

## 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](http://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](mailto:consultations@shr.gov.scot)

Or post to: Scottish Housing Regulator  
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#### Name/organisation name

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#### 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?

I14. Overall we would not object to the removal of this indicator. A larger number of refusals is not necessarily a negative measure as this can represent a positive level of choice being given to housing applicants providing this does not impact on void re-let times. However, Indicator 30 - the average re-let time provides a more consistent overall view of the effectiveness of our lettings policy and procedures, void repairs and lettings standards.

I20. Adaptations ultimately improve the wellbeing of our tenants, whether this is a wet floor shower or a bespoke extension to their house. The cost while important from a budget perspective is not indicative of an actual performance improvement from the perspective of the tenant and the indicator does not align itself to accurate or meaningful benchmarking.

I23 & I24. We support this change because this indicator does not provide comparable stats across organisations. We operate a common housing register meaning RSL partners consider homeless applicants without the need for a formal section 5 referral, so in effect this indicator under reflects the consideration given to the homeless applicants in our authority. We would also support the proposed change to indicator C2.

C3. We would support this indicators removal because stock information is provided separately to the SHR in the annual stock submission and a breakdown of general and supported accommodation is provided in the annual HSAR return to the Scottish Government.

C4. We would support this because the indicator on abandoned homes is just a number and not an actual measure of performance. In reference to indicator 22, however, we would also suggest that this is a poor indicator because the evictions do not necessarily relate to the court actions listed in the indicator response.

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?

I10. This indicator, although valued by tenants, is not consistently reported across all landlords. Due to the complexity of determining what "right first time" actually means, and the degree of latitude provided in the definition to locally determine what is, or is not, included in the scope of the indicator leads to benchmarking data that is unreliable or not particularly useful. Our preference would be to remove this indicator entirely from ARC reporting as it takes a disproportionate amount of staff manual effort to collect this measure, however, we would support amending it to develop a more simplified and more

transparent approach, although, the new definition doesn't provide the clarity or simplification required.

I15. Overall we would support including cases from the previous year, however, we would propose reporting the total number of cases closed in the last year and break this down by the number resolved in specific banded time scales rather than the reintroduction of any targets we set ourselves, as this is a simpler and more understandable measure. We would strongly oppose the reintroduction of locally agreed targets because this introduces a significant level of inconsistency that results in meaningless and incomparable benchmarking information. We have concerns regarding the introduction of ASB cases per 100 homes and we require clarity regarding tenure of the ASB complainant and the subject of the complaint.

C2. We would support the proposed change to indicator C2.

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 support this change to introduce information on long term voids, provided the standard reporting exceptions as detailed in indicator 18 on void rent loss is applied to this indicator. We have ongoing concerns regarding uniform and consistent reporting of this indicator relation to the application of the exceptions by other RSLs and LAs. Overall however this would address concerns regarding properties being empty for non-routine reasons such as committee decisions, structural damage, etc.

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?

Electric Safety. We would support the introduction of this indicator because this is a critical element in assuring ourselves that we are providing safe properties for our tenants and fulfilling our legal obligations. We need further clarity in the definition regarding reporting exceptions such as properties identified for disposal that don't have an electrical power supply.

Fire Safety. We would support the introduction of this indicator because this is a critical element in assuring ourselves that we are providing safe properties for our tenants and fulfilling our legal obligations. We need further clarity in the definition regarding reporting exceptions.

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 that the Council should have ongoing assurance in respect of all areas of tenant safety and that this can be reflected via the Annual Assurance Statement. It may also be useful to include a limited number of measures that allow data to be captured on all areas of tenant safety through the use of indicators and as stated above we would include indicators for these other areas of tenant safety in the ARC.

In respect of the specific indicators regarding damp and mould reporting more clarity is required in the guidance. We need clarity at the start of this indicator regarding what is a case of damp or mould. A case of damp can be reported but when assessed it is found not to be dampness but condensation. In this case are we to report the cases reported or the cases assessed? These needs to be further clarity regarding a report of dampness or mould and a case assessed as having dampness or mould.

Further clarity is required in the definition in respect of a case of dampness and what is considered dampness. Also we need clarity for a case that is open as opposed to cases that are being monitored following any inspection or where dampness works have taken place.

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?

We support the introduction of the indicators on damp and/or mould, but would not base this solely on cases as reported by tenants as they can often confuse condensation for damp. In the absence of mould we would suggest only recording cases assessed as having damp. We agree that some cases could be complex but again the guidance should provide sufficient clarity regarding what should be and should not be included in the return.

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 would support the use of average time rather median time as this is the consistent method utilised throughout the other indicators in the return. If a distinction is required between different lengths of time taken to address the specific cases than a time banded average may be more beneficial to adopt for this indicator.

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

The core indicators seem clearly defined, however, there requires to be clarity regarding reopened cases because the stated definition is not providing sufficient clarity. The core definition is “any repair that has been reported as or assessed as a case of damp and/or mould”, if we revisited and found dampness and/or mould would this not simply be treated as a new case? Moreover, as stated above, tenants often report condensation for damp. Unless mould is present we should only report cases of dampness after an assessment has been made to rule out condensation and this should be explicit in the guidance. Not doing so could provide misleading data.

Thank you for taking the time to give us your feedback