

*Young People, their aspirations and Social Housing*

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*University of Southampton HEA Funded: Making Methods Matter: Embedding Employability and Enhancing Experience.*

*In association with Sovereign Housing Association*

[[1]](#footnote-1)

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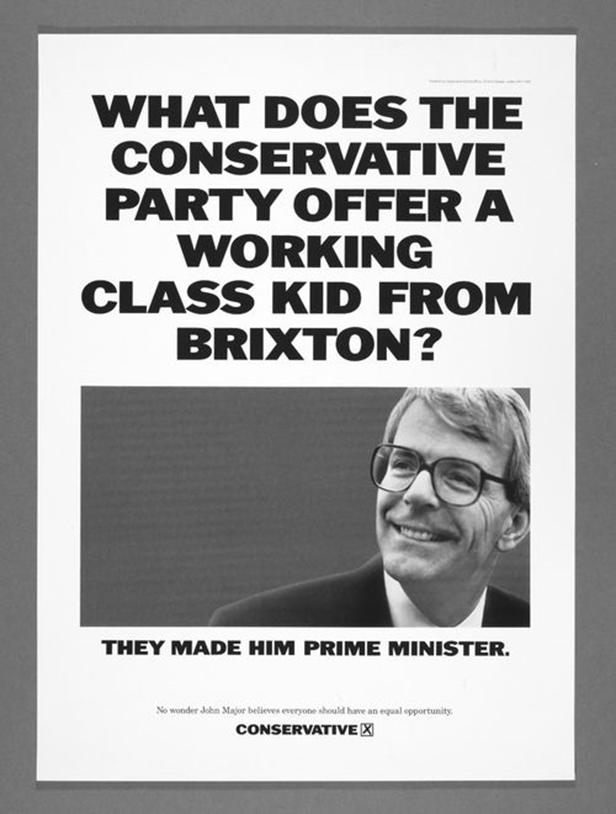
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******“[***The real tragedy of the poor is the poverty of their aspirations”.***](http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/a/adamsmith383483.html)

***-***[***Adam Smith***](http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/a/adam_smith.html)

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**[I]Executive Summary**

***Social Housing and aspirations amongst young people in the United Kingdom***

*In the current economic climate high achievement in education is essential if a child wishes to find work in a squeezed job market. It is important that children from a young age aspire to be successful, whether they wish to go to college and university or do an apprenticeship to aid their employment prospects. Furthermore, in such a turbulent economic climate it is likely that more people will struggle in the property market and turn to social housing. We believe now to be a good time to research into the perceived link between aspiration and attainment and whether housing type impacts upon aspiration formation and actual achievement. It is time to evaluate the connections between housing and aspiration, and attempt to discover if a correlation between the two exists.*

*Low aspirations amongst young people may affect their actual achievement and so it is crucial that we focus on raising ambitions to get children off to a good start in their lives. This provides the foundations for our research.*

*In February 2013 Sovereign Housing Association commissioned us to report on aspirations amongst young people with a specific focus upon social housing. Our research was conducted in a Basingstoke school of 11-16 year olds, the key areas of our research were: the demographics of social housing (age, gender, and race), how young people define success, the factors young people most associated with success, and the shape which young people envisage their futures to take.   
  
After a detailed literature review, we carried out our own primary research. 139 questionnaires were completed by students between the ages of 11 and 16, with roughly equal amounts of participants living in social housing and living in private housing. Upon analysis, our data reveal no strong correlational link between housing group and aspiration type within the respondent group.   
  
We have concluded from our evidence that there is not a link between social housing and low aspiration formation within our sample. Our response group had a demographic balance akin to that of the country as a whole; with a roughly equal gender balance and almost representative ethnic composition. We are confident that our conclusions and recommendations are therefore applicable to a wider audience. We appreciate that evidence from our sample cannot be generalised to the entire population, and yet we believe it offers an insightful look into the aspirations of young people, leading to policy recommendations and points for consideration that could be employed more generally when dealing with young people and aspirations.   
  
We suggest that amongst children in social housing and in private housing, aspirations are similar. We therefore conclude that there is not necessarily any fundamental link between living in social housing and aspiration. Indeed, we have found further evidence in our literature review to fortify our line of argument that it is alternative, more structural issues which determine low aspiration amongst young people.   
  
Our research does not provide concrete evidence for wider levels of aspiration in young people across the UK. However it allows for the creation of a framework of ideas from which a greater analysis of the UK as a whole is possible. Therefore our research project has provided a platform for further analysis.*

**[II]Rationale**

***The importance and relevance of research into aspirations and housing***

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*The foundational paradigm in the existing research on this subject suggests that there is a causal link between low aspiration and social housing. However this rarely amounts to more than speculation. We believe that this assumption requires proper research and this is the basis of our rationale.*

*\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

The concept of aspiration is a vitally important issue in many fields, from education and welfare to criminal justice. To aspire to something is to hold a deep-seated wish to achieve a certain goal. It can vary from the aspiration to live a happy and healthy life, to the aspiration to be a successful and financially sound member of society. Usually, it is used to refer to the career and educational ambitions of young people, but it can also be used to refer to more general life ambitions, such as wanting to start a family or live in a particular area[[2]](#footnote-2).

The term aspiration is also important as a young person’s aspiration can affect the rest of their life. Spielhofer et al. (2011) have also subdivided the term to include the prefixes ‘low’, ‘realistic’ and ‘high’. The term ‘realistic aspirations’ is also sometimes contrasted with ‘ideal’ or ‘idealistic aspirations’, that are used to refer to individuals’ ideal outcomes or goals regardless of their current circumstances, abilities or settings . Our study researched whether aspiration is affected by domestic residence. More specifically, we investigated whether living in social housing affects aspirations amongst young people. This question is significant as if aspiration is affected by the form of residence then this could have important socio-economic ramifications. We focused on aspiration as a slightly broader concept than just educational aspiration, drawing in factors such as housing and employment ambitions. It is important to cover a wide range of different fields when researching aspiration, as by its very nature, it can vary broadly from person to person.   
  
It is especially important to learn more about aspiration amongst those in areas of deprivation. To understand if aspiration and ambition differs amongst those of a lower socio-economic background is to understand whether ones domestic background affects their chances of success. In the 21st century serious barriers to both achievement and aspiration resulting from where a person lives should not be accepted as the norm.

This point was outlined in a Community Links Research Report by Aaron Barbour and Dr Marlen Llanes from November 2009:

***“So for those children and young people still in school today understanding their aspirations and ambitions will be key to developing strategies and plans as how best we, as society, can support them to fulfil their potential”.[[3]](#footnote-3)***

This is as relevant today as it has ever been. In the current economic climate it is essential to understand how aspirations amongst young people are shaped. We must understand how aspirations are formed and developed so we can at least go some way to comprehending how to improve such aspirations. The aspiration of a child is the first step on the ladder to success; a child must want to succeed if they are to achieve their goals.

The objective of the research undertaken in this study was to gather evidence, to help increase understanding about:

**I.** Whether young people on Sovereign estates have lower aspiration levels than those in more affluent areas.

**II.** Whether there is a wider value in Sovereign as a social housing provider investing resources into raising aspiration.

**III.** What is currently inspiring children and young people in areas of social housing.

**IV.** What are the current barriers preventing children and young people to achieving their aspirations.

**V.** Children and young people’s own opinion on the type of support that would inspire them to do better in life.

Sovereign were also interested in:

* How do the aspirations of younger people on their estates compare with those in less deprived areas?
* How does aspiration compare with expectation of achievement and actual attainment?
* Is aspiration in some areas being stifled by a poorer standard of public services?
* What factors most influence young people’s aspirations on their estates?
* Do aspirations differ depending on surroundings (i.e. University vs. Apprenticeships)
* Are aspirations of their younger residents different in more mixed communities (i.e. where there is a mix of housing tenures rather than concentrated social housing)?
* Are aspirations different for those in rural / urban areas?

Within the existing literature, there was a trend that the numbers in social housing had seen a decrease since changes to the eligibility rules under the Housing Act in 2004. They have fallen since 2003-04 from 70,000 to 2,290 in 2009-2010[[4]](#footnote-4). Yet, what it showed was the rise of community internships and projects that promoted the quality of services and opportunities presented to young people. In certain cases many residents felt that the quality of services provided to their children greatly outweighed the quality of housing and the surrounding environment.

A 2008 Department for schools and Families study measuring aspiration involved research from young people aged between 11 - 14[[5]](#footnote-5). We believe that age 11 is the ideal starting age for our research, since children at that age are expected to be starting to develop ideas on the future. However our research enables us to properly test this assumption. We expanded upon this age bracket slightly, including respondents ages 15 and 16. We believe their involvement was important, as we were interested to measure trends and changes in aspiration as young people ‘grow up’, and at these ages choices and premonitions about the future become all the more significant and relevant.   
  
A similar study, from the Princes Trust found that there can be significant differences between the age groups:

***"Those aged 14-17 placed a greater emphasis on work and material achievements, while those aged 18-25 focused on relationships and self-fulfilment."[[6]](#footnote-6)***

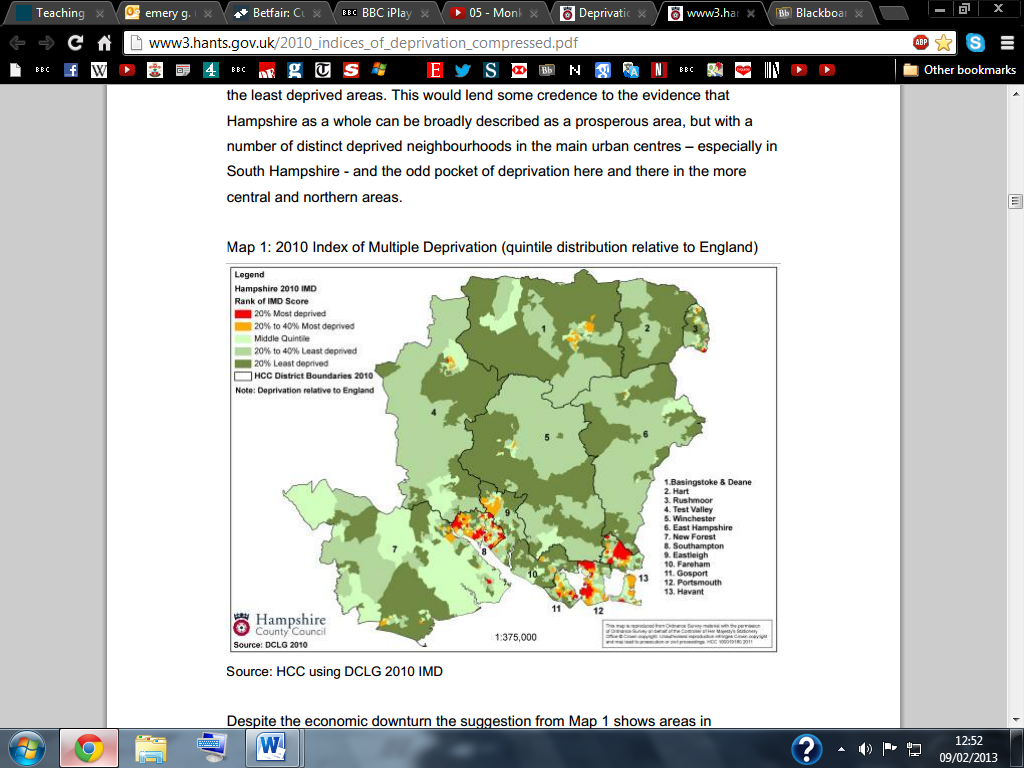
# There must be focus on more than education and the drive of a child to achieve at school. The influence of parents should not be discredited.

# A Sutton Trust study titled *“Creating a High Aspiration Culture for Young People in the UK”[[7]](#footnote-7)-* looked into parental factors in addition to education and employment factors. The study found that while young people themselves found their parents to be a strong influence, this wasn’t always in a positive way. Children interviewed came up with responses such as ‘*I really like art, but when I was picking my options my mum said I shouldn’t pick it because I didn’t want to be an artist’*.

# However another child said *‘I would like to be a journalist because my mum said I am good at writing’*.

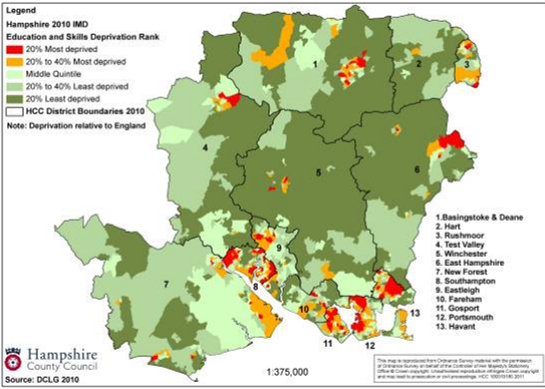
The notion that raising aspirations will lead to enhanced outcomes, both vocationally and educationally, is approaching the status of a common-sense truism. What appears to be missing from the discussion of aspiration is an explanation of why some aspirations are better than others and, even more fundamentally, how aspirations actually affect outcomes[[8]](#footnote-8). Our project enabled invites serious reflection upon the association between aspiration and its impact upon ‘success’.   
  
Many young people on social housing estates experience multiple forms of deprivation.

The following images are from the Hampshire County Council 2010 Index of Deprivation. They show how Basingstoke features among the areas of Hampshire with the highest levels of deprivation, on a number of different levels

**Map 1: 2010 Index of Multiple Deprivation (quintile distribution relative to England) [[9]](#footnote-9)**

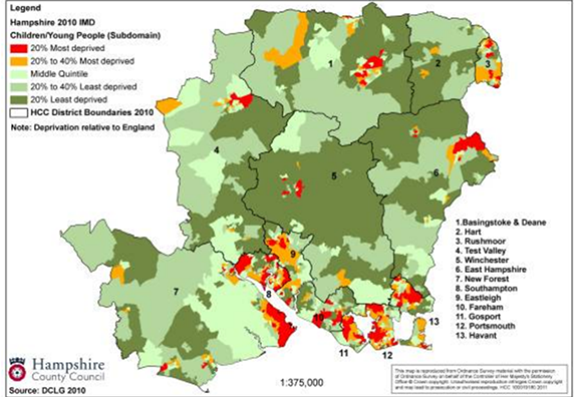
This map shows how for multiple deprivation, some parts of the Basingstoke area are among the 20 to 40% most deprived areas in England.

For education in Basingstoke, the situation is bleaker.   
  
**Map 5: Education, Skills and Training Deprivation (quintile distribution relative to England)*[[10]](#footnote-10)***

******

This map illustrates how Basingstoke is among the 20% most deprived areas in the country for Education, Skills and Training. As ‘Map 6’ below demonstrates, the area is also among the 20% most deprived areas in the country for deprivation among children and young people.

**Map 6: Children/Young People Deprivation Sub-domain (quintile distribution relative to England)*[[11]](#footnote-11)***

******

***One in seven***

***would describe***

***their time at school***

***as “a negative***

# *experience overall”[[12]](#footnote-12)*

***Around 8 in 10 parents***

***have had some involvement***

***in their child’s education***

***in the last couple of years[[13]](#footnote-13)***

**[III]Methodology**

**Applying research methods to our objectives – conducting primary research**   
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Initially, it was planned that both quantitative and qualitative research would be conducted, in the form of questionnaires followed by focus group discussions with young people between the ages of 11 and 16. This group had been specifically chosen as we felt it represented a key age range in the formation of aspirations. However, issues of consent and access, combined with the limited time frame being operated under, rendered us unable to conduct focus group discussions.   
  
We remain satisfied that the high response rate of the questionnaires provides us with an in-depth insight into the aspirations of young people in both social and non-social housing. However, future research may wish to draw in evidence from focus group discussions to provide a qualitative depth that cannot be derived from questionnaires alone.

**Questionnaires (see Section VI – Appendix A)**

***Content***  
The questionnaire comprised of 14 questions. For ease of data analysis purposes and completion, all questions were closed. We acknowledge the limitation of purely using closed-ended questions, as they do not allow for rich qualitative detail (as focus groups do). Nevertheless, we feel the research methods we used still enable us to form valuable conclusions, providing the best compromise between easily accessible analysis and useful response data.

After initially identifying age, gender, ethnicity and housing type, the majority of the questions employed a Likert scale of agreement. This involved four responses ranging between ‘strongly agree’ and ‘strongly disagree’, with an ‘other’ option included. We believe this somewhat counteracted the lack of open questions in our questionnaire, as this technique allowed us to gauge opinion, whilst maintaining the advantages of closed questions for analysis in that the responses could be easily coded. However, we were aware of the possibility of respondents being drawn to selecting the ‘other’ option, as has been identified as an issue in previous research adopting this technique. However, upon analysis, this did not prove to be a prevalent issue within the responses.   
  
We were mindful of the fact that respondents were young, and in recognition of this we tried to keep the structure and content of the questionnaire as simple to understand and complete as possible. This was aided by the use of routing to guide respondents through the completion of the questionnaire.

***Distribution and completion***  
  
An advantage of the use of questionnaires in our research was the ease with which they could be widely distributed and inexpensive in nature, further enhanced by the use of one specific setting for distribution. We received 139 completed questionnaires, with a demographic balance that satisfied our aims for cross-comparison.   
  
 The questionnaires were distributed at Aldworth Science College, where Sovereign identified a large stock of socially housed students.   
  
The questionnaires were distributed to students ranging between 11-16 years old. The age bracket of interest initially identified was 13-16, however it was found that the lowering of the age range included was beneficial in broadening the scope of our findings.   
  
The use of young respondents meant consent was essential; each questionnaire was distributed with a consent form and information sheet (see Section VII – Appendix A2 and Section VIII – Appendix A3), informing the respondents of their right to withdraw their involvement at any time and assurances of the anonymity of their involvement. Consent was also obtained from the school as most of the respondents were under 16.   
  
It’s important to stress that the results of this survey are drawn from a sample, and therefore not necessarily representative of the entire population.



**[IV]Findings**

We received 139 responses to our survey. Our main aim for the demographic makeup of our respondent sample was to include a high mixture of socially housed and non-socially housed students. We achieved this, with 60 respondents indicating they occupied social or council housing, and 77 being non-socially housed.

Our sample was also mixed in terms of gender, age and ethnicity. 45% of respondents were male, and 55% female. Ages ranged from 11 to 16, offering us a broad range of cross comparison, a slight majority of the students involved were at KS3 level (55%) with the remaining 45% studying for their GCSE’s. Ethnicity was primarily white British (125 respondents), the remaining 14 respondents identified themselves as ‘Mixed heritage’ (7), Asian, (4) and black or black British (2).

Our primary research was focused on how housing situation and aspiration are correlated. We also analysed the data to determine demographic differences in order to get an idea of differences within aspirations in terms of age, gender and ethnicity. Therefore we have divided our findings into a number of subheadings below:

**Age**

We decided to analyse the responses to questions 11a and 11b, as these presented two of the most interesting points of analysis.  
  
11a intended to unpick conceptions young people hold surrounding the importance of jobs and education within the benefit system, asking whether they agreed they could rely on the benefit system to provide them with a ‘good life’.   
  
**“Q11a. To what extent do you agree with the following statement?  
  
Having a job and/or an education are not the most important thing to me, especially when the benefits system can provide the means to a good life.”**  
We identified that to strongly agree or agree represented an attitude of dependency on the welfare system.

**Figure 1:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Age** | **Percentage of respondents identifying ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’.** | |
| **Non socially housed** | **Socially housed** |
| 11 years | 25% | 60% |
| 12  years | 27% | 22.5% |
| 13 years | 31% | 34% |
| 14 years | 33% | 28% |
| 15 years | 50% | 37.5% |

[16 year olds omitted here due to low response result skewing result].   
  
By quantifying the results for this question by age and housing type differences are evident in the youngest age bracket, where the evidence indicates socially housed young people indicate a higher propensity to depend upon the benefits system in the future, in comparison with those who were not socially housed. However, this disparity appears to level out through the rising age groups; the differences between those socially housed and non-socially housed not appearing to be significant. However, 15 year old non-socially housed respondents do appear to be anomalous of this trend.   
  
Question 11b was also analysed for comparisons between age group and housing type. This question was specifically aimed at identifying young people’s positive outlooks for the future, with strongly agree and agree identifying students with a positive attitude towards their own capability for success.

**“Q11b) To what extent do you agree with the following statement?**  
*I can do whatever I want to with my life, if I put my mind to it.***”**

**Figure 2:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Age** | **Percentage of respondents identifying ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’.** | |
| **Non socially housed** | **Socially housed** |
| 11 years | 100% | 75% |
| 12  years | 77% | 72% |
| 13 years | 94% | 100% |
| 14 years | 66% | 83% |
| 15 years | 100% | 100% |

Figure 2 above exemplifies the positive outlook of most of the students involved in the survey. Differences between those who were socially housed and non-socially housed appear to be mainly marginal throughout the age groups, again indicating that young people in the sample in social housing do not broadly identify themselves as being disadvantaged or incapable of success.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Lives in social housing** | **Does not live in social housing** | **Total** |
| **Male** | 29 | 33 | 62 |
| **Female** | 48 | 27 | 75 |
| **Total** | 77 | 50 | 137\* |

**Gender  
Figure 3**\*2 females did not respond to the question.

Figure 3 illustrates the makeup of our sample by gender and housing type.  
  
Analysis of Q14 was carried out to record any differences between aspiration in terms of gender and housing type. the question asked respondents to identify which future scenario out of a choice of six they envisaged as most likely for themselves. This question was important as it explicitly asked respondents to think ‘realistically’, hopefully returning results which demonstrate what they are *actually* capable of achieving, and not their ideal future scenarios (i.e., their imagined abilities to translate their aspiration into actual achievement). The results of our findings are presented in figure 4.  
  
**“Q14. Which of the following scenarios best represents where you realistically see yourself in 10 years?”**

**Figure 4**Figure 4 graphically represents the results for Q14 by gender and housing type.   
  
It is evident from these results that the responses within the gender groups do not vary massively between the different housing types.   
  
Overall, the responses were fairly positive. 44% of males socially housed and 44% of males non-socially housed have ‘ambitious’ imagined scenarios, expecting to find themselves in education, work experience or an apprenticeship, or placed in a ‘good job’ (i.e. managerial role or a job preluding to this). 47% of socially-housed females and 49% of non-socially housed females also envisage this for the future. This demonstrates around half our respondents in each subgroup hold aspirational expectations, and within our sample these did not seem to be distinctly affected by housing type or gender.   
  
Unemployment does not appear to have been selected as an anticipated problem in the respondent’s futures, no females indicated this as their imagined scenario. The largest subgroup imagining unemployment was non-socially housed males, where 10% foresee this scenario in ten years’ time.   
  
It is concerning to see that that nearly a third of each subgroup see themselves employed in a ‘dead end’ job, but the similarity of the results across the respondent groupings suggest that this concern is not attributed to one specific demographic. Instead, it is appears to be a notion held by many young people in general, and not formed as a result of housing type.

**Ethnicity**

**Ethnic Group 1 - White (including White British, White Irish and White Other).**

125 respondents identified themselves as White, and of these 55 indicated that they lived in social or council housing, while 68 indicated that they did not. This therefore comes to 44 % in Social/council housing, and 54 % not (bearing in mind there were 2 non-replies)

Interestingly- amongst the 55 white socially housed respondents 47 answered question 14 with a ‘positive’ future scenario… only 3 respondents indicated that they saw themselves as being unemployed. It was the same for those who weren’t in social or council housing, with only 3 respondents seeing themselves an unemployed in 10 years. Also interestingly, of all the other respondents (i.e. those from the other 4 ethnic groups and both those in and not in social/council housing), none indicated that they saw themselves as unemployed in 10 years.

**Ethnic Group 2 (Mixed Heritage) including White and Afro-Caribbean, White and Black African, White and Asian and Mixed Other**

7 respondents identified themselves as of Mixed Heritage, and of these 2 indicated that they lived in social or council housing. This is therefore approximately 28%

**Ethnic Group 3- Asian or Asian British, including those of an Indian, Pakistani, Nepalese and Bangladeshi extraction.**

4 respondents identified themselves as Asian or Asian British, with 1 of these indicating that they lived in social or council housing. This is therefore approximately 25%.

**Ethnic Group 4- Black or Black British (including Afro-Caribbean and African)**

2 respondents identified themselves as Black or Black British with both of these indicating that they lived in social or council housing. This is therefore 100%.

**Ethnic Group 5- East Asian (including Japanese, Korean and Chinese and other East Asian ethnic groups).**

1 respondent identified themselves thusly, but did not indicate that they lived in social or council housing.

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We then cross compared housing situation with direct questions on aspiration.  
 ***Cross comparison of Housing situation with Question 8.*  
 “Q8.** **Why are you at school?”**

By comparing housing situation and the reasons behind the children being at school, we were attempting to create an inference between social housing and aspiration for the future. Question 8 has 10 different possible answers on the theme of what reasons the respondent provides for being at school. The possible answers vary from the incentive to get a job or an apprenticeship to the legal requirement to be in education. When interpreting the data we decided to merge the first three possible answers to indicate a positive reason to be at school. Among the 77 non-socially housed respondents 49% indicated one of these positive reasons for being in education. 60 respondents in the study were socially housed, and of these 61% had what we are suggesting is a positive reason for being at school. This may indicate that a greater percentage of respondents in social housing were at school with positive future aspirations in mind, in comparison with those who did not live in social housing.

***Cross comparison between housing situation and Question 14:***   
  
 **“Q14. Which of the following scenarios best represents where you realistically see yourself in 10 years?”**

Our final question asked respondents where they realistically saw themselves in 10 years from a list of options including employment, unemployment and further education or training. We subdivided employment to include all kinds of jobs from semi to unskilled labour to high managerial positions. Again, we merged so-called ‘positive’ future scenarios (including education and/or training with all forms of employment). The data we collected illustrates a relatively similar, albeit high, percentage of optimism amongst both forms of housing. 83% of those not in social or council housing indicated that they were optimistic about where they see themselves in 10 years, ticking the employment or education boxes. For the respondents in social or council housing the situation was similar; 77% indicating the same optimism. Therefore we have concluded that amongst young people as a whole from our study, there is a prevailing paradigm of optimism, despite the fact that this optimism is more stark in the non-socially housed demographic.

***Cross comparison between housing situation and Question 10* .  
  
  
“Q10.   
What is the most important factor in determining your success?”**

In our research we placed significance on mitigating factors. We believe that a person’s background is important to their aspirations. Question 10 in the questionnaire attempts to tackle

this issue by asking respondents to indicate the most important factor that determines success including education, family support, the local community (including housing) and financial or economic considerations. We found that the vast majority of both socially and non-socially housed respondents placed either educational success or family support as in their opinion the most important factor. Figure 5 below illustrates this:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Educational Success** | **Family Support** | **Community Factors** | **Financial Factors** | **N/A** |
| **Non-social housing** | 49% | 35% | 1.30% | 5% | 9.60% |
| **Social Housing** | 45% | 40% | 3% | 3% | 9% |

**Figure 5:**

Figure 5 shows how, as with previous questions, there is little significant difference between children in social housing and those not in social housing. Interestingly though, respondents placed little significance to community factors and financial factors. We included housing situation in community factors, so it is interesting for our research that the children placed little significance to their housing situation. We also find that it is noticeable how children on the whole did not see financial factors as important, and suggest that a higher age group may have indicated financial factors. We propose that money is not significant for children of the age we targeted in our questionnaire, these children instead value education and family support. This highlights the importance of parental input in education, something outlined in our rationale.



**[V]Policy recommendations and implications**

  
Upon evaluation it can be concluded from our primary research that social housing does not appear to have a significant impact upon the formation of high career and educational aspirations in young people. Although based upon a sample, we are satisfied that the age, gender, and ethnic distribution of the socially and non-socially housed young people we collected our data from is similar to society as a whole, and therefore allows us to propose some powerful conclusions and policy recommendations for Sovereign Housing Association.

Our evidence suggests that while there may be not be an issue with low aspirations stemming specifically from the socially housed respondents, existing research identifies a disparity in attainment between those from disadvantaged backgrounds compared with those who are not. As many who are socially housed fall into this demographic (the median gross income for households in social housing in 2007/08 was £10,900, compared with £23,320 for households across all tenures) it may be that whilst aspiration rates are not significantly different, actual levels of achievement are. Therefore, we recommend that further research is conducted to address factors other than aspiration that may have direct impact upon these differing levels of attainment.   
  
In the policy brief from Sovereign questions were raised as to whether local services and a lack hereof could be a mitigating factor in low aspiration. While we believe this does require research, we found in our data that children still attach more significance to education and family support as a determining factor in success. Therefore, we recommend that Sovereign continue to work closely with local schools which their tenants attend in order to ensure their tenants are receiving the guidance required to translate their aspirations into attainment.   
  
Ultimately, our research findings disproved the anecdotal assumption outlined by Sovereign in the policy brief, this assumption being the belief that socially housed young people have lower aspirations than their peers. Our research has found this to be untrue. It is enlightening itself to find that attitudes differ from reality, and therefore it may be that unsupported negative attitudes surrounding the socially housed are detrimental to their achievement, despite their aspirational drive.   
  
Our discovery that (in this sample) aspiration was not directly affected by housing type supports the argument that “social housing is not inherently linked to negative outcomes”[[14]](#footnote-14). This leads us to suggest that rather than focusing upon the housing type as the determining factor, research should be conducted into the events surrounding social housing, that is to say the factors that result in the need for social housing. As the *Joseph Rowntree Foundation* research suggests, “perhaps most likely to be significant would be the immediate events that precipitated entry into social housing” (ibid). Fundamentally, we argue that perhaps it is not the fact of social housing that impacts upon attainment or leads to presumptions of low aspiration, but the initial factors that cause people to become socially housed.

Ideally we would use these students as a cohort and follow their progress to truly ascertain whether success differs by housing situation, but this was unrealistic in this research project. However, we believe our research offers an enlightening look into the aspirations of young people *as a whole.* Our research demonstrates that many young people, whether socially housed or not, foresee positive futures for themselves and aspire to success. The challenge is now the harness this aspirational drive and to convert it into actual achievement. It is this which leads us to our recommendations for further research areas and policy recommendations for Sovereign Housing Association specifically.

***Our policy recommendations for action and further research:***

* Our research did not specify any particular ‘problem’ subgroups of tenants who seem especially unmotivated. Therefore, we recommend Sovereign takes this on board and conducts a broad approach in any future schemes surrounding aspirations and young people.
* However, further research should be conducted to discover the differences in attainment between those who are and those who are not socially housed. Cross analysis of the results should be conducted to unearth demographic differences within socially housed young people’s attainment. This would pinpoint key groups that need particular attention.
* Further research should be conducted into the attitudes and assumptions surrounding social housing, to discover whether they are founded in empirical evidence, or purely anecdotal, and the impact of these attitudes. Our research suggested that attitudes surrounding socially housed young people and their aspirations are anecdotal, therefore it would be interesting to know if other negative presumptions are made and to test the validity of these presumptions.
* Sovereign should continue to foster strong community links between themselves and tenant-attended schools, in order to ensure tenants receive satisfactory guidance in achieving their aspirations. This is especially relevant as respondents identified the importance of educational support and educational achievement as being key to their future success.
* Unspecific to socially housed young people, roughly 30% of all respondents foresee themselves as ending up in a ‘dead end’ job, therefore advice needs to be offered to these students so they can uncover alternative futures for themselves.
* To combine the recommendations we have made for improved educational and careers advice, we recommend that Sovereign consider holding ‘Careers and Education Guidance Days’ where young tenants can speak to admissions officers and careers advisors as well as companies that hold apprenticeships. This would work to counteract the lack of support young people identified in their schools provision of such advice as shown by a low level of response to our question on this area.

**[VI] Appendix A**

**Anonymous questionnaire on young people’s aspirations**

**Thank you for agreeing to take part in this study. The purpose of this questionnaire is to investigate young people’s aspirations and future plans, and whether living in social housing affects this.**

**Please note that this questionnaire is anonymous and no personal details are required apart from age, gender, ethnicity and whether you live in social housing.**

**To answer the questions please tick next to the answer appropriate to you, as demonstrated below:**

**“What is your favourite colour?”**

□√ **Red**

□ **Blue**

□ **Orange**

**Section A**

**Identity/background**

**Question 1)** How old are you?

□ 11

□ 12

□ 13

□ 14

□ 15

□ 16

**Question 2)** Are you?

□ Female

□ Male

**Question 3)** Which **ethnic** group are you in? (please only tick **ONE** box)

**White**

□ White British   
□ White Irish   
White Other - please specify; ………………………………. 

**Mixed Heritage** 

□ White and Black   
□ Caribbean   
□ White and Black African   
□ White and Asian

Mixed Other - please specify; ………………………………….

**Asian or Asian British** 

□ Indian   
□ Pakistani   
□ Bangladeshi   
Asian Other - please specify; ………………………………… 

**Black or Black British**

□ Caribbean   
□ African   
Black Other - please specify; ………………………………. 

**Chinese or other Ethnic Group** 

□ Chinese   
Any other - please specify; ………………………

**SECTION B**

**Housing/Education/Employment**

**Question 4)** Are you currently living in “**social”** or “**council”** housing?

*Social* *rented* *housing* *is* *housing* *that is owned and managed by Local Authorities or Registered* *Social* *Landlords, as opposed to being privately owned*

□ Yes

□ No

**Question 5)** Please tick **ONE** box from each of the subsections below that best describes your current situation?

1. **In Education**

(Please tick which level of education below)

□ KS3  
□ GCSE  
□ None  
□ Other – please state ……………………………….

1. **In Training/Apprenticeship**

(Please tick **ONE** of the options below)

□ Unpaid work experience/internship  
□ Paid or unpaid apprenticeship  
□ None

1. **Employment**

□ Currently in employment  
□ Currently unemployed

Other-please state: …………………………..

**Please *ONLY* answer the questions ‘6’ , ‘7’and ‘8’ if you are currently in education, i.e. ticked an answer from 5(a).**

If you ***didn’t*** tick a box in **‘5a’** please ***skip*** straight to question **‘*9’*.**

**Question 6)** Have you met, either at school or independently, any educational or careers advisors? This may include an advisor from ‘**Connexions**’ or ‘**Get Smaart’** (or any similar organisation), or a college or university admissions advisor.

□ Yes

□ No

□ Don’t Know

**Question 7)** If you answered **‘NO’** for the above question what was the reasoning behind this?

(If you answered **‘YES’** for question in the previous please skip this question)

(Please only tick **ONE** box)

□ School/College has not provided opportunity

□ You have not felt the need to meet with any advisors, i.e. you are confident on your future plans

□ You have not met any advisors yet but would like to in the future

□ You do not wish to meet any advisor

□ Other- please state; …………………………

**Question 8)** What reason from the ones listed below would you give to the following question: ‘Why are you currently at school?’

(Please only tick **ONE** box)

□ I am studying for school qualifications so that I can get a job.  
□ I am studying for school qualifications so that I can go on to further/higher education.  
□ I am studying for school qualifications so that I can get an apprenticeship.  
□ I am at school while I look for a job.  
□ I am at school while I wait for acceptance into a course.  
□ I am at school because my parents want me to be.  
□ I am at school because I am not aware of what else I could be doing.  
□ I am at school because my friends are here.  
□ I am at school because I have to be here by law.

Other - please specify;……………………………………

**Question 9)** To what extent do you **agree** with the following statement?

'My education has (or will if still in education) provided me with the skills to do well in life'

□ Strongly agree  
□ Agree  
□ Disagree   
□ Strongly Disagree  
□ Other

**Question 10)** Please tick **ONE** box that best describes in your opinion the most important factor in determining success.

□ Educational success  
□ Family support  
□ Community support  
□ Financial factors

**Question 11)** To what extent do you **agree** with the following statements?

“Having a job and/or an education are not the most important thing to me, especially when the benefit system can provide the means to a good life’.”

□ Strongly Agree  
□ Agree  
□ Disagree  
□ Strongly Disagree  
□ Other

“‘I can do whatever I want to with my life, if I put my mind to it.”

□ Strongly Agree  
□ Agree  
□ Disagree  
□ Strongly Disagree  
□ Other   
  
“Even if a person tries hard at school and applies for a good job, their background will determine their success, not their effort.”

(Background in this case is referring to local area, family and finances available)

□ Strongly Agree  
□ Agree  
□ Disagree  
□ Strongly Disagree  
□ Other

‘I cannot pursue the career or educational path I would like to because of my personal circumstances’

(For example, to support a family or peer pressure)

□ Strongly Agree  
□ Agree  
□ Disagree  
□ Strongly Disagree  
□ Other

“I have made clear career plans for my future'

□ Strongly Agree  
□ Agree  
□ Disagree  
□ Strongly Disagree  
□ Other

'I know what I need to do in order to achieve my career plans'

□ Strongly Agree  
□ Agree  
□ Disagree   
□ Strongly Disagree  
□ Other

Do you see yourself being successful?  
□ Strongly agree  
□ Agree  
□ Disagree  
□ Strongly disagree  
□ Other

**Question 12)** Which of the following options would you prioritise, **i.e.** the thing you would like to get ‘sorted’ first?

(Please only tick **ONE** box)

□ Get ‘on the career ladder’ i.e. start a job that will help you to progress up to a better position and salary

□ Find any employment you can

□ Start a family

□ Get your own house, either through a mortgage or social housing

Other (please state in space below)

---------------------

**Question 13)** Please **RANK** the following in order of preference (where ***1*** is the ***most*** important to you and ***4*** is the ***least*** important thing for you)

□ Having a family  
□ Having an interesting job  
□ Having lots of money  
□ Having a nice home

**Question 14)** Which of the following scenarios is most similar to where you realistically see yourself in 10 years?

(Please only tick **ONE** box)

□ Unemployed

□ Unemployed, but in a stable domestic environment- for example as a ‘full time mum/dad’ or in a home where a partner or a parent/guardian is in work.

□ In education, work experience or an apprenticeship

□ In a steady job where the pay is constant but where there is little chance of a significant pay increase or any real possibility to advance up to more senior roles

□ In a ‘good job’, for example a manager or chief executive, or in a role where this is possible in the near future

□ None of the above.

**Thank you for taking the time to fill in this questionnaire.**

**[VII] Appendix A1**

Participant Information Sheet

**Study Title**: Studying the aspirations of young people in the Basingstoke area based on housing situation

**Researchers**: Peter Roberts, George Emery, Rosie Cullen, Priscilla Grant, Kirsty Totimeh, Sean Duffy, Aun Abdi, Canan Ulucinar, Sumer Tagman, Josh Galpin, Ollie Grant

**Please read this information carefully before deciding to take part in this research. If you are happy to participate you will be asked to sign a consent form.**

**What is the research about?**

We are conducting research on behalf of Sovereign Housing association. We are students at the University of Southampton. This piece of research aims to ascertain levels of aspiration in young people, in terms of their housing situation. In this questionnaire we are aiming to understand the hopes and dreams of young people and what affects these viewpoints. Our research is being funded by the University of Southampton but is very inexpensive in nature.

**Why have I been chosen?**

You are in an age group that we are interested in analysing (13-16) and live in the Basingstoke area.

**What will happen to me if I take part?**

You are asked to fill in a questionnaire for us, which is simple in nature. They are mostly closed end questions (multiple choice). Once you have filled out the questionnaire we will aggregate the results and produce data to create conclusions and policy recommendations for Sovereign. We do not require a follow up with you but if you wish to see the results of the study it can be made available to you.

**Are there any benefits in my taking part?**

This study will help us to understand aspiration levels and produce policy recommendations for Sovereign Housing association.

**Are there any risks involved?**

There are no risks involved with participating in this study. However, if you do not wish to participate then that is your choice.

**Will my participation be confidential?**

All information gathered for this study is confidential in that it will be stored on a password protected computer (this policy is in line with the University’s Data Protection policy). All the data that we produce will be anonymous in terms of the questionnaire. There will be no need for us to use individual names when we are producing large data entries (such as producing percentages)

**What happens if I change my mind?**

You have an absolute right to withdraw from participation in the questionnaire at any time whatsoever.

**What happens if something goes wrong?**

If you have more questions about filling out the questionnaire then you can contact our research team on this email address: [prvr1g11@soton.ac.uk](mailto:prvr1g11@soton.ac.uk). In the event of any immediate concerns surrounding the questionnaire, or confusion as to what a particular question is asking, don’t be afraid to consult your teacher.

**[VIII] Appendix A2**

Research Consent Form

Please tick and then sign below:

I understand that I am being asked to participate in a questionnaire as part of research on behalf of the University of Southampton alongside Sovereign Housing Association. This research involves the study of aspiration in the youth population and the link this has to social housing.

Please tick:

I understand that I have the right to withdraw from this research if I feel the need to at any point.

Please tick:

I recognise that all information about me will be treated in strict confidence and I will not be named at any point in this study.

Please tick:

I have read and understood the attached participant information sheet and understand what participation in this project will involve.

Please tick:

Signed: Date:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Adult Representative Consent Form

Please refer to the participant information sheet and tick and sign below to indicate that it is understood what is being asked of the participants in this research and that you give your consent to the research going ahead as an informed representative of the school at which the participants study. This consent negates any need for the written consent of a parent/guardian.

I understand that the students are being asked to participate in a questionnaire as part of research on behalf of the University of Southampton alongside Sovereign Housing Association. This research involves the study of aspiration in the youth population and the link this has to social housing.

Please tick:

I understand that the students have the right to withdraw from this research if they feel the need to at any point.

Please tick:

I recognise that all information about the students will be treated in strict confidence and they will not be named at any point in this study.

Please tick:

I have read and understood the attached participant information sheet and understand what participation in this project will involve, and consent to the participants in my care taking part.

Please tick:

Signed Date  
  
\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Image from <http://www.sovereignliving.org.uk/> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. (Gutman and Akerman, 2008). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Community Links Research Report, Aaron Barbour and Dr Marlen Llanes. November 2009 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. National Statistics, Communities and Local Government, December 2010

   Department for Communities and Local Government: London [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. **The Department for Children, Schools and Families, Dec 2008. *Aspiration and attainment amongst young people in deprived communities.*** [***http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/109339/aspirations\_evidence\_pack.pdf***](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/109339/aspirations_evidence_pack.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. ***http://www.princes-trust.org.uk/PDF/Princes%20Trust%20Research%20Reaching%20the%20Hardest%20to%20Reach%20mar04.pdf*** [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. <http://www.suttontrust.com/research/creating-a-high-aspiration-culture-for-young-people-in-the-uk/> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. ***The influence of parents, places and poverty on educational attitudes and aspirations.* Joseph Rowntree Foundation Keith Kintrea, Ralf St Clair and Muir Houston October 2011.** [**http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/young-people-education-attitudes-full.pdf**](http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/young-people-education-attitudes-full.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. *The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) provides a combined weighted value of different types of deprivation, but with a particular underlying importance placed on income and employment benefit claimants. Areas associated with higher unemployment rates and a greater dependency on welfare from the state are generally ranked closer to ‘1’ on the IMD scale because of that weighting, and where ‘1’ is the most deprived area in England.*

   Source: Hampshire County Council- using DCLG 2010 IMD  
   <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/2010_indices_of_deprivation_compressed.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Ibid, 2010 [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Ibid, 2010 [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. I ***The influence of parents, places and poverty on educational attitudes and aspirations.* Joseph Rowntree Foundation Keith Kintrea, Ralf St Clair and Muir Houston October 2011.** [**http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/young-people-education-attitudes-full.pdf**](http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/young-people-education-attitudes-full.pdf)p. 12 [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Ibid. p16 [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Joseph Rowntree Foundation, (2009) *Growing up in Social Housing in Britain.*  [↑](#footnote-ref-14)