

Housing Associations in 2007: Profile of the Housing Association Sector Summary

A Dataspring Summary Report on
behalf of the Housing Corporation

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***Note on threshold change**

From 2007, the threshold criteria for housing associations (HAs) completing the Long version of the Regulatory and Statistical Return (RSR) was raised to those that owned or managed 1000 units/bedspaces (including shared ownership dwellings). Prior to this, HAs that owned or managed more than 250 units completed the long version of the RSR form. HAs that complete a Long return are required to provide more regulatory information than smaller HAs which would therefore produce lower totals in some aggregated RSR time series data. The Housing Corporation have therefore re-based some of the 2005/06 data, so that figures can be compared on a like for like basis.

1. The National Picture

1.1 Total stock¹

- The housing association (HA)² sector stockholding continued to grow and by 31 March 2007 the 1,687 HAs returning valid RSRs owned³ 2,178,223 units⁴ for rent, an increase of approximately seven percent since 2006 (Table 1).
- Ninety two percent of this stock was directly managed by the owning HA. Only a very small proportion is now managed by local authorities (LAs) on behalf of HAs (<1%) (Table 2).
- Forty five percent of the total rental HA stock⁵ was owned by LSVT HAs (Table 4), while two percent was owned by BME HAs (Table 5).
- In terms of stock managed on behalf of others, HAs managed 206,117 units in 2007, an increase of three percent over the previous year. The majority of this stock was owned by other HAs, (58%), with a further 27% being owned by other organisations. The remaining 15% was owned by LAs (Table 3).
- Three hundred and thirty three HAs operated within group structure arrangements in 2007 (Table 6), a decrease of five percent over the previous year. Group structure HAs reported 1,662,248 units as owned at 31 March 2007 (Table 7).
- There was a five percent decrease in the number of units managed under temporary housing schemes in 2007. The largest proportional decrease was in Private Sector Lease (PSL) housing 36% (Table 9).
- Nearly 30% of all HAs owned property in two or more local authority (LA) areas (Table 8).

1.2 Social housing stock

- Ninety eight percent of the total rental stock owned by HAs at 31 March 2007 was social housing (2,137,576 units). General needs units accounted for 76% of owned social housing. Supported/housing for older people units accounted for 19% and the remaining five percent was leasehold housing where the purchaser has not acquired 100% equity (Table 10).
- Ninety three percent of social housing stock was directly managed by the owning HA (Table 4).

¹ Group structure information and temporary housing data comparisons with the previous year's data are based on recalculated 2006 stock, due to the threshold change in 2007.

² For the purposes of this summary, the term 'housing association' relates only to those registered with the Housing Corporation (RSLs)

³ The definition of total stock owned by HAs includes: general needs units owned and supported and/or housing for older people units owned + non social housing units owned + leased housing where the purchaser has not acquired 100% equity (social and non social).

⁴ The term 'units' = self-contained units and shared housing bedspaces combined.

⁵ Percentage of the total here is based on the stock in Tables 4 and 5 which excludes shared ownership stock.

- Ninety four percent of the social stock in 2007 was owned by 374 HAs (just under a quarter of all HAs who completed a valid return). In terms of size, each of these HAs owned more than 1000 units of total stock. Over half the social stock was owned by HAs with between 2,501 and 10,000 units of total stock in ownership (Table 10).

1.3 General needs stock

- HAs owned 1,620,476 general needs housing units at 31 March 2007, an increase of five percent over the previous year (Table 10).
- A small proportion (1%) of these owned units were categorised as keyworker housing (HA controlled) (Table 11).
- HAs also managed a further 137,303 units on behalf of others in 2007, a slightly higher proportion of which were keyworker units (3%) (Table 11).
- Over 70% of the general needs housing owned by large HAs⁶ was two and three bedroom properties, while one bedroom stock accounted for 22%. Larger 5 and 6 bedroom properties made up less than one percent of the stock (Table 16).

1.4 Supported housing and/or housing for older people

- At 31 March 2007, HAs owned 405,076 supported housing and/or housing for older people units, an increase of three percent over the previous year (Table 10). Almost 80% of this was owned by HAs with over 2,500 units of total stock in ownership.
- HAs also managed 37,199 units on behalf of others in 2007 (Table 11).
- Seventy six percent of the owned stock was categorised as housing for older people, the majority of which was designated supported housing for older people (Table 11).
- Twenty four percent of the owned stock was categorised as supported housing, the majority of which was designated supported housing (Table 11)
- The majority of supported and/or housing for older people stock in 2007 was in the form of one bedroom properties (59%), while over a quarter was shared housing bedspaces and bedsits (Table 20).
- Ninety three percent of the supported stock was occupied at 31 March 2007 (Table 21).
- Over three quarters of supported stock owned by HAs was occupied or intended for older people with support needs (76%). In terms of other client groups to which HAs provide housing, units occupied by or intended for single homeless people and those with learning disabilities remained the next largest groups, each making up around 6% of the stock (Table 22).

1.5 Staff units

- HAs reported 6,923 staff units in 2007, a decrease of six percent over the previous year. The majority (86%) of these units were owned by large HAs (those with over 1000 units of total stock in ownership) (Table 24).

⁶ Those HAs completing a Long return (i.e. those with 1000+ units in ownership).

1.6 Shared Ownership⁷

- At 31 March 2007 HAs owned a total of 114,109 shared ownership, leasehold housing for older people (LHOP) and other shared equity housing units, an increase of 11% since 2006. Breaking these figures down further, the number of ‘other’ shared equity units increased by 46% over the year while, shared ownership and LHOP units increased by 12% and 5% respectively. Non-social shared equity housing decreased over the year by two percent (Table 26).
- Eighty three percent of the total shared equity units were SHG/HAG funded (Table 24).
- HAs often retain residual freehold responsibilities on shared equity stock where the purchaser has staircased up to 100% equity. In 2007, 106,288 such units were recorded in the RSR, an increase of nine percent over the previous year (Table 28).
- In 2007, HAs also managed residual freehold responsibilities on 19,426 units owned by other organisations (Table 28).

1.7 Non-social stock

- At 31 March 2007, HAs owned 40,647 non-social housing units, an increase of 12% percent since 2006 (Table 29).
- Student accommodation and market rented housing continued to dominate the types of non-social housing owned by HAs in 2007, accounting for 38% and 22% respectively (Table 29).
- Keyworker and specialist housing accounted for 15% and 14% respectively, and units designated as ‘Other’ non-social housing and leasehold housing (where the purchaser had not acquired 100% equity) each accounted for five percent of the total. The remaining one percent of stock was designated as NASS contract asylum seeker accommodation (Table 29).
- Non-social housing stock managed on behalf of others decreased by 5% in 2007 to 19,930 units (Table 29).
- On average, HAs spent five percent of their gross annual turnover and four percent of gross capital on non-social housing in 2007 (Table 30).

1.8 Vacancies

- Of the 2,016,174 general needs and supported housing units owned by HAs in 2007 (excluding supported housing owned by Abbeyfields and Almshouses), a total of 53,169 (3%) were vacant at 31 March. The proportion of vacancies has remained at around this level for the past five years (Table 13).
- The proportion of units vacant and available/unavailable for letting also remained static at around one percent each in 2007 (Table 13).
- The majority of general needs stock vacant and available for letting was vacant for a relatively small period of time (3 weeks or less) (40%), while only three percent were vacant for over a year (Table 17).
- The majority of general needs stock vacant and unavailable for letting was much more likely to be vacant for long periods, with 45% being vacant for over a year (Table 17).

1.9 Decent Homes Standard stock

- In 2007, 254,263 dwellings owned by HAs failed to meet the decent homes standard (DHS), a marked improvement on the previous year when the figure had been 14% higher (Table 15).

⁷ Non-social stock comparisons with the previous year’s data are based on recalculated 2006 stock, due to the threshold change in 2007.

- Seven percent of these units had not been brought up to the DHS because the tenants requested that the work should not be undertaken (Table 15).

2. The Geographical Picture

2.1 Total stock⁸

- In all Housing Corporation Investment areas (i.e. excluding stock held outside England), HAs recorded a total of 2,170,856 units of stock owned at 31 March 2007⁹ (Table 31).
- London, the South East and North West regions each held similar proportions of this stock (17%, 15% and 18% respectively). The East Midlands and the North East held the smallest proportions of the stock at five and six percent respectively (Table 31).
- In 2007, Large HAs recorded 43,041 wheelchair standard social housing units as owned in England, this was a six percent increase over the previous year. Just under a quarter of these units were held in the London region (22%), an increase of 10% over the previous year. The largest increase regionally, was in the West Midlands which was up 17% and accounted for 11% of the total wheelchair standard units (Table 32).
- Large HAs provided 691,898 units under Choice Based Lettings systems in England in 2007. Nearly half of these were relatively evenly distributed between London and the North West regions (23% and 26% respectively) (Table 33).

2.2 General needs stock

- HAs reported 1,620,045 general needs units as owned in England in 2007, a five percent increase since 2006 (Table 34).
- London and the North West held the largest proportions of this stock (17% and 18% respectively). Stock levels in all regions increased over the year, the largest rise being in Yorkshire and the Humber and the North West (both up 8%) (Table 34).
- The national vacancy rate in general needs stock for large HAs in 2007 was two percent. However, the North East region was slightly higher, at three percent, while London, Southern and Eastern regions all had slightly lower than average vacancy rates (1%) (Table 37).
- For small HAs the national average vacancy rate was just one percent, with the North East, again higher at three percent. The South East and East Midlands regions were, however, also higher than average with two percent vacancy rates (Table 38).

2.3 Supported housing and/or housing for older people

- HAs reported 404,662 owned supported housing and/or housing for older people units in England in 2007, a three percent increase since 2006 (Table 39).
- Stock had increased in all regions except London (-1%). The largest proportion of supported housing and/or housing for older people remained in the North West region as had been the case since 2005 (when a major change in definitions of these types of units had occurred)¹⁰ (Table 39).
- In terms of stock occupied or intended for older people only, HAs reported 306,016 owned units nationally in 2007, an increase of four percent over the previous year. The largest proportion of this stock was held in the North West region (19%). Stock

⁸ Comparisons with the previous year's total stock data are based on recalculated 2006 stock, due to the threshold change in 2007.

⁹ This figure excludes shared ownership, LHOP and non-social housing owned by HAs completing a Short return (those with less than 1000 units in ownership or management) as they were not required to provide this information.

¹⁰ See Housing Corporation circular 03/04 for more details.

increased in all regions, with the Northern regions experiencing the largest increase (9%)¹¹ (Table 40).

- In terms of owned supported housing stock only, HAs reported a national total of 98,646 units, a small decrease since 2006 (1%). The geographical profile of these units was different to that of housing for older people, with the majority of stock being held in the London region (29%). Supported housing decreased in five of the nine regions in 2007, but only between one and three percent. Stock held in the West Midlands, however, increased by five percent since the previous year (Table 41).

2.4 Staff units¹²

- The number of staff units owned by large HAs in England in 2007, decreased by five percent. The largest decrease regionally was in the East Midlands (-13%) (Table 44).

2.5 Shared ownership¹³

- Large HAs owned shares in 107,587 shared ownership, LHOP and other shared equity housing units held in England in 2007, an increase of 13% since 2006 (Table 45).
- Nearly half the stock was held in London and the South East, while only three percent of the stock was held in the North East (Table 45).
- The South East, London and the East Midlands had the largest proportions of leasehold housing as a percentage of total stock (8%, 7% and 7% respectively) (Table 45)

3. HA Characteristics

3.1 HAs and the RSR dataset

- 1,687 completed a valid RSR in 2007, 459 of these completed a Long return, this was 127 less than the previous year, although this can mainly be attributed to the change in threshold for completing the Long return in 2007 (Table 46).
- The remaining 1,228 completed the Short/Abbey return¹⁴ (Table 46).

3.2 Paid staff and Governing Body members

- HAs employed 110,658 FTE (Full Time Equivalent) paid staff at 31 March 2007, three percent more than in 2006 (Table 47).
- The majority of FTE staff employed by large HAs were engaged in managing or maintaining housing stock (44%). Twenty nine percent were involved in support and care services (Table 47).
- The majority of paid staff, where known, considered themselves to be of White: British/Other origin (83%) (Table 50).
- At 31 March 2007, almost two thirds of all HA paid staff were female (Table 51).
- HAs had 17,099 Governing Body members in 2007, the vast majority of whom (84%) considered themselves to be of White: British origin (Table 52).

¹¹ When taking Yorkshire and the Humber, the North East and North West regions together.

¹² Comparisons with the previous year's staff units data are based on recalculated 2006 stock, due to the threshold change in 2007.

¹³ Comparisons with the previous year's shared ownership data are based on recalculated 2006 stock, due to the threshold change in 2007.

¹⁴ Abbeyfields and Almshouses generally complete a Short return, but are not required to complete every section.

4. HA Activities

4.1 Mortgages¹⁵

- Nine Large HAs (2% of the total number of Large HAs) provided mortgages or secured loans in 2007, two less than in 2006 (Table 53).

4.2 Lettings¹⁶

- Large HAs made 278,099 lettings over the year in 2006/07, a 14% increase over the previous year. Using the CORE dataset, HAs recorded 222,696 lettings as made in 2006/07 (Table 54).
- They also rejected 8,341 LA nominations over the year, evicted 11,384 households and served 313 anti social behaviour orders (3 less than 2006) and 1,045 anti-social behaviour injunctions (301 more than 2006) (Tables 55, 57 and 58).
- Two hundred and nineteen large HAs participated in Choice Based Lettings systems in 2007, an increase of eight percent over the previous year. Just under two thirds of these owned between 2,501 and 10,000 units of total stock in ownership (Table 56).
- HA recorded 130,034 general needs lettings in the CORE dataset, in 2007, an increase of one percent over the previous year. Eighty five percent of these lettings were re-lets (Table 59).
- Half of these lettings were nominated by LAs, over a third were made to single person households (aged below 60 years old) and almost a quarter were made to lone parent households. Nearly one fifth of general needs lettings were made to households accepted as statutorily homeless at the time of letting. These figures remained much the same as the previous year (Table 59).
- An indication of stock turnover figures can be calculated by general needs lettings as a percentage of the total general needs units owned. Based on this, the average turnover rate of general needs stock was around 10% nationally, with a low of nine percent in London and a high of 14% in the East Midlands (Table 79).

4.3 Sales/Disposals¹⁷

- Large HAs made 24,321 in 2006/07, 39% more than the previous year. Just under half of these were shared ownership sales, while 30% were sales to other HAs. Twenty three percent were sold under RTB and similar schemes which was 19% less than the previous year (Table 63).
- Large HAs reported 3,466 leaseholders as having staircased to maximum equity in 2006/07, 51% more than 2005/06 (Table 66).
- Large HAs also made 6,127 disposals for non-social housing use over the year, 10% more than 2005/06. Just over half of these were made to the private sector (Table 68).
- Large HAs made 3,992 demolitions over the year, 319 units less than the previous year. Four hundred and thirty of these had received SHG funding and 81 had been demolished within 15 years of completion of a grant aided project. At 31 March 2007, 8,844 units were awaiting demolition. (Table 69).

¹⁵ Comparisons with the previous year's mortgage data are based on recalculated 2006 stock, due to the threshold change in 2007.

¹⁶ For RSR data, comparisons with the previous year's lettings data are based on recalculated 2006 stock, due to the threshold change in 2007.

¹⁷ Comparisons with the previous year's sales and disposals data are based on recalculated 2006 stock, due to the threshold change in 2007.

4.4 Additions¹⁸

- A total of 26,904 units were newly built, by or for large HAs in 2006/07, 10% more than the previous year. Twenty two percent of these were built without the use of public subsidy (20% more than in 2005/06) (Table 70 and 72).
- Large HAs purchased 3,981 homes (nearly a third of which were purchased without public subsidy) over the year, nine percent less than the previous year, while 24,875 units were acquired through voluntary transfers from LAs (Table 70).

4.5 Repairs

- A good record of repairs performance continued in 2006/07 with 386 large HAs reporting 3,002 routine repairs, the majority (94%) of which were completed within the average target of 30 calendar days (Table 76).

4.6 Tenant Satisfaction

- Three hundred and sixty three Large HAs reported on tenants' satisfaction. Of these, 23 had an overall satisfaction rating of between 90.1 to 100% from their tenants, while only two HAs had a low overall satisfaction rating of between 25.1 and 50% (Table 78).
- In terms of opportunities for tenant participation, performance was much lower, with only four HAs having a satisfaction rating of between 90.1 to 100% (Table 78).
- Tenants seemed generally satisfied with repairs and maintenance performance with 263 (of 354) HAs, reporting between 70.1 and 100% satisfaction from tenants (Table 78).

4.7 Rents^{19, 20}

- The weighted average assured net weekly rent charged for general needs self-contained tenancies in 2007 was £66.75, which was £2.52 (4%) more than the previous year. The average secure, self-contained net weekly rent charged in 2007 was £65.96, which was £1.59 (2%) higher than the previous year (Table 81).
- The average assured general needs rent was just one percent higher than the average secure rent at 31 March 2007 (Table 81).
- The weighted average net rent for supported housing and/or housing for older people housing stock was £59.12, which was £2.53 (4%) more than in 2006 (Table 84).

¹⁸ Comparisons with the previous year's additions data are based on recalculated 2006 stock, due to the threshold change in 2007.

¹⁹ Please see the *Guide to Local Rents Part II (2007)* for more detailed information on HA rents, published by the Housing Corporation at www.rsrsurvey.co.uk and www.dataspring.org.uk.

²⁰ Comparisons with the previous year's rents data are based on recalculated 2006 stock, due to the threshold change in 2007.