

**HOUSE CONDITION SURVEY
3rd USER ENGAGEMENT GROUP MEETING
THURSDAY 5TH OCTOBER 2017
LIBRARY MEETING ROOM
THE HOUSING CENTRE**

- 1.0 Present:
- Karly Greene – NIHE (Chair)
 - Jahnet Brown – NIHE
 - Donna McLarnon – NIHE (minutes)
 - Gerard Jervis - NIHE
 - Jennifer Doak – ABC Council
 - Danielle Rush – Dept for Infrastructure
 - Andy Clement - DfC
 - Robert Clements – NIHE
 - Sinead Collins - NIHE

Apologies: Sharon Jeffers, Aidan Campbell, Ciara Cunningham, Suzanne Bagnall

		Action
2.0	Welcome and previous minutes The previous minutes were agreed. All actions had been completed.	
3.0 3.1	Progress update Fieldwork and response rates Throughout the fieldwork period it was noted that the response rate in South Belfast was low, possibly due to the high number of student housing in the area (making access over the summer months difficult). For this reason fieldwork was extended to mid-November, with 3 surveyors working in this area to boost the response rate. The overall response rate was 67%, slightly lower than the usual response rate of approximately 70%. However, this drop in response rates is also being experienced across many other social research surveys and is not unique to the HCS.	
3.2	National Statistics accreditation During 2016 and 2017 the NIHCS was assessed by the UK Statistics Authority for compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. In March 2017 the NIHCS was awarded National Statistics Status, which means that the statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality, and public value.	

	<p>K Greene informed the group about some of the National Statistics rules which need to be adhered to, particularly those which may affect users, such as release practices ie. the statistics must be made available to everyone at the same time, therefore nothing can be released before the publication date.</p>	
<p>3.3</p>	<p>Preliminary findings</p> <p>K Greene outlined the key findings, and advised the group about an issue with the overall stock figure for 2016. The stock figure was provided by NISRA, who carried out quality assurance of the address database during 2015/16. The preliminary report was published in March 2017 with an overall stock figure of 740,000. However during the summer of 2017 NISRA corrected the 2016 overall stock figure to 780,000 (based on the findings of the quality assurance process).</p> <p>NISRA carried out analysis of the 40,000 omitted addresses to check how they varied from the overall stock. Checks were carried out on known information such as council area, house type and capital values. NISRA concluded the overall randomness of this group meant that they did not vary much from the overall stock and there was therefore no significant impact on the representativeness of the NIHCS 2016 sample.</p> <p>The preliminary report was revised to reflect the corrected stock figure and was published in October 2017. The report shows that changes in proportions are minimal (in most cases less than 1 per cent).</p> <p>K Greene to present the findings of the report to the Housing Council.</p>	<p>KG</p>
<p>3.4</p>	<p>NIHCS modelling</p> <p>Modelling is now underway to produce the following data:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repair Costs • SAP and Thermal Comfort indicators • Decent Homes indicators • Fuel Poverty indicators • Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) • CO2 Emissions consistent for HECA <p>The modelling work was delayed due to the correction of the total stock figure (as the Repair Costs model had been completed and needed to be revised in line with the corrected stock figure). It is now anticipated that modelling will be completed in February 2018.</p>	

	<p>The group discussed the differences between the Fuel Poverty Models used in NI and in the rest of the UK. J Brown confirmed that Fuel Poverty will be calculated using both methods, and that going forward, both figures may be published to allow comparisons nationally.</p> <p>Seminars will be held to introduce the new definition and to explain the pros and cons of both.</p> <p>The HHSRS was discussed. JB advised the group that the decision on whether NI should adopt the HSSRS (rather than Unfitness) lies with the DfC. A separate meeting with the Department will be scheduled.</p> <p>S Collins asked about the possibility of rural unfitness figures. J Brown advised that this may be possible if the figures are robust enough, although some caution may be advised in relation to small numbers.</p> <p>J Brown also informed the group that the 2016 report will use a new definition of urban/rural. This new eight band definition is the result of the 'Review of the Statistical Classification and Delineation of Settlements' published by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) in 2015. The updated classification will allow comparison with other official statistics and is assigned using GIS, rather than being allocated by the surveyor.</p> <p>It will not be possible to compare figures calculated using the new definition with previous years. The group acknowledged that this may cause some problems but agreed that it was best to move to the new definition.</p>	<p>JB/DM</p> <p>JB</p>
<p>3.5</p>	<p>Cavity wall insulation survey</p> <p>The first phase of the CWI project went out to tender in February 2017, however no bids were received and feedback indicated that the budget was too low. A working group was set up to agree the way forward. NIHE's Asset Management department was carrying out a similar project examining CWI in NIHE dwellings, and it was proposed that both projects should be carried out by the same consultants, with Asset Management leading the project.</p> <p>D McLarnon informed the group that a research team had been appointed and the pre-inspection process was underway. It is anticipated that the project will take approximately one year to complete, with approximately 1000 NIHE dwellings and 300 private dwellings (identified through the NIHCS 2016) being surveyed using borescopes.</p>	

3.6	<p>Private rented sector survey</p> <p>This survey looks at all aspects of being a private tenant. The fieldwork has been completed and a draft report is due in November 2017. The report layout is being re-designed to create a shorter, more user friendly document. The group was advised that as some of the data comes from the NIHCS 2016 it will not be possible to release this until the NIHCS main report has been published. It will be released as a separate section at a later date.</p> <p>S Collins asked if it will include tenants in rural areas. J Brown confirmed that it will, but that due to the small sample size it will not be possible to report these separately.</p>	
4.0	<p>Structure and content of main report</p> <p>The research team asked for feedback on the current format of the report, and views on changing it to a shorter report with more use of infographics.</p> <p>The group agreed that a shorter report would be useful and would broaden the audience, however some members (particularly those from a policy background) did not want to lose the current format. Their view was that the current format is easy to read and the narrative is very useful, particularly to those who do not have a background in statistics. These users rely on the background information and analysis provided in the report.</p> <p>Following a discussion it was agreed that a two-pronged approach would be adopted, with the main report being published as normal, and a shorter summary report to follow. Users in favour of a new layout suggested an introduction for each chapter along with the relevant tables, and a 1 page summary for each topic.</p> <p>The research team will seek guidance from the UK Statistics Authority's assessment team about how to include the summary report in the National Statistics assessment process.</p>	DM
5.0	<p>Timescales and meeting users' needs</p> <p>The group confirmed that a March¹ 2018 publication will meet their data needs.</p>	
6.0	<p>AOB</p> <p>The group discussed energy efficiency and the need for an evaluation to show that the £30 million spend annually is</p>	

¹ Since this meeting, the publication date has been changed to May 2018. This is due to a recent government revision of one of the key modelling outputs which now needs to be adopted.

	<p>making a difference.</p> <p>The group discussed the need to identify research requirements in relation to community planning. Welfare Reform and private tenant research were put forward as possible research topics.</p>	
7.0	<p>Date of next meeting</p> <p>The next meeting will be held in February 2018. Date to be agreed.</p>	