

56005

Over the financial year of 2024/2025, what was the average waiting time for your social housing from effective date of current banding to property offer or letting (whichever is easier to calculate).

This information is available at the following link: https://edindexhousing.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/WaitingTimes24_25.pdf

How does the authority handle homeless cases where the authority does not own any stock that would qualify as a suitable offer to the customer to discharge duty, for example customers requiring an x-bed property, where the landlord does not own any stock of this size. Any references to policies or procedures would be preferred if possible.

We have a Local Housing Strategy (LHS) and Housing Emergency Action Plan (HEAP) which anchors decisions we take to meet the scale of the housing challenges in Edinburgh.

We know that many homeless households require homes with bedroom sizes in excess of what stock is currently available through the City of Edinburgh Council and our RSL partners. Our LHS and HEAP have specific streams to enable us to maximise the best use of stock available and plans to increase the variety of housing to work to meet the demand of homeless households.

Our Acquisitions and Disposals (A&D) policy is enabling us to purchase homes to meet the demand for different homeless applicants' needs. The policy for this has changed recently which allows us to consider a broader variety of property types to meet demand. The current insufficient stock levels will drive decisions to increase capacity to ensure we can comply with our legal obligations to offer the homeless household a suitable home.

We are addressing a range of homelessness prevention routes to support households to remain in their current homes, where it is safe and reasonable to do so.

This includes:

- Retrofits of existing Council stock to enable homes to be of a good quality standard
- Prevent homelessness from the private rented sector
- Early intervention work to support households to remain in their home by addressing social needs
- Empower tenants to remain in their homes by settling payment arrangements with their landlords
- Sourcing alternative housing options where a household's home doesn't meet their needs
- Increased tenancy support at the point of sign up

We are working to develop timelines for completing specific workstreams within the HEAP. Within this is a plan to continue to work with RSL partners to maximise lets to homeless households. Currently, we are receiving great support through our RSL partners to not only scale up the percentage of lets to homeless households (65%) but provide support for direct lets for homeless households and those who also have Urgent Exceptional Housing Needs or where a management transfer request is appropriate. Our RSL partners have been incredibly flexible and are continuing to respond to changing demands.

The HEAP also seeks to:

- Explore new financial models and streams to increase the supply of affordable housing
- Develop and implement a plan to ensure that larger affordable homes can be increased
- Explore land opportunities for direct development on strategic sites
- Campaign for increased funding from the Scottish Government to cover increased construction costs
- Explore options for house swap incentives to free up homes which are under-occupied
- Bring more empty homes back into use

In 2024/25, 53% of cases were closed due to the applicant receiving an offer of a socially rented home. However, many homeless households are supported to source alternative forms of housing other than socially rented. Each applicant will be offered a support package to support them to live independently. This will include benefit checks to ensure they are receiving the most amount of benefits available to them, and income maximisation support to alleviate debts. They will also be offered employability support to seek employment, better paid work or more secure work. They will also be offered assistance to access private rented or mid-market rented accommodation, which is accompanied with a financial inclusion check to confirm if the tenancy is sustainable.

The current suspension of the requirement to have a local connection within Scotland can allow for discussions with the applicant to see if they are interested in being referred to another Local Authority. This in no way will be used to seek to circumvent our legal obligations, but in some cases, the household may be unwilling to wait such a long time for a home within the Edinburgh area that meets their needs, that they are willing to be referred to another Local Authority area if that can assist in meeting their needs quicker.

To summarise:

- We are expanding our A&D programme to purchase a variety of properties
- We are expanding a range of prevention options
- We are working with RSL partners to increase capacity to house homeless applicants
- We are continuing to explore housing options for all homeless households as not every applicant will want a social home

Please refer to the information published on our website: [Local Housing Strategy – The City of Edinburgh Council](#)