
Chapter 3

Fieldwork

Fieldwork for the 2013-14 English Housing Survey (EHS) was managed on behalf of the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) by NatCen Social Research. There are two parts to the EHS: the interview survey and the physical survey. All interviews were carried out by trained NatCen Social Research interviewers; the surveys by professional surveyors employed by CADS Housing Surveys. This chapter provides further details of fieldwork procedures, including interviewer and surveyor training.

Overview

- 3.1 The 2013-14 survey was conducted by a consortium led by NatCen Social Research. The consortium included CADS Housing Surveys who employ a large field force of professional surveyors to undertake the visual inspection of properties, and Building Research Establishment (BRE) who are responsible for developing the physical survey questionnaire and surveyor training manuals and delivering the surveyor training sessions.

Fieldwork period

- 3.2 Fieldwork for the survey commences in April each year and is spread over the year, in eight batches (or waves) with two waves of fieldwork per quarter. In each wave, interviewers are given six weeks in which to complete their quotas of work. Surveyor fieldwork is the last two weeks of the interview fieldwork period plus a week beyond the end of interviewer fieldwork date.

3.3 Fieldwork dates for 2013-14 were as follows¹:

	Interviewer		Surveyor	
	Start	Finish	Start	Finish
Quarter 1				
Wave 1	01/04/2013	19/05/2013	04/05/2013	26/05/2013
Wave 2	06/05/2013	16/06/2013	01/06/2013	23/06/2013
Quarter 2				
Wave 1	24/06/2013	04/08/2013	20/07/2013	11/08/2013
Wave 2	22/07/2013	01/09/2013	17/08/2013	08/09/2013
Quarter 3				
Wave 1	16/09/2013	27/10/2013	12/10/2013	03/11/2013
Wave 2	14/10/2013	24/11/2013	09/11/2013	01/12/2013
Quarter 4				
Wave 1	06/01/2014	16/02/2014	01/02/2014	23/02/2014
Wave 2	03/02/2014	16/03/2014	01/03/2014	23/03/2014

Training and project briefings

Interviewers

3.4 Interviewers working on the EHS are drawn from the NatCen Social Research pool of interviewers. Prior to starting work at NatCen, all interviewers receive three days of intensive training, which includes training in computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI) and workshops on doorstep technique. After this, interviewers are supervised for up to three days in the field. Interviewers are also encouraged to 'shadow' more experienced colleagues as a method to learn from others and to share experiences.

3.5 Before starting work on the EHS, all interviewers are required to complete a briefing on the survey. In 2013-14, there were three types of briefing:

- Interviewers who had not previously worked on the project were required to attend a one day face-to-face briefing. In total, 121 interviewers were briefed at eight such briefings. These briefings covered:
 - purpose of the study
 - how the study data are used
 - previous EHS findings

¹ A small number of cases were released early (8th April) to interviewers in order to check the systems were working.

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- study procedures including making contact with respondents as well as the identification and selection of dwellings and households, including houses in multiple occupation (HMOs)
 - how to motivate respondents to take part
 - survey documents
 - booking appointments for the physical surveyor visit
 - various exercises to test their understanding of the EHS
 - (for less experienced interviewers) going through a dummy interview
- Interviewers who had previously worked on the survey and who had achieved fewer than 10 productive interviews, or less than 90% of the predicted target for their area, were required to attend a shorter face-to-face briefing. Five such face-to-face refresher briefings took place in 2013-14, and 116 interviewers attended these. The refresher briefings covered uses of the EHS data, best practice for how to deal with respondents on the doorstep, the changes in procedures for 2013-14 fieldwork and how to make contact with the surveyors. These briefings were interactive and gave the interviewers a chance to discuss fieldwork with interviewers who had performed well in the previous year.
 - Interviewers who had previously worked on the survey and who achieved 90% or more of the predicted target for their area did not attend a briefing but, instead, were sent documents so they could brief themselves. A total of 121 interviewers were briefed in this way. This self-briefing focused on the changes that had been made to the survey for 2013-14 and the important protocols for the survey.
- 3.6 The briefings were run by NatCen Social Research and attended, where possible, by members of the EHS Team from DCLG and CADS Housing Surveys.
- 3.7 In advance of the face-to-face briefings, interviewers were required to undertake a pre-briefing exercise. This involved reading the project instructions and completing a questionnaire covering the main survey procedures. The completed exercises were marked after the briefings.

Surveyors

- 3.8 EHS surveyors are employed by CADS Housing Surveys and trained by BRE on the technical content of the survey. Surveyors working on the EHS come from a range of professional backgrounds with approximately half being qualified Environmental Health Officers and the remaining from a variety of professional groups including architects and building surveyors.

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- 3.9 There is a limited amount of turnover of surveyors each year. In 2013-14, 158 surveyors (including Regional Managers) worked on the EHS, including 147 surveyors who had worked on the survey previously and seven new recruits.
- 3.10 Surveyors new to the EHS receive a five-day residential briefing. The rigorous residential training involves both desk-based and practical sessions and is designed to enable surveyors to adopt a standard approach to the assessment and reporting of the condition of the dwellings they will be inspecting.
- 3.11 In advance of their training, all new surveyors are issued with an EHS technical manual, written by BRE, which sets out key definitions and provides guidance on correct completion of the survey form. New surveyors also received a set of worked examples on the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). The worked examples are made up of model answers from DCLG and scenarios based on test properties used in previous EHCS/EHS briefing years. Used primarily for benchmarking purposes, those scenarios are intended solely to aid the completion of the HHSRS within the EHS form.
- 3.12 The new surveyors for the 2013-14 survey year received a five-day briefing on all areas of the physical survey, the substantive topics covered in the physical survey briefing are listed below.
- survey procedure and administration
 - digital pen methodology for surveying
 - survey validation procedures
 - amenities
 - services, heating and energy
 - construction
 - measurement
 - exterior and plot
 - ageing elements
 - external defects
 - structural faults
 - Housing Health and Safety Rating System
 - pests
 - drains
 - common parts
 - shared facilities
 - flat construction and faults, and
 - area and environment
- 3.13 Five of the seven new surveyors also attended an additional briefing session in order to introduce them to the principles of the HHSRS. The remaining two did not require additional briefing because they have previous experience of

the system. The full briefing programmes for 2013-14 new surveyor briefing can be found at Annex 3.1.

- 3.14 As soon as possible after training, Regional Managers arranged accompanied visits with their new surveyors to check on the competence of those surveyors and to answer any practical questions surveyors might have.
- 3.15 Each year, surveyors who have worked on the EHS previously receive a one-day refresher briefing, supplemented by distance learning modules. The modules and subsequent quizzes were completed by the surveyors at home prior to attending the briefing and the results fed back to them during a dedicated training session. All the 147 surveyors and four Regional Managers who had previously worked on the survey attended one of the refresher briefings.
- 3.16 The 2013-14 refresher briefing was designed to:
- introduce and explain the changes made to the EHS form
 - explain about estimating heat losses through walls
 - explain how the data the surveyors collect is used to produce SAP, fuel poverty figures and carbon emissions
 - refresh surveyors on the EHS decision rules
 - cover key survey procedures and reminders including the physical survey appointment booking process used by the NatCen interviewers to schedule their visits.

Making contact with respondents

Letters announcing the interviewer's visit

- 3.17 All addresses sampled for the EHS received a letter, in advance of the interviewer's first visit, explaining the purpose of the study and stating that an interviewer will be visiting shortly. The letter also included details of how the address had been selected and gave reassurances about confidentiality by stating:

We will treat information you give in the strictest confidence under the Data Protection Act 1998. The results collected are used for research purposes only and no one looking at the findings will be able to identify you in any way. Your information will be used by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), and their counterparts in the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC), for the production of statistics only.

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- 3.18 These letters were sent out centrally by NatCen Social Research (i.e. not by the interviewers). The interviewers carry laminated copies of the letters with them to aid respondents' recall of the advance letter on the doorstep. A copy of the advance letter is available at Annex 3.2.

Leaflets

- 3.19 Respondents were also sent a leaflet about the study with their advance letter. This provided additional information about the survey including examples of how previous EHS data have been used. It also addressed potential concerns about data protection, provided contact details for NatCen Social Research and web addresses for DCLG and NatCen Social Research.
- 3.20 In 2013-14, as in the previous year, there were three different versions of the leaflet, one targeted at owner occupiers, one at private renters and the third at social renters. Each version included pictures and study findings which were considered to be particularly relevant for that tenure group.
- 3.21 Households selected for a physical survey were also given a leaflet describing the purpose of the surveyor's visit and what to expect from the physical inspection. These leaflets are updated annually. Copies of the 2013-14 interviewer and physical survey leaflets are available at Annex 3.3.

Interview survey data collection

- 3.22 Prior to seeking an interview with a respondent at a sampled address, the interviewer undertakes a series of contact procedures using the EHS 'doorstep form'. These include:
- Collecting 'first impression' data from the sampled address to be used in non-response analysis.
 - Identifying the sampled dwelling. A dwelling is defined as a unit of accommodation where all the rooms and amenities are for the exclusive use of the household(s) occupying them.
 - In cases where there was more than one dwelling at the sampled address, for example, if a house has been split into two self-contained flats, randomly selecting a dwelling at the sampled address for the interview.
 - Identifying the households living at the dwelling and, in cases where a dwelling contains more than one households, randomly selecting a household for interview
 - Collecting information from neighbours about addresses that are vacant or where the interviewer has been unable to make contact with the occupants.

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- 3.23 Properties that were vacant at the time of the interviewer's first call were then passed to CADS Housing Surveys to approach for a physical survey. These are sub-sampled on the same basis as occupied dwellings based on the last known tenure of the property.

Interviewing non-English speakers

- 3.24 NatCen employs some interviewers who can conduct the interview in a language other than English. However this is not always possible and interviewers tend to rely on household interpreters to complete interviews with non-English speakers. Household interpreters must be aged 13 or over and willing to translate on behalf of the interviewer. None of the survey documents are translated.
- 3.25 In 2013-14, 12 interviews were carried out by a NatCen interviewer in a language other than English; 24 interviews were undertaken using a family or friend of the respondent as an interpreter.

Maximising response

- 3.26 In 2013-14, interviews were achieved for 13,306 households. This represents 60% of sampled addresses eligible for interview and is in line with the target response rate. Interviewers used a number of procedures to maximise response rates.
- 3.27 Interviewers were encouraged to make a minimum of nine calls at each address before classifying the address as a non-contact. These calls had to be at different times of the day and spread across the fieldwork period. At least two of these calls needed to be in the evening from Monday to Thursday and two had to be at the weekend.
- 3.28 In an attempt to maximise response, some survey agencies have procedures to reissue/reassign addresses that have not yielded a productive interview to another interviewer to attempt. EHS addresses are not generally reissued because doing so would delay the completion of the interview survey component and would reduce the amount of time the physical surveyors have to complete the fieldwork of the physical surveys. Instead of reissuing unproductive addresses, interviewers are required to make a comparatively high number of calls at each address to contact the occupants and attempt to secure an interview.
- 3.29 All participating households were given a £10 gift card at the end of the interview as a token of appreciation. A new visual aid was produced for interviewers in 2013-14 to show respondents some examples of how the EHS data is used. This was designed to be used by interviewers on the doorstep to encourage respondents to take part.

Surveyor appointments

- 3.30 Interviewers were also responsible for gaining consent from those households eligible for the physical survey. The approach to making appointments is kept under close review in order to maximise the consent rate. Information about the appointment times/preferences is transferred from NatCen Social Research to a secure CADS Housing Surveys website and CADS Helpline staff assist in changing and confirming arrangements between the surveyors and respondents for the physical inspection.
- 3.31 Interviewers were asked to make a firm, timed appointment wherever possible using information about the surveyor's availability. The interviewers were provided with a list of dates and 59-minute 'slots' when their surveyor had indicated they were available. This information was built into the CAPI interview programme. Surveyors were also able to provide daily notes about each of their available days and overarching notes about their general availability and preferences for working. Those notes were also displayed on the interviewers' laptop.
- 3.32 The surveyor's availability was updated each night during the fieldwork period. Interviewers obtained current availability, plus details of any existing appointments allocated to their surveyor, each time they connected with NatCen Social Research's servers, which they were instructed to do before starting work and when finishing work each day.
- 3.33 Interviewers and surveyors were encouraged to speak to each other before interviewer fieldwork commenced to discuss any issues there may be on availability and booking appointments for the physical survey. Interviewers and surveyors were also provided with reciprocal contact details so that they could discuss work patterns and scheduling preferences if necessary.
- 3.34 As part of their training, interviewers were briefed on how to explain the physical survey to respondents and arrange the appointment for the surveyor to visit. Interviewer training included:
- the surveyor fieldwork periods
 - transfer of information about appointments between CADS and NatCen
 - how to make appointments and what to take into account when making them
 - how to gain agreement from respondents for the physical survey
 - a practice of the booking appointment section of the CAPI

Interview survey data collection

- 3.35 The content of the interview survey is reviewed annually (see Chapter 2 for more detail). NatCen and DCLG thoroughly check all new and revised questions in the CAPI programme before the beginning of fieldwork, including:
- question and answer texts
 - all routing alternatives
 - textfills inserted into the CAPI programme to customise the questions
 - checks built into the CAPI programme to improve the accuracy of data collected during the interview
- 3.36 The data for the first wave are also checked to ensure that the new/revised questions are working properly.
- 3.37 The data collection process for the interview survey is as follows:
- interviewers conduct a computer-assisted personal interview (CAPI) with the household reference person (HRP) or their partner using a laptop
 - interviewers upload the survey data to NatCen
 - interviews are checked and edited where necessary by a team of editors. For example, if an interviewer writes an electronic note using the CAPI programme saying they are unsure how many bedrooms there are, the editor will look at the note and check it against the criteria for bedrooms and correct the answer if it is wrong.
- 3.38 As part of the interview, private rented sector tenants are asked for permission to contact their landlord and to provide their landlord contact details. Those cases where this permission is given, and contacts can be successfully traced, form the sample for the EHS Private Landlord Survey (PLS). This survey with landlords and agents collects information on the size and composition of different groups of landlords, their property portfolio, why they are involved in renting, how they approach the maintenance and management of their properties, their future plans and their views on a range of issues within the private sector market.
- 3.39 The PLS was last conducted in 2010 based on landlord contact details collected in 2007-08 (in the EHCS) and in 2008-09 (in the EHS). Results were published on the DCLG website in 2011². Data are available for download from the UK Data Archive. A PLS was not conducted in 2013-14, although

² www.gov.uk/government/publications/private-landlords-survey-2010

information on landlords was still collected to enable a PLS to be conducted at some point in the future.

Physical survey data collection

3.40 The data collection process for the physical survey is as follows:

- Surveyors conduct the survey using a paper form designed to be used with a digital pen. They also take photographs of the outside of the property using a digital camera.
- The paper form features a series of small black dots arranged in a special non-repeating pattern (the Anoto pattern) which can be read by a digital pen which features an inbuilt digital camera. Every page has a unique Anoto pattern. As the pattern on each page is unique and non-repeating, the camera in the pen can determine the page the pen is on as well as the exact position of the pen as it writes across each page. During a survey the digital pen's inbuilt camera collects data by recording the position of the pen, captures and stores digital snapshots of the pen marks across the Anoto pattern.
- After the survey, surveyors upload the survey data to a dedicated website which displays the data as a facsimile of each page for the surveyor to check and correct electronically. An extensive series of validation checks on range, plausibility and consistency have been developed which enable surveyors to validate their own survey before submitting it to their regional manager.
- Photographs of the properties surveyed are added to the website.
- Corrected data are submitted to their regional manager for final checking and, if necessary, returned to the surveyor for correction or clarification via the website.
- The checked data are forwarded to BRE by regional managers for consolidation with the EHS results.
- An additional stage of checking was introduced for 2013-14 whereby all forms that would have previously been submitted to BRE with one or more 'error' messages were filtered and subjected to further checks by the CADS Survey Director. The aim of these additional checks was to reduce the numbers of forms being passed to BRE with errors. As a result of these checks, only 8 completed full surveys retained legitimate system errors when passed to BRE for further data validation and acceptance testing. More information on data validation can be found in section 5.4 of Chapter 5 'Data Processing'.

3.41 The subjective nature of some assessments required for the physical survey means that a degree of variability is inevitable between surveyors in some of

their judgements. To minimise the impact that any one surveyor can have on the results of any one area or type of property an annual upper target of 65 is set on the number of surveys any one surveyor can complete. An additional restriction is set relating to work within any one region, such that no one surveyor should complete more than 45 full surveys in any region (a limit of 36 exists for the North East as less physical surveys are conducted in this area compared with other regions). These rules contribute to improving the statistical reliability of the survey and providing more robust measures of housing condition below the national level. In 2013-14, 90.5% of surveyors did not exceed any Regional target and no surveyors exceeded the annual upper target of 65 full surveys.

- 3.42 Although not used in 2013-14, a calibration exercise was used in previous years to detect any variability that arises from surveyors making different judgements given the same information. The next scheduled calibration exercise is due to be undertaken in 2014-15. More detail on how those exercises have informed previous years of the survey can be found in the 2011-12 technical advice note on data quality, published on the DCLG website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-housing-survey-technical-advice>.
- 3.43 To provide further insight into the effects of systematic surveyor variability on the precision of estimates from the physical survey, a Surveyor Variability Study (SVS) is routinely undertaken. Last conducted in 2009-10, the study involved a call-back exercise in which 300 properties were re-surveyed by a second surveyor and the results were compared. The 2009-10 SVS found that, overall, there was a high level of agreement between surveyors' assessments of properties. The next scheduled SVS will take place during the 2014-15 survey year. More information can be found in the 2009-10 SVS summary report, published on the DCLG website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-housing-survey-technical-advice>.

Annex 3.1: The briefing programme for 2013-14 new surveyors

EHS BRIEFING PROGRAMME MARCH 2013 (NEW SURVEYORS)

Day 0		
20.00-20.45	Welcome/Introduction	DCLG,SN,DR
20.45-21.30	Sections 1 - 4 of form	MD
21.30-22.00	Dwelling definition exercise	MD

Day 1		
08.20-09.00	Basic principles	MD, KW
09.05-10.00	Interior	ER
10.00-10.15	Coffee	
10.15-11.00	Amenities	VM
11.00-12.00	Interior/amenities faults	CB, VM
12.00-13.00	Services, heating, energy	CT, MC
13.00-14.00	Lunch	
14.00-15.00	Services, heating, energy cont	MC, CT
15.00-18.00	Fieldwork/debriefing	VM, ER, RMs
18.00-19.00	Free	
19.00-20.00	Dinner	
20.00-20.30	Exercise (energy)	MC, CT
20.30-21.00	Energy answers/discussion	MC, CT
21.00-	Free	

Day 2		
08.30-09.15	Dwelling age, type, construction	SN
09.15-10.25	Shape/measurements, views	KW
10.25-10.45	Shapes and Views exercise	RMs
10.45-11.00	Coffee	
11.00-12.00	Exterior/plot	MD, ER
12.00-13.30	External faults	ER, VM
13.30-14.30	Lunch	
14.30-15.00	Structural faults	SN
15.00-18.30	Fieldwork/debriefing	ER, VM, RMs
18.30-19.00	Free	
19.00-20.00	Dinner	
20.00-20.45	HMOs / HH interview	ER, DR, SN
20.30-	Free	

Day 3		
08.30-09.15	Module/flat surveys	KW
09.15-10.00	Common parts	ER
10.00-10.30	Shared facilities	KW
10.30-10.45	Coffee	
10.45-11.25	Flat construction/faults	VM
11.25-11.45	Review flat surveys	ER
11.45-12.30	Block/area	SN
12.30-13.00	Module definition Exercise	DR
13.00-14.00	Lunch	
14.00-18.00	Fieldwork : full survey of flat in large block Debriefing in field	ER, VM, RMs
18.00-19.00	Free	
19.00-20.00	Dinner	
20.00-20.30	E-learning feedback	RMs
20.30-	Free	

Day 4		
08.30-09.00	HHSRS and the EHS	SN
09.00-09.30	HHSRS extreme risks	SN
09.30-10.45	HHSRS worked examples	VM
10.45-11.00	Coffee	
11.00-11.20	Introduction to digital pen	CB, ER
11.20-13.00	Digital pen practice	CB, ER
13.00-14.00	Lunch	
14.00-18.30	Fieldwork - 1 full surveys including HHSRS and 1 HHSRS debrief in field using digital pen	ER, VM, CB, RMs
18.30-18.45	Downloading survey	CB, MC, ER
19.00-20.00	Dinner	
20.00-21.30	Validating data from this afternoons survey	CB, MC, ER
21.30-	Free	

Day 5		
08.30-09.00	Check out of rooms	
09.00-10.30	Full survey debriefing	SN, ER, VM
10.30-10.45	Coffee	
10.45-11.30	Validation hints and tips	ER, MC
11.30-12.30	Using your data	KW, JH
12.30-12.45	Meeting with RMs	RMs
12.45-13.45	Lunch	
13.45-15.30	Survey admin/web site	DB/Nat
15.30-15.45	Coffee	
15.45-	Computer workshop Pick up packs, lap tops Leave	KD

Key

Location

- Fielden House
- IT suite
- Field
- Free

Staff

Name	Initials
DCLG	DCLG
Simon Nicol	SN
Dave Beach	DB
Maggie Davidson	MD
Kevin White	KW
Liz Robinson	LR
Viv Mason	VM
Chris Beer	CB
Charlotte Turner	CT
Matt Custard	MC
Jack Hulme	JH
Keith Davies	KD
RMs	RMs

Annex 3.2: Advance Letter

- 3.44 In 2013-14 an experiment was carried out to test different versions of the letters and leaflets. So during the year a combination of the materials used in 2012-13, and the newer ones, were used. The old materials were used for Q1. The new ones, which were tailored to the three main tenure groups, were then trialled on a split-sample basis for Quarters 2 and 3 before being adopted for all cases in Q4. In addition, as part of the test, a postcard was sent one week before the advance letter, although that was discontinued in Q4.

Advance letter (Q1)



Department for Communities and Local Government

The Householder
<<add1>>
<<add2>>
<<add3>>
<<add4>>
<<add5>> <<postcode>>

Dear Householder,



<<Post_Date>>

Reference

no.:P3171/<<No_Wave>>/<<serial_num>><<CL1>

>

Help us understand housing in England today!

You've been selected to help us with the English Housing Survey.

This study gathers information on people's housing circumstances, and the energy efficiency of housing in England. It is being carried out by NatCen Social Research, Britain's largest independent research organisation, for the Department for Communities and Local Government.

With your help, we can make sure that all groups in the community are properly represented, which is important.

An interviewer will call at your address soon. All of our interviewers carry identity cards with their photograph.

We'll keep your details in strict confidence, and findings of the study can't be traced back to you or your household in any way.

If you have any questions, please call us on Freephone 0800 652 4572 or visit www.natcen.ac.uk/participant-area.

As a thank you we will give you a £10 voucher when your household takes part in the study.

Thanks in advance for your participation – with your help we can get a better understanding of housing in England today and help shape future housing policy.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Allcock
Project Co-ordinator, English Housing Survey

NatCen
Social Research that works for society

NatCen Social Research, Kings House, 101 – 135 Kings Road, Brentwood, Essex CM14 4LX
Tel. 0800 652 4572
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Advance letter for owner occupiers (Q2-4) – a slightly modified version was sent to addresses that were anticipated to be renters.



Department for
Communities and
Local Government



Sir/Madam

ADD1
ADD2
ADD3
ADD4
ADD5
POSTCODE

Help improve homes for family, friends and neighbours in **<sector_name>**

Dear Sir or Madam,

You've been selected to take part in the English Housing Survey – we hope we can count on your help in this important survey.

Each year a number of people are chosen at random from across the country to be interviewed, so this is a unique chance to put forward your views about homes in **<sector_name>**.

From reducing our carbon emissions to helping young people get a foot on the housing ladder – the survey will help shape the future of housing in **<sector_name>**. So you could end up helping your neighbours, family and friends.



What's next?

One of our interviewers will call at your house in the next week or so. So you know who they are, they all carry a photo ID.

<Intv_Caption> <Intv_NAME>



Any questions?

If you have any questions, please call us on freephone **0800 652 4572** or visit **www.natcen.ac.uk/taking-part/ehs**



Thanks for your help

As a thank you, we will give your household a £10 voucher when you take part. Your help will really give us a better understanding of the housing situation in England today, so thanks again for playing such an important part.

Yours Sincerely,

Sarah Allcock
Project Coordinator,
English Housing Survey

NatCen
Social Research that works for society

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PRIN/DWN4305

Annex 3.3: Leaflets

- 3.45 In 2013-14 an experiment was carried out to test different versions of the letters and leaflets. So during the year a combination of the materials used in 2012-13, and the newer ones, were used. The old materials were used for Q1. The new ones, which were tailored to the three main tenure groups, were then trialled on a split-sample basis for Quarters 2 and 3 before being adopted for all cases in Q4. In addition, as part of the test, a postcard was sent one week before the advance letter, although that was discontinued in Q4.

Interviewer (main survey) leaflet (Q1)

The English Housing Survey

This leaflet answers some of the questions you may have about taking part in this study.

? What is the English Housing Survey?

The English Housing Survey (EHS) is conducted by NatCen Social Research on behalf of the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), the department responsible for developing government housing policy in England.

The study is the main source of information on people's housing circumstances and the condition of housing in England. It collects up-to-date information from all types of households – whether they are owner-occupiers or rent from a local authority, housing association, or private landlord. The EHS is conducted throughout the year across England.

All sectors of society are represented, ensuring that the study results reflect the population of the country.

? Who are NatCen Social Research?

NatCen Social Research are an independent, non-profit institute with a core team of over 150 research specialists and 1,200 interviewers. Last year we developed more than 75 social research reports for government, educational bodies, charities and

responsible businesses. At NatCen Social Research we believe our work has the power to make people's lives better.

? Why does this study matter?

The study results are used by the government to assess how housing circumstances vary across the country and between different types of household.

This information helps to:

- measure whether housing conditions are getting better or worse, and how satisfied people are with their home and neighbourhood;
- understand whether housing is affordable, both for renters and private owners;
- show whether the steps taken to improve energy efficiency and cut carbon emissions in both public and private housing are working; and
- target housing policies and resources. The study's results are used to ensure that funding is directed to the people and regions where it is most needed.

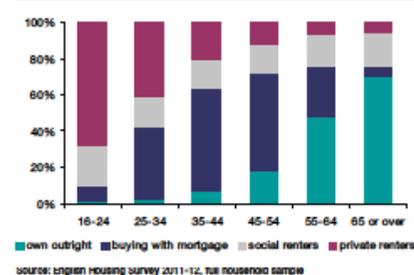
More information about the study is available from the DCLG web site:

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-communities-and-local-government/series/english-housing-survey

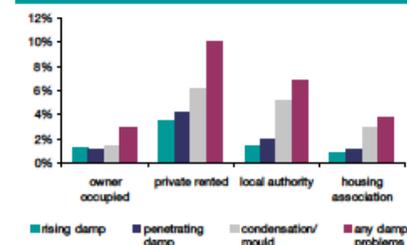
The study's results

The study's results are also used by housing Associations, non-governmental organisations, surveyors, universities and others. Here are two examples of results:

Tenure split within age group of householder, England, 2011-12



Percentage of homes with damp problems, by tenure, 2011



? Is the study confidential?

Yes. Information you give us is treated as strictly confidential as directed by the Code of Practice for Official Statistics and the Data Protection Act. It will be used by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), and the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC), to produce anonymous statistics that will not identify you or anyone in your household. These anonymous statistics are analysed by government and other approved organisations, such as universities, non-governmental organisations, and surveyors. For further details see DCLG's EHS Data Security Strategy on their website.

? Why did we choose you?

As it is not possible to ask everyone to take part in the study, a selection of addresses is selected to represent the entire country. Your address is one of these and was selected at random from a list of postal addresses held by Royal Mail.

You are important for the study because the random sample will give a true cross-section of the community. We are interested in people from all age groups, all parts of the country, and all types of homes.

We cannot substitute another address for yours as this would bias the sample's results, so your contribution is very important to the study. By taking part you help us provide an accurate picture of how changes in the economy and government policy affect you and your community.

Contact us

If you have any queries about taking part in this study, please call our freephone Survey Enquiry Line on 0800 652 4572.

Alternatively, you can write to:

NatCen Social Research
Operations Department
101-135 Kings House
Kings Road
Brentwood
Essex
CM14 4LX

Thank you for your help.

To find out more about NatCen Social Research, visit our website: www.natcen.ac.uk/about-us



Department for
Communities and
Local Government

NatCen
Social Research that works for society

Interviewer leaflet_v4



Why your help is important

www.natcen.ac.uk

Physical Survey leaflet (Q1)

The survey team comprises:



Department for
Communities and
Local Government

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) is the government department that sponsors the EHS to collect information on changing trends in housing, the condition of the housing stock and the characteristics of households living in different types of housing.
www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-communities-and-local-government/series/english-housing-survey

NatCen

Social Research that works for society

NatCen Social Research are an independent, non-profit institute, working for government, educational bodies, charities and responsible businesses. NatCen Social Research are conducting the household interview part of the study.
www.natcen.ac.uk

CADS

Housing Surveys

CADS Housing Surveys will be conducting the visual inspection of the property using professional surveyors qualified to assess housing conditions and energy efficiency.

www.cadesignservices.co.uk

Your appointment with the surveyor is:

Date: _____

Time: _____

Name of surveyor: _____

EHS Helpline: 020 3131 3179

Physical survey leaflet_v4



Explaining the surveyor's visit



Thank you for taking part in the interview which was the first part of the English Housing Survey (EHS) study. We hope you will now agree to take part in the second phase which consists of a physical inspection of your property.

Just over half of all households where an interview has taken place are randomly selected for a follow-up physical inspection by a surveyor.

We would like to arrange a convenient time when a qualified surveyor can visit your home. The interviewer has details of when surveyors are working in your area.

? Who will conduct the physical inspection?

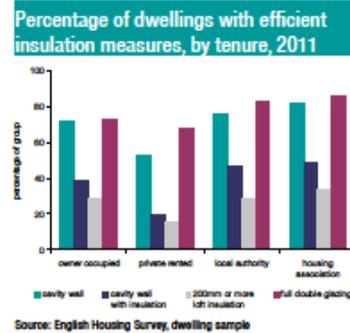
The EHS is conducted on behalf of the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). DCLG have appointed CADS Housing Surveys to undertake the physical inspection. CADS employ professional surveyors qualified to conduct the EHS assessments.

? What is the purpose of the physical inspection?

During the interview you kindly told us about your housing circumstances and aspirations, and your views on your home and neighbourhood. To supplement this information we also

need a professional assessment of your home so that we can determine what types of household are living in the least energy efficient homes and how housing conditions vary between household groups.

The chart below gives just one example of results available from the information collected by the EHS.



Housing Association properties are the best insulated!

? What will the surveyor do?

Our surveyor will call at an agreed time that is convenient to you. On arrival the surveyor will introduce themselves and show you their identity card.

Their assessment will take about an hour and although most of this will be spent

surveying the outside of the home, they will ask to see all the rooms inside. The inspection is a visual one and will not involve any disruption to your home or belongings.

? Do I have to take part in the physical inspection?

As with the interview, we rely upon voluntary co-operation, which is essential if our research is to be successful. Your home has been chosen at random to provide a balanced picture of all parts of the country and types of property and household. By taking part you help us to provide an accurate picture of housing in England.

? Should I let my landlord know I'm taking part?

There is no reason to inform your landlord or freeholder of your participation unless you want to. As the interviewer will have explained, all your responses at interview and the information collected at the physical inspection will remain confidential and will not be passed onto your landlord.

? Will I get any feedback after the physical inspection?

While the EHS is designed to provide government with a reliable assessment of the energy efficiency and condition

of the housing stock it is not as detailed as a survey that you would pay to have conducted yourself. We are not therefore able to provide any feedback on your home unless the surveyor identifies any issues which they consider to be an imminent risk to you or your family. In this situation they will alert you to the problem and advise you to take immediate action.

? Is the physical inspection confidential?

Yes. The information collected at both the interview and physical inspection stages of the study is handled in the strictest confidence by DCLG, NatCen Social Research, and their appointed contractors as directed by the Code of Practice for Official Statistics and Data Protection Act. It will be used to produce statistics that will not identify you or anyone in your household. These anonymous statistics are analysed by government and other approved organisations, such as universities, Non-Governmental Organisations, and surveyors.

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this important national study.

Leaflet for owner occupiers (Q2-4) – a slightly modified version was sent to addresses anticipated to be renters.

How the English Housing Survey makes a difference

The information collected can help give the Government a clearer picture of the state of homes and housing in England. This means they can make more informed decisions - so resources are better used to help home owners and tenants.



Help for first time buyers

We all know it's hard for young people to buy their first home. Our research helps highlight to the Government the size of the problem. From 2013, with the Help to Buy scheme, first time buyers are now able to secure a special government loan to help them get a foot on the housing ladder.



Measuring our carbon footprint

The English Housing Survey (EHS) allows us to estimate the carbon footprint of houses and flats. This means Government can predict the contribution improvements in housing make to the national CO2 reduction targets.



Adaptations to remain in the home

England has an ageing population. This study identifies the type and scale of adaptations that are needed to allow people to remain in their own homes for as long as they want.

For more information

Freephone 0800 652 4572
Or visit www.natcen.ac.uk/taking-part/ehs
Email: info@natcen.ac.uk

NatCen have been carrying out high quality social research for over 20 years. We are a non-profit organisation, independent of all government.

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