Housing Scrutiny Report

Update Report
Who Gets Social Housing 2022 - 2023

Housing Scrutiny Commission: 31st July 2023

Assistant Mayor for Housing: Cllr Elly Cutkelvin

Lead Director: Chris Burgin

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 2022/2023.

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 6008 on 01/04/2023. This is relatively unchanged compared to 6053 on 01/04/2022.

2.2.   Banding proportions

2.2.1. Band 1 applicants account for 20% (1190). This is an increase of 4% compared to 01/04/2022.

2.2.2. Band 2 applicants account for 34% (2057) of all households on the Housing Register. This is a 6% decrease compared to 01/04/2022.

2.2.3. Band 3 applicants account for 46% (2761) of all households on the Housing Register. This is relatively unchanged compared to 01/04/2022.

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 60% (3630) of the register. This is relatively unchanged compared to 01/04/2022.

2.3.2. Following a Summer 2019 Policy change, there are now 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. Positively, the number of statutory overcrowded/critically overcrowded households has decreased by 10% from 218 to 197 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. 829 households were in this priority as at 01/04/2023.

- 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. 2604 households were in this priority as at 01/04/2023.

2.3.4. People who are homeless or threatened with homelessness accounts for 20% (1199) of all households on the Housing Register. This is relatively unchanged compared to 01/04/2022.

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

2.4. *Housing demand vs. Housing Need*

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. Work is ongoing to analyse this and determine how we can increase supply.

Size of accommodation

- The highest size-need is for 2-bedroom accommodation which accounts for 34% of total need.

Area of accommodation

- Housing need in all areas of the city is high, but needs are highest in Troon Ward and Eyres Monsell Ward where the highest proportion of people on the housing register are awarded the highest priority (Band 1). Lowest need is in Stoneygate Ward and North Evington Ward, with the lowest proportion of people on the housing register awarded Band 1.

- Housing demand shows us a different picture. By comparing various data sets we can reliably conclude that demand for housing in Belgrave, North Evington, Wycliffe, and Stoneygate Wards is highest, despite housing need in those areas being relatively low in severity. Evidence from customer interactions backs up this conclusion, 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 and south-west. With the exception of Evington, lets in the east of the city are much lower, with the lowest being seen in Rushey Mead 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 decreased by 110 (9%) from the corresponding period last year. This is driven by a lack of tenancy terminations.

3.1.2. To combat this;

- Leicester City Council will continue to seek to maximise the supply of new affordable housing in the city via both new build and acquisitions and through producing new council homes itself and supporting the provision of new affordable homes by Registered Providers and other Providers. We have committed to a target of 1500 new and acquired properties over the next 4 years.

- Leicester City Council also has a strong private rented sector access scheme. There were 200 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.

3.2. Which applicants are achieving the lettings?

3.2.1. Of all lettings in 2022/2023;

- Band 1 accounted for 75% of all lets in 2022/2023.

- Band 2 accounted for 17% of all lets, although there were only 7 family-sized lets to Band 2 families seeking general needs accommodation in the period. This has resulted in longer waiting times for Band 2 families with an average waiting time of over 48 months for 2- and 3- bedroom accommodation in Band 2.

- Band 3 accounted for 8% of all lets but it should be noted that around 40% of these were allocations of Sheltered Housing, which is under less demand. 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. 558 (52%) 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 (192) in the last 12 months followed by Braunstone (112) and Saffron (90). 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 2022/2023:

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

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

3.4.2. Compared to 2021/2022 (see Fig2) we can see a 3 month increase in average waiting times for 2-bed flats and 3-bed houses, but otherwise waiting times remain steady.

Fig 2 ave. waiting times for B1 applicants seeking general needs accomm 2021/2022:

	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed+
BAND 1				
House / Maisonette	-	9	8	10
Bungalow	5	19	-	-
Flat	5	4	-	-
Bedsit	2	-	-	-
Sheltered	1	-	-	-

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 2022/2023 are shown in Fig3:

Fig 3 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	-	-	-

3.4.4. Compared to 2021/2022 (see Fig4) we can see that waiting times have increased for many property types and sizes, in some cases very significantly.

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

Fig 4 ave. waiting times for B2 applicants seeking general needs accomm 2021/2022:

	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed+
BAND 2				
House / Maisonette	-	28	38	48
Bungalow	8	36	-	-
Flat	16	30	-	-
Bedsit	16	-	-	-
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 2022/2023 are shown in Fig5:

Fig 5 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	-	-	-	-

3.5.2. Compared to 2021/2022 (see Fig6) we can see that waiting times have increased, in some cases very significantly. This is attributed to a supply and demand issue that is being actively addressed through development of an Adaptations Strategy. The Strategy, led by Housing Development, will look at how we can better meet adapted demand (and specifically fully-wheelchair accessible accommodation) with our existing stock, and any new stock we acquire.

Fig 6 ave. waiting times for wheelchair accessible accomm 2021/2022:

	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed
BAND 1	10	27	35	40
BAND 2	36	48	48	-
BAND 3	48	-	-	-

3.6. _Other Adapted Accommodation[3]_

3.6.1. For other forms of adapted accommodation, the current average waiting times for households within 2022/2023 are shown in Fig7:

Fig 7 ave. waiting times for adapted accomm 2022/2023:

	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed
BAND 1	6	6	14	-

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[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.

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

3.6.2. Compared to 2021/2022 (see Fig8) we can see that waiting times have increased moderately for those requiring 1-bed adapted accommodation, but decreased for those needing 2-bed and 3-bed adapted accommodation, in some cases a significant reduction.

Fig 8 ave. waiting times for adapted accomm 2021/2022:

	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed
BAND 1	4	9	20	48
BAND 2	5	31	41	-
BAND 3	8	48	48	-

3.7. *Ground Floor Accommodation*[4]

3.7.1. For ground-floor-specific accommodation, the average waiting times for households within 2022/2023 are shown in Fig9:

Fig 9 ave. waiting times for ground-floor- specific accomm 2022/2023:

	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed
BAND 1	6	13	68	48
BAND 2	7	18	-	-
BAND 3	-	-	-	-

3.7.2. Compared to 2021/2022 (see Fig10) we can see that waiting times have increased moderately for those requiring 1-bed adapted accommodation, and increased more significantly for those needing 2-bed and 3-bed accommodation.

Fig 10 ave. waiting times for ground-floor- specific accomm 2021/2022:

	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed
BAND 1	5	7	36	-
BAND 2	8	8	48	-
BAND 3	12	12	-	-

3.8. *Housing Associations*

3.8.1. Lettings to Housing Associations and HomeCome accounts for 235 (22%) of all lettings in the last 12 months. This has remained proportionate to the overall lettings for the corresponding period last year.

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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.

3.8.2. PA Housing was the largest provider with 102 (43%) of the lets with EMH Homes the next highest provider with 27 lettings (11%).

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 26% (280) of all lettings for the 12-month period. This has remained relatively unchanged from the corresponding period last year.

3.9.3. Direct lets to homeless households account for 81% of total direct lettings.

4. Summary of appendices:

4.1. Appendix 1 - Households on the Register by Band & Priority and as at 01/04/2023
4.2. Appendix 2 - Lettings by Priority for the 12-month period 01/04/2022 – 31/03/2023
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.

Households on the Register by Band & Priority and as at 01/04/2023

	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	5 Bed	6 Bed	7 Bed	8+Bed	Total
BAND 1	**247**	**443**	**320**	**114**	**50**	**16**	**-**	**-**	**1190**
Compulsory Homeloss	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Harassment	11	21	9	3	2		-	-	46
Management Case	20	7	6	4	1	1	-	-	39
Medical	61	79	68	31	7	2	-	-	248
Priority Under-occupation	63	5	1	-	-	-	-	-	69
Referred Case	-	5	6	3	1		-		15
Statutory Overcrowding	2	58	69	30	26	12	-	-	197
Statutory Homeless	51	262	161	43	13	1	-	-	531
Young Person Leaving Care	39	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	43
BAND 2	**605**	**758**	**349**	**235**	**76**	**27**	**5**	**2**	**2057**
Care package ASC	29	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	30
Leaving Armed Forces	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Leaving Residential Care	4	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
Medical	96	118	184	81	13	4	-	-	496
Overcrowded Families in 1 Bed	-	471	96	7	1	-	-	-	575
Severe Overcrowding	-	9	23	133	59	23	5	2	254
Statutory Homeless	187	110	29	9	1	-	-	-	336
Temporary Accommodation	288	34	6	3	1	-	-	-	332
Under-occupation	-	12	11	2	1	-	-	-	26
BAND 3	**877**	**816**	**860**	**197**	**10**	**1**	**-**	**-**	**2761**
Sheltered Housing Only	96	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	96
Adult Leaving Care	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Medical Care + Support	30	15	5	1	2	-	-	-	53
Overcrowding - Non-Tenants	732	607	116	25	2	1	-	-	1483
Overcrowding - Tenants	16	193	737	170	5	-	-	-	1121
Workplace Move	2	1	2	1	1	-	-	-	7
Grand Total	**1729**	**2017**	**1529**	**546**	**136**	**44**	**5**	**2**	**6008**

Lettings by Priority for the 12-month period 01/04/2022 – 31/03/2023

	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	5 Bed	Total
BAND 1	**280**	**260**	**237**	**18**	**1**	**796**
Compulsory Homeloss	1	2	-	-	-	3
Harassment	10	19	10	1	-	40
Management Case	33	9	8	-	-	50
Medical	47	17	16	2	-	82
Priority Under-occupation	25	1	1	-	-	27
Referred Case	1	4	2	1	-	8
Statutory Overcrowding	2	55	60	2	-	119
Statutory Homeless	122	152	140	12	1	427
Young Person Leaving Care	39	1	-	-	-	40
BAND 2	**188**	**15**	**9**	**-**	**-**	**212**
Care package ASC	6	-	-	-	-	6
Leaving Residential Care	4	-	-	-	-	4
Medical	49	9	6	-	-	64
Overcrowded Families in 1 Bed	-	3	2	-	-	5
Statutory Homeless	55	1	-	-	-	56
Temporary Accommodation	73	1	1	-	-	75
Under-occupation	-	1	-	-	-	1
BAND 3	**66**	**3**	**2**	**-**	**-**	**71**
Sheltered Housing Only	24	-	-	-	-	24
Medical Care + Support	4	-	-	-	-	4
Overcrowding - Non-Tenants	38	3	2	-	-	43
Grand Total	**534**	**278**	**248**	**18**	**1**	**1079**

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

**Updated every 6 months
Last update: April 2023**

Total Applicants on 1st April 2023	Total Lettings April 2022 to March 2023
6,008	**1,079**

Demand for housing v Supply
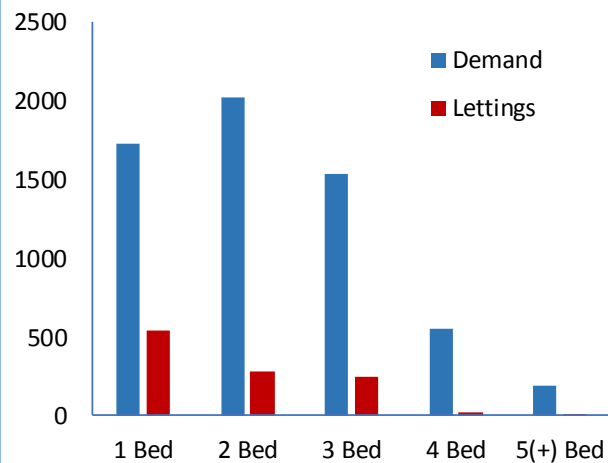
Average waiting times (months) for different property types*

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	5	11	11	10	18
BAND 2	20	48*	48*	60*	60*
BAND 3	31	72*	72*	72*	72*

Wheelchair Accessible Homes

	1 BED	2 BED	3 BED	4 BED	5 BED
BAND 1	30	30	60	51	60*
BAND 2	37	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	6	6	14	48*	60*
BAND 2	7	20	15	60*	60*
BAND 3	20	30	48*	60*	60*

Ground Floor Homes

	1 BED	2 BED	3 BED	4 BED	5 BED
BAND 1	6	13	68	60*	72*
BAND 2	7	18	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