



Valuation Office
Agency

VOA Rent Officers

propertymark

**WORKING TOGETHER TO KEEP
THE PRS BETTER INFORMED**

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SECTION 1 - ABOUT US

1.1 A brief history

Rent Officers were created by the Rent Act 1965 to register 'Fair Rents' for protected tenancies, and originally operated under the administration of a 'Proper Officer' within the County Council / London Borough structure.

We took on additional Housing Benefit work following the introduction of Assured Shorthold Tenancies by the Housing Act 1988 and in 1999 we became a separate agency within various Government departments. We then merged with the VOA after the introduction of Local Housing Allowance (LHA) in 2008.

Today our data contributes to benefits which support almost two million PRS households in England through Housing Benefit, LHA and Universal Credit (UC)
(Source: Stat-Xplore, Dept for Work & Pensions)

1.2 Rent Officers – what we do

Rent Officers are statutory officers, independent of local government and policy making. Our main responsibilities fall into two main categories:

- Valuation casework – making Housing Benefit determinations and registering Fair Rents under the Rent Act 1977.
- Lettings research to support our statutory valuations, LHA/UC and official rental statistics published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) – collecting details of private residential lettings and gathering market insight from conversations with letting agents and landlords.

1.3 Find out more about us online

- Read more about the work of VOA Rent Officers by visiting our website:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/valuation-office-agency>
- Main Rent Officer homepage:
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/valuation-office-agency-and-housing-allowance>

1.4 Information leaflet

Our latest information leaflet 'VOA Rent Officers - Working with the Private Rented Sector' gives further detail and is available as a PDF document or as a paper copy – an illustration is provided in the annexes for reference only.

Please contact us if you would like either or both versions sent to you personally.



KEY MESSAGE

Your rental data supports rent officer valuations, housing benefits that help sustain almost two million PRS tenancies and contributes to ONS official rental statistics

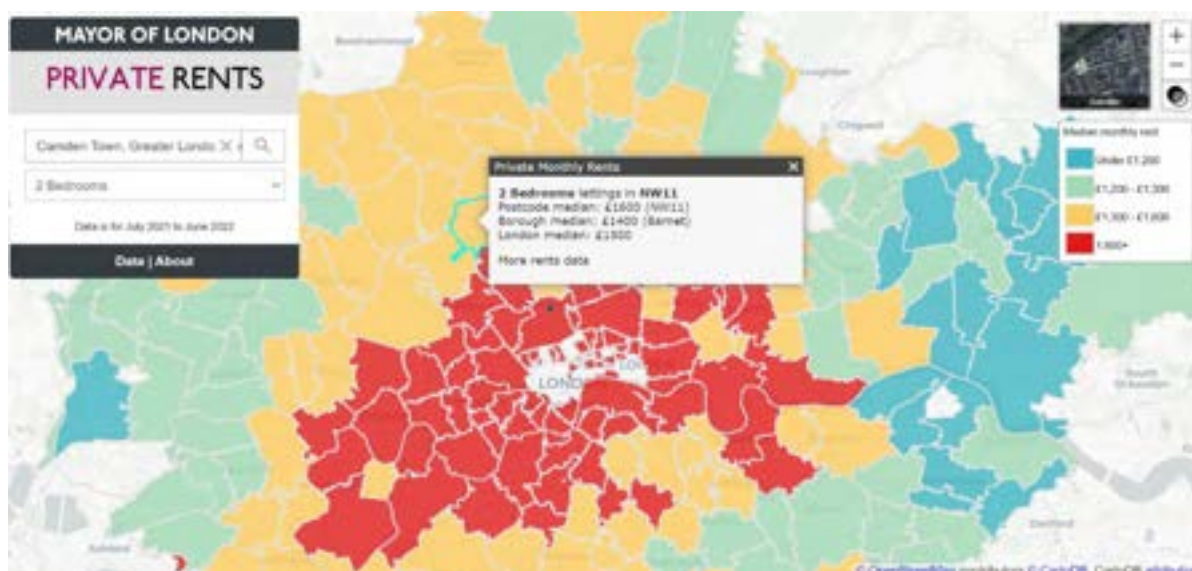
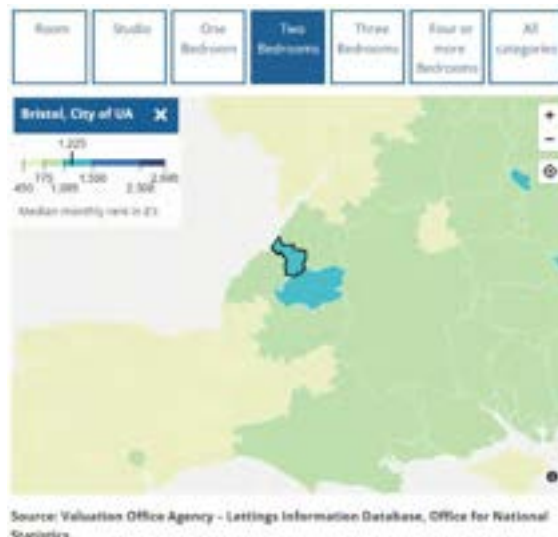
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SECTION 2 – STATISTICS

We work closely with our statistical partner, the ONS, who use our rental data for research and statistical purposes including:

2.1 Official Rental Price Statistics

- The latest [Private rental market summary statistics in England: Oct 2021 to Sept 2022](#) (PRMS) were published by ONS on 14 December 2022. These official statistics include an interactive map showing median monthly private rental prices by local authority and bedroom category in England. The next publication is due in June 2023. Anyone can re-use the statistics under the terms of the [Open Government Licence](#).
- The [London Rents Map](#) is produced using ONS data, based on private sector achieved rents collected by VOA Rent Officers. It shows combined sample data on median, lower quartile and upper quartile monthly rents for various property types, for each postcode district and London Borough. It is published on the Mayor of London website as an interactive map. The map is updated quarterly; the latest update contains data for the 12 months to the end of December 2022.



2.1 Rental Price Change Statistics

- The latest monthly [Index of Private Housing Rental Prices \(IPHRP\)](#) based on VOA rental data for England, is released by ONS around the middle of each month, along with the national inflation indices. Example Graphs:

Figure 1: The UK annual private rental price percentage change rose to 4.4% in the 12 months to January 2023
Index of Private Housing Rental Prices percentage change over 12 months, UK and London, January 2016 to January 2023

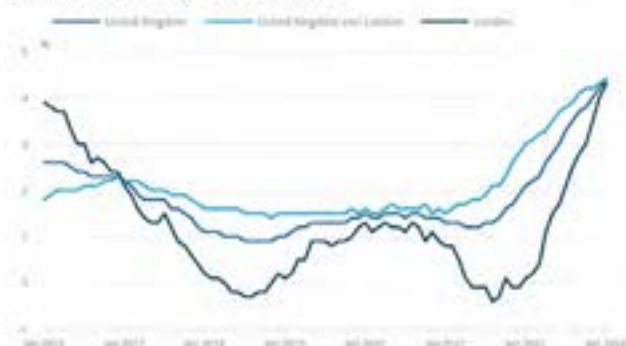


Figure 4: Weakest annual rental price percentage change is in the West Midlands

Index of Private Housing Rental Prices percentage change over the 12 months to January 2023, by English region



- IPHRP is an experimental price index tracking the prices paid for renting property from private landlords in the UK and includes measures of owner occupiers' housing costs.

2.2 Private rental growth measures, a UK comparison

- The latest '[Private rental growth measures](#)' report compares growth in the Index of Private Housing Rental Prices (IPHRP) with other measures of private rental growth, from January to December 2022.
- Superficially, there can be considerable difference between the Office for National Statistics' (ONS') measures of rents (IPHRP, OOH and the private rental market summary statistics (PRMS)) and comparable indicators from the private sector.
- However, once adjustments are made for differences in what the indices are measuring, the ONS' measures of rents are more closely aligned with the other sources of rental prices.
- We have shown the wide range of sources available for rental data and highlighted the extent of their similarities and differences. Differences can be explained, providing confidence that the IPHRP is a robust measure of UK consumer price statistics.

Figure 1: Index of Private Housing Rental Prices (IPHRP) measure is more stable

IPHRP and private sector measures of rents, percentage change over 12 months, January 2013 to December 2022, UK



Source: Zoopla, HomeLet, Rightmove and Office for National Statistics - Index of Private Housing Rental Prices

- In a [series of posts on the ONS Blog](#) Christopher Jenkins (Assistant Deputy Director for Prices Division, ONS) explains more about rental prices, measuring stock and flow of data, the power of PRS data, and the housing market.

2.3 Rental Statistics Development

- On 24 March 2023 ONS published experimental longitudinal analysis of observed recent changes in the abundance and magnitude of private rental price changes in England from Feb 2022 to Feb 2023.
[Changes in private rental sector behaviour, England - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)
- ONS are re-developing the IPHRP and PRMS to produce mix-adjusted average rental prices comparable over time and down to lower geographic levels. The [Private rental prices development plan](#) was updated in February 2022.
- ONS envisage a new, single, monthly publication that provides a more detailed insight into the rental market.
- The new rental statistics will provide:
 - ❖ a monthly publication covering the UK, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, the English regions, and local authorities;
 - ❖ an index of private rental price growth over time;
 - ❖ annual percentage change in price over time;
 - ❖ the average private rental price over time; and
 - ❖ a breakdown of private rental price by geography and bedroom category (studio, one bedroom, two bedrooms, three bedrooms, and four or more bedrooms).

2.4 Inflation Measures

- UK inflation indices are released around the middle of each month. They include VOA rental data in the basket of goods.
- Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers' housing costs ([CPIH](#)) - a [National Statistic](#), the most comprehensive & ONS lead measure of inflation. It was introduced in March 2013 and extends CPI to include a measure of the costs associated with owning, maintaining and living in one's own home, known as owner occupiers' housing costs (OOH), along with council tax.
- [Consumer Prices Index](#) (CPI) - covers a number of items excluded from the RPI. In the last 15 to 20 years there has been a shift towards using the CPI in preference to using the RPI for a number of uses, including; uprating of government pensions and some benefits which changed in 2011.

- [Retail Price Index](#) (RPI) - as a legacy measure to meet existing user needs. The RPI is the longest-standing measure of inflation in the UK. It is no longer a National Statistic due to its methodology not meeting international standards. The RPI is still used in some index-linked gilts.

KEY MESSAGE

Official rental price level, and monthly rental price change statistics, are being redeveloped to produce mix-adjusted average rental prices comparable over time and down to lower geographic levels.

Your rental data contributes up to 20% of CPIH, the ONS lead measure of inflation.

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SECTION 3 - LOCAL HOUSING ALLOWANCE & UNIVERSAL CREDIT

3.1 Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates

- In accordance with The Rent Officers (Housing Benefit and Universal Credit Functions) (Modification) Order 2020 (SI 2020/ 1519) the latest LHA rates applicable from 1st April 2023 are the same rates that came into force on 1st April 2021 and are published at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-housing-allowance-lha-rates-applicable-from-april-2021-to-march-2022>
- Previous LHA rates & tables applicable from April 2020 to March 2021 are also available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-housing-allowance-lha-rates-applicable-from-april-2020-to-march-2021>
- You can find current and some historic LHA rates on LHA direct, where you can search by postcode or local authority: <https://lha-direct.voa.gov.uk/search.aspx>

- You can find out more about LHA rates & Broad Rental Market Areas (BRMAs) here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/understanding-local-housing-allowances-rates-broad-rental-market-areas>

3.2 Universal Credit

- You can find out more information about housing costs and Universal Credit here: <https://www.gov.uk/housing-and-universal-credit/renting-from-private-landlord>

KEY MESSAGE

Local Housing Allowance rates are updated every April along with the housing element of Universal Credit. They are based on your rental data, subject to government policy.

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SECTION 4 – REGISTERED FAIR RENTS

4.1 Background and history

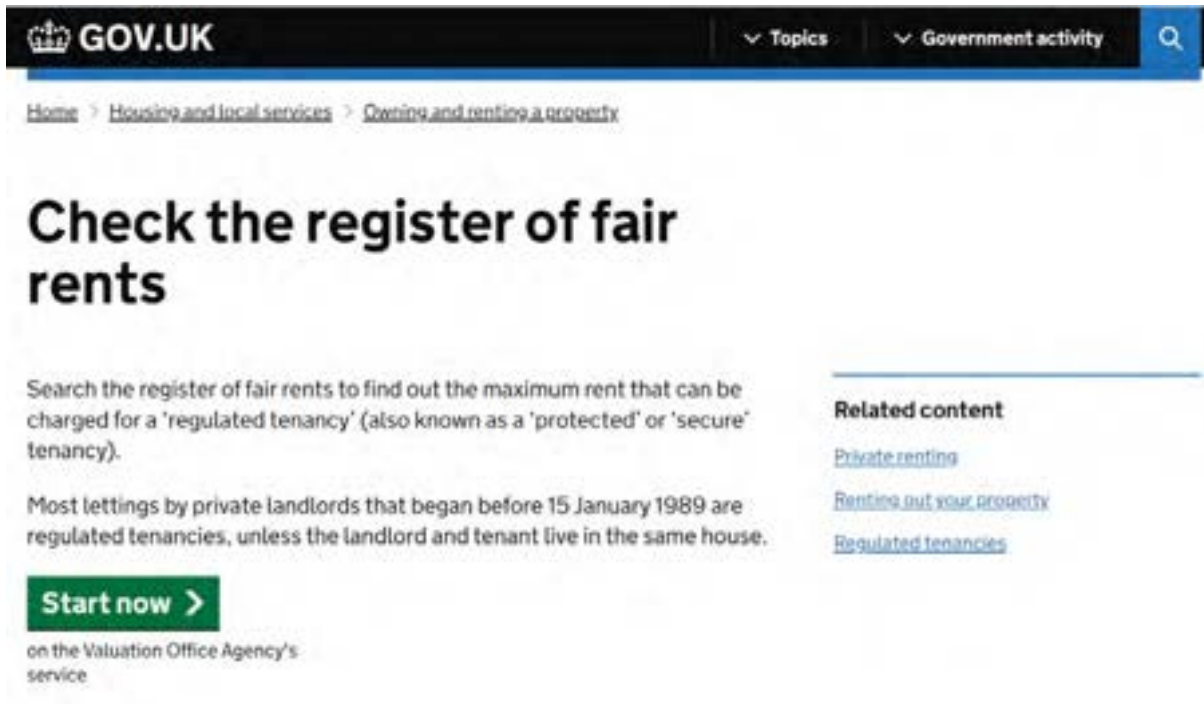
Fair Rents are a pre-Housing Act 1988 form of rent regulation which continue to this day. Many agents and landlords are familiar with them, but as time passes and numbers diminish so does knowledge. Here's a brief introduction to this fascinating ongoing Rent Officer work:

- Rent Officers register Fair Rents for most private sector tenancies which started before 15th January 1989, known as regulated tenancies. The Rent Act 1977 sets out the general processes, valuation principles and requires the Rent Officer to maintain a public Register of Fair Rents. We also register Fair Rents for former agricultural workers under the Rent (Agriculture) Act 1976, and secure Housing Association tenancies, under the Housing Act 1985.
- It has now been over 30 years since the Housing Act 1988 introduced modern assured / assured shorthold tenancies. Effectively no new regulated or secure tenancies have been created since then, and with very limited succession rights, numbers are gradually reducing. However, in a typical 'normal' year we still register around 28,000 Fair Rents annually.
- The types of property we deal with varies tremendously, from chocolate box thatched cottages (some with little more than an outside toilet and old Butler sink), all types of flats and maisonettes, to large detached houses with substantial gardens. Tenants are equally as varied and interesting as the properties with many recanting stories about the World Wars or how life used to be growing up in post-war Britain.
- An application for re-registration can be made
 - by the landlord alone one year and nine months after the effective date of the previous registration;
 - by a tenant alone after two years; and
 - at any time where there has been a significant change of circumstances, or it is made jointly by both landlord and tenant.
- Applications can now be completed electronically and emailed to us, with further contact via email or telephone if possible. This is particularly effective for bulk applications and where services are provided, like communal gardening, cleaning of a shared entrance hall and stairs, or a lift. Application forms can be obtained from: www.gov.uk/government/publications/fair-rent-forms.
- Section 70 of the Rent Act and supporting case-law tells Rent Officers how to assess a Fair Rent. The following is a summary of the valuation process:

- The starting point is an assessment of a market rent, making any relevant additions or deductions if the subject property/tenancy details are different from the comparable evidence.
- The Rent Officer should disregard any improvements the tenant has carried out, any premium the tenant has paid, and any damage the tenant has caused
- If in the Rent Officer's opinion there is a general shortage of similar accommodation in the locality (known as 'scarcity') they may adjust the valuation to reflect this.
- Where the landlord or tenant provides supporting evidence take account of specific issues, for example the impact of voids on the rental value of a property.
- Any adjustments made by the Rent Officer must accurately reflect the way the market is known to function locally.
- After this the Maximum Fair Rent Order is applied, which limits the amount the rent can be increased from the previous registration, based on the Retail Price Index. It does not apply the first time the rent is registered or if significant improvements are made.
- The Rent Officer will consider any representations made by either party or their agent, and may hold a meeting (known as 'a consultation') to discuss the valuation and registration process
- Rents can be re-registered every two years, but the existing Fair Rent is the maximum rent a landlord can charge until it is re-registered. The Register of Fair Rents is a public document which can be viewed online: www.gov.uk/check-register-rents
- The landlord, tenant (or their agent) can object to the Rent Officer's decision by writing to them within 28 days of service of the rent register. The registered rent will then be considered by the First-tier Tribunal (Property Chamber), Residential Property who will look at the case again. The Rent Officer's decision remains effective and chargeable until the Tribunal make a new decision.
- More detailed information and guidance about Fair Rents can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/rent-officer-handbook-fair-rent-registration>

4.2 Rent Register

- View the register of Fair Rents at: <https://www.gov.uk/check-register-rents>
Please note that this is now the only rent register maintained by the VOA – hard copies of historic rent registers are no longer retained.



The screenshot shows the GOV.UK website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the GOV.UK logo, a search icon, and dropdown menus for 'Topics' and 'Government activity'. Below the navigation bar, there is a breadcrumb trail: 'Home > Housing and local services > Owning and renting a property'. The main heading is 'Check the register of fair rents'. Below the heading, there is a search box and a description: 'Search the register of fair rents to find out the maximum rent that can be charged for a 'regulated tenancy' (also known as a 'protected' or 'secure' tenancy). Most lettings by private landlords that began before 15 January 1989 are regulated tenancies, unless the landlord and tenant live in the same house.' A green button labeled 'Start now >' is prominently displayed. Below the button, it says 'on the Valuation Office Agency's service'. On the right side, there is a 'Related content' section with three links: 'Private renting', 'Renting out your property', and 'Regulated tenancies'.

KEY MESSAGE

The latest registered rent (based on a market rent starting point) can be found on the online Rent Register. Applications to re-register the rent can be made every two years.

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SECTION 5 – WORKING TOGETHER

A wide range of stakeholders choose to work with VOA Rent Officers, as they are reassured by our independent and impartial Government status. Our valuations and ONS Private Rented Sector (PRS) statistics are underpinned by the goodwill and trust of landlords, letting agents and tenants, who voluntarily provide around half a million achieved private sector rents each year. Maintaining a representative sample of private rents relies upon contributions from all parts of the PRS, from individual landlords with a single property, to letting and managing agents with large portfolios. Including new, renewal and periodic tenancies across England gives us a unique view of the market.

When you contribute rental data to VOA Rent Officers for their statutory work, this data also feeds into official Government rental statistics which can help landlords and tenants make more informed decisions and choices. Your rental data helps inform policy making and contributes to national inflation measures. These in turn affect loans, mortgages, investments, pensions, benefits, and numerous other products.

5.1 Our PRS Stakeholder Team

Gary and Jo would like to hear your thoughts for close working partnerships within the PRS.

Gary Trent, PRS Stakeholder Lead



“ The PRS never ceases to amaze me. We’ve had tremendous support from the professional and trade bodies, lettings agents and landlords. They recognise the importance of a reliable supply of lettings information for Rent Officer’s work and the contribution the data makes to the ONS inflationary measures and PRS official statistics. The more comprehensive the data, the better potential to refine and expand rental statistics. That’s an exciting prospect for the sector and it’s realistic to think that the UK Stats Authority vision of **‘High quality statistics, analysis and advice to help Britain make better decisions’** is achievable for the PRS”

gary.trent@voa.gov.uk

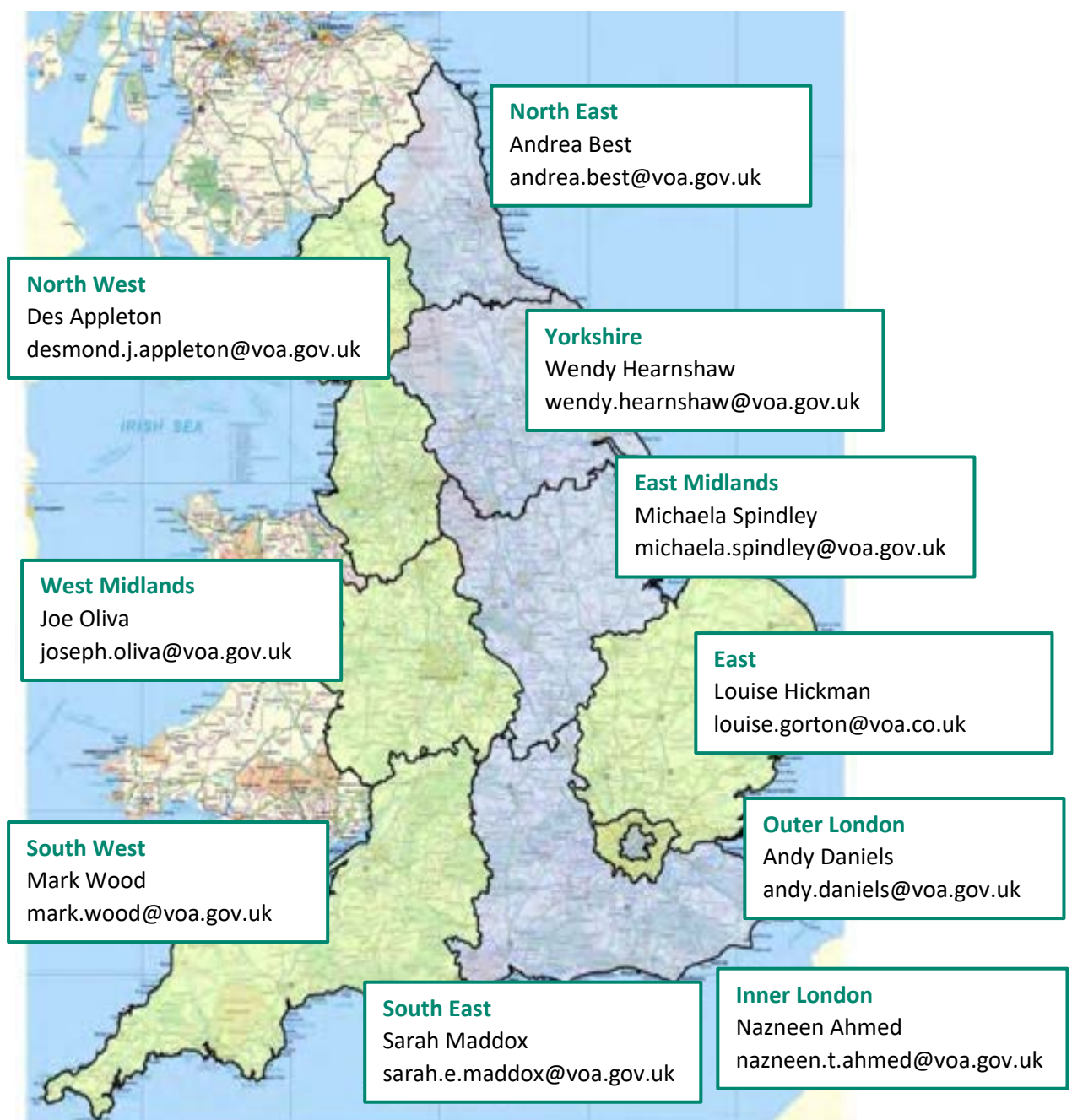
or Customer Journey Manager:

jo.cornick@voa.gov.uk

martin.way@voa.gov.uk

5.2 Building Local Relationships

- At the start of 2022 we improved our management coverage at a local level to deliver a more consistent customer experience. Our 10 new Hub Managers have more time to spend helping build connections with you and strengthen relationships across each area.
- The map below shows each of our managers, the areas they cover and their contact details. Your local Rent Officer may not have changed, but there are some handovers happening.



5.4 Media Enquiries

If you have a media enquiry about the Valuation Office Agency, you can contact our press office using the details below. This service is only for journalists and our press office cannot help with customer service enquiries.

Email: voamediaenquiries@voa.gov.uk

Phone: 03000 543466

Our normal office hours are 9.00am to 5.30pm, Monday to Friday. Outside of this we will only respond to urgent media enquiries. Our duty press officer can be contacted on 07773 572114.

The VOA is bound by the rules of confidentiality and cannot discuss details of individual taxpayers or companies.

KEY MESSAGE

We are happy to come along to any local, regional or national meeting or event. Please get in touch with your local manager or one of the PRS Stakeholder team.

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SECTION 6 – COMMUNICATION & SOCIAL MEDIA

6.1 VOA Rent Officer Communication

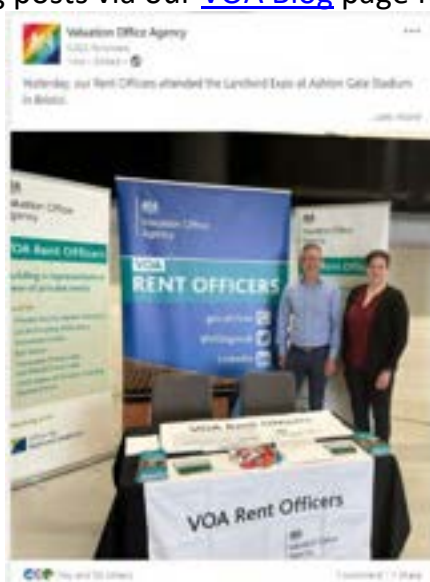
- We regularly produce an electronic VOA Rent Officer update newsletter which is distributed directly by our rent officers to their agent contacts.
- We are also happy to add you to our central distribution list if you'd like to receive a personal copy.



- These generally coincide with the six-monthly publication of the ONS Private Rental Market Statistics (PRMS)
- We hope you find our eUpdates interesting and informative, but we'd love to hear your feedback and suggestions for future issues. We welcome external articles and are happy to write articles for your newsletters or communications. Please contact our editor jo.cornick@voa.gov.uk

6.2 VOA Social Media

- Read the latest VOA updates by following us on our social media channels: Twitter [@VOAgovuk](https://twitter.com/VOAgovuk) or <https://twitter.com/VOAgovuk> and LinkedIn [VOA LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/valuation-office-agency/) or <https://www.linkedin.com/company/valuation-office-agency/>
- We run small social media campaigns specifically for VOA Rent Officers to improve awareness and signpost to useful information.
- And we also write blog posts via our [VOA Blog](#) page for the private rented sector.



6.3 Collaborating on Social Media

- We believe there are many mutual benefits and a largely shared audience between us which we would like to explore further in future. This represents a fantastic opportunity to work together to help improve knowledge and understanding of the PRS.
- We follow most of the main PRS professional bodies and representative organisations and will look out for your content on these platforms and share or like posts of mutual interest to our audience.
- Being a Government Agency however we must ensure impartiality and exercise more caution over what we post, like or share. In general terms external content must be factual and informative for our audience and not express opinions on policies or be controversial in nature.
- It really helps if you can like or share our posts as it helps to amplify our messages and reach more of our target audience.

- Please contact our Stakeholder Manager jo.cornick@voa.gov.uk or our Comms Team if you wish to discuss collaboration on any of these channels.

KEY MESSAGE

We post on our current Twitter and LinkedIn channels – please like and share content that you feel is relevant to your audience. We will look out for your content on these platforms and share posts of mutual interest to our audience.

SECTION 7 - HOW YOU CAN CONTRIBUTE

7.1 Flexible options – the easiest for you

You can share information with us in a variety of ways, but we really want to find the simplest and easiest method of sharing information for you. Talk to your local rent officer or email roli@voa.gov.uk to explore all the options, which include:

- ❖ Generate a CRM software report direct from your own system and share it securely with us
- ❖ Contact roli@voa.gov.uk to discuss options for the secure transfer of high volumes of rental data centrally
- ❖ Confirm rental information with a rent officer by telephone or email
- ❖ Alternatively, rent officers can visit you personally to collect rental information, or attend local meetings/events.



7.2 Share Rental Data with Rent Officers Easily and Securely

One of the most practical solutions to sharing rental data with VOA Rent Officers is the use of system generated CRM software reports listing your recent lettings.

The advantages to you

- Quick and easy to set-up, saving you time
- Provides more control for you over how your data is shared
- Can provide an audit trail
- Can be run at regular, scheduled intervals – ideally monthly to help track price change as accurately as possible
- Can be shared digitally with us – with a password protected file via email, or for larger multi-branch networks via our secure drop box or your own secure transfer mechanisms
- Straight from your system – avoids reliance on memory or looking up details
- Some packages enable multi-branch reports, so one authorised employee can produce reports centrally

We really do appreciate the time you give us, so finding easier, quicker ways for you to share rental data can lessen the burden on you and makes time for a quick chat about the market.

We are also acutely aware of data protection, that you have internal compliance to think of, and want to work with us in the most secure way possible. Anything we can do to help you benefits us all.

One of the easiest solutions is the use of system generated reports listing your recent lettings, either produced in branch or centrally through an arrangement with your head office. Now is a great time to reconsider system reports for new and renewal lettings. They'll save you time and are the safest means to exchange information. Rent Officers have brief instructions for most of the commonly used agent software packages, which can help you extract a report containing only the relevant information. Any additional data, like tenant names for example, can be easily removed or redacted.

The small investment in time needed to set up the initial report will pay dividends as they take very little time to re-run on subsequent visits. Please ask the Rent Officer when they visit you next to discuss the best option for you.

We would like to personally thank all the agents who have continued to work with us.

7.3 The importance of full addresses

The full address of properties is essential to help us track and update individual records and avoid duplication. We may contact you to clarify or update the information you provide to ensure accuracy and accountability

KEY MESSAGE

We really want to work with you to find the simplest and easiest method of sharing information for you personally. We will work with you and your CRM provider to improve efficiency.

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SECTION 8 – KEEPING YOUR INFORMATION SAFE

8.1 Our Privacy Notice

- We look after your information very carefully and will not share it with any other parties unless it is lawful to do so.
- VOA Rent Officers are statutory officers, independent and impartial.
- Private rent levels shared with VOA Rent Officers are only used for very specific purposes, contributing to:
 - housing benefit valuations, local housing allowance levels and Universal Credit, benefits which support almost 2 million private rented sector tenancies;
 - ONS rental statistics and inflation measures; and,
 - Fair Rents for regulated tenancies
- We only share information with ONS for statistical and research purposes, with DWP for the purpose of administering social security benefits, and Rent Officers in Welsh and Scottish Governments for their Rent Officer Functions.
- We DO NOT share your rental data with anyone else.
- The legal basis for processing your information is the exercise of official authority under Article 6 of the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR).
- We aim to retain your personal information for only as long as is necessary to undertake our functions and in line with our retention and disposal policy.
- You can find further detail in our privacy notice which describes how we collect and use information in accordance with data protection law under UK-GDPR: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/valuation-office-agency-rent-officer-functions-privacy-notice>

KEY MESSAGE

We take great care of your information and data, as if it were our own. Trust us to keep it safe.

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SECTION 9 – ANNEXES

9.1 VOA Rent Officers Information Leaflet



VOA RENT OFFICERS WORKING WITH THE PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR



Sharing your rental information makes a difference

A better informed private rented sector

When you contribute rental data to VOA Rent Officers for their statutory work, this data also feeds into official Government rental statistics which can help landlords and tenants make more informed decisions and choices.

Your rental data helps inform policy making and contributes to national inflation measures. These in turn affect loans, mortgages, investments, pensions, benefits, and numerous other products.



Your rental data helps inform policy making and contributes to national inflation measures.

A wide range of stakeholders choose to work with VOA Rent Officers, as they are reassured by our independent and impartial Government status. Our valuations and ONS Private Rented Sector (PRS) statistics are underpinned by the goodwill and trust of landlords, letting agents and tenants, who voluntarily provide around half a million achieved private sector rents each year.

Maintaining a representative sample of private rents relies upon contributions from all parts of the PRS, from individual landlords with a single property, to letting and managing agents with large portfolios. Including new, renewal and periodic tenancies across England gives us a unique view of the market.

Working with the Office for National Statistics

We work closely with our statistical partner, the Office for National Statistics (ONS), who use our rental data for research and statistical purposes including:

- official Private Rental Market Statistics (PRMS), covering rental levels for every local authority area in England
- monthly Index of Private Housing Rental Prices (IPHRP), an experimental statistic measuring the change in price of renting residential property
- measures of inflation, like the Consumer Price Index (Housing) - the Government's preferred inflation measure
- as well as national accounts



The ONS aims to further develop rental statistics to better meet the needs of the PRS.

"We aim to unify private rental price statistics by replacing the IPHRP and PRMS with a new, single, monthly publication ...using the latest available data."

ONS Private rental prices development plan updated January 2021

How you can contribute

You can share information with us in a variety of ways, but the easiest way is through our digital channels:

- Generate a CRM software report direct from your own system and share it securely with us
- Contact rol@voa.gov.uk to discuss options for the secure transfer of high volumes of rental data digitally
- Confirm rental information with a rent officer by telephone or email
- Complete a simple form available from gov.uk/voa (provide letting information and e-mail it back to rol@voa.gov.uk)
- Alternatively, rent officers can visit you personally to collect rental information, or attend local landlord forums.

VOA Rent Officers want to work with agents and landlords to find the simplest and easiest method of sharing information for you. Talk to your local rent officer or email rol@voa.gov.uk to explore all the options.

The full address of properties is essential to help us track and update individual records and avoid duplication. We may contact you to clarify or update the information you provide to ensure accuracy and accountability.



For further information please visit:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/valuation-office-agency>

Rent Officer statutory functions

The rental information you share with us is used for our statutory determinations and valuations, VOA Rent Officers:

- determine levels of Local Housing Allowance (LHA) across England,
- provide local authorities in England with Housing Benefit determinations,
- provide the private rental element of Universal Credit, and
- maintain a register of Fair Rents under the Rent Act 1977.

VOA Rent Officers play a role in benefits which support almost two million PRS households in England through Housing Benefit, Local Housing Allowance and Universal Credit. (Source: Stat-Xplore, Dept for Work & Pensions)

Looking after your information



VOA Rent Officers are registered with the Information Commissioner and comply with the Data Protection Act 2018. The VOA's internal systems have been risk assessed in line with Government guidelines. Personal information is only retained for as long as is necessary to undertake our functions and in line with our retention and disposal policy.

We will not share your information with any other parties unless it is lawful to do so.

You can find further detail in our privacy notice: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/valuation-office-agency-rent-officer-functions-privacy-notice>

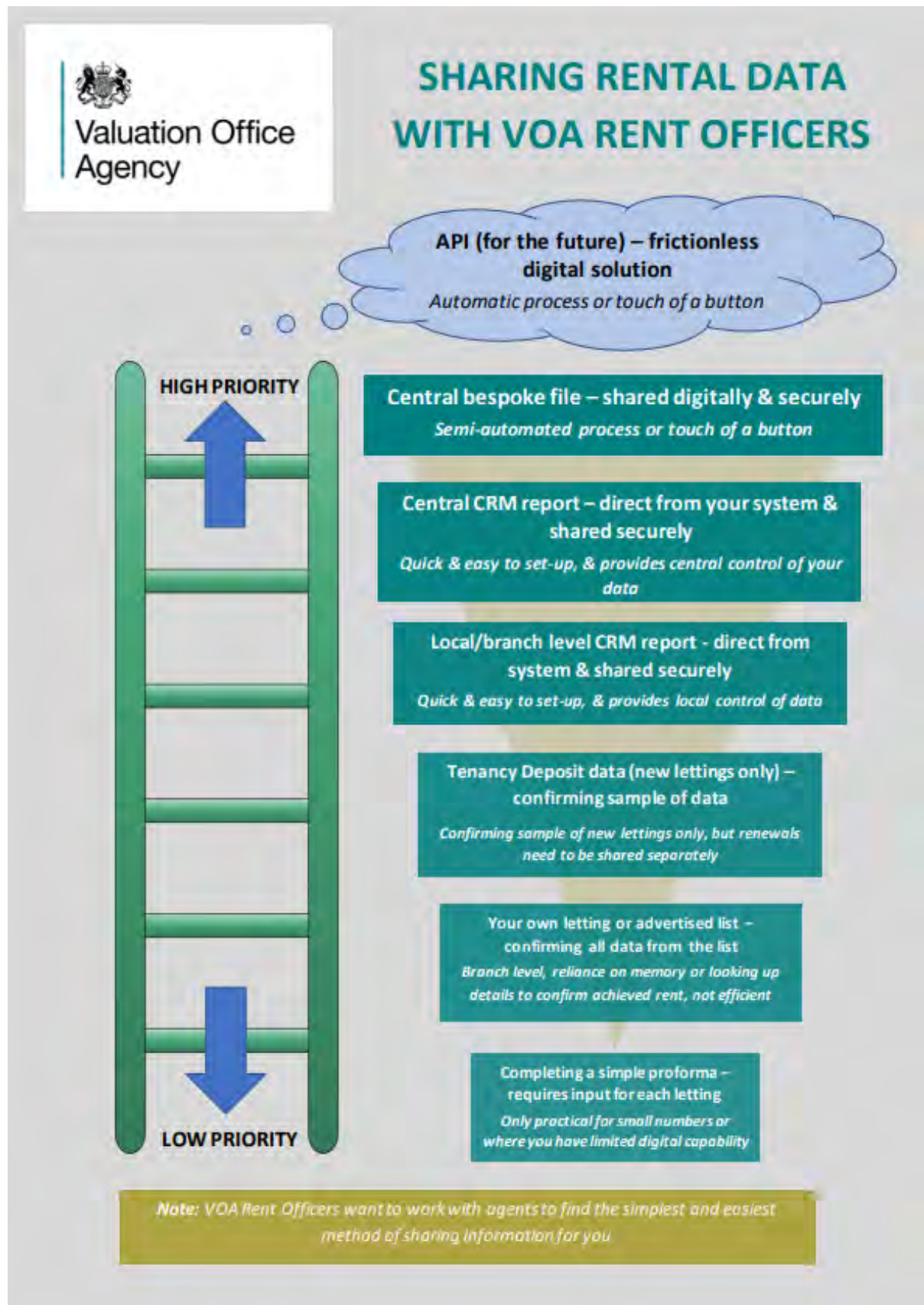
Please email any comments or feedback to rol@voa.gov.uk

If you benefit from the information VOA and ONS publish, please share it.

Find out more on-line

- Read more about the work of VOA Rent Officers by visiting our website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/valuation-office-agency>
- Find the latest Local Housing Allowance rates when you live on LHA Direct: <https://lha-direct.voa.gov.uk>
- View the register of Fair Rents at: <https://www.gov.uk/check-register-rents>
- Read the latest VOA updates by following us on our social media channels Twitter @VOAGovUK and LinkedIn VOA LinkedIn

9.2 Sharing Rental Data with VOA Rent Officers



9.3 Key messages visual



VOA Rent Officers

SHARE your rental information with us. It only takes a few minutes to do it. Contributing to a database of around half a million achieved market rents.

TRUST us to keep it safe & secure. Thousands of landlords & letting agents already do. We are fully compliant with all data protection legislation.

ACCESS to official rental statistics & interactive map. Completely free. And contribute towards CPIH, the lead measure of UK inflation.

TOGETHER giving you improved market knowledge. Helping you advise & invest wisely. Compare your rents with the wider market.

SHARE more information with us & benefit from improved statistical products. Helping us all improve our understanding of the private rented sector. Better informed, better decisions.

*Sharing your rental information
makes a difference*

9.3 Utilising CRM Software Reports



Valuation Office
Agency

VOA Rent Officers

Share Rental Data with Rent Officers Easily and Securely

One of the most practical solutions to sharing rental data with VOA Rent Officers is the use of system generated CRM software reports listing your recent lettings

The advantages to you

- Quick and easy to set-up, saving you time
- Provides more control for you over how your data is shared
- Can provide an audit trail
- Can be run at regular, scheduled intervals
- Can be shared digitally with us – with a password protected file via email, or for larger multi-branch networks via our secure drop box or your own secure transfer mechanisms
- Straight from your system – avoids reliance on memory or looking up details
- Some packages enable multi-branch reports, so one authorised employee can produce reports centrally

We really do appreciate the time you give us, so finding easier, quicker ways for you to share rental data can lessen the burden on you and makes time for a quick chat about the market.

We are also acutely aware of data protection, that you have internal compliance to think of, and want to work with us in the most secure way possible. Anything we can do to help you benefits us all.

One of the easiest solutions is the use of system generated reports listing your recent lettings, either produced in branch or centrally through an arrangement with your head office. Now is a great time to reconsider system reports for new and renewal lettings. They'll save you time and are the safest means to exchange information. Rent Officers have brief instructions for most of the commonly used agent software packages, which can help you extract a report containing only the relevant information. Any additional data, like tenant names for example, can be easily removed or redacted.

The small investment in time needed to set up the initial report will pay dividends as they take very little time to re-run on subsequent visits. Please ask the Rent Officer when they visit you next to discuss the best option for you.

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We would like to personally thank all the agents who have continued to work with us. The rental data you share not only helps us meet our statutory obligations (particularly helping tenants to meet their ongoing rental liability through the Housing Benefit and Universal Credit system) but it also has wider benefits to the economy, feeding into national inflation measures and rental statistics.

Links to statistics and other useful information

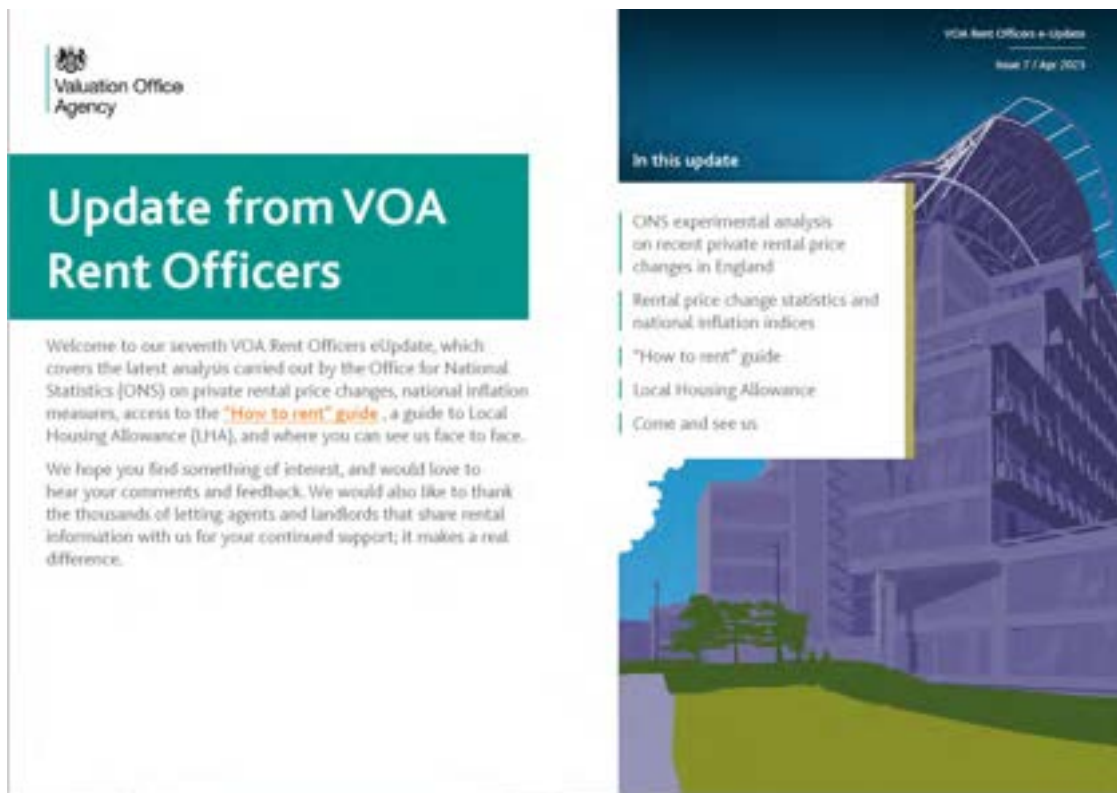
- **Private Rental Market Summary Statistics (PRMS)** – the latest PRMS published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) every 6 months in June and December are here ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/bulletins/private-rental-market-summary-statistics-in-england/previous-releases. These official statistics are based on VOA Rent Officer rental data and include an interactive map showing median monthly private rental prices by local authority and bedroom category in England. Anyone can re-use the statistics under the terms of the [Open Government Licence](#).
- **Index of Private Housing Rental Prices (IPHRP)** - the latest monthly [IPHRP](#) based on VOA rental data for England, is released by ONS around the middle of each month.
- **Developing rental price statistics** – the ONS are planning to transform private rental price statistics. You can find out more detail about their plans here: ons.gov.uk/private-rental-prices-development-plan/february-2022
- **UK inflation indices** - Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers' housing costs ([CPIH](#)) - a [National Statistic](#), the most comprehensive & ONS lead measure of inflation; plus the [Consumer Prices Index](#) (CPI); and also the [Retail Price Index](#) (RPI). Also released around the middle of each month and include VOA rental data in the basket of goods.
- **Local Housing Allowance (LHA)** - you can find current (from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023) and some historic LHA rates on LHA direct, where you can search by postcode or local authority: <https://lha-direct.voa.gov.uk/search.aspx>
- **Universal Credit** - information on housing costs and Universal Credit can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/housing-and-universal-credit/renting-from-private-landlord>
- **Register of Fair Rents** - check the electronic rent register via <https://www.gov.uk/check-register-rents>
- **Main Rent Officer homepage** – to find out more about the work of VOA Rent Officers please visit <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/valuation-office-agency-and-housing-allowance>
- **Rent Officer Functions Privacy Notice** – our full privacy notice can be read here <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/valuation-office-agency-rent-officer-functions-privacy-notice/>

BENEFITS FOR AGENTS OF SOFTWARE REPORTS | UPDATED 2022

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9.4 VOA Rent Officers eUpdate Newsletter



Valuation Office Agency

Update from VOA Rent Officers

Welcome to our seventh VOA Rent Officers eUpdate, which covers the latest analysis carried out by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) on private rental price changes, national inflation measures, access to the **"How to rent" guide**, a guide to Local Housing Allowance (LHA), and where you can see us face to face.

We hope you find something of interest, and would love to hear your comments and feedback. We would also like to thank the thousands of letting agents and landlords that share rental information with us for your continued support; it makes a real difference.

In this update

- ONS experimental analysis on recent private rental price changes in England
- Rental price change statistics and national inflation indices
- "How to rent" guide
- Local Housing Allowance
- Come and see us

ONS publish experimental analysis on recent private rental price changes in England (Feb 2022 to Feb 2023)

On 24 March 2023 ONS published their 'Changes in private rental sector behaviour, England: February 2022 to February 2023' report. We've summarised the main takeaways:

- Collecting price data from privately rented properties every 12 months, on average, ("revisiting") enables rental price changes to be tracked over time.
- The proportion of privately rented properties in England revisited in February 2023 that had experienced a price increase was 50.6%, up from 36.0% of those revisited in February 2022.
- The proportion of privately rented properties revisited in February 2023 that had experienced a price increase was highest in London (66.8%) and lowest in the North West (27.9%).
- The average price percentage increase for privately rented properties in England revisited in February

2023 that had experienced a price increase since the last visit was 9.7%, up from 7.0% in February 2022.

- Tenants privately renting in London may have faced larger rental price rises compared with other English regions, with London privately rented properties revisited in February 2023 experiencing a larger average price increase (12.0%) than the England average (9.7%).
- The proportion of privately rented properties revisited in February 2023 that had experienced a price increase of 10% or more was 33.3% in London; this was just under double the proportion for England (18.2%).
- Since early 2022, revisited flats and maisonettes have consistently experienced the highest average percentage rental price change of all property types in London.



You can read the whole report here:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/articles/changesinprivaterentalsectorbehaviourengland/february2022tofebruary2023>

Rental price change statistics and national inflation indices

The latest monthly [Index of Private Housing Rental Prices \(IPHRP\)](#), UK, based on VOA rental data for England, has also been released by ONS.

The IPHRP is an experimental price index, tracking the prices paid for renting property from private landlords in the UK, and includes measures of owner occupiers' housing costs.

In England, private rental price changes rose to 4.7% in the 12 months to February 2023. East Midlands had the highest increase, with West Midlands having the lowest.

Figure 1: The UK annual private rental price percentage change rose to 4.7% in the 12 months to February 2023

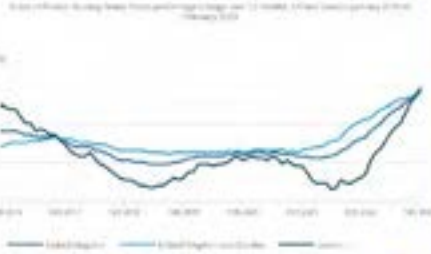
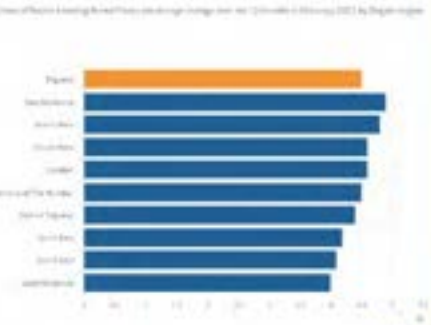


Figure 4: Weakest annual rental price percentage change is in the West Midlands



How to guide

A new ["How to rent"](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-rent-guide) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-rent-guide>) was published on Friday 24 March on GOV.UK.

Landlords in England must serve this latest version both at the start of any new tenancy and on renewal.

This guide is for tenants and landlords in the private rented sector to help them understand their rights and responsibilities. It provides a checklist and more detailed information on each stage of the process, including:

- what to look out for before renting
- living in a rented home
- what happens at the end of a tenancy
- what to do if things go wrong



Local Housing Allowance

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) use **Local Housing Allowance (LHA)** rates to calculate Housing Benefit for tenants renting from private landlords. LHA rates relate to an area in which a claim is made these areas are called Broad Rental Market Areas (BRMA).

A BRMA is where a person could reasonably be expected to live taking into account access to certain facilities and services.

How local Housing Allowance rates are calculated

VOA Rent Officers collect rental information from letting agents, landlords, tenants and other sources. LHA rates are based on private market rents being paid in the BRMA which can differ from advertised rents.

The data does not include all rents that might exist in each BRMA. In accordance with DWP legislation, Rent Officers must collect a sufficient sample from the 12-month period ending 30 September. This is prior to DWP publishing LHA rates on 1 April.

The published data includes both new and renewal rents in payment, as negotiated between landlord and tenant. These rents do not include any value attributed to services which are ineligible for housing benefit (effectively net rents). Housing benefit supported rents are also removed where possible.

The LHA comprises a set of rates for a number of categories - Categories A to E which are:

a) 'Shared Accommodation'

Exclusive use of one bedroom and sharing the use of one or more of a:

- kitchen
- bathroom
- toilet
- room suitable for living in

b) 1 bedroom dwellings: those with one bedroom and exclusive use of a kitchen, a bathroom, a toilet and a room suitable for living in

c) 2 bedroom dwellings

d) 3 bedroom dwellings

e) 4 bedroom dwellings

The LHA rates from 1st April 2023 have been determined in accordance with The Rent Officers (Housing Benefit and Universal Credit Functions) (Modification) Order 2023 (516/2023) and are the same rates that came into force on 1st April 2020. Any policy enquiries should be directed to the Department for Work and Pensions.



Come and see us

We will be appearing at the following events, come and see us to talk about how you can contribute.

When?	What?	Where?
Wednesday 17/05/2023 09:00 – 15:30	National Landlords Investment Show	Holte Suite, Aston Villa Football Club, Villa Park, Witten Lane, Birmingham, B6 6HE
Thursday 08/06/2023 09:30 – 15:00	Newcastle Landlords Conference	Newcastle Falcons Conference Centre, Kingston Park, Newcastle, NE13 8AF
Tuesday 27/06/2023	Propertymark One	Ovo Arena, Wembley
Tuesday 04/07/2023 09:30 – 17:00	National Landlords Investment Show	1 Old Billingsgate, Lower Thames Street London, EC3R 6DX

Thank you

A brief personal thank you for continued help.

The rental data you share helps tenants to meet their rental liability through Housing Benefit and Universal Credit system, as well as feeding into national inflation measures and rental statistics.

To be of real value the data you share with VOA Rent Officers crucially needs to include the full address, type of tenancy etc. We would appreciate feedback on the ways you find simplest and easiest to provide this level of information. Please speak to your local Rent Officer to explore the best option for you.

How to contact us

The best way to get in touch with VOA Rent Officers is through our online [contact form](#), which also has links to useful self-help guidance. Using this channel will help ensure your query is managed by the appropriate team as quickly as possible.

To support customers, our telephone service also operates from 9:00am – 4:30pm from Monday to Friday.

Please make use of our self-serve and online channels, and wherever you can, please use our electronic communication tools to contact us.

If you have any comments or feedback about this publication, please [contact us by email](#).



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9.5 Highlights from Latest Rental Statistics

Current rental prices statistics

- Currently, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) publishes two private rental prices statistical outputs: the UK Index of Private Housing Rental Prices (IPHRP), which is produced monthly, and Private rental market summary statistics in England (PRMS), which is produced bi-annually.
- The IPHRP measures the change in the price tenants face when renting residential property from private landlords. It publishes an index of private rental growth and annual percentage change for the UK, its countries and English regions.
- PRMS are point-in-time rental-price estimates for England, English regions and English local authorities. Current methodology limitations prevent compositional changes from being considered, so it is not appropriate to compare PRMS estimates year-on-year to infer trends in the rental market, and a price index cannot currently be produced.

Private rental market summary statistics

The ONS published their latest official Private rental market summary statistics in England on 14 December 2022. Using achieved rental data shared with VOA Rent Officers by so many different private landlords, agents, and management companies across England they provide a unique view of rent levels for both new lettings and renewals (the stock and flow of the market).

This statistical bulletin shows combined sample data on median, lower quartile and upper quartile monthly rental prices for the private residential rented market. The statistics are available at national, regional and local authority level, enabling comparisons to be made between areas; although not currently over time.

The summary statistics include an interactive map (see example on right) displaying the median data by local authority and bedroom category, enabling better visualisation of the statistics, and helping bring them to life.

Key highlights from this release include:

- The statistics are based on a sample of 509,390 items of confirmed private rents (including both new, renewal and periodic tenancies) from our Rent Officer lettings information (LI) database, over 12 months to the end of September 2022.
- The median monthly rent was £800 for England, recorded between October 2021 and September 2022; this is the highest ever recorded.

- London had the highest median monthly rent at £1,475; this is nearly double the median monthly rent for England.
- The North East had the lowest median monthly rent at £525.
- The difference in monthly rental price between the most and least expensive local authorities was £1850.

The next publication of the PRMS is due to be released in June 2023

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/bulletins/private-rental-market-summary-statistics-in-england/previous-releases>

Index of Private Housing Rental Prices

- IPHRP is an experimental price index tracking the prices paid for renting property from private landlords in the UK and includes measures of owner occupiers' housing costs.
- Published monthly key highlights from the latest rental index for October 2022 include:
 - Private rental prices paid by tenants in the UK rose by 4.9% in the 12 months to March 2023, up from 4.8% in the 12 months to February 2023.
 - Annual private rental prices increased by 4.6% in England, 4.4% in Wales and 5.1% in Scotland in the 12 months to March 2023
 - Within England, the East Midlands saw the highest annual percentage change in private rental prices in the 12 months to March 2023 (5.1%), while the South East saw the lowest (4.2%)
 - London's annual percentage change in private rental sector prices was 4.8% in the 12 months to March 2023, above the England average and it's highest annual rate since December 2012.

Figure 4: Lowest annual rental price percentage change is in the South East

Index of Private Housing Rental Prices percentage change over the 12 months to March 2023, by English region



Source: Index of Private Housing Rental Prices from the Office for National Statistics

Rental Statistics Development

ONS are re-developing the IPHRP and PRMS to produce mix-adjusted average rental prices comparable over time and down to lower geographic levels. The [Private rental prices development plan](#) was updated in February 2022.

In 2016, a user engagement event was held at which two main areas for development were identified: publication of private rental price comparable over time, including a historical data time series, and greater geographic granularity, including rent growth measures down to local authority level.

The ONS established data access requirements and received access to all necessary data by September 2019, enabling the launch of this development project.

Throughout 2020 and 2021, the ONS presented its analyses and methodology research outputs to a selection of stakeholders. They gathered feedback on the initial findings, discussed methodology options, completed further analysis based on the outcomes of this consultation and implemented their valuable feedback in the development of the methodology. They have now finalised the methodology they will be using. This will be based on the approach used to calculate the UK House Price

Index, but tailored to suit the rental prices data, and this will be published in an article over the coming months.

They will be engaging with users further when they publish initial analysis and undertake user consultation in 2023. Users will be notified through the Index of Private Housing Rental Prices' publications when future user engagement will begin.

The timescales for this project have been revised – an outline of the future project milestones of the statistical development work includes:

- publishing an updated development plan, early 2022: now complete
- publishing the new rents methodology that will be used, early 2022: in progress
- developing the new production system, throughout 2022: in progress
- publishing research articles throughout 2022: now likely to start early 2023
- publishing initial analysis and undertaking user consultation (the impact on OOH and consumer prices will be considered alongside this), first half of 2023: to start
- Publishing decision on incorporation into official statistics, end of 2023: to start
- publishing first statistical bulletin using the new methodology, 2024: to start

Future dates are estimates and are subject to continued systems development, research, and impact analysis to ensure the quality of statistics, which is their priority. Decisions will be made through continuous engagement with stakeholders.

In the meantime, if you have any comments or queries on their work you can email hpi@ons.gov.uk

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SECTION 10 – VERSION CONTROL SHEET

Details of Update	Version Number	Date
First draft version of document	V1.0	November 2022
6 th draft version of document	V1.0	10 th May 2023
7 th draft version of document	V1.0	23 rd May 2023
Final Version	V1.0	7 th June 2023
Update to staffing	V2.0	16 th October 2023

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