The private rented sector and anti-social behaviour

The London Borough of Tower Hamlets

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neighbourhood knowledge management

Executive summary

Tower Hamlets is situated in the east end of London close to London's financial centre and stretches eastward as far as the Olympic Park and to Docklands in the south.

Its population is around 278,000 but such has been the pace of growth and development this is projected to grow to 352,000 by 2025. There is strong evidence that much of this growth will occur in the privately rented sector (PRS).

Compared with social housing where providers are subject to scrutiny from their tenants and vice versa, no comparable arrangements exist within the Private Rented Sector.

The Council therefore wishes to consult on whether or not to introduce a private landlord licensing scheme in the borough in order to tackle significant and persistent problems such as noise nuisance, rubbish accumulation and other ASB designations by requiring landlords to address nuisance issues directly with their tenants.

To do this it needs to demonstrate that the area within the proposed designation that persistent ASB occurs is caused, in part, by private landlords failing to manage their properties (and their tenants) effectively.

However, demonstrating the link between anti-social behaviour and private rental is not straightforward since there is no comprehensive source of information on whether a property is privately let, either divided into rental units or sub-let to tenants.

This report is based on independent research into potential links between the PRS and ASB, wherever they may occur. It is concerned with three main issues, namely:

- The identification of the size of the private rented sector using statistical analysis to predict which properties are privately rented or not

- The size of the private rented sector properties broken down as appropriate rental type for the purposes of additional or selective licensing

- Using statistical analysis, demonstrating a direct link between the private rented sector and ASB both at a household level and locality level

Our results put the Council's own estimates of the size of the PRS which are based on the 2011 census at a slightly higher figure of 37,000 or 31% of the total housing stock although this is very much an upper bound. Of this, approximately 54% single family households and 46% HMOs.

As part of the project we will provide Tower Hamlets with a database of private sector properties providing the risk score of whether a property is more likely to be an HMO or single family rented property plus other attributes of each UPRN.

If a licensing scheme is introduced this database can be compared with licence applicants and used appropriately to follow-up potential non-applicants.

To identify levels of ASB, we used multiple sources of data in several ASB categories using both council data sources and Police reported crime. We found that:

- Council reported personal and nuisance ASB was highly seasonal but increasing in volume over time especially during the summer months

- Enviro-crime including fly-tipping was also seasonal but increasing year on year

- Police reported crime was generally persistent and more common during winter rather than summer months.

In addition risk factors such as Housing Benefit status, untidy gardens, housing dilapidations and pest control events were predictive of Council reported nuisance ASB and community safety reported ASB.

A key finding is that if we take all private properties as a group whether rented or not the incidence of all occurrences of ASB attributable to individual addresses is 9.9% in high risk HMOs and twice the levels seen in the social housing sector as a comparator.

If we restrict our analysis to high risk suspected single family rented properties the noise incident rate is 7.3%. Differences of similar magnitudes were also found in community safety reported ASB and pest control incidents.

Although rates may appear relatively low, they can have a significant impact in an area. As illustration we found that 72k of the 118k residential properties in Tower Hamlets are situated within 10 metres of at least one council reported ASB incident in the last three years.

This implied that almost no area was immune from its effects, but we also found that the density of ASB varied 16-fold with hotspots concentrated mainly in northwest of the borough meaning that not everywhere was equally affected.
The correlation between ASB and the PRS at an arbitrary administrative level such as a ward rather than at property level is harder to detect.

In summary, with the PRS set to become even larger because of the inability of the supply of affordable housing in Tower Hamlets to match the expected population growth, there is a reasonable possibility that the current levels of ASB will also grow in tandem based on the evidence presented.

Tower Hamlets also has a large social rented sector and rates of ASB are higher than in all private properties; but when rental status in the private sector is taken into account and account is taken of the risk factors such as those indicated, ASB is higher in private rented rather than social rented accommodation.

It should also be noted that because it is densely populated Tower Hamlets will naturally experience more ASB that some other boroughs (e.g. noise). Whilst there is a case for introducing the scheme across the whole borough, we are aware that the council has logistic concerns about implementation across the entire borough at the same time.

This might then steer the council towards initially licensing only certain wards. If so the wards in which ASB and PRS 'hotspots' overlap to a greater degree include the following: Whitechapel, Weavers, Spitalfields and Banglatown, Bow East & West, Blackwall & Cubitt Town and Millwall.

However, this is only a suggestion. Finally, we also note that because the distribution of HMOs and single family rented properties appear to be similar there is arguably no need for Additional or Selective licensing schemes to cover different areas.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Tower Hamlets is situated in the east end of London close to London's financial centre and stretches eastward as far as the Olympic Park and to Docklands in the south. Its population is around 278,000 but such has been the pace of growth and development this is projected to increase to 352,000 by 2025. There is strong evidence that much of this growth has occurred in the privately rented sector.

Figures from the 2011 Census for example show that the private rented sector (PRS) had grown by 135% since the previous census in 2001 and now totals over 34,000 properties. Since then further growth has taken place and now it may be as high as 37,000. According to a report by HSBC, Tower Hamlets is among the top 50 councils for buy to let properties. [1]

The creation of Buy to Let (BTL) mortgages in 1996 has helped to generate a new generation of small landlords not allied to any professional body and often letting just one or two properties. This means for example that some properties that would have been instantly recognisable as council properties from their appearance or location may no longer be identifiable in the same way.

Concerns about overcrowding and unregulated properties and their negative impacts locally have fuelled a widespread suspicion that the growth in the private rented sector is to blame. This in turn has highlighted an unacceptable element of private renting and the difficulty of dealing with those landlords determined to evade their legal responsibilities.

Tower Hamlets itself has seen recent growth in some categories of anti-social behaviour (ASB) such as fly-tipping and complaints about private rented properties. The effects of ASB are felt by residents in different ways. Untidy and overgrown gardens and noise nuisance are two other examples of issues which have been linked to the failure of private landlords to manage properties in an effective way.

Although the causes of ASB are sometimes complex, Tower Hamlets now considers that Selective Licensing of private rented properties offer the best chance of eliminating or reducing ASB. However it is unsure whether any scheme should cover all properties or only some wards where the problems are understood to be greater.

1.2 Additional and Selective Licensing – The legal framework

At present only HMOs which contain 3 or more storeys and are occupied by 5 or more persons forming two or more households are subject to compulsory licensing. Currently, there are only 139 such properties in Tower Hamlets. However, there are two new designations of licensing that provide discretionary adoptive powers for local authorities for all other types of private rented properties.

[1] http://www.newsroom.hsbc.co.uk/press/release/hsbc_reveals_top_50_buy_to_let

These cover smaller HMOs (Additional Licensing) and all other single occupation private rented sector accommodation (Selective Licensing). For each designation different considerations and definitions apply.

Additional Licensing allows councils to impose licensing on other categories of HMOs if it considers that a significant proportion of these HMOs are being managed ineffectively so as to give rise to problems for those occupying them or for the public.

As with Additional Licensing, Selective Licensing may be introduced in areas of low demand housing or areas with significant anti-social behaviour problems. Such problems, which are usually created by just a few landlords or tenants, can have a significant impact in an area and Selective Licensing is intended to help improve them.

All privately rented properties within a Selective Licensing area have to be licensed, regardless of whether or not the property is an HMO. The Council must consult local landlords before introducing selective licensing in an area and they have to publicise it when it is made. Otherwise many of the provisions relating to selective licensing are similar to those relating to the mandatory and discretionary licensing of (HMOs).

Before introducing such schemes, the Council has to be satisfied it is an area which is experiencing a significant and persistent problem caused by anti-social behaviour and also show that some or all of the private sector landlords who have let premises in the area are failing to take action. The challenge for the Council in the coming months is to be sufficiently satisfied in the evidence linking ASB incidents to the PRS and that this evidence will withstand any legal challenge.

1.3 Aims of this report

Tower Hamlets has already done some limited work into the prevalence of anti-social behaviour into the Private Rented Sector in which there were some early indications of which wards might be possible candidates.

However, it was decided that this work needed to be independently validated and extended in order to provide a broader evidence base that would inform choices about the type and extent of any licensing scheme.

This report therefore has two main aims. These are firstly, to identify the probable size of the private rented market, and secondly to establish to what extent ASB is directly linked at both a property and ward level to rental status.

Specific priorities are therefore:

- Obtaining a better understanding of the location of the private rented sector within the borough – broken down by HMOs and non-HMOs
- Identifying whether there is a clear link between private rented properties incidents of ASB and whether there are any geographical concentrations
- Exploring whether evidence exists to satisfy the requirements of the Housing Act for additional and selective licensing on a borough-wide basis

Achievement of these aims requires a clearer understanding of its private rented sector and its distribution; an understanding of how anti-social behaviour, environmental issues and other council enforcement services are linked to individual properties; and secondly, as strong as possible identification of the probability of which properties are privately rented or not.

Accompanying this report is a database detailing all private sector properties and their likely rental status and other relevant data. The practical value of this database is in monitoring licence applications and identifying compliant and non-compliant properties after the scheme is introduced and for validating the actual rental status of individual properties compared with their predicted rental status.

1.4 Structure of the report

The remainder of the report is structured as follows:

- Section 2 describes the methodology and data sources used
- Section 3 analyses trends and spatial patterns in ASB by category and profiles households by risk factors
- Section 4 identifies the size of the private rented sector
- Section 5 undertakes a ward level and micro-spatial analysis
- Section 6 summarises the main findings and concludes

2. Methodology and data sources

We begin with a description of the methodology and data sources used for identifying rental status and the measurement ASB. We start with a brief overview of change in the patterns of renting between 2001 and 2011. Although it is now somewhat dated, the Census is useful because it is the only official source of data on tenure types and trends. It does not enable the specific linkage of ASB to individual properties but it does provide a window on the rapid growth in private sector renting over the previous decade and sets the scene for the more detailed analysis that follows.

2.1 Changes in tenure since 2001

As with many other London boroughs the amount of change in tenure-ship in Tower Hamlets over the last decade is striking. Census data from 2001 and 2011, the only official data source on tenure, show that the number of households grew by 28.2% from 80,531 units to 103,268 units over the period. This growth is in large part due to increased population pressures and massive regeneration especially in the south of the borough.

The GLA estimates that the population currently stands at 278k but based on their estimates this is forecast to grow another 27% by 2025 to 352k and to 397k by 2040,

an increase of 47% over 2014. Based on tenancy trends this strongly indicates that the private rented sector will play a major role in accommodating this number of people.

The Census breaks down households into three tenure categories: owner occupied, social housing or private rented. The most noticeable difference between 2001 and 2011 has been the fall in the relative share of social housing from 51% to 39% and the relative increase in the PRS from 18% to 33% of all residential properties over the period.

Table 1[2] shows that whereas social housing fell by 2.7% between 2001 and 2011, owner occupation grew by 18.4% and the PRS by a massive 135.1%, from 14,552 units to 34,216 units. These changes are due to a combination of factors including the lack of affordable properties, population increases, including as a result of in-migration, and consequent high housing demand.

Tenancy TH	2001	2011	change %
Owner occupied	22,742	26,935	18.4
Social housing	41,236	40,106	-2.7
Private rented	14,552	34,216	135.1
Total	80,531	103,268	28.2

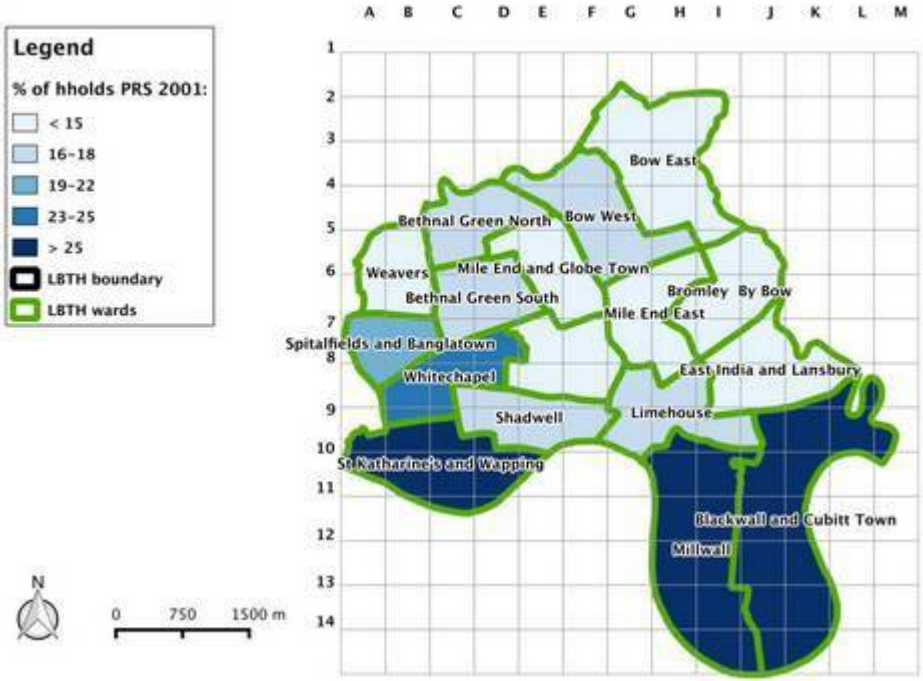
Table 1: Changes in tenancy between 2001 and 2011 (source: 2001 and 2011 census)

The changes underway in the private rented market are also significant because they are not especially localised with most wards being affected to a degree. However, areas with the largest private rented sectors are wards including Blackwall and Cubitt Town, and Millwall including Docklands, both of which comprise many new developments, and Whitechapel and Spitalfields are mainly old stock.

As Figure 1 also shows the biggest changes between 2001 and 2011 have been in the west (cells A5 to D10) and south (cells H10 to K14) but also in the northeast particularly in Bow East (cell H3). In the darkest shaded wards over 40% of properties are in the PRS; in the areas least affected such as Bromley by Bow (I6) and East India (J8) nearly a quarter of properties are in the PRS as compared with less than 10% in 2001.

[2] 2001:
http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/LeadTableView.do?a=7&b=6275287&c=tower+hamlets&d=13&e=16&g=6337981&i=1001x1003x1032x1004&m=0&r=1&s=1420216743186&enc=1&dsFamilyId=163

2011:
http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/LeadTableView.do?a=7&b=6275287&c=tower+hamlets&d=13&e=61&g=6337981&i=1001x1003x1032x1004&m=0&r=1&s=1420216806123&enc=1&dsFamilyId=2505



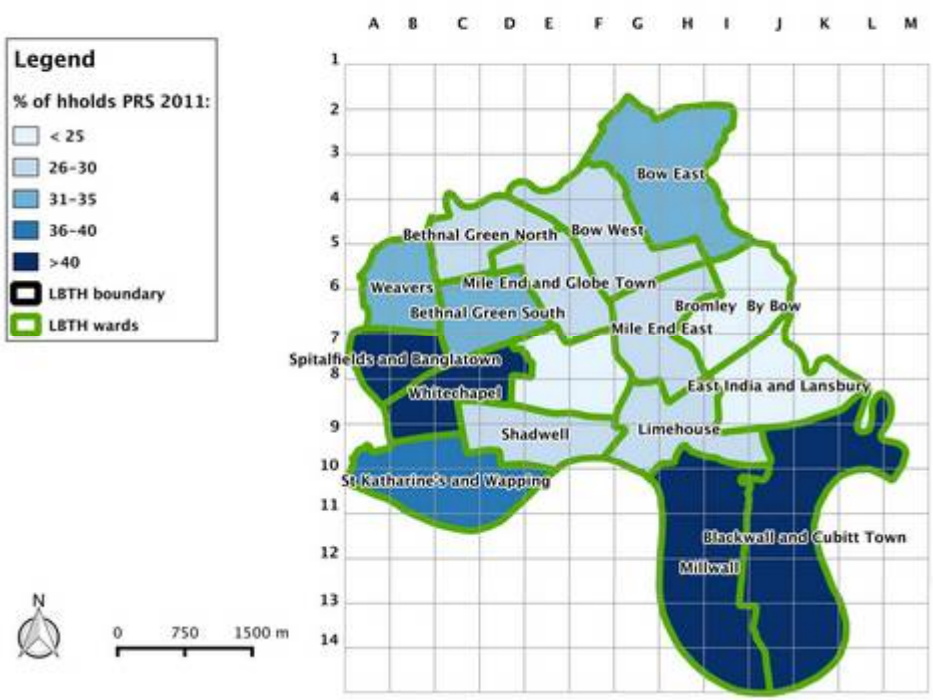


Figure 1: (a) Private rented sector as a percentage of the housing stock in 2001: (b) Private rented sector as a percentage of the housing stock in 2011

2.2 Identification of private rented properties

In the context of selective licensing, census data has two limiting features: firstly it is area-based and secondly it is arguably already out of date. A key requirement is to be able to demonstrate an association between tenure and persistent ASB, but this is not possible unless ASB can be shown to be associated at a property level or that the prevalence of ASB is higher in areas with higher concentrations of privately rented properties.

However, the problem is that there is no specific, comprehensive or up to date information with which to verify whether any individual property is owner occupied or privately rented. All that is known with certainty is whether a property is in the private sector, part of the council stock or social housing. In addition to this problem it is also unclear whether a property is an HMO or being rented by a single family or an owner occupier. This is important because it may affect the type of licence required.

HMOs, for example, can be difficult to identify accurately as their designation depends on the relationship between the occupants living in the property and this can be subject to change over time. Accurate assessment requires an inspection of the property and discussions with the occupants. As previously noted, the present definition of HMOs currently subject to compulsory HMO licensing will be greatly expanded under Additional Licensing and so knowing approximately how many extra properties will be captured as a result is important.

In order to introduce Additional or Selective Licensing councils are required to establish a link between anti-social behaviour on the one hand and private rented sector on the other. This means that as well as identifying whether a property is private rented or not one needs to provide evidence that links rental status to ASB which is methodologically challenging. Once they have done this, the way is open to introduce the scheme and rental properties and their landlords will self-identify as they apply for licences.

Experience suggests that demonstrating that ASB is higher in neighbourhoods with a correspondingly large private rented sector is not particularly difficult but it does not necessarily prove there is a causal link. Our methodology is property as well as area-based in which we use information from a range of sources to measure the likelihood of whether each individual private sector property is rented or not and if so whether it is an HMO or a single family unit.

The methodology is based on work done by ourselves on behalf of Newham Council and others since. This borough, which has progressed farthest in terms of the implementation of selective licensing, has been running the scheme for over a year. In this time it has visited numerous properties which it believed to be at risk. These properties have been flagged either as HMOs, single family private rented dwellings or owner occupied.

The information gathered in this way was used to provide statistical profiles of similar properties in order to predict their rental status. In the practical use of the method,

through selected property visits and the introduction of landlord licences, Newham have reported 90% accuracy levels using this approach which is being improved upon with each visit or landlord contact as the scheme beds down.

We therefore proceeded accordingly in Tower Hamlets. The process involved linking current and historical data totalling tens of thousands of records taken from sources such as Council Tax, Housing and Council Tax Benefit systems and the Electoral Roll to individual properties included in the current Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG) to identify their probable rental status based on rental profiles produced in Newham.

An obvious question is how accurate is this approach when it is applied in another area? The factors themselves such as benefit status and occupant turnover are generic and could apply to any area. However, because the estimates are based on a statistical analysis they do not give a precise answer as to whether an individual property is rented or not but a 'risk score' based on the number of risk factors applying to individual properties.

The practical value of this information is twofold: firstly is that it is possible to determine whether properties with a high likelihood of being rented can be associated or correlated directly with ASB incidents (something that would not otherwise be possible); secondly the information can be used to filter properties at the implementation stage of licensing (e.g. visiting non-compliant properties and checking their rental status).

We use the information on rented status produced in this way in conjunction with separately sourced information on ASB (see next section). As will be seen, we use ASB data in three ways: 1. to analyse ASB trends over time including signs of year on year growth or seasonality; 2. analyses at small area level up to ward size to see if or whether ASB and the rental sector are correlated geographically; 3. where data permit, an analyses of ASB at property level to demonstrate probable direct causality.

2.3 Data on Anti-social behaviour

DCLG guidance advises that ASB is deemed to occur when it falls into one of three categories:

- **Crime**: Tenants not respecting the property in which they live, including vandalism, criminal damage, robbery/theft or car crime

- **Nuisance neighbours**: Noise, nuisance behaviour, animal-related problems, vehicle-related nuisance etc.

- **Environmental crime**: Graffiti, fly-posting, fly-tipping, litter around a property.

Because anti-social behaviour takes numerous forms even within each category, it may be recorded for different purposes and in different ways and by different

authorities. Nearly all data used here is compiled from complainants to the council or relayed to the council via the police.

The data usually show the date and location of the occurrence and the nature of the complaint. Complaints that are sourced to residential addresses are domestic in origin and others originate from external sources.

External sources can be located by grid reference rather than by address. Domestic occurrences can be assigned a UPRN (Unique Property Reference Number) by matching addresses to the Local Land and Property Gazetteer which enables us to map or otherwise analyse the data with considerable precision.

We based our analysis on events recorded between April 2010 and August 2014.
Three different databases covering anti-social behaviour are maintained by Tower Hamlets as follows:

- Noise complaints (around 30k occurrences over the period)
- Community Safety ASB related events (14k occurrences)
- Tower Hamlets Enforcement Officers (23k occurrences)

Noise data are collated through the council switchboard during working hours but during out of hours they are routed and collated through the Tower Hamlets Enforcement Officer system (THEOs).

Community safety data are collated by the Community Safety Team's through its call handling centre. The data typically cover a wide range of incident types such as violent or drug related behaviour, but it also includes categories that are litter or graffiti related (e.g. related to hate crimes).

THEO data collated by street wardens are similar in some ways to Community Safety data. However, incident types vary with less emphasis on violent or drug related behaviour and more on litter, fly tipping etc.

<u>Other data sources</u>

Although not strictly covered by the standard definitions of ASB we have found other data sources to be useful which are predictive of ASB and tend to be more associated with the PRS than with other tenancy types.

These include pest control data which are based on call-outs to attend to rat, mice or insect infestations (about 20k incidents over the period) and secondly housing complaints (about 1,000 a year).

Housing complaints are mainly but not exclusively from private rented tenants. They include housing hazards of various kinds (e.g. gas, electricity, and dangerous structures), problems with damp and mould, overcrowding and suspected illegal HMOs.

We also made use of previous work undertaken by ourselves from the time of the last census during which we estimated the population of Tower Hamlets using only administrative sources of data.

This data source contained information, inter alia, by household type, occupancy, benefit and tenancy status. Although now slightly old it fills some important gaps in the data especially in terms of household types.

2.4 Use of pre-2014 wards

The old pre 2014 ward areas are used throughout this report. This is because any historical ward data at a ward level is captured using these areas and these were the ward areas in use when potential licensing schemes were initially considered.

3. Patterns of ASB in practice

In this and following sections, we report our results. We begin with an analysis of trends in different categories of ASB through time from April 2010 to August 2014. A rising trend will signify whether ASB is a growing problem or not and if so in which ASB category.

3.1 Trends in ASB

(a) Noise complaints

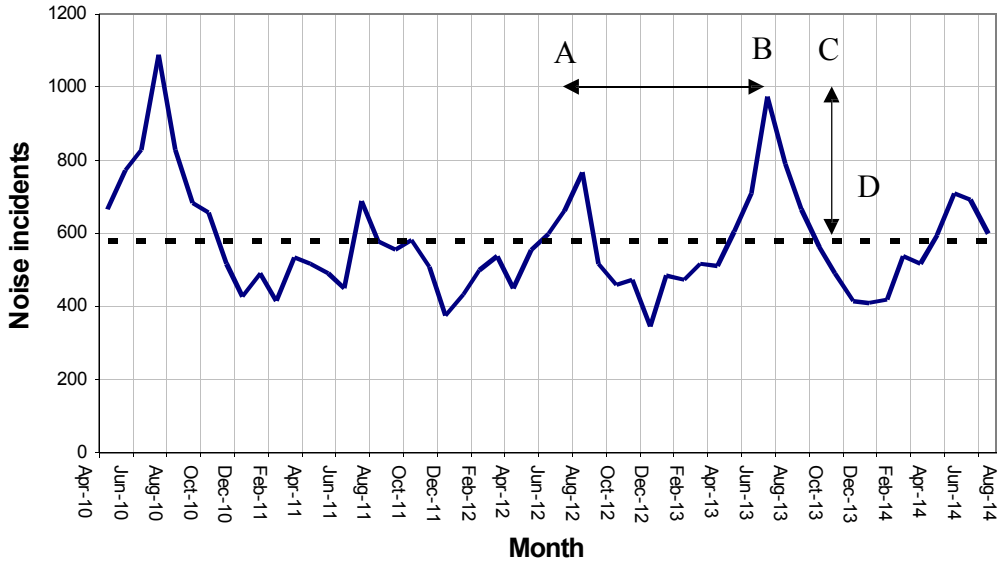


Figure 2: Monthly occurrences of noise complaints from April 2010 to August 2014

Domestic noise complaints account for two thirds of all occurrences in this data set and of these the most common complaint by far is loud music. A second important cause for complaint is construction or demolition work which accounted for 12% of occurrences.

Transport or animal related noise occurrences only account for around 3% of occurrences and other external causes (e.g. pubs, clubs, leisure facilities, or commercial premises) for the remainder (~ 19%).

Figure 2 shows the pattern over time. There are about 600 complaints per month on average. As can be seen noise complaints are highly seasonal with most occurring during the summer months peaking in August (see A to B).

While the pattern is repeated each year it can be seen that the peaks vary in intensity (e.g. C to D) from year to year and may be weather related (e.g. more outdoor activity during hot summers). The overall trend however appears to be persistent and there is no discernible trend to the annual pattern either up or down.

(b) Community Safety ASB

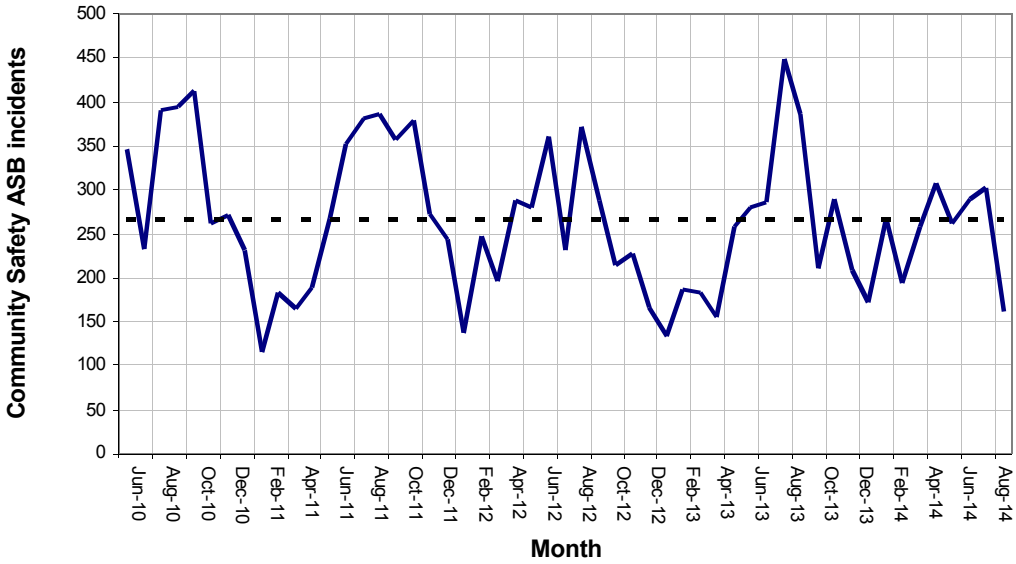


Figure 3: Monthly ASB occurrences from April 2010 to August 2014

Community safety data reveal that about one-third of all complaints are noise related. However, other important designations fall under several categories. The most important of which are drug related (16%) and violent behaviour (12%).

Other categories that stand out are alcohol related (4%), criminal damage to property (3%), litter (3%), and vehicle related (3%). There are about 260 incidents a month on average in all the categories analysed.

As with noise data above there is a strong seasonal pattern to the data as Figure 3 shows, although again the duration and intensity of the summer peak varies. Overall there is no long term discernible trend either up or down.

(c) Tower Hamlets Enforcement Officer (THEO) data

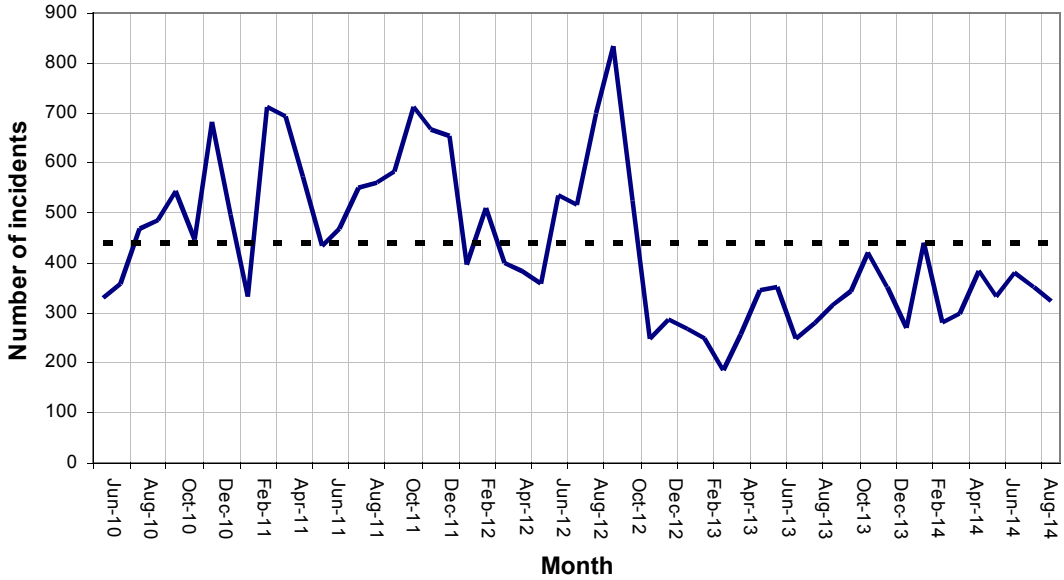


Figure 4: Monthly THEO reported occurrences of ASB from April 2010 to August 2014

Enforcement officer collated data is dominated by litter or alcohol-related categories. These account for 21% and 26% of occurrences respectively. Other much smaller categories include noise (4%) and drug related incidents (3%) and criminal damage (2%).

As Figure 4 might suggest, the data are characterised by a miscellaneous range of unconnected incidents with relatively little pattern. Most are not domestic related and therefore not easily attributable to individual properties.

There is between 440 reported incidents a month on average but also no particular seasonality in pattern. Compared with 2011/12, the pattern since has been downward with incidents down by over a third but the reasons for this have not been investigated.

Related trends

(d) Pest control

Figure 5 reveals a strong and persistent seasonal pattern in calls to the pest control service. Peak months for activity are in August and least in December with about 400 reports per month on average.

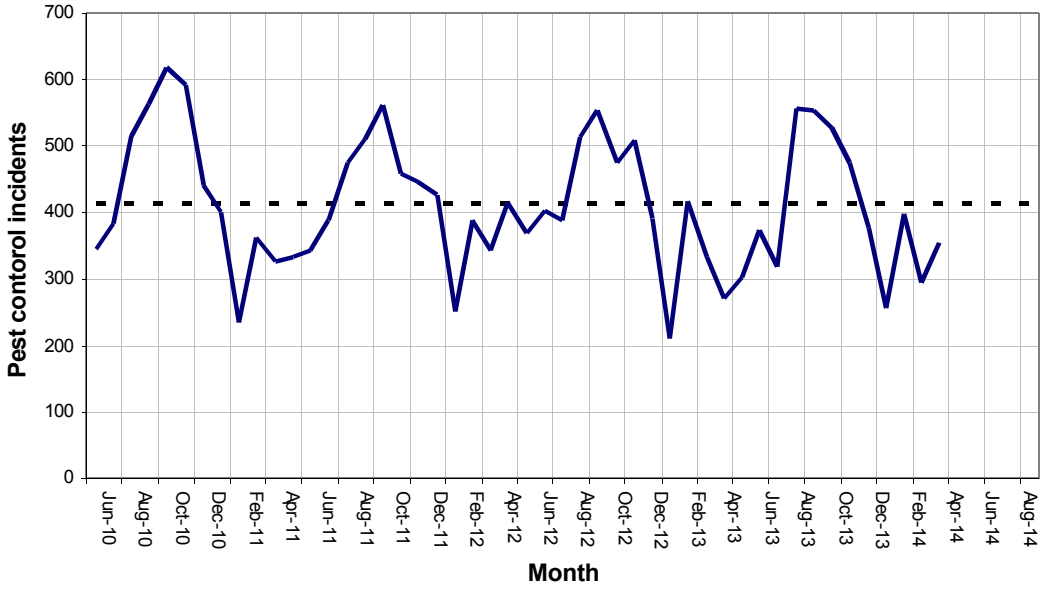


Figure 5: Monthly reports of pest occurrences from April 2010 to August 2014

(e) Housing complaints

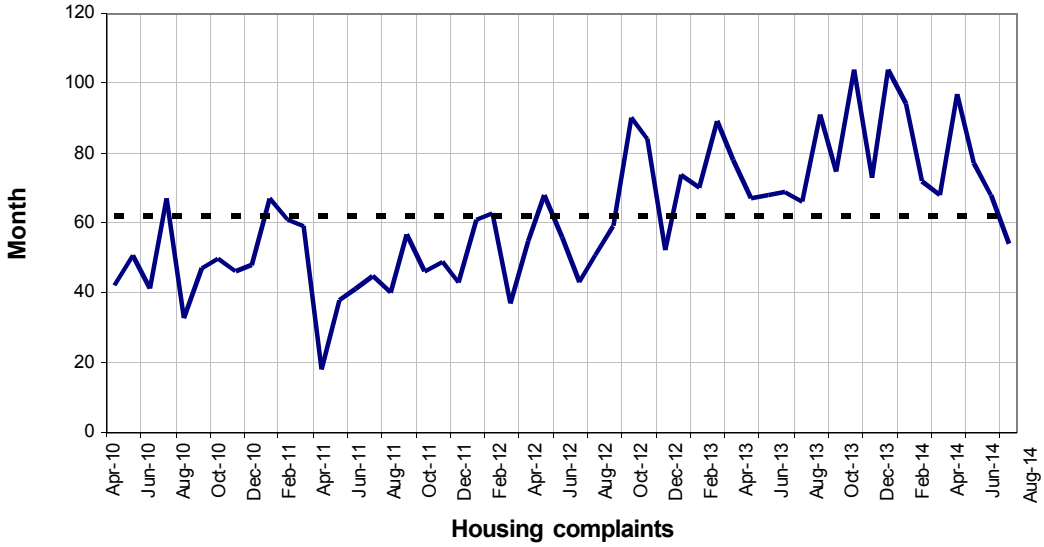


Figure 6: Monthly housing complaints from April 2010 to August 2014

Housing complaints are low as compared with other incident types and are usually initiated by tenants; however, their frequency is increasing as shown in Figure 6. Monthly complaints average 61 but their increase is probably related to the growth in the PRS and for this reason is likely to continue.

3.2 Profiling ASB by household type

That levels of ASB can vary by household type is to be expected. To test to what extent such differences are both large and systematic, we used *nkm* data from 2011 based on a project for the Council.[3] This project estimated the total population of Tower Hamlets using local administrative sources in which, as a by-product, counts by household type were also produced. This report is widely referred to in Tower Hamlets documents and was used to help validate the results of the 2011 Census.

Category	description
A	family households with dependent children
B	single adult households with dependent children
C	older cohabiting households
D	older person living alone
E	three generational households
F	cohabiting adult households no children
G	single adult households
H	other households

Table 2: Classification and definitions of households

Table 2 is a list of eight mutually exclusive household types which are largely self-explanatory. Using incidents identified in the data sets from the previous section that could be linked to addresses, we assessed the levels of ASB, pest control and housing complaints against each type over a three-year period by household type.

Our results are shown in Table 3. This enumerates the number of privately owned households of each type, the population they contain and rates of occurrence for each incident type. As can be seen the most numerous household types are F and G which are cohabiting adult households (no children) and single adult households living alone.

Type A family households are the next most numerous. Although substantially fewer in number, they contain almost equivalent populations to type F and G. Other household types are much fewer in number by comparison.

As far as incident rates are concerned the following points can be made:

- Noise complaints and pest control events are the main ASB markers affecting households, followed by community safety ASB reports and housing complaints

- Type E three-generational households which are often overcrowded appear to be associated with the highest levels of noise, pest control and are roughly equal highest on ASB rates, and housing complaints

- Types A and B family and single parent households also can be associated with higher rates of ASB, noise complaints and pest control

[3] *nkm* – neighbourhood knowledge management: A system for estimating population and households using administrative data. www.nkm.org.uk

- Older households with a least one person aged 65+ are not immune from noise complaints, pest control, or other events; however types F and G household with working age adults tend to have slightly lower rates across all categories

Rental status aside, it can be surmised from the above that households most likely to be associated with these ASB markers are unlikely to be people that live alone and more likely to be family households or have above average numbers of people living in them. In the next section we profile ASB at a property level.

Household type	Population	number	community safety noise	community safety ASB	council pest control	THEOs	housing complaints
A	32,134	6,932	32.4	6.7	21.2	0.5	4.1
B	8,826	3,341	31.0	5.6	16.2	0.4	4.7
C	3,961	1,584	28.3	5.4	18.4	0.3	1.3
D	1,397	1,397	20.6	3.4	11.3	0.4	1.1
E	5,013	756	49.5	6.6	39.6	0.4	4.1
F	35,060	15,551	19.9	3.0	8.1	0.5	1.7
G	29,667	29,668	17.1	2.8	5.3	0.8	1.8
H	1,048	569	24.4	4.0	14.4	3.2	1.8
Total	117,106	59,798	21.2	3.6	9.5	0.7	2.2

Table 3: Breakdown of Tower Hamlets private sector properties by household type and ASB risk markers; all rates expressed as percentages. Note: Excludes social housing, hostels, care homes, student accommodation, HMOs

3.3 Property level profiling of ASB risk factors

In this section, we develop the concept of a risk ladder to quantify the association between specific risk factors and ASB at an individual property level rather than a ward or some other level. A risk ladder is a table that enumerates all possible combinations of risk factors, quantifies the number of households exposed to each risk factor combination, and models the associated rates of ASB in each case.

For the purposes of this analysis ASB is defined as there being at least one event at an address on the Community Safety database in the last three years. We find that the risk factors used are predictive of ASB especially if they occur together (e.g. a noise complaint at the same address, a pest control call out or something else to do with the property).

The key point is how predictive of ASB are these events depending property characteristics and how many properties share these characteristics. The information is useful since it can result in a more targeted and joined up ASB reduction strategy to the extent that risk factors are modifiable in terms of local housing policy and regulation.

After some experimentation using potential risk factors taken from all address based data sources, a smaller number of the most predictive factors of ASB were selected and analysed in depth. However, we also investigated other combinations of risk factors and property types and we report these results also.

The risk factors included in our example include Housing Benefit status which is a proxy for low income and partly for private rental status, secondly possible overcrowding, and lastly noise or housing complaints. The definition of noise complaints for this purpose is that there should have been at least one reported event over the period. The results are tabulated from high risk households to low risk and are shown in Table 4.

In all 73,098 private sector properties were analysed. Column two lists the number of private sector properties exposed in each risk category; the next four columns show whether or not a risk factor applies in that risk category denoted by 'Y'), and the final column shows the risk of ASB occurring based on the given risk factors expressed as percentage. There are 16 sub-categories altogether as defined by the presence or absence of each risk factor.

At the foot of each column is the total number of occurrences of each risk factor, so for example there were 5,087 address linkable noise events complaints at address level in the period and so on. The risk of ASB is ordered from categories at highest risk (row 1) to those at least risk (row 16). The average risk of ASB across all properties is 2.2% and is shown in the bottom right hand corner of the table.

Category	number of UPRNs in category	five or more residents (nkm)	Housing Benefit	noise complaints	housing complaints	At least one ASB event in last three years
1	5	Y	Y	Y	Y	60.0
2	62	Y	Y	Y		40.3
3	20	Y		Y	Y	30.0
4	25		Y	Y	Y	28.0
5	335		Y	Y		25.4
6	253	Y		Y		20.9
7	139			Y	Y	20.9
8	3,193			Y		13.0
9	87	Y			Y	6.9
10	70	Y	Y		Y	5.7
11	716	Y	Y			5.2
12	2,256	Y				4.8
13	222		Y		Y	4.1
14	3,652		Y			3.6
15	712				Y	3.4
16	61,351					1.0
total	73,098	3,469	5,087	4,032	1,280	2.2

Table 4: Risk ladder showing the risk of ASB based on the given risk factors in private sector residential properties

Some risk categories apply to only a small group of properties and others to much larger groups. For example row one, contains only five properties. It has a predicted risk of 60%, which is around 27 times the borough average and is in a category in which all four risk factors apply.

The last risk category in row 16 contains 61,351 properties; no risk factors apply to this group and the level of ASB at 1% is half the borough average of 2.2%. This underlines the fact that ASB is concentrated in relatively few private properties in all.

Further analysis of the information in Table 4 shows the influence of each risk factor in turn on ASB (Note: all odds are significantly different from one at p=95%). This finds that ASB rates increase:

- 2.7 times if there is five or more people living at the address
- 2.4 times if a UPRN is in receipt of Housing Benefit
- 11.9 times if there has been any noise complaint
- 1.8 times if there have been any housing complaints

This suggests that the strongest predictor of ASB is whether there have been noise complaints. From Table 4 it can be seen that this risk factor occurs in the first 8 rows of the risk ladder. The risk factor odds are multiplicative so if just the first two risk factors applied, i.e. possible overcrowding and Housing Benefit, the odds are increased by 2.7 x 2.4 = 6.7 times i.e. a property is 6.7 times more at risk than a property where neither of these factors applies.

Figure 7 is a graph showing the predicted impact on ASB of these risk factors versus the observed risk. As can be seen the results show a strong correlation with these four factors statistically explaining about 96% of the observed variation in ASB incidence, suggesting that these particular risk factors are highly predictive of ASB.

3.4 Social versus private housing and multiple events at the same address

This analysis can be extended to the social housing as well as the private sector. Tower Hamlets has a large social housing sector and so it is relevant to ask if ASB varies between these two sectors. In general we obtain a risk factor of 1.4 in favour of social housing which means that, other things being equal, the odds of ASB rates are higher in social housing than the entire private sector by this factor.

However, if ASB occurs in private sector properties which are also associated with any of the other risk factors in Table 4 then private sector ASB rates will be considerably higher. For example ASB incidence rates in social housing with *no other risk factor associated* is 2.5% but in the private sector for a household receiving housing benefit the rate is 3.9%.

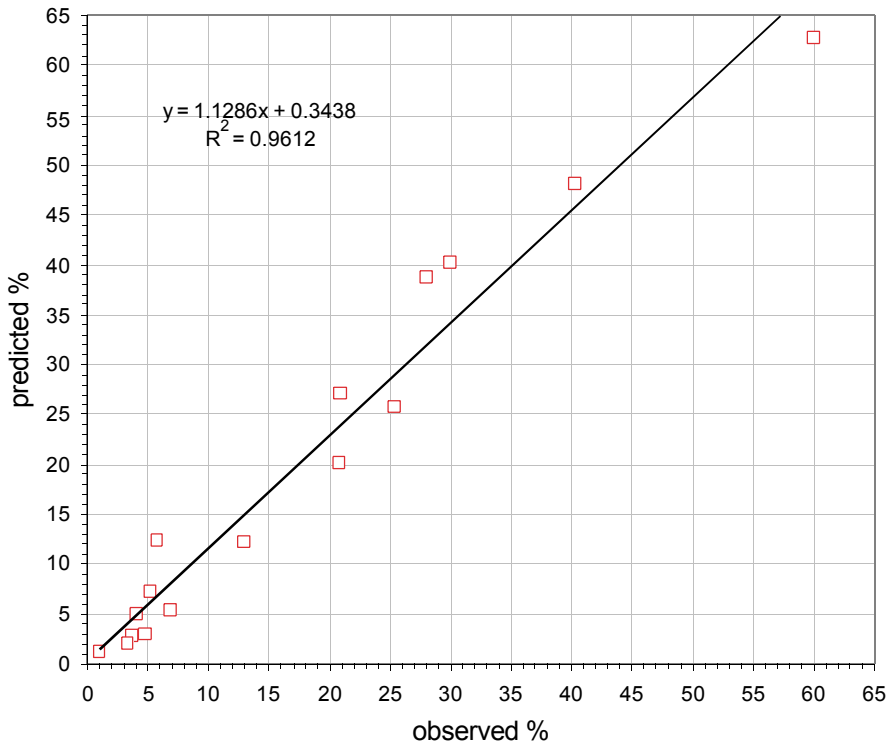


Figure 7: Predicted and observed variation in ASB according to selected risk factors

The same result applies if other risk factors are used; for example, if pest control had been included then it would increase the odds of an ASB event by a factor of 1.6.
We conclude from these results that there is a risk gradient with some types of household more likely to be associated with ASB than others depending on the risk factors applying.

However, thus far we have not yet looked at multiple events at the same address. Plainly, some addresses may have been reported more than once to the Council and the extent to which this occurs is of potential significance (e.g. where a small number of properties cause a disproportionate number of incidents).

We found little difference between private sector properties and social tenure in this regard. Overall 5.5% of properties in the private sector and 6.4% in social housing are associated with one or more noise complains and 1.9% of private properties and 2.5% of social housing two or more incidents.

However, this analysis fails to separate out the PRS from the general private sector. In the next section we show that levels of ASB are substantially higher than in either the private sector as a whole or in social tenure i.e. a private rented property carries a greater risk of ASB than either of these other categories.

4. Identifying the private sector rented stock

As previously stated, the problem is that there are no complete data on which properties among private sector housing are rented or not although many will self-identify if for example Housing Benefit is claimed. Our analysis above identified the

extent of ASB but did not draw the link with private rented status specifically, only a general stratification of properties at risk in the private and social housing sectors. This issue is now addressed.

Newham, the farthest progressed borough in terms of selective licensing, has been running a selective licensing scheme for over a year. In this time it has visited numerous properties which it believed to be at risk of rental status. In other words there was a high likelihood that the properties in question were being lived in by rent paying tenants. These properties were flagged either as HMOs or single family private rented dwellings.

Each property can be linked to risk factors such as benefit status and turnover and profiled to other properties that have not been visited. The factors themselves are generic and are combined in a database of all private sector properties by assigning a risk score to each property which is predictive of the likelihood of a private sector property being rented or not. We call properties with the highest likelihood of rental status as being most 'at risk' of being private sector rented.

Unvisited properties in Newham at high risk that have not registered under the scheme are selected and then visited on a systematic basis. Because the methodology is probabilistic, it does not give a definitive answer as to whether a property is privately rented or not but simply a probabilistic score. However, its use in practice has resulted in around a 90% accuracy of identification.

In previous work for Newham, different combinations of risk factors were systematically analysed for their predictive power in terms of any of the three outcomes. This process resulted in the creation of three binarised sets of risk factors, one for each outcome (i.e. a risk factor was either present at an address or not).

For each risk factor the odds were calculated using the model. Four risk factors with the best predictive power were used giving rise to 16 possible risk factor combinations per address for each outcome. Odds schedules were then tabulated and are explained in the results section below.

Although the identified risk factors are highly intuitive and plausible, the analysis is not without its limitations. The sample of visited properties is rich in information but relatively small in terms of sample size and it is also based on a different London borough.

This has four possible effects on the analysis:

- First, although selected risk factors are generally statistically significantly different from zero at the 95% level of confidence, confidence intervals tend to be wide

- Second, not all possible risk factor combinations are observed in the Newham data collected during visits. This means that the reported odds of them being in either category are based on the extrapolation of risk factors present in other categories which had been visited

- Third, some risk factors may overstate the effect in some cases where prior selection criteria had been used to identify a particular property e.g. where housing officers had prior intelligence they could use

- Fourth, risk factor weights in LB Newham may not be identical to weights in Tower Hamlets which means that risk scores could vary between the boroughs. However, Newham and Tower Hamlets share a border and so might be expected to share some similarities.

4.1 Results

In this section we use the linked data sets to identify HMOs and single family rented properties in Tower Hamlets so as to distinguish between them as far as possible, based as closely as possible on Newham risk factor profiles. We begin with HMOs.

(a) <u>HMOs</u>

The risk factors for identifying HMOs are as follows:

- No current CTRS (Council Tax Reduction Scheme[4]) recipient at address: A property not receiving CTRS is estimated to be 3.1 (1.1 to 9.1, p=95%) times more likely to be HMO status than a property receiving Council Tax Benefits. A possible explanation for this is that properties receiving Council Tax Benefit tend to be older person households or owner occupied rather than a landlord.

- Two or more changes in Council Tax liable surname in last 36 months: A property in which the surname of the person responsible for paying Council Tax had changed at least three times in the previous 36 months, a measure of turnover, was 1.1 (0.48 to 2.6, p=95%) times more likely to be an HMO.

- At least one change in electoral roll registrants in last 12 months: Properties in which the surnames of at least one current registrant at an address were not present the previous year were estimated to be 2.1 (0.9 to 4.5, p=95%) times more likely to be HMOs than properties where there had been no changes.

- More than two surnames on the Electoral Roll at address in last 36 months: Properties with three or more surnames registered at the address over the previous 36 months is estimated to be 6.9 (2.9 to 16.5, p=95%) times more likely to be HMOs than properties with three or fewer. This is the most predictive of all the risk factors selected

Table 5 shows the number and proportion of properties impacted by each risk factor combination. As previously stated the column to the right shows the relative risk score with risk categories ranked from high to low which are probability based. The simplest way to interpret the risk score is that a property with the given risk factors is

[4] CTRS = Council Tax Reduction Scheme. a benefit which provides low income households with financial support for paying their Council Tax

x times more likely to be an HMO than if none of the risk factors existed where *x* is the risk score.

Category	Private sector UPRN	% of private sector	No Recipient of Council Tax Benefit at address	2 or more changes in CTL name in last 36 months	Any change in electoral roll registrants in last 12 months	Three plus surnames in Electoral Roll last 36 months	risk score
1	3,618	4.95	Y	Y	Y	Y	48.8
2	4,092	5.60	Y		Y	Y	43.8
3	536	0.73	Y	Y		Y	23.6
4	640	0.88	Y			Y	21.2
5	305	0.42		Y	Y	Y	15.9
6	470	0.64			Y	Y	14.3
7	70	0.10		Y		Y	7.7
8	7,184	9.83	Y	Y	Y		7.1
9	102	0.14				Y	6.9
10	12,539	17.15	Y		Y		6.3
11	8,207	11.23	Y	Y			3.4
12	30,458	41.67	Y				3.1
13	600	0.82		Y	Y		2.3
14	1,201	1.64			Y		2.1
15	591	0.81		Y			1.1
16	2,485	3.40					1.0
Total	73,098	100.00	3.06	1.11	2.07	6.92	

Table 5: Risk ladder showing the relative risk of a property being a private sector HMO

As is seen the properties at highest risk or likelihood of being HMOs are those where there has been no entitlement to CTRS, two or more changes in the name of the person responsible for paying Council Tax, any change in electoral registrants in the last 12 months, and more than two different surnames on the Electoral Roll in the last 36 months.

Table 5 suggests there are about 17,017 properties at higher likelihood of being HMOs. This assessment is based on the first nine risk categories with the highest scores in which all bar one (row 8) have share a high turnover of residents, the most influential of the risk factors. For example a property in row 1 in which 3,618 are identified as having all four risk factors is nearly 49 times more likely to be PRS than one in row 16 which has none of the given risk factors for which there are 2,485 properties identified.

A key finding is that if we take all private properties as a group whether rented or not the incidence of all occurrences of ASB attributable to individual addresses is 9.9% in the top nine risk categories for noise and 4.2% in the seven low risk categories. If we do the same for community safety reported ASB it is 3.1% and 1.9% and for pest control incidents 8.2% versus 5.2% (all differences statistically significant from zero ($p<0.001$). Hence we find that in each category the incidence of ASB leans towards properties more likely to be HMOs than not.

(b) Single family rented properties

The risk factors for single family rented properties are as follows:

- No CTRS recipient at address: A single family privately rented household is less likely to receive CTRS but more likely to receive Housing Benefit (see below). Not in receipt of CTRS increases the odds of private rented status 1.6 times 1.6 (0.9 to 4, p=95%) times.

- Two or more changes in Council Tax liable person surname in last 36 months: Any change in Council Tax liable person surname is predictive of single family status (also with HMOs). In this case the odds of a property being single family rented status is increased 1.6 (1.00 to 2.47, p=95%) times.

- Two or less adults at address: Two or less adults at an address are predictive of single family status rather than HMO status. It is estimated that this factor increases the odds of private family rented status 1.2 times (0.74 to 1.95, p=95%) times.

- Housing Benefit recipient at address: Rented single family households can be identified by their Housing Benefit status. This is by far the strongest of the four predictive risk factors, increasing the odds of identification 4.7 (2.63 to 8.00, p =95%) times.

Table 6 shows the number and proportion of properties impacted by each risk factor combination and the comparable proportion of households in each category. The column to the right shows the relative risk or likelihood score with risk categories ranked from high to low.

These are obtained by multiplying the risk factor weights at the foot of the table under each risk factor. A risk score of say 9.1 in row 3 means that the outcome is 9.1 times more likely than if none of the risk factors were present as in row 16. The contribution of each risk factor to the odds of private rental status is shown in the bottom row.

It is noteworthy that Housing Benefit has the most influence amongst these. It increases the odds of private rental status 4.65 times and appears in each of the top eight risk categories. Other risk factors make smaller contributions whilst the final column is obtained by multiplying the odds together to derive an overall risk score. To put a scale on the findings the results suggest that there are around 20,248 properties in the top nine risk categories all of which claim Housing Benefit.

If we restrict our analysis to high risk suspected single family rented properties in high risk rows 1 to 9 we find that the incidence of noise incidents is 7.3% as compared with 4.8% in the bottom seven categories. Additionally, the incidence of community safety reports of ASB is 3% in the top nine risk categories as compared with 1.9% in the bottom seven categories whilst the comparative figures for pest control are 7.3% versus 5.4%. Again, the difference between the all-property rate and high risk single families is statistically significantly different from zero ($p<0.001$).

Category	Private sector UPRNs	% of private sector	No Recipient of Council Tax Benefit at address	2 or more changes in CT liable person 36 months	2 or less adults at address ER	Any recipient of Housing Benefit at address	Risk score
1	131	0.2	Y	Y	Y	Y	14.3
2	31	0.0	Y	Y		Y	11.9
3	265	0.4	Y		Y	Y	9.1
4	1,232	1.7		Y	Y	Y	8.8
5	100	0.1	Y			Y	7.6
6	275	0.4		Y		Y	7.3
7	2,490	3.4			Y	Y	5.6
8	563	0.8				Y	4.7
9	15,161	20.7	Y	Y	Y		3.1
10	4,222	5.8	Y	Y			2.6
11	32,569	44.6	Y		Y		2.0
12	38	0.1		Y	Y		1.9
13	14,795	20.2	Y				1.6
14	21	0.0		Y			1.6
15	691	0.9			Y		1.2
16	514	0.7					1.0
Total	73,098	100	1.63	1.57	1.20	4.65	

Table 6: Risk ladder showing the relative risk of a property being a private sector single family household

How do these estimates compare with what is known about the size of the private rented sector? The only data available are from the 2011 census which reports a figure of 34,216 (see Table 1). Our figure combines estimates in Table 5 and 6 above based on the top nine risk categories in each table. This gives a combined total 37,265 so around 3,000 units more.

However, since there is inevitable overlap between HMOs and single family designations in our methodology, our figure must be regarded as an upper bound. Given that the Census is now over 3 years old and also taking into account the rapid pace of change in Tower Hamlets we believe the most accurate estimate lies somewhere between.

5. Ward level

The total number of identified high risk rental properties in the previous analysis gives an estimated size of the private rental sector of around 37,000 properties consisting of approximately 54% single family households and 46% HMOs. This total is based on probabilistic estimates and so could be higher or lower but it compares reasonably well with the total size of the PRS given in the 2011 Census of around 34,000 and after allowing for the fact that the Census is now over three years old.

As part of the project we will provide Tower Hamlets with a database of private sector properties providing the risk score of whether a property is more likely to be an HMO or single family rented property plus other attributes of each UPRN.

In this section, we analyse the spatial distribution of the PRS properties (i.e. properties with a high likelihood of being private rented) and link it to previous indicators firstly at ward level and then at a micro-spatial level. We analysed four categories of ASB: Noise incidents (A), community safety ASB (B), council pest control (C), and incidents collated by local enforcement officers (THEO) (D).

We can compare the results with the proportion of PRS in each ward versus all property types with the concentrations of ASB designations. The first column of Table 7 ranks each ward by the estimated number of private sector rented households among all property types. The proportions obtain bear similarity with the results of the Census three years earlier but concentrations are now slightly higher.

Alongside this information Table 7 also shows the rank of each ASB designation by ward. A final column ('overall rank') is a ranked combination of each previous ranking to give an aggregate assessment of the concentration of ASB in each ward. The wards are ordered based on the size of the PRS relative to the housing stock. We can see that for example that Bethnal Green South ranks 5th in terms of the size of the rented sector but 1st in terms of ASB.

The results show that ASB and the size of the PRS are not perfectly aligned. The two highest ranked wards for PRS, Millwall and Blackwall and Cubitt Town for example, are ranked lowest on ASB. However, there is a much closer alignment in Whitechapel (ranked 3rd on PRS and 4th on ASB), and Bethnal Green South (5th on PRS, 1st on ASB).

As can be seen therefore the pattern is irregular but it does not mean that ASB and PRS are unrelated since it depends on other risk factors outlined previously which showed that PRS properties were more prone to ASB. However, the main problem is that ward boundaries do not necessarily correspond with PRS and ASB hotpots. We therefore sought a different method of identifying these hotspots and the wards chiefly affected so that we could then work backwards to determine which wards in particular should be targeted.

Rank PRS as % of all propert-ies	Ward	% PRS of all propert-ies	A	B	C	D	ASB overall rank
1	Millwall	48.8	17	17	16	17	17
2	Blackwall and Cubitt Town	39.5	16	16	14	16	16
3	Whitechapel	39.5	6	9	1	5	4
4	Bow East	36.3	13	12	15	14	14
5	Bethnal Green South	32.8	2	4	2	1	1
6	St Katharine's and Wapping	31.4	15	13	13	15	15
7	Shadwell	31.0	9	8	9	9	9
8	Mile End and Globe Town	28.7	4	1	5	4	3
9	Spitalfields and Banglatown	28.4	7	14	4	2	6
10	Weavers	27.5	1	3	6	3	2
11	Bow West	26.8	5	6	3	8	5
12	Limehouse	26.6	8	7	10	10	9
13	Bethnal Green North	25.8	3	2	17	6	7
14	Mile End East	24.6	14	15	8	12	13
15	East India and Lansbury	22.6	12	11	11	13	12
16	Bromley By Bow	21.9	11	10	12	11	11
17	St Dunstans and Stepney Green	19.8	10	5	7	7	8

Key to columns A to D

A	B	C	D
community safety noise	community safety ASB	council pest control	community safety THEOs

Table 7: Tower Hamlets wards ranked by PRS size and ASB categories

Figure 8: Tower Hamlets map showing ward boundaries and names

5.2 Micro-spatial analysis of ASB and the PRS

Micro-spatial analysis involves analysing the co-location and incidence of ASB and rented properties at a small area level. Its advantage is that we can avoid boundary effects by drilling down and analysing the co-occurrence of ASB and the PRS at different spatial scales. We tested various different approaches: Cell level, property level and hotspot analysis.

(a) Cell maps

In this first example, we use grid-level analysis i.e. areas that are not tied to any administrative boundaries. This enables a different spatial perspective with which to compare earlier ward level analysis with the specific difference that ward effects are dissociated from local effects.

We subdivided Tower Hamlets into 0.5km x 0.5km grid cells. We enumerated the total number of properties in each cell, the number of high risk HMOs and single family dwellings, and combined together the number of Noise and ASB incidents. We then analysed the incidence per property of ASB with the percentage of properties in each rented tenure type within each cell and mapped the results (Single family dwellings, HMOs or the whole PRS) and each class of major ASB category.

Our findings are presented in two maps shown in Figures 9 and 10. Each cell is coloured using a 'traffic light system'. Each cell is colour coded according to whether the concentration of ASB events per household is in the lower quartile of all cells (low risk, green), between the 25th and 75th percentile (medium risk, amber), or in the upper quartile range (high risk, red). Any un-shaded cells are those with too few private sector properties to make a valid assessment.

Both maps show a similar pattern as follows. Most red and amber cells concentrate in the north and central areas of the borough between rows 2 and 9. Amber as opposed to green cells predominates in the east central areas and red in the west central areas. Red cells in the east of the borough tend to be contiguous and span wards such as Weavers, Spitalfields and Banglatown, Bethnal Green North and South, Mile End and Globe Town.

A distinction can be drawn with cells in the south of the borough (below row 10) which are relatively unaffected by ASB apart from in three or four localised concentrations. The affected wards were identified in the previous as being high in terms of PRS but low in ASB and include Millwall, Blackwall and Cubitt Town, and St Katherine's and Wapping. However, what the cell level approach does not show very clearly is within-cell variations in ASB and PRS (e.g. a cell which is relatively low in ASB may have hotspots within it which are not apparent at this scale and nor at ward level.

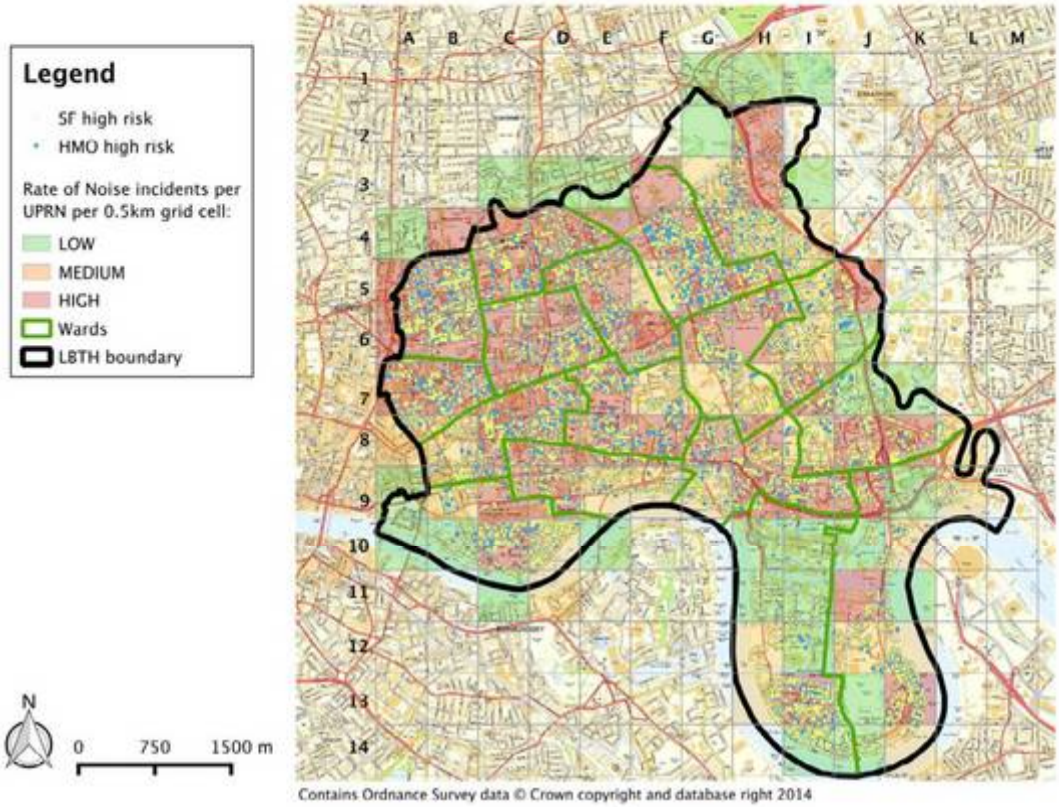


Figure 9: Map of noise incidents per property at 0.5 x 0.5 sq km cell level

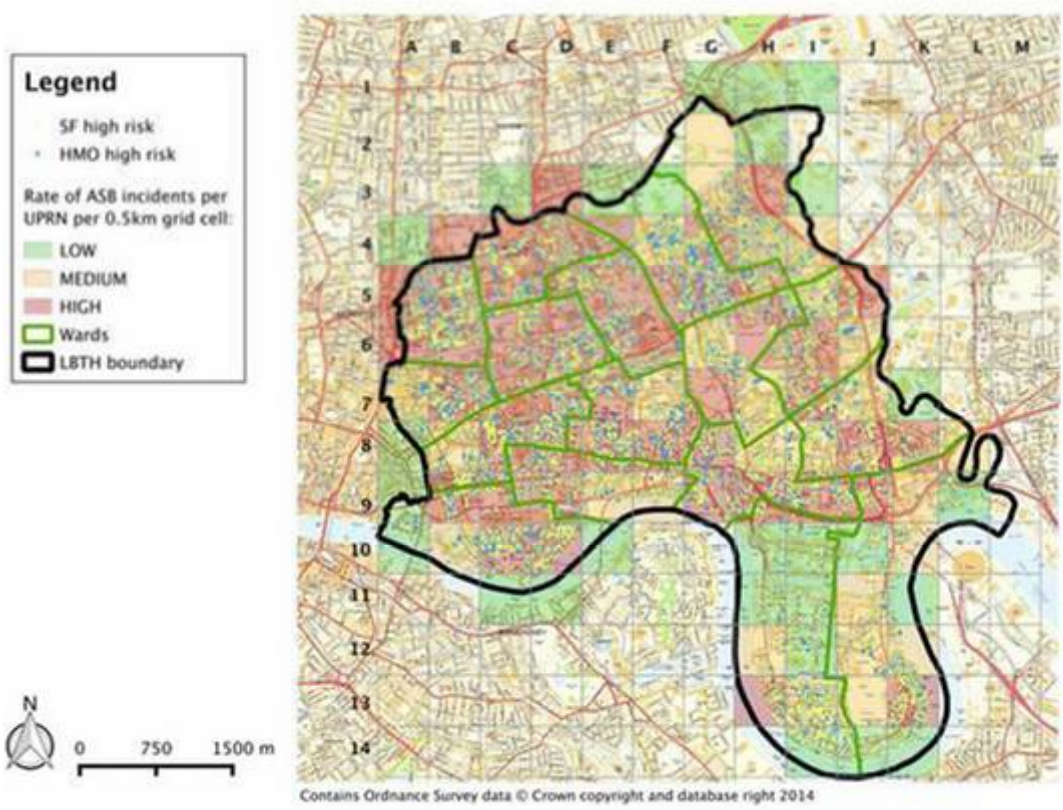


Figure 10: Map of ASB incidents per property at 0.5 x 0.5 sq km cell level

(b) Property level and hotspot analysis

Although it occurs in different concentrations we have shown that ASB is widespread in the borough. This is apparent for example when noise complaint data at household level are mapped. Figure 11 is a map of all residential properties in Tower Hamlets. Those coloured blue are properties that are located 10 metres or less from at least one noise incident occurring in the last three years; and those coloured grey are more that 10 metres from an incident.

There are 72k properties affected by ASB based on this definition and 46k that are not. The map shows that some neighbourhoods are more affected than others; for example, there is a greater concentration of 'blue' properties in the northwest corner covering cells A4 to D8 and a lesser concentration in other areas, but the map also shows that no area is completely immune from its effects

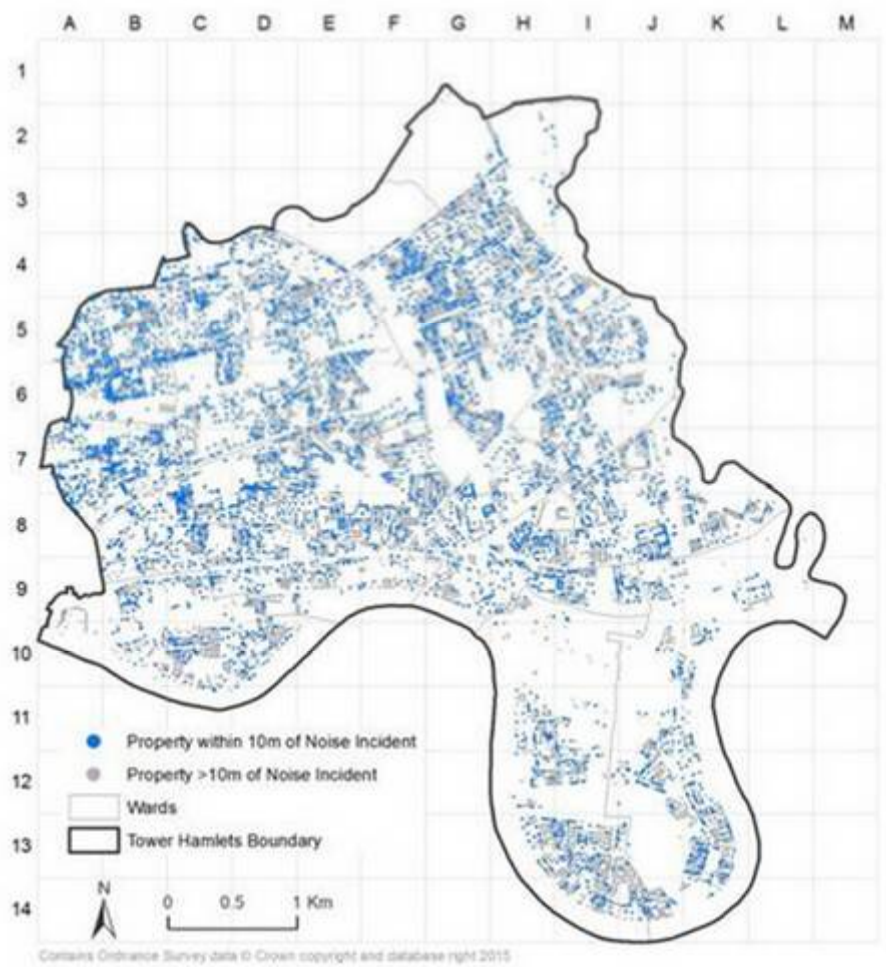


Figure 11: Property level map in which properties that are located within 50 metres of an ASB incident are colour coded blue

We have seen that where there are higher numbers of private rented properties, higher levels of ASB may be expected. Evidence of this is clearly visible from the Figures 12 and 13 which are contour maps based on the number of ASB incidents per square kilometre, in which it is seen that levels range from as low as 250 per square kilometre to nearly 4,000 per square kilometre (e.g. see cells A5 and A6) based on data over a three year period.

Overlaid on the maps is the density of HMOs and rented single family properties derived from our earlier analysis. It shows that the distribution of HMOs (Figure 12) and single family dwellings (Figure 13) is quite similar, thus making them hard to distinguish. It also shows that the correspondence between the PRS and ASB concentrations is quite marked albeit inexact (e.g. see cells B7 and B8, H4 I11, I13, and K10).

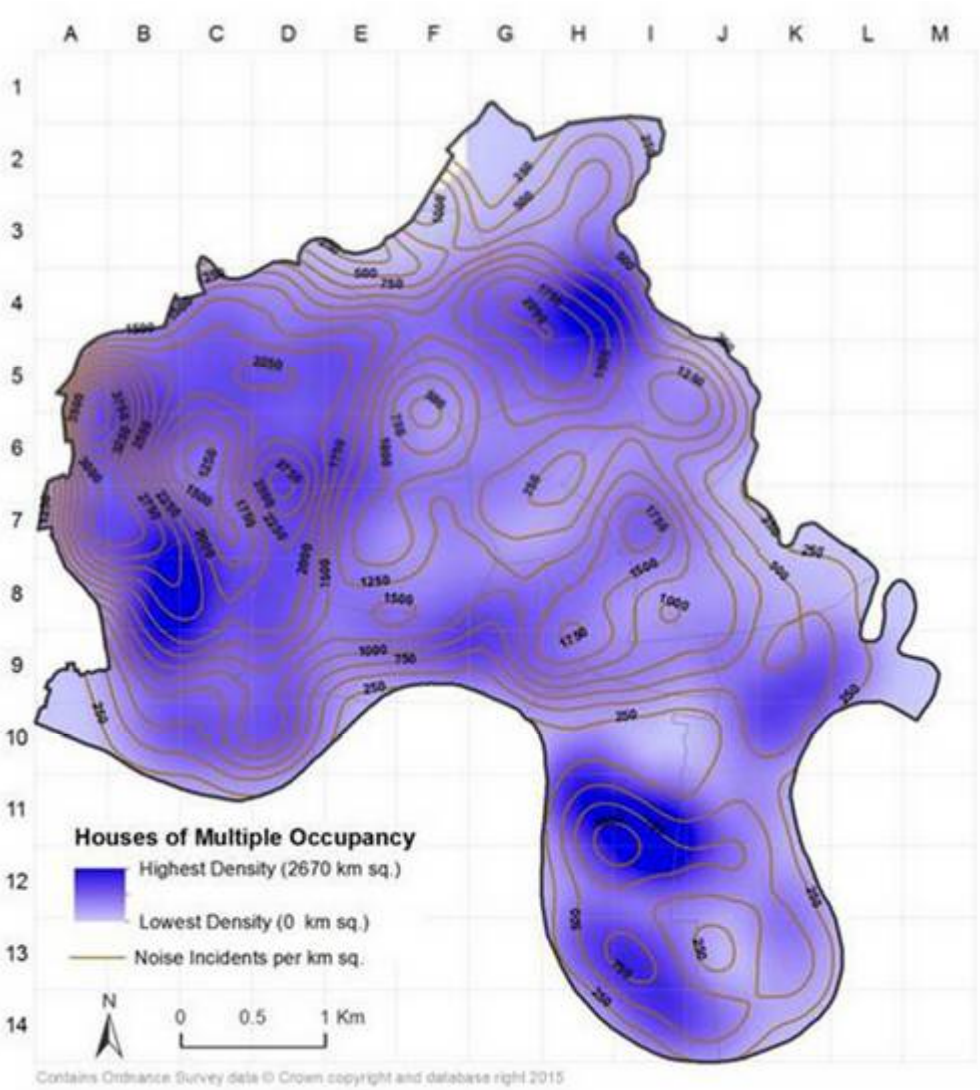


Figure 12: Map showing contours of address level noise in events per square kilometre compared with concentration of high risk HMOs

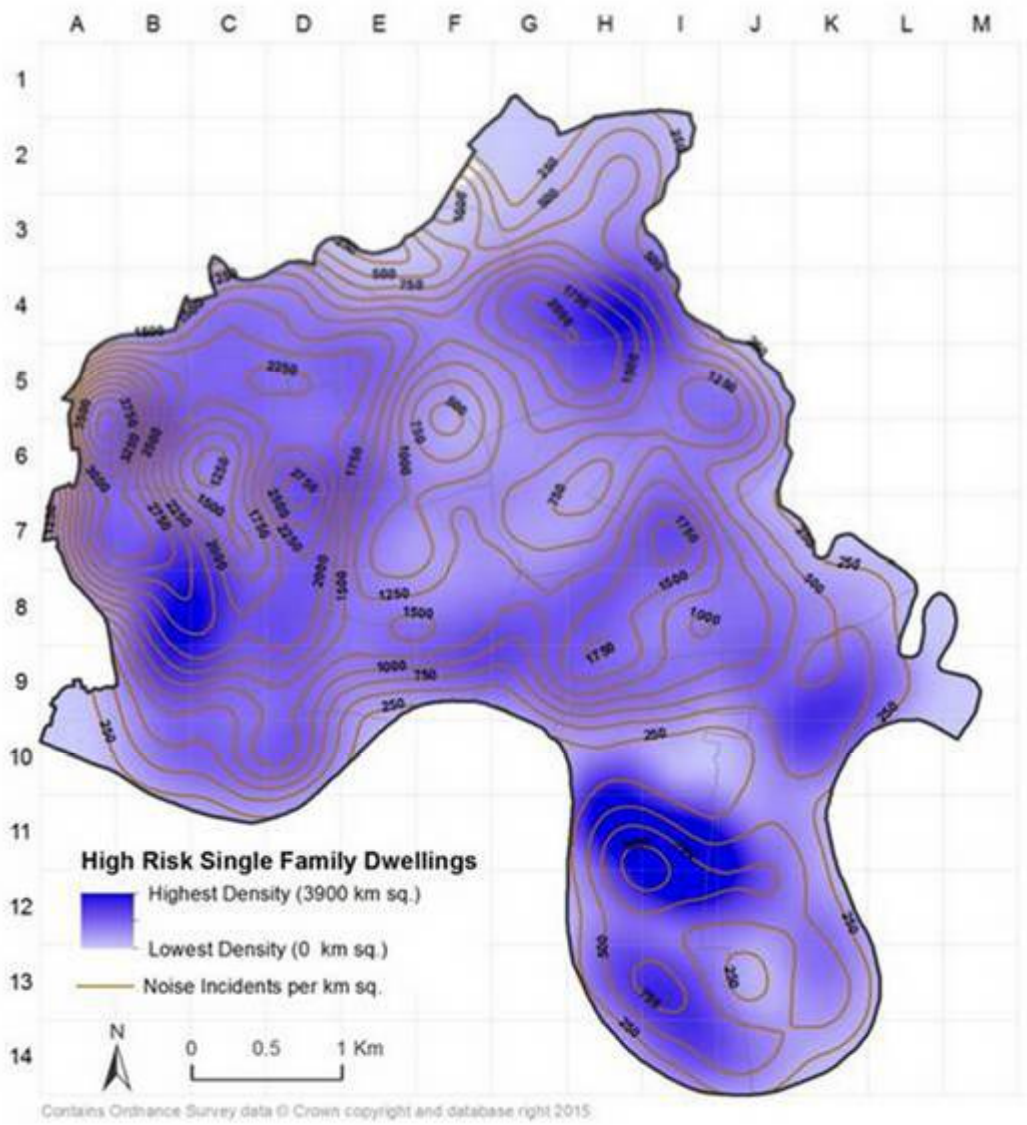


Figure 13: Map showing contours of address level noise in events per square kilometre compared with concentration of high risk rented single family dwelling HMOs

6. Conclusions

The total number of identified high risk rental properties in the previous analysis gives an estimated size of the private rental sector of around 37,000 properties consisting of approximately 54% single family households and 46% HMOs. This estimate compares reasonably well with the total size of the PRS given in the 2011 Census of around 34,000 but is an upper bound for reasons given previously.

As part of the project we will provide Tower Hamlets with a database of all private sector properties providing the risk score of whether a property is more likely to be an HMO or single family rented property plus other attributes of each UPRN. If a licensing scheme is introduced this database can be compared with licence applicants and used appropriately to follow-up potential non-applicants.

As far as ASB is concerned we found that domestic noise complaints account for two thirds of all noise complaints and of these the most common complaint by far is loud music. Community safety data reveal that about one-third of all complaints are also noise related but other important headings were drug-related incidents and violent behaviour. Most categories of ASB were seasonally related, persistent and tended to be concentrated in the summer months.

This applied also to pest control incidents which were also very seasonal with summer peaks and winter troughs. In each of the previous cases average levels have been reasonably but one area of growth is housing complaints from tenants. Whilst these are low compared with other incident types and categories, their frequency has been increasing. This increase is probably related to the growth in the PRS and hence set to continue.

A key finding is that if we take all private properties as a group whether rented or not the incidence of all occurrences of ASB attributable to individual addresses is 9.9% in risk HMO categories for noise and 4.2% in the low risk categories. If we do the same for community safety reported ASB it is 3.1% and 1.9% and for pest control incidents 8.2 versus 5.2%. These levels are also higher than those seen in the social housing sector as explained below.

If we restrict our analysis to high risk suspected single family rented properties we find that the incidence of noise incidents is 7.3% as compared with 4.8% in the low risk categories – so it implies there is a similar effect as with HMOs but the disparity is smaller. This also applies to community safety reported ASB and to pest control and therefore seems to be a common finding as between private rented tenancy types.

In addition to the above, we find that 5.5% of all properties in the private sector and 6.4% in social housing are associated with one or more noise complaints and 1.9% of private properties and 2.5% of social housing two or more incidents. Social housing is also slightly higher among other markers to be prone to multiple events but the differences are not great.

On the other hand where a private property is associated with other risk factors the risk of ASB was increased relative to the social housing sector. In general however

we find that the whole rented sector accounts for proportionately more ASB than the owner-occupied sector.

Among the various risk factors the strongest predictor of community safety reported ASB is whether there have been noise complaints at an address. Other statistically significant risk factors were potential overcrowding at an address, eligibility for Housing Benefit, and housing complaints, but other useful markers were pest control incidents at the same address. Hence we can say that where a PRS property is badly maintained where these risk factors apply the levels of ASB are likely to be higher.

At the ward level we found that, using the hotspot analysis, the wards which contained both hotpots for ASB and PRS properties were mainly contained in Weavers, Spitalfields & BanglaTown., Whitechapel, Bow East, Bow West, Blackwall & Cubitt Town and Millwall. They all scored highly on ASB but their local concentrations of PRS properties are more variable in terms of tenancy mix.

Many of the wards in question are both small in area and contiguous. Hence it can be argued that introduction of licensing in one ward may not make sense if the problem straddles neighbouring wards or landlords shift their focus to an unlicensed neighbouring ward, as seems likely. Others e.g. in the south are much larger in area and the hotpots are confined to smaller areas within them and this problem is less applicable.

Because the private rented sector is widespread although concentrated more in some wards than others, a borough wide scheme could also be justified based on the general finding that the PRS is responsible for more ASB per property than owner occupied dwellings especially where there are other risk factors associated as listed above. However, the ward approach, linked to identifiable hotspots of private renting and ASB is both more targeted and practicable having regard to the councils logistical concerns about implementation.

In conclusion, the report has demonstrated a direct link between anti-social behaviour both at a property level and to a lesser extent at a ward level among private rented properties. Although the PRS and ASB coincide quite closely, the patterns do not nest easily into any particular ward configuration. The advantage of using hotspot mapping that it minimizes the arbitrariness of using pre-2014 ward boundaries.

One final but important point to note is that our results found roughly equal numbers of both HMOs and single family rented properties. The fact that the hotspots for both are almost identical suggests to us there is a case for a selective licensing scheme to be introduced rather than two separate schemes for additional and selective licensing.

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