

Housing Allocation Scheme Consultation Analysis.

December 2024

Introduction

Milton Keynes City Council is required to have a housing allocations scheme to determine the procedures that are followed when assessing the eligibility of applicants and to offer or nominate to social housing stock. The scheme details how applicants, via the MKCC Housing Allocation Scheme, can apply to the housing register, what the eligibility requirements are, how the assessment process works and how housing is allocated.

The Council is proposing changes to the current housing allocations scheme. If the proposed policy changes are adopted, reregistration will be not be required, the new scheme will only apply to applicants from the date set when the delegated decision is made. The consultation is seeking feedback on the proposed changes from current and prospective housing tenants, Milton Keynes residents, and our partners. The results of the consultation are included in this report.

The consultation was open between 10 September 2024 and 2nd December 2024. 423 people responded to the consultation. We received 412 responses from individuals and 8 from organisations.

The proposed changes are listed below, (with a link to the consultation results for that proposed change in brackets):

- Clarify those who will be disqualified from joining the housing register (slide 4)
- Increase the requirement for a local connection to Milton Keynes from three to four years (slide 5)
- Additional preference for people fleeing domestic abuse and those from the armed forces (slide 6)
- Limit the number of offers to applicants in Band A or those who are homeless (slide 7)
- Additional preference/priority for people with specific housing needs in Bands A-C (slide 8)
- Introduction of a new emergency band (slide 9)

The following report summarises the results from the consultation. The free text comment analysis has been themed with the assistance of co-pilot and checked for accuracy.

Housing Allocations Scheme Consultation Summary

Qualification: Do you agree?

Who should we disqualify?	Disagree%	Agree%
Persons living outside Milton Keynes excluded from priority band	12	88
Person incapable of holding a tenancy agreement	19	81
Persons with rent or service charge arrears over two months	30	70
Persons with financial resources over £16,000 (Armed Forces disregarded)	29	71
Anyone who owns their own home	13	87
Persons guilty of anti-social or unacceptable behaviour excluded	7	94

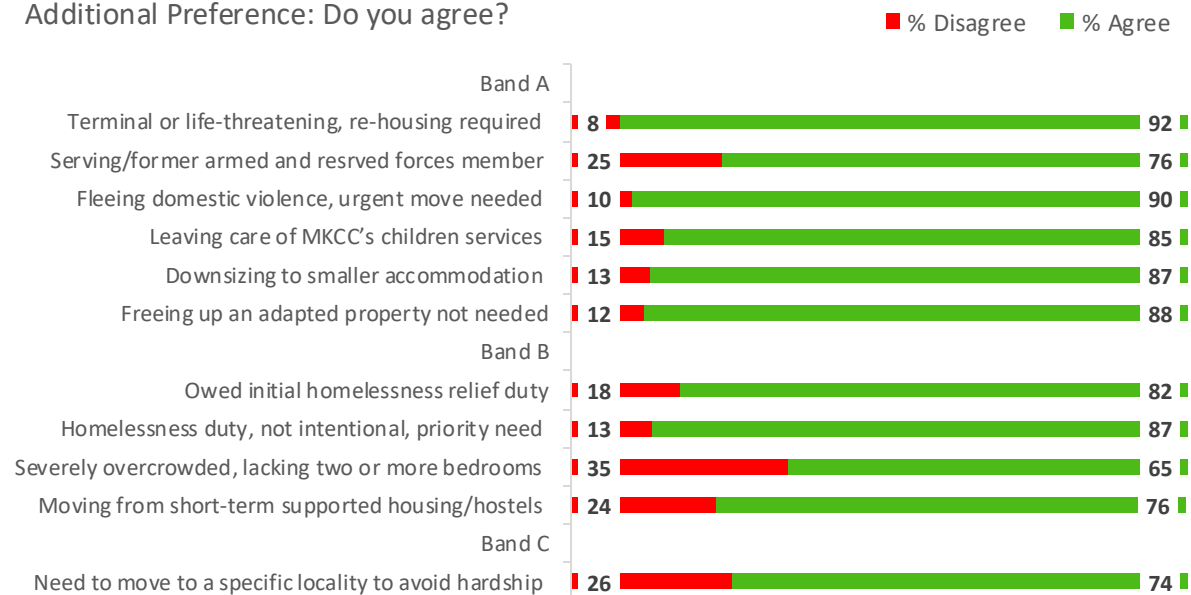
Who should be given additional preference?

Former service personnel exempt from local connection criteria	29	71
Assessed domestic violence victims needing urgent move	27	74

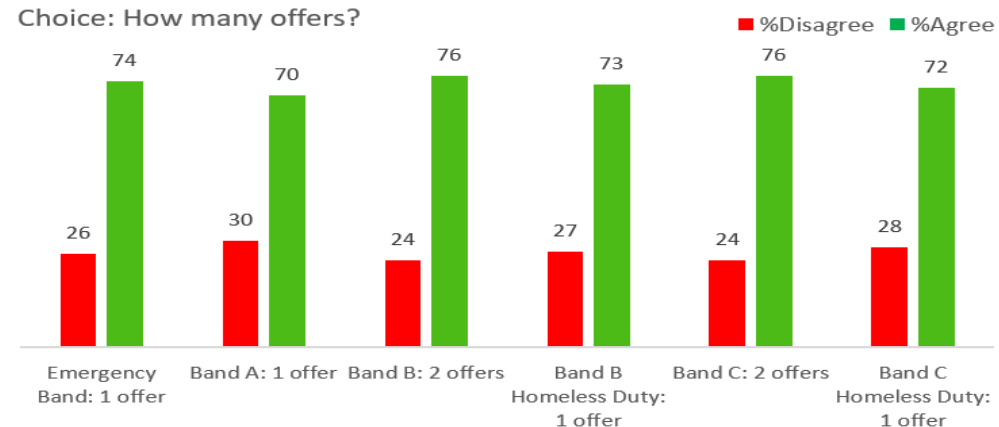
How long do you need to live in Milton Keynes for?

Minimum four years continuous connection to Milton Keynes required	21	79
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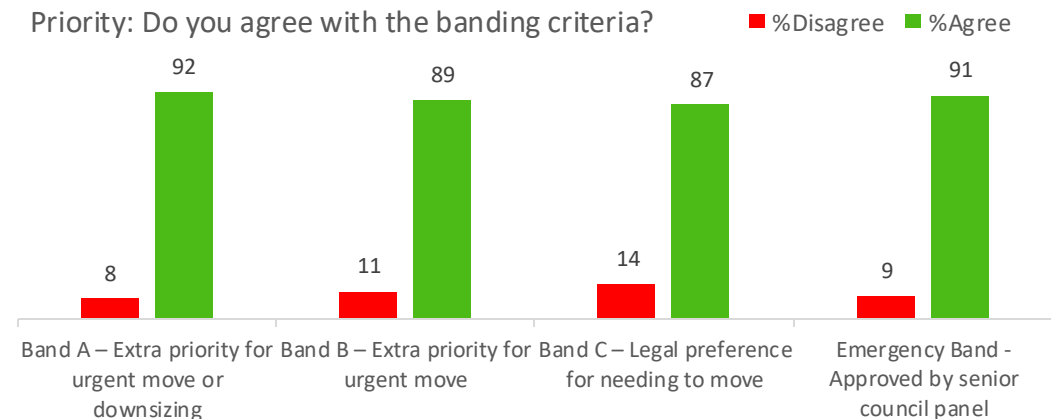
Additional Preference: Do you agree?



Choice: How many offers?



Priority: Do you agree with the banding criteria?



423 respondents to the survey



412 individuals



8 organisations minus MKCC. (Wolverton and Greenleys Town Council, Central Milton Keynes Town Council, Grand Union Housing Group, Iheborn Family, MK Fawcett, YMCA, MK Act, Bus Shelter MK)

The majority of respondents agreed with our proposals across all areas

Qualification – should applicants in criteria A-F be disqualified from joining the housing register?

Agree, 82%

Disagree, 18%

Reasons for agreeing with the proposal:

Reasons for disagreeing with the proposal:

- Disqualifying applicants based on two months or more rent arrears is counterproductive
- Support needs to be available to people who have rent arrears
- The causes of anti-social behaviour is often complex, penalising people for a history of behaviour may lead to a cycle of homelessness
- People fleeing domestic abuse who have debt should be assessed on a case-by-case basis to ascertain the intentionality of the debt
- Being a homeowner shouldn't disqualify anyone. I need to have something secured before I sell, or I'll be homeless. I can't afford private rent, and I can't afford to buy outright.
- Increase in mental health and anti-social behaviour issues due to perceived unfairness in housing allocation

Qualification – should the number of years an applicant will need to qualify for residency increase from three to four years?

Agree, 79%

Disagree, 21%

Reasons for agreeing with the proposal:

- Prioritises local residents and increases their chances of getting housing
- Prioritises people with long standing ties and commitment to the area

Reasons for disagreeing with the proposal:

- Some agree that the local connection criteria should be more flexible, especially for those who have lived in Milton Keynes for a significant part of their lives, even if not continuously.
- Disadvantages those people who move out of Milton Keynes for support or work and then move back to live
- People who need to move to Milton Keynes to be nearer to family for disability-related support should be given more flexibility
- It seems unfair to make decisions about social housing bases on a local connection when so many people are struggling with high private rents; there needs to be more affordable housing options.
- Connection only applying to applicants over 60 with adult children who have lived in MK for 10 years is terrible. What about applicants who are adult children of mk residents that are over 60 and have lived there over 10 years, especially if the adult children used to previously live there. It should work both ways

Qualification – should additional preference be given to people fleeing high risk domestic abuse and member of the armed forces needing to move?



Reasons for agreeing with the proposal:

- MKCC to ensure that men fleeing domestic abuse are supported

Reasons for disagreeing with the proposal:

- People fleeing domestic abuse should not have to demonstrate a local connection to qualify for social housing in Milton Keynes
- People fleeing domestic abuse need specialist advice and support with housing e.g. if they are homeowners and have to dispose of a property
- Women in refuge have experienced high risk domestic abuse and should therefore be included in Band A priority

Choice – Should the number of offers be limited to one for those applicants for are in Band A or those who have been homeless?

Agree, 73%

Disagree, 27%

Reasons for agreeing with the proposal:

- 76% agreed with band B and C getting 2 offers
- People should only have 1 offer unless there is a medical/disability issue which makes the property unsuitable. Priority should not be given to those who are deliberately overcrowded by having additional children or family come to live with them

Reasons for disagreeing with the proposal:

- Only two choices is insufficient, as the offers may be unacceptable for various reasons, leaving applicants with no viable options.
- The policy may pose challenges for families with children commuting for school, as the location of housing can impact their daily lives.
- Some believe that the use of choice should be backed up with data, allowing applicants to make informed decisions about areas with suitable accommodations, especially for those with disabilities or fleeing domestic violence.

Additional Preference – do you agree with the proposals included for additional preference in Bands A-C?

Agree, 83%

Disagree, 17%

Reasons for agreeing with the proposal:

- Priority criteria for young people leaving the care system is important. This priority should include anyone care experienced.
- We welcome the addition of move on from supported accommodation into Band B which will help to prioritise the unique housing needs of the people we support.
- Reduces costs for the council associated with temporary accommodation and gets people housed sooner, reducing the time spent in temporary accommodation
- Ensures properties are allocated transparently and appropriately, preventing misuse
- Encourages downsizing, which helps alleviate the overall housing problem

Reasons for disagreeing with the proposal:

- Reducing homeless applicants to Band B is seen as potentially increasing the social and financial costs of temporary accommodation.
- All autistic people that grew up in Milton Keynes should have priority for social housing if they need it

Should Milton Keynes introduce a new emergency banding? Overall %

Agree, 91%

Disagree,
9%

Reasons for agreeing with the proposal:

- Support for Vulnerable tenants

Reasons for disagreeing with the proposal:

Elected Member and other stakeholder responses

MKACT

- People fleeing domestic abuse must be able to access support anywhere and should be able to approach Milton Keynes for support including housing options
- People fleeing domestic abuse should not have to demonstrate a local connection to Milton Keynes
- People being supported in a refuge should be treated as having experienced high risk domestic abuse and should attract a Band A priority

Milton Keynes Fawcett Group

- People fleeing domestic abuse must be able to access support anywhere and should be able to approach Milton Keynes for support including housing options
- Relationship between the Housing Allocation Scheme and MKCC's revised Domestic Abuse Strategy is key
- The term domestic abuse should be used throughout the allocation scheme
- Reciprocal agreements might be useful if they help victims to secure a suitable housing option

Elected Member and other stakeholder responses

YMCA MK

- Welcome the proposal to include those leaving supported accommodation in Band B priority

The Bus Shelter MK

- Raised concern about those people who have to move home to escape abuse may be disadvantaged by the requirement for a continuous local connection
- Identified the importance of support to help with anti-social behaviour and debt

Milton Keynes Youth Council

- Suggested shorter/fixed term tenancies to allow more people to access social housing rather than social housing tenancy being for life

Milton Keynes Liberal Democrat Group

- Concerned about the lack of affordable housing and its impact on local residents
- Households placed in temporary accommodation by MK should not lose their local residence in the allocation scheme
- Concern about the tightening of criteria for overcrowding and its potential impact on families

Further Observations by respondents can be found on [Housing allocation consultation | Milton Keynes City Council](#)

 **Milton Keynes** City Council