

Welsh Government

Summary of Responses

Proposed Changes to Social Housing Sales Data Collections

Date of issue: 3 April 2012

Proposed Changes to Social Housing Sales Data Collections User Consultation - Results

Summary

A user consultation was conducted to ask for views on proposed changes to the social housing sales data currently collected from local authorities and registered social landlords (RSLs). These proposals aim to ensure that the information collected and published on social housing sales remains relevant, accurate and meets the needs of users.

The proposed changes were:

- Merge the two existing forms into one form for both local authorities and RSLs;
- Removing data items that are no longer needed;
- Updating the categories of intermediate tenure sales;
- Introducing a new table looking at the impact of the suspension of the Right to Buy; and
- Introducing a new First Release specifically covering Social Housing Sales.

The purpose of this consultation was to meet the following objectives:

- To ensure data continues to be available to users where needed.
- To ensure that data collected remains relevant and of good quality.

Thank you to all those who took the time to respond to this user consultation. There were 11 responses to the consultation which ran from 12 January to 1 March 2012. The report below includes a summary of responses as well as some direct quotes where relevant.

Our response to the user consultation is set out below:

- 100 per cent of respondents were content to merge the two existing forms into one form for both local authorities and RSLs.

Decision: We will make this change but delay its implementation until 1 April 2013 to cover the 2011-12 financial year.

- 100 per cent of respondents agreed with the proposal to remove data items that are no longer needed, including Tables 3 and 4 of the local authority form, data on Right to Buy claims, responses and claims outstanding at the end of the period and the detailed breakdown of Right to Buy sale prices and discounts.

Decision: We will make these changes but will drop Tables 3 and 4 from the local authority form with effect from 1 April 2012 for the 2011-12 financial year and implement the other changes with effect from 1 April 2013 for the 2012-13 financial year.

- 75 per cent of respondents agreed with the proposal to update the categories of intermediate tenure sales and ask the question of all social landlords but 25 per cent did not.

Decision: This change will be made and implemented from 1 April 2013 for the 2012-13 financial year. Concerns were raised that the categories should distinguish between 'Extra care' and 'Flexible Tenure for the Elderly schemes' to help to monitor housing provision under the Equality Act 2010, however we do not believe this level of detailed breakdown is required by all end users of the data. Concerns were also raised that categories could become inconsistent in future as the housing market changes and new products become available and to address this we will ensure that the categories are reviewed regularly to ensure continued relevance.

- 83 per cent of respondents thought the new 'other intermediate sales' column in Table 2 would be used but 17 per cent disagreed.

Decision: The change will be made and implemented from 1 April 2013 for the 2012-13 financial year. The concern that the categories could become inconsistent in future as the

housing market changes will be addressed by regular review of the categories to ensure continued relevance.

- 88 per cent of respondents agreed with the proposal to introduce a new table looking at the impact of the suspension of the Right to Buy, including the number of units covered by the suspension of the Right to Buy by local authority area, but 13 per cent did not. 57 per cent thought this data item is a good measure of the impact of suspensions but 43 per cent disagreed.

Decision: The change will be made and a new table added to the annual form from 1 April 2013 for the 2012-13 financial year. There was concern that the use of longer term measures such as Local Housing Market Assessments (LHMAs) would be better, however LHMA information is not easily accessible centrally on a consistent basis. A further respondent suggested a better measure would be the number of units covered by the suspension as a proportion of stock. To address this, the new data collection form will be pre-filled with social housing stock data from the previous year which will allow this proportion to be calculated

- 89 per cent of respondents agreed with the proposal to introduce a new First Release specifically covering Social Housing Sales but 11 per cent of respondents did not agree with this proposal. Only 25 per cent of respondents stated that they use the existing release on new build and social housing sales and 75 per cent stated they do not.

Decision: The change will be made and a new annual first release specifically covering Social Housing Sales data for 2011-12 will be published on 12th June 2012. One respondent would prefer to see a combined release covering new house building and sales for the final quarter of the year. However new house building data is collected and published quarterly and it would be difficult to coordinate the annual sales collection with the last quarterly collection of the year for new house building.

- 67 per cent of respondents did not want anything specific to be included in the new Social Housing Sales release and 56 per cent of those responding do not use the existing Social Housing Sales data on the StatsWales website.

Decision: There will be no specific additions to the new Social Housing Sales release as a result of the feedback from this consultation. Although we are looking to improve the commentary in our statistical releases more generally in order to meet a requirement placed on us by the UK Statistics Authority.

There was interest in showing a comparison with sales of market (non social) housing but the data that is available from the Land Registry could not be presented within the release on a strictly comparable basis. There was also interest in presenting information on the social profile of those buying social housing but this information is not collected and the review process did not identify a central requirement for this level of detail. Some concern was expressed about the availability of data at an individual sales category and individual landlord level. To address this, whilst the release will not present this level of detail it will provide information on how this can be accessed via the StatsWales website. Concern was also expressed about the graph facility within StatsWales. The hosting of the StatsWales website is currently being retendered and one of the aspects of the new contract will be improved charting functionality, as compared to the current solution.

Following this consultation and further consideration of some of the issues raised the decision has been taken to:

- Make the changes outlined above to the current annual Social Housing Sales data collection returns including the new table looking at the impact of the suspension of the Right to Buy but delay its implementation until 1 April 2013 to cover the 2011-12 financial year.

Implementing these changes from 1 April 2012 as originally planned would not allow sufficient notice for the local authority and RSL data providers and may impact adversely on their ability to provide accurate information, particularly as the data required is retrospective and covers the

2011-12 financial year. Delaying the implementation will allow data providers time to make the necessary changes to their data processing systems and to familiarise themselves with the new data requirements, definitions and guidance.

Following implementation, the Welsh Government will continually monitor and review the impact of these changes to ensure users needs continue to be met and that the quality of information published is not adversely affected.

Introduction

A summary of the background to the consultation is provided in this report. The full background to the consultation is available in the consultation document, published alongside this document:

Statistics on social housing sales have not been reviewed fully for nearly 15 years. Concerns had been by end users of the information regarding the continuing relevance and accuracy of some of the information collected. The collection of this data is currently spread across two returns, the local authority sales form and the Registered Social Landlord (RSL) sales form. It was collected quarterly up to the end of 2010-11 and has now moved to an annual collection cycle as a result of the 'Proposed Changes to Housing Data Collections' consultation:

<http://new.wales.gov.uk/consultations/statistics/housingdata/?lang=en&status=closed>

In the autumn of 2011 a sub group of the Housing Information Group (HIG) was established to review the social housing data items collected and their associated guidance. The group included internal Welsh Government colleagues as well as external representatives from local authorities and Community Housing Cymru on behalf of RSLs.

The review process identified a number of changes which could be made to the current data collection form. These would ensure that the information collected and published on social housing sales remains relevant, accurate and meets the needs of users. The changes aim to provide more clarity to data providers and remove data items no longer relevant or required by end users of the data.

The changes identified include:

- Merge the two existing forms into one form for both local authorities and RSLs;
- Removing data items that are no longer needed;
- Updating the categories of intermediate tenure sales;
- Introducing a new table looking at the impact of the suspension of the Right to Buy; and
- Introducing a new First Release specifically covering Social Housing Sales.

A consultation was held, in accordance with the Official Statistics Code of Practice, to allow users to comment on these proposed changes to the data collection returns. The proposals in this consultation have already been agreed in principle by the Housing Information Group (which represents the views of a range of stakeholders) and by its social housing sales sub-group. The consultation was therefore open for a period of 6 weeks rather than the more usual 12 week period, from 12th January 2012 to 1st March 2012. The rationale for the proposed changes was included in the consultation documents which are published alongside this document.

Methods

Respondents were asked if they agreed with the proposed changes to the social housing sales data collections as well as the views on the introduction of a new annual First Release specifically covering Social Housing Sales.

The background document explaining the consultation and the response form are accessible via the [Welsh Government consultations website](#) alongside this document. Emails to a wide group of potential users of housing statistics were sent out inviting response to the consultation. These included devolved and central government, local government, housing associations, other third sector organisations, various housing bodies and housing networks. Responses were received in Excel response forms or as emailed comments.

Results

11 responses to the consultation were received, 10 using the Excel response form and 1 in the form of an e-mail. Of the 11 respondents, 7 stated that they were happy to be identified in this report and they are listed in the annex. The number and percentage of responses by type of organisation and a summary of the responses are provided in the following tables:

Organisation	Number of responses	Percentage of responses
Local Authority	3	27%
Registered Social Landlord (a)	6	55%
Central Government	1	9%
Other Third Sector	1	9%
Total	11	100%

(a) These are classified as third sector organisations

Response table

Questions		Yes	No	Respon d	Total
Q1.	Do you agree with the proposal to merge the two existing forms into one form for both local authorities and RSLs.	9	0	2	11
	% of responses to this question	100%	0%		100%
Q2.	Do you agree with the proposal to remove data items that are no longer needed, in particular : > Tables 3 and 4 of the local authority form covering the disposal of land for housing and the disposal of dwellings built and financed by private developers on local authority owned land completed respectively. > Data on Right to Buy claims, responses and claims outstanding at the end of the period. > The detailed breakdown of Right to Buy sale prices and discounts. Although we will still collect the total figure.	9	0	2	11
	% of responses to this question	100%	0%		100%
Q3a.	Do you agree with the proposal to update the categories of intermediate tenure sales and ask the question of all social landlords. > We will replace the existing local authority categories. > We will replace the existing Homebuy and other categories on the old RSL form with four categories: Shared equity, intermediate rents, low cost home ownership and other intermediate sales. > The 'other intermediate sales' column will cover Extra care and Flexible Tenure for the Elderly schemes.	6	2	3	11
	% of responses to this question	75%	25%		100%
Q3b.	Do you think the new 'other intermediate sales' column in Table 2 will be used?	5	1	5	11
	% of responses to this question	83%	17%		100%
Q4a.	Do you agree with the proposal to introduce a new table looking at the impact of the suspension of the Right to Buy > We will ask for the number of units covered by the suspension of the Right to Buy by local authority area.	7	1	3	11
	% of responses to this question	88%	13%		100%
Q4b.	Do you think that this data item is a good measure of the impact of suspensions?	4	3	4	11
	% of responses to this question	57%	43%		100%
Q5a.	Do you agree with the proposal to introduce a new First Release specifically covering Social Housing Sales > We will publish an annual Statistical First Release on Social Housing	8	1	2	11
	% of responses to this question	89%	11%		100%
Q5b.	Do you use the existing release on new build and social housing sales?	2	6	3	11
	% of responses to this question	25%	75%		100%
Q5c.	Is there anything specific you would like to be included in the new Social Housing Sales release?	3	6	2	11
	% of responses to this question	33%	67%		100%
Q5d.	Do you use the existing Social Housing Sales data on the StatsWales website? (www.statswales.wales.gov.uk)	4	5	2	11
	% of responses to this question	44%	56%		100%

The following pages give more detail on the responses provided to each of these questions.

Question 1.

Do you agree with the proposal to merge the two existing forms into one form for both local authorities and RSLs?

What are your reasons for this, including any impact this change might have on your work?

There were 9 responses received in relation to this question. All 9 (100 per cent) agreed with the proposal. The comments provided in these responses included the following:

- “We agree with the proposals to merge the data into one form, enabling easier comparison of sales rates between social housing providers. This will not impact upon existing workloads.”
- “Will streamline and standardise paperwork.”
- “There is a clear logic to merging the two forms in to one; should result in greater consistency in reporting sales categories and allow better comparison between Local Authority and RSL statistics.”
- “It seems sensible to collect sales data from all social landlords on the same form. This would not impact on our work.”

Discussion

All of those who responded to this proposal were in favour of merging the two existing forms into one for both local authorities and RSLs. Social housing sales is now the only remaining area of data collection for housing statistics where local authorities and RSLs collect data on a different basis. This change would allow better comparison between social landlords and remove inconsistencies in the reporting of different types of sale.

Conclusion

We will merge the two existing forms into one data collection return for both local authorities and RSLs with effect from **1 April 2013 to cover the 2012-13 financial year**. This will allow time for the data providers to make the necessary changes to their data processing systems and to familiarise themselves with the new data requirements, definitions and guidance.

Question 2.

Do you agree with the proposal to remove data items that are no longer needed, in particular:

- **Tables 3 and 4 of the local authority form covering the disposal of land for housing and the disposal of dwellings built and financed by private developers on local authority owned land respectively.**
- **Data on Right to Buy claims, responses and claims outstanding at the end of the period from the local authority form.**
- **The detailed breakdown of Right to Buy sale prices and discounts from the local authority form. Although we will still collect the total figure.**

What are your reasons for this, including any impact this change might have on your work?

There were 9 responses received in relation to this question. All 9 (100 per cent) agreed with the proposal. The comments provided in these responses included the following:

- “We welcome the removal of any extraneous data collection requirements that would reduce any unnecessary administrative burden for local authorities”.
- “RSLs do not collect this data anyway so the change would not impact on our work”.

- “- removal should result in a reduced burden to the data providers with the added reassurance that similar data is being collected through the annual Affordable Housing Data Collection returns. There will be no direct impact on our workload as a result of this change.

Discussion

All those who responded to this question were in favour of the proposed changes. During the original review process we did not identify any users for the data shown in Tables 3 and 4 of the local authority form and similar data relating to additional affordable housing delivered on former LA land is already collected as part of the new affordable housing data collection. It is not considered good practice to continue collecting data which is not used and removal of these data items should not impact on the work of the RSL data providers as they are not currently asked for this information and will significantly reduce the burden on local authority data providers.

Respondents were also in favour of the proposal to remove data items from Table 1 of the local authority form covering Right to Buy (RTB) claims, response notices and applications outstanding as well as the detailed breakdown of RTB sale prices and discounts. Again during the review process we did not identify any users of the data and respondents stated they were content to remove any data not required as this would reduce the burden on data providers. This proposal however while not directly affecting the RSL data providers may mean significant changes to the data processing systems for the local authorities as they will still be expected to provide total figures for RTB sales and they may have systems in place which produce the information in its current format. It may therefore be advisable to allow sufficient lead in time for the local authority data providers to make the necessary adjustments to their data processing systems before the proposals relating to Table 1 and 2 of the current local authority form is implemented.

Conclusion

Having assessed the views of respondents the decision has been taken to remove tables 3 and 4 of the local authority form covering the disposal of land for housing and the disposal of dwellings built and financed by private developers on local authority owned land completed respectively **with effect from 1 April 2012 for the 2011-12 financial year**. There is no reason to delay the implementation of this proposal as it will not require any change to the local authorities processing systems and will reduce the burden placed on them as data providers with immediate effect.

The data items in Table 1 covering Right to Buy (RTB) claims, response notices and applications outstanding as well as the detailed breakdown of RTB sale prices and discounts will also be removed but **from 1 April 2013 onwards to cover the 2012-13 financial year**. This will allow the local authority data providers sufficient time to make the necessary changes to their data processing systems.

Question 3

3 (a) Do you agree with the proposal to update the categories of intermediate tenure sales and ask the question of all social landlords.

- **We will replace the existing local authority categories.**
- **We will replace the existing Homebuy and other categories of intermediate sales on the old RSL form with four categories: Shared equity, intermediate rents, low cost home ownership and other intermediate sales.**
- **The ‘other intermediate sales’ column of the new forms will cover Extra care and Flexible Tenure for the Elderly schemes.**

There were 8 responses received in relation to 3(a). Of these, 6 (75 per cent) agreed with the proposal and 2 (25 per cent) did not. The comments provided by those who agreed with the proposal included:

- “The proposal to update the sales categories reflects the reality of delivering new schemes with significantly reduced or no Social Housing Grant. We are typically relying on a blend of tenures to make schemes financially viable, including social rent (with neutral tenure sale option), intermediate rent (Rent First purchase model), shared ownership, and open market sale. The proposed sales categories coupled with the definitions are sufficiently comprehensive to cover the full range of sales activity that we are engaging in. There will be no direct impact on our workload as a result of this change.”
- “Again it makes sense to collect data from all social landlords on one form. The new categories will accommodate all schemes - this would have minimal impact on our work.”
- “The impact on our work will be to up-date categories of intermediate tenure sales”

Two respondents did not agree with the proposal in 3 (a) for the reasons outlined below:

- “categories should be updated - however we feel it is important to distinguish in reporting between Extra Care Scheme and Flexible Tenure for the Elderly Schemes. - This would ensure that the Welsh Government is effectively monitoring housing provision for people with a characteristic which is protected under the Equality Act 2010 and can continue to meet its legal obligations.”
- “Whilst agreeing with the need to simplify these categories, this is a new and evolving market with new products being constantly developed. There is a concern that this could lead to inconsistencies in the classification of such sales. We would therefore propose that the 5 group classifications are reduced to 2, those being new build sales and resales of existing stock.”

3(b). Do you think the new ‘other intermediate sales’ column in Table 2 will be used?

What are your reasons for this, including any impact this change might have on your work?

There were 6 responses received in relation to 3(b). Of these, 5 (83 per cent) were in favour and 1 (17 per cent) respondent was not. Comments from those who approved the proposal included:

- “This will depend on how well the tenants are able to save towards a deposit for a mortgage and the housing market fluctuates over the next 10 years. It seems reasonable to suggest that house prices may rise over 10 years thus allowing tenants to use 50% of the difference in values to contribute towards their deposit for a mortgage. “
- “we have a number of leasehold apartments for elderly residents that re-sell from time to time and would fall within the 'Other Intermediate Sales' category. “

The person who didn't think the new category would be used stated they felt in general the number of categories of sales should be reduced to 2 categories covering new build sales and re-sales of existing stock.

Discussion

The majority of respondents agreed with the proposal to update the categories of intermediate tenure sales as outlined above and ask the question of all social landlords. In response to those who opposed the proposal, whilst we recognise that distinguishing between ‘Extra care’ and ‘Flexible Tenure for the Elderly schemes’ would help to monitor housing provision under the Equality Act 2010, we do not believe this level of detailed breakdown is required by all end users of the data. The inclusion of both these schemes within the ‘other intermediate sales’ category will both ensure consistency with other social housing data collections and prevent an increased burden on data providers. Whilst we are content that the proposed new categories are consistent

with the current housing market however, we are aware that the categories will need to be kept under regular review to ensure they remain relevant and compatible with any new housing products.

The majority of respondents agreed that the 'other intermediate sales' category would be used and it should be included on the new data collection form. The respondent opposing the proposal did so because they felt that generally the categories could become inconsistent in future as the housing market changes and new products become available. However, as stated above we are aware of this and will ensure that the categories are reviewed regularly to ensure continued relevance.

Conclusion

We will update the categories of intermediate tenure sales and ask the question of all social landlords as outlined above but **with effect from 1 April 2012 to cover the 2012-13 financial year**. This will allow time for the data providers to make the necessary changes to their data processing systems and to familiarise themselves with the new data requirements, definitions and guidance.

Having assessed the views of all respondents it has been decided that the other intermediate sales' column will be included in Table 2 of the new form **from 1 April 2013 onwards**.

Question 4

4(a) Do you agree with the proposal to introduce a new table looking at the impact of the suspension of the Right to Buy?

- **We will ask for the number of units covered by the suspension of the Right to Buy by local authority area.**

There were 8 responses to 4(a). Of these, 7 (88 per cent) agreed with the proposal and 1 (13 per cent) did not. Comments from those who approved the proposal included:

- "We agree that it is essential that there is such a mechanism for monitoring the impact of policy implementation. "
- "We believe that this would be a useful exercise, and would provide a clear picture of the extent of suspension across Wales. "
- "This change relates primarily to Local Authorities; as an RSL there will be no direct impact on our workload as a result of this change. "
- "It makes sense to measure the impact of the suspension of the Right to Buy. This will have minimal impact on our work."

The respondent who opposed the proposal stated:

- "We understand that in order for a suspension to become effective a local authority is required to make a business case to the Welsh Government who would then consider its merits. We are not sure of the merits of introducing a table which is very unlikely to be used."

4(b) Do you think that this data item is a good measure of the impact of suspensions?

What are your reasons for this, including any impact this change might have on your work?

There were 7 responses to 4(b). Of these, 4 respondents (57 per cent) agreed it was a good measure and 3 respondents (43 per cent) did not. Comments from those agreeing it was a good measure included:

- “It will allow an overview of the extent of the use of this legislation by locality.”
- “This would show the number of units covered by the suspension across Local Authority areas. This will have minimal impact on our work.”
- “This change relates primarily to Local Authorities; as an RSL there will be no direct impact on our workload as a result of this change. “

Comments from those disagreeing included:

- “Proportion of the stock covered by suspension would be a better indicator.”
- “A longer term measure is needed i.e. Local Housing Market Assessment.”

Discussion

The majority of respondents agreed with the proposal to introduce a new table looking at the impact of the suspension of the Right to Buy in areas of housing pressure and felt it would provide a useful way of measuring the impact of this new legislation across Wales with minimal impact on resources for data providers. The table would provide policy colleagues within the Welsh Government with useful evidence for monitoring the impact and effectiveness of this policy. Though one respondent questioned how likely it was to be used we consider that this will depend on the amount of take up by the local authorities across Wales and is something that can be kept under future review.

The majority of respondents also agreed that this table was a good way of measuring the impact of the suspension of Right to Buy. Some respondents felt that the use of longer term measures such as Local Housing Market Assessments (LHMAs) would be better, however LHMA information is not easily accessible centrally on a consistent basis. A further respondent suggested using comparing the number of units with the level of stock, as this would provide an indication of what proportion of stock is covered by the suspension of Right to Buy.

Conclusion

The majority of respondents were in favour of introducing a new table covering the impact of the suspension of Right to Buy and this will be included on the new data collection form and will be introduced in April 2013 for the 2012-13 financial year. This will allow time for the data providers to make the necessary changes to their data processing systems and to familiarise themselves with the new data requirements, definitions and guidance. As the Welsh Government guidance for local housing authorities on applications to suspend the Right to Buy and Related Rights has not yet been published and there were no suspensions in place in January 2012 when the consultation took place, it would make little sense to introduce this new table for the current financial year.

Furthermore following the suggestion to look at the proportion of stock covered by the suspension it has been decided that the new data collection form will be pre-filled with social housing stock data from the previous year which will allow this proportion to be calculated.

Question 5.

5(a) Do you agree with the proposal to introduce a new First Release specifically covering Social Housing Sales?

- **We will publish an annual Statistical First Release on Social Housing Sales.**

There were 9 responses to 5(a). Of these, 8 (89 per cent) agreed with the proposal and 1 (11 per cent) did not. Comments from those who approved the proposal included:

- “It is logical to split the sales and new build statistics as they are collected at different intervals. This change would not impact on our work.”

- “Data on social housing sales is likely to have distinct uses. In addition, it should be published in an accessible format so that people from outside the housing sector can readily access and use it. “
- “This will improve UK comparability as it aligns more closely with the approach in England.”
- “General interest in monitoring the levels of sales activity within the sector. There will be no direct impact on our workload as a result of this change.”

Comment provided by respondent who opposed the proposal was:

- “No. If new build and sales statistics were previously reported together; there is no reason why the new build statistics cannot be produced for each of the first three quarters of the year; and a combined publication being produced for the final quarter.”

**5(b) Do you use the existing release on new build and social housing sales?
If yes, which parts of the sales section of the release do you use?**

There were 8 responses to 5(b) of which 6 (75 per cent) stated that they did not currently use the statistical release on new house building and social housing sales and 2(25 per cent) stated that they did. There were only 2 comments provided both from those who currently use the release as follows:

- “All, on occasion to give GB/UK stats.”
- “It is used to gain general information on the level and type of sales.”

5(c) Is there anything specific you would like to be included in the new Social Housing Sales release?

If yes, please provide details and reasons

There were 9 responses to 5(c), of these 6 (67 per cent) did not want anything specific included in the new Sales statistical first release and 3 (33 per cent) did as outlined below:

- “It would be useful if tables could be included on a comparable basis to England, i.e. covering sales of social housing stock separately to non-social housing stock sales.”
- “ - it would be useful to know who is buying social housing i.e. what protected groups they belong to. This would provide insight into the housing needs of people from protected groups, and if there are any barriers for people from protected groups in buying social housing stock.”

“Breakdown across sales classifications A to E as proposed. Also, if producing statistics in graphical format it would help to improve on the bar charts that are used in the 'Tables' function of the StatsWales website - these are difficult to read when trying to identify RSLs against results. “

**5(d) Do you use the existing Social Housing Sales data on the StatsWales website?
(www.statswales.wales.gov.uk)**

If yes, which data in particular do you use?

There were 9 responses to 5(d), of these 5 (56 per cent) stated they do not use the existing Social Housing Sales data on the StatsWales website and 4 (44 per cent) stated that they do.

There were only comments from those who currently use the data on StatsWales and the data they access and uses made of this are as follows:

- “General interest in levels of sales activity across the sector to help identify others to network and share best practice with.”

- “Equalities Datasets”
- “Sales Stock Rents Vacancies Lettings Rent Arrears”

Discussion

Most respondents were in favour of introducing a new annual release specifically related to social housing sales. Though one respondent would prefer to see a combined release for the final quarter of the year this would be difficult as we would need to coordinate the annual sales collection with the last quarterly collection of the year for new house building. The majority of respondents do not currently use the combined new house building and social housing sales release so would not be adversely impacted by the introduction of a new release which only covers social housing sales.

We have considered the comments provided on specific items to be included within the new release as follows:

- We do not currently collect any information on the sales of market (non-social) housing in Wales and whilst we could look at including the transactions data available from the Land Registry we would not be able to present this within the release alongside the information collected on social housing sales on a strictly comparable basis.
- Both the data we currently and plan to collect on social housing sales does not include any information on the social profile of those buying the properties. We could not therefore publish this within the statistical release.
- The data collected on social housing sales will be available by individual social landlord, by local authority area and by category of sale (Table 2 A to E) as shown in the draft form. We may not present this level of detail in the release but it will be available on the StatsWales website and can be downloaded into Excel and graphs produced within Excel.

Most of those responding to question 5(d) stated that they do not currently use StatsWales and we therefore need to ensure that all end users of the data are aware of the information on social housing sales that are available on StatsWales and how this can be accessed. Furthermore the hosting of the StatsWales website is currently being retendered and one of the aspects of the new contract will be improved charting functionality, as compared to the current solution. This should be available later this year.

Conclusion

We will publish a new annual first release covering only social housing sales on 12 June 2012 which will cover the information collected from all local authorities and registered social landlords for the 2011-12 financial year.

Information on new house building will no longer be included as this has been collected quarterly and published in a separate new house building release since April 2011. However, the release will continue to include some information on dwelling stock estimates and a brief statement as to how this is affected by sales.

The release will clearly define what social housing sales covers, why we collect this information and how it is used, including any relevant references to policy commitments. The release will include trend information though the tables and charts will present annual rather than quarterly data and where possible we will compare activity at a local authority level for the current year and over time. We are also looking to improve the commentary in our statistical releases more generally in order to meet a requirement placed on us by the UK Statistics Authority.

Though the release will present summary level sales information, the full data set by individual social landlord, category of sale and housing type (houses or flats) will be available on the StatsWales website. The release will include links to the full social housing sales dataset on StatsWales and details of how this information can be accessed.

The annual release for 2012-13, to be published in the summer of 2013, will be extended and revised to show the information collected via the new data collection form which will be issued in April 2013.

General comments

Respondents were also asked to provide comments on any related issues which were not specifically addressed by questions 1 to 5 of the consultation form. Two respondents provided comment as follows:

- “We look forward to the publication of the final guidance, and - would be pleased to assist in any further discussions directly or through the Welsh Local Government Association and the All Wales Chief Housing Officers Panel upon this issue.”
- “We do not have any comments to make in response to the specific questions, however, we did collate the following views which we hope will be of use. With regards to the sale of social stock, it would be important to know: Address/ locality of stock: which areas are losing housing - i.e. are rural area being hit harder than urban areas in Powys Sale price of property: to compare with open market returns in the area - clarification on how homes are valued and discounted to tenants to purchase -Number of bedrooms: to identify what stock is selling and potentially what stock will be needed -Age of stock - i.e. is this older properties? It would be interesting to gauge what stock has been lost and why - are these desirable areas? Are the homes very cheap in comparison to surrounding OPM stock? Would these figures also include other social stock sold such as share ownership/ LCHO delivered by a RSL? It would be interesting to see what finance is being released by the sale of social stock and where this is going - i.e. is it being made available to LAs to develop new social stock?”

In response to the comments above:

- Table 1 of the new data collection form for 2012-13 onwards will provide information on the locality of socially rented stock sold via Right to Buy, Right to Acquire and through voluntary and other schemes at a local authority level. Table 2 of the new form will provide information on the locality of non-socially rented stock sold such as shared equity (HomeBuy), low cost home-ownership (LCHOs) and other intermediate tenures at a local authority level. This information will allow comparison between urban and rural authorities.
- Table 4 of the new data collection form will provide information on the selling price and discounts for local authority Right to Buy sales and we can use this to calculate average prices and average discounts at a local authority level across Wales. As RSLs have not previously been required to provide this information they will not be expected to complete this table as it was not identified as a data requirement during the review process and would impose a heavy and unjustified resource burden on the RSL data providers.
- As previously stated we do not currently collect any information on the sales of market (non-social) housing in Wales and whilst we could look at the transactions and house price data available from the Land Registry we would not be able to present this alongside the information collected on social housing sales on a strictly comparable basis.
- We do not currently require the local authority and RSL data providers to provide any financial information relating to uses made of any monies obtained from the sale of their properties. The review process did not identify any need for this information and it will therefore not be included on the new data collection form.

Conclusion

Having considered all the information gathered during the consultation and the views of members of the Housing Technical Information Group and the Social Housing Sales Sub Group, it has been

decided to go ahead with all the proposed changes but to delay the implementation of most of these changes until April 2013 for the 2012-13 financial year so that there is sufficient time for the data providers to make the necessary changes to their data collection and processing systems and to familiarise themselves with the new definitions and guidance.

The exception to this will be the proposal to drop Tables 3 and 4 from the current local authority form and the publication of a new annual release covering social housing sales. The proposal to drop Tables 3 and 4 **will be implemented in April 2012 to cover the 2011-12 financial year**. The reasons for not delaying the implementation of this proposal are:

- The review process did not identify any users for the data and it is not good practice to continue collecting data which is not used
- Similar data are already collected as part of the new affordable housing data collection
- Removing these tables will significantly reduce the burden on local authority data providers
- RSL data providers will not be affected as they are not required to provide it.

The new annual release covering social housing sales will be published on 12 June 2012 and will present data collected for the 2011-12 financial year, due to the data collection changing from a quarterly collection to an annual collection.

The changes outlined below **will be implemented in April 2013 for data collections that cover the 2012-13 financial year onwards**:

- The two existing forms will be merged into one form for both local authorities and RSLs.
- Data on Right to Buy claims, responses and claims outstanding at the end of the period, in table 1 of the current local authority form, will be removed
- The detailed breakdown of Right to Buy sale prices and discounts, in table 2 of the current local authority form, will be removed but we will still collect the total figure.
- The categories of intermediate tenure sales will be updated and all social landlords (local authorities and RSLs) will be asked to provide this information as follows:
 - The existing local authority categories on the current local authority form and the existing Homebuy and other categories on the current RSL form will be replaced with four categories: Shared equity, intermediate rents, low cost home ownership and other intermediate sales.
 - The 'other intermediate sales' column will cover Extra care and Flexible Tenure for the Elderly schemes.
- A new table looking at the impact of the suspension of the Right to Buy will be included on the new form which will ask for the number of units covered by the suspension of the Right to Buy by local authority area. It will also present the social housing stock from the previous year to allow calculation of the proportion of stock covered by suspension.

Following implementation the Welsh Government will continually monitor and review the impact of these changes to ensure users needs continue to be met and that the quality of information published is not adversely affected.

ANNEX A

Questions asked

Name

Organisation

Job Title

Email address

Do you wish to be identified as the author of your response? (mandatory question)

Q1. Do you agree with the proposal to merge the two existing forms into one form for both local authorities and RSLs?

What are your reasons for this, including any impact this change might have on your work?

Q2. Do you agree with the proposal to remove data items that are no longer needed, in particular:

- Tables 3 and 4 of the local authority form covering the disposal of land for housing and the disposal of dwellings built and financed by private developers on local authority owned land completed respectively.
- Data on Right to Buy claims, responses and claims outstanding at the end of the period.
- The detailed breakdown of Right to Buy sale prices and discounts. Although we will still collect the total figure.

What are your reasons for this, including any impact this change might have on your work?

Q3 (a). Do you agree with the proposal to update the categories of intermediate tenure sales and ask the question of all social landlords.

- We will replace the existing local authority categories.
- We will replace the existing Homebuy and other categories on the old RSL form with four categories: Shared equity, intermediate rents, low cost home ownership and other intermediate sales.
- The 'other intermediate sales' column will cover Extra care and Flexible Tenure for the Elderly schemes.

What are your reasons for this, including any impact this change might have on your work?

Q3 (b) Do you think the new 'other intermediate sales' column in Table 2 will be used?

What are your reasons for this, including any impact this change might have on your work?

Q4 (a) Do you agree with the proposal to introduce a new table looking at the impact of the suspension of the Right to Buy?

- We will ask for the number of units covered by the suspension of the Right to Buy by local authority area. What are your reasons for this, including any impact this change might have on your work?

Q4 (b) Do you think that this data item is a good measure of the impact of suspensions?

What are your reasons for this, including any impact this change might have on your work?

Q5 (a) Do you agree with the proposal to introduce a new First Release specifically covering Social Housing Sales?

- We will publish an annual Statistical First Release on Social Housing Sales.

What are your reasons for this, including any impact this change might have on your work?

Q5 (b) Do you use the existing release on new build and social housing sales?

If yes, which parts of the sales section of the release do you use?

Q5 (c) Is there anything specific you would like to be included in the new Social Housing Sales release?

If yes, please provide details and reasons

Q5 (d) Do you use the existing Social Housing Sales data on the StatsWales website? (www.statswales.wales.gov.uk)

If yes, which data in particular do you use?

We have asked a number of specific questions. If you have any related issues which we have not specifically addressed, please use this space to report them.

List of responders (*who stated that they were happy to be identified*)

Name	Organisation
Paul Lilley	City & County of Swansea
Jane Hinton	DCLG
Dave Sharman	Bron Afon Community Housing
Richard McQuillan	Hafod Housing Association
Karen Courts	Merthyr Tydfil Housing Association Ltd
Tim Beckingsale	Seren Group
Mark Richards	Bro Myrddin HA

Produced by

**Environment, Sustainability and Housing Statistics Unit
Knowledge and Analytical Services
Welsh Government
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ**

Tel: 029 2082 5063

E-mail: stats.housing@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Table 1: Sales of social rented stock

Sales by Welsh social landlords, 2011-12

PLEASE SELECT LANDLORD

[Go to the guidance](#)
[Go to definitions](#)

[Table 2](#)
[Back to Home Page](#)

	Sales of social rented stock					Sales of social rented stock					Comment					
	Houses with:				V1	Flats with:				V1						
	Right to Buy	Right to Acquire	Voluntary sales	Total		Right to Buy	Right to Acquire	Voluntary sales	Total							
a	b	c	d	a	b	c	e	f	g	h	e	f	g			
1	Isle of Anglesey			0	X	X	X				0	X	X	X		
2	Gwynedd			0	X	X	X				0	X	X	X		
3	Conwy			0	X	X	X				0	X	X	X		
4	Denbighshire			0	X	X	X				0	X	X	X		
5	Flintshire			0	X	X	X				0	X	X	X		
6	Wrexham			0	X	X	X				0	X	X	X		
7	Powys			0	X	X	X				0	X	X	X		
8	Ceredigion			0	X	X	X				0	X	X	X		
9	Pembrokeshire			0	X	X	X				0	X	X	X		
10	Carmarthenshire			0	X	X	X				0	X	X	X		
11	Swansea			0	X	X	X				0	X	X	X		
12	Neath Port Talbot			0	X	X	X				0	X	X	X		
13	Bridgend			0	X	X	X				0	X	X	X		
14	The Vale of Glamorgan			0	X	X	X				0	X	X	X		
15	Cardiff			0	X	X	X				0	X	X	X		
16	Rhondda Cynon Taf			0	X	X	X				0	X	X	X		
17	Merthyr Tydfil			0	X	X	X				0	X	X	X		
18	Caerphilly			0	X	X	X				0	X	X	X		
19	Blaenau Gwent			0	X	X	X				0	X	X	X		
20	Torfaen			0	X	X	X				0	X	X	X		
21	Monmouthshire			0	X	X	X				0	X	X	X		
22	Newport			0	X	X	X				0	X	X	X		
23	Wales	0	0	0	0	✓	✓	✓	0	0	0	0	0	✓	✓	✓

Comment

Table 2: Sales of non-social rented stock

Sales by Welsh social landlords, 2011-12

PLEASE SELECT LANDLORD

[Go to the guidance](#)
[Go to definitions](#)

[Table 3](#)
[Back to Home Page](#)

		Sales of non-social rented stock Houses with:						Sales of non-social rented stock Flats with:																
		Shared equity (including Homebuy)	Intermediate rents (including Rent First)	Low Cost Home Ownership (LCHO) (including Shared Ownership)	Other intermediate sales	Voluntary sales	Total	V1											Comment					
		a	b	c	d	e	f	a	b	c	d	e	g	h	i	j	k	l		g	h	i	j	k
1	Isle of Anglesey						0	X	X	X	X	X						0	X	X	X	X	X	
2	Gwynedd						0	X	X	X	X	X						0	X	X	X	X	X	
3	Conwy						0	X	X	X	X	X						0	X	X	X	X	X	
4	Denbighshire						0	X	X	X	X	X						0	X	X	X	X	X	
5	Flintshire						0	X	X	X	X	X						0	X	X	X	X	X	
6	Wrexham						0	X	X	X	X	X						0	X	X	X	X	X	
7	Powys						0	X	X	X	X	X						0	X	X	X	X	X	
8	Ceredigion						0	X	X	X	X	X						0	X	X	X	X	X	
9	Pembrokeshire						0	X	X	X	X	X						0	X	X	X	X	X	
10	Cardiff						0	X	X	X	X	X						0	X	X	X	X	X	
11	Swansea						0	X	X	X	X	X						0	X	X	X	X	X	
12	Neath Port Talbot						0	X	X	X	X	X						0	X	X	X	X	X	
13	Bridgend						0	X	X	X	X	X						0	X	X	X	X	X	
14	The Vale of Glamorgan						0	X	X	X	X	X						0	X	X	X	X	X	
15	Cardiff						0	X	X	X	X	X						0	X	X	X	X	X	
16	Rhondda Cynon Taf						0	X	X	X	X	X						0	X	X	X	X	X	
17	Merthyr Tydfil						0	X	X	X	X	X						0	X	X	X	X	X	
18	Caerphilly						0	X	X	X	X	X						0	X	X	X	X	X	
19	Blaenau Gwent						0	X	X	X	X	X						0	X	X	X	X	X	
20	Torfaen						0	X	X	X	X	X						0	X	X	X	X	X	
21	Monmouthshire						0	X	X	X	X	X						0	X	X	X	X	X	
22	Newport						0	X	X	X	X	X						0	X	X	X	X	X	
23	Wales	0	0	0	0	0	0	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0	0	0	0	0	0	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

Comment

Table 3: Impact of the suspension of the Right to Buy Sales by Welsh social landlords, 2011-12

[Go to the guidance](#)

[Go to definitions](#)

PLEASE SELECT LANDLORD

[Table 4](#)

[Back to Home Page](#)

Do not include units owned by other landlords

At 31 March 2012	
Number of your landlord's units covered by the suspension	V1

Comment

	a	a	
1	Isle of Anglesey	✓	
2	Gwynedd	✓	
3	Conwy	✓	
4	Denbighshire	✓	
5	Flintshire	✓	
6	Wrexham	✓	
7	Powys	✓	
8	Ceredigion	✓	
9	Pembrokeshire	✓	
10	Carmarthenshire	✓	
11	Swansea	✓	
12	Neath Port Talbot	✓	
13	Bridgend	✓	
14	The Vale of Glamorgan	✓	
15	Cardiff	✓	
16	Rhondda Cynon Taf	✓	
17	Merthyr Tydfil	✓	
18	Caerphilly	✓	
19	Blaenau Gwent	✓	
20	Torfaen	✓	
21	Monmouthshire	✓	
22	Newport	✓	
23	Wales	0	✓

Comment	
---------	--

Table 4: Selling prices and discounts for local authority Right to Buy sales

Sales by Welsh social landlords, 2011-12

Only Local Authority data should be included.
RSLs do not need to complete this table.

PLEASE SELECT LANDLORD

[Back to Home Page](#)

[Go to the guidance](#)

[Go to definitions](#)

£ / number	V1	Comment
a	a	

1	Selling price (excluding discount) for all Right to Buy units sold (£)		✘	
2	Total discounts for all Right to Buy units sold (£)		✘	
3	Total selling price (including discount) for all Right to Buy units sold (£)	£0.00	✓	
4	Total Right to Buy sales (number) (from Table 1)	0	✓	
5	Discount per unit (£) (Right to buy discounts should be £16,000 or less per property).	-	✓	

Comment

General Guidance

Guidance for all tables

[Back to Home Page](#)

Include:

- 0.1
- Sales of properties which are Social Housing Grant (SHG) funded or non-SHG funded;
 - Sales completed during the quarter;
 - Sales where the unit is a loss to the stock of the landlord.

Exclude:

- 0.2
- Transfers of stock between social landlords. Please note the details in the comment box at the bottom of the page;
 - Demolitions;
 - Initial sales, re-sales and staircasing.

Which table should I record the sale on?

- 0.3
- For all self-contained stock in Stock Tables 1, 2 and 3 (general needs, supported, sheltered, extra care), use Sales Table 1. However if the sale is through an extra care or flexible tenure for the elderly scheme, use Table 2, 'other intermediate sales'.
 - For all non self-contained stock (bedsits and hostels/shared accommodation) in Stock Table 4, use Sales Table 1. Count each unit or bedspace as 1 unit.
 - For all intermediate tenures in Stock Table 5, column 1, use Sales Table 2.
 - For 'other tenures not at social rents' in Stock Table 5, column 2, use Sales Table 2 and the 'voluntary sales' column.

Table 1: Sales of social rented stock

- 1.1
- No specific guidance.

Table 2: Sales of non-social rented stock

- 2.1
- No specific guidance.

Table 3: Impact of the suspension of the Right to Buy

- 3.1
- Include all units in the suspension area, regardless of whether they qualify for Right to Buy or Right to Acquire.
- 3.2
- Count units as in the stock form.

Table 4: Selling prices and discounts for local authority Right to Buy sales

- 4.1
- Only local authorities need to complete this table.

Definitions

Sales by Welsh social landlords, 2011-12

[Back to Home Page](#)

Extracare Housing	Specific housing schemes offering flats and support amenities to elderly people. Residents may opt to rent or to buy where available. Include in Table 2, 'Other intermediate sales'
Flexible Tenure for the Elderly	Includes specific housing schemes developed in the 1990s to provide flexible tenure options for older people in housing schemes designed specifically for their needs. Include in Table 2, 'Other intermediate sales'
Intermediate rents (including Rent First)	The unit is owned by the social landlord and the rent is set above the social level but below market level. Can be Welsh Government grant funded or landlord funded. Includes Rent First. Record in Table 2.
Low Cost Home Ownership (LCHO) (including Shared Ownership)	This scheme allows qualifying purchasers to buy a share of the property with a proportional rent payable on the remaining share to the social landlord. Include in Table 2.
Right to Acquire	The Right to Acquire (RTA) scheme was introduced by the Housing Act 1996 with effect from 1 April 1997. The scheme enables eligible housing association tenants living in qualifying properties to buy their rented home at a discount. RTA only applies to properties built or acquired by housing associations, both charitable and non-charitable, with public funds from 1 April 1997 onwards. Properties transferred from a local authority to a housing association after 1 April 1997 are also eligible. Some properties are exempt from RTA including sheltered housing and homes located in small rural settlements. Include in Table 1.
Right to Buy	The Right to Buy scheme (RTB) was introduced by the 1980 Housing Act with effect from October 1980. RTB is available to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • secure tenants of RSLs; and • RSL assured tenants who have been transferred with their homes as part of a stock transfer from a local authority to an RSL; these tenants have a preserved RTB. Qualifying tenants may purchase the home they rent from their social landlord at a discount. Includes flats sold on leasehold terms. Include in Table 1.
Shared equity (including Homebuy)	A Shared Equity scheme such as Homebuy helps people who are unable to meet their housing needs in the market to buy a suitable home. Where the scheme is available, the social landlord provides an equity loan of between 30% and 50% of the property purchase price. When the loan is repaid, the amount repayable will be the same agreed percentage of the value of the property at the time. The loan can be repaid at any time but must be repaid when the property is sold. <p>There are two ways that Homebuy loans are provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A social landlord can choose to sell any property in its ownership on Homebuy equity sharing terms. This will include sales of properties under 'neutral tenure' principles where newbuild properties are let or sold according to the need of the applicant; and • 'Do-it-Yourself' or 'DIY' Homebuy; eligible purchasers can choose a qualifying property from the open market and the social landlord provides an equity loan for a percentage of the purchase price. Include in Table 2.
Staircasing	Moving between percentages for a shared equity scheme for example from 50:50 to 70:30 or vice versa.
Voluntary sales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This includes the outright sale of property, for example the property is surplus to requirements due to low demand or is uneconomic to repair. • Record any sales to non-registered RSLs or the private sector as voluntary sales. Include in Table 1 if the property is at social rents, otherwise include in Table 2.