

# **Home or Hotel? A contemporary challenge in the use of Housing Stock**

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## **Abstract**

Over the past five years there have been significant changes made to Private Rented Sectors (PRS) across the UK. The PRS has become increasingly important to providing a home to millions, and there has been increased political focus towards renting at both National and Devolved Governments. At the same time, there has been a substantial increase in the number of short-term holiday lets enabled by online platforms such as Airbnb. There are concerns that housing stock is being transferred from being a home in the PRS to being tourist accommodation.

This paper aims to explore the policy nuances that encourage short-term holiday lets over private rented accommodation. Furthermore, this paper examines the growth in short-term lets on Airbnb in London and identifies the extent to which professional property investors are using this platform. To accomplish this, we analyse secondary data on Airbnb listings across a four-year period. This analysis identified that there was a 283% increase in the number of listings available over this period, to 70,534 listings in London, and that there was a 316% increase in the number of listings provided by a professional host to 31,400 listings over the same period. The analysis of this data and the review of previous literature provides evidence to support the argument that previously privately rented homes are now being offered as tourist accommodation. The paper analyses the struggles this poses for policy makers, communities and housing providers, and then sets out challenges for future research.