



Department for
Communities and
Local Government

50 years of the English Housing Survey



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Foreword by Melanie Dawes



We are so used to completing surveys these days that it is easy to forget just how innovative it was for the Government Central Housing Advisory Committee to recommend, some 50 years ago, that the government needed ‘a national sample survey, scientifically designed and carried out by skilled investigators...to provide reliable data on house condition’¹. And so the English Housing Survey was born, the first such survey in the world to systematically examine the condition of homes across a whole country.

Much has changed since 1967 when the focus of the survey was on whether homes had a bath or shower, an indoor WC, a wash hand basin, and hot and cold water at three points. At that time, 25% of homes lacked one or more of these basic amenities. Some 2.5 million homes didn’t have an inside WC.

Despite these significant changes, 50 years on, this department’s commitment to obtaining and analysing good quality data on people’s housing circumstances and the condition and energy efficiency of homes in England remains.

I hope this report offers an interesting insight into the changing nature of English housing over the past 50 years and to how the Survey itself has changed over that period. I was particularly struck by how much of the housing stock that was around at the time of the first survey in 1967 remains today. Just like our housing surveys, in England, we clearly build our houses to last!

I hope you enjoy the report, and continue to use the English Housing Survey for insights into housing in England.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Melanie Dawes". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Melanie Dawes
Permanent Secretary
Department for Communities and Local Government

¹ Central Housing Advisory Committee, 1966. *Our Older Homes: A Call for Action*. (Report of the Sub-Committee on Standards of Housing Fitness). London: HMSO.

Introduction and main findings

1. The English Housing Survey (EHS) is a national survey of people's housing circumstances and the condition and energy efficiency of housing in England. In its current form it was first run in 2008-09. Prior to then, it was run as two standalone surveys: the English House Condition Survey and the Survey of English Housing. It is one of the longest standing surveys in government, with 2017 marking the 50th anniversary of the first survey in 1967.
2. The initial one page survey form used in 1967 was the first in the world to set a benchmark for housing conditions based on inspections by trained professionals of a random sample of the homes across whole nations. At that time, the survey covered England and Wales.
3. While the 1967 survey and 1971 follow-up survey focused on the physical condition of dwellings, from 1976 the EHS has included a detailed face-to-face survey with households. This makes the EHS one of the only surveys in the world that combines collection of information about the physical condition of the home with information about the personal circumstances of the people that live there. This combination gives the EHS unique insight into many issues of public importance, not just related to housing.
4. To mark the 50th anniversary of the EHS, the Building Research Establishment (BRE, which has been involved with the survey since the 1970s) and the Department for Communities and Local Government (the government department that manages the survey) have produced this report. A number of special events are also planned to mark the occasion.
5. While similar housing surveys are also undertaken in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, the focus of this report is the English Housing Survey. It provides a 'snapshot' comparison of two moments in time: 1967 and 2017. Though there has been a huge amount of change within the EHS and England's housing during this 50-year period, there is a lot to learn from comparing these two years.
6. The report is split into three chapters: comparing the policy context of the 1967 survey with the context in which the EHS operates today, comparing housing in 1967 with today, and comparing the EHS in 1967 with the EHS today. The final chapter includes a discussion of the impact of the EHS.
7. The report draws on a range of sources, including the findings of the 1967 survey and the most recent EHS data, which were collected between April 2015 and March 2016 and published in 2017.

Main findings

Throughout its history, the English Housing Survey (EHS) has been integral to the benchmarking and monitoring of housing standards in England. Housing has improved since 1967, and the standards by which housing is assessed have changed accordingly.

- In 1967, 25% of homes lacked one or more of the following basic amenities: a bath or shower, an indoor WC, a wash hand basin, hot and cold water at three points. By 1991 only 1% lacked one or more of these, and the number of homes that fail to meet this standard is now almost too small to measure.

In 1967, there were 14.8 million homes in England; roughly 14.4 million of these homes remain part of the housing stock today.

- While wholesale demolition and replacement of poor quality stock (through 'slum clearances') was an important part of housing policy in the post-World War Two era, since 1967 greater emphasis has been placed on the improvement of existing stock. Most of the stock which existed in 1967 remains today; and most of those homes have undergone some form of improvement. Around 7.5 million (56%) of homes built before 1965 have had major improvement works undertaken. About a third (34%) have been extended.

Tenure has been a major focus for policymakers and a central analytical category in the EHS since the first survey.

- In 1967, half (51%) of the English housing stock was owner occupied, 29% was rented in the social rented sector, and 20% was privately rented. Fifty years later, 63% of the stock was owner occupied, 17% was in the social rented sector and 20% was privately rented. However, this 'snapshot' comparison of 1967 and today misses the big changes to tenure during the intervening period (in particular, in the private rented sector).

While the 1967 survey had a limited focus on measuring housing standards and housing regeneration, the survey's remit has since broadened to include a much wider range of housing-related concerns.

- Notably, the EHS plays an important part in monitoring housing performance, particularly heating and energy efficiency, and its effect on fuel poverty. While the 1967 EHS did not collect information on heating fuel or insulation, other sources indicate that in 1961 76% of homes used solid fuel and the number of homes that had any form of insulation was virtually zero. In 2015, less than 1% of homes relied on solid fuel for their main heating, 95% of homes have some double glazing, and 98% either have loft insulation or no loft.

Average household size has gone down since the 1960s, from 3.0 people per household in the 1961 Census to 2.4 in 2015-16.

- This is for a variety of reasons, including the ageing of the population and, related to this, the increase in the proportion of households consisting of just one or two persons, which rose from 43% in 1961 to 64% in 2015-16.

Acknowledgements and further queries

8. Each year the EHS relies on the contributions of a large number of people and organisations. The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) would particularly like to thank the following people and organisations, without whom the EHS and this report would not have been possible: all the households who gave up their time to take part in the survey, NatCen Social Research, BRE, CADS Housing Surveys, and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) who make an annual financial contribution to the survey's running costs.
9. This report was produced by Simon Nicol and Helen Garrett at BRE, in collaboration with the EHS team at DCLG who relied enormously on the DCLG library to access the historical information cited throughout. Our thanks to everyone who provided comments on earlier drafts of the report.
10. If you have any queries about the report, would like any further information, or have suggestions for analyses you would like to see included in future EHS reports, please contact ehs@communities.gsi.gov.uk.
11. The responsible analyst for this report is: Brendan Donegan, Housing and Planning Analysis Division, DCLG. Contact via ehs@communities.gsi.gov.uk.

Chapter 1

Policy context: 1967 and 2017

- 1.1 The 1967 House Condition Survey of England and Wales emerged in a particular historical situation, in response to particular policy needs. There are big differences between the policy context of the 1967 survey and the policy context today. This section focuses on differences in the government's approach to housing supply, sub-standard housing and social housing.

Origins of the 1967 survey

- 1.2 In 1966, a report by a sub-committee of the Central Housing Advisory Committee titled *Our Older Homes: A Call for Action* recommended that 'a national sample survey, scientifically designed and carried out by skilled investigators was necessary...to provide reliable data on house condition².' Work began on developing the survey in autumn of that year, with data collection taking place in spring 1967³.
- 1.3 The findings of the 1967 survey were published in *Economic Trends* in May 1968, with a preface which sets the scene by describing the policy context. Two points stand out. First, the survey was conducted at a time when the government felt that the quantity of housing had improved to the point where attention could be turned to the quality of housing. Second, the survey was conducted at the end of a decade in which large-scale demolition – slum clearances – was used as a policy response to the problem of sub-standard housing.
- 1.4 The preface notes that after the Second World War, the 'general quantitative shortage of housing' was the 'over-riding consideration,' but as the quantitative situation began to improve, the government placed increasing emphasis on 'qualitative aspects of the stock'⁴. In order to develop policy intended to improve the quality of the stock, the government needed data, but at that time 'there were virtually no statistical data on the structural condition of the houses or on the need for repairs and maintenance'⁵. This was the context in which the government identified the need for the survey.

² Central Housing Advisory Committee, 1966. *Our Older Homes: A Call for Action*. (Report of the Sub-Committee on Standards of Housing Fitness). London: HMSO.

³ Ministry of Housing and Local Government, 1968. House Condition Survey, England and Wales, 1967. *Economic Trends*, 175(May 1968), pp.xxiv.

⁴ Ministry of Housing and Local Government, 1968, pp.xxiv.

⁵ Ministry of Housing and Local Government, 1968, pp.xxiv.

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- 1.5 Prior to the 1967 survey, post-war slum clearance (which began in 1955) was informed by local authorities providing estimates of unfit housing in their areas. It 'gradually became clear that these estimates were not a sufficiently reliable basis for national policy' and 'substantially understated the problem'⁶. In fact the estimate of unfit dwellings arrived at in the 1967 survey was more than double the estimate obtained from local authority figures in 1965 – 1.8 million compared to 820,000⁷.

Comparison of policy context in 1967 and today

- 1.6 After World War Two, the government embarked on an extensive programme of house building in which local authorities played a major part. Total completions (i.e. by private enterprise, Registered Social Landlords and local authorities) peaked in 1968, at 352,540. Local authority completions peaked in 1953 at 198,210 and in 1967 reached their highest point since 1955, at 154,500. The number of completions by local authorities declined significantly over the 50 years that followed, Figure 1.1.
- 1.7 Net additions (completions minus demolitions) provide a more accurate picture of changing housing supply than dwelling completions, in particular because of the large-scale demolition of sub-standard housing in the post-war period. Between 1955 and 1985, 1.5 million homes were demolished or closed as a result of slum clearance in England and Wales, displacing over 3.7 million people⁸. These clearances focused on housing stock built in response to the massive rural-to-urban population movements that took place in the nineteenth-century, during Britain's Industrial Revolution⁹. During the decade 1961-1971, annual average net additions were 223,700, compared to 166,000 during the decade 2006-07 to 2015-16¹⁰.
- 1.8 The government's programme of slum clearances was central to the 1967 house condition survey, which categorised unfit properties according to whether they should be dealt with 'as an individual case or as part of an area of housing to be cleared'¹¹. The majority (61%) of the 1.8 million unfit dwellings in England and Wales in 1967 were 'in potential clearance areas'¹², Figure 1.2.

⁶ Ministry of Housing and Local Government, 1968, pp.xxiv.

⁷ Ministry of Housing and Local Government, 1968, pp.xxv.

⁸ Yelling, J., 2000. The incidence of slum clearance in England and Wales, 1955-1985. *Urban History*, 27, 2, pp.234.

⁹ Yelling, 2000, pp.244.

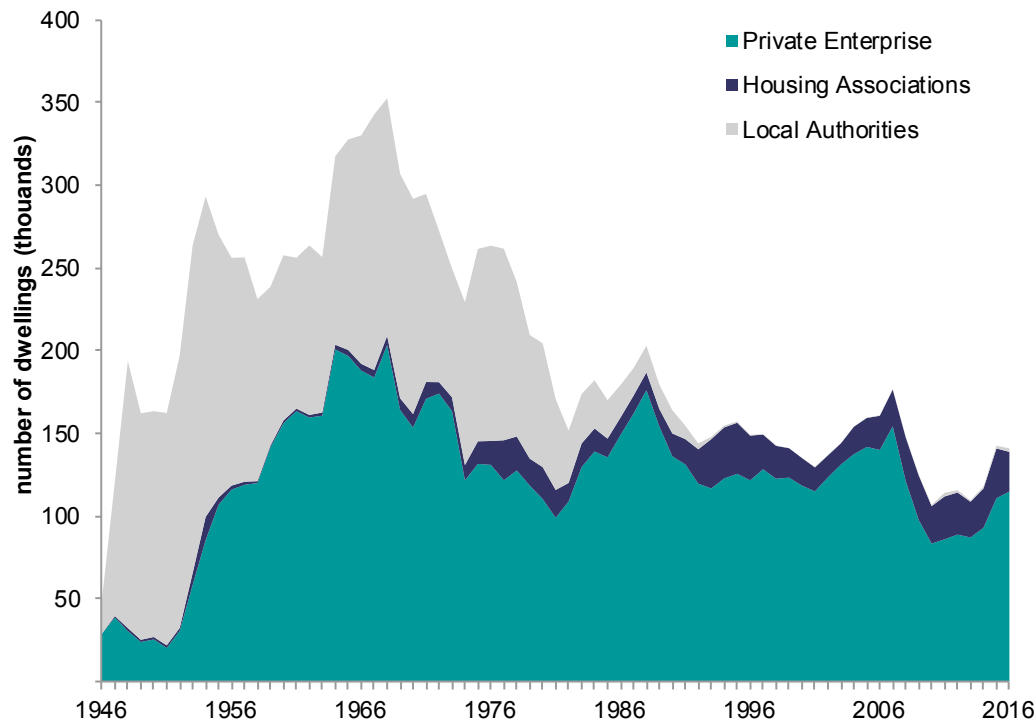
¹⁰ 1961-1971 figure calculated from Table 104, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-dwelling-stock-including-vacants>. 2006-07 to 2015-16 figure calculated from Table 120,

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-net-supply-of-housing>. See Technical notes at the end of this report for methodology.

¹¹ Ministry of Housing and Local Government, 1968, pp.xxiv.

¹² Ministry of Housing and Local Government, 1968, pp.xxv.

Figure 1.1: House building (permanent dwellings completed), by tenure, 1946 to 2016



Source: Table 244, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-house-building>

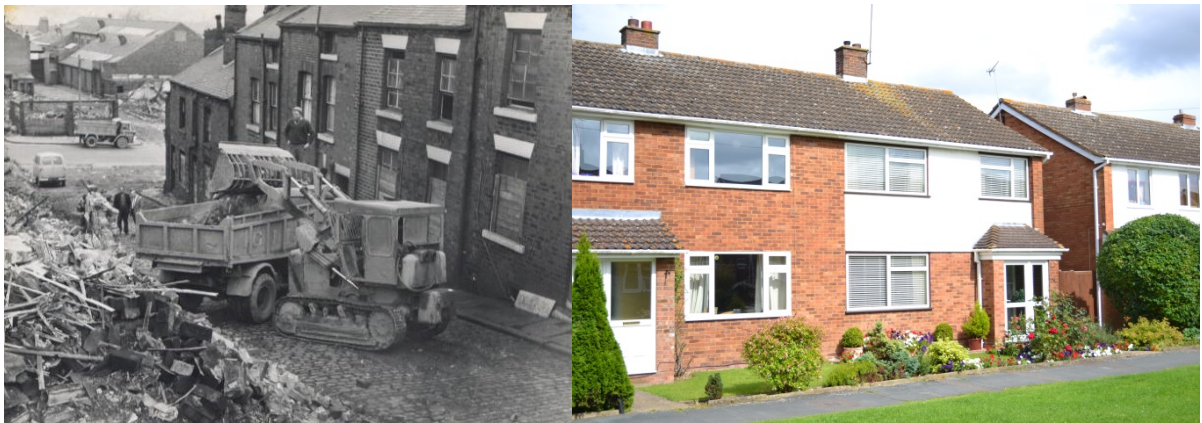
1.9 Slum clearance is no longer central to housing policy – the focus is now on increasing supply and improving the quality of stock. The 1967 survey signalled the beginning of the policy shift away from stock replacement to stock improvement¹³.

Two eras of economic policy: a case study of social housing

1.10 Housing policy in 1967 was made in the long shadow of the Industrial Revolution and the (more recent) shadow of the Second World War. One of the legacies of the Industrial Revolution was a large quantity of housing deemed unfit for human habitation. Two by-products of the Second World War were the large-scale destruction of properties and a major shift in ideas about the responsibilities of government to its people, resulting in the creation of the Welfare State and an emphasis on Keynesian economic policy.

¹³ Yelling, 2000, pp.236.

Figure 1.2: Demolitions and house building in the 1960s



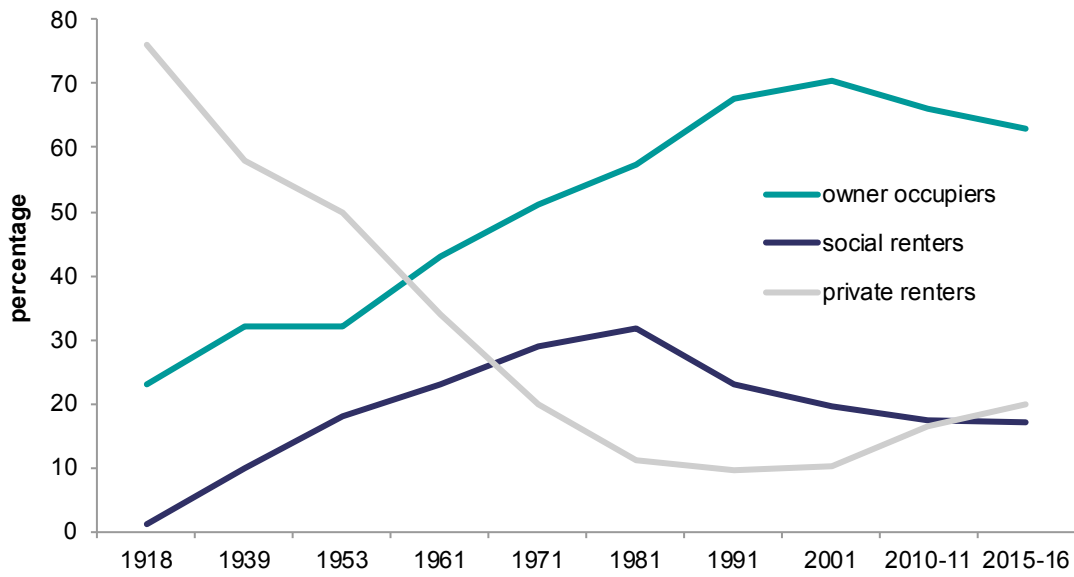
Left: Demolition in Grove House Lane, Leeds, August 1967. Right: Contemporary photo of houses constructed in the 1960s.

Photos: Left: Gill Demolition Ltd © 1967, Right: BRE © 2015

- 1.11 In 2017, housing policy is being made largely in the shadow of changes to the functioning of the international economy that began with the 1970s oil crisis. Since then, economic policy has emphasised the role of the market in achieving optimal outcomes.
- 1.12 One of the key areas in which housing policy has changed between these two eras is on the question of public provision of housing, now known as social housing. Until the 1980s, the provision of social housing was aimed at households on a range of incomes, but since then the emphasis has been on allocating new lettings to those in greatest need¹⁴.
- 1.13 The social rented sector began to grow after the First World War and peaked at 32% of total households in 1981. The most recent EHS data (2015-16) indicates that 17% of households live in the social rented sector, Figure 1.3.

¹⁴ Hills, J., 2007. *Ends and Means: The future roles of social housing in England.* CASE Report 43, http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/5568/1/Ends_and_Means_The_future_roles_of_social_housing_in_England_1.pdf

Figure 1.3: Trends in tenure, 1918 to 2015-16



Note: prior to 1961, figures only available for 1918, 1939 and 1953

Source: Table FT1101 (S101), <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/tenure-trends-and-cross-tenure-analysis>

Chapter 2

Housing: 1967 and 2017

2.1 This section presents a brief comparison of housing in 1967 and housing today, drawing on a range of sources, including the findings of the 1967 survey and the most recent EHS data¹⁵. The main topics covered are quality of stock, tenure, dwelling age and type, heating and energy efficiency, and household size.

Quality of the housing stock

2.2 Since its inception, the English Housing Survey has been used to reveal and remedy issues of housing quality, and housing policies have generally led to step changes in housing standards, which have been benchmarked and monitored using the EHS. For example, following the 1967 survey, 'Intermediate Grants' were made available to homeowners to provide basic missing amenities. In 1967, 25% of homes lacked a basic amenity (a bath or shower, an indoor WC, a wash basin, hot and cold water at three points); 2.5 million English homes (19%) did not have access to an indoor WC¹⁶. By 1991, the number of homes lacking a basic amenity had fallen to 1%, helped in part by access to these grants, Figure 2.1.

2.3 In 1967, the minimum standard for housing was 'unfit dwellings'. An inspector decided whether each dwelling was statutorily unfit for human habitation on the basis of Section 4 of the Housing Act 1957 which refers to the following factors: repair; stability; freedom from dampness; natural lighting; ventilation; water supply; drainage and sanitary conveniences; facilities for storage, preparation and cooking of food and for the disposal of waste water. A dwelling is recorded as 'unfit' if it falls below the standard due to any of these factors individually or in combination. In 1967, 12% of homes were deemed unfit for human habitation. By 1996, this had dropped to 4%, Figure 2.1.

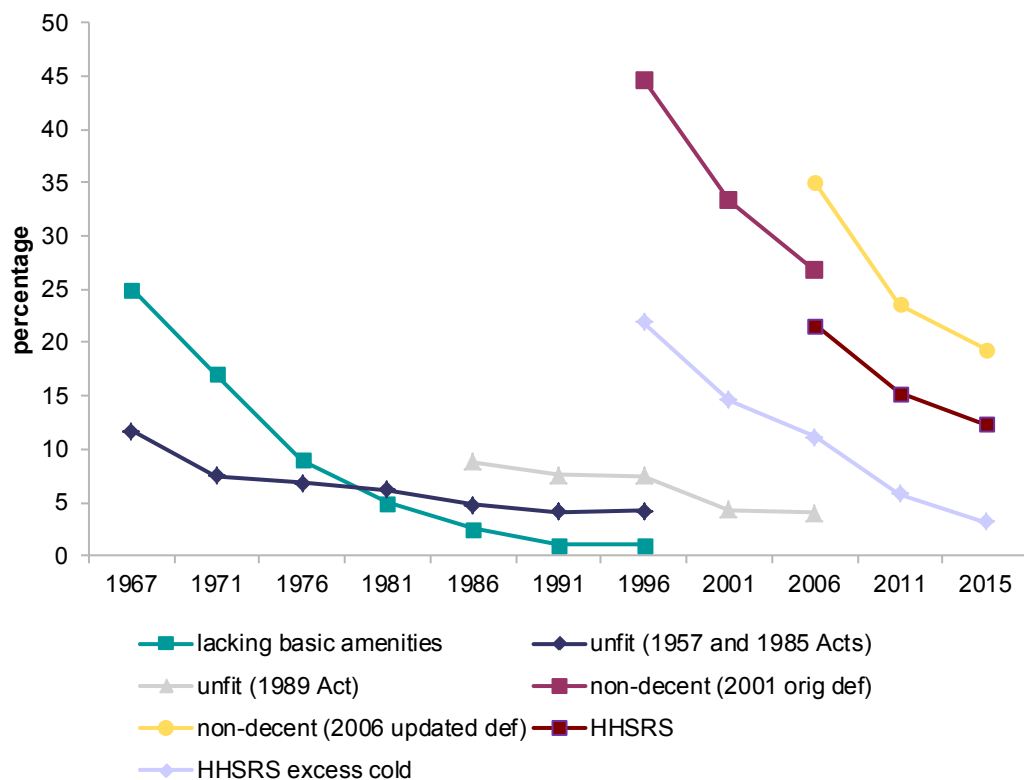
2.4 Since 2006, the statutory measure of 'poor housing' in England is whether a dwelling has any one of 29 potential Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) hazards at Category 1 level. In 2015, the most prevalent Category 1 hazard types were 'falls on stairs' and 'excess cold', Annex Table 2.1. Hazards are classified as a Category 1 hazard if they represent a significant risk to the household. For example, for 'falls on stairs' the inspector

¹⁵ While there are methodological differences between the 1967 survey and the EHS today (detailed in Chapter 3 and the Technical notes at the end of this report), the data are broadly comparable.

¹⁶ Calculation by BRE, based on the findings of the 1967 survey (see Technical notes).

determines the likelihood of a fall occurring over the following 12 months which could result in significant harm to a member of a vulnerable age group (e.g. children and elderly people)¹⁷. Between 2006 and 2015, the proportion of homes with an HHSRS hazard at Category 1 level declined considerably – from 22% to 12%, Figures 2.1 and 2.2.

Figure 2.1: Changing housing conditions, 1967 to 2015



Base: all dwellings

Notes:

- 1) Housing Act 1957, Housing Act 1985 and Local Government and Housing Act 1989
- 2) 'unfit' refers to unfit for human habitation

Sources:

- 1) 1967: National House Condition Survey of England and Wales¹⁸
- 2) 1971-2006: English House Condition Survey
- 3) 2011 onwards: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

2.5 Up until 2001, the EHS was run every five years. It became a continuous survey in 2002 to measure annual progress against the new Decent Homes Standard that was introduced in 2001. The standard, which was a response to the EHS estimate that there was a £19 billion backlog of repairs and

¹⁷ Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2006. *Housing Health and Safety Rating System: Operating Guidance – Housing Act 2004 Guidance about inspections and assessment of hazards given under Section 9*. London: Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, p.18, Box 2

¹⁸ Calculation by BRE, based on the findings of the 1967 survey (see Technical notes).

maintenance in the social rented sector¹⁹, was set for all social housing to be made 'decent' within 10 years²⁰.

- 2.6 The EHS continues to measure decency across all tenures. Significant improvements were made between 2001 and 2015; however, 19% of English homes did not meet the standard in 2015. While the original target of making all social homes decent was not met and 13% of the social stock remains non-decent, this is significantly lower than the proportion of non-decent homes in the owner occupied (18%) and private rented (28%) sectors²¹.

Figure 2.2: Continuities and changes in housing conditions



Notes: While housing conditions have improved significantly since the 1967 survey, there are still occasional instances of unfit housing, such as that seen in the photo on the right (taken in 2014). Left: two bedroom Victorian terrace house in the Aston area of Birmingham, occupied by a husband and wife and two children under the age of 6. Right: House in multiple occupation (HMO) in London Borough of Newham.

Photos: Left: Nick Hedges © 1971, Right: BRE © 2014²²

Tenure

- 2.7 In 1967, half (51%) of the English housing stock was owner occupied, 29% was rented in the social rented sector, and 20% was privately rented.²³ Fifty

¹⁹ Department for the Environment, Transport and the Regions and Department of Social Security, 2000. *Quality and choice: a Decent Home for all. The Housing green paper*. London, DETR, pp.8

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20121029133758/http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/housing/pdf/138019.pdf>

²⁰ Full details of the Decent Homes Standard criteria can be found in the EHS Technical Report 2015-2016, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-housing-survey-2015-to-2016-technical-report>

²¹ Para 2.13-2.15 in English Housing Survey 2015 to 2016: headline report, at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-housing-survey-2015-to-2016-headline-report>

²² Garrett, H., Davidson, M., Nicol, S., Roys, M. and Summers, C. 2014. *The cost of poor housing in London*. Watford: IHS BRE Press.

²³ Calculation by BRE, based on the findings of the 1967 survey (see Technical notes).

years later, 63% of the stock was owner occupied, 17% was in the social rented sector and 20% was privately rented, Figure 2.3²⁴.

Figure 2.3: Tenure, 1967 and 2015



Base: all dwellings

Sources:

1967: National House Condition Survey of England and Wales²⁵

2015: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

- 2.8 However, this ‘snapshot’ comparison of 1967 and today misses a number of changes during the 50 year intervening period.
- 2.9 Of the three main tenures, it is probably the social rented sector that has changed the most over the last 50 years, Figure 1.3.²⁶ In 1967, 29% of the stock was in the social rented sector (about 2% of which was owned by housing associations, the remainder by local authorities). In 2015-16, the social rented sector was the smallest tenure, only 17% of homes in England, Figure 2.3. Significantly, in 2015-16 more homes in the social rented sector were owned by housing associations than local authorities.
- 2.10 In both 1967 and 2015-16, 20% of homes were in the private rented sector, Figure 2.3. However in the intervening period, the proportion of households in the private rented sector declined to around 9%, remained at that level from the mid-1980s until the mid-2000s, and then rose again to its current 20%²⁷. While the proportion of homes in the private rented sector in 2015 was the

²⁴ The proportions given in this paragraph are based on EHS dwelling estimates, whereas the proportions given in the paragraphs that follow are based on a combination of EHS dwelling and household estimates, indicated in the text by references to ‘homes’ (based on dwelling estimates) or ‘households’ (based on household estimates). See the Technical Notes for an explanation of the difference between dwelling and household estimates.

²⁵ Calculation by BRE, based on the findings of the 1967 survey (see Technical notes).

²⁶ See also paragraph 1.13 above.

²⁷ FT1101 (S101), <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/tenure-trends-and-cross-tenure-analysis>

same as it was in 1967, the absolute number has increased considerably as the size of the stock has increased.

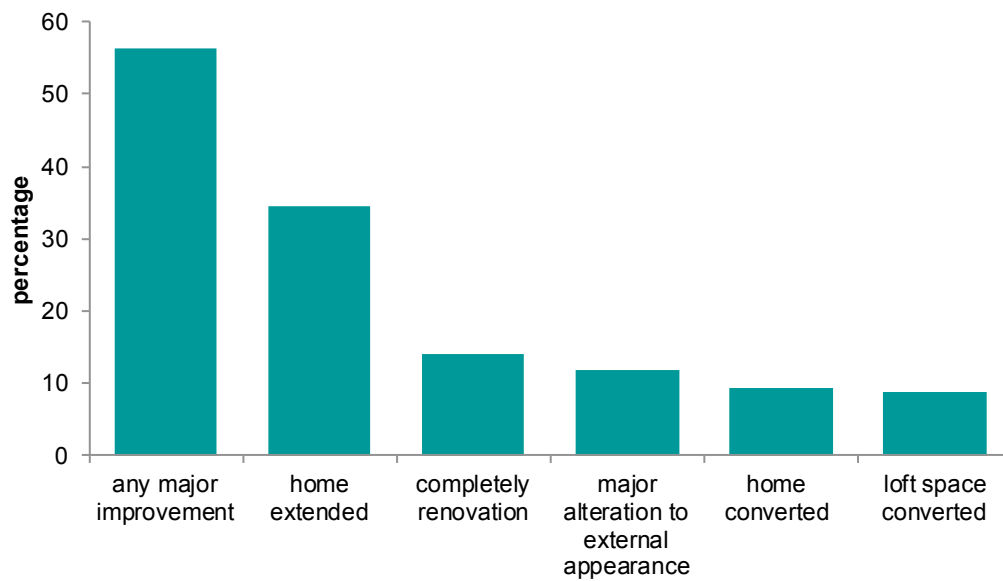
- 2.11 In 1967, 51% of homes were owner occupied; lower than the 63% of households that live in owner occupation now, Figure 2.3. This sector has also undergone considerable change over the last 50 years. The proportion of households in owner occupation grew steadily until it peaked at 71% in 2003 and then declined, but since 2013-14 the rate of owner occupation has not changed. Since 2013-14 there have been more outright owners than mortgagors (i.e. households buying their home with a mortgage). The increase in the number and proportion of outright owners is at least partly explained by population ageing, with large numbers of baby boomers reaching retirement age, paying off their mortgages and moving into outright ownership²⁸.

Dwelling age and type

- 2.12 In 1967, there were 14.8 million homes in England; roughly 14.4 million of these homes remain part of the housing stock today, Annex Table 2.2.
- 2.13 While most of the stock which existed in 1967 remains today, most of these homes have undergone some form of improvement. Around 7.5 million (56%) of homes built before 1965 have had major improvement works, Annex Table 2.3. About a third (34%) have been extended. Some 14% have undergone complete renovation, Figure 2.4.

²⁸ Paras 1.5-1.7 in English Housing Survey 2015 to 2016: headline report, at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-housing-survey-2015-to-2016-headline-report>

Figure 2.4: Home improvements to pre-1965 built homes, 2015



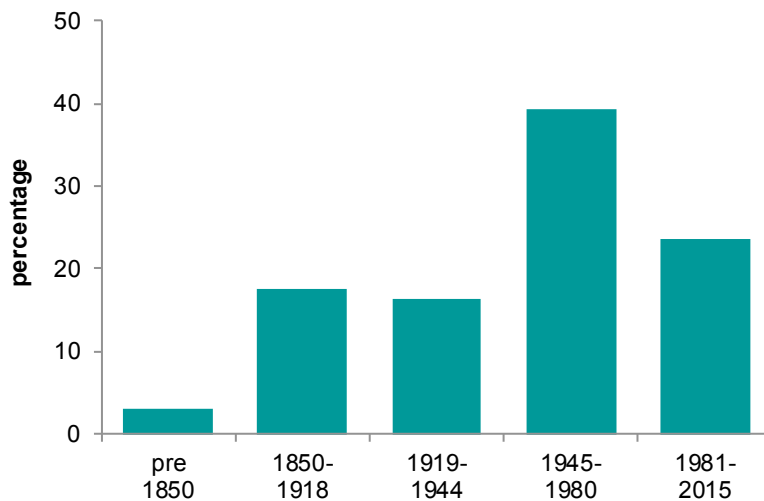
Base: all dwellings built before 1965

Note: underlying data are shown in Annex Table 2.3

Source: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

2.14 In 2015, 37% of the English housing stock was built in the period before 1945. Some 39% was built in the post war period (1945 to 1980); the rest was built after 1980, Figure 2.5.

Figure 2.5: Age of English homes, 2015



Base: all dwellings

Source: English Housing Survey, dwelling sample

2.15 In 2015, the most prevalent dwelling type was the terraced house, comprising 28% of the stock, Annex Table 2.4. While 17% of the current housing stock was built between 1850 and 1918, more than half (54%) of the homes remaining from that period are terraced houses, such as the one shown below, Figure 2.6.

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- 2.16 The second most prevalent dwelling type in 2015 was the semi-detached house (26% of the stock), Annex Table 2.4. While 16% of the current housing stock was built between 1919 and 1944, nearly half (47%) of the homes remaining from that period are semi-detached houses.
- 2.17 Among stock built since the 1980's, three dwelling types predominate: the detached house (28% of homes built during this period), the low-rise purpose built flat (24%), and the terraced house (23%), Annex Table 2.4.

Figure 2.6: The most prevalent dwelling type today



Picture credit: © Stephen Taylor and licensed for reuse under a Creative Commons Licence, <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/>

Heating and energy efficiency

- 2.18 In recent years, the focus of the EHS physical survey has shifted towards housing performance – particularly to heating and energy efficiency, and its effect on fuel poverty.
- 2.19 Over the past 50 years, most homes have transitioned from solid fuel (mostly coal) to gas and electricity. While the 1967 EHS did not collect information on the heating fuel used in homes, other sources indicate that in 1961 76% of

homes used solid fuel²⁹. In 2015, less than 1% of homes relied on solid fuel for their main heating, Live Table DA6101³⁰.

- 2.20 The number of insulated homes has also increased markedly. In 1961, the number of homes that had any form of insulation was virtually zero³¹. In 2015, 95% of homes have some double glazing, and 98% either have loft insulation or no loft, Live Table DA6201³².

Household size

- 2.21 While the 1967 survey did not collect data on household size, overcrowding or under-occupation, in more recent years the EHS has done so.
- 2.22 Since the time of the 1967 survey, the number of households in England has increased from 13.9 million in the 1961 Census to 22.8 million in 2015-16³³. The increase in the number of households represents both population growth and a decrease in average household size, from 3.0 in the 1961 Census to 2.4 in 2015-16³⁴. For a variety of reasons, including population ageing, the proportion of households consisting of just one or two persons rose from 43% in 1961 to 64% in 2015-16³⁵.
- 2.23 There has been a corresponding increase in the number of under-occupied homes. In the last 20 years, under-occupation in the owner occupied sector has increased to the point where, in 2015-16, over 50% of owner occupied households are under-occupied (i.e. have two or more spare bedrooms). The proportion of under-occupied households in the rented sectors decreased over this period. The overall number and proportion of under-occupied households increased from 31% (6.2 million households) in 1995-96 to 37% (8.5 million households) in 2015-16³⁶.
- 2.24 In 2015-16, overcrowding was more prevalent in the rented sectors than for owner occupiers. The proportion of overcrowded households in the owner occupied sector, which was 1% (191,000 households) in 2015-16, has

²⁹ Utley, J. and Shorrocks, L. 2012. *Ninety years of housing, 1921-2011: Trends relating to living standards, energy use and carbon emissions*. Watford: IHS BRE Press.

³⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/energy-performance>

³¹ Utley and Shorrocks. 2012. *Ninety years of housing*.

³² <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/energy-performance>

³³ 1961 figure from Table 401, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-household-projections>, 2015-16 figure from the English Housing Survey 2015 to 2016 headline report, at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-housing-survey-2015-to-2016-headline-report>.

³⁴ 1961 figure from Table 401, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-household-projections>, 2015-16 figure from Table FA1211 (S109), <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/tenure-trends-and-cross-tenure-analysis>

³⁵ 1961 figure from Berrington, A. and L. Simpson, 2016. *Housing composition and housing need*. In: T. Champion and J. Falkingham, ed. *Population change in the United Kingdom*. London: Rowman and Littlefield. pp.104-124, 2015-16 figure from Table FA1211 (S109).

³⁶ Paras 1.68-1.71 in English Housing Survey 2015 to 2016: headline report, at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-housing-survey-2015-to-2016-headline-report>

remained relatively stable since 1995-96. Overcrowding in the social rented sector rose from 5% of social rented sector households in 1995-96 to 7% in 2009-10, then remained closer to 6% until 2015-16, when it rose to 7% again. Overcrowding in the private rented sector rose from 3% of private rented sector households in 1995-96 to 6% in 2011-12, and since then has decreased to 5%³⁷.

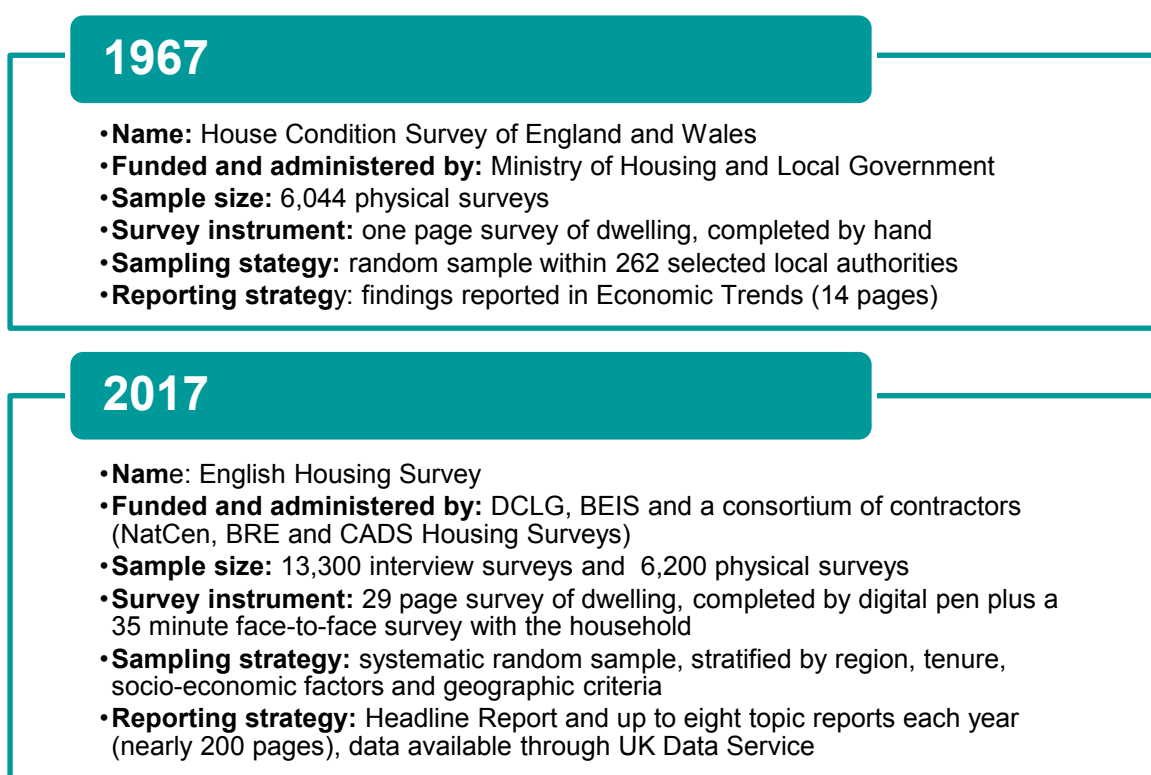
³⁷ Paras 1.65-1.67 and Annex Table 1.20 in English Housing Survey 2015 to 2016: headline report, at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-housing-survey-2015-to-2016-headline-report>

Chapter 3

English Housing Survey: 1967 and 2017

- 3.1 The single page form used to collect data in the 1967 survey (see Appendix 1) has evolved into a 23 page physical survey form and a detailed household interview questionnaire, enabling a considerably wider range of analyses than the 1967 survey, Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1: English Housing Survey methodology, 1967 and 2017



- 3.2 The English Housing Survey is the current incarnation of the series of surveys of English housing that began in 1967. The first two surveys, in 1967 and 1971, focused on the stock and collected very limited information on households. Between 1976 and 2001 a physical survey of dwellings, combined with an interview survey of households residing in those dwellings were conducted once every five years. This was known as the English House Condition Survey (EHCS). Between 2002 and 2007 the EHCS was conducted every year. In 2008, the EHCS merged with another survey called the Survey of English Housing, and became known as the English Housing Survey.

-
- 3.3 The sample size for the physical survey peaked at 30,000 in 1986³⁸, but in recent years has remained close to 6,000, the sample size used in 1967 – a figure chosen because it was considered large enough to provide robust national estimates. The sample size for the interview survey peaked at 17,500 in 2001 and was 13,300 in 2015-16³⁹.

Impact of the EHS

- 3.4 By combining the collection of information about the physical condition of homes with information about the personal circumstances of the people that live in them, the EHS offers a unique insight into many issues of public importance, not just related to housing.
- 3.5 The survey is used every day by many people, for many purposes. Users include government departments, academics, charities (including Shelter and Age UK), think tanks, consultancies and other organisations such as the Bank of England. Analyses based on EHS data have been published in a variety of scholarly journals⁴⁰.
- 3.6 The EHS has played an important role in the design and implementation of a great number of policies. For example, the increasing focus on collecting detailed repair cost information in the 1970s and 1980s led to a surge in grant assistance for private sector renewal, with the funding to local authorities being distributed according to needs defined by the survey. Most recently, EHS data has been used to inform the 2017 Housing White Paper, for example, providing data on home ownership and housing costs and affordability⁴¹. These and other policies informed by the EHS are shown below, Figure 3.2.

³⁸ The 1986 survey required a large sample size because at that time data collection took place once every 5 years and the data was being used to inform the distribution of public funds to regions and local authorities for targeted private sector renewal, the main indicators being unfitness and disrepair. At its peak, £1bn per annum was distributed in this way.

³⁹ BRE, 2014. *A History of the English Housing Survey*. Unpublished report.

⁴⁰ These include *International Journal of Environmental Health Research*, *Energy Policy*, and *Journal of Social Policy*. An annotated bibliography is available on request from DCLG.

⁴¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fixing-our-broken-housing-market>

Figure 3.2: Selection of policies informed by the EHS, 1967 to 2017

1969 Housing Act

- Findings from the 1967 survey informed decisions to boost improvement grants and encourage area renewal through General Improvement Areas (GIAs).

1980 Housing Act

- The 1976 survey found sub-standard conditions were more prevalent among pre-1919 dwellings, which informed extension of repair grants to this section of stock.

1989 Local Government and Housing Act

- Informed by the 1986 survey findings, this Act included new renovation, disabled facilities and minor works grants; means testing of grant aid; a new fitness standard; and Renewal Areas replaced GIAs and Housing Action Areas (HAAs).

2001 Decent Homes Programme

- Aiming to make all social housing 'decent' within 10 years, this programme was launched in response to EHS figures, and used the EHS to benchmark and monitor progress.

Fuel Poverty

- Since 1991, the EHS has been used by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy to monitor fuel poverty. This usage of EHS data has become increasingly prominent since 2012.

2017 Housing White Paper


- The White Paper sets out the government's plan for 'Fixing our broken housing market' drawing on 2014-15 EHS data which shows, for example, that affordability is a particular issue for young people who are now more likely to be renting than buying their own home.

Technical notes

1. Some of the findings in this report make use of data presented in the 1967 report. As the 1967 survey covered both England and Wales, it was necessary to remove the Welsh data from the analysis. The Welsh Housing Condition Survey in 1968 (which had a larger sample and the same methodology) provided a reasonable estimate of the profile of Welsh dwelling in 1967, thereby enabling an estimate of the figures for England.
2. The latest figures – most of which have been published in other EHS reports are also provided. Figures for households are presented for ‘2015- 16’ and are based on fieldwork carried out between April 2015 and March 2016 on a sample of 13,468 households. Figures for physical dwellings are presented for ‘2015’ and are based on fieldwork carried out between April 2014 and March 2016 (a mid-point of April 2015). The sample comprises 12,351 occupied or vacant dwellings where a physical inspection was carried out.
3. In Chapter 1, annual average net additions are calculated for two decades. The figure for 1961-1971 is calculated from figures for dwelling stock at the start and end of the decade in Table 104, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-dwelling-stock-including-vacants>. The figure for 2006-07 to 2015-16 is calculated from figures for annual net additions between 2006-07 and 2015-16 in Table 120, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-net-supply-of-housing>. These two tables use different methodologies, but represent the best data available for these periods.
4. In 1967, housing association dwellings were classified as private rented sector dwellings. This continued until 1981, when they were counted separately for the first time. Such homes continue to be counted separately and are now classified alongside local authority homes as social rented sector dwellings. In 1981, 2% of households rented their homes from a housing association. In 1967, as in 1981, most housing associations were small, local and had philanthropic status so it is likely that the proportion in 1967 was similar⁴². Throughout the report, 1967 tenure estimates have been adjusted to reflect this.

⁴² While most housing associations were small and local, an important exception was the Peabody Group, which was large (housing 19,273 people in 1967) and operated across a number of London boroughs. Peabody Trust, 1968. *Annual Report, 1967*. George Berridge & Co., London and Thetford, p. 3.

Appendix 1: The 1967 survey form


MINISTRY OF HOUSING & LOCAL GOVERNMENT
NATIONAL HOUSE CONDITION SURVEY 1967

LOCAL AUTHORITY AREA _____

C	LA			EPR	Con	U _R		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

ADDRESS OF RATEABLE UNIT _____

SCHEDULE NUMBER OF RATEABLE UNIT	10,11,12
----------------------------------	----------

NUMBER OF DWELLINGS IN RATEABLE UNIT

LESS THAN 1 y	1 OR MORE <i>specify</i>	UNOBTAINABLE x	13
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If more than 1 dwelling in rateable unit
ADDRESS OF DWELLING
use form for each dwelling

NUMBER OF RATEABLE UNITS IN DWELLING

LESS THAN 1 y	1 OR MORE <i>specify</i>	UNOBTAINABLE x	14
------------------	--------------------------	-------------------	----

SURVEYOR _____

15,16

DATE OF INSPECTION _____

rateable value	17,18,19
----------------	----------

HAS THE DWELLING BEEN INSPECTED INTERNALLY

YES 1	NO 2	20
----------	---------	----

IS THE DWELLING A (OR PART OF A)

DETACHED HOUSE 1	SEMI-DETACHED 2	TERRACE HOUSE 3	NON RESIDENTIAL plus SINGLE DWG. 4	PURPOSE BUILT BLOCK OF FLATS 5	BLDG. CONVERTED TO MORE THAN 1 DWG. 6	21
---------------------	--------------------	--------------------	--	--------------------------------------	---	----

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION OF BUILDING

PRE 1919 1	1919-1949 2	POST 1949 3	22
---------------	----------------	----------------	----

IS THE DWELLING IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION

MULTI-OCCUPIED 1	PROBABLY H.O. 2	PROBABLY NOT H.O. 3	NOT MULTI-OCCUP. 4	23
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IS THE DWELLING "UNFIT"

UNFIT 1	PROBABLY UNFIT 2	PROB'LY NOT UNFIT 3	NOT UNFIT 4	24
------------	---------------------	------------------------	----------------	----

WOULD YOU EXPECT ACTION TO BE TAKEN UNDER 1957 HSG. ACT
this section to be filled in whether dwg is unfit or not

IS THE ENVIRONMENT UNSATISFACTORY

PART II 1	PART III 2	NO 3	25
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IS THE ENVIRONMENT UNSATISFACTORY

UNSATISFACTORY 1	NOT UNSATISFACTORY 2	26
---------------------	-------------------------	----

NUMBER OF ROOMS IN DWELLING

<i>specify</i>	UNOBTAINABLE x	27
----------------	-------------------	----

DOES THE DWELLING POSSESS FOR THE EXCLUSIVE USE OF THE OCCUPANTS

FIXED BATH IN A BATHROOM 1	FIXED BATH NOT IN A BATHROOM 2	NEITHER 3	UNOBTAINABLE x	28
----------------------------------	--------------------------------------	--------------	-------------------	----

DOES THE DWELLING POSSESS FOR THE EXCLUSIVE USE OF THE OCCUPANTS,

WASH HAND BASIN 1	NONE 2	UNOBTAINABLE x	29
----------------------	-----------	-------------------	----

DOES THE DWELLING POSSESS FOR THE EXCLUSIVE USE OF THE OCCUPANTS

W.C. WITH ENTRANCE INSIDE DWELLING 1	W.C. WITH ENTRANCE INSIDE BUILDING 2	W.C. WITH ENTRANCE OUTSIDE BUILDING 3	NONE 4	UNOBTAINABLE x	30
--	--	---	-----------	-------------------	----

DOES THE DWELLING POSSESS

HOT & COLD WATER AT THREE POINTS 1	NONE OR LESS THAN THREE POINTS 2	UNOBTAINABLE x	31
--	--	-------------------	----

IS THE DWELLING IMPROVABLE (4 POINTS)

ALREADY HAS 4 AMENITIES 1	YES 2	NO: WATER SUPPLY IMPRACTICABLE 3	NO: OTHER REASON <i>specify</i> 4	UNOBTAINABLE x	32
---------------------------------	----------	--	---	-------------------	----

WHERE CAN THE BATHROOM BE ADDED

ALREADY HAS BATHROOM 1	INTERNALLY W'OUT LOSS OF BEDSPACE 2	INTERNALLY WITH LOSS or EXTERNAL 3	INTERNALLY WITH LOSS OF B.S. ONLY 4	EXTERNALLY ONLY 5	NOT IMPROVABLE 6	UNOBTAINABLE x	33
------------------------------	---	--	---	----------------------	---------------------	-------------------	----

WOULD REPAIRS TO THE DWELLING COST

LESS THAN £100 1	£100-£250 2	£250-£500 3	£500-£1000 4	£1000-£1500 5	OVER £1500 6	UNOBTAINABLE x	34
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WHAT IS THE TENURE OF THE DWELLING

CLOSED UNDER HSG. OR PLANNING ACTS 1	OWNER OCCUPIED 2	H. T. OR L. A. TENANT 3	OTHER 4	UNOBTAINABLE x	35
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FORM NOT COMPLETED FOR REASONS

NO LONGER A DWELLING 1	DWELLING DEMOLISHED 2	CARAVAN OR HOUSEBOAT 3	ADDRESS UNTRACEABLE 4	OTHER REASON <i>specify</i> 5	36
------------------------------	-----------------------------	------------------------------	-----------------------------	-------------------------------------	----

OTHER NOTES _____

HM/LP/5/1966

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