Scottish Housing Regulator

Guide to surveying tenants and service users

January 2023

Advisory Guidance prepared by Engage Scotland for the Scottish Housing Regulator

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January 2023

This advisory guide outlines the range of survey methods available to landlords, and sets out best practice approaches for each method. The guide should be used in conjunction with our Technical Guidance for Landlords.

The Technical Guidance outlines the relevant Charter indicators, the questions that should be asked to fulfil the data requirements for those indicators, the form the questions should take and the answer options that should be made available to tenants and service users.

Landlords can provide context to their tenants and other service users both when seeking their views and when reporting the overall results back to them.

SUMMARY OF GUIDANCE

This Guide has been produced to help social landlords in designing and conducting surveys of tenants and service users. We have sought to ensure that the guidance balances the need to secure regular and robust survey data, comparison of results across landlords, and minimising the administrative burden on landlords. A key part of that is supporting landlords to select from a growing range of potential survey approaches, including online options.

Getting started

Key considerations for landlords in preparing to conduct their survey.

Integrating surveys with wider engagement

Ensure that your approach will build on existing trend data and complement your wider engagement and communication.

Pre-survey engagement can support participation

Use the pre-survey period as an opportunity to begin engagement with tenants and service users to support survey response.

Complying with data protection

Landlords should ensure that their approach is consistent with key data protection principles, and equality data collection guidance.

More detailed guidance on preparing for a survey is provided at Chapter 2.

Survey design

Our recommendations for the survey design stage.

A carefully chosen survey approach

Landlords should consider the pros and cons of survey methods, taking account of their requirements and resources.

Dedicating the necessary resources to survey design

Good survey design is a critical stage – landlords should dedicate the resources to ensure all survey materials are fit for purpose.

More detailed guidance on survey design is provided at Chapter 3.

Survey fieldwork

Our recommendations for undertaking each element of the survey fieldwork process.

Most landlords should invite all tenants to take part

Landlords with less than 2500 units should invite all tenants - others can choose a sample but online surveys can enable a full census.

Fieldwork focused on maximising participation

All aspects of fieldwork should aim to minimise barriers to participation and maximise the level and representativeness of response.

More detailed guidance on survey fieldwork is provided at Chapter 4.

Data processing

Our recommendations for data processing to prepare data for SHR.

Clean and check data to ensure accuracy

Landlords should clean and check survey data to deal with any missing values, response errors or routing mistakes.

Careful survey weighting to ensure representative results

Landlords should carefully assess the profile of survey respondents and calculate survey weights to correct for any bias in response.

More detailed guidance on data processing is provided at Chapter 5.

Returning data to the SHR

Key tasks for landlords in submitting survey data to the SHR as part of their ARC return.

Submit ARC in line with SHR Technical Guidance

Landlords should read SHR Technical Guidance carefully when preparing to submit survey data as part of their ARC return.

Provide technical information to aid interpretation

Landlords should ensure their ARC returns include required technical detail such as fieldwork dates, survey methods and response numbers.

More detailed guidance on returning data to the SHR is provided at Chapter 6.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. This guide has been produced to assist local authorities and RSLs in designing and conducting surveys of tenants and other service users.

1.2. The Scottish Government's Social Housing Charter came into force in 2012, setting out the standards and outcomes that tenants and service users can expect from social landlords. Social landlords are obliged to submit information each year on the Charter and EESSH indicators through their Annual Return on the Charter (ARC). The Scottish Housing Regulator has produced Technical Guidance for landlords which sets out the specific ARC indicators and how information should be collected and reported for each indicator. [1] Annex 2 summarises these indicators.

1.3. The ARC includes indicators relating to tenant and service user experience and satisfaction with landlord services. As the SHR Technical Guidance notes, landlords should undertake surveys of tenants and service users to collect this information at least every three years.

How landlord information is used

1.4. The SHR's role is to safeguard and promote the interests of tenants and other users of social landlord services in Scotland. Monitoring landlords' performance against the Charter is a key part of the SHR's regulatory approach and ARC data, including data collected through tenant surveys, contributes to this work. The SHR also uses ARC data to produce annual National Reports summarising landlords' performance,[2] and a performance report for each landlord.[3]

1.5. There are several specific 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
- assess whether landlords are achieving Charter outcomes

[1] https://www.housingregulator.gov.scot/for-landlords/advisory-guidance/technical-guidance/how-to-complete-your-annual-return-on-the-charter-arc

[2] https://www.housingregulator.gov.scot/landlord-performance/national-reports

[3] https://www.housingregulator.gov.scot/landlord-performance/landlords

- compare the performance of landlords by having identical data from each
- inform the SHR's wider regulatory activity
- look more closely at specific aspects of a landlord's performance.

Purpose of this guide

1.6. This guide sets out recommended steps on how to conduct a survey of social housing tenants and service users. This includes detailed instructions for the following stages of survey development, fieldwork and reporting:

- Chapter 2 sets out points for consideration in planning your survey
- Chapter 3 provides guidance on choosing an appropriate data collection method, and questionnaire content and design
- Chapter 4 provides guidance on survey sampling, fieldwork scheduling and regularity, and collecting data
- Chapter 5 provides guidance on data inputting and cleaning, and weighting of responses
- Chapter 6 provides advice on preparing and submitting data to the SHR
- Chapter 7 sets out a checklist of key tasks.

1.7. The guide also highlights key choices which landlords will have to make when developing their survey approach, and sets out the pros and cons of available options. The guidance we provide here seeks to ensure that SHR will receive regular and robust data that is fit for purpose, that data can be compared across landlords, and that the administrative burden on landlords is minimised. We say more about these principles throughout the guide.

1.8. This guide has been commissioned by the SHR and produced by Engage Scotland. It is the latest version of guidance originally produced in 2013 (and updated in 2016) which drew on a 2011 Ipsos MORI report proposing minimum standards for the collection of tenant satisfaction data.[4] A key focus for this update has been to support landlords in selecting from a growing range of potential survey approaches, including online options.

[4] http://www.ipsos-mori.com/researchpublications/researcharchive/2737/Capturing-better-information-on-tenant-satisfaction.aspx

2. GETTING STARTED

Key Tasks

Ensure that your survey approach will continue to build on existing trend data and will complement your wider engagement and communication.

Consider how survey content can gather information to support ongoing service improvement, alongside ARC indicators.

Use the pre-survey period as an opportunity to begin engagement with tenants and service users.

Consider whether you have the resources to deliver some or all survey stages in-house, or whether outsourcing would be appropriate.

Ensure that your approach reflects key data protection and GDPR principles, and guidance on equality data collection.

2.1. This section sets out key points that landlords should consider in preparing to conduct a survey of their tenants and other service users.

Taking account of existing survey activity

2.2. It is now 10 years since the introduction of the Charter, and most landlords have well established survey approaches in place to meet ARC requirements. We are also aware that these approaches, and tenant engagement more widely, have continued to evolve over this period, for example to include more use of digital and online options.

2.3. This guide has been designed to allow sufficient flexibility for landlords to select the survey approach that best suits their specific circumstances and resources. We have also sought to ensure that survey approaches can complement landlord's wider engagement mechanisms. For example, landlords can select from a range of survey methods (see Annex 1), can combine different survey methods where this can improve accessibility for tenants, and can add to the set of required questions (see Annex 2).

2.4. Minimum requirements are set for each survey method to ensure that survey data can support ARC reporting including tracking results over time. Landlords have built a valuable set of time series data through ARC returns, and minimum survey requirements will ensure that survey data continues to add to this, even where landlords adjust or change their survey approach.

Survey aims and objectives

2.5. Landlords should think carefully about the aims and objectives of their 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.

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

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

Pre-survey engagement with tenants

2.7. Response rates are a key factor for the robustness of survey results. In Chapter 4 we outline ways in which landlords can design and manage surveys to maximise response.

2.8. However, there is much that landlords can do before survey fieldwork so that, when tenants and service users are invited to take part, they are already aware of the survey and have been encouraged to engage. Landlords should use the range of channels and tools they already use to communicate with tenants and service users, including newsletters, social media, links with RTOs and public meetings. The focus of this early communication should be on making clear that:

- the survey will be focussed on ensuring landlords understand and are sensitive to the needs of all tenants and service users.
- survey findings will be used by landlords to identify areas of tenant concern and make appropriate service changes.

- the survey will be short and simple to complete – and where possible will offer multiple response options so that tenants can take part in the way that best suits them.
- 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 participants.
- the expected survey start and close dates.
- how results from previous surveys and other tenant engagement exercises have been used by the landlord.

2.9. Early, clear and eye-catching communication will help to generate a positive attitude towards the survey and encourage tenants and service users to take part.

Outsourcing survey work

2.10. 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.

2.11. The main advantage of keeping the survey in-house is that it is likely to be less expensive than using a third party. However, this depends on the availability of the required skills and resources, and there are considerable advantages to procuring help from a research company. These include:

- **expertise** : external research contractors are likely to have more expertise in designing and delivering robust surveys in terms of drawing survey samples, choosing an appropriate method, ensuring robust survey fieldwork processes, and effective weighting and analysis of data.
- **independence**: they are entirely independent of the landlord, and can ensure tenants are confident in the robustness of survey processes.
- **flexibility** : landlords can choose to use external support only for specific parts of the survey, if certain elements can be delivered in-house.
- **quality control**: all research companies should have strict quality control procedures which adhere to the principles set out by the Market Research Society - landlords should always check this in advance.

2.12. 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 surveys are procured individually or undertaken in-house.

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

Data security and equalities

2.14. Preparation and delivery of a survey will involve the collection and processing of personal information about your tenants and service users. As such, issues relating to data security, confidentiality and anonymity are of paramount importance and should underpin all stages of the process. The survey is also an opportunity for landlords to support their duty under equalities and human rights legislation to understand the needs of different service users – the SHR requires social landlords to ask for equalities information for this purpose.

2.15. Annex 3 provides a summary of relevant legislation and guidance around data security and equalities, including tools which may be useful for landlords in preparing for their tenant survey.

3. SURVEY DESIGN

Key tasks

Conduct your survey by postal or online self-completion, or by telephone or face-to-face interview.

Think carefully about the pros and cons of each method in developing your approach, taking account of your requirements and resources.

Consider whether a mixed method approach would help to secure the required level and profile of response – but ensure that survey questions are consistent and appropriate for all methods.

Ensure that survey content uses the exact question wording for each Charter indicator – inclusion of other questions should take account of advice on questionnaire wording, structure and length.

3.1. This section sets out recommendations for survey design, including development of landlords' survey approach and development of survey questionnaires and other materials.

Choosing the right method

3.2. To meet the SHR's minimum requirements, we would recommend that the survey is carried out by post, online, telephone or face-to-face. Guidance previously recommended avoiding online surveys due to concerns around relatively low levels of internet use amongst social tenants, and the risk of online surveys being unrepresentative. However, access to the internet has continued to increase since this guide was last updated. For example, the 2020 Scottish Household Survey indicated that more than 80% of social rented tenants used the internet, and trend data suggests that this may have increased further since 2020. Carefully designed and implemented online surveys can therefore produce robust, representative results – although as noted later in this section, landlords should provide an alternative response option for tenants without internet access.

3.3. Any of the four recommended methods can be used as long as the SHR's minimum requirements on statistical robustness are met. Each data collection method has advantages and disadvantages which need to be weighed up by landlords. These are outlined at Annex 1. We encourage landlords to think carefully about these in selecting their survey approach.

3.4. Whichever method is chosen, it should be noted that the SHR requires the following technical information as part of the statistical return (see Annex 2 and separate SHR Technical Guidance[5] for more information):

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

A mixed method approach

3.5. It may be appropriate for landlords to combine multiple methods when surveying their tenants. This can be particularly effective in securing a sufficient volume of survey responses, and/or ensuring the survey approach is accessible to all tenants and service users.

3.6. For example, if a landlord sees low response rates to an initial postal or online survey they may consider supplementing this with a telephone methodology to boost response. Similarly, landlords may choose to include a smaller scale telephone or postal survey methodology alongside an online survey if they have a significant proportion of service users without internet access, or if they feel that a purely online methodology will exclude specific service user groups.

3.7. Where a mixed method approach is used, it is essential that landlords ensure the survey questions are consistent and appropriate for the methods used. The landlord should also ensure that robust systems are in place to prevent duplicate responses, for example by use of unique referencing for each service user.

Comparison of survey methods

3.8. Taking account of the pros and cons of the different methods set out at Annex 1, face-to-face surveys are sometimes referred to as the 'gold standard' in terms of achieving a representative sample and having the fewest constraints in relation to the length and complexity of the questionnaire. However, all survey

[5] https://www.housingregulator.gov.scot/for-landlords/advisory-guidance/technical-guidance/how-to-complete-your-annual-return-on-the-charter-arc

methods have strengths and weaknesses; face-to-face surveys can be significantly more costly than other approaches, and are more onerous in terms of staff skills and training. Landlords may also need to consider whether experience of the COVID-19 pandemic has affected service users' willingness to take part in face-to-face engagement.

3.9. Other survey methods have more drawbacks in terms of survey design and achieving a representative response. For example, online and postal surveys typically have greater potential for under or over-representation of specific groups. However, these survey methods (online surveys in particular) are substantially less expensive and less complex to design, manage and implement. Indeed, online and postal surveys can be carried out in-house without incurring significant extra cost or the need for specialist equipment or expertise – although careful design is required to maximise the level and representativeness of response.

3.10. The final decision over which method to use will depend on a variety of factors. These should include consideration of the survey method that landlords current use (if any); contact methods used for tenant engagement more widely; the budget available; access to a suitable sample (including telephone/email contact details); resources and expertise available; and the demographics of the tenants you wish to survey. Landlords will need to adapt their chosen method to their own circumstances.

Tracking survey results over time

3.11. The chosen survey method can affect the level and profile of response. For example, online and postal surveys typically achieve a lower response than face to face surveys, while specific service users groups can be more likely to respond to some survey methods than others (older tenants typically being more likely to respond to postal surveys and younger tenants typically more likely to respond to online surveys). Annex 1 provides further information on this.

3.12. The survey 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.

3.13. The potential impact of different survey methods on the profile of response and how respondents answer questions means that a change of survey approach can have an impact on survey results. It is important to note that this impact can be the result of the new survey approach securing a more representative sample and/or a more accurate picture of respondents' views. Survey weighting should also be used to minimise any distortion of results associated with the representativeness of the achieved sample. Where possible, survey weighting should include any characteristics which have seen a significant change in representation.

3.14. Nevertheless, landlords seeing a significant change in trend data following a change in survey approach should consider the extent to which this may reflect other issues, rather than a 'genuine' change in tenant views. For example, landlords may wish to ask:

- Has there has been any significant change in the profile of survey respondents from previous years, that may explain changes in overall survey results? For example, landlords should consider whether the achieved sample include a larger proportion of any service user groups where views differ from the overall average.
- Has there been any change to the content, design and/or layout of the survey questionnaire that may explain changes in survey results?
- Have there been any wider changes in service provision or standards that could explain changes in survey results?

Questionnaire content

3.15. 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. Questionnaire design is key to deriving useful outputs from any survey. Two key aspects of design are important: (a) the content of the questionnaire and (b) the style and layout of the questionnaire.

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

The core SHR questions

3.17. 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 Annex 2 for further detail.

3.18. Eight indicators (1, 2, 5, 7, 12, 13 and 25) should be collected as part of a survey of tenants. Indicators 29 and 32 should not be collected as part of a survey of tenants - see Chapter 4 for more discussion on collecting data for these indicators.

3.19. When using the questions listed at Annex 2, it is important that all the answer options are included in the question and made available to the respondent. This is particularly true of the 'don't know/no opinion' option (Question 1) and the 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied' option (Question 1, 5, 7 etc.). These options serve the important function of ensuring questions are balanced and that sufficient options are provided to cover the full range of potential respondent answers. Removing these questions from your questionnaire may skew collected data and will not allow for valid comparison with other survey data.

Including other questions

3.20. To assess the representativeness of the sample and to enable analysis of results by different subgroups, you may wish to include some **demographic questions** which can be used to compare the profile of the achieved sample against the whole population. Alternatively, this information can be matched to survey responses from stock data using a unique identification number included on survey invites and responses.

3.21. While the survey should collect the questions stipulated by the SHR for ARC as a minimum, you may also wish to include **other service and performance-related questions** to inform your own service improvement and tenant consultation. The number of questions you include is based entirely on your own needs, but we strongly recommend keeping the questionnaire as short as possible. See 'Questionnaire Length' below for further advice.

3.22. We would also recommend that most survey questions are 'closed' – i.e. questions with a set of pre-defined response options. However, you may want to include an 'open ended' question at the end of the questionnaire to collect more unprompted views.

3.23. You may wish to design your own questions but, where possible, we recommend using tried and tested questions from existing surveys. A useful source of questions is the STAR survey question bank.[6] If you do design new questions, we would recommend that you test them with a small number of tenants or colleagues to check for understanding and clarity.

Questionnaire style and layout

3.24. All questionnaires should be user-friendly and equalities-friendly regardless of the method being used, both for respondents and (in the case of telephone or in-person surveys) interviewers. There are different design considerations depending on whether you choose to use interviewer-led or self-completion methods. These are discussed below.

Telephone and face-to-face surveys

3.25. In telephone and face-to-face surveys, the questionnaire should be designed so that the content is easy to follow for interviewers, and is logical and meaningful for respondents. This will help to minimise interviewer errors, improve the quality of respondents' answers and help to maximise response. We recommend that the questionnaire incorporates the following:

- a clear script of what the interviewer should say during each interview including (a) a brief introduction to the survey outlining its purpose and how results will be used, (b) how long the survey will take, and (c) an explanation of how confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained. A printed or electronic copy of the privacy notice should also be provided to all participants (see Data security and equalities in Chapter 2 for further detail).
- wording of questions and response options which is clear, avoiding use of jargon and acronyms.
- sequencing of questions which flows naturally for service users, reflecting the general principle that questions should ideally move from the general (i.e. overall satisfaction with repairs) to the specific (i.e. views on specific aspects of repairs). We recommend that interviews begin with straightforward and non-sensitive questions - SHR has stipulated that the

6 https://bloom-digital.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/housemark/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/09165712/housemark-star-question-library-final_newbrand.xlsx

question on overall satisfaction with landlord services should be asked first.

- use of thematic sections to group related questions (repairs and maintenance, value for money, tenant participation, etc). A brief introduction can be included for each section, for example "Moving on, I'd now like to ask some questions about the repairs service provided by your landlord".
- clear instructions for the interviewer including the number of responses allowed for each question, whether the interviewer should read out response options, and any routing based on responses to earlier questions (although this should be automatically applied if computer-assisted interviewing is used).

<u>Questionnaire length</u>

3.26. We would strongly recommend that a telephone interview lasts no more than 10 minutes and a face-to-face interview no more than 20 minutes. Longer interviews are likely to have an impact both on service users' willingness to take part in the survey (potentially undermining the response rate) and on the quality of their answers - longer interviews are susceptible to higher levels of 'respondent fatigue'.

<u>Questionnaire piloting</u>

3.27. Prior to fieldwork, 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.

Postal surveys

3.28. The design of the questionnaire – it's style and appearance, its length and how user friendly it is - is of particular importance for a postal survey because it will have a direct impact on response rates and the quality of survey data. Landlords should ensure that the questionnaire is short, clearly laid out and easy to complete with instructions for respondents. This will help to maximise response (see Chapter 4 for more advice on maximising response) and ensure the highest level of data quality (by minimising risk of respondent error).

3.29. We recommend that postal questionnaires incorporate the following:

- a length of no more than four pages of A4 – this is key to maximise survey response.
- wording of questions and response options which is clear, avoiding use of jargon and acronyms.
- sequencing of questions which flows naturally, reflecting the general principle that questions should ideally move from the general (i.e. overall satisfaction with repairs) to the specific (i.e. views on specific aspects of repairs). We recommend that the questionnaire begins with straightforward and non-sensitive questions - SHR has stipulated that the question on overall satisfaction with landlord services should be first.
- use of thematic sections to group related questions (repairs and maintenance, rents, tenant participation, etc). A subject heading can be used to indicate the start of each section, for example ‘Repairs and maintenance’ and ‘Value for money’.
- clear instructions on how to complete questions, including how many options can be selected for each question (e.g. ‘please select one option only’) and clear routing instructions for any questions that should be answered by particular respondents only (e.g. dependent on earlier responses).
- a cover letter addressed from the landlord (including relevant branding and signed by an appropriate officer) which explains the purpose of the survey and how results will be used, incorporates a privacy notice giving confidentiality and anonymity assurances, email and telephone contact details for queries, and clearly states the survey closing date.
- an offer of materials in large print or another language, and where feasible an option to complete the survey online or by telephone for service users who are unable to complete the postal survey.
- be accompanied by a reply-paid envelope for returning the questionnaire.
- a unique identifier printed on the questionnaire and cover letter linked to the respondent's property data, which can be used for monitoring of response and analysis purposes.

Addressing barriers to participation

3.30. Postal surveys are reliant on respondents self-completing the questionnaire and can therefore be affected by potential barriers to participation which need to be addressed.

- **respondents with a visual impairment**. The cover letter should include an offer (in large print) of a large print questionnaire – these can be printed and issued upon request.

- **respondents whose first language is not English**. The cover letter should include a standard translation statement in the most commonly used languages (see example below) and offer the opportunity to complete the questionnaire with the assistance of a translator.

Figure 1: Example translation statement

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

3.31. Prior to fieldwork, we 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 questionnaire is printed and sent to tenants/service users.

Online surveys

3.32. As with any self-completion survey approach, design is a crucial stage for online surveys with the potential to have a direct impact on response rates and the quality of data.

3.33. A range of online survey platforms are available to support landlords in the design, preparation and administration of online surveys. If a landlord does not already use a specific platform or in-house software, they should choose a platform that meets their needs. In particular, landlords may wish to ensure that their selected platform can:

- automate the issue of survey invites and reminders.
- enable tenants to 'opt out' of further survey communication.
- produce online surveys that are accessible across a range of devices (i.e. laptop/PC, tablet or mobile phone).
- support any question filtering or routing that may be required.
- support linking of survey responses with sample data.

3.34. Landlords should also ensure that their selected platform meets the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998 and UK GDPR, including around the transfer of survey data between countries.

3.35. In terms of survey questionnaire design, key points noted earlier in relation to postal surveys also apply to online surveys. In particular, we recommend that online survey questionnaires incorporate the following:

- a length equivalent to no more than four pages of A4 – approximately 10 minutes completion time.
- wording of questions and response options which is clear, avoiding use of jargon and acronyms.
- sequencing of questions which flows naturally, moving from the general (i.e. overall satisfaction with repairs) to the specific (i.e. views on specific aspects of repairs). We recommend that the questionnaire begins with straightforward and non-sensitive questions - SHR has stipulated that the question on overall satisfaction with landlord services should be first.
- division of the survey into thematic sections to group related questions (repairs and maintenance, rents, tenant participation, etc). We recommend that a new survey page is used for the start of each section.

- clear instructions on how to complete questions, for example how many options can be selected for each question. We recommend that the online survey uses question styles to ensure these instructions are followed.
- application of question routing for any questions that should be answered by particular respondents only (e.g. dependent on earlier responses) – this can also help to minimise survey completion time.
- a cover email (including relevant branding) which explains the purpose of the survey and how results will be used, incorporates a privacy notice giving confidentiality and anonymity assurances, provides email and telephone contact details for queries, a link or email address for tenants who wish to opt out of the survey, and clearly states the survey closing date.
- an option to request a printed questionnaire and/or to take part by telephone for those who are unable to complete an online survey. This should include an offer of printed survey materials in large print or another language.
- a unique identifier integrated with the survey response, enabling response data to be linked to the respondent's property data.

Addressing barriers to participation

3.36. Online surveys are reliant on respondents self-completing the questionnaire and can therefore be affected by potential barriers to participation which need to be addressed.

- **respondents with a visual impairment**. Landlords should ensure that their online survey platform supports screen readers for those with visual impairment, and make hard copy large print questionnaires available upon request.
- **respondents whose first language is not English**. The invite email should include a standard translation statement in the most commonly used languages and offer the opportunity to complete the questionnaire with the assistance of a translator.

Questionnaire piloting

3.37. Prior to fieldwork, we recommend piloting the questionnaire with a small group of colleagues and/or service users. This can be used to check for clarity and understanding of survey content, and accessibility of the survey for different devices (where possible, landlords should test the survey on laptop/PC, tablet and mobile phone). This will ensure that any errors can be rectified before the survey is issued to tenants/service users.

4. SURVEY FIELDWORK

Key tasks

Invite all tenants and service users to participate in the survey if you have fewer than 2,500 units. Other landlords can draw a representative sample of tenants or invite all to participate.

Follow advice on survey administration, with a focus on maximising response rates and minimising potential barriers to participation.

4.1. This section sets out recommendations for completing each element of survey fieldwork. It specifies minimum standards for your approach and gives advice on key choices to be made at each stage.

Sampling

4.2. 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, while limiting the resources required.

4.3. However, it should be noted that the need for sampling can vary dependent on the survey method chosen. For example, sample size has a smaller impact on resourcing and costs for online surveys, such that even landlords with larger numbers of tenants/service users may be able to issue an online survey to all tenants/service users with minimal resourcing impact.

The sample frame

4.4. The sample frame is a list of all eligible tenants and service users, held usually in an Excel file, from which the sample should be selected. The specific data required will depend in part on the survey method selected, but as a minimum we recommend that this includes:

- full address, including postcode and neighbourhood/management area

- email address (if online survey being used) and telephone/mobile number (if telephone survey being used)
- property type (i.e. flat, terraced, detached etc.)
- property age
- number of bedrooms
- name, age, sex of tenants/service users
- tenure (i.e. whether tenant or factored service user).

4.5. Before landlords select the final sample, they should be sure that the sample selected matches the profile of the overall population of tenants and service users in line with the characteristics listed above. 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.

4.6. 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 Annex 3.

Do you need a census or a sample?

4.7. Decisions around whether landlords should use a census or sample approach depend on a range of considerations. Ipsos MORI's 2011 report to the Scottish Housing Regulator, '*Capturing Better Information on Tenant Satisfaction*'[7] sets out these considerations in detail. For the purposes of this guidance, it should be noted that the great majority of landlords in Scotland are recommended to contact all tenants (i.e. undertake a census) and so will not need to select a sample.

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

4.8. Landlords with up to 1,500 units should use a census approach, inviting all their tenants and service users to take part in the survey to ensure the survey produces results which are accurate to ±5%.

4.9. Landlords with 1,500 to 2,500 units should also ideally use a census approach, particularly if they are using an online survey where the additional cost is likely to be small. While it is possible for these landlords 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. Recommending a census approach for these landlords also reflects that this avoids the time and cost of survey sampling, is likely to reduce the need for significant weighting of data at the end of the survey, and is more likely to enable more robust data analysis including comparison of results across different areas and service user sub-groups. A census survey approach also enables the landlord to make the survey available to all tenants and service users. [8]

4.10. **We therefore recommend that all landlords with up to 1,500 units should use a census approach, and that landlords with 1,500 to 2,500 units should use a census approach if possible.**

Small landlords

4.11. 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 landlord with 100 units would require a 76% response to produce data accurate to ±5%, and a 40% response rate 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 may be less robust, it will still play a vital role in contributing to the overall picture being formed by other information.

Target response rates

4.12. Of course, landlords are encouraged to maximise their survey response rate and to exceed a 40% response where possible. Indeed, this will be necessary for

[8] We note that recommending a census approach for this group of landlords may result in circumstances where they survey a larger number of service users than landlords with more than 2,500 units who use a sample approach. Despite this anomaly, a census remains our recommended approach for the reasons set out at 4.9.

many landlords to enable analysis of variation in results across geographic areas and between groups of tenants.

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

- **whether non-response varies between areas or groups of tenants**. For example, is non-response higher among young people or people living in particular areas or property types? See Chapter 5 for information on weighting results to correct for non-response.
- **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?

Sample size

4.14. For landlords with more than 2,500 units a representative sample of tenants and service users may need to be selected. As noted above, smaller landlords may consider drawing a sample but it is recommended that they conduct a census.

4.15. The size of that sample is important for several reasons, particularly in relation to the type and level of analysis which can be undertaken and the robustness of data. Our recommendations are based on ensuring landlords can 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[9]. 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% - i.e. if a survey showed that 70% are satisfied with their landlord we need to be 95% confident that the 'true' result lies between 66.5% and 73.5%.

[9] 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.

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

Table 1: Sample size requirements

Population (number of units)	Sample size needed (±5% accuracy, 40% response)	No. of replies received assuming 40% response
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

Selecting the sample

4.17. Once landlords have worked out the size of sample required, the final step before survey fieldwork is to select and extract the sample. This can be done through 'sampling interval' (known as systematic sampling) or computer-generated random selection.

Using the sampling interval

4.18. As discussed earlier, the sample frame is the full list of tenants and service users, their contact details and other data about their homes. The 'sampling interval' is, simply, the number of tenants/service users in the sample frame divided by the size of the sample you wish to invite to participate in the survey. So, if you have 9,400 tenants/service users and need to invite 940 participants then the sampling interval is 10. This means that 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

4.19. Alternatively, landlords can use a computer to randomly select a sample. In this case, landlords should ensure that the file is sorted by postcode before random numbers are applied to each record. It is not good practice to specifically target tenants who have 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.

Survey boosts

4.20. We understand that, on occasion, landlords may wish to ensure that their survey sample has sufficient numbers of certain tenant types 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 selected sample, for example with additional tenants who are drawn from the database of recent repair completions.

Extracting the selected sample

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

4.22. Before beginning fieldwork, each sample record needs to have its own unique identification number which can be used to link each survey invite and response with the correct resident record.

Managing survey fieldwork

4.23. Once the survey sample is in place, you are ready to begin the main survey fieldwork stage.

Single sweep of fieldwork

4.24. 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 of data. Landlords may wish to extend the survey period to incorporate additional fieldwork strands to maximise response. However, it is not acceptable for landlords to submit data which has been collected at multiple stages over a period of years and rolled into one submission.

Fieldwork scheduling

4.25. 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.

Administering telephone and face-to-face surveys

4.26. 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'[10], we would recommend out-sourcing telephone and face-to-face fieldwork to a professional external agency. As Housemark notes, these survey approaches have specific requirements in terms of staff training and quality control such that outsourcing is likely to be more cost-effective. There is also a risk of response bias if tenants do not feel confident giving their views to landlord staff.

4.27. Therefore, this section primarily focuses on the steps required to administer postal and online surveys; landlords are much more likely to have the capacity to carry out these approaches in-house. However, we also provide more general advice on how response to the survey can be maximised, regardless of method chosen.

Administering postal surveys

4.28. There are several steps involved in administering a postal survey: (a) printing and mail out, (b) collating and monitoring response, and (c) sending reminders.

4.29. **Printing and mail-out**. When the questionnaire and accompanying materials (cover letter, reply paid envelope, privacy notice and 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.

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[10] http://www.housemark.co.uk/hmresour.nsf/lookup/STARguide.pdf/%24File/STARguide.pdf

4.30. The questionnaire and accompanying materials should be placed in an envelope and sent out to sampled addresses. To avoid identifiable information being included on the questionnaire (therefore risking 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 can be used to identify service users for the purposes of logging responses and undertaking analysis. The reply-paid envelope should include the address of where questionnaires should be sent.

4.31. **Collating and monitoring response**. A crucial stage of the survey is systematically logging returned questionnaires and monitoring response. As questionnaires are received they should be matched against the unique identification number and recorded as 'Received'. A small number of questionnaires may be returned undelivered - these 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 (see Figure 2 for an example).

Figure 2: Extract from example response logging spreadsheet

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1	**Unique ID**	**Forename**	**Surname**	**Address 1**	**Address 2**	**Address 3**	**Address 4**	**Postcode**	**Status**	**Notes**
2	1000001	John	Tenant	22 Survey Street	Glasgow			G2 7DA	Received	
3	1000002	John	Tenant	24 Survey Street	Glasgow			G2 7DA	Received	
4	1000003	Jane	Tenant	26 Survey Street	Glasgow			G2 7DA		
5	1000004	John	Tenant	28 Survey Street	Glasgow			G2 7DA	Received	
6	1000005	Jane	Tenant	30 Survey Street	Glasgow			G2 7DA	Return to sender	Invalid address
7	1000006	Jane	Tenant	Flat 1/1	5 Regulator Rd	Glasgow		G2 7DA		
8	1000007	John	Tenant	Flat 1/2	5 Regulator Rd	Glasgow		G2 7DA		
9	1000008	Jane	Tenant	Flat 2/1	5 Regulator Rd	Glasgow		G2 7DA		
10	1000009	Jane	Tenant	12 Regulator Rd	Glasgow			G2 7DA	Return to sender	Derelict building

4.32. This spreadsheet can also be used to manage reminders. It can be used to monitor the survey response rate which will help you decide when reminders should be sent, and to carry out a mail merge to send reminders.

4.33. **Sending reminders**. The maximum time that should be allowed between the initial mail-out and survey close is eight weeks. During this time, we recommend that at least one reminder (with a cover letter, replacement questionnaire and reply-paid envelope) is sent to all non-responding tenants. 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 3-4 weeks) when the volume of returns begins to slow down.

Administering online surveys

4.34. The key steps involved in administering an online survey are broadly similar to those described above in relation to postal surveys, although the process is simpler and less resource intensive for online surveys. The survey requires (a) issue of survey invites, (b) monitoring response, and (c) issuing reminders.

4.35. **Issue of survey invites**. When the survey content has been agreed, survey invites are ready to be issued to the survey sample. Most online survey platforms enable landlords to automate this process without the need for specialist knowledge or resources. Survey invites should incorporate sample data, such that emails are personally addressed to each tenant/service user and a personalised survey link is provided to ensure each response is matched with the relevant sample data without asking tenants to provide their unique identifier number. Survey invites should also include a facility for tenants/service users to opt out of further survey communications.

4.36. Landlords may also wish to issue invite letters by post to those for whom an email address is not held. Letters should include a link to the survey (link-management services such as Bitly or Ow.ly can produce shorter, more memorable links to the survey for this purpose) and the tenant's unique identifier number. A second version of the online survey will be required for these tenants, which asks for their unique identifier number on the front page (the remainder of the survey should be identical to the 'primary' survey).

4.37. **Monitoring response**. Online survey platforms automate the logging of survey returns and monitoring of response. Survey responses are matched against the sample using the unique identification number to monitor the volume of response and enable tracking of any variation in response across key service user groups.

4.38. As noted earlier in relation to the design of online surveys, we recommend that landlords offer postal and/or telephone survey completion options for tenants and service users who cannot complete the online survey. Any postal or telephone responses should be logged and entered into the online survey as they are received to ensure these respondents do not continue to receive survey reminders, and to produce a single survey dataset.

4.39. **Issuing reminders**. The maximum time that should be allowed between survey issue and close is eight weeks. We recommend that multiple reminders are issued to non-respondents at key points during the fieldwork period. The timing of reminders should be based on response, i.e. being issued as the volume of returns slows down. As a guide, we recommend a first reminder 2 weeks after initial survey issue, with further reminders issued every 2 weeks.

Maximising survey response rates

4.40. The level of survey response is key to the robustness of results, and maximising response is one of the crucial aspects of any survey. The following steps can be taken to improve survey response rates, regardless of which method is chosen:

- **keep the survey as short as possible**. It is important to recognise the tension between questionnaire length and likely response rate – a balance must be struck between meeting your (and the SHR's) information needs and maintaining a suitable survey length. As a rule of thumb, we recommend maximum questionnaire lengths of 4 A4 pages for postal (or equivalent for online), 10 minutes for telephone, and 20 minutes for face-to-face.
- **send a cover letter/email**. This should communicate the importance of the research and the potential benefits of participation, for example noting that survey results will inform service improvements. In a postal or online survey, the letter/email 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 contact details for queries**. Include telephone and email contact details with all survey communication, for any tenants/service users with queries about the survey.
- **publicise the survey widely**. Landlords should use their communication channels to publicise the survey prior to and during fieldwork. This could include via tenant newsletters, social media, landlord websites, any Tenants Association events and in local offices. Communications should include a short and memorable link to the survey. A public-facing version of the online survey will be required for this purpose, which does not ask for a unique identifier. As this will prevent linking of survey responses with sample data, the public-facing version of the survey should include additional questions to collect any demographic or property information which would otherwise be drawn from sample data.

Ways of collecting data not included in the survey

4.41. The bulk of data for ARC will be collected through the survey of tenants and service users. Outwith the survey approach, landlords may wish to use other methods to ask about experience of specific service transactions – including for several ARC indicators. These are summarised below.

Indicator 12 - Repairs and maintenance

4.42. SHR permits landlords to submit existing performance data on repairs and maintenance rather than collect it via the survey. Landlords wishing to use existing performance data should (a) ensure the question used in their regular performance monitoring matches the wording of indicator 12, (b) inform the SHR of their intention to use performance rather than survey data, and (c) ensure their submission includes details of the time period covered, number of feedback requests issued and the number of returns on which results are based.

Indicator 29 - Factored owners

4.43. Data for this indicator can be collected using the same method and process used for the survey of tenants, but limiting the sample 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 other questions to inform your own service improvement.

Indicator 32 - Gypsy/Travellers

4.44. The SHR is flexible in relation to the method used to collect data for indicator 32. Possible options include a survey of current residents of social landlord owned/managed sites (carried out at the same time as the tenant survey), or an exit survey of residents as they leave the site.

4.45. We recommend carrying out this research using a face-to-face method. Greater proportions of the Gypsy/Traveller population have literacy issues which may be a barrier to participation if a postal or online method is used. This is reflected in advice from Shelter that engagement with Gypsy/Travellers should prioritise face-to-face interactions which ensure participants understand the process[11].

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[11] 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)

The population of Gypsy/Travellers is also small and not widely dispersed so face-to-face surveys are likely to be a more cost-effective method.

5. DATA PROCESSING

Key tasks

Code, clean and check your survey data in accordance with guidance to deal with any missing values, response errors or mistakes in routing.

Weight survey data based on careful assessment of the profile of survey respondents against all tenants and service users.

5.1. 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. The three key stages involved are (a) data inputting, (b) data checking and cleaning, and (c) data weighting.

5.2. 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.

Data inputting

5.3. Data inputting is the process of collating the responses from each of the returned questionnaires into one dataset, ordinarily in a spreadsheet or database. For a postal survey we would strongly recommend starting the process of data inputting before the end of the fieldwork - inputting data from potentially hundreds of questionnaires can be very time-consuming. Online surveys and computer-assisted telephone or face to face surveys will not require data inputting, although landlords may have to compile data from multiple sources to produce a single dataset for checking and cleaning.

5.4. 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 at 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', and Don't know/no opinion code '6'.

5.5. Within the spreadsheet or database, each question should be allocated a separate column or field, with each row containing all of the answers from an individual respondent (see example at Figure 3).

5.6. 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 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.

5.7. 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’, the code for that respondent at that question should also be ‘4’.

Data checking and cleaning

5.8. 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 are asked to complete the questionnaire themselves. The three most common errors are:

- **missing values**. This is when respondents fail to answer some questions. This type of error cannot be corrected - when this happens, the question should be coded as '-1' or '99' to denote a missing value.
- **selecting more response options than allowed**. This can happen on a question where respondents are instructed to 'select one option only', for example if 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 can be inputted. However, if it is not clear, the question should be coded as 'missing' (as above).
- **mistakes in routing**. Some questions 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 (i.e. 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 12 but did not have a repair in the last 12 months. Where this happens, the invalid response should be coded as a missing value.

Figure 3: Extract from example survey response dataset

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
1	**Unique ID**	**Q1**	**Q2**	**Q3**	**Q4_1**	**Q4_2**	**Q4_3**	**Q4_4**	**Q4_5**	**Q5**	**Q6**	**Q7**	**Q8**	**Q9**
2	1000001	3	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	3	1	3
3	1000002	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	1	3	2
4	1000003	2	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	3	2
5	1000004	1	2	2	0	0	1	0	1	2	1	2	2	1
6	1000005	4	1	6	1	0	1	0	0	6	4	1	1	4
7	1000006	1	1	4	1	1	0	0	1	4	1	1	2	1
8	1000007	1	2	5	0	1	0	1	0	5	1	2	2	99
9	1000008	2	4	3	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	4	3	2
10	1000009	2	4	2	1	1	0	0	0	2	2	4	4	2
11	1000010	1	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	3	3	1
12	1000011	2	4	2	1	1	0	0	0	2	2	4	4	2
13	1000012	3	6	3	1	0	1	1	0	3	3	6	5	3
14	1000013	2	5	2	99	99	99	99	99	2	2	5	3	2
15	1000014	1	6	5	0	1	0	0	1	5	1	6	5	1
16	1000015	1	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	6	1	4	2	1
17	1000016	1	3	4	0	0	0	0	0	4	1	3	2	1
18	1000017	4	2	2	1	0	0	1	0	2	4	2	2	4
19	1000018	5	2	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	5	2	3	5
20	1000019	5	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	2	5	1	1	5
21	1000020	2	1	2	1	1	0	0	0	2	2	1	1	2
22	1000021	2	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	3	3	2
23	1000022	1	4	3	0	0	0	0	1	3	1	4	2	1
24	1000023	1	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	2	2	1
25	1000024	1	2	2	1	0	1	0	0	2	1	2	2	1
26	1000025	2	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	3	2	2
27	1000026	3	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	3	1	99	99

Weighting the data

5.9. Weighting is used to correct for bias in survey results. In all surveys, some groups are more likely than others to respond; for example, younger people and those in employment are generally less likely than others to respond to surveys. This means that certain subgroups will be under-represented and others will be over-represented in the final achieved sample. Weighting ensures that final survey results are representative of the whole survey population.

5.10. The first step in calculating the required weighting is to assess the extent to which certain groups are under- or over-represented. This is done by comparing the profile of the achieved sample against the profile of all tenants/service users using key population characteristics. Any characteristic can be used to assess the representativeness of the achieved sample if there is associated information available for the whole population. Some examples where social landlords will likely have suitable information for weighting are: dwelling type (i.e. flats, semi-detached house, detached, terraced), number of bedrooms and geographic location (i.e. admin or management area). We recommend that landlords select the characteristic(s) against which responses will be assessed prior to survey fieldwork, and ensure that the survey includes questions to capture this information and/or that they can merge in this information from existing records (i.e. using the unique identifier).

5.11. Where groups are under or over-represented, weighting should be applied to the survey responses to correct for this bias. A worked example is provided over the page as a guide for landlords.

5.12. 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 following:

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

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

Survey weighting: worked example

A landlord with 1,000 tenants carries out a full census online survey. A 50% response produces 500 completed returns.

Responses are assessed against the profile of all tenants/service users using property size as the only weighting characteristic. This shows that the achieved sample over-represents tenants in 3 and 5 bedroom dwellings, and under-represents 1, 2, and 4 bedroom dwellings.

Number of bedrooms	Population		Achieved sample	
	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%
Total	1000	100%	500	100%

To correct for this response bias, the landlord needs to weight down responses from over-represented groups and weight up those who are under-represented. A weighting factor should be calculated for each property size group using the formula: [percentage share of the population] divided by [percentage share of the achieved sample]. This produces the following weighting factors:

1 bedroom: 10% / 4% = 2.5

2 Bedrooms: 30% / 20% = 1.5

3 Bedrooms: 40% / 50% = 0.8

4 Bedrooms: 10% / 8% = 1.25

5 Bedrooms: 10% / 18% = 0.56

Weighting variables can easily be created using statistical packages such as SPSS or SAS. 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’.

6. RETURNING YOUR DATA TO THE SHR

Key tasks

Submit your survey data to the SHR as part of your ARC return, in line with SHR Technical Guidance.

Ensure your return includes the required technical information, including survey fieldwork dates, survey administration method(s) and response numbers.

6.1. 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.[12] 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.

6.2. As stated at Chapter 4 in relation to fieldwork, it is essential that landlords 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.

SHR performance indicators

6.3. As noted above, the SHR requires survey data to calculate the following performance indicators:

- 1: Percentage of tenants satisfied with the overall service provided by their landlord.
- 2: Percentage of tenants who feel their landlord is good at keeping them informed about their services and decisions.
- 5: Percentage of tenants satisfied with the opportunities given to them to participate in their landlord's decision making processes.
- 7: Percentage of tenants satisfied with the quality of their home.

[12] https://www.housingregulator.gov.scot/for-landlords/advisory-guidance/technical-guidance/how-to-complete-your-annual-return-on-the-charter-arc

- 12: Percentage of tenants who have had repairs or maintenance carried out in last 12 months satisfied with the repairs and maintenance service.
- 13: Percentage of tenants satisfied with the landlord's contribution to the management of the neighbourhood they live in.
- 25: Percentage of tenants who feel the rent for their property represents good value for money.
- 29: Percentage of factored owners satisfied with the factoring service they receive
- 32: For those who provide sites - percentage of Gypsy/Travellers satisfied with the landlord's management of the site.

SHR calculations

6.4. The technical guidance outlines the formula which the SHR will use to calculate each performance indicator. For example, for indicator 2:

SHR calculation for Indicator 2

To calculate the indicator:

Divide

(ii) number responding very good + number responding fairly good

By

(i) Number of tenants who responded to the question.

And multiply by 100.

6.5. Landlords should provide the technical details of how the survey was carried out, specifically:

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

7. PROCESS CHECKLIST

7.1. The following process checklist may be useful as you plan and undertake a survey.

1. Getting Started	✓
Use the pre-survey period as an opportunity to begin engagement with tenants and service users.	☐
Consider whether you have the resources to deliver some or all survey stages in-house, or whether outsourcing would be appropriate.	☐
Ensure that your approach reflects key data protection and GDPR principles, and guidance on equality data collection.	☐

2. Survey Design	✓
Select your survey approach, considering pros and cons listed at Annex 1 – and considering whether a mixed approach would be beneficial.	☐
Agree your overall survey objectives and finalise your survey content. Ensure this uses the exact question wording for each Charter indicator, and decide whether you wish to include additional questions.	☐
Ensure the questionnaire will collect required housing, demographic and equalities data (where this cannot be matched to responses from the sample database).	☐

3. Survey Fieldwork	✓
Invite all your tenants and service users to participate in the survey if you have fewer than 2,500 units.	☐
If you have more than 2,500 units decide whether to use a sample approach, taking account of guidance on sample size and structure.	☐
Ensure your fieldwork follows guidance, focused on maximising response rates and minimising potential barriers to participation.	☐

4. Data Processing	✓
Code, clean and check survey data in line with this guidance.	☐
Assess the profile of respondents against the survey population and calculate survey weights.	☐

5. Returning Your Data	✓
Produce survey results and submit data to the SHR as part of your ARC return in line with SHR Technical Guidance.	☐

ANNEX 1: COMPARISON OF SURVEY METHODS

Table 2 over the page compares each survey method (postal, online, telephone and face-to-face methods) in relation to the following.

- **Response rates**. The expected response rate is likely to vary dependent on the selected survey method. However, it should be noted that the response rates shown in Table 2 are indicative - they are not necessarily what landlords should expect to achieve with their tenant survey.
- **Representativeness**. Each survey method varies in terms of the factors that may influence how representative the achieved survey sample is likely to be.
- **Questionnaire design**. The design process should take account of the impact of the chosen survey method for the length and complexity of the survey, and the questions that can be used.
- **Quality of answers/data**. The quality of information collected is a key consideration in assessing the extent to which survey responses provide an accurate picture of tenant views. Each survey method can affect the quality of the information collected in terms of missing data, response error and social desirability.
- **Implementing the survey**. In selecting a suitable survey method, landlords should consider implications for development and delivery of the survey, including for example whether this can be resourced in-house.

Table 2: Comparison of four recommended survey methods

Aspect	Postal	Online	Telephone	Face-to-face
Summary of method	Self-administered – completed by the respondent, without the aid of an interviewer.	Self-administered – completed by the respondent, without the aid of an interviewer.	Interviewers administer the questionnaire over the telephone. Research organisations routinely use CATI – Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing – but can use paper/pen.	Interviewers administer the questionnaire in person. Research organisations routinely use CAPI – Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing – but can use paper/pen.
Response Rates	Typically lower response rates – a response rate of approximately 40% is possible.	Typically lower response rates – 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.
Representative-ness	Universal coverage – sampling carried out using address list. Lower costs mean that larger survey samples may be feasible – but lower response rates can increase the chances of bias in results (i.e. that respondents are systematically different to non-respondents). Careful survey weighting is required to manage this. No control over who completes the survey so cannot be certain that the questionnaire has been completed by the appropriate person.	Universal coverage. Email invites dependent on email address coverage, but landlords can issue postal invites for others. We also recommend that postal and/or telephone response options are provided. Lower cost means that a census is more feasible, maximising reach and ensuring all tenants/service users can participate. However, lower response rates can increase the chances of bias in results (i.e. that respondents are systematically different to non-respondents). Careful survey weighting is required to manage this. No control over who completes the survey so cannot be certain that the questionnaire has been completed by the appropriate person.	Restricted to those 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. Control over who completes survey - can ask 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).

Aspect	Postal	Online	Telephone	Face-to-face
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. To increase response rates, questionnaire length should be kept to a minimum (around 4 A4 pages max) and be carefully designed	Since they rely on respondents being able to complete the questionnaire themselves, the questions and instructions must be easy to understand and self-explanatory. To increase response rates, questionnaire length should be kept to a minimum (equivalent to 4 A4 printed pages or approx. 10 mins completion time) and be carefully designed. Use of question routing can help to shorten completion times.	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 self-completion and telephone surveys because interviewers are on hand to clarify misunderstandings, respond to any queries and probe open ended questions. Showcards which display the possible response options to closed questions can also be shown to respondents, enabling use of longer question forms than telephone surveys. Longer interviews can be carried out (around 20 mins max).
Quality of answers/data	They rely on respondents completing the questionnaire themselves, hence are prone to respondent errors. This can include answering questions incorrectly or missing out questions entirely, increasing 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.	They rely on respondents completing the questionnaire themselves, hence are prone to respondent errors. This can include answering questions incorrectly or missing out questions entirely, increasing the likelihood of 'missing' data. However, online surveys offer additional options to ensure compliance with question rules and routing, and to require a response to key questions. 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 or online method. That is where the respondent provides an answer they deem is more socially acceptable rather than 'true' – although conducting the interview 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'.

Aspect	Postal	Online	Telephone	Face-to-face
Impact on implementing the survey	Considerably less expensive than telephone and face to face options. Cost is related directly to number of questionnaires printed and sent. However, to improve response rates care must be taken over survey design (including piloting) and the follow-up of non-responders (i.e. with reminders). Does not have the resourcing, skills and equipment requirements of telephone or face to face options. Does not require interviewers and can be carried out without the need for a fieldwork team. As a result, carrying out in-house is more feasible.	Least expensive of the four options. Cost is primarily related to initial design and production of the survey, and subsequent analysis. Increasing the volume of survey invites (and responses) therefore has a limited impact on cost unless analysis of multiple open questions is required. Care over survey design (including piloting) is required to maximise response. However, online surveys enable more follow-up of non-respondents (e.g. through automated email reminders). Has the lowest resourcing, skills and equipment requirements – although some initial training may be required for use of the selected survey platform. The most feasible option for in-house delivery.	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, hence less down time. Requires trained interviewers and supervision of the team. 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). Can be carried out from a central location, or remotely by homeworking staff – although careful supervision is even more important in this case.	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. 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). Need to consider safety issues of interviewers carrying out fieldwork alone.

ANNEX 2: SURVEY CONTENT

Table 3 over the page sets out the question wording and other survey design considerations for each of the ARC indicators that require tenant survey data.

Table 3: Survey questionnaire content

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 • Don't know/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 'Don't know/No opinion'. This is to ensure 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.
2: 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 5). Should be asked of all respondents.

Indicator	Question wording	Other Advice
5: 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 2). Should be asked of all respondents.
7: 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 12). Should be asked of all respondents

Indicator	Question wording	Other Advice
12: 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** 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 7).
13: Percentage of tenants satisfied with the landlord's contribution to the management of the neighbourhood they live in.	'Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your {landlord/LANDLORD NAME]'s contribution to the 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

Indicator	Question wording	Other Advice
25: 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, to what extent 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
29: 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 Chapter 4 for more information).
32: For those who provide sites - percentage of Gypsy/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 Chapter 4 for more information).

ANNEX 3: DATA SECURITY AND EQUALITIES

Data security, confidentiality and anonymity

The sample and information collected as part of the survey will include personal information about individuals, including their name, contact details and other personal data. As such, issues relating to data security, confidentiality and anonymity are of paramount importance and should underpin all stages of the process - including survey design, fieldwork and data collection, data processing and analysis.

These stages should comply with the Market Research Society's (MRS) Code of Conduct[13], and adhere to the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018), and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR). This legislation places the onus on organisations which collect and/or process personal information to think about and justify how and why personal data will be used.

The Information Commissioners Office has produced detailed guidance on data protection[14], and the MRS has produced guidance on data protection specifically in the context of social research[15]. This provides important information on key principles and concepts which should inform landlords' approach to surveying their tenants and service users. In particular, landlords should take account of the following principles for the collection and use of personal data:

- **Lawfulness, fairness and transparency**. Landlords should ensure that 'personal data' is processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner. Landlords should identify the lawful basis or bases for the survey. Several lawful bases are available including 'consent', 'task in the public interest' or 'legitimate interests' - whichever is chosen, ethical guidance on informed consent must be followed.
- **Purpose limitation**. Personal data should be collected for explicit, specified purposes – and should not be used for other, incompatible purposes.

[13] https://www.mrs.org.uk/standards/code-of-conduct

[14] https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection

[15] https://www.mrs.org.uk/standards/data_protection

- **Data minimisation**. Collection of personal data should be limited to what is necessary for the survey, including equalities monitoring.
- **Accuracy**. Every reasonable step should be taken to ensure that personal data is accurate.
- **Storage limitation**. Personal data should not be held for longer than is necessary for the purpose of the survey.
- **Integrity and confidentiality**. Processing of personal data should ensure appropriate security including protection against disclosure. It is vital that landlords ensure that their reporting and dissemination of survey results does not risk identifying individuals.

Landlords should produce a privacy notice for each survey, summarising how their survey approach will ensure the above principles are met, and informing tenants/service users of their rights under data protection legislation. This should include tenants' right to access their personal data, right to rectify inaccuracies, right to erasure of their personal data, and right to withdraw their consent.

Depending on the survey approach, landlords may need to match survey response data with personal sample information. This can be valuable in enabling use of sample data for analysis purposes (avoiding the need to ask tenants for information already held by the landlord), to assess the profile of the achieved sample, and to identify non-respondents for the purposes of issuing reminders.

To ensure this data linking does not risk identifying individuals, we recommend using an anonymous unique identifier for each household which can be used to temporarily match survey response data with personal information. To further ensure that data is held securely, all files containing personal information should be encrypted and password protected.

Equalities data collection

The Scottish Social Housing Charter reflects equalities and human rights legislation in requiring social landlords to work to understand the needs of different service users, and to deliver services that recognise and meet these needs. This duty includes a particular focus on recognising that people with different protected characteristics may have different needs. In addition to protected characteristic groups, SHR's approach to regulation also seeks to encourage better equality outcomes for people who are homeless and Gypsy/Travellers who use social landlord sites (the latter being the specific focus of Charter indicator 32).

To support this duty, the SHR requires social landlords to ask for equalities information from their tenants and other service users[16]. The SHR Equalities Statement notes that this information should be used to inform landlord decision making, including the assessment of equalities impacts associated with those decisions.

Guidance on equality data collection has been produced for social landlords in Scotland[17]. This guidance highlights the importance of this data for service quality and tenant participation. Of particular relevance for landlords planning their survey approach, the guidance provides example materials for obtaining consent and collecting the required equality data from service users.

[16] https://www.housingregulator.gov.scot/about-us/what-we-do/how-we-work/equalities-statement-2019-2022

[17] https://www.sfha.co.uk/our-work/policy-category/governance-and-regulation/sub-category/scottish-housing-regulator/policy-article/update-to-equalities-guidance-and-faqs-now-available

ANNEX 4: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Achieved sample The set of valid completed responses to a survey.

Response bias Variation in the level and/or quality of response across tenants and service user groups which can affect the extent to which survey results accurately describe the views of the sample population. Different forms of response bias include:

- Variation in the level of response across specific tenant and service user groups, resulting in the achieved sample not being representative of the sample population.
- Poor questionnaire design with leading or unbalanced questions resulting in respondents not being able to accurately report their views.
- Telephone or in-person surveys being conducted by people known to tenants and service users, resulting in participants being less willing to answer honestly.

Sampling frame/ Survey population The list of people or addresses from which a survey sample will be drawn – for landlords this should be the list of all current tenants and service users.

Survey sample A randomly-selected subset of tenants and service users selected from the sampling frame, to whom the survey will be issued. A sample can be a useful approach for larger landlords where issuing the survey to all tenants and service users is not feasible.

Survey weights Values applied to survey responses to compensate for survey non-response – i.e. to adjust for difference(s) in the profile of the achieved response and the sampling frame.