Summary of the Annual Allocations Scheme Review 2025/26

Main headlines

- ✓ **Continued decrease in overall numbers on the housing register –** in spite of increasing pressure in the housing market, focussed and comprehensive work has ensured the register robustly reflects live applications which are relevant and needs assessment up to date

- ✓ **A significant increase in 4 and 5-bedroom properties were advertised –** new enabling opportunities have been optimised and secured a welcome increase to new 4 and 5-bedroom social housing stock in the borough. This is a significant achievement.

- ✓ **60% of all 2 and 3-bedroom properties advertised were family houses –** this is a positive for families with children who would prefer to exercise choice and to wait a little longer to secure a house rather than flat

- ✓ **95% of all advertised properties were at social rent levels**– this is a key priority objective within the Housing and Homelessness Strategy as social rents are the most affordable of all tenures.

- ✓ **Particular pressures for single person households on the register remain**

- ✓ **Increasing demand for ground floor and adapted properties** – this demand includes for larger sized properties and is important to feed into new affordable housing delivery enabling

- ✓ **85% of all lets advertised were SNG and VIVID** – demonstrating SNG and VIVID remain our key RP partners

- ✓ **A need has been identified to review the provisions for tenants needing to move as a result of regeneration schemes.** – a paper will be brought forward for Cabinet to consider in September 2026.

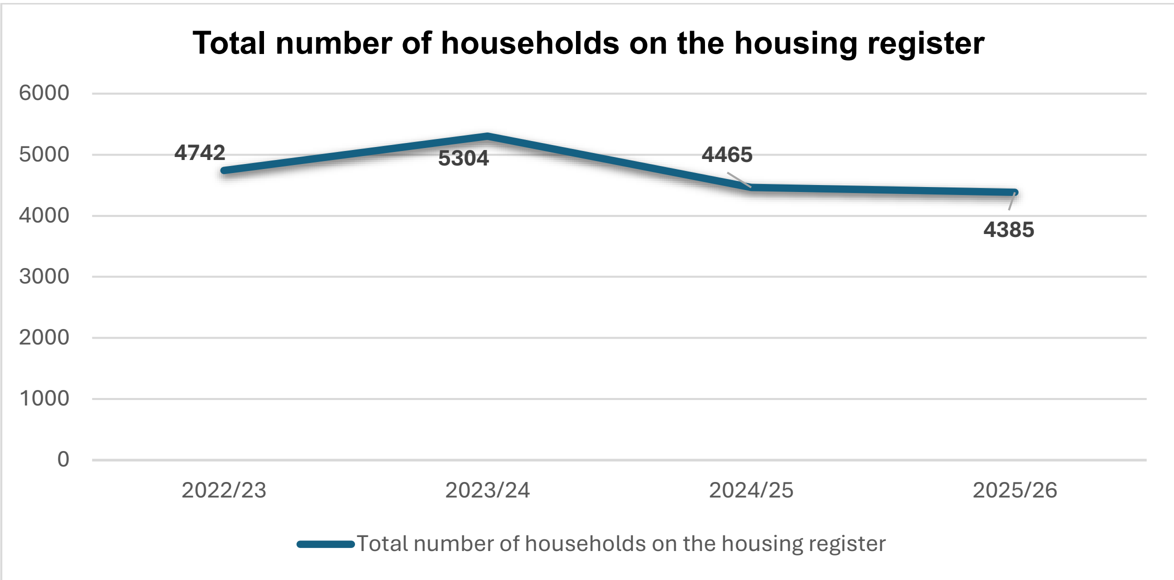
EVIDENCE

Demand and supply

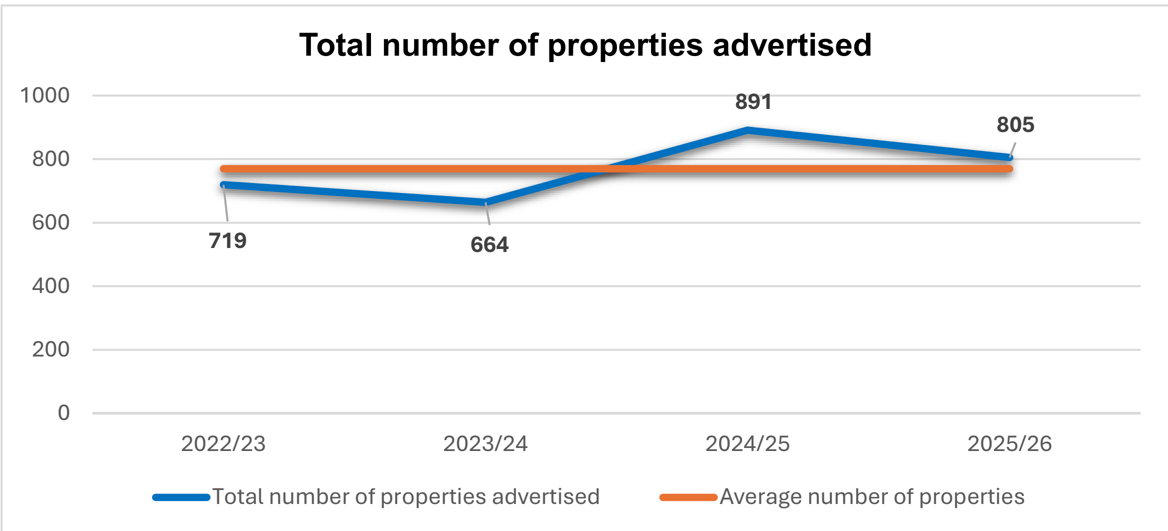
2025/26 is the second year there has been a decrease in the number of households registered on the housing register, despite the wider housing pressures. The housing register accurately reflects active need within the borough as households receive detailed advice and ongoing support from expert Housing Register Officers. The number of properties advertised is above the average number of properties advertised over the past 4 years

There were 5 times as many households compared to the number of properties advertised. This remains the same as last year.

Graph 1



Graph 2



Single / Couple households

The largest group of households on the housing register remains single applicants, comprising 61% of all household types which is a slight increase from last year. 70% of all general needs, single applicants on the housing register are aged under 35, which is an 8% increase since last year. This is attributable to intensive work undertaken to support non-dependents to make their own housing register application, to assist with addressing their long-term future housing needs.

Officers have provided targeted assistance to those single applicants to understand their housing requirements, as this applicant type is arguably the most transient in their living arrangements and therefore more likely to have changing housing requirements.

The number of single person/couple applications compared to properties becoming available continues to far outweigh supply to a significantly greater extent than for families. In 2025/26 the ratio of applicants to properties was 12:1, compared to 3:1 for families. This is an increase from last year where the ratio of single person/couple applicants to properties was 10:1.

Average waiting times

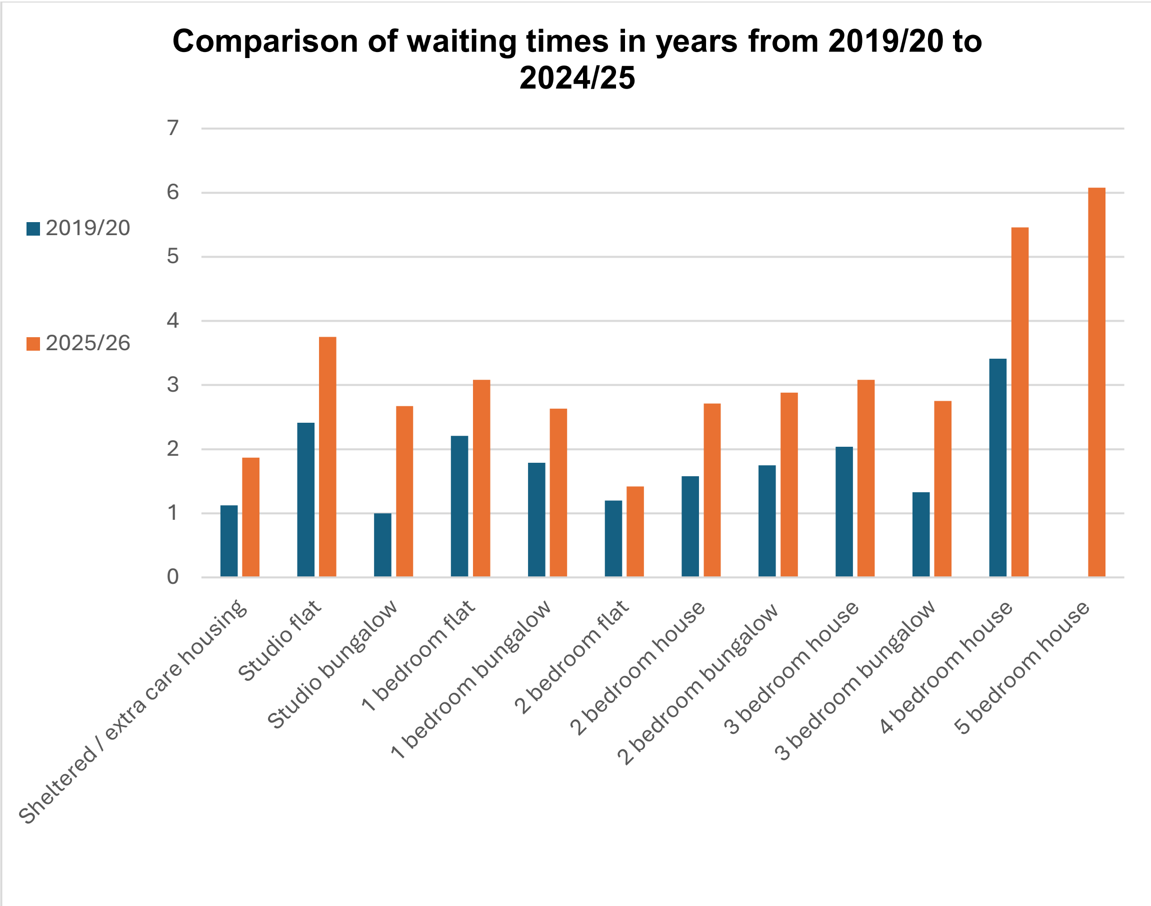
Compared to 2019/20, waiting times have generally increased, shown below in graph 3. The average wait for properties can be skewed by those applicants who exercise their choice to wait for a certain location and/or property type, that is less readily available, rather than choosing to bid on the locations and/or property types that become available sooner. An increase in average waiting times can also be attributed to reduced number of properties advertised this year, which inadvertently increases the average wait.

The longest wait continues to be for larger properties, namely 4- and 5-bedroom properties due to the limited number of properties becoming available during previous years. However, this year, 6% of the vacancies advertised were 4- and 5-bedroom properties, compared to only 2% of the vacancies last year (note there were zero 5-bedroom properties).

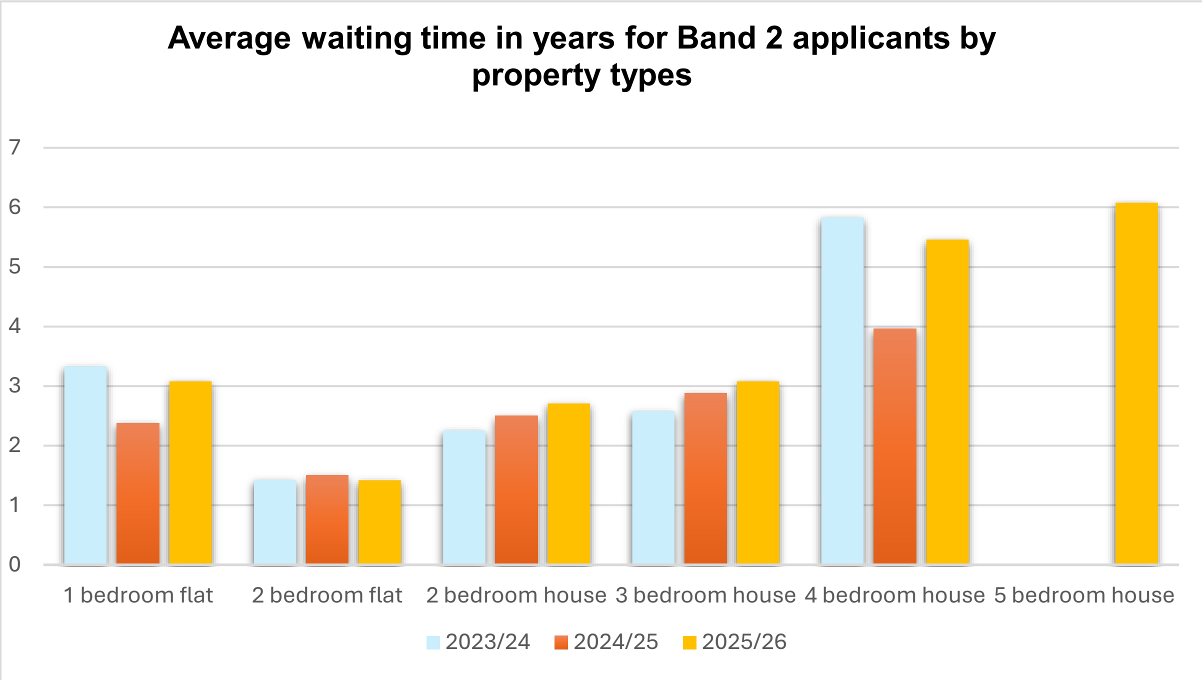
Average waiting times for 4-bedroom properties has increased as depicted in graph 4 below. This is despite an 133% increase of 4-bedroom properties advertised (35 properties). There were also 10 5-bedroom properties advertised, and the last time a 5-bedroom property was advertised was in 2021.

The average waiting times for most vacancy types over the past three years have remained relatively constant, as shown below in graph 4. It is noted that this year (2025/26) compared to last year (2024/25) the waiting times for 1-bedroom flats increased from c. 2.5 years to c. 3 years.

Graph 3



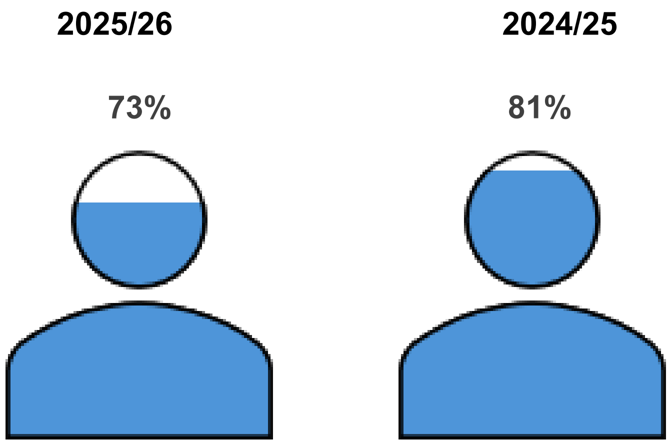
Graph 4


Average waiting time in years for Band 2 applicants by property types
7
6
5
4
3
2
1
0
1 bedroom flat
2 bedroom flat
2 bedroom house
3 bedroom house
4 bedroom house
5 bedroom house
2023/24
2024/25
2025/26

Inactive housing applicants

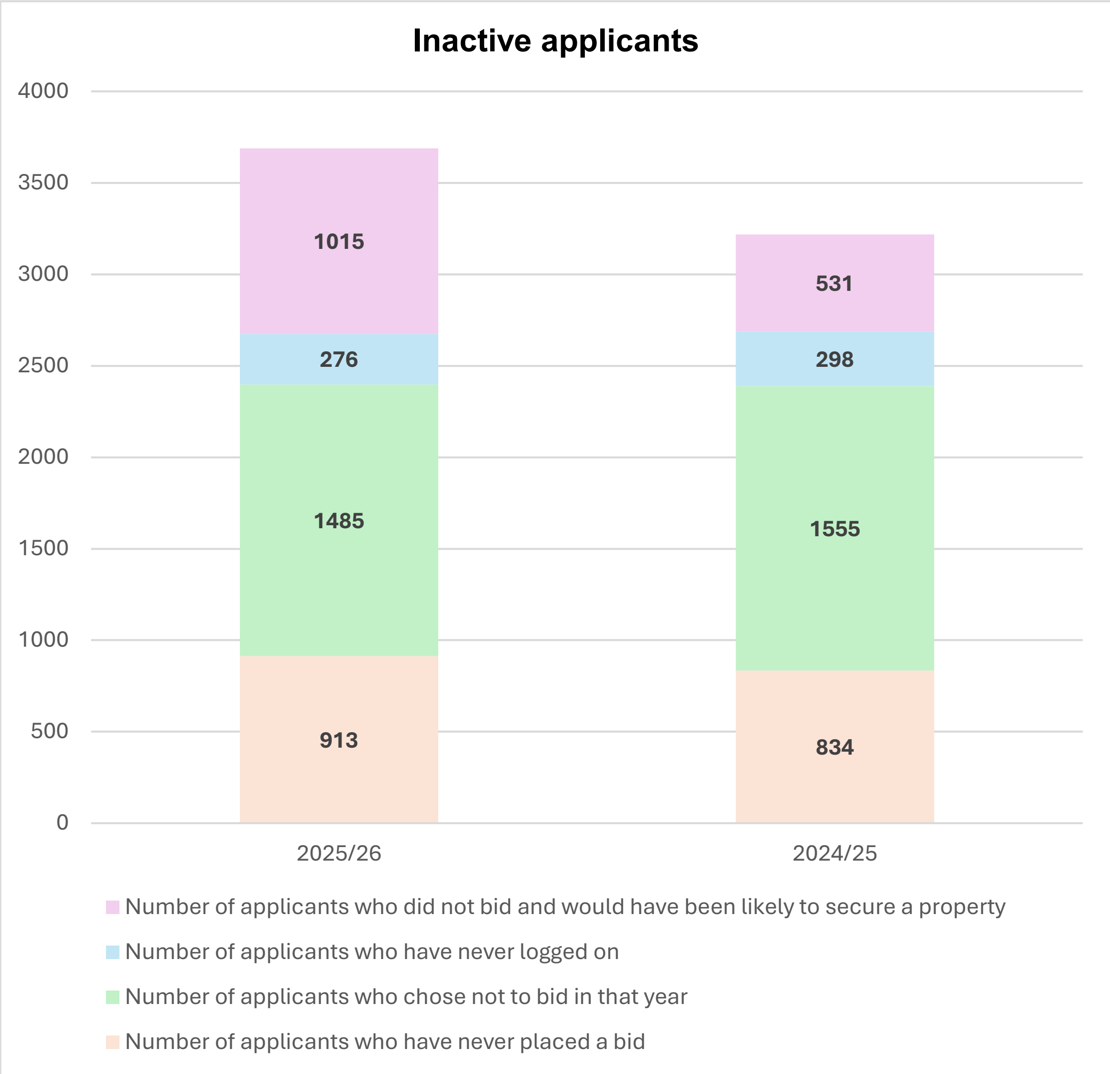
73% of applicants on the housing register have been actively searching and bidding for social housing (by logging on to Homebid and/or placing bids), compared to 27% who are not active. This has decreased since last year, by 8%, shown in graph 5. This demonstrates more households are exercising their choice to wait for suitable properties and location for their household before choosing to place a bid.

Graph 5



1015 households (23% of the total housing register) would have been highly likely to be successful in obtaining a social housing property had they have placed a bid last year, based on the applicant's time registered on the housing register. This has increased since last year suggesting more applicants are actively bidding when they are likely to be successful in obtaining a property.

Graph 6

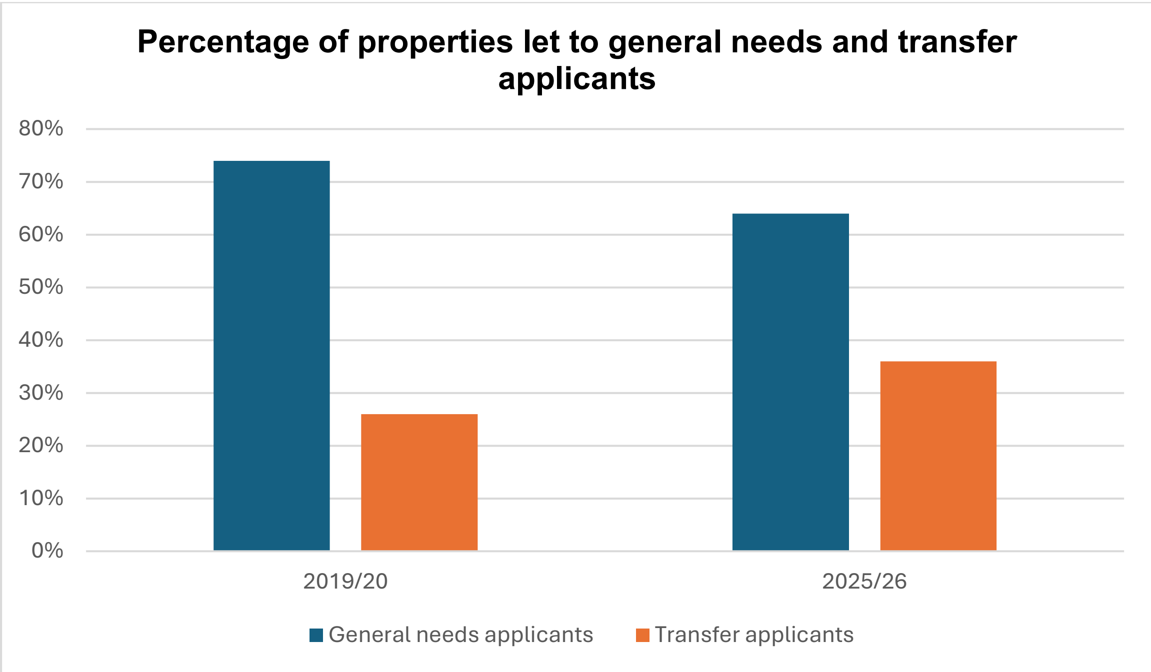


There has been a 21% decrease in the number of households with an application date prior to 2015. 37 households remain on the housing register with an application date prior to 2015, which was the date BDBC amended the Allocations Scheme to the current scheme. This demonstrates those applicants with an older date are choosing to bid on properties of their choice.

General needs : Transfer applicants

There is a similar proportion of transfer applicants. Since 2019/20, the percentage of properties let to transfer applicants has increased by 10%. This provides a double benefit as the resulting vacancy is re-advertised through the housing register.

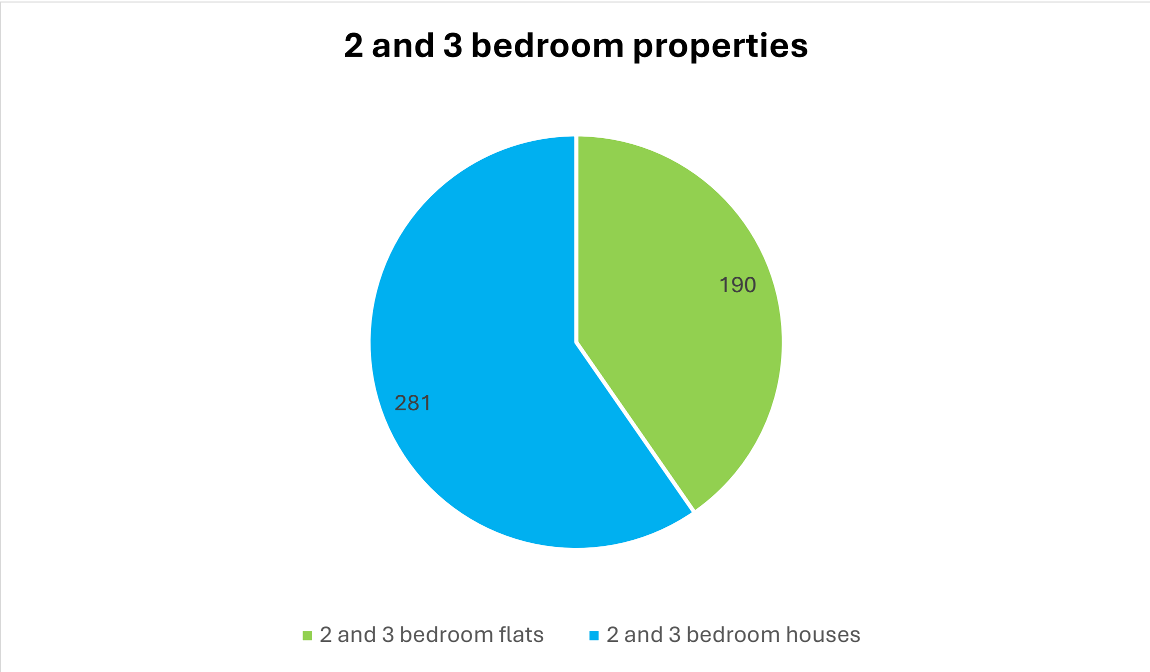
Graph 7



Flats

Waiting times for 2-bedroom flats are almost half that of 2-bedroom houses (17 months compared to 33 months respectively). During the year, more 2- and 3-bedroom houses were advised compared to flats. shown in Graph 9. This demonstrates the role 2-bedroom and 3-bedroom flats can play in meeting housing needs, particularly where urgent, and in preventing homelessness and avoiding the use of emergency accommodation for many households.

Graph 8



During 2025/26, a total of 58 families living in upper floor flats were registered as they were deemed to be in housing need. The number of families in upper floor flats applying to the housing register continues to reduce and reduced by 8% compared to 2024/25. This demonstrates more households in upper floor flats are in suitable accommodation.

Social : Affordable Rents

There continues to be significant increases in tenancies offered at social housing rents rather than affordable rents, with 95% of all tenancies offered at social housing rents. Social rents are set at c. 40% of market rent whereas affordable rents are let at up to 80% of open market rents.

This is a key priority objective within the Housing and Homelessness Strategy as social rents are the most affordable of all tenures. It also reflects the increasing number of new homes being delivered at social rents.

Graph 9

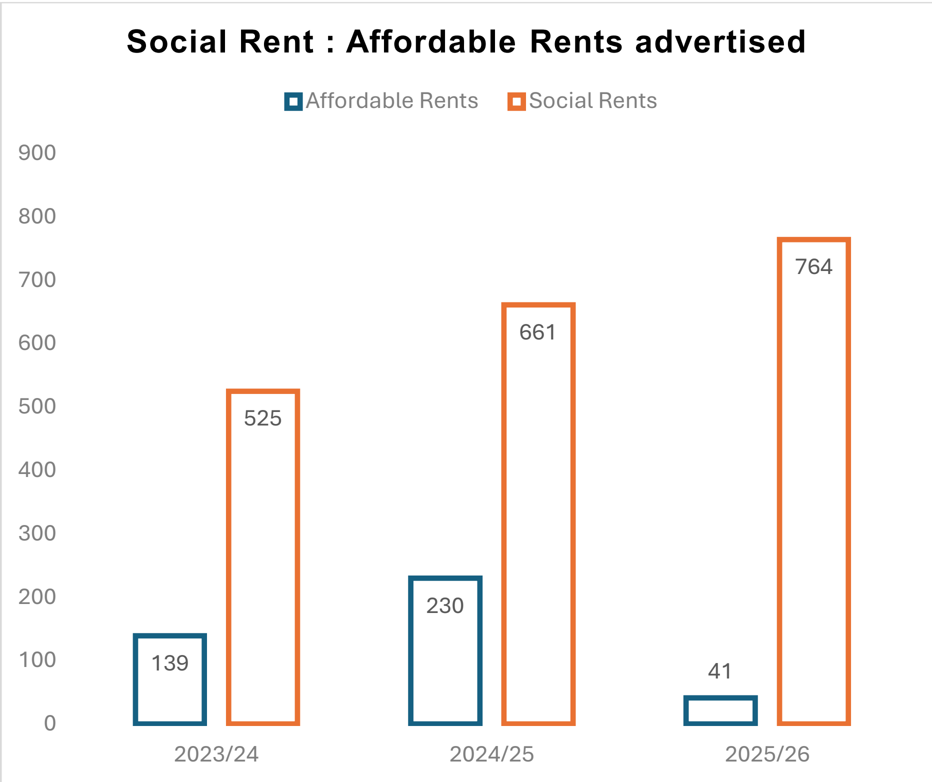


Table 1

Tenure	Social rent		Affordable rent	
2025/26	764 (0 were fixed term)	95%	41 (0 were fixed term)	5%
2024/25	661 (17 were fixed term)	74%	230 (28 were fixed term)	26%
2023/24	525 (2 were fixed term)	79%	139 (22 were fixed term)	21%

Ground floor and adapted properties

Over the past two years there has been a notable 6% increase in the need for ground floor and/or adapted properties, with 16% of households on the housing register requiring this type of accommodation.

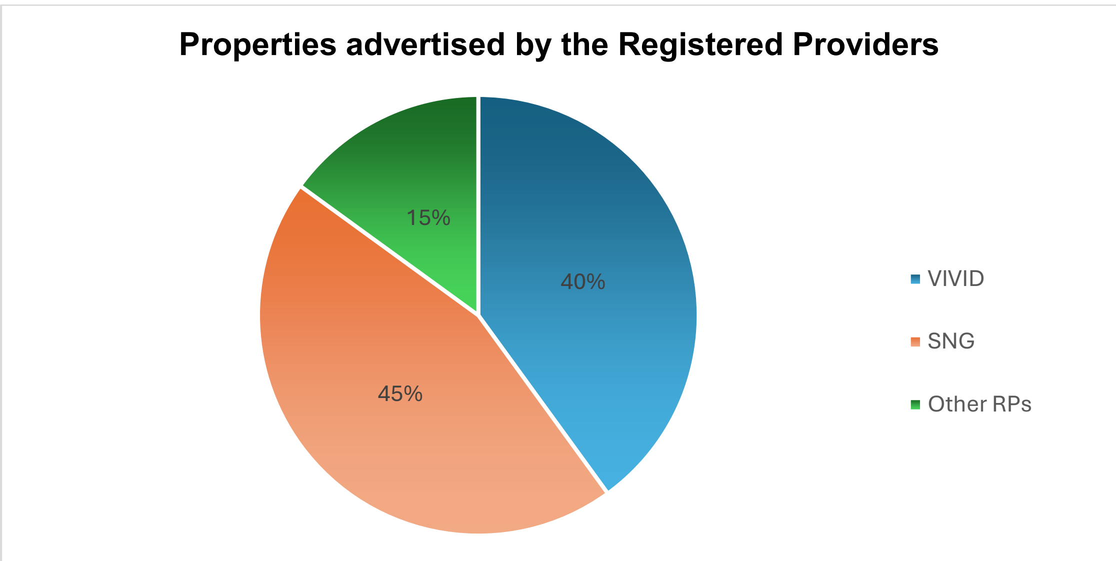
There is a growing demand for ground floor and/or adapted properties, with 2% of the total households on the housing register requiring three-bedroom or larger properties which are either ground floor or adapted

Due to the rising numbers of households who require specific accommodation, during 2026/27, a detailed review will be undertaken. This will be to understand the needs of these households and what type and size of accommodation will meet their needs.

Registered Providers advertised properties

In 2025/26, 85% of all vacancies were advertised by either SNG or VIVID housing associations, the remainder being through other registered providers, demonstrated in Graph 12.

Graph 10



Regeneration Addendum

The Regeneration Addendum was added to the Housing Allocations Scheme in 2022, after a decision was taken to adopt a lettings plan that introduced a number of policy exceptions for those tenants moving as part of a regeneration scheme. The policy intent of the Addendum is to enable social housing tenants within the borough who need to vacate their homes for regeneration projects to transfer to alternative social housing through the Council's housing register.

The Council Plan 2023-27 and the Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2024-27, have key priorities to ensure there is a collaborative approach to enable the delivery of strategic regeneration areas. The need for change has arisen due to the nature and pace of progression of key regeneration schemes, particularly, at Buckskin and South Ham, alongside ongoing partnership working with Registered Provider partners and the identification during the review of the Allocations Scheme and Regeneration Addendum that the Addendum must remain fit for purpose.

To date the addendum has not awarded any priorities to tenants as no regeneration schemes have progressed to planning consent stage. However, to ensure the addendum remains fit for purpose, a minor change to the Regeneration Addendum is proposed to take place during the financial year 2026/27, including the addition of a framework to ensure moves are phased proportionately with demonstrated commitment from the Registered Providers.