

Briefing notes

Addressing topical issues in UK rental markets

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In the latest in our series of **Briefing notes** we explore the question of **how important community is to renters**.

The stereotype of renters in the UK is that they are a transient population with little emotional investment in the home they rent or their local neighbourhood. **Using the results from a survey of over 8,000 renters conducted by Dataloft on behalf of the Property Academy in July 2021**, we investigated the importance attached to community by renters. We also looked at just how transient renters are in the UK.

The experience of lockdown highlighted the importance of neighbours, local amenities and community activities. Many column inches have been dedicated to the need for increased space in the home and more broadly, the desire for open space in the form of parks, countryside and coastline. A more subtle consequence of spending more time at, or close to, home is how much people have come to value the communities in which they live. The weight given to community is harder to quantify, which is where a survey, with a large number of respondents is valuable.

Community

How important is community to renters?

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Dataloft is an independent consultancy, delivering intelligent, data-driven insight on housing market economics.

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dRMA Dataloft Rental Market Analytics

Dataloft Rental Market Analytics (DRMA) is the UK's largest and most comprehensive single source of achieved rents. It includes over 5 million references, with around 30,000 new tenancies and 50,000 new tenants added each month. Extensive rental data and insight is available semi-automated or in conjunction with bespoke Dataloft Consult analysis.

What does the **evidence** say?

Pleasant neighbours

- **91%** of respondents consider **pleasant neighbours** to be **very important** or **important**. It was highest for 35 to 44-year-olds and 65 years+. Furthermore, 86% of 18 to 24-year-olds rated having pleasant neighbours as important or very important.

Local community

- **79%** of renters rated **local community** as **very important** or **important** when searching for a new rental home. It was higher in two age bands: 35 to 44-year-olds and 65 years+.

Sense of community

- **Sense of community in the local area** would persuade **72%** of renters **to rent longer**. It was slightly higher (74%) for 35 to 44-year-olds (typically at the family life stage). **42%** of renters would **choose a property more quickly**.
- **Sense of community within the building** would persuade **69%** of renters **to rent longer** but the proportion was even higher (74%) amongst 18 to 24-year-olds. **41%** would **choose quicker**. Although renters would **stay longer** where there is a sense of community in the local area and in the building, **few would pay more**, (7% and 5% respectively).

Long-term renters

- Nearly a quarter of respondents (23%) had rented for 10 years or more, and a further 19% had rented for 5 to 10 years. 44% identify as **long-term renters** (31% cannot afford to buy their own home, 14% choose to rent with no plans to buy).

91% of renters value

pleasant neighbours

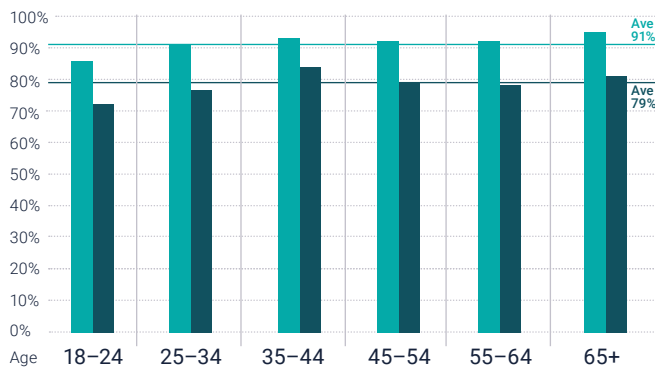
as very important or important

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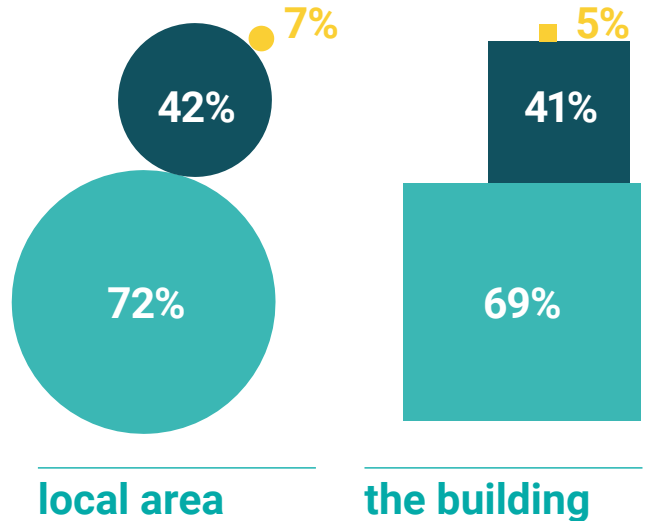
There were variations by age group



Dataloft Rental Market Analytics

Sense of community

Renters will rent for longer and choose properties quicker but will not pay more



Dataloft, Property Academy Renter Survey 2021

What does this mean?

The survey was conducted across the whole private rental market but has important implications for designing and delivering build to rent stock.

Renters move, on average, every 4.3 years, compared to 17.4 years for owner-occupiers. As such, they are likely to be more open to settling into a new community.

As well as curating events, it is important to design common spaces that encourage spontaneous encounters, whether co-worker space, parcel collection lockers, secure bike storage or the gym. In communal gardens, picnic tables, BBQs, or allotments can help.

A dedicated app, Facebook or WhatsApp group can facilitate communication ranging from news about events to requests to borrow equipment from a neighbour.

Renters who have made friends within a building are more likely to renew their tenancies. Anecdotal evidence from a provider during lockdown was that their pet friendly policy encouraged residents to form friendships through dog walking and led to renewals.

HomeViews 2020 found a significant positive correlation between higher scoring schemes and communal facilities, events, pet-friendly policies and, management teams fostering a community feel. 12% of residents mentioned 'sense of community' or 'knowing their neighbours' in reviews.

Operators should also consider the benefits of integration with the wider local community by opening-up some of the communal facilities to non-residents for a fee.