

## OPEN DOOR?

Better Housing for One Parent Families  
under the Rental Accommodation Scheme



## Outline

- Why this project?
- Approach
- Findings
- Recommendations
- Progress

## Need for Change

- Changing composition of households
- Limited social housing
- Rent supplement flawed
  - 13,889 (23%) one-parent families in receipt of Rent Supplement in 2005
  - 53% of all in receipt for at least a year
- 16,795 (38%) one-parent families in need in 2005

## Rental Accommodation Scheme

- Transfer to local authorities
- Existing properties and PPPs
- 5,000 transfers in 2006 (about 33,000 eligible)

## Opportunities

- Eliminating poverty traps
- Improved security
- Focus on standards
- A chance to settle

## Research aims

- Influence quality of RAS accommodation
- Identify issues for one parent families
- Specify RAS dwelling standards
- Policy recommendations

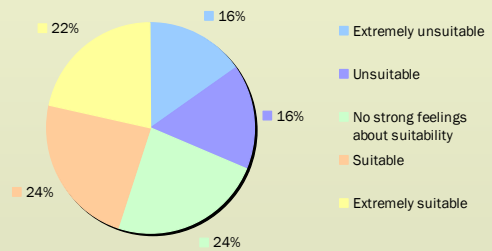
## Methodology

- Review experience elsewhere
- Survey of lone parents
- Focus groups
- Consultation with architect

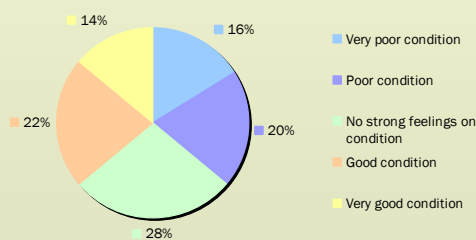
## Survey of lone parents

- 51 questionnaires, mostly phone interviews
- 74% house, 20% purpose-built apartment and 6% flat
- Over two-thirds (67%) on rent supplement for over 18 months

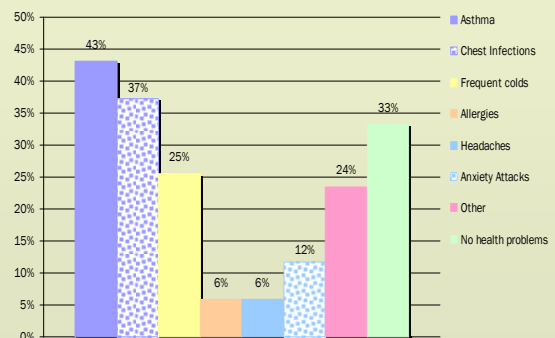
## 32% living in unsuitable accommodation



## 36% living in poor conditions



## Children's health vulnerable





Main problems



Heating and Thermal Efficiency



Storage and Play Space



Clothes Drying



Safety and Security



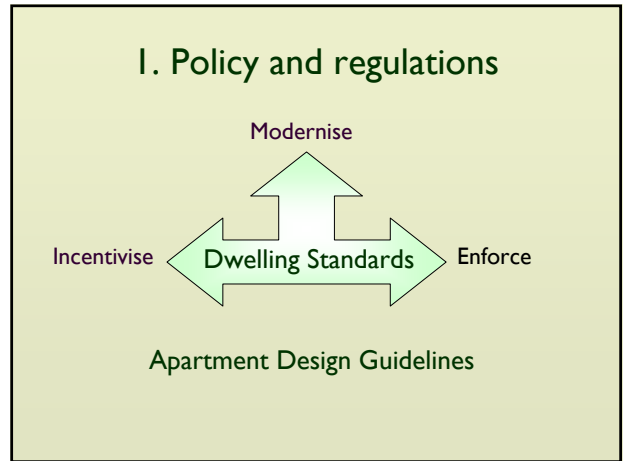
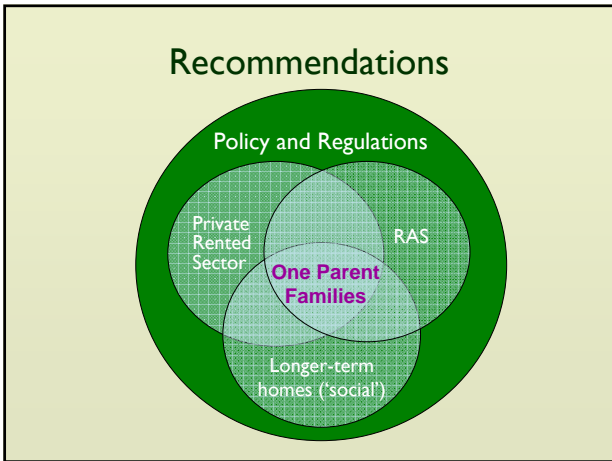
Repairs



Standards

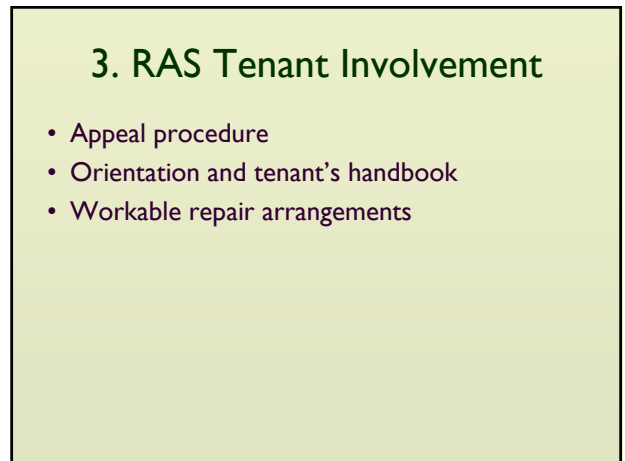


Rights and obligations



**2. RAS family-friendly housing**

- Appropriate size
- Play space
- Storage space
- Appliances & heating



**3. RAS Tenant Involvement**

- Appeal procedure
- Orientation and tenant's handbook
- Workable repair arrangements

#### 4. Sustainable Homes

- Community support for RAS tenants
- No ghettoisation
- Regular reviews of housing needs (RAS → Social)

#### 5. Wider housing Context

- RAS not the full answer
- More social housing investment needed
- Differential rent if eligible for RAS

#### Progress to date

- Review of dwelling standards and guidelines
- Rent Supplement reform:
  - Ban on full-time work removed for RAS eligible
  - Easing of assessment of earnings
- Consultation on design standards
- National Advisory Group on RAS
- RAS pilot schemes (Access Housing Unit)