

# Research into provision of floor coverings in social housing

 Altair



 Longleigh  
Foundation

A grant-making partner for the social housing sector

# Intro – Altair, Longleigh and me



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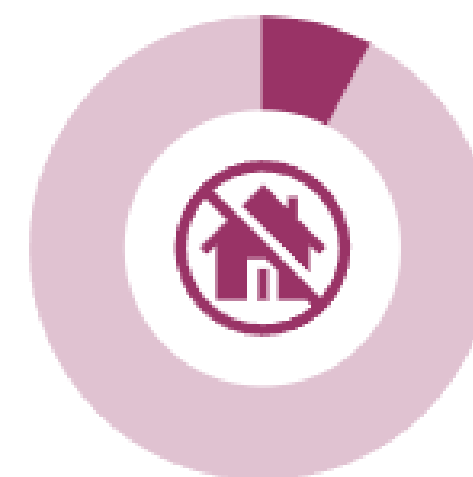
# Quick overview of social housing

- 4.9 million social rented homes in Britain as at March 2020 (with 4m in England)
- Majority owned by private registered providers (2.9m) with remainder local authorities
- More likely than other tenures to be in lower income brackets - 37% social rented households have gross income less than £400 per week (19% PRS, 25% owned outright, 5% buying with a mortgage) (FRS 22/23)
- In UK, 70% social renters received one or more income-related benefits, over three times higher than for all households (mainly housing benefit and council tax reduction) (FRS 22/23)
- In England, 43.3% of social rented households are in full or part-time work (English Housing Survey, 21/22)
- Due to scarcity of social housing, it is allocated to those in greatest housing need, meaning tenants more likely to have vulnerability when compared to other tenures



**54%**

of social rented households have at least one household member with a long-term illness or disability



**8%**

of social renters have experienced homelessness



**18%**

of social rented households are lone parent households

Source: English Housing Survey, 21/22

# About the research

# Aims and method

Investigate the impact of, and opportunities for, social housing provider's flooring standards in Wales, Scotland and England, keeping tenant voice at the heart.



# Outputs

Three learning reports and one final report.

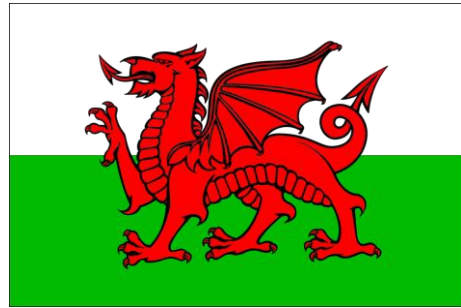


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# Floor coverings practice

# Disparity in standards



**Wales – standards and funding**



**Scotland – funding**



**England – limited standards and no funding**



**Altair's survey of social landlords found that 90% of general needs homes do not have floor coverings in all rooms at point of let.**



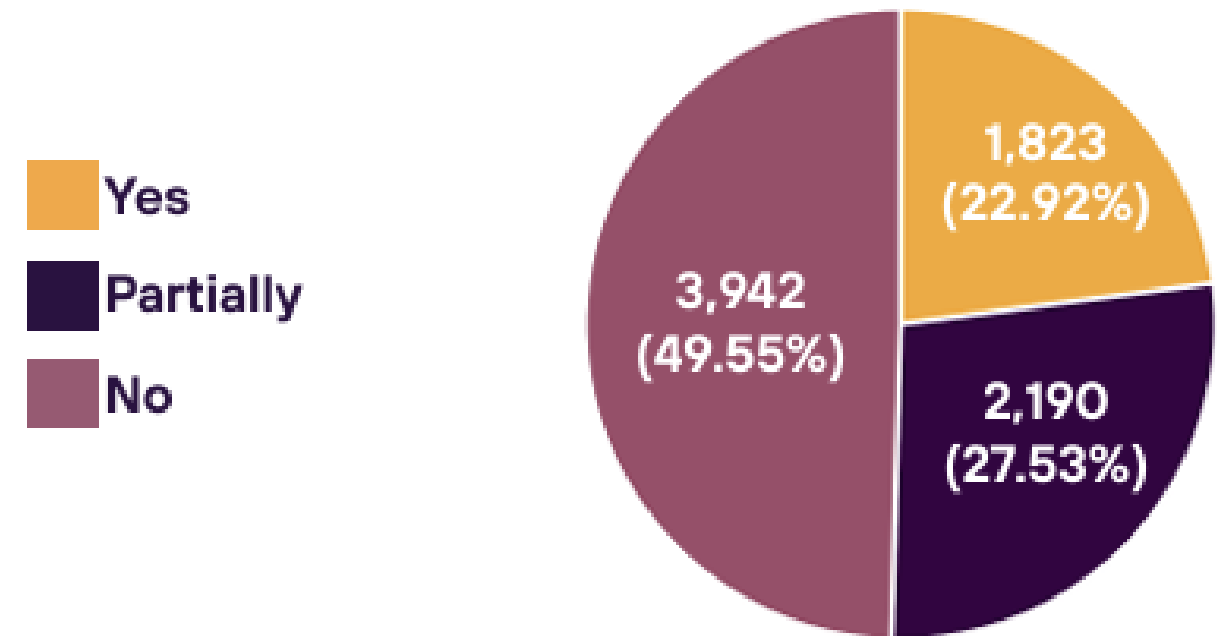
# How many people are affected?

Our survey with MRI Software found **almost four in five tenants move into a home with no or partial floor coverings** (77%, n=7,955) – **9% still living without floor coverings in all rooms**

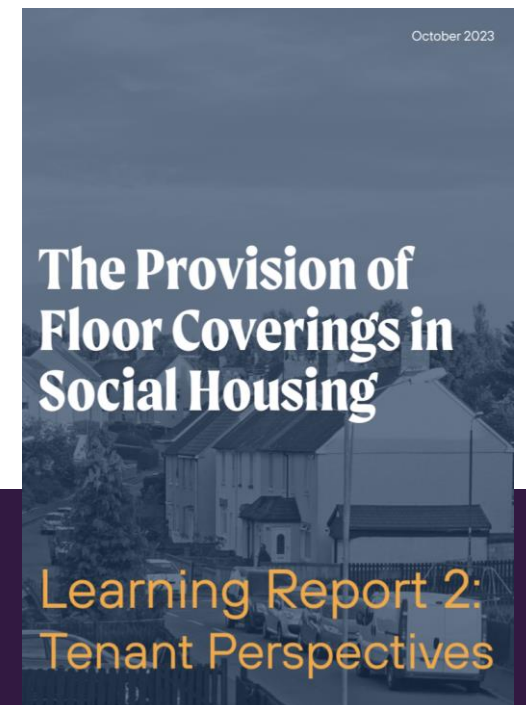
Bedrooms, living room and hallway were most likely to not have any floor covering

An estimated **760,000 adults in social housing** may be living without floor coverings (End Furniture Poverty)

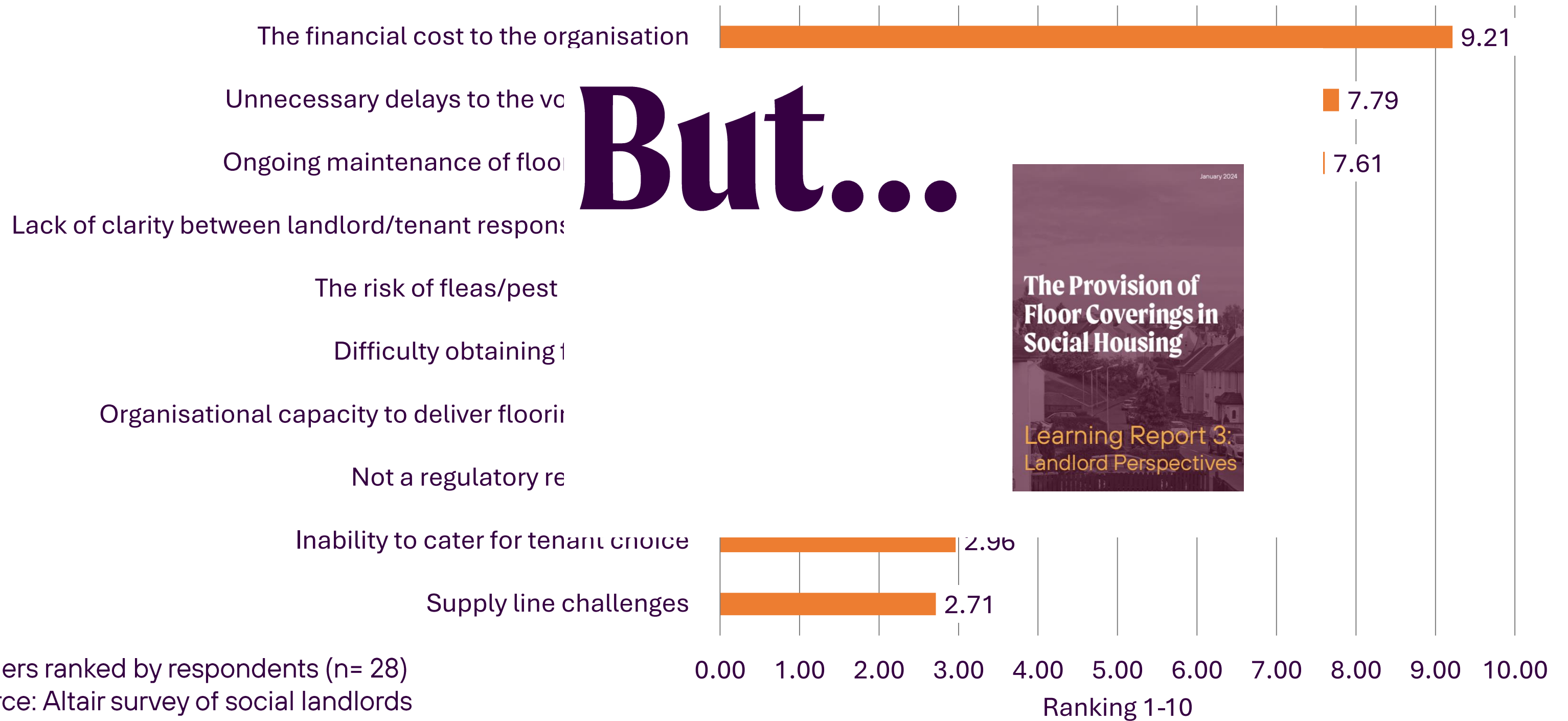
Was your home equipped with floorcoverings when you moved in?



n= 7,955. Source: MRI Software, Resident Voice Index



# Why don't landlords provide floor coverings at point of let?



# Funding and finance

•Four grant making organisations told us that during 2021/22 they made **501** grants for flooring to social housing tenants. The cost of this was **just under £174,000**, representing 6% of their total grants for the year.

## Average cost of flooring in social rented homes

- ❖ **Average cost to landlord is £1,000** (takes account of material cost savings through volume work)
- ❖ **Average cost to household is £920** (assume that don't need to cover whole home as partial flooring)

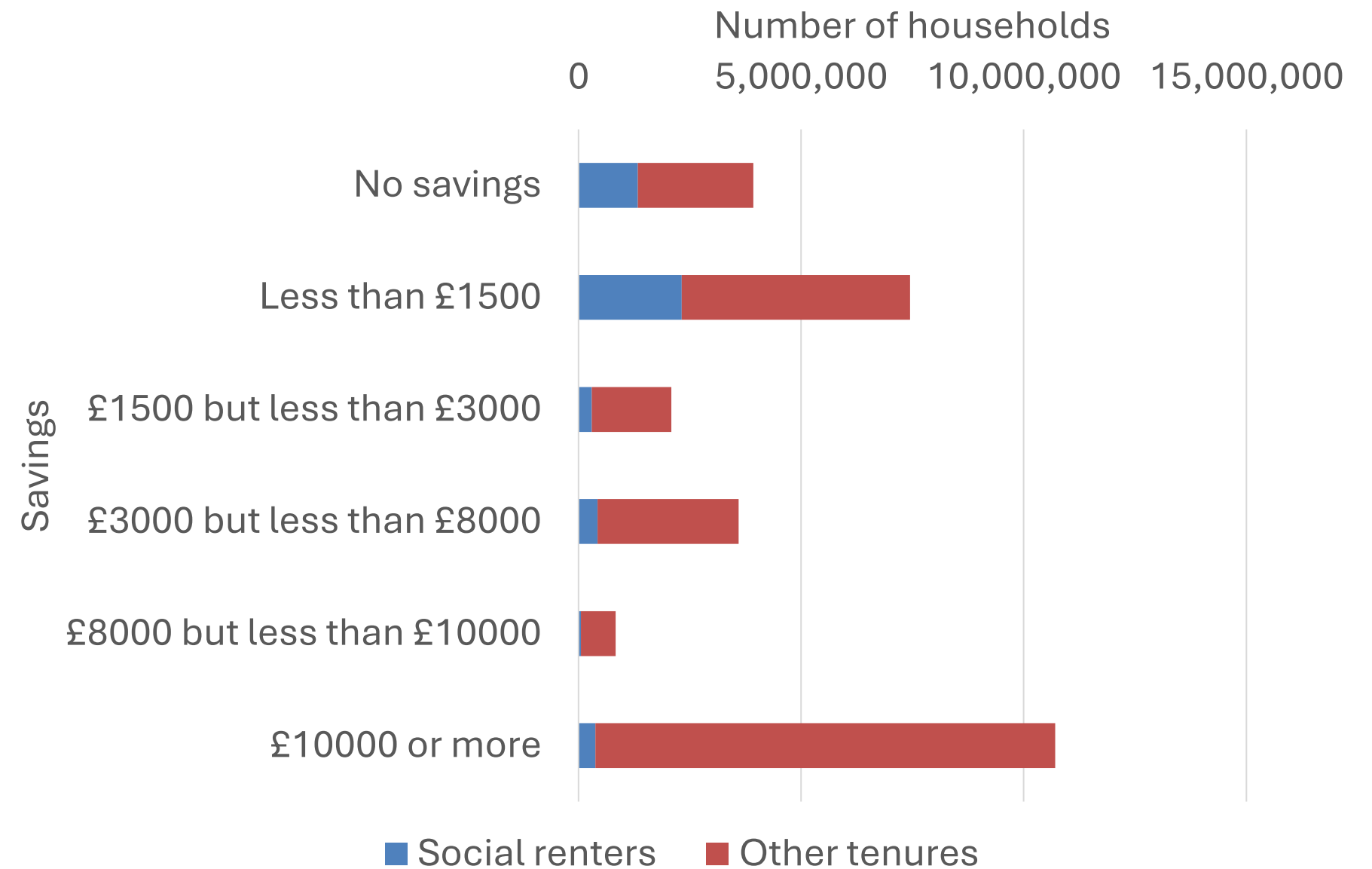


# How do households pay?

FRS data tells us that social renters are least likely to have savings when compared to other tenures – 28% no savings (next highest is PRS at 18%, all households 14%)

The Resident Voice Index survey found that 28% of respondents paid for their floor covering by taking out a loan. Over half of those who took out loan (54%, n=2,267) took between 1-3 years to repay.

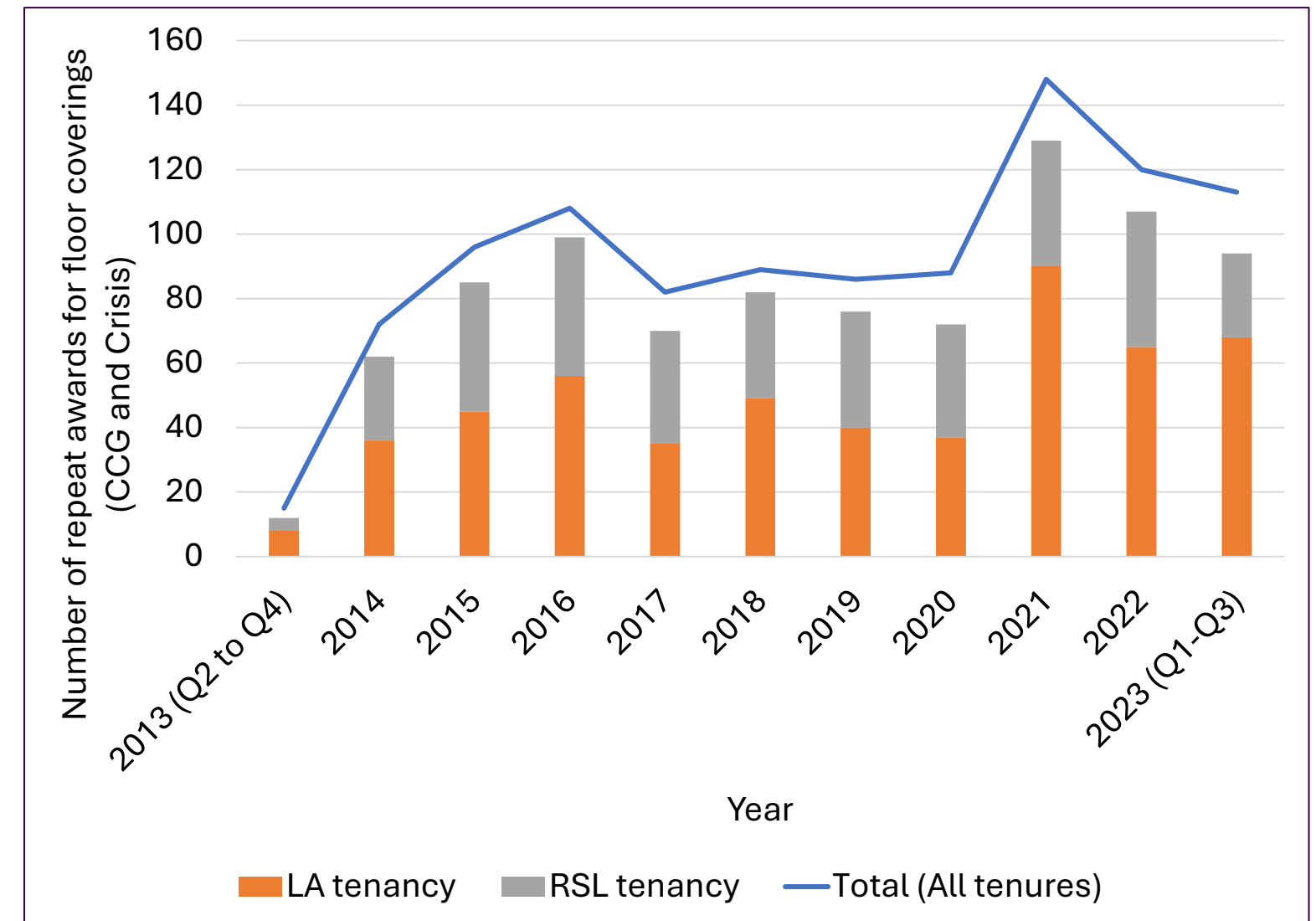
For households, it could take an average of **20 months to fund floor coverings for those on Universal Credit and 8 months for low-income households** not on Universal Credit.



Source: FRS, 2022/23

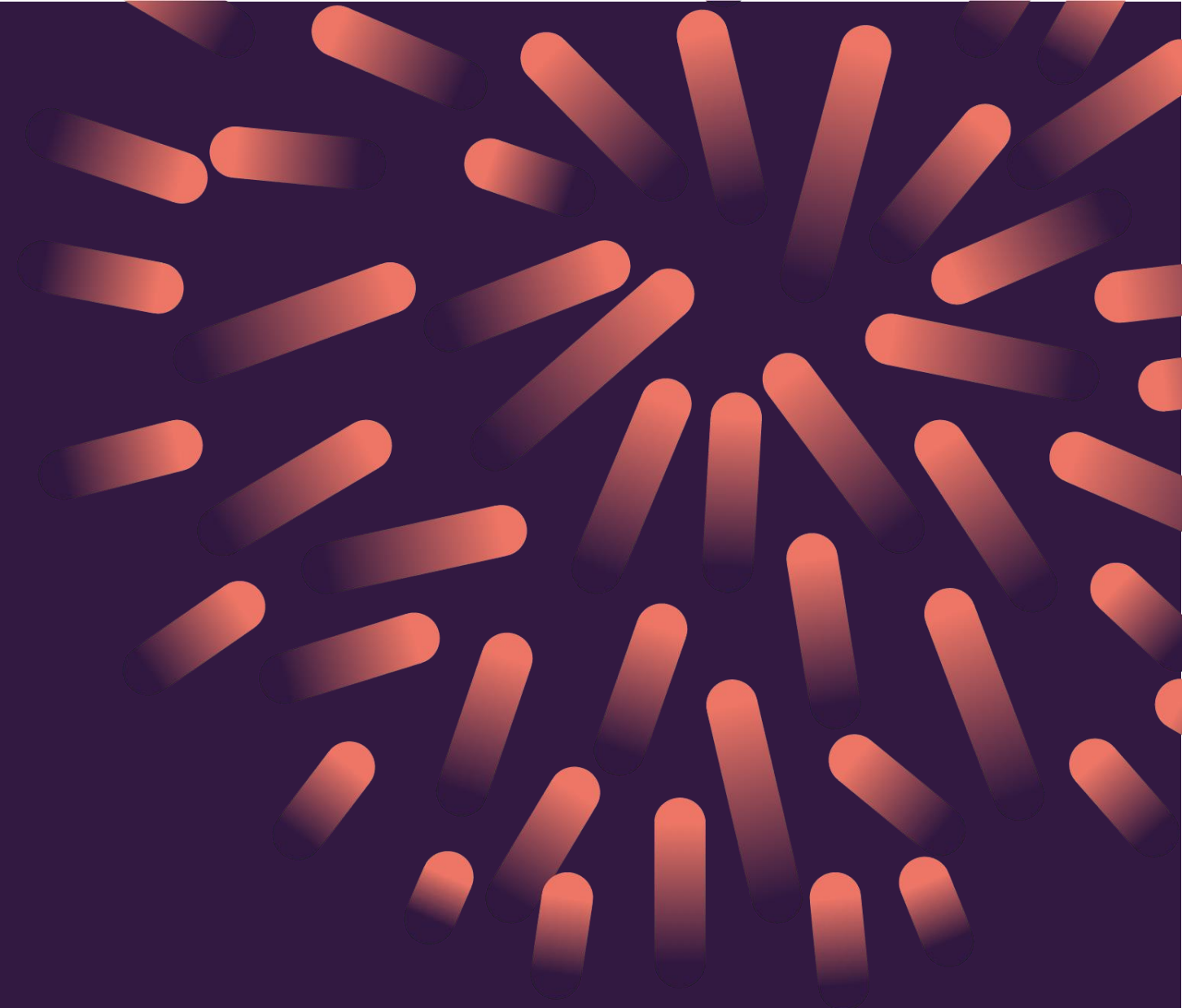
# Available funding for households

- ❖ **Scottish Welfare Fund** – In the 12-months from October 2022, 32% of Community Care Grants were for carpet/lino/floor coverings (cost of £11m) – nearly 2,000 repeat applications from social renters for CCG for flooring since 2013
- ❖ Welsh Government **Emergency Assistance Payments**
- ❖ In England, some local authorities offer **local welfare assistance** (perhaps 29%)
- ❖ **Household Support Fund**
- ❖ **Budgeting advance** or budgeting loan for those on benefits
- ❖ **Grant makers**
- ❖ **Charities**



Source: Ad hoc request to Scottish Government, Scottish Welfare Fund statistics (thanks, Ian!)

# Impact



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# Impact

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## For households

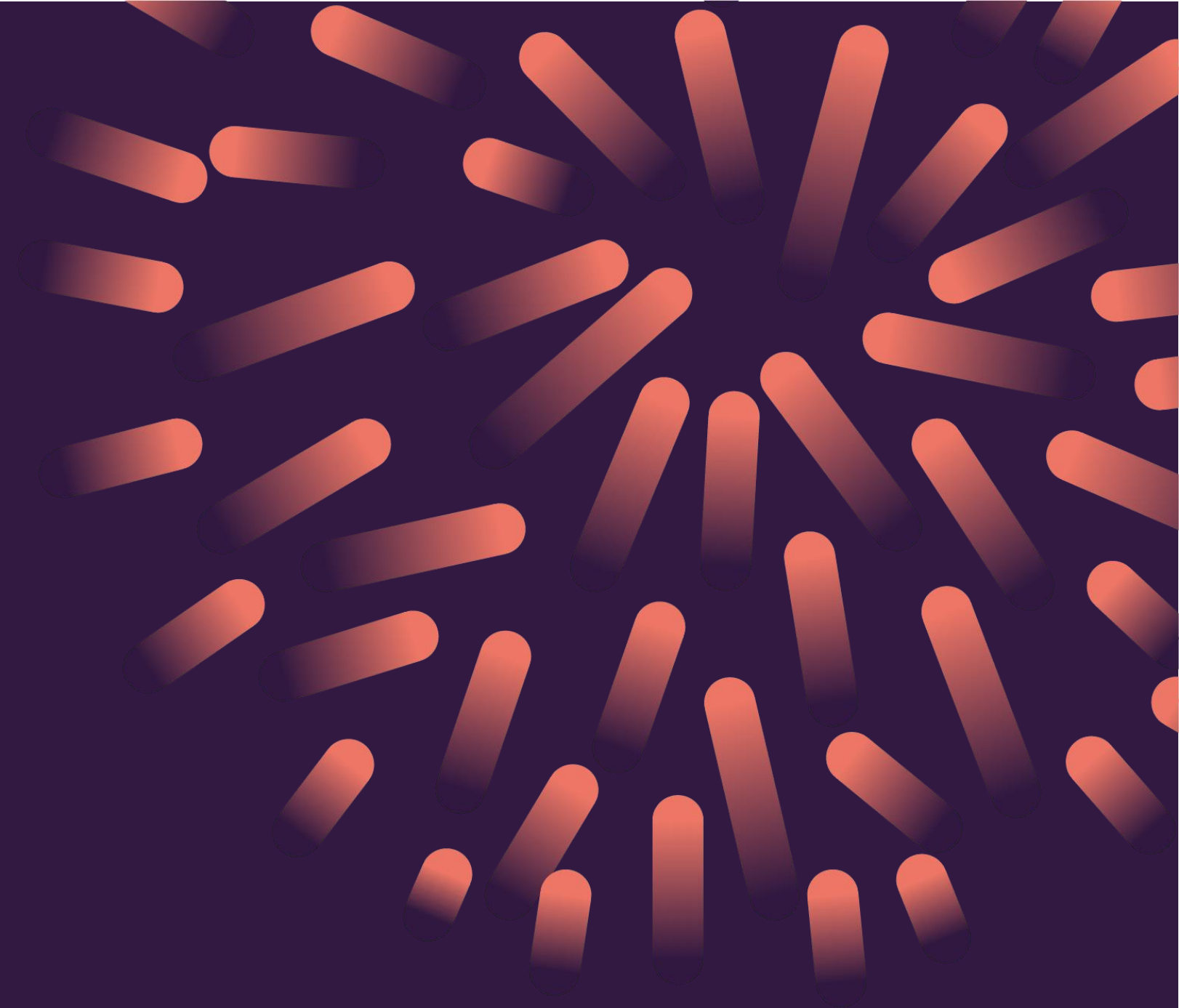
- Lack of floor coverings linked to debt, stigma, less community integration, noise, reduced feelings of home and perception of warmth, environmental impact from disposing of carpet, and disruption.
- Floor coverings, as part of essential package of furniture provides a social return on investment of £7,480.
- Prevent domestic abuse survivors returning to perpetrators.
- Prevents homelessness.
- Improves community safety.
- Better for child development.
- Important consideration for health.

## For landlords

- Reduced void turnover – Thirteen saw a reduction from 600/year to 200/year and Citizen saw an 8% reduction in one pilot and between a 30% and 50% reduction over a 12-month period in another.
- Reduced void costs as tenants felt happier in home and more likely to maintain tenancy – Thirteen saw void costs reduce by, on average, £500 per property.
- Reduction in void rent loss.
- Increased staff and tenant satisfaction.
- Reduced refusal rate.
- Improvements in tenant health and wellbeing from better quality.
- Reduced likelihood and severity of falls.
- Fewer complaints concerning noise.



# Recommendations



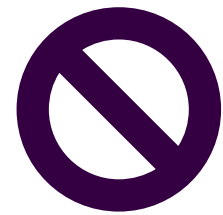
## What we are calling for



**Funding**



**Improved standards**



**Stop removing good quality floor coverings**



**Test**



**Talk**

# Thank you to our steering group

**Claire Donovan, End Furniture Poverty**

**Alison Inman, Past President of Chartered Institute of Housing and  
Tpas Chair**

**Alicja Zalenskinka, Tai Pawb**

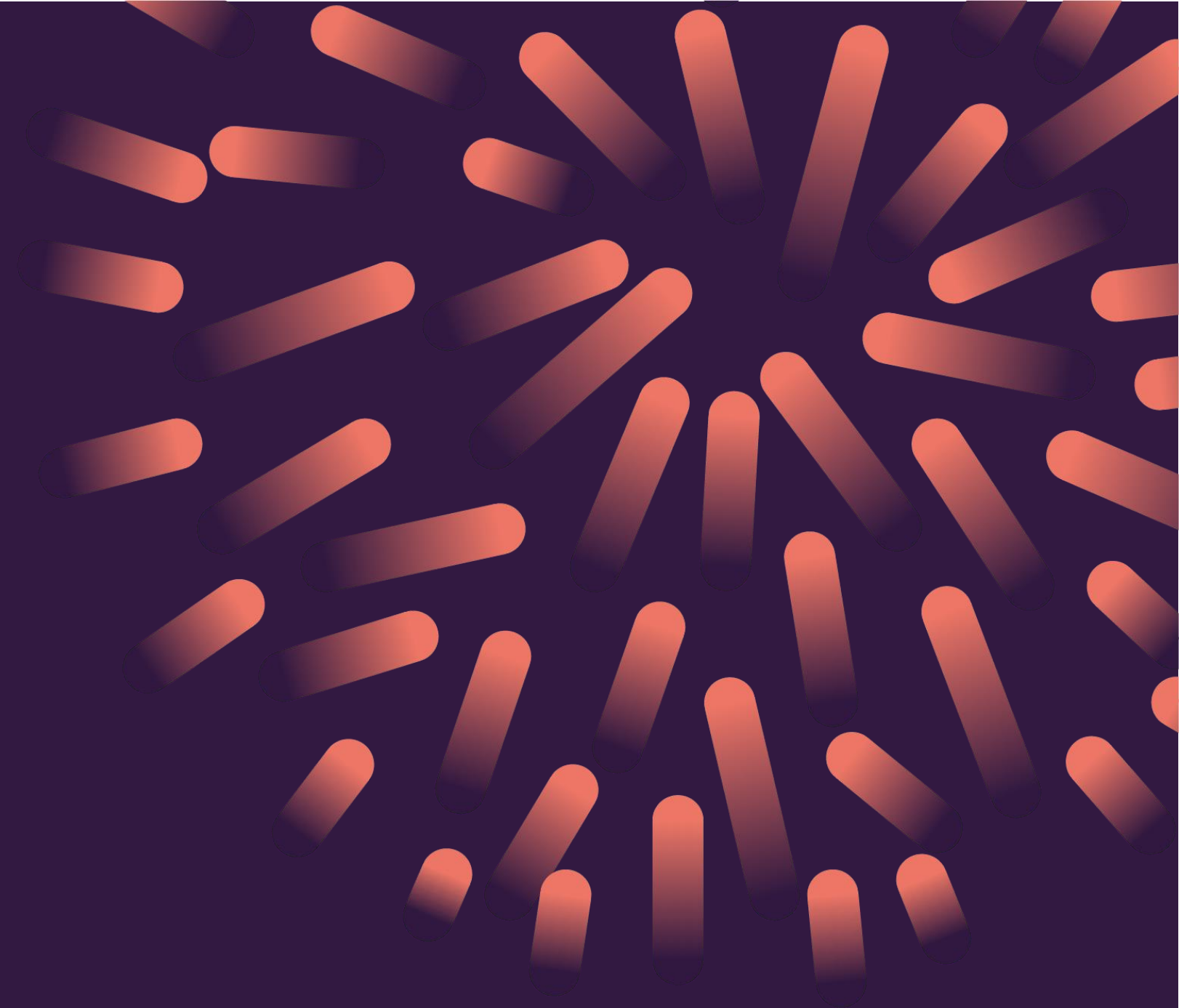
**Anne Dokov, Longleigh**

**Brian Robson and Joanne Wilson, Northern Housing Consortium**

**Fayann Simpson, Tenant**

**Katie Hipkiss, National Housing Federation**

Q&A



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