

Figure 1: the relationship between poor housing and health outcomes

Source: Annual Report of the Director of Public Health 2011

Why is this issue important?

Poor housing conditions, arising from housing insecurity, living in unsuitable temporary accommodation, overcrowding, and housing in poor physical condition, present risks to health.¹ Figure 1 illustrates the impact over a wide range of health and related outcomes.

Key outcomes

The Strategic Housing Partnership works through the city's Housing Strategy 2015² to tackle our housing challenges by focusing on:

- ***Improving housing supply***
- ***Improving housing quality***
- ***Improving housing support***

These strategic priorities contribute to achieving a number of aims in the Public Health, NHS and Adult Social Care Outcomes Frameworks on issues such as: homelessness; suitable housing for those with a mental illness, disability or learning disability; domestic abuse; noise; fuel poverty; excess winter deaths; social contentedness; falls and injuries; mortality; helping older people regain independence after illness or injury.

¹ Fair Society, Healthy Lives: The Marmot Review; 2010

² Brighton & Hove Housing Strategy 2015: <http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/housing/general-housing/housing-strategy-2015>

Impact in Brighton & Hove

Brighton & Hove has around 130,000 homes,³ is one of the most densely populated areas in the region and has the smallest household size in the South East averaging at 2.1 people.⁴

Our owner occupier rate is low at 53.3%, compared to 67.6% in the South East and the private rented sector increased by 45.7% between 2001 and 2011 with 28.0% of households now renting their home from a private landlord. Limited land supply restricts new housing development putting additional pressure on housing costs. 8,168 (6.7%) of Brighton & Hove's households are considered to be overcrowded (fewer bedrooms than needed).

Pressures from an expanding population, high property prices, pockets of poor quality housing and the welfare reform are having a detrimental effect on the health and wellbeing of many residents, particularly amongst the most vulnerable members of our communities.

The key housing issues reported by residents are:

- **Housing Supply:** restricted supply leading to high cost of owner occupation and private renting and a need for benefit support to compensate for low wages to meet costs

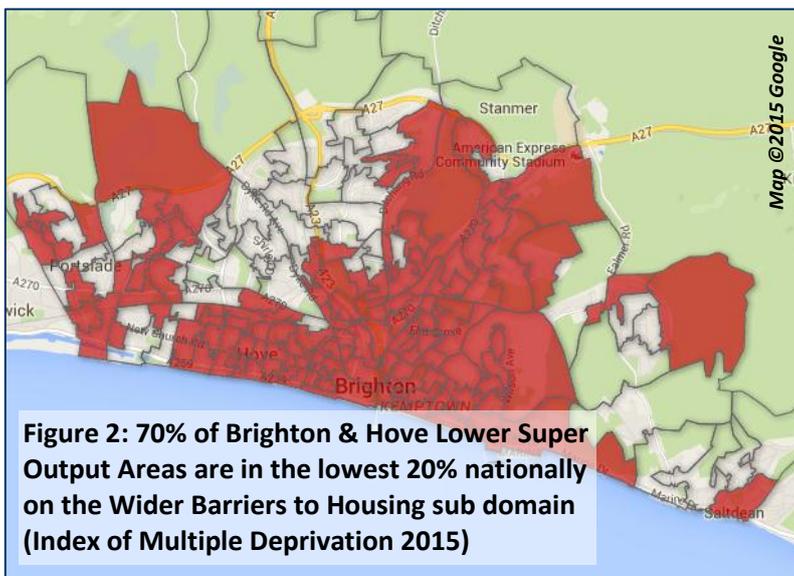
³ 2015 estimate. Based upon Census 2011 plus new builds

⁴ Office for National Statistics. Census 2011

6.4.4 Housing

- Housing Quality: poor quality housing in the private sector and fuel poverty
- Housing Support: high levels of vulnerable households with high care support needs
- Increased numbers of people rough sleeping (see Section 6.4.3)

In the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2015 (IMD2015) wider barriers to housing sub-domain (affordability, overcrowding and homelessness), 70% of the city's Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) are in the bottom 20% nationally (Figure 2), with 95% in the bottom 40%.



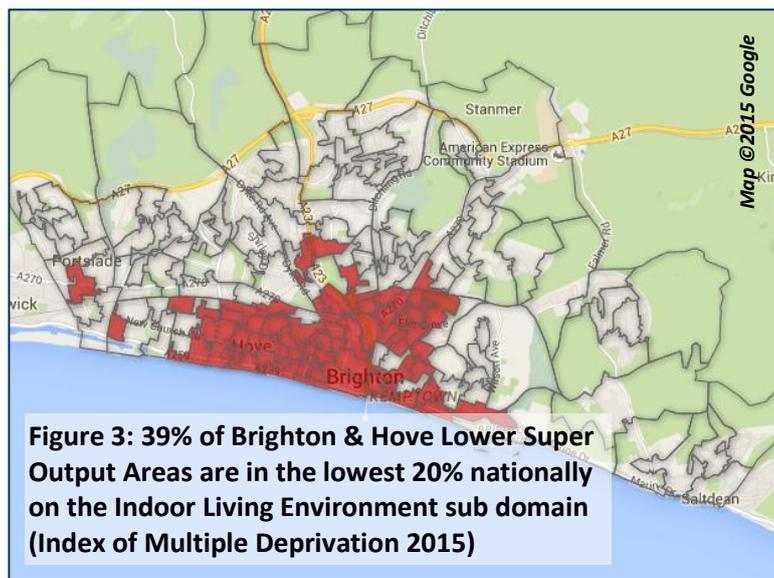
The Council's Assessment of Affordable Housing Need Report 2012 identified that the minimum household income required to afford market housing (whether owner occupied or private rented) is £42,000 per annum against an average (median) household income of £28,240.⁵

The Assessment estimates that almost 88,000 households (72%) can not afford market housing without spending a disproportionate level of their income on housing costs or some form of subsidy. The Report has identified demand for 17,403 new affordable homes (3,481 per annum) in the period 2012-2017 above that already planned.

More than 22,000 households were on the city's Housing Register on 1 April 2015. 420 households became homeless in 2014/15, a decreased of 15% over the last three years (although it is still 14% above the 2009/10 low). The most common reasons for homelessness are loss of private rented housing (22%⁶) and eviction by parents, family or friends (14%) . 18% of those accepted as homeless in 2014/15 were in priority need due to disability or mental illness, around double the England average. In 2014/15, intensive work with young people and families ensured that only 1 person aged 16 and 17 became homeless.⁷

Housing condition is known to have a major impact on health particularly around issues such as damp, disrepair and poor energy efficiency. The IMD2015 shows that on the indoor living environment sub domain (housing quality) 39% of the city's LSOAs are in the bottom 20% nationally (Figure 3) with more than a quarter in the bottom 10%.

3 out of every 10 of the city's homes (around 37,000 properties) are considered to be non-decent with 99.9% of this being in the private sector. 42.5% of all vulnerable households in the private sector living in non-decent homes.⁸



⁵ Brighton & Hove Assessment of Affordable Housing Need Report 2012: www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/downloads/bhcc/ldf/Assessment_of_Affordable_Housing_Need.pdf

⁶ Percentage excludes rent arrears (to 25% if including rent arrears)

⁷ Brighton & Hove City Council. Housing Statistics Bulletin:

<http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/housing/general-housing/housing-strategy-statistical-bulletin>

⁸ Brighton & Hove City Council. Private Sector Stock Survey 2008

6.4.4 Housing

The CIEH and BRE developed a toolkit to estimate the cost of poor housing. For Brighton & Hove it suggests that there are more than 1,200 excess colds and falls in the home each year that impact on quality of life and cost society £20 million per annum (£8 million NHS costs and £12 million in lost work and the need for benefits and support). The cost to adapt and improve this housing is estimated at £2million.⁹

As older people age and their needs change, responding effectively to these changes can enable them to maintain a good quality of life and maintain independent living. Spending £2,000-£20,000 on adaptations to support an older person at home can save £6,000 per year in care costs.¹⁰ The 2011 census indicated that half of local residents aged 85 and over still owned their own home.

Where we are doing well

The 2011-2015 Affordable Housing Programme saw 522 new affordable homes developed. This includes completion of the first new Council homes in a generation at Balchin Court under the “New Homes for Neighbourhoods” programme that aims to deliver more than 500 new council homes over the next few years. 66 new affordable homes are expected to be completed in 2015/16 across the City. These are being built to Lifetime Homes Standard and 7 will be new wheelchair adapted homes. We have identified sites likely to contribute a further 449 new affordable homes between April 2016 and March 2018.

The Council is working with owners of empty homes and has helped bring more than 900 back into use since 2009. During 2014/15, 158 long term empty private sector homes were brought back into use in the City.

More than 4,500 private sector homes have been improved since 2009 through our private sector renewal work. However, government funding for private sector renewal ceased in 2011 so we developed a Community Finance Initiative with a private sector partner and other authorities to focus on equity release and low cost loans to unlock the capital in people’s homes.

By working in partnership with landlords and local letting agencies we are improving management and conditions in HMOs and reducing the impact on the community. Brighton & Hove City Council introduced an additional HMO Licensing scheme in five ‘Lewes Road wards’ of Hanover & Elm Grove; Moulsecoomb & Bevendean; St Peters & North Laine; Hollingdean & Stanmer and Queen’s Park in November 2012.

Permission was granted in June 2015 to extend Additional HMO Licensing to 7 further wards in the city - Brunswick & Adelaide, Central Hove, East Brighton, Goldsmid, Preston Park, Regency and Westbourne. Smaller Houses in Multiple Occupation in these wards of two or more storeys and three or more occupiers, will need to be licensed from October 2015.

We are working with West Sussex County Council developing a model for delivery of Green Deal / Energy Company Obligation funding for local residents, businesses and the community through the Sussex Energy Saving Programme.

A long term maintenance partnership with Mears has provided apprenticeships for 100 local people and also helped ensure 99.5% of the council’s homes meet the Decent Homes Standard. The Council is also leasing 499 poor quality homes to Brighton & Hove Seaside Community Homes to refurbish and let to households in need.

With more people with complex needs living at homes for longer we continue to invest in specialist housing and provide adaptations across all tenures.

Funding has been awarded from the Homes & Communities Agency to redevelop the former Brooke Mead sheltered housing scheme. The original scheme had 8 non self contained flats with shared facilities and was no longer fit for purpose. Brooke Mead will be a new 45 home Extra Care housing scheme for older people and those with dementia that meets HAPPI principles. Work will start in 2015 and be complete in 2017.

To help residents maintain their independence at home, during 2014/15 we completed 179 Disabled Facilities Grant assisted major adaptations to support private sector households (owner-occupiers, private tenants, housing association tenants) plus 238 major and 655 minor adaptations to council properties.

⁹ Chartered Institute of Environmental Health / Building Research Establishment: Good Housing Leads to Good Health. A Toolkit for Environmental Health Practitioners

www.cieh.org/policy/good_housing_good_health.htm

¹⁰ Audit Commission. Building Better Lives. 2009

6.4.4 Housing

The Council invested over £2.6m on adaptations across the City last year, £1.4m through Disabled Facilities Grant and £1.2m in Housing Revenue Account funding for council homes. We also work with developers and landlords to ensure that accessible and adapted affordable housing is advertised and let to Housing Register applicants with a matching need.

We have leased over 1,000 good quality private sector flats and houses to minimise our use of B&B type accommodation and also to provide housing solutions for Adult Social Care and Children's Services which reduces the impact on those services. There is a strong correlation between B&B type accommodation and poor health and so by providing alternatives we are mitigating the potential impact. We have also leased accommodation to provide young people with supported housing projects.

The last 5 years has seen the Council's Housing Options service and partner organisations prevent more than 13,700 households from becoming homeless (2,538 in 2014/15 alone).

Brighton & Hove City Council funds the provision of support for more than 3,500 residents to either maintain their independence or help them return to independence through targeted services such as hostels for rough sleepers, the domestic violence refuge and special projects working with a range of groups such as those with learning disabilities or mental health problems. Funding pressures will see the £11m budget for this work reduced by £2m in 2015/16. It has been calculated that every £1 spent on support services saves an additional £4.10 across the public sector.

Local Inequalities

Older People: the 2008 Private Sector Housing Condition Survey identified that homes where the head of the households was aged 85 or over had the highest rates of housing non-decency, however, government funding for private sector improvement work has ceased.

Young People: the Children's and Young People's Joint Commissioning Strategy is working to improve support to young people, help prevent homelessness and develop pathways to independence for those in our care.

Disability: homelessness in the city related to physical disability is around double the England average due to the nature of our housing stock making adaptations costly or impractical. The Council used to receive government funding for Disabled Facilities Grants and top this up with private sector renewal money however this has been removed. We need to ensure adaptations are prioritised within the new Better Care Fund.

Race: a Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) needs assessment and research for the Housing Strategy 2015 did not identify any housing needs unique to the city's BME communities, with affordability and quality being the main concerns. However, research did identify that BME households are more likely to be renting privately, and specific BME groups are more likely to own homes in deprived areas or request homelessness support.

Lesbian, Gay, Transgender and Bisexual communities: a specialist LGBT Housing Options Officer ensures the needs of these groups are more effectively supported with their housing needs.

People experiencing domestic violence: specially trained Housing Options staff ensures the needs of these households are more effectively supported.

Gypsies and Travellers: a Traveller Commissioning Strategy is helping to meet the needs of these focussing on improving site availability, education, health and community cohesion.

Predicted future need

Welfare Reform changes between 2010 and 2015 were projected to take £102m per annum from residents and the city's economy, an average of £528 per working age adult each year with some households losing £1,000's.¹¹

The new reduction in the benefit cap to £20,000 from late 2016 is expected to affect around 850 households (early analysis) and changes to Tax Credits from April 2016 will impact on several thousand households and increases in benefits will no longer be paid for third or subsequent children born after 2017. The council is working through the implications of these changes with its partners to allow it to plan how to support those affected.

¹¹ Centre for Regional Economic Social Research and Sheffield Hallam University, *Hitting the poorest places hardest, the local and regional impact of welfare reform*, April 2013

6.4.4 Housing

These changes have increased demand for our housing advice and homelessness services compared to the last decade as rent levels become ever more distant to affordability levels and fewer properties available within housing benefit limits.

Monitoring of the Rightmove website has identified that during the six month period from April to September 2015 only two 3-bedroom homes were advertised within housing benefit limits in Brighton & Hove. Less well off (and often vulnerable) households are having to move out of Brighton & Hove along the coast to less expensive areas.¹²

In the longer term, household growth and an ageing population will increase pressures on the housing supply, housing costs and support services. The Council's Assessment of Affordable Housing Need Report 2012 identified demand for 17,403 new affordable homes (3,481 per annum) in the period 2012-2017 above that already planned.

The draft City Plan shows that the city has the capacity to develop 13,200 homes in the period 2010 to 2030 (660 per annum), far less than projected growth of 30,120 households.¹³ Within this, there could be up to 4,000 new affordable homes however this only meets one year of the current excess demand.

A regional approach is required to help meet the city's housing needs which is being explored through the Greater Brighton devolution bid that will include the creation of a Greater Brighton Housing Company and Living Wage house model.¹⁴

The city has a relatively small proportion of people aged 85 and over (2.2% of the city's population compared to 2.4% in England) and projections to 2037 suggest this population will increase nearly three quarters to 3.3%.¹⁵ This will increase the need for housing, support and care and we are actively looking to increase the supply of extra care housing and other accommodation to maintain resident's quality of life and reduce the need for institutional care.

¹² Brighton & Hove Local Housing Allowance Comparison Report: <http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/housing/general-housing/housing-market-reports>

¹³ Brighton & Hove City Plan (submission draft): <http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/planning/planning-policy/city-plan>

¹⁴ Greater Brighton Devolution Prospectus 2015: [http://present.brighton-hove.gov.uk/Published/C00000855/M00005736/AI00048274/\\$20151005123437_007892_0033227_Appendix2DevolutionProspectus.pdfA.ps.pdf](http://present.brighton-hove.gov.uk/Published/C00000855/M00005736/AI00048274/$20151005123437_007892_0033227_Appendix2DevolutionProspectus.pdfA.ps.pdf)

¹⁵ Office of National Statistics 2012 Subnational Population Projections

What we don't know

Housing Supply & Demand: The impact from the supply of new homes continuing to fall short of current demand and future population increases.

Affordable Housing: The Housing & Planning Bill 2015 suggests that new affordable housing on developer led sites could be in the form of Starter Homes for sale rather than rent.

Welfare Reform: The extent to which households will cope with reductions in the benefit cap, changes to tax credits and rising housing costs.

Budget Pressures: The impact of service reductions arising from funding pressures within the Council (£26m reduction per annum), health services, community & voluntary sector and other agencies.

Key evidence and policy

Chartered Institute of Housing: www.cih.org

Chartered Institute of Environmental Health: www.cieh.org

Shelter: www.shelter.org.uk

Recommended future local priorities

1. Development of new affordable housing for rent to lifetime homes standard.
2. Initiatives to improve the management and quality of homes in the private rented sector.
3. Joint housing, health and care commissioning of energy efficiency and adaptation works to reduce fuel poverty and promote independence.
4. Joint housing, health and care commissioning of support to sustain and promote independence.
5. Joint housing, health and care commissioning of new supported housing for key groups.

Key links to other sections

- Rough sleeping
- Fuel poverty

Further information

www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/housingstrategy

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