

Customer feedback on proposed changes to Midlothian social housing allocation policy

Midlothian Council is considering making changes to the way social housing is allocated locally. This will cover homes owned by Melville Housing Association, as well as those owned by the Council.

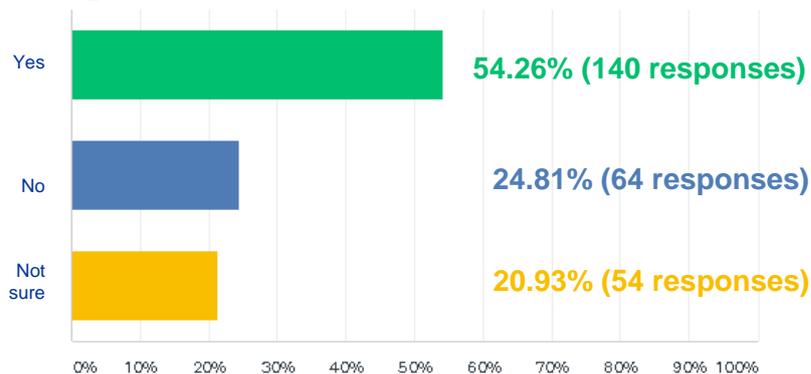
Melville carried out a consultation exercise in March 2019 to find out the views of tenants (and the wider community) on some of the key proposed changes. It should be noted that we only consulted on the issues that are directly relevant to Melville tenants.

The consultation exercise was carried out using the following methods:

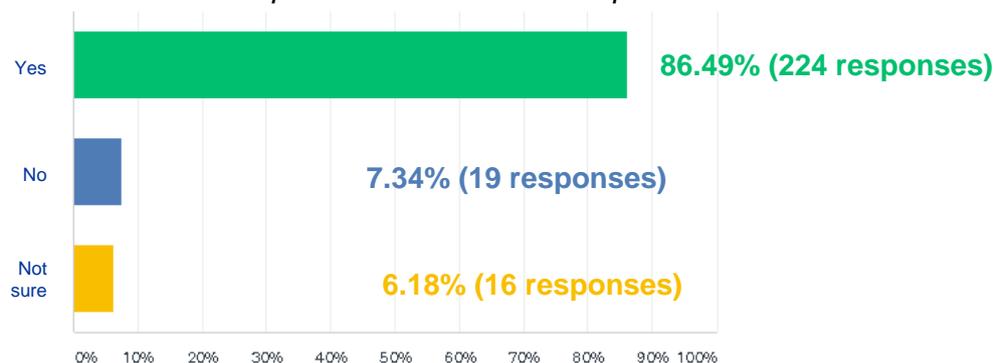
1. An eye-catching Facebook post about the consultation, with a direct link to the short questionnaire on the Survey Monkey website.
2. Featuring the consultation as a news story on the homepage of our website. The news story then contained a link to the Survey Monkey questionnaire.
3. Sending a mass text message to the 1,600 tenants we have mobile numbers for. The text included a link to the online survey (which can easily be completed on a smart phone).
4. Paper copies of the questionnaire available from our office reception

The consultation met with an excellent response, with 259 people replying. This report provides a summary of the findings.

Q1 Should the Council get rid of the Choice list?

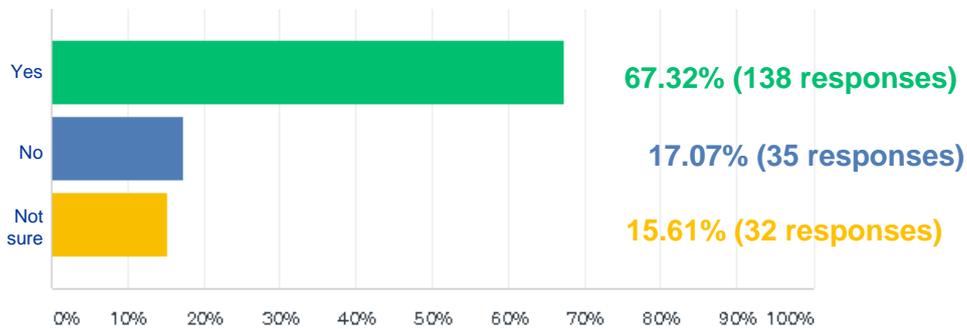


Q2 Should the Council award more points for under/over occupied homes?

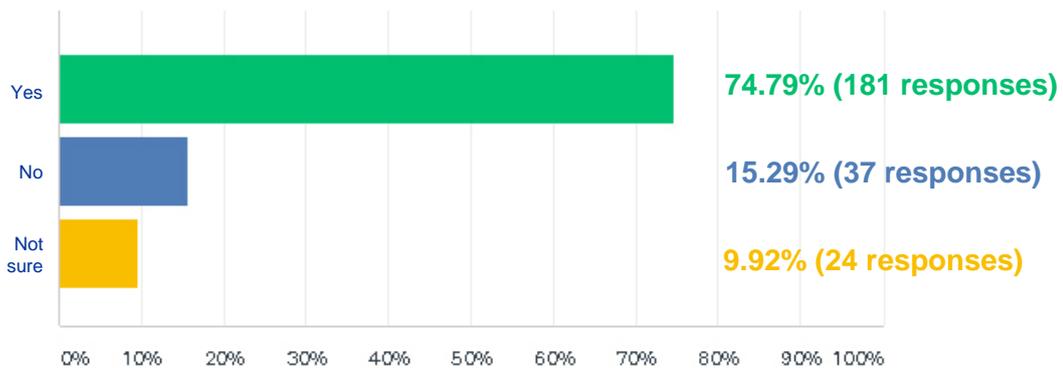


Q3 Tackling homelessness

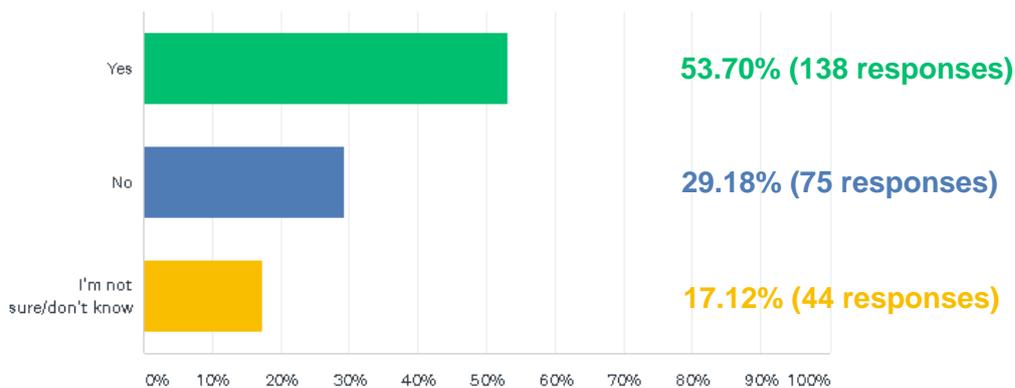
Option A - Should the Council give additional priority to homeless households who have not been permanently housed after spending a very long time in temporary accommodation?



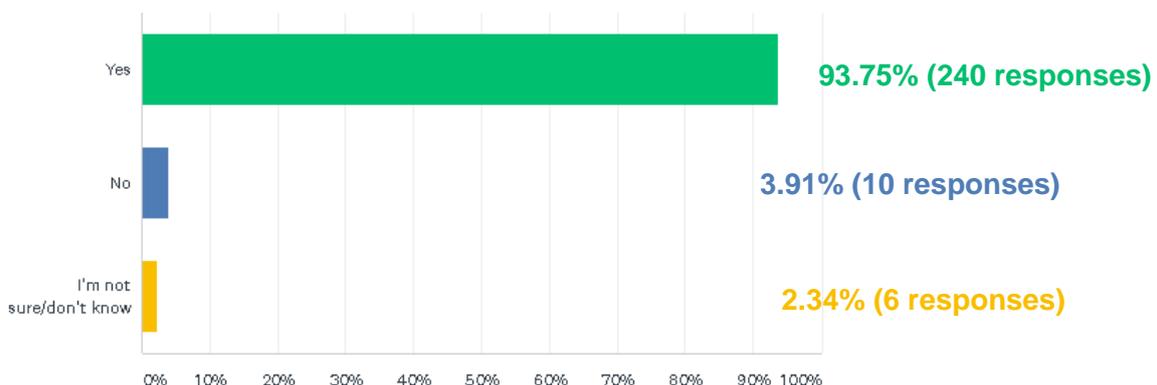
Option B - Should the Council require homeless applicants to widen their areas of choice and house types to increase their chances of being permanently housed more quickly?



Q4 Should the Council move to a choice-based letting system?



Q5 Should priority be given to applicants who are resident in Midlothian?



Q6 Additional comments

Most frequently occurring words in additional comments:

make someone bed homeless council house unfair Yes know tenants daughters bedroom
council Melville children don't flat years available rent single person think offered
move afford living system families pay given go house
Stop giving people also properties home priority builds
need medical work bring list waiting list council private look council tax
new builds smaller waiting suited one even allocated parents Midlothian place seem
Melville partner Stop

Other comments included:

Additional priority should be given to working families with low income

Been on the waiting list for 4 years highest medical priority and found people who don't have the same needs and points have been given properties they don't have the priority to have them

Build more council, Melville homes

Put greater pressure on private house builders to build more houses to rent

Build small prefab homes, bedsit type places

Communication with people on the list is very poor. I was on the list for seven years and had to actively seek updates on my options and position on the list. I consider myself well-educated and articulate enough to be able deal with that situation. However I worry that the most vulnerable people in our community would not have the tools or advice readily available to help them.

Council should allocate disabled people first into better equipped housing that meet there needs

Each case should be treated with respect and on individual basis and check that couples who have got married now co habit so don't need a council house each or maybe the child from another relationship will soon be off age so this will let them have their own council house!!!! maybe follow spot checks and bring gardens up to scratch like all the new builds not all families have the finances to do a bit landscaping and older houses 50yrs+ grounds end up very uneven which can become hazardous for older generations

Exchange and medical awards should be looked at as a priority. People exchanging there council house for another too move into is giving some one the opportunity if a house same goes to those giving up there house for another due to medical reasons ??

Extra points for living in Midlothian should only be given to those who have lived in Midlothian for 3 years, not those who have been temporarily housed here for a short period of time

There should be a maximum time people are expected to wait on a house, after which time they are treated as priority

Forces veterans should be given priority over all others bar families homeless with children

Give them to Scottish people

Having to review or update the housing allocation list every 3 months is nonsense. I failed to return 1 from & have since been removed from Melville & council housing list. Which is totally a waste of time

House people who are working full time before housing unemployed. Some people are on the list due to marriage split and need rooms for children staying over. This needs to be considered when housing, especially when it's a single man who has daughters! Staying with family for years in a bedroom with children growing fast is not good and needs to be priority

House should be given to Midlothian residents first before in comers out with this area

I feel as a single Male I've have been forced to save and purchase a property due to the waiting list for a single man! I think every single person on the list should be treated with the same point scoring system except over/under crowding

I feel properties that are available should be offered to people who are in priority and certain circumstances, any people or person who has shown or been involved with anti social behaviour or is a threat in a community should not be rehoused but moved from their current residence and area

I have been in the swap list for ages and would like the opportunity to give my flat to someone whose needs it suits instead of them being moved into a place that's too big then they end up swapping. Look at the exchange list people who are desperately waiting and give them an offer at something

I know of 4 people who are in 3/4 bedroom properties and are now single occupants. I'm sure in the 70's the council decanted people into accommodation more suited to their size. Are the council considering this option?

I think housing is terrible. I have 2 adult daughters sharing a room ages 20 24. We are very over crowded. Yet all the dealers seem to have priorities. System needs looked at

I think it unfair that homeless applicants are not considered for new build properties as they become available. All housing stock should be available to all, and not just people on the transfer list

I think people in temporary accommodation or homeless should be given houses first as it is very unfair to us to live in such limbo. People on the general list may just be on it to move out of parents homes or just to move to a different area and I find it ridiculous that they get housed first before someone such as myself who is in temporary accommodation with my young son

I think that families/single parents from this area should be allocated first before anyone who lives without the area. Also there should be more help for working couples who can't afford private landlords but work hard and can afford council rent

I think the age of opposite sex siblings having to share a room should be lowered to 8 or 9 as at age 10 girls in particular start to physically change etc also making more 3bed + properties available as it seems even in new builds it's mostly 2 bed properties built

I think the people who are in house that are overcrowded should be move to properties that suit due to the stress that this can cause and that all house should be made a square enough for families

I think there needs to be a system in place for tenants to be checked on. As some don't always need property they are putting down for so not fair on folk who have a genuine need

I think we need to start looking after those that work and don't rely solely on benefits to be a priority for housing. I also think that these people should be the ones to be offered new builds over other members of the public ie drug users, anti social people etc. I'm sick of seeing new builds being given to those that won't look after or respect the property

I think with new builds you should look at people's income. My partner and I can't afford to buy a house but we earn too much together for mid market. We are stuck in a horrible flat. When people on housing benefit get moved

Its a joke how you can be awarded a 4 bedroom from one housing association and 3 double from council!

Look at people who can afford rent instead they are left on the list while non rent payers seem to be housed as priority. Look at how current tenants occupied the house for example a single person in a 2 bed non rent payer and family of 3 in a one bed property can't they be swapped? Utilising the properties to full capacity!

Make all new build properties transfer only

Midlothian & Melville should stop sending review forms for housing transfer. It's a nuisance really. I forgot 2 send 1 from back & was taking off housing transfer list for council & Melville

More consideration should be given to fathers who have children and are separated from their partners as it seems there is no help for working men who are homeless

More emphasis on people who have a property but live somewhere else for example with partner. This does go on as I have seen it. The tenants need to be tackled as properties not being used properly and rent is being paid for property to stand more or less empty

More has to be done to assist homeless families. Having to move every 6 months or so to maintain a homeless status is not acceptable. Children involved must be able to have a sense of security by staying at same schools, keeping same friends etc

Councils must be more flexible & understand individual circumstances

My brother is still on the list after separating 8/9 years ago he works full time has never been in bother and would pay rent and council tax and has 2 kids a boy and girl he's a good person would look after his property. Nothing at all and never an offer, I know of other people don't work drink the place a mess, only 1 if the 2 kids went to stay now and again, my bro has his kids faithfully every week he had to go private let could only afford one bedroom he slept on the floor on blow up and the kids got his bed, the one that chooses not to work got a house my brother still has nothing to call his own to care for his kids. What's fair about that? mistakes are made

My experience with Melville is they don't care who they allocate properties and should try and meet the needs of working families and allocate properties on a more structured allocation

People with health problems should have priority

Only offer home if they are going to contribute to society and work, if they don't within a reasonable time scale, homeless again!. Don't give houses to young adults, they should work like everyone else and save to get a house, not just expect it as they are pregnant or have a drug or alcohol issue. Stop bringing the community down and make people who wish to live in the community, contribute to it!!!

People out with Midlothian should get the same points if they are over occupied and willing to move to a smaller house in a different area

People under occupying are never offered any of the smaller new build 2 bedroomed houses

People who have always been in flats should be given extra points to move to a house with private garden area.

People who need a bigger house for over crowding shouldn't be made to wait as long. I have been in a 2 bedroom flat for 15 years with 3 children (one girl and two boys). I was advised by the council to facilitate the space in my living room and sleep there so my son's could have a room, I had to do this.. why am I paying full rent and full council tax and u can't even get the bigger house.. I've been waiting for 6 years now

People who pay full rent and council tax should be taking into account to move to a bigger house. I have a 11 year old girl and a 5 year old boy sharing a room!

People who work in Midlothian should be given priority

Priority should be given to private rent tenants to cut the cost of rents paid, especially those with young children as they need to have somewhere settled

Priority should be given to those already in Midlothian, with children already at Midlothian schools to reduce family upheaval. I strongly feel the policy on under occupancy should be reviewed. Smaller families seem to wait far longer due to a shortage of 2 bedrooms when a 3 bedroom could be used, if said family can afford the extra rent without assistance

Priority to those living and working/studying in Midlothian

Priority to working people

Shouldn't matter if they are in arrears set up a payment plan for them

Some families have that long a wait that they take their names of these lists and go private. It is costing them large amounts of money. These people are usually workers and do not have a chance on these lists. This is fact

Sort homelessness out first, if someone has a home they are already at a bigger advantage to those who don't have a permanent home

Stop allowing tenants to sublet their properties so the people who actually need housing can get it

Stop giving extra points for disabilities such as alcoholism

Stop giving freshly decorated properties to drug addicts and general scum. It is disgusting that these people get such nice houses then wreck them and get moved to another in a continuing cycle

Stop giving houses to people that don't have medical or higher priority there's people with high priority and medical needs that are being bypassed and houses given to people that either don't need them or are not a priority there are also people in 4 and 3 beds that don't need them

Stop giving them to drug addicts

Stop housing refugees!!!

Take into account people earnings

Should consider people who are already in private housing who can't afford there rent etc but don't want to be homeless. Rather than them getting into debt

The time scale someone has been waiting for a house. I've been waiting 4 years

They should make sure the home meets the needs of the tenant

Try and bring waiting lists down so people aren't waiting as long and they can be near people who are in family circles

Unsure how houses are allocated currently. We are grateful for our 2 bed house. We were on the list 8 years and finally got a house when I was 8 months pregnant. Unfortunately the house is more suited to a single person rather than a family. We all currently share a room and our belongings are in the other room with little storage space and mould in every room. My point being that in the future we will more than likely need moved to a bigger property. If we had been allocated a bigger property in 1st place then a single person could've benefited from our current abode. My second point on how houses are allocated. I know of 5 or 6 single men who have either got a council/ Melville 2 bed property within a year of application or been allocated a 3 bed house when they either never have their kids or see them once a year. All of them were in a similar position as ourselves. Back living with parents. As I said we are grateful to have a roof over our heads but find the current allocation system unfair.

When people are evicted they should be put to bed & breakfast, instead of given a house when someone who has been on the list could get that house!!!

Yeah people who work paying private let prices should get more help finding council house

Children's mental health should be taken into respect when it comes to overcrowding

Giving people who work hard, and pay their Taxes and NI should be priority

I do not think it is fair to charge tenants higher rents for living in what is classed a high demand area. It's where people were born and their families reside. They are being unfairly penalised and it is discrimination

I think if possible you should put clean living people together and not mix them with people who can't keep the properties up to standard as some of us abide by the rules and others have no consideration for their neighbours or the property

The council and Melville should hand over all control to someone else as they couldn't run a piss up in a brewery let alone council tenants

Far too many houses are being privately let to non householders & no checks being done on the property by Melville or the Council making it easy to abuse the system & allow householders to charge a monthly rent which goes straight into their pocket whilst they live elsewhere with parents/or partners

The way you have allocated residents within new estates is shocking. There is not enough mix of responsible tenants who have held a long term tenancy and people who lead chaotic lifestyles and have experienced homelessness and mental health issues and drug issues. There should be a better balance with more experienced tenants and less chaotic being placed in smaller groups together. The tenants with issues would have more of a chance in getting help for their issues and not be dragged down by people living in their immediate vicinity. Also the way in which the new estate (greenhall) gardens and properties have not been looked after is disgraceful. The housing officers should visit regularly to find out why tenants can't or won't look after the property

They need to stop insisting that people accept a property before they have even had a chance to view it and check its suitability. This would save a lot of time and paperwork

Youngsters and young families have no chance of getting properties in this area and yet when I moved out my last property the whole stair seemed to be filled with Polish people. My daughters r hard working young ladies having to spend a fortune on private lets