

# **Annual monitoring review of the Council's Allocations Scheme 2023/2024**

## **Contents**

Annual monitoring review of the Council's Allocations Scheme 2023/2024 .....	1
Housing Register applicants' information .....	3
Who is on the housing register, and how many households are waiting? .....	3
Table 1 - Households on the housing register in 2023/24 .....	3
Table 2 - Households on the housing register in 2022/23 .....	3
Graph 1 – Numbers on the housing register by household type.....	4
Year on Year Housing Register totals.....	5
Table 3 – Year on Year Housing Register totals.....	5
How are applications prioritised for vacancies? .....	5
Graph 2 – breakdown of applicants by band .....	5
Graph 3 – Breakdown of applicants in Band 3 .....	6
Single applicants.....	7
Table 4(i) – Age ranges of single person households on the housing register in 2022/23.....	7
Table 4(ii) – Age ranges of single person households on the housing register in 2023/24.....	7
Graph 4 – household by type : vacancies.....	9
Inactive Housing Applicants.....	10
Table 5 – inactive households within 2023/24 .....	10
Property types .....	11
Properties Advertised .....	11
Graph 5 – type of properties advertised .....	11
Properties advertised by Housing Associations in Basingstoke and Deane .....	12
Graph 6 – adverts by social housing landlords .....	12
Ground floor and adapted priorities .....	12
Flats.....	13
Addressing housing needs in the private rented sector .....	14
Quotas.....	14
Table 6 – percentage of annual lets to general needs or transfer applicants .....	14
Who does not qualify for the housing register? .....	15
Graph 7 – Non-qualifying applications.....	15
Local connection .....	16
Rural / Parish Connections .....	16

Graph 8 (i) and (ii) - 2023/24 .....	17
Graph 8A(i) and (ii) – 2022/23 .....	17
Type of tenancy offered.....	18
Table 7 – rent type.....	18
Waiting times.....	19
Graph 9 (i) – average waiting time in years for Band 1 Applicants by property types.....	20
Graph 9 (ii) – average waiting time in years for Band 2 Applicants by property types.....	21
Graph 9 (iii) – average waiting time for Band 3 applicants by property type ..	22
Complaints & requests for reviews .....	22
Right to Move .....	23
Legislative Changes impacting Allocations Schemes .....	23

## **Housing Register applicants' information**

### **Who is on the housing register, and how many households are waiting?**

As of 31 March 2024, there were 5304 households on the housing register, made up of the following households, as shown below in table 1 & 2 and graph 1. In 2022/23, there were 4742 households on the housing register. This is a 12% increase from last year. In 2023/24, 75% of the households on the housing register are general needs applicants and 25% are transfer applicants.

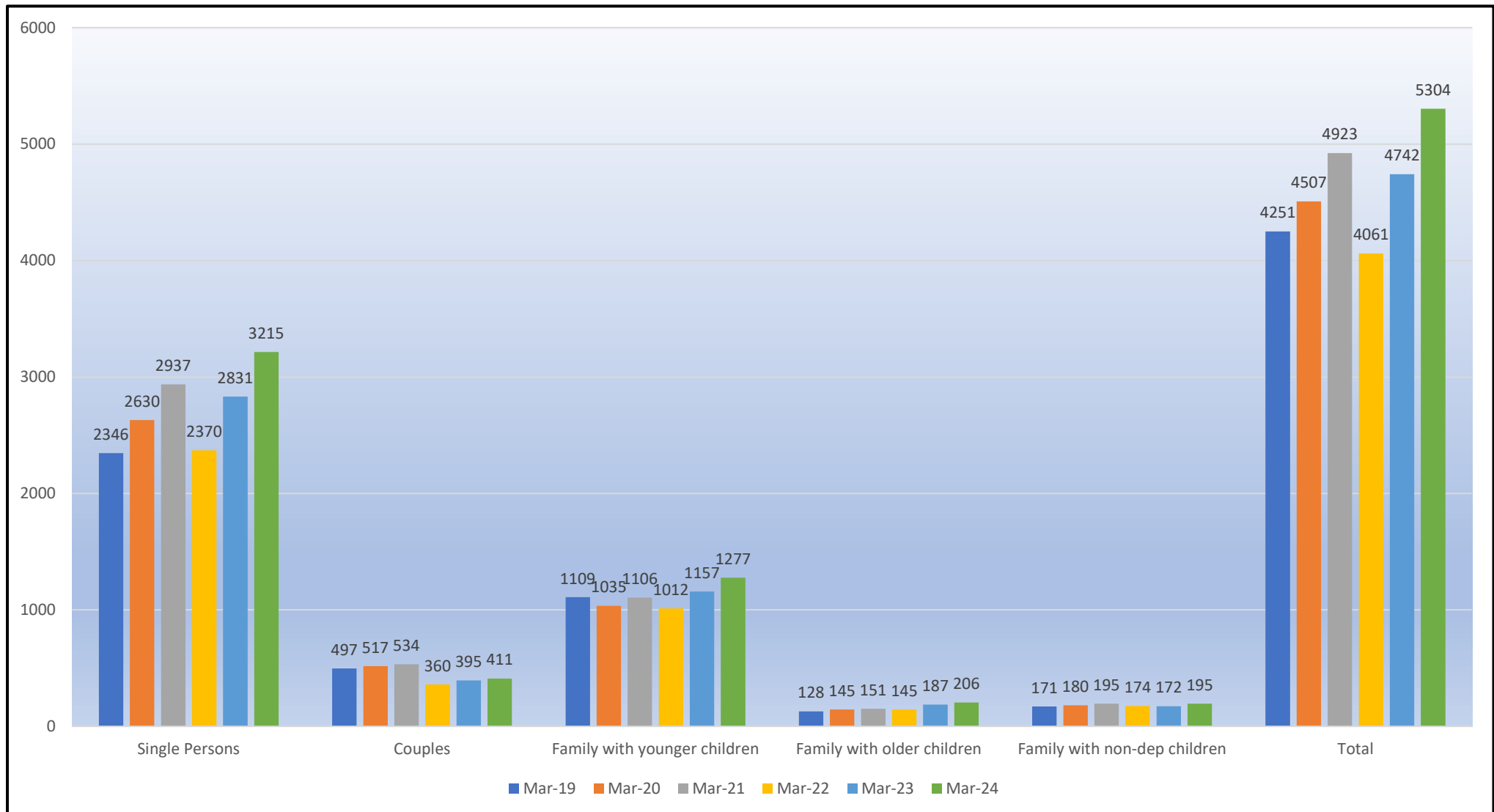
***Table 1 - Households on the housing register in 2023/24***

<b>Totals on register</b>	<b>Band 1</b>	<b>Band 2</b>	<b>Band 3</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Total %</b>
Single persons	83	3061	71	<b>3215</b>	<b>61%</b>
Couples	16	394	1	<b>411</b>	<b>8%</b>
Family with younger children	11	1258	8	<b>1277</b>	<b>24%</b>
Family with older children	2	200	4	<b>206</b>	<b>3%</b>
Family with non-dependent children	12	182	1	<b>195</b>	<b>4%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>5095</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>5304</b>	

***Table 2 - Households on the housing register in 2022/23***

<b>Totals on register</b>	<b>Band 1</b>	<b>Band 2</b>	<b>Band 3</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Total %</b>
Single persons	95	2673	63	<b>2831</b>	<b>60%</b>
Couples	12	382	1	<b>395</b>	<b>8%</b>
Family with younger children	8	1143	6	<b>1157</b>	<b>24%</b>
Family with older children	3	180	4	<b>187</b>	<b>4%</b>
Family with non-dependent children	11	161	0	<b>172</b>	<b>4%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>4539</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>4742</b>	

**Graph 1 – Numbers on the housing register by household type**



## Year on Year Housing Register totals

**Table 3 – Year on Year Housing Register totals**

Year End	Total numbers	% increase from previous year
2023/24	5304	12%
2022/23	4742	17%
2021/22	4061	17.5% decrease *
2020/21	4923	9%
2019/20	4507	6%
2018/19	4251	16%
2017/18	3675	21%
2016/17	3037	N/A

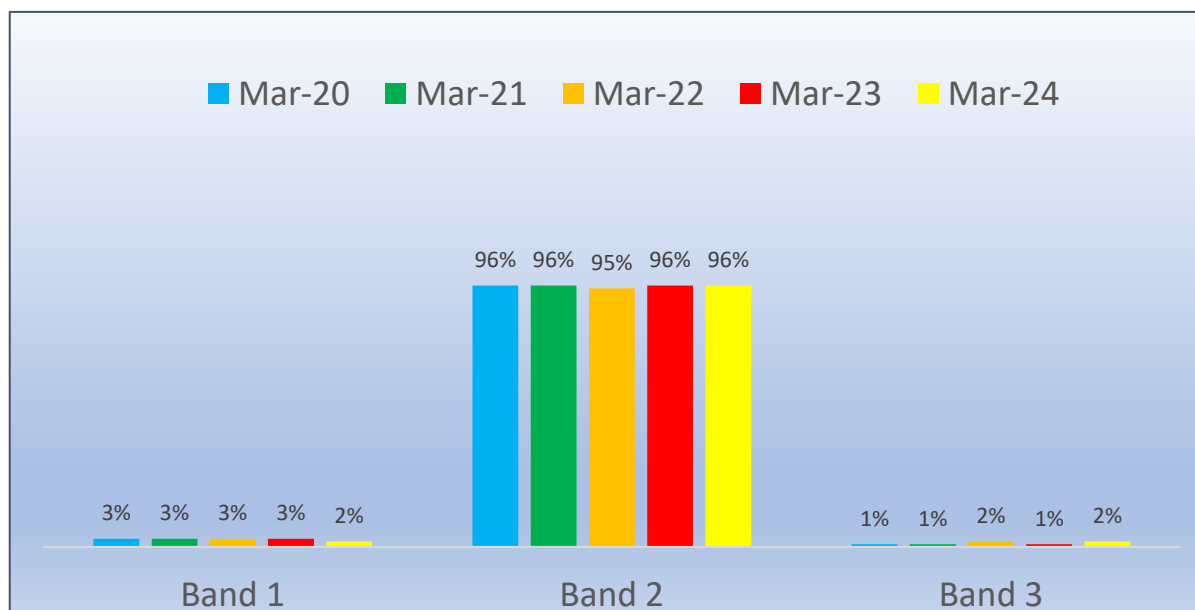
*\*The decrease of applicants on the register during 2021/22 is due to the annual review of housing applications being paused during Covid.*

The above table shows the percentage rate of increase for this year is less than last year.

## How are applications prioritised for vacancies?

To qualify to join the housing register, all applicants must have an assessed housing need. Applicants are then categorised into three bands and prioritised according to the date of their application (i.e. how long they have been waiting). The distribution of applicants by band has remained similar as demonstrated in graph 2 below.

**Graph 2 – breakdown of applicants by band**



**Band 1 Applicants:**

Applicants in Band 1 are those with a critical/urgent need to move as well as transfer applicants under occupying a unit of social housing by two or more bedrooms. Of the 124 applicants in Band 1, 89 are transfer applicants under occupying their current accommodation by two or more bedrooms. Households who are on the register for this reason tend to be more selective with the bids that they place, which is why only 12 households from this group successfully used their Band 1 status to move in the last year, compared to 6 households in 2022/23.

**Band 2 Applicants:**

The vast majority (96%) of all applicants are placed in Band 2.

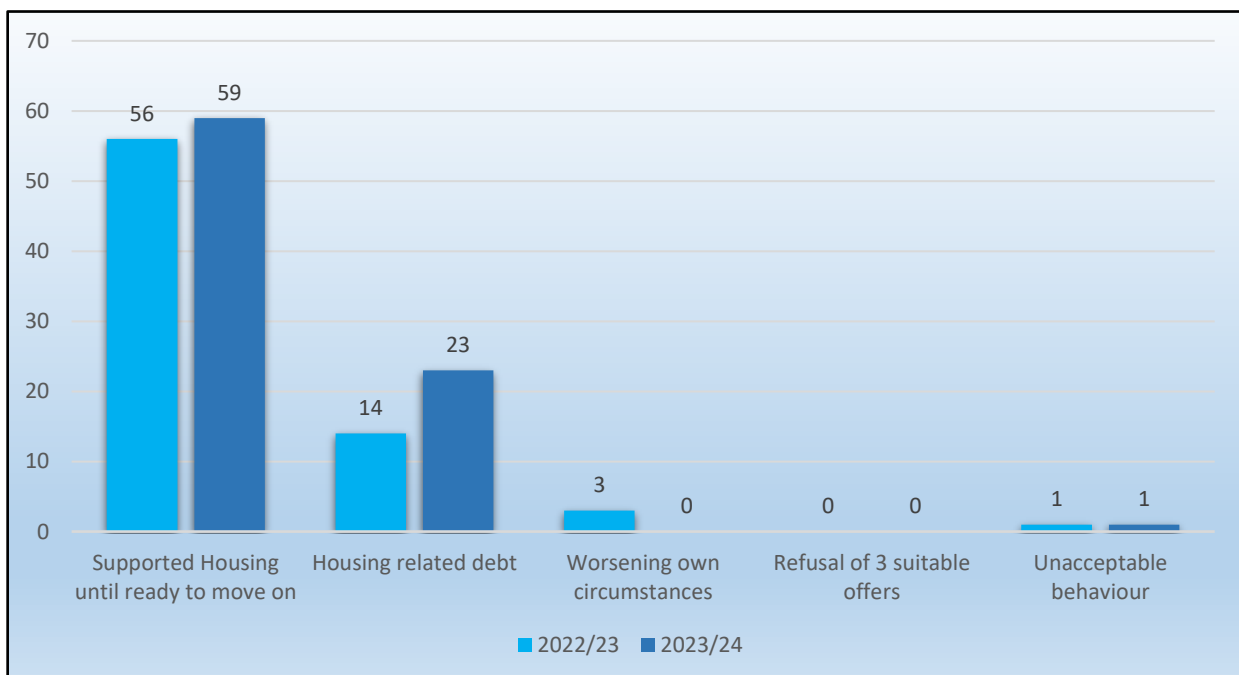
**Band 3 Applicants:**

Band 3 applicants are in housing need but have reduced priority for one or more of the following reasons:

- Having housing related debts or unacceptable behaviour
- Deliberately worsening their housing circumstances
- They have refused three reasonable offers
- They are in supported housing and not ready for a move to independent accommodation

As of 31 March 2024, there were 85 applicants in Band 3, equating to less than 2% of the total number of applicants on the housing register. Reasons for reduced priority are shown in graph 3 below.

**Graph 3 – Breakdown of applicants in Band 3**



It is still the case that no applicants have had their priority reduced due to refusing three suitable offers of accommodation.

All the applicants owing housing related debts are supported to arrange a payment plan and referred to appropriate support services to enable them to move into Band 2. The breakdown of those applicants in Band 3 with housing related debt is as follows:

- 19 applicants were previously evicted from Social Housing and have former tenancy arrears.
- 1 applicant has arrears including with a private landlord
- 1 applicant has a housing benefit overpayment
- 2 applicants owe Basingstoke and Deane money

## Single applicants

The largest group of households on the housing register remains single applicants, comprising 61% of all household types. This is a 1% increase from last year. Over two thirds (69%) of all general needs (non-transfer) single applicants on the housing register are aged under 35. This remains the same figure as last year but was a 9% increase from the year 2021/22.

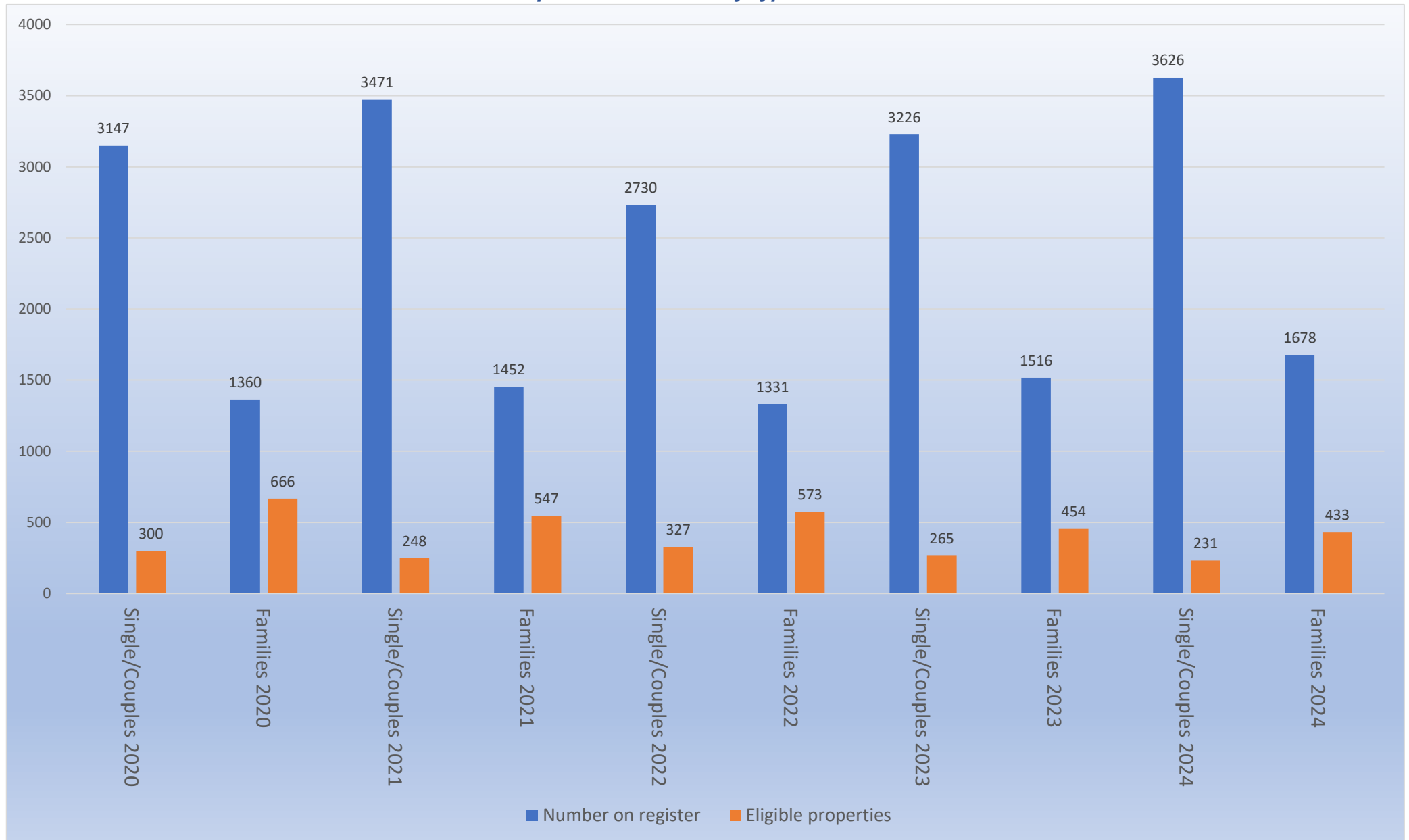
**Table 4(i) – Age ranges of single person households on the housing register in 2022/23**

Age range	General Needs	Transfers	Totals	% of all totals
16-19	295	0	295	10%
20-24	664	10	674	24%
25-34	722	37	759	27%
35-54	484	97	581	21%
55+	277	245	522	18%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2442</b>	<b>389</b>	<b>2831</b>	

**Table 4(ii) – Age ranges of single person households on the housing register in 2023/24**

Age range	General Needs	Transfers	Totals	% of all totals
16-19	311	0	311	10%
20-24	787	6	793	25%
25-34	844	39	883	27%
35-54	565	103	668	21%
55+	320	240	560	17%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2827</b>	<b>388</b>	<b>3215</b>	

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 2022/23 the ratio of single person/couple applicants to properties were 12:1, compared to 3:1 for families. In 2023/24 the ratio of single person/couple applicants to properties were 16:1, compared to 4:1 as demonstrated in Graph 4 below.

**Graph 4 – household by type : vacancies**

## Inactive Housing Applicants

74% of applicants on the housing register are actively searching and bidding for social housing, as they have both logged on to Homebid and placed a bid, irrespective of their time registered on the housing register.

There are 1394 applicants (26% of the housing register) who have yet to place a bid on a property, the same percentage of applicants in 2022/23. Within these applicants, 574 applicants (11% of the total housing register) have never logged onto Basingstoke Homebid and therefore by virtue of this have never placed a bid, which is again the same percentage as in 2022/23. This demonstrates applicants are logging on and exercising their choice to wait before placing a bid on a property of their choosing.

During 2023/24, 2284 households did not place a bid (43% of the housing register), this comprised of 1802 single person or couple households and 482 family households with children. There were 76 households that had an application date prior to 2015, which is the year we changed to our current allocations scheme.

923 households (17% 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. This is based on the applicant's time registered on the housing register. This equates to 40% of the applicants that did not place a bid. This is shown in table 5 below.

**Table 5 – inactive households within 2023/24**

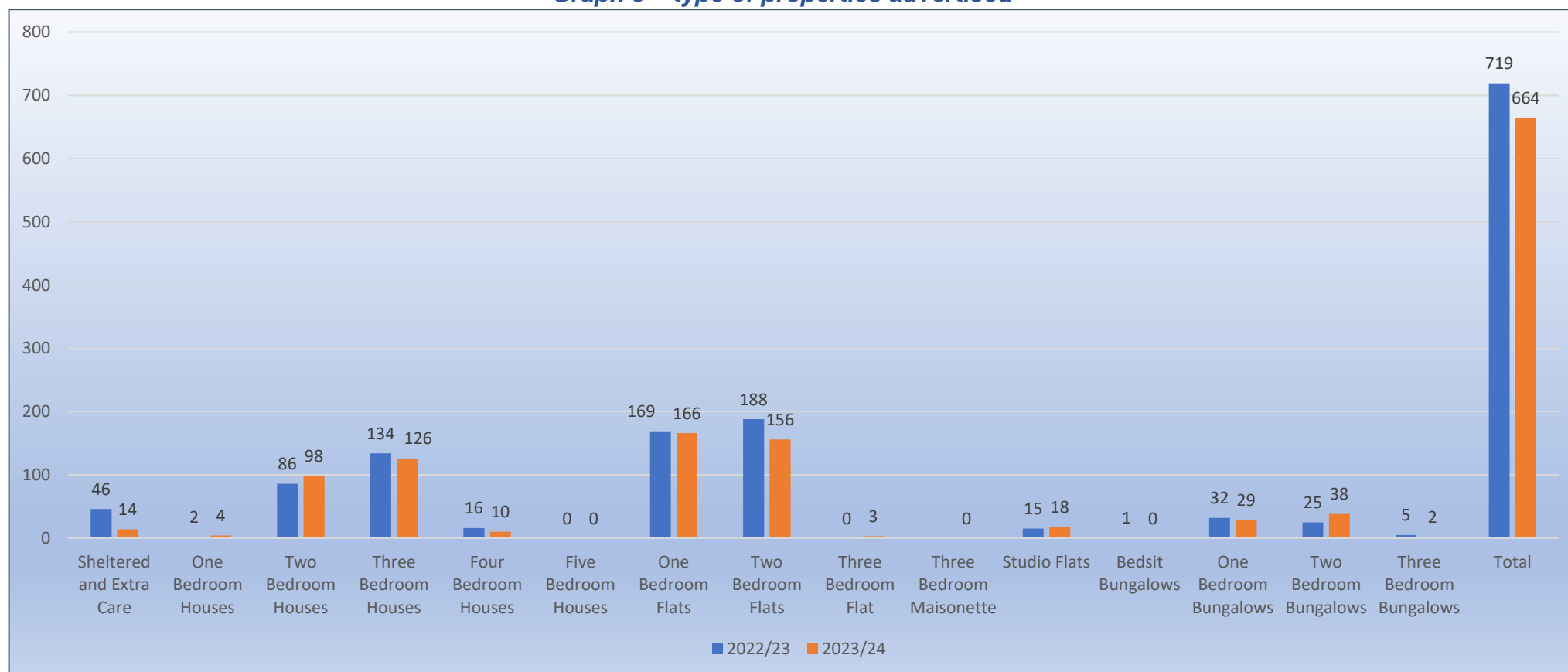
	<b>1 or 2 or 3 bedroom flat or house</b>  (based on the applicant's property eligibility within the allocations scheme)	<b>4 or 5 bedroom house</b>  (based on the applicant's property eligibility within the allocations scheme)	<b>Total</b>
<b>Single / couple households</b>	558	0	558
<b>Families with children</b>	268	97	365
<b>Total</b>	<b>826</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>923</b>

## Property types

### Properties Advertised

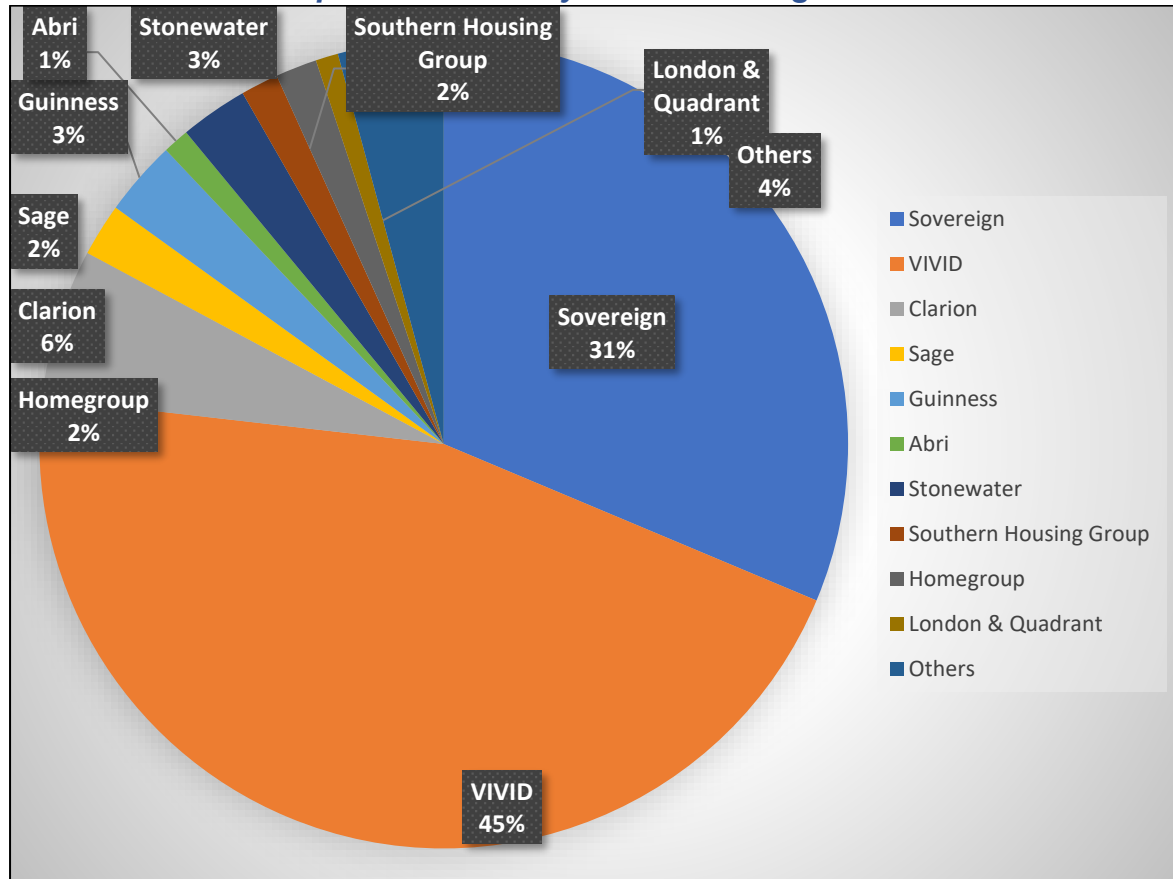
A total of 664 properties were advertised as available for letting during the year, compared to 719 properties in 2022/23. 238 (36%) of these properties were houses, and 343 (52%) were flats and studios. In 2022/23, 33% of the properties advertised were houses and 60% were flats, an increase in the percentage of houses being advertised. Out of the 343 flats that were advertised 41% (140) were either ground floor or had lift access, which remains the same percentage as last year. The properties advertised for letting are shown in graph 5 below.

*Graph 5 – type of properties advertised*



## Properties advertised by Housing Associations in Basingstoke and Deane

*Graph 6 – adverts by social housing landlords*



In 2023/24, 77% of all vacancies were advertised by either SNG (previously Sovereign) or VIVID housing associations, the remainder being through other registered providers. This is a decrease from last year, where SNG and VIVID advertised 81% of all vacancies. This is mostly because SNG's advertised vacancies have reduced by 11% since last year. Last year VIVID and SNG advertised similar levels of properties (approximately 40% each of the total properties). This year VIVID has advertised 14% more than SNG.

### Ground floor and adapted priorities

The Allocations scheme allows for suitable properties to be prioritised for applicants who require specific accommodation to meet a medical need. In 2023/24, 555 households (10%) on the housing register required either a ground floor or an adapted property, compared to 11% on the housing register in 2022/23.

In 2023/24, 232 properties were advertised granting priority to households who needed this specific type of accommodation, compared to 229 properties advertised in 2022/23. This equated to 35% of the total properties advertised, compared to 32% in 2022/23.

## Flats

To ensure households, have the widest choice of options on the housing register the allocation scheme enables households with younger children (i.e. under 10) to place bids on upper floor flats. In 2023/24 a total of 248 two-bedroom houses and flats were advertised for letting to households with children. 150 (60%) of these properties were flats and 98 (40%) houses. 6 two-bedroom flats were let to couples or single people.

In comparison, in 2022/23 there were a total of 274 two-bedroom flats and houses advertised for letting with 188 (68%) of these properties being flats and 88 (32%) houses. 8 two-bedroom flats were let to couples or single people.

This year almost a quarter of all properties (23%) were two-bedroom flats. This is a slight decrease from last year (26%), this is because the overall number of properties advertised decreased this year.

The information in Graph 9(ii) suggests households on the register are indeed positively exercising choice when bidding for properties. The average wait for a two-bedroom house in 2023/24 was 2.3 years compared to 1.5 years for a two-bedroom flat. In 2022/23 the wait for a two-bedroom house was the same as this year whilst a two-bedroom flat was 1.1 years.

147 housing register applications were received from families already living in social housing (transfer applicants) in two-bedroom upper floor flats. 80 applicants (54%) had a housing need to move with the remainder being assessed as having no housing need.

## Addressing housing needs in the private rented sector

The Allocations scheme enables applicants living in unsatisfactory private rented sector accommodation to move into settled social housing. In 2023/24 648 (12%) households on the housing register were living in accommodation in the private rented sector. This remains the same percentage as in 2022/23.

In 2023/24, 92 (18%) of all offers accepted were by applicants in this group, the same percentage as the previous year (18%). This is a slight decrease from 2021/22 (22%) and is partly attributable to the increased proportion of transfer applicants successfully bidding.

## Quotas

The council can choose to make a percentage of its annual lets available to certain groups i.e. transfer applicants (existing Housing Association tenants who are tenants in the borough.)

In 2023/24 and 2022/23 no properties were made available exclusively for transfer applicants. The table below demonstrates that the percentage of lets made to transfer applicants and general needs applicants remained proportionate and similar to the previous year.

***Table 6 – percentage of annual lets to general needs or transfer applicants***

<b>Year</b>	<b>General Needs</b>	<b>Transfer</b>
2023/24	65%	35%
2022/23	65%	35%
2021/22	73%	27%
2020/21	72%	28%
2019/20	74%	26%

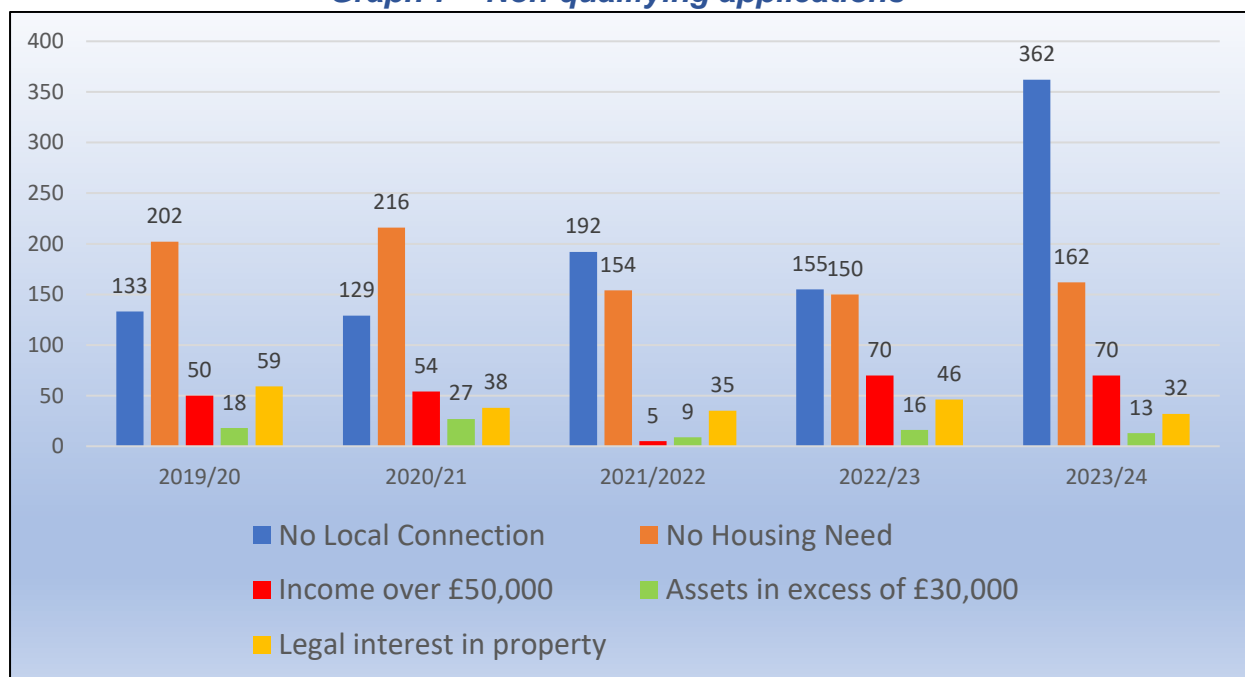
## **Who does not qualify for the housing register?**

Applicants must fulfil the following criteria to qualify for inclusion on the register

- Have a housing need, as defined within the Council's allocation scheme
- Have a local connection [see below]
- Have a household income of less than £50,000 per annum
- Not have savings more than £30,000
- Not have any legal ownership of or interest in a property

Graph 7 below shows the reasons why applications have been unsuccessful.

***Graph 7 – Non-qualifying applications***



In 2022/23 there were 437 applicants who did not meet the qualifying criteria to join the housing register and this increased to 639 applicants in 2023/24. This is a 46% increase from 2022/23. The main increase came from applicants who did not meet the local connection criteria, with 140 of the 362 applicants (39%) applying from outside of the Basingstoke and Deane borough.

In addition to those applicants who did not meet the qualifying criteria, there were a further 1,182 applicants that were not successful in joining the housing register for other reasons. 188 applications were submitted incomplete, and 640 applications were closed after applicants did not respond to a request for further information.

## **Local connection**

To be able to join the housing register, applicants need to meet the Council's adopted local connection criteria. This means that all applicants applying to Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council for social housing must be able to demonstrate a connection by way of residence, employment or the need to live in the borough to give or receive a substantial level of support **unless** they are armed forces applicants or applicants who are fleeing domestic abuse.

Of the 5304 households on the register, 45 applicants (35 applicants in 2022/23) were not required to meet the local connection criteria, which includes 17 members of the armed forces (22 members in 2022/23). This continues to demonstrate a positive working application of the Council's commitment to support the Armed Forces community through its [Armed Forces Community Covenant](#).

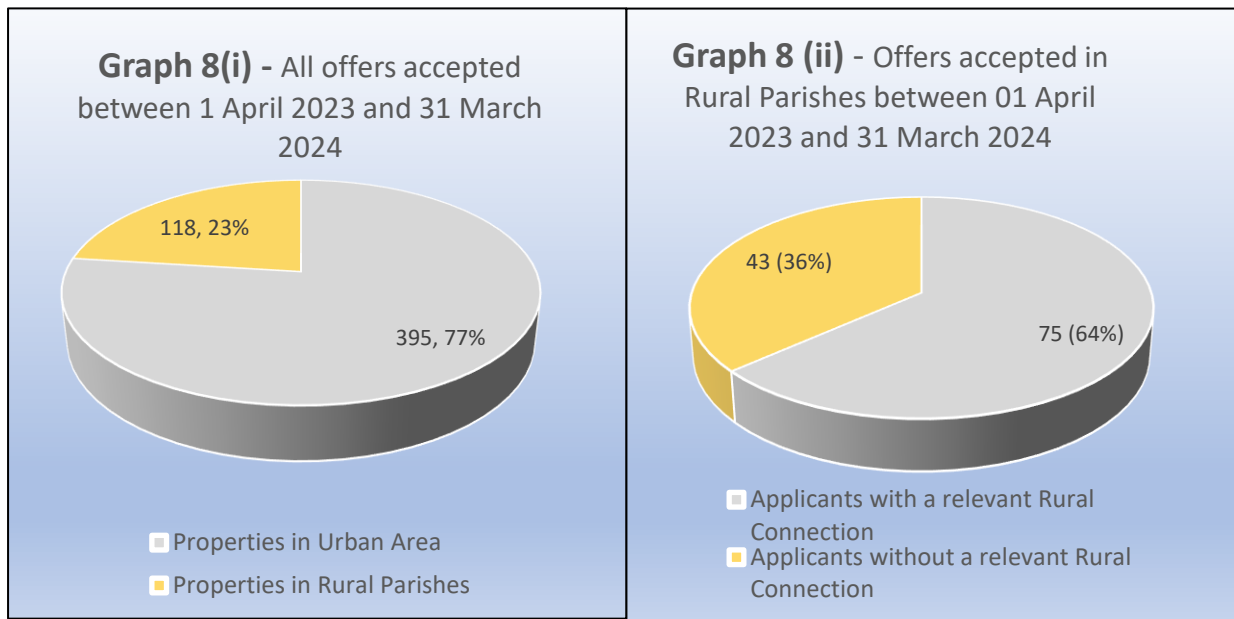
28 applicants of all the households on the register, were not required to meet the local connection criteria, due to fleeing from domestic abuse. This is a substantial increase from 2022/23 (13 applicants) and is due to the commitments the Council has made in respect of domestic abuse and its strategic objective to achieve Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation during 2024/25.

## **Rural / Parish Connections**

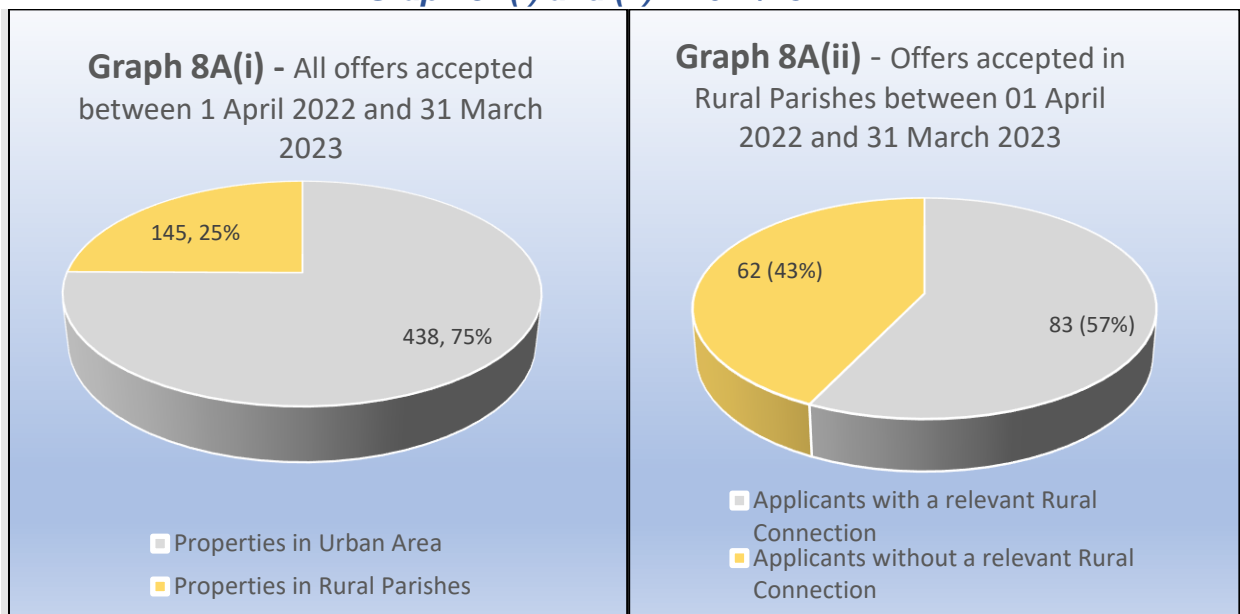
The Allocations Scheme enables priority to be given to applicants with a local connection to rural areas outside of the urban areas of the town. During 2023/24, 23% of all properties advertised for letting were in rural parishes, a decrease of 2% since last year. 64% of those properties were let to households with a local connection to the parish, a 7% increase from last year. The primary reason that lettings went to households without a parish connection was that households with a local connection to the parish did not bid. The percentage of properties available outweighed the percentage of applicants on the housing register with a local connection to a rural Parish, which totalled 17% of the total applicants on the housing register.

Information in Graph 8(i) and (ii) and Graph 8A(i) and (ii) below demonstrate that the proportion of vacancies arising in rural areas, and the proportion of offers being accepted by applicants with a local connection to the relevant parish. There is, however, sufficient demand from the urban areas of the borough for vacancies that arise for which there is no demand (or bids) from people with rural connections.

**Graph 8 (i) and (ii) - 2023/24**



**Graph 8A(i) and (ii) – 2022/23**



## **Type of tenancy offered**

Housing Associations can offer a variety of tenures. The type of tenancy is displayed on the property advert to allow applicants to make an informed decision when placing bids. Properties can be offered as:

- **Social Rent** – Rents set at approximately 40% of market rent and usually let on an assured tenancy (usually following a 1-year probationary tenancy) **or**
- **Affordable Rent** – Rents set at up to 80% of the rent achievable for a similar property on the open market, but should not exceed the Local Housing Allowance rates
- **Fixed Term** – Tenancies let on an assured shorthold tenancy (AST) and offered for a fixed period (usually 5 years). After the fixed term has expired, the housing association will review the tenant's circumstances.

***Table 7 – rent type***

Tenure	2022/23		2023/24	
<b>Social rent</b>	465	65%	525 (2 were fixed term)	79%
<b>Affordable rent</b>	254	35%	139 (22 were fixed term)	21%

The significant increase and proportion of properties being advertised at social rent is to be welcomed as social rent properties are more affordable to households on low incomes.

Both SNG and VIVID reported a high volume of applications for mutual exchanges in 2023/24. A total of 661 mutual exchanges were completed in the borough for 2023/24, which means that at least 1300+ households secured alternative accommodation of their own choosing. This is over double than last year where 287 mutual exchanges were completed with over 500+ households securing alternative accommodation of their own choice. This is predominantly because SNG have invested in a new system to allow them to complete mutual exchanges quicker and have resolved a backlog of moves.

When combined with the 664 properties advertised as becoming available for letting (of which 85 properties were new homes) this means that at least 1900+ households secured social housing of their choice in the borough in 2023/24. This has increased greatly since last year, of 1200+ households securing social housing in 2022/23. A significant number of households are still demonstrably securing a suitable home by

finding a suitable mutual exchange and demonstrates the housing register is not the only option available to facilitate a move to alternative social housing.

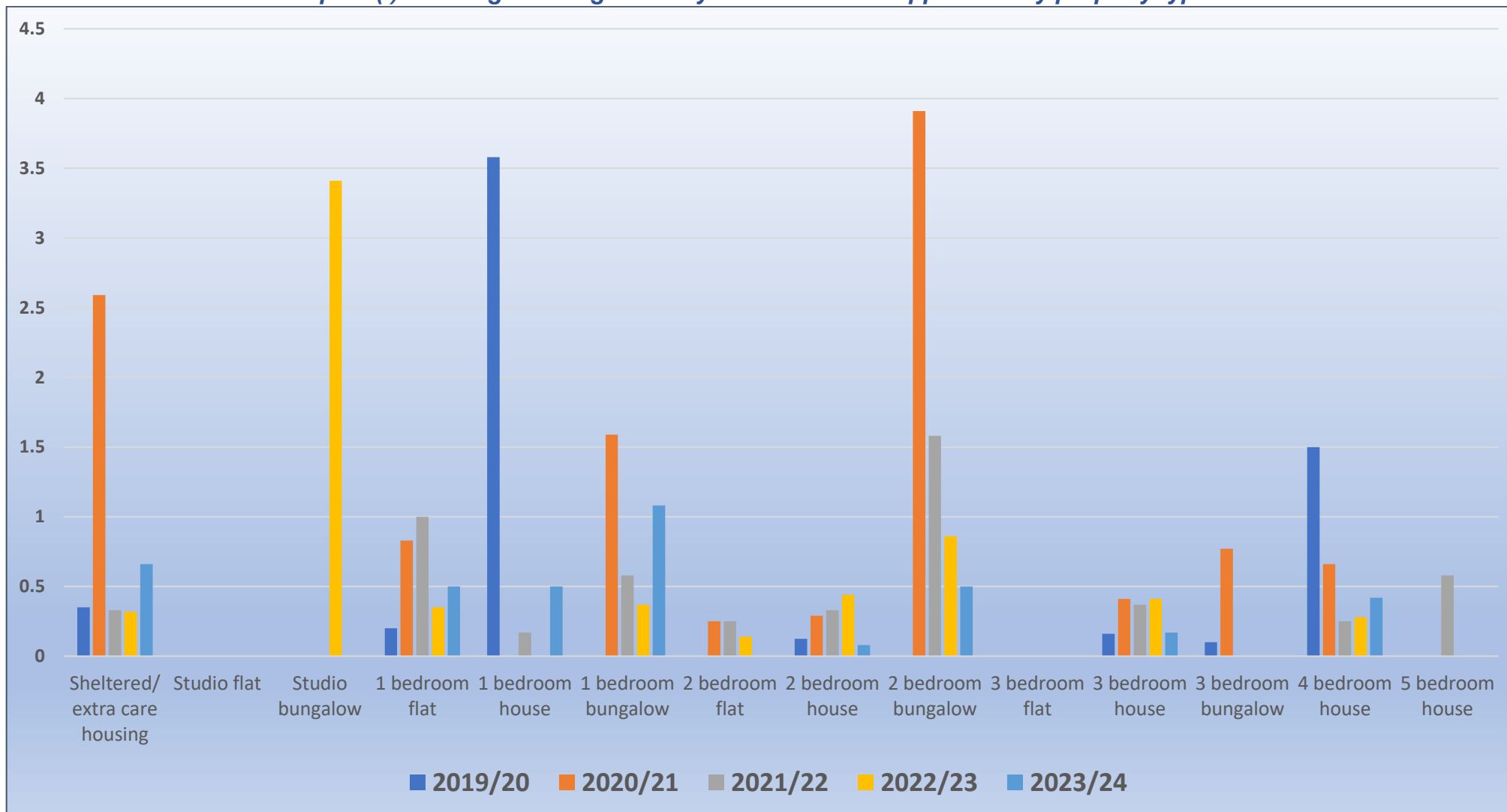
## **Waiting times**

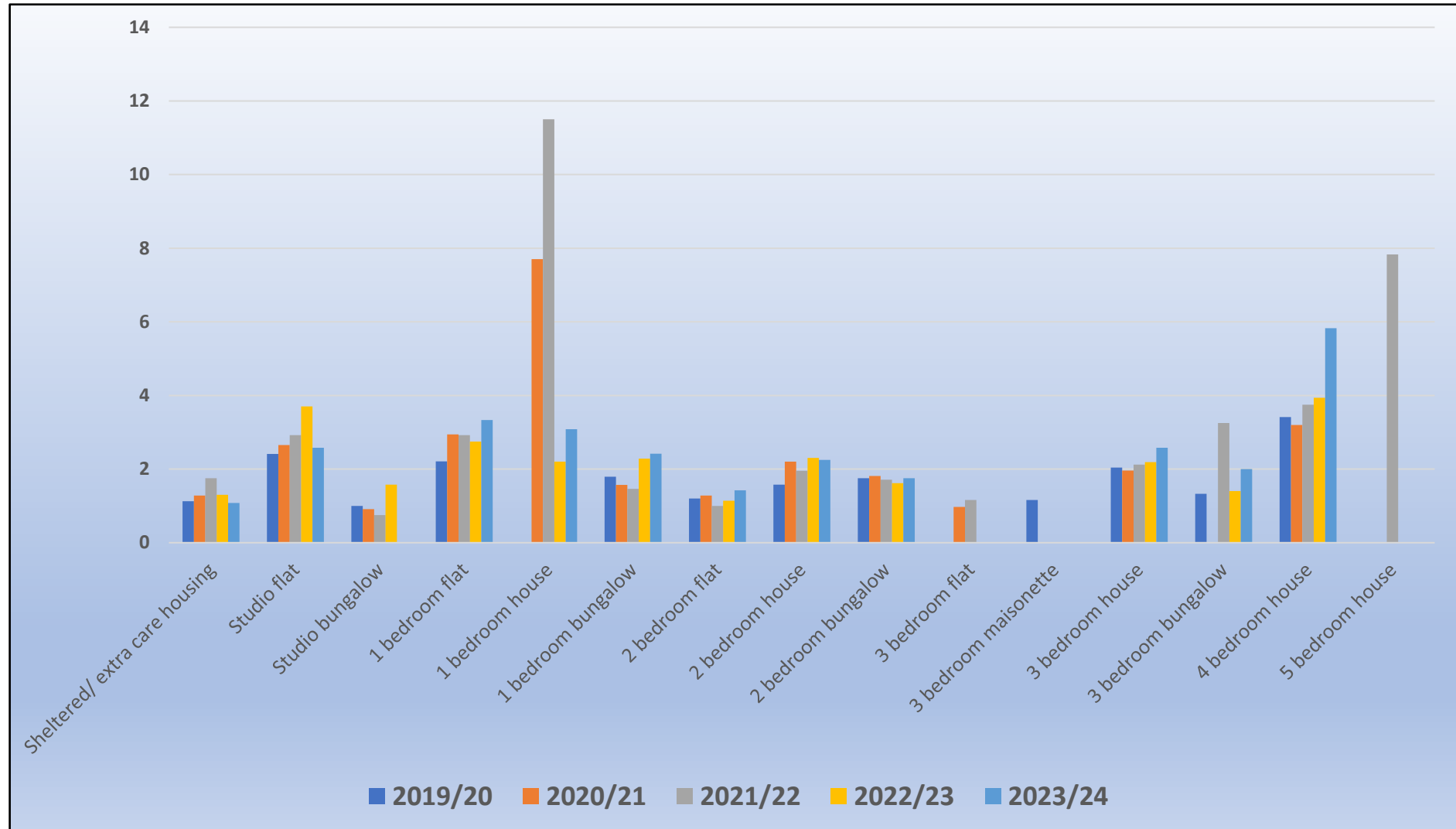
Across the borough, the demand for accommodation continues to outweigh supply.

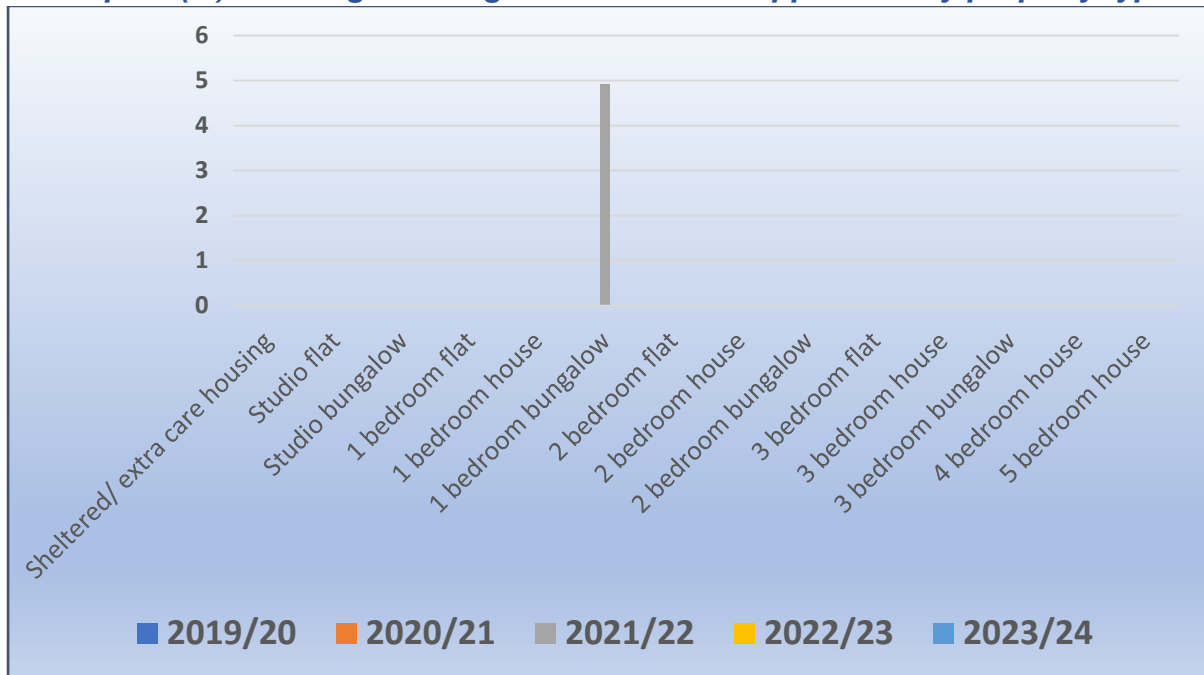
The length of time an applicant waits for accommodation will depend on:

- the size and type of accommodation they require
- the location to which they wish to move
- the number of vacancies becoming available
- whether or not they choose to exercise their bid for advertised vacancies

As a general overview, the average wait for properties by size and type has tended to be as shown in Graph 9(i), (ii) and (iii) below.

**Graph 9 (i) – average waiting time in years for Band 1 Applicants by property types**

**Graph 9 (ii) – average waiting time in years for Band 2 Applicants by property types**

**Graph 9 (iii) – average waiting time for Band 3 applicants by property type**

There has been a slight increase in waiting times this year for those applicants in band 2 but a decrease in waiting times for those applicants in band 1. The longest wait continues to be for four and five-bedroom properties. This is due to the limited number of properties of this size becoming available.

In 2023/24 there were 10 4-bedroom properties and no 5-bedroom properties available for letting, compared to 16 4-bedroom properties in 2022/23.

## **Complaints & requests for reviews**

All applicants have the statutory right to request a review of any aspect of their housing application assessment.

There were 13 requests for reviews during 2023/24, a large decrease since 2022/23 (at 22 reviews). In seven (54%) of these cases the council's original decision was upheld, compared to 50% last year. This shows a consistent rate of upholding decisions. In four cases the decision was reversed and two applicants withdrew their request for a review.

## **Right to Move**

This refers to statutory provisions introduced by Government in 2015 for social tenants in England who need to move to avoid hardship because the tenant works (or has been offered work) in the borough of the authority into whose are they wish to move and has a genuine intention to take up the offer.

From June 2015 levels of Right to Move applications have been monitored to inform any recommendations to apply a quota for such cases. This is in accordance with statutory guidance from Government.

In 2023/24 and 2022/23 no Right to Move applications were received.

## **Legislative Changes impacting Allocations Schemes**

There have been no legislative changes impacting allocations schemes for the past two years. However, the Government published a consultation on reforms to social housing allocations in March 2024. The proposed changes are to prioritise those with the closest connection to the UK by introducing a UK connection test of at least 10 years, those with a local connection of at least two years by introducing a local connection test and those who do not disrupt communities through anti-social behaviour or terrorism activity. Further proposed changes included an income test and a fraudulent declaration test. We responded to this consultation and the outcome of this consultation is impending.

Cabinet approved a change to the wording of the domestic abuse criteria regarding local connection within the Allocation's Scheme at paragraph 5.2, following an Ombudsman decision. The change is deletion of text:

To have a local connection to the borough of Basingstoke and Deane you will need to meet one of the following criteria:

- The applicant is a victim of domestic abuse ~~and is at high risk. Supporting evidence from police, domestic abuse support services or other appropriate professionals may be required to assist in determining the applicant's level of risk.~~ Applicants meeting this criterion are not subject to the two years continuous residence qualification.