

## Results Of Social Housing Energy Audit To Be Launched In Cork

*Entire social housing schemes across Ireland are energy inefficient and some are in desperate need of being upgraded, a new survey has found.*

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Atwo-year project, entitled Advanced Ventilation Approaches for Social Housing (AVASH), recently concluded the country's first energy performance audit of existing social housing stock.

Lead by Delap & Waller EcoCo Ltd., a leading Sustainable Design Consultancy with offices in Dublin and Cork, the EU-funded project audited existing social housing schemes in counties Meath, Kildare and Dublin. The schemes featured included family dwellings and dwellings for the elderly and the disabled.

It is hoped that the audit will establish best ventilation strategies for existing social housing in order to achieve occupant health and comfort, maximum energy efficiency and significant reductions in energy bills for householders.

Seminars will take place at the Lifetime Lab in Cork (2pm, 22 May) and at Cultivate in Dublin (7pm, 3 June).

All data collected during the audit will be presented to social housing providers who are considering upgrading their social housing stock by performing energy intelligent retrofitting of individual dwellings and entire schemes.

Consultants and other construction professionals will also be provided with an insight into key issues they will be facing during retrofit projects and practical solutions for improvements in energy performance for old and new dwellings.

50% of Ireland's 1.5 million dwellings were built prior to the introduction of Building Regulations in Ireland in 1979. Energy consumption in Irish homes is about 40% higher than the European average and Irish homes are responsible for a staggering 11.5 million tonnes of CO2 emissions per year.

'A dramatic improvement of the energy performance of the existing housing stock is therefore essential if we want to make any dent into our greenhouse gases emission targets', explained Mr. Jay Stuart, Managing Director of DWEcoCo Ltd.

While welcoming the Government's Budget commitment to commencing or acquiring 9,000 social housing units in 2008, Mr. Stuart expressed concern that many would not be completed with maximum energy efficiency in mind.

According to Mr. Stuart, 'Unfortunately most dwellings due for completion in 2008 will be constructed to the minimum energy efficiency standards of the Building Regulations. Energy savings for householders and greatly reduced carbon emissions can be achieved by going that step further without incurring large additional costs. In particular the current Part F of the Building Regulations dealing with ventilation is out of date and in conflict with the new Part L. The industry requires the knowledge and tools which we will offer to social housing providers and construction professionals

through our project findings and public information campaign.'

Advanced thermal imaging and pressure testing equipment was used in the AVASH survey to investigate the state of the dwellings' thermal insulation and degree of air tightness.

Utilising this information, computer simulations have been used to determine the best ventilation strategy for the dwelling type. A key performance indicator for the project is the level of ventilation and air tightness and their impact on energy use for space heating. Other benefits include a much healthier and comfortable living environment for the households involved as well as significant cuts in energy bills.

Mr. Stuart stated that AVASH project partners in the UK and Denmark had recently launched similar audits.

It is expected that the result of these projects, along with the analysis of social housing schemes in Ireland, will have a European wide impact, will contribute to the exchange and sharing of knowledge and experience in the field and will improve the energy performance of the existing social housing stock and its inhabitants' quality of life.'

Further information about the audits and Advanced Ventilation Approaches for Social Housing (AVASH) is available from the website: <http://www.brighton.ac.uk/art/avash/index.html>

For further information about the AVASH seminar in Cork, please contact Xavier Dubuisson, manager of DWecoCo's Cork office at 021 496 6757.

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Founded in 2006, **Dunphy Public Relations** is a communications group led by Mark Dunphy from County Clare. Mr. Dunphy previously held the position of '*Head of News and Current Affairs*' in Clare FM Radio.

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