



Ealing

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Private Sector House Condition Survey 2010

Executive Summary
April 2011

Ealing Council
Working in partnership with



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Executive Summary

Introduction

Private Sector House Condition Surveys (HCS) are conducted on a regular basis by local authorities as a means of maintaining a detailed picture of housing conditions in the private sector (owner occupied and privately rented homes). Such a picture forms a useful evidence base on which to build strategies and inform investment decisions, and feed into statistical returns and other internal reports. The information is also useful in presenting the potential obligations on an authority in relation to current housing legislation:

- Section 3 Housing Act 2004
- Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 (RRO)

The survey was a sample survey with a target of 1,000 dwellings, covering all private sector tenures excluding registered social landlord (RSL) or housing association dwellings. A sample of 2,000 was drawn with final total of 977 full surveys being undertaken.

In order to place the findings in context, comparisons are made to the English Housing Survey (EHS) 2008/2009, published by Communities and Local Government (CLG).

Key findings

The table shows a summary of key findings from the House Condition Survey:

Key finding from the private sector house condition survey

| Characteristic | Owner occupied | Privately rented | All private sector stock | England |
|---|-----------------|------------------|--------------------------|---------|
| Dwellings <i>Per cent of stock¹</i> | 66,310 52% | 36,330 28% | 102,640 80% | 82.0% |
| Non-decent <i>As a % of each tenure</i> | 24,210 36.5% | 15,820 43.6% | 40,030 39.0% | 34.4% |
| Vulnerable in decent homes ² <i>% vulnerable households in decent homes</i> | 7,110 65.3% | 4,370 55.0% | 11,480 61.0% | 66.9% |
| Category 1 Hazard <i>As a % of each tenure</i> | 13,240 20.0% | 8,910 24.5% | 22,150 21.6% | 23.6% |
| In Fuel Poverty <i>As a % of each tenure</i> | 5,540 8.6% | 3,090 8.8% | 8,630 8.7% | 15.6% |
| Mean SAP ³ | 55 | 56 | 55 | 50 |
| Residents over 65 <i>As a % of each tenure⁴</i> | 18,500 28.8% | 2,130 6.0% | 20,630 20.7% | 24.6% |
| Households in receipt of benefit <i>As a % of each tenure⁴</i> | 10,890 17.0% | 7,940 23.0% | 18,830 19.0% | 17.0% |
| <p>1. Percentages given as a proportion of total housing stock, the remaining 20% is all social housing, which was not surveyed as part of this study</p> <p>2. Refers to households in receipt of an income or disability benefit, as defined under former Public Service Agreement 7 objectives</p> <p>3. SAP is the government's Standard Assessment Procedure for rating energy efficiency on a scale of 1 (poor) to 100 (excellent)</p> <p>4. As a percentage of occupied dwellings, not all dwellings</p> | | | | |

Summary of Condition Data

The data contained in the following tables provide a useful summary of the condition data contained within the body of the report.

| Tenure | Category 1 Hazard | Disrepair | Non Modern | Thermal Comfort | Non-decent | SAP |
|------------------|-------------------|-----------|------------|-----------------|------------|-----|
| Owner occupied | 20.0% | 6.4% | 1.4% | 17.6% | 36.5% | 55 |
| Privately rented | 24.5% | 10.2% | 0.5% | 23.2% | 43.6% | 56 |

| Dwelling type | Category 1 Hazard | Disrepair | Non Modern | Thermal Comfort | Non-decent | SAP |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|-----------|------------|-----------------|------------|-----|
| Small terraced house | 11.3% | 5.6% | 3.1% | 30.0% | 41.2% | 57 |
| Medium/large terraced house | 18.9% | 6.3% | 1.8% | 18.4% | 34.9% | 56 |
| Semi detached house | 29.0% | 3.9% | 0.0% | 11.1% | 41.7% | 50 |
| Detached house | 19.2% | 4.3% | 0.0% | 5.1% | 21.5% | 48 |
| Bungalow | 32.0% | 2.9% | 0.0% | 32.0% | 35.0% | 41 |
| Converted flats | 27.4% | 12.4% | 1.5% | 14.5% | 41.6% | 56 |
| Low rise purpose built flats | 19.8% | 12.4% | 0.2% | 28.8% | 42.3% | 59 |
| High rise purpose built flats | 10.0% | 4.2% | 0.0% | 31.8% | 36.0% | 66 |

| Construction date | Category 1 Hazard | Disrepair | Non Modern | Thermal Comfort | Non-decent | SAP |
|-------------------|-------------------|-----------|------------|-----------------|------------|-----|
| Pre 1919 | 27.7% | 10.7% | 2.7% | 16.0% | 41.2% | 50 |
| 1919-1944 | 21.9% | 8.0% | 1.0% | 17.0% | 38.6% | 53 |
| 1945-1964 | 25.4% | 10.4% | 0.4% | 20.8% | 46.6% | 56 |
| 1965-1980 | 7.5% | 5.3% | 0.0% | 30.4% | 38.8% | 63 |
| 1981-1990 | 20.7% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 28.1% | 33.4% | 55 |
| Post 1990 | 24.5% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 22.9% | 27.0% | 66 |

The privately rented stock had the highest proportionate rate for most of the criterion with the exception of lacking modern facilities where the owner occupied stock had the highest rate.

Low rise purpose built flats (less than 6 storeys) had the highest overall non-decency rate as well as for disrepair. Bungalows had the highest rates for both Category 1 Hazards and thermal comfort failure with small terraced houses (less than 70m²) having the highest failure rate for disrepair.

By construction date the pre-1919 stock had the highest failure rates for Category 1 Hazards, disrepair and lacking modern facilities, whilst 1965 to 1980 dwellings had the highest rate of thermal comfort failure. The 1945 to 1964 stock had the highest overall non-decency failure rate with high rates in all of the criterion although none of them the highest.

The results indicate that the worst conditions are to be found in the private rented sector, bungalows and low rise purpose built flats (less than 6 storeys) and pre-1919 dwellings.

General survey characteristics

The following list gives some of the key features of Ealing's private sector housing stock and population compared with national averages:

- A substantially higher proportion of the stock was built before 1965 than that found nationally (54.7% compared with 33.9%), although the proportion of dwellings in most of the age bands were lower than their national comparators, with the only exception being the 1919 to 1944 age band which was substantially higher at 46.8% compared with 17.0% nationally.
- The tenure profile showed some differences to the national pattern. The owner occupied stock had lower proportions than that found nationally (52% compared with 68%), with privately rented dwellings being represented at a much higher rate (28% compared with 14%) and the social rented sector being slightly higher (20% compared with 18%).
- The stock had much higher proportions of terraced houses and flats, with lower proportions of all other types.
- There were more heads of household aged between 16 and 44 years than nationally (50.9% compared with 38.9%) with less aged over 45 (32.1% compared with 42.0%).
- The figures for length of residence, for those that had been resident for up to 5 years, showed a higher rate to that found nationally (41% compared with 35%).
- Overall average incomes are well below those reported for England as a whole at £550 per week compared with £710.
- The proportion of households with an income of less than £15,000 was 24.6% compared to 23.0% nationally with potential affordability issues for repair and improvements in the private sector dwelling stock.
- Receipt of a range of benefits is used to define vulnerability, which are mainly income related with the exception of some disability benefits, and are closely associated with the qualifying criteria used under the Warm Front scheme (see section 4.11.2 of Final Report). In Ealing the proportion of households receiving a benefit, at 19%, was just above the national average of 17%.

Decent Homes Standard

It is Government policy that everyone should have the opportunity of living in a "decent home". The Decent Homes Standard contains four broad criteria that a property should:

- A - be above the legal minimum standard for housing, and
- B - be in a reasonable state of repair, and
- C - have reasonably modern facilities (such as kitchens and bathrooms) and services, and
- D - provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort (effective insulation and efficient heating).

All of these criteria are described in more detail in their own individual chapters in the main report.

Overall, 40,030 private sector dwellings failed the Decent Homes Standard in Ealing. A total of 21.6% (22,150) failed due to the presence of a Category 1 Hazard and 19.6% (20,080) due to thermal comfort failure.

Cost implications for repair and improvement

The cost to make dwellings decent in the private sector provides an idea of the cost of bringing dwellings up to a good standard. The costs are the total sum that would be needed for remedial and improvement work, regardless of the source of funding. They take no account of longer term maintenance, which would be in addition to these costs.

| Reason | Total Cost (£ million) | Average Cost per dwelling (£)* |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Category 1 Hazard | £26.2 | £1,180 |
| Repair | £21.2 | £2,670 |
| Amenities | £16.4 | £14,280 |
| Thermal comfort | £27.3 | £1,360 |
| Total | £91.1 | £2,280 |

* Rounded to nearest £10

Category 1 Hazards

One of the most significant changes under the Housing Act 2004 was a change in the minimum standard for housing. The fitness standard was removed and replaced by the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) is a prescribed method of assessing individual hazards, rather than a general standard to give a judgment of fit or unfit. The HHSRS is evidence based – national statistics on the health impacts of hazards encountered in the home are used as a basis for assessing individual hazards.

The HHSRS system deals with a much broader range of issues than the previous fitness standard. It covers a total of 29 hazards in four main groups described in more detail in the main report:

- Primary hazard failures in Ealing were falling on stairs, excess cold and falling on level surfaces, which followed that found nationally.
- Category 1 Hazards are strongly associated with older dwellings and, with dwellings occupied by households with an income under £10,000, those in receipt of a benefit, those aged over 65 and dwellings with a disabled resident.
- Category 1 Hazards are strongly associated with privately rented dwellings and with semi-detached houses and converted flats.

Energy Efficiency

Energy efficiency is a key consideration in private sector housing and the following illustrates some of the issues:

- Fuel poverty at 8.7% was lower than the rate found in England at 15.6%. The cost of remedial works to the 5,540 owner occupied dwellings in fuel poverty (i.e. needing to spend more than 10% of income on Space heating; Water heating; Lights and appliances and Cooking) was just over £13.7 million.
- The mean SAP (SAP 2005 energy rating on a scale of 0 (poor) to 100 (good)) is 55 in Ealing, which was higher than that found nationally in private sector dwellings (50).
- The least energy efficient dwellings are older dwellings (Pre-1919) and detached houses. The mean SAP rating for privately rented dwellings was 56 compared with 55 for owner occupied dwellings.
- Improving energy efficiency will contribute towards a range of Ealing's corporate priorities and indeed contribute to a wide range of issues e.g. reduced carbon emissions, tackling fuel poverty, elimination of Category 1 Hazards, improved health and well being and warmer homes.
- The level of excess cold hazards could be an issue given that just over a fifth of residents are aged 65 and over in Ealing with the potential link with cold related illnesses.

What of the future?

The comprehensive spending review by the government, published in October 2010 presents new challenges, the impact of which are still yet to be fully considered. Many performance targets set by the previous Labour Government have been removed by the Coalition Government, giving local authorities greater responsibility for setting their own targets, although there will be a single comprehensive data list developed, with publication due in the early part of 2011 for implementation in April 2011.

The national housing agenda has changing priorities, and has moved away from dwelling condition toward:

- Increasing the number dwellings to buy or rent including affordable housing
- Protecting the vulnerable and disadvantaged and supporting people to stay in their own homes
- Ensuring that homes are of high quality and sustainable

The findings of the report provide a range of issues that will place demands on the authority for services such as disabled facilities grant, minor works grants, decency loans and enforcement action in relation to the level of Category 1 hazards within the privately rented stock.

Conclusions / Recommendations

Section 3 of the Housing Act 2004 still requires a local housing authority to keep the housing conditions in their area under review with a view to identifying any action that may need to be taken by them under, amongst other things, article 3 of the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002, which contains general powers to provide assistance for housing renewal.

The Regulatory Reform Order also placed the primary responsibility on owners to maintain their own property, whilst recognising that vulnerable households still required assistance. In Ealing there were 7,350 vulnerable households living in non-decent dwellings with the targeting of scarce resources perhaps best being aimed at this group.

Tackling Category 1 Hazards must be a priority given the statutory duty to act where a Category 1 Hazard has been identified. The highest failure rates were found in pre-1919 dwellings, semi-detached houses and converted flats, and in the private rented sector.

Just over a fifth of heads of household in Ealing were aged 65 and over which will potentially place increasing demands on the authority for adaptations and works to allow frail and vulnerable occupiers to live in their own homes, with the current potential cost for Disabled Facilities Grant being just over £15 million.

Given the findings in relation to energy efficiency, vulnerable occupiers and fuel poverty, a logical approach to private sector housing assistance and enforcement would include a focus on energy efficiency, particularly in pre-1919 dwellings and detached and semi-detached houses which had the lowest mean SAP ratings.

There were an estimated 1,210 long-term vacant dwellings in Ealing, which is a wasted resource. Ealing's Empty Property Strategy has been set up to encourage owners to bring long-term empty homes back into use by the utilisation of grants and, where necessary, enforcement action.