



Homes &
Communities
Agency

STATISTICAL DATA RETURN 2012/13

User Feedback

September 2014 (Version 1.0 – initial release)

Introduction

In order to determine whether the Statistical Data Return (SDR) data release (commentary and data sheets) were meeting user requirements the HCA undertook a survey of users. An online survey was created and linked from the HCA Statistical Data Return web page and promoted in the HCA external e-newsletter.

In total 26 responses were received (up to 27 May 2014).

In addition, a short telephone interview was undertaken with three known users of the data (those individuals who had previously contacted the data team for advice or data).

This report examines the feedback obtained through these two surveys.

Data users

The data gathered suggests that the SDR data release is used by a variety of individuals working within local government, registered social housing providers (RP), consultancies and other businesses.

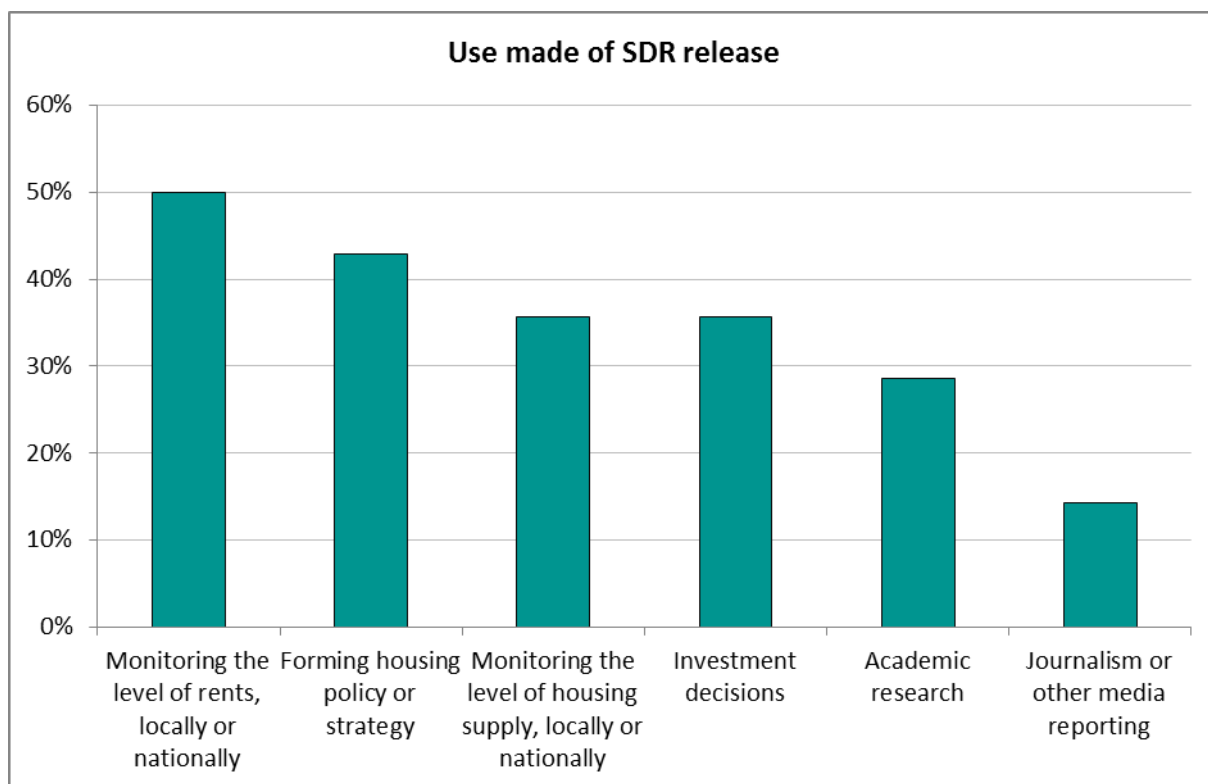
Of those that confirmed the type of organisation for which they worked in the on line survey (n=14), 50% worked for an RP, 36% worked for a consultancy, 7% worked for local government and 7% worked for 'other' businesses.

The telephone survey users were from consultancies (including market research organisations) and non-governmental bodies.

Data uses

The surveys suggest that SDR data is used to inform a range of activities. As Figure 1 shows, the main uses are to monitor the levels of housing supply and rents, to inform decisions on investment, and to form housing strategy and policy.

Figure 1: Uses made of the SDR release (online survey) (n=14)



Additional information provided by online respondents, suggests that the SDR data is used for benchmarking and comparisons (on rents, affordability and competitiveness) as well as to inform asset management.

The telephone respondents indicated that they use the survey to determine the size of individual providers (the number of properties owned and / or managed) and to compare to other data sources to check for variations indicative of errors or to impute missing data.

The majority of those surveyed (both online and telephone) reported that they would make use of the data rather than the statistical commentary released alongside it. Indeed, 71% of those completing the online survey¹ stated they would 'just use the data in the spreadsheet'.

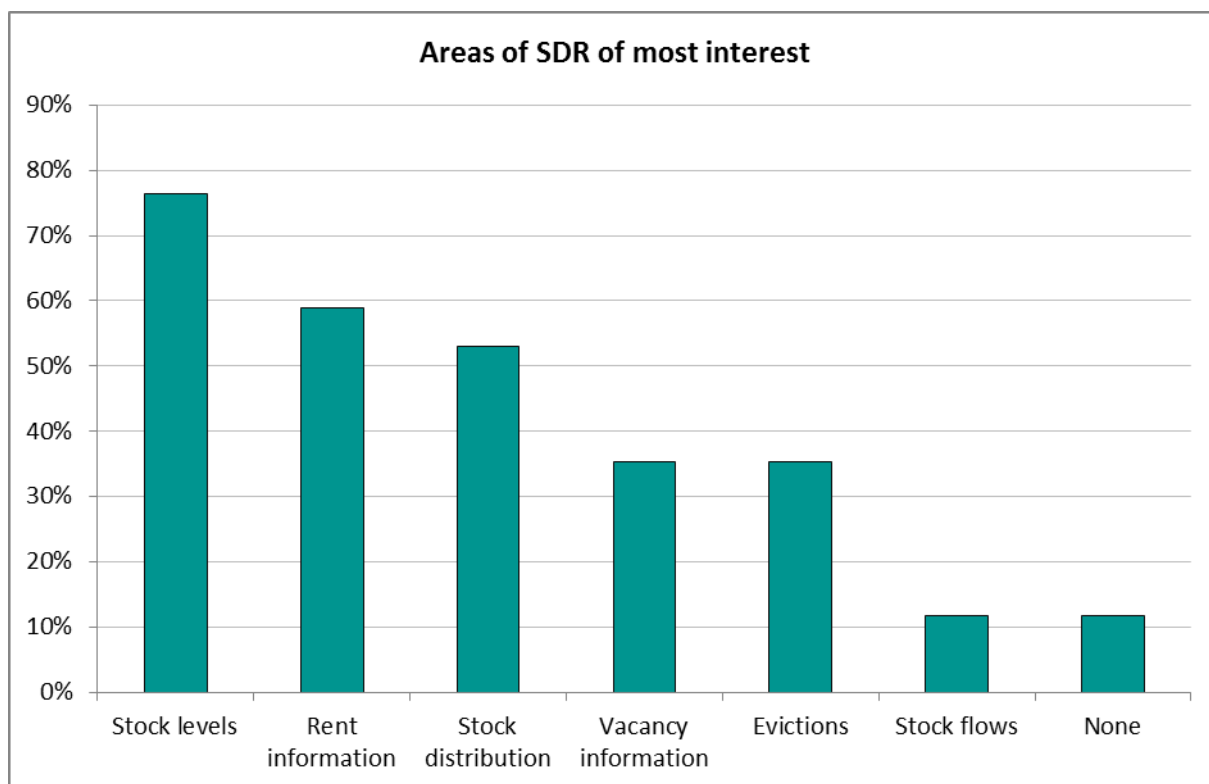
However, 22% (three respondents) did state they would use the data and the commentary in the release document as well as the data in the spreadsheets.

Data areas of most interest

To support the uses of the data, respondents were asked which areas of the SDR statistics they were most interested in (both in the commentary and the data).

¹ N=14

Figure 2: Areas of the SDR (commentary and release) of most interest (online survey) (n=17)



Unsurprisingly, (given the uses made of the data), the areas of most interest were stock levels (with 77% of respondents stating that this was an area in which they were most interested) and rent information (with 59% of respondents stating this was an area in which they were most interested).

The two respondents who stated that 'none' of the report was of interest, did not elaborate on their choice, but both also stated that they did not plan to use the SDR report this year as they had no requirement to use it.

Overall, the telephone respondents also suggested that rents and stock were areas in which they were most interested. However, one respondent did state that the whole SDR release was of interest at a broad level (commenting specifically on the release document rather than the data).

Usefulness of the statistical data release and commentary

Respondents were asked to consider how useful each section of the statistical data release and the commentary (not the data spreadsheets) were to them.

Overall the results were positive, with the majority of respondents confirming that they found all listed sections either 'very useful' or 'useful' (when excluding 'don't know' responses²).

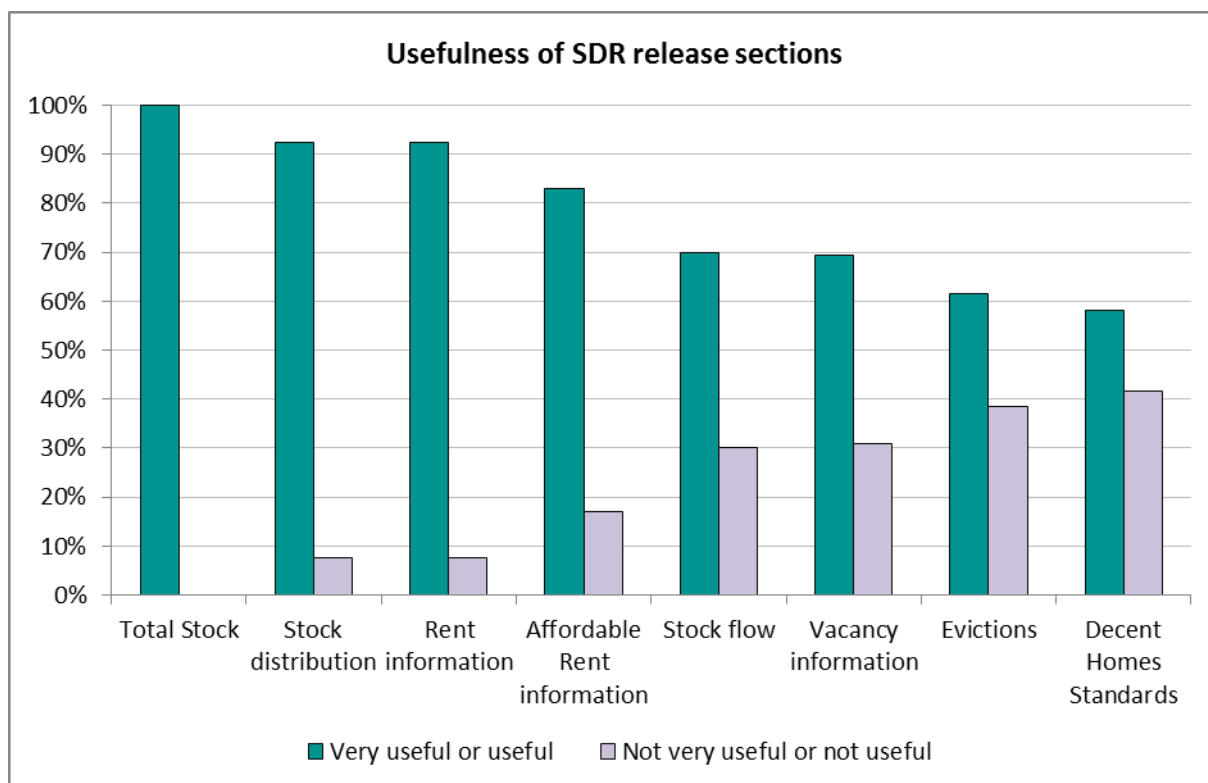
As Figure 3 shows, respondents reported that the Total Stock, Stock Distribution and Rent Information sections were the most useful (with only one respondent stating that Stock Distribution

² Total stock = 3 DK responses (n=15), Stock Distribution = 3 DK responses (n=16), Vacancy information = 3 DK responses (n=16), Stock Flow = 6 DK responses (n=16), Evictions = 3 DK responses (n=16), Rent Information = 3 DK responses (n=16), Affordable Rent = 3 DK responses (n=15), Decent Homes Standards = 4 DK responses (n=16).

wasn't very useful, one respondent stating that Rent Information was not useful and just two individuals stating that the Affordable Rent section was not or not very useful).

Of those interviewed by telephone, one had not used the release or commentary, one commented that they found the stock levels section useful whilst another commented that they didn't really use the report, but did find it of general interest.

Figure 3: The usefulness of the SDR (commentary and release) (online survey) (n=15-16)



Respondents were also asked to state if they strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed or strongly disagreed to the statements:

- I believe the SDR statistical release document is easy to understand
- the data presented in the SDR statistical release document provides me with useful information about the social housing sector in England

In total (excluding 'don't know' responses) 93% reported that they strongly agreed or agreed that it was easy to understand³ while 100% reported that they strongly agreed or agreed that it provided them with useful information about the social housing sector in England.⁴

Respondents were also asked whether they agreed or disagreed that the SDR data overall met their current needs. In total 86% stated they agreed (12 respondents), although two (14%) stated they disagreed.⁵

³ 7% (one respondent) stated that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. N=15 (with one 'don't know' response)

⁴ N=15 (with one 'don't know' response)

⁵ N=15 (includes 1 DK response excluded from analysis).

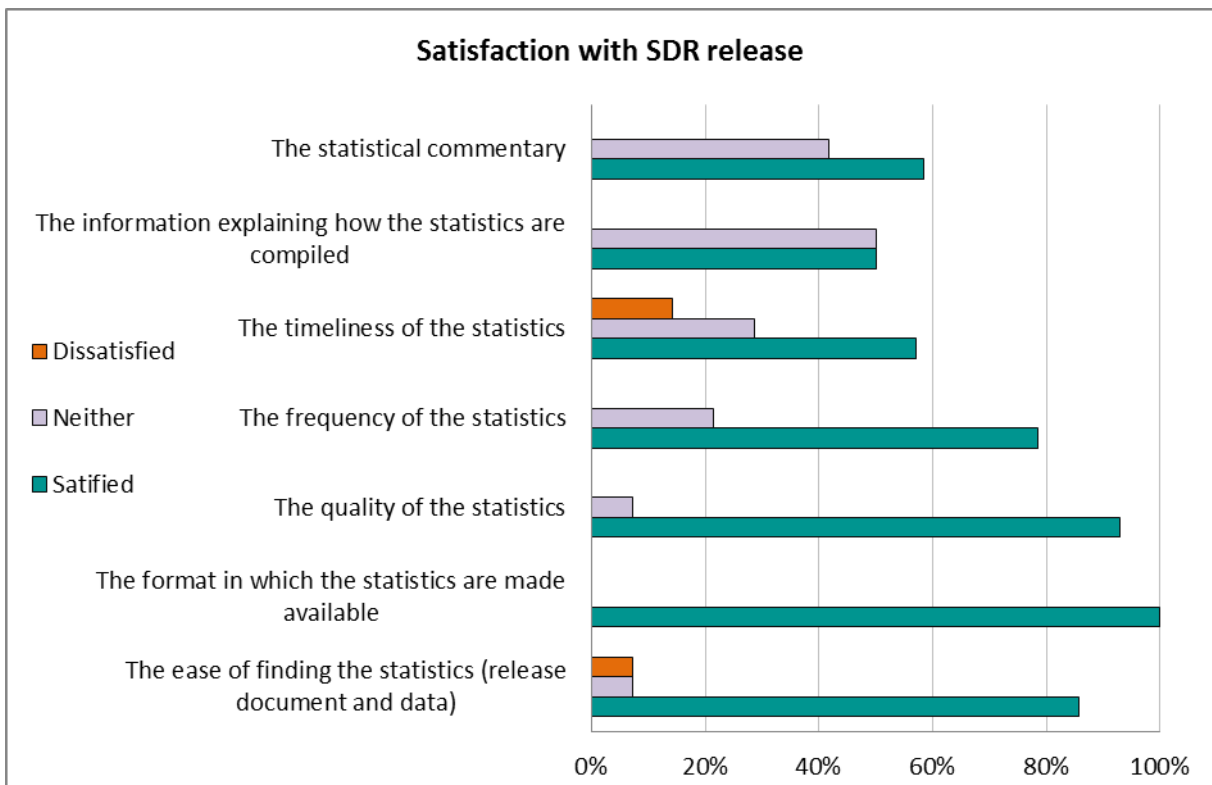
General views on the SDR data release

Respondents to the survey were generally satisfied with the SDR data release, with all respondents (excluding those who did not know)⁶ stating they were satisfied or very satisfied with the format in which the data are made available, and 87% being satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of the statistics.

Respondents were slightly less satisfied with the information explaining how the statistics were compiled and the statistical commentary overall (with a larger proportion of respondents selecting 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied').

The timeliness of the statistics drew two 'dissatisfied' responses, whilst the ease of finding the release drew one.

Figure 4: Satisfaction with elements of the SDR release (online survey) (n=15)



The telephone respondents broadly reflected the online survey views, although one respondent did state that the format of the statistics meant they were difficult to use as the data was spread over multiple sheets.

Respondents were also asked if they agreed or disagreed to the statement 'I know how to provide feedback about the SDR (release document and data) to the HCA'. Only four respondents (25%) agreed to this statement. The remainder said they 'neither agreed nor disagreed' (20% or three respondents); 'disagreed' (33% or five respondents); or 'did not know' (20% or three respondents).

⁶ N=15 (includes 1 DK response).

Recommendations for 2013/14 release

A number of suggestions for improvement were made by respondents. Some of these such as the inclusion of additional questions, the release of contact information and increased frequency of data collection are not currently possible. However, a number of recommendations are being made for inclusion in the 2013/14 release:

- 1) improve the information within the SDR statistical release document, relating to how the statistics are collected and compiled
- 2) make finding the SDR release (data and release document) easier, by having a separate page on the HCA website and linking to this from NROSH+ and in media distributed at the launch
- 3) ensure that links to previous years' data are provided alongside the current year release
- 4) include additional tables drawn out from the data analysis undertaken to produce the statistical data release document (i.e. including but not limited to: LA level analyses on rents, stock levels, Affordable Rents, Decent Homes Standard)
- 5) include details on how to feedback to the HCA about the SDR within the statistical release document and provide online survey alongside the 2013/14 release to gather further feedback for next year

Useful links

The SDR survey page on the HCA website can be found at:

<http://www.homesandcommunities.co.uk/ourwork/sdr-statistical-releases>

This page contains links to the current and previous SDR data releases and links to the online user feedback survey (on which this note is based).

If you have any feedback on the SDR data release or data, please complete the survey on the SDR page or send your feedback to the HCA Referrals and Regulatory Enquiries Team on 0300 1234 500 or email at mail@homesandcommunities.co.uk (please entitle your emails 'SDR Feedback').

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