Annual Return on the Scottish Social Housing Charter

Consultation questions

We welcome your general feedback on our proposals as well as answers to the specific questions we have raised. You can read our consultation paper on our website at www.housingregulator.gov.scot
Please do not feel you have to answer every question unless you wish to do so.

Send your completed questionnaire to us by **Friday 8 November 2024.**

By email @:   consultations@shr.gov.scot

Or post to: Scottish Housing Regulator
5th Floor, 220 High Street
Glasgow G4 0QW

Name/organisation name

Almond Housing Association

Address

44 Etive Walk		
Livingston		
Postcode EH54 5AB	**Phone** 01506 439291	**Email** enquiries@almondha.org.uk

How you would like your response to be handled
To help make this a transparent process we intend to publish on our website the responses we receive, as we receive them. Please let us know how you would like us to handle your response. If you are responding as an individual, we will not publish your contact details.

Are you happy for your response to be published on our website?

Yes ☒   **No** ☐

If you are responding as an individual:

Please tell us how you would like your response to be published.	*Pick 1*
Publish my full response, including my name	☐
Please publish my response, but not my name	☐

1. There are some indicators which we do not routinely use in our regulatory assessment of social landlords' performance. As part of the consultation we are proposing to stop collecting the following indicators **14, 20, 23, 24, C3 and C4.**

   Do you agree with our proposals to remove these indicators?

   > 14 – We are in agreement re the removal of this indicator.
   > 20 – We do not agree with the removal of this indicator. Given the reduced SG funding for adaptations being experienced recently & the current uncertainty over future funding this information will assist with identifying the reasons for any increased waiting time & completion times within the sector. In addition, we would suggest it would be more worthwhile adding an indication for percentage of minor vs. major adaptations, as this also adds significant context to the average time to complete adaptations and the total costs.
   > 23 & 24 – We are in agreement re the removal of this indicator.
   > C3 – We are in agreement re the removal of this indicator.
   > C4 – We do not agree with the removal of this indicator. Ind22 is only for evictions, including ones that have abandonments after court action but not standard abandonments.

2. Following feedback from stakeholders we propose to amend the following indicators **10, 15 and C2**.

   Do you agree with our proposals to amend these indicators?

   > 10 – We agree with the proposed amendment to this indicator given the known anomalies with the current approach. Specific guidance will be required however to determine time-scales for when to include a repair which is reported again. We are in agreement that removing the need to report on timescale is appropriate.
   >
   > Additional guidance / clarification should be provided as to what can be classed as 'complex' repairs to avoid further anomalies. Clarification is also required on 12-months vs. within the reporting year. If it is 12 months rather than reporting year, this will make the process more difficult as it will require analysis of two years' worth of data, rather than just the current year. There are already discrepancies on the way landlords produce this indicator and interrogate their data - adding complexity in this way will add to this discrepancy and dilute down the value of this indicator.
   >
   > The "Proposed inclusions/exclusions" does, refer to "repairs reported again in the reporting year," so timescale needs clarified. We believe this should be reporting year.

15 – We agree with the proposed amendments to this indicator re reporting year although we do not feel that introduction of locally agreed targets as a basis for comparing performance will allow for meaningful benchmarking.
C2 – We agree with the proposed amendment to this indicator.

3. We also propose to introduce an additional indicator to monitor long term voids.

Do you agree that we should collect an additional indicator in relation to long term voids?

We agree that the above indicator should be added in relation to long term voids.

Whilst the inclusions/exclusions make it clear OOM can be removed, an observation for this proposed indicator is that if a void is long-term void throughout the year (e.g. from April – February), but relet prior to 31st March, it is not reportable.

As a result of the above the data is unlikely to be fully accurate – although appreciate it will provide a snapshot to compare year on year.

4. We propose to collect two new indicators in relation to tenant and resident safety. Do you agree with the additional indicators we propose to collect in relation electrical safety and fire detection?

We agree that the additional indicator in relation to EICR's should be collected.

We agree that the additional indicator in relation to Fire Safety (in line with Tolerable Standard) should be collected.

Unlike SHQS however, there is no allowance for exemptions/abeyances (e.g. no access), and unlike gas, there is no option to cap the meter if no access. This could lead to inconsistencies in reporting across Landlords.

5. Do you agree with our proposed approach to collect landlords' performance in relation to compliance with tenant and resident safety duties as part of the Annual Assurance Statements?

We agree with the proposed approach outlined within the consultation document.

6. Issues of damp and mould continue to be an important area of concern for tenants. We therefore propose three new indicators in relation to damp and mould. Do you agree with our proposals to introduce these indicators?

> **Average length of time taken to resolve cases of damp and/or mould** – we agree with the proposal to introduce this indicator however the guidance should ensure consistency with regard to what constitutes 'resolved' & whether this is something which the landlord or tenant determines. There is also a risk that cases will be closed down prematurely to positively influence this KPI which could result in poorer customer service.
> **Percentage of resolved cases of damp and/or mould that were reopened** – We agree with the proposal to introduce this indicator however the guidance should be clear on what constitutes an existing or new case. This appears to be a 12-month period rather than within the reporting year. As above, this is going to be far more difficult and time consuming to produce and lead to disparities. We believe this should be reporting year.
> **Number of open cases of damp and/or mould at the year-end** – As the proposed average length of time taken to resolve cases of damp and/or mould indicator clearly includes "cases resolved in the current reporting year, which were raised in the previous year, but not resolved until the current year." we believe that is more informative and negates the need for this indicator.

7. Do you agree with the proposal to collect the "Average length of time taken to resolve cases of damp and/or mould" or would the "median" be more appropriate to measure the time to resolve cases of damp and/or mould?

> We are relaxed regarding which approach to use as long as it is applied consistently across the sector.

8. Damp and mould is a complex area for landlords. Are the new indicators we propose on damp and mould clearly defined?

> As indicated in question 6 we believe that further guidance should be provided to ensure consistency of interpretation / reporting across the sector as to what is included within the calculation. We also feel that additional guidance would be helpful to ensure that there is consistent application regarding what is classed as a damp & mould case. There is the potential for cases to be misclassified / under reported so as to avoid including within the ARC return.

Other approaches / indicators which could be considered include -

Case Categories - Small / medium / large – (this would need to be carefully set out in prescribed criteria) The number of each would be meaningful against the average time as "mould on shower sealant" will be considerably quicker to resolve than penetrating damp affecting multiple rooms.

An indicator to identify 'How many cases of damp and mould resulted in the property being uninhabitable for a period of time.'

Outcomes (results): No damp or mould found / condensation / penetrating / rising.

Outcomes (reasoning): e.g. due to overcrowding, building defect, cost of living, age of stock etc.

Thank you for taking the time to give us your feedback