



Department for
Communities and
Local Government



English Housing Survey

Changes to physical survey form and interview survey
questionnaire 2014/15



Consultation with English Housing Survey users on changes to the survey

Following a period of consultation with colleagues in housing policy, the English Housing Survey (EHS) team have finalised the changes to the interview questionnaire and the physical survey form for survey year 2014/15. These changes have been reviewed and agreed with co-funders DECC and consortium partners National Centre for Social Research (NatCen), Building Research Establishment (BRE), and CADS Housing Surveys .

Review of data collection on the English Housing Survey

The EHS collects data in two separate phases. In the first phase an interviewer visits a sampled address and conducts a face-to-face interview using a questionnaire that is administered via CAPI (computer assisted personal interviewing). In the days following the interview a second phase of data collection occurs when a qualified surveyor visits the address to make an assessment of the fabric and condition of the home. The surveyor completes a detailed form using a digital pen.

Each year the relevance of the data collected on the interview questionnaire and surveyor form is reviewed in consultation with users. Questions may be revised if they are found to deliver poor quality data, or removed altogether if the information they elicit is no longer relevant to our users' needs. This makes room for the inclusion of new questions, capturing data on emerging trends and new government policy.

In 2014-15 the questionnaire and physical survey were subject to a number of changes, summarised below.

New questions on living in the private rented sector

Several new questions on aspects of the private rented sector (PRS) will be added to the interview questionnaire:

- the total length of time people stay in the PRS (adding up time spent at different addresses);
- the duration of the tenancy that is secured, the length of the notice period, and whether this is adequate;
- where responsibility for repairs lies, with the landlord, estate agent or property manager;

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- whether up-front fees charged to the tenant for starting a new tenancy are transparent,
 - whether up-front fees are so large that they inhibit free movement to new accommodation.

Other topics

In addition, the interview survey will incorporate questions on the following topics:

- identification of householders who are or have served in the Armed Forces (branch, length of service and any resulting long-term injury);
- reasons why social rented sector (SRS) households have considered moving home (eg. for work, for more space);
- reasons why a mortgage applications have been turned down;
- impact of NewBuy and Help to Buy on intentions of those who are renting to get onto the property ladder;
- when smoke alarm(s) were last tested;
- whether participating in particular schemes that help finance measures to increase the energy efficiency of the home (eg. Green Deal, Renewable Heat Incentive).

In addition some minor amendments to existing questions have been made, adding response options for example.

Rotation out of lower priority questions to create space

The following questions have been assessed as lower priority and will be removed temporarily from the survey (“rotated out”) to yield space for new questions:

- the contact details of the landlord for PRS tenants, previously used for the Private Landlord Survey;
- selected questions on work done to improve energy efficiency of the home;
- some questions on satisfaction with local area and changes to the local area.

Scheduled rotation of question modules

Two modules are scheduled for rotation back in for 2014/15: QDepAtt (the module of questions on tenancy deposits) and QDisadapt (the module of questions relating to adaptations for disability). Two modules are also scheduled for rotating out for 2014/15: Qfire (the module of questions on fire safety) and QSechomes (the module of questions on second homes).

Changes to the physical survey form

As part of the annual consultation key users of data from the EHS physical survey were also consulted. The main topic areas to be updated are listed below:

- more detail on wall insulation including hard-to-treat walls
- more detail on renewable energy
- whether boiler is working for fuel poverty analysis
- household question on overheating
- presence of carbon monoxide detector, smart meters and in-house display

Further enquiries

Please contact the survey team at ehs@communities.gsi.gov.uk

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Department for Communities and Local Government

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