Ipsos MORI
Scotland

Conducting surveys of tenants and service users – a guide

Prepared for the Scottish Housing Regulator by Ipsos MORI Scotland

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Contents

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The passing of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 and the Scottish Social Housing Charter (The Charter) formed part of the legislation changes that introduced an obligation on landlords to regularly undertake surveys of their tenants and submit the resultant data to the Scottish Housing Regulator. Landlords are obliged to submit the data in their Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) by the end of May each year. The Charter sets standards and outcomes that tenants and service users can expect to receive from their landlord. The outcomes outlined in the Charter cover a wide range of issues from communication with tenants to value for money, and from estate management issues to repairs and maintenance services.

The Charter requires that landlords report against these indicators on a regular basis and that those reports are made to the SHR. The SHR has collated a series of indicators (see section 3.6.1) which outline exactly what information is required and how it should be collected and reported.

This guide is provided for local authorities and RSLs to assist in designing and conducting surveys of tenants and other service users. When we use “you” and “your” we are referring to the expected reader of this guide – the local authority or RSL.

This guide has been updated and revised in May 2016.

1.2 Why the SHR need this information

The SHR’s role is to monitor and assess landlords’ performance against the Charter, through its regulatory assessments, published analysis and thematic work. It will use the data submitted by landlords for this purpose including the data collected in tenant surveys.

There are a number of objectives that the SHR wishes to achieve by asking landlords to conduct regular surveys with their tenants and service users:

- provide tenants and service users with robust, reliable, high quality information about the range of services provided by landlords
- help in an assessment of whether landlords are achieving the standard of outcomes required by the Charter

- be able to compare the performance of landlords by having identical data from each
- plan regulatory activity as a result of the performance data received from landlords
- use information from indicators to look more closely at specific aspects of a landlord's performance.

1.3 Purpose of this guide

This guide has been commissioned by the SHR, and prepared and written by researchers from Ipsos MORI Scotland. Over many years Ipsos MORI has conducted a range of surveys in the social housing sector. This includes the Scottish Household and House Condition Surveys and the 2009 national survey of social housing tenant priorities.

In 2011 we published a report for the SHR, proposing minimum standards, which stated what all social housing landlords should collect in order to obtain robust data on tenant satisfaction. In producing those recommendations our overriding principles were to ensure that the SHR obtain robust evidence of tenant satisfaction from all landlords while making sure that the landlords themselves could undertake surveys which are cost effective and do not over burden their time.

This guide takes that report one stage further, although its principles remain the same. It sets out detailed steps for conducting a survey, capturing the views and experiences of tenants and other service users. In writing this guide we have ensured that the following principles are achieved:

- SHR will receive regular, robust data from all social housing landlords which it can use for its own purposes
- data should be consistent between landlords so that SHR is receiving the same information from all
- all attempts will be made to minimise the burden on landlords by building in flexibility around data collection options.

We outline more on these principles throughout this guide.

1.4 What this guide covers

This guide sets out recommended steps on how to conduct a survey of social housing tenants and service users. It covers the major pitfalls to avoid and sets out the pros and cons of choices available at different stages in the research process.

In particular this guide covers:

- choosing an appropriate data collection method
- sampling
- questionnaire content and design
- using existing performance data
- fieldwork scheduling and regularity
- collecting the data
- data entry and cleaning
- preparing data for the SHR.

2 Getting started

2.1 Links with existing survey activity

Many landlords will already be engaging with tenants and service users through regular surveys. The purpose of the Charter survey is to complement that existing activity rather than replace with entirely new rules and guidance.

In our 2011 report setting out minimum standards for capturing tenant satisfaction information, we acknowledged that the majority of stakeholders who participated in that research favoured a 'bottom-up' approach to surveying tenants. This means that landlords should have ownership and management of the survey.

This guide is designed to reinforce that position, emphasising flexibility for landlords. This is partly to avoid unnecessary burden and expense, and partly by way of acknowledging the existing research and engagement that most landlords already undertake. *This guide is designed to complement that activity rather than replace it.*

There are a number of ways in which this flexibility is built in, including:

- landlords can choose between a range of data collection approaches provided the minimum requirements are met (see section 3.2 for more details)
- landlords can add their own questions to the short number of questions that must be asked by all (see section 3.6.1 for more details)
- for some questions, performance data can be provided rather than data collected in surveys, provided the minimum requirements are met (see section 3.7.1 for more details).

This guide will help landlords provide the SHR with meaningful and useful data for its purposes.

The guide includes issues such as the specific wording of some questions, the data collection techniques that can be used and the formats in which data should be supplied to the SHR.

2.2 Aims and objectives of your survey

Landlords should think carefully about the aims and objectives of the survey. There are a limited number of questions required to comply with the Charter indicators. So, there is wide scope for landlords to test attitudes and experiences in a range of other areas.

In addition to the questions required by the SHR, landlords may want to gather feedback on issues such as:

- testing specific communications landlords use with tenants, e.g. how good is the regular newsletter; would tenants prefer postal or online communication?
- views of customer service provided by the landlord
- satisfaction with any other services provided which are not covered in the Charter-related questions.

2.3 Pre survey engagement with tenants

In section 3.6.2 we outline ways in which landlords can design and manage surveys to maximise rates of response among participants.

However, there is much that landlords can do before the survey starts so that, when tenants and service users are requested to take part in the survey, they are already aware of it and have been encouraged to engage. Landlords can use their suite of communications tools, including newsletters, links with RTOs, public meetings and any social media tools, to advertise the survey and encourage participation, emphasising:

- the survey will be focussed around key services, enabling landlords to be more aware of and sensitive to the needs of tenants and service users, making appropriate changes to services and improve tenant experience.
- information will be used by landlords and the SHR to ensure service improvement and identify areas of tenant concern
- the survey will be short and simple to complete
- all information given will be entirely confidential and participants will not be asked to identify themselves in the survey
- details of any incentives such as a prize draw for all participants
- the dates of the survey
- previous results from surveys and any other tenant engagement exercises.

Early, clear and eye-catching communication will generate a positive feel for the survey, give tenants and service users notice that it is going to happen, and encourage them to take part when asked.

2.4 Data security, confidentiality and anonymity

Since the sample and information collected as part of the survey will include personal information about individuals (including their name, address and other personal and household information), issues relating to data security, confidentiality and anonymity of data are of paramount importance and should frame all stages of the research process. The design and management of the survey should comply with the Market Research Society's Code of Conduct, and adhere to the Data Protection Act 1998. It is important to take account of the following:

- information collected for one purpose (in this case 'research') cannot be used for any other – for example, it should not be added to a tenant management database as intelligence on particular households
- it should not be possible to identify individual respondents in the results.

Dependent upon how the survey is carried out, you may need to match up survey responses with personal sample information; for example:

- where you want to link information contained in your database of stock with survey data, for analysis purposes
- to check the profile of the achieved sample (see 4.4)
- in postal surveys to identify households who have not responded to the survey for the purposes of sending out reminders (see 4.2 for more information).

It is good practice to save personal information and survey data as <u>separate</u> files. This will help to ensure that personal information is not disclosed and that individuals are not identified in the results. To facilitate the process of linking files (for the purposes above), we would recommend using a unique identifier for each household which can be used to temporarily match survey data with personal information. To further ensure that data is held securely, all files containing personal information should be encrypted and password protected.

For further reading on the issues relating to collecting and storing respondent data please see:

https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/https://www.mrs.org.uk/standards/data_protection/

3 How to design the survey

✓ Do…	✗ Don't…
• consider the most appropriate method for conducting fieldwork based on your requirements	• conduct a survey using an online methodology
• consider the pros and cons of each methodology carefully	• conduct a survey using more than one method before ensuring that questions are appropriate for both methods
• consider the benefits and drawbacks of outsourcing survey fieldwork	• compromise the integrity or robustness of the survey in order to gain a 40% response rate
• ensure any sample drawn is representative of the population	• draw a representative sample of units if it may be more cost effective to conduct a census
• ensure that questions chosen relate to the indicators outlined by the SHR	• conduct survey fieldwork in a number of waves across years

3.1 Introduction

This section sets out recommendations for completing and submitting each element of the survey process. It recommends standards in your approach to the survey and gives a range of advice at each stage.

These should apply at each stage and are summarised as:

- **data collection method –** we recommend that surveys should be conducted either via a postal, self-completion exercise or by an interviewer via a face to face or telephone interview, and *not* by surveys online

- **sampling –** we recommend that landlords with fewer than 2,500 units invite *all* tenants and service users to participate in the survey. Those with more than 2,500 can draw a representative sample of tenants **or** invite all to participate

- **questionnaires –** questions linked to the Charter indicators should contain the exact wording specified on those indicators. Other questions can be added at the landlord's discretion though notice should be taken of advice on how to word and structure questionnaires

- **administration –** landlords should follow advice provided on the process of administering the survey, ensuring that all efforts are made to maximise response rates and that participants are encouraged to take part

- **data –** before being submitted to the SHR data must be coded, cleaned, weighted and checked in accordance with the guidance set out

- **submission –** when submitting data to the SHR, landlords should ensure it is sent securely and in the required format.

3.2 Choosing the right method

In order to meet the SHR's minimum requirements, we would recommend that the survey is carried out by post, telephone or face-to-face. For the purposes of this exercise, *online surveys should not be used* as they are extremely unlikely to provide results representative of the wider tenant population: large numbers of tenants of social landlords do not have access to the internet so an online method would automatically exclude a sizable proportion of the tenant population from the survey. For example, data from the Scottish Household Survey shows that only six in ten households in the social rented sector have access to the internet compared to nine in ten in the owner occupied and private rented sectors.[1] This means that online surveys of social housing tenants run significant risks of being unrepresentative; for that reason we recommend avoiding online surveys as a method for conducting tenant research.

As discussed above at 3.1, any of the three recommended methods can be used as long as the SHR's minimum requirements on statistical robustness are met. While it might be anticipated that many landlords will choose a postal survey, we would encourage landlords to adopt more robust methods where possible.

Each data collection method has advantages and disadvantages which need to be weighed up by landlords. These are outlined in Table 1. We encourage landlords to think carefully about these before making their decision.

[1] Data from *Scotland's People Annual Report: Results from 2014 Scottish Household Survey*, published August 2015

Weighing up the pros and cons of the different methods, ***face-to-face surveys are considered best at obtaining representative samples and have the fewest constraints in relation to the length and complexity of the questionnaire.***

Postal surveys are considered the least satisfactory in respect of these attributes. However, postal surveys are substantially less expensive and are less complex to design, manage and implement. Indeed, postal surveys can be carried out in house without incurring significant extra cost or the need for specialist equipment or expertise.

The final decision over which method to use will depend on a variety of factors including: the survey method you use currently (if any); the budget available; the availability of a suitable sample; resources and expertise available; and the demographic of the tenants you wish to survey. Landlords will need to adapt their chosen method to their own circumstances.

It is worth noting that the method chosen to collect data can affect the response rate (see Table 1 for more information). It is also worth noting that the chosen method can also affect the ways in which respondents answer certain questions. For example, questions relating to tenant satisfaction tend to score higher satisfaction when conducted using a face-to-face method, rather than a postal survey.

3.3 Using a mixed method approach

It is possible for landlords to use more than one data collection method when surveying their tenants. This may be an approach some landlords take to ensure they receive an adequate number of responses. It is essential that landlords ensure their survey questions that are used across both methods are consistent, and are appropriate for the method. This will allow data to be collated. If this approach is taken, landlords should also ensure that both strands of fieldwork are conducted over the same time period.

For example, a landlord may initially undertake a postal survey of their tenant stock. If response rates were low to this survey, they may consider using a telephone methodology to contact residents and conduct the survey by phone. This landlord should ensure that those respondents who are called are not the same as those who returned their postal survey to avoid duplicated data. They should also ensure that the questions are consistent across both methods to allow data to be collated.

Whichever method is chosen, the SHR requires the following technical information as part of the statistical return (see section 5 for more information):

- method of administering the survey
- number of tenants who were surveyed
- fieldwork dates of the survey.

Table 1 below compares each method (postal, telephone and face-to-face methods) in relation to:

- *response rates* – what response rate is the method likely to yield? (It is worth noting that the response rates shown in Table 1 are indicative. They are not necessarily what landlords should expect to achieve with their tenant survey.)
- *representativeness* – how representative is the survey likely to be?
- *effects on questionnaire design* – what impact does the method have on the length and complexity of the questionnaire and questions that can be used?
- *quality of answers/data* – how does the method affect the quality of the information collected, in terms of: missing data, response error; and social desirability?
- *implementing the survey* – how does the method impact on the design and management of the survey?

Table 1: A comparison of the three recommended methods

Aspect	Postal	Telephone	Face-to-face
Summary of method	Self administered – completed by the respondent, without the aid of an interviewer.	Interviewers administer the questionnaire to the respondent over the telephone from a central location. Research organisations routinely use CATI – Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing – but can be carried out using paper and pen.	Interviewers administer the questionnaire to the respondent in person. Research organisations routinely use CAPI – computer assisted personal interviewing – but can be carried out using paper and pen.
Response Rates	Typically lowest response rates of three methods – a response rate of approximately 40% is possible	Typically higher than postal but lower than face-to-face – a response rate of approximately 50% is possible	Typically highest of three methods – a response rate of approximately 60% is possible
Representativeness	Universal coverage – sampling carried out using address list. Lower response rates can increase the chances of bias in the results i.e. that people who respond to the survey are systematically different to those who do not. No control over who completes the survey so cannot be certain that the questionnaire has been completed by the appropriate person.	Restricted to respondents for whom valid telephone numbers are available. As a result, does not provide universal coverage of population and may risk under representing specific groups (e.g. poorer groups who are less likely to have telephones). May not be feasible at all unless landlords have landline and mobile telephone number for almost all tenants Complete control over who completes survey. Can ask specifically for a named person or for a particular role in household (for example, head of household).	Universal coverage – sampling carried out using address list. Highest response rates mean that there is lowest chance of bias in the results. Complete control over who completes survey. Can ask specifically for a named person or for a particular role in household (for example, head of household).
Effects on questionnaire design	Since they rely on respondents being able to complete the questionnaire themselves, the questions and instructions must be easy to understand and self explanatory. Further, to increase response rates, questionnaire length should be kept to a minimum (around 4 A4 pages max) and be carefully designed	More complex questionnaires can be used than in postal surveys since interviewers are on hand to clarify misunderstandings, respond to any queries and probe open ended questions. However, since the survey is administered over the phone, questions should be less complex, and interviews should be shorter (around 10 mins max), than those used in face-to-face surveys.	More complex questionnaires can be used than in postal and in telephone surveys because interviewers are on hand to clarify misunderstandings, respond to any queries and probe open ended questions. Further, showcards which display the possible response options to closed questions can be shown to respondents. Longer interviews can be carried out (around 20 mins max).

Aspect	Postal	Telephone	Face-to-face
Quality of answers/data	Since they rely on respondents completing the questionnaire themselves, they are prone to respondent errors – including answering questions incorrectly or missing out questions entirely. This increases the likelihood of 'missing' data. Respondents are more likely to provide honest answers as they complete it on their own, without the presence of an interviewer.	Since the interviewer administers the survey, the likelihood of response errors is minimal. However, the presence of the interviewers means that the survey may be more prone to social desirability bias than a postal method (that is, where the respondent provides an answer they deem is more socially acceptable rather than 'true'); although, the fact that it is over the phone, means that this is less of an issue than in face-to-face surveys.	Since the interviewer administers the survey, the likelihood of response errors is minimal. However, the presence of the interviewer means that the survey may be more prone to social desirability bias than other methods (that is, where the respondent provides an answer they deem is more socially acceptable rather than 'true').
Impact on implementing the survey	Least expensive of three options. Cost is related directly to number of questionnaires printed and sent. To improve response rates care must be taken over the design of the questionnaire and the follow-up of non-responders. Does not require interviewers. Can be carried out without the need for fieldwork team. Can be carried out in-house without the need for special equipment or expertise.	Less expensive than face-to-face since there is no travelling involved. Respondents who are not in at the time of the call can easily be called back. Requires trained interviewers and supervision of the team. Can be carried out from a central location. Should be conducted in line with the Market Research Society guidelines. As part of this, all interviewers should be properly trained and supervised to Interviewer Quality Control Scheme standards (IQCS).	Most expensive method given the time and travel involved: Interviewers need to visit each address in person and may require multiple visits to interview respondents who are not at home. Cost increases with greater geographical dispersion of the sample. Requires trained interviewers and supervision of the team. Need to consider safety issues of interviewers carrying out fieldwork alone. Should be conducted in line with the Market Research Society guidelines. As part of this, all interviewers should be properly trained and supervised to Interviewer Quality Control Scheme standards (IQCS).

3.4 Outsourcing Survey work

Currently, some landlords undertake tenant surveys using their own staff and expertise so that the exercise is conducted entirely 'in-house.' Others procure the expertise of an external research organisation to undertake the work.

The main advantage of keeping the survey in-house is that it is likely to be less expensive than using a third party.

However, there are considerable advantages to procuring help from a research company, including:

- **expertise -** they are likely to have more expertise in designing and delivering robust surveys which will have advantages in terms of:
    - drawing robust samples
    - choosing the most appropriate data collection method
    - ensuring fieldwork is efficient and robust
    - analysis and weighting of data
- **independence -** they are entirely independent of the landlord
- **flexibility -** they can be used for certain elements of the survey if not the entire process
- **quality control –** all research companies should have strict quality control procedures which will enhance confidence in data robustness and should adhere to the principles set out by the Market Research Society – landlords should always check this in advance.

It is acceptable for groups of landlords to come together and procure research services jointly and we understand that there may be economies of scale in doing so. This guidance applies equally in those circumstances as when procured individually or undertaken in-house.

We strongly recommend that landlords make all these checks through a procurement process before awarding contracts for tenant surveys.

3.5 Sampling

Sampling refers to the process that some landlords will need to go through to select a representative proportion of their tenants and service users to take part in the survey. For those with a large number of tenants and service users, sampling enables landlords to conduct the survey among a cross-section in the knowledge that the survey data is representative of your tenant base as a whole.

3.5.1 The sample frame

The sample frame is a list of tenants and service users, held usually in an Excel file. This is the document from which the sample should be selected. Landlords will want, as a minimum, the following details on the file:

- full postal address, including postcode and neighbourhood/management area
- property type (i.e. flat, terraced, detached etc.) and age
- number of bedrooms in the property
- name, age, sex of tenants and service users
- tenure – i.e. whether tenant or factored service user.

Before landlords select the final sample to contact, they should be sure that the sample selected matches the profile of the population of tenants as a whole in line with the above characteristics.

It is also important that certain properties, tenants and other service users are excluded from the sample before it is selected because they are not applicable to the survey. This includes:

- any tenure groups not being surveyed
- empty properties
- commercial or non-residential properties and garages
- people who are known to have died since the database was last updated
- duplicate and ‘dummy’ entries in the sample.

In order to protect respondent confidentiality and assist with administration, we recommend that landlords create a unique identification number for each property. For other recommendations around data protection see section 2.4.

3.5.2 Do you need a census or a sample?

Ipsos MORI's 2011 report to the Scottish Housing Regulator, *'Capturing Better Information on Tenant Satisfaction*[2]*,* outlined the approach that landlords should take to select a sample of their tenants.

Before going into more detail about why and how to undertake a sample selection, it is important to point out that *the vast majority of landlords in Scotland will not need to select a sample of their tenants because they will need to contact all tenants to take part in their survey, i.e. undertake a census.*

Landlords with up to 1,500 units should invite all their tenants and service users to take part in the survey in order to provide the SHR with data for analysis which is accurate to ±5%, assuming they can achieve what we would consider a reasonable response rate of 40%. Considering the time and expertise required for extracting data and organising sampling, it is more cost-effective for landlords with up to 2,500 units to mail questionnaires to *all* tenants rather than a sample.

We would therefore recommend that only landlords with 2,500 or more units need to select a representative sample of their tenants.

We understand that landlords with fewer than 2,500 units may wish to draw a sample of their tenants. While it may be possible for landlords with more than 1,500 units to draw a sample, if it is likely that the response rate will fall short of 40%, they should conduct a census to ensure that there are enough responses. ***It is highly recommended that landlords with less than 2,500 units conduct a census.***

There are three main reasons for this, all linked to the fact that a census approach will result in more responses:

1. a census approach is likely to reduce the need for significant weighting of data at the end of the survey
2. a census approach is more likely to result in landlords being able to do more robust data analysis
3. a census approach is likely to be cheaper

[2] http://www.ipsos-mori.com/Assets/Docs/Scotland/publicaffairs_scotland_shrtenantssurveysreport_17.3.11.pdf

To take an example which highlights these points: a landlord with 2,500 units (of which 5% are vacant) achieving a response rate of 25% would only get 594 responses. Although a sample of 594 gives a nominal precision of ±3.5%, an achieved sample based on a 25% response rate is likely to require significant weighting which reduces precision.

Also, a landlord with 2,500 units is more likely to have stock split over a number of developments and will want to compare the results for different areas and sub-groups of tenants or explore the results in more detail, all of which will require a larger sample.

Therefore, combining methodological and analytical considerations with the practical costs of sampling (comparing that staff and other resource costs of sampling with the relatively low cost of additional printing and postage) means that even though a census is not required for topline reporting to the regulator, it is likely to remain the most cost-effective choice for all but the largest landlords.

3.5.3 Small landlords

Although we think that all landlords should target a minimum response rate of 40% this still means that some small landlords will be unable to provide the SHR with data accurate to ±5%. For example, a 40% response rate means that a landlord with 100 units would only receive 40 returns from a postal survey but a requirement for data accurate to ±5% would need 76 responses. A 40% response rate for this landlord would provide data accurate to ±11%. The SHR appreciates that this is a particular challenge for small landlords. Even if the representativeness of the survey can be questioned, it will still play a vital role in contributing to the overall picture being formed by other information.

3.5.4 Target response rates

Of course, landlords are encouraged to exceed a response rate of 40% and most will want to in order to understand variation across the areas where they hold stock and to analyse variation between groups of tenants.

However, a response rate of less than 40% would not invalidate the data. In all cases there would need to be some judgement about the impact of the response rate on the representativeness of the data since a 40% response leaves adequate scope for the survey results to be affected by non-response bias. The key considerations would be:

- whether non-response varies between areas or groups of tenants. Is non-response higher among young people or people living in particular areas or property types? (see 4.4 for information on weighting results to correct for over- and under-representation of particular groups)

- whether non-response is an indicator of a general lack of engagement with tenants. Do other indicators suggest that a low response rate might be symptomatic of poor management, regardless of what responding tenants say about service quality?
- the likely impact of non-response on key indicators – are the results more likely to over-state or under-state the true level of satisfaction among the population as a whole?

3.5.5 Sample size

For landlords with more than 2,500 units a representative sample of tenants and service users may need to be selected in advance of the survey. (Landlords who have less than 2,500 units may consider drawing a sample, but it is recommended they conduct a census as it is simpler, more cost effective and will provide more robust data.) The size of that sample is important for a number of reasons, particularly in relation to the type and level of analysis which can be undertaken and the robustness of that data. In terms of our recommendations, the size of the sample required is related to the need to provide the SHR with robust and accurate data. As stated, we recommend that landlords achieve data that is accurate to ±5% at the 95 per cent confidence interval[3]. In practical terms, that means that for any result from the survey, the SHR will want to be at least 95% confident that it is accurate to within ±5%. For example, if a survey showed that 70% of tenants and service users are satisfied with their landlord we need to be 95% confident that the result lies between 66.5% and 73.5% if all tenants were asked.

Assuming a 40% response rate and the need to achieve data that is accurate to ±5%, the table below illustrates the sample sizes required for landlords with 1,500 units or more. The sample sizes detailed below are designed to provide the SHR with data for analysis which is accurate to ±5%, based on response rate of 40%. Should landlords wish to carry out extensive subgroup analysis, they may want to increase the size of their sample.

[3] this describes how certain you can be that the results of your survey reflect the views of the whole of your tenant and service user population, within a range of possible error.

Population (number of units)	Sample size needed to achieve accuracy at ±5% assuming 40% response rate	No. of replies received assuming 40% response rate
1,500	775	310
2,000	815	325
2,500	840	335
3,000	865	345
3,500	875	350
4,000	890	356
4,500	900	360
5,000	915	366
7,500 or more	940	376

3.5.6 Selecting the sample

Once landlords have worked out the size of sample required, the final step before beginning the fieldwork stage of a survey is to select and extract the sample. This can be done either through working out and using the 'sampling interval' (known as systematic sampling); or by applying a computer-generated random selection function.

Using the sampling interval

As discussed earlier, the sample frame is the full list of tenants and service users, their addresses and other data about their homes. The 'sampling interval' is, simply, the number of tenants and service users in the sample frame divided by the size of the sample to which you want to send questionnaires or conduct interviews. So, if you have 9,400 tenants and service users and need to issue 940 questionnaires then the sampling interval is 10.

Therefore you need to pick every tenth tenant in the sample frame, from a list *sorted by postcode*. If the sampling interval as calculated does not result in a whole number, it is advised that you change the sample size so that a whole number sampling interval results.

Computer-generated random selection

Alternatively, landlords can use a computer to randomly select a sample. In this case, landlords should ensure that the file is *sorted by postcode* beforehand. When it comes to selecting respondents for a sample they should be selected at random. It is not good practice to survey a tenant who has made contact to a landlord e.g. to report a repair. Doing so may result in a skewed and unrepresentative sample. However, please see the section below on using survey boosts.

Using boosts

We understand that, on occasion, landlords may wish to ensure that the samples they select have sufficient numbers of certain tenant types in order to undertake specific analysis of those tenants. For example, landlords may want some certainty over the number of tenants in the annual survey who have had a repair completed in the last year. The database from which the sample is selected will not necessarily show that information. In such instances it is legitimate to boost the sample selected with additional tenants who are drawn from the database of recent repair completions.

3.5.7 Extracting the addresses

Whether landlords select a sample through a sampling interval or by computer selection, this will generate a list of addresses the size of your sample. We recommend that, once this has been done, landlords should delete all the addresses that were not selected.

Before beginning fieldwork, each sample record needs to have its own unique identification number which can be used in the mail-out to link each questionnaire with the correct resident record with this number printed on the front of questionnaires.

3.6 Constructing the questionnaire

When you have decided on what survey method to use and prepared your sample, the next stage is to develop your questionnaire for data collection.

The key to deriving useful outputs from any survey relies on good questionnaire design. Two aspects are important: the content of the questionnaire; and the design, style and layout of the questionnaire.

3.6.1 Questionnaire content

Careful consideration should be paid to the content of the questionnaire to ensure that the results are valid and meaningful.

The core SHR questions

Regardless of the method used, the questionnaire should, as a minimum, include the questions required by the SHR, using the prescribed wording and response scales, and following other instructions – see Table 2 below.

As noted, eight indicators (1, 3, 6, 9, 10, 16, 17, and 29) should be collected as part of a survey of tenants. Indicators 28, 33, and 37 should not be collected as part of a survey of tenants (see 3.7.5 for more discussion on collecting data for these indicators).

When using the questions shown in Table 2, it is important that all of the answer options are included in the question and made available to the respondent. This is particularly true of the 'no opinion' option (question 1) and the 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied' option (question 1, 6, 9 etc.). These options serve the important function of ensuring questions are balanced and that sufficient responses are provided to cover the full range of respondent answers. Removing these questions from your questionnaire may skew collected data and will not allow for valid comparison with other survey data.

Table 2

Indicator	Question wording	Other Advice
1: Percentage of tenants satisfied with the overall service provided by their landlord.	‘Taking everything into account, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the overall service provided by {your landlord/LANDLORD NAME}?’ Response options: • Very satisfied • Fairly satisfied • Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied • Fairly dissatisfied • Very dissatisfied • No opinion	**Part of survey of tenants.** To ensure consistency in assessing performance across landlords, this question should **always be asked first** and as a **stand-alone question**. If it is asked after questions about other aspects of landlords’ services, respondents are likely to answer differently (in most cases, more negatively). Take care to include the option ‘No opinion’. This is to ensure that the question is consistent with the same question asked in the Scottish Household Survey (SHS). Should be asked of all respondents. As part of the Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) for this indicator, the SHR also requires the following survey technical details: • method of administering the survey. • total number of tenants who were surveyed. • fieldwork dates of the survey.
3: Percentage of tenants who feel their landlord is good at keeping them informed about their services and decisions	‘How good or poor do you feel {your landlord/LANDLORD NAME} is at keeping you informed about their services and decisions?’ Response options: • Very good • Fairly good • Neither good nor poor • Fairly poor • Very poor	**Part of survey of tenants.** Should be included alongside other questions about communication and participation (including indicator 6). Should be asked of all respondents.

6: Percentage of tenants satisfied with the opportunities given to them to participate in their landlord's decision making processes.	'How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with opportunities given to you to participate in {your landlord/LANDLORD NAME}'s decision making processes?' Response options: • Very satisfied • Fairly satisfied • Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied • Fairly dissatisfied • Very dissatisfied	**Part of survey of tenants.** Should be included alongside other questions about communication and participation (including indicator 3). Should be asked of all respondents.
9: Percentage of tenants satisfied with the standard of their home when moving in.	Two questions: a) Did you move into this property within the last year, that is since {MONTH YEAR}? Response options: Yes No b) 'Thinking about when you moved in, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the standard of your home? Response options: • Very satisfied • Fairly satisfied • Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied • Fairly dissatisfied • Very dissatisfied	**Part of survey of tenants.** Question a) should be asked directly before question b) in the survey. Question a) should be asked of all respondents Question b) should be asked only of respondents who moved into their property within the last year (i.e. all those who answered 'Yes' at question a)) Instructions should be provided for respondents (in a postal survey) or interviewers (in a telephone or face-to-face) survey to this effect: Postal – "ANSWER QX IF YOU MOVED INTO YOUR PROPERTY IN THE LAST YEAR (ANSWERED 'YES' AT QX). OTHERWISE GO TO QY." Telephone, Face-to-face – "ASK ALL WHO MOVED INTO THEIR PROPERTY IN THE LAST YEAR (CODE 1 'YES' AT QUESTION X)"

10: Percentage of tenants satisfied with the quality of their home.	'Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the quality of your home?' Response options: • Very satisfied • Fairly satisfied • Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied • Fairly dissatisfied • Very dissatisfied	**Part of survey of tenants.** Should be included alongside other questions about repairs and maintenance (including indicator 16). Should be asked of all respondents
16: Percentage of tenants who have had repairs or maintenance carried out in last 12 months satisfied with the repairs and maintenance service.	Two questions: a) 'Have you had any repairs carried out in this property in the last 12 months?' Yes No b)'Thinking about the LAST time you had repairs carried out, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the repairs service provided by {your landlord/LANDLORD NAME}' Response options: • Very satisfied • Fairly satisfied • Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied • Fairly dissatisfied • Very dissatisfied	**This can be collected as part of the survey of tenants OR as part of regular performance monitoring** Unlike indicator 9, no filtering is required at this question. Both questions a) and b) should be asked of all respondents. However, in the statistical return the SHR requires you to base the results only on those tenants who said they have had repairs carried out in the last 12 months. Should be included alongside other questions about repairs and maintenance (including indicator 10).

17: Percentage of tenants satisfied with the management of the neighbourhood they live in.	'Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your {landlord/LANDLORD NAME]'s management of the neighbourhood you live in?' Response options: • Very satisfied • Fairly satisfied • Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied • Fairly dissatisfied • Very dissatisfied	**Part of survey of tenants.** Should be asked of all respondents
28: Of those households homeless in the last 12 months the percentage satisfied with the quality of temporary or emergency accommodation. (LAs only)	'How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the overall quality of the temporary or emergency accommodation you were provided?' Response options: • Very satisfied • Fairly satisfied • Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied • Fairly dissatisfied • Very dissatisfied	SHOULD NOT FORM PART OF THE SURVEY OF TENANTS. LOCAL AUTHORITIES ONLY. The SHR understands that local authorities have existing methods for collecting this information (see 3.7.1for more information).
29: Percentage of tenants who feel the rent for their property represents good value for money.	'Taking into account the accommodation and the services [your landlord/LANDLORD NAME] provides, do you think that the rent for this property represents good or poor value for money? Is it…' Response options: • Very good • Fairly good • Neither good nor poor • Fairly poor • Very poor	**Part of survey of tenants.** Should be asked of all respondents

33: Percentage of factored owners satisfied with the factoring service they receive.	'Taking everything into account, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the factoring services provided by {LANDLORD NAME}' Response options: • Very satisfied • Fairly satisfied • Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied • Fairly dissatisfied • Very dissatisfied	SHOULD NOT FORM PART OF THE SURVEY OF TENANTS. Part of a survey of Factored owners (see 3.7.5. for more information).
37: For those who provide sites - percentage of gypsies/travellers satisfied with the landlord's management of the site.	'How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with {your landlord/LANDLORD NAME]'s management of your site?' Response options: • Very satisfied • Fairly satisfied • Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied • Fairly dissatisfied • Very dissatisfied	SHOULD NOT FORM PART OF THE SURVEY OF TENANTS. There is flexibility in how this information can be obtained (see 3.7.5. for more information).

Including other questions

Demographics

In order for you to assess the representativeness of the sample, you may wish to include some demographic questions which can be used to compare the profile of the achieved sample against the profile of the whole population. Alternatively, this information can be matched in retrospectively from stock data using a unique identification number included on questionnaires and in the sample. Of course, as well as being used for checking the representativeness of the results, demographic information can be used to analyse the results by different subgroups of service users. This can help you identify whether there are any specific needs among particular groups.

Other service and performance related questions

While the survey should collect questions stipulated by the SHR for the purposes of the ARC as a minimum, you may also wish to include other questions to collect information to feed into your own service improvement and tenant consultation. The number of questions you include is based entirely on your own needs but we would strongly recommend keeping the questionnaire as short as possible – see discussion on Questionnaire Length below for advice.

We would advise that most of the questions included in the questionnaire are closed questions (that is, when the question has a set of pre-defined response options) but you may want to include an ‘open ended’ question at the end of the questionnaire to collect more unprompted views.

You may wish to design your own questions but, where possible, we would recommend using tried and tested questions from existing surveys. A useful source of questions is the STAR survey question bank. If you do design new questions, we would recommend that you test them with a small number of tenants/colleagues to check for understanding and clarity.

3.6.2 Questionnaire design, style and layout

All questionnaires, regardless of the specific method being used, should be user-friendly for interviewers and respondents. There are different design considerations depending on whether you choose to use telephone or face-to-face, or postal methods. There are discussed below.

3.6.3 Telephone and face-to-face surveys

In telephone and face-to-face surveys, the questionnaire should be designed so that the structure and content is easy to follow for interviewers and is logical and meaningful for respondents. Ensuring this will help to minimise interviewer errors and improve the quality of respondents' answers.

The following steps should be taken:

- there should be a clear script of what the interviewer should say during each interview, including:
    - a brief introduction to the survey which outlines the purpose of the survey, explains how long it will take, and provides assurances over confidentiality and anonymity. This also will help maximise response to the survey
    - the wording of questions and related response options should be clear.
- the order of questions should make sense and the interview should flow naturally:
    - the questionnaire should be divided into sections by question topic – for example, questions about repairs and maintenance should be asked in one section, and questions about tenant participation should be asked in another
    - where relevant, introductions to new sections should be used – for example, "Moving on, I'd now like to ask some questions about the repairs service provided by your landlord"
    - the interview should begin with straightforward and non-sensitive questions – to this end, the SHR has stipulated that the question on overall satisfaction with landlord services should be asked first. The general rule in questionnaire design is that the questions should move from the general to the specific i.e. in a section about repairs, ask overall satisfaction with the last repair carried out (indicator 16) before asking about specific aspects of the repairs service.

- instructions for the interviewer should be clearly stated; for example:
    - the number of responses allowed for each question e.g. "CODE ONE RESPONSE ONLY"
    - whether they should or should not read out response options e.g. "DO NOT READ OUT"
    - any routing of questions based on responses to earlier questions (although routing will be automated if using computer assisted interviewing).

Questionnaire length

We would strongly recommend that a telephone interview lasts no more than 10 minutes and a face-to-face interview lasts no more than 20 minutes. Longer interviews are likely to have an impact both on respondents' willingness to take part in the survey (there is an inherent tension between questionnaire length and likely response rate) and on the quality of their answers should they take part – longer interviews are susceptible to higher levels of 'respondent fatigue'.

Questionnaire piloting

Prior to going into the field, we would recommend piloting the questionnaire with a small group of colleagues and/or service users to check for clarity and understanding. This will ensure that any misunderstandings or errors in the questionnaire can be rectified before the data collection stage.

Example questionnaire

A good example of a design (including structure, introductions, and instructions to interviewers) of a face-to-face or telephone questionnaire is the questionnaire used in the survey to identify the priorities of tenants of social landlords (see pages 97 – 114).

3.6.4 Postal surveys

The design of the questionnaire – in relation to how it looks, its length and how user-friendly it is – is of particular importance on a postal survey because it will have a direct impact on response rates and on the quality of the data. Ensuring that the questionnaire is short, easy to complete and return, clearly laid out, and provides clear instructions on how to complete it, will help ensure the highest level of data quality (respondent error will be minimised) and will maximise the response rate (see 3.7.4 for more information on ways of maximising response rates).

We recommend that the postal questionnaire should:

- be no more than four pages of A4 – as explained above, there is an inherent tension between questionnaire length and likely response rate
- have a logical and meaningful flow:
    - the questionnaire should be divided into sections by question topic – for example, questions about repairs and maintenance should be asked in one section, and questions about tenant participation should be asked in another
    - each new section should be denoted by a subject heading – for example, “Value for Money”; or “Repairs and maintenance”
    - begin with straightforward and non-sensitive questions – the SHR has stipulated that the question on overall satisfaction with landlord’s services should be asked first. The general rule in questionnaire design is that the questions should move from the general to the specific i.e. in a section about repairs, ask overall satisfaction with the last repair carried out (indicator 16) before asking about specific aspects of the repairs service.
- provide clear instructions on how to complete each question, including: the number of responses allowed for each question (e.g. “PLEASE SELECT ONE OPTION ONLY”); and clear routing instructions where questions should be answered by particular respondents only (depending on their response to earlier questions)
- be accompanied by a cover letter, which should:
    - contain the logo of the landlord
    - explain the purpose of the survey and how it will impact on services and/or service users
    - provide assurances over confidentiality and anonymity
    - provide contact details for queries or concerns

  - offer the opportunity of completing a large print questionnaire or assistance in another language (see below)
  - clearly state the closing date by which the questionnaire should be returned
  - be appropriately signed (by the Chief Executive or Head of Service, for example).

- be accompanied by a reply paid envelope for returning the questionnaire
- contain a unique identifier linked to the respondent's property, which can be used for booking in and monitoring of response, and for analysis purposes.

Addressing barriers to participation

Since postal surveys are reliant on respondents completing the questionnaire themselves, there are potential barriers to participation which need to be addressed.

- for respondents who have a visual impairment: in large print in the cover letter you should include the offer of a large print questionnaire. Upon request these can be printed and sent to respondents
- for respondents whose first language is not English: in the cover letter, you should include a standard translation statement, in the most commonly used languages (see example below), offering the opportunity to complete the questionnaire with the assistance of a translator.

If you would like more information in your own language, please contact us at the address shown below in the bottom box.

Polish: Jesli chcial(a)by Pan/i otrzymac wiecej informacji we wlasnym jezyku, prosze kontaktowac sie z nami pod adresem podanym w dolnej ramce.

Russian: Если вам требуется помощь переводчика, контактные номера для обращения по этому вопросу приводятся в конце страницы.

Bengali: যদি আপনার নিজের ভাষায় লেখা আরও তথ্য চান তাহলে দয়া করে আমাদের সঙ্গে যোগাযোগ করুন, তলার বক্ সে আমাদের ঠিকানা রয়েছে

Somali: Hadii aad u baahan tahay faahfaahin intaa kabadan oo ku soobsan afkaaka hooyo ama Af Somali fadlan lana soo xiira cinwaanka hoos ku qoran.

Urdu: اگر آپ اپنی زبان میں مزید معلومات حاصل کرنا چاہتے ہیں تو براہ کرم ہم سے اس پتہ پر رابطہ قائم کریں جو کہ نیچے کے بکس میں درج ہے۔

Chinese: 如果你需要用中文印成的資料，
請按低端方格内提供的地址与我們聯系。

Hayk Gyuzalyan, 020 7347 3254. Ipsos Mori, 79-81 Borough Road, London SE1 1FY

Questionnaire piloting

Prior to going into the field, we would recommend piloting the questionnaire with a small group of colleagues and/or service users to check that it is user-friendly, and is easy to understand and follow. This will ensure that any misunderstandings or errors in the questionnaire can be rectified before the questionnaire is printed and sent to respondents.

Example questionnaire

A good example of how to lay out a postal questionnaire is the questionnaire used in the survey to identify the priorities of tenants of social landlords (see pages 115 – 129).

3.7 Collecting the survey data

3.7.1 Single sweep of fieldwork

Best practice is that landlords conduct their survey as a single exercise, conducted at one point in time and underpinned by the principles within this guide on sampling and response rates. Ensuring that fieldwork is completed in one sweep is the best way to ensure reliability and comparability. It is not acceptable for your submission to the SHR to be made up of data collected at a number of different stages over a period of years and rolled into one submission.

3.7.2 Data not collected in the survey

The bulk of data collected for meeting the indicator requirements will be collected through the survey of tenants and service users.

However, data for submission on a number of the indicators can or must be collected from other sources:

- **Indicator 16 – repairs and maintenance –**SHR is permitting landlords to submit existing performance data that they collect on repairs and maintenance rather than collect it in the survey. If they wish to use existing performance data they must:
    - ensure that the question they use on their regular performance monitoring is amended to match the wording required on indicator 16
    - inform the SHR of their intention to use performance data rather than data collected in the survey

  - in their submission they should ensure that they include details of the time period covered and the numbers of cases on which results are based, as well as the number of request for feedback which were issued over the time period.

- **Indicators 28 (homelessness), 33 (factored owners) and 37 (gypsies/travellers) -** these should not be collected as part of the survey of tenants. See section 3.7.5 for more details.

3.7.3 Fieldwork scheduling/timing and regularity

The SHR expects landlords to carry out a survey of tenants and service users at least once every 3 years. This means that potentially two out of every three ARCs are based on results collected in previous years. However, this should be considered a minimum requirement and landlords may wish to conduct surveys more frequently as part of their own service improvement.

3.7.4 Administering the survey

Administering telephone and face-to-face surveys

Both telephone and face-to-face surveys require significant levels of additional expertise, equipment and resources to deliver them to a sufficiently high standard. Therefore, in accordance with advice given by Housemark in their 'Guide to running STAR'[4], we would recommend out-sourcing telephone and face-to-face fieldwork to a professional external agency:

> *"**Running telephone and face to face interview surveys***
>
> *Our advice would be to out-source these interviews, particularly face to face interviews, so that these are conducted by a professional external agency. The main reasons for this recommendation are as follows:*
>
> - *both survey methods are quite complex and should be conducted in line with the Market Research Society guidelines which, amongst other requirements, specify that interviewers should be properly trained and supervised to Interviewer Quality Control (IQCS) Scheme standards*
> - *it is likely to be more cost-effective to use external agencies than in-house resources, particularly for face to face interviews, which may need to be spread over a wide geographical area*

[4] http://www.housemark.co.uk/hmresour.nsf/lookup/STARguide.pdf/$File/STARguide.pdf

- *there is a danger that there would be response bias if respondents feel unconfident about telling staff their views, whereas an external agency would offer an independent view.*
- *In-house telephone interviewing is much more suited to continuous monitoring surveys of specific services than to a one-off survey[5]."*

Therefore this section primarily focuses on the steps required to administer a postal survey, which landlords are much more likely to carry out in house. However, it also provides more general advice on how response to the survey can be maximised, regardless of method chosen.

Administering postal surveys

There are a number of steps involved in administering a postal survey:

- printing and mail out
- 'booking in' and monitoring response
- sending reminders.

Printing and mail-out

When the questionnaire and accompanying materials (the cover letter, the reply paid envelope, and the translation note) have been prepared, they are ready to be printed, packed and sent out to the sample. Printing can either be carried out in-house or by a professional printing firm.

The questionnaire along with accompanying materials should be placed in an envelope and sent out to sampled addresses. In order to avoid identifiable information being included on the questionnaire (and therefore risk respondent anonymity), the address should be included on the cover letter only and should be displayed in a windowed envelope. The name and address of the respondent should not be included on the questionnaire. The unique identification number included on questionnaires should be used to identify households for the purposes of booking in and analysis. The reply-paid envelope should include the address of where questionnaires should be sent to be booked in.

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[5] http://www.housemark.co.uk/hmresour.nsf/lookup/STARguide.pdf/$File/STARguide.pdf (page 19)

'Booking in' and monitoring response

A crucial stage of the survey is systematically booking in returned questionnaires and monitoring response. As questionnaires are received they should be matched against the corresponding unique identification number and recorded as 'Received'.

It is possible that a small number of questionnaires will be returned to sender. In these cases, they should be recorded as 'Invalid address'.

An excel file containing a full list of the sampled addresses is a useful way of recording this information:

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1	**Unique ID**	**Address 1**	**Address 2**	**Address 3**	**Address 4**	**Postcode**	**Status**	**Notes**
2	1000001	22 Booking in street	Glasgow			G2 7DA	Received	
3	1000002	24 Booking in street	Glasgow			G2 7DA	Received	
4	1000003	26 Booking in street	Glasgow			G2 7DA	Received	
5	1000004	28 Booking in street	Glasgow			G2 7DA		
6	1000005	30 Booking in street	Glasgow			G2 7DA	Invalid address	Derelict building
7	1000006	Flat 1/1	5 Regulator Road	Glasgow		G2 7DA		
8	1000007	Flat 1/2	5 Regulator Road	Glasgow		G2 7DA		

This spreadsheet can also be used to manage reminders: it can be used to monitor the response rate to the survey which will help you decide when reminders should be sent. In addition, it can be used to carry out a mail merge when reminders are ready to be sent.

Sending reminders

Based on experience, the maximum time that should be allowed for fieldwork, between the initial mail-out and the close of the survey, is eight weeks. During this time, at least one reminder (which includes a cover letter, a replacement questionnaire and a reply paid envelope) should be sent to all *non-responding* households. The timing of reminders is very much dependent on the level of response but typically reminders should be sent halfway through the fieldwork period (after around 4 weeks) when the volume of returns begins to slow down.

Maximising survey response rates

One of the crucial aspects of any survey is in ensuring that a sufficiently high response rate is achieved. The following steps can be taken to improve response rates to the survey, regardless of which method is chosen:

- keep the questionnaire length as short as possible – it is important to recognise that there is an inherent tension between questionnaire length and likely response rate. In order to maximise likely response, we would recommend ensuring that the questionnaire strikes a balance between meeting your needs for information (in addition to the SHR's) and a suitable length. As a rule of thumb, we would recommend the following maximum questionnaire lengths: 4 A4 pages for postal; 10 minutes for telephone; and 20 minutes for face-to-face

- send a cover letter/advance letter – the letter should communicate to tenants about the importance of the research and the potential benefits to them of taking part. We would recommend emphasising that the data collected will help you to obtain a better understanding of tenants' service needs which will feed into service improvements. In a postal survey, the letter should be sent with the questionnaire as part of the survey pack. For a face-to-face or telephone survey, the letter should be sent in advance of the start of fieldwork
- provide (within the covering letter) contact details for someone who respondents can contact should they have any queries about the survey
- publicise the survey widely – for example, in tenant newsletters, on your website, at Tenants Association events and in your local offices.

3.7.5 Ways of collecting data not included in the survey of tenants

Indicators 28, 33, and 37 should not be collected as part of a survey of tenants. This section describes how this information can be collected.

Indicator 28 – Homeless Households in the last 12 months

The SHR requires all local authorities to return information relating to homeless households' (within the last 12 months) satisfaction with each different type of emergency or temporary accommodation stayed in throughout the duration of the time they are homeless. This may include:

- LA ordinary dwelling
- housing Association / RSL dwelling
- hostel – local authority owned
- hostel – RSL
- hostel – other
- bed and Breakfast

- women's refuge
- private sector leasing
- other placed by authority.

Therefore, the prescribed question should be asked each time a household has left or moved from one type of temporary or emergency accommodation in the last 12 months. As a result this cannot be collected using a survey of tenants carried out every three years.

The SHR understands that local authorities have existing methods of collecting this information.

Indicator 33 – Factored owners

Data for this indicator can be collected using the same method used for the survey of tenants and following the same process set out above. The only difference is that the sample will be limited to owners for whom you provide factoring services. While the SHR requires data from one question only for the ARC, as is the case on the survey of tenants, you may wish to include a number of other questions to inform your own service improvement.

Indicator 37 – Gypsy/Travellers

The SHR is flexible in relation to the method used to collect data for indicator 37. Possible options include:

- a survey, carried out at the same time as the survey of tenants, which captures the views of current residents of social landlord-owned/managed sites
- an exit survey of residents as they are leaving the site.

We would recommend carrying out this research using a face-to-face method rather than postal, for two reasons. First, substantial proportions of the Gypsy/Traveller community have literacy issues which may serve as a barrier to participation. This recommendation is consistent with advice from Shelter[6]:

> *"Consultations need to take into account the low levels of literacy within the community, and offer opportunities to engage with processes in other ways. This will mean less paper consultations and more face-to-face interactions, allowing for time to explain the process and the role the individual can play in influencing the provision of services."*

Second, the population of Gypsy/Travellers will be small and not widely dispersed so face-to-face surveys are likely to be a more cost effective method.

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[6] Shelter (2008) Good Practice Guide: Working with housed Gypsies and Travellers, http://england.shelter.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/57772/Working_with_housed_Gypsies_and_Travellers.pdf (page 15)

4 Data processing

✓ Do…	✗ Don't…
• ensure each question response option is given a code	• underestimate the time required for data input
• ensure the data is thoroughly checked and 'cleaned'	• return your data without checking it
• check the data for bias to determine if weighting should be applied	• automatically assume that weighting is or is not required – check for bias in the data

4.1 Introduction

Data processing is a key stage in the survey process as it prepares your data before it can be sent to the SHR, as part of the ARC, or analysed for your own purposes. There are three stages:

- data inputting
- data checking and cleaning
- data weighting.

Data processing requires a degree of technical knowledge so you may choose to out-source the work if you do not have sufficient skills in-house. That said, this section is written for those who will be carrying out the work themselves.

4.2 Data inputting

Data inputting is the process of collating the responses from each of the returned questionnaires into one data set, ordinarily in a spreadsheet or database.

We would strongly recommend starting the process of data inputting before the end of the fieldwork. The task of inputting data from potentially hundreds of questionnaires can be very time-consuming.

All closed questions should be ‘coded’. This is the process of allocating a number, or ‘code’, that corresponds to a particular answer to a question; for example, on the question for indicator 1: Very satisfied (would be code ‘1’), Fairly satisfied (code ‘2’), Neither satisfied or dissatisfied (code ‘3’), Fairly dissatisfied (code ‘4’); Very dissatisfied (code ‘5’); No opinion (code ‘6’).

Within the spreadsheet or database, each question should be allocated a separate column or field and each row should contain all the answers from an individual respondent (see example below).

While none of the questions prescribed by the SHR are multicode (questions that allow respondents to select more than one response), you may include a multicode question for your own purposes. The process of inputting the data for these is slightly different to a single code question (above) as each response within the question should be allocated a separate column – for example, Q2_1 (for question 2, first response option), Q2_2 (for question 2, second response option), and so on. The code allocated in these columns should be binary: either a ‘0’ for respondents who did not select the option; or a ‘1’ for those who selected the response option.

For questions where the response itself is numerical (for example, How many children aged 0-15 years live in this household?) the code should correspond to the value given by the respondent i.e. if a respondent answers ‘4’ to the question above, the code for that respondent at that question should also be ‘4’.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9
2	1	3	6	3	3	2	3	2	2
3	2	1	2	3	3	2	1	6	2
4	2	1	2	2	2	3	2	1	1
5	3	2	3	2	3	2	3	6	4
6	3	1	2	6	2	1	1	1	2
7	2	1	4	6	2	4	2	2	2
8	1	2	6	2	6	6	6	6	2
9	5	4	2	3	3	3	4	5	2
10	5	4	3	3	5	5	5	6	4
11	5	3	3	3	3	5	3	5	4
12	4	4	2	3	2	4	5	6	3
13	2	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
14	2	6	6	6	6	3	4	3	3
15	4	4	2	3	3	2	4	2	3
16	2	6	6	6	2	2	5	2	2
17	1	2	2	1	1	1	2	1	1
18	4	2	4	6	4	6	2	6	5
19	2	2	2	3	3	3	2	6	5
20	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	4	3
21	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
22	4	3	3	3	4	4	5	3	4
23	3	3	3	3	3	4	3	4	4
24	2	2	4	2	3	3	1	1	2
25	3	1	3	3	1	3	2	2	3
26	5	4	2	5	4	5	4	5	4

4.3 Data checking and cleaning

Unless the survey has been carried out using computer packages, which have automated routing and in-built checks on accuracy and completeness of data, there will always be errors in the questionnaires – this is particularly the case in postal surveys since respondents need to complete the questionnaire themselves. Three likely errors include:

- 'missing values' – this is when respondents fail to answer particular questions. This type of error cannot be corrected. When this happens, the question should be coded as '-1' or '99' which denotes a missing value

- selecting more response options than allowed – for example, on a question where respondents are instructed to 'SELECT ONE OPTION ONLY', the respondent has ticked two response options. In some circumstances, it may be possible to determine the respondent's intention (i.e. where one of the ticks has been crossed out). If this is the case, the intention should be inputted. However, if it is not clear, the question should be coded as 'missing' (as above)

- mistakes in routing – some questions in a questionnaire are designed to be asked of a subsample of respondents depending on their answer to an earlier question – for example, the question for indictor 9 should only be answered by respondents who have moved into their property in the last year (if they answered ‘Yes’ to a previous question). Occasionally respondents answer questions that they were not supposed to; for example, a respondent who answered the question for indicator 9 but did not move into their property within the last 12 months. Where this happens, the invalid response should be coded as a missing value.

4.4 Weighting the data

Weighting is the process carried out to overcome the problem of bias in the results. In all surveys, particularly postal surveys, some groups are more likely than others to respond (for example, older tenants are more likely than younger tenants to respond). This means that certain subgroups will be under-represented and others will be over-represented in the final achieved sample (i.e. all the people who responded). Weighting ensures that received responses are representative of the whole survey population.

In order to calculate what weighting is required, the first step is to check for the extent to which certain groups are under- or over-represented. This is done by, first, comparing the profile of the achieved sample against the population profile using a key population characteristic and identifying any groups that are under- or over-represented. In practice, any single characteristic can be used to assess the representativeness of the sample as long as there is associated information available for the whole population. Some examples where social landlords will likely have suitable information on the population are: dwelling type (flats, semi-detached house, detached, terraced) and number of bedrooms.

As noted at section 2.4, it is essential that you include either questions in the survey which capture this information and/or merge in this information from your existing records using the unique identifier on questionnaires.

Where groups are under or over-represented, weighting should be applied to the survey responses to correct for this bias.

Example:

Imagine that a landlord has 1,000 properties and carries out a Census. At the end of the fieldwork they have received a total of 500 questionnaires. Using the number of bedrooms in a property as the weighting characteristic, they compare the profile of the achieved sample against the population data they have on record:

	Population		Achieved sample	
Bedrooms	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**
1	100	10%	20	4%
2	300	30%	100	20%
3	400	40%	250	50%
4	100	10%	40	8%
5	100	10%	90	18%
	1000	100%	500	100%

As can be seen, compared to the population, the achieved sample over-represents dwellings with 3 and 5 bedrooms, while it under-represents 1, 2, and 4 bedroom dwellings. Therefore, to correct for this we need to weight *down* the responses of those who are *over*-represented and weight *up* the responses of those who are *under*-represented.

In order to work out the specific weights that should be applied, we need to calculate the weighting factor:

$$= \frac{\text{Percentage of 1 bedroom dwellings in the population (10\%)}}{\text{Percentage of 1 bedroom dwellings in the achieved sample (4\%)}}$$

$$= \frac{10}{4} = \textit{weighting factor of 2.5}$$

This means that all responses given by respondents living in 1 bedroom dwelling should be weighted up by a factor of 2.5. Based on the same calculation, the weighting factors for the other subgroups are:

- 2 Bedrooms (1.5)
- 3 Bedrooms (0.8)
- 4 Bedrooms (1.25)
- 5 Bedrooms (0.56).

Weighting variables can easily be created using statistical packages, for example SPSS or SAS. Again, taking the example above, a weight can be created in SPSS using the following syntax (note: the variable names used here can be changed):

COMPUTE Weight1=0.

If NumBedroom =1 Weight1=2.5.

If NumBedroom =2 Weight1=1.5.

If NumBedroom =3 Weight1=0.8.

If NumBedroom =4 Weight1=1.25.

If NumBedroom =5 Weight1=0.56.

To apply the weight, use the command: '*Weight by Weight1'*.

We recognise that weighting is quite complex so would recommend additional reading before carrying out this exercise for the first time.

For additional information on how to identify bias in survey data and how to apply weighting, please see the powerpoint slides Ipsos MORI have provided to the SHR entitled 'Bias and weighting'. Further reading can also be found on:

http://www.applied-survey-methods.com/weight.html

https://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/docs/methodology/ESS_weighting_data_1.pdf

5 Returning your data to the SHR

✓ Do…	✗ Don't…
• follow the SHR's Technical Guidance when returning your data	• return data to the SHR without being aware of the technical guidance
• return all data in one exercise	• return data to the SHR in multiple waves
• ensure your data fits the SHR's performance indicators	
• provide technical details of how the survey was carried out. These should include fieldwork dates and methodology of survey.	

Full information on the data that landlords are required to send to the SHR as part of the ARC is outlined in the Technical Guidance document. Landlords should read the guidance carefully to ensure that the data they supply is as accurate as possible. That guidance also provides information relating to timescales of when data should be sent.

As stated in section 3.7.1 in relation to fieldwork, it is essential that landlords must also report data to the SHR as a single exercise, rather than a rolling one.

Data for tenant surveys should always be returned to the SHR to reflect a full survey, rather than yearly data.

5.1 SHR performance indicators

As noted above, the SHR requires survey data in order to calculate the following performance indicators:

- 1: Percentage of tenants satisfied with the overall service provided by their landlord

- 3: Percentage of tenants who feel their landlord is good at keeping them informed about their services and decisions
- 6: Percentage of tenants satisfied with the opportunities given to them to participate in their landlord's decision making processes
- 9: Percentage of tenants satisfied with the standard of their home when moving in
- 10: Percentage of tenants satisfied with the quality of their home
- 16: Percentage of tenants who have had repairs or maintenance carried out in last 12 months satisfied with the repairs and maintenance service
- 17: Percentage of tenants satisfied with the management of the neighbourhood they live in
- 28: Of those households homeless in the last 12 months the percentage satisfied with the quality of temporary or emergency accommodation. (LAs only)
- 33: Percentage of factored owners satisfied with the factoring service they receive
- 37: For those who provide sites - percentage of Gypsy/Travellers satisfied with the landlord's management of the site

5.2 SHR calculations

The technical guidance outlines the formula which the SHR will use to calculate each performance indicator. For example, for indicator 3:

To calculate the indicator we will divide: (ii)(a) number responding very good + (b) number responding fairly good. By: (i) number of tenants asked the question. Multiply by 100.

Landlords should provide the technical details of how the survey was carried out; specifically:

(i) Fieldwork dates of the survey(s)

(ii) Method(s) of administering the survey(s) i.e. Census or sample survey; postal, face-to-face or telephone.