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# Better homes, better neighbourhoods

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Interventions to improve housing are often part of broader area-regeneration activities. A programme of housing-led regeneration in a post-industrial village in West Dunbartonshire, at the foot of Loch Lomond in Scotland, involved housing association tenants moving from ex-council flats reported to have damp problems (fig 1➤), to newly built houses with private gardens (fig 2➤). Not only was the fabric of the new houses better, but also the neighbourhood regeneration involved general environmental improvements. These included aesthetic improvements, provision of children's play areas and better street design. Levels of housing density were reduced by housing people in houses rather than in flats, and although the flats were not overcrowded, there was a small but statistically significant reduction in house occupancy (persons per room) when residents moved to their new house. A paper in this issue of *JECH* reports the findings of a prospective controlled study that evaluated the effects on health 1 year after residents moved to a new house: no marked health effects were reported.<sup>1</sup>

**Figure 1** Ex-council flats with reported damp problems



**Figure 2** Newly built houses with private gardens and wider environmental improvements

