

“It’s my life,
it’s always somebody else’s say,
somebody else’s opinion...
why I should I even bother voting if
I don’t get a say anyway”



Anna, 31
A single mother and a frequent mover
in the private rented sector

Anna is a single mother living in a private rented house with her two young daughters, in a small town in Yorkshire.

She has lived on her own since she was 15, and she has moved house more than 14 times in a decade. This has mostly been due to a mix of short tenancies, trouble paying rent and inconsistent housing benefits. Her last move, however, was to escape from her violent partner, who had assaulted her when she told him to leave her daughters alone. Anna and her daughters stayed with her friend for 3 weeks before she was provided with temporary housing. Before her daughters were born Anna had experienced homelessness, where she stayed with friends and family.

Anna is not currently working due to an ongoing injury and is relying on Universal credit, though she hopes to get back to work when she recovers. Her days consist of cleaning the house, watching television, taking her children to the park and ‘chilling.’ Her adult step son helps her with her daughters occasionally. Since he lost his housing he has been sofa surfing between his father’s, friends and Anna’s home.

Anna’s main considerations are her daughters safety and happiness. She often worries about money, and feels like she doesn’t have the resources to give her children what they need, such as going on trips or paying for tutors.

Key themes with Frequent Movers

- **A house is not a home.** It is often thought of as temporary or in practical terms.
- **Not connected to the area.** Belief that the post is not for them, feelings of uncertainty
- **Some cycling in and out of homelessness**



“I don’t want her dad to find her... I don’t think anything is confidential... if it’s on the internet then anyone can access it.”

Voter registration

Anna has never registered to vote or voted, and has no desire to do either in the future.

She is apathetic and disempowered, believing that there is no point to voting. Growing up her parents and wider family were not politically engaged.

She believes she might have been on the electoral register when she was married, as her husband may have registered her.

Another, more personal reason Anna does not wish to register is the fear that the abusive father of her younger daughter will use it to find them. Very few people in her life vote or are registered to vote.

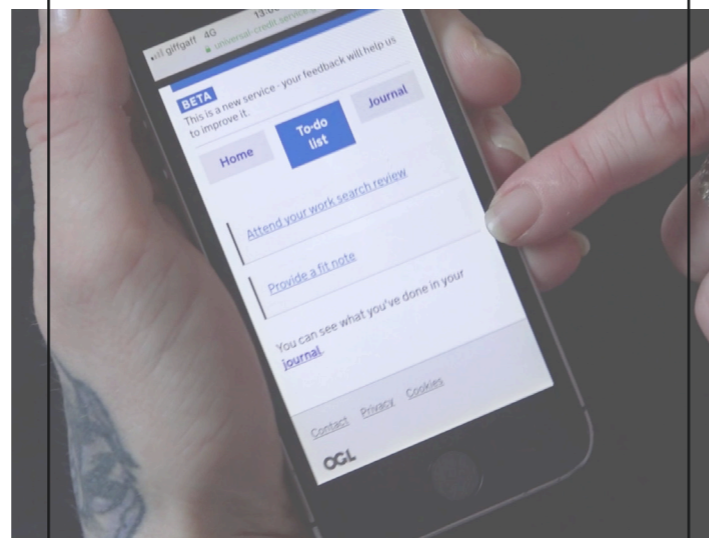
She admits that whenever she receives any correspondence that has the word ‘vote’ on it, she throws it straight in the bin.

Systems, process and technology

Anna is a heavy phone user, uses messaging apps to communicate with friends and goes on Facebook.

She uses her phone to access the universal credit site, which she is very happy with. She finds it easy to use and she especially likes the feature that connects her with her advisor, using it often.

On the other hand, Anna does express a mistrust with sharing information on the internet. She does not think it is secure, and fears her ex partner will use it to find her family. She puts false information on social media sites, which she feels protects her.



Services, interactions and outreach

Anna has had mixed feelings and experiences with public services. On one hand, she feels like councils ‘never ever help,’ but on the other, has had good experiences with social services.

A school nurse had helped refer her to a food bank when they had first moved to the area, and their welfare officer has helped get into contact with charities to help with furniture.

Anna know of a local church that offers some help or classes, which she has been meaning to go to.

She also has a lot of trust in her Universal credit advisor.

“When I first moved here, I spent all my money on moving, and didn’t have any money left for food...”



The future

Anna wants a better life for her and her daughters. She hopes to get back to work, and has aspirations to go to college and university, and to ‘get rich’ to be able to provide more stability and opportunities for her girls.

Questions to consider

What might Anna not know about electoral registration?

What would be the best medium of communication with her?

What are the barriers to Anna registering to vote, and how could you tackle these?

Who does Anna interact with and who does she trust?

What are Anna’s feelings and motivations?

"I'm not politically engaged. I'm too lazy to make an effort... I registered to vote so I could have more of a presence when getting credit."



Shahid, 34

A lodger and a frequent mover in the private rented sector

Shahid lodges in a 4 bedroom house with his landlady, her young daughter and another lodger who is a student, in a seaside town.

Born in Bangladesh, Shahid moved to Europe in his early twenties after a strained relationship with his middle-class parents and a dissatisfaction with what he felt was a stifling prospect of stability. After living in a number of different countries, he eventually settled down in the UK, where he had a relationship break down with his long term partner. This led to a prolonged period of isolation with no support from his family. Since moving to his current town, Shahid has moved frequently. Initially, staying in a guest hotel, he got a job and moved more centrally but began to have money troubles, leading to him not being able to pay the rent. He experienced homelessness, living in a tent by the pier for a number of months. He was then housed by his local council for a year. He moved again another two times before his current house, choosing it for the cheapness of rent.

Shahid lives in the daughter's old room, which still is decorated for a young girl. This he doesn't mind as it is a temporary place for him. The house as a living room which the lodgers are not allowed to use.

Shahid is well educated and had started a number of university courses, but had dropped out every time. He has worked a number of different jobs before his current role as a support worker where he works long hours, often night shifts. He has little in the way of a social life and spends his free time bingeing on Netflix and drinking at home. Shahid feel that this is his choice, and is prioritising saving money.

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“I’ve not really thought about the electoral roll, I think it’s proof that I live at this property and neighbourhood, and I vote a certain way?”

Voter registration

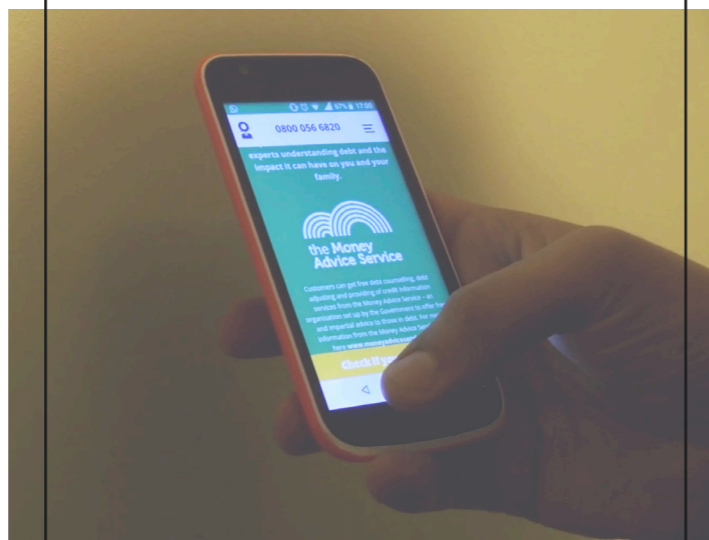
Shabid was registered at a previous address but had not registered at his current home. He had recently began thinking of registering again, after going on the Citizen’s Advice Bureau website, which recommended registering to help his credit score. This is his main motivation. Having a ‘foot-print’ and being able to apply for better credit cards is very important to him.

Shahid feels he is not actively politically engaged. He believes he is too lazy, however he is quite passionate about political issues and knows who he would be voting for. He had tried to vote before but gave up after going to the wrong polling station.

Systems, process and technology

Shabid spends a lot of time on the internet for both entertainment and for advice, often visiting sites such as the Money Advice Service. He does this mostly on his phone, though he is buying a laptop on credit for gaming purposes.

He is very comfortable navigating technology, and, when registering to vote, had no trouble locating and completing the form. The only confusion was whether he should count the others living with him as part of his household or whether he was a household by himself.



Services, interactions and outreach

Shabid has had mainly positive experiences with council services. He was given temporary housing and housing benefits, though these were stopped when he found a job. He has also received help from local charities, and is able to navigate private services like his bank with ease. He has faith in the system and trusts that there are good people everywhere.

During his period of homelessness, Shabid had received good support from the homeless community and still keeps in touch with them. He would often defend the council in conversations with these peers and would offer advice about how they can best interact with public services.

“If you know the right people... I just told them everything the way it was and they did help.”



The future

Shabid is optimistic about the future. He likes being in England and wants to settle here. He feels that he is on the ‘wrong side of 30’ and needs to start thinking about savings and a mortgage. With his current job and accommodation, he feels that he can do this but is worried about his lack of money skills

Questions to consider

What might Shabid not know about electoral registration?

What would be the best medium of communication with him?

What are the barriers to Anna registering to vote, and how could you tackle these?

Who does Shabid interact with and who does she trust?

What are Shabid’s feelings and motivations?



"I tend not to open electoral post. I know it say 'Please do not ignore' but because it's not got my name on, I just pretend it's going to be for the home owner."

Priya, 25

A young professional and frequent mover in the private rented sector

Priya is a young professional renting a two bed flat in London. She lives there with her friend who she met at university.

Priya has moved residence almost every year since she left home to go to university. Before she moved into her current flat, she had moved back with her parents to save money but soon got a little 'sick of it.' She chose her flat as it was located close to some friends and was only a short drive from her family. She likes it but doesn't consider it a 'home.' For Priya, a home feels like it needs to be something she owns or in an area she had grown up in. Besides, she is planning on moving out by the end of the year. It feels like a transient, temporary place and so she hasn't updated her bank or driving license to this new address, knowing that she would have to change it again soon. She keeps all of her moving boxes, and even plans on leaving the little furniture she had bought.

Though an adult with a stable job in finance, Priya doesn't quite feel that she is actually an adult yet. The process of registering to vote feels like a part of 'adulthood' and a bit of a hassle to do when if there isn't a general election close.



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“...you do everything on the internet. We got internet the day we moved in. You sort of expect it when you move in...it’s just something you have to do.”

Voter registration

Priya receives letters concerning voter registration at her current residence but doesn’t bother to open them.

She knows it’s important but because it doesn’t have her name on it, she feels that it’s for the homeowner to deal with. There’s never been a consequence to her not responding, making her feel like it’s ok to do this. Priya registered when she was at university because “it was the Brexit vote” and she wanted to participate, and had reregistered at her parents but has not updated it since.

Registering to vote is at the bottom of her list of things to do and she would probably only be motivated to do so at a general election or referendum. Though neither of her parents vote, she thinks it is an important thing to do and makes an effort to vote at general elections. She is not particularly interested in what’s happening politically but has a specific interest in education and health.

Systems, process and technology

Priya is a heavy internet user, and feels that having access to the internet is a necessity. She uses Google Sheets to keep track of shared chores and searching for property with her flatmate. She often works from home and uses multiple digital platforms, and likes have the TV or radio on while she works. She uses social media recipe inspiration and lifestyle choices.

When registering, Priya navigates the form fairly easily on her laptop. She gets confused when asked whether she has moved out permanently, before deciding to click that she has. She doesn’t really understand the impact of clicking yes or no or what qualifies as a permanent address.

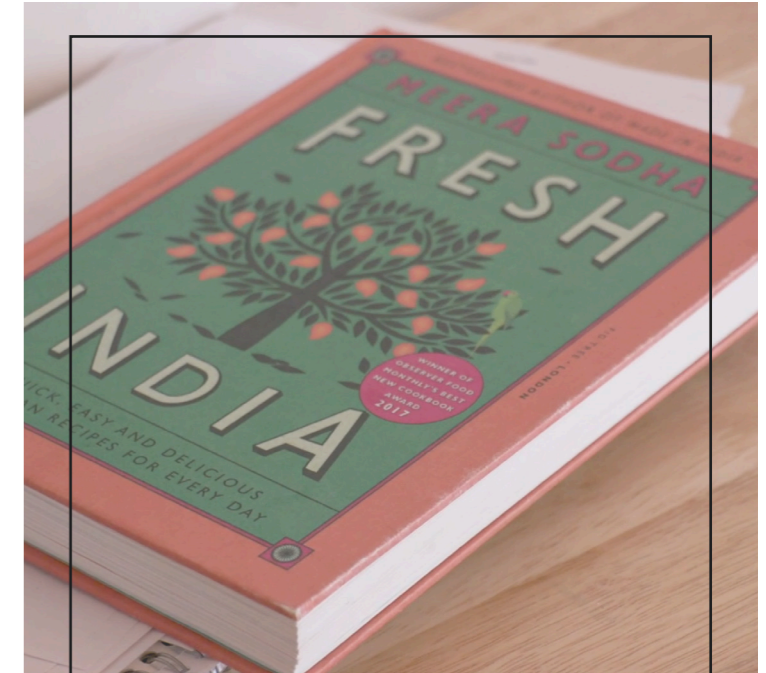


Services, interactions and outreach

Priya doesn’t have much contact with council services, and can’t recall much correspondence from public services. She mostly receives takeaway flyers or post addressed to previous occupants. If Priya gets letter addressed to the ‘occupier’, she feels that it’ll just be junk mail or telling her information she is not bothered about. If someone really wanted to get in touch with her, then they would use her name. And because she goes home often, she collects her letters there.

For any advice or services, she will go straight to Google. She has a close knit family who she often talks to through messenger apps. She doesn’t feel the need to get involved in the local community.

“I’m just renting, so I don’t feel like this is a place I want to invest time in the local community.”



The future

She has a boyfriend who she met in university. She feels that when she moves in with him, she will make sure to change addresses, even if they move around a lot together. This is because it feels like making a home with somebody and they will be things they would want to do together, like banking.

Questions to consider

What might Priya not know about electoral registration?

What would be the best medium of communication with her?

What are the barriers to Priya registering to vote, and how could you tackle these?

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What are Priya’s feelings and motivations?