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## Introduction

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This note summarises the messages emerging from our research and other main sources of information on housing officers and the housing sector that have been brought to our attention within the remit of this study. This summary seeks to clarify the findings and resolve the sometimes different approaches adopted in the studies.

## Main messages

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Our results show that there is a requirement for 47% growth in the supply of housing **and** welfare officers to meet demand but our forecasts indicate that supply under a business-as-usual extrapolation will exceed this.

Evidence from a wide range of sources is ambiguous, partly as a result of organisational and policy change in the sector and partly as a result of the number of different occupations involved in the housing sector.

The Arup report explores the housing occupation – those in the sector who consider themselves housing professionals over and above any other occupation such as surveyors, planners, etc. In general this accords with housing officers, as defined in LFS data, and housing managers, as defined by Asset Sector Skills. Asset Sector Skills research focuses on the housing sector and includes a broad range of occupations, a number of which are included in other occupational chapters of the Arup report.

Amongst housing professionals, there appear to be people shortages in:

- housing managers/officers in London and South East (Arup model, Asset Sector Skills)
- senior managers
- specialist areas of skills reflecting increasing complexity of housing policy and interventions

In the housing sector, there appear to be significant shortages in:

- surveyors, business skills (e.g. accountants, marketing experts) and those with wider experience e.g. regeneration professionals
- As well as people shortages there are a number of gaps in generic skills such as project management.

In terms of forecasting skills gaps, there is no other quantitative data that we have identified which explores current or future skills gaps in housing professionals. Asset Skills Forecasts explore employment trends and use these as a proxy for demand. There is no indication whether supply will respond to meet these jobs. The surplus in our model is partly dependent on the evidence from trends to date that supply can respond to increasing demand to fill new posts. This may not be the case indefinitely and will be explored when the model is rerun to reflect CSR07 and new directions in housing policy.

Due to the lack of other quantitative information on the supply and demand of housing and welfare officers, we cannot identify whether the surplus is being driven by increases in welfare officers or housing officers or both. We note that there are shortages across the sector and have tried to reflect the subtleties of the available data in the report.

What we can say from survey data (when housing associations are extracted from the data) is that some housing associations identify possible shortages in the supply of housing and welfare officers. This shortage is likely to refer to housing officers, which could tentatively suggest that the surplus in housing and welfare officers refers to welfare officers and hides widespread shortages.

## Background

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The data with respect to housing professionals is ambiguous. This has been set out in the chapter on housing and welfare officers.

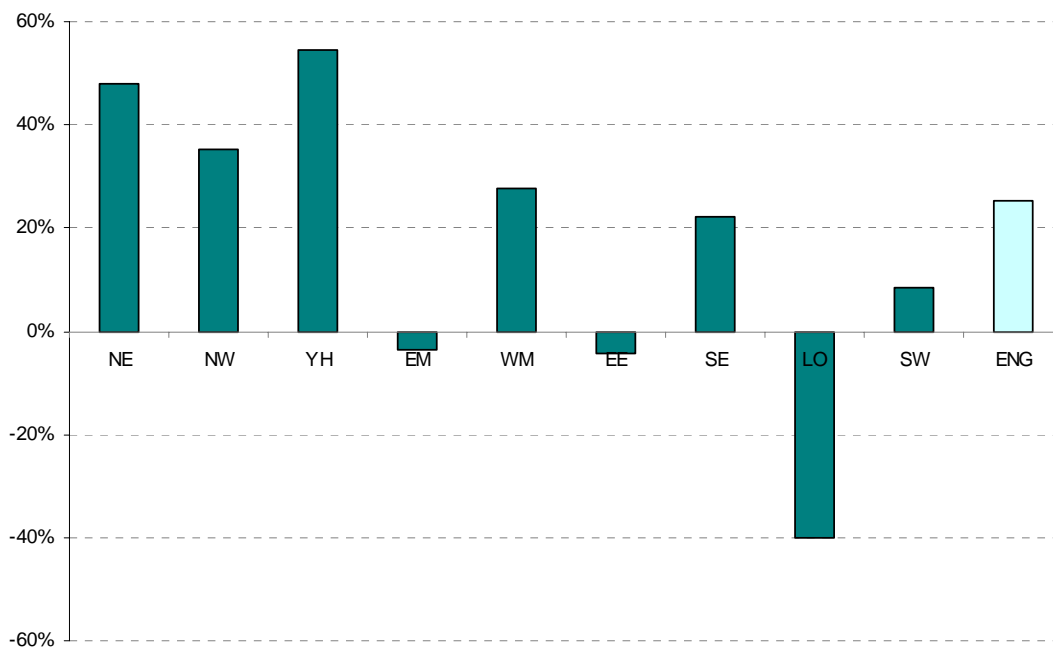
This note provides a summary of various sources:

- Arup model
- Arup survey (in more detail below)
- Wider evidence base – Evidence Base Review (Ernest and Young), Gap Analysis for Sustainable Communities Professionals (Young Consulting) and a series of Asset Sector Skills reports

#### Arup Forecasting Model

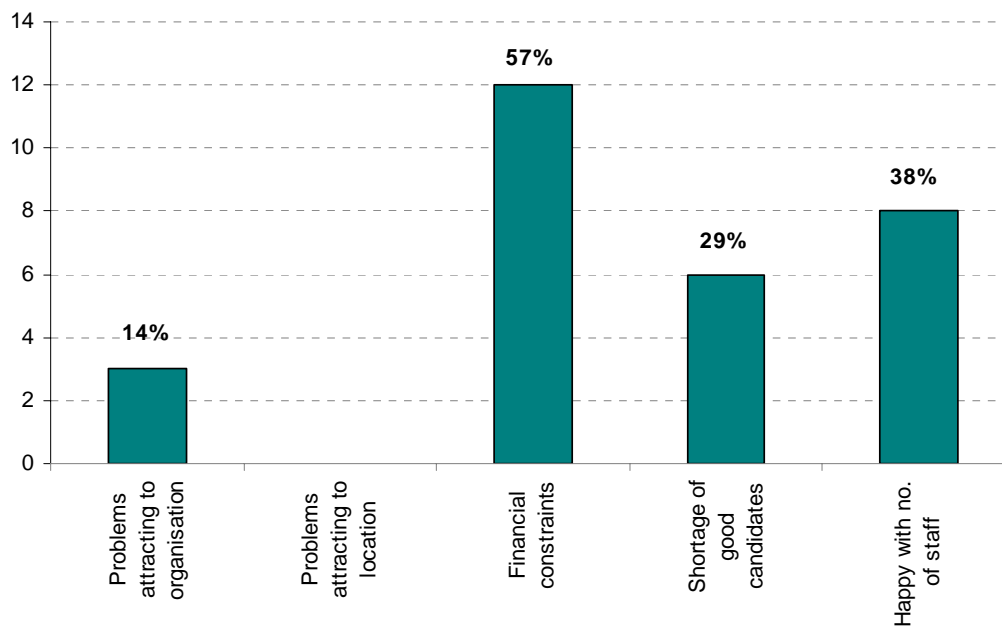
- The Arup model projects an overall surplus of housing and welfare officers of 25% (that is to say, forecast demand for H&W officers will be 25% lower than forecast supply of H&W officers).
- This does not mean that demand for H&W officers is not increasing. It is forecast to rise by 47% between 2006 and 2016, but supply is forecast to rise more quickly – 90% between 2006 and 2012.
- The supply forecast is based on a 45% observed increase in category “3232 Housing & Welfare Officers” 2001 and 2005 (as reported by the Labour Force Survey). It is not possible to get any further breakdown on this category from the Office for National Statistics. It is possible that the rapid growth in people working in this category has been as a result of a growth in Welfare Officers rather than Housing Officers but it is not possible to confirm this using LFS data.
- Despite a predicted surplus on aggregate, our model forecasts areas of labour shortage in H&W officers – 40% in London, 4% in the East Midlands; 4% in the East of England.

#### Forecast Skills Gaps in Housing and Welfare Officers in 2012 by Region



## Arup Survey of Organisations

- **Q10** - When asked what the constraints to employing more staff were, the majority of HA respondents said financial. More people said they were happy with the number of staff they employed than said they observed a shortage of good candidates. None of the free text quotes make reference to problems recruiting or lack of good candidates.

**Response to Q20 by Housing Association respondents**

- **Q11** – When asked if they found it easier or harder to recruit than two years ago, 38% said easier or the same, or made no response. 62% said they found it harder to recruit than before. However, free text responses indicate that the problems may not be to do with H&W officers. No comments mentioned H&W explicitly, but two comments mentioned development/development and surveying as particular areas of recruitment problems for Housing Associations.
- **Q20** - When asked whether they expected to see a shortage of any type of professional, 24% said they expected a shortage of H&W officers. For comparison, the number of HA respondents who said they expected shortages in other professions are shown below.

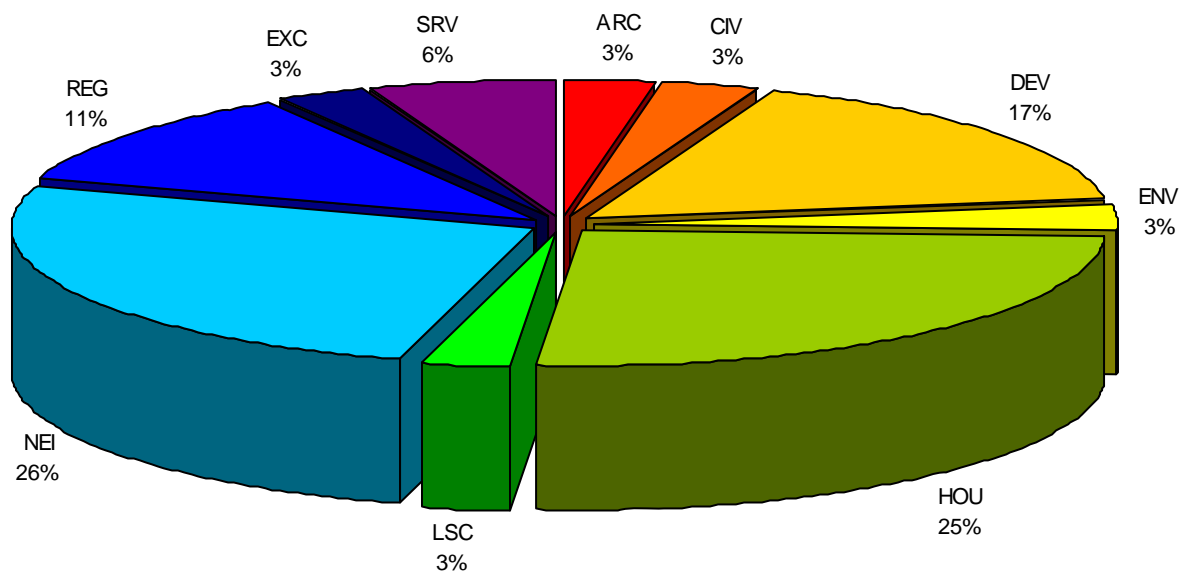
**Response to Q20 by respondents from Housing Associations**

<b>Profession in which a shortage is anticipated</b>	<b>% of respondents who expect a shortage</b>
Developers	24%
Housing & Welfare Officers	19%
Surveyors	14%
Sustainable Development Specialists	5%
Regeneration and Economic Development	5%
Environmental Specialists	5%
Engineers	5%
Transport Planners	0%
Planners	0%
Landscape Architects, Urban Designers and Architects	0%

Arup Survey of Individuals

- Of those who work for Housing Associations, the breakdown of occupations was as follows:

**Occupation of respondents working for Housing Associations**



- Q19 – When asked whether they thought their organisation ought to employ more of any type of professional, 14% said they thought their organisation needed more H&W officers – but H&W shortages were noted by fewer people than shortages in Regen & Ec Dev, Neighbourhood and Community, Architects etc, Environmentalists and Sustainable Development specialists.

**Response to Q19 by respondents working for Housing Associations**

	% who think more of this professional should be employed
REG	43%
NEI	34%
URB, LSC, ARC	31%
ENV	31%
SUS	26%
HOU	14%
DEV	9%
PLN	9%
ENG	3%
SRV	3%
TRA	0%

Summary of evidence reviewed

**2004, Evidence Base Review, Ernest and Young:**

**Definition:** Considers housing under social occupations. Defines housing officers as being responsible for management and maintenance of properties of mixed tenure, predominantly will work within public sector for a local authority or housing association. LA housing and welfare officers identified as responsible for assessing local housing requirements and needs of special groups.

**Numbers:** Housing officers assumed to be included in Housing and Welfare Officer SOC code – CIH membership used as a proxy for the number of housing officers.

**Shortages:** Found no quantitative or qualitative evidence to show that shortages in any of three social occupations, including housing officers. No evidence to suggest that demand will increase as a result of Sustainable Communities Plan. But did note that the CIH recognised that skills requirements were changing and demand for training was unmet.

**2006, Gap Analysis for Sustainable Communities Professionals, York Consulting**

**Definition:** Uses definition in evidence base review.

**Numbers:** 20,000 members of CIH. High numbers in London and the South East. Greatest increases in membership in North East and East Midlands.

**Demand:** Increase in the number of senior positions within HA and LA (source: stakeholders)

**Supply:** Older age profile of the profession.

**Shortages:** CIH report shortage of people in the sector, particularly in London and the SE. But Recruitment and Retention Survey Jan 2006 shows relatively low proportion of LAs reporting difficulties in recruiting and retaining officers in to housing management roles, although higher proportions had difficulties recruiting at a higher level. CIH reports that particular difficulties recruiting people with technical occupations such as surveyors and architects.

This suggests shortage in:

- senior positions
- London and SE
- Technical occupations like surveyors

**Generic skills:** No evidence on generic skills but view is that skill base of housing officers is widening as they are required to play a link role between housing, regeneration and planning.

### **Asset Skills Reports 2006**

Asset Skills – Sector Skills Council for the places in which we live and work

#### Skills Needs Assessment for the UK

This report provides an overview of the sector which contains the following sub-sectors: property and housing services, facilities management and cleaning.

#### **Characteristics of the sector:**

- growth in workplaces 1998-2004, driven by high growth in Property and Housing workplaces (51% growth)
- Employment and workplaces focused in London and the SE
- 628,000 in sector, approximately 349,425 in Property Services and Housing

#### **Recruitment:**

**2005 National Employers Skills Survey** – 17% of all establishments in Asset Skills Survey face vacancies, a similar proportion to vacancies to the economy as a whole in England. 6% hard to fill vacancies, 4% skills shortages vacancies. Most frequently cited hard to fill vacancies were health care and related personal services, elementary cleaning professions and sales and related professions, architects, town planners and surveyors.

**2002 DfES, A Review of Skills Needs in the Property and Housing Sector** – significant problems recruiting to maintenance/asset management, finance/accounts and support/care jobs in HAs

**2004 Housing Corporation 'Staying On: Retaining Staff in Housing Associations'** – 17% turnover lower than national average across employment sector, masking difficulties in large HA and those in London. Retention problem for particular organisations, not for sector, and in support and care staff and specialists. Poor image of the sector a barrier to recruitment.

#### **Skills gaps:**

**2005 Asset Skills Needs Assessment** – communications skills, general IT, management skills

**2002 DfES report** – management development and business planning seen as important

**2004 Housing Corporation** – poor management

**2006 Asset Skills Industry Board** – generic skills seen as important; also specific skills IT, finance, building and construction trade

#### **Future skills gaps:**

Future skills needs equated to employment growth – two very different projections – do not explore the relationship between supply and demand

- **Main projections** – across the sector, 30% increase 2004 -2014
- **Alternative projections** – 1% increase 2004-2014 – within this growth mostly within property services, in area of letting of own property and management of property. Housing and welfare officers show significant growth in employment – reflects supply increase in our model which partly accounts for surplus in supply.
- **Replacement demand** – to account for retirement will need 40,000 – 50,000 new staff 2004-2014

- **Drivers of demand** – increase in rate of household formation and increase in demand for social housing

#### Asset Skills Sector Skills Agreement, Priority Occupations in the Asset Skills Sector

This report explores issues surrounding supply and demand for skills in priority occupations.

#### **Housing managers**

**Organisational change:** rapid change in the sector with the emergence of the Housing Associations with a more entrepreneurial approach

**Shortages:** Acute skill shortages in the S, SE and London picture elsewhere mixed; some evidence of increasingly specialist skills (e.g. supported housing) difficult to recruit in to

**Supply:** Older age profile means potential labour shortages at a later date, technical background of staff can exacerbate managerial skills shortages

**Demand:** HA increasingly look for people with general management skills (and are competing with the public sector), LA now competing with HAs.

#### **Future drivers:**

- changes in housing quality standards
- mergers of HA – bottlenecks in career progression
- stock transfers from LA to ALMOS/Has
- broadening role of HAs

#### **Housing Development Staff (assess need, develop strategy, development activity)**

**Recruitment:** difficulties recruiting across range of occupations linked to development activity, especially project management and surveying (National Housing Federation); also lack of strategic enablers

#### **Future drivers:**

- Sustainable communities plan requiring wider range of skills
- Major construction projects in the SE impacting on supply

#### Asset Skills, Sector Skills Agreement, Stage Three UK Wide Report

This report summarises findings from previous report and sets out action plan to address skills shortages.