

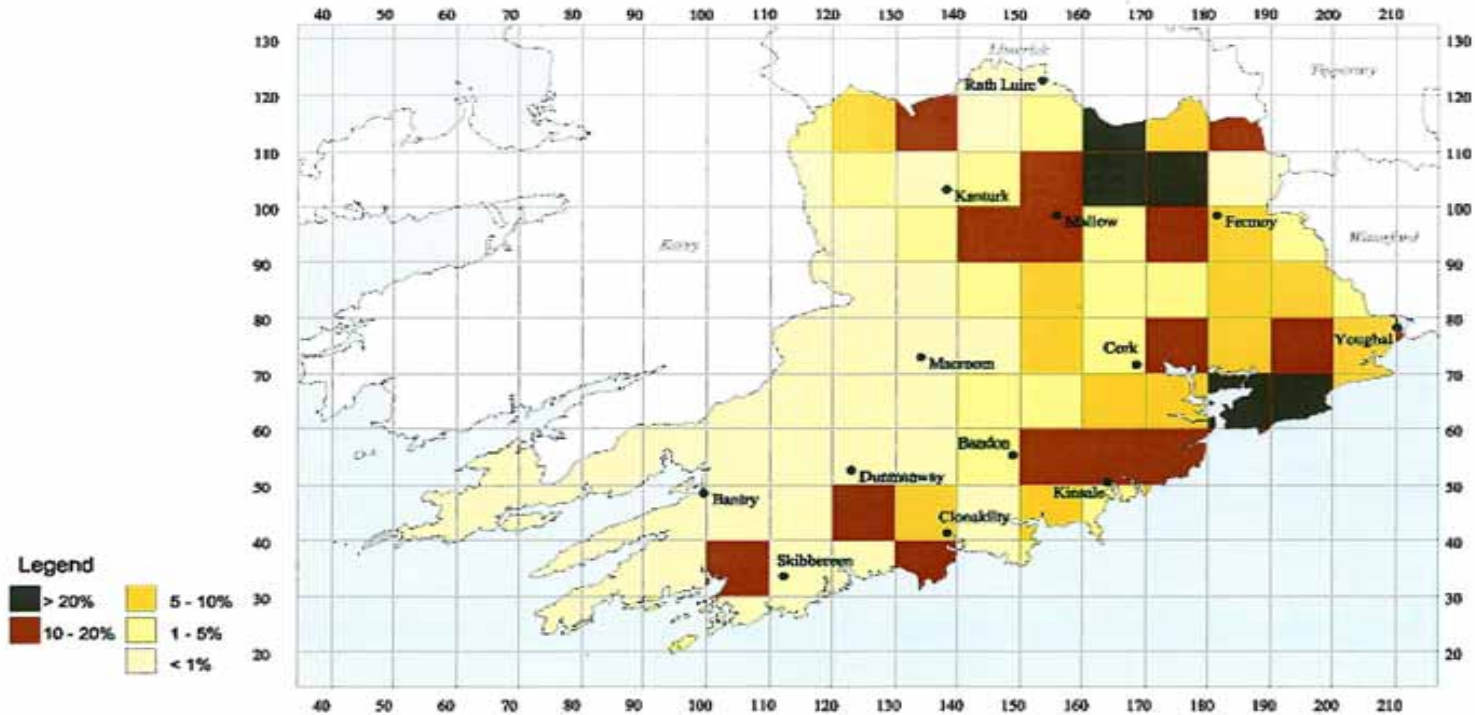
Radon in North Cork – A Case Study

6th November 2008

Presenter : Michael Cremin,
Senior Executive Officer Housing Dept.



Cork County



Introduction

- **RPII** National Survey suggests significant areas of North Cork in excess of 20% risk, and an even bigger area in the 10% to 20% category.

Strategy 1:

- Decision made to test all rented stock, across Cork County, prioritised by category of risk.
- Implementation Team – S.E.O., Senior Executive Engineer, Executive Engineer & District Supervisor
- Issues:
- “Duty of care”
- Potential local hysteria.
- Communications: -
Householders, Elected Members, Media.
- Procurement and Costs
- Identification of
Householders, delivery/recovery of test kits.

Strategy 2:

- Households identified from Council IGIS Browser Map, linked to Home Package, containing the original RPII Survey, highlighting exceedences >10%.
- Write to all Elected Members
- Write to all identified householders

- **To : The Cathaoirleach and each Member of the Northern Committee**
- **Re: Radon Survey, North Cork.**
- The Radiological Protection Institute of Ireland has, as part of a National study, identified areas in North Cork where, potentially, Radon Levels could be higher than normal.
- I have attached a map of North Cork, and refer in particular to those areas coloured brown and red.
- Cork County Council, in co-operation with the Institute, now intends to check each rented Council house in these areas, for actual Radon levels occurring.
- A total of 591 houses have been identified, and the following arrangements have been made.
- 1) The Council will visit each house and, with the occupants permission, place a small detector, one upstairs the other downstairs, for a period of 3 months
- These detectors will hardly be noticeable, will not obstruct the room and will not emit any sound
- 2) Following the 3 months, they will be collected and sent for testing.
- 3) Should radon levels of in excess of a scale of 200 be detected in any house, an extractor can be fitted to disperse it on an ongoing basis to the outside air.
- Where levels are considerably in excess of this measurement, then an underground ventilation unit can be fitted, again to disperse the radon to the outside.
- There will be no charge payable by the occupants should the need for these works arise.
- In the event of you having any query, or require any further information, please contact Charlie Brannigan, Senior Executive Engineer, at 022 – 30445, or by email at charles.brannigan@corkcoco.ie
- **Michael Cremin**
- **Senior Executive Officer**
- **Annabella, Mallow.**
- **29th November 2007.**

2,078 Houses Identified

- 599 in > 10% zones- including Mallow & Fermoy Town Councils
- Test kits procured & delivered to **599** houses. (Liam Fitzgerald, District Supervisor)
- 2 kits per house (2 storey: upstairs/downstairs) – 3 month test period
- Cost €54 per house including results

INITIAL TEST RESULTS:

- Becquerel Banding a) 0-200 Bq/m³: b) 201- 800 Bq/m³: c) > 800 Bq/m³
- Houses Requiring:
- Immediate Remediation (> 800 Bq/m³) 26 - 4%
- Remediation in time (201- 800 Bq/m³) 95 - 16%
- Unable to access 78 - 13%
- Further measurements 157 - 26%
- No Remediation 243 - 41%
- Total: 599

Implementation Strategy

- Results conveyed to RPII & HSE
- Meetings held and roles agreed:
- RPII – Advisor on the need for remediation works
- HSE - Advisor on Public Health issues, and notify all local G.P.'s
- County Council – Procure contractors, write to all householders/elected – members/Oireachtas members
- Close co-operation between Cork County Council, RPII and HSE with all media and public enquiries

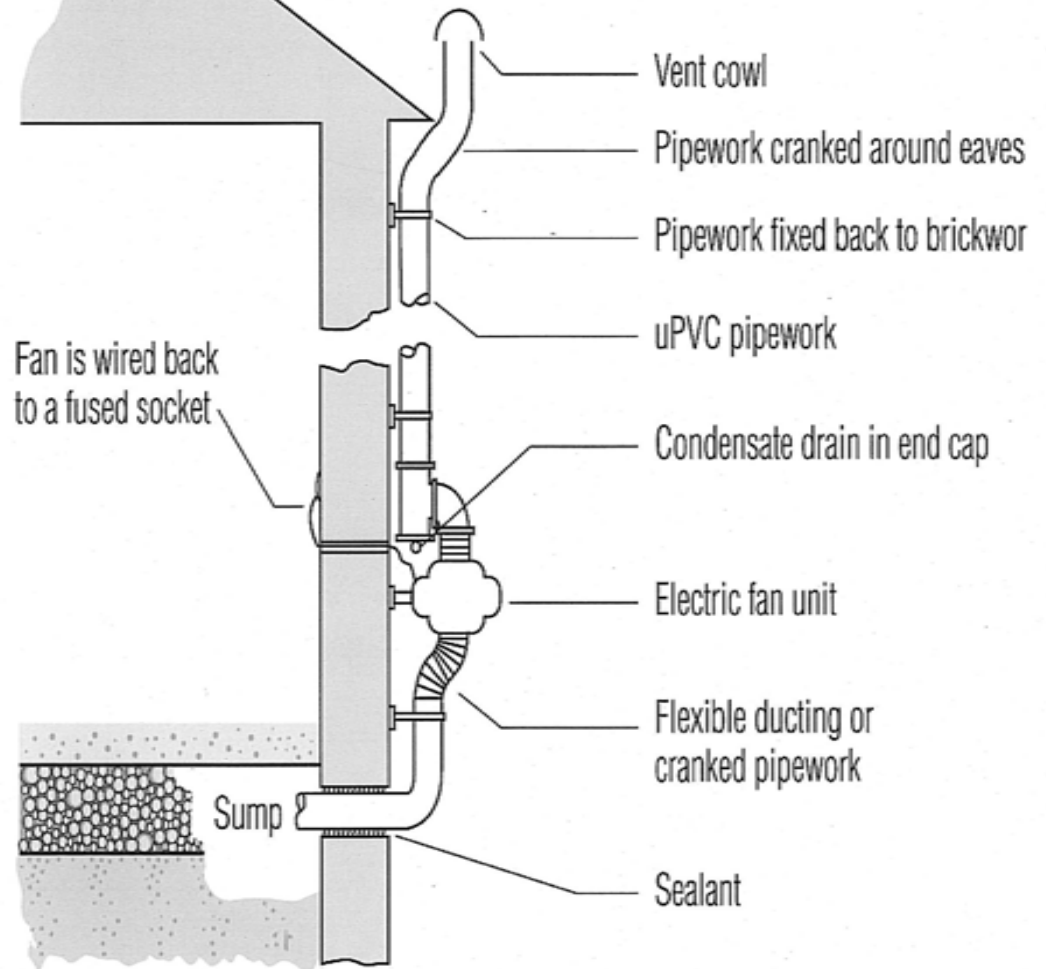
Notification of Householders and Members

- Radon Advice Fact Sheet sent to all Householders
- Letters sent to all Householders detailing radon level for each dwelling
- Letter sent to all Members detailing results and actions to be taken

Remediation Works

- Agreed remediation works in all cases-
Sump with fan assist
- RPII advice that this is the most effective method in dealing with all levels of radon occurring.

A Typical External Sump



Work in progress and Costs

- Works completed to 26 Houses where levels in excess of 800 Bq/m³ were found –
- Contracts being procured for remaining tests and future works.

Costs:

- Test - €54 per dwelling
- Sump + fan assist €1,500 per dwelling
- Estimated Total Outcome - €600,000
- Application to be made to D.O.E. H.& L.G for Allocation

Summary

- Cork County Council has worked closely with RPII and HSE in assessing and communicating the radon risk to its Tenants
- This co-operation was vital in reassuring those affected and in ensuring that all relevant information was made available to Tenants

- 599 homes assessed for radon risk in North Cork – remediation work complete in 26 where levels above 800 Bq/m³ were found
- Work will begin shortly in homes in the 200 – 800 Bq/m³ category
- Testing in the remainder of Cork (South & West), to begin shortly, and will conclude when every rented Council house in the County has been tested

- Council has gained much experience with radon over the past 12 months and with the support of RPII and HSE, believes that the issue can be effectively dealt with locally

- Cork County Council is available to provide advice and guidance to other Local Authorities who are now considering assessing the radon risk in their areas

- Thank you for your time and attention.