



## **Census Briefing Paper Two**

### **Profile of the HA Dwelling Stock: The RSR 2001 and the Census 2001, An Update**

#### **Executive Summary**

#### **Objective of the briefing paper**

The paper compares the Regulatory and Statistical Return (RSR) and the Census surveys in 2001 to assess the evidence on the number of dwelling units within the Housing Association (HA)<sup>1</sup> sector. The objective is to identify the extent of differences in the numbers of dwellings reported in the two surveys and the reasons for these differences.

#### **The main findings**

- At the national level, the Census figure for the number of HA dwelling units is 11% lower than that reported in the RSR. The differences are considerable for all geographical levels with only one identical figure at district level (Hart district).
- Almost 60% of HA stock figures reported in the RSR are larger than the HA stock measured in the 2001 Census.
- The data in the two surveys are collected for different purposes. Most fundamentally the RSR directly measures dwelling units, while the Census depends on responses about their home from individual occupants.
- The main reason for the difference lies in the impact of the LSVT programme. Seventy-seven percent of the total difference in England is related to LSVT districts.
- There is a strong relationship between the scale of the differences and the timing of LSVTs. Where there are large differences, LSVTs have often taken place near the Census date (29<sup>th</sup> April 2001).
- Besides the LSVTs, there are three other significant reasons for the differences: the incorrect reporting of 'lives rent free' category and the omission of vacant dwellings in the 2001 Census, both of which result in smaller HA stock figures in the Census as compared to the RSR; and the difference in definitions of HA used in the two surveys.

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<sup>1</sup> Within this briefing paper, the majority of the HA sector consists of associations registered with the Housing Corporation (RSLs) and non-registered housing associations includes Cooperatives and Charitable Trusts.

- Clarifying the differences and the reasons for these differences can help to ensure that the most suitable dataset is employed for the purpose of understanding the role played by HA stock at national, regional and local authority levels.

## Introduction

The paper compares the Regulatory and Statistical Return (RSR) and the Census surveys in 2001 to assess the evidence on the number of rented dwelling units in the Housing Association (HA) sector in 2001. The aims of this paper are:

- to identify the differences between the two surveys at national, regional and particularly district levels;
- to explore the possible reasons for the differences; and
- in particular, to clarify whether the differences relate to definitions and methodologies used or to the responses to particular Census question in specific areas, notably where ownership has changed over the last few years.

In order to clarify and to understand the reasons behind the differences between the HA stock reported in the RSR and the Census, this paper first considers the methodologies and definitions used in the two surveys. Then, it examines the extent of variation in more detail at different geographical levels before exploring possible reasons for these differences.

### 1. Methodologies and definitions

A comparison of the methodologies used to collect data by the RSR and the Census surveys is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Fundamental comparison of methodologies used in the RSR and the Census surveys**

<b>Methodology</b>	<b>RSR</b>	<b>Census</b>
<b>Basis of data collection</b>	HA based	Household based (four tenure)
<b>Timing</b>	Annual census at 31 March each year	Ten year census at 29 April 2001
<b>Geographic Coverage</b>	All stock owned/ England	England
<b>Spatiality</b>	1998 boundaries	1998 boundaries
<b>National variables</b>	All information available nationally	All information available nationally
<b>Local variables</b>	Key variables available at district level	All information available at district, ward, and 'Census Areas' (areas 20 times smaller than wards - around 150 households)
<b>Samples</b>	HAs with less than 250 units in ownership/ management do not provide district level breakdown of properties	All households complete the same form (communal establishment)
<b>Total HA stock</b>	Total number of units for staff +total number of units occupied + total number of vacant units (excluding bedspaces and shared ownership units)	Living units within HA owned stock (excluding vacant dwellings and staff units)

Source: RSR 2001 and 2001 Census

The Regulatory and Statistical Return (RSR) is a survey of the HA sector administered annually by the Housing Corporation as part of its regulatory function. As such it is a rich source of data about the sector and its performance. Because virtually all registered HAs complete a RSR, there is the potential to analyse data for the sector as a whole at national, regional and local authority level, as well as to assess the position of individual HAs. It covers all stock owned by HAs registered in England. This exceeds the stock of HA housing located in England because it also includes small holdings in the rest of the UK.

The 2001 Census includes people living in the rented stock owned by HAs in England at all geographic levels. In addition, the Census asks for different information in some respects, e.g. about accommodation which households occupy, compared to the RSR. The differences in characteristics and ownership of stock are noted in Table 2.

**Table 2: Comparison of characteristics and definitions of the housing stock**

<b>Definitions</b>	<b>RSR</b>	<b>Census</b>
Owned or Rented	Property for rent Property awaiting sale Shared ownership  100% Leased	Owns outright Owns with a mortgage or loan Pays part rent and part mortgage (shared ownership) Rents Lives rent free
Identity of Landlord	Owning HAs	Council (LA) HA, Co-op, Charitable Trust, Private landlord or letting agency Employer of a household member Relative or friend of a household member

Source: RSR 2001 and Census 2001

The variation in the methodologies and definitions used in the RSR and Census surveys lead to significant differences in HA stock reported.

## **2. General findings of the comparison**

### **2.1 National and regional comparisons**

At national level, the total stock owned by HAs reported in the Census is 11% less than that reported in the RSR (Table 3).

Regionally, the differences (as percentages of the RSR figures) range from 1% to 24%. All regions, except for London and the North East, have positive differences – i.e. there is less stock reported in the Census than in the RSR. The largest differences are in the West Midlands and North West regions (24% and 22% respectively) accounting for 28% and 22% of the total difference in England respectively. The differences in the South West, East Midlands, Yorkshire and the Humberside, and Merseyside regions are also higher than the national average. The smallest difference is in the London region (Table 3).

**Table 3: Regional comparison of HA stockholdings between the RSR and Census surveys**

Region	RSR	Census	Total differences	Differences as % of RSR	Differences as % of total difference in England	Number of LSVTs	Total of LSVT units
	Total HA stock	Total HA stock					
London	271,092	274,150	-3,058	-1%	-2%	12	47,414
South East	233,869	217,208	16,661	7%	11%	30	137,394
South West	146,045	120,824	25,221	17%	17%	21	84,870
East Midlands	74,209	63,502	10,707	14%	7%	4	17,397
Eastern	116,865	109,591	7,274	6%	5%	11	46,125
West Midlands	178,959	136,509	42,450	24%	28%	15	92,210
Yorkshire and the Humberside	88,536	77,458	11,078	13%	7%	3	20,380
North East	53,322	56,149	-2,827	-5%	-2%	2	38,920
North West	154,869	121,247	33,622	22%	22%	14	75,422
Merseyside	70,078	61,680	8,398	12%	6%	2	6,629
<b>ENGLAND</b>	<b>1,387,844</b>	<b>1,238,318</b>	<b>149,526</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>566,761</b>

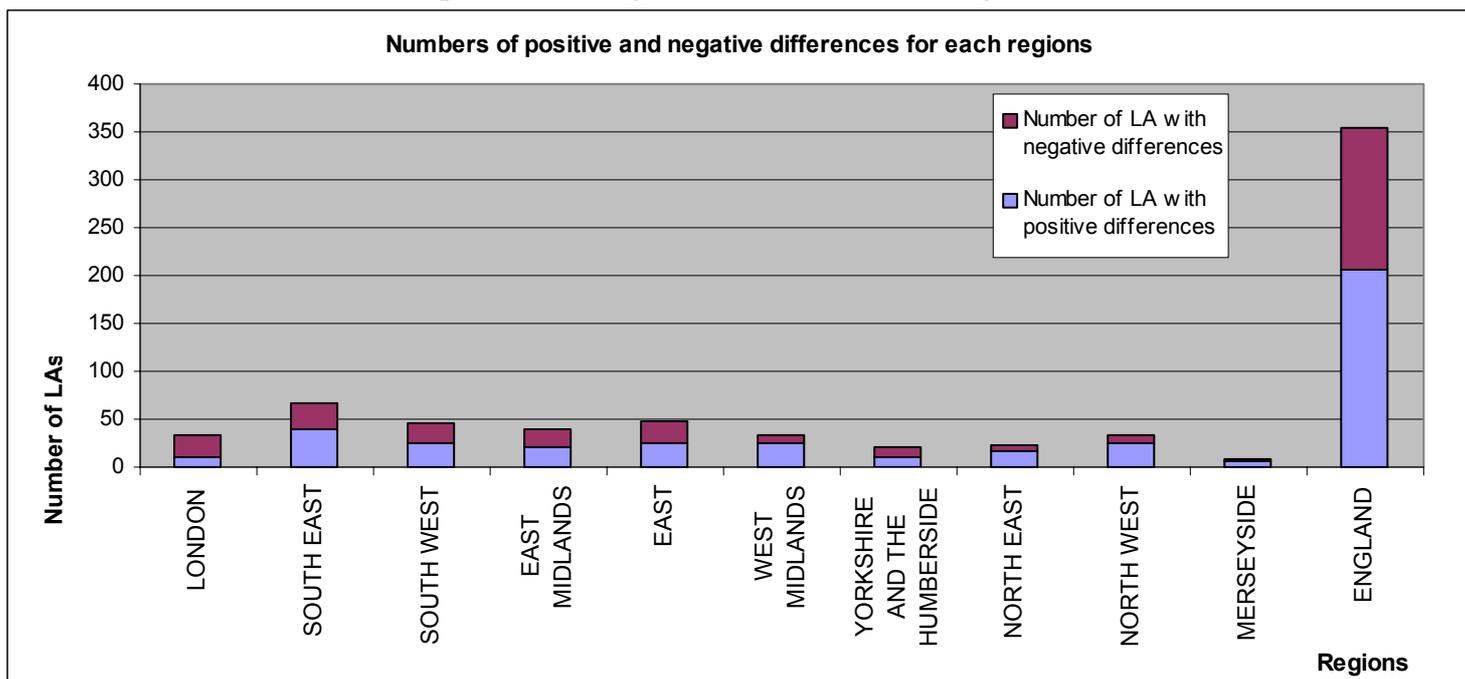
Source: The 2001 Census (National Statistic web site), and RSR 2001

Note: This table does not take into account LSVTs that occurred after the Census date (29<sup>th</sup> April 2001)

## 2.2 District level comparisons

The differences at district level range from 0.1% to 179% of the RSR HA stock, with only one identical figure between the two surveys in Hart district, which is in the South East region. Chart 1 shows that over half of the differences for all districts in England (58%) are related to higher HA stock being reported on the RSR (we call them ‘positive differences’).

**Chart 1: Number of districts with positive and negative differences in each region**



### Positive differences (RSR stock higher than that in the Census)

As shown in Table 4, the largest positive difference is for East Staffordshire (62% as a percentage of the RSR), in the West Midlands region where the difference is also largest at regional level.

The top 20 districts with positive differences, shown in Table 4, all have differences more than three times the national average. Importantly, in all districts there has been a full LSVT although in Carlisle, it occurred after the Census date.

**Table 4: The 20 largest positive differences by district (ranked according to % of RSR's HA total stock)**

Districts	RSR	Census	Differences as % of RSR	LSVT or Non-LSVT	LSVT Date	Units of LSVTs	Region	Rank
	Total HA stock	Total HA stock						
East Staffordshire	6,659	2,546	62%	F-LSVT	26.03.01	5,637	WM	1
Calderdale	15,583	6,354	59%	F-LSVT	06.03.01	12,759	YH	2
Burnley	6,653	2,929	56%	F-LSVT	08.03.00	5,330	NW	3
Newcastle-under-Lyme	10,811	4,790	56%	F-LSVT	31.01.00	9,887	WM	4
Tameside	20,574	9,682	53%	F-LSVT	27.03.00	9,433	NW	5
Boston	5,143	2,449	52%	F-LSVT	29.11.99	4,871	EM	6
Tynedale	3,808	1,817	52%	F-LSVT	20.12.99	3,564	NE	7
Coventry	25,450	12,174	52%	F-LSVT	22.09.00	20,125	WM	8
Wyre Forest	6,717	3,251	52%	F-LSVT	27.03.00	6,056	WM	9
Carlisle	2,673	1,314	51%	F-LSVT	09.12.02	7,198	NW	10
Staffordshire Moorlands	3,727	1,886	49%	F-LSVT	23.02.01	3,132	WM	11
Mendip	5,589	2,834	49%	F-LSVT	19.03.01	4,326	SW	12
Chichester	6,859	3,600	48%	F-LSVT	13.03.01	5,321	SE	13
Chester	8,000	4,261	47%	F-LSVT	27.11.00	7,096	NW	14
South Somerset	9,694	5,293	45%	F-LSVT	01.03.99	8,883	SW	15
Telford and Wrekin	14,886	8,245	45%	F-LSVT	25.3.99	13,081	WM	16
Weymouth and Portland	3,771	2,107	44%	F-LSVT	20.03.00	3,105	SW	17
East Lindsey	6,116	3,593	41%	F-LSVT	01.03.99	5,102	EM	18
Test Valley	6,239	3,720	40%	F-LSVT	27.03.00	5,495	SE	19
Kerrier	4,797	2,945	39%	F-LSVT	23.3.98	3,732	SW	20
<b>England total</b>	<b>1,387,844</b>	<b>1,238,318</b>	<b>11%</b>					

Source: Census 2001(National Statistic web site), and RSR 2001

Note:

1). F-LSVT = Full LSVT

2). In Carlisle, LSVTs took place after the Census date (29<sup>th</sup> April 2001)

### Negative differences (RSR stock less than that recorded in the Census)

Table 5 lists the 20 districts with the largest negative differences in England. At the top end these differences are very much larger than in the case of positive differences – and thus the range of differences is also larger.

The largest negative difference is in Medway (-179% of the RSR), which is in the South East region (Table 5). This is because the LSVT HAs in Medway chose not to register with the Housing Corporation (they are ‘USLs’ or ‘Unregistered Social Landlords’) and thus, did not fill in the RSR survey. Sunderland, which is in the North East region, also has a particularly large negative difference. This is because the transfer occurred close to the date that the RSR should have been completed and the newly formed LSVT HA in Sunderland did not fill in a RSR survey. The same reason also applies to Blackburn with Darwen. Moreover, there is evidence that when filling the Census, occupants in particular districts tended to be confused about the identity of their landlords. For example, in Wansbeck there are a large number of private landlords providing affordable rented housing and the occupants often assume that their landlords are housing associations. This helps to explain the high HA stock figures reported in the Census.

**Table 5: The 20 largest negative differences by district (ranked according to % of RSR’s HA total stock)**

Districts	RSR	Census	Differences as % of RSR	LSVT or Non-LSVT	Date	Units of LSVTs	Region	Rank
	Total HA stock	Total HA stock						
Medway	3,270	9,110	-179%	Unreg-LSVT	27.07.90	8029	NE	1
Sunderland	4,663	12,043	-158%	F-LSVT	26.03.01	35356	SE	2
East Hertfordshire	1,212	2,917	-141%	F-LSVT	18.03.02	2687	SE	3
Richmondshire	248	587	-137%	Non-LSVT	-	-	NW	4
Eden	768	1,808	-135%	F-LSVT	29.09.97	1510	E	5
Wansbeck	532	1,011	-90%	Non-LSVT	-	-	YH	6
Rutland	234	410	-75%	Non-LSVT	-	-	NE	7
Blackburn with Darwen	3,050	4,972	-63%	F-LSVT	28.03.01	9886	EM	8
South Cambridgeshire	1,083	1,644	-52%	Non-LSVT	-	-	NW	9
Harrow	2,257	3,244	-44%	Non-LSVT	-	-	WM	10
Berwick-upon-Tweed	229	320	-40%	Non-LSVT	-	-	EM	11
South Lakeland	858	1,200	-40%	Non-LSVT	-	-	L	12
Derbyshire Dales	346	482	-39%	Non-LSVT	-	-	EM	13
City of London	231	319	-38%	Non-LSVT	-	-	E	14
Shrewsbury and Atcham	745	1,024	-37%	Non-LSVT	-	-	EM	15
Solihull	1,574	2,096	-33%	Non-LSVT	-	-	NE	16
Teignbridge	944	1,244	-32%	Non-LSVT	-	-	NW	17
Runnymede	637	833	-31%	Non-LSVT	-	-	E	18
North Kesteven	516	672	-30%	Non-LSVT	-	-	SE	19
South Kesteven	793	1,020	-29%	Non-LSVT	-	-	EM	20
<b>England total</b>	<b>1,387,844</b>	<b>1,238,318</b>	<b>11%</b>					

Source: Census 2001(National Statistic web site), and RSR 2001

Note: LSVTs in East Hertfordshire occurred a year after the Census date (29<sup>th</sup> April 2001) which resulted in the small HA stock reported in the 2001 RSR.

### Smallest differences (those less than 2% of HA stock reported in the RSR)

The RSR and Census HA figures are identical for Hart district and it is noteworthy that Hart was a very early LSVT with occupants now well informed about the transfer. The differences in Plymouth, North Lincolnshire, Three Rivers, and Rochford are also small (0.1%). Sixty-five percent of these districts have negative differences and all, but three districts, are non-LSVT districts (Table 6).

**Table 6: The smallest differences by district (less than 2% of the RSR HA stock)**

Districts	RSR	Census	Differences as % of RSR	LSVT or Non-LSVT	Date	Units of LSVTs	Region
	Total HA stock	Total HA stock					
Hart	2591.00	2591.11	0.0%	F-LSVT	09.03.94	2408	SE
Plymouth	5972.00	5967.83	0.1%	Non-LSVT	-	-	SW
<b>North Lincolnshire</b>	<b>1087.00</b>	<b>1088.24</b>	<b>0.1%</b>	Non-LSVT	-	-	<b>YH</b>
<b>Three Rivers</b>	<b>875.00</b>	<b>876.10</b>	<b>0.1%</b>	Non-LSVT	-	-	<b>E</b>
<b>Rochford</b>	<b>871.00</b>	<b>872.29</b>	<b>0.1%</b>	Non-LSVT	-	-	<b>E</b>
<b>Shepway</b>	<b>1422.00</b>	<b>1419.85</b>	<b>0.2%</b>	Non-LSVT	-	-	<b>SE</b>
<b>Blaby</b>	<b>577.00</b>	<b>578.12</b>	<b>0.2%</b>	Non-LSVT	-	-	<b>EM</b>
<i>Waltham Forest</i>	<i>7450.00</i>	<i>7434.45</i>	0.2%	Non-LSVT	-	-	L
Cheltenham	1550.00	1546.06	0.3%	Non-LSVT	-	-	SW
Crewe and Nantwich	981.00	977.96	0.3%	Non-LSVT	-	-	NW
South Tyneside	4000.00	3985.65	0.4%	Non-LSVT	-	-	NE
<b>Southwark</b>	<b>11797.00</b>	<b>11839.69</b>	<b>0.4%</b>	Non-LSVT	-	-	<b>L</b>
Stockport	4425.00	4408.69	0.4%	Non-LSVT	-	-	NW
<b>Kirklees</b>	<b>4420.00</b>	<b>4436.96</b>	<b>0.4%</b>	Non-LSVT	-	-	<b>YH</b>
<b>South Norfolk</b>	<b>1105.00</b>	<b>1109.25</b>	<b>0.4%</b>	Non-LSVT	-	-	<b>E</b>
Wigan	2763.00	2752.11	0.4%	Non-LSVT	-	-	NW
<b>Southampton</b>	<b>4588.00</b>	<b>4606.46</b>	<b>0.4%</b>	Non-LSVT	-	-	<b>SE</b>
<b>Ellesmere Port and Neston</b>	<b>646.00</b>	<b>650.07</b>	<b>0.6%</b>	Non-LSVT	-	-	<b>M</b>
<b>Great Yarmouth</b>	<b>1024.00</b>	<b>1031.76</b>	<b>0.8%</b>	Non-LSVT	-	-	<b>E</b>
Southend-on-Sea	2592.00	2569.40	0.9%	Non-LSVT	-	-	E
<b>Hyndburn</b>	<b>1376.00</b>	<b>1388.29</b>	<b>0.9%</b>	Non-LSVT	-	-	<b>NW</b>
Sheffield	8398.00	8313.16	1.0%	Non-LSVT	-	-	YH
<b>Havering</b>	<b>1613.00</b>	<b>1632.65</b>	<b>1.2%</b>	Non-LSVT	-	-	<b>L</b>
<b>Rotherham</b>	<b>3188.00</b>	<b>3232.02</b>	<b>1.4%</b>	Non-LSVT	-	-	<b>YH</b>
Tamworth	1213.00	1195.77	1.4%	Non-LSVT	-	-	WM
<b>Stroud</b>	<b>972.00</b>	<b>986.04</b>	<b>1.4%</b>	Non-LSVT	-	-	<b>SW</b>
Teesdale	546.00	537.80	1.5%	Non-LSVT	-	-	NE
<b>Cherwell</b>	<b>2527.00</b>	<b>2565.45</b>	<b>1.5%</b>	<b>F-LSVT</b>	<b>20.02.95, 05.02.96</b>	<b>1622</b>	<b>SE</b>
Newark and Sherwood	1642.00	1614.08	1.7%	Non-LSVT	-	-	EM
<b>St. Albans</b>	<b>1299.00</b>	<b>1321.74</b>	<b>1.8%</b>	Non-LSVT	-	-	<b>E</b>
<b>Tendring</b>	<b>1943.00</b>	<b>1977.43</b>	<b>1.8%</b>	Non-LSVT	-	-	<b>E</b>
<b>Greenwich</b>	<b>9308.00</b>	<b>9473.65</b>	<b>1.8%</b>	<b>F-LSVT</b>	<b>29.03.99</b>	<b>1280</b>	<b>L</b>

Districts	RSR	Census	Differences as % of RSR	LSVT or Non-LSVT	Date	Units of LSVTs	Region
	Total HA stock	Total HA stock					
<b>Stafford</b>	<b>1268.00</b>	<b>1290.65</b>	<b>1.8%</b>	Non-LSVT	-	-	<b>WM</b>
<b>Doncaster</b>	<b>2154.00</b>	<b>2195.93</b>	<b>1.9%</b>	Non-LSVT	-	-	<b>YH</b>

Source: Census 2001(National Statistic web site), and RSR 2001

Note:

- 1). F-LSVT = Full LSVT
- 2). Bold = Negative differences

### 3. Possible reasons for the differences between the 2001 RSR and 2001 Census

There are four main reasons that can be identified for why the differences (positive and negative) found between the two surveys arise:

- The impact of the LSVT (Large Scale Voluntary Transfer) programme
- The impact of incorrect reporting of ‘Lives rent free’ in the Census 2001
- The impact of a wider definition of the HA sector in the Census
- The impact of the treatment of vacant dwellings in the Census

#### 3.1 The LSVT programme (mainly positive differences)

LSVTs involve Local Authorities transferring their housing stock to HAs via a large-scale transfer arrangement. This may lead to some ambiguity in the identity of social landlords from the point of view of occupants. Even though Table 3 shows no clear links between the numbers of LSVT or the LSVT units and differences at the regional level, there is a relationship how recently the LSVT occurred (e.g. immediately prior to the Census date) and the scale of the differences.

For example, the West Midlands region, which has the largest difference, has 15 LSVTs (92,210 units). This is considerably fewer than the South East region, which has 30 LSVTs (137,394 units), the largest number of LSVTs in England (Table 3). However, the difference in the West Midlands (24%) is significantly larger than that in the South East region (7%). This appears to be closely related to the fact that the majority of LSVTs that took place in the West Midlands were more recent than those in the South East. Forty-seven percent of LSVTs in the West Midlands took place after 1998, whilst only about a fifth was transferred during the same period in the South East region. LSVTs, which took place in the East Midlands, South West, Yorkshire and the Humberside, and Merseyside regions, were also recent (after 1998). This helps explain why the differences for these regions are higher than the national average.

Another example worth noting is the difference between the South West and East Midlands regions. Both regions have comparable proportionate differences (17% and 14% respectively) and both are above the national average. Nonetheless, the South West region has 21 LSVTs (84,870 units), while there are only four LSVTs (17,397 units) in the East Midlands region. However, the LSVTs in the East Midlands took place after 1999 and are therefore of more immediate significance in reporting terms.

At district level, as shown in Table 4, all of the 20 districts, that have the largest differences in HA stock between the two data sources, are districts with recent LSVTs. A quarter of these districts are those in which transfers took place between one to three months before the Census date. As for the rest, a large proportion of LSVTs took place after 1998. This further suggests that the timing of LSVTs is critical in accounting for differences (see Chart 2). The relationship between differences and timing of LSVTs is further illustrated by Map 1.

**Chart 2: Relationship between the absolute differences and the timing of LSVTs**

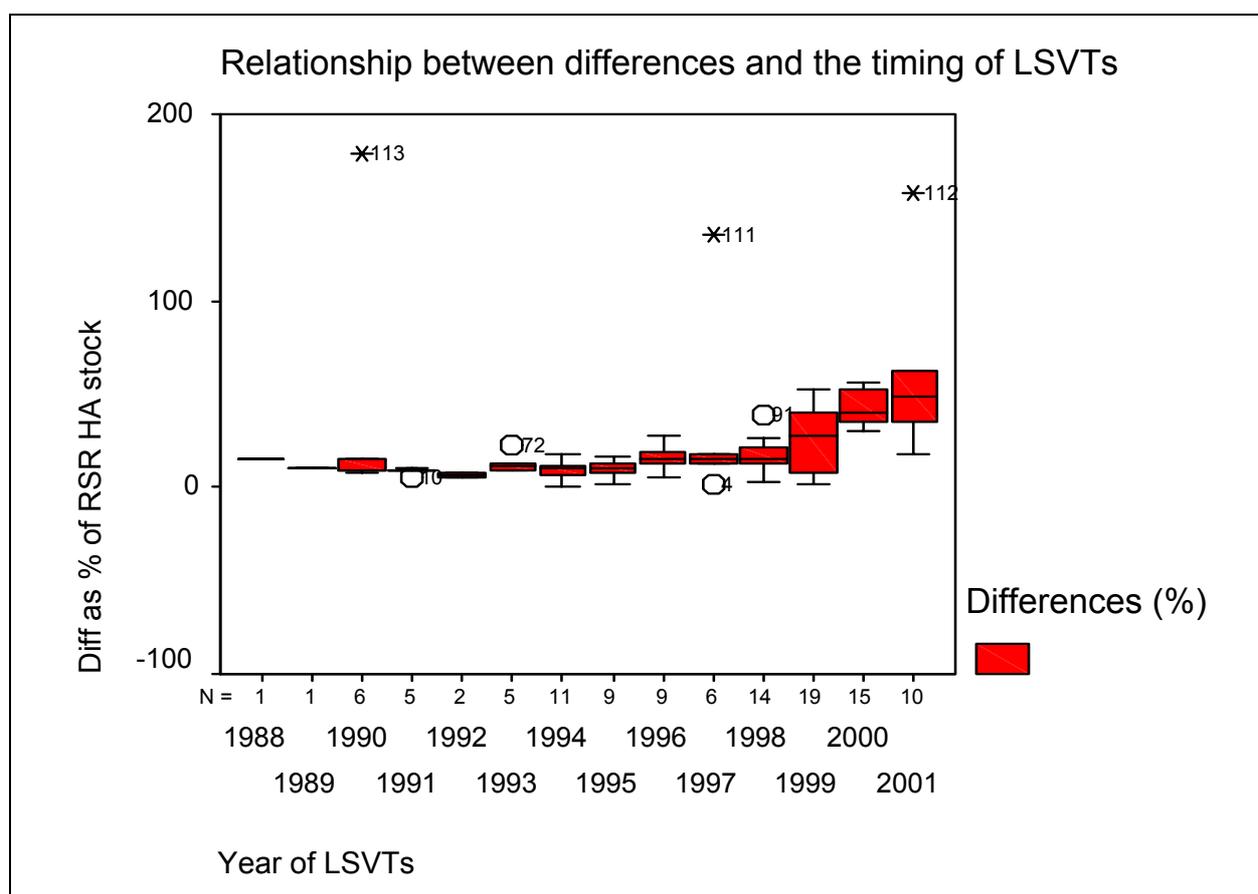


Table 7 also supports the view that LSVTs significantly influenced the HA stock levels reported in the Census. It shows that 77% of the total absolute difference for all districts in England are from LSVT districts, and within this, 90% are positive differences (the Census HA stock smaller than that reported in the RSR). On the other hand, for non-LSVT districts, the majority of the differences are negative (61%).

**Table 7: Comparison between LSVT and non-LSVT with respect to total absolute differences in England**

	Total differences (absolute)	Total differences as % of the total for England	Positive	Negative
<b>Total LSVT</b>	198,518	77%	90%	10%
<b>Total non-LSVT</b>	53,648	23%	39%	61%
<b>England total</b>	252,166	100%		

Source: Census 2001(National Statistic web site), and RSR 2001

Note: This table does not take into account LSVTs that occurred after the Census date (29<sup>th</sup> April 2001)

### 3.2 Incorrect reporting of ‘lives rent free’ in the Census 2001 (positive differences)

Another factor, which may partially explain the differences, is the ‘lives rent free’ issue. This consists of some respondents who perceived themselves to be living ‘rent free’ because they were in receipt of full Housing Benefit (with their entire rent being paid directly to their landlord) and also some housing associations’ staff whose accommodations were provided for by the associations that were not accounted for in the Census survey. On the other hand, some one-third of those who were actually living rent-free ticked one of the boxes listing possible social landlords.<sup>2</sup> The ‘lives rent free’ category accounts for 2% of the total dwellings in England<sup>3</sup>. When comparing the imputed HA stock in the Census, which includes the ‘lives rent free’ units, the total difference for England decreases significantly from 11% to 7% (Table 8). Also, the differences for all regions, except for London and the North East regions, are smaller.

**Table 8: Regional comparison between the RSR and the Census taking live rent free into account**

Region	RSR	Census	Imputed Census's HA stock (includes ‘lives rent free’ units)*	Diff (before adding lives rent free units)	Imputed diff (after adding lives rent free units)	Diff as % of RSR (before adding lives rent free units)	Imputed diff (after adding lives rent free units) as % of RSR
	Total HA stock	Total HA stock					
London	271,092	274,150	281,567	-3,058	-10,475	-1%	-4%
South East	233,869	217,208	225,292	16,661	8,577	7%	4%
South West	146,045	120,824	125,954	25,221	20,091	17%	14%
East Midlands	74,209	63,502	67,762	10,707	6,447	14%	9%
Eastern	116,865	109,591	115,080	7,274	1,785	6%	2%
West Midlands	178,959	136,509	141,805	42,450	37,154	24%	21%
Yorkshire and the Humberside	88,536	77,458	82,535	11,078	6,001	13%	7%
North East	53,322	56,149	58,771	-2,827	-5,449	-5%	-10%
North West	154,869	121,247	124,645	33,622	30,224	22%	20%
Merseyside	70,078	61,680	65,078	8,398	5,000	12%	7%
<b>ENGLAND</b>	<b>1,387,844</b>	<b>1,238,318</b>	<b>1,288,605</b>	<b>149,532</b>	<b>99,239</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>7%</b>

Source: Census 2001, and RSR 2001

Note: \*The figures in this column are imputed and are maximum figures. The ‘lives rent free’ stock is calculated by multiplying the total dwelling stock for each region by 2%, then add these onto the Census’s HA stock figures.

### 3.3 Difference in definition of the HA sector between the 2001 RSR and the 2001 Census (negative differences)

In the 2001 Census, the HA sector also includes dwellings owned by Co-operatives and Charitable Trusts while the RSR only accounts for the registered HAs (Table 2). This difference in definition of HA sector results in negative differences between the two surveys with the RSR HA stock smaller than the Census figures – and can affect particular districts quite significantly.

<sup>2</sup> ODPM

<sup>3</sup> This is part of the ‘other rents’ category, which has been excluded from Table 1 in the Census Briefing Paper 1, and accounts for 3% of total dwellings. The rest (1%) of ‘other rents’ is made up of rented from the employer of a household member, rents from relative or friend of a household member, and others.

### 3.4 The treatment of vacant dwellings in the Census 2001(positive differences)

The information in the 2001 Census was collected from households across England and necessarily only included data from those present at the time. It thus omitted information on the ownership of vacant dwellings (in addition to those without occupation rights who did not wish to advertise their presence, and those with occupation rights who were temporarily resident abroad).

Table 9 shows the change in the differences between RSR and Census figures on stock once vacant dwellings are taken into account. The difference for England falls from 11% to 7% (4% decrease) and a decrease is observed in the differences for all regions, except for London and the North East.

**Table 9: Comparison between the old differences and the imputed differences, in which vacant dwellings have been added, for England**

Region	RSR	RSR Vacant*	Census	Imputed Census HA stock (including vacant)**	Diff (before adding vacant units)	Imputed diff (after adding vacant units)	Diff as % of RSR (before adding vacant units)	Imputed diff (after adding vacant units) as % of RSR
	Total HA stock		Total HA stock					
London	271,092	7,609	274,150	281,759	-3,058	-10,667	-1%	-4%
South East	233,869	3,751	217,208	220,959	16,661	12,910	7%	6%
South West	146,045	2,438	120,824	123,262	25,221	22,783	17%	16%
East Midlands	74,209	2,448	63,502	65,950	10,707	8,259	14%	11%
Eastern	116,865	1,756	109,591	111,347	7,274	5,518	6%	5%
West Midlands	178,959	5,456	136,509	141,965	42,450	36,994	24%	21%
Yorkshire and the Humberside	88,536	2,948	77,458	80,406	11,078	8,130	13%	9%
North East	53,322	1,952	56,149	58,101	-2,827	-4,779	-5%	-9%
North West	154,869	7,164	121,247	128,411	33,622	26,458	22%	17%
Merseyside	70,078	3,727	61,680	65,407	8,398	4,671	12%	7%
<b>ENGLAND</b>	<b>1,387,844</b>	<b>49,735</b>	<b>1,238,318</b>	<b>1,288,047</b>	<b>149,532</b>	<b>99,797</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>7%</b>

Source: Census 2001, and RSR 2001

Note:

\*The data on vacant dwellings is from the RSR 2001. The regional data is only for 'self-contained units' while the vacant data for England is for total units.

\*\* The imputed Census HA stock figures (including vacant dwellings) are maximum figures.

The differences in HA stock between the two surveys are fundamentally related to the differences in the definitions and methodologies used in reporting and collecting data, and in the responses received to particular questions used in the surveys. Possible reasons for the differences include the LSVT programme, incorrect reporting of people who live rent-free in the Census, and the treatment of vacant dwellings in the Census, all of which make the HA stock reported in the 2001 Census smaller than those in the RSR (positive differences). The wider definition of the HA sector in the Census, on the other hand, leads to negative differences, with the RSR HA stock less than the Census figures. The effect of LSVTs can also lead to negative differences where transfer has been to non-registered HAs - although the overall effect of this is small. It is interesting to note that the reasons for the positive differences (larger RSR HA stock figures compared to Census) are much clearer and more general as

compared to those for negative differences, which tend to be related to district specific attributes.

## Summary and Conclusions

This paper compares the data provided by the RSR and the Census surveys with respect to Housing Association (HA) stock. There are significant differences between the two sources. The overall difference for England is 11% of the RSR. The largest difference is in the West Midlands region (24%) and the smallest is in the London region (-1%). At district level, the largest positive difference (RSR HA stock larger than the Census figures) is in East Staffordshire (62% of the RSR), in the West Midlands region while the smallest is in Plymouth (0.1%). The largest negative difference (RSR HA stock smaller than Census figures) is in Medway (-179% of the RSR) and the smallest is in North Lincolnshire, Three Rivers, and Rochford (all at -0.1%).

Four possible reasons for the differences are considered. These include the LSVT programme; the 'lives rent free' issue in the Census 2001; difference in definition of the HA sector between the two sources; and the treatment of vacant dwellings in the 2001 Census. It is found that the impact of the LSVT programme is most significant and there is a strong relationship between the timing of the LSVT programme and the scale of the differences. This applies at all geographical levels. The assumption must be that that LSVTs caused confusion in the identity of the social landlords (Local Authority and Housing Association), and thus led to differences in HA stock reported in the Census (77% of the total absolute difference in England comes from LSVT districts).

The 'live rent free' issue also played a part in these differences. People who 'lived rent free' (including incorrectly people who receive housing benefits and correctly some HA staff) accounted for 2% of the 'other rents' category in the 2001 Census (see note on Table 1 in the Census Briefing Paper 1). As a result, once the imputed figure for 'lives rent free' is added to the Census HA stock for England, the overall difference decreases from 11% to 7%.

The differences in definitions of HA sector used in the RSR and the Census 2001 also contribute to the differences. The 2001 Census takes into account not only registered HAs, but also Co-operatives, Charitable Trusts and Housing Trusts, while the RSR only accounts for the registered HAs.

The impact of vacant dwellings is also significant. Vacant dwellings were necessarily excluded from the HA stockholdings reported on the 2001 Census while the 2001 RSR reported such dwellings. Adding vacant dwellings to the Census HA stock figures could, at its maximum, reduce the total difference for England from 11% to 7%.

Because some reasons are negative and some positive, it is not possible to evaluate exactly the impact of each source of difference separately, especially at district level. However, it is clear that the positive differences tend to be more general than the negative which are often specific to a particular district.

Overall, this study shows that the 2001 RSR clearly provides a better indicator of the stock owned by Housing Associations than the Census – even though it excludes non-registered associations. As importantly, it is clear that, when using either the RSR or the Census to assess the importance of the sector, the sources of differences as identified in this briefing note should be taken into account.

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**Map 1**  
**Relationship between the differences and LSVTs**

