Tick one box:  ☒ STAFF project  ☐ POSTGRAD project  ☐ UNDERGRAD project

Title of project:  The Council Questionnaire: A survey of radon activities, policies and practice in local authorities containing actionable radon areas in England and Wales

Name of researcher(s):  Wouter Poortinga; Karin Bronstering

Name of supervisor (for student research):  poortingaw@cardiff.ac.uk, bronsteringk@cardiff.ac.uk

The purpose of this form is for you to think about ethics issues in your research. Please answer 'YES' 'NO' or 'NOT APPLICABLE' (N/A) to each of the following questions. A negative response does not automatically result in non-approval of the research, but should be explained in Box A.

- Will you describe the research process to participants in advance, so that they are informed about what to expect?  ☒
- Will you tell participants that their participation is voluntary?  ☐
- Will you tell participants that they may withdraw from the research at any time and for any reason?  ☒
- Will you obtain valid consent from participants? (specify how consent will be obtained in Box A)  ☒
- If the research is observational, will you ask participants for their consent to being observed?  ☐
- If the research involves photography or other audio-visual recording, will you ask participants for their consent to be photographed / recorded and for its use/publication?  ☒
- With questionnaires, will you give participants the option of omitting questions they do not want to answer?  ☐
- Will you tell participants that their data will be treated with full confidentiality and that, if published, will not be identifiable as theirs?  ☒
- Will you allow the participants the option of anonymity for all or part of the information they give in an interview or documentary form?  ☐
- Will your project involve deliberately misleading participants in any way?  ☒
- Will you debrief participants at the end of their participation (i.e. give a brief explanation of the study)?  ☐
- Is there any realistic risk of any participants experiencing either physical or psychological distress or discomfort? If 'yes', give details on a separate sheet and state what you will tell them to do if they should experience any problems (e.g. who they can contact for help).  ☐

Do participants fall into any of the following special groups? If yes, clearly describe in Box A how you intend to handle ethical issues arising with research on these vulnerable groups.

- Children (under 16 years of age)  ☒
- People with learning difficulties  ☒
- Patients  ☐
- People in custody  ☐
- People engaged in illegal activities  ☐
- Vulnerable elderly people  ☐

Does the research meet the requirements of the University's Health and Safety policies?  ☒
(see http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/osheu/complete_risk_assessment/index.html)

You MUST Bring to the attention of the School Research Ethics Committee any issues with ethical implications not clearly covered by the above checklist

FOR STUDENT PROJECTS: THE SUPERVISOR MUST INITIAL ONE OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS:

- The supervisor believes this research project has negligible ethical implications and the student can proceed with the research immediately.
- The supervisor believes this research project has some minor ethical implications. Box A clearly describes the supervisor's recommendations to follow and/or issues that the student needs to address in order for the research to proceed.
- The supervisor believes this project may have significant ethical implications and should be brought before the Ethics Committee. Box A clearly describes the ethical issues arising the research. The student SHOULD NOT proceed until the project has been approved by the
Box A  The Project (provide all the information listed below in a separate attachment)

1. Title of Project
2. Purpose of the project and its academic rationale
3. Brief description of methods and measurements
4. Participants: recruitment methods, number, age, gender, exclusion/inclusion criteria
5. Consent and participation information arrangements - please attached consent forms if they are to be used
6. A clear and concise statement of the ethical considerations raised by the project and how is dealt with them
7. Estimated start date and duration of project

All information must be submitted along with this form to the School Research Ethics Committee for consideration

SEE ATTACHMENT

Box B  Researcher Statement. (In all cases Box A should clearly describe how you plan to deal with ethical issues in your research).

- I believe this research project has negligible ethical implications.
- I believe this research project has some minor ethical implications. [X]
- I believe this project may have significant ethical implications.

Signed  Print Name  Date
Undergraduate or Postgraduate Researcher

Signed  Print Name  Date 24/02/09
Research Supervisor or Lead Researcher

Box C  Comments from the School Research Ethics Committee

STATEMENT OF ETHICAL APPROVAL

This project had been considered using agreed Departmental procedures and is now approved

Signed  Print Name  Date
Chair, School Research Ethics Committee
BOX A - THE PROJECT

1 Title of the project
The Council Questionnaire: A survey of radon activities, policies and practice in local authorities containing actionable radon areas in England and Wales.

2 Purpose of the project
The aim of the project is to obtain a comprehensive overview of radon-related policy and practice in local authorities that contain actionable radon areas in England and Wales. Radon actionable areas are parts of the country where at least 5% of homes are predicted to meet or exceed the action level of 200 Becquerel per cubic metre of air (Bq/m³). These actionable areas are targeted in the Radon Roll-Out programme to promote radon awareness, testing and remediation.

Of particular interest are (a) recently conducted domestic radon and testing campaigns within the local authority (such as the radon roll-out programme), (b) radon policy, e.g. everyday practices of dealing with radon related enquiries from the public, and (c) support provided for residents who wish to remediate their homes.

Data collected will supplement information recently obtained through a series of semi-structured interviews with environmental health officers for which ethical approval was obtained. By targeting all local authorities containing actionable radon areas, this part of the research will be able to give a more comprehensive overview of activities than would be able with the semi-structured interviews only.

3 Brief description of methods and measurement
Data will be collected using a questionnaire (see Appendix B). The topics of the questionnaire are similar to those of the policy interviews and comprise items about the local authorities’ activities with regards to (a) public radon enquiries, (b) awareness raising and testing activities and (c) radon remediation.

The questionnaire will be sent to environmental health officers from all local authorities within England and Wales that contain radon actionable areas. The local authorities are selected using the Radon Atlas of England and Wales (Green et al., 2002).

The questionnaire will be sent together with a cover letter that includes details of the project as well as information about data protection, voluntariness of participation etc. (see Appendix A). To increase the response rate a pre-stamped, self-addressed envelope will be included. Completion of the questionnaire is anticipated to not exceed ten minutes.
4 Participants: recruitment methods, number, age, gender, exclusions/inclusion criteria
Participants in the study are environmental health officers from the 87 local authorities in England and Wales with actionable radon areas within their boundaries. Prior to posting the questionnaire, telephone enquiries will be made to identify the officer who is responsible for managing domestic radon requests.

5 Consent and participation information arrangements
The proposed study does not pose a realistic risk of any participants experiencing either physical or psychological distress or discomfort. The questionnaire only contains items of purely informative character about radon related activities, policies and practice. Furthermore, the project does not involve any kind of participant deception, manipulation, distraction or misleading information. No sensitive data will be collected that could trigger upset, anxieties or any other adverse emotional reactions. The information sheet provided with the questionnaire explicitly informs the participants about issues of confidentiality, that participation is voluntary, and that participants can withdraw from the study at any time.

We therefore perceive the individual’s acceptance of completing and returning the questionnaire, in combination with the information provided as implied consent to participate in the study.

6 Statement of ethical considerations
Ethical considerations arise with local authority officers who wish to receive the study results and are therefore asked to provide their personal name. However, personal names will only be used to ensure that the results are being sent to the right recipient. The personal information provided will not be used in the research in any way.

7 Estimated start date and duration of the project
We intend to send out the questionnaire immediately after research has been approved by the School Research Ethics Committee.

References
APPENDIX A

Dear Sir/Madam,

We are writing to invite you to participate in a Department of Health funded research project on ‘Awareness and Perceptions of the Risks of Exposure to Radon in Homes’.

The overall aim of this multi-method project is to gain a better understanding of radon awareness of residents in radon affected areas in England and Wales, and to learn about day-to-day policies and practices of local authorities with radon affected areas. The results of the study will be used to improve radon communication and remediation programmes throughout the UK.

We hope that you are able to help us with research by completing the enclosed questionnaire and return it using the pre-addressed stamped envelope provided. The questionnaire covers topics such as radon in your local authority, awareness raising and testing activities, and procedures of dealing with public enquiries about domestic radon.

The questionnaire should not take longer than 10 minutes to complete.

Your participation in this project is entirely voluntary and you can withdraw from the study at any time. If you would like to receive the results of the survey you can write down your name at the end of the questionnaire or send us an email.

The information you provide will be treated confidentially and the data will be anonymised. Your name will not be used in the reporting or analyses in any way. The survey has been approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Welsh School of Architecture (reference number)

If you have any questions about this survey please do not hesitate to contact us. We are happy to respond to any queries you may have.

Thank you very much in advance for your help.

Karin Bronstering
Welsh School of Architecture
Cardiff University
Bute Building, King Edward VII Avenue
Cardiff, Wales, CF10 3NB
Tel: 029 2087 0643
Email: BronsteringK@cardiff.ac.uk
APPENDIX B

A. General Information

Your Local Council: ____________________________________________________________

Your Position: ________________________________________________________________

B. Radon in your Local Authority

1. In your local authority, how much of a problem do you think residential radon is?
   - [ ] Major problem
   - [ ] Some problem
   - [ ] Not a problem
   - [ ] Don’t know

2. What is the area of your local authority affected by radon? (Where more than 1% of homes are estimated to have radon levels at or above the radon Action Level of 200 Bq/m³)
   - [ ] 0-25%
   - [ ] 26-50%
   - [ ] 51-75%
   - [ ] 76-100%
   - [ ] Don’t know

3. Which department in your local authority is responsible for enquires regarding radon in existing domestic buildings?
   - [ ] Building control
   - [ ] Environmental health
   - [ ] Other, please specify: __________________________________________________
C. Radon Enquiries from Residents

4. In your local authority, how many officers are able to give basic radon advice to residents? (Please include all full-time and part-time officers from all departments)

_____________ Officers

5. On average, how many radon-related enquiries does your local authority receive from residents?

☐ Less than one per month
☐ About one per month
☐ Between five and ten per month
☐ More than ten per month (please specify) ________________________
☐ Don’t know

6. How does your local authority generally deal with radon-related enquiries from members of the public? (Please tick all that apply)

☐ The member of the public is referred to an officer within the local authority (either via telephone or in person)
☐ The member of the public is advised to visit the local authority’s website for more information
☐ The member of the public is advised to contact the HPA, BRE, or radon helpline
☐ None of the above
☐ Other, please specify ________________________________

7. Does your local authority register the following information? (Please tick one box on each line)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of radon-related enquiries</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of houses that are tested for radon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of houses that have remediated high radon levels</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other, please specify</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. Which, if any, of the following does your local authority use to advice members of the public on radon affected areas? (Please tick all that apply)

☐ Indicative Atlas of Radon in England and Wales
☐ ukradon.org.uk
☐ Radon GIS dataset
☐ Other, please specify ________________________________
9. Does your local authority have a copy of the Indicative Atlas of Radon in England and Wales, issued in 2007?
- Yes
- No
- Don’t know

10. Does your local authority have a copy of an earlier radon atlas?
- Yes
- No
- Don’t know

11. Does your local authority’s website provide information about residential radon?
- Yes
- No (Please go to question 13)
- Don’t know (Please go to question 13)

12. Does your local authority’s website provide the following information? (Please tick one box on each line)
- An internal telephone number for radon enquiries
- An internal contact email address for radon enquiries
- Name of a contact person in your LA for radon enquiries
- A link to the Health Protection Agency (HPA) website
- HPA Radon Hotline telephone number
- A link to the Building Research Establishment (BRE) website
- A link to ukradon.org.uk
- Basic information about radon
- Information about the health effects of radon
- Information about how to test for radon/obtain a radon test
- Information about how to reduce indoor radon levels
- Other, please specify

3
D. Awareness Raising and Testing Activities

13. Has your local authority been involved in radon testing campaigns during the late 1980s, early 1990s that were carried out by the former NRPB?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Don’t know

14. Has your local authority participated or is currently participating in the radon roll-out programme? (A programme initiated by the NRPB, now known as the HPA, that promotes awareness and radon testing)
   - Yes
   - No
   - Don’t know

15. Is your local authority currently involved in a programme other than the radon roll-out programme to promote domestic radon awareness and testing?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Don’t know

16. Would you consider taking part in a domestic radon awareness and testing programme in the future?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Don’t know

17. Has your local authority been involved in any radon-related activities (other than the roll-out programme) since the year 2000?
   - Yes
   - No (Please go to question 20)
   - Don’t know (Please go to question 20)

18. What were these activities related to? (Please tick all that apply)
   - Residential radon
   - Radon in the workplace
   - Radon in drinking water
   - Other, please specify ____________________________________________________________________
19. Could you give a description of the activities you were involved in?

20. How important do you think it is to collaborate with other local authorities to promote radon awareness and testing among the general public?
   - Very important
   - Fairly important
   - Not that important
   - Not at all important

21. How important do you think it is to collaborate with professional organisations such as the HPA or the BRE to promote radon awareness and testing among the general public?
   - Very important
   - Fairly important
   - Not that important
   - Not at all important

22. Is your local authority a member of a regional radon steering group or committee?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Don’t know

23. In general, how active would you describe your local authority in promoting radon awareness and testing among the general public?
   - Very active
   - Fairly active
   - Not that active
   - Not at all active

E. Radon Remediation

24. Does your local authority provide residents with a list of approved builders or contractors who are able to carry out remediation work?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Don’t know
25. Does your local authority offer financial support for homeowners to remediate high radon levels?

☐ Yes
☐ No (Please go to question 27)
☐ Don’t know (Please go to question 27)

26. What kind of financial support for remediation does your local authority offer homeowners? (Please tick all that apply)

☐ Means tested grants
☐ Means tested loans
☐ Grants that are not means tested
☐ Loans that are not means tested
☐ Other, please specify __________________________

27. Would you be interested in receiving more information about radon from professional organisations such as the HPA or the BRE?

☐ Yes
☐ No

28. Are you interested in receiving the results of this survey?

☐ Yes (Please write down your name in the space provided)

________________________________________________________

☐ No

If you have any further comments, please write them in the space below.

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

This is the end of the questionnaire. Thank you very much for your help!