



Regulator of  
Social Housing



# Technical notes and definitions

Registered providers  
social housing stock and rents  
in England statistics

2020-2021

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# Contents

Contents	1
Introduction	2
Purposes and uses of the data	3
Factors impacting the statistics	5
Revisions policy	7
Related statistics	8
Definition of terms	12
Categorisation of units	14
Why not have your say on our statistics in 2021/22?	15

## Introduction

These technical notes and definitions support the latest statistics release on registered provider (RPs) social housing stock and rents in England. The release comprises of a briefing note, additional tables, look-up tool and supplementary documents, all available through the statistical release pages.

## Data sources

RP social housing stock and rents in England statistics are derived from the local authority data return (LADR) and the statistical data return (SDR). These surveys collect stock and rent information from RPs.

For more information on the data sources please see individual technical notes and definitions produced for the private registered provider (PRP) social housing stock and rents in England (based on the SDR) and the local authority registered provider (LARP) social housing stock and rents in England (based on LADR) statistical releases.

## Coverage

The statistics provide information on social housing that is owned by RPs. Data collected on stock size, types, location and rents is as at 31 March. All figures in this document refer to stock located in England. We present the data at a local authority and regional level in these statistics. The data collected through the SDR and LADR provides stock and rent information at a local authority level. As an organisation we are required to restrict data collection to that which is used to support our regulatory activity. More detailed unit or sub-LA geographical data are not collected as we do not require this granularity of data and consider the burden of the request disproportionate to the value it would add to the regulation of the rent standard. The definitions used within the release are consistent with the way data was collected in the LADR and SDR each year. For more information, please see the individual PRP and LARP social housing stock and rents in England statistical publications.

## Publication schedule

These statistics will usually be fully published in the Autumn each year, with the data pre-announced in the release calendar. All statistics are published on our [statistics pages](#).

## Purposes and uses of the data

We use the SDR and LADR data as a source of administrative data. See the **data quality and methodology note** for more information.

### Why is the data published?

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority (UKSA) encourages public bodies to use administrative data for statistical purposes, as such, we publish these data annually. The published dataset promotes transparency. The publication of SDR and LADR data provides users with geographical breakdowns of stock types and social rents, which we believe are of significant value.

### Who uses the data?

The primary users of these statistics and the underlying data are our own staff, who use this data for the purposes of regulating the rent standard.

We believe that others will use these data in similar ways to the PRP and LARP social housing stock statistics and the previous releases of LAHS. Central and local government are likely to use these statistics for a variety of purposes, including policy development and the production of statistics and as a basis for answering Parliamentary questions and other requests for information by Ministers, local authorities and the general public. LARPs and PRPs are likely to use the data to inform business planning and benchmarking. Journalists and academics are also likely to find this data useful for research into and understanding of the social housing sector.

### How is the data released and what can it be used for?

The statistical release and the accompanying tables and tools are useful primary sources of information for users interested in the social housing sector in England.

We also publish the raw data for SDR and LADR (along with briefing notes specifically focused on PRP social housing stock and rents and LARP social housing stock and rents) in our other statistical releases.

### Strengths and limitations of the data from which the statistics are drawn

The LADR and SDR collections are designed to be a complete census of RPs, and therefore no sampling errors should be present in the final dataset.

However, response rates do vary between the returns and we recommend users of these statistics explore the underlying strengths and weaknesses of the SDR and LADR as presented in the technical notes provided in the individual PRP and LARP social housing stock and rents in England statistical publications. These are available on our [PRP and LARP statistics pages](#).

## Factors impacting the statistics

The figures reported in these statistics can be impacted by internal factors and external influences. These can dictate practices and patterns in social housing provision and create differences in categorisation and recording within and between years.

### Effect of Government policy

Changes in Government policy relating to different aspects of the social housing sector impact the statistics on the shape and nature of the sector overall. Those likely to impact the 2020 statistics are outlined specifically within the PRP and LARP social housing stock and rents in England statistical release technical notes and definitions. We recommend users of these combined RP statistics consult those technical notes for more detail.

Specific areas of note are the effect of stock classification, rent regulation, right to buy/ acquire and large scale voluntary transfer (LSVT) activity.

### Effects of public subsidy

The role that public subsidy plays in the changes to stock numbers should be considered, especially when considering any gains. Changes in available public subsidy also reflect underlying changes in government policy. For information on public subsidy please see information published by [Homes England](#).

### Affordable Rent

Affordable Rent can only be offered as part of a contractual agreement with the Homes and Communities Agency (known as Homes England) or Greater London Authority (GLA). Levels of growth are principally driven by the timing of the funding and delivery programme.

### Home ownership

The mix of stock to be delivered under the 2016-2021 Shared Ownership and Affordable Homes Programme (SOAHP) has evolved during the lifecycle of the programme. The initial prospectus and bidding round for the programme was focused almost exclusively on shared ownership and other home ownership products. The Autumn Statement in November 2016 increased the funding available for affordable homes delivery (and also made grant funding available for Affordable Rent schemes).

The 2021-2026 Affordable Homes Programme will provide grant funding for social and Affordable Rent units and for home ownership units (with an approximately equal delivery split between rental and ownership units). At the point of the 2021 data collections, the grant

funding from this programme had yet to be allocated. The profile of social stock held by providers will be influenced by this funding in future years.

## Effects of RP recording

The data from which the statistics are produced are provided by RPs. This data is likely drawn directly from RP housing management systems. While we challenge data which appear anomalous we ultimately rely on RPs to provide an accurate reflection of their operations. See the **data quality and methodology note** for more information.

Changes to policy (such as Government's Policy Statement on Rents for Social Housing 2019) may impact on RPs' recording of stock (for example requiring the reclassification of stock based on changing requirements). We rely on RPs to accurately categorise their stock according to prevailing policy.

## Coronavirus pandemic

Although the pandemic should not have impacted on stock classification or rent setting directly, it is important to recognise the resource impact the pandemic had for many providers of social housing. We consider it a small but recognisable risk that the recording of data at source may not have been subjected to the same data quality assurance processes as may have been in place in other years.

## Prior year comparability

While the factors impacting on the social sector may impact on the comparability between years, there have been few changes between the 2020 and 2021 data collections. These, and the estimated impacts of these, are detailed within the LARP and PRP social housing stock and rents technical notes and definitions.

## Revisions policy

We have adopted the [revisions policy](#) developed by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). This policy covers two types of revisions.

**Scheduled revisions** – where the receipt of subsequent information is expected.

These statistics are based on data collected in the SDR and LADR. These surveys have no scheduled revisions period. We expect RPs to submit complete, accurate data in a single survey round. As such, there are no scheduled revisions planned for this release. However, the data collected through the SDR and LADR is used to inform engagement on registered providers' compliance with the Rent Standard. As part of their response to any issues raised by us, providers subject their data to increased validation and may identify errors in the data submitted. We are committed to ensuring the quality of the SDR and LADR data and will gather corrected data from RPs as part of this work. We will, therefore, republish these statistics in the April of the year following the initial publication, if the aggregate changes made by providers require a major revision.

**Non-scheduled revisions** – where subsequent information is received unexpectedly, for example to rectify a data error or where methodological issues are identified.

If a substantial error occurs as a result of the production process or due to errors in submitted figures reported by RPs after the survey has closed, the statistical release and accompanying tables will be updated with a correction notice as soon as is practical. Revisions will normally only be made to the previous year's data and not earlier years. Revised data are denoted 'R' in tables and each document (including the raw data release) contains a revisions history.

We consider data quality and transparency in publication of data a priority. As such, where errors are identified through regulatory engagement we will ensure published data are revised.

The **data quality and methodology note** provides information about our approach to data quality and publication of revisions when they are required.



## Related statistics

Social housing statistics in the UK are available for England and the devolved administrations. These include:

### **Private registered provider social housing stock and rents**

Published by us, these national statistics provide information on housing stock, lettings, average rents, decent homes and evictions by PRPs in England.

They are compatible with the data within this statistical release.

[Private registered provider social housing stock in England - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

### **Local authority registered provider social housing stock and rents**

Published by us, these national statistics provide information on housing stock and average rents for stock owned by local authority registered providers in England.

They are compatible with the data within this statistical release.

[Local authority registered provider social housing stock in England - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

### **DLUHC Housing statistics**

DLUHC produce a range of statistics from data collected from providers of social housing. Summary information about their collections, including frequency and topic area is provided at: [Guide to MHCLG housing statistics - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

Of most relevance to this publication are the local authority housing statistics (LAHS).

### **Local authority housing statistic (LAHS)**

LAHS data are published by the DLUHC annually. They provide information on stock, lettings, average rents (prior to 2020), waiting lists, decent homes delivery and evictions by LA landlords in England.

The LAHS statistics are broadly compatible with the statistics drawn from the LADR, although there are some definitional differences, particularly in the way in which bedspaces and LCHO units were treated prior to 2020.

See prior year comparability section for more information on the way in which LAHS and LADR data are collected and used.

[Local authority housing data - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

## **CORE**

DLUHC collects data through CORE (the continuous recording of lettings and sales in social housing in England). This system records information on all new social housing lettings and sales (for both LA and PRP properties), along with the characteristics of new social housing tenants and the homes they rent and buy. All providers delivering Affordable Rent units are obliged to update CORE.

Information on lettings from CORE is available in the DLUHC release on Social Housing Lettings: [Social housing lettings - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

Information on sales from CORE is available in the DLUHC release on Social Housing Sales: [Social housing sales \(including Right to Buy and transfers\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

## **Housing Statistics**

The Housing Statistics release (produced each year in June and November) by Homes England details the supply of new stock, through housing starts on site and completions made for each programme managed by Homes England, by LA and tenure.

The Housing Statistics release relates only to new stock, while the SDR covers both existing and new stock.

London is excluded from the Affordable Housing Starts and Completions in the Housing Statistics release. When reviewing new build data against figures contained in these statistics, reference to the limitations in new build recording should be made (see page 3).

[Housing statistics - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

## **Affordable Housing Statistics (England)**

The GLA publishes data relating to other London housing delivery, with monthly and annual Affordable Housing Statistics. When reviewing new build data against figures contained in these statistics, reference to the limitations in new build recording should be made (see page 3).

## **Affordable Housing Starts and Completions (England)**

DLUHC combines data from Homes England and GLA to publish live tables on Affordable Housing supply, which can be found at: [Live tables on affordable housing supply - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

## **English Housing Survey (England)**

This survey is comprised of two parts. The first covers household profiles (including tenure trends, demographic and economic characteristics, rents and housing benefit). The second covers housing stock (age, size and type, energy efficiency, decent homes and homes affected by damp).

[English Housing Survey - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

The data cover all dwellings in England, so include stock from both the private (free market) and social housing sectors, though stock figures covering the social sector separate LA and PRP dwellings.

## **Private Rental Market Statistics (England)**

The Valuation Office Agency releases statistics on the average rents paid for private properties in England (private rental market) twice yearly (May and November).

[Valuation Office Agency: private rental market statistics - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

While average rents are provided by unit sizes comparable to the LADR and by LA location, all figures are on a monthly, rather than a weekly basis as in the LADR and other releases mentioned in this section. The underlying data set is not drawn from a statistical sample, so the statistics should be treated as indicative only.

## **Related statistics - devolved administrations**

Information on social housing in the rest of the UK is available from the respective devolved administrations. It should be noted that, due to differences in the collection period, methodology and terminology, direct comparisons should be made with care. Details of the data collected and methodologies used can be obtained from the sources below.

## Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland Housing Statistics are produced annually by the Department for Communities. These statistics contain information on supply, energy, social renting demand, private renting demand, owner occupier demand and household characteristics.

[Housing | Department for Communities \(communities-ni.gov.uk\)](https://communities-ni.gov.uk)

While the report covers all homes in Northern Ireland, the social renting demand section focuses more on applications/ allocations/ homelessness, though it does also provide comparable overall average weekly rents for housing associations.

## Scotland

The Scottish Government produce a range of statistics in the annual Housing Statistics for Scotland. These include information on new housing supply, public sector stock and house sales, LA housing management, supported housing, houses in multiple occupation and RTB entitlement.

[Housing statistics - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

The social housing tables contain a selection of statistics that offer some coherence with the SDR, such as stock counts, average weekly rents, sales and vacancies. Most of these measures are available by individual LA location, with some available by landlord type (registered social provider versus LAs).

## Wales

The Welsh Government produces the Social Housing Stock and Rents Statistical Release on an annual basis, running across the financial year. The report includes information on the number of dwellings, bedsits and bedspaces owned or partly owned by LAs and registered social landlords, along with breakdowns of location of stock at LA level.

[Social housing stock and rents \(gov.wales\)](http://gov.wales)

This release provides unit counts and average weekly rents, split by provision type and by LA location for registered social landlords' stock, which are comparable with the equivalent SDR statistics.

## Definition of terms

The definitions presented below are provided for clarity of terms and categories within this release. They are consistent with definitions for the data collected in the 2021 LADR and SDR collections (based on a view 'as at' or 'in the year to' 31 March 2021).

For greater detail please see the technical notes and definitions for the individual PRP and LARP social housing stock and rents in England statistics.

### Affordable Rent

Affordable Rent homes are those made available to households eligible for low cost rental housing at a rent level of no more than 80% (inclusive of service charges) of local market rents. Affordable Rent homes must form part of an agreement with Homes England or the GLA. They can be either general needs or supported housing. See also **London Affordable Rent**.

### Exceptions/ excepted units (rents)

Units with an exception from the Rent Standard (see individual PRP and LARP social housing statistic technical notes and definitions for more information).

### General needs housing

General needs housing covers the bulk of housing stock for rent. It includes both self-contained units and non-self-contained hostel/ shared housing units and bedspaces. General needs housing is stock that is not designated for specific client groups.

### Gross rent

The total charged to tenants inclusive of all rent and property related service charges.

### London Affordable Rent

London Affordable Rent (LAR) was introduced in 2016 by the Mayor of London. LAR units are Affordable Rent units in London let at or below the weekly rent benchmarks set by the GLA. They are included in Affordable Rent figures in the LADR collection. For more information see [Homes for Londoners: Affordable Homes Programme 2016-2023 | London City Hall](#).

### Low cost home ownership

LCHO accommodation is defined in the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 as being that occupied or made available for occupation in accordance with shared ownership arrangements, shared equity arrangements, or shared ownership trusts; and it is made available to people whose needs are not adequately served by the commercial housing market.

## **Low cost rental**

The term low cost rental is used in these statistics to denote any stock which meets the definition of low cost rental accommodation in the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008. It must be available for rent, with a rent below market value, and in accordance with the rules designed to ensure that it is made available to people whose needs are not adequately served by the commercial housing market.

## **Net rent**

The rent charged to tenants excluding all service charges.

## **Social housing**

Social housing is defined in the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 sections 68-77. The term covers low cost rental, LCHO and accommodation owned by RPs as previously defined in the Housing Act 1996.

## **Social rent**

In these statistics social rent refers to all low cost rental units that are general needs or supported housing (excluding Affordable Rent). This includes units with exceptions from the rent standard.

## **Social stock**

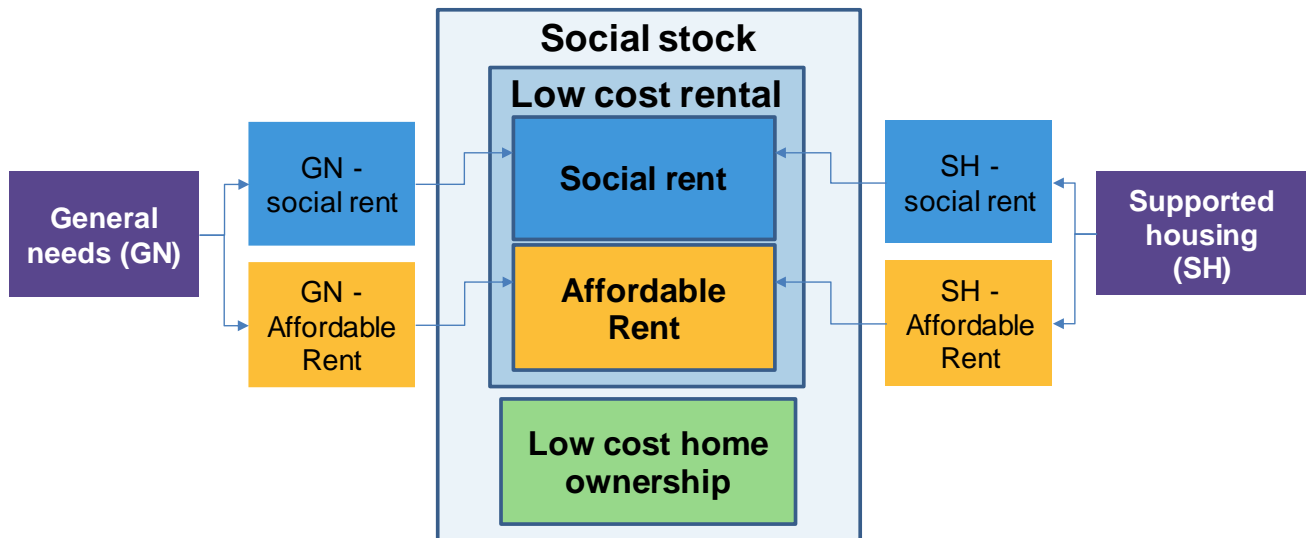
Social stock is used in these statistics to denote the total number of low cost rental and LCHO units. Total social stock figures represent the number of self-contained units plus bedspaces.

## **Supported housing**

Units can only be counted as supported housing if they meet the definition of supported housing specified in the policy statement. The fact that a tenant receives support services in their home does not make it supported housing.

## Categorisation of units

The graphic below shows the types of unit included in each category used in the statistics. Social rent and Affordable Rent are both included in low cost rental figures. In the statistics the term 'social rent' is used for all low cost rental units which are not defined as Affordable Rent. This is in line with common usage of the term 'social rent' and means that 'social rent' units will include some units excepted from the Rent Standard.



User should note that the terminology used in the SDR and LADR collections may be more specific. We recommend users review the technical notes which accompany the individual PRP and LARP social housing stock and rent statistics.

## Why not have your say on our statistics in 2021/22?

As this is the first year of publication for these statistics, we are keen to hear your views on how the format and range of documents in this statistical release meet your needs. Please email feedback, including suggestions for improvements to [enquiries@rsh.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@rsh.gov.uk) or click below to quickly rate how this document meets your needs.



**All needs met**



**Some needs  
met**



**No needs met**





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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.**