

The background of the slide features a large, light blue watermark of the City of Vancouver's coat of arms. The crest is a shield divided into four quadrants. The top-left quadrant shows a sailing ship on wavy lines representing water. The top-right quadrant depicts a stag's head with large antlers. The bottom-left quadrant shows a beaver. The bottom-right quadrant features a grizzly bear. Above the shield is a crown with four maple leaves. A banner at the bottom of the shield contains the motto "A NE FOR A".

## **Agenda Item 6**

### **Allocations Outcome Report 2015/16**

**Falkirk Council**

**Title:** Allocations Outcome Report 2015/16  
**Meeting:** Scrutiny Committee  
**Date:** 15 September 2016  
**Submitted By:** Director of Corporate & Housing Services

**1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 This annual report provides statistical information on housing allocations during 2015/16 and provides analysis of the allocation outcomes to consider if the Allocation Policy continues to meet its objectives and helps inform any changes that should be made to the allocation policy.
- 1.2 The report also provides an update on the changes to the Allocation Policy agreed by the Executive in January 2015 and implemented from April 2015 and where applicable what the outcomes have been.

**2. Recommendations**

**The Scrutiny Committee is asked to:**

- 2.1 **note the allocation outcomes for 2015/16; and**
- 2.2 **note that further analysis and consultation will be carried out and reported back to a future meeting**

**3. Background**

- 3.1 Falkirk Council's Allocation Policy must comply with a number of statutory responsibilities as set out in the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 as amended by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014.
- 3.2 There is also a legal obligation under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 to consult both tenant groups and individual service users over policy matters likely to significantly affect them.
- 3.3 In addition to compliance with the legal framework, the Allocations Policy is also expected to meet the outcomes of the Scottish Social Housing Charter, in particular Equalities; Housing Options; Access to Housing; and Tenancy Sustainment indicators.
- 3.4 The policy must also take account of the Local Housing Strategy and local needs and circumstances.

## **4. Considerations**

### **Allocation Outcomes Report 2015/16**

- 4.1 The Allocations Outcome Report 2015/16 is attached as Appendix 1. This document provides essential statistical information on letting outcomes which enables an evaluation to be carried out into the effectiveness of the Allocation Policy with regard to its overall objectives. These objectives include ensuring applicants with the greatest housing need are rehoused, making better use of the housing stock and providing housing applicants with more choice.

The Allocations Outcome Report is divided into 8 sections:

1 - The introduction briefly explains how Home Spot works. This is the Council's letting system used to allocate houses.

2 - An overview of the housing list to inform of the demographics of applicants and their housing requirements.

3 - A review of the bid activity to inform the level of demand for housing and from which groups.

4 - The sequencing of properties is analysed to ensure that each group has received the allocated quota of a third each and ensures that this is sequenced fairly and evenly in terms of the allocation area, size and types of properties.

5 – An analysis of properties let within the year. The numbers of properties available for let in each month is recorded along with the area, house type and size to analyse the level of turnover in a year.

6 – An analysis of lets to applicants. This section examines lets within each of the applicant groups (ie Home Seeker, Home Starter, Home Mover) and also Housing with Care which is housing for elderly people. It also looks at the priority (ie banding award) of the applicants that were rehoused. This is to analyse availability of housing for all applicants.

7 – An analysis of the length of time people waited to be rehoused after being awarded their priority banding. Again, this is important to ensure that the Allocation Policy is rehousing applicants in greatest housing need quickly as well as enabling other applicants the opportunity to be rehoused.

8 – Provides equalities information.

- 4.2. The key points to note from the Allocation Outcome Report 2015/16 are:

- Section 2: There are 9933 applicants on the housing list including 115 applicants for Housing with Care. The percentage of applicants in each group is noted below:

Home Mover	27%
Home Starter	69%
Home Seeker	3%
Housing with Care	1%

- Section 3: Bidding Activity

42% of all applicants bid for properties resulting in 34,914 bids. Although we currently have 9933 applicants, less than half are actively bidding for properties.

55% of bids were placed online by applicants, the remainder were placed either by telephone or visit to the local offices. It has been identified that further investment is required in our IT systems to improve on-line facilities for customers.

- Section 4: Sequencing

1368 general needs properties were advertised during 2015/16. Properties were advertised equally across the 3 applicant groups for the first advert. If a property is not let after the first advert. It is re-advertised and all groups are allowed to bid for it.

- Section 5: Properties Let

1630 properties were let during 2015/16. A decrease of 10 compared to 2014/15. Lets made to each of the applicant groups is detailed below. Home Starters (the largest group) received the largest number of lets. This was due to properties being re-advertised with no restrictions on applicant group.

- Home Mover                      27%
- Home Starter                    46%
- Home Seeker                    25%
- (Housing with Care 2%) – *excluded from advert sequencing*

- Section 6: Applicants Rehoused

The priority banding of the applicants who were rehoused in 2015/16 have been noted below. This shows that nearly half of all lets were to Band 1 applicants (those with the greatest housing need).

- Band 1                              46%
- Band 2                              23%
- Band 3                              21%
- Band 4                              9%

- Section 7: Time spent in Housing Need

The information below, broken into each applicant group, shows the percentage of applicants were rehoused within 6 months

- Home Mover                      41% housed within 6 months of priority award
- Home Starter                    54% housed within 6 months of priority award
- Home Seeker                    73% housed within 6 months of priority award
- Housing with Care              74% housed within 6 months of assessment

- Section 8: Equalities Analysis

- The gender breakdown of the housing list is:  
53% female applicants / 47% male applicants
- The gender breakdown of applicants rehoused during 2015/16 is:  
57% female / 43% male

The age profile of applicants is:

- 14% applicants are under 25 years
- 33.5% applicants are aged 26 – 40 years
- 31.5% applicants are aged 41 – 60 years
- 21% applicants are aged over 60

The age profile of applicant rehoused is:

- 26% under 25 years
- 34% 26 – 40 years
- 26% 41 – 60 years
- 12% over 60 years

- 4.3 In summary, the Allocations Outcomes Report confirms that the policy continues to meet housing needs and demands. The Allocations Outcomes for 2015/16 are comparable with the outcomes in previous years. Issues that were identified from the analysis outcomes are further discussed in paragraphs 4.9 – 4.13 of this report.

### **Allocations Policy Review 2015 – Update**

- 4.4 **Letting Quotas:** During 2015/16 all vacant properties were advertised equally across the letting groups, however the outcome of the lettings per category show that 25% of lets were to Home Seekers; 27% to Home Movers and 46% to Home Starters. 2% of lets were to Housing with Care applicants. Where a property is advertised for a specific group and there are no eligible bids from the group, the property is re-advertised for all groups. Home Starters are most likely to place bids as the majority group on our waiting list.

In 2014/15, the letting outcomes were 34% Home Seeker; 25% Home Mover and 35% Home Starters, 6% Housing with Care. The impact of changing the letting quotas has reduced the number of lets to Home Seekers (the smallest group) and increased lets to Home Starters (the largest group).

It is proposed to retain the current letting quotas for the time being as all categories have equal opportunity to bid for properties. This will enable monitoring to continue and more in-depth analysis of lettings over a longer period.

- 4.5 **Local Letting Initiatives:** The Allocation Review carried out in 2015 focussed on 3 different types of letting initiatives – Low Demand Properties; New Build Council Houses; High Flats Letting.

**Low Demand Properties:** It was proposed that the Service would carry out further consultation and develop local letting initiatives in specific areas where there were issues of low demand, which included the proposal of the introduction of an incentive scheme to encourage uptake by providing decoration vouchers or white goods, carpets etc. However, during 2015/16 it has not been necessary to introduce a Low Demand Local Letting Initiative as we have been able to address issues by advertising weekly; introducing an improved void housing standard (including decoration if required); advertising properties for all groups and accepting “ineligible” bids (ie allowing properties to be under-occupied) for 3 bedroom flats where there has been no demand from families. The option of a Low Demand Local Letting Initiative is still available should there be any future issues within specific areas.

**New Build Council Properties:** This local letting initiative gives priority to existing tenants for new build (general needs) properties.

**High Flat Letting:** The Council cannot consider age when allocating properties which means lets to applicants under the age of 60 cannot be prohibited in the high flats. Consultation was carried out with the local high flat community during 2015 and reassurances were given that it was the objective of the letting initiative to sustain the settled community and minimise housing management issues through sensitive letting.

During 2015/16 there were 56 lets within the high flats; demand is still high from applicants over 60 and those requiring an adapted property. Over 40% of lets were to adapted properties and 7% of lets were to applicants under 60 years. The letting initiative will continue in its current format to enable further monitoring over a longer period of time. The local housing office continues to work closely with the high flat community to ensure that the objective of a stable and settled community is sustained.

- 4.6 **Exceptional Circumstances:** The Allocations Policy covers the majority of housing situations that an applicant may experience. From 1 April 2015, there was a change in policy to the way that officers deal with cases with exceptional circumstances. Previously a Band 1 would be awarded and the applicant would be required to bid for properties. Given the serious and exceptional nature of cases considered under this priority and the urgency for re-housing, the policy now states that the applicant should be matched to the first suitable property. A procedure was implemented to monitor the decisions made in relation to cases awarded exceptional circumstances priority. Since its introduction on 1 April 2015, there have been 7 cases considered by the Panel; 5 cases were accepted and 2 were refused. Requests for award of exceptional need will only be considered where the circumstances cannot be met through the existing allocation policy.
- 4.7 **Appeals Process:** The appeals process has been reduced from 3 stages to 2 stages to make the process simpler. No issues have arisen by reducing one of the stages.

- 4.8 **Welfare Reform:** The Executive agreed in January 2015 that no changes would be made to the Allocation Policy in relation to restricting applicants from having an additional bedroom to avoid the additional financial burden in relation to “bedroom tax”. It was agreed that we would continue to monitor the situation until the position is clearer in regard to devolved powers on Housing Benefits issues and analysis of the impact of Universal Credit (UC) is known. Although, UC is now being rolled out within the Falkirk Council area to new single claimants who are out of work or on a low income (in April 2016 there were 648 claims for UC), it is taking the UK government significantly longer than originally stated. Therefore, it is proposed to continue with the status quo until more information is available.
- 4.9 **Housing with Care:** The feedback received from our consultation in 2014 has been used to influence the Older Persons Housing Strategy. It is proposed that as part of this strategy, we will review how we allocate housing with care properties on the basis of assessed need rather than age or date of priority. This work will form part of the Housing Contribution Strategy Group and progress will be reported through regular updates to the Integrated Joint Board Strategic Planning Group.

#### **Requirements for further consultation**

- 4.10 The analysis of the allocations outcomes and feedback from customers, staff and Elected Members has highlighted some issues that may require changes to the Allocation Policy. Before any changes can be made to the policy, the Council is obliged to carry out consultation with tenants, service users and stakeholders. This consultation will be carried out over the coming months and a further report will be submitted for Executive approval.

#### **4.11 Tenant Incentive Scheme**

The Tenant Incentive Scheme has been in place since 1 April 2013. The aim of the scheme is to try and encourage tenants living in larger, family sized properties that are larger than they require to move to smaller properties and where they would not have previously considered moving house due to the financial barriers. In January 2015, it was agreed to monitor the scheme and review it. We have promoted and publicised the tenant incentive scheme and housing staff have been providing information and advice to tenants. Following feedback from tenants and their representatives concern was raised that some tenants may feel pressurised to move home if they were individually targeted therefore we have only promoted the scheme through general publicity.

Analysis of the outcomes has shown there continues to be a limited uptake for the scheme. During 2015/16, there were 12 awards totalling £25,000. The tenants who moved have either been actively bidding prior to the introduction of the scheme or they had a specific housing need (e.g. medical) which required them to be rehoused. We cannot conclude from our analysis whether the scheme is actually achieving its objective i.e. attracting people to move house.

On this basis, it is proposed that the Tenant Incentive Scheme for downsizing be ceased. Support and assistance will continue to be available to tenants wishing to move house and where possible they will be referred onto other services who, depending on their individual circumstances, may be able to offer financial assistance.

- 4.12 **Under Occupancy:** The Council is be obliged to give reasonable preference to applicants who under-occupy their property. Currently, Band 1 priority is awarded to applicants who are under-occupying their current tenancies regardless of the property size. Analysis has shown that 67% of Band 1 Home Movers have been awarded this priority for under-occupation, which is very high. It is proposed that applicants who are under occupying their property continue to receive reasonable preference within the Allocation Policy however, the application of the award should be brought in line with the award of overcrowding i.e. where they are under-occupying by 2 or more bedrooms.
- 4.13 **Time Limited Priority for Band 1 Applicants:** A Band 1 priority is the highest level of housing priority that can be awarded and reflects an urgent need for rehousing. Under the current allocation policy only Home Seekers are time limited for an offer due to the Council's statutory obligations under homeless legislation. All other applicants awarded Band 1 retain their priority without time limit, however this means that some applicants who require urgent rehousing are on the housing list for a considerable period of time without bidding for properties that could be suitable for their needs. It is not the intention to remove priority from applicants who have an urgent need for rehousing however, it is proposed that a regular review of applicants who have Band 1 priority is carried out and assistance offered to help move them to more suitable accommodation. Further analysis of Band 1 applicants and available accommodation will be carried out along with a full consultation process.
- 4.14 **Applicants with Multiple Priority:** Under the current Allocation Policy, applicants are only awarded one level of banding based on their most urgent housing need. It is acknowledged that some applicants who have multiple and complex housing issues could fall under several priorities. It is not the intention to change the banding policy at this stage but further analysis will be carried out to review how applicants with multiple priorities (e.g. homeless and in a wheelchair) wait to be rehoused. A full consultation process will be carried out once further analysis has been completed and will be reported back to Committee.

## 5. Consultation

- 5.1 As noted in Section 1 of this report, the Council is obliged to carry out a full consultation process prior to amending the Allocations Policy. A consultation process similar to the Allocations Review in 2014 is planned to be carried out over the coming months. This will consist of attending the Tenants Forum meetings and involving the Registered Tenants Organisations; developing a questionnaire and carrying out a series of Focus Groups for all stakeholders including service users, tenants, local members and other landlords.



A publicity campaign through the Tenants Newsletter, Council's website, social media etc will be carried out to promote the consultation and reach as wide an audience as possible.

## **6. Implications**

### **Financial**

- 6.1 These are policy changes so there are no financial implications and will be administered within existing resources. There are savings from the Tenant Incentive Scheme and this budget can be re-directed to meet other housing priorities i.e. void budget.

To meet the Council's future frontline services objectives we have identified that IT requires to be updated. Work is currently ongoing to scope out the requirements and it has been identified that there is likely to be financial implications to upgrade the HomeSpot system and improve on-line services in the future.

### **Resources**

- 6.2 No additional resources required. Service will continue to be provided within existing staff team.

### **Legal**

- 6.3 The Council must ensure that it meets all its legal obligations in terms of statutory legislation for allocations. The Scottish Government has still to provide further guidance on some parts of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 and the allocation policy will continue to be monitored to ensure it meets these requirements.

### **Risk**

- 6.4 No risks identified

### **Equalities**

- 6.5 A full Equalities & Poverty Impact Assessment was previously carried out for the Allocation Review in 2015 and no significant equality issues were identified. A further EPIA will be carried out as part of the review process and reported back to members.

### **Sustainability/Environmental Impact**

- 6.6 Not applicable.

## **7. Conclusions**

- 7.1 The Allocations Outcome Report provides a comprehensive update on lettings activity during 2015/16. The report evaluates the effectiveness of the Allocations Policy with regard to meeting housing needs, making better use of the housing stock and providing housing applicants with more choice.
- 7.2 The statistical data has shown that the Allocation Policy continues to meet its objectives however it has also highlighted a number of issues that require further analysis and consultation. A further report will be submitted to Committee detailing findings and if appropriate approval will be sought to make further changes to the Allocation Policy.

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Director of Corporate & Housing Services

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**Date:** 1 September 2016

## **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 Allocations Outcome Report 2015/16

### **List of Background Papers:**

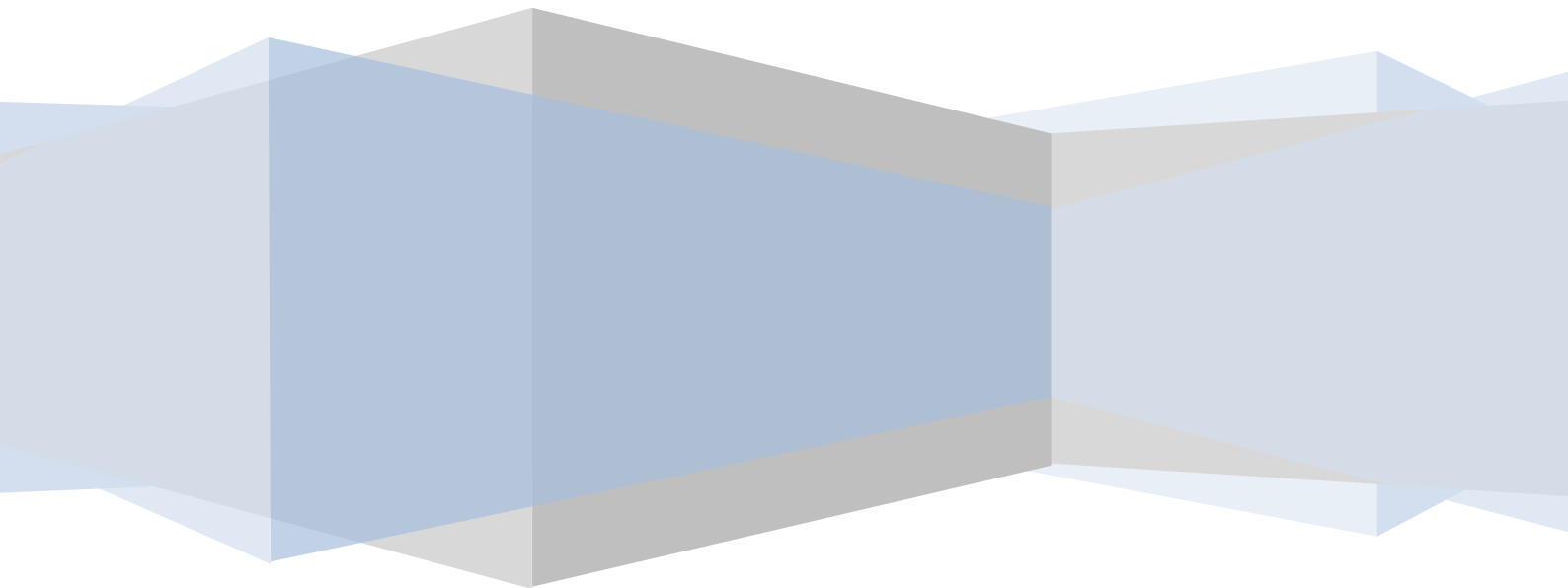
The following papers were relied on in the preparation of this report in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973:

- none

**Falkirk Council**

# **Housing Allocations Outcomes Report**

**2015 – 2016**



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## Section 1 – Introduction to HomeSpot

- 1.1 This report provides comprehensive information about Falkirk Council's housing list as at 31 March 2016 and allocation outcomes during 2015 - 2016. The report seeks to evaluate the effectiveness of the Allocations Policy with regard to meeting housing needs, making better use of the housing stock and providing housing applicants with more choice.
- 1.2 Homespot is a Choice Based Letting system which Falkirk Council uses to let its properties. All vacant houses are advertised on the Council's website or in the Homespot Newsletter every week. Applicants are invited to place bids for the properties they are interested in.
- 1.3 Each application is assessed into an Applicant Group and awarded a banding depending on the level of housing need. Applicant Groups are:

**Home Seekers:** Applicants who are considered to be homeless in terms of housing legislation.

**Home Movers:** Tenants of Falkirk Council or a Housing Association already living in the Falkirk area and looking to move home.

**Home Starters:** All other applicants.

- 1.4 Each application is then awarded a banding depending on the level of housing need.

**Band 1:** Home Seeker; leaving Armed Forces; Care Leavers; significant medical condition/disability; hospital discharge; overcrowding; under-occupation; lacking amenities; regeneration or re-development area.

**Band 2:** Home Starters with no security of tenure; sharing amenities & overcrowded; overcrowded by 1 bedroom; social need.

**Band 3:** Families with children under 10 living in a tenement flat with no access to a shared garden; frequent/regular overnight contact with children and you do not have home of your own; limited independence due to medical condition/disability; local connection to Falkirk area; Home Starter living in house too big; private sector tenants with a short assured tenancy; sharing amenities.

**Band 4:** Applicants will be awarded Band 4 if they do not have any of the above noted housing needs.

- 1.5 Houses are advertised equally between the 3 Applicant Groups (i.e. we aim to let 33% of properties equally between Home Seekers, Home Movers and Home Starters). There are 10 allocation areas :

- Bo'ness
- Bonnybridge/Banknock
- Braes

- Dawson
- Denny
- Falkirk Central
- Falkirk East
- Falkirk West
- Grangemouth
- Larbert/Stenhousemuir

- 1.6. In order to achieve the Council's target of 33% of mainstream allocations being made to each Applicant Group, an automatic sequencing process is used. The process aims to ensure, over time, that the targets for lets to each applicant group are met in each of the allocation areas and that as even as possible a distribution of properties in terms of size is achieved. This is in recognition of the fact that within each of the applicant groups (Home Seeker, Movers and Starters) there is a range of household types who need accommodation of varying sizes. The sequencing process is complex and takes account of both, the location, type and size of each property, and the date the property became vacant.

The process of sequencing voids is continuous and sequencing for each new edition of the HomeSpot Newsletter starts from point where it left off from the previous list.

- 1.7 Adapted properties and Housing with Care Level 3 properties are advertised in HomeSpot and let in accordance with agreed procedures however, they are not included in the sequencing process. Housing with Care Level 1 and 2 properties are not advertised and are directly matched to applicants that have been assessed as needing this type of supported housing. As part of the Older Persons Housing Strategy there are proposals to review how we allocate housing with care properties on the basis of need rather than age or date of priority. This work will form part of the Housing Contribution Strategy Group and progress will be reported to the Integrated Joint Board Strategic Planning Group.

## Section 2 - Current Housing List: Applicant Groups & Band of Priority

- 2.1 The total number of applicants on the housing list as at 31 March 2016 was 9933 which included 115 applicants for Housing with Care. The Table below compares the number of applicants on the housing at 31 March 2016 with the total number of applicants on the housing list as at 1 April 2015 broken down by applicant group and Band of priority.

*Table 1 – Comparison of number of Applicants by Band of Priority at 31 March 2016 and 1 April 2015.*

	Home Seeker		Home Mover		Home Starter		Total	
	Mar 16	Apr 15	Mar 16	Apr 15	Mar 16	Apr 15	Mar 16	Apr 15
Band 1	250	279	836	927	297	294	1383	1500
Band 2	-	-	367	422	865	1005	1232	1427
Band 3	-	-	269	346	4563	5071	4832	5417
Band 4	-	-	1259	1313	1111	1290	2370	2603
Total	250	279	2731	3008	6836	7660	9817	10947
%	2.5%	2.5%	27.8%	27.5%	69.7%	70%		

### Main Points to note:

The main change in the total number of applicants on the housing list from April 15 to March 2016 is due to the number of applications cancelled due to re-registration

All three mainstream applicant groups have stayed similar in terms of percentages with a 0.3% rise in Home Movers and a 0.3% reduction for Home Starters.

The proportion of applicants with Band 1 priority for housing has increased from 13.7% in April 2015 to 14.1% in March 2016.

The majority of applicants with Band 1 priority are Home Movers and this has decreased to 60% of Band 1 applicants.

The proportion of Home Starter applicants with Band 1 has increased from 19.6% in April 2015 to 21.5% in March 2016.

24% of applicants on the list do not fall into any of the statutory reasonable preference groups and therefore have no housing need. This has remained similar to the figure in April 2015.

There are 115 applicants on the housing list who are seeking Housing with Care. Housing with Care applicants make up 1% of all applicants.

## **2.2 Home Seeker Applicants**

Home Seeker applicants make up 2.5% of the overall waiting list. As noted in previous allocation outcomes the number of Homeless applicants who are unintentionally homeless has continued to fall. Therefore the continued reduction in the overall number of Home Seeker applicants is encouraging and shows the effectiveness of our prevention approaches and housing options advice.

In light of the continued fall in Home Seeker applicants, Housing and Social Committee agreed in April 2015 that the quota of lettings to Home Seekers would reduce to 33% from 50%. This means that the quota of lettings will be equal across all groups.

Accordingly, all 250 applicants with Home Seeker priority are entitled to an offer of permanent housing.

## **2.3 Home Mover Applicants**

The percentage of Home Mover applicants with Band 1 priority has decreased slightly from 30.8% of all Home Movers in April 2015 to 30.6% of all Home Movers in March 2016.

Of the 836 Band 1 Home Movers 67% (557) have been awarded priority for under occupying their property; 51% are currently living in a 2 bedroom property; 44% live in a 3 bedroom; and 5% live in a 4 (or more) bedroom property. Outcomes have shown the majority of Band 1 lets to Home Movers are for under-occupation. Falkirk Council is committed to continuing reasonable preference to this category however further analysis is required be carried into the award of under-occupation.

13% (355) of Home Mover applicants are overcrowded; 2% (51) are lacking 2 bedrooms (Band 1) - 43 of these require a 5 or more bedroom property. 11% are lacking 1 bedroom (Band 2).

17% (464) of Home Mover applicants are living in a tenancy which is unsuitable due to a medical condition.

46% (1259) of all Home Mover applicants have been awarded a Band 4 as they have no housing need as defined by legislation and our Allocation Policy.

## **2.4 Home Starters Applicants**

Home Starter applicants make up 69.63% (6836) of the housing list and this has decreased by 824 applicants from 2015.

Although Home Starters are the largest group of applicants, 83% of Home Starters have a low level of housing need 66.7% (4563) have Band 3 priority and 16.3% (1111) have Band 4 which means they have no housing need.



13.6% (930) of Home Starter applicants are overcrowded; 82 are lacking 2 bedrooms (Band 1) and 848 are lacking 1 bedroom (Band 2).

18% (1230) of Home Starters are living in Private Tenancies and have no other housing need.

6% (410) of Home Starter applicants are living in a property which is unsuitable due to a medical condition.

## Section 3 - Bidding Activity

- 3.1 Properties are advertised weekly and on average 49 properties are advertised each week. Applicants are only able to bid for properties that are advertised for the applicant group they are in or for any properties that are advertised under the All Groups category. Table 2 below shows the average number of bids per week by applicant group from 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2016. Overall the average number of bids per week has been 671.

*Table 2 – Average Weekly Bidding Activity*

	2014/15	2015/16
Average No of Properties Advertised per Week	53.7	49.4
Average No of Bids From Home Seekers per Week	90.1	67.4
Average No of Bids From Home Movers per Week	174.2	125.3
Average No of Bids From Home Starters per Week	469	477.8
Average No of Bids From Housing With Care	3	0.8

- 3.2 42% (4372) of all applicants bid for properties during 2015/16. This indicates than more than half of the applicants who currently have a live housing application are not currently seeking to be re-housed.

*Table 3 – Bids by Group and Bands*

Group	Housing with Care	Band 1	Band 2	Band 3	Band 4	Total
Housing with Care	11	-	-	-	-	11
Home Mover	-	430	224	146	485	1285
Home Seeker	-	620	0	0	0	620
Home Starter	-	241	576	1516	180	2513
Total	11	1291	800	1662	665	4429

The highest number of bids from Band 1 applicants was from Home Seekers. On 31 March 2016 there were 836 Home Mover applicants with Band 1 priority; however during 2015/16 only 430 bids were placed by Home Movers which is just less than 50% of Home Movers actively bidding. Further analysis and monitoring of bidding activity for Band 1 applicants will be carried out during 2016/17.

The majority of bids received are from Home Starters with Band 3 priority. Further analysis is required but initial findings show that this is from applicants currently residing in the private sector.

## Section 4 - Sequencing of Properties

- 4.1 The table below shows the sequencing of general needs properties by allocation area and applicant group for all advertising cycles during 2015 - 2016. The table shows that 1368 general needs properties were advertised during 2015 - 2016.

*Table 4 – Sequencing of properties*

Allocation area	Home Seekers	Home Movers	Home Starters	Total
Bo'ness	32	28	32	92
Bonny/Bank	32	30	32	94
Braes	46	47	44	137
Dawson	53	66	55	174
Denny	45	50	48	143
Falkirk Central	26	27	26	79
Falkirk East	59	52	58	169
Falkirk West	34	40	35	109
Grangemouth	84	83	87	254
Larb/Shm	37	38	42	117
Total No.	448	461	459	1368
Total %	32.7%	33.7%	33.6%	100%

In addition to the 1368 properties above, a further 183 properties were advertised for “Adapted” and 85 Housing with Care Level 3 properties have also been advertised during the year with applicants over 60 years of age being eligible to bid for these properties.

- 4.2. Applicants can only bid on properties that have been advertised for their group (e.g. Home Seeker is only able to bid on Home Seeker advertised properties). However, if there are no suitable bids received from applicants in the advertised category then properties will be re-advertised the following week under the category “All Groups”. This allows any applicant to bid for the property and the property is then let on the basis of priority need (i.e. banding) and date of award. In 2015/16, 498 properties were re-advertised for “All Groups”, resulting in a total of 935 adverts. The majority of the lets advertised under All Groups were to Home Starters (60%), Home Seekers (29%) which proportionately is large number of lets given this is the smallest category. Home Movers received 48 of the lets (11%).

As outlined in Section 1, Para 1.6 of this report, the sequencing process is done automatically to ensure that all applicant groups get an equal chance of all house types, house sizes in all areas. However, sometimes the sequence can select a property where there is no such demand from that group (e.g. 4 bedroom property in an outlying area sequenced for the Home Seeker group and there are no applicants at that time requiring that size of property in that area; or a 3 bedroom flat being sequenced for a Home Mover in a low demand area and there are no applicants in that category looking for this type of accommodation). However, once the property is re-advertised

for All Groups then a significant amount of bids are received from applicants in other categories who are very interested in that property. The sequencing process has been set to ensure that it is fair and equitable across all categories. Whilst there is an acknowledgement that some properties being sequenced are not suitable for the category, to advertise every property for All Groups would not enable proper monitoring and control to ensure fair access.

#### 4.3 Properties Advertised by House Type

The table below shows the number of adverts by house type.

*Table 5 – Properties Advertised by House Type*

Allocation area	4-in-a-block	Flat	House	Total
Bo'ness	48	166	23	237
Bonny/Bank	26	68	61	155
Braes	86	72	90	248
Dawson	65	264	27	356
Denny	38	357	39	434
Falkirk Central	8	102	13	123
Falkirk East	37	145	50	232
Falkirk West	54	108	16	178
Grangemouth	49	386	24	459
Larbert/Stenhousemuir	32	45	72	149
Total No.	443	1713	415	2571
Total %	17%	67%	16%	100%

Two thirds properties advertised (67%) were tenement flats and high rise flats with the remainder of properties being evenly split between houses and 4-in-a-blocks.

However these proportions vary with allocations area, for example, in Grangemouth nearly 84% of available properties were flats with only 5% of available properties being houses. This can create problems where applicants are trying to meet their housing aspirations as well as their housing needs.

#### 4.4 Properties Advertised by Size

The table below shows the number of adverts by size.

*Table 6 – Properties Advertised by Size*

Allocation area	1 + 2 beds	3 beds	4 beds(+)	Total
Bo'ness	166	55	16	237
Bonny/Bank	104	48	3	155
Braes	168	70	10	248
Dawson	200	147	9	356
Denny	182	247	5	434
Falkirk Central	116	7	0	123
Falkirk East	177	49	6	232
Falkirk West	119	58	1	178

Grangemouth	375	78	6	459
Larbert/Stenhousemuir	113	33	3	149
Total No.	1720	792	59	2571
Total %	67%	31%	2%	100%

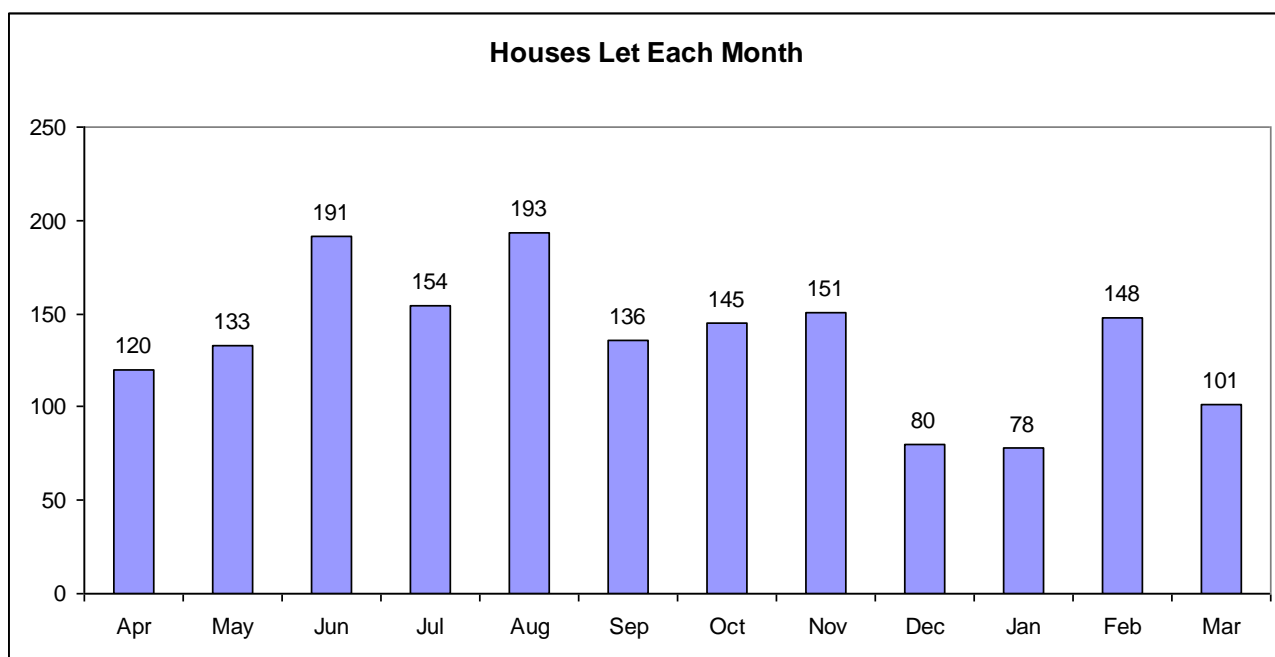
There were 508 one bedroom adverts with one quarter of these advertised as Adapted or Housing with Care Level 3.

## Section 5 - Properties Let

### 5.1 Number of Properties Let Each Month

From 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016, 1630 properties were let across the Council. The number of properties let per month is set out in the table below. This is a decrease of 10 properties from 2014/15.

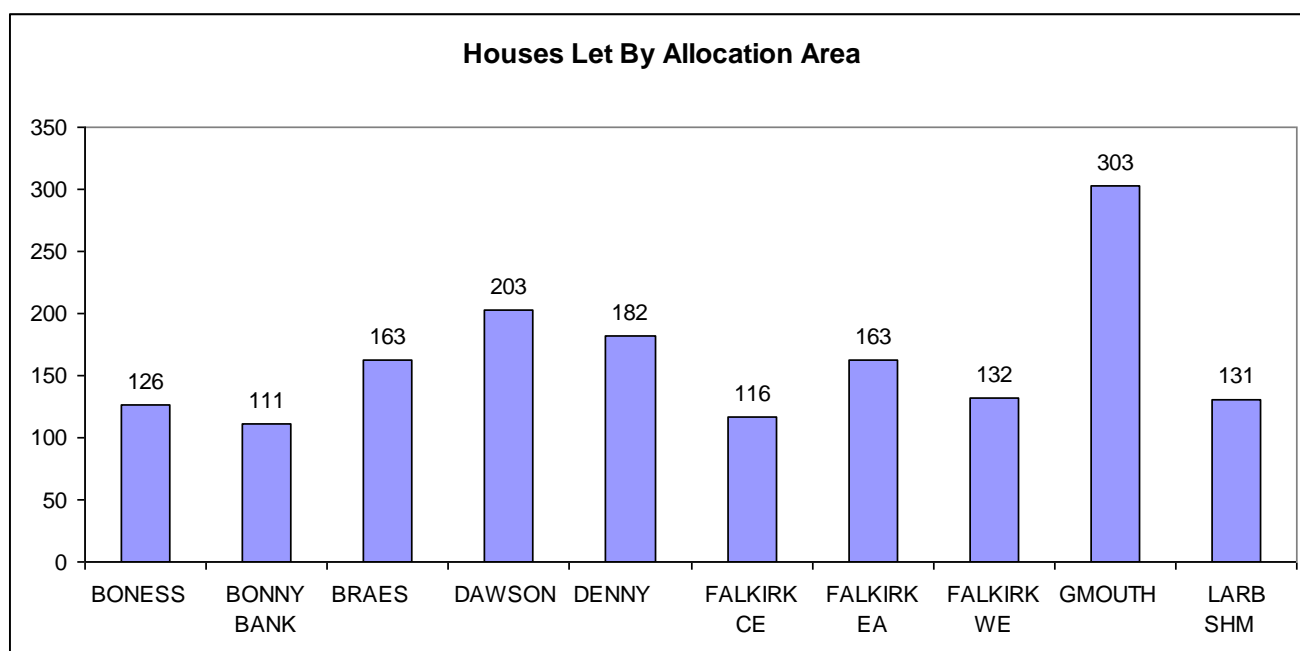
*Table 7 – Houses Let Each Month*



### 5.2 Number of Properties let in Allocations Areas

The chart below shows the breakdown of properties let by allocations area. The allocations area with the most lets was Grangemouth with 303 properties let during the year, followed by Dawson with 202 properties. The Bonnybridge/Banknock area had the fewest lets with 111 properties being let.

*Table 8 – Houses Let by Allocation Area*



### 5.3 Size of Properties Let

21.5% (351 properties) let had 1 bedroom

58.7% (956) properties let had 2 bedrooms

17.7% (285 properties) let had 3 bedrooms

2.1% (34 properties) let had 4 or more bedrooms

Turnover of properties (i.e. properties that became available for re-letting) was 10% last year which is comparable with the national average.

## Section 6 - Applicants housed during 2015/2016

6.1 The table below shows the number of lets by applicant group and allocation areas during 2015 - 2016.

*Table 9 – Applicants Housed By Allocation Area*

Area	Housing with Care	Home Mover	Home Seeker	Home Starter	Total
Bo'ness	7	23	25	71	126
Bonny/Bank	0	32	32	47	111
Camelon	0	44	33	86	163
Dawson	0	66	51	86	203
Denny	3	41	41	97	182
Falkirk Central	17	28	20	51	116
Falkirk East	0	43	48	72	163
Falkirk West	6	44	40	42	132
Grangemouth	0	70	79	154	303
Larb/Shm	1	46	39	45	131
Total	34	437	408	751	1630

The outcome of all lets during the period, including Housing with Care properties, is as follows:-

- 25.03% of lets were to Home Seeker applicants
- 26.81% of lets to Home Mover applicants
- 46.07% of lets were to Home Starter applicants
- 2.09% of lets were to Housing with Care applicants

Analysis has shown that all vacant mainstream properties were sequenced and advertised equally across each of the groups. However, Section 5 has highlighted that some properties required to be re-advertised for All Groups which has resulted in the anomaly with the letting quotas. Home Seekers place the largest amount of bids despite being the smallest group and over 70% of Home Seekers are rehoused within 6 months of being awarded their priority, therefore more analysis of sequencing outcomes will be carried out before reviewing the letting quotas.

### 6.2 Meeting Housing Needs

Lets have also been analysed based on the Band of priority of the successful applicant:-

- 45.5% of lets were to applicants with Band 1 priority
- 22.5% of lets were to applicants with Band 2 priority



- 20.7% of lets were to applicants with Band 3 priority.
- 9.3% of lets were to applicants with Band 4 priority
- 2.1% of lets were to Housing with Care applicants

68% of lets were to applicants with either Band 1 or Band 2 priority which indicates that the policy is effective in meeting housing needs and that lets are routinely made to those applicants in the greatest housing need. Nearly 10% of lets are to applicants with no housing need and this also highlights the effectiveness of the allocation policy where it is still able to meet applicants housing requirements and makes the housing accessible to all applicants.

*Table 10 – Breakdown of lets per applicant group/banding*

Applicants Housed	Band 1	Band 2	Band 3	Band 4	HwC	Total
Home Mover	201	70	40	126	-	437
Home Seeker	408	-	-	-	-	408
Home Starter	132	296	298	25	-	751
Housing with Care	-	-	-	-	34	34
Total	741	366	338	151	34	1630

## Section 7 - Time Applicants Spend in Housing Need

7.1 The tables below show the length of time that applicants spent in housing need (by applicant group) before accepting an offer of housing.

*Table 11 – Home Seeker Lets 2015/16*

< 6 mths	6-12 mths	1-2 years	2-5 years	5-10 years	> 10 years	Total
296	79	20	13	0	0	408
73%	19%	5%	3%	0%	0%	408

92% of Home Seekers were in housing need for less than a year when they accept an offer of housing. Despite Home Seekers only having 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of vacant properties to bid for instead of the previous 50%, this has had a minimum impact resulting in a similar figure to 2014/15. The Council is continuing to meet its statutory obligation to re-house homeless applicants.

*Table 12 – Lets to Home Seekers over past 3 years*

Year	< 6 mths	6-12 mths	1-2 years	2-5 years	5-10 years	> 10 years	Total
2013/14	70%	18%	9%	3%	0	0	492
2014/15	78%	17%	4%	2%	0%	0%	520
2015/16	73%	19%	5%	3%	0%	0%	408

*Table 13 – Home Mover Lets 2015/16*

Applicant Priority	< 6 mths	6-12 mths	1-2 years	2-5 years	5-10 years	> 10 years	Total
B1	81	48	46	23	2	1	201
B2	20	17	13	15	5	0	70
B3	38	24	21	20	7	0	110
B4	60	19	22	14	5	6	126
Total	41%	21%	20%	13%	3%	2%	437

A significant number of Home Movers (41%) were housed in less than 6 months of being awarded their priority and 62% of Home Movers were housed within one year of being awarded their priority.

*Table 14 – Home Starter Lets 2015/16*

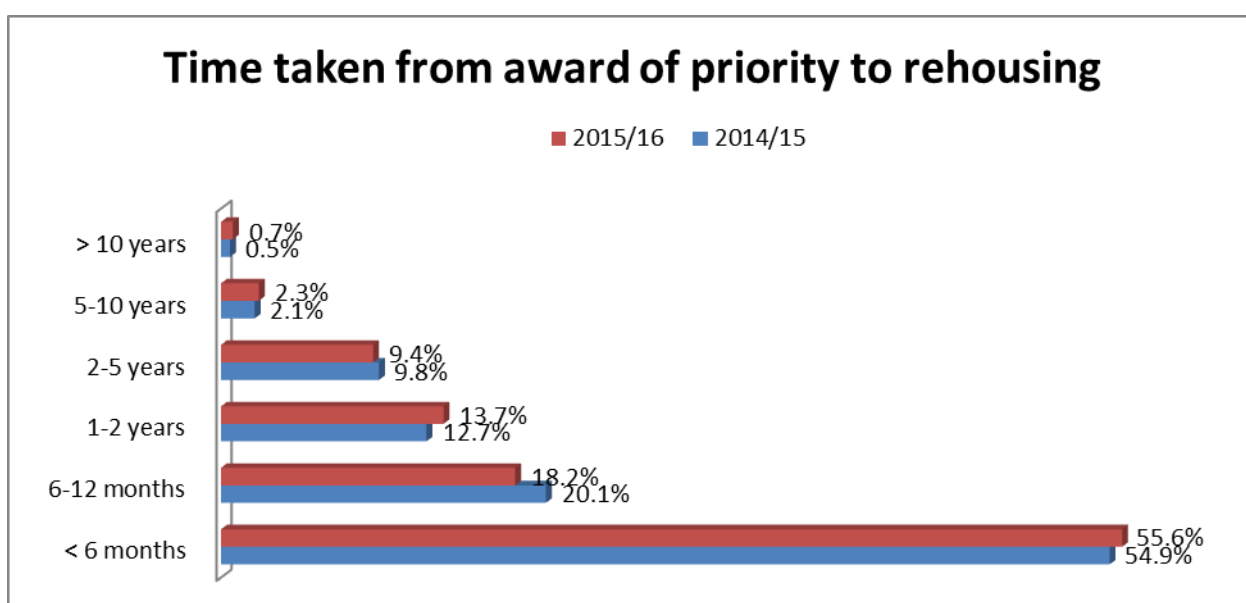
Applicant Priority	< 6 mths	6-12 mths	1-2 years	2-5 years	5-10 years	> 10 years	Total
B1	74	30	19	6	2	1	132
B2	209	34	33	18	2	0	724
B3	106	56	57	55	20	4	596
B4	18	3	3	1	0	0	50
Total	54%	16%	15%	11%	3%	1%	751

A significant number of Home Starters (54%) were housed in less than 6 months of being awarded their priority and 71% of Home Starters were housed within one year of being awarded their priority.

## Housing with Care Lets 2015/16

74% of Housing with Care applicants were housed in less than 6 months of their Housing with Care assessment. Applicants moving into Housing with Care are able to move more quickly than applicants moving into general needs housing.

*Table 15 – All Applicants – comparison of time taken to re-house 2014/15 & 2015/16*



87.5% of all applicants were housed within 2 years of applying for housing. This is broken down further as follows:-

- 55.6% of all applicants were housed in less than 6 months of being awarded priority.
- 73.8% of all applicants were housed between 6 months to 1 year of being awarded priority.
- 9.4% of all applicants were housed between 2-5 years of being awarded priority.
- 2.3% of applicants were housed between 5-10 years of being awarded priority.
- Less than 0.7 % of applicants waited more than 10 years to be offered a house. This is an increase from the previous year.

Time taken to re-house applicants over the past 2 years has remained consistent.

## Section 8 – Equalities Analysis

### 8.1 Housing Applicants

Information is provided below on the profile of applicants as at 31 March 2016. The information is very similar to that provided in previous years.

#### Gender

- 57.14% of main applicants are female, overall applicants are 52.98%
- 42.86% of main applicants are male, overall applicants are 47.02%

#### Age

- 21.70% of applicants are age 25 years or less
- 30.26% of applicants are between 26 and 40 years
- 27.83% of applicants are between 41 and 60 years
- 20.21% of applicants are over 60 (1/3<sup>rd</sup> are over 75)

#### Disability

- 24% of applicants on the housing list have indicated that they consider that they have a disability.
- Over half of these applicants indicate this is in relation to a physical disability or mobility problems.

#### Ethnicity

- 88% of applicants are White Scottish.
- the next most numerous ethnic groups are 3.85% Other British; 2.85% Other White Ethnic Group and 2.3% of applicants have not provided information about their ethnicity.

#### Religion

- Information is not available for 33% of applicants
- 42.97% of applicants have no religion
- 28.62% of applicants are Church of Scotland
- 12.01% of applicants are Roman Catholic

#### Sexual Orientation

- 36% of applicants did not respond or indicated that they did not wish to respond.

- Of the applicants who did respond, 86% indicated that they were heterosexual.

## 8.2 Applicants Re-housed

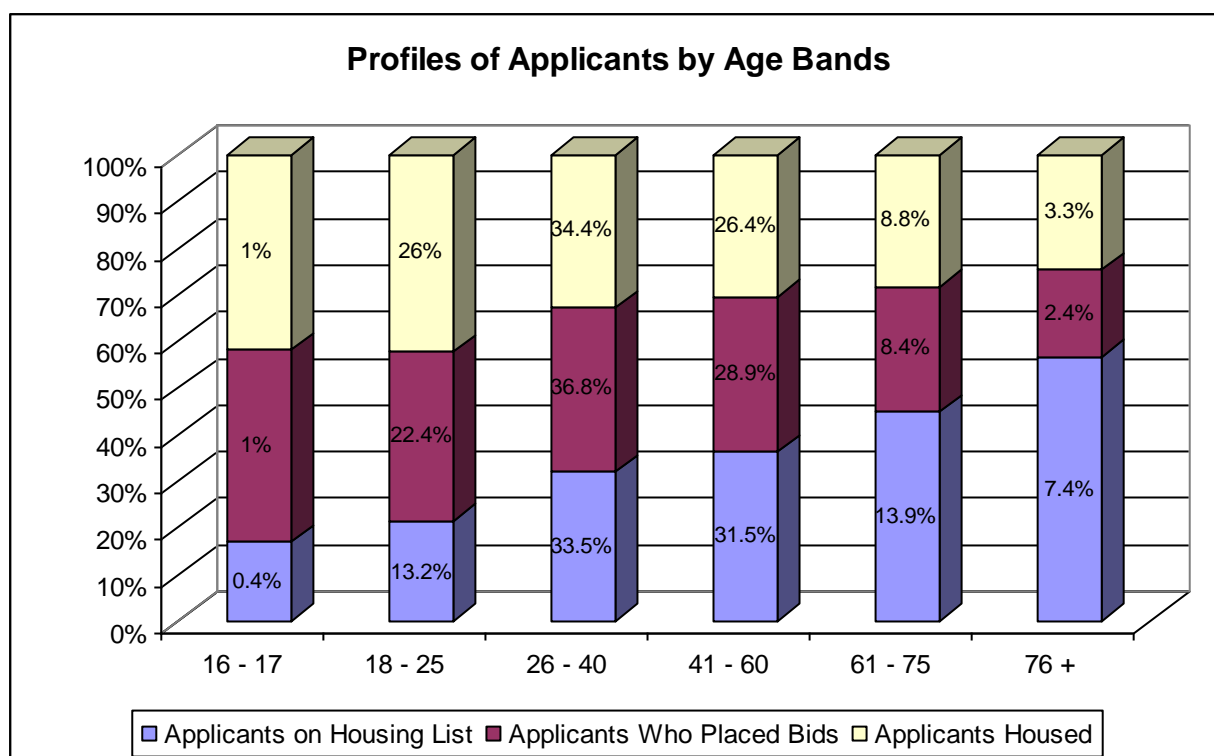
A breakdown of equalities information available regarding applicants who have been re-housed during 2015/16 is set out below, the main points to note as follows:

### Gender Profile

57% of the applicants housed were female, 43% of applicants housed were male which is representative of the housing list.

### Age

*Table 16 – Profiles of Applicants by Age Bands*



Young people aged 18 - 25 make up 13.2% of applicants on the housing register however, 26% of properties are being let to this group of applicants. Many of the young people have complex housing needs and have high priority to reflect this.

A smaller percentage of elderly applicants are being housed than are represented on the housing list. Applicants aged over 60 years old make up 21.3% of the housing register yet they account for only 12.1% of lets. However a number of those applicants do not have any housing need.

## Disability

26% of applicants housed provided information that they considered that they have a disability; whilst just under half (48%) of these applicants indicated this in relation to a physical disability or mobility problems.

## Ethnicity

The allocations made is broadly representative of the waiting list and as such 89% of applicants housed were White Scottish, 4% of applicants housed were Other British, 0.06% of applicants housed were Black Scottish British African. 1.4 % of applicants housed of did not provide this information.

## Religion

80% of applicants housed either did not provide any information about their religion or said they had "no religion". Of the remaining applicants that were housed 10 % were Church of Scotland; 6% were Roman Catholic and 2% of applicants housed were Other Christian

## Sexual Orientation

About 3% of applicants housed did not provide information about sexual orientation and 95% of applicants housed were heterosexual.