



Social Housing Lettings Annual Report

2019-20



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Social housing lettings: April 2019 to March 2020

This report details Epping Forest District Council's (EFDC) social housing lettings in 2019-20, with information on tenants, tenancy type and length.

Registering for housing

The Housing Register is a list of home seekers who are waiting to be offered a council or housing association property. Home seekers include applicants who have applied to the Council for housing, and existing tenants who wish to transfer to alternative accommodation. Under the Housing Allocations Scheme, applicants need to meet with the local eligibility criteria in order to qualify for inclusion on the Council's housing register.

Everyone on the housing register is put into one of the three priority bands; band A, band B, or band C. Band A represents the highest priority and band C represents the lowest.

Choice-based Letting Scheme

EFDC lets council or housing association properties through its Choice-Based Letting Scheme to home seekers on the housing register, whereby home seekers actively search for available council and housing association properties using the HomeOption website (www.homeoption.org). Vacant council and housing association homes are advertised weekly and home seekers can express their interest in available properties (sometimes called 'making a bid').

The Council uses the Locata IT system to advertise properties and record lettings. Prior to 1 April 2020, Locata did not include EFDC homelessness applicants, therefore the detailed information in the tables and graphs below refer to direct or transfer applicants only.

Shortlisting

As people place their bids for housing, the HomeOption system automatically compiles a shortlist of applicants.

Available homes are offered to the home seekers who have the highest priority bandings and have been waiting longest; subject to satisfactory verification checks at the time the offer is made.

Number of properties let

Number of properties let through the HomeOption Choice-Based Letting Scheme for the last five years:

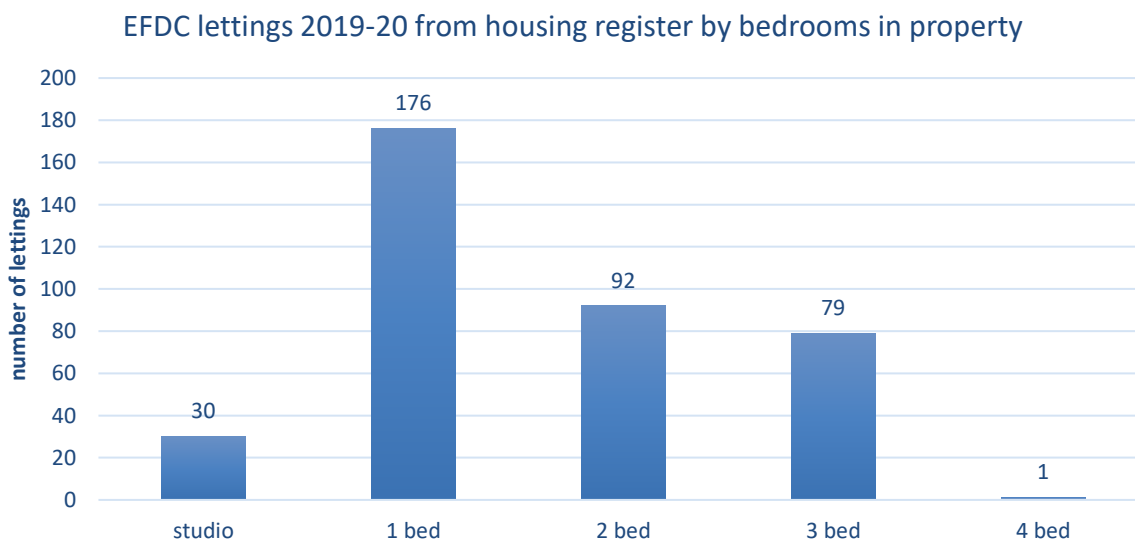
| Number of lets* | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------|
| Social rent | Affordable rent | Year |
| 334 | 0 | 2015-16 |
| 487 | 6 | 2016-17 |
| 422 | 15 | 2017-18 |
| 423 | 26 | 2018-19 |
| 326 | 52 | 2019-20** |

*source: Local Authority Housing Statistics (LAHS) 2015-2019 ** provisional figures for 2019-20

Social housing for rent can be let at social or affordable rent. Social rent is set using a formula that takes into account local earnings and house prices, while affordable rent is set at 80% of market rent. In general, affordable rents are higher than social rents and the gap between them is bigger for larger properties.

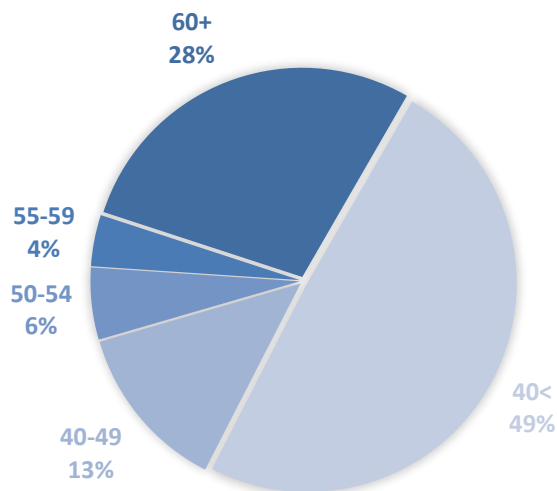
Affordable rents are charged for all new social housing built under the Council's House Building Programme, or those purchased from the open housing market.

Number of properties let in 2019-20 split by the number of bedrooms



Proportion of property lettings in 2019-20 split by age of main applicant

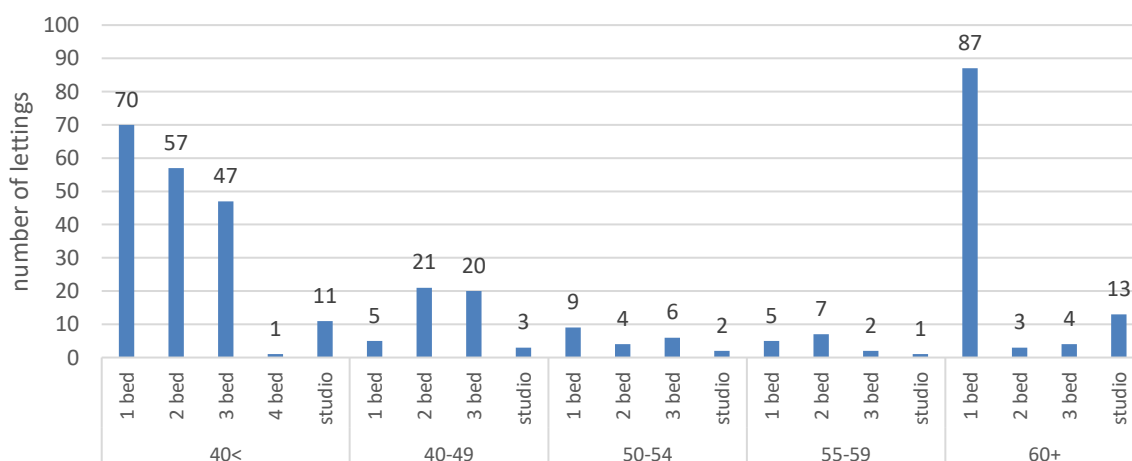
EFDC lettings 2019-20 from housing register by age band



Proportion of lettings made in 2019-20 split by the number of bedrooms and the primary applicant's age group

The table below shows the correlation between the age of the main applicant and the size of the property let to them. This information is helpful when planning what sizes of properties to build to meet future demand.

EFDC lettings 2019-20 from housing register by age and bedrooms per property



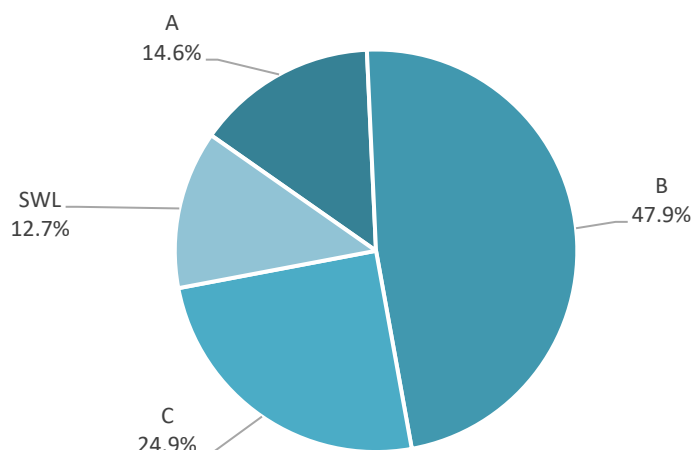
Number of properties let in 2019-20 split by the band awarded to the applicant

The urgency of someone's housing application is assessed in line with the Housing Allocations Scheme which is available to view at www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk. Applications are placed in bands from A to C, depending on the level of need.

The main categories of need for each band are summarised in the table below:

| Band | Main categories of need |
|------|---|
| A | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members of the Armed Forces with serious injury, illness or disability • Bereaved spouses or civil partners of those serving in the regular forces • Downsizers seeking fewer bedrooms than current social housing property • Home seekers needing to move on urgent medical/ welfare grounds • Home seekers living in insanitary, overcrowded or unsatisfactory conditions • Home seekers with mobility problems • Home seekers needing two or more additional bedrooms compared to their current accommodation |
| B | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home seekers sharing accommodation, lacking at least one bedroom • Home seekers needing to move to a particular locality • Home seekers needing to be one household but are having to live apart • Home seekers needing one additional bedroom • Existing council tenants living in 2/3 bedroom flatted accommodation needing houses • Existing council sheltered tenants wishing to move within their scheme or to another scheme • Existing council tenants over 60 living in 1 bed property wishing to move to sheltered accommodation |
| C | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home seekers needing to be closer to their place of work • Home seekers sharing accommodation with another household • Members of the Armed Forces who have no housing need, and the application is made within 5 years of discharge • Spouses and children of existing and former Armed Forces Personnel • Home seekers needing to move on moderate medical/disability grounds • Home seekers in the Council's interim accommodation awaiting homelessness decision • Home seekers demonstrating an exceptional need to move to the district • Home seekers to whom the Council does not owe a full homelessness duty, where there is a requirement to afford reasonable preference on the ground of homelessness |

% of EFDC lettings 2019-20 from housing register by application banding



Types of applicants

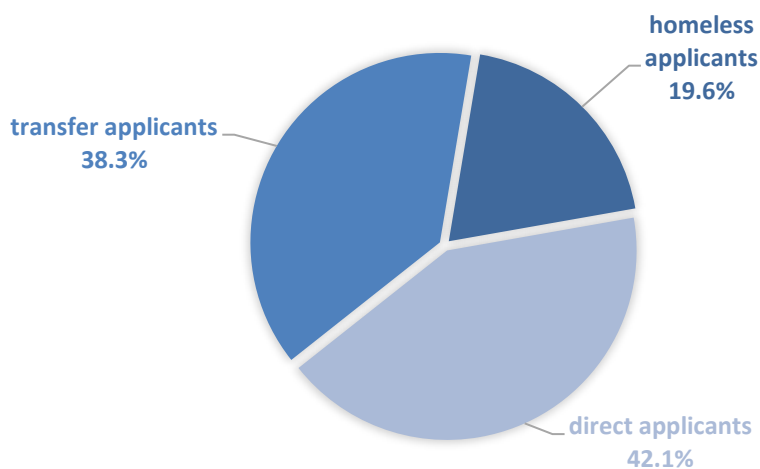
Applicants fall into three categories:

Homeless applicants – households that EFDC has accepted a legal duty to house. Most will be in temporary accommodation.

Transfer applicants – council or housing association tenants seeking a move to another property.

Direct applicants – all other applicants. The largest groups are people renting privately and people living with their family.

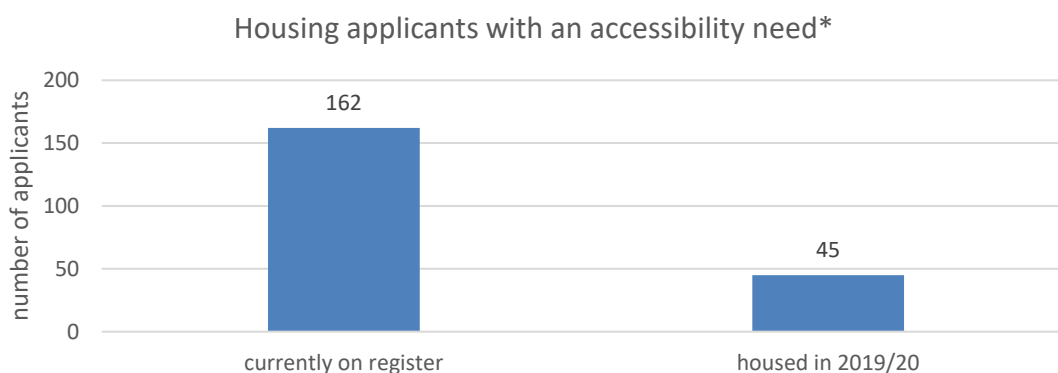
All EFDC lettings 2019-20 by application type



Accessibility and adaptations

Some disabled people need a home to have certain features for it to be suitable for them. Most commonly, people have limited mobility and need a property with level access such as a bungalow or ground floor flat. It is also relatively common for people to need a level-access shower. A few people need a property adapted specifically for a wheelchair user.

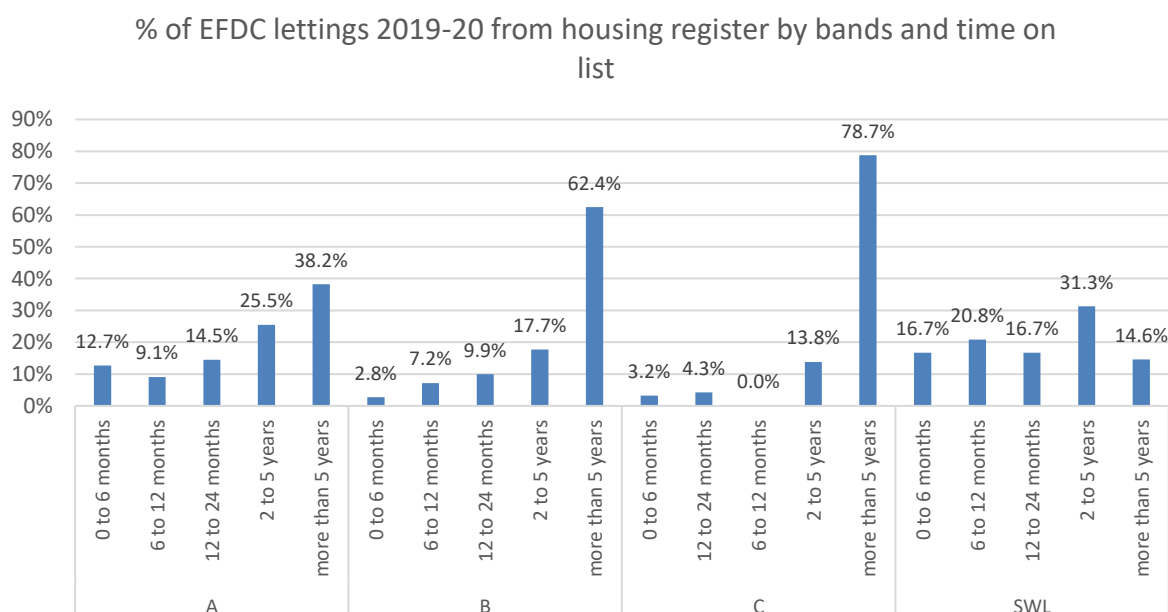
We are committed to making sure that adapted homes are offered to people who need adaptations in the property. We therefore operate a system where people identify their accessibility needs to us and if a suitable property becomes vacant, people needing the adaptations are given priority first.



*These figures include all applicants who identify on their application that they have a permanent physical disability. The totals include those who also have supporting occupational health or medical evidence.

Waiting times

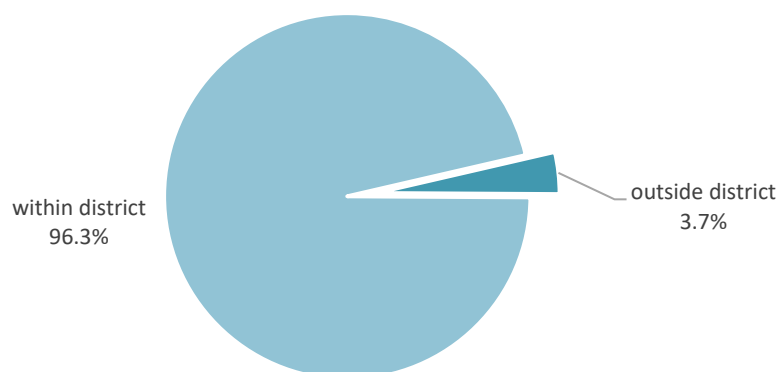
The graph below shows the typical waiting time for housing, broken down by the band of the applicant. It is measured by recording how long people have waited when they are housed.



Household movement

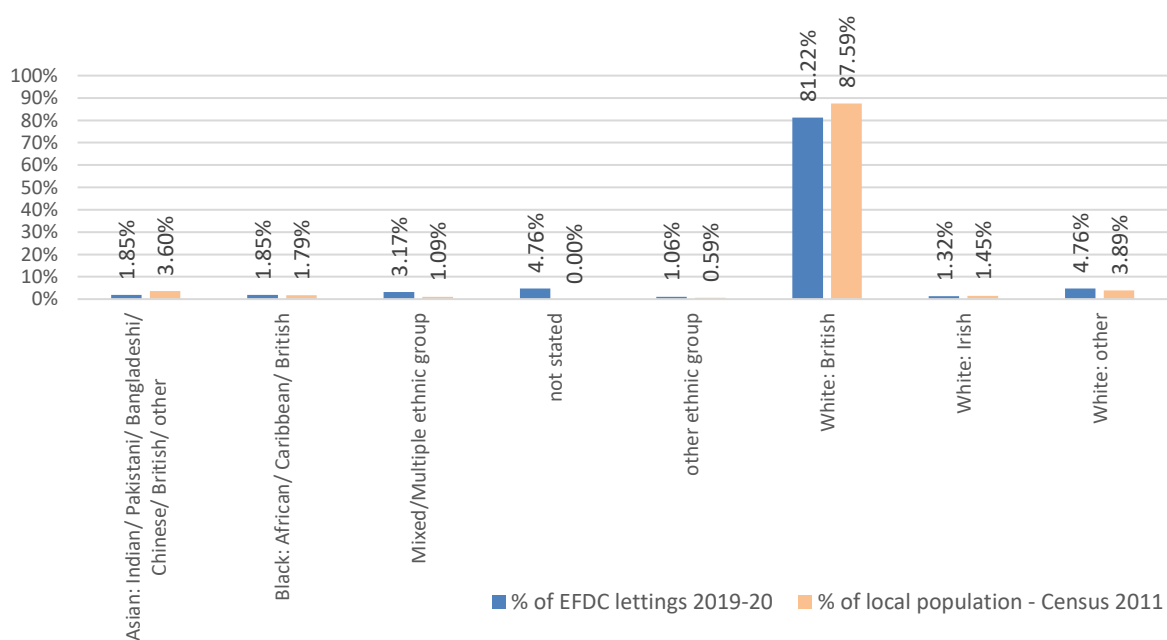
The following chart shows the extent of cross boundary movement in the district. Some people who move district may have a work or family connection to the area they move to.

% of EFDC lettings from housing register by area from which application came



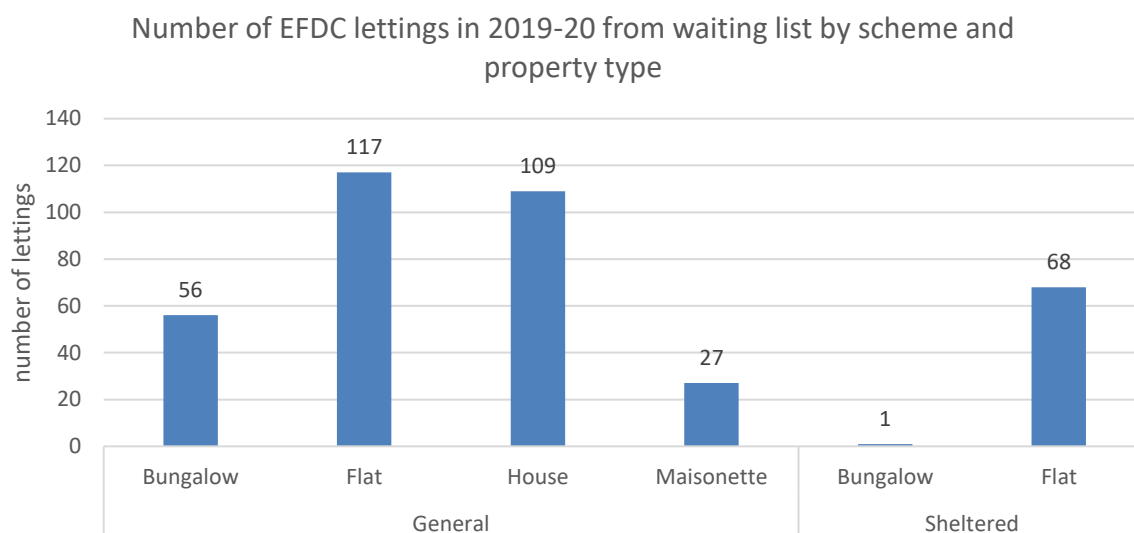
Ethnic groups housed by EFDC in 2019-20 compared with overall ethnicity in the district

% of EFDC lettings 2019-20 from waiting list by applicant's stated ethnic group compared to proportion in district population (as at Census 2011)



Proportion of lettings made in 2019-20 split by the type of property

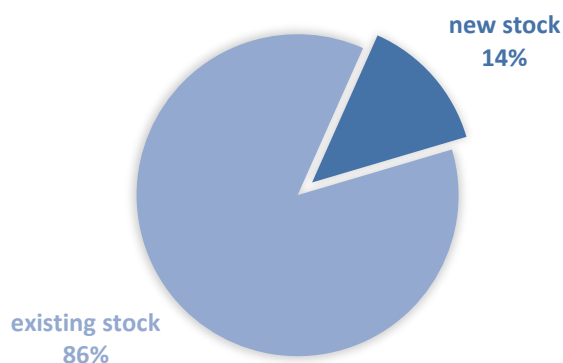
The sheltered housing category mainly comprises flats in sheltered housing schemes but also includes those properties let that are part of, or are linked to, sheltered schemes. It is quite common for a few bungalows to be linked to a neighbouring sheltered housing scheme and for the purposes of the graph below, they are included in the sheltered housing category.



New build and existing properties

The graph below compares lettings of new build council housing with lettings of existing properties

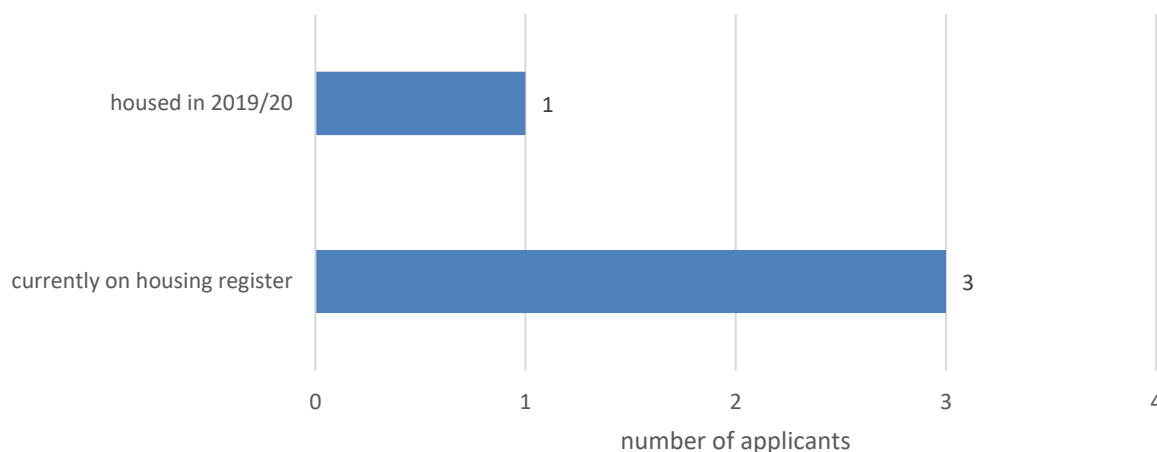
% of EFDC lettings 2019-20 from waiting list by stock type



Armed forces

Priority is given to applicants who have served in the armed forces.

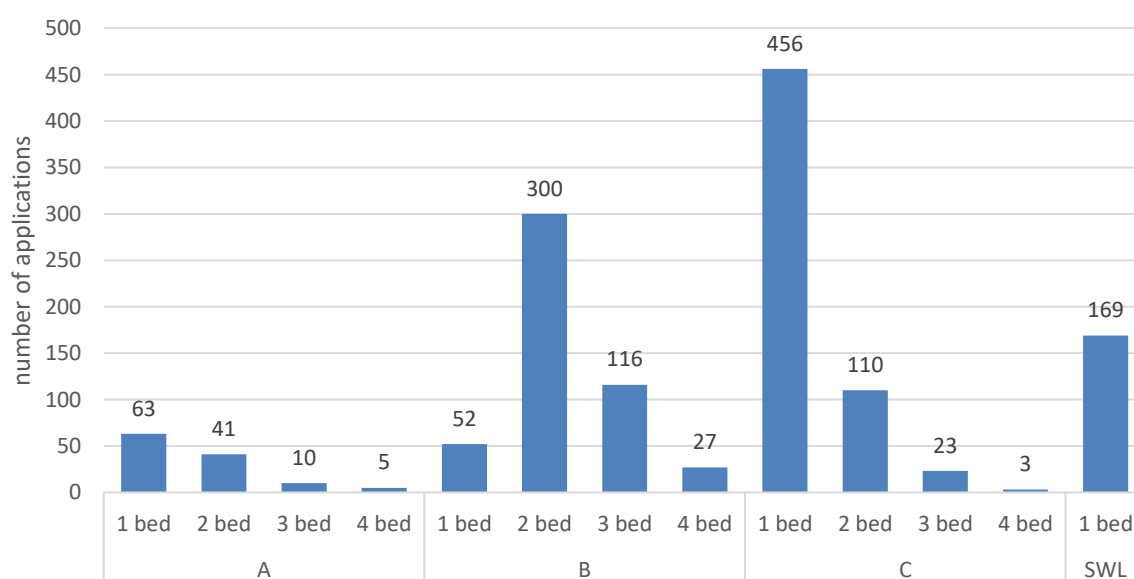
Armed forces applications to the EFDC housing register



Active applicants by band as at 1 April 2020

The number of applicants changes all the time as new people register and households move into accommodation or do not renew their application. Applicant numbers are therefore a snapshot at a particular point in time. All the data for the report so far has related to the households that have been housed through the scheme from April 2019 to March 2020. The table below relates to people waiting to be housed in each band.

Housing waiting list by band and bedrooms requested (1 April 2020)



Housing and Property
Epping Forest District Council
Civic Offices, High Street, Epping
Essex CM16 4BZ

www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk

June 2020