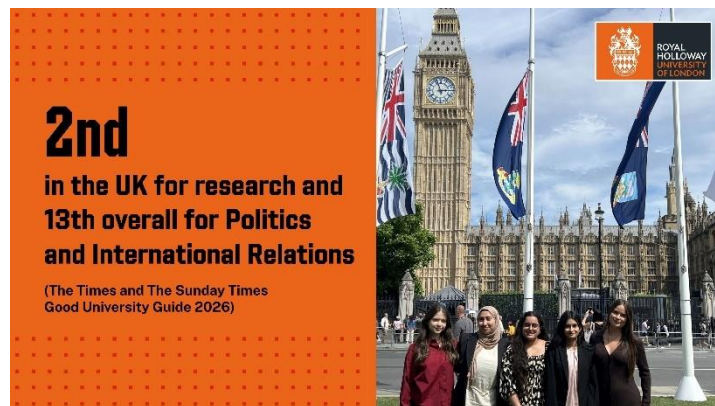# Politics in Action at Royal Holloway – Student Report

The Politics in Action course at Royal Holloway University was set up by Professor James Sloam and Professor Tom Dyson in 2014 (in the Department of Politics, International Relations and Philosophy) to give students an opportunity to gain experience of political life in a wide range of civic and political organisations - from political parties and government departments, to mental health and refugee charities, to the police and NHS, to our own Royal Holloway volunteering service - and use this to improve their employment prospects, sharpen their research skills and provide a real contribution to our communities, society and government.

In 2019, in the context of Black Lives Matter, we set up a further one week placement opportunity – with the Clerk of the House of Commons and Janet Daby MP – for several of our students from minoritized groups to spend a week working with the Committees in Parliament each year. Our cohort for 2025 are pictured above outside Parliament.

Today, around 25 students opt to take the course each year, and we are immensely proud of their efforts. The students - building on their placement experiences - have delivered first-class political analysis of some of the key challenges facing British democracy today. And, many of the placements have provided direct pathways to employment - in recent years, students have been awarded jobs in government ministries, as parliamentary research assistants, as local government officials, and in the charity sector, as a direct result of their work on the course.

More than that, for some students the placements have literally transformed their lives - increased their self-confidence and sense of self-worth, and helped them deal with challenges they face in their own lives. In the backdrop of ongoing crises – such as the cost-of-living-crisis and the threat of climate change - it is more important than ever that today's young people contribute to the rejuvenation British democracy and society, to help build sustainable futures for us all. The Politics in Action module is one small example of what can be achieved.

You can read a sample of our students reports from recent years below.

Department of Politics & International Relations

Paper #1: To what extent has the lack of housing support undermined care for asylum seekers and refugees in the UK? By Ms Nina Sood

Edited by Mr Lewis Virgo

Royal Holloway I did International Relations as my degree, this was an interesting and captivating degree as we studied topics such as the effect of mega-cities on a global scale and the different aspects of the topical refugee crisis. Learning about social issues and the worldwide impact of them, such as the different forms of revolution and how they are achieved, was relevant as these were ongoing within the current climate so the importance of what we were researching was made clear. Doing the Politics in Action module has helped me greatly as it has provided me with essential experience within a workplace and has also shown me how to act in a professional setting. The transferable skills I learnt are ones which I can apply to all future career aspirations, helping to me achieve my goals.

<u>To what extent has the lack of housing support undermined care for asylum seekers and refugees in the UK?</u>

Abstract

Asylum seekers and refugees face a multitude of problems within society currently, especially with divisive and xenophobic right-wing rhetoric on the rise. This report will be looking at an issue

that has a massive impact on this section of the public, housing, and the lack of care that the government has for it. Instead, due to prioritising a hostile environment policy over their care of asylum seekers and refugees, the UK government causes them to be overrepresented in the homelessness population and reliant on external bodies to be able to live in housing that fulfils their basic needs.

Introduction

The report will firstly outline the definitions of asylum seekers and refugees and explain the UK's hostile environment policy and what motivates it. It will then outline the different types of support asylum seekers and refugees can get and what they pertain in relation to housing. The literature review will discuss how destitution and poverty towards refugees and asylum seekers in relation to housing are prevalent and, in most cases, largely government caused. It will also explain the problems with NASS accommodation and the knock-on effects this has on asylum seekers, including severely worsening both their mental and physical health. Why refugees are overrepresented in the homelessness population will also be explained, along with how, without help from external services, many asylum seekers and refugees are put in very precarious positions. The case studies will be specifically looking at the issue of asylum support accommodation, and how issues with delays, dispersals and communication have a great effect on the standard of housing for asylum seekers. It will also expand on how the government has no care for the health and wellbeing of this specific group as their policies are needlessly punishing, and the lack of housing support from the government has a direct correlation with their wellbeing.

The difference of an asylum seeker and a refugee

An asylum seeker is defined as one who had fled a place of conflict and has come to the country seeking refuge, but their status is yet to be determined, whilst a refugee is one whose status as a refugee has been confirmed by the courts of law (Amnesty, 2020). The UK is legally obliged to give support to asylum seekers and refugees; however, they are only eligible to claim if they are unable to safely stay within any part of their home country without fear of persecution as per the government's definition (Claim Asylum in the UK, 2020). Many refugees choose the UK as the place they will seek refuge as it is commonly known as a place that gives confirmed refugees a

good way of life, however, due to the geographical place of the UK, many traffickers also laud the UK as the best place as then they would get more money from transporting someone through the whole of Europe (Gibney, 2004, p.126). Due to the UK only being legally obliged to give support to confirmed refugees, the government tries their best to hand out this title sparsely to keep the numbers down (Somerville, 2007, p.65). As a result of this mode of deterrent, many would-be refugees have to go through the court process multiple times before they are finally accepted as a refugee, showing how from the start the government tries to make the process as hard as possible for everyone involved (Jesuit Refugee Service, 2018).

The UK has one of the strictest asylum policies in Europe, this is due to the fact that it is one of the most sought out places to because of their benefits system being perceived as generous compared to other countries, also due to its geographical location as was mentioned before (Gibney, 2004, p.126). This has led to the UK's Home Office (HO), under Conservative leaderships and New Labour, to continually adopt a hostile environment policy that is getting stricter as time goes on (Somerville, 2007, p.65), (Allsopp, 2014, p.6). This hostile policy is adopted as a deterrent to appease public opinion, as generally allowing more migration, even in the form of refugees, is seen as negative and will not help governments in any bid to get re-elected and such (Anderson, 2015, p.5). Therefore, it is mainly due to this that the hostile environment policy has come about, yet this policy has real-life consequences for some of the most vulnerable people in society. This makes their aim of making asylum seekers who would claim asylum elect to leave before the legal process of becoming a refugee, a largely inhumane and violent one (Allsopp, 2014, p.6). Which is especially cruel considering the hardships that they have lived through before they fled their home countries which made them need to claim asylum in the first place. Building on this, the hostile policy does little to deter overall as the conditions they build are still better than the ones that the refugees and asylum seekers are coming from, making it a pointless endeavour.

What types of asylum support there are and their importance

 The main types of support that asylum seekers can get from the government is Section 4 (S4), Section 95 (S95) and Section 98 (S98), however, destitution is a prerequisite to all of these types of support (Asylum Support Appeals Project, 2016). Only S4 is the support given to asylum seekers who have had their claim denied and they are either trying to leave, unable to leave, or it is unreasonable to expect them to leave, this support consists of accommodation and a small amount of money per week put on an Aspen card (Home Office, 2018, p.6). Whilst S95 support is given when they have an outstanding asylum claim, with S98 being given when the eligibility of S95 is still being processed (Asylum Support Appeals Project, 2016).

Whilst their claim is still pending, if they have been accepted for S95 subsistence and accommodation support, they will be housed in National Asylum Support Service (NASS) accommodation. However, if their asylum claim is accepted they only have 28 days to move from their NASS accommodation, with the housing responsibility instead being transferred to the local authorities (Doyle, 2014, p.6). This is normally a very big shock to the refugees, and if they do not already have information or services to support them with this change then they have a large chance of ending up homeless.

Due to the government following their hostile environment policy, the housing situation for both refugees and asylum seekers is abysmal at best. This is a major issue as housing should be a key priority, as it is a basic human necessity. Instead, the government relegates this priority to the backbenches and as a result, as both the proceeding literature and case studies prove, it causes major problems and further trauma to an already vulnerable group who barely have the means to deal with it without external help.

Literature Review

The problem with housing stems via the NASS accommodation that asylum seekers are placed in, and this then has a knock-on effect to when they have to rapidly move from NASS accommodation to the housing market when their positive status is approved. The literature, as a whole, backs this up, it does this by underlining how, due to both the hostile environment policy and subsequent policies, the Home Office has failed both asylum seekers and refugees, and as a result has led to a worsening of their mental and physical health (Garvie, 2001), (Phillimore et al, 2007).

The idea that enforced poverty and destitution are key ideals that stem from the hostile environment policy is underlined by many of the readings on the subject (Allsopp, 2014), (Phillimore et al, 2007), (Philips, 2006). These specifically relate to housing in that refugees are overrepresented in the homeless population, and even if they reside in housing, it is substandard and exacerbates both their mental and physical health (Philips, 2006, p.544). This is highlighted by the Joint Committee on Human Rights who concluded that the governments' hostile policy was to both try and deter refugees from seeking asylum in the UK and to also force those who had

had their asylum claims rejected to return rather than try and reclaim asylum (Allsopp, 2014, p.6). Moreover, due to their low levels of English and vulnerable state, if refugees or asylum seekers become homeless they are put into a much dangerous position compared to the average person. From this, we see how inhumane the hostile policy is, as it results in indirect violence against asylum seekers who have to go through the trials of destitution and homelessness if they do not already have some kind of support system in place. This, therefore, goes against the whole objective of them fleeing to escape persecution and violence if it is instead the government of the country that they hope to find refuge in that is causing them further trauma.

It is also a policy that there is no statutory obligation to house singular people, this adversely affects refugees as this is the type of person who makes up a large percentage of refugees, meaning that they become homelessness the minute their NASS eviction happens if they have no accommodation to fall back on (Phillimore et al, 2007, p.24). A representative for the Home Office itself, the head of integration, further proves this point as they admitted that the information available to refugees concerning the housing market is "totally inadequate" (Philips, 2006, p.550). This therefore backs up the idea that enforced destitution and poverty is a key ideal of the hostile environment policy as the policies in place serve no aim than to bring them stress and deplete their wellbeing.

Another thing that the readings reach the same conclusion on is how the NASS accommodation that is supplied to asylum seekers is largely inadequate and causes a range of problems to them (Garvie, 2001), (Allsopp, 2014), (Philips, 2006). Housing conditions are substandard and the likes of mould, delays in repair and lack of facilities mean that those living in NASS accommodation face physical and worsening mental health issues (Allsopp, 2014, p.29). There is also major overcrowding, which is especially bad for young people and those in a vulnerable position as safety becomes a massive issue depending on the people their residing with (Philips, 2006, p.543). All of these issues are very detrimental to the wellbeing of asylum seekers as many of them when they arrive already have an array on mental and physical health problems, and the lack of an adequate housing situation will hinder their recovery no matter how much professional help they are getting (Garvie, 2001, p.32). This, in turn, shows that whilst the government tries to save money by cutting corners on adequate housing, they are instead causing the public to fund the gaps by putting greater pressure on external organisations to help them (Philips, 2006, p.543). This highlights the failings of the NASS housing system, and how due to failing government policy asylum seekers are facing a multitude of issues due to inadequate housing.

Additionally, NASS contracts in themselves are fraught with issues, such as due to the nature of them, people see becoming landlords to NASS accommodation as a way to get money quickly

(Garvie, 2001, p.37). This is because NASS outsources accommodation to the private sector, where the quality is much worse than the social rented sector, and where it is harder to hold people accountable for bad housing as the case studies will later back up (Garvie, 2001, p.31). Furthermore, asylum seekers are afraid to tell their landlords if there are any issues as they are afraid that it could lead to them being evicted due to their lack of rights, and a lack of information surrounding this issue is also a massive problem (Garvie, 2001, p.37). Also, when they are not placed in NASS accommodation they are instead put in places like bed and breakfasts, but these have little to no cooking facilities meaning that the meagre amount of subsistence they are given barely helps them, especially if they have had failed asylum claims (Phillimore et al, 2007, p.24). There is also the issue that since most of the food you obtain from food banks is given with the idea that you have cooking facilities, it means they have little to no options to eat. This is especially hard if they live in central areas like London where ready-made food is even more expensive, and also families who would be unable to even warm up milk for their children. This adversely impacts both their mental and physical health with the stress of when their next meal will be due to their housing problems and how they can make the small amount of money last them for food let alone all other things they need to buy.

If they themselves wanted to fix the issue and go into private accommodation this would be very hard due to the high deposits needed and the fact that until they get their national insurance number, they cannot access state benefits (Bakker et al, 2016, p.122). Sometimes this does not arrive until way after they have been removed from NASS accommodation which is a major issue as they have to rely on charities and grants to survive. Furthermore, many of them would be unaccustomed to the facilities, with the added barrier of language meaning that they are especially vulnerable in unsafe and dangerous properties compared to a regular tenant (Garvie, 2001, p.32). The government's failure to take this into consideration, instead relying on refugee charities and foundation to help them, shows how it is to a great extent that the lack of housing support from the government undermines care to asylum seekers and refugees (Garvie, 2001, p.36).

One of the most serious ways in which the lack of housing support is adversely impacting asylum seekers and refugees is the massive impact it has on both their physical and mental health. This is due to the housing they are put in not being up to standard or taking into consideration the barriers that refugees face, as many of them have serious mental and physical ailments

compared to the general public (Phillimore et al, 2007, p.35). Things such as housing them on the second or third floor when they have mobility issues or housing a vulnerable people in shared accommodation are both issues that affect many refugees and asylum seekers, with the government doing little to acknowledge and fix these issues unless they are repeatedly asked to do so by charities and foundation multiple times (Jesuit Refugee Service, 2018, p.5). This highlights that refugees and asylum seekers are being failed by the government as they should not need help from external bodies to be able to access the correct standard of housing.

From this review of the literature surrounding the topic of housing for refugees and asylum seekers, we see that the government has largely been unable to supply adequate levels of housing in many cases. Instead, it is up to external bodies to repeatedly lobby the government to provide this for them, but the problem still largely remains unsolved as it is normally on a case-by-case basis that this is done.

Case Studies

Building on the literature review with case studies, we see how these issues brought up by the literature is largely correct and the failing policies put forward by the Home Office is affecting refugees and asylum seekers on a visceral level. The research is largely ethnographic, collected from my time within the Helen Bamber Foundation, which is an organisation which helps asylum seekers and refugees who have been through human cruelty with a holistic approach (Helen Bamber Foundation, 2020). Working within the Housing and Welfare department meant that I dealt with refugees and asylum seekers who needed aid in housing and also meant I dealt first hand with some of the issues mentioned. All the case study evidence is from the Helen Bamber database but due to confidentiality, it cannot be cited further.

The case studies show a wide range of issues that are faced by the refugees and asylum seekers seeking accommodation, specifically the issues that arise with asylum support accommodation. Asylum seekers, when destitute, are eligible to apply for S95 support which can either be subsistence only or both subsistence and accommodation (Asylum Support Appeals Project, 2016). This support is needed as they are illegible from claiming mainstream benefits if their asylum claim has not been accepted yet, and also are not allowed to work (Asylum Support Appeals Project, 2016). When it is granted NASS accommodation should be provided, yet in many cases, there are serious delays to this due to both the governments' fault and the miscommunication with the private contractors. There are delays brought about with incorrect information given to them on many occasions, and also them refusing to fill their duty by housing

them in accommodation that is suitable to their needs, which results in major health and social problems as evidenced by the case studies.

The case studies also back up the fact that due to failures of the government to provide adequate housing care for refugees and asylum seekers, they are grievously worsening both their mental and physical health. In one instance a woman who suffered from PTSD due to being a victim of trafficking was granted S95 support, which included accommodation. But this was delayed multiple times through no fault of her own, and the stress caused by this resulted in her having traumatic flashbacks and worsening depressive symptoms, as well as a raised blood pressure.

In another instance, a mother and child were granted S95 in August, but it took them over two months to be housed, and this was only due to the foundation continually chasing the dispersal date up, with a Pre-action protocol (PAP) having to be submitted also. The PAP was evidence submitted to the courts about the treatment of the family, in this case, to try and resolve the issue since the private contractor was failing in their duty of housing them properly. This backs up the evidence put forward in the literature review about the difficulty of the private housing contract providers. As unlike local authorities who are accountable to the public, private housing contractors are only accountable to the central government, so it is only through the likes of judicial action that they are dealt with, which is a timely and difficult procedure. The person in question also has PTSD and was the single mother of a nine-year-old. The continual uncertainty of housing, coupled with her seriously vulnerable state, as confirmed by a trainee clinical psychologist of the foundation who noted that due to her past, her not residing in safe and stable accommodation meant a greater risk of harm. This whole thing had a great impact on her mental health and even with government knowledge of her being a single vulnerable mother with child, they did little to fix their mistakes. These both prove the points about the lack of housing by the government severely undermining care for both asylum seekers and refugees as without external help from the foundation they were likely to be in housing limbo for a significant amount of time.

Furthermore, the lack of support with housing has even resulted in some of the asylum seekers who were clients in the foundation to rescind their application of S95 support of accommodation and subsistence, to only subsistence after continual failings of the government to supply adequate housing. In one case a pregnant asylum seeker was meant to be dispersed into the

North of London in a single occupancy room due to both her mental and physical health. However, at first, they refused to give her a single occupancy even with both medical and legal evidence for her case given, and they only accepted her needs when the issue was raised by the foundation to a manager. They then proposed a room in East London, which she would have been unable to travel from due to her support system and hospital being based in North London, which she especially needed due to her fragile position. She then requested to change to subsistence only as the housing matter had caused her great deals of stress and anxiety which were attributed to her housing situation by a GP. This backs up the notion that the lack of housing support has resulted in asylum seekers staying in substandard accommodation because their mental and physical health is not taken into consideration in the slightest by the government, which is a massive failure on their part.

Housing is such a key issue as it not only affects asylum seekers, but it affects their families too. In one case, it took months for an asylum seeker to gain accommodation, and this was after the foundations' multiple attempts to contact the housing provider to confirm a dispersal date. But to make matters worse, after they were finally given a property it was nowhere near where their son's school was, even after multiple requests, and evidence provided by both their GP and the school, to be housed in this area. Due to this, the child had to travel more than two hours both ways just to get to school since they were in a pivotal year of study, and to move schools would mean that they would be unable to sit exams or pass the year. However, the travelling was having a massive impact on the child and causing him undue stress, showing how the government not being able to provide suitable housing was having long-lasting effects on a wide range of people.

Conclusion

To conclude, it is to a large extent that the lack of housing support has undermined care for asylum seekers and refugees in the UK. This is evidenced by the fact that due to the government wanting to follow a hostile environment policy to try and deter asylum seekers from settling in the UK, they are trying to make conditions as bad as they possibly can, and unacceptable housing plays a big role in this. This is due to housing being a key priority, so if they can make the whole process as unappealing as they possibly can to potential asylum seekers, they hope it will both act as a deterrent and a warning. Yet the real human cost of this is inhumane, and the idea that further traumatisation through dangerous and stressful living conditions is absurd as the only

thing it is achieving is making their lives pointlessly worse. With the fallout being a bigger homelessness population and human misery. Additionally, due to the government's failings, more pressure is put onto charities and foundations that help refugees and asylum seekers, when it should instead be the government's responsibility to provide an acceptable level of something as basic as housing. Overall, until the government prioritises housing over their failed attempts at deterring asylum claimants, this issue will continue to exist, and continue to have a massive impact on the welfare of asylum seekers and refugees within the UK.

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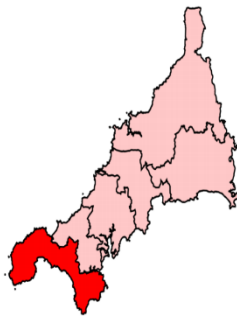
Department of Politics & International Relations

Paper #2: Kernow in Westminster: an investigation into the unique position of Cornwall on the national stage"

by Ms. Jennifer Elsey (edited by Mr Lewis Virgo)

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

❖ Local casework

❖ Persuading ministers

❖ Attending parliamentary receptions

❖ Attending private meetings with cabinet ministers

PLACEMENT WITH DEREK THOMAS MP IN PARLIAMENT

Jennifer Elsey

Conservatives

"I'm Jenny Elsey and I have just finished my BA in Politics with an International Year, spending my third year at Boston College in the US. Politics in Action gave me the incredible opportunity to

work for my local MP, Derek Thomas, in Parliament where I undertook all kinds of work including research, writing to constituents, working on a local environmental project, and attending private meetings with cabinet ministers and oral evidence sessions for APPGs.

The best part of the internship was getting to attend meetings with people like Sajid Javid, Gavin Williamson, and Alistair Campbell. Meeting these people in discussions about real political change was a totally unique experience.

Politics in Action was an all-round brilliant course as I got to take on an internship that I loved and where I felt I was contributing to politics, and that also counted towards my degree. I was also employed by Derek for a further 3 months after the course ended which allowed me to experience how the constituency office runs too, giving me a more varied outlook on the job.

The level of responsibility given to me by Derek was beyond what I expected and it has prepared me very well for my new job as a property sales consultant in London. I had to learn to communicate well with people of all backgrounds and build meaningful relationships with them, and also deal with a few interesting characters! While I am not working in politics for now, my time in Parliament has definitely made me want to go back to it someday!"

<u>Kernow in Westminster: an investigation into the unique position of Cornwall on the national stage</u>

Introduction

In this report, I will examine the uniqueness of Cornish politics, how and why it differs from politics of the rest of England and how representing the region presents different challenges to its MPs. I will use a discussion of transport, tourism and its side effects, and Cornwall's relationship with the European Union to illustrate my argument which is that Cornish MPs hold a unique role

in

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

❖ Local casework
❖ Persuading ministers
❖ Attending parliamentary receptions
❖ Attending private meetings with cabinet ministers
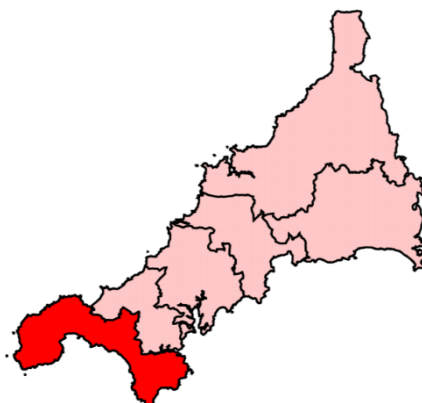
Westminster that differs greatly from the roles of other English MPs, and they have greater struggles when it comes to securing funding than other constituencies might.

I do not necessarily favour the creation of a devolved Cornish Assembly in line with the Welsh and Scottish devolved assemblies in this essay as the concept has faults that I do not have space to discuss fully in this report (these faults are mostly in funding and organisational issues). Wales was granted its devolved assembly in 1999 so that they could create their own public policy to suit their different needs (Keating, 2002). This is evidence that Central Government recognised Wales' unique political needs. In this report I will try to explain the uniqueness of Cornish political interests by occasionally making connections between Cornwall and Wales to prove that Cornwall does have a unique position in Westminster and perhaps needs special attention in order for constituents to feel fully represented. Mark Prisk, former Shadow Minister for Cornwall, told me in an interview that while a fully devolved Cornish Assembly would not be practical, Cornwall would benefit if some powers were granted to the Unitary Council, including farming management policy, and managing transport, social care and health, and housing. Especially with regard to farming, he mentioned that very little would change noticeably for the people of Cornwall, but the budget would be managed more effectively in the area than in Central Government.

Throughout my report, I will argue that Cornwall has unique political struggles which make representing the region difficult for Cornish Members of Parliament. I will also argue that Cornwall has different funding difficulties to most places and that these difficulties arise as a result of different reasons.

<u>Methodology</u>

I conducted ethnographic research for this report, gathering information about current and past issues relevant to Cornwall from those who have been or still are in roles at the heart of Cornish politics. I conducted an interview with Mark Prisk, former Shadow Minister for Cornwall (and the only person ever to have held this role) which I secured by sending him a message on LinkedIn. I also conducted a number of interviews with Derek Thomas, Member of Parliament for St Ives. I have spent time working in Derek's Westminster office, working as a link between Westminster and the constituency, almost 300 miles apart. I have worked with constituency staff, constituents, charities, local and regional police forces, and Cornwall Council and so I have seen a vast array of issues that affect the people, businesses, and infrastructure in the area. This has inspired me to delve further into researching Cornish politics and how it may differ from politics

in other regions of England, as I feel that I have had a unique experience in working for a Cornish MP.

Political background

Historically, Cornish constituencies have tended to be represented by Conservative or Liberal/Liberal Democrat MPs. Labour has struggled with its attempt to win any Cornish seats, with only four General Election wins in any of the Cornish constituencies, the first being in 1945 when Evelyn King won the Penryn and Falmouth seat for the Labour party, holding it for five years before leaving the county and defecting to the Conservative Party (Denny, 1994). Even in this case, Cornwall's first Labour seat was won considerably later than Labour's rise across the rest of Great Britain where Labour was beginning to replace the Liberal Party in the 1920s (Laybourn, 2016). The 1945 win can perhaps be attributed to the high membership of the Workers' Union due to the number of china clay workers in the constituency at the time (Thorpe, 2005). Labour then went on to win the Falmouth and Camborne seat in 1950 with Harold Hayman as their representative, and he held the seat until his death in 1966 when fellow Labour member John Dunwoody took the seat until 1970 when it was won back by Conservative candidate David Mudd (Mackenzie, 2010). Labour's final win in the county was Candy Atherton's win of the Falmouth and Camborne seat in 1997 which she held until the 2005 general election (They Work For You, 2020).

Other than Labour's few brief periods in Cornish seats, the constituencies have been won by Liberal, then Liberal Democrat, and Conservative candidates almost exclusively for the past century.

Current constituencies and MPs

Currently, there are six constituencies in the county: Camborne and Redruth (George Eustice, Conservative), North Cornwall (Scott Mann, Conservative), West Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, also known as St Ives (Derek Thomas, Conservative), South East Cornwall (Sheryll Murray, Conservative), St Austell and Newquay (Steve Double, Conservative), and Truro and Falmouth (Cherilyn Mackrory, Conservative). Although the Liberal Democrats have always had a significant degree of influence in Cornish constituencies in general elections, they have failed to win a seat since the 2010 election. The St Ives seat was the closest swing seat in the recent 2019 election but the "stop Brexit" position of the Liberal Democrats was undesirable for the pro-Brexit constituency.

Cornish Identity and a Cornish Assembly

Cornish identity is something of great importance to a lot of people who were born and raised in Cornwall. There is a distinct "feeling" of being Cornish (for Cornish people this is often more important than the feeling of being English) that far exceeds the regional pride that people from most other English counties experience, which has been described by Fiberg as being a "social entity" (Deacon, 2007 p.5). Deacon writes that "counties cannot be cultural regions in their own right" but that Cornwall is unique and different, and goes against this rule (Deacon, 2007 p.5). Cornish history lies amongst Celtic history which encompasses Celtic language, culture and traditions, and Celtic nationalism (Deacon, 2007, p. 8). There is still a great emphasis placed on Cornwall's history and this report will go on to discuss the political implications of Cornish history

CORNISH POLITICS AND IDENTITY

- ❖ Cornish identity: its origins and its effect on politics
  - ❖ Interview with Mark Prisk
  - ❖ Cornwall as a peninsula
- ❖ Deprivation in Cornwall
  - ❖ Neglected despite its high deprivation levels
  - ❖ Harmful views of the North vs. South divide

and identity.

Cornwall struggles to balance its two opposing identities - that of being "English" and of being "Celtic". Whilst dictated and controlled by England, many Cornish people feel far removed from the rest of the country and in need of a community with a tighter bond that so happens to be based on the area's history as its common denominator (Deacon, 2007). Mark Prisk said the same to me in my interview with him: that Cornish people feel isolated and independent.

As a result of this intense feeling of Cornish identity and the thought that Cornish people feel distinctly different from English people, there have been proposals of constructing a Cornish Assembly to address the people's political desires. Willett and Tredinnick-Rowe quote Deacon who says that the Declaration for a Cornish Assembly was written in 2001 and was supported by over 50,000 people which, at the time, was around 10% of the electorate, and gained the support of four of the five MPs at the time across parties (Willett & Tredinnick-Rowe, 2016). Furthermore, there has been support from MEPs, members of the Welsh Assembly and Scottish Parliament, and the Dáil Éireann (Willett & Tredinnick-Rowe, 2016). The creation of a Cornish Assembly and representation of Cornish people in politics is a cross-party belief but so far, not one that has gained support significant enough to make tangible changes.

A comparison was made by Willett and Giovannini between Cornwall and the North East in their 2014 article (Willett & Giovannini, 2014). Scotland and Wales had once felt isolated from Westminster, but managed to gain devolved powers to help represent their differences and needs in a more effective way. The North East was considered to be the next logical step for devolution by "an elite group separated from the regional public" who were those leading the campaign (Willett & Giovannini, 2014), but it came to nothing after the idea for a regional assembly was overwhelmingly rejected by the electorate in the 2004 referendum with 78% voting against a regional assembly (Mulholland, 2004). It is clear that there was no real appetite for devolution in the North East as it was proposed by elites, mostly just John Prescott, and the referendum was not requested by "normal" people in the area (Mulholland, 2004; Willett & Giovannini, 2014). New Labour was keen to promote regionalism but only for those areas it deemed important enough politically: Scotland, Wales, and the North East of England (Willett & Giovannini, 2014). Cornwall simply wasn't a consideration for devolution by the Labour Party in the late 1990s and early 2000s. The campaign for a Cornish Assembly has been a grassroots, bottom-up campaign, with heavy support from the people of Cornwall and little support from decision-making elites (Willett & Giovannini, 2014). From this, we can clearly see that Cornwall and Cornish people have different interests to the rest of England: interests that local people think are not being addressed well enough in Westminster and that deserve more, better-focused attention, and which elites do not fully understand.

Derek Thomas told me in an interview about how the agenda of Cornish nationalists does not have an impact on politics and elections, but that all Cornish voters expect their MP to work and argue in the interest of Cornwall, more so than in the interest of England or the United Kingdom. He said that Cornish MPs of any party are always strongly representative of the county, and he added that Cornish MPs do a better job at representing Cornwall than Welsh MPs do at representing Wales as a result of the expectations that Cornish people have of their MPs. This shows how important Cornish identity is in politics and the impact that it has on how Cornish MPs represent their constituents. I argue that the need for representation and how it is done is far more intense in Cornwall than it is in other counties as a direct result of the power of Cornish identity.

Cornwall's deprivation

As I will go on to discuss throughout this report, Cornwall does have very high levels of deprivation compared to the rest of England. A European Union data agency, Eurostat, names Cornwall the second most deprived region in Northern Europe (Smallcombe, 2018). Generally, when thinking about deprivation in England, the South is considered wealthy and the North is considered to have more of the most deprived regions. People overlook Cornwall as it is simply part of "the

South" which is better-served by spending, with more, higher quality hospitals, schools, and jobs. I argue that this lack of knowledge about just how deprived some parts of Cornwall are is a key reason why the area is often overlooked in Parliament.

The Shadow Minister for Cornwall

In 2007, David Cameron appointed Mark Prisk as Shadow Minister for Cornwall. Speaking with Mark, he explained to me that at the time, the county's constituencies were all Liberal Democrat seats, meaning that an entire region had no Conservative representation. The role was created in recognition of "Cornish interests" such as the state of the A30 and railways, and so that Cornwall could have a Conservative voice in Westminster. This appointment was, according to Mark, a strategic political appointment that was designed to give Cornwall a louder voice in Westminster so that more changes could be made to improve the region. Derek told me that now, this "louder voice in Westminster" must be served by the county's MPs working as one unit. This clearly illustrates that David Cameron recognised how much Cornish MPs were being ignored. No other region of England has been granted a similar appointment and I argue that this is because no other region experiences such big issues and is ignored so much by Westminster.

Three interests that set Cornwall apart

Transport: The Welsh Assembly and Scottish Parliament both have control over their internal transport, and the Welsh Assembly has control over its highways. With the amount of tourists visiting Cornwall annually in the summer months, it is vital that attention is paid to Cornwall's roads and public transport links. There is a lack of high quality transport links and very often, a lack of any public transport at all. People are reliant on expensive personal vehicles in deprived, cut-off places (Lucas et al. 2009) and, as a result, many are entirely isolated. Gaining the funding necessary to connect these areas in Cornwall is not a Westminster priority, especially in trying times where other things have to come first such as Brexit.

In an interview, former Shadow Minister for Cornwall Mark Prisk told me about Cornwall's unique struggles with transport, primarily the difficulties in connecting the county with the rest of England, mentioning the train links and the A30 specifically. Cornwall relies on one railway track that was built in the 1840s and goes through the coastal Devon resort town of Dawlish (Clark, 2020). The track is open and exposed to the sea, meaning that any meteorological events such as storms can cause the track to be closed for weeks for maintenance. With the higher than average deprivation levels in Cornwall, trains are an essential mode of transport for local people. The sheer number of storms in the area and the poor condition of public transport means that Cornish MPs struggle to be heard as the issue simply does not affect the rest of the country. They are

entirely unique in their position and this goes further to prove my argument that Cornish MPs have a role that differs to the roles of other English MPs as much more is at stake, with much higher costs involved.

I found that funding for the A39 in Cornwall was promised almost 100 years ago, and after years of campaigning, it has just been given pre-approval in the 2020 budget (Mann, 2020). This shows the issues that Cornwall faces in trying to secure vital funding to improve the state of the roads, both for the benefit of locals and tourists.

Tourism and its side effects: Mark Prisk told me that tourism, as one of Cornwall's key industries, is one of the county's main local interests. 2016, Battle et al. released a retrospective review into the effect that accidental injuries of non-Welsh residents had on hospitals across South Wales (Battle et al. 2016). They noticed that there was an increase in Emergency Department (ED) attendance amongst non-Welsh residents in the summer and that their lack of knowledge about the dangers of the area contributed to many of the unintentional injuries dealt with by the ED (Battle et al. 2016). In fact, all three of the accidental deaths of non-Welsh residents that they recorded were due to drowning (Battle et al. 2016, p. 3).

Other parts of the country simply do not experience the severe fluctuations in population that areas like Wales and Cornwall do. Derek Thomas explained to me how Cornwall's healthcare is funded. He told me that Cornwall's NHS funding is directly linked to the number of permanent residents in the area, as well as the levels of deprivation and average wages in the area. When a non-resident uses Cornwall's NHS facilities, a bill is meant to be sent to the NHS commission where the patient lives. While most hospitals and surgeries are very efficient at billing the relevant commissions and receiving their money back, Derek Thomas informed me that Cornwall is very inefficient at requesting its money back, and is owed hundreds of millions of pounds a year that should have been claimed but, for various reasons, was not claimed. Cornwall is also meant to bill foreign countries if tourists use its health services, but Derek said that this was also managed very poorly. While Cornwall does need to become more efficient at processing claims from other regions and countries, its significantly increased population during the summer months makes the need for claiming money from other areas spike at a rate that is difficult to manage. Tourism is extremely costly to Cornwall. Cornwall's popularity amongst British and foreign tourists makes funding Cornwall's hospitals particularly difficult, and makes the MPs' roles in representing Cornish healthcare particularly difficult. This is a truly exceptional situation and is something that sets Cornwall apart from most of the rest of England with regards to its strains and struggles, and shows how hard it can be to secure the necessary funding and for MPs to represent a failing system in their constituencies.

In my interview with Mark Prisk, we talked about the impact that tourism has on housing in Cornwall. He mentioned the struggles that local people have when it comes to finding affordable housing, particularly those areas within a mile of the coast. Since Cornwall is a peninsula, this means that much of the county, especially the South West, is within this 1-mile zone and so housing prices are significantly higher due to the number of people with second-homes in the area. In a 1996 report, Payne et al. wrote about the deprivation levels in Cornwall and other rural areas and how spending from Central Government often disregards the comparatively low wages in the county. They write of a problem that is unique to areas like Cornwall: seasonal and casual employment which is more common there than in other areas of England. When this is combined with the higher housing costs, lower wages, and poor transport links between work and home, Cornwall sees itself in a rare point of deprivation and "concealed homelessness", making the local MPs work towards a goal in Westminster that is often overlooked since the combination of factors at work are not seen together in other areas of the country (Payne et al, 1996).

Cornwall and the European Union: Cornwall's relationship with the European Union is another factor that makes Cornwall's politics and preferences unique. As the EU considered Cornwall to be one of the poorest regions in Europe (Whitehouse, 2019), billions of pounds were given to the county by the EU to improve the area for local people and tourists, including £26m to build the Eden Project and over £40m to build Newquay Airport (Whitehouse, 2019). Despite this, the county still voted decisively to leave the EU in 2016 with 56.5% voting leave (BBC, 2020). The new airport and the widening of the A30, funded by the EU, are both additions that Cornwall could not have afforded by itself but which significantly improve the lives of local people in the region, and so I argue that the desire to sacrifice future EU funding proves that Cornwall is in a unique position politically. Mark Prisk told me about the feeling of independence that Cornish people feel, and the way that their isolation from the rest of the UK makes them more likely to want to look out for each other and work separately and alone. Many people will have experienced the benefits of EU-funded projects and few will directly have felt the struggles of the local fishing industry, and yet dissatisfactory EU fishing policies were a main contributor to Cornish people voting to leave the EU (Sherwood, 2020). The Cornish people's desire to prioritise industries that do not directly affect them in such a crucial referendum is something that I personally think sets Cornwall apart from the rest in relation to their political priorities.

In my interview with Mark Prisk, we discussed the reasons why Cornwall voted to leave the EU despite its generous funding, and he said that fishing policy was a core reason, and that for Cornish people, fishing is more than just an industry and a way to make money. It is part of the

history and tradition of the region, and so people are more protective of it than they would otherwise be. Derek Thomas agreed that fishing and farming are important to a much wider group of people than those directly involved in the industries because there is a deep tradition and history to fishing and farming that resonates with a lot of local people and makes them care more about their neighbours' struggles in those areas. Mark Prisk also said that Cornwall feels so far removed from the rest of the country (and even further removed from Brussels and the EU), both in politics and in physical location, and therefore there is a sense that Cornish people have to look out for each other more and be a more independent region than others. This ties in with my finding that Cornish people vote for each other, not just for themselves, as seen in the fishing and farming industries' influence on the EU referendum. This is not a common way for people to behave in elections and it shows Cornwall's unique belief system in action.

Not only does Cornwall's complex relationship with the EU show that Cornish politics is deeper than just a desire for money, it will also only get more complex in the future due to Brexit. Cornwall is currently somewhat neglected in terms of funding from Westminster and it does not appear to be the case that after EU funding stops for Cornwall, that Westminster will take up the same amount of the EU funding that Cornwall will lose out on. I argue, therefore, that Cornwall's relationship with the EU proves that Cornish people think and act differently when it comes to politics, making it harder to represent the county, and that the region is politically distinct from the rest of England. The lack of Westminster funding has been hidden by the high levels of EU funding, but in the coming years I believe that Westminster will start to understand how little money Cornish MPs receive from the Government.

Conclusion

I have argued throughout this report that Cornwall is a special case when it comes to its politics. It struggles to be represented well in Westminster due to a number of reasons, including the lack of understanding that there is, indeed, deprivation in the south of England, the fact that the county is a peninsula with a heightened desire to fend for itself politically, and its stronger sense of tradition and identity, also as a result of its location and lack of borders with other counties. I have discussed three key policy issues that show how Cornwall struggles in a different way to other areas in England including the issue of poor transport and how this, combined with other factors like seasonal work and low wages, can isolate people. I also wrote about tourism and how it has negative effects on the provision of healthcare and the availability of affordable housing for

local people. Finally, I discussed Cornwall's relationship with the EU and how, even in the crucial 2016 EU referendum, Cornish pride and traditions outweighed the desire for further EU funding.

I have shown how Cornish people think differently and have different political priorities. More focus is placed on independence as a mindset, and much pride is taken in local traditions, so much so that they can swing a county to vote in a way contrary to what one might predict. It is hard to represent the people of Cornwall in Westminster when these mindsets come into politics as it is yet another factor that MPs have to consider, alongside their difficulties in securing funding for vital projects.

This report has used interviews and discussions with current and former politicians to prove that the county's political situation is very different to that of other areas in England, and that this, alongside difficulties in getting Westminster to spend money on the region, makes Cornwall a unique and difficult place to represent.

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Paper#3: Community Land Trusts: A Local Solution to a National Problem?
By Mr James Neal

Edited by Mr Lewis Virgo

About me: James Neal

I am a First-Class Honours BA Politics Graduate. On my placement, I interned with the Rt Hon Stephen Timms MP for East Ham assisting with both constituency and parliamentary duties. In Westminster, I was required to provide briefings, articles, speeches, press releases and draft ministerial questions on a wide range of topics, to assist Stephen in his duties both as a parliamentarian and as Chair of the DWP Select Committee. In the constituency, I assisted Mr Timms with his weekly drop-in clinics with constituents managing a large caseload, relating to a wide variety of differing constituent concerns. I am incredibly grateful to the department and Mr Timms for this opportunity provided to me in my final year, it has been an incredible learning experience, and I have been privileged to work with such an excellent team. I believe that it has set me up with several skills and connections that will be of great benefit to my future career.

Community Land Trusts: A Local Solution to a National Problem?

While this research report is academic and thus non-partisan it is worth noting my own bias'. I am personally an activist for the Labour party and Cooperative parties, furthermore, I was previously a Parliamentary Assistant to the Labour MP for East Ham and Chair of the DWP Select Committee, the Rt Honourable Stephen Timms MP. Moreover, this research will heavily focus on the Housing crisis in London, especially the London Borough of Newham and thus is not a large enough sample size to be representative. Moreover, due to the sheer scale of the Housing Crisis and the space constraints of this report, not all issues relevant have been given the appropriate amount of attention.

This report in no way reflects the position of Stephen Timms or the DWP Select Committee and endeavours to be an objective, albeit critical analysis of the housing crisis, its causes, effects and its solutions.

Introduction

In this research report, I intend to discuss the causes and effects of the Housing Crisis in London, why local authorities have failed to adapt and if Community Land Trusts (CLTs) are a viable policy solution. This will be done through a study of the broader academic literature and various policy briefs which I have completed in my role as Parliamentary Assistant to the Rt Honourable Stephen Timms MP, which will be available upon request.

What are my Roles?

- Caseworker
- Policy
- Campaigns

I will begin with a general discussion of the effects of the Housing Crisis, how it affected London and specifically the London Borough of Newham. I will then discuss the causes of the Housing crisis of which I have identified three key themes, namely: Right to Buy (RTB), Chronic Under-Funding and deregulation of the housing market. Having done this, I will scrutinise two approaches local authorities have adopted in response to the housing crisis, namely the Tower Hamlets Overcrowding Strategy and the Greater London Authority (GLA) Innovation fund. I will then end with a discussion of CLTs what they are, what their benefits are, examples of successful CLT's and possible future developments.

<u>What is the Housing Crisis, and what are its effects?</u>

The Housing Crisis primarily refers to the endemic underfunding of sufficient homes. According to most recent studies, an estimate of 8.4 million people in England alone are currently "living in an unaffordable, insecure or unsuitable home." (National Housing Federation, 2019) While nationally its effects have been considerable, with homelessness up 134% since 2010 (NAO, 2017) and rapidly rising rent and dramatic reductions in the quality and availability of social housing contributing to a rapid spike of national inequality (Robertson, 2017) it affects have been most acutely felt in London. (Neal, 2020a)

Statutory overcrowding, as defined by the 1985 Housing act, is perhaps one of the most pressing impacts of the Housing Crisis. In London, 5.84% of households are overcrowded (Lloyd and Gleeson, 2020) and in boroughs such as Newham, that percentage goes as high as 29%. (Lloyd, 2020) Moreover, this definition of overcrowding lends itself to underreporting, as I noted in my policy brief on allocation policies. (Neal, 2020a) With some councils, notably Newham Borough Council, adding several caveats to a definition of over-crowding, most egregious being the so-called "natural overcrowding." (Newham Borough Council, 2020) This states that Newham council will not grant increased priority to overcrowding brought about "through natural growth during the period of their tenancy (e.g. through the birth of children)," as that is considered "permissible," a clear oversight regarding overcrowding. (Neal, 2020a) Furthermore, the current statutory overcrowding standard, present in the 1985 Housing Act, is a relic of the 1935 Standards, which even at the time was temporary and in need of reform. (Young, 1935) As Wilson and Barton note in their House of Commons briefing paper, "The statutory overcrowding standard is not generous; relatively few households pass the test." (Wilson and Barton, 2018, p.4)

Furthermore, there are clear links between overcrowding and a higher risk of severe ill-health, especially amongst children, with children brought up in overcrowded housing ten times more likely to develop meningitis. (Shelter, 2005) Moreover, as I found in my policy brief, overcrowded properties are far more likely to develop mould and damp, which further exacerbates health issues, increasing the risk of respiratory problems. (Neal, 2020b) Additionally, children brought up in overcrowded households consistently have lowered educational attainment, and a higher rate of future unemployment and later poverty. (Wilson and Barton, 2018, p.4) There are also direct links between overcrowding and "depression, anxiety or stress in the home." (ibid, p. 11)

Furthermore, London also has disproportionately high levels of households on Local Authority waiting lists, with a 2018 data set, suggesting that as many as 232,409 households are currently on an LA Waiting list. (DCLG, 2018) Further analysis of this figure raises additional concerns, with

waiting times for accommodation often exceeding 10-15 years for moderate-low priority cases. (Neal, 2020a)

Thus, as a result of minimal social housing, alongside a steadily declining owner-occupier sector, with owner-occupation rates declining from 70.7% in 2005 to 63.8% in 2019 (Statista Research Department, 2020) many are forced to enter the Private Rent Sector (PRS) and face extortionate rents and poor quality housing. (Neal, 2020b) London's PRS is "highly deregulated" (Watt and Minton, 2016, p.) and as a result rents skyrocket, while quality declines, with landlords looking "to squeeze out and appropriate as much ground rent as possible." (Robertson, 2017, p.204) Indeed, 29% of PRS properties are deemed non-decent with landlords and housing associations even renting out garden sheds to whole families. (Kentish, 2017)

Further complicating the matter is the role race places in exacerbating the effects of the Housing Crisis. (Gulliver, 2017) Indeed, families from BME groups are twice as likely as White British to be in severely overcrowded properties (Shelter, 2005) while 36% of England's homeless are BME. (Gulliver, 2017) Moreover, "Studies of 'race and housing' issues have consistently shown that BME groups are disadvantaged in the nation's housing system." (ibid, p.3) Accordingly, the London Borough of Newham, which is incorporated into East Ham constituency, has the joint highest BME

Figure 5: Dwellings per person, 2017.

population in London, (ibid, p.18) while also ranking as the Homeless hotspot of London. (Mohdin, 2018)
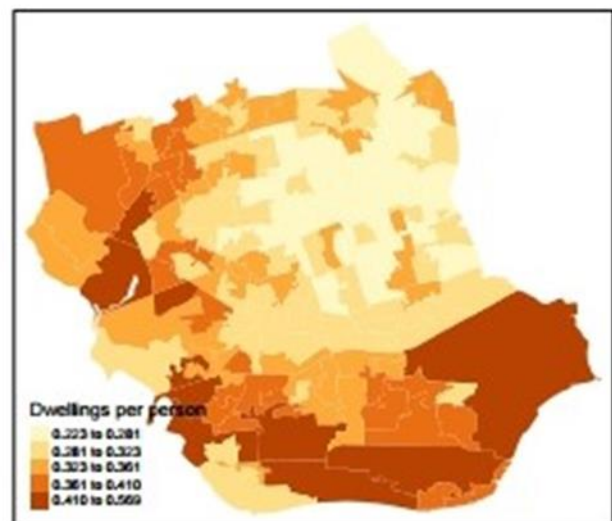
What Caused the Housing Crisis?

Having discussed the effects of the housing crisis, I will now discuss its causes. While there are several different arguments in the literature as to the causes of the Housing Crisis, three stand out as most compelling: Right to Buy (RTB), chronic underfunding of public services and the deregulation of the housing market. All three of these arguments are interrelated and arguably come under the umbrella of neo-liberalism, with Watt and Minton highlighting the neoliberal roots of the Housing Crisis. (Watt and Minton, 2016) There are several other inter-related factors, such

as the issue of Long-Term Empties, (AEH, 2019) and rapid population increases (Karantonis, 2008) which also played a role. However, as a result of space constraints, I will focus on the three most prominent causes of the Housing Crisis

Right to Buy (RTB) is understood as the "seminal social policy" (Watt and Minton, 2016) of Thatcherism, as it intended to expand the "property-owning democracy in the UK." (Jones and Murie, 2006) It works by granting secure tenants of social housing the legal right to buy the property at a discounted rate. (The Housing Act 1980) While it is true that RTB significantly increased the rates of ownership, with 2.6 million council homes sold in Great Britain since its implementation, it is arguably complicit in the housing crisis. (Homer, 2019) Indeed, those who primarily benefitted from RTB, where higher-income, white families in areas of high owner-occupation as they typically had more residual income by which to utilise RTB, (Pikvance, 2012, p.350) furthermore, higher-quality properties where substantially more likely to be bought. (ibid) This had the effect of changing the quality of social housing as those properties that were not purchased are habitually of lower quality and in more deprived areas, with 40% of social housing in the 20% of the most deprived neighbourhoods. (Hills, 2007, p.91) Leading to a process of "residualisation" (Pickvance, 2012, p.350) where the social composition of households became more homogeneous, with lower employment rates and higher poverty, this led to the othering and isolation of council tenants that have exacerbated the housing crisis. (Grant, 1992, p.214, Robertson, 2017, p.198)

At the same time as social housing stock has been bought up through right to buy, levels of council housebuilding have steadily declined since the 2010s this leads onto our second factor, under-funding. (Bowie, 2017, Lyons, 2014) Indeed, while council housebuilding has been on a downwards trend since the 70s, it has seen a 90% drop since the 2010 General election, (Kentish, 2018) with as few as 1,409 low-cost homes started in England in 2017/18 as opposed to 39,402 in 2009/10. (ibid) Promised alternative sources of housing such as 200,000 starter homes (Conservative Party, 2015) have failed to materialise, with a total of 0 of these starter homes having been built. (Honeycombe-Foster, 2019)

Furthermore, commitments to increase the numbers of "affordable housing" (Gallent, Durrant and May 2017) have so far met with failure. With campaigners alleging that, at as much as 80% of market value, the bracket for a property to be deemed "affordable" is far too high when we consider the already extremely high property prices. (Kentish, 2018) Regardless, the Conservatives have failed to deliver on these commitments, with as few as 60,000 affordable houses being built from April 2017 to March 2018. (ONS, 2018) Moreover, properties that do end up being built are typically for higher-income residents, with low price council estates bulldozed

to build higher rent properties in the process of 'state-led gentrification.' (Watt 2009) Indeed, the government spends four times more subsiding private housing than on affordable homes. (Wilcox, Perry, Stephens, and Williams. 2017) This process has been referred to as "austerity urbanism" (McKenzie, 2015) and is in effect, a process of "social cleansing." (Watt and Minton, 2016, p.211)

Both the effects of RTB and the under-supplying of housing have been compounded by the rapid deregulation of the housing market. Indeed, the liberalisation of mortgage markets in the 1980s facilitated a huge influx of credit into the housing market. (Robertson, 2017) As a result, enabling the securitisation of mortgages, that being the process of converting a mortgage into liquid financial assets and floating them. (ibid) As a result of securitisation's need for a steady stream of mortgages, it necessitated a much higher rate of borrowing and subsequent willingness to lend to less creditworthy borrowers. (Sassen, 2009) Indeed, between 1995 and 2005, residential mortgage lending increased by 521%. (Scanlon et al., 2008) This increased lending led to rapid rises in house prices, which consequently encouraged further riskier lending, creating cyclical processes, culminating in the 2007-2009 crash and the subsequent credit crunch. (Robertson, 2017, pp.199-201) This crisis would have the effect of reducing the rates of "trading up" in the housing market as a result of shortfall of loans and has led to a significant drop off in house building by both private companies and the government, due to a reported lack of funds. (Neal, 2020c) Furthermore, the process of deregulation has enabled a proliferation of lower quality housing in the PRS and empowered "dodgy landlord" to profiteer from desperate tenants. (Robertson, 2017) Indeed, in our casework, we are often faced with tenants who face unfair evictions, exploitative rents and negligent landlords, highlighting the effects of deregulation.

The factors as mentioned above all played significant roles in the housing crisis. Arguably they can all be brought under the umbrella of a general process of Thatcherite neo-liberalisation of the housing market, that has continued broadly unopposed since the 80s. However, these are just the three most prevalent factors involved in the housing crisis. Other significant factions such as the abundance of LTEHs, (AEH, 2019) and rapid population growth (Karantonis, 2008) would all have to be considered in a more in-depth analysis of the crisis.

What has been the response of Local Government?

In response to this crisis, various organisations from Local Borough Councils, to NGOs and religious centres have attempted several measures to mitigate the worst of these effects. (Neal, 2020d) For brevity, I will only discuss a small selection of approaches, for which I have drafted

policy briefs for Stephen Timms MP, namely: The Tower Hamlet's - reducing overcrowding initiative and the GLA's Innovation Fund. (Neal 2020a. Neal, 2020d)

The Tower Hamlet's Reducing Overcrowding initiative was designed in response to the endemic overcrowding present in Tower Hamlet's borough. (LGA, 2016) with an estimated 1,800 households on the Common Housing register as of 2016, which were deemed as "severely overcrowded." (ibid) This initiative promised cash incentives to under-occupiers willing to move into the owner-occupied sector, rent deposit schemes and the commencement of 20 'knock throughs' per annum. (ibid) In the first year of implementation, this initiative saw some successes, with more than 40 households moving from under-occupied three-bed homes and 21 empty properties brought back into use. (ibid) Moreover, this initiative has contributed to the removal of 508 Households from the LA waiting list from 2016 to 2017. (DCLG, 2019) However, despite these initial successes, since 2017 Tower Hamlets has seen an increase of Households from the LA waiting list, with the number rising by 192 between 2017 and 2018, (DCLG, 2019) and continues to suffer from endemic overcrowding. (Neal, 2020a)

The GLA's innovation fund, on the other hand, promises affordable housing providers with the investment so long as they can demonstrate sustainability, scalability and compliance with government statutes. (Mayor of London, 2016) In my policy brief, I found that these innovation funds have been effective while working with faith groups. (Neal, 2020d) Indeed, the Newham Deanery is in the process of demonstrating its suitability for these funds to support initiatives to use surplus church land for affordable. (Brittenden and Sefton, 2019) However, serious questions remain about the speed by which this fund can be secured, the ability of most faith groups to demonstrate financial suitability and the pace at which this housing can be developed, with this looking like longer-term mitigation, rather than an immediate solution. (Neal, 2020d)

While both these initiatives have seen some success, they are ultimately constrained by a severe lack of governmental funding. They thus, cannot provide a convincing solution to the housing crisis. (Neal, 2020a and Neal 2020d) While reinvestment in public and affordable housing, the reversal of damaging policies and regulation of the housing market would be an ideal solution, the current administration is unlikely to take this approach. Consequently, local associations need an innovative and effective system to properly mitigate the housing crisis that does not rely on substantive public funding. In my view, CLTs can provide this solution as I will demonstrate in the succeeding part of this report.

Community Land Trusts: a solution?

A CLT is a form of local co-operatively owned community-led project, which acquires land to develop, to the benefit of the community. (Neal, 2020e) While primarily designed for housing, these schemes can also include, "public spaces, shops, parks, pubs etc." (Wilson, 2017) These trusts find their theoretical origins in both neo-republican and neo-Marxist traditions, putting a premium both on induvial property ownership, and a focus on commonwealth over induvial ownership. (Soifer, 1990, p.239) As noted by Davis, CLTs give "people a personal stake in the ownership of housing and a common stake in the stewardship of the land." (Davis, 1983, p.6)

These trusts are set up through three phases that I identified in my policy brief. The first is the acquisition stage in which they acquire land either through direct purchase, leasing or as a gift. (Neal, 2020e) Having done this, the CLT will enter the development stage, where the organisers will develop properties on the land to then rent or sell to members of the CLT. (ibid) The CLT will then enter the final stage that being the management stage, where the properties are maintained and progressively upgraded by the CLT. (ibid) These properties are designed according to local needs and are typically asset locked, meaning that their affordability is protected by law, to ensure the affordability both in the present and in future, with any additional funds re-invested back into a shared community pot. (ibid) In my briefing research, I identified several potential benefits of a CLT programme.

First and foremost, CLTs help promotes real community engagement and local democracy in ways that top-down approaches do not. (ibid) CLT's help engenders a sense of "collaboration" (Thompson, 2020, p.83) amongst participants. This is perhaps best reflected with the tripartite government structure typically adopted by CLTs where "resident-members, local community and wider expert-stakeholders have equal representation on the democratically elected governing board." (Davis 2010; Meehan 2014). This community engagement is pivotal for appealing to the so-called "left behind" (Goodwin and Heath, 2016) aggregate, who feel united by a "general sense of insecurity, pessimism and marginalisation." (ibid, p.331) Indeed, allowing this group the ability to govern where and how properties are developed indeed will let these groups truly "take back control," at least so far as housing policy. (Neal, 2020e)

Moreover, the quality of housing in these CLTs are both tailored for local needs and price ranges, while also typically being of a much higher quality then PRS or social housing. (ibid) As the Smith Institute recognised, the CLT sector favours "quality of output rather than volume," (Heywood, 2016) while this admittedly slows the rate at which properties are developed, it ensures a higher quality of housing.

Finally, these projects are significantly more affordable both for beneficiaries and for the provider. (Neal, 2020e) For instance, one CLT in Mile End offers one-bedroom flats at around £130,00, while identical flats can cost as much as £450,000, levelling the playing field for those who seek to enter the property ladder. (Wainwright, 2017) CLTs make properties permanently affordable by setting rent on average local income rather than market values, ensuring long term viability. (Thompson, 2020, pp.82-83) Moreover, CLTs ease some of the burdens on local authorities by providing a cheap, locally sustainable routes by which beneficiaries can receive housing. (Neal, 2020e)

As Thompson noted, "If housing is the battlefield of our time, then the community land trust (CLT) model is an increasingly popular weapon wielded in the counteroffensive against neoliberal financialisation, social exclusions, affordability crises, state-led demolition-and-rebuild and other incursions on our 'housing commons.'" (Thompson, 2020). In other words, CLT's are affordable, collaborative and of high quality and thus provide a possible antidote for the worst excesses of the Housing Crisis.

<u>Community Land Trusts: Examples</u>

Having demonstrated the theoretical benefits of CLT's, I will now discuss several practical examples of successful CLT programmes to demonstrate efficacy.

Perhaps one of the most successful examples of a CLT is the Burlington Community Land Trust. Pioneered in the 1980s, by then-Mayor, Bernie Sanders, the Burlington CLT, now the Champlain Housing Trust is the largest CLT in the USA. (Blumgart, 2016) Indeed, 7.6% of housing stock sits on CLT land, with 566 homes, and 2,100 rental and cooperative units as of 2016. (ibid) As early as September 1986, the BCLT was given recognition by the UN as "having made a unique contribution to helping solve the housing problems face by poor people." (Soifer, 1990, p.249) Moreover, BCLT has helped engender in its recipients a philosophy that housing should be understood as a fundamental right and that land should be a public resource, challenging the neo-liberal ideological hegemon which privileges private ownership over humanity. (ibid, pp.249-251)

In this same vein, East Ham sees the development of a new CLT programme titled E16 CLT, which is in its acquisition stage. It intends to provide "genuinely and permanently affordable housing," in Custom House. (E16 CLT, 2020) As my policy brief found: Anyone who lives, works or has a connection to Newham can join and buy a share for £1. Each year, members can vote for board members as well as participating in other big decisions based on one member, one vote. While

currently in its very early stages E16 appears to be a promising development for the future which may provide a much-needed antidote to the housing crisis in East Ham. (Neal, 2020e)

These examples are clear demonstrations of the present workability of CLT programmes and the genuinely positive effects they can have on the lives of their beneficiaries.

<u>Community Land Trusts: Going Forward?</u>

While the potential of these programmes is undeniable, most CLTs are in their infancy and are only able to provide a small number of households with genuinely affordable housing. We should ask ourselves how should the CLT movement progress?

In terms of national implementation, the National CLT Network has recommended three key steps the government may take to assist the growth of the CLT sector. These steps are as follows: Firstly, "Introducing a Community Right to Buy." (National CLT Network, 2020) This would overcome the primary challenge to CLT housing, the acquisition of land, by granting communities RTB over local land and a compulsory RTB for abandoned or neglected land. (Neal, 2020e) Secondly, a £500 million community housing fund to last the next five years, to prove as a starting fund for CLT's seeking to get off the ground and in assisting in the development stage. (ibid) Finally, ensuring the continued affordability of CLT homes, by exempting CLTs from policy or legislation that undermines permanent affordability, such as leasehold enfranchisement or voluntary RTB. (ibid) Likewise, the Cooperative party have been advocating for a more comprehensive policy of Community Wealth Building, (CWB) in which CLT's play a pivotal role, empowering local authorities and communities via a process of "regeneration framed around cooperative values of self-help, participation, social responsibility and democratic accountability." (Birley, 2017, p.3) Further developments are expected in this CWB sector, following its successes with the Preston Model, leading to attempted replication in various local authorities. (Neal, 2020f)

Despite this, questions remain about the future of CLTs. Community-led housing while growing steadily is very much still in its infancy and attempts to co-ordinate these movements faces inherent roadblocks; indeed, "Community-led housing models and groups are by their nature local and disparate." (Heywood, 2016, p.48) Moreover, Community-led housing faces a hostile environment perpetuated by "conventional developers and housebuilders." (ibid)

Furthermore, due to the current COVID-19 crisis and the resulting economic fallout, it is unlikely that the political will for such an initiative will be in deep reserve. Despite this, CLT's and other such community-led housing policies can go some way in addressing the more deplorable effects of this crisis by providing genuinely affordable tailor-made housing for beneficiaries and

with more significant government support, it can grow at a faster rate than presently. (Neal, 2020e)

Fundamentally, the housing crisis is an artificial one, created out of decades of negligent government policy and chronic underfunding. While CLT's at present, cannot provide a complete antidote to the housing crisis, they can provide vital help for their beneficiaries and should be viewed alongside other initiatives, as a step in the right direction. (Neal, 2020e)

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Department of Politics & International Relations

Paper #4: *How do China and Thailand affect the cooling outlook of Southeast Asia?*

By Ms Melissa Martin

Edited by Mr Lewis Virgo

Hiya! I'm Melissa, and I've just graduated with a BA International Relations. I've really enjoyed my time in the department, and in particular I feel so lucky to have taken Politics in Action this year. The course structure made me feel confident that taking on a year-long internship wouldn't be putting too much pressure on my third year, which was something I was concerned about when I began looking for work experience in my second year. My internship at Third Generation Environmentalism (E3G) was a highlight of my third year, giving me both professional experience and a hands-on learning experience that brought a new dimension to my degree. Lecture and seminar learning is insightful, but actually getting to have a hand in climate research and policy advising has helped me understand the content in a whole new light. The opportunity has made me enthusiastic about my MSc and, beyond that, working in the field. Spending time in a professional office environment also taught me to consider my personal development in a professional sense, value my work and network with colleagues, particularly other young professionals, all of which has given me confidence to take my next steps. Plus, the free coffee wasn't half bad.

Introduction

The effects of the climate crisis are becoming more apparent and the discourse around it has rightfully shifted from "stopping" climate change to mitigation and adaptation (Griffin and Hindle Fisher, 2019). This mitigate-and-adapt approach is pervasive, requiring change from all corners of society. One underrepresented area of change vital to mitigation and adaptation is cooling, which encompasses all forms of temperature control such as water cooling, food transportation and air conditioning (ibid.). The importance of cooling can be summarised as follows:

The world will get warmer as climate change takes its toll. Contemporaneously, the middle class across the world will expand, meaning households and businesses will be able to buy fridges, air conditioners and so on. Once equipment is acquired, it will be used more and more as the world warms due to relative gains in temperature. If this equipment is not "climate-friendly" it will contribute to global emissions at an alarming rate, thus causing further warming, in addition to

exacerbating other effects of climate change. This in turn, causes more need for cooling, and the cycle continues (ibid.).

My work with the cooling team at climate-think tank E3G involves compiling research and policy options for countries positioned as key actors on the supply and demand sides of cooling production. Through our desk- and interview-based research we can assess the national conditions of these countries. This information is then used to inform pressure groups such as government agencies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), industry officials and intergovernmental organisations (IOs) on how best to adjust production and policy to best mitigate and adapt to climate change in the space of cooling. Cooling may not be the most significant aspect of the climate change response, but it is important, especially considering its interconnectedness with other aspects of climate change mitigation.

My research report builds heavily on this work. This requires a heavy emphasis on narrative building. While this may not seem to be directly data driven due to its qualitative nature, it is dependent on the data gathered and shows the vitality of quantitative and qualitative research used in tandem. Using the desk-research compiled by my team and I throughout this year, I assess the cooling outlook in Southeast Asia by comparing China and Thailand in terms of select national conditions. To achieve this, my report is structured in the following manner: first, a literature review exploring work foundational to this research; second, an explanation of the methodology including a wide understanding of national conditions and a deeper understanding of technology and innovation and finance and investment; third, a description of the data for China and Thailand in the aforementioned fields; finally, a discussion on what the data means for the future of cooling in Southeast Asia.

<u>Literature</u>

Actions occur due to a wide array of push and pull factors, which makes it impossible to know precisely what causes government actions. Robert Putnam (1988) looks at this and in doing so introduced the analogy of two-level games to the discourse of domestic and international policy. Putnam points to various conferences with which outcomes cannot be fully explained by the domestic pressures placed on national representatives (Waltz, 1959), nor the international balance these representatives try to maintain (Gourevitch, 1978 & Prasad, 2017). Several key figures have tried explaining the relationship through regional integration (Deustch et. al, 1957 & Haas, 1958), supranational organisations (Keohane and Nye, 1977), and economic opportunism (Katzenstein, 1978) to little avail.

Putnam shows that policies on either "game table" are inextricably linked to the pressures of the opposing table in a way that is not quantifiable. Thus, multiple factors including domestic political parties, re-election prospects or infrastructure programmes and international treaties, allyships or motives are insightful. At the same time, they are not so important on their own they should be understood as the sole factor driving policy.

The key to any successful policy is ratification. Ratification - whether it be to a subnational, national or supranational policy - requires an understanding of what agents will agree to, and thus how the narrative of a policy must be written or delivered. George Tsebelis' veto theory (2002a) captures this process. The theory says that to change the status quo (for instance, implementing a policy) veto players must be persuaded to support a measure. Various players have differing interests, enough of which must be catered to in order to overcome the status quo. This mix of interests amounts to a "win set" - introduced by Putnam and developed further by Tsebelis. The smaller the win set needed, the easier it should be to deliver a change to the status quo.

As decision making bodies become larger and more diverse, and as the changes required become more complex, it becomes correspondingly harder to secure change (Tsebelis, 2002b). In cases where there will definitely be winners and losers, it is important to position the win set in the most effective way possible by assessing the landscape through a political economy lens (Gilpin, 2001) to account for as many interests as possible. These real-world changes are multi-sectoral, requiring big sacrifices (Tsebelis, 2002c). The key role of the win set shows the importance of identifying the interests of different agents and building on those interests to develop a solution that suits enough powerful agents to change the status quo.

Cooling is an understudied field in the realm of political science. This is understandable, as the field is incredibly technical and much more novel than war and peace on both domestic and international agendas. Cooling, nonetheless, is vital to the fight against climate change, which is on every agenda. Literature on cooling largely focuses on the technology which, while important, does little to further the conversation of how to implement clean cooling programmes globally. As such, it is useful to look at cooling as a policy similar to voting rights or tax cuts, which are more "mainstream" agenda items. By doing this, you can assess where a country is in terms of policy, what vested interests lie on either side, how capable the country is to combat failures of implementation and what can be gained by successful implementation (Healy and Marchand, 2019). Because clean cooling is a feat of both clean energy sources and efficient generation, much of the conversation centres around "dirty" energy giants and the technological capacity of nations (K-CEP, 2018). Additionally, it is important to identify what actors hold funds crucial to the transition to and implementation of clean cooling.

Methodology

❖ The Political Economy Mapping Methodology (PEMM) is an analytical tool developed by E3G to assess threats and opportunities to countries presented by the low carbon transition. It assesses three systems: national conditions, political system and external projection. Overall, the sections provide a comprehensive assessment of the country to answer the following research questions:

- "What are the core interests that shape the national debate around a low carbon transition in the country?

- "How are these national conditions affected by the country's political system?

- "How does the interaction between the country's economic and political systems play out in its external projection and choice?" (Healy and Marchand, 2019)

As this work heavily depends on narrative building, it is important to allow the data gathered to guide the questions being asked. All methodology comes from Annex I of E3G's "SEA Change: Delivering a Zero Carbon Economy in Southeast Asia" Report (Healy and Marchand, 2019).

➢ *National Conditions* refer to country-specific trends in the real economy that shape the debate on climate action and a low carbon transition. It is due to this that all national conditions are vital, despite this report only having the space to discuss metrics regarding technology & innovation and finance & investment, which will be discussed in detail in later sections. All other national conditions are as follows:

- *Climate risk* assesses a country's exposure and vulnerability to a changing climate and asks if there is sufficient adaptive capacity to respond. Regarding cooling, this widely means the capacity to incorporate efficient, clean and secure cooling.

- *Energy transition* assesses a country's energy production and consumption trends and overall progress on the transition to a low carbon energy system. The energy transition is important because it tells us how significant cooling is to a country's energy demand growth.

- *Energy security* assesses what natural resources a country has to meet energy demand, and how they go about securing these and additional resources to secure the energy supply. This is particularly important in cooling because cooling uses a large – and rising – proportion of energy demand in times of peak demand, which presents a potential challenge to countries that are energy insecure.

- **Technology and innovation** assess the characteristics and performance of a country's technological and innovation capacity, including equipment development and production. Regarding cooling, this includes cooling equipment and services.

- **Finance and investment** assess the dynamics and performance of a country's financial and investment system, including financial flows enabling development and what bodies these funds are coming from. This is vital in the cooling sector, as financing can come from a variety of public and/or private sources and funding mechanisms.

- **Public goods** assess the communal goods and services valued by citizens. How these are valued vary from society to society, so it important to see what matters to people and how cooling is perceived. For example, in some countries access to AC can be viewed as "modern" or act as a status symbol in society.

- **Land use** assesses a country's key trends on biodiversity loss and protection, land use and the use of marine resources. Food systems linked to fisheries and agricultural production play an important role in cooling, particularly efficient cold chain storage and transportation.

➤ **Political System** considers actors that effect change in the country's decision-making process, accounting for the size and scope of their influence.

- **Government** assesses actors and priorities in the government system and civil service. Because cooling technology and implementation often requires government action but is rarer as a government or public priority, the government's perception of cooling and the low-carbon transition is vital.

- **Business** assesses the scope, importance and connections of identified key business actors, and their engagement with high and low carbon industries. Whether public and private businesses are supportive of the low carbon transition – and by extension, clean cooling- or not, they are influential in the political system.

- **Public discourse** assesses the message, delivery and impact of public debate in the political system, including citizen action and social movements. Again, because cooling is not often a high priority, in this condition it is often an extension of the discussion of a low carbon transition and/or other public goods such as housing or working conditions.

- ➢ **External Projection and choice** consider how a country portrays itself internationally and how they communicate and work with others.

  - ▪ **Foreign policy** assesses how a country positions itself in the world, as well as its foreign policy approach and priorities.

  - ▪ **Climate diplomacy** assesses how a country positions itself in international climate negotiations and what it has committed to do. This includes commitment and progress of Nationally Determined Contributions to the Paris Agreement and engagement with other relevant agreements such as the Montreal Protocol and Kigali Amendment.

- ❖ *Country Choice*

There are several countries with particularly large impacts on the supply and/or demand side of cooling, and thus have large impacts on the emissions produced by this sector. I have chosen to assess China and Thailand for several reasons.

First, their geographic location makes these two countries ideal for comparison. They both act as leaders in the region, in respect to cooling and beyond (Griffin and Hindle Fisher, 2019). This positions

Global Top AC….	
…Manufacturers	…Consumers
China	United States
Mexico	China
Thailand	Japan

my data to be impactful as the policy initiatives set out by these two nations has the potential to guide and support the entire region.

Second, both China and Thailand are heavily responsible for the supply-side of cooling including manufacturing, assembly and distribution (ibid.). China is the largest global exporter of assembled air conditioners and parts, and Thailand is the second largest exporter (OEC, 2020). This means that the standards they hold their companies to, especially manufacturers, will affect the rest of the supply chain on a global scale.

Third, both countries have the potential to be key actors on the demand side of cooling, due to their growing middle classes and natural climates (IEA 2019a & IEA 2019b). This means that the preferences and choices consumers make can have an impact on production, and thus, emissions. This has already proven to be the case in Thailand, which will be discussed in later sections.

Finally, China and Thailand are salient in this conversation due to their national emphasis on technological innovation, which have made them hubs of investment (ibid.). Both countries have cooling narratives that hinge on being leaders of innovation regionally and globally.

- ❖ *Technology & Innovation Metrics*

Technology & Innovation (T&I) metrics assess the capability a country's innovation capacity. Both countries are manufacturing hubs that have governments pushing their high-tech capacity to escape the "middle income trap" (CLASP, 2019). This has resulted in both countries having relatively high innovation capacities. To further examine the innovation capacities of China and Thailand, I will discuss data collected and scored by the Global Innovation index (GII). These metrics include the following:

- Human Capital and Research, which explains quality of education system, skills development and research capacity.

- Business Sophistication, which explains the impact of knowledge-intensive services, research within business and business-university collaboration.

- Knowledge & Technology Outputs, which explains the levels of original work development, impact of knowledge on business and high-tech export levels.

- Creative Outputs, which explains the levels of unique goods, services and patent or utility models exported (Dutta et. al, 2011-2019).

- ❖ *Finance & Investment Metrics*

Innovative cooling, which affects all residential and industrial buildings in some form, requires an "open for business" environment. In countries hoping to be hubs for global cooling equipment, such as China and Thailand, there must be ample help for businesses to invest in research and development of new and more efficient technologies (Dean et. at, 2018). This comes in many forms such as government regulations, subsidies and income flows from international organisations such as the World Bank Group (ibid.). To gain insight into the finance & investment (F&I) landscape of these countries, I will discuss the following data gathered by the World Economic Forum (WEF) Global Competitiveness Index:
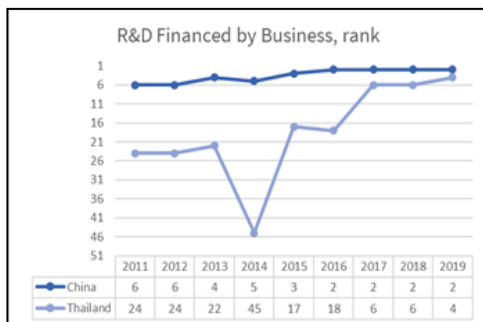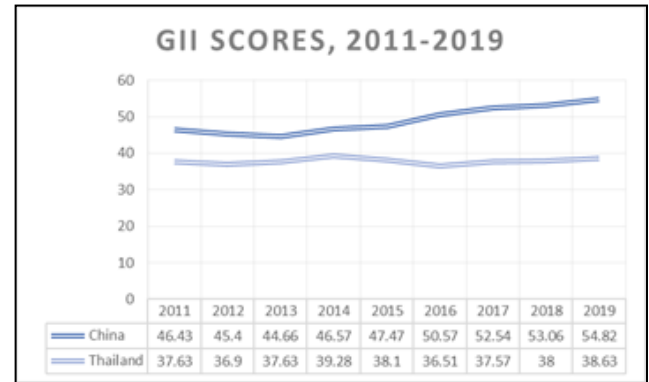
- Product Market, which explains the domestic competition and trade openness of a country.

- Labour Market, which explains the dynamics such as flexibility and incentivization of the labour supply.

- Financial System, which explains the systems depth and stability.

- Market Size, which explains actual and potential gross domestic product and imports (Schwab, 2010-2019).

Data

1. Technology & Innovation Metrics

Several indicators are gathered annually by the GII, which help to create a comprehensive picture of the innovation capacity in countries and regions. Both China and Thailand are considered more developed than expected in the GII's most recent report, ranking in the top tier of upper middle-income countries. Their overall ranks separate them, with China at 14 and

GII SCORES, 2011-2019

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
China	46.43	45.4	44.66	46.57	47.47	50.57	52.54	53.06	54.82
Thailand	37.63	36.9	37.63	39.28	38.1	36.51	37.57	38	38.63

Thailand at 44, but each show rises in capacity compared to previous years. Neither country leads the region, but China is significantly higher in the regional ranking than Thailand, suggesting its regional superiority in overall capacity.

R&D Financed by Business, rank

|	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
China	6	6	4	5	3	2	2	2	2
Thailand	24	24	22	45	17	18	6	6	4

Neither country is particularly strong in human capital, but both countries excel in research and development. The percentage of R&D budget financed by business in China is consistently around 75% and businesses consistently perform R&D as well, which suggests their business atmosphere is very open to and invested in innovation. In fact, this earns China a global top 3 rank in terms of business financing of R&D. China also has a level of university and industry collaboration that is strong for its income group and has several globally ranked universities despite the relative weakness of the education system.
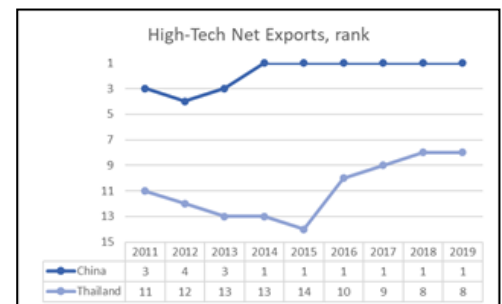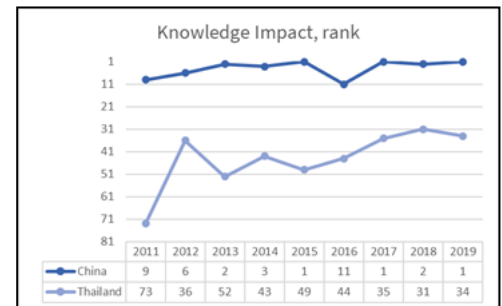
Thailand is also home to a selection of top-ranking universities with a variety of specialisms, and the country boasts its commitment to university and business collaboration, a recent endeavour by its

R&D Performed by business, rank

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
China	10	7	17	13	13	13	13	12	12
Thailand	42	37	57	55	49	52	36	37	35

government in tandem with a concentrated effort to develop research talent in business. Thailand's R&D budgets from business have historically been lower than China's, but recently this
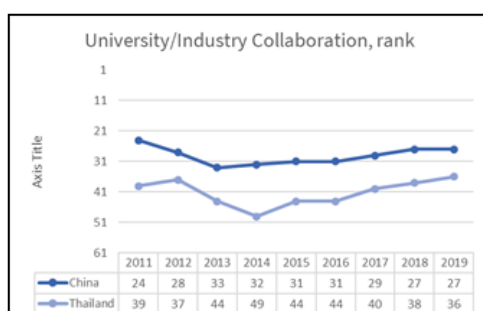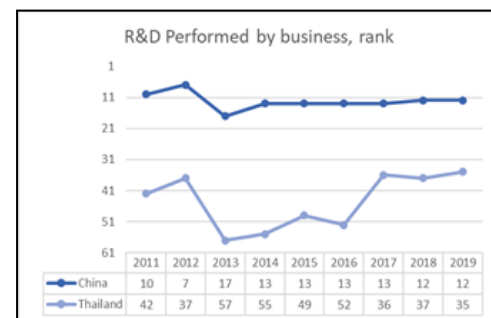
has increased and now stands at almost 75%. The same as China. While 75% represents a much higher amount in absolute terms in China, as Thailand's economy is much smaller, the increase shows Thailand's efforts to bolster innovation capacity.

University/Industry Collaboration, rank

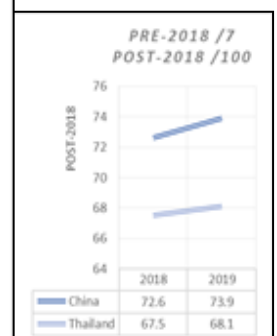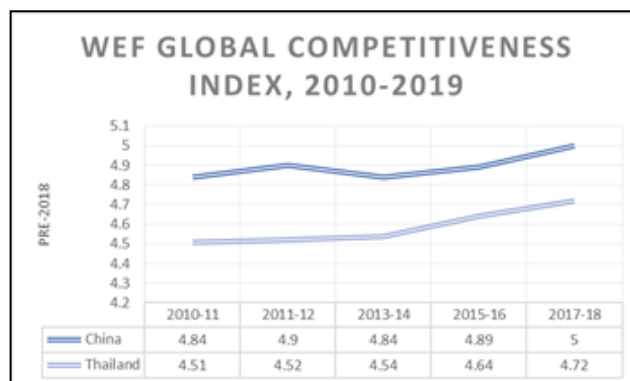|	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
China	24	28	33	32	31	31	29	27	27
Thailand	39	37	44	49	44	44	40	38	36

This input capacity places both countries in a good position for innovative outputs. China ranks well globally and regionally in terms of output innovation, while Thailand lags globally but is strong relative to the region. Both countries excel in terms of their middle-income country ranking. Both countries are top ten exporters in high-tech goods and services and have strong growth rates in worker productivity as a result of their investment in human capital China, in particular, has been ranked as a global and income group leader in knowledge creation, which includes metrics such as domestic patents, academic or technical literature, and utility model developments.

Knowledge Impact, rank

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
China	9	6	2	3	1	11	1	2	1
Thailand	73	36	52	43	49	44	35	31	34

High-Tech Net Exports, rank

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
China	3	4	3	1	1	1	1	1	1
Thailand	11	12	13	13	14	10	9	8	8

Thailand lags in these specific areas but has earned a top 20 rank in specific metrics such as FDI net outflows, utility models and high-and medium-tech manufacturing companies, which makes sense considering the manufacturing economy that has driven Thai development.

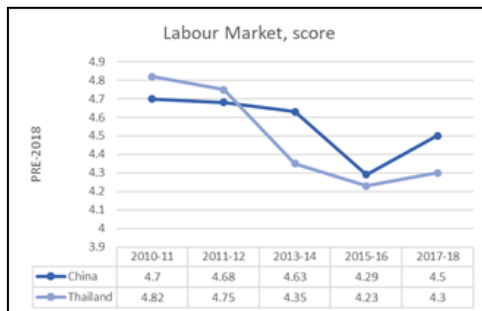## 2. *Finance and Investment Metrics*

What Southeast Asia lacks in human capital; it makes up in business competitiveness. The WEF Global Competitiveness Index ranks Southeast Asia, a top competitive region, with the highest top (Singapore) and median scores.

WEF GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS INDEX, 2010-2019

	2010-11	2011-12	2013-14	2015-16	2017-18
China	4.84	4.9	4.84	4.89	5
Thailand	4.51	4.52	4.54	4.64	4.72

PRE-2018 /7
POST-2018 /100

	2018	2019
China	72.6	73.9
Thailand	67.5	68.1

While China has kept its 28th place rank between 2018 and 2019, with a comprehensive score just above the regional average, Thailand has sunk two places to 40th (which is not necessarily due to any declines in Thai business competitiveness, as it can be affected by lower nations' exceptional growth) with a comprehensive score just under the regional average.

Both countries score relatively low, safely below the regional average, in terms of their institutions which is no surprise considering their political regimes. For macroeconomic stability, both countries excel with scores of 90 for Thailand and 99 for China (out of 100). The countries have

comparable human capital with scores, in health nearing 90 and skills in the low 60s, indicating a common place for improvement.

Product Market, score

	2010-11	2011-12	2013-14	2015-16	2017-18
China	4.4	4.42	4.32	4.62	4.5
Thailand	4.46	4.47	4.67	4.69	4.7

PRE-2018 /7 POST-2018 /100

	2018	2019
China	59	59
Thailand	63	63

	2018	2019
China	57	58
Thailand	53	53

Labour Market, score

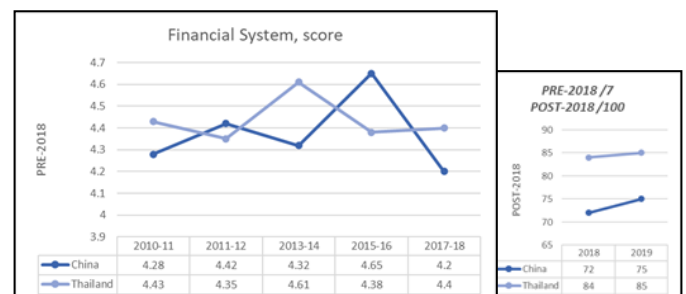|	2010-11	2011-12	2013-14	2015-16	2017-18
China	4.7	4.68	4.63	4.29	4.5
Thailand	4.82	4.75	4.35	4.23	4.3

These factors act as supports to market health, where both countries perform relatively well. In terms of product market, China has a slight lead on Thailand mostly thanks to its dominance on the global market and border efficiency, which makes up for lower scoring metrics such as tariffs and domestic competition. Thailand, as a smaller economic player, has a lower score overall, but notably scores very well in border efficiency and competition in service, and shows improvement in global market dominance.

China's labour market scores are quite low, mostly brought down by labour productivity, flexibility of wage and redundancy costs. Thailand's labour market scores are varied. While flexibility metrics are very low, lower than those of China, it is incentivisation metrics pull its overall score up higher than its counterparts. In particular, the country's labour tax code and productivity scores earn it a top 25 rank in the wider metric of the labour market.

Where Thailand excels beyond China, and most countries as it sits with a rank of 16, is the financial system. Thailand's financial system is both deep and stable, with highly ranked credit gaps, bank soundness, market capitalization and credit available for private sector business. In contrast,

Financial System, score

	2010-11	2011-12	2013-14	2015-16	2017-18
China	4.28	4.42	4.32	4.65	4.2
Thailand	4.43	4.35	4.61	4.38	4.4

PRE-2018 /7 POST-2018 /100

	2018	2019
China	72	75
Thailand	84	85

China's financial system is deep, but very unstable. The country has strong credit available for the private sector and venture capital availability, but the majority of stability indicators bring down the country's overall score quite a bit.

Finally, both countries share strong market size scores. China clearly outscores Thailand, as the top scoring country in this pillar, with an insurmountable GDP coupled with a low rate of goods or services imports. Thailand is a top 20 country in this pillar with a smaller GDP and almost triple the proportion of imports as a percentage of GDP, which still allows the country to strike a strong balance.

Discussion
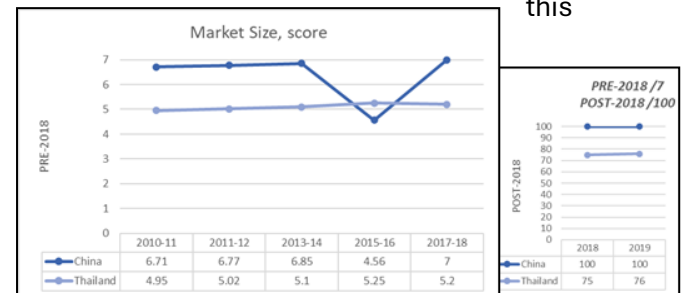
These data points are important to understanding signals of capacity for cooling advancement in Southeast Asia, but do not paint the whole picture accurately. Due to the complexity of domestic politics in a globalized world, there is no single set of metrics that will accurately predict whether a country will use its capacity to advance a particular programme, especially one as niche as a cooling technology. My data, in this sense, is incomplete. Despite this, it is insightful as these national conditions indicate the potential of cooling in China and Thailand, and thus the narrative of the region. With this in mind, I will discuss what the aforementioned metrics lend to this narrative.

Southeast Asia represents almost one-tenth of the global population, and the entire region is subject to rising temperatures (IEA, 2019a). This means that in the coming decades, when impactful action on climate is needed most, demand for cooling will soar throughout the region. This will put a strain on energy supplies, air pollution and CO_2 emissions as cooling alone can account for 50% of energy in peak demand times (IEA, 2019b). For the sake of energy and climate security, actors in the region have been putting forward ambitious policies to generate more of their own clean energy and use it as efficiently as possible (ibid.). Policy without capacity does not amount to much, but Thailand and China are situated well to meet such policy with innovative solutions and ample funding to achieve cooling advancements.

Both countries have demonstrated their commitment to leading in cooling technology, and the aforementioned innovation indicators signal their ability to develop advanced technology. Developing "part time" and "part space" cooling units which act as "smart" ACs that react to consumer behaviour to increase efficiency is on the agenda in China (ibid.), while the Thai government can comfortably raise minimum efficiency performance standards (MEPS) to increase efficiency without harming manufacturers or consumers (CLASP, 2019b). These are important not only for domestic markets but serve as pull factors for the entire region due to their market dominance. Thanks to their commitment to innovation, technology such as non-

refrigerant cooling with desiccants, evaporation and absorption chillers can be developed, incentivized and exported to the entire region (IEA, 2019b).

Funding is necessary to achieve this. Currently, 'green' funding comes from a wide variety of sources including government budgets, international banks, private corporations and multilateral investments (IEA, 2019a). For various reasons, China is well-positioned to fund projects and routinely does so through bi- and multilateral agreements and via international banks or banking networks (IEA, 2019b). This means that China has a substantial influence on the Southeast Asian development agenda and has the potential to have a positive impact on its cooling prospects.

Thailand does not have the financial capacity to act as a financier for big developments, but it does stand out as a project leader in the region thanks to its ambitious policy and strong, stable market. The country is a key actor in several regional 'green' development projects funded by the Asian Development Bank (ADB, 2020), the Climate Bonds Initiative (IFC and CBI, 2018) and the Kigali Cooling Efficiency Program (K-CEP, 2018) to name a few. Its financial potential sets it apart as a key leader in ASEAN as the group works toward developing a regional clean energy alliance with increased, harmonised MEPS. Most of the development money for the region comes from local or regional funders (IEA, 2019a), which means key technological and financial hubs are paramount in the region's advancement.

Conclusion

As climate change mitigation and adaptation become more urgent with every passing year, it is vital that all development going forward is environmentally sustainable. In the space of cooling, sustainable implementation is blocked by interest groups, such as "dirty" energy, and held up by bureaucratic inconsistency and inertia. Policy is complex, but there is a great deal of potential in the advancement of cooling in Southeast Asia. This potential shows itself fundamentally in the technological and financial capacity of regional leaders China and Thailand and is bolstered by progressive development agendas that seek to use cooling as a means to achieve energy security and economic development. These countries hold ample influence in the region, which becomes more impactful to both the global economy and greenhouse gas emissions every year. As the region's middle class grows and looks to access cooling equipment, these countries can set an example for regional and global peers that clean cooling is the way forward.

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Department of Politics & International Relations

Paper #5: Children in Care and Ealing Local Authority's Services By Ms Shabnam Karim

Edited by Mr Lewis Virgo

"My name is Shabnam Karim and I graduated in International relations and politics. I chose to do the 'politics in action' course is because I wanted to gain experience in working in a political and professional field. I really enjoyed and recommend this course for other people is because it helped me and will help others to prepare for work and gain general knowledge and awareness in the chosen career field. It gave me the opportunity to gain some real insight and develop my job specific skills".

Children in Care and Ealing Local Authority's Services

This research will be looking into the key issue's children in care face when they eventually leave care (be that at the age of 16-18 years old depending on their circumstances). This report is based on my own experience as a child in care at age 15 and my continuing voluntary work with care leavers and children in care. Being a child in care with my local authority to now being a care leaver, I have not only experienced what it is like to be a care leaver from that specific local authority but had the privilege to work voluntarily with them for the past three years and have seen how the Children's Services Department functions and therefore have gathered substantial relevant research.

The report will be divided into three sections: literature review on the key issue's children in care face when they leave care, Ealing local authority's services and how effective and what improvements it requires.

Literature review

The definition of a care leaver is "Any adult under the age of 18 who spent time in care as a child. Such care could be in foster care, residential care (mainly children's homes), or other arrangements outside the immediate or extended family. The care could have been provided directly by the state, by the voluntary or private sector such as Barnardo's, The Children's Society and many others (Care Leavers Association,2020).

A young person leaving home and deciding to live independently is a huge challenge but what if that young person did not have a home to start with? Or what if their childhood had been disrupted due to growing up in a children's homes and foster placements? As a young person, the journey of transitioning into an independent young adult is difficult but imagine how difficult it would be if you were coming from a disadvantaged background. This is the reality every year for more than 10,000 young people leaving care between the age of 16 to 18 years of age who are expected to become adults overnight and take responsibility for their food, health, money and wellbeing 'whereas most of their peers remain at home well into their 20s' (Stein, 2004).

 Research across the UK has shown that care leavers experience a different and difficult life compared to their peers due to their transitional period as a child in care to a care leaver (Dixon et al, 2006,1). This is because when a child grows up in care, they face many social disadvantages and discrimination as well as having an instable life thus producing poor outcomes for their future such as homelessness, unemployment and mental health problems (Randall, 1989,226). In addition, many black and other ethnic minority young people face problems regarding their identity due to the broken relationship with their family and community (Everson,2009, p52). Studies have pointed out that displacement and disruption at a young age can have a devastating effects on a young person therefore it is very important for local authorities such as Ealing council to provide care leavers with a stable and secure environment and help them to build the essential life skills necessary by providing courses and activities for young people to take part in (Packman and Hall, 1998).

The life history of the young person in care influences their preparation when transitioning. This is because if the person had a difficult childhood and developed complex social and behavioural needs then it is likely that those experiences will have a major impact on the next stage of their life (Dixon et al, 2006,97). Local authorities have a legal obligation to support them when they

turn 18 by providing a personal advisor who helps them plan their Future and finds them somewhere suitable to live.

However, when it comes to providing the right support, many local authorities are failing - a report by Ofsted stated that 7% of local authorities are judged "inadequate" and 47% are currently rated as requiring "improvements" (OFSTED,2018,46). It can be argued that when it comes to preparing children in care for their transition into a care leaver, many local authorities have failed to make adequate preparations (Knapp,1989). Majority of care leavers have not received any kind of preparation especially those living with a foster carer or in hostels, nor have they received a formal leaving care review, known as a "pathway plan".

This review is very important because "the care leaver plans out their future, articulating their aspirations and identifying interim goals along the way to realising their ambitions and should be able to respond to their changing needs and ambitions. It should look ahead at least as far as the young person's 21st birthday and will be in place beyond that where the young person is in a programme of education or training which takes them past that age" (DHSC,2000,32). The choice to leave care is a very divided issue- 35% of care leavers stated they had a choice to leave, 30% exercised some choice while 35% did not have any choice when having to leave care (Dixon et, 2006,35).

Local authorities have a responsibility to support the care leavers up to the age of 25 whether it is with education or work training. The UK Government is aware that care leavers do not have the same support system as their peers so they want to ensure that these young people have the same kind of support as a non-care leaver/young person would get from their parents (Department of Health, 1998). The Department for Education(DFE) sets the overall framework support for them as it gives statutory guidance to local governments. To ensure that the framework is working, DFE collects information on care leavers and publishes the report (Utting, 1997).

Each department within the local authority has a "duty of care" around specific areas such as housing, work, educational training and welfare. Local authorities are often inspected by OSTED (The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills) in order to regulate the quality and effectiveness of their service. Depending on how often each local authority is visited by OFSTED, once the inspection is over, a report is published- OFSTED began this process in 2013.

This inspection is very important as it puts pressure on local authorities to ensure they carry out their duty effectively. A Department of Education report showed that 62% of children in care are

there because of neglect and abuse thus being in care and the impact that comes with being in care can have a very significant impact on their emotional and mental health and behaviour (Morse, 2015,7) and significantly causes them to have difficulties in building and maintaining relationships with their peers, friends, family and professionals.

In 2018, a report by Members of Parliament (MPs) found that care leavers are being let down by the system which has led to devastating consequences on their lives (DFE,2018,6). Many studies have suggested that those from being in care backgrounds have a greater chance of developing mental illness in adult life (Buchanan, 1999). Barnardos research reported more than 4 in 10 care leavers have mental health needs such as depression, anxiety, and poor self-esteem due to their past experiences - this is very worrying as more children are being taken into care and the number of care leavers is increasing (Smith,2017,3).

Coram Voice charity found care leavers are over 7 times more likely to have low life satisfaction than their peers who have not been in care and 20% said they did not feel that things they did in life are worthwhile in contrast to just 4% of their peers (2018,56). Care leavers have reported problems that they often deal with on a regular basis such as anger management, verbal, physical and sexual abuse, ADHD, alcoholism, and emotional issues relating to their past experiences of abuse, rejection or trauma (Cole et al, 2002).

Furthermore, majority care leavers suffer from trauma-based experiences which affects their mentality towards certain concepts of society. From personal experience, they lose hope in the care system in which they have no of faith or trust since they have been let down so much by people who have controlled majority of their life.

Ealing Local Authority's Services

This section will investigate the services that Ealing local authority offers to its care leavers. Ealing council is the third largest local authority in London. The Council provides many different services. Ealing children's services aims to meet its duty through following the Children's Act 1989 and the Children and Young Persons Act 2008. The local authority focuses on three areas: Looked after children, Care leavers and Family assessments (Ealing council report, 2018,3). Currently in Ealing, there are 385 young care leavers and numbers continue to grow (OFSTED,

Ealing report, 2018, 9). In accordance with the Children's and Social Work Act 2017, Ealing local authority has responsibilities to its care leavers and is required to publish a local offer (a leaflet describing all the services they offer) as well as provide a personal adviser to support them until the age of 25.

A key support given to Ealing's children in care and care leavers is through the Horizons Education and Achievement Centre- a place where care leavers and children in care can go for counselling, seek information and advice on any issues (Young Ealing, 2020). This Centre also offers training to help prepare children for independent living. The Centre provides youth workers, teachers, social workers, health staff, Connexions workers and arts and music consultants. Being a care leaver in the 'shout-out forum' (monthly meet up of a group of care leavers to research and discuss issues affecting young people in care) it is an opportunity to meet councillors, social services and national campaigns to offer advice on helping improve the services for the current young people in care.

Horizons is very popular amongst care leavers as all personal advisors are based there and the majority from personal experience are very genuine, kind and caring. The OFSTED 2019 report stated that the Horizons Centre was "greatly valued by children in care and care leavers. Here, children and young people access practical support and benefit from staff who are persistent in ensuring that their needs are met. Care leavers describe the service as "brilliant" (OFSTED, 2019, 6).

In addition to the Horizons Centre, Ealing council helps with accommodation and housing. The Council tries to encourage young people to stay in care whether it is with a foster carer or in a residential home until they are 18. Some children in care can choose to stay with their foster carers until 21, this is called the 'staying put arrangement' if they are still in education or have some personal circumstances or special needs- however, this can only happen if it is agreed by their social workers and the head of children's services in their pathway plan. When the young person is 18, they no longer have a social worker anymore and are located a personal adviser who

helps with finding suitable accommodation and continues to provide support until the young person either turns 25 or chooses to close their case.

Ealing's care leavers aged 18-20 years are treated as a priority need group in homelessness legislation and therefore Ealing Homeless Persons Unit and can be approached directly or the help is available from the young person's Personal Adviser or the Aftercare service. For care leavers who have obtained social housing, a 'setting up home/leaving care' grant is offered which is £2,000 in order to set up their independent living situation. However, some care leavers claim that accessing the offer is not an easy process and sometimes they do not get the whole amount whilst others argue that they have been chasing this payment for many years and still not received it.

Furthermore, care leavers, up to aged 25 are also exempt from paying council tax in order to help avoid getting into debt but, many care leavers claim that although the offer of being exempt from paying council tax is stated, it has not been put in action place- this particular issue was raised at the Ofsted meeting I attended. Ealing local authority claims that the Council Tax exemption is active, but views of care leavers differ, and this issue is currently being investigated by the Head of Services.

In addition to the support from horizons, personal advisors and accommodation help, Ealing council provides a range of options in education, training and employment and offers different kinds of financial help and practical support depending on what route the young person chooses to take. For care leavers who embark on a university journey, they receive help in choosing the right course and university that matches their talent, interests and abilities.

Ealing council also offers an Educational grant, and this is a discretionary grant of up to £5,500 each year in order to cover for food and accommodation costs. This offer is not offered to each Ealing care leaver, but to the ones who are seen to have potential and achieved good grades in their A level exams.

Ealing local authority also offers a range of opportunities for training, apprenticeships or volunteering work. Personal Advisers help the young person contact the Connexions Service. Care leavers who do not wish to carry on with education, are offered traineeships, which is a 6-month pre-employment programme. Traineeships are in valuable for young people as it helps them gain training, literacy and numeracy skills and real "workplace skills". Ealing Council has its own Council's Apprenticeship Programme which I feel is an excellent opportunity for young people aged 16+ to develop skills and qualities and gain work experience and complete their qualifications.

Another way which Ealing Council supports care leavers on their health and wellbeing by encouraging them to see a GP regarding their health issue. If that is unresolved, the care leavers see Leaving Care Clinical Psychologist who can help. Care leavers before their transition, are given their health summary report and final health assessment, detailing all their relevant medical history. However, the majority of the care leavers (based on my discussions with them) claim that they do not know what a heath summary report is and have never received one.

For care leavers who feel isolated from society and live alone, Ealing local authority tries to help them participate more in society by offering information on how to access leisure centres and clubs, encourage them to participate in Ealing Care Leavers forums such, as the Horizons Shout Out Council, ME Mentoring Project and Corporate Parent Committee.

How effective and what improvements Ealing Local Authorities requires?

In this section, I will be evaluating the effectiveness of the support given by Ealing local authority and how I believe the service can improve. In 2019, Ealing local authority had an inspection visit

by OFSTED who reported that the overall department of children's social care services required improvement. The three areas inspected were: "The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection, the experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers and the impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families" (OFSTED,2019,2).

The services in Ealing local authority had deteriorated since the last inspection in 2016 and required improvements. In the space of 3 years, the experience and progress of care leavers went from "outstanding" to "needs improvement" (OFSTED ,2016,1). One of the shocking aspects found in the report was the delays in "assessing children's needs; except for those children identified as being at immediate or potential risk of harm" (OFSTED, 2019,1). Furthermore, the report also stated that "Care leavers receive a high level of support with their education, training and employment, but the quality of their accommodation is inconsistent, and some care leavers do not feel safe where they live" (OFSTED,2019,1). The OFSTED report did not surprise me because as a care leaver, I also work part time as a mentor to these young people in one of the departments.

At that meeting, the majority of care leavers raised their concern about the children's services department and how let down they have been. Some raised concerns on feeling manipulated and pushed forcefully to leave their carers in order to live independently even though they are not prepared to live on their own. Other care leavers explained how unsuitable their accommodation is, how unsafe the location and surroundings are and how despite being promised that they would be exempt from paying council tax; that promise had not been fulfilled- with many care leavers in a council flat being heavily in arrears. Despite the claim that after care services "are working together with housing services to strengthen their corporate parenting response to care leavers housing needs", I feel not enough has been done to resolve the issues (OFSTED,2019,9). The reason why OFSTED's rating for Ealing local authority went from 'outstanding' to 'needs improvement' is because the housing offer and situation for care leavers is unacceptable.

OFSTED also mentioned in the 2019 inspection report that the local authority needs to improve "the quality of responses to children and young people who are at risk of being homeless"

(OFSTED,2019,2). One way I can suggest in improving the housing situation would be to establish a forum of local, honest Landlords (who are somehow regulated) and are committed in offering safe and affordable accommodations for care leavers. I have been informed through my research that the majority of care leavers have faced homelessness, but the local authority failed to record the many cases in order to avoid the public backlash. Until many of these young people have an advocate to fight for their cases, many local authorities including Ealing will try to avoid helping. One young care leaver who I interviewed at Horizons stated that he had been homeless for 4 months and 'sofa surfing' after he left care and despite many attempts of going to the Homelessness Unit, they still did not offer help until he went to Coram Voice, a children's charity who helped provide him with an advocate to help.

The OFSTED report, reported that Ealing local authority needs to offer a range of accommodation options for care leavers, something I agree with because then care leavers would have a choice about a decent safe environment in which to live and continue more confidently with their

transition to adulthood life. In addition, offering a wide range of different accommodation options reduces vulnerability and risk of exploitation of care leavers who have not developed the right set of skills necessary for independent living.

Furthermore, many other local authorities offer their care leavers 'social housing' while Ealing Council argue that it does not have enough flats or houses to offer young people. When I interviewed a key support worker who wished to remain anonymous, she stated that although Ealing Council does have many council flats to offer, the criteria set by housing is extensive and the department rejects many applications of care leavers each year arguing they do not meet them. The criteria list every year changes and last year out of 385 care leavers, only one person was offered a council flat. In order to improve the housing shortage crisis and help the care leavers who are not eligible for social housing, the local authority can also offer financial support of one month's rent and one month's deposit to secure private rented accommodation.

Whilst Ealing local authority claim to various offers and services are available, accessing them is difficult because the service team are both disorganised and unable to meet the pressure and demand within a helpful timeframe.

During this research, a report by OFSTED mentioned that in order for a local authority to get 'outstanding' for their service, "a strong feature is the persistence and commitment of staff to support young people and get the best for them"(OFSTED,2016,51). This was OFSTED's explanation as to why Trafford local authority was the first local government to be given 'outstanding' for their service to care leavers as "The service knows where all its care leavers are and has appropriate levels of contact with each individual based on their personal needs and pathway planning"(OFSTED,2016,51). I also believe that in order to improve the relationship between social workers/support workers and care leavers one needs to ensure that these

professionals are highly committed to knowing their young people very well so can recommend or offer best advice. Professionals in this sector should understand that young people who are transitioning to live independently have had their trust broken therefore it will take some time to rebuild that. Also, when a child in care is leaving care and turning into a care leaver, the social worker needs to create an effective pathway plan and ensure that they meet the young person's changing needs and wants.

Another way to help reduce care leavers feeling isolated and to improve their mental health would be by offering free gym memberships. This is what Stockport local authority is currently doing in order to help their care leavers battle mental health and other emotional problems (Stockport report, 2020,3). Ealing local authority I would suggest could consider this or offer free weekly activities in a community centre so that all the care leavers within the Borough can socialise and meet therefore establish friendship groups and de isolate themselves.

It is very difficult and challenging to make changes to a system already in place, but I believe that in order to improve the services for care leavers, the whole system needs a full review with new, effective policies being put in place.

In this report I have described in detail key issues children in care face when they leave care, the services offered by Ealing local authority with specific reference to the OFSTED report, the effectiveness of the services and the improvements required.

In conclusion, evidence shows there is a need for change to improve the outcomes for children in care transitioning into independent adulthood life and this will require continuing research in order to bring in more new policies and develop better working practice.

Although it is a major concern that the number of children going into care is increasing rather than decreasing therefore as a welfare system, we need to be looking into how we can reduce this number and set our intention in a more proactive and preventative way in order to give these vulnerable children the best service possible.

One final comment. Many people ask me if I think the care system will change and whether children in care will have better futures. I believe that the current system will take time and shared commitment by professionals to improve. However, I think more opportunities and support are being created for children in care therefore there is positive change for a brighter future for these young people who, I hope will not have to go through the same difficult transition as I and many other thousands of care leavers have done.

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