

Ashton, Leigh and Wigan 
Primary Care Trust



Wigan Council and Ashton, Leigh
and Wigan Primary Care Trust

Wigan Citizens' Panel Survey 6

Written Report

BMG
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Prepared for: -
Wigan Council and Ashton, Leigh
And Wigan Primary Care Trust

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1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

HOUSING AND RELATED SERVICES

- Within the scope of this survey, half of the respondents live in a semi-detached house (50%). 27% of the respondents live in a detached house. 20% are in a terraced house, 15% of these are mid-terraced and 5% are end-terrace.
- 60% of the respondents have lived in their property eleven years or more. Only one in ten have lived there for two years or less. Overall 86% are generally happy in their property and consequently 79% are not considering moving house in the next 12 months.
- Of those who are not generally happy (5%), the most common reason given for this is that the property is too small (37%).
- Grants should be restricted to people who own and live in the house (excluding landlords) is a statement that 32% of panel members agree with.
- Loans should be repaid when the property is sold is the option cited by 52% of respondents.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

- In May 2001 Wigan Council, representing the Council and Wigan and Bolton Health Authority¹, commissioned BMG to establish a Citizens' Panel on their behalf. In July 2001 12,221 Wigan residents, randomly selected from the Electoral Register, were mailed an invitation to join the Wigan Citizens' Panel. The expected response rate was between 10% and 13%, however a response rate of 16% was achieved and therefore the panel was established with 1,992 panel members.
- The invitation to join the panel also included the first survey questionnaire. This questionnaire was divided into two distinct parts. The first part asked those interested in joining the panel to provide information about themselves. Information was collected on a range of profile issues including the economic status of the respondent, qualifications held, their marital status and the number of children, if any, in the household. In addition, respondents also provided information about their housing tenure, whether they have a disability and their access to information technology at home.
- On receipt of each completed questionnaire, BMG coded the verbatim (open-ended) questions, input and then analysed the data. As part of the analysis process the data was 'weighted' by gender and age to ensure that it accurately matches the known profile of Wigan's population by these two characteristics.
- In late August 2002 1510² members of the Wigan Panel were mailed with the sixth panel survey and 1003 panel members returned a completed questionnaire by the deadline. This gave a 66% response rate for survey.
- A sample of 1003 is very robust and is subject to a maximum standard error of $\pm 3.1\%$ at the 95% confidence level on an observed statistic of 50%. Thus, we can be 95% confident that responses are representative of those that would be given by the total adult population, if a census had been conducted, to within 3.1% of the percentages reported.
- As with the earlier surveys the data was 'weighted' and a set of data tables has been produced which presents the results and breaks down the data by the following groups:
 - ◆ **Gender**
 - ◆ **Age**
 - ◆ **Marital Status**

¹ The Health Authority has now been superseded by the Ashton, Leigh and Wigan Primary Care Trust

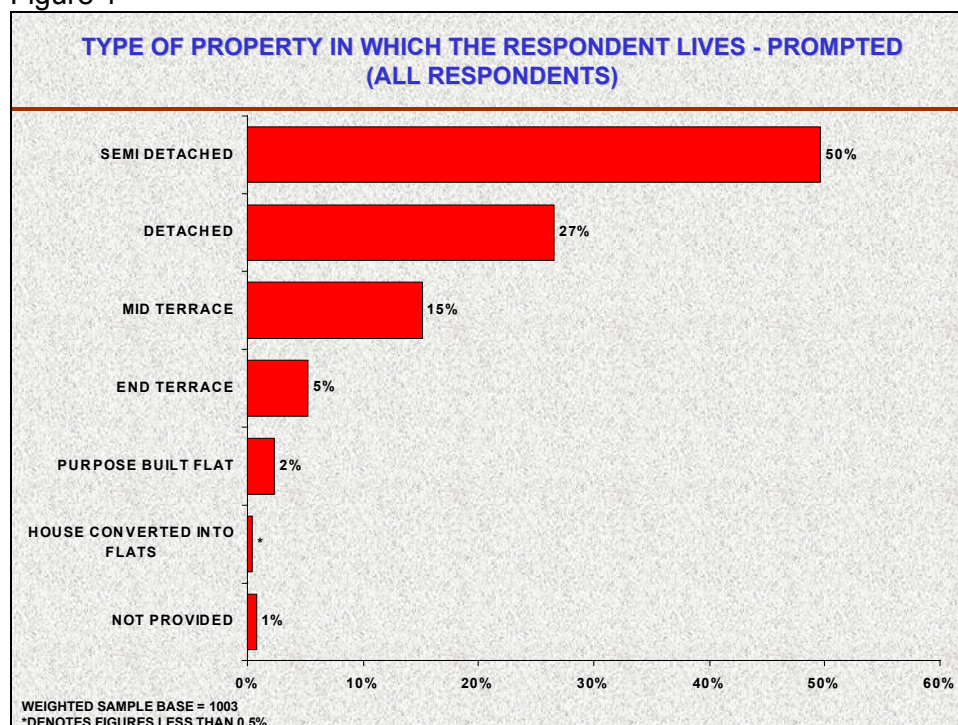
² Panel members who had not responded to any of the three previous surveys were not mailed

- ◆ **Ethnicity**
- ◆ **Disability**
- ◆ **Children under 16 living in the household**
- ◆ **Economic status**
- ◆ **Internet access**
- ◆ **Ward of residence**
- This document summarises in a written format the main findings from the sixth panel survey.
- Please note that in terms of ethnicity profiling the actual numbers of respondents to this survey who define themselves as being in a BME group is too small, consequently statistics have not been quoted in these terms.

3.0 HOUSING AND RELATED SERVICES

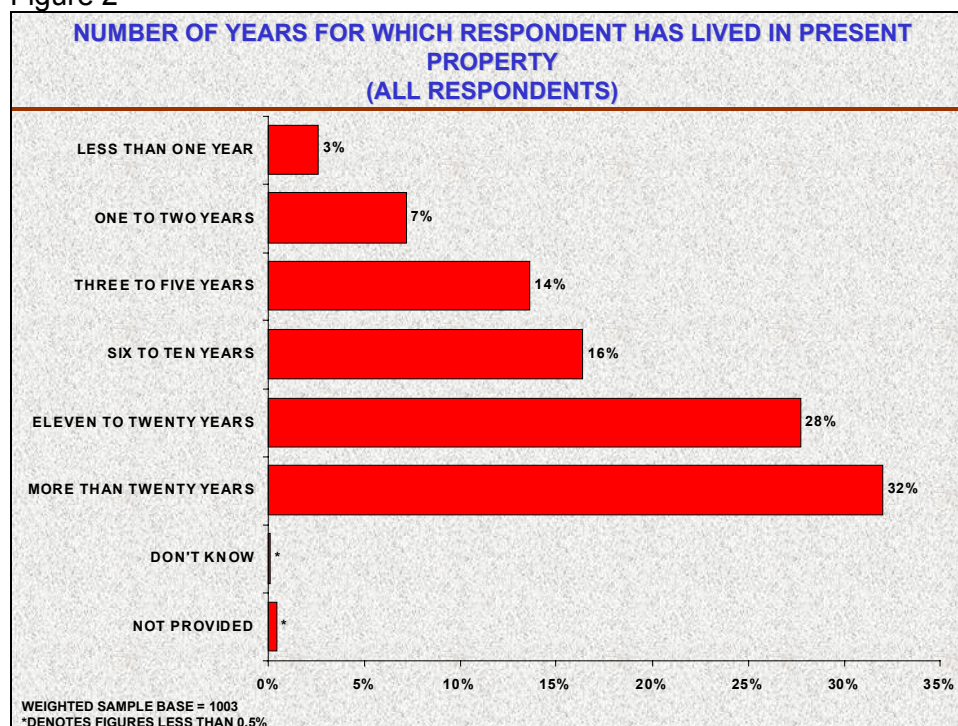
- Wigan Council's Environmental Health & Consumer Protection Department provides a range of housing related services for the Borough's 131,000 homes.
- The Housing Strategy section is responsible for researching and developing a framework for dealing with housing issues and problems in the Borough. This includes monitoring the provision of Social Housing and Asylum Seeker distribution. Advice is also given on Energy Efficiency and Home Security.
- The Urban Renewal section is responsible for ensuring that all privately owned homes are healthy, safe and warm. This is done through approving grant assistance to homeowners and providing advice and guidance to landlords. Enforcement powers are also used to deal with unfit and empty homes.
- Questions were put to the panel on this service to help shape the future policies of the sections, and influence the way services are provided.
- The respondents were provided with a choice of property types and asked to choose the one which best describes their property. Half of the respondents live in a semi-detached house (50%). 27% of the respondents live in a detached house. Of the 1 in 5 respondents (20%) who are in a terraced house, 15% of these are mid-terraced and 5% are end-terrace.

Figure 1



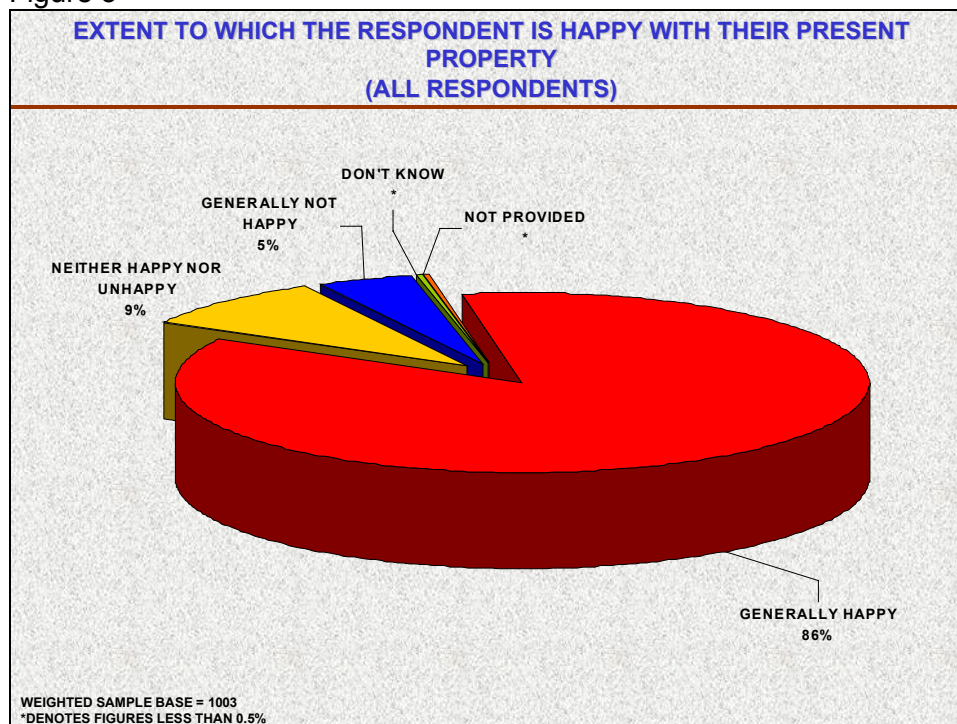
- The largest age group living in mid-terrace property is the 18-24 age group at just over one in five (22%). Semi-detached houses are also most common amongst this age group (63%). Approaching a third of both the 25-44 and 45-64 age groups (31% and 30% resp.) live in a detached property.
- The majority of people have lived in their property for either more than twenty years (30%) or eleven to twenty years (28%). In fact 64% of the 65 and over age group have lived in their property for more than twenty years.
- Of the respondents who have lived in their property for more than twenty years, 34% are the owners of the property and 25% are council tenants. The longest length of residency currently, for those who rent privately is six to ten years (46%).

Figure 2



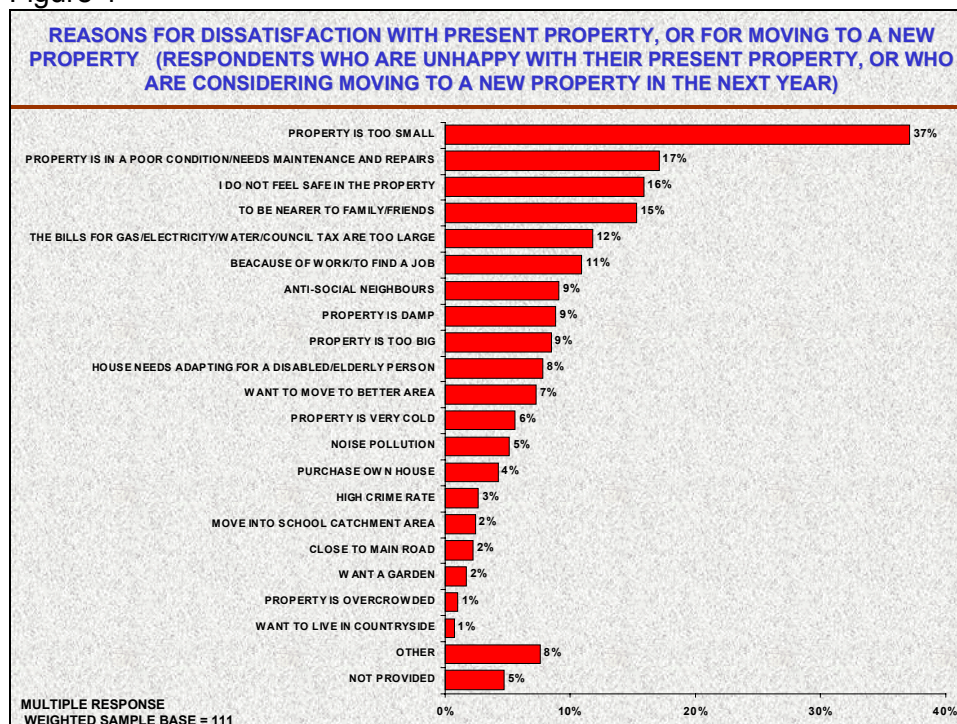
- The majority of respondents would describe themselves as being generally happy (86%) with their property compared to 9% who are neither happy nor unhappy and one in twenty say that they are generally not happy 5%. The same proportions are generally prevalent across the age categories
- The majority of owner-occupiers are generally happy with their property (88%) compared to 73% of council tenants. The group that is most unhappy is comprised of those who are in a privately rented property (28%).

Figure 3



- Although the majority of respondents are not thinking of moving home (79%), nearly one in ten (9%) are considering the option and are thinking of moving house in the next 12 months. Those in privately rented accommodation are the group that is most considering moving (24%).
- Although the numbers of respondents are progressively smaller at this point, no-one who currently lives in Beech Hill, Hindsford, Norley, or Worsley Mesnes is thinking of moving. However, 23% of those in Winstanley, 21% in Hindley Green and 20% in Leigh Central are thinking of moving.
- Respondents who were either generally not happy with their property or are thinking of moving house in the next 12 months were asked to indicate why this is so, from a given list of options. Of the options listed the most popular reasons are that the current property is too small (37%), in a poor condition / needs maintenance and repairs (17%), and the householder does not feel safe in the property (16%).

Figure 4



- Twice as many female respondents felt that their property was too (48%) small compared to males (24%). Four times as many females (24%) compared to males (6%) feel unsafe in their property, and approaching a third more women (19%) consider their property to be in a poor condition / in need of maintenance and repairs than men (15%)
- Although the general pattern highlighted above is reflected across the age groups, the most common reason for either being unhappy or thinking of moving house for 45-64 year-olds is that the property is damp (26%) and that the property is too big for those aged 65 and over (34%). In addition to this 30% of the over 65 age group do not feel safe in their property.
- Respondents were asked to list additional reasons for not being happy or thinking of moving house. The most common supplementary motives given are: anti-social neighbours (9%), want to move to a better area (7%), noise pollution (5%), purchase own house (4%), high crime rate (3%), want a garden (2%), want to be close to a main road (2%), want to move into a school catchment area (2%), want to live in the countryside (1%).
- Wigan Council has limited resources to spend on improving privately owned housing in the Borough. These resources can be provided in the form of interest free loans (repaid when/if the property is sold) or grants (a one-off payment that does not need to be paid back).
- Panel members were asked to indicate from a given list of statements which, if any, they agreed with for the provision of grants and, separately, for the provision of loans.

- Grant allocation should be restricted to people who own and live in the house is the most common response given (32%). However this was closely followed by several of the other statements. Grant allocation should be: repaid when the property is sold (29%); restricted to people who are disabled (28%); restricted to people on means tested benefits (27%); restricted to people who are aged 60 or over.
- Interestingly, a lower proportion of respondents who have a disability opted for restricting grant allocation to people who are disabled (25%) compared to those who are not disabled (28%).
- The results for a council loan allocation were relatively more marked. Over half of the respondents (52%) feel that the loan for improving privately owned housing should be repaid when the property is sold. The next most popular option is to restrict loan allocation to people who own and live in the house (37%). Restricting loan allocation to people on means tested benefits is opted for by 18% of respondents.

Figure 5

