

The experiences of people living with HIV housed in Temporary Accommodation in North-East London

Housing is an important social determinant of a person's health and wellbeing

- 1 PLWHIV have unique needs and challenges in maintaining good health and **poor housing can severely affect their wellbeing...**
- 2 **Existing research evidences poor living conditions** and adverse effects on the health of Temporary Accommodation (TA) residents, but...
- 3 There has been no specific recent research that has looked at the complex and unique needs of PLWHIV in TA, **hence this study.**

PLWHIV living in North-East London were engaged in three key phases

Surveys

Surveys were distributed in person with clients, through HIV clinics across East London, and online.

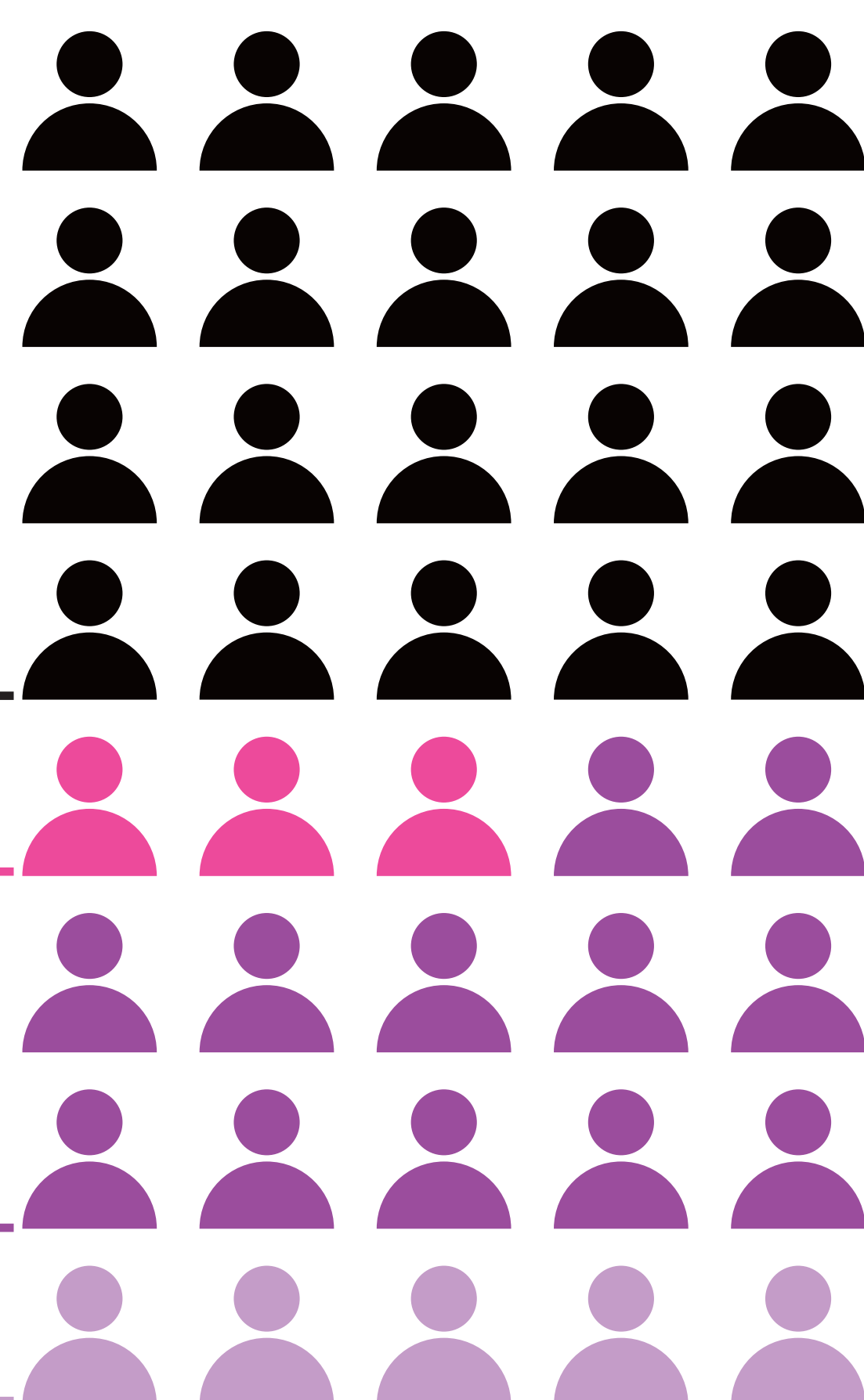
Out of the **40 responses...**

20 were current TA residents

3 had previously lived in TA

12 were either currently living or had previously lived in TA

5 had limited experience of TA



Interviews

Six semi-structured interviews were held for a more comprehensive collection of the experiences and needs of PLWHIV in TA.



Focus group

A focus group was held as the final phase of the study, to add to the outlined experiences and to review the draft recommendations for policy and service change.



“ A good living environment is good medicine for People Living with HIV ”

Focus Group Participant

Key results

70% had lived in TA for 2 or more years, with 3 people for more than 10 years

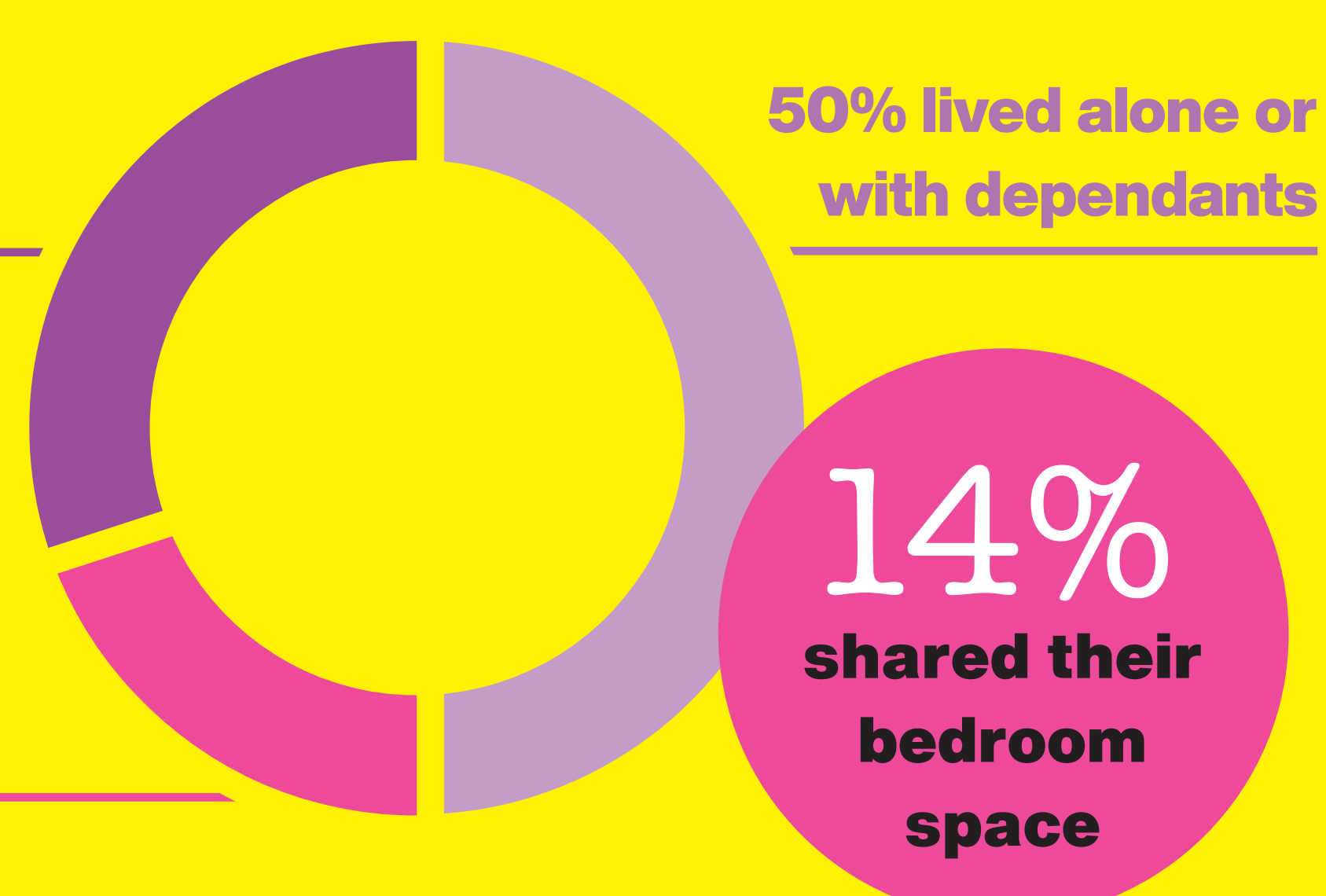
30% moved from other TA into their current or most recent TA

60% said they struggled to cover basic costs of food, shelter, and transport

Accommodation...

30% shared with 1 person

20% shared with 2 or more people



Health...

75% stated TA worsened their mental health

30% their physical health

50% their relationships and social life

Conclusions

70% of PLWHIV were not satisfied with their TA and identified safety, privacy and/or discrimination, including because of their HIV status, as key reasons.

TA is not temporary: 71% of PLWHIV had been in TA for longer than one year, with some being in TA for as long as 10 years or more.

The negative **health impacts** of being in TA for people living with HIV **can be severe**, including not adhering to treatment or maintaining their regular HIV care.

Social networks are especially important to PLWHIV, who often go to great lengths to develop and maintain them. Being housed in TA that is far from friends and family, and their chosen medical providers, impacts their wellbeing and the care they receive.



Recommendations

1 **PLWHIV should be prioritised in allocating TA**, as good housing supports their health and wellbeing, and reduces risks of disease progression and transmission.

2 **PLWHIV should not be placed in shared accommodation** due to their particular needs for privacy and confidentiality, and the significant risks of experiencing stigma and discrimination.

3 **Treatment and support needs must be considered** in TA allocations, including ensuring PLWHIV have access to their chosen medical providers and peer/social support networks.

4 **Local authorities should identify good TA providers and share their good practices.** Examples of what "good TA" looks like should be solicited from PLWHIV who live in TA, highlighting the qualities and attributes of TA, such as the ones identified in this study, that make PLWHIV happy with their housing.

5 **Local authorities should carry out HIV training among their TA providers and staff** who allocate TA for them to better understand the severity of stigma around living with HIV as compared to other chronic health conditions.

6 Health professionals providing housing support letters to PLWHIV should **highlight the unique needs of PLWHIV and the difficulties in maintaining their treatment regimes in shared accommodation**, and the impact of patient-doctor relationships and social connections in patients adhering to their treatment regimens.