Briefing 13/02 January 2013

# Scottish House Conditions Survey: Key Findings 2011

To: All Chief Executives, Main Contacts and APSE Contacts in Scotland

For information only to England, Northern Ireland and Wales

**Key Issue**

The purpose of this briefing is to advise APSE members on the key statistics from Scottish Government's 2012 newly published Scottish House Conditions Survey (SHCS): Key Findings 2011.

The report includes findings on:-

- Condition of Scottish Housing Stock
- Energy efficiency
- Households living in fuel poverty
- Dwellings passing and failing the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS)

## 1.0 Introduction

This briefing sets out the main statistics from Scottish Government's Scottish House Conditions Survey (SHCS): Key Findings 2011. The SHCS is the only national survey of the housing and households undertaken in Scotland. The survey combines both an interview with occupants and a physical inspection of homes to build up a picture of Scotland's occupied housing stock which covers all types of households and homes across the country – whether owned or rented, flats or houses. This allows physical data to be recorded by professional, trained surveyors and social data to be collected via householder interviews.

This is the eighth "Key Findings" report since the SHCS changed to a continuous format in 2003. This continuous format was introduced to allow more flexibility of content and to assist in the monitoring of Government targets. The results from this report are based on analysis from January to December 2011 and due to the sample size of approximately 3,000 paired

households, it is not possible to provide in-depth information. Therefore the report concentrates on setting out key, high level, national estimates relevant to a number of important policy areas.

Care should to be taken when comparing estimates from the reports prior to the continuous format – reports for 1991, 1996 and 2002. This is due to the introduction of the continuous, year-round fieldwork which was introduced in 2003/4 and could possibly bring about some changes to the estimates. Also as SHCS changed contractors from the Office for National Statistics to Ipsos-MORI, there is a possibility that this may have caused some year on year changes.

In addition to above the report highlights that there are a number of other factors which should to be considered when comparing estimates. These include:-

- Dwelling numbers - as the base number of occupied dwellings changes
- Growth in Scottish Housing Stock – this can give impression that more dwellings now fall into certain categories therefore important to compare rises in proportions as well as numbers
- SHSC is a sample survey – all survey figures are estimates of the true occurrence within the population and will contain some error associated with sampling.
- Sampling variation – sources of uncertainty may also arise from incomplete responses or failures to secure participation from each sampled household.
- Types of estimates – different types of estimates will be subject to different levels of uncertainty associated with sampling and design.

Full survey findings can be found at http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2012/12/4995

## 2.0 Key Findings from the Survey

The report provides key estimates which are relevant to a number of important policy areas. This briefing covers some of the main findings from the survey.

**Condition of Scottish Housing Stock**

The survey highlights a number of factors about the stock one being that detached houses have dominated new-builds since 1982. This differs from dwellings figures from earlier periods which show a large proportion of the pre-1919 stock are tenements whilst dwellings from the 1945-1982 period are predominately semi-detached and terraced housing.

It is also reported that about one fifth of the stock is now over 92 years old and a third over 67 years old, with twenty two percent of the stock having been built within the last 30 years.

The survey provides information on dwellings which are on or off the gas grid, with dwellings "on the gas grid" being classified by whether there is a medium/low pressure pipe in the mapping area.

The table below shows that overall in Scotland; ninety one percent of dwellings are on the gas grid. Of the remaining nine percent which is "off grid", ninety four percent are in rural areas.

| Gas Grid Coverage | | Urban | Rural | Total | *Un-weighted sample size* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| On gas grid | *000s* | 1,956 | 191 | **2,147** | *2,723* |
| | *Row %* | 91 | 9 | **100** | |
| | *Col %* | 99 | 48 | **91** | |
| Not on gas grid | *000s* | 12 | 206 | **218** | *493* |
| | *Row %* | 6 | 94 | **100** | |
| | *Col %* | 1 | 52 | **9** | |
| **All Dwellings** | *000s* | **1,969** | **397** | **2,365** | ***3,216*** |
| | *Row %* | **83** | **17** | **100** | |
| | *Col %* | **100** | **100** | **100** | |
| *Sample size* | | *2,497* | *719* | ***3,216*** | |

Table Source: SHCS 2011

**Energy Efficiency**

One of the easiest and most effective ways to improve the energy efficiency of a dwelling is by installing or upgrading the insulation. It has been estimated that in a non-insulated dwelling a third of all heat is lost through the walls and up to a quarter through the roof.

Since the continuous format of the survey began in 2003/4 it has been recorded that the number of dwellings with no insulation has fallen from 110,000 to just 32,000 which represents two percent of all dwellings which could have loft insulation. It was also highlighted that forty-five percent of dwellings with lofts had insulation of a depth of 200mm or more in 2011 compared with just fourteen percent in 2003/4. The findings on the depth of the insulation showed dwellings in the social sector had a higher proportion of better insulated lofts than those in the private sector, 94% compared with 84% respectively (based on 100mm or more). One of the reasons for this is that the Scottish Quality Housing Standard requires at least 100mm of loft insulation, with all social rented homes having to meet this standard by 2015.

| External Wall Construction | Insulation Added? | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Solid/Other (000s) | Not insulated | 523 | 541 | 540 | 542 | 546 |
| | Insulated | 50 | 56 | 57 | 68 | 68 |
| | Sub total | 573 | 597 | 597 | 611 | 614 |
| Cavity (000s) | Not insulated | 816 | 766 | 732 | 671 | 600 |
| | Insulated | 924 | 967 | 1,015 | 1,076 | 1,154 |
| | Sub total | 1,740 | 1,733 | 1,747 | 1,747 | 1,754 |
| **All dwellings** | | **2,313** | **2,330** | **2,344** | **2,357** | **2,368** |
| Solid/Other (%) | Not insulated | 91% | 91% | 90% | 89% | 89% |
| | Insulated | 9% | 9% | 10% | 11% | 11% |
| | Sub total | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| Cavity (%) | Not insulated | 47% | 44% | 42% | 38% | 34% |
| | Insulated | 53% | 56% | 58% | 62% | 66% |
| | Sub total | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |

Table Source: SHCS 2011

From the table above it can be noted that since 2007 cavity wall insulation has increased from fifty-three percent to sixty-six percent in 2011.

The report notes that social landlords have conducted significantly more work to improve dwellings overall. In the social sector, 44% of pre-1976 dwellings remain untreated compared with 69% in the private sector. The majority of work done has been to fill cavity walls (27% in the private sector and 36% in the social sector), which is generally the lowest cost improvement available.

The social sector has seen the greatest uptake of more expensive measures, where exposed walls are clad externally or internally with insulating material. As of 2011 nearly 20% (including those with both insulation types) of pre-1983 social sector housing had undergone such treatment compared with around 4% of private sector housing.

In terms of energy efficiency on the National Home Energy Rating (NHER) scale, approximately 1,500,000 dwellings were rated "good", which totals sixty-five percent. Across all sectors, seventy one percent of dwellings in urban areas have a "good" NHER rating compared with thirty two percent of those in rural areas. Urban dwellings are also about five times less likely to be rated "poor" than those in rural areas. The mean NHER score of dwellings in rural areas is 5.3 compared to 7.2 for those in urban areas. The median NHER scores are 5 and 8 respectively. Dwellings off the gas grid are seven times less likely to have a "good" NHER rating and about eight times more likely to have a "poor" NHER rating than those who are on the gas grid.

**Fuel Poverty**

Scottish Government uses the following definition of fuel poverty, taken from the Scottish Fuel Poverty Statement 2002:-

*"A household is in fuel poverty if it would be required to spend more than 10% of its income (including Housing Benefit or Income Support for Mortgage Interest) on all household fuel use."*

Moreover, "Extreme Fuel Poverty" is defined as a household having to spend more than 20% of its income on fuel.

| Year | Fuel poverty | | Extreme fuel poverty | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *000's* | *%* | *000's* | *%* |
| 2002 | 293 | 13.4 | 71 | 3.2 |
| 2003/4 | 350 | 15.4 | 112 | 4.9 |
| 2004/5 | 419 | 18.2 | 119 | 5.2 |
| 2005/6 | 543 | 23.5 | 173 | 7.5 |
| 2007 | 586 | 25.3 | 172 | 7.4 |
| 2008 | 618 | 26.5 | 182 | 7.8 |
| 2009 | 770 | 32.7 | 243 | 10.3 |
| 2010 | 658 | 27.9 | 185 | 7.8 |
| 2011 (July Price) | 582 | 24.6 | 153 | 6.4 |
| 2011 (Oct Price) | 684 | 28.9 | 185 | 7.8 |

Table Source: SHCS 2011

The table above shows the fuel poverty rates from 2002 (the fuel poverty figures include those in extreme fuel poverty). The information highlights that in mid-July 2011 approximately 582,000 households were in fuel poverty which is a decrease of 76,000 since 2010, the extreme fuel poverty figure dropped by 32,000 households over this same period. Between 2002 and

July 2011 the fuel poverty rate peaked in 2009 when it reached 770,000 households which totalled almost thirty-three percent.

The table also shows the difference in the figures following the sharp fuel price increase which took place in October 2011. This change in fuel price brought a further 102,000 households into fuel poverty affecting around 684,000 households and increased the extreme fuel poverty figure by 32,000 in a three month period. The report notes that the 3 main factors driving changes in fuel poverty rates are fuel prices, income and energy efficiency of the home.

By simulating a number of changes between 2010 and July 2011, the survey found that:-

- An increase in average household income contributed a 2.5% decrease in fuel poverty rates.
- Improvements in the energy efficiency of housing contributed a 1.7% decrease in fuel poverty rates.
- Increases in fuel prices contributed a 0.8% increase in fuel poverty rates.

**Scottish Housing Quality Standard**

Scottish Government sets two quality standards which are monitored through the Scottish House Condition Survey.

- The first is the tolerable standard (Local Authorities have a statutory duty and specific powers to deal with houses that fall below the tolerable standard).
- The second is the Scottish Housing Quality Standard which was announced by the Minister for Communities in February 2004.

The survey highlighted that in 2011 approximately fifty-eight percent of the Scottish housing stock failed to meet the standard set by the Scottish Housing Quality Standard. This was a decrease from sixty-one percent from 2010. However, 2011 did witness the highest failure rate for private rented sector which reached sixty-five percent with Local Authorities and other public providers showing fifty eight percent.

## 3.0 Comment and Conclusion

The report highlights a range of issues and although it does not show any real surprises, the findings do back up existing policies and highlight the need for long term planning.

The social sector is certainly the one which is improving faster overall with regard to the SHQS. This reflects the levels of investment made by Local Authorities and others in the public sector, in their housing stock both in terms of bathrooms, kitchens, windows and roofs as well as insulation, energy management and efficiency measures.

Disrepair is another item covered by the report. Although it is measured over 3 categories it reiterates common perceptions in that the rates for the sector which require either minor repairs, extensive repairs or show extensive disrepair are highest in the Local Authority and private rented sector and lowest in the owner occupied sector. Significant investment programmes undertaken in eth social sector designed to sustain the property over the long term by taking an asset management approach rather than a reactive one but this shows the scale of the job facing those responsible for local authority stock.

The report also notes that one fifth of the overall stock is now over 92 years old. This figure will be lower in the local authority stock but it does highlight the fact that properties are assets which are around for a long time, require long term planning and management and are

replaced over many years. Existing austerity programmes mean that houses are not being built in anything like the numbers that was the case in the 1960s or 70s and retrofit and improvement schemes are far more common and highlights the need for an asset management approach to property maintenance. The vast majority of the existing stock will be around in 50 and more years.

The issue of 'off grid' fuel supplies remains a major one for local authorities. Rural properties are more costly to maintain and the same is true of fuel poverty and energy management services and improvements. Again this is something which local authorities need to be aware of in future as resources are reduced and priorities need to be identified.

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