

Northern Ireland House Condition Survey 2022
2nd User Engagement Group Meeting (via web-ex)
25 March 2021
MINUTES

Attendees:

Pat Austin – NEA	Avril Hiles – DfC
Jahnet Brown – NIHE	Gerard Jervis – NIHE
Robert Clements – NIHE	Claire Kennedy – NIHE (minutes)
Sinead Collins – NIHE	Donna Knowles – DfC
Denise Conlon – NIHE	Siobhan McCauley – NIHE (Chair)
Lesley Curry – DfC	Oliver McHugh – DfC
Andy Frew – NIHE	Donna McLarnon – NIHE
Katie Fulton – DfC	John McMullan – NIHE
Tim Gilpin – NIHE	Colm McQuillan – NIHE
John Goudy – NIHE	

Apologies: Michelle Bamford, Catherine Blease, Aidan Campbell, Andy Clement, Ciara Cunningham, Aileen Gordan, Ailbhe Hickey, Paul Isherwood, Sharon Jeffers, Andy Kennedy, David Moore, Helen McAdam, Martin McDermott, Catherine McFarland, Stephen McGonagle, Hugh McVeigh, Claire Patton, Erin Savage, Claire Shortt, Kim Smyth, Susan Wilken

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1.0	Welcome and introductions S McCauley welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were noted.	
2.0	Declaration of Interests No declarations of interest were noted.	
3.0	Minutes from previous meeting The minutes of the previous meeting, held on 22 October 2020, were agreed. Actions to be carried forward were: A Frew had raised the possibility of accessing existing EPC datasets, if required. A Frew advised that he hopes to have access to this data soon. This will be followed up by the HCS team when the data is available. A separate user group meeting will be set up to discuss the format of the HCS reports.	HCS team HCS team
4.0	Progress report (report) J Brown and D McLarnon outlined the key points from the progress report distributed to the group in advance of the meeting. Members of the group were asked for any feedback and/or comments.	
4.1	NIHCS update from October 2020 D McLarnon provided an overview of the progress since the last user engagement group meeting held in October 2020.	
4.2	NIHCS 2021 consultation (Covid-19) D McLarnon thanked the group for their contribution to the consultation exercise which helped inform the decision on how to proceed with the survey. It was recognised that there were health and safety risks linked to carrying out the survey during the pandemic i.e. transmission of the virus. In addition to this, the consultation highlighted the following key issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there could be data quality risks if a low response rate is achieved, • there is a need for some level of output from the HCS in 2021 in 	

	<p>order to meet the needs of users</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> it is important to continue to monitor other nations and producers <p>Following the consultation; the NIHCS Steering Group recommended that the survey should be postponed until 2022 and modelled statistics, based on 2016 data, should be produced in the interim. The Housing Executive's CXBC approved the recommendation and the postponement was announced in February 2021.</p> <p>4.3 National Statistics The Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) has been informed about the decision to postpone the survey.</p> <p>4.4 Interim Modelling 2021 – User Group Discussion J Brown asked for the groups' views on potential modelling topics to be completed this year.</p> <p>The schedule was set out with the aim to have draft reports completed by September, followed by quality assurance and publication by December.</p> <p>J Brown explained that it is possible that 3 pieces of modelling work could be produced subject to the timeframe, feasibility and budget. However, if more than 3 areas of work were required combinations could be reviewed with the contractor.</p> <p>Feedback from users, already received through the consultation process, indicated that the key areas of interest for interim modelling were fuel poverty and energy.</p> <p>Discussion about possible modelling took place, and users also highlighted other areas of interest for future research. Suggestions made were:</p> <p>J McMullan: explore the impact of Covid-19 on housing.</p> <p>S Collins: include a question in the HCS about possible changes in energy costs as a result of Covid-19 and home working.</p> <p>A Frew: explore geographic information including geothermal energy, the impact of wind speed and height on energy use, the potential for storing heat underground, and for community heating in settlements.</p> <p>J McMullan: include questions on orientation of property to determine the potential for solar panels and if homes have hot water storage cylinders.</p> <p>P Austin: include questions relating to pre-payment meters and disconnecting issues.</p> <p>J Brown reported that new questions for 2022 will ask about oil quantities purchased - this will provide more depth to fuel poverty findings. It was confirmed that the HCS can provide analysis of households in fuel poverty by payment method for gas and electricity.</p> <p>R Clements: suggested an update to the annual fuel poverty figures (last figures were 2018). J Brown reported that 2019 and 2020 fuel poverty</p>	
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	<p>figures could be produced. However, 2020 could be subject to the availability of fuel cost data published in October 2021.</p> <p>J McMullan: suggested exploring food poverty in addition to fuel poverty.</p> <p>S McCauley invited the group to forward any additional requests for modelling to the HCS team by Friday 2 April. Requests will be considered in relation to time constraints and feasibility.</p>	User Group
4.5	<p>NIHCS 2022 – updates to the HCS form</p> <p>J Brown thanked the User Group for their feedback since the last meeting and that new questions and updates had, as far as possible, been included in the next HCS form.</p> <p>Physical section survey form changes included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • updating timelines • updating electricity tariffs and hot water fuel systems for NI • collecting information on charging points for electric vehicles <p>Social section survey form changes included collecting data on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • smart thermostat or smart home devices for appliances, lights, water • Changes of electricity supplier, difficulties paying energy bills, oil quantities bought and method of payment, reducing household energy use • temperatures at night time, flooding and impact of strong winds • energy improvement grants • Welfare benefit updates 	
4.6	<p>NIHCS 2022 modelling reports and outputs</p> <p>These will be reviewed at a User Group meeting closer in time to when decisions need to be made.</p>	
4.7	<p>NIHCS 2016 reports</p> <p>The '<i>Cost of carbon savings in NI's housing stock</i>' was published in February 2021. This is the first HCS report on this topic and it was noted the report provides robust data for NI.</p> <p>The next report due to be published (April/early May) is the '<i>Tolerable Standard for NI</i>' based on Scotland's minimum repair standard. This will be the last report, in the series, based on 2016 data. The report will be useful for the review of the fitness standard in NI.</p>	
4.8	<p>Revised Timetable</p> <p>J Brown provided an update of the HCS timetable due to the postponement of the 2021 HCS. In addition to the interim modelling, preparations are continuing for 2022 including training manual updates, setting up a surveyor payment system, recruitment planning (surveyors) and sample design.</p>	
5.0	<p>Next steps</p> <p>J Brown asked members to forward any suggestions for interim modelling by 2 April.</p>	User Group
6.0	<p>AOB</p> <p>S McCauley thanked the group for their support.</p>	
	<p>Date of next meeting</p> <p>Date to be agreed.</p>	