



Office for Health
Improvement
& Disparities



Local government mechanisms to improve the health and wellbeing of tenants in private rented housing: a realist evaluation in the South West

Dr Rachael McClatchey

Office of Health Improvement and Disparities (South West) & University of the West of England

With many thanks to the research team:

Lucy Davies, Office of Health Improvement and Disparities (South West)

Claire Ferraro, Public Health Specialty Training Programme

Ellis Turner, University of West of England

Jennifer Harris, Tenancy Deposit Scheme

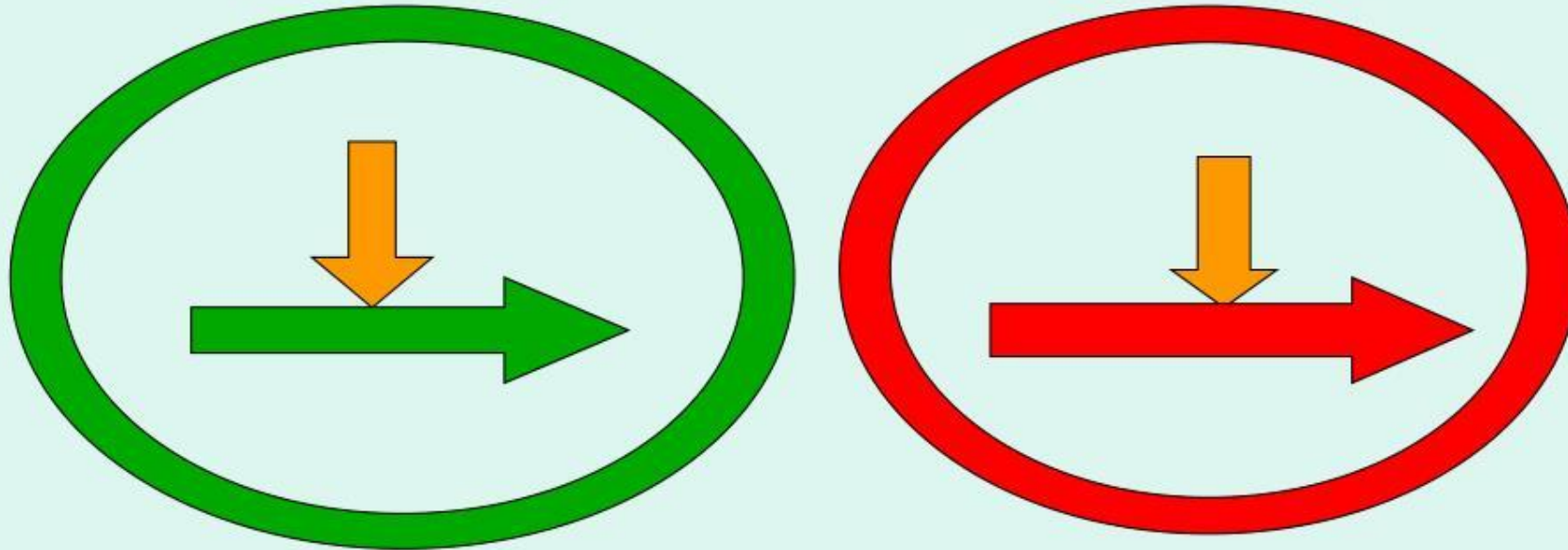


Image source: Liverpool Echo

Realist Evaluation: Mechanisms, Contexts and Outcomes

Don't ask 'what works?'

Rather, investigate: 'what works for whom in what circumstances?'

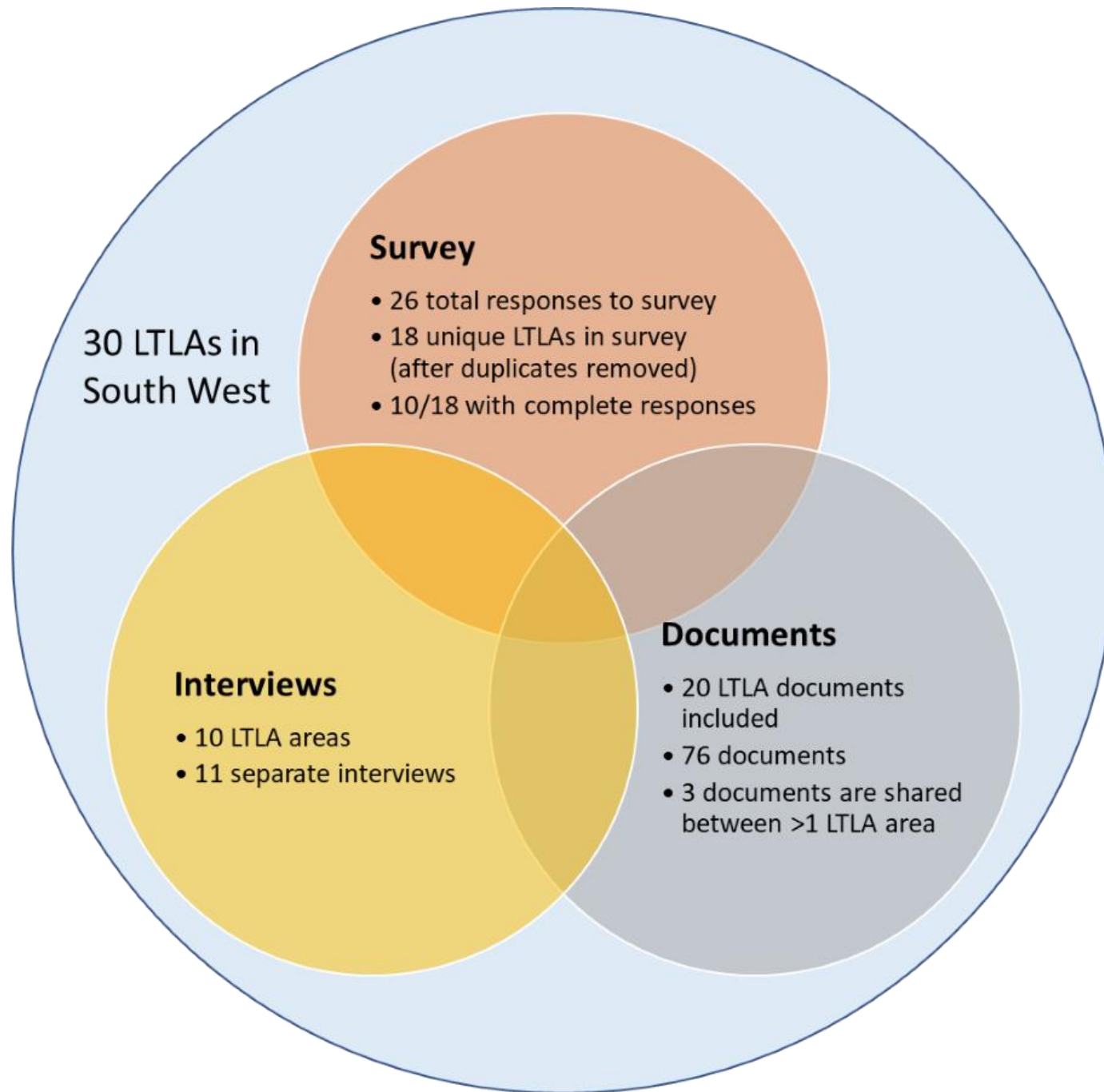


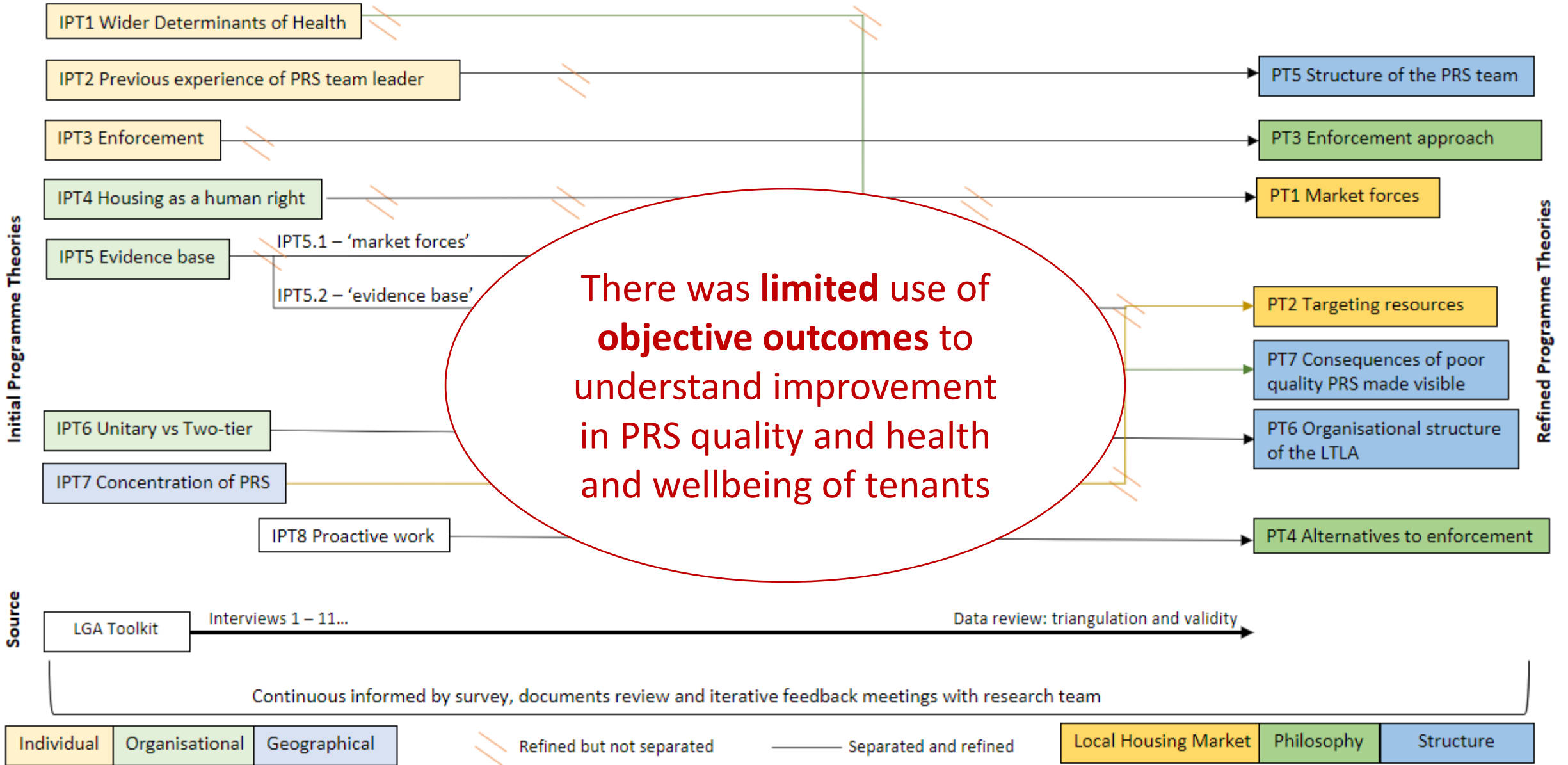
The same programme mechanism will have
different outcomes in different contexts

Method



Results





CONTEXTS

- local **demands** on housing supply (e.g. refugee resettlement, high student populations)
- **location, type** and **density** of PRS housing
- **data** use and sharing arrangements
- **team leaders** individualised approaches
- **structure, size, funding, contracts** and **political** support within Local Government
- local **understanding** of;
 - market forces influencing landlords
 - links between poor quality PRS housing and health inequalities
 - links between poor quality PRS housing and wider societal issues (homelessness, zero carbon commitments, crime, waste management, antisocial behaviour, illicit drug markets)

MECHANISMS

- type of **enforcement** (hard/soft and proactive/ reactive)
- use of **non-enforcement** approaches
- ability to **target** resources
- **investment** in home adaptations
- clear **information** about links between housing and health on council resources
- **strategic vision**
- multi-agency **partnerships**

Local Housing Market

CONTEXT

Concentrated PRS

e.g. inner city, deprived, student

Dispersed PRS

e.g. rural

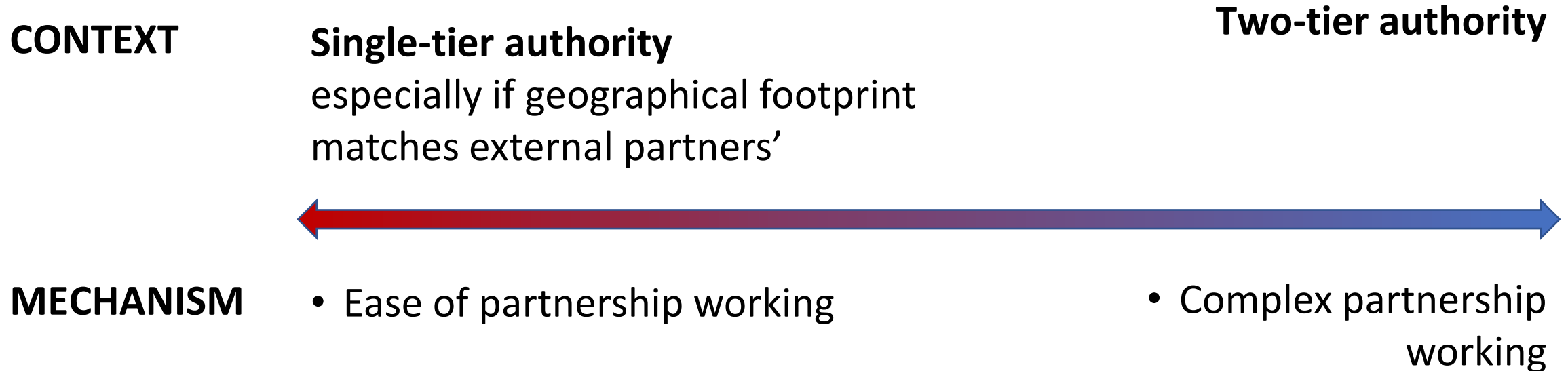
MECHANISM

- Proactive enforcement (e.g. reach threshold to introduce selective or additional licensing) and non-enforcement activities
- Ability to target resources

- May be more reliant on complaint-led enforcement activities
- More challenging to target resources



Structure



No clear association between mechanisms used and;

- Structure and location of PRS team within Local Government
- PRS staff being able to articulate an accurate understanding of wider determinants of health

Philosophy

CONTEXT

- Political support
- PRS team leader previous experience
- Limited resources
- Vulnerable 'silent' tenants understood
- PRS properties where enforcement is more difficult to apply e.g. Air BnB's, guardianship schemes



MECHANISM

'Hard' Enforcement
Improvements in the worst quality PRS

Alternatives to enforcement
Improving education and engagement, sharing good practice, supporting tenant groups, introducing landlord forums, accreditation schemes or star-rating systems, and establishing referral pathways between partners

Recommendations

- Mechanisms that bring about a positive outcome in managing PRS housing are unlikely to be universal; they depend on the context which differs across place and over time
- This highlights the need for strategies to be **tailored considering the local context**
- Increase ability to demonstrate **outcomes** in the PRS
- Increase support for LAs to use low-level geographical **data** to target resources and find PRS properties and areas of concern
- Understand the interplay between **climate and health** agendas, such as health outcomes associated with energy efficiency interventions
- Impact of Renters (Reform) Bill

Thank you

Please get in touch with any questions
rachael.mcclatchey@dhsc.gov.uk