Dimensions of Inequality

Housing and Neighbourhood Standards

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July 2010
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Chapter 1

Introduction

This series of papers set out measures of inequality in housing and neighbourhood standards. The first paper (Chapter 2) provides an analysis for Great Britain as a whole based on data from the General Household Survey (GHS). This is a household rather than a property survey, but it does include data on households’ own perceptions of the quality of their dwelling, and the neighbourhood in which they live.

There is no Great Britain, or UK, wide property survey to provide professional evaluations of stock or neighbourhood quality. Long before the 1999 devolution settlement it was custom and practice that stock condition surveys were undertaken nationally, and there are stock condition surveys for each of England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Nor can the results of the national surveys simply be aggregated, as each country also uses different measures of stock and neighbourhood quality.

The second paper (Chapter 3) provides a broadly equivalent analysis for Scotland, drawing on data from the Scottish Household Survey, while the third paper (Chapter 4) provides a broadly equivalent analysis for Wales, drawing on data from the Living in Wales survey.

All three papers provide a measure of overcrowding defined against the ‘bedroom standard’. The question on household’s perceptions of the quality of their dwelling, and the neighbourhood in which they live, do however vary between the surveys. In each case the papers provide data on one indicator on stock quality, and two indicators on different dimensions of household’s perceptions of their local area.

The three household surveys do not collect household information that enables these measures to be applied to every strand of inequality of concern to the Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC). However all three surveys permit measures in terms of age, gender, ethnicity and long term illness, disability or infirmity, in addition to contextual measures related to tenure, income and economic status.

The General Household Survey analyses are based on data for the three years 2004 to 2006; although for some indicators it is based on data for just 2005 and 2006, as the selected measures were only introduced in 2005. The analyses from the Scottish Household Survey are based on the two years 2005 and 2006; while the analyses of stock condition from the Scottish House Condition Survey are based on data for the three years 2005/06 to 2007/08.
The Living in Wales survey based analyses are based on data for the three years 2006 to 2008, except for the analyses of overcrowding relative to the bedroom standard, for which data was available only for 2007 and 2008.

In all cases data from combined years was utilized in order to increase sample sizes so that the analyses could provide more robust results for, in some cases relatively small household groups. The GHS sample for the years 2004 to 2006 was 31,223. The sample for the two years 2005 and 2006 was 22,533. The Scottish Housing Survey sample for two years 2005 and 2006 was 31,013; the sample from the three years (2006 to 2008) of the Scottish House Condition Survey was 11,309. The Living in Wales sample for the years 2006 – 2008 was 22,917, while the sample for the two years (2007 and 2008) was 15,464.

All graphs are presented in terms of distributional percentages; rather than absolute numbers. Percentages are calculated based only on cases where data was provided. Generally, however, the number of cases without data was insignificant on all measures. The few exceptions are noted in the papers.

A brief final paper (Chapter 5) comments on the similarities, and differences, in the results from the analyses for Great Britain as a whole, and the results for Scotland and Wales.
Chapter 2

Great Britain

Introduction

This chapter sets out measures of inequality in housing and neighbourhood standards, based on analyses of data from the General Household Survey (GHS). The GHS is a long standing household survey that provides data for the whole of Great Britain.

In recent years the survey has also included questions on the quality of dwellings and neighbourhoods, based on the perceptions of the households. This is of particular value as the more detailed national house condition surveys that cover England, Scotland and Wales differ in the measures they apply, and the frequency with which they are undertaken.

This chapter focuses on four measures drawn from the GHS:

1. Density of occupation based on the ‘bedroom standard’
2. Whether the dwelling suffers from a leaking roof, damp walls/floors/ Foundations or rotten floorboards
3. Pollution, grime or other environmental problems in area
4. Crime, violence or vandalism in area.

The GHS does not collect household information that enables these measures to be applied to every strand of inequality of concern to the Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC). However it does permit measures in terms of age, gender, ethnicity and long term illness, disability or infirmity, in addition to measures related to tenure, income and economic status.

The analyses that follow are based on three years combined data (2004, 2005 and 2006) for the density of occupation measure, and two years combined data (2005 and 2006) for the other three measures. The results for each measure are set out in turn below. It should be noted that unless otherwise stated the definitions of households below are based solely on the status of the household representative person.
Density of occupation based on the ‘bedroom standard’

The conventional measure of the adequacy of housing space standards used in UK is the ‘bedroom standard’. This was developed in 1960, and has been routinely applied since the GHS first began in 1971. It is essentially based on pre-war environmental health standards. The standard is calculated in relation to the number of bedrooms, and the number and characteristics of the household members. One bedroom is allocated to each married or co-habiting couple, and other person aged over 21, each pair aged 10 to 20 of the same sex, and each pair of children under 10. Unpaired children, or individuals under 20, are allocated a separate bedroom (although they can be paired with another person aged under 20 of the same sex).

While the bedroom standard remains the primary measure of overcrowding it must also be recognised that over the last half century living standards have risen significantly, and average levels of occupational density are now some way above the bedroom standard. The average case is for a household to have one bedroom more than required to satisfy the bedroom standard; and a substantial proportion of households have two or more bedrooms than required by the standard.

While overcrowding, relative to the bedroom standard, is the key focus for housing and poverty policies, the differential access to accommodation occupied at densities above the bedroom standard is also relevant when the policy focus is on inequality.

Figure 2.1

Overcrowding by economic status
Overall just 2.3% of households live in overcrowded accommodation when measured against the bedroom standard. Of those just 0.2% occupied dwellings that fall two or more bedrooms below the standard, with 2.1% occupying dwellings with one bedroom below the standard.

However Figure 2.1 shows that the proportions of overcrowded households are higher for economically inactive households below retirement age, with one in ten households that are ‘keeping house’. The same groups of households are also far more likely to occupy dwellings that meet, but do not exceed the bedroom standard. While a quarter of all households just meet the standard, the proportion rises to a half for unemployed households and those ‘keeping house’, and 38% for those who are permanently unable to work.

Nonetheless overall the great majority of households - 72% - occupy dwellings with more rooms than are required to meet the bedroom standard. The proportions are even higher for working and retired households, with almost a half of all retired households occupying dwellings with two or more bedrooms than required to simply meet the bedroom standard.

Figure 2.2

Overcrowding by income quintile

Figure 2.2 shows that the incidence of overcrowding is very similar for lower and middle income households, and is only appreciably lower for households in the two upper income quintiles. 86% of households in the highest income quintile occupy dwellings that exceed the bedroom standard.
There are also marked differences in levels of overcrowding as between households in the different tenures, as shown in Figure 2.3. Just over 5% of all households in social rented accommodation are overcrowded, compared to just over 3% of households in the private rented sector, and 1% of all home owner households. Similarly while over a half of all households in the social rented sector occupy dwellings that simply meet the bedroom standard, this applies to just over two fifths of private tenants, and only 16% of home owner households. Conversely while some two fifths of social rented households occupy dwellings that exceed the bedroom standard, this is the case for 54% of all private sector tenants, and 84% of all home owner households.

**Figure 2.3**

**Overcrowding by tenure**

The levels of overcrowding in the social rented sector are an indication of the pressures of demand on the sector, as allocation policies are typically based on compliance with the bedroom standard. In that context overcrowding is primarily indicative of opportunities for transfers failing to meet the pressures from additions to the membership of households initially allocated dwellings on the basis of a ‘tight fit’ to the standard. Similarly under occupation against the bedroom standard in the social rented sector primarily arises from reductions in household size (ie grown children leaving home).

Nonetheless the relatively high level of overcrowding in the social rented sector is of particular policy concern given that the whole purpose of providing social sector housing is to try to meet housing needs; not perpetuate them. Not surprisingly the level of overcrowding in social rented housing is highest in London, where there is also the greatest pressure on allocations.
One in eight social sector tenants in London live in accommodation that is overcrowded on the basis of the bedroom standard. With a higher than average proportion of households also occupying dwellings that just comply with the bedroom standard, this means that over 70% of social sector tenants in London occupy dwellings below the level of the contemporary social norm (of the bedroom standard plus one).

Levels of overcrowding are also clearly related to household age, composition and gender. Figure 2.4 shows that overcrowding is highest for households aged 26 to 59, and less declines as households reach retirement age. The key factor underlying this is that overcrowding is most pronounced among households with children, as can be seen in Figure 2.5.

**Figure 2.4**

![Overcrowding by Age](image)

While the presence of children in the household is the most significant factor related to higher levels of overcrowding Figure 2.5 also shows that households with female heads tend to occupy dwellings at greater density than households with male heads, whether or not there are children in the household.
While the presence of children in the household is the most significant factor related to higher levels of overcrowding Figure 2.5 also shows that households with female heads tend to occupy dwellings at greater density than households with male heads, whether or not there are children in the household.

However the most marked differentials in levels of overcrowding can be seen in relation to the ethnicity of households (Figure 2.6). Just over 9% of all Asian households (including Asian British) are overcrowded relative to the bedroom standard, while almost 15% of all Black households (including Black British) are overcrowded against the standard. In contrast less than 2% of all white British households are overcrowded against the standard.

There are also marked variations within these broad ethnic groupings. Overcrowding against the bedroom standard applies to just over 4% of Indian households; 15% of Pakistani households, and 26% of all Bangladeshi households. Similarly overcrowding against the standard applies to 8% of Black Caribbean households, and 21% of Black African households. In each case the figures apply to the ethnic groupings inclusive of those born in the UK.

There are similarly marked ethnic differences in the proportions of households occupying dwellings at levels in excess of the bedroom standard. This applies to over three quarters of all white British households; but less than half of all Black (including Black British) households.
A further analysis distinguished between those household representative persons born in the UK, and those born outside the UK. However due to the small sample sizes this analysis is limited to those that are white British, and all those that are not white British. For white British households there the proportions occupying dwellings at, above and below the bedroom standard were barely different as between those born in or outside the UK. However, for the non white British households the proportions occupying below the bedroom standard were higher for those born outside the UK (at 12%), than for those born in the UK, (at 8%).

There is also a clear interconnection between density of occupation, ethnicity, incomes and tenure. While just 2% of all white British households in the three lower income quintiles occupied dwellings at densities below the bedroom standard, among all other ethnic groups the average proportion was 11%. Similarly while 4% of all white British households in the social rented sector occupied dwellings at densities below the bedroom standard, among all other ethnic groups the average proportion was 14%.

There is, however, no significant different in space standards as between those households where the household representative person has a long term illness, disability or infirmity and those households where this is not the case. However it should be noted that the formal bedroom standard makes no allowance for whether households might require an additional bedroom for health reasons.
Overcrowding by Long Standing Illness, Disability or Infirmitiy

Dwelling Quality

As seen above the General Household Survey now includes data on the quality of dwellings occupied by households. While the assessment is based on the judgements of the households, rather than an assessment by trained surveyors as is the case with the national housing surveys, the GHS has the advantage of providing a single consistent measure for the whole of Great Britain.

The GHS stock condition question asks whether the dwelling suffers from a leaking roof, damp walls, floors or foundations, or rotten floorboards or window frames. Figure 2.8 shows that there is a clear link between poor stock condition (as measured by a positive answer to the GHS question) and economic status, and that this link is stronger than the simple link to household equivalised income (shown in Figure 2.9).

Unemployed households, and those ‘keeping house’, are the most likely to report poor quality housing, with working and retired households far less likely to do so. While there is a positive association between income levels and stock condition, households in the two highest income quintiles are only slightly less likely to report living in poor conditions than households in the three lower income quintiles.
Figure 2.8

Leaks, Dampness Etc
by economic status

Percentage saying Yes

- Unemployed
- Keeping House
- Unable to work
- Working
- Retired

Figure 2.9

Leaks, Dampness Etc
by income quintile

Percentage saying Yes

- Lowest
- Second
- Middle
- Fourth
- Highest

Equivalised gross BHC household incomes
There is, however, a much stronger association between tenure and poor housing conditions (Figure 2.10), with tenant households in both the social and private rented sectors being more than twice as likely to report living in poor conditions than home owner households.

It is notable that on the GHS measure only marginally less social sector tenants report poor conditions than private tenants. In contrast the national stock condition surveys based on professional assessments typically show a greater concentration of poor conditions in the private rented sector; albeit that the difference has been reduced in recent years with the recent growth of the sector predominantly introducing more better quality dwellings to the sector.

Nonetheless, after taking account of the larger size of the home owner sector these figures still show that numerically there are as many home owner households reporting living in poor condition dwellings as there are tenant households.

There is also a strong association between age and the quality of dwellings, with a marked decline in the reporting of poor conditions for older households (Figure 2.11). Similarly there is a marked difference in the reporting of poor conditions as between female headed households with children, and other forms of household (Figure 2.12). This difference is only partly linked to the high proportion of female headed households with children in the social rented sector; as such households are more likely to report living in poor dwellings in all tenures.
Figure 2.11

Leaks, Dampness Etc by Age

Figure 2.12

Leaks, Dampness Etc by gender and whether children in household

Gender of household representative person
Among lower income households the proportion of households with children and a female household representative person rises to 30% (for the two lowest income quintiles), while the proportion for households with children and a male household representative person rises to 17%. Among households without children there is very little variation between income bands.

There is also a strong association between ethnicity and poor condition housing, (Figure 2.13) with households in all non white ethnic groups around twice as likely to report living in poor conditions compared to white British households. Bangladeshi (36%) and Black African (31%) households were especially likely to report living in poor conditions.

For households with a white British representative person there was no difference between those born in or out of the UK and the likelihood of living in poor conditions. However among the non White British those born outside the UK have a much higher likelihood of living in poor conditions (31%), than those born in the UK (21%).

**Figure 2.13**

Leaks, Dampness Etc by Ethnicity

While both white British and other ethnic groups are more likely to live in poor housing conditions if they fall within the lower income groups, the differences are not greatly pronounced, and broadly follow the pattern seen in Figure 2.9 above. While 14% of all white British households in the three lower income quintiles live in poor housing conditions, among all other ethnic groups the average proportion was 24%. However within the social rented sector while one in five white British households lived in poor housing conditions, among all other ethnic groups the average proportion was 32%.
There is, however, very little difference between those with, or without, any long term illness, disability or infirmity, when it comes to reporting living in poor housing conditions. Those without such conditions are marginally more likely to report living in poor conditions (Figure 2.14).

**Figure 2.14**

Leaks, Dampness Etc by
Long standing Illness, Disability or Infirmary

![Bar chart showing percentage of households mentioning leaks and dampness by long-standing illness, disability, or infirmity.](chart.png)

**Pollution, grime or environmental problems**

The General Household Survey also includes a number of measures of neighbourhood quality. These are based on the ‘local area’, and if prompted interviewers will provide a definition that this is based on the area within a 15-20 minute walk from the household home, or a 5-10 minute drive from the home.

The first neighbourhood measure analysed is based on whether the household considered there to be ‘pollution, grime, or other environmental problems in the area caused by traffic or industry?’ Overall 13% of all households indicated that such problems were to be found in their local area.

Households permanently unable to work were the most likely to cite these problems (18%), while retired households (10%) were least likely to cite them. There was, however, virtually no difference, as between working and unemployed households (Figure 2.15).
Figure 2.15

Pollution, Grime Etc
by economic status

Figure 2.16

Pollution, Grime Etc
by income quintile

Equivalised gross BHC household incomes
Similarly there was very little, and no systematic, difference between households in different income groups and the likelihood of them citing pollution problems in the neighbourhood. Only households in the second lowest income quintile were slightly less likely to cite pollution problems than households in the other income groups (Figure 2.16).

There was even less variation in the likelihood of citing pollution problems as between households in different tenures (Figure 2.17), although it may be noted that in this instance households in social rented dwellings were marginally less likely to cite pollution problems than the households in other tenures.

**Figure 2.17**

Pollution, Grime Etc by Tenure

The link between age and living in an area where households perceive there to be problems with pollution is confirmed in Figure 2.18. There is very little difference between the age bands for households up to the age of 59; but thereafter the incidence of citing pollution problems declines for the two older age bands, with just 8% of households aged 70 or over citing pollution problems. This is consistent with the responses by retired households shown in Figure 2.13 above.

Female headed households with children (16%) are the most likely to cite pollution problems in the area. While households without children are less likely to cite pollution problems it is notable that on this measure male households without children are marginally more likely to cite pollution problems than female households without children (Figure 2.19).
Figure 2.18

Pollution, Grime Etc by Age

Figure 2.19

Pollution, Grime Etc by gender and whether children in household
White British households were the least likely to cite problems with local pollution (13%) compared to all other ethnic groups, with mixed and Chinese ethnic groups twice as likely to cite such problems (Figure 2.20). Within the broader ethnic groups it should also be noted that a third of all Bangladeshi households cited problems with pollution in their local area. There were no significant differences in the likelihood of reporting local pollution between those born in or outside the UK, whether white British or not white British.

![Pollution, Grime Etc by Ethnicity](image)

![Pollution, Grime Etc by Long standing Illness, Disability or Infirmity](image)
Those with a long term illness, disability or infirmity were slightly less likely to report living in a polluted area than those without such health conditions (Figure 2.21).

**Crime, Violence or Vandalism**

The second measure of neighbourhood quality analysed related to whether the household considered there to be ‘crime, violence or vandalism’ in the area. The incidence of such problems, at 29% for all households, were far more likely to be cited than the problems with pollution, as indicated above.

The incidence of citings for crime (etc) in the area are related far more predictably to economic status and household income than was the case with the pollution indicator. Retired and working households are both substantially less likely to cite problems with crime (etc) in their area than the various categories of out of work households (Figure 2.22).

**Figure 2.22**

*Crime, Violence or Vandalism in area by economic status*

There is a similarly predictable relationship between citings of crime (etc) in the local area and household income; with lower levels of citings by households in the two highest income quintile groups, compared to those in the three lowest income quintile groups (Figure 2.23). However it is notable that there is virtually no difference as between households in the three lowest income quintiles, and the difference with households in the upper income quintiles is also quite slight.
In contrast there is a far more marked association between housing tenure and citings of crime (etc) in the local area, with households in the social rented sector far more likely to indicate local issues with crime (etc) than households in either the owner occupied or private rented sector (Figure 2.24).

There is a similarly marked association between households indicating problems with crime (etc) in the local area and the age of the household representative person (Figure 2.25). Citings are highest for those aged 17-25, and lowest for those aged 70 or over, with all those aged 26 to 69 in an intermediate position, with very little difference between the age bands within that wide age range.
Figure 2.24

Crime, Violence or Vandalism in area by Tenure

Figure 2.25

Crime, Violence or Vandalism in area by Age
Female headed households with children are by some margin the most likely to cite problems with crime (etc) in their local area; while female headed households without children are the least likely to cite such problems (Figure 2.26). Male headed households, with and without children, are only very slightly more likely to cite such problems than female headed households without children.

The differences between white British and other ethnic groups are less marked for the crime (etc) measure than the other three measures covered by this paper. While most other ethnic groups are more likely to cite problems with crime (etc) in this instance Chinese households are the least likely to cite such problems (Figure 2.27). It is also notable that on this measure there was very little difference between the Bangladeshi, Indian or Pakistani households within the broader Asian African group, while the citings by Black Caribbean households (36%) were a little higher than for other black households.

There were, however, no significant differences in the likelihood of reporting local problems with crime (etc) between those born in or outside the UK, whether white British or not white British.

As with the area pollution indicator, those with a long term illness, disability or infirmity were slightly less likely to report living in an area with crime or related problems than those without such health conditions (Figure 2.28).
Figure 2.27

Crime, Violence or Vandalism in area by Ethnicity

Figure 2.28

Crime, Violence or Vandalism in area by Long standing Illness, Disability or Infirmity
Concluding Observations

This chapter has set out results from an original analysis of data from the General Household Survey on the spaciousness and quality of dwellings, and the quality of local neighbourhoods, for Great Britain.

One key initial finding from all these analyses is the strong negative association between housing tenure and all four dwelling and neighbourhood measures. There is also a negative association between household income and the four indicators but it is more variable in the impact it makes for the different dimensions of equality.

Without seeking to adduce any causality in the negative association with tenure these results nonetheless suggest that securing access to social housing is not in itself necessarily an ideal outcome for all households, both in terms of the adequacy of the dwellings, and their satisfaction with the housing conditions and the neighbourhoods of the dwellings they subsequently inhabit.
Chapter 3

Scotland

Introduction

This chapter sets measures of inequality in housing and neighbourhood standards, based on analyses of data from the Scottish Household Survey (SHS), and the Scottish House Condition Survey (SHCS) to complement the UK based analyses drawn from the General Household Survey.

This chapter focuses on four measures drawn from the two surveys:

1. Density of occupation based on the 'bedroom standard' (SHS)
2. Ratings of neighbourhood as a place to live (SHS)
3. Graffiti and Vandalism in neighbourhood (SHS)
4. Ratings of the condition of the house/flat (SHCS)

The SHS and SHQS, as the GHS, do not collect household information that enables these measures to be applied to every strand of inequality of concern to the Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC). However SHS and SHCS do permit measures in terms of age, gender, ethnicity and long term illness, disability or infirmity, in addition to measures related to tenure, income and economic status. Those measures are broadly equivalent to those available from GHS.

However the released SHS dataset does not include an equivalised income measure; so an alternative measure of unequivalised incomes has been used. The income measure is based on net household incomes, and the bands are £1,300-£6,000 (7% of households), £6,000-£10,000 (19%), £10,000-£15,000 (21%), £15,000-£20,000 (14%) and over £20,000 (39%). The household income bands from SHCS are slightly different and are described below.

The analyses that follow are based on two years combined data (2005 and 2006) for all SHS measures, and three years data for SHCS (2005/6 – 2007/8). The results for each measure are set out in turn below. It should be noted that unless otherwise stated the definitions of households below are based solely on the status of the household member with the highest income; which is used in SHS and SHCS, rather than the household representative person measure used in GHS.
**Bedroom Standard**

In overall terms the proportion of households living in accommodation below the bedroom standard in Scotland is marginally higher than in the UK as a whole. There are, however, far more households living in accommodation that just meets the bedroom standard (31% against 25%), and far fewer living in accommodation with two or more rooms above the standard (28% against 36%).

Overcrowding (against the bedroom standard) is highest for households where the highest income member (HIH) is looking after the home or family (7%), compared to just 3% for households where the HIH is either working or unemployed. For retired households the proportion falls to under 1%.

**Figure 3.1**

**Overcrowding by economic status**

There is little variation in the proportion of overcrowded households by income band (Figure 3.2), with 2-3% being overcrowded in all bands. Indeed it is the households in the two lowest income bands that are marginally less likely to be overcrowded. However the two fifths of households in the highest income band are most likely to occupy dwellings with one or more dwellings above the bedroom standard.
Home owners are the least likely to live in overcrowded accommodation (2% compared to 4% in the social rented sector and 5% in the private rented sector). They are also far more likely to live in dwellings with rooms in addition to those required by the bedroom standard (77% compared to 44% in the social rented sector and 46% in the private rented sector).
While overcrowding is highest for households aged 35-44 (5%), the likelihood of households living in accommodation above the level of the bedroom standard rises consistently with age, except for households aged 75 or over. Just 40% of households aged 16 to 24 live in accommodation above the bedroom standard, and this rises to 81% for households aged 60 to 74 (Figure 3.4).

Figure 3.4

While overcrowding is highest for households aged 35-44 (5%), the likelihood of households living in accommodation above the level of the bedroom standard rises consistently with age, except for households aged 75 or over. Just 40% of households aged 16 to 24 live in accommodation above the bedroom standard, and this rises to 81% for households aged 60 to 74 (Figure 3.4).

Figure 3.5
Overcrowding by gender and whether children in household

Not surprisingly overcrowding is most frequently associated with households with children (Figure 3.5). 10% of female headed households with children, and 6% of male headed households with children live in overcrowded accommodation, compared to just 1% of all households without children.

Figure 3.6

Overcrowding by Ethnicity
Overcrowding is also far more prevalent for ethnic minority (11%) and mixed households (8%), than it is for wholly white households (3%) (Figure 3.6). White households are also far more likely to occupy dwellings with one or more rooms above the bedroom standard (67% compared to just 48% for ethnic minority households and 52% for mixed households).

There is no difference between levels of overcrowding between those households with at least one member with a long term illness and disability, compared to those with no long term illness or disability (Figure 3.7). However it should be noted that the bedroom standard makes no provision for households that might require an additional room for health reasons.

Households without any long term illness or disability are also slightly more likely to occupy dwellings with one or more rooms in excess of the bedroom standard.

Figure 3.7

Overcrowding by Long Standing Illness and Disability

Quality of local area as a place to live
The Scottish Household Survey includes an overall measure of how households rate the quality of the local area in which they live, alongside measures about specific aspects of neighbourhood quality.

Just under a quarter (24%) of unemployed households, and those looking after the home and family rate their local areas as fairly poor or very poor. The proportion falls to just 7% for working households, and 5% for retired households.

At the other end of the spectrum just 26% of unemployed households rate there areas as very good, alongside just 30% of those keeping the home. This rises sharply to 52% for working households, and 60% for retired households (Figure 3.8).

**Figure 3.8**

Local area as a place to live by economic status

There is much less variation in ratings for the local area between income bands, except for those in the highest income band, where only 5% rate the area as being fairly or very poor, compared to 9-0% for households in the lower income bands. The highest income households are also more likely to rate their area as very good (58% compared to 47-49%) for the lower income groups.
Very few home owners rate their local area as being fairly or very poor (4%), while the proportion is highest for social sector tenants (17%), with private sector tenants in an intermediate position (8%). Home owners are also far more likely to rate their area as very good (58% compared to just 35% for social sector tenants.

Attitudes to local areas are consistently related to age, with the youngest households (19%) most likely to rate their area as very or fairly poor, and the oldest households least likely (4% for those aged 75 or over).
In terms of gender there is a clear difference between female headed households with children, and all other households. Almost one in five female headed households with children rate their area as being fairly or very poor (18%), compared to just 7% for all other households (Figure 3.12).

One in eight ethnic minority households rate their area as fairly or very poor, compared to just 8% for white or mixed households.
Households with at least one member with a long standing illness and disability are slightly more likely to rate their local areas as fairly or very poor (11% compared to 8%).

Figure 3.14

Local area as a place to live by Long Standing Illness and Disability
Vandalism and graffiti

The Scottish Household Survey also includes a specific question about the frequency with which they see vandalism, graffiti or other deliberate damage to property in their local area.

Unemployed households are the most likely to indicate that these are fairly or very common in their area (27%), while they are indicated far less by those in work (14%) and those that are retired (12%) (Figure 3.15).

There is very little variation on this indicator between households in the different income bands. The most notable (but still slight) distinction is that just 3% of the households in the highest income band suggest that vandalism or graffiti in their area is very common, compared to 5-6% for all other income bands.

Figure 3.15

Vandalism and graffiti in local area by economic status

Figure 3.16
Vandalism and graffiti in local area by income bands

There are far more distinct differences as between households in the different tenures (Figure 3.17). While just 13% of all home owners, and 14% of private tenants, indicate that vandalism or graffiti is fairly or very common in their area, the proportion is much higher at 26% for social sector tenants.

Figure 3.17

Vandalism and graffiti in local area by tenure

Figure 3.18
The experience of vandalism and graffiti in local areas is also consistently related to age (Figure 3.18), with the youngest households most likely to indicate that they are fairly or very common (27%), and the oldest households least likely to do so (9%). Vandalism and graffiti is also far more likely to be cited as being fairly or very frequent common incidence by female households with children (28%), compared to much lower ratings by all other households (15%) (Figure 3.19).

**Figure 19**
Vandalism and graffiti in local area by gender and whether children in household

There are far more limited variations on this indicator both in terms of ethnicity (Figure 3.20) and disability (Figure 3.21). While ethnic minority households are more likely to cite fairly or very common problems in their area, the differences are marginal (17% against 16% for white households).

Similarly while households with at least one member with a long term illness and disability are more likely to cite fairly or very common problems in their area, the differences are marginal (19% against 16%).

Figure 3.20
Figure 3.21

Vandalism and graffiti in local area by Ethnicity

Vandalism and graffiti in local area by Long Standing Illness and Disability

Condition of house or flat
There is very little variation in the proportions of households that rate their dwellings as being good or poor across the lower income ranges. It is only among households with incomes over £500 per week (that comprise 29% of all households) that there is an appreciable rise in the proportion of households that rate their dwellings as fairly or very good (Figure 3.22).

Among households with incomes from £500 - £700 per week 86% rate their dwellings as fairly or very good, and among households with incomes in excess of £700 the proportion rises to 89%. However even in the lowest income band, that comprises just 5% of all households, 78% of those households rate their dwellings as being fairly or very good, while 4% rate their dwellings as being fairly or very poor.

Figure 3.22

There is a more pronounced in the households ratings of dwelling condition based on tenure, with home owners much more likely to rate their dwellings as fairly or very good than households in either of the rented tenures. The differences in ratings as between private and social sector tenants are marginal.

89% of all home owners rate their dwellings as fairly or very good, while only 1% rate them as fairly or very poor. Among social sector tenant households 73% rate their dwellings as being fairly or very good, and 8% rate them as fairly or very poor. Among private tenant households 76% rate their dwellings as being fairly or very good, and 7% rate them as fairly or very poor (Figure 3.23).

Figure 3.23
Satisfaction with dwelling quality is also consistently and positively associated with age (Figure 3.24). While 10% of the youngest households (aged 16 to 24) rate their dwellings as fairly or very poor, this falls to just 1% for households aged 65 or over.

**Figure 3.24**
Female headed households with children are far more likely to assess their dwellings as fairly or very poor (12%), and far less likely to assess their dwellings as fairly or very good (68%). In contrast the differences between female households without children, and male households with or without children, are marginal (Figure 3.25). Within each of those three groups just 3% rate their dwellings as fairly or very poor, while 83% to 86% rate their dwellings as fairly or very good.

**Figure 3.25**

**Dwelling condition by gender and whether children in household**

As with the Scottish Household Survey samples sizes permit only a limited analysis in terms of ethnicity. Non white households are marginally more likely to rate their dwellings as being fairly or very poor, but more clearly likely to rate their dwellings as being fairly or very good (Figure 3.26). 5% of non white households rate their dwellings as being fairly or very poor, compared to 4% of all white households. While 75% of non white households rate their dwellings as being fairly or very good, the proportion rises to 83% among white households.

There are also limited differences between households with, and without, a long term sick or disabled household member. 5% of all households with a long term sick or disabled member rate their dwellings as fairly or very poor, compared to just 3% of other households. 81% of all households with a long term sick or disabled member rate their dwellings as fairly or very good, compared to just 84% of other households.
Figure 3.26

Dwelling condition by Ethnicity

![Bar chart showing dwelling condition by ethnicity]

- White
- Other
- Very poor
- Fairly poor
- Average
- Fairly good
- Very good

Figure 3.27

Dwelling condition by Long Standing Illness and Disability

![Bar chart showing dwelling condition by illness and disability]

- Illness and Disability
- No Illness or Disability
- Very poor
- Fairly poor
- Average
- Fairly good
- Very good
Chapter 4

Wales

Introduction

This chapter sets measures of inequality in housing and neighbourhood standards, based on analyses of data from Living in Wales Survey (LiWS), to complement the UK based analyses drawn from the General Household Survey (GHS).

This chapter focuses on four measures drawn from the survey:

1. Density of occupation based on the ‘bedroom standard’
2. Ratings of the condition of the house/flat
3. Whether area not well maintained; dirty; incidence of litter
4. Whether area not safe or secure; a lot of crime

The Living in Wales Survey, as the GHS, does not collect household information that enables these measures to be applied to every strand of inequality of concern to the Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC). LiWS does permit measures in terms of age, gender, ethnicity and registered disability or vision impaired, as well as measures related to tenure, income and economic status, that are broadly equivalent to those available from GHS.

However the LiWS dataset does not include an equivalised income measure; so an alternative measure of unequivalised incomes has been used. The income measure is based on gross household incomes, and the bands are less than £6,240 (10% of households), £6,240-£12,480 (23%), £12,480-£20,800 (22%), £20,800-£33,800 (20%), £33,800-£48,000 (14%) and over £48,000 (12%).

The analyses that follow are based on three years combined data (2006 to 2008) for all measures, except for overcrowding against the bedroom standard which is based on two years data (2007 and 2008). The results for each measure are set out in turn below. It should be noted that unless otherwise stated the definitions of households below are based solely on the status of the household representative person.


**Bedroom Standard**

In overall terms the proportion of households living in accommodation below the bedroom standard in Wales (at 2%) is marginally lower than in the UK as a whole (Figure 4.1). Overcrowding (against the bedroom standard) is highest for households where the household representative person (HRP) is unemployed, or looking after the home or family (8%), compared to just 2% for households where the HRP is either working or long term sick or disabled. For retired households the proportion falls to well under 1%.

**Figure 4.1**

**Overcrowding by economic status**

![Bar chart showing overcrowding by economic status](chart1)

Households occupying dwellings below the bedroom standard

**Figure 4.2**

**Overcrowding by income band**

![Bar chart showing overcrowding by income band](chart2)

Households occupying dwellings below the bedroom standard
There is little variation in the proportion of overcrowded households by income band, with some 2% being overcrowded in both the lowest and highest income bands (Figure 4.2). Indeed it is the households in the lowest income band that are marginally least likely to be overcrowded. However over three quarters of the households in the lowest income bands are single, and without children, and are inherently less prone to overcrowding.

Home owners are the least likely to live in overcrowded accommodation (1% compared to just over 4% in the social rented sector and just over 3% in the private rented sector) (Figure 4.3).

**Figure 4.3**

Overcrowding by tenure

Overcrowding is highest for households aged from 25 to pension age, at just under 3%, while for households aged under 25 the proportion is a little lower at just over 2% (Figure 4.4). For households of pension age, as already suggested by Figure 4.1 above, the proportion falls to well below 1%.

Again the age related incidence of overcrowding reflects the differences in the composition of households, and the incidence of households with children. Overcrowding is highest, at 6%, for female households with children, compared to 4% for male households with children. For both male and female households without children the proportion falls to well under 1% (Figure 4.5).
Overcrowding in also far more prevalent for ethnic minority households (9%), than it is for white British households (2%) (Figure 4.6). There are also marked variations between ethnic groups, with overcrowding highest for Chinese (16%) and Asian (11%) households.
Households without any long term illness or disability are marginally more likely to occupy dwellings with one or more rooms in excess of the bedroom standard; but the difference is not significant (Figure 4.7).
Condition of house or flat

The Living in Wales survey rates property condition in three bands – good, poor and very poor. This is a composite measure based on whether the dwelling is deemed to be good or poor on a number of key stock condition elements. Unlike the GHS and Scottish household surveys, in the Welsh case the assessment is made by the interviewer, rather than by the household.

The highest incidence of dwellings rated as either poor or very poor are occupied by unemployed households (22%). Households at home (14%), or long term sick or disabled (15%) also have an above average likelihood of living in poor condition dwellings, while for working households the proportion (10%) is in line with the average for all households. However retired households are much less likely to live in poor condition dwellings (7%) (Figure 4.8).

Figure 4.8

Dwelling condition by economic status

There is a limited, but clear, relationship between household income and stock condition (Figure 4.9). 16% of all households in the lowest income band live in poor condition property, compared to 11% and 12% in the next two lowest income bands.

For households with in the income bands above £20,800 the proportion of households falls below the average, and for the highest income band the proportion falls to just 6%.
As elsewhere the lowest proportion of households living in poor conditions are home owners (Figure 4.10). However it should also be noted that due to the larger size of the home owner tenure they nonetheless account for over a half of all households living in poor condition dwellings.
It is notable that in Wales private rented sector dwellings are most likely to be rated as poor or very poor (19%), some way above the 13% rating for social rented sector dwellings. While this relative ranking of the condition of the rented sectors is different to that for Scotland, and for Great Britain as a whole, this is clearly related to the methodological difference between the measures; with the Welsh indicator based on an interviewer assessment, while the Scottish and Great Britain measures are based on the occupiers assessment.

Satisfaction with dwelling quality is also consistently and positively associated with age (Figure 4.11). While 19% of the younger households (aged under 25) live in poor or very poor dwellings, the proportion falls to 10% for other working age households, and to just 7% for pension age households.

Figure 4.11

Dwelling condition by Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Category</th>
<th>Very poor</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Good</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 25</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 to pensionable age</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pensionable age</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Female headed households with children are far more likely to live in poor condition dwellings (13%) than other household types (Figure 4.12). In contrast the differences between female households without children, and male households with or without children, are marginal. Within those groups just 8-9% rate live in poor condition dwellings.
The likelihood of white British households living in poor dwellings is in line with the average; while the proportions for ethnic minority households are higher, and especially for non British white (14%), Chinese (17%) and mixed (19%) households (Figure 4.13). However the sample size for mixed ethnicity households in the Welsh survey is very small and that result should therefore be treated with considerable caution.
There are limited differences between households where the HRP is registered as disabled (including vision impaired). While 8% of the disabled households are assessed to live in poor condition dwellings, the proportion is higher, at 11%, for other households (Figure 4.14).

**Quality of local area as a place to live**

The Living in Wales survey includes a number of indicators relating to perceptions of neighborhood quality; but no obvious ‘overall’ indicator. The analysis has focused on two indicators that broadly relate to the aspects of neighborhood quality derived from the General Household Survey.

The first is whether, or not, the area is disliked on the basis of perceived poor maintenance, with issues around dirt and litter. The second, in the following section, is whether, or not, the area is disliked on the basis that it is not perceived to be safe or secure, and that there is a lot of crime.

In general terms there were relatively small differences in the extent to which areas were disliked on the basis of being poorly maintained, with issues around dirt and litter. Overall 8% of all households expressed a dislike of their area on this ground. The proportions ranged from 11% for the unemployed, 9% for those keeping home or long term sick or disabled, down to just under 8% for working and retired households (Figure 4.15).
Similarly there were limited differences between households in different income bands, although there was a marked reduction in the incidence of this factor (5%) for the households in the highest income band (Figure 4.15).
The differences on this measure for households in different tenures were almost imperceptible (Figure 4.17).

Figure 4.17

Area not well maintained by tenure

There was a clear pattern in terms of age with households aged under 25 (9%), more likely to cite this issue than older working age households (8%), and retired households (7%); but again the differences were very limited (Figure 4.18).

Figure 4.18

Area not well maintained by age
Similarly while female households with and without children were some 1% more likely to cite concerns on this issue compared to their male counterparts the differences were not great. Those households with children were almost very slightly less likely to cite concerns on this issue than the households without children (Figure 4.19).

Figure 4.20

Area not well maintained by Ethnicity
The most marked differences for this indicator relate to households in different ethnic groups, but they are still quite limited (Figure 4.20). Chinese (12%), Asian (11%) and black (10%) households were all more likely to cite this issue than white British (8%) households. While the figure for mixed households is much lower caution is required due to the very small sample for this group.

The differences between households, based on whether the HRP was registered disabled or vision impaired were also modest, although the disabled households were marginally more likely to cite concerns on this issue (Figure 4.21).

**Figure 4.21**

Area not well maintained by registered disabled or vision impaired

![Bar chart showing area not well maintained by disabled or vision impaired households](image)

**Safety and security of area**

The second indicator of neighborhood quality is based on whether the area is disliked on the basis that it is perceived not to be safe and secure; and that there is a lot of crime. More marked differences are shown against this indicator than for the indicator based on whether the area was well maintained.

Overall just 6% of all households indicated their dislike of the area on these grounds; but with the proportion ranging from 12% for unemployed households down to just 4% for retired households (Figure 4.22).

The proportion was also higher for those in the lowest income band (9%), and below average for all households in the three highest income bands (all around 5%) (Figure 4.23).
Figure 4.22

Area not safe or secure by economic status

Figure 4.23

Area not safe or secure by income band
The incidence of concerns about safety and security in the area were highest among social sector tenants (9%), average for private sector tenants, and lowest for owner occupiers (5%) (Figure 4.24).

There was a similar range of responses based on age, with the highest response by those aged under 25 (10%), an average response by older working age households, and the lowest response by pension age households (4%) (Figure 4.25).
There were more limited differences based on gender, although female headed households with children (8%) were more likely to cite concerns on this issue than other households (Figure 4.26).

The differences were, however, more marked in terms of ethnicity, with 14% of all Asian households citing concerns on this issue, compared to 9% for black households, 8% for Chinese households, and 6% for white British households. As before the figures for mixed households are shown for completeness but must be treated with caution due to the small sample size (Figure 4.27).
There was, however, virtually no difference on this measure between households with, or without, a disabled or vision impaired HRP (Figure 4.28).
Scotland, Wales and Great Britain compared

In broad terms the housing and neighbourhood equality patterns observed in Scotland and Wales were very similar to those in Great Britain as a whole.

Precise comparisons should be treated with caution, due to the different survey sources used, and for the variations in the details of the measures taken from each survey. Only in respect of overcrowding relative to the bedroom standard was it possible to identify an identical measure from each survey. In that context this brief chapter highlights those measures where the results for Scotland and/or Wales were substantially different to the results for Great Britain as a whole.

Overcrowding

In Scotland and Wales, as Great Britain as a whole, the contemporary incidence of overcrowding against the ‘bedroom standard’ is quite limited. In part this is a mark of economic and social progress in the half a century since that measure was devised in 1960. It nonetheless remains the routine survey measure of overcrowding.

In overall terms just 2.3% of all households in Great Britain were overcrowded based on the requirements of the bedroom standard; but with rather more households in Scotland (2.7%), and rather less in Wales (2.0%).

In Wales unemployed households were just as likely as households ‘keeping home’ to be overcrowded (8%); while in Great Britain as a whole and Scotland the proportions for the unemployed were much lower than for those keeping home.

In other respects the profiles of overcrowding in Scotland and Wales followed broadly the same pattern as for Great Britain as a whole. Overcrowding was far more prevalent in both the private and social rented sectors than among owner occupier households. Similarly the incidence of overcrowding initially rose with age; before declining to negligible levels among pensioner age households.

The incidence of overcrowding was higher for female headed households with children than for other household types (6% in Wales, 10% in Scotland and 8% in Great Britain as a whole).

There was also a similar pattern of much higher overcrowding among ethnic minority households, compared to all white households. 10% of all ethnic minority households were overcrowded in both Wales and Great Britain, with the proportion slightly higher at 11% in Scotland. The comparable figures for all white households were 2% in Wales and Great Britain, and 3% in Scotland.
Stock Condition

The national house condition surveys undertaken in England, Scotland and Wales all provide detailed surveyor evaluations of the condition of the housing stock in each country. However each of the devolved administrations focus on different measures of stock condition, so that it is not possible to construct from those sources a uniform measure of stock condition for Great Britain as a whole.

For that reason the starting point for the analyses in this report are the measures of stock condition derived from the General Household Survey. The GHS measure used in the report is of dwellings that suffer from a leaking roof, damp walls, floors or foundations, or rotten floorboards or window frames. The assessments of this very basic measure of stock condition are those of the household.

There is no exact match to this measure in the surveys for Scotland and Wales. The Scottish House Condition Survey provides a self assessment measure that simply indicates whether the dwelling is considered to be very poor, fairly poor, average, fairly good or very good. The Living in Wales survey provides an even simpler assessment of whether a property is considered to be very poor, poor or good. This is a composite measure derived from assessments of more specific property characteristics; but it should be noted that the Welsh measure is based on the assessments of the interviewers, rather than those of the households.

In this summary comparison properties are referred to as being in poor condition if from the GHS they are stated to suffer from a leaking roof, damp etc, if from the Scottish House Condition Survey they are stated to be very poor or fairly poor, and if from the Living in Wales survey they are stated to be very poor or poor.

The differences between the measures mean that no direct comparison can be made of the relative stock condition between the countries. However this nonetheless permits an examination of the similarities, and differences, in the profiles of the extent to which the equalities groups suffer from poor housing conditions in each country.

There is a clear, but limited relationship shown by all the surveys between stock condition and economic status and income levels. The highest incidence of poor condition related to economically inactive working age households; while the lowest incidence related to retired households.

Similarly the households in the highest income bands in each country had rather lower levels of incidence of poor condition dwellings. However there was very little difference in the incidence of poor condition dwellings between households in the lower and middle range income bands. Only in Wales did the households in the very lowest income band (comprising 10% of all households) have a higher incidence of poor condition dwellings.
In all cases the incidence of poor quality dwellings was assessed to be much lower in the owner occupied sector, and higher in both the private and social rented sectors. Both the GHS and Living in Wales surveys found that the incidence of poor condition was assessed to be slightly higher in the private rented sector, than in the social rented sector. In contrast the Scottish House Condition Survey found the incidence of poor condition dwellings to be marginally higher in the social rented sector, than in the private rented sector.

All three surveys showed that the incidence of poor condition dwellings declined consistently with age. Similarly they all showed that female headed households with children were consistently most likely to occupy poor condition dwellings; with no significant differences between female headed households without or children, or male headed households with or without children.

There is also a clear relationship between ethnicity and stock condition, with ethnic minorities as a whole more likely to occupy poor condition dwellings in all countries. The GHS analysis shows that while one in eight white households occupied poor condition dwellings, this was the case for 22% of all ethnic minority households. The difference between all white and all ethnic minority households was, however, less marked in the Scottish and Welsh analyses. In Scotland, on the SHCS measure, just under 4% of all white households occupied poor condition dwellings, compared to 5% for all ethnic minority households. In Wales, on the Living in Wales measure, 9% of all white households occupied poor condition dwellings, compared to 12% for all ethnic minority households.

There was no difference between the households with or without some disability (as defined in the different surveys) in respect of stock condition.

**Neighborhood quality**

The measures of neighborhood quality from the three household surveys differ to such an extent that it limits the direct value of comparisons between the countries. In broad terms, however, the differences for the equality groups on all neighborhood quality measures were less pronounced than for the overcrowding and stock condition measures. It is worth highlighting here, however, the few cases where there were significant differences for any of the equalities groups on these measures.

On all measures there was a clear relationship with age, with pensioner age households far less likely to regard the neighborhoods in which they lived as being problematic.
The relationship between tenure and neighborhood quality was more mixed. On four indicators the social rented sector was associated with poor neighborhood quality; but on two measures there were no significant differences between any of the tenures. The social rented sector was associated with poor neighborhood quality on the crime, violence or vandalism in area indicator for Great Britain, and the vandalism and graffiti indicator, and the overall ratings of the area as a place to live, for Scotland, and the rating of the area as not safe or secure for Wales.

In contrast there were no significant differences between the tenures for the pollution and grime in area indicator for Great Britain, or the maintenance of the area indicator for Wales.

On all but one measure female headed households with children were more likely to rate their neighborhood as poor, compared to all other household types. The exception is the Welsh maintenance of the area indicator, where female headed households with and without children were both rather more likely to state that their area was not well maintained, compared to male headed households with and without children.

On all but one indicator ethnic minority households were rather more likely to rate their neighborhood as poor, compared to the ratings of white households. The differences were, however, limited. There was, however, no difference between white and ethnic minority households in their assessments of the incidence of vandalism or graffiti in their area in Scotland.

Finally there were no significant differences in any of neighborhood ratings as between households with or without disabilities (as defined in the surveys).
References

This report is based on original analyses of data from the General Household Survey, the Scottish Household Survey, the Scottish House Condition Survey, and Living in Wales, the Welsh household survey.

Reports are regularly published providing a range of data from these surveys, together with an overall description of the scope of the survey.

Living in Britain (Various years), Office for National Statistics (based on the General Household Survey).

Scotland’s People (Various Years), Scottish Government (based on the Scottish Household Survey).

Scottish House Condition Survey Key Findings (Various Years), Scottish Government.

Scottish House Condition Survey Technical Report (Various Years), Scottish Government.

Living In Wales (Various Years), Welsh Assembly Government (based on the Living in Wales household survey).