Reviewer’s report

**Title:** The SHARP study: a quantitative and qualitative evaluation of the short-term outcomes of housing and neighbourhood renewal

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 25 March 2009

**Reviewer:** Mai Stafford

**Reviewer’s report:**

This clearly written paper describes the evaluation of a housing and neighbourhood renewal initiative. There is a clear need for studies addressing this important topic. The SHARP study is designed to evaluate 1 and 2 year effects on health and well-being. This paper limits itself to effects at 1 year when the intervention group, but not the control group, were studied. The authors draw appropriate conclusions based on this uncontrolled branch of the study. It is not apparent to me why Table 1 and some of the study design includes information relating to the controls since they do not contribute to answering the research questions posed in this paper. This material might be more appropriate put in the paper which evaluates 2 year effects. The other main suggestion I have is to look at participants who moved home and neighbourhood separately from those who only moved home.

I believe the paper would benefit from clarification on some points.

**Major essential revisions:**

i) Describe the eligibility criteria for the intervention and how the allocation of families to new houses (or not) was done. Also describe the take-up of the intervention versus families who were offered but did not take up the move. This background is important for understanding the nature of the intervention and potential differences between intervention group and controls.

ii) How were participants recruited into the study? How were people selected for the two groups (ie what was the sampling frame for each group and how were participants selected from this frame)?

iii) Please provide detail on the response rates at follow-up and baseline.

iv) The statistical analysis section seems to be missing.

**Minor essential revisions:**

v) (page 10): How was change in health measured and analysed?

vi) I am not clear why there are so many chi-sq stats for education by intervention/control. Should there not be just 1 testing differences across all educ categories?

vii) I would like to see the SE characteristics of respondents vs non-responders at wave 2.

viii) It would be interesting to see Table 3 broken down by whehter the participant...
moved neighbourhood or not.

ix) Please clarify how the association between change in health and change in number of problems was analysed.

x) What items capture respectively status, personal progress and identity (page 15)?

xi) It would be helpful to have more description on the rationale for the selection of participants within categories.

xii) The conclusion may be more appropriately stated as “renewal is accomplished by significant improvements in perceived housing environment”. Or were objective measures included? If so, it would be interesting to see this in the results section.

Discretionary revisions:

i) Might drop the reference to SCORE as this doesn’t seem to be used in the paper.

ii) The order of the text on page 9 could match the order in Table 1. (Although consider dropping Table 1 from this paper.)

iii) I could not see how figures on page 9 3rd paragraph relating to tenure types relate to Table 1. Please clarify.

iv) It might be more informative to age adjust the health outcomes in table 1.

v) Univariate should be bivariate (page 10).

vi) The distribution of postal areas presumably refers to the distribution of respondents within postal areas? What are the settlement categories referred to here?

vii) X, F and U could be described in footnotes (Table 1).

viii) Can employment status be broken down further (e.g. into retired/unemployed)?

ix) Table 2 heading please clarify is difference in % at waves 1 and 2.

x) Note that the greatest improvements were identified from differences in absolute %s (not proportional change, for example).

xi) Table 3: I wonder if it is necessary to show t, p and asterisks in the final column?

xii) It was not clear to me what the chi sq of 5.9 and associated p-value referred to (page 14).

xiii) The text might state the magnitude and CI for change in number of symptoms, not just the p-values (page 15).

xiv) Presentation of p-values in Table 5 is not consistent with format for previous tables.

xv) What are the numbers in columns 2 and 3 of table 5?

xvi) I am not sure it is relevant to talk about proportions of participants in the qualitative section, given their selection.
xvii) Social functioning is referred to on page 22. Was this measured? And would it be appropriate to refer to fear of crime or worry about crime rather than simply crime, since crime does not appear to have been directly measured or recorded?

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.