Author's response to reviews

Title: The SHARP study: a quantitative and qualitative evaluation of the short-term outcomes of housing and neighbourhood renewal

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Author's response to reviews:

Dear Editor,

We have listed below the many changes we have made in response to the referees’ comments. We are grateful to the referees and feel that the changes we have made have improved the paper.

Reviewer 1:
Major essential revisions
We have conducted a separate descriptive analysis of those who moved and those who stayed in the same area as suggested by the referee. We have uploaded this as an additional file (Additional File 1) and described it in the text (last paragraph, page 14).

We have also removed some of the references to the control group, as suggested.

Specific points:

(i), (ii) We have added an additional section on Recruitment. This describes how the eligibility criteria for the intervention varies between housing providers and may include such issues as family size, health status, and aspects of the accommodation. For example an RSL may prioritise a particular family for a new home because the tenant has health problems; and another because of new child. Because of RSL concerns about data confidentiality we were not able to approach tenants directly. Instead tenants were first contacted by the Resident Social Landlord (RSL) with information about the study, and were able to opt-in. This also meant that we did not have information on refusals, but was the only basis on which the study could proceed. We have also now acknowledged this as a limitation in the discussion.

(iii) The response rates are: follow up: 83.8%; baseline: 46% baseline. The latter percentage was inadvertently missed out from the paper and has been added.

(iv) This is now included (p8)
Minor essential revisions

(v) This was unclearly worded; “change in health” should actually be “change in self-reported health”, in two categories (excellent, very good or good versus fair or poor). The text is now amended.

(vi) A single chi-sq test would also have been appropriate, but we did not do this as it would not have allowed us to explore differences between the individual educational levels (as opposed to within the group as a whole).

(vii) We have now described the non-respondents in the Results section, page 12 (briefly, they were more likely to be male, and less likely to be under-30 or the over-70 age group; there was no association with education, or working status.

(viii) This has been done and is included as Additional file 1.

(ix) This was calculated by comparing the number of housing problems reported by those whose health changed with those who reported that their health did not change (i.e. a one way ANOVA). However looking at this again, it would be simpler to present this as a Chi-Sq, to show the association between change in housing problems (more, same or fewer) and change in health (better/same/worse). We have therefore replaced the F value with the Chi-Sq test. The non-significant result is the same, so the text has not changed.

(x) We have reworded this to clarify, as follows: “They reported significant improvements in most items, especially status and sense of personal progress (“My home makes me feel I am doing well in life”) and identity (“My home expresses my personality and values”).

(xi) Adults of any age were eligible but for purposes of recruiting a comparison group we grouped the respondents into 3 categories, corresponding to the 3 broad household types represented in the intervention group - families with younger children, families comprised only of older persons (e.g. 2 retired people), and other adult households. We have now noted in the text that these categories were created in order to describe the broad range of adult households in the intervention group.

(xii) We have changed the wording in the Conclusions as suggested.

Discretionary revisions

(i) We have kept this in, as it provides a little more background to the study.

(ii) We have reordered the text as suggested and altered the ordering of the table.

(iii) This is a mistake (text strayed from an earlier version). It has now been replaced with the correct text describing the results in the table.

(iv) We have not done this as this is just a simple description of the two groups. We will do this in future analyses of Wave 3 data.

(v) Yes, this is an error. We have corrected this.

(vi) The “settlement categories” simply refer to the urban rural classification. We have now clarified the wording here. The distribution of postal areas does indeed
refer to the distribution of respondents across the postal areas – we have clarified the wording now.

(vii) We have added a footnote as suggested.

(viii) These have now been added to Table 1.

(ix) We have changed the column headings to clarify this.

(x) This is correct. We have changed the text to make this clear (i.e. that these are absolute rather than relative changes).

(xi) These were not necessary and we have deleted these.

(xii) The phrase respondents were “ask to rate the friendliness...” was misleading as they did not “rate” it. We have reworded this as follows: The percentage reporting that people were “quite friendly” or “very friendly” changed little over time and did not differ between those who had moved into a new neighbourhood and those who had remained in the same area. (#2=5.9, 4 d.f., p=0.21).

(xiii) We have now recalculated this and have included the 95% confidence intervals. The reduction is actually not significant (overlapping confidence intervals) – the text has been amended.

(xiv) We have not changed this as it is discretionary and we think the table is clear.

(xv) This is the percentage of respondents who agreed with the statement. We have amended the table heading to clarify this.

(xvi) We agree. We have deleted the reference to “about a third” and “about half”.

(xvii) We agree and have changed this to fear of crime as suggested. Social functioning: we didn’t make clear in the text that we have data on this at Wave 1 and 3, and so we will be able to analyse change in this outcome, comparing intervention and control groups. We have amended the text to make this clear.

Reviewer 2: Suggested minor revisions have now been made.