

21 March 2025

Our Ref: FOI 696

Request

We received your request on 03 March 2025 for the following information:

For every NIHE office, please list the date of the of the longest running (i) application and (ii) transfer listed on the system.

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

Our response

Table 1 below provides longest waiting time (in months) for applicants and transfer applicants, for each local office, as at 31st December 2024. Waiting list statistics are produced quarterly and so the December 24 figures are the most recently available.

Table 1 NIHE Local Office	Longest time for Applicants on waiting list	Longest time for Transfers on waiting list
Antrim	419 Months	575 Months
Armagh	279 Months	298 Months
Ballycastle	404 Months	532 Months
Ballymena	377 Months	235 Months
Ballymoney	341 Months	434 Months
Banbridge	376 Months	300 Months
Bangor	415 Months	264 Months
Carrickfergus	425 Months	204 Months
Coleraine	521 Months	292 Months
Cookstown	251 Months	139 Months
Dairyfarm	247 Months	226 Months
Derry 1 Waterloo Place	394 Months	467 Months
Derry 2 Waterside	420 Months	400 Months
Derry 3 Collon Terrace	304 Months	379 Months
Downpatrick	413 Months	279 Months

Table 1 NIHE Local Office	Longest time for Applicants on waiting list	Longest time for Transfers on waiting list
Dungannon	329 Months	300 Months
Fermanagh	421 Months	212 Months
Larne	374 Months	328 Months
Limavady	299 Months	364 Months
Lisburn & Castlereagh	410 Months	264 Months
Lurgan	423 Months	316 Months
Magherafelt	324 Months	307 Months
Newry	464 Months	223 Months
Newtownabbey 1	352 Months	240 Months
Newtownabbey 2	331 Months	222 Months
Newtownards	514 Months	271 Months
North Belfast	542 Months	362 Months
Omagh	355 Months	304 Months
Portadown	322 Months	316 Months
Shankill	565 Months	324 Months
South & East Belfast	570 Months	490 Months
Strabane	375 Months	307 Months
West Belfast	399 Months	458 Months

Using the interquartile range method for outlier detection (a data point is considered an outlier if it is more than $1.5 \times \text{IQR}$ above the third quartile), we can determine that applications with the waiting time of more than 150 months are statistical outliers and therefore are not representative of the typical experience of applicant households.

Mean and median waiting times are considered to be more representative of the typical experience of applicant households. The tables below provide data on the number of applicants on the Social Housing Waiting List as at as at 31st December 2024 (Table 2) and the number of transfer applicants as at as at 31st December 2024 (Table 3), by NIHE Local Office and Mean & Median Waiting Time. Both tables should be viewed in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Table 2: Applicant households on the Social Housing Waiting List as at 31/12/2024, by NIHE Local Office and Mean & Median Waiting Time (in months)			
NIHE Local Office	No. of Applicant Households	Mean Waiting Time (in months)	Median Waiting Time (in months)
Antrim	1,330	45.2	29.0
Armagh	815	43.9	24.0
Ballycastle	491	55.9	38.0
Ballymena	1,499	43.7	29.0
Ballymoney	691	51.1	34.0

Table 2: Applicant households on the Social Housing Waiting List as at 31/12/2024, by NIHE Local Office and Mean & Median Waiting Time (in months)			
Banbridge	785	44.7	27.0
Bangor	1,734	50.8	33.0
Carrickfergus	1,044	44.2	25.0
Coleraine	1,827	48.5	34.0
Cookstown	544	45.7	28.0
Dairy Farm	611	67.2	55.0
Derry 1 - Waterloo Place	1,649	51.7	32.0
Derry 2 - Waterside	1,689	50.9	35.0
Derry 3 - Collon Terrace	1,862	55.8	40.0
Downpatrick	1,887	54.3	42.0
Dungannon	1,163	42.5	24.0
Fermanagh	1,284	41.6	25.0
Larne	627	38.4	24.0
Limavady	816	47.6	36.0
Lisburn & Castlereagh	2,509	52.4	37.0
Lurgan	1,526	42.5	28.0
Magherafelt	611	48.0	30.0
Newry	2,066	59.5	41.0
Newtownabbey 1	990	47.8	28.0
Newtownabbey 2	1,145	43.5	27.0
Newtownards	1,577	48.9	28.0
North Belfast	3,092	53.8	40.0
Omagh	979	43.6	28.0
Portadown	935	41.3	26.0
Shankill	630	45.1	26.0
South & East Belfast	5,549	51.5	35.0
Strabane	1,053	46.9	29.0
West Belfast	3,315	57.6	38.0
N. Ireland Total	48,325	50.0	33.0

Table 3: Transfer applicants as at 31/12/2024, by NIHE Local Office and Mean & Median Waiting Time (in months)			
NIHE Local Office	No. of Households	Mean Waiting Time (in months)	Median Waiting Time (in months)
Antrim	264	36.2	20.0
Armagh	161	45.5	29.0
Ballycastle	104	47.9	26.5
Ballymena	364	32.1	20.0
Ballymoney	143	47.5	26.0
Banbridge	135	42.3	23.0
Bangor	407	39.2	25.0
Carrickfergus	227	32.0	20.0
Coleraine	434	40.9	27.0

Table 3: Transfer applicants as at 31/12/2024, by NIHE Local Office and Mean & Median Waiting Time (in months)			
Cookstown	92	37.3	27.5
Dairy Farm	238	40.5	29.5
Derry 1 - Waterloo Place	370	39.1	22.0
Derry 2 - Waterside	319	38.4	25.0
Derry 3 - Collon Terrace	429	34.1	23.0
Downpatrick	344	42.3	32.0
Dungannon	250	37.2	26.5
Fermanagh	162	45.9	36.0
Larne	125	39.8	24.0
Limavady	188	55.7	42.0
Lisburn & Castlereagh	763	36.6	24.0
Lurgan	220	44.1	32.0
Magherafelt	105	43.3	34.0
Newry	405	36.3	23.0
Newtownabbey 1	341	36.8	22.0
Newtownabbey 2	296	41.1	30.5
Newtownards	482	34.2	22.0
North Belfast	864	42.0	30.0
Omagh	174	58.5	33.5
Portadown	127	49.4	27.0
Shankill	309	45.6	29.0
South & East Belfast	1,518	40.2	25.0
Strabane	233	49.0	30.0
West Belfast	927	48.1	30.0
N. Ireland Total	11,520	40.8	26.0

It is important to note that all applicant households on the Waiting List are assessed and awarded points according to their housing need. It is the level of points awarded that determines their position on the Waiting List rather than the date of their application alone. Any eligible person may apply under the Housing Selection Scheme regardless of their level of housing need and they may choose to remain on the Waiting List as part of the annual renewal exercise for as long as they wish, even if awarded zero points under the Housing Selection Scheme.

The factors that may generally impact on the amount of time a person is on the Waiting List include:

- Housing need- number of points awarded under the Housing Selection Scheme
- Type of accommodation required
- Area of Choice selected:
 - being very high demand and requiring a high number of points
 - having a very low number of properties with low stock turnover.

Notes:

- *Waiting List data is a snapshot of the waiting list as it was on the last day of the specified quarter, in this case 31/12/2024.*
- *When a question of “average waiting times” or “average points” is asked, MEAN and MEDIAN averages are provided.*

Reasons for this include:

The MEAN (arithmetic average) is useful for understanding overall trends but can be heavily skewed by outliers (unusually high or low values) – for example, applicants who have been on the waiting list for a number of years or who have just joined the waiting list.

The MEDIAN (middle value, a measure of central tendency) is less affected by outliers and represents a “typical” case better when the data is skewed.

By presenting both, we ensure that the analysis captures both central tendency and the potential impact of unusually high or low values.

We also note that when the number of applicants is small, statistical indicators become less reliable and have a much lower predictive value regarding the “typical” experience. In such cases, the figures may be more indicative of the specific circumstances of the individual applicant households rather than a broader trend. Caution must be exercised when interpreting the results.

This concludes our response.