

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A: QUESTIONS ABOUT HOUSING PROBLEMS

Looking at the options on the card, to what extent, in your opinion, is each of the following a problem in your home? (options “no problem”, “minor problem”, “serious problem”, “don’t know”)

Housing problems related to warmth: Dampness or condensation; draughty/leaky windows, keeping your home warm in winter; the heating system.

Other housing-related problems: the level of security; too few rooms; too many rooms; rooms too small; rooms too large; not enough privacy; noise from neighbours; noise from other household members; poor state of repair; hazards inside the home; hazards outside the home

THE JECH GALLERY

Better homes, better neighbourhoods

Interventions to improve housing are often part of broader area-regeneration activities. A programme of housing-led regeneration in a post-industrial village in West Dunbartonshire, at the foot of Loch Lomond in Scotland, involved housing association tenants moving from ex-council flats reported to have damp problems (fig 1), to newly built houses with private gardens (fig 2). Not only was the fabric of the new houses better, but also the neighbourhood regeneration involved general environmental improvements. These included aesthetic improvements, provision of children’s play areas and better street design. Levels of housing density were reduced by housing people in houses rather than in flats, and although the flats were not overcrowded, there was a small but statistically significant reduction in house occupancy (persons per room) when residents moved to their new house. A paper in this issue of *JECH* reports the findings of a prospective controlled study that evaluated the effects on health 1 year after residents moved to a new house: no marked health effects were reported.¹

The potential for positive health effects is often used as a rationale for public investment in neighbourhood regeneration.^{2,3} However, positive health effects should not be assumed to be the inevitable result of housing improvement.⁴ The results from our study raise questions about the complexity of the intervention and about the diverse mechanisms through which housing improvement may affect health.¹

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- 1 Thomson H, Petticrew M. The health impacts of housing-led regeneration: a prospective controlled study. *J Epidemiol Comm Health* 2007;**61**:211–4.
- 2 Social Exclusion Unit. *A new commitment to neighbourhood renewal: national strategy action plan*. HMSO, London: Cabinet Office, 2001.
- 3 HM Treasury & Department of Health. *Tackling health inequalities: summary of the 2002 cross cutting spending review*. London, 2002.
- 4 Thomson H, Petticrew M, Morrison D. Health effects of housing improvement: systematic review of intervention studies. *BMJ* 2001;**323**:187–90.

APPENDIX B: NEIGHBOURHOOD SCORE—AGGREGATE OF 21 ITEM QUESTIONNAIRE

Looking at the options on the card, which best describes how much of a problem the following are around where you live? (options “not a problem”, “a minor problem”, “a serious problem”, “don’t know”)

Vandalism; litter and rubbish; smells and fumes; assaults and muggings; burglaries, levels of security of houses; closes and back courts or gardens; disturbance by children or youngsters; speeding traffic; people drinking alcohol in public places; uneven or dangerous pavements; lack of public transport; level of police presences and speed of police response; safe children’s play areas; facilities for teenagers/young people; adequate street lighting; nuisance from dogs; people hanging around; reputation of neighbourhood; drug dealing and drug taking; noise—for example, factories, traffic, shouting; the people around here.



Figure 1 Ex-council flats with reported damp problems.



Figure 2 Newly built houses with private gardens and wider environmental improvements.