

The Emergency Allocations Policy - Impact of Direct Matching

Outcomes July – August 2023

Housing Services Division September 2023



sirgar.llyw.cymru
carmarthenshire.gov.wales

Cyngor Sir Gâr
Carmarthenshire
County Council



Contents

Context and Recommendations	1
Number of Properties Matched	2
Matches by Band	3
Matches by Community Connection Ward, Property Type and Landlord	3
Definitions	4
Unsuitable Matches and Reviews	6
Housing Register Data	7
Policy Timeline	8

Context

At its meeting held on the 20th February 2023 Cabinet considered the findings of the Communities, Homes, and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee Task & Finish Group to develop an Emergency Social Housing Allocations Policy for Carmarthenshire to address the unprecedented situation where the Council, as with all Welsh Local Authorities and Registered Social Landlords, was facing increased demand for social housing that was exceeding the level of supply.

The Emergency Allocations Policy was approved by Cabinet at this meeting, together with the following recommendation:

That the Scrutiny Committee receive updates at every meeting from officers on the effectiveness of the change; that the content of the update reports (attached) include data for the previous period referring to:

- Proportion of properties directly matched and those advertised
- Banding of Clients directly matched
- Number of properties directly matched and advertised by each community connection area, type of property and landlord
- Proportion of direct matches that were successful
- Number of direct matches where the client requests a review of the allocation, and the outcome of those reviews
- Number of direct matches where the client refuses the allocation but doesn't request a review

This is the third report of data available for direct matching which covers from July 2023 to August 2023.

The data in this report highlights how this has impacted on the number of properties available to bid on for the wider housing register.

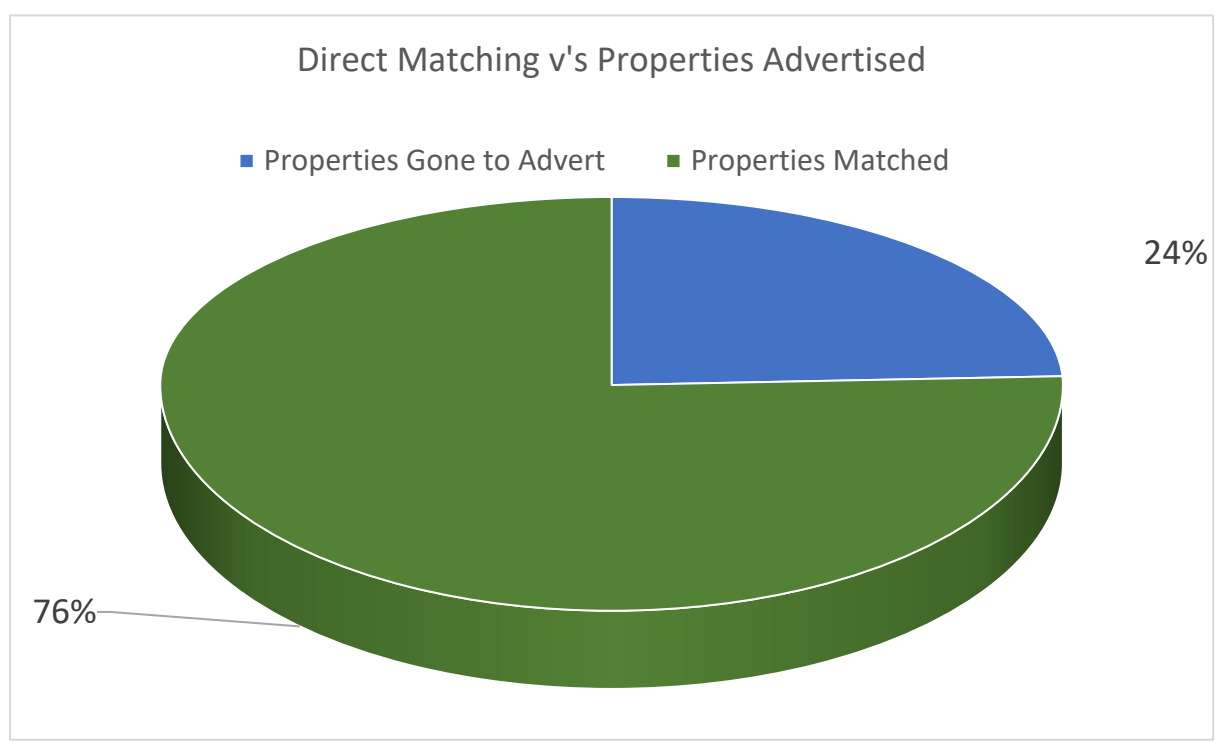
Recommendations

Communities, Homes, And Regeneration Scrutiny Committee are asked to:

1. Consider the data provided in the monitoring report of the Emergency Social Housing Allocation update report on the operation of the new allocation policy;
2. Provide feedback on any additional or detailed information required for the next quarterly monitoring report being mindful of GDPR rules; and
3. Approve the timeline to commence work formalising the Policy and proceed with formal consultation.

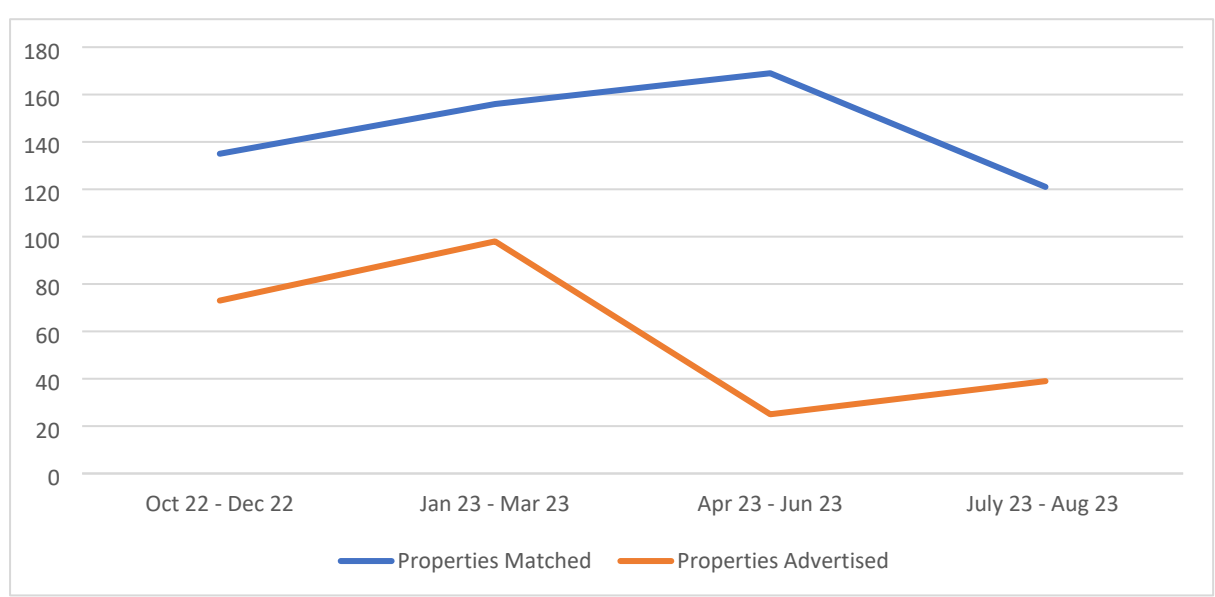
Number of properties matched

Graph 1. Properties Matched July 2023 – August 2023

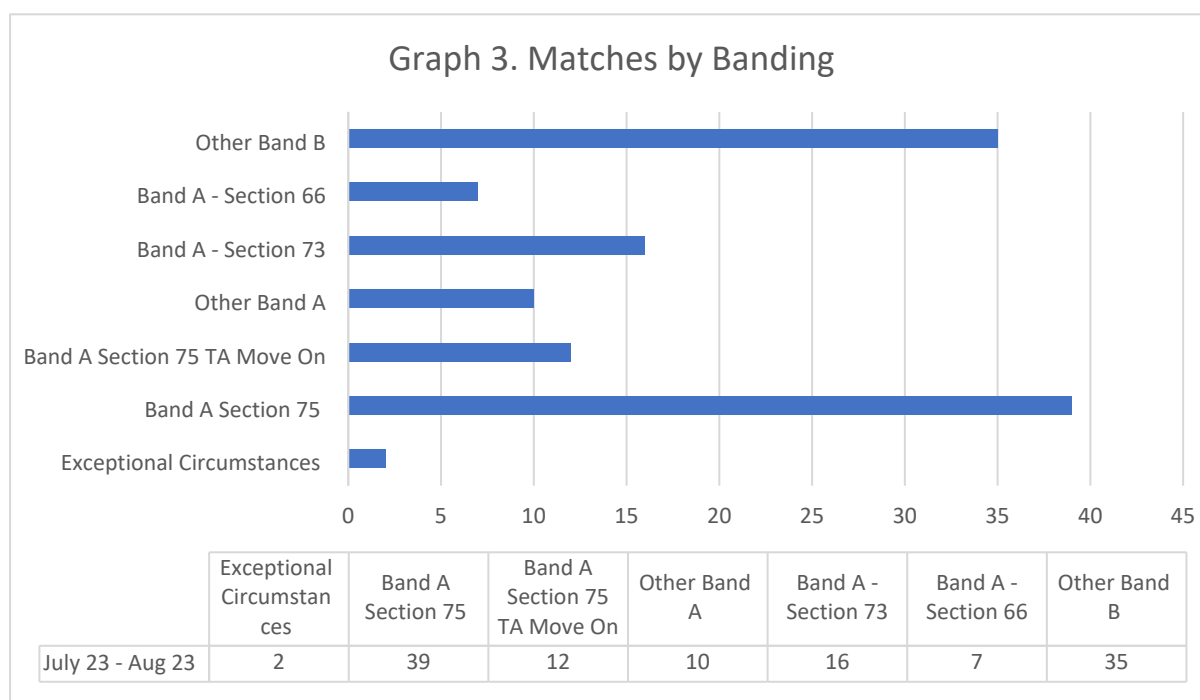


Properties Gone to Advert	39
Properties Matched	121

Graph 2. Properties directly matched v's properties advertised.



Matches by Band



Matches by Community Connection Ward, Property Type and Landlord

Table 1. Matches By Community Connection Area

Community Connection Area	No of Matches
Amman Valley	6
Ammanford	8
Carmarthen	25
Gwendraeth	18
Llandovery/Llandeilo	9
Llanelli East	11
Llanelli North/Rural	6
Llanelli Town	18
Llanelli West	10
Rural Central	2
Rural North	5
Rural West	3

Table 2. Matches By Property Type

Property Type	No of Matches
1 Bedroom Bungalow	3
1 Bedroom Flat	23
1 Bedroom Flat >55's	6
1 Bedroom House	2
1 bedroom Flat Extra Care	2
Bedsit	0
Shared Housing	0
2 Bedroom Bungalow	19
2 Bedroom Flat	10
2 Bedroom Flat > 55	0
2 Bedroom Maisonette	0
2 Bedroom House	18
3 Bedroom House	38
4 Bedroom House	0

Table 3. Matches By Landlord

Landlord	Stock	No of Matches
Bro Myrddin	986	9
Caredig	600	7
Carmarthenshire Council	9324	93
Pobl	1425	8
Wales and West	152	2
Western Valleys	-	1
Simple Lettings	134	1

Definitions for the purpose of the report

Homeless Duties within the Homeless (Wales) Act 2014

Sec 66 – Prevention

Once the household has been assessed and found to be at threat of homelessness, a duty to assist that household to try and prevent homelessness by taking all 'reasonable steps'. Some solutions such as mediation, support with debt advice/mortgage/rent arrears, security measures put in place, advocacy, private rented accommodation, social housing, prevention fund.

Sec 73 – Relief

Once the household has been assessed and found to be homeless, a duty to assist the household in resolving their homelessness.

Sec 75 – Final duty

Once the duty under Section 73 has ended, if the household is homeless, has a local connection and fits into a priority need group the authority has a duty to house. This accommodation must be for a minimum of 6 months.

Temporary Accommodation

If a household is homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, they apply to the council for help. We may provide temporary accommodation; this can sometimes be referred to as 'emergency' accommodation or 'interim' accommodation'.

We provide different kinds of temporary accommodation. Some of which is provided by the Council, private landlords and commissioned rooms in Hotels and Bed and Breakfast that we have the responsibility for arranging and allocating.

At the time of writing this report (11 09 23) there are no households with children in Bed and Breakfast or Hotels. For families these are used in emergency situations only until such time as we can arrange more suitable temporary accommodation.

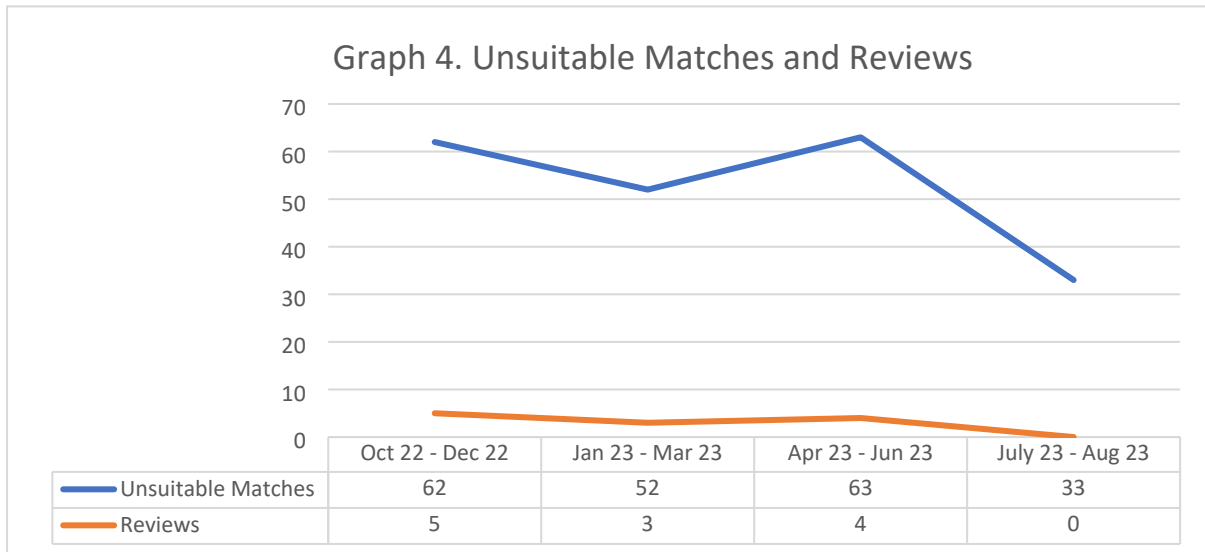
The impact of the direct matching has enabled us to reduce the time that households spend in temporary accommodation by 19 days for single people and 16 days for families. Although this demonstrates an improvement there are still substantial challenges ahead in reducing the use and length of stay in temporary accommodation.

No Preference Group

Applicants are placed in a Band depending on their housing need identified through the housing assessment. Applicants will fall under the 'No preference group' if they:

- Have the financial resources available to meet their housing costs.
- Have been guilty, or a member of their household has been guilty, of unacceptable behaviour serious enough to make them unsuitable to be a tenant of the Council.
- Do not have a local connection to Carmarthenshire, as defined at section 81 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014. A person has a local connection with the area because:
 - the person is, or in the past was, normally resident there, and the residence is or was of the person's own choice.
 - the person is employed there.
 - of family associations.
 - unless they are exempt because of special circumstances (i.e., fleeing domestic abuse or violence, moving to receive or provide care to someone who has a local connection)

Unsuitable matches and reviews



Reasons for unsuitable matches:

- Change of Circumstances i.e., no longer needed accommodation, other needs we were unaware of.
- Property not suitable to meet their needs – medical conditions, family make up.
- Property topography unsuitable.
- Refusing properties after initial verbal offer – after viewing not happy with property offered i.e. don't like property or area, no off street parking
- Band B refusals – applicants can have 2 reasonable offers

Housing Register Data

Table 4. Number of Households on the Housing Register

Band	Applications 09/10/22	Applications 12/04/23	Applications 13/06/23	Applications 28/08/23
Band A	607	830	831	581
Band B	1197	926	887	1077
Band C (Registered Only)	2610	2463	2488	2708
No Preference Group	-	332	322	374
Total	4414	4551	4528	4740

Policy Timeline

The Emergency Allocations Policy has been operational since April 2023. There has been regular monitoring of the impact of the Policy with a view of using the data and feedback to commence work in formalising the wider Allocations Policy.

Below outlines a proposed timeline of the work that will be undertaken to formally review the impact of the Emergency Policy, gather feedback and suggestions for improvement and carry out formal consultation in line with the guidance outlined in the Code of Guidance for Local Authorities on the Allocation of Accommodation and Homelessness 2016.

November 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commence Work to Review Data and Feedback from Emergency Allocations Policy • Prepare detailed plan
December 2023	Review and Finalise: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible Housing Register Policy • Extra Care Policy
January 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare draft Allocations Policy for Consultation • Prepare Awareness Material • Pre-Consultation Meeting with Scrutiny
February 2024 – April 2024	12 Week Consultation Period to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Members • Wider Public Consultation • Stakeholders
May 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyse feedback and Prepare Final Policy • Legal – Barrister Checks • Final Version for Political Process
June 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DMT – 11th June 2024 • CMT – 20th June 2024
July 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities, Homes & Regen Scrutiny – 8th July 2024
September 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-Cabinet – 2nd September 2024 • Cabinet – 16th September 2024
October 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council – 9th October 2024
November 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members Session • Staff Training
December 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy Live