

Councillor Sarah Allen – Cabinet Member for Housing

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13th March 2025

Cllr Simon Ball

Elected Member

Via email: simon.ball@rotherham.gov.uk

Dear Cllr Ball

Question to Council – Wednesday 5th March 2025

Thank you for your question to Council on 5th March 2025. I have set out your question and my response below.

Given that there are approximately 6,500 households on the housing register, what is the average waiting time for social housing, and what concrete steps is the council taking to reduce this waiting time and ensure that those in need are housed in a timely manner?

The housing register is a register of need, not a waiting list, so it is not possible to provide average waiting times. Those with higher priority will be rehoused earlier than those with lower priority regardless of how long they have waited.

The Council lets approximately 1,200 homes per year, meaning there is a significant gap between supply and demand of council homes. This is common across all parts of the country.

To ensure residents who need social housing can get it, the Council is focused on acting in three areas:

First, we aim to prevent the need for our help in the first place. Our Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy sets out the steps we are taking to focus activity on preventing homelessness. Our measures to improve the private rented sector – including through the proposed selective licensing scheme – will help to improve standards and management practices in a housing tenure that remains a significant driver of homelessness.

Secondly, we are seeking to make the best use of the council homes available to us. The speed with which the Council re-lets vacant council homes has reduced markedly over the last few years, to an average of 32.5 days in the 2024/25 financial year so far. This compares favourably with the estimated 6 weeks for the sector for the last full financial year (2023/24). To build on this, the Council is consulting on a new Housing Allocations Policy, which will strengthen our approach to ensuring scarce council homes are allocated to those who need them most.

Thirdly, we are doing everything in our control to build and acquire new homes. The Council has added approximately 650 new council homes to our housing stock since 2018 and we are on track to achieve 1,000 new homes by the summer of 2027.

The Council welcomes changes to the Right to Buy scheme, which should result in fewer sales of council homes.

I hope that my response is helpful.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sarah Allen', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Councillor Sarah Allen
Cabinet Member for Housing