

Q: We have heard that the demographics of renters are changing, as more people remain in rented accommodation for longer. In your view, to what extent do you believe the private rented sector is meeting the needs of diverse groups, such as families and older people?

A: One third of renters in Wales now have dependent children, and a fifth of all families with children reside in the sector. The number of pensioners renting privately is set to greatly increase over the coming years, as a consequence of middle-aged workers being unable to either get on the property ladder or access social housing.

Frequent house moves due to insecure housing has a lasting effect on both children and the elderly. Unaffordable rent rises seriously undermine the finances of parents with dependent children, and people struggling to make their pension last the month. Unsafe housing conditions can undermine the development of children, and be life-threatening to both infants and the elderly.

While families and older people can be more dramatically affected by the state of the private rented sector, all of these outcomes are felt by our members at all stages of life. The 22 year old that lives with friends, the 42 year old with 3 children and the 72 year old pensioner all need the same thing: housing that is secure, affordable and safe. The private rented sector is currently failing miserably to deliver this. Private renters of all ages and living arrangements need rent controls; better (and properly enforced) safety standards; and protection from evictions, including relocation payments in circumstances where evictions cannot be avoided.