



Briefing 14/14 April 2014

Scottish House Conditions Survey: Key Findings 2012

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 2012.

This report includes findings on:-

- Condition of Scottish Housing Stock
- Energy efficiency
- Fuel poverty
- Dwellings passing and failing the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS)

1.0 Introduction

This briefing sets out the main statistics from the Scottish Government's Scottish House Conditions Survey (SHCS): Key Findings 2012, which is now part of the wider Scottish Household Survey (SHS). 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 dwellings to provide a picture of Scotland's occupied housing stock covering all types of households. The physical data is recorded by professional, trained surveyors and is combined with social data collected from the interview with the householder.

This is the ninth 'Key Findings' report since the SHCS changed to a continuous format in 2003 and the first since its integration with the SHS.

Care should be taken when comparing estimates from reports prior to the continuous format – reports for 1991, 1996 and 2002 - and to all previous surveys with the continuous format, as some of the methodological innovation introduced for the 2012 fieldwork (as a result of the integration with the SHS) cannot be discounted as a possible explanation for some observed year-on-year change. This includes but is not limited to:

- **Sample size changes** – physical inspections were down 13% in 2012 compared to 2011 figures (3,219 in 2011 down to 2,787 in 2012).
- **Council Tax** – The amount which households pay was not collected, for 2012 these payments were estimated and included in the derivation of net household income which is relevant to the production of fuel poverty statistics.
- **Tenure** – this information was not collected in 46 households due to a questionnaire routing error, so it was not possible to reproduce tenure breakdowns provided previously.

Full survey findings can be found at:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0043/00439879.pdf>

2.0 Key Findings from the Survey

This 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.

Key Attributes of the Scottish Housing Stock

This section of the report covers Scotland's diverse range of housing stock and highlights that both the age and type of dwellings can have a lot of consequences for energy performance, the potential to make improvements and living conditions.

The most common types of housing show that there are nearly as many pre-1919 properties as there are post-1982 properties, which represent twenty one percent and twenty three percent of the stock respectively.

The survey noted that proximity to the gas grid allows households to use the cheapest major commercial fuel for their heating and hot water, so gas grid access can have a strong effect on the cost of heating a home. The table below shows that overall in Scotland, ninety percent of dwellings are on the gas grid. Of the remaining ten percent which is "off grid", ninety three percent are in rural areas.

	Gas Grid Coverage		Location			
	Dwellings	Col %	Urban		Rural	
	Dwellings	Col %	Dwellings	Col %	Dwellings	Col %
On Gas Grid	2,143,000	90%	1,948,000	99%	195,000	46%
Off Gas Grid	244,000	10%	15,000	1%	228,000	54%
Total	2,386,000	100%	1,963,000	100%	423,000	100%
Sample Size		2,787		2,169		618

Table Source: SHCS 2012

Energy Efficiency

'Energy inefficient homes' are defined as those where an energy audit identifies that the dwelling has a Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) score of 54 or less.' – The Scottish Government, Home Energy Efficiency Programme 2013.

For the first time in 2012, over half of all surveyed reported monitoring their energy use either fairly closely or very closely; this marked a statistically significant increase since 2011, and those that don't monitor their energy use fell to twenty-two percent from thirty-one percent in 2008. There has also been a consistent increase in the use of energy monitoring devices in dwellings from two percent in 2008 to eight percent in 2012.

In 2012, eighty-eight percent of lofts across all sectors had loft insulation of at least 100mm, an increase of six percent since 2010, with the majority of improvements coming from the private sector where insulation of 100mm or more increased to eighty-seven percent; this is likely due to the fact that the social sector already has a higher proportion of better insulated lofts because of the SHQS introduced in 2004 which requires those properties to have at least 100mm of loft insulation by 2015, so a lot of the necessary work in the social sector has already been undertaken. Only forty-eight percent of pre-1983 social sector dwellings remain untreated compared with sixty-eight percent in the private sector. Although the thickness of loft insulation has increased significantly since 2003/04 (fifty-four percent with 200mm or more compared with fourteen percent), there are still an estimated twelve percent of lofts that would benefit from top-up and

retrofit measures. From 2003/04, the number of dwellings with no insulation has fallen from six percent to under two percent in 2012; the slow decline has been attributed to barriers preventing the installation of insulation.

Wall insulation is broken up into two categories, cavity walls and solid/other construction types, which represent three quarters and one quarter of external walls respectively. The latter may be classed as 'hard to treat' because of the inability to install low-cost cavity wall insulation in these wall types. Over the last 5 years, the proportion of insulated cavity walls has increased from fifty-six percent to sixty-six percent and can largely be attributed to the installation of lower cost cavity wall insulation (CWI); although the survey team have noted that the number of CWIs has likely been underestimated due to factors such as contractors getting better at disguising injection holes. The proportion of solid wall dwellings with insulation has remained constant at around eleven percent, although this is to be expected with the difficulty and high costs associated with this type of insulation. The table below shows the percentages of insulated and non-insulated cavity and solid walls and the cumulative totals from 2008 to 2012.

	2008		2009		2010		2011		2012	
	000s	%	000s	%	000s	%	000s	%	000s	%
Cavity walls										
Not insulated	766	44%	732	42%	671	38%	600	34%	606	34%
Insulated	967	56%	1,015	58%	1,076	62%	1,154	66%	1,157	66%
Total	1,733	100%	1,747	100%	1,747	100%	1,754	100%	1,763	100%
Solid/Other walls										
Not insulated	541	91%	540	90%	542	89%	546	89%	557	89%
Insulated	56	9%	57	10%	68	11%	68	11%	66	11%
Total	597	100%	597	100%	611	100%	614	100%	623	100%
Cumulative totals										
Reduction in uninsulated cavity walls since 2007 (SHCS)	50,000		84,000		145,000		216,000		210,000	
Recorded CERT CQI installations	39,546		86,043		129,507		178,397		218,110	

Table Source: SHCS 2012

Across the social and private stock, SHQS compliance has improved by five percent, reducing the rate of failure to fifty-four percent with the highest rate of failure remaining in the energy efficiency criterion where forty-one percent of all dwellings have failed. There has been no significant change in the level of over-crowding since 2011, with around three percent currently living in overcrowded accommodation. In contrast to this, there was a small, statistically significant two percent reduction in under-occupancy to thirty percent in 2012. In the last two years, there has been a significant drop in the average CO2 emissions per dwelling per year from 5.6 tonnes in 2010 to 5.4 tonnes in 2012, with pre-1919 properties emitting a higher mean figure of 7.6 tonnes due to the difficulty of heating homes with little or no insulation.

It was highlighted by the survey that thirty-four percent of dwellings had a SAP rating of over 70, which represents a seven percent increase from 2011 and an eleven percent increase since 2010, while the proportion of dwellings with a rating of 40 or less has remained constant at around five percent over the last three years. Dwellings with a good Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) Rating (B and C) has increased to forty-four percent in 2012 from sixteen percent in 2007 while moderately rated dwellings (D and E) have decreased in tandem from seventy-six percent in 2007 to fifty-one percent in 2012. Poorly rated properties (F and G) have seen little improvement since

2010. The percentage of dwellings with a good National Home Energy Rating (NHER) score (7 or higher) has increased to sixty-nine percent in 2012 from sixty-two percent in 2010, with the most common NHER rating being 8, with a mean of 7.1 and a median of 8. Households with a poor NHER rating (2 and lower) has remained constant at three percent since 2008.

When combined, these results suggest that dwellings with moderate ratings in both surveys have benefitted the most from the installation of energy efficiency measures. There has been little change in the least energy efficient dwellings in the last several years; this has been attributed to the limited scope for low cost energy efficient measures in those dwellings and suggests additional barriers are preventing these homes from becoming energy efficient (e.g. hard to treat cavity walls in detached and semi-detached dwellings with greater exposed surfaces).

Fuel poverty

'Fuel poverty is the result of the interplay between income, fuel price and energy efficiency. It is related to but distinct from poverty in that, while low income is an important driver, it is not a prerequisite. Fuel poverty also considers the condition of the home and the costs of heating, hot water, cooking, lighting and appliances'– Scottish Fuel Poverty Statement.

Under the 2001 Housing (Scotland) Act (section 88), the Scottish Government is committed to eradicating fuel poverty as far as practically possible by November 2016. The Scottish Government's current definition of fuel poverty is when a household would be required to spend more than ten percent of its income on all household fuel use; extreme fuel poverty is defined as a household spending twenty percent of its income. The table below shows fuel poverty and extreme fuel poverty statistics dating back to 2003/4.

Year	Fuel Poverty		Extreme Fuel Poverty	
	000s	%	000s	%
2012	647	27.1%	170	7.1%
Oct-11	721	30.5%	190	8.0%
Jul-11	611	25.8%	161	6.8%
2010	686	29.1%	192	8.1%
2009	805	34.3%	244	10.4%
2008	634	27.2%	191	8.2%
2007	613	26.5%	176	7.6%
2005/6	571	24.7%	179	7.7%
2004/5	436	18.9%	125	5.4%
2003/4	352	16.0%	115	5.1%

Table Source: SHCS 2012

The overall statistics when compared with those from October 2011 show that fuel poverty has fallen from 30.5% to 27.1%; this means that approximately 74,000 are no longer considered fuel poor under the current definition of the term. This has been attributed to improved energy efficiency contributing two-thirds and increases in household income contributing the remaining third. Around 170,000 households (7.1%) were living in extreme fuel poverty, and this level has changed very little since October 2011.

While in previous year's properties such as detached houses had the highest levels of fuel poverty followed by semis, terraces, then tenements, there has been a significant reduction in fuel poverty among these properties; semis and terraces are now in line with tenements in fuel poverty terms at a rate of twenty-six percent fuel poor.

There was a significant reduction in fuel poverty in 1965-1982 buildings between 2011 and 2012, down twelve percent to a rate of twenty-six percent; although, it is important to note that this was largely concentrated in dwellings on the gas grid. Off grid properties saw an increase of four percent to fifty-two percent.

Condition of Scottish Housing Stock

In 2012, dwellings without any disrepair rose two percent to nineteen percent. Over the same period, there was a significant fall in dwellings with extensive disrepair from twenty-six percent in 2011 to eighteen percent in 2012. This is the lowest recorded level of extensive disrepair since 2003/4, likely due to the requirement for social housing to meet the SHQS by 2015 with a twenty percent disrepair threshold for certain building elements. The SHQS compliance figure rose five percent to a forty-six percent pass rate across the housing stock; however the rates for social housing stock have not improved since 2011. There has been no significant change to the proportion of dwellings falling below the tolerable standard. The table below shows the changes in basic and extensive repair divided by tenures and sectors.

		Basic Disrepair			Any Extensive Disrepair		
		2011	2012	Change	2011	2012	Change
Tenure	Owner-occupier	79%	77%	-2%	22%	16%	-6%
	LA/other public	90%	90%	0%	33%	23%	-10%
	HA/co-op	83%	77%	-6%	26%	12%	-14%
	Private rented	89%	89%	0%	37%	26%	-12%
	Not known	86%	85%	-1%	35%	29%	-6%
Sector	Private	81%	79%	-2%	25%	18%	-7%
	Social	87%	85%	-2%	30%	19%	-11%
Scotland Total		83%	81%	-2%	26%	18%	-8%

Note: "Not known" tenures are those who reported living rent free. These could not be assigned a tenure group in 2012. Table Source: SHCS 2012

There has been no real change in the last three years of penetrating damp in the housing stock (3.6% - around 86,000 dwellings), and levels of rising damp are very low (0.3% - around 7,000 dwellings). Levels of condensation have been rising gradually from 7.6% in 2005/6 to 11.3% in 2012, however these figures cover anything from a small damp patch upwards so this rise does not necessarily indicate a serious housing quality issue.

3.0 Comment and Conclusion

APSE recognises that while this report highlights a lot of incremental improvements in Scotland's housing stock, for the past several years, homes with the lowest energy efficiency ratings have stayed constant and seen little improvement since 2010. Any improvement in Scotland's overall NHER score can mainly be attributed to upgrades of moderately rated dwellings rather than upgrades across all levels, so it is arguable that what appears to be incremental improvements in energy efficiency and other indicators do not provide an accurate picture of the condition of Scotland's diverse housing stock. In respect of emissions and fuel poverty, the number of off-grid homes remains a concern.

A fifth of Scotland's homes were build pre-1919, and have a mean SAP rating of 56.4, only a mere 2.4 points above being considered energy inefficient by the Scottish Government and produce an additional 3.4 tonnes per year compared with post-1982 dwellings. While the process of retrofitting difficult to insulate properties may not seem cost-effective at first, many of these properties will potentially be occupied for the next 50 years and action is becoming unavoidable if the Government wishes to meet its plethora of targets in fuel poverty, carbon emissions, the SHQS and other related areas over the next decade; APSE recognises that immediate action would provide the largest benefits for tenants and the environment; Falkirk Council have maximised

home energy funding to help meet the Council's corporate plan which includes addressing fuel poverty.

There has also been encouraging progress from several of APSE's other membership authorities such as Fife Council's delivery plan for 2,700 affordable homes by May 2017 and their carbon reduction strategy which goes beyond 2011's building regulations through innovations such as the use of energy monitoring systems, breathable wall systems and solar thermal roof panels; Midlothian Council recently took first place in the Scottish National Renewables League 2012/13 category for heat pumps and solar photovoltaic panels for using solar panels on their latest affordable housing developments as part of an ongoing house building strategy which is currently in its second phase. APSE is pleased that innovation is driving up the quality of house building in Scotland and that local authorities are taking steps to future-proof new housing stock by going above and beyond the latest building regulations. APSE hopes that this rejuvenation of affordable house building in Scotland will continue and will help to eliminate the kinds of problems found in pre-1919 dwellings in the future.

APSE Energy has been set up to form an effective collaboration of a large number of local authorities to enable and facilitate the municipalisation of energy services. By this APSE means the public and community, as well as private, ownership and managerial control of local energy generation, distribution networks and delivery of energy efficiency works. For more information on APSE Energy and how it could potentially support large scale retrofit works and more please contact Mark Bramah at Mbramah@apse.org.uk or visit the APSE Energy page by clicking [here](#)

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