

# Lambeth Housing Allocation Consultation Results Summary

JANUARY 2024



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## Introduction

About a third of Lambeth residents live in social housing, provided by either the council or a social landlord such as a housing association. The majority of social rent homes in the borough are offered by Lambeth Council to families on the council's housing register, with applicants and tenants able to bid for homes that are available.

More than 43,000 households are currently on this list, including families without a suitable place to live and those whose social rent home doesn't meet their needs looking to transfer. Lambeth has more applicants on its waiting list than any other council. This is because of high demand, but also because we don't limit access to the list.

This number has risen continually in recent years as finding an affordable place to live in the borough has become more and more difficult. Of those 43,000 households on the list, just 800 will successfully bid on a home this year, fewer than one in 50.

Our current Allocation Scheme was introduced in 2013 and **we are now considering what to do so we can make sure the system is making the best use of what homes are available** and that it is as fair as possible. The current scheme is based on four bands. When people bid the person in the highest band get priority. When there are multiple people in the same band who bid on a property it goes to the person who has been on the waiting list the longest.

### Band A: Emergencies and Strategic Priorities

Emergencies and strategic high priority groups<sup>1</sup>

### Band B: High Priority

Households with an urgent housing need: Severe overcrowding (lacking 2 or more bedrooms) Urgent need to move on medical grounds. Those at risk of homelessness who are working with the council to prevent homelessness.

### Band C: Medium Priority

Level 1: Homeless households being provided with temporary accommodation by the council,

Level 2: Households with an identified housing need, but without a high priority: Overcrowding (lacking 1 bedroom) or sharing bathroom/kitchen facilities. A less urgent need to move on medical grounds Homeless households (not being provided with temporary accommodation)

### Band D: Low Priority

All those not in other groups

Those who are adequately housed

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<sup>1</sup> Emergency transfers due to risk of violence • Life threatening medical emergency • Care leavers • Decants of council tenants • Where housing is required to prevent significant harm to a child • To facilitate discharge of child from care • To facilitate discharge from residential care or hospital • Council and housing association tenants downsizing.

## How we consulted

The consultation was launched on 12 October and ran for six weeks until 20 November. In response to community demand the consultation was extended to 19 January.

The main group that we wished to engage with were people currently on the housing register. We contacted everyone on the housing register and sent them a copy of a survey. Where applicants did not have email addresses on our system, we sent them a text message with links to the consultation. Where we held neither email nor mobile phone numbers, we sent a hard copy to their postal address.

Residents were given the option of attending a 'drop-in' if they wanted help to fill in the questionnaire. Sessions were run between 14:00-16:00 at the Civic Centre in Brixton for four weeks during the consultation period. The drop-in sessions were there for residents to discuss the allocation consultation and also the housing strategy which was being consulted upon at the same time. We had 50 residents come to the drop ins in total. Many of the residents attending the drop-ins found the sessions a helpful opportunity to discuss their individual housing situation, in addition to feeding into the overall process.

Posters were put on council estates advertising the consultation including an option for residents who were not online to text in a request to receive a paper copy of the questionnaire.

The consultation was also widely promoted through the council's social media channels. Overall there was an excellent response to the consultation with 2,045 surveys completed.

One organisation that has made a significant contribution to this consultation is Housing Action Southwark and Lambeth (HASL). They are a volunteer run community housing group made up of individuals who are homeless, living in overcrowded accommodation or facing other housing problems. They submitted a detailed response to the proposals and also submitted 218 individual responses on behalf of their members by email. The detailed analysis of the results considers the impact of these answers counting each answer individually and as a single response, showing how it affects the overall proportions of those in support or against the proposals.

As part of the survey responses, people were able to express an interest in attending workshops. These were attended by 63 people. In addition the proposals have been discussed with the council's departmental management teams, Staying Healthy Partnership, LAMPAG (Lambeth Pensioners Action Group), Visit Lambeth Forum Network, and the Lambeth Housing Partnership who represent the main housing associations in Lambeth. We also wrote separately to housing associations in Lambeth as there is a requirement in law to do so when making changes to an allocation scheme.

The allocation proposals were also a topic at the Resident Assembly, a big gathering with council tenants and leaseholders held on 11 November.

## Results summary and our response

The survey and the consultation process more generally considered 6 specific proposals and an open ended question about the allocation scheme in general.

### Should we give more priority to people in Temporary Accommodation?

Overall there is a majority of support for this proposal with more people agreeing (62%) than disagreeing (17%). There are more people who neither agree nor disagree (21%) compared to those

who disagree. The highest level of support for this proposal is among Band C1, those living in temporary accommodation where 96% of people agree.

OUR RESPONSE – Move TA occupants from C1 to Band B

Should we give lower priority to “prevention cases”?

Overall opinion here was much more divided, with slightly more people disagreeing than agreeing and the remainder undecided. This question is similar to the first one about more priority for people in temporary but whereas 62% of respondents agreed with that proposal, only 35% agree that prevention cases should have lower priority. Those in Band B are the most likely to disagree with the proposal.

OUR RESPONSE – “Prevention Cases” remain in Band B.

Should we limit the number of offers?

For homeless households there is a majority support for this approach in all Bands with more people agreeing with the proposal than disagreeing. There is less support from people in Band B and Band C1 than the other groups. Those who have been homeless or threatened with homelessness are less likely to support this proposal than those who have not.

For other households there is also an overall majority of support for this proposal with more people agreeing (46%) than disagreeing (33%). Different to the question on homeless offers, for two of the Bands, A and B, more people disagree with the proposal than agree. The highest level of support for this proposal is among Band C1, those living in temporary accommodation.

OUR RESPONSE – Homeless households limited to one offer, two for other households. We would affect this change by having people removed from the housing register and having to reapply. Homeless households would have their housing duty discharged.

Should we restrict access to the housing register to those that have a chance of being allocated a home?

Overall more people agreed that access to the housing register should be restricted (43% agree compared to 34% disagree). All Bands had more people agreeing except for Band D where the majority disagreed (52%).

OUR RESPONSE – Band D will be removed from the housing register.

Should waiting time be based on time within a band rather than the time of initial application?

Almost 50% of respondents agree or strongly agreed that waiting times should be based on the time within a band which was the majority vote compared to a third who disagreed.

OUR RESPONSE – Waiting time will be based on time in Band.

Should we require applicants to log in occasionally to keep their accounts active?

There was a high level of support that people should be required to log in from time to time, with 73% supporting the idea that this should be required. Of these the vast majority thought that a period of every year would be the best time period.

OUR RESPONSE – Applicants will be required to log in annually to keep their accounts active.

## **Equality Characteristics of Respondents Overall**

The profile of respondents broadly reflects the characteristics of those on the housing register.

- Ethnicity: 47.9% Black, 21.3% White, 19.1% Other.
- Age: 3.3% <24; 24.3% 25-34; 29.8% 35-44; 36.5% 45-64; 6% 65+
- Gender: 72.6% Female, 26.5% Male.
- Disability: 38.3% Yes, 61.8% No.

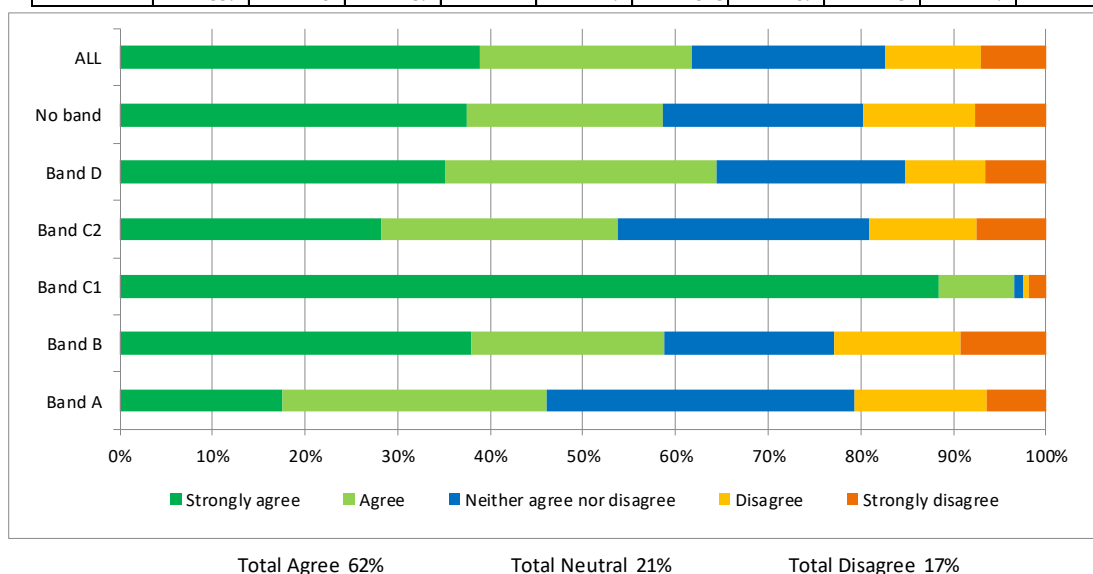
## Detailed analysis question by question

### Should we give more priority for people in Temporary Accommodation?

Applicants with nowhere else to live and in priority need are placed in temporary accommodation (TA) waiting for permanent accommodation. Priority need is usually because someone has children but is also for some vulnerable single people. People in TA are given Band C1 priority. There are 4,000 households in TA and on average over the last two years only 30 households have been successful bidding for a home. We plan to increase their Priority to Band B. We project this would mean an additional 120 households in TA would be allocated social housing each year. They would be competing with other groups in Band B who would have longer to wait as a result.

#### To what extent do you agree that we should give more priority to people in temporary accommodation?

	Strongly agree		Agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Total
Band A	17%	11	29%	18	33%	21	14%	9	6%	4	63
Band B	38%	116	21%	64	18%	56	14%	42	9%	28	306
Band C1	88%	184	8%	17	1%	2	0%	1	2%	4	208
Band C2	28%	192	25%	173	27%	184	12%	79	8%	51	679
Band D	35%	102	29%	85	20%	59	9%	25	7%	19	290
No band	37%	97	21%	55	22%	56	12%	31	8%	20	259
ALL	39%	702	23%	412	21%	378	10%	187	7%	126	1805



Overall, there is a majority of support for this proposal with more people agreeing (62%), than disagreeing (17%). Interestingly, there are more people who neither agree nor disagree (21%) compared to those who disagree. The highest level of support for this proposal is among Band C1, those living in temporary accommodation where 96% of people agree.

If we take the HASL responses into account as individual responses, this increases the proportion agreeing with this proposal to 66% and 15% disagreeing.

Where people **agree or strongly agreed** they thought families need stability and a permanent place to live. There was concern for the poor living conditions in temporary accommodation, the constant moving endured, and the length of time families spent in situ considering it was proposed as a temporary solution. Comments considered the health, safety and wellbeing of families, homelessness prevention, lack of access to adaptations and cost and legal obligation to the Council.

- *People need stability and a permanent place to live asap, and temporary accommodation is very expensive for the council too, so the longer people are in TA is the more it's costing the council."*
- *"TA you can't settle and make long term decisions for example. School, GP etc. you can't feel comfortable in your own surroundings because you are stuck in limbo. You can be moved on at any point in time. This causes mental stress and anxiety."*
- *"Because it's temporary the word temporary takes the peacefulness out of it."*
- *"Stability is essential for everyone's well-being and not having long-term housing can affect mental health and even job prospects."*
- *"I have been in temporary accommodations since 2006."*
- *"I knew of someone who has been in temporary accommodation for 10yrs paying 2 x payment a council flat is paying. Is not fair to them."*
- *"What's available and the conditions of Temporary Accommodation can have a severe negative impact on a person's health and wellbeing."*
- *"I agree that everyone should have an equal chance but living in temporary housing affects your mental health greatly."*
- *"The movement within temporary accommodation is too much. Being in temporary accommodation and been moved around almost every year to a different place is very detrimental to families especially families with children who are in school."*
- *"Some people in TA including myself have kids and has been moved a lot and it has a negative impact on the kids as well as the individual."*
- *"Temporary accommodation has adverse impacts of mental and physical health for adults and children. These options often mean people with disabilities cannot access full adaptations. Overall temporary accommodation is often expensive/poor value for money."*
- *"I am unable to work have disability need assisted housing."*
- *"Obligation under Part 6 HA 1996"*

Where people **disagree or strongly disagreed** thought the proposal was unfair as those in Band B had waited a long time and this proposal would cause further delays. Comments stated being in Temporary accommodation meant families had shelter and were not homeless.

- *"Because of the needs of tenants who's already in band B will be waiting much longer than they are already."*
- *"People in band b are already waiting long enough to be housed. Adding more people increases their waiting time."*
- *"I don't think one should have to wait longer just to reduce the temporary accommodation list. Social housing allocated for the year should be shared amongst the bands."*
- *"They have adequate housing."*
- *"They already have somewhere to live."*
- *"They already have a place to call home."*
- *"They already have a property."*
- *"They have somewhere suitable to live temporarily unlike someone who doesn't."*
- *"Unfair to those waiting."*
- *"Priority should be given to those longest on list."*
- *"Well at least they have a shelter over their head."*
- *"If that is the case people with more housing needs allocated in band B will have to wait longer which is not fair."*



21% of respondents neither **agree nor disagreed** to give more priority to people in temporary accommodation. Comments varied from priority should be based on individual needs to this approach would cause a delay the those in Band B which would effect peoples mental health. Some thought thought that those in temporary accomodation already had somewhere to live so should not be prioritized.

- *"It depends on their circumstances and why they became homeless in the first place."*
- *"Because of the needs of tenants who's already in band B will be waiting much longer than they are already."*
- *"People in band b are already waiting long enough to be housed. Adding more people increases their waiting time."*
- *"I don't think one should have to wait longer just to reduce the temporary accommodation list. Social housing allocated for the year should be shared amongst the bands."*
- *"...They should also be assessed for priority onto Band B such as medical or disability reasons not just because they are in temporary accommodations."*
- *"The cases should be reviewed into who needs more, how their situation is..."*
- *"They already have a place to call home."*
- *"They already have a property."*
- *"They have somewhere suitable to live temporarily unlike someone who doesn't."*
- *"Unfair to those waiting."*
- *"Priority should be given to those longest on list."*
- *"Temporary accommodation has adverse impacts of mental and physical health for adults and children. These options often mean people with disabilities cannot access full adaptations. Overall temporary accommodation is often expensive/poor value for money."*
- *"Well at least they have a shelter over their head."*
- *"If that is the case people with more housing needs allocated in band B will have to wait longer which is not fair."*

#### **Other comments from workshops, drop-ins and emails.**

There was support for giving more priority to temporary accommodation at the workshops. An additional point raised in the detailed HASL response was that if homeless applicants move into Band B that it was very important that all the time they waited in temporary accommodation (from the start of their homeless duty in Band C1) should be treated as time spent in Band B.

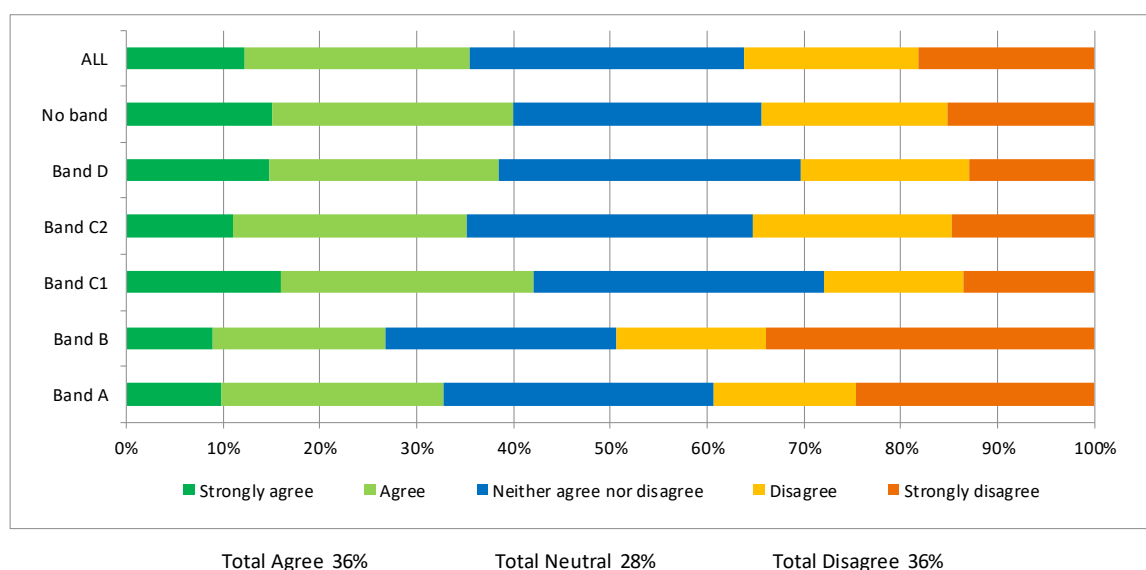
This would be the case.

## Should we give a lower priority to prevention cases?

Band B includes overcrowded households and people with an urgent need to move on medical grounds. It also includes applicants who were at risk of homelessness but have worked with the council to prevent their homelessness. We are considering whether the homelessness prevention cases might be moved to a lower priority, from Band B to Band C1.

### To what extent do you agree that we should give lower priority to prevention cases?

	Strongly agree		Agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Total
Band A	10%	6	23%	14	28%	17	15%	9	25%	15	61
Band B	9%	26	18%	52	24%	70	15%	45	34%	99	292
Band C1	16%	32	26%	52	30%	60	15%	29	14%	27	200
Band C2	11%	70	24%	154	30%	189	21%	131	15%	94	638
Band D	15%	33	24%	53	31%	70	17%	39	13%	29	224
No band	15%	36	25%	59	26%	61	19%	46	15%	36	238
ALL	12%	203	23%	384	28%	467	18%	299	18%	300	1653



Overall opinion here was much more divided, with the same proportion disagreeing than agreeing and the remainder undecided. This question is similar to the first one about more priority for people in TA, but whereas 62% of respondents agreed with that proposal, only 36% agree that prevention cases should have lower priority. Those in Band B are the most likely to disagree with the proposal.

**Where people agreed or strongly agreed** they said it was because they believed other priorities were more important, particularly if they thought it would benefit their own situation. Some thought that if people were adequately housed they shouldn't have a priority.

- "Overcrowded and medical needs should take priority"
- "If you and tenants have worked together to prevent homelessness and there is no risk of homelessness then the priority should be lowered."
- "Homeless people need homes also but they shouldn't be put before people with urgent medical needs"
- "I believe that it is fair if they are moved to a lower priority as they have a property they can call their own. It means people who have been in temporary accommodation can be prioritised to also have a permanent home"
- "To my opinion, I think you people to give priority to Band B to those who have been on the TA waiting list for so long to prevent homelessness. For example: Like me in TA since 2014"

- "I have 2 young children and I have been bidding since 2013 March, I have never once been shortlisted or offered a property the current policy and the way it works is quite clearly not working and it's extremely UNFAIR"
- "Overcrowding is a major issue specially when it involved children this should be a priority and those with medical needs"
- "Because we are living in private renting and paying rent and taxes should also be considered in house allocation"
- "People with medical need should be given priority"
- "I have been living with my relative and his family, his children are grown up, the flat is crowded. I'm 62 years old with health problems. Please I need my own flat"
- "There are people in social housing that do not have appropriate homes and it's about time we have some priority. I am overcrowded and in band C2 on the transfer list. We get forgotten about!"

Where respondents **disagreed** they thought it would be unfair to penalise by de-prioritising applicants who have worked with the council. Families opted for this as a temporary solution on the promise it would lead them to be given more priority to be eventually rehoused and would feel betrayed.

- "How can you agree to give people an incentive and then take it away, those already with the incentive should be allowed to keep it with priority"
- "Homelessness should be more priority than overcrowding"
- "All this would mean is that those in this band with the incentive would now request temp accommodation and you will have more in temporary accommodation"
- "I am in band B and have been on the list since 2014 and have still yet to get permanent housing. I have worked with the council and private renting is only getting more expensive and it's getting increasingly difficult to balance my finances even with housing benefits"
- "I have clients that have worked with the council after they said they would be honoured by doing and as a result they have suffered and lived in less than suitable environments. To now go back on your word to accommodate temp accommodation who are likely living in better conditions is unacceptable and deceitful"
- "Homeless prevention does not mean you are placed in permanent housing. It is a strong possibility you might be faced with homelessness again due to many environmental factors that are not in your controlled eviction- landlord unable to pay their mortgage"
- "I don't think this is fair because this is the fallacy that was sold to me when I was homeless. I was told that I would be given priority if I were to move to a private rented accommodation. I followed this advice, and found myself in a high costing accommodation, and at the mercy of private landlords"
- "Many already in this state feel vulnerable, desperate suffering from anxiety and depression. Putting them in a lesser priority, worsens the mental health"

**Where people were neutral** they gave various reasons including many the same as those given for people who agreed / disagreed. Some neutral responders said that the changing priorities doesn't change anything and that cases should be assessed on their individual merit. Some respondents said that they didn't understand the question.

- "All you are doing is moving people to a lower priority so doesn't really change anything"
- "Each case needs to be considered on its own merits given the individual circumstances"
- "You don't seem to look at individual people's cases to determine the reality of the situation"
- "I believe people who are in an overcrowded house should not be seen as Band B. They are people who are homeless or are fleeing domestic violence who have been put in a lower

band. I think anyone at risk of being homeless and has worked with the council to prevent it and then become homeless should be considered band B”

- “I don’t have anything to say because I’m also being overlooked in this case”
- “Again, everyone’s situation is different but some of the people in priority bands choose to be in that state making it unfair for us on band D having to wait a long time to get a place if it would even happen”

#### **Other Comments by email:**

HASL provided a long, considered answer to this question an extract of which is below:

*“Lambeth residents who engaged with the council’s Temp to Settle policy were promised band B and social housing through this route. The council should keep their promise to these people and they should remain in band B. Also, if the homeless prevention band had not existed then most of these applicants would now be in temporary accommodation. Therefore, the only fair solution is that they have the same priority as homeless households under the new scheme, which is Band B.*

*Furthermore, as a result of legal action with Public Interest Law Centre (and with practical support from HASL) taken by applicants affected by the Temp2Settled Scheme, Lambeth council signed a consent order on 27 May 2020 confirming that applicants on this scheme would remain in band B as long as they remained in the private rented housing arranged by the council. The consent order gives applicants in band B for homeless prevention a legitimate expectation that they would remain in band B as long as they remained in the private rented housing that the council secured. Therefore, removing them from band B now would be unlawful.*

*However, going forward, the council should end the homeless prevention band”*

HASL went on to explain why they didn’t support priority for homelessness prevention cases, feeling that it was “manifestly unfair institutionalised queue jumping”, that it undermined homeless rights and was difficult for resident to explain.

One of our clients wrote into their case worker, articulately explaining their views:

*“I would like to further express my concerns regarding the new allocation system being proposed. I’ve been living in a severely overcrowded property with my family for nearly 9 years and was advised to not seek temporary accommodation and continue bidding as going in to temp accommodation would reduce my priority to band C, knowing this therefore kept me living in the condition I was to ensure my chance of obtaining a permanent property would be honoured. To now learn of the new proposals I feel that Lambeth council is showing absolutely no regard to those that worked with them by not going into temp accommodation and they are not honouring what they said they would do by ensuring we have priority through working with the council. In doing this it also means that those who opted not to go into temp accommodation will now have no choice but to seek temp accommodation as this could be the only option if their priority is reduced. I believe this new system is very biased and not justifiable and I do not believe it will relieve the council of temp accommodation tenants but instead it will increase it.*

*As someone who has opted to not go into temp accommodation to help the council I feel like I am being disregarded and my living circumstances with my two children are being overlooked for those who are very much living in better conditions whilst in temp accommodation. Should these proposals go ahead I would like advice on how I can move forward with my concerns.”*

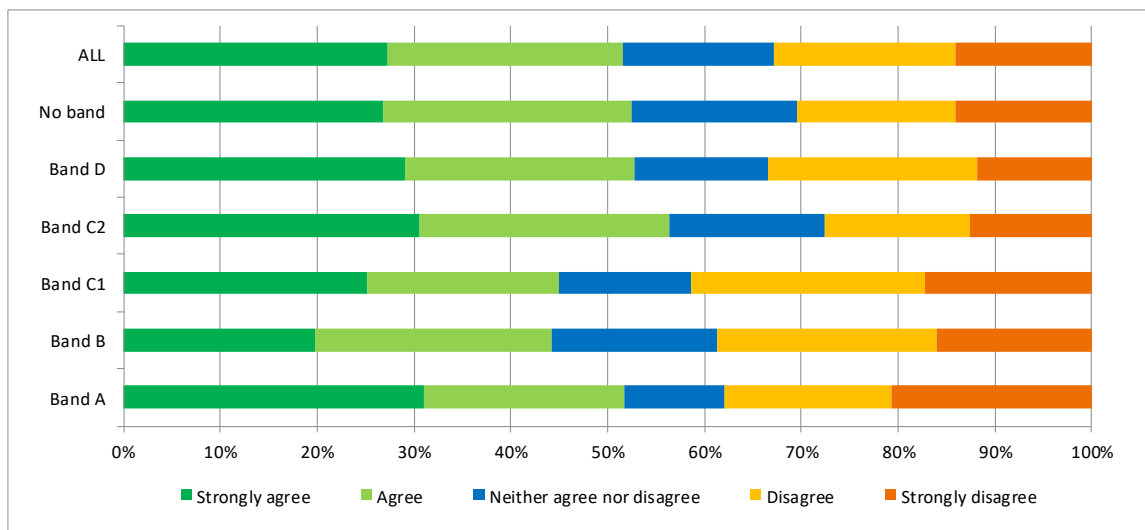
## Should we limit the number of housing offers?

Under the current system, residents with the highest priority can also turn down suitable offers, extending the period of time they wait for a home. This can also lead to properties being left empty while we find someone else. We don't think this is fair to other people on the list. We are proposing to limit homeless households to one offer (in line with homelessness law and what most councils already do) and two offers for other applicants.

### Homeless Households

**To what extent do you agree that we should place limits on the number of housing offers for homeless households**

	Strongly agree		Agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Total
<b>Band A</b>	31%	18	21%	12	10%	6	17%	10	21%	12	58
<b>Band B</b>	20%	54	24%	67	17%	47	23%	62	16%	44	274
<b>Band C1</b>	25%	48	20%	38	14%	26	24%	46	17%	33	191
<b>Band C2</b>	31%	181	26%	152	16%	95	15%	89	13%	74	591
<b>Band D</b>	29%	74	24%	60	14%	35	22%	55	12%	30	254
<b>No band</b>	27%	61	26%	58	17%	39	16%	37	14%	32	227
<b>ALL</b>	27%	436	24%	387	16%	248	19%	299	14%	225	1595



Total Agree 52%

Total Neutral 16%

Total Disagree 33%

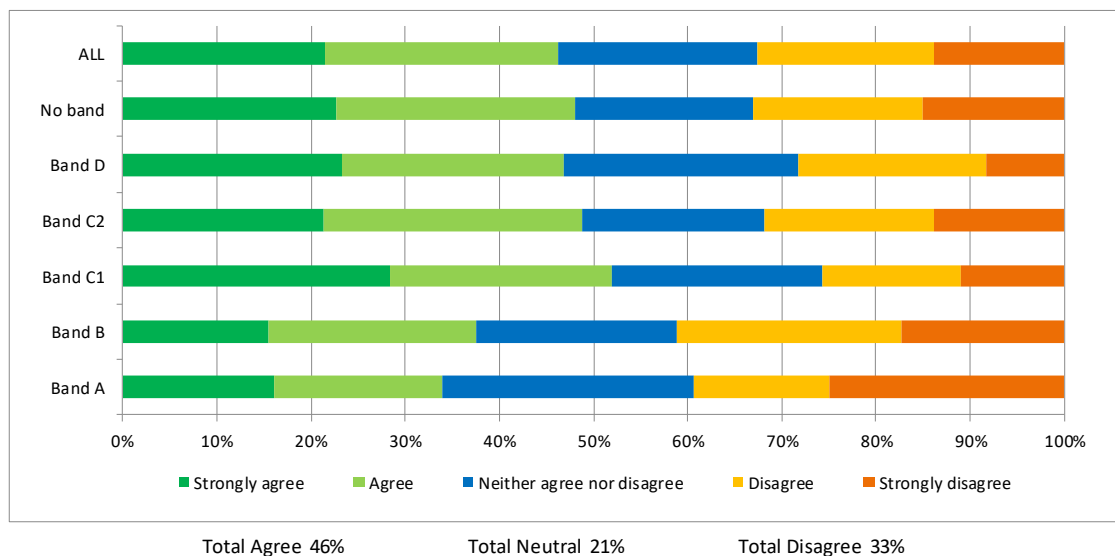
There is a majority support for this approach in all Bands with more people agreeing with the proposal than disagreeing. There is less support from people in Band B and Band C1 than the other groups. Unsurprisingly, those who have been homeless or threatened with homelessness are less likely to support this proposal than those who have not.

If we add in the HASL submission which is 218 respondents, this increases the percentage of those that strongly agree to 36%, meaning that 57% agree and 29% disagree, compared to 52% and 33% respectively if the numbers are only counted once as in the table above. To note that the HASL response strongly supported limits to offers, but that this would be three offers for both homeless and other households to avoid confusion.

## Other Households

To what extent do you agree that we should place limits on the number of housing offers for other applicants

	Strongly agree		Agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Total
Band A	16%	9	18%	10	27%	15	14%	8	25%	14	56
Band B	15%	42	22%	60	21%	58	24%	65	17%	47	272
Band C1	28%	52	24%	43	22%	41	15%	27	11%	20	183
Band C2	21%	118	27%	152	19%	107	18%	99	14%	77	553
Band D	23%	56	24%	57	25%	60	20%	48	8%	20	241
No band	23%	48	25%	54	19%	40	18%	38	15%	32	212
ALL	21%	325	25%	376	21%	321	19%	285	14%	210	1517



As with the question on offers to homeless applicants, overall there is a majority of support for this proposal with more people agreeing (46%) than disagreeing (33%). Different to the question on homeless offers, for two of the Bands, A and B, more people disagree with the proposal than agree. The highest level of support for this proposal is among Band C1, those living in temporary accommodation.

### What people said in their comments:

Where people **agree or strongly agreed** they thought that people should be more accepting of any home particularly when they are homeless.

- "Homeless applicants should accept first offers as it's better than being homeless"
- "If homeless priority should be a home you need not what you want so keep it fair to others"
- "Depending on what is deemed suitable or their reasoning for turning them down"
- "Individuals should not be picky"
- "People who reject the housing offers, leave others waiting for an extremely long time. Some people are ready to move now, because of the severity of their situations."
- "It's unfair for us on band D due to delay and long waiting times. If anyone is desperately in need of a place to live, why the fuss in what accommodation you get."
- "Other applicants have a home, homeless people don't"
- If you are homeless, the chance of a home should not be turned down. any home is better than homelessness. For other applicants I believe two is fair.
- I do not think it's fair in any way for people who need emergency housing to have the right to turn down multiple properties

- "I strongly agree that there should be limits on the number of refusals that people can make in order to reduce the waiting times for properties for everyone. But any limit on the number of refusals should be the same for everyone on the housing waiting list in order to avoid confusion. I think that allowing everyone to have 3 refusals is fair and reasonable." (HASL)

Where people **disagreed or strongly disagreed** many made comments that Lambeth shouldn't force anyone to live somewhere and that because there was such high demand it should always be easy to find someone else to take the property. There was concern over people being made to live in unsuitable accommodation.

- "You can't force people to live somewhere they don't like"
- "There should never be limits on the number of offer, these offers need to be suitable for the applicants and not just somewhere because the council says so.
- "As there are so many people waiting I think if someone doesn't want the flat as it doesn't suit their needs it should be offered to the next person on the list (there are 43000 waiting aren't there?)"
- "The council should not be forcing people to live where they don't want to. Anyway with the bidding system no property stays empty for longer as 4 or more people view them at a time."
- I do not think it's reasonable to give homeless applications only 1 offer as sometimes options are given in areas not suitable ie due to childcare so the applicant can travel to work or children are already settled in a school & changing schools would cause stress
- "There are many reasons for turning down a property. One example is having bad relations with the people within that community. For safety reasons I'd have to disagree with limited offerings."
- "Majority of your properties have issues which as a council you cover up. People should be able to have multiple choice especially when you leave people waiting forever to be place in settled accommodation.
- "To be pressured in to having to accept the first can be very stressful"
- "If multiple people reject the property, it's probably a property issue"
- "The adverts do not give enough information about the properties advertised. There is usually only one generic photo of the outside of a building - not even the one advertised. You can only get to see the property and therefore the actual condition of it by bidding and viewing. Until the adverts show accurate information you cannot restrict bidding."
- "This all needs to be explained clearly to the applicants because at the moment it is not very clear"
- Other housing applicants should not be subjected to a massive control over housing offers, or you might as will remove the bidding system and present us with a property.
- Just because an individual is homeless does not mean the council has the right to disregard individual choices and freedoms of the individual - as though just because they are homeless they should be grateful for whatever they are given and are forced to accept it or live on the streets. This is just the type of thinking that makes the council completely out of touch.
- A human being is the expert on their own circumstances. They know if a home is not suitable. Article 8 of the human rights 1998 provides the right to a private life and home

#### **Other comments from workshops, drop-ins and emails.**

The other events largely mirrored the comments above. Questions were raised about what would happen if an offer were to be refused and the need for residents to be clear on the consequences.

Workshops discussed whether there was more that could be done to provide better information to residents before viewings – could floor plans / videos be provided as was the case in lock down?

Some limiting to the number of offers was generally viewed as a positive thing but residents wanted assurances that there would be a clear policy about what suitable grounds for refusal might be and there was concern about housing officers being fair.

One of the housing officers at the workshop who is involved in the operational management of lettings, was concerned about the administration of limited offers and how to manage the challenges that may result.

At the workshop with housing association partners it was mentioned that having no limits on the number of offers contradicted their approach when carrying out decants which were typically limited to 2 or 3.



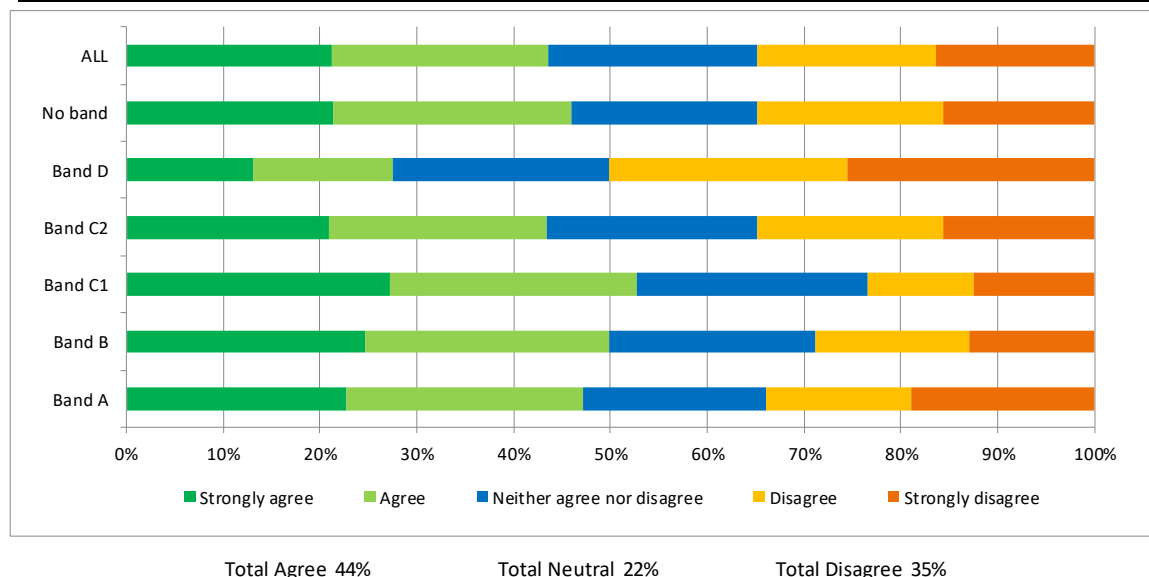
## Should we restrict access to the housing register?

Households are currently able to join the waiting list even if they have no chance of ever being offered a home. Thousands of families put time, effort and emotional energy into bidding for homes week on week. The growing register also requires resources to manage enquiries, complaints and review requests despite fewer homes being allocated. We think that this time can be better spent providing proactive support to those in housing need.

We are proposing to prevent access and remove anyone on the list who only qualifies as “Band D” – applicants who are not in any priority group and includes those adequately housed.

### To what extent do you agree that we should restrict access to the housing register to those who have a chance of being allocated a home?

	Strongly agree		Agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Total
Band A	23%	12	25%	13	19%	10	15%	8	19%	10	53
Band B	25%	65	25%	66	21%	56	16%	42	13%	34	263
Band C1	27%	50	26%	47	24%	44	11%	20	13%	23	184
Band C2	21%	121	22%	130	22%	126	19%	111	16%	90	578
Band D	13%	32	14%	35	22%	54	25%	60	26%	62	243
No band	21%	48	25%	55	19%	43	19%	43	16%	35	224
ALL	21%	328	22%	346	22%	333	18%	284	16%	254	1545



Overall more people agreed that access to the housing register should be restricted (44% agree compared to 35% disagree). All Bands had more people agreeing except for Band D where the majority disagreed 51%.

If we include the HASL results as individual responses the overall result is changed with 38% agreeing and 43% disagreeing.

Those who **agree or strongly agreed** thought this approach would reduce the number of bidders per property and remove residents who did not have an urgent housing need. This would result in the Council focusing on those who have priority and using resources more efficiently. There was concern that tenants on the register who had little to no chance of being allocated a home would have ‘false hope’ which could have a negative effect on a person’s wellbeing.

- *“If they are never going to get a place then not much point being on the list.”*
- *“Lambeth have to draw the line somewhere.”*

- *"Prevents delay"*
- *"This will save time for you to concentrate on people who really need a place."*
- *"It's a waste of resources to have people on a list who have no chance."*
- *"It seems pointless them being given false hope and wasting time on those who do need the help."*
- *"Stops false hope and allows people to look at other options and know the reality sooner than later."*
- *"There is no point giving people false hope."*
- *"If you're not a priority then you shouldn't be there."*
- *"Give opportunity to the families already on the housing register before adding more."*
- *"Those that have no chance of being offered social housing, should not be allowed to join the register & be given the reasons why straightaway. To avoid complaints & unnecessary stress."*
- *"If they will never end up getting a home then it makes it pointless being able to join the list and bid."*
- *"It would make the register significantly lower and allow attention to be focused on the ones who require housing more urgently."*
- *"If the chances of someone getting a property is very low then there should not be a category for them. It is a waste of time."*
- *"Then the people who are in the higher bands will get a better chance and Lambeth would be able to provide better support."*
- *"It doesn't make sense to have people clogging up the register who are never going to be housed."*
- *"If they are in band D it means they don't need the house therefore those on the D should be removed."*
- *"If someone doesn't qualify, they shouldn't apply it's time consuming!"*
- *"If they are not in need of a house, should not need to be on a waiting list."*
- *"This allows the current list to be looked in to sufficiently."*
- *"There is no point putting someone on the register who has no chance of being allocated a home. This only leads to anxiety and unnecessary worry. Focus should be put on how those in the higher bandings can be allocated faster."*
- *"Housing should be offered only to people who are genuinely in need."*
- *"This will give those people in need a better chance."*
- *"If they are never going to be housed why give false hope. Remove."*
- *"If there are people on the housing list who have no chance of housing, the council should just be open and honest to allow the higher priority people to have a chance of being housed because Lambeth wouldn't have to filter through so many people and you would probably get fewer complaints and drained individuals like myself."*
- *"Time and resources can be focused on those more in need."*

Where people **disagree or strongly disagree**, they thought it was unfair and would take away individual choice. Restricting access to the register, is against equality of opportunity. It was thought that everyone should have access regardless of how unlikely a person is to be allocated a home.

- *"Everyone should be able to bid."*
- *"Choice is really important as other factors also cost may be applicable to confirming a home that allocations may or may not meet standards or expectation."*
- *"Everyone should be given the same opportunity."*
- *"To take away hope could have a serious mental impact on individuals."*

- *"Some in band D, for example those at risk of domestic violence is a higher priority than overcrowding and so removing altogether is unfair. There should be a chance to review band of individuals so they can move up if needed."*
- *"Has no impact. Only makes your waiting list look smaller."*
- *"Everyone should have the opportunity."*
- *"The housing register should remain open for all. What should be restricted is those with no priority being allowed to bid until those with high priority have been permanently placed in permanent housing. This would give all those on the Register a more realistic idea of when they should and can bid for suitable properties."*
- *"Should be up to the applicant if they want to keep bidding."*
- *"Everybody needs a place to live. Just because they don't have certain 'qualifying' issues doesn't mean they don't struggle to find a home. If they are connected to the borough they should be allowed to bid. People are applying for social housing because they need it."*
- *"There should be equal opportunities to all that request for social housing."*
- *"I think it would make it worse because at least they are on the system. Really this just shows the reality of the growing need for social housing or laws in place that cap rent so landlords aren't in control, I believe they have laws like this in other countries and it means less people need social housing. Taking these people off the register will destroy their hope but it doesn't necessarily mean they will be able to find another solution."*
- *"Every citizen should be given an opportunity to apply for social housing if they chooses."*
- *"The proposal to restrict access and maintain the status quo seems like a missed opportunity. It's not the residents' fault that the council has failed to manage its finances, contracts, and land effectively to address a challenge of this magnitude. What residents need is a forward-thinking, action-oriented council that is willing to break free from the shackles of the past and proactively seek solutions."*
- *"It's not fair and everyone should be treated equally."*
- *"Build more homes, E comes before J so Edify don't Justify."*
- *"Now this will favour Lambeth Council the upper hand to chuck anyone on band D. This is wrong on every level... working with outside of the Borough and even outside of London with different boroughs will help those who wants to go out of London would definitely be something should be look into."*
- *"I think the focus should be on providing more housing not limiting people's access to the registry. I also think there should be honesty for new people joining that it'll be a long wait."*
- *"People deal with issues differently. Everyone's situation should be considered."*
- *"Needs to be a clear criteria for those eligible/not to be able to restrict this. A chance is still a chance."*
- *"It's unfair especially to those who have lived in the borough 20 plus year."*
- *"Why do you have to restrict their housing right?"*
- *"Every Lambeth resident should have an opportunity to bid."*
- *"Focus on providing supply not denying needs."*

Those who **neither agree nor disagree** felt that each case should be assessed on a case-by-case basis to determine who should access the register. It was also felt that all should have access however, some would receive restricted access based on a change in circumstances.

- *"Restricted access until change of circumstance."*
- *"Someone in Band D circumstances can change so this can unfair. Maybe limit them access to bid until/if their circumstances change and then allow them to bid with proof of change of circumstances rather than completely giving them no access."*

- *"I think it depends on the individual circumstance; it should be judged on a case by case."*
- *"Would need more information for and informed opinion."*
- *"When they're in need they can move to a higher band. But maybe you can disable them from bidding if there is no use in them bidding."*
- *"Depending on the situation."*
- *"It's depends on a person situation."*
- *"I think everyone should be allowed to be on the list and bit for housing regardless getting one or not. People's situations can change any time."*
- *"Case by case."*
- *"I think these people should be allowed on the list, but their reason for wanting to move should be taken into account. If there is a good reason they should be allowed to stay on list, if not then maybe they should be removed from the list, but put on a different list named (not priority applicants), for people who might be able to be moved one day, only after priority applicants have been moved and there are other property's free and available for them to be considered to be moved into. Priority applicants should be put before the not priority applicants and be put on two separate lists (the not priority applicants will not have a guarantee on how long they will have to wait before they get considered to view another property."*
- *"Should be case by case and if there are other needs, if not then they should be removed or assigned to the private rent team in Lambeth."*
- *"Seems like a waste of time and giving false hope. But then their circumstances may change in the future which means they are already on the list and just need to update their circumstances."*

#### **Other comments from workshops, drop-ins and emails.**

The discussions at the workshops generally reflected the mixed views as described in the comments from the surveys. There is still a belief out there that if you wait long enough you will get somewhere, but this isn't true. One workshop attendee described her experience of being incorrectly placed in Band D, and the fear that administrative errors could prevent people from being on the register. Another attendee described how she had successfully bid on a bedsit property while in Band D, so it does happen.

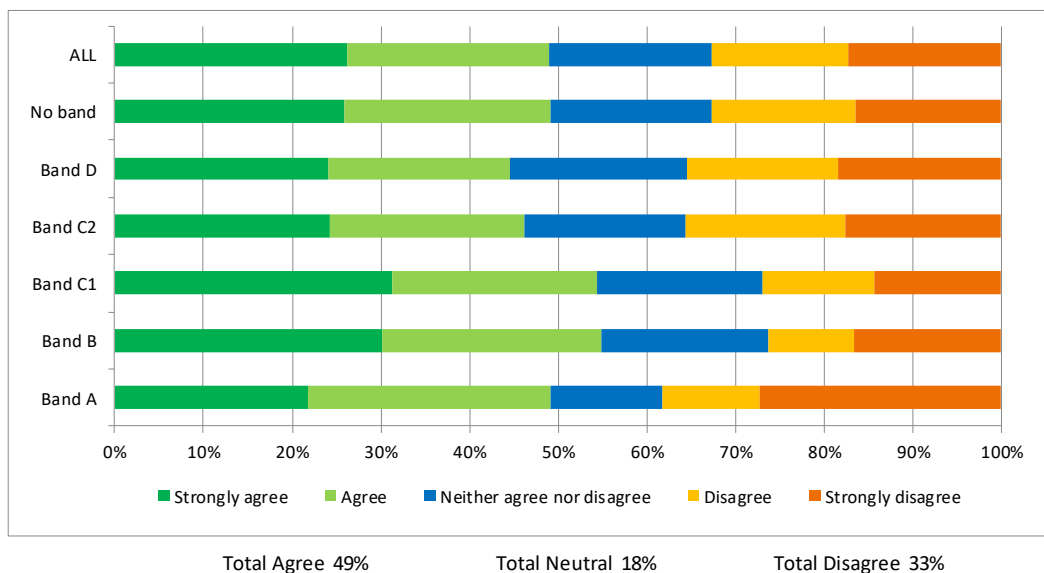
In their detailed response HASL said that it was an important tool to show the government the desperate need for more social housing. They said that many people on Band D now will have an urgent housing need in the future and having an active account and understanding of how the scheme works will be useful in those instances. They also raised the point that we are likely to get complaints from people not allowed to join the list and that savings of resources may be limited.

## Should waiting time be based on time within a band rather than the time of initial application?

Currently, when people with the same band bid on the same property the person who has been waiting the longest wins. The time on the register is taken from when they first joined. So, for example if someone joined the register as a teenager but only became a higher priority applicant many years later, they would be in a much stronger bidding position than someone who only joined the register when their housing situation reached crisis point. We don't think this is fair.

### To what extent do you agree that waiting time should be based on time within a band rather than time of application?

	Strongly agree		Agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Total
Band A	22%	12	27%	15	13%	7	11%	6	27%	15	55
Band B	30%	78	25%	64	19%	49	10%	25	17%	43	259
Band C1	31%	57	23%	42	19%	34	13%	23	14%	26	182
Band C2	24%	139	22%	126	18%	104	18%	103	18%	101	573
Band D	24%	58	20%	49	20%	48	17%	41	18%	44	240
No band	26%	57	23%	51	18%	40	16%	36	16%	36	220
ALL	26%	401	23%	347	18%	282	15%	234	17%	265	1529



49% of respondents **agree or strongly agreed** that waiting times should be based on the time within a band which was the majority vote. If we consider the HASL responses individually, this increases the proportion to 55%, with 29% disagreeing.

Many responses sympathized with those who have waited for a long period but felt strongly the process should be needs based rather than time based. It was felt that those who have been on the list for a long time do not have needs which are urgent. Comments included those who wanted a more equitable approach by suggesting the Council recalculate the criteria to include time within a band whilst also considering the time of application.

- *“Somebody in a critical situation needs to be housed first.”*
- *“It’s about need not convenience.”*
- *“Time of application does not give time of urgency someone who has been allocated Band A for example by social worker shows there is an urgent need why prioritise someone just because they were in the application for long? Wouldn’t they have been offered a place long time ago if it was that urgent.”*

- *"I think if you're in a band it means you have been identified as having a housing issue. You need to look at their circumstance to the person, family you are dealing with and their need at the time."*
- *"Should be reviewed how in more needed."*
- *"I agree with that because if you have been waiting years to be housed you should have forts dibs unless it medical or an emergency."*
- *"People's circumstances change. Time within the band is the best option rather how long of being an applicant."*
- *"Disabled person and sever sick people should get priority at any time; they should get priority at any point."*
- *"Having a need to join the housing register should be need based. Someone could be in far more need of a property but will be overlooked for someone who signed up years before. It's a timeline many people have no choice over."*
- *"When one becomes a priority, it's seen as an emergency/urgent based on their current situation."*
- *"Crisis level should take priority."*
- *"Someone could be in more need."*
- *"Being on waiting list for a very long time can be quite distressing to those who in dire need but are helpless due to growing housing demands. However, some situations might require urgent housing provisions as in case of emergencies which may be unprecedented. I'll agree that time within the band should be considered in all fairness, but considerations should also be given to those in critical need due to unforeseen circumstances."*
- *"Things change and waiting times should change alongside them."*
- *"For someone to join due to crisis then that's a cry for help. This could be due to dangers in the home, mental health, disability, illness. I don't think it's fair that those people will wait longer because they registered after a person. Crisis and urgent need should be just that. Priority should be the reason not the time on the register."*
- *"Yes, but if you think this situation is unfair then split out your bands better to make an unavoidable crisis higher priority than a slow (perhaps avoidable) situation such as eventual overcrowding."*
- *Current circumstances must take priority. Time still is a factor within the same band.*

Overall, 33% of respondents **disagree or disagreed** that waiting time should be based on time within a band. It was considered unfair to those who had been waiting longer. Prioritising those based on time within a band, would cause significant delays to those who had been waiting a long time. It was highlighted that this would cause a negative impact on the wellbeing of those who had to wait for a long period of time.

- *"I think it should be based on time on application, because everyone that has a crisis will be getting houses and people that having waited many years will get pushed behind further, it's not fair."*
- *"Time on the register should absolutely be relevant. It would be unfair for someone to move up a band if their needs changed and they trumped people who have been on the register longer."*
- *"This will impact existing applications and that is unfair."*
- *"Those who have been on the list longest should have priority,"*
- *"I have been on register since 1999. I have always been overcrowded and now I have medical needs that put me into band b however raising a family in overcrowded circumstances brings on depression which leads to other medical issues be it mental health or physical health. I'm still waiting. I know of a few families that have moved permanently at least 5 times that is not fair. I'm still at same address."*

- *"The emotional and mental even physical turmoil a person can experience when in need of housing is a serious issue, so only becoming qualified once the band changes, if it ever does, is unfair."*
- *"Person who has waited the longest should get the property it's only fair. The system of giving new applicants properties over older applicants is a part of the problem."*
- *"It should be based on both of those points."*
- *"Some people are already struggling from the moment they are placed on the register but do not have any other option to remain there until prioritised which in itself can cause a lot of distress. I do not see why someone has to reach crisis point in order to be prioritised."*
- *"People have put time into emotionally bidding and never being accepted for properties why take this away from them?"*
- *"Some of us have been on the housing register for Iver 10 years and still haven't been housed."*
- *I was on band c and moved to band b Been on register for I think 11 years now so that should be considered."*
- *"I have been on the list for over 16 years, and I have never been offered a property. It is not fair. I understand that some people may experience difficulties which makes them a higher priority, however that should not take away the fact that people have been on the list for years and should be prioritised."*
- *"Because it's not fair you have been registered for long and they give it to someone that just came."*
- *"Waiting for so many years should be considered."*
- *"They still were in need for social housing hence they applied and have been waiting. It will be unfair to waste all their years of waiting."*
- *"Whilst situations can change and increase a person's banding position. The time spent as an applicant in totality should be considered, as there was a need from the onset."*
- *"People who have waited the longest should be given priority."*
- *"It's not fair or balance if person waiting a long time."*
- *"Both conditions should be taken into account."*
- *"If someone has been bidding for many years then as long as there is a valid reason for them to be on the bidding list then yes, they should be priority."*
- *"Time of Application."*
- *"You are allocated to band for a reason. Amount time on waiting list is important."*
- *"Duration of the applicant waiting time should still be considered."*
- *"Should be the length of time of being on the register."*
- *"Should be based on time and banding."*
- *"It's not fair to house someone that been on the list for 5 years over someone that has been the list for 15 years."*
- *"Waiting time needs to be taken into consideration as there will be reasons for someone joining the register in the first place. Why would that not matter?"*  
*"Time on list should be the key factor."*
- *"Time of application should be calculated, someone waiting for 10 years shouldn't get deprioritised by someone who became homeless recently."*
- *"The applicant who has been waiting longest would always be pushed back. They have been awarded priority for a valid reason. It's about fairness."*

Overall, 19% of respondents **neither agree nor disagreed**. They commented that it was important to assess needs on a case-by-case basis. Interestingly, it was felt that that a combination of time and

individual's priorities should be considered and acknowledged this is a complex matter trying to meet the needs of everyone.

- *"This is a very complex and I don't have an idea."*
- *"I think the length of time a person has been waiting should be highly prioritised based on the extreme negative impact it can have on someone's mental health. I also believe that priority Banding should also be considered alongside the length of stay in temporary accommodation."*
- *"I can see the merit of both arguments."*
- *"If they have been on the register for a long time, and the band has changed, it means there have been multiple situations where housing has been required. Without going into individual circumstances there is no way to tell if a person that has been on the waiting list has needed a higher band a long time before the change. Investigation is needed."*
- *"Hard to say really, I think both should be taken into consideration. For example, I could be homeless at any time, my daughter just started a school and has settled and I also have a support network close by. I have been bidding for nearly 4 years and I'm a BAND B. I can actively see my numbers reduce monthly which actually gives me peace of mind that I'm getting closer to finding a home for me and my daughter. So, I think both should be taken into consideration."*
- *"I think consideration for both instances is better. It takes into account the length of time plus the order of priority."*
- *"Circumstances change."*
- *"It's difficult to say one way or the other. If you give one case higher priority due to their circumstances which may include a crisis situation, you are then taking away another's right. Perhaps there should be a review of a person's personal circumstances as they may improve and so would no longer be considered a priority."*
- *"Dependant on circumstances."*
- *"This statement is only valid with a proposed alternate method of weighting requests."*
- *"This is a tricky one, and might have to be considered case by case."*
- *"It all depends on circumstances and based on case merit..."*
- *"The cases shall be examined more individually. Someone, who is longer on the list might also be in a fragile situation and need."*
- *"It all depends as everyone's situation is different..."*
- *"Both parties are just as deserving. A person waiting for 15 years who is struggling to be housed and another who is in band A - this is incomparable." Both*
- *"Each case is different, in some cases applicants who are in more need than someone who has been"*
- *"It would all depend on the individual's situation."*
- *"Depends on individual circumstances."*

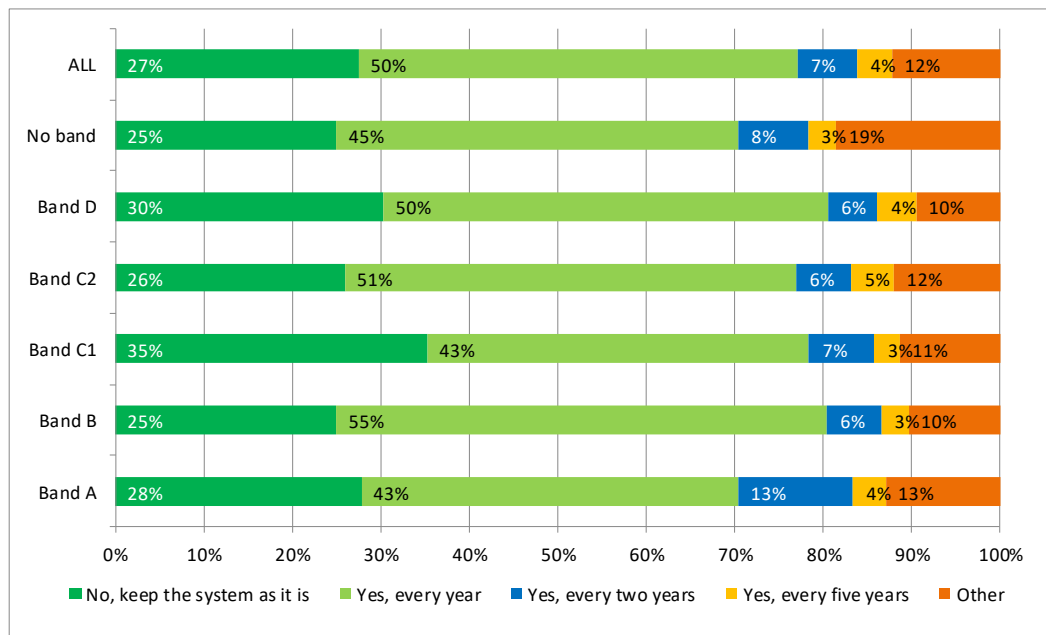
#### **Other comments from workshops, drop-ins and emails.**

There were really mixed views at the workshops with some agreeing others disagreeing for the same reasons as those described above.

The HASL response supports the proposal, but has concerns over the quality of the council's data and suggests that there needs to be a process for applicants to review their 'time in band' date and check that it is correct.



## Should we require applicants to log in occasionally to keep their accounts active?



There was a high level of support that people should be required to log in from time to time, with 73% supporting the idea that this should be required. Of these the vast majority thought that a period of every year would be the best time period.

If we put the 218 responses from the HASL submission into the figures this reduces the proportion supporting the proposal from 73% down to 63%.

12% of people suggested a different time, with a range of answers including weekly, monthly, and every six months. No one suggested that it should be more than five years.

### What people said in the comments?

Where people said that we should **keep the system as it is** they raised concerns that people might just forget, and that it could be an issue for vulnerable residents. Questions were raised about what the purpose of such an initiative might be and whether we were looking to deliberately take people off the list possibly for political reasons. Others made the point that it could be bad for mental health to be constantly bidding for a home unsuccessfully.

- I have been in a situation where I forgot about the bidding system but to log back on was so easy and such a relief
- Because we don't need to log in to see properties
- If people do not log in they will not bid therefore they are not interfering with the process. This is just another mechanism to reduce the "image" of the housing service in Lambeth rather than the actual impact by finding ways to simply remove people from the register rather than actually house them.
- you're just trying to reduce your waiting list for political purposes.
- People do not always remember
- Because login and no good news can bring bad days
- Some people might struggle to use the internet that often especially old people or those with disabilities.

- Most people haven't got it written down and would have to search in their emails for when they received their login, this seems a bit stressful if you'd have to full login years later
- A lot of vulnerable people on the housing list have limited access to the internet. They also may have chaotic, difficult lives, mental health issues, and a lack of support. Forcing them to log in to a website in order to stay on the list is arbitrary and cruel. The only reason to do this would be in order to trick people into forfeiting their place on the housing list through forgetting to log in.
- No as many people suffer with bad memory and could easily forget unless you have a system in place to send a reminder to said person
- I mean, people who desperately need housing login only to find that they are s are still very low in the queue of ever getting a safe permanent home and now you want to take away their right of bidding just because they haven't logged in in a while to see that misery .. wow
- Everyone should feel secure that they are on the register. The worry of homelessness is bad enough without having an extra thing to worry about. You can always send people reminders to keep you updated in case their circumstances change.
- I only understood about the bidding process a few months ago I would have been deleted under proposals and be none the wiser. Maybe you should email or post people on the list to confirm whether they need still be on the list, just as you do for electoral register
- this will increase the purposeless bidders that run up the numbers on the adverts and actually make it impossible for the potential successful applicants.
- i don't have a problem with the logging in. just thst it's demoralising thinking there's no point to bid when you've never even had a chance
- I worry most vulnerable will not log on

Those that **supported annual logins** made references to making sure people still had a need for housing and that it's important the council has up to date details. Checking in once a year seemed like a reasonable request to many respondents. Some who supported the concept only did so with the proviso that people would be made aware of this requirement and that something was in place for people who aren't online.

- This will help eliminate people who longer require social housing and free up more space.
- If you have a housing need I believe you'll be actively seeking accommodation or at least logging in 2/3 times a year. I think it's reasonable.
- As you say - people move on or their circumstances change
- To ensure people still have local need for housing
- If you are not logging in at least once a week your case must not be urgent
- If they're not logging in, they're clearly not in housing need. Remove them from the register!
- Yes because it will be easier to view and understand
- Because if they're inactive they probably have suitable accommodation and only want a social home for convenience. They may be making others who need it more who are active all the time miss out.
- It makes the list longer unnecessarily. Accurate data will assist in meeting the needs of housing.
- My reason for this decision is because it will shorten the waiting time for people who are living in the area and are I titled to a property to get one and eliminate those who are no longer in the borough.
- Knowing who's active gives you a clear view of who is still in need
- Whoever actively bids should be given priority over those that only login once in a while They clearly already have adequate housing and are not in any urgency to seek adequate housing

- I am one of those applicants, and I have no idea how to even log onto the system. An annual touchpoint would clear your system out and would also let people waiting know you have their application and haven't forgotten them.
- I don't think that doing everything electronically is ethical as it immediately excludes all this who cannot access their accounts (the elderly, the mentally ill, those with inadequate access to support staff etc). But some annual check that requires a response (ideally to go out by post, electronically & get a follow up call of no response) should happen. This is just sensible database maintenance.
- I believe if you move out of Lambeth you should be removed from the list all together.
- A reasonable approach seems to be logging in once a year, though reminders should be sent out.
- You sent me the email to complete as I was 'on the waiting list', when in fact I was given a housing association property over 20 years ago. At this point you should have taken me off the list. If in need there is no reason why you should be leaving it from one year to the next to log into your account and bid
- Online services mean this isn't an onerous task
- Seems fair as long as people are aware this is the practice.
- This seems reasonable as long as the system can send people a reminder on their phone. There may be highly vulnerable people, including those with certain disabilities whom I would exempt from this requirement.

The answers for people **who responded two or five years** gave similar perspective to those agreeing with one year. Some additional thoughts are listed below.

- I would say every 2 years, as sometimes people have no hope. Like myself I bid and it seems like I'm getting nowhere. As Band A and B get the offers
- every year may seem a bit too much but two would be reasonable. On the other hand, why not using other registers to know if applicants have moved away from the borough?
- I think every 5 years would be best as a lot can happen within those years and just to make sure you have given enough to say they are in need

#### **Other comments from workshops, drop-ins and emails.**

The discussions at the workshops were similar to the comments from the surveys, with mixed views. There was a sense among some of the discussions that regular bidding demonstrated a level of need that in some way should be reflected with additional priority. Often the initial reaction to the question was that of course people need to bid, although positions became more nuanced when it was pointed out the potential downsides, particularly for people who may be vulnerable or with limited online access.

The detailed response from HASL summed up the issues well, "No, keep the system as it is. The risk of requiring applicants to log in occasionally means that more vulnerable people, for example people without digital skills or who do not speak English as their first language, could risk having their bidding accounts closed. Someone in band C2 could understandably give up bidding for a long period of time after years of bidding unsuccessfully, but this does not mean that they do not have a housing need. Or they could have lost their login details, and because they were not close to being successful or have language barriers, they may not have contacted the council about this. If there are accounts that have been inactive for an extended period of time such as 3 years, the council could send an email or letter to the applicant reminding them about their account, providing a reminder of their login details, and reminding them to do a change of circumstances application if they have had any change of circumstances."

## Other comments?

We received a wide range of suggestions both from the surveys, emailed responses and discussions at the workshops. One thing that came across is that there are a number of statements and questions demonstrating misconceptions about the allocation scheme which are untrue but may be quite commonly believed. We will review how information is provided in the future to help dispel them. The results below are separated out into suggestions and questions.

Suggestion / Comment	Lambeth response
Can you allow bidding to go across different local authorities for people who would like to move elsewhere?	Social housing access is typically restricted to individuals with a local connection. For existing tenants seeking to relocate to a different borough, various options, such as mutual exchange, are available. Further information can be found on our <a href="#">website</a> .
Give priority to people born in the UK not those born elsewhere; priority for British citizen (and other similar comments)	It would be unlawful, and contrary to our ethos as a borough committed to equity and justice, to undertake such an action.
Build more homes!	Lambeth is currently formulating a new housing strategy, with the delivery of more affordable housing standing as one of its three primary priorities.
Private landlords charging fortunes should be restricted from charging whatever they want and Lambeth should put a standard rent fee across the borough	Lambeth does not have the authority to control rents in the private sector.
Giving people adequate homes from the beginning will also avoid complications down the line I.e. a single parent should always be given a 2 bed minimum not a 1 bed - as when the child grows they'll need bigger and have to apply all over again. A family with different sex kids should be given adequate rooms to accommodate boys/ girls and not wait until they've hit puberty to re house them	Due to limited supply, allocating larger homes is prioritized for households with older children.
You should not accept anyone who applies, only people living in the borough for a length of time should be accepted.	Social housing allocation in Lambeth typically requires a 'local connection' of residing in the borough for 2+ years.
The scheme is rubbish and only works for the people that know council/housing association workers	That is not the case.
Happy that the allocations policy is being reviewed. Would like to see Lambeth offering/ signposting alternative means of housing eg. IMR's assisting with securing deposits for private rent etc.	Lambeth provides advice and assistance, including deposit support, for anyone facing homelessness.
Young carers should have their own bedrooms	While ideal, prioritizing family size accommodation could be unfair to other overcrowded households.

Is age a factor in what Band you are placed in?	The age of children may influence bedroom allocation but doesn't automatically affect priority bands.
Many homes lay empty yet the council says there is a lack of stock	Minimizing the number of empty homes is a priority in Lambeth's new housing strategy.
Some of us also need to be rescued please consider the Band D applicants	Band D individuals are considered adequately housed and are placed at the bottom of the priority list.
we have 2 therapy dogs but all your properties state no pets allowed. Again I'm not able to bid yet	Council tenants are allowed to have pets in their properties.
People that need an extra bedroom (whether one or more) should be in band b.	We recognize the need to prioritize individuals and families facing severe overcrowding, particularly those without adequate two-bedroom housing. Transitioning everyone into Band B, as proposed, would, unfortunately, be unjust for those experiencing the most critical housing challenges. Our commitment lies in ensuring fair and balanced allocations that address the specific needs of our residents.
The actual property adverts need to more accurately reflect the current state of a property. Actual photos of the property inside and out. A checklist of room sizes, what is up to date within the property, and EPC ratings etc., should be included.	Improving information about available properties is under consideration following feedback.
The council should present ads only when the property is in good liveable condition. Social housing renters do not have either the time, money, or experience to be able to afford moving costs and decorating costs all at once. Well maintained, clean & basic neutrally decorated properties should be the minimum for an advertised property at all times.	Allowing people to view properties during ongoing work is preferred to reduce empty home durations. We do offer some support with decorations for older tenants who are unable to do the work themselves.
Also people have private properties that they rent to others, while still living in their council flats -is that right?	There's no legal restriction on council tenants buying another property and renting it out.
I think home visit should be initiated to understand the conditions and situation of people	The number of people on the housing register makes certain requests unfeasible.
All I can say I find some of Lambeth housing officers very rude and don't know how to talk to people from my experience.	Apologies are offered for any dissatisfaction, and the aim is always to provide a professional and empathetic service.
Has the council still got properties in Bromley, Sutton, Frome and Banbury?	Banbury and Frome Homes were transferred to Sanctuary Housing Association in 2018.
Please number paragraphs in new policy	Certainly, we can accommodate that request.
Residents that have been housed in poor purpose built homes with no washing machines/badly refurbished property should be	Regrettably, we are unable to furnish individuals relocating to social housing with white goods.

given the opportunity to bid for other properties.	While it would be a welcome addition, budget constraints prevent us from allocating funds to this non-mandatory provision.
How many applicants are on the different bands?	As of October 2023: Band A – 2,703 Band B – 5,584 Band C1 – 3,828 Band D – 11,351
How long does it take to get a flat?	The frequency of being offered a property varies based on band, bid, and property availability.
The system needs more transparency on who get the flats and why. Why are some properties removed from the system and readvertised?	Various factors contribute to this occurrence, one of which may be inaccuracies in the property description.
Currently only council housing tenants who are statutorily overcrowded qualify for Band A. This unfairly excludes housing association tenants who are statutorily overcrowded. Those in housing association homes should be included alongside council tenants in band A for statutory overcrowding.	Overcrowded housing association tenants will have a relatively high priority for rehousing, by being in Band B and housing associations can also facilitate moves within their own stock.
We have also struggled to get the council's environmental health and enforcement team to make referrals for band A for enforcement. There needs to be training on this priority so that people affected by enforcement action can access their rightful position on the waiting list.	Feedback on environmental health concerns has been relayed to the environmental health team.
Band A is the council's emergency band. There should be an expediated and clear procedure for emergency band A requests and these should be processed within 48 hours. From the council's housing allocations policy, it is not clear who to contact or what the process is for requesting band A in emergency situations	Band A requests are managed by officers through referrals and decided by a panel, and a 48-hour response time is not feasible.
People who have become homeless as a result of domestic abuse should have two years extra time added to their housing register account to reflect this additional need	At this review, we have decided not to pursue that course of action.
Remove the rule banning family members aged 21 and above from housing register applications. The bedroom entitlement rules are very strict. The current policy says the children of the same gender can share until 21 years old. This should be reduced to 16 years old (and ideally every child should have their own bedroom).	When considering register applications that include individuals over the age of 21, there is a potential impact on the allocation of large family-sized properties. In such cases, these properties are primarily assigned to tenants with grown-up children who have been on the waiting list for an extended period. This approach aims to recognize and reward the loyalty and patience of those who have been waiting the longest. By implementing this

	strategy, we strive to ensure an equitable distribution of housing resources while meeting the diverse needs of our community.
The current scheme appears to require joint applicants to start their waiting time again if their relationship breaks down. If there is relationship breakdown, applicants should not lose their waiting time. The current rules discriminate against women. They discourage women from leaving abusive relationships.	We concur that this situation is undesirable, and as a proactive measure, we will incorporate a provision into the allocations policy. In cases where applicants need to submit a new application due to specific circumstances, they will be able to inform the council, and we will ensure their original application date is reset accordingly. This adjustment aims to enhance transparency and fairness in our allocations process, aligning with our commitment to providing equitable housing opportunities for all.
applicants can end up with multiple housing register accounts through no fault of their own. We have noticed that when someone has a homeless duty accepted, they are awarded a new bidding account even if they had a bidding account before their homeless application. We have had to help people make complaints in order to get their new account backdated to the date when they first joined the housing register.	Housing officers should check and prevent the inappropriate placement of applicants.
Downsizing should be given a higher priority. I know of someone elderly who would downsize if he could be guaranteed a move closer to his son. Lambeth cannot do this so he stays where he is.	Downsizers have a high priority (Band A) and can bid for homes on choice-based lettings
Priority should be given to people who have lived in the borough for more than at least 5-10 years	Most people on the housing register have a long-term connection to Lambeth.
There seems to be an assumption that everyone above the age of 55yrs needs a sheltered accommodation and therefore will only be considered for such otherwise will probably be left to die in an unsecured and unsuitable temporary accommodation	<p>There is no assumption suggesting that individuals above the age of 55 years are exclusively considered for sheltered accommodation.</p> <p>At Lambeth Council, our approach is to assess housing needs comprehensively, taking into account various factors such as individual circumstances, health conditions, and preferences. We are committed to providing suitable and secure housing solutions for all residents, ensuring their well-being and comfort.</p>

<p>Bidding regularly gives you more priority</p> <p>Bidding as soon as the advert comes out gives you more priority</p>	<p>Both of these misconceptions are entirely unfounded and hold no merit. They have no bearing on the situation.</p>
<p>What are the “points” mentioned when you use Home Connections?</p>	<p>The Home Connections system has standard questions, but Lambeth's non-points-based system renders certain parts irrelevant.</p>
<p>Various points raised by the British Legion including on the armed forced covenant and staff training</p>	<p>These are being considered.</p>