



Report to Scrutiny

Item Number:

Contains Confidential Or
Exempt Information

No

Subject of Report:	The Impact of Poor Housing on Health
Meeting:	Scrutiny Review Panel 1 - Inequalities 8 th September 2016
Service report author:	Maxine Sawford, Housing Graduate Trainee, Sawfordm@ealing.gov.uk tel: 0208 825 5751
Scrutiny officer:	Anna-Marie Rattray, Scrutiny Review Officer Email: RattrayA@ealing.gov.uk Tel: 0208 825 8227
Cabinet Responsibility:	Cllr Jasbir Anand, Housing Portfolio Holder
Director Responsibility:	Mark Wiltshire, Director of Community Safety & Housing
Brief:	To consider the impact of poor housing on the health of the residents in the borough and make recommendations for improvements accordingly
Recommendations:	The Panel is recommended to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- consider and comment on the information provided on the impact of poor housing on the health of the residents in the borough; and- make suggestions for further improvements accordingly

1. Impact of poor housing on health

Ealing is among the largest boroughs in London with a population totalling 342,100 in 2014¹. The Greater London authority (GLA) has projected that this will increase to 365,000 by 2021. At present, there are 137,000 residential properties in the Borough of which 117,000 are in the private sector².

The tenure structure of residential properties has changed significantly with a greater number of those renting privately. Census figures from 2011 showed that since 2001 there has been an increase of nearly 70%, from 21,000 units to 36,000 units in the private rented sector. In the same period, owner occupation has shrunk by 12% whilst social renting has remained static³.

Housing and Poor Health

This report will focus on the impact of housing on health. This will be done using the World Health Organisation's definition as a framework, "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity⁴". The impact of housing on each these arrears will be discussed, including the difference within tenure types.

Difference in Tenures

Mayhew Harper Associates were commissioned to undertake an in depth analysis of Ealing's Private rented sector (PRS). One of the key findings of the report was how the rapid increase in the PRS has led to a fall in property standards such as dilapidations, overcrowding and anti-social behaviour⁵. This is a picture reflected nationally with the English Housing Survey identifying higher levels of poor housing across the PRS⁶

These issues are not just confined to the PRS, in 2015 it was estimated that nationally, 100,973 council homes were still below the decent home standard⁷

Physical Health

There is a direct link between poor housing conditions and physical health problems with an increase in related diseases and physical injury. In order to quantify poor housing, a measure often used is the Housing Health and Safety Rating System

¹ Ealing Council, *Facts and Figures*, Accessed April 2016.

https://www.ealing.gov.uk/info/201033/council_and_local_decisions/483/ealing_facts_and_figures

² Mayhew. L, *Additional and Selective Licensing in Ealing and the association with Anti-Social Behaviour*. September 2015, Accessed April 2015.

³ Ibid

⁴ World Health organisation, *WHO definition on health*, Accessed 12.8.2016.

<http://www.who.int/about/definition/en/print.html>

⁵ See Appendix A for Mayhew Report

⁶ Chartered institute of Environmental Health, *Housing and Health resource*, Reviewed 2015, Accessed April 2016, <http://www.cieh-housing-and-health-resource.co.uk/>

⁷ Inside housing. *100,000 council homes will still be non-decent in 2015* <http://www.insidehousing.co.uk/100000-council-homes-will-still-be-non-decent-in-2015/6511478.article>

(HHSRS)⁸. It is used as a means of identifying hazards within housing across all tenures. The system is used to rate the risk from 29 hazards including:

- Damp and mold, excess cold/heat
- Pollutants e.g. asbestos, carbon monoxide, lead
- Lack of space, security or lighting, or excessive noise
- Poor hygiene, sanitation, water supply
- Accidents – falls, electric shocks, fires, burns, scalds
- Collisions, explosions, structural collapse

Fig 1 demonstrates the potential health implications for each of these hazards.

Fig 1 Impact of hazards on Physical Health⁹

Hazard	Physical Health Effect
Damp and Mould Growth	Increase in heart rate, Increased hygiene risk Increased risk of accidents Spread of contagious disease
Excess Cold	Hypothermia Respiratory conditions – bronchitis, pneumonia, influenza Cardiovascular Heart attacks, strokes Infections Death
Lead	Lead when ingested accumulates in the body and has toxic effects on the nervous system, cognitive development and blood production
Asbestos	Pleural plaques Fibrosis Lung cancer Mesothelioma
Carbon Monoxide and fuel combustion products	High Concentrations – unconsciousness and death Lower Concentrations – headaches, dizziness, weakness, nausea, confusion, disorientation, fatigue
Crowding and Space	Increase in heart rate Increased hygiene risks Increased risk of accidents Spread of contagious diseases

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Chartered Institute of Environmental health 2015

Water supply	Gastro-intestinal illness
Noise	Headaches Sleep disturbance
Domestic Hygiene, pests and refuse	Gastro-intestinal disease Asthma and allergic reactions
Personal Hygiene, sanitation and Drainage	Gastro-intestinal illness and Infections Skin Infections

It is estimated that over 20% of properties in the PRS have a category 1 hazard which is twice the number in social housing¹⁰.

Mental health

Whilst there is a clearly defined link between poor housing and poor physical health; the link is harder to demonstrate when looking at the impact on mental health. Despite this, for many individuals, there is a clear link between poor mental health and insecure housing¹¹.

Those with mental health issues, particularly when severe, also face the additional barrier of maintaining a tenancy. This can make it even more difficult for them to secure safe, good quality housing and also puts them at greater risk of becoming homeless¹².

Equally, housing in the PRS tends to have much less security in tenure versus homeownership and social housing. This in itself can create add/or exacerbate mental health conditions¹³.

The risk of homelessness can have a particularly damaging impact on children and young people. Offending and behaviour problems can often be traced back to homelessness in younger years¹⁴. There is also growing evidence to suggest that pre-school age children are at risk of developing mental health issues such as anxiety and depression as a result of poor housing¹⁵.

The temperature of a property can also have a damaging effect on an occupants' mental health. The UK warm front scheme found a link between the temperature of a property and mental health. Those with bedrooms with temperatures higher than 21 C

¹⁰ North 2014, pg.21

¹¹ Chartered Institute of Environmental health 2015

¹² Mental Health NHS Confederation, *Housing and Mental Health*, 2011, Accessed April 2016.

http://www.nhsconfed.org/~media/Confederation/Files/Publications/Documents/Housing_MH_021211.pdf

¹³ Chartered institute of environmental health, 2015

¹⁴ Shelter, *Chance of a lifetime The impact of bad housing on children's lives*, 2006, pg. 7

¹⁵ Chartered Institute of environmental health

were found to be 50% less likely to be experiencing depression or anxiety than those who were at 15 C or less¹⁶.

Fig 2 Demonstrates the potential impact other hazards can have on mental health¹⁷

Fig 2 potential impact other hazards can have on mental health

Hazard	Impact on mental health
General Substandard Housing	Mental health – anxiety, depression Socio-emotional development Disruption to education and impact on academic achievement
Damp and Mould Growth	Depression Anxiety Feeling of Shame
Excess Cold	Depression and anxiety Slower physical growth and cognitive development in children
Lead	Continual exposure at low levels has been shown to cause impaired cognitive development and behavioural problems in children.
Crowding and Space	Psychological distress and mental disorders; Reduction of tolerance; A reduction of the ability to concentrate; Disruption to education and impact on academic achievement. Stress tension and sometimes family break-up Lack of privacy
Entry by Intruders	Fear of crime; Stress and anguish.
Lighting	Depression and psychological effects caused by a lack of natural light or the lack of a window with a view
Noise	Stress responses; sleep disorders; Lack of concentration; Anxiety and irritability
Domestic Hygiene, pests and refuse	Emotional distress
Personal Hygiene, sanitation and Drainage	Feeling of shame

Overcrowding

The 2011 Census indicated that 67.9% of the 1.1M overcrowded households in the UK were private or social renting and 23.6% of all households in Ealing were overcrowded. The data estimates that there were 1,600 unlicensed HMOs in the borough¹⁸. Overcrowding is a growing problem in the UK as a consequence of the lack of affordable housing (**Fig 3**),

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ Office of National Statistics, 2011 Census. Accessed April 2016. <http://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011census>



Fig 3 Graph showing the ratio of house prices to earnings in the UK¹⁹

Access to private space has a major role in maintaining good mental health and privacy restrictions can lead to mental problems such as stress, depression or anxiety. Overcrowding causes a wide array of accumulative stresses (**Fig.4**) which consequently can have an associated negative effect on mental and physical health. Specifically, Shelter found that 86% of individuals living in overcrowded conditions suffered from depression, anxiety or stress and 75% suffer sleep disturbance which can have a wide range of effects on a person's health e.g. diabetes, obesity, hypertension and depression²⁰.

¹⁹ Pettinger, 2016, *UK Housing Market Stats and Graphs*, Accessed April 2016

<https://www.economicshelp.org/blog/5709/housing/housing-market-stats-and-graphs/>

²⁰ Colton, 2006, *Sleep disorders and deprivation*, Accessed, April 2016

<https://www.nationalacademies.org/hmd/~media/Files/Report%20Files/2006/Sleep-Disorders-and-Sleep-Deprivation-An-Unmet-Public-Health-Problem/Sleepforweb.pdf>.

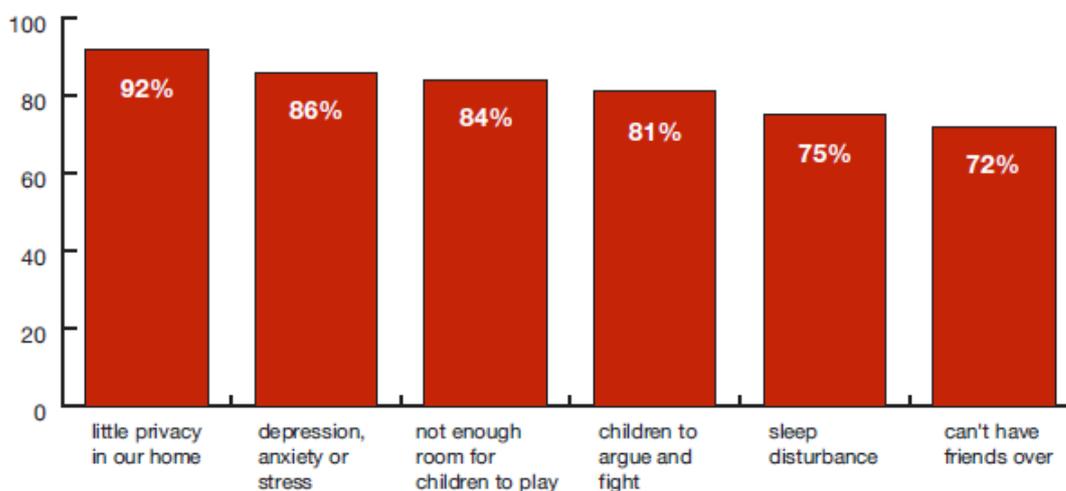


Fig.4 Graph demonstrating the most common negative effects of overcrowding²¹.

Vulnerable groups disproportionately impacted

The impact poor housing has on individual's health disproportionately affects vulnerable groups. Children and young people are more likely to live in overcrowded conditions. The impact of this is vast, from affecting educational attainment, causing psychological and emotional distress and impacting on children's cognitive development²². Children living in damp, mouldy conditions are more likely to develop asthma and respiratory difficulties than those living in warm dry homes²³.

The health of those aged over 75 are also disproportionately affected. They are particularly vulnerable during the colder months. Poorly heated housing can lead to a range of health problems, including respiratory and circulatory conditions, cardiovascular disease and poor mental health. It is said that one of the main driving points behind this is energy inefficient properties that are difficult or costly to heat²⁴.

Dilapidations

Reported dilapidations increased significantly between April 2011 and January 2015. A large proportion were associated with Outhouses (25.4%) and HMO's, which supports the need for the Council to take regulatory action to improve the condition of private homes.

²¹ Shelter , *Full House Report*, 2005, pg.13

https://england.shelter.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0016/66400/Full_house_reportL.pdf

²² Chartered Institute of environmental health, 2015

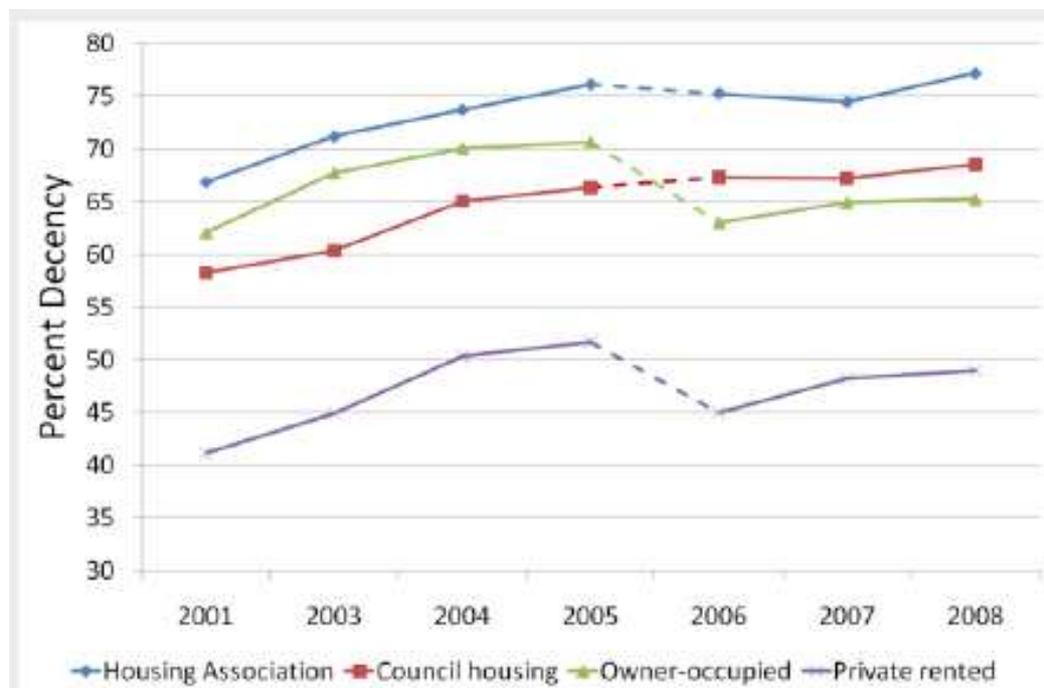
²³ Ibid

²⁴ Ibid

Category	Number of incidents	%
Housing defects	3,794	33.4
Outhouse related	2,885	25.4
HMO related	2,231	19.6
General nuisance	1,327	11.7
Overcrowding	206	1.8
Rubbish	202	1.8
Overgrown garden	160	1.4
Other	553	4.9
Total	11,358	100

Fig.5 - Number of dilapidations by type reported within the London Borough of Ealing April 2010 – January 2015²⁵

In social housing, only 3.0% of properties have dilapidations²⁶ with the Decent Homes Programme specifically targeting this sector to improve and standardise housing conditions over the last two decades. This scheme has used £38bn²⁷ of government investment and has been largely successful (**Fig.6**), whilst only £2bn has been spent on Private Sector Housing during this time and therefore, standards are falling, with unregulated landlords exploiting tenants across London, who have little choice but to pay high rents for poor housing.



²⁵ Mayhew 2015, pg.15

²⁶ Mayhew 2015, pg.19

²⁷ Houses of Parliament 2011, pg.3

*Previous additional licensing scheme (expired 2015)

Fig.6 Graph depicting the housing stock conditions of different housing sectors and the effect of the Decent Homes Programme (2001-2008)²⁸

2. Legal Implications

2.1 S.3 of the Housing Act 2004 imposes an obligation on local housing authorities to review housing conditions in their districts with a view to identifying any action that may need to be taken by them.

2.2 S.8 of the Housing Act 1985 imposes an obligation on local housing authorities to consider housing conditions in their district and for that purpose to review any information which has been brought to their notice, including in particular information brought to their notice as a result of the consideration of the housing conditions in their district under s.3 of the Housing Act 2004.

3. Financial Implications

No financial implications directly arising from this report.

4. Other Implications

Links to Ealing Council's Plans and Strategies:

- Corporate Plan 2014-18: Priority 1: A prosperous borough, providing affordable, high quality and decent housing.
- Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2016-21, Priority 3: Create and sustain an urban environment that helps people to make healthy choices
- Energy Strategy: Affordable warmth: protect the health and wellbeing of our most vulnerable residents
- Private Sector Housing Strategy 2014-19, Priority 3: Improve the condition of private housing through regulation

5. Background papers

Ealing Council, Facts and Figures

https://www.ealing.gov.uk/info/201033/council_and_local_decisions/483/ealing_facts_and_figures

Mayhew. L, Additional and Selective Licensing in Ealing and the association with Anti-Social Behaviour. September 2015

²⁸ Houses of Parliament 2011, pg.3

World Health organisation, WHO definition on health
<http://www.who.int/about/definition/en/print.html>

Chartered Institute of Environmental Health, Housing and Health resource, Reviewed 2015, <http://www.cieh-housing-and-health-resource.co.uk/>
Inside Housing, 100,000 council homes will still be non-decent in 2015
<http://www.insidehousing.co.uk/100000-council-homes-will-still-be-non-decent-in-2015/6511478.article>

Mental Health NHS Confederation, Housing and Mental Health, 2011
http://www.nhsconfed.org/~media/Confederation/Files/Publications/Documents/Housing_MH_021211.pdf

Shelter, Chance of a lifetime The impact of bad housing on children's lives, 2006, pg. 7

Colton, 2006, Sleep disorders and deprivation,
<https://www.nationalacademies.org/hmd/~media/Files/Report%20Files/2006/Sleep-Disorders-and-Sleep-Deprivation-An-Unmet-Public-Health-Problem/Sleepforweb.pdf>

Shelter , Full House Report, 2005, pg.13
https://england.shelter.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0016/66400/Full_house_reportL.pdf

Office of National Statistics, 2011 Census. <http://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011census>

Pettinger, 2016, UK Housing Market Stats and Graphs
<https://www.economicshelp.org/blog/5709/housing/housing-market-stats-and-graphs/>

Consultation

Name of consultee	Department	Date sent to consultee	Date response received from consultee	Comments appear in report para:
Internal				
Director	Executive Director Regeneration and Housing			
Lawyer	Director of Legal Services			
Finance Officer	Director of Finance			
Councillor	Cabinet Member for Housing			

Report History

Decision type:	<i>I. Urgency item?</i>
Information	No

Authorised by Cabinet member:	Date report drafted:	Report deadline:	Date report sent:
	17.8.16	26.8.16	26.8.16

Report no.:	Mark Wiltshire, Director of Community Safety & Housing