

*In spring 2017, the South London Gallery (SLG) invited artist Jessie Brennan to collaborate with residents of Pelican Estate on a project titled YOUR WORDS. Jessie spent time listening to residents whose experiences, in different ways, celebrate the value of public housing and speak to the broader challenges often faced by those on council estates.*

*For a broader context of the project, including Jessie's introductory text and examples of further conversations between Jessie (JB) and Pelican residents, please see the South London Gallery website:*

<https://www.southlondongallery.org/projects/jessie-brennan-words/>.

**Emily (b. 2006, Spain) and mother Carolina (b. 1980, Ecuador), Pelican Estate residents**

JB How did you come to live on Pelican Estate?

E My parents came here because of the jobs, because in Spain there wasn't jobs. So they thought that here there'd be jobs.

JB Did they find them?

E Yes.

C When I just arrived here [five years ago] we started working as cleaners in a company, me and my husband. And when we arrived we couldn't speak nothing English. We started from zero, so was really difficult. And now actually I study as well, study as Teaching Assistant. And I work in a voluntary job one day a week and I study two days a week and I work three days a week. So I'm happy in here because I can learn things... For myself, it's really good staying here and for my daughters as well.

E When we [first] came here [to London], we used to live with our two aunties and two uncles and our three cousins.

JB In one home?

C Yeah.

JB How was that?

E Overcrowded.

JB I can imagine. How many bedrooms were there?

C Two.

- E Some [of us] had to sleep on the sofa. Me and my cousins, there was two bunk-beds that we had each. And then I don't know how the adults slept.
- C We lived [with] my sister-in-law for almost four months. [...] We really suffer a lot. But we never gave up! [...]
- JB After that did you go into private rented accommodation or council housing?
- C Private rental. Even now [on Pelican Estate] it's private. [...] Here it's really expensive. Sometimes we just work to pay bills, rent, food, transport. It's really difficult. But it's okay because in here I think the best opportunity is [to] learn and improve our lives.