



Ministry of Housing,  
Communities &  
Local Government

# Social Housing Sales statistics 2019-20

Technical Notes



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If you have any enquiries regarding this document/publication, complete the form at <http://forms.communities.gov.uk/> or write to us at:

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government  
Fry Building  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF  
Telephone: 030 3444 0000

For all our latest news and updates follow us on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/mhclg>

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# National Statistics Status

National Statistics status means that our statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value as set out in the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#). It is the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government's statisticians' responsibility to maintain compliance with these standards.

The designation of these statistics as National Statistics was first confirmed in December 2011 following an assessment by the UK Statistics Authority. These statistics last underwent a compliance check against the Code of Practice for Statistics in June 2018.

## Data collection

The statistics in this publication and related tables are based on six sources:

1. The Local Authority Housing Statistics (LAHS) data collection administered by MHCLG and its predecessors;
2. The Pooling of Housing Capital Receipts return administered by MHCLG;
3. The Statistical Data Return (SDR) from the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH);
4. The COntinuous REcording (CORE) of sales data collection run by MHCLG;
5. The Investment Management System (IMS) administration system run by Homes England;
6. The GLAOps system used by the Greater London Authority.

Right to Buy Sales of local authority stock are collected through the Pooling of Housing Capital Receipts returns supplied to MHCLG by Local Authorities. This provides information at district level for all local authority council Right to Buy sales as well as housing capital expenditure. This is a quarterly return and is reconciled annually against values from the Local Authority Housing Statistics (LAHS) data return. For 2019-20, this will be done for the Quarterly Right to Buy release to be published in June/July 2021.

The Regulator of Social Housing collects stock sale information from private registered providers through the Statistical Data Return (SDR). The figures in the SDR do not include new build dwellings built for Local Cost Home Ownership, such as Shared Ownership,

acquisitions from the private sector for Affordable Home Ownership or transfers between social housing providers.

Data from the Pooling of Housing Capital Receipts, LAHS and the SDR is used to compile social housing sales totals in Live Table 678 and the headline figure for this report. These sections include sales under the Right to Buy, Preserved Right to Buy, Voluntary Right to Buy, Right to Acquire, Social HomeBuy, social leased sales to tenants and sales for non-social use. Shared equity sales to tenants are recorded at the point of initial sale. The figures exclude sales through low cost home ownership schemes, such as shared ownership, where these do not relate to existing social stock, i.e. sales of newly built homes for shared ownership or acquisitions of private sector homes for affordable home ownership. Intra-tenure transfers between social housing providers are also excluded.

Private Registered Providers are required to complete CORE Sales logs. Social landlords that are not registered with the Social Housing Regulator but affiliated to the National Housing Federation are invited on a voluntary basis to complete CORE Sales logs. Local authorities are also invited to return the forms on a voluntary basis, but only a small number choose to do so. The data from CORE is therefore almost exclusively representative of PRP sales. Additionally, some entries are imputed or removed where appropriate due to incompleteness or data quality issues in the financial information. As such, the CORE Sales figures reported in this release do not cover all private registered provider sales, and instead should be considered a subset of private registered provider sales.

The CORE Sales return captures information on each individual sale<sup>1</sup>, including the demographic characteristics of the purchaser. These demographic questions are voluntary however and not reported for all sales. CORE is also used to calculate financial details for Right to Buy sales by private registered providers as well as the proportion these sales that are flats. CORE records information on Shared Ownership, are included in the characteristics and financial sections, but have been excluded from the analysis on the total and type of sales, as they are not sales of social housing stock.

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<sup>1</sup> The latest and historical forms can be found here <https://core.communities.gov.uk/content/GuidesAndManuals.html>

The IMS is a HE system for administering grants. In areas covered by the GLA this is now recorded by GLAOps as part of the GLA's Affordable Housing Statistics. These sources provide data on private registered provider Right to Acquire and Social HomeBuy sales. These are considered the preferred sources for these data. However, data on these schemes collected through the SDR is used in the headline figures and live table 678 for consistency with other data.

## Data quality

### Things to note on this release

As part of ongoing work to continuously improve the publication, over the past year we have made revisions to the historical time series for this release. There are two sets of revisions:

- Revisions to local authority sales that are not Right to Buy between 1999-00 and 2010-11 – this was done to make the data consistent with subsequent years, ensuring consistency by removing weighting applied to the data and applying the same definitions. This has resulted in a small increase in sales over the period (less than 600 additional sales overall).
- Revisions to the methodology to the whole series private registered provider sales – this was done following discussions with the Regulator of Social Housing, to better align the data in this publication with their Statistical Data Return (SDR), which is the data source. As such, the data in this release includes sales categories not previously included (mostly those classified as social leasehold sales) which has resulted in a large increase over the whole series (over 63,500 additional sales overall).

These changes affect the headline figures in the release, which are summarised in Live Table 678.

We have increased the granularity of data available for social housing sales. All sales and demolitions are now available broken down by Local Authority from 1999-00 to 2019-20. This has resulted in some updates to table 678

This release also includes a new section comparing data on sales and demolitions of social housing with data on new supply of affordable housing for rent provided by local authorities and private registered providers. This new section is being added to address user needs and follows from the Housing Communities and Local Government Select Committee report on ‘Long-term delivery of social and affordable rented housing’.<sup>2</sup>

We are releasing alongside this publication an open data format file including the time series of the social housing sales and demolitions data from 1999-00 onwards. Please note that data for private registered providers is only available at England level. Please see the “Accompanying tables and open data” section below for further details.

Section B of the Local Authority Housing Statistics (LAHS) is released along with this publication. Due to COVID19, the response rate to LAHS 2019-20 was slightly lower than in previous years. We expect to publish the final version of this year’s data in June/July 2021 following the scheduled revisions for LAHS.

Live Table 696 will not be updated with this release due to a data quality issue identified with the household structure variable that is used to create it.

## Assessment of data quality

In 2015, the UK Statistics Authority (UKSA) published a [regulatory standard for the quality assurance of administrative data](#). To assess the quality of the data provided for this release, the department has followed that standard.

The standard is supported with an [Administrative Data Quality Assurance Toolkit](#) which provides useful guidance on the practices that can be adopted to assure the quality of the data they utilise.

The Social Housing Sales statistical release is produced by MHCLG based on data provided by Homes England, the Regulator of Social Housing, the Greater London authority, Local Authorities and other data collections held by the department. An assessment of the level of risk based on the Quality Assurance Toolkit is as follows:

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<sup>2</sup> The report can be found here <https://committees.parliament.uk/work/109/longterm-delivery-of-social-and-affordable-rented-housing/publications/>

<b>Risk/Profile Matrix Statistical Series</b>	<b>Administrative Source</b>	<b>Data Quality Concern</b>	<b>Public Interest</b>	<b>Matrix Classification</b>
Social Housing Sales Statistics	Homes England, GLA and Local authorities' individual data systems.	Low	Medium	Low Risk [A1]

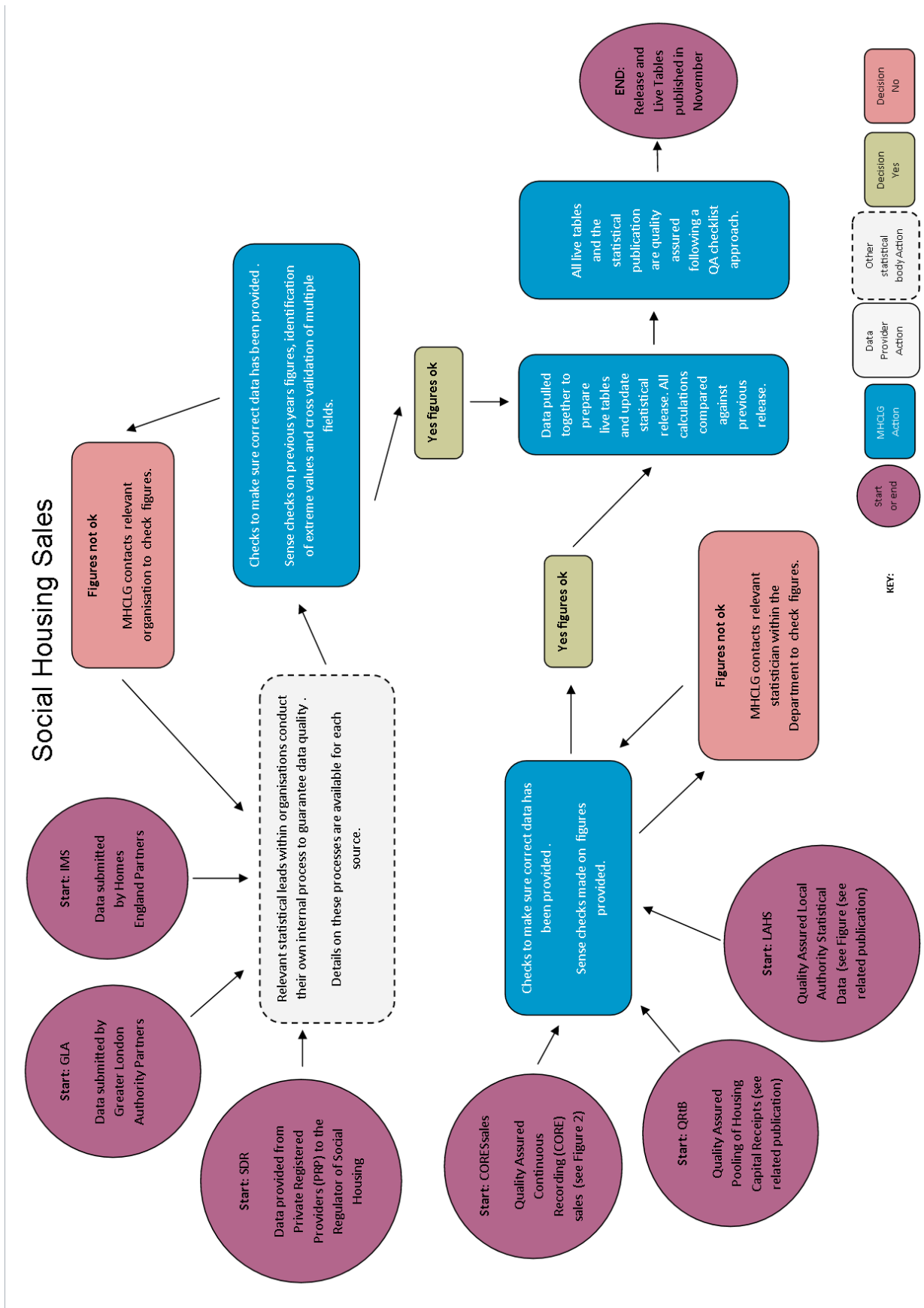
The publication of Social Housing Sales statistics can be considered as medium profile, as there has been mainstream media interest, with moderate economic and/or political sensitivity.

The data quality concern is considered low given that the data are checked by providers and most of the data would have been released in publications that are compliant with the Code of Practice for Statistics and subject to data quality checks prior to publication.

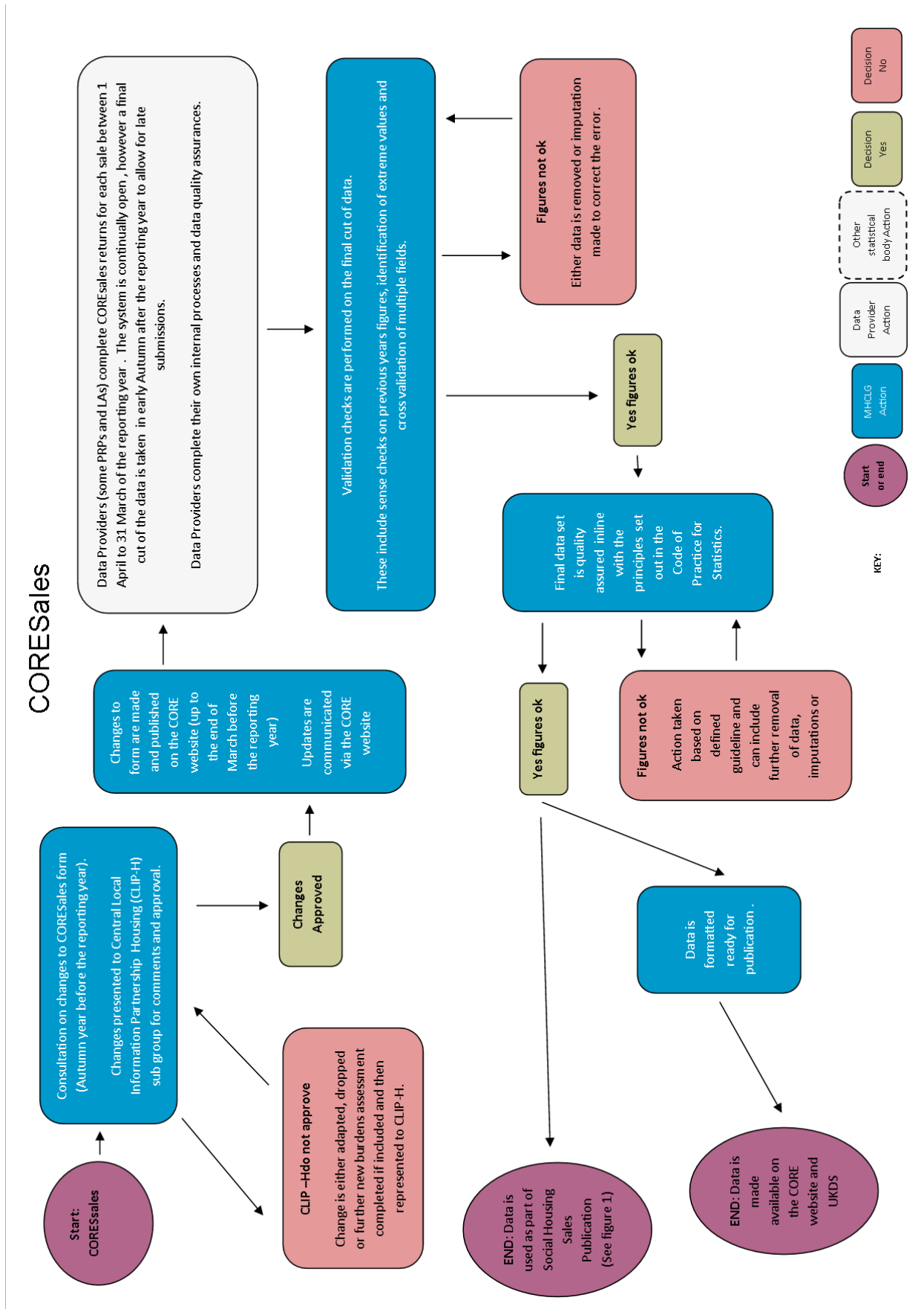
Overall, the Social Housing Sales statistics have been assessed as A1/Low Risk. A full outline of the statistical production process and quality assurance carried out is provided in the flow chart in Figure 1 and 2. Further details are also provided against each of the four areas outlined in the Quality Assurance of Administrative Data (QAAD) Toolkit.



**Figure 1: Quality assurance flow diagram for Social Housing Sales data**



**Figure 2: Quality assurance flow diagram for CORE sales data**



## Operational context and administrative data collection

As some Local Authorities do not own any stock and therefore cannot make any social housing sales, they provide no information through their LAHS return. As at 1 April 2019 there were 312 local authorities, of which 165 were stock-holding authorities (i.e. have Housing Revenue Account). Local authorities are required to have a HRA if they own at least 200 units, and some local authorities may own a small amount of stock without having a HRA. In 2019-20, 5 local authorities did not submit any data and 20 submitted unfinalized data, resulting in a response rate of completed submissions of 92%. This is a drop compared to the previous year's rate of 98.9%, which is due to delays caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

The Pooling of Housing Capital Receipts figures on Local Authority Right to Buy sales and receipts are audited annually by Local Authorities and continuously quality assured by MHCLG, both of which can result in revisions. The technical notes for these figures can be accessed at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/right-to-buy-sales-in-england-july-to-september-2020> . Every effort is made to collect data from every Local Authority but on occasion estimates may be used (see imputation). Care should be taken using data at a Local Authority level as the totals are low and therefore can vary greatly year on year.

All private registered provider social landlords that are registered with the RSH complete the SDR which includes data on changes to their stock, including sales and demolitions. The SDR sales data does not include information on property type nor does it collect information on stock changes at local authority level. Instead, data on the types of properties sold by private registered providers is taken from Continuous Recording (CORE) returns. This method assumes that the property type distribution of any sales not reported on CORE, such as those by small PRPs, is the same as those for larger PRPs. There is no estimate of stock changes, including sales and demolitions at local authority level.

The SDR does not ask private registered providers to provide financial information on their sales of stock. However, CORE returns do include financial data on social housing sales. The financial information from CORE is shown as simple mean values for the reported sales. It is mandatory for private registered providers to fill our CORE Sales logs with financial information on the sale. Local authorities and other social landlords are invited to complete CORE Sales logs on a voluntary basis, but few choose to do so. As such, the

CORE Sales data set is considered a partial data set of Social Housing Sales and is almost exclusively reflective of sales of PRP-owned stock, so these figures have limitations and should be treated with caution. The CORE Sales data undergoes some imputation of financial variables such as mortgage, property value, and deposit, and some entries are removed due to missingness or data quality issues. The final data used for this release has complete financial information, some of which has been imputed.

Homes England and the GLA collect information provided by PRPs that have applied to receive grant and this shows the number of Right to Acquire and PRP Social HomeBuy figures. Because they are based on grant funded completions, these are the preferred series for these data and they are published in live tables 677 and 683 respectively. However, data on Right to Acquire and Social HomeBuy are also reported through the SDR and used for the headline figure and as part of live table 678.

### **Communication with data supply partners**

There are regular contacts with the data suppliers for this release to ensure that there is a common understanding of what information is being supplied.

Communication with suppliers is managed through a number of formats, e.g. regular contact with data providers and the Central Local Information Partnership Housing sub-group (CLIP-H).

For data collected in LAHS please see the individual releases for further specific engagement with their suppliers (links provided above). For CORE Sales communication is delivered primarily via the website <https://core.communities.gov.uk/>.

There is a clear Memorandum of Understanding between MHCLG, Homes England and the GLA outlining the terms of what data are provided and timescales.

### **QA principles, standards and checks by data suppliers**

The SDR collection and release has been assessed and is badged as a National Statistics publication.

The LAHS return is also badged as National Statistics and contains mandatory and non-mandatory questions. Validation rules have been developed at both collection point and during data processing. Where a validation rule has triggered values these are queried

with the respective local authority. Further details on the QA of this return can be found in the LAHS return.

The Mayor of London has a commitment to achieve full compliance with the Code of Practice and the GLA revises its data to ensure quality of information. Details of the operational context and quality assurance procedures of how these figures are collected are included in those sources.

The CORESales data is provided from around 250 Private Registered Providers, the Department does not have full oversight of their systems and quality procedures. We provide clear guidance and documentation to them via the CORE system. Data received by the Department undergoes an extensive validation and imputation process which is set out in figure 2.

### **Producers' QA investigation and documentation**

Whilst providers are expected to carry out their own checks before the data is submitted for this publication, further quality assurance is carried out once the data is received by the responsible statisticians for this publication (figure 1).

The data are compiled together and compared to the raw data, published figures, historical time series and policy information that may have impacted the figures. Queries are escalated to producers if it is necessary to clarify further.

The data, report and tables are quality assured independently by another statistician in the production team. Further final checks are performed to the final end product. These checks use a clear checklist approach to ensure the figures are consistent across the release and live tables, with each check being systematically signed off when it has been completed.

## **Imputation**

Imputations are performed on CORE Sales data. Imputation rules are based on checks of multiple fields and examination of extreme or inconsistent values. For this release, imputation was performed in cases where the mortgage and/or deposit were unknown, but the sale price was known. Where either mortgage or the deposit were missing, the missing value was calculated based on the other value and the sale price. Where both entries were

missing, the deposit was assumed to be equal to 10% of the sale price. Entries with impossible values (e.g. a deposit greater than the market value of the property) were corrected or imputed where possible based on the available values, or otherwise removed. More detail on the imputation process is available upon request.

Imputation is not performed on the sections of LAHS used in this release.

## Definitions

### **Total Social Housing Sales**

Figures on social housing sales include only sales which result in existing stock leaving the social sector. These include sales under Right to Buy (RTB), Preserved Right to Buy (PRTB), Voluntary Right to Buy (VRTB), Right to Acquire (RTA), Social HomeBuy (SHB), other outright or shared equity sales to tenants and sales for non-social use (to other private registered providers or to the private sector).

Sales of other kinds, such as shared ownership sales of newly built social stock or of private sector stock, stock transfers to Registered Providers, either from Local Authorities or other PRPs, are not included in the total social housing sales figures.

The figures do not include sales and transfers between local authorities and PRPs. Large Scale Voluntary Transfers (LSVTs) of local authority stock to PRPs and sales and transfers between PRPs for social housing purposes are not included in these figures. Further information on Large Scale Voluntary Transfers (LSVTs) of local authority stock to PRPs can be found in MHCLG's Local Authority Housing Statistics (LAHS) and the RSH's Statistical Data Return (SDR).

Demolitions are not included in the total social housing sales figures and are presented separately.

### **Other definitions**

The definitions used in this publication can be found in the 'Housing statistics and English Housing survey' glossary published by MHCLG and that can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-statistics-and-england-housing-survey-glossary>

# Revisions policy

This policy has been developed in accordance with the UK Statistics Authority's Code of Practice for Statistics and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government Revisions Policy and can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statistical-notice-mhclg-revisions-policy>.

It covers two types of revisions that the policy covers, as follow:

## Non-Scheduled Revisions

Where a substantial error has occurred as a result of the compilation, imputation or dissemination process, the statistical release, live tables and other accompanying releases will be updated with a correction notice as soon as is practical.

## Scheduled Revisions

Revisions to previous annual data are generally incorporated in the next release. Figures are not published in these statistics with a provisional status (but imputed estimates may be used). Revised figures are highlighted in the live tables.

Live Table 678 will be revised along with the June/July release of Right to Buy quarterly, which corresponds to the end of the financial year.

Following scheduled revisions to the LAHS datasets in June/July, Live Table 682 may also be revised, should it be necessary.

## Revisions in this release

There have been two sets of revisions as described above:

- There were revisions to local authority sales that are not Right to Buy between 1999-00 and 2010-11, which resulted in less than 600 additional sales overall for the period. These data are consistent in definition and methodology with subsequent years.

- Revisions to the methodology to the whole series private registered provider sales, which has resulted in over 63,500 additional sales overall over the whole series. This was done following discussions with the Regulator of Social Housing, to better align the data in this publication with their Statistical Data Return (SDR), which is the data source. As such, the data in this release includes sales categories not previously included (mostly those classified as social leasehold sales). Note that the underlying SDR data were not revised.

These changes affect the headline figures in the release, which are summarised in Live Table 678.

Other small revisions were done in Live Tables 677 and 683 to include 2012-13 and 2013-14 Greater London Authority in data that incorrectly been omitted before.

## Other information

### Uses of these statistics

These statistics are used to monitor social housing sales including Right to Buy sales and analyse the effectiveness of policy changes around Right to Buy and the housing sector.

These statistics also allow to have a measure of the main losses to the social housing sector, either through sales or demolitions of existing stock. For the first time, we have included a section contrasting the number of sales and demolitions of social housing with comparable new supply of affordable housing for rent (including acquisitions).

Data published alongside this release also provides important information on personal and financial characteristics of some of those buying properties through private registered providers, including existing tenants, those using Shared Ownership schemes or buying outright.

These data also provide further information on these schemes. For instance, in LAHS, there is information now being collected on local authority Shared Ownership staircasing transactions that helps monitor the effectiveness of this scheme and the number of



transactions that lead to the maximum allowed ownership. Data on staircasing of private registered provider shared ownership sales will be collected from April 2021.

## Related Statistics

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is part of a cross-government working group, including devolved administrations and the Office of National Statistics, working to improve the trustworthiness quality and value of housing and planning statistics across the UK. This working group has published action plan to make the planned improvements on house building statistics clear and transparent to users.

Details of this work and how you can provide feedback are available via the Government Statistical Service website: <https://gss.civilservice.gov.uk/guidances/working-with-users-2/housing-and-planning-statistics/>

**Table A: Related statistics**

Release	What do statistics show?	Frequency	Where does the data come from?	What are these figures most appropriate for?
<b>This release:</b> <b>Social Housing Sales</b>  <b>MHCLG</b>	Annual estimates of sales for social housing stock in England.  Characteristics for PRP sales are also shown.	Annual  Usually published in December	The Local Authority Housing Statistics (LAHS) form administered by MHCLG. The Pooling of Housing Capital Receipts return administered by MHCLG. The Statistical Data Return (SDR) from the RSH. The COntinuous REcording (CORE) data collection run by MHCLG. The Investment Management System (IMS) administration system run by the HE Greater London Affordable Housing Statistics from the GLA.	These figures provide an overview of all sales of social housing stock in England. Shared ownership sales are not counted as they are treated as supply and not the sale of existing stock.  These figures provide characteristics for PRP sales that have been recorded in CORE sales.
<b>Quarterly Right to Buy</b>  <b>MHCLG</b>	Quarterly estimates of Local Authority Right to Buy	Quarterly	Data provided directly by local authorities	'Leading indicator' for the Right to Buy policy.  Figures provided are Local Authority Right to Buy sales, the associated receipts. The starts on site and acquisitions of the delivered replacements.
<b>Social housing lettings</b>  <b>MHCLG</b>	Annual estimates of lettings for social housing	Annual  Usually published November/December	The COntinuous REcording (CORE) data collection run by MHCLG. The Local Authority Housing Statistics (LAHS) form administered by MHCLG.	These figures provide an over-view of all lettings of social housing stock in England.

	stock in Eng-land.			
<b>Affordable housing Supply</b> <b>MHCLG</b>	Overall affordable housing supply (new build and acquisitions )	Annual  Usually published in November	Homes England and Greater London Authority data which is published every six months combined with and Local Authority Housing Statistics Data	Provides the most complete estimate of affordable housing supply. Affordable housing figures are a subset of total housing supply.
<b>Local Authority Housing Statistics</b> <b>MHCLG</b>	Stock and condition of Local Authority owned housing, including information on rents and waiting lists	Annual  No longer has a dedicated bulletin, the data is published between November and January	Data provided directly by local authorities	Information on the stock, condition and changes to local authority owned properties.
<b>Statistical Data Return</b> <b>RSH</b>	Stock and condition of Private Registered Provider owned housing	Annual	Data provided directly by Private Registered Provider to the Regulator of Social Housing	Information on the stock, condition and changes to Private Registered Provider owned properties.
<b>Housing supply: indicators of new supply statistics</b> <b>MHCLG</b>	Quarterly estimates of new build starts and completions	Quarterly	Building control officers at: •National House Building Council •Local Authorities •Approved Inspectors	This is a 'leading indicator' of house building, available soon (< 2 months) after each quarter's end
<b>Housing supply; net additional dwellings</b> <b>MHCLG</b>	Total housing supply that comprises all new build, conversions , change of use, other gains/losses and demolitions	Annual  Usually published in November	Comes from local authorities outside London (Housing Flows Reconciliation Return) and for London boroughs is provided by Greater London Authority (London Development Database)	Provides an accurate assessment of annual change in all housing stock and is the most comprehensive estimate of supply.
<b>Dwelling Stock estimates</b> <b>MHCLG</b>	Total housing stock, split by tenure	Annual  Usually published in May	Overall change in stock from Net Additional Dwellings. Tenure information provided directly from Local Authorities and Housing Associations.	Provides an accurate assessment of the total size of the housing stock and how it is split by tenure

## Devolved administration statistics

## **Wales**

The Welsh Government publishes information on social housing sales, which does include information on Right to Buy sales. On 26 January 2019 'Right to Buy' was repealed for all council and housing association tenants. The latest release can be found at the following link: <http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/social-housing-sales/?lang=en>

## **Scotland**

The Scottish Government publish information on social housing sales, however, from 1 August 2016 the 'Right to Buy' has been repealed for all council and housing association tenants. The latest release can be found at the following link:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Housing-Regeneration/HSfS/Sales>

## **Northern Ireland**

In Northern Ireland social tenants have the right to a statutory house sale, which is similar to a "Right to Buy". The latest release can be found at the following link:

<https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/topics/housing-statistics>

## **User engagement**

Users are encouraged to provide feedback on how these statistics are used and how well they meet user needs. Comments on any issues relating to this statistical release are welcomed and encouraged. Responses should be addressed to the Housing Statistics inbox [housing.statistics@communities.gov.uk](mailto:housing.statistics@communities.gov.uk)

The Department's engagement strategy to meet the needs of statistics users is published here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/engagement-strategy-to-meet-the-needs-of-statistics-users>