

## Bolton Council – Tackling poor housing, protecting the most vulnerable & stimulating the local economy



### Challenges

**Bolton Council needed to understand the condition of its private sector housing, however had only a limited budget to achieve this. BRE's Housing Stock Condition Model provided an opportunity to get the information they needed at a significantly lower cost than undertaking a full survey.**

Bolton also needed to develop a new policy approach for tackling private sector housing that was in poor condition at a time when the Council was facing cuts. The approach needed to fit with the Council's priorities of protecting the most vulnerable and to stimulate the local economy, without increasing demand for services.



Advisory



Data



Research



Tools

### Solution

Bolton used BRE's Housing Stock Condition Model to help identify properties at risk of failing decency. The stock condition model was able to predict the presence of housing hazards, energy efficiency levels, disrepair, fuel poverty and low income households.. Using this data, Bolton were able to obtain an overall indication of the level of poor housing conditions and the potential costs for rectifying.

The Council was very keen to make the link between poor housing conditions and the impact on health and social care. In order to do this, they carried out a data matching exercise with benefits data, homecare and health condition data that was shared with them from the CCG and Adult Social Care. This provided an indicative list of vulnerable households that potentially lived in poor conditions.

The intention being to prevent conditions from becoming worse, hospital presentations and admittance as a result of falls, cold homes etc. and reduce the need for home care packages as a result of adaptations. This data has been used to target 'Care and Repair' services including home improvement grants. This enabled Bolton to focus resources on those most in need and manage limited budgets.

"It is so refreshing to get someone who is prepared to help us achieve better outcomes for people instead of making us jump through hoops and putting so many barriers in place"

**Michelle Horrocks,  
Growth & Regeneration Manager, Bolton Council**

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## Benefits

**Bolton's intention was to tackle those properties identified through the BRE model as being at the highest risk of failing decency that are lived in by those most in need. By tackling poor housing conditions it was hoped to support health and social care transformation plans by ensuring people are able to live in their own homes for longer with improved health.**

A recent cost benefit analysis of the service has provided an indicative saving to health and social care of £3m over 5 years. This has been achieved by enabling vulnerable homeowners to remain living independently in their own homes for longer.

In terms of the overall goal of managing demand, the targeted approach has been successful and Bolton have also been able to ensure that local contractors are able to undertake the work required, thereby helping to stimulate the local economy.

The exercise helped the Council target those households with health conditions living in poor housing conditions - such as dwellings suffering from excess cold where the occupier has Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) or respiratory disease, and dwellings with the potential for fall hazards where the occupier is elderly and at higher risk of a hospital admission. The Council's customers have received home improvement grants of up to £35k (and in some cases more) for measures such as rewiring, roofing works, damp proof courses, windows and doors, new heating systems, new kitchens and bathrooms, external wall insulation and structural remedies. In addition many have received adaptations to their property such as level access showers, stairlifts, ramps etc. Since the policy was introduced in 2013, 2,829 measures (outlined above) have been implemented.

The Council also carried out a mailshot campaign to properties with the presence of housing hazards and health conditions. Home visits were undertaken to identify the type of improvements that were needed. These have ranged from DPCs, roofing, rewires, new kitchens and bathrooms. The flexible approach taken to funding has meant that DFG has been able to support the Council's Safe Warm and Dry grant scheme and vice versa, providing a true wraparound service for the customer.

"Without this intervention Mrs C's health would have continued to decline during the cold winter, potentially putting more pressure on health and social services. The most important issue for Mrs C was being able to continue to live in her home with all the memories it holds for her."



**£3 million**  
saving on health and  
social care over 5 years

**2,829**  
improvement measures  
implemented



Individual home  
improvement grants of  
**£35k+**  
per dwelling

### Get in touch

For more information on BRE's services in housing and health go to  
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