

Midlothian Council Housing Lettings Analysis

2016/2017 and 2017/18

Introduction

Midlothian Council Allocation Policy

In April 2013 Midlothian Council adopted a new allocation policy. Prior to this the Council's Allocation Policy was Transfer led meaning that current tenants were given first option to new lets. The 2013 policy adopted a Group and Points model in which three waiting lists were created to reflect applicant circumstances with yearly letting targets set. This was subsequently revised in 2016 and waiting lists were set at:

- Choice List (Target 10%) – list for those applicants with no identifiable need, with points awarded for the length of time an applicant has been on the list.
- Homeless List (Target 45%) – list for those applicants who have presented and been accepted as being homeless.
- General Needs (Target 45%) – list for those applicants with a specific need. For instance those with medical need or who are living in overcrowded conditions.

Letting Outcomes

Table 1 below shows the number of applicants in each list group on 31st March 2018. It shows that the majority (60.5%) of the 4,789 households are in the General Needs group, 23% are in the Homeless group and 16.5% are in the Choice group.

Table 1: Housing List by Group

List	31/03/2018
	%
General Needs	60.5%
Homeless	23%
Choice	16.5%
Total	100%

Table 2 shows the total housing stock by area. It shows that the greater number of council houses are found in the larger towns and villages. There are also several villages with a very small number of council units.

Table 2: Housing Stock by Area

Area	Housing Stock - All				Total Stock
	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed +	
Auchendinny inc Glencorse	3	6	12	0	21
Bilston	0	88	17	3	108
Bonnyrigg/Lasswade	168	508	359	76	1,111
Carrington	3	3	6	0	12
Cousland	0	9	0	0	9
Dalkeith	125	845	310	55	1,335
Danderhall	40	136	60	12	248
Gorebridge	120	398	251	43	812
Loanhead	82	313	119	26	540
Mayfield/Easthouses	49	418	177	32	676
Newtongrange/Butlerfield	18	146	65	24	253
North Middleton	0	4	3	0	7
Pathhead	14	59	48	4	125
Penicuik	183	536	304	37	1,060
Poltonhall	10	56	37	3	106
Rosewell	36	33	26	3	98
Roslin	4	38	4	0	46
Temple	0	2	3	0	5
Midlothian	855	3,598	1,801	318	6,572

The number of properties let by month, broken down by waiting list category can be seen in Chart 1 below. It shows that during 2016/17 the outcomes of target lets were not exactly aligned to the intended targets for the Housing Allocation Policy. This was due to Midlothian Council introducing a Common Allocation Policy with Melville Housing which led to 45% of all lets by Midlothian Council and including Melville Housing lets being allocated to homeless households. In 2017/18 this was amended to ensure that 45% of all Midlothian Council lets (not including Melville Housing lets) were allocated to homeless households. General needs lets have usually been a higher proportion than the target (45%) because allocations to Choice list Applicants were often below the 10% target.

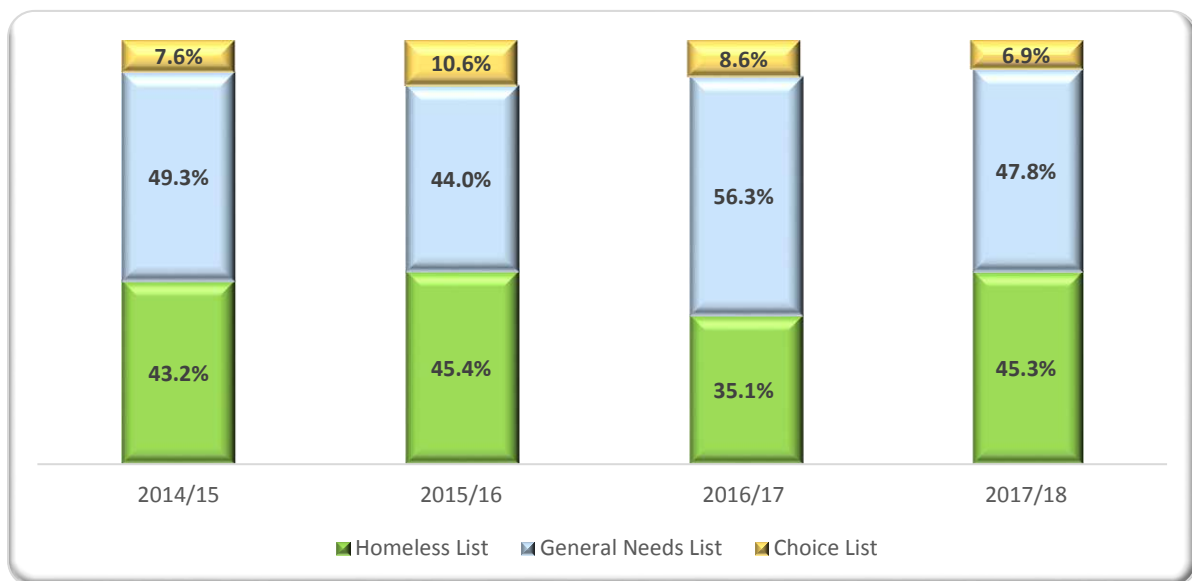
Chart 1: Midlothian council lettings categories by year 2014/15 to 2017/18

Table 2, below, presents the number and proportion of lets by area over the years of 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18. It indicates that the highest number of lets continue to take place in settlements with the most council housing stock: only four areas let more than 100 units during the past three years. Conversely, several smaller settlements such as Bilston and Carrington had a very small number of lets with some villages having no lets at all.

Midlothian Council's new build programme does significantly influence these trends. For example in Penicuik there were three small sites completed in 2015/16 leading to an increase in homes being let. In Loanhead a development at Edgefield Gardens resulted in 59 lets made in Loanhead during 2016/17 instead of a more routine figure of around a dozen per year. In Gorebridge during 2017/18 a large site was also completed resulting in more than double the usual number of allocations. These annual fluctuations will continue as further development progresses in most areas of Midlothian. In 2017/18 there was a higher level of lets compared to previous years (364) due to more new build completions in this year compared to previous years. It is anticipated that there will be around 300 lets during 2018/19 and numbers will begin to rise from 2019/20 onwards due to a significant number of new housing completions expected in this period.

Table 3: Numbers and proportion of lets by area.

Area	2015/16		2016/17		2017/18		Number	%
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
Auchendinny	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0%
Bilston	1	0.4%	1	0.3%	3	0.8%	5	1%
Bonnyrigg/Lasswade	32	11.8%	53	17.5%	28	7.7%	113	12%
Carrington	0	0.0%	1	0.3%	1	0.3%	2	<1%
Cousland	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0%
Dalkeith	52	19.1%	55	18.2%	72	19.8%	179	19%
Danderhall	10	3.7%	5	1.7%	18	4.9%	33	4%
Gorebridge	33	12.1%	42	13.9%	122	33.5%	197	21%
Loanhead	13	4.8%	59	19.5%	11	3.0%	83	9%
Mayfield	26	9.6%	19	6.3%	23	6.3%	68	7%
Newtongrange	7	2.6%	12	4.0%	16	4.4%	35	4%
Pathhead	6	2.2%	6	2.0%	2	0.5%	14	1%
Penicuik	84	30.9%	40	13.2%	55	15.1%	179	19%
Poltonhall	6	2.2%	4	1.3%	7	1.9%	17	2%
Rosewell	2	0.7%	3	1.0%	4	1.1%	9	1%
Roslin	0	0.0%	2	0.7%	2	0.5%	4	<1%
Total	272	100.0%	302	100.0%	364	100.0%	938	100%

Allocations by Waiting List to Settlements

Tables 4, 5 and 6 shows all lets for the period 2015/16 – 2017/18 by Housing List Group and area. It shows that there are some variations by area. Smaller areas will be more likely to have unusual figures because of the small number of lets. It is notable that there was a higher proportion of lets to homeless applicants in Dalkeith compared to the other lists. In Dalkeith this is possibly due to a significant number of smaller, flatted properties being relet in this period and a higher proportion of Ready to Rent properties being let to homeless households in this area.

Table 4: Lets to settlement by Area and Letting Group 2015/16

Area	Choice		Homeless		General Need		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Bilston	1	3.4%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.4%
Bonnyrigg	3	10.3%	15	12.1%	13	10.8%	31	11.4%
Dalkeith	4	13.8%	33	26.6%	16	13.3%	53	19.4%
Danderhall	1	3.4%	1	0.8%	8	6.7%	10	3.7%
Gorebridge	7	24.1%	13	10.5%	13	10.8%	33	12.1%
Loanhead	0	0.0%	3	2.4%	10	8.3%	13	4.8%
Mayfield	2	6.9%	13	10.5%	11	9.2%	26	9.5%

Newtongrange	1	3.4%	1	0.8%	5	4.2%	7	2.6%
Pathhead	1	3.4%	2	1.6%	3	2.5%	6	2.2%
Penicuik	8	27.6%	37	29.8%	39	32.5%	84	30.8%
Poltonhall	1	3.4%	4	3.2%	2	1.7%	7	2.6%
Rosewell	0	0.0%	2	1.6%	0	0.0%	2	0.7%
Roslin	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	29	100.0%	124	100.0%	120	100.0%	273	100.0%

Table 5: Lets to settlement by Area and Letting Group 2016/17

Area	Choice		Homeless		General Need		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Bilston	0	0.0%	1	1.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.3%
Bonnyrigg	0	0.0%	17	16.2%	33	19.6%	50	16.7%
Dalkeith	3	11.5%	26	24.8%	24	14.3%	53	17.7%
Danderhall	1	3.8%	0	0.0%	4	2.4%	5	1.7%
Gorebridge	7	26.9%	15	14.3%	21	12.5%	43	14.4%
Loanhead	6	23.1%	21	20.0%	32	19.0%	59	19.7%
Mayfield	3	11.5%	7	6.7%	9	5.4%	19	6.4%
Newtongrange	2	7.7%	0	0.0%	10	6.0%	12	4.0%
Pathhead	0	0.0%	2	1.9%	4	2.4%	6	2.0%
Penicuik	3	11.5%	12	11.4%	25	14.9%	40	13.4%
Poltonhall	0	0.0%	2	1.9%	4	2.4%	6	2.0%
Rosewell	0	0.0%	1	1.0%	2	1.2%	3	1.0%
Roslin	1	3.8%	1	1.0%	0	0.0%	2	0.7%
Totals	26	100.0%	105	100.0%	168	100.0%	299	100.0%

Table 6: Lets to settlement by Area and Letting Group 2017/18

Area	Choice		Homeless		General Need		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Bilston	4	16.0%	23	13.9%	31	17.8%	58	15.9%
Bonnyrigg	3	12.0%	14	8.5%	11	6.3%	28	7.7%
Dalkeith	6	24.0%	38	23.0%	28	16.1%	72	19.8%
Danderhall	2	8.0%	4	2.4%	12	6.9%	18	4.9%
Gorebridge	5	20.0%	49	29.7%	69	39.7%	123	33.8%
Loanhead	1	4.0%	6	3.6%	4	2.3%	11	3.0%
Mayfield	3	12.0%	10	6.1%	10	5.7%	23	6.3%
Newtongrange	1	4.0%	10	6.1%	5	2.9%	16	4.4%
Pathhead	0	0.0%	1	0.6%	1	0.6%	2	0.5%
Penicuik	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Poltonhall	0	0.0%	6	3.6%	1	0.6%	7	1.9%
Rosewell	0	0.0%	2	1.2%	2	1.1%	4	1.1%
Roslin	0	0.0%	2	1.2%	0	0.0%	2	0.5%
Totals	25	100.0%	165	100.0%	174	100.0%	364	100.0%

Allocations by Housing Need

Following the change to the Housing Allocation Policy it was expected there would be a change in the profile of need that would be met. Table 4 shows the outcomes for the year 2015/16 which operated under the Allocation Policy set in April 2013. After April 2016 a Group and Points system was still in place but three additional targets were set for rehousing specific needs groups within the General Needs groups. An even split was targeted between those with medical needs, overcrowded/underoccupying households and those with other needs, such as living in a house in poor condition.

Currently the most common housing needs on the waiting list are as follows:

- Homeless: 1075
- Insecure Accommodation: 638
- Living Care Of: 1008
- Overcrowded: 387
- Under occupying: 140
- A Medical: 207
- B Medical: 466

As shown in Table 7 below, applicants with homeless points and those with medical points are the groups which receive the highest level of allocations. One of the reasons that medical needs continues to receive a high level of allocations is due to a significant number of council housing available for relet being specifically adapted those with medical needs or designated as specialist housing such as amenity housing, retirement housing and extra care housing. In addition, when new build estates are developed many of the ground floor homes are well-suited to those with medical needs that so it is common for a significant number of allocated housing on new build estates to be designated for those with medical needs. In addition, a significant number of applicants are Homeless households with medical priority (23 allocations to applicants with these needs in 2017/18). However, the changes to the Housing Allocation Policy in 2016 have ensured that there has been an increase in the number of allocations to households living in overcrowded conditions. Allocations to those with no identified need will have been let to applicants on the Choice list.

In 2017/18 some tenants allocated housing who had previously lived in Newbyres Crescent and Gore Avenue (which was subsequently demolished). Affected households were offered

the opportunity to move to the Robert Franks Avenue/David Herkes Way new build estate in Gorebridge and 20 households chose to do this when the site was completed in 2017.

In addition, the number of lets to current tenants from 2015/16 to 2017/18 were as follows:

2015/16 - 46

2016/17 - 53

2017/18 - 90

This increased number of lets to current tenants is mainly due to new build activity where a Local Letting Initiative is agreed that usually will prioritise applicants who are existing tenants with a housing need, such as being overcrowded. This creates a vacancy chain which helps to meet the need of several applicants on the housing list.

Table 7: Allocations by Applicant Need 2015/16 – 2017/18

Identified Need	2015/16		2016/17		2017/18	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
No Identified Need	29	10.6%	25	8.4%	25	6.9%
Insecure Accommodation	15	5.5%	26	8.7%	21	5.8%
Management Transfer	21	7.7%	15	5.0%	16	4.4%
Overcrowding	15	5.5%	34	11.4%	27	7.4%
Underoccupying	0	0.0%	2	0.7%	5	1.4%
Newbyres Tenants	7	2.6%	0	0.0%	20	5.5%
Homeless A Medical	9	3.3%	11	3.7%	23	6.3%
A Med	28	10.3%	40	13.4%	27	7.4%
B Med	23	8.4%	34	11.4%	35	9.6%
Womens Aid	1	0.4%	1	0.3%	2	0.5%
Sheltered/Extra Care	11	4.0%	17	5.7%	22	6.0%
Homeless	114	41.8%	94	31.4%	141	38.7%
Total	273	100.0%	299	100.0%	364	100.0%

Table 8: Allocations to General Needs by Target Group

Target Group	2015/16		2016/17		2017/18	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Medical	63	51.2%	82	48.5%	76	43.7%
Overcrowding	17	13.8%	35	20.5%	50	28.7%
Other Needs	42	34%	53	31%	48	27.6%

Allocations by Property Size

Tables 9, 10 and 11 below show the lets to each allocation group by property size for the last three years. In each year around half of the lets have been for 2 bedroom homes. Next most common are 1 bedroom properties, followed by 3 bedroom properties. Only a small number of 4 bedroom homes were let in each year. The size of units does not vary that much between the Groups although there are few allocations to 1 bedroom housing to applicants in the Choice group.

Table 9: Allocations by property size and waiting list 2015/16

Bedroom Size	Waiting List						Total	
	Homeless List		Needs list		Choice List			
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1	35	28.5%	49	40.8%	8	27.6%	92	33.8%
2	62	50.4%	53	44.2%	12	41.4%	127	46.7%
3	22	17.9%	14	11.7%	9	31.0%	45	16.5%
4+	4	3.3%	4	3.3%	0	0.0%	8	2.9%
Total	123	100.0%	120	100.0%	29	100.0%	272	100.0%

Table 10: Allocations by property size and waiting list 2016/17

Bedroom Size	Waiting List						Total	
	Homeless List		Needs list		Choice List			
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1	29	27.4%	59	34.7%	3	11.5%	91	30.1%
2	58	54.7%	73	42.9%	19	73.1%	150	49.7%
3	17	16.0%	33	19.4%	4	15.4%	54	17.9%
4+	2	1.9%	5	2.9%	0	0.0%	7	2.3%
Total	106	100.0%	170	100.0%	26	100.0%	302	100.0%

Table 11: Allocations by property size and waiting list 2017/18

Bedroom Size	Waiting List						Total	
	Homeless List		Needs list		Choice List			
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1	31	18.8%	56	32.2%	0	0.0%	87	23.9%
2	96	58.2%	75	43.1%	20	80.0%	191	52.5%
3	26	15.8%	38	21.8%	5	20.0%	69	19.0%
4+	12	7.3%	5	2.9%	0	0.0%	17	4.7%
Total	165	100.0%	174	100.0%	25	100.0%	364	100.0%

Allocations by Ethnic Group

Table 12 below shows the number and proportion of lets to ethnic minority applicants and compares the results to the proportion of the same ethnic groups on the waiting list. It shows that there has been a slight increase in the proportion of the Housing List who identify themselves as not being White Scottish households and Ethnic Minority households. This could be partly due to the change in the Housing Allocation Policy, as there has been a reduction in lets to current tenants, and only a small proportion of current tenants belong to a non-white ethnic group (1% of current tenants report that they belong to a non-white ethnic group compared to 5% of Housing list applicants).

Table 12: Ethnic Group Statistics for Waiting Lists and Allocations

Ethnic Group	2015/16		2016/17		2017/18	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Applicants on waiting list who are Gypsy/Travellers*	1	0.02%	1	0.02%	1	0.02%
Allocations to Gypsy/Travellers	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Applicants on waiting list who are non-white Scottish*	460	9.46%	722	15.13%	1041	22.32%
Allocations to Non-white Scottish	14	5.13%	32	10.60%	38	10.44%
Applicants on waiting list who are BME*	184	3.79%	213	4.46%	254	5.45%
Allocations to BME applicants	9	3.30%	15	4.97%	11	3.02%

Waiting Lists for Applicants

Table 13 and 14 and 15 show the Housing List by qualifying size of applicants. It indicates that as a result of the decision to change the bedroom size qualification in 2013, which was prompted as a result of the UK Government's Welfare Reform legislation, there were significant changes to the need for different property sizes. Following the Scottish Government's measure to mitigate the effect of the bedroom tax on tenants, the Housing Allocation Policy was amended again in 2016, enabling single people and couples to choose 2 bedroom housing has reduced the level of demand on 1 bedroom housing. In 2016, 53.6% of applicants were waiting for 1 bedroom housing and this has reduced to 28% by 2018. Conversely, households waiting for 2 bedroom housing had increased from 34.5% of all applicants in 2016, to 57.9% of applicants in 2018. This is a positive change as there are more 2 bedroom homes available compared to 1 bedroom housing. However, it is recognised that there has been an increased number of smaller households on the Housing List, with 43% of Applications being a single person household. The new build programme will be developing a significant proportion of 1 bedroom housing to address this.

Table 13: Waiting List in Midlothian 31st March 2016

	1 Bed		2 Bed		3 Bed		4 Bed +		Total
Number and %	2565	53.6%	1649	34.5%	480	10.0%	88	1.8%	4782

Table 14: Waiting List in Midlothian 31st March 2017

	1 Bed		2 Bed		3 Bed		4 Bed +		Total
Number and %	1662	34.2%	2533	52.1%	549	11.3%	118	2.4%	4862

Table 15: Waiting List in Midlothian 31st March 2018

	1 Bed		2 Bed		3 Bed		4 Bed +		Total
Number and %	1293	27.6%	2712	57.9%	553	11.8%	128	2.7%	4686

It is evident that the length of time to be allocated housing varies depending on area choices made at the application stage. Tables 16, 17 and 18 show the average length of time applicants had been on the waiting list at the time of allocation. On average it took 4 years for households to be allocated a property. Applicants on the Choice List faced the longest wait for housing, followed by the Homeless List then General Needs housing having on average a shorter wait. However, it should be recognised that many households on the Housing List have been waiting for much longer times than the average shown below and the time taken to allocate units will be dependent on the level of need of an applicant. Also, most homeless applicants will stay in temporary accommodation until a permanent let becomes available. The Newbyres Crescent/Gore Avenue transfer households are included in Table 18 and this reduced the average rehousing time for Gorebridge.

Table 16: Average time on Housing List for those housed in 2015/16

Area	Time taken (yrs) to house applicants by waiting list			All Lists
	Homeless	General Needs	Choice List	
Bilston	-	-	2.9	2.9
Bonnyrigg	4.7	3.1	4.8	4.2
Gorebridge	2.9	1.8	5.4	3.4
Dalkeith	2.8	2.7	5.8	3.8
Danderhall	4.2	4.0	5.9	4.7
Loanhead	3.0	2.7	-	2.9
Mayfield	3.0	2.4	4.9	3.4
Newtongrange	2.4	3.1	7.1	4.2
Pathhead	3.7	4.3	10.3	6.1
Penicuik	3.4	3.9	5.1	4.1
Poltonhall	4.5	1.3	7.3	4.4
Rosewell	5.1	-	-	5.1
Roslin	-	-	-	-
Average All Areas	3.4	3.2	5.5	4.0

Table 17: Average time on Housing List for those housed in 2016/17

Area	Time taken (yrs) to house applicants by waiting list			All Lists
	Homeless	General Needs	Choice List	
Bilston	7.5	-	-	7.5
Bonnyrigg	3.8	3.8	-	3.8
Gorebridge	3.6	2.7	5.8	4.1
Dalkeith	3.8	4.4	5.4	4.5
Danderhall	-	4.1	0.6	2.3
Loanhead	5.2	4.7	6.3	5.4
Mayfield	4.1	2.1	6.4	4.2
Newtongrange	-	4.1	6.1	5.1
Pathhead	4.4	4.1	-	4.3
Penicuik	3.9	3.1	6.0	4.3
Poltonhall	0.5	2.9	-	1.7
Rosewell	6.0	1.3	-	3.6
Roslin	4.5	-	6.4	5.5
Average all areas	4.1	3.7	5.8	4.6

Table 18: Average time on Housing List for those housed in 2017/18

Area	Time taken (yrs) to house applicants by waiting list			All Lists
	Homeless	General Needs	Choice List	
Bilston	-	-	-	
Bonnyrigg	3.7	4.0	5.9	4.5
Dalkeith	4.1	4.6	7.9	5.5
Danderhall	2.9	3.9	5.8	4.2
Gorebridge	3.2	2.6	2.6	2.8
Loanhead	3.3	0.9	6.0	3.4
Mayfield	3.2	5.2	3.5	4.0
Newtongrange	3.7	1.2	14.3	6.4
Pathhead	0.1	4.5	-	2.3
Penicuik	5.0	2.2	6.2	4.5
Poltonhall	4.4	0.5	-	2.5
Rosewell	4.5	7.3	-	5.9
Roslin	7.0	-	-	7.0
Average All Areas	3.8	3.2	5.8	4.3

Average length of time until allocation in any particular year is affected by the areas that properties become available. For instance if a major new-build development is completed in an area it is likely to reduce the time taken to house applicants.

An indication for an applicant's length of the time before they might be offered housing is the number of points people had on their application at time of allocation. Tables 19, 20 and 21 show the average points obtained by applicants at time of allocation. The tables show there are fewer points awarded to Choice List applicants as they do not have a demonstrable housing need compared to Homeless and General Needs applicants. The average number of points at allocation is highest in the General Needs group compared to the Homeless and Choice groups.

Table 19: Average number of points at allocation 2015/16

Area	Homeless List	General Needs List	Choice List	All Lists
Bilston	-	-	38	38
Bonnyrigg	142	207	50	161
Gorebridge	141	193	55	143
Dalkeith	128	178	56	153
Danderhall	124	125	58	117
Loanhead	116	182		167
Mayfield	117	219	52	150
Newtongrange	112	237	65	195
Pathhead	121	126	85	118
Penicuik	146	161	50	142
Poltonhall	148	259	66	153
Rosewell	130	-	-	130
Roslin	-	-	-	-
Average All Areas	135	180	54	143

Table 20: Average number of points at allocation 2016/17

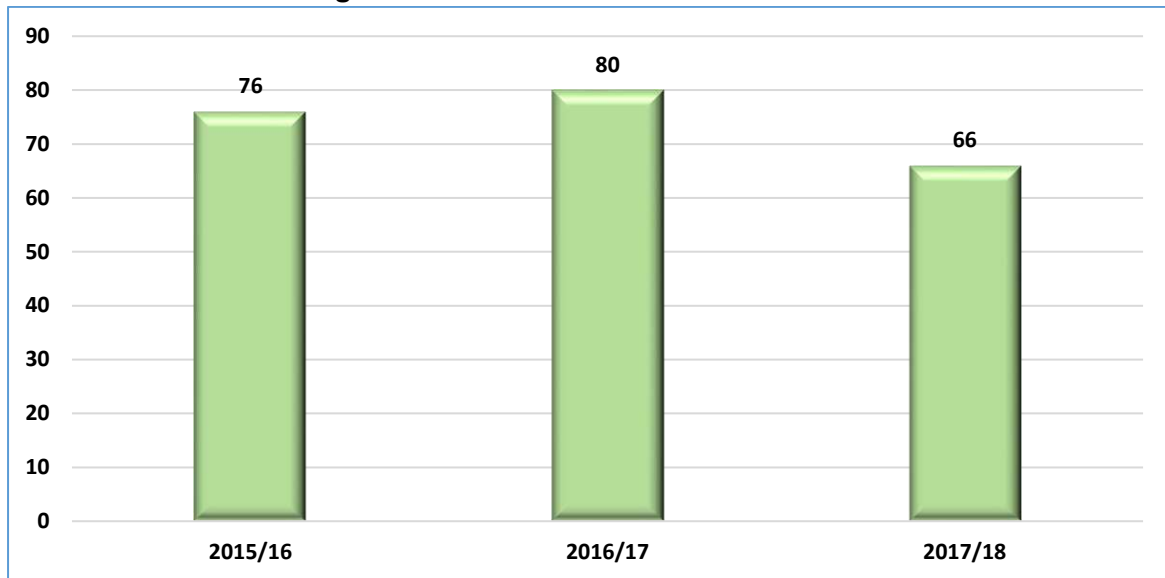
Area	Homeless List	General Needs List	Choice List	All Lists
Bilston	144	-	-	144
Bonnyrigg	132	163	-	152
Gorebridge	123	136	57	120
Dalkeith	132	140	64	131
Danderhall	-	194	24	151
Loanhead	138	150	79	139
Mayfield	136	141	61	126
Newtongrange	-	198	58	167
Pathhead	125	118	-	120
Penicuik	198	163	58	166
Poltonhall	189	182	-	184
Rosewell	135	230	-	198
Roslin	214	-	60	137
Average All Areas	141	154	63	141

Table 21: Average number of points at allocation 2017/18

Area	Homeless List	General Needs List	Choice List	All Lists
Bilston	139	140	-	139
Bonnyrigg	152	194	57	158
Gorebridge	124	175	44	149
Dalkeith	136	149	66	124
Danderhall	166	150	57	135
Loanhead	143	173	58	146
Mayfield	146	144	43	125
Newtongrange	165	209	64	147
Pathhead	98	124	-	111
Penicuik	142	161	57	106
Poltonhall	145	154	-	146
Rosewell	126	154	-	140
Roslin	186	-	-	186
Average All Areas	138	167	55	136

Mutual Exchanges

Midlothian Council tenants are able to access Homeswapper to search for a suitable mutual exchange. Homeswapper is a web-based system enabling tenants to self-register, search for suitable exchange properties and arrange exchanges themselves. Housing Officers ensure the swap suitability of tenants, undertake tenancy checks and administer tenancy agreements. As with existing tenants who downsize via a Housing Application, a £1,500 incentive to move payment is eligible for those households who downsize by 2 or more bedroom sizes. The Chart below shows that there has been a slight reduction in Mutual Exchanges in 2017/18 following a very high number of swaps (80) in 2016/17. There are currently 476 live applications from households who are currently tenants of Midlothian Council.

Chart 4: Mutual Exchanges 2015/16-2017/18

Changes in numbers and proportion of Mutual Exchanges by area and property type can be seen in Tables 22, 23 and 24. The tables show that the most common swaps are for, and between, house type properties rather than flats or four in a blocks, with more than 55% of exchanges being for houses in all years.

Table 22: Mutual Exchanges 2015/16

Area	Flat		4 in a Block		House		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Bilston	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Bonnyrigg	1	1%	2	3%	1	1%	4	5%
Gorebridge	1	1%	4	5%	3	4%	8	11%
Dalkeith	1	1%	8	11%	5	7%	14	18%
Danderhall	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%	1	1%
Loanhead	0	0%	3	4%	3	4%	6	8%
Mayfield	4	5%	1	1%	11	14%	16	21%
Newtongrange	1	1%	2	3%	0	0%	3	4%
Pathhead	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Penicuik	3	4%	2	3%	14	18%	19	25%
Poltonhall	1	1%	0	0%	1	1%	2	3%
Rosewell	0	0%	0	0%	3	4%	3	4%
Roslin	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	12	16%	22	29%	42	55%	76	100%

Table 23: Mutual Exchanges 2016/17

Area	Flat		4 in a Block		House		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Bilston	0	0%	1	1%	0	0%	1	1%
Bonnyrigg	1	1%	4	5%	11	14%	16	20%
Gorebridge	1	1%	3	4%	4	5%	8	10%
Dalkeith	1	1%	4	5%	10	13%	15	19%
Danderhall	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%	1	1%
Loanhead	2	3%	4	5%	3	4%	9	11%
Mayfield	0	0%	3	4%	9	11%	12	15%
Newtongrange	0	0%	1	1%	4	5%	5	6%
Pathhead	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Penicuik	1	1%	3	4%	7	9%	11	14%
Poltonhall	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%	1	1%
Rosewell	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%	1	1%
Roslin	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	6	8%	23	29%	51	64%	80	100%

Table 24: Mutual Exchanges 2017/18

Area	Flat		4 in a Block		House		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Bilston	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%	1	2%
Bonnyrigg	1	2%	2	3%	1	2%	4	6%
Gorebridge	1	2%	5	8%	3	5%	9	14%
Dalkeith	3	5%	5	8%	7	11%	15	23%
Danderhall	0	0%	0	0%	3	5%	3	5%
Loanhead	2	3%	2	3%	2	3%	6	9%
Mayfield	4	6%	0	0%	5	8%	9	14%
Newtongrange	0	0%	0	0%	3	5%	3	5%
Pathhead	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Penicuik	0	0%	3	5%	7	11%	10	15%
Poltonhall	1	2%	0	0%	2	3%	3	5%
Rosewell	0	0%	0	0%	3	5%	3	5%
Roslin	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	12	18%	17	26%	37	56%	66	100%

Table 25 below shows existing tenants who have moved either through being allocated another property on by undertaking a mutual exchange with another tenant. It shows that most tenants were moving to a property of the same size. A significant number of these were mutual exchanges (21 out of 58 in 2017/18). Likely reasons for tenants moving to a property of the same size includes:

- Needing to move to for medical reasons, such as moving from a 2 bed terraced house to a 2 bed bungalow.
- A mutual exchange tenant who wants to move to a different area or property type, such as from a flat to a house.

The Table also shows that tenants moving to a property larger than their previous one was quite common, with 31 tenants moving to a property one bedroom size larger and 2 tenants moving to a property two bedroom sizes larger. Downsizing was also quite common, with 23 tenants moving down one bedroom size, 6 moving down 2 bedroom sizes and 2 moving down 3 bedroom sizes in 2017/18.

Tenants who downsize by 2 or more bedroom sizes qualify for an Incentive to Move payment which encourages households who under occupy their property to move by offering payment of £1,500. This payment was £1,000 prior to 2016 then it was increased to £1,500 as part of the Housing Allocation Policy review. There has been no significant difference in the figures since this introduction which suggests the financial incentive is not a key motivation for a household to downsize. This may be because most tenants live in 2 or 3 bedroom properties and may only want to move to a home 1 bedroom size smaller than they live in or that the incentive does not offset enough of the costs associated with moving house. However, if Incentive to Move payments were provided to households who move down 1, 2 or 3 bedroom sizes the cost of payments would increase from £12,000 to £46,500 in 2017/18.

Table 25: Existing Tenants who move home, by size

Year	Change in bedroom size combined					
	2	1	0	-1	-2	-3
2014/15	1	17	75	19	7	1
2015/16	3	18	51	23	6	1
2016/17	2	28	44	24	5	1
2017/18	2	31	58	23	6	2

Ready to Rent

As part of the Allocation Policy properties may be advertised as Ready to Rent in the following circumstances:

- When there is no demand for a particular empty property, or
- The property has been formally offered and refused three times, or
- The property has been available to let for 6 weeks or longer

Previously, the procedure for letting properties with higher refusal rates would be that applicants would be written to in batches of 10 to the households with the highest points on the Housing List to inform them that the property had become available and asking if they would like to be considered for it. This was an inherently inefficient method of allocation and

in 2012/13 the average re-let time for such properties was 78 days against an average 48 days for standard properties.

The new Housing Allocation Policy allowed for these properties to be allocated to any interested applicant using a choice-based method. The property would be advertised on the web and in the housing office with a deadline date inviting applicants to note their interest for the property and offered to the applicant with most points. Interested applicants could also ask for text alerts to their phone when a property becomes available to let.

In recent years the average turnover rate in Midlothian has been around 5%. Low turnover indicates a high level of demand for an area. Table 26 below shows that the turnover for streets where Ready to Rent is used the level of turnover appears to be reducing which indicates that demand for these areas is improving.

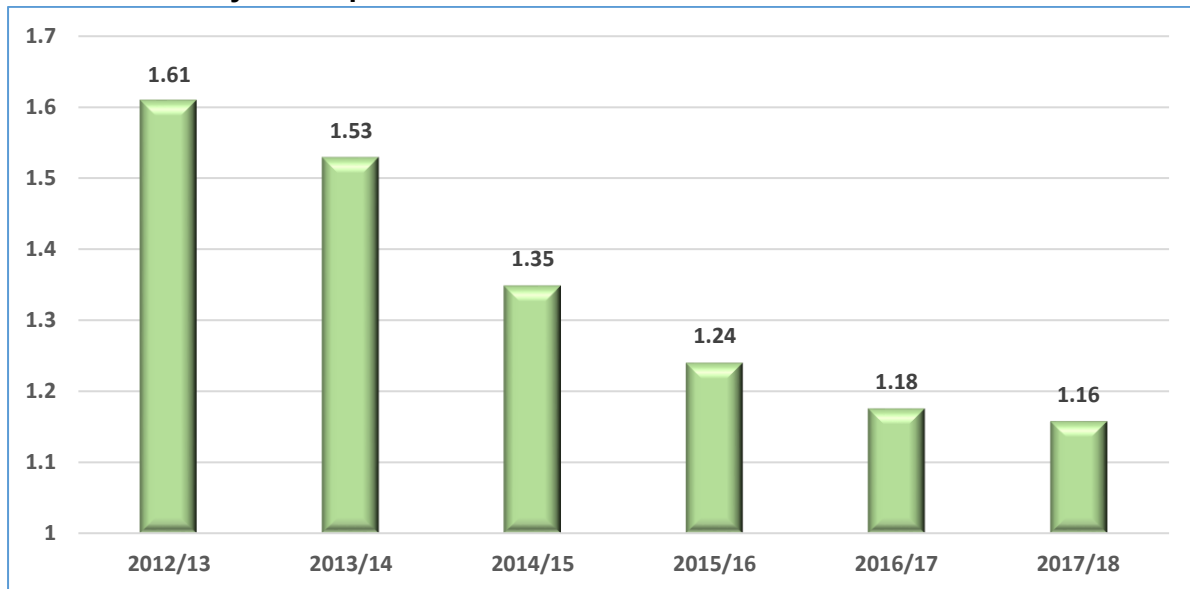
Table 26: Turnover of Ready to Rent Area Properties

Road	Stock Numbers	2015/16		2016/17		2017/18	
		No. Void	% Turnover	No. Void	% Turnover	No. Void	% Turnover
Braeside Road North	18	3	16.7%	3	16.7%	4	22.2%
Hillside Crescent North	19	5	27.8%	3	16.7%	3	16.7%
Mcneill Terrace	34	2	11.1%	1	5.6%	1	5.6%
Woodburn Drive	95	11	61.1%	5	27.8%	5	27.8%
Total	166	21	12.7%	12	7.2%	13	7.8%

Refusals

It was intended that the new Housing Allocation Policy would reduce the number of tenancy offer refusals, as all applicants were now able to choose property type at application.

Previously only existing Council tenants had the option of choosing the property type and other applicants would be penalised for refusing property types in which they did not want to live. Chart 6 below indicates a significant reduction in refusals as Housing Applicants are now very likely to accept an offer of housing made to them than was the case under the previous Housing Allocation Policy.

Chart 6: Tenancy Offers per let 2012/13-2017/18**Lets to Home Owners**

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 gives Registered Social Landlords the right to take into account if a Housing Applicant is a home owner. In the Housing Allocation Policy review in 2016 it was agreed that once this part of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 was enacted into law, Midlothian Council would:

- Suspend applicants who are homeowners who do not have a specific need for council housing. Homeowners who have a suspended application would not accrue waiting time points during their period of suspension.

However, the enactment of this legislation has been delayed and will not be commenced until 2019 so Midlothian Council has not been able to suspend home owners who do not have a specific need for council housing. Table 27 below shows that there are a number of lets being made to home owners in each year. It is likely that most of them will require housing for medical needs that cannot be easily met in the private sector.

Table 27: Lets to Home Owners

Years	No. of Lets
2015/16	18
2016/17	19
2017/18	20
Total	57

Conclusions

- It is evident that the Housing Allocation Policy is closely meeting the targets for Waiting List Groups, with the exception of the Choice Group, which had a reduced proportion of allocations than anticipated.
- General Needs applicants account for 61% of applicants on the list, with the remainder of applicants either being homeless or choice list.
- In the three years being analysed the number of lets has been rising due to an increase in new build housing being handed over for let.
- There has been a significant increase in households waiting for 2 bedroom housing due to the change in household size eligibility which was agreed as part of changes to the Housing Allocation Policy in 2016. At the same time, the number of households requiring 1 bedroom housing has decreased significantly. 2 Bedroom housing continues to be the most common property size being let to applicants.
- The target of housing an equal split of needs between those with medical, overcrowding and other needs has been more difficult to meet due to the need to provide suitable properties to applicants with medical points.
- Use of Ready to Rent procedures has improved the speed of relets for properties which have previously taken longer than average to let.
- The use of Homeswapper was initially very successful at generating increased mutual exchanges although there has been a slight reduction in 2017/18.
- There has been no increase in existing households downsizing by 2 or more bedroom sizes and qualifying for an increased Incentive to Move grant of £1,500.
- There has been a reduction in the number of Housing List applicants refusing offers due to Applicants being given more choice of the property types they will be offered.