

University of Dundee

At Home with Children

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At Home with Children: Learning from Lockdown

Interim Findings Report: Survey



April 2022

Interim findings of the At Home with Children Research Project,
funded by the UKRI/AHRC Covid-19 Rapid Research Fund [grant number AH/V014943/1]

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Photos: Unsplash.com *except where indicated*

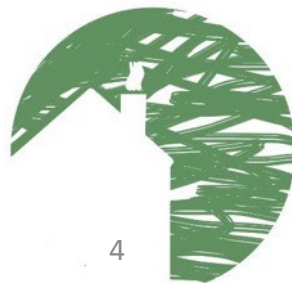
Contents



	page
Foreword	04
Summary of Findings	06
Introduction	09
Methodology	12
Survey Results	15
Further Information	48
Appendix	50

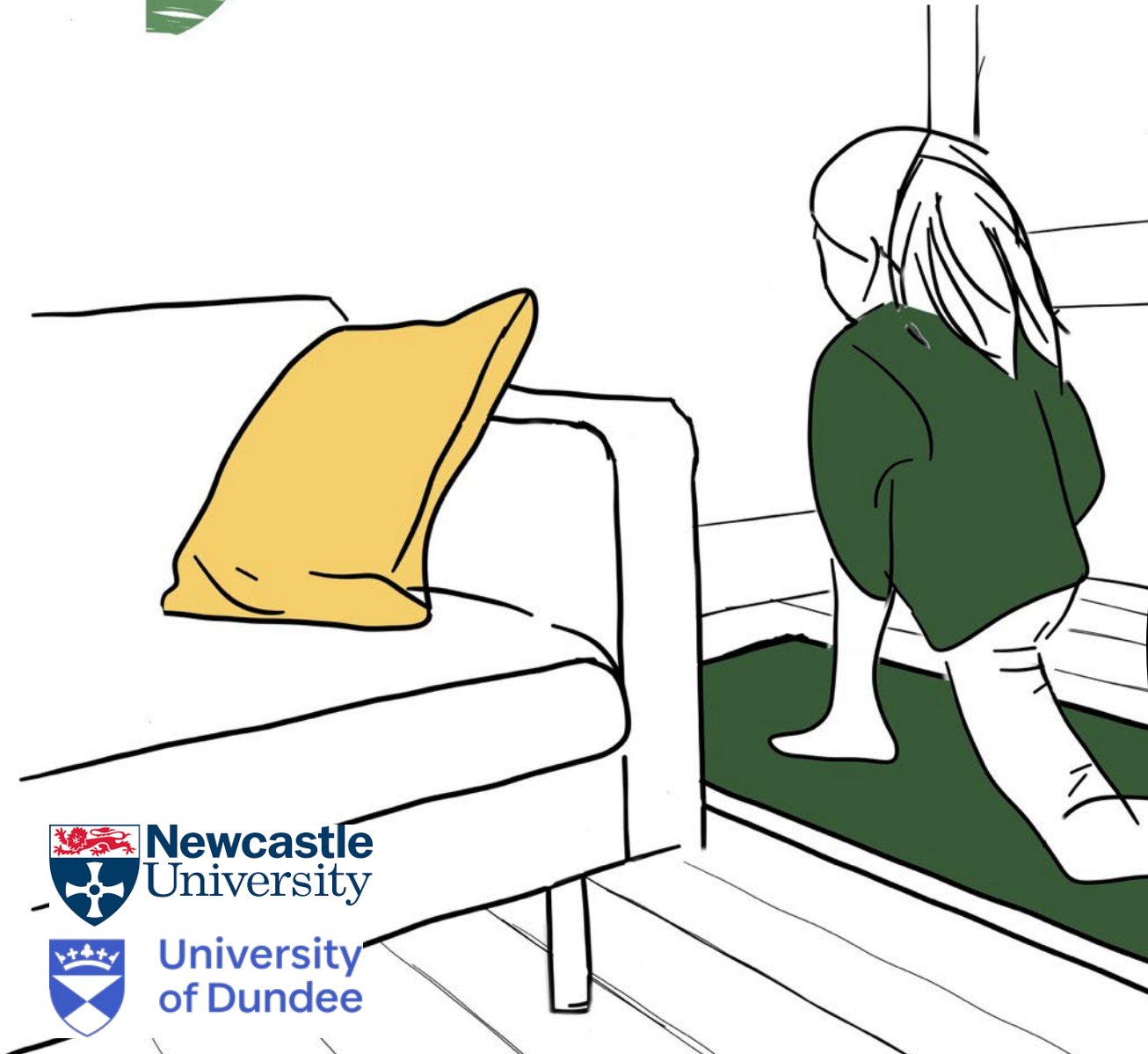


Foreword





At Home with Children: Learning from Lockdown



- This report summarises findings of a survey of 1246 householders in England and Scotland, each representing a family with children (0-17 years old). The survey is part of the At Home with Children research project, which explores how lessons learned from lockdown can help to re-imagine, refurbish and design 'liveable' homes for the contemporary needs of families with children.
- We have surveyed families about how their home supported, or hindered, their practical, social and psychological needs during lockdown. We have recorded the adaptations that families made to their homes to better support their lockdown home life and wellbeing. Relevant quotes from our phase 2 interviews have been incorporated where appropriate.
- The project will share the tactics and home adaptations that families have found helpful, through a 'Home Hack Toolkit', so that others can directly benefit from these ideas. Our findings and recommendations will also target housing policy and professionals in family support roles, identifying the settings and scenarios that present the greatest challenges to families.
- The project is funded by the UKRI Covid-19 Rapid Research Fund via the Arts and Humanities Research Council [grant number AH/V014943/1]

Summary of Findings



Key Findings

Satisfaction with the home during lockdown

Our survey of 1246 families (representing 2521 adults and 2158 children) showed that:

- Almost a quarter of respondents were dissatisfied with their home's ability to meet their household's needs, more specifically: 40% of people living in flats were dissatisfied and 35% in small terraces, compared with 18% in medium or large terraces and 15% in detached homes.
- Half of respondents were dissatisfied with their home as a space for home schooling. Low-income families and people living in flats, were least satisfied.
- A third of respondents were dissatisfied with their home as a space for alone time. People living in flats, non-binary people and females were least satisfied.

Tension, wellbeing, time and space to yourself

- Around half of respondents agreed that there was more familial conflict or tension during lockdown.
- More than two-thirds of respondents agreed lockdown made it more difficult to have 'time and space to themselves'.
- Around half of respondents agreed that lack of time and space to themselves had a negative impact on their wellbeing: families living in more densely occupied homes (more people, fewer rooms) and families with SEN children were more likely to agree.
- Adults had to use unusual spaces to get time and space to themselves.

Challenges and adaptations

- Challenges with the home's spaces were particularly felt in small terraces and flats. Some challenges are related to environmental comfort e.g. lighting/heating. These were a particular problem in the newest homes built post-2010.
- The majority of families made adaptations to their home during lockdown. Of those, more than half said that they expected to keep the changes they had made.



Key Recommendations

House size, number of rooms and density of occupation

- Review domestic space standards and policy definitions (such as ‘density’) to address the quality and nature of space required for a family, including attention to spaces for alone time, work and home-schooling.

Adaptability

- Prioritise design (and refurbishment) for adaptability in national and local authority housing design codes and guidance. Adaptability is here interpreted to extend beyond issues of access and mobility (Part M) over a resident’s lifecourse, to include responses to the everyday diverse and changing activities of families and their related social and mental wellbeing needs.

Environmental comfort

- Refine environmental comfort standards and guidance to support householders’ physical and mental wellbeing. Consider conflicts between reducing carbon demands and addressing wellbeing demands (e.g. window area).

Housing-related CPD for professionals in family support roles

- Include ‘dwelling liveability’ in the education and continuing development of professionals in family support roles. Social workers, child psychologists and family therapists are well-placed to explore the potential to mitigate tensions and conflicts that might be exacerbated by domestic space and patterns of space use in the home with families.



Introduction



Aim:

To understand what
'liveable' domestic space means
for families with children under
pandemic conditions

England and Scotland



In this report you will find the results of the survey grouped into the following key themes:

- Demographics
- Dwelling Profile
- Satisfaction
- Challenges
- Changes



Methodology



The At Home with Children Project

Phase 1 - Surveys

Photo Survey

Exploratory analysis of photographs in the public domain showing spatial micro-interventions made in homes during the pandemic

Representing areas such as play, messiness, left-over spaces, alone spaces and homeschooling/homeworking space

Online Questionnaire

1246 families completed an online questionnaire about their satisfaction with their home, along with any challenges and changes they made

Phase 2 –

Family Interviews

Interviews with families exploring the way they used their home during lockdown and how it impacted their wellbeing

Phase 3 – Focus Groups

Focus groups to engage members of different householders in co-developing and refining a set of design ideas and tools that improve the liveability of our domestic spaces according to challenge scenarios and dwelling typology



Survey method: Questionnaire

Questionnaire

An online questionnaire collected quantitative data from June - August 2021.

Themes

The questionnaire explored families' satisfaction with their domestic space, challenges faced and adaptations made, along with adult self-perceptions of wellbeing and adult perceptions of child distress.

Measures

The questionnaire included 33-items. Five point scales and option lists were used for the majority of questions, with open spaces to allow further information to be added if desired.

Participants

Only adults completed the questionnaire. Questions were framed to allow one adult from each household to represent their family's experiences.



Survey Results



Key areas:

- Demographics
- Dwelling Profile
- Satisfaction
- Challenges
- Changes

Tweet

Back



At Home with Children: Learning from Lockdown
@homewchildren

How well did your home meet your family's lockdown needs? How did you adapt? Please tell us in our survey 🖱️ newcastle.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/at_home_with_c... and share your pics 🖱️ athomewithchildren.ac.uk/takepart/phase... so we can show policymakers what liveable space means for families. athomewithchildren.ac.uk'

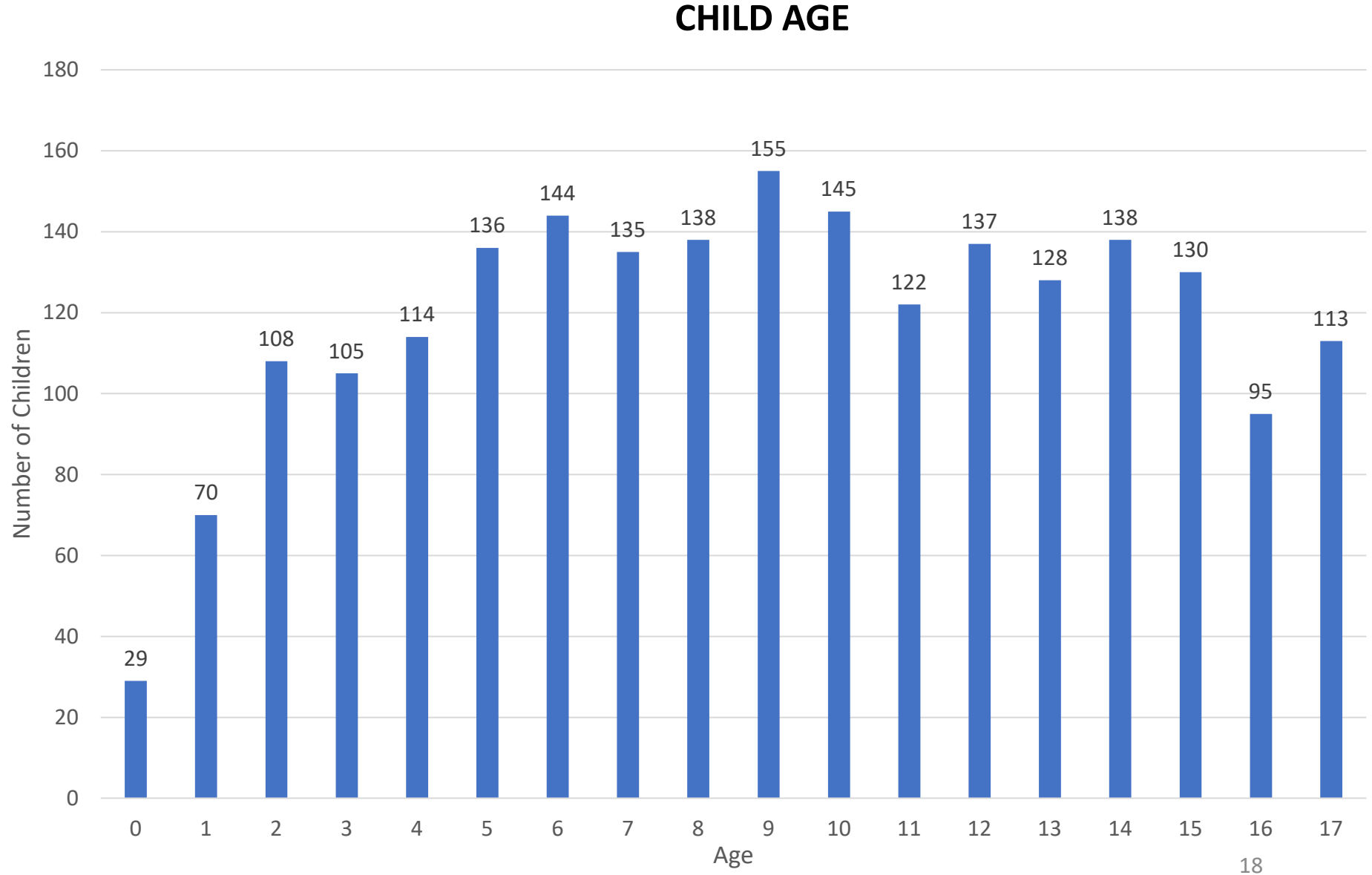


Demographics

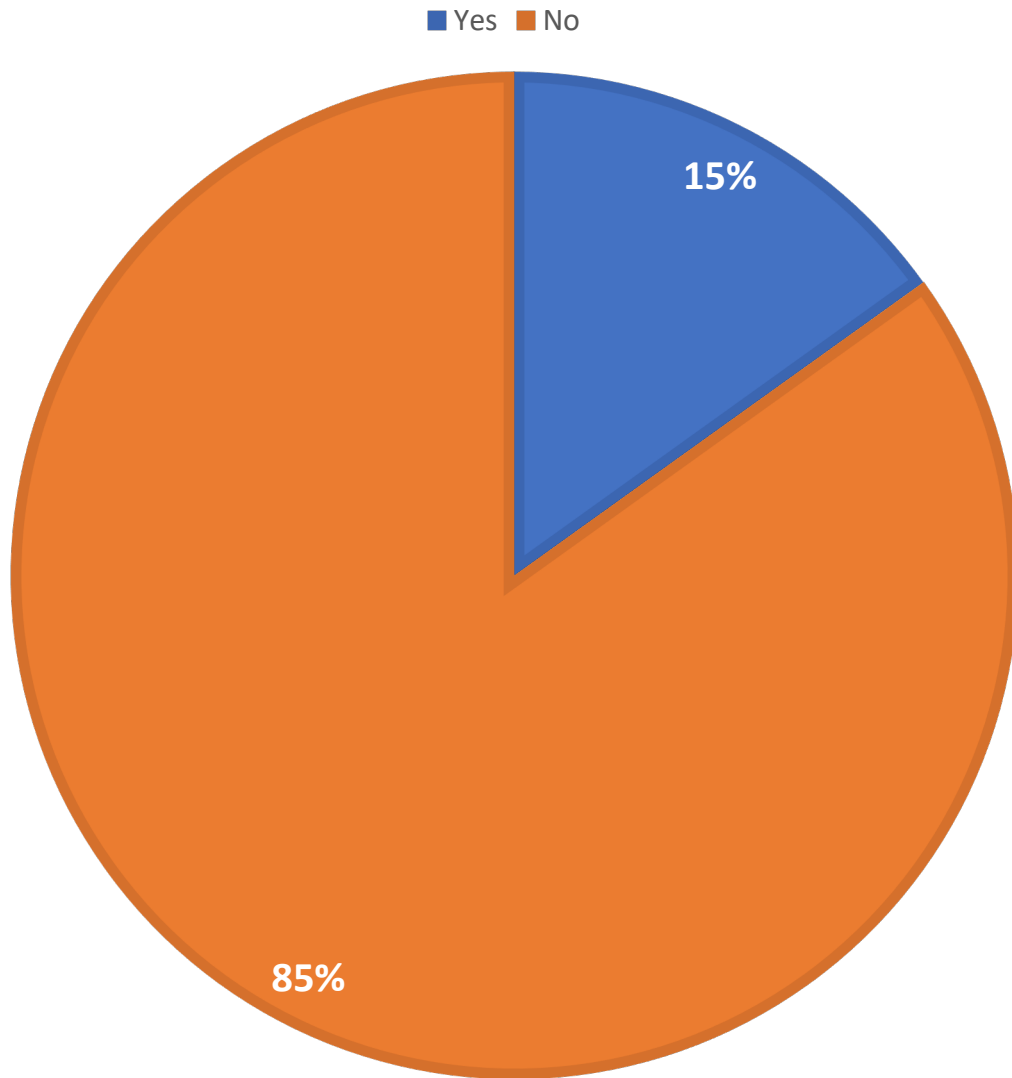
Participants

1246 families
representing a total
of:

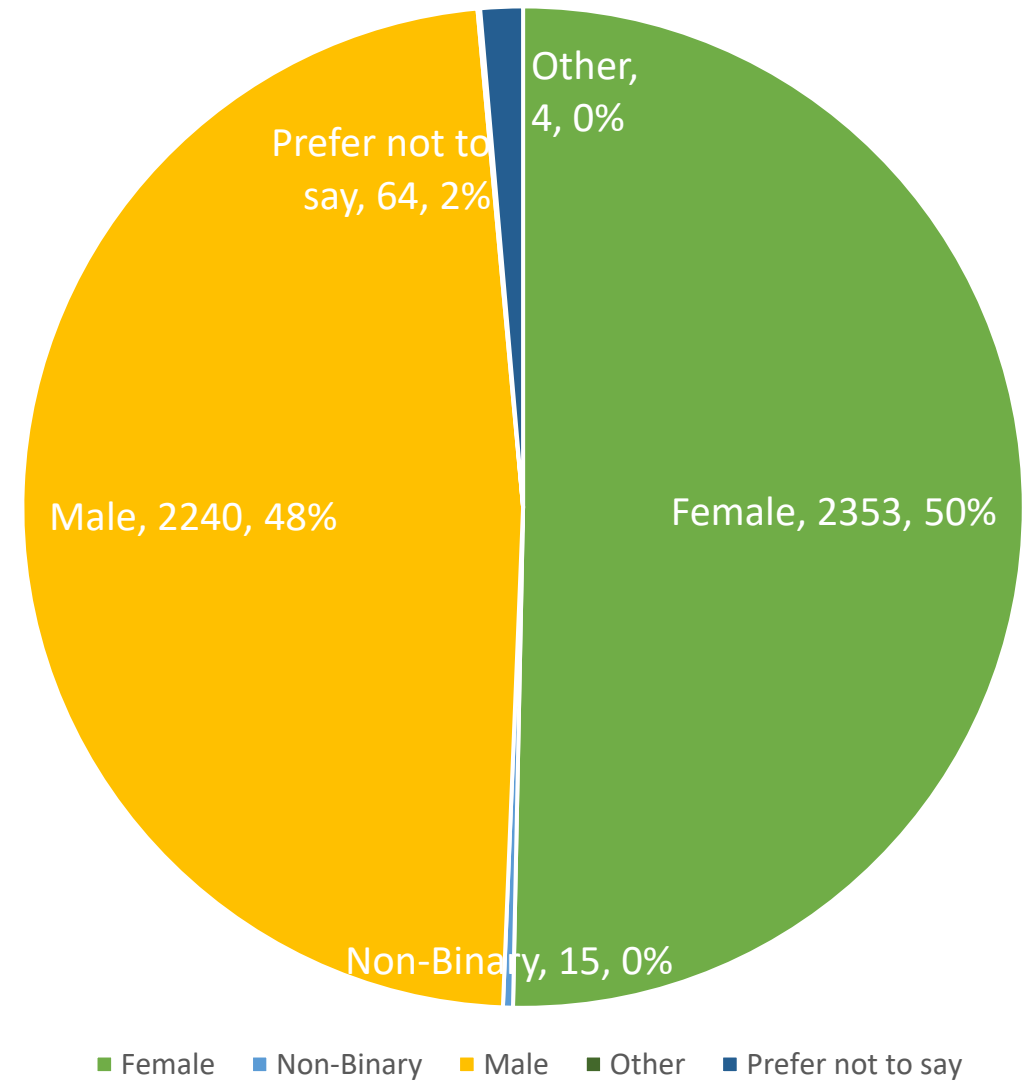
- 2521 adults
- 2158 children
- Average family=
2 adults +
1 or 2 children



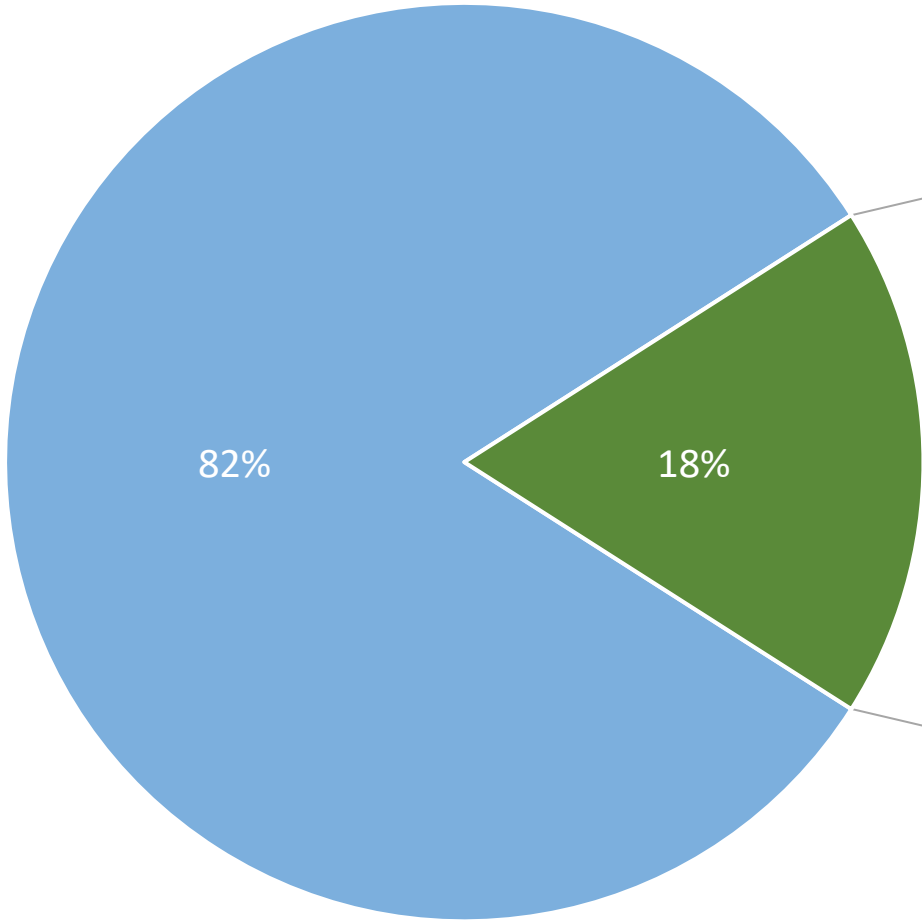
SAMPLE BY CHILD SEN NEEDS



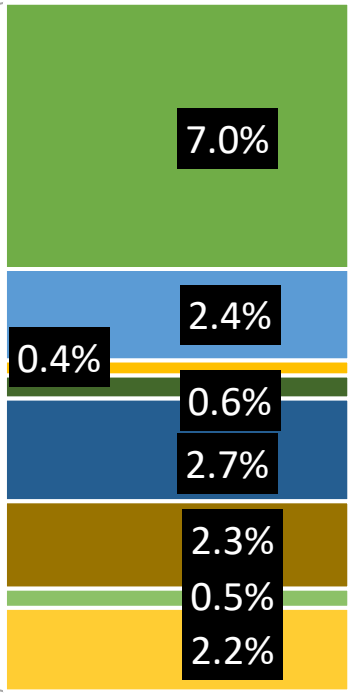
SAMPLE BY GENDER IDENTITY



ETHNICITY

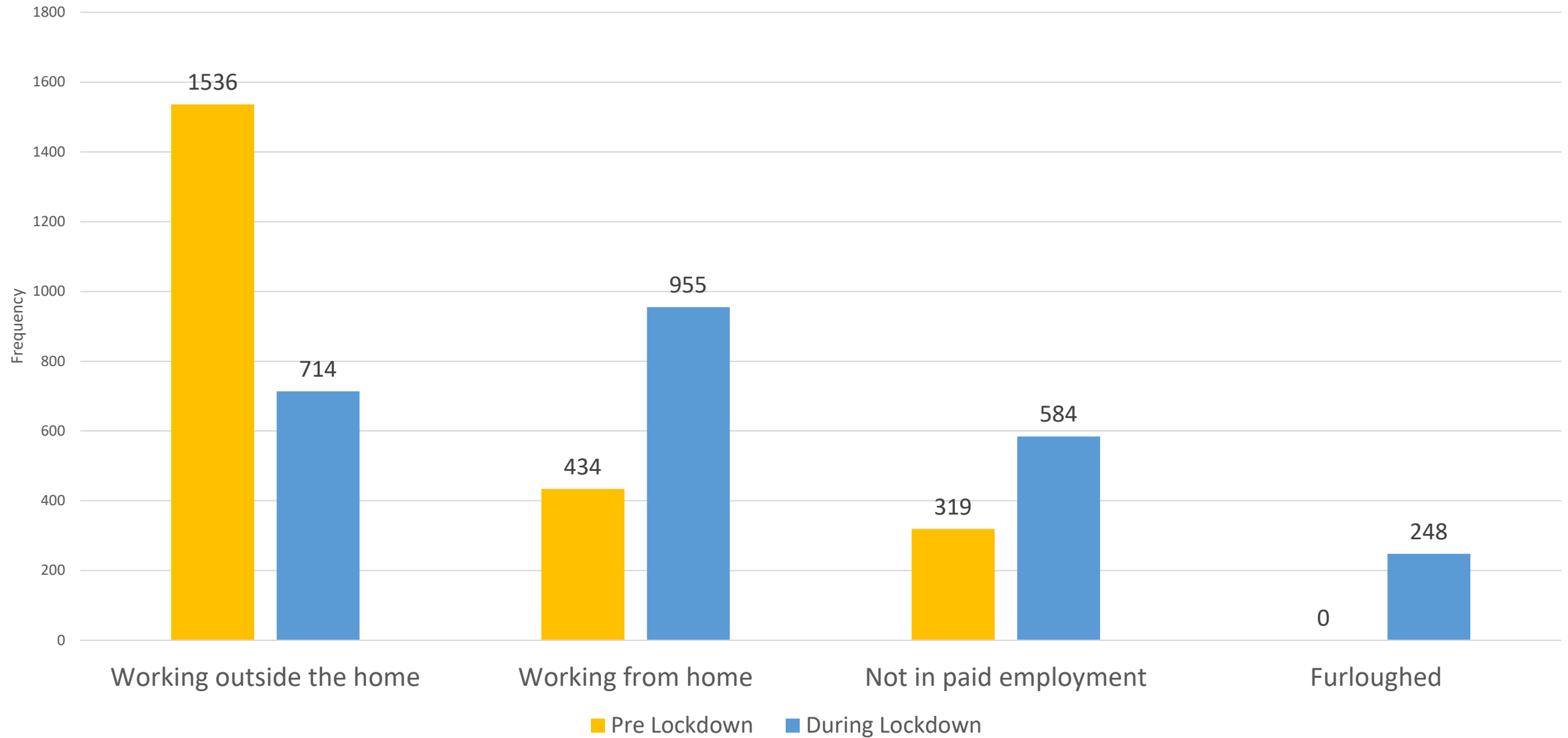


- Other Ethnic Group
- White/White British



- Asian/Asian British
- Black/Black British
- Chinese/Chinese British
- Middle Eastern/Middle Eastern British
- Mixed Race (Other)
- Mixed Race (Black/White)
- Other Ethnic Group
- Prefer not to say

ADULT (18YRS+) SAMPLE BY EMPLOYMENT STATUS



SAMPLE BY HOUSEHOLD INCOME

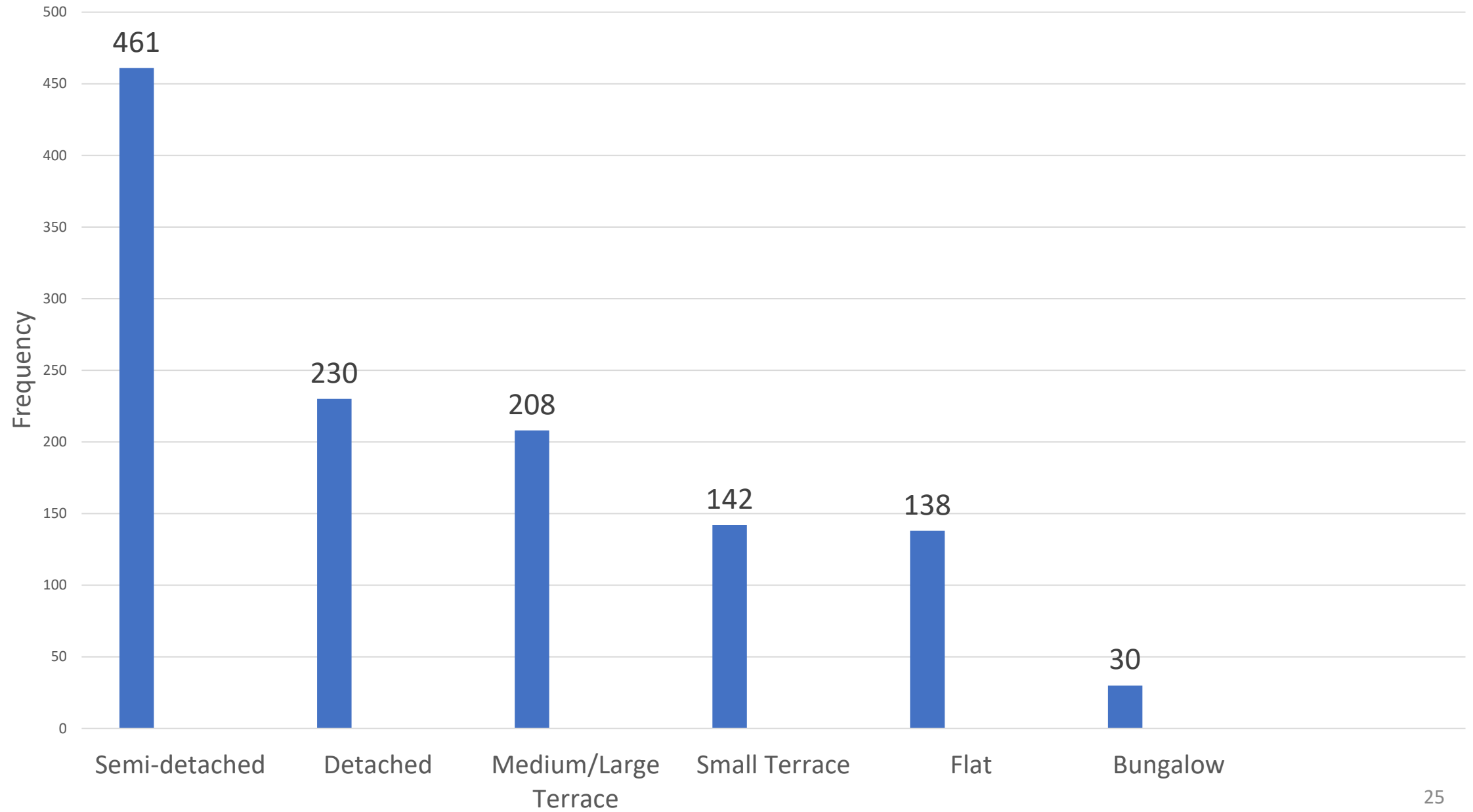


SAMPLE BY GEOGRAPHIC REGION

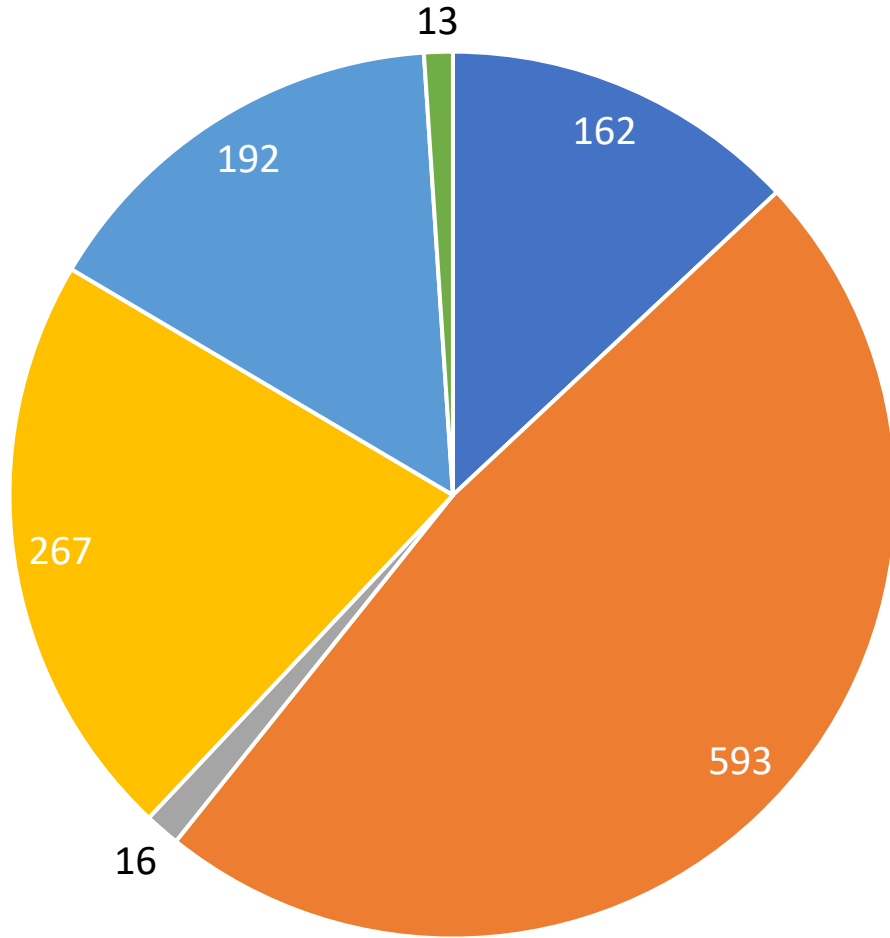


Dwelling Profile

SAMPLE BY HOUSE TYPOLOGY

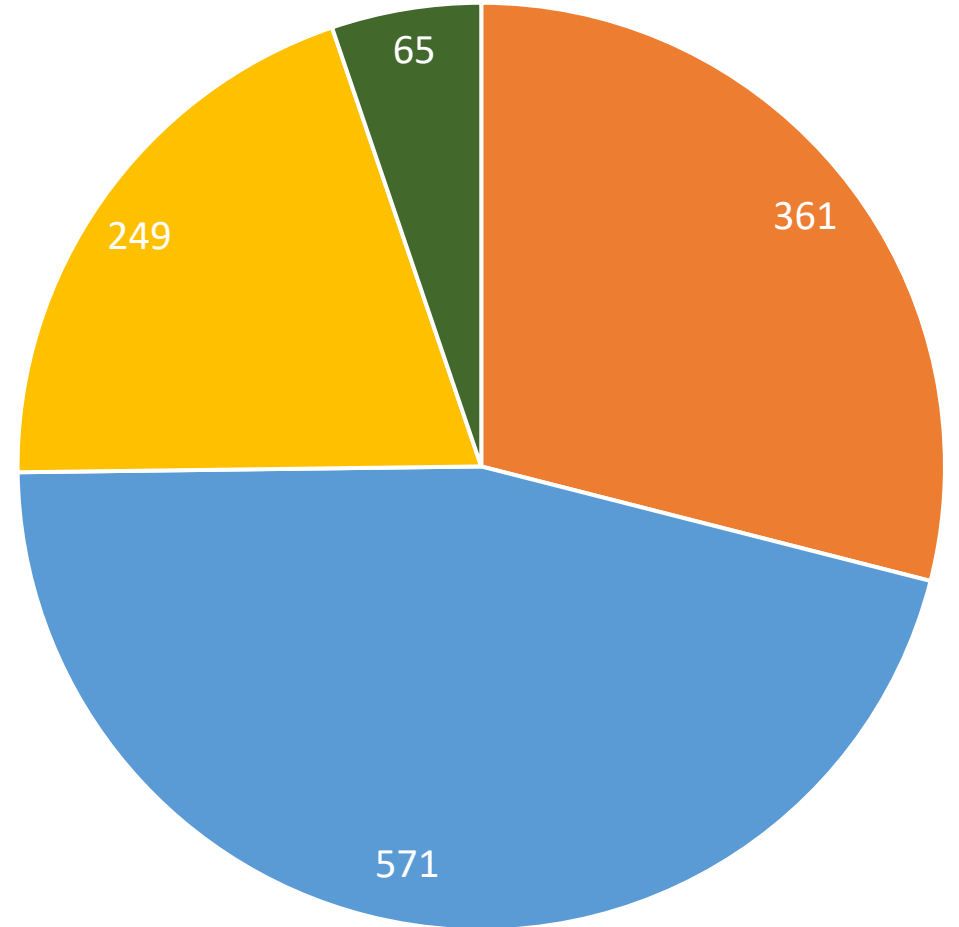


SAMPLE BY OWNERSHIP STATUS



- Own outright
- Mortgage/Loan
- PartOwn/PartRent
- Rent privately
- Social housing
- Rent free/Hosted

SAMPLE BY NUMBER OF BEDROOMS



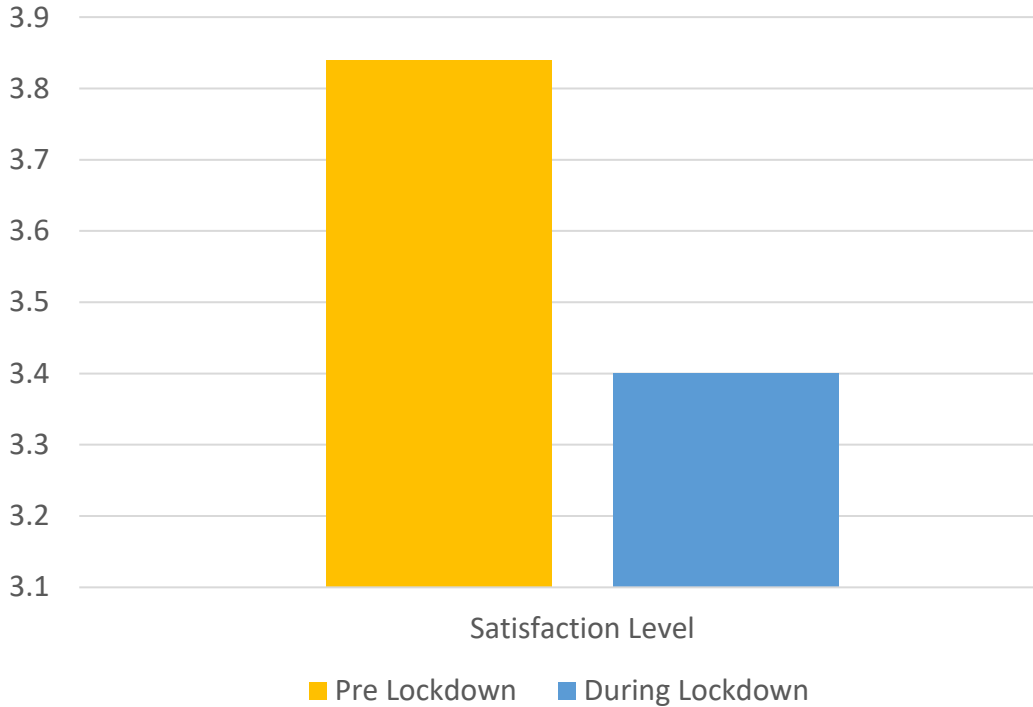
- 0-2 bedroom
- 3 bedroom
- 4 bedroom
- 5+ bedroom

Satisfaction

Reduced satisfaction with the home

24%
of people were dissatisfied with their home's ability to meet their household's needs

People were significantly less **satisfied with their homes' ability to meet the needs** of their household during lockdown



“If I came up to the loft it used to make me feel a little bit uneasy that there might have been something I've forgotten to do or something I'd missed. There were the remnants of my notepad, notes and I would start to feel a bit, anxious about ‘have I done everything’ and I just I couldn't step away from it”

Family of 4 in 4 bedroom terrace house

Least satisfied were people living in:

- Social housing
- 0-2 bed homes
- Flats
- Homes with little to no outdoor space



Homeworking

21%

of people were dissatisfied with their home as a space for home working



“I would have worked all day and then at 5:00 o'clock I go downstairs. We'd go through the whole everything with the children, you know, food, bedtime into bed, they get to sleep and then it's 8:30 and then I have to go back to the computer and start working again ... I would go to bed at 11:30 and just be thinking. I'm letting so many people down ... I just couldn't go to sleep even though I was so tired”

Family of 4 in 3 bed terrace house



Home Schooling

50%

of people were
dissatisfied with
their home as a space
for home schooling



“It was really hot in the summer, quite cold in the winter and when it rained it was just constant noise.

So, you can't really concentrate in it. When it was my mom's working days I had to work and do my schoolwork in there. It wasn't very peaceful, so it was a bit hard to sort of work in... It wasn't my favourite space to be in”

*Primary age child
Family of 3 in 2 bedroom
bungalow*

Child Play/Leisure

17%

of people were dissatisfied with their home as a space for children's play or leisure



“We had that space, the living room, because it's quite a big room, it was an absolute godsend, and it became a little bit of everything ... you could have a Lego table set up and then you could watch a film on the sofa and then we could put out a train track and then we could sit at the table”

Family of 4 in 3 bedroom semi-detached house



Adult Leisure and Alone Time

25%

of people were dissatisfied with their home as a space for adult leisure



33%

of people were dissatisfied with their home as a space for alone time

71%

of people agreed lockdown made it more difficult to have 'time and space to themselves'

"I think the bedroom - in my bedroom I was like on my own. I can shut my room and do my quiet time and I can focus on my work. But in lockdown I have to share my room with everyone. There's the telly going, they're on their phones going on their YouTube going on and everything. So it's like it's hard to focus"

Family of 3 in 3 bedroom large terrace house



Tension; Time and Space to Yourself

68%

of people agreed that they would have liked more time and space to themselves



51%

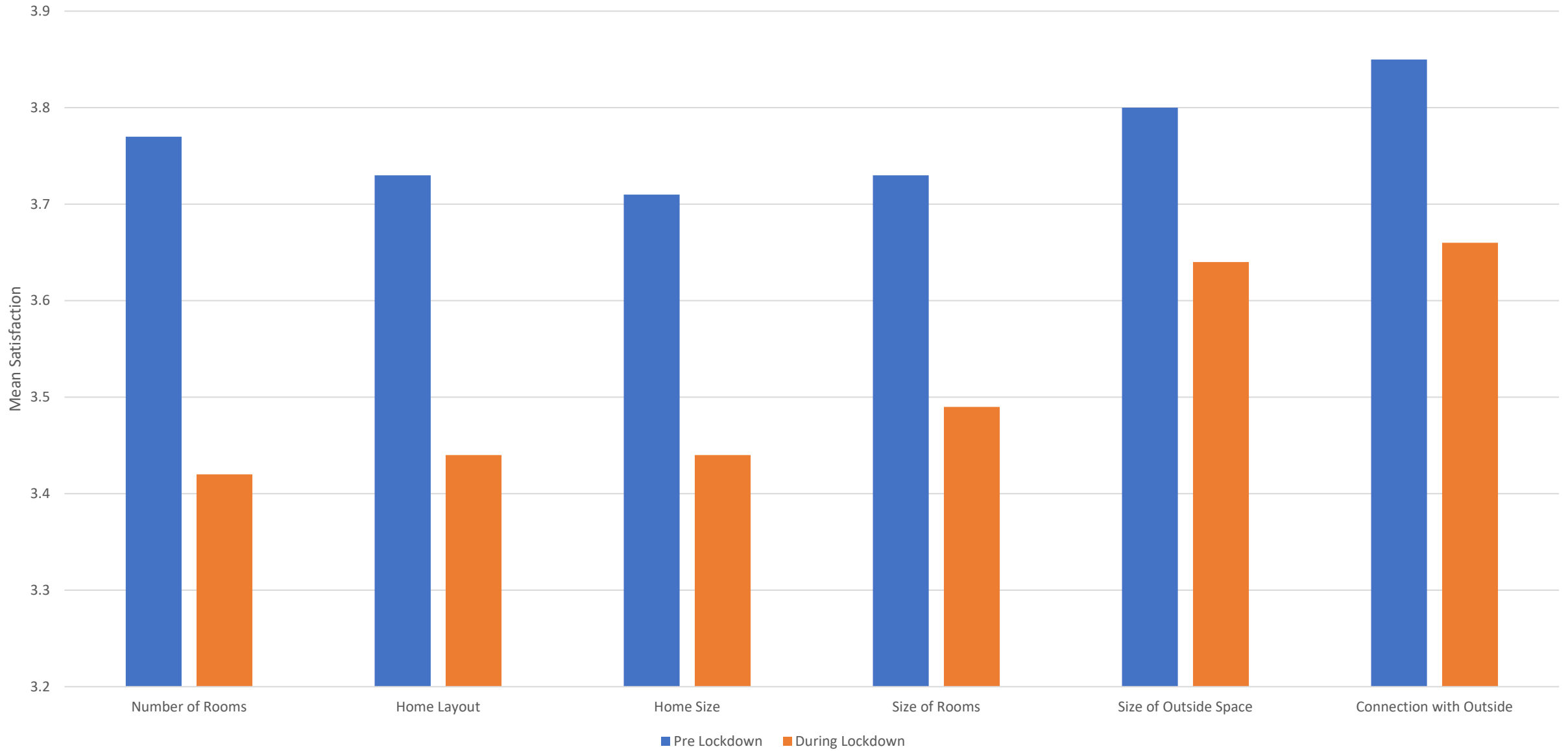
of people agreed that there was more familial conflict or tension during lockdown

52%

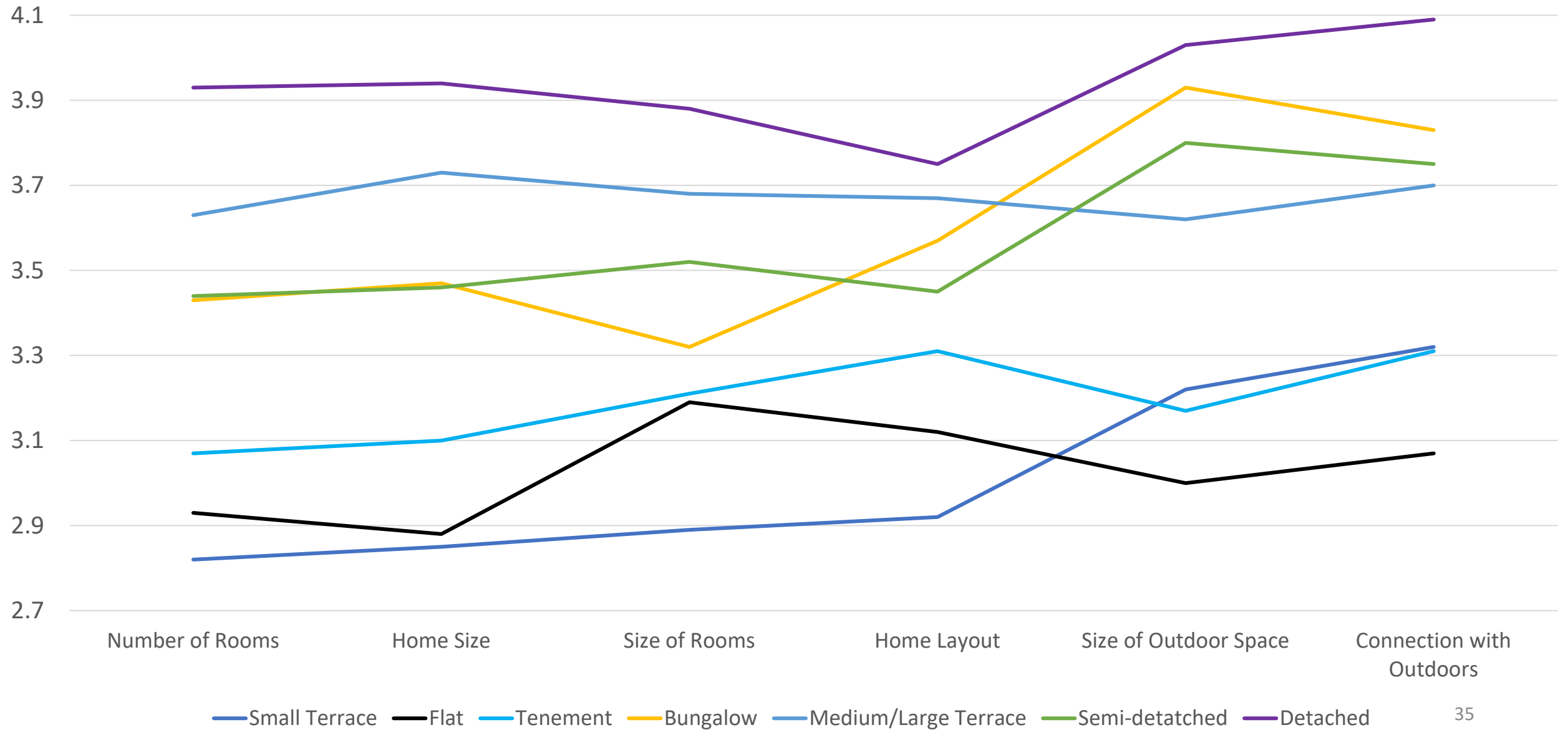
of people agreed that lack of time and space to themselves had a negative impact on their wellbeing



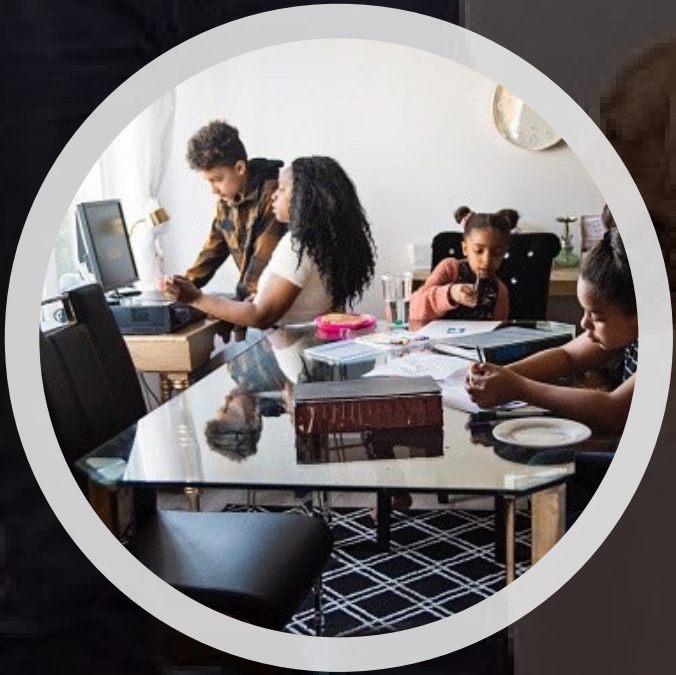
SPATIAL SATISFACTION LEVELS



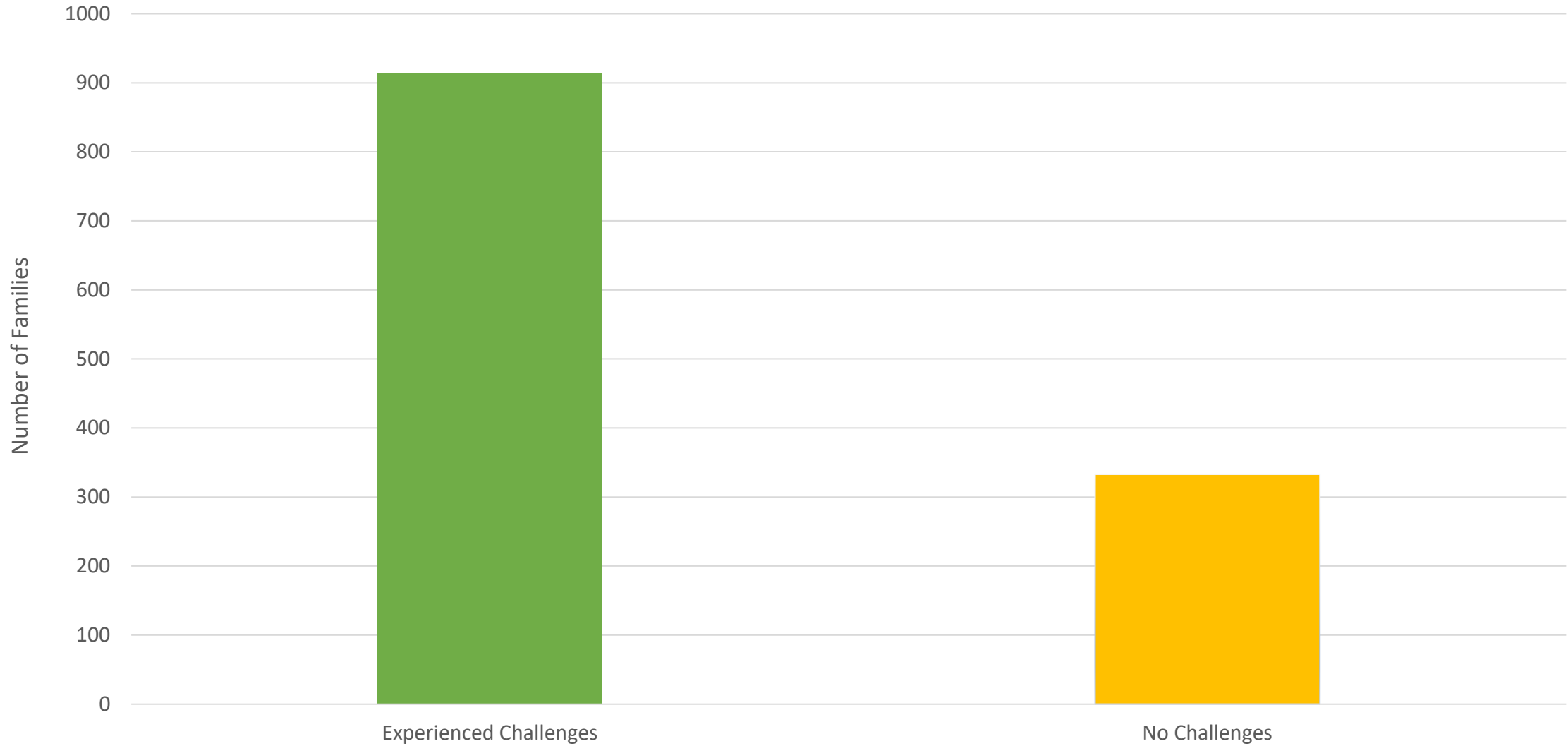
SATISFACTION WITH DESIGN ELEMENTS OF HOME



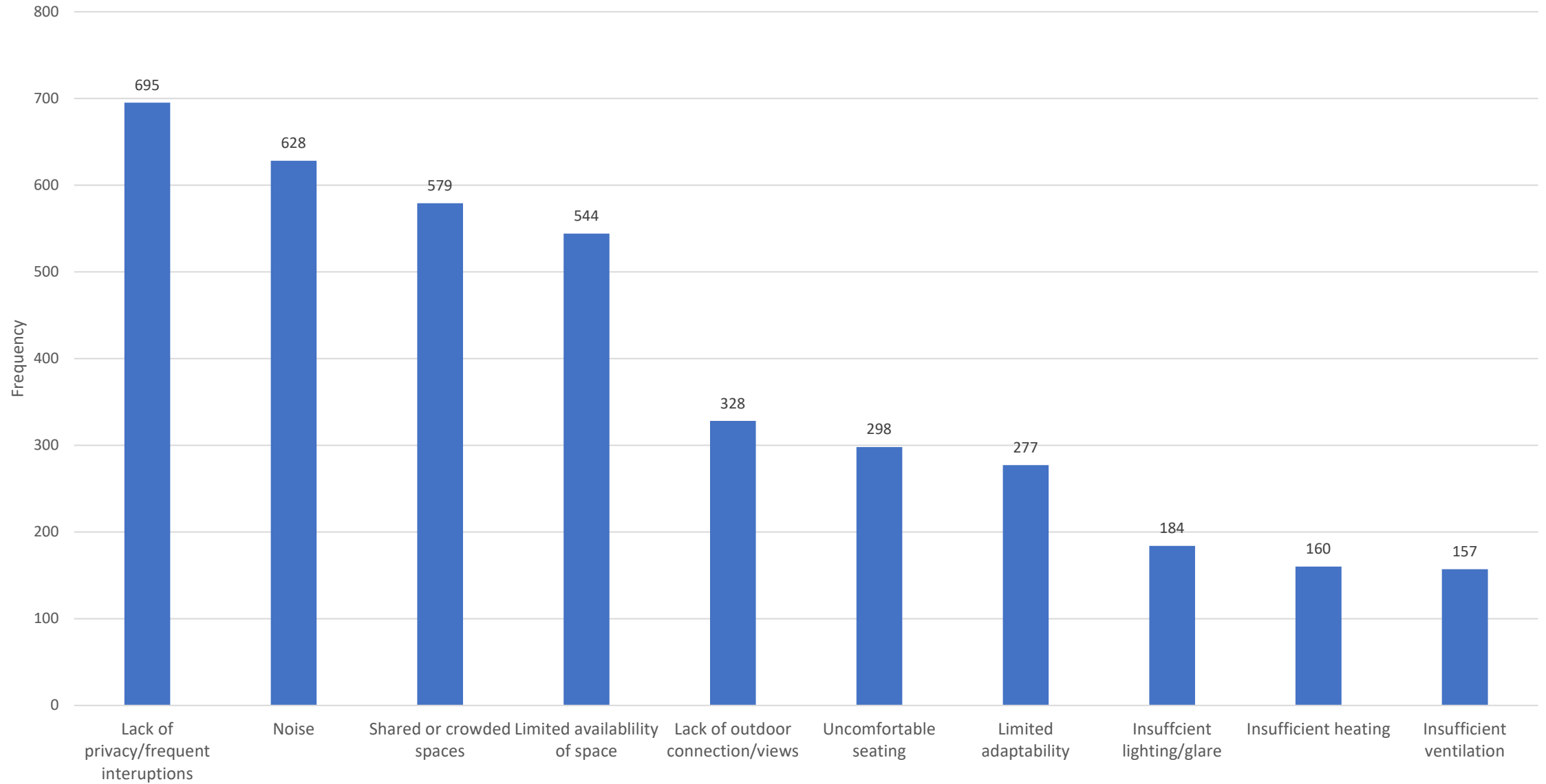
Challenges



EXPERIENCED DWELLING-RELATED CHALLENGES?



TYPES OF DWELLING-RELATED CHALLENGE



Sharing Spaces

Interruptions

"I had to be near enough to them that if anything did happen I could just like break my call and go out... despite the rule being if the door is shut don't come in unless it is a dire emergency, I'd still have people coming in and out and telling me things"

Family of 5 in 4 bedroom detached house

Teen Child: "We have bunk beds because we're living in my grandparents' house and then we also have really close proximity, so also stuck together."

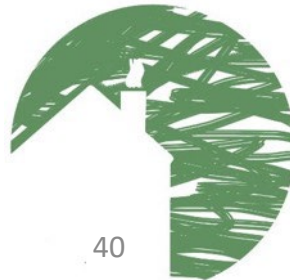
Mother: "Having spent all day together and then having to go to bed. Always the standard 'she poked me', 'he hit me', 'she stole my teddy bear' 'she's breathed heavily in my direction', 'my sock's gone'. It was definitely worse."

Family of 6 in 3 bedroom bungalow

Noise

"I had [13yr old] going on in her call and so when she was doing PE she was jumping about and everything. So, I couldn't really hear what they were saying ... and then [6yr old] was playing with dollies in her room."

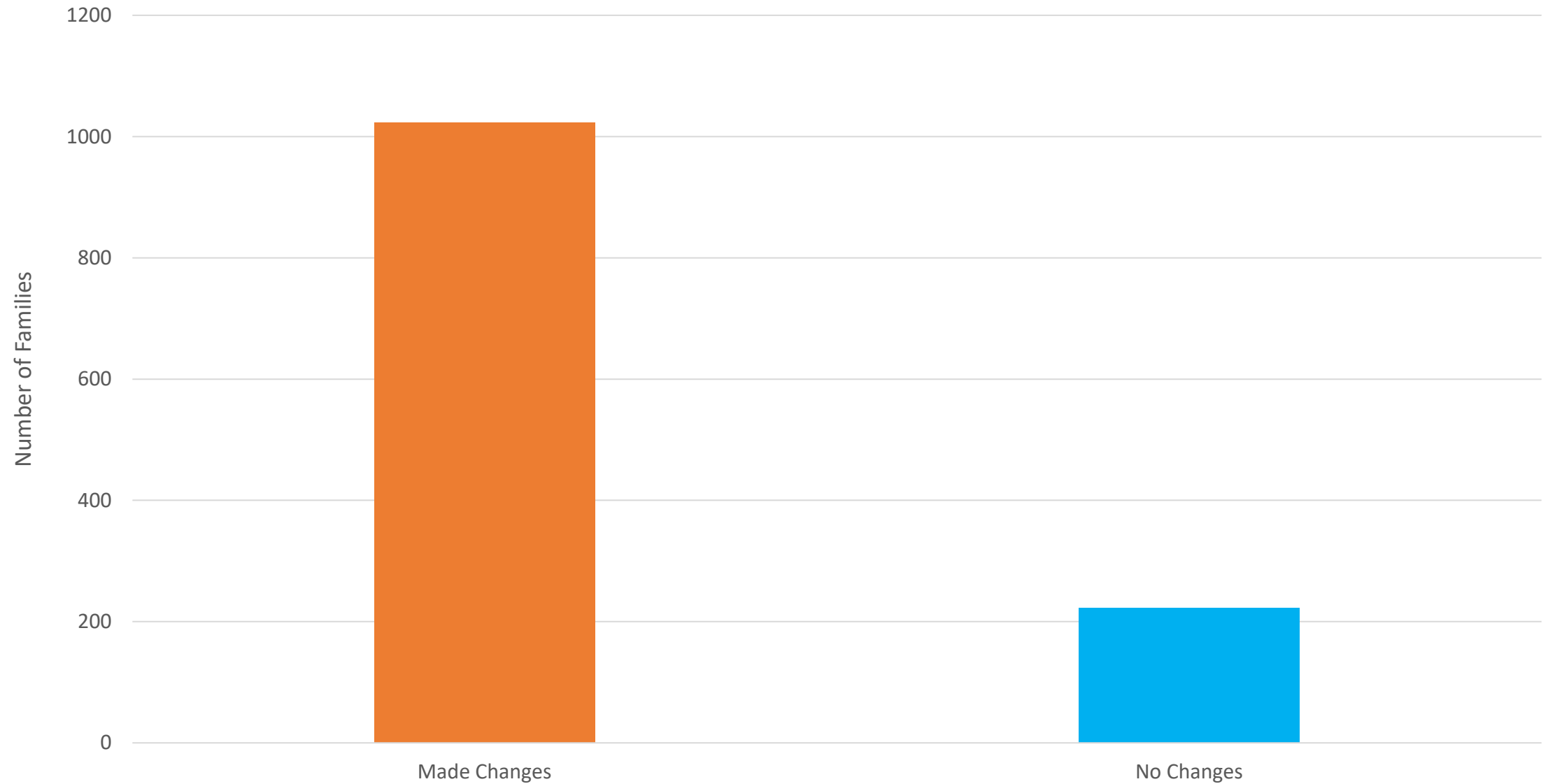
Family of 5 in 4 bedroom terrace house



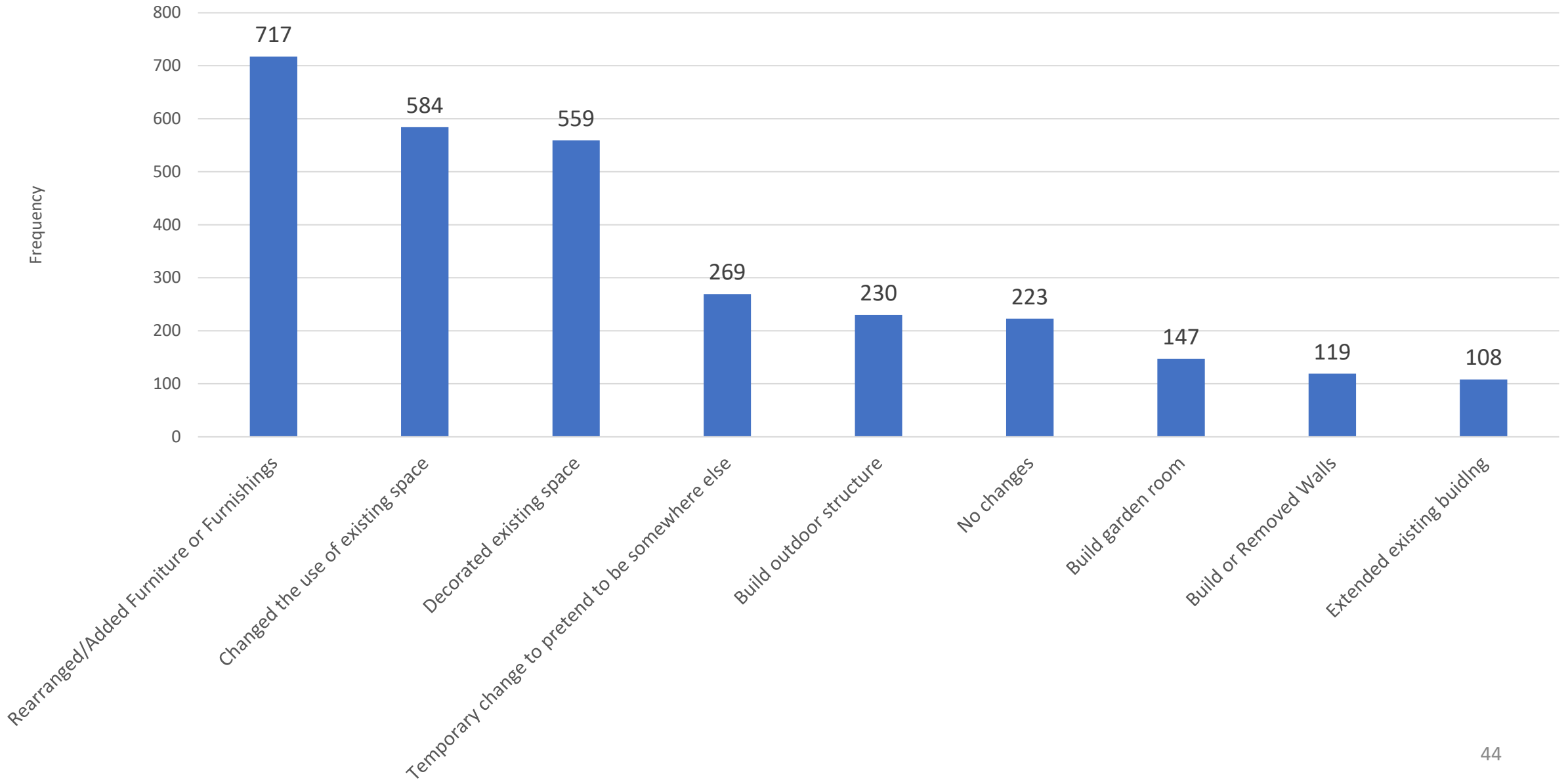
Changes to the home



Made changes to improve lockdown home life?



TYPES OF CHANGE MADE TO IMPROVE LOCKDOWN HOME LIFE



Changing use of existing space

“The playhouse ... before it was a mess space like loads of toys thrown around in it and now it's more of a space where we just sit and it's just nice to sit and like do the crafts with them”

Family of 3 in 2 bedroom semi-detached council house

Temporary change to pretend to be somewhere else

“I did it initially to try to distract them from what was going on... to say right guys, this is going to be so exciting we're going to eat our dinner at the Conservatory and we're going to pretend it's a restaurant”

Family of 5 in 4 bed detached house

Re-arranged/added furniture or furnishings

“I've used a couple of blankets, nailed them to the wall and there's quite a quite a big space there. It was quite like an extra room. You know, even though you were in the same room - you could hear everyone - it felt like a bit of a privacy.”

Family of 5 in 2 bed rented tenement



NO-/LOW- COST CHANGES

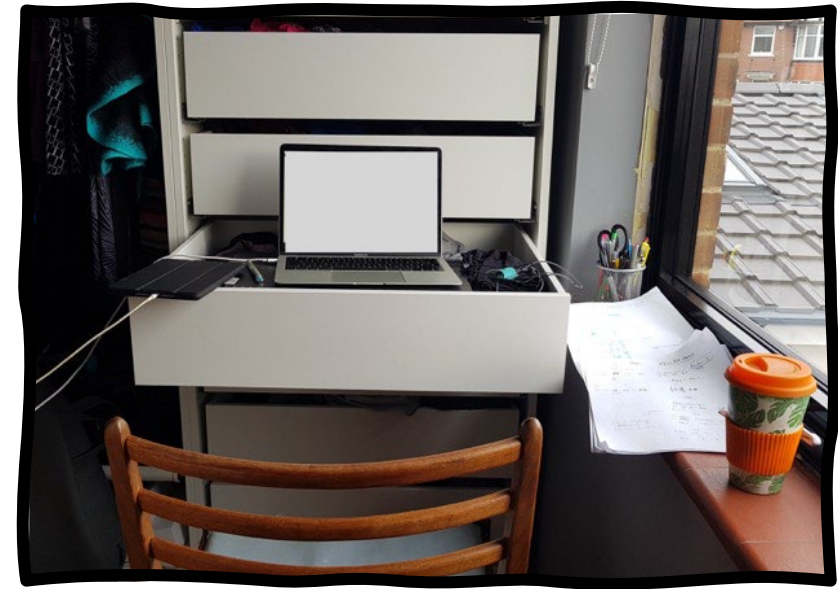
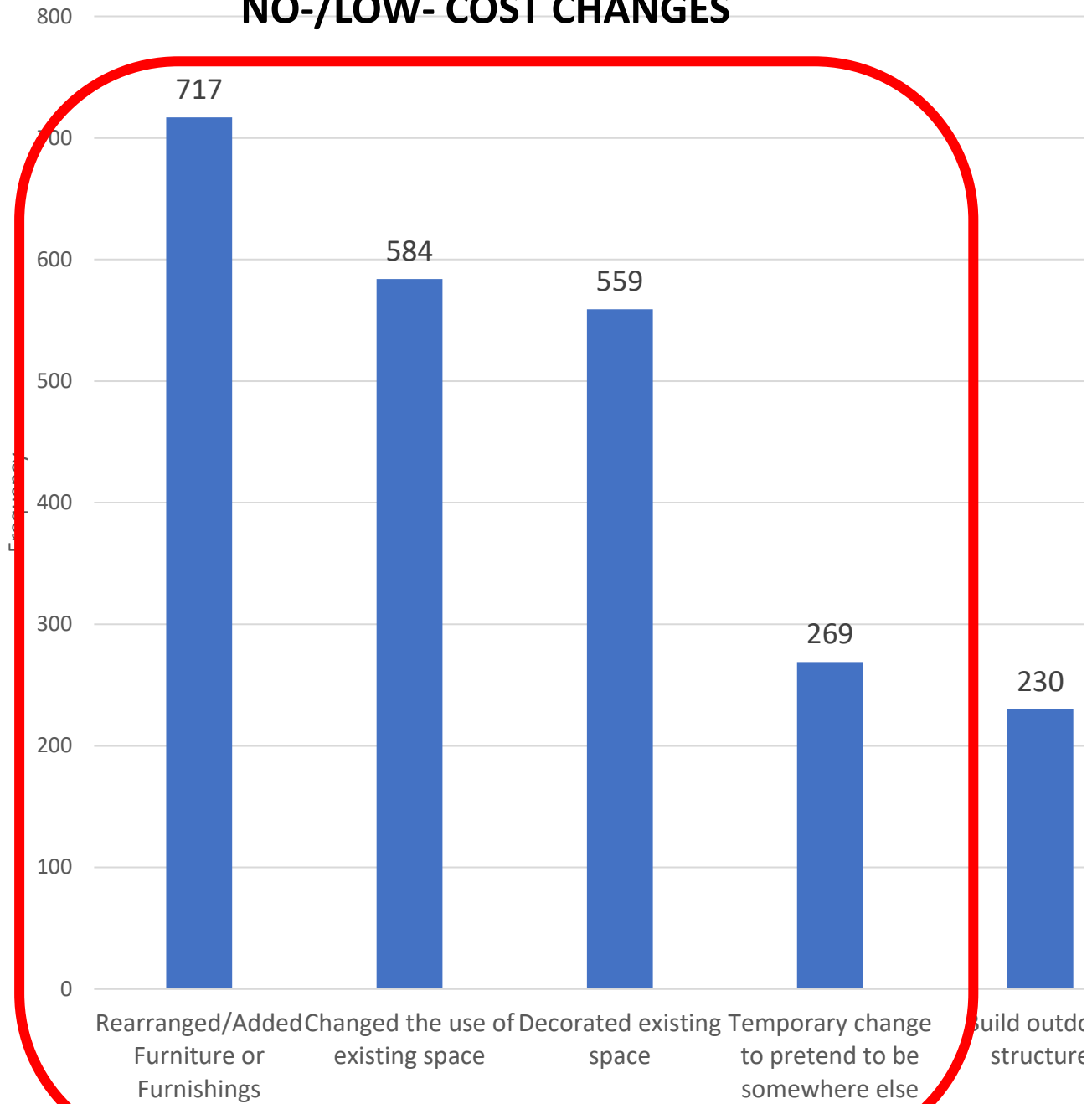


Photo credits: research team/research participants

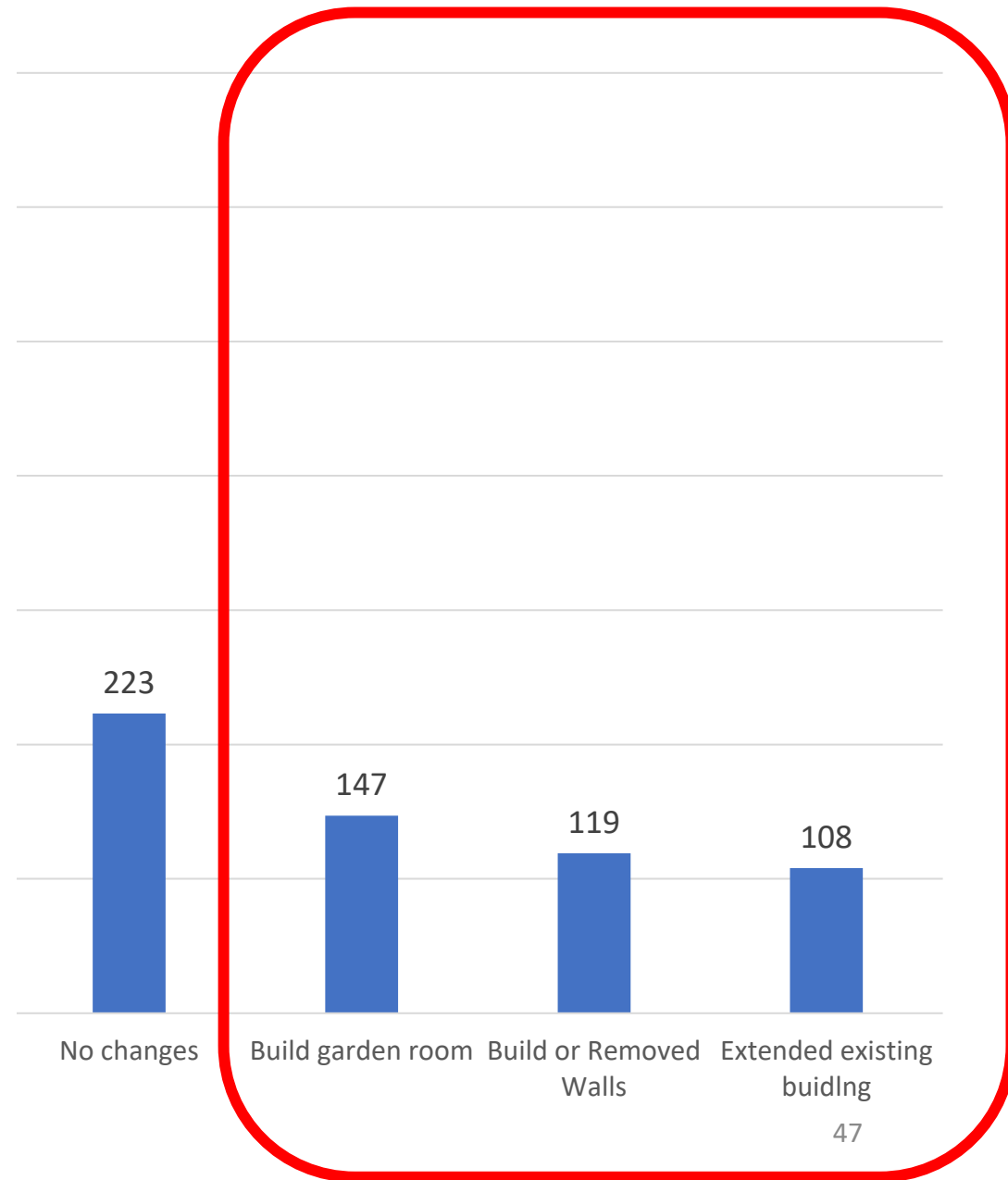
Frequency

800
700
600
500
400
300
200
100
0



Photo credits: research team/research participants

HIGH COST CHANGES



Further Information



Email contacts

Project: athomewithchildren@newcastle.ac.uk

Principal Investigator: rosie.parnell@newcastle.ac.uk



@homewchildren

Online/In the press

website: <https://athomewithchildren.ac.uk>

Intergenerational Foundation Blog: <https://www.if.org.uk/2021/05/28/at-home-with-children-be-part-of-the-research/>

British Psychological Society article: <https://www.bps.org.uk/news-and-policy/project-exploring-impact-people%E2%80%99s-living-spaces-their-mental-wellbeing-urges>

British Psychological society article: <https://www.bps.org.uk/news-and-policy/study-presents-evidence-impact-people%E2%80%99s-housing-their-health-and-wellbeing>

Research Team

Newcastle Uni: Rosie Parnell (PI), Husam Kanon (RA), Emily Pattinson (RA), Alkistis Pitsikali (RA)

Univ of Dundee: Sandra Costa Santos (Co-I), Heba Sarhan (RA)



Appendix



Survey Questions

1. I confirm that I have read the information about this research project and the Data Protection Statement and I agree to participate.
2. Please indicate where you live.
3. Have you spent at least one of the COVID-19 lockdown periods when the schools were closed (starting March 2020 or January 2021) in your home (primary dwelling)?
4. Did your household include children and/or young people (aged 1-17 years) during the COVID-19 lockdown period that you spent in your home?
5. Which of the following best describes your home?
6. When was your home built?
7. Does your household own or rent your home?
8. How many bedrooms does your home have?
9. Apart from the bedrooms counted in the previous question, how many other separate rooms do you have in your home (including bathrooms/wcs)?
10. Does your home have outdoor space where your child/children can play or hang out?
11. Please fill in the table for each member of your household.
 - a. Year of Birth
 - b. Gender
 - c. Ethnic Group
 - d. Highest level of completed education



12. In the same order as the one you used in the previous question, please fill in the table for each adult in household.
 - a. Employment status BEFORE the COVID-19 lockdown
 - b. Employment status DURING MOST of the COVID-19 lockdown
13. Does your household include more than 8 individuals?
 - a. Please use this box to fill in the year of birth, gender, ethnic background, highest level of education and employment status for any more individuals in your household.
14. Do any of the children in your household usually receive additional support for learning when at school? N.B. Scotland tends to refer to 'Additional Support for Learning (ASL)' and England refers to 'Special Educational Needs (SEN)' support or provides support via an 'Education, Health and Care' (EHC) plan.
15. Did you have any child-care support from family/support bubble members during lockdown?
16. What was your household's approximate total annual income BEFORE the COVID-19 PANDEMIC?
17. What was your household's approximate total annual income DURING the COVID-19 PANDEMIC?
18. What is your postcode?



19. Reflecting on home life BEFORE the COVID-19 PANDEMIC, how satisfied were you with your home as a space for the following activities:

- a. Children's play or leisure
- b. Family time
- c. Adults' leisure
- d. Restoration time alone
- e. Adults working from home
- f. Children's home schooling

20. Reflecting on home life DURING LOCKDOWN, how satisfied were you with your home as a space for the following activities:

- a. Children's play or leisure
- b. Family time
- c. Adults' leisure
- d. Restoration time alone
- e. Adults working from home
- f. Children's home schooling



21. Reflecting on home life DURING LOCKDOWN please choose the most applicable answer.
- a. My home adapted easily to my household's lockdown needs.
 - b. Lockdown made it more difficult for my child/children to pursue leisure/play within our home.
 - c. Lockdown made it more difficult to have time and space to myself.
 - d. Lockdown made working from home more difficult.
 - e. Lockdown made completing school work at home more difficult.

22. Have you made any of the following changes to your home as a way to improve lockdown home life?

- a. Changed the use of an existing room/space
- b. Decorated an existing room
- c. Rearranged or added new furniture/furnishings
- d. Built or removed internal walls
- e. Extended an existing building
- f. Built a garden room (e.g. home office, workshop, playroom etc.)
- g. Built or installed an outdoor structure (e.g. deck, canopy, play equipment etc.)
- h. Made temporary changes to pretend we were somewhere else (e.g. on holiday, at a bowling alley, spa, cinema etc.)
- i. No changes made [or not applicable]
- j. Other



23. Are you planning to keep (or repeat) these changes to your home in the longer term?

24. What were the main challenges your household faced with the available spaces in your home DURING LOCKDOWN?

- a. Sharing space/Crowded
- b. Limited availability of space/options
- c. Frequent disturbance/
- d. Lack of privacy
- e. Noise
- f. Lack of outdoor views/Lack of connection to the outside
- g. Inadequate lighting/Glare
- h. Inadequate ventilation
- i. Inadequate heating
- j. Uncomfortable seating
- k. Limited adaptability
- l. Not applicable
- m. Other

25. How satisfied were you overall with your home's ability to meet your household's everyday needs?

- a. Before the covid-19 pandemic
- b. During lockdown



26. How satisfied were you with the following characteristics of your home BEFORE the COVID-19 PANDEMIC?

- a. Layout of your home
- b. Size of your home overall
- c. Number of rooms in the home
- d. Size of rooms
- e. Views/Connection to the outside
- f. Size of outdoor space

27. How satisfied were you with the following characteristics of your home DURING LOCKDOWN?

- a. Layout of your home
- b. Size of your home overall
- c. Number of rooms in the home
- d. Size of rooms
- e. Views/Connection to the outside
- f. Size of outdoor space

28. Overall, do you think that at least one of your children had difficulties in one or more of the following areas: emotions, concentration, behaviour or being able to get on with other people?

- a. Before the COVID-19 pandemic
- b. During lockdown



29. Did the difficulties upset or distress your child?
- Before the COVID-19 pandemic
 - During lockdown
30. Did the difficulties interfere with your child's everyday life in the following areas BEFORE the COVID-19 PANDEMIC?
- Home life
 - School work/learning
 - Leisure activities
 - Friendships
31. Did the difficulties interfere with your child's everyday life in the following areas DURING LOCKDOWN?
- Home life
 - School work/learning
 - Leisure activities
 - Friendships
32. Reflecting on home life DURING LOCKDOWN please choose the most applicable answer.
- I would have liked more time and space to myself
 - A lack of time and space to myself had a negative impact on my wellbeing.
 - There was more tension or conflict between members of my household than there was before the COVID-19 PANDEMIC



33. If there is anything more you want to clarify or share with us regarding your COVID-19 lockdown experience please use the box below.

April 2022

athomewithchildren@newcastle.ac.uk

