

**Old houses into new homes.**

**Contributors**

Great Britain. Ministry of Housing and Local Government.  
Great Britain. Welsh Office.

**Publication/Creation**

London : H.M.S.O., 1968.

**Persistent URL**

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/nrr53wqm>

**License and attribution**

This work has been identified as being free of known restrictions under copyright law, including all related and neighbouring rights and is being made available under the Creative Commons, Public Domain Mark.

You can copy, modify, distribute and perform the work, even for commercial purposes, without asking permission.



Wellcome Collection  
183 Euston Road  
London NW1 2BE UK  
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722  
E [library@wellcomecollection.org](mailto:library@wellcomecollection.org)  
<https://wellcomecollection.org>



MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
WELSH OFFICE

# OLD HOUSES INTO NEW HOMES

*Presented to Parliament by the Minister of Housing and Local Government  
and the Secretary of State for Wales*

*by Command of Her Majesty*

*April 1968*

LONDON  
HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE

2s. 9d. net

Cmnd. 3602

OLD HOUSES  
INTO  
NEW HOMES

WELLCOME INSTITUTE LIBRARY	
Coll.	weIMOmec
Call	Gen Coll
No.	
	P
	3076



22200206823

SBN 10 136020 7



## OLD HOUSES INTO NEW HOMES

### I. INTRODUCTION

Since the war the first aims of housing policy have been to provide enough houses to overcome the shortage, to keep up with the growing number of households and, since 1955, to replace the worst of the older houses. At the same time house owners and local authorities have been encouraged by subsidies and other means to carry out improvements. But for the most part improvement has been left to individual initiative, and the results have been patchy. Now, as the result of the very large increase in housebuilding in the last few years, it is possible to plan for a shift in the emphasis of the housing effort. The need for large new housebuilding programmes will remain for many years ahead. But the balance of need between new housebuilding and improvement is now changing, so there must be a corresponding change in the emphasis of the local authority housing programmes. The Government intend that within a total of public investment in housing at about the level it has now reached, a greater share should go to the improvement of older houses.

2. How can this be brought about? Some new facts have come to light, some old facts have been better understood, some powers and grants which were adequate when they were introduced are no longer adequate. Local authorities' powers to bring about the improvement of single houses and of whole areas of houses are cumbersome and inflexible; some aspects of the present control of rents are standing in the way of improvement of older houses. All this must be adjusted if the change described above is to be achieved.

3. This White Paper sets out these matters in more detail, and says what changes in policy and law in England and Wales the Government propose.

### II. KNOWLEDGE

4. Until 1967 the Government had to rely upon local authorities' own estimates of the number of slums in their areas. Some of these estimates were rather rough, and different authorities naturally applied different standards. Early in 1967 the Government itself carried out a sample survey of the condition of houses in England and Wales. The survey showed that there were more unfit houses and more sub-standard houses than had been known before, and they were not so much concentrated as had been believed before, but more spread out. We now know that there are probably 1.8<sup>(1)</sup> million unfit dwellings, of which 1.1<sup>(1)</sup> million are likely to have to be dealt with in clearance areas. The remaining 700,000 will have to be dealt with individually. Although nearly all of these need repairs costing £125 or more,<sup>(2)</sup> some of them will be worth saving and improving. Of the 13.9<sup>(1)</sup> million or so dwellings which are not unfit, some 3.7<sup>(2)</sup> million need repairs

(1) Appendix Table 1.

(2) Appendix Table 12.



costing £125 or more and some 2·3<sup>(1)</sup> million lack one or more of the following—an indoor lavatory, a fixed bath, a wash basin, and a hot and cold water system. Altogether, about 4·5<sup>(1)</sup> million dwellings which are not unfit require either £125 or more spent on repairs, or lack one or more basic amenities, or both. More details of the survey results are published in the Appendix, many of them for the first time.

5. In order to keep this knowledge up to date and to provide local authorities with a starting point for the exercise of the improved powers and the deployment of the increased grants outlined below, the Government propose to lay upon them the duty, when surveying the condition of housing in their areas, of considering not only the need to provide new houses, but also what needs to be done about those which are unsatisfactory.

### III. THE GENERAL POLICY

6. The results of the survey demonstrate the need for a new deal for our older housing areas. Bad housing, disrepair, lack of basic necessities like hot water and baths, are not limited to any one part of the country, or to the big cities and towns, or to houses of particular tenure. True, conditions are worse in the North than elsewhere: and worse in privately let houses than in owner-occupied houses or local authority houses. But in all parts of the country and in all kinds of accommodation there are far too many people living in bad conditions, and without the comfort and convenience they ought to have in their homes. The policy behind the legislative changes now put forward is simply that much more should now be done year by year to improve and repair houses that can be improved and to get rid of the unfit ones.

7. The Government look to local housing authorities to be the main instruments of this policy in their areas. There will be a useful role for housing associations, which have already done very good work in some areas. Much too will depend on the co-operation of owners and residents. But the local authorities must take the lead and drive the policy forward in each town and district. They will need better powers, better techniques and better financial arrangements. But above all, each authority will need to make up its mind to secure results: the Government hope that the proposed legislation will be taken as the occasion for this new effort to begin, and not merely as a series of technical changes.

8. The differences between local authorities' areas are very great: this means that the powers and methods used must be flexible. It also means that local authority programmes will have to reflect their different needs, within the balance of the total national programme of expenditure on new and older houses.

9. Academic studies have shown ways of relating the cost of immediate replacement to the cost of improvement with deferred replacement according to the "life" of improved property, the prevailing interest rates, and other factors. Practical studies have shown the comparative costs of re-developing and improving housing areas, and have brought out the difficulty of comparing benefits as rigorously as costs. Studies on these lines need to be pursued further to inform the thinking of both Government and

---

(1) Appendix Table 14.



local authorities. But no further study is needed to prove that millions of families in this country are going to be living in unsatisfactory houses for at least another twenty years unless new efforts are made. And it is already clear that the present grant limits do not reflect the maximum which it may be worth while to spend on improvement. In many other cases, improvement at much less than maximum cost will make a great difference to the comfort and convenience of the people living in the house.

10. In reviewing the policy and legislation over the last three years the Government have received the report of a sub-committee of the Central Housing Advisory Committee, under the chairmanship of Mrs. Evelyn Denington, called "*Our older homes—a call for action*". This advised on a general approach to slums and improvement. The Ministry of Housing and Local Government published *The Deeplish Study* in September, 1966. This is a study of the possibilities of area improvement in a part of Rochdale, and since then a pilot scheme of improvement conducted jointly by the Ministry and the Rochdale County Borough Council has been going forward in Deeplish. The Government have also benefited from *the Fulham and Halliwell Reports* on the possibilities for private enterprise in the comprehensive redevelopment of old residential areas in Fulham and Bolton published by the Taylor Woodrow Group and Hallmark Securities Limited respectively.

#### IV. IMPROVEMENT AND REPAIR

##### *Powers and procedure*

11. The Government want local authorities to direct their main efforts in future to the improvement of whole areas, not just individual houses—though grants for improving individual houses will be continued and will be used in area improvement. The powers in Part II of the Housing Act 1964, do not really enable an authority to improve an area as a whole; and they have been found cumbersome in practice. The Government propose therefore to repeal them and to put in their place a procedure and powers on the following lines.

12. Local authorities should have power to declare General Improvement Areas. The aim in these areas would be to help and persuade owners to improve their houses, and to help them also by improving the environment. Authorities would be able to buy land and buildings and carry out work for this purpose. They would also have power to buy houses for improvement and conversion and to buy any houses which were unfit and which stood in the way of the improvement of the whole area.

13. The success of area improvement will depend on local authorities securing the co-operation of householders in improving their houses with grants. In the Government's view the voluntary principle must be the guiding one, although powers of compulsory purchase would be available. It is essential that the wishes and needs of people in the area should be fully considered, and that the authority's plans for the area should be fully explained. For this reason, and to avoid delay, it is not proposed that the declaration of the area and the plans for it should be formally submitted to the Minister or Secretary of State for inquiry and approval. What is needed at this stage is informality of approach and good public relations



and consultation; there must be flexibility in the authority's plans. The time for appeal and inquiry would be later when an individual's interests were affected. And the better the explanation and consultation the less often will this have to happen.

14. Local authorities should be able to help owners in many ways and it is proposed to extend their powers of doing so. For instance, the Government propose to enable them to act as agents for the owner in any matter relating to improvement, since many owners may not know how to set about it.

15. In suitable cases where an owner needs a loan as well as a grant, but could not afford to repay the principal for a period, or during his occupancy, the Government propose that the local authority should be able to charge interest only, the principal being secured on the property and recovered later on. Authorities can sometimes help greatly by providing temporary rehousing during improvement, but this does not need any new powers.

### *Environment*

16. Whole areas and streets cannot be brought up to proper standards unless something can be done for the environment, as opposed to the interiors, of the houses. At present such powers as exist are not easy to apply, and no grant is payable for the improvement of anything except the houses themselves and for their conversion into flats. This creates difficulty for the local authority in providing children's play spaces, or parking spaces, or planting trees, or regulating the traffic for the good of the people who live there. These purposes would be included in the concept of "improving the area", and the Government propose to provide a coherent set of powers for them, including powers to acquire land and buildings. The Government also propose an exchequer grant of 50 per cent on approved expenditure on works and the purchase of land for improving the environment of an area, the grant-aided expenditure to be limited to £100 per house in the area.

### *Repairs*

17. The 1967 sample survey showed that there are nearly 4½ million dwellings in the country (not including those likely to be in slum clearance areas) which need £125 or more spent on repair. The Government propose that the powers of authorities to secure the repair of houses should be exerciseable not only as at present where the house has become unfit, but wherever there is serious disrepair, and that the work required should be what is reasonable having regard to the age, character and location of the house. This power should be of use not only in getting houses repaired but in ensuring that an area which has been brought up to a good state of improvement is not allowed to fall into decay again afterwards.

### *Housing and Planning*

18. The selection of improvement areas and the action taken in them can be important elements in the total planning of the town. There should therefore be close consultation with the local planning authority (in many cases it will be the same authority) so that housing and planning policies



can be integrated in a total policy of urban renewal. But in using these powers local housing authorities will take as their starting point the housing conditions in which people are living.

19. The "action area" technique, as part of the urban structure plans included in the Town and Country Planning Bill now before Parliament, will often be relevant. It will be for the local planning authority to consider in consultation with the housing authority which improvement areas should be identified as action areas; the size and importance of the area, and the amount of change proposed will be relevant factors.

### *Grants*

20. With these new or extended powers and more informal and flexible procedures must go increases in the grant limits if house and area improvements are to run at a higher level.

21. Since 1949 local authorities have been able to pay grants to house owners willing to improve their houses to certain standards, and since 1959 they have been bound to pay grants to house owners who claimed them in installing the "basic amenities" in their houses. The first type is called a discretionary grant, the second type a standard grant. Grants are 50 per cent of the cost of the work, of which the local authority recovers three-quarters from the Exchequer. For improving council houses, local authorities get three-eighths of their costs back from the Exchequer. At present, normal limits for discretionary grants are £400, and for standard grants £155.

22. The numbers of discretionary and standard grants approved in England and Wales in the last few years are as follows:—

			<i>Discretionary</i>	<i>Standard</i>	<i>Total</i>
1960	...	...	48,013	82,819	130,832
1961	...	...	47,945	79,831	127,776
1962	...	...	41,768	68,738	110,506
1963	...	...	42,701	77,278	119,979
1964	...	...	45,050	76,635	121,685
1965	...	...	40,100	82,893	122,993
1966	...	...	39,960	67,760	107,720
1967	...	...	46,606	66,536	113,142

Forty-nine per cent of these grants were made to owner-occupiers, 29 per cent to local authorities and 22 per cent to other owners.

### *New Discretionary Grant Limits*

23. The minimum estimated cost to attract grant at all will continue to be £100. The normal maximum level of discretionary grant will be raised from £400 to £1,000. The maximum grant for the conversion of a house of three or more storeys, which is at present £500 for each flat obtained, will be raised to £1,200 for each flat obtained. These increases reflect not only increases in prices since 1954 but the Government's view of what it may in certain cases be worth while to spend on improving or converting a house.



24. The Government also propose that it should in future be made possible to include in grant-aided improvement some items of structural repair or replacement.

#### *New Standard Grant Limits*

25. The discretionary grant, with its greater flexibility and its new ceiling, will obviously be the preferred instrument for use in General Improvement Areas, but there will still be many householders outside these areas, and perhaps also within them, who wish, and have the right, to improve their houses by simply installing the "basic amenities". Since the present maximum of £155 was established for the standard grant (1959), costs in the building industry have risen. The Government now take the view that in the age of the refrigerator a ventilated food store is no longer a "basic amenity" which should be insisted upon; a sink, on the other hand, is. The Government propose therefore that the ceiling for the standard improvement grant should be raised to £200, and that the individual grant limits should be varied as follows:

<i>Basic Amenity</i>	<i>Maximum Grant</i>	
	<i>Now</i>	<i>Proposed</i>
	£	£
Bath ... ..	25	30
Wash-hand basin ... ..	5	10
Hot and cold water to bath ... ..	35	45
Hot and cold water to wash-hand basin	15	20
Hot and cold water to sink ... ..	25	30
W.C. ... ..	40	50
Food Store ... ..	10	—
Sink ... ..	—	15
	<hr/> 155 <hr/>	<hr/> 200 <hr/>

#### *Waiving of conditions*

26. In order to meet the great variety of needs with the help that is most useful in each case, the Government think that local authorities should have power to waive some of the existing conditions for grant in particular cases, subject to general directions given by the Minister or Secretary of State. These include the conditions relating to the "life" of houses to be improved (now a minimum of 15 years); the standard of improvement to be attained; the requirement that all the missing "basic amenities" must be provided at once if a standard grant is to be paid; and the requirement that grant cannot be paid if the work has been begun before the owner's application for grant has been approved.

#### *Time Limit*

27. On the other hand authorities should have power to impose a time limit within which any work approved for grant must be done.



### *Acquisition for Conversion or Improvement*

28. Housing associations, whose role in improvements the Government hope to see expand, at present enjoy one advantage over local authorities in this field; under the Housing Subsidies Act 1967 they can obtain Exchequer assistance towards the cost of buying houses for conversion or improvement as well as for doing the work. The Government propose to make grants for acquisition to local authorities also, and at the same time to increase the cost on which assistance is payable (covering both acquisition and work) from the present maximum of £2,000 per flat obtained to £2,500. This will apply both to authorities and to associations. Taking account of the more limited life of older houses, even when they have been improved, these new limits should encourage local authorities to undertake this work whenever it is economic to do so, and will provide them with Government assistance broadly equivalent in present value terms to the subsidy which they receive towards building new houses.

29. All these provisions together are intended to give local authorities, working with housing associations and with householders, a new opportunity to bring basically sound old houses up to modern standards, and to make many run-down neighbourhoods into pleasant and comfortable places to live in.

### *Rents*

30. Landlords improving their houses reasonably expect to receive some increase in rent. Under present law where the improvement is aided by grant, the permissible rent increase is limited by the grant conditions. Now that there is a well-established system of determining fair rents for regulated tenancies it seems right to use this machinery for determining new rents of these tenancies following grant-aided improvement.

31. Controlled tenancies raise wider questions. The rents chargeable, even with the increases permitted after improvement, do not normally provide a sufficient return to encourage landlords to improve their houses. Indeed, landlords whose rents are still controlled may have little incentive, or may even be unable, to maintain their houses as they should. The Government have in the past been unwilling to pass controlled property into rent regulation under the Rent Act 1965 until more experience has been gained of rent regulation. They are still unwilling to allow this to happen except where some countervailing advantage could be secured for the tenant. But the achievement and maintenance of a proper standard of equipment and repair would be such an advantage, and the Government accordingly propose the following changes in rent law.

32. *First*, where a house let on a regulated tenancy is improved with a grant<sup>(1)</sup>, the rent should be determined under Part II of the Rent Act 1965 and not as at present by conditions attached to the grant.

33. *Second*, where a house let on a controlled tenancy is improved with a grant<sup>(1)</sup>, the tenancy should become a regulated one and the rent should be determined as above.

---

(1) Grant in these paragraphs means discretionary grant or standard grant.



34. *Third*, where a house let on a controlled tenancy is certified by the local authority as being in the required state, as indicated in paragraph 35, the tenancy should become a regulated one and the rent should be determined as above, even though no grant has been given.

35. In all these cases the house would normally need to have at least the basic amenities—an indoor lavatory, a fixed bath, a wash basin, a hot and cold water system and a sink—and to be in good repair.

36. Where a regulated rent has been increased, or a controlled tenancy has passed into regulation, following improvement carried out with grant, it would clearly be wrong for the full fair rent to be payable right away. The increase in rent will therefore be phased over a period. There would also be phasing in those cases of the third type mentioned above where there might otherwise be a sharp increase in rent as a result of the move to regulation.

37. Landlords will be able to apply to the rent officer for certificates as to the fair rent which would be obtainable, once the local authority had approved the work, although, of course, the new rent would not become payable until the work had been completed. The question of rights of appeal where a certificate is refused is being further considered.

### *Multiple Occupation*

38. At present, local authorities have certain powers to step in and regulate the conditions of houses in multiple occupation. But they have to wait until the multiple occupation is established before they can do anything. This means that in practice they are confined to alleviating the abuses which may arise in these circumstances, and cannot prevent them arising. The Government now propose to make available powers to regulate the conditions in which multiple occupation may be established, or to prevent it. These powers would be given to local authorities who needed to use them in the interests of people living in areas of housing stress. The powers could be applied, by order of the Minister or Secretary of State on a local authority's application, to such areas in their district as they consider necessary. Unless the contrary were approved for a particular area, they would only apply where it was proposed that a house should be occupied by more than, say, two families or by more than four individual lodgers. Where the powers were applied, registration with a local authority would be a pre-requisite of new multiple occupation, and registration could be refused by the authority if:

- (i) the house was unsuitable and incapable of being made suitable ;
- (ii) the person having control of the house, or the person intended to be the person managing the house, was not a fit and proper person.

39. The authority would be able to make registration conditional on the carrying out of works and on the level of occupancy. Right of appeal to the courts would be given against refusal to register or against the conditions attached to registration.

40. But authorities should be able, when they use their control powers, to give help as well, so that a house may be at least partly improved even though it is still in multiple occupation. The Government propose therefore



that authorities should be able to give a grant for the "basic amenities" even though they may not be for the "exclusive use" of any one family in the house.

41. Certain minor aspects of local authority control over existing multiple occupation are under review and proposals will be included in the legislation.

## V. SLUMS

42. The criteria by which a house is judged to be fit or unfit are set out in section 4 of the Housing Act, 1957. The Government believe that these criteria are in the main still the right ones, but, as was pointed out in the Denington Report, an important contributing factor making for an unfit house may be that it has a very bad internal layout: for example, a W.C. opening directly from the living room or kitchen, and narrow, steep or winding staircases. The Government propose therefore to add the internal arrangement of a house to the list of criteria.

### *Slum Clearance*

43. The number of slums dealt with in England and Wales in recent years has been as follows:—

<i>Year</i>						<i>Total</i>
1960	...	...	...	...	...	56,561
1961	...	...	...	...	...	61,969
1962	...	...	...	...	...	62,431
1963	...	...	...	...	...	61,445
1964	...	...	...	...	...	61,215
1965	...	...	...	...	...	60,666
1966	...	...	...	...	...	66,782
1967	...	...	...	...	...	71,769

This is by no means an unsatisfactory record, but it is no longer good enough. As more and more new houses are built (and record figures are now being achieved) more unfit old houses ought to be cleared. And the number to be cleared has been underestimated in the past. The Government intend to continue to give first priority in the allocation of the housing programmes to areas with large numbers of slums.

### *Compensation*

44. The obstacles to faster slum clearance must therefore be identified and removed. There is no doubt that, as the Denington Report noticed, the objections local authorities meet with to their clearance proposals are not really so much directed to the standards applied as to the terms of compensation. The basis of compensation is that if a house is unfit for human habitation it cannot be assumed to have any value. The compensation is therefore for "site value" alone: that is, the owner is paid no more for his land than he would be if there were no house on it at all. Over the years certain exceptions to this principle have grown up. Owner-occupiers now never receive less for an unfit house than the gross value for rating purposes. If a house has been well maintained in spite of its



unfitness, a "well-maintained" payment is made. For owner-occupied houses this is four times the rateable value; for others it is twice. If an owner-occupier bought a house, which is now unfit, between 1939 and 1955 (when very few slums were being cleared) and has had it for less than fifteen years, he gets the full market value of the house.

45. A growing proportion (now about 20 per cent nationally and much higher in some areas) of owners of houses in clearance areas are owner-occupiers; and they have a special grievance. Often they bought their house when it was not possible to get anything better, and they have put their savings into it. In any case, it is their home which is being demolished, and the average difference between site value and full market value is significantly greater for owner-occupied than for tenanted houses.

£

Tenure of house	Average gap between site value and market value (end 1966)							
	Regions in England							Wales
	North	Yorks and Humber-side	North-West	West Midlands	Greater London	South East Counties	Southern Counties	
Owner-occupied	248	180	357	538	1,880	929	844	546
Tenanted ...	98	80	139	89	107	206	204	112

NOTE: Based on information supplied by the Inland Revenue relating to cases reported upon by District Valuers during a period of 6 months.

46. The Government consider that the site value basis of compensation should be retained as the general rule. But they propose that (a) additional payments should be made to owner-occupiers of unfit houses dealt with under slum clearance powers, subject to the conditions indicated below; in the case of unfit houses acquired for clearance, this will have the effect of bringing the total payments up to full market value, (b) unfit tenanted houses should qualify for larger payments if they have been well maintained. It is proposed that these changes should refer back to 23rd April 1968, that is to the date of this White Paper, and they are therefore set out in detail in the following paragraphs.

47. Owner-occupiers of houses which are unfit for human habitation and are purchased compulsorily, or are subjected to one of the procedures set out in paragraph 4(1) of the Second Schedule to the Housing Act, 1957 (demolition, closing or clearance orders) or are subjected to an unfitness order under paragraph 2(2) of the Second Schedule to the Land Compensation Act, 1961, are in certain circumstances entitled to an additional payment, or supplement. This supplement reflects the amount, if any, by which market value exceeds site value, but is payable only where a house was owner-occupied on 13th December 1955, and at the time of the compulsory purchase or other order is still owned by the same person, or a member of his family, who has not had 15 years' enjoyment of the property.



48. The Government propose that this supplement should now become payable to all owners of houses which are owner-occupied in accordance with the terms of paragraph 49 below, in cases where the appropriate action is taken at any time after 23rd April 1968. The "appropriate action" here means the commencement of the "relevant proceedings" leading to the purchase or vacation of the house, as defined in paragraph 4(6) of the Second Schedule to the Housing Act, 1957 (for example the date of the declaration of the clearance area by the local authority). For unfitness orders the "appropriate action" would be the making of the order.

49. An owner-occupied house means in the first place any house which has been occupied by its owner or a member of his family continuously since 23rd April 1968. Where it is acquired for occupation after that date, the house must have been owner-occupied for two years before the "appropriate action" as defined in paragraph 48. (This is to avoid last minute sales which might be arranged simply to qualify for the supplement.)

50. The Government propose that a person whose house is acquired or vacated before these provisions become law, but as a result of "appropriate action" taken after 23rd April 1968, should be able to claim later an additional payment to which he might become entitled by the legislation insofar as he has not already received it (for instance, on a sale by agreement).

51. "Well-maintained" payments will not be paid where a house qualifies for the new supplement. But the Government propose that the "well-maintained" payment for tenanted houses should be increased from twice, to four times, the rateable value of the house. The same rate will apply to owner-occupied houses not qualifying for the supplement under paragraph 48 above. These "well-maintained" payments will continue to be limited to the amount, if any, required to bring the site value up to the full market value of the house. The apportionment of these payments between landlord and tenant will continue to be a matter for the local authority.

## VI. CONCLUSIONS

52. It is the main purpose of this White Paper to explain the proposals for legislation. The Minister and the Secretary of State will in due course publish a manual of advice for local authorities on how to handle the new General Improvement Area as an instrument of housing policy. But certain general remarks may still be in place.

53. No local authority can do everything on its own, but the Government envisage that the improvement of the older housing areas in our towns and cities should be carried out under the leadership of local authorities, and following general strategies which each local authority will decide for its own area.

54. Within that general strategy there will be a great part to be played by housing associations, and at every stage the voluntary co-operation of householders will prove, as it has already proved under the existing system, to be the first condition of progress. Local authorities must be tireless in explaining their proposals, and in gaining the confidence and approval of those whom they will affect. Areas will be able to be designated without



reference to Whitehall, and without appeal or hearing. The time for appeal or hearing will be if, and only if, it becomes necessary to propose the compulsory purchase of any house or land, and at that stage the customary statutory safeguards of the appeal system will come into play. But the better the local explanation and co-operation is, the less frequently will compulsory purchase be necessary.

55. The keynote of the proposals is that the local authorities should positively concern themselves with the condition of the unsatisfactory private houses in their towns. The legislative and other changes now proposed, while reserving compulsory acquisition as an ultimate sanction, will greatly strengthen and widen the authorities' powers to improve the living conditions of their people.

56. The proposals of this paper place great emphasis on flexibility: flexibility in conditions, in grant maxima, in Ministerial control. And this is right, since local circumstances will vary very widely. Some authorities will need to continue to devote most of their energies to clearance areas. Others, where there are not so many slums, or not such a shortage of housing, or a higher proportion of sound old houses, will wish to put much greater emphasis on General Improvement Areas.

57. These proposals will bring both problems and opportunities to the building industry, not excluding the smaller builders. The relations between the local authority and the local builders, and a good organisation to make the most productive use of their services and of local authorities' direct labour departments in this work, will greatly affect the success of improvement in any area. The Government are further studying this aspect of the subject and will consult the industry about it.

58. And finally, the Government hope that the publication of this White Paper, and the passage of the legislation it proposes, will be the occasion for a great new drive, grouping all the existing powers and using to the full the new powers and the higher grants proposed, for the improvement of those millions of older houses, and those hundreds of thousands of older streets which, though they are neglected at the moment, can be made into decent, pleasant and comfortable places to live in.



## VII. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

1. Local authorities to have the duty, when surveying the condition of houses in their areas, of considering not only the need to provide new houses, but also the need to deal with unsatisfactory areas (paragraph 5).

2. Improvement area provisions of the Housing Act 1964 to be repealed (paragraph 11).

3. Local authorities to be empowered to declare General Improvement Areas, without Ministerial approval ; to assist householders in these Areas in improving their houses ; and to acquire land and buildings in them for improvement of the environment, improvement of houses, or clearance (paragraphs 12 and 13).

4. Local authorities to be able to act as owners' agents in improvement matters (paragraph 14).

5. Payments of interest only due on loans for the owner's share of improvement and repair costs to be allowed in appropriate cases, the principal being recovered later (paragraph 15).

6. Exchequer grant of 50 per cent. for environmental improvement, on costs of up to £100 per dwelling, in General Improvement Areas (paragraph 16).

7. Local authorities' power to compel owners to repair houses to be extended (paragraph 17).

8. Normal maximum discretionary grant to be raised from £400 to £1,000 (paragraph 23).

9. Normal maximum conversion grant to be raised from £500 per dwelling to £1,200 (paragraph 23).

10. Certain repairs and replacements to be eligible for improvement grant (paragraph 24).

11. Normal total standard improvement grant to be raised from £155 to £200 (paragraph 25).

12. Ventilated food store to be removed from standard improvement grant "basic amenities", and sink added (paragraph 25).

13. For standard grant, basic amenities need not all be provided at the same time (paragraph 26).

14. Grant may be paid on improvement of houses which will not necessarily last fifteen years longer (paragraph 26).

15. Improvement grant may be paid even if the work has begun before grant approved (paragraph 26).

16. Local authorities to be able to impose a time limit within which the work must be done (paragraph 27).

17. Assistance towards purchase of houses for improvement and conversion to be payable to local authorities as well as housing associations (paragraph 28).

18. Normal maximum cost of acquisition and conversion or improvement eligible for assistance to be £2,500 per dwelling obtained (paragraph 28).



19. Rents of tenanted houses which reach a required state, to be determined under the Rent Act 1965 (paragraphs 32, 33 and 34).

20. Local authorities to have power in certain areas to regulate or prevent proposed multiple occupation of houses (paragraph 38).

21. Basic amenities may attract grant even if not for the exclusive use of one family (paragraph 40).

22. Minor improvements to local authorities' powers to regulate existing multiple occupation (paragraph 41).

23. Internal arrangement of a house to be included in the criteria of fitness (paragraph 42).

24. Supplementary payments for owner-occupied houses subject to future slum clearance (paragraphs 46 to 51).

25. Tenanted unfit houses to attract payments of four times rateable value if house has been well-maintained (paragraphs 46 and 51).



## NATIONAL SAMPLE SURVEY OF THE CONDITION OF HOUSES

1. This survey of the condition of the housing stock was carried out by a physical inspection of a representative sample of dwellings by experienced public health inspectors working to a common brief.

2. The sample was designed to give a broad national picture. It was not large enough to give a local or regional picture. It is possible, however, to provide a picture for three broad divisions of the country—the North; Wales, Midlands, East Anglia and the South-West; the South-East.

3. The survey was directed to establish facts about:—

- (i) fitness and unfitness (according to the criteria of unfitness in section 4 of the Housing Act, 1957);
- (ii) the provision of basic amenities; viz. internal W.C.; fixed bath; hot and cold water system; wash basin. Information was not sought about ventilated food stores;
- (iii) state of repair; estimates were made of the amounts required to be spent to put dwellings into a satisfactory state of repair (excluding internal decoration) where this came to £125 or more.

The survey provided for a sub-division of most of these items by reference to age, type of area (conurbations, other urban areas and rural districts), and tenure.

4. The results are in Tables 1 to 14, viz.:—

Tables 1-4: Fitness and Unfitness.

Tables 5-8: Lack of amenities.

Tables 9-13: Disrepair (as measured by estimated costs of repairs needed).

Table 14: Disrepair of fit/unfit dwellings having/not having all basic amenities.



Stock of dwellings: by region and condition  
Estimated number February 1967  
England and Wales

TABLE 1

Thousands of dwellings: percentages

Region	Unfit dwellings				Dwellings not unfit						All dwellings			
	In potential clearance areas (Part III Housing Act 1957)		Others (Part II Housing Act 1957)		All unfit dwellings		In or adjoining potential clearance areas—Part III Housing Act 1957 (to secure satisfactory areas for re-development)		Others			All dwellings not unfit		
		%		%		%		%		%			%	
Northern, Yorkshire and Humberside and North West ...	578	52.6	184	25.0	762	41.5 (15)	51	45.1	4,218	30.7	4,269	30.8 (85)	5,031	32.0 (100)
South East ...	139	12.6	199	27.0	338	18.4 (6)	21	18.6	4,956	36.0	4,977	35.9 (94)	5,315	33.9 (100)
Rest of England and Wales (A) ...	382	34.8	354	48.0	736	40.1 (14)	41	36.3	4,577	33.3	4,618	33.3 (86)	5,354	34.1 (100)
England and Wales	1,099	100.0	737	100.0	1,836	100.0 (12)	113	100.0	13,751	100.0	13,864	100.0 (88)	15,700	100.0

NOTE: Figures in brackets show the numbers as a percentage of the stock in each region.

(A)=East Midlands, West Midlands, South West, East Anglia and Wales.



Stock of dwellings: by type of area and condition  
Estimated number February 1967

## England and Wales

Thousands of dwellings: percentages

Area	Unfit dwellings				Dwellings not unfit				All dwellings					
	In potential clearance areas (Part III Housing Act 1957)	Others (Part II Housing Act 1957)	All unfit dwellings	In or adjoining potential clearance areas—Part III Housing Act 1957 (to secure satisfactory areas for re-development)	Others			All dwellings not unfit						
Conurbations ...	454	% 41·3	146	% 19·8	600	32·7 (11)	% 54·9	4,655	33·9	4,717	34·0 (89)	% 33·9 (100)		
Other urban areas ...	523	47·6	283	38·4	806	43·9 (11)	48	42·5	6,302	45·8	6,350	45·8 (89)	7,156	45·6 (100)
Rural districts ...	122	11·1	308	41·8	430	23·4 (13)	3	2·6	2,794	20·3	2,797	20·2 (87)	3,227	20·5 (100)
England and Wales	1,099	100·0	737	100·0	1,836	100·0 (12)	113	100·0	13,751	100·0	13,864	100·0 (88)	15,700	100·0

NOTE: Figures in brackets show the numbers as a percentage of the stock in each type of area.







Stock of dwellings: by age and condition  
Estimated number February 1967  
England and Wales

TABLE 4

Thousands of dwellings: percentages

Age of dwelling	Unfit dwellings						Dwellings not unfit						All dwellings		
	In potential clearance areas (Part III Housing Act 1957)		Others (Part II Housing Act 1957)		All unfit dwellings		In or adjoining potential clearance areas—Part III Housing Act 1957 (to secure satisfactory areas for re-development)		Others		All dwellings not unfit				
		%		%		%		%		%		%			
Pre 1919	...	1,091	99.3	693	94.0	1,784	97.2 (30)	110	97.3	4,135	30.1	4,245	30.6 (70)	6,029	38.4 (100)
1919-1944	...	5	0.4	44	6.0	49	2.7 (1)	3	2.7	4,203	30.6	4,206	30.3 (99)	4,255	27.1 (100)
Post 1944	...	3	0.3	—	—	3	0.1 (0)	—	—	5,413	39.3	5,413	39.1 (100)	5,416	34.5 (100)
Total stock	...	1,099	100.0	737	100.0	1,836	100.0 (12)	113	100.0	13,751	100.0	13,864	100.0 (88)	15,700	100.0

NOTE: Figures in brackets show the numbers as a percentage of stock in each age category.



Stock of dwellings: by lack of basic amenities and region  
Estimated number February 1967

England and Wales

Table 5

Thousands of dwellings: percentages

Amenities lacked	Northern, Yorkshire and Humberside and North West		South East		Rest of England and Wales (A)		England and Wales
		%		%		%	
Internal water closet	...	1,255	586	20.1 (11)	1,078	36.9 (20)	2,919
Fixed bath	...	854	481	22.8 (9)	771	36.6 (14)	2,106
Wash basin	...	1,101	853	28.1 (16)	1,086	35.7 (20)	3,040
Hot and cold water at 3 points	...	1,083	1,044	30.7 (20)	1,273	37.4 (24)	3,400
One or more of the amenities	...	1,402	1,126	28.6 (21)	1,415	35.9 (26)	3,943
Total stock	...	5,031	5,315	33.9	5,354	34.1	15,700
							100.0

NOTE: Figures in brackets show the numbers without the listed amenities as a percentage of the stock in each region.

(A) = East Midlands, West Midlands, South West, East Anglia and Wales.



# Stock of dwellings: by lack of basic amenities and type of area

Estimated number February 1967

## England and Wales

Table 6 Thousands of dwellings: percentages

Amenities lacked	Conurbation		Other urban areas		Rural districts		England and Wales	
		%		%		%		%
Internal water closet ... ..	957	32.8 (18)	1,419	48.6 (20)	543	18.6 (17)	2,919	100.0 (19)
Fixed bath ... ..	727	34.5 (14)	961	45.6 (13)	418	19.9 (13)	2,106	100.0 (13)
Wash basin ... ..	1,119	36.8 (21)	1,385	45.6 (19)	536	17.6 (16)	3,040	100.0 (19)
Hot and cold water at 3 points ...	1,209	35.6 (23)	1,618	47.6 (23)	573	16.8 (18)	3,400	100.0 (22)
One or more of the amenities ...	1,360	34.5 (26)	1,914	48.5 (27)	669	17.0 (21)	3,943	100.0 (25)
Total stock ... ..	5,317	33.9	7,156	45.6	3,227	20.5	15,700	100.0

NOTE: Figures in brackets show the numbers without the listed amenities as a percentage of the stock in each type of area.



Stock of dwellings: by lack of basic amenities and tenure  
Estimated number February 1967

England and Wales

Table 7

Thousands of dwellings: percentages

Amenities lacked	Owner occupied		Rented from local authorities or new town corporations		Other tenures		Closed (A)		All dwellings	
		%		%		%		%		%
Internal water closet	952	32.6 (12)	363	12.4 (9)	1,522	52.2 (46)	82	2.8 (73)	2,919	100.0 (19)
Fixed bath	565	26.8 (7)	93	4.4 (2)	1,311	65.1 (39)	77	3.7 (68)	2,106	100.0 (13)
Wash basin	849	27.9 (11)	479	15.8 (11)	1,632	53.7 (49)	80	2.6 (71)	3,040	100.0 (19)
Hot and cold water at 3 points	1,018	30.0 (13)	521	15.3 (12)	1,779	52.3 (53)	82	2.4 (73)	3,400	100.0 (22)
One or more of the amenities	1,288	32.7 (16)	675	17.1 (16)	1,895	48.1 (57)	85	2.1 (76)	3,943	100.0 (25)

NOTE: Figures in brackets show the numbers without the listed amenities as a percentage of the stock in each tenure category.

(A)=Closed as unfit under Housing Act powers or preparatory to redevelopment under other statutory powers.



Stock of dwellings: by lack of basic amenities and condition

Estimated number February 1967

England and Wales

Thousands of dwellings: percentages

TABLE 8

Amenities lacked	Unfit dwellings				Dwellings not unfit			
	In potential clearance areas		Others		All unfit dwellings		In or adjoining potential clearance areas—Part III Housing Act 1957 (to secure satisfactory areas for re-development)	
	(Part III Housing Act 1957)	%	(Part II Housing Act 1957)	%		%		%
Internal water closet ...	962	87.5	450	61.1	1,412	76.9	65	57.5
Fixed bath ...	923	84.0	401	54.4	1,324	72.1	51	45.1
Wash basin ...	965	87.8	485	65.8	1,450	79.0	72	63.7
Hot and cold water at 3 points ...	991	90.2	526	71.4	1,517	82.6	72	63.7
							1,442	10.5
							731	5.3
							1,518	11.0
							1,811	13.2
							1,507	10.9
							782	5.6
							1,590	11.5
							1,883	13.6
							2,919	18.6
							2,106	13.4
							3,040	19.4
							3,400	21.7

Stock of dwellings: by region and repair costs  
Estimated number February 1967  
England and Wales

Region	Under £125		£125-£249		£250-£499		£500-£999		£1,000 and over		All repair costs	
		%		%		%		%		%		%
Northern, Yorkshire and Humberside and North West	2,984	29.5 (59)	927	36.8 (18)	543	40.9 (11)	346	35.7 (7)	231	30.8 (5)	5,031	32.0 (100)
South East	3,966	39.1 (75)	655	26.0 (12)	307	23.1 (6)	200	20.6 (4)	187	24.9 (3)	5,315	33.9 (100)
Rest of England and Wales (A)	3,182	31.4 (59)	939	37.2 (18)	478	36.0 (9)	423	43.7 (8)	332	44.3 (6)	5,354	34.1 (100)
England and Wales	10,132	100.0 (65)	2,521	100.0 (16)	1,328	100.0 (8)	969	100.0 (6)	750	100.0 (5)	15,700	100.0

NOTE: Figures in brackets show the numbers as a percentage of the stock in each region.

(A) = East Midlands, West Midlands, South West, East Anglia and Wales.

TABLE 9



Unable to display this page

Stock of dwellings: by tenure and repair costs  
Estimated number February 1967  
England and Wales

TABLE 11	Tenure	Thousands of dwellings: percentages									
		Under £125		£125-£249		£250-£499		£500-£999		£1,000 and over	
			%		%		%		%		%
Owner occupied ...	5,572	55.0 (70)	1,219	48.4 (15)	656	49.4 (8)	316	32.6 (4)	208	27.7 (3)	7,971
Rented from local authorities or new town corporations	3,526	34.8 (83)	548	21.7 (13)	95	7.2 (2)	52	5.4 (1)	27	3.6 (1)	4,248
Other tenures ...	1,022	10.1 (30)	742	29.4 (22)	574	43.2 (17)	578	59.6 (17)	452	60.3 (14)	3,368
Closed (A) ...	12	0.1 (11)	12	0.5 (11)	3	0.2 (3)	23	2.4 (20)	63	8.4 (55)	113
Total stock ...	10,132	100.0 (65)	2,521	100.0 (16)	1,328	100.0 (8)	969	100.0 (6)	750	100.0 (5)	15,700
											100.0

NOTE: Figures in brackets show the numbers as a percentage of the stock in each type of tenure.

(A) = Closed as unfit under Housing Act powers or preparatory to redevelopment under other statutory powers.



Stock of dwellings: by repair costs and condition  
Estimated number 1967  
England and Wales

TABLE 12

Thousands of dwellings: percentages

Repair costs	Unfit dwellings			Dwellings not unfit					All dwellings
	In potential clearance areas (Part III Housing Act 1957)	Others (Part II Housing Act 1957)	All unfit dwellings	In or adjoining potential clearance areas—Part III Housing Act 1957 (to secure satisfactory areas for re-development)	Others		All dwellings not unfit		
					%	%	%	%	
Under £125	5	15	20	18	10,094	10,112	10,132	64.5	
£125-£249	44	92	136	33	2,352	2,385	2,521	16.1	
£250-£499	252	162	414	22	892	914	1,328	8.4	
£500-£999	380	210	590	29	350	379	969	6.2	
£1,000 and over	418	258	676	11	63	74	750	4.8	
All £125 and over	1,094	722	1,816	95	3,657	3,752	5,568	35.5	
All repair costs	1,099	737	1,836	113	13,751	13,864	15,700	100.0	

Stock of dwellings: by age and repair costs  
Estimated number February 1967

England and Wales

TABLE 13

Thousands of dwellings: percentages

Age of dwelling	Under £125		£125-£249		£250-£499		£500-£999		£1,000 and over		All repair costs	
		%		%		%		%		%		%
Pre 1919 ...	1,784	17.6 (30)	1,416	56.2 (23)	1,154	86.9 (19)	932	96.2 (16)	743	99.1 (12)	6,029	38.4 (100)
1919-1944 ...	3,141	31.0 (73)	917	36.4 (22)	161	12.1 (4)	29	3.0 (1)	7	0.9 (0)	4,255	27.1 (100)
Post 1944 ...	5,207	51.4 (96)	188	7.4 (4)	13	1.0 (0)	8	0.8 (0)	—	— (-)	5,416	34.5 (100)
Total stock ...	10,132	100.0 (65)	2,521	100.0 (16)	1,328	100.0 (8)	969	100.0 (6)	750	100.0 (5)	15,700	100.0

NOTE: Figures in brackets show the numbers as a percentage of the stock in each age group.



Stock of dwellings: relation between repair costs, condition and provision of amenities  
Estimated number February 1967  
England and Wales

Thousands of dwellings

TABLE 14

	Repair costs under £125	More than minor expenditure on repairs					All repair costs
		£125-£249	£250-£499	£500-£999	£1,000 and over	Repair costs of £125 or more	
<i>Outside potential clearance areas</i>							
Dwellings with all amenities:							
Not Unfit ...	9,235	1,551	495	161	30	2,237 (A)	11,472
Unfit ...	—	26	45	54	51	176	176
Totals ...	9,235	1,577	540	215	81	2,413	11,648
Dwellings lacking amenities:							
Not Unfit ...	859	801	397	189	33	1,420	2,279 (A)
Unfit ...	15	66	117	156	207	546	561
Totals ...	874	867	514	345	240	1,966	2,840
<i>In or adjoining potential clearance areas</i>							
Not Unfit ...	18	33	22	29	11	95	113
Unfit ...	5	44	252	380	418	1,094	1,099
Totals ...	23	77	274	409	429	1,189	1,212
All dwellings ...	10,132	2,521	1,328	969	750	5,568	15,700

(A) The number of dwellings outside potential clearance areas which are not unfit requiring repairs costing £125 or more, or lacking amenities, or both is given by the sum of these figures, viz., 4,516,000.

**HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE**  
*Government Bookshops*

49 High Holborn, London W.C.1  
 423 Oxford Street, London W.1  
 13A Castle Street, Edinburgh 2  
 109 St. Mary Street, Cardiff CF1 1JW  
 Brazennose Street, Manchester 2  
 50 Fairfax Street, Bristol 1  
 258/9 Broad Street, Birmingham 1  
 7-11 Linenhall Street, Belfast BT2 8AY

*Government publications are also available  
 through any bookseller*