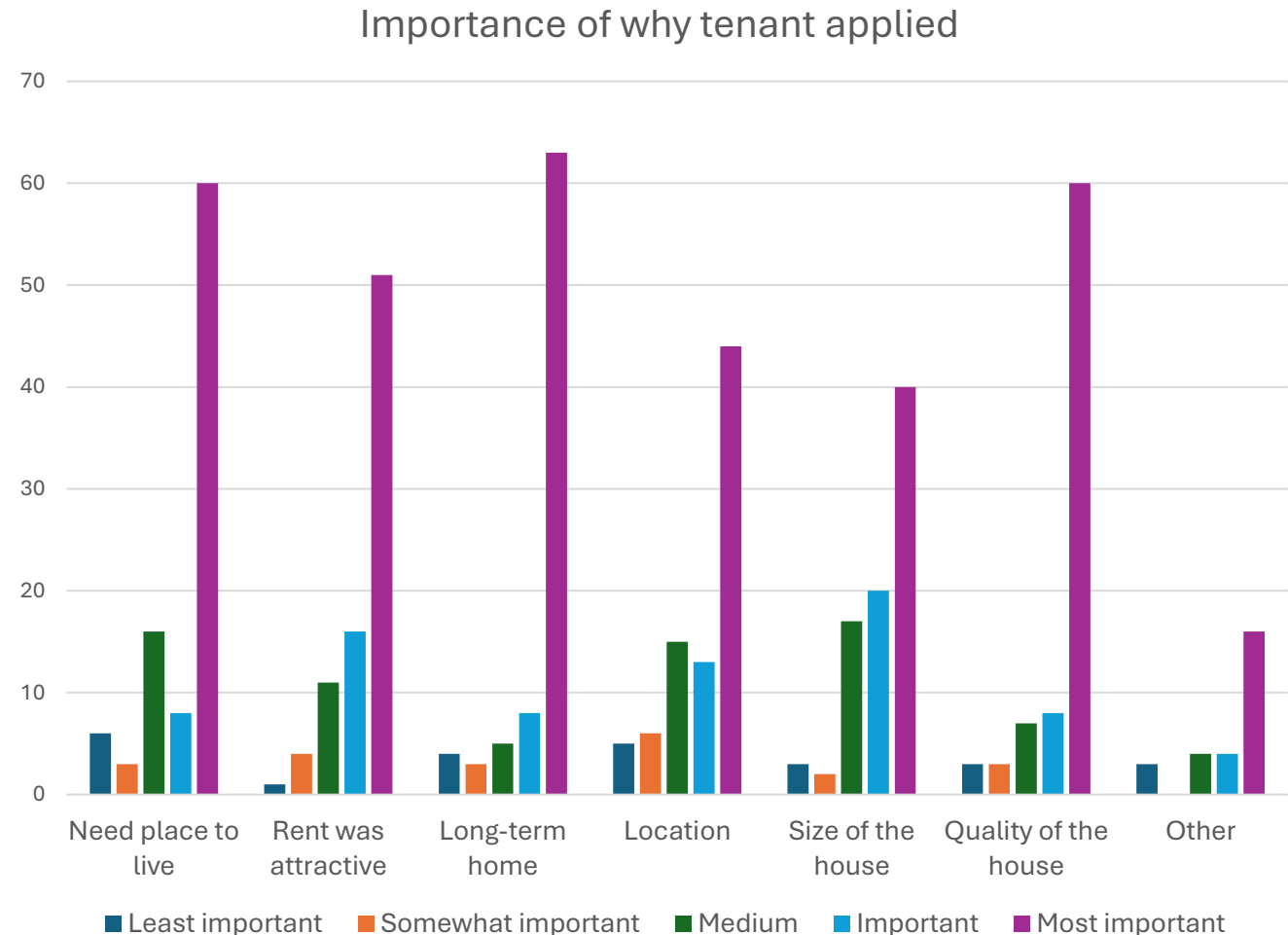


# SECURITY / HOME: 3 PILLARS

Resident interviews emphasized 3 pillars, often compared to negative experiences of PRS.

## 2. High quality 'new' housing

- Important in terms of feelings of ownership and pride
- Pros and cons of unfurnished



# SECURITY / HOME: 3 PILLARS

Resident interviews emphasized 3 pillars, often compared to negative experiences of PRS.

## 3. Professionalism of AHBs and positive landlord/tenant relations

- Responsive on property maintenance
- Perception of sector as more regulated than PRS



# SECURITY / HOME: CHALLENGES

## 1. Security in context of loss of income

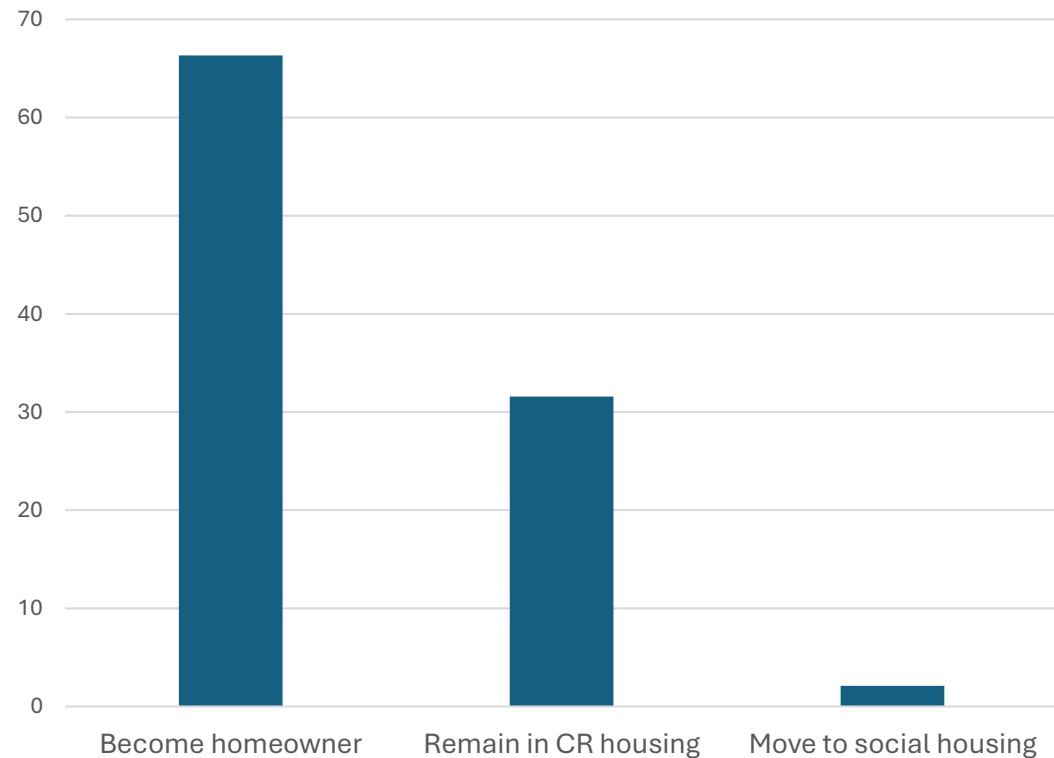
- Loss of income as source of insecurity
- Lack of communication around role of HAP/RAS
- Concerns about paying rent in retirement: “The desire for home ownership. Paying rent into old age is a negative” (Open question, online survey)

## 2. Homeownership aspirations

- Just under 50% say plan to stay in cost rental for rest of life, but majority aspire to homeownership.
- Main motivations include having ‘house & garden’; not paying rent in later life; and ‘homeownership dream’

“I’d love to stay here... But I do have concerns about what happens when I retire, and I no longer have the income that I have now. Will I be able to pay the rent?” (Kate, Cost Rental Tenant)

In future, do you hope to...



# PLACE / COMMUNITY

Cost rental appears to be supporting the development of vibrant and extremely **diverse communities**.

Almost 80% very or somewhat positive about their neighbourhood.

Over 70% feel very or somewhat part of a community

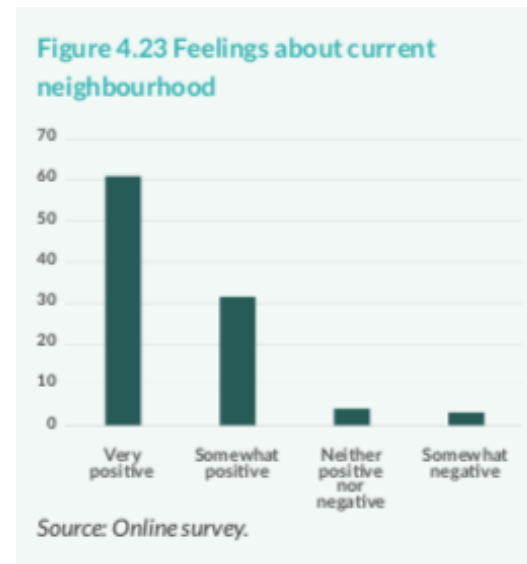
Particular evidence of parents forming bonds

Some developments are also mixed tenure and therefore mixed income, supporting another policy goal

No evidence of stigma



“I know there’s people from social housing, I know there’s homeowners there, I’m there from the Cost Rental, but you wouldn’t know who’s who. Nobody behaves differently.”  
(Linda, Cost Rental Tenant)



“All the parents have a separate WhatsApp group ... and all the Mas would meet up once a week... or meet up outside in the courtyard where we would have chats and let the kids play together.” (Amelia, Cost Rental Tenant)

# PLACE / COMMUNITY

**Location** did not emerge as a major factor in tenants' decision to apply for Cost Rental – security and affordability were more significant.

Early in tenancies and place formation. Interviews focused more on “time space relations” (e.g., how residents organised work and social reproduction)

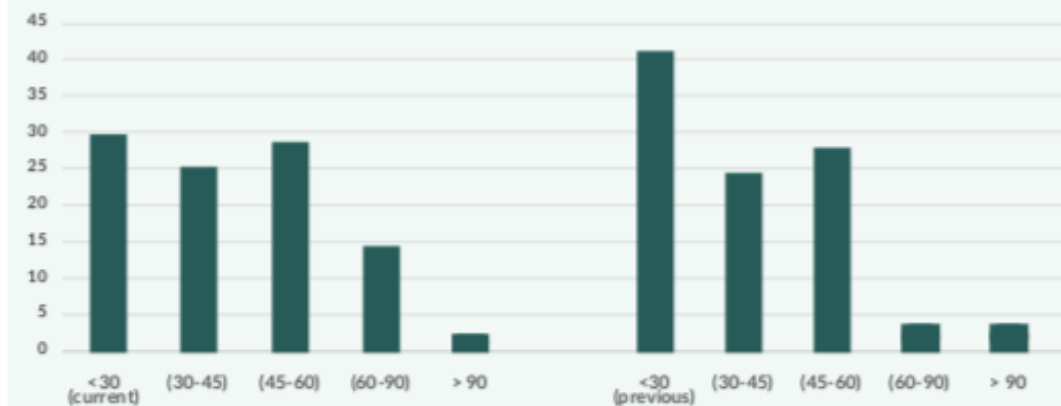
Challenges around:

- Services and infrastructure somewhat lacking, especially for peripheral developments.
- General sense of car dependency.



“I don’t have a car, and I have to rely on public transport and I find it very difficult. I feel that having a car is mandatory here.”  
(Ravi, Cost Rental Tenant)

Figure 4.26 Length of current and previous commutes

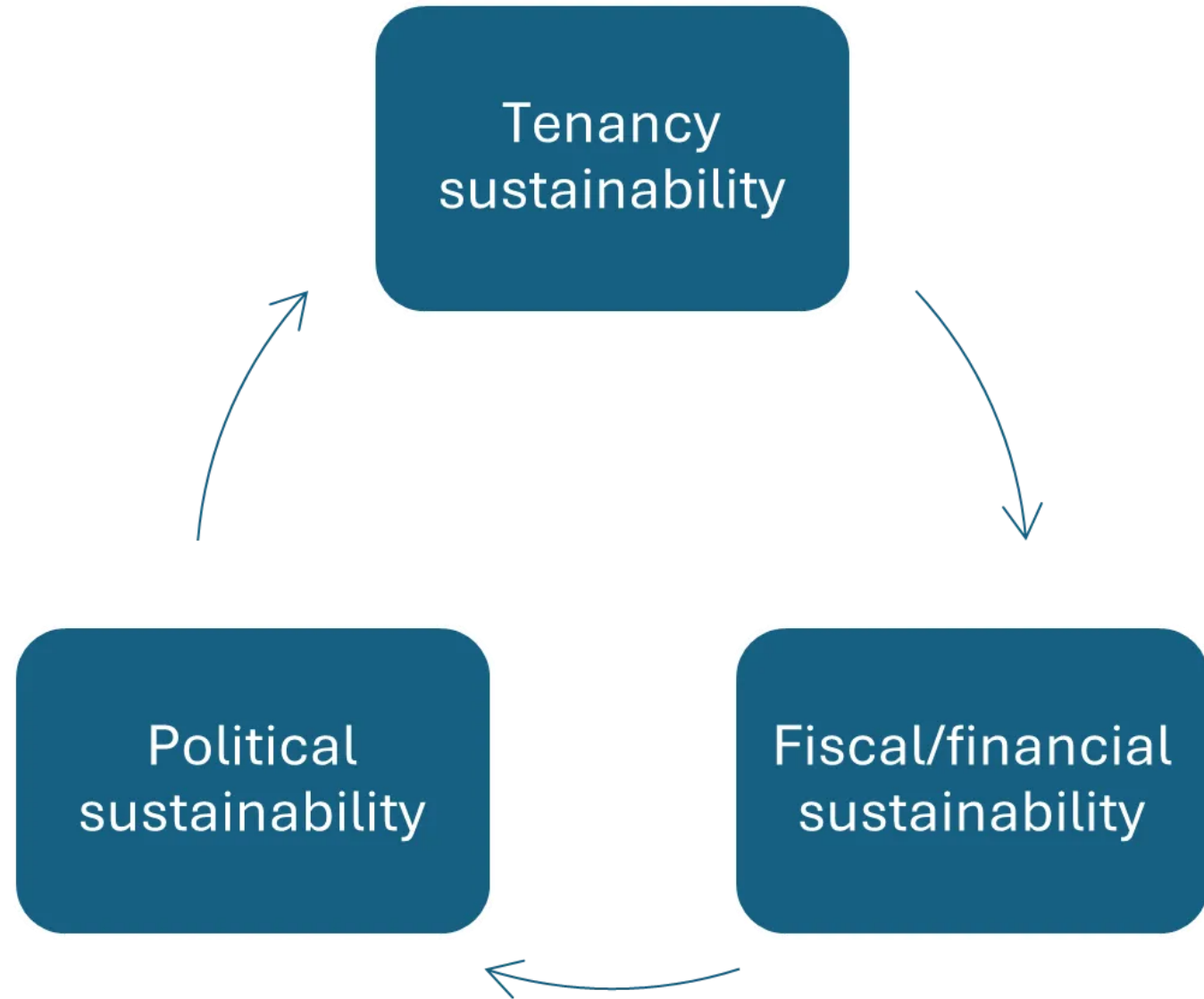


Source: Online survey.

# WIDER CONSIDERATIONS

1. The research raises questions about how we might think about **affordability**; e.g., in relation to housing quality and other trade offs; affordability over the lifetime of a tenancy rather than specifically on point of entry.
2. **Maturation** of the Cost Rental tenure; this research provides snapshot of residents' first experiences, but as their housing needs, and those of new residents, evolve how will the sector adapt?
3. Cost Rental as an **intervention in the housing system**; aims to partially decommodify a commodified market and 'homeownership society' (Norris, 2016) but wider impacts across the housing system remain to be seen.





# The Impact of Cost Rental Housing: Security, Affordability and Place

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## THANK YOU!

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