

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING
BY DEPUTY G.P. SOUTHERN OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 28TH MARCH 2017**

Question

Will the Minister outline how the new system of choice-based lettings, in which potential tenants are encouraged to bid for properties, works in conjunction with the strict date order under which the waiting list for social housing operates; will she account for the high refusal rates experienced in 2015, as reported in ‘Andium Homes: Annual Report 2015’ (R.76/2016); and will she state what measures, if any, have been adopted in response to these refusal rates and with what success?

Answer

The Andium Homes choice-based lettings system gives applicants registered on the Affordable Housing Gateway waiting list the opportunity to express interest in, and view, available social rented properties.

An available property will be offered to an applicant who (having expressed interest in that property) has the highest priority. In this case, priority is determined by:

- Band – applicants in band 1 receive the highest priority.
- Date order – the applicant who has been waiting longest in the highest band will take priority.
- Housing requirements – the property must be suitable for the applicant’s stated requirements (e.g. a need for a ground floor property or a walk-in shower).

This process is consistent with the policies of the Affordable Housing Gateway.

If the applicant with the highest priority turns down the property, the next person with the highest priority registered on the waiting list will be offered the property.

Andium Homes introduced a choice-based letting system in 2016, following a pilot scheme in 2015. Prior to this, offers for housing had been made directly to applicants. However, direct offers did not provide an efficient lettings process, resulting in a large number of refusals from applicants who were not interested in the properties that had been offered to them (as identified in the 2015 Andium Homes Annual Report).

The introduction of a choice-based lettings system has shown positive results, providing an efficient, clear and customer-oriented approach to the allocation of social housing. In the 1st quarter of 2016, for instance, the average turnaround time for properties was 42 days, which has reduced to 23 days in the 1st quarter of 2017. Moreover, the number of offers turned down by applicants has reduced significantly:

Q1 2015	57%
Q1 2016	51%
Q1 2017	18%

Properties refused as a percentage of offers made

The advantage of the choice-based lettings system is that it enables applicants to make informed decisions about the type and location of the property they can let, which is more likely to result in them living in a property they can settle in and enjoy.

The introduction of the choice-based lettings system is consistent with the Minister’s Housing Strategy, which identifies the need to make the best use of housing resources by ensuring the efficient letting of social rented housing.