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RSR Briefing Paper 4: Stock adaptations and dwellings provided for tenants with support needs

A Dataspring Briefing Paper on
behalf of the Housing Corporation

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HOUSING CORPORATION
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This paper is one of a series of Briefing Papers presenting the preliminary findings from a 3-year study of data from the annual Regulatory Statistical Return (RSR) that the majority of social landlords registered with the Housing Corporation are obliged to fill in each year. The overall aim of the project is to understand how the housing association sector has changed since 1989, what has influenced or driven these changes and the implication of this for future housing regulation policy. Each Briefing paper focuses on a particular theme, linked to the data available in particular parts of the RSR. This paper focuses on stock adaptations and housing provided for client groups with different support needs between 1989 and 2005.

Main findings

- The number of wheelchair adapted self contained units and bedspaces in England more than trebled from 1996 to 2005, when 47,000 dwellings were recorded in the RSR.
- Over a third of these are located in London and the South East while just a quarter are located in the North East, North West, Merseyside and Yorkshire and the Humber together.
- The proportion of all dwellings that are adapted in this way has increased from 1.3% in 1996 to 2.5% in 2005.
- The proportion adapted in the East of England is 3.2% while the North West and North East have 1.6% and 1.7% respectively.
- The number of sheltered dwellings recorded was 130,000 in 1996 and 120,000 in 2001. Following reclassification of the stock, sheltered stock levels were at 257,000 in 2005.
- Most of this is located in the South East (16%) while the North East has only 4%.
- The number of dwellings recorded for those with support needs that are owned by RSLs was 96,600 in 1999 and 127,500 in 2004.
- 59% of those were directly managed by the owning RSL in 1999 and 65% in 2004.
- RSLs also managed a further 13,400 supported dwellings for other RSLs and owning bodies in 1999 and 18,700 in 2005.
- The two largest client groups with support needs that are housed by RSLs are the single homeless (28% of all clients in 1999 and 20% in 2004) and the elderly with support needs (18% in 1999 and 28% in 2004.
- Most clients (93%) were housed by MF RSLs in 1999 but by 2004 LSVT RSLs housed 12%
- 11% of refugees recorded were housed by BME RSLs in 1999 and 12% in 2004.
- 60% of all asylum seekers recorded were housed by LSVT RSLs in 2004.

Methodology

Findings in this paper are based on analysis of data from the Housing Corporation Registry and from the RSR and its predecessor, the HAR 10, between 1989 and 2001. These are analysed by RSL type and size. The RSL type categories are provided by the Housing Corporation Registry. Size bands for the RSLs were derived by summing the numbers of self contained rental units and hostel bedspaces (excluding supported or shared accommodation). Size 0 denotes those RSLs registered but with no stock, for example the 'parent' RSL of a group structure.

RSL type code	RSL type description
ALMS	Almshouses
ABBS	Abbeyfields
BME	Black and Minority Ethnic
LSVT WHAS	Large Scale Voluntary Transfer Whole Transfer (All Stock)*
LSVT WHSS	Large Scale Voluntary Transfer Whole Transfer (Some Stock)**
LSVT PART	Large Scale Voluntary Transfer Partial Transfer***
MF	Mixed Funded****

* WHAS refers to LSVT areas where all the stock was transferred and all went to one newly created RSL
** WHSS refers to a whole-stock transfer where stock was divided between more than one new RSL
*** PART refers to an RSL set up to take transfer stock in a district where only some of the stock was transferred to the HA sector.
**** These are all other RSLs that receive mixed funding (i.e. from public and private sources) but are not included in the other six categories

RSL size bands (s/c units and bedspaces)	RSL size description
0 units	
1-50 units	small (1-250 units)
51-100 units	small (1-250 units)
101-250 units	small (1-250 units)
251-1,000 units	medium (251-2,500 units)
1,001-2,500 units	medium (251-2,500 units)
2,501-5,000 units	large (2,501-10,000 units)
5,001-7,500 units	large (2,501-10,000 units)
7,501-10,000 units	large (2,501-10,000 units)
over 10,000 units	very large (> 10,000 units)

Spatial analysis

Many variables are only available at the national level. However, some key variables are collected at the Local Authority district level and these can then be aggregated up to regional level.[1] Tables and charts will therefore either refer to dwellings totals for all RSLs with valid RSR returns (ALL) or just those dwellings that are in districts within England (ENG).

Definitions of adapted, sheltered and supported accommodation

- Wheelchair units are those specifically designed, both internally and externally, to meet the need of people who use wheelchairs permanently.
- Mobility units are those designed only for wheelchair access but have no special features of internal design. These are not included with the wheelchair units. They are for ambulant disabled people and those who need occasional use of a wheelchair.
- Sheltered units have two classifications:

(a) Sheltered with support. These are specially designed units for older people, known as category 1.5 or 2 schemes. They must have an alarm system and warden support.

(b) Very sheltered. These are units for older people with high support and personal care needs, known as category 2.5 accommodation. All individual dwellings and communal areas are wheelchair accessible and there are additional features such as special bathrooms, sluice rooms, etc. Wardens and care assistants provide intensive care and support to residents.

[1] Only data for districts that are in England are included. District level data have been harmonised to take account of local authority boundary changes that took place during the 1990s. The regions referred to are Housing Corporation Investment Regions.

- Supported housing is dwellings accommodated by people with extra support needs. It can include specially designed units (i.e. the 'support' is integral to the housing scheme) and ordinary dwellings where the support can be linked to the tenant, who receives floating or temporary support (funded by T/SNMA). Such housing includes certain types of sheltered housing, hostels, shared housing, group homes, residential care and nursing homes. Such support may include day to day help with domestic activities, provision of child care activities, provision of education, training, advice and arranging social activities.
- As a result of changes in the guidance given for filling in the RSR in 1998, the amount of supported housing owned by RSLs appears to drop suddenly between 1997 and 1998. Between 1995 and 1996 there is a big drop in the numbers of supported dwellings; this may be due to a reclassification of tenants. In 1995 the RSR asked about 'elderly' and 'frail elderly' people, whereas in 1996 it asked for details of 'older people with support needs'. It is possible that the 'frail elderly' were then classified as occupying very sheltered dwellings.
- In 2005 there was a major shift in focus in terms of supported housing, from the individual to the structure and design of the dwelling. These changes in the Housing Corporation's approach to supported and sheltered housing came about as a result of the introduction of the Supporting People programme. From 2005 supported housing is broken down into two categories, 'Purpose designed supported housing' and 'Designated supported housing'.
- In addition there was a recategorisation of sheltered housing into the following three new categories; 'Housing for older people (all special design features), housing for older people (some special design features) and designated support housing for older people'.
- Stock receiving floating or move-on support was no longer measured separately in 2005.

Changes to data requested over the years

- In 1989, 1990 and 1991 the RSR asked for number of bedspaces in shared housing units that were designed for the elderly and how many were wheelchair dwellings. Wheelchair dwellings include those that are also for the elderly.
- In 1992 it asked separately for units and bedspaces for the elderly and for wheelchair dwellings, which again were included in the dwellings for the elderly.
- In 1994 and 1995, Part B of the RSR included two questions that asked for the numbers of self contained units for rent that are adapted (either specifically designed or modified) for use by elderly people and as 'wheelchair units'
- In 1996, the relevant questions were modified and asked for numbers of units that were sheltered units for older people with support needs and wheelchair standard units and bedspaces.
- In 1997 the first question was modified to ask for numbers for both sheltered units with support and very sheltered units with support.
- The numbers of self contained accessible general housing units was requested in 1998, in addition to the numbers of wheelchair units, but this was not asked for again until 2001.
- Similarly, data collected about stock adaptations at the local authority level are not consistent over the time series. Between 1989 and 1995 data are available for units and bedspaces for the elderly, wheelchair units and wheelchair standard bedspaces.

From 1996 this changes to sheltered units and bedspaces and very sheltered units and bedspaces and the definitions for wheelchair units changes.

As a result of the changes listed above it is difficult to track change over time for stock adaptations and dwellings used for tenants with support needs. Examples used in this paper therefore track change over different time periods according to the variables used and only use data to 2004.

A table of the variables used and the years available is given below. Because of the change in reporting in 2002 some variables collected separately before 2002 have to be combined in order to link with variables from 2002 onwards.

Variables used	**Years available**
Wheelchair adapted self-contained units* + shared wheelchair standard bedspaces	1996-2005
Mobility units + mobility bedspaces	1996-2005
Sheltered units with support	1996-2001
Sheltered bedspaces with support	1996-2001
Very sheltered bedspaces with support	1996-2001
Total of sheltered bedspaces	1996-2001

*available from 1994

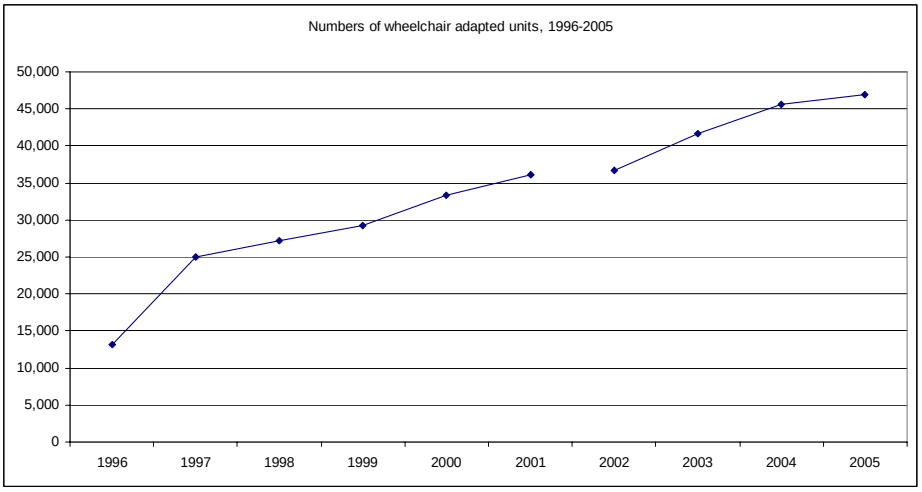
Findings

Table 1: Wheelchair adapted dwellings (ENG)

Between 1989 and 1993 stock adaptations for wheelchair users may also include some dwellings classified as being for the elderly. From 1996 onwards dwellings for the elderly were then referred to as sheltered housing with support, so these are reported in the section on sheltered housing.

Wheelchair-adapted self contained units and bedspaces are the most consistent variables available for longitudinal analysis (although the standards that these have to comply with have altered over time) and they are both available at district level.

Figure1: Numbers of wheelchair adapted units, 1996-2005



The number of wheelchair adapted self contained units and bedspaces located in England more than trebled between 1989 and 2005, from 13,100 to 47,000.

The region with the greatest proportion of the national total of wheelchair stock in 2005 is the London region (20%), although this has decreased from its 1989 proportion of 24%. Over a third (38%) of all wheelchair units were located in London and the South East in 2005, compared to just 25% in Merseyside, The North East and North West and Yorkshire and Humberside together.

The proportion of all rental units that are adapted to wheelchair standard has increased from 1.3% in 1989 to 2.5% by 2005. The regional difference in that proportion varied little in 1996, yet by 2005 it ranged from the East having the highest proportion (3.2% in 2005) and the North West and North East having the lowest (1.6% and 1.7% respectively).

Wheelchair adapted units by RSL type and size (ENG)

The breakdown of wheelchair adapted stock by RSL type and size shows the effect of reclassification that took place between 2001 and 2002. In effect, the numbers show a drop in the Almshouse and Abbeyfield RSLs and a corresponding rise in the other types. Thus there has been a fall in the proportion of adapted stock in RSLs in the smaller sizebands.

Table 2: Sheltered stock

Numbers of sheltered and very sheltered dwellings (ENG)

The numbers of sheltered and very sheltered dwellings fell from 130,000 in 1996 to 120,000 in 2001. After reclassification in 2002 stock numbers have been rising again, to reach 257,000 in 2005. The regional proportion of sheltered stock varies little between 1996 and 2005; in 2005 the South East had the highest proportion (16%) and the North East had the lowest (4%).

While MF RSLs owned most of the sheltered stock in 1996 (84%), by 2005 it was divided almost equally between MF RSLs and LSVT RSLs (48% and 46% respectively. As a result, 80% of sheltered stock is now owned by RSLs with more than 2,500 dwellings.

Figure 2: Numbers of sheltered dwellings, 1996-2001 and 2002-2005

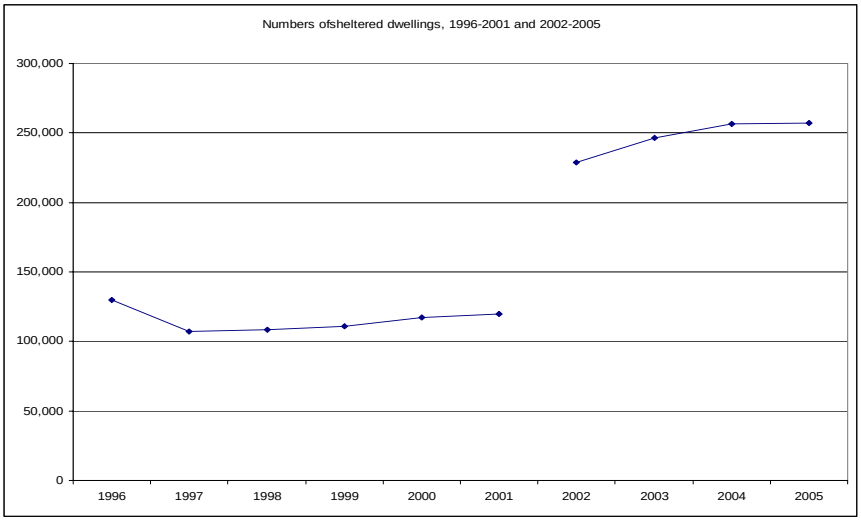


Table 3: Housing provided for clients with support needs

As a result of a change in the guidance in the RSR in 1998 the amount of supported housing that RSLs owned appeared to drop substantially between 1997 and 1998. Much of the shift was due to the reclassification of stock to general needs by a number of large RSLs because it was sheltered, not supported housing. For this reason the analysis is taken from 1999 onwards.

The number of dwellings owned by RSLs that were intended for tenants or households with support needs was 96,700 in 1999 and this had increased to 127,500 by 2004. Of those, the numbers owned and managed directly by the same RSL was 56,536 or 59% in 1999 and 82,898 or 65% in 2004.

The number of such dwellings managed by RSLs but owned by a different RSL or another body was 13,400 in 1999 and 18,700 in 2004.

Table 4: The breakdown by client group of those occupying supported housing, 1999-2004

RSLs are requested to provide a breakdown of the supported housing stock that they own by the client group needing support that it is intended to house. Data have been collected on client groups with support needs since 1995 but some of the categories have changed over time. There is a consistent categorisation of client groups with support needs, suitable for longitudinal analysis, between 1999 and 2004.

The client groups analysed in this paper are as follows:

Variable Name	Description
older	Older people
drugalc	People with drug and alcohol problems
mhlth	People with mental health problems
lrng	People with learning difficulties
offend	Ex-offenders
phys	People with physical difficulties
rfgee	Refugees
asylum	Asylum seekers
vulwmn	Vulnerable women with children
vlnwmn DV	Women vulnerable to domestic violence
hivaids	People with HIV/Aids
young	Young people at risk
snglhmls	Single homeless people

Numbers of supported units/bedspaces allocated to different client groups (ALL)

In 1999 there were 91,400 units/bedspaces occupied by clients with special needs or requiring a supported style of housing management. The two largest client groups were the single homeless (28%) and the elderly (18%). Clients with learning difficulties or mental health problems together accounted for a third of all places occupied.

By 2004 the numbers of places occupied had increased by 34% to 122,300. Most of the increase was attributable to homes designated for elderly people with support needs and as a

result they increased their share to 28% while supported accommodation for single homeless people accounted for 20%.

Breakdown of groups housed by RSL type (ALL)

In 1999 the vast majority (93%) of supported housing clients of all types were housed by MF RSLs. For clients with drug and alcohol problems this percentage rose to 99%. Older people with support needs, however, were less concentrated into MF RSLs accommodation (76%); 5% of those recorded were in Almshouses and 18% were in accommodation provided by LSVT RSLs. Eleven percent of all refugees recorded were housed by BME RSLs, together with 6% of all vulnerable women with children.

Five years later in 2004 only 85% of all clients were housed by MF RSLs while LSVT RSLs accounted for 12%. More clients with drug and alcohol problems were being housed by LSVT and BME RSLs (5% in all). No refugees are recorded as being housed by LSVTs, yet 60% of asylum seekers were in accommodation provided by LSVT RSLs and a further 4% were housed by BME RSLs.

Summary

Since 1989 there has been a shift from reporting solely on stock adaptations and more towards how RSLs are providing suitable homes and services to allow people needing a supported style of housing management to sustain their tenancies. As a result of these changes during the mid-1990s when the classifications were varying and the data asked for in the RSR was being modified, time series analysis of stock adaptations and provision for tenants with support needs is not valid.

The amount of stock adapted for wheelchair use has trebled since 1996. In addition, over a quarter of a million sheltered homes were recorded in 2005.

There has also been a shift in the balance between different users of supported housing. In 1999 the biggest group were the single homeless, but by 2005 it was the elderly with support needs.

While a significant proportion (12%) of all refugees in RSL accommodation are housed by BME RSLs, over 60% of those clients seeking asylum were housed by LSVT PART RSLs in 2004.