

Equalities impact assessment

Housing Allocations – 2020/21



Background

- This assessment will explore the impact of the Housing Allocations work undertaken by Islington Council between April 2020 and March 2021.
- This will include demographic analysis of:
 - The population approaching Islington Council to lodge a homelessness application,
 - The population who were housed, following a homelessness application
 - The population currently on the borough's housing waiting list
 - And the borough's overall population.
- This assessment will seek to identify any areas where the allocations process might have an undue impact on the inequalities within the borough, with relation to the protected characteristics under the Equalities Act, 2010.



Background

- In the period studied, Islington Council received 1,051 homelessness applications, and housed 1,680 households in permanent accommodation.
- The Housing Register is taken as a snapshot at the end of March 2021, with 14,002 households on the Register.

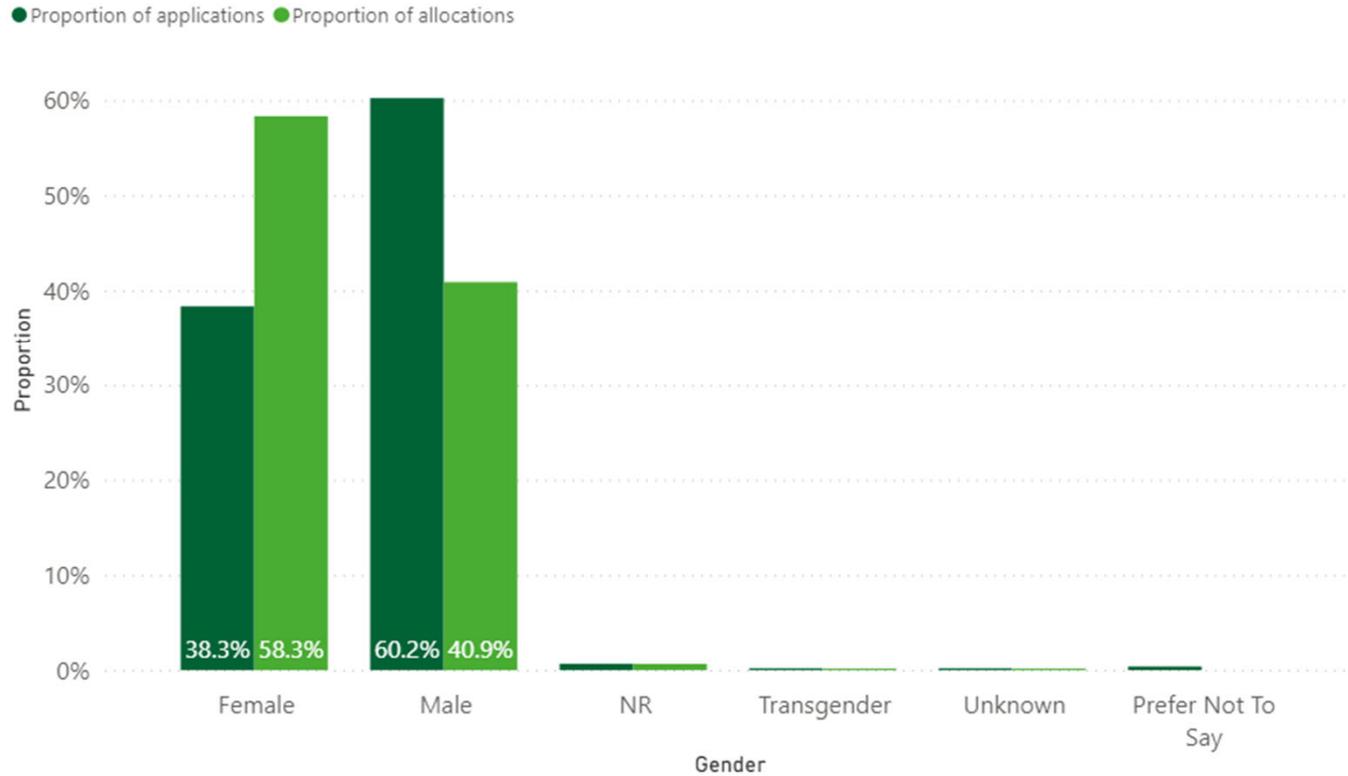
Executive Summary

- The analysis shows that, in general, the profile of Islington's housing applicants and those allocated a new property is slightly younger, more female, and much more heavily skewed towards people of colour than the borough population.
- While these groups are over-represented, relative to the borough's population, they are likely to be a consequence of dependent children contributing to a priority need decision, and the ethnic inequalities in the labour market and other factors that contribute to homelessness.
- Overall, there is no obvious indication of inequitable processing in the Housing allocations process.
- However, it should be noted that there is very little consistent recording of disability, and there is relatively little recording of religion, marital status and sexual orientation. There may be value in improving recording of these factors, to further inform future work in this area.



Gender

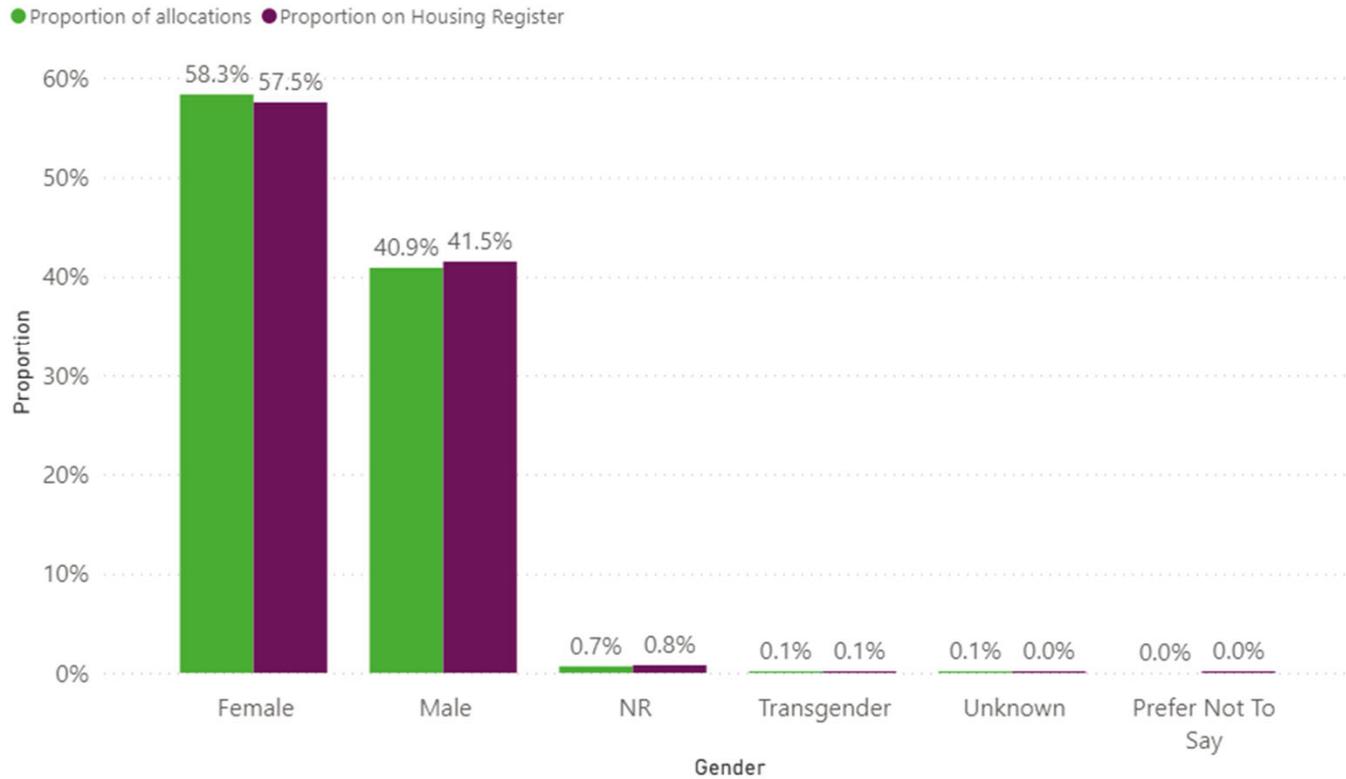
Comparison of households applying for homelessness support against those accommodated, 2020/21



- In 2020/21, 60% of applicants were male, while 58% of people housed were female.
- While this is a marked, and statistically significant, difference, it is likely to be explained by the associations between gender and factors that increase a person's chances of being assessed as a priority need for Council accommodation.
- It is worth noting that this is a change in pattern from previous analysis, where the majority of applicants have been female.

Gender

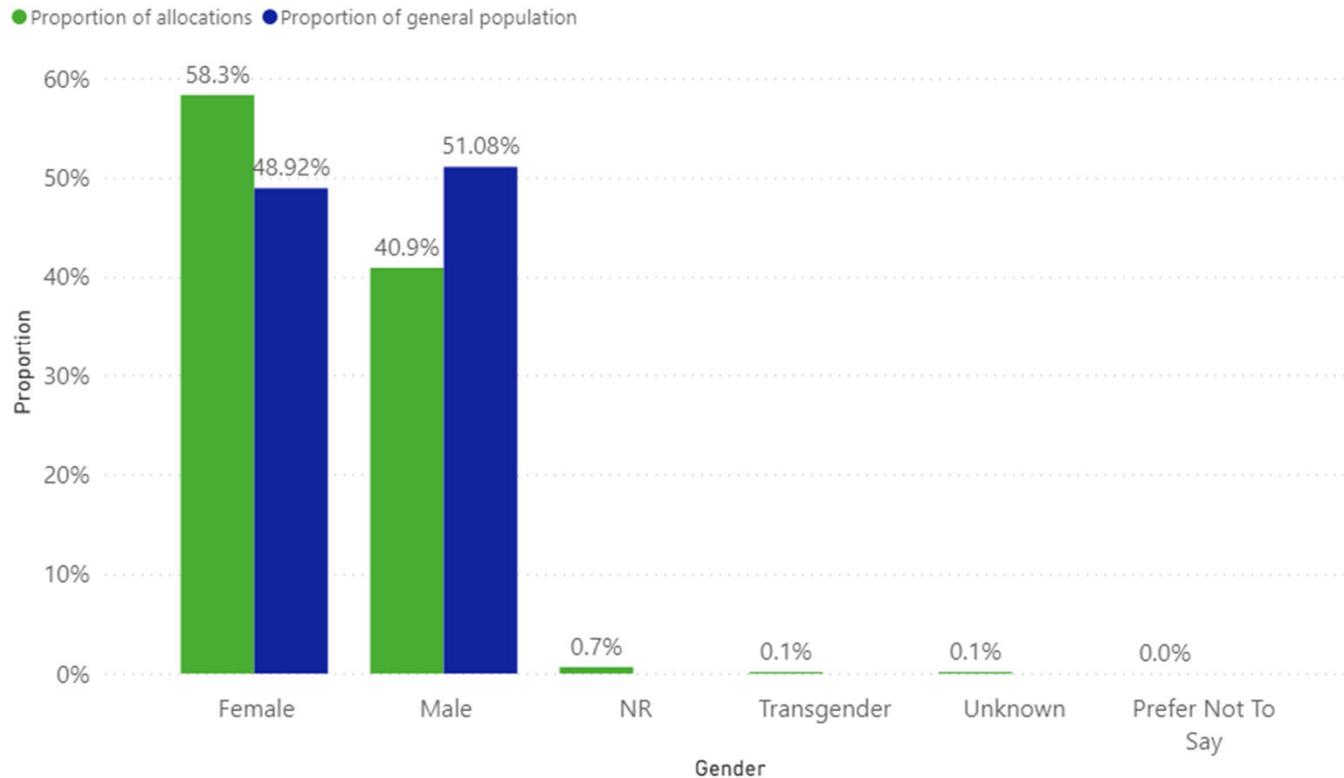
Comparison of the households housed in 2020/21 against those on the Housing Register



- While the comparison between applicants and housed populations showed a stark difference by gender, there is almost no difference between those allocated a property and the Housing Register.

Gender

Comparison of households accommodated in 2020/21 against the Islington population aged 16+



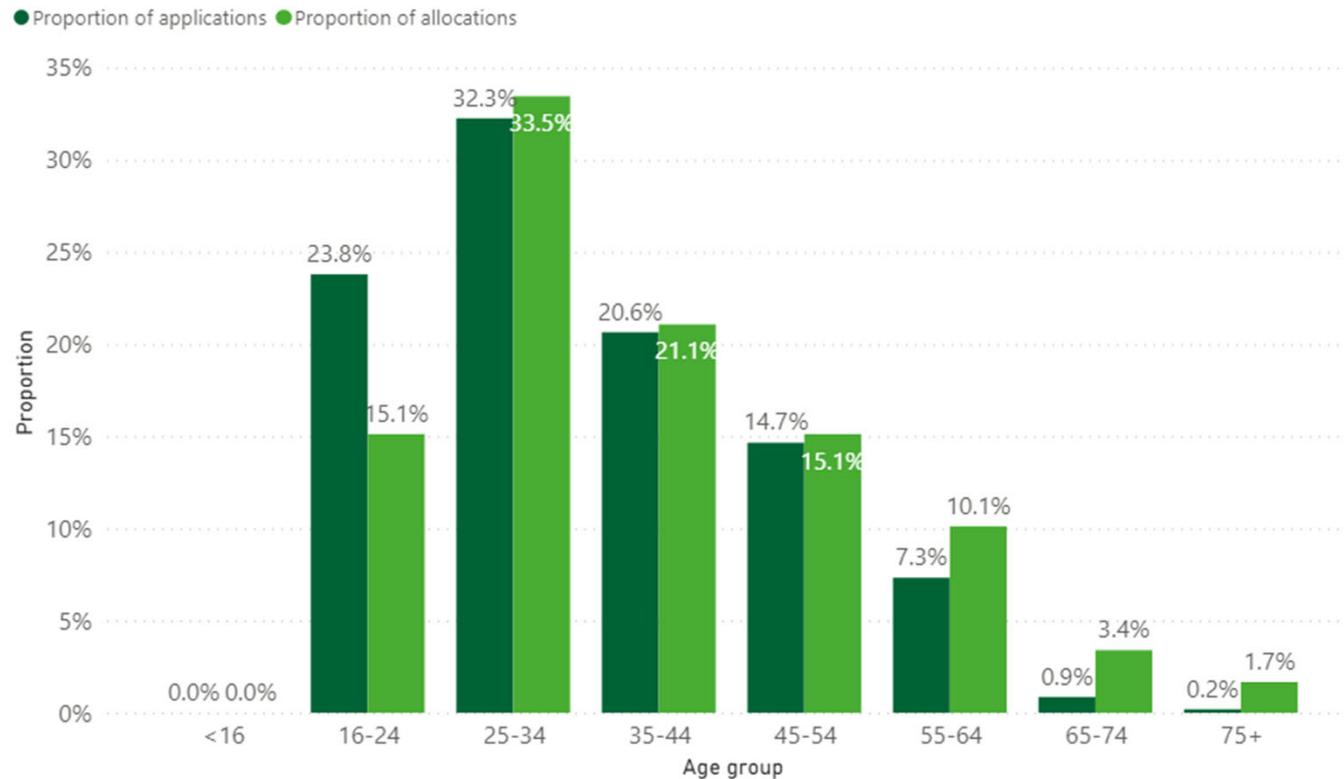
- This chart compares the population who have been housed this year against the Islington population, based on GLA estimates.
- The population who were housed this year had a slightly higher proportion of females than the general population.
- The allocated population has a portion of people with no recorded gender, however it should be assumed that this population would be split fairly evenly between male and female.

Gender

- This shows that while the housing applicant pool has a greater proportion of males than the general population, the housed population and the housing register are both skewed towards females.
- Previous years has shown less of a male skew in the applicant pool - 60% of applicants in 2016 were female, while in 2018/19 and 2019/20 the applicant pool was 53% male. The skew this year suggests that there might have been a significant Covid-impact on the applicant pool: this would tie in with other known changes in the labour market and a substantial shift in the gender split of Universal Credit sign-ups among Islington tenants in the first half of 2020.
- The fact that the housed population and housing register are both more female is in keeping with previous analysis. Women are more likely to apply as a result of domestic violence than men, and they are also more likely to apply with dependent children – these factors contribute to women being more likely to be housed or to be added to the waiting list than men.

Age groups

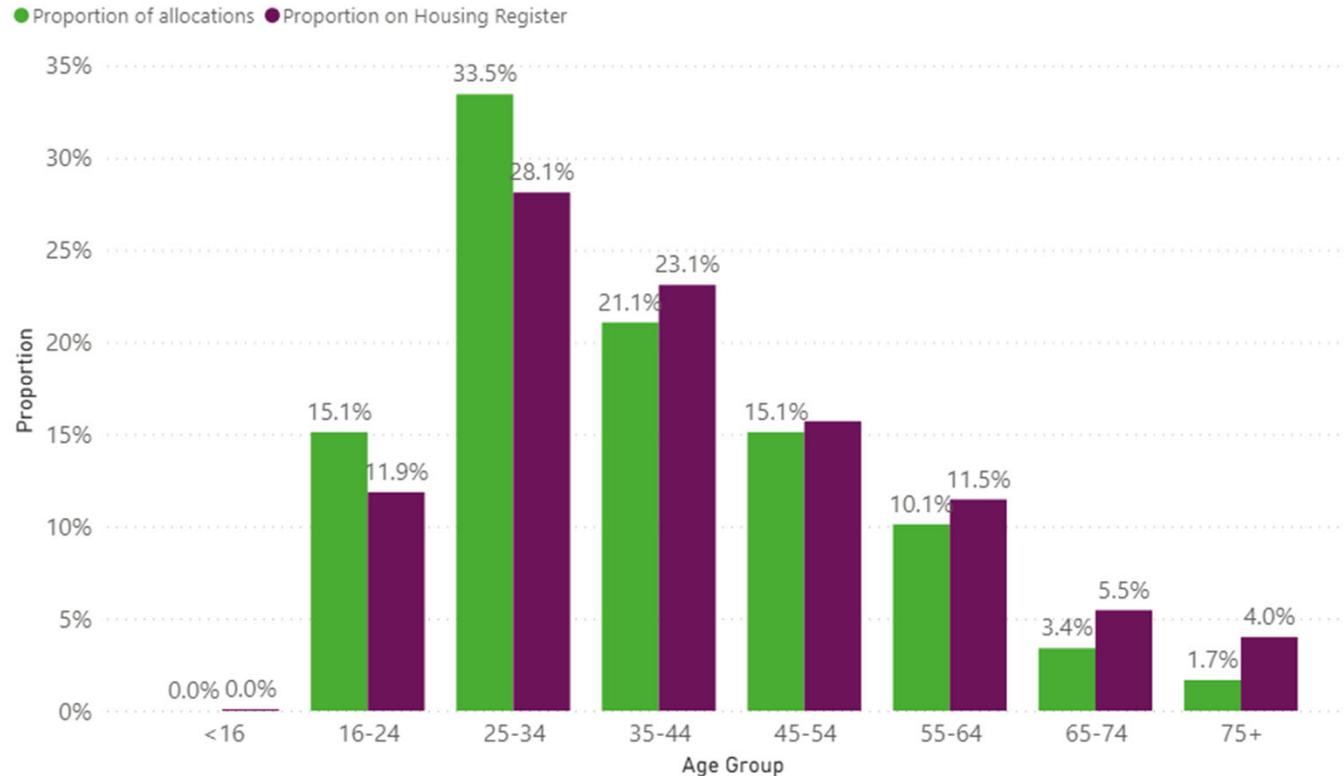
Comparison of households applying for homelessness support against those accommodated, 2020/21



- In general, housing applicants are slightly younger than those who were housed.
- There are statistically significant differences between those aged 16-24 (with a higher proportion of applicants than housed), and ages 65-74 and 75+ (which account for a higher proportion of those housed).
- It should be noted, however, that those aged 65 and over who are being housed are almost entirely transfers and mutual exchanges, rather than fresh applicants.

Age groups

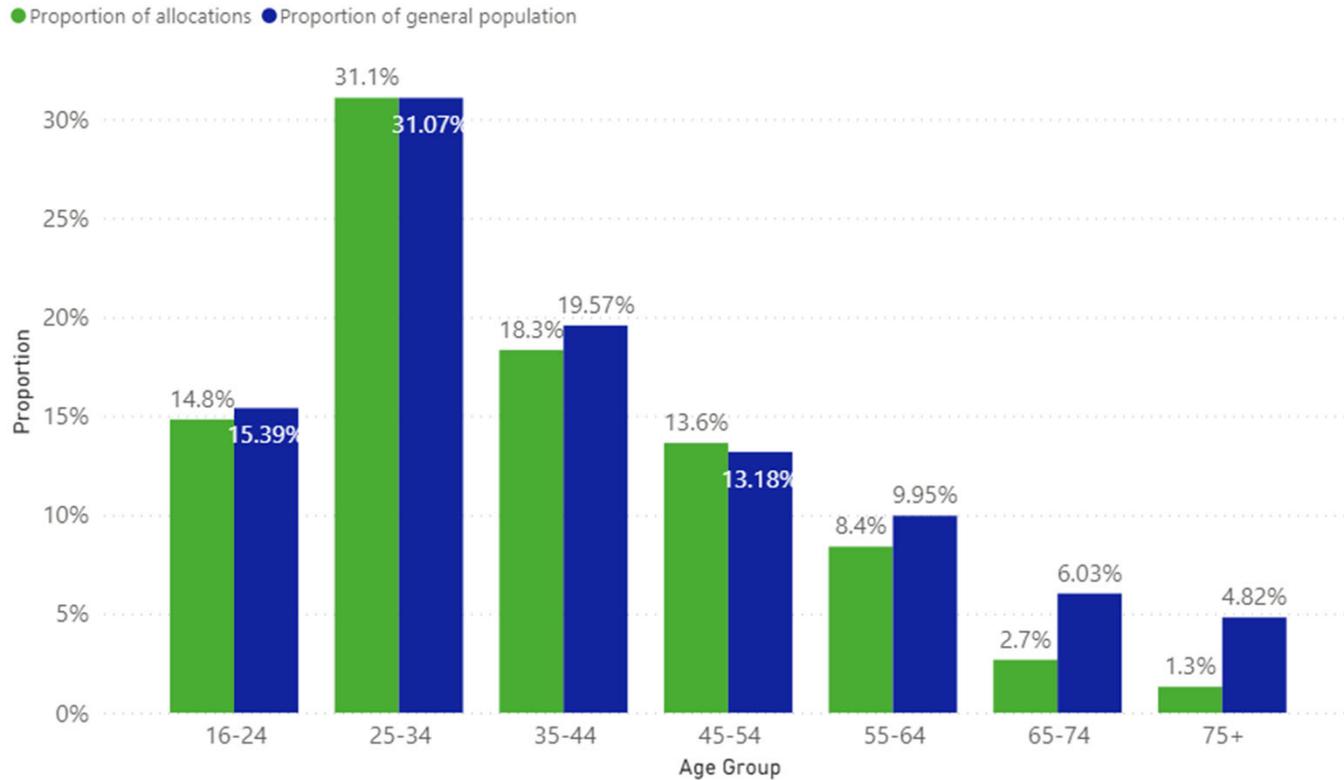
Comparison of the households housed in 2020/21 against those on the Housing Register



- While housing applicants tended to be younger than those who were allocated a new property, this chart shows that those allocated a new property are, in turn, also younger than those on the Register.
- The age groups most likely to be allocated a new property correlate with ages most likely to have a dependent child.
- Given that households can be on the Housing Register for some time, it also makes sense that this population are likely to be older, on average, as households will slowly age.

Age groups

Comparison of households accommodated in 2020/21 against the Islington population aged 16+



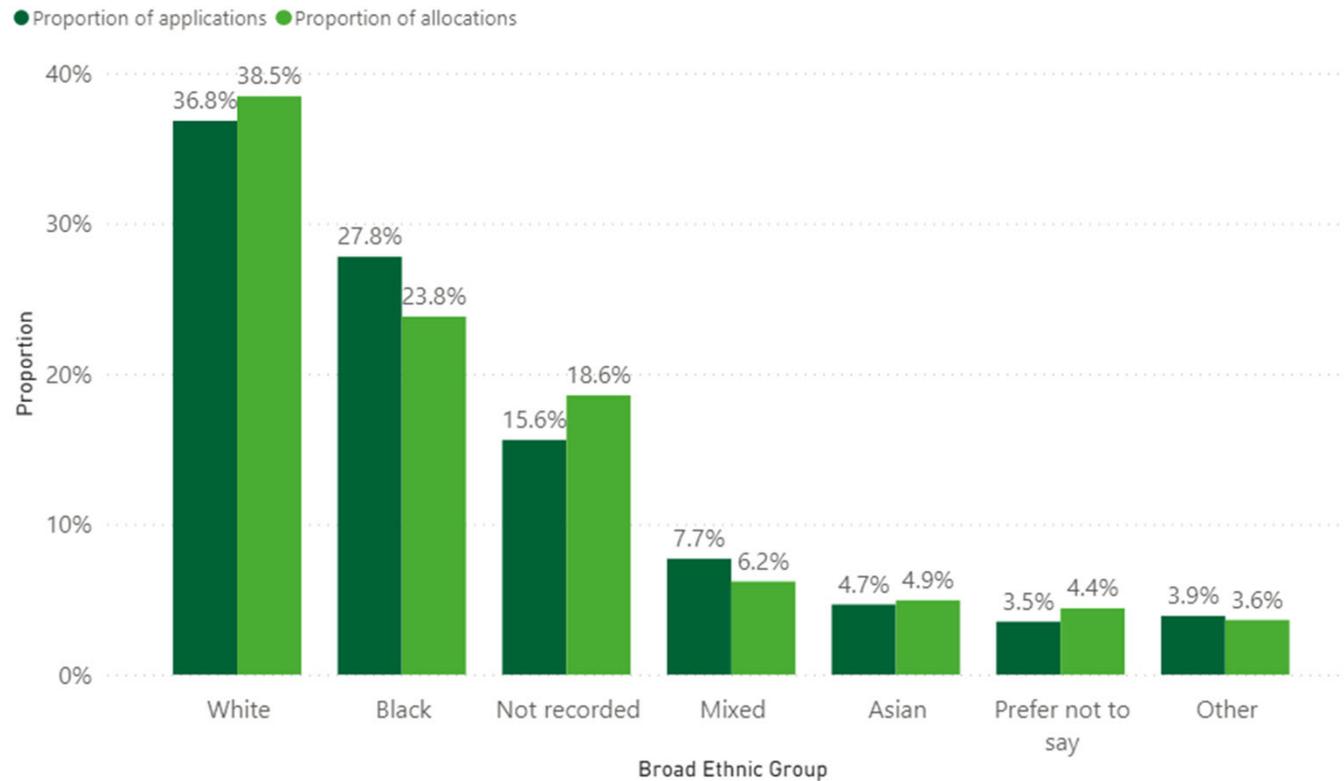
- Compared against the general population, the population housed in 2020/21 were slightly younger.
- It should be noted that 10% of the housed population had no recorded age, though the age profile of those is likely to be similar to those with a recorded age.

Age

- These slides have shown that in general, people at all stages of the housing process are slightly younger than the borough population. This is likely a result of home ownership and stable forms of employment being more common among older adults.
- In general, the households allocated a new property this year are slightly younger than those on the Housing Register.
- These patterns are likely a consequence of dependent children counting as one of the priority need categories; women accounted for two-thirds of people housed between the ages of 25-34, as well as 60% of those housed between the ages of 16-24; both slightly higher ratios than the overall proportion of allocations that were for female applicants (58%)

Ethnicity

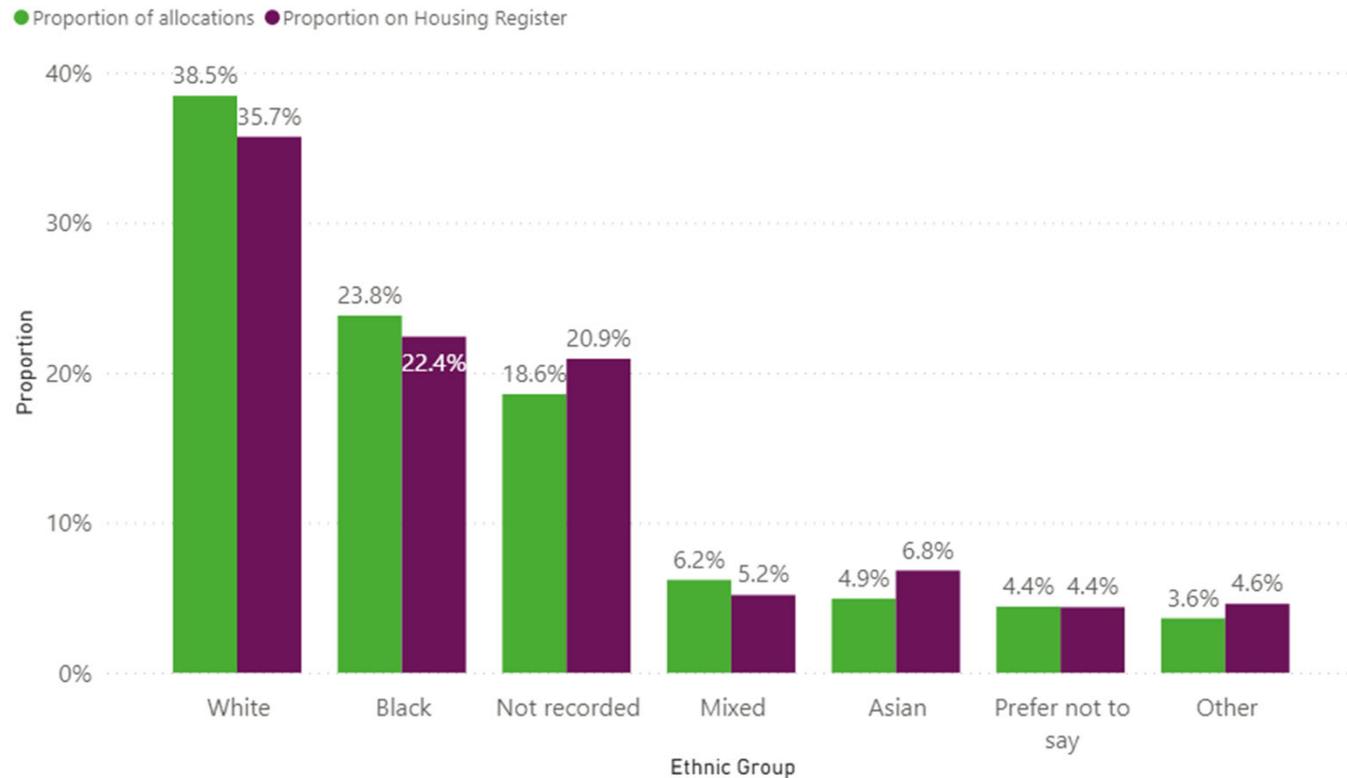
Comparison of households applying for homelessness support against those accommodated, 2020/21



- There is no significant difference between the ethnicity of Islington's housing applicants and those housed, in 2020/21.
- In both groups, 15% of households had no recorded ethnicity, and a further 3-4% opted not to provide an ethnicity when asked.

Ethnicity

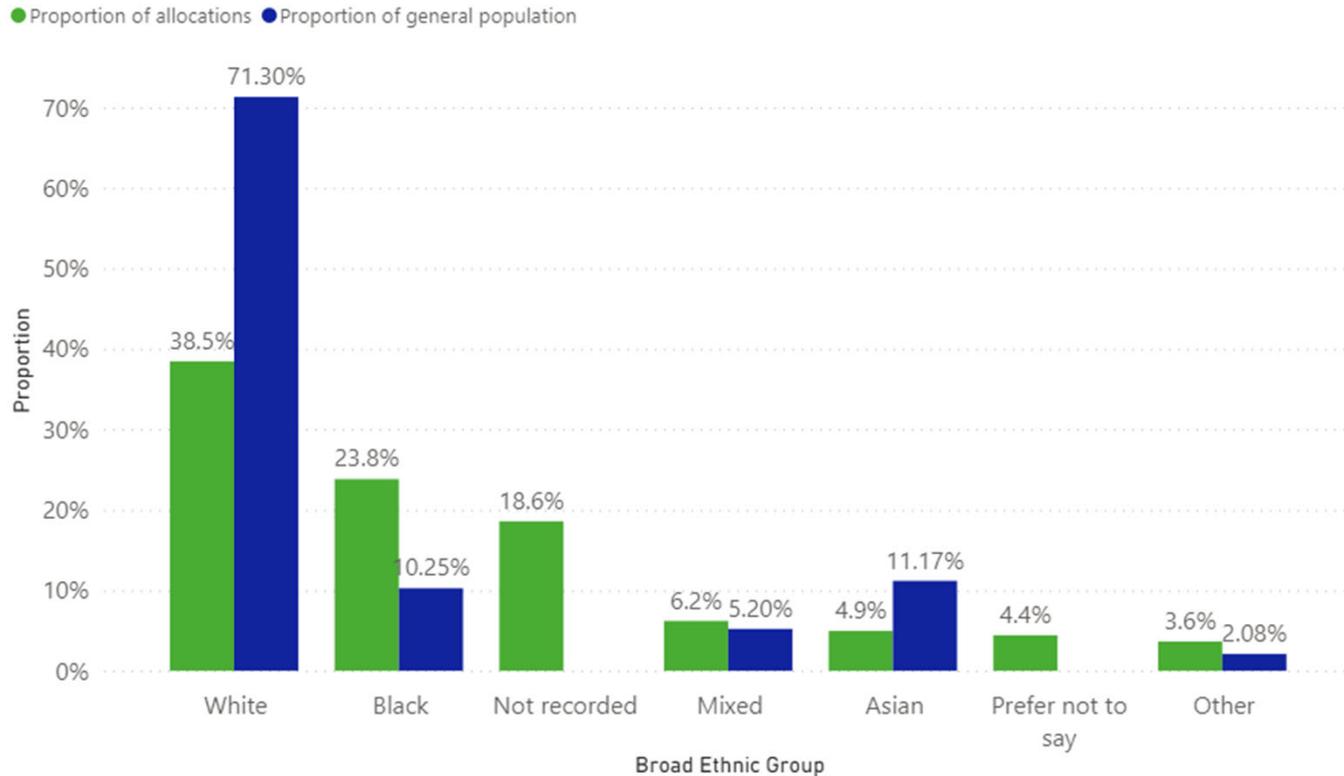
Comparison of the households housed in 2020/21 against those on the Housing Register



- The Housing Register shows a similar breakdown by ethnic group to the overall applicant population:
- A quarter of households on the Housing Register have no recorded ethnicity, or declined to provide their ethnicity.
- Of those with a recorded ethnicity, most households are White.
- There is a statistically significant difference between the proportion of Asian households housed, and the proportion on the waiting list.

Ethnicity

Comparison of households accommodated in 2020/21 against the Islington population aged 16+



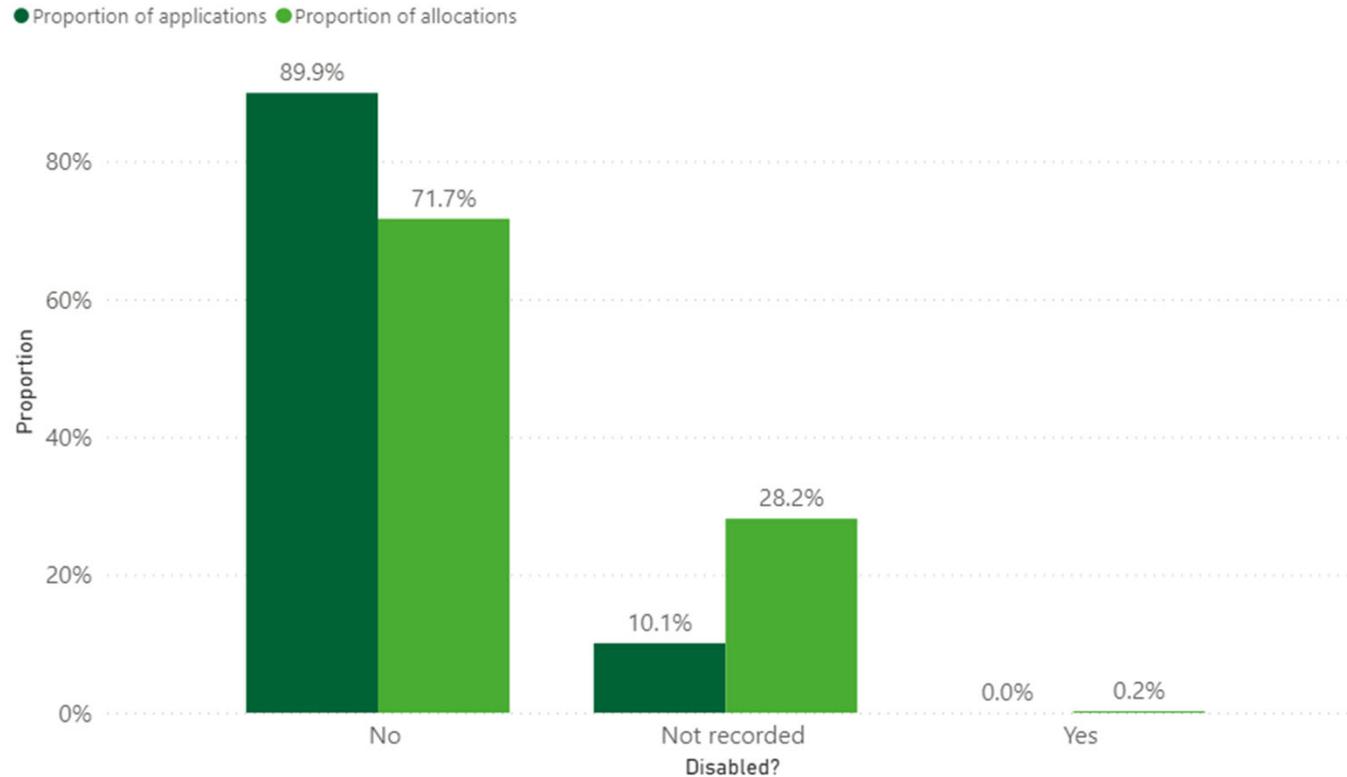
- This chart shows that there is a stark difference between the ethnicity make-up of the borough population and the population who were housed in 2020/21.
- The borough's adult population, based on GLA estimates, is 71% White, compared to a third of applicants and households who were housed and had a recorded ethnicity.

Ethnicity

- These slides have shown that while the borough population is almost three-quarters White, this ethnic group only accounts for around a third of households at each stage of the Council's homelessness process.
- This is in keeping with previous analysis on Islington's housing data, which found that people from Black and Other ethnic groups are more likely to apply for, and be accepted as, statutory homeless than people from White ethnic groups.
- The previous analysis found that this pattern held true even after adjusting for other risk factors, such as age, gender, and deprivation.
- This suggests that individuals from Black and Other ethnic groups are being disproportionately affected by the upstream factors that lead to homelessness (challenges in the labour market, mental ill-health, physical disability, inaccessible housing market, etc.).
- There is a statistically significant difference between the housed and waiting list populations, in terms of the representation of Asian households. This may be a sign that Asian households are disadvantaged in the allocations process, but it may also be explained by other factors – for example the average household size for Asian families on the Waiting List is 3.2 persons per household, compared with 2.9 for Black households, and 2.6 for White and Mixed households.

Disability

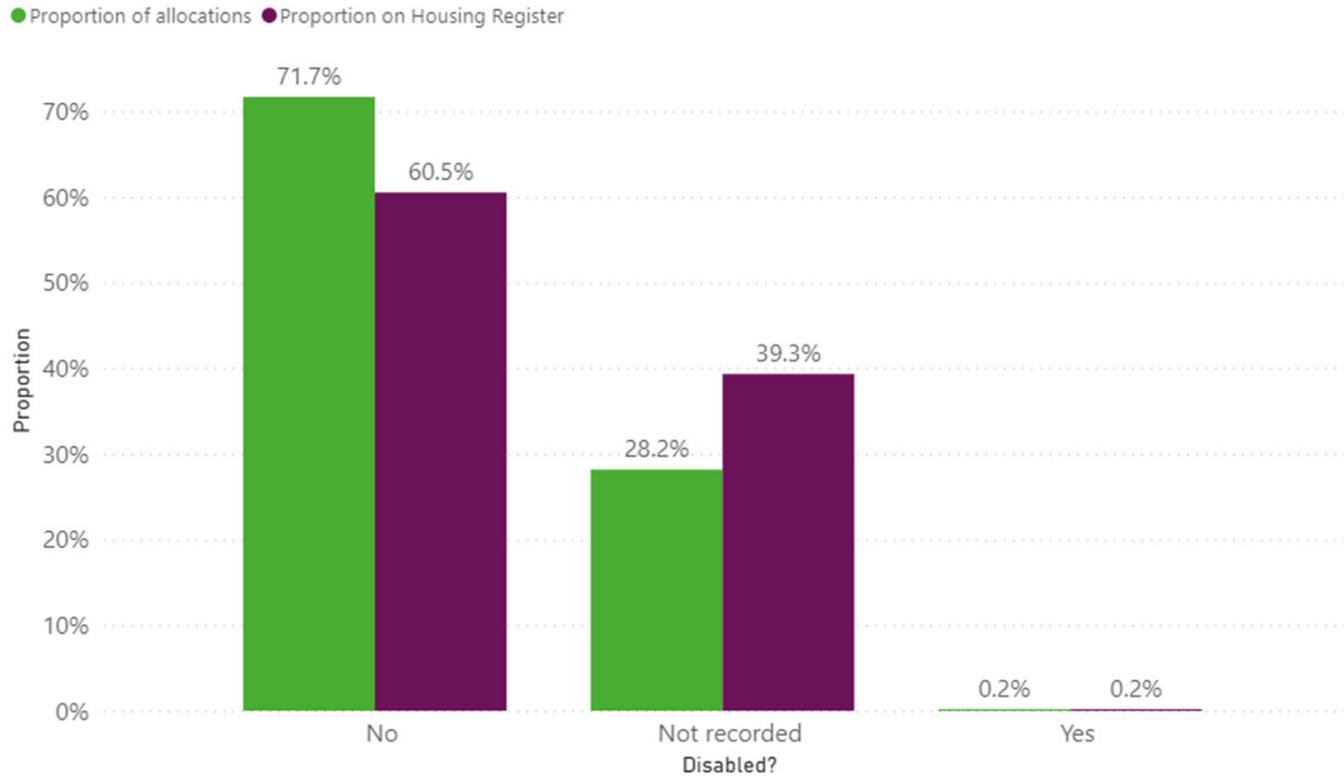
Comparison of households applying for homelessness support against those accommodated, 2020/21



- This data shows that there are no applicants with a disability status recorded, within the applications or allocations.
- A fairly small portion have no disability status recorded, in both groups.
- The data suggest no clear problem with equalities impact, however this does imply an unusually low level of disability within both populations.

Disability

Comparison of the households housed in 2020/21 against those on the Housing Register



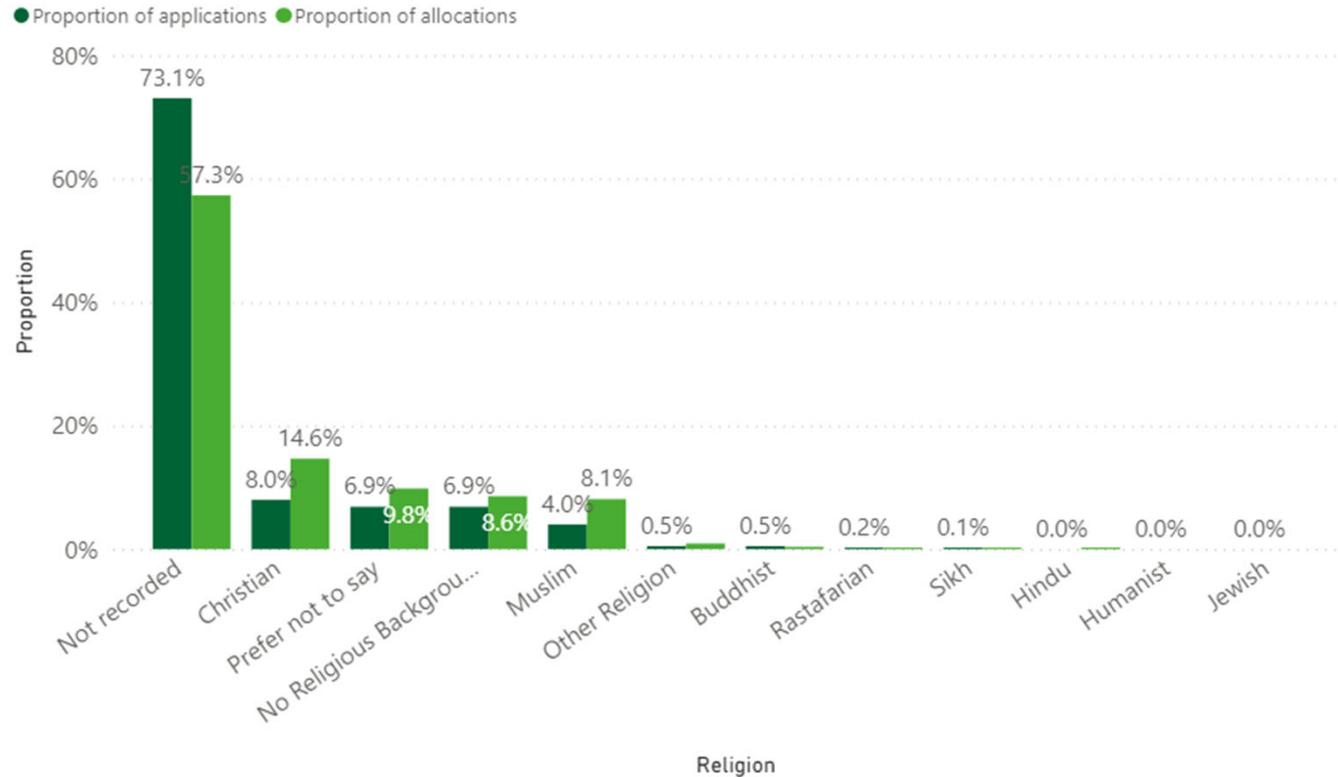
- Only a very small number of households on the Housing Register have a disability recorded against their record.
- By contrast, the Housing Register also has a high number of cases with no disability status recorded.

Disability

- These slides show that there is very little recording of disability among housing applicants, those allocated a new property, or on the waiting list.
- These figures are surprisingly low throughout, however for the available data there is no indication of inequality in processing.

Religion

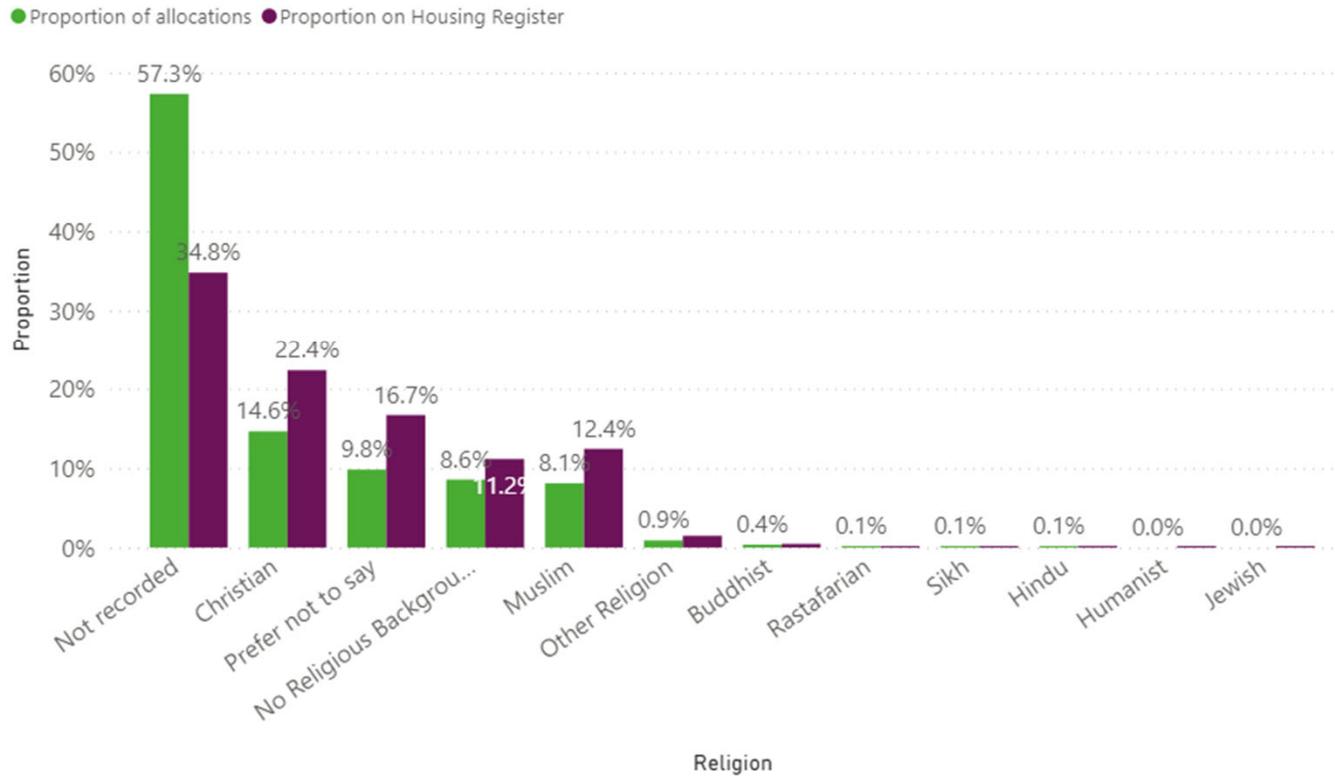
Comparison of households applying for homelessness support against those accommodated, 2020/21



- A high proportion of households have no religion recorded.
- Focusing on those with a recorded religion, the figures are similar:
 - Christians account for 30% of applications and 29% of allocations;
 - Those with no religion account for 25% and 14%;
 - Muslims account for 15% and 25%.

Religion

Comparison of the households housed in 2020/21 against those on the Housing Register



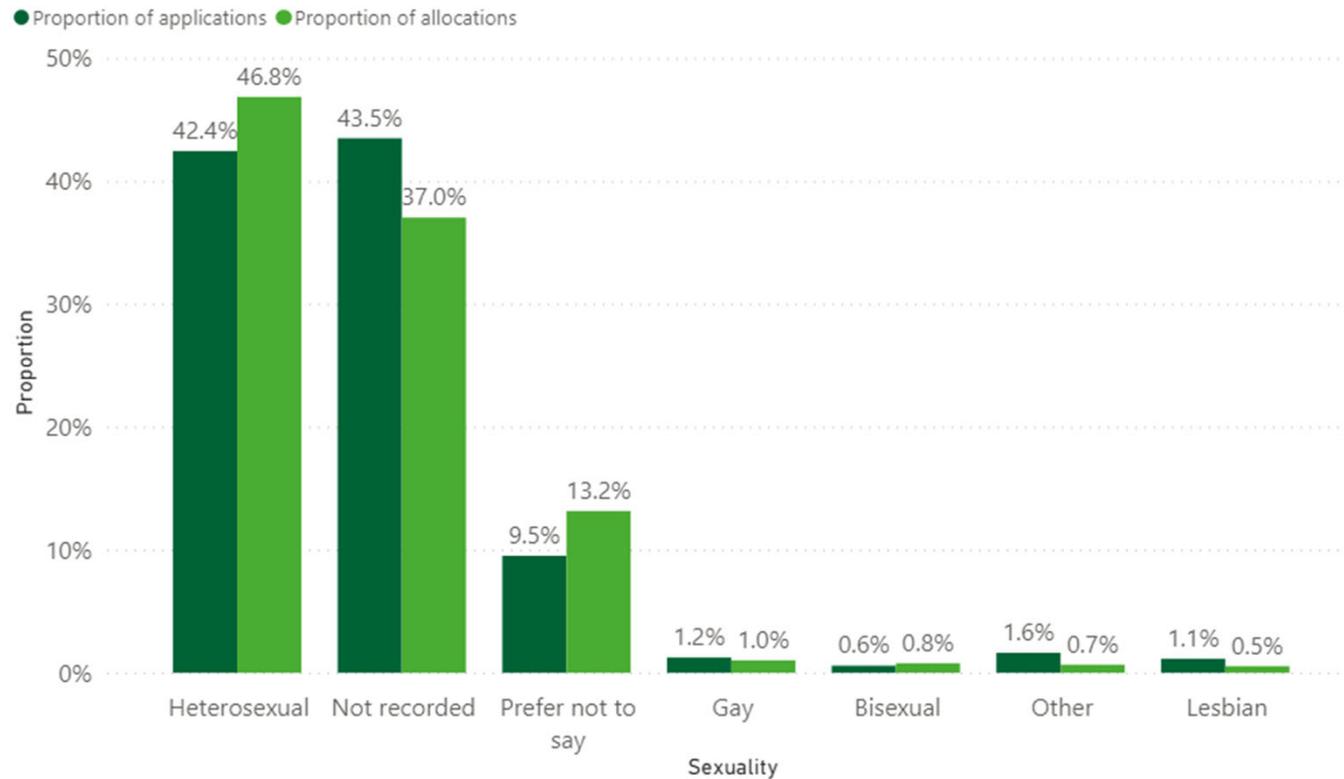
- There is a higher rate of religion recording among households on the Housing Register.
- Here, only 35% of households are missing a religion recording.
- Again, once the 'Not recorded' category is removed, the proportions are broadly similar:
 - Christians account for 34% of the Housing Register and 29% of those housed,
 - Muslims are 19% of the Housing Register and 25% of those housed,
 - Non religious households are 26% of the Register and 29% of those housed.

Religion

- The clearest pattern from this analysis is that there is a low level of data recording for religion.
- There is a logical explanation for this, given that religion is not a key determinant of a person's eligibility for housing support, though it does inhibit equity analysis.
- Focusing on the remainder with a recorded ethnicity, there is little evidence of inequity: slightly higher proportions of those recorded as Christian or Muslim were housed and fewer of those with no religious background, relative to the applicant population, however these differences are not statistically significant.

Sexuality

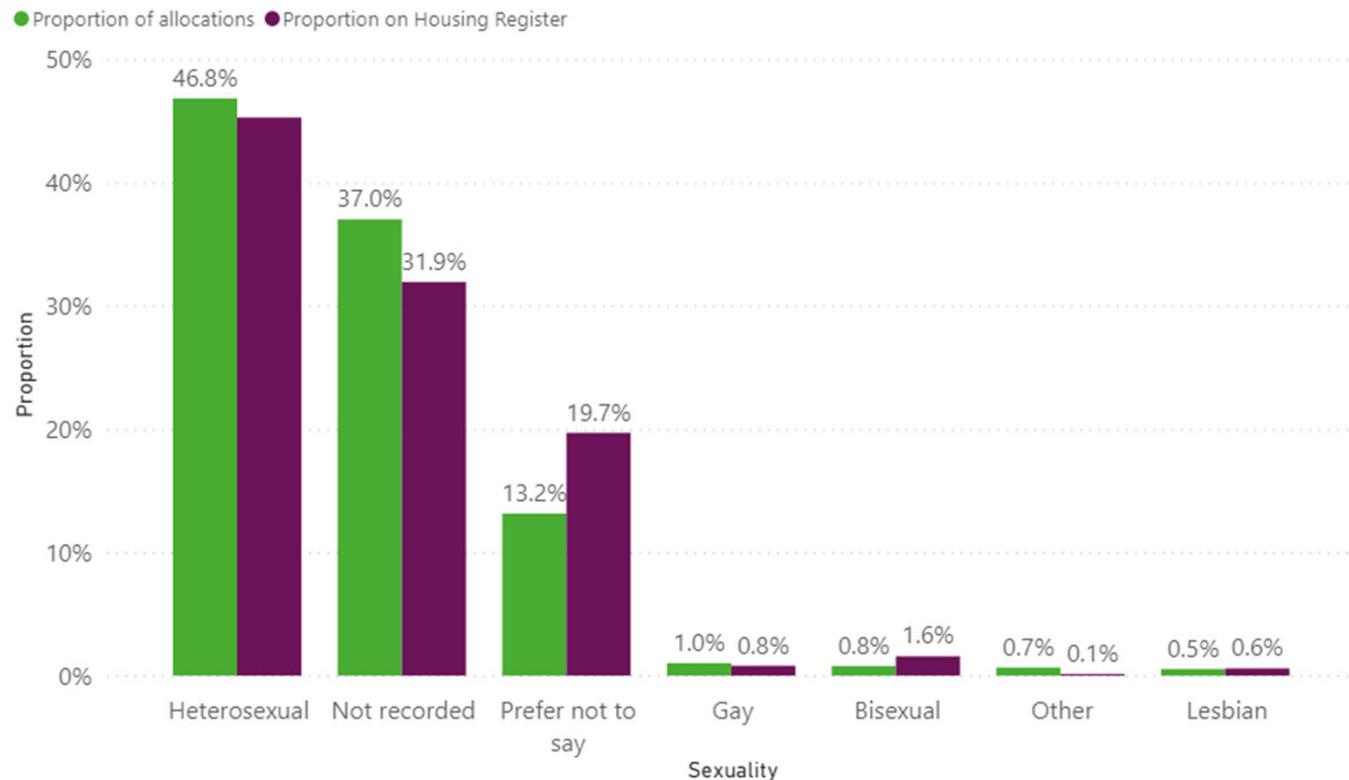
Comparison of households applying for homelessness support against those accommodated, 2020/21



- Overall, most applicants either have no recorded sexual orientation, or are recorded as heterosexual.
- 10% of applicants preferred not to disclose their sexual orientation, compared to 13% of allocations.
- Small portions of applicants and allocations were gay, bisexual, or lesbian.

Sexuality

Comparison of the households housed in 2020/21 against those on the Housing Register



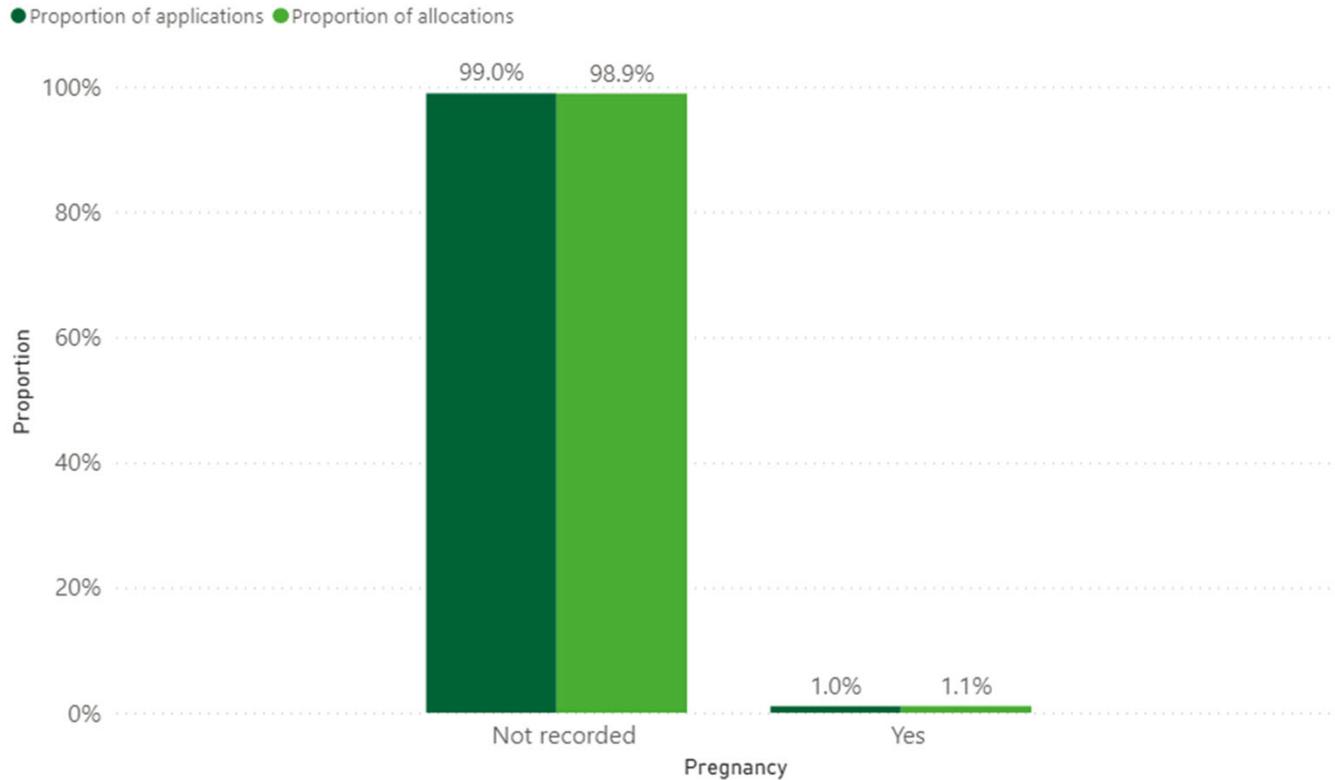
- The households allocated in 2020/21 are similar to those on the Housing Register.
- A slightly higher proportion on the Housing Register preferred not to disclose their sexual orientation, but this is the only difference of note.
- Of those with a recorded sexual orientation, there is no statistical difference between the categories.

Sexuality

- A substantial minority of cases do not have a recorded sexual orientation, and a further 10-15% of cases preferred not to share their sexual orientation when asked.
- As with religion, this is somewhat expected as the category in itself is not relevant to a housing application, however it slightly restricts analysis of equity in service delivery.
- When comparing only those cases with a recorded sexuality, over 90% of applications, allocations, and cases on the Housing Register are heterosexual. This is broadly in line with national figures for the general population: the ONS reported in 2018 that 94% of the national population identify as heterosexual.
- The lesbian, bisexual, and gay populations may be slightly over-represented in Islington's housing pools: 2.8% of London adults identified as LGB which is similar to Islington's housing profile: 4.5% of applicants were LGB, and 3.6% of allocations, and 6% of the Housing Register. However, this is likely to be explained by Islington's younger age profile than most of London, and in turn those applying for statutory homelessness and being housed are younger again than the general population.
- Interestingly, reported reasons for loss of accommodation do not appear to vary by sexuality - there is no indication, for example, that LGBTQ+ applicants for statutory homelessness were more likely to have been asked to leave by family.

Pregnancy

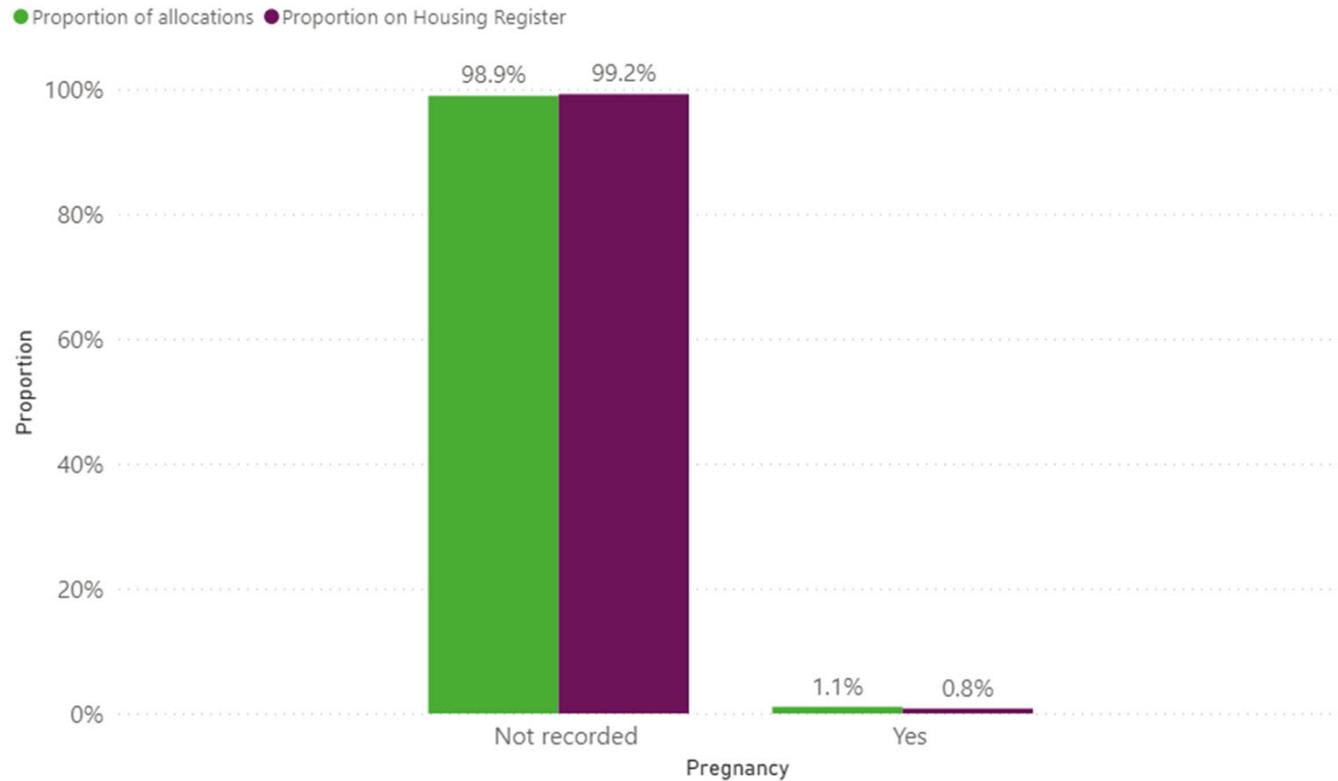
Comparison of households applying for homelessness support against those accommodated, 2020/21



- 1.1% of households housed in 2020/21 involved a pregnant woman, compared to 1.0% of the applicants.

Pregnancy

Comparison of the households housed in 2020/21 against those on the Housing Register



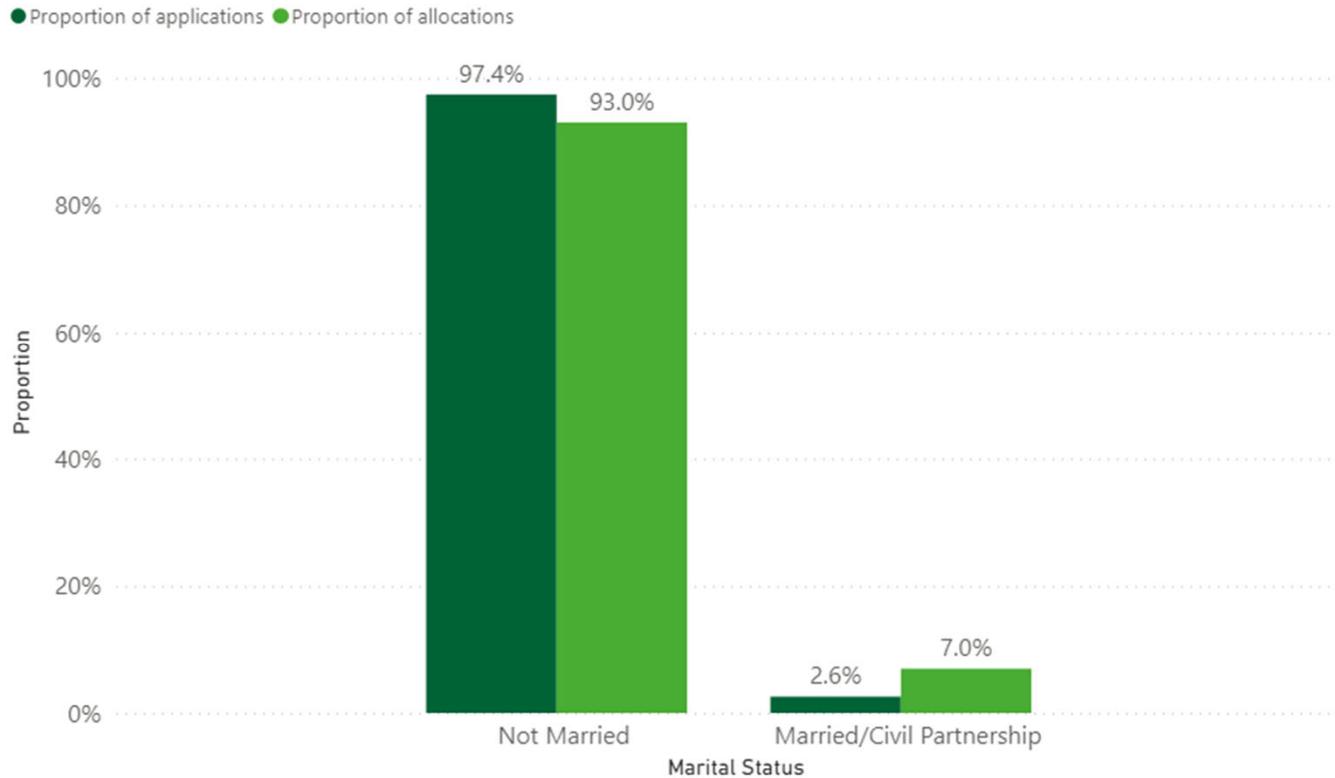
- 1.1% of households housed in 2020/21 involved a pregnant woman, compared to 0.8% of the Housing Register.

Pregnancy

- There is little difference between the level of pregnancy in the applicant pool and those housed, or on the Housing Register.
- The very slightly higher rate of pregnancy among those housed is to be expected, given the priority need attached to having a dependent child or pregnancy.
- The rate of pregnancy in the allocations pool is slightly higher than the national average – ONS data for 2019 puts the number of live births per year at 640,000 which would equate to approximately 0.8% of the population being pregnant at a single point in time.

Marital status

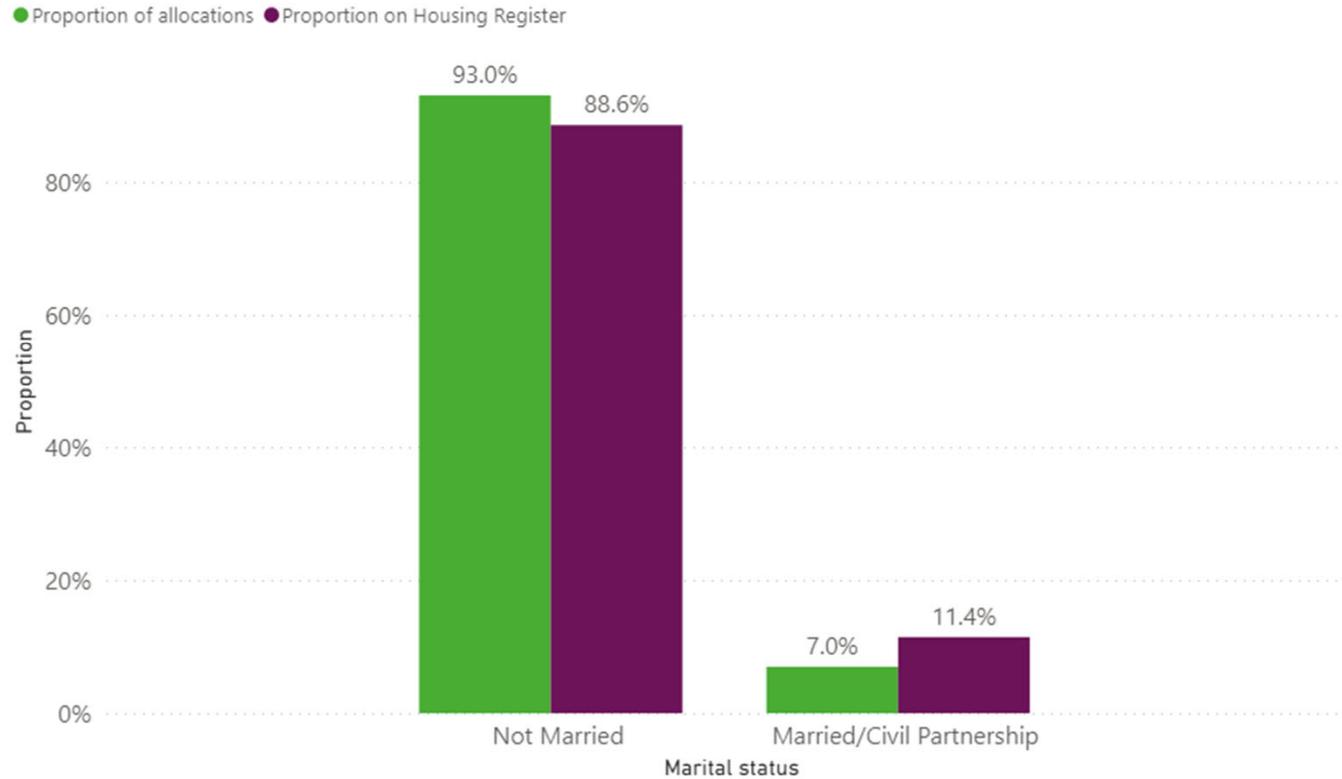
Comparison of households applying for homelessness support against those accommodated, 2020/21



- The relationship data in the housing population suggests that only 2.6% of housing applicants, and 7.0% of those allocated are married or in a civil partnership.

Marital status

Comparison of the households housed in 2020/21 against those on the Housing Register



- This shows that there is a slightly higher rate of marriage and civil partnership among those on the Housing Register.

Marital status

- The very low rate of marriage and civil partnership suggests that there may be some gaps in the Housing data, as this is a relatively low proportion – 50.2% of the population of England and Wales are currently married or in a civil partnership according to ONS data.
- However, this may also point towards the factors that make a homelessness application more likely; single parent families are more likely to be at risk of homelessness through financial difficulties, or as a result of relationship breakdown, for example.
- Based on the data that are available, there is no indication that people in marriages or civil partnerships are experiencing any level of discrimination in the allocations process.

Conclusion

- This slide pack explores the available data on the nine equalities strands for Islington's homelessness applicants, housing allocations, and people on the housing register.
- There are some differences in experience by age, gender, and ethnicity; however these are most likely to be logical consequences of the allocations process. Women, and particularly young women, are more likely to be allocated a property as they are most likely to be a priority need through caring for a dependent child or being a survivor of domestic abuse.
- Similarly, people from Black and Other ethnic groups are particularly more likely to apply for homelessness support relative to the borough population. Given that the ethnic breakdown of households allocated a new property reflect the ethnicity profile of those applying, and on the waiting list, it suggests that the differences by ethnicity are a consequence of upstream causes of homelessness rather than a result of inequitable treatment in the allocations process.
- Overall, there is no obvious indication of inequitable processing in the Housing allocations process.
- However, it should be noted that there is very little consistent recording of disability, and there is relatively little recording of religion, marital status and sexual orientation. There may be value in improving recording of these factors, to further inform future work in this area.

FURTHER INFORMATION



About Public Health Knowledge, Intelligence and Performance team

Public Health KIP team is a specialist area of public health. Trained analysts use a variety of statistical and epidemiological methods to collate, analyse and interpret data to provide an evidence-base and inform decision-making at all levels. Camden and Islington's Public Health KIP team undertake epidemiological analysis on a wide range of data sources.

All of our profiles, as well as other data and outputs can be accessed on the Evidence Hub at: <https://www.islington.gov.uk/about-the-council/islington-evidence-and-statistics>

About the Equalities Impact Assessment: Housing Allocations

This data pack/profile was produced by David Clifford, Principal Public Health Intelligence Specialist, and Tara Hendry-Boord, Data Officer, reviewed and approved for publication by Mahnaz Shaukat, Head of Health and Care Intelligence.

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We would also very much welcome your comments on these profiles and how they could better suit your individual or practice requirements, so please contact us with your ideas.

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