



Social Housing Annual Lettings Report 2021/22



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INTRODUCTION

This report provides information on the allocation of social housing in the District of Epping Forest (“the District”) between 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022 and the demand for social housing on 31 March 2022. The data relates to the Allocations Scheme for 2018-2022.

A review of the Allocations Scheme for 2022-2027 resulted in some changes which became effective in September 2022. The changes have no impact on this report and will be reflected in the next Social Housing Lettings report for the period April 2022 – March 2023.

Social housing lettings: April 2021 to March 2022

Information is provided on the number, size and type of social rented properties that were let to qualifying households between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022. It includes typical waiting times and profiling information on age, mobility needs and ethnicity of the applicants that have been rehoused.

The report covers Council owned stock and properties owned by other registered providers of social housing (RPs). RPs are also known as housing associations.

Housing register snapshot: 31 March 2022

A snapshot is taken on 31 March every year of the number of applicants on the housing register. The breakdown in this report includes the number of households waiting for 1-bed, 2-bed, 3-bed or 4+bed properties in priority Bands A-C, and homeless households to whom the Council owes a main housing duty (or ‘main homeless duty’).

Other information

Details are also provided on the number of mutual exchanges and management transfers that took place outside of the allocations scheme between 2021-2022, and the number of properties that former tenants purchased from the Council under the Right to Buy.

CONTEXT

Eligibility for social housing

The Government sets out who is eligible for social housing in England depending on whether they are a British citizen and how long they have been habitually resident in the country and/or their immigration status.

The Council determines who qualifies for social housing in the District based on whether they fulfil the local eligibility criteria specified in the Allocations Scheme or if the Council has accepted a main housing duty under homelessness legislation.

The housing register

The housing register is a list of applicants in housing need who qualify for at least one offer of social rented housing in the District.

Applicants on the housing register are awarded one of three priority bands; Band A, Band B, or Band C. Band A represents the highest priority and Band C represents the lowest.

Choice-based lettings and direct lets

The majority of lettings are made to households on the housing register through the Council's choice-based letting scheme (CBL).

Applicants are required to actively consider available Council and RP properties that are advertised and updated weekly on a database known as LOCATA through the HomeOption website (www.homeoption.org).

Applicants can express an interest in suitable vacant properties by selecting up to three properties per week to bid on. Bids are then placed in order for each property. The bid from the applicant in the highest band who has been waiting the longest is usually then selected and offered that property if it meets their needs.

Direct lets (DL) are typically made to homeless households to whom we have accepted a main housing duty. They are usually placed in temporary accommodation while they wait. Or to Council tenants that the Council needs to move by way of management transfer.

Affordable rent and social rent

The rent charged for social housing is either 'affordable rent' or 'social rent'. Affordable rent is set at up to 80% of the market rent for the property and social rent is set using a formula that takes account of local earnings and house-prices. Affordable rent is typically higher than social rent.

The majority of Council owned re-let properties are at social rents. More new build properties are set at affordable rent than social rent.

Accessibility and adaptations

A significant number of households include one or more occupants with disabilities or mobility needs and require a property with level access such as a bungalow or ground floor flat.

Occasionally additional adaptations may be necessary such as a level-access shower, handrails, a stair lift or a fully wheelchair adapted property.

When adapted properties become available to let then households with an identified need for those specific adaptations are usually prioritised above households without that need.

Sheltered housing supplementary waiting list

Sheltered housing is advertised via CBL and sometimes attracts limited interest from applicants on the Housing Register.

The Council keeps a supplementary waiting list (SWL) of applicants aged over 60 who can bid for sheltered housing in the district without meeting all the criteria required to join the housing register.

If a qualifying applicant on the housing register does bid for an individual sheltered housing property then they will be given priority over applicants from the SWL who have also submitted bids.

Main housing duty (main homeless duty)

Main housing duty means the duty that the Council has accepted to rehouse a homeless household under part 7 of the Housing Act 1996. This duty applies when a household is unintentionally homeless, eligible for assistance and has a priority need (referred to as 'main homeless duty' on the graphs in this report for ease of reference).

Priority Bands A-C

The following table gives a breakdown of the main categories of need within each priority Band for a choice based letting within the Allocations Scheme for 2018-2022.

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 with 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

Management transfers

Occasionally the Council has to move an existing Council tenant to an alternative property for housing management reasons. This may be due to an emergency for medical or personal safety reasons, or as a permanent decant to carry out major works or to regenerate or demolish their existing home.

LETTINGS INFORMATION

Number of properties let by year

This table shows the number of properties that have been let to qualifying applicants in housing need each year over the last five years.

Year	Total	Council properties	RP properties
2021/22	404*	361*	43*
2020/21	413**	372**	41**
2019/20	538	494	44
2018/19	449		
2017/18	437		

Source: Local Authority Housing Statistical Returns (LAHS) ** Adjusted 2020/21 *Provisional figures 2021/22

Fig.1

There was a reduction in lettings in 2020/21 and the early part of 2021/22 largely due to a slow-down in the number and turnaround time of empty properties because of Covid restrictions and shortages in skill and materials.

Properties let by priority need

This chart shows the percentage of properties that were let by priority need between 2021-2022.

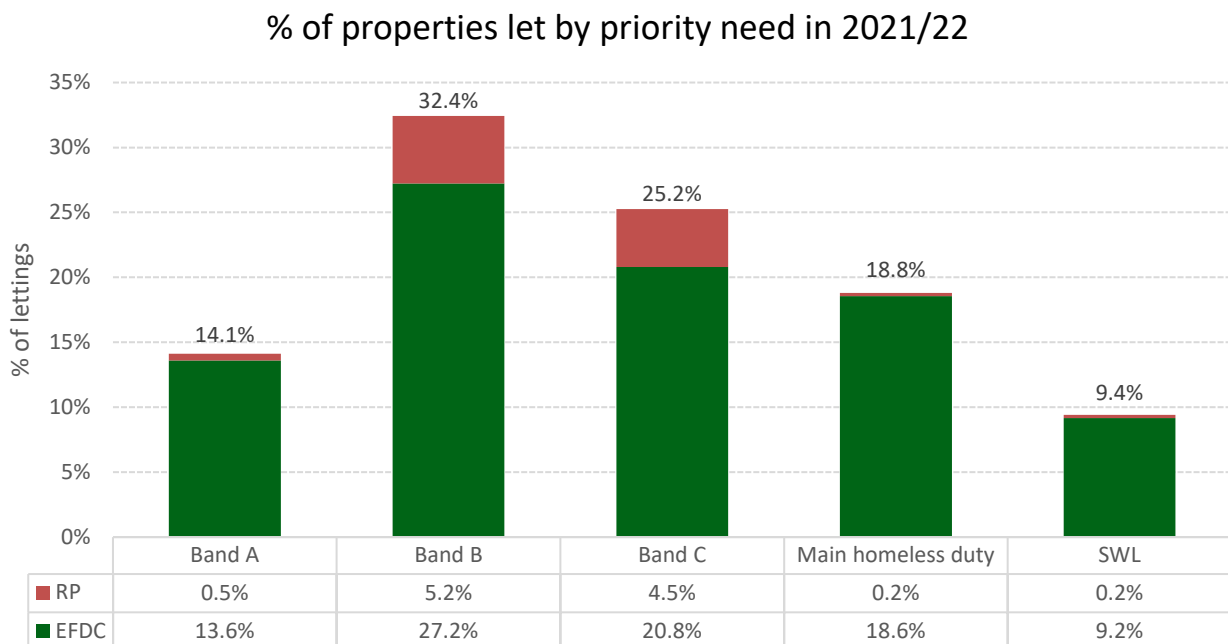


Fig.2

The highest percentage of properties were let to applicants in Band B (32.4%) followed by Band C (25.2%) and main homeless duty (18.8%). The fewest number of lettings were made to applicants on the supplementary waiting list for sheltered housing (9.4%).

Properties let by choice-based lettings and direct lets

This chart shows the percentage of properties that were allocated via choice-based lettings and direct lets by landlord to Bands A-C, main homeless duty and management transfers between 2021-2022.

% of Choice Based Lettings (CBL) and Direct Lets (DL) 2021/22

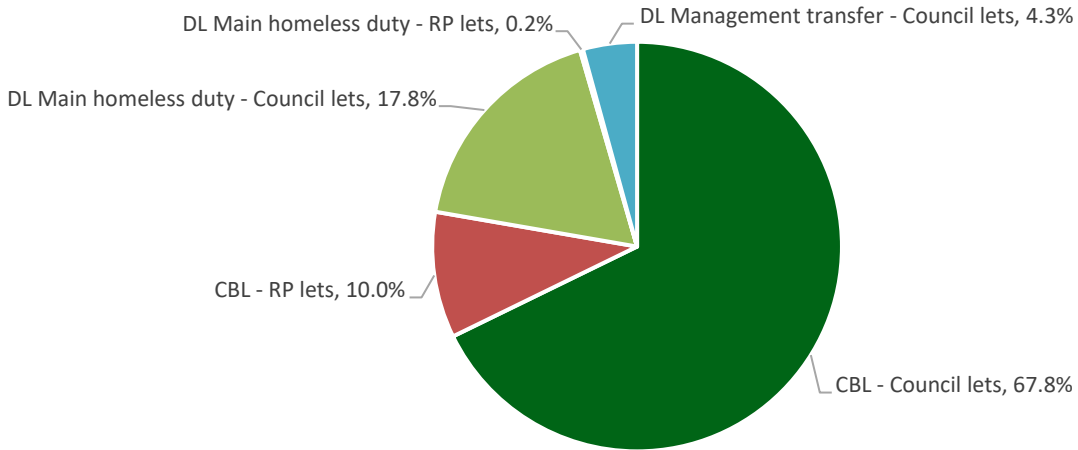


Fig.3

The majority of lettings were Council properties via choice-based lettings (67.8%) and Council properties that were direct lets to main homeless duty households (17.8%). Choice-based lettings of RP properties accounted for 10% of all lettings. Management transfers only accounted for 4.3% and less than 1% were direct lets of RP accommodation to homeless households.

Properties let to residents of the District and other local authorities

This chart shows the percentage of Band A-C applicants, main homeless duty households and SWL applicants that were habitually resident in the District before being allocated a property and those who were previously resident in other local authority areas.

% of lettings from in district and out of district applicants 2021/22

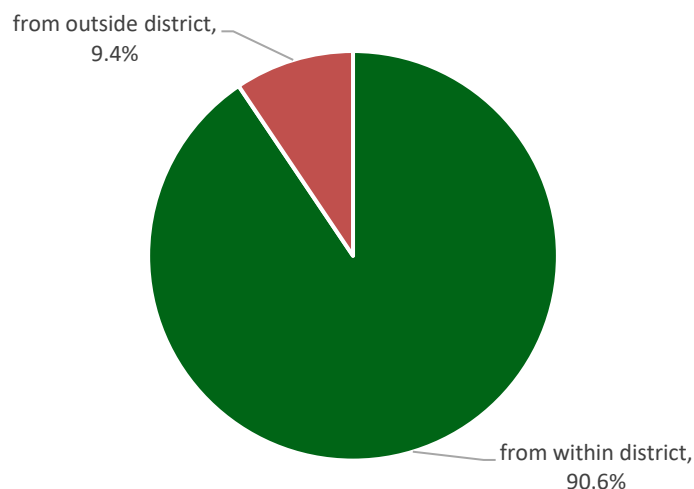


Fig.4

The majority of properties were let to existing residents of the District (90.5%).

Percentage of re-lets, new-build and acquired properties let

This chart compares the letting of new build Council and RP properties with the re-letting of existing Council and RP properties between 2021-2022.

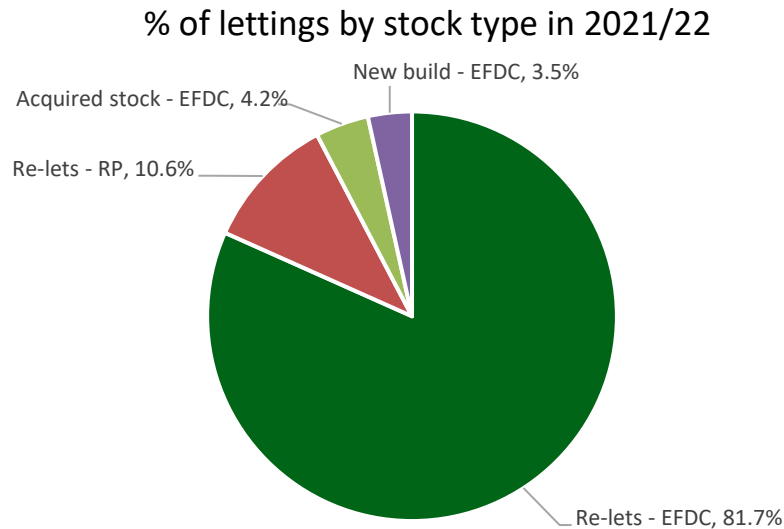


Fig.5

The vast majority of lettings between 2021-2022 were to existing Council properties that had become vacant (81.7%) followed by relets to RP stock (10.6%) Acquired and new-build Council housing accounted for the remainder (4.2% and 3.5% respectively).

Properties let by rent type

This chart shows the percentage of properties that were let at social rent levels compared to affordable rent between 2021-2022.

% of lettings at social rent and affordable rent 2021/22

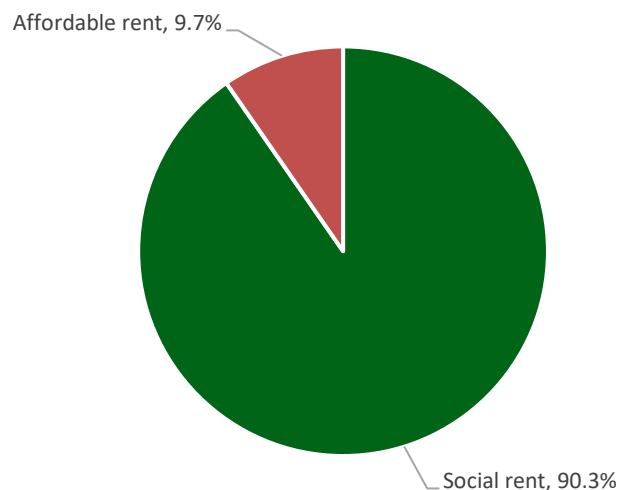


Fig.6

Over 90% of properties were let at social rent and just under 10% were let at affordable rent between 2021-2022.

The following chart provides a further breakdown of lettings for affordable rent and social rent by landlord and applicant need between 2021-2022.

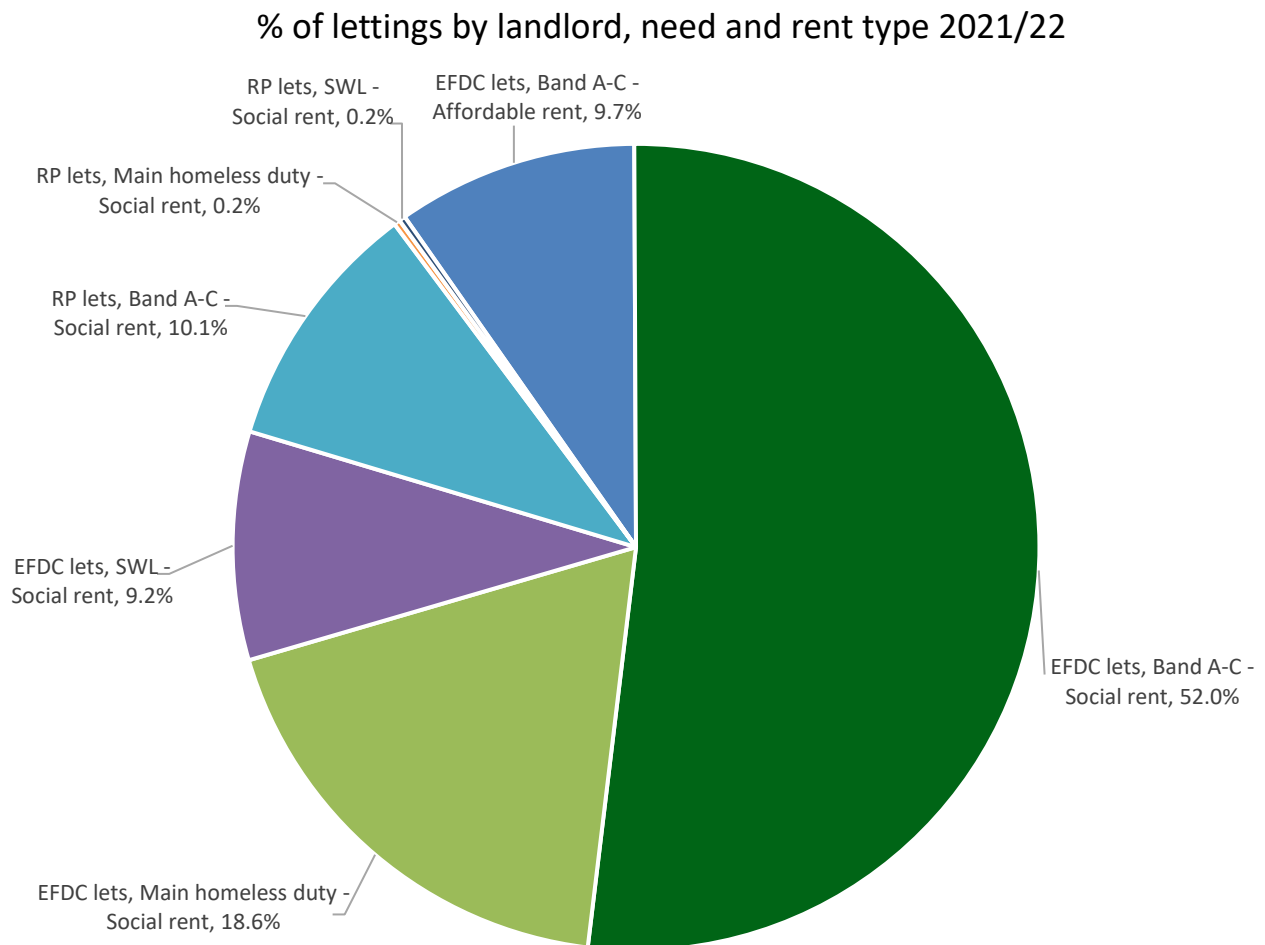


Fig.7

Over half of all lets (52%) were of Council properties made to applicants in and A-C via choice-based lettings at social rent. Just under 20% of Council properties were let directly to main homeless duty households at social rent.

Only 10.1% of properties let were RP properties let to Band A-C applicants via choice-based lettings. All of the Council owned properties that were let at affordable rent were allocated to applicants in Band A-C.

Properties let by dwelling type

This chart shows the number of lettings by property type i.e. flat, house, maisonette, bungalow and sheltered accommodation to Band A-C applicants, main homeless duty households and SWL applicants between 2021-2022.

Number of lets by property type in 2021/22

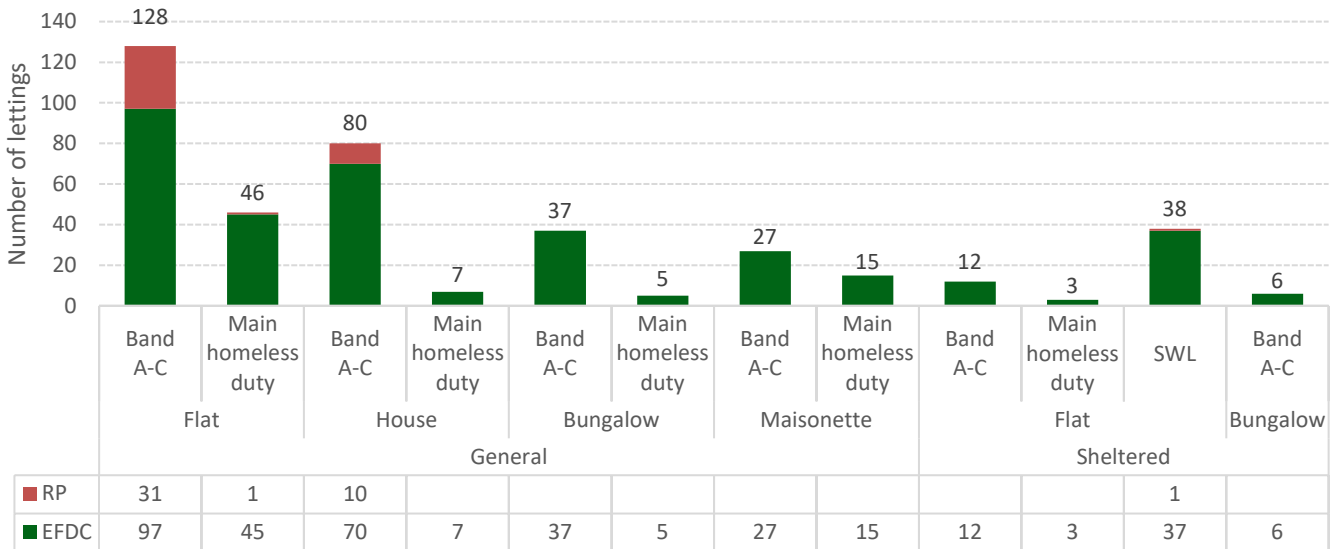


Fig.8

More Band A-C applicants and main homeless duty households were allocated flats than houses, and a far greater proportion of houses were allocated to Band A-C applicants (80) than to main homeless duty households (7). All sheltered housing lettings to the supplementary waiting list applicants (38) were to flats. All vacant sheltered housing bungalows were let to Band A-C applicants (6).

Properties let by bed size

This chart shows the number of properties that were let by bed size to Band A-C applicants, main homeless duty households and SWL applicants between 2021-2022.

Number of lettings by bed size 2021/22

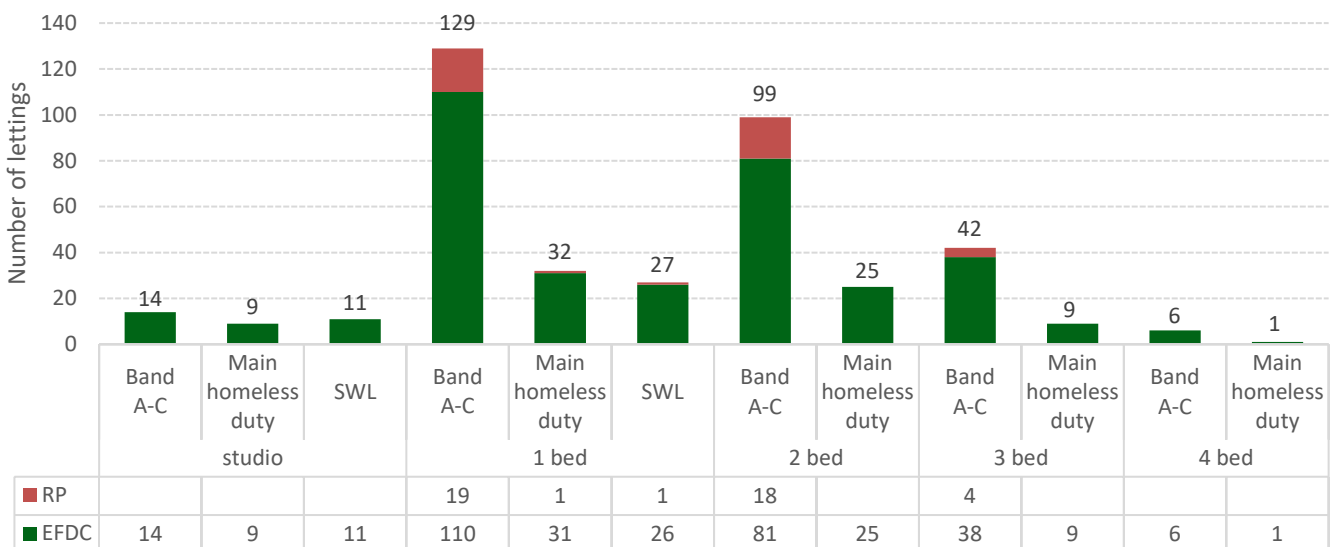


Fig.9

The majority of lettings in 2021/22 were for 1 bed properties. These generally saw the highest turnover of occupants and therefore become vacant more frequently than family sized homes.

Properties let by age group of main applicant

This chart shows the percentage of properties that were let by age group for Bands A-C applicants, main homeless duty households and SWL applicants between 2021-2022.

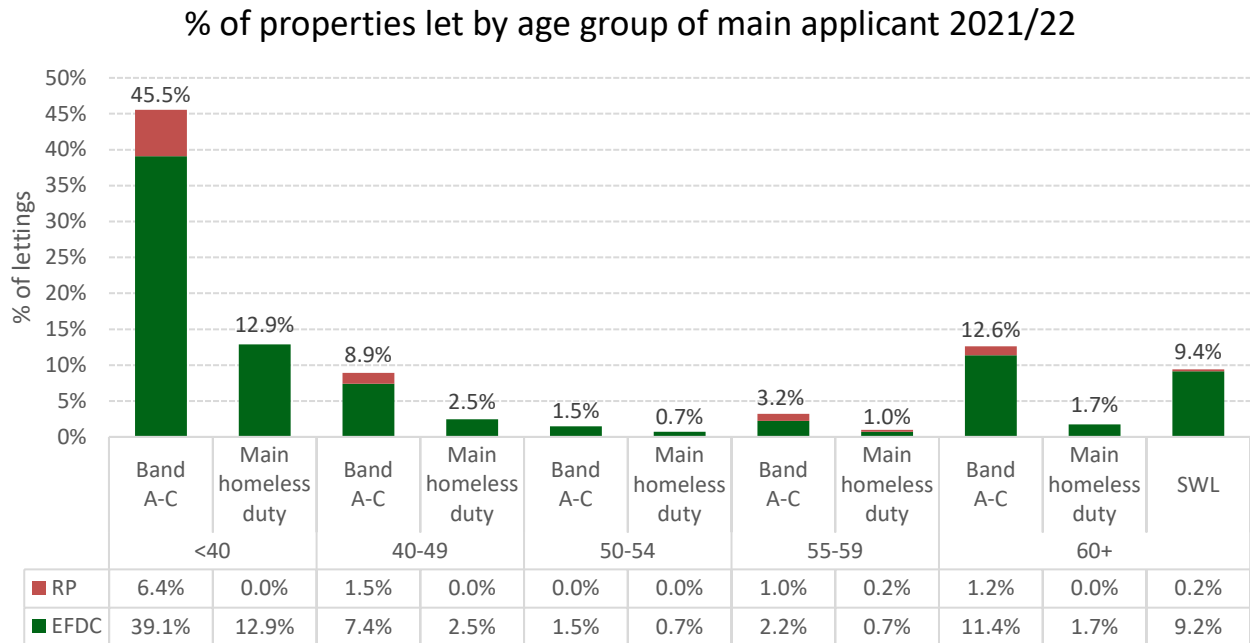


Fig.10

The majority of lettings were made to main applicants in Bands A-C under the age of 40 (45.5%), followed by main homeless duty households with main applicants under the age of 40 (12.9%) and in Bands A-C over the age of 60 (12.6%).

Less than 1% of lettings were made to main homeless duty households where main applicants were in the age groups 50-54 or 55-59 respectively.

Applicants with disability access and adjustment needs

This chart shows the number of lettings that were made in 2021/22 to applicants with an identified need for a specific property type or adaptation due to disability or restricted mobility, and the number of applicants with equivalent needs waiting on the housing register as at 31 March 2022.

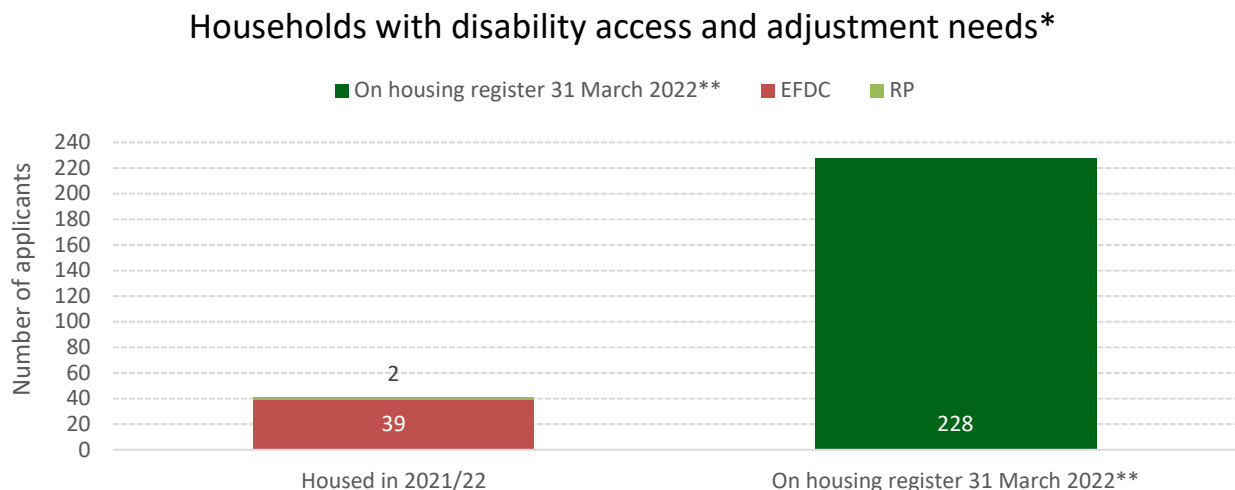


Fig.11

*This chart relates to all applicants who have identified a household member with permanent or long-term disability and requires a particular property type or adaptation. It includes but is not limited to those with supporting occupational health or medical evidence.

** Including 41 households with a member who uses a wheelchair some or all of the time.

Ethnic profile of households who moved in 2021/22

This chart shows the breakdown of lettings between 2021-2022 by the applicant's stated ethnic group compared to the ethnic profile of the District's residents as recorded in the National Census of 2011.

% of lettings in 2021/22 by applicant's stated ethnic group compared with the Epping Forest District population (as at Census 2011)

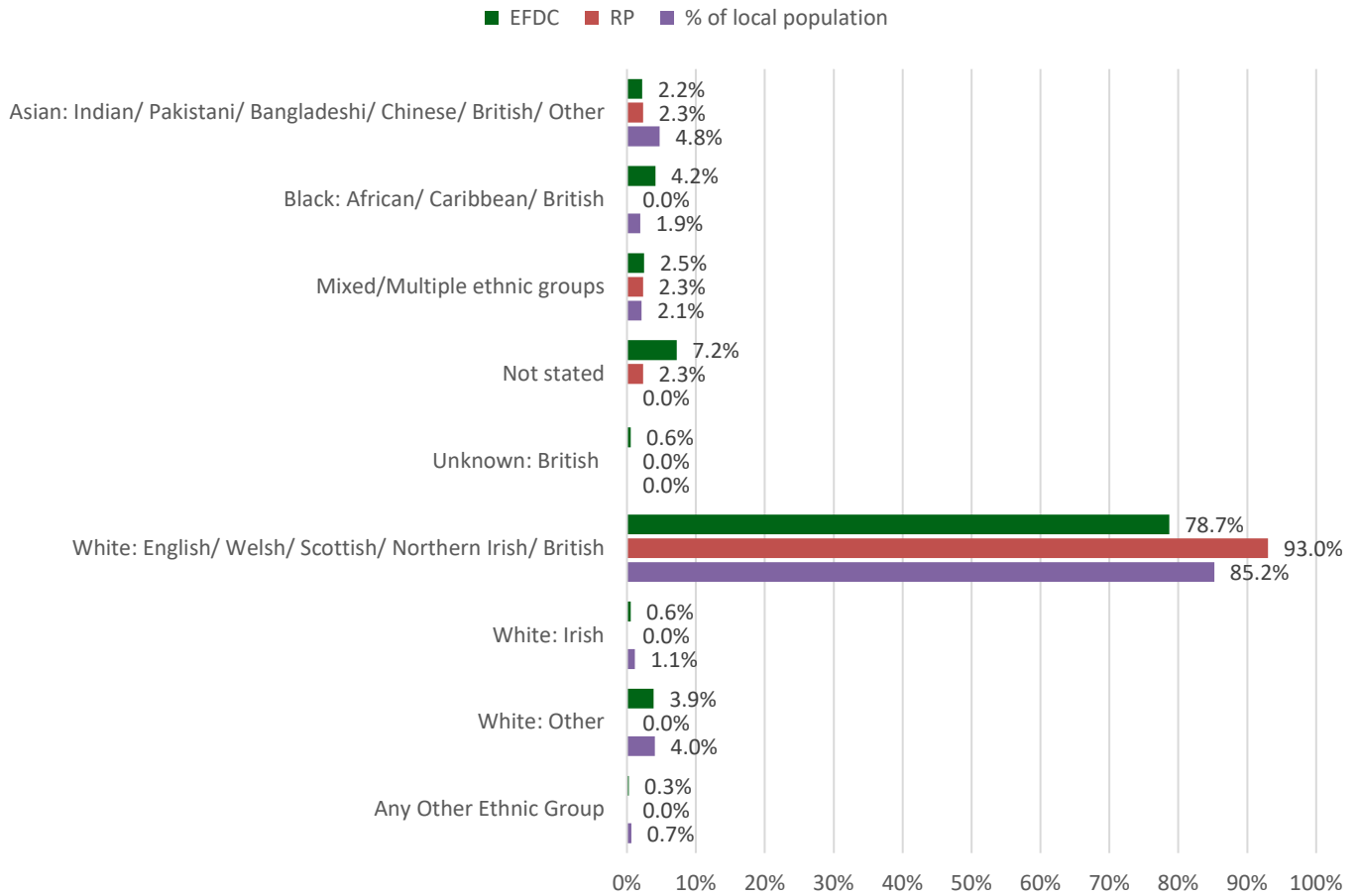


Fig.12

The ethnic profiling data comparison may not be robust enough to draw firm conclusions as the comparison is between current information for people who moved in 2021-2022 with National Census statistics for the general population of EFDC that was gathered in 2011.

More meaningful analysis can be undertaken once the 2021 Census data is published in full.

WAITING TIMES

The following charts show the length time applicants waited who were offered and accepted a property between 2021-2022. Waiting times are typically affected by the size and type of property needed, the applicant's priority banding and bidding history (if applicable) and whether they were maintaining their rent account and conditions of tenancy satisfactorily.

Waiting time for Band A applicants housed between 2021-2022

This chart shows the length of time that Band A applicants waited before being housed.

Waiting times for Band A applicants in 2021/22

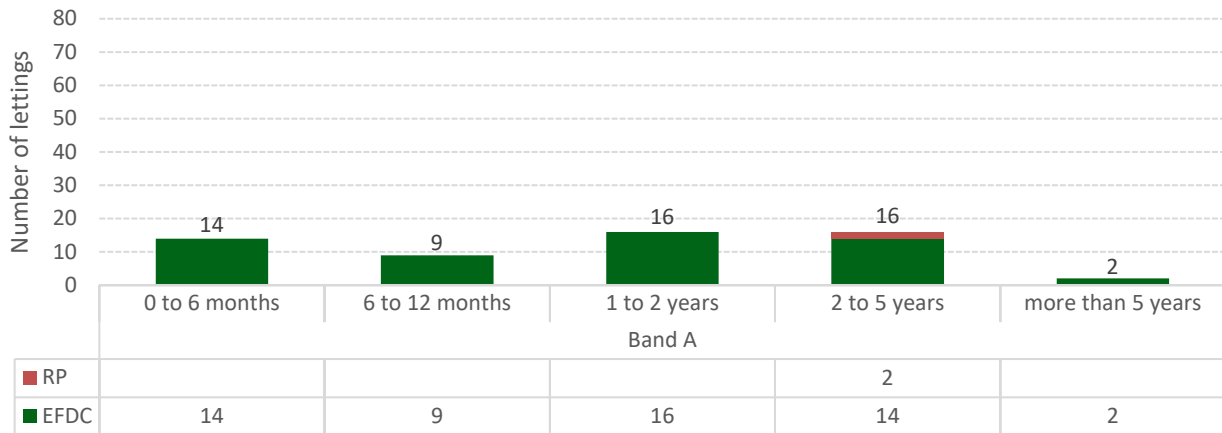


Fig.13

The waiting time for Band A applicants housed in 2021/22 varied quite considerably between less than six months to nearly five years. This would have been affected by the size and type of property needed and whether they had urgent need to move or were choosing to downsize.

Waiting time for Band B applicants housed between 2021-2022

This chart shows the length of time that Band B applicants waited before being housed.

Waiting times for Band B applicants in 2021/22

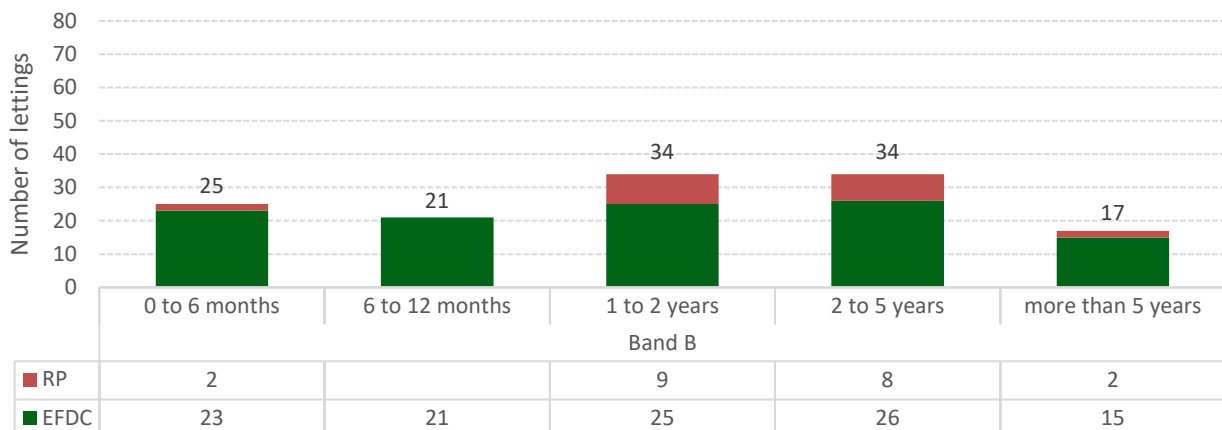


Fig.14

Band B applicants most commonly waited between 1 to 2 years and 2 to 5 years. As with Band A there is a fairly even distribution of applicants who waited anything from less than six months to more than five years. Typically Band B applicants require the widest range of property types, which due to availability can affect their waiting time.

Waiting time for Band C applicants housed between 2021-2022

This chart shows the length of time Band C applicants waited before being housed.

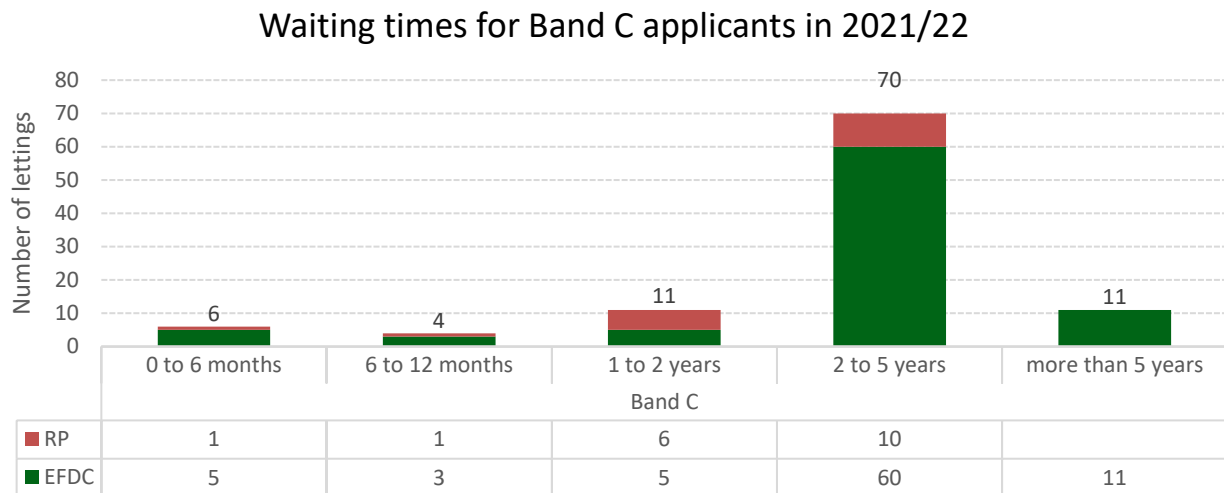


Fig.15

Band C applicants most commonly waited between 2 to 5 years to move. Band C is the lowest priority Band and has the highest number of applicants.

Waiting time for main homeless duty households housed between 2021-2022

The waiting time for main homeless duty households is taken from the date that the Council accepted a main housing duty towards that household, regardless of when a household approached the Council for assistance or the date they may have been placed in temporary accommodation.

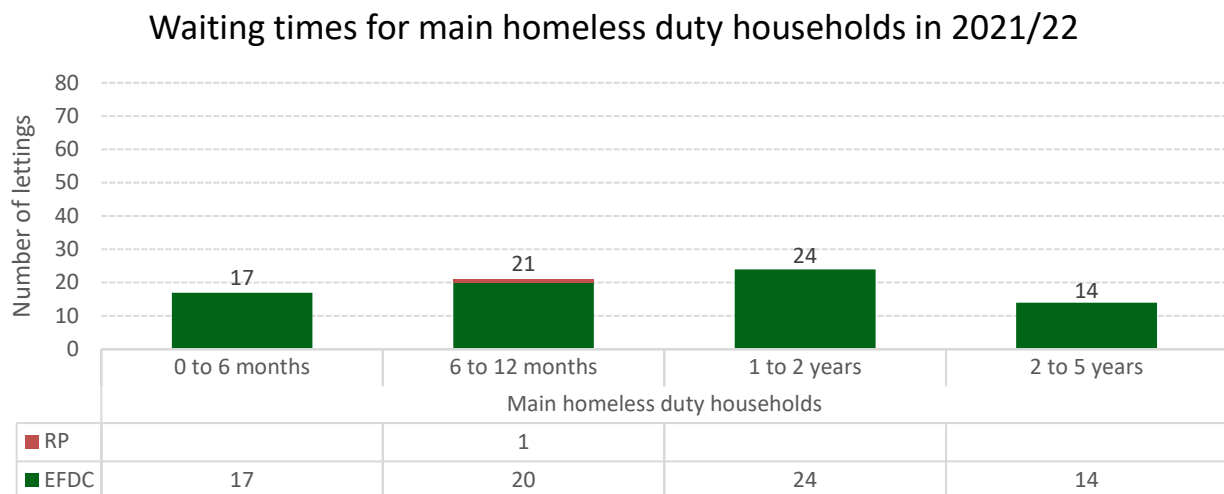


Fig.16

Main homeless duty households most commonly waited between 1 to 2 years for their direct offer of suitable settled accommodation depending on the size and type of property they needed.

Waiting time for supplementary waiting list applicants housed between 2021-2022

This chart shows the length of time applicants on the supplementary waiting list waited before being housed.

Waiting times for SWL applicants in 2021/22



Fig.17

Applicants for sheltered housing on the SWL most commonly waited 0 to 6 months to receive an offer. The relatively short waiting time was due to the low demand for sheltered housing from other applicants who qualified to join the housing register.

THE HOUSING REGISTER

Applicants on the housing register between 2017/18 and 2021/22

This table shows a snapshot of the number of applicants on the housing register on the 31 March every year from 2018 to 2022. It does not include the supplementary waiting list for sheltered housing as those applicants fall outside of the qualifying criteria for the housing register.

Year	Total Active Applicants
31 March 2022	1,308
31 March 2021	1,355
31 March 2020	1,291
31 March 2019	1,494
31 March 2018	1,376

Fig.18

The snapshot of the 1,308 of applicants on the Housing Register on 31 March 2022 reduced by 47 compared to 1,355 on 31 March 2021. This can be attributed to effective management of the waiting list.

Applicants waiting to move by Band and bed size

This chart shows the number of applicants waiting to move on 31 March 2022 by priority Band and bed size

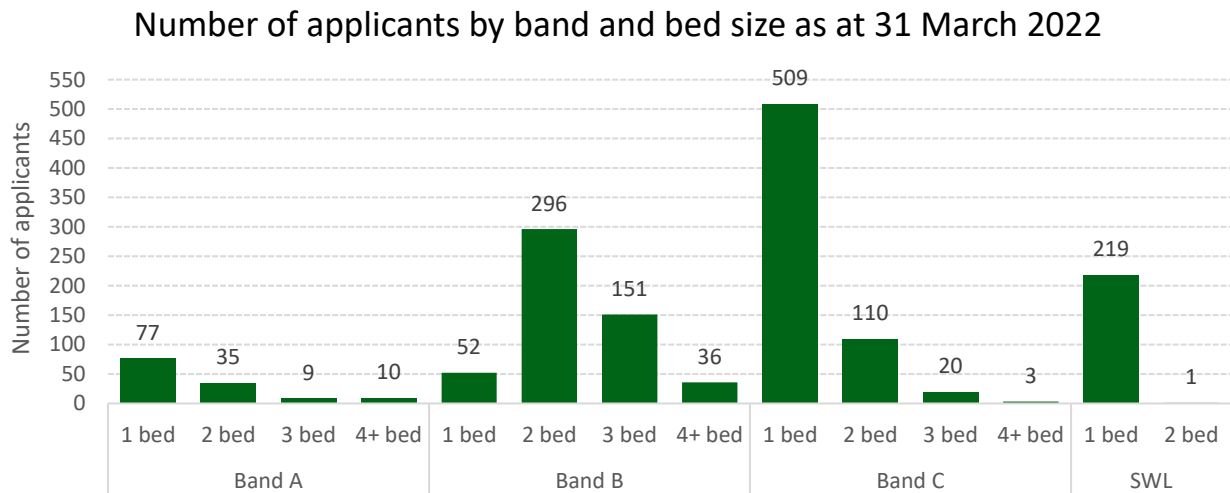


Fig. 19

There were 131 applicants in Band A, 535 applicants in Band B and 642 applicants in Band C. An additional 220 applicants were on the supplementary waiting list (SWL).

The demand from Band A and Band C applicants was mainly for 1 bed properties. The demand from Band B applicants was mainly for 2-bed family sized accommodation.

Members of the Armed Forces waiting to move

Members of the Armed Forces and former members of the Armed Forces, or their bereaved partners are given specific consideration and priority is awarded based on their circumstances in relation to their service.

This chart shows the number of members of the armed forces or their bereaved partners that were housed between 2021-22 and on the housing register on 31 March 2022.

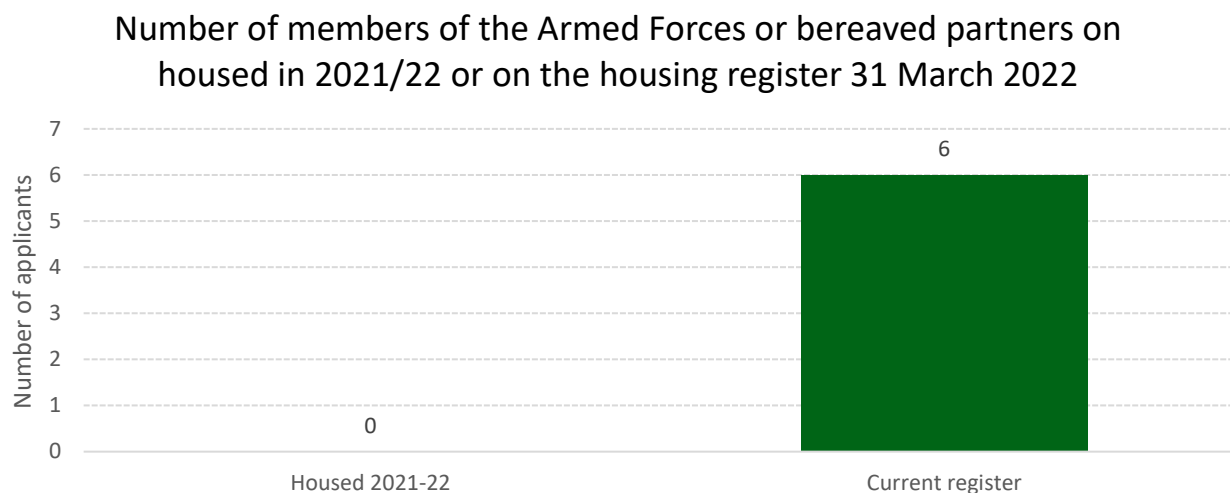


Fig.20

No lettings were made to applicants in this category during 2021-2022. A total of six applicants were in Band C on the housing register on 31 March 2022.

Main housing duty (main homeless duty) households waiting to move

The chart below gives a snapshot as at 31 March 2022 of the number of main homeless duty households waiting to move, by the size of property that they required.

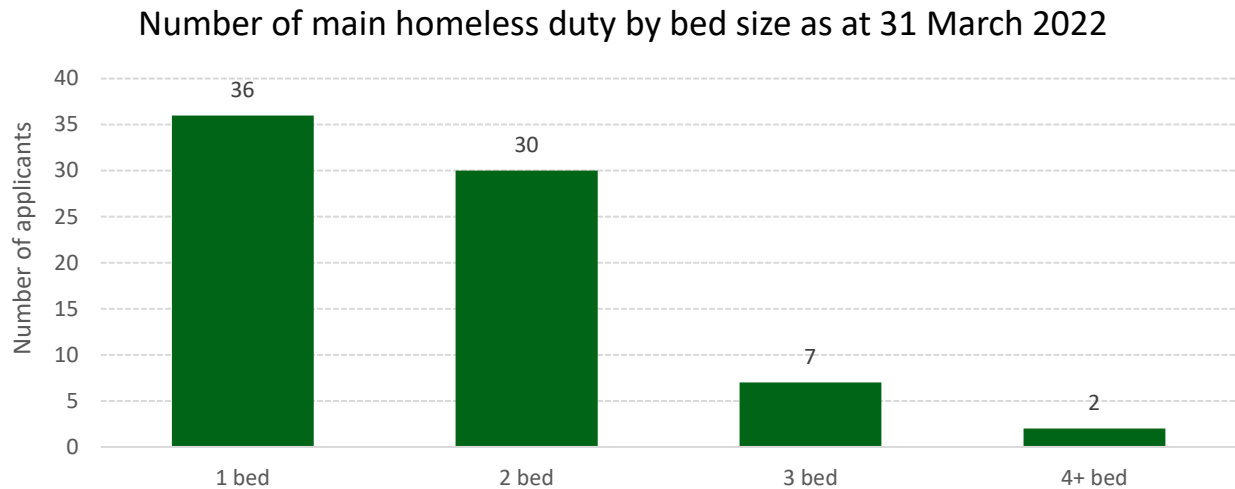


Fig.21

The highest demand was for 1-bed properties required for 36 main homeless duty households, closely followed by 30 main homeless duty households needing 2-bed family sized homes. Although the demand for seven 3-bed properties and two 4+bed properties was significantly lower these larger family sized homes are in shortest supply.

OTHER INFORMATION

The following information reflects tenant mobility and lettings outside of the Housing Allocations Scheme including mutual exchanges, management transfers and Right to Buy sales.

Number of mutual exchanges by year between 2017/18 and 2021/22

This table shows the number of mutual exchanges that took place each year between 2017/18 and 2021/22.

Year	Total	Intra - district	Inter - district
2021/22	82	64	18
2020/21	69	59	10
2019/20	74	63	11
2018/19	96	82	14
2017/18	92	82	10

Fig.22

Of the 82 mutual exchanges that took place between 2021-2022 most (64) were between tenants who both or all lived in the District. Although there was a slight increase in inter-district mutual exchanges compared to the last few years.

Number of management transfers between 2021-2022

This chart shows the number of management transfers that the Council made by bed size between 2021-2022.

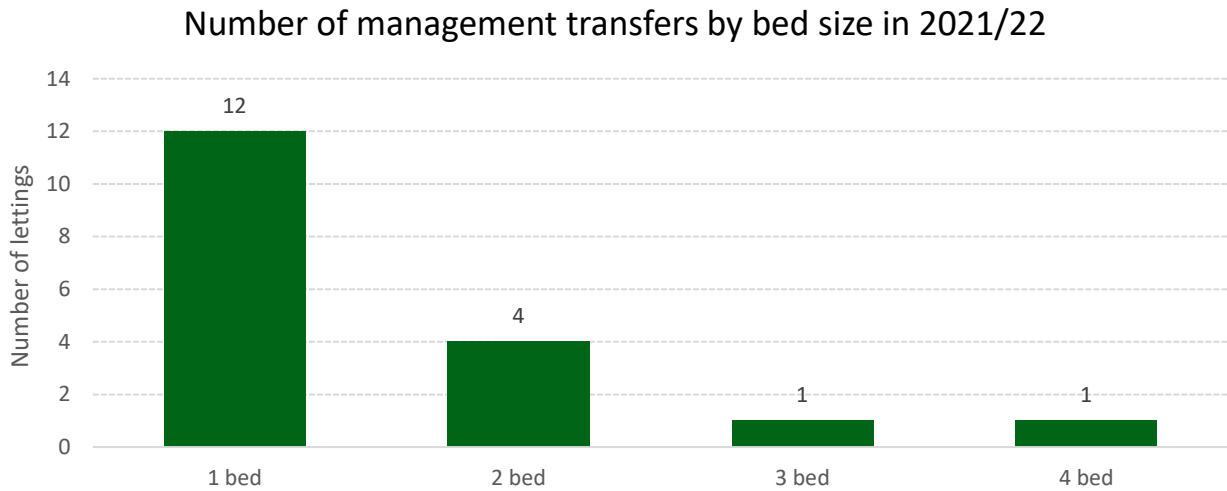


Fig.23

There were 18 management transfers between 2021-2022. The vast majority were into one-bedroom properties (12).

The following chart shows the percentage of management transfers by age-group of the lead tenant that were arranged in 2021-22.

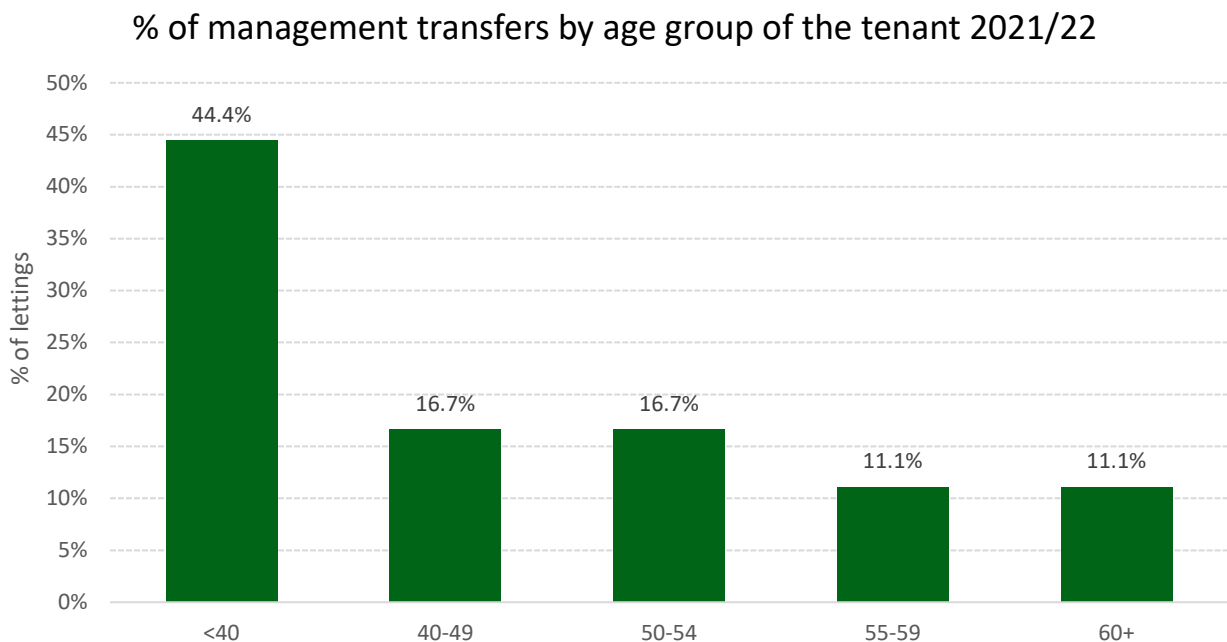


Fig.24

Most households who moved via management transfer had a lead tenant under 40 years old, with a fairly even split across the other age groups.

Management transfers required by bed size

The chart below shows the number of management transfer households waiting to move as at 31 March 2022. Typically management transfers are to properties with the same number of bedrooms as the tenant's existing property.



Fig.25

Of the 14 households that the Council had identified as needing a management transfer on 31 March 2022, ten households required a 1-bedroom property and two households required a 2-bed property. Although only one 3-bed and one 4+ bed properties were required, these are in the shortest supply.

Number of Right to Buy sales by year between 2017/18 and 2021/22

This chart shows the number of Right to Buy sales that have taken place over the last 5 years.

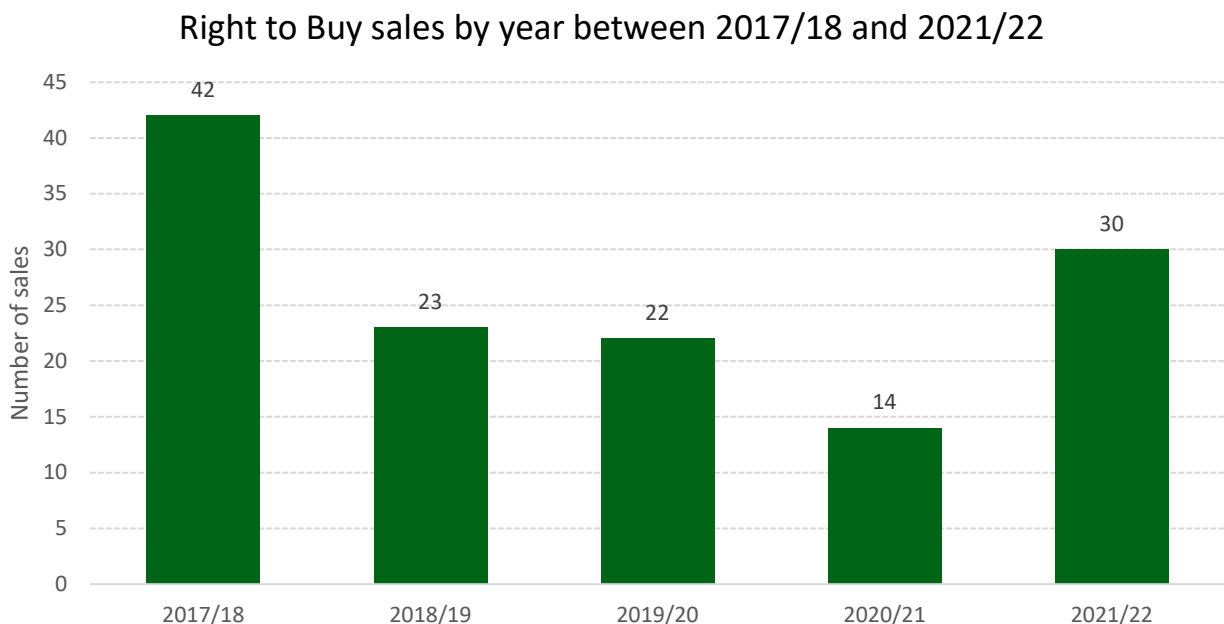


Fig. 26

The number of sales decreased each year from a high of 42 in 2017-18 to a low of 14 in 2020-2021. However the following year (2021-2022) sales more than doubled to 30. This was largely attributed to the temporary easing of stamp duty obligations to stimulate the housing market for first time buyers.

Further details on the [allocation of social housing](#) in the District can be found on the Councils website www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk

If you have any questions or require this information in a more accessible format please contact:

housingstrategy@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Charlotte Wright / Janice Nuth
Communities and Wellbeing
Epping Forest District Council Civic Offices
High Street
Epping
Essex
CM16 4BZ

www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk

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