

Housing Scrutiny Committee

Overcrowding

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Context to overcrowding in Islington

- **Overcrowding vs severe overcrowding**

In Islington, overcrowding is categorised as a household needing one additional bedroom. In contrast severe overcrowding is categorised as a household that requires two or more additional bedrooms.

- **Scale of overcrowding vs severe overcrowding (*specifically Housing Register applicants*)**

Overcrowded households	2329 (as of July 2022)
Severely overcrowded households	545
Total	2874 (19% of households on the housing register)

- **Why do some households need to move to a larger home?**

Family size growth with additional children	Children who have reached 10 years (opposite sex)
Family members joining from abroad	Children who have reached 16 years (same sex)
Guardianship orders/ foster caring/ adoption	Multi-generational family expansion
Tenants who may have accepted a smaller property after which their family grew with additional children	

Why do we need to tackle overcrowding?

Overcrowding is associated with:

- increased physical and mental health problems
- poorer educational achievement by children
- increased risk of infectious or respiratory diseases
- increased risk of accidents and fires
- reduced stature in children
- poor diet and nutrition is higher in people living in overcrowded conditions
- overcrowding can also have an impact on family life and relationships and lead to family breakdown and increased social tensions with neighbours

How does the Housing Needs service support tenants who are overcrowded?

For overcrowded tenants, typically this relates to:

- advice on mutual exchanges as the best way for tenants to alleviate their overcrowding irrespective of housing points awarded
 - advice on how to prevent damp and mould formation as well as support to rent cheaper storage space from the council
 - advice on support with energy bills
 - housing options advice to consider alternative options to alleviate their overcrowding
 - onward referrals to other council services (quiet spaces for children to study) and voluntary sector services.
- For severely overcrowded tenants, the service can arrange for the provision of space saving furniture to alleviate the effects of severe overcrowding
 - Home visits* - **looking to increase this as we return to a post Covid setting*
 - The home visits are used to signposting tenants to other services e.g. Social Care, Bright Spark, SHINE, Property Services (re repairs), provide advice on bidding, local letting schemes, advising on mutual exchange etc

How does the Housing Needs service support tenants who are overcrowded?

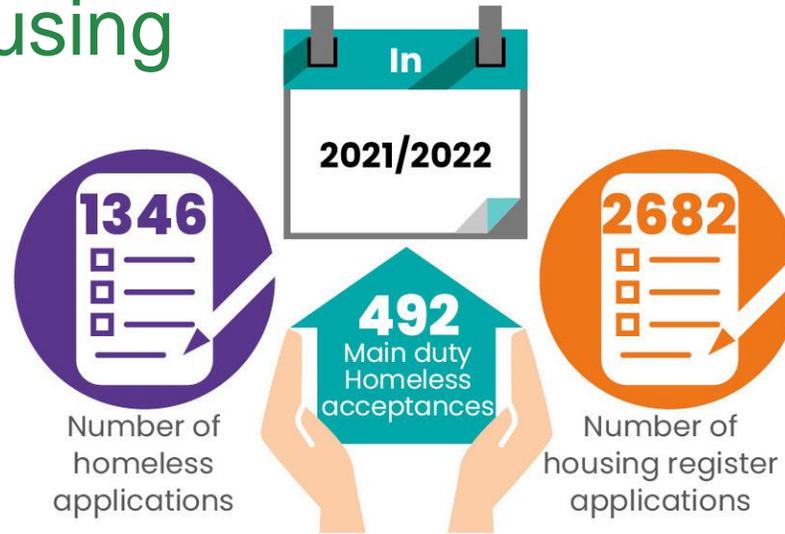
- Supporting downsizers to move to create voids
 - Personalised service to support tenants who are typically vulnerable through the process of downsizing
 - Advanced identification of properties
 - Joint viewings
 - Support with financial incentives- decoration allowance, moving support, utilities re-connections
- Mutual exchange- This is a great way for residents to downsize, thereby releasing their larger home for a larger household.
 - Supporting tenants who wish to exchange properties with another social housing tenant. This is a joint exercise between Housing Needs and Homes and Communities.
 - Within Housing Needs, officers advise residents on how to register online, how tenants can entice others registered looking to move.
 - Incentive provision around decorative/white goods- “works in occupation”

Key performance indicators

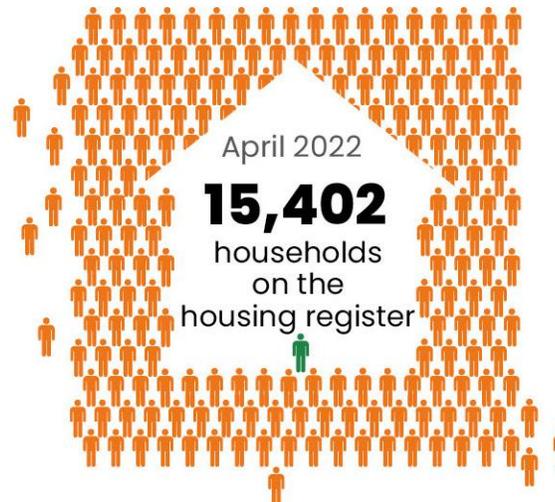
The service measures the achievement of across three key areas.

Key performance indicator	Target	Performance in 2020/21	Outcome
Numbers of overcrowded families assisted to move in to appropriate/suitable housing	150	114	Did not meet the target*
Numbers of underoccupiers assisted to move in to appropriate/suitable housing	150	121	Did not meet the target*
Numbers of household assisted to move in to appropriate/suitable housing via a mutual exchange	150	158	Exceeded the target

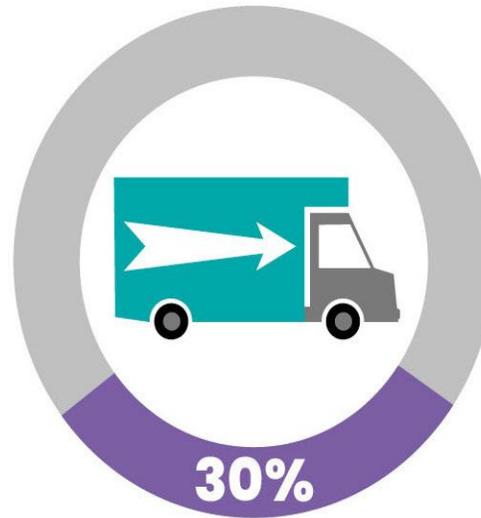
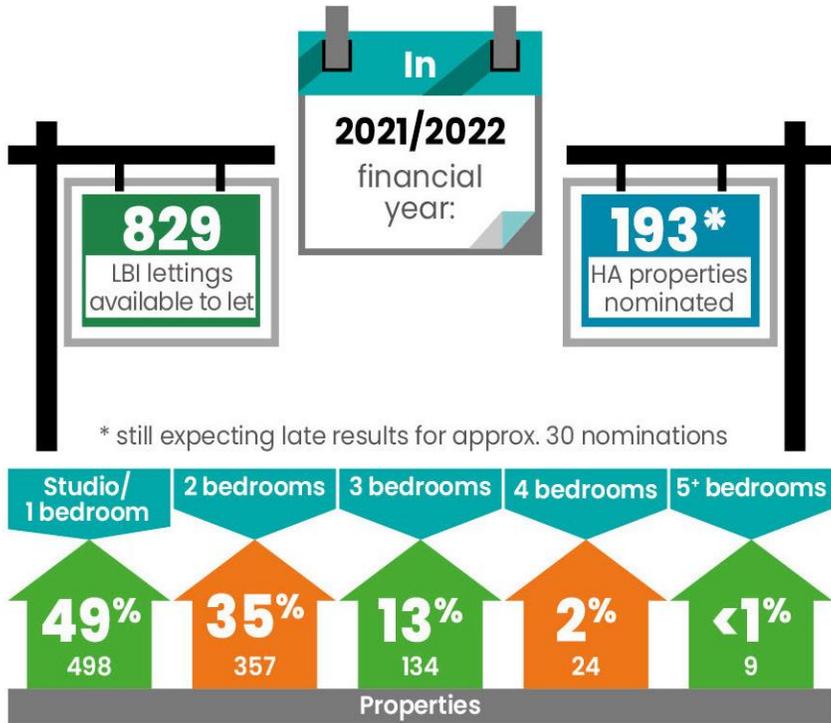
Demand for social housing



By bed size where known	
Number of beds in accommodation	Number of households on the Housing Register
	6697
	2710
	1615
	535
	287



Allocation of social housing facts and figures 2021/22



of lettings were to social housing tenants moving home



of lettings were to homeless households



of lettings were to households on the general waiting list

Allocation of social housing 2020/21 vs predicted allocations for 2022/23

- There are significant budgetary pressures on the Housing General Fund which means the service will need to significantly reduce the number of households in private sector temporary accommodation to below 300.
- Factoring in the current rate of homeless approaches, the expected supply of relet voids and new builds properties, we anticipate having to meet the following percentage of allocations to meet the target of <300



of lettings to social housing tenants moving home



of lettings to homeless households



of lettings to households on the general waiting list

New Build Lettings - 2021/2022

Islington Council new builds

39 new build lettings

- 9 (23%) were downsizers
- 8 (21%) were let to tenants seeking a transfer from their existing home
- 11 (28%) were let to like for like transfers so these households were not overcrowded
- 11 (28%) were let to applicants on the housing register

Of the 28 social housing transfers, multiple chains of moves were progressed leading to 38 households in housing need being housed in suitable homes comprising:

- a) Overcrowded families and severely overcrowded families
- b) Homeless families
- c) Down sizers
- d) Tenants with significant health and welfare issues
- e) Domestic abuse survivors
- f) New Generation Scheme (adult children of social housing tenants)
- g) Care leavers

Housing Association new builds

16 new build lettings

- 5 let to waiting list cases
- 8 were overcrowded of which 2 were severely overcrowded
- 1 welfare/ medical
- 1 medical / Wheelchair need
- 1 downsizer. Resultant void let to a homeless case

Chains are more challenging to identify in the case HA onward moves. We will be offered the onward moves in due course.

"Larger properties produce greater onward moves"

Housing Scrutiny Committee

Overcrowding

Helena Stephenson
Head of Housing Partnerships



Perspective from Tenancy Services

1396 LBI
overcrowded
tenants
registered for
rehousing

- Fire Safety
concerns

- Noise complaints
- Linked to some
ASB
complaints
- Other wellbeing
and safeguarding
issues

- Damp and mould
- Additional 'wear
and tear' repairs

How do we help?

Advice and support	Noise and ASB	Fire Safety and Storage
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promotion and support around downsizing, mutual exchanges• Support to apply for housing transfers by registering for rehousing• Management of succession and 'Use and Occupation' cases• Careful advice around damp and condensation 'It's not lifestyle' Housing Ombudsman report• Support to access repairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promotion of mediation offer• Ensuring appropriate floor coverings are in place• Promotion of youth offer and family support where needed• Casework approach for more serious issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fire Risk Assessment programme to address items left in communal areas• Associated Fire Safety advice that promotes storage solutions• Management and promotion of storage options• Thriving Neighbourhoods project

Comments / Any questions?