



Introduction

This report describes the quality assurance arrangements for the Statistical Data Return (SDR) data collected by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH). It accompanies the **Private registered provider (PRP) social housing stock in England** statistical release, providing more detail on the regulatory and operational context for data collection and the safeguards that aim to maximise data quality.

Background

The statistics published by RSH are based on data collected directly from PRPs through the SDR survey. RSH consults with PRPs in order to ascertain which data items are present in systems and works with PRPs to minimise the overall burden placed upon them.

The SDR data is used extensively by RSH as a source of administrative data. It is required by RSH to deliver its operational approach to regulating the economic standards (see regulatory context on page 2). Public bodies are encouraged to use administrative data for statistical purposes by the United Kingdom Statistics Authority (UKSA), as such, RSH publishes this data.



National Statistics status

The statistics derived from the SDR data are published as **Private registered provider (PRP) social housing stock in England**.

They are considered by the regulatory arm of the UKSA (the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) to have met the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value, and are considered a national statistic.

Designation history

These statistics were designated as a National Statistic in 2014 following an [assessment](#) against the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#). Following the designation as a National Statistic, producers of the statistics must comply with the statutory requirement to ensure the Code of Practice continues to be observed. RSH keeps the trustworthiness, quality and value of the statistics under constant review.

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Publication schedule

These statistics are fully published in October each year, with the data pre-announced in the [release calendar](#). Selected data on rents and stock are published in September. Pre-release access is restricted. All data, supplementary tables, data tools and additional information (including a list of those with 24hour pre-release access) are published on the RSH statistics pages <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistical-data-return-statistical-releases>.

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Improvements since designation

Since being designated a National Statistic, the following improvements have been made:

- **Accessibility**
 - 2018 release of excel based “*look up tools*”, allowing the interrogation of data at a PRP and Local Authority (LA) level without analytical experience.
 - Addition of supplementary notes and additional guidance and documents to provide simple access to information to understand the statistics in greater detail.
- **Timeliness** - the publication of the key elements of the statistics has been moved from October to September to provide users earlier access to the areas they deem the most useful.
- **Transparency** - revisions policy and processes have been enhanced, to improve transparency in data changes.
- **Relevance to users** - 2019 briefing note style adopted following user feedback on use and value and earlier release of key statistics on the most used areas (stock and rents).

Quality assurance of administrative data (QAAD)

The data used in the production of these statistics are classed as administrative data. As part of RSH's compliance to the code of practice, and in the context of other statistics published by the UK Government and its agencies, RSH has determined that the statistics drawn from the SDR are likely to be categorised as **low quality risk – medium public interest** (with a requirement for basic/ enhanced assurance).

Notwithstanding this, RSH aims for the highest standards of data quality possible within the constraints of available resources and the existing regulatory and operational context. Through on-going internal analysis, RSH seeks to understand the strengths and limitations of the data, the overall quality of the data and to identify potential means by which it may be improved.



Regulatory context

The regulatory framework for social housing in England provides both the basis for collecting SDR data and the framework which ultimately underpins data quality. For more information about RSH please see <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/regulator-of-social-housing>.

Regulatory framework

RSH collects SDR data in order to deliver its operational approach to regulating the economic standards set out in the [regulatory framework for social housing in England from the 1st April 2015](#).

The regulatory framework consists of three elements:

- **Regulatory requirements** – the requirements with which PRPs need to comply (including our three economic standards (Governance and Financial Viability, Value for Money and Rent Standard) and requirements on data and information submission).
- **Codes of practice** – to assist private registered providers in understanding how compliance can be achieved.
- **Regulatory guidance** – further explanatory information on the regulatory requirements, including how RSH will carry out its role of regulating the requirements.

As part of the regulatory framework, PRPs are required to submit SDR data by 31 May each year, along with other data returns and regulatory documents at various points during the year.

The regulatory framework and data quality

The regulatory framework places the onus for data quality on PRPs and their boards. The [Governance & Financial Viability Standard](#) sets out the specific expectation that “providers shall communicate with the regulator in an accurate and timely manner”. This expectation is amplified in guidance on the regulatory approach, [Regulating the Standards](#). This states that the regulator will regard “the submission of late and incomplete or inaccurate regulatory data may be indicative of a weak control environment” and “failure to provide accurate and timely data may be reflected in [the regulators] judgement of a provider’s compliance with the regulatory standards”.

Addressing issues with data quality

RSH acts proportionately to address issues of data quality through its [regulatory approach](#). Regulatory judgements of compliance with the Governance and Financial Viability Standard (which includes data quality) are published for PRPs that own 1,000 or more social housing units. RSH also has statutory intervention and enforcement powers ranging from collection of additional information to the removal of PRP officers as set out in the [regulator’s approach to intervention, enforcement and use of powers](#).



Governance of data and statistics at RSH

The statistician responsible for the publication of these statistics is also responsible for the SDR data collection and the cleansing of incoming SDR data; working with PRPs to directly address anomalies within the data submissions and producing the final data set on which the statistics are produced.

All SDR data are stored and analysed within password protected government secure networks and access to the sector level analysis work undertaken on the data is restricted until after publication (PRP level data is accessed by RSH staff as part of operational work). Further information on the data quality assurance processes employed by RSH is provided on page 4.

Data submitted by PRPs is redacted within the public release to remove all contact information submitted within the Entity Level Information (ELI) section. This contact information is not publicly available. There is no other administrative data held by RSH which can be made available for use in statistics. However, RSH publishes a range of summary data from other information collected. These are available <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/analysis-and-statistical-reports>.



SDR collection

All PRPs are expected to complete the SDR. The size of return completed is based on the size of the PRP, with those owning 1,000 or more units of social stock providing more information.

History - The first collection occurred in 2012 and it has been collected annually from PRPs since. The SDR collects data on stock size, types, location and rents at 31 March each year, and data on sales and acquisitions made during the 12 months up to the 31 March each year.

Systems - The SDR is collected via a web-based system called [NROSH+](#). The NROSH+ system is hosted and maintained by RSH (through its digital partner Homes England). RSH control the requirements for data input processes, storage, verification, sign off and extraction of submitted data and produce the statistical releases. Data is either imported or entered into the NROSH+ system directly by PRPs. See page 4 for details on quality assurance processes.



Quality assurance processes

RSH subjects SDR submissions to a series of checks to identify potential quality issues before each data return is signed off. The final SDR data file that supports the statistical release is only created once all outstanding queries are resolved. Any return not meeting the RSH quality standard is excluded from the final dataset.

Submission checks

SDR data submitted to RSH is subject to both automated validation checks and manual inspection.

Automated validations are programmed into the NROSH+ system and check the SDR data at the point of submission for correct formatting, consistency and logical possibility (within expected limits). For example, ensuring numbers of units are consistent across different parts of the SDR and that LA areas are reported consistently. Automated validations are either 'hard' or 'soft'.

Hard validations - PRPs cannot submit without the issue being resolved (e.g. when an LA area is present in one question and not in another comparable question).

Soft validation - PRPs can submit but are required to check their information, and if correct to submit a supporting document (e.g. when a value appears to be outside of a normally expected range, such as higher than expected rents).

Manual inspections are systematically undertaken on all data submitted. The level of manual checking performed on each return is based on the complexity of the data and the number of LAs in which the PRP operates. However, all returns are checked for basic consistency and likely errors, for example where proportions of stock are recorded as particular excepted categories are outside the expected range or where rents are particularly high or low.

Where RSH identifies a potential anomaly with the submitted SDR data, a query is raised with the submitting PRP. The sign off of SDR returns for all providers with 1,000 or more units is dependent on the resolution of all queries. This overall checking process is outlined in the diagram in Annex A.

Post publication checks

SDR data (excluding contact details or optional pilot year questions), are published at a disaggregated level as part of the statistical release. Releasing data into the public domain serves as an additional route through which erroneous data may be identified by the PRP or third parties.

Misreporting

There are no numerical measures of misreporting of SDR data by PRPs. However, one source of possible quality weakness is inconsistent interpretation of guidance with providers not applying this consistently across the sector. This issue is most likely to arise where there are technical or legal definitions that are complex or, to some degree, ambiguous. It is more likely to arise among PRPs owning fewer than 1,000 units due to the reduced level of contact with regulation staff and their specialisms in certain types of activities (e.g. supported housing/ leasehold). Please see **technical notes and definitions** for more information on other factors which impact on the data collected.

Corrections

Under the revisions policy (see **technical notes and definitions**), errors identified will be investigated and corrections issued in the subsequent year's release, or through supplementary releases during the year if the level of error is deemed material to the use of the data. The level of revision due to identified errors is documented within the following year's statistical release.

Data quality regulation

If, through either manual checks or subsequent information, SDR data has been submitted with significant material errors, that may reasonably have been found by a PRP during their internal quality control process, RSH will consider the extent to which this offers evidence of failure to meet requirements for data quality and timeliness under the Governance and Financial Viability Standard. Within the regulatory framework set out on page 2, RSH will consider the most appropriate response.



2019 responses

All PRPs are required to complete the SDR. However, due to non-submission or exclusion due to unresolved errors there is a small level of known SDR non-response. In 2019 the overall non-response rate was 4%, this being slightly lower than in previous years. A list of late/ missing returns has been published alongside the release since 2018.

Using other administrative data held by RSH, it has been identified that, to date, all the PRPs excluded from the SDR data are those which own fewer than 1,000 social housing units/ bedspaces. The response rate for these 'small' providers in 2019 was 95%. Data is weighted to account for this small proportion of census respondents for which data is not available (see Accounting for missing data section below).



Accounting for missing data

In 2014, following consideration of alternative methods and discussions with the National Statistician's Office and (now) MHCLG, weighting was selected to account for the small proportion of missing data. This method was chosen given the incomplete prior year data for some of the non-submitting PRPs and the relative simplicity of the dataset.

Weighting

SDR data (2012 to 2019) has been weighted. Where presented, data collected as part of predecessor to the SDR (the Regulatory Statistical Return) has not been weighted due to differences in methodology, classification and storage. Weighted data is highlighted in the release and is marked in relevant tables by the use of an uppercase 'I'. Data are weighted in the following categories:

| Categories | Large PRPs | Small PRPs |
|---|--------------|--------------|
| General needs | | ✓ |
| Supported housing | | ✓ |
| Housing for older people | | ✓ |
| LCHO | | ✓ |
| Social leasehold | | ✓ |
| Non-social rented/ leasehold | | ✓ |
| Affordable Rent (all categories) | not weighted | not weighted |
| Evictions (all categories) ¹ | ✓ | N/A |
| Mutual exchanges ¹ | ✓ | N/A |
| No. of for-profit providers | not weighted | not weighted |
| No. of DHS failures | | ✓ |

¹ Excepting 2012 data, where an accurate response rate for this question cannot be determined.

Particular caution should be used when viewing weighted results for evictions and mutual exchanges. Given the optional nature of the questions, non-responding PRPs may not have the same trends as responding PRPs. It may be that those with high rates of evictions are more likely to choose not to disclose that information in an optional question or those with a low rate may feel it unnecessary.

The impact of weighting the 2019 data is shown in published supplementary tables. As in previous years the effect of weighting on totals is relatively minor given the minimal missing information.

Basic method

Weighting based on the response rate to the SDR has been applied to the categories shown above. It assumes that the trends in the data submitted by PRPs would also apply to the PRPs who did not submit (e.g. that the proportion of social housing stock owned in each region of England is the same for the small providers that did not respond as it is for the small providers that did).

The general formula used to conduct this weighting was as shown:

$$\text{Weighted result} = \text{Unweighted result} \times \frac{1}{\text{Response rate}}$$

For regional and national totals, weighting was carried out at the LA level and aggregated upwards. Due to the discrete nature of the data (number of units), all data were rounded up (i.e. a weighted result of 10.1 units would be recorded as 11 units as it represented a figure greater than ten units).

Exceptions

The number of Affordable Rent (AR) stock was not weighted. To own AR stock, PRPs must be signed up to the Affordable Homes Programme which requires additional reporting and active engagement with the Regulator. The likelihood that any AR stock has not been captured in the SDR is therefore considered to be very small. Accordingly, AR units were removed from the dataset before weighting occurred, then added back in.

Where AR data could not be split by stock type; for example, the number of supported housing and housing for older people it was assumed that the distribution of AR stock followed the distribution of non-AR stock (e.g. supported housing and housing for older people AR was assumed to be divided between the two component stock types in the same proportion as the non-AR supported housing and housing for older people stock).



Average rent and service charge calculations

General needs, supported housing and housing for older people rental figures in this release are calculated using data supplied by large PRPs only, as small providers are not required to submit detailed rental data. All PRPs with Affordable Rent stock are required to submit rental information for that stock regardless of the total number of units owned.

Data collected

Prior to 2018 PRPs were instructed to record rental data for temporary social housing as part of the prevailing main category for that type of stock (i.e. temporary social housing that was general needs would be recorded as part of the general needs data). This changed in 2018 and temporary social housing was captured separately for general needs and support housing/ housing for older people.

The raw data released shows figures for all data collected, with separate temporary social housing data. It also provides the combined averages, where temporary social housing rents are combined back into their prevailing main category of stock. Briefing notes and main data tables reference the combined averages unless otherwise stated.

Calculation of averages

All averages relating to rents in this statistical release are fully weighted by stock owned by PRPs for the appropriate geography and/ or sub-group.

Average service charges and gross rents

The average service charges presented in the rent sections relate only to the stock where there is a Housing Benefit eligible service charge present. Therefore, zero service charges are excluded from this calculation.

However, gross rents presented in these tables do include stock without a service charge. Because of this, the sum of the average net rent and average service charge will not equal the average gross rent.

Calculation of social rent rates

PRPs are required to follow the guidance set out by RSH when calculating social rent rates. It should be noted that social rent rates are not applicable to homes let under the Affordable Rent programme, classified as temporary social housing or intermediate rent properties.

The guidance can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rent-standard-guidance>.

Unit sizes for which rent data are collected

PRPs owning 1,000 or more units are required to submit LA level breakdowns for rent and service charges for the following unit sizes. PRPs owning fewer than 1,000 units submit rent figures at a PRP level only, this combines all unit sizes and locations. Analysis presented in the statistical release focuses on the detailed rent data submitted by larger PRPs only.

General needs, temporary social housing general needs and Affordable Rent general needs

Bedspaces/ non-self-contained
Bedsit
1 bedroom
2 bedroom
3 bedroom
4 bedroom
5 bedroom
6 or more bedrooms

Supported housing/ housing for older people, temporary social housing supported housing/ housing for older people and Affordable Rent supported housing/ housing for older people

Bedspaces/ non-self-contained
Bedsit
1 bedroom
2 bedroom
3 bedroom
4 or more bedrooms

For all material in the 2019 release (including briefing notes, supplementary tables and the 2019 SDR data set) visit: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statistical-data-return-2018-to-2019>.

Why not have your say on our statistics in 2019/20?

RSH want to hear your views on how the new format and range of documents in this statistical release meet your needs. Please email feedback, including suggestions for improvements to enquiries@rsh.gov.uk or click below to rate how this document meets your needs.



All needs met



Some needs met

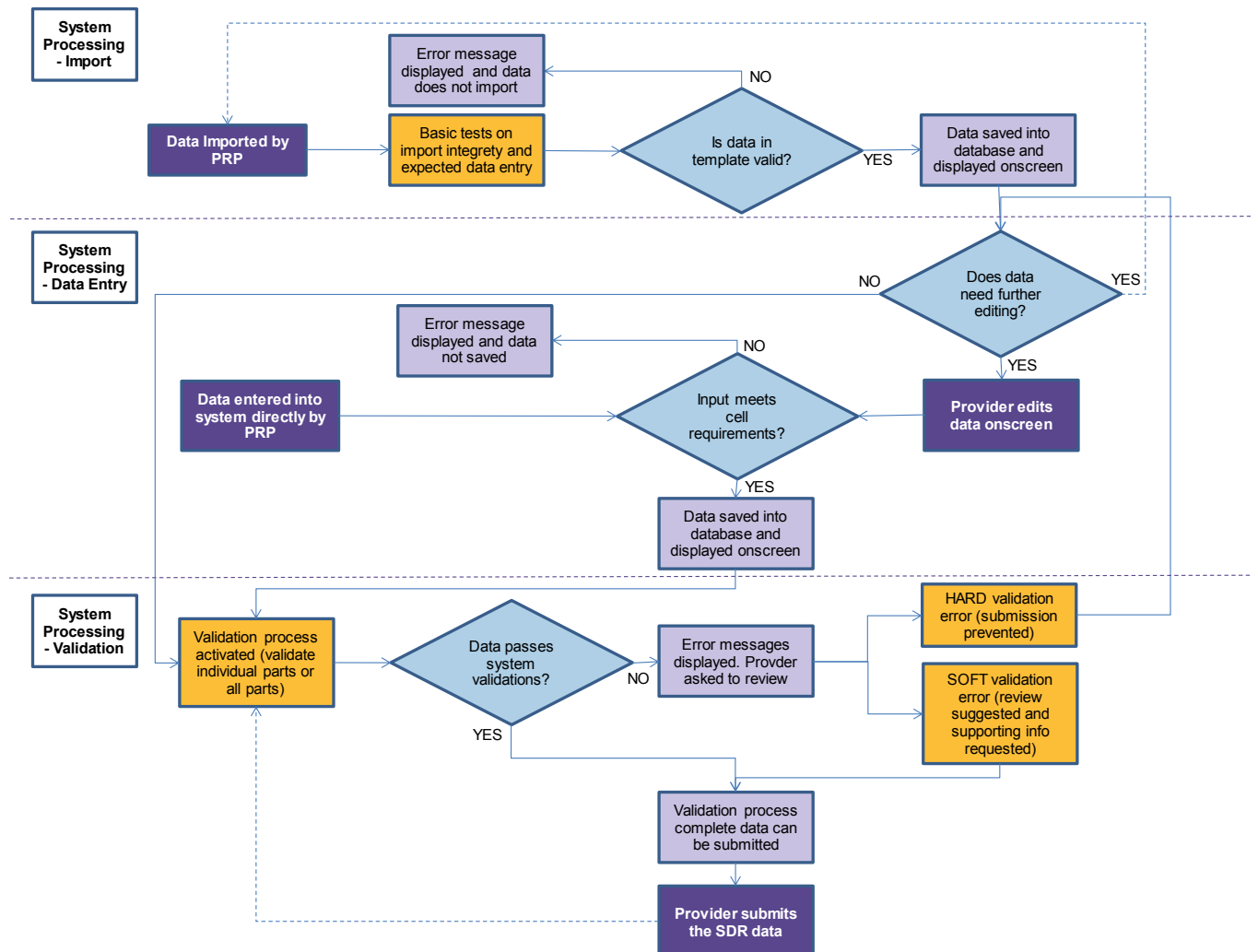


No needs met

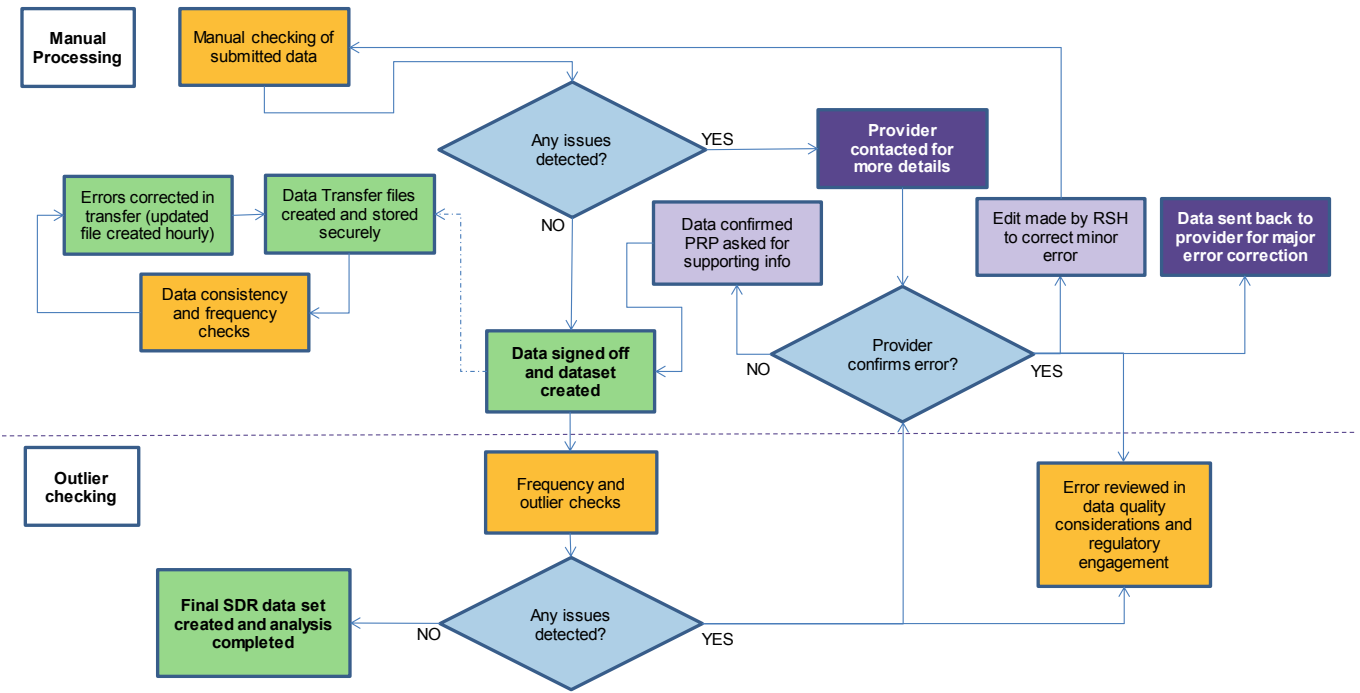


Annex A: Quality assurance processes - process map

Data import, entry and system validation (pre submission to RSH)



Manual data processing and outlier checking (post submission to RSH)





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RSH regulates private registered providers of social housing to promote a viable, efficient and well-governed social housing sector able to deliver homes that meet a range of needs.