



Sixth Inter-Island Public Health Forum

Les Côtils Christian Centre, Cambridge Park Guernsey

Wednesday, 17th October - Saturday, 20th October 2001

Housing Standards

Mr Stephen D Smith, Environmental Health Officer, States of Jersey

Jersey has a population of over 90,000 people and currently the States Government relies on Housing Accommodation legislation as the means of trying to cap the islands rising population. This is achieved by limiting the rights of individuals to the type and standard of accommodation to which they can aspire. To achieve full housing qualification standards an individual must achieve a lengthy period of settlement. The island currently has no legislation in place to regulate the standards and occupation levels of accommodation.

An increasing demand on accommodation particularly in the unqualified sector of the market has resulted in poor standards with overcrowding, lack of basic standard amenities, poor standards of repair, dampness and a resultant increase in stress levels in family units. High demand also fuels the cost resulting in the lower paid suffering poorer quality accommodation. Firms are prepared to pay to keep good staff further inflating rents which are at a rate seen nowhere else in the UK other than London.

For many years Environmental Health has pursued improvements in housing standards in individual cases on an informal basis and until 1997 was able to rely on outdated Closing Order powers to prevent occupation of the very worst cases.

The paper will look in depth at the current legal framework of Housing Accommodation Law, the link between poor housing and poor health and the powers that are being considered to redress the situation for tenants many of whom have no security of tenure and little immediate prospect of achieving Housing qualifications entitling them to States Housing.