Quality Assurance of Administrative Data

Northern Ireland Housing Statistics

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Analytical Services Unit
Housing Team

Department for
Communities
www.communities-ni.gov.uk

Northern Ireland
Statistics and Research Agency

Background Information

This document contains information on the administrative data sources used by the Housing team in the Department for Communities, Analytical Services Unit (ASU), as well as quality assessments on each of them.

In 2015 the UK Statistics Authority published a regulatory standard for the quality assurance of administrative data. The standard was developed in response to concerns about the quality of administrative data and in recognition of the increasing role that such data is playing in the production of official statistics. The standard encourages risk based judgements and supports a proportionate approach.

The housing team in ASU use a range of sources, both survey based and administrative databases to produce quarterly and annual National Statistics Reports. In accordance with Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) regulations, when using administrative data ASU follow the standard set in the regulatory standard for the quality assurance of administrative data, by United Kingdom Statistics Authority (UKSA).

The standard is supported with an Administrative Data Quality Assurance Toolkit which provides useful guidance to statistical producers about the practices they can adopt to assure the quality of the data they utilise.

Quality Reports for each of the administrative data sources used by the housing team have been included in this document. The publications that these relate to can be found at: https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/topics/housing-statistics

Please note that some of the statistics the housing team report on are provided by other branches within NISRA who have already completed QAAD exercises for each of them. They can be found here:

Housing Stock
New Dwellings - Starts and Completions
NI House Price Index
Planning Statistics
Mortgages Bulletin – To be updated when published

List of Administrative Datasets

Social Housing Development Programme (SHDP)
Waiting Lists, Allocations, Transfers & Housing Stress
Homelessness
NIHE Tenants in Receipt of Housing Benefit
NIHE Average Weekly Rent
Wales Average Weekly Rent
Scotland Average Weekly Rent
Housing Association Data
National House Building Council (NHBC)
Northern Ireland Co-Ownership Housing Scheme

Technical Note

As detailed in the UKSA Administrative Data Quality Assurance Toolkit, the assessment of the quality assurance level should be pragmatic and proportionate. It should be made in light of an evaluation of the likelihood of quality issues arising in the data that may affect the quality of the statistics and of the nature of the public interest served by the statistics.

There are four levels of assurance that can be assigned to an administrative data source and the Risk/Profile Matrix below is used to assess which level an administrative source should be assigned:

A0: No Assurance

A1: Basic Assurance

A2: Enhanced Assurance

A3: Comprehensive Assurance

Level of risk of quality concerns	Public interest profile		
	Lower	**Medium**	**Higher**
Low	Statistics of lower quality concern and lower public interest [A1]	Statistics of low quality concern and medium public interest [A1/A2]	Statistics of low quality concern and higher public interest [A1/A2]
Medium	Statistics of medium quality concern and lower public interest [A1/A2]	Statistics of medium quality concern and medium public interest [A2]	Statistics of medium quality concern and higher public interest [A2/A3]
High	Statistics of higher quality concern and lower public interest [A1/A2/A3]	Statistics of higher quality concern and medium public interest [A3]	Statistics of higher quality concern and higher public interest [A3]

When using the Risk/Profile Matrix, the statistician refers to the following explanatory notes to determine the level of quality concern, and the level of public interest:

Level of risk of data quality concerns

Low risk – the data may have a low risk of data quality concerns in situations in which there is a clear agreement about what data will be provided, when, how, and by whom; when there is a good appreciation of the context in which the data are collected, and the producer accepts that the quality standards being applied meet the statistical needs.
Medium risk – the data may be regarded as having a medium risk of data quality concerns when high risk factors have been moderated through the use of safeguards, for example, integrated financial audit and operational checks, and effective communication arrangements. It is also appropriate to consider the extent of the contribution of the administrative data to the official statistics, for example, in cases where the statistics are produced in combination with other data types, such as survey or census data.
High risk – the data may have a high risk of data quality issues when there are many different data collection bodies, intermediary data supplier bodies, and complex data collection processes with limited independent verification or oversight.

Public interest profile of the statistics

Low profile – politically neutral subject; interest limited to niche user base, and limited media interest.

Medium profile – wider user and media interest than those considered 'low profile', with moderate economic and/or political sensitivity.

High profile – economically important, reflected in market sensitivity; high political sensitivity, reflected by Select Committee hearings; substantial media coverage of policies and statistics; important public health issues; collection required by legislation.

Social Housing Development Programme (SHDP)

Background to the Statistics

Analytical Services Unit (ASU) produces the *"Northern Ireland Housing Bulletin"* (a quarterly publication) and *"Northern Ireland Housing Statistics"* (an annual publication) which present the following information:

- SHDP New social Housing Dwelling Starts (Quarterly and Annually)
- SHDP New Social Housing Dwelling Completions (Quarterly and Annually)

The Data Source and Supplier

These tables are produced by Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) using the Social Housing Development Programme (SHDP) database. The NIHE manages the delivery of the Social Housing Development Programme and maintains a database which records all information relating to social rented sector starts and completions.

Risk/Profile Matrix

Statistical Series	Administrative Source	Data Quality Concern	Public Interest	Matrix Classification
SHDP New Dwelling Starts and Completions	SHDP Database	Low	Medium	Low Risk [A1]

The publication of SHDP New Dwelling Starts and Completions data can be considered as **medium profile**, as there is mainstream media interest, with moderate economic and/or political sensitivity.

The data quality concern attached is as **low concern** given that the data is collected from each housing association by the NIHE, who ensure quality assurance checks and data cleansing. The data is then sent to ASU who perform further validation and checks, allowing any errors to be identified and corrected.

Overall, SHDP statistics have been assessed as **A1: Basic Assurance.** Further detail is provided in each of the areas below to justify this assessment.

Operational Context and Admin Data Collection

Data is populated on the database, in part, based on paper returns received from all Housing Associations. Prior to input onto the system the returns are checked and verified. Downloads from the database are also validated to ensure consistency over time and reliability of results.

For accuracy, a social sector start on-site or completion is only confirmed when appropriate levels of paperwork are received from housing associations. In the case of social sector new build starts on-site, this will include:

- A solicitor's letter confirming that the site is in the ownership of the housing association;
- Proof of Planning Permission;
- An extract of the Works Contract confirming contractor's date of possession of the site.

For information, this differs from Building Control Starts and Completions which are recorded as the date of first and last building control inspection.

Communication with data supply partners

Statisticians in ASU work closely alongside researchers within NIHE regarding the specification and supply of SHDP data. Each quarter ASU and NIHE statisticians open a dialogue to specify what data is required, in what format and a deadline is agreed upon. This allows time for NIHE to extract and quality assure the data before sending it to ASU.

Following this ASU perform their own quality assurance checks. If any errors or possible quality issues are identified at this stage, ASU will query this with NIHE who will endeavour to resolve the identified issues and/or advise ASU of the outcome.

QA Principles, standards and checks by Data Suppliers

Paperwork supplied by Housing Associations is checked by senior administrative staff and 100% checks are carried out by supervisory staff. Regular internal audits are carried out through cross-checking of databases to ensure consistency. The SHDP database is supplied to the Department for Communities (DfC) on a monthly basis as part of the Operational-Level Agreement (OLA) between DfC and NIHE regarding the management of the SHDP. This includes detail of the monthly starts and completions confirmed.

Producers' QA Investigations and Documentation

The data supplied by the NIHE is published by ASU in the Quarterly Housing Bulletin and the Annual Housing Statistics publications. Statisticians in ASU check the tables against the previous financial years' data for inconsistencies and data variations. If any issues occur, ASU submit a query to NIHE for clarification. Before data is published in either of these publications, it is reviewed and quality assured via a number of different checks, at several different levels of authority.

Waiting Lists, Allocations, Transfers & Housing Stress (Housing Management System)

Background to the Statistics

ASU produces the annual publication *"Northern Ireland Housing Statistics"* which includes a table on Social Rented Sector Waiting Lists and Allocations. This holds information on the following from the end of each financial year:

- Total Applicants on Common Waiting List – Northern Ireland (NI) and Local Government District (LGD) geographies available
- Number of Applicants in Housing Stress
- Number of Allocations to Applicants – NI and LGD geographies available
- Number of Allocations to transfers – NI and LGD geographies available

The allocations figures are broken down into new applicants and transfers from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) and Housing Associations.

The Data Source and Supplier

The tables are produced by NIHE for Analytical Services Unit (ASU) using the Housing Management System (HMS). NIHE holds data on all housing applications and allocations made through the Common Selection Scheme in the HMS. The Selection Scheme was approved by the Department of Social Development (now Department for Communities) and has been effective from 1st November 2000. It applies to accommodation owned by NIHE or any registered Housing Association which is participating in the scheme with the exception of accommodation which is let on a temporary basis. The scheme has been devised to be fair and open and give applicants freedom of choice in where they wish to live. Anyone applying under the scheme will be visited and assessed, registered on a Common Waiting List and allocated property according to the rules of the scheme. ASU publish the data in the Quarterly and annual Housing Statistics publications.

Risk/Profile Matrix

Statistical Series	Administrative Source	Data Quality Concern	Public Interest	Matrix Classification
Housing Stress	Housing Management System	Low	Medium	Low Risk [A1]

The publication of Social Rented Sector Waiting Lists and Allocations, including the number of applicants in housing stress data can be considered as **medium profile,** in that there is a wide, mainstream media interest, with moderate economic and / or political sensitivity.

The data quality concern attached is considered as a **low quality concern** given that the data is collected by the NIHE with a view to finding those on the Common Waiting List suitable accommodation. This requires the data to be thorough and robust enough for operational use, with many built in quality assurance checks by the data providers. Alongside this, as the publishers, ASU take further quality assurance steps to ensure any errors are identified and corrected.

Overall, Social Rented Sector Waiting Lists and Allocations statistics has been assessed as **A1: Basic Assurance**. Further detail is provided in each of the areas below to justify this assessment.

Operational Context and Admin Data Collection

Statistics drawn from the Common Waiting List are published on an annual basis within the Housing Statistics Annual publication. Figures up to and including 2010-11 were draw from the 'PRAWL' operational IT system. PRAWL has been replaced by the Housing Management System (HMS) which went live in July 2011. Total figures for the 2011-12 year (ie. Allocations) are therefore drawn from both systems. Figures for 2011-12 year end (ie. Waiting list data) were extracted at 1st May 2012, as opposed to 31st March in other years. Figures for allocations for 2011-12 onwards are fully comparable with published statistics for previous years. However, due to the introduction of the new Housing Management system and a change to the annual renewal process for applicants the number of waiting list applicants is considered to be a significant undercount for this period. This has been caveating in all tables to make users aware of it, and the issue was resolved before the next instalment of the time series.

HMS data is held on servers behind a firewall and access is via profiles and restricted to specific roles within the HMS system. Allocations data is extracted on a daily basis and waiting list data is extracted on the first of each month. Data is extracted using the Sequel Server Integration Services (SSIS) package, from this models are created to allow the data to be put onto a dashboard.

Communication with data supply partners

Statisticians in ASU work closely with researchers within NIHE regarding the specification and supply of Social Rented Sector Waiting Lists and Allocations data. NIHE and ASU DfC have a formal agreement in place regarding the supply of data.

Each quarter ASU and NIHE statisticians open a dialogue to specify what data is required, in what format and a deadline is agreed upon. This allows time for NIHE to extract and quality assure the data before sending it to ASU.

Following this ASU perform their own quality assurance checks. If any errors or possible quality issues are identified at this stage, ASU will query this with NIHE who will endeavour to resolve the identified issues and/or advise ASU of the outcome.

QA Principles, standards and checks by Data Suppliers

The common waiting list reports on all households that have applied for social housing through the Common Selection Scheme in Northern Ireland at financial year-end. NIHE holds data on all housing applications made through the Common Selection Scheme in the HMS. The Waiting List application figures cover new applicants only i.e. those with no existing NIHE/Housing Association tenancy; current tenants seeking a transfer are not included.

Information is extracted from the Housing Management System in the form of reports produced through 'business objects' (this is due to be replaced by Microsoft Data Analytics Tools). Waiting List and allocations data are also periodically downloaded from HMS and validated using enquiry on HMS / alternative Crystal reports to ensure that the data are reliable and robust for use. Data is checked across various geographies and cross tabs to ensure it is within expected parameters and compared against previous trends. Any anomalies identified are flagged up and investigated if

necessary. NIHE checks all data carefully, ensuring a high level of quality assurance. However, users should be aware that figures are extracted from a live database on a specific date.

Producers' QA Investigations and Documentation

The data supplied by the NIHE is published by ASU in the Quarterly Housing Bulletin and the Annual Housing Statistics publications. Statisticians in ASU check the tables against the previous financial years' data for inconsistencies and data variations. If any issues occur, ASU submit a query to NIHE for clarification. Before data is published in either of these publications, it is reviewed and quality assured via a number of different checks, at several different levels of authority. Further Quality Assurance takes place on a regular basis as a by-product of analysing the dataset to answer operational queries, ad-hoc queries, and assembly questions.

Homelessness

Background to the Statistics

Analytical Services Unit (ASU) produces *"Northern Ireland Housing Bulletin"* (a quarterly publication) and *"Northern Ireland Housing Statistics"* (an annual publication) with data tables on Homelessness which hold information on the following:

- Households Presenting As Homeless By Reason
- Households Presenting As Homeless By Household Type
- Households Presenting As Homeless By Outcome
- Homeless Households Accepted As Full Duty Applicants By Reason

The Data Source and Supplier

The tables are produced by NIHE for ASU using the Housing Management System (HMS). NIHE holds data on all homeless presenters in the HMS. In Northern Ireland the Housing (NI) Order 1988 (as amended) identifies the Northern Ireland Housing Executive as the agency tasked with responding to homelessness. The Order places a statutory duty on the Housing Executive to provide interim and/or permanent accommodation for certain homeless households, dependent upon investigations and assessment of their circumstances. In order to be "accepted" as statutorily homeless, a household must meet the four tests of:

- Eligibility
- Homelessness
- Priority Need
- Intentionality.

Any household that meets these four tests will be accepted as a "Full Duty Applicant" and will be owed a full housing duty. The full housing duty includes ensuring that accommodation is made available for the household as well as the provision of temporary accommodation where necessary and assistance with the protection of the household's belongings. ASU publish data on those presenting and accepted as homeless in the quarterly housing bulletin and the annual Housing Statistics publication.

Risk/Profile Matrix

Statistical Series	Administrative Source	Data Quality Concern	Public Interest	Matrix Classification
Homelessness	Housing Management System	Low	Medium]	Low Risk [A1]

The publication of homelessness data can be considered as **medium profile**, in that there is wider user and media interest, with moderate economic and / or political sensitivity.

The data quality concern attached is considered as a **low quality concern** given that the data is collected by the NIHE with a view to adding those accepted as homeless to the Common Waiting List and finding them suitable accommodation. This requires the data to be thorough and robust enough for operational use, with many built in quality assurance checks by the data providers.

Alongside this, as the publishers, ASU take further quality assurance steps to ensure any errors are identified and corrected.

Taking this into consideration, the level of assurance attached to the production of Homelessness statistics has been assessed as **A1: Basic Assurance.** Further justification for this decision will be highlighted below.

Operational Context and Admin Data Collection

Statistics on homelessness drawn from the HMS are published on a quarterly basis within the Quarterly Housing Bulletin and the Housing Statistics Annual publication. Figures up to and including 2010-11 were drawn from the 'PRAWL' operational IT system. PRAWL has been replaced by the Housing Management System (HMS) which went live in July 2011. Figures for July - September 2011, October - December 2011 and January - March 2012 homeless figures are not available on a quarterly basis due to the introduction of a new Housing Management System in July 2011. Total figures for the 2011-12 year are therefore drawn from both systems. Following the introduction of the new Housing Management System, no data on reason for presentation is available for 3,731 cases during the period July 2011 - March 2012 and 835 cases during the period April - June 2012. This is due to the merging of two systems, involving data migration and keying variations. Figures on homelessness for 2011-12 onwards are fully comparable with published statistics for previous years.

HMS data is held on servers behind a firewall and access is via profiles and restricted to specific roles within the HMS system. Homelessness data is extracted on a quarterly basis. Data is extracted using a SSIS package, from this models are created to allow the data to be put onto a dashboard.

Communication with data supply partners

Statisticians in ASU work closely with researchers within NIHE regarding the specification and supply of Homelessness data. NIHE and ASU DfC have a formal agreement in place regarding the supply of data.

Each quarter ASU and NIHE statisticians open a dialogue to specify what data is required, in what format and a deadline is agreed upon. This allows time for NIHE to extract and quality assure the data before sending it to ASU. Following this ASU perform their own quality assurance checks. If any errors or possible quality issues are identified at this stage, ASU will query this with NIHE who will endeavour to resolve the identified issues and/or advise ASU of the outcome.

QA Principles, standards and checks by Data Suppliers

Statistics on homelessness drawn from the HMS include all presenters and acceptances, as well as those who had their duty discharged.

Information is extracted from the Housing Management System in the form of reports produced through 'business objects' (this is due to be replaced by Microsoft Data Analytics Tools). Homelessness data is also periodically downloaded from HMS and validated using enquiry on HMS / alternative Crystal reports to ensure that the data are reliable and robust for use. Data is checked across various geographies and cross tabs to ensure it is within expected parameters and compared against previous trends. Any anomalies identified are flagged up and investigated if necessary.

NIHE checks all data carefully, ensuring a high level of quality assurance. However, users should be aware that figures are extracted from a live database on a specific date.

Producers' QA Investigations and Documentation

The data supplied by the NIHE is published by ASU in the *"Northern Ireland Housing Bulletin"* and *"Northern Ireland Housing Statistics"*. Statisticians in ASU check the tables against the previous financial years' data for inconsistencies and data variations. If any issues to occur ASU submit a query to NIHE for clarification. Before data is published in either of these publications, it is reviewed and quality assured via a number of different checks, at several different levels of authority. Further Quality Assurance takes place on a regular basis as a by-product of analysing the dataset to answer operational queries, ad-hoc queries, and assembly questions.

NIHE Tenants in Receipt of Housing Benefit

Background to the Statistics

Analytical Services Unit (ASU) produce the *"Northern Ireland Housing Statistics"* publication with tables which hold information on the following:

- Total Number of NIHE tenants and the % of which are receiving Housing Benefit
- Number of tenants receiving the full amount of Housing Benefit
- Total Housing Benefit paid
- Average Housing Benefit per recipient

The Data Source and Supplier

These tables are produced by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) who hold information on all Housing Benefit cases in Northern Ireland, and on Housing Executive rent accounts, in operational IT systems.

The data in these tables relates solely to properties rented from the Housing Executive, and is extracted from the 'I-world' Housing Benefit System and the Housing Management System (HMS). Users of the tables are those with an interest in the housing sector; including government officials, the voluntary sector, charities, the private sector and others. The figures are based on information about all Housing Executive tenancies in Northern Ireland.

Risk/Profile Matrix

Statistical Series	Administrative Source	Data Quality Concern	Public Interest	Matrix Classification
NIHE tenants in receipt of HB	'I-World' Housing Benefit System/ Housing Management System	Low	Medium	Low Risk [A1]

The publication of NIHE Housing Benefit data can be considered as **medium profile**, as there is wider user and media interest, with moderate economic and/or political sensitivity.

The data quality concern attached is as **low concern** given that when producing these reports, NIHE run quality assurance checks and data cleansing. The data is then sent to ASU who perform further validation and checks, allowing any errors to be identified and corrected.

Overall, Housing Benefit statistics have been assessed as **A1: Basic Assurance.** Further detail is provided in each of the areas below to justify this assessment.

Operational Context and Admin Data Collection

Statistics on NIHE tenants in receipt of Housing Benefit are published on an annual basis within the Housing Statistics Annual publication. Figures are derived from 'Business Objects' reports within the Housing Benefit system, which identify live Housing Benefit awards for Housing Executive tenancies and cases with a 'Full Housing Benefit' flag for Housing Executive tenancies. Full Housing Benefit refers to when the full charge for rent and rates is met by Housing Benefit.

The figure for the total amount of Housing Benefit paid is produced by the Housing Executive's Finance Division.

Figures relating to the total number of tenants, number of tenants in receipt of Housing Benefit, total benefit paid and average benefit per recipient are coherent and directly comparable with those published previously. However, figures relating to the number and proportion of tenants receiving full Housing Benefit from 2011-12 onwards are not strictly comparable with figures for previous years. An adjustment made to the Housing Benefit IT system during 2011-12, improved the accuracy of the figures from this year onwards.

Communication with data supply partners

Statisticians in ASU work closely alongside researchers in NIHE regarding the specification and supply of this data. Every year ASU and NIHE open a dialogue to specify what data is required, in what format and a deadline is agreed upon. This allows time for NIHE to extract and quality assure the data before sending it to ASU.

Following this ASU perform their own quality assurance checks. If any errors or possible quality issues are identified at this stage, ASU will query this with NIHE who will endeavour to resolve the identified issues and advise ASU of the outcome.

QA Principles, standards and checks by Data Suppliers

Figures relating to the total number of tenants, number of tenants in receipt of Housing Benefit, total benefit paid and average benefit per recipient are downloaded and validated to ensure that the data is reliable and robust. The Housing Executive checks all data that is published carefully to provide a high level of quality assurance; however, figures relating to the number and proportion of tenants receiving full Housing Benefit from 2011-12 onwards are not strictly comparable with figures for previous years. An adjustment made to the Housing Benefit IT system during 2011-12, improved the accuracy of the figures from this year onwards.

Producers' QA Investigations and Documentation

The data supplied by NIHE is published by ASU in the "*Northern Ireland Housing Statistics*" publication. Statisticians in ASU check the tables against the previous financial years' data for inconsistencies and data variations. If any issues occur ASU submit a query to NIHE for clarification. Before data is published in "Northern Ireland Housing Statistics", ASU's annual publication, it is reviewed and quality assured via a number of different checks, at several different levels of authority.

NIHE Average Weekly Rent

Background to the Statistics

Analytical Services Unit (ASU) produces *"Northern Ireland Housing Statistics"* (an annual publication) with tables which hold information on the following:

- Average Weekly Rent (Net)
- Annual Collectable Rental Income
- Annual Arrears

The Data Source and Supplier

Data on average rent, rent arrears and collectable rent is sourced from the Housing Executive's computerised Housing Management System (HMS), which holds up-to-date data on all Housing Executive rent accounts. The data in the tables relates solely to properties rented from the Housing Executive. Users of the tables are those with an interest in the housing sector; including government officials, the voluntary sector, charities, the private sector and others. The figures are based on information about all Housing Executive tenancies in Northern Ireland.

Risk/Profile Matrix

Statistical Series	Administrative Source	Data Quality Concern	Public Interest	Matrix Classification
NIHE Average Weekly Rent	Housing Management System (HMS)	Low	Low	Low Risk [A1]

The publication of NIHE rent data can be considered as **low profile**, as there is limited/niche user and media interest, and it is relatively politically neutral.

The data quality concern attached is as **low concern** given that when producing these reports, NIHE run quality assurance checks and data cleansing. The data is then sent to ASU who perform further validation and checks, allowing any errors to be identified and corrected.

Overall, the average weekly rent statistics have been assessed as **A1: Basic Assurance.** Further detail is provided in each of the areas below to justify this assessment.

Operational Context and Admin Data Collection

Data on average rent, rent arrears and collectable rent is sourced from the Housing Executive's computerised Housing Management System (HMS), which holds up-to-date data on all Housing Executive rent accounts. The data in the table relates solely to properties rented from the Housing Executive. Users of the tables are those with an interest in the housing sector; including government officials, the voluntary sector, charities, the private sector and others. The figures are based on information about all Housing Executive tenancies in Northern Ireland.

Communication with data supply partners

Statisticians in ASU work closely alongside researchers in NIHE regarding the specification and supply of this data. Every year ASU and NIHE open a dialogue to specify what data is required, in

what format and a deadline is agreed upon. This allows time for NIHE to extract and quality assure the data before sending it to ASU.

Following this ASU perform their own quality assurance checks. If any errors or possible quality issues are identified at this stage, ASU will query this with NIHE who will endeavour to resolve the identified issues and advise ASU of the outcome.

QA Principles, standards and checks by Data Suppliers

Data on average rent are validated on a yearly basis, confirmed by senior management and reported to the Housing Executive Board in an annual Rent Increase Board Paper. The Average Rent figure remains static throughout the year.

Data on rent arrears and collectable rental income are subject to validation, and are reported to the Housing Executive Board, on a monthly basis. Records are inspected periodically by the Housing Executive's Internal Audit Unit and can also be subject to inspection by the Northern Ireland Audit Office. Figures can change slightly following year-end due to accounting adjustments. Income Collection and Arrears reporting was also inspected by the DfC Accountability Section at the end of 2015/16 and received the top classification 1.

The time series of data is coherent and directly comparably over time, as the methods of calculating data have not changed.

Producers' QA Investigations and Documentation

The data supplied by NIHE is published by ASU in the Annual Housing Statistics publication. Statisticians in ASU check the tables against the previous financial years' data for inconsistencies and data variations. If any issues do occur ASU submit a query to NIHE for clarification. Before data is published in "Northern Ireland Housing Statistics", ASU's annual publication, it is reviewed and quality assured via a number of different checks, at several different levels of authority.

Wales Average Weekly Rent

Background to the Statistics

Analytical Services Unit (ASU) produces *"Northern Ireland Housing Statistics"* (an annual publication) with tables which hold information on the following:

- Average Weekly Local Authority Rents for Wales

Information on Quality Assurance of Administrative data provided by the Welsh Government can be found here: http://gov.wales/docs/statistics/2017/171115-housing-statistics-quality-report-en.pdf

Scotland - Average Weekly Rent

Background to the Statistics

Analytical Services Unit (ASU) produces *"Northern Ireland Housing Statistics"* (an annual publication) with tables which hold information on the following:

- Average Weekly Local Authority Rents for Scotland

The Data Source and Supplier

The Centre for Housing Market Analysis (CHMA) within the Scottish Government collects Housing Revenue Account (HRA) information from each Local Authority on an annual basis. This information is used to produce an official statistics bulletin which presents statistics on local authority housing income and expenditure. The information is also audited by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance (CIPFA). In turn, these statistics are used by councils to monitor, manage and plan housing finances. It is also made available to for scrutiny to Scottish Ministers.

Risk/Profile Matrix

Statistical Series	Administrative Source	Data Quality Concern	Public Interest	Matrix Classification
Average Weekly Local Authority Rent	Local Authority Housing Accounts	Medium	Low	Low Risk [A1]

The publication of Scottish HRA data can be considered as **low profile**, as in Northern Ireland there are limited/niche users and media interest, and it is relatively politically neutral.

The data quality concern attached is of **medium concern** as whilst the CHMA carry out their own quality assurance and auditing of this data, ASU are generally unaware of this process. ASU have sought clarification from CHMA on this and will update this section when more information becomes available.

Overall, these statistics have been assessed as **A1: Basic Assurance.** Further detail is provided in each of the areas below to justify this assessment.

Operational Context and Admin Data Collection

Data on the average rent charged by local authorities in Scotland is sourced to the HRA Statistics bulletin. The annual Housing Revenue Account (HRA) return asks for budgeted or estimated HRA information relating to the year in which the return is being completed (2017-18), and for near actual and un-audited information for the year just ended (2016-17) in accordance with section 204(4) of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987.   Local Authorities may revise earlier figures in subsequent years once they have audited accounts.

Communication with data supply partners

Statisticians in ASU are able to extract the figures required for this table from a pre published statistics bulletin "Housing Revenue Account (HRA) statistics: income and expenditure" on the Scottish Government website. Prior to publication, these figures have undergone a quality assurance process by CHMA and CIPFA.

Following this ASU perform their own quality assurance checks. If any errors or possible quality issues are identified at this stage, ASU will query this with The Centre for Housing Market Analysis who will endeavour to resolve the identified issues and advise ASU of the outcome.

QA Principles, standards and checks by Data Suppliers

Along with the HRA return sheets which are sent to each Local Authority for completion, the Centre for Housing Market Analysis provides guidance on how the data should be collected and calculation guidance where necessary.

Some checks are built into the survey form, for example, if the rents look too high this will result in an error message which the Local Authority can then see, check and address if necessary. The majority of checks are performed by CHMA once all the data has been collated into a national dataset. This includes arithmetic checks of all rows and columns, that numbers are in the right denominations e.g. 000s, Millions and there are cross checks between certain tables to ensure that they reconcile correctly. Where errors are found they are corrected by CHMA or fed back to the data providers were further clarity is required. Some of the tables are cross-checked by Statisticians in Local Government Finance who hold some equivalent HRA account data in their financial returns. This allows any differences to be reconciled or explained. The tables, bulletin and charts are closely proof-read by the CHMA prior to release.

Following this, the data are checked by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy. This is independent of the Scottish Government and any errors are fed back to the SG CHMA.

The time series of data is coherent and directly comparably over time, as the methods of calculating data have not changed.

Producers' QA Investigations and Documentation

The data supplied through the HRA statistics bulletin is published by ASU in the Annual Housing Statistics publication. Statisticians in ASU check the tables against the previous financial years' data for inconsistencies and data variations. If any issues do occur, ASU submit a query to the CHMA for clarification. Before data is published in "Northern Ireland Housing Statistics", ASU's annual publication, it is reviewed and quality assured via a number of different checks, at several different levels of authority.

Housing Association Data

Background to the Statistics

Analytical Services Unit (ASU) produce *"Northern Ireland Housing Statistics"* (an annual publication) with tables which hold information on the following:

- Housing Association Average Weekly Rent (Gross & Net)
- Housing Association Annual Collectable Rental Income (Gross)
- Housing Association Annual Arrears (Gross)

The Data Source and Supplier

Community Regeneration & Housing within the Department for Communities (DfC) collects information on social housing stock owned by Housing Associations (HAs) registered with DfC. Data gathered from the HAs is used in the production of Performance Indicators. These indicators are used to assess and compare the performance across all HAs and to ensure that they are adhering to the standards set out in the Housing Association Guide. Financial Lenders also view the performance tables to help assess the financial viability of the HAs when approving increased borrowings.

Risk/Profile Matrix

Statistical Series	Administrative Source	Data Quality Concern	Public Interest	Matrix Classification
Housing Association Rent, Income & Arrears	ARR database	Medium	Low	Medium Risk [A2]

The publication of Housing Association data can be considered as **low profile**, as there is limited/niche user and media interest, and it is relatively politically neutral.

The data quality concern attached is **medium concern** as although the data is reliant on self-reporting for each housing association, high risk factors have been moderated through the use of safeguards such as operational checks and effective communication arrangements.

Overall, Housing Association statistics have been assessed as **A2: Enhanced Assurance.** Further detail is provided in each of the areas below to justify this assessment.

Operational Context and Admin Data Collection

Data is requested from each HA via an excel version of the (1) Annual Regulatory Return (ARR) and (2) the Annual Financial Return (AFR). In both cases returns are collated onto a single spreadsheet. Data is gathered under the following categories:

- Summary Information about the Housing Association (Senior staff details) and the services provided by, for or shared with other bodies,
- Housing Management (this includes voids and rental income),
- Maintenance (repair response times),

- Contextual Statistical Information (numbers and type of dwelling units and breakdown by District Council area),
- Miscellaneous (number of evictions and abandonments) and
- Additional Information (Board membership)
- Financial Information including management and maintenance costs

Information on the ARR is checked by staff in the Regulation Team in Community Regeneration & Housing. The checks carried out are to ensure that information supplied in various parts of the ARR tally and that anything that does not match is accounted for by way of written explanation. Information supplied is cross checked with any recent inspections which were carried out by the team. Data was also checked against previous performance tables to address any variances identified. All discrepancies are followed up with the HAs and supporting documentation requested to be supplied Similar procedures are applied to information on the Annual Financial return by staff in the Finance team in Housing Group.

Communication with data supply partners

Statisticians in ASU work closely alongside staff in the Housing Group regarding the supply of data. ASU assist the Housing Group with their initial data collation and analysis when they produce their 'Performance Indicator reports'. Due to this, ASU already have access to the data required to produce the tables that are published in their annual publication. Throughout the process ASU and the Housing Group correspond regularly to ensure that both teams are aware of progress and to ensure that if any errors or disparities occur, they can be addressed by the appropriate party.

Prior to publication, ASU perform further quality assurance checks. If any errors or possible quality issues are identified at this stage, ASU will query this with Housing Group who will endeavour to resolve the identified issues and advise ASU of the outcome.

QA Principles, standards and checks by Data Suppliers

The Inspection Team within Community Regeneration & Housing test the information supplied on the ARR and the AFR while out on fieldwork during the course of an inspection on the HA. The team also check the data supplied against the Audited Accounts, Internal Audit and External Audit Reports to verify the accurateness of the data supplied. The final performance tables are also compared to the previous year's tables and large variances are highlighted and queried with the HA, explanations and amendments are submitted.

Producers' QA Investigations and Documentation

The data supplied by the Housing Group is published by ASU in their annual publication, "Northern Ireland Housing Statistics". Statisticians in ASU input the data into a pre-existing excel document that has automated calculations to produce the figures for the table. This method has been pre-approved by management and ensures consistency year on year. Once the table is produced and formatted, statisticians in ASU check the tables against the previous financial years' data for inconsistencies and data variations. If any issues do occur, ASU submit a query to the Housing Group for clarification. Before the data is published, it is reviewed and quality assured via a number of different checks, at several different levels of authority.

Whilst statisticians in ASU and in the Housing Group carry out as many checks as possible to minimise the risk of error, there is still a reliance on self-reporting, and the possibility of human error. These points are highlighted in quality documents to make users of these statistics aware of this.

National House Building Council (NHBC)

Background to the Statistics

Analytical Services Unit (ASU) produces *"Northern Ireland Housing Bulletin"* (a quarterly publication) and *"Northern Ireland Housing Statistics"* (an annual publication) with tables which hold information on the following:

- NHBC Registered New Dwelling Number of Sales - NI and LGD geographies
- NHBC Registered New Dwelling Average Price - NI and LGD geographies

The Data Source and Supplier

These tables are produced by National House Building Council (NHBC) using information provided by builders and solicitors. NHBC collects information on all new-build properties registered for NHBC's New-Build and Self-Build warranty products. NHBC provides the warranty on approximately 80% of new homes built in the UK.

NHBC is an independent non-profit distributing company, reinvesting all resources in further research and work to improve the construction standard of new UK houses for the benefit of homeowners. For more information refer to the following link: http://www.nhbc.co.uk/.

Risk/Profile Matrix

Statistical Series	Administrative Source	Data Quality Concern	Public Interest	Matrix Classification
New Dwelling number of sales and average Price	Fusion Database	Low	Medium	Low Risk [A1]

The publication of NHBC New dwelling sales and prices data can be considered as **medium profile**, as there is wider user and media interest, with moderate economic and/or political sensitivity.

The data quality concern attached is as **low concern** given that when producing these reports, NHBC run quality assurance checks and data cleansing. The data is then sent to ASU who perform further validation and checks, allowing any errors to be identified and corrected.

Overall, NHBC statistics have been assessed as **A1: Basic Assurance.** Further detail is provided in each of the areas below to justify this assessment.

Operational Context and Admin Data Collection

Builders, on registering their intention to build a property, state the anticipated selling price of the property, which is entered on NHBC's computer system. Once the property is sold, the purchaser's solicitor notifies NHBC of the sale and states the actual selling price, by completing an 'Acceptance of Cover' form; either entering the information on-line or by completing and returning a paper form, which will then be entered on the system by NHBC staff. Reports are run on a quarterly basis to bring back the information on selling price of properties sold in Northern Ireland within the time

period. By careful checking of the data, most possible errors are identified, investigated and amendments made, when necessary, to the data held on the system. This validation includes identifying inaccuracies such as missing information or data that may have been keyed incorrectly. Reliance is placed however, on the date of legal completion (date of sale) being entered correctly on the system. Any amendments necessary are made on the system and checks are carried out to confirm that it has been done.

Communication with data supply partners

Statisticians in ASU work closely alongside researchers within NHBC regarding the specification and supply of this data. Each quarter ASU and NHBC statisticians open a dialogue to specify what data is required, in what format and a deadline is agreed upon. This allows time for NHBC to extract and quality assure the data before sending it to ASU.

Following this ASU perform their own quality assurance checks. If any errors or possible quality issues are identified at this stage, ASU will query this with NHBC who will endeavour to resolve the identified issues and advise ASU of the outcome.

QA Principles, standards and checks by Data Suppliers

Information is supplied by builders, developers or solicitors and is checked by senior administrators at the point of input on NHBC database. Data is extracted monthly and stringent crosschecks are carried out to identify and correct anomalous data arising at this point. Data is then additionally reviewed by the Data Manager before being approved for use.

The data is thoroughly checked and any anomalies investigated prior to issue in order to provide a high level of quality assurance. Nevertheless, as the figures are extracted from a live database on a particular date, figures may change due to late notification from solicitors. Although a re-run of the previous quarter is supplied to the Department for Communities (DfC), alongside the data for the most recent quarter, any data from notification provided after the re-run will not be captured. Additionally, LGDs are allocated by site location and postcode. Where a site covers a large area, or a postcode is incorrectly assigned, a plot may be allocated to a neighbouring LGD.

Producers' QA Investigations and Documentation

The data supplied by NHBC is published by ASU in the Quarterly Housing Bulletin and the Annual Housing Statistics publications. Statisticians in ASU check the tables against the previous financial years' data for inconsistencies and data variations. If any issues occur, ASU submit a query to NHBC for clarification. Before data is published in either of these publications, it is reviewed and quality assured via a number of different checks, at several different levels of authority.

Northern Ireland Co-Ownership Housing Scheme

Background to the Statistics

Analytical Services Unit (ASU) produces *"Northern Ireland Housing Statistics"* (an annual publication) with tables which hold information on the following:

- Applications Completed/Approved
- Households becoming full owners
- Part Purchases (Partial Staircasing)
- Homes Currently owned through the scheme
- Capital Expenditure
- Median Price of Properties Purchased through the Scheme

The Data Source and Supplier

The Co-Ownership housing scheme has been operated by the Northern Ireland Co-Ownership Housing Association (NICHA) since the late 1970s and is a Government funded low cost route into homeownership for people who could not otherwise afford to buy a home. Purchasers buy a share in the property of their choice (from 50% up to 90% initially).

Each case is assessed individually, and all properties are subject to valuation before purchase. Co-Ownership Housing provides up to 50% of the funding to the purchasers, who then contribute the balance towards the home of their choice, usually through a mortgage from any one of several market suppliers. Purchasers start off with the percentage share in the property that they can afford and can then increase that initial share by buying part or all of the remaining equity in the property from Co-Ownership Housing at a later date. There is a cap on the value of the property that can be purchased through this scheme which currently sits at £150,000. A new property value limit of £160,000 was set for applications received from 1 April 2017.

DfC Housing Supply branch is responsible for monitoring the funding and operation of the schemes by NICHA and are supplied with data in accordance with the terms and conditions as set out in a legally binding Loan agreement and terms and conditions outlined in a Departmental letter of offer. The Departments Finance Branch also received quarterly monitoring reports detailing spend and housing purchases/disposals.

Risk/Profile Matrix

Statistical Series	Administrative Source	Data Quality Concern	Public Interest	Matrix Classification
Co-Ownership Housing Scheme Activity	NICHA database	Low	Low	Low Risk [A1]

The publication of NICHA Co-Ownership Scheme data can be considered as **low profile**, as there is limited/niche user and media interest, and it is relatively politically neutral.

The data quality concern attached is as **low concern** given the final nature of the data (for reporting purposes), in that there are no missing values or known sources of error. When the data is then sent to ASU, further validation and checks occur.

Overall, NICHA statistics have been assessed as **A1: Basic Assurance.** Further detail is provided in each of the areas below to justify this assessment.

Operational Context and Admin Data Collection

Up until April 2016 NICHA received all its government funding in the form of Housing Association Grants (HAG) in order to complete purchases. Housing Association Grants claims are submitted to DFC Finance Team for payment of the appropriate funding. Such claims are subject to the necessary finance checks to reconcile claims and payments against the appropriate purchase records and deed transactions; this provides confirmation that the relevant monitoring returns reflect the number of actual purchases made/applications completed.

Since April 2016, the overwhelming majority of Government funding is provided by way of Financial Transactions Capital (FTC) Loans and is transferred to NICHA in advance of purchase. As with Housing Associations grants approvals are subject to the necessary finance checks to reconcile claims and payments against the appropriate purchase records and deed transactions; this provides confirmation that the relevant monitoring returns reflect the number of actual purchases made/applications completed.

DFC Housing Supply branch is responsible for monitoring the funding and operation of the schemes by NICHA against agreed delivery targets. NICHA supply DFC Housing Supply with data on a monthly & quarterly basis in accordance with the terms and conditions set out in the Financial Assistance agreement. The Departments Finance Branch also received quarterly monitoring reports detailing spend and housing purchases/disposals.

Due to the final nature of the data (for reporting purposes), there are no missing values or known sources of error. Figures for 'Homes Currently Owned through the Scheme' and 'Households becoming Full Owners' are validated through an external audit process.

Communication with data supply partners

Statisticians in ASU work closely alongside staff in the Housing Division (DfC) regarding the specification and supply of this data. Every year ASU and Housing Division staff open a dialogue to specify what data is required, in what format and a deadline is agreed upon. This allows time for NICHA to extract and quality assure the data before it is sent to ASU. Housing Division sends ASU the data on behalf of NICHA.

Following this ASU perform their own quality assurance checks. If any errors or possible quality issues are identified at this stage, ASU will query this with the Housing Division who will endeavour to resolve the identified issues and advise ASU of the outcome.

QA Principles, standards and checks by Data Suppliers

NICHA is a Registered Housing Association & Industrial and Provident Society regulated and funded by DFC. NICHA Board of management is responsible for ensuring that the organisation has

established and maintained an effective system of internal financial control to ensure the reliability of financial information, maintaining proper accounting records.

NICHA employ suitably qualified and experienced staff in risk management, data analysis and audit reporting of performance data to the Department.

In addition NICHA is subject to an external audit to provide reasonable assurance to the organisation about the reliability of financial and operational information.

Due to the final nature of the data (for reporting purposes), there are no missing values or known sources of error. Figures for 'Homes Currently Owned through the Scheme' and 'Households becoming Full Owners' are validated through an external audit process.

Producers' QA Investigations and Documentation

The data supplied by NICHA/Housing Division is published by ASU in the Annual Housing Statistics publication. Statisticians in ASU check the tables against the previous financial years' data for inconsistencies and data variations. If any issues occur ASU submit a query to the Housing Division for clarification. Before data is published in these publications, it is reviewed and quality assured via a number of different checks, at several different levels of authority.