



Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities

Social Housing Sales statistics 2020-21

Technical Notes



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January 2022

Contents

National Statistics Status	4
Data collection	4
Data quality	6
Things to note on this release	6
Assessment of data quality	7
Imputation	13
Definitions	14
Total Social Housing Sales	14
Other definitions	14
Revisions policy	14
Non-Scheduled Revisions	15
Scheduled Revisions	15
Revisions in this release	15
Other information	16
Uses of these statistics	16
Related Statistics	17
Devolved administration statistics	19
User engagement	20

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 Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities' 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 DLUHC and its predecessors;
2. The Pooling of Housing Capital Receipts return administered by DLUHC;
3. The Statistical Data Return (SDR) from the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH);
4. The COntinuous REcording (CORE) of sales data collection run by DLUHC;
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 primarily through LAHS with some Imputation of figures done through the Pooling of Housing Capital Receipts returns supplied to DLUHC by Local Authorities. This provides information at district level for all local authority council Right to Buy sales as well as housing capital expenditure.

The Regulator of Social Housing collects stock sale information from private registered providers through the Statistical Data Return (SDR).

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, 100% staircased low cost home ownership and sales for non-social use. Shared equity sales to tenants are recorded at the point of initial sale. The figures exclude initial 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 sale¹, 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 what proportion of Right to Buy 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.

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

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

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 four sets of revisions:

- Revisions to local authority sales to tenants and other sales. Between 1991-92 and 1995-96, following research of previously published housing statistics, it is now possible to separate sales to tenants from other sales in this period. This has not resulted in the change in the total number of sales.
- Other sales of social rented stock have been separated from low cost home ownership stock in table 678 and the open data. This has not resulted in any change in the total number of sales.
- There have been adjustments to the local authority right to buy sales between 2005-06 and 2019-20. The previous published tables used the pooling of capital receipts return as the main source of data for right to buy sales. However, to maintain consistency with other columns in table 678, the main source for these sales has been changed to LAHS and the P1B forms, the precursor to LAHS, with imputation for missing values taken from pooling. This has resulted in an increase of 263 sales in this period.
- The number of 100% staircased sales of shared ownership properties by local authorities has been added to table 678 to maintain consistency with PRP data. Data on these sales are only available back to 2018-19. Addition of these types of sales has added 103 sales to the time series.

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 local authority sales and demolitions are now available broken down by Local Authority from 1999-00 to 2020-21, with PRP sales and demolitions broken down by local authority area available from 2011-12 to 2020-21.

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 before 2011-12. 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. We expect to publish the final version of this year’s data in June/July 2022 following the scheduled revisions for LAHS.

Live Table 696 has been revised following data quality issues identified with the household structure variable that was used to create it. A new household structure variable has been derived and the time series revised for consistency.

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 DLUHC 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:

Risk/Profile Matrix Statistical Series	Administrative Source	Data Quality Concern	Public Interest	Matrix Classification
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

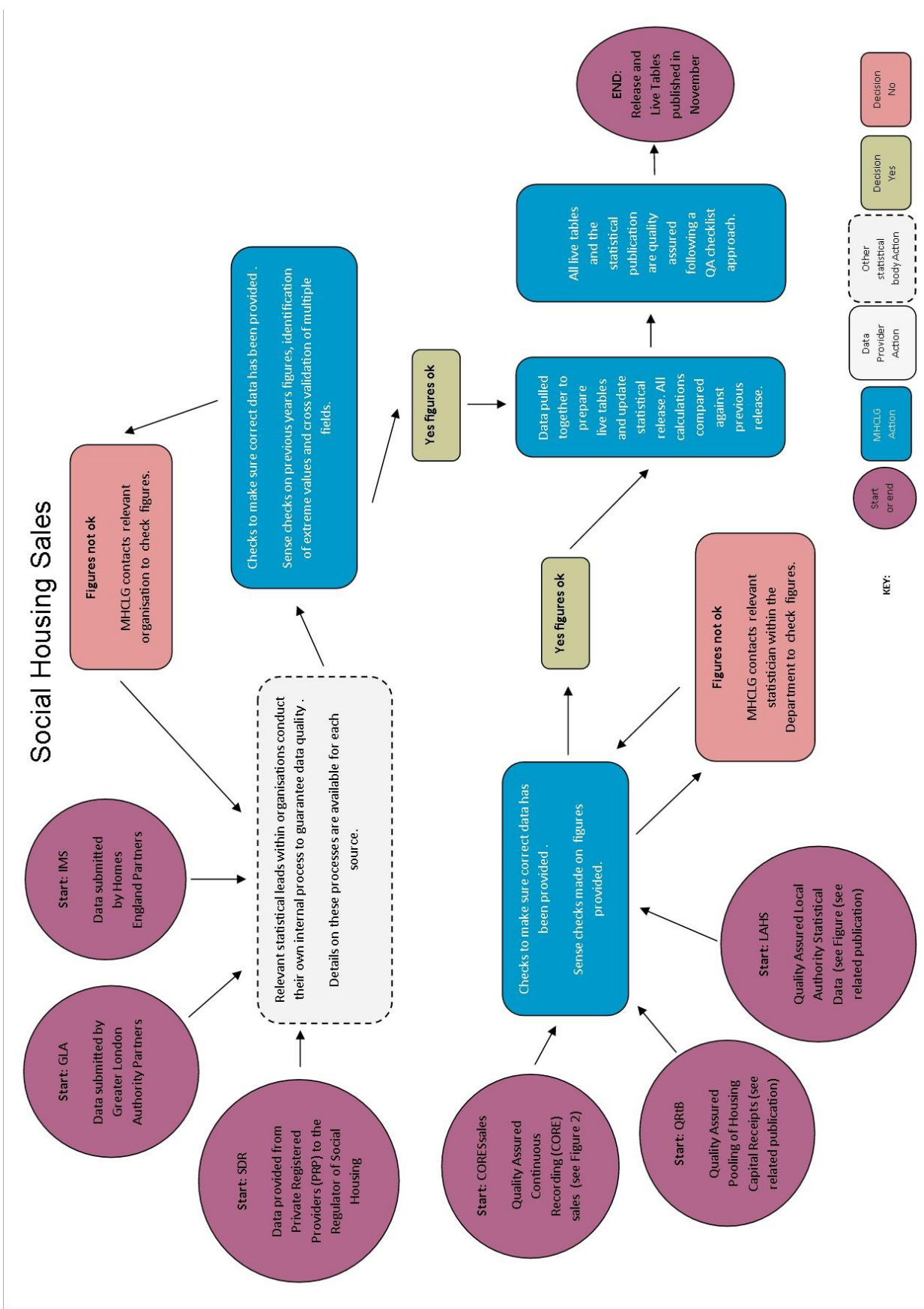
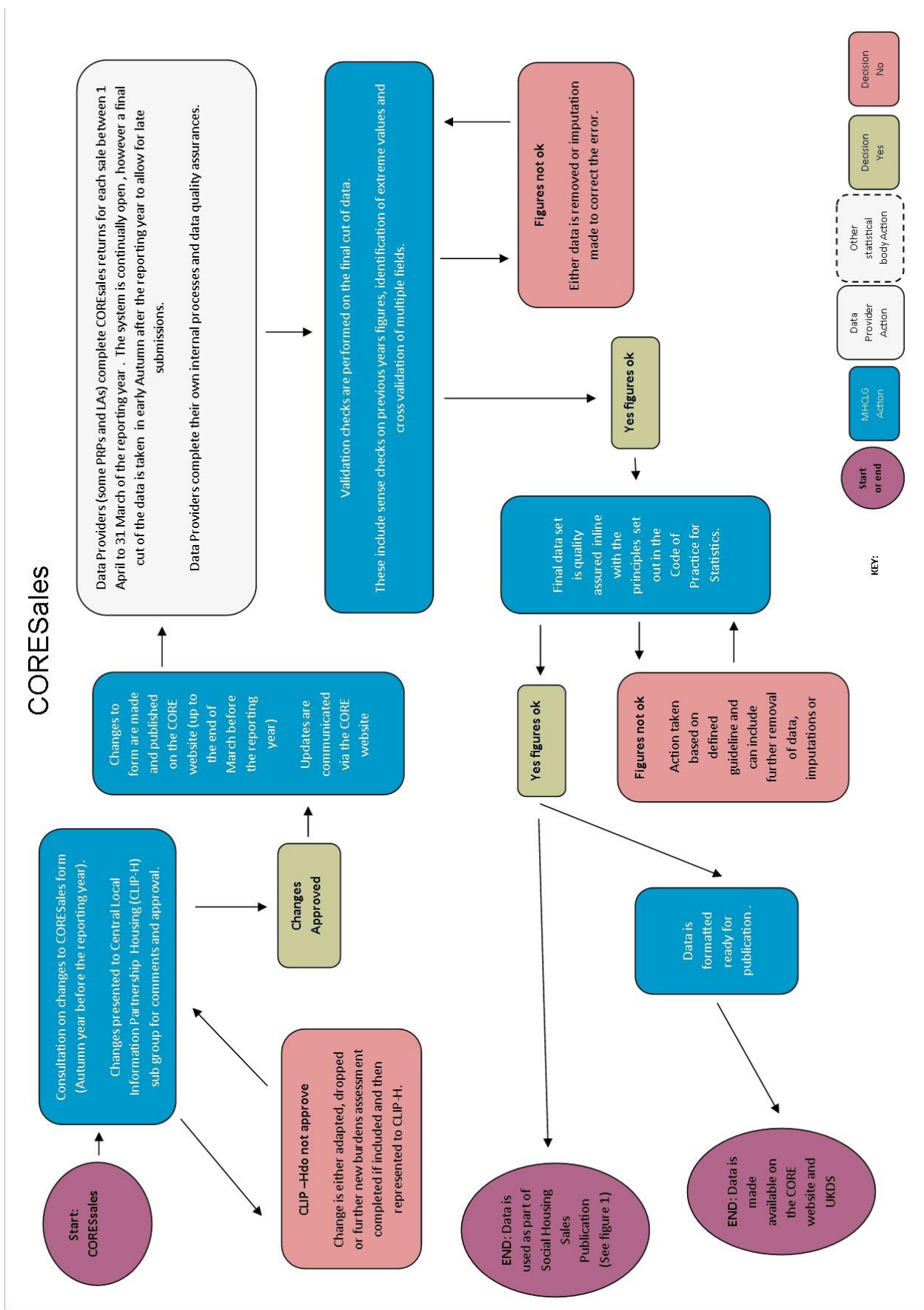


Figure 2: Quality assurance flow diagram for CORE sales data



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 2020 there were 314 local authorities, of which 165 were stock-holding authorities (i.e. have Housing Revenue Account). Local authorities are required to have an HRA if they own at least 200 units, and some local authorities may own a small amount of stock without having an HRA. In 2020-21, 4 local authorities did not submit any data and 5 submitted unfinalized data, resulting in a response rate of completed submissions of 97%.

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 and the data which is collected for sales to sitting tenants is not broken down by type of sale 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.

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 subgroup (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 DLUHC, 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 nonmandatory 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 CORE Sales data is provided from around 170 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). Also included are sales of low cost home ownership stock, like shared ownership, where the tenant has reached 100% ownership through staircasing transactions.

Sales of other kinds, such as initial 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 DLUHC'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 DLUHC 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 DLUHC Revisions Policy and can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statistical-notice-dclg-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.

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:

A revision to the LA Right to Buy between 2005-06 and 2019-20. In previous versions of this statistical release, the data recorded by LAs in the Pooling of Capital Receipts return (hereafter called "Pooling") to DLUHC was used as the sole source for LA Right to Buy sales. The sales recorded in Pooling do not have the same definition as those in LAHS, which came into use in April 2011 and its precursor, the P1B form. Pooling was used as the main source as it had a more complete return than LAHS or P1B, despite not all Right to Buy sales being recorded in Pooling. It was decided for this release to use the values recorded by Local Authorities in the P1B and LAHS returns as the main source and impute the value from Pooling if there was a missing value in LAHS or P1B. This has led to an increase of 263 sales across England over this 14-year period, with no single year having a larger change than 1.5%.

The number of 100% staircased sales of shared ownership properties by local authorities has been added to table 678 to maintain consistency with PRP data. Data on these sales are only available back to 2018-19. Addition of these types of sales has added 103 sales to the time series

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

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 Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities 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?
This release: Social Housing Sales DLUHC	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 DLUHC. The Pooling of Housing Capital Receipts return administered by DLUHC. The Statistical Data Return (SDR) from the RSH. The Continuous REcording (CORE) data collection run by DLUHC. 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.
Quarterly Right to Buy Management Information DLUHC	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.
Voluntary Right to Buy Midlands pilot Management Information		Annual To be published on 24 February 2022	Data provided directly by Registered Providers	Update on the progress of homes sold and replacements under the Voluntary Right to Buy (VRTB) Midlands pilot, which was launched in August 2018.

Right to Buy Sales and Replacements	Annual audited figures on Right to Buy Sales and Replacement of stock sold	Annual To be published in June/July	Data provided directly by local authorities	Figures provided are Local Authority Right to Buy sales, the associated receipts. The starts on site and acquisitions of the delivered replacements.
Social housing lettings DLUHC	Annual estimates of lettings for social housing	Annual To be published February/ March	The COntinuous REcording (CORE) data collection run by DLUHC. The Local Authority Housing Statistics (LAHS) form administered by DLUHC.	These figures provide an overview of all lettings of social housing stock in England.
Affordable housing Supply DLUHC	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.
Local Authority Housing Statistics DLUHC	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.
Statistical Data Return RSH	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.
Local Authority Data Return	Stock, rents and condition of Local Authority owned housing	Annual	Data provided directly by Local Authorities to the Regulator of Social Housing	
Housing supply: indicators of new supply statistics DLUHC	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

Housing supply; net additional dwellings DLUHC	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.
Dwelling Stock estimates DLUHC	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

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>