

ANNUAL MONITORING REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S ALLOCATIONS SCHEME 2021/2022

1. Introduction

The Council's statutory allocations policy is reviewed, and the review published annually. The review considers the impact and effectiveness of the policy and assesses it against the strategic objectives of the council, to highlight whether any changes should be considered.

The Council's current scheme of allocations was approved by Cabinet in December 2014 and implemented fully by October 2015.

The key objectives of the allocations policy are to:

- Help applicants in housing need find suitable housing.
- Give priority to those applicants in urgent housing need
- Create a simple system to use.
- Respond to the housing needs of local people.
- Make efficient and best use of social housing stock in the area,
- Encourage and assist applicants to take an informed, measured and long term view on their housing options

The annual review also helps the Council understand in more depth the nature and extent of housing need for affordable housing (particularly for rent) in the borough.

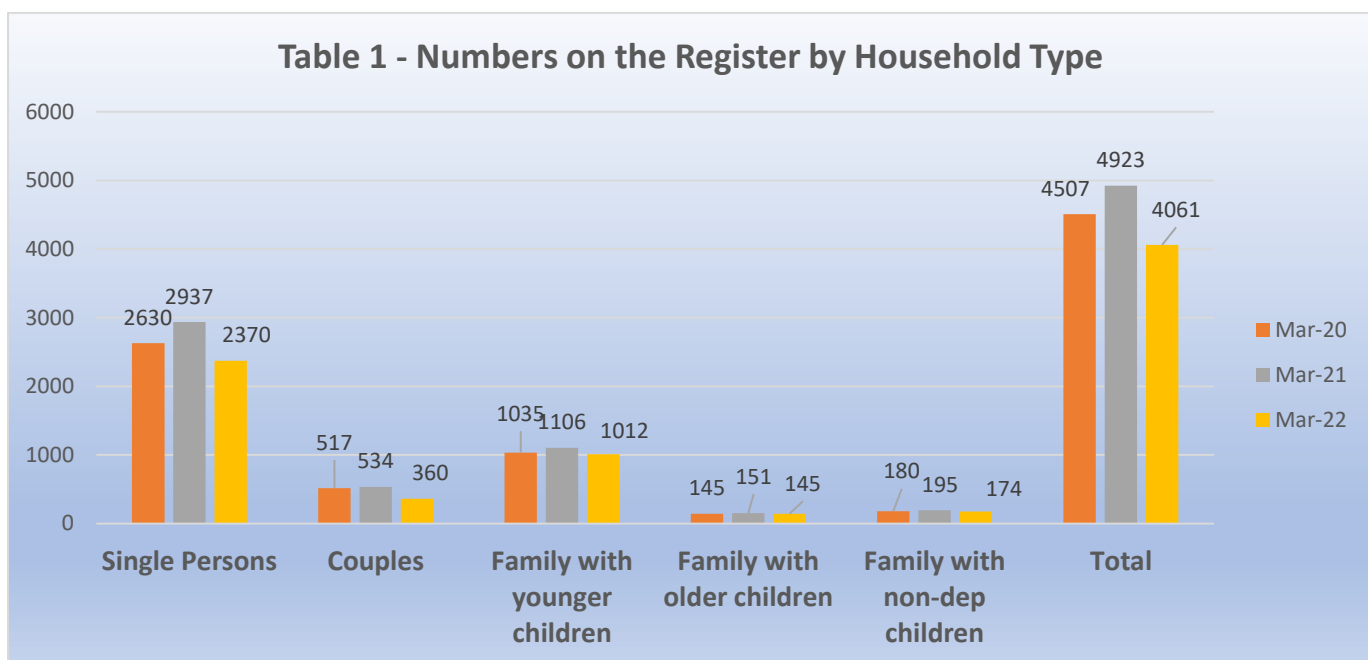
2. Key information

2.1. Who is on the housing register, and how many households are waiting?

As of 31 March 2022, there were 4061 households on the housing register, made up of the following households:

Table 1 (i) – Households on the Housing Register

Totals on register	Band 1	Band 2	Band 3	Total	Total %
Single persons	75	2237	58	2370	58%
Couples	13	344	3	360	9%
Family with younger children	18	988	6	1012	25%
Family with older children	4	140	1	145	4%
Family with non-dependent children	9	165	0	174	4%
				4061	



Active Housing Need

Following the completion of a comprehensive review of applications on the housing register during 2020/21, the number of households on the housing register as at March 2022 had decreased by 17.5%. During the renewals process 2011 applications were cancelled as applicants did not renew their application, of whom 38% had never logged onto Homebid.

A monthly rolling review programme (where applicants are required to renew their application on an annual basis) has now been re-instated.

There are 1089 (27%) applicants on the housing register who have yet to place a bid on a property. 420 applicants (10% of the housing register) have never logged onto Basingstoke Homebid. These figures have reduced from 1553 (32%) and 916(19%) respectively, which indicates that applicants who previously have not logged on or placed a bid have not renewed their housing application.

Table 2 – Year on Year Housing register totals

Year End	Total numbers	% increase from previous year
2021/22	4061	17.5% decrease
2020/21	4923	9%
2019/20	4507	6%
2018/19	4251	16%
2017/18	3675	21%
2016/17	3037	N/A

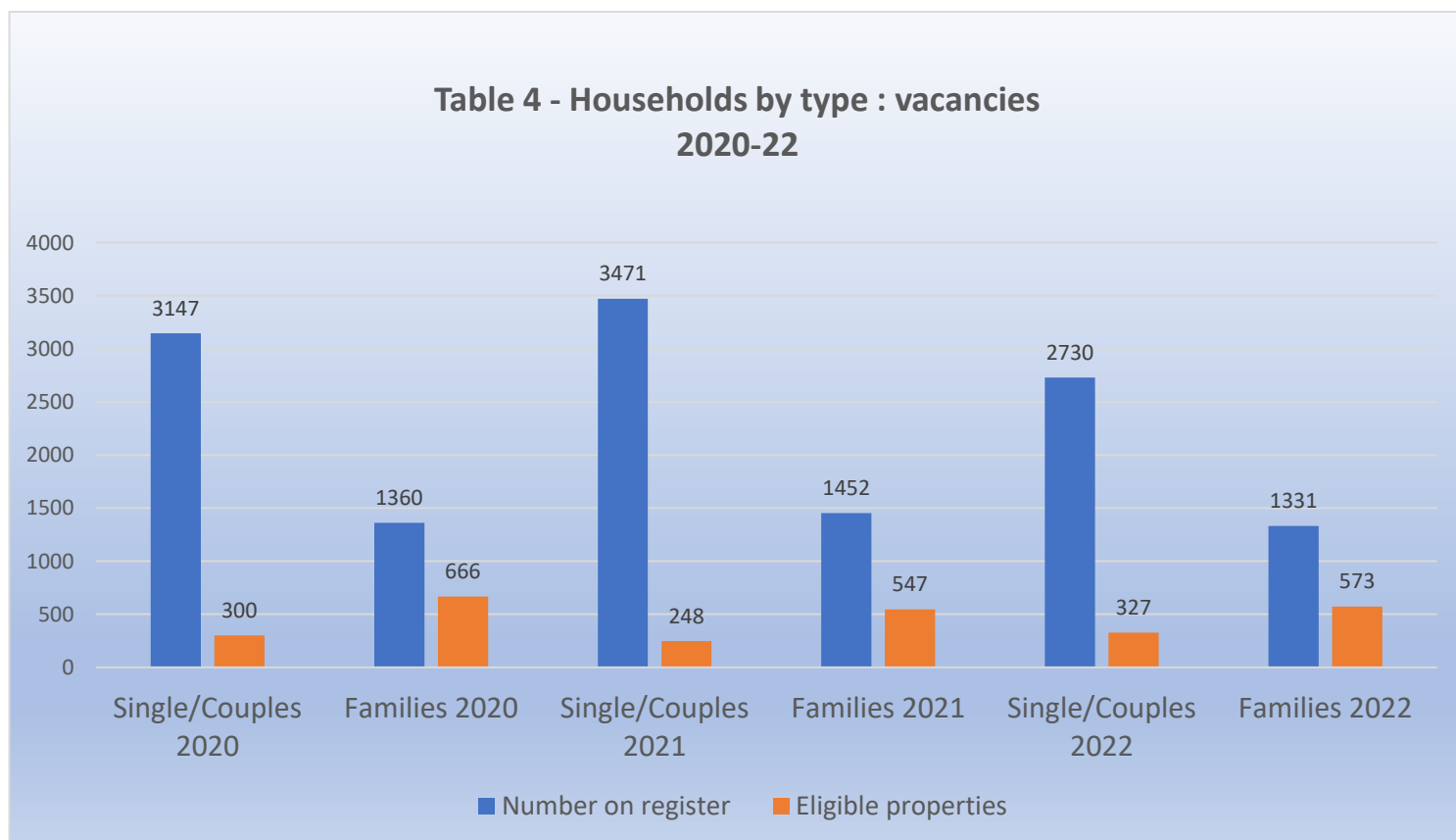
The largest group of households on the housing register remains single applicants, comprising 58% of all household types.

Nearly two thirds (60%) of all general needs (non-transfer) single applicants on the housing register are aged under 35. This is reduction of 6% from the previous year. This is likely to be due to the more transitory nature of younger single people (as opposed to more families, who tend to be more settled), and the impact of the rolled-out review referred to in 2.1 above.

Table 3 – Age ranges of single person households on the housing register

	General Needs	Transfers	Totals
16-19	239		239
20-24	545	7	552
25-34	606	33	639
35-54	418	76	494
55+	220	226	446
Totals	2028	342	2370

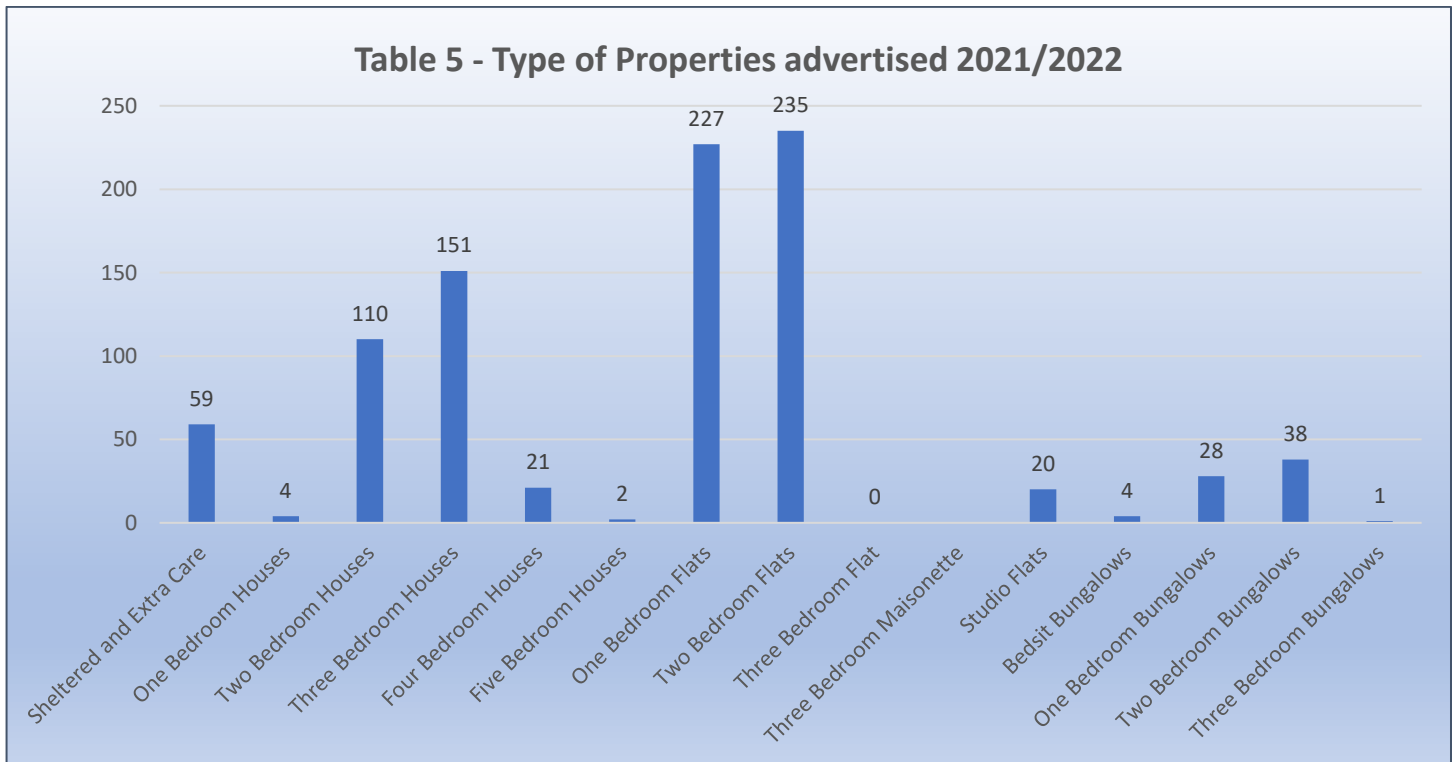
The number of single person/couple applications compared to properties becoming available continues to far outweigh supply to a significantly greater extent than for families. In 2021/22 the ratio of applicants to properties was 8:1, compared to 2:1 for families as demonstrated below:



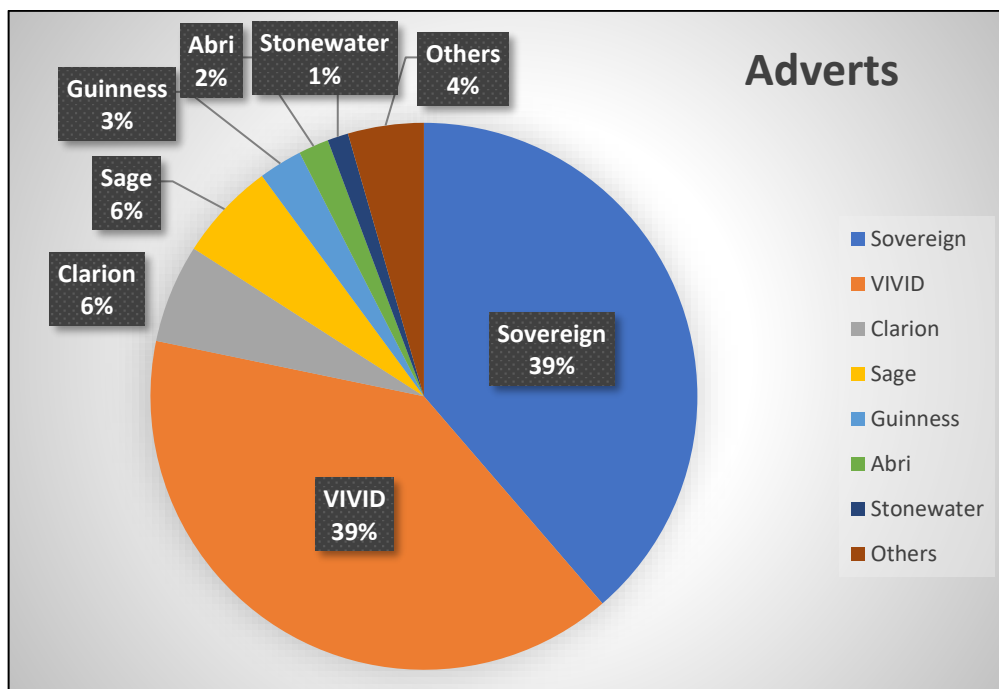
2.2. Properties Advertised 2021/22

A total of 900 properties were advertised as available for letting during the year. 288 of these properties were houses, and 482 were flats. Out of the 482 flats that were advertised nearly 40% (189) were either ground floor or had lift access.

The properties advertised for letting were as follows:



2.3. Which social housing landlords advertised properties in BDBC?

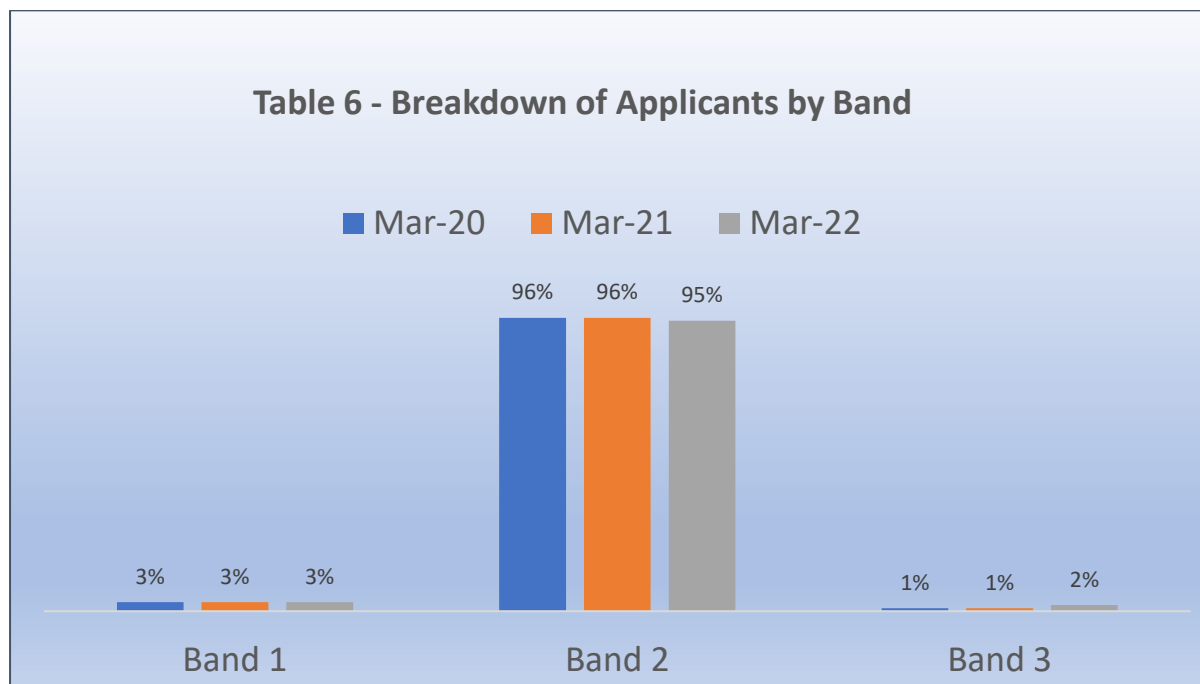


2.4. How are applications prioritised for vacancies?

To qualify to join the housing register, all applicants must have an assessed housing need.

Applicants are then categorised into three bands and prioritised according to the date of their application (i.e. how long they have been waiting)

The distribution of applicants by band has remained constant as demonstrated below



Band 1 Applicants:

Applicants in Band 1 are those with a critical / urgent need to move as well as transfer applicants under occupying a unit of social housing by two bedrooms or more.

Of the 119 applicants in Band 1, 111 (93%) are transfer applicants. Most of these transfer applicants are under occupying their current accommodation by two or more bedrooms. Households who are on the register for this reason tend to be more selective with the bids that they place, which is why only 8 households from this group bid successfully in the last year. 41 households in total in band 1 bid successfully in 2021/22 in total.

Band 2 Applicants:

The vast majority (95%) of all applicants are placed in Band 2.

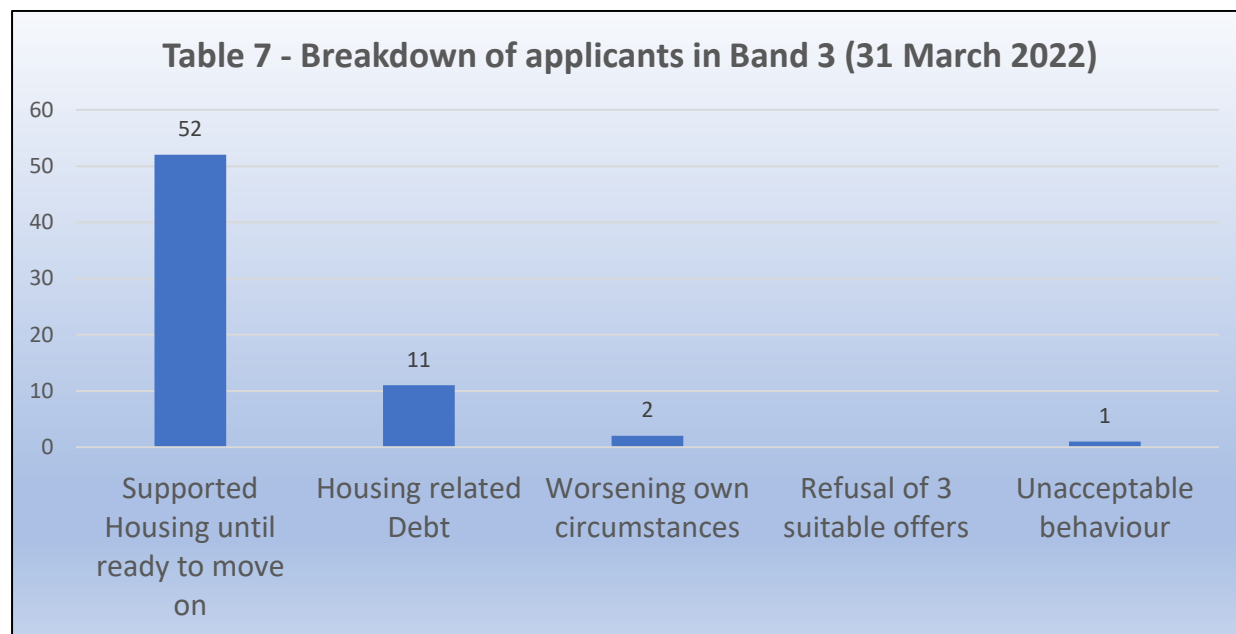
Band 3 Applicants:

Band 3 applicants are in housing need but have reduced priority for one or more of the following reasons:

- Having housing related debts or unacceptable behaviour
- Deliberately worsening their housing circumstances
- They have refused three reasonable offers

- They are in supported housing and not ready for a move to independent accommodation

At March 2022 there were 68 applicants in Band 3, equating to less than 2% of the total number of applicants on the housing register. Reasons for reduced priority were as follows.



It is still the case that no applicants have had their priority reduced due to refusing three suitable offers of accommodation.

All the applicants owing housing related debts are supported to arrange a payment plan and referred to appropriate support services to enable them to move into Band 2.

2.5. Ground floor and adapted priorities

The policy allows for priority for suitable properties to be prioritised for applicants who require specific accommodation to meet a medical need.

In 2021/22, 512 households (13%) on the housing register required either a ground floor or an adapted property. In the same period 272 properties were advertised granting priority to households who needed this specific type of accommodation. This equated to **32%** of the total properties advertised.

2.6. Addressing housing needs in the private rented sector

The allocations scheme enables applicants living in unsatisfactory private rented sector accommodation to move into settled social housing.

In 2021/22, 172 (22%) of all offers accepted were by applicants in this group. This is a slight increase from 2020/21 (20%).

2.6 Quotas

The council can choose to make a percentage of its annual lets available to certain groups i.e. transfer applicants (existing Housing Association tenants who are tenants in the borough.)

In 2021/22 no properties were made available exclusively for transfer applicants. The table below demonstrates that the percentage of lets made to transfer applicants and general needs applicants have generally remained consistent from year to year.

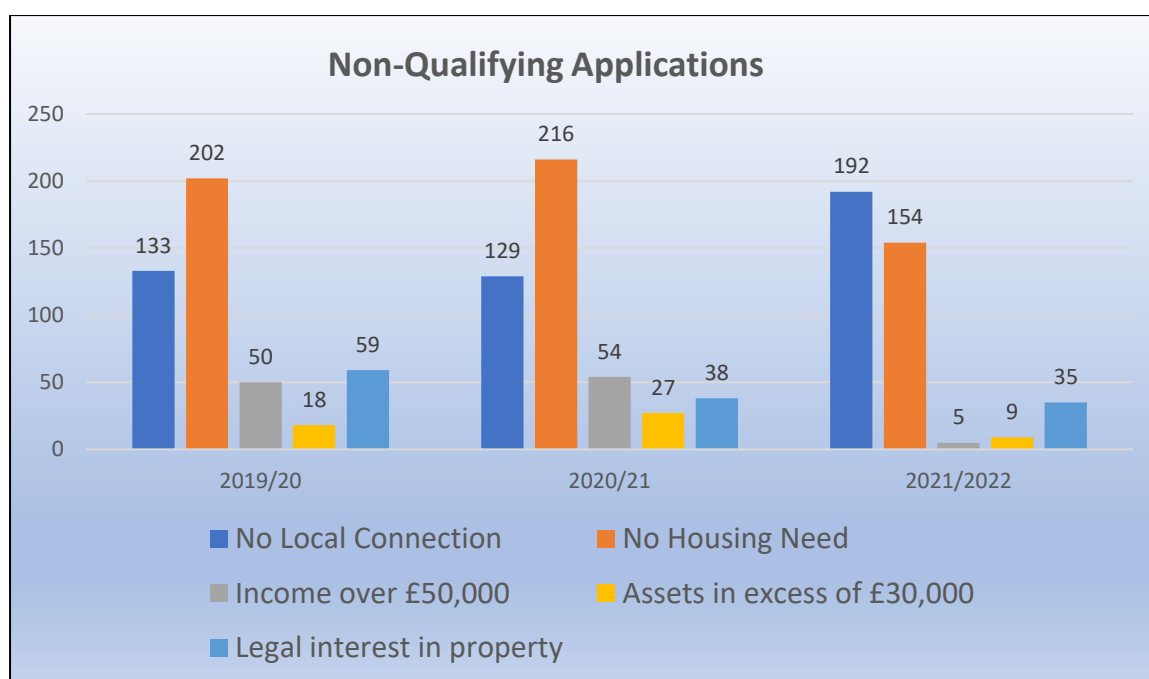
	General Needs	Transfer
2019/20	74%	26%
2020/21	72%	28%
2021/22	73%	27%

2.7. Who does not qualify for the housing register?

Applicants must fulfil the following criteria in order to qualify for inclusion on the register

- Have a housing need
- Have a local connection [see 2.7 below]
- Have a household income of less than £50,000 per annum
- Not have savings in excess of £30,000
- Not have any legal ownership of or interest in a property

The following tables shows the reasons why applications have been rejected.



The number of applications which were rejected because applicants did not meet the qualifying criteria has decreased by nearly 15% from the previous year.

2.8. Local connection

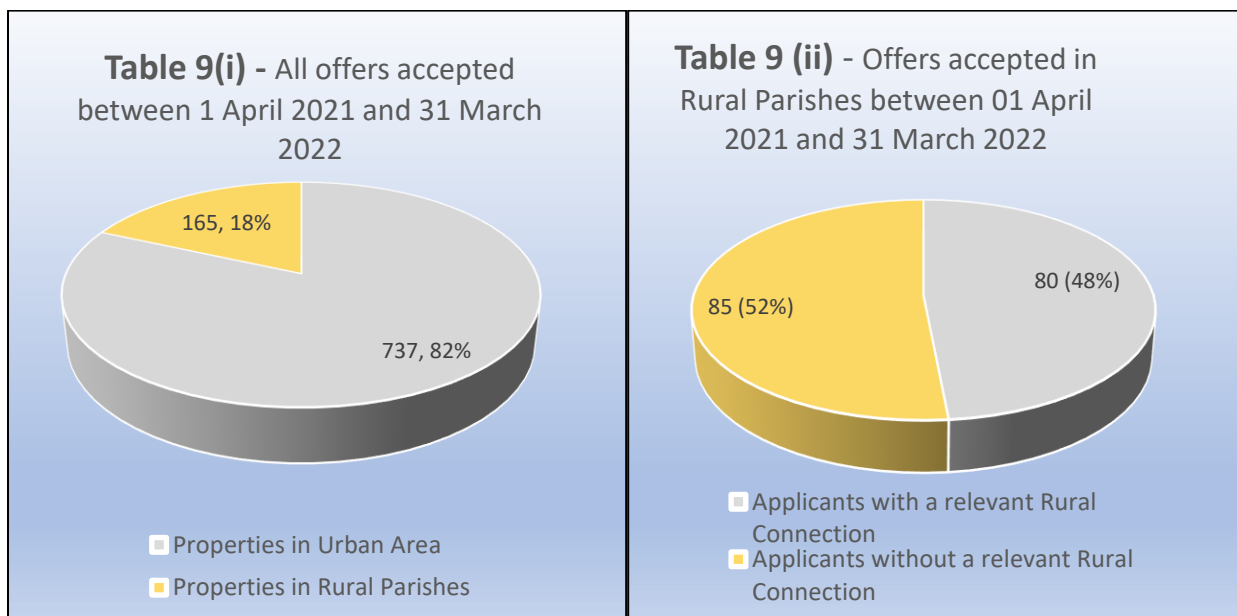
In order to join the housing register applicants, need to meet the local connection criteria. This means that all applicants applying to BDBC for social housing must be able to demonstrate a connection by way of residence, employment or the need to live in the borough to give or receive a substantial level of support **unless** they are armed forces applicants or applicants who are fleeing domestic abuse.

Of the 4061 households on the register, 32 applicants are not required to meet the local connection criteria, which includes 15 members of the armed forces. This continues to demonstrate a positive working application of the Council's commitment to support the Armed Forces community through its Armed Forces Community Covenant. <https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/armed-forces-community-covenant>

2.9. Rural / Parish Connections

The Allocations Scheme enables priority to be given to applicants with a local connection to rural areas outside of the urban areas of the town.

Information in tables 9 below demonstrate that the proportion of vacancies arising in rural areas, and the proportion of offers being accepted by applicants with a local connection to the relevant parish. There is, however, sufficient demand from the urban areas of the borough for vacancies that arise for which there is no demand (or bids) from people with rural connections.



During 2021/22, 18% of properties advertised for letting were in rural parishes, a decrease of 10% since last year. 48% of those properties were let to households with a local connection to the parish.

The primary reason that lettings went to households without a parish connection was that households with a local connection to the parish did not bid.

2.10. Type of tenancy offered

In 2021/22, nearly 80% of all vacancies were advertised by either Sovereign or Vivid housing associations, the remainder being through other registered providers

Housing Associations can offer a variety of tenures. The type of tenancy is displayed on the property advert to allow applicants to make an informed decision when placing bids. Properties can be offered as:

Social Rent – Rents set at approximately 40% of market rent and usually let on an assured tenancy (usually following a 1-year probationary tenancy) **or**

Affordable Rent – Rents set at up to 80% of the rent achievable for a similar property on the open market, but should not exceed the Local Housing Allowance rates

Fixed Term – Tenancies let on an assured shorthold tenancy (AST) and offered for a fixed period (usually 5 years). After the fixed term has expired, the housing association will review the tenant's circumstances.

Of the 900 properties advertised in 2021/22:

- **66%** (590) were advertised at social rent levels
- **34%** (310) were advertised at affordable rent levels

The significant proportion of properties being advertised at social rent is to be welcomed as social rent properties are more affordable to households on low incomes.

Both Sovereign and Vivid reported a high volume of applications for mutual exchanges in 2021/22. A total of 201 mutual exchanges were completed in the borough for 2021/22, which means that at least 400+ households secured alternative accommodation of their own choosing.

When combined with the 900 properties that advertised as becoming available for letting (of which 153 properties were new homes) at least 1300+ households secured social housing of their choosing in the borough in 2021/22.

2.11. How long will I have to wait for accommodation?

Across the borough, the demand for accommodation outweighs supply.

The length of time an applicant waits for accommodation will depend on:

- the size and type of accommodation they require
- the location to which they wish to move
- the number of vacancies becoming available
- whether or not they choose to exercise their bid for advertised vacancies

As a general overview, the average wait for properties by size and type has tended to be as follows:

Table 10 (i) – waiting time for Band 1 Applicants by property types:

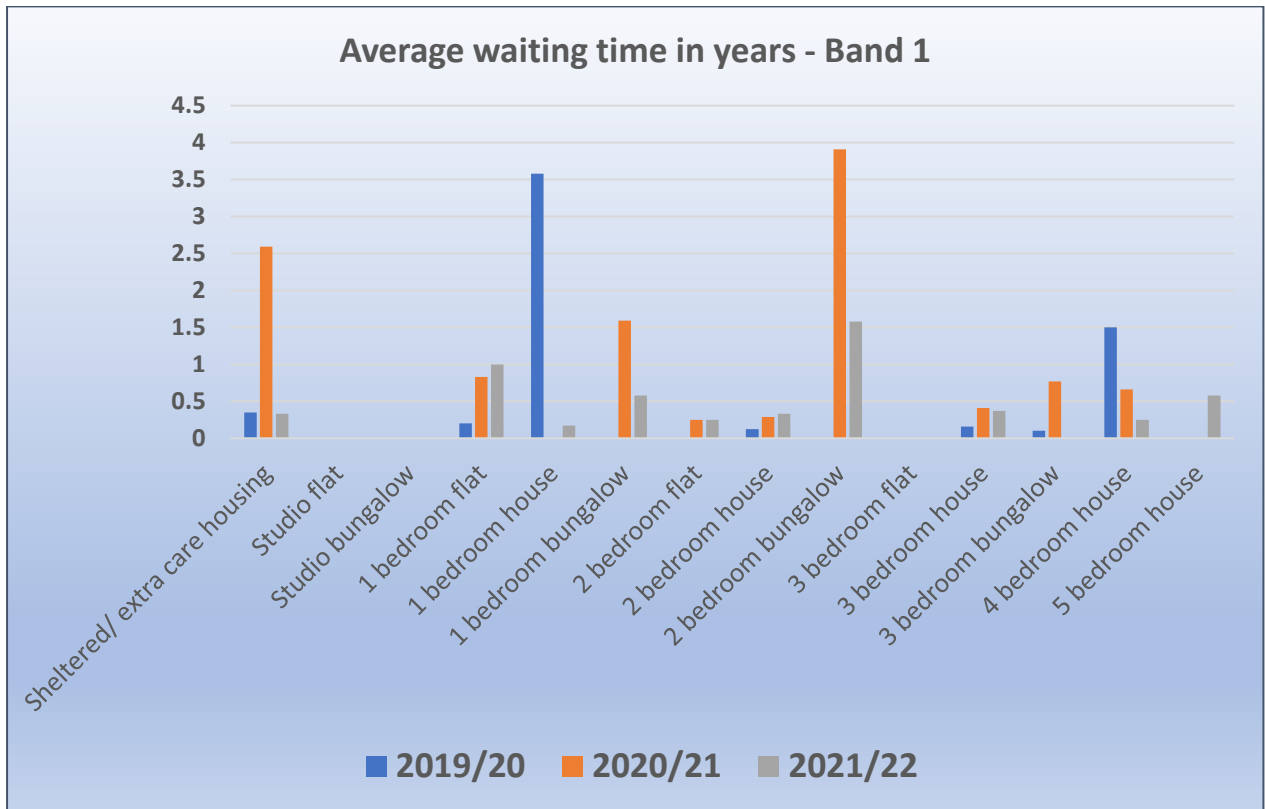


Table 10 (ii) – waiting time Band 2 Applicants by property types:

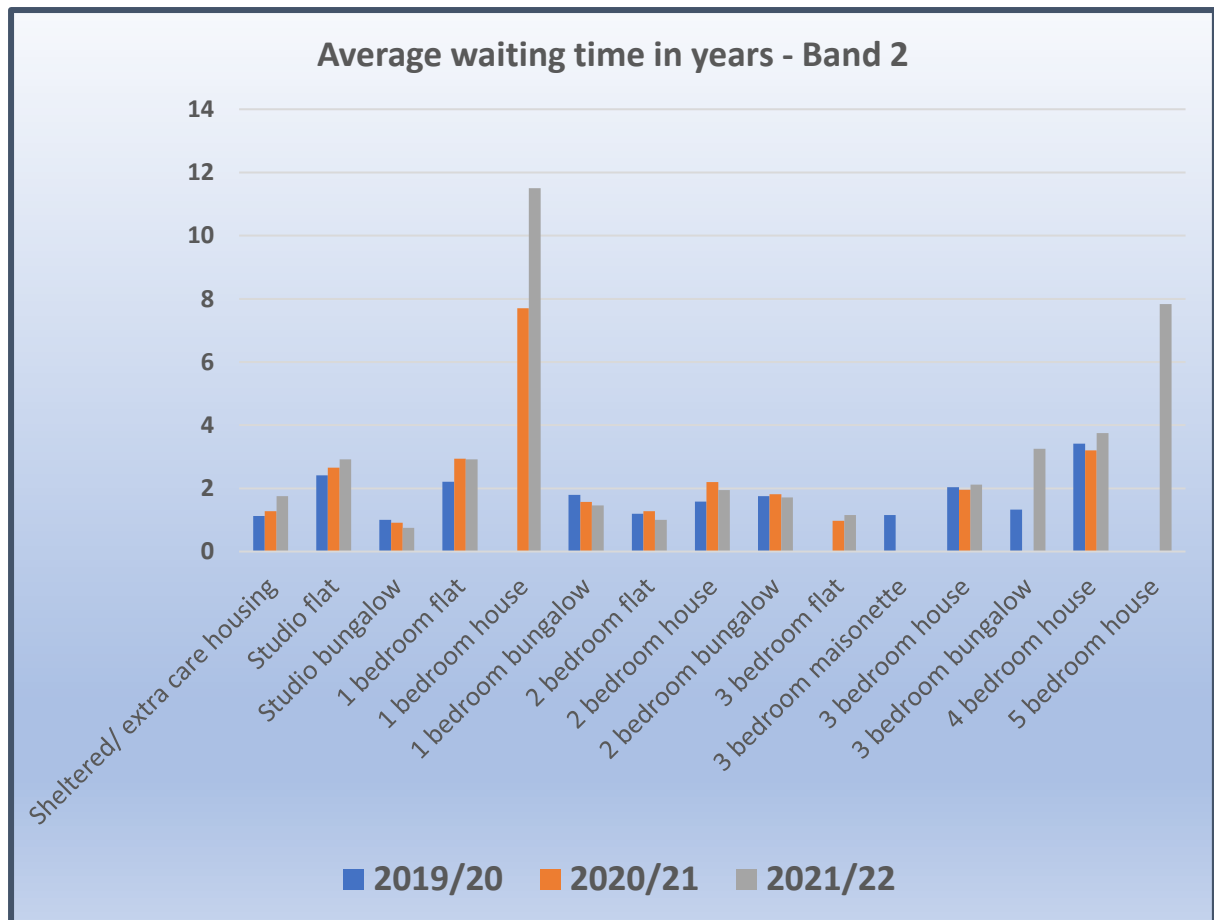
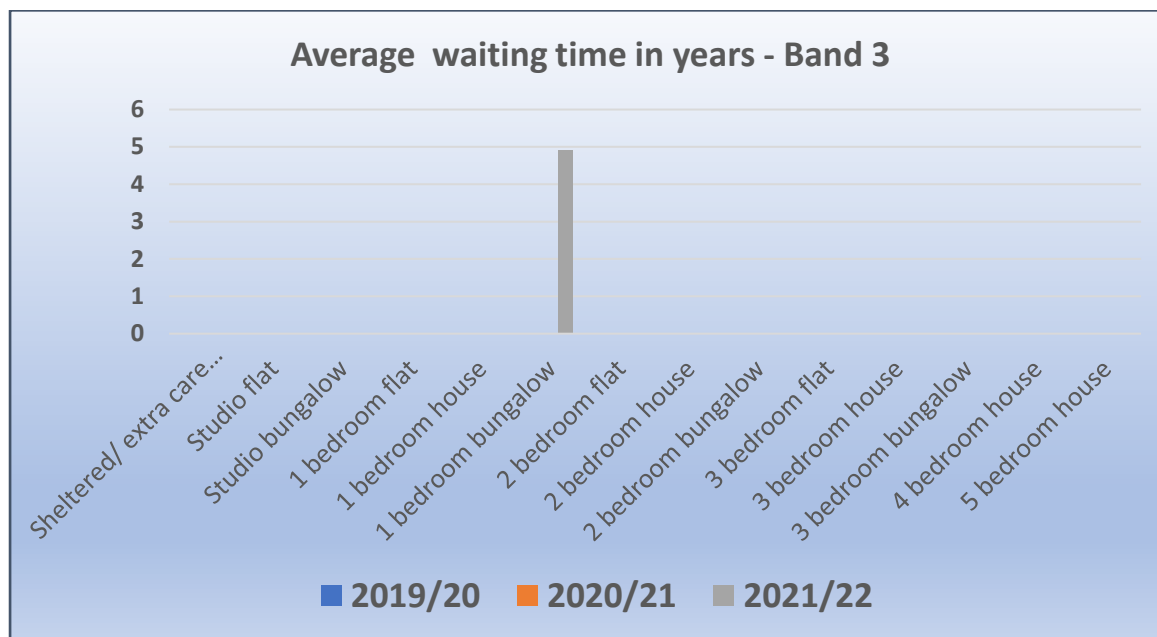


Table 10 (iii) – waiting time for Band 3 Applicants by property type



Aside from one-bedroom houses, the longest wait continues to be for 4-and 5-bedroom properties. This is due to the limited number of properties of this size becoming available.

In 2021/22 there were 21 x 4-bedroom properties and for the first time in 4 years there have been 2 x 5-bedroom properties that became available for letting.

2.12. Flats

In order to ensure households have the widest choice of options on the housing register the allocation scheme enables households with younger children (i.e. under 10) to place bids on upper floor flats where the landlord considers that the property is suitable for a young family.

In 2021/22 a total of 345 two-bedroom houses and flats were advertised for letting to households with children. 235 (68%) of these properties were flats and 110 (32%) houses. 33 two-bedroom flats were let to couples and single people.

The information in Table 10(ii) suggests households on the register are indeed positively exercising choice when bidding for properties – the average wait for a 2-bed house in 2021/22 was 2.2 years compared to 12 months for a 2-bedroom flat.

2.13. Complaints & requests for reviews

Of all 19 complaints received by the Housing Service during 2021/22, 6 related to the housing allocations policy.

All applicants have the statutory right to request a review of any aspect of their housing application assessment.

There were 26 requests for reviews during 2021/22. In 17 of these cases the council’s original decision was upheld and in 3 cases the decision was reversed. 2

applicants withdrew their request, 1 applicant was awarded a management move by their landlord during the review process whilst 3 households were housed before the review was concluded.

2.14. Right to Move

This refers to statutory provisions introduced by Government in 2015 for social tenants in England who need to move to avoid hardship because the tenant works (or has been offered work) in the borough of the authority into whose are they wish to move, and has a genuine intention to take up the offer.

From June 2015 levels of Right to Move applications have been monitored in order to inform any recommendations to apply a quota for such cases. This is in accordance with statutory guidance from Government.

In 2021/22 no RtM applications were received.

2.15. Legislative Changes impacting Allocations Schemes

None during 2021/22.

In 2021/22 an addendum to enable the Council and its Registered Provider (RP) partners to implement the decant requirements for regeneration schemes was adopted.

The lettings plan was developed to ensure that existing social housing tenants who need to vacate their property as part of regeneration scheme proposals are provided with the right support and appropriate priority to transfer into new accommodation which meets their housing needs.

The report can be found here: [Decision - \(3 of 2022\) - Local Lettings Plan to support delivery of housing regeneration schemes - Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council](#)