

Allocations Policy Review

Analysis of affected households

October 2013



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1. Background

Allocations policies were subject to tight legislative requirements, giving little room for local flexibility. The Localism Act 2011 introduced changes in relation to both homelessness and allocations, which mean local authorities, are no longer required to keep an open housing register, but are able to restrict access to their register for social housing. The Government is of the view that Local Authorities should ensure that they prioritise applicants who can demonstrate a close association with their local area.

For example, authorities can restrict the register to only those with evidenced housing need, or only those with a local connection. At the same time the Act gives local authorities the power to award additional priority to certain households, for example, those in employment.

The existing Torbay allocations policy was last reviewed and agreed by council in January 13. Social housing is a scarce resource, in Torbay we have a limited supply of 5,600 homes available to rent, and between 350 and 370 average re - lets per year. With the planned delivery of affordable homes only expected to be 100 per year, of which 70% should be rented and 30% should be shared ownership.

The table reflects the current pipeline; there are no assurances that these homes will be delivered

Year	Rented	Shared ownership
2013/14	179	15
2014/15	103	30
2015/16	75	35
2016/17	50	25
2017/18	50	25
Total	457	130

The policy needs to promote and encourage households to seek alternatives to social housing.

We are seeing an increasing demand in the use of emergency/temporary accommodation and high cost adult and children's social care intervention services provided by the authority. This combined with the need to achieve significant budget savings, has led the Mayor, Executive Lead and members to request a further review to ensure that we are providing the best opportunities for local residents and making the most appropriate use of our social housing stock. Our approach should reflect local circumstances that are understood by local people.

The code of guidance and the Housing Act 1996s166A(3) require us to avoid setting policy criteria which disqualify groups of people whose members are likely to be accorded reasonable preference for social housing.

Activity Plan

1. Members of the conservative group to agree scope of review and consultation questions.
2. A six week public consultation, with a report to return to Overview and Scrutiny and Member groups, prior to final recommendations to full council in February/ March 2014
3. Members to see the comments made through the consultation process regarding the proposed changes.

4. Provide further information and analysis regarding the make-up of bands and those applicants who would be directly impacted by the proposals.
5. To agree final recommendation of allocation policy changes for full council.

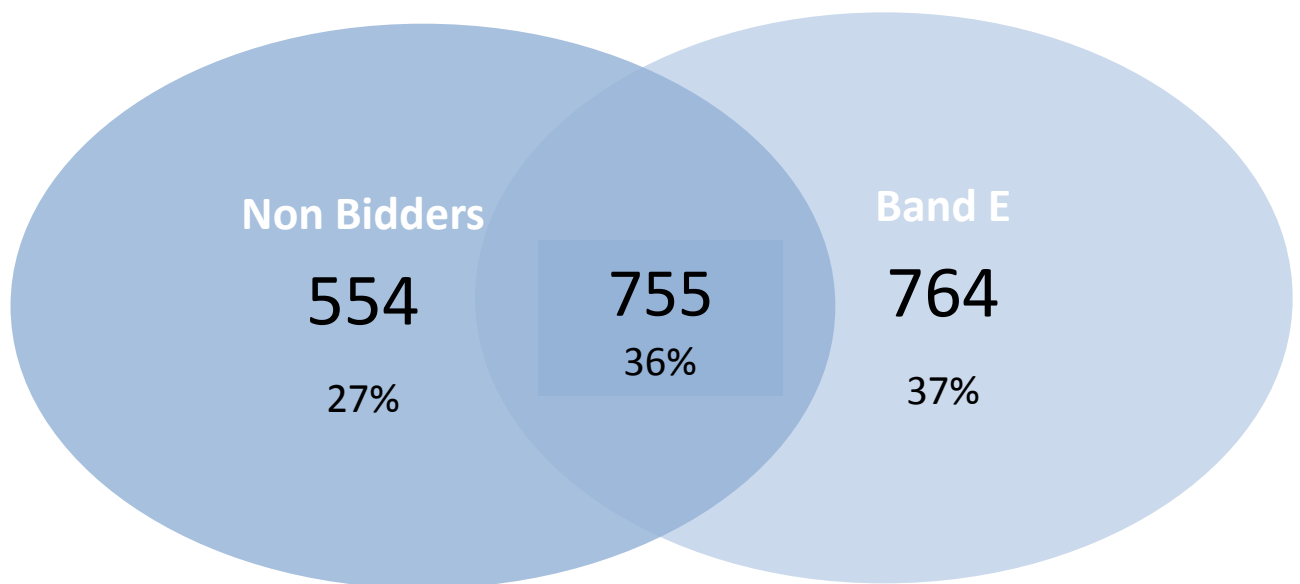
The following issues are under consideration:

1. Apply a local connection criteria/ eligibility of 5 years residency for anyone wishing to register, who is not eligible under the reasonable preference criteria. (Allocations guidance) or apply a 2 year residency test to all new applicants as a new qualification criteria. **(the government latest proposal Oct 13 for strengthening statutory guidance on social housing allocations, it is also proposed that local authorities should consider adopting other qualification criteria alongside the residency test so that people who are able to demonstrate a strong association to the local area are not disadvantaged – this might include close family who have lived in the area for a min period of time and employment in the area for a min number of years)**
2. Remove band E from the Torbay housing register and restrict the allocation of social housing to those with an evidenced housing need as defined within the policy (To manage unrealistic expectations by excluding people who have little or no prospect of being allocated housing. To reduce the processing time/ work load of housing options staff – there is a risk that initially this would create additional work in terms of households requesting a review of their priority)
3. Remove applicants who have not bid for 12 months, or refuse three properties
4. Give additional priority for those households working in Torbay. This could be applied to particular areas of deprivation to achieve more balanced sustainable communities.
5. Give additional priority for those households volunteering

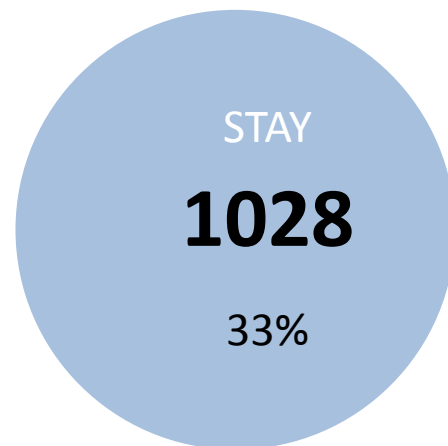
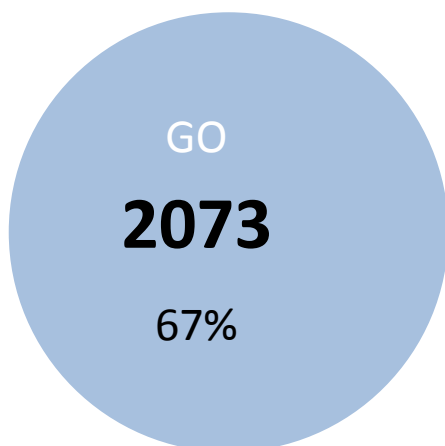
Summary

As of Oct 2013, there were a total of **3101** on the Housing Register. It has been proposed that people in band E with ‘no housing needs’ and those who have not bid within 12 months are removed from the Register.

554 people across bands A to D have never bid, or not bid within the year and there are **1519** on band E. However, 755 people in band E have also not bid.



If the ‘cross over’s’ between the groups identified above are taken into consideration, there will be a total of **2073** people lifted from the Housing Register, with 1028 people remaining, approximately one third of the original total.



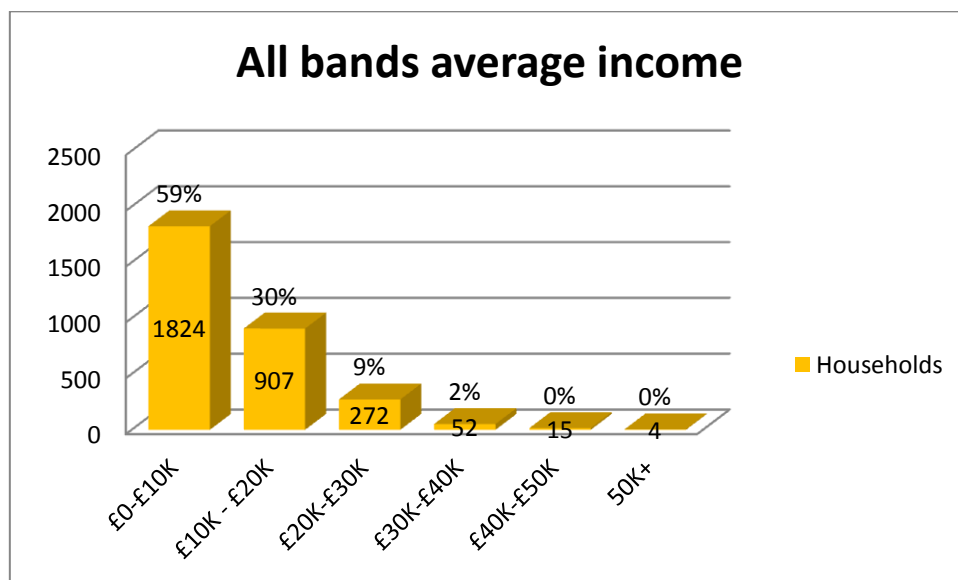
2. Analysis of applicants

Definitions of categories below

All Torbay Home Choice: Applicants per band as at October 2013.

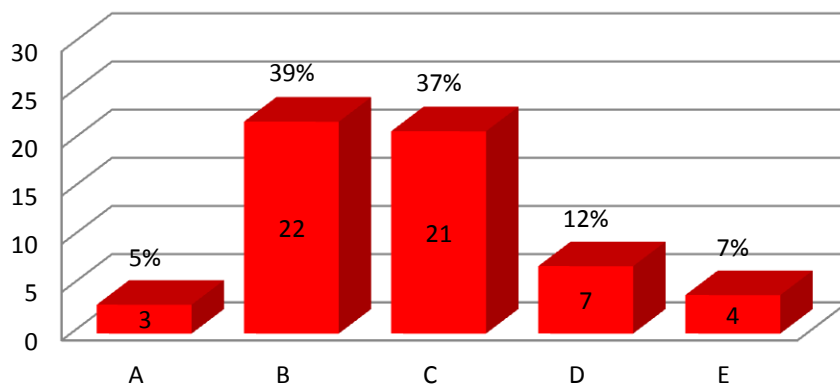
Bands	Assessment of housing need	Applicants	%*
A	Emergency Housing Need	5	0.2%
B	High Housing Need	346	11%
C	Medium Housing Need	455	15%
D	Low Housing Need	776	25%
E	No Housing Need	1519	49%
Total		3101	

*rounded up

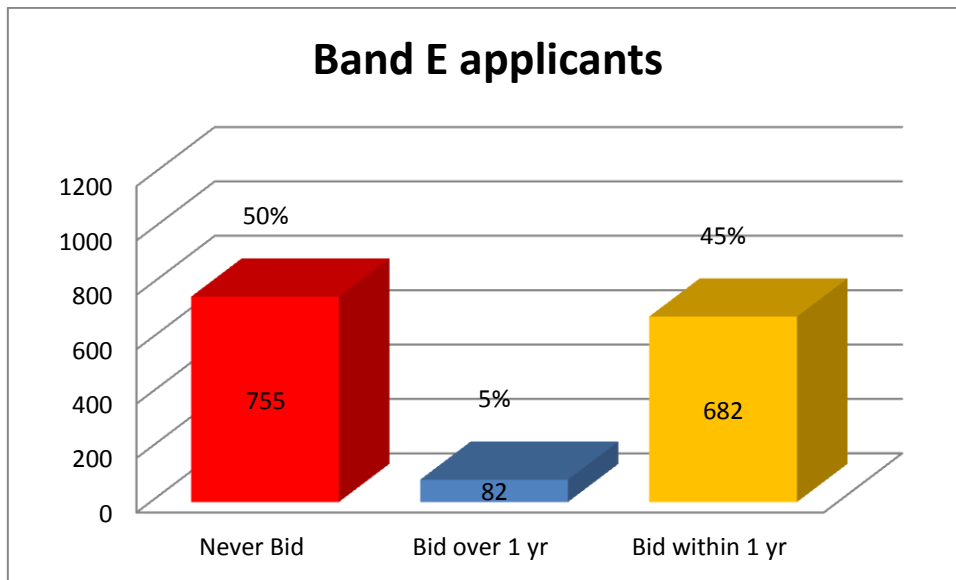


*data unavailable for 19 households

Movement into Torbay without a local connection by band

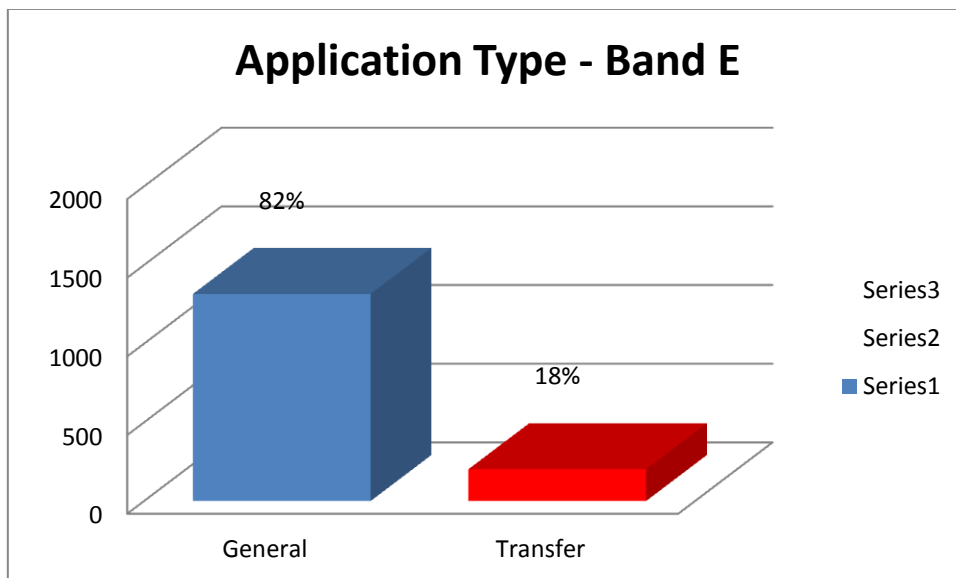


3. Band E applicants: 'No housing need'



Bidding history

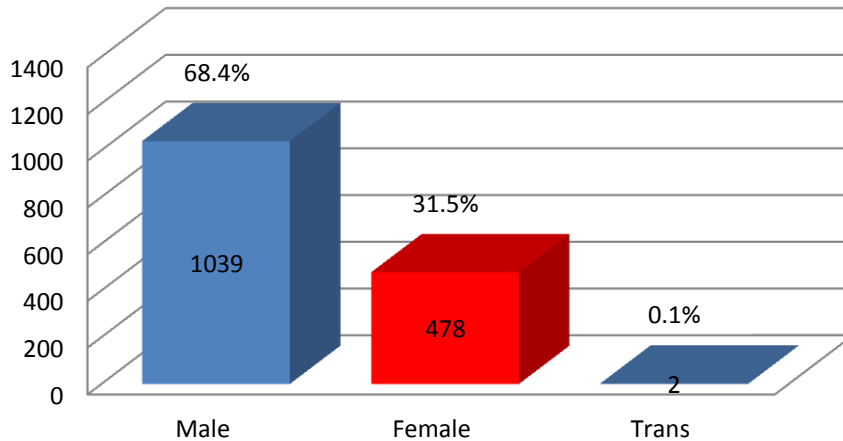
If you combine the number of band E applicants who have never bid and those who have not a bid within the last 12 months, you arrive at a figure of **837**. This is **55%** of the band E total of **1519**, and approximately **27%** of the total register.



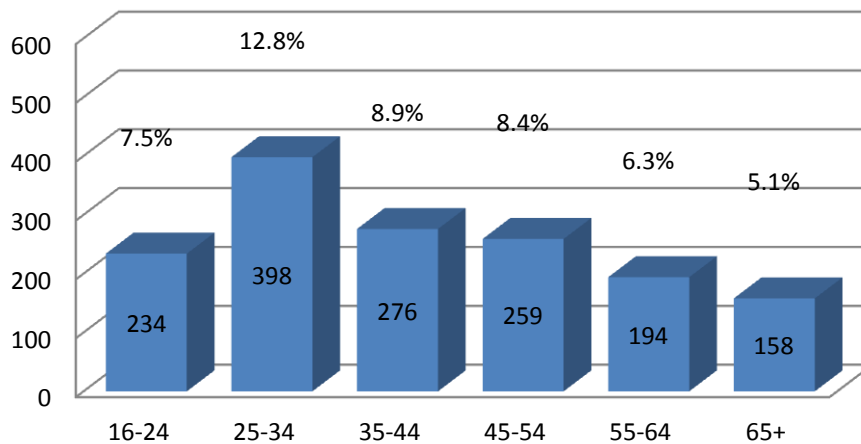
Application Type

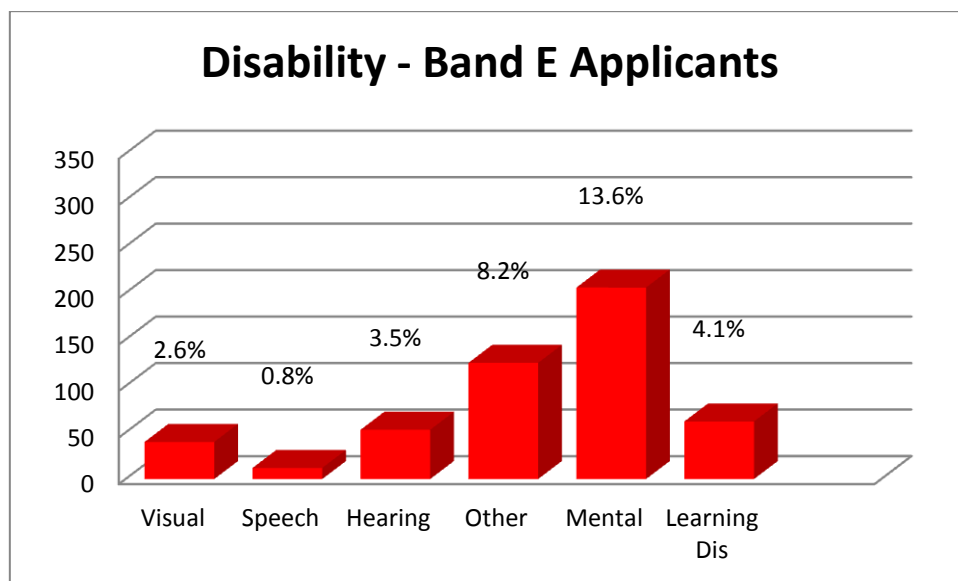
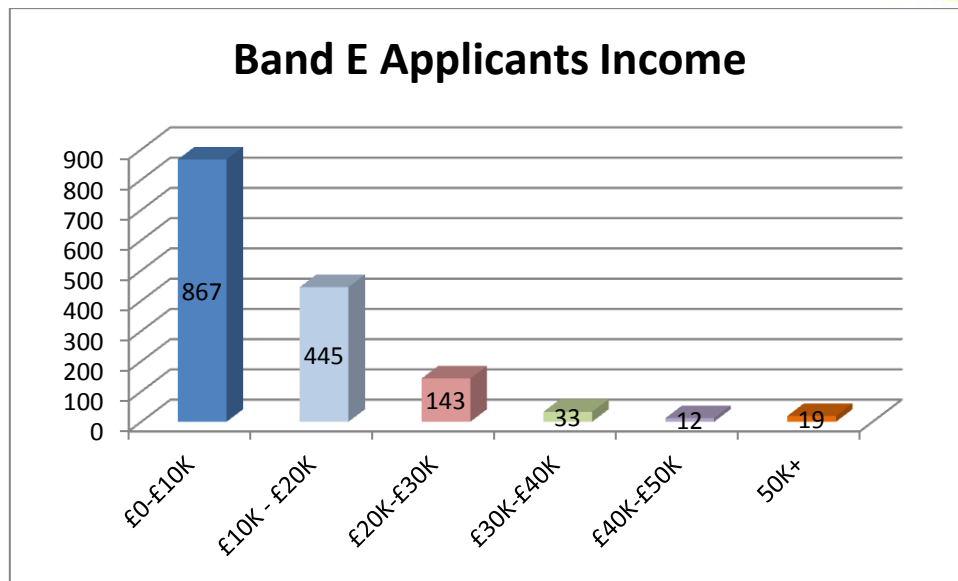
People who are registered to 'transfer' are those who are living in social housing and want to move within the area, but who are deemed to already live in suitable accommodation. They are eligible for a mutual exchange. 'General needs' records

Gender - Band E Applicants

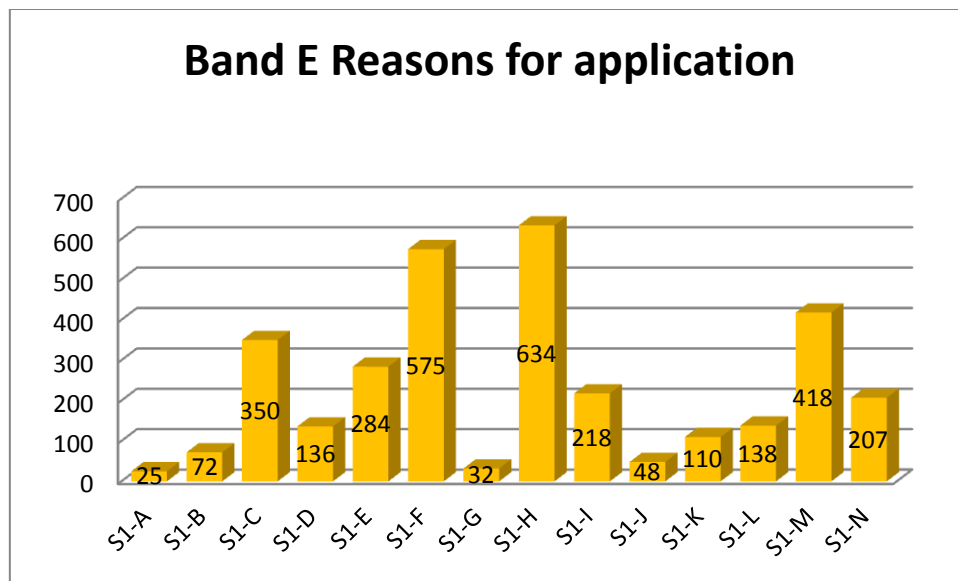


Age - Band E Applicants





The chart shows the number and percentage of band E applicants with disabilities, by disability type. Applicants may have more than one disability. 386 band E applicants have a disability (25.4%).



Key to chart categories

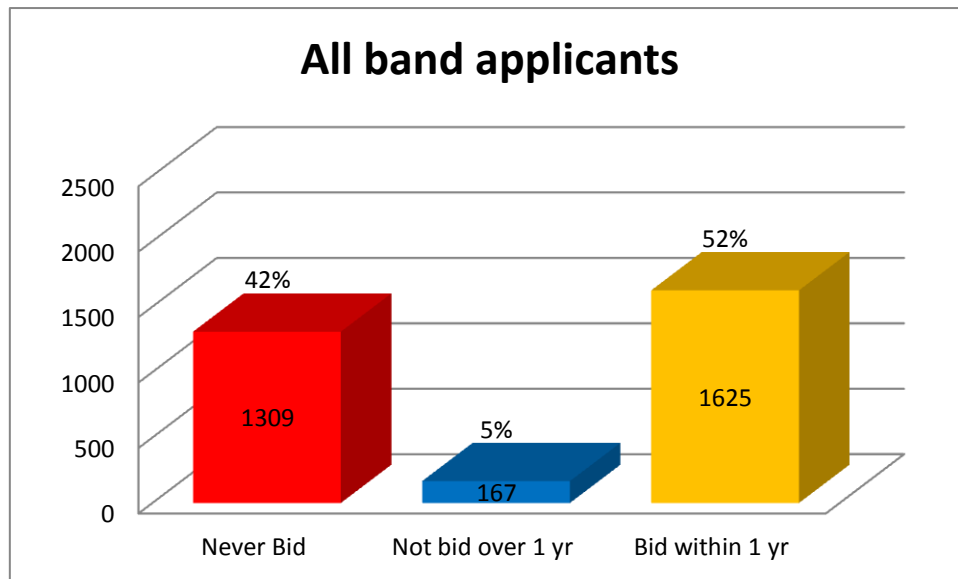
S1-A	Are you currently serving or have you served in the regular UK armed Forces?
S1-B	Are you a council or housing association tenant who wants to move to a smaller home?
S1-C	Are you seeking to live in a particular village within Devon where you have a local connection?
S1-D	Are you ready to move from supported accommodation to independent living?
S1-E	Are you homeless or at risk of becoming homeless?
S1-F	Are you struggling to afford your current home?
S1-G	Do You Share Kitchen Toilet Bathroom etc
S1-H	Health Wellbeing Made Worse By Current Home
S1-I	Do you need to move because your current home is in very poor condition?
S1-J	Do You Have Children Under 8 Years Old And Live On Or Above The Third Floor
S1-K	Do you want to live in sheltered housing
S1-L	Do you need to move to escape violence (including domestic violence) or harassment?
S1-M	Do you need to move to be near to family to give or receive support?
S1-N	Do you need to move to a larger home because you don't have enough bedrooms for your household?

Applicants may have more than one reason for moving

4. Non bidding applicants: all bands

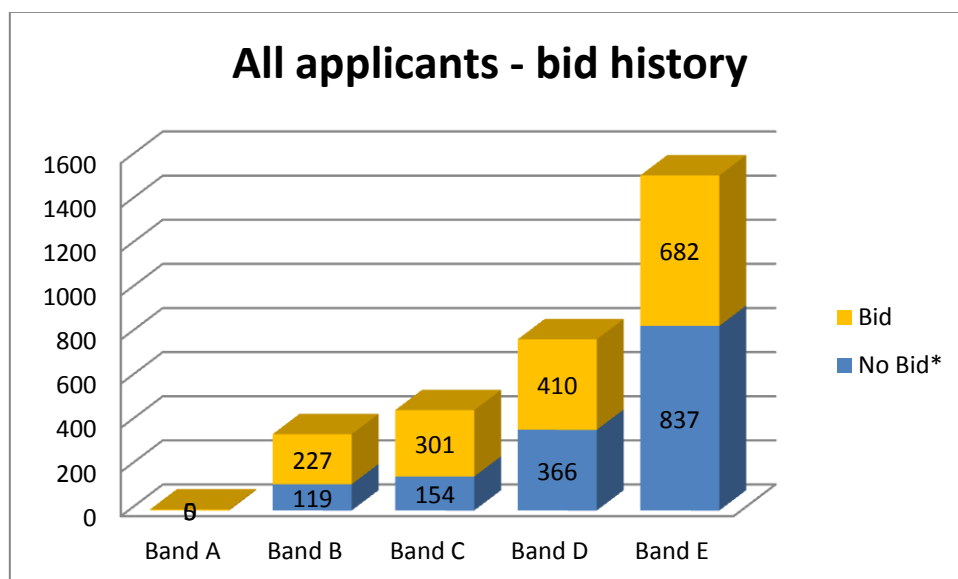
Non bidding applicants; all bands

As of Oct 2013, **3101** people were registered on the housing register. Of that number, a total of **1476** were recorded as having never made a bid, or as having not made a bid within one year. This leaves a total of **1625** active applicants bidding on property within the last year.



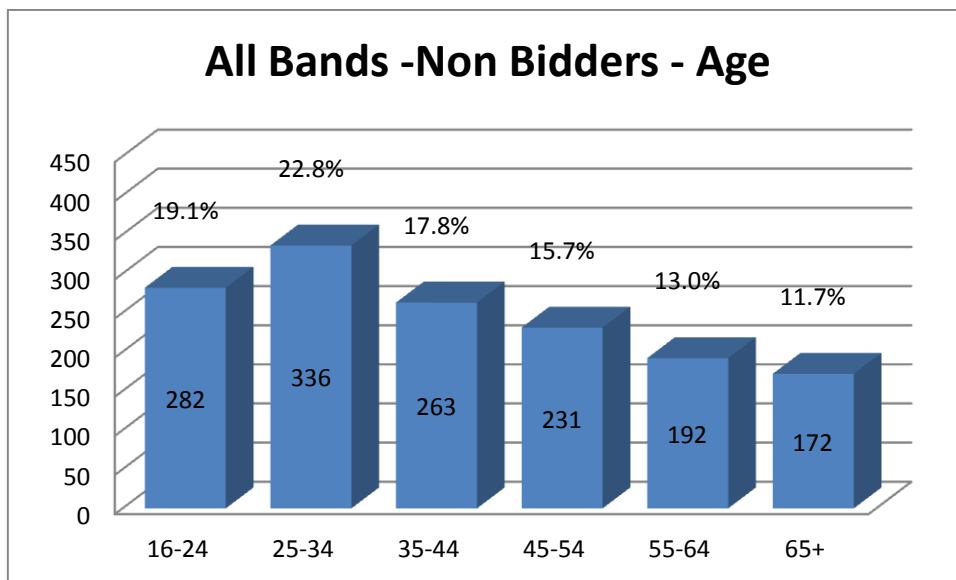
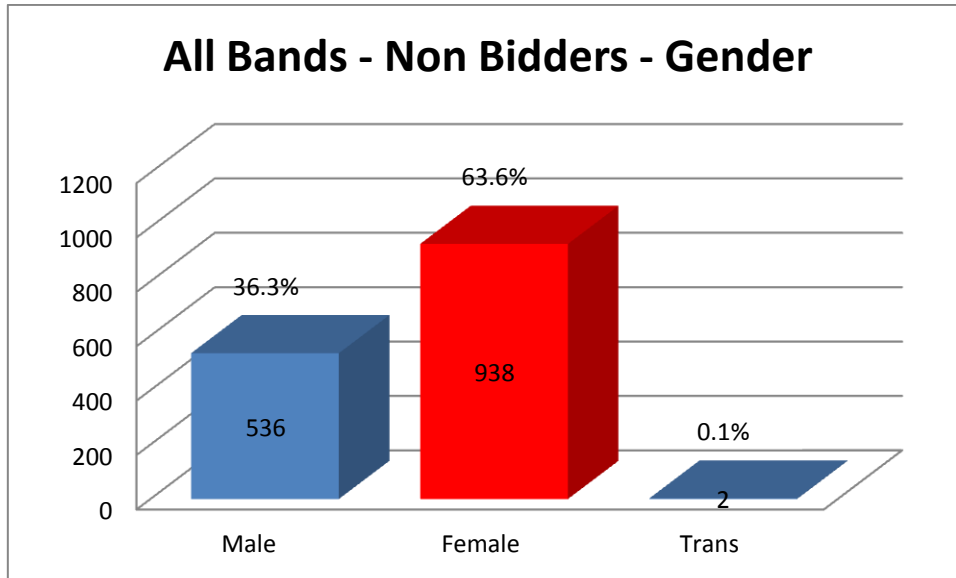
Bidding history

Of the **3101** people registered for Social Housing, **1476** were recorded as having never made a bid or not having bid within one year. **This represents 48% of the Housing Register.**

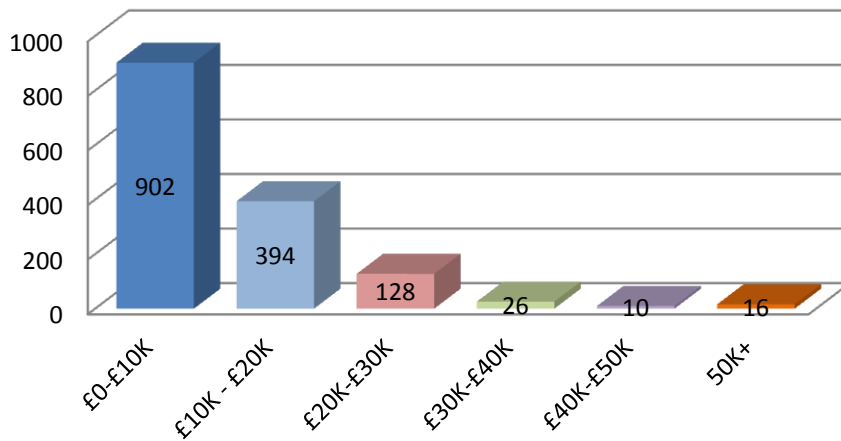


**No bid = applicants who have never bid and those who have not bid within one year*

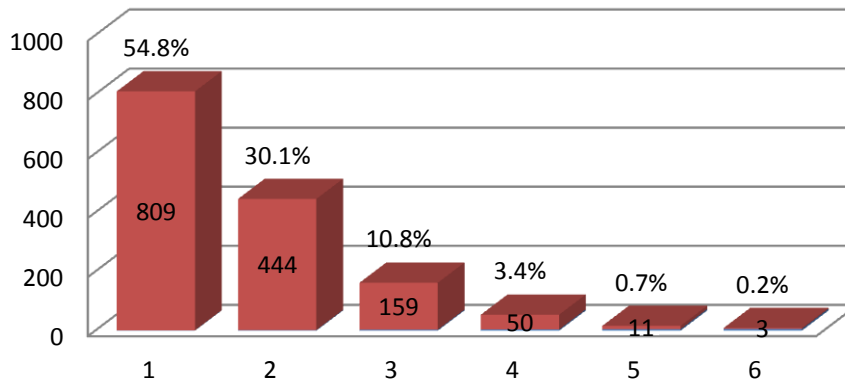
Approximately **55%** of band E has never bid, or not bid within 1 year – that’s approximately **27%** of the total register

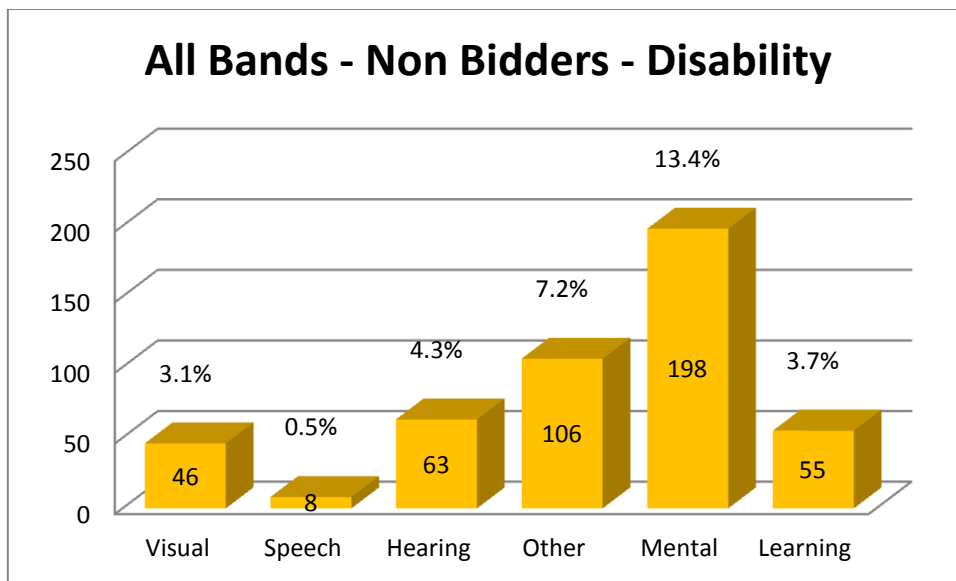


All Bands - Non Bidders - Income

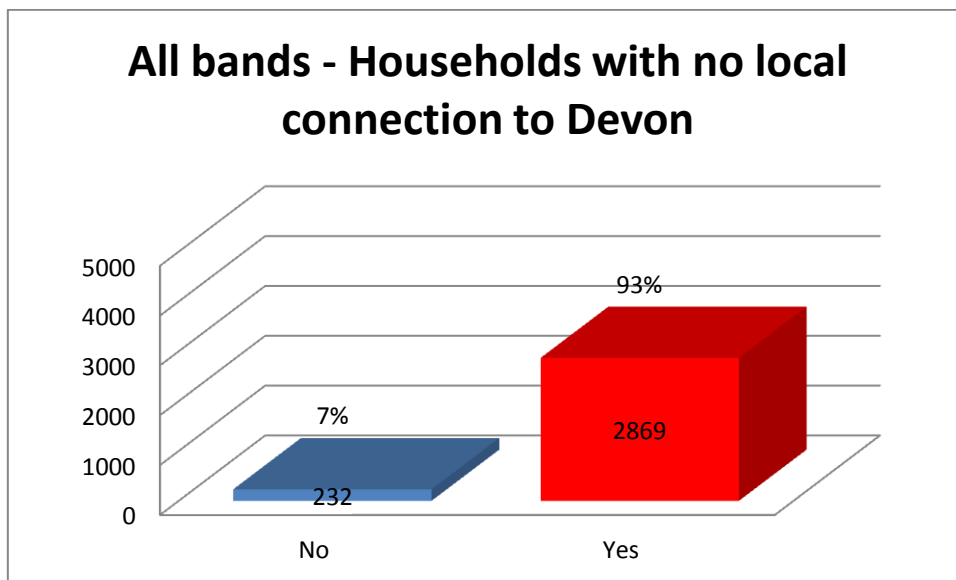


All Bands - Non Bidders - Bedroom Requirement





The chart shows the number and percentage of non bidding applicants with disabilities, by disability type. 888 applicants have a disability (29%).



4% of people in 'all bands' have no local connection to Devon