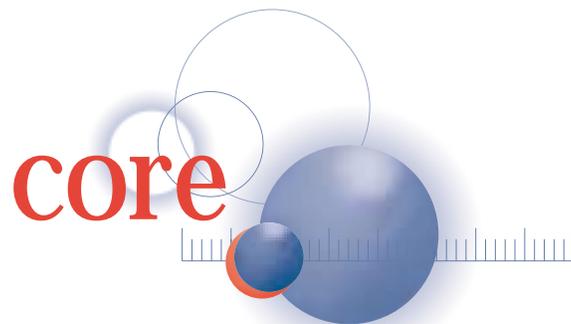


January 2001



CORE analysis

supported housing and supporting people

This article examines the nature of supported housing services provided by Registered Social Landlords in England. The analysis is presented in the context of the imminent changes in funding being introduced in the Supporting People programme, the aim of which is to put the funding and development of supported housing on a more secure and co-ordinated basis. Since the implementation of Supporting People is intended to result in service improvements, there is a risk “of unintended changes and undesirable problems arising as a result of changing from one system to another in April 2003”¹. For this reason the Government have stated the intention that all supported services should be subject to a review process involving users, providers and funders.

Local authorities will be expected to produce a Supporting People strategy, based on a needs and

supply analysis, by July 2002. The data available in Supported COREⁱⁱ will be a central element in examining local supply and needs, setting these within a regional or national context, in order to assess options and priorities in the process of developing a coherent strategy.

As a contribution to the start of this national review, and the preparation of strategies by local authorities, this article examines the nature of supported housing provided by Registered Social Landlords in 1999-2000. The approach adopted in the article is to address some of the key policy issues which will be relevant in an assessment of need or review of existing services. The article is intended to illustrate the value of CORE in such analysis and is thus selective rather than comprehensive in approach. More detailed information can be found in the CORE Digest 1999/2000ⁱⁱⁱ.

¹ DETR (2000) *Supporting People – Together Towards 2003*, chapter 2.

ⁱⁱ CORE (COntinuous REcording) is a system for the recording of information on new lettings and sales made by Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) in England. The system covers all new households taking up general needs RSL rented accommodation or purchasing homes from RSLs through low cost home ownership initiatives. Since 1996/7, lettings made in supporting housing provided by RSLs have also been recorded. The CORE system is funded by the Housing Corporation and the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) and is administered by the Joint Centre for Scottish Housing Research (JCSHR), based at the Universities of St. Andrews and Dundee.

ⁱⁱⁱ The CORE Digest will be published in February 2001 and will comprise a CD-ROM of statistical tables and a short six-page summary of key facts. The price of the Digest and CD-ROM for 1999/2000 is £10. Copies can be ordered by calling Evelyn Quate at JCSHR on 01334 467290.

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KEY FINDINGS

Output

- The Supported CORE database records 15,345 supported accommodation schemes providing a total of 109,675 units of accommodation a quarter of which are in schemes registered, wholly or in part, under the Registered Homes Act 1984.
- While almost a third of all units are located in London (33,299, 30%), one-fifth of all moves into supported housing (14,181 lets) took place there.
- A total of 45,455 homeless households entered supported accommodation in 1999/2000, which represented two-thirds of all new lets.

Performance

- Less than a quarter of people were allocated supported housing with some form of tenancy (fair rent, assured or assured short-hold tenancy).
- Four-fifths of all households were in receipt of housing benefit.
- Sharing is the most common living situation for people in supported accommodation - three-quarters of all lets were made in shared houses or hostels. However, the number of lets in direct access hostels continues to decline.

Effectiveness

- There is a wide variation in the total weekly rent and service charges across the country ranging from £148.51 per week in Merseyside to £109.40 in the East region (around an average of £131.58).
- There is also considerable regional variation in the costs charged for the different types of support provided. The northern regions have higher costs for re-settlement support, counselling and intensive housing management, whereas London and the Yorkshire and Humberside regions have higher costs for substantial care and nursing care services (respectively).

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of introducing a new "Supporting People" grant, to be administered by local authorities, is to unify all the different funding

sources currently employed into one unified grant. This should make the provision of supported accommodation more accountable since it should be clearer what is being funded, how much is being spent and what is the nature and quality of support.

Until March 2003 existing supported accommodation projects continue to be funded under the transitional Housing Benefit scheme. During this time local authorities must collect accurate information on what is being funded. It is intended that they will map existing supply and needs, by April 2001, in preparation for a full needs survey to be completed by June 2002. It is this needs and supply analysis which will be used to produce the local authority's initial Supporting People strategy. Consequently, local authorities will require good information on the nature and scale of provision and be able to map this to local need. Supported CORE provides the base for these information requirements.

The DETR consultation paper 4 (Quality and Monitoring) suggests some tentative measures and indicators which denote the type of management information which will be required to undertake an analysis of supply and need and to monitor strategies. Using these as a guide the remainder of this article is focussed on three broad issues – output measures, performance measures and measures of effectiveness – of supported housing. The data which is examined in relation to each of these measures is highly selective and intended to illustrate the potential use of Supported CORE in such analysis.

It is argued that if the quality and effectiveness of support services are to be improved then it is necessary to "introduce a more systematic and strategic process to assess needs within and across local authority areas"^{iv}. A pre-requisite of an analysis of need for supported housing is a clear and detailed understanding of the nature and scale of existing provision. Clearly a strategic analysis must locate a local assessment of need within a broader regional and national context. Equally, priorities for future provision can only be established within an understanding of trends which monitor the effectiveness of historic policies. As a continuous recording database CORE meets these requirements since it allows assessment to be compared both spatially and longitudinally.

The main measures of output relate to the

^{iv}DETR (2000) *Supporting People – Together Towards 2003 – the key principles*.

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amount of accommodation provided and who benefits from that supply. The scale of provision reflects the achievement of previous investment and policies. During the year 1999/2000, 66,695 households, containing approximately 79,400 individuals, were allocated supported housing by RSLs, within a total stock of 109,675 units of accommodation. This housing was provided, within a variety of management arrangements, in 15,345 schemes across the country.

The analysis of supply can be assessed in relation to the profile of service users for whom the accommodation is provided. Overall two-thirds of new households (45,455) entering supported accommodation in 1999/2000 were homeless. More than two-fifths of households (42%) were single homeless people. Of this number, one-fifth of all new occupants (13,130) of supported housing were statutorily homeless (within the provisions of the Housing Act 1996 and nominated as such by the local authority), while a further 48% (31,522) were classified as 'other homeless'.

The output of accommodation can also be measured in relation to variables of age, gender, ethnicity and employment status.

Age

The median age of heads of household in supported accommodation was 26 for all household types, compared to a median age of 34 for general needs households. However, the average age of people from ethnic minority groups is significantly lower (24) than for white

British groups (26); it is also significantly lower for women (24) than for men (27). In contrast Irish people were significantly older (median age 36) and three-quarters were men.

Gender

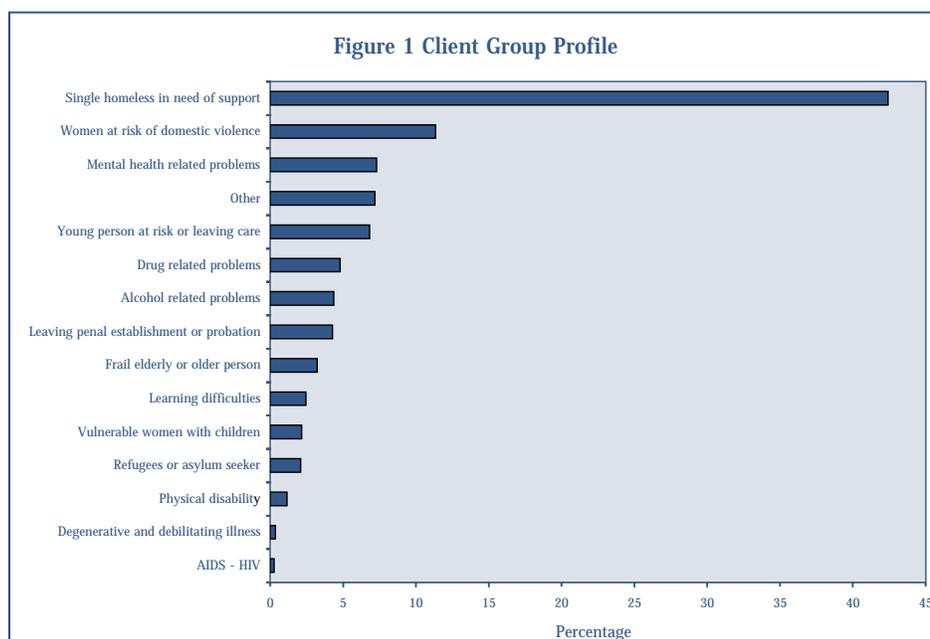
Three-fifths of supported housing was allocated to male heads of household, in contrast to general needs housing in which 56% was headed by a woman. While, overall, two-fifths of all supported lettings were to women, 60% of people of Asian origin were women, and almost a tenth of women fleeing domestic violence were of Asian origin, compared to 3% overall.

Ethnicity

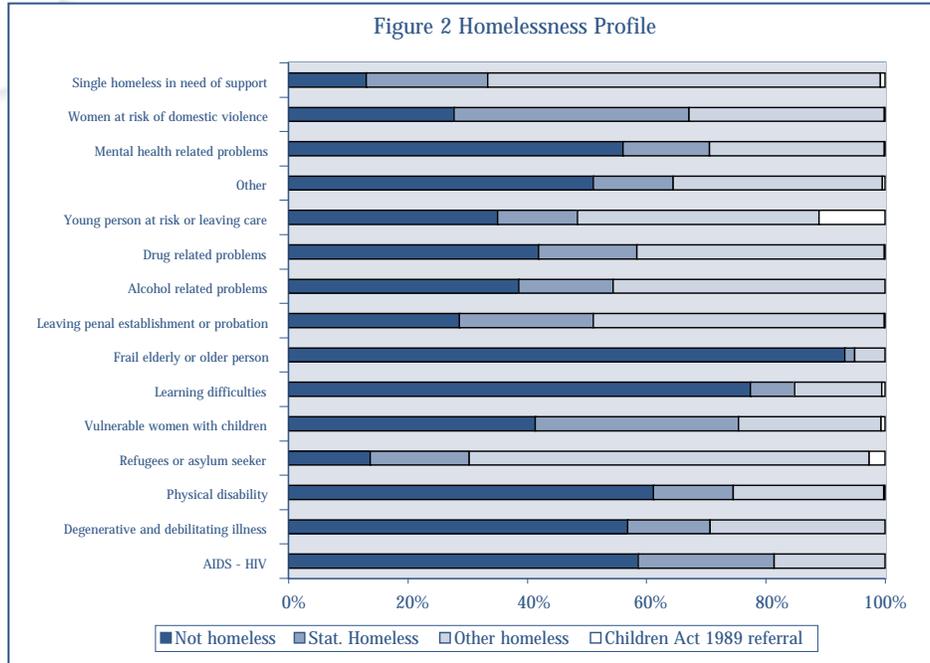
Over three-quarters (51,756) of all allocations in supported housing were made to people from a British/European ethnic origin. People of a Black or Mixed origin had a lower average income (£52.94 compared to £58.40) and had a different age profile (see above).

Employment Status

The majority of households allocated supported housing in 1999/2000 contained no-one in employment, reflecting the situation in previous years. Two-fifths of people were unemployed, one-fifth was sick or disabled and 10% was not seeking work; less than 7% were in full or part-time work. Partly as a result of this four-fifths of all households allocated supported accommodation during the year were in receipt of housing benefit.



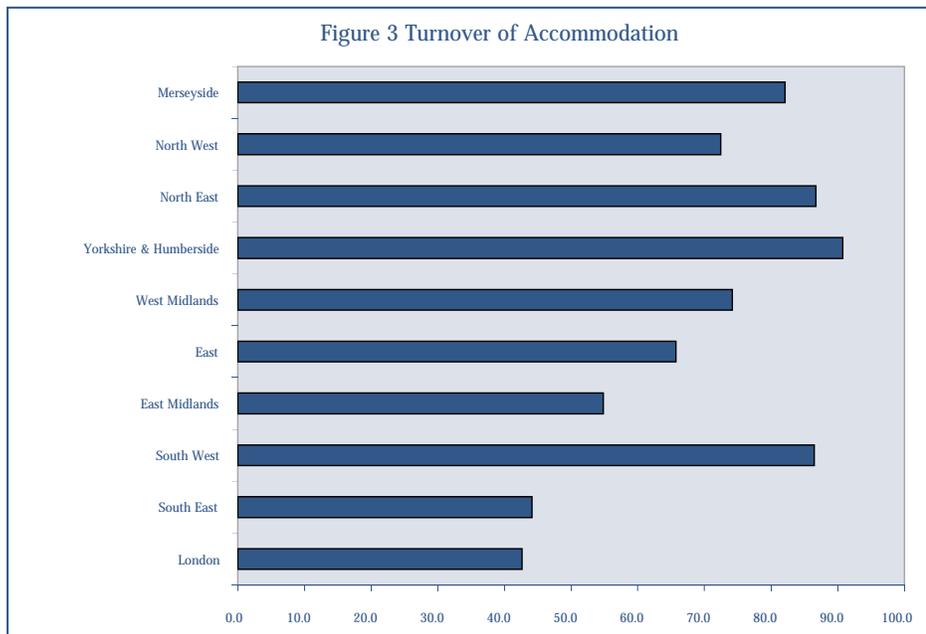
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PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The performance of supported accommodation can be evaluated by two distinct sets of measures. The first set relates to the proposed outcomes of the provision. The second relates to the extent to which the provision meets the needs of users or, in a more extended analysis,

empowers users. The empowerment of users can be measured both in relation to the performance of supported accommodation (for example, the extent to which people have normal tenancy rights) and in relation to the outcomes achieved (for example, the extent to which people are enabled to move on to independent living).



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Outcomes

Many outcome measures can only be provided by the aggregation of project level information. However, project level measures can only be understood within a context of comparative data. Supported CORE can provide such comparative data through, for example, a measure of the level of occupancy and turnover of accommodation.

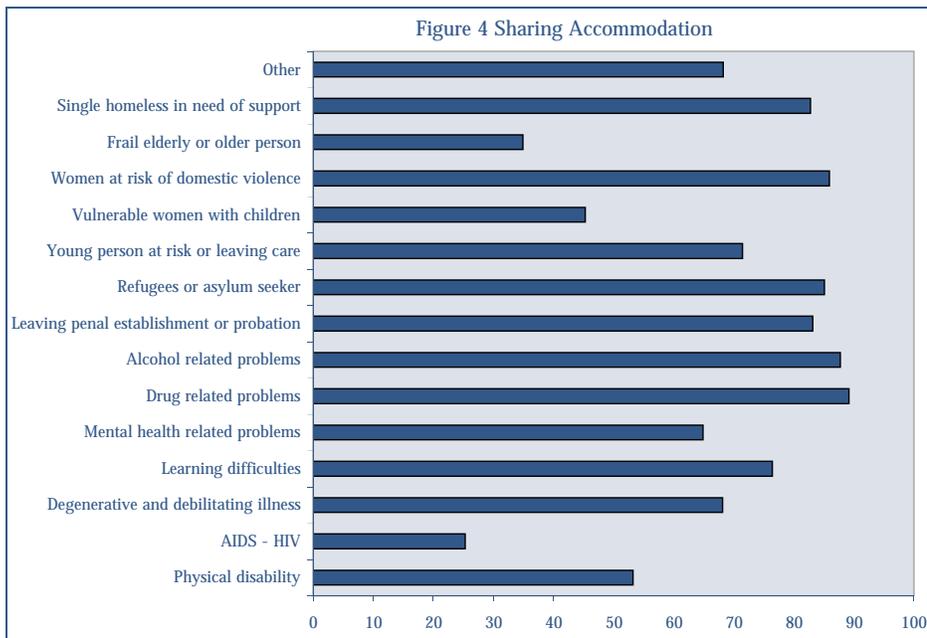
Comparing the number of lettings to the total amount of supported accommodation in each region, the 'turnover' of stock is significantly lower in London (43%), the South-East (44%) and the East Midlands (55%) compared to other regions such as Yorkshire and Humberside (91%), the North-East (87%), the South-West (87%) and Merseyside (82%).

Users' needs

Only about a quarter of people (in non-registered accommodation) were allocated supported housing with some form of fair rent, assured or assured short-hold tenancy. Equally, only a fifth of people living in shared accommodation have some form of tenancy agreement, compared to over half of those in self-contained

accommodation. Since care in the community is intended to normalise lifestyles in order to enable people to lead independent lives, this lack of tenancy rights for a significant proportion of people is worthy of more detailed evaluation.

While the provision of tenancy rights reflects the management arrangements under which it is allocated, the level of shared accommodation reflects historic patterns and policies of capital investment. Overall a high percentage - 78% - of allocations were in shared accommodation. While shared accommodation may be entirely appropriate for some client groups, especially where the accommodation is for a transitional period, it may be less suited to the needs of others. One may suspect, for example, that the difficulties of dealing with challenging behaviour are more pronounced in shared accommodation^v. Despite this, two-thirds of people with a mental health problem were allocated shared accommodation. This prevalence of shared accommodation probably reflects the economies of scale of support provision rather than the needs of users.



^v Edgar W, Doherty J and Mina-Coull A (2000) *Support and Housing in Europe: tackling social exclusion in the European Union*, Policy Press, Bristol (ISBN: 1 86134 275 6)

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MEASURES OF EFFECTIVENESS

The Supporting People grant aims to introduce greater transparency in resource allocation and to improve the quality and effectiveness of services. The effective implementation of Supporting People will require a detailed understanding of the nature of support services provided, the pattern and diversity of support provided for different client groups and the variation in the cost of different forms of support between different providers and between different areas.

Type of support

Overall, two-fifths of people (41%, 22,075) received counselling forms of support, while a further third received intensive housing management support. Almost two-thirds of women fleeing domestic violence and 40% of all vulnerable women with children received counselling support.

In contrast to 1997/98, almost twice as many people (8,316, 13%) received re-settlement support, more than half of whom were either single homeless or people leaving penal establishments.

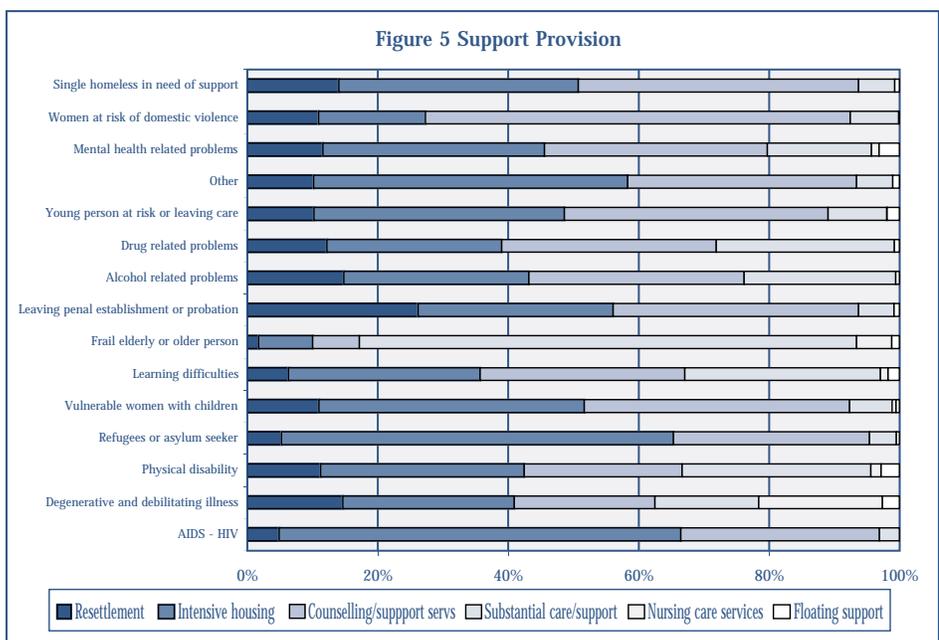
Cost of support services

The average cost of support services vary with the type of support provided and, since people tend to receive different types of support, these are reflected in variations in cost between client groups.

The average weekly costs of support, that is the total of rent and charges, range from £73.58 for floating support, £110.09 where intensive housing management is the main support provided, £117.33 for re-settlement support, £132.58 for counselling support, £208.97 for substantial personal support, to £314.68 where nursing services are provided.

The highest level of support charges are incurred for schemes which provide services to people with an alcohol dependency (£218.31) and frail older people (£212.97). The lowest levels were recorded for young people leaving care (£104.56) and people with HIV/AIDS (£97.66).

It is clear from analysis of CORE data that, as a result of a historically haphazard pattern of growth, existing provision is spatially concentrated and uneven. The CORE data further



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demonstrates a wide variation in costs of service provision both between different providers and between different areas of the country. Such discrepancies merit more detailed research prior to the implementation of supporting people in 2003.

The pattern of support provision varies between regions. Intensive housing management support is relatively more common in London. In contrast, counselling support is most commonly provided in the East and West Midlands, the North East, the North West and Merseyside. Substantial care support^{vi} is more common, compared to the national average, in the East region.

In addition to these variations in the pattern of support provision, there are also regional variations in the average costs of providing similar types of support.

For example, resettlement support costs £163.60 on average in Yorkshire and Humberside (compared to a national average of £117.33. Intensive housing management costs an average of £143.24 in the North West compared to £110.07 nationally. Counselling support services cost on average £145.18 in the North West compared to a national average of £131.58.

In contrast, the more intensive support packages – substantial care and nursing care – cost more in London and in Yorkshire and Humberside compared to other areas. Substantial care costs an average of £298.35 in London compared to a national average of £209.03. Nursing services cost £427.46 in Yorkshire and Humberside compared to an English average of £314.58.

The north-south rent polarity that exists for general needs housing is not mirrored by the regional pattern of total rent and charges for supported accommodation in 1999/2000. The highest level of total rent and charges in 1999/2000 across all supported housing allocations was recorded in Merseyside at

£148.51 per week. Properties in the North East and North West regions were similar (£144.85 and £143.83 respectively). The lowest level of average charges were in the East region and South-West region where the average was recorded as £109.40 and £109.76 per week respectively.

IMPLICATIONS FOR SUPPORTING PEOPLE

This preliminary analysis illustrates that Supported CORE can provide many of the required management indicators needed in developing and monitoring Supporting People strategies. It also suggests that important issues of policy can be more fully explored, for example, in relation to each of the following areas:

Focusing provision on local need

It has been suggested that supported housing services have grown up over a number of years, driven by the availability of capital and revenue funds rather than by an analysis of local needs (Together Towards 2003). The level of growth does, however, represent a considerable achievement in probably a little over a decade. The analysis of CORE data demonstrates that provision is geographically uneven. This would suggest that there is probably an under-provision in many areas when compared to even a conservative assessment of need. It could also suggest a mismatch of needs and supply.

This suggests a need for a transparency in funding to maintain the levels of growth achieved historically and for a targeting of resources to areas of local need. More detailed analysis of CORE data is possible to guide the strategic assessment of need in order to focus provision on local areas of need and under-provision. More detailed geographical analysis is obviously possible, for example in relation to areas of priority need or social inclusion partnership areas. Equally it is possible to

^{vi} In addition to intensive housing management, substantial care and support involves a very intensive level of staff input to provide for physical and emotional care and practical/education/life skills training to the tenants.

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examine patterns of supply and need in a more detailed analysis in relation to service user diversity (ethnicity, gender and age).

Improving the range and quality of services

The data demonstrates a diversity of provision; a diversity which probably reflects both a response to perceived needs and a variation in decision-making and administrative practice. Given the present variations in provision both for particular client groups and between administrative areas, the review of services should be undertaken within this broader contextual framework provided by the CORE facts.

Monitoring the effectiveness of provision

The CORE data clearly demonstrates variations in costs for similar services and client groups between administrative areas which may reflect differences in policies, procedures or in the effectiveness of providers. Our analysis can not, of course, be used to draw inferences about the quality of service provision or its appropriateness for particular users. It may, though, indicate that there is an over-provision for some and an under-provision for others. Equally an analysis of Supported CORE data can provide indicators which are useful in directing more detailed qualitative, or project level, research in relation to the effectiveness of support services in meeting users' needs.

CORE Annual Digest 1999/2000

In early February, JCSHR will publish the CORE Annual Digest for 1999/2000. The publication of the Digest, which has been brought forward at the request of RSLs, will enable associations to review their own statistics against regional and national averages. Following the successful introduction last year of a CD-ROM of standard statistical tables, the Digest for 99/2000 will comprise a similar CD and a concise six-page summary of key facts. The price of the Digest and CD-ROM for 1998/99 is £10. Please order a copy by calling Evelyn Quate on 01334 467290.

Copies of the 1998/99 CORE Annual Digest and CD can now be purchased at the reduced price of £10 (previously £25). The 1998/99 Digest includes a detailed commentary of over 210,000 RSL lettings and 10,000 Sales.

CORE Data Analysis Service

CORE also operates a Data Analysis Service which provides special analyses of CORE data. CORE data can be invaluable for housing strategies, comparative studies, commercial assessments and many other applications. Analyses may be undertaken to meet needs at local authority, regional or national levels or for any selected subgroup of associations. Comparisons to show trends over time can be made. If you would like further information or to commission an analysis, please contact George Marshall on 020 7843 2266 at the National Housing Federation, 175 Grays Inn Road, London, WC1X 8UP (email: georgem@housing.org.uk)



Please visit the CORE Web Site at
www.core.ac.uk

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