



# English Housing Survey Dissemination Strategy

Your chance to have your say





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## Introduction

1. This note sets out preliminary proposals for the release of information from the new English Housing Survey launched in April 2008 which brought together the two former surveys – the Survey of English Housing (SEH) and the English House Condition Survey (EHCS).
2. Users' views are invited by **December 2nd**. Please respond using the separate response sheet and e-mail to Homa Ahmad:

**[Homa.Ahmad@communities.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Homa.Ahmad@communities.gsi.gov.uk)**

## Background

3. Both the SEH and EHCS are long standing and well regarded surveys with a large body of users covering a wide range of interests inside and outside government. An important aim of the dissemination strategy for the new survey will be to maintain continuity for existing users while introducing improvements to capitalise on the potential offered by the new integrated survey.
4. The English Housing Survey brings together the methodology for the two former surveys and comprises:
  - An interview with approximately 17,000 households a year. This is referred to as the 'full interview sample' and equates to the sample of the former SEH and will be analysed on a single financial year basis.
  - A follow up physical inspection of 8,000 of these respondents' homes to assess the condition and energy performance of the property. An independent market valuation is also undertaken. This is referred to as the 'paired sample' and equates to the sample of the former EHCS and will be analysed on a rolling two-year basis.
5. First results from the 2008/09 EHS are expected to become available Jan/Feb 2010. A range of outputs are proposed based on the two main samples above. These include:
  - Annual headline report
  - Annual report on changing housing trends and circumstances
  - Annual report on changing condition and energy characteristics of the housing stock
  - Annual technical report
  - Supporting tables on the web

- Publicly available data sets
- Information and advice service.

Each of these is outlined briefly below and in the table at Appendix 1.

## Annual headline report

6. This short report would present preliminary headline findings including key indicators related to Departmental Strategic Objectives covered by the survey, at national level from both the full and paired samples focusing on key trends in tenure, household composition, overcrowding and any topical housing issues such as housing costs. The report would also provide an update on the changing condition and energy performance of the stock by housing sector.
7. This would be a web only publication normally available to download Jan/Feb each year starting in 2010.

## Annual household report

8. Available in the summer/autumn each year this report would follow the pattern of previous SEH *Housing in England* reports and be based on the full interview sample only.

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housingresearch/housingsurveys/surveyofenglishhousing/sehpublications>)

It would present comprehensive analysis of housing trends across each of the sectors and for different household groups including changing tenure patterns, over crowding and under occupation, second homes, rents and mortgages. Both national and regional level findings would be presented where possible.

9. Changes to the questionnaire content will mean the coverage of the report will not exactly replicate that of former SEH reports. New topics will also be introduced on a rolling basis reflecting changing policy interests. Users' views on structure and content would be welcomed.
10. The report would be available to download from the web site. Limited hard copies will also be printed, and available at the launch event. The report would include an overview of the survey methodology with guidance about sampling errors and a glossary of terms.

## Annual housing stock report

11. Also available in the summer/autumn each year, this report would broadly follow the pattern of former EHCS reports and be based on the rolling two year sample of paired cases ie where a physical inspection has been undertaken. The first results presented for '2008' would cover the fieldwork period April 2007 to March 2009 and would bring together data collected in the final year of the EHCS and the first year of the EHS. Following this transition year all data will come from the EHS paired sample.
12. The structure and focus of these reports is still under discussion and users' views would be welcomed to help shape the way forward. The overarching focus is expected to remain on housing conditions and energy performance but with other topics introduced each year to reflect emerging policy priorities. The 2007 report just published illustrates one approach to this, but other options (such as separate topic reports) could be considered.  
  
[www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housingresearch/housingsurveys/englishhousecondition/ehcsreports](http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housingresearch/housingsurveys/englishhousecondition/ehcsreports)
13. Again changes to the interview survey content may mean not all topics from former EHCS reports can be covered in full but the overall level of continuity with the former EHCS will be high. In 2008 we will for the first time be able to report on the energy performance of the housing stock using the approach employed for the Energy Performance Certificate (RDSap or Reduced Data Standard Assessment Procedure). In practice there should be little difference in findings based on this approach compared with the traditional approach used in the EHCS but the latter will also remain available for comparability and to assess long term trends.
14. The report would be available to download from the web site. Limited hard copies will also be printed and be available at the launch event. The report would include an overview of the survey methodology with guidance about sampling errors and a glossary of terms.

## Launch event

15. We plan to host an annual public seminar or workshop to present the findings of these two annual publications.

## Technical report

16. A detailed Technical Report is proposed to be released in conjunction with the first round of annual reports in autumn 2010. This would set out the detailed methodology of the new survey including the sampling and weighting strategy, how this differs from that used in the former surveys and its impact on results. Information will be provided on sampling and other sources of error so that users can derive confidence intervals for any given measure.
17. Information will also be provided on how the key derived measures used for analysis are created and any significant changes to the way these have been computed as a result of either a change in the data collected or to the approach to modelling.
18. In subsequent years a brief update will be provided if there have been any significant changes to survey methodology which cannot be covered within the reports themselves.

## Web tables

19. Currently both the SEH and EHCS present additional information via a large number of supporting tables on the CLG website.

[www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housingresearch/housingsurveys/englishhousecondition/ehcsdatasupporting/ehcsstandardtables/](http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housingresearch/housingsurveys/englishhousecondition/ehcsdatasupporting/ehcsstandardtables/)

[www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housingresearch/housingsurveys/surveyofenglishhousing/sehlivetable/](http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housingresearch/housingsurveys/surveyofenglishhousing/sehlivetable/)

20. Under the EHS it is proposed to:

- Review the content of the web tables and continue those from both former surveys where consistent data is being collected and there is an on-going demand
- Where there has been a minor change to survey content or methodology the tables affected will be flagged with a 'health warning' to inform users of possible discontinuities

- Begin new supporting tables where a change to the survey content means a former SEH or EHCS table cannot be reliably continued
  - Introduce new tables as normal to reflect the changing content of the reports.
21. The tables will be posted as early as possible each year after the publication of the main annual reports.
22. A limited range of EHS tables will also be included as part of the Annual Housing Statistics publication – and will appear in the Housing Statistics web tables.

## Public datasets

23. We will continue to release both the ‘full interview sample’ and ‘paired sample’ datasets via the UK Data Archive (UKDA) and to encourage secondary analysis. They will be anonymised SPSS datasets with full user technical documentation. All data sets will include grossing weights that users must apply to the data to generate nationally representative results. Any potentially disclosive information will have been removed and only regional level geographic identifiers included.
24. The ‘full interview sample’ dataset data will be released on a single financial year basis and be deposited at the UKDA shortly after the annual publication each year.
25. The ‘paired sample data will continue to be released as a 2 year rolling sample. We would expect to have the combined ‘2008’ dataset available together with the fuel poverty data by summer/autumn 2010 to coincide with the annual publication. Variable naming has been retained from former EHCS/SEH variables where there has been no significant change to the data collected.
26. Any feedback from current users of our UKDA data sets would be welcomed so that we can take this on board in preparing the release of the EHS data.
27. Currently a complete EHCS data set (SPSS format) together with historical data is also available on CD directly from CLG. CLG will also soon be releasing (via the UKDA) a data set for the 15 years of the SEH from 1993 to 2008. We are currently considering whether to continue this service and users’ views would be welcomed. Would the provision of a single CD each year containing archive SEH and EHCS data sets together with ongoing EHS data sets be a useful output for users?
28. We also plan to deposit the EHS data sets complete with detailed geographic identifiers via the ONS Virtual Microdata Laboratory or a similar facility offered at the UKDA. The VML gives researchers access to sensitive information in a secure environment so that confidentiality requirements are met. The disclosive EHS data set would only be available to approved researchers who have agreed to abide by strict



disclosure control principles. Users' views on the value of access to this data would be welcomed, including the possibility of data linking.

## Information and advice service

29. At present users of the EHCS - other than those within or working for central government - requiring bespoke analysis are referred to the Building Research Establishment who offer a tabulation service on a cost recovery basis. For SEH users, by contrast, a wider range of requests are able to be handled within CLG.
30. The Department has limited resources available to undertake survey analysis for third parties, and is no longer able to provide tabulations beyond that contained in the published reports. We are therefore considering establishing a new Information and Advice Service (IAS) to make EHS results more accessible by providing a single point of access for user requests, together with expert advice. The main aim of the service would be to promote use of the EHS through provision of information, advice and support. This could include a tabulation service, and support for the user community. We would welcome views as to the importance of such a facility, which services should be offered, and what you consider ought to be its priorities.

## Building the user community

31. CLG wish to expand the number of active users of the English Housing Survey and its forerunners, and in particular encourage greater use of EHS data in research and teaching. In addition to establishing an Information and Advice Service, we are considering hosting a regular EHS workshop/conference at which academic research would be presented, and establishing a small grants fund targeted mainly at PhD students and post-doctoral fellows. Other options to consider might include using the UKDA Economic and Social Data Service to support EHS users or setting up training sessions for prospective EHS users. We would welcome views on these proposals, and suggestions for other ways in which we might build the user community.

**Housing Analysis and Surveys Division**  
Communities and Local Government  
November 2009



## English Housing Survey – Dissemination strategy summary

Product	Date available	Sample*	Geography	Media	Content	Any Comments?
Headline Report	Jan/Feb 2010 and annually thereafter	Full interview and paired sample	National	Web based only	Key findings on housing tenure, household composition, stock condition and energy performance	Comments sought on structure and content.
Annual Household Report	Summer 2010 and annually thereafter	Full interview sample	National with some regional	Web report and hard copy to purchase	Similar to current SEH reports. comprehensive analysis of housing trends across each of the sectors and for different household Both national and regional level findings would be presented where possible.	Comments sought on structure and content.  Are annual reports seen as essential?
Annual housing stock and energy performance report	Summer 2010 and annually thereafter	Paired sample	National with some regional groups	Web report and hard copy to purchase	Similar to 2007 EHCS reports. Focus on wide ranging aspects of stock condition and energy performance.	Comments sought on structure and content  Are annual reports seen as essential?
Technical Report	Autumn 2010 with annual updates	All	n/a	Web based only	A report on survey methodology covering sampling and weighting strategy, data collection and validation; creation of derived measures and data quality.	



Web Tables	Summer 2010 and annually thereafter	All	National.  Some regional	Web based only	Maintaining existing SEH and EHCS time series where possible. Possible minor discontinuities to be flagged. New tables introduced to reflect new report content	
Public dataset	Summer/Autumn 2010 and annually thereafter	All	National with GOR identifiers	Electronic SPSS data base	Anonymised data set released via the UKDA with user documentation.  Disclosive data set available to approved researchers through the Virtual Microdata Laboratory	Would a single CD containing archive SEH and EHCS plus new EHS data sets be useful output?  VML access valuable to your work?
Information and Advice Service	Ongoing	All	All	Dedicated website	To be determined, but likely to include tabulation service, FAQ other direct support for users, online bibliography of research	How else can we develop the user community? UKDA ESDS service? Bespoke training to support EHS users?

**\*sample**

‘Full interview sample’ is the sample of 17k households interviewed each year. Data set is analysed on a single financial year basis.

‘Paired sample’ is the sample of households where both an interview and an inspection of the property is completed. There are approximately 8k paired cases completed each FY and the sample is analysed on a rolling 2-year basis. ie information for the period April 2007 to March 2009 will be reported on together and presented as ‘2008’ findings.