

Information note 1: What is in the 1996 EHCS?

On 5th May 2006 the responsibilities of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) transferred to the Department for Communities and Local Government.

Department for Communities and Local Government
Eland House
Bressenden Place
London SW1E 5DU
Telephone: 020 7944 4400
Website: www.communities.gov.uk

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1. Introduction

1.1 This is the first of a series of Information Notes produced by the Research Analysis Evaluation Division for users of the 1996 English House Condition Survey (EHCS) from both inside and outside the Department. This note describes the information which is available from the four component surveys which together make up the EHCS, namely the: main physical survey, the household interview survey, the postal survey of local authorities and housing associations (RSL) landlords and the survey of market value of dwellings.

1.2. Summary findings of the survey are being released, as in previous years, in the form of one or more published reports. Background tabulations and Key Findings are also available on the Departments Internet site¹ and to DETR internal users via the Info Net system. The purpose of this note is to:

- set out the full range of data which are available and for what geographic areas it can be analysed
- help users define and agree their requirements for additional analyses, beyond those to appear in the main reports. Requests from internal users will be met by RAE. Arrangements for external users are described at para 2.4 and in Information note 3.

1.3. Further EHCS Information Notes are available covering

- Background to the Survey
- Disseminating the EHCS .
- Data Quality
- Estimating Repair Costs

The series will be added to as required. Copies of all Information Notes are available on the Department's internal Info Net system and on the Department's Internet site. Alternatively contact Peter-Tomas Gray in RAE in Eland House on 0171 890 3528.

2. Information available from the survey

2.1 A full list of all the main topics covered by the survey are listed at Annex A. A list of the geographic areas for which this information can be presented is given at Annex B

2.2 This list includes not only the basic data as collected in the field but also 'derived' or secondary information produced by a series of models developed by RAE and a team at the Building Research Establishment. These models take information collected in the field, such as the amount of repair work needed to a home, and uses this to develop measures for analysis such as the cost of making a property fit. Four main models are used:

- Repair cost model to generate cost of remedying disrepair and unfitness over different time periods
- Income model to generate gross and net household income
- Work done model to generate the cost and volume of all repair work undertaken to homes by occupants and landlords
- Energy efficiency modelling to determine energy efficiency ratings directly comparable with those of the Standard Assessment Procedure

2.3 Work on some of these models is still underway and where data are not yet available this is indicated by an * in Annex A. RAE will be able to advise you when the data will be available.

2.4 All the EHCS data are held on a data base by RAE who can analyse the information using a powerful statistical package (SPSS). This enables data from any part of the survey to be linked and manipulated in a wide variety of ways. Any item can be used individually or in combination and can be analysed for either all households/dwellings or for particular sectors of the stock or for particular household groups. Users within DETR should discuss with staff in RAE the full range of analysis options . Users outside the Department may use the results available on the Internet, obtain extracts of the data from the Data Archive or obtain bespoke tabulations from the Building Research Establishment. Services for external users are described in EHCS Information Note 3 – Disseminating the EHCS.

2.5 Information from the survey may be presented in a wide variety of ways depending on the customer's particular requirements. These include:

- Standard cross tabulations
- User defined tabulations
- Graphic products including bar graphs, pie charts, line graphs etc
- Maps at regional level or for pre-defined clusters of local authorities
- Written analysis of results/guidance on interpretation of results

Examples of the type of product available are given in the summary of the main report and in

the set of supporting tables both available on Info Net and the Internet site.

3. Base dates

3.1. Unless otherwise stated, all data relates to a base date of **1st April 1996** or, where applicable, to the period 1.11.91 to 1.4.96.

4. Analysing change

4.1 One of the key aims of the EHCS is to enable changes in the condition of the stock and the distribution of households across the stock to be monitored over time. To facilitate this

- A core of questions has remained unchanged since 1991
- Half the sample of dwellings (in the interview survey) were also visited in 1991.

4.2 For many topics it is therefore possible to look at changes since 1991 through a simple comparison of the **net** change in the results between 1991 and 1996. For example x% of the stock was owner-occupied in 1991 compared to y% in 1996. In addition, by looking only at those addresses for which data are available for both 1991 and 1996, it is possible to look at stock movements in more detail and identify **gross** change. For example, of those addresses that were owner occupied in 1991 x% have remained in owner occupation but Y% have transferred to other sectors.

4.2 While the EHCS methodology has remained largely unchanged, there have been some improvements made to the way in which repair costs have been derived compared to 1991. These, together with variations detected in the standards used by surveyors in recording disrepair, mean that direct comparison of repair cost information with information published in 1991 would be invalid. RAE have however reworked key repair cost information from 1991 on a common basis to that used in 1996 so that valid comparisons can be made. These results are available in the main report and in the supporting tables.

5. Interpretation of the results

5.1 Valid information from the interview survey, which was conducted first, was obtained for 16,100 addresses. The remaining surveys were sub-samples of these. Most analyses are based on a core sample of 11,593 occupied dwellings for which both a full physical and interview survey were obtained. An additional 538 vacant addresses with a full survey are included for analyses relating to all dwellings (occupied and vacant).

5.2 Sample results are then grossed back to national totals. As a sample survey, all the results have a margin of error associated with them. This means the true result will lie within a band either side of the figure presented. Errors are also associated with methods of measurement. These can arise from the difficulty in ensuring that those assessments of condition which are inherently subjective are made on a consistent basis both within the 1996 survey and between 1991 and 1996. They can also occur as a result of methodological changes. Staff in RAE will be able to advise users in the Department on how to interpret the significance of any findings from the survey. Further information is available to all users on data quality and the survey methodology as Annexes to the main report and on the Internet site.

Annex A - Data Available From The 1996 EHCS Index

1. BASIC CHARACTERISTICS

1.1 PROPERTY TYPE

These provide a comprehensive description of the nature of the stock. They may be used individually or in combination with other EHCS data, to select any particular housing category for analysis.

- dwelling type;
- extent of self containment;
- tenure;
- vacancy/length of vacancy;
- date of construction;
- alterations since construction;
- date of major improvements and alterations;
- age of principal building components;
- type of construction;
- dwelling configuration in terms of shape and elevation features;
- dimensions of dwelling;
- orientation;
- plot description;
- number and function of rooms;
- *location (postcode and grid reference)*;
- in conservation area
- listed building.
- access/adaptations for the disabled
- floor level for flats

1.2 HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

Derived principally from the household interview survey, these data provide detailed descriptions of household composition, income, employment status, and health. They can be used individually or in combination to select particular household types for analysis and to analyse the relationship between house condition and household type. Information on Homes in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) will be available later in 1998.*

- main or second home;
- length of residence;
- household details:

- o number of residents;
- o age;
- o sex;
- o marital status;
- o relationship to head of household;
- o lodgers/boarders/numbers sharing;
- o part of family unit/ number of family units in household;
- o economic status

- ethnic group of head of household and spouse
- employment status/SEG of head of household and spouse;
- income of head of household and spouse from:

- o employment/second jobs/government schemes/other income;
- o state benefits and allowances, type of benefit and amount
- o pensions (payments and income);
- o savings.

- modelled net income data*
- receipt of state benefits - by category;
- if any registered disabled persons in household
- for non registered disabled, occurrence of long standing illness, extent of disability, and use of aids and adaptations
- health problems in past year
- smoking patterns
- presence of pets
- car ownership

1.3 TENANCY AND OCCUPANCY CHARACTERISTICS

These provide a detailed description of the tenure type, mortgage and rent payments. For local authority and RSL tenants, there is additional information on how the property is managed, dates of relets, if vacant, and if property has been acquired or sold as part of a particular government initiative. These data may be used to select particular tenure types for detailed analysis, and to examine the impact of different management arrangements.

- previous tenure;
- current tenure - leasehold/freehold; rented furnished/unfurnished;
- renters only - category of landlord current and previous;
- owners only - if previously rented, from whom.

- all tenants

- o type of owner; if linked to employment
- o type of tenancy fixed term/indefinite/if before 15.1.89;
- o shorthold or assured tenancy;
- o present rent;
- o receipt of housing benefit by tenant or landlord;
- o services included in rent;
- o payment of any additional charges;
- o changes in the management of tenancy
- o intentions to move.

- local authority stock

- o if sold since 1991/to whom/under what scheme/date;

- o if acquired since 1991/from whom/date;
- o number of relets and associated periods of vacancy;
- o if vacant/why/future plans;
- o if dwelling intended as special needs housing/type/type of adaptation

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• RSL stock

- o if sold since 1991/ to whom/what scheme/date;
- o if acquired since 1991/from whom/date;
- o dates of relets;
- o if vacant/how long/why/future plans;
- o original construction/acquisition date for properties acquired pre 1.4.89
- o source of funding for original acquisition.
- o if dwelling intended as special needs housing/type/type of adaptations

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• owner occupiers

- o property owned outright or with mortgage; leasehold or freehold
- o from whom property purchased, when and purchase price;
- o Right to Buy/value of discount/% discount/total price/date;
- o source of finance;
- o length of mortgage/amount/type/additions/amount;
outstanding/repayments;

o any service charges/ground rent.

1.4 VALUE OF THE HOUSING STOCK

Collected by the market value survey, these values can be used in combination with other data to examine for example, the value of vacant stock, the relationship between rents and market values, and to establish the equity or debt people hold in their homes.

- vacant possession market value as at 1.4.96 based on condition at that date;
- vacant possession market value as at 1.4.96 with all observed defects repaired.
- owner occupiers estimate of current market value

1.5 AREA DESCRIPTION

This data contains surveyors' and householders assessments of the condition of both the neighbourhood immediately surrounding the dwelling and the wider surrounding area. This will help to determine, for example, whether a survey dwelling is typical of others in the area, and whether the area might be a potential candidate for area level initiatives.

- description/assessment of local environment including urban/rural classification;
- predominant land use of area
- parking provision/car ownership.
- type of road located on

A number of additional geographic descriptors are available &endash; see Annex B.

2. STOCK CONDITION

2.1 CONDITION AND PROVISION OF FACILITIES

Individual elements of the data may be used for in depth analysis of a particular aspect of disrepair. Overall housing condition may be assessed through a combined variable of 'poor housing' based on the extent of disrepair, unfitness and extent of modernisation.

State of Repair

Detailed and comprehensive data on the physical condition of the interior and exterior of dwellings including common areas of flats. For most components an

assessment of the extent, urgency and nature of work required is available, plus the estimated cost of repair work based on the surveyors' assessments.

- o assessment of state of repair by internal and external building elements, including curtilage.
- o nature and cost of repairs required, available for:
 - o individual building elements;
 - o related to different building materials;
 - o cost of repair for whole dwelling;
 - o urgent repairs;
 - o repairs required in medium term.

- o problems with condensation and damp

Fitness

- o overall assessment plus reasons for being unfit with regard to structural stability, disrepair, dampness, lighting, heating, ventilation, water supply, preparation and cooking of food, wc, bath\shower\washhand basin, and drainage.

Interior amenities

- o Provision of, age and condition of major internal services and facilities
 - o drinking water supply
 - o kitchen amenities
 - o bathroom amenities

- o WC amenities
- o secondary amenities
- o primary services
- o if on mains drainage

Shared facilities

- o Provision of and action needed to shared facilities and services

Other aspects of condition or "quality" of dwellings

- o security;
- o fire safety of dwellings and common areas of blocks;
- o ease of access to building.

2.2 HEATING AND ENERGY*

Collected from the physical survey, household interview survey, and Fuel Consumption Survey, a comprehensive picture is available on heating patterns, fuel bills, fuel consumption, insulation and temperatures achieved. Thermal efficiency of the dwelling can be calculated.

- heating type by room;
- central heating- type and controls;
- use of additional heating;
- times heating on/ off; heating regimes;
- temperature at time of interview in home;
- outside temperature at time of interview;
- satisfaction with heating;
- heating costs and methods of payment
- method of water heating;
- draughts;
- insulation – presence of different types and reasons for not installing;
- calculation of u values;
- cooking patterns, fuel used, ventilation methods
- LA and RSL stock

- o whether energy audit undertaken and rating.
- o whether communal heating system

2.3 HOME SAFETY

Information collected from householders on the incidence of fires and accidents in the home and information from the physical survey on ease of escape from dwelling.

- accidents - frequency over last year
- description/link to house design, layout and
- condition/actions as result of accident;
- fires - frequency over last two years; cause of last fire, spread, cost of damage, use of fire brigade; presence of smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detector
- means of escape;
- security - provision of window and door locks burglar alarms.
- noise problems

3. REPAIR AND IMPROVEMENT

3.1 ACTION BY HOUSEHOLDER*

Collected from the householder interview survey, information is provided on all repair and improvement work undertaken by the householder.

- awareness of problems with internal and external condition;
- intentions regarding problems; actions taken so far; reasons for inaction.
- plans for future improvements
- how problems identified and tackled
- reasons for not using builder
- details of any repair/improvement work undertaken by householder and/or landlord/freeholder as described by householder.
- Work undertaken is recorded for the following periods:
 - o Jan - Dec 95 all work but likely to exclude DIY small items;
 - o Jan 92 - Dec 95 major work undertaken.

- Information is available on:

- o type of work and expenditure (total expenditure or expenditure on particular types of work where expenditure includes imputed labour costs for DIY work.);

- o Financing of work undertaken including contributions from grant/whether grant applied for and not received;

- o Type of contractor used.

3.2. ACTION BY LOCAL AUTHORITY AND REGISTERED SOCIAL LANDLORDS*

Collected from the postal survey of local authorities and RSLs, the data provides full description of type and cost of all work undertaken by LAs and RSLs on their properties .

Local Authority stock

Work to dwellings:

- o Responsive major work - type, estimated cost, volume of emergency priority work, source of funding for work completed in period 1.11.91 to 1.4.96
- o Responsive minor work – type, estimated cost, volume of emergency work, source of funding for work completed in period 1.4.95 to 1.4.96.
- o Cyclical maintenance - type, frequency, estimated cost, source of funding for work completed 1.11.91 to 1.4.96
- o Planned/programmed major work - type, estimated cost and source of funding of work completed 1.11.91 to 1.4.96.
- o Expected replacement period for items in common areas or shared facilities within a block

Work to estates:

- o Estate level works impacting on the dwelling. 4 categories of work as for dwelling. Cost data not collected but may be modelled.

RSL stock

- o Responsive major work - type, estimated cost, volume of emergency priority work, source of funding for work completed in period 1.11.91 to 1.4.96. Whether part of Improvement for Sale scheme.
- o Responsive minor work – type, estimated cost, volume of emergency work, source of funding for work completed in period 1.4.95 to 1.4.96.
- o Cyclical maintenance - type, frequency, estimated cost, source of funding for work completed 1.11.91 to 1.4.96
- o Planned major reimpvement - type, estimated cost and source of funding of work completed 1.11.91 to 1.4.96. Whether part of Improvement for Sale scheme
- o Rehabilitation works – if interior, exterior of dwelling, cost source of funding, date of last rehab, if part of Improvement for Sale scheme
- o Expected replacement period for items in common areas or shared facilities within a block

Work to estates:

- o Estate level works impacting on the dwelling. 4 categories of work as for dwelling. Cost data not collected but may be modelled.

3.3 MANAGEMENT OF LOCAL AUTHORITY AND REGISTERED SOCIAL LANDLORD STOCK

For local authority and RSL. stock information has been obtained on management arrangements for their dwellings, and any planned changes to these arrangements

- Management arrangements - whether contracted out/plans to change
- Tenant participation arrangements
- Management responsibilities of authority, tenant management, contract manager
- Formal responsibilities of tenant for repair and maintenance
- Receipt of Disabled facilities grants; applications for consent to make improvements

3.4 ACTION BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES ON PRIVATE SECTOR STOCK*

Collected from the postal survey, information is provided for all private sector stock on any individual grant applications, any block group action, area based action and enforcement action for the period 1.11.91 to 1.4.96.

- area based action - current and planned type, size, dates, works undertaken, source of funding;
- block/group action- type and size of scheme;
- grants - details of two most recent grants paid, type of grant, date, by whom, works undertaken, costs, mandatory or discretionary, if unfit and reasons for unfitness before work, role of HIA;
- enforcement action – if action taken and under what powers.

4. ATTITUDES OF HOUSEHOLDERS

Collected from the householder interview survey, information is available on householder attitudes to a wide range of housing issues which may be analysed in relation to the state of repair of the stock.

- views on management arrangements and perceived affect of any changes.
- householders satisfaction with home and its state of repair.
- householders satisfaction with immediate surroundings.
- householders attitudes to neighbourhood.
- problems with noise –type and reason
- intentions to move.
- households satisfaction with range of characteristics of their home, including provision of facilities and state of repair.
- awareness of problems with state of external repair; intentions; reasons for inaction.
- tenants' assessment of their landlords' repair record.

Annex B - EHCS 1996 Geographic areas for analysis

Data from the EHCS may be analysed for the following geographic areas:

National

Government office regions

Standard statistical regions/Economic planning regions

Area type

- City centres (urban)
- Urban areas (urban)
- Suburban residential (urban)

- Rural residential (rural)
- Village centres (rural)
- Rural (rural)

Groups of authorities with similar characteristics (CACI unfitness groups used in the allocation of housing resources)

- older London boroughs
- suburban London
- northern industrial towns
- older resorts and university towns
- rural districts
- large urban districts
- shire districts
- suburban districts
- mixed industrial/rural districts
- southern industrial towns

Deprived authorities (worst 56 authorities defined using Departmental Index of Local Conditions)

Housing corporation regions

Note

- **Other geographic groups may be constructed provided sample sizes are adequate**
- **Data are not available at individual county or local authority level.**