Update Report

Who Gets Social Housing 2023 - 2024

Housing Scrutiny Commission: August 2024

Assistant Mayor for Housing: Cllr Elly Cutkelvin
Lead Director: Chris Burgin

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
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- Report version number: 1

1. Purpose

1.1. This report provides an update to Members of the 'headline' Housing Register and Lettings data, relating to Leicester City Council's Housing Register.

1.2. The report deals with the financial year 2023/2024.

2. Headline data from the Housing Register

2.1. Overall number of households on the Housing Register

2.1.1. The number of households on the Housing Register is 6682 on 01/04/2024. This is an 11% increase compared to 6008 on 01/04/2023.

2.2. Banding proportions

2.2.1. Band 1 applicants account for 23% (1570). This is an increase of 32% compared to 01/04/2023.

2.2.2. Band 2 applicants account for 32% (2126) of all households on the Housing Register. This is a 2% decrease compared to 01/04/2023.

2.2.3. Band 3 applicants account for 45% (2986) of all households on the Housing Register. This is relatively unchanged compared to 01/04/2023.

2.3. Primary reasons for joining the Register

2.3.1. Overcrowding remains the biggest reason for joining the Housing Register and currently accounts for 58% (3876) of the register. This is relatively unchanged compared to 01/04/2023.

2.3.2. Following a Summer 2019 Policy change, there are three levels of banding priorities for overcrowding, rather than the original two. This allows for overcrowding needs on the Housing Register to be better separated dependent on level of need, which in turn allows for those in the most critical housing need to be elevated and prioritised appropriately. Although this results in a fairer system, and a Policy more capable of allocating housing by level of need, the change did have a consequent negative impact on those remaining in Band 2, who now experience longer waiting times.

2.3.3. The following information summarises the differences between priorities:

- Band 1 Overcrowding priority is awarded to those whose overcrowding meets the most critical need – either meeting the statutory overcrowding definition within the Housing Act 1988, or otherwise exceeding the property's maximum occupancy levels. The number of statutory overcrowded/critically overcrowded households has increased by 24% from 197 to 245 in the last 12 months.

- Band 2 Overcrowding priority is awarded to those whose overcrowding falls short of Band 1 criteria but is acknowledged within LCC's Allocations Policy as severe – those lacking 2 bedrooms or more, or families living in 1-bed flats. 246 households were in this priority as at 01/04/2024.

- Band 3 Overcrowding priority is awarded to those whose overcrowding is not severe but is acknowledged within LCC's Allocations Policy as causing potential houses difficulties – those lacking just one bedroom. 2822 households were in this priority as at 01/04/2024.

2.3.4. In May 2023, the Easymove scheme was introduced as part of the Overcrowding Strategy to ease overcrowding for social housing tenants. The aim of the scheme is to find housing solutions for social tenants by facilitating a mutual exchange between an overcrowded and an under occupying household. This creates an alternative route to suitable accommodation for tenants whilst reducing the cost of void properties and making best use of our stock.

2.3.5. Between 5th May 2023 and 31st March 2024, the project successfully managed 9 mutual exchanges, moving 18 Social Housing tenants into housing more suitable for their needs. 2 were Housing Association tenants and 16 were LCC tenants. This means that solutions were found for 9 overcrowded households outside of the Housing Register with a saving over £63,000 in avoided costs associated with LCC void properties.

2.3.6. The scheme is ongoing and a target of 10 mutual exchanges for 2024/25 has been set, which would yield 20 solutions for Social Housing tenants. As at 18/7/24, the project has already achieved 4 mutual exchanges since 1st April 2024 and so is set to exceed the target should solutions continue on the same trajectory.

2.3.7. People who are homeless or threatened with homelessness accounts for 25% (1686) of all households on the Housing Register. This is an increase of 33% compared to 01/04/2023.

2.3.8. More detailed information on reasons for joining the housing register can be found at Appendix 1.

2.4. *<u>Housing demand vs. Housing Need</u>*

2.4.1. Housing demand and housing need are different.

2.4.2. Housing need is driven by population growth and various socioeconomic factors and is measured by the Local Authority in terms of circumstances. These circumstances are then assessed, and priority is awarded on the housing register depending on the level of housing need.

2.4.3. Housing demand includes housing need as a driver, but other drivers exist. Housing demand is also driven by preference, for example wanting to live in a certain area of the city. This can subsequently drive-up waiting times in that particular area. Preference is a key element of Leicester City Council's Housing Register, as we operate a choice-based lettings scheme, allowing applicants to bid on properties as they wish (except for those priorities that require auto-bidding due to urgency).

2.4.4. In Leicester, information indicates the following:

Type of accommodation (i.e., house, bungalow, flat, maisonette)

- Need for all types of accommodation is high, and significantly outstrips supply.

- When looking at family-sized housing, houses have higher demand than maisonettes and flats, leading to lower average waiting times for the latter.

Adapted accommodation

- Need for fully wheelchair adapted accommodation outstrips supply significantly. Whilst waiting times for this type of accommodation have reduced overall since 2022/23 (see 4.5), there is a disparity between the number of Fully Wheelchair Accessible need applicants on the register achieving lets compared to those requiring other types of accommodation.
- Analysis completed in June 2023 showed that there was a requirement to source 25 additional Fully Wheelchair Accessible properties to remove the disparity between the percentage of Fully Wheelchair accessible and other households being rehoused compared to their representation on the register.
- The analysis showed that for other types of adapted accommodation, we are meeting or exceeding the required amount of suitable accommodation.
- Work is ongoing to analyse this and determine how we can increase supply and we are:
    - Undertaking a project to contact those fully wheelchair accessible households who have been waiting longest on the register to discuss their desired areas as well as their current need for housing so we can determine where we need to look for adapted accommodation.
    - Aiming to secure suitable adapted or adaptable accommodation through the acquisitions process.
    - Developing an adapt first process which will ensure that we have exhausted all viable options to adapt current homes before pursuing rehousing for the household. This will ensure less upheaval for the household and will increase the amount of adapted accommodation available.
    - Seeking to adapt suitable void properties for Fully Wheelchair Accessible households if viable.
    - Working closely with Housing OT’s to ensure a person centred approach to all adapted needs applicants; considering the best way to resolve their housing need in short term whilst planning for future needs. This may mean lowering the level of adaptations needed for some without reducing their priority on the register in recognition of a higher adapted requirement in the long term.
    - The disparity will be reviewed twice a year and will form part of this report. It will also inform the adapted strategy in relation to ongoing work

to ensure adapted accommodation is available at, at least a proportionate rate to General Needs Accommodation and waiting times are comparable for all category needs.

Size of accommodation

- The highest size-need is for 2-bedroom accommodation which accounts for 33% of total need.

Area of accommodation

- Housing need in all areas of the city is high, but needs are highest in Abbey Ward, Wycliffe Ward and Castle Ward where the highest proportion of people on the housing register are awarded the highest priority (Band 1). Lowest need is in Knighton Ward and Aylestone Ward, with the lowest proportion of people on the housing register awarded Band 1.

- Housing demand shows us a different picture. By looking at bidding patterns, we can see that bids placed for housing in Western, Braunstone Park & Rowley Fields and Eyres Monsell is highest, despite housing need in those areas being lower in severity. This doesn't provide the whole picture relating to demand as bids can only be placed where properties are available for offer and these wards have experienced higher lets than others so will inevitably attract more bids. Evidence from customer interactions suggests that Belgrave, North Evington, Wycliffe, and Stoneygate Wards are in highest demand and also suggests that those currently living in those areas prefer to remain there if possible and will wait longer on the register in order to do so, potentially leading to the high number of ongoing applications in those wards.

- Supply (lets) across the city is disparate, with the north-west seeing high numbers of lettings, as well as pockets in the south. With the exception of Evington and Thurncourt, lets in the east of the city are much lower, with the lowest being seen in Spinney Hills Ward. Supply in various wards can be affected by a number of factors but is primarily driven by the level of Council stock in the area, and the frequency with which tenants leave accommodation.

Landlord preference

- Demand for Council tenancies is higher than Housing Association tenancies, which are also available through the Housing Register. This leads to marginally lower average waiting times for the latter.

2.5. *Other observations*

2.5.1. Social Housing tenants (Leicester) account for 23% of all households on the Housing Register.

3. Lettings Headline data

3.1. *Overall number of lettings*

3.1.1. The number of lettings in the last 12 months has remained relatively unchanged from the corresponding period last year.

3.1.2. To combat the rise in demand;

- Leicester City Council has an ambitious acquisitions programme.

- Leicester City Council also has a strong private rented sector access scheme. There were 219 lettings to private landlords via schemes. We continue to review these schemes to ensure they continue to provide excellent support to both landlord and tenants and continue to be competitive in the private sector market.

- The EasyMove project officer works with overcrowded and under occupying social housing tenant to achieve moves into suitable accommodation outside of the Housing Register.

3.2. *Which applicants are achieving the lettings?*

3.2.1. Of all lettings in 2023/2024;

- Band 1 accounted for 74% of all lets in 2023/2024.
- Band 2 accounted for 20% of all lets, although there were only 24 family-sized lets to Band 2 families seeking general needs accommodation in the period.
- Band 3 accounted for 6% of all lets but it should be noted that these were allocations of Sheltered Housing, adapted housing or age designated accommodation, which is under less demand or priority is given to older applicants. Band 3 applicants have the lowest assessed housing need and will generally not have success on the Housing Register for general needs housing. They are advised to seek other housing options.

3.2.2. 576 (53%) of all lettings were for households who became homeless or were at threat of homelessness. This is proportionate to the previous year and reflects the support given to homeless households to secure settled accommodation through the housing register.

3.2.3. New Parks had the most lettings (198) in the last 12 months followed by Eyres Monsell (158). This is largely driven by the locations in which Leicester City Council is actively acquiring accommodation.

3.2.4. More detailed information on lettings can be found at Appendix 2.

3.3. *Time taken to achieve an offer of accommodation*

Please note: Where the charts below state a number, the number indicates the average time, in months, to achieve an offer during the period. The amount of time spent on the register, and waiting times, is highly dependent on the applicant's level of bidding activity and choices. As such, waiting *times could be significantly above average if an applicant is demonstrating lower bidding activity and/or activity that is focused on particular areas of the city, or particular property types.*

3.4. *Waiting times for 'General Needs' properties*

Band 1 applicants

3.4.1. For properties that were not directly allocated, the current average waiting times for Band 1 applicants seeking general needs accommodation[1] are showing in Fig 1, below (shown in months):

Fig 1 ave. waiting times for B1 applicants seeking general needs accomm 2023/2024:

	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed+
BAND 1				
House / Maisonette	-	16	19	21
Bungalow	7	16	-	-
Flat	9	12	-	-
Bedsit	7	-	-	-
Sheltered	2	2	-	-

* A – symbol indicates there were no lets of that type in the period.

3.4.2. Compared to 2022/2023 (see Fig2) we can see a 4 month increase in average waiting times for 1 bed flats, a 5 month increase for 2-bed flats, an 8 month increase for 3-bed houses and an increase of 7 months for 4+ beds.

Fig 2 ave. waiting times for B1 applicants seeking general needs accomm 2022/2023:

	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed+
BAND 1				
House / Maisonette	-	10	11	14
Bungalow	5	18	-	-
Flat	5	7	-	-
Bedsit	2	-	-	-
Sheltered	2	-	-	-

Band 2 applicants

3.4.3. For general needs properties that were not directly allocated, the current average waiting times for Band 2 applicants within 2023/2024 are shown in Fig3:

Fig 3 ave. waiting times for B2 applicants seeking general needs accomm 2023/2024:

	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed+
BAND 2				
House / Maisonette	-	-	-	-
Bungalow	11	-	-	-
Flat	17	36	-	-
Bedsit	31	-	-	-
Sheltered	5	-	-	-

[1] General needs properties are known as Cat C properties and are defined as those that do not have any significant adaptations installed.

3.4.4. Compared to 2022/2023 (see Fig4) we can see that waiting times have increased slightly for many property types and sizes.

Fig 4 ave. waiting times for B2 applicants seeking general needs accomm 2022/2023:

	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed+
BAND 2				
House / Maisonette	-	39	55	-
Bungalow	10	-	-	-
Flat	20	27	-	-
Bedsit	31	-	-	-
Sheltered	3	-	-	-

3.5. Waiting times for Wheelchair Accessible Accommodation[2]

3.5.1. For wheelchair accessible properties that were not directly allocated, the current average waiting times for households within 2023/2024 are shown in Fig5:

Fig 5 ave. waiting times for wheelchair accessible accomm 2023/2024:

	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed
BAND 1	16	39	32	-
BAND 2	20	-	-	-
BAND 3	-	-	-	-

3.5.2. Compared to 2022/2023 (see Fig6) we can see that waiting times have decreased for many property sizes, in some cases very significantly with the exception of 2-bedroom accommodation:

Fig 6 ave. waiting times for wheelchair accessible accomm 2022/2023:

	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed
BAND 1	30	30	60	51
BAND 2	37	-	-	-
BAND 3	-	-	-	-

3.6. Other Adapted Accommodation[3]

3.6.1. For other forms of adapted accommodation, the current average waiting times for households within 2023/2024 are shown in Fig7:

Fig 7 ave. waiting times for adapted accomm 2023/2024:

	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed

[2] Known as Cat A accommodation, and defined as being fully adapted for wheelchair users, which would include widened doorways.
[3] Known as Cat B accommodation, and defined as being significantly adapted, for example the need for a through-floor lift and level-access shower in situ.

BAND 1	5	14	17	5
BAND 2	7	15	17	4
BAND 3	-	-	-	-

3.6.2. Compared to 2022/2023 (see Fig8) we can see that waiting times have decreased slightly for those requiring 1-bed adapted partially accommodation, but increased for those needing 2-bed and 3-bed partially adapted accommodation in Band 1, In addition, there have been lets of larger, 4 bedroom accommodation to this cohort.

Fig 8 ave. waiting times for adapted accomm 2022/2023:

	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed
BAND 1	6	6	14	-
BAND 2	7	20	15	-
BAND 3	20	30	-	-

3.7. Ground Floor Accommodation[4]

3.7.1. For ground-floor-specific accommodation, the average waiting times for households within 2023/2024 are shown in Fig9:

Fig 9 ave. waiting times for ground-floor- specific accomm 2023/2024:

	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed+
BAND 1	7	8	60	-
BAND 2	18	36	-	-
BAND 3	-	-	-	-

3.7.2. Compared to 2022/2023 (see Fig10) we can see that waiting times have decreased for those requiring 1-bed ground floor accommodation, and for Band 1 requiring 2 and 3 bed accommodation.

Fig 10 ave. waiting times for ground-floor- specific accomm 2022/2023:

	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed+
BAND 1	6	13	68	-
BAND 2	7	18	-	-
BAND 3	-	-	-	-

3.7.3. If we look at the rate households in Bands 1 & 2 were rehoused in 2023-24 compared to their representation on the register as at 1/4/2024, General Needs households are

4 Known as Cat G accommodation and defined as being a property all on the ground floor or having facilities that would make it suitable for someone unable to use stairs.

now being rehoused at a lower rate than their representation on the register, which is likely because their numbers on the register have increased. Whilst lets to Fully Wheelchair Accessible households have increased and waiting times reduced, they are still not being rehoused at a proportionate rate to their representation on the register whilst other adapted need households are. In fact, Partially Adapted households are rehoused at a higher rate than their representation. This is likely to be due to the numbers of partially adapted bungalows available.

Adapted Category	Number on register	% of total register
General Needs	3294	89%
Ground Floor	23	1%
Partially Adapted	257	7%
Fully Wheelchair	122	3%

Adapted Category	Number of lets	% of total lets
General Needs	827	82%
Ground Floor	11	1%
Partially Adapted	137	13%
Fully Wheelchair	23	2%

3.7.4. The disparity for Fully Wheelchair Accessible households has reduced and that for General Needs applicants has increased. Partially adapted applicants are still achieving offers at a higher rate. This reflects the ongoing work to address adapted needs on the register and indicates that selecting partially adapted voids to further adapt to Fully Wheelchair Accessible will reduce disparities further.

3.8. *Housing Associations*

3.8.1. Lettings to Housing Associations and HomeCome accounts for 252 (23%) of all lettings in the last 12 months. This has remained proportionate to the overall lettings for the corresponding period last year.

3.8.2. PA Housing was the largest provider with 100 (39%) of the lets with Riverside the next highest provider with 36 lettings (14%).

3.9. *Direct Allocations*

3.9.1. Leicester City Council's Housing Allocations Policy allows for direct allocations of housing to be made to applicants whose circumstances merit priority rehousing on the basis of managing risk, emergencies, and best use of stock.

3.9.2. The number of direct lettings accounts for 32% (348) of all lettings for the 12-month period. This has increased by 6% from the corresponding period last year.

3.9.3. Direct lets to homeless households account for 76% of total direct lettings whilst direct lets to current tenants account for 20%.

4. Summary of appendices:

4.1. Appendix 1 - Households on the Register by Band & Priority and as at 01/04/2024
4.2. Appendix 2 - Lettings by Priority for the 12-month period 01/04/2023 – 31/03/2024
4.3. Appendix 3 - Customer Information Dashboard

5. Is this a private report? No

6. Is this a “key decision”? If so, why? No – update only.

Appendix 1

Households on the Register by Band & Priority and as at 01/04/2024

	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	5 Bed	6 Bed	7 Bed	8+ Bed	Total
BAND 1	298	574	482	160	43	12	-	1	1570
Compulsory Homeloss	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	2
Harassment	15	20	7	5	1	-	-	-	48
Management Case	23	8	6	4	-	-	-	-	41
Medical	47	60	64	30	7	2	-	-	210
Priority Under-occupation	62	5	3	-	-	-	-	-	70
Referred Case	2	12	10	4	-	-	-	-	28
Statutory Overcrowding	1	68	102	40	26	7	-	1	245
Statutory Homeless	109	396	289	77	9	3	-	-	883
Young Person Leaving Care	39	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	43
BAND 2	755	724	328	221	80	15	2	1	2126
Care package ASC	32	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	33
Leaving Armed Forces	3	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	6
Leaving Residential Care	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6
Medical	82	109	165	75	14	2	-	-	447
Overcrowded Families in 1 Bed	-	466	91	5	1	-	-	-	563
Severe Overcrowding	-	11	21	134	64	13	2	1	246
Statutory Homeless	181	73	18	2	-	-	-	-	274
Temporary Accommodation	451	50	23	4	1	-	-	-	529
Under-occupation	-	12	9	1	-	-	-	-	22
BAND 3	993	874	900	210	8	1	-	-	2986
Sheltered Housing Only	105	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	105
Adult Leaving Care	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Medical Care + Support	22	18	8	2	2	-	-	-	52
Overcrowding - Non tenant	841	654	139	25	3	-	-	-	1662
Overcrowding - Tenants	22	200	753	182	3	-	-	-	1160
Workplace Move	2	2	-	1	-	1	-	-	6
Grand Total	2046	2172	1710	591	131	28	2	2	6682

Appendix 2

Lettings by Priority for the 12-month period 01/04/2023 – 31/03/2024

	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	5 Bed	6 Bed	7 Bed	Total
BAND 1	**352**	**236**	**195**	**15**	**2**	**1**	**-**	**801**
Compulsory Homeloss	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Harassment	23	14	16	-	-	-	-	53
Management Case	39	8	9	2	-	-	-	58
Medical	26	21	17	2	-	-	-	66
Priority Under-occupation	41	3	-	-	-	-	-	44
Referred Case	2	2	7	-	-	-	-	11
Statutory Overcrowding	2	35	29	3	2	1	-	72
Statutory Homeless	183	150	116	8	-	-	-	457
Young Person Leaving Care	36	3	-	-	-	-	-	39
BAND 2	**178**	**9**	**6**	**3**	**-**	**-**	**1**	**197**
Care package ASC	11	-	-	-	-	-	-	11
Leaving Residential Care	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Medical	47	7	6	-	-	-	-	60
Overcrowded Families in 1 Bed	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	2
Severe Overcrowding	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	2
Statutory Homeless	28	-	-	-	-	-	-	28
Temporary Accommodation	89	-	-	2	-	-	-	91
BAND 3	**80**	**9**	**4**	**1**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**94**
Sheltered Housing Only	33	-	-	-	-	-	-	33
Medical Care + Support	4	1	-	-	-	-	-	5
Overcrowding - Non tenants	42	8	4	-	-	-	-	54
Overcrowding - Tenants	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	2
Grand Total	**610**	**254**	**205**	**19**	**2**	**1**	**1**	**1092**

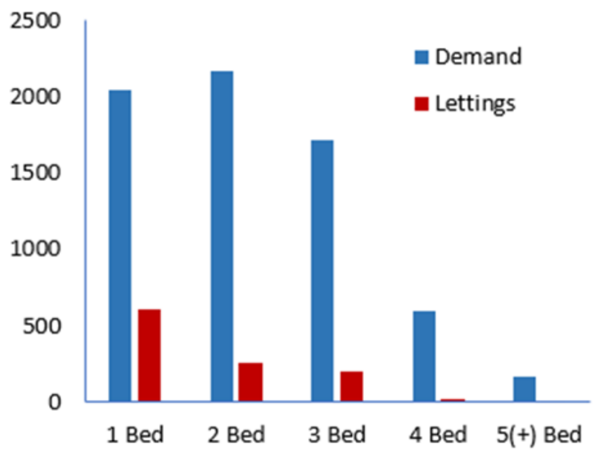
Customer Information Dashboard **Appendix 3**

Who Gets Social Housing? (Council and Housing Association Homes)

Updated every 6 months
Last update: April 2024

Total Applicants on 1st April 2024	Total Lettings April 2023 to March 2024
6,682	**1,092**

Demand for housing v Supply



Average waiting times (months) for different property types*

*Figures quoted are average waiting times for individuals who are bidding regularly across all areas of the city

General Needs Homes

	1 BED	2 BED	3 BED	4 BED	5 BED
BAND 1	6	15	19	19	24
BAND 2	16	48*	48*	60*	60*
BAND 3	24	72*	72*	72*	72*

Wheelchair Accessible Homes

	1 BED	2 BED	3 BED	4 BED	5 BED
BAND 1	23	39	32	48*	60*
BAND 2	23	60*	60*	60*	72*
BAND 3	72*	72*	72*	72*	84*

Accessible Homes with Level Access Shower

	1 BED	2 BED	3 BED	4 BED	5 BED
BAND 1	7	20	17	48*	60*
BAND 2	8	20	17	60*	60*
BAND 3	24	36*	48*	60*	60*

Ground Floor Homes

	1 BED	2 BED	3 BED	4 BED	5 BED
BAND 1	7	8	60	60*	72*
BAND 2	18	36	48*	60*	72*
BAND 3	36*	48*	60*	60*	84*

*Estimated waiting times as no actual data available during this period

For further information visit our website at www.leicester.gov.uk/housingapplications