

HOMELESSNESS REVIEW

2022

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1 UNDERSTANDING HOMELESSNESS

In developing the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023- 2028 a review of homelessness in Staffordshire Moorlands has been undertaken. The purpose of the Homelessness Review is to establish the extent of homelessness in the area, identifying trends and any gaps in the service currently being provided. The review has considered a range of information including:

- Number of homeless approaches
- The type of households becoming homeless
- Support needs of homeless households
- Reasons for homelessness
- Homeless Prevention and Relief cases and outcomes
- Temporary accommodation provision
- Demand and Supply of Affordable housing
- Private Rented housing

- Rough Sleeping & Single Homelessness
- Existing homelessness prevention measures / prevention toolkit
- The current Housing Advice Service
- Resources available to address homelessness and deliver the Strategy

The Homelessness Review provides information to develop the Council's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023 to 2028 and the Homelessness Review document should be read in conjunction with that strategy.

A summary of the key findings of the Homelessness Review can be found in section 11.

The data set used to undertake this review was extracted from the Council's Locata system and Homelessness Case Level Collection (H-CLIC) data.

2 HOUSEHOLDS APPROACHING THE COUNCIL'S HOUSING ADVICE SERVICE

The table below shows the number of households approaching the Council for housing advice and homeless assistance. The majority of approaches have been given advice and were closed at triage stage; the applicant was not threatened with homelessness within 56 days but required general housing advice only.

Approaches	2018/ 2019	2019/ 2020	2020/ 2021	2021/ 2022	2022/23 Q1 & Q2	Total
Total Approaches (including housing advice cases)	612	602	566	553	334	2667
Homeless Assessment	300	279	244	175	87	1126

Fig 1. Service approaches

Between April 2018 and September 2022 the Housing Advice Service dealt with 2667 approaches for advice and assistance. The data shows that demand for the service remained steady in 2018/19 and 2019/20, reduced slightly during 2020/21 and 2021/22. However the first 6 months of 2022/23 suggest service demand is increasing and 26% of approaches require homelessness assessment.

The table below shows the number of Duty to Refer received. Please note the Duty to Refer for public bodies was introduced in October 2018, so 2018/19 data does not comprise of a full year's data set. The number of Duty to Refer received has not increased significantly since the Duty to Refer was introduced under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

Referrals	2018/ 2019	2019/ 2020	2020/ 2021	2021/ 2022	2022/23 Q1 & Q2
Total referrals	71	95	100	86	46
by a public body under the Duty to Refer	32	40	42	32	18

Fig 2. Duty to Refer

3 HOMELESSNESS STATISTICS

3.1 Assessments

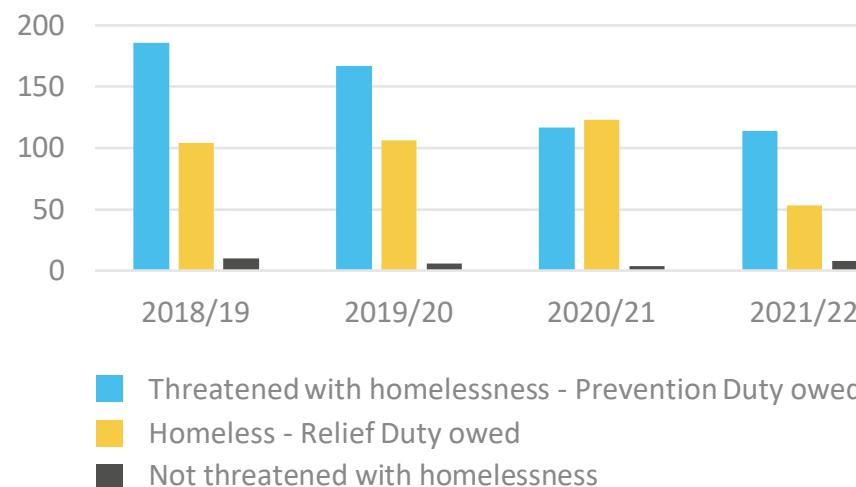
The data below analyses the assessments and outcomes recorded under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

The Act requires local housing authorities to focus on preventing or relieving homelessness. Prevention duties include any activities aimed at preventing a household threatened with homelessness (within 56 days) from becoming homeless. This involves activities to enable an applicant to remain in their current home or find alternative accommodation, to prevent them from becoming homeless. Relief duties are owed to households that are already homeless and require help to secure alternative accommodation.

The table below shows that with the exception of 2020/21 the majority of applicants were owed a Prevention Duty compared with a Relief Duty. This is likely to be linked to the impact of the pandemic where an increase in crisis presentations was witnessed.

Assessments	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/23 Q1 & Q2
Threatened with homelessness – Prevention Duty owed	186	167	117	114	53
of which due to service of valid s21 notice	31	26	17	29	10
Homeless – Relief Duty owed	104	106	123	53	33
Not threatened with homelessness	10	6	4	8	1

Fig 3. Homelessness Assessments



It is important to maintain this and ensure that customers access the service at the earliest opportunity, the earlier people approach for assistance, the more opportunity there is to prevent homelessness occurring. However it is equally important that there are sufficient resources in place for staff to be able to dedicate time to prevention work.

It is more difficult to assist households when they are actually homeless, they can have limited housing options available resulting in increased use of temporary accommodation. Households facing crisis are more likely to experience negative impacts on their mental health and emotional wellbeing, ability to maintain education and employment and pressure on personal and family relationships.

Early identification of problems, early targeted interventions and the provision of high-quality advice and assistance will ensure people have the best chance of staying in their home.

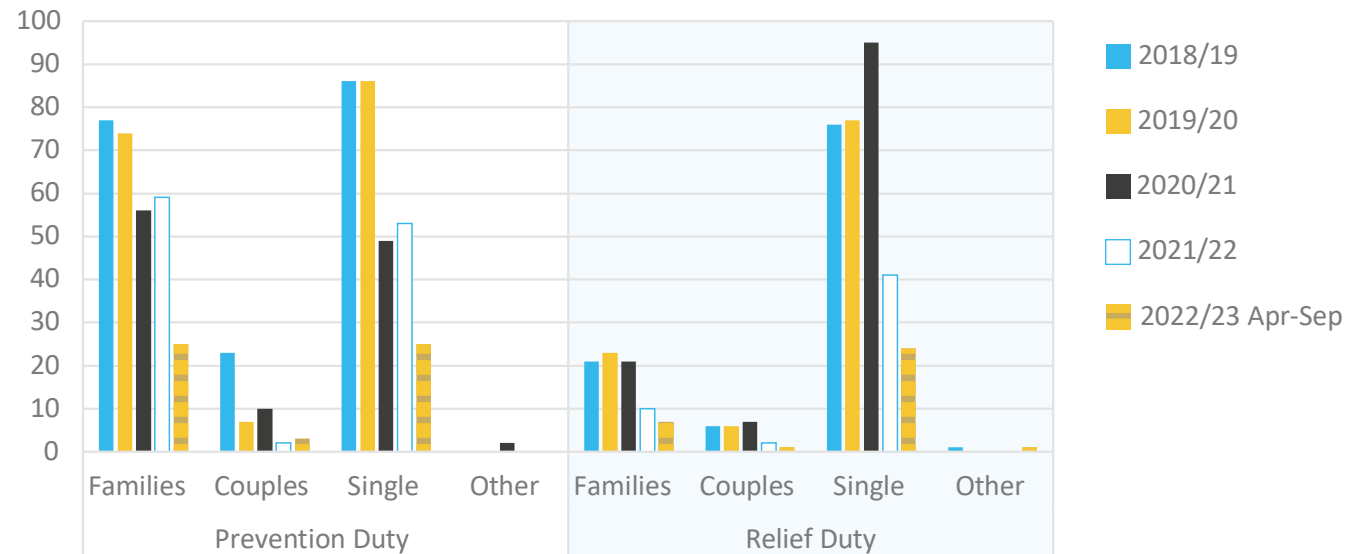
3.2 Demographic profile of Homeless Households

Family composition

The family composition of households owed a Prevention Duty and Relief Duty are displayed below.

		2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/23 Q1 & Q2
Prevention Duty	Families	77	74	56	59	25
	Couples	23	7	10	2	3
	Single	86	86	49	53	25
	Other	0	0	2	0	0
Relief Duty	Families	21	23	21	10	7
	Couples	6	6	7	2	1
	Single	76	77	95	41	24
	Other	1	0	0	0	1

Fig 4. Family composition



In total single people consistently on an annual basis account for over 50% (54-60%) of all homeless approaches owed a Prevention or Relief Duty. Compared with 32-41% of families.

The majority of households owed a Relief Duty are single people, in 2021/22 and 2020/21 accounting for 77%, whilst households with dependent children accounted for 19% and 17% of those owed a Relief Duty. Single households are over-represented at relief stage in all years, this may indicate that families with dependent children are more likely to approach the service prior to experiencing homelessness than single people.

A challenge for the Council therefore is to ensure that our services are targeted to ensure that all demographic groups approach for assistance at an earlier stage in their housing situation, when there is a threat of homelessness as opposed to once they are experiencing homelessness.

It is important to note that single people are more likely to be vulnerably housed or their homelessness may be hidden, and as such their housing arrangements were more likely to be impacted by the pandemic. It is also more difficult to prevent homelessness and find a housing solution for single households due to the availability of affordable housing options for single households.

Age

The chart below outlines the age range of main homeless applicant owed a Prevention or Relief Duty. Those aged 25-34 years account for 29-37% of all homeless approaches owed a Prevention or Relief Duty on an annual basis, 34% in 2021/22

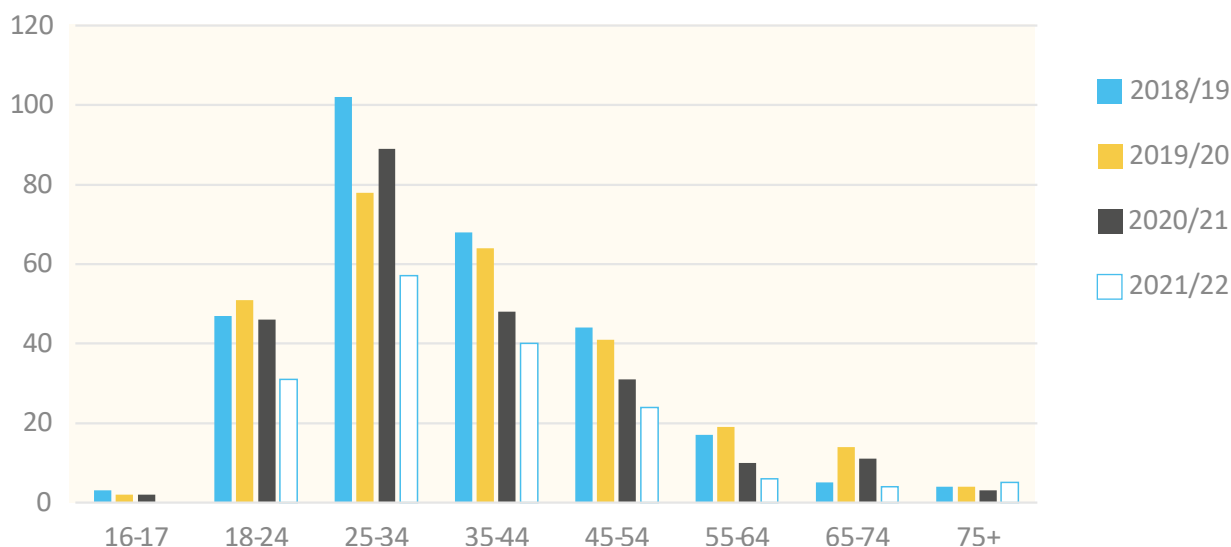


Fig 5. Age

Sexuality

The table below shows the sexuality of the main homeless applicant owed a Prevention or Relief Duty over the past 4 years.

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Bisexual	0	0	0	0
Gay/ Lesbian	5	6	5	3
Transgender	0	2	0	1

Fig 6. Sexuality

Ethnicity

The graph below demonstrates the ethnicity of the main homeless applicant owed a Prevention or Relief Duty over the past 4 years. The ethnic origin of homeless households appears to largely reflect the demography of the District, the 2011 census indicates 97.5% Staffordshire Moorlands population White British.

	2018/ 2019	2019/ 2020	2020/ 2021	2021/ 2022
White	276	267	232	159
Black/ African/ Caribbean/ Black British	0	2	1	2
Asian/ Asian British	1	1	1	0
Mixed/ Multiple Ethnic groups	3	1	2	1
Other	2	0	1	1
Not known	7	1	3	4
Total	289	272	240	167

Fig 7. Ethnicity

Support Needs

Data collected as part of the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 requirements provides a more detailed picture of the support needs of homeless households. The table below shows the number and % of households owed a Prevention or Relief Duty who have an identified support need. Approximately half of all households have at least one identified support need. The proportion of households with support needs is increasing.

Support Needs	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Number households with a support need	92	116	109	85
% households with a support need	31	42.5	45.4	50.9
Total support needs	178	228	283	183

Fig 8. Households with support needs

The graph below shows the most prevailing support need is mental health, accounting for 20.4% of all declared support needs in 2021/22. Mental health problems in this context refer to an individual's cognitive, behavioural, emotional, and social well-being, and can impact upon the instrumental activities of daily living such as managing finance, medication, communicating with others and companionship. Other frequently prevailing support needs include physical ill health, domestic abuse, drug dependency, alcohol dependency and offending history.

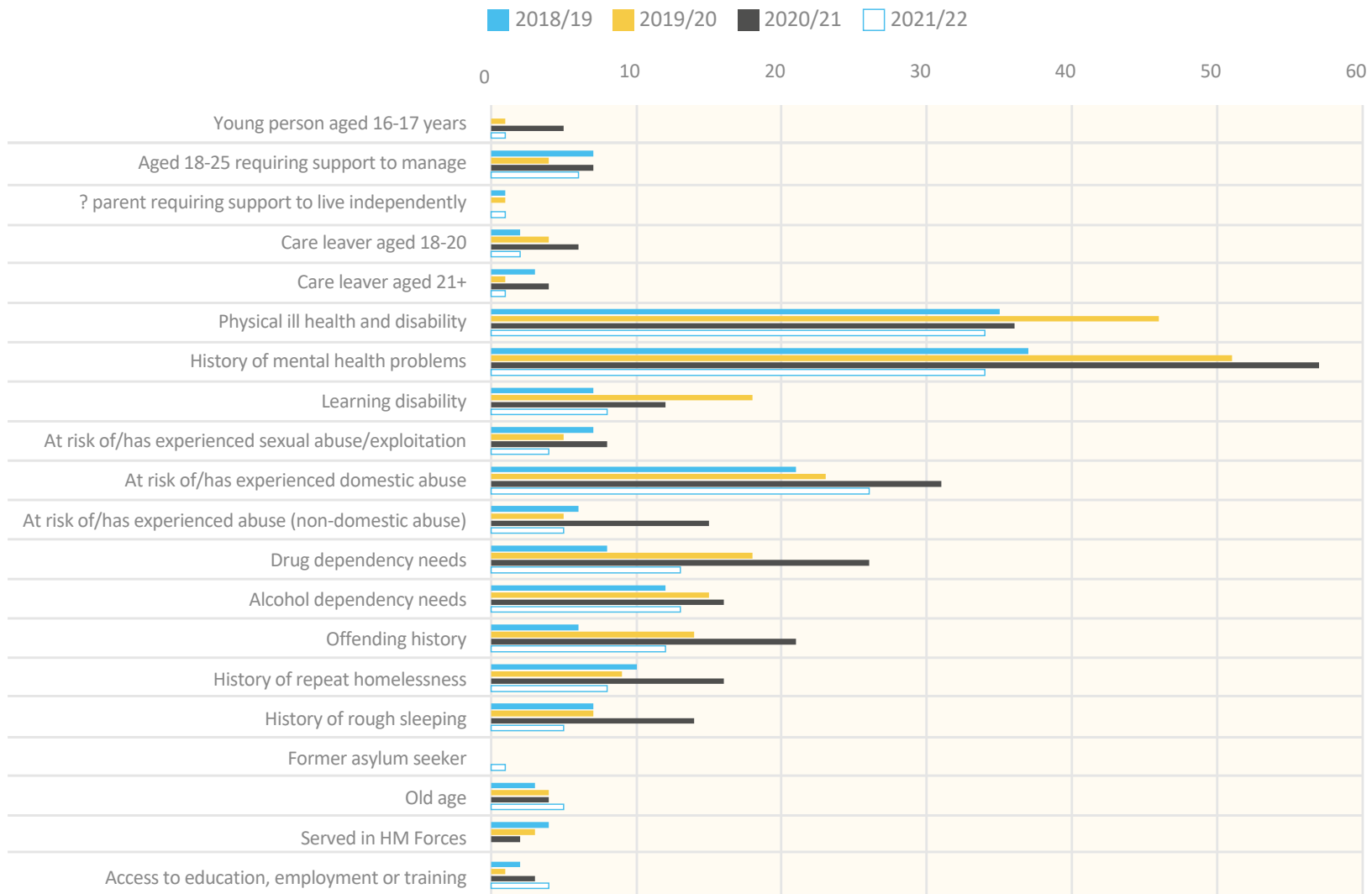


Fig 9. Support needs

Support need	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	% 2021/22
Young person aged 16-17 years	0	1	5	1	0.6
Young person aged 18-25 years requiring support to manage independently	7	4	7	6	3.8
Young parent requiring support to manage independently	1	1	0	1	0.6
Care leaver aged 18-20 years	2	4	6	2	1.2
Care leaver aged 21+ years	3	1	4	1	0.6
Physical ill health and disability	35	46	36	34	20.4
History of mental health problems	37	51	57	34	20.4
Learning disability	7	18	12	8	4.8
At risk of/has experienced sexual abuse/exploitation	7	5	8	4	2.4
At risk of/has experienced domestic abuse	21	23	31	26	15.6
At risk of/has experienced abuse (non-domestic abuse)	6	5	15	5	3
Drug dependency needs	8	18	26	13	7.8
Alcohol dependency needs	12	15	16	13	7.8
Offending history	6	14	21	12	7.2
History of repeat homelessness	10	9	16	8	4.8
History of rough sleeping	7	7	14	5	3
Former asylum seeker	0	0	0	1	0.6
Old age	3	4	4	5	3
Served in HM Forces	4	3	2	0	0
Access to education, employment or training	2	1	3	4	2.4
Total support needs	178	230	283	183	

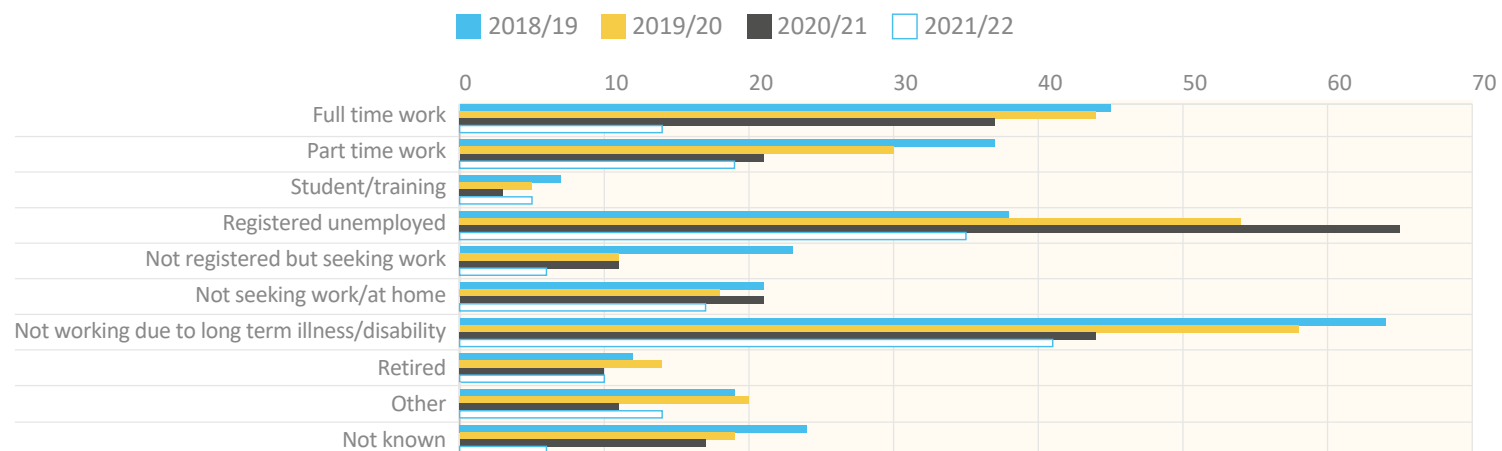
Applicants with multiple and complex support needs, including mental health and substance misuse, have increased, are more challenging to assist and need a more person centred approach. This requires increased efforts in partnership with other support agencies and suitable housing may be more difficult to secure. Facilitating access to appropriate support, including tenancy related support, can help sustain accommodation.

Employment status

Information below shows the employment status of main applicant owed a Prevention or Relief Duty. During the last four years, 20-28% households are in employment compared with 13-27% registered unemployed, and 18-28% households are not working due to long term illness/ disability.

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Full time work	45	44	37	14
Part time work	37	30	21	19
Student/ training	7	5	3	5
Registered unemployed	38	54	65	35
Not registered but seeking work	23	11	11	6
Not seeking work/ at home	21	18	21	17
Not working due to long-term illness /disability	64	58	44	41
Retired	12	14	10	10
Other	19	20	11	14
Not known	24	19	17	6

Fig 10. Employment Status

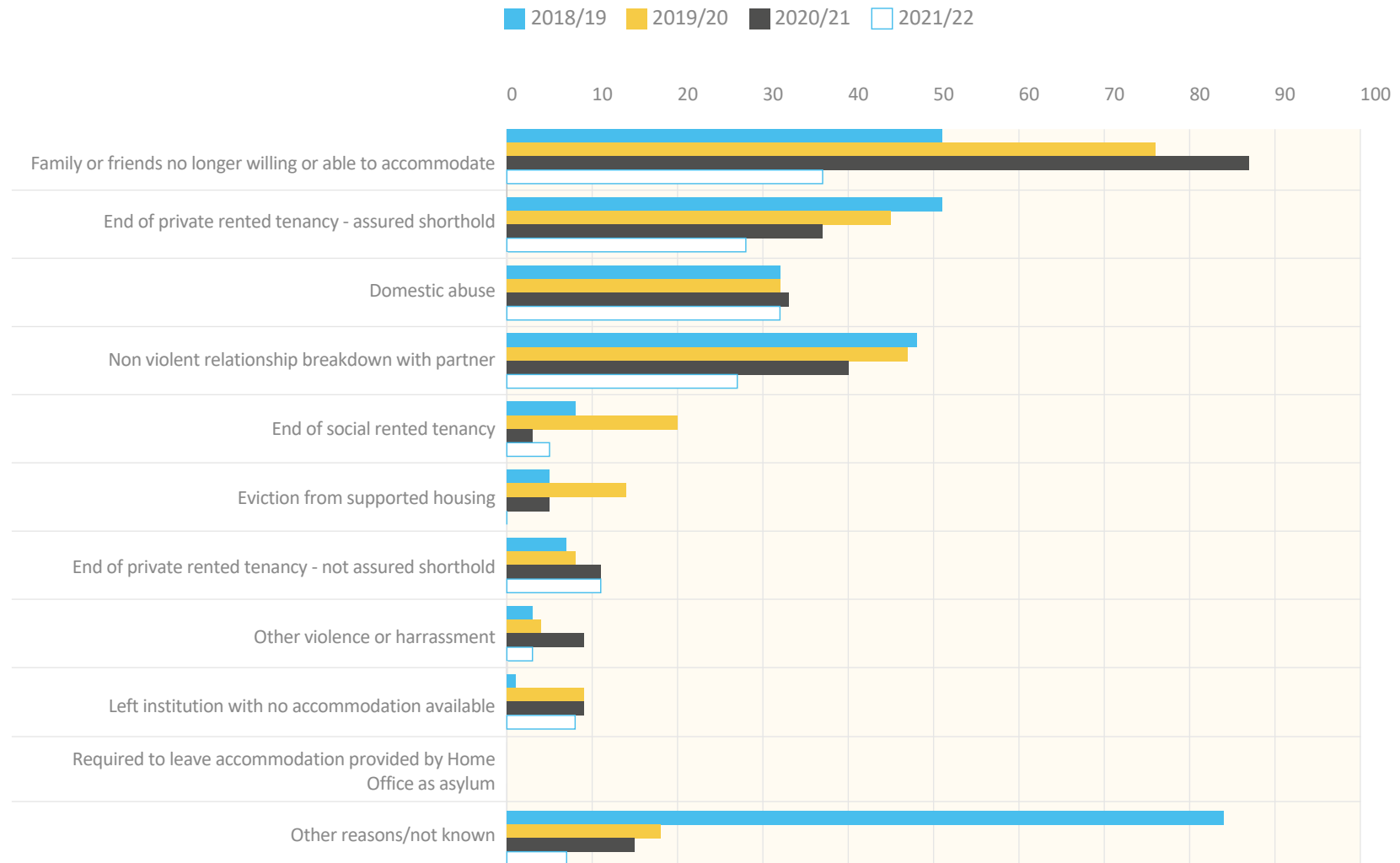


3.3 Reasons for homelessness

The table and graphs below detail the main causes of homelessness for those owed a Prevention and Relief Duty.

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Family or friends no longer willing or able to accommodate	51	76	87	37
End of private rented tenancy - assured shorthold	51	45	28	37
Domestic abuse	32	32	33	32
Non-violent relationship breakdown with partner	48	47	40	27
End of social rented tenancy	8	20	3	5
Eviction from supported housing	5	14	5	0
End of private rented tenancy - not assured shorthold	7	8	11	11
Other violence or harassment	3	4	9	3
Left institution with no accommodation available	1	9	9	8
Required to leave accommodation provided by Home Office as asylum support	0	0	0	0
Other reasons / not known	84	18	15	7
Total	290	273	240	167

Fig 11. Homeless reasons



The causes of homelessness are complex however the main reasons for homelessness for those owed a Prevention and Relief Duty in Staffordshire Moorlands 2021/22 were family/ friends eviction (22%), ending of private rented tenancy (22%) followed by domestic abuse (19%). Other main causes include relationship breakdown (16%).

In 2020/21, the main cause of homelessness was also family/ friends eviction (36%), followed by relationship breakdown (17%) and domestic abuse (14%).

Family exclusions can arise where young adults start a family of their own resulting in overcrowding and tensions. Although the presenting reason for homelessness may be exclusion from the family home, people have a variety of histories or routes into homelessness and some may have been living with a family member or friends or 'sofa surfing' after becoming homeless from a previous address.

It is important to note restrictions on evictions during the pandemic ended October 2021, so figures for this period are not representative. Possession cases now progress through the County Court system. Due to the Coronavirus Act 2020 court possession actions by landlords and mortgage lenders dropped to unprecedentedly low levels. Claim volumes for mortgage and landlord possession for the District, shown below, are rising but have not reached pre-Covid levels

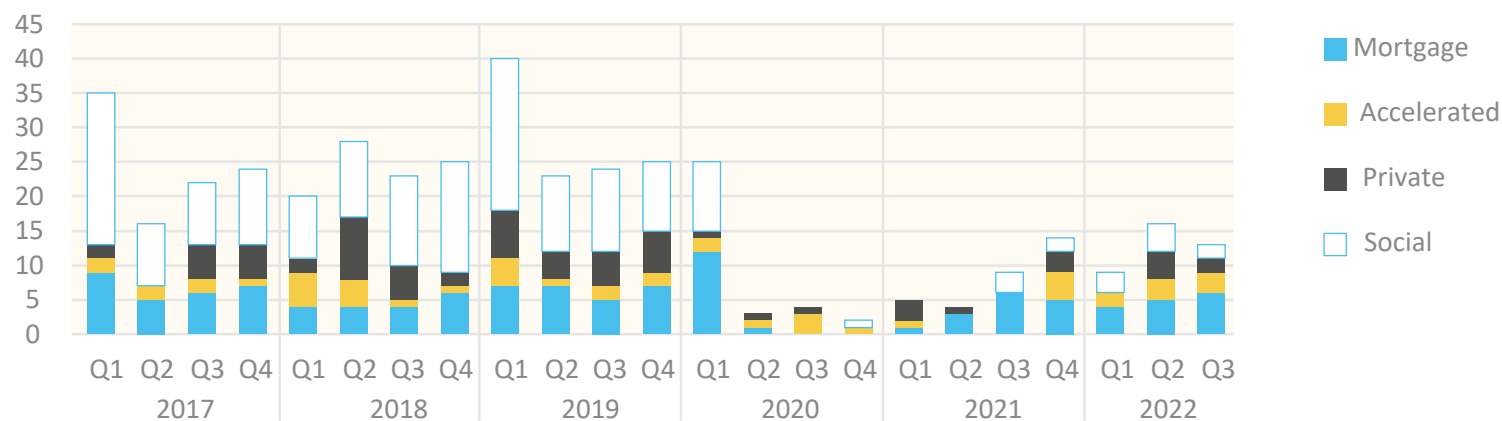


Fig 12. Court claims for possession, MOJ

Similarly orders of possession are still below pre-covid levels but numbers have been rising since restrictions ended.

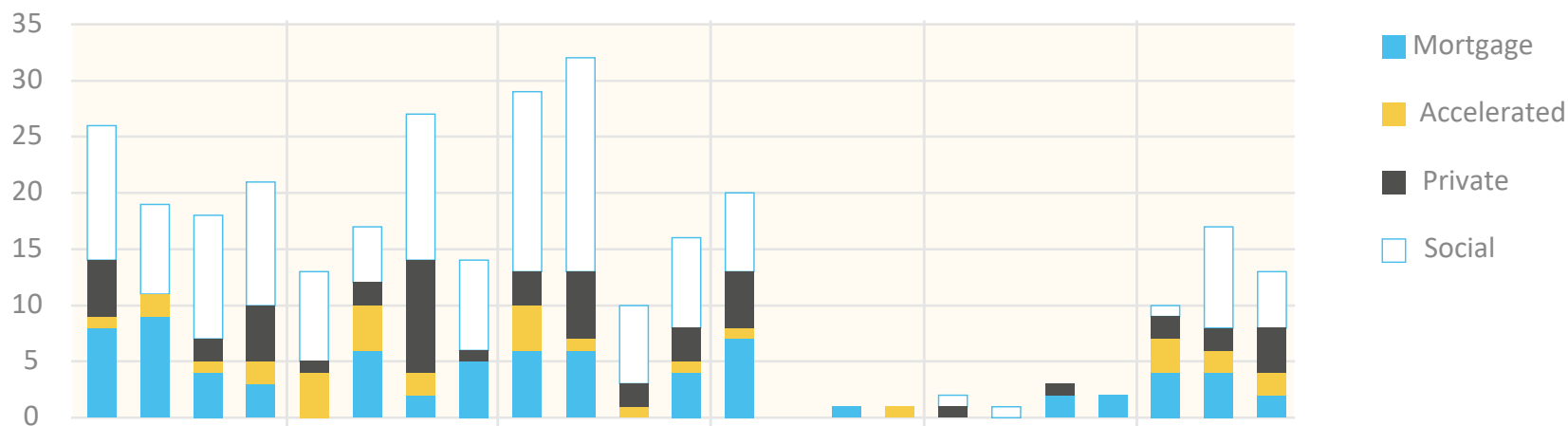


Fig 13. Court orders for possession, MOJ

Significantly higher numbers of households renting privately, socially and with mortgages are anticipated to approach the Council for housing and homelessness assistance linked with the cost of living crisis. The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) ‘Financial Lives 2020’ survey outlines the precarious financial position of many households. 10.7 million households have characteristics of low financial resilience, defined as people who “are over-indebted or have little capacity to withstand financial shocks. For example, they could not withstand even a £50 a month reduction in their income, or losing their main source of household income for even a week”¹. The FCA estimated this figure represented one UK household in every five. 7.8 million of these households were indebted and 3.8 million were in financial difficulty. The report also considered the level of financial buffer households had to withstand sudden financial shocks and concluded that 39% of adults (20.3 million) lacked 3 months living costs in savings. They also found:

- 5.1 million were usually overdrawn, often using an overdraft facility to pay for essential living expenses
- 2.8 million had persistent credit card debts
- 5.6 million had at least one high-cost loan

Those with limited savings or patterns of borrowing that place them at greater risk if they experience a persistent drop in income. Financial insecurity creates a significant cohort of people at risk of serious financial problems should they experience financial shock such as increase in energy bills, food or other essentials.

¹ FCA, (2021). Financial Lives 2020 survey: the impact of coronavirus.

3.4 Prevention and Relief Outcomes

The Housing Advice Service has had a longstanding focus on homelessness prevention prior to the implementation of the Act. The table below shows Prevention Duty ending during the year and the outcomes achieved.

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Moved to alternative accommodation	66	80	49	50
Stayed in existing accommodation	25	53	33	24
Total	91	133	82	74
Secured accommodation for 6+ months	91	133	82	74
Homeless (including intentionally homeless)	14	12	12	7
Contact lost	29	13	13	18
56 days elapsed and no further action	6	10	8	20
Withdrew application / applicant deceased	7	4	0	4
No longer eligible	0	0	0	0
Refused suitable accommodation offer	0	0	0	0
Refused to cooperate	0	0	0	0
Not known	0	0	0	0
Total	147	172	115	123

Fig 14. Prevention Duty end

For 123 households in 2021/22 where a Prevention Duty ended, accommodation was secured for 74, this indicates homelessness successfully prevented for 60.2% households. This compares favourably with the national prevention rate of 56.3%.

In 2020/21, of 115 cases where prevention duty ended, homelessness was prevented for 82 households, equating to a prevention rate of 71.3%. This is above the national average for England of 59.4% and a huge achievement in the middle of a pandemic.

Households are more likely to be assisted to secure alternative rather than existing accommodation. The table below details accommodation outcome for prevention cases.

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Social rented sector	42	63	28	34
Private rented sector	36	48	41	26
Staying with family	4	15	11	9
Staying with friends	1	0	0	1
Owner-occupier	1	5	2	2
Other	1	2	0	0
Not known	6	0	0	2
Total	91	133	82	74

Fig. 15 Prevention Duty accommodation

The majority of households whose homelessness was prevented in 2021/22 were helped to access Registered Provider housing, which accounted for 46% of prevention outcomes. In 2020/21, the majority of households, 50%, were assisted to access private rented accommodation.

The chart shows the main prevention activity that resulted in accommodation secured for households in 2021/22.

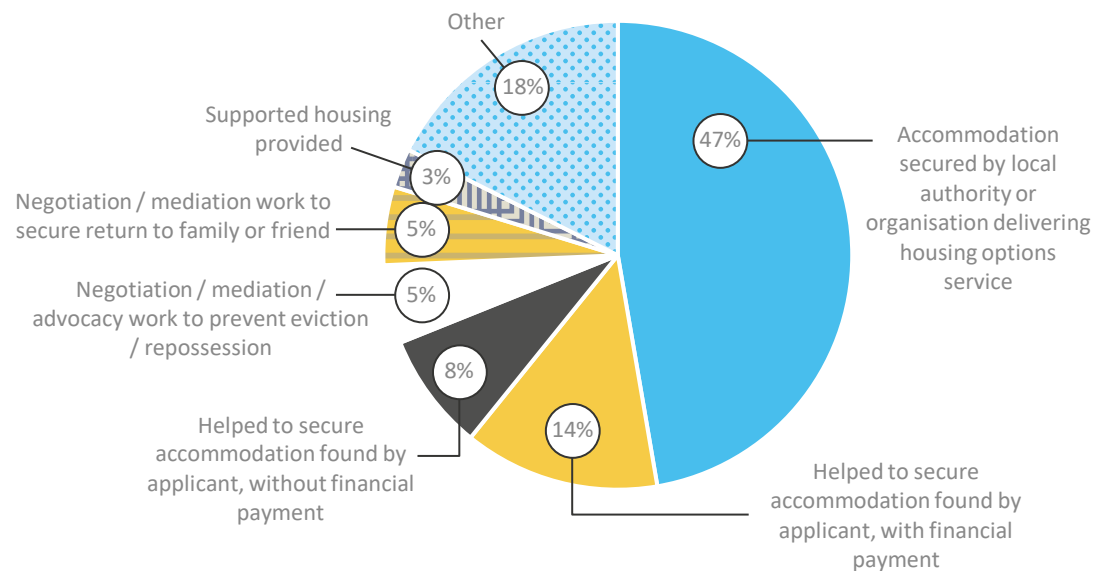


Fig 16. Prevention activity resulting in accommodation 2021/22

While family/friends evicting is the main cause of homelessness, in 2021/22 only 4 (5%) cases had their homelessness prevented through activity which involved successful 'negotiation/mediation work to secure the return to family and friends'. This is a possible area for future focus to ensure a more targeted approach to preventing homelessness due to this cause.

The table below shows Relief Duty end during the year and the outcomes achieved.

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Secured accommodation for 6+ months	40	74	82	33
56 days elapsed	9	22	32	20
Contact lost	43	17	19	10
Withdrew application / applicant deceased	3	3	2	4
Refused final accommodation	1	1	0	0
Intentionally homeless from accommodation provided	0	1	3	1
Local connection referral accepted by other LA	1	0	2	0
No longer eligible	1	1	0	0
Notice served due to refusal to cooperate	0	0	0	0
Not known	0	0	0	0
Total	98	119	140	68

Fig 17. Relief Duty end

For 68 households in 2021/22 where a Relief Duty had ended, accommodation was secured for 33, this indicates homelessness successfully relieved for 48.5% households, compared with the national relief rate of 39.1%.

In 2020/21, of 140 cases where Relief Duty ended, homelessness was relieved for 82 households, equating to a relief rate of 58.6%. This is above the national average for England of 39.8% and a huge achievement in the middle of a pandemic.

The table below details accommodation outcome for relief cases, in 2021/22 majority were helped to access Registered Provider housing (51.5 %). Since 2019/20, across relief and prevention cases, the number of households being assisted to access private rented sector accommodation has declined significantly.

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Social rented sector	13	30	40	17
Private rented sector	6	27	23	5
Staying with family	4	6	10	5
Staying with friends	0	6	6	0
Owner-occupier	0	0	0	0
Other	1	1	2	1
Not known	16	4	1	5
Total	40	74	82	33

Fig 18. Relief Duty accommodation

The chart below shows the main relief activity that resulted in accommodation secured for households in 2021/22

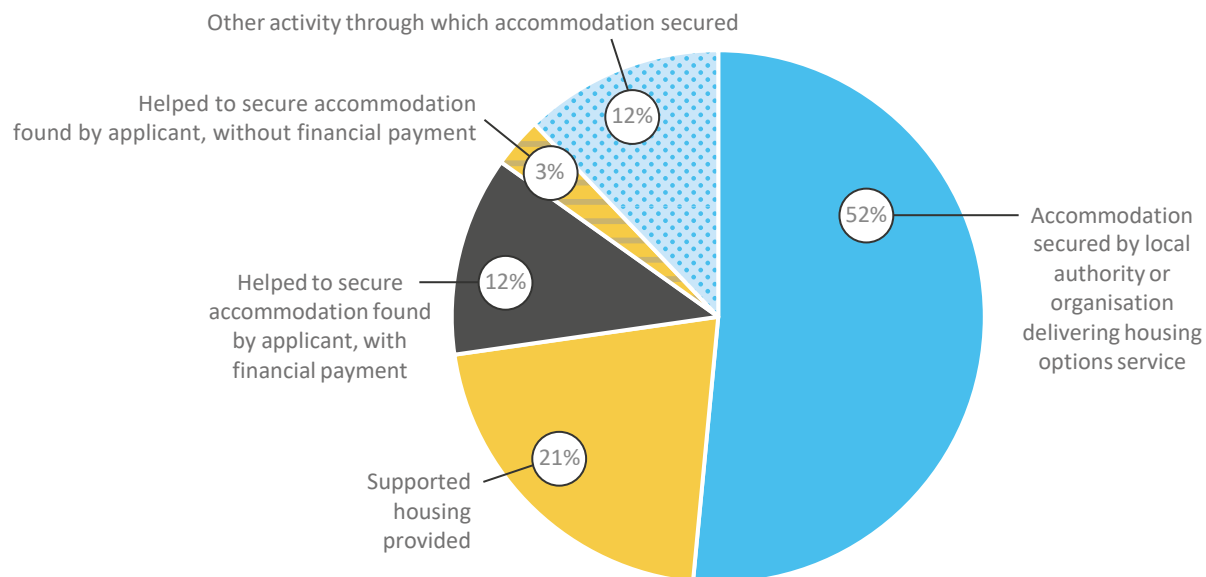


Fig 19. Relief activity resulting in accommodation 2021/22

Unfortunately, contact lost is a common reason for prevention or relief duty to end. Lack of engagement is an issue for applicants who are already homeless with 15% of relief cases being closed due to lost contact and 15% of prevention cases being closed for the same reason. Individuals can be difficult to engage and often do not want to work with the Housing Advice Service. Lack of engagement can be for a variety of different reasons that relate to both support needs and previous experiences with public services.

3.5 Main Duty Decisions

The table below details the number of Main Duty decisions for households where homelessness could not be prevented or relieved.

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Homeless + priority need + unintentionally homeless (acceptance)	5	11	13	16
Homeless + priority need + intentionally homeless	1	0	1	0
Homeless + no priority need	5	11	19	6
Not homeless	1	3	0	0
Total	12	25	33	22

Fig 20. Main Duty decisions

Of 22 Main Duty Decisions made in 2021/22, 16 (73%) households were owed a full homeless duty, the table below details how this duty was discharged during the year. The majority of households had the main duty discharged through an offer of social housing, there may be opportunities to make better use of the private rented sector in ending the main duty.

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Housing Act 1996 Pt6 social housing offer - accepted	6	7	8	8
- refused	0	0	0	0
Private rented sector offer - accepted	0	0	1	1
- refused	0	0	0	0
Voluntarily ceased to occupy	0	1	1	3
Refused suitable TA offer, withdrew or lost contact	4	0	1	1
Became intentionally homeless from TA	0	0	1	0
Ceased to be eligible	0	0	0	0
Not known	0	0	0	0
Total	10	8	12	13

Fig 21. Main Duty discharge reasons

4 TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION PROVISION

The duty to provide interim/temporary accommodation is triggered when there is a reason to believe a household may be eligible for assistance, homeless and in 'priority need' or in cold and extreme weather. As at 31st March 2022 there were a total of 12 households temporarily accommodated, of these, 5 households had dependent children, with a total of 13 children. The number of households temporarily accommodated, per 1,000 households was 0.29, lower than the national average of 3.98.

The chart below shows a month end snapshot of the total number of households in temporary accommodation and those in B&B/hotel accommodation. A spike in temporary accommodation provision during 2020/21 is linked with the national Everybody In initiative during the pandemic, the Authority housed over 40 single homeless people with no fixed abode who were at risk of rough sleeping or rough sleeping.

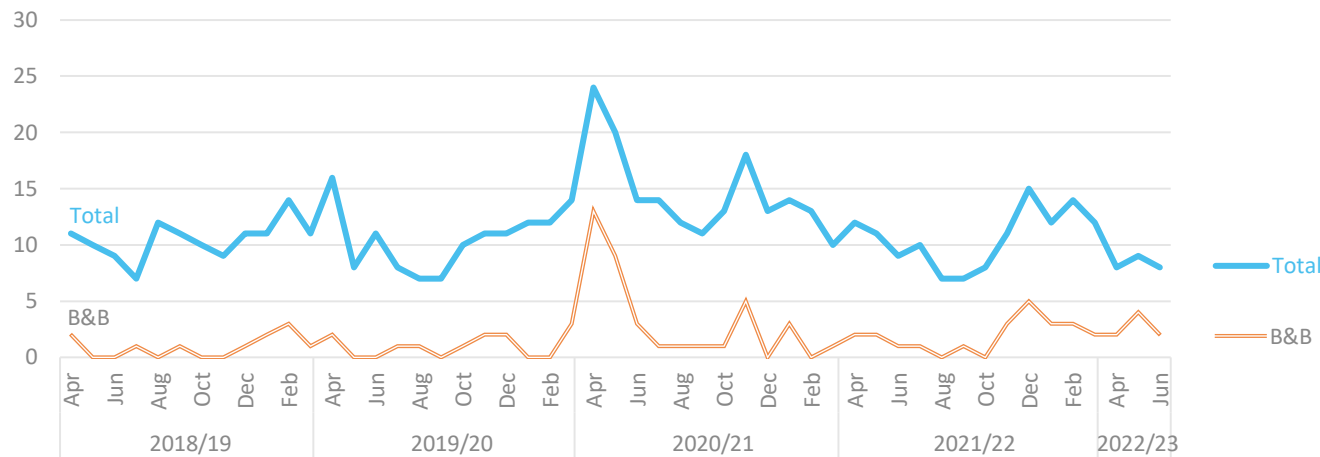


Fig 22. Households in temporary accommodation

Bed and breakfast accommodation is provided on an emergency basis with a move facilitated to alternative accommodation as soon as possible. The table below shows initial B&B/ hotel placement in 75% temporary accommodation placements 2020/21 and 58% 2021/22.

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23 Q1 & Q2
Total Households Temporary Accommodation	75	50	33
Total Households in TA 6wk+ (42 days)	35	31	18
Total households placed B&B	56	29	21
Total families placed B&B	7	7	5

Fig 23. Households in temporary accommodation

In 2021/22 gross B&B/ hotel accommodation cost was £31,057 and there are limited facilities including for food preparation. The Authority works in partnership to provide temporary accommodation options including emergency cold weather provision, for example in 2020/21 Mount Cook Winter provision, with multi-agency support available on site.

The Council has access to a portfolio of 12 designated temporary accommodation properties within the District, owned and managed by LSVT Registered Provider, Your Housing Group. Of these properties; 3 are wheelchair adapted and 1 property includes sanctuary scheme adaptations with improved security.

The table opposite shows the size and number of temporary accommodation vacancies during 2021/22.

Property Type	Number of nights occupied 2021/22	2021/22 Number vacancies (turnaround)
1 bed flat	251	5
2 bed flat	328	3
1 bed flat	296	2
1 bed flat	248	4
1 bed flat	284	3
1 bed flat	332	4
2 bed flat	273	4
1 bed flat	274	3
3 bed house	338	3
2 bed maisonette	365	0
3 bed house	330	2
3 bed house	145	1 (extensive fire damage)

Fig 24. YHG temporary accommodation

It can take considerable time for some households to move on from temporary accommodation. In 2021/22, 31 households were in temporary accommodation for over 6 weeks, on average 125 days. The average time a homeless household with children spent in B&B/ hotel accommodation during 2021/22 was 34 days.

The time spent in accommodation is affected by the limited supply of social housing and affordable private rented accommodation and any household rent arrears or tenancy breaches (including housing related debt, antisocial/ unacceptable behaviour) which make it difficult to access and delay further rehousing.

5 DEMAND AND SUPPLY OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The Authority is not stock holding, however in partnership with Your Housing Group (LSVT) and Home Options, have a register of households in need of social housing, a joint allocation policy and choice based lettings system for the advertising and allocation of Registered Provider vacancies /nominations.

The Council is legally required to give certain categories of housing need a reasonable preference, including homeless households. The Home Options allocation policy gives preference to those in housing need in a four-tier banding system (A-D);

- Band A – Emergency/ Priority move required
- Band B – Urgent Need to move
- Band C – Identified Housing Need: applicants who need to move but do not need to do so urgently
- Band D - Non-Priority Housing: applicants who are otherwise adequately housed but would like to live somewhere different.

Housing register information provides a reflection of current housing need within the District. As at 1.4.2022 there were 745 housing applicants on Home Options.

The table below shows a breakdown of registered applicants, corresponding bedroom size need and assessed banding.

	1 (general needs)	1 (over 55 years)	2	3	4	4+	Total
Band A	6	6	6	4	4	1	27
Band B	20	16	20	31	8	6	101
Band C	114	75	112	81	23	5	410
Band D	45	52	73	32	5	0	207
Total	185	149	211	148	40	12	745
	332						
Associated with homelessness	29 (15.7%)	5 (3.3%)	15 (7.1%)	17 (11.5%)	3 (7.5%)	2 (16.7%)	71 (9.5%)
	34 (10.24%)						

Fig 25. Home Options applications (as at 1.4.2022)

17.2% of all applicants have been assessed as having an Emergency or Urgent housing need (Band A & Band B). 71 or 9.5% of applicants have a priority banding associated with homelessness. Single people and couples requiring 1 bedroom accommodation account for 332 or 44.6% of applicants. Those aged under 55 years, 185 or 24.8%, require 1 bed general needs accommodation, compared with 149 or 20% aged over 55 years, eligible for older persons accommodation options (including bungalows or warned controlled accommodation). Families requiring 2 bedrooms make up 28.3%. However, households requiring larger 4 bedroom accommodation will have the longest wait due to the extremely limited supply of this size accommodation, shown in the table below, which provides information about social housing vacancies allocated through Home Options.

	1 Bed General Needs	1 Bed Over 55's	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	Total
2018/19	20	54	60	30	0	164
2019/20	19	27	63	36	0	145
2020/21	10	35	32	31	0	108
2021/22	17	46	49	36	1	149
2022/23 Q1-Q2	15	15	14	12	0	56

Fig 26. Home Options allocations

The table below provides detailed demand information relating to social housing vacancies allocated through Home Options during 2021/22.

Property Type	No. available	% allocations	Average No. bids	Range of bids
1 bed bungalow	40	31.8	15	4 to 41
2 bed bungalow	1		3	3
1 bed flat (55 yr+)	5		5	1 to 9
1 bed flat (60 yr+)	1		2	2
1 bed flat	12	10.8	21	1 to 37
1 bed house	1		47	47
studio	1		17	17
1 bed flat (40 yr+)	1		6	6
1 bed flat (50 yr+)	1		1	1
2 bed flat	12	32.4	15	6 to 27
2 bed maisonette	1		11	11
2 bed house	35		24	9 to 45
3 bed house	36	24.3	41	18 to 87
4 bed house	1	0.7	31	31
Total	148	100		

Fig 27. Home Options allocations 2021/22

31.8% of allocations relate to older persons (over 55 years) accommodation. There is greater availability of 1 bed older persons housing and lower demand compared to 1 bed general needs, with only 10.8% or 16 lets. The chart below gives a comparison applicant bedroom need (as at 1.4.2022) compared to social housing lets during 2021/22.

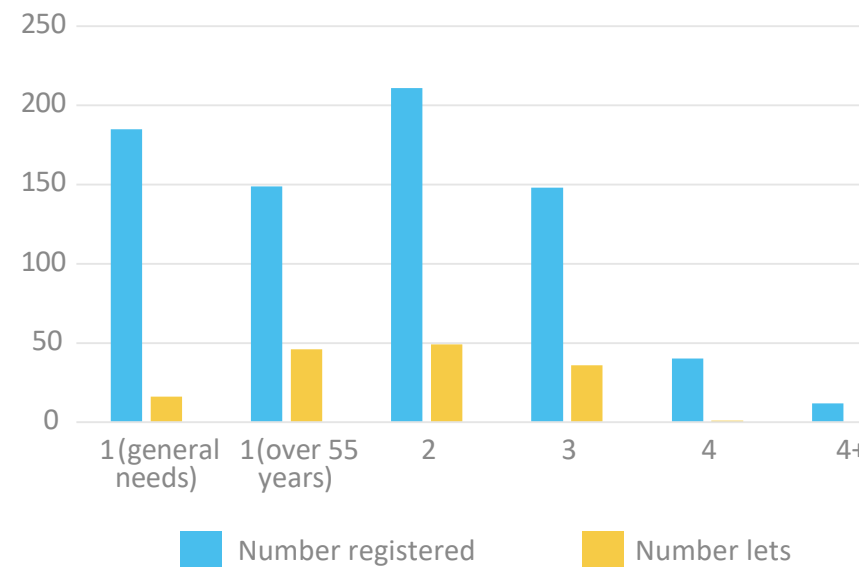


Fig 26. Home Options demand compared with allocations 2021/22

The availability of social housing impacts on homeless households but also other applicants in housing need, 17.2% of whom have been assessed as having an Emergency or Urgent housing need (Band A & Band B). For homeless households it means longer time periods in temporary accommodation before they can be made an offer of social housing. Less availability and lengthier waiting times are also associated with particular locations within the District, such as Cheadle.

There is high demand and a low supply of affordable housing. This is compounded by lower levels of social housing within the District, approximately 3299 properties, 8.01% compared with 16.6% nationally. The table below shows annual new build completions and limited affordable housing development.

	Total Housing Completions	Affordable Housing completions
2014/15	278	225
2015/16	99	19
2016/17	128	33
2017/18	142	5
2018/19	165	42
2019/20	203	18
2020/21	201	21
2021/22	177	20

Fig 27. Housing development

The 2017 Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) estimated that the overall net annual need for affordable housing is between 224-432 per annum. In terms of size, the largest categories of net need are for 1 and 2 bedroomed (60%), 3 and 4 bedroomed (40%).

Making the best use of existing housing stock is an important element of meeting housing need. To encourage social housing tenants to downsize from family accommodation and free up family sized homes for others, those under occupying may be awarded priority Band A or B under the Home Options allocation policy. Overcrowded social housing tenants freeing two bedroom houses may also be awarded priority Band B, the purpose of this is to give tenants living in two bedroom houses additional preference for a move to larger accommodation to free up smaller two bedroom houses for those that may be affected by the Spare Room Subsidy, which reduces the amount of rental benefit paid (14% for one extra bedroom; 25% for two or more extra bedrooms).

Registered Providers are increasingly requesting prospective tenants pay rent in advance and carry out affordable assessments before they will accept new tenants. This can sometimes mean that non-working households, or those in receipt of a low wage, may not meet the affordability criteria set by some landlords.

It is clear that the demand for social housing outweighs the supply and this housing option cannot be relied upon by homeless households, however it can be equally difficult for these households to access private rented accommodation.

6 PRIVATE RENTED HOUSING

The private rented sector plays a vital role; from preventing homelessness from this tenure by mediation and negotiations with landlords and tenants, through to rehoming households.

However many of our clients are reluctant to consider this as a housing option, seeing it as having less security of tenure and unaffordable. In addition, a buoyant rental market, high rent levels against restricted Housing Benefit/Universal Credit Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates means that securing private rented accommodation within the District is increasingly difficult and unaffordable for households on low incomes or benefits. The Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rate is the maximum amount of assistance that households may receive towards their rent whilst in receipt of Housing Benefit /Universal Credit. The table below shows rental market data (1.4.2021-31.3.2022) and demonstrates the disparity between market rents and LHA levels in the District. (It is important to note Staffordshire North LHA covers the majority of the District, is most applicable, Peaks and Dales LHA covers a small area within the Peak District Park.)

	Median Private Rent (£ pcm)	Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates (£ pcm)		LHA shortfall (£ pcm)	
		Staffordshire North	Peaks & Dales	Staffordshire North	Peaks & Dales
'Room' / Shared Accommodation Rate	not available	264.12	304.15	not available	not available
1 Bed	450	373.97	423.37	76.03 (20.3%)	26.63 (6.3%)
2 Bed	535	423.84	523.55	111.16 (26.2%)	11.45 (2.2%)
3 Bed	720	548.51	623.31	171.49 (31.3%)	96.69 (15.5%)
4 Bed	900	742.95	747.96	157.05 (21.1%)	152.04 (20.3%)

Fig 28. Median market rent compared with LHA rates

The median market rent for a 1 bedroom property is £450pcm, this is £76.03pcm above the LHA rate. For 4 bedroom properties this shortfall rises to £157.05pcm. Any shortfall between the market rent and LHA would need to be met from an applicant's existing income or benefits. Any accommodation the Council assists to provide to meet its homeless duties must be considered affordable.

The Shared Accommodation Rate (SAR) applicable to single under 35's, limits housing cost help to the amount of renting a room in a shared house with few exceptions. This greatly impacts upon the ability of single homeless people to access affordable private rented accommodation and the availability of shared housing is very limited, with for instance only 2 licensable HMOs in the District.

In addition to the issue of market rents there is also the issue of low supply (10.8% private sector stock compared with 19.52% nationally) and high demand from working professionals. The results of an online search for rental properties in Staffordshire Moorlands are shown in the table below. No properties were within LHA rate. Only 7 x 1 bed properties available to rent, with an average rent of £632.86pcm. This snapshot demonstrates the difficulty in finding affordable private rented housing for those in need.

	Shared 1 room	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed
Number advertised	1	7	15	11	2
Average rent (£ pcm)	425	632.86	685.53	845	1525
Number within Staffordshire North LHA rate	0	0	0	0	0

Fig 29. Market rent advertising snapshot compared with LHA

Many landlords are reluctant to accept households in receipt of benefits as tenants. They may require high initial upfront payments for rent in advance and deposit, credit and reference checks and guarantors. The situation is exacerbated for households with debts or a history of rent arrears or failed tenancies. Increasingly anecdotal information suggests landlords are selling their homes, intend to leave the market rather than relet. Increasing mortgage costs for landlords will also inform decisions to sell or increase rents. Shelter refer to a 'perfect storm of spiralling rents and out of control bills which threatens to push many towards the brink of homelessness'.²

Nationally there are a number of developments to improve the private rented sector;

- An EPC rating is measured from A to G with 'A' being the most efficient and 'G' being the least. From April 2018 let properties had to have a minimum rating of 'E' or above. In April 2020, this retrospectively applied to all existing tenancies.
- New proposals in Minimum Energy Performance of Buildings (No.2) Bill mean rental properties will need to be more energy efficient. From Dec 2025 let properties have to have minimum EPC rating 'C' or above, applicable to existing tenancies from Dec 2028, where practical, cost-effective, and affordable.
- The Tenant Fees Act 2019 came into force 1 June 2019. Landlords and agents are only able to charge fees and payments 'permitted' in the legislation. Landlords are responsible for the costs associated with setting up, renewing or ending a tenancy

² Berry, C & Pennington, J (2022) Cover the cost - preventing homelessness for renters in the cost of living crisis. London: Shelter.

The main proposals within the Renters Reform Bill, are;

- End of s.21 ‘no fault’ mandatory notice and eviction, which will be balanced with reforms of s.8 notice possession grounds.
- End to Assured Shorthold Tenancies, fixed term tenancies, replaced by Assured tenancies.
- Introduction of a property portal or landlord registration scheme.
- Application of the Decent Homes Standard to the private sector
- Introduction of a private rented Ombudsman to deal with tenant complaints

Initiatives

The Housing Advice Service has a Prevention Fund which provides flexible financial assistance to enable people to remain in or secure an alternative home. Poor financial situations can place households at risk of homelessness. The fund supports access into the private rented sector and is a key element in the effective negotiation of repossession cases. The table below shows expenditure and prevention / reliefs achieved. Q1 and Q2 2022/23 suggests increasing, however cost-effective expenditure, averaging £932.59 per case.

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23 Q1 & Q2
Total expenditure	6,609.55	7,975.99	11,966.91	10,196.73	10258.5
Instances	12	22	29	23	11
Average cost	550.8	362.55	413.65	443.34	932.59

Fig 30. Prevention Fund expenditure

A Rent Deposit Bond Scheme is also available to support low-income households with deposit bonds, however uptake has declined over time, shown below.

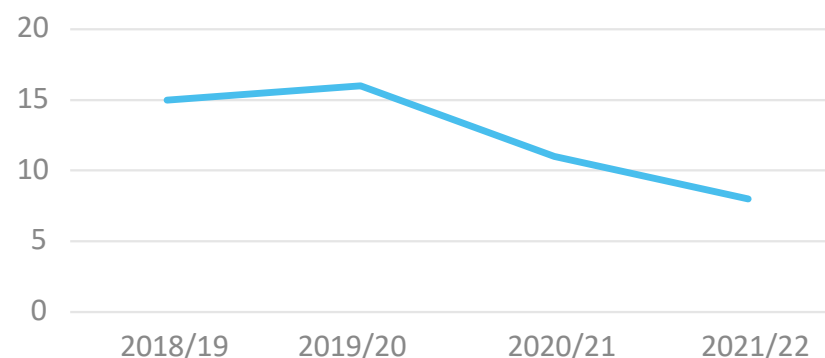


Fig 31. Rent Deposit Bond

Adullam Homes are commissioned to provide 'Single Person's Housing Project' and a Tenancy Sustainment Officer, they provide;

- Negotiation with relatives/ accommodation providers to explore opportunities to remain at home or move in a planned way.
- Signposting/ referral to appropriate support including access to essential household items
- Pre-tenancy training in order to improve tenancy sustainment and the 'landlord offer'
- Assistance in finding accommodation, including private rented accommodation and affordable shared accommodation and access to Rent Deposit Bond.
- Tenancy support; including advice in budgeting and independent living (including employment and CV writing), liaising with landlords, dealing with relationships in shared properties

A 'Call B4 You Serve' service specifically to support landlords, provides a dedicated service to help and assist landlords to resolve difficulties they may experience with tenants. The service provides advice and assistance across a variety of aspects including for instance negotiation with tenants, possession procedures, Discretionary Housing Payments where there may be for instance rent shortfall and direct landlord payments. The service is considered an example of good practice both in terms of 'upstream prevention work' and cross-boundary working by DLUHC specialist advisor team.

A virtual landlord forum, outlining legislative and benefit changes, assistance and support available to landlords, during the pandemic was well attended. Further landlord forums or opportunities to engage landlords, for instance considering changes proposed under the Renters Reform Bill, would be beneficial.

Although private sector eviction is highlighted as one of the main reasons for homelessness and rehoming within the private sector has declined and is a challenge, there are however opportunities to work with private landlords to prevent and resolve homelessness, in regards to incentives and the sustainability of tenancies and improve the Private Sector Landlord Offer.

7 ROUGH SLEEPING AND SINGLE HOMELESSNESS

Rough sleeping is the most visible form of homelessness. Defined as “people sleeping, about to bed down (sitting on/in or standing next to their bedding) or actually bedded down in the open air (such as on the streets, in tents, doorways, parks, bus shelters or encampments). People in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as stairwells, barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations, or “bashes”).”

Annually each Authority is required to submit an official figure of numbers of rough sleepers on a single typical night. The graph below details the number of rough sleepers found or estimated since 2011, which indicates rough sleeping remains low in Staffordshire Moorlands.

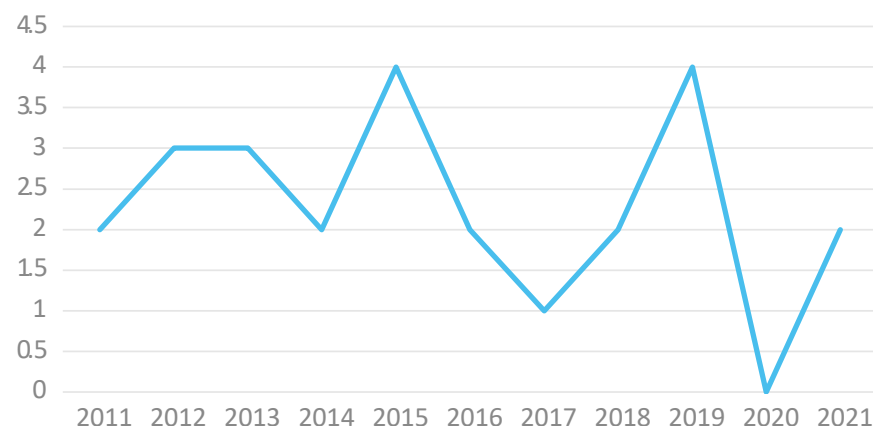


Fig 32. Rough sleeping annual snapshot

The table below shows the annual number of rough sleeper reports received by P3, commissioned rough sleeper outreach service, including referrals made through Streetlink, and the number of verified rough sleepers.

	2020	2021	2022 (Jan-Sept)
Number of Outreach Referrals	67	44	36
Verified rough sleepers	27	23	13

Fig 33. Rough sleeping referrals and verified rough sleepers

Rough sleepers are predominantly single males, a high proportion have multiple and complex support needs, which can include mental and physical health, substance misuse, offending, and failed tenancy histories.

Rough sleepers can move back and forth between local authority areas, in order for instance to access available services, facilities and accommodation. Crisis estimate the cost of a single person sleeping rough in the UK for 12 months is £20,128 compared with estimated cost of successful intervention (£1,426).³³ There are significant impacts on public expenditure with costs for health care, including NHS, mental health services and emergency services at hospitals, and costs for the criminal justice system.

“Homelessness also has a human cost. The distress of lacking a settled home can cause or intensify social isolation, create barriers to education, training and paid work and undermine mental and physical health. When homelessness becomes prolonged, or is repeatedly experienced, there are further deteriorations in health and well-being.”

³³ Pleace, N. (2015) At what cost? An estimation of the financial costs of single homelessness in the UK. London: Crisis. Pleace, N. & Culhane, D.P. (2016) Better than Cure? Testing the case for Enhancing Prevention of Single Homelessness in England. London: Crisis.

Consistently over the last 4 years single homeless people have accounted for over 50% of the Council's homeless approaches. Whilst the Council would have a duty to provide advice and assistance to help resolve their housing difficulty, for many without 'priority need' under homelessness legislation, the Council would not have a duty to provide emergency temporary accommodation.

It is more difficult to prevent/ relieve homelessness and find a housing solution for single people/ rough sleepers;

- There is very limited availability of 1 bed general needs social housing and a reluctance for Registered Providers to accept nominations for rough sleepers/single homeless who have multiple and complex needs, without a support package or a proven history of maintaining a tenancy.
- There are also significant barriers for single people being able to access private rented accommodation, this includes single under 35 years shared room LHA rate, and shortfall between market rents levels and LHA rate.
- Supported accommodation within the District shown fig 33, vacancies are infrequent, and existing providers offering lower level support are often unable to take those with more complex or higher support needs, and providers offering higher level support are often unable to take individuals without Adult Social Care funding.
- Adult Social Care thresholds are high and rough sleepers are not often considered eligible for care and support.
- Those with failed tenancy histories, rent arrears, housing related debt, antisocial/ unacceptable behaviour are less likely to be able to access social housing, private rented, supported or temporary housing.

Provider	Client group
SIS	Complex mental health (Leek)
Brighter Futures	Mental health (Biddulph)
New Pastures Housing	Vulnerable adults and veterans (Leek)
Honeycomb Charitable Services Ltd	Domestic abuse refuge & dispersed accommodation (Cheadle)
Lifeways/ Inclusion Housing	Complex mental, physical health, & learning disability (Leek)
Rethink	Mental health (Leek, Cheadle, Biddulph)
The Wrekin Housing Trust Ltd/ Choices	Learning disabilities (Leek)
Your Housing Group/ Ascent LLP	Learning disabilities (Cheadle)
Walk Ministries	Substance Misuse - Detox (Cheadle area)
Sanctuary Housing Association	Older persons (Leek & Biddulph)
Staffordshire Housing Association	Older persons (Biddulph & Cheadle)
Midland Heart	Older persons (Leek)
Anchor Housing	Older persons (Leek)
Your Housing Group/ Ascent LLP	Extra Care, older persons (Leek)

Fig 33. Supported Accommodation

Initiatives

A collective funding bid with Authorities within the DHOG (Derbyshire Homeless Officers Group) partnership to DLUHC 2022-25 'Rough Sleeper Initiative' secures grant funding to deliver the following, across ten local authorities including Staffordshire Moorlands.

- Rough sleeper outreach services to engage with rough sleepers, who may have multiple and complex needs, and move them off the street.
- Tenancy related support for rough sleepers assisted to move away from the street into accommodation or those that may be at risk of rough sleeping.
- Rough sleeper co-ordinators
- Prison navigator role to provide intensive 'through the gate' support to individuals on release from custody to secure accommodation and to help break the cycle of repeat custodial sentences and homelessness
- Substance misuse navigator roles will provide support to those with a prevalent need of alcohol and/or substance use to improve levels of engagement and increase the number of people in treatment
- Mental Health link worker will work to support access to assessments and support.
- Bi-monthly rough sleeper street counts allow the impact of services to be considered
- P3 commissioned service provider links with all Housing Advice Services

Regular multi-agency 'Rough Sleeper Action Group' meetings, bring together agencies to share information, improve joint working and develop risk management and action planning to support rough sleepers to address their needs and move off the street.

Adullam Homes are commissioned to provide 'Single Person's Housing Project' and Tenancy Sustainment Officer, provide;

- Negotiation with relatives/ accommodation providers to explore opportunities to remain at home or move in a planned way.
- Signposting/ referral to appropriate support including access to essential household items
- Pre-tenancy training in order to improve tenancy sustainment and the 'landlord offer'
- Assistance in finding accommodation, including private rented accommodation and affordable shared accommodation and access to Rent Deposit Bond.
- Tenancy support; including advice in budgeting and independent living (including employment and CV writing), liaising with landlords, dealing with relationships in shared properties

In partnership with Framework Housing Association and High Peak Borough Council, an application to DLUHC 'Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme' (RSAP) 2021-2024 secures grant funding to provide supported accommodation for rough sleepers, or those at risk of rough sleeping. 4 units of self-contained, supported accommodation are being provided in Leek.

8 EXISTING HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION MEASURES / PREVENTION TOOLKIT

Successfully preventing and relieving homelessness has always been and remains the main aim and focus of the Council's Housing Advice Service.

Prevention actions include any activities aimed at preventing a household threatened with homelessness from becoming homeless. This would involve activities to enable an applicant to remain in their current home or find alternative accommodation to prevent them from becoming homeless. This can take the form of advice and information; proactive interventions, such as negotiating with landlords to enable people to retain tenancies; assistance with debt; and targeted services at known risk/ homeless points. Relief duties are owed to households that are already homeless and require help to secure alternative accommodation.

In order to map out existing services for the review, outlined below are some of the measures the Housing Advice Service use to prevent and relieve homelessness:

- Housing options interviews assess homelessness circumstances, explore options, establish housing and support needs. A Personalised Housing Plan sets out actions or reasonable steps to be taken by the Council and the applicant, to help them remain in their current accommodation or to find alternative accommodation.
- Case work interventions such as negotiations with landlords or parents to resolve behavioural or arrears problems to retain their accommodation.
- Referrals to appropriate support and tenancy related support services (including substance misuse, domestic abuse, money/ debt advice, Foodbanks)
- Referrals to housing providers including domestic abuse refuges, supported and temporary accommodation
- Single Persons Housing Project and Tenancy Sustainment Officer
- Domestic Abuse Housing Advocate
- Rent Deposit Bond Scheme
- Call Before You Serve, bespoke landlord advice service

- Prevention Fund (provides flexible financial assistance to help people remain in or secure alternative home)
- Discretionary Housing Payment (financial assistance with rent arrears or rent shortfalls)
- Money, debt and budgeting advice
- Rough sleeper outreach & support services
- Sanctuary Scheme security adaptations in relation to domestic abuse
- Joint working protocols (for example with Children's Social Services in relation to young people 16-17 year olds and NHS Trust in relation to mental health hospital discharge)

There are a wide range of measures and initiatives available, however it is important the Authority continues to develop interventions and partnership work to improve the prevention toolkit.

9 THE CURRENT HOUSING ADVICE SERVICE

One Stop Shops are available in each of the Staffordshire Moorlands main towns (Leek, Cheadle and Biddulph) and offer internet access and accessibility for those with disabilities.

24 hour, out of hours emergency homelessness assistance is available with access to temporary accommodation facilitated in accordance with legislative requirements.

The Home Options and Council websites provide access to advice and information and offer means to make online housing and homeless applications, raise service requests and make email enquiries.

A homeless duty officer is available to address same day homelessness emergencies.

Over the phone advice and assistance is principally provided, with virtual or face to face housing options and homelessness interviews as necessary.

Housing Advice Officers regularly attend multi agency meetings including MARAC, MAPPA, RSAG & Vulnerability Hub meetings.

A translation service is available as required to ensure full understanding of advice and services that are available.

Feedback from customers is taken into account and any accessibility issues raised are addressed. Regular staff supervision is undertaken to monitor quality of service. However there is opportunity to develop customer feedback methods to inform and improve service delivery.

10 RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO ADDRESS HOMELESSNESS AND DELIVER THE STRATEGY

Our approach to tackling homelessness is based upon an ‘invest to save’ principle, through funding services and initiatives that meet strategic priorities, prevent and relieve homelessness and support vulnerable people in housing need. We will continue to work with partners to review and access funding sources and opportunities. This is a summary of the most significant funding sources;

Local authorities receive annual Homelessness Prevention Grant (HPG) from DLUHC. The purpose of the HPG is to give local authorities control and flexibility in managing homelessness pressures and supporting those who are at risk of homelessness, homelessness prevention, enforce the Homelessness Reduction Act, and end the use of unsuitable bed and breakfast accommodation for families for longer than 6-week period. In 2022/23 the Authority received £145,057 HPG. The grant is used on funding for homelessness services, staff, activities and projects to prevent and address homelessness. The government has confirmed its commitment to provide HPG, and during Summer 2022 consulted on the funding arrangements for HPG 2023/24 onwards.

The Authority provides short term (up to 13 weeks) financial support in the form of Discretionary Housing Payments to help meet shortfall in housing costs. Indications are that a number of households claiming this award to sustain their accommodation potentially be at risk of homelessness if they did not receive these payments as their accommodation would become unaffordable. The table shows the numbers of applications and awards has increased overtime.

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Government Contribution	95450	84413	86700	121467	91330
Amount Paid	94044	83872	97129	121024	94753
Applications received	not available	not available	201	272	193
DHP Awards	190	313	199	203	159
Awards refused	not available	not available	2	69	34

Fig 34. DHP

The Council works with partners to identify and access external sources of funding. Successful partnership funding bids include;

- DLUHC Domestic Abuse funding bids to support across North Staffordshire: refuge provision, dispersed accommodation, Children & Young Persons Support Worker, and Domestic Abuse Housing Advocate role.
- Successful Rough Sleeper Initiative DLUHC funding bids to provide rough sleeper services across Derbyshire and Staffordshire Moorlands.
- Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme DLUHC funding to provide supported accommodation for rough sleepers, or those at risk of rough sleeping.

11 WHAT THE HOMELESSNESS REVIEW IS TELLING US - KEY FINDINGS, LOCAL CHANGES, TRENDS, AND CHALLENGES

■ The majority of people who approach the Housing Advice service for assistance do so either before they are threatened with homelessness for general housing advice only (triage stage) or within 56 days before becoming homeless (prevention stage). However single people are most likely to approach the Council when they are actually homeless (relief stage).

■ Consistently single homeless people account for over 50% homeless approaches (54-60%), compared with 32-41% of families. A significant change since the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act.

■ The Housing Advice service continues to successfully prevent and relieve homelessness, for 609 households between 2018-2022.

■ The major causes of statutory homelessness 2021/22; family/friends eviction (22%), ending of private rented tenancy (22%) followed by domestic abuse (19%). Other main causes include relationship breakdown (16%).

■ Significantly higher numbers of households renting privately, socially and with mortgages are anticipated to approach the Council for housing and homelessness assistance linked with the cost of living crisis.

■ 50.9% of homeless applicants have additional support needs. The most prevailing support need is mental health, 20.4% applicants. Other prevailing support needs include physical ill health, domestic abuse, drug dependency, alcohol dependency and offending history.

■ In 2021/22, 31 households were in temporary accommodation for over 6 weeks, an average 125 days. The average length of time a homeless household with children spent in B&B/ hotel accommodation was 34 days.

■ There are approximately 3299 social housing properties, representing 8.01% housing stock compared with 16.6% nationally.

■ In April 2022 there were 745 housing applicants on Home Options, 17.2% have been assessed as having an Emergency or Urgent housing need (Band A & B).

■ In 2021/22 less than 150 Housing Association properties were allocated through Home Options, 31.8% for those over 55 years.

■ Private rented sector rehoming has declined and is a challenge for households on low incomes or in receipt of benefits, with significant LHA rate shortfall/ disparity with median market rent of 20.3% -31.3%, equivalent £76.03 -£171.49pcm. However there are opportunities to work with landlords to prevent and relieve homelessness, in regards to incentives and the sustainability of

tenancies and improve the Private Rented Landlord Offer.

- 23 verified rough sleepers during 2021. Rough sleepers are predominantly single males, a high proportion have multiple and complex support needs, which can include mental and physical health, substance misuse, offending and failed tenancy histories.

- There is a wide range of prevention measures and initiatives available, however it is important the Authority continues to develop interventions and partnership work to improve the prevention toolkit



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