Social Housing and Social Exclusion 2000-2011

Rebecca Tunstall

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Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion
London School of Economics
Houghton Street
London WC2A 2AE
CASE enquiries – tel: 020 7955 6679

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Telephone:	UK+20 7955 6679
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Email:	j.dickson@lse.ac.uk
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Editorial Note

At the time of writing, Rebecca Tunstall was a Lecturer in the Department of Social Policy, LSE., and a CASE Associate.

Abstract

By some definitions, social housing, social housing tenants are necessarily socially excluded. In other terms, in 2000, social housing tenants were at greater risk of being socially excluded than owner occupiers and private renters on measures of income, employment, education, health, and housing and neighbourhood quality. However, by 2011, basic housing quality in social housing had overtaken that in home ownership, and slight reductions in social exclusion of social tenants in terms of income, employment, and neighbourhood quality at least disproved arguments of inevitable tenurial polarisation. There is evidence that housing and regeneration policies contributed to these changes, but the economy was also important, and population turnover is likely to have played a role. Finally, the gains of 2000-2011 may not be sustained.

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Introduction

Social housing tenants and estates have sometimes been seen as archetypes of social exclusion, and social housing tenure has even been seen as a causal factor in exclusion. This report assesses how much social housing tenants could be described as 'socially excluded' in 2000, and whether and if so, how and by how much this had changed by 2011. It explores how much any change in the social exclusion of social housing residents can be attributed to housing and regeneration policies, and how much to other factors, including broader housing and social exclusion policy, and economic and social change.

The period 2000-2011 was an extremely active one for social housing and neighbourhood regeneration policy and there is a wealth of excellent research describing policies and their impacts (eg Leather et al. 2007, SQW 2008, Taylor 2008, Wong et al. 2009, AMION 2010, Batty et al. 2010, Lupton et al. 2010, Johnstone et al. 2010), and also assessing cumulative impact (eg Griggs et al.2008, Power 2009, Bashir et al. 2011). This report draws largely on existing research and analysis. However, it intentionally takes a slightly different approach to many existing studies, to assess the extent of change in social exclusion first, before considering potential causal factors including policy.

Evidence on trends for 2000-2011 does not report changes for a fixed group of individuals. Given births, deaths, household formation and reformation and moves, the group in social housing over the period 2000-2011 was of course made up of a changing set of individuals and households. Part or most of any changes in measured in social exclusion will be the result of moves in and out of social housing rather than changes in the situating for existing residents or any particular individuals. There is certainly no evidence that any level of social exclusion or trends in social exclusion are caused by tenure per se.

'Social housing' includes homes owned and managed by local authorities and third sector bodies. During the period 2000-2011 61 local authorities in England separated housing ownership from management by setting up arm's length management organisations (ALMOs) to run their homes. Over the period, the formal designation of the third sector bodies switched from 'housing associations' to 'registered social landlords' (RSLs) and again to 'registered providers' (RPs). This report focuses on England rather than on the whole UK.

1. Social housing tenants: Socially excluded by definition?

Housing tenure has been included as an element of indexes intended to define and measure social exclusion, or its closely related precursor, multiple deprivation. For example, social rented tenure and private rented tenure featured amongst the indicators in the Townsend Index of deprivation (Townsend 1987) and the Breadline

Britain index (Gordon 1995). Effectively this described all tenants as 'deprived' or at least at greater risk of deprivation by definition. Numerous social science and medical research studies have used rented or social rented housing as a single convenient and effective proxy for general disadvantage. However, other aspects of housing, including overcrowding and lack of amenities, featured more frequently in deprivation indices (eg Lupton and Tunstall 2003), and housing tenure has not been included in the English Index of Multiple Deprivation or the comparable Welsh or the Scottish indices. Instead homelessness, overcrowding, and disrepair in the private sector were included for England, and overcrowding and lack of central heating in Scotland and Wales (Statistics for Wales 2009, Office of the Chief Statistician for Scotland 2009).

However, some definitions and measures of social exclusion imply that all social housing, social housing tenants are necessarily socially excluded, or at least are at special risk of exclusion. The Labour government's Social Exclusion Unit initially identified residents of at least the 'worst estates' as priorities alongside street homeless people and those excluded from school. The SEU later reverted to the term *"poor neighbourhoods"* (SEU 1998), but the Department of Social Security also reintroduced rented tenure amongst their indicators of social exclusion (DSS 1999).

Researchers have begun to examine wealth as well as income as a dimension of social exclusion. Wealth is distributed *"far more unequally"* than income (Hills et al. 2010 p205), and it is home ownership that forms the main element of UK household wealth. As non-home owners also had fewer savings, pensions and other assets, renters are almost definitionally poor in assets. In 2006-08 social tenants had a median total household wealth of £18,000 compared to almost £300,000 for those buying with a mortgage and £411,000 for outright owners (Hills et al. 2010).

It is at least more true that all or many residents of social housing are 'socially excluded' by definition than would be the case for other concepts such as 'poverty'. Social exclusion, like relative deprivation, incorporates the idea of social norms and 'usual' activities (eg Byrne 2005). For example, one definition states,

> *"An individual is socially excluded if s/he is resident in the UK but for reasons beyond his/her control cannot take part in usual UK resident activities and s/he would like to"* (Burchardt et al. 1999: 30).

Being a home owner and not being a social tenant are 'usual' activities for UK residents from young adulthood onwards, and for most types of households. From its inception in 1986, when the BSA asked respondents to advise a newly-married young couple, both with steady jobs, over ninety per cent of those questioned have advised them to buy a home. Home ownership has not yet been identified as 'essential' in any consensually' derived measures of necessary expenditure and relative poverty, although other aspects of housing such as freedom from damp and an inside toilet were (Gordon et al. 2000). However, by the 2000s, if not before, several writers argued that in the UK the fact of majority homeownership had become embedded in social expectations and 'normalized' (Flint and Rowlands 2003), and that even school children saw homeownership as 'the desirable norm' (Rowlands and Gurney 2000).

Hills showed that in 2004/05 fewer than 10% of social renters in England could afford to buy a home in the lower quartile of prices, fewer than in 1997/98 (Hills 2007). So most social renters cannot take part in the 'usual' activity of being home owner – but do they want to? Many definitions of social exclusion discount chosen statuses. Two divergent groups of attitudinal data can be quoted. The ninety percent of the public advising the newly-married couple to buy from 1986 onwards had to include at least some social tenants. In 1999/2000, 32% of housing association tenants said that in ten years' time, they themselves would most like to be living as owner occupiers (TSA 2009). However, by 2008 the figure was down to 13%. At this point only 6% of social tenants thought that theirs was not a 'good type of housing tenure', while 27% strongly agreed that it was and 51% tended to agree (TSA 2009). Notably, Fletcher et al. found

> *"near universal agreement among all [tenants] that the social rented sector provides a superior residential offer when compared with the private rented sector"* (2008 p14-15).

However, most definitions of social exclusion suggest that tenants' own attitudes are not the only ones to consider here. 'Social exclusion' differs from concepts such as deprivation and poverty because it also incorporates non-material states and processes of disadvantage, including those created through others' opinions. Fifty years ago, Tucker noted,

> *"Amongst private house owner-occupier and tenants, prejudice against council estates can be found everywhere… there is too, a redoubtable fifth column on the estates themselves"* (Tucker 1966: 11)

In 1999 The Survey of English Housing found that 75% of non-council tenants said they would not live in council housing even if they could get it, and only very small proportions of BSA respondents thought the notional young couple might be best off in social housing. These negative attitudes to social housing are reflected in tenants' common preferences for the more anonymous street properties, and policy recommendations to ensure homes in mixed tenure areas are not distinguishable (Bailey et al. 2006).

Has the idea that social housing tenants are social excluded by definition or at least greater risk of being so become more plausible over the period 2000-2011? In 2000 there were 4.0m social renting households in England or 20% of the total, but by 2008 the number was 3.8m or 18% of the total (ONS Labour Force Survey CLG livetables Table 104). It seems likely that the number of local clusters of social housing, however defined, would also have declined. These changes will in themselves have made social tenure slightly less 'normal'.

In context, though, the 2000s were distinguished by relative stability in the tenure system, and the rate of decline of social housing was much faster in the 1980s and 1990s. From 2000 to 2008 the number of home owner households grew only slightly, from 14.3m to 14.6m, and the proportion fell from 71% to 68%, so it could also be argued that home ownership also became slightly less 'normal' over the 2000s.

Private renting filled the gap, and this, particularly when combined with falls in house prices from 2007 and recession in 2008/09, may, arguably have contributed to some 'renormalizing' of rented housing in general. These macroeconomic changes appear to have fed through fairly rapidly into attitudes to tenure. While BSA respondents have constantly advised a newly married couple to buy a home, the proportion advising them to buy as soon as possible or to wait has varied with the economic cycle. However, any small effects here may be outweighed by other determinants of public attitudes, for example the phenomenon of 'chavs', and TV representations such as the largely negative portrayal of the character Vicky Pollard from the BBC TV series *Little Britain* (2003-), and characters in the Channel 4 series *Shameless* (2004-).

The next section considers how much social housing tenants have been socially excluded, using definitions and measures which do not assume exclusion by definition, and how much this has changed in the period 2000-2011.

2. Social housing residents and trends in dimensions of social exclusion 2000-2011

In a series of reports, MacInnes et al. (and other colleagues) monitored individual indicators of dimensions of social exclusion for a decade, including measure of income, working status, health, education, crime, access to services, across society, for special age groups, for groups at risk, and measures of particular gaps and inequalities (2009). In 2009, they found that 25/43 had improved over the period 1998-2008, in 9/43 there was no change, and 9/43 had worsened. The indicators which had changed for the worse included measures of income inequality, unemployment and services and benefits take-up amongst older people. However, progress appeared to slow or staff, and over the period 2003-2008, only 14/43 indicators had improved, while 16/43 had worsened. Similarly, Hills et al. described progress across a range of dimensions of social exclusion, but with many caveats, some slowing of progress in the late 2000s, and substantial gaps remaining at the end of the period (2009).

Did social housing tenants experience the same general trends? Few quantitative measures of social exclusion disaggregate results by housing tenure. Instead we look at some important dimensions of social exclusion and how they affected those in different housing tenures:

1) Income;
2) Employment;
3) Education;
4) Health;
5) Housing quality;
6) Neighbourhood quality;

7) Exclusion from social and political participation and power; and

8) The social exclusion of deprived neighbourhoods.

Examining individual dimensions overlooks the cumulative effects of multiple aspect of exclusion on individuals and areas. Data are given where possible for England. Data cover the 2000-2011 period or as much of this period as possible

1) Income and income inequality

Hills et al. found that while UK income inequality initially fell, overall 1997-99 to 2006-08 it increased on each of a number of measures (2010). However, in terms of incomes,

> *"inequalities between tenures… were actually slightly smaller in 2006-08 than they had been eleven years before"* (2010: 289).

In 1996/97-1998/99, council tenants' median net individual incomes (after housing costs) were 67% of the UK national median, while those of housing association tenants were 69% of the median, and those of people buying with a mortgage were 139% of the median (Hills et al. 2010). In 2000/01 54% of those in social rented homes in Great Britain were in households below 60% of median equivalised household income after housing costs, a widely-used measure of relative poverty, compared to 13% of home owners (Palmer 2010). 57% of housing association tenants and 61% of council tenants in 2000 were living without two or more items that at least half the population deemed necessities, such as two meals a day, a telephone and a warm waterproof coat, compared to 15% of outright owners, 19% of owners with a mortgage and 33% of private renters (Gordon et al. 2000). Social tenants made up 49% of all households defined as 'poor' in this way, 10% of the total being housing association tenants and 39% council tenants. Social tenure remained a significant predictor of having to do without necessities even after controlling for a number of individual factors, including age, ethnicity, gender, region, marital status, household type, employment, employment status, benefit status, and income.

Ten years later, by 2005/06-2007/08, the figures for the median incomes of those in different tenures were very slightly closer. Council tenants' median net individual incomes were 68% of the overall median, housing association tenants' incomes were 72% of the national median and those buying with a mortgage were 134% of the national average respectively (Hills et al. 2010). On this one dimension of social exclusion, then, social tenants' relative incomes had risen very slightly, and on average they were very slightly less 'excluded', as they were slightly less distant from the national median. By 2008/09 the proportion of UK social renters in households below 60% median income had fallen from 54% to 46%, while the proportion of owner occupiers below this poverty line had not changed, so by this measure the social exclusion of social tenants had reduced (Palmer 2010). Private tenants were in an intermediate position but closer to social renters. In addition, despite their lower average incomes, by the late 2000s those in social renting were not more likely to be in 'fuel poverty' (spending more than 10% of their disposal income on heat) than

owner-occupiers, reflecting the small size and good condition of social housing. The tenure group most likely to be fuel-poor was private renters. However, the number of social tenants in fuel poverty grew between 2001-07, largely due to the rising cost of fuel (Palmer 2010). Rising absolute and relative incomes may have reduced the number of social tenants unable to get 'necessities'. Some qualitative evidence supports this. In a group of 20 unpopular estates, several staff reported on decreased housing benefit claims and rent arrears in the early 2000s, and a senior RSL officer thought that by 2005 the difference was palpable:

> *"our customers have more money, they feel better, it is possible to lift people out of poverty"* (Tunstall and Coulter 2006 p49).

However, the change reported by Hills et al., at least, was partly due to an increase in income inequalities *within* rented tenures 1997-99 to 2006-08. For example, the income of the 90th percentile of council tenant and housing association tenant incomes was 5.7 times that of the 10th percentile, while ten years on, the ratio was 6.3 for council tenants and 6.5 for housing association tenants (Hills et al. 2010 p289). Thus while for some tenants the situation had improved, a sub-group of those in social housing tenants had moved further from the national median income.

Overall, evidence suggests significant risk of social exclusion at the start of the period for social housing tenants in terms of both absolute and relative income. Over the period 2000-2011, there was a modest reduction in the proportion of social tenants and their families living on poverty incomes, so social exclusion on this dimension reduced slightly.

2) Employment

The Labour Force Survey shows that in 2000/01 68% of heads of UK social renter households in Great Britain were not working, compared to 33% of heads of home owner households (Survey of English Housing CLG livetables Table S111). This is a very dramatic gap. It also represents a significant change – or what Hills described as a 'collapse' - since the 1980s and 1990s, when the pattern in different tenures was much more similar (Hills 2007 p102). Hills observed that over the 1980s and 1990s, the types of people with higher chances of worklessness had been increasingly concentrated in social housing, but the higher rates of non-employment amongst social rented tenants were not fully explained by controlling for the number of disadvantages people had (Hills 2007). Qualitative evidence suggested that most non-employed heads of households and other residents wanted to work, unless they prioritised child care (Fletcher et al. 2008).

However, over the period 2000s, worklessness amongst social tenants actually reduced, if very slightly. The proportion of non-working social housing heads fell slightly from 68% in 2000/01 to 67% in 2009, while the proportion of non-working owner household heads rose slightly to 35% (MacInnes et al. 2009). This was at least partly due to a reduction in the proportion of retired heads of social renting households, from 37% in 2000/01 to 31% 2007/08, and although unemployment also

fell from 6% of heads of households to 4%, the proportion of heads of households in employment was stable over the period (CLG Survey of English Housing Table S418). In a study of 20 unpopular council estates, by 2005, an RSL manager said, "The estate had really high unemployment; a lot are now working", and the proportion of estate residents who mentioned employment as a priority in 2005 was the same as across the country as a whole (Tunstall and Coulter 2006 p49). Estate residents appeared to be benefiting from the positive economic climate. Data on unemployment claims 2001-09 for postcode sectors containing the estates suggested employment rates continued to increase until the start of recession in 2008 (authors' calculations).

While the rate of social tenant household head non-employment remained generally stable over the 2000s, it became an increasing focus for concern. The Hills report data has been quoted repeatedly (eg Feinstein et al. 2008, Flint 2008, Davies 2008), and there have been several pieces of additional research into the issue (eg Fletcher et al. 2008, Crisp et al. 2009). In 2008, the incoming housing minister Caroline Flint, formerly minister for Employment and Welfare Reform, suggested that new social tenants should sign a commitment to look for work (Flint 2008).

The gap between tenures in terms of employment type and wages has received much less attention. However, in 2006, 49% of heads of employed social renting households were in routine or semi-routine occupations, compared to 24% of private renters and 15% of owners. Only 19% were in professional or higher technical and supervisory jobs, compared to 47% of private renters and 55% of owners (CLG Labour Force Survey livetables Table S115). Between 2001/02 and 2006, there was no change in the distribution between tenures of those in the top two occupational classes, but amongst those in the lowest two occupation classes, the proportion in home ownership fell from 77% to 62%, the proportion in social renting fell from 26% to 23%, and the proportion in private renting rose from 11% to 15%, implying a growing difference in employment type between tenures (authors's calculations from CLG Labour Force Survey livetables Table S115). In 2006-08 55% of the working age adults in social housing in 2006-08 were women (author's calculations from Figure 4.7a in Hills et al. 2010), and the median hourly wage for women living in social housing who were working was just £6.58, little more than the national minimum at £5.52 per hour from 2007, while the figure for men was £7.65 (Hills et al. 2010). The comparable figures for those buying a home with a mortgage were £9.75 for women and £10.64 for men (Hills et al. 2010). This suggests that work literally didn't pay social tenants as well as those in other tenures.

Overall, evidence suggests significant risk of social exclusion for social housing tenants in terms of employment in 2000. Over the period 2000-2011, there were slight improvements in participation in the labour market, at least until the start of the recession in 2008. However, there were also signs of growing exclusion in terms of the quality of jobs held.

3) Education

In 2006-08, 4 per cent of social tenants had degrees, compared to 20 per cent or more for the other tenures, and 46% had qualifications below the equivalent of 5 GCSEs grades A-C or none at all, compared to just over 20% for home owners (Hills et al. 2010). A study of 20 unpopular council estates found a gap in GSCE performance and pupil absence between schools serving the estates and the local and national average in 2004 (Tunstall and Coulter 2006). Tenants interviewed by Fletcher et al. in their study of worklessness mostly had had *"poor school experiences",* resulting in no or few qualifications (2008 p58). The older siblings of Millenium Cohort members who took part in a survey appeared to be similar to contemporaries in other tenures in terms of their interest in education, but were more likely to have problematic relations with teachers (Tunstall et al. 2011). In 2006, only 1% of 5 year old children of social renters had parents in the top quintile of all families on an index of occupational class and education and only 7% had parents in the top two quintiles combined. These 5 year olds scored slightly lower on vocabulary and pattern construction tests than those in other tenures, and some differences remained even after controls for parents' advantage, neighbourhood and a small number of other family and individual characteristics (Tunstall et al. 2011).

Overall, evidence suggests significant risk of social exclusion for social housing tenants in terms of education in 2000. The gap in GCSE results and attendance between schools linked to the 20 unpopular estates and the local and national average reduced 1994-2004 (Tunstall and Coulter 2006). Otherwise, there is little published evidence on trends in educational exclusion by housing tenure.

4) Health

The Labour Force Survey found that more than a fifth of men of working age in social housing in 2006-08 were not working due to illness or disability, compared to about a twentieth in other tenures (Hills et al. 2010). A study of 20 unpopular estates found much higher levels of limiting long-term illness amongst tenants in 2001 than in surrounding areas and across the nation (Tunstall and Coulter 2006). Fletcher et al. noted high rates of physical and mental ill health amongst tenants they interviewed in 2007, which were a bar to work for many (2008).

Overall, evidence suggests significant risk of social exclusion for social housing tenants in terms of health. There was a slight increase in the proportion of heads of social renting households of working age who were permanently sick or disabled between 2000/01 and 2007/08, but otherwise there is little evidence of trends over time.

5) Housing quality

Social housing lags behind home ownership on many aspects of quality, and behind private renting for some. In 2007/08 48% of social tenants' homes were in the lowest council tax band, a measure of capital value incorporating housing and neighbourhood quality, compared to 13% of those of owner occupiers and 28% of private renters (CLG Survey of English Housing Livetables S122). In 2007/08, 82% of social tenants

were satisfied with their accommodation, compared to 96% of owner occupiers, and 85% of private renters (CLG Survey of English Housing livetables Table S129) or 81% (TSA 2009) were satisfied with the services they received from their landlord.

In 2007/08 59% of social rented homes were houses or bungalows rather than flats, compared to 92% of homes in owner occupation and 61% of private rented homes (CLG Survey of English Housing Livetables S120). In 2006/07 72% had gardens compared to 92% of owner occupiers and 63% of private renters, and in 2004/05 65% of social renters had double glazing compared to 76% of owner occupiers. In 2005/06-07/08 7% of social renting households were overcrowded, compared to 1% of owners and 6% of private renters (CLG Survey of English Housing Livetables S127), and in 2007/08 on average social renters had 2.4 rooms per person, compared to 3.1 for home owners and 2.5 for private renters (CLG Survey of English Housing Livetables S126). In 2005/06 88% of social rented homes had central heating in all living rooms and bedrooms, very similar to other tenures (CLG Survey of English Housing Livetables S128). However, in 2008 73% met the 'Decent Homes' standard. This involved meeting the current statutory minimum standard, being in reasonable repair, with reasonably modern facilities and services and providing a reasonable degree of thermal comfort. The 73% figure for social housing compared to 64% of private sector homes in the same year (House of Commons CLG Committee 2010).

Over the period 2000-2011, social housing had caught up on several measures. The proportion of special renting households with homes in the lowest council tax band fell, the proportion with central heating grew (CLG Survey of English Housing Livetables S421). Tenants' satisfaction with landlord services increased slightly between 2000/01 and 2007/08 (CLG Survey of English Housing livetables Table S129). The gap reduced between social housing and home ownership in terms of the number of rooms per person, having double glazing and gardens reduced. In 2008, according to the English House Condition Survey, the proportion of social rented homes meeting the Decent Homes Standard grew from 61% to 73%, and a net 578,000 homes or 14% of the total social housing stock and 35% of non-decent social rented homes were improved 2001-2008, while landlord returns show even bigger changes. This was a substantial change for the group of more than 1m people who were directly affected (CLG livetables Table 119). Between 1995 and 2005, 5 out of 6 unpopular council estates with structural and design problems saw them resolved through redevelopment and investment, and a resident in one of these estates suggested the new design had reduced stigma: *"it looks much better, like a normal house"* (Tunstall and Coulter 2006 p36). On the other hand, there was a slight increase in overcrowding in social housing, and despite apparent objective improvements in conditions, the proportion of social tenants satisfied with their accommodation fell from 90% (ahead of private renting) in 2000/01 to 82% in 2007/08, (behind private renting) (CLG Survey of English Housing Livetables S120, S421, S129).

Overall, evidence suggests that at the start of the period, social housing tenants were at greater risk of poor housing quality especially when compared to home ownership. However, over the period 2000-2011 there were major reductions in gaps between the

tenures, particularly on the more easily alterable features of homes, and the differences in the proportion of homes in different tenures which were modestly 'decent' ended entirely.

6) Neighbourhood quality

In 2007/08 80% of social renters were satisfied with their local area, compared to 89% of owner occupiers and 97% of private renters (Survey of English Housing livetables Table S707). In 2001/02, social renters were more likely than those in other tenures to say that local leisure services, job opportunities, crime, rubbish collection and appearance were bad than those in other tenures (Survey of English Housing livetables Table S726?A7.21). People in areas dominated by social housing were more likely to name serious problems in their areas and to be dissatisfied with the neighbourhood than others (Palmer, et al. 2008). Local authority tenants were less likely than those in other tenures to agree that their local area was a place where people get on well together, even after controlling for numerous individual and area factors (Laurence and Heath 2008). The majority of parents of 5 year olds living in social housing in 2006 did not feel that their neighbourhood was 'excellent' or 'good' for raising children, in sharp contrast to those in other tenures, and were more likely to be concerned about crime and racist attacks (Tunstall et al. 2011). Older siblings of these 5 year olds, median age 12, in social housing were least likely to enjoy living in their areas, most likely to be concerned about crime, and most likely to have been victims of crime and anti-social behaviour compared to children in other tenures. On the other hand, in 2006 social housing neighbourhoods provided 5 year olds and their families with opportunities similar to those of other tenures, in terms of the access to a range of services, including parks and playgrounds, a place at their first choice of primary school, and local family and friends (Tunstall et al. 2011).

Over the period 2001/02-2006/07, the proportion of social tenants saying that crime was a problem in their area fell sharply from 62% to 45%, and the gap between tenures reduced (Survey of English Housing livetables Table S711). Many social housing areas saw capital investment in the environment, health centres or public areas, as well as additional spending on education, health, housing and other services (Tunstall and Coulter 2006, Taylor et al. 2007, AMION 2010, Batty et al. 2010). The proportion of people (of all tenures and in all neighbourhoods) who though that vandalism and hooliganism, graffiti, crime, dogs, litter and rubbish were a problem in their areas declined steadily throughout the 1990s and 2000s (Survey of English Housing, 2009). In 20 unpopular council estates nearly three quarters of local housing managers thought estate conditions had improved 1995-2005, as did the vast majority of residents and residents' groups (Tunstall and Coulter 2006). Despite these changes, the proportion of all social tenants satisfied with their areas increased only very slightly, but the gap between tenures also reduced 2000/01-2007/08 (Survey of English Housing livetables Table S707).

Overall, at the start of the period social housing tenants were significantly more likely to experience poor neighbourhood quality than people in other tenures, especially

when compared to home owners. However, there were major reductions in gaps between tenures over the period 2000-2011.

7) Social and political participation and access to power

Many definitions of social exclusion include social and political participation, but given the shortage of data, few measures do. However, in the case of social tenants, there is evidence on trends in participation in consultation about housing.
In 2010, social landlord regulators felt that *"tenant participation… is normal practice in a way it was not ten years ago"* (TSA/AC 2010 p3). Over the period 2000-2010, there was little change in the proportion who had taken part in meetings or fora, but a slight increase in satisfaction with opportunities for participation (Survey of English Housing livetables Table 129). The proportion of council tenants and private tenants saying their landlord did not take their views into account reduced slightly, although there was little chance for housing association tenants (TSA/AC 2010). The proportion of a group of 20 unpopular council estates with active residents' groups fell in the early 2000s, but in most cases residents felt this was because conditions had improved (Tunstall and Coulter 2006).

Overall, this suggests some increases in social and political involvement with landlords via conventional tenant participation. There is little evidence on other forms of social and political participation, and it could be argued that some of the major developments for individual landlords and social housing as a whole 2000-2011 such as landlord mergers, centralization of management, and continued stock transfer from councils to housing associations went ahead without a clear mandate from tenants.

8) Various measures of social exclusion across deprived neighbourhoods

Data on the social exclusion of 'deprived areas' can give some idea of trends for social housing tenants for variables not available otherwise. Between 2001-2006/07 changes for these areas were "*largely positive"* (AMION 2010 p22). Gaps between more and less deprived LSOAs nationwide on education at age 14 tests reduced (AMION 2010). In the New Deal for Communities areas there was positive change on 32 of 36 indicators used, with the biggest improvements in resident's attitudes to their areas (Batty et al. 2010).

However, between 2001 and 2007, gaps between more and less deprived LSOAs on crime were mixed (AMION 2010). Qualitative research shows that gaps remained, for example in the quality of environmental services (Hastings, et al. 2005) and public transport (Lucas et al. 2008). Hills et al. record substantial gradients by neighbourhood deprivation for income, employment, health, and education (2010).

The proportion of all people claiming out of work benefits who were located in the 10 per cent of wards with the highest rates of claim did not change from 1998–2003 or 2003-08 (Palmer et al. 2008). Of the 600 postcode sectors in the top 10 per cent in England for unemployment in recession in 1985, nearly half were also in the top 10 per cent 1990, 1993, 2005 and 2009 (Tunstall with Fenton 2009). When measured by the Gini coefficient, inequality in distribution of JSA claim rates between postcode

sectors reduced somewhat in recessions, but grew whenever there was growth including most of the period 2000-2011. Between 2001 and 2007, gaps between more and less deprived LSOAs on mortality actually increased, although this may be partly due to patterns of mobility rather than worse outcomes for individuals (AMION 2010).

Deprived neighbourhoods with substantial proportions of social housing tenants fared worse than other deprived neighbourhoods. They were less likely to have seen improvements on employment, education, health and crime 2001-06/07 and more likely to have seen declines, and the effect was stronger for social housing (AMION 2010 p45). However the link between high levels of social housing in a neighbourhood and greater increases in Job Seeker's Allowance claims in recessions disappeared when region, past claimant rate, sector of employment, proportion of residents without a car, ethnicity and qualifications were taken into account, suggesting that poorer progress for areas dominated by social housing was likely to be due to the characteristics of their populations, rather than due to any 'tenure or neighbourhood effect (Tunstall with Fenton 2009).

Overall, this suggests significant social exclusion of deprived areas and their residents, with some reductions over the period 2000-10. However change was faster in deprived areas that did not have concentrations of social housing, and recession 2008-9 may have eroded gains.

Summary

By 2011, social tenants were less likely to live in a non-decent home than residents of private sector housing. MacInnes at al. found that eligible pensioners in social housing were more likely to claim pension credit than others (2009). However, measures on which social renters do better than those in other tenures are rare. If social renters were excluded or at greater risk of being excluded than others in 2000, that remained the case in 2011.

However, there is some evidence that gaps between social tenants and those in other tenures reduced over the period 2000-2011. In terms of housing and neighbourhood quality, social tenants have experienced considerable improvement. In terms of income and employment, and participation on landlord issues at least, there has been some improvement 2000-2011. There is little information on trends in education and health. Overall, social tenants appear to have done less well than residents of deprived areas not dominated by social housing. Finally, any 'definitional' social exclusion of social tenants may have worsened.

Of course, these are average trends and there may be marked differences in the experience of different tenants. There are signs of differences between tenants of councils, Registered Providers (or 'housing associations') and ALMOs on employment (Hills et al. 2010), satisfaction with home and neighbourhood and involvement (eg TSA 2009). Some definitions of social exclusion might state that even if average outcomes improve for a group such as social tenants, social exclusion

may increase not only if another group (such as those in other tenures) improves faster, but also if a subgroup experiences no change or a worsening position.

3. Social housing and social exclusion: estate regeneration and other relevant policy 2000-2011

As noted, there is a wealth of research describing individual social housing and neighbourhood regeneration policies and their impacts. How much can we attribute changes in the social exclusion of social housing tenants to any kind of policy, and how much to housing and regeneration policy in particular? Asked to identify the most important policy change affecting a particular estate in 2005, one senior RSL manager named not any aspect of housing or regeneration policy but tax credits, part of mainstream fiscal and benefits policy (Tunstall and Coulter 2006).

From 2000 to 2008 the economy grew and overall employment increased. This must form a substantial part of the explanation for reduced social exclusion for social tenants in terms of income and employment. However, regeneration projects within the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal, seem likely to have helped social tenants benefit from these opportunities. For example, social landlords spent £200m on worklessness initiatives 2003-08 (Cope 2008). From 2007-2010 a Working Neighbourhoods fund of £1.5bn took the place of most earlier renewal programmes. There is also direct evidence of the impact of neighbourhood regeneration on employment and other dimensions of social exclusion affecting social tenants. Gaps between neighbourhoods within local authorities on employment, education, and crime reduced more 2001-07 in areas affected by the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal than in similar areas without these programmes (AMION 2010).

There is also evidence of the impact of mainstream housing policy over the period. Social tenants' incomes were slightly less far behind those in other tenures before housing costs have been taken into account (Hills et al. 2010 p245). This means that spending on social housing (to create subsidised rents and via housing benefit) was in itself redistributive and acted to reduce the social exclusion of tenants in terms of income (Sefton et al. 2009), although Hills asked whether the subsidy that goes into social housing could do more, for example to encourage tenant employment (2007). The TSA and the Audit Commission interpreted the growth in opportunities for social *tenant* participation as

> *"lead by policy changes, the growth of a consumer culture and the failings of some landlords"* (TSA/AC 2010 p3).

Increased regulatory pressure on local authorities, ALMOs and housing associations and punishment of poor performance by removing access to options and funds forced through improvements in housing quality (House of Commons CLG Committee 2010).

However, most of these programmes were neither widespread or big enough to have made a substantial contribution to reduced social exclusion for the average social tenant. The Neighbourhood Renewal Fund reached a quarter of local authorities, although they were the more populous ones and ones with higher proportion of social housing. Its budget of £0.8bn worked out at under £10 per resident per year, and even if the other public funds drawn into projects are included, spending only totalled about £20/head/yr (author's calculations from Wong et al. 2010). In addition, NRF spending on housing and the environment peaked at 14% of the total budget in 2005/06 (AMION 2010). Other projects only reached a tiny minority of all social tenants. The New Deal for Communities reached probably one percent of all social renting households, but in the 39 areas where it operated it spent £1.7bn or about £4,000/head/yr, and was able to *"transform"* neighbourhoods and narrow the gap between them and other areas (Barry et al. 2010: 6). Others involved limited total budgets as well as limited sites, such as Housing Market Renewal, Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders, and Neighbourhood Wardens.

The great exception was the Decent Homes programme, more strictly part of mainstream housing policy than an estate regeneration scheme. It affected vastly the greatest proportion of all social tenants of all regeneration policies, and involved substantial direct expenditure which fed through directly into reducing social exclusion on the hosing quality dimension. Its budget of £40bn amounted to about £10,000 for every social rented home, and paid for 1m new central heating systems, rewiring in 740,000 homes, 700,000 new kitchens and 525,000 new bathrooms (House of Commons CLG Committee 2010). The English House Condition Survey shows that a net 578,000 homes or 14% of the total social housing stock and 35% of non-decent homes were improved 2001-2008, while landlord returns show higher numbers (CLG livetables Table119).

The much greater progress on reaching the Decent Homes standard 2000-2011 in the social rented sector rather than in the private sector demonstrates what housing policy can achieve (House of Commons CLG Committee 2010). On the other hand, the Mixed Communities demonstration projects demonstrated the limits of local authority efforts to raise money and have impact without central government funding, based on cross-subsidy from property development and vulnerable to recession (Lupton et al. 2010). Some studies assessing the whole period have concluded that both economic growth and regeneration policy had effects, and probably complemented each other (Griggs, et al. 2008). Some suggest that over the 2000s regeneration projects were less salient than mainstream housing and economic policies (Tunstall and Coulter 2006), or that economic growth and market forces were more important to neighbourhood fortunes than policy (Meen et al. 2005; Bramley et al. 2007). Factors that were associated with greater neighbourhood change 2001-06/07 included policy, but also resident skills, population turnover, the sub-regional economy, and accessibility to lower-skilled jobs (AMION 2010).

4. Conclusion

By some definitions, social housing, social housing tenants are necessarily 'socially excluded', or at special risk of being so. By all the measures considered here, at the start of the period in 2000, high proportions of social housing tenants were socially excluded and social tenants overall were at greater risk of being excluded. By 2011, there had been were modest reductions in some dimensions of social exclusion: income, employment, and neighbourhood quality. There had been a complete closing of the gap between tenures on basic housing quality. On the other hand there were some signs of increased concentrations of disability, and little information on other aspects of health or on education. There is evidence that housing and regeneration policy contributed to this change, but that its salience should not be overstated, and the economy and mainstream housing policy were also important.

Overall, many commentators on inequality, social exclusion and regeneration have concluded that while there was progress over the New Labour period, which demonstrated what concerted policy effort can achieve when combined with a positive economic climate, the overall results were modest. Many have concluded both that underlying exclusionary processes such as and that there could have been yet greater policy effort. For example, Hills et al. argued that neighbourhood renewal *"needs renewal"* (2010 p402) However, Palmer et al. said,

> *"the successes of the last ten years need to be stressed in order to confront the damaging idea that everything always gets worse and nothing can be done about it"* (2008 p19).

However, a new government in 2010 and the constraint of low growth and a budget deficit have meant a more radical shift in agendas. Batty et al. pointed out that even the well-funded NDC represented an addition of just 10% on mainstream public expenditure in its areas (2010). The programme showed that funding changes of this scale could 'transform' neighbourhoods, although it affected just 39 in all. However, over the period 2011-2015, almost every neighbourhood nationwide will be affected by 'negative NDCs', real terms public sector spending cuts of considerably more than 10%. While pondering subtle adaptations to estate regeneration policy, we should now expect to see transformations of NDC scale, but in a negative direction, affecting every neighbourhood and housing estate nationwide. Some writers have predicted a reversal of progress, growing inequalities and even public disorders (Power 2009).

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