

Generation Rent – Covid19 Renter Survey April 2020

To better understand renters' experiences of and concerns arising from the pandemic, Generation Rent ran a short survey on Survey Gizmo between 22 and 30th April 2020. We invited renters to take part via our mailing list, online renter forums and social media. In total we had 1542 responses.

We asked respondents 12 questions, focusing on their housing tenure and circumstances, income and employment status, and their experiences and concerns around the coronavirus pandemic. A summary of Questions 1 to 11 are set out below, along with selected breakdowns. Question 12 asked "Would you like to tell us anything else about your experience of renting during the pandemic?" We are looking at how to present this data.

Note: we made a distinction between private tenants who started their tenancy before and after 1997 – most of the latter are assured shorthold tenants (ASTs) and therefore subject to Section 21 "no-fault" evictions; most of the former are tenants under a different regime and have greater protections from eviction.

Q1. What best describes your living situation when the lockdown was announced?	Respondents	% (n=1542)
Private tenant (tenancy started in 1997 or later)	1029	67%
Private tenant (tenancy started before 1997)	100	6%
Council/housing association tenant	318	21%
Lodger	25	2%
I rent university-owned accommodation	12	1%
Other (e.g. property guardian, licensee)	53	3%

Q2. Who do you live with? Please select all that apply	Respondents	% (n=1542)
Partner	624	40%
Children	459	30%
Other relatives	96	6%
Housemates I know well	189	12%
Housemates I don't know well	91	6%
Landlord	21	1%
I live alone	428	28%

Q3. Has your income been affected by coronavirus? (E.g. through loss of work, sick leave, being furloughed, caring for relatives.)	Respondents	% (n=1542)
No, I'm still on my full income	329	21%
No, I was not working before the crisis started	340	22%
Yes, I have lost all my income	291	19%
Yes, I have lost some of my income	577	37%

Q4. How worried are you about not being able to pay rent in the next six months?	Respondents	% (n=1542)
I am already behind on rent	233	15%
Not worried	353	23%
Somewhat worried	498	32%
Very worried	452	29%

Q5. Do you receive benefits that pay for any of your rent?	Respondents	% (n=1542)
No	873	57%
I applied for Universal Credit but cannot receive it	58	4%
I am in the process of applying for Universal Credit	113	7%
Yes, I receive Universal Credit/Housing Benefit that pays for some of my rent	371	24%
Yes, I receive Universal Credit/Housing Benefit that pays my full rent	123	8%

Q6. Have you asked your landlord for a lower rent?	All	% (n=1542)	All who have lost income	% (n=864)	% who lost income and approached landlord (n=327)
Yes, we have agreed a lower rent that I don't need to pay back	31	2%	24	3%	7%
Yes, we have agreed a lower rent but I need to pay it back later	87	6%	82	9%	25%
Yes, but my landlord has demanded the full rent	224	15%	182	21%	56%
Yes, but I am waiting for a response	49	3%	39	5%	12%
I have not asked but I am thinking about doing so	322	21%	217	25%	N/A
I have not asked and probably won't	811	53%	320	37%	N/A

Q7. How worried are you about being evicted in the next 6 months?	All	% (n=1542)	ASTs somewhat or very worried about paying rent	% (n=692)	ASTs not worried about paying rent	% (n=178)
I have been asked to move out since March 26	11	1%	5	1%	3	2%
I was asked to move out before March 26	23	1%	10	1%	4	2%
Not worried	592	38%	183	26%	128	72%
Slightly worried	512	33%	314	45%	36	20%
Very worried	397	26%	179	26%	7	4%

Q8. How worried are you about being evicted in the next 6 months?	ASTs on reduced income and asked landlord for lower rent	% (n=257)	ASTs on reduced income and did not ask landlord for lower rent	% (n=393)
I have been asked to move out since March 26	1	0%	5	1%
I was asked to move out before March 26	3	1%	7	2%
Not worried	48	19%	99	25%
Slightly worried	76	30%	164	42%
Very worried	129	50%	117	30%

Q9. Have you been planning to move house since mid-March?	All respondents	% (n=1542)
I agreed a new tenancy/move-in date but it has now been cancelled	5	0%
I agreed a new tenancy/move-in date but it has now been cancelled	12	1%
I have agreed a new tenancy but have not moved yet	17	1%
I have moved home since lockdown started	65	4%
No	1053	68%
No, but another member of my household has been planning to move out	53	3%
Yes, and I am currently looking	127	8%
Yes, but I have stopped looking	109	7%
Other	89	6%

Q10. Have you paid money for a home you haven't moved into yet? Select all that apply	Respondents who had found a new home but had not moved	% (n=34)
Yes, a holding deposit (up to 1 week's rent) which has not been returned	4	12%
Yes, a holding deposit which has been returned	0	0%
Yes, a security deposit (up to 5 weeks' rent)	7	21%
Yes, rent	2	6%
No	21	62%
Other (buying home)	2	6%

Q11. How confident are you that you and other members of your household are able to safely follow public health advice at home?	All	% (n=1542)
Don't know	62	4%
Not confident	145	9%
Somewhat confident	506	33%
Very confident	821	53%

Q2. Who do you live with? Please select all that apply	Not confident about safely following public health advice at home	Total in household type	%
Partner	48	624	8%
Children	44	459	10%
Other relatives	8	96	8%
Housemates I know well	25	189	13%
Housemates I don't know well	33	91	36%
Landlord	4	21	19%
I live alone	34	428	8%

Q12. In which part of the UK did you live when the lockdown was announced?	Respondents	% (n=1534)
East Midlands	78	5%
East of England	90	6%
Greater London	401	26%
North East England	82	5%
North West England	170	11%
Northern Ireland	6	0%
Scotland	42	3%
South East England	268	17%
South West England	188	12%
Wales	31	2%
West Midlands	77	5%
Yorkshire & Humber	101	7%