

26 March 2024

Our Ref: FOI 310

Request

We received your request on 14 February 2024 for the following information:

- 1. How many individuals from ethnic minority backgrounds are currently on the homeless housing list?*
- 2. Among the individuals above, how many are families with children?*
- 3. Please provide the duration these individuals and families have been on the Social Housing waiting list.*
- 4. Among them, how many have been on the list for over five years, and what reasons or challenges have hindered their access to housing during this period?*
- 5. Are there recorded statistics of complaints made by individuals from Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities regarding their housing needs?*
- 6. Some of the housing advisors requested a share code the same as Employers. Can you confirm if this is part of Homelessness eligibility checks or not?*
- 7. When allocating Accommodation, Are NIHE staff required to consider other aspects of the families, such as children's Education needs, Health and well-being?*

Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

Our response

Re **question 1, question 2, question 3** and **part 1 of question 4**, the table below provides data on the NIHE Waiting List Mean and Median Months as of 01/10/23 for all applicants and FDA (Full-Duty Applicants) in Northern Ireland, by Ethnic Origin.

The table should be viewed in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Table 1: Waiting list data as of 30/09/2023, for all applicants and FDA (Full-Duty Applicants), by Ethnic Origin								
	Ethnic Origin	No. of Applicant Households on the Waiting List, Total	Mean Mths	Median Mths	No. of Applicant Households on the Waiting List with Dependent Children	Mean Mths	Median Mths	No. of Applicant Households that have been > 60 months on the Waiting List
All applicants	Black African	834	35.8	24.0	342	39.7	30.0	156
	Bangladeshi	34	48.1	41.0	19	57.9	53.0	<10
	Black Caribbean	30	45.9	33.5	16	57.3	52.5	<10
	Chinese	123	53.4	45.0	82	52.1	46.5	43
	Indian	55	44.9	39.0	29	46.5	45.0	14
	Irish Traveller	314	36.6	25.0	123	40.1	31.0	57
	Pakistani	55	36.1	34.0	30	34.6	37.0	11
	White	41,399	47.1	31.0	13,938	48.0	32.0	11,323
	Mixed	329	35.6	28.0	163	33.9	28.0	60
	Black Other	159	30.1	19.0	70	31.4	24.0	18
	Other	901	40.6	29.0	462	49.0	45.0	235
	Refused	47	22.3	11.0	23	21.2	11.0	<10
	Unknown	1,335	78.3	52.0	459	66.4	44.0	646
	Total	45,615	47.5	31.0	15,756	48.0	33.0	12,583
FDA only	Black African	614	36.3	26.0	254	41.7	33.0	110
	Bangladeshi	17	68.2	55.0	12	77.3	66.0	<10
	Black Caribbean	19	56.4	49.0	13	63.8	56.0	<10
	Chinese	80	57.2	51.0	63	52.5	49.0	29
	Indian	35	45.2	45.0	20	50.6	46.0	10
	Irish Traveller	220	43.6	32.0	91	46.5	34.0	52
	Pakistani	33	36.1	34.0	20	35.1	32.0	<10
	White	24,775	48.9	37.0	9,211	50.5	38.0	7,385
	Mixed	200	40.7	35.5	98	38.6	32.0	47
	Black Other	113	29.5	22.0	51	30.8	19.0	11
	Other	689	42.8	32.0	361	51.2	46.0	200
	Refused	28	28.3	14.5	16	24.7	14.5	<10
	Unknown	743	73.3	72.0	292	64.1	52.5	403
	Total	27,566	48.9	37.0	10,502	50.4	38.0	8,271

Additionally, please see Table 2 below which provides allocation data for the 5-year period from 01/10/2018 to 30/09/2023. The table should also be viewed in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Table 2: Allocations 01/10/2018-30/09/2023, by Ethnic Origin			
Ethnic Origin	No. of Allocations	Mean Months on the WL at the Point of Allocation	Median Months on the WL at the Point of Allocation
Black African	224	28.9	18.0
Bangladeshi	18	30.5	17.5
Black Caribbean	14	22.4	7.5
Chinese	64	25.9	12.0
Indian	16	32.4	22.0
Irish Traveller	323	19.5	12.0
Pakistani	19	28.2	20.0
White	29,168	25.2	15.0
Mixed	172	24.1	16.0
Black Other	60	18.9	13.5
Other	289	30.6	21.0
Refused	12	18.1	13.0
Unknown	764	40.5	27.0
Total	31,143	25.6	15.0

Notes:

- This response is based on the most recently published data at the moment of the FOI request (data as of 01/10/2023).
- A Full Duty Applicant is a person to whom the Housing Executive owes a duty under the Homelessness legislation, Article 10(2) of the Housing (NI) Order, 1988 to “secure that accommodation becomes available for his /her occupation”.
- When a question of “average waiting times” or “average points” is asked MEAN and MEDIAN averages are provided.

Reasons for this include:

The MEAN is the arithmetic average and as a statistic can often be unreliable, having been skewed by significant outliers i.e. applicants who have been on the waiting list for a number of years.

This degree of skewing makes the arithmetic average, the MEAN, unreliable. Therefore, following expert advice on this matter a methodology that utilises the MEDIAN (a measure of central tendency) as a more reliable indicator in relation to Waiting Lists and Allocations is also provided.

- UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 - It is important to note the GDPR & Data Protection Act 2018 regarding the potential risk of identifying individuals and individual households. Guidance from NISRA suggests that equality monitoring information should not be disclosed in sensitive cases where individuals or individual households could be identified. Also, the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) 'Anonymisation:

Managing Data Protection Risk' Code of Practice states 'where less than 10 responses have been given to an answer that identifies something factual, all variables relating to that question have been suppressed'. However, 'it should be noted that attitudinal questions are not bound by this rule, in addition to responses of 'Don't know', 'Refused', 'Other' or similar'. As the information provided is considered sensitive, some statistical disclosure controls may have been placed on the tables with the omission of data in cases where there are less than ten Applicants.

- <10 are cases where numbers are less than 10
- Allocations are aggregated over a 5-year period from 01/10/18 to 30/09/23 and will include allocations to both Housing Executive and housing association properties.

(4) Part 2 What reasons or challenges have hindered their access to housing during this period?

We do not hold this information.

(5) Are there recorded statistics of complaints made by individuals from Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities regarding their housing needs?

We do not hold nor record the information requested in relation to formal complaints.

(6) Some of the housing advisors requested a share code the same as Employers. Can you confirm if this is part of Homelessness eligibility checks or not?

The Housing (NI) Order 1988 (as amended) identifies the Northern Ireland Housing Executive as the agency tasked with responding to homelessness. The Order places a statutory duty on the Housing Executive to provide interim and/or permanent accommodation for certain homeless households, dependent upon investigations and assessment of their circumstances.

In order to be “accepted” as statutorily homeless, a household must meet the four tests of:

- Eligibility
- Homelessness
- Priority Need
- Intentionality

Any household that meets these four tests will be accepted as a “Full Duty Applicant” and will be owed a full housing duty.

In investigating eligibility, under Article 7a of the 1988 Order, the Housing Executive have a statutory duty to consider Persons from Abroad to determine if the necessary requirements are met. As part of this investigation, and if it may assist with the processing of an application, Housing Advisors may if appropriate, request details of an applicant’s share code to help determine their immigration status.

(7) When allocating Accommodation, Are NIHE staff required to consider other aspects of the families, such as children's Education needs, Health and well-being?

When making offers of permanent accommodation under the Rules of the Housing Selection Scheme the accommodation offered will be located within a Common Landlord Area (CLA) corresponding with the Applicant's selected area of choice. That is an applicant will only be offered accommodation in an area they have selected. In making a permanent offer of accommodation the main factors considered are size, location and the suitability of features of the dwelling (e.g. some applicants may require ground floor or wheelchair standard accommodation).

This concludes our response.