

CIH submission to the call for user views on Local Authority Housing Statistics



Chartered
Institute of
Housing

About CIH

The Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) is the independent voice for housing and the home of professional standards. Our goal is simple - to provide housing professionals and their organisations with the advice, support and knowledge they need to be brilliant. CIH is a registered charity and not-for-profit organisation. This means that the money we make is put back into the organisation and funds the activities we carry out to support the housing sector. We have a diverse membership of people who work in both the public and private sectors, in 20 countries on five continents across the world.

Further information is available at: www.cih.org

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Summary of our key points

This is a response to the consultation on changes to [Local Authority Housing Statistics](#). The MHCLG produces the Local Authority Housing Statistics (LAHS) bulletin in January each year. The consultation covers the publication arrangements and a move away from a specific bulletin.

CIH principally makes use of the LAHS data for its annual *UK Housing Review*. This response has been prepared in collaboration with Gillian Young of Newhaven Research, who is the principal author of the compendium of tables in the *Review*.

Our key points are:

- Contrary to the department's proposals, CIH finds the bulletin to be useful.
- However, it is most important that the datasets themselves are maintained, and also that the publication timetable is not adversely affected.
- The aim appears to be to publish most of the data in November following the end of the reporting year, ie. two months ahead of the current timetable. This is welcome if the commitment is made, and met in future.
- CIH is concerned that there should be no loss of detail in the published datasets, for example the current distinction in stock figures between stock let at social rents and at Affordable Rents.
- CIH would urge the department to return to publishing data for standard statistical regions. Apart from being intrinsically useful, Homes England/the Social Housing Regulator produce regional data and it is helpful to be able to easily compare LAHS (and other MHCLG) data with their data.

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Answers to questions posed by the consultation

Which user group most represents your situation?

None. CIH is a professional body, and you do not mention these in paragraph 11.

What do you use the LAHS bulletin for?

The bulletin is a general source of information which provides a useful summary, allowing access to different data compiled in a single source.

What do you use the LAHS data tables for?

CIH uses the tables:

- As a source for certain tables within the annual *UK Housing Review*.
- As a source for our annual estimate of the loss of social rented stock, with accompanying press release/articles.
- As a source for research projects, publications, press queries and member enquiries within CIH (of course, alongside many other data sources).

Are there any reasons why you would not support the discontinuing of the LAHS bulletin?

See above. The danger is that losing the bulletin will make accessing the data more difficult, not less, for people unfamiliar with the location of the tables on gov.uk.

CIH believe the complete LAHS dataset should continue to be published and the link to this should be made clear in the various publications. As such, CIH would welcome clarification when precisely the full dataset will be published.

CIH believe that ALL data collected via the LAHS should be subject to the degree of auditing and cleaning consistent with national statistics accreditation. This includes, for example, data reported in 'Section F - Condition of Dwelling Stock: Information on loans, grants and other assistance'. In the years since Live Table 313 was stopped these are subject to some very obvious reporting errors.

Are there any reasons why you would not support the proposed changes to the timing of the publication of the LAHS data?

We support the timing on the basis that it appears that most data will be available in November instead of January. This would be extremely helpful, especially if the department keeps to this commitment in future.

CIH is concerned that there should be no loss of detail in the published datasets, for example the current distinction in stock figures between stock let at social rents and at Affordable Rents.

There is a reference to some of material being published in the second May after the reporting year: we presume this applies only to the particular bulletin/table concerned, and that the data themselves would appear in November or when the full LAHS dataset is published, presumably no later than the end of January

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Do you have any further comments?

CIH would urge the department to return to publishing data for standard statistical regions. Apart from being intrinsically useful, Homes England/the Social Housing Regulator produce regional data and it is helpful to be able to easily compare LAHS and other departmental data with their data.

CIH would urge the department to consider collecting data on local authority lettings to homeless households as part of the LAHS, due to the sub-optimal quality of CORE data due to indifferent response rates.

The LAHS lettings data return has been revised to focus primarily on tenants new to the social rented sector and existing tenants (including tenants of the specific LA and tenants that previously rented from another LA or PRP landlord). This appears to have created a discontinuity in live table 602. The figures up to 2010/11 remain unchanged from earlier versions and therefore appear to refer to the number of lettings new to the local authority landlord (and thus includes tenants than transferred from another social landlord), as opposed to tenants new to the social rented sector.

**Chartered Institute of Housing
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