

Housing Associations in 2006: Profile of the Housing Association Sector Summary

Total rental stock in ownership:

- The housing association (HA)¹ sector stockholding continued to grow and by 31 March 2006 the 1,698 HAs returning valid RSRs owned² 2,079,515 units³ for rent, an increase of approximately three percent since 2005 (Table 4).
- In terms of geographical diversity, nearly 30% of HAs owned property in two or more local authority (LA) areas (Table 3).
- At 31 March 2006, HAs also managed 201,058 units on behalf of others – a 14% increase from the previous year. Over half of these were managed on behalf of other HAs, the majority of which were likely to be managed within group structures (Table 12).
- Four hundred and eleven HAs operated within group structure arrangements in 2006 (171 more than in the previous year) (Table 16).
- There was an eight percent decrease in the number of units managed under temporary housing schemes in 2006. The largest proportional decrease was in temporary market rent housing/HAMA plus at -26%. (Table 15).
- In 2006, 296,816 dwellings owned by HAs failed to meet the decent homes standard. This was a 14% decrease since 2005 (Table 88).

Social housing:

- Ninety eight percent of the total rental stock owned by HAs at 31 March 2006 was social housing (2,040,762 units). General needs units accounted for 76% of all social housing owned. Supported/housing for older people units accounted for 19% (Table 2). Ninety three percent of social housing stock was directly managed by the owning HA (Table 4).
- Ninety eight percent of the social stock in 2006 was owned by 533 HAs (just under a third of all HAs who completed a valid return). In terms of size, each of these HAs owned more than 250 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 2).
- Three percent of the social housing stock was vacant at 31 March 2006; this proportion has remained the same over the past 4 years (Table 6).
- HAs managed 180,078 social housing units on behalf of others, a 15% percent increase over the year. Fifty nine percent of these units were owned by other HAs within the sector, and again it is likely that the majority of these were likely to be managed within group structure arrangements (Table 13).

¹ For the purposes of this summary, the term 'housing association' relates only to those registered with the Housing Corporation (RSLs)

² 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).

³ The term 'units' = self-contained units and shared housing bedspaces combined.

General needs social housing rental stock:

- HAs owned 1,547,390 general needs housing units at 31 March 2006, an increase of two percent since the previous year (Table 23).
- The national vacancy rate in general needs stock at 31 March 2006 (as a percentage of total stock in ownership) remained at just under two percent. (Table 28).
- The weighted average assured net weekly rent charged for general needs self-contained tenancies in 2006 was £64.38, which was £2.79 (5%) more than the previous year. The average secure, self-contained net weekly rent charged in 2006 was £64.29, which was £3.72 (6%) higher than the previous year. The average assured general needs rent was less than one percent higher than the average secure rent at 31 March 2006, as opposed to two percent in the previous year (Table 36).

General needs lettings:

- CORE (COntinuous REcording of HA lettings and sales) recorded 128,264 general needs lettings between 1 April 2005 and 31 March 2006, 11% percent less than in the previous year (Table 48).
- The number of lettings that were made to tenants nominated by mobility schemes decreased by 71% percent between 2004/05 and 2005/06 (Table 48).
- Over a third of all lettings in 2005/06 were made to single adults under 60 years old. This proportion has remained much the same since 2000/01. Seventeen percent of total lettings went to households accepted as statutorily homeless at the time of letting, a slightly higher percentage than in the previous year, which was 15 % (Table 48).
- 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 eight percent in London and a high of 14% in the East Midlands (Table 51).

Supported and/or housing for older people social housing rental stock:

- At 31 March 2006, HAs owned 392,970 supported housing and/or housing for older people social housing units. The majority (86%) of these units were directly managed by the owning HA (Table 43).
- There had been no increase in the proportion of supported and/or housing for older people units vacant in 2006 (it remained at 5%) (Table 41).
- Stock occupied or intended for older people continued to be the largest supported housing and/or housing for older people client group, accounting for just under three quarters of the supported housing and/or housing for older people housing stock, followed by single homeless people with support needs, and people with learning disabilities, both accounting for 6% (Table 45).
- The weighted average net rent for supported housing and/or housing for older people housing stock was £56.73, which was £1.26 (2%) more than in 2005 (Table 46).

Non-social housing:

- At 31 March 2006, HAs owned 38,753 non-social housing units – an increase of six percent since 2005 (Table 10).

- Student accommodation and market rented housing continued to dominate the types of non-social housing owned by HAs in 2006, accounting for 38% and 23% respectively (Table 5).
- There was also a small increase in the number of non-social housing units managed on behalf of others (6%), bringing the total to 20,980 units. A third of these were student accommodation, while just under a third were categorised as 'other' non-social housing (Table 5).

Leased housing:

- At 31 March 2006, HAs owned shares in 102,582 shared ownership, Leasehold Housing for Older People (LHOP) and other shared equity units, six percent more than the previous year (Table 61).
- The number of shared ownership units had increased by 10% over the year while the number of LHOP units increased only very slightly (1%). (Table 61).
- HAs also managed but did not own shares in 10,866 leased housing units at 31 March 2006, a 31% increase since 2005 (Table 64).
- HAs retained the residual freehold interest on 97,872 units of leased housing that had been sold by them, seven percent more than in 2005 (Table 65).
- HA reported 2,402 cases of leased housing where the purchaser had staircased to 100% equity in 2006. Ninety two percent of these properties had received a Social Housing Grant (Table 74).

Other services provided by HAs:

- Of the HAs who provided other activities and services⁴, the majority were involved in activities linked to Supporting People contracted services. The average percentage of gross turnover and capital generated by these services were 10% and three percent respectively, and the majority of HAs provided these services to their own tenants (Table 18).
- Of the specified service types, 'Corporate Services' continued to account for the highest average percentage of gross turnover and capital employed (26% and 15% respectively) (Table 18).
- Sixty four HAs provided 'Non-residential units' which includes shops, offices, garages and hotels although these accounted for the least gross turnover (2%) (Table 18).
- In 2006, HAs were asked to provide information on the possible provision of mortgages or secured loans. Of the 631 HAs who completed a valid, Long return, two percent indicated that they did provide these financial services (Table 19).

Acquisitions and developments:

- HAs acquired 67,885 units over the year to 31 March 2006, 36% less than in 2005. This decrease was mainly due to a large fall (-56%) in the number of units transferred from local authorities or HATs over the year. The number of units purchased by HAs in 2006 also fell by almost half (Table 67)
- The number of units newly built increased by 10% in 2006 (Table 67).

⁴ Only HAs who completed a Long return were required to provide information on other activities and services.

- HAs built and purchased 6,101 units for rent without the use of public subsidy over the year, 18% more than the previous year (Table 68).

Sales and demolitions:

- HAs sold 18,125 units over the year, including 7,783 sales of initial shares in shared ownership properties – the highest number of statutory sales made in the sector. Although closely followed by 6,830 Right To Buy, Preserved Right To Buy, Rent to Mortgage sales and Right to Acquire sales (Table 72) - over a third of these sales were made in the North West region (Table 77).
- Eighty two percent of the shared ownership sales had received Social Housing Grant funding (Table 72).
- In terms of sales to other HAs (which accounted for less than one percent of the total stock owned in 2006) – 1,231 units were sold to group members over the year (a 65% decrease since 2005), while the number of units sold to non-group HAs increased by 52% to 2,124 units (Table 78).
- HAs demolished 4,573 units over the year, 483 units less than the previous year. Five hundred and seventy four of these had received SHG funding and 43 had been demolished within 15 years of completion of a grant aided project (Table 80).

Paid staff and Governing Body members:

- HAs employed 107,044 FTE (Full Time Equivalent) paid staff at 31 March 2006, two percent more than in 2005 (Table 81).
- The average ratio of staff per 100 dwellings was 5.1 in 2006, much the same as in 2005 where the average ratio was 5.2 (Table 84).
- The majority of paid staff, where known, considered themselves to be of White: British/Other origin (83%) (Table 85).
- At 31 March 2006, over two thirds of all HA paid staff were female (Table 86).
- At 31 March 2006, HAs had 17,282 Governing Body members (3.1% less than 2005), 85% of whom considered themselves to be of White: British origin (Table 87).

Further Information

This summary along with the tables and technical papers that accompany it are written and compiled by Jennie Spenceley (with Daniel Banks and Katherine Haynes) of Dataspring, Cambridge Centre for Housing and Planning Research, University of Cambridge. The whole process was undertaken in collaboration with Caroline Smart, Tom Sutch and Pragati Somaia of the Housing Corporation and many thanks are extended to them for their assistance.

A full list of the tables cited in this summary along with the technical papers that accompany them can be downloaded from www.dataspring.org.uk and www.rsrsurvey.co.uk.