



To:
All members of the
Cabinet

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Date: 13 July 2020

Supplementary Agenda

Cabinet - Wednesday, 15 July 2020

Dear Councillor

I enclose the following items which were marked 'to follow' on the agenda for the Cabinet meeting to be held on Wednesday, 15 July 2020:

- 4. Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025 - Key Decision** **3 - 124**
Cabinet member: Cllr Maureen Attewell

To consider a report on adopting the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025.

Yours sincerely

Gillian Scott
Committee Services

To the members of the Cabinet

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Cabinet**15 July 2020**

Title	Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025		
Purpose of the report	To make a Key Decision		
Report Author	Steph Green, Housing Strategy & Policy Officer		
Cabinet Member	Councillor M. Attewell	Confidential	No
Corporate Priority	Housing		
Recommendations	Cabinet is asked to approve the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025 as appended to this report.		
Reason for Recommendation	The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025 sets out how the Council will tackle and prevent homelessness in the borough. The strategy sets out six key priorities, and is based upon the findings of an extensive Homelessness Review, feedback from two stakeholder events held in 2019, extensive feedback from local partners from the statutory and voluntary sectors, and responses from a six week public consultation which ran from December 2019 to January 2020.		

1. Key issues

1.1 The Council currently has a Homelessness Strategy which covers the period 2014 to 2019. It is a legal requirement under the Homelessness Act 2002 to have a strategy in place for the prevention of homelessness and rough sleeping, which must be reviewed at least every five years and be informed by an in-depth review of homelessness demand and services in Spelthorne. These requirements are summarised in Chapter 2 of the Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities, published by the Government.

Homelessness Review

1.2 The purpose of a Homelessness Review is to determine the levels of actual or possible homelessness and rough sleeping in the local area. It also identifies the current services and options available to the local authority to prevent and tackle homelessness and rough sleeping.

1.3 According to statutory guidance, the review must specifically address:

- (a) the levels, and likely future levels, of homelessness in Spelthorne;
- (b) the activities which are carried out:
 - i) to prevent homelessness in Spelthorne;

- ii) to secure accommodation for in Spelthorne for residents who are or may become homeless in the future; and
 - iii) to provide support for people in Spelthorne who are homeless or who may become at risk of homelessness; or who have been homeless and need support to prevent them becoming homeless again; and,
- (c) the resources available to the Housing Options team, social services authorities, other public authorities, voluntary organisations and other persons for the activities outlined in (b) above.
- 1.4 In completing the review, Officers have considered:
- (a) homelessness casework records and other local sources of data;
 - (b) trends in homelessness approaches and in underlying causes;
 - (c) which cohorts may be more likely to become homeless or be threatened with homelessness;
 - (d) the profile of households who have experienced homelessness in Spelthorne;
 - (e) equality monitoring data, including that relating to homelessness applications and outcomes;
 - (f) the range of factors that may affect future levels of homelessness;
 - (g) the personal and structural factors that may contribute to people becoming homeless; and,
 - (h) any planned legislation or local policy changes that are likely to impact on levels of homelessness for particular groups in Spelthorne.
- 1.5 The public, private and voluntary sectors can all contribute, directly or indirectly, to the prevention of homelessness and the provision of accommodation and support for homeless residents. The review therefore considers the activities of all relevant agencies and organisations, as well as the resources available to them, which may contribute to the delivery of services. This in essence involves carrying out a mapping exercise which supports the identification of gaps in service provision. Bridging these gaps form part of the revised strategy.

Steps already taken in the development of a new strategy

- 1.6 Officers have taken the following steps in the production of the Homelessness Review and draft strategic priorities:
- (a) Online survey sent to approximately 2000 previous service users to gain feedback on the service they received;
 - (b) Stakeholder workshops on 24 September & 14 October: over 100 attendees across 40 organisations represented, including councillors;
 - (c) Homelessness Strategy Working Group: including key officers and the Portfolio Holder for Community Wellbeing;
 - (d) Peer review of the activities being undertaken by neighbouring and comparable housing authorities. This presents opportunities for cross-borough cooperation and joint working;
 - (e) Extensive review of relevant local and national data;

- (f) Presentations have been delivered to Spelthorne’s Health and Wellbeing Group and to committees of elected members throughout the development of the strategy;
- (g) A draft strategy framework was made available for public consultation. This ran for six weeks through December 2019 to January 2020. The public consultation was made available online and hard copies were distributed to all local libraries and made available at the Council Offices;
- (h) This strategy proposal has been cross referenced against:
- the Local Government Association’s ‘Making Homelessness Strategies Happen’ guidance;
 - the ‘Local Housing Authority Checklist: Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategies’ created by Crisis;
 - “Bleak Houses: Tackling the crisis of family homelessness in England” report from the Children’s Commissioner, August 2019;
 - the Royal British Legion’s “Supporting the Armed Forces Community with Housing in England: a Best Practice Guide”; and
 - our obligations under the Housing Act 1996 (as amended), case law, best practice and the Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities (updated 15 April 2019).
- 1.7 The proposed strategy for the period 2020-2025 consists of 6 strategic priorities, and an associated Action Plan. These priorities are:
- (a) End the use of private sector emergency accommodation (bed and breakfasts);
- (b) Reduce the length of stay in temporary accommodation;
- (c) Nobody sleeps rough in Spelthorne;
- (d) Increase the use of the private rented sector for homelessness prevention and relief;
- (e) Invest in staff training and development in order to improve the customer journey within the Housing Options service; and
- (f) Improve partnership working to prevent and relieve homelessness.
- 1.8 The Action Plan contains a range of targets, projects and initiatives which work towards achieving the aims of the strategy. Many of the actions listed are areas of work which will be ongoing throughout the course of the strategy period.
- 1.9 It is proposed the strategic monitoring of the Action Plan is carried out by the Council’s Strategic Housing Group. As the Action Plan is a ‘living’ document that will constantly develop over time, it is proposed that the operational monitoring of the Action Plan is carried out by a new working group which will be set up, made up of representatives from the Council as well as our statutory and voluntary partners. This will include interested elected borough and county councillors.
- 2. Options analysis and proposal**
- Option 1 (recommended) – to approve the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025 as appended to this report**

- 2.1 The final draft of our Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy along with supporting papers are appended to this report:
- (a) Appendix 1: Spelthorne Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025
 - (b) Appendix 2: Spelthorne Homelessness Review 2019
 - (c) Appendix 3: Equality Impact Assessment for the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025
- 2.2 The final draft is presented following extensive work with councillors, stakeholders and the public, outlined in paragraph 1.6.

Option 2 (not recommended) – do nothing

- 2.3 The Council is required under the Homelessness Act 2002 to have a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, which is now out of date. As part of the Government's Rough Sleeper Strategy, there was an expectation from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) that all local authorities have refreshed homelessness strategies in place before the end of December 2019. Spelthorne has missed this deadline as the development of the parent Housing Strategy was delayed towards the end of 2019. Officers negotiated with MHCLG a revised deadline of 31 March 2020. The Council is at risk of censure from MHCLG if it fails to revise its Homelessness Strategy by this date. This may include an inability to access grant funding for homelessness services until such time as we are able to present an approved, viable Homelessness Strategy.

3. Financial implications

- 3.1 The development of the new strategy has been funded using existing financial resources.
- 3.2 Individual projects within the strategy Action Plan may have financial implications in the future, for example sustaining our rough sleeping outreach service. Where these costs cannot be met using existing financial resources, additional budget will be requested at the time when it is required, or through the annual growth bids process and budget setting. The delivery of some elements of the strategy may not be possible if funding is unavailable at the time. In such a situation, the strategy will need to be adjusted accordingly.

4. Other Considerations

- 4.1 An Equality Impact Assessment of the proposed strategy has been carried out. Whilst some negative impacts have been identified, appropriate mitigations have been identified which are already in place which, in the opinion of Officers, satisfactorily addresses these impacts. A copy of this assessment has been appended to this report.

5. Timetable for implementation

- 5.1 Provided that Cabinet approve the recommendation of this report at its meeting on 25 March 2020, then it is anticipated that the strategy will be in use from 1 April 2020.

Background papers: None

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Spelthorne Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025

Appendix 2: Spelthorne Homelessness Review 2019

Appendix 3: Equality Impact Assessment for the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025

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**Spelthorne Borough Council: Homelessness and
Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025**
April 2020

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Foreword

I am pleased to introduce you to Spelthorne Borough Council's new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy for 2020-2025. It outlines in detail how we propose to prevent and tackle homelessness in Spelthorne using six key strategic priorities.

Homelessness is a key part of the Government's domestic agenda, pledging to end rough sleeping by 2025. We are committed partners in this effort and are committed to ensuring residents of Spelthorne have somewhere to call home that is both suitable and affordable. It is vital that our residents have access to effective, specialist support at the earliest opportunity to prevent them from becoming homeless.

This strategy offers exciting opportunities for collaborative working across the statutory and voluntary sector, to maximise the delivery of homelessness prevention and support services in Spelthorne. Its primary aims include:

- ending the use of bed and breakfast accommodation, keeping homeless families closer to their existing support and community networks;
- reducing the length of time which homeless households stay in temporary accommodation, to limit the disruption to accessing schools, GPs and employment;
- enhancing our outreach and intervention services to rough sleepers, whilst also supporting their recovery from living on the streets;
- maximising the use of private rented sector opportunities to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping, and
- investing in staff training and development so that those who need to access homelessness services receive the best available service.

We also plan to implement a new way of monitoring our service delivery. A new monitoring group, made up of not just councillors and council staff, but also of community partners and other statutory agencies, will be responsible for making sure this strategy is implemented, and highlighting areas for continued improvement.

I would like to extend my thanks to our residents, service users, partners and staff members who fed into this ambitious Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, which sets the foundations for homelessness and rough sleeping prevention services over the next five years.

Councillor M. Attewell

Portfolio Holder for Community Wellbeing and Housing

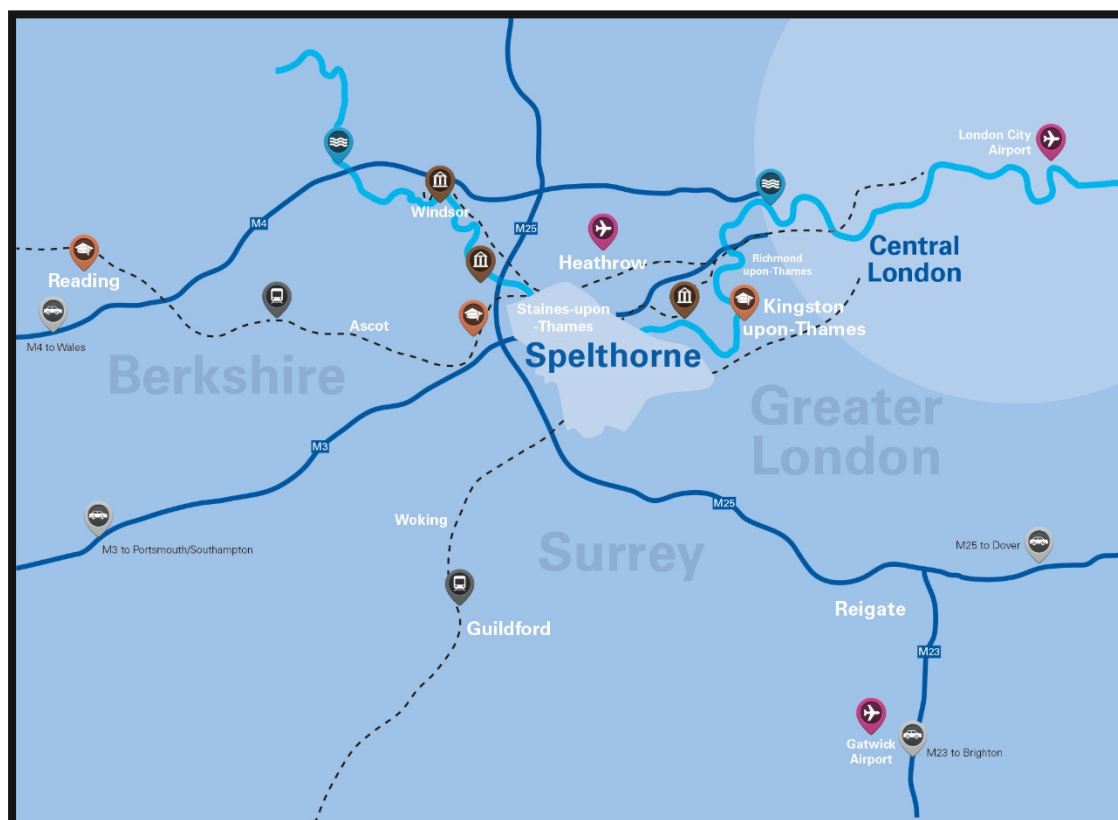
Introduction and overview of Spelthorne

As outlined in our Housing Strategy, we believe Spelthorne is a successful borough that offers suitably accessible transport links, great employment

opportunities and plenty of green open spaces. The Housing Strategy recognises that access to a range of appropriate, affordable housing options is vitally important to ensure that we can build on Spelthorne's success. Furthermore, access to affordable housing options is one method of tackling homelessness and preventing rough sleeping in the borough.

Spelthorne is located on the south-west edge of London and in the north-west of Surrey, neighbouring the boroughs of Slough, Windsor & Maidenhead, Runnymede, Elmbridge, and the London Boroughs of Richmond upon Thames, Hounslow and Hillingdon. The north of the borough borders London Heathrow airport. Spelthorne is densely populated and has five main urban areas: Ashford, Shepperton, Staines-upon-Thames, Stanwell and Sunbury. Outside these urban areas:

- 65% is green belt,
- 30% of the total area is either flood plain or reservoir,
- 17% of the borough is water, and
- We have 12 miles of River Thames frontage.



Almost half of Surrey's 20 most deprived super output areas are in Spelthorne. Three are in the ward of Stanwell North, two in Ashford North and Stanwell South and one in each of Ashford East and Sunbury Common. Spelthorne has the highest number of lone parent families and the highest level of child poverty in Surrey; it also has the highest under-18 conception rate in the county. That said, residents are largely healthy, with life expectancy for both males and females slightly above the national average.

Whilst house prices remain well above the national average, most residents are owner-occupiers (73%), followed by private rented (13%) and social rented (12%).

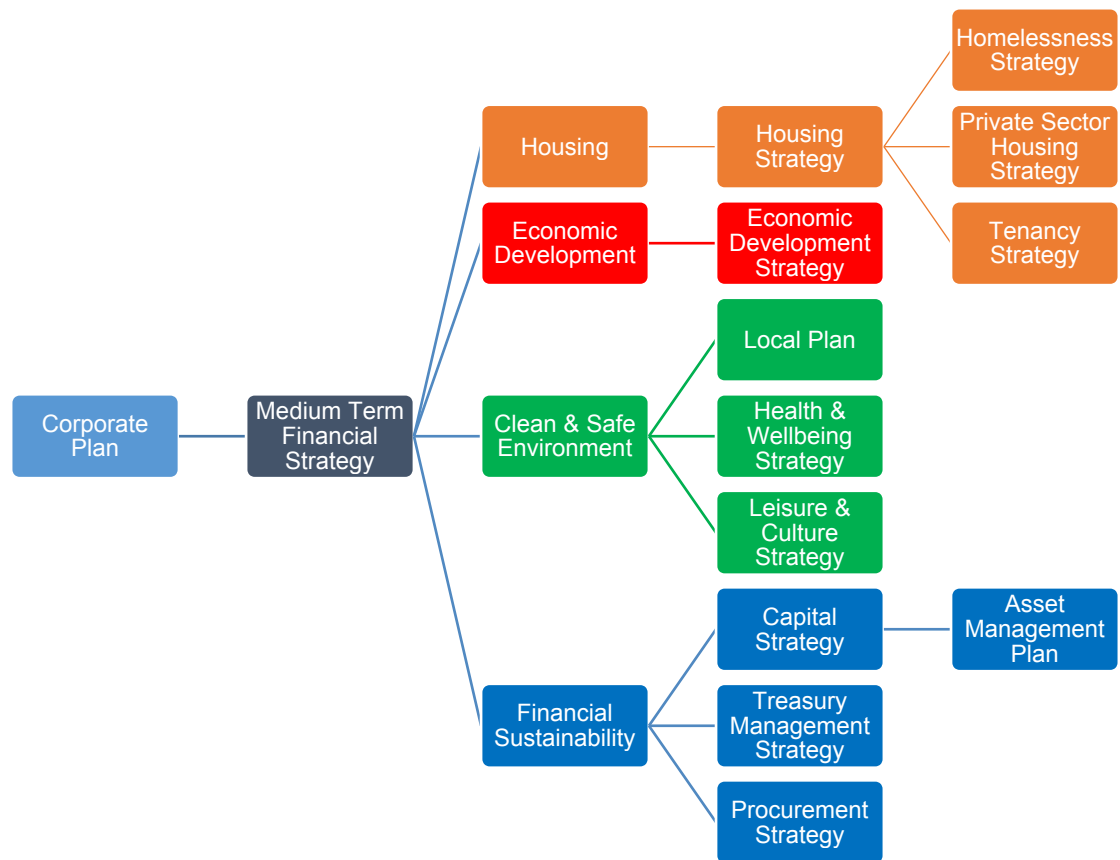
Spelthorne has a slightly lower population of under-30s (34%) compared to the rest of the country (37%), and a slightly higher population of 30-69 year olds (42%) compared with the UK average of (40%), The number of 70+ is 23%, which is broadly in line with the rest of the UK (24%).

Although the number of VAT and/or PAYE-registered business has fallen slightly over the past four years, Spelthorne has a low rate of unemployment: 1.4% of those economically active aged 16 to 64, compared to the South East (2.2%) and UK as a whole (3.5%). Heathrow Airport is a significant local employer, with 8.3% of Spelthorne's working population employed there. Significantly, 21.5% of those in work in Stanwell North are in low level employment compared to an average of 11.6% in Surrey. Average wages are slightly above regional averages at £630 per week for full-time employees.

How the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy links in with the Council's wider work

Housing is one of the Council's four corporate priorities within its Corporate Plan 2016-2019, and our Housing Strategy is the foundation for our approach to meeting our corporate aim:

"To strive towards meeting the housing needs of our residents, providing working families and others in housing need within the Borough with suitable accommodation."



**Note that links above between priorities / strategies do not accurately represent the relationships between the different documents as many strategies interlink with multiple areas of the Council's work.*

The relationship between the Housing Strategy and Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy

There are several areas where both strategies crossover.

Our **Housing Strategy** considers the housing needs of all of our residents, and works to ensure that residents have an appropriate choice in the type and location of a home which meets their needs.

Our **Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy** focusses on supporting those residents who may be homeless now, or at risk of homelessness in the future. It provides the foundations for the delivery of the Council's homelessness and rough sleeping prevention services, and provides the 'toolkit' for our officers to support those residents needing to access our services.

How the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy was developed

The Housing Strategy and Policy team at the Council carried out a Homelessness Review which looked extensively at data from the period 2014 to 2019, specifically:

- the levels, and likely future levels, of homelessness within Spelthorne;
- how Spelthorne works to:
 - prevent homelessness and rough sleeping;
 - secure appropriate accommodation for those who are or may become homeless; and
 - provide support for those who are homeless or who may become at risk of homelessness, including those who experience repeat homelessness;
- the resources available to officers for providing homelessness and rough sleeping prevention services.

A summary of the findings from the Homelessness Review were presented at two stakeholder events held at Spelthorne Borough Council which saw over 100 attendees across 40 organisations represented. These stakeholder events were held in a workshop-style, in order to provide an opportunity for other agencies to offer feedback on our services and suggestions on how we can work together in the future.

These initial suggestions were formed into a draft strategy framework which was made available for public consultation. This ran for 6 weeks through December 2019 to January 2020. The public consultation was made available online and hard copies were distributed to all local libraries and made available at the Council offices.

A working group of relevant officers and councillors considered the results of the Homelessness Review, stakeholder events and public consultation responses. This group then formulated a draft Action Plan, drawing together proposals from across the Council as well as from partner agencies and other statutory bodies.

Following on from our stakeholder events, we had follow up meetings with some of our key partners to consider the draft Action Plan, and fine-tune the strategic priorities. Furthermore, presentations were delivered to committees of elected members throughout the development of the strategy for comment and further amendments.

We have also cross referenced our Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy against:

- the Local Government Association’s ‘Making Homelessness Strategies Happen’ guidance;
- the ‘Local Housing Authority Checklist: Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategies’ created by Crisis;
- “Bleak Houses: Tackling the crisis of family homelessness in England” report from the Children’s Commissioner, August 2019; and
- the Royal British Legion’s “Supporting the Armed Forces Community with Housing in England: a Best Practice Guide”.

We have used these resources to ensure that we have covered key areas of homelessness prevention and relief in our new strategy, and considered any new and innovative ways of working.

In formulating this strategy, we have considered our obligations under the Housing Act 1996 (as amended), case law, best practice and the Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities (updated 15 April 2019).

Spelthorne Homelessness Strategy 2014-2019: Review of Action Plan

The previous Homelessness Strategy 2014-2019 contained eight strategic priorities. The progress that the Council has made on each of these priorities is outlined in the section below.

Strategic priority 1: Adopt a corporate and partnership commitment to preventing homelessness

No.	What we said we would do	How we said we would do it	What progress we have made
1.1	Adopt a homelessness strategy	Homelessness strategy presented to Council	The existing 2014-2019 strategy was commissioned at Cabinet on 15 July 2014, with the final version approved by Cabinet on 30 September 2014.
1.2	Establish a Spelthorne Borough Council Housing Forum	Agree terms of reference and membership. Partnership commitment confirmed at Forum. Commit to annual review of action plans associated with the Housing Strategy/ Private sector strategy and the Homelessness strategy.	To date, a Spelthorne Borough Council Housing Forum has not been set up, although for the past twelve months, Spelthorne Borough Council has joined Runnymede Borough Council's Homelessness Task Group meetings. Consideration is currently being had as to the merits of a combined cross-border group, versus a separate one for Spelthorne.

Strategic priority 2: Develop and provide a comprehensive prevention housing options service

No.	What we said we would do	How we said we would do it	What progress we have made
2.1	Develop a 'triage system' to filter all presenting cases relating to housing options and homelessness prevention	Review current arrangements. Write new procedures that deal with the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing options advice relating to general needs and prevention of homelessness • Housing options advice relating to special needs and prevention of homelessness. • Procedure for dealing with application under the Housing Act 1996 and the discharge of duty into the private rented sector. • Emergency and temporary accommodation. 	The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 has resulted in an entire new suite of processes and procedures, which now outdate the processes we said we would do when the strategy was implemented. All cases are offered an assessment, and where applicants are identified as threatened with homelessness, or actually homeless, they are offered a personal housing plan to either prevent or relieve their homelessness.
2.2	Identify the reasons for 'no fault' evictions and establish action plan to deal with aspects relating to Council or partner responsibilities	Review existing data. Review Housing benefit arrangements Establish action plan.	With the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, there was little resource available to progress this action.
2.3	With partners develop educational and pre-tenancy training courses	Prepare information pack and interactive materials for Spelthorne Borough Council website and for local schools and youth clubs. Prepare materials for use by the Housing options team when working with vulnerable applicants prior to taking up a tenancy.	With the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, there was little resource available to progress this action. We plan to carry this action forward to the next strategy.

		Through the Housing Forum consider development of pre-tenancy training with other agencies.	
2.4	Improve the life chances of households vulnerable to becoming homeless	<p>Through the Housing Forum identify the range of support available to vulnerable households as they relate to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welfare benefits advice • Access to training and employment • Debt counselling • Furniture and white goods • Food banks • Volunteering projects • Access to internet 	With the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, there was little resource available to progress this action. We plan to carry this action forward to the next strategy.

Strategic priority 3: End the use of bed and breakfast accommodation by families

No.	What we said we would do	How we said we would do it	What progress we have made
3.1	Ensure there are sufficient private rented sector units of a good standard available for homeless households	<p>Keep under active review all the households currently accommodated in B and B and develop a fast track plan to get them moved onto temporary accommodation.</p> <p>Support the establishment of the Spelthorne Borough Council Lettings agency (see below)</p> <p>Work with local lettings agencies and the Spelthorne Borough Council lettings agency to secure sufficient private rental sector homes for presenting clients.</p>	<p>Whilst we have not ended the use of B&B accommodation by families we have significantly reduced the number of out-of-borough placements and reduced the average length of time for B&B users over the last five years.</p> <p>Our Spelthorne Rent Assure scheme was established in December 2016 and has seen great success. This is explained in more detail under strategic priority 6.</p>

Strategic priority 4: Facilitate the discharge of the homelessness duty into the private rented sector

No.	What we said we would do	How we said we would do it	What progress we have made
4.1	Prepare procedures for the processing of applications under the Housing Act 1996	Review current approach and draft new procedures	New policy for the discharge into the private sector has been in place since 2014. Revised procedures were drawn up in early 2018 in light of the implementation of Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. These were subsequently updated in February 2019 following clarifications in the Code of Guidance, and experiences over the first year of the new legislation.
4.2	Prepare a communications campaign for the general public on the change of approach	Devise materials for use in the campaign including reasoning behind the decision; timescales for implementation; simple guides for those in housing need; information for the Spelthorne Borough Council website.	The Council's website was updated in 2018, following which greater functionality was possible. Since then, comprehensive information has been available to the general public regarding how the Council's housing options service operates.
4.3	Train all staff in the new approach	Prepare training materials and run in-house course for all Housing Options front line staff and managers	Training in this area has been ongoing, but issues with data quality have been raised by the Homelessness Review which will need addressing in the new strategy. There is a clear need for ongoing training and support for officers to make legally sound and robust decisions.

Strategic priority 5: Through the Housing Forum develop housing pathways for vulnerable groups

No.	What we said we would do	How we said we would do it	What progress we have made
5.1	Identify all the vulnerable groups	<p>Through the Housing Forum review data and research relating to vulnerable groups.</p> <p>Identify all bespoke service providers and voluntary groups engaged with these client groups.</p>	<p>As per 1.2, a Housing Forum has not been set up.</p> <p>Since the introduction of the Homeless Reduction Act 2017, we prepared statutory pathway plans required for the identified groups (see 5.2 below)</p>
5.2	Develop housing option pathways for each of the groups (starting with the largest / most at risk groups)	<p>Pathway template devised to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice • Practical support • Specialist housing available • Supported housing offer • Pre-tenancy training 	<p>As a result of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, the Council is required to have pathway plans for a number of different client groups including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) persons released from prison or youth detention accommodation, b) care leavers, c) former members of the regular armed forces, d) victims of domestic abuse, e) persons leaving hospital, f) persons suffering from a mental illness or impairment, and g) Any other group that the authority identify as being at particular risk of homelessness in the authority's district. <p>These pathway plans have been created in partnership with the relevant partner agency, and are 'living documents' which can evolve in time.</p>

Strategic priority 6: Develop a private sector offer through working with landlords and through a Spelthorne Borough Council lettings agency and the acquisition of Spelthorne Borough Council properties for use as temporary accommodation

No.	What we said we would do	How we said we would do it	What progress we have made
6.1	Establish a Spelthorne Borough Council lettings agency	Identify the Spelthorne Borough Council offer to landlords Consider the governance models for a letting agency (in-house; voluntary sector; housing company?) and prepare a business case. Launch the lettings agency and agree targets for year one.	The Rent Assure Scheme was set up in 2016 to offer competitive market rent to landlords who offer their properties to the Council for homeless families. This was in addition to the existing Bond Scheme which was set up in 2007. To January 2020, there are 70 landlords signed up to the rent assure scheme, across 91 properties. In addition to the 245 landlords signed up to the existing Bond Scheme, across 368 properties.
6.2	Acquire a portfolio of Spelthorne Borough Council properties	Prepare business case for Council approval for use of reserves to buy properties. Establish governance arrangements (see above). Procure management agent for day to day running of the portfolio.	Knowle Green Estates was set up in May 2016 following the purchase of Harper House in Ashford. Since then, the Assets team has significantly expanded its portfolio, and is currently working on a number of sites which will provide a steady supply of privately rented homes, a number of which will be available to the Council's housing department for nomination into.
6.3	Work with local lettings agencies to secure further private sector rental units	Ongoing liaison and marketing to the private rental sector.	Since the launch of our Rent Assure Scheme in December 2016 the Rent Assure team has liaised with lettings agencies and managed to secure a number of properties with 11 different local estate agents.

Strategic priority 7: Adopt a ‘no second night out’ for emergency accommodation

No.	What we said we would do	How we said we would do it	What progress we have made
7.1	Improve the service offer to single homeless people	Secure additional funding through the ‘Single homeless fund’ for a specialist worker. Include single homeless people in the definition of vulnerable groups and develop a pathway.	Spelthorne Borough Council had a Single Person Complex Case Worker attached to the Family Support Team, funded by the ‘single homeless fund’ grant funding. This post was initially shared with Elmbridge Borough Council, but once the grant funding ended, this service was fully integrated into and funded by Spelthorne.
7.2	Ensure that there is adequate winter shelter	Work with local voluntary and faith groups to ensure a cold weather shelter is available	We worked with Runnymede Borough Council and Elmbridge Borough Council to provide a winter shelter at the Hersham Road hostel. This was successfully implemented for one year. Since then each borough has made their own arrangements.

Strategic priority 8: In partnership with the Citizens Advice Bureau prevent mortgage repossessions

No.	What we said we would do	How we said we would do it	What progress we have made
8.1	Ensure a co-ordinated approach to advising and supporting households vulnerable to mortgage repossessions	Through the Housing Forum identify agencies available to provide assistance. Council to consider developing a business case for a mortgage rescue project using Spelthorne Borough Council reserves as funding.	As per 1.2, a Spelthorne Borough Council Housing Forum has not been set up. The mortgage rescue protocol was introduced by national government so there is now earlier preventative work. This is reflected in our statistics which show we have a low number of homeless households from mortgage repossessions.

The national context and our current homelessness and preventing rough sleeping challenges

Whilst homelessness is linked to one of our main corporate priorities (Housing), a number of factors influence our ability to deliver our housing and homelessness advice for Spelthorne. Many of these are as a result, both directly and indirectly, of national government policy and legislation.

The national policy context

Recent statistics from the Chartered Institute of Housing's UK Housing Review 2019 indicates that in the year of 2017/18, nationally 56,570 homeless households were recorded, with the South East region accounting for 7,730¹ of these. Whilst the numbers have fluctuated there has been a general increase of homelessness in the last five years. The review identifies the main reasons for homelessness which remains consistent over the last five years. The top three reasons for homelessness nationally are:

- Loss of private dwelling, including tied accommodation, which accounts for 35% of homelessness.
- Parents, relatives or friend no longer willing or able to accommodate, which accounts for 27% of homelessness
- Breakdown of relationship with partner (including where domestic violence is involved), which accounts for 17% of homelessness.

In a similar trend, Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) identifies an increase in the number of rough sleepers both nationally and regionally. MHCLG conduct an annual snapshot of people rough sleeping on a single night by using street or spot counts and evidence-based estimates. MHCLG's 2018 annual autumn snapshot of national rough sleeping recorded 4,677 people as sleeping rough on a single night. This figure is nearly double what it was in 2014 when it was 2,744².

In August 2018, the Government released its Rough Sleeping Strategy which set out how it would seek to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and eliminate it by 2027. It makes 61 commitments, which focus on three key themes: prevention, intervention, and recovery. A Delivery Plan was published in December 2018 which provided more detail on how the target would be met. This includes the introduction and distribution of a Rough Sleeper Initiative fund to local authorities for immediate support.

¹ Chartered Institute of Housing. M. Stephens, J. Perry, P. Williams, and G. Young (2019). 2019 UK Housing Review. CIH: Coventry.

² Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (2018) 'Rough Sleeping Statistics Autumn 2018, England (Revised)'. Retrieved from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/rough-sleeping-in-england-autumn-2018>

Following the General Election in December 2019, the Conservative Government updated its commitment to ending rough sleeping by 2025 – two years earlier than planned.

Significant changes to the law on homelessness were implemented in April 2018 through the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. This legislation enhances the legal duties Spelthorne, as the local housing authority, has towards certain people who find themselves homeless or threatened with homelessness. Changes included:

- Extending the time in which a household is defined as ‘threatened with homelessness’ from 28 days to 56 days.
- Placing homelessness prevention on a statutory basis regardless of priority need or whether someone may be intentionally homeless.
- Requiring authorities to provide personalised assessments and housing plans in all eligible cases, which contain ‘reasonable steps’ for both the authority and the applicant to take to prevent or relieve homelessness.

A national review of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 is to be undertaken by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in 2019/20, which will assess the effectiveness of the changes in reducing homelessness overall. Spelthorne Borough Council recently participated in MHCLG’s public consultation which called for evidence on the impact of the Homeless Reduction Act 2017. The results from this review are due to be published by Summer 2020.

A range of measures to raise standards in the private rented sector:

- Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act which gives tenants the right to take their landlord to court in cases where their rented property poses health risks. The Act applies to all tenancies created after 20 March 2019, with all existing tenancies being covered from 20 March 2020
- Extension of HMO licencing to include all properties which accommodate five or more people, from two or more separate households.
- Tenant Fees Act 2019 which bans certain landlord and lettings agent fees, and caps the level of tenancy deposits required. The aim is to reduce the costs that tenants can face in accessing and sustaining a tenancy. There have already been widespread reports that this has led to an increase in rents as landlords seek to recover their costs in other ways.
- Proposal to abolish ‘no fault’ evictions in the private rented sector. Section 21 notices currently allow a landlord to terminate a tenancy without a specific reason, outside of the initial fixed term. A consultation on this proposal ran from July to October 2019. The results of this consultation are due to be published sometime in 2020, although the Government has already announced, via the Queen’s Speech on 19

December 2019, they plan to move forward with the abolition of Section 21 'no fault' evictions through a Renters' Reform Bill.

Welfare reform

Welfare reform has been ongoing since 2009, introducing a wide package of measures to reduce expenditure on benefits, and to promote the concept of 'making work pay'. Such measures have included:

- The overall benefit cap which limits the amount of benefit a person can claim.
- Introduction of Universal Credit which was implemented on a phased basis and commenced in Spelthorne from November 2018.
- Removal of the spare room subsidy.
- Freeze on the Local Housing Allowance rates.

As outlined in the Housing Strategy, the government's ongoing roll-out of welfare reform policies through the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016 is affecting the way in which the Council can respond to local housing and homelessness pressures.

Local Housing Allowance rate freeze

Local Housing Allowance was implemented in April 2007 and is the system for calculating housing benefit entitlement for tenancies in the private rented sector. The amount of LHA is calculated based on the 30th percentile of local rents in the local area. Since 2016, the levels of Local Housing Allowance (LHA) have been frozen, and will remain frozen until at least 2020.

This, coupled with the fact that in the years before the freeze was implemented, the increases in LHA did not keep pace with market levels, means that there are large shortfalls between market rents and the LHA. Spelthorne is mentioned specifically in research published by Shelter in 2017, as at that time it was an authority with one of the top ten biggest shortfalls between LHA and market rents for both families needing two bedrooms, and single people or couples needing just one bedroom³.

Using data from the Valuation Office Agency⁴ data from December 2018, lower quartile rents per month are higher than LHA levels by up to £139 per month, for all property sizes except for four bedroom properties.

³ Shelter: Analysis: Local Housing Allowance Freeze, March 2017. Retrieved from: https://england.shelter.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/1349012/Final_LHA_analysis.pdf

⁴ Valuation Office Agency Private rental market summary statistics: October 2017 to September 2018 <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/private-rental-market-summary-statistics-october-2017-to-september-2018--2>

	Lower Quartile rent, pcm	LHA level (December 2018)	Shortfall
Room only	£525	£390	-£135
1-bedroom	£875	£774	-£101
2-bedrooms	£1,100	£961	-£139
3-bedrooms	£1,200	£1,199	-£1
4-bedrooms	£1,550	£1,658	£108

Source: Valuation Office Agency Private rental market summary statistics and in-house monitoring

The enduring gap between LHA levels and market rents mean that access to affordable private rented accommodation to prevent or relieve homelessness is a significant challenge.

In order to encourage private landlords in Spelthorne to rent their property through the Council, we offer a rent guarantee scheme called Spelthorne Rent Assure. Benefits of the scheme for landlords include:

- one month's rent paid directly in advance
- a five-week repair bond
- arrangement of property viewings
- free tenancy agreements provided (including Right to Rent checks)
- a free inventory service provided by a professional company
- initial tenancy training at the start of the scheme
- ongoing tenancy sustainment support for both the landlord and tenant is available for the duration of the scheme
- a completely free service

To date, 70 landlords are signed up to the scheme, offering a total of 91 properties to households who found it difficult to access the private rented sector without assistance.

Benefit cap

The government now has an overall limit of how much any single household can receive in welfare. In 2019/20, this amount is set as £20,000 for couples and families with dependent children, and £13,400 for single person households.

As of February 2019, there were 102 households resident in Spelthorne who have been capped, with amounts of up to £200 per week deducted from their benefit allowances. 84% of these are single-parent households, and 64% of these have more than one child.⁵

⁵ DWP Benefit Cap Statistics: Households capped to February 2019 (2 May 2019)

The Housing Options team has a dedicated member of staff who specialises in supporting households affected by the Benefit Cap. Such support includes access to training and/or employment, assistance to claim other benefits which may result in an exemption from the cap, or short term awards of Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP).

Universal credit

The replacement of a range of 'legacy' benefits into one monthly payment, with the claimant being responsible for paying their housing costs represents a massive culture shift from the previous welfare system. All of Spelthorne is covered by Staines Job Centre Plus, which started a rollout of Universal Credit to new claimants as from November 2018. As of February 2019, there were 805 households claiming Universal Credit, of which 61% were not in employment⁶. This number will continue to rise until the end of the managed migration of all welfare claimants onto Universal Credit, which is currently scheduled for 2024.

Research undertaken by the Residential Landlords Association (RLA) in October 2018 found that 61% of landlords had experienced a tenant on Universal Credit going into arrears in the previous twelve months, up from 27% in 2016, and 38% in 2017. The amount owed to landlords was £2,390 on average, with 77% of possession claims involving a tenant on Universal Credit being primarily as a result of rent arrears⁷.

Further research, published by the DWP in July 2018, suggested that Universal Credit was having a direct effect on claimants' ability to maintain rent payments:

“Slightly more than one third of claimants receiving UC payments towards their housing costs were in arrears in both surveys (36 per cent in Wave 1 and 35 per cent in Wave 2). Among those who were in arrears, two thirds (65 per cent) said they fell into debt after they made their claim for UC.”⁸

⁶ DWP Universal Credit statistics: claims, monthly starts and people on Universal Credit up to 14 March 2019, Table 3.2 People on Universal Credit by employment and Local Authority, February 2019 to March 2019

⁷ Simcock, T.J., (2018). Investigating the effect of Welfare Reform on Private Renting.

Manchester:

UK. Residential Landlords Association. Retrieved from:

<https://research.rla.org.uk/wpcontent/uploads/investigating-effect-welfare-reform-private-renting.pdf>

⁸ DWP Universal Credit Full Service Survey by IFF Research. Retrieved from:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/714842/universal-credit-full-service-claimant-survey.pdf

Austerity

Austerity has meant that local government services have received significant funding cuts over the past five years, including to:

- Revenue Support Grant – the money granted to local authorities to fund local services.
- Housing related support services – such as supported accommodation and floating support services, and changes to the way services are commissioned.

In line with other local authorities across the country, financial austerity is affecting the delivery of many local services. As a lower tier authority, Spelthorne is particularly sensitive to the financial situation of Surrey County Council. As reported in our Capital Strategy recently, the cost of offsetting budgetary cuts at county level is approaching £500,000.

Brexit:

The UK voted to leave the EU in June 2016 and there is intense uncertainty over the long-term implications of Brexit on the economy. This makes it difficult to predict the impact of Brexit on the housing market and subsequently homelessness. In July 2018, Homeless Link and Crisis worked with WPI economics to consider the possible impacts of Brexit on homelessness. The three organisations raised questions as to whether the UK Shared Prosperity Fund would be utilised to support the homelessness agenda and questioned what rights future EU migrants may have. Overall they concluded that it is hard to predict the challenges Brexit may cause on homelessness but suggested if the risks posed are carefully considered then an opportunity may be created to improve or renew domestic policy agendas.⁹

The Spelthorne context

Spelthorne's overall level of homelessness and use of emergency accommodation is fuelled by:

- Affordability of the private rented sector for local residents
- Demand on the limited supply of social housing
- The limited number of active affordable housing providers actively developing in the borough, and lack of affordable housing supply through private developments
- Impact of welfare reform policies

In common with other areas across the country, homelessness has been a growing issue. Since 2009, the numbers of statutorily homeless households has increased significantly¹⁰, although the number has remained relatively stagnant over the past four years.

⁹ WPI Economics (2018) Homelessness and the Impact of Brexit: Tackling the Challenges and Grasping the Opportunities. A WPI Economics Report for Crisis and Homeless Link.

¹⁰ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: Detailed local authority level homelessness figures. Section 1, Column e11g

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Number of households accepted as unintentionally homeless, in priority need and owed the “Main Duty”	123	120	115	116	61 ¹¹

Source: In-house monitoring

Over the same period, the average number of households in temporary accommodation per quarter has seen a correspondingly significant increase¹², meaning that the authority’s gross spend on temporary accommodation is now regularly over £1million per year.

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Number of households in Temporary Accommodation (average per quarter)	104	126	112	103	110
Gross spend on temporary accommodation	£1.01m	£1.56m	£1.25m	£1.17m	£1.31m

Source: In-house monitoring

Delivery of affordable housing has also been sluggish over the past four years, with only six affordable dwellings completed in the 2018/19 financial year.

Year	Affordable dwelling completions (Gross)	Affordable dwellings lost (Gross)	Affordable dwellings completed (Net)	Rented (Gross)	%	Shared Ownership (Gross)	%
2014-15	16	43	-27	8	50%	8	50%
2015-16	138	14	124	82	59%	56	41%
2016-17	46	0	46	46	100%	0	0%
2017-18	9	0	9	5	55%	4	45%
2018-19	6	0	6	6	100%	0	0%
Total	215	57	158	147	73%	68	27%

Source: In-house monitoring

This performance pales in comparison to the need. The Council’s Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) Update Report, prepared for the

¹¹ The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 was implemented from April 2018 which introduced two new duties – to prevent homelessness and relieve homelessness. This figure represents the number of applicants who were owed the “main duty” under s193(2) Housing Act 1996 (as amended) following the end of the prevention and relief duties.

¹² Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: Detailed local authority level homelessness figures. Section 6, Column e69c

purposes of revising the Council's Local Plan, suggests an overall need of 459 additional homes per year to 2035 – the vast majority being affordable or social rented instead of affordable home ownership¹³.

The availability of existing social housing stock is severely limited. In 2017/18, there were eleven applicants for every social housing vacancy, on average¹⁴, over double the levels from four years prior.

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Number on Housing Register as at 1 April	1,224	1,598	1,869	2,186	1,245 ¹⁵
Number of lettings	209	249	197	199	170
Ratio applicants to vacancies	6:1	6:1	9:1	11:1	7:1

Source: In-house monitoring

An additional pressure is that Spelthorne has a lack of diversity amongst Registered Providers. Over 90% of the social housing stock is with one provider, A2Dominion¹⁶, which results in us being overly-reliant on that provider's policies and activities. There is also a disproportionately high presence of large providers, with only one provider classified as 'small' (owning less than 1,000 units).

PRP name	Size of organisation	General needs, self-contained social stock	% of overall stock in area
A2Dominion	Large	4438	90.41%
Metropolitan Thames Valley Housing	Large	250	5.09%
L&Q	Large	95	1.94%
PA Housing	Large	86	1.75%
Catalyst	Large	34	0.69%
Ability	Small	3	0.06%
Notting Hill Genesis	Large	2	0.04%
Mount Green	Large	1	0.02%
Total		4909	

¹³ SBC SHMA Update May 2019, prepared by GL Hearn

¹⁴ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: Live Table 600: numbers of households on local authorities' housing waiting lists, by district: England, and in-house recording

¹⁵ In 2018/19, a new Housing Allocations Policy was introduced which resulted in a full re-registration process. This figure represents the number of applicants who had successfully re-registered by 1 April 2019.

¹⁶ Regulator for Social Housing Statistical Data Release 2018. Retrieved from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statistical-data-return-2017-to-2018>

It's important to note that A2Dominion's stock in Spelthorne accounts for roughly 25% of its low cost rented accommodation stock across its entire portfolio, with more than twice as many properties in Spelthorne as the next highest stock holding area in the London Borough of Ealing¹⁷.

Local Authority	No. of low rented homes
Spelthorne	4,435
Ealing	1,985
Hounslow	1,408
Hillingdon	1,238
Bromley	913

The Council's Housing Strategy 2020-25 sets out how the Council plans to engage with Registered Providers in a more proactive way, encouraging new providers to the area, reviewing the use of lettings policies and looking again at our Tenancy Strategy to ensure that Registered Providers offer tenures which meet local need. Additionally, in order to preserve the small amount of existing social housing, the Council will develop protocols with Registered Providers, so that where they seek to dispose of affordable housing locally, that the Council is offered first refusal on any sale.

¹⁷ Regulator for Social Housing Statistical Data Release 2018. Retrieved from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statistical-data-return-2017-to-2018>

Our strategic priorities for the next five years

Our strategic homelessness and rough sleeping prevention priorities over the next five years will focus on six key areas:

- End the use of private sector emergency accommodation (bed & breakfast)
- Reduce the length of stay in temporary accommodation
- Nobody sleeps rough in Spelthorne
- Increase use of private rented sector for homelessness prevention and relief
- Invest in staff training and development in order to improve the customer journey within the Housing Options service.
- Improve partnership working to prevent and relieve homelessness

End the use of private sector emergency accommodation (bed and breakfast)

We need to ensure that our residents who are facing or who are at risk of homelessness are assisted at the earliest opportunity.

Emergency accommodation, otherwise known as ‘bed and breakfast’, lacks security and can be disruptive to households; particularly to those with children as found by Children’s Commissioner¹⁸. Living in emergency accommodation can add to the pressures homeless families are already under. Sometimes we have no choice but to offer accommodation outside of Spelthorne, which can make it difficult to sustain existing support networks and access local services.

This type of accommodation is also extremely costly to the council to secure as we have to compete against nearby London boroughs for suitable establishments. Spelthorne Borough Council currently has a gross budget of £1.5m per year for emergency accommodation. This expenditure could be better used on innovative homelessness preventative methods and longer-term solutions.

Whilst we inspect every establishment which we use for emergency placements, we have very little control over the quality of accommodation on offer above the bare minimum standards.

We will work to end the use of costly private sector emergency accommodation, only using them in the most exceptional of circumstances. We plan to use the redeveloped Harper House as the main service provision for homeless families, and the new White House Hostel for single homeless people. Together with the temporary accommodation owned by A2Dominion, and any additional capacity created through Knowle Green Estates we believe this aim to be entirely achievable.

¹⁸ Children’s Commissioner (2019). Bleak Houses: Tackling the Crisis of Family Homelessness in England. <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/cco-bleak-houses-report-august-2019.pdf>

How we will achieve this

- In line with the Housing Strategy, deliver the redevelopment of Harper House throughout 2020/21, and put in place robust housing management and resident support arrangements to keep placement lengths to a minimum.
- Put in place a comprehensive plan to end the use of emergency accommodation where possible and suitable, starting with out-of-borough placements before moving onto ending in-borough placements also.
- As part of the Council's Housing Strategy, work to deliver a range of tenure options within the Borough, including temporary accommodation. To support this work, we will produce a requirements analysis which will detail the specific types of properties needed to meet the needs of local homeless households. This will include assessing the need for accessible units, sheltered, extra care and keyworker accommodation.
- Implement earlier preventative techniques which includes raising awareness and encouraging the use of the 'duty to refer' which was introduced by the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 and encourage a 'commitment to refer' with local registered providers.
- Closely monitor the level of funding for the Council's homeless prevention fund, leveraging in resources from alternative funding streams where possible and as necessary.
- Review the way in which residents of emergency accommodation are supported to access settled accommodation at the earliest opportunity. With this, we will require all households in emergency accommodation who are on the Housing Register to register for auto-bidding for all suitable available properties. Suitability will be based on the contents of the applicant's personalised housing plan.

Reduce the length of stay in temporary accommodation

Whilst temporary accommodation is slightly more longer term than emergency accommodation, it is still only a temporary measure and can still be disruptive to homeless households.

Currently, the only temporary accommodation available for the Council to use is owned by A2Dominion. Our recent Homelessness Review identified that households in temporary accommodation were on average staying for over a year. Where possible, we want to see a significant reduction in the time homeless households spend in temporary accommodation and see an increase in the number of households we are moving on to more settled accommodation. This will support the reduction both in numbers of households and length of time they stay in emergency accommodation.

How we will achieve this

- Review and establish robust move-on plans for all residents of temporary accommodation. This will be in partnership with A2Dominion who own and manage the properties. Regular progress meetings will highlight those who have lived in temporary accommodation for longer than 6 months. This includes liaising and joint working with family support, voluntary organisations and our other partners to establish effective plans and maximise opportunities for identifying suitable alternative and more settled accommodation.
- Work with A2Dominion to develop the service offer for temporary accommodation. This will include rent levels, quality, fixtures and fittings, as well as move-on plans.
- Ensure referrals have been completed for all existing and future resident families in temporary accommodation to the Spelthorne Rent Assure Scheme. This is another opportunity to help residents in to privately rented accommodation which is more readily available to use.
- In line with our Housing Strategy, we will promote and increase the delivery of suitable affordable rented housing in the borough which will give homeless households greater options of moving onto settled accommodation.
- Assess the impact of affordability issues and limited access to white goods and furniture on our ability to assist clients move on from temporary accommodation. Work with voluntary organisations and identify alternative methods to help families in temporary accommodation access essential goods to prevent delays when moving on to settled accommodation.

Nobody sleeps rough in Spelthorne

The Government's Rough Sleeping Strategy aims to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and eliminate it by 2025. We are committed to supporting this target. Nationally, rough sleeping has nearly doubled in the last 8 years. In Spelthorne, the number of rough sleepers has varied over the years but is an increasing trend which represents an extreme form of homelessness.

Nobody deserves to be sleeping rough in Spelthorne. We want to ensure our homelessness support and outreach service is maximised to ensure this doesn't happen in the first place, and if it does happen then we are able to target appropriate support to individuals to support them from the streets.

We will access a range of funding streams, including through joint bids with neighbouring councils, voluntary and statutory partners, to deliver rough sleeper services.

How we will achieve this

- Develop and keep updated a service support map for rough sleepers in Spelthorne to ensure we are maximising the use of nearby services. As part of this mapping exercise, we will identify gaps in service provision across the borough and work with voluntary and faith sectors to address these gaps.
- In partnership with other Surrey authorities, explore adopting a Surrey Adults Matter MEAM (Making Every Adult Matter) approach and the capability of appointing a 'navigator' for those who may need additional support in seeking accommodation. Allocating more dedicated time to these types of cases may encourage reengagement with the local authority and supporting services.
- Sustain our current Rough Sleeper Coordinator and Outreach service which ensures anyone who is reported as sleeping rough in Spelthorne is offered support and advice at the earliest opportunity. This will involve considering how this role will fit in with the White House Hostel to be developed in 2020/21.
- Encourage the public to use StreetLink to notify us of people sleeping rough in the area. This will enable us to reach and offer support to them sooner.
- Work with other agencies to deliver workshops to local schools and youth clubs to increase awareness of homelessness and housing options.
- Work with A2Dominion, Surrey County Council and other key partner agencies to deliver a Housing First style pilot. We will also identify and jointly work with local NHS primary care networks to facilitate this.
- In line with the Council's Housing Strategy, deliver the White House Hostel project in partnership with Homes England. With this, we will ensure the development of a psychologically informed environment by working with Surrey Adults Matter to deliver trauma informed care training sessions.

- Measure the impact and monitor the effectiveness of our family support team service delivery. The family support team provide additional assistance to families and single homeless people with multiple and complex needs.

Increase use of the private rented sector for homelessness prevention and relief

With the extremely limited availability of social housing, accessing privately rented accommodation is the primary method of preventing and relieving homelessness in Spelthorne.

Strengthening our use of the private rented sector offers us an opportunity to prevent and relieve homelessness at an earlier stage. We want to encourage as many local landlords, estate agents and property developers to work with us as possible.

We already have the Spelthorne Rent Assure scheme – we need to ensure that the service offer meets the needs of both landlords and future tenants of those landlords, as well as the Council as funder of the service.

We also have Knowle Green Estates with a pipeline supply of high quality, private rented accommodation within the Borough. We need to make sure that as much of that accommodation as possible is offered to those who are most in need.

How we will achieve this

- In line with our Council's Housing Strategy, ensure our offer to private sector landlords is competitive, robust, affordable, and suitable.
- Use appropriate marketing methods to encourage new landlords to work with us, and ensure that we have a sustainable pipeline of properties to use.
- In order to improve relations with local estate agents and landlords, we will organise a biennial landlord forum. Part of this will market our Spelthorne Rent Assure scheme and the incentives we offer landlords. In partnership with Jobcentre Plus, the event would include a Q&A stall on Universal Credit to provide reassurance and information to landlords.
- Work with Knowle Green Estates to expand affordable private rental sector tenure in accordance with our Housing Strategy aims.
- Assess the tenancy sustainment support methods we use to prevent homelessness to identify common causes of tenancy risk.
- Work with Citizens Advice Runnymede and Spelthorne social policy team to address and lobby on the broader causes of homelessness such as the challenges of welfare reform.
- In partnership with Jobcentre Plus and Spelthorne Borough Council's Economic Development team, design a workable process to effectively support residents who are affected by any welfare reform (particularly those affected by the benefit cap who are finding it difficult to secure work). The process will focus on skills including CV and interview advice and job searching tips.
- Evaluate how Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) are allocated to ensure effective targeting of households facing homelessness. This will

include making sure we know how we are targeting payments, and whether payments deliver longer term outcomes or not.

- Work with our Environmental Health team on HHSRS (Housing health and safety rating system) inspections to prevent homelessness from properties in poor conditions. This may include the introduction of a housing improvement grant to enable landlords to undertake necessary works, preventing the potential homelessness of the existing residents.
- Develop a pre-tenancy training pack to help prepare residents who are entering in to a tenancy agreement for the first time or who are considered vulnerable and need additional support.
- Explore our Spelthorne Rent Assure scheme service capabilities to ensure optimum efficiency.
- In line with our Housing Strategy, identify suitable incentives to help bring empty homes in the borough back in to use for the purposes of tackling homelessness, including exploring how Spelthorne Rent Assure can fit into this work.
- Carry out an in-depth study of the affordability of affordable rents in Spelthorne.

Invest in staff training and development in order to improve the customer journey within the Housing Options service.

Residents who seek our help because they are homeless or threatened with homelessness are going through a potentially stressful and chaotic point in their life. We want to ensure that those needing help and support receive it in a way in which is suitable for them from confident and knowledgeable staff who are supported to keep their skills and knowledge up-to-date through continued professional development.

This priority is not just about the staff delivering homelessness services, it also encompasses the systems and processes which support the staff to deliver those services. This includes looking at how we collect and use data in a more innovative way to target support services and implement new ways of working.

How we will achieve this

- We will continue working with other Surrey authorities to access shared training events.
- Where appropriate, open up training opportunities to partners to enable the delivery of joint services to meet our strategic priorities.
- Ensure all staff are given counter fraud training to equip staff with the skills for identifying fraudulent activity used to seek homelessness assistance and support. Where applicable, we will work with A2Dominion to identify any concerns of fraud we may identify when carrying out our investigations.
- Seek to implement relevant recommendations from the forthcoming Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government's (MHCLG) review of the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.
- Enhance the Housing section on Spelthorne Borough Council's website to ensure it is easily accessible and has a clear directory of services available in the local area for households threatened or experiencing homelessness.
- Agree annual training plans with members of the team. Open up more opportunities for our Housing Options staff to develop their skills and knowledge of housing and homelessness advice. We will offer staff relevant courses and qualifications and membership of the Chartered Institute of Housing.
- We will review the channels by which customers contact us with an intention of making it simpler and easier to get in touch with us.
- We will implement opportunities for us to collect customer feedback. This will allow us to make more timely reviews of service delivery, and help us to better inform policy development.
- Identify a member of the Housing Options team to complete regular data quality checks. This will ensure regular monitoring of our data on homelessness in the borough and identify staff training requirements where patterns of issues are identified. Improving data quality

monitoring will better inform our decision making on preventing homelessness, and feed into future policy and strategy development.

Improve partnership working to prevent and relieve homelessness

We can't deliver our homelessness and rough sleeper services without the assistance and support of our partners.

We have established strong links with our partners to jointly identify vulnerable groups at risk of homelessness. We want to continue to effectively work with our partners to ensure our society's most vulnerable groups are supported at the earliest opportunity to prevent homelessness. Furthermore, collaborative working enhances the service being delivered as it allows for other issues to be addressed simultaneously.

How will we achieve this

- Work with North Surrey Domestic Abuse Service (NSDAS) to ensure support is offered to victims at risk of, or who are fleeing, domestic abuse. This includes identifying suitable refuges to ensure provision for people fleeing to other areas of the country. Furthermore, we will continue to utilise the 'Sanctuary Scheme' where suitable to create safe havens in existing homes of domestic abuse survivors.
- We will work with offender management services (probation, prisons and youth offending services) to identify people leaving custody who may be at risk of homelessness in order to prevent it at the earliest opportunity. As part of the Homeless Reduction Act 2017, the 'duty to refer' should help this information be communicated in a timely manner.
- Continue to effectively work with our Community Mental Health Team (CMHT) to ensure suitable assistance is offered to residents at risk of, or who are experiencing homelessness. We will actively contribute to our local NHS primary care network implementation group that has been implemented as part of the Surrey Heartlands mental health transformation.
- Continually develop links with child and adult social care services to identify care and support needs for our service users that have additional needs. This includes identifying potential care leavers that are at risk of homelessness and need further support resettling in to and sustaining their accommodation; detailed pathway plans will set out the needs of the young person. Early help services will enable us to improve early homelessness intervention methods.
- Sustain the delivery of supported accommodation and day service drop-in at Hershams Road with Transform, Runnymede Borough Council and Elmbridge Borough Council.
- Develop our work with 'Life Housing' which offers support and accommodation for young single parents, particularly those households with additional support needs. We will explore their growth strategy and identify opportunities for further schemes in the local area.
- Liaise with the NHS on a local hospital discharge protocol to prevent homelessness and to minimise discharge delays where

there is a patient with a housing need that is preventing them from leaving.

- Update our pathway plan for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople threatened with homelessness and enhance our understanding of their needs.
- Prevent and relieve migrant homelessness by broadening our understanding and by identifying and tackling cuckooing and modern day slavery in Spelthorne.
- Continue to liaise with DWP on the effective implementation of the national migration of Universal Credit which is expected to fully complete by 2024.
- Develop further links with armed forces charities to ensure currently serving members of the armed forces and veterans are offered suitable assistance to access and sustain settled accommodation.
- Contribute to the 'Surrey Homeless Health Needs Audit' as part of Surrey County Council's data collection exercise which aims to inform future commissioning of homelessness services.

Delivery and monitoring of the Strategy

Action Plan

Strategic Priority One: End the use of emergency accommodation

No.	Action	Aims/Outcomes	Lead Officers	Partner Agencies	Timescale	Status / Comments
1.1	Put in place a plan to end the use of emergency accommodation out-of-borough where suitable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keeping homeless households in the borough will help sustain existing support networks and services and minimise disruption. Reduce the costs spent on emergency accommodation. 	Housing Strategy & Policy Manager	Spelthorne Borough Council	Dec 2020	
1.2	Deliver the redevelopment of Harper House through 2020/21 and put in place robust housing management and resident support arrangements to keep placement lengths to a minimum.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve the quality of temporary accommodation units for families. Part of the plan to end the use of emergency accommodation out-of-borough where suitable. In turn, this will help homeless families sustain existing support networks and services in the borough. Reduce the costs spent on emergency accommodation. 	Housing Strategy & Policy Manager, and Property and Development Asset Manager	Spelthorne Borough Council	Oct 2021	
1.3	Carry out an analysis of the current and likely future need for specialist accommodation for homeless households.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote and increase the delivery of affordable rented housing in the borough as outlined in our Housing Strategy. To detail the specific types of properties needed to meet local 	Housing Strategy & Policy Manager	Spelthorne Borough Council	Jul 2020	

		need, including accessible units and keyworker accommodation.				
1.4	Implement earlier preventative techniques by encouraging the use of the 'duty to refer' introduced by the homeless reduction act. and encourage a 'commitment to refer' with local Registered Providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase awareness of the 'duty to refer' by visiting partners, creating posters, posting on our social media and website. • Ensure our partners are informed of the referral process to keep referrals consistent. • Strengthen our partnerships with other public bodies. • Encouraging the use of the 'duty to refer' or 'commitment to refer' allows us more time to prevent a client from becoming homeless thus potentially reducing the need for emergency accommodation. • Repeat stakeholder event (annually) to update our partners on the progress of our Homelessness Strategy. 	Team Manager Housing Options	Spelthorne Borough Council, Community Mental Health Team, NHS, Adult Social Care, Children's Services, Jobcentre Plus and Probation.	Sep 2020 and ongoing	
1.5	Monitor the level of funding for the Council's homeless prevention fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a better understanding of how we utilise our prevention fund. • Maximise funding for homelessness prevention by leveraging in resources from alternative funding streams where possible and as necessary. • Making best use of our prevention fund may reduce the local need for emergency accommodation. 	Housing Strategy & Policy Manager, and Team Manager Housing Options	Spelthorne Borough Council	Apr 2020 and ongoing	

1.6	Review the way in which residents of emergency accommodation are supported to access settled accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish the resources available to us to assist homeless households in to accommodation. • Create a clear process map to ensure service consistency and highlight any areas for improvement. • Endeavour to fulfil the needs of our service users by offering different means of accessing support. 	Housing Strategy and Policy Manager	Spelthorne Borough Council	Dec 2020	
1.7	Require all households in emergency accommodation who are on the Housing Register to register for auto-bidding for all suitable available properties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximise opportunities for homeless households to secure settled accommodation by ensuring bids are placed on all suitable properties. • Reduce the move on time from emergency accommodation. 	Team Manager Housing Options	Spelthorne Borough Council	Oct 2020	

Strategic Priority Two: Reduce the length of stay in temporary accommodation

No.	Action	Aims/Outcomes	Lead Officers	Partner Agencies	Timescale	Status / Comments
2.1	Work with A2Dominion to develop the service offer for temporary accommodation. This will include reviewing and establishing move on plans for residents, prioritising those who have been there for 6+ months.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with family support, voluntary organisations and our partners to help households seek alternative accommodation. • Reducing the length of stay for households that include children will help to reduce further disruption to childhood experiences and improve general well-being. • Improve our joint working relationship with A2Dominion. • Move on plans will record advice and support that has been given to help tenants move on. • Ensure the size, location and quality of temporary accommodation is suitable and the rent levels are appropriately valued. 	Housing Strategy and Policy Manager	Spelthorne Borough Council and A2Dominion	Apr 2021	
2.2	Ensure referrals have been done for all existing and future families at risk of homelessness to the Spelthorne Rent Assure Scheme to help assist them in to the private rented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximise opportunities for homeless households to secure settled accommodation by ensuring referrals have been made to our Spelthorne Rent Assure Team. • Improve move on times for temporary accommodation residents as privately rented accommodation is our primary offer. 	Team Manager Housing Options	Spelthorne Borough Council	Aug 2020 and ongoing	

	sector which is more readily available.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure our service offer is consistent by monitoring private rented sector offers to homeless households. • Provide an electronic referral form in our systems programme Locata for all housing officers to complete. 				
2.3	Review the current ways households with affordability issues are provided with essential goods and furniture when moving on from temporary accommodation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimise any delay to a household moving on from temporary accommodation. • Ensure sufficient resources are identified as the result of a limited service offer now being provided by the Surrey Crisis fund due to high demand. 	Housing Strategy and Policy Officer	Spelthorne Borough Council and voluntary organisations	Aug 2020	

Strategic Priority Three: Nobody sleeps rough in Spelthorne

No.	Action	Aims/Outcomes	Lead Officers	Partner Agencies	Timescale	Status/Comments
3.1	Develop and keep updated a service support map for rough sleepers in Spelthorne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximise the use of local support services. Identify gaps in service provision across the borough and work with voluntary and faith sectors to address these gaps. 	Rough Sleeper Coordinator	Spelthorne Borough Council	July 2020 and ongoing	
3.2	Explore adopting a Surrey Adults Matter MEAM (making every adult matter) approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore the option of appointing a 'navigator' for those who may need additional support in seeking accommodation. Allocating more dedicated time to homelessness cases facing severe and multiple disadvantage may encourage them to re-engage with our local authority and supporting services. Prevent people from experiencing crisis and support their recovery at the earliest opportunity. 	Housing Strategy and Policy Manager	Spelthorne Borough Council and Surrey County Council (Surrey Adults Matter)	Dec 2020	
3.3	Sustain our Rough Sleeper Coordinator and Outreach Service as part of our homelessness prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage our residents to make use of Streetlink to notify services earlier. Ensure anyone who is reported as sleeping rough in the borough is offered advice and support as soon as possible. 	Housing Strategy & Policy Manager	Spelthorne Borough Council, MHCLG	Mar 2020 and ongoing	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A designated outreach service will allow for more detailed assessments. • Improve partnership with Street Angels who are voluntarily working in the local area. • Facilitate the delivery of the White House Hostel service that is to be developed in 2020/21. 				
3.4	Deliver housing and homelessness awareness based workshops to local schools and youth clubs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase awareness of housing options to ensure our younger residents are well informed. • Empower young people to start thinking about their future and planning ahead. 	Team Manager Housing Options and Housing Strategy and Policy Officer	Spelthorne Borough Council, Citizens Advice Runnymede and Spelthorne	Dec 2021	
3.5	Deliver the White House Hostel project which will provide supported housing for single homeless people, including those with multiple and complex needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer support to single homeless people with multiple and complex needs to help them move on independently to settled accommodation. • Reduce the current costs spent on nightly paid accommodation that does not offer the specialist support needed. • Develop a psychologically informed environment by working with Surrey Adults Matter to deliver trauma informed care training sessions for staff. 	Housing Strategy and Policy Manager	Spelthorne Borough Council, Surrey County Council, Homes England, Rentstart	April 2021	

3.6	Deliver a Housing First style pilot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help homeless individuals with multiple and complex needs who have experienced repeat or entrenched homelessness. By providing them with a home to start rebuilding their lives from, they are then able to address other issues. • Be part of a global movement that aims to end homelessness through a housing first service. 	Housing Strategy and Policy Manager	Spelthorne Borough Council, A2Dominion and Surrey County Council	May 2020 and ongoing	
3.7	Measure the impact and monitor the effectiveness of our family support team service delivery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure families and single homeless people with multiple and complex needs have support measures in place that are both practical and flexible to meet varying needs. 	Housing Strategy and Policy Manager	Spelthorne Borough Council	Apr 2021	

Strategic Priority Four: Increase use of the private rented sector for homelessness prevention and relief

No.	Action	Aims/Outcomes	Lead Officers	Partner Agencies	Timescale	Status/Comments
4.1	Organise a biennial landlord forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Market our schemes and incentives to increase landlord interest and improve relations with estate agents. Work with Job Centre Plus to provide a Universal Credit Q&A stall to provide reassurance and information to landlords. Ensure our offer to private sector landlords is competitive, robust, affordable and suitable. 	Rent Assure Scheme Manager	Spelthorne Borough Council, Rentstart and Job Centre Plus	May 2021 and ongoing	
4.2	Work with Knowle Green Estates (KGE) to expand affordable private rented sector tenure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure a sustainable pipeline of properties. Continue to offer privately rented properties as our primary offer as it is more readily available. Establish a service offer. 	Housing Strategy and Policy Manager, and Property and Development Asset Manager	Spelthorne Borough Council and Knowle Green Estates	Dec 2020 and ongoing	
4.3	Work with Citizens Advice Runnymede and Spelthorne social policy team to address and lobby broader causes of homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support lobbying the underlying causes of homelessness as part of our homelessness prevention efforts. 	Housing Strategy and Policy Manager	Spelthorne Borough Council and Citizens Advice Runnymede and Spelthorne	Jan 2022 and ongoing	

4.4	Design a workable process to effectively support residents who are affected by welfare reform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help residents affected by welfare reform to secure employment by linking in with Jobcentre plus employment advisor events. These events focus on CV and interview advice and job searching tips. • This will particularly help residents affected by the benefit cap who need to secure work to lift the cap. 	Team Manager Housing Options and Economic Development Manager	Spelthorne Borough Council, Job Centre Plus, and A2D DOSH scheme	Mar 2022 and ongoing	
4.5	Evaluate how discretionary housing payment's (DHP) are allocated to households facing homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure effective targeting of DHP's to help prevent homelessness. • Understand how we target payments by improving data collection methods. 	Housing Benefits Manager, Housing Strategy & Policy Officer	Spelthorne Borough Council	Nov 2020 and ongoing	
4.6	Work with our Environmental Health team on Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) inspections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevent homelessness from properties in poor condition. • Where there are affordability issues, explore the option of introducing housing improvement grants to enable landlords to undertake necessary works. 	Housing Strategy and Policy Manager and Senior Environmental Health Manager	Spelthorne Borough Council	Dec 2021 and ongoing	
4.7	Develop a pre-tenancy training pack for residents entering the private rented sector for the first time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise awareness of tenant responsibilities for residents who have little to no experience of managing a tenancy, or, who, need additional support because they are considered vulnerable. 	Housing Strategy and Policy Officer	Spelthorne Borough Council, and Citizens Advice Runnymede and Spelthorne	Dec 2020	

4.8	Assess the tenancy sustainment support methods we use to prevent homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify common causes of tenancy risk to ensure we are tailoring our homelessness prevention support accordingly. 	Housing Strategy and Policy Officer	Spelthorne Borough Council	Dec 2020	
4.9	Explore our Rent Assure Scheme service delivery capabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure our Spelthorne Rent Assure Scheme is efficient by building the process in to our electronic system, Civica. 	Housing Strategy and Policy Manager	Spelthorne Borough Council	April 2021	
4.10	Carry out an in-depth study of the affordability of Affordable Rents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better understand local affordability to inform future policy and strategy development, particularly with forthcoming properties to be managed by Knowle Green Estates. 	Housing Strategy and Policy Manager	Spelthorne Borough Council	December 2020	

Strategic Priority Five: Invest in staff training and development in order to improve the customer journey within the Housing Options service

No.	Action	Aims/Outcomes	Lead Officers	Partner Agencies	Timescale	Status/Comments
5.1	Continue accessing shared training events with Surrey authorities and where appropriate, open these up to our partners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet the training needs of our staff whilst also allowing local authorities to share their experiences with other boroughs. Partner training will strengthen the joint service we offer and show a commitment to our partners. 	Team Manager Housing Options	Spelthorne Borough Council and Surrey Learn	Ongoing	
5.2	Ensure all staff undertake counter fraud training and work with A2D to identify cases whereby social housing has been wrongfully obtained.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equip staff with the necessary skills for recognising fraudulent activity. Investigate and where applicable prosecute those found to be unlawfully obtaining social housing which has deprived another in genuine need. Agree process and Service Level Agreement for fraud cases. 	Team Manager Housing Options	Spelthorne Borough Council and A2Dominion	August 2020	
5.3	Pending Government's HRA review, seek to implement relevant recommendations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to adapt our service offer as appropriate to compliment the Homeless Reduction Act (HRA). 	Housing Strategy and Policy Manager	Spelthorne Borough Council and MHCLG	Apr 2021	
5.4	Enhance the Housing Options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure it is easily accessible and has a clear directory of services detailing the housing and 	Housing Strategy and Policy Officer,	Spelthorne Borough Council	Apr 2021	

	section on our corporate website	homelessness support available in Spelthorne.	Communications Manager			
5.5	Agree annual training plans with members of the team.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open up more opportunities for our Housing Options staff to develop their skills and knowledge. Offer staff relevant courses and qualifications and membership to the Chartered Institute of Housing. Demonstrate to our staff that we value their future career plans. 	Team Manager Housing Options	Spelthorne Borough Council and CIH	Ongoing	
5.6	Review the channels by which customers contact us e.g. phone, email etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make these types of communication simpler and easier. Ensure a consistent service delivery across the team. 	Housing Strategy and Policy Manager	Spelthorne Borough Council	Sep 2020	
5.7	Implement opportunities to collect customer feedback.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow us to make timely reviews of service delivery, and help us to better inform policy development on housing and homelessness advice. 	Housing Strategy and Policy Manager	Spelthorne Borough Council, and SCHO.	Apr 2021	
5.8	Identify a member of the Housing Options team to complete a monthly data quality check.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure regular monitoring of our data on homelessness in the borough and identify staff training requirements where patterns of issues are identified. Improving data quality monitoring will better inform our decision making on preventing homelessness. 	Team Manager Housing Options	Spelthorne Borough Council	May 2020	

Strategic Priority six: Improve partnership working to prevent and relieve homelessness

No.	Action	Aims/Outcomes	Lead Officers	Partner Agencies	Timescale	Status/Comments
6.1	Ensure accessibility to suitable accommodation for victims of domestic abuse.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure support and assistance is available to victims of domestic abuse. • Identify suitable refuges out of borough in order to provide suitable accommodation for people fleeing domestic abuse. • Get updates on Surrey County Council procuring domestic abuse outreach and accommodation services. • Where suitable, utilise the 'Sanctuary Scheme' to make safe havens in the homes of domestic abuse survivors. 	Team Manager Housing Options	Spelthorne Borough Council and North Surrey Domestic Abuse Service (NSDAS)	Nov 2020 and ongoing	
6.2	Work with offender management services to identify people leaving custody who may be at risk of homelessness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevent homelessness at the earliest opportunity by working with probation, prisons and youth offending services. • Encourage use of the 'duty to refer'. 	Team Manager Housing Options	Spelthorne Borough Council, Probation, HMP Bronzefield and youth offending services	Jan 2021 and ongoing	
6.3	Actively contribute to our local Primary Care Network implementation group as part of the Surrey Heartlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to future plans on mental health practitioners and community care connector plans in Spelthorne. 	Team Manager Housing Options	Spelthorne Borough Council, Community Mental Health Team (CMHT)	Jan 2021 and ongoing	

	Mental Health Transformation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen partnerships with local GPs to ensure support is available for residents with mental health issues who are threatened with or experiencing homelessness. 		and NHS Surrey Heartlands Bordership and Partners.		
6.4	Improve early homelessness intervention for families that require or receive additional support from child and adult social care services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure transparent communication with child and adult social care services, particularly early help services. Identify the number of potential care leavers that may be at risk of homelessness and encourage use of the 'duty to refer' to prevent youth homelessness. 	Team Manager Housing Options and Family Support Manager	Spelthorne Borough Council, adult and child social care services.	July 2021 and ongoing	
6.5	Sustain the delivery of Hersham Road supported accommodation and day service drop-in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a project group with Transform, Runnymede Borough Council and Elmbridge Borough Council to monitor, sustain and improve the existing supported accommodation and service offered. 	Team Manager Housing Options	Spelthorne, Runnymede, and Elmbridge Borough Council's, and Transform Housing	Dec 2020 and ongoing	
6.6	Meet with 'Life Housing' to understand their growth strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure supported accommodation is available for young single parents, particularly those households with additional support needs. Identify the opportunity for further schemes in the local area. 	Team Manager Housing Options, and Housing Strategy & Policy Manager	Spelthorne Borough Council and Life Housing	July 2020 and ongoing	
6.7	Liaise with the NHS on a local hospital discharge protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prevent homelessness at the earliest opportunity 	Housing Strategy and Policy	Spelthorne Borough Council and NHS	Aug 2021	

	that takes into consideration housing and homelessness services offered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimise discharge delays where there is a housing need preventing the patient from leaving the hospital. 	Manager, Team Manager Housing Options and Independent Living Senior Team Manager			
6.8	Update pathway plans for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople threatened with homelessness in light of the recent Gypsy and Traveller Site Accommodation Need Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broaden our understanding of Gypsy and Traveller needs who are threatened with, or facing homelessness. Ensure our pathway plan is up to date and retains its suitability. 	Team Manager Housing Options	Spelthorne Borough Council	Apr 2021	
6.9	Prevent and relieve migrant homelessness including tackling modern day slavery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance our understanding of migrant homelessness including how to identify and tackle cuckooing and modern day slavery in Spelthorne. 	Team Manager Housing Options	Spelthorne Borough Council and Surrey Police	Apr 2021 and ongoing	
6.10	Continue to liaise with DWP on the effective implementation of the national	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exchange regular updates with DWP on the Universal Credit migration process. Communicate and tackle common issues with our local Jobcentre Plus to feedback to the service centre. 	Housing Benefits Manager	Spelthorne Borough Council, DWP and Jobcentre Plus	Apr 2024	

	migration of Universal Credit.					
6.11	Develop further links with armed forces charities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure currently serving members of the armed forces, veterans and their families are offered appropriate support to access and sustain settled accommodation. • Promote the 'Directory of Housing and Support Service for Veterans'. • Support STOLL's 'No Homeless Veterans' campaign. • All staff will be offered Armed Forces Covenant training (the e-learning module will be mandatory for staff). • Ensure all staff are utilising the Royal British Legion toolkit for local authorities containing information and guidance on housing Veterans. 	Team Manager Housing Options, and Armed Forces Champion Officer	Spelthorne Borough Council, Armed Forces Covenant, STOLL and the Royal British Legion	Dec 2020	
6.12	Contribute to the 'Surrey Homeless Health Needs Audit'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide data about the service we provide to people in Spelthorne who are currently experiencing homelessness and highlight any gaps in the system. • Data obtained from this audit will be used to inform future commissioning of homelessness services. 	Team Manager Housing Options	Spelthorne Borough Council, 'Healthy Surrey' at Surrey County Council, and Homeless Link	Feb - Apr 2020	

Monitoring of the strategy

Operational monitoring

The Action Plan attached to this strategy is a 'living' document which will adapt and develop over time. A new group will be formed, with responsibility for operationally monitoring the implementation of this strategy and its Action Plan.

The composition of this new group will include, as a minimum:

- Officers from relevant sections of the Council
- Portfolio Holder for Housing
- Any partner organisation which has any actions within the Action Plan
- Any other interested party where their involvement will support the effective delivery of the agreed strategy

The frequency and duration of meetings is to be agreed, but it is anticipated that formal reviews of the Action Plan will be at least quarterly.

Strategic monitoring

The strategic responsibility for monitoring the implementation of this strategy and its action plan, in particular the resources available to deliver the strategy, is delegated to the Council's Strategic Housing Group (SHG).

SHG exists to ensure that Spelthorne Borough Council has a focussed strategic approach on housing matters, and to ensure that Spelthorne's housing needs are identified and met.

The objectives of SHG are:

- To decide priorities and focus of the group for the coming year.
- Develop strategies for dealing with issues (which may translate into projects to be reviewed).
- To ensure all housing strategies dove tail with other relevant strategies e.g. Asset Management Plan, Capital Strategy, etc.
- Develop and monitor the progress of both the Housing Strategy and Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Plans.
- Monitor key areas of concern (such as emergency accommodation and shortage of affordable housing) and make strategic decisions on approaches to mitigate the impact.
- To make decisions on operational matters which impact the delivery of strategic priorities.
- To share information on housing and housing-related issues (including changes to legislation).
- To identify and allocate resources to help meet the priorities identified.
- To ensure key politicians and partners are effectively communicated with.
- To receive updates on Knowle Green Estates developments.

- To consider and agree corporate responses to government consultations which directly or indirectly affect housing.

Membership of SHG includes:

- Deputy Chief Executive(s) (Chair)
- Joint Group Heads Community Wellbeing (Vice-Chair)
- Portfolio Holder – Housing
- Group Head Regeneration and Growth
- Head of Corporate Governance
- Deputy Group Head Community Wellbeing
- Housing Strategy & Policy Manager
- Team Manager Housing Options
- Housing Benefits Manager
- Senior Environmental Health Manager
- Accountant (Housing)

SHG meets approximately once per month, and will commit to reviewing the strategy Action Plan at least every quarter, making recommendations and decisions as necessary to ensure the delivery of the strategy.

Glossary

Bed and Breakfast (B&B) – Accommodation which the Council sources for homeless households to live in whilst longer term solutions are found. The Council usually pays for these placements on a nightly basis, and it cannot reclaim all of the cost of the placement from either the homeless household or the Government. As a result, it costs the Council a significant amount of money per year to pay for these placements.

Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) – Monetary grants for property adaptations to meet the needs of a person with a disability which prevents them from otherwise living comfortably day-to-day.

Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) – A payment that may be made at the discretion of the Council to help assist a resident with their housing costs.

Duty to Refer – Was introduced by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. Certain authorities are imposed to refer persons who are threatened with homelessness or who may already be homeless to local authorities. (Note: 'Commitment to Refer' has been adopted by other bodies that are not imposed to refer persons at threat of homelessness but do so voluntarily).

Extra Care - Specialist housing that offers care and support services on-site, generally for those aged 55+. Care levels are usually higher than sheltered accommodation.

Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 – Legislation introduced to amend the legal duties placed on local authorities with an emphasis on earlier targeted homelessness prevention.

Housing First – Is a housing and support approach that offers settled accommodation to homeless persons with complex needs and a history of repeat homelessness in which they then subsequently address other support need issues.

Keyworker Accommodation - Accommodation let to essential service public sector employees, usually at a discount of 10-20% off market rates.

Knowle Green Estates - A company wholly owned by Spelthorne Borough Council, set up to manage residential accommodation within the borough.

Local Housing Allowance (LHA) – These rates are used to calculate a tenant's entitlement for Housing Benefit or Universal Credit housing element. These levels are set by the Government and should be based upon the 30th percentile rents in the local area.

Pathway Plans – A detailed support plan developed for persons deemed vulnerable (as outlined in 5.2 of the Housing Strategy 2014-2019 action plan review).

Registered Provider (RP) – Provider of social housing. For example, A2Dominion is a Registered Provider and owns the majority of social housing stock in Spelthorne.

Sanctuary Scheme – Where suitable, the scheme aims to create a ‘secure sanctuary’ for victims of domestic abuse by enabling property adaptations to existing accommodation.

Sheltered - Accommodation which usually comprises of self-contained units with some shared communal spaces. Schemes are generally designed for those aged 55+.

Spelthorne Rent Assure Scheme – A two year rent guarantee scheme for private sector landlords.

Supported Housing – Accommodation that offers additional support. This type of accommodation is not usually age restricted, but specific schemes may be designed for residents with specific needs (i.e. alcohol, mental health).

Surrey Adults Matter (Adopted from Making Every Adult Matter) – Focuses on delivering coordinated services and improving the lives of adults facing severe multiple disadvantage.

SWEP (Severe Weather Emergency Protocol) – Aims to prevent rough sleeping during extreme cold weather.

Temporary Accommodation – Accommodation offered to homeless households who are subject to some form of duty under homelessness legislation. In Spelthorne, this is likely to be a 6 month tenancy of one of A2Dominion’s properties.

Universal Credit – Assists with living costs and replaces six benefits by merging them in to one monthly payment. Universal Credit replaces Child and Working Tax Credits, Housing Benefit, Income Support, Jobseekers Allowance, and Employment Support Allowance.

Spelthorne Borough Council Homelessness Review 2014-2019

November 2019



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Introduction

Under the Homelessness Act 2002¹ local housing authorities have a statutory duty to conduct a Homelessness Review at least every five years in order to formulate a Homelessness Strategy that tackles and prevents homelessness in their borough. Spelthorne Borough Council last carried out its Homelessness Review in 2014 with a strategy for 2014 to 2019.

The purpose of a Homelessness Review is to establish the housing need in the borough and outline current and likely future levels of homelessness. It identifies what is currently being done to prevent and tackle homelessness and who the key stakeholders are in these activities. The review also considers what resources are available to the Council and its partners to support households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.

The last Homelessness Strategy outlined eight key strategic priorities that we wanted to achieve in the last five years²:

1. Adopt a corporate and partnership commitment to preventing homelessness.
2. Develop and provide a comprehensive preventative housing options service including the single homeless.
3. End the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for families.
4. Facilitate the discharge of the homelessness duty into the private rented sector.
5. Through the Housing Forum develop housing pathways for vulnerable groups.
6. Develop a private sector offer through working with local landlords and through a Spelthorne Borough Council lettings agency that will acquire properties for the discharge of the duty and where necessary as temporary lets.
7. In collaboration with Runnymede and Elmbridge Councils: Adopt a 'no second night out' for emergency accommodation.
8. In partnership with the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) prevent mortgage repossessions.

The following Homelessness Review highlights what we have achieved as a local housing authority and identifies gaps and key areas for improvement to inform the next Homelessness Strategy.

¹ Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (2002) Homelessness Act. The National Archives.

² Spelthorne Borough Council (2014) Spelthorne Homelessness Strategy 2014-2019.

Data analysed

This Homelessness Review has taken in to account both national and local statistics to help inform the current levels and likely future levels of homelessness in Spelthorne. It has considered the current activities which are preventing homelessness in the borough and identified support for households who are experiencing or are threatened with homelessness. The review has also given some thought to the ways in which securing accommodation are available or may be available for households threatened with homelessness. We have also considered the resources that are available to us for the activities noted above.

The following data has been used to help inform this Homelessness Review:

- Both national and local context of homelessness.
- Spelthorne Borough Council's casework records and locally recorded figures on homelessness approaches between April 2014 and March 2019. This includes information on the number of households that approached the council for help and the underlying reasons for the approaches. The figures also identify which duty, if any, was owed to the clients under homelessness legislation and how temporary or emergency accommodation was utilised (where applicable).
- Spelthorne Borough Council's recorded local statistics on housing register figures between April 2014 and March 2019. This indicates how social housing has been allocated by property type and bedroom size. It also gives an insight in to what proportion of social housing has been allocated to households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.
- Local context of the private rental sector including information on our Spelthorne Rent Assure scheme for private lettings.
- Recorded statistics on rough sleeping locally and regionally, and the options available to rough sleepers in the area; including the recent implementation of the Rough Sleeper Initiative in Spelthorne.
- Existing data on the resources available to use which includes expenditure on homelessness prevention activities. This is broken down by associated revenue costs and the workforce delivery costs.

National context

Levels of and reasons for homelessness

Statutory duties have been placed on local housing authorities by the Housing Act 1977³ and Housing Act 1996⁴ to ensure advice and support is available to households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. The recent Homelessness Reduction Act 2017⁵ marks one of the biggest changes in homelessness legislation in 30 years. Local authorities are tasked with determining whether a household who has approached for help is homeless or threatened with homelessness. They must decide if the household is eligible for assistance from the Council and if they are eligible, take reasonable steps to help to either prevent or relieve their homelessness.

Latest statistical data from the Chartered Institute of Housing indicates the levels of homelessness in England and more specifically in the South East region where Spelthorne is located. The data is recorded from the years 1991 to 2017 but for the purpose of this review we will concentrate on the years of 2014 to 2017. In 2014 the total number of homeless households in England was 54,590. The South East region made up 7,330 of the total figure. By 2017 the total number of homeless households in England was 56,570. The South East region made up 7,730 of the total figure. A small extraction of the statistical table provided by CIH is demonstrated in Table 1 below to highlight the statistical changes over the last four years.

	2014	2015	2016	2017
South East Region	7,330	7,800	7,930	7,730
England	54,590	57,760	59,100	56,570

Table 1: Extraction of table 94a 'levels of homelessness in England, 2019 UK Housing Review (CIH, 2009, p.224)⁶

Ultimately the number of homeless households has slightly increased each year with the exception of 2017 where it decreased both nationally and regionally. CIH break down the main reasons for homeless nationally across 2014 to 2017. An extraction of the reasons for homelessness table is provided in Table 2.

Reason for homelessness (England) (%)	2014	2015	2016	2017
Parents, relatives or friends no longer willing or able to accommodate	27	27	27	26
Breakdown of relationship with partner	17	17	16	18
Loss of private dwelling, including tied accommodation	35	36	38	34
Mortgage arrears	2	1	1	1
Rent arrears	3	3	3	3
Other	17	16	16	18

Table 2: Extraction of table 94 'reason for homelessness in England', 2019 UK Housing Review (CIH, 2019, p.222)⁷

³ Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (1977) Housing (Homelessness Persons) Act. The National Archives.

⁴ Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (1996) Housing Act. The National Archives.

⁵ Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (2017) Homeless Reduction Act. The National Archives.

⁶ Chartered Institute of Housing. M. Stephens, J. Perry, P. Williams, and G. Young (2019) 2019 UK Housing Review. CIH: Coventry.

⁷ Chartered Institute of Housing. M. Stephens, J. Perry, P. Williams, and G. Young (2019) 2019 UK Housing Review. CIH: Coventry.

Notably, the largest reason for homelessness nationally is the loss of private dwelling, including tied accommodation. This is followed by parental, relative or friend evictions. Generally all six reasons for homelessness in England remain a similar percentage annually. Loss of private dwelling increased steadily every year by 1-2% then dropped in 2017 by 4%, however, it remains the main reason for homelessness.

Local Housing Allowance, private rents and Discretionary Housing Payments

As indicated by Table 3, the local housing allowance rates for Spelthorne Borough Council has marginally increased in the last five years but has not significantly changed.

Local Housing Allowance (LHA) Rates for Spelthorne (monthly)	1 st April 2014 to 31 st March 2015	1 st April 2015 to 31 st March 2016	1 st April 2016 to 31 st March 2017	1 st April 2017 to 31 st March 2018	1 st April 2018 to 31 st March 2019	1 st April 2019 to 31 st March 2020
Shared accommodation	£364.00	£367.64	£367.64	£378.69	£390.04	£390.04
One bedroom	£722.54	£751.44	£751.44	£751.44	£773.98	£797.20
Two bedroom	£923.82	£960.79	£960.79	£960.79	£960.79	£989.60
Three bedroom	£1187.03	£1198.90	£1198.90	£1198.90	£1198.90	£1198.90
Four bedroom	£1594.32	£1658.11	£1658.11	£1658.11	£1658.11	£1658.11

Table 3: Local Housing Allowance rates for Spelthorne 2014-20

However, the Valuation Office Agency highlights the average renting price in Spelthorne is significantly higher than the Local Housing Allowance rate as outlined in Table 4: Average private rental costs in Spelthorne from 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019

Whilst there are some fluctuations, the private rental prices in Spelthorne have generally increased over the last five years.

Private Rental Market Statistics Median Monthly Rent (£)	1 April 2014 – 31 March 2015	1 April 2015 – 31 March 2016	1 April 2016 – 31 March 2017	1 April 2017 – 31 March 2018	1 April 2018 – 31 March 2019
Room	585	575	550	638	530
One bedroom	825	895	900	900	918
Two bedrooms	1,095	1,150	1,150	1,175	1,150
Three bedrooms	1,250	1,350	1,375	1,350	1,350
Four bedrooms	1,798	1,750	1,725	1,695	1,741

Table 4: Average private rental costs in Spelthorne from 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019⁸

This means there is often a shortfall between the local housing allowance rate and market rent which Housing Benefit or Universal Credit claimants will have to top up. Spelthorne Borough Council is granted a Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) budget by the Government each year, which can be allocated to claimants who need further help with their housing costs; this may include

⁸ Valuation Office Agency (2019) Private Rental Market Summary Statistics: April 2018 to March 2019, April 2017 to March 2018, April 2016 to March 2017, April 2015 to March 2016, and April 2014 to March 2015.

help with the shortfall in rent. DHPs are at the discretion of the council and are administered by the housing benefit department for those with special circumstances. DHPs may also be administered to households that are threatened with homelessness in an attempt to prevent them from becoming homeless. Table 5 outlines Spelthorne Borough Council's total expenditure on DHP for the last five years.

Year	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Central Government contribution to DHP	£202,187	£120,689	£188,045	£294,771	£265,061
Spelthorne Council additional DHP top up	Nil	£79,311	£111,955	£105,229	£134,939
Total DHP budget	£202,187	£200,000	£300,000	£400,000	£400,000
Total DHP expenditure	£197,799	£199,995	£295,973	£337,860	£352,666

Table 5: Discretionary Housing Payment funding and expenditure

Table 5 outlines how much money we received from the Government and how much we topped it up using our own funds. The data highlights that our DHP expenditure has increased over the last five years. Our DHP budget is almost double what it was in 2014 and indicates a greater demand in DHP requests.

Welfare Reform Act

Changes in legislation and policy includes the 2012 Welfare Reform Act⁹ which adjusted the means-tested benefit system and introduced two new benefits Universal Credit (UC) and Personal Independence Payment (PIP). Universal Credit was introduced on a phased implementation basis and came fully in to Spelthorne's borough from November 2018. UC replaces six existing benefits: housing benefit, working and child tax credits, income support, jobseeker's allowance and employment support allowance.

Other significant changes from the Welfare Reform Act includes:

- Introduction of council tax support in replacement of council tax benefit.
- Introduction of the 'benefit cap' which limits the amount of benefit a person can claim. Outside Greater London, the maximum benefit threshold for couples and single parents with children is £384.62 per week and £257.69 for single adults.
- Emphasis on localised support as the social fund community care grants and crisis loans were abolished.
- Automatic recovery of benefit overpayments.
- Replacement of budgeting loans and interim payments with advance benefit payments.
- Under occupation rule through the introduction of 'bedroom tax' on socially rented properties where the number of bedrooms exceeds the tenants households composition.

⁹ Department for Work and Pensions (2012) Welfare Reform Act 2012 Regulations.

Spelthorne context

Spelthorne is located on the south-west edge of London and in the north-west of Surrey, neighbouring the boroughs of Slough, Windsor & Maidenhead, Runnymede, Elmbridge, and the London Boroughs of Richmond upon Thames, Hounslow and Hillingdon. The north of the borough borders London Heathrow airport. Spelthorne is densely populated and has five main urban areas: Ashford, Shepperton, Staines-upon-Thames, Stanwell and Sunbury. Outside these urban areas:

- 65% is green belt,
- 30% of the total area is either flood plain or reservoir,
- 17% of the borough is water, and
- We have 12 miles of River Thames frontage.

Almost half of Surrey's 20 most deprived super output areas are in Spelthorne. Three are in the ward of Stanwell North, two in Ashford North and Stanwell South and one in each of Ashford East and Sunbury Common. Spelthorne has the highest number of lone parent families and the highest level of child poverty in Surrey; it also has the highest under-18 conception rate in the county. That said, residents are largely healthy, with life expectancy for both males and females slightly above the national average.

Whilst house prices remain well above the national average, most residents are owner-occupiers (73%), followed by private rented (13%) and social rented (12%).

Spelthorne has a slightly lower population of under-30s (34%) compared to the rest of the country (37%), and a slightly higher population of 30-69 year olds (42%) compared with the UK average of (40%), The number of 70+ is 23%, which is broadly in line with the rest of the UK (24%).

Although the number of VAT and/or PAYE-registered business has fallen slightly over the past four years, Spelthorne has a low rate of unemployment: 1.4% of those economically active aged 16 to 64, compared to the South East (2.2%) and UK as a whole (3.5%). Heathrow Airport is a significant local employer, with 8.3% of Spelthorne's working population employed there. Significantly, 21.5% of those in work in Stanwell North are in low level employment compared to an average of 11.6% in Surrey. Average wages are slightly above regional averages at £630 per week for full-time employees.

Homelessness in Spelthorne prior to the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

Prior to the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act in April 2018, when an applicant approached the Council for homelessness assistance, they were assessed by a housing officer to determine whether or not the Council owed them the 'main' housing duty. Under homelessness legislation the assessment involved five tests:

- Their eligibility for assistance;
- Whether they were homeless or threatened with homelessness within 28 days;
- Whether they had a priority need;
- Whether they had a local connection to the borough; and,
- Whether they had become homeless intentionally.

Approaches for housing advice

Prior to the change in legislation a total of 4,377 approaches to the Council were recorded since April 2014. Table 6 breaks down the case status of each approach. Cases whereby advice was given is where our housing officers determined that a client was not threatened with homelessness within 28 days, and was therefore given general housing support and advice. Those that were not prevented or relieved would have made a homelessness application which would have been assessed by the Council. Cases who approached as homeless on the day would have also gone straight to assessment.

Case Status	Total	% of Total
Advice only given	2,211	51%
Lost Contact and Withdrawn	761	17%
Not Prevented or relieved	513	12%
Homeless on the day	299	7%
Prevented or relieved	593	14%
Total	4,377	100%

Table 6: Approaches for housing advice by outcome 2014/18

Table 6: Approaches for housing advice by outcome 2014/18 indicates to us that approximately half our cases were advice only cases. Whilst we successfully prevented or relieved homelessness in just under 15% of our cases we also took homelessness applications from approximately a fifth of our total number of homelessness approaches. We lost contact or the application was withdrawn with just under 20% of our cases.

Homelessness prevention toolkit

The Council works to prevent homelessness through mediation and negotiation with landlords and tenants. In some circumstances, the Council may be able to use a discretionary prevention fund to help an applicant retain their home or find alternative suitable accommodation. For example, where an applicant approaches as threatened with homelessness due to rent arrears, the Council may give budgeting advice to help sustain the tenancy and signpost the client for more specialist financial support from the Citizens Advice Bureau to help resolve the issue through a repayment plan. Where possible the Council will always try to negotiate with a landlord or relative to prevent an eviction.

In cases where there is domestic abuse the Council will look at methods such as the North Surrey Sanctuary Scheme to try and prevent an applicant from becoming homeless. The scheme offers

preventative methods to make the home more secure and 'sanctuary like' where it is appropriate for victims of domestic violence to remain in their home. Spelthorne Borough Council spent £22,339 on implementing the sanctuary scheme across 29 households between April 2014 and March 2019. In 2018/19 we did a comprehensive review of the sanctuary scheme which resulted in the implementation of a streamlined process from referral through to job completion.

The outcome whereby assistance was provided to prevent homelessness is outlined in Chart 1. This demonstrates to us that negotiation with landlords to help tenants remain in their privately rented sector (PRS) accommodation is our largest type of preventative assistance. The figure highlights two further key points during 2017/18 where resolving Housing Benefit (HB) issues made up the majority of assistance followed by mediation, conciliation or legal assistance.

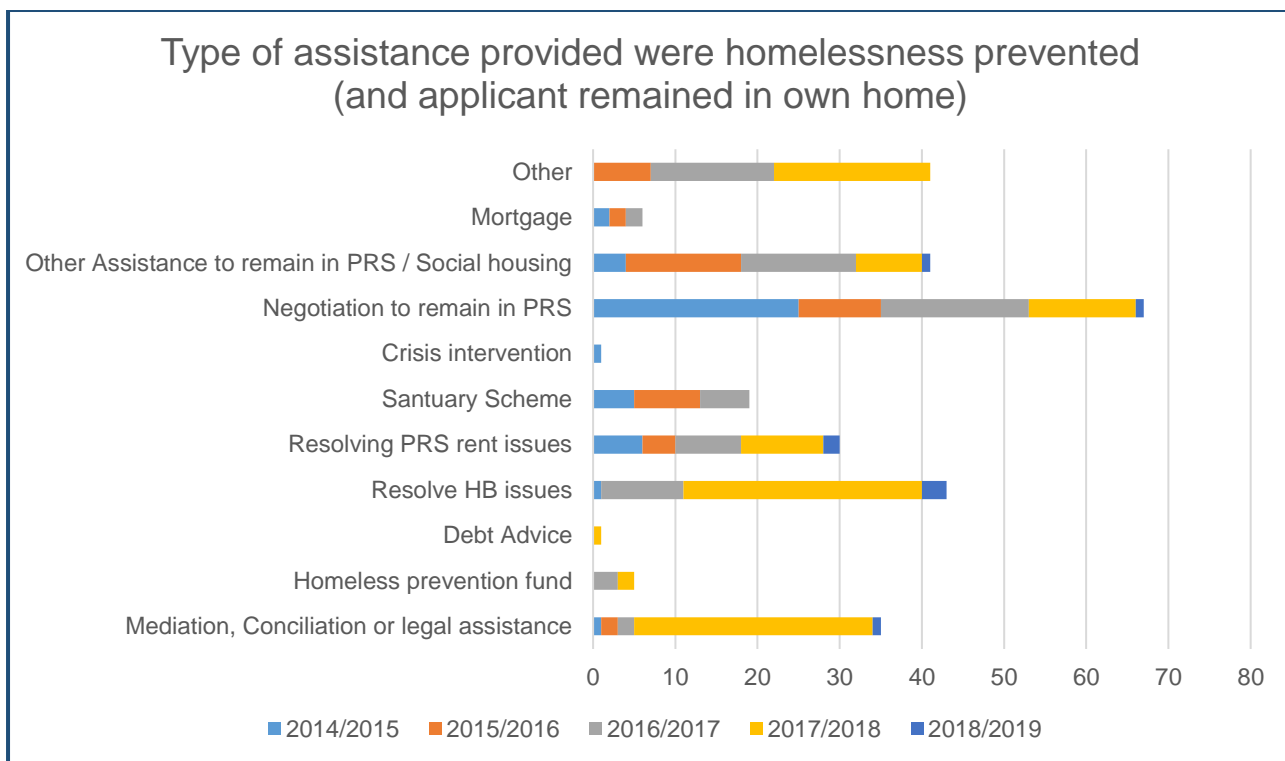


Chart 1: Type of assistance provided were homelessness prevented (and applicant remained in own home)

Homelessness applications

A total of 822 homeless applications were taken by Spelthorne Borough Council between April 2014 and March 2018. As demonstrated in Table 7, from the total number of homelessness applications, 540 were accepted under the main duty by Spelthorne Borough Council as they were eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and in priority need. Out of the total number of homeless applications, 13 were found ineligible for assistance due to their immigration status.

	Main s193(2) duty accepted	Eligible but not homeless	Eligible but intentionally homeless	Homeless but not in priority need	Ineligible	Lost contact or withdrew application
Total	540	64	38	43	13	124
% of Total	66%	8%	5%	5%	2%	15%

Table 7: Homelessness applications by outcome 2014/18

Information collated on any protected characteristics of applicants that have been owed the main duty in 2014/18 is outlined in Chart 2 and Chart 3. The majority of our cases were UK nationals and

around three quarters were White British. There is a still a proportion of various other ethnic groups and nationalities which demonstrates some diversity in the community and our clientele.

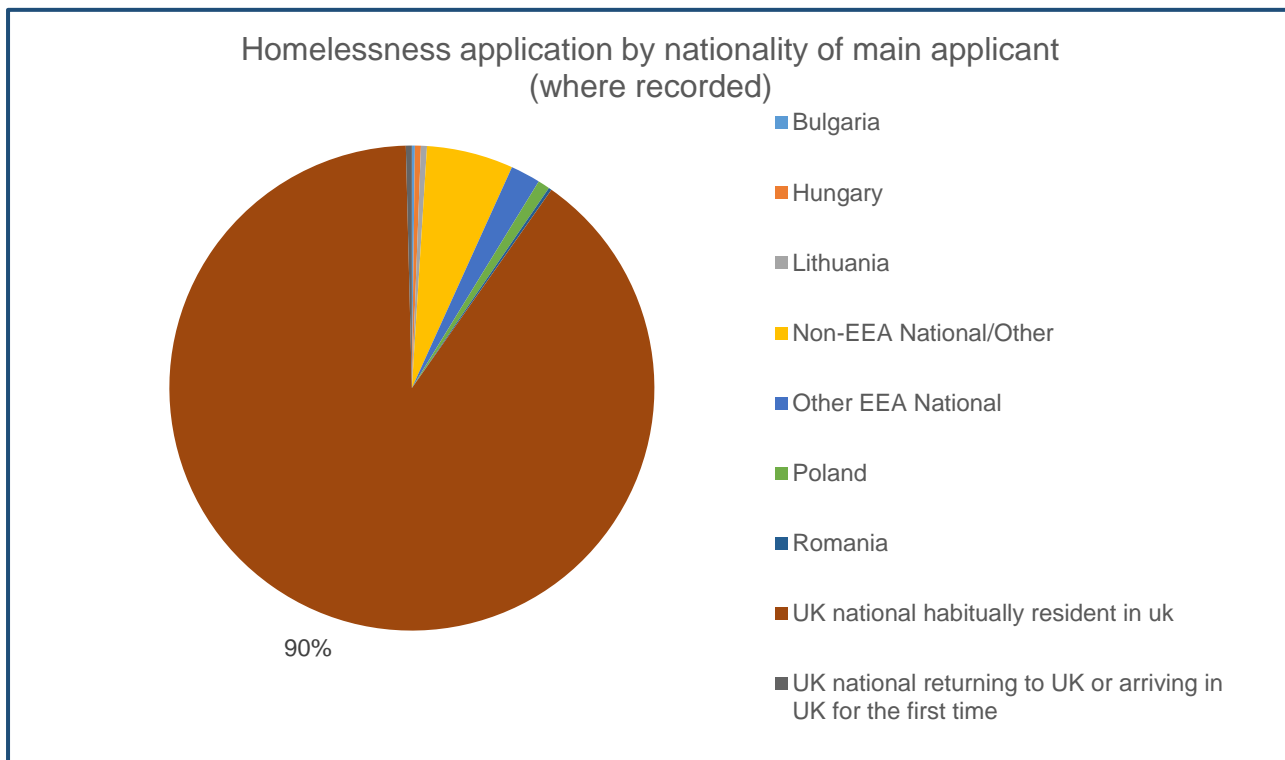


Chart 2: Homelessness application by nationality of main applicant (where recorded) 2014/18

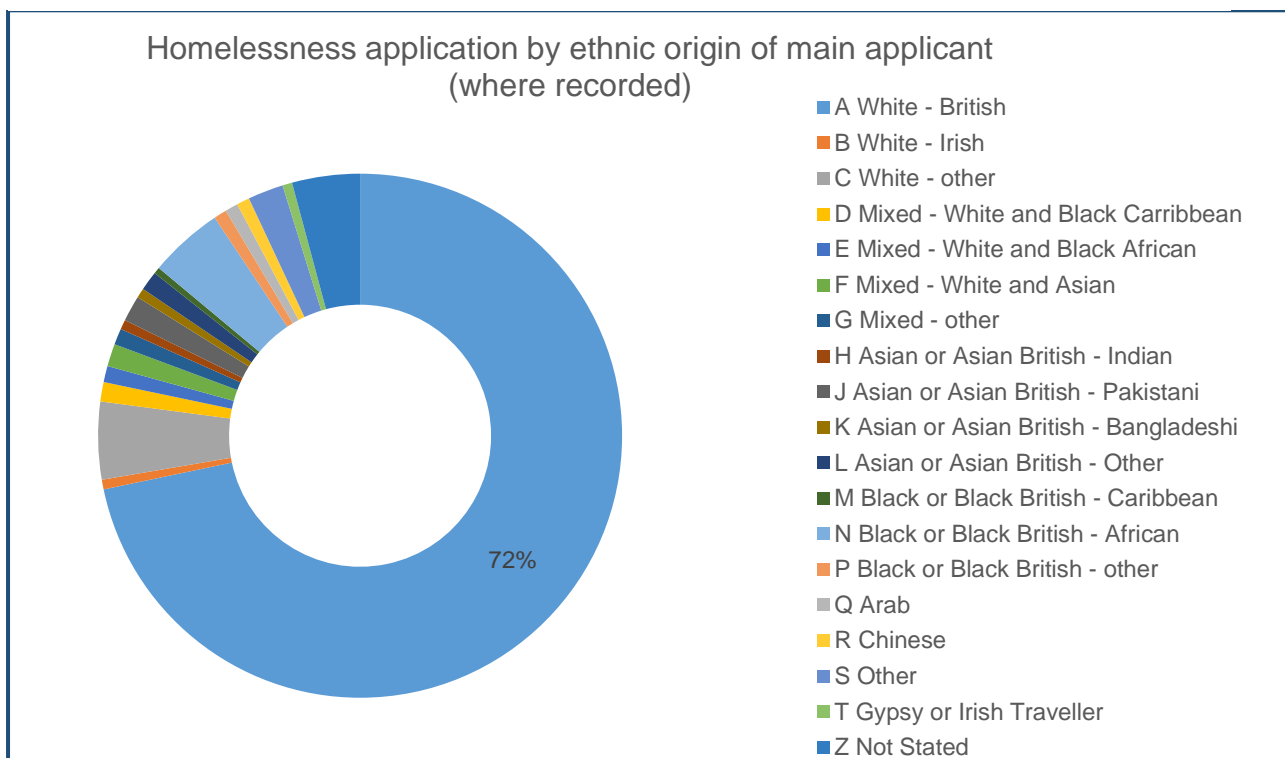


Chart 3: Homelessness application by ethnic origin of main applicant (where recorded) 2014/18

Priority need

Section 189 of the 1996 Act¹⁰ defines priority need as someone who has either:

- Dependent children in their care or is pregnant;
- A care leaver or vulnerable as a result of having been in care;
- Vulnerable due to a physical or mental disability or as a result of having been a member of HM forces;
- Threatened with harassment of violence which means they are unable to occupy their accommodation;
- Homeless from an emergency or disaster e.g. flood or fire;
- Vulnerable as a result of a custodial sentence, remanded in custody or other kind of offence, or
- Any other special circumstances that would deem a person to be vulnerable if homeless.

Chart 4 identifies the priority need of cases in which the main duty was owed. The data highlights the most common priority need when applicants have approached Spelthorne Borough Council for homelessness assistance. The largest category is homeless households with dependent children which makes up around 71%.

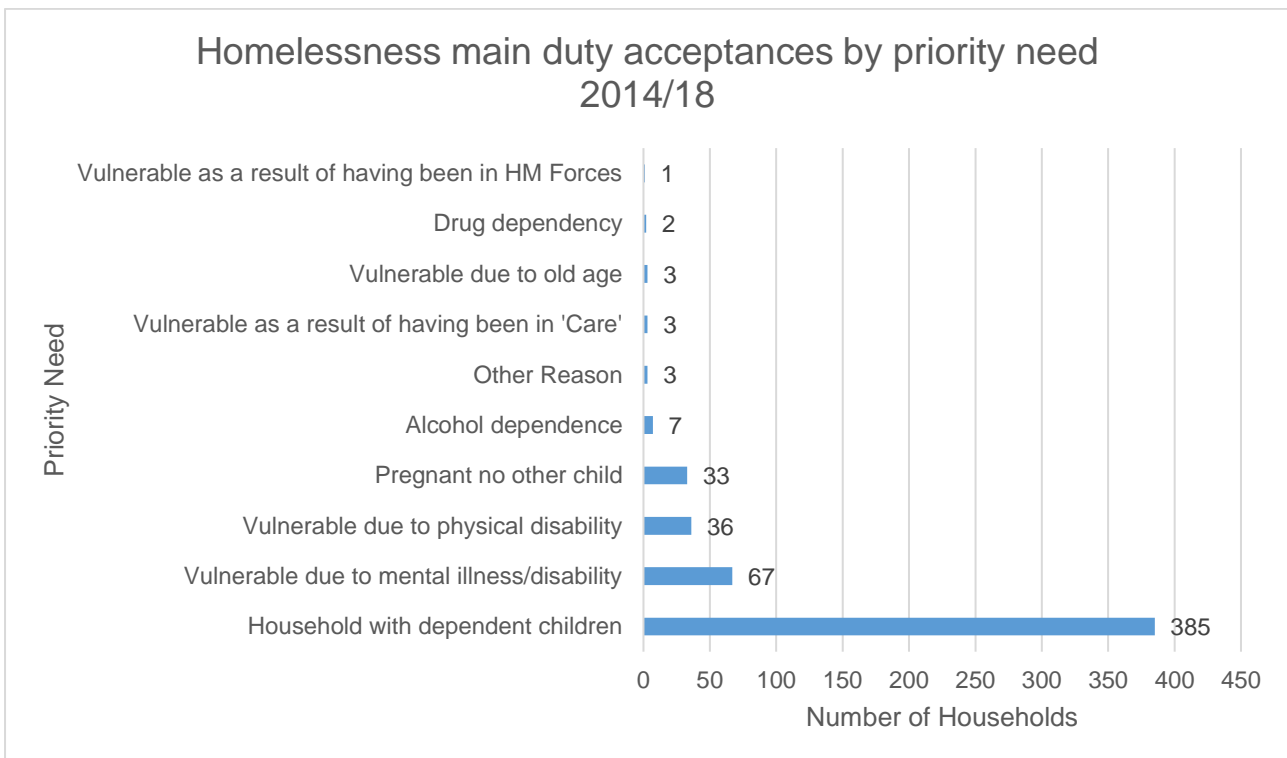


Chart 4: Homelessness main duty acceptances by priority need 2014/18

Reason for homelessness

Homelessness applications broken down by reason for homelessness between April 2014 and March 2018 is displayed in Chart 5. Spelthorne Borough Council's three biggest reasons are indicated as first, parents no longer willing or able to accommodate. Second, loss of rented or tied accommodation due to termination of an assured shorthold tenancy (for example, an applicant has been served with a S.21 notice). Third, other relatives or friends are no longer willing or able to accommodate. In comparison to the national data collected on reasons for homelessness

¹⁰ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (1996) Housing Act. The National Archives.

Spelthorne Borough Council's top three reasons for households approaching as homeless or threatened with homelessness slightly varies.

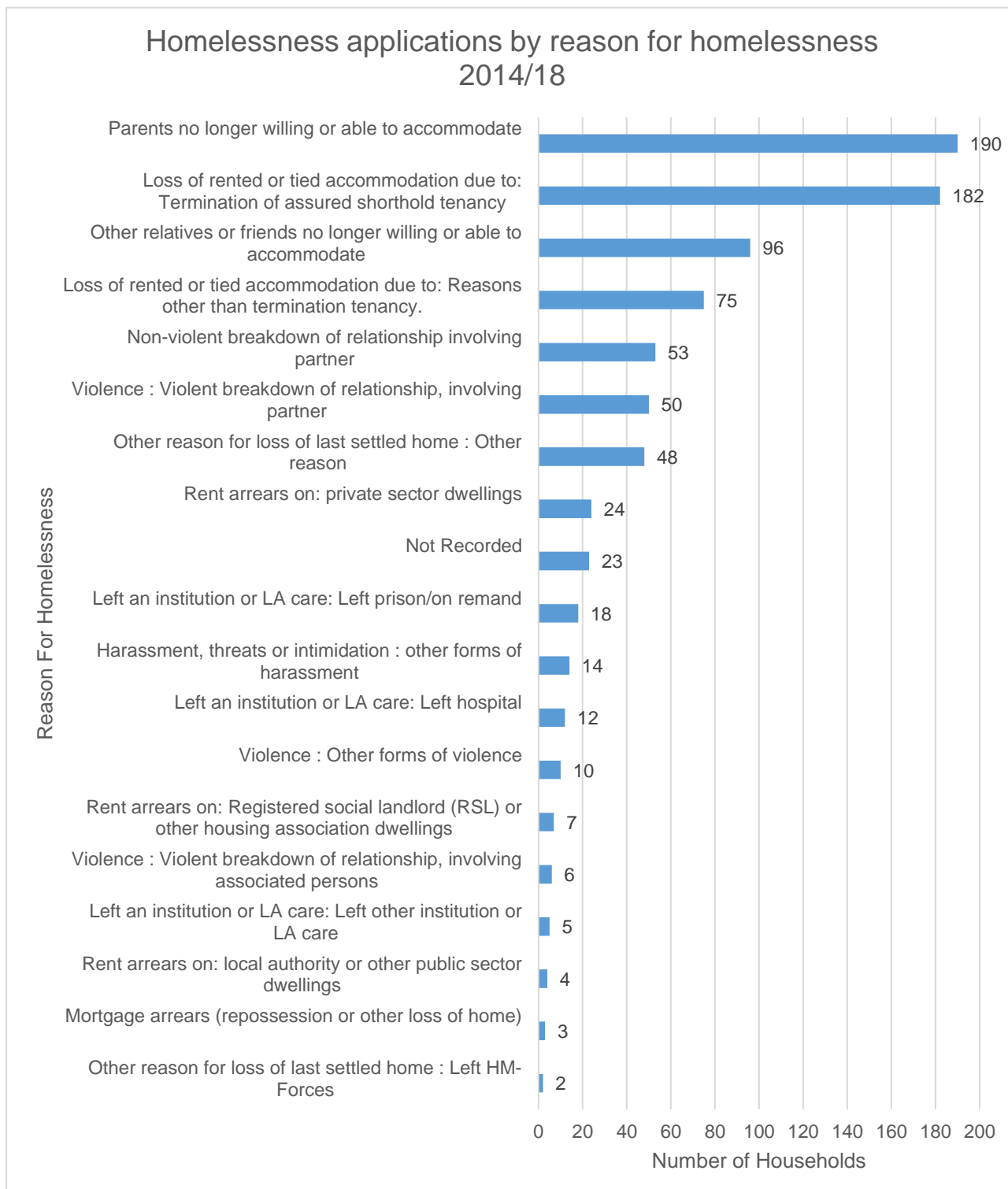


Chart 5: Homelessness applications by reason for homelessness 2014/18

Outcomes of main duty acceptances

The reasons for why the Council has discharged the main duty is indicated in Chart 6. The majority of households accepted an offer of social housing. This is followed by an offer of accommodation in the private rented sector. There are still 38 households who approached the Council for help prior to

3 April 2018, which have not yet reached an outcome. These are referred to as 'legacy' households and we are still working with them to help find suitable settled accommodation.

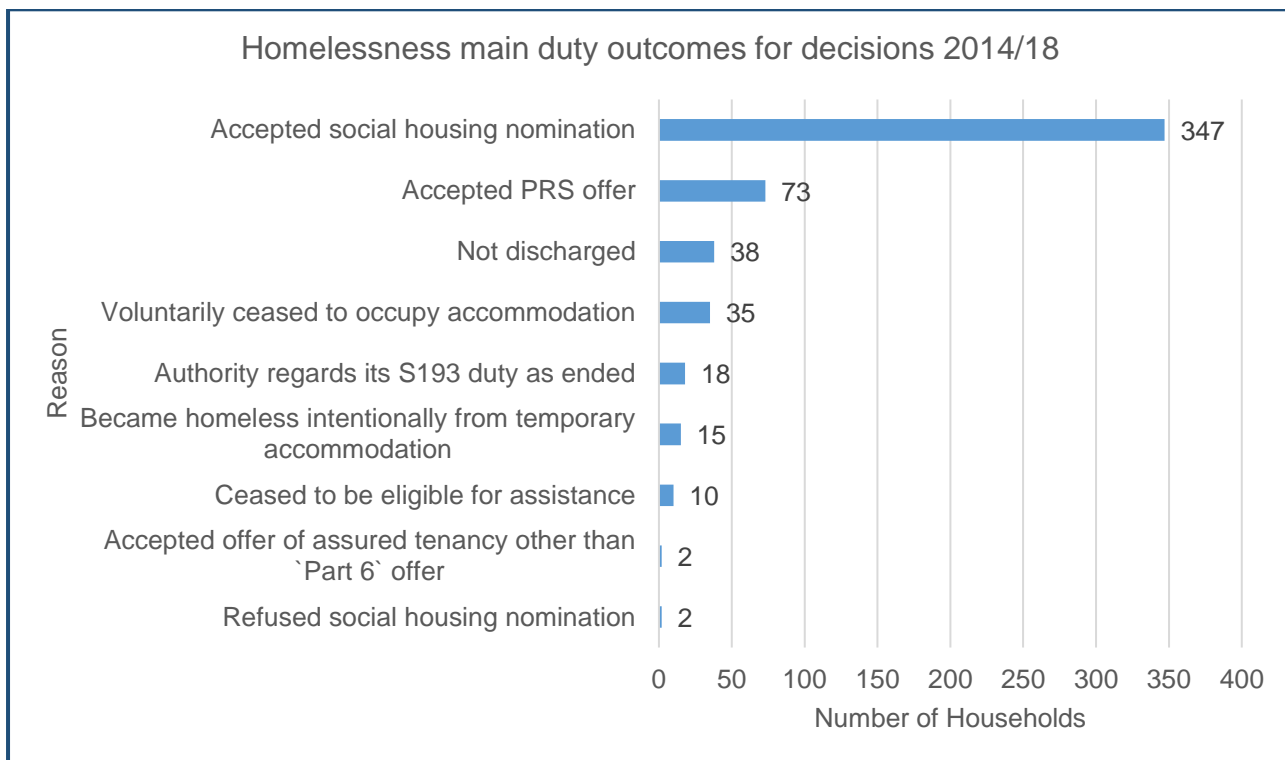


Chart 6: Homelessness main duty outcomes for decisions 2014/18

Homelessness in Spelthorne following the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

The Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) 2017

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017¹¹ was a significant change in homelessness legislation and was introduced in April 2018 with the main aim of targeting earlier homelessness prevention. Some of the main changes included:

- Earlier intervention. If a client is threatened with homelessness within 56 days the local authority is required to offer assistance to prevent homelessness. The previous time frame was 28 days.
- A Personalised Housing Plan (PHP) is now developed and agreed for each applicant which aims to outline reasonable steps for both the household and Council to take in order to try and prevent or relieve homelessness. The plan is designed with emphasis on a joint effort to help tackle homelessness.
- Introduction of the “duty to refer” which has been enforced on certain public bodies to refer households directly to the local housing authority who they believe may be homeless or at risk of homelessness in an effort to identify and offer support at an earlier stage.

The Homelessness Reduction Act places three specific duties on local authorities, this includes:

- **Prevention duty** – a 56 day prevention duty may be triggered when a client is threatened with homelessness within 56 days. This means the Council will try to prevent the client from becoming homeless within a 56 day period.
- **Relief duty** – if a client is already homeless or the Council has not been able to prevent a client from becoming homeless, a 56 day relief duty will commence. This means the Council will try to relieve homelessness by supporting the client to find alternative accommodation.
- **The ‘main’ duty** – if the Council has been unable to relieve a client’s homelessness the Council will consider whether a ‘main’ duty may be owed under homelessness law to help the client on a longer term. The Council will assess if the client is eligible, homeless, has a local connection, and has a priority need and whether the client has become homeless unintentionally. These are the original five tests undertaken prior to the HRA coming into force, and were unchanged by the new legislation.

In preparation for the change in legislation, Spelthorne Borough Council took 3 main steps to help implement the Homelessness Reduction Act¹²:

- 1) Five new members of staff were recruited and in post by March 2018 due to the expected increased workload. This included three Housing Options Officers, one Tenancy Sustainment Officer, and one Complex Needs Worker.
- 2) A new electronic case management system called HPA2 was developed by our system provider Locata. This was developed from the original HPA system and allowed for the creation of personalised housing plans, and allowed for the client to self-serve more easily. These individual plans are accessible to both housing officers and clients who can update and note any circumstantial changes. HPA2 also enables us to collate statistical information which we report back quarterly through the quarterly ‘H-CLIC’ return to MHCLG.
- 3) Staff and stakeholders were prepared through HRA training and two stakeholder events were jointly held with Runnymede Borough Council to inform our partners of the changes.

¹¹ Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (2017) Homelessness Reduction Act. The National Archives.

¹² Spelthorne Borough Council (2019) Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Housing Options Update 15 January 2019.

Approaches for housing advice

Between April 2018 and March 2019, a total of 1,223 households approached Spelthorne Borough Council seeking assistance as they were either homeless or threatened with homelessness. This is broken down in Chart 7.

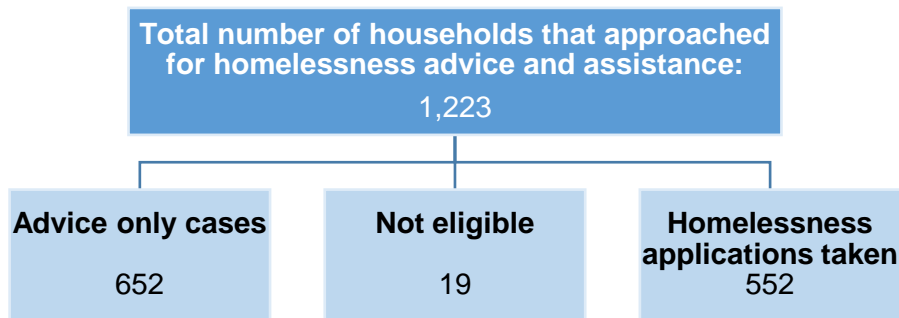


Chart 7: Approaches for initial housing advice 2018/19

Under s179 of the 1996 Act, the Council is required to provide free advice and assistance to residents who need help with their housing. Where we are approached and the issue is resolved purely through the provision of this s179 advice and assistance, we refer to these cases as ‘advice only cases’. This will also include cases where we have carried out non-statutory preventative work, for example before the 56 day trigger we may request a discretionary housing payment to help cover the shortfall in rent as a temporary measure.

As shown in Chart 8, where the main reason for the loss of a household’s last settled address was recorded, the main reason was friends or family no longer willing or able to accommodate, followed closely by the end of an assured shorthold tenancy in the private sector. This is in line with approaches prior to the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. There have been a number of cases recorded as ‘other reasons / not known’, which needs addressing.

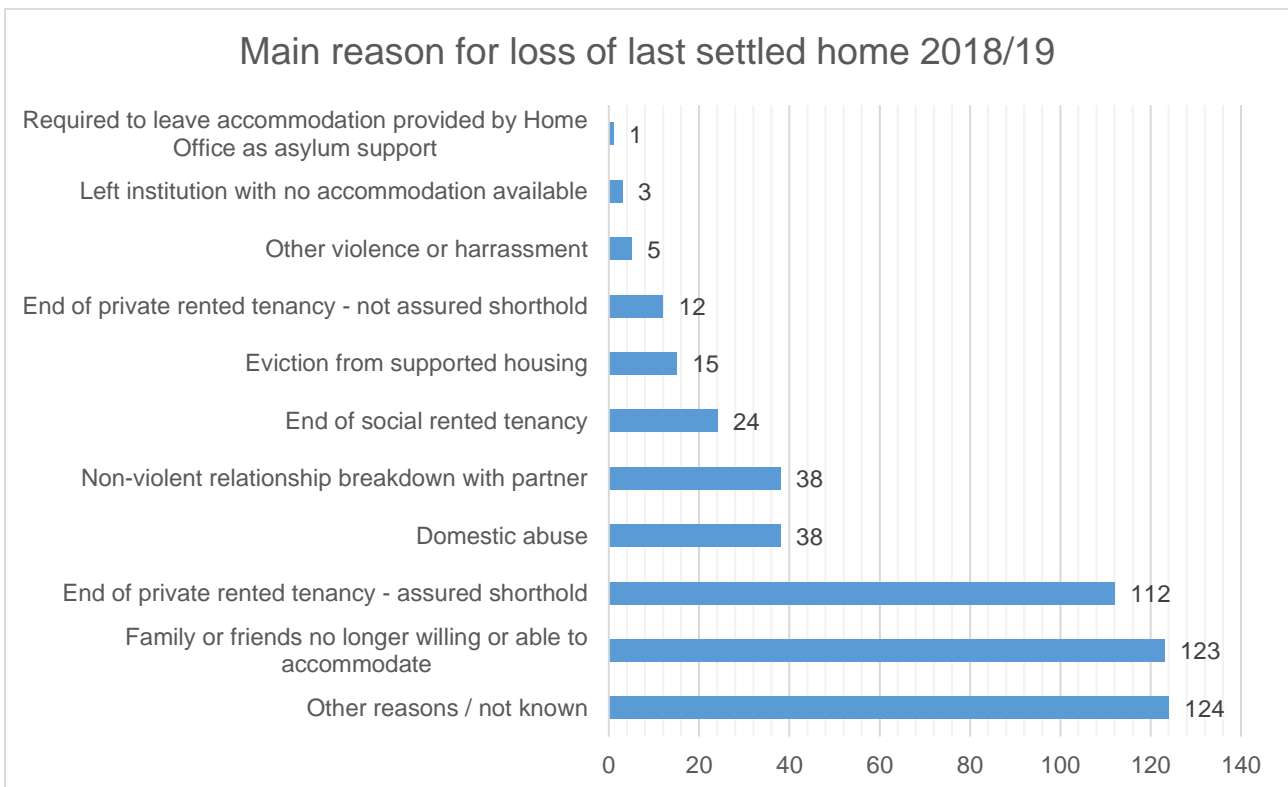


Chart 8: Main reason for loss of last settled home 2018/19

Once the trigger for taking a homelessness application is met, we carry out the assessment of circumstances and needs. From April 2018 to March 2019 a total of 552 applications were taken. Table 8 breaks down how each client was assessed upon application acceptance.

Assessment of Circumstances on Approach	Total	% of Total
Not threatened with homelessness within 56 days	46	8%
Prevention duty owed	355	64%
Already homeless relief duty owed	151	27%
Total	552	100%

Table 8: Initial assessment of circumstances for homelessness applications 2018/19

Meeting the support needs of homeless households

Throughout the course of 2018/19, we assisted a number of households with support needs. 63% of all households owed either a Prevention Duty or a Relief Duty had a support need. As shown in Chart 9 below, for one in five households, this main support need was mental health issues. Some of the ways in which we responded to these support needs are contained within the Partnerships section later in this review.

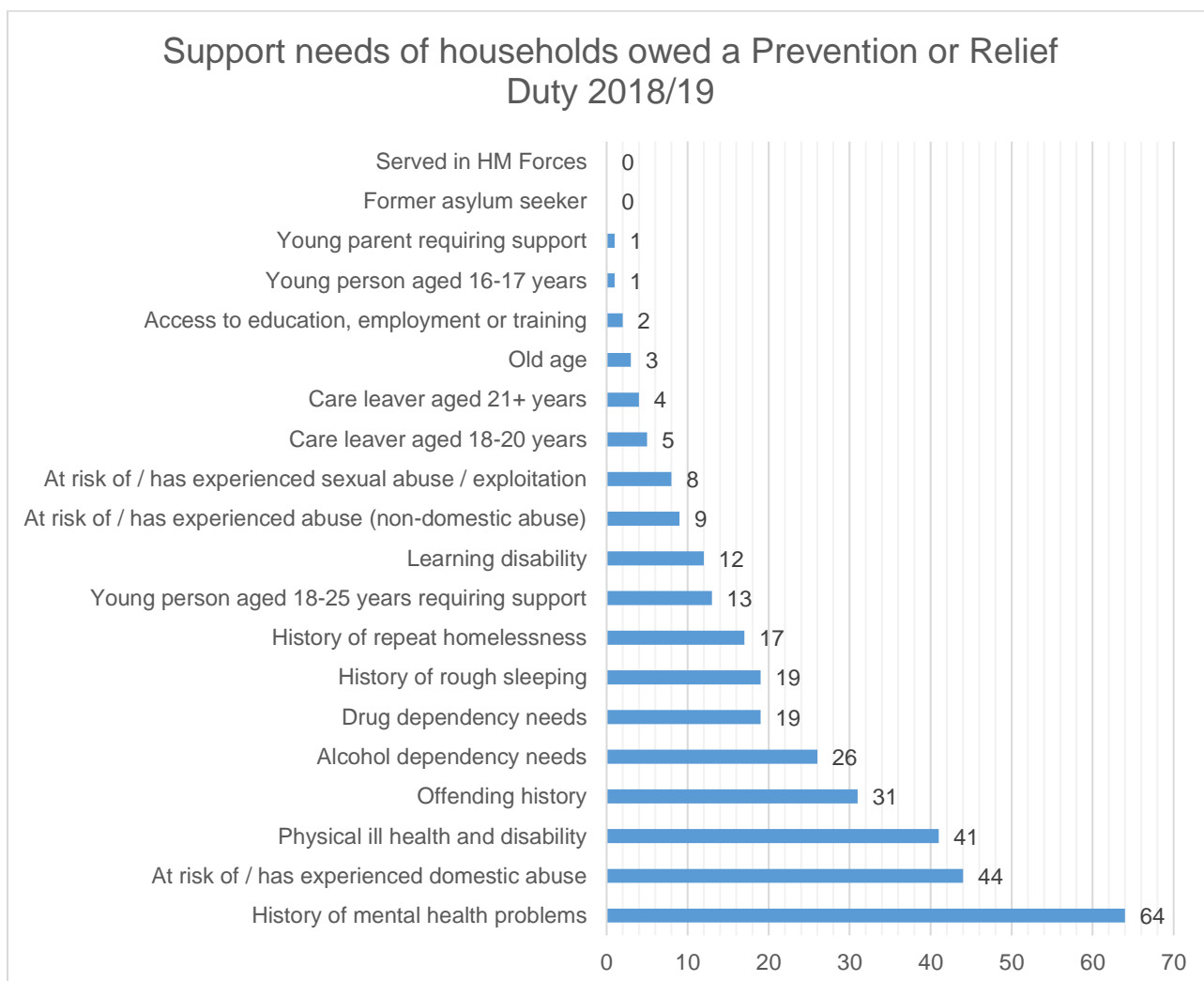


Chart 9: Support needs of households owed a Prevention or Relief Duty 2018/19

Nationality and ethnicity of households

In line with the years prior to the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, the vast majority of households owed a duty were habitually resident UK nationals. Additionally, our data shows that we continue to serve a diverse range of ethnicities in our community. Chart 10 and Chart 11 show this data in more detail.

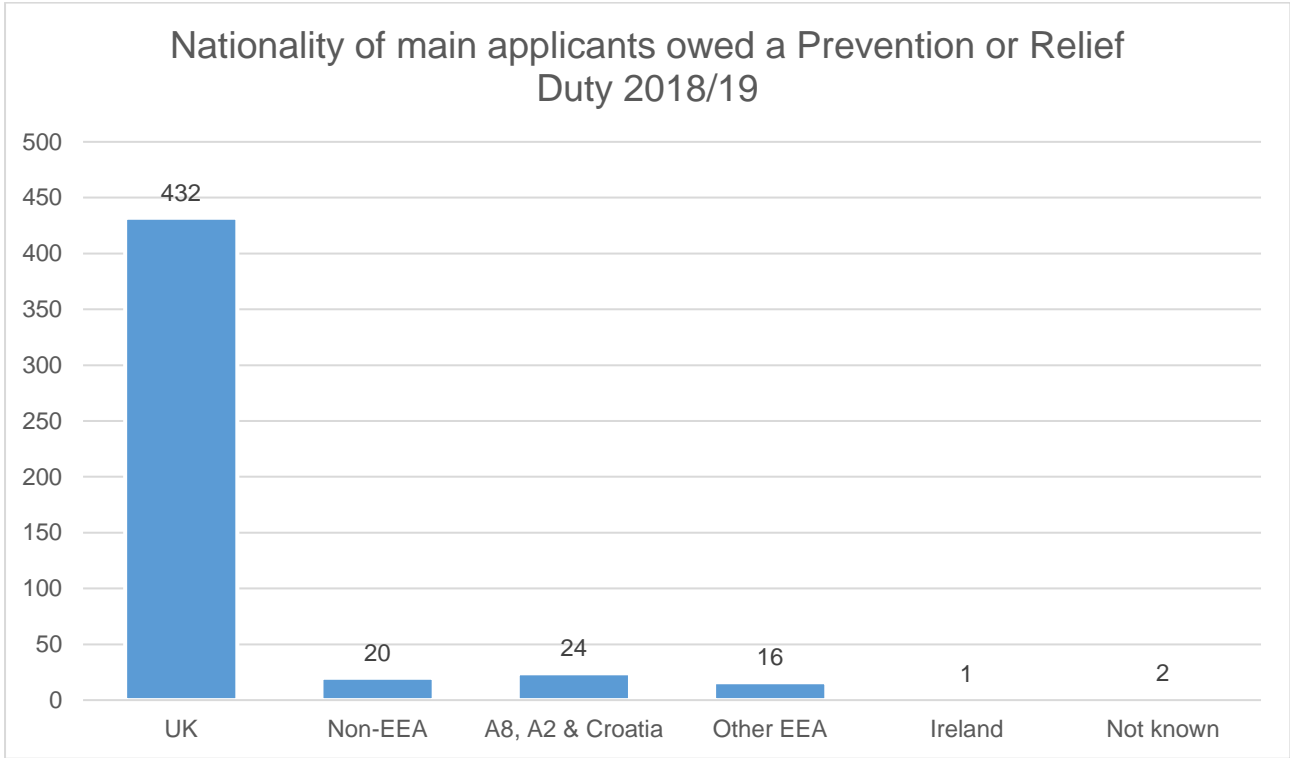


Chart 10: Nationality of main applicants owed a Prevention or Relief Duty 2018/19

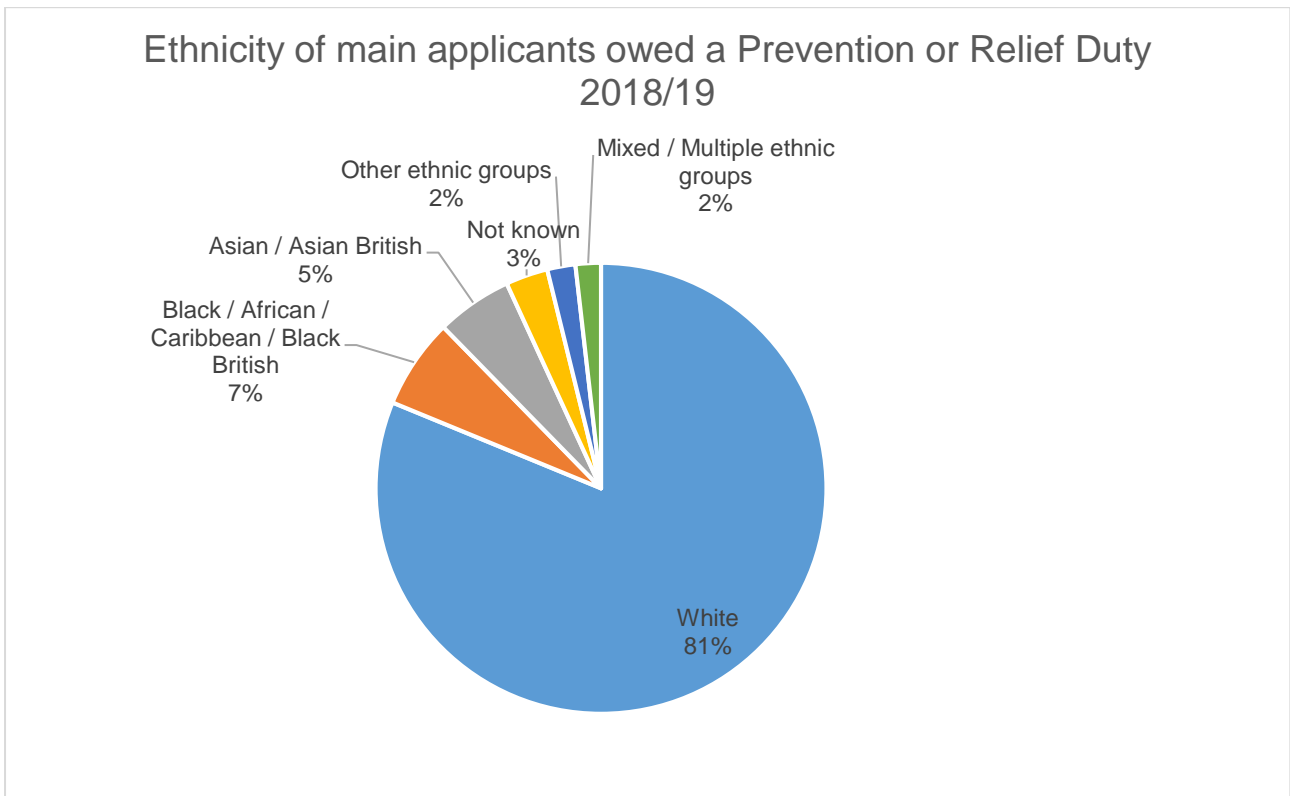


Chart 11: Ethnicity of main applicants owed a Prevention or Relief Duty 2018/19

Employment status of households

The majority of households approaching us for assistance are in employment, with 35% in either part-time or full time employment. Chart 12 breaks down the employment status of households.

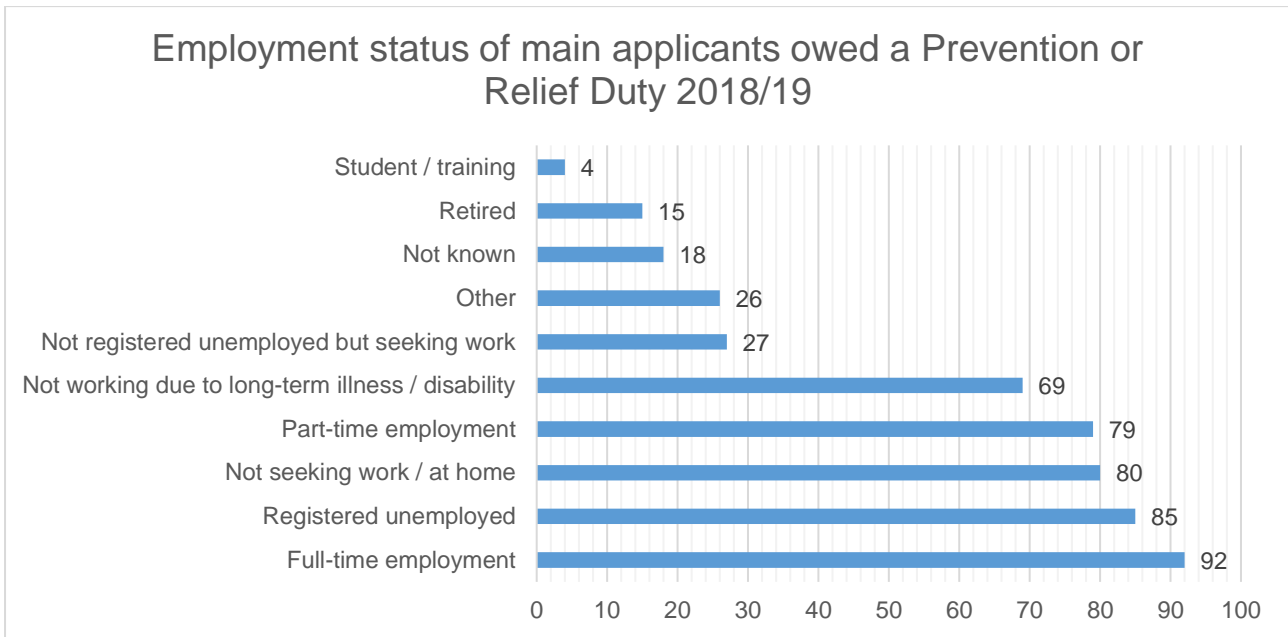


Chart 12: Employment status of main applicants owed a Prevention or Relief Duty 2018/19

Outcomes of applications

The outcomes of these applications are broken down by the three main duty types: Prevention Duty in Chart 13, Relief Duty in Chart 14 and Main Duty in Chart 15. The categories in green suggest a positive outcome for the applicant. This highlights that a significant proportion of households are assisted to either remain in their existing accommodation or are helped to secure alternative accommodation. It also indicates that we are still losing contact or applications are being withdrawn in a large number of cases. In summary:

- We successfully prevented homelessness in 50% of cases, with 65% of the accommodation secured for clients being in the private sector.
- We successfully relieved homelessness through securing suitable accommodation for clients in 31% of cases. 51% of the accommodation secured for clients was in the private sector.
- The Main Duty was discharged successfully in 86% of cases, with 22% of discharges into the private sector.

Outcomes of Prevention Duty discharged in 2018/19

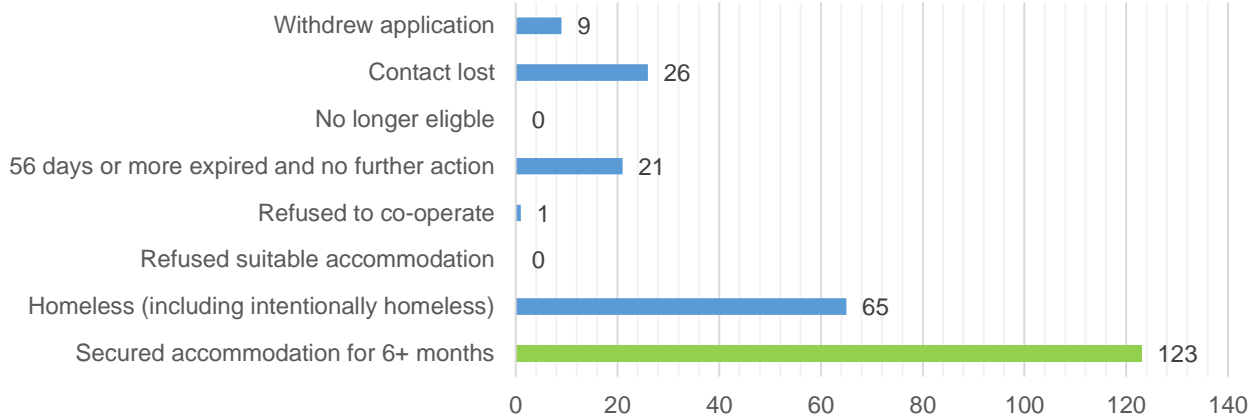


Chart 13: Outcomes of Prevention Duty discharged in 2018/19

Outcomes of Relief Duty discharged in 2018/19

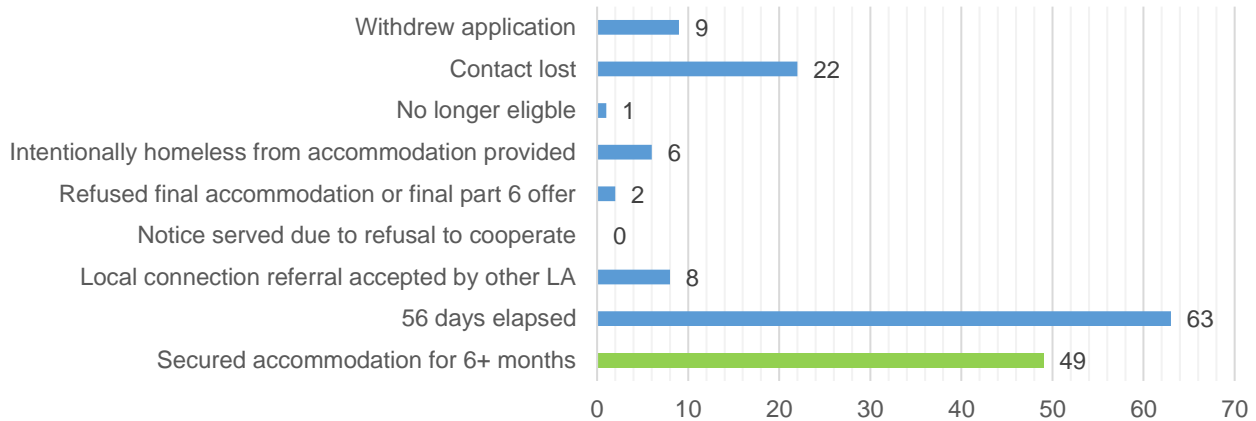


Chart 14: Outcomes of Relief Duty discharged in 2018/19

Outcomes of Main Duty discharged in 2018/19

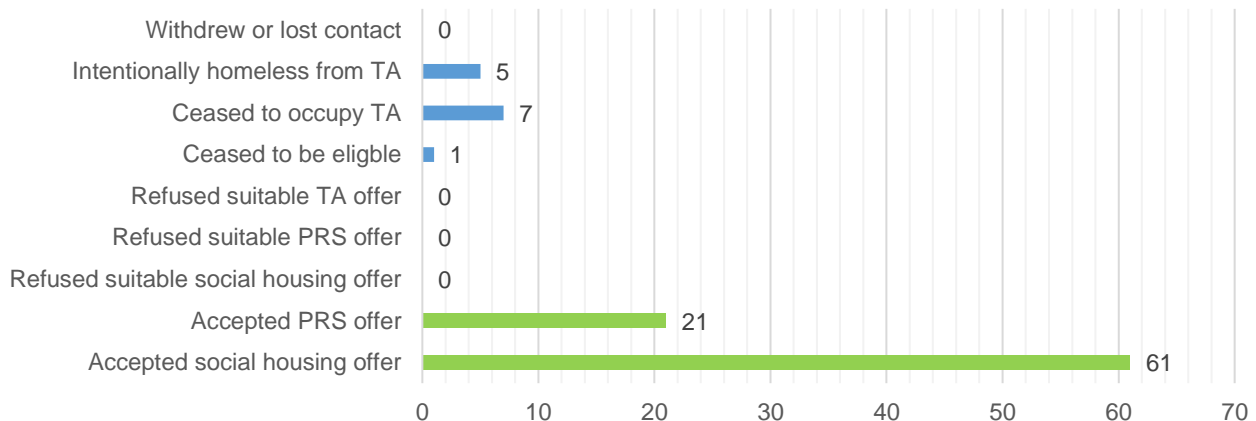


Chart 15: Outcomes of Main Duty discharged in 2018/19

Since the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act, Spelthorne Borough Council provides even earlier intervention to prevent homelessness. Inevitably, it is easier to tackle homelessness at an earlier stage with more time to assist and offer planned support. Spelthorne Borough Council has focused a large proportion of assistance to helping clients stay in their existing accommodation or help them in securing accommodation in the private rented sector.

Main Duty acceptances

Where we were unable to successfully relieve homelessness, we considered whether the household was owed the Main Duty under s193 (2) Housing Act 1996. This assessment involved considering whether the household was eligible, homeless, in priority need, had a local connection to Spelthorne, and that they had not become homeless intentionally. This assessment was carried out in 84 cases, and we accepted the Main Duty in 73% of cases. Where the Main Duty was accepted, 69% were in priority need because of dependent children within the household. This is in line with acceptances prior to the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

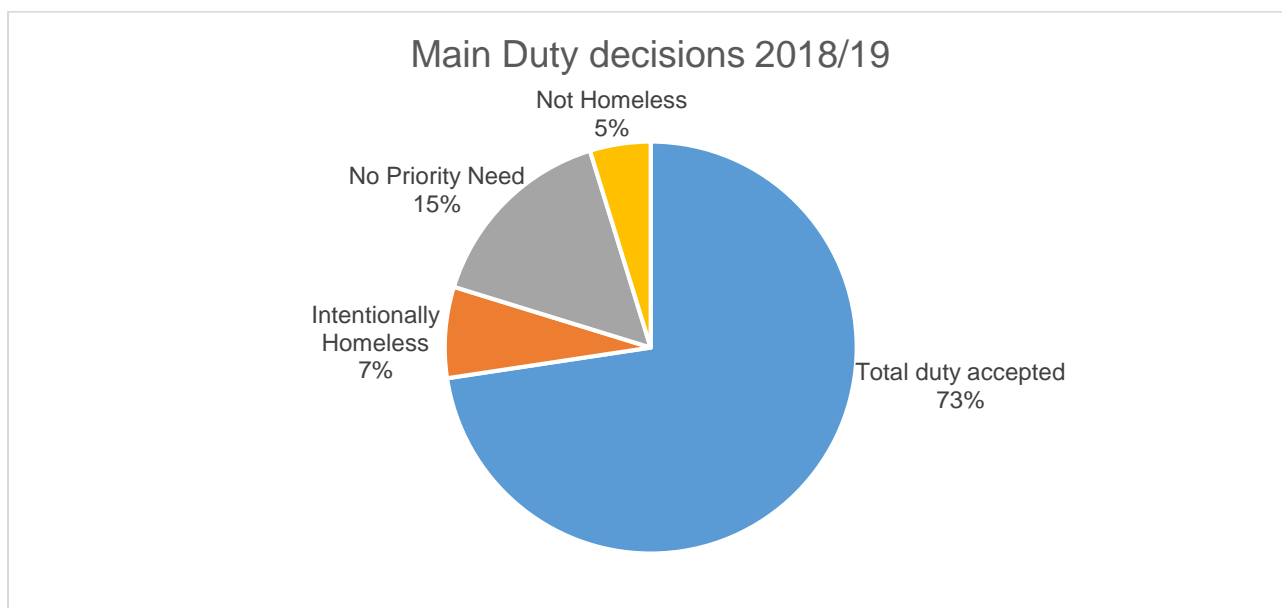


Chart 16: Main Duty decisions 2018/19

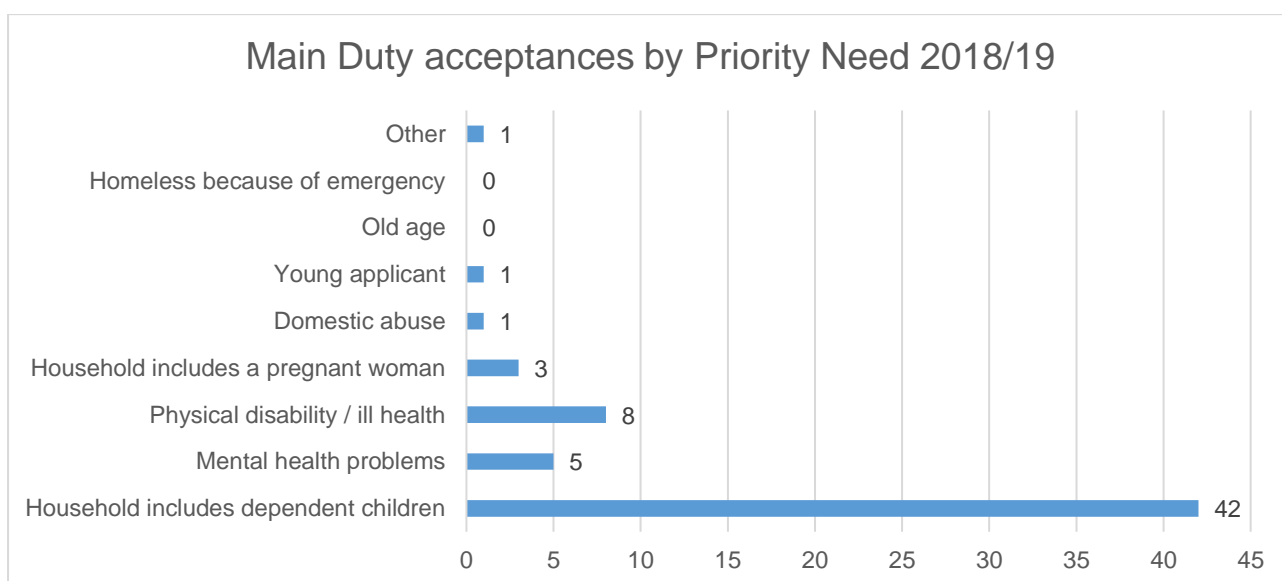


Chart 17: Main Duty acceptances by Priority Need 2018/19

Supply and demand of affordable and social housing

Spelthorne Borough Council does not own its own housing stock and as a result works closely with housing associations in the borough who offer social rented accommodation. Spelthorne Council transferred its housing stock in 1996 to what is now A2Dominion Housing Group. Social housing is extremely limited due to the high demand for affordable rented properties in the borough and nationwide. In order for residents to access social housing they must register with the Council's housing register by completing an online application on the Search Moves Website <https://www.searchmoves.org.uk/choice/>. By joining the housing register applicants are able to bid for properties in the local area through 'choice based lettings'. As previously mentioned, demand significantly outweighs the supply of social housing so the majority of applicants on the housing register will likely not be given the opportunity to be offered social housing.

Housing register

As of the annual snapshot date of 1st April 2019, there were 1242 households on Spelthorne's housing register who were waiting and trying to secure a social housing let. Table 9 shows the statistics were affected in the years of 2015 and 2019 as highlighted in yellow. The changes that occurred included a change in the housing allocations policy and the housing register re-application process whereby existing housing register applicants were invited to re-register an updated application with us. These changes explain the decrease in numbers on the housing register for the years 2015 and 2019 as not all existing applicants applied again.

Number of Accepted Housing Register Applicants					
Year	Bedroom Need				Total
	1	2	3	4	
2019	507	501	195	39	1242
2018	1030	828	281	40	2179
2017	881	720	228	40	1869
2016	721	661	182	34	1598
2015	549	493	153	23	1218
2014	1034	589	525	47	2195
	Numbers after re-application and new policy				

Table 9: Applicants registered for social housing by bedroom need as at 1 April each year 2014/19

The largest bedroom need on the housing register has consistently been one beds followed by two beds for the last five years.

Chart 18 breaks down the age band categories of our one bed need applications. This demonstrates that approximately 65% of our applicants with a one bed need are under 50 and are therefore exempt from age restricted properties, including sheltered accommodation. A comparison of the number of properties that are let with age restrictions is indicated further below.

Age of main applicant for households requiring one bedroom

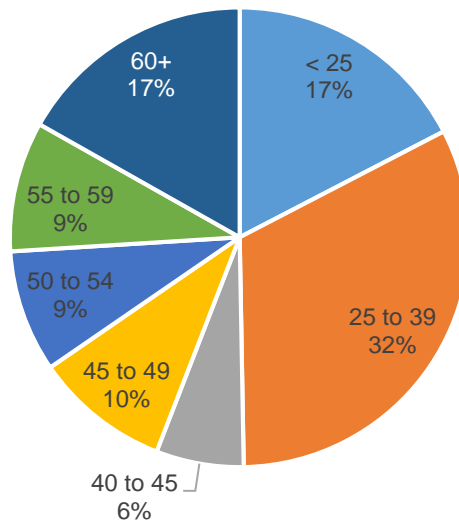


Chart 18: Age of main applicant for households requiring one bedroom

Supply of affordable and social housing

Over the last five years a total of 1,101 properties were let via Spelthorne Borough Council through Search Moves.

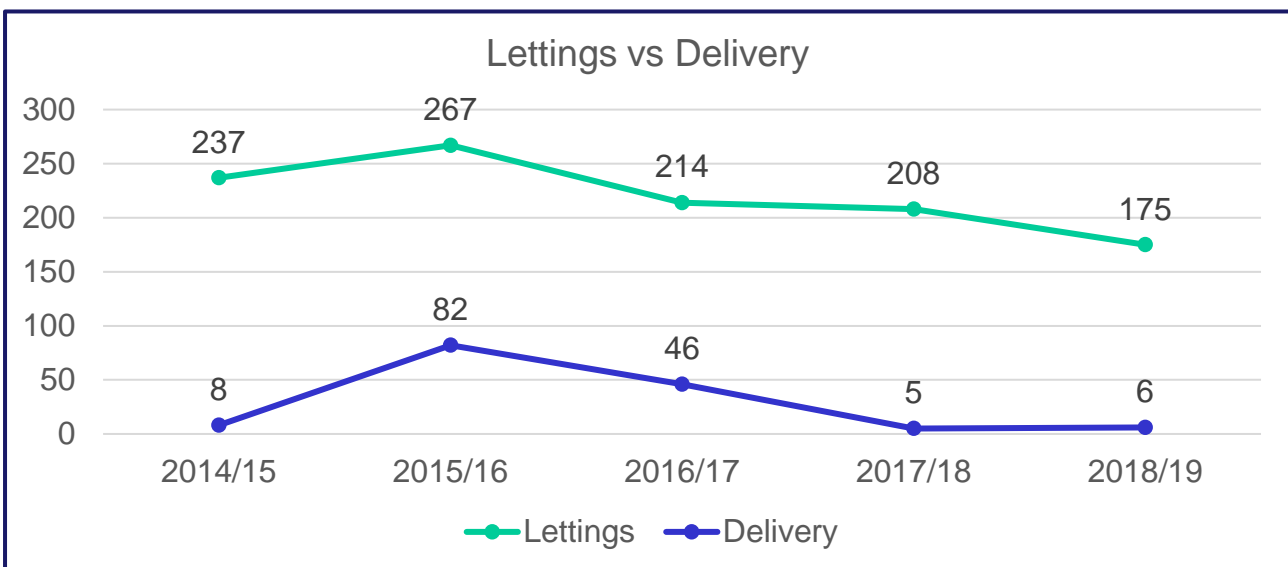


Chart 19: Lettings vs. delivery of affordable and social housing 2014/19

Social lettings have declined by approximately 25% in the last five years. A clear decline in social lets is also in line with a decline in the number of new affordable properties being delivered in the borough. In 2015/16 there was a slight peak in social lets which we interpret to be an impact of the Stanwell New Start regeneration development which commenced in 2009 and was led by A2Dominion. However, the consistent trend over the past four years is a decrease in social let properties.

Chart 20 and Chart 21 identifies the total number of Search Moves lettings by bedroom size and property type between the financial years of April 2014 to April 2019. Nearly half of the properties let were one bedroom properties, this was the highest number of bedroom size let through Search Moves. Out of the total number of 1 bedroom properties let, 97 were recorded as sheltered

accommodation and a further 203 were listed as age restricted. Age restricted properties accounts for nearly half of our one bedroom lets despite 65% of applicants with a one bed need being under the age of 50. As expected, the smallest number of properties let through Search Moves was 4 bedroom properties. This is mainly due to the limited availability of this property size. The majority of properties let were flats which make up approximately 63% of the total number of lets between the financial years of 2014 to 2019. The second highest property type was houses which made up approximately 23% of the total number of properties let.

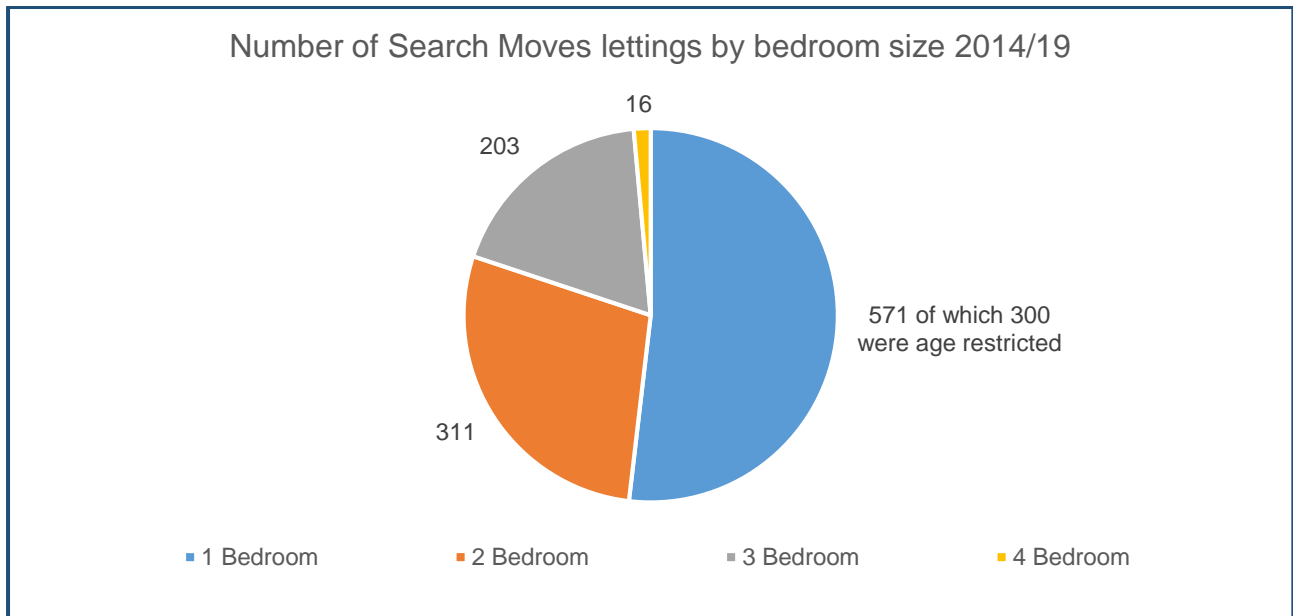


Chart 20: Total number of affordable and social lettings through Search Moves by bedroom size 2014/19

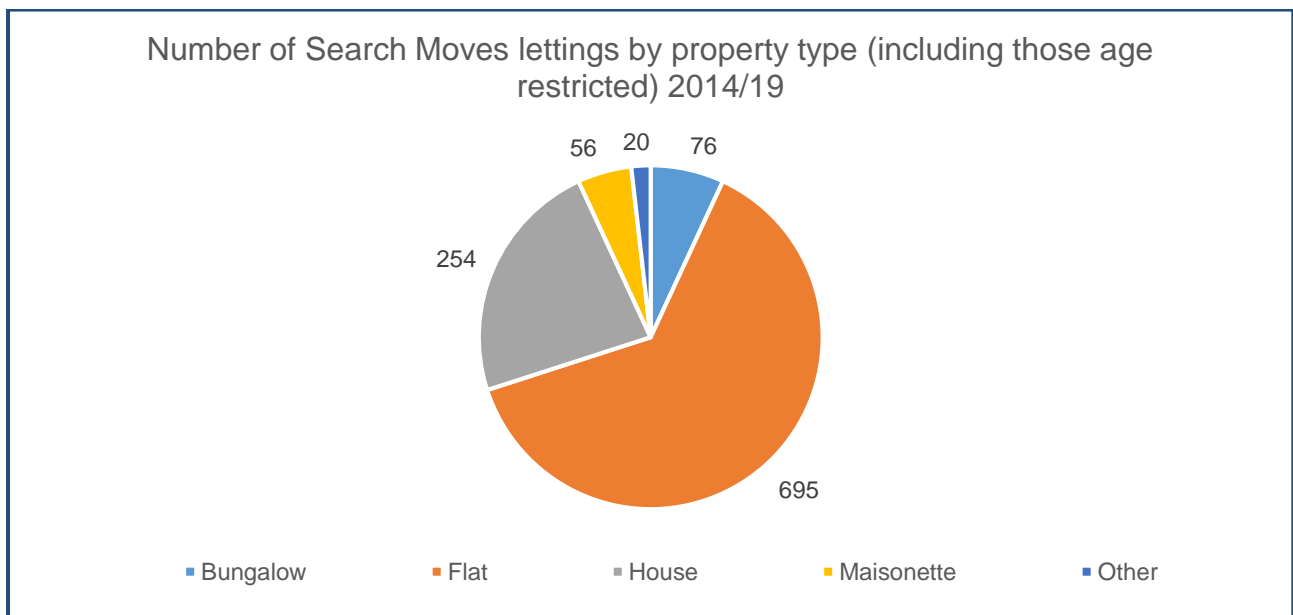


Chart 21: Total number of affordable and social lettings through Search Moves by property type 2014/19

Chart 22 and Chart 23 further clarify a decline in social lets. All bedroom sizes have generally declined over the five year period. Similarly flats and houses have declined whilst bungalows and maisonettes have generally stayed consistent. Overall these figures reiterate the decline in social housing lets.

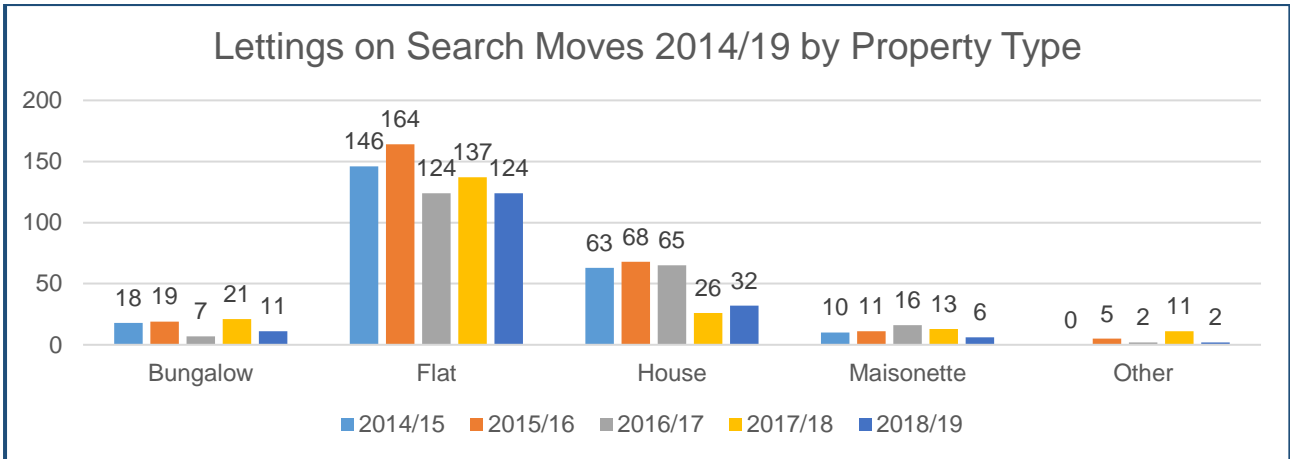


Chart 22: Total number of affordable and social lettings through Search Moves by property type and year 2014/19

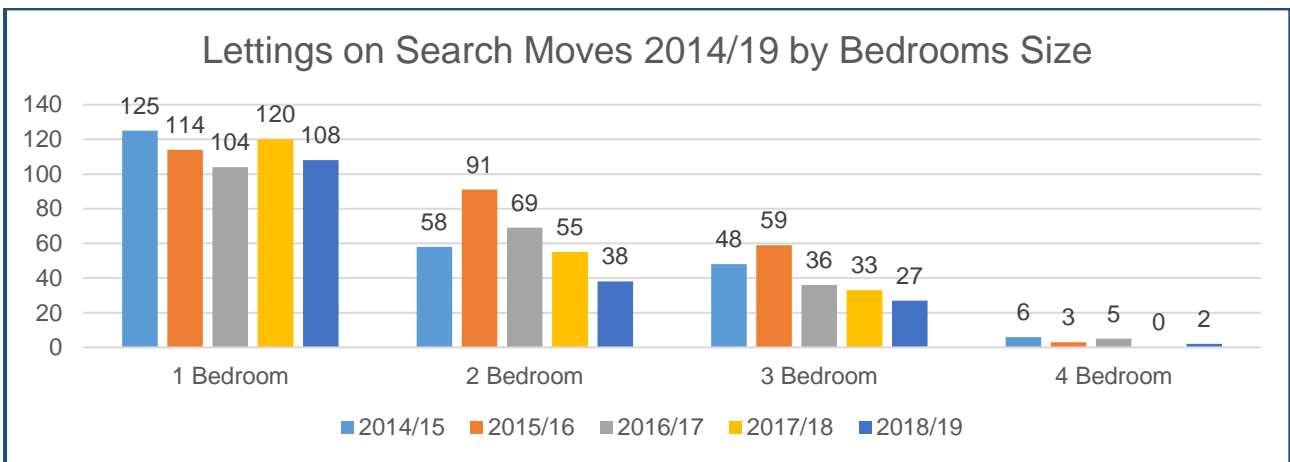


Chart 23: Total number of affordable and social lettings through Search Moves by property size and year 2014/19

Despite 1,101 properties being let through Search Moves between the financial years of 2014 and 2019, there was still a large number of households in this time period that were registered on Spelthorne Council’s housing register. There is an extremely limited number of social housing in comparison to the number of households seeking assistance and demand significantly outstrips supply.

The allocation of affordable and social housing to homeless households

The allocation of social housing is one way of helping households that are facing homelessness. Due to its limited availability and large numbers of others waiting for it, it is not a realistic option to resolve a homelessness crisis. The number of Search Moves lettings to homeless households when compared with all other households on the housing register between the years of April 2014 to April 2019 is demonstrated in Chart 24.

The data is broken down to those threatened or duty accepted as homeless versus all other households that were not. Ultimately a total of 383 homeless households were let properties through the Search Moves website over this date period. This makes up approximately 35% of persons let properties between the financial years of April 2014 to April 2019, the remaining numbers were all other households that were successful in bidding through the choice based lettings.

Number of Search Moves lettings to homeless households vs. all other households 2014/19

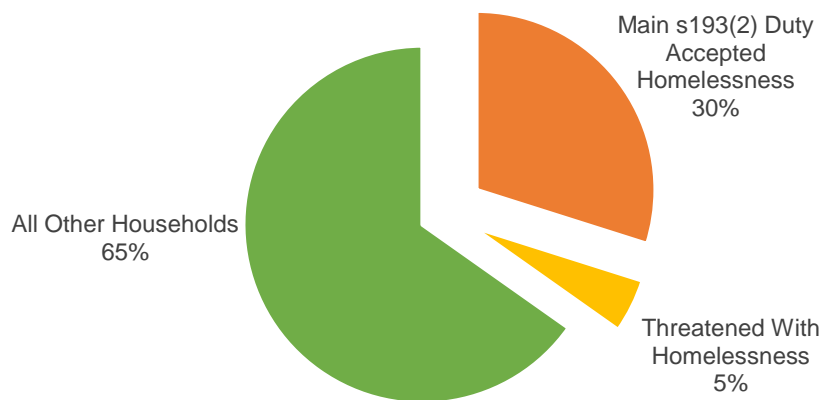


Chart 24: Total percentage of lettings of affordable and social housing through Search Moves by household type 2014/19

Table 10 is a short extract of a CIH table on lettings to homeless households in England and more specifically the South East region. An extra line for Spelthorne has been added to draw comparisons.

Area	% Lettings 2014/15	% Lettings 2015/16	% Lettings 2016/17	% Lettings 2017/18
Spelthorne	18	37	39	41
South East Region	17	15	20	24
England	14	12	16	19

Table 10: Extract and addition to Table 98c 'lettings to homeless households in England', 2019 UK Housing Review (CIH, 2009, p.230).¹³

On average 19% of socially let properties are let to homeless households annually in the South East region. This is in comparison to 15% nationally. Spelthorne averages out as 34% which is just over double of the national average and just under double of the South East region average.

¹³ Chartered Institute of Housing. M. Stephens, J. Perry, P. Williams, and G. Young (2019) 2019 UK Housing Review. CIH: Coventry.

Emergency and temporary accommodation

There are some instances where we as a Council are unable to prevent homelessness. A duty to provide interim accommodation arises where an applicant is assessed as homeless and there is a reason to believe that they are in priority need. This duty continues until the Council decides what further duty, if any, is owed to the household. There are two particular types of accommodation Spelthorne Borough Council use:

- **Emergency accommodation** (e.g. Bed and Breakfast): usually procured by the Council on a nightly basis. Although the Council has exclusive access to Harper House in Ashford, private providers are also used.
- **Temporary accommodation (TA)**: let on a longer term, although still temporary in nature. The Council owns two properties which it uses as temporary accommodation. These properties are let on non-secure weekly tenancies. We also have access to 40 properties owned by A2Dominion which are reserved exclusively for use as temporary accommodation. These properties are let on six-monthly assured shorthold tenancies.

Type of emergency and temporary accommodation used

To give an indication of how Spelthorne Borough Council uses interim accommodation, the data in Table 11 and Table 12 gives a snapshot of the 31st March 2019 to demonstrate this.

Accommodation type for properties within Spelthorne	Studio	1 Bedroom	2 Bedroom	3 Bedroom	Total
B&B (Travelodge)	0	2	0	0	2
Other Nightly Paid (Shared)	0	1	0	0	1
Other Nightly Paid (Self-Contained)	0	20	17	1	38
Temporary Accommodation (Registered Provider)	2	25	7	3	37
Temporary Accommodation (Spelthorne Council)	0	0	1	0	1
Total	2	48	25	4	79

Table 11: Snapshot of emergency and temporary accommodation placements within Spelthorne as at 31 March 2019

Accommodation type for properties outside of Spelthorne	Studio	1 Bedroom	2 Bedroom	3 Bedroom	Total
B&B (Travelodge)	0	1	0	0	1
Other Nightly Paid (Self-Contained)	0	12	2	4	18
Total	0	13	2	4	19

Table 12: Snapshot of emergency and temporary accommodation placements outside of Spelthorne as at 31 March 2019

At the 31st March 2019, the largest accommodation type that the Council arranged for eligible homeless applicants is self-contained nightly paid accommodation which was provided to 56 households. Part of this reasoning may be due to the Council's duty to provide suitable accommodation to households with children or expectant children. Under the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) Order 2003, B&B accommodation with shared facilities is not considered suitable for families with children or those who are pregnant where the placement is beyond six weeks. Therefore, this may influence the numbers in self-contained accommodation.

This is further echoed by the second largest accommodation type which is temporary accommodation from a registered provider which totals to 37. The smallest accommodation types are B&B and shared nightly paid premises.

Location of temporary and emergency accommodation used

Where suitable, the Council aims to use accommodation within Spelthorne to reduce disruption to households and their links to the borough. There are some instances where this is not possible or not suitable so some households are placed out of borough. However, the information highlights that in total 79 households were placed in borough compared to 19 that were placed out of borough. Chart 25 demonstrates that the majority of placements are made within Spelthorne.

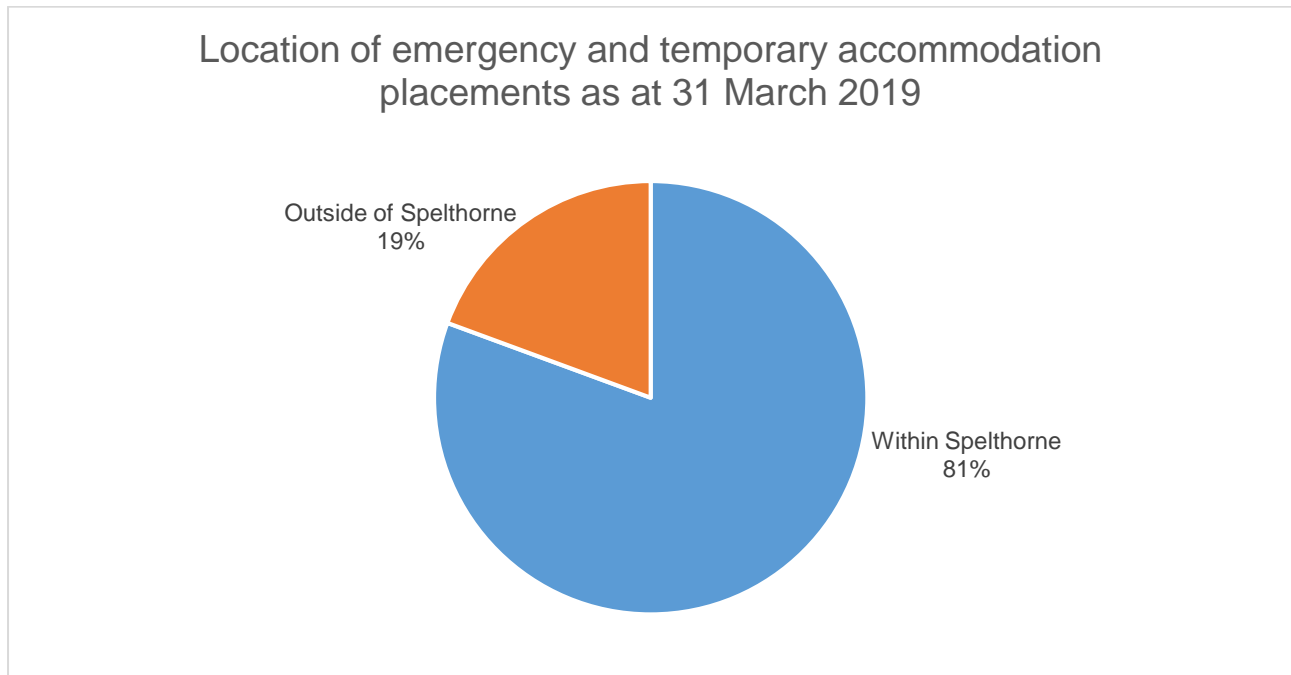


Chart 25: Location of emergency and temporary accommodation placements as at 31 March 2019

Chart 26 shows households in emergency and temporary accommodation as at the snapshot date of 31 March 2019 were made up of predominantly families with one child, closely followed by families with two children.

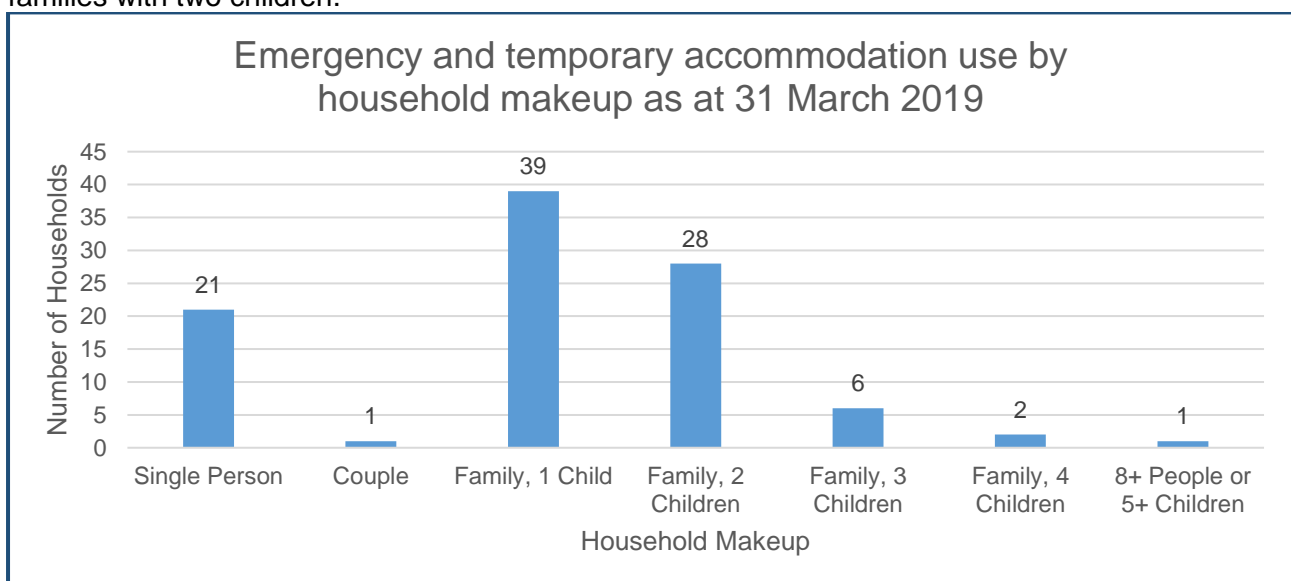


Chart 26: Emergency and temporary accommodation use by household makeup as at 31 March 2019

Length of stay in temporary and emergency accommodation

We try to minimise the length of time a household may have to be in emergency or temporary accommodation. However, this is strongly dependent on the availability of alternative suitable accommodation that meets the housing needs of the client. The average length of stay in temporary accommodation is shown in Chart 27; this is based on 56 households and their total length of stay after they exited their temporary accommodation. Unfortunately there has been an increase in the average time a household spends in temporary accommodation over the past four years.

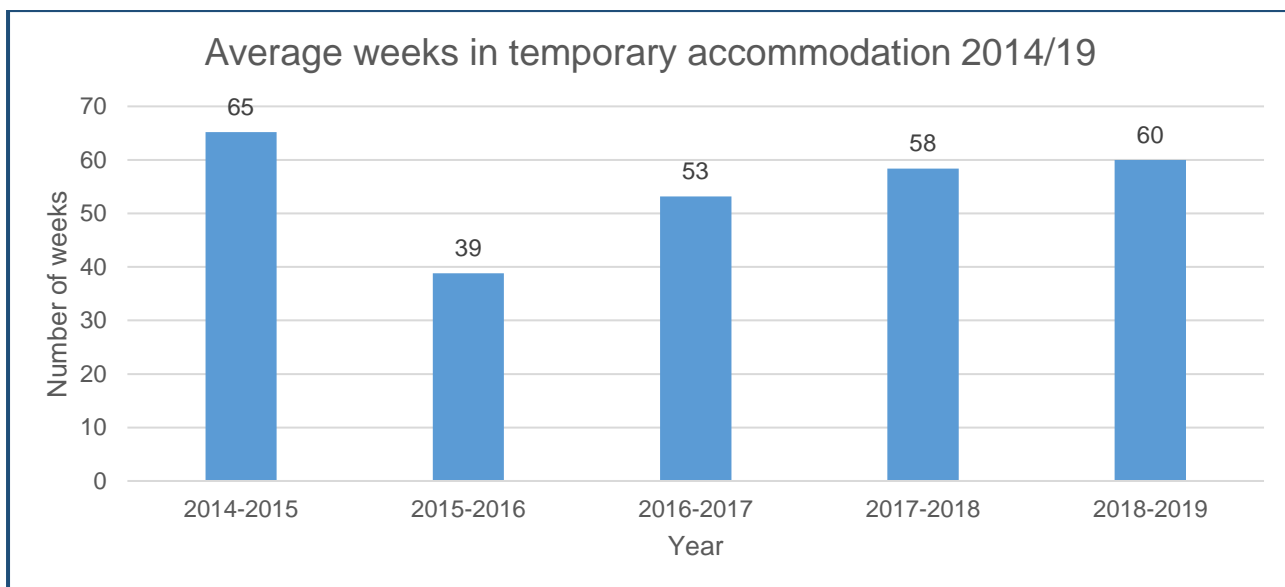


Chart 27: Average weeks in temporary accommodation 2014/19

In comparison, Chart 28 is based on 597 households and their total length of stay after they exited their bed and breakfast accommodation. The average time in this type of accommodation for the last five years has significantly decreased from 47 weeks in 2014/15 to 14 weeks in 2018/19. This is a significant success compared to previous years and is indicative of our service provision in moving households on from B&B to more suitable accommodation.

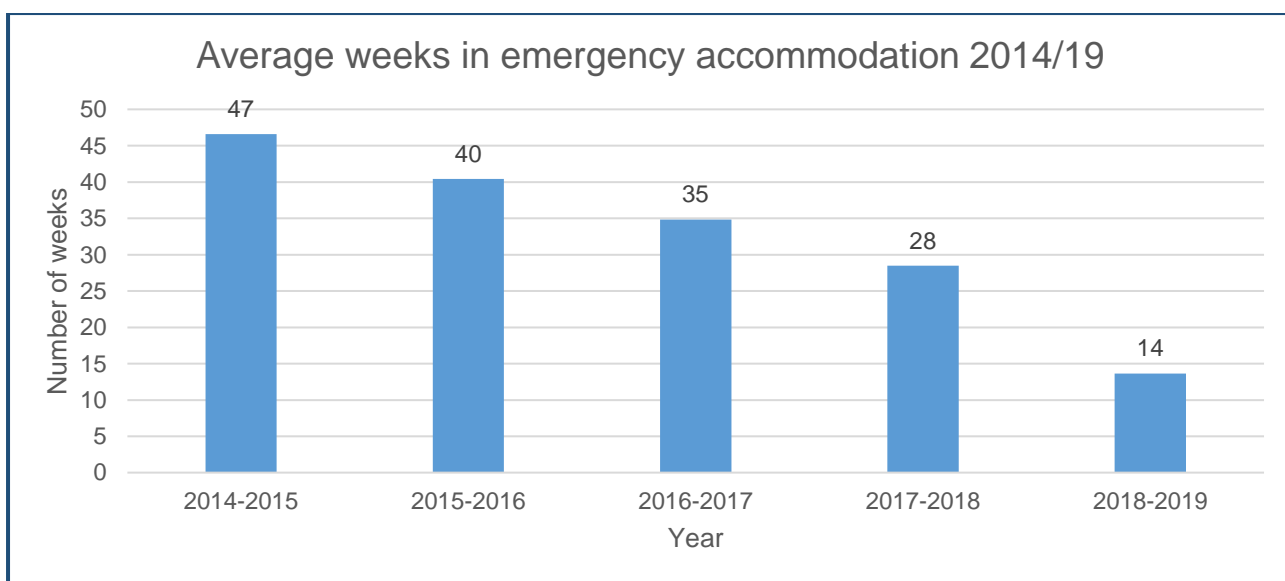


Chart 28: Average weeks in emergency accommodation 2014/19

Access to the private rented sector

Privately rented accommodation is our primary route to help relieve homelessness in the borough and is what we will use in the first instance to help prevent or relieve homelessness. One of the main issues our applicants have when securing privately rented accommodation is the large costs incurred up front by the tenant. This is usually one month's rent in advance and a 5 week deposit. When facing the threat of homelessness these large costs can cause pressures on households who may not be in a position to afford this.

Affordability of private sector housing is one of the big issues households face. There is usually a large sum of monies requested from tenants to secure a private tenancy. Expenses usually consist of a deposit, rent in advance and other costs incurred from setting up, renewing or ending the tenancy. In a bid to help our homeless applicants find and secure privately rented accommodation, Spelthorne Borough Council offers three methods of support.

1. **Prevention Fund** – With the introduction of the Homeless Reduction Act and in an attempt to prevent homelessness at the earliest possible stage. Spelthorne Council has utilised a prevention fund to help assist applicants in securing suitable accommodation through a loaned deposit and rent in advance. The applicant enters in to an affordable repayment plan with the council to pay these monies back. In the last 5 years, Spelthorne Borough Council has spent a total of £244,232.36 towards homelessness prevention.
2. **Rent Deposit Scheme** – Was designed by the Council to assist homeless families with a bond deposit and one month's rent in advance to secure privately rented accommodation. This was the Council's original scheme that was introduced in 1997 to help single persons and childless couples that were homeless or threatened with homelessness. In 2007 the scheme was amended to run as a family scheme. In total, 245 landlords have signed up to the Rent Deposit Scheme across 368 properties since 2007. Between the financial years of 2014 and 2019 Spelthorne Council made 88 of these placements. We have since produced a new scheme as outlined below but still offer the rent deposit scheme where we can.
3. **Rent Assure Scheme** – Introduced in December 2016 offers a rent guarantee scheme to landlords with an aim of them renting their properties through the Council to families who have been accepted as homeless. Additional incentives offered to landlords is outlined in part of the scheme's leaflet displayed. To April 2019, there have been 59 landlords that have signed up to the Rent Assure Scheme, across 78 properties. The data below indicates the scheme's success in forming tenancies with families who are homeless or threatened with homelessness and landlords. Spelthorne Council has demonstrated its good working relationships with landlords as it's noted that landlords who have started on the scheme have come back with other properties to rent through the Rent Assure Scheme.

Benefits of this completely free scheme include:

- rent being paid directly to landlords by the Council at a fair guaranteed local market rate
- a rent guarantee and five week security repair bond agreement which lasts two years
- free assured short-hold tenancy agreement
- free tenant finding service
- choice of approved tenants
- free professional inventory service
- free tenancy support service
- tenant training programme
- ongoing support for landlord and prospective tenants

Image 1: Summary of Rent Assure Scheme benefits to landlords

Clients placed on Spelthorne Rent Assure 2016 - 2019

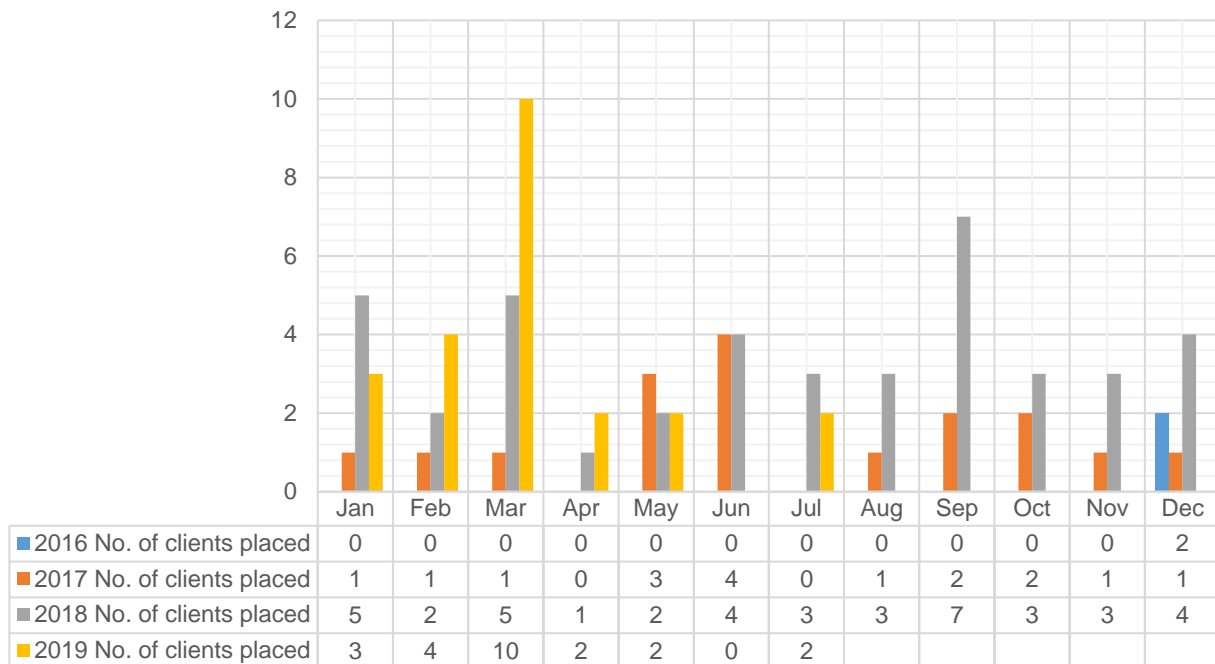


Chart 29: Total placements on Spelthorne Rent Assure 2016/19

Chart 29 details the number of placements which have been made under the Spelthorne Rent Assure Scheme. Noticeably the number of households placed on the scheme increased at two major points; September 2018 and March 2019. During these two separate occasions Spelthorne Borough Council worked with Knowle Green Estates (KGE). KGE is a company wholly owned by Spelthorne Borough Council, set up to manage residential accommodation within the borough. All of the new KGE properties to date have been let through the Spelthorne Rent Assure scheme and the rent was capped at the local housing allowance. The impact of Spelthorne Borough Council working with KGE means we have been able to help assist 11 homeless households in to affordable privately rented properties. We have built a good working partnership with KGE, they consult Spelthorne Borough Council during decision making on future housing projects. The benefit of this is that future specifications of housing planning by KGE will consider the housing need and demand in Spelthorne.

Spelthorne Rentstart

Whilst the Rent Assure scheme helps families who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, Spelthorne Council works closely with a local charity called Spelthorne Rentstart who are able to offer support to single persons and childless couples. Rentstart offers similar incentives for landlords to the Rent Deposit scheme in that they help tenant's secure privately rented accommodation through wholly or part funding a rent deposit through their deposit guarantee scheme and offer ongoing tenancy sustainment support.

As highlighted in Chart 30, Rentstart have successfully assisted a total of 1,747 clients between the financial years of 2014 to 2019. Assistance was given through housing advice which was provided to 1,362 clients and an additional 385 were supported in to accommodation through the Deposit Scheme.

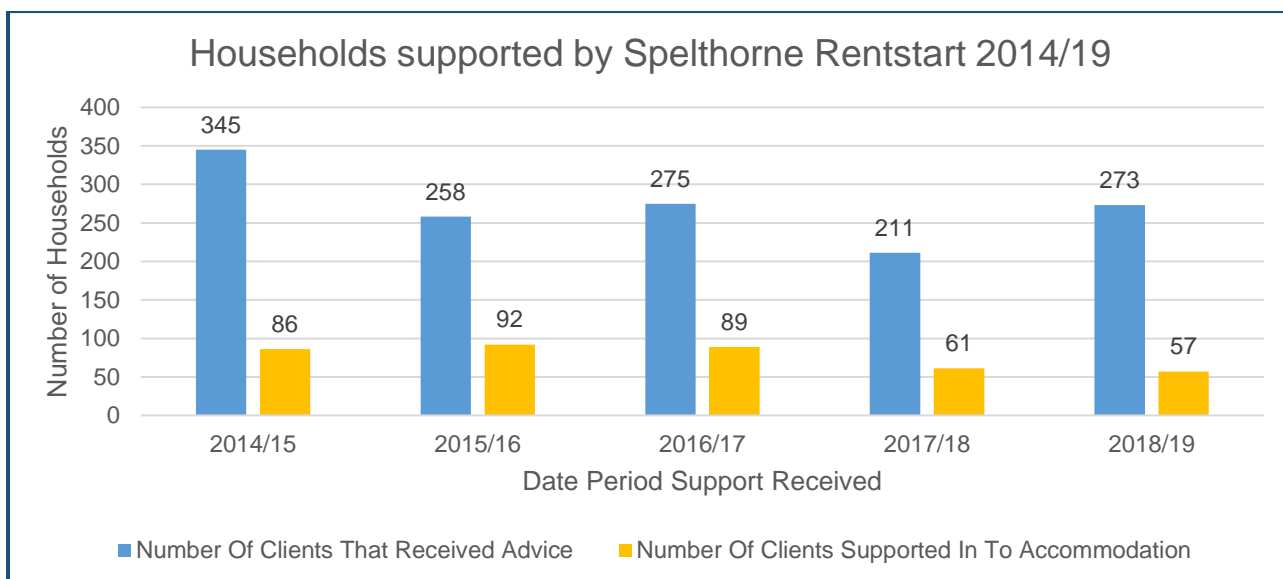


Chart 30: Number of households supported by Spelthorne Rentstart 2014/19

Rentstart have advised the number of client's housed in rooms has been declining in recent years which has led to a reduction in the overall number of client's housed.

Rentstart consider the lack of rooms is attributable to several factors including:

- The scarcity of rooms has led to rents being pushed up to unaffordable levels;
- The Local Housing Allowance has not kept up with market rents;
- The introduction of Universal Credit. This received a lot of negative press which put new landlords off, making it increasingly difficult for Rentstart clients to secure properties; Fortunately, Rentstart managed to retain all of their existing landlords;
- A change in the travel and tourism accommodation market has led to less availability of rooms as they are being utilised for other means;
- The absence of a Night Shelter in 2017/18 and 2018/19. This was a lifeline to Rentstart during the winter months, as it gave access to rooms at short notice for brief periods, giving Rentstart a window to work intensively with clients to secure more permanent accommodation in the private rented sector.

Rough Sleeping

MHCLG conduct an annual snapshot of people rough sleeping on a single night. The snapshot uses street or spot counts and evidence-based estimates. MHCLG's 2018¹⁴ annual autumn snapshot of national rough sleeping recorded 4,677 people as sleeping rough on a single night with London accounting for 27% of the total number. This figure is nearly double what it was four years ago when it was 2,744. MHCLG goes on to identify that:

- 64% were UK nationals;
- 14% were women;
- 6% were aged 25 years or younger.

MHCLG break their figures down by region; Spelthorne falls under the South East region of England. This is recreated in Chart 31 to indicate the total number of rough sleepers over the last 8 years. The general trend is a significant increase in the number of rough sleepers.

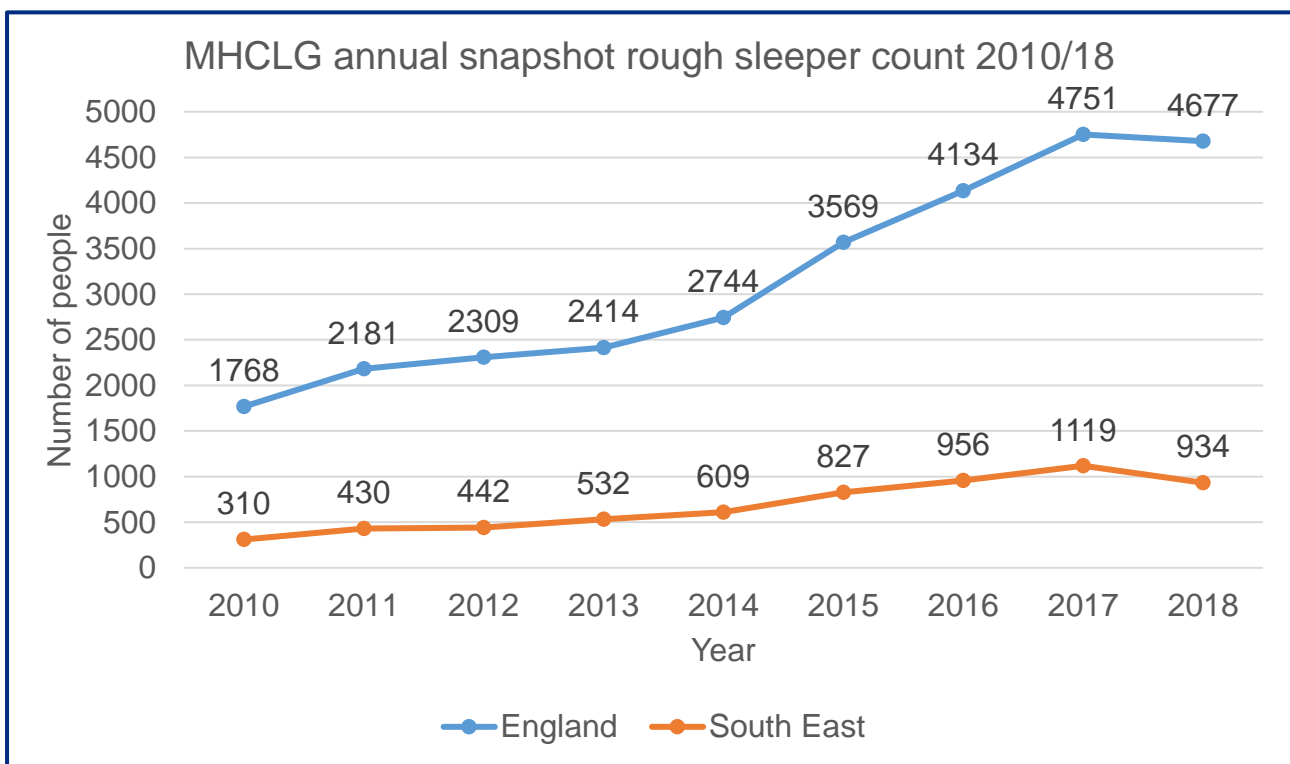


Chart 31: MHCLG annual rough sleeper count 2010/18

The South East Region was noted as having 20% of the total number of people sleeping rough and was ranked second highest by region after London. However, the total number of rough sleepers in the South East Region decreased from the previous year which was recorded as 1,119. This may be partly from the introduction of The Rough Sleeping Initiative that was launched in spring 2018 as part of the government's strategy to initially half rough sleeping and then fully eradicate it by 2027¹⁵.

Similarly, the trend of increased numbers of rough sleepers is a common pattern in Spelthorne. Chart 32 shows the numbers of rough sleepers recorded in Spelthorne for the last 8 years. Whilst people rough sleeping may not be a significant problem in the borough it is still an increasing concern.

¹⁴ Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (2018) 'Rough Sleeping Statistics Autumn 2018, England (Revised)'.

¹⁵ Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (2018) 'Rough Sleeping Strategy: Delivery Plan.'

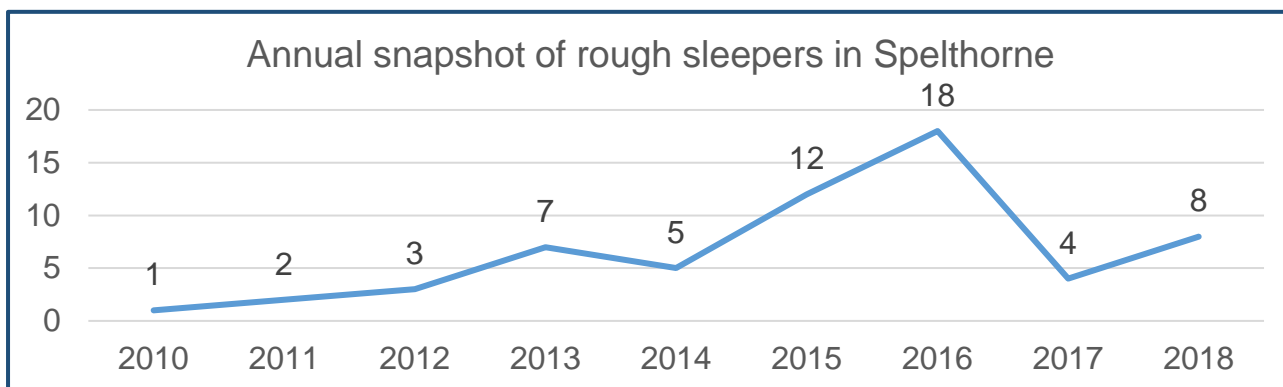


Chart 32: Annual snapshot of rough sleepers in Spelthorne 2010/18

Annual winter shelter

For the past number of years, we have worked with Transform Housing & Support, Runnymede Borough Council and Elmbridge Borough Council to provide a winter shelter for rough sleepers. The most recent accommodation being the Hershams Road hostel. Since 2017 each borough has made their own arrangements. This was due to a number of factors which included a required change in the planning layout of an extension to Hershams Road hostel which was intended to be used as a winter shelter. The extension was smaller than originally intended and unfortunately effected the capability of it being used as a winter shelter.

Each year, the Council identifies provision for homeless people to shelter them from inclement and severe weather. Those accessing this facility are generally people who are not owed a longer-term housing duty by the Council, and who would otherwise qualify to be accommodated on an emergency basis under what is known as the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP). SWEP is activated when the 'feels like' temperature falls to below 0°C for at least three consecutive nights. It is up to the Council to determine when SWEP is activated.

For the past number of years, the Council has funded a service jointly with Runnymede Borough Council and Elmbridge Borough Council. The location of this service has varied over the years:

- 2014/15 – Whiteley Village, Hershams
- 2015/16 – Fairways, Staines-upon-Thames
- 2016/17 – Fairways, Staines-upon-Thames
- 2017/18 – Hershams Road, Walton-on-Thames

In each of the years 2014/15, 2015/16 and 2016/17, the Council contributed £5,000 revenue funding towards the set-up and running of the shelter. No revenue funding was provided for the year 2017/18 for reasons given later in this report.

Due to difficulties with the Hershams Road extension works, there was no winter shelter provision for the 2018/19 winter months. Instead, Officers relied on SWEP activation, and placed a total of four homeless people into emergency accommodation who would otherwise have been referred to the night shelter. This figure does not include those individuals who refused offers of assistance – this data is not currently held in an easily reportable manner.

Rough Sleeper Initiative

As a result of increasing rough sleep numbers, Spelthorne Borough Council put in a recent bid and was successful for Rough Sleeping Initiative funding. As of March 2019 we were awarded £50,000 towards helping reduce and where possible eliminate rough sleeping in Spelthorne's borough. This fund has already been utilised by the recruitment of a Rough Sleeper Coordinator and Outreach

Officer who is working to map existing services for rough sleepers in Spelthorne. The officer is responsible for working with service providers to ensure that those persons who are experiencing or are at risk of rough sleeping have information and access to outreach services. The remaining monies will be used towards a personal support budget to help rough sleepers into settled accommodation.

The role is still in its early stages but has already provided us with some indicative data on the number of rough sleepers in Spelthorne. The number of people recorded as rough sleeping is broken down in Table 13.

Month of 2019	Number of people recorded as rough sleeping in Spelthorne
May	8
June	7
July	8
August	13
September	10

Table 13: Monthly snapshot of the number of people recorded as sleeping rough in Spelthorne

Having a rough sleeper coordinator allows us to dedicate a resource to monitor the number of people rough sleeping in the borough more carefully and allows us to focus our attention on ways to encourage them to engage with us for support.

Since the beginning of June 2019 the rough sleeper coordinator reported the following successes so far:

- One rehoused in to sheltered accommodation;
- One rehoused in to private rented accommodation;
- Three in B&B under statutory duty after referring to a housing options officer – the rough sleeper coordinator is still offering an outreach service to them;
- Two rehoused in to supported housing with an ongoing outreach service for one month whilst the rough sleeping coordinator works with the key worker. A further one has an assessment booked for supported housing;
- Four have moved on out of borough and not been sighted again.

The Council hopes to see ongoing success from the Rough Sleeping Initiative funding as part of achieving its new strategy and will continue to monitor its results.

Resources available to deliver homelessness services

Staffing revenue expenditure

A comparison of our staffing team in 2014 to 2019 is demonstrated in Chart 33 and Chart 34.

Housing Options Team 2014

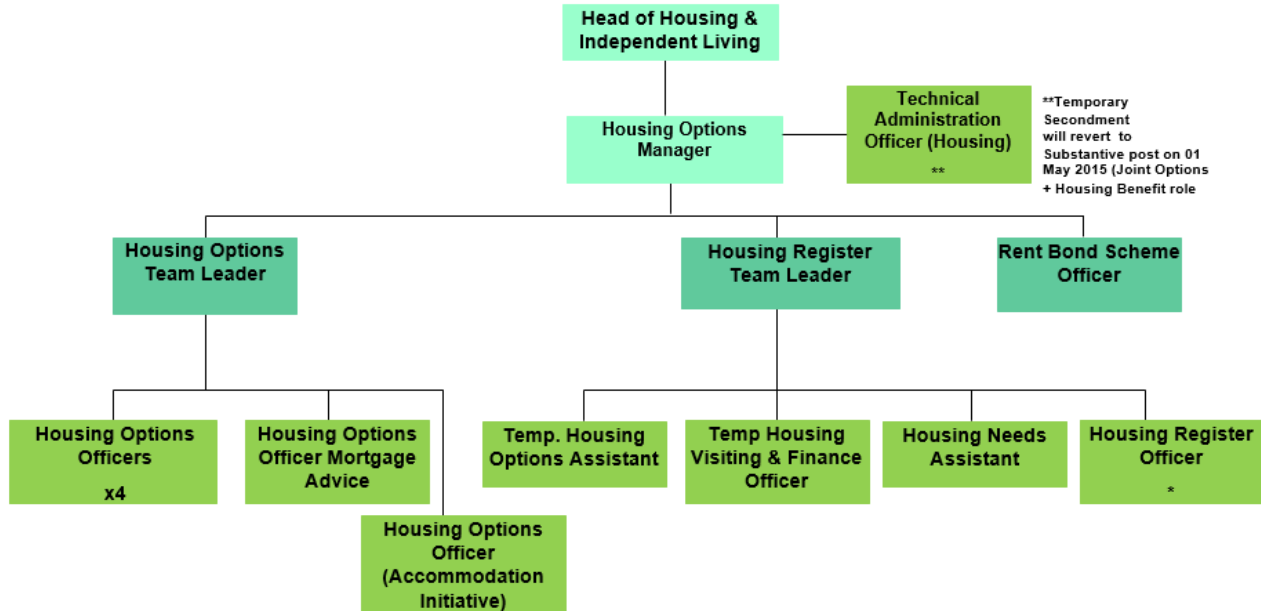


Chart 33: Housing Options team structure 2014

Housing Options Team 2019

The Housing Options team at Spelthorne Borough Council has significantly expanded over the last five years. This includes the recruitment of five new members of staff posted by March 2018 due to the increased workload predicted as a result of the implementation of the Homeless Reduction Act. This included three Housing Options Officers, one Tenancy Sustainment Officer, and one Complex Needs Worker.

The Complex Needs Worker sits within the Family Support Team (a shared service with Elmbridge Borough Council and Epsom & Ewell Borough Council), but is funded by the Community Wellbeing Group, and works wholly for the Housing Options team.

In addition to this, in March 2018 the corporate Housing Strategy function transferred from the Regeneration and Growth Group to the Community Wellbeing Group.

Total expenditure related to these costs are displayed in Chart 35. This highlights an increase in expenditure with staff related costs including: salaries, insurance, pension, and essential allowances for home visits. Staff related costs has doubled compared to five years ago due to the required team expansion. This has ensured our ability to deliver a well-structured and effective Housing Options service. With increasing numbers of homeless households and rough sleepers Spelthorne Borough Council has aimed to meet with the demand for housing support, advice and assistance.

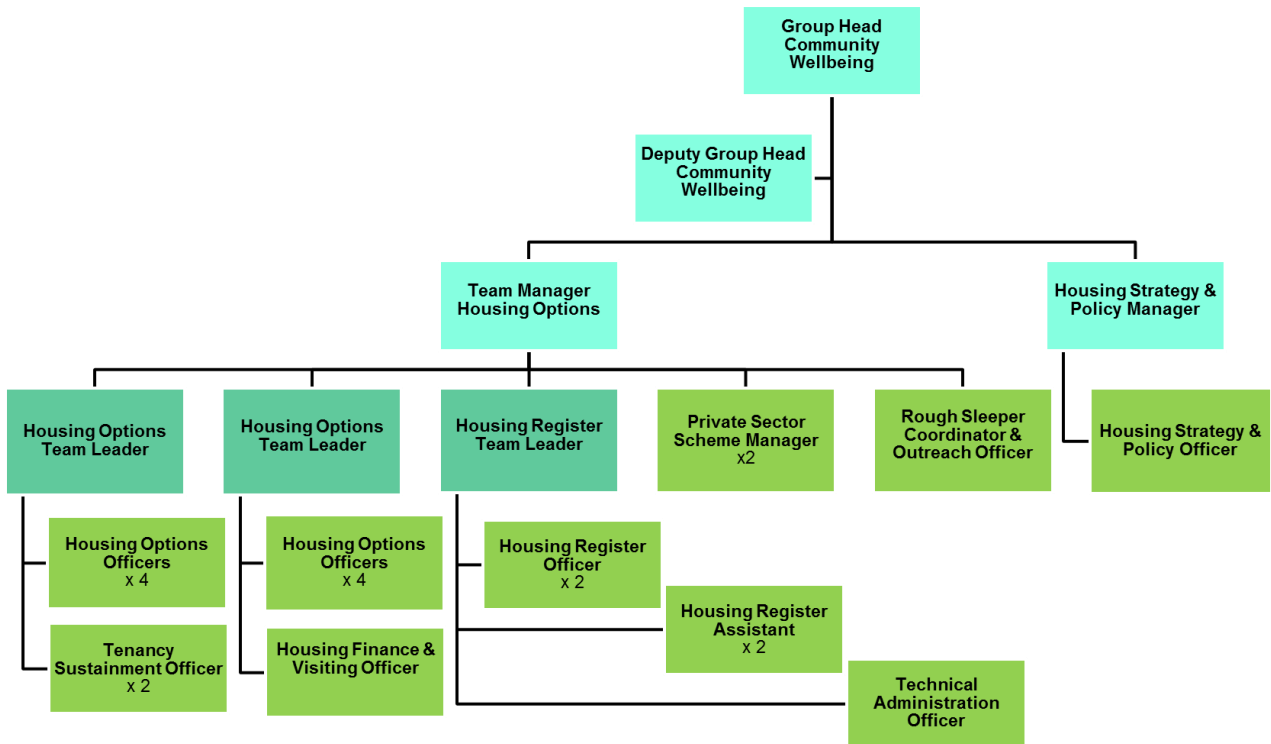


Chart 34: Housing Options team structure 2019

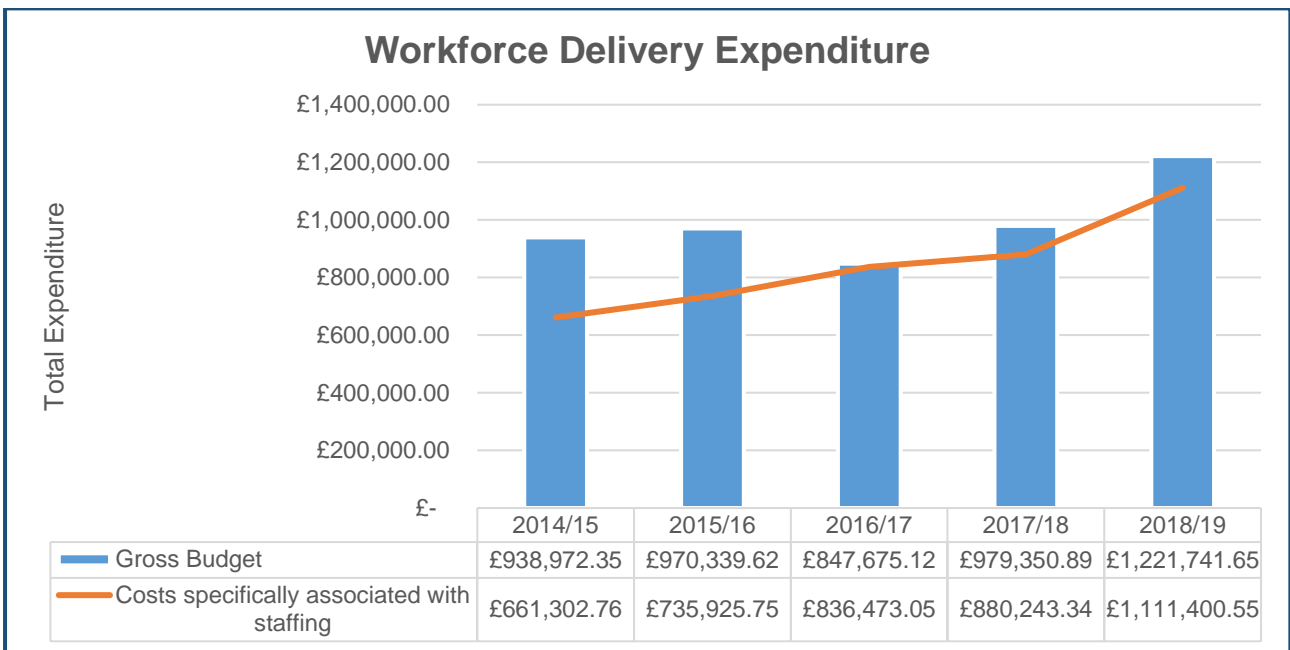


Chart 35: Workforce delivery expenditure 2014/19

Non-staffing revenue expenditure

Spelthorne Borough Council has also seen an increase in expenditure on homelessness and rough sleeping prevention initiatives. Chart 36 indicates a slight increase in initial years with a more than doubling in 2018/19. Some major changes in this final year included:

- The expiry of the St Mungo’s and A2 Dominion floating support contract in 2018. As a result of this, Spelthorne Borough Council appointed an additional resource to work as a tenancy sustainment officer within the Housing Options team.
- Our Choice Based Lettings system was also upgraded in light of the new allocations policy and reapplication process in 2018/19.

- Spelthorne Borough Council now tops up our annual grant for Citizens Advice Runnymede and Spelthorne (CARS) services by £35,000.
- Due to Surrey County Council cuts, Spelthorne, Elmbridge and Runnymede Borough Council must now contribute towards the costs for a Look Ahead housing related floating support service. This contribution is £20,000 each per annum. This has been initially agreed for three years.

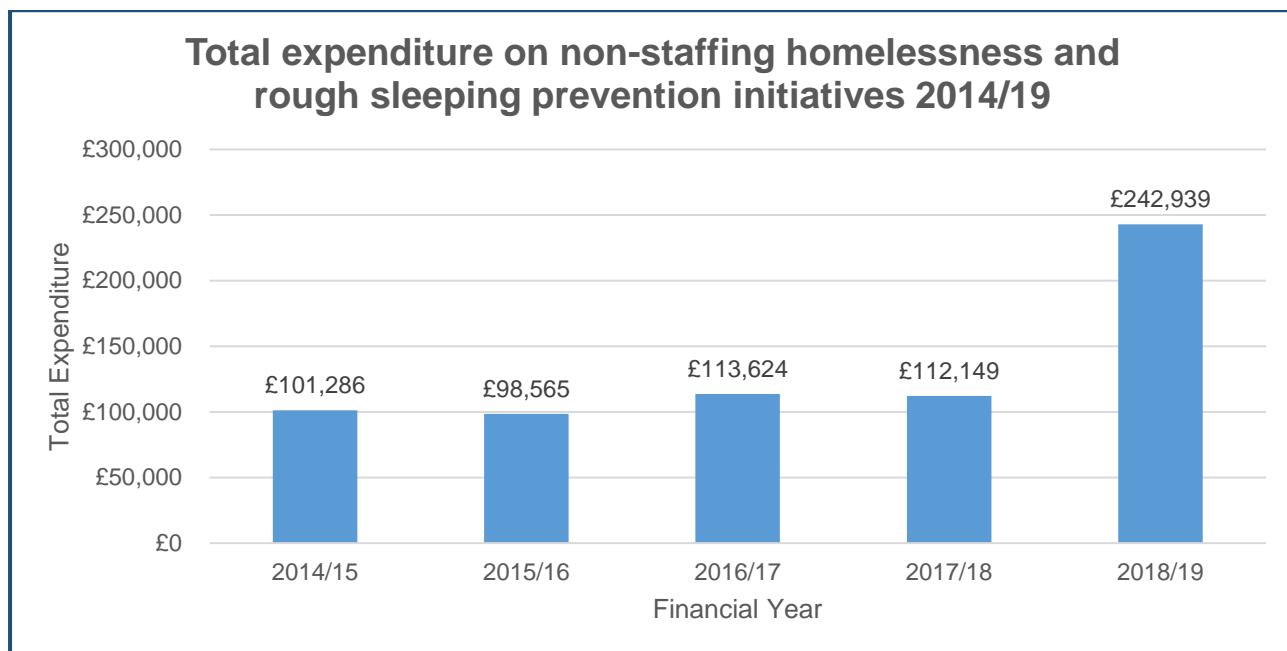


Chart 36: Total expenditure on non-staffing homelessness and rough sleeping prevention initiatives 2014/19

Emergency accommodation expenditure

Given the level of use of emergency accommodation, a significant amount of money is spent by Spelthorne Borough Council to secure emergency accommodation for homeless households. Whilst some of these charges are recovered back from the homeless applicant, there is still a shortfall which the Council pays for. Chart 37 identifies the total expenditure on emergency accommodation over the last five years. Whilst the figures fluctuate there has generally been an increase in expenditure compared to five years ago.

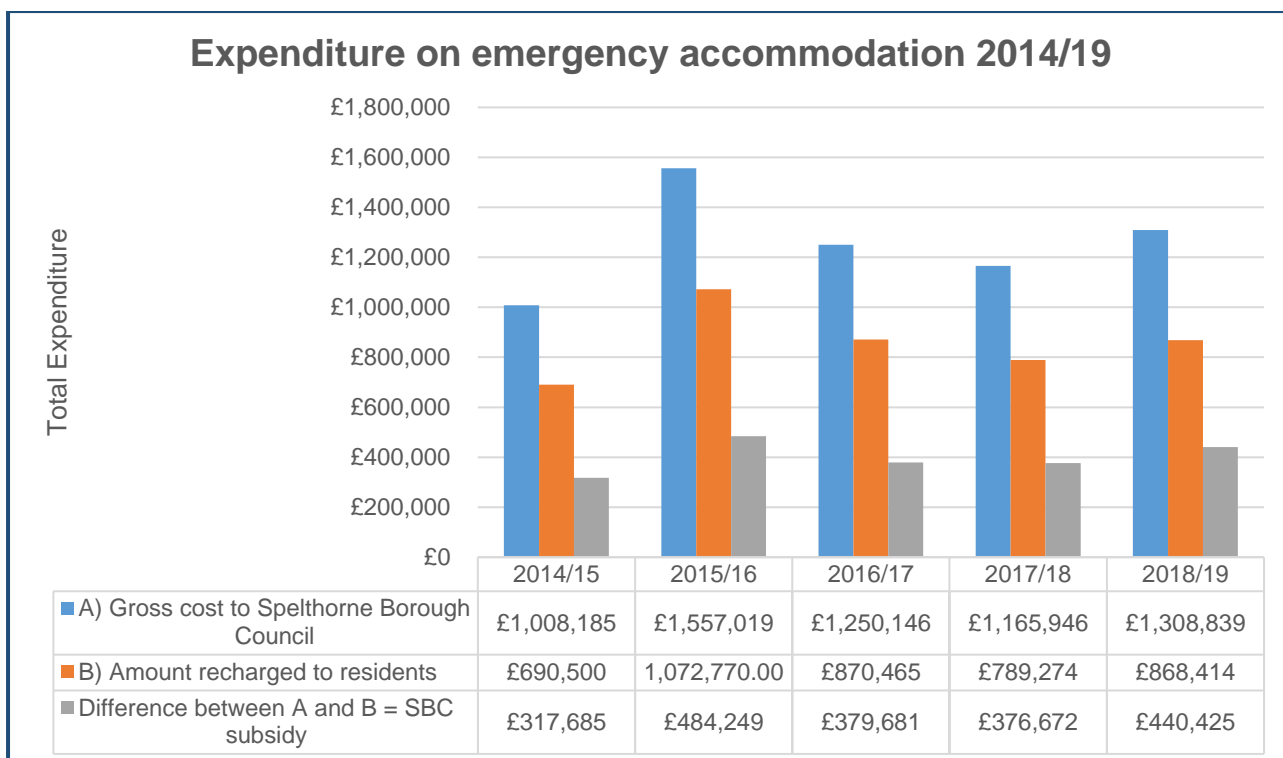


Chart 37: Expenditure on emergency accommodation 2014/19

Protection of property

Under section 211(1) and (2) Housing Act 1996 the local authority has a responsibility to ensure that where it has become subject to a duty to a homeless household they have ensured their possessions are safely stored. Table 14 indicates the total expenditure on reasonable steps taken to prevent the loss or damage to any personal property of the homeless household.

Financial Year	Storage expenses directly incurred by SBC	Reimbursement for storage expenses incurred by household
2014/15	£4,157.00	£0.00
2015/16	£869.59	£488.00
2016/17	£463.48	£0.00
2017/18	£1,100.00	£0.00
2018/19	£4,317.00	£45.50
Total:	£10,907.07	£533.50

Table 14: Expenditure on protection of property 2014/19

Spelthorne Rent Assure

Our privately rented scheme whilst successful is also initially costly as we enter in a two year guarantee rent period with the landlord. Since the commencement of our Rent Assure Scheme in December 2016, we have committed £2,227,689.80 up to April 2019. These costs are made up of the total market rents we have offered to pay for a period of 24 months. We collect back rent equivalent to the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rate and top up the remaining monies to make up the market rent. Therefore whilst we have committed £2,227,689.80, providing we collect the full LHA rent back from the tenant the total cost to the council to top up these rents is £222,363.21. This

is approximately 9% of the monies we have committed and is significantly lower than the costs that would be incurred by an emergency accommodation placement

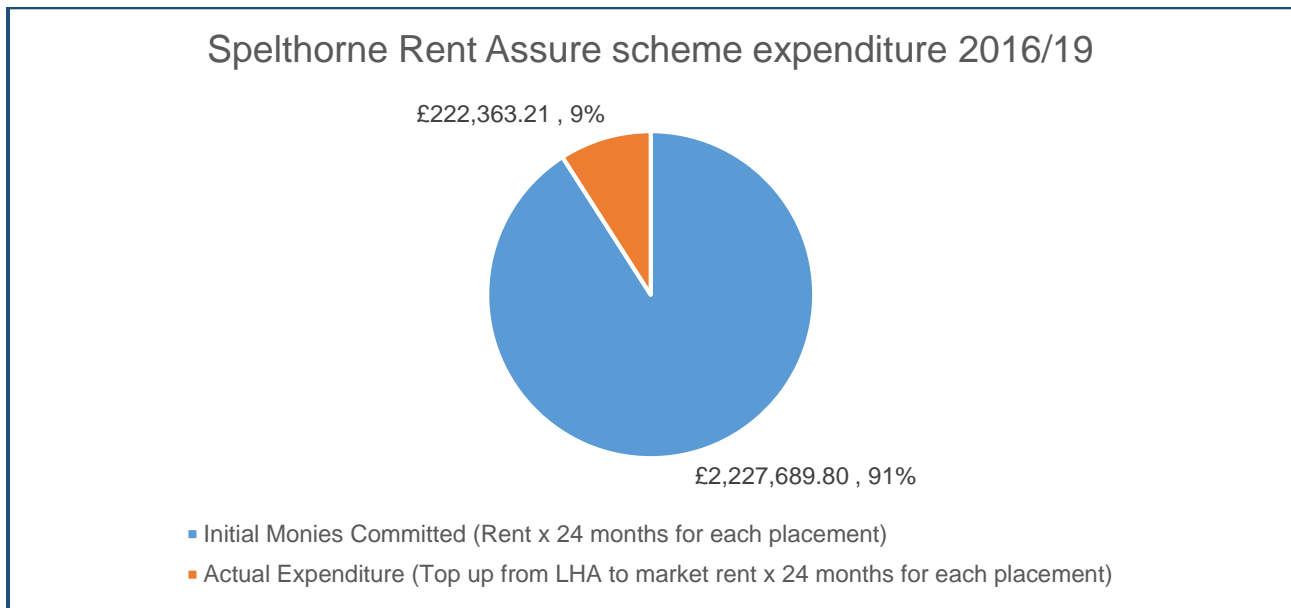


Table 15: Spelthorne Rent Assure scheme expenditure 2016/19

As the scheme is fairly new a total of £4,592.95 has been spent to market the scheme and gauge landlord interest. The scheme also offers the incentive of paying for an inventory to be completed at the start of the tenancy by a professional company. These inventory costs have accumulate to £4,060 for all placements made before April 2019.

Partnerships

Joint working is key to earlier intervention of preventing homelessness. Spelthorne Borough Council prides itself in working with its local partners to help reduce the levels of homelessness. To list but a few partnerships, Spelthorne Borough Council demonstrates some of the effective joint working relationships we have achieved so far and hope to continue building.

- **Social Services – e.g. mental health team (Catalyst), adult social care (Locality team), MEAM (Making Every Adult Matter), children’s social services, and the family support team.** These are key partnerships that we have to ensure that some of the most vulnerable groups in our society are offered specialist support and assistance. We have open opportunities to communicate with the various social services to ensure the wellbeing of households is being upheld when faced with potential homelessness. The introduction of the ‘Duty to Refer’ under the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 has also placed greater links between statutory services and the Housing Options team. By attending regular **MARAC** meetings with statutory and voluntary sector agencies, we are more informed about households who are victims of domestic violence and abuse. These meetings allow us to work together to ensure we are all offering the support needed by high-risk cases.
- **Surrey Police, National Probation Service, and Kent, Surrey and Sussex Community Rehabilitation Company** – By attending regular **MAPPA** meetings we are able to ensure we are supporting clients who are under probation and are either threatened or are facing homelessness. These meetings gives us deeper insight to the needs of this potentially vulnerable group.
- **Gypsy and traveller support** – to better understand the needs of this community and the types of support we can give.
- **Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)** – whilst we can offer budgeting advice, CAB are able to offer more enhanced financial and legal advice. Spelthorne Borough Council has formed a direct fast track referral service with CAB.
- **Job Centre Plus / DWP** – with the introduction of Universal Credit (UC) to Spelthorne borough in November 2018, we were proactive with our awareness and training of UC by working with Staines Jobcentre Plus (JCP). We also have a direct contact at JCP to assist with specific UC queries or complications.
- **Applied Resilience** - if there is an emergency there will almost certainly be a housing element involved. The applied resilience team have provided training sessions to staff at Spelthorne Borough Council in preparation for an emergency response.
- **Look Ahead** – the housing related floating support contract with Look Ahead means single people, couples and families are offered support with tenancy sustainment, homelessness and resettling in a community. Look Ahead specialise in delivering support services to those with mental health or learning difficulties. They also deliver assistance to young people and those facing homelessness.
- **Transform Housing** - we have worked with Transform Housing to ensure our cases with more complex needs are assessed for support housing and are offered the assistance they need or require.
- **Homestart** – We work together to ensure families with young children who are experiencing challenging times are getting the additional support and assistance they need on a day-to-day basis.

- **Rentstart** - we have worked very closely with this charitable organisation for a number of years. Our PRS team in particular have built a good working relationship to ensure single homeless applicants are provided with the support they need whilst the PRS team mainly focus on families. The PRS team and Rentstart have run joint landlord forums and keep an open line of communication when new landlords or potential properties arise.
- **Salvation Army** - who operate a service in the Spelthorne Borough means an additional support service is available to help offer tailored assistance for those experiencing homeless. Our rough sleeper coordinator has worked with the Salvation Army to understand how we can offer a joint outreach service.
- **Children's centres** – By working with local schools in the area, we are able to keep clear lines of communication open to ensure the welfare and well-being of vulnerable children are being monitored and assured.
- **St Giles Trust** – We have worked with St Giles Trust to broaden our support service and widen our opportunities of helping a homeless household find a suitable tenancy. St Giles Trust particularly help to assist vulnerable young people by helping them seek employment, understand financial management and support them in finding accommodation.
- **St Mungo's** - Our rough sleeper coordinator and outreach officer has particularly worked closely with St Mungo's to gain an insight on rough sleeping and the impact it has. By working together, both parties are able to monitor rough sleeping more closely and work to provide outreach services to this vulnerable group of people.
- **Foodbanks** – in times of crisis we directly complete referrals to local foodbanks in order to help households in a desperate time of need e.g. **MANNA, Stanwell Foodbank, St Saviours Church.**
- **Surrey Crisis Fund / Besom Project / Hounslow Furniture Recycling Project / Woking Community Furniture Project** - We work closely with charitable organisations and the Surrey Crisis fund to help clients set up homes with furniture and white goods where no other funds or resources are available for households.
- **Age UK** – by keeping in regular contact, we are ensuring we provide support for this potentially vulnerable group of people and are better informing our understanding of this groups support needs.
- **Sanctuary Scheme** – Spelthorne Borough Council in partnership with Surrey Police and CAB Elmbridge (West) (North Surrey Domestic Abuse Outreach Service). Through joint working, the sanctuary scheme provides additional security to victims of domestic abuse where it is appropriate for them to remain in their own homes. Without this partnership this service would not have been operationally available.
- **Housing associations e.g. A2Dominion, PA Housing, Metropolitan Thames Valley Housing, L&Q** – As Spelthorne Borough Council does not own its own stock it aims to work with housing associations that operate in the local area to ensure affordable housing is available and being delivered. Our allocations team work effectively with the lettings teams of all of our housing association partners to ensure nominations are suitable and lets are completed in a timely fashion.

Monitoring and review

Strategic Housing Group (SHG)

SHG exists to ensure that Spelthorne Borough Council has a focussed strategic approach on housing matters, in order that Spelthorne's housing need is identified and met.

The objectives of SHG are:

- To decide priorities and focus of the group for the coming year.
- Develop strategies for dealing with issues (which may translate into projects to be reviewed).
- To ensure all housing strategies dovetail with other relevant strategies e.g. Asset Management Plan, Capital Strategy, etc.
- Develop and monitor the progress of the Housing Strategy Action Plan.
- Monitor key areas of concern (such as emergency accommodation and shortage of affordable housing) and make strategic decisions on approaches to mitigate the impact.
- To make decisions on operational matters which impact the delivery of strategic priorities.
- To share information on housing and housing-related issues (including changes to legislation).
- To identify and allocate resources to help meet the priorities identified.
- To ensure key politicians and partners are effectively communicated with.
- To receive updates on Knowle Green Estates acquisitions and developments.
- To consider and agree corporate responses to government consultations which directly or indirectly affect housing.

Membership of SHG includes:

- Deputy Chief Executive (s)
- Portfolio Holder – Housing
- Joint Group Heads Community Wellbeing
- Group Head Regeneration and Growth
- Deputy Group Head Community Wellbeing
- Housing Strategy & Policy Manager
- Housing Options Manager
- Housing Benefits Manager
- Senior Environmental Health Manager
- Accountant (Housing)

A number of staffing changes over the first three years of the strategy period meant that strict monitoring of the implementation of the strategy and action plan was not fully carried out. Despite this, much of the strategy was being implemented as intended, and being monitored by service managers.

Implementation of the Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan 2014-19

Looking back at the eight strategic priorities that were set out for 2014-19, we have achieved some of our targets but we have not been successful in all.

A reminder of these targets are outlined below in Table 16.

Strategic Priority	Did we accomplish it?
Adopt a corporate and partnership commitment to preventing homelessness.	Yes – Spelthorne Borough Council adopted a Homelessness Strategy which was commissioned at Cabinet on 15 July 2014. To date a housing forum has not been established, although for the past year Spelthorne Borough Council has joined Runnymede Borough Council’s Homelessness Task Group Meetings.
Develop and provide a comprehensive preventative housing options service including the single homeless.	Partly – The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 has resulted in an entire new suite of processes and procedures, which now outdate the processes we said we would do when the strategy was implemented. All cases are offered an assessment, and where applicants are identified as homeless or threatened with homelessness, they are offered a personal housing plan to either prevent or relieve their homelessness.
End the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for families.	No – Whilst we have not ended the use of B&B accommodation by families we have significantly reduced the number of out-of-borough placements and reduced the average length of time for B&B users over the last five years.
Facilitate the discharge of the homelessness duty into the private rented sector.	Yes – We continue to discharge duty into the private rented sector. We work to promote the private rented sector as the most realistic way of preventing and relieving homelessness.
Through the Housing Forum develop housing pathways for vulnerable groups.	Partly – As previously noted, we did not establish a housing forum. Since the introduction of the Homeless Reduction Act 2017, we prepared statutory pathway plans required for the identified groups. These plans have been jointly created with the relevant partners and are able to evolve in time.
Develop a private sector offer through working with local landlords and through a Spelthorne Borough Council lettings agency that will acquire properties for the discharge of the duty and where necessary as temporary lets.	Yes – Our Rent Assure Scheme was launched in December 2016 which offers competitive market rent to landlords who offer their properties to the Council for homeless families. This is in addition to our existing Bond scheme which was set up in 2007.
In collaboration with Runnymede and Elmbridge Councils: Adopt a ‘no second night out’ for emergency accommodation.	Yes – We had a Single Person Complex Case Worker attached to the Family Support Team which was shared with Elmbridge. We also worked with Runnymede Borough Council and Elmbridge Borough Council to provide SWEP accommodation in Hersham Road. This was successfully implemented for one year and thereafter each borough has made their own arrangements.

In partnership with the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) prevent mortgage repossessions.

Partly – The mortgage rescue protocol was introduced by national government so there is now earlier preventative work. This is reflected in our statistics which show we have a low number of homeless households from mortgage repossessions.

Table 16: Review of the Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan 2014-19

Equality Analysis

Directorate: Community Wellbeing Service Area: Housing Strategy & Policy	Lead Officer: Steph Green Date completed: 7 January 2020
Service / Function / Policy / Procedure to be assessed: Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-25	
Is this: New / Proposed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Existing/Review <input type="checkbox"/> Changing <input type="checkbox"/>	Review date:

Part A – Initial Equality Analysis to determine if a full Equality Analysis is required.

What are the aims and objectives/purpose of this service, function, policy or procedure?

The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-25 sets the strategic direction for the Council in its ambition to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping in Spelthorne.

The final strategy contains six strategic priorities, and an associated Action Plan:

1. Ending the use of private sector emergency accommodation
2. Reduce the length of stay in temporary accommodation
3. Nobody sleeps rough in Spelthorne
4. Increase use of the private rented sector for homelessness prevention and relief
5. Invest in staff training and development in order to improve the customer journey within the Housing Options service
6. Improve partnership working to prevent and relieve homelessness

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Please indicate its relevance to any of the equality duties (below) by selecting Yes or No?

	Yes	No
Eliminating unlawful discrimination, victimisation and harassment	✓	
Advancing equality of opportunity	✓	
Fostering good community relations	✓	

If not relevant to any of the three equality duties and this is agreed by your Head of Service, the Equality Analysis is now complete - please send a copy to **NAMED OFFICER**. **If relevant**, a Full Equality Analysis will need to be undertaken (PART B below).

PART B: Full Equality Analysis.

Step 1 – Identifying outcomes and delivery mechanisms (in relation to what you are assessing)

<p>What outcomes are sought and for whom?</p>	<p>The main outcome of the strategy is to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping in Spelthorne.</p> <p>Affected groups will include (not exhaustive):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All adults (and associated dependants) who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, including rough sleepers; • Those who are unable to access the housing market locally due to high property prices and increasing rents; • Partners involved in the delivery of affordable housing and homelessness support services, such as Registered Providers, property developers, private landlords, health and social care providers; • Owners of empty homes; • Housing Options Staff at Spelthorne Borough Council.
<p>Are there any associated policies, functions, services or procedures?</p>	<p>Corporate Plan Medium Term Financial Strategy Capital Strategy Health & Wellbeing Strategy Local Plan Economic Development Strategy Asset Management Plan Housing Act 1996 (as amended by various) Housing Strategy Homelessness Strategy</p>
<p>If partners (including external partners) are involved in delivering the service, who are they?</p>	<p>Whilst partners have a role in delivering some elements of the Action Plan, the overall strategy is the responsibility of Spelthorne Borough Council.</p>

Step 2 – What does the information you have collected, or that you have available, tell you?

What evidence/data already exists about the service and its users? (in terms of its impact on the 'equality strands', i.e. race, disability, gender, gender identity, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, maternity/pregnancy, marriage/civil partnership and other socially excluded communities or groups) and **what does the data tell you?** e.g. are there any significant gaps?

General Spelthorne context

Almost half of Surrey's 20 most deprived super output areas are in Spelthorne. Three are in the ward of Stanwell North, two in Ashford North and Stanwell South and one in each of Ashford East and Sunbury Common. Spelthorne has the highest number of lone parent families and the highest level of child poverty in Surrey; it also has the highest under-18 conception rate in the county. That said, residents are largely healthy, with life expectancy for both males and females slightly above the national average.

Although the number of VAT and/or PAYE-registered business has fallen slightly over the past four years, Spelthorne has a low rate of unemployment: 1.4% of those economically active aged 16 to 64, compared to the South East (2.2%) and UK as a whole (3.5%). Heathrow Airport is a significant local employer, with 8.3% of Spelthorne's working population employed there. Significantly, 21.5% of those in work in Stanwell North are in low level employment compared to an average of 11.6% in Surrey. Average wages are slightly above regional averages at £630 per week for full-time employees.

Whilst house prices remain well above the national average, most residents are owner-occupiers (73%), followed by private rented (13%) and social rented (12%).

In common with other areas across the country, homelessness has been a growing issue. Since 2009, the numbers of statutorily homeless households has increased significantly, although the number has remained relatively stagnant over the past four years.

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Number of statutorily homeless households	0	2	4	34	80	123	120	115	116

Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: Detailed local authority level homelessness figures. Section 1, Column e11g

Gender / gender identity

Census data from 2011 shows that 50.5% of residents in Spelthorne were female, with the remaining 49.5% being male. There is no data known to be held in relation of other gender identities.

Source: ONS Census, 2011 - neighbourhood statistics for residents aged 16 to 74

A White Paper published in December 2018 (*Help shape our future: the 2021 Census of population and housing in England and Wales*) sets out the Office for National Statistics' (ONS) recommendations for what the census should contain and how it should operate. The White Paper recommends that the census in 2021 includes a question about gender identity, asking respondents whether their gender is the same as the sex they were registered as at birth. The question will be separate from the question about sex (i.e., whether the respondent is male or female), which will be phrased in the same way as previous years. There is currently no official data about the size of the transgender population (the word 'transgender' is used here to describe people whose gender identity does not match the sex they were assigned at birth). The Government Equalities Office (GEO) has said that there may be 200,000 to 500,000 transgender people in the UK, but stresses that we don't know the true population because of the lack of robust data. The ONS has identified user need for official estimates in order to support policy-making and monitor equality duties.

Source: <https://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/CBP-8531>

Age

Spelthorne has a slightly lower population of under-30s (34%) compared to the rest of the country (37%), and a slightly higher population of 30-69 year olds (42%) compared with the UK average of (40%), The number of 70+ is 23%, which is broadly in line with the rest of the UK (24%).

Source: <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/local-data/constituency-statistics-population-by-age/>

Ethnicity

The ethnic make-up of Spelthorne is largely in line with the UK average, although we have more residents who identify as Asian and fewer residents who identify as Black than the national average.

Ethnic group	Spelthorne		Region	UK
	Number	%	%	%
White	83,455	87.3%	90.7%	87.2%
Mixed	2,382	2.5%	1.9%	2.0%
Asian	7,295	7.6%	5.2%	6.9%
Black	1,545	1.6%	1.6%	3.0%
Other	921	1.0%	0.6%	0.9%
Total	95,598	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/home-affairs/communities/demography/constituency-statistics-ethnicity/>

Disability

As of July 2019 there were around 2,020 PIP claimants in Spelthorne constituency. In comparison, there was an average of 2,500 claimants per constituency across the South East. Within Spelthorne, psychiatric disorders were the most common reason for claiming PIP. They accounted for 37% of awards, compared to 36% in Great Britain. 'Psychiatric disorders' include anxiety and depression, learning disabilities and autism. The second most common reason for awards was musculoskeletal disease (general), which accounted for 17% of awards within the constituency and 21% in Great Britain. Musculoskeletal disease (general) includes osteoarthritis, inflammatory arthritis and chronic pain syndromes.

Source:

<http://data.parliament.uk/resources/constituencystatistics/personal%20independence%20payment/PIP%20claimants%20in%20Spelthorne.pdf>

Religion

Residents of Spelthorne predominately identify themselves as either Christian or having no religion. There is a smaller Muslim population compared with the national average, but a larger Hindu population.

	Constituency		Region	UK
	Number	%	%	%
Has religion	67,392	70.5%	65.0%	66.7%
of which				
Christian	60,954	63.8%	59.8%	58.8%
Muslim	1,808	1.9%	2.3%	4.5%
Hindu	2,332	2.4%	1.1%	1.4%
Buddhist	420	0.4%	0.5%	0.4%
Jewish	206	0.2%	0.2%	0.4%
Sikh	1,325	1.4%	0.6%	0.7%
Other	347	0.4%	0.5%	0.4%
No religion	21,511	22.5%	27.7%	26.1%
Not stated	6,695	7.0%	7.4%	7.2%

Source: <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/home-affairs/communities/constituency-data-religion/>

Sexual orientation

There is no accurate dataset which can be used to reflect solely Spelthorne. The White Paper recommends asking a new question about sexual orientation. The ONS has identified a user need for better data on sexual orientation – particularly for small areas – to inform policy-making and service provision, as well as monitoring equality duties. The ONS has previously used the Annual Population Survey (APS) to estimate the size of the lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) population in the UK. According to these estimates, just over 1 million people identified as LGB in 2016 (around 2% of the population). However, the sample population used in the APS isn't big enough to provide robust estimates of the LGB population in smaller areas.

Source: <https://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/CBP-8531>

Marriage / Civil Partnership

More people in Spelthorne are married compared to the rest of England and Wales, and fewer people identify as single.

Marital Status	Spelthorne		England and Wales	
All usual residents aged 16+	78,089		45,496,780	
Single (never married or never registered a same-sex civil partnership)	24,562	31%	15,730,275	35%

Married	38,984	50%	21,196,684	47%
In a registered same-sex civil partnership	153	0%	104,942	0%
Separated (but still legally married or still legally in a same-sex civil partnership)	2,042	3%	1,195,882	3%
Divorced or formerly in a same-sex civil partnership which is now legally dissolved	6,870	9%	4,099,330	9%
Widowed or surviving partner from a same-sex civil partnership	5,478	7%	3,169,667	7%

Has there been any consultation with, or input from, customers / service users or other stakeholders? If so, with whom, how were they consulted and what did they say? If you haven't consulted yet and are intending to do so, please list which specific groups or communities you are going to consult with and when.

A public and stakeholder consultation on the draft framework was carried out for six weeks which included:

- The general public
- Service users
- Other statutory bodies
- Registered Providers
- Councillors
- Equalities groups, including Disabled People's groups and Older People's groups, via the Spelthorne Health & Wellbeing Group

The consultation methods included an online questionnaire, email and letter responses, and verbally at meetings. Hard copies of the consultation was also circulated to local libraries and made available at the Council Offices for residents without access to the internet.

Special category data from respondents of the consultation questionnaire were purposefully not collected to avoid any issues with the GDPR.

Are there any complaints, compliments, satisfaction surveys or customer feedback that could help inform this assessment? If yes, what do these tell you?

None

Step 3 – Identifying the negative impact.

a. Is there any negative impact on individuals or groups in the community?

Barriers:

What are the potential or known barriers/impacts for the different 'equality strands' set out below? Consider:

- **Where** you provide your service, e.g. the facilities/premises;
- **Who** provides it, e.g. are staff trained and representative of the local population/users?
- **How** it is provided, e.g. do people come to you or do you go to them? Do any rules or requirements prevent certain people accessing the service?
- **When** it is provided, e.g. opening hours?
- **What** is provided, e.g. does the service meet everyone's needs? How do you know?

* Some barriers are justified, e.g. for health or safety reasons, or might actually be designed to promote equality, e.g. single sex swimming/exercise sessions, or cannot be removed without excessive cost. If you believe any of the barriers identified to be justified then please indicate which they are and why.

Solutions:

What can be done to minimise or remove these barriers to make sure everyone has equal access to the service or to reduce adverse impact? Consider:

- Other arrangements that can be made to ensure people's diverse needs are met;
- How your actions might help to promote good relations between communities;
- How you might prevent any unintentional future discrimination.

Equality Themes	Barriers/Impacts identified	Solutions (ways in which you could mitigate the impact)
Age (including children, young people and older people)	Young people aged 16-17 cannot hold tenancies and so housing options are severely limited.	Young people aged 16-17 receive enhanced services via the Surrey Joint Protocol. They have access to specialist young peoples homelessness accommodation.

	Older people may be less likely to access our services when needed. Those aged 18-39 may have reduced access to social housing as a result of welfare policies as well as local landlord policies (age restrictions)	Older people have greater access to social housing via age restrictions across the A2Dominion stock. Spelthorne Borough Council has a Discretionary Housing Payment pot which this group can access in case of hardship. Under the Spelthorne Borough Council Housing Strategy 2020-25, A2Dominion have agreed to a comprehensive review of age restrictions in Spelthorne.
Disability (including carers)	Anecdotally we know that physically disabled people accessing homelessness services in Spelthorne have much more limited options available to them in relation to emergency, temporary and settled accommodation.	See action 1.3 – we will review the availability of accessible accommodation options for this affected group. We will also provide accessible rooms at the White House and Harper House to reduce the reliance on Travelodge bookings.
Gender (men and women)	No negative impacts have been identified.	n/a
Race (including Gypsies & Travellers and Asylum Seekers)	Accommodation for people seeking asylum is the responsibility of the Home Office. Provision for pitches for gypsies and travelling showpeople are dealt with under the Local Plan.	n/a
Religion or belief (including people of no religion or belief)	No negative impacts have been identified.	n/a
Gender Re-assignment (those that are going through transition: male to female or female to male)	Where individuals are transitioning, they may be impacted if they are placed into accommodation with shared facilities.	As part of standard assessments, we would consider this issue before offering accommodation with shared facilities.
Pregnancy and Maternity	Under homelessness legislation, pregnant women are recognised as being in ‘priority need’ and so arguably receive preferential treatment when compared with women who aren’t pregnant, or men.	Those who aren’t in priority need receive a comprehensive housing needs assessment and support to access their own accommodation solutions.
Sexual orientation (including gay, lesbian, bisexual and heterosexual)	No negative impacts have been identified.	n/a

Step 4 – Changes or mitigating actions proposed or adopted

Having undertaken the assessment are there any changes necessary to the existing service, policy, function or procedure? What changes or mitigating actions are proposed?

No changes required.

Step 5 – Monitoring

How are you going to monitor the existing service, function, policy or procedure ?

The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-25 will be monitored by the Council’s Strategic Housing Group who meet monthly. The Action Plan will be monitored at least quarterly, with any required changes to the strategy being recommended to elected members (where required) as a result.

Part C - Action Plan

Barrier/s or improvement/s identified	Action Required	Lead Officer	Timescale
n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Equality Analysis approved by:

Group Head:	Date:
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Please send an electronic copy of the Equality Analysis to the Equality & Diversity Team and ensure the document is uploaded to the EA Register which will be available to the public:

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