

# Housing Associations in 2008: Profile of the Housing Association Sector Summary

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### **1. The National Picture**

#### **1.1 Total stock**

- The housing association (HA)<sup>1</sup> sector stockholding continued to expand. By 31 March 2008, the 1,676 HAs returning valid Regulatory Statistical Returns (RSRs) owned<sup>2</sup> 2,296,368 units<sup>3</sup> for rent. This represented an increase of approximately five percent since 2007 (Table 1).
- Ninety-one percent of total stock was directly managed by the owning HA. Seven percent was managed under a management agreement by another HA and a further two percent by other organisation. Only a very small proportion (0.2%) was managed by local authorities (LAs) on behalf of HAs (Table 2).
- Forty-nine percent of the total rental stock<sup>4</sup> was owned by Large Scale Voluntary Transfer (LSVT) HAs (Table 4), while two percent was owned by Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) HAs (Table 5).
- In terms of social housing stock managed on behalf of other organisations, HAs managed 221,630 units in 2008, an increase of eight percent over the previous year. The majority of this stock was owned by other HAs (63%), with a further 26% being owned by other organisations. The remaining 11% was owned by LAs (Table 3).
- A total of 455 HAs operated within group structure arrangements in 2008 (Table 6). Group structure HAs reported 1,764,086 units as owned at 31 March 2008, 77% of the total stock in the HA sector (Table 7).
- There was a six percent decrease in the total number of units managed under temporary housing schemes in 2008. The largest proportional decrease (-27%) was properties managed by Housing Associations as Managing Agents (HAMA) and Housing Association Leasing (HALS; Table 9).
- Thirty-one percent of all HAs (511 out of 1,676) owned properties in two or more LA areas (Table 8).

#### **1.2 Social housing stock**

- Ninety-eight percent of the total rental stock owned by HAs at 31 March 2008 was social housing (2,254,783 units). General needs units accounted for 76% of owned social housing. Supported/housing for older people units accounted for 18% and the remaining six percent was leasehold housing where the purchaser has not acquired 100% equity (Table 10).
- Ninety-two percent of social housing stock was directly managed by the owning HA (Table 2).
- Ninety-four percent of the social housing stock in 2008 was owned by 384 large HAs<sup>5</sup> (23% of all HAs who completed a valid RSR) with more than 1000 units in their total

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<sup>1</sup> In this summary, the term 'housing associations' refers only to those associations registered with the Tenant Services Authority (the Registered Social Landlords, RSLs).

<sup>2</sup> The definition of total stock owned by HAs includes: general needs rented housing owned + housing for older people owned + supported rented housing owned + non social rented housing owned + social and non-social leased housing in which the purchaser has not acquired 100% of equity.

<sup>3</sup> Throughout the summary, 'units' are referred to the combination of non-self-contained and self-contained units.

<sup>4</sup> The percentage of the total rental stock is based on the sum of general needs housing, supported/housing for older people and non social housing as shown in Tables 4 and 5 in which social leased housing stock is excluded.

owned stock. Over half the social housing stock was owned by large HAs with between 2,501 and 10,000 units of total stock in ownership (Table 10).

### 1.3 General needs housing stock

- HAs owned 1,713,124 general needs housing units at 31 March 2008, an increase of six percent over the previous year (Table 10).
- Only one percent of the general needs owned (HA controlled) units were categorised as keyworker housing (Table 11).
- HAs also managed a further 139,956 units on behalf of other organisations in 2008, three percent of these units were keyworker accommodations (Table 11).
- In terms of bedsizes, 73% of the general needs housing owned by large HAs was properties with two and three bedrooms, while 21% was those with one bedroom. Less than one percent (0.4) was properties with five and six or more bedrooms (Table 16).

### 1.4 Supported housing and/or housing for older people

- At 31 March 2008, HAs owned 415,551 supported housing and/or housing for older people units, an increase of three percent over the previous year (Table 10). Almost 80% of these were owned by HAs with over 2,500 units of total stock in ownership.
- HAs also managed 38,371 units on behalf of other organisations in 2008 (Table 11).
- Seventy-six percent of the owned supported housing and/or housing for older people units was categorised as housing for older people (316,557), 71% of which was designated supported housing for older people (Table 11).
- The remaining 24% of the owned supported housing and/or housing for older people units was categorised as supported housing (98,994), 67% of which was designated supported housing (Table 11)
- In terms of bedsizes, 55% of supported and/or housing for older people stock owned by large HAs in 2008 was one bedroom properties, while 24% was shared housing bedspaces and bedsits (Table 19).
- Almost all (95%) supported housing and/or housing for older people units were occupied at 31 March 2008 (Table 20).
- Over three quarters (76%) of supported housing and/or housing for older people units owned by HAs were occupied or intended for older people with support needs. The next largest client groups were single homeless people and those with learning disabilities; they each occupied six percent of these units (Table 21).

### 1.5 Staff units

- HAs reported 6,434 staff units in 2008, a decrease of seven percent over the previous year. The majority (87%) of these units were owned by large HAs (Table 22).

### 1.6 Shared Ownership

- At 31 March 2008, HAs owned a total of 126,926 shared ownership, leasehold housing for older people (LHOP), other shared equity housing units including those for non-social housing use<sup>6</sup>. This was an increase of 11% since 2007. The number of shared ownership units increased by 11% to 107,630 in 2008, while LHOP units by 10% to 13,518. 'Other' shared equity units increased by 66% to 4,960. Non-social shared equity housing decreased by 1,267 over the year to 818 units (Table 23).
- Large HAs owned a total of 119,638 shared ownership, leasehold housing for older people (LHOP), other shared equity and non-social leased housing units. Eighty-four

<sup>5</sup> Large HAs are those who own and/or manage at least 1000 units. They are required to complete a Long version of the RSR.

<sup>6</sup> From 2005/06, HAs with less than 1000 units were no longer asked to complete information on non-social housing.

percent of them were funded by Social Housing Grant/Housing Association Grant (SHG/HAG; Table 24).

- HAs retain residual freeholder responsibilities in properties sold through shared ownership arrangements or outright sale including Right to Buy/Preserved Right to Buy/Right to Acquire (RTB/PRTB/RTA) even though the purchaser has staircased up to 100% equity. There were 114,353 such units in 2008, an increase of eight percent over the previous year (Table 26).
- In 2008, HAs also managed 19,280 properties in which the freehold has been retained but were owned by other organisations (Table 26).

### **1.7 Non-social housing stock for large HAs**

- At 31 March 2008, large HAs owned 41,585 non-social housing units, an increase of two percent since 2007 (Table 27).
- Student accommodation was the dominant type of non-social housing owned by large HAs in 2008, accounting for 30% (Table 27).
- Keyworker accommodation and market rented housing accounted for 24% and 22% of the total non-social housing stock, respectively. Specialist housing accounted for 15%, and units designated as 'Other' non-social housing accounted for six percent. Leasehold housing (where the purchaser had not acquired 100% equity) accounted for two percent of the total. The remaining one percent of non-social housing was the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) housing for asylum seekers (Table 27).
- Non-social housing stock managed by large HAs on behalf of other organisations increased by 40% in 2008 to 27,852 units (Table 27).
- On average, large HAs spent five percent of their gross annual turnover and four percent of gross capital on non-social housing in 2008 (Table 28).

### **1.8 Vacancies**

- Of the 2,128,675 general needs and supported housing and/or housing for older people units owned by HAs in 2008, a total of 53,080 (3%) were vacant at 31 March. The vacancy rates have been retained at this level for the past six years (Table 13).
- The proportions of units vacant and available or not available for letting also remained static at around one percent each in 2008 (Table 13).
- There were 13,355 vacant and available for letting general needs dwellings in 2008. Nearly half (45%) of them were unoccupied for three weeks or less, and only four percent were vacant for over a year (Table 17).
- For vacant and unavailable for letting general needs housing stock, 14,089 out of 17,023 were vacant for over six weeks, in which 52% being vacant for over a year (Table 17).

### **1.9 Decent Homes Standard stock**

- In 2008, 224,585 dwellings owned by HAs failed to meet the Decent Homes Standard (DHS). This represented 11% of the total general needs and supported housing and/or housing for older people units. It was a marked improvement on the previous year when the figure had been 12% higher (Table 15).
- An additional one percent of this owned stock (22,947) 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 stock

- At 31 March 2008, HAs owned a total of 2,296,581 units<sup>7</sup> of general needs housing, supported housing and/or housing for older people, shared ownership and LHOP, non-social housing and staff units in all nine regions in England (i.e., excluding those stock that were outside England; Table 29).
- HAs in the North West held the largest proportion (18%) of total stock, and those in London had the second largest, at 17%. The region having the smallest proportion of total stock was the East Midlands with only six percent (Table 29).
- In 2008, large HAs owned 43,082 wheelchair standard social housing units in England, an increase of 41 units (or 0.1%) over the previous year. Twenty-one percent of these units were held by large HAs in London region, a decrease of five percent. The largest increase regionally, was in the North East which was up 13% and accounted for six percent of the total wheelchair standard units (Table 30).
- In England, 836,093 units were given over to choice-based lettings by large HAs in 2008. The largest proportions of these units were located in the North West (23%) and London (20%; Table 31).

### 2.2 General needs stock

- HAs owned 1,712,710 general needs housing units in England in 2008, a six percent increase since 2007 (Table 32).
- HAs in the North West (19%) and London (17%) held the largest proportions of this stock. Stock levels in all regions increased over the year, the largest increase being in the East of England (14%) and the East Midlands (13%; Table 32).
- For large HAs, 29,243 self-contained general needs housing units were vacant in 2008. The national average vacancy rate was one percent. However, vacancy rates for large HAs in the North East, the North West and the Yorkshire and the Humber were slightly higher at two percent (Table 35).
- For small HAs, the national average vacancy rate was also one percent (1,556 out of 110,664 general needs housing stock). Small HAs in the South East had the highest vacancy rate of three percent. Also, those in the East Midlands and the North East had vacancy rates (2%) that were above the national average (Table 36).

### 2.3 Supported housing and/or housing for older people

- HAs owned 415,013 supported housing and/or housing for older people units in England in 2008, a three percent increase since 2007 (Table 37).
- Stock of supported housing and/or housing for older people increased in all regions. The only exception were the South East (<-1%) and the Yorkshire and the Humber (-2%). Since 2005, HAs in the North West owned the largest number of these units. In 2007 and 2008, they owned 18% of the total stock in England (Table 37).
- In terms of housing for older people, HAs owned 316,156 units nationally in 2008, an increase of three percent over the previous year. The largest proportion of this stock was held by HAs in the North West region (19%). Stock increased in all regions except the South East (-1%) and the Yorkshire and the Humber (-3%). HAs in the East Midlands experienced the largest increase of 17% (Table 38).
- In terms of supported housing, HAs owned a total of 98,857 units, a minute increase (0.2%) over the previous year. The geographical distribution of these units was

<sup>7</sup> This figure excludes shared ownership, LHOP and non-social housing owned by HAs with less than 1000 units in ownership or management as they were not required to provide this information in the Short version of the RSR.

different to that of housing for older people, with the majority of stock being held by HAs in London (29%). Supported housing decreased in four of the nine regions in 2008 but only between one and two percent. Stock held by HAs in the North East, however, had the largest increase of 18% (Table 39).

## **2.4 Staff units for large LAs**

- The number of staff units owned by large HAs in England in 2008 was 5,588, a decrease of seven percent over the previous year. The largest decrease regionally was in Yorkshire and the Humber (-19%; Table 42).

## **2.5 Shared ownership for large HAs**

- Large HAs in England owned a total of 121,680 shared ownership, LHOP, other shared equity housing and non-social leased housing units in 2008. This represented an increase of 13% since 2007 (Table 43).
- Over half of the stock was held by large HAs in London (30%) and the South East (26%), while only three percent was located in the North East (Table 43).
- In England, stock of shared ownership, LHOP, other shared equity housing and non-social leased housing accounted for five percent of the total stock owned by large HAs in 2008. Regionally, large HAs in London (8%), the South East (8%) and the East Midlands (7%) had the largest proportions of such dwellings in their total owned stock (Table 43).

# **3. HA Characteristics**

## **3.1 HAs and the RSR dataset**

- 1,676 HAs completed a valid RSR in 2008, 479 of them completed a Long version; this was 20 (or 4%) more than a year earlier (Table 44).
- The remaining 1,197 completed a Short version<sup>8</sup> (Table 44).

## **3.2 Paid staff and Governing Body members**

- There were a total of 115,184 full-time equivalent (FTE) paid staff at 31 March 2008, four percent more than in 2007 (Table 45).
- Large HAs employed 94,493 FTE paid staff, 45% of them were engaged in managing or maintaining the housing stock. Another 26% were involved in support and care services (Table 45).
- Ninety-three percent of 133,484 HA paid staff had known ethnic origin in 2008. The majority (83%) of them considered themselves to be White with British/Other origin (Table 48).
- At 31 March 2008, 65% of all paid staff were female (Table 49).
- HAs had 16,855 Governing Body members in 2008 with 84% of them considering themselves to be White of British origin (Table 50).

# **4. HA Activities**

## **4.1 Mortgages and secured loans provided by large HAs**

- Twelve large HAs (3% of all large HAs) provided mortgages or secured loans in 2008, three more than in 2007 (Table 52).

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<sup>8</sup> Abbeyfields and Almshouses are required to complete a Short version of the RSR but are not required to complete Part H.

## 4.2 Lettings

- A total of 285,516 general needs, and supported housing and/or housing for older people lettings made by large HAs between 1 April 2007 and 31 March 2008. This was three percent more than last year. It was also 29% more than those lettings (221,503) actually reported in the COntinuous REcording (CORE) system in 2007/08 (Table 53).
- There were 250 large HAs operating a choice-based lettings scheme in 2008, an increase of 14% over the previous year. Over 60% of these were operated by large HAs with 2,501–10,000 units of total stock in ownership (Table 54).
- Large HAs rejected 11,922 LA nominations to fill an empty property of general needs, supported housing and/or housing for older people during the year 2007/08 (Table 55). They also evicted 11,354 households (Table 56). A total of 220 Anti-social Behaviour Orders (93 less than 2006/07), and 1,319 Anti-social Behaviour Injunctions (274 more than 2006/07) were granted by large HAs during the course of the year 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008 (Table 57).
- In terms of CORE, a total of 127,301 general needs lettings were made by all HAs in 2007/08, a decrease of two percent over the previous year. A majority (84%) of these lettings were re-lets (Table 58).
- Over half (53%) of general needs lettings reported in CORE were nominated by LAs. Thirty-six percent of these lettings were made to single person households (aged below 60 years old) and another 24% to lone parent households. Also, 18% of general needs lettings were made to households accepted as statutorily homeless at the time of letting, which remained much the same as the previous year (Table 58).
- The turnover of general need housing stock is calculated by general needs lettings as a percentage of the total general needs units owned by all HAs. Based on this, the national average turnover rate of general needs housing stock was around 10%. Regionally, London, the South East and the North West all had the lowest turnover rate of nine percent, while the East Midlands had the highest of 12% (Table 77).

## 4.3 Sales/Disposals for large HAs

- Large HAs had 26,673 sales completed in 2007/08, 10% more than the previous year. Just under half of these (49%) were shared ownership sales, an increase of 14% over last year. A further 35% were sales to other HAs, and 14% were RTB/PRTB/RTA that was 32% less than a year earlier (Table 62).
- A total of 2,231 leaseholders staircased to 100% (or 75% in the case of LHOP) in shared ownership schemes offered by large HAs in 2007/08, 36% less than 2006/07 (Table 65).
- In 2007/08, large HAs also made 5,290 disposals to other HAs, the private sector and other organisations for non-social housing use, 14% less than in 2006/07. Nearly 2,000 (1,921) disposals, or 36% of all disposals, were to another HA within its group. This was a huge increase of 266% over last year (Table 68).
- Just over 6,000 (6,092) units/bedspaces were demolished by large HAs during the year 2007/08, 2,100 units more than the previous year. Eight percent of these demolitions (467) were SHG/HAG funded in which 51 were demolished within 15 years of completion of a grant aided project. At 31 March 2008, 6,036 units/bedspaces were awaiting demolition (Table 69).

## 4.4 Additions for large HAs

- A total of 25,841 dwellings were newly built by or for large HAs during the year ending 31 March 2008, 4 percent less than the previous year (Table 70). Sixteen percent of these new units (4,256) were built without public subsidy, 28% less than in 2006/07 (Table 72).

- Between 1 April 2007 and 31 March 2008, 90,061 properties were acquired by large HAs through LSVT from LAs or Housing Action Trusts. This was a tremendous increase compared with the 24,875 units transferred last year. Large HAs also purchased 5,901 dwellings in 2007/08, 48% more than the previous year. A third of these purchases were made without public subsidy (Table 70).

#### **4.5 Tenant satisfaction – general needs housing stock managed by large HAs**

- In 2008, 357 large HAs reported conducting a survey of their general needs tenants in the past three years. Twenty-four of them had 90.1–100% of tenants who were very satisfied with the overall service provided by HAs while only two HAs had 25.1–50% of their tenants satisfied with the overall services (Table 76).
- Twenty out of 355 large HAs had 80.1–100% of tenants who were very satisfied or satisfied with the opportunities for participation in management and decision making (Table 76).
- Over 70% of large HAs (254 out of 356) had 70.1–100% of tenants replied that they were very satisfied or satisfied with the way their HAs' repairs and maintenance services. However, there were six large HAs that had less than half of their tenants satisfied with such services (Table 76).

#### **4.6 Rents for large HAs<sup>9</sup>**

- For assured tenancies, the weighted average net rent charged by large HAs for self-contained general needs housing (a total of 1,476,116) in 2008 was £70.06 per week, which was £3.31 (5%) more than the previous year. For secure tenancies (120,610 units), it was £69.01, £3.05 (5%) higher than the previous year (Table 80).
- For all general needs housing owned by large HAs (i.e., including non-self-contained units), the average assured rent (£70.04 per week) was two percent higher than the average secured rent (£69.00) at 31 March 2008 (Table 80).
- For supported housing and/or housing for older people owned by large HAs, the weighted average net weekly rent for all non-self-contained and self-contained units was £62.10, which was £2.98 (5%) higher than the previous year (Table 83).

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<sup>9</sup> More detailed analysis on rents charged by all HAs can be found in *Guide to local rents 2008 Part II: Social Landlord Rents*, published at <http://www.dataspring.org.uk/outputs/detail.asp?OutputID=183> and <http://www.rsrsurvey.co.uk/index.cfm?task=viewDocs&subtask=statistics&year=2008>.