AS Geographical Investigation:
How and why does quality of housing vary through different areas in Sheffield?

1) Identification of a question:

I am investigating housing quality in Sheffield because I think that it is interesting to see how housing quality varies throughout the different areas (wards) in Sheffield. I also think that it is a good topic to base my investigation on because the topic of housing has lots of different aspects to study and is manageable within time available.

2) Development of strategy:

I will gather my primary data by visiting different areas throughout Sheffield and assess the quality of the environment and the housing. I will also gather secondary data from Sheffield library about housing and trends. I will do this by looking at the local census and see if there is any useful information contained in them that I could use. The library is not the only place where useful information can be gathered, I could go to local estate agents in Sheffield and also look on the internet at how house prices differ in the areas that I am studying to see if any trends or patterns can be established.

3) Collection of data:

I will collect the data using the housing quality indexes, of which an example is shown below (fig 3.1).

Fig 3.1:

	Worst Scenario	1	2	3	4	5	Best Scenario
s1	Ugly Houses						Attractive Houses
s2	Runned Down and Neglected Area						Well Maintained
s3	Many Vacant Houses						No Vacant Houses
s4	Noisy						Quiet
s5	Filthy/ Much Litter						Clean
s6	Congested With Traffic						No Traffic
s7	No Vegetation						Vegetation
s8	Hostile						Welcoming and Safe
s9	Large Amounts of Graffiti						No Graffiti
s10	No Front Garden						Large Front Garden
s11	High Rise Housing						Detached Housing
s12	No Drive/ Area for Parking						Garage

I am using an index because it is an accurate way of collecting data from different types of housing and having sufficient information to compare and draw an accurate conclusion from that data. Another reason that I chose to use an index is that not all of the data was collected by me. As there were too many areas to cover so if all the people in my group went by the same guidelines we would be able to draw a more accurate conclusion and there would be less chance of error in the results. During the field trip we noticed that our index did not include whether or not the houses had parking spaces or not so we included it whilst collecting the data. We did this because we thought that it would be very useful in helping us to distinguish whether or not the housing was of good quality of not. Other than that no other changes were made during the field trip.

The survey points that we selected to do the environmental and housing checks were strategically placed. We did seven checks 1km away from the city centre, seven checks 3km away from the city centre and seven checks 5km away from the city centre (shown in fig 3.2). The points were going out towards the North, North East, South East, South, South West, West and North West edges of the city. We did it this way so it would be going through as many of Sheffield's different wards as possible and give spread of data over the whole city. Another reason why the survey points were located where they were was because of easier access, nine of the points were located close to main tram lines and the other 3 points were accessed using a car. This meant that on the first day the data was gathered in enough time to visit the library and estate agent for additional information. We then returned to Sheffield to do the other 9 housing quality indexes and gather additional information on house prices and trends. No housing quality checks were carried out to the West of the city because that is the area where mainly industry is located and there are very few houses.

4) Analysis, evaluation and interpretation:

The results of the environmental and housing quality indexes are shown in Fig 4.1. The general pattern that is shown is the further that the survey points get away from the city centre, the greater the tot al number of points that that area has received. This means that the general quality of housing improves as it gets further away from the city centre. The annotated photographs in Fig 4.2 also show this. Fig 4.3 shows four of the different models of urban form. The information gathered proves that it is the Mann's model theory for a UK city which is more likely suited to Sheffield. The scatter graph (Fig 4.4) also shows this trend. Another reason why Mann's model is more suited to Sheffield is the differenc e between the East and the West sides of the city as shown in Fig 4.5 and

Fig 4.6 (Mann-Whitney test). The two highest mean scores from the whole survey (4.42 and 4.83 points) were also gathered from the West side of the city, this is shown in the line graph (fig 4.4). the better quality of environment is also shown in the map fig 4.7 which shows that the highest house prices are towards the west of the city. I think one of the main reasons that the poorer housing is located towards the East is, the East is where most of the industry in the city is located. This may mean that most of the working class populations are located in the Eastern end as it is closer to their place of work and therefore cuts down transportation costs. Most industry in the city was originally located towards the East of the city because of prevailing winds and rivers (River Don) taking the pollution eastwards away from the city. One reason why houses are more expensive towards the West of the city than the East (Fig 4.7) is because there is less chance air pollution. The Mann-Whitney test results show the possibility that the difference between the East and the West sides of the city occurred just by chance is only 3.2%. This shows a clear difference between the two sides of the city and I am 96.8% sure that the difference did not occur by chance.

5) Presentation of a summary:

I think overall the results I obtained are quite accurate and as I predicted. I think I have successfully established how and why housing quality varies throughout different areas in Sheffield. What I have established is that generally the quality of housing increases going further away from the city centre. I have also found that there are differences in quality between the East and the West sides of the city. If I were to improve my study I would do an extra group of environmental checks so the study reaches out further away from the city centre, for example a further 2km. This would mean all off Sheffield's areas (wards) were included in the survey as about 5 wards were missed out due to lack of time. I also think that the results may have been more accurate if all of the different environments were assessed by the same person, as different people may give areas more/ less generous scores than others as they may have a different opinion on how many points it is worth.