

HMOs – Housing Need in Southampton

Some broad context information on Housing Need in Southampton

- 17% of households in the city live in social housing
- City council still has 17,500 council homes
- Larger than average number of private rented homes
- Lower than average number of owner occupiers
- Around 7,000 Houses in Multiple Occupation
- For 1 bed starter home, income needed is £26k
- For 2 bed starter home, income needed is £34k
- Southampton median gross pay £20k
- 14,000 households on housing waiting list
- Half are waiting for one beds
- 80 new applications made a week

The need for single person accommodation

The numbers of single people (and couples) needing social housing has increased significantly over recent years. The reasons for this are multiple but include changes to family composition in the population as a whole, the cost of owner occupation being prohibitive for many, and also changes to welfare benefit payments including housing costs. The housing option for many first time householders who are working single people, is now a room in a shared house or flat share.

Local Housing Allowance

In January 2012 the age threshold for the shared accommodation rate of Local Housing Allowance was increased from 25 to 35 years of age. This means that single benefit claimants up to the of age of 35 have a limit on the assistance they receive for housing costs (LHA) based on a room in a shared property, rather than prior to January 2012 when those over 25 would have the LHA for a self contained one bedroom property. At the current time the LHA for room in a shared property is £64.62 compared to the one bedroom LHA of £115.38. This change does not apply to tenants of council or housing association property and explains the increase in demand for one bedroom social housing and the need for shared accommodation the majority of which would be within HMOs.

Housing Register

The council currently operates a waiting list for households in need of social housing in the city. This is a single combined list for the letting of council owned homes and most of the Housing Associations who have stock in Southampton. This makes the list a single access point for letting social housing and represents a good indicator of the housing needs of the residents in Southampton.

There are, as of January 2014, 13,712 active applicants on the Housing Register. Of these, 2,346 are SCC tenants waiting to move to alternative social rented accommodation – the rest are either first time applicants or Housing Association tenants waiting to move to alternative social rented housing.

Of the 13,712:

2,351 are waiting for supported accommodation for older people – 50+ / 55+ / 60+ ('sheltered accommodation')

5,828 are waiting for one-bedroom accommodation

3,111 are waiting for two-bedroom accommodation

1,858 are waiting for three-bedroom accommodation

497 are waiting for a four-bedroom accommodation

67 are waiting for a 5+ bedroom accommodation

The number of vacancies available to let is typically around 1300 to 1500 each year. The variation in available lets is due to property not being available to let due to property refurbishment, and the reductions in the numbers of new property being built. The figures below give an indication of the number of households re-housed from the waiting list during 2011 for general needs properties and how the gap in numbers of people housed compared to those needing homes.

We are currently in a period of major changes to welfare benefits, including the Spare Room subsidy, benefit caps, and the introduction of Universal Credit. It is difficult to predict how these changes will impact on future housing needs, but it is likely the demand for affordable housing will continue to outpace the supply of affordable homes.

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