

## 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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#### 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?

**Indicator 14: Tenancy offers refused during the year**

Agreed, as a number of RSLs moved to a more Choice Based Letting system, this measurement becomes less meaningful.

**Indicator 20: Total cost of adaptations completed in the year by source of funding**

Agreed. Given that indicators 19 and 21 already track households waiting for and the time taken to complete adaptations, the removal of the financial cost indicator could simplify reporting.

We do believe though, distinguishing between minor and major adaptations in the data would lead to a more productive reporting process and offer better insight into performance.

Minor adaptations (e.g., installing grab rails or minor changes in the bathroom) are typically low-cost and can be delivered quickly. These adaptations are essential in promoting the well-being of residents and preventing accidents, particularly among older adults or those with mobility issues.

Major adaptations (e.g., installing stairlifts or wet rooms) involve higher costs and longer completion times. They often require substantial planning, external contractors, and coordination between various departments.

By distinguishing between the two, Local Authorities can better understand the resource distribution between minor and major adaptations. It would offer insights into the impact on tenants, and overall efficiency of delivering this critical service. This nuanced approach would enhance the overall approach.

**Indicators 23 and 24: Homelessness referrals**

Agreed

**C3: Number of lets during the reporting year split between general needs and supported housing**

Agreed

**C4: Abandoned homes**

The proposal to stop collecting data on abandoned homes in favour of relying on Indicator 22 (court actions and evictions) could omit important information as possession of abandoned properties are not recovered in this manner. Abandonments provide unique insights into tenancy sustainability issues that are distinct from evictions. This data can

help Local Authorities and landlords understand the reasons behind abandoned properties, such as affordability, housing quality, or neighbourhood factors. Keeping this indicator could contribute to better housing retention strategies and reduce the incidence of abandoned homes, along with maintaining transparency within the industry.

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?

**Indicator 10: Reactive repairs completed right first time**

We disagree to changing this indicator for the following reasons. While the SHR's intent to simplify Indicator 10 is understandable, the proposed changes would introduce new complexities and fail to address the root causes of discrepancies in repair data. A more productive approach would involve refining the existing "right first time" metric to address any recording anomalies, rather than adopting a new and narrower metric that overlooks the intricacies of repair services.

Furthermore, sufficient transition time must be granted for housing systems to adjust, ensuring that any changes made do not disrupt current reporting mechanisms or undermine the integrity of performance data. As such, we recommend reconsidering this proposal. Receiving instruction in 2025 will not grant sufficient time to make the necessary system development or changes for ARC 2025/26 and therefore should be postponed until April 2026.

**Indicator 15: Anti-social behaviour cases resolved**

We agree, this appears to be a logical inclusion.

**C2: Lets in the reporting year by source of let**

We agree, this appears to be a beneficial inclusion, particularly for Local Authorities.

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 strongly agree.

It is our opinion the gross void losses should also be published without exceptions and include carry forward balances. The 'opportunity lost' needs to be quantifiable, especially during this housing crisis.

We continue to collect this information as a local indicator and therefore can facilitate its reintroduction.

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?

**How many times in the reporting year did you not meet the requirement to complete an electrical safety inspection (EICR) within five years of the last EICR?**

The proposed new indicators for electrical and fire safety are necessary and beneficial steps toward ensuring tenant and resident safety.

The main implications are the proposed timescales for implementation. At this time, we only hold current testing data in our system. Without historical data, this new indicator could have serious implications on our compliance standing. Receiving instruction in 2025 will not grant sufficient time to make the necessary system development or changes for ARC 2025/26 and therefore should be postponed until April 2026.

We feel that this indicator is sufficient without duplication in SHQS, as the proposed point of clarification relating to electrical safety. Gas safety is not included in this manner, and therefore neither should electrical.

Only occupied/tenanted properties should be subject to an electrical safety failure. A void property going for disposal or extensive works does not need to be suitable for habitation until prior to the tenancy starting, similar to gas safety regulations. The property must remain compliant throughout occupancy.

**Number of homes that do not have 'satisfactory equipment for detecting fire and giving warning in the event of fire or suspected fire' installed at the year end.**

We fully support the inclusion of this indicator.

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 do not. Solely relying on Annual Assurance Statements (AAS) may risk oversimplifying the monitoring of complex safety issues. While the overall framework encourages compliance, there is a lack of specificity regarding what safety metrics will be monitored and reported. Clear definitions and expectations are essential to ensure consistency across landlords, especially when dealing with varied safety obligations

Safety compliance is a dynamic area where issues can arise quickly, requiring real-time responses. The AAS has provided an effective platform for emergent issues to be reported on without the bureaucracy of inclusion in the overall return. A good example of this is Reinforced Autoclave Aerated Concrete (RAAC).

For more routine legal duties, such as water safety, lift servicing, asbestos. It may be more appropriate to collect specific indicators, as they detract from the overall meaningfulness of the AAS.

Revised guidance and more conformity within the industry would be welcomed.

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;**
- **Percentage of resolved cases of damp and/or mould that were reopened; and**
- **Number of open cases of damp and/or mould at the year end.**

The new indicators on damp and mould proposed in the consultation document are a positive step toward improving transparency and accountability in addressing this issue. However, a reactive approach may not yield a fully considered or meaningful outcome.

A beneficial performance indicator would be to measure a landlord's responsiveness. That could be done from initial report of issue to assessment. Following that, cases can be categorised and tracked through their journey to resolution and a determination if the residents can remain in situ.

Issues of damp and mould are not uniform in nature, they vary significantly in their causes, severity, and the interventions required. For example, some cases may involve minor ventilation issues, which can be resolved quickly with simple repairs. Others may be due to deeper structural problems, requiring extensive investigation, planning, and major works such as new Damp Proof Course. Relying solely on these current three indicators may risk oversimplifying the complexity of the issue.

Distinguishing between minor and complex cases would at least be a start to installing some sort of domain-specific metric or cluster analysis (such as average resolution time complex cases). This would provide a clearer picture of how landlords are managing damp and mould, while also ensuring that performance metrics are aligned with improving tenant outcomes and operational efficiency. As is the approach taken with repairs or complaints.

Replicating Indicator 10 for damp and mould also runs the risk of replicating the inherent problems with it. It is important that meaningful resolution is sought for tenants and trying to provide an industrywide measure is complicated. Complex matters could require independent assessor certification. Providing a clearer framework for post-resolution monitoring would give landlords the tools to better evaluate long-term effectiveness.

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?

Yes, we do agree.

In response to the question on whether the "average" or the "median" would be more appropriate for measuring the time to resolve these cases. The median does tackle outliers more effectively.

We would argue that neither metric, in isolation, sufficiently captures the complexities inherent in resolving damp and mould issues (extreme heterogeneity). Trying to measure the effectiveness of such interventions using simple, aggregate metrics, without

accounting for the complexity and variety of cases, would not provide meaningful insights into landlord performance or tenant experience. Failure to capture the varying severity of cases, distort the realities of performance, and risk undermining efforts to address serious housing issues.

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

The indicators as outlined in the consultation document still leave room for ambiguity and may not sufficiently reflect the complexity of the issues landlords and tenants face. Damp and mould problems are not uniform, and the proposed indicators fail to distinguish between different types of damp (e.g., condensation, rising damp, or penetrating damp). This lack of specificity could lead to confusion in how landlords report and interpret data, as well as inconsistencies across housing providers. Without clear definitions that distinguish between these various forms, it will be difficult for landlords to apply consistent reporting standards. A lack of categorisation could also impact the ability to benchmark performance or address root causes effectively.

Thank you for taking the time to give us your feedback