



all party parliamentary group
for healthy homes and buildings

EVIDENCE SESSION 3:

Building our Future Green Paper – Laying the Foundations for Healthy Homes and Buildings

Unhealthy Homes and Buildings in Focus

Tuesday 12th December 2017

14:00-15:00 Committee Room 6, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

NON-VERBATIM MINUTES

1. Welcome and Introductions

Jim Shannon MP

Chair of the APPG for Healthy Homes and Buildings

The Chair welcomed all attendees and explained that today's session is the third oral evidence session held in response to the Green Paper. He thanked all of those who have submitted written evidence and also those who have agreed to give us oral evidence today.

He went on to say that the Green Paper is a significant and influential project and one which hopefully will shine a light on the need for Government support and action to improve the quality and standard of the homes and buildings we work and live in. Given that people spend on average 90% of our time indoors it is important that MPs and others take on board the findings and recommendations in the Green Paper.

He concluded by saying that today the meeting will focus on some of the specific topics of discussion related to how homes and buildings affect on our health: acoustics, insulation, lighting, heat and soforth.

He then welcomed those who we have invited to give further oral evidence today.

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| ○ Lewis Rogers | Velux |
| ○ Stephen Turner | Institute of Acoustics |
| ○ Sarah Kostense-Winterton | MIMA |
| ○ Jack Harvie-Clark | HEMAC Noise Group |
| ○ Meradin Peachey | Association of Directors of Public Health |

He also recorded his gratitude to the sponsors of the group, Airtopia, BEAMA, Saint-Gobain and new sponsor Velux.

Secretariat of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Healthy Homes and Buildings
hbbappg@devoconnect.co.uk | healthyhomesbuildings.org.uk | @APPGHBB

The All Party Parliamentary Group for Healthy Homes and Buildings is kindly supported by;



2. Overview of the Session

Jade Lewis, Saint-Gobain

Comments would concentrate on thermal, acoustic and air quality issues. She said that British home buyers take 3 times as long to buy a sofa than a house – it is their biggest purchase but it is not taken seriously.

She pointed out that 58% of homes experience mould – and 25 million homes don't have the insulation to correct standards. It is therefore not surprising that bronchitis, emphysema and other respiratory diseases have increased by 25% and now third biggest killer. She concluded that excess winter deaths are linked to poor housing and called for healthier homes and buildings.

Lewis Rogers, Velux

Introduced the company which is the leading manufacturer of roof windows and employs 40,000 people across ten countries. Better daylight and ventilation is what they believe and that everyone has the right to a healthy home. However unfortunately 1 in 6 across Europe live in an unhealthy home.

Velux supports the working group and recommendations including for a joined up approach at Government level as well as with the industry. Also support housing as a priority, although would add that renovation should also be a priority.

Jim Shannon asked Lewis to explain more about VELUX's understanding of the health ramifications arising from buildings with poor light and, crucially, how you believe these can best be addressed?

- **Lewis Rogers** replied natural daylight and ventilation is central to Velux – benefits are to health and wellbeing. Clear detriment of darkness but daylight also has positive impact. Velux suggest renovation as a key solution but rates of renovation very low – if we renovated 2% of homes every year then unhealthy homes would be halved by 2050.

Key issue is to unlock private investment – home improvement survey shows that 6 out of 10 were planning £50bn worth of improvements so significant investments are possible but need to be focussed on the right renovations.

Stephen Turner, Institute of Acoustics

Introduced the IoA which is the professional body for all those who work in this field. He said noise is the 'Cinderella of the environment' as 7m are seriously annoyed by noise from their local environment and similar number annoyed by noise from neighbours

Secretariat of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Healthy Homes and Buildings
hbbappg@devoconnect.co.uk | healthyhomesbuildings.org.uk | @APPGHHB

The All Party Parliamentary Group for Healthy Homes and Buildings is kindly supported by;



He stated Government's overarching policy on noise is good but implementation is uneven so issues are often not addressed. The IoA do have a number of detailed policy recommendations:

- sound insulation regulations are too low and standards should be increased as part of the current review of buildings regs
- conversion of offices to homes can happen without reference to noise – should be more joined up thinking so concerns

Jade Lewis asked – as **Jim Shannon** had to give his apologies and leave the meeting – a follow up question: one of the key recommendations of the draft Green Paper was to promote joined-up thinking on health and housing and ensure that both areas are embedded in government thinking beyond their specific departments. Do you see this recommendation as a potential solution to the issues you raise? What other solutions have you considered?

- **Stephen Turner** replied that noise is an issue to often circumvented rather than properly addressed. However IoA do recognise it is a complicated issue as we all experience noise differently. Implementation is key challenge and perhaps a noise reduction APPG would help find solutions and encourage joined up thinking.

Sarah Kostense-Winterton, MIMA

If insulation done well then acoustics would be improved. Many issues regards energy efficiency are seen in silos but need to be pieced together

She went on to say that 25% of energy could be saved if properly insulated – 19m homes are insufficiently insulated. Energy Efficiency Infrastructure group – all on EIG website – commissioned a report from Frontier Economics that showed that if current spending of £0.6bn was increased to 1.1bn then majority of homes would reach the EPCC by 2035

Question: [The Building Energy Infrastructure Programme raised in Affordable Warmth, Clean Growth report published in September 2017] makes many ambitious medium-to-long term goals to improve the energy efficiency of the UK housing stock. In MIMA's understanding where does the priority lie at present? What are the key next steps that need to be taken to improve energy efficiency in our homes and buildings through insulation?

- **Sarah Kostense-Winterton** replied to say insulation is one key element of energy efficiency. New homes need to be constructed to carbon zero standard and there is also a need for a large scale demonstrator programme to provide evidence of their benefits. To encourage this low interest loans, changes to stamp duty, tax allowances for PRS, might all be needed. MIMA have a three year plan: building regs needs to be agreed as efficiency target is within clean growth strategy.

Jack Harvie-Clark, HEMAC Noise Group

Secretariat of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Healthy Homes and Buildings
hbbappg@devoconnect.co.uk | healthyhomesbuildings.org.uk | @APPGHHB

The All Party Parliamentary Group for Healthy Homes and Buildings is kindly supported by;



One unintended consequence of emphasis on energy efficiency – more airtight buildings - leads to greater use of mechanical ventilation but then people turn off as too noisy.

HEMAC's main concern is to focus on the health effects of modern energy efficient construction and ventilation and call for awareness of the problems that arise when problems related to energy efficiency in the home are addressed without awareness or consideration of how the building is used.

Gill Morris asked what lessons need to be learned from past attempts to address noise pollution or IAQ in the home?

- **Jack Harvie-Clark** replied to say changes to building regs drove a huge step change in noise between neighbours and sound insulation standards improved. However there is still a need for a robust testing regime so a building is working in way envisaged

Meradin Peachey, Association of Directors of Public Health

ADPH calls for more reference to overcrowding and more and greater recognition of the key role of LA and Directors of Public Health. In these respects they welcomed the green paper as housing and health are high in our priorities although noted that there was insufficient reference to importance of planning and health inequality within it.

She went onto point out that not only buildings are important but also the local environment. She drew attention to the fact that the London Borough of Newham served 2,000 notices on current landlords. A recent survey of paediatricians show 40% could not discharge a child due to poor housing. ADPH supports more research and linking that research to planning.

Question: ADPH's response to the Green Paper consultation raised the need for government to engage proactively with developers on the issues of health and housing. What experience does the ADPH have of doing this and what key benefits do you think could be derived from the government adopting this approach?

- Linking skilled people to developers is important – healthy urban development is crucial moving forward.

Thanks and Next Steps

Gill Morris for the Secretariat of the APPG for Healthy Homes and Buildings thanked all witnesses and attendees. She explained that the officers and sponsors would meet early in the New Year to review all the evidence and draft the White Paper with a view to a prestigious launch being held in after Easter. Meanwhile there will be a UKIEG satellite event to which all APPG attendees would be invited.

Secretariat of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Healthy Homes and Buildings
hbbappg@devoconnect.co.uk | healthyhomesbuildings.org.uk | @APPGHHB

The All Party Parliamentary Group for Healthy Homes and Buildings is kindly supported by;

