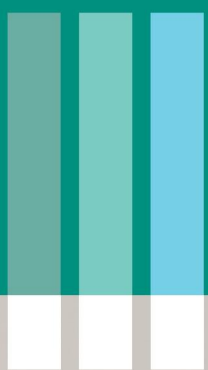


Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019 - 2024



Lichfield
district council

July 2020

Foreword

Access to suitable, good quality and affordable housing is important to our health and wellbeing and essential in providing sustainable communities. Ensuring we have the right type of homes in the right location can have a major impact on our ability to meet the needs of our growing and ageing population and to support the economic prosperity of the district.

Since the publication of our last housing and homelessness strategies, there has been a major change in approaching the ongoing issue of homelessness and rough sleeping. The Homelessness Reduction Act has fundamentally changed the way that local authorities in England deliver their homelessness and housing options services, and the government has set a target to eradicate rough sleeping by 2027.

I am therefore very pleased to introduce our new Housing, Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-2024. It has three priorities, which are to:

- enable people to live in good quality homes that are suitable for their needs
- increase housing choice to meet the needs of current and future residents
- prevent or relieve all forms of homelessness including rough sleeping

Naturally, the council cannot do this alone, and the strategy can only be delivered in collaboration with key partners across the private, public and voluntary sectors working alongside our communities. I believe that through this strategy and its supporting action plan, we are able to build upon the strengths of what has already been achieved and meet the challenges of the future.



Councillor Angela Lax
Cabinet Member for
Regulatory, Housing
& Health

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Executive summary

We have developed our Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy in response to the key housing issues currently facing Lichfield District, as well as those that are expected to occur over the next few years and decades. It recognises the significant changes we will experience with regard to an ageing and growing population and the demand that this will bring for certain types of housing and housing related support.

The strategy is in three sections: current housing, future housing and homelessness and rough sleeping.

A review of our evidence is included to support our three priorities:

1. To enable people to live in good quality homes that are suitable for their needs
2. To increase housing choice to meet the needs of current and future residents
3. To prevent or relieve all forms of homelessness including rough sleeping

Our objectives to meet these are to:

- Promote services enabling people to live independently in their own homes
- Advise and where possible support vulnerable households living in poor housing conditions
- Encourage best use of the housing stock
- Increase the supply of affordable housing
- Ensure an adequate supply of suitable and accessible accommodation for vulnerable and older people in need
- Improve the range of suitable housing options for those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness
- Identify and provide support to those who face barriers to accessing and maintaining suitable accommodation
- Tackle rough sleeping so that no one needs to sleep rough

How we will achieve these is set out in our action plan in Annexe D. The strategy is a working document and we will update our evidence, including the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic and amend our action plan after one year, and then at regular intervals over the next five years.

Introduction

Housing is fundamental to the wellbeing of our residents, their families and our communities. Although Lichfield District Council has not owned any council housing since 1997, we still have many key strategic housing responsibilities, such as preventing and relieving homelessness, assessing housing need and providing Disabled Facilities Grants.

For the first time, our Housing Strategy and Homelessness Strategy have been combined into one document to create a broader strategy that not only covers homelessness and rough sleeping but the wider housing challenges. This reflects thinking that preventing homelessness and rough sleeping cannot be considered in isolation but within a wider framework, which covers the causes of and solutions to these challenges, such as access to affordable and suitable accommodation, the impact of welfare reform and the provision of and access to support for vulnerable households to successfully maintain their home.

Ensuring an adequate supply of appropriate housing for all needs requires a multi-agency approach: our stakeholders include residents, registered providers, developers, voluntary and community sector organisations, the county council and private landlords.

Our action plan reflects this partnership approach and enables us to monitor and measure how well we address our priorities and objectives over the next five years. It will be reviewed annually to ensure we are achieving our objectives and that we are able to adapt and respond positively to opportunities and promptly to housing market issues or changes in national policy.

This strategy has been developed to take into account the key housing issues locally. It has been informed by our Homelessness Review 2019, which is a comprehensive review of evidence relating to homelessness and rough sleeping in addition to other housing information.

The strategy is structured into three main sections:

- **Current housing**
- **Future housing**
- **Homelessness and rough sleeping**

There is also an action plan in Annexe D that sets out how we will achieve our three priorities, which are:



Enable people to live in good quality homes that are suitable for their needs



Increase housing choice to meet the needs of current and future residents



Prevent or relieve all forms of homelessness including rough sleeping

Achievements since 2013

Since the last housing and homelessness strategies we have delivered some excellent outcomes for the district by working closely with internal and external partners:

504



Number of new affordable homes - around 25% of total new housing

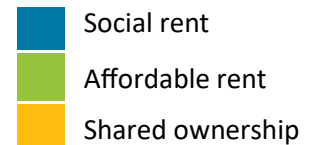
153

504

146



New affordable housing between 2013/14 and 2018/19. Another 24 were discount market sale



1,072



Households prevented from being homeless



Established a Housing First style service For rough sleepers

1,750



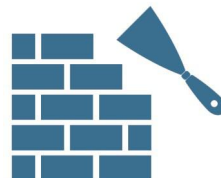
Homes let through Choice Based Lettings

£3,728,374



Value of Disabled Facilities Grants delivered between 2013/14 and 2018/19

422



Disabled Facilities Grant adaptations completed between 2013/14 to 2018/19

£38,029



Emergency Home Repair Assistance grants issued

£232,740



Value of energy efficient measures installed with support from Warmer Homes Greener District between 2013/14 and 2018/19. 111 measures were installed and 1,129 households received advice



Statutory housing notices served



Supported an emergency night shelter in 2019 and 2020, supporting up to eight people who were sleeping rough

National context

Our previous housing and homelessness strategies were adopted in 2013 and since that time significant legislative changes have taken place, presenting opportunities and challenges which include:

- Welfare Reform & Work Act (2016) – introduction of universal credit; benefit cap; 1% rent reduction on social housing; freeze on Local Housing Allowance; spare room subsidy
- Housing and Planning Act (2016) – empowered the government to introduce Right to Buy for Housing Association tenants; phasing out of life-time tenancies; Starter Homes.
- Homelessness Reduction Act (2017) – fundamentally changed the way that we deliver our homelessness and housing options services. Discussed in detail in section 3.

Local context

Every four years our Strategic Plan sets out the corporate vision and priorities which determine how we deliver our functions and policies during that time. The Strategic Plan 2020 to 2024 has the following vision and priorities:

Corporate vision

‘We will work collaboratively to enable people, shape place and develop prosperity across Lichfield District. We will be a good council that innovates and puts our customers at the heart of all we do’

Corporate priorities



Of most importance to this strategy are the priorities ‘shape place’, ‘enable people’ and ‘develop prosperity’.

The strategy is a core document which exists alongside a range of interconnected plans, policies and strategies, shown in figure 1. During the previous strategy period the council strengthened its understanding of housing and its relationship with health and wellbeing. This was reflected in our first Health and Wellbeing Strategy, through which we have committed to encouraging more active, healthier lifestyles and supporting vulnerable and older people which can be improved through appropriate housing provision.

Interconnected documents



A Profile of Lichfield District

Lichfield District is located in the county of Staffordshire in the West Midlands, 20 miles north of Birmingham and 9 miles from Walsall. It also has good rail links with a direct train to London taking 1 hour, 15 minutes. There are two main urban settlements, the cathedral city of Lichfield and the town of Burntwood, as well as many rural villages and settlements. The district is rich in history and this heritage and culture, along with excellent transport links, has resulted in a high demand for homes, making it now the most expensive place to live in the county.

Key facts about the district:

- 23% of our residents are aged 65 and over compared to the national and regional average of 18%.
- Population is currently 103,965¹ and projected to increase by 4% between 2015 and 2025, with a significant growth in people over 65 (20%) and over 85 (63%). This rate of increase is likely to be faster than the national average.
- The average house costs £70,000 more than in the West Midlands.
- Household numbers are expected to rise from 44,000 to 48,000 by 2039. Household numbers containing people aged 25-74 years old will decrease whereas those aged 75 or over will rise from 16% to 29%.
- Actual size of our households will decrease from an average 2.43 persons to 2.24 between 2018 and 2038 due to a rise in single person households, such as older people living alone.
- Home ownership is high at 75% but has dropped by 4% since 2001. Private renting has increased from 5% to 12% and social renting remains the same at 13%.
- It is prosperous and ranks within the lowest 25% of local authorities for overall deprivation². However, some areas fall within 20% of the most deprived.
- It is less ethnically diverse than the region and England with White British origin accounting for over 94% of the district. 13 people identified themselves as gypsy or Irish traveller in the 2011 census.
- Overall life expectancy is 81 years for men which is better than the West Midlands at 79 years and England at 80 years. For women in the district it is 83 which is the same for females both regionally and nationally. However, on average, the final 16 years are spent in poor health.
- 48% of people aged 65 or over have a limiting long-term illness which is slightly lower than the national average at 52%
- In 2017/18, 700 people were diagnosed with dementia, rising from 660 the previous year. 68% of adults with learning disabilities live in settled accommodation which is lower than Staffordshire (73%), West Midlands (72%) and England (77%).

Section 1: Current housing

We cannot rely solely on building new homes to meet the needs of our current and future residents; it is important to ensure that our existing stock, of all tenures, is of a good standard to increase housing choice and encourage mobility. Adapting existing houses to suit the occupant's needs can also help them to remain in their own home, if they wish and to live as independently as possible.

Owner occupied housing

The existing housing stock is generally in good condition, though a stock condition report in 2017³ found that 15% of dwellings had category 1 hazards⁴, 6% were hazardous due to excess cold and 9% due to fall hazards. 3% were also in disrepair.

¹ Mid-year population estimate 2017

² The Indices of Deprivation are a unique measure of relative deprivation at a small local area level (Lower-layer Super Output Areas) across England. The Indices of Deprivation 2019 (IoD2019) is the most recent release.

³ BRE Integrated Dwelling Level Housing Stock Modelling and database for Lichfield District Council, July 2017

⁴ To comply with housing law, homes should be free of any serious (category 1) hazards. There are 29 hazards which can be assessed for seriousness under The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) including dampness, disrepair, excess cold and electrical hazards.

Though the primary responsibility for maintaining a home rests with the homeowner, we have very limited funding for emergency home repair assistance grants for owner-occupiers. Applicants must be vulnerable due to old age or disability and be on income-related benefits to qualify. We will be carrying out an evaluation of these grants as part of a review of our Housing Assistance Policy to determine their effectiveness and examine alternative approaches.

The private rented sector (PRS)

At 10%, the proportion of our stock that is privately rented is significantly smaller than England at 19%. However, it is the fastest growing sector having increased from 5% of properties in 2001. The stock is generally in good condition and in the 2017 survey had the same percentage with category 1 hazards as the owner occupied stock, though it fared slightly worse for disrepair. A study of housing enforcement notices served by our private sector housing team since 2013 show the majority were due to excess cold, damp and electrical faults.

We also have 20 licensed⁵ Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and there may be more that we are unaware of that have not been inspected or licensed yet. We also have a number of HMOs that fall slightly below the criteria for a license. HMOs are required to meet basic housing standards as other private rent properties but there are additional rules to address the increased fire risk and facilities for the occupants.

To ensure our private rental stock is of a good standard, we will continue to engage with landlords to investigate complaints and also make sure they are aware of their responsibilities.

⁵An HMO is required to be licensed by the Local Authority if it is occupied by five or more persons living in two or more separate households.

⁶Also called Housing Associations.

⁷This is required by the Localism Act 2011.

⁸The council stock was sold in 1997.

We have a Landlords' Forum, run jointly with Tamworth Borough Council, which meets twice a year in conjunction with the National Landlords' Association (NLA) to provide advice, education and guidance on housing standards and promote good working practices with our private landlords. The majority of our landlords welcome this partnership working. However, for the small minority who fail to maintain their properties, we will take enforcement action where necessary to ensure their properties are rented to an acceptable standard and licensed where required.

Social housing

We have approximately 5,790 properties in the social rented sector, managed by 16 RPs⁶. Although not a stock-owning authority, we still have responsibilities regarding social housing and work with the RPs to make sure their social stock is of a good standard and suitable for our residents' needs, both now and for the future.

We have a Tenancy Strategy⁷, which our RPs must abide by when formulating their lettings policies. This includes the use of fixed term tenancies and protection for vulnerable tenants, in addition to rents being at or below local housing allowance rates. It is in our action plan to review our Tenancy Strategy to ensure that it remains fit for purpose.

The RP with the majority of social rented stock⁸ (80%) including the ex-council housing stock is Bromford. They have a planned maintenance programme and almost all⁹ of their homes now meet the Decent Homes standard¹⁰.

⁹Tenants can decide if they want the works to be carried out to their home &, as of Feb 2020, there are 12 properties that do not meet the DH standard for this reason.

¹⁰The Decent Homes standard was updated in 2006 and the criteria for the standard are for a property to meet the current statutory minimum standard for housing, be in a reasonable state of repair, have reasonably modern facilities and services and provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort.

Bromford has a regeneration programme¹¹ to demolish older homes made of non-traditional style construction, such as Swedish Timber and 'Airey' that have a low EPC rating and are very inefficient and expensive to heat. Once the three current schemes are complete, 42 homes will have been demolished and replaced by 93 brand new energy efficient homes.

Improving on energy efficiency

In terms of energy efficiency, the average Simple SAP¹² ratings for all private sector stock is 59, which is better than both England and the West Midlands. Overall owner-occupied homes are not as efficient as the private rented, having a SAP rating of 58 compared to 62. This is likely due to the large number of owner-occupied, rural homes which tend to be older (pre-1944) and less energy efficient. We have a small number of houses with no central heating - 1.6% or 700 homes, which is lower than the national average of 2.7%¹³.

We set up Warmer Homes Greener District (WHGD) in 2008 to support and advise local households on energy and energy bills. A key feature of this service has been its energy efficiency grants, which have enabled many of our vulnerable households to receive assistance despite the often prohibitive cost of essential heating repairs and replacements.

WHGD continues to be offered on our behalf by the specialist energy efficiency advice provider, Beat the Cold (BTC). Through BTC we are now involved in a number of pioneering public health focused projects in partnerships, including local health and care providers, Staffordshire County Council, utility companies and other key community service providers. The main projects include Staffordshire

¹¹This includes Lullington road/Main street Clifton Campville, Levett road Packington and Anson Road Alrewas.

¹²The Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) is the methodology used by the Government to assess and compare the energy and environmental performance of dwellings. Its purpose is to provide accurate and reliable assessments of dwelling energy performances that are needed to underpin energy and environmental policy initiatives.

Warmer Homes, a scheme to increase access to mains gas services and first time central heating to qualifying households, and the Staying Well Service, improving health outcomes for those living with chronic conditions. This enables us to better address the full impacts of poor housing on the health and wellbeing of vulnerable occupants.

Empty homes

Compared to national figures, the number of empty homes in the district is low. At December 2019 there were approximately 800 empty homes, around 1.6% of our total housing stock. Just under half of these had been empty for over six months and are therefore considered to be long-term empty homes according to the standard definition¹⁴.

Empty homes are often a cause for concern and can attract anti-social behaviour. Our Empty Homes Policy describes the tools available to us to deal with problematic empty homes as well as how we monitor empty homes, process complaints, assess risks and try to bring empties back into use. The council also uses council tax premium powers as a deterrent to keeping properties empty.

Adapting existing housing

We recognise that many people who are disabled wish to remain in their own homes, rather than move to specialist accommodation. We will therefore continue to assist eligible residents to adapt their properties through the use of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs). With our predicted ageing population, it is expected there will be a greater future demand for DFGs to enable residents to live as long and as independently as possible in their own homes.

¹³2011 figures from Staffs Observatory

¹⁴A long term empty home is one which has been empty for more than six months.

We have used the services of a Home Improvement Agency (HIA) to deliver DFGs for many years and since April 2018 we have been part of the county-wide SILIS Partnership¹⁵. The current HIA is Millbrook Healthcare Ltd that assist applicants with adaptation works and will guide them through the process, from the initial enquiry to completing the works. The majority that are awarded are for the conversion of traditional style bathrooms to level access showers and the installation of stair lifts.

Housing for older people

There are around 1,300 dwellings for older people and 135 with care, 90% of which is either owned outright or through shared ownership schemes, 5.5% is social rent and the remaining 4.5% private rent. It consists of sheltered accommodation, extra care housing and care homes. We only have one extra care housing scheme in Lichfield, which is owned by Bromford. It has 135 one, two and three bedroom apartments available to rent, buy outright, or part rent/buy with shared ownership.

Accord Housing Association are in the process of building a dementia centre of excellence in Fradley. The scheme will provide care and support for residents and their families, with a specialist team who will work alongside people with dementia, 24 hours a day, delivering personalised and quality care and support.

Housing for people with disabilities

There is some specialist housing for adults with learning disabilities including a modern supported housing complex for 20 adults in Fazeley that has 12 Supported Living flats, and an 8 bedded transition home. In Lichfield there is also a 7 bed residential care home, for people with learning disabilities with a view to preparing them for supported living.

A new My Place scheme built by Bromford is soon to open in Burntwood comprising 14 self-contained flats for people with a learning disability, where they can live independently with the care and support they need.

Current housing – a summary of our challenges

- There is a smaller than average private rental sector with high rent levels
- There are some areas of poor quality private rental housing with category 1 hazards, including hazards due to excess cold and falls
- We are unsure of the exact number of HMOs in the district that require licensing
- As our population ages, more existing housing will become unsuitable
- We expect that there will continue to be an increased demand for DFGs

To address these challenges we have established the following priority- to work with partners to:

‘Enable people to live in good quality homes that are suitable for their needs’

Our objectives to achieve this are:

- Promote services enabling people to live independently in their own homes
- Advise and where possible support vulnerable households living in poor housing conditions
- Encourage best use of the housing stock
- Our actions to deliver these objectives are in the action plan in Annexe D

¹⁵Supporting Independent Living in Staffordshire Partnership is made up of: Staffordshire County Council, Lichfield District Council, Newcastle Under Lyme Borough Council, South Staffordshire District Council, Stafford Borough Council, Staffordshire Moorlands Borough Council and Tamworth borough Council.

Section 2: Future housing

As with many other local authorities, we face significant housing pressures due to a high demand for housing and a lack of affordable and suitable homes. Therefore, it is vital we are aware of the housing needs of our residents and that new housing building reflects these needs.

Issues

There is an imbalance of housing types, with a high number of large detached and semi-detached family homes (particularly in rural areas) and a relatively low number of smaller one and two bed homes.

House prices and rents are generally high, affecting mobility and preventing first time buyers getting on the property ladder and older people downsizing. This increases demand for social rented properties and low-cost home ownership options.

We know we are losing younger working residents and families to nearby areas due to the lack of smaller, affordable properties, which can have a negative impact on the sustainability of communities, particularly in rural areas.

Affordable housing need

Our last housing strategy identified affordability as a major problem, and this is still a significant issue for many of our residents. The 2019 Housing and Economic Development Need Assessment¹⁶ estimated the net annual level of affordable housing need to be 220 affordable housing units¹⁷ from 2016 to 2036. This includes all affordable tenures, such as social and affordable rent and shared ownership.

The need for social rented homes remains high and at January 2020 there were 1,350 applicants registered on Homes Direct, our choice based lettings system. 45% of applicants needed one bedroom accommodation followed by 35% with a two-bedroom need. 15.5% required a three-bed property and 4% a four bed. Less than 1% were on the waiting list for a five or six bed home.

¹⁶ This need from 2016-2036 Lichfield District Council (2019). Housing and Economic Development Need Assessment.

The majority of applicants on the register have expressed a preference for a home in Lichfield and Burntwood but this is to be expected as they are the two largest urban settlements.

Delivery of affordable housing

To deliver affordable housing, we work in partnership with our approved RPs¹⁸, including supporting their affordable homes grant applications to Homes England. The majority is delivered through planning gain/developer contributions widely called s106. In the last three years 2016-17 to 2018-19² of the 398 affordable homes built and occupied, 58% was secured through s106 agreements.

In recent years a few of our RPs have been very successful in building new homes through their own land led schemes rather than s106, with 169 built in the last three years. Several RPs are now Homes England strategic partners that gives them even more flexibility and longer term funding certainty for the next ten years which should enable them to do even more of these.

Our current planning policy stipulates that on sites of 15 or more, up to 40% of new dwellings should be affordable with the percentage reviewed every year according to a dynamic model of viability, currently 37%. Our policy also states that around 35% of the affordable housing should be intermediate tenure (including shared ownership) whilst 65% must be for rent.

¹⁷ Affordable housing includes social rented, affordable rent and intermediate housing, provided to specified eligible households whose needs are not met by the market.

¹⁸ In 2018 we launched an Approved Registered Providers policy www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/approvedproviders

affordable housing should be intermediate tenure (including shared ownership) while 65% must be for rent. Where a developer proposes a lower percentage of affordable housing, they are required to provide robust evidence through a viability appraisal to justify this, which will be subject to independent testing and verification by the District Valuer. Affordable housing should be provided on all eligible sites and only in very exceptional circumstances will we accept contributions in lieu to provide affordable housing elsewhere.

As part of our Local Plan review, we are reviewing all of our housing policies, which will include the percentage affordable housing that we seek on new housing sites. The percentage will be largely determined by a plan wide viability study that is still in progress. As part of the policy development, we will also be reviewing the suite of supplementary planning documents (SPDs), in particular the Developer Contributions SPD and examine how we can balance the competing demands of affordable housing and other contributions, such as open space, in the future.

There are currently 213 affordable dwellings with planning permission that are due to be constructed in the next five years¹⁹ and many other sites in the planning system. We know this will not be enough to meet demand. However, through our local plan review, our aim will be to ensure we can continue to maximise the delivery of affordable homes in the right locations across the district.

As we are not a stock owning authority, we rely on developers and RPs to build new homes and we will continue to work closely with them to ensure good quality, affordable housing. However, in September 2019 we formed a Housing Company with the aim to respond to local housing need and provide homes, both to rent and sell, that will help to grow communities, create opportunities and support independent living.

It will focus on small to medium size development opportunities which can get overlooked by larger developers. The company will look to initially sell these homes to grow capital that allows it to support the development of both smaller and affordable homes in the future.

We are also increasing the supply of affordable housing by using existing commuted sums and some housing reserves to acquire our own properties. We are leasing the initial purchases to Spring Housing for the Housing First initiative to rehouse rough sleepers and homeless people with multiple and complex needs.

Meeting the needs of specific groups

Older people

We will experience significant growth in our older population over the next few decades which will have major implications on the type of housing required and associated support. For example, it is estimated that residents over 65 with dementia will increase by 59% by 2035, and higher numbers will be living in accommodation unsuitable for their needs.

In 2019 we commissioned an independent living research project to determine the housing needs of older people in the district²⁰. The research found:

- The majority of older people prefer to live in their own home for longer rather than move to specialist accommodation. There will therefore be an increased demand for adaptations and DFGs to make current homes more accessible.
- There is a lack of housing choice for older people, in all tenures.
- The majority of older persons' accommodation is located in Lichfield city with areas such as Burntwood under-represented.

¹⁹ Lichfield District Council: Authority monitoring report July 2019

²⁰ An Assessment of the Housing Needs of older People, people with Mental Health Needs & People with Physical Disabilities in Lichfield District, Housing LIN, Jan 2020 (Housing LIN)

- The current housing available is expensive and unaffordable for many older people.
- People were unsure of the options and type of housing available to them.

More detailed information on the research is available in Annexe C.

People with learning or physical disabilities

We know the number of residents with learning or physical disabilities will decrease slightly over the next few decades²¹. However, the independent living study showed there will be a rise in people with a learning disability reaching old age as life expectancy improves. We also know there is a significant number of adults with learning disabilities currently living with older parents who now have their own age-related care needs²².

According to Staffordshire County Council, 68% of adults with learning disabilities live in settled accommodation²³ which is lower than the county at 73% and England at 77%²⁴. Living independently with support is the ideal housing option for adults with a learning disability as it has a positive effect on their quality of life and can reduce social exclusion.

In addition, the same study identified the need for a proportion of new build properties to be built to Lifetime Homes²⁵ standards to accommodate both working age and older people with disabilities. Lifetime homes encourage independent living and therefore have a positive effect on quality of life

²¹ Housing LIN

²² Housing LIN

²³'Settled' accommodation is defined by Public Health England as housing where the person can reasonably expect to stay as long as they want. 'Unsettled' accommodation is either unsatisfactory or where residents do not have security of tenure, for example, in residential care homes.

²⁴ Housing and Health in Staffordshire, the Strategy Team. Staffordshire Observatory, Staffs County Council, Jan 2019

In the future. We will therefore work closely with our planning colleagues and developers to encourage the delivery of specialist accommodation, including lifetime homes, to ensure we have a good supply of properties built for changing life circumstances and adaptability.

Gypsies and Travellers

We have an obligation under the Housing & Planning Act 2016 to consider the needs of people who reside or resort to the district, and provide sites on which caravans can be stationed, or places on inland waterways where houseboats can be moored. In 2018 there were six unauthorised encampments believed to be mainly as a result of people passing through the district.

The 2019 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) identified a need for seven residential pitches²⁶. Our Local Plan supports the delivery of these by 2040, including meeting the identified need for four pitches by 2024.

Self and custom build housing

Under the Housing and Planning Act 2016, we are required to keep a register of all individuals who wish to acquire land to build homes to occupy as their main residence. As of January 2020, we have a very low demand for self-build schemes and it is therefore unnecessary to have a specific policy to identify site allocations. However, we support the principle of self and custom build and any proposals will be considered on their merit.

²⁵ Homes that meet 16 design criteria that are intended to make homes more accessible and adaptable for lifetime use at minimal cost www.lifetimehomes.org.uk

²⁶ Lichfield District Council, North Warwickshire Borough Council and Tamworth Borough Council Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) November 2019



Future housing – a summary of our challenges

- We have a shortage of affordable social rented housing and the turnover does not meet demand.
- There is a smaller than average private rental sector with high rent levels. Low income households are therefore priced out of the market with landlords more likely to rent to higher earning households with more stable incomes.
- Having the highest house prices in Staffordshire means that home ownership is out of reach for many, which impacts on mobility, preventing first time buyers from getting on the property ladder and older people from downsizing.
- We need to improve housing choice for our changing population; this means enabling an increased supply of smaller homes and age-related housing with better accessibility standards.
- We need to work with partners to increase the supply of suitable housing choice for people with learning disabilities including where they are currently living with their older parents or carers with their own care needs.

To address these challenges we have established the following priority, to work with partners to:

'increase housing choice to meet the need of current and future residents'

Our objectives to achieve this are:

- Increase the supply of affordable housing
- Ensure an adequate supply of suitable and accessible accommodation for vulnerable and older people in need

Our actions to deliver these objectives are in the action plan in Annexe D.

Section 3: Homelessness and rough sleeping

Introduction

Section three sets out how we plan to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping in our district.

The evidence from our Homelessness Review in Annexe B has shown that tackling homelessness is a complex issue and can only be addressed through a thorough understanding of the reasons why people lose their home or become at risk of homelessness. It is also important to understand why some people, in particular vulnerable adults and rough sleepers, repeatedly struggle to sustain their tenancies. The review has shown one of the most important ways to prevent homelessness is through good partnership working with other agencies and stakeholders to provide sustainable solutions.

Homelessness can be extremely traumatic for individuals and families and can have a huge impact on their health and wellbeing. For example, a report by the Local Government Association²⁷ found that homeless people in England are more likely to have long-term physical health or mental health problems than the general population, and children who experience homelessness are more likely to suffer from stress and anxiety, resulting in depression and behavioural issues. In addition, they are also at greater risk of becoming homeless themselves when they reach adulthood.

We are therefore committed to tackling all forms of homelessness by either preventing households from becoming homeless or assisting those that do to secure suitable and permanent accommodation as soon as possible. In many cases, this will require strong multi-agency partnership working to help those with complex needs who may struggle to find and keep a home.


²⁷Leng, G. (2017). The Impact of Homelessness on Health - A guide for Local Authorities. London. Local Government Association


In addition to tackling homelessness in general, all local authorities are now required to update their homelessness strategies to incorporate how they plan to address rough sleeping in their area. This is in response to the government's own Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018, which commits to halving rough sleeping in England by 2022 and end it by 2027.

Achievements

Since the adoption of our last Homelessness Strategy in 2013, we have:

-  **Reviewed our use of temporary accommodation** resulting in better self-contained unfurnished accommodation.
-  **Improved access to the Discretionary Housing Payment scheme** to make it more accessible to households who are in hardship and facing potential homelessness.
-  **Revitalised the Landlord's Forum** by combining it with Tamworth Borough Council's to make it more appealing to landlords with property in both areas.
-  **Successfully bid for Rough Sleeper Initiative and Rapid Rehousing Pathway funding** to enable our rough sleeper outreach and Housing First scheme.
-  **Facilitated the opening of a Winter Night Shelter for the first time in February/March 2019.** This was run by a local charity Churches Together and was made possible through government Cold Weather funding that we match funded.
-  **Reviewed our Homeless Prevention schemes** to simplify the number available and make it easier for vulnerable households to access grants or loans to secure suitable accommodation.

 **Set up a partnership with Fusion Credit Union (FCU)**, a not-for-profit financial co-operative that administers low-cost loans, for deposits or rent in advance.

 **Provided funding for Citizens Advice South East Staffordshire (CASES)** through our Community and Voluntary Sector funding to enable them to support people who are in crisis due to homelessness or at risk of homelessness due to debt.


The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017


By far the most significant event since the adoption of our last Homelessness Strategy is the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA), which was enacted in April 2018.


This has fundamentally changed the way that local authorities in England deliver their homelessness and housing options services. We now have a duty to assist **all** those affected by homelessness, not just those in 'priority need' or with a local connection. In addition, a person can now be considered at risk of homelessness if they are in danger of losing their home within 56 days rather than 28 under the previous legislation.


We also now have a statutory duty to prevent or relieve homelessness and are required to carry out in-depth interviews to compile a personal housing plan (PHP) for each household that presents as homeless or at risk. The PHP contains actions that the applicant and the council must take to help them with their homelessness, including contact with supporting agencies, if appropriate.


These new duties have increased the number accessing our Housing Options services and also lengthened the time that officers will assist them in resolving their housing issue. As a result, we have:


 **Purchased a new IT system**, which has resulted in an improved service to customers. This new database (called Housing Jigsaw) records activity in response to the HRA and collates data required by the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). It enables online homeless applications through a customer portal used to access a PHP, upload documents and update actions.

 **Appointed an additional Housing Options Officer** to address the need for more in-depth interviews and the creation of PHPs.

 **Seconded an officer to undertake additional projects** relating to the implementation of the HRA and the requirement to record more detailed homelessness information required by MHCLG.

 **Appointed a Tenancy Sustainment Officer** to help deliver the new prevention duty. This officer will assist customers who need additional help to become 'tenancy ready' and help vulnerable tenants who may be at risk of losing their home through debt issues or underlying support needs.

 **Raised awareness with our stakeholders** through meetings with agencies, such as mental health services, the Through Care Service (which supports care leavers) and Probation to make them aware of the new legislation and their role in helping to prevent homelessness.

 **Commissioned Spring Housing Association to manage accommodation and provide an outreach service for rough sleepers and other homeless people.** This service, which started in September 2019, is in conjunction with Cannock District Council and will provide supported accommodation based on the Housing First model. In addition, with unallocated s106 funds we have committed to the purchase of up to five properties, to be used by Spring as supported accommodation for rough sleepers and homeless people with complex needs.

A snapshot of homelessness and rough sleeping

Between 2013-2018 we received 6,308 housing advice enquiries

There were five rough sleepers at the annual rough sleeper estimates in 2018 and 2019

In 2018/19:

- >> 518 households received housing advice of which 230 were owed a prevention or relief duty
- >> 44 referrals were made to us under the Duty to Refer
- >> 122 households were owed the prevention duty, 108 households were owed the relief duty
- >> 13 households were able to remain in their existing home and 40 were found an alternative
- >> On average 16 households were in temporary accommodation at the end of each quarter
- >> The average length of stay in temporary accommodation was 15 weeks
- >> 24 households lost their home due to domestic violence, an increase from 12 in 2017/18
- >> 14 households secured private rented accommodation to relieve their homelessness
- >> 33 households secured social rented accommodation to relieve their homelessness
- >> 151 households were identified as having support needs

The top three reasons for the loss of last settled home were:










- Family no longer willing or able to accommodate
- The ending of a private rented tenancy
- Relationship breakdown

How we tackle homelessness through partnership working

To successfully tackle homelessness issues, it is vital to work in partnership with other public agencies and organisations. We have good working relationships with our voluntary and statutory agencies and without them it would not be possible to provide a complete service to our customers. However, a major challenge in the district is we have no direct access hostel for men or women and no residential treatment centres for drug or alcohol addiction. We will, therefore continue to build good working relationships with local agencies and develop new partnerships with others that can help us to address the key homelessness issues in the district.

In addition to identifying issues through the Homelessness Review, the council has also carried out consultation to share our emerging priorities and seek additional evidence to assist with the formation of this strategy. We launched a Homelessness Forum at an event on 11 September 2019 that was attended by 30 people representing 16 organisations working with homeless and vulnerable people. The attendees were invited to comment on our findings of the Homelessness Review as well as participate in a workshop to discuss case studies based on recent homeless cases.

As a result of this consultation, a number of recommendations were made:

-  Investigate the possibility of a private sector leasing scheme
-  Promote the use of shared accommodation identify private sector landlords with a social conscience
-  Develop eviction panels and protocols with RPs to reduce the number of evictions due to rent arrears
-  Facilitate the development of more supported accommodation
-  Utilise the availability of DHP to prevent homelessness through payment of rent arrears.
-  Reduce debt by encouraging referrals to money advice e.g. CASES
-  Ensure RPs' policies do not exclude people on financial grounds
-  Promote Fusion Credit Union
-  Ensure there is access to employment and training opportunities such as those provided by Job Centre Plus.

Rough sleeping

We are committed to helping rough sleepers get the right support and access to settled housing and will work to meet the government's target to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and end it by 2027.

We recognise that rough sleepers are one of the most vulnerable groups in society. Some suffer from substance misuse (alcohol or drug dependency) and mental or physical health issues, or a combination.

Evidence has also shown many entrenched rough sleepers are homeless because they have repeatedly been unable to sustain accommodation due to these multiple and complex support needs.

Rough sleeping data

Since 2010, we have carried out an annual rough sleeper estimate, in accordance with government requirements, to get as accurate a representation as possible of the number of people sleeping rough on one night.

The last annual rough sleeper estimate in November 2019 reported five rough sleepers. This was the second largest number of rough sleepers in the county behind Newcastle-Under-Lyme and equal to the estimates of East Staffordshire, Stafford and Tamworth. As the estimate is only a snapshot of one night, we know from unofficial sightings there could be more. Though the numbers are relatively low, they have increased, as three were recorded in 2017 and one in 2016. It is also of concern that, of the 151 individuals owed a prevention or relief duty in 2018/19, eight of those had a history of rough sleeping.

How we help rough sleepers

Homeless & rough sleeper housing pathway

In June 2019, with Cannock Chase District Council we entered into a partnership with Spring Housing Association to deliver a housing accommodation on a Housing First model, which includes flexible support for as long as is needed.

Lichfield Emergency Night Shelter (LENS)

In 2019 and 2020, we joined central government in funding an emergency winter night shelter to provide shelter, food and support to our rough sleepers.

The service was managed by Churches Together - a local faith group and over 50 volunteers - and was hosted by different churches over seven nights a week.

Following the March/ April 2019 shelter, four of the rough sleepers were supported in moving into their own independent or supported accommodation and three were subsequently offered accommodation. Two engaged in recovery services to support them with their substance misuse.

The Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP)

In times of severe weather²⁸, rough sleepers are particularly at risk of harm and in extreme cases, death. SWEP aims to get rough sleepers off the streets during periods of extreme weather. Anyone who is sleeping rough is eligible for accommodation while the SWEP is in place; they do not need to fit the eligibility criteria for temporary accommodation.

Evidence from the SWEP data from the last three years demonstrates that this is an important service and, though it is not a legal requirement, we see it as a moral duty to help rough sleepers in extreme weather. Over the last three years, this protocol was triggered seven times from 2017 to 2019 for a total of 60 nights. Seven rough sleepers were accommodated at a cost of £667.

Street begging

Street begging is often associated with rough sleeping and we have seen an increase in the number of street beggars, particularly in Lichfield city centre. However, not all street beggars are rough sleepers. Intelligence from Staffordshire Police and other partners suggests that some individuals who visit the city are not homeless but 'professional' street beggars.

A project is being developed to look at the available options to support those begging in the street, to work alongside the Housing First initiative and to reduce the visible presence of street begging in the city.

We are exploring a 'diverted giving scheme' that would seek to dissuade people from giving money directly to street beggars, but give instead to a scheme that would support people on the street to move away from begging and into a better alternative lifestyle, or would fund a winter night shelter.

²⁸ The SWEP arrangements are activated when the night time temperature is predicted to be zero degrees Celsius for three consecutive nights.

Options around the implementation of this are being considered, and any scheme needs to ensure that only those genuinely in need are supported.

Members of the armed forces

In 2018/19, nine applicants who were owed a housing duty had a history of serving in the armed forces, including one person who became homeless as a result of leaving the armed forces.

Lichfield District Council supports the Staffordshire Armed Forces Community Covenant which recognises the sacrifices that members of the armed forces and their families make on behalf of their country and ensures that they are not disadvantaged in the provision of public services, including housing and homelessness advice.

To support our veterans, we ask all homeless applicants if they have a connection to the armed forces and identify any issues which could prevent them from accessing and maintaining accommodation.

We also work in partnership with organisations that provide accommodation and support to ex forces personnel, such as Alabare Supported Housing (ex-service personnel) Royal British Legion, SSAFA, Veterans Gateway and Haig Housing.

Our proposed revised allocations scheme gives additional preference to veterans when accessing social housing and they are also exempt from having to meet the local connection criteria.

We have also given the highest priority (emergency band) to the spouse or partner of armed or reserve forces personnel who are required to leave their current armed forces accommodation following the death of a spouse or partner, and their death is as a result of their service.

Homelessness and rough sleeping - a summary of our challenges

- Households owed a housing duty increased by 81% between 2017/18 and 2018/19 due to our new statutory duties to help all eligible applicants (not just those who are statutory homeless)
- The top three consistent reasons for homelessness applications is families no longer able or willing to accommodate, the ending of a private tenancy, and relationship breakdowns
- There is evidence that homelessness is affecting more younger and older households
- In 2018/19, 24 domestic violence cases were recorded, double that of 2017/18
- More households who are assessed as owed a duty have more complex and multiple support needs. In 2018/19, 66% of households owed a duty were assessed as having a support need
- We continue to be a high user of temporary accommodation compared to the other Staffordshire local authorities (second only to Tamworth)
- We have a growing number of rough sleepers with complex needs
- We have no direct access hostels, for either men or women and no residential treatment centres for drug or alcohol addiction

To address these challenges we have established the following priority to work with partners:

‘to prevent or relieve all forms of homelessness including rough sleeping’

This will be achieved through the following objectives:

- Improve the range of suitable housing options for those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.
- Identify and provide support to those who face barriers to accessing and maintaining suitable accommodation.
- Tackle rough sleeping so that no one needs to sleep rough.

Our actions to deliver these are in our action plan in Annexe D



Appendices

A. Evidence for our Housing Strategy	24
B. Homelessness Review 2019	36
C. Summary of research project on the housing needs of older people, people with learning disabilities and people with physical disabilities in Lichfield District	68
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Annexe A: Housing evidence

The following data has been used to produce the housing section of the Housing, Homeless and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-2024 and identify our priorities and objectives. More detailed data relating to homelessness and rough sleeping can be found in the Homelessness Review in Annexe B.

Population and age profile of Lichfield District

The population of Lichfield District is approximately 103,965 people and is placed fifth out of the eight local authorities in the county behind Stafford, Newcastle-under-Lyme and East and South Staffordshire. Cannock Chase, Staffordshire Moorlands and Tamworth both have a smaller population than Lichfield District.

Chart 1:
Population

Source: MYE5:
Population estimates:
Population density for
the local authorities in
the UK, mid-2001 to
mid-2018



The age of the district is skewed towards the older age groups with higher numbers in the 45 years and over age groups than the West Midlands and England. We have particularly high numbers of residents in the 70-79 years age groups.

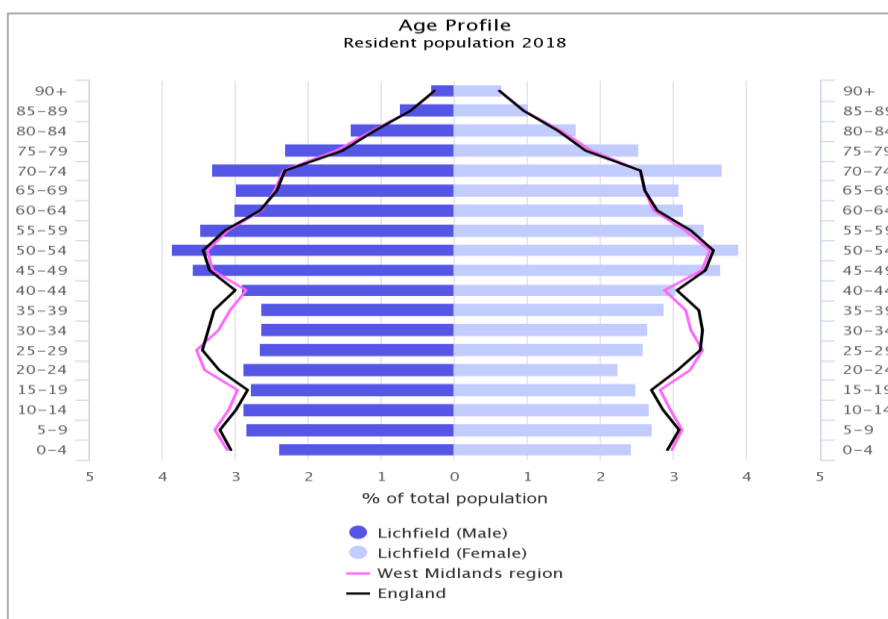


Chart 2: Age

Source: Public Health England <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/public-health-outcomes-framework/data#page/12/gid/1000049/pat/6/par/E12000005/ati/101/are/E07000194>

Just under a quarter of residents are aged 65 or over which is similar to the South Staffordshire and Staffordshire Moorlands profile.

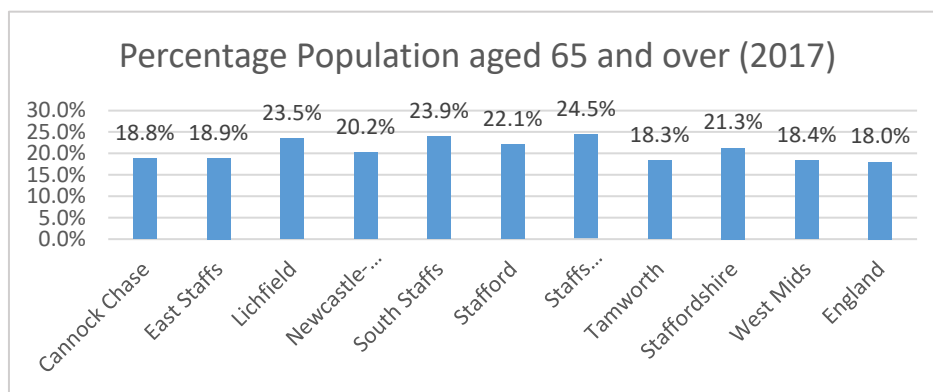


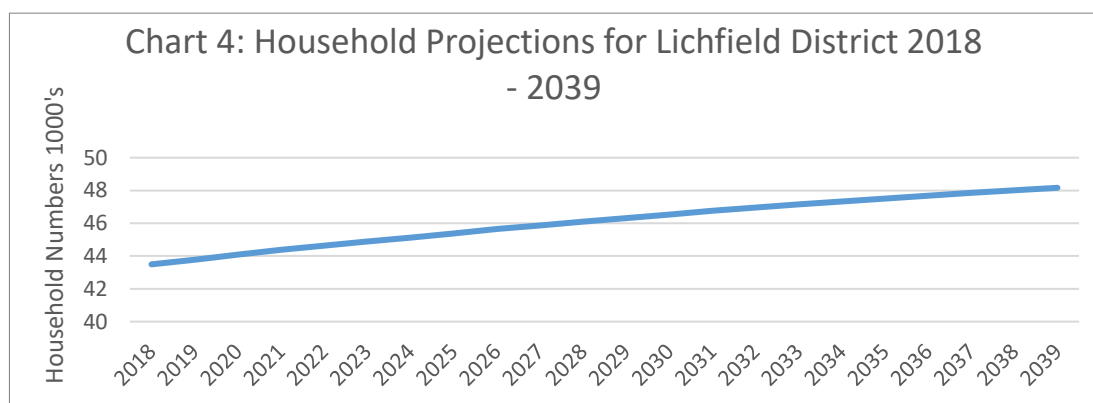
Chart: 3
Population aged 65 and over

Source: Staffordshire County Council Lichfield District Data Pack: The Strategy Team, Sept 2018

<https://www.staffordshireobservatory.org.uk/documents/District-Borough-Data-Packs/2018/Lichfield-Data-Pack-2018.pdf>

Household projections

The number of households is predicted to increase between 2018 and 2039 by 9%, which is an additional 4,000 households.

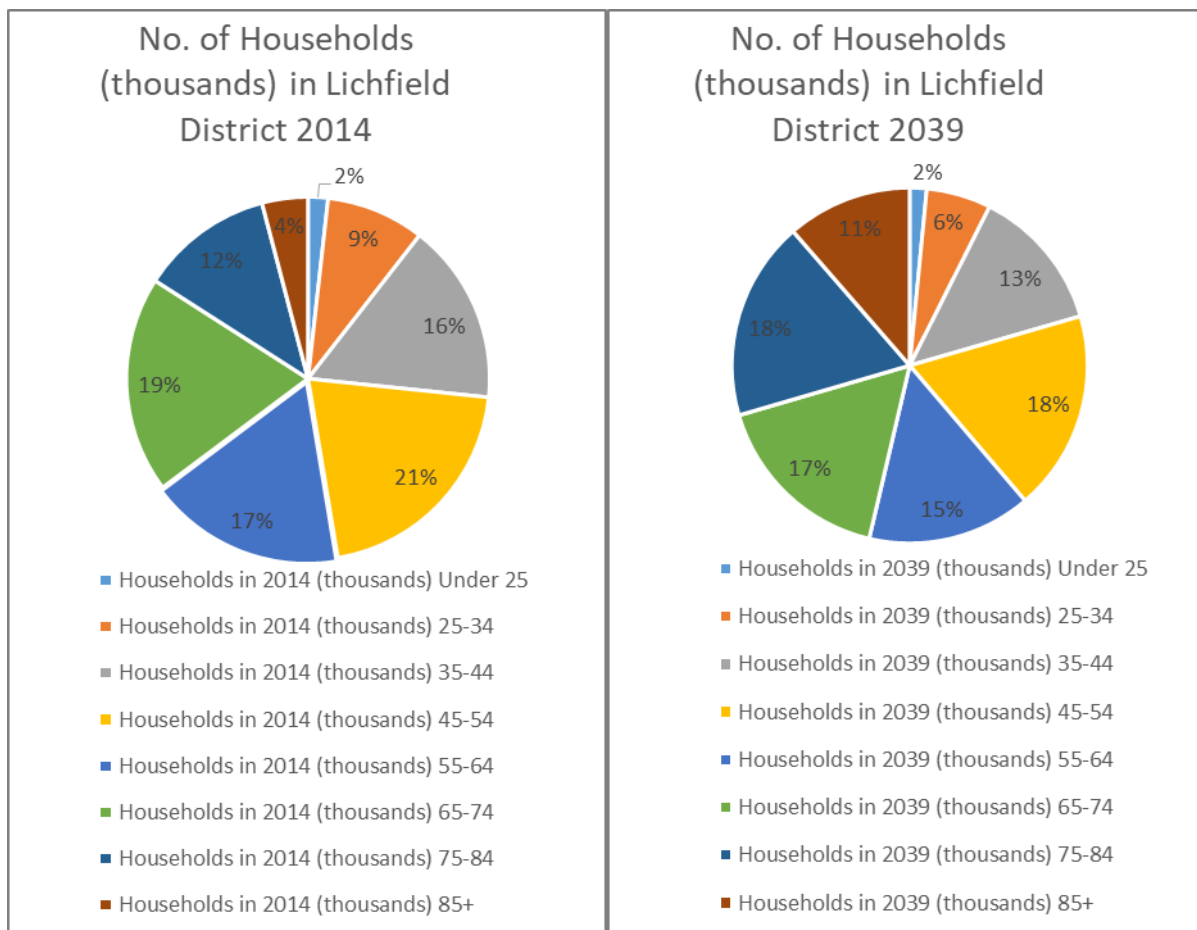


Source: ONS Table 406: Household projections by district, England, 1991- 2039

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-household-projections>

Household composition

Between 2017 and 2027, the greatest rise in population will be in residents aged 65 and over. The most significant rise will be in the 85+ age group; the highest rise in the county. This is reflected in charts 5 and 6 which show that the average household size will decrease from 2.43 persons in 2018 to 2.24 in 2039, which is most likely due to an increase in older people living on their own. Numbers containing people aged 25-74 years old will decrease whereas those aged 75 or over will rise from 16% to 29%.



Charts 5 and 6 No households in 2014 and 2029 by age

Source: Office of National Statistics <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2011/KS402EW/view/1946157175?cols=measures>

Life expectancy

Overall life expectancy is 81 years for men and 83 years for women, which is slightly higher than the region and England for males and on a par for females.

Healthy life expectancy is much lower than this and both men and women in the district will on average spend their last 16 years in poor health.

Table 1 Life expectancy	Life expectancy at birth – males (years)	Life expectancy at birth - females (years)	Healthy life expectancy at birth - males (years)	Healthy life expectancy at birth - females (years)
	2014-2016	2014-2016	2009-2013	2009-2013
Cannock Chase	78.6	82.6	61.1	62.1
East Staffs	79.2	82.1	63.5	65.3
Lichfield	80.7	83	65.4	66.6
Newcastle-under-Lyme	78.9	82.3	62.2	63.5
South Staffs	80.6	84.1	65.6	66.3
Stafford	80.5	83.4	65.5	66.6
Staffs Moorlands	79.9	82.8	64.1	65.3
Tamworth	78.7	82.7	62.6	63
Staffs	79.7	82.9	63.9	65
West Midlands	78.8	82.7	62.2	63.2
England	79.5	83.1	63.5	64.8

Source: Staffordshire County Council Lichfield District Data Pack: The Strategy Team, Sept 2018

Deprivation¹

Lichfield DDistrict is a relatively prosperous area, having the second lowest percentage of people in the most deprived quintile² in the county (behind South Staffordshire). However, this still equates to 4000 of our residents.

Table 2: Deprivation

Area	Percentage in most deprived IMD 2015 quintile	Number of People
Cannock Chase	13.80%	13,600
East Staffs	17.80%	20,800
Lichfield	3.90%	4,000
Newcastle-under-Lyme	11.20%	14,400
South Staffs	1.40%	1,500
Stafford	5.30%	7,100
Staffs Moorlands	4.60%	4,500
Tamworth	17.70%	13,600
Staffs	9.20%	79,500
West Midlands	29.50%	1,696,100
England	20.20%	11,092,200

Source: Staffordshire County Council Lichfield District Data Pack: The Strategy Team, Sept 2018

<https://www.staffordshireobservatory.org.uk/documents/District-Borough-Data-Packs/2018/Lichfield-Data-Pack-2018.pdf>

Learning disabilities³

In 2017/18 there were 300 people identified as having a learning disability, a prevalence of 0.3% of the population. 68% of people with a learning disability live in settled accommodation which is the joint lowest in the county and lower than the West Midlands and England.

Table 3: Learning disabilities prevalence 2017/18			
	%	No. of People	% of adults with Learning Disabilities who live in settled accommodation
Cannock Chase	0.6%	700	73%
East Staffs	0.5%	700	68%
Lichfield	0.3%	300	68%
Newcastle-under-Lyme	0.4%	600	74%
South Staffs	0.3%	400	84%
Stafford	0.4%	500	76%
Staffs Moorlands	0.5%	400	72%
Tamworth	0.6%	600	81%
Staffs	0.5%	4,000	73%
West Midlands	0.5%	31,800	72%
England	0.5%	284,400	77%

Source: Staffordshire County Council Lichfield District Data Pack: The Strategy Team, Sept 2018

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2011/KS402EW/view/1946157175?cols=measures>

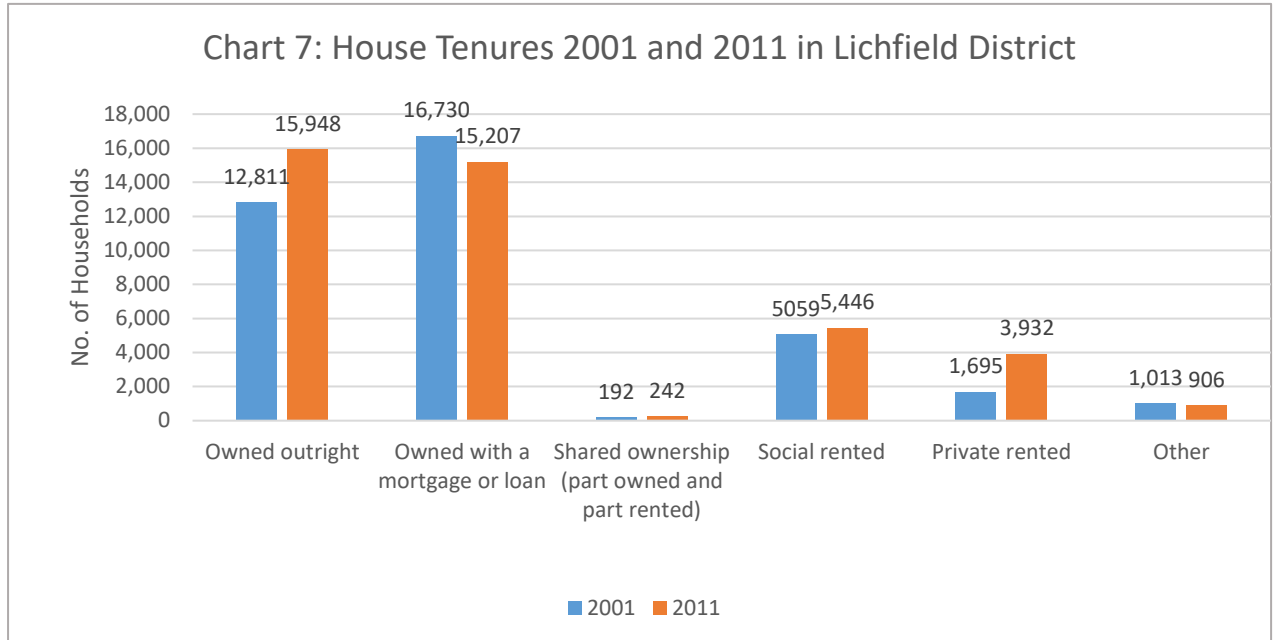
¹ The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2015 is the official measure of relative deprivation for small areas in England. There are 32,844 small areas (called Lower-Layer Super Output Areas). The IMD ranks every small area in England from 1 (most deprived area) to 32,844 (least deprived area). Deprivation is measured in 7 domains – income, employment, education, health, crime, barriers to housing & services and living environment.

² Most deprived 20% of Lower-Layer Super Output Areas.

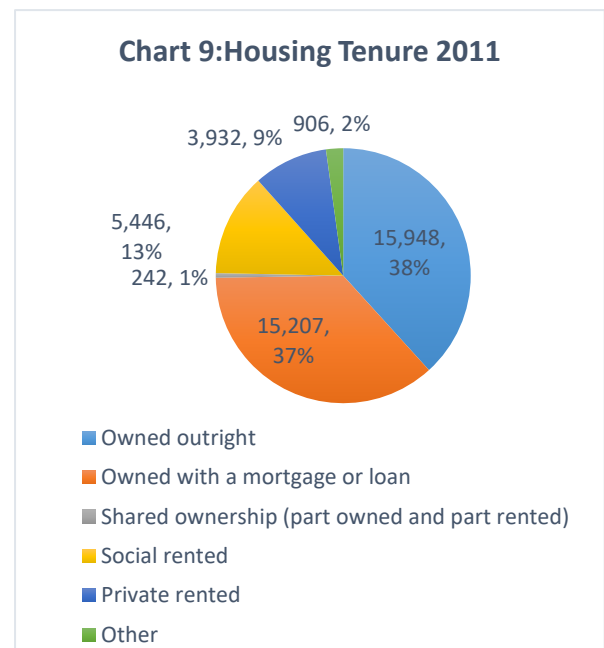
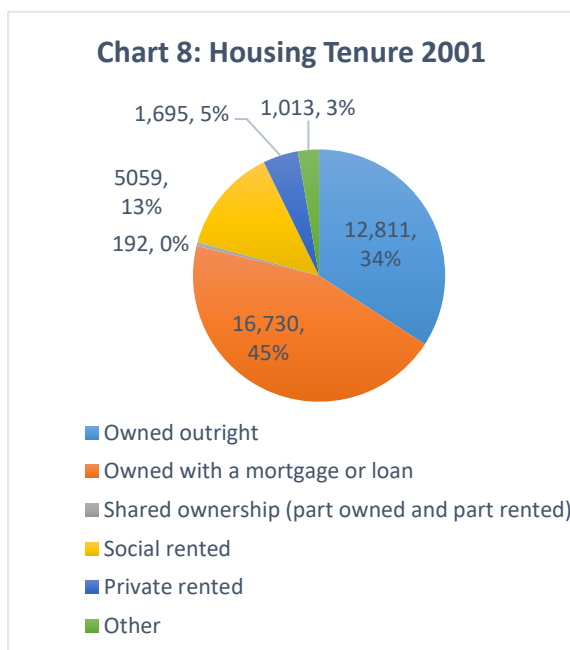
³ A learning disability is a reduced intellectual ability and difficulty with everyday activities – for example household tasks, socialising or managing money – which affects someone for their whole life.

House tenure

Between 2001 and 2011 there was a dramatic shift in tenure with a significant rise in the number of properties owned outright and a drop in households with a mortgage or loan. This is most likely due to the large number of older people who have paid off their mortgage. The number of households in social rented properties has increased as has also those in shared ownership homes, though prevalence is still low. The most significant change is the rise in private rented homes which has increased by 132%.



Charts 8 and 9 below show this as a percentage and indicate that, although the number of households in social rented homes has risen, the percentage of total households in this tenure has not changed. The nominal increase in the number of shared ownership properties is evident here, and in 2011 was still only 1% of housing in the district.



Source: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2011/KS402EW/view/1946157175?cols=measures>

Housing tenure by area 2011

Table 4 below indicates that Lichfield District has one of the highest percentages of owner occupied homes in the county. This is also significantly higher than the region and England though the proportion of houses that are privately rented is much lower.

Table 4: Housing tenure by area 2011

Table 4 Area	All households	Owner occupied households	Privately rented households	Socially rented households	Rent free households
Cannock Chase	40,700	28,400	4,900	6,900	500
		70%	12%	17%	1%
East Staffordshire	47,300	33,100	7,200	6,400	600
		70%	15%	13%	1%
Lichfield	41,200	31,400	3,900	5,400	400
		76%	10%	13%	1%
Newcastle-under-Lyme	52,600	36,600	5,500	9,800	700
		70%	10%	19%	1%
South Staffordshire	44,500	33,900	3,800	6,200	600
		76%	8%	14%	1%
Stafford	55,700	40,200	7,200	7,600	700
		72%	13%	14%	1%
Staffordshire Moorlands	41,800	33,400	4,100	3,700	600
		80%	10%	9%	1%
Tamworth	31,600	21,700	3,500	6,100	300
		69%	11%	19%	1%
Staffordshire	355,300	258,700	40,100	52,200	4,300
		73%	11%	15%	1%
West Midlands	2,294,900	1,504,300	321,700	435,200	33,700
		66%	14%	19%	1%
England	22,063,400	14,148,800	3,715,900	3,903,600	295,100
		64%	17%	18%	1%

Source: 2011 Census, Office for National Statistics, Crown Copyright

<https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Care-for-all-ages/Information-for-providers/Market-Intelligence/Market-position-statement-intelligence/Staffordshire-population-demographics/Population-demographics-and-adult-social-care-needs-all-adults.aspx>

Housing affordability

Though the average gross salary of residents is the highest in the county, homeownership is still out of reach for many with the housing affordability ratio at 7.4.

Table 5	Housing affordability ratio (ratio of median house price to median gross earnings)	Average house price	Average gross salary
	2017	Q3 2017	2017
Cannock Chase	5.7	£158,000	£27,787
East Staffs	6.4	£167,000	£26,058
Lichfield	7.4	£225,000	£30,344
Newcastle-under-Lyme	5.2	£130,500	£24,943
South Staffs	7	£212,250	£30,329
Stafford	6.7	£192,000	£28,664
Staffs Moorlands	5.9	£159,000	£27,149
Tamworth	6.8	£170,000	£25,098
Staffs	6.3	£175,000	£27,789
West Midlands	6.6	£177,000	£26,857
England	7.9	£230,000	£29,085

Source: Staffordshire County Council Lichfield District Data Pack: The Strategy Team, Sept 2018

Table 6 below shows the change in average house prices since 2015, which on average are currently £70,000 more than in the West Midlands.

Average property prices

Table 6	Aug-15	Feb-17	Feb-18	Jan-19
Average Property Price – Lichfield district	£268,247	£282,453	£308,610	£300,362
Average Property Price-West Midlands	£202,397	£214,877	£225,658	£231,121
Difference	£65,850	£67,576	£82,952	£69,241

Source: Authority Monitoring Reports <https://www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/downloads/file/1280/authority-monitoring-report-2019>

Condition of housing stock

Private sector stock

The housing stock is generally in a good condition, though 15% of dwellings in the owner occupied and private rented sector were found to have category 1 hazards with 6% of these being due to excess cold and 9% due to fall hazards. More private rental properties than any other tenure were in disrepair. The condition of the social rented stock is also good and in better condition than the private sector, though, as expected it does have a higher percentage of low income households. The number of low income households in fuel poverty who are privately renting is high compared to those in the social sector.

Table 7: Stock condition

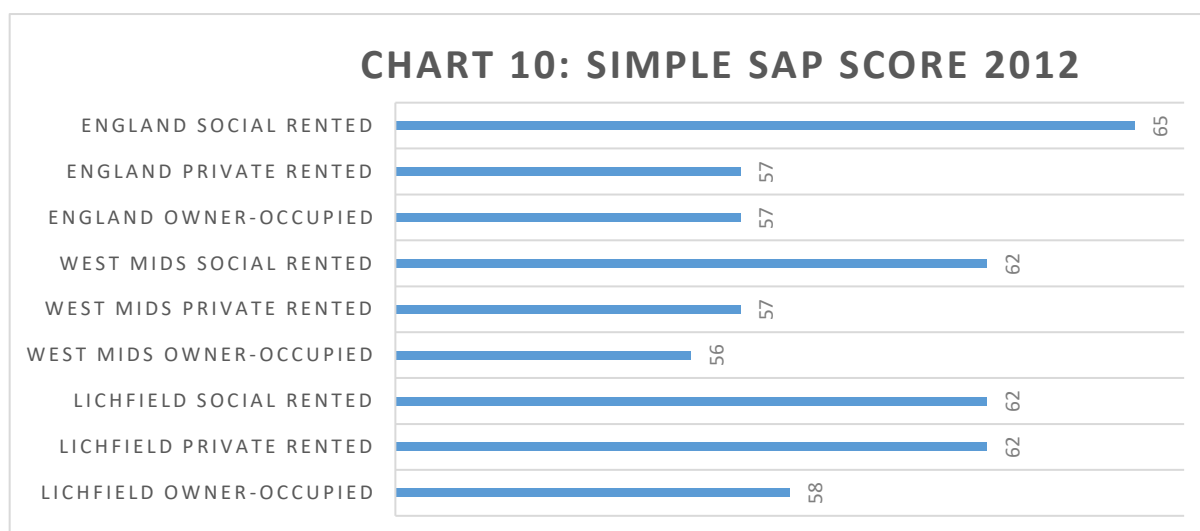
Indicator		Private sector stock				Social stock	
		Owner-occupied		Private rented		No.	%
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
No. of dwellings		32662		5138		6188	
HHSRS category 1 hazards	All hazards	4792	15%	763	15%	516	8%
	Excess cold	2025	6%	268	5%	177	3%
	Fall hazards	2916	9%	485	9%	273	4%
Disrepair		1021	3%	304	6%	198	3%
Fuel poverty (10%)		3361	10%	684	13%	859	14%
Fuel poverty (low income high costs)		2920	9%	787	15%	696	11%
Low income households		1976	6%	1439	28%	4067	66%

Source: Integrated Dwelling Level Housing Stock Modelling and Database for Lichfield District Council, BRE July 2017

Energy efficiency

In terms of energy efficiency, the average Simple SAP⁴ ratings for all private sector stock is 59, which is better than both England and the West Midlands. Overall owner-occupied homes are not as efficient as the private rented, having a SAP rating of 58 compared to 62

Source: Integrated Dwelling Level Housing Stock Modelling and Database for Lichfield District Council, BRE July 2017



⁴ The Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) is the methodology used by the Government to assess and compare the energy and environmental performance of dwellings. Its purpose is to provide accurate and reliable assessments of dwelling energy performances that are needed to underpin energy and environmental policy initiatives.

Housing standards in the private sector

Table 8 below shows that the majority of enforcement notices served from 2013/14 to 2018/19 were due to excess cold, damp and electrical faults.

	* Total	Damp & Mould	Excess cold/ lack of heating	Ventilation	Insulation	Electrical installation	Fire risk	Falls	Disrepair	Other
13/14	8	0	7	1	2	4	2		1	
14/15	12	2	1	0	0	9	4	3	1	
15/16	12	3	5	1	3	4	3	2	1	1
16/17	7	2	2	0	1	2	3	1		1
17/18	6	2	4	1	3	3	2		3	
18/19	10	3	6	2	3	4	2	1	1	
Total	55	12	25	5	12	26	16	7	7	2

Source: Lichfield District Council Private Sector Housing Team 2019

*Note the total is the number of improvement notices served which will comprise one or more of the hazards listed in the table

Housing need

The housing register

Chart 11 below shows that 46% of applicants on the housing register require either a studio flat or a one bedroom property and 34% need a two bedroom home. This demonstrates the need for smaller, affordable properties in the district.

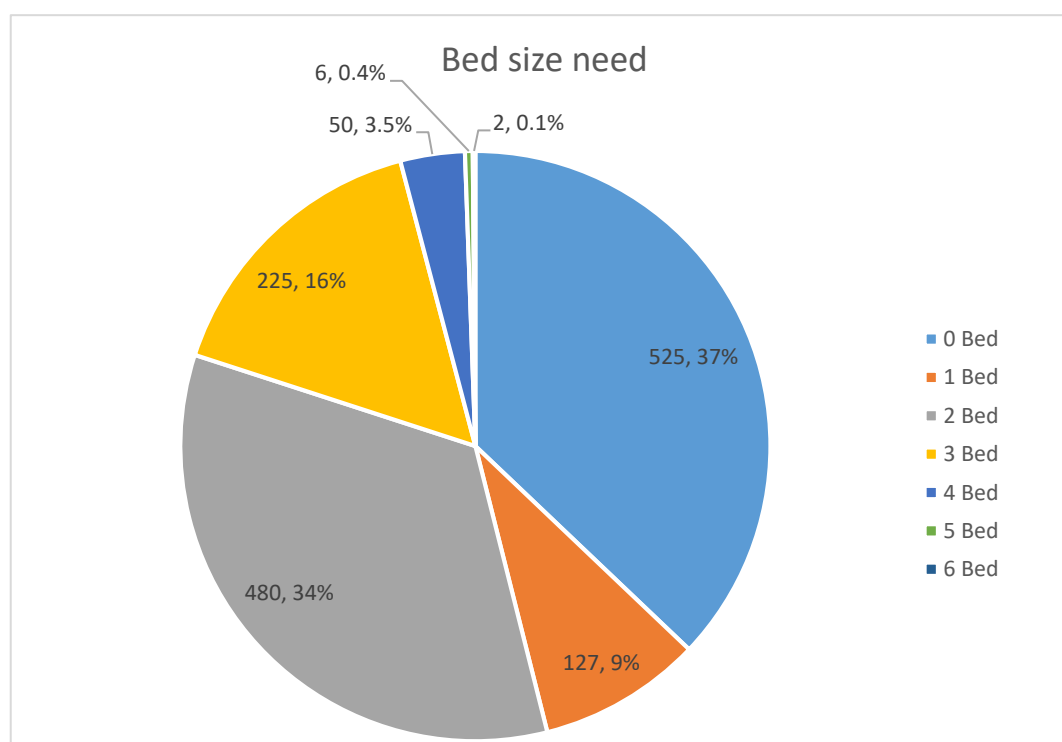


Chart 11: Bed size need

Source: Lichfield District Council Housing Register February 2020

Housing & Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA)

The HEDNA completed in 2019 demonstrated a net need of 220 affordable homes per annum up to 2036.

Estimated annual level of affordable housing need (2016-2036) (social/affordable rented)	
Current need (annual figure)	30
Newly forming households	346
Existing households falling into need	139
Total gross need	515
Re-let supply	295
Net need	220

Table 9: Estimated annual level of affordable housing need (2016-2036)

Source: Housing & Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA), Sept 2019. G.L. Hearn, London

Affordable housing completions

Since 2013, 504 affordable homes have been built of all tenures. Nearly a third of homes built were shared ownership which is an important way of accessing affordable home ownership.

Year	Total number of units	Affordable rent	Social rent	Shared ownership	Discount market sale
2018/19	235	88	66	81	
2017/18	135	45	54	34	2
2016/17	28	2	1	3	22
2015/16	50	43	4	3	
2014/15	31	3	10	18	
2013/14	25	0	18	7	
Totals	504	181	153	146	24
%		35.9%	30.4%	29.0%	4.8%

Table 10: Affordable home completions by year and tenure

Source: Development Sites summary spreadsheet: LDC

Stock composition

Table 11 also shows there is a large number of owner-occupied homes with four or more bedrooms and a low number of two bedroom properties. The high number of two bed homes in the private rental sector suggests an undersupply available at an affordable price. These smaller properties will continue to be in high demand over the next few decades due to a gradual reduction in household sizes.

		Lichfield	West Midlands	England
Owner-occupied	1 bed	2%	2%	4%
	2 bed	17%	20%	23%
	3 bed	48%	54%	48%
	4+ bed	32%	24%	25%
Social rented	1 bed	27%	29%	31%
	2 bed	37%	34%	34%
	3 bed	34%	33%	31%
	4+ bed	2%	4%	4%
Private rented	1 bed	13%	18%	23%
	2 bed	41%	37%	39%
	3 bed	35%	36%	28%
	4+ bed	10%	10%	10%

Source: Housing & Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA), Sept 2019. G.L. Hearn, London

Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs)

The table below shows the amount of DFG grant money spent on adaptations to homes since 2013. Due to the ageing population, it is expected that there will be a continued rise in demand for these grants over the next few decades.

Table 12: DFG numbers and expenditure per annum

Financial year	Expenditure £	Number of grants awarded
2013/14	584,000	89
2014/15	372,000	37
2015/16	384,000	55
2016/17	788,000	90
2017/18	1,017,000	101
2018/19	583,000	50
Total	£3,728,000	422

Source: Lichfield District Council 2020

Housing register

The table below shows the number of households on the council's housing register in the last five years

Table 13: No. of households on the housing register on 1 April of each year	No. of households
2015	1146
2016	1220
2017	1243
2018	1008
2019	1370

Source: Lichfield District Council

The table below shows the number of social housing properties that were advertised from 2015 to 2018 and the average number of bids made for each property.

Table 14: Average no. of bids of properties advertised from 2015 to 2018			
		No advertised	Average no. of bids
1 bed	Studio	10	68
	Bungalow	94	45
	Flat	215	56
	House	4	60
2 bed	Bungalow	40	37
	Flat	294	25
	House	103	68
3 bed	Flat	6	58
	House	142	44
4 bed	House	4	21
5 bed	Bungalow	1	28
	House	2	19
Total		915	43

Source: Lichfield District Council

A review of homelessness in Lichfield District

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A Review of homelessness in Lichfield District

Summary of evidence

Since the introduction of the HRA:

- There were 518 approaches to us for homelessness issues in 2018/19, less than half the number than in 2017/18. This is because all approaches are now directed through the new Jigsaw housing portal. Customers can either self-refer through the portal or a Housing Options Officer will assist them.
- Households owed a housing duty increased by 81% from 127 in 2017/18 to 230 in 2018/19. However, the number of applicants accepted as owed the main housing duty reduced by 44% from 56 to 24 in the same years. The rise in applications is predictable as we have new statutory duties to help **all** eligible applicants (not just those who are statutory homeless). The new duties to prevent and relieve homelessness before applicants are owed the main housing duty is also the most likely reason for the dramatic reduction in these figures, as many applicants will have had their homelessness issue resolved before they would be owed the main duty.
- From October 2018 to September 2019, we received 44 referrals from public agencies under the new 'Duty to Refer' requirement.
- The number of households owed the main housing duty decreased by 57% from 56 in 2017/18 to 24 in 2018/19. This is expected due to the changes in legislation which gives councils additional responsibilities before the main duty is owed.
- The number of households owed a housing duty is low compared to other Staffordshire local authorities. This shows that homeless numbers are still relatively low even with the new responsibilities of the HRA.
- However, this is not the case with households who were owed the main duty we had the second largest number of households in 2018/19 in the county.
- The new requirements brought about by the HRA has changed the most common type of household owed a housing duty. In 2018/19, single males were most likely to be owed a duty with single females the next most likely group. These groups made up 54% of the total households owed a duty. This amounted to 125 single people in 2018/19 compared to only 12 in 2017/18. The third most common type of household was female single parent families. This is a reflection of the new requirement to assist all eligible households rather than just those with a priority need. It also demonstrates how disregarded these groups were under previous legislation.
- There is evidence that homelessness is affecting more households at both young and old age ranges. 52 households aged between 18 and 24 were owed a duty in 2018/19 compared to only 20 in 2017/18 and 28 in 2016/17. 11 households aged 65 or over were also accepted as homeless including 7 aged 75 or older. Between 2014 and 2018 only 4 people in total aged 65 or over were accepted as homeless.
- The top three most common reasons for homelessness applications in 2018/19 were families no longer able or willing to accommodate (21%), the ending of a private tenancy (21%) and relationship breakdowns (19.5%). These were the most common reasons identified in the 2013–2018 Homelessness Strategy, although numbers are on the rise with double the number of relationship breakdowns and family evictions occurring in 2018/19 compared to 2017/18 and nearly quadruple the number of private rented tenancy losses.

- In 2018/19, the number of domestic violence cases recorded doubled from 12 in 2017/18 to 24 in 2018/19.
- 22% of applicants owed a duty in 2018/19 were in full-time work.
- It is clear that many households who are assessed as owed a duty now have more complex and multiple support needs. Two-thirds (66%) of households owed a duty were assessed as having a support need, 46% of which needed support with their mental health and 22% were due to physical disability.
- In 2018/19, only 25% of households were prevented from becoming homeless by being able to remain in their existing home. The remaining 75% were found alternative accommodation before they became homeless. Moving home causes more disruption and is more costly and time-consuming than being able to stay. It is therefore preferable for households to remain in their existing home if at all possible.
- The use of temporary accommodation peaked in 2015/16 with an average stay of 19 weeks. This dropped to 15 weeks in 2018/19. However, the average length of stay in B&B accommodation has increased.
- We have continued to be a high user of temporary accommodation compared to the other Staffordshire local authorities (second only to Tamworth). This was also identified in the 2013 Homelessness Strategy.
- The majority of households (77) who were owed a duty had their homelessness resolved through the allocation of a registered provider property whereas only 21 were offered a private rented tenancy.

Rough sleeping

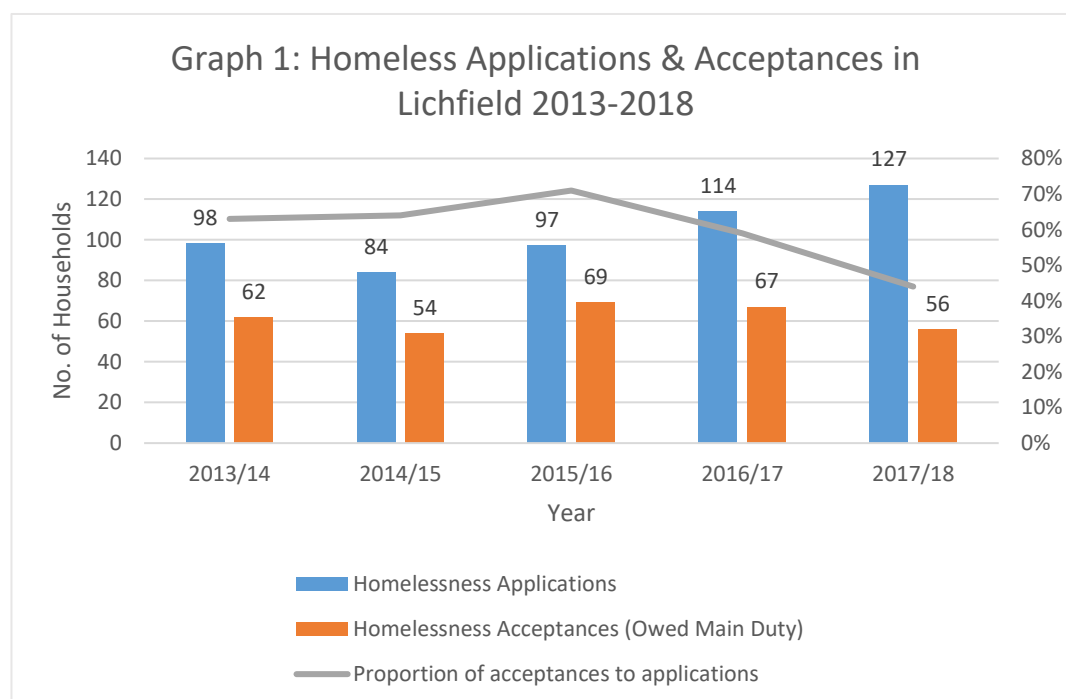
- Over the last few years the council has been aware that we have a growing number of rough sleepers with complex needs (2 or more support needs).
- A shortage of supported housing and support for substance misuse and mental health issues plus high housing costs and welfare reform are all factors that have contributed to the rise in rough sleeping.
- Of the five rough sleepers recorded in November 2018, at least 2 of these can also be described as entrenched.
- We have no direct access hostels, for either men or women, and no residential treatment centres for drug or alcohol addiction. This often leaves the only available option as accommodation outside of the district and away from any support networks an individual may have, which in turn reduces the likelihood of success and increases the incidence of repeat homeless presentations.

Introduction

This purpose of this review is to obtain the most comprehensive and up to date information on homelessness in our district. This will give a clear understanding of the issues we face, enabling the development of robust policies and actions to tackle the causes of homelessness now and into the future. Since our last Homelessness Strategy was published in 2013, the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (HRA) has come into force, which has fundamentally changed the way that local authorities deliver their statutory homelessness duties. It has also affected how homelessness data is measured which has meant that, in many cases, data from 2018/19 cannot be directly compared with that from previous years. The first section of this review therefore examines data collected prior to the HRA giving a picture of homelessness since the last strategy was produced and the remaining part looks at information obtained since the HRA was introduced in April 2018. It is important to note that, due to initial problems with transitioning the old data gathering method to the new one, statistics for 2018/19 have been labelled by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) as 'experimental' and therefore should be treated with caution.

Pre-Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

Levels of homelessness



Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Govt (MHCLG) Live Tables on Homelessness

Between 2013 and 2018, we received 6,308 housing advice enquiries¹ (an average of 1,262 a year) from households who were either homeless or were worried about losing their home. The number of enquiries has reduced slightly since the last strategy as the average from 2008 to 2013 was 1425, a reduction of 11%. Of the 6,308 enquiries, 520 were found to be either homeless or at risk of homelessness (called homeless applications) as defined by housing law, of which 309 (59%) were accepted as homeless and owed the main housing duty².

Graph 1 above shows the breakdown of homeless applications and acceptances between 2013/14 to 2017/18 and shows that:

- 🏠 Homelessness applications were on the increase, rising from 84 to 127 households (an increase of 51%) between 2014/15 and 2017/18. This increase mirrors the national trend in rising homelessness. The reasons specific to Lichfield district are discussed later on page 5 under 'Reasons for Homelessness'.
- 🏠 The number of acceptances, however, dropped from 69 to 56 households (a decrease of 19%) between 2015/16 to 2017/18 and the number of acceptances in relation to applications was also decreasing. This is likely to be due to the council becoming more successful at preventing people from becoming homeless before they reached the main duty stage which was encouraged by the government in the lead up to the introduction of the HRA.

¹ These consist of all enquiries regarding homelessness and other housing issues via telephone calls, emails or visits to reception including multiple enquiries for individual cases.

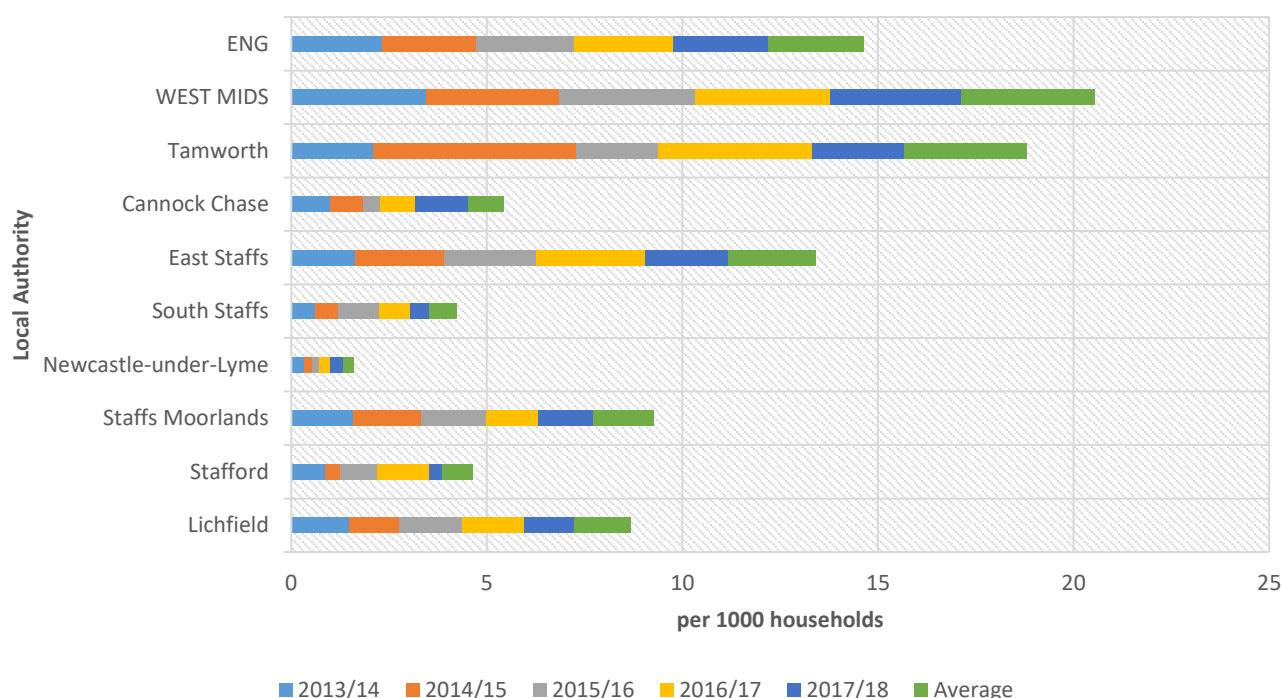
² These are households that are eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need.

Relative levels of homelessness compared to other Staffordshire local authorities

To understand the levels of homelessness in relation to the population size, MHCLG measures the rate of homelessness acceptances per 1,000 households. The graph below gives our homelessness acceptances in comparison to the other Staffordshire local authorities and shows that:-

- 🏠 Our number of homelessness acceptances in relation to population size is low compared to England and the West Midlands and, with the exception of Tamworth Borough, all other Staffordshire local authorities had a lower acceptance rate than England.
- 🏠 When calculating the average score for the Staffordshire local authorities, we had the fourth highest rate of acceptances per 1,000 households, which is the middle position out of the eight authorities.

Graph 2: Comparative Homeless Acceptances - no. per 1000 households of population - Staffs Local Authorities



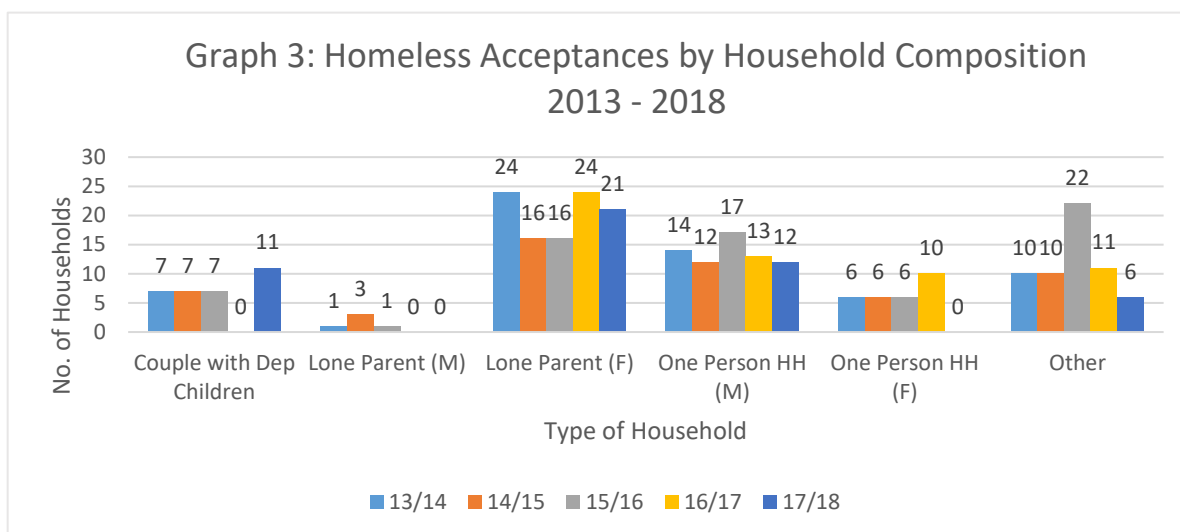
Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Govt (MHCLG) Live Tables on Homelessness

Who is being made Homeless in Lichfield?

Household type

Data from the MHCLG can tell us what type of household is being made homeless. For example, the graph below shows the composition of households accepted as homeless between 2013 and 2018.

Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Govt (MHCLG) Live Tables on Homelessness

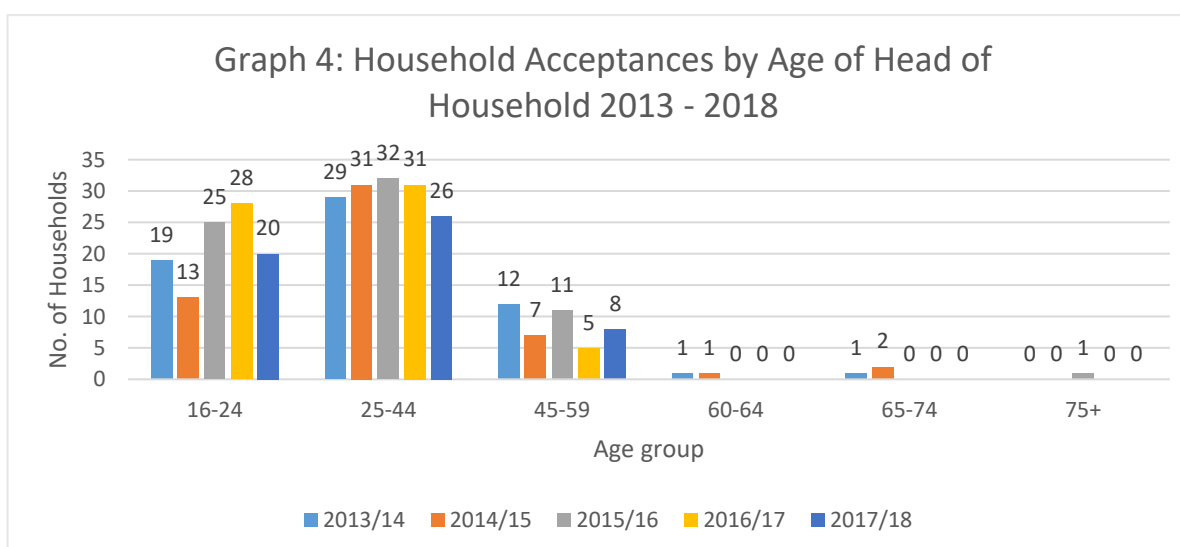


Key findings are:-

- 🏠 34% of households accepted as homeless were female single parent families with the second most common type being single males, comprising 23% of the total.
- 🏠 20% of acceptances were classed as 'other' types of household which would include families with multiple generations or childless couples.

Age

- 🏠 Graph 4 below shows that almost half (49%) of acceptances between 2013 and 2018 were aged between 25 and 44 years old.
- 🏠 37% of the total acceptances in those five years (172 households) were young people aged 16 to 24.
- 🏠 In these five years, 6 people aged 60 or over were accepted as homeless.



Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Govt (MHCLG) Live Tables on Homelessness

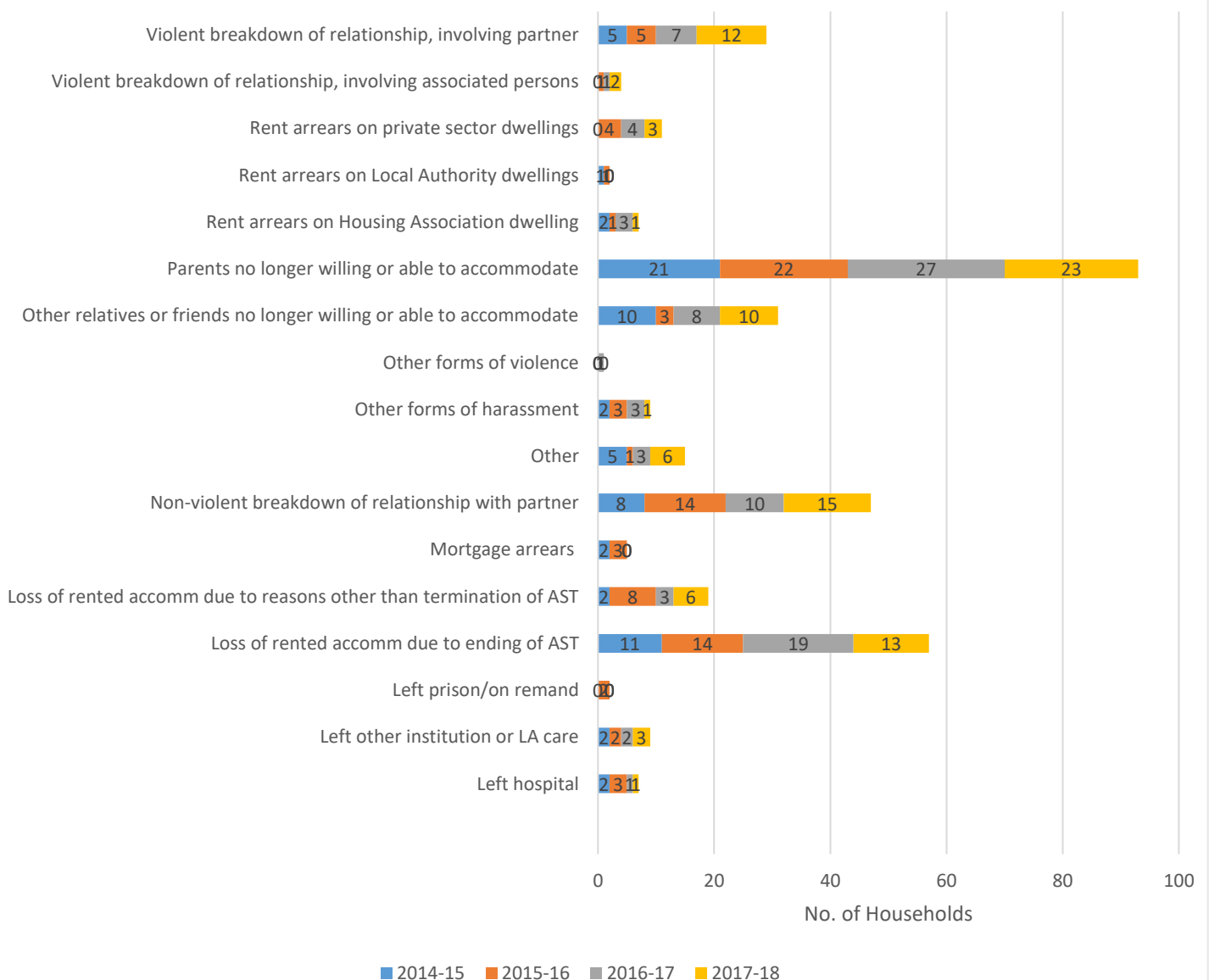
Ethnicity

Lichfield district's population is predominantly White British which is reflected in the homeless acceptance figures and shows no particular group was over-represented in the homelessness statistics. Between 2015- 2018, 95% of acceptances were White British. The remaining applicants described themselves as Black or Black British (3 applicants), Asian or Asian British (1) or mixed race (3) whereas 7 were recorded in the 'other' or 'not recorded' category.

The government now requires local authorities to include additional categories of household type and age in order to give more detailed information. This will, in future, give a better understanding of the composition of households accepted as homeless and will therefore improve the targeting of resources for different cohorts.

Reasons for homelessness

Graph 5: Reason for Loss of Last Settled Home 2014 - 2018



Source: Lichfield District Council

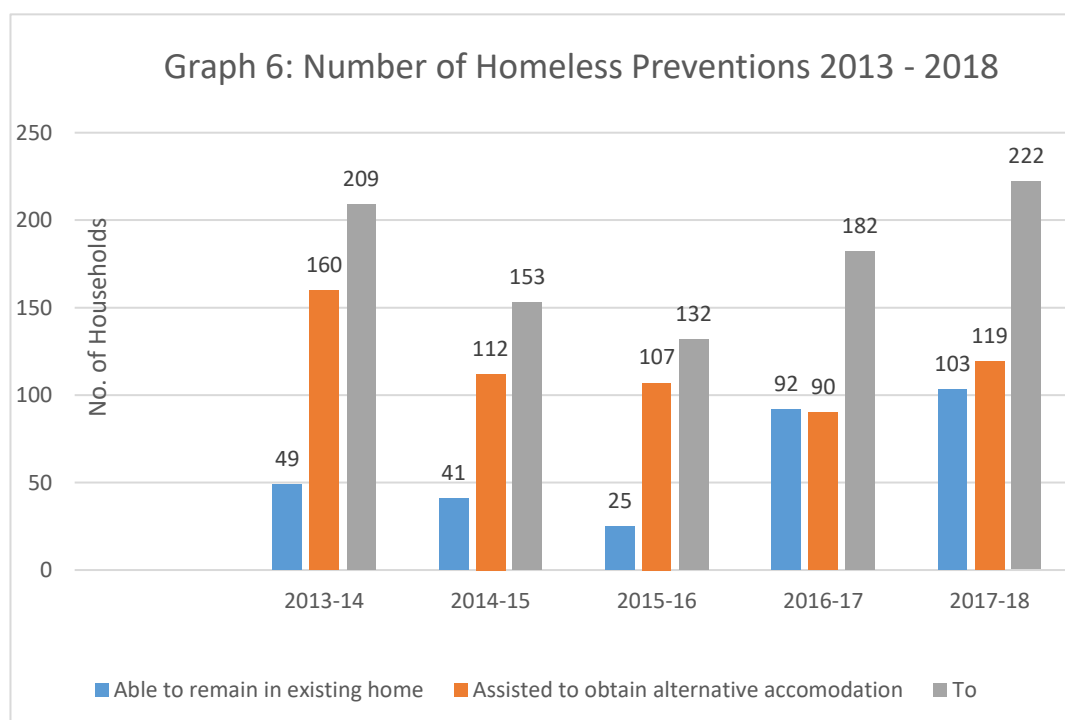
Graph 5 shows that over the 5 year period the primary reason for being accepted as homeless was 'Parents no longer willing or able to accommodate' which accounted for over a quarter

(27%) of all homeless acceptances. Over each of these five years, this has been the largest single reason for the loss of last settled home.

- 🏠 The second and third most common reasons for being accepted as homeless were:
 - Relationship breakdown (76 cases or 22%).
 - The loss of a private rented property due to termination of an assured shorthold tenancy (57 cases or 16%)
- 🏠 When combining all forms of violence (harassment, domestic violence and violence associated with other persons), as a reason for loss of last settled home, this accounted for 43 households or one in eight households accepted as homeless.

Homeless prevention

Before the HRA was introduced, the duty for local authorities to prevent a household from becoming homeless was discretionary. It was, however, considered good practice and graph 1 on page 1 does indicate that our ability to prevent homelessness was improving between 2015 and 2018, shown by the decrease in homelessness acceptances and the reduction in the proportion of acceptances to applications.



Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Govt (MHCLG) Live Tables on Homelessness and LDC & Citizens Advice South East Staffordshire (CASES)

The graph above shows the number of cases where positive action was taken by the council to prevent homelessness between 2013 and 2018.

Key findings:

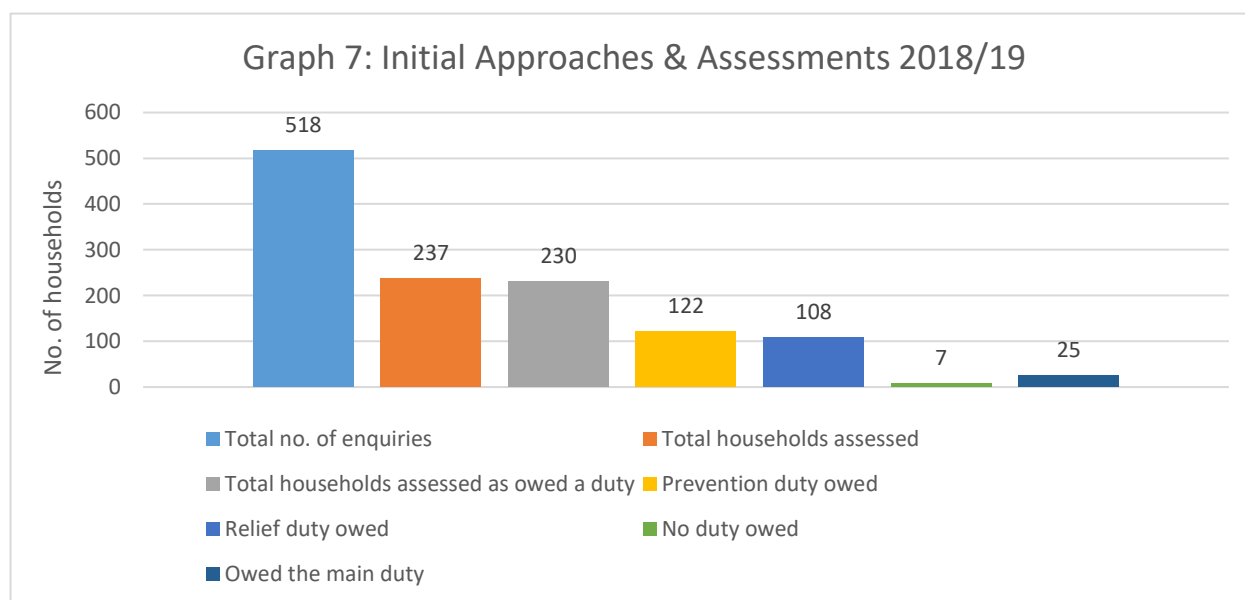
- 🏠 From 2015, we can see that the number of preventions was rising, in particular with regard to households able to remain in their existing home. In 2016, we supported the local Citizens Advice called Citizens Advice South East Staffordshire (CASES). This service helped to prevent homelessness through debt advice, dealing with housing benefit problems and resolving rent or

service charge arrears in the social or private rented sector. It is clear that this proved to be an invaluable service, as the number of preventions rose considerably in the two years that CASES data was recorded.

- When comparing numbers with those following the introduction of the HRA (see page 17), this shows that the council was more successful at preventing homelessness prior to the new legislation. However, this is due to the simplicity in recording a ‘successful prevention’ before the HRA. Under the new Act, prevention of homelessness is now a statutory duty which requires certain actions to be undertaken before it can be officially recorded as a successful prevention. Eventually, this will enable the government to identify the most successful prevention methods but, in the short term, it will mean that prevention figures will be lower than before the new legislation was introduced.

Homelessness statistics since the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

Levels of homelessness 2018/19



Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Govt (MHCLG) Live Tables on Homelessness

Homelessness applications are now called assessments in the MHCLG data and are the number of households that approach the council and are then assessed as being owed a prevention or relief duty, or have no duty owed to them (i.e. they are not homeless or threatened with homelessness within 56 days). Once the relief duty expires if the household has still not secured permanent accommodation, then they will be assessed as being owed the main duty³.

The graph above shows that:

- Last year, we received 518 homelessness enquiries, a significant drop from previous years which showed an average of 1262 from 2013 to 2018. However, this is probably due to the change in the way that we record enquiries in the data we provide to MHCLG, as we now record how many new enquiries are made by household, but previously, there could have been multiple enquiries

³ This definition has not changed with the introduction of the HRA and still refers to households who are eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need

recorded per household. This new method, coupled with the fact that accessing homelessness information online has been made much easier means that fewer enquiries will be made directly to the council.

- 🏠 In 2018/19 230 households were assessed as being owed a duty. This could be seen as an increase of 81% from the previous year, although as explained above they are not comparable numbers. The increase is therefore, most likely due to the following reasons:
 - A household can now be regarded as at risk of homelessness 56 days before losing their home, rather than 28 days under the previous legislation, meaning that more people will now meet the homelessness criteria.
 - Local authorities are now required to prevent or relieve homelessness for **anyone** who is eligible⁴ not just those in priority need.
 - More people are coming forward for assistance as they are made aware of the changes in legislation. Under the previous law, where statutory duties were fewer, households (particularly single person) often chose not to make a formal homeless application as no advantage could be gained.
- 🏠 Graph 1 on page 1 shows that homeless acceptances were reducing prior to the introduction of the HRA, which, in part was due to our proactive approach to preventing homelessness. These cases have dropped even further, with the number of households owed the main housing duty decreasing by 57% from 56 in 2017/18 to 24 in 2018/19. Again, this is expected due to the changes in legislation as we now have a duty to prevent (for 56 days) or relieve (for 56 days) an applicant from homelessness, and so it is more likely that they would have had their housing issue resolved in the 112 days before they would be owed the main duty.

Reasons for approaching the council

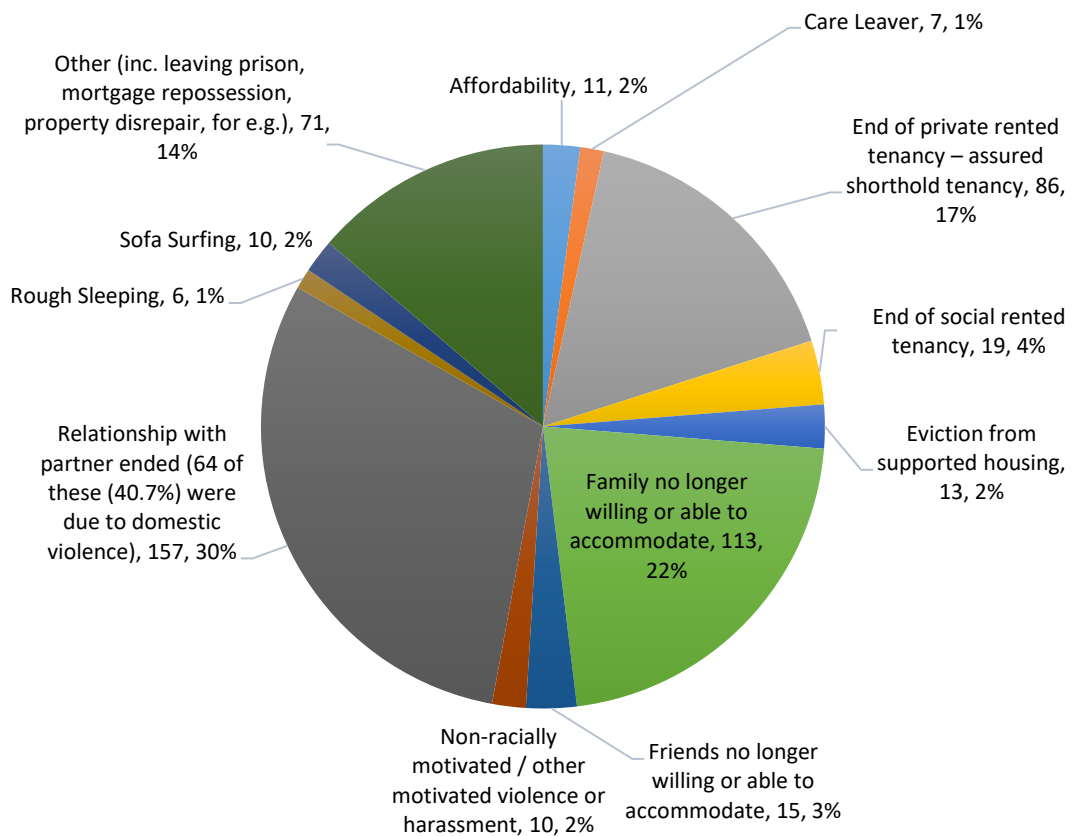
Chart 8 below gives a breakdown of why the 518 households approached the council for advice. It shows that the top three most common reasons were:

- Relationship breakdown (30%)⁵
- Family not being able to accommodate (22%)
- The ending of a private rented tenancy (17%)

⁴ Eligibility for assistance is dependent upon the applicant's immigration status, or her/his right of residence in the UK.

⁵ Total of 157 households, of which 64 of these (40.7%) were due to domestic violence

Chart 8: Enquiries by Reason 2018/19



Source: Lichfield District Council

- ⌘ These are also the most common reasons why households were ultimately accepted as homeless both in the years 2014 to 2018 and 2018/19 which is discussed further on page 14 under 'Reason for Loss of Last Settled Home'.

Duty to refer

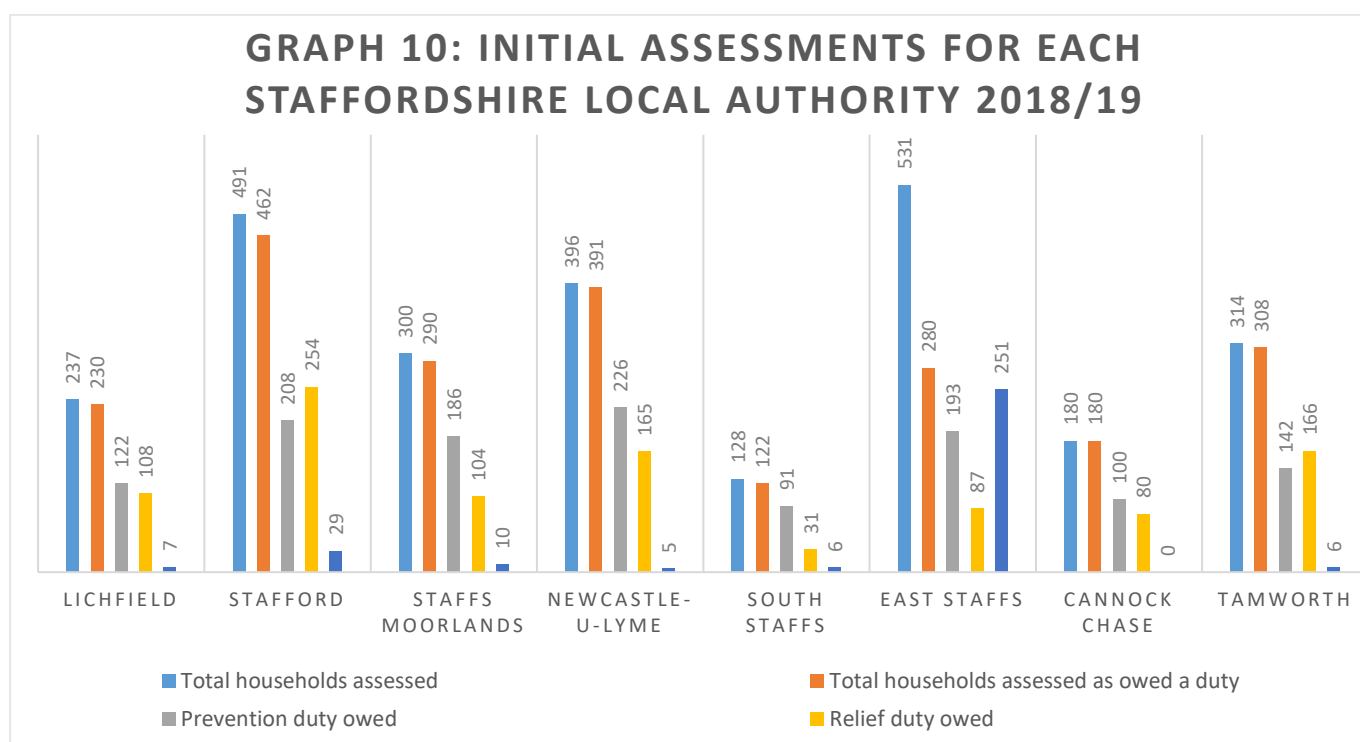
From October 2018, as part of the HRA, certain public bodies have a Duty to Refer, which places an obligation on specified public authorities to notify the relevant local authority of households they consider may be at risk of homelessness within 56 days. This means a person's housing situation must be considered whenever they come into contact with wider public services. The aim of the change is to intervene at an earlier stage when a person is at risk of becoming homeless and give meaningful assistance to someone who may not yet have made contact with their local authority.

- ⌘ Table 9 below shows that, already, this is proving to be an important service as we have received 44 referrals since October 2018 with the most number of referrals from Job Centre Plus.
- ⌘ 9 referrals have come from agencies which are not required by law to notify us but it is considered good practice, such as registered providers (housing associations).

Table 9: Referrals under duty to refer (from October 2018 – 10 September 2019)	
Organisation	No. of referrals
Job Centre Plus	19
Probation	7
Social services	4
Hospital	1
Mental health	4
Wider agencies (non-statutory) e.g. Registered Providers	9
Total	44

Source: Lichfield District Council

Relative levels of homelessness compared to other Staffordshire local authorities



Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Govt (MHCLG) Live Tables on Homelessness

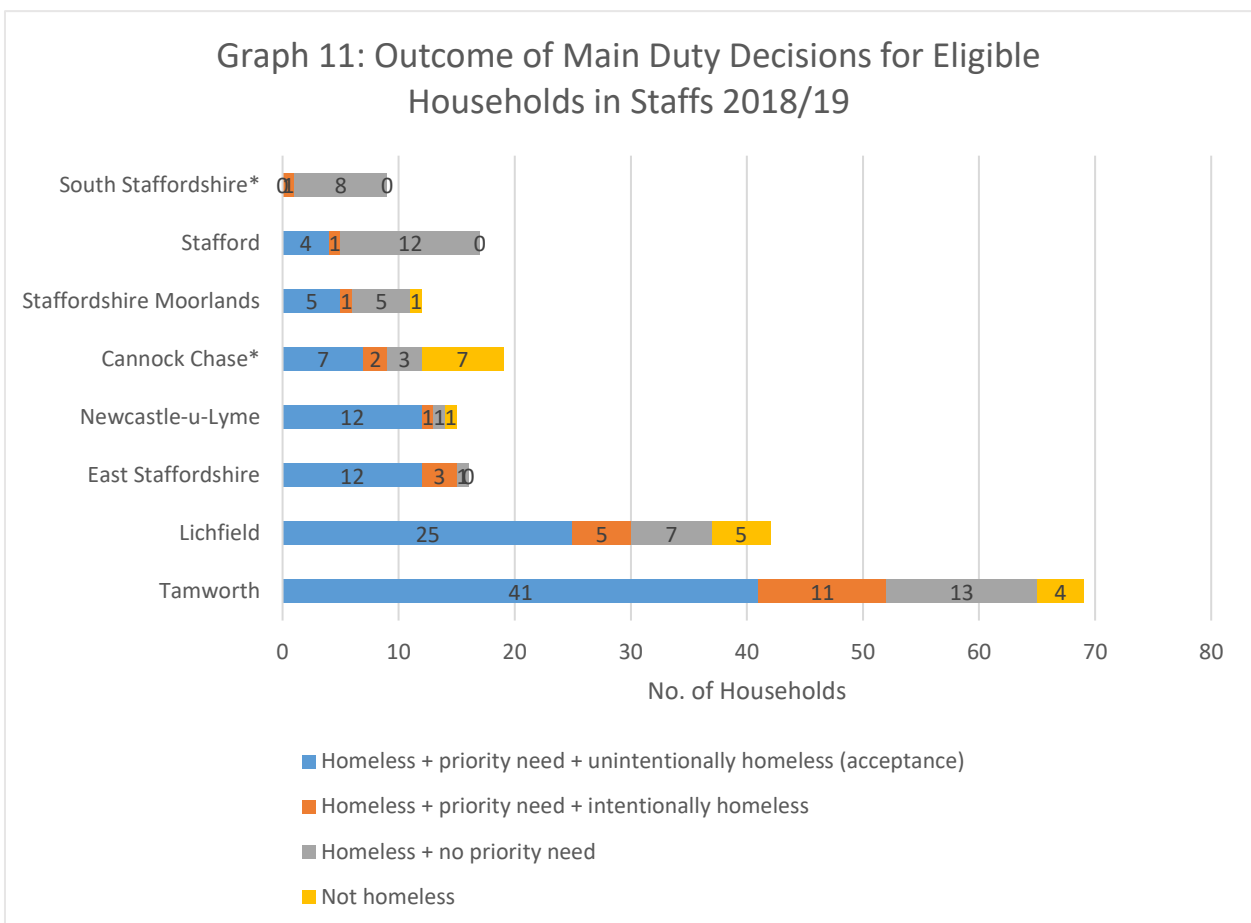
- Graph 10 above shows that we still have relatively few numbers of households who are homeless or at risk of homelessness compared to the other Staffordshire local authorities. Graph 2 compared the numbers under previous housing legislation showing that we had the fourth lowest number of acceptances. With the change in homeless definitions, we now have the third lowest number of total assessments and households owed the prevention duty, with only Cannock Chase and South Staffordshire having fewer.
- The number of households owed the relief duty is slightly higher as we had the fourth lowest numbers in 2018/19.

Main duty decisions

The full housing or main duty applies where the duty to prevent or relieve homelessness has not been successful. Only those who are eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless, and have a priority need will qualify.

Despite Graph 10 showing that we had low numbers of assessments, Graph 11 below shows that this was very different with regard to main duty decisions made in 2018/19. Here, we had the second largest number in the county behind Tamworth Borough Council and the next placed local authorities (East Staffordshire and Newcastle-under-Lyme) had less than half the number of decisions compared to Lichfield. There are a number of explanations regarding this inconsistency, namely:-

- We have a shortage of affordable private rental properties available to low-income families resulting in fewer options when it comes to finding alternative accommodation, which means that more will consequently be owed the main housing duty as they have not been rehoused once the relief stage had ended.
- Some of the other local authorities in Staffordshire have more supported accommodation than we do which are vital in helping vulnerable households to secure housing.



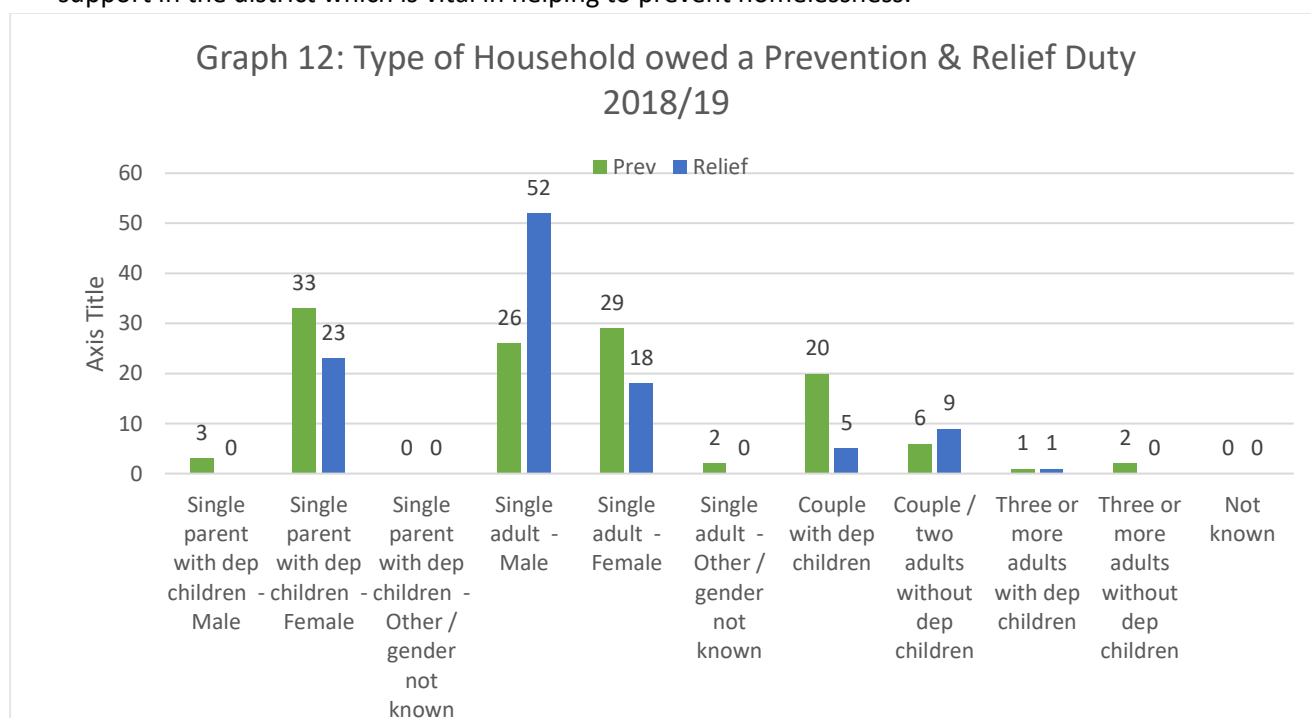
Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Govt (MHCLG) Live Tables on Homelessness

Who is being made homeless in Lichfield District?

Type of household

The information collated under the new legislation is more detailed than before, particularly with regard to the type of household which will give a better understanding of who is most at risk of homelessness. The graph below shows that:-

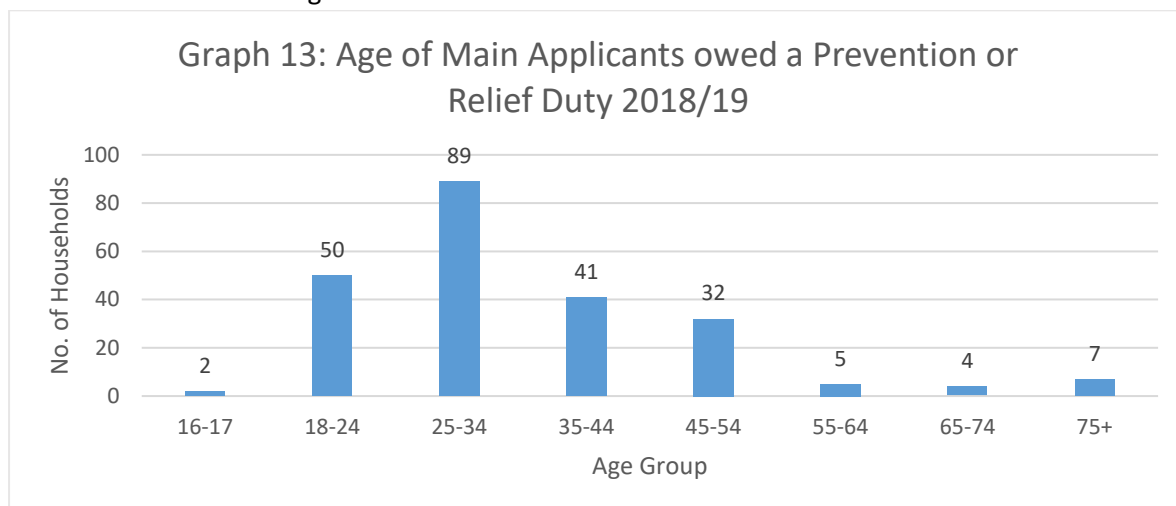
- 🏠 In 2018/19, single males were most likely to be owed a duty with twice the number being owed the relief duty rather than prevention. This suggests that single men are more likely to only seek help when they are at crisis point and actually homeless. This may be for the following reasons:-
 - In the past, this group were not entitled to much assistance with their homelessness and so single men may not have bothered seeking help from the council.
 - For some time, we have had little access to supported accommodation and floating services for complex needs such as drug and alcohol dependency which is more prevalent in men than women.
- 🏠 The next most likely group was female single parents though, in these cases, there were more owed the prevention duty rather than relief.
- 🏠 The third most likely group to seek help with homelessness was single females, making up 20% of the total owed a duty.
- 🏠 In 2018/19 there were a total of 29 households with dependent children who were owed the relief duty. In other words, there were 29 families who were at the most extreme end of homelessness and at crisis point.
- 🏠 These figures contradict the trends we were seeing prior to the introduction of the HRA when it was most common for families with females as the head of the household to be homeless. The new trends of single males and females now being more likely to be owed a duty shows that these groups were largely overlooked before the HRA. It also strongly suggests a lack of housing related support in the district which is vital in helping to prevent homelessness.



Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Govt (MHCLG) Live Tables on Homelessness

Age

- 🏠 The graph below shows that there were 52 households aged between 18 and 24 who were owed a duty. This is a very young age to be facing homelessness and suggests that, in many cases, these are individuals who have just left the parental home and are struggling with finding suitable and affordable accommodation. This may be a reflection on the lack of housing options for this group as a single person up to the age of 34 is usually only entitled to housing costs based on the single room rate of Local Housing Allowance, meaning they are further disadvantaged by the lack of affordable shared housing in the district.

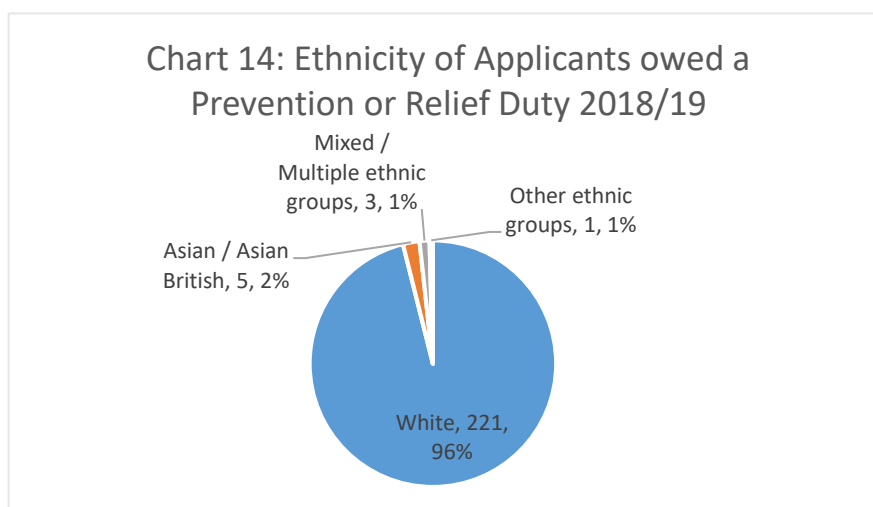


Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Govt (MHCLG) Live Tables on Homelessness

- 🏠 11 households aged 65 or over were also accepted as homeless including 7 aged 75 or older. This may suggest a rise in the number of older people facing homelessness, which is something that is also emerging on a national level.

Ethnic background

The chart below shows that the ethnicity of those households owed a duty in 2018/19 has not altered significantly since the introduction of the HRA and still reflects the composition of the district population as a whole.

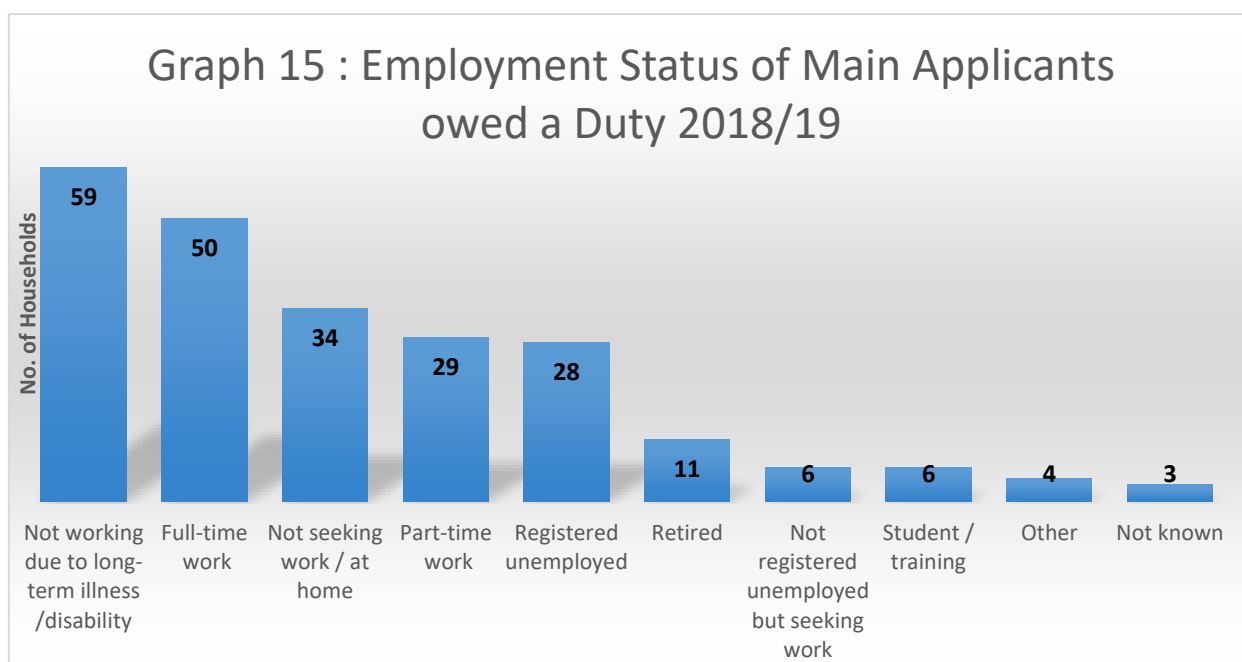


of Housing, Communities & Local Govt (MHCLG) Live Tables on Homelessness

Source: Ministry

Employment status

The graph below shows the employment status of the main applicants owed a duty in 2018/19.

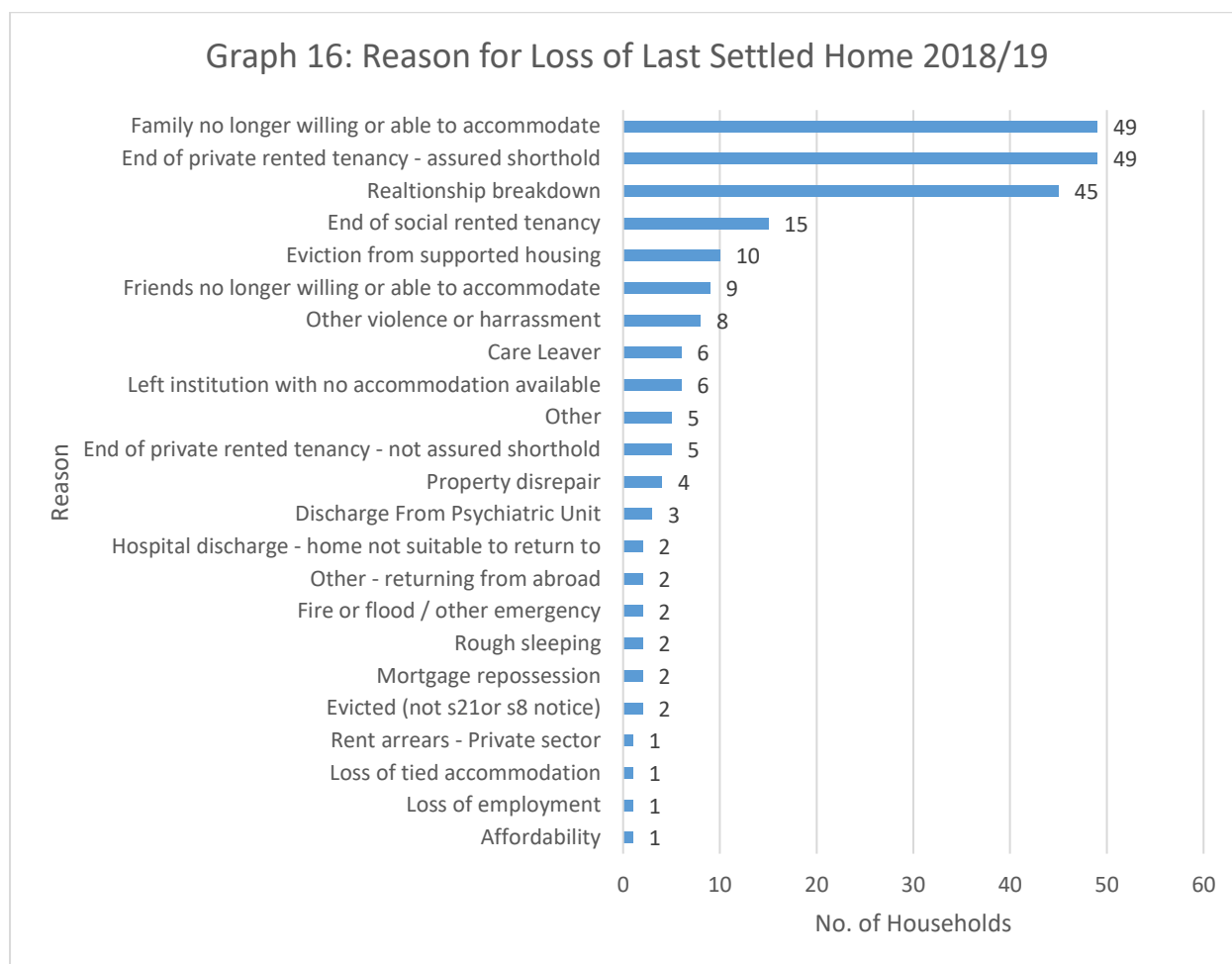


Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Govt (MHCLG) Live Tables on Homelessness

Key findings:

- ⊞ The majority of homeless applicants were those who were not working due to a long-term illness or disability.
- ⊞ 22% of applicants owed a duty were in full-time work, which is again an indication that there is a lack of affordable housing in the district if households cannot find a suitable property on a full-time salary.
- ⊞ The number of applicants not seeking work is most likely a reflection on the number of single parent households that present to the council
- ⊞ The number of applicants in part-time work and registered unemployed/seeking work shows that there is a need for support services that can advise on seeking appropriate and better paid employment. It also suggests a need for suitable advice on benefit entitlement, which may also help those who are retired or studying and facing homelessness.

Reason for loss of last settled home in 2018-19



Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Govt (MHCLG) Live Tables on Homelessness

The graph above gives the most common reasons for households to lose their home in 2018/19 and shows that:

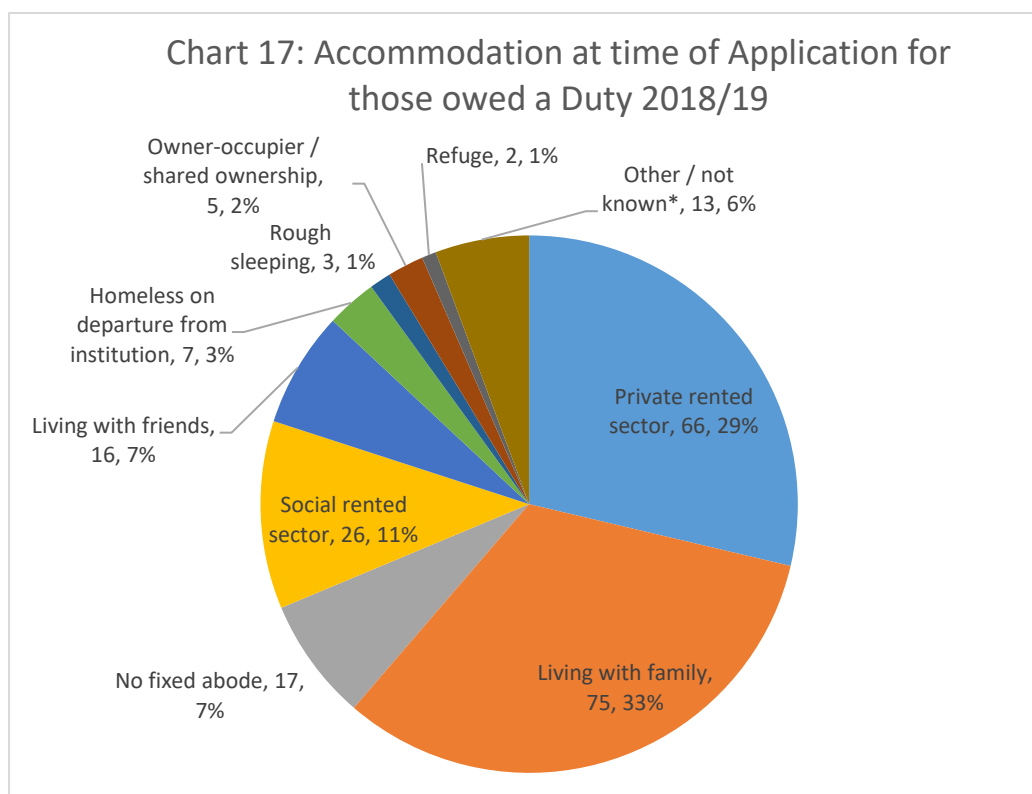
- 🏠 The top three most common reasons for homelessness applications in 2018/19 were:-
 - Families no longer able or willing to accommodate (21%) (joint first),
 - The ending of a private tenancy (21%) (joint first)
 - Relationship breakdown (19.5%)⁶
- 🏠 These were also the top three reasons, although in a slightly different order, for homelessness in 2014-2018 (see Graph 5) though numbers have increased considerably. For example, Graph 5 shows that in 2017/18, 21 households were accepted as homeless due to parental eviction compared to 49 in 2018/19. It is not clear, however, if these cases are **parents** evicting their children as the category is now 'family eviction'. There were 13 households made homeless due to the loss of a private tenancy and 27 were due to a relationship breakdown in 2017/18 whereas graph 5 shows these numbers have noticeably increased to 49 and 45 respectively.
- 🏠 In 2018/19, the number of domestic violence cases doubled from 12 in 2017/18 to 24 in 2018/19. Homelessness due to domestic violence was, in fact, on a steady increase from 2014 to 2018. This may have been due to the closure of refuges which were shut due to

⁶ 24 of relationship breakdowns were due to domestic abuse

funding cuts around this time. The rise to 24 domestic abuse cases in 2018/19 may also be because, under the HRA, these households are now owed a housing duty. Before the HRA, these cases would not always have made a formal homeless application and would have been rehoused directly from the refuge due to having a priority status on our housing register. Domestic abuse cases may therefore have been higher before the HRA, but previously they would not have been included in our homeless data.

Accommodation at time of application for those owed duty

The chart below shows that the majority (33%) of households owed a duty were living with family at the time, followed by 29% of households who were in private rented accommodation. The third group was households living in the social sector. There is a worrying trend of households being made homeless by both private and social landlords which we have noticed for some time and in many cases, the eviction is due to rent arrears. As Lichfield district has a very buoyant private rental market it has disadvantaged low-income households. Some landlords are therefore quick to serve a section 21 notice on a tenant if they are having difficulty paying their rent, rather than allow time for them to pay off their debts. In addition, registered providers have become much more commercial and risk averse in recent years and so we are seeing more social sector tenants losing their tenancy through rent arrears.



Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Govt (MHCLG) Live Tables on Homelessness

Support needs for households owed a duty

The recording of support needs is a new requirement under the HRA, which will give us a greater understanding of issues that could have a contributing factor to a person's homelessness.

Of the 230 households that were owed a duty, 151 (66%) were identified as having support needs. The table below shows a list of support needs that were recorded on the personal housing plans of those who were owed a duty in 2018/19. Households can have multiple support needs, so the total number of support needs is more than the actual number of households. Our records show that 24% of those with a support need were found to have two or more support needs and 19% had three or more support needs. Information shown from the table below includes:-

- 🏠 The most common support need was help with mental health issues, accounting for 46% of households with support needs who were owed a duty. 22% of cases had a physical health issue or disability followed by 18.5% who were at risk of or experienced domestic abuse.
- 🏠 2 of those who were owed a duty had served in the armed forces. It is now a requirement for all local authorities to record this number due to the rise in homeless applicants who are veterans.
- 🏠 This is a reflection on the growing number of households that approach the council with multiple and complex support needs. It goes some way in explaining how these households became homeless in the first place but also demonstrates the importance of effective referral processes and protocols with our stakeholders, to ensure that vulnerable households are given the support they need to find and keep suitable accommodation.

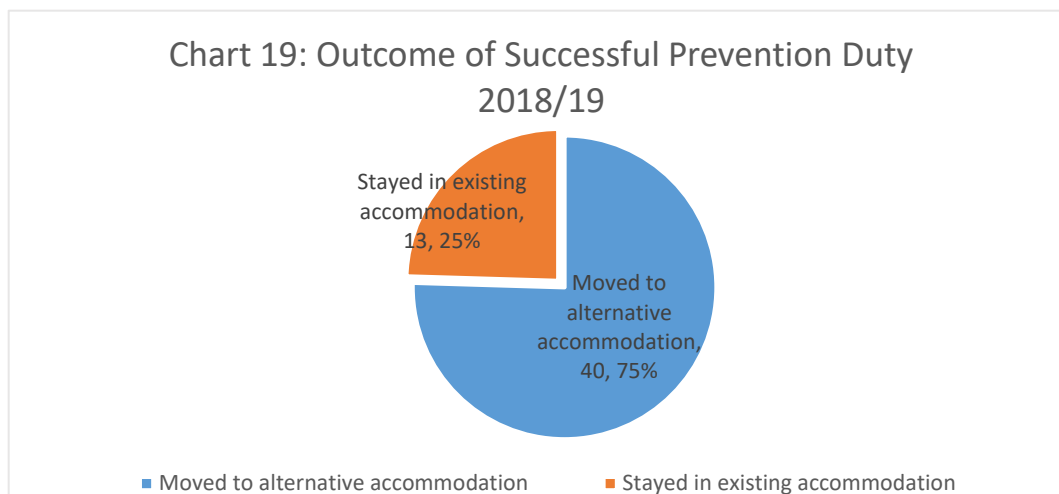
Table 18: Support needs of households owed a prevention or relief duty	No. of times reported
History of mental health problems	69
Physical ill health and disability	33
At risk of / has experienced domestic abuse	28
Access to education, employment or training	27
Drug dependency needs	19
Young person aged 18-25 years requiring support to manage independently	15
Alcohol dependency needs	12
Offending history	9
History of repeat homelessness	9
History of rough sleeping	7
Learning disability	6
At risk of / has experienced abuse (non-domestic abuse)	6
Old age	6
Care leaver aged 18-20 years	6
Care leaver aged 21+ years	5
Young person aged 16-17 years	5
Young parent requiring support to manage independently	4
At risk of / has experienced sexual abuse / exploitation	2
Served in HM Forces	2
Total (for 151 individual households)	270

Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Govt (MHCLG) Live Tables on Homelessness

Homeless preventions and reliefs

Of the 122 households owed the prevention duty (see Graph 10), 109 had their prevention duty discharged⁷ and, of the 108 households owed the relief duty, 106 had this duty discharged.

These new prevention figures cannot be directly compared with those in Graph 6 due to the change in definition under the HRA, which, as highlighted earlier, now places more obligations on local authorities before they can record a successful prevention. In addition, the relief duty which helps to secure suitable accommodation for applicants who are homeless and eligible for assistance was not included in previous legislation.



Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Govt (MHCLG) Live Tables on Homelessness

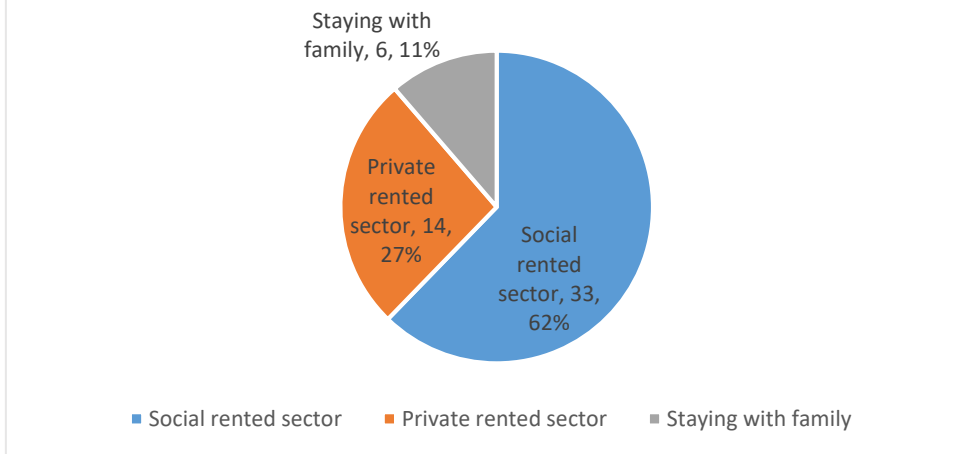
- ☞ The chart above shows that three quarters of prevention cases avoided homelessness by moving to alternative accommodation. This is not ideal and it is usually preferable for households to remain in their existing accommodation, as it is less disruptive, costly and time-consuming than having to relocate. In some circumstances, however, accommodation will be unsustainable or inappropriate (e.g. if the applicant is fleeing domestic abuse).

Type of accommodation secured

- ☞ Chart 20 below shows that, the majority (62%) of households owed a prevention duty were found alternative accommodation in the social rented sector whereas only 14 households were rehoused in the private sector. This clearly shows the difficulty that the council has in finding suitable affordable accommodation in the private rented sector. In most cases, social rented accommodation is the preferred option for households though we are always in need of private rented properties if suitable social housing is not immediately available or if households need a short term tenancy.

⁷ This means the duty has ended in some way as defined by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

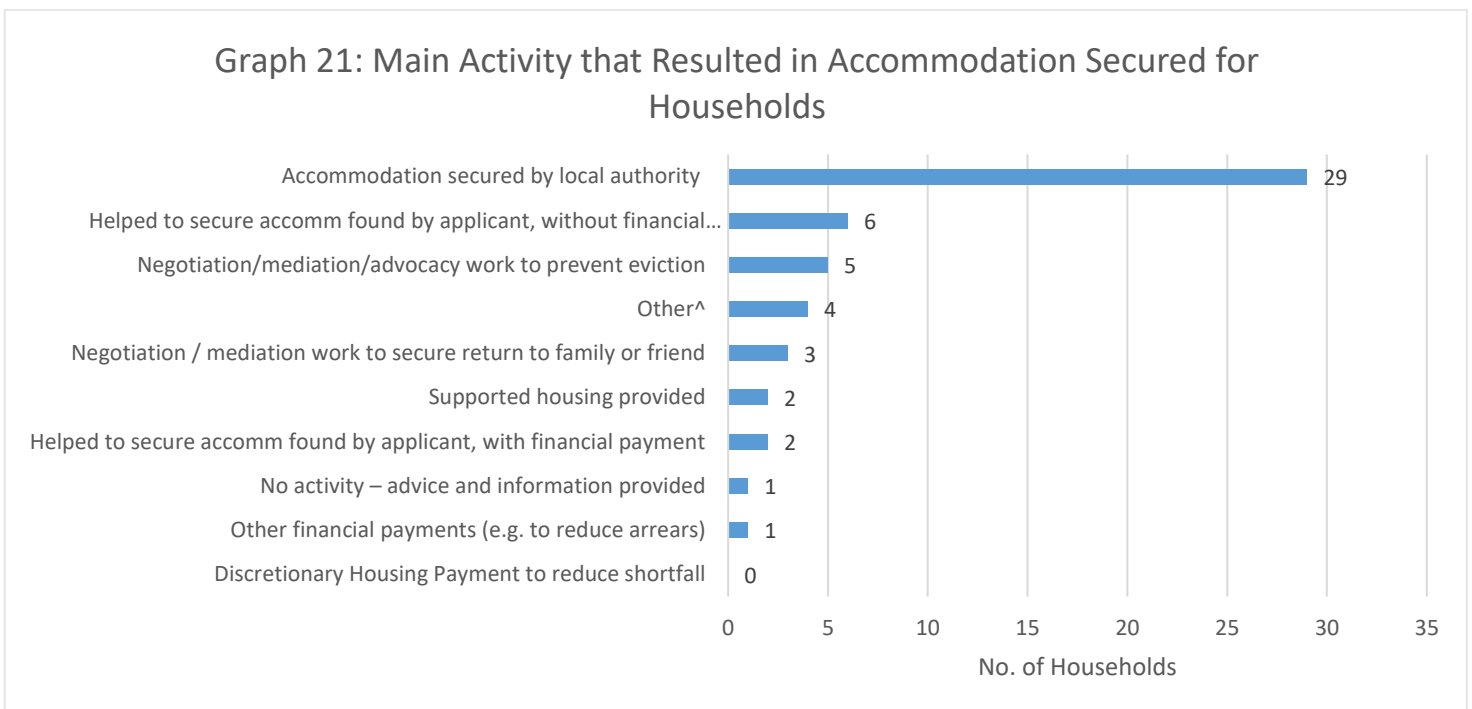
Chart 20: Type of Accommodation secured at end of the Prevention Duty 2018/19



Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Govt (MHCLG) Live Tables on Homelessness

How Accommodation was secured

Graph 21: Main Activity that Resulted in Accommodation Secured for Households



^ Other includes debt advice, resolved benefit problems, sanctuary or other security measures to home, not known, housing related support to sustain accommodation

Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Govt (MHCLG) Live Tables on Homelessness

🏠 The graph above shows that, the majority of households (55%) were able to secure accommodation through positive action by our Housing Options team. We also negotiated for 5 households to remain in their home and for 3 to stay with family or friends. This demonstrates the importance of thorough and more complex working with customers under the HRA which will help to keep evictions down.

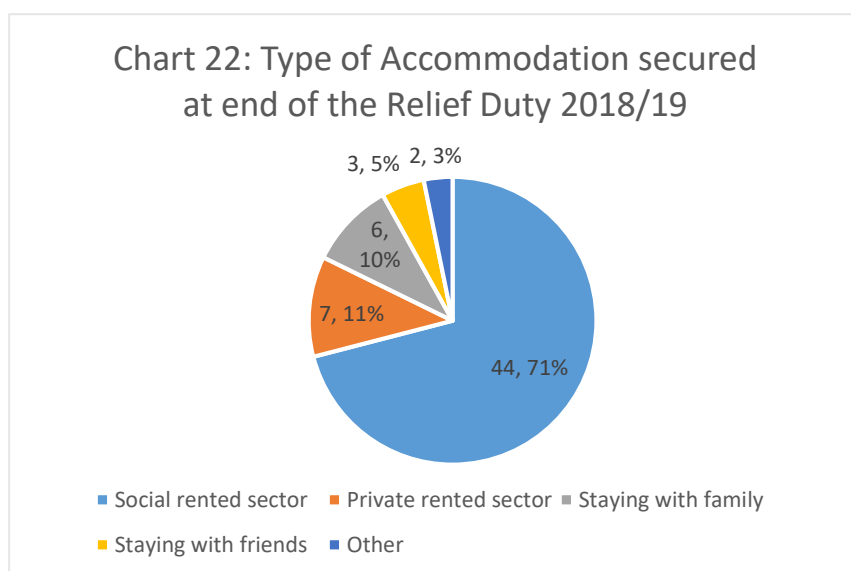
It is interesting that no DHP's were used in 2018/19. We will investigate the use of these payments in more prevention cases in the future as they are an invaluable way of reducing homelessness, particularly when a short-term solution, such as paying rent arrears or securing a rental bond, is required.

Homeless reliefs

Chart 22 below shows that the top three ways that households were relieved of their homelessness were:-

- The provision of a tenancy in the social rented sector
- A private rented property
- Staying with family

There is, however, a significant difference between the number of households that secured accommodation in the social sector (44) and those that took on a private tenancy (7). We will endeavour to address this imbalance through seeking ways to encourage our private sector landlords to provide affordable accommodation to low income households.



Source: Ministry of

Housing, Communities & Local Govt (MHCLG) Live Tables on Homelessness

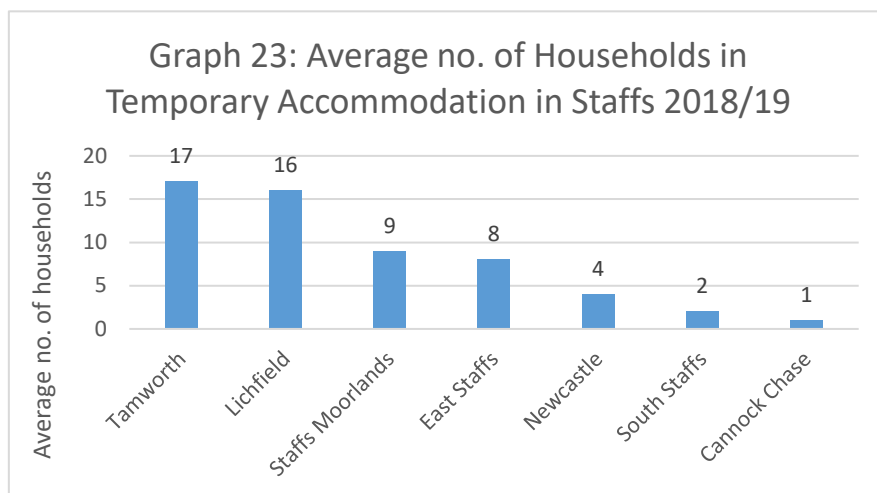
Use of temporary accommodation

Number of households in temporary accommodation

Local authorities have a statutory duty to secure accommodation for unintentionally homeless households that are in a priority need group⁸. Once this has been established, temporary accommodation must be provided whilst the local authority is investigating their homelessness. The cost of accommodation is paid for by the council, for which we can be reimbursed from housing benefit.

⁸ Includes pregnant women, those who have dependent children living with them, 16- and 17-year-olds, care leavers aged 18 to 20 years old and anyone considered vulnerable due to old age, mental illness or disability, or physical disability.

Government statistics show the number of households that are in temporary accommodation at the end of each quarter in the year. This means that some households may be in this accommodation for more than one quarter and so will be counted twice. In order to give an indication of our use of temporary accommodation compared to the other Staffordshire authorities, the table below shows the average number of households that were in temporary accommodation at the end of quarter.

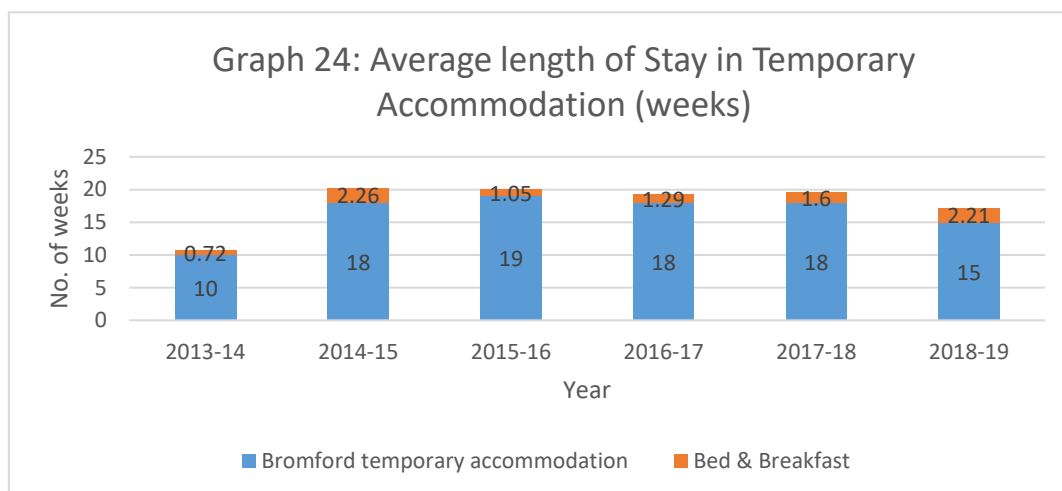


Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Govt (MHCLG) Live Tables on Homelessness

⊞ The graph above shows that, despite having lower numbers of homeless acceptances in relation to the other Staffordshire authorities, we are a high user of temporary accommodation. This is due to the difficulty we have in securing accommodation for our most vulnerable and/or low income families which is, most likely for the following reasons:-

- Private landlords are reluctant to offer accommodation to tenants with support needs, such as mental health issues or drug or alcohol dependency that may cause issues with their tenancy.
- In addition, registered providers are refusing to take on tenants if they are in rent arrears or cannot demonstrate their ability to sustain a tenancy. This results in households staying in temporary accommodation for longer than is necessary.

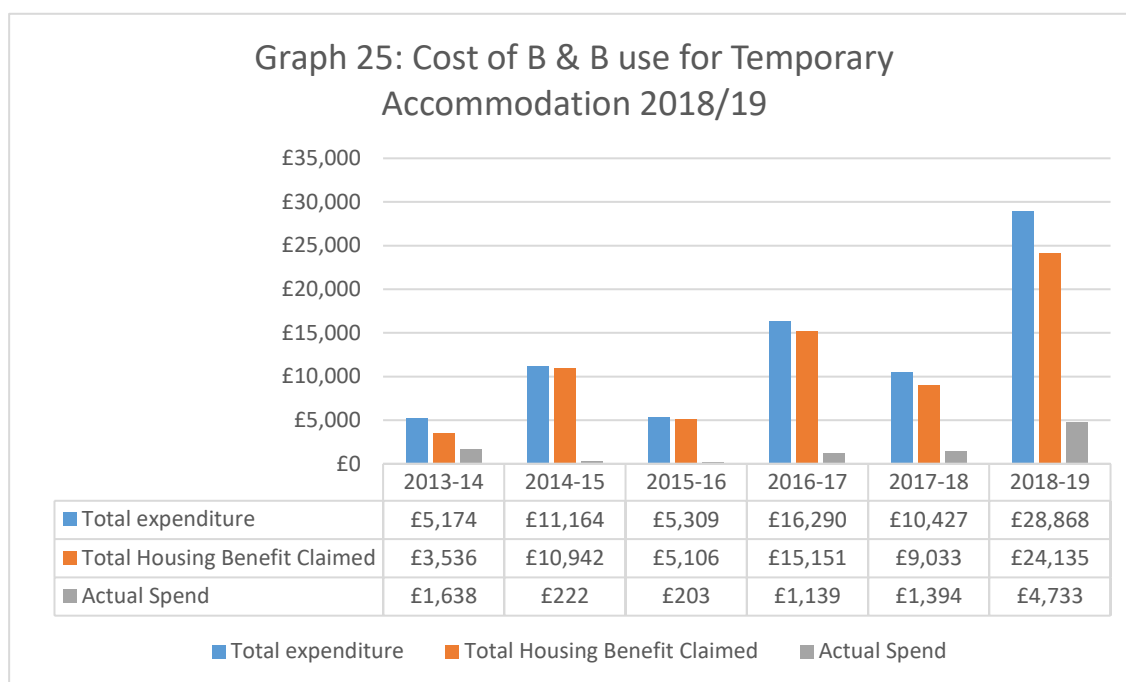
Average length of stay in temporary accommodation



Source: Lichfield District Council

- ⌘ Table 24 above shows that the length of time that households stayed in temporary accommodation until they found a suitable home almost doubled from 10 weeks in 2013/14 to a peak of 19 weeks in 2015/16.
- ⌘ The length of stay decreased from 2017/18 to 2018/19 by a drop of 3 weeks (18 weeks to 15 weeks).
- ⌘ However, the length of stay in Bed and Breakfast accommodation in 2018/19 was three times longer than in 2013/14.

Cost of bed and breakfast emergency accommodation



Source: Lichfield District Council

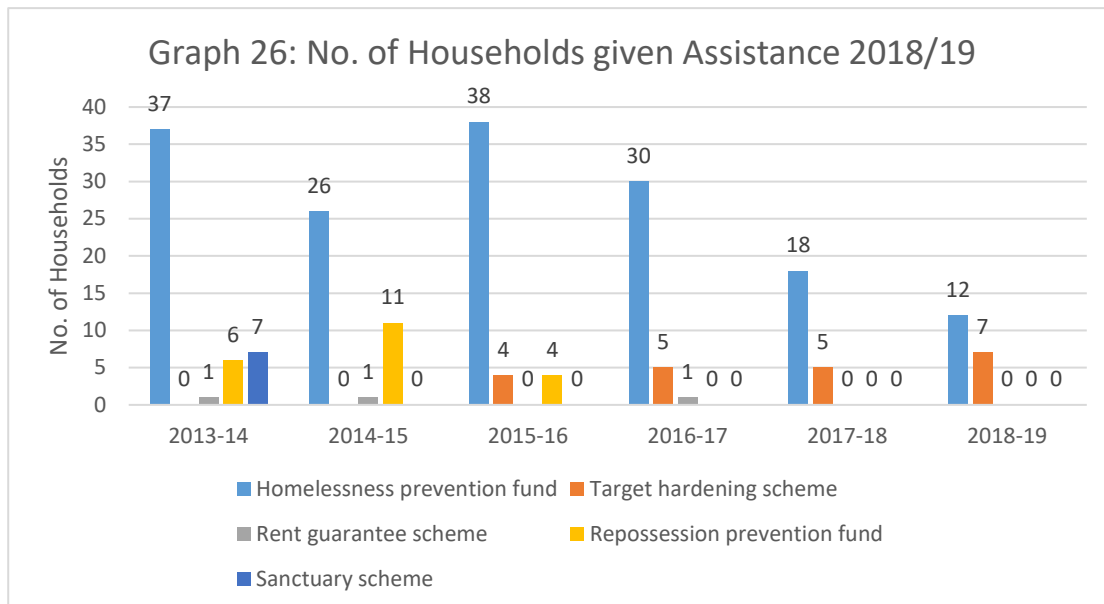
- ⌘ The graph above shows that in 2018/19, the council spent nearly three times as much on B&B accommodation than in 2013/14.
- ⌘ It is likely that the increase in the use of temporary accommodation and the length of stay in Bed & Breakfast establishments is due to the new legislation as
 - households spend more time in temporary accommodation whilst their homelessness situation is thoroughly investigated
 - the new statutory duties to prevent or relieve homelessness have added to the length of time an application is open
- ⌘ The council is also seeing more households becoming homeless who have multiple support needs and, as registered providers are now insisting that support for these needs is put in place before they are offered accommodation, it has resulted in a longer stay in emergency provision.

Homeless prevention schemes

The council has a number of schemes that it can access in order to help prevent homelessness. These are summarised below:

Scheme	Description of scheme
Homelessness prevention fund	A financial assistance scheme (in the form of loans or grants) available to applicants to be used where homelessness can be prevented or relieved and/or the use of temporary accommodation avoided or brought to an end. Can be used for rent in advance, deposits for private rental and Housing Association tenancies. The loans are provided by Fusion Credit Union and underwritten by the council.
Sanctuary (Target hardening) scheme	The prevention of homelessness by ensuring that survivors of domestic abuse and other violent crimes are able to remain in their homes and feel safer and more secure in doing so by the installation of security measures to make a home more resistant to attack or damage.
Rent guarantee scheme	To assist homeless households access private rented sector accommodation. Under this scheme, the council will provide a guarantee against the value of the rent deposit or rent in advance, rather than it being actually paid to the landlord. These are not popular with landlords so few have been used over the last 6 years.
Repossession prevention fund	Specific loans available for any households, which risk becoming homeless through repossession or eviction. It can also be used for individuals at risk of rough sleeping. Merged with the homelessness prevention fund in 2016.
Discretionary Housing Payments(DHP)	A DHP is a payment made in addition to housing benefit or universal credit where the applicant needs financial assistance with housing costs.

Source: Lichfield District Council

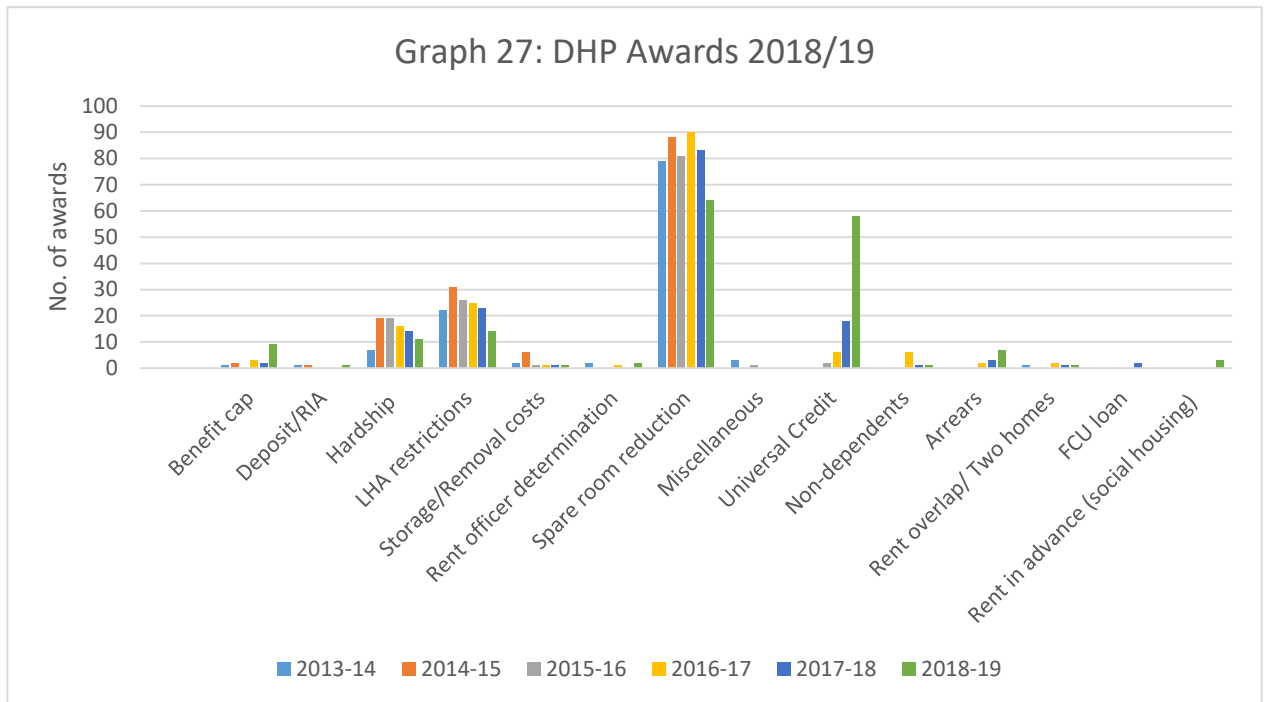


Source: Lichfield District Council

- ⊞ Graph 26 above shows that the Homeless Prevention fund has, by far, assisted the most households. This is used mainly for helping households with rent deposits in order to secure a tenancy in the private sector and is therefore a reflection on the increase in the number of households that now rely on this tenure for housing. The number of households being offered this assistance has, however, dropped considerably, particularly when it merged with the repossession fund in 2016/17. Only a third of households were offered this fund in 2018/19 compared to 2013/14. This is partly due to our increased use of DHP to cover such costs as rent arrears, rent in advance and rent deposits (see page 25).
- ⊞ The number of households that were assisted through the target hardening (sanctuary) scheme is likely to be a reflection on the rising numbers of domestic violence incidents in the district which is also displayed in the figures of households who are being made homeless.

The use of Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) to prevent homelessness

DHP is available to anyone in rented accommodation who needs further financial assistance with their housing costs and is currently, or will be claiming Housing Benefit or Universal Credit that includes a housing element. Further financial assistance is defined as additional financial help that is needed where an applicant is unable to meet their housing costs from their available household income, for example because they have a shortfall or need help with rent arrears. Housing costs generally means rent but can be interpreted more widely to include rent in advance, rent deposits, storage/removal costs or other lump sums associated with a housing need.



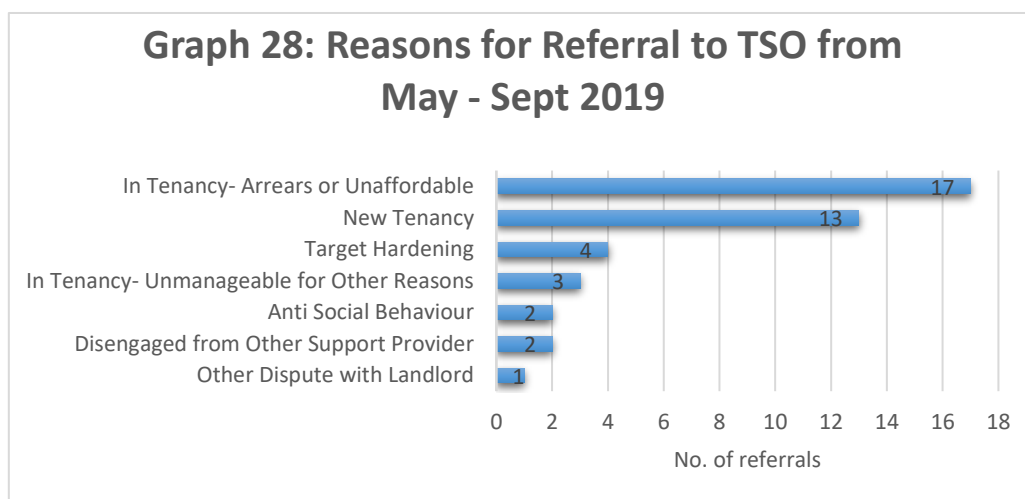
Source: Lichfield District Council Revenues & Benefits Team

DHP payments can be used to support the prevention of homelessness. By assisting people to maintain or move to more affordable tenancies, it can be used to prevent households from falling into debt that might cause them to lose their homes.

- 🏠 The graph above shows that the majority of payments were for customers affected by the spare room reduction. However, there are an increasing number receiving DHP for help with Universal Credit issues, such as changes to the frequency of payments and changes in the amount that is awarded. It is expected that, as more claimants move to Universal Credit that this may increase over the next few years.

The work of the Tenancy Sustainment Officer (TSO)

The purpose of tenancy sustainment is to enable people to keep their tenancies, thereby reducing evictions and preventing homelessness. Our TSO was appointed in April 2019 to assist vulnerable people by connecting them to the right services and support agencies who can help them with issues they might have which can have an impact on their ability to sustain a tenancy.



Source: Lichfield District Council

- 🏠 Graph 28 shows the invaluable work that our TSO is carrying out to help prevent homelessness. Through advising the client on debt management and liaising with other support agencies this has resulted in a number of households being able to remain in their accommodation.
- 🏠 13 households have also been supported in preparing for their new tenancies. This includes training on paying utilities and budgeting advice which will help them to sustain their tenancies in the long-term.

Working with our partner agencies

Citizens Advice South East Staffordshire (CASES)

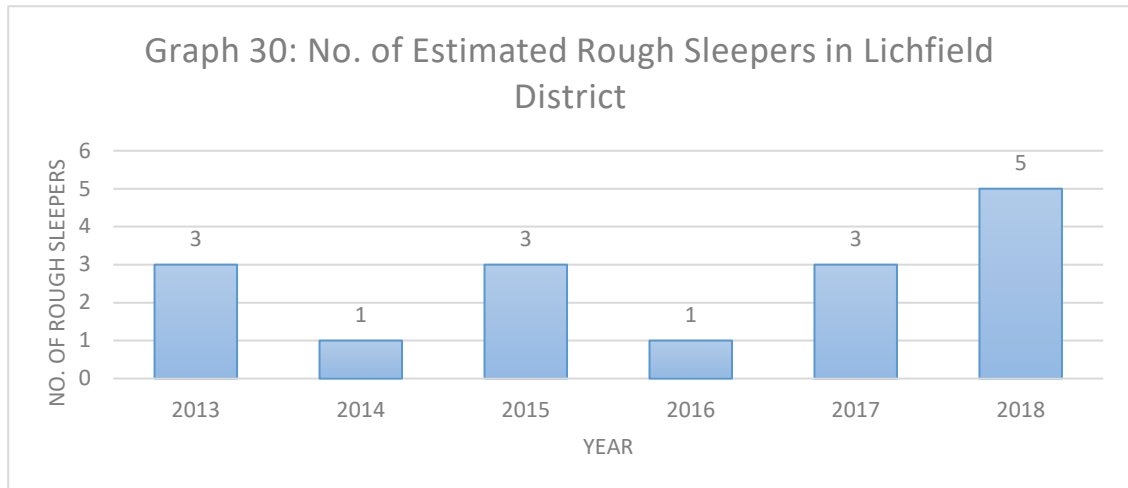
The local Citizens Advice advises residents on issues such as debt management, welfare benefits and housing advice. The council supports this service through our community and voluntary sector grant funding in recognition of how important this work is in the prevention of homelessness.

The table below shows the number of homelessness preventions that were directly related to the work of Citizens Advice in 2018/19 and demonstrates how significant their role is in helping us to prevent homelessness. These cases are additional to the number of preventions that were reported on page 10, Graph 10.

Table 29: No. of Homeless Prevention cases by Citizens Advice		
Type of action	How prevented from becoming homeless	No. of cases
Debt Advice	Remain in existing accommodation	12
Resolving rent or service charge arrears in the social or private rented sector	Remain in existing accommodation	8
Accommodation arranged with friends or relatives	Found alternative accommodation before became homeless	2
Total		22

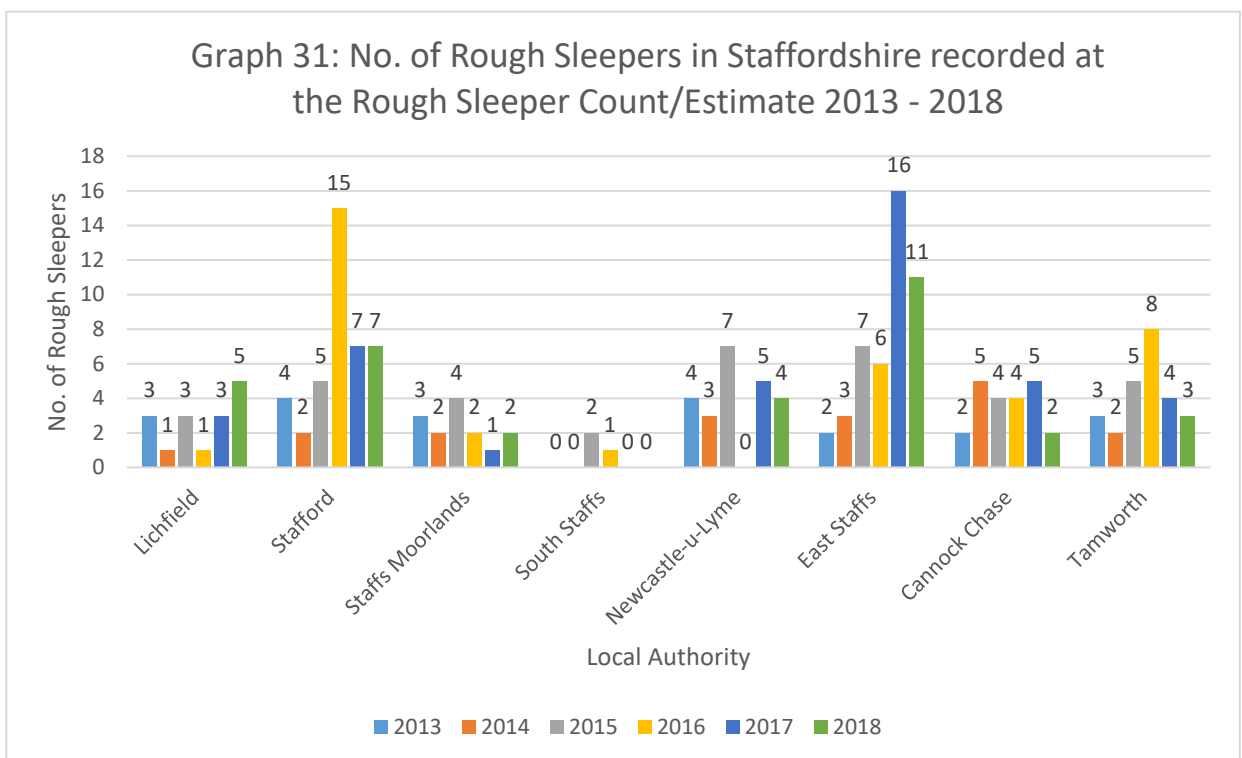
Source: CASES

Rough sleeping



Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Govt (MHCLG) Live Tables on Homelessness

- 🏠 The above figures represent the official rough sleeper annual estimate, which is a snapshot of a single night.
- 🏠 The chart above shows that we had relatively few numbers of people rough sleeping throughout this time period, but there has been a steady increase in the last three years.
- 🏠 Graph 31 below shows that our overall level of rough sleeping is low compared to other areas within Staffordshire with East Staffordshire and Stafford having the highest numbers.



Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Govt (MHCLG) Live Tables on Homelessness

Lichfield Emergency Night Shelter (LENS)

Lichfield Emergency Night Shelter opened for the first time in 2018/19 for two months running from 2 February to 31 March 2019. The table below shows how successful the scheme was in its first year.

Table 32: Information on use of Lichfield Emergency Night Shelter Feb & March 2019	
No. of rough sleepers that used the shelter	8
Average occupancy levels per night	3
Average no. of nights people stayed	22
No. of rough sleepers helped to move to independent or supported accomm.	4
No. offered permanent accommodation	3
No. began engaging in recovery services	2

Source: Lichfield District Council

Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP)

The SWEP is designed to protect rough sleepers from the effects of severe weather by providing accommodation to any rough sleepers, regardless of their eligibility under the homelessness legislation when the night time temperature is likely to be 0 degrees C or below for at least three consecutive nights.

The table below show the number of nights that the SWEP was active and the number of rough sleepers assisted.

Table 33: No. of rough sleepers assisted under the SWEP Protocol 2017-2019				
Year	No. of nights	No. of rough sleepers assisted	No. of nights	Total cost (£)
2017	19	1	3	144
2018	30	3	3	162
2019	11	3	8	360

Source: Lichfield District Council

Annexe C: Summary of the research project on the assessment of the housing needs of older people, people with mental health needs and people with physical disabilities in Lichfield District February 2020

In September 2019, Lichfield District Council commissioned the Housing Learning and Improvement Network (Housing LIN) to carry out a study of the current and future housing needs of the following 3 specific groups of people:

- Older residents (aged 60 or over)
- Adults with mental health issues and/or learning disabilities who require supported accommodation
- Adults with physical disabilities who require adaptations to their homes.

The purpose of this study is to ensure the council is fully aware of the current housing available for these groups and their housing needs for the future. This research will then enable the council to influence development of the right specialist housing through partnership working with developers and Registered Providers. The project consisted of firstly examining existing data on the demographic and socio-economic profile of these groups, followed by interviews and surveys to find out the suitability of their current accommodation and their expected future housing needs.

Findings of the project

Older people

The findings of the study confirmed that our population is getting older and there will be a significant rise in the number of residents aged 65 or over from 2019 to 2035. This will have major implications on the suitability of current housing and will affect demand for certain types of homes to be built over the next few decades. The number of people with long term conditions will increase due to the ageing population and dementia will become more common. The number of older people with learning disabilities will also increase due to people with this condition living longer as life expectancy improves. In light of these findings, Housing LIN concluded the following:-

- **An additional 590 specialist¹ homes will be required by 2035 to accommodate older people with around 295 for rent and 295 for sale.**
- **205 homes with care provision are needed comprising approx. 125 for rent and 80 for sale.**
- The ageing population will mean there will be an increase in the number of people living in unsuitable accommodation due to accessibility issues and there will therefore be an increase in demand for DFGs to install adaptations such as ramps, stairlifts and level access showers.
- A proportion of new homes should be built to Lifetime Homes Standards².
- Due to the rise in dementia cases, there is a need for the provision of dementia care and dementia-friendly homes³.
- Older residents want a greater choice of housing options across all tenures. Many are currently living in large family-sized homes which are unsuitable for their needs and, though they are interested in downsizing, any new homes should be affordable and offer an accessible living environment as they get older.
- Extra care housing is attractive to some older people and there was also an interest in both one and two bedroom properties.

¹ These 'specialist' units include sheltered housing schemes with a scheme manager, 24-hour emergency help service and communal areas; age designated housing such as flats or bungalows where all tenants are over a certain age and extra care housing which has communal facilities and access to domestic support and on-site 24/7 personal care.

² Homes that meet 16 design criteria that are intended to make homes more accessible and adaptable for lifetime use at minimal cost <http://www.lifetimehomes.org.uk/>

³ This includes homes with good lighting, level access floors and simple, user-friendly kitchen and bathroom layout.

- Many of the older residents surveyed stressed the importance for any new age-related homes to be spacious, well-designed and close to amenities and services.
- A lot of older people wanted new housing to have facilities which encouraged social interaction and gave the opportunity to establish a strong community.
- Many of those surveyed thought that there was a shortage of suitable accommodation for older people in Burntwood.

People with learning disabilities and mental health needs

Findings

The findings showed that there will be a slight reduction in the number of residents with learning disabilities but there will be an increase in the number of older people with these conditions due to improvements in life expectancy. Lichfield district also has a small but significant number of adults with learning disabilities who still live with their parents. Unfortunately, these parents are getting older and are beginning to have their own care needs which has implications for the housing options available. In addition, the county council policy is to decrease the use of residential care for adults with learning disabilities and to increase the provision of supported housing. In light of these findings, Housing LIN recommended the following:

- There is a significant number of people with mental health issues that live in unsuitable housing. Many of the people with learning disabilities said that they wished to live as independently as possible in order to improve their quality of life and there is therefore a need for more appropriate affordable housing to be built to enable these groups to live as independently as possible.
- More specialist accommodation and/or support in the home will be required over the coming decades, including for people who are physically disabled *and* have a learning disability, or who lose their current family carer due to old age.
- There is a need for more supported housing for people with learning disabilities to enable people to live independently in their community and close to family support networks. **An estimated 32 net additional units of supported housing is required for people with learning disabilities in Lichfield district to 2030/31.**
- There is a need for the District Council to engage with County Council commissioners to develop district level housing plans in relation to meeting the housing needs of adults with learning disabilities.

Lichfield District Council's response to this project

In the light of these findings, the council has included the following actions to the Action Plan attached to this strategy:

- Ensure Disabled Facilities Grants are delivered efficiently and in accordance with statutory duties
- Work in partnership to maximise delivery of new age appropriate and specialist homes through the planning process
- Negotiate provision of specialist housing, where appropriate, in new housing schemes
- Establish a good working relationship with Staffordshire County Council Adult Social Care Team
- Share the study and research findings with key stakeholders

Priority one: Enable people to live in good quality homes that are suitable for their needs

Objective one: Promote services enabling people to live independently in their own homes

Actions	Milestones	Outcomes	Lead Officer & resources	Timescale
1.1 Ensure Disabled Facilities Grants(DFGs) are delivered efficiently and in accordance with statutory duties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Quarterly and annual SILIS performance reports produced ✓ Information available online for customers is reviewed ✓ Review the contract and future DFG delivery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 70 adaptations are completed per annum ✓ DFG Budget is spent ✓ DFGs are delivered effectively 	<p>HWM,</p> <p>DFG budget of £1.1 m</p>	<p>Quarterly reports.</p> <p>Contract renewal March 2023</p>
1.2 Review and publish a revised Housing Assistance Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Review the effectiveness and outcomes achieved through the current policy ✓ Review the emergency home repair grant eligibility ✓ Review assistance provided through the homelessness prevention and assistance policy and consolidate both policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ A review of the policy and the effectiveness of housing assistance is completed ✓ A draft revised policy is produced and consulted on ✓ Final consolidated policy completed and website updated 	<p>HWM</p> <p>HOM, HSWO</p>	<p>March 2021</p>

Objective two: Advise and where possible support vulnerable households living in poor housing conditions

Actions	Milestones	Outcomes	Lead Officer & resources	Timescale
1.3 Make effective use of our statutory powers to improve the private rented stock, ensuring homes meet at least minimum housing standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Highlight our statutory powers and offer guidance through the Landlords Forum ✓ Monitor the number of complaints received and action taken ✓ Develop intelligence gathering techniques to ensure unlicensed HMOs are licenced ✓ Review and improve the information on our website to ensure tenants are aware of their rights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Private rented stock is improved ✓ All complaints are responded to in-line with the customer promise and appropriate action is taken ✓ Annual review of complaints ✓ Increased number of licensed HMOs ✓ Website is improved 	<p>PSHM,</p> <p>PSHO, HWSO</p>	<p>March 2024</p>

Objective two: Advise and where possible support vulnerable households living in poor housing conditions					
Actions	Milestones	Outcomes	Lead Officer & resources	Timescale	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Review resources available to commence more proactive improvement work 				
1.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through Warmer Homes Greener District (WHGD) work in partnership with Staffordshire Warmer Homes Partners to deliver positive health and housing outcomes amongst target groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Delivery of Staffordshire Warmer Homes project ✓ Completion of street-level mains gas schemes enabling homes to benefit from new mains gas connection and first time gas central heating ✓ Quarterly monitoring of referrals and associated impacts between WHGD and health/care partners 	HWSO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> December 2024 March 2024 	
1.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the WHGD advice line and the various services available to all residents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Approval of new flexible eligibility declarations ✓ Organisation of geographically targeted promotion ✓ Performance of WHGD is reviewed annually 	HWSO, WGHD budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual reviews March 2024 	
Objective three: Encourage the best use of the housing stock					
Actions	Milestones	Outcomes	Lead Officer & Resources	Timescale	
1.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work to minimise the number of long term empty homes in the district and increase the number brought back into use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Online information resource is published ✓ Participate in the development of the 'Action On Empty Homes' national toolkit for communities and local authorities ✓ Review policy on empty homes 	HWSO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> March 2024 End of 2021 	
1.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalise and implement new arrangements for the administration of the housing register and the new allocation scheme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ New arrangements for the housing register are finalised ✓ Review, adopt and implement a revised Housing Allocations scheme and allocations system ✓ Nomination agreements with RPs are reviewed and revised 	HWM, HOM, HSO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> March 2021 Tenancy Strategy April 2021 	

Objective three: Encourage the best use of the housing stock				
Actions	Milestones	Outcomes	Lead Officer & Resources	Timescale
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Review the Tenancy Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Revised Tenancy Strategy completed 		

Priority two: Increase housing choice to meet the needs of current and future residents				
Objective four: Increase the supply of affordable housing				
Actions	Milestones	Outcomes	Lead Officer & Resources	Timescale
2.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work in partnership to maximise delivery of new affordable homes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Review process for responding to planning applications ✓ Complete the housing evidence base for the revised Local Plan including affordable housing need and viability ✓ Local Plan housing policies revised including affordable housing policy (incl. commuted sums) ✓ Supplementary Planning Documents revised ✓ Developer Contributions SPD revised incorporating <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ required contributions on sites including affordable housing ✓ process for determining viability appraisals ✓ Acquire properties using commuted sums, existing reserves and right to buy receipts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Revised process in place ✓ Local Plan housing evidence base completed ✓ Revised target for affordable homes built per annum in accordance with new Local Plan evidence base ✓ Revised Local Plan and policies in place ✓ Revised SPD(s) covering all developer contributions in place ✓ Properties purchased for the Housing First scheme and additional affordable homes acquired to meet our statutory housing duties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Process review October 2020 Local Plan 2021 Revised SPDs 2022 March 2024

Annexe D: Action plan

Priority two: Increase housing choice to meet the needs of current and future residents

Objective four: Increase the supply of affordable housing

Actions	Milestones	Outcomes	Lead Officer & Resources	Timescale
2.2 Work with Approved RPs to monitor their stock and look for new sites and regeneration opportunities to increase the number of rented and shared ownership homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Opportunities for new build and regeneration of older schemes explored ✓ Quarterly updates on new build in the pipeline ✓ Annually review RP criteria for specification and location of new affordable housing ✓ Annual review meetings with Approved RPs to share data and monitor performance ✓ Annual update of the Housing directory of RP stock to monitor disposals and completions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Regeneration schemes identified ✓ Reviewed RP criteria for the specification and location of new affordable housing ✓ Supply of affordable homes increased ✓ Housing Directory updated 	<p>HWM HWSO</p>	<p>Annually March 2024</p>
2.3 Begin developing housing through the council's new local housing company and limited liability partnership with PSP to help accelerate the rate of build and diversify tenure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Development of the first new homes is in progress ✓ Identify medium to long term opportunities to deliver affordable homes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 30 new homes by 2024/25 ✓ Smaller homes for rent and sale built ✓ Profits from homes built are pooled and reinvested into new housing ✓ Medium to long term opportunities to deliver affordable homes identified 	<p>CEx, Asst CEx</p>	<p>2024/25</p>

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Objective five: Ensure an adequate supply of suitable and accessible accommodation for vulnerable and older people in need

	Actions	Milestones	Outcomes	Lead Officer & Resources	Timeline
2.4	Work in partnership to enable new provision of specialist housing and homes built to Lifetime Homes Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Share the Independent Living study findings with key stakeholders such as SCC ✓ Engage with County Council commissioners on their plan for meeting the housing needs of adults with learning disabilities ✓ Ensure the Local Plan reflects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ the needs identified for specialist housing for older people and adults with learning disabilities ✓ the need for homes built to Lifetime Homes Standards ✓ the need for the provision of dementia-friendly homes ✓ Regular updates with partners ✓ Determine success of new schemes being built 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Work to determine what proportion of new homes are built to Lifetime Homes Standards ✓ Revised Local Plan and policies in place ✓ New schemes and opportunities for life time homes identified 	HWM, HSWO	December 2020 Spring 2021
2.5	Monitor the success of specialist housing schemes currently on site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Regular updates with partners ✓ Determine success of new schemes being built 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Greater intelligence obtained on the need for further specialist schemes 	HWM, HSWO	April 2021

Priority three: Prevent or relieve all forms of homelessness including rough sleeping

Objective one: Improve the range of suitable housing options for those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness

	Actions	Milestones	Outcomes	Lead Officer & Resources	Timescale
3.1	Promote the work of the Tenancy Sustainment Officer and develop a 'Private Landlords' Offer' for landlords who have appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Use the Landlords' Forum to ensure landlords are aware of the Tenancy Sustainment Officer role in supporting tenants ✓ Work with landlords to develop a good understanding of the right incentives and support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ An increase in the number of private sector landlords willing to work with us and to rent to vulnerable and low-income households 	HOM, SHOO, TSO	May 2021

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Priority three: Prevent or relieve all forms of homelessness including rough sleeping

Objective one: Improve the range of suitable housing options for those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness

Actions	Milestones	Outcomes	Lead Officer & Resources	Timescale
properties for rent for low-income/vulnerable households	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> required to encourage them to rent to vulnerable and low-income households ✓ Investigate why households are made homeless from private sector tenancies ✓ Set up landlord offer group to determine content of offer and consult on draft with landlords ✓ Review effectiveness of TSO role with Bromford and consider long term sustainability of the role 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Reduced trend of the number of homeless acceptances due to the ending of ASTs ✓ Increased prevention and relief of homelessness due to end of AST ✓ Good communication & working relationship with private landlords 		
3.2 Purchase properties for households with complex and multiple needs including those to be leased out for the Housing First scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Complete acquisition of the 3 properties in progress ✓ Finalise lease with Spring ✓ Identify and purchase other suitable properties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Lease agreement with Spring finalised ✓ 5 properties purchased and let ✓ Increased housing options available for people with complex and multiple needs 	HOS, HOM, PSHO,	End July 2020 for the first 3 and other 2 by April 2021
3.3 Actively promote DHP and homeless prevention schemes to enable households to access or remain in the private or social rented sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Monitor use of DHP & HPS to ensure used to maximum advantage to prevent homelessness ✓ Raise awareness of the use of DHP & HPS amongst our partners ✓ Review homelessness prevention and assistance policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 100% DHP spent ✓ Awareness raised ✓ Homelessness prevention and assistance policy reviewed 	HOM, SHOO	April 2021

Annexe D: Action plan

Priority three: Prevent or relieve all forms of homelessness including rough sleeping

Objective two: Identify and provide support to those who face barriers to accessing and maintaining suitable accommodation

Actions	Milestones	Outcomes	Lead Officer & Resources	Timescale
3.4 Review joint working arrangements with all partners, public and third sector organisations to ensure that maximum support is available to those with complex and multiple needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Carry out a regular review of the referral process to ensure the correct procedure is being carried out & all relevant households are being referred ✓ Identify new supported accommodation to increase the options available ✓ Review suitability of supported schemes ✓ Review the operation of the weekly Vulnerability Hub and encourage all agencies that can help prevent homelessness to attend ✓ Review role of Through Care Group and agree terms of reference ✓ Develop an eviction protocol with Pathway to reduce the number of households that are asked to leave the refuge and seek help with accommodation from the council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Increase awareness of and accessibility to services to create an enhanced customer experience ✓ New supported accommodation schemes, including out of area with no local connection criteria are identified ✓ Vulnerability Hub reviewed ✓ Terms of reference for Through Care Group agreed ✓ Protocol with Pathway established ✓ Fewer approaches from households asked to leave the Pathway refuge 	HOM, SHOO, HOT	March 2024
3.5 Develop our Homeless Prevention Forum of housing providers, support services and partner agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Establish regular meetings of the Forum ✓ Work with partner, voluntary, community and statutory organisations to review best practice and measure the impact of initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Forum established, membership, role, remit and terms of reference agreed ✓ Forum monitors the strategy action plan 	HOM, SHOO	March 2021
3.6 Work with Registered Providers to establish a protocol to reduce the number of evictions from social housing and increase access to accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Liaise with RPs about their strategies to prevent homelessness e.g. through their 'Homes for Cathy'¹ commitments. ✓ Discuss with RPs their policies with regard to previous housing debt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Increase the number of households that are prevented from homelessness by being able to remain in their existing home 	HOM, SHOO, TSO	March 2024

¹ A group of Housing Associations that have signed up to nine commitments aimed at tackling homelessness

Annexe D: Action plan

Priority three: Prevent or relieve all forms of homelessness including rough sleeping

Objective two: Identify and provide support to those who face barriers to accessing and maintaining suitable accommodation

Actions	Milestones	Outcomes	Lead Officer & Resources	Timescale
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Look at the establishment of eviction panels 			
3.7 Ensure effective discharge protocols with public agencies are in place where appropriate and possible e.g. Hospitals and prisons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Review existing protocols with all prisons ✓ Review protocols with hospitals ✓ Promote the use of discharge planning meetings where possible ✓ Promote use of 'Alert' protocol 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Number and nature of applications from hospitals, prisons, etc., is known to inform further actions ✓ Effective protocol in place with prisons particularly over placement of high risk offenders ✓ Protocols in use where needed 	HOM, SHOO	Prisons end of 2020 All others by end of 2021`
3.8 Effectively liaise with other council departments to improve the prevention of homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Explore using a community safety mediation scheme for relationship breakdown/ family exclusion ✓ Work with the Community Safety team to ensure incidents of violence or anti-social behaviour are addressed ✓ Develop early warning system with private sector team where there are potential issues regarding a tenancy that may lead to eviction ✓ Ensure optimum use of DHP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Greater liaison between services ✓ Greater take up of services 	HOM, community safety team, revs and benefits, PSHO	June 2021

Annexe D: Action plan

Priority three: Prevent or relieve all forms of homelessness including rough sleeping Objective three: Tackle rough sleeping so that no one needs to sleep rough

Actions	Milestones	Outcomes	Lead officer & resources	Timescale
3.9 Monitor and review the Spring Housing rough sleeper outreach service and 'Housing First' project to ensure it delivers its outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Regular monitoring meeting held with Spring HA to ensure targets are being met ✓ Annual reviews completed ✓ Council properties purchased ✓ RP properties identified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Reduction in rough sleepers ✓ Additional support provided to rough sleepers including access to health and addiction services 	HOM, SHOO, Spring, HOT	May 2021
3.10 Review the SWEP protocol in line with government guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ SWEP reviewed regarding the triggers for activation ✓ Review agencies on distribution list ✓ Monitor number of rough sleepers housed through SWEP as a measure of the success 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Revised SWEP criteria operational ✓ SWEP activated during all forms of severe weather ✓ Revised homelessness prevention and assistance policy 	HOM	SWEP review complete March 2021
3.11 Work closely with Churches Together to evaluate the future need for a night shelter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Review success of previous night shelters ✓ Assess requirement and identify funding for future night shelters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Review completed of the night shelters in 2019 and 2020 ✓ Fewer rough sleepers on the streets as they are using the shelter ✓ Night shelters open in future years if needed 	HOM	September 2020 Ongoing
3.12 To work with partners on the District Board to explore a 'diverted giving scheme' or similar initiative to discourage street begging and promote proactive schemes to support people to move away from begging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Attend regular meetings & share intelligence with Community Safety, police and other agencies to report on street begging ✓ Raise awareness amongst the public of the council's new policy on street begging & alternative ways of helping street beggars ✓ Work with police & other agencies to tackle street begging through enforcement methods where appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ A form of alternative or 'diverted' giving scheme is put in place ✓ Public are aware of the scheme and are using it ✓ Reduction in numbers of those street begging 	HOM, Community Safety, HOT	July 2020 for initial launch of scheme

Annexe E: Glossary of homelessness terms

Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP)

This is a payment that can be granted at the discretion of the local authority to help towards housing costs. Only those entitled to Housing Benefit or the housing costs element of Universal Credit can receive it.

Duty to refer

Certain public authorities must notify a local housing authority in England where one of its service users may be homeless or at risk of homelessness (and they agree to the referral). The following are public authorities with a duty to refer:

- prisons
- youth offender institutions and youth offending teams
- secure training centres and colleges
- probation services
- jobcentre plus
- accident and emergency services provided in a hospital
- social service authorities
- The Ministry of Defence is also subject to the duty to refer in relation to members of the Royal Navy, the Royal Marines, the regular army and the Royal Air Force

Eligible for assistance

To qualify for help under the homelessness legislation or to be entitled to housing benefit, an applicant must be eligible for assistance. Eligibility for assistance is dependent upon the applicant's immigration status, or her/his right of residence in the UK or whether s/he is habitually resident in the UK.

Homeless acceptances (pre HRA)

Acceptances: households found to be eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and falling within a priority need group (as defined by homelessness legislation - see below) during the quarter are referred to as 'acceptances'. These households are consequently owed a main homelessness duty by a local housing authority. The main duty is to secure settled accommodation.

Homeless application (prior to the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (HRA))

This refers to when a person who may be homeless or threatened with homelessness within 56 days applies to the local authority for help in finding them a home, to prevent them from losing their home, or to secure alternative accommodation. The application does not need to be in writing and can be made on a person's behalf.

Homelessness assessments (after the HRA)

This is a new definition introduced by the HRA and refers to those households who approach the council as homeless or threatened with homelessness. They are then assessed as being owed either the prevention or relief duty or no duty at all (i.e. they are not homeless or threatened with homelessness within 56 days).

Housing enquiries

These are all enquiries made to the council about issues regarding housing and homelessness. They include telephone calls, emails or visits to reception.

Housing main duty (post HRA)

A person or household is owed the main housing duty if they are found to be eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need.

Intentionally homeless

Section 191(1) provides that a person becomes homeless intentionally if ALL of the following apply:

- a. they deliberately do or fail to do anything in consequence of which they cease to occupy accommodation; and,
- b. the accommodation is available for their occupation; and,
- c. it would have been reasonable for them to continue to occupy the accommodation.

Prevention duty

The prevention duty applies when a local authority is satisfied that an applicant is threatened with homelessness within 56 days and eligible for assistance. The LA is required to 'take reasonable steps to help the applicant to secure that accommodation does not cease to be available'.

Priority need

The Housing Act 1996 defines five categories of people who must be accepted as in priority need, namely:

- pregnant women, or any person who resides with a pregnant woman
- households with dependent children
- all 16- and 17-year-olds, provided they are not a 'relevant child' (i.e. they remain the responsibility of social services) or a child in need to whom a local authority owes a duty under section 20 of the Children Act 1989
- all 18- to 20-year olds, who 'at any time after reaching the age of 16, but while still under 18' were, but are no longer, looked after, accommodated or fostered
- any person who has lost her/his accommodation as a result of an emergency such as flood, fire or other disaster.

The Housing Act 1996 also defines the following groups who will be accepted as in priority need provided that the authority is satisfied that they are vulnerable. A person may be vulnerable as a result of:

- old age, mental illness or disability, physical disability or other special reason, or someone who lives with one of these categories of vulnerable person
- having been looked after, accommodated or fostered and is aged 21 or over
- having been a member of Her Majesty's regular naval, military or air forces
- having served a custodial sentence
- having had to leave accommodation because of violence or threats of violence from another person that are likely to be carried out.

Registered providers (housing associations)

Registered providers in England are independent societies, bodies of trustees or companies that provide low-cost social housing for people in housing need on a non-profit-making basis. They are predominantly charities and any trading surplus is used to maintain existing homes and to help finance new ones.

Relief duty

The relief duty applies when a local authority is satisfied that an applicant is homeless and eligible for assistance. It requires an authority to 'take reasonable steps to help the applicant to secure that suitable accommodation becomes available for the applicant's occupation' for at least six months.

Rough sleeping

A person who is sleeping rough as defined by the government is someone who is sleeping, or bedded down, in the open air (such as on the streets, or in doorways, parks or bus shelters); or are in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats or stations).

Temporary accommodation

This is accommodation provided by the local authority to homeless households in priority need owed the relief duty or the main duty.

