



Private Sector House Condition Survey 2003

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY REPORT



**Prepared on behalf of
Swindon Borough Council**

by

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November 2003

Ref: E1190





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY REPORT

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This report presents an executive summary of the findings to emerge from a comprehensive sample survey of housing conditions in the private housing sector across the Borough of Swindon. The study has been conducted on behalf of Swindon Borough Council by David Adamson & Partners Ltd.

1.2 Using national guidance issued by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, the study has involved a sample of 1000 randomly selected private dwellings representative of all areas and of all private housing types, ages and tenures. At each sampled dwelling a full internal and external survey of physical attributes and conditions has been completed; supported by a short interview with occupying households. Information from the survey can be applied to national planning within the Housing Investment Programme (HIP) framework and also locally to ensure the equitable distribution of resources for private housing within a private sector regeneration strategy.

1.3 This report is supported by a detailed report of survey findings and by a computerised database of information on sampled properties.

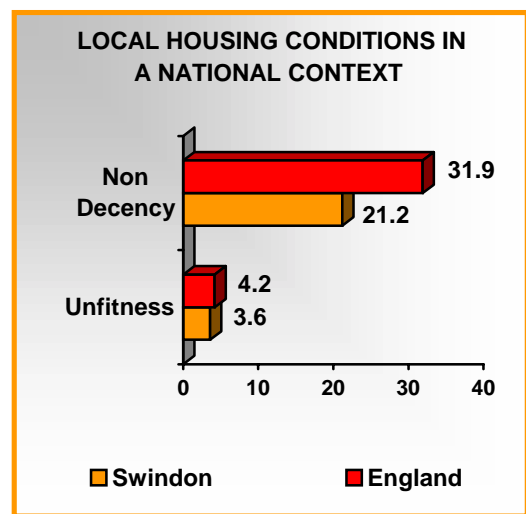
2. HOUSING CONDITIONS - AN OVERVIEW

2.1 The Borough of Swindon comprises an estimated 69958 private dwellings, containing 65849 households and a private household population of 168933 persons.

2.2 55093 dwellings (78.8%) meet the requirements of the Decent Homes Standard and can be regarded as satisfactory. The remaining 14865 dwellings (21.2%) are "non-Decent" due to unsatisfactory condition or inadequate amenity. Within the non-decent housing stock, 2518 dwellings (16.9%) were assessed as unfit for habitation; 3145 dwellings (21.2%) while not unfit were in poor repair and 9202 dwellings (61.9%) while not unfit and in good repair offered inadequate

amenity or thermal efficiency. These figures equate to an overall rate of unfit in the Borough of 3.6% and an overall rate of non-decency of 21.2%.

2.3 Rates of dwelling unfit and non-decency in the Borough of Swindon are not significantly different from the National average. Rates of non-decent housing are however below the National average.



3. NON-DECENT HOUSING - UNFITNESS

3.1 An estimated 2518 private dwellings in the Borough of Swindon are unfit, representing an average rate of 3.6%. Unfitness rates are equivalent to current regional and national averages.

3.2 Unfitness is not evenly distributed across the Borough but is higher in particular areas and housing sectors

- *Central and Gorse Hill Wards*
- *Private-Rented Stock*
- *Pre-1919 housing*

3.3 Factors influencing the decision to classify a dwelling as unfit are internal amenity related and in particular are associated with facilities for the preparation and cooking of food.





4. NON-DECENT HOUSING - DISREPAIR

- 4.1 A further 3145 dwellings while not unfit experience disrepair and are non-decent. These dwellings are at risk of deteriorating into unfitness, and represent 4.5% of all private housing.
- 4.2 Rates of disrepair are higher in the inter-war housing stock although problems of disrepair are extending into the early post war sector and are evident across all tenures. Geographically highest rates of disrepair are associated with Western and Gorse Hill Wards.

5. NON DECENT HOUSING—ENERGY AND AMENITY

- 5.1 Outside of unfitness and disrepair, 9202 dwellings (13.2%) fail the amenity and energy efficiency requirements of the Decent Homes Standard. The majority of failings relate to energy efficiency. The current SAP rating for private housing in the Borough is measured at 56, above to the national average of 51 for all private housing. 16618 occupied dwellings (25%) have a SAP rating of 50 or below. Lowest levels of energy efficiency are associated with Central, Gorse Hill and the mixed urban wards and with pre-1919 housing. 6425 households, 9.8% are in fuel poverty.

6. SUMMARY OF DECENT HOMES PERFORMANCE

- 6.1 Overall, 14865 dwellings fail to meet the criteria of the Decent Homes Standard and are non-decent. This represents 21.2% of total private sector housing in the Borough.

- 6.2 Costs to address non-decency are estimated at £38.285M averaging £2576 per dwelling. 86% of outstanding costs are associated with disrepair (£7.653M, 20% and unfitness (£24.375M, 66%)

7. HOUSEHOLDS IN UNSATISFACTORY DWELLINGS

- 7.1 **Poor housing conditions within the Borough are associated with households in social and economic disadvantage.** This affects the ability of households to repair and improve their dwellings; in particular

- *Elderly Households*
- *Young Single Households*
- *Households on benefit and/or low incomes*

- 7.2 While economic and social disadvantage can impair a households ability to improve or repair their dwelling, other factors apply and in particular attitudes to and awareness of actual housing conditions.

There is a significant lack of perception of housing condition problems among private sector households

- *88% of households living in unfit dwellings are very satisfied with their current housing*
- *63% of households have not carried out major repairs/improvements to their home in the past 5 years.*
- *Only 21% of households living in unfit dwellings intend to repair or improve their home in the next 5 years.*

TABLE 1: COSTS TO ADDRESS DECENT HOMES

DEFECT CLASSIFICATION	DEFECTIVE (1) DWELLINGS		COSTS TO ACHIEVE DECENCY		
			Total Cost	Average Cost	% of Total Cost
	No	%	£M	£	%
Unfitness	2518	3.6	24.375	9680	65.6
Disrepair	3604	5.2	7.653	2123	20.0
Amenities	353	0.5	0.883	2501	2.3
Energy Efficiency	10748	15.4	5.374	500	14.1
ALL NON DECENT DWELLINGS	14865	21.2	38.285	2576	100.0





8. EMERGING ISSUES

8.1 Overall the survey indicates that 55093 private dwellings, or 78.8%, are in satisfactory condition. The remaining 14865 dwellings, or 21.2% are non-decent due to unfitness, poor repair or inadequate amenity/energy efficiency. Private housing conditions are equivalent to the national average but local problems are nevertheless apparent and require to be addressed in any future housing strategy. To facilitate informed decision making on the targeting of housing resources the survey reveals several factors which ought to be considered. These include

- *An uneven distribution of physical housing problems across the housing stock with above average rates of unsatisfactory housing conditions in the private-rented sector and for pre-war housing.*

- *An uneven distribution of physical housing problems geographically across the Borough with above average rates of deficiency in the older, inner wards.*
- *A correlation between physical housing conditions problems and socio-economic disadvantage. Elderly households are particularly affected.*

8.2 A new strategic framework for private sector housing investment is recommended within the Regulatory Reform Order. While incorporating support for households in economic and social disadvantage a key component of the new framework is the potential release of equity in owner-occupied homes to support repair and improvement. Equity potential within the owner-occupied market is high although only 138 target households, or 5.2% expressed interest in a Council sponsored Equity Guarantee Scheme.

HOUSING CONDITIONS AND INVESTMENT NEEDS

SURVEY AREA	TOTAL HOUSING STOCK	UNSATISFACTORY HOUSING								COSTS TO ACHIEVE DECENTY	
		UNFIT		POOR REPAIR		UNSATISFACTORY AMENITIES/ ENERGY		TOTAL NON DECENT		TOTAL	AVERAGE
		NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	£M	£
Central Ward	4210	536	12.7	134	3.2	429	10.2	1099	26.1	7.175	6526
Eastcott Ward	4951	265	5.4	265	5.1	851	17.2	1382	27.9	3.273	2369
Western Ward	4163	168	4.0	337	8.1	618	14.8	1123	27.0	2.201	1961
Gorse Hill Ward	3351	346	10.3	281	8.4	303	9.0	930	27.8	3.310	3558
Mixed Urban Wards	16205	604	3.7	620	3.8	2536	15.7	3762	23.2	10.729	2852
Mixed Rural Wards	9067	597	6.6	201	2.2	925	10.2	1723	19.0	7.113	4129
Post-War Housing Wards	28011	0	0.0	1306	4.7	3540	12.6	4846	17.3	4.483	925
ALL AREAS	69958	2517	3.6	3144	4.5	9202	13.2	14865	21.2	38.284	2575

This is a research report prepared by
DAP Consultancy
 on behalf of
Swindon Borough Council

Total Private
 Housing Stock
 69958 Dwellings

