

## Annual Return on the Scottish Social Housing Charter

### Consultation questions

We welcome your general feedback on our proposals as well as answers to the specific questions we have raised. You can read our consultation paper on our website at [www.housingregulator.gov.scot](http://www.housingregulator.gov.scot)

Please do not feel you have to answer every question unless you wish to do so.

Send your completed questionnaire to us by **Friday 8 November 2024**.

By email @: [consultations@shr.gov.scot](mailto:consultations@shr.gov.scot)

Or post to: Scottish Housing Regulator  
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#### How you would like your response to be handled

To help make this a transparent process we intend to publish on our website the responses we receive, as we receive them. Please let us know how you would like us to handle your response. If you are responding as an individual, we will not publish your contact details.

#### Are you happy for your response to be published on our website?

Yes  No

#### If you are responding as an individual:

Please tell us how you would like your response to be published.

*Pick 1*

Publish my full response, including my name

Please publish my response, but not my name

1. There are some indicators which we do not routinely use in our regulatory assessment of social landlords' performance. As part of the consultation we are proposing to stop collecting the following indicators **14, 20, 23, 24, C3 and C4**.

Do you agree with our proposals to remove these indicators?

While we welcome the approach SHR is taking with regard to the proposed removal of indicators not currently used for regulatory assessment of performance, it is our view that some of these indicators – particularly Indicators 20 and C4 - remain useful in providing contextual information. Indicator 20 is particularly important given the budgetary pressures facing landlords at the present time. With regard to C4, while Indicator 22 provides information on evictions, it does not cover abandonments and as such C4 remains useful in understanding landlords' respective contexts.

Landlords have advised us that these indicators are relatively straightforward to collate, and as such our view would be that these two indicators should be retained.

With regard to Indicator C3, some landlords have noted that this remains useful and is again straightforward to collect. As such we do not feel there is a need for this to be removed.

We agree that indicators 14, 23 and 24 should be removed.

2. Following feedback from stakeholders we propose to amend the following indicators **10, 15 and C2**.

Do you agree with our proposals to amend these indicators?

#### **Right First Time/Reported Again**

We welcome the Regulator's efforts to amend Indicator 10 in order to make this more useful, and we are broadly supportive of its simplification. The removal of target times as an element within RFT is particularly welcomed, as to our minds this supports greater comparability between landlords. Accurate reporting on recalls remains a challenge for landlords, but recognise this indicator is one that tenants value.

We would request that SHR give further consideration to the definitions being used. Right First Time as it currently stands relates to recalls within the reporting year. At Page 37 of the Consultation document, the amended indicators suggest that this framework is being retained (i.e. 10.(ii) Of those, number of reactive repairs that were reported again **during the reporting year**). Also on Page 37, however, a contradictory statement is made suggesting that we would now be considering whether a "completed repair [was] reported [again] within a **12-month period**".

As well as this, Right First Time currently concerns how we think about the '**original repair**' – i.e. if there is a recall during that reporting year, the original repair is not "Right First Time". The proposed indicator instead is concerned with how we think about

**'subsequent repair(s)'** – i.e. if there is a recall on a repair within a 12 month period, the subsequent repair(s) are classified as 'reported again'.

While we agree with the spirit of the changes to Right First Time/Reported again, taken together we believe the two changes in definition highlighted above as they currently stand may place an additional burden on landlords, and as such request that further consideration be given to how 'Reported Again' will be defined.

Our Members have also advised us that they would welcome further guidance on how 'complex repairs' in this context might be defined, as there is significant variation across the sector as to how this exemption is being applied. We understand SHR's motivation for not being prescriptive on this, but additional guidance would support comparability and usefulness of this indicator in measuring performance.

#### **Anti-social behaviour**

We are broadly supportive of the changes proposed to Indicator 15, particularly the shift towards ensuring ASB cases carried forward from previous years are considered in the indicator.

We would suggest, however, that considering whether the cases have been 'resolved within locally agreed targets' rather than simply 'resolved' adds a layer of complication from the point of view of comparing performance across the sector. While some landlords favour also reporting on target times here, our view is this would complicate matters further from a comparative standpoint.

SHN Members suggested several other useful measures in relation to this indicator, including looking at recurrence of ASB cases over time.

#### **Lets by Source**

With regard to Indicator C2, we are supportive of the changes proposed here, as we believe this indicator, subject to the change we have suggested below, will provide local authorities and RSLs with additional contextual information that will be useful in planning for the needs of homeless households.

In order for this to be meaningful, however, we would suggest that the **total number of lets** at C2 should also be split by local authority. In its current iteration, we could only say "50% of this RSL's homeless lets were in [Council X]", whereas including this information would allow us to also say "50% of this RSL's lets in [Council X] were to homeless households".

3. We also propose to introduce an additional indicator to monitor long term voids.

Do you agree that we should collect an additional indicator in relation to long term voids?

SHN welcome efforts to track the number of properties void at year end and to identify the prevalence of long-term voids in the sector, however the presence of significant exemptions in the proposed definitions for this indicator will in our view make this less meaningful and therefore less useful.

One possible alternative approach might be to ask for the total number of voids at year end, before asking about the nature of those voids. This is broadly the approach taken by the Scottish Government's Housing Statistical Annual Return (HSAR), currently

completed by local authorities only. This return asks for void properties to be split by a) how long the property has been void and b) which category they fall into – i.e. ‘never to be relet’, ‘void due to modernisation’, ‘low demand’ etc. This would provide context to this headline figure and make the data far more meaningful for landlords, tenants and stakeholders.

4. We propose to collect two new indicators in relation to tenant and resident safety. Do you agree with the additional indicators we propose to collect in relation electrical safety and fire detection?

We are in agreement with the two new indicators in relation to tenant and resident safety, but feel it is worth considering whether data on how many of these were abeyances/exemptions could be reported on here (in addition to the proposed comments boxes).

5. Do you agree with our proposed approach to collect landlords’ performance in relation to compliance with tenant and resident safety duties as part of the Annual Assurance Statements?

We would defer to landlords on this matter but agree that these legal duties should be covered in landlords’ ongoing assurance processes.

6. Issues of damp and mould continue to be an important area of concern for tenants. We therefore propose three new indicators in relation to damp and mould. Do you agree with our proposals to introduce these indicators?

We believe further consideration needs to be given to these indicators to ensure they are as robust as possible. As it stands, these indicators are collecting data on all cases “reported as or assessed as” damp and mould, resulting in data being gathered on cases which vary considerably in their severity and required response. They are also dependent on the definition of ‘resolved’, making this more challenging to meaningfully compare.

Our discussions with landlords indicated that recording information on the different categories of damp and mould may prove to be more useful, as well as collating information on the outcomes of such assessments and resultant actions.

With regard to recording timescales to resolve such cases, some landlords reported to us that they were carrying out 3 monthly follow-up visits. They noted that while this represents good practice an indicator asking for timescales to be measured may disincentivise such approaches. Again given the considerable variation between different types of damp and mould cases and the challenges in finding appropriate contractors, timescales may be less useful as an indicator of performance than when applied to repairs, for example.

The requirement to track cases of damp and mould over a 12-month period is sensible (‘iii – Number of cases of damp and/or mould that were reopened’), but presenting this as a percentage of resolved cases in the indicator is somewhat misleading given that many of these re-opened cases will be from the previous reporting year.

7. Do you agree with the proposal to collect the “Average length of time taken to resolve cases of damp and/or mould” or would the “median” be more appropriate to measure the time to resolve cases of damp and/or mould?

We have no strong view on this.

8. Damp and mould is a complex area for landlords. Are the new indicators we propose on damp and mould clearly defined?

As noted above, this is a very challenging indicator to get right in terms of definition and feel further consideration should be given to what we are collecting and the reasoning behind this.

Thank you for taking the time to give us your feedback