



Homes &  
Communities  
Agency

# STATISTICAL DATA RETURN USER FEEDBACK

2013-2014

29 September 2015

## Introduction

This report describes user feedback used to inform the Statistical Data Return (SDR) statistical release.

In 2014/15 the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) undertook a survey of users in order to determine whether the SDR statistical release (commentary and data) based on the 2013/14 SDR data collection were meeting user requirements. A survey was created and linked from the SDR statistical release web page<sup>1</sup> and promoted in the HCA external e-newsletter (see Annex A). In total 36 responses were received (between 2 September 2014 and 27 April 2015). In addition, a short telephone interview was undertaken with four 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 and builds on the user feedback survey results obtained from a similar survey undertaken in 2013-14 to obtain views on the 2012/13 SDR statistical release.<sup>2</sup>

## Data users

The SDR is collected as part of the HCA's requirements to inform its regulatory procedures and engagement. In addition to this use by the HCA, the data gathered in 2015 suggests that other users of the SDR data release include local government, private registered providers of social housing (PRPs), consultancies, academics and other businesses.

Of the on-line survey respondents confirming the type of organisation they worked for<sup>3</sup>, 48% worked for an PRP, whilst 13% worked for local government, and 13% worked for central government. This represents an increase in the proportion of respondents from a local or central government background (previously 7% for both in 2014), although the percentage of users from a PRP background is similar (50% in 2014). However, these changes are likely due to the improved communications around the SDR release and user survey, and should not be seen as indicative as a shift in user profile.

The telephone survey users were mixed, with two from regional government bodies, one from an PRP and one reporting an academic (financially based) background.

## 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 form housing strategy and policy and to inform decisions on investment (based on answers selected by respondents from a fixed list of options, see Annex A for survey questions).

---

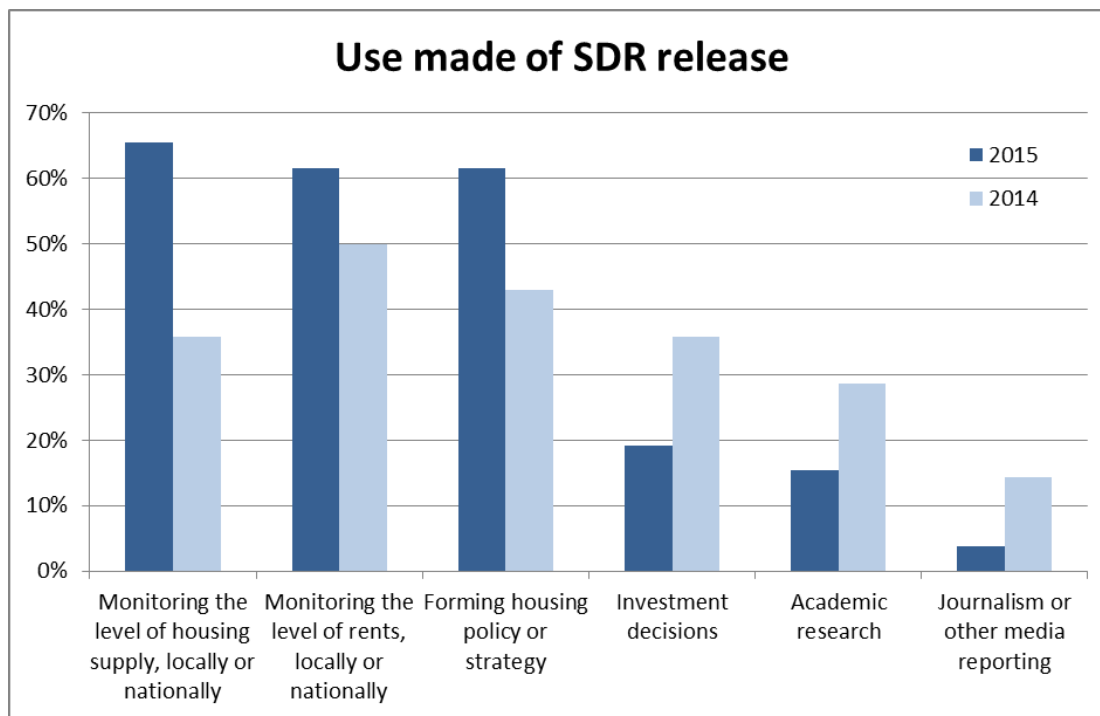
<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statistical-data-return-2013-to-2014>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistical-data-return-statistical-releases>

<sup>3</sup> N=23

This is broadly similar to the findings in 2014, although there have been slight changes between categories. However, the samples sizes are small (n=26 in 2015 and n=14 in 2014) and these changes should not be seen indicative of a shift of usage.

Figure 1: Uses made of the SDR release (online survey) (2015: n=26 / 2014: n=14)



Additional information provided by online respondents, suggests that the SDR data is used for benchmarking and the identification of PRPs to allow targeting of business services. One respondent from within the HCA reported that they utilised the SDR data to provide a source of information for queries coming into the organisation.

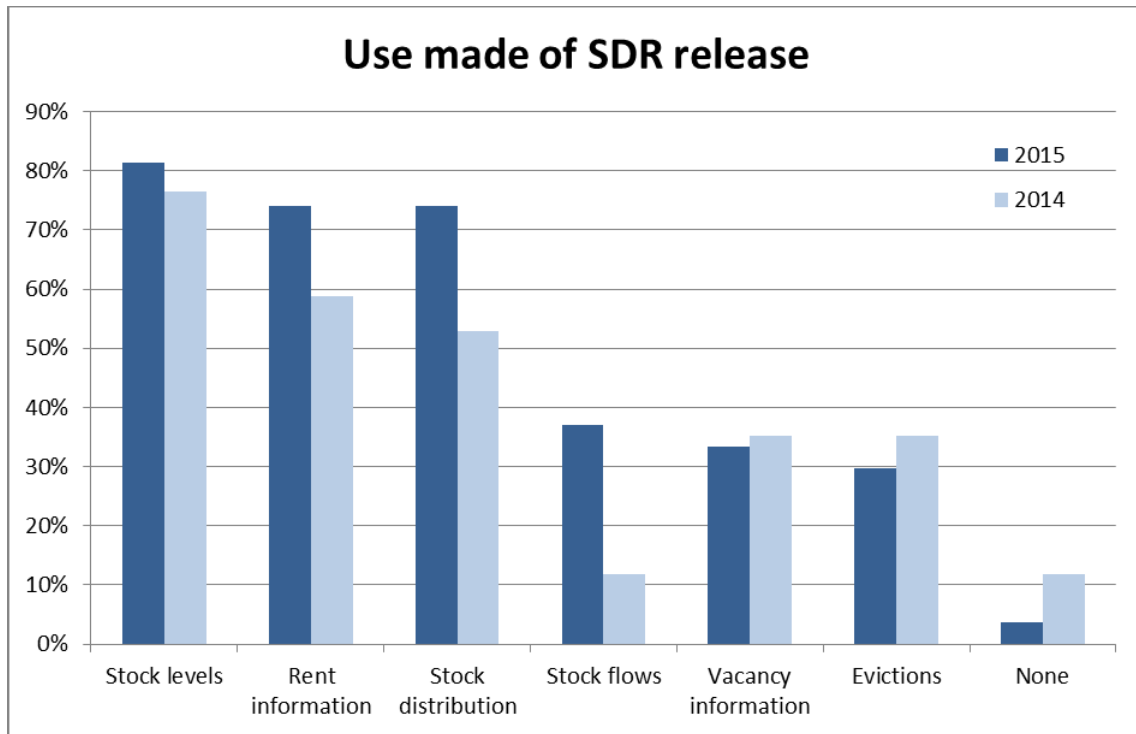
Similarly, the telephone respondents indicated that they use SDR data to determine the size of individual providers (the number of properties owned and / or managed), identifying providers by geographical coverage and benchmarking them against others, exploring group relationships and for analysis into trends relating to welfare reform.

In 2014 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 (71% of online survey), with 22% reporting they would use the commentary as well. In 2015 more respondents reported using the data and commentary in conjunction with the data (46%) and fewer reported using the data alone (46%).

### 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).

Figure 2: Areas of the SDR (commentary and release) of most interest (online survey) (2015: n=27 / 2014: n=17)



The results were similar to those obtained in 2014, although the level of respondents reporting that 'none' of the sections were of interest fell from 12% to 4%.

Unsurprisingly, given the uses made of the data, the areas of most interest in the 2013/14 SDR release were stock levels (with 81% of respondents stating that this was an area in which they were most interested) and rent information (with 74% of respondents stating this was an area in which they were most interested).

As Table 1 below shows PRPs were the largest response category for use of each type of data, with stock levels, evictions and rent information being most used by this type of respondent.

**Table 1: Areas of the SDR (commentary and release) of most interest by respondent type (online survey) (2015: n=27)**

Type of organisation using data	Stock levels	Rent info	Evictions	Stock flows	Stock distribution	Vacancy info	None
Academia	1	1	1				
Central Government	3	3	3	3	1	1	
Consultant		2	1	1	1		
Financial or banking industry	1	1	1	1	1		
Local Government	3	2	1			1	
Other business	1	1			1		
Registered Social Housing Provider (PRP)	9	8	9	4	3	3	
Other	1	1	1				
Not stated	3	1	3	1	2	3	1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>

The single respondent who stated that 'none' of the report was of interest, did not elaborate on their choice, but confirmed 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 (both levels and distribution) were areas in which they were most interested.

### **Usefulness of the statistical release document**

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

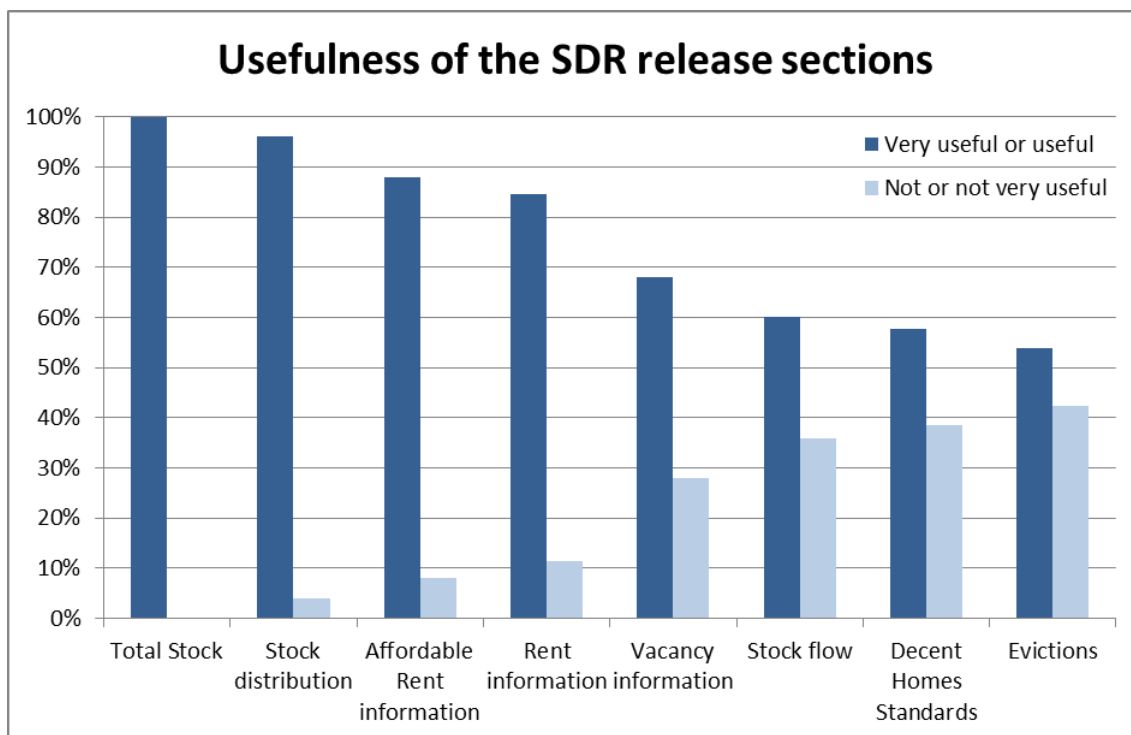
Overall the results were very positive, with the majority of respondents confirming that they found all listed sections either 'very useful' or 'useful'. As Figure 3 shows, in 2015, respondents reported that the Total Stock, Stock Distribution, Affordable Rent and Rent Information sections were the most useful (with only one respondent stating that Stock Distribution wasn't useful, two individuals stating that the Affordable Rent section was not or not very useful and three respondent stating that Rent Information was not or not very useful). This follows a similar distribution to 2014, where Total Stock, Stock Distribution and Rent information were the sections found to be very useful or useful by the vast majority of respondents (100%, 92% and 92% respectively).

Of those interviewed by telephone, the total stock and stock distribution sections were seen as the most useful, with sections on average rents also being reported as useful. However, those interviewed by phone reported being mainly interested in the data tables and spreadsheet information, although three reported using the document as a sense check or for overall interest.

Information about stock flow was seen as being limited in the SDR release, with information relating to new build, conversation and estimates on supply being considered by some as poor by those interviewed by phone. This could be seen

reflected in the feedback from the online survey where 36% of respondents stated the information was not useful or not very useful.

Figure 3: The usefulness of the SDR (commentary and release) (online survey) (n=25-26)



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) 95% reported that they strongly agreed or agreed that it was easy to understand<sup>4</sup> while 95% reported that they strongly agreed or agreed that it provided them with useful information about the social housing sector in England.<sup>5</sup>

Respondents were also asked whether they agreed or disagreed that the SDR data overall met their current needs. In total 83% stated they agreed (20 respondents), although two (8%) stated they strongly disagreed.

<sup>4</sup> For easy to understand, this was slightly higher than the 93% in 2014, in both years (2014 and 2015) (one respondent) stated that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. 2015 - N=24 (with two 'don't know' response), for useful information, this was slightly lower than in 2014 where 100% of the 15 respondents strongly agreeing or agreeing. In 2015, three respondents stated they neither agreed nor disagreed that the data provided them with useful information (n=24; with two: 'don't know' responses).

<sup>5</sup> N=24 (includes 2 DK responses)

Of those that strongly disagreed, one stated that they needed more information on the supported housing sector and the other stated they wanted data in a more useable online tool (and not just presented in spreadsheet format).

Those interviewed by phone were also asked if they found the geographical analysis (national, regional and local authority (LA) useful). In general the analysis done at regional level was noted as being important, and most of those interviewed stated if that information were not presented, they would need to aggregate the LA level information into regions for their work. However, all believed the presentation of data at a LA level were important and enabled drilling down into the data. They showed a preference that these additional tables should not be presented within the body of the commentary (in order to keep the release document of a manageable size), but would be better provided as additional tables.

During the telephone interviews, respondents were asked their views on a potential new section, focusing on the distribution of PRPs across England, looking at their size, coverage and characteristics. All those interviewed believed this would be an interesting or useful addition to the SDR release and several reported using the data released to do something similar within their own organisations.

### **General views on the SDR data release**

Overall, respondents to the survey were generally satisfied with the SDR data release. The vast majority of respondents<sup>6</sup> stated they were satisfied or very satisfied with the quality (92%) and frequency of the statistics (92%) and the information explaining the compilation of the statistics (91%).

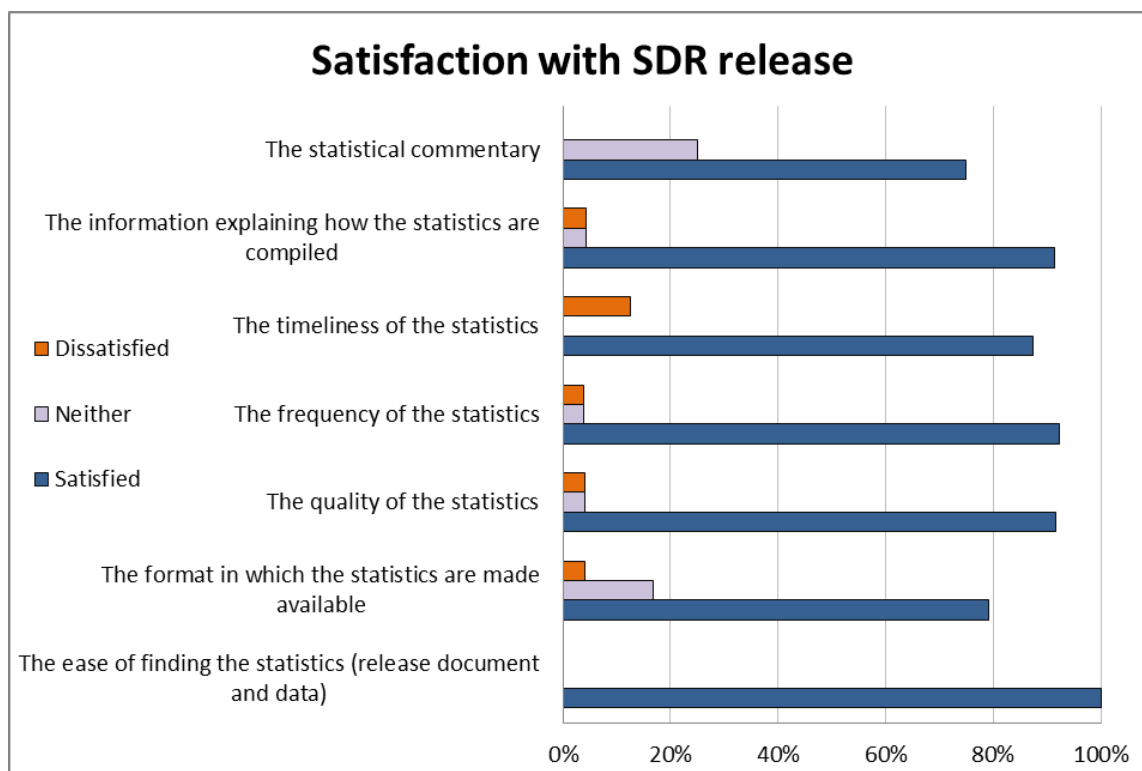
All respondents reported being satisfied or very satisfied with the ease of finding the statistics. There were three respondents (13%) who were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the timeliness of the statistics (this was similar to the survey in the previous year in which two respondents reported being dissatisfied).<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Excluding those who did not know N=23 to 26 depending on question.

<sup>7</sup> One of those dissatisfied with the timeliness of reports in 2015 came from within the HCA. They were also fairly dissatisfied with the format in which the data were available. The others responses were both from PRPs, one of whom wanted the data 'released earlier'.

Figure 4: Satisfaction with elements of the SDR release (online survey) (n=23-26)



The telephone respondents broadly reflected the online survey views, although, as last year, one respondent stated that the format of the statistics meant they were difficult to use as the data was spread over multiple sheets. They suggested providing more additional tables, which summarise stock type by ownership by LA and by PRP and provide a quicker reference to stock levels than the current data sheets.

Providing the data in a more interactive manner was mentioned by those interviewed by phone and those completing the online questionnaire. Whilst the raw data spreadsheets were seen as useful, several respondents reported wanting a more interactive, online tool, which would enable easier filtering and exploration of the data and quicker access to information for particular PRPs or LAs.

### User feedback

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'. In total, 54% reported that they agreed or strongly agreed with this statement (compared to just 25% in 2014).<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> 2015 – n=24; 2014 – n=15



## Recommendations for 2014/15 release

A number of suggestions for improvement were made by respondents. The feedback on timeliness of statistics has been considered, but it is unlikely that the release can be made earlier than is currently achieved. Equally, suggestions to increase the number of times per year the data is collected and released are not feasible at this time.

However, a number of recommendations based on the survey findings are being made for inclusion in the 2014/15 release, or for wider work:

- 1) Retain the regional information presented in the statistical release document and reference to regions within the data release.
- 2) Increase the number of tables (provided as additional tables outside of the statistical commentary) which present data at a LA/PRP level to improve the ease of using the statistics (this should include additional subtotals of owned and managed stock by type)
- 3) Provide additional information relating to the PRP sector, including distribution and density of PRPs operating across England, including exploration of size, group structures and focus of stock types delivered.

Longer term aims

- 4) Explore potentials for providing SDR data in an online tool or linking SDR data into existing online query tools (such as those provided via Open Data (data.gov.uk)) or by publicising existing tools produced in the sector.
- 5) Review the SDR data collection for future years, looking to improve the data collected and reported around stock flow (acquisition and conversions), supported housing and stock eligible for Right to Buy / Right to Acquire schemes.

## Useful links

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

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistical-data-return-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](mailto:mail@homesandcommunities.co.uk) (please entitle your emails 'SDR Feedback').

## Annex A: Survey questions for online survey conducted in 2014/15

### Questions for survey monkey survey of SDR Statistical Release use

The HCA is interested in understanding how the Statistical Data Return (SDR) Statistical Release (the Private Registered Provider Social Housing Stock in England: Statistical Data Return – 2013/14) is used by those who access it and which area of the report that users find most important. The results from this survey will be used to inform future releases and will be published alongside the next release.

Thank you for your time in completing this survey.

**1) Do you plan to use the SDR statistical release document and/or SDR data this year?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

Yes – skip to Q3, No – go to Q2

**If NO, (they do not plan on using the SDR release or data this year)**

**2) Which of the following options best describes your reasons for not using the SDR statistical release document / data this year?**

- a. No requirement to use the statistics
- b. Breadth of SDR Statistics do not cover the topic(s) I am interested in
- c. Depth of SDR Statistics do not give enough detail on the topic(s) I am interested in
- d. Statistics do not meet quality / reliability requirements
- e. Timeliness of statistics do not meet my needs
- f. Frequency of statistics do not meet my needs
- g. Statistics not in accessible format
- h. Other; please specify

TEXT BOX

Skip to Q6

**If YES, (they are planning to use the SDR release),**

**3) Which of the following best describes the way in which you will use the SDR statistics (please tick one):**

- a. Use the data and commentary in the statistical release document (but not the data in the spreadsheet)
- b. Use the data and commentary in the statistical release document and the data in the spreadsheet
- c. Use the data definitions and explanations of survey methods in release document (not the commentary) and the data in the spreadsheet
- d. Just use the data in the spreadsheet
- e. Other combination of statistical commentary and data

**4) For what use (or uses) are you most likely to use the SDR statistical release document and/or SDR data, please tick all that apply:**

- a. Forming housing policy or strategy
- b. Monitoring the level of housing supply, locally or nationally

Statistical Data Return (SDR) user feedback 2013/14

- c. Monitoring the level of rents, locally or nationally
- d. Journalism or other media reporting
- e. Investment decisions
- f. Academic research
- g. Other; please specify

TEXT BOX
----------

5) Please give a brief description of the use you intend to make of the SDR statistical release document and/or SDR data.

TEXT BOX
----------

6) Which area(s) of the SDR statistics are of most interest to you (either in the commentary or the data)?, please tick all that apply

- a. Stock levels
- b. Stock distribution
- c. Vacancy information
- d. Stock flows
- e. Evictions
- f. Rent information
- g. None
- h. Other; please specify

TEXT BOX
----------

7) Thinking of just the statistical release document and the commentary provided (not the data spreadsheets), please indicate how useful you feel each of the following areas are:

	Very Useful	Useful	Not Very Useful	Not Useful	Don't Know
Total Stock					
Stock distribution					
Vacancy information					
Stock flow					
Evictions					
Rent information					
Affordable Rent information					
Decent Homes Standards					

8) How satisfied are you with the following aspects of the HCA's SDR Statistics (release document and data spreadsheets)?

	Very Satisfied	Fairly Satisfied	Neither	Fairly Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Don't Know
The ease of finding the statistics (release document and data)						
The format in which the statistics are made available						
The quality of the						

statistics						
The frequency of the statistics						
The timeliness of the statistics						
The information explaining how the statistics are compiled						
The statistical commentary						

**9) Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree to each of the statements below:**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
I believe the SDR statistical release document (the Private Registered Provider Social Housing Stock in England: Statistical Data Return – 2013/14) 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						
The SDR Data overall (release document and spreadsheets) meet my current needs for the work I am undertaking						
I know how to provide feedback about the SDR (release document and data) to the HCA						
I feel the SDR release document does not provide me with sufficient understanding of the underlying data on which it is based						

**10) Please let us know any suggestions you have on how the SDR Statistical Release document or data could be improved to better meet your needs?**

TEXT BOX

**11) Have you had any contact with the HCA regarding the SDR release document or data spreadsheet?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

Yes – go to Q12, No –skip to Q13

**12) Please provide us with some details about your experience of talking to the HCA about the SDR and your feelings about the service provided**

TEXT BOX

**13) Which user group or organisation do you represent (please tick one box only)?**

Central Government	
Local Government	
Registered Social Housing Provider	
Consultant	
Financial or banking industry	
Other business	
Media	
Academia	
Private individual	
Other (please specify)	

**14) Thank you for your time in completing this survey.**

We are very interested in getting user views on the SDR.

If you are willing for us to contact you again over design and developments in the data, then please send your contact details to us at [NROSHenquiries@hca.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:NROSHenquiries@hca.gsi.gov.uk) **(Please entitle email SDR User Engagement)**

This will be used solely for this purpose of understanding the use of the SDR and will not be passed to any third parties'

If you have any further comments you would like to make please email [NROSHenquiries@hca.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:NROSHenquiries@hca.gsi.gov.uk) or telephone 0300 1234 500.

homesandcommunities.co.uk  
mail@homesandcommunities.co.uk  
0300 1234 500



# Homes & Communities Agency

**Homes and Communities Agency**  
Fry Building  
2 Marsham Street  
London SW1P 4DF

The Homes and Communities Agency is committed to providing accessible information where possible and we will consider providing information in alternative formats such as large print, audio and Braille upon request.

Publication date: September 2015