

# Housing Policy update February 2012



# What are we going to talk about?

- National and Regional Context
- Update on Tenancy Strategy
- Local Authority Trading Company/Transfer of Housing Service



## National & Regional Context

- Government has published its Housing Strategy
- Localism Bill has been enacted
- London Mayor has published draft Housing Strategy for London

# Government Housing Strategy

## *Laying the foundations, a housing strategy for England*

- Increasing supply: more homes, stable growth
- Social and affordable housing reform
- A thriving private rented sector
- Empty homes
- Quality of housing experience and support
- Quality, sustainability and design



# London Housing Strategy

The Mayors housing vision has two core aims:

- **Empowering people-** with more community involvement, by meeting aspirations for home ownership and by increasing opportunities for social tenants to move, especially for work. There will also be a specific emphasis on tackling need at a London-wide level, particularly on rough sleeping and overcrowding
- **Transforming places-** increase the supply of new homes across the capital, in particular affordable and family housing and better quality and higher standards for new and existing homes across all tenures.



# London Housing Strategy cont...

- Housing devolution
- Owning a home
- Renting a home
- Tackling need
- Increasing supply
- Transforming places
- Improving quality





# Strategic Housing Issues for Barnet

- Allocations Scheme
- Investment Opportunities
  - HRA Reform
  - Affordable Rents
- Tenancy Strategy
- Impact of welfare reform
- Maintaining services with reduced budgets

# Tenancy Strategy

Household type	Tenancy type
Existing secure tenants	No change
Young people under the age of 26	2 years reviewable
People over the age of 26 and under pensionable age	5 years reviewable
Pensioners, people or a family member with terminal illness, disability or former members of the armed forces	Lifetime tenancy



# What the tenancy review takes into account

- ☒ Above avg. income/assets
- ☒ Breaches of tenancy/civil disturbance
- ☒ Under-occupation
- ☒ Young people not engaging with support
- ☒ Adapted property no longer needed

- ☒ Children in local schools
- ☒ Household includes disabled person
- ☒ Terminal illness
- ☒ Care leaver
- ☒ Foster carer
- ☒ Family Intervention Project

## Outcome of tenancy strategy consultation

- strong support for the principle of creating fixed term tenancies as a way of making better use of council housing
- principles of the strategy are found to be sound
- support for the idea of reviews and awarding different length tenancies for different groups
- Need to be more specific about some of the proposals
- Income threshold generally considered to be too low

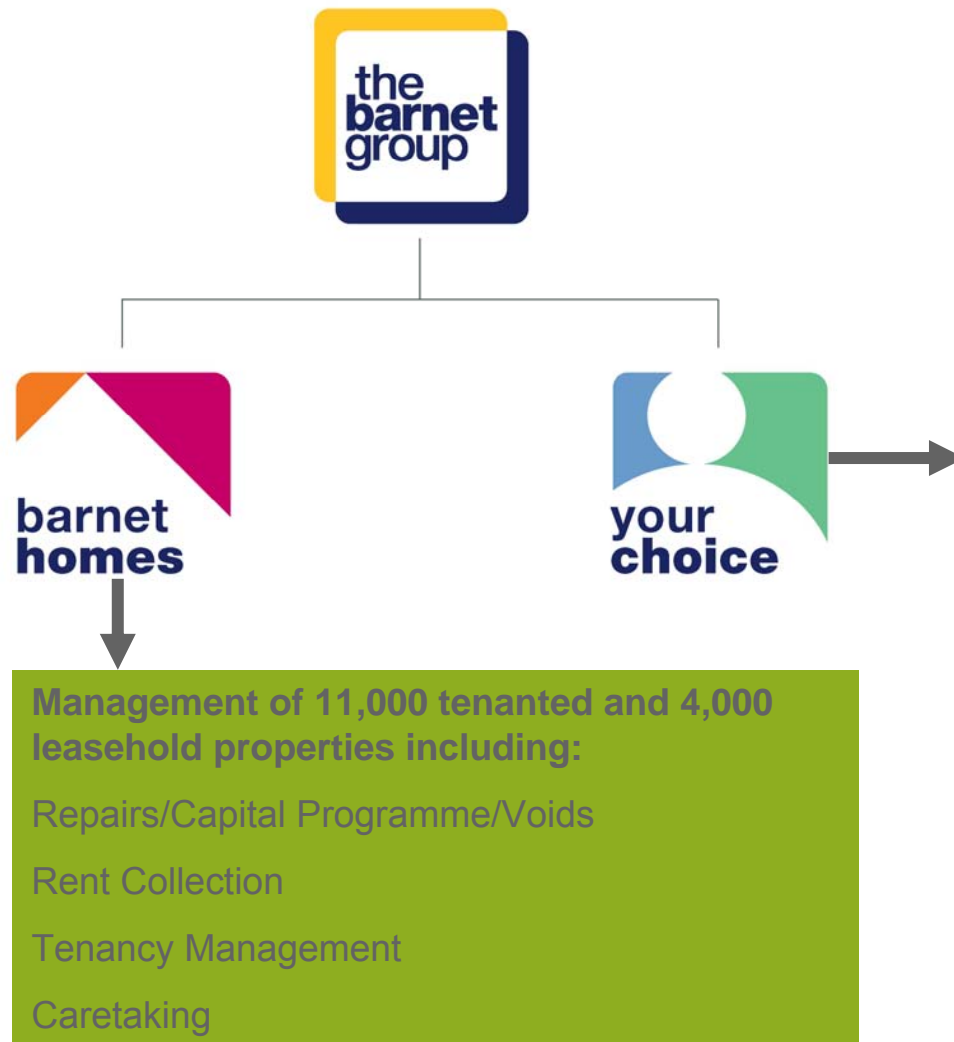
# Potential Changes post consultation

- The earnings threshold
  - For households with children, the threshold has been set at the median earnings for Barnet which is currently £36,200;
  - For households without children the threshold will be median earnings minus 15% which is currently £30,800;
- Other single people over the age of 25 could be offered two year tenancies rather than five depending on their circumstances
- Clearer definition of disability.
- Clarity around the use of discretionary succession

## Tenancy Strategy next steps

- Agree final policy changes
- Consult with all secure tenants on discretionary succession and new tenancy agreement
- Cabinet decision 4<sup>th</sup> April
- Preparation for implementation from June

# Local Authority Trading Company



**Management of 11,000 tenanted and 4,000 leasehold properties including:**  
Repairs/Capital Programme/Voids  
Rent Collection  
Tenancy Management  
Caretaking

**Learning Disabilities Services**  
**Rosa Morison:** building-based day opportunities for people with profound, multiple learning disabilities  
**Flower Lane Autism Service:** buildings and community based day opportunities for people with Autistic Spectrum conditions  
**Community Space:** building and community based day opportunities to promote inclusion, skills development and access to employment.  
**Valley Way:** a short breaks respite service  
**Barnet Supported Living Service:** daily living support for people within their own tenancies  
**Physical and Sensory Impairment Services**  
**Barnet Independent Living Service:** building and community based day opportunities to promote inclusion and independent living

# Transfer of Housing Service to Barnet Homes

- Options Appraisal and Business Case
- Synergies between Housing Service and Barnet Homes
- Improved customer experience
- Performance Improvements
- Savings

On track to implement from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012.



## Further Reading

- Government Housing Strategy  
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/housingstrategy2011>
- Mayor's housing strategy (Consultation ends 6<sup>th</sup> March)  
<http://london.gov.uk/consultation/revised-london-housing-strategy>
- Government consultation on Allocations (ends 30<sup>th</sup> March)  
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/allocationofaccommodation>



# Any questions?





# Housing allocations

**Shaun Flook**  
**Housing Needs Manager**

# What am I going to talk about?

- Recap on changes made to allocations scheme last year
- How scheme is working currently
- Localism Act
- Further changes
- Any questions?



# What is a housing allocations policy for?



We have more people asking for help than properties available. How do we decide who will be offered a home?

# What changes did we make in April 2011?

- Closure of open waiting list
- Use of 4 simple bands instead of points
- Assisted choice instead of bidding on Home Connections
- Recognising community contributions of people in housing need
- Inclusion of Private Rented Sector (PRS) in selections of properties

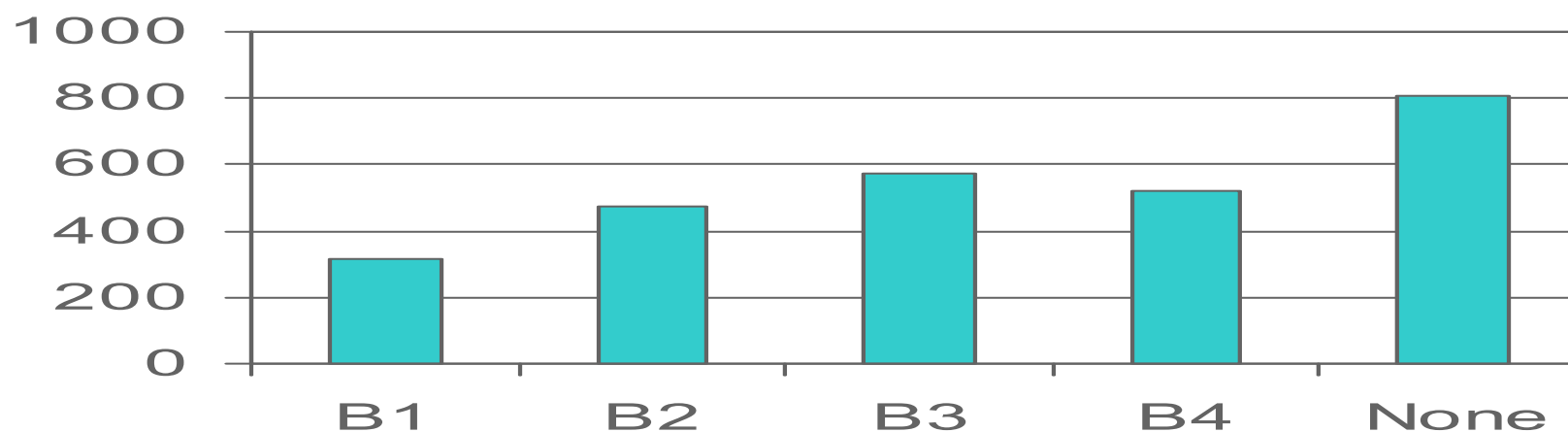
# Barnet housing bands from April 2011

<b>Band 1</b>	Reasonable preference:  People who :	Needs to move urgently
<b>Band 2</b>	A) are homeless or owed certain homelessness duties	Needs to move + Community Contribution
<b>Band 3</b>	B) are occupying unsanitary, overcrowded, or otherwise unsatisfactory housing C) need to move for medical or welfare reasons, including grounds relating to a disability D) need to move to a particular location – e.g. to be nearer to special training opportunities, or special medical facilities - and who would suffer hardship if they were unable to do so	Needs to move
<b>Band 4</b>	People who would fall into one of the higher bands but have had their priority reduced because of a breach of their existing tenancy, or have no local connection, or have made themselves homeless intentionally or have a substantial capital asset.	



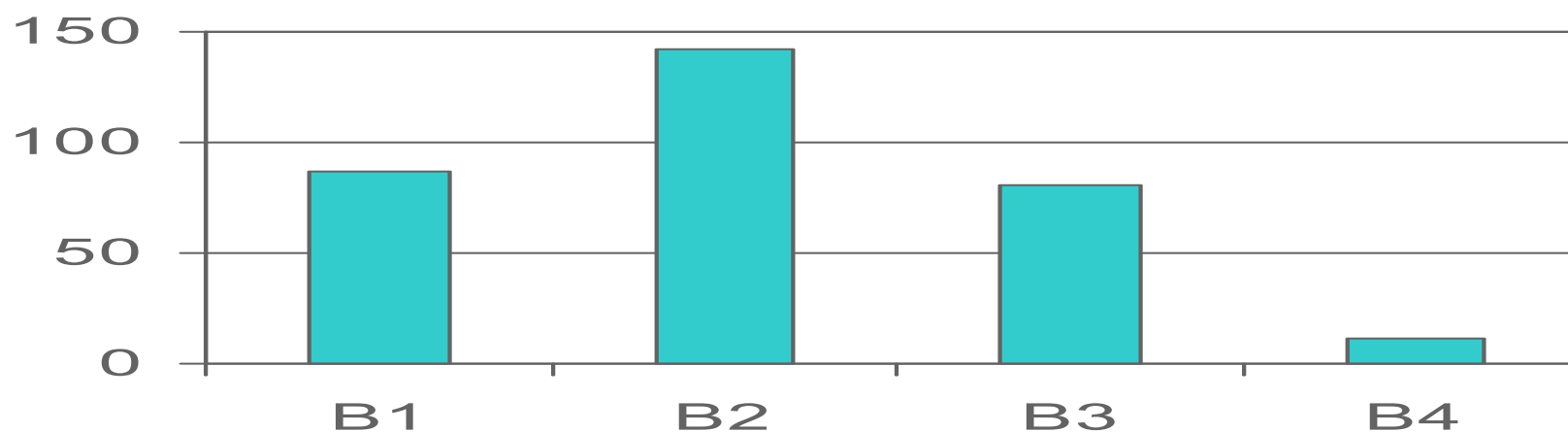
## Numbers in bands April 2011 to January 2012

Band 1	Band 2	Band 3	Band 4	Not banded
313	472	574	522	807



## Housed in social housing April 2011 to January 2012

Band 1	Band 2	Band 3	Band 4
87	142	81	11



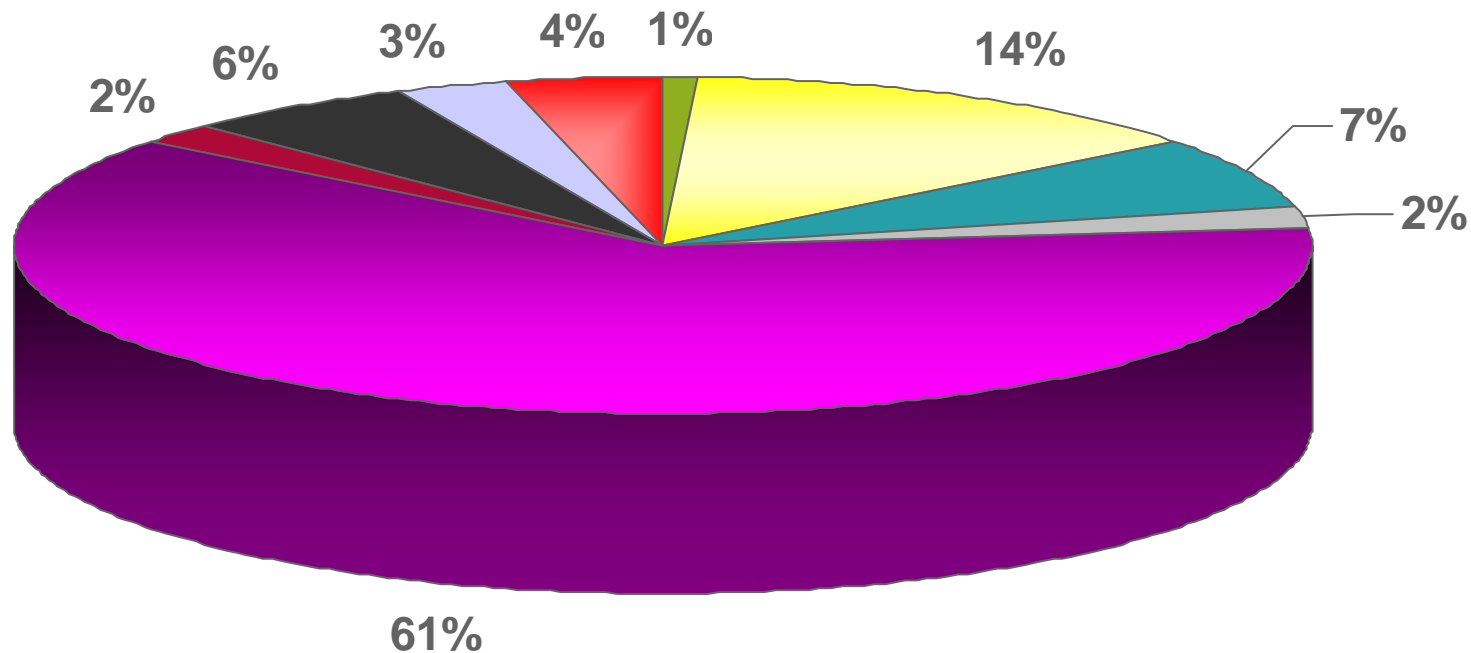
## People housed in private rented housing

- 140 households have been housed into the PRS from one of the Barnet bands
- We need to do more work on identifying which band people are housed into the PRS from

# What is community contribution ?



# Why have people been awarded community contribution?



armed forces

discretion

education

tbc

working

volunteering

move on

transfer

leaving care

# The Localism Act 2011

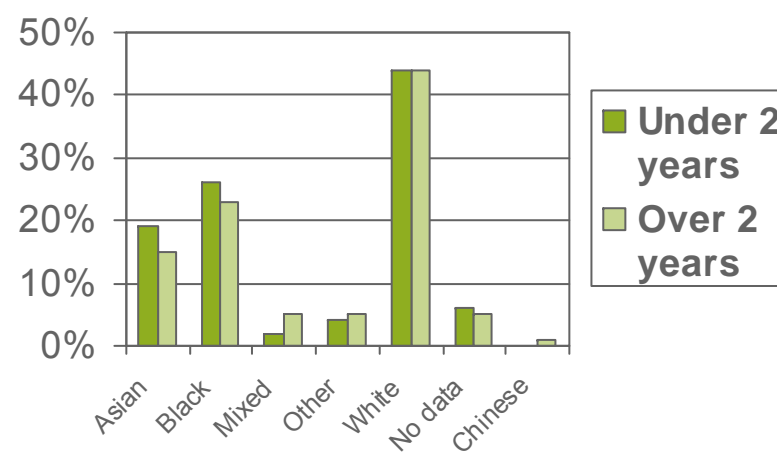
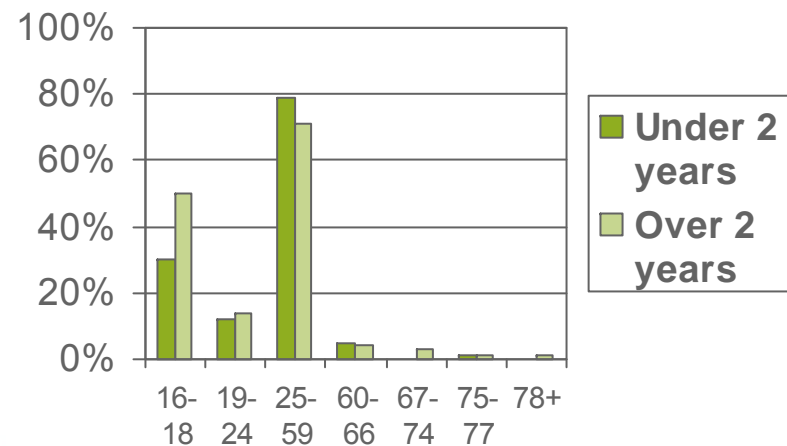
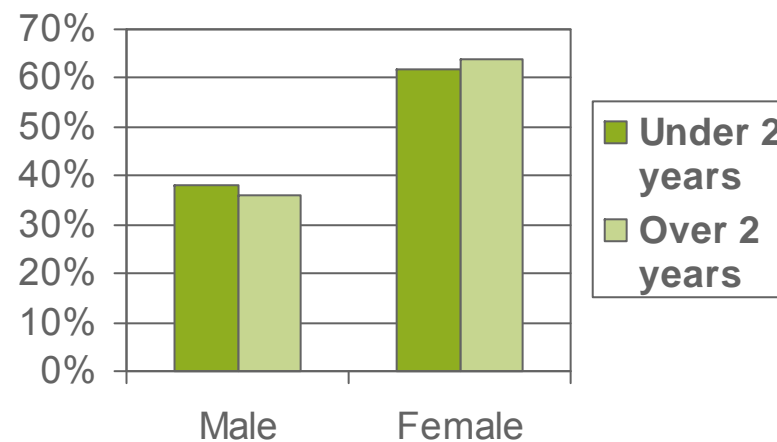
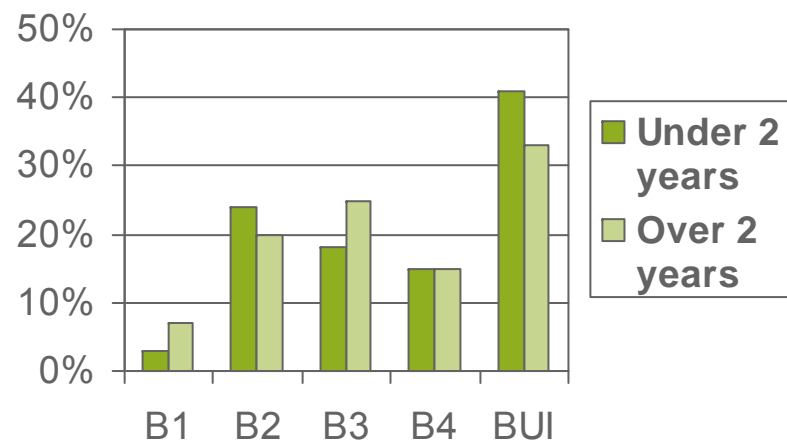
- This was enacted on 17 November 2011
- It gives local authorities new freedoms and flexibilities in determining who can qualify for help with housing
- From April 2012 we will be able to discharge homelessness duty to people with priority need who are not intentionally homeless into the PRS
- Social landlords have to publish a local tenancy policy

# The council's proposed changes 1

- Local connection criteria
  - Currently applicants have to have lived in Barnet for 6 months
  - We propose to increase this to 2 years
  - We will have the discretion to waive the requirements in exceptional cases



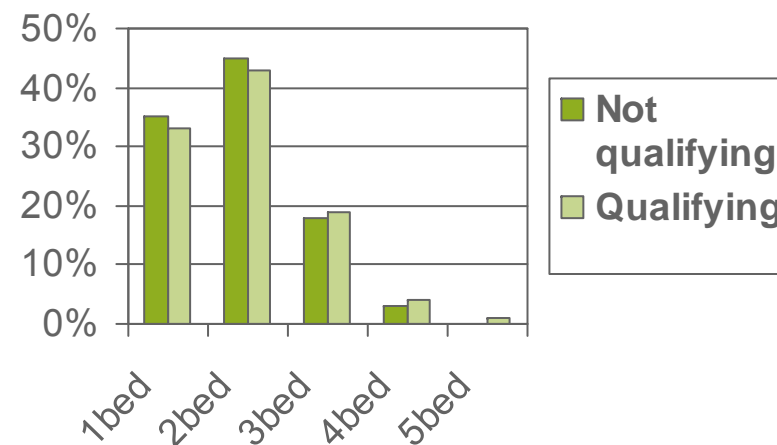
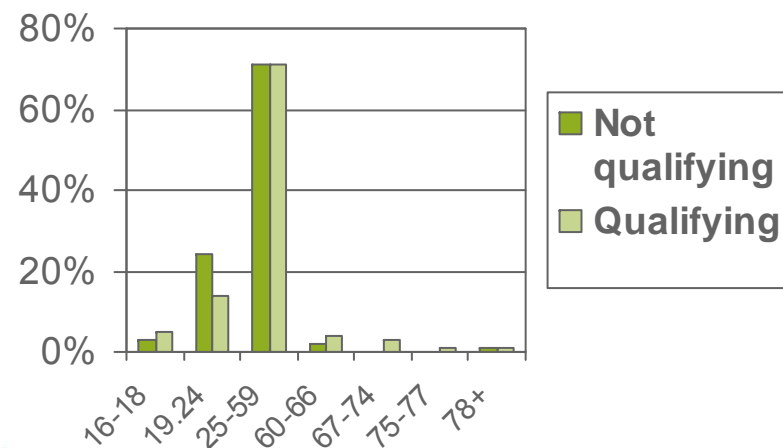
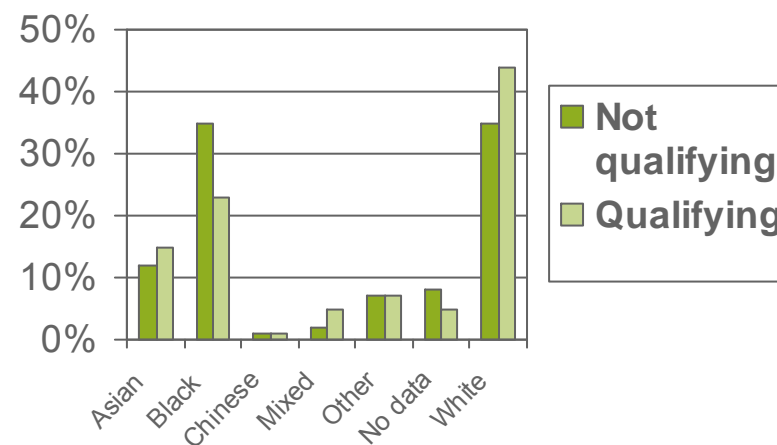
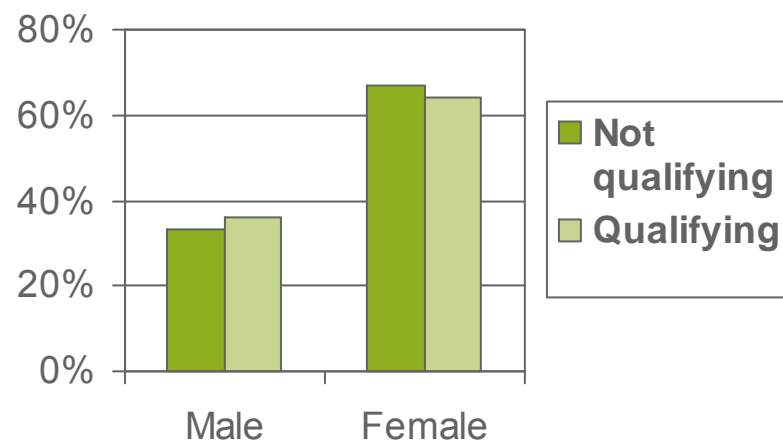
# Local connection and equalities



## The council's proposed changes 2

- We propose that the following classes of person will not qualify for a housing band:
  - Applicants with no local connection
  - Applicants overcrowded by 1 bed
  - Applicants convicted of benefits fraud
  - Applicants who have refused 2 reasonable offers
  - Intentionally homeless applicants
  - Applicants in long-term temporary accommodation
  - Applicants owing rent arrears or in breach of other tenancy condition
  - Applicants with assets exceeding limits set out in tenancy strategy

# Non-qualification and equalities



## The council's proposed changes 3

- The policy on discretionary succession has been amended so that any further succession would only happen if the succeeding tenant would qualify for bands 1 to 3
- 5% of re-lets will be allocated on a London-wide basis to existing social tenants through a pan-London mobility housing allocations scheme which prioritises under-occupation and moves required for work

# Proposed changes to community contribution

- Young people should also be expected to make a community contribution to be placed in band 2
- Clarification that the head of the household or partner can qualify a household for community contribution rather than adult children
- Applicants with formal caring responsibilities may not be able to work but can qualify for band 2 through the discretion policy

## Find out more

- [http://engage.barnet.gov.uk/housing-planning-and-regeneration/housing-allocations/consult\\_view](http://engage.barnet.gov.uk/housing-planning-and-regeneration/housing-allocations/consult_view)
- The consultation ends on 2 March 2012
- Please send comments to [chloe.horner@barnet.gov.uk](mailto:chloe.horner@barnet.gov.uk)

## Next steps

- Cabinet will be asked to approve new scheme on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2012
- Scheme will then be implemented



# Any questions?

