



Residents' lived realities of transformational regeneration

Phase 1 findings

February 2012

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GoWell is a collaborative partnership between the Glasgow Centre for Population Health, the University of Glasgow and the MRC/CSO Social and Public Health Sciences Unit, sponsored by the Scottish Government, Glasgow Housing Association, NHS Health Scotland and NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde.

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Executive summary

What did we know already?

Past research on living in high-rise flats has identified a number of negative effects upon residents ranging from crime and vandalism, mental health impacts such as depression, and weaker social relations. Families with children have been identified as being particularly at risk from some of these factors. On the other hand, some residents, especially older people, are reported to like living in high-rise buildings due to the views afforded, and the feelings of safety provided through concierge services (in more recent years). However, research on high-rise living in Glasgow dates from the early years of its existence (late 1960s), with little new evidence since.

The literature on 'forced relocation' in neighbourhood restructuring situations indicates that residents' attitudes to relocation, and in particular the extent to which they will see relocation in a positive light, depend upon four factors: their own housing intentions; their understanding of need for renewal and relocation; the process of movement itself, and the degree of choice and control they feel they have; and lastly, their own personality and disposition towards change.

What does this study do?

This study uses qualitative research methods, namely in-depth interviews with 23 households (mostly families with children) from three estates, to examine what it is like to live in high-rise blocks that have been identified for clearance and demolition, on estates that are the subject of policy intervention to bring about transformational regeneration.

In particular the study reports on the behavioural, social and psychological impacts upon residents of living in deteriorated dwellings and neighbourhoods. The study also reports on residents' hopes and expectations regarding relocation to another dwelling and area in the near future.

In an accompanying report, we explore whether residents believe that their residential environment (including home and neighbourhood) influences their experience of health¹.

What did we find?

Current and ongoing conditions in the flats and neighbourhoods resulted in a range of social, behavioural and psychological responses in residents.

Poor conditions in the flats (cold, dampness, water penetration, inadequate space) caused daily inconveniences and extra hassle which made everyday life even harder for those living on low incomes. Often problems were recurrent or persistent despite efforts to deal with them (by tenants and landlords), which added to residents' feelings of helplessness.

Feelings of embarrassment and stigma caused people to be reluctant to have visitors, and were in conflict sometimes with people's more positive views of themselves. Some people withdrew from, or had disrupted, social relations as a result; others responded by getting out and beyond the local area as often as possible.

The biggest problem in the common areas of blocks (lifts, stairs, drying areas etc) and in the surrounding neighbourhoods was antisocial behaviour by other residents and by outsiders. References to drinking and drug taking in the local area were common. This restricted residents' use

of these spaces (some were reluctant to spend much time outside), and caused ongoing fear and anxiety for themselves and their children. On the other hand, and contrary to expectations, people were generally not critical about local amenities and services, or were positive about being able to easily access these beyond their estate.

As a result of these conditions and, for some, the experience of decline, most people were looking forward to moving. Nonetheless, there was anxiety about moving away from an area people were familiar with, even though the area had problems and despite the fact that improvements were expected through relocation. There were concerns about the uncertainty of not knowing who one's neighbours would be after moving.

Other concerns about moving were the product of having lived many years in high-rise blocks, particularly in relation to safety and social relations. Some people were concerned about the risk of burglary from living in a house or at ground level. Others were anxious about the requirement to have more casual social contact with their neighbours when living at ground level and on a street.

The two things many people were looking forward to about moving were having a better home and nicer neighbours. They wanted a home they could invest in and feel pride in, things they currently were unable to do. They expected their children to flourish and family relations to improve with a better home that also offered more space for individual family members. Having 'decent' neighbours and getting away from antisocial behaviour were also high in people's expectations.

Many people saw the impending move as an opportunity to make changes to their lives and to achieve a 'fresh start' for themselves and their

families. People were very keen to do more to find a job as part of this changed future, after the move.

What are the policy and practice implications?

Residents' reports suggest that more could be done to supervise, manage and maintain blocks awaiting clearance in order to upkeep cleanliness, peace and quiet, and safety for the occupants.

Giving residents as much information as early as possible on their new home and neighbourhood helps people to think about the adjustments they may need to make and reduces their anxiety. This includes seeing the plans for their new house, and assisting or encouraging them to visit their new neighbourhood.

Ongoing support services for residents awaiting relocation might also be helpful. Discussions with residents about what life might be like living in a new type of dwelling and a new area could smooth their adjustment and reduce some of their anxieties. Having someone to talk to whilst in an uncertain period where people expect an unfamiliar change to come, and are thinking about changes they might wish to make themselves, could be of great assistance to those involved.

In order to help residents achieve the changes to their lives which they hope for, post-move support services might also be beneficial. These should not be limited to housing and neighbouring issues (though those are important elements) but also include support for lifestyle changes, and with making the transition to work. Relocation appears to offer an opportunity to work with a willing group of people who wish to improve their lives, but may need support and assistance to do so.

Glasgow's regeneration and GoWell

Attempts to improve the quality of urban dwellings, neighbourhoods and communities have long been a feature of urban development. Terms such as 'urban regeneration', 'renewal' and 'housing led area-based initiatives' are used, sometimes interchangeably, to describe a range of different approaches to achieving better living conditions and opportunities for disadvantaged residents.

This report focuses on neighbourhoods located in Glasgow, a Scottish city that is currently experiencing substantial investment in regeneration. Glasgow is the largest city in Scotland and contains high concentrations of poverty, disadvantage and ill health. Area-based health inequalities are stark: for example life expectancy in the most disadvantaged areas of Glasgow has been estimated to be at least 15 years shorter than in the more prosperous areas².

In 2003, over 80,000 socially rented homes in the city transferred from public ownership to a newly created not-for-profit organisation called Glasgow Housing Association (GHA), following a tenants' referendum. GHA became the largest provider of social housing in the city alongside a number of smaller providers (collectively known as 'Registered Social Landlords' or RSLs). The stock transfer paved the way for a city-wide regeneration investment programme spearheaded by GHA but also involving other RSLs and non-housing partner organisations from other sectors.

Glasgow's regeneration involves a number of different components such as housing improvement, building new homes, demolishing housing stock, tenure diversification (i.e. introducing more private sector housing into predominantly social rented neighbourhoods), as well as attempts to support residents with delivering improved services and improved mechanisms for community engagement and empowerment. Over a billion pounds has now been invested in communities across the city. The amount and type of investment varies across the city by locality according to circumstances.

GoWell is a research and learning programme that aims to investigate the impact of this investment on the health and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities in Glasgow over a ten-year period³. The Programme aims to establish the nature and extent of these impacts and the processes that have brought them about, to learn about the relative effectiveness of different approaches, and to inform policy and practice. It is a multi-component study with a comparative design. Although focused on regeneration in Glasgow, GoWell aims to produce findings that are transferable to other regeneration settings.

1 Introduction

Lived Realities is a longitudinal qualitative study investigating how residents are affected by ‘transformational regeneration’ over time. Its setting is three of the eight Transformational Regeneration Areas (TRAs) in Glasgow. These are all inner-city social housing estates, built originally to accommodate over 1,000 households, each comprising predominantly of high-rise flats but also include some low-rise stock. In each neighbourhood, all or most of the existing housing is being demolished so that the neighbourhoods can be redesigned. It is a lengthy process involving community engagement, large scale clearances, and relocation of residents to newly built or improved housing.

GoWell is interested in finding out what it is like for residents who live in neighbourhoods where, over a number of years, tenants are being re-housed and unsustainable homes demolished. There is a longstanding research tradition that alleges and explores the negative social effects of housing clearance programmes: for example, Paris & Blackaby (1979) note that “comprehensive redevelopment has frequently been accused of the ‘destruction of communities’ and established neighbourhoods”⁴.

The existing research on living in high-rise flats has been reviewed previously⁵. This identified a number of negative effects upon residents ranging from crime and vandalism, mental health impacts such as depression, and weaker social relations. Families with children have been identified as being particularly at risk from some of these factors. Physical health effects (such as on respiratory health) are difficult to differentiate from the effects of living in flats per se. The problems of high-rise flats are said to arise from design issues (including the ‘enforced communality’ of tower blocks), the layout and context of high-rise estates, and poor management and maintenance of blocks. On the other hand, some residents, especially older people, are reported to like living in high-rise buildings due to the views afforded, and the feelings of safety provided through concierge services (in more recent years).

An early study of the residents of high-rise flats in Glasgow – including Red Road, one of our study areas⁶ – found similar issues soon after initial occupancy.

They argued that living in high flats caused anxiety for parents and that the environment on high-rise estates was not good for child development. One of the biggest issues they identified was that of anonymity and social isolation, due to design features which did not facilitate social contact. They also criticised the lack of facilities and amenities on estates at that early stage.

Research on residential relocation as part of neighbourhood restructuring programmes has often focused on the question of whether such moves would be seen negatively as constituting ‘displacement’⁷. Four factors have been identified as influencing the resident’s attitude to such ‘forced relocation’. First, their own housing intentions and in particular whether they had been intending to move in any case. Second, their understanding of the need for restructuring and of the renewal process. Third, the personality of the individuals involved: some people are more optimistic and positively disposed to change in general, than others. Lastly, the extent of choice and control that residents are afforded in the movement process⁸.

1.1 Lived realities

By ‘lived realities’ we mean a rich textured description of the everyday, through focusing on the *experiences, perceptions, expectations* and *aspirations* of residents as they live through major regeneration. The study focuses on a relatively small sample, and explores in-depth how residents experience living through major change in their neighbourhoods.

Phase 1 of this study started early 2011 and fieldwork was complete by July 2011. Of the 23 households recruited to the study, 17 were still living in high-rise flats and six had recently moved to new houses. At this stage in the process of transformational regeneration the areas had already started to change considerably in that people were moving out so blocks of flats were emptying and the nature of the community changing. New houses were being built in some areas, some shops and local services had closed down and there was a lot of derelict land. Most people in the study knew when and where they would be moving, but a minority were still living with uncertainty as they did not know what the future held for them.

2 Methodology

The study is an in-depth qualitative research study. We have drawn on phenomenology in conceptualising a framework for it: phenomenological research characteristically starts with concrete descriptions of lived situations, often first person accounts, set down in everyday language and avoiding abstract intellectual generalisations⁹. This is important in terms of the ways that questions are framed so as not to direct participants in a particular direction or use leading questions. The analysis and findings are grounded in participants' own experiences and perceptions.

The first wave of the study took place over the spring/summer of 2011. The second wave will take place during the spring/summer of 2012 when we will attempt to re-interview the wave 1 participants. As this interim report has been produced prior to the second wave, it includes only wave 1 data rather than a longitudinal comparison of wave 1 and wave 2 data.

Following informed consent, participants took part in two wave 1 interviews typically conducted several days apart. The first was an in-depth interview loosely structured around themes such as participants' background, home, neighbourhood, health, aspirations and experience of regeneration. At the end of the interview, participants were loaned a camera and asked to take photographs once the researcher had gone to represent the theme of 'my day.' This instruction was left deliberately open to encourage participants to develop their own sense of what was important to their everyday life (and what was not). In this way, it was hoped that the second interview could be steered to a greater degree by the participants' own priorities rather than those of the researchers. The second wave 1 interview was consequently based around those photographs, as the interviewer returned to ask participants to explain their significance.

The interviews were conducted by a researcher (Louise Lawson (LL)) at the homes of participants, recorded using digital audio equipment and transcribed by a specialist transcription company. The aim was to interview participants without other householders present. However, the interviewer was sensitive to her status as a guest in the participants' homes and

respected the wishes of any participants who wanted to allow other householders to sit in for some or all of an interview (this happened in a minority of cases).

After each interview the participants received a £20 voucher to thank them for their time. All data (digital, visual, audio and textual) that could potentially identify participants has been held and transported securely in line with Medical Research Council data handling guidelines, so that the anonymity of participants can be preserved. To help protect participants' confidentiality, this report uses pseudonyms rather than the participants' real names, and does not name the neighbourhoods they live in. The study received ethical approval having been through the University of Glasgow's ethics approval process.

Transcribed interviews were analysed by two researchers (LL and Matt Egan (ME)) using a coding framework they developed jointly. They categorised data into a series of sub-themes, dividing the themes relatively equally between them. NVivo 9 (computer software designed to assist with data storage and analysis) was used to assist with the process.

2.1 Recruitment and sample

A total of 23 households participated in the study and 50 interviews were carried out. Although the plan was to conduct two interviews per household, one in-depth interview and one photo interview, in some instances family members were interviewed separately and two families took part in go-along interviews (see Table 1):

Table 1: Number of households and interviews in each area

	Households	Total no. interviews
Area 1	11	23
Area 2	9	19
Area 3	3	8
	23	50

- The majority of participants were recruited via the Local Housing Organisations in each area (researcher liaised with housing officers) (n=13).
- Some were recruited through church/community groups (n=3).
- A number were recruited through snowballing.

Snowball sampling consists of identifying participants who then refer the researcher on to other participants, usually through their social contacts (n=6).

- One person was recruited through the GoWell survey and had consented to follow up (n=1).

Detail about the sample – participant pseudonyms, recruitment type, household details, household situation, other relevant information and data collected – is in the appendix.

In summary:

Of the 23 participants, 20 were ‘family households’ in that there was at least one adult and one child/young person living at the same address either full or part time. Three were single person households. Interviews were usually held with one member of the household but in some instances joint interviews were conducted (n=5) or other members of the household joined in at various points. For the first household that was recruited, interviews were conducted with each member of the family (two adults and two young people).

2.1.1 Housing

At the time of interview, of the 23 household participants:

- Six had recently moved from high-rise flats to new build houses locally.
- One had moved within the area from one high-rise flat to another.
- Eight were in the process of moving or were about to move from a high-rise flat (five to new builds; two to improved builds and one was to move to a new build within the same area).
- Eight were still waiting to find out where they would be moving to (and all living in high-rise flats).

2.1.2 Work

Participants were either working full or part-time, actively doing voluntary or community work, in training or education, looking for work or not working. In summary:

- 11 were working full or part-time or active in community/voluntary work
- 11 were not working
- 1 was off sick

2.2 Reflection on methodology

As with all social research, the recruitment methods adopted, research framework and relationship between the researcher and participants will have some bearing on the findings.

The local housing organisations (LHOs) greatly assisted in identifying people and households willing to take part in the study. The researcher contacted all those whose names were provided by the LHO; approximately half agreed to take part providing a good cross-section of views and experiences. Without the involvement of the LHOs, recruitment would have proved more difficult and not necessarily any more fruitful. In addition other recruitment methods were used (via community organisations and snowballing). This combination of methods reduces the risk of bias arising from the recruitment process.

Phenomenology, as a research framework, is based on small sample sizes and aims to illuminate specific detail about people’s lives. It relies on the establishment of a good level of rapport between the researcher and participants, and empathy is critical to gaining depth of information. A concern about this approach is often to do with sample size and generalisability of the findings. However, the approach relies on the depth of the information gathered, understanding subjective experience and revealing deep, and often unheard, issues. The approach offers a valuable dimension to, and complements, other aspects of the GoWell study.

2.3 Themes

This report focuses on two broad themes that emerged from the analysis of the phase 1 data:

- Current conditions: what it is like to live in areas undergoing major change, what does this mean and how does it affect residents and their families.
- Moving on: hopes and expectations of relocation, moving and the future.

Each theme is discussed using quotes from participants to illustrate points made and bring the findings to life. The findings are based only on recent (within approximately the last year) or current experiences. Participants have been assigned a pseudonym to protect their anonymity.

3 Current conditions – home and neighbourhood

This theme covers participants' everyday experiences of living in flats in neighbourhoods undergoing transformational regeneration in the context of impending change. Sub-themes are:

- Living in the high-rise flats.
- Living in neighbourhoods undergoing major change.
- Effects on people's lives.

3.1 Living in the high-rise flats

This section covers the physical and social conditions of life in the high-rise flats and common areas of blocks. Most of the participants were living in high-rise buildings due for demolition and in areas that would be redeveloped in due course. The conditions they report therefore mostly reflect the recent decline of their homes and neighbourhoods, though some of their accounts go back further in time than this. Participants experienced problems to varying intensities; some had very major problems that had a big effect on their lives, while a minority were relatively happy with some aspects of high-rise living. They enjoyed the spacious rooms and layout, views and security aspects of the high-rise flats:

"I'll definitely miss my kitchen, just for my view. I like looking out the window." (Jackie)

"I like high flats, cause [they're] usually quite spacious sort of living rooms and see the cupboard space is brilliant." (Sue)

3.1.1 The cold

Several participants talked about the problems heating the flats, the cold and draughts, trying to get the balance of air to prevent damp, and the inefficiency of storage heaters. *Basra* talked of sleeping *"with jumper, sometime even gloves, in the winter time – the heater was not enough"* and *Ali* who had bought two heaters for his small flat said *"I'm still cold....Because I told you, water's coming everywhere, you cannae make it warm"*. By contrast, in the summer the flats could be too warm *"in the summer, the heat is scandalous. In the winter, you freeze"* (*Moira*). Many were on key or white meter payment schemes so were concerned about the level of

cost in relation to heating their flats, as *Carol* explained:

"I was freezing, always looking to see how much electricity was going... some weeks it would cost up to forty pound in there and that was on a key ...and it wasn't for you know, extra... it wasn't because I was burning all my heaters and everything like that. It was actually just to keep warm."

3.1.2 Dampness and water penetration

Problems associated with dampness and water penetration was most commonly talked about in relation to the physical condition of the flats.

Moira is in her early 60s and lives on the sixth floor of a high-rise block. She lives by herself during the week and her granddaughter stays with her every weekend. She and her friend *Anne* talked about the condition of her home, particularly the damp causing bad smells, making the wall black and water running down the kitchen wall:

Moira: "It's stinking...simple as. You can open ma door in the winter. Anne what's the smell like? The smell of dampness."

Anne: "...all her granddaughter's stuff had to get be moved away fae the walls."

Moira: "Her wardrobe, drawers, bed and everything had to come away tae – I had to dismantle her bed and put it against – because that wall was black."

Anne: "Then you had a river running in the kitchen."

Moira: "I've always got a river running in there doon the wa's."

This was typical of many other participants' experiences. Many talked about how water damage and leaks had ruined furniture, clothes and personal possessions. *Sue* had a leather sofa which had started to go mouldy and she was thinking about making a compensation claim for it. She also talked about her clothes getting ruined:

"I had to throw a lot of stuff out. The wardrobe was near the wall, had to throw a lot of stuff out...I had a pair of leather trousers years ago, they got ruined. It's the smell, on clothes know, material clothes. Sometimes you can't really get rid of that."

Ali explained how the water damaged his bedroom wall and his television fell off and broke.

When people moved they often had to throw a lot of things away and replace them. *Lesley* had recently moved and had to buy new furniture:

“Well that hoose had dampness so I had to buy aw new beds...for up here when we moved fae [here]. I couldnae take much furniture [Why not?] Cause it was aw rotten wi’ dampness.”

A further problem with the damp was its persistent nature. *Ali* explained how he painted the bathroom wall two weeks previously but the damp had come back through after a short spell of time. Several participants talked about their attempts to clean the mould off the walls or paint over it but it reoccurred within a relatively short period of time:

“That’s only two weeks ago I painted that [bathroom wall]. You see what has come up again. And damp here. Mould. And you look in my bathroom you see mushroom.” (Ali)

Participants used various strategies to deal with the problems they experienced such as using crockery placed on top of cupboards to catch leaks, and placing towels on window sills to collect the water. *Moira* explained *“every single morning in the winter, every day I’ve got to put towels on every single window ledge. Forget paper towels. Every window ledge”*. She then had the hassle of regularly having to wash and dry extra towels, yet washing and drying clothes was a further inconvenience for many living in the flats due to poor and aged plumbing making it difficult. (Drying clothes was also a problem because of a lack of drying areas and facilities).

“Washing machine doesn’t work because the water flow doesn’t have enough pressure to send water inside the machine so we have to use the tube to put the water in it...all the houses do the same...the amount of water that goes into the machine is very low so once you’ve cleaned the clothes you still have the smell of soap.” (Sami)

While the problems already identified were often a daily inconvenience, some problems were more far-reaching in the way they affected people’s daily lives. Participants often had to deal with these on top of other issues such as poor physical and mental health, family problems and money worries. Furthermore, many felt they got little help in dealing with these problems or were made to feel responsible for them.

Due to serious problems of mould in the kitchen, mould damage to her carpet, sofa and walls, and the smell of dampness, the condition of her flat meant *Sue* did not want her grandchildren to stay over saying *“I’m very angry. ... It’s awful. ... You know [they] can’t, there’s no way they can stay over...In case they get anything”*.

Carol who lives with her two teenage daughters had spent the previous year sleeping on the sofa in her living room as her bedroom had been flooded and had severe water damage. She described how it affected her relationship with her daughters and the impact on space in the flat:

“The oldest is normally into her laptop wi’ her earphones on and the youngest is sitting with her DS. And they’ll be sitting in here, and then sometimes, know times that you’ve been absolutely shattered, and I’ll say ‘I want to get my bed out’. And they’ll be like that- cause then they’ll end up getting stuck on one couch then they’ll start arguing - I’m not getting any peace.”

“I’ve been in here and it has been driving me nuts. Because as I say the kids can go to their room, but I’ve got nowhere to go.”

Layan who lives with her husband and three sons was left without power in her bedroom and hall for ten days due to water penetration from the floor above:

“When we came [back from holiday] the water... in the bathroom and in that hole from the door until here, all water but the water had dropped from the ceiling and maybe that’s take a time, yeah. And we spent... when we tried to put the light on, the electricity shock, we phoned actually the concierge and they come and cut the electricity from the bathroom and the hall and need ten days to fix that.”

Often there was little that people could do to alleviate the problems they were experiencing. Most had sought help from the housing organisation but they were unable to deal with the problems being experienced and instead offered suggestions such as using a bucket to catch drips. Several participants mentioned using buckets:

“They’ve been out, nearly every year and always say there’s ‘nothing we can do, apart from give you a bucket’. And that is their words, that’s what they tell you.” (Alison)

"Bucket everywhere. Honestly here, here, here."

(Nada)

3.1.3 Space

Some families shared relatively little space. *Nada* has five children and lives in a three bedroom flat – her three daughters share a bedroom, two in single beds and the other on a mattress on the floor in between the two beds. *Alison's* flat has two bedrooms. She lives with her teenage daughter, 11 year old son, teenage nephew and a dog. The boys shared bunk beds in the bedroom and the daughter takes her mattress to the living room to sleep on at night:

"That's why there's a mattress in here, because of the two boys. The boys are eleven and fifteen, so most of the time, Nathalie, she was sleeping on the couch, but now she's brought the mattress downstairs, so she sleeps here."

Some of the families had teenage children of both sexes who were sharing rooms. As *Keith*, who lived in a three bedroom flat with his partner and three teenage children, explained:

"If you've only got two children I suppose it's not too bad because obviously they'd have a bedroom each. It's the fact that you've got a sixteen year old girl sharing with a thirteen year old boy."

3.1.4 Common areas

Participants talked about conditions in the common areas of blocks, particularly the lifts, stairwells and drying areas. Some blocks had reputations for being worse and more poorly maintained than others. Problems associated with common areas were often about poor design and maintenance, but more frequently were about other people's antisocial behaviour ranging from urinating in lifts and stairwells to drug dealing in corridors. Another difficulty was groups of people entering and the fear of not knowing who was in the block. Sometimes these problems coincided:

"... the kind of people that were coming in the building, it was horrible. You know in the night you won't get a sleep. Banging the doors and they drink. They comes in with group of people, so you don't know whom you were living with here. Kind of. Peeing on the stairs and the lifts, they were – it was horrible." *(Maya)*

Layan talked about people dealing drugs on the stairwells so she and her family felt unsafe using them. She suggests that these people often do not live in the area but come from outside with the purpose of dealing drugs:

"The building itself. It's full with the bad people, it's full with the drug dealer people and so we saw many faces coming arrived to this building, we don't know who's coming from, just maybe they come to collect the drugs from here or... it's unsafe at all, we can't use the stairs. Since five years here, just I use the stairs maybe two, three times."

Lifts and stairs

The lifts were mentioned by most participants as a drawback to living in the flats. They offered security for some because they had cameras in so the concierges could see what was going on (*"Cos of the cameras, you feel a bit secure"*), but for the majority they were a regular hassle for reasons including being too small, unreliable and often crowded, getting stuck or fear of them getting stuck, feeling scared and smelling due to things such as smoke and urine.

A central problem about using the lifts was to do with antisocial behaviour. *Sami* is a Muslim and lives with his wife and young son. He talked about his experience of using the lifts, in the context of his ethnic and religious background:

"And people take their dogs, and they smoke in the lift. And – cause I'm not a smoker... it's very hard to tolerate somebody smoking....you try to say something like being as an Asian, he might be saying something back...keep silent and accept the smoke you're as well to."

He added:

"I was on the ground floor. I pressed the button, lift button. The lift opened and there's five boys they were sitting in the lift. I said, 'can you come out please'. They said 'no'. They said 'fuck off' or something, something, some rough words they used. Then I, I, thought what can I do? I mean I tried to go around the other lift, but at that time that lift was like broken. So there was only one lift to use."

Others talked about the lifts smelling and people urinating in them:

“Obviously somebody must have been in it [the lift] before us, so you’ve either got drink, hash or there’s a smell of pee or something.... Sometimes you’ve got to go in and honestly, and quite a lot of times you’ve got to go in and just put your jacket over your mouth.” (Keith)

Several participants described how the lifts disrupted social relationships. *Paul* explained how the lifts would deter his children’s friends from visiting because *“[they] wouldn’t really want to come to the flats because a lot of them were frightened of the lifts”*. *Morag* said when her mum visited, they met in a café because she would not get in the lift:

“She doesnae like the lifts...every time I’m on the phone to her, she’s- ‘have you heard anything about getting out o’ there yet? She hates it.”

Some feared that something bad could happen in the lift. *Moira* said *“you stand at the door – you don’t, never, ever, ever [stand at the] back”*. *Layan* explained that when her friends all moved into the same block she hardly ever saw them because they were afraid to use the lift and stairs so became more isolated because of this. It was considered an irony that they were now so close physically, yet further apart psychosocially.

During busy times, people could wait a long time for a lift which could be a problem particularly for those with school-aged children. *Layan* who has children said *“Sometimes we were waiting about ten minute or fifteen minute when they come back from the school just waiting for the lift”*.

In some blocks, the stairs were not a feasible alternative to using the lift because of fear and the safety aspect and general uncleanliness. *Carol* explained why she did not use the stairs:

“You’re not going to want to go down the back stairs because there’s people peeing down there, there was people hitting up, there was needles getting left and it was... anytime that you had to run you didn’t... they’re slippy stairs as well and you didn’t want to touch anything it was horrible down the back stairs.”

Moira talked about the condition of the stairs:

“... and the smell of urine on the back stairs. You know, you get faeces as well.”

Drying areas

Some blocks had drying areas but they did not cater for many households and were often considered inefficient. In some blocks the drying areas were said to be out-of-order. Where they existed, the areas were often poorly maintained and abused by other residents. *Maya* explained:

“if you hang your clothes there and bring them up it has to go back in the machine because they smell...I think it’s because back of the building people are peeing....”

Layan took a photo of the drying area that showed a broken lock and explained how on several occasions she had had things stolen from there:

“We locked it and we have a key and some people come in and broke that one, dropped the lock on the floor and stole something. That’s the three, four times happened.”

3.2 Living in neighbourhoods undergoing major change

This section is about participants’ experiences of the neighbourhood, particularly focusing on shops and services, community issues and antisocial behaviour.

3.2.1 Shops and services

The majority of participants were happy with the shops and services available locally. Public transport was generally regarded as good. In one area there was an active church and related community activity (although some complained about the lack of community activity). There was also a lot of support for local schools.

Participants talked of travelling to shops and services including supermarkets, shopping centres, parks and cinemas outside of their local neighbourhoods. They were not necessarily tied to their local area especially if they had the means to travel beyond.

A minority expressed criticisms about the local shops and services, particularly in the context of them being better in the past (when the areas were considered more settled and like villages). For example, *Alison* who suffers from significant health problems, did not work and had to use taxis or rely on lifts to access shops and services outside the area, was unhappy about local services:

“There’s no bank, there’s no post office here, which is a carry-on. We used to have all that, but it’s all cutbacks now, so you need to travel quite a bit to get your money, and your electricity.”

However, in the same area many were relatively happy with what was available as the following example illustrates:

“Only one good thing about the shops on this street, doctors, the bru [dole], everything, it’s all nearby... In the precinct, it’s one good thing I like about this place... Because if you live somewhere you have to get a bus.” (Aisha)

In a different area participants felt everything they needed was close by:

“You can pay your TV licence, you can pay your council tax, you can pay any kind of bills here... You can top up your electricity.” (Ula)

“I am very happy. Everything around me... shopping, chippie, hospital.” (Nada)

“It’s handy for everywhere. It’s next to the city centre, you’ve got your schools right next to it... everything’s all close by.” (Jackie)

3.2.2 Antisocial behaviour in the community

Many talked about how the areas had changed in recent years. One neighbourhood was perceived to have got better in that community relations (particularly in relation to the arrival of asylum seekers) had improved and there was some sense of community. A different neighbourhood was seen to have gone downhill quite drastically with no community spirit or activity. Common to both areas was the presence of antisocial behaviour and its effect on people living there:

“When I first moved in here there was a few couples that were quite nice and say hello to older ones and everything. But they took them all out... And you felt the place just dropping. And as soon as they all went out, scum just came in.” (Carol)

Antisocial behaviour manifested itself in various ways. Many commented on people drinking, taking drugs and hanging about the areas:

“People, drinking... I know it’s everywhere but up here’s a bit – known to be a bit much.” (Aisha)

Some mentioned the mess created by other people’s behaviour such as the amount of rubbish strewn around and stuff getting thrown from the flats:

“Yeah, all dirty nappies, bottles of cider, cans, loads of things came down.” (Carol)

There were more serious concerns such as recent murders and attacks that some made reference to:

“In the past six years we’ve had paedophiles up the flats, murders up the flats, and the elderly man was murdered up the flats this year, or last year.” (Alison)

Participants dealt with antisocial behaviour in different ways. The main response was fear. Some felt they spent more time in their flat than they would prefer because they were fearful to go out in the evening or after a certain time. The safer option was to stay in:

“I think when you stay inside the, it’s kind of safe you know because the concierge is there, so you can be sure that even if you go to holiday your house won’t be knocked down or somebody won’t try to enter, and things will be taken away. So you can feel safe on that way... But that way is like, you stay in a multi-storey flat you feel like always in a modern slum, right, it’s like a slum you are living you know. ... The behaviour of when you go out of the house, you see the behaviour of people, then you feel like you know, you are living in a city slum.” (Sami)

In a different area *Emma*, a teenager, talked about feeling scared walking around because of people drinking and taking drugs.

“Well there was a lot of people taking drugs and stuff, and like alcoholics and that, so it’s like quite, I don’t know, scary, if you like walking around and that, and you need to watch like who you’re bumping into and everything.”

Some talked about living in fear or being worried for their children and using strategies to keep check on them:

“Yeah when I walking in the night, if I would go out on the night and don’t come back just I phone them, just someone look at the window because I am on the way or sometimes when my sons come back later on from their study, from the university and I’m so worried about them and they late, just... I phoned and where you are?” (Layan)

Some said their friends and family did not feel safe when visiting the flats. In turn this led to isolation for some. *Aisha's* experience was that her family lived in a different part of the city but were too afraid to visit her because of the type of neighbourhood she lived in:

"It's quite isolated as well. My family's scared to come up here. There's always something happening – people flinging things out of windows, people fighting – there's a lot of that carry on happens here."

People dealt with the antisocial behaviour in different ways. *Keith*, while not particularly frightened, wanted to avoid it:

"With drunks and drug addicts. So I've come to the stage where I don't want to go to the shops. I don't want to see it."

Jon admitted that there were lots of people drinking and taking drugs but that they were generally harmless:

"...And some people they are drinking outside there...But they are – most of them because they get used to seeing you, some of them they are very nice."

Several participants talked about 'keeping yourself to yourself': the view was that you did not need to get involved:

"Just mind my own business sort of thing, just go to the shops." (Sue)

"Some people say it's got worse. I don't know, see if you keep yourself to yourself, you're fine." (Rachel)

3.3 Effects on people's lives

The living conditions and neighbourhood affected most participants' lives in a negative way. This section covers some of the emotional impacts and coping strategies participants adopted. Some of the impacts (e.g. fear and isolation) and coping strategies have been covered in the previous section.

3.3.1 Embarrassment

A number of participants reported being embarrassed by the state of their flats and neighbourhoods. This sometimes affected people's social relations, for example, not wanting to invite friends or family to the house. *Layan* talked about feeling ashamed about the state of her house:

"Ashamed that we cannae let anybody else into the house, cannae let somebody into the house because you're embarrassed cause o' it...Cause in a way it makes your house look dirty and everything else as if you don't clean it."

Sue said:

"It makes it look as though you're filthy or something you know."

Carol talked about the embarrassment she felt from smells that prevailed around the flats, although she was unable to identify where these came from:

"It's just like a – it's a really horrible stench that goes through everywhere, and it's embarrassing. To actually say, right I live – aye but hold your nose, just keep breathing through your mouth the now and you'll be fine once we get into the house."

Some talked about the effect on their children and how they felt embarrassed for their friends and parents living in such conditions and neighbourhoods:

"I'm actually embarrassed to say where I stay, and for the parents, 'cos I wouldn't like my kids getting dragged into [this area] if they didn't live here." (Carol)

Paul and his son *David* had recently moved from a flat to a new house. *Paul* commented that *David's* life had changed because he could now freely invite friends to the house whereas previously he had been embarrassed to do so.

"He's very embarrassed, man – cause you felt like you lived, you felt 'I don't really wanna bring my mates up to the house'. Now you can go, 'I live here. Aye, come round, aye' cause there's no second thought, do you know what I mean? It's like, you just do it on impulse, do you know what I mean?"

When *David* was asked if he felt embarrassed, he answered:

"I was at the time, because I didn't really wanna – see because they all had houses and stuff, and I'm still living in the flat." (David)

3.3.2 Stigma

Some talked about how they felt stigmatised. Although the physical conditions were poor, some took great

pride in their homes. *Barbara*, who lived in a small one bedroom flat by herself, took photos of it looking pretty and colourful. She explained that it was to:

“show that no everybody that lives here are mankie dudes. Some of us actually take a little bit of pride in our hoose you know, it’s not just... it might not be my house, but it’s my home”.

Ula also took photos of her house, particularly her living room, to show how comfortable it looked saying *“it’s absolutely you know comfortable for us to sit in”.*

A number of participants talked about feeling undermined by where they lived and other people’s attitudes towards them:

“I don’t tell people I live [in this area] at all if they ask, if it gets into conversation, and they ask whereabouts you come from, I live, I’ll normally say round about ... but if it’s, like, a deeper conversation, then I do get embarrassed saying that I live in the high flats and everything else, because it is a down and out area so it is. I do see it as a down and out area. People look down on you when you say you stay in the high flats....it’s dead degrading.” (Nicola)

“It comes across, oh you come from [here] you must be scum. You must be getting in trouble, or you must be taking drugs. There’s got to be something wrong wi’ you.” (Rachel and Keith)

3.3.3 Boredom and frustration

Although a number of participants were content, some talked about feeling bored and frustrated with their lives. These participants had little energy or resources to change their situation at present. The effect of not having a job and income, often combined with other health and social issues, exacerbated the effects of living in poor quality homes and neighbourhoods.

Rachel and *Keith* say they are “stuck in a rut” and that their life is “boring” which they associate with their residential conditions. They both have significant health problems, neither work but they are both very keen to get jobs. They have three children who have all been at school in the area and grown up there. *Rachel* and *Keith* spend a lot of time looking out of the window: this was evident through talking to them, observing them and in the photos they took. At various points in conversation they added: *“we look out of the window...it’s a thing we*

do”; *“Just to break up the day a bit, to stand and look out”*; *“if it’s a nice bright day we can stand at the window most of the day”.*

From the window they could observe the view and watch the children playing; the window looked over the school where their children attended and where *Keith* is involved in the local football team. The window is a connection for them to the outside world and also their memories. It seemed to help them cope with their lives.

Morag who has poor health is unable to work and struggles financially lives in a small ‘studio flat’ on the top floor with her cat. She admits that her house does not help the way she feels as it is too small (*“like a tent”*) and high up and thinks moving to a better house will improve her life. Her television had broken and she was waiting to get it fixed. When asked what she did in the flat she replied: *“Just sitting...Nothing much... It’s boring”.*

Aisha is a single parent actively, but unsuccessfully, looking for work. She talked about the expense of taking her son out and struggling financially which left her feeling depressed and frustrated as it meant she had to spend more time in the flat:

“Even the bus fare now, just even to go to the town, it’s just horrendous. Four pound. Another pound for [son’s name], that’s five pound. You think you might as well stay in. Then I get depressed cause you’re in the house, cleaning up and doing.”

3.3.4 Spending time away

Some others felt they had to get out of the house as a way of coping. *Moir*a said she could not bear to spend more time in her house than she had to: *“This is killing me, sitting in this hoose. I cannae stay in this hoose”.* She had a routine of going on regular day trips, meeting up with her best friend and visiting her family who lived outside the area.

Layan who had experienced living in a block with a bad reputation for antisocial behaviour, and she and her family had experienced a lot of verbal abuse in the block, tried to spend as much time away from it as she could. She was actively involved in community and voluntary work. Her children were studying at university and school. She was also looking for a job. She had a very active life. One of the worst things about her life

was living in that particular block and putting up with the antisocial behaviour (“*I’m happy here but not in this building*”). She tried to spend as much time out of the flat as possible (her family often went away on trips at the weekend) and felt she could not let her youngest son out to play locally:

“For me, I try to spend all my time outside, also for my children because they study and they come back maybe at eight o’clock sometimes and seven o’clock, the oldest one, but the youngest one, when he want to go and play out, I say ‘no... we, I can’t. I can’t’, I keep him usually at home... I try to keep him here or if he want to go for a park or to enjoy yourself go further away to Glasgow Green, go to Kelvingrove. I catch a bus, take him to outside [here], to let him play.”

Interestingly, *Layan* also had a good relationship with the area where she was heavily involved in its local community – for her and her family it was the block she lived in and its immediate environment together with the poor physical condition of her home that affected the quality of her life.

3.3.5 Lives on hold

Some participants had put their lives on hold. As the vast majority knew a move was imminent, this often meant putting up with the poor physical and social conditions of home and neighbourhood until they moved as there was little they could do to change the situation.

Keith’s son’s bedroom was damp and in need of decoration but this was put off as it was considered a waste of time:

“That’s the dampness. That’s the state of the room obviously undecorated because of the dampness.... It’s a waste of time decorating it.”

Rachel said there was no point spending money on the flats when they knew they were being demolished:

“We started doing this up didn’t we and then they told us they were coming down. So we were like well, what’s the point in keeping spending money.”

Aisha did not know when or where she would be moving so was living with more uncertainty compared to many other participants. She had considered moving sooner but was afraid that if so she would lose out on

disturbance allowance so felt she had to wait until her flat was in active clearance. The disturbance allowance would enable her to buy the things she needed; she did not have the money or incentive to buy such things while still living in the flat:

“Think the washing machine might go, fridge might go soon. Just carry on sometimes... [son’s name] bed’s broke as well so I don’t know how I’m gonna manage that one.”

One family who had moved from a flat to a new house talked about aspects of their life being on hold when they lived in the flat:

“When we lived in the flat I didn’t see any point in getting a nice cooker really... I didn’t know the size of the kitchen we were gonna get as well. So I thought if I get one that doesn’t fit, so I just held off until we moved here.” (Heather)

Since the move the family have made a whole range of changes to their lives including getting new furniture, televisions, computers, internet connection and a pet rabbit – things they did not have when they lived in the flats, and which they say have improved their lives since they moved.

3.4 Active and fulfilling lives

Some participants were content and had active and fulfilling lives despite their poor living conditions. These participants had jobs or were involved in community, voluntary work and/or training opportunities. They often had active social lives, hobbies and interests, and good social and family connections.

In talking through a typical day, *Ula* mentioned taking her children to school and nursery, and then going to the city centre to get her shopping and to do her errands. On most weekdays she does voluntary work in the community, working on different projects on different days of the week. She also talked about the various activities her children were involved in outside of school. She talked passionately about her local community.

Nada, who had a paid job, talked about how she spent her time with her family when she was not working, which usually involved trips outside the area: *“yesterday, we go eat outside in the Braehead Centre... we go all together. We spent all the time there”*. She

added *“Tuesday and Wednesday, we go shopping, I buy something for them. We [then] go to the cinema”*. She talked about her enjoyment of the cinema and trips to the seaside and safari park with her family.

Jackie who had two part-time jobs talked about the training she had done:

“When I wasnae working, I was always doing some sort of college course, or some sort of learning... even though I’ve ended up wae a cleaning job that I love, I’ve got an HNC in social care. I’ve got an NC in computing. I’ve done hair dressing. I’ve done childcare. I’ve done counselling. I’ve got loads of different courses”.

She talked about enjoying spending time in the cemetery which she found *“dead peaceful and dead relaxing”* and at the local park saying *“I like to go up there as well. They used to have the canal, you could go up and feed the ducks and things like that”*. Later on in conversation she said *“very rarely do I come straight hame fae my work. I’ve always got somewhere to go, somebody to see”*.

4 Moving on: hopes and expectations for relocation, moving and the future

Of the 23 participants in the study, six had already moved to new build houses. One had moved within the neighbourhood (high-rise to high-rise). Eight were in the process of moving or knew where they would be moving: five to new builds, two to improved houses and one within the area. Eight did not know where they would be moving, though they were expecting to move.

The two sub-themes in this section are:

- Relocation.
- Hopes for moving and the future.

4.1 Relocation

The vast majority of participants were optimistic about moving and were looking forward to the prospect of a new house in a better area. No one felt forced out although some might have stayed in the neighbourhood given the choice, particularly if new houses were built there. This section covers why some desired to stay and concerns about moving.

4.1.1 Desire to stay in the area

In one study area some participants indicated a preference for staying there if they had been given the choice of a new build house. Indeed some said that this was what they were promised years ago but it had never materialised and they were not kept informed of the process. *Layan* explained that because she had already moved once within the area she was told *“you have the best offer to go back”* adding:

“But now year after year they say, ‘no we don’t want to build new [houses here]’... I don’t know what the reason. Sometimes like say [one] thing and after few months they change everything.”

Ula in particular was finding the transition difficult. She had never encountered any problems since she and her family arrived here and her family had recently been granted leave to remain in the UK. She was actively involved in the community and had several good friends and neighbours. Her children attended the local schools and nursery. She also felt the shops and facilities in

the area were good. She expressed real sadness about having to move on.

“We like here and we like these people here and we are here for more, for four years, three years, so three years and a half, why we have to move? You know, neighbours are very good. We didn’t face any problems here when we came here.”

She later added:

“...I love [it here], you know, and I was really, I want to be involved of the community here....I didn’t want to move far from here. If I have chance, you know, to come [here] definitely I will be very happy. You know, I love to move again back here.”

She also said that this was the feeling among the wider community:

“Everybody I know doesn’t want to leave, sometimes I need to use the lift downstairs, everybody absolutely is, you know, is not happy about moving.”

A concern about staying in the neighbourhood (if given that opportunity) was the decline in population and who was going to be left behind. Jackie’s comment was typical of others:

“Oh, I’d have stayed, aye. I would have stayed. The only thing that was worrying me was, in that case, because I’d be, obviously, a smaller amount of people staying there, who would be the ones staying? Who would our neighbours be, know what I mean?”

In one of the other study areas the majority of participants had no desire to stay there. One family was moving to a new house within the area, when they were built, but they envisaged the new community to be different to the existing community, as Alison and Nicola from the same family explain:

“The people around us will change, because when we’re up at this new house, we’re gonna have people that’s been there a long, or people that’s been in the area a long time, who cares about the area, who cares about what they’re living in.” (Alison)

“It’s gonna become a community we’ll get, because everybody is getting moved out, it’ll be all the junkies and all the alcoholics and all the asylum seekers, they’ll all move out...so it’s gonna be a community again.” (Nicola)

4.1.2 Concerns about moving

The majority were looking forward to moving and felt it could not come soon enough. However, there were some general worries about moving with a couple of families feeling quite emotional about the prospect. These tended to be families who had lived in the areas for a long time, their children were brought up there and they had never encountered any major problems. At the same time however they were looking forward to getting houses in better condition.

“I don’t like change neither I dae... I’m quite upset. I think it’s, emotional...So I dae. I think the day I’m leaving here, I’ll probably cry.” (Rachel)

“I don’t think it’s actually anything in particular [I’ll miss], I think it’s just memories probably. The fact that I’ve been, I was 13 when I first started coming down [here]. And when I met their Da – that’s why I got a hoose [here]. Y’know what I mean, like, their Granny stayed doonstair from me in number 1, before she died. Their family, their da’s family’s all close by.”

(Jackie)

A frequent worry about moving (although only expressed by a minority of participants) was about the types of people they would be living beside, although some had the reassurance that they would be moving to new areas with families they already knew. As Keith said: *“at least we know a few people that’s over there, we’re not the only new people there”*.

“The most worrying? I’m not sure, you know, because it’s like, it is a new area for us. It’s a new neighbourhood. We don’t know, we don’t understand if the neighbourhood are good or not.” (Ula)

Some did not know where they would be relocating to, so for these people it was not necessarily a concern about moving but worry about where they would be moving to. Sami has a wife and young son but had only been offered another high-rise flat on the eighteenth floor in a different area that he turned down. He said: *“I feel like moving as soon as possible. You know whenever I get a house outside this area I’ll be taking it definitely”* adding later *“if they offer us a decent house then we will move”*. Aisha was desperate to move and hoped it would coincide with her son starting secondary school, but said she had not been made any offers and was living with a lot of uncertainty about the future.

The need to adjust

There were several worries about adjusting from living in a high-rise flat to a house at ground level. One issue was losing anonymity and having to interact more:

“Coz in the flats, you can be more anonymous, do you know what I mean, you can just kinda shut your door and that’s it – but if you’re living next door to somebody, in hooses, you’re kinda more likely to interact wae your neighbours.” (Jackie)

Others were concerned about security; practical and time issues:

“I probably keep going doon and checking ma doors and ma windows and- when I go oot I’ll probably be nervous.” (Rachel)

“It’ll be different to look out ma window, you know, to actually see street level – that’s gonna be quite strange...Going into a front door, without having to account for a few extra minutes to... if you phone a taxi for example, you need to wait a few minutes to get yourself a lift to come and run down the stairs or whatever. So everything’s gonna be... or if you’re going for the bus, you need to leave a few minutes early, when the bus is due, ‘cause you need to account for going in the lift or going doon the stairs or... things like that. ‘Cause if it’s early in the morning I’ll no go doon the stairs, if it’s too early, like if I’m starting work kinda maybe 6 or... so I need to wait for a lift to come.” (Jackie)

The majority of those who had moved said they were much happier and had made a successful transition. An exception is Lesley. Lesley had recently moved from a flat to a house and was finding the transition difficult, particularly regarding living in what she called a “*low down house*”. She has had a difficult life with family problems, looking after her grandchildren, dealing with depression and other family issues. She had lived in a high-rise flat all her life where she says she had the concierge and several locks on her door. Her main problems with adjusting are feeling scared and not being able to sleep:

“I like the hoose during the day, at night I just cannae sleep in it’...I’m feart in case the hoose gets broke into.”

She says her grandchildren are much happier and

settled as they now have a better quality of life:

“Don’t get me wrang, the dug’s settled in, and my two grand weans have settled in brilliant.”

“...can bring the weans up in a better life there nae needles lying about, well out in the gairdens.”

[Was that a problem in [area]?]

“Aye. Used to find them on your stairs and you don’t find anything like that in here.”

Lesley’s difficulty in adjusting could be more about coping with the issues in her own life than the actual move itself.

4.2 Hopes for moving and the future

This section covers hopes for moving in relation to the home and neighbourhood and how participants expect to feel as a consequence.

4.2.1 Better physical and psychosocial conditions

Given the very poor physical conditions that many were enduring, most were looking forward to better physical improvements in their new houses such as getting rid of the damp, having more space, feeling warmer and reduced bills:

“I don’t know. It would be nice to get somewhere that I didn’t have to decorate all the time you know, most houses I’ve had are dumps.” (Sue)

“To just be warm in the winter compared to this.” (Rachel)

“Well it’ll be nice not to be in a damp house. And somewhere that was reasonable to heat, you know.” (Sue)

Heather and her family who had moved from a flat to a new house gave a good account of the physical comfort of the new house compared to the flat:

“The heating’s on. Yeah. It’s on, it’s on low but it’s – the first thing we noticed when moved – when we got the keys for this house, we walked through it, we went “oooh, the heat!” (Laughs.) It was like being in the Bahamas or something, cause we weren’t used to it. But if I was in the flat now I would have on about three cardigans, slippers. Because it was just so cold. I mean you could breathe and you’d see your breath. That’s how cold it was.”

'Home'

There was a desire for a place people could call home and give them a sense of stability as illustrated by the following:

"It's not my home, it's not my home... I want, just nice house for me and my children, now." (Nada)

"I feel this is my flat but not... I don't feel that's all the building, I don't feel that's my home, but maybe there I feel that's my home. Yeah, I feel, what it's called? My person... It's, I find myself there. I hope to find myself there." (Layan)

"It means I can settle doon. I know I'll be safe and I'll have nae worries." (Morag)

Heather and her daughter Emma emphasised feelings of safety and security in their new house since the move:

"Having that – you know secure feeling of well this is ours and, even though it's still tenancy." (Heather)

"It's a lot easier and warmer and you feel safer in here." (Emma)

Many took pride in their flats despite their poor physical condition. Some felt, however, that their new homes would provide the incentive for them to do them up nicely and be proud of them.

"Hopefully it's going to be a nice flat, but I'll be...feel safer, cleaner, want to do the house up, even this house, there's no money to do it up." (Aisha)

"He wants Rangers wallpaper, a big bed and his telly on the wa'. Know what I mean? So I'm gonnae dae his room up really nice." (Harry)

"I think because it's a nicer house you're going to want the money to do it up nice." (Rachel)

Space

Many had seen their new houses or the plans for them and were looking forward to the extra space they would have and things like extra bedrooms and bathrooms, extra toilets, bigger kitchens and storage facilities. Rachel who was moving to a new build house talks with some excitement about the extra bathrooms:

"..and then the second floor's got like a toilet or a sink then the next one up's got a bath, toilet, sink and a shower and you can stand in the bath and have a shower. Whereas the one on the bottom's an actual

shower room....The bottom one, I didn't realise how big it was. It's quite big, aye."

Heather and her family gave a good account of the changes they had experienced since moving and how their life had improved. They lived on the seventeenth floor of a high-rise block and their two teenage children (boy and girl) shared a bedroom. When her daughter Emma was asked what it was like sharing a room with her brother she replied *"annoying"* because *"if, say, you wanted to get changed, you had to go to the toilet or something, if somebody else was in the room"*.

Their new house and how it enabled them to have more space, freedom and possessions was discussed:

"I think knowing that you've got somewhere that's... somewhere that you can build on now and you've got a bigger space, a bigger area. I mean the kids have got their own room. Which is a relief to them. They've got their own space. We've also got a garden which we never had before. So that's good."

Heather provides a lot of detail about the family's use of space and how this changed since the move. They have more freedom now whereas previously the lack of space, combined with the design of the flat and poor physical conditions, meant their life was more difficult. She talked about the three toilets, en-suite bathroom and children having their own rooms. Her husband could pursue his gaming hobby with a new gaming chair and accessories; the living room was now deemed his space as everyone else now had somewhere comfortable to go. Heather could watch television in her bedroom. Her daughter got a pet rabbit because there was space for a hutch in the kitchen. Her son had a computer and gaming chair in his bedroom. The garden was an extra space with patio and table and chairs.

Garden

The garden was important for many as an extra space, place for children to play out in as well as a space for adults to go into. Harry was hoping to get a house with a garden so that he could *"Put a set o' goals up"* so his son could *"play fitba in the back gairden"* and Nada wanted a *"private garden"* to *"have barbeques"*.

Several adults talked about looking forward to having a garden to just sit and relax in; a place to go if you wanted to be outdoors but did not want to go out. Rachel has

depression; on bad days she feels she cannot leave the house so she was looking forward to having the garden as a place to go:

“Even if I don’t want to go oot, I can sit in the garden. I can still just open the [patio] doors, and sit inside.”

All those who had moved to houses with gardens talked about the benefits of having a garden. *Nadia* made a video clip of her and her children and their friends enjoying the garden. It showed the tent the children played in, the exercise bike, washing line, barbeque, table and chairs. She talked about the changes it had made to their lives in that it was an extra space for the family, they did not need to travel to a park and she felt safe knowing that she could let her children play out and see them through the window.

Lesley says her grandchildren are more content now they have a garden as they can keep their toys in it and play outside, and she can see them from the living room:

“They’re mair content, when they’ve come – coz they’re never in. I think that’s what it is. They’ve got the freedom, and they don’t need tae rely on granny getting ready, waiting on John coming up to take [the dog] oot.”

4.2.2 Better social and family relations

Some had hopes that they would be able to enjoy better family relationships. One factor was that they expected more visits from family members:

“Well hopefully my grandkids will be able to stay over cause you know, [their mother] won’t let them stay over at the moment, because it’s a high flat and well obviously it’s damp and everything you know.” (Sue)

“At least ma new house I’ll feel ma family might be able to visit. Up here nobody wants to visit, no family wants to come here at all.” (Aisha)

Some felt that they and their children would be more able to invite people round. *Ali* who lived in a one bedroom flat felt that he could not ask people to come and celebrate the birth of his son because the flat was too small along with it being damp and smelly. *Carol* had hopes for her teenage children in that they would be able to take their friends to the house without feeling embarrassed.

“And some peoples can visit you. Now, my cousins, two o’ my cousins stay near, one o’ them stay in Hull, one of them stay in Wakefield... They call me because baby’s born. They call me. We coming, just make wee bit party for baby. I said just wait because my house really, not enough. When I’m change my house coming, because that’s make me happy, bigger house.” (Ali)

“The kids’ll have a life, they can go out and they can do stuff, they can bring people back without being embarrassed.” (Carol)

There would also be more space for family members within the home. *Maya* and her family had already moved to a new house and explained that the family had already started to see the benefits of having more space compared to the flat:

“In this room we can all spend time together in this living room, as you can see there’s a lot of space... children would have been fighting for space... we are often sitting here happier and talking to each other. That has changed completely, the bond is more strong than [in the flat] because we all sit together and talk to each other.”

Keith said:

“So I think they might get on a wee bit better to be honest with you, once they’ve got their rooms.”

When participants discussed moving and choice of new area, they often mentioned the importance of being closer to friends and family.

4.2.3 Better neighbourhoods

Living in a better neighbourhood, getting rid of the antisocial behaviour and having decent neighbours was a desire for many:

“I just hope the people that stay in the area’s a lot better.” (Harry)

“I hope good area, and good neighbour as well. The important things about me, good neighbours.” (Nada)

“I’d hope to have nice neighbours.” (Sue)

“Cleaner, some nice people, a wee bit of neighbourhood spirit, and you wernae embarrassed.” (Aisha)

Jackie had been to visit the area she was moving to on a Saturday night as she felt she would give her a good sense of what it was like. She felt reassured that it was going to be a decent neighbourhood she was moving to, and that the new housing association was going to keep it that way:

“... the wee estate where we’re going to is nice and it’s gonna be lovely...And we went along on a Saturday night, ‘cause I thought, this is the best time to go, ‘cause then you’ll see if there’ anybody hanging about or whatever and it was deadly quiet, hardly saw a soul. Everywheres all nice, it was all clean, nae graffiti, nae litter. So I thought it seems as if that [housing association] are really gonna, y’know what I mean, kinda stick to what they say.”

In terms of neighbourhood, there was no specific mention of moving to an area with better shops and services. Schools were important for those with school-age children and this was often a consideration in their choice of new area so as not to disrupt their children’s schooling or to move to an area where the school was considered good. Sami would hope for a move to the West End or city *“because schools are good in that place. People are decent”*.

4.2.4 Feeling happier and better lives for children

Participants expressed various emotions about how they hoped they would feel after the move. Many hoped to feel happier, more secure and stable. The words ‘happy’ and ‘better life’ were used by several participants:

“Hopefully I’ll probably feel happier in the house.”
(Aisha)

“I think everything will change. I’ll be happy.” (Ali)

“I’d be happier round there, for everything that... Just to have security to know that, about me, is, stabilised.”
(Carol)

In terms of aspiration, some of those with children indicated that they wanted them to have better lives than what they had:

“I need better life for my son.” (Ali)

“I hope they have a better life than what I had.”
(Lesley)

“The kids having a better way of life.” (Keith)

Those with children talked about their aspirations for them. Some talked about the importance of education and getting a job:

“I like, just, I see to my children happy, complete their education, later find job.”
(Nada)

“I need to concentrate on his education as well. So if my children can’t have a good school here right, I need to go somewhere a bit better place where the neighbours are good.”
(Sami)

“...want [them] to be plumbers.”
(Basra)

Nadia felt her children had a better chance of a decent education and not getting into bad ways if they moved away from the flats:

“I think the council people must get the children down from the high flats...Because [when] they are small you can get them education quick. If they’re grown up big you can’t stop [it’s too late?]...yes, like a teenager if he say he wants to go out you can’t say nothing I don’t want [here] for the education for my children, I don’t want my children be bad.”

4.2.5 A fresh start

Moving to a new house was seen as a fresh start for some, to make changes, an opportunity to get their lives on track and to start afresh:

“I’m looking forward to this flat being pulled doon. Cause it’ll gie him a new start wi’ the wean tae, right. A new hoose, daein it a’ up nice, daein his room up nice, and starting fae scratch.”
(Harry)

“I think the fact that you’ve got somewhere fresh and new to start with.”
(Rachel)

“Like I say, you get into a rut don’t you. I think cause we’ve [got] used to the life we’re leading....Hopefully it’ll give us the boost to think oh this is a new change, different change in your life, get on with things.”
(Keith)

Getting a job

Many of those without jobs were hopeful that the move would be an incentive for them to find a job. Getting a job was seen as an important part of their future for reasons including having more money, getting out, pursuing interests and not wanting to live on benefits.

“Only way my life would be improved, I get a decent job, make a decent living, and start fae scratch a’ ower again.” (Harry)

“I’ll need to be working. I don’t want to be on jobseekers allowance, because I’ve never been happy with the jobseekers allowance.” (Jon)

“I’d like to go to college to – you know HND, do the HND and get a better job.” (Sue)

Rachel and Keith both are keen to work. They say:

“We’ve sort of settled into a rhythm of a life, and it’s taking – someat needs to get us – push us to get us out of it...We need someat to say get up and let’s get someat done kind of thing.”

[Yeah. But you’re moving house soon aren’t you?]

“I think the house’ll – I think house’ll do it for me.”

Most of those who mentioned finding work were already in the process of making real attempts to find a job. They also tended to be disadvantaged through poor health, lack of qualifications, the need for childcare and having been out of the job market for a long time.

Aisha said:

“Getting a job. Aye. Money is... important. Not that I’m being greedy or nothing. When you’re skint it’s terrible....I need to now. Just to get out, fight the depression, help to meet people, up and go, a bit of confidence.”

Aisha had been on computer and confidence building courses. She had applied for a disclosure check to do voluntary work with older people. She had been at the regeneration agency, used the computer to look for jobs and put together a CV. She talked about trying to get herself a laptop computer. She considered home help or shop work, but had also thought about doing counselling and working for Women’s Aid or with homeless people. She said *“I feel a bit more confident going job-hunting. Stress... but at least now I know about disclosures, voluntary jobs, what you’re entitled to”*.

5 Discussion

The findings provide a window into participants’ everyday realities of impending change and relocation. They were presented as two broad themes: ‘current conditions’ and ‘moving on’. The first theme mirrors the second theme in that, while the majority of participants talked about their experiences of living mainly in poor physical and social conditions on high-rise estates, they were on the whole optimistic that such problems would be alleviated when they moved, and their quality of life would be improved in various ways.

5.1 Current conditions

The current conditions of living in dilapidated high-rise flats have had the most negative impacts on participants’ everyday lives. The condition of the flats – problems of cold, damp and water penetration in particular – were a daily hassle and a regular inconvenience for people. Problems in the common areas, such as lifts and stairwells, were partly about poor maintenance but exacerbated by antisocial behaviour. Antisocial behaviour was a recurring theme in relation to home and neighbourhood that seemed to significantly affect people’s lives.

Though the worst examples of physical conditions in the flats may be due to their continued decline in advance of clearance, many are also inherent, or at least commonly reported in high-rise flats and on high-rise estates generally.

The problems associated with the poor physical conditions of the flats had social, psychological and behavioural impacts in varying degrees. Socially, some felt they could not enjoy proper social relations particularly as their flats were not nice places for people to visit or stay. This led to isolation for some as family and friends did not visit. Some felt embarrassed and stigmatised by living in such conditions. Psychologically many were fearful, particularly in relation to the common areas of buildings. They also felt a lack of control over the conditions both in the flat (e.g. water coming in) and in the common areas (e.g. dealing with the behaviour of others). From a behavioural perspective, everyday life for many people was a daily hassle and much harder in terms of having to cope with routine things.

There was little attachment to, or sense of community, in these neighbourhoods (although one area was perceived to have more sense of community than the others, and some people were sad to leave). Some who had experienced the areas in better times were critical of declining services, but most participants were satisfied with local shops and services. This was partly because the neighbourhoods tended to be well situated and had everyday facilities available. The areas are all well located for accessing services elsewhere, given that people have the means to travel.

Antisocial behaviour was a much bigger concern to people than local services. Socially, for some this led to fear and withdrawal from using public space meaning they were unable to get on with their lives in the ways they wanted to. Some felt that they would have better family and social relationships in their new homes and neighbourhoods if the problems of antisocial behaviour were eliminated, as friends and family would be more likely to visit.

Psychologically, there was a level of fear and concern that something bad might happen in the neighbourhood for themselves but more so for their children. In terms of impact on behaviours, people used public space less and did not enjoy spending time in the local area. Some reported staying at home more, particularly in the evenings when it was considered more dangerous outdoors. Conversely, others tried to get away from the area whenever possible as a way of coping with the undesirable conditions.

Participants experienced the negative effects described to varying degrees. Some, however, showed powers of coping and resilience, and are modest in their demands and desires for improvement. These participants had very active and happy lives with jobs, good social networks, hobbies, interests and involvement in the community. Despite the poor conditions they got on with their lives as best they could.

5.2 Moving on

All participants would be moving on at some point (some had already moved). Moving people to better conditions and to a different type of neighbourhood seems appropriate and desirable given the conditions described. In one study area there was a desire to stay

in the neighbourhood, but this was not the majority view across the participants and areas.

There were fears and anxieties about moving, even given that most people wanted to move and were looking forward to it. Some of these were due to the inevitable effects of change; the legacy effects of living in a high-rise flat; and the actual process of moving. There is evidence from those who had already moved that suggest that concerns over moving abate over time. These participants talked about the changes to their lives largely in a positive way. The focus tended to be on the benefits of the new house, its space and associated impacts, rather than the wider environment, shops and services.

Change is always difficult, more so when it is large-scale change involving relocating to a new area. Most people have some attachment to homes, estates and neighbourhoods, even in poor or challenging areas. Change was difficult for some, particularly those who had an emotional attachment to the area; some participants had lived on the estate for a long time, had family, friends and other social connections, and their children were brought up there. So although the physical and social conditions tended to be poor, some had many happy memories with the places they were leaving.

The legacy effects of living in high-rise estate meant that some participants were more fearful of crime, especially the possibility of forced entry in a house. There was some anxiety about the need for social interaction living in houses and being more known by ones neighbours. Some had liked the idea of being anonymous in a flat.

In terms of process, there was concern about who people's neighbours would be, but others were looking forward to a new type of neighbourhood, particularly getting rid of the antisocial behaviour element and having decent neighbours to live beside. There was also some uncertainty about where people would be moving to, and some disappointment that new build locally would not be possible

People have very positive expectations associated with moving. The physical improvements many hoped for such as warm, damp-free homes and more space meant they could look forward to better family and social relations; family members might interact better in the home, and friends and family would be more likely to

visit. They looked forward to better neighbours and the elimination of antisocial behaviour. As such they hoped that intra-neighbourhood relations would be better and that social networks would improve.

Psychologically, many were looking forward to having a “home”, being more settled, gaining pride and becoming oneself. Some talked about a fresh start; particularly an added incentive to get a job. Some had hopes that their children would have a better life away from living on high-rise estates, and talked about their hopes and aspirations for them.

Behaviour changes include being able to have more active lives and do more things. Having a garden was noted by several participants as something they were looking forward to. For adults it was viewed as a space for relaxation; for children it offered more freedom, along with space and security.

Many will need help to achieve some of their goals and to adapt to living in a different type of house and neighbourhood. Some support services before and after the move will help, and this is something that should be given consideration to those involved in the process of transformational regeneration.

6 Conclusion

Phase 1 of the Lived Realities study explored residents' everyday experiences of living in neighbourhoods undergoing transformational regeneration. At this stage in the research the majority of study participants were living on high-rise estates that were undergoing major physical and social change, and were waiting to be relocated to new homes often in different neighbourhoods. Participants talked about the difficult physical and social living conditions in relation to their flats and neighbourhoods, and how such problems affected their everyday lives. Apart from dealing with issues such as damp and water penetration in the home, a key concern was antisocial behaviour in the community and how they coped with this on a regular basis.

While the current living conditions on these estates, and the way they affect people's lives, is very poor for most, there was much optimism with regard to relocation and the future. Apart from a few concerns, the vast majority were hopeful that an improved or new home, and hopefully more desirable neighbours, would be beneficial for them and their families in terms of the physical, social, psychological and behavioural benefits it would offer in the longer term. This was evidenced by those who had already moved. By the next phase of data collection in 2012 the vast majority of participants will have relocated. This will be an opportunity to see if their hopes and expectations have been realised, and to probe further into participants' lived realities at this next stage in the process.

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Acknowledgements

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Suggested citation:

Lawson L, Egan M. *Residents' Lived Realities of Transformational Regeneration: Phase 1 Findings*. Glasgow: GoWell; 2012

Appendix: Lived Realities - sample characteristics (July 2011)

Participant				
Recruitment	Household details	Housing situation	Ethnicity and country of birth	Working / not working
Lesley				
Local Housing organisation (LHO)	Female, lives with grandchildren	Recently relocated from Area 1 to new build	White Scottish, born in UK	Not working
Ali				
LHO	Male, lives with partner and baby	Lives in Area 1, in process of moving	Middle Eastern, born outside UK	Working (on sick leave)
Jon				
LHO	Male, lives alone	Recently moved within Area 1	African, born outside UK	Not working
Sue				
LHO	Female, lives with 2 adult sons	Lives in Area 1, future relocation unconfirmed	White Scottish, born in UK	Not working
Rachel and Keith				
LHO	Female & Male, 3 children	Live in Area 1, in process of moving	White Scottish / British, born in UK	Neither working
Sami				
LHO	Male, lives with partner and baby	Lives in Area 1, future relocation unconfirmed	Asian, born outside UK	Working
Ula				
Church	Female, lives with partner and 3 children	Lives in Area 1, in process of moving	African, born outside UK	Not working (high level of voluntary work)
Layan				
Church	Female, lives with partner and 3 children	Lives in Area 1, in process of moving	Middle Eastern, born outside UK	Not working (high level of voluntary work)
Jackie				
LHO	Female, lives with 3 children	Lives in Area 1, in process of moving	White Scottish, born in UK	Working
Nada				
Snowballing	Female, lives with partner and 5 children	Lives in Area 1, future relocation unconfirmed	Middle Eastern, born outside UK	Not working
Moira				
LHO	Female, looks after grandchild at weekends	Lives in Area 1, future relocation unconfirmed	White Scottish, born in UK	Not working (high level of voluntary work)



Participant				
Recruitment	Household details	Housing situation	Ethnicity and country of birth	Working / not working
Aisha				
LHO	Female, lives with child	Lives in Area 2, future relocation unconfirmed	Asian Scottish, born in UK	Not working
Harry				
LHO	Male, lives with child	Lives in Area 2, future relocation unconfirmed	White Scottish, born in UK	Not working
May and Dave				
Snowballing	Female and male, live with child	Live in Area 2, in process of moving	White Scottish, born in UK	Neither working
Morag				
Snowballing	Female, lives alone	Lives in Area 2, future relocation unconfirmed	White Scottish, born in UK	Not working
Carol				
Snowballing	Female, lives with 2 children	Lives in Area 2, in process of moving	White Scottish, born in UK	Working
Nadia				
LHO	Female, lives with partner and 2 children	Recently relocated from Area 2 to new build	African, born outside UK	Working
Maya				
LHO	Female, lives with partner and 3 children	Recently relocated from Area 2 to new build	African, born outside UK	Working
Alison and Nicola				
LHO	Females, live with 3 children	Live in Area 2, in process of moving	White Scottish, born in UK	Working
Barbara				
Snowballing	Female, lives alone	Lives in Area 2, future relocation unconfirmed	White Scottish, born in UK	Not working
Heather and Paul				
GoWell survey	Female and male, live with 2 children	Recently relocated from Area 3 to new build	White Scottish / British, born in UK	Both working
Lynda				
Snowballing	Female, lives with son	Recently relocated from Area 3 to new build	White Scottish, born in UK	Working
Basra				
Community organisation	Female, lives with partner and 4 children	Recently relocated from Area 3 to new build	African, born outside UK	Not working

Note: Participants born outside of the UK included people on various types of visa and different stages of the British Citizenship application process for asylum seekers/refugees.

