

G15 Residents' Group

A forum to unify and promote the resident voice to influence, reform and celebrate social housing

London Assembly Call for Evidence: Social Housing Allocations

G15 Residents' Group Response

October 2025

About the G15 Residents' Group

The G15 Residents' Group (G15 RG) represents residents living in the 880,000 homes owned and managed by London's largest housing associations, which together provide homes for around one in ten London households. Our members bring direct experience of the social housing allocations process – both as applicants and as current tenants. This response draws on our lived experience, practical insight, and ongoing dialogue with our landlords.

We welcome this call for evidence and support the G15's formal response. Our focus is to ensure that **resident voices are embedded in future policy development**, so that lived experience informs and shapes meaningful reform. The current allocations system is complex, inconsistent and emotionally demanding. Reform is urgently needed.

Introduction

The housing system in London is in crisis. While recent government legislation has rightly prioritised and strengthened safety and accountability, it has also created new administrative pressures that can slow progress and divert focus from the Mayor's core housing strategy objective: **to build more homes**.

Our recommendations reflect both the resident experience and an understanding of the wider housing delivery system. We seek to identify solutions that improve the allocations system, ease broader housing pressures to free-up more existing homes and enable new development. We believe that by working together across government, local authorities and other housing providers, we can create a fairer, more transparent and better-resourced allocations system that will make the best use of London's limited social housing and support residents into the right homes for their needs.

Key Issues Identified

1. Inconsistency Across Boroughs

Allocations policies vary significantly between London boroughs, creating a postcode lottery. Residents have shared examples of being removed from waiting lists due to sudden changes in the

criteria, or facing years-long delays simply because they live in a borough with fewer available homes or more fragmented application criteria and process.

2. Lack of Transparency and Communication

Applicants are often not informed about how points are allocated or why they are not progressing on the waiting list. There is little to no communication when priorities shift due to new statutory duties (e.g. the recent London Councils Pan-London Grants programme prioritising the housing of care leavers and abuse survivors), leaving long-term applicants stagnant on the list. This causes confusion, frustration, and demoralisation.

3. Impersonal and Rigid Systems

The allocations process treats people as numbers, not individuals. Residents describe being placed in unsuitable temporary accommodation, denied flexibility around possessions, an impersonal bidding system and forced to move with little notice. It is felt (by those who engage in it) that the system lacks empathy and adaptability. Particularly the need in providing better support and accessible options for older and disabled residents who want or need to move, and focusing on providing adapted homes and help with the moving process.

4. Void Properties and Bureaucratic Delays

Housing associations and councils are not always aligned, leading to delays in filling available homes. Residents cited examples of newly built or refurbished homes sitting empty for months due to slow council responses or poor inter-agency communication.

5. Cross-Boundary Challenges

Housing associations operate across multiple boroughs, but council allocations agreements are often rigid and siloed. This limits the ability to match residents with suitable homes and creates inefficiencies and inequality.

6. Limited Resident Involvement

Despite being directly affected, residents are rarely involved in shaping allocation policies. Their expertise and lived experience are underutilised.

Recommendations

Based on our collective experience, G15RG proposes the following:

1. Standardise Allocations Criteria Across London

Introduce a London-wide framework to reduce postcode disparities, essentially review medical and welfare priority assessments to ensure they are applied consistently and communicated clearly to applicants. This would also help to ensure fairness and transparency in access to social housing.

2. Improve Transparency and Communication

Require councils to introduce shared data systems and transparent reporting between councils and housing associations to improve coordination, reduce void times, and give applicants clearer

information and the ability to give regular updates to applicants, including changes in prioritisation and how these affect their position.

Provide clear, accessible guidance for all applicants on how the system works, what evidence is needed, and how decisions are made. This should include tailored support for people with disabilities, language barriers or limited digital access.

3. Embed Resident Insight in Policy Development and Introduce Resident-Led Reviews

Residents are experts by experience. Their insight must be central to any long-term housing strategy. This includes understanding the lived realities of downsizing schemes, the need to expand mutual exchange and other mobility options so residents that enable residents to move into homes that better suit their needs. Their involvement is essential in co-designing solutions and shaping future housing policy.

A formal mechanism should be established to enable residents to participate in periodic timely reviews of allocations policies. These should be realistic, manageable and monitored by the London Assembly.

4. Streamline Void Management

Develop joint protocols and expectations between councils and housing associations to ensure voids are filled quickly and efficiently—reducing waiting lists and financial loss.

5. Support Cross-Borough Collaboration

Develop formal agreements that allow housing associations and councils to share or exchange nominations across boroughs, so homes can be let more quickly and residents have a wider range of options, including local connection requirements so they do not unfairly prevent residents from accessing homes that meet their need.

6. Expand and Promote Downsizing Incentives

Standardise financial and practical support for residents willing to downsize or move out of London. This would free up larger social homes for families in need.

Ensure funding mechanisms support the delivery of larger, family-sized social homes.

Current grant structures make it harder for housing associations to deliver larger homes, even though these are in highest demand. We support the G15's recommendation to review grant rates so that funding better reflects the cost of delivering family homes.

7. Improve Strategic Partnerships with Housing Associations

Housing associations are not-for-profit organisations with the capacity to build new social homes and foster inclusive communities. The London Assembly should continue to encourage councils and housing associations to plan and build together, rather than compete for land or funding. Joint development and partnership planning would make better use of resources and help deliver more affordable, high-quality homes.

Conclusion

The current allocations system is fragmented, unclear, and often fails to meet the needs of those it aims to serve. Those who engage in it find it to be unbalanced and inconsistently applied. As residents we are the active contributors to London's communities, and we are seeing the quality of life for Londoners diminishing.

A lack of transparency and consistency in the allocations process is having a profound impact on people's lives and reshaping the cultural fabric of London. The decline in social housing, rising living costs, and the falling number of children living in the capital are symptoms of a system that is failing to adapt. These trends threaten the inclusivity and diversity that define London.

Without urgent reform, the consequences will deepen: communities will fragment, opportunities will narrow, and London risks becoming a less healthy, less inclusive place to live. Pan-London grants to support Londoners in crisis are vital, but to succeed, they require robust cross-agency support.

We urge the London Assembly to treat this call for evidence as the beginning of a deeper partnership with residents—those who live the realities of social housing every day. Together we can co-create a fairer, more effective allocations system that **delivers safe, secure, and suitable homes for all Londoners.**

The G15 Residents' Group