

## Teenage Housing Tenure and Neighbourhoods and the Links with Adult Outcomes: Evidence from the 1970 Cohort Study

### Introduction

This study is one of a pair funded by the Homes and Communities Agency and the Tenant Services Authority. The other report can be found at <http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/case/>. This pair of studies develops the findings of two previous reports on the relationship between housing and life chances (Feinstein *et al*, 2008, Lupton *et al*, 2009). These previous reports examined housing circumstances in childhood for those born in 1946, 1958, 1970 and 2000, and the relationship between childhood housing and adult outcomes across a range of measures for those born in 1946, 1958 and 1970. They found as yet unexplained connections between being 'ever' in social housing in childhood and worse adult outcomes on an overall measure of deprivation and a range of individual measures for those born in 1958 and in 1970 (but not for those born in 1946) (Feinstein *et al*, 2008, Lupton *et al*, 2009). Statistically significant associations remained after using a very large set of more than 50 controls for family and individual characteristics, for many outcomes and many ages, although the size of all of the associations was substantially reduced.

The current study uses the British Cohort Study, whose members were born in 1970 and who were aged 40 in 2010. It examines housing and neighbourhood circumstances of this generation at age 16 in 1986, and their outcomes at age 34 in 2004. It aims to explore:

- if there are any differences in adult outcomes between those in social renting and private renting, between private renting and home ownership, and within home ownership as teenagers; and
- the characteristics of the neighbourhoods experienced by those in different tenures as teenagers, and whether features of social housing neighbourhoods might either constitute all or part of what appeared to be a 'tenure effect'.

### The homes and neighbourhoods of people born in 1970 when they were 16 year old teenagers in 1986

- At the age of 16, 18% of those born in England in 1970 were living in social housing, 79% were in home ownership and 2% were in private renting. The vast majority living with their parents rather than in their own households as independent adults.
- Compared to teenagers in owner occupied homes, teenagers in social housing had had, on average, a number of disadvantages at birth and in early childhood that were related to family circumstances and could not in any way have been 'caused' by their housing or neighbourhood at age 16. For example, on average they had parents with lower qualifications and lower occupational class, they were more likely to be a lone parent family at birth and at 16, they had mothers who had their first children younger, they had lower birth weights, they were more likely to have experienced family dissolution during childhood, and to have more siblings. This suggests that in the 1970s and 1980s social housing was successfully targeting more disadvantaged families.

- The kinds of neighbourhoods teenagers lived in varied sharply by tenure. At both small neighbourhood scale (about 100-150 households) and larger neighbourhood scale (about 2,200 households), teenagers in social housing were highly concentrated in the most deprived neighbourhoods and those dominated by social housing. 62% of teenagers in social housing were in the three most deprived deciles (tenths) of small neighbourhoods, compared to 18% of those in home ownership, and teenagers in social housing were largely excluded from less deprived neighbourhoods. 33% of teenagers in social housing were in social housing dominated small neighbourhoods, compared to just 4% of those in owner occupation.

### Outcomes in adulthood

- Those in both rented tenures at age 16 in 1986 were more likely to have less desirable outcomes at age 34 in 2004 than those in home ownership at 16, in terms of all the eleven measures we examined: paid employment, means tested benefits claiming, highest qualifications, literacy and numeracy, depression, malaise, self-efficacy, life satisfaction, regular exercise, cigarette smoking and self-rated health. This complements the results found for this cohort in Feinstein *et al* (2008) and Lupton *et al* (2009).
- The present analysis allows us to compare social renting and private renting. Those in social renting at 16 had worse raw outcomes in terms of chances of claiming means tested benefits, having literacy and numeracy problems, smoking, qualifications, self-rated health, and self efficacy than those in private renting at 16.
- However, those in social renting at 16 actually had slightly better raw outcomes in terms of chances of depression, malaise and life satisfaction at 34 than those in private renting.

### The role of teenage housing tenure in explaining adult outcomes

- We controlled for individual and family advantage, with both a small and large set of controls. The small set of controls included eight measures: index of Family Advantage, mothers' age at the birth of her first child, whether mother had moved away from her home region by the birth of her first child, cohort member's weight at birth, whether the cohort member was born into a lone parent family; whether they were in a lone parent family at 16; number of siblings resident in the household at 16; and region lived in at 16. The larger set of controls included 56 variables, as used in Feinstein *et al* (2008) and Lupton *et al* (2009).
- With the small set of controls, differences in outcomes between those in social renting and in home ownership at 16 for regular exercise at 34 were no longer statistically significant. With the large set of controls, differences in outcomes between those in social renting and in home ownership at 16 were no longer statistically significant for six of the eleven variables at 34, while statistically significant links remained for smoking, depression, qualifications, paid employment and self-rated health. Both sets of controls reduced the size of the association between teenage tenure and adult outcomes considerably. These results complement the results found for this cohort in Feinstein *et al* (2008) and Lupton *et al* (2009).
- However, again results vary between the main rented tenures, but private renting at 16 does not appear to have offered any clear advantage over social renting at 16 in terms of young adult outcomes. After the small set of controls, those in social renting at 16 had higher odds ratios of being in employment, a positive outcome, and lower odds of some negative outcomes (claiming benefits, depression, malaise and low life satisfaction) compared to those in home ownership than those in private renting as teenagers.\* On the other hand, those in social housing as teenagers did worse than those in private renting in terms of the remaining half of the outcomes.
- This study has found some as yet unexplained connections between childhood tenure and adult outcomes, as in previous studies, but the critical tenure difference appears not to be between social renting and other tenures, but between both rented tenures and home ownership.

### The role of teenage neighbourhoods in explaining adult outcomes

- Regression tests showed some evidence for the existence of a longitudinal relationship between teenage neighbourhood deprivation and tenure mix and adult outcomes, after controlling for family and individual circumstances.
- After applying controls for family and individual circumstances with both the small and large set of controls, taking neighbourhood characteristics into account modified somewhat the relationship seen between teenage tenure and adult outcomes.
- Thus, the associations between tenure and outcomes we have found can be described as partly due to neighbourhood characteristics in terms of deprivation and tenure mix at small neighbourhood scale (about 100-150 households) and larger neighbourhood scale (about 2,200

households).

- However, the associations between tenure and outcomes we have found cannot be described as entirely or mainly due to 'neighbourhood effects'.
- Again, this evidence of associations between teenage tenure and adult outcomes that remain after controls for family and individual advantage and neighbourhood characteristics does not amount to evidence that these differences were caused by housing tenure.
- The relationship between housing tenure and outcomes is certainly not straightforward. It may be that research using other descriptions of neighbourhoods, such as employment rates, or other scales such as local authority scale, might show area effects making a greater contribution. In addition, it may be that there are other 'hidden' variables, such as particular family and individual characteristics that might explain the relationships found.

### Implications for today's children and their housing and neighbourhoods

- Over the past 40 years, as British Cohort Study members have grown up, the UK housing system has changed considerably and UK neighbourhoods have also changed.
- However, rented homes and their neighbourhoods are still important for today's children and families. The companion study to the present one, based on the Millennium Cohort Study shows that in 2006, 18% of children aged 5 lived in social rented homes and 9% lived in privately rented homes (the study is found at <http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/case>).
- We have found evidence that characteristics of those born in 1970, which are either known at birth or at age 16, are associated in some way with differences in later outcomes at age 34, and could be used to predict later disadvantage.
- Whether the associations we have found are large or small or a concern for policy is a matter for judgment.

### References

- Feinstein, I., Lupton, R., Hammond, C., Mujtaba, T. and Sorhaindo, A. with Tunstall, R., Richards, M., Kuh, D. and Jonson, J. (2008) *The public value of social housing: A longitudinal analysis of the relationship of housing and life chances*, London: Centre for Research on the Wider Benefits of Learning, Institute of Education, University of London.
- Lupton, R.; Tunstall, R.; Sigle-Rushton, W.; Obolenskaya, P.; Sabates, R.; Meschi, E.; Kneale, D. and Salter, M. (2009) *Growing up in social housing in Great Britain: The experience of four generations*, London: Homes and Communities Agency.

### Note

\* Results are presented through 'odds ratios'. 'The 'odds' of something occurring is the probability of having the condition (such as smoking at least one cigarette a day) divided by the probability of *not* having the condition (not smoking...). For example, for those in owner occupation as teenagers, the odds of smoking at 34 were 20.2% (smokers)/79.8% (non smokers), or 0.253. For those in social renting as teenagers the odds were 40.3%/59.7% or 0.675. So those in owner occupation as teenagers had lower odds of smoking as adults than those in social renting as teenagers. An 'odds ratio' is the differences in odds of an outcome between those in different groups, such as those in social renting as teenagers and those in owner occupation. So, here, the odds ratio of smoking at 34 for those in social housing as teenagers compared to those in home ownership as teenagers is 0.675/0.253 or 2.66. An 'odds ratio' between social housing and owner occupation of *more than one* means that the outcome (here, smoking) was more likely for those in social housing as teenagers compared to those in home ownership, and visa versa. However, an odds ratio for two groups of 2.66 does *not* directly translate to meaning that the outcome was '2.66 times as likely' for one group as the other.

### Further information

This CASEbrief summarises findings from *Teenage Housing Tenure and Neighbourhoods and the Links with Adult Outcomes: Evidence from the 1970 Cohort Study* by Rebecca Tunstall, Ruth Lupton, Dylan Kneale and Andrew Jenkins, CASereport 64, <http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/dps/case/cr/CASereport64.pdf>