

Briefing Note and FAQs – Housing Needs Assessment

What is the Housing Needs Assessment?

The Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) is part of a range of background documents that will help inform the housing policies and proposals in our new Local Plan. It is an assessment of peoples' housing situation based on interviews with households living within our borough.

Why prepare a HNA?

We need to have detailed evidence to feed into the new Local Plan, which includes an up to date Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). The HNA can help inform our future SHMA, which we are in the process of commissioning.

How was the HNA prepared?

The HNA is based on households' responses to a questionnaire. Working with research company Social and Market Strategic Research (SMSR), residents from every ward in the borough were asked about all aspects of their housing situation from 3 to 20 December 2012.

SMSR carried out a mixture of confidential telephone and face-to-face interviews, while also satisfying criteria for statistical significance. SMSR contacted around 3,000 random residential addresses/numbers in the borough, and this yielded 1,012 responses. The responses were recorded, and the findings highlighted in the HNA.

What are the key findings?

Support Needs 14 per cent of respondents said that someone within the household had support needs. Seven per cent needed support with a physical disability and seven per cent with a medical condition.

Housing costs 94 per cent of those who owned their home reported that their housing costs were less than 40 per cent of income. By contrast, 56 per cent of those renting reported that their housing costs exceeded 40 per cent of income.

Benefits and income support 20 per cent of respondents were in receipt of benefits or income support to help with rent or mortgage payments.

Bedrooms required The survey looked at the number of bedrooms in respondents' properties and compared this with the number required. One fifth of respondents had the exact number of bedrooms to accommodate the residents in their household. More than three-fifths who only needed one bedroom were living in a three or four bedrooled property. Under-occupation was most common amongst home owners (79 per cent of those with a mortgage, and 91 per cent of those who own outright).

Only two per cent of households were categorised as overcrowded. However closer to 10 per cent considered themselves to be overcrowded.

Moving House Only 11 per cent of respondents had moved house within the last five years. Only 10 per cent of residents intended to move in the next five years.