



Regulator of  
Social Housing

# **Call for user views on the Statistical Data Return: Private registered providers social housing stock in England**

May 2019



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# 1. Scope of this call for user feedback

**Topic:** The Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) produces the publication and data: *Statistical Data Return (SDR): Private registered providers of social housing in England* in October each year. The publication covers the topics for which data is collected as part of the SDR data collection. Some of these data are also currently used and reported in other statistical bulletins published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).

The full SDR data file is published at the same time as the publication document each year and includes the underlying data<sup>1</sup> provided to RSH via the SDR collection. Additionally, since 2018 we have included two look-up tools which allow users to interrogate the data set at either a provider level or at a geographic (local authority) level.

**Scope:** This paper calls on users of the SDR and other stakeholders to provide views on the proposals outlined and answer questions about their use of the SDR publication, data files and look-up tools to help the RSH improve the way in which data are published and better meet user needs now and, potentially, in the future.

The outcome of this review will inform the next SDR publication due for publication in autumn 2019. A chance to provide views on the 2019 release will be provided following its publication.

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<sup>1</sup> However, contact information and text fields are suppressed from the raw data due to personal details contained within.

## 2. Basic information

To:	All providers of data for and users of the Statistical Data Return data, publication and associated documents.
Body responsible:	Regulator of Social Housing
Duration:	The call for views will last for six weeks from 24 May 2019, finishing on 5 July 2019. The outcome of the review of feedback will be published on the RSH website in August 2019.
Enquiries:	For any enquiries about this review please contact our Referrals and Regulatory Enquiries team on 0300 124 5225 who will be pleased to help.

### 3. How to respond

RSH invites you to provide feedback on the proposals outlined in section 5 of this paper, and on what you require from the SDR publication, tools and data release so that we can focus our resources and outputs accordingly, where possible. Section 6 outlines some key questions where we are particularly interested in your feedback.

Please respond online via SurveyMonkey<sup>2</sup>:  
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/9NMCWV6>.

Please be aware that unless you complete the survey and click on the ‘submit’ button your response will not be registered as a completed return. However, incomplete responses will be seen by the Regulator and will be reviewed to determine whether they raise any new issues which it would be relevant for the Regulator to consider.

If for any reason you are unable to complete a response on Survey Monkey you can email your response to the questions in this consultation to: [consultation@rsh.gov.uk](mailto:consultation@rsh.gov.uk) or write to RSH at the address set out below.

Please include “**SDR publication feedback**” as your subject heading.

Written responses can be sent to:

Referrals and Regulatory Enquiries team  
Regulator of Social Housing  
1st Floor – Lateral  
8 City Walk  
Leeds LS11 9AT

When you reply it would be very useful if you confirm which questions you are responding to, whether you are replying as an individual or submitting an official response on behalf of an organisation.

For all responses – please include:

- your name and your position (if applicable)
- the name of organisation (if applicable)
- an address (including post code)
- an email address, and a contact telephone number.

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<sup>2</sup> Survey Monkey is an international company based in the USA and any data entered on their platform is stored and located in the USA and countries in which their affiliates are located and in which their service providers are located or have servers. You can obtain full details of their [Security Statement](#) and [Privacy Policy](#) in relation to the data they hold on their site.

Representative groups are asked to give a summary of the people and organisations they represent, and where relevant, who else they have consulted in reaching their conclusions when they respond.

## **Freedom of Information Act 2000/Environmental Information Regulations 2004/ Data Protection obligations**

RSH will not publish any individual responses but will summarise these at a high level in the outcome from the review, published in summer 2019.

However, RSH is subject to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR). Therefore, information provided in response to this call for views may be made available in accordance with either statute.

RSH has a statutory obligation to respond to all requests for information. To inform our responses, we consult with third parties where applicable and appropriate. Additionally, you should indicate any areas of information that you believe are particularly sensitive when submitting your response.

Confidentiality agreements may not be binding under FOIA or EIR.

RSH will process your personal data in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018.

RSH therefore asks that no unnecessary personal information is supplied through this exercise and that any which is necessary is supplied only with the authorisation of the owner of that information.

## **Equalities statement**

RSH is mindful of its statutory equality duties under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.

The Regulator will take a proportionate approach to its equality obligations and has identified no specific equalities implications for this call for user feedback. However, based on responses, RSH reserves the right to revisit these matters if new information comes to light.

## 4. Background

Since 2012 RSH has collected a large amount of information from private registered providers<sup>3</sup> (providers) of social housing through the SDR data collection. This annual survey (collected in April and May) collects data on housing stock owned by providers, much of which is collected at a local authority level, including number and size of dwelling and average weekly rents. The survey also collects information on the gains and losses from the social housing sector, with a balance sheet introduced in 2017 providing greater insight into the way in which stock moves around, in and out of the provider ownership.

This data is published in autumn alongside a statistical publication, which provides additional information and insight on the data collected and the trends which it suggests regarding changes in stock owned, rent levels and activity within social housing owned by private registered providers.

Over the last few years the size of the publication has increased (to nearly 90 pages in 2018), in response to increased complexity in the policy environment and diversification in the social housing sector. Feedback from some users has suggested that the increase in the size of the document has made it more difficult for users to navigate and to identify key data and trends. Some users have suggested that they do not make extensive use of the full statistical publication. The size of the publication and associated analysis has also increased the amount of time and resource required to reach publication, pushing the publication time back by over a month since 2012. Delays in publication of key data can reduce their value to some users.

Further information on the SDR collection and previous publications are available from the [RSH website](#).<sup>4</sup>

RSH has already been working to improve the SDR publication, based on feedback we have received, with the introduction of the look-up tools in 2018, allowing easier access to, and instant presentation of, the SDR data on a provider and geographic (local authority) basis. It is now seeking user views on how further changes and improvements could be made to the way the SDR data and publication are presented and disseminated.

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<sup>3</sup> Private registered providers are separate from Local Authorities registered providers. Local Authority providers submit data on social housing to the Local Authority Housing Statistic (LAHS) collected by Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). The RSH will begin a pilot data collection (Local Authority Data Return (LADR) from 2019, however data from this collection will not be published by the RSH but will be included alongside data collected through the LAHS return by MHCLG.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistical-data-return-statistical-releases>

## 5. Proposals

RSH is seeking user views into the future of the SDR publication and data release to ensure the SDR delivers usable, effective and reliable statistical data to those interested in social housing provision by private registered providers.

The key change proposed would be to replace the current large SDR publication with smaller, individual briefing notes about key topics that are believed to be the most useful and most used (based on previous feedback).

Alongside each of these shorter briefing notes we would propose the publication of the key data fields to which they relate, with the full data set being published shortly after the publication of these notes along with the look-up tools.

By creating shorter briefing notes and focusing analysis on the key areas of interest we aim to make the publication of the data timelier; achieving the publication of stock and rent information in late September with the full set of data being available from early October. Users have suggested that it is valuable to be able to access these data by this stage, particularly to inform rent setting and provider business planning decisions for the following financial year.

The SDR data would also still be available through other MHCLG publications, including the live tables at the point they are published (usually from November each year).

### Overview of proposed changes

The table below outlines the key proposals for the publication of the SDR from autumn 2019.

Current	Proposed
SDR publication document	<p>Stock briefing note</p> <p><i>Covering a large section of the current release ‘Total stock’ section, with details about stock type, distribution and change. This would not include specific Decent Homes Standard, but existing tables/maps would continue to be published in additional tables and maps.</i></p> <p>Rent briefing note</p> <p><i>Covering the key areas of the current release ‘Rents’ section and ‘Affordable Rent’ section. All current tables and maps would be available within the briefing note or within the additional tables and maps.</i></p>



	<p>Stock movement briefing note</p> <p><i>Covering most of the key areas of the current release ‘Stock flow’ section.</i></p> <p><i>This would not include specific Eviction or Mutual Exchange commentary, but existing tables would continue to be published in additional tables. <b>Note:</b> No annual production of commentary relating to Decent Home Standard, vacancies, evictions, mutual exchanges nor sector characteristics would be undertaken, due to continued stability across these areas over a number of years. However, if key changes occur within these thematic areas then additional briefing notes could be produced on an ad hoc basis.</i></p>
Additional tables	<p>Additional tables – Greater range of tables, covering all those currently available in the SDR publication document.</p> <p>Additional maps – showing key themes on a larger scale than those included in briefing notes (including those within the current SDR publication).</p>
Private registered provider (PRP) look-up tool  Geographic (local authority) look-up tool	<p>PRP look-up tool</p> <p>Geographic (regional and local authority) look-up tool</p> <p><i>Geographic (regional and local authority) trend look-up tool [from 2020].</i></p>
Data quality report	<p>Data quality and methodological note: covering both the current data quality report and the methodology, technical and other associated notes in the SDR publication. Published alongside the first data released.</p>
Missing or late submitters list and pre-release access notes	<p>These would remain the same. Published alongside the first data released.</p>

Once the data is interrogated we may consider whether it is appropriate to produce additional briefing notes to explain trends or changes within the data submitted. These would be published following the publication of the core data and key briefing notes.

## Timing of proposed changes

RSH will publish the outcome of this review and the call for user views in the summer 2019.

Following this, the 2018/19 SDR data will be published in the autumn in the format determined by RSH after taking into account user feedback. Specific publication dates will be determined in the summer – we anticipate the release of the three core briefing notes and full data set no later than the current timetable, which sees the publication occurring at the end of October each year.

Users will have the opportunity to provide further comment on any revised release following the autumn publication.

## 6. Suggested questions on proposed changes

We would like to know what you think of the proposed changes outlined in section 5 of this document. In addition, we would welcome views on the following allied questions:

1. What use do you currently make of the SDR publication document, and would anything be lost if the large publication was no longer available in future (given that all underlying data and short briefing notes would still be published)?
2. Are the key topics we've suggested (stock levels, rents and stock movement) the most appropriate areas for briefing notes? Are there other areas of the SDR data you would like to see analysed and published in briefing note format?
3. Do you have any concerns or comments on the proposal to remove commentary on vacancies, sector characteristics, Decent Homes Standard, Evictions or Mutual exchanges (noting that data and tables would still be published)?
4. At what time of year is the SDR information most valuable to you? Is the proposed acceleration of the timetable for stock and rent data likely to be helpful?
5. Are there any other additional tables or cuts of the data that you would like to see which are not currently available?
6. Are the maps that are currently produced of use to you? Are there other graphical representations of data you would be keen to see?
7. Do you find the current publication of the full SDR data file in one excel file helpful, or are there any other formats that you would prefer or be more useful?
8. Have you used the PRP look-up tool in 2018, if so was it useful? Are there any improvements you'd like to see in the provider look-up tool?
9. Have you used the LA look-up tool in 2018, if so was it useful? Are there any improvements you'd like to see in the LA look-up tool?
10. Do you have any views on the intended addition of regional summaries to the current geographic (local authority) look-up tool?
11. Do you have any views on the proposal for a regional/LA trend look-up tool (likely to be published in 2020)?

## General comments about the statistics

We would also like to hear any general comments you have regarding the Statistical Data Return. In particular:

- Is there anything we currently do which you would not want changed, and if so why?
- Is there anything that the figures do not cover which you would find useful, and if so why?
- Are there any other suggestions you have which you think could improve the publication of the SDR data, and if so why?

Please remember, you are also able to provide feedback on the RSH SDR publication at any time. This feedback can be sent to [enquiries@rsh.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@rsh.gov.uk) or supplied via the user feedback survey available each year on the current year SDR publication page on the RSH website where the [current survey](#)<sup>5</sup> is available.).

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statistical-data-return-2017-to-2018>

## 7. About this review

Whilst not a consultation that RSH is obliged by statute to conduct, this document and the process set out for collecting feedback has been developed to adhere to the Consultation Principles issued by the Cabinet Office<sup>6</sup>.

Representative groups are asked to give a summary of the people and organisations they represent, and where relevant, who else they have consulted in reaching their conclusions, when they respond.

Information provided in response to this review may be published or disclosed in accordance with the access to information regimes (the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004).

If you believe that the information that you are submitting is sensitive, please say so when submitting your response and explain to us why you believe that the information should not be disclosed in response to an information request. If we receive a request for disclosure of the information we will take full account of your explanation, but we cannot guarantee that the information will not be disclosed. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Regulator.

The Regulator will process your personal data in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Individual responses will not be acknowledged unless specifically requested.

Thank you for taking the time to read this document and respond. Your opinions are valuable to us.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/consultation-principles-guidance>



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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.**