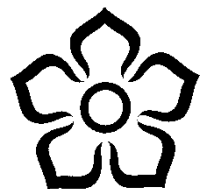


# Homelessness Review 2017

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Leicester  
City Council

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## 1. Introduction

### **Why are we carrying out a review of homelessness?**

- 1.1 The Homelessness Act 2002 places a duty on all local housing authorities to carry out a review of homelessness and homelessness service provision for their area and, in consultation with local partners and stakeholders, formulate and publish a homelessness strategy based on the results of that review, at least every five years. The last full review in Leicester was conducted in 2012 and the current Homelessness Strategy covers the period 2013-18. There has been continuous monitoring of the current strategy and an interim service and spending review of homeless services was undertaken in 2016.

### **What is homelessness?**

- 1.2 People can be homeless if they have nowhere to stay and are living on the streets, they can also be considered homeless even if they have a roof over their head.

Homelessness can include people:

- staying with friends or family
- staying in a hostel, night shelter or bed & breakfast accommodation
- squatting
- at risk of violence or abuse in their home
- living in poor conditions that affects their health
- living apart from their family because they don't have a place to live together

### **Scope of the review**

- 1.3 The review aims to develop a picture of homelessness in Leicester and look at the current provision of services to establish whether the needs of homeless people and those at risk of homelessness are being met.

- 1.4 The following services are not commissioned by housing services:

- Health care services for homeless people including primary health care, mental health, drug and alcohol services. The primary health care needs of homeless people were assessed in June 2016 by Public Health & the NHS  
<http://www.leicester.gov.uk/media/181923/homelessness-jspna.pdf>
- Domestic violence and sexual violence services including refuge provision. These services are commissioned by Leicester City Council's Community Safety team.
- Welfare advice services including housing advice (except housing advice provided by Leicester City Council's Housing Options service)

### **How the review was undertaken**

- 1.5 The review was undertaken between February and May 2017. A broad range of information collection techniques have been used to inform this review, including:

- ✓ incorporating the regular monitoring of the most recent strategy;
- ✓ service/performance data;

- ✓ consultation (including service users, people who work in homelessness services, organisations that provide homelessness services, and the public);
- ✓ literature reviews.

### **Previous strategy**

- 1.6 The 2013-18 homelessness strategy focused on investing in prevention, moving from a culture of crisis and rescue to one of prevention and support. The strategy committed to six principles which related to a focus on prevention, providing temporary and move-on accommodation, implementing the 'No Second Night Out' initiative for rough sleepers and ensuring homeless people are able to access the services they need.
- 1.7 Some of the achievements of the previous strategy include:
- ✓ Implemented No Second Night Out project in partnership with the voluntary community sector.
  - ✓ Developed the Single Access and Referral point (SAR) to ensure access to commissioned housing related support services is available to those people who are most in need.
  - ✓ A scheme to allow households to move directly into settled accommodation without the need to access temporary accommodation. From August 2015 to May 2017 104 families and 45 singles have used this scheme.
  - ✓ We have focused on making better use of the private rented sector as settled accommodation and to improve access to floating support services when clients are placed in private rented accommodation, including working with landlords to prepare them to take tenants who are at risk of homelessness; sourcing appropriate and affordable accommodation; making use of discretionary housing payments and working with Leicestershire District Councils who have received new Government funding to provide private rented accommodation for singles.
  - ✓ Targeted multi-agency work with the most entrenched homeless individuals (those people receiving council funded homelessness services who have been in hostels four or more times in the last two years or who repeatedly sleep rough). When this initiative was introduced in 2012 there were 118 individuals identified. At the end of 2014/15 this had reduced to 52 which had further reduced to 38 at the end of 2015/16, and to 31 by the end of 2016/17.

### **National context**

- 1.8 The last few years have seen significant changes which are likely to impact on homelessness:
- Passing of the Homelessness Reduction Act which will extend statutory responsibilities for local authorities to provide meaningful support to single people as well as extending prevention & relief duties for all eligible households.
  - Economic growth has been slow over the period of the strategy and economic forecasts suggest uncertainty in the coming years particularly affected by the decision to leave the European Union. National earned incomes remain, in real terms, 5% below 2008 levels. The Office for

Budget Responsibility forecast it will be 2022 before real earnings return to their 2008 levels.

- The impacts of the UK's decision to leave the European Union are hard to predict. Depending on the deal we could see large numbers of EEA nationals with uncertain statuses with regard to employment, benefits and housing rights.
- The overall rate of new housing provision is not keeping pace with household growth and is failing to reduce housing market pressures.
- 'Affordable' rental products are now beyond the reach of those on the lowest incomes and Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates were frozen on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2015.
- Welfare reform continues to have an impact on those receiving benefits (lower benefit caps, changes that mean most 18-21 year olds will not be able to claim support with their housing costs, roll-out of Universal Credit, freezing of LHA rates).
- Cuts to local government funding.

### **Local commitment**

- 1.9 Addressing homelessness is a key element of the City Mayor's vision for Leicester, the strategic work of the Housing Division and an important component of other related services and strategies.
- 1.10 The City Mayor's manifesto stated "Homelessness in modern Britain is not acceptable" and committed to:
- ✓ continue to support services to tackle homelessness and ensure people are supported on a sustainable basis into permanent accommodation as quickly as possible;
  - ✓ continue to resource the Outreach team to reduce and eliminate rough sleeping.
- 1.11 In addition to this the manifesto also commits to building new homes, including affordable homes, exploring options for low cost home ownership, making resources available for bringing empty homes back into use and raising the quality of private rented and registered social landlord homes in the city.

## 2. Leicester and housing in Leicester

### About Leicester

#### Households

- 2.1 With around 349,500 residents and 132,000 households, Leicester is the tenth largest city in England and the most populous urban centre in the East Midlands. Leicester has a relatively young population. 37% of the population are aged under 35, compared with 30% nationally, it has a larger proportion of student only households (2.3% compared to 0.5% in the country as a whole) and a higher proportion of single parent households than is found nationally.<sup>1</sup>
- 2.2 Leicester is home to a diverse range of faiths and communities. Leicester residents come from over 50 countries across the world, making the city one of the most ethnically diverse places in the UK.
- 2.3 Around a third of Leicester residents were born outside of the UK, and 34% of these (53,000) arrived in the UK between 2001 and 2011. Also, as a designated National Asylum Seeker dispersal city, Leicester is home to a community of asylum seekers.

#### Housing

- 2.4 There are around 135,000 homes in the city. Leicester has a smaller proportion of owner occupied homes than is the case nationally, but a larger proportion of social housing and private rented homes. The stock of council housing has been decreasing, mainly due to right to buy, while the number of households in private renting households has been increasing at a greater rate than any other tenure.

#### Economic factors and deprivation

- 2.5 The ONS Annual Population Survey (up to Sept 2016) reported Leicester had a (model based) unemployment rate of 6.3%, compared with 4.2% for the East Midlands and 4.9% for Great Britain. There has been a steady decline in Leicester's (model based) unemployment rate since a high point of September 2013 when it was 14%.
- 2.6 Leicester has traditionally experienced a higher unemployment rate than that which is found in the East Midlands or nationally, which is in part a product of it being a populous urban area. Youth unemployment is also a significant concern. Higher levels of unemployment are also concentrated in pockets of the city.
- 2.7 Leicester is generally regarded as experiencing higher levels of deprivation than many parts of the country and has a relatively low wage economy.
- 2.8 Leicester is ranked 21st most deprived in DCLG's Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2015 out of 326 local authorities, compared with 25th in the 2010 Index. Compared to England, Leicester has almost double the population

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<sup>1</sup> 2011 Census

living in the two fifths (40%) most deprived lower super output areas (LSOA's) in the country. 76% of Leicester's population, compared with only 40% of England's, live in the 40% most deprived LSOA's in the country.

## 2.9 What has changed since 2013?

- Leicester's population has continued to increase, from 333,812 in 2013 to 349,500 in 2017, an increase of 5.6%.
- The number of households in Leicester has continued to increase from 125,000 in 2013 to 132,000 in 2017, an increase of 4.7%.
- Council stock has decreased from 22,139 in 2013 to 21,150 in 2017 (a 4% decrease). This is a total reduction in stock of 989. Last year was the largest year-on-year fall in council stock, a loss of 453 homes.
- Registered social landlord stock has increased from 10,419 to 10,641
- Average house prices have been increasing year on year since 2013 and are, as of the first quarter of 2017, 23% higher than they were in 2013.
- From 2013 to 2016 national insurance number allocations to adult overseas nationals have increased year on year from 6,173 in 2013 to 9,165 in 2016 – a 49% increase.
- Median annual gross pay has increased from 2013; £18,267 to £18,989 in 2016, however this has not increased in line with inflation, meaning that real pay is falling.
- Unemployment levels have substantially reduced since 2013 (from a high of 13.7% in 2013 to 6.1% in 2016).

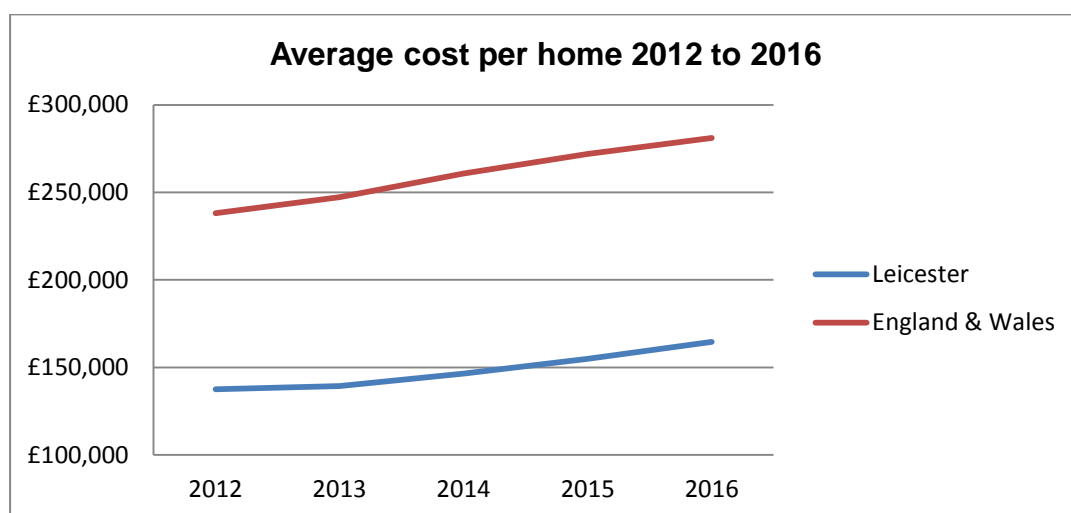
## Housing in Leicester

### Supply of housing / affordable housing

- 2.10 An adequate supply of affordable housing makes a significant contribution to preventing many people experiencing the threat of homelessness or homelessness itself.
- 2.11 A council's housing register is one of the ways in which the demand for affordable housing can be evidenced (although they are generally considered to be an undercount as not everyone in housing need will apply to the council). There were 11,165 households on the housing register in April 2016, compared to 9,980 in 2013, an increase of 12%. There are to be changes to the council's housing register which will significantly reduce the numbers on the register (see section 2.33).
- 2.12 An assessment of housing need undertaken in 2017 estimated Leicester had an overall annual need of 1,692 homes per year up to 2031 of which 786 homes a year should be affordable housing.
- 2.13 Market housing plays an important role in affordability as a shortage of market housing is likely to lead to price rises and impact on affordability. A lack of affordable housing can also lead to overcrowded households and/or residing in unsuitable accommodation which is likely to increase the risk of homelessness.

### Home ownership

- 2.14 There are a number of different indicators of housing affordability; however, the ratio of house prices to income is a key indicator of the relative affordability of a household to be able to afford to buy a home.
- 2.15 The average price of Leicester's homes has increased by 25% since 2012 (compared with quarter 1 2017 prices). The average house price in Leicester is now £171,640<sup>2</sup>.



- 2.16 The average cost of homes is noticeably less in Leicester, than is the case nationally, although Leicester has a lower level of average earnings compared to the country as a whole. In 2016 the gross median annual pay in Leicester was £18,989.<sup>3</sup>
- 2.17 Department of Communities and Local Government guidance (2007) suggest that to be considered affordable, households should spend up to 25% of their gross income on housing costs and that mortgages should be based on 3.5 times income.
- 2.18 An individual earning the gross median annual pay (based on 3.5 times income) may be able to borrow £66,462. This is well below the average property price in Leicester and still below the average property sale price of a flat or maisonette (£116,063 average sale price in 2016).
- 2.19 Leicester's ratio of lower quartile house prices to lower quartile annualised weekly earnings has increased since 2012. In 2015 this ratio had increased to 5.9 which demonstrates that it has become harder for those in the lower quartile income bracket to buy a home.

### Private rented sector

- 2.20 The private rented sector (PRS) provides an important housing alternative for low income households who cannot access owner occupied homes and for

<sup>2</sup> Average house price quarter 1 2017. Land Registry data

<sup>3</sup> ONS Annual Survey of hours and earnings



whom the shortage in social housing means there are is no realistic prospect of securing a home from the housing register.

- 2.21 Barriers to accessing the PRS for households on low incomes include issues relating to benefits, initial deposits, fees required, referencing requirements, high rents and in some cases landlords' reluctance towards letting to benefit claimants.
- 2.22 Based on the Department of Communities & Local Government guidance (2007), to be considered affordable rental costs should not exceed 25% of their gross income. Based on median gross pay in Leicester in 2016 for a full-time worker and the median market rents, rental costs would be 26% of their gross monthly pay. For individuals who are in the bottom 25% of earners in Leicester their rental costs would be 34% or more of their gross monthly pay. Living costs, including fuel costs, have also been increasing which disproportionately affects low income households and can make it more difficult to sustain a home.
- 2.23 Nationally a survey of PRS landlords found that 63% of landlords surveyed said that they would prefer not to let to housing benefit claimants. In high rent and high demand areas, where there are competitive markets, landlords may be less likely to let properties to people in receipt of benefits where there are a greater number of potential tenants and renting options to choose from.
- 2.24 An analysis of the private rented market sector in 2016<sup>4</sup> surveyed a sample of agents in Leicester. Of the agents surveyed in Leicester, around 65% said they thought their landlords might be willing to accept tenants in receipt of welfare benefits." Renting to tenants on welfare benefits has been a concern that has been raised at the local Landlord's Forum and to the Housing Options Private Rented Housing team. A BBC nationwide analysis<sup>5</sup> of online listings for spare rooms found that the majority stated benefit claimants were not welcome. A website offering 11,806 rooms to let across England, only 2% were open to people on benefits. There were no vacancies for benefit claimants in Leicester.
- 2.25 Research undertaken by the Housing Options Private Rented Housing Team between 01/09/2016 to 31/12/2016 showed the difference between Leicester's private market rents and Local Housing Allowance (LHA) (see below). The research illustrates that there is very little private rental accommodation available at LHA rates. It is the tenant's responsibility to finance any shortfall between LHA and their rent. Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP's) can help with this shortfall however these payments are made for a 13-week period after which you have to reapply. Therefore, these payments are not a long-term solution.

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<sup>4</sup> Research undertaken by Inside Housing Solutions for Westminster Council looking at rental by Inside Housing Solutions

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-39102860> 9th March 2017

Size of property (number of lettings analysed)	In line with LHA	Within £25 of LHA	Within £50 of LHA	£50+ over LHA
2 bed (11)	1	0	1	9
3 bed (10)	0	0	3	7
4+ bed (26)	0	0	0	26

Of these properties, the rents compared with LHA rates were:

Size of property	Monthly LHA rate	Average monthly rent	Difference between average rent and LHA rate
2 bed homes	£475.00	£609.55	£134.55
3 bed homes	£550.00	£695.50	£145.50
4+ bed homes	£700.00	£1,127.73	£427.73

2.26 LHA has been frozen since 30<sup>th</sup> January 2015, and will remain frozen until 2021 and as a result, rental affordability is likely to be a continuing issue for more households. Also, as the amount of Local Housing Allowance received depends on household income, savings and any non-dependents living in the same property, as a household's circumstances change this could lead to their accommodation becoming unaffordable - as tenants are bound by a tenancy agreement they might be unable to move for some months despite their change in circumstances.

2.27 The availability of suitable and affordable PRS properties in Leicester has become a growing issue. G4S who provide housing for asylum seekers in Leicester use 300 private rented properties and there is a concern that other local authorities may also look to rent properties here, because it is relatively affordable compared to some areas, especially London. These commissioning agents can offer incentives to landlords. If this happens the supply of suitable PRS properties will become harder to source. There have also been several changes affecting landlords of private rented properties which makes renting out their properties less economically beneficial to them. This has meant that some landlords, particularly those who have mortgages are selling their properties.

### Social Housing

2.28 As of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017, there were 11,403 applicants on the housing register. There had been a small increase (2%) over the year from 11,165. The previous year saw a more significant increase of 18% over the year (from 9,461 as of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015). Overcrowding remains the biggest reason for joining the housing register and as of April 2017, accounted for 42% of the register. Households in bands 1 to 3 on the housing register are considered to have a housing need for accommodation. As of 6<sup>th</sup> July 2017, it was agreed to remove all those applicants on the housing register who have little or no housing need and are therefore not likely to receive an offer of accommodation. This reduced the list to 7,623 households (as of 11<sup>th</sup> July) and will help us to better manage customer expectations.

2.29 Since the last homelessness review there have been three significant revisions to the Leicester City Council's allocations policy:

1. In 2013 the allocations policy was revised in response to changes to housing benefit following the Welfare Reform Act 2012. These changes were made so that people on the housing register would only be allocated the number of bedrooms which would be covered under housing benefit rules, reducing the risk of financial hardship to prospective tenants due to shortfalls in housing benefit. Also from May 2014 no new applications were accepted onto the register where the customer was considered to be adequately housed.
2. In 2015 the allocations policy was revised in response to the Localism Act 2011. The main changes were to:
  - strengthen the local residency requirement (increasing the current settled home requirement from 1 to 2 years) and for evidence of previous settled home from 2 consecutive years or more out of the last 5 years to 3 or more years out of 5;
  - exclude owner-occupiers and those with the financial resources to resolve their own housing issues from the housing register (in Leicester this was set at a total income of more than £25k per year for a single household or more than £40k per year for joint households or capital assets of over £50k)
  - give band 3 priority to those working households or those in local training schemes who needed to move closer to their job/training scheme.
3. Further changes that will be made in July 2017 are:
  - Applicants who are considered to be in low housing need will be removed from the housing register (removing bands 4 & 5). Applicants requesting 1 bed sheltered housing will be moved to a higher band
  - Amend the income threshold for joint households to join the register to £31k per year
  - Differentiate between tenants and non-tenants who receive overcrowding banding priorities and amend age rules for families living in 1 bed accommodation
  - Adopt the government's bedroom standard, so that people on the Housing Register will only be allocated the number of bedrooms which are covered under these standards
  - Creating a new band 2 priority for people who are living in insanitary or unreasonable housing
  - Households will be able to choose to apply for accommodation with one less bedroom than they are eligible for. Families with 1 child aged 2 years and under are able to choose to apply for 1 and 2-bedroom accommodation

2.30 In the last two years the total number of lettings from the social housing register has reduced (1,504 in 2016/17 and 1,479 in 2015/16). See graph A. However, 38% (579) of all lettings were for the prevention of homelessness or to households who become homeless. This was an increase from the previous year (481 (33%) of all lettings in 2015/16). Just over half of all

lettings were of 1 bedroom accommodation. In 2014/15 there was an increase in the number of lettings as there was a large number of new build properties completed and let during this year.

- 2.31 Average waiting times for family size accommodation have increased. For a band 2 household seeking a two-bedroom property waiting times have increased from 12 months to 18 months and those seeking a four-bedroom property waiting times have increase from 21 months to 39 months.

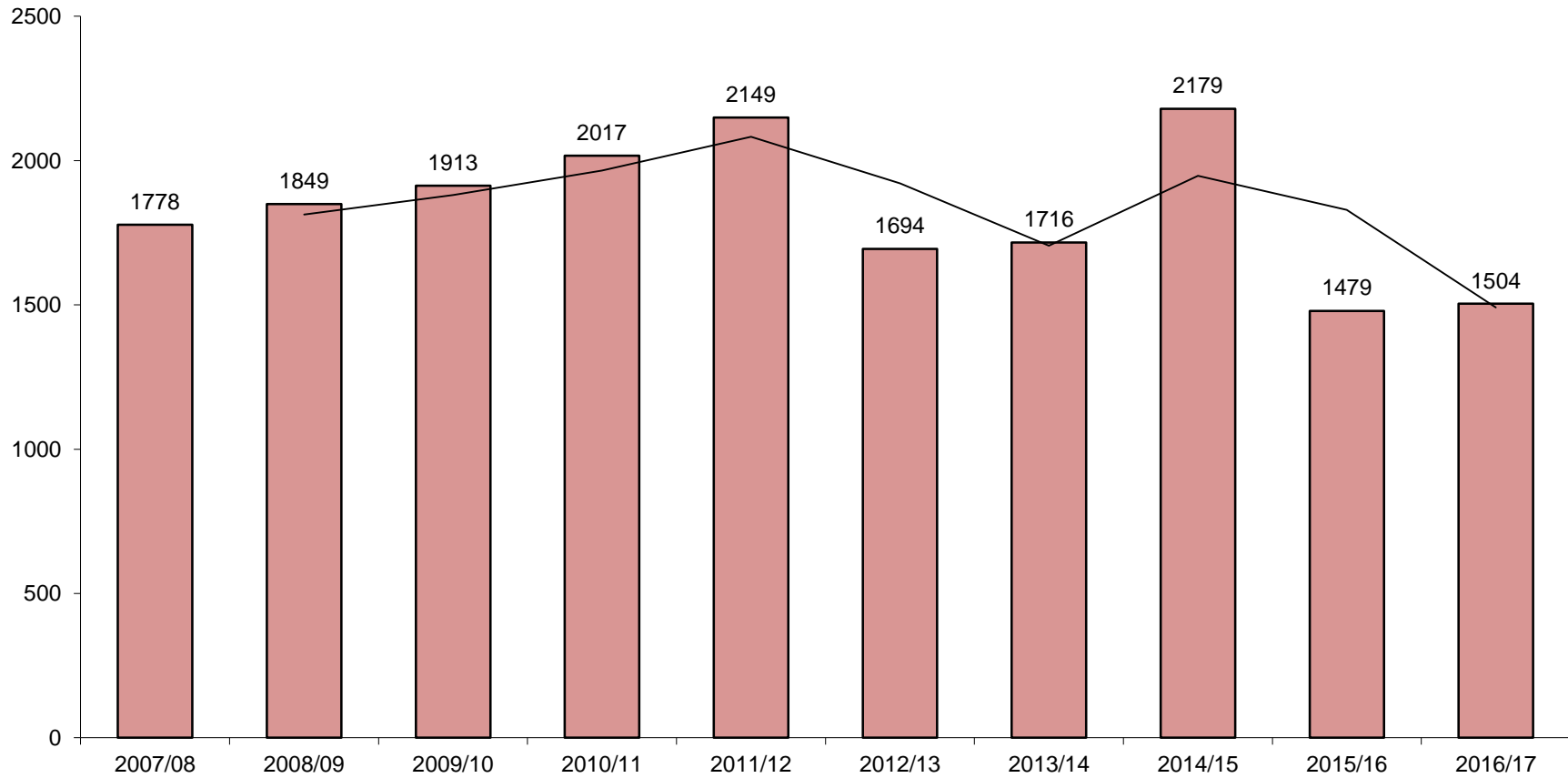
Council Housing

- 2.32 The Council is the biggest landlord in the city and will generally be the most affordable rental option for many people; therefore, it is important that any tenants experiencing affordable issues are supported to maintain their tenancies to reduce the cycle of homelessness.
- 2.33 In 2016/17 of the 54 evictions 13 were families, 1 couple and 40 single people. Only 6 of the evictions involved debt relating to welfare reforms (all these related to the 'bedroom tax'). The majority of eviction cases were not directly affected by welfare reform.

Evictions from LCC homes	Non-payment of rent	ASB	Total evictions
2014/15	103	2	105
2015/16	52	2	54
2016/17	54	0	54

- 2.34 All tenants where action is being taken relating to arrears are offered support. Any non-payment of rent eviction cases involving vulnerable, family or those with complex needs are reviewed by senior officers to ensure all possible interventions have been made to prevent homelessness.
- 2.35 In 2016 the council introduced a welfare support needs policy to identify and provide support, where required, to 'vulnerable tenants'. Vulnerable council tenants who are at risk of homelessness or who have experienced homelessness can also access the STAR service (housing-related support service).
- 2.36 When tenants notify the council of their intention to end their tenancy we could do more to establish the reasons for their decision to end their tenancy, so if they are struggling to maintain their tenancy or are potentially leaving themselves in a more insecure housing situation appropriate advice / support can be provided.

Graph A: Lettings from the social housing register 2007 - 2017



### Welfare reform

- 2.37 The Government has introduced a range of reforms to benefit entitlement over the last few years. The council has contacted households affected by the reforms to alert them to the changes and sign-post them to support. Below are some of the impacts on households in Leicester:
- 2.38 There have been 1,458 of households affected by the under-occupancy rules which restrict benefit to the number of rooms deemed to be needed by that household (also known as the 'bedroom tax). The average loss of benefit per household is £13.77 per week.
- 2.39 The government introduced a cap on the amount of benefits households could claim in 2014. In November 2016, 98 households were affected, these families were already affected by the previous benefit cap threshold and the average loss per household was £65.00 per week. Families with 5 or more children were most affected. In January 2017 420 new households were affected and the average loss per household was £51.78 per week. In February 2017, there were 530 affected households and the average loss per household was £63.32 per week.
- 2.40 Child tax credits have been limited to two children from April 2017, for any subsequent children born after 6<sup>th</sup> April 2017. This will significantly impact on the incomes of large family units over time. In Leicester families with 3 or more children currently make up 12.5% (1,738 households) of the housing benefit caseload.
- 2.41 As mentioned in section 2.27, local housing allowance rates have been frozen since 30<sup>th</sup> January 2015, and will remain frozen through to 2021.
- 2.42 Going forward there are several further changes that are likely to impact on homelessness:
- Largest single impact on homelessness is likely to be the roll out of Universal Credit (UC) from March 2018 in Leicester. From this point, working age households will no longer make new claims for Housing Benefit (or Job Seekers Allowance / Employment Support Allowance / Tax Credits / Income Support) and instead will have to claim UC. Households granted a new tenancy will also move onto UC as a 'major change in circumstances.' Currently there are less than 500 claimants of UC in Leicester. Experience from other areas of the country where full service UC has already been introduced is that rent arrears double compared to legacy benefits.
  - UC claimants under 22 from March 2018 will no longer be automatically entitled to housing costs. There are however a number of exemptions to this and the numbers we anticipate to be affected in Leicester are low.
  - From April 2019, maximum rent allowances (in HB/UC) will be capped at LHA rates for those in social housing tenancies signed after April 2016, which by then is likely to be well below market levels.

- Also from April 2019 it is proposed that supported accommodation rents will be capped at LHA rates. The government has proposed that councils would be given cash to top up the difference. How this would be allocated has yet to be clarified and there has been a recent parliamentary committee report that made recommendations to change the existing proposals.

2.43 A number of welfare changes have already been implemented and the proposed changes are a significant risk to the continued success in prevention of homelessness. Personal budgeting support is currently available in Leicester, provided by Citizens Advice LeicesterShire, for those claiming universal credit, to help people to manage their finances/ budget. Universal credit is paid differently from other benefits as it is paid once a month usually paid directly into the individual's bank, building society or credit union account. For some this will mean they have to arrange to pay their own rent (for some people receiving housing benefit this was paid directly to their landlord). The ongoing availability of budgeting support will be essential to prevent homelessness when universal credit is fully implemented.

#### Discretionary Housing Payments

2.44 The council can provide short term financial support in the form of Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) to some people to help meet the shortfall in their housing costs. The table below shows the number of applications over the last three years and the number and percentage of DHP awards made.

Year	Number of DHP Applications	Number of awards made	% successful applications
2014	2,266	1,801	79.5%
2015	2,389	1,718	71.9%
2016	2,221	1,652	74.4%

2.45 In 2016/17 although there were less people awarded DHP the total value of awards increased. DHP is a temporary award where people have to make a new claim after 13 weeks. Indications are that there are a number of households claiming this award to sustain their accommodation and who would be potentially at risk of homelessness if they did not receive these payments as their accommodation would become unaffordable.

#### Value and number of DHP payments 2014/15 to 2016/17

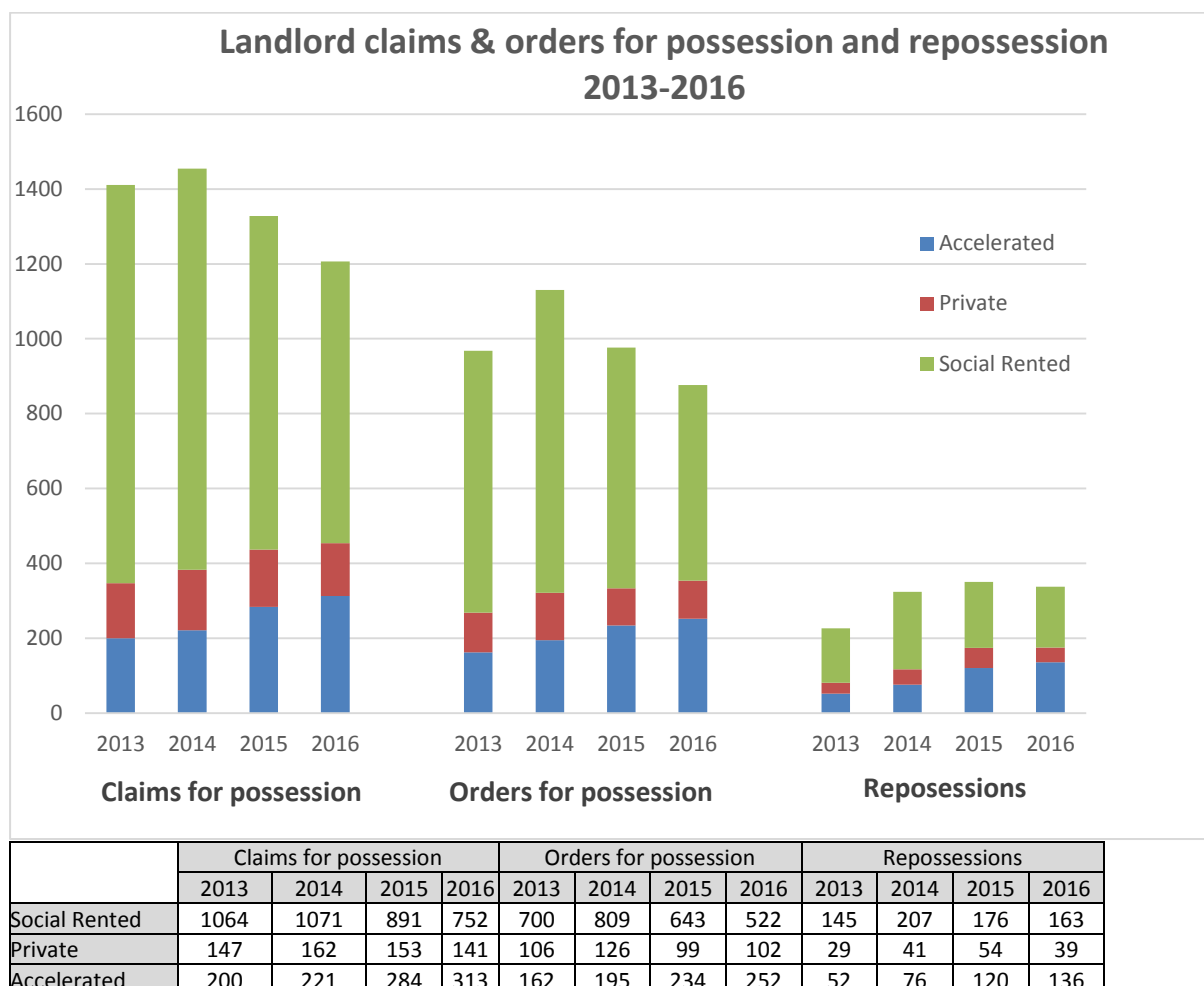
DHP Award reasons	2014		2015		2016	
	Number	Value (£)	Number	Value (£)	Number	Value (£)
Benefit cap	109	£145,384.38	63	£75,101.64	153	£170,331.00
Under occupation	795	£347,552.87	673	£308,594.69	575	£280,396.93
LHA restriction	478	£159,689.29	392	£218,508.81	402	£250,226.11
Combination	64	£29,800.05	136	£82,291.91	53	£26,730.82
Other (non-welfare reforms)	355	£138,266.41	454	£128,927.06	469	£216,312.97
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,801</b>	<b>£820,693.00</b>	<b>1,718</b>	<b>£813,424.11</b>	<b>1,652</b>	<b>£943,997.83</b>

2.46 Housing services are working with the council's revenues & benefits service to make sure DHP are effectively targeted to prevent homelessness.

Court activity

2.47 Since 2013, Leicester has seen a significant reduction in both mortgage orders for possession and mortgage claims for possession, with an overall decrease of 63.8% in annual mortgage claims for possession between 2013 and 2016, and a 67.5% reduction in annual mortgage orders for possession between 2013 and 2016<sup>6</sup>. There were a total of 194 mortgage claims and orders for possession in 2016.

2.48 Annual landlord claims and orders for possession both increased between 2013 and 2014 (claims up by 3% and orders up by 16.8%) but then decreased in the following years. There were fewer total claims and orders for possession in 2016 than there were in 2013. However, repossessions have increased from a total of 226 in 2013 to 338 in 2016, an increase of 50%.



2.49 The Retaliatory Eviction & Deregulation Act came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2015 making changes to when and in what circumstances landlords can give notice to a tenant. This act provides some protection to tenants who make a

<sup>6</sup> Ministry of Justice figures



legitimate complaint to their landlord about the condition of their property and, in response, instead of making the repair, their landlord services them with an eviction notice. This act also made it more straightforward for landlords to evict a tenant where they are allowed to do so.

2.50 The most common form of tenancy is an assured shorthold tenancy; this allows landlords to take back their property without giving any reason when:

- The tenants' deposit is in a deposit protection scheme
- The tenant is given at least 2 months' written notice
- The date the tenant must leave is at least 6 months after the original tenancy began
- It is a periodic tenancy, or a fixed-term tenancy and the leaving date if after the end of the fixed term

It is common practice for private landlords to offer 6 month assured shorthold tenancies. There are many cases where tenants are given notice and this does not relate to any action taken by the tenant (e.g. rent arrears, damaging the property, anti-social behaviour). Housing Options continue to experience large numbers of tenants seeking advice from Housing Options because their assured shorthold tenancy has been ended.

2.51 **Key points relating to housing in Leicester:**

- Need for more affordable housing
- Affordability is a barrier for people to access home ownership and to rent in the private sector
- Increasingly difficult for people receiving benefits to access private rented accommodation. Welfare changes have had, and continue to have an impact
- Increased demand for social housing however there are fewer lettings available this means waiting times are increasing
- Most lettings in the private rented sector are assured shorthold tenancies which are insecure and often short-term

### 3. Homelessness in Leicester

#### What is homelessness?

3.1 People who don't have a home are described as homeless. When we hear the term homeless we often think of people living rough on the streets; sleeping rough on the streets is only one form of homelessness. It is the one we think of because it is more visible than people who may be living in temporary accommodation.

3.2 There are several categories of homelessness, defined and measured in different ways. These are outlined below<sup>7</sup>:

<i>Statutory homeless</i>	Households deemed to be homeless, eligible for support from their local council and in priority need.
<i>Single homeless</i>	Those who are homeless but do not meet the priority need criteria to be housed by their local authority under homelessness legislation. They may live in supported accommodation, e.g. hostels and semi-independent housing projects, sleep rough, sofa surf or live in squats.
<i>Vulnerably housed</i>	People without accommodation and people in temporary, insecure or poor quality accommodation, including overcrowding or those who are threatened with homelessness.
<i>Street homeless</i>	People sleeping rough.
<i>Hidden homeless</i>	People not recorded in official statistics, who tend to reside in squats, on the floors or sofas of friends and families, or sleep rough in concealed locations.

3.3 The total picture of homelessness is set out below and then afterwards broken down into figures and services for families and singles & couples (including young people and offenders / ex-offenders).

#### Homelessness Advice and Prevention

##### Customer Services / Housing Options

3.4 The council has a statutory duty to provide advice and assistance to those in housing need and who are homeless or facing homelessness. In Leicester, this is provided by the Housing Options Service.

3.5 In April 2015 the Housing Options service moved to be co-located with Customer Services in York House. Customer Services provides a triage service for those seeking housing advice (at reception or by telephone). All crisis presentations (those who are saying they are homeless on the day) are referred to the Housing Options Service for immediate, specialist advice and assistance. Customer Services also refer anyone who may be facing

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<sup>7</sup> Taken from Homeless Link Support for single homeless people in England: Annual Review 2016

homelessness for early intervention and the more complex issues arising from Housing Register enquiries. The customer service centre is open Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5.00pm (4.30pm on Friday) and telephone advice line is open Monday to Friday 8.00am – 6.00pm. Outside of these hours, in an emergency, there is a contact number available at all times.

- 3.6 Since 2014/15 households approaching housing options for assistance when they are homeless or at risk of homelessness have increased year on year. From 2015/16 to 2016/17 approaches increased by 30%. The percentage of these households who are singles has increased from 2014/15 to 2016/17, from 55% to 62%.

Household composition	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Families	974	1,218	1,412
Singles	1,189	1,658	2,327
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,163</b>	<b>2,876</b>	<b>3,739</b>

- 3.7 Housing Options hold surgeries at the Dawn Centre two days a week, (on Tuesday’s and Thursday’s) but the plan is to extend this to 5 days a week (Monday to Friday) to ensure that entrenched homeless people and those leading chaotic lives can access services.
- 3.8 Housing Options operates a single access & referral point to access its commissioned housing related support services (accommodation based and floating support). This was highlighted at the last review as good practice to ensure customers receive a consistent approach in one place. There is an eligibility criteria to access homelessness services. Leicester has a policy to offer accommodation and support to not just those we have a statutory duty to assist, but to others, to support other council priorities e.g. to eliminate rough sleeping. There are other (non-commissioned) services that operate who have their own access policies.

#### Advice

- 3.9 Access to timely advice is key in the prevention of homelessness. As well as advice provided by Housing Options there is currently a range of other advice services available in the city (see advice services leaflet: <https://www.leicester.gov.uk/media/181901/advice-services-in-leicester-sept-16.pdf>)

Housing and homelessness advice is provided by:

- Community Advice and Law Service (CALs)
- Leicestershire Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)
- Shelter Housing Aid and Research Project (SHARP)
- Bangladeshi Youth and Cultural Shomiti
- Highfields Centre
- Saffron Resource Centre
- Somali Development Services
- The Race Equality Centre

- 3.10 The council is currently reviewing social welfare advice services across the city. Housing and homelessness advice will continue to be provided (in addition to advice available from housing options), although there could be changes in provider from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018. Future social welfare advice services will operate from the council's Customer Service Centre with an outreach provision.

Prevention

- 3.11 Enabling people to stay in their existing accommodation and avoiding the need for a formal homelessness assessment makes economic and social sense. Homelessness prevention is carried out by Housing Options services when people approach them for assistance. Homelessness prevention is also supported and carried out by a range of other internal services and external providers. The percentage of households prevented from becoming homeless after seeking help at Housing Options has been increasing year on year.

% of households prevented from becoming homeless after seeking help at housing options	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
	73.0%	78.8%	85.3%	89.7%

- 3.12 The table below shows how people were assisted to remain in their existing home. It includes preventative work done to support council tenants to sustain their tenancies by STAR & the Income Management Team. The numbers of successful prevention outcomes have been increasing year on year.

<b>Homelessness preventions - assistance to remain in existing home</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2015/16</b>	<b>2016/17</b>
Mediation	2	22	11	22
Conciliation	29	19	18	33
Financial payments from a homeless prevention fund	5	4	3	23
Debt Advice	48	18	49	15
Resolving Housing Benefit problems	9	163	298	362
Resolving rent or service charge arrears	10	179	260	501
Sanctuary scheme measures for domestic violence	7	6	73	58
Crisis intervention - providing emergency support	0	0	1	3
Negotiation or legal advocacy	184	70	43	37
Other assistance	306	115	162	158
Mortgage arrears interventions or mortgage rescue	27	7	1	1
Other	0	0	8	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>627</b>	<b>603</b>	<b>927</b>	<b>1,215</b>

3.13 This table shows how people were assisted to obtain alternative accommodation as a homelessness prevention outcome. The numbers of households assisted to find alternative accommodation has been increasing year on year.

<b>Households assisted to find alternative accommodation<sup>8</sup></b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2015/16</b>	<b>2016/17</b>
Hostel/HMO	243	471	625	1136
Private rented sector with landlord incentive scheme	304	235	124	127
Private rented sector without landlord incentive scheme	41	24	43	41
Accommodation with friends or relatives	12	14	14	26
Supported accommodation	17	23	26	9
Social housing - management move of existing LA tenant	1	20	74	43
Social housing - offer of LA accommodation or nomination to RSL	77	169	755	821
Social housing - negotiation with an RSL outside nomination arrangements	4	1	8	6
Low cost home ownership scheme / market housing solution	0	0	0	0
Other	354	281	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,053</b>	<b>1,238</b>	<b>1,669</b>	<b>2,209</b>

3.14 Leicester's prevention approach has been very successful, especially in tackling family homelessness. The Homelessness Reduction Act looks to strengthen the advice and assistance options for the single homeless. As part of reviewing our processes to implement the Homelessness Reduction Act we also want to further improve the outcomes for single people who are homeless. It is widely recognised that the extension of the statutory duties will place additional burdens on services that are already under significant pressure due to the increase in presentations for advice and assistance.

3.15 Since the last review there have been continuous developments and changes to support the advice & preventative services available:

- In 2015 Leicester adopted some of the principles of Housing First to assist households who were facing homelessness and their only need was accommodation. This initiative is used for those on the housing register in homeless categories where this would prevent a hostel admission or reduce the length of stay in a hostel. This has been particularly successful in reducing the number of families without support needs having to be placed in a hostel. Housing First is an approach for long-term homeless people with high support

<sup>8</sup> P1E Return (quarterly returns submitted to the DCLG relating to the council's responsibilities under homelessness legislation)

needs to place them into their own tenancy and then provide open ended support. This approach has been used for 14 individuals working with the Revolving Door team. Up to the end of 2016/17, 104 families and 45 single people have been helped into accommodation by this initiative who would have otherwise needed to access temporary accommodation.

- In 2016, following a successful pilot, initially developed by Blaby District Council in partnership with Leicester, a housing enablement team (Lightbulb project) works with patients (from the Bradgate Mental Health Unit & University Hospitals Leicester) who are well enough to leave hospital but have no accommodation to return to or their current accommodation is no longer suitable to prevent any delayed transfer of care. In 2016/17 there were a total 239 referrals from city patients.

3.16 Preventing homelessness is an ongoing challenge and prevention options are becoming more limited, mainly due to issues of affordability. The council along with other local authorities in Leicestershire & Rutland was successful in obtaining funding as part of the government’s Prevention Trailblazer programme. The aims of our project are to provide more early interventions to prevent homelessness by:

- Making available easily accessible and targeted self-accessed homelessness advice, signposting and referrals to services
- Raising awareness of support available and improving links with organisations and services outside the existing ‘homelessness services’ networks
- Having available targeted person-centred support for individuals who are less able to navigate self-accessed support
- Ensuring homeless prevention advice & support can be easily accessed across all the local authority partner areas.

3.17 Resources have been increased in the private sector housing options team to enable further work to secure suitable private sector properties to prevent homelessness.

### **Homeless applications**

3.18 A total of 256 homeless applications were made in 2016/17 and of these over a third were found to be homeless and in priority need. The council’s proactive prevention approach has meant that the number of homeless applications has been kept to a minimum. However, we do not consider the number of homelessness applications to be reflective of the demand for homelessness services.

<b>Homeless applications<sup>9</sup></b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2015/16</b>	<b>2016/17</b>
Homeless and in priority need	91	108	129	100

<sup>9</sup> P1E Return (quarterly returns submitted to the DCLG relating to the council’s responsibilities under homelessness legislation)

Eligible, homeless and in priority need, but intentionally so	37	54	45	51
Eligible, homeless but not in priority need	207	144	112	68
Eligible, but not homeless	11	9	12	7
Ineligible	69	48	36	30
Total	415	363	334	256

3.19 Homeless acceptances can give us a picture of reasons why people are becoming homeless. The top three reasons for homelessness acceptances in 2016/17 were loss of rented / tied accommodation (38), required to leave accommodation provided by the Home Office as asylum support (14) and violence (12) and parents no longer / willing / able to accommodate (12). These were the same main reasons as in the previous years; except parents no longer able to accommodate which has not been a main reason until 2016/17.

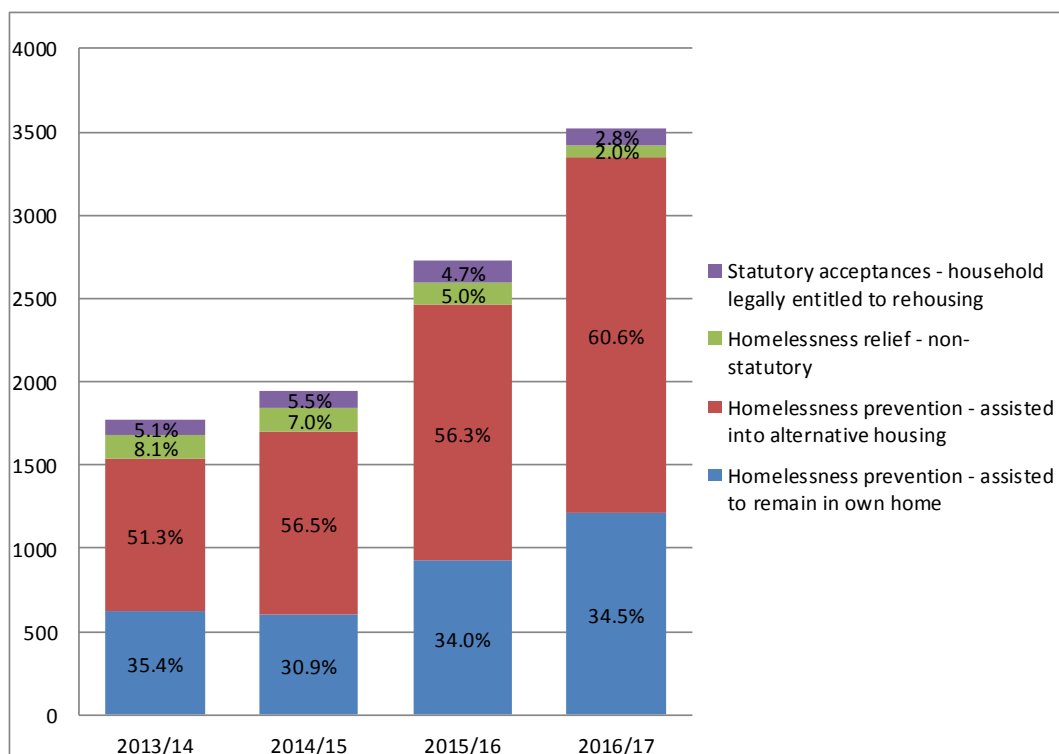
Main reason for loss of last settled home <sup>10</sup>	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Parents no longer / willing / able to accommodate	5	7	7	12
Other relatives / friends no longer willing / able to accommodate	11	14	11	9
Non-violent breakdown of relationship with partner	3	1	1	3
Violence	19	17	18	12
Harassment, threats or intimidation	1	5	5	3
Mortgage arrears	2	0	1	1
Rent arrears	3	0	2	5
Loss of rented / tied accommodation	26	30	40	38
Required to leave accommodation provided by Home Office as asylum support	17	28	37	14
Left an institution or LA care	0	1	2	1
Left armed forces	0	0	1	0
Other	4	5	4	2
Total	91	108	129	100

3.20 From the 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2016, Leicester City Council began to fully discharge and end our main homeless duty by way of a 'Private Rented Sector Offer' (PRSO) in all cases for homeless applicants who have applied to this local authority as homeless. This was introduced to make best and fair use of the limited social housing and to provide opportunities beyond social housing.

<sup>10</sup> P1E Return (quarterly returns submitted to the DCLG relating to the council's responsibilities under homelessness legislation)

This however is only sustainable if we can source suitable private rented sector properties.

3.21 The chart below provides an overview of Leicester City Council’s actions to assist homeless and potentially homeless households. Prevention of homelessness is our key objective and this shows that the council’s work is focussed clearly on the prevention of homelessness.



## Street homelessness

### Numbers of rough sleepers

3.22 All local authorities have to submit an annual figure to DCLG to indicate the number of people sleeping rough in their area on a typical night (in the Autumn). This can be an estimate or a count. In Leicester, this has been estimated by the council and local homelessness services discussing local intelligence. Similar to figures nationally, especially in cities, Leicester has seen an increase in rough sleeping.

Rough sleeping estimate	2013	2014	2015	2016 (rate per 1,000 of population)
Leicester	11	19	22	36 (0.28)

3.23 Leicester City Council has an Outreach team who specifically work with rough sleepers in Leicester. They gather information daily, when working, on the numbers seen and will follow up referrals from other organisations. From their records, we can report how many unique individuals they identified. This we feel is a more accurate reflection than the estimate. Although it is noted that



the Outreach team is a small team that generally covers a small area of the city and therefore there may be other individuals not identified by the outreach team who are rough sleeping. From 2015/16 to 2016/17 there has been a 25% increase in unique individuals within the year seen by the Outreach team.

	2015/16	2016/17
Unique individuals identified by Outreach as rough sleeping	159	198

- 3.24 Of the 198 unique individuals identified by outreach as rough sleeping during 2016/17 the table below is a breakdown of categories based on their first presentation during the financial year. However, some of these individuals could be the same as when partial or no information is provided these cannot be reconciled to previous information gathered.

PFA	Stock	Flow	Returners	Unknown	Total
40	29	80	10	39	198

Definitions:

PFA: Persons from abroad

Stock: people who have rough slept the previous and / or the current financial year.

Flow: first time rough sleepers, people who have not been seen rough sleeping before.

Returners: people who have rough slept prior to the last financial year and have returned to rough sleeping this financial year

Unknown: Individuals not engaging with outreach services therefore no information to categorise.

- 3.25 Of the 198 unique individuals rough sleeping:
- The 40 'PFA' were all European union nationals
  - Outreach team helped, at least once, 68 of these individuals (34%)
  - 10 individuals had a tenancy, at some point, when rough sleeping
  - 9 individuals were aged between 16-24
  - Where ethnicity is recorded, 79% were white, 8% were asian and 14% were black
  - Outreach were unable to establish the identity of 53 individuals (this could be because they were asleep or the individuals did not want to provide any further information)
  - Housing advice was provided to 79 individuals, of which temporary accommodation was offered to 48 individuals (in 17 cases this was refused or the individual failed to turn-up and in 6 cases the temporary accommodation provider refused to accommodate the individual).
- 3.26 Leicester City Council has been working with Action Homeless and other organisations as part of the European End Street Homelessness Campaign. This initiative aims to end street homelessness in the city by 2020. There will be a survey of street homeless people and those in temporary

accommodation. A plan will be developed for each individual so they can be housed as soon as possible.

- 3.27 There is a growing issue with begging in the city. Many members of the public assume that those begging are rough sleeping. The housing division is working with the council's street drinking team and the city centre police to tackle begging in the city. Information on whether beggars do have accommodation helps the police take appropriate action against persistent beggars. The police have served community protection notices and a criminal behaviour order to help tackle those persistently begging.
- 3.28 In July 2016 there were 12 identified prolific beggars (those seen begging daily) in the city, only one was identified as sleeping rough. Of the others; 7 had their own tenancies, 3 were living with friends or family and 1 was staying in homeless temporary accommodation.
- 3.29 In May 2017 there were 16 identified prolific beggars in the city, seven were identified as sleeping rough (although two of these did have tenancies but were still sleeping rough). Of the others; 5 had their own tenancies, 2 were staying in homeless temporary accommodation and 2 were of no fixed abode. All of those in tenancies have at some point been homeless. There were also 9 regular beggars identified (those who beg at least three times a week or are seen by services on a regular basis but are not out every day). Of these individuals 3 were identified as sleeping rough, 4 had their own tenancies and 2 were staying in homeless temporary accommodation.

#### Outreach

- 3.30 The outreach team helps those rough sleeping to move off the streets; to access services and support; and offer advice on health access, benefits and housing. Staff can also accompany service users to appointments and interviews if required. The Outreach team also work with other agencies to tackle begging and street drinking. They also provide a reconnection services to homeless people from out of Leicester to enable the person to return their city, town or country. In 2016/17 the Outreach reconnected 102 people to places where they had a link/connection or family outside Leicester. This included 20 persons from abroad. In PFA cases the council would like further engagement with UK Visas & Immigration to help support the local authorities' work with migrant rough sleepers. There are individuals that refuse to engage with the outreach team. For example, in February 2017 8 out of 15 rough sleepers known to the Outreach team were not engaging.
- 3.31 As a result of a successful cross authority bid to the Department for Communities & Local Government Rough sleeping programme, led by Charnwood Borough Council in 2016/17, part of the funding received will be used to provide additional resources to the outreach team to extend services into the evening. This team will be in place by early July 2017.

#### No Second Night Out (NSNO) – Leicester approach

- 3.32 Leicester City Council works with other district authorities and The Bridge to operate a NSNO pathway. In the city, there is one NSNO bed available

provided by Action Homeless. If required, the city council can also make a referral to NSNO beds available in the county. These beds are only available when no other temporary accommodation is available and for individuals who have no recent history of rough sleeping and who have little or no support needs.

- 3.33 There are few referrals made for the NSNO city bed available. Referrals can only be made for clients who have little or no support needs; there is a cut-off point for referrals which means the Outreach twilight team are not currently always able to make referrals and not all service areas are aware of the referral processes. 80 individual rough sleepers seen by the outreach team in 2016/17 were first time ('flow') rough sleepers. Of these individuals 44 (55%) were assessed for temporary accommodation. 36 individuals were eligible for temporary accommodation however 12 refused this accommodation or did not go to the accommodation provider and in 5 cases the temporary accommodation provider refused the referral. There needs to be a review of current procedures to ensure there is support for all new rough sleepers; so that they do not have to spend a second night rough sleeping and their needs can be quickly assessed and to consider what services can do regarding individuals who refuse the current support offered.

#### Dawn Centre emergency bed provision

- 3.34 The Dawn Centre offers up to 10 additional emergency bed spaces of dormitory style accommodation. Referrals for the emergency beds are primarily received from Leicester City Council's Outreach Team, but individuals may present out of hours at the Dawn Centre. Such referrals are assessed by Dawn Centre staff and accommodated if a relevant 'threshold' is met and spaces are available. Emergency bed referrals are required to meet the 'threshold' of rough sleeping or being at immediate risk of rough sleeping.
- 3.35 All emergency bed referrals are then assessed by Housing Options to ascertain if they are both homeless and eligible for temporary accommodation. If individuals are not eligible they will be offered support with reconnection to their local authority or for persons from abroad, repatriation.
- 3.36 Those accommodated on the emergency beds can access three meals a day in the Dawn Centre dining room. There is both a housing benefit charge and an ineligible charge for the use of these beds. The ineligible charge is a third less than that charged for a 'permanent' hostel bed space.
- 3.37 Weekly monitoring of hostel vacancies and the emergency beds is carried out to ensure, as far as possible, that no-one is sleeping rough due to the lack of vacancies. Some rough sleepers refuse assistance and some are excluded due to their behaviour. Due to the rise in rough sleeping we are currently undertaking further work with a targeted plan for any individual appearing on the weekly snapshot of rough sleepers.

#### Dawn Centre Severe Weather Bed provision / Winter Bed provision

- 3.38 The Dawn Centre offers additional bed-spaces in dormitory accommodation in periods of severe weather. The definition of severe weather can include

periods of heavy rain, gale force winds and extremes of temperature i.e. night-time temperatures of 2°C or below. Such weather triggers the offer of up to 10 more bed spaces in the Y Support Day Centre (based in the Dawn Centre building). In hot weather the Dawn Centre provides individuals with support to keep hydrated and sun protection (e.g. shelter / provision of sun screen / showers).

- 3.39 These beds are always offered on a first-come first-serve basis. There is no charge for the use of these beds. Invariably they have been fully occupied.

#### One Roof Leicester (ORL) Winter Beds

- 3.40 During the winter of 2015/16 the emergency provision was run in partnership with Leicester City Council and Y Support. In total, 82 individuals were offered accommodation across all providers, ORL accommodated 38 (46%).
- 3.41 ORL Winter Night Shelter was a multi-faith initiative that rotated around 7 venues in the city. It was open from 12 December 2016 to 27 February 2017. The shelter provided emergency accommodation and food to homeless people in Leicester during the coldest months of the year. There were 10 beds available every evening.
- 3.42 During this time they had 28 referrals and of these 24 used the beds. The average number of nights in the shelter was 28. The criteria to use these beds were: male, rough sleeping, can manage without alcohol or drugs overnight whilst at the shelter, from 7pm to 8am.

#### **3.43 Key points relating to street homelessness:**

- Rough sleeping is increasing
- There is more street begging and the latest figures show more of these individuals are homeless
- Over a third of rough sleepers offered temporary refused this / or failed to go to the accommodation provider. Rough sleepers often have complex needs. Further work is being undertaken to consider alternative offers of support to engage this client group
- Review of no second night out procedures in the city to help ensure timely support is available to all that require it
- We need to consider how interventions can be sustained so people do not return to the streets

#### **Family homelessness**

##### Number of homeless families

- 3.44 Over a three-year period (2014/15 to 2016/17) the number of families seeking assistance from housing options because they are facing homelessness has increased year on year (see graph B and table below) as has the number of cases where homelessness was prevented.
- 3.45 Although the numbers seeking assistance has been increasing those households who need to be referred into temporary accommodation has decreased. This shows that the emphasis on preventing family homelessness

has been successful and housing options are currently able find a preventative solution in 80% of cases.

- 3.46 Unfortunately the prevention of homelessness is not possible in all cases and the housing options service is the safety net for those who are in crisis and require emergency interventions. The numbers of families being placed in temporary accommodation and bed and breakfast accommodation has decreased over the last 3 years (see graph C and table below).

	Seeking assistance from HO	Requesting TA	% seeking assistance then requesting TA	Eligible for TA	Placed in TA	% eligible placed in TA
2014/15	974	267	27.4%	266	246	92.5%
2015/16	1,218	255	20.9%	264	256	97.0%
2016/17	1,412	246	17.4%	256	188	73.4%

- 3.47 Bed and breakfast usage has decreased in the last year. Bed & breakfast accommodation is only used when temporary accommodation is unavailable or temporary accommodation is unsuitable and the council has a duty to accommodate. B&B accommodation is not suitable for families with children and we have met the government's guidance to ensure this is not used for longer than six weeks.

	Number of families accommodated (number of occasions)	Average length of stay - days
2014/15	64 (76)	6.5
2015/16	107 (115)	5.2
2016/17	11 (11)	3.1

#### Services for homeless families

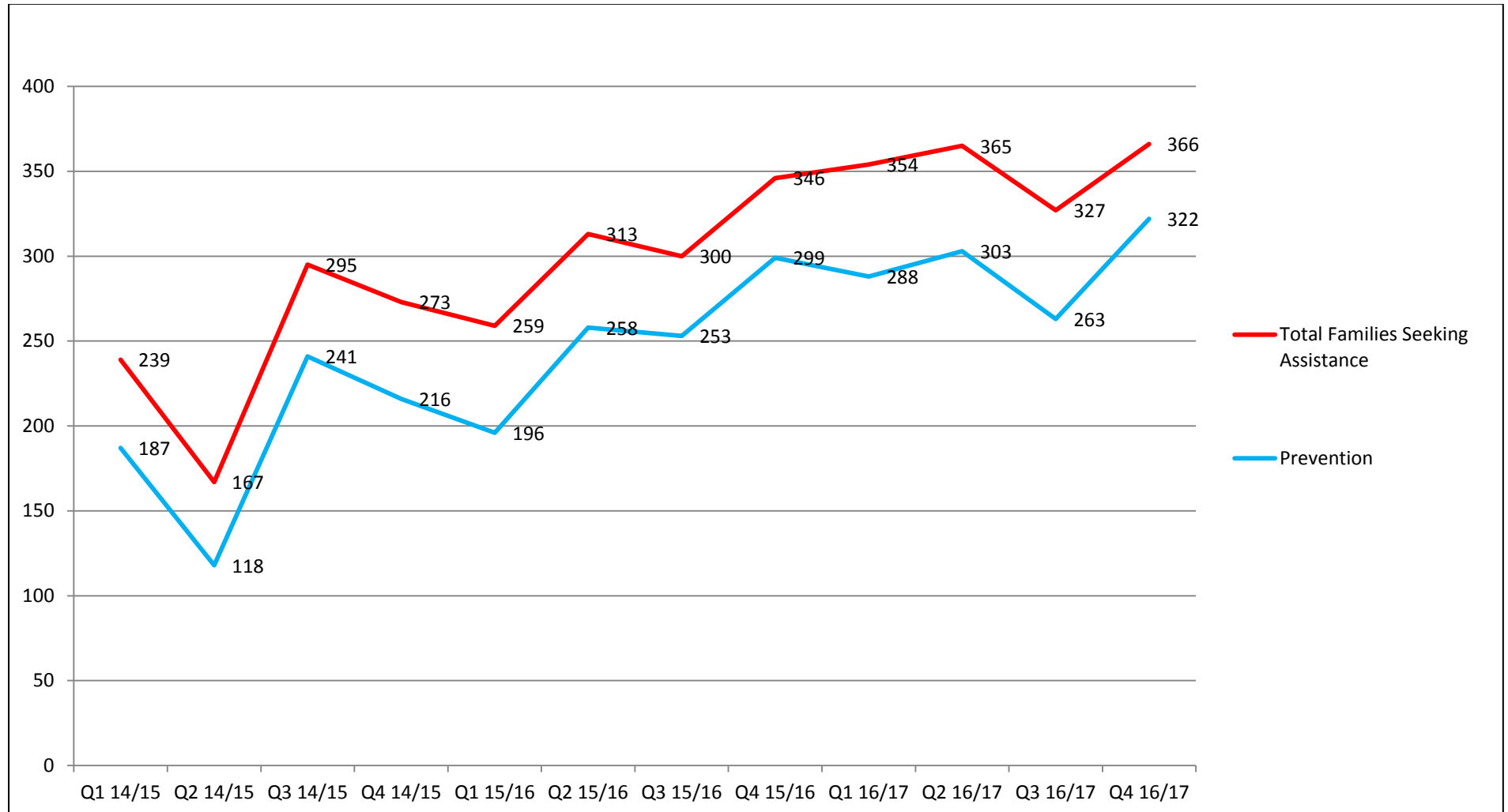
- 3.48 *Housing Division commissioned accommodation based housing related support*

The last strategy proposed to commission a total of 60 units of temporary accommodation. Leicester City Council's Border House provides the 60 units of accommodation for families.

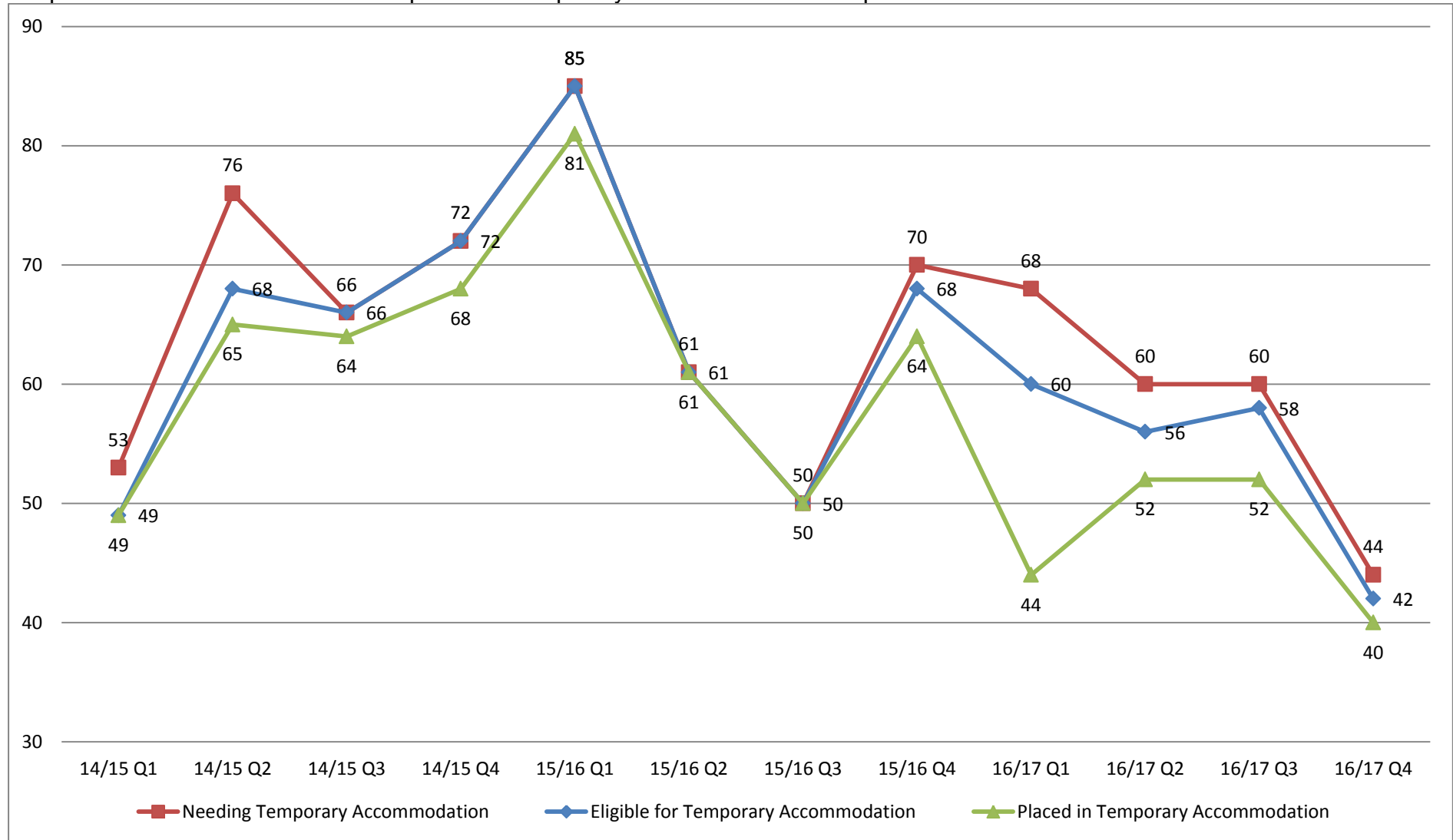
- 3.49 *Other accommodation services (non-commissioned)*

Adullum Homes Housing Association Bethany Project provides 25 units of accommodation for vulnerable women with children who have support needs.

Graph B: The number of families who came to housing options saying they faced homelessness



Graph C: Homelessness families' requests for temporary accommodation 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017<sup>11</sup>



<sup>11</sup> Single Access and Referral Team data

### 3.50 *Other services*

Leicester City Council's Family Support Service provides support to families in Border House to prevent homelessness reoccurring. Since the last homelessness strategy, family support services have also been available to vulnerable families in the wider community. The Family Support Service provides specialist support and its workers are trained in child development and safeguarding. This service also includes the Corner Club which provides sessional crèches and a homework club.

Action Homeless run a project called Building Blocks for children between the ages of 0-4 years who are affected by homelessness. It offers group and family play sessions and runs a toy library. This project is funded by a BBC Children in Need grant of £73,891 over 2 years.

### 3.51 *Housing Division commissioned floating support services*

Generic floating support services are available (as described in services for singles).

#### Commissioned service performance

3.52 Over 3 years the commissioned families' accommodation has received the following number of referrals:

<b>LCC - Families</b>	2014/15		2015/16		2016/17 <sup>12</sup>	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Acceptances	209	91%	208	95%	189	94%
Provider refused	6	3%	5	2%	2	1%
Service user refused	15	7%	6	3%	10	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>230</b>		<b>219</b>		<b>201</b>	

3.53 During 2014/15 & 2015/16 Border House has been over 90% occupied. There was some refurbishment work undertaken in early 2016/17 that reduced occupation, however since quarter 2 the number of beds not being used has been rising. In quarter 1 beds not used was 5% of the total available, in quarter 2 & 3 this was 18% and in quarter 4 this was 21%.

3.54 Following the last strategy the aim was to reduce the time people spent in temporary accommodation – aiming for a maximum stay of 4 months. Looking at a snapshot on the first day of each quarter the length of stay of families in temporary accommodation has been relatively consistent over the last 3 years. Of all leavers in 2016/17 the average length of stay was 50 days and 89% of customers stayed up to 4 months. This is the shortest average length of stay of any type of accommodation. The number of evictions as a percentage of ceased stays has varied from 9 to 2% but has been reducing year on year.

<sup>12</sup> Provisional SAR data for quarters 3 & 4 2016/17



3.55 Commissioned providers are also monitored quarterly on how many people achieve independent living (this measures the number of service users who have moved on from supported accommodation in a planned way). This has remained consistent over a 3-year period between 91-94% of clients and is one of the highest rates of all the accommodation providers.

3.56 Commissioned providers provide data on the support needs of the service users they provide support to. This records the primary support needs of the client and main secondary support needs in 2016/17. Data for Leicester City Council is only available for quarter 1; however, this shows that 100% of clients in family accommodation had a recorded primary need of being homeless with support needs. 84% had no recorded secondary support needs.

**3.57 Key points relating to family homelessness:**

- Prevention initiatives have worked well so far however numbers seeking support keeps increasing
- Fewer families have needed to go into temporary accommodation
- Reduction in the use of B&B. Currently there are no families in B&B
- Family hostel provision is currently underutilised. Further consideration is required of the number of temporary accommodation units required going forward, also considering predicted future demand
- Risk to sustaining the high level of prevention if numbers presenting to services continue to increase and external factors, such as changes to welfare benefits, which may lead to more family homelessness

**Singles & couple’s homelessness**

Number of homeless singles & couples

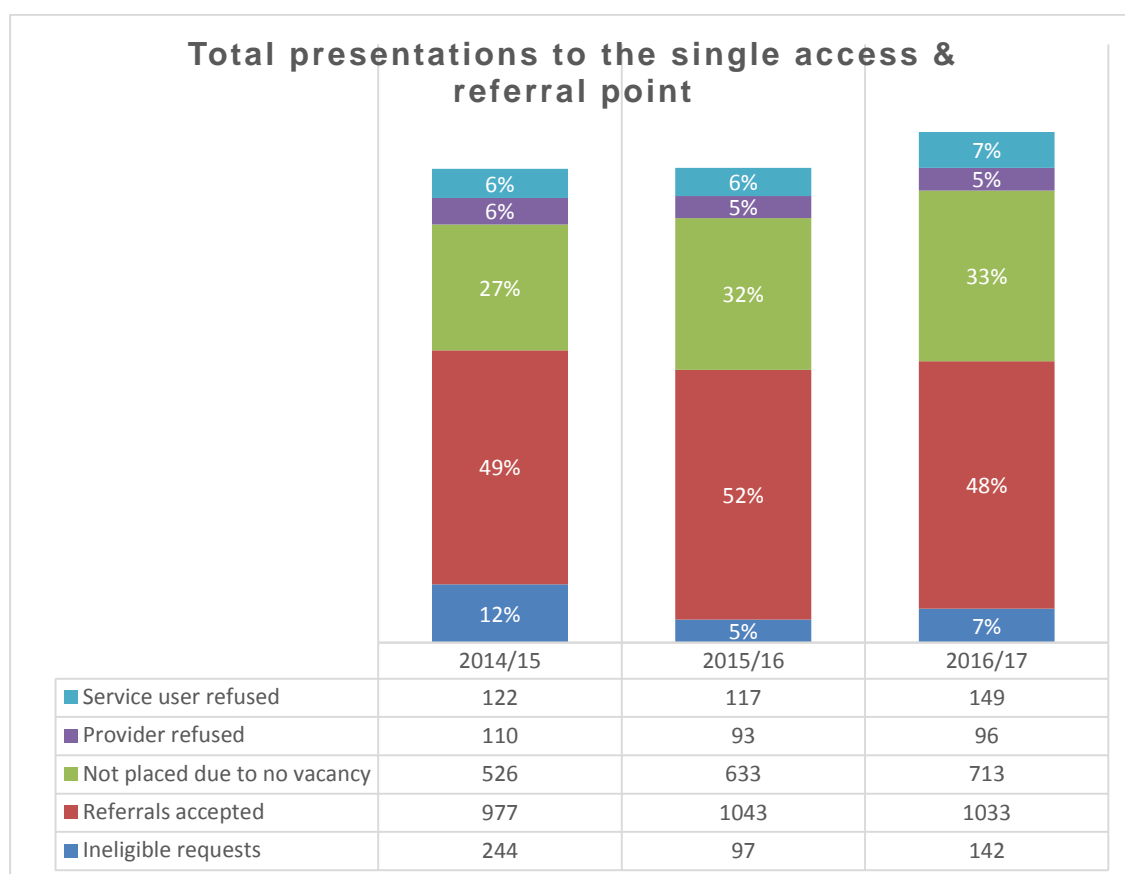
3.58 Numbers of homeless singles & couples seeking assistance has been increasing year on year. The numbers of placements in temporary accommodation have remained consistent. The numbers requesting temporary accommodation has reduced indicating that more preventative options are being utilised (see below table and graphs D & E). These numbers are based on unique individuals seen each quarter. If individuals have approached housing options more than once during the quarter the figures show the ‘best’ placement outcome.

	Seeking assistance from HO	Requesting TA	% seeking assistance then requesting TA	Eligible for TA	Placed in TA	% eligible placed in TA
2014/15	1,189	1,074	90.3%	919	745	81.1%
2015/16	1,658	1,069	64.5%	950	758	79.8%
2016/17	2,327	1,045	44.9%	894	732	81.9%

3.59 The number of unique individuals requesting temporary accommodation over the 3-year period was 2,598. 2,251 were eligible for temporary accommodation of which 1,926 were placed in temporary accommodation.

325 individuals who were eligible for temporary accommodation did not get placed over the 3-year period.

3.60 The below chart shows all presentations rather than unique individuals as above. There were a total of 6,095 presentations to the single access and referral point for temporary accommodation over the 3-year period. This is different from the unique individual data above as where someone has approached the council more than once they will show only once and the outcome will show the 'best' placement outcome for that individual in the quarter. The numbers we have not placed because there was no vacancy has been increasing.

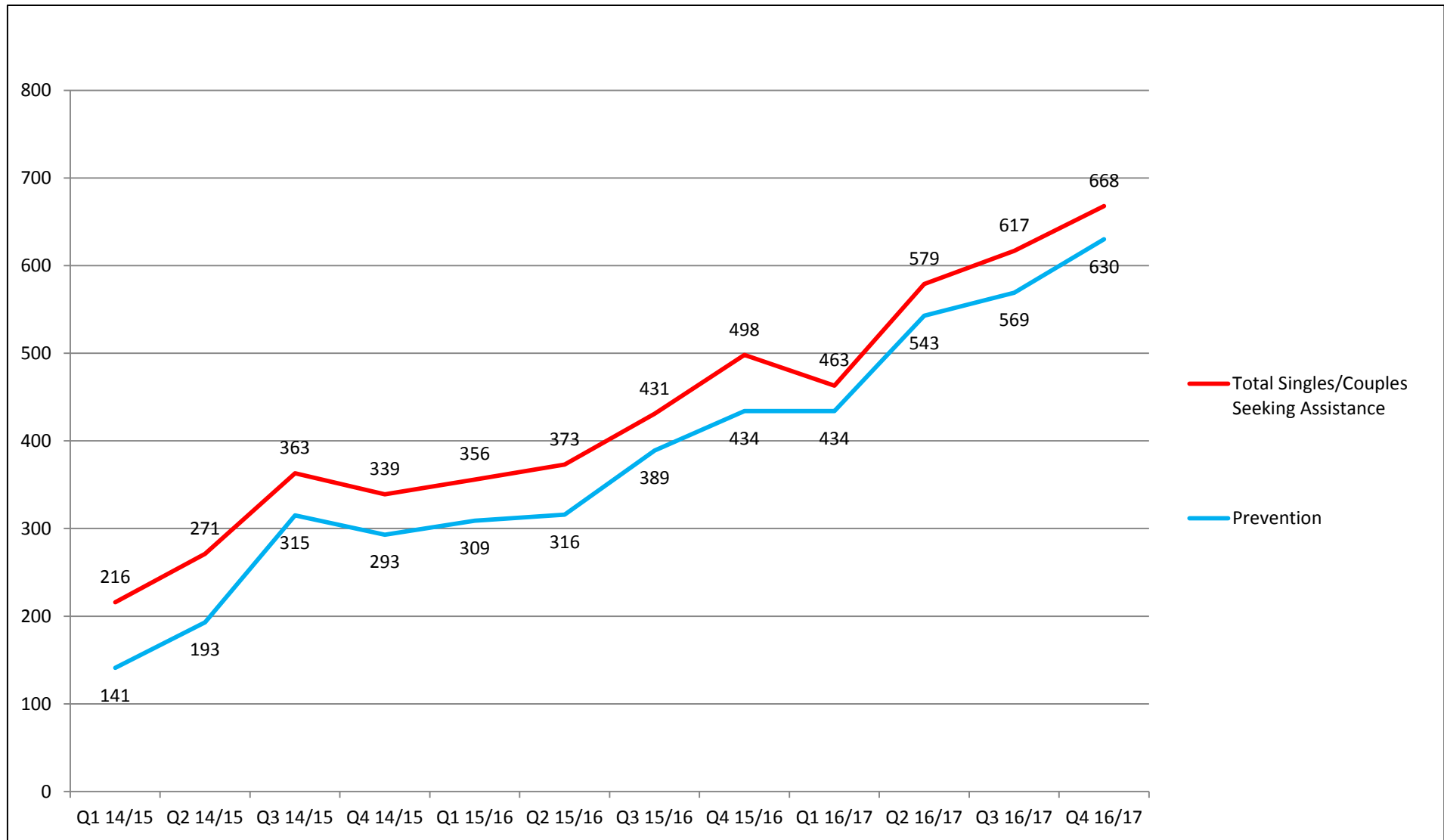


3.61 Bed & breakfast accommodation is only used when there is a statutory duty case and there is no other temporary accommodation available. The use for singles has reduced and the average length of stay has been reduced.

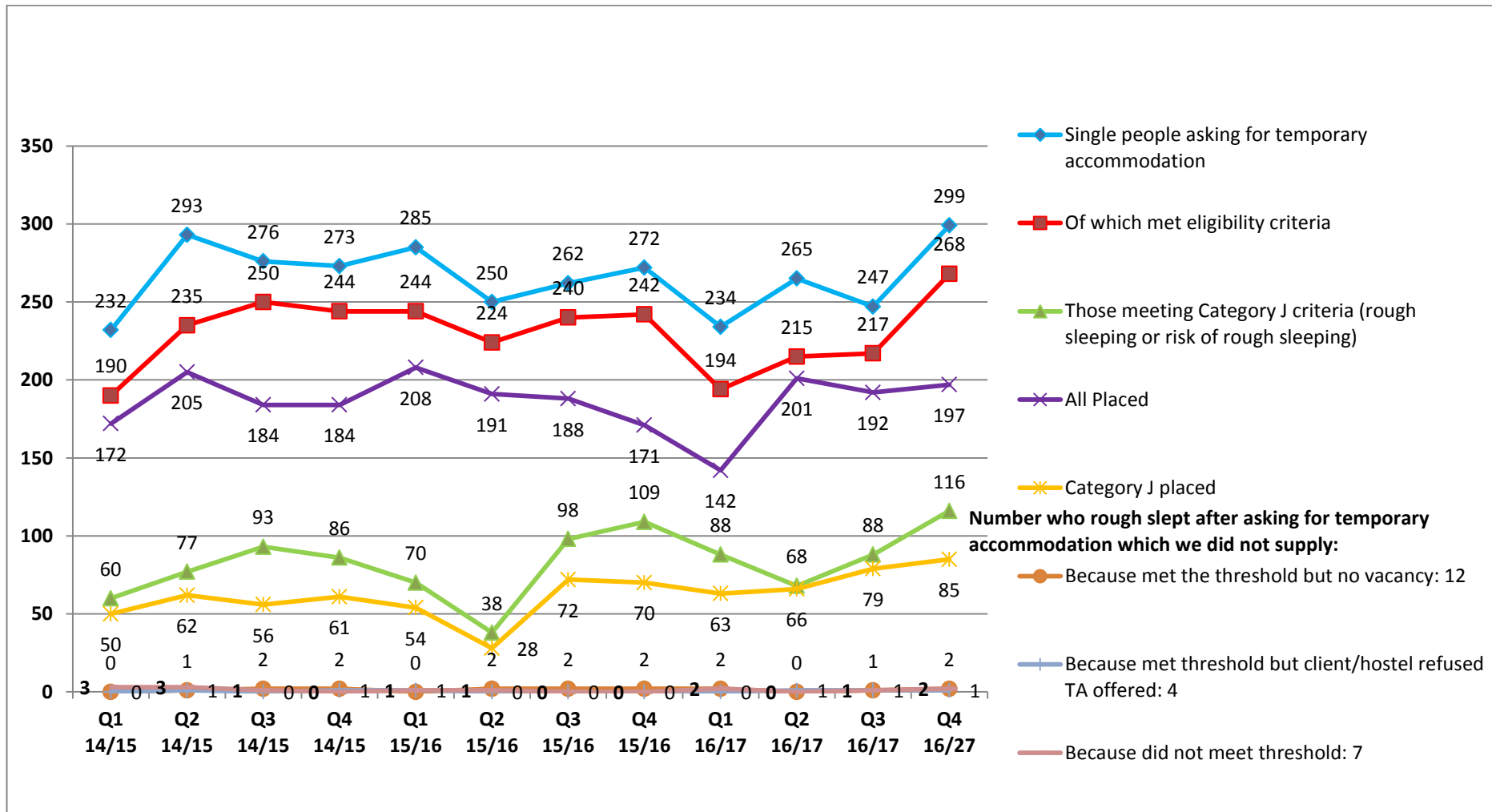
#### Bed and breakfast usage for singles & couples

	Number of singles accommodated (number of occasions)	Average length of stay
2014/15	50 (64)	10.1
2015/16	50 (59)	5.5
2016/17	10 (11)	2.9

Graph D: The number of singles & couples who came to housing options saying they faced homelessness



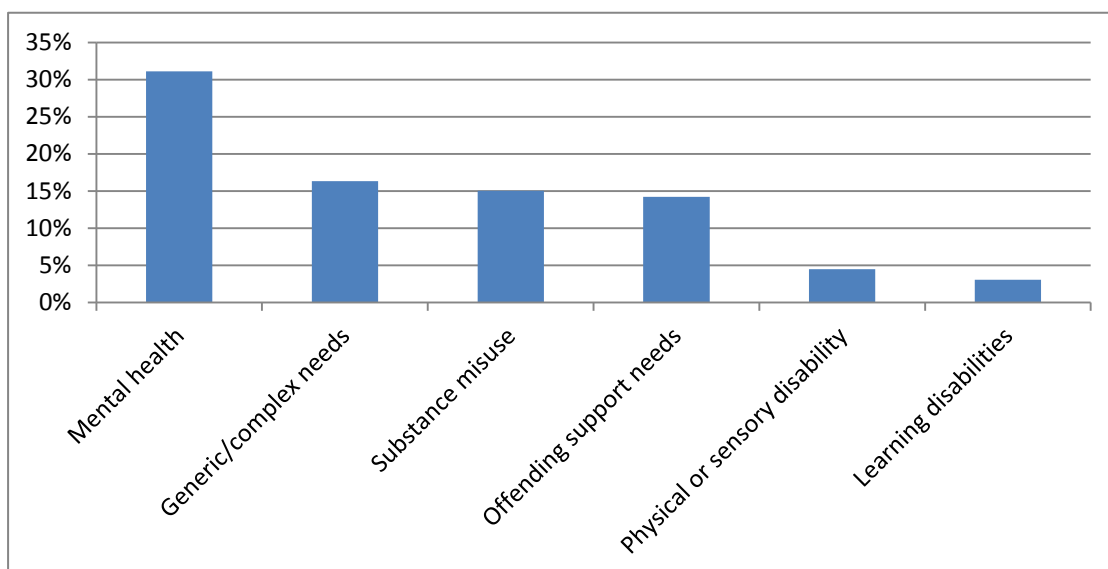
Graph E: Homeless singles & couples: Unique quarterly individual requests for temporary accommodation over the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017<sup>13</sup>



<sup>13</sup> Single Access and Referral team data. This shows the 'best' placement outcome for each individual in a quarter

### Complex cases

3.62 Based on client records of those receiving commissioned homelessness services during 2016/17<sup>14</sup> the main recorded support needs of clients (other than housing related with support needs) were:



Over 30% of clients have mental health support needs and over 15% have many/complex needs.

3.63 To help with complex cases the council and its partners hold multi-disciplinary team (MDT) meetings to discuss complex cases and identify solutions to resolving any outstanding issues.

3.64 Also the council's homelessness services have been working with other council services to identify individuals facing multiple problems that have had contact with many services and have multiple needs. 10 individuals who had the most contact with council services have been identified and currently work is underway to capture more information about these individual so individual support plans can be developed. This initiative will be reviewed to ensure wider lessons are learnt and any positive practice can be adopted.

3.65 Homelessness is not just a housing issue, but often involves a variety of other complex and overlapping factors. Clients often have a variety of needs and improving outcomes for homeless people requires services to work together to address these. Multi-agency work takes place between housing services, health services, mental health services, adult social care, children's services the police, criminal justice services and employment services to support vulnerable clients.

<sup>14</sup> LCC Contracts & Assurance client record returns 2016/17 primary and secondary support needs . Only Q1 info available for LCC services

### Repeat homelessness

- 3.66 1,926 unique individuals were placed in temporary accommodation over a three-year period (2014/15 to 2016/17) out of which 900 had previously been in temporary accommodation more than once within the last 3 years (47%). 110 unique individuals had been in temporary accommodation 4 or more times in the last 3 years.
- 3.67 Prior to adopting the new homelessness strategy in 2013 it was identified that 37% of single people who came into council hostels had experienced at least two previous stays in hostel accommodation. We have monitored unique individuals placed in commissioned temporary accommodation and the percentage of those that were previously in temporary accommodation within the last two years. During 2014/15 this was 36% (222/621), 2015/16 this was 32% (226/698) and in 2016/17 43% (272/638). This may have increased as our records become more complete (as previously we only had a record of whether individuals had been in council temporary accommodation).
- 3.68 The council monitors multiple repeat homeless through its repeat homeless list. This approach was developed in November 2012. Individuals are included on this list when an individual meets one of the following criteria:
- Returner or stock rough sleeper
  - Have had four or more admissions into commissioned homelessness services in the last two years
  - Singles and couples who have been in commissioned homelessness services for 12 months
- 3.69 The Revolving Door team endeavours to provide support to individuals on this list. As of September 2015, the capacity of the Revolving Door team was increased allowing them to work with more cases.

	New cases	Closed cases	Total number on list at end of year
2012/13			118
2013/14	53	102	69
2014/15	56	73	52
2015/16	51	81	38
2016/17	145	93	28
<b>Total</b>	<b>305</b>	<b>349</b>	

- 3.70 In 57% of all repeat homeless list closed cases positive move-on has been achieved. This means a successful housing solution has been found. These include; independent tenancies, residential care or residential rehabilitation, adult social care supported living, long-term supported housing, returned to family / partner or reconnected.
- 3.71 The percentage of clients who are eligible for temporary accommodation who have been in temporary accommodation 4 or more times in the last 2 years is slowly reducing. This shows that the repeat homeless list approach, with

support available from the Revolving Door team, is reducing the amount of individuals with 4 or more re-admissions to temporary accommodation.

	2014/15	2014/15 to 2015/16	2014/15 to 2016/17
% of all unique individuals, eligible for TA who been in TA 4 or more times in last 2 years	7%	6%	5%
Increase in number of unique individuals from previous year	48	40	22

- 3.72 Although progress has been made with reducing individuals with a high number of admissions re-entering homelessness services there are still significant challenges in further reducing all repeat homelessness.

#### Services for singles & couples

- 3.73 There are generic services available for singles as well as specialist accommodation for young people and offenders. These services are detailed below.
- 3.74 *Housing Division commissioned accommodation based housing related support for singles*

The last strategy proposed to commission a total of 177 units of accommodation for singles. Action Homeless were commissioned to provide 45 units of accommodation for singles and Leicester City Council were to provide a further 44 units via the Dawn Centre and 90 units of supported and shared housing. Following the interim service and spending review in 2016, in the light of the proposed changes to supported housing funding, 60 units of LCC supported and shared housing were re-provisioned as general needs housing. Other LCC units of supported / shared housing for homeless singles are to be re-provisioned as supported living for those with Adult Social Care needs. Generally, Leicester City Council supported and shared housing was used for singles requiring low-medium support after a period in the Dawn Centre. The pathway will now be to offer independent accommodation with floating support services, where this is required. This change will have been completed by 30<sup>th</sup> June 2017.

- 3.75 *Other accommodation services (non-commissioned)*

Nottingham Community Housing Association's Heathfield House provides 24 fully furnished one bedroom flats for homeless adults aged 25+ who have low to medium support needs and can live independently.

Community of Grace Hunters Lodge has 16 bedrooms with shared bathrooms and offer long term support to men who have been homeless or socially isolated. This accommodation is open to people from the UK, EU and non-EU nationals and failed asylum seekers and refugees.

Home Group's (Stonham) Leicester Housing Management Service provides an accommodation based service that caters for the needs of individuals at risk of homelessness, who are homeless or in emergency need of accommodation. They provide single occupancy rooms in a two-bedroomed terrace house, a three-bedroomed house and a seven-bedroom shared property.

Action Homeless's Accommodation Assist has 36 units of accommodation providing a range of temporary accommodation solutions. This consists of shared houses, bedsits, and one and two bedroomed flats across the city. Action Homeless also runs a project 'Action on Empty Homes' where they have renovated a number of empty properties which are offered as longer term housing solutions to people leaving homelessness services. These properties are known as Accommodation Plus and there are currently 55 units of this accommodation.

One Roof Leicester have provided bed & breakfast accommodation on occasion (since December 2014 they have accommodated 72 people totalling 338 nights) and 'compassionate beds' for vulnerable individuals on nil income (since April 2015 they have accommodated 20 people totalling 1,957 nights).

### 3.76 *Housing Division commissioned floating support services*

The last strategy proposed to commission an additional 353 units of generic floating support however 259 units of floating support were utilised. Leicester City Council's floating support services provided:

- Revolving Door – 60 units
- Private Sector STAR – 60 units
- Council tenant STAR – average 35 new cases a month

P3 were commissioned to provide a total of 188 units of floating support. As this was a proposed increase in service, initially 94 units were brought into use to ensure there was demand for services before 'calling-off' any further units.

Generic floating support is support that is available for singles, couples, young people and families where there is a risk of homelessness or the customer has just been re-housed after a period of homelessness.

The Revolving Door team was established to work with all individuals who have been in hostels four or more times in the last two years; in September 2015, this was changed to two or more time in the last two years, or individuals who repeatedly sleep rough as well as those people who have been in temporary accommodation for more than 12 months are assessed by the Revolving Door team. The Revolving Door team will then actively work with cases where it is assessed that they can 'add value'.

During 2015 the Private Sector STAR service was incorporated into the Revolving Door team to provide additional support to tackle repeat homelessness and private sector cases were then referred to P3 who had



capacity to take on additional cases. The Revolving Door team now provides 132 units of floating support.

### Commissioned service performance

- 3.77 Over 3 years the commissioned generic singles accommodation has received the following number of referrals:

<b>LCC - Singles</b>	2014/15		2015/16		2016/17 <sup>15</sup>	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Acceptances	339	83%	370	85%	402	81%
Provider refused	24	6%	23	5%	25	5%
Service user refused	45	11%	40	9%	67	14%
<b>Total</b>	<b>408</b>		<b>433</b>		<b>494</b>	

<b>Action Homeless</b>	2014/15		2015/16		2016/17 <sup>15</sup>	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Acceptances	198	75%	209	82%	193	72%
Provider refused	45	17%	21	8%	33	12%
Service user refused	21	8%	26	10%	41	15%
<b>Total</b>	<b>264</b>		<b>256</b>		<b>267</b>	

- 3.78 Over the past 3-years generic accommodation for singles has been at an average of 97% occupancy. There have been some nights when there have been no beds available in the generic singles accommodation, although there have been other nights when there have been more than 5 beds available. The increase in 'beds not used' in council temporary accommodation in the last quarter is because of the staged closure of LCC supported & shared housing as agreed in the interim spending review decision.
- 3.79 The aim was that individuals would stay in temporary accommodation for a maximum of 4 months. More single people stay in temporary accommodation for a longer period than families and in a significant number of cases longer than 4 months. Of all leavers in 2016/17 the average length of stay in Action Homeless accommodation was 95 days, of which 67% stayed for up to 4 months. In LCC accommodation for singles the average length of stay was 111 days, of which 63% stayed for up to 4 months. The longer length of stay reflects the complex needs of many individuals in temporary accommodation services and difficulties with pathways into settled accommodation.

Leicester City Council data also includes supported & shared accommodation which from June 2017 will no longer be used for homeless people. Evictions as a percentage of ceased stays (quarterly) have been decreasing in both providers over the 3-year period. The quarterly average was 15% in LCC accommodation and 22% in Action Homeless accommodation.

- 3.80 Commissioned providers are also monitored on how many people achieve independent living (this measures the number of service users who have moved on from supported accommodation in a planned way). This is

<sup>15</sup> Provisional SAR data for quarters 3 & 4 2016/17

measured quarterly and varies over the 3-year period. In Action Homeless Accommodation this has varied between 50-68% and in Leicester City Council Accommodation between 58-74%. This is well below the levels in family accommodation and again reflects the complex needs of many single homeless people. All accommodation providers are required to develop and agree a support plan, including plans for moving-on into settled accommodation with the customer within 7 days of entry into temporary accommodation.

- 3.81 Commissioned providers provide data on the support needs of the service users they provide support to. This records the primary support needs of the client and main secondary support needs in 2016/17. Data for Leicester City Council is only available for quarter 1. This shows that 97% of clients in LCC singles accommodation had a recorded primary need of being homeless with support needs. 15% had no recorded secondary support needs and 16% had a secondary support need of 'rough sleeper'.

The client needs data for Action Homeless singles shows much more varied recorded primary support needs. With a total of 27% showing a housing related support need (26% 'rough sleeper' & 1% single homeless with support needs). 15% had a housing-related secondary support need and 15% had no recorded secondary support need. This would indicate a difference on how this data is recorded between the two providers.

3.82 **Key points relating to singles and couple's homelessness:**

- Increasing numbers of singles and couples seeking assistance
- Increased preventions likely to be further strengthened by the implementation of Homelessness Reduction Act
- Repeat homelessness has been reducing however a significant number of individuals have repeat admissions. We need to strengthen services to improve sustained outcomes and reduce abandonment / disengagement. For example; by ensuring support plans follow individuals through breaks in service
- Preventing homelessness is not just about housing. Many homeless people have complex needs which require a multi-disciplinary approach. We will continue to work with others and seek to forge strong working relationships with a range of services / organisations including physical and mental health services, social care services, criminal justice organisations, employment and advice services.

Floating support services

- 3.83 As newly commissioned floating support services, NACRO & P3, took a time to get up to full utilisation. All floating support services apart from P3 in the second and third year of the contract have been at or over their specified capacity. The aim was for there to be transition of support between temporary accommodation and floating support however these have not always been made or done in a timely fashion. This has led to, on some occasions, delays in referrals. Meaning that when the floating support service receives the referral and they make contact with the individual, the individual feels they no

longer require support. There have also been limited referrals from housing options to floating support services to provide support to those at risk of homelessness.

Floating support services utilisation (placement days provided as % of capacity) average per year

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Private Sector STAR	108	N/A	N/A
Revolving Door	93	100	101
NACRO (specialist offender support)	91	103	104
P3	58	79	83

- 3.84 The aim of floating support services is to provide short-term support to enable people to establish and maintain independent living. All service providers achieved this in at least an average of 90% of cases.

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Private Sector STAR	99	N/A	N/A
Revolving Door	98	95	97
NACRO (specialist offender support)	100	100	100
P3	95	90	94

- 3.85 When commissioned it was expected the average length of support would be no more than 6 months. This is not the case for the Revolving Door team who will provide longer-term support to entrenched homeless / very complex need clients. Based on closed cases during 2016/17 the average length of support was 525 days for the Revolving Door service (in 12% of cases support lasted up to 6 months), 190 days for NACRO (in 46% of cases support lasted for up to 6 months) and 166 days for P3 (in 58% of cases support lasted for up to 6 months).

- 3.86 Commissioned providers provide data on the support needs of the service users they provide support to. This records the primary support needs of the client and main secondary support needs in 2016/17. Data for Leicester City Council is only available for quarter 1. This shows that 55% of clients receiving support from the LCC Revolving Door team had a recorded primary need of being homeless with support needs whereas clients receiving support from P3 had a primary need of being homeless with support needs in 25% of cases. NACRO had no client primary or secondary needs recorded as housing related.

- 3.87 Housing related-support for council tenants is provided by the STAR service whose performance is monitored by the below measures:

Performance measure	2015/16				2016/17			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Total number of vulnerable tenants supported to maintain their tenancy	567	597	576	562	520	557	579	612
Number of tenants from temporary accommodation supported to sustain their tenancy	60	91	93	81	88	73	66	82

**3.88 Key points relating to floating support services:**

- Floating support services are effective to help individuals sustain their tenancies they are of key importance at the point of transition from temporary accommodation to settled accommodation. We need to improve processes to ensure support is available in a timely fashion when individuals are moving-on from temporary accommodation
- There could be a targeted use of floating support services to provide more intensive support to individuals approaching housing options to prevent homelessness
- Floating support services were commissioned to provide support, on average for no more than 6 months, in a significant amount of cases the length of support provided is longer than 6 months
- The revolving door service was developed in response to the issue of repeat homelessness. Repeat homelessness remains a key issue and ensuring holistic support is available to prevent homelessness from reoccurring is essential
- We need to review the eligibility criteria for floating support services to ensure they are available for those who most require them, and at a time that these services are needed

### Young People

- 3.89 Local authorities (housing and children's services) have statutory duties to provide support, including support with housing, to some groups of young people including young people aged 16 to 17, care leavers aged 18 to 20 (or until 24 for care leavers studying full time), and people considered vulnerable because they've been in care, the armed forces or prison, or because they've experienced violence, or the threat of violence. The number of children in care has been increasing (April 2016; 627 – March 2017; 659). The number of children in care living independently (and therefore more likely to require help with housing) has also increased (April 2016; 16 – March 2017; 31).
- 3.90 An Ofsted inspection of Leicester City Council's Children's Services in 2015 highlighted the need for children's services and housing to work in partnership to manage the needs of homeless 16/17 year olds and to ensure that joint assessments are completed to ensure a holistic assessment; this is underpinned by case law from the Southwark judgement.
- 3.91 Housing services have a joint working protocol with children's services. Arrangements include a single point of contact for any urgent cases that may

arise and joint assessments for all homeless 16/17 year olds. In 2014/15 there were 52 joint assessments, in 2015/16 there were 60 and in 2016/17 there were 53. Our allocations policy also recognises the need for the prioritisation of cases to primarily safeguard and protect the needs of the most vulnerable children. In band 1 for example there are two categories, one specifically for the needs of those leaving care and one for referred case (from Director to Director) that need very urgent consideration. In 2014 19 individuals received band 1 priority because they were leaving care, in 2015 this was 38 and in 2016 this was 41. Children's services make referrals to the single access and referral point for temporary accommodation; they also spot purchase other accommodation in the city.

- 3.92 During 2015/16 there were 422 customers aged 16-24 who came to housing options because they were homeless or at risk of homeless in 2016/17 there were 403.
- 3.93 Of 2,598 unique individuals (singles & couples) requesting temporary accommodation from housing options between 2014/15 and 2016/17, 818 individuals were aged 16-24 (31%). 98 individuals were considered eligible for temporary accommodation because they were 'children leaving care' and 202 16-24 year olds were considered eligible for temporary accommodation because they were a 'vulnerable adult'. Of current commissioned homeless temporary accommodation for singles & couples (194 units) 44% are designated for young people (85 units).
- 3.94 Singles private renters under the age of 35 are usually only entitled to housing benefit at shared accommodation rates. These rates will apply to social rented tenants (who signed their tenancy after April 2016) from April 2019. This has a large impact on young people. As at 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2017 there were 1,517 single people aged under 35 on the housing register. There is limited shared housing availability and as a landlord Leicester City Council does not have any general needs shared accommodation.
- 3.95 From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 it is planned that 18 to 21 year olds will no longer be entitled to the housing cost element of universal credit, unless they can prove they meet an exemption. Exemptions are included for victims of domestic violence, care leavers and young parents. It also includes those whom "in the opinion of the Secretary of State it is inappropriate...to live with each of their parents." We also believe it is the government's intention to exempt move-on from homeless temporary accommodation therefore we do not think this will have significant effect on the young people seeking assistance from housing options, but we will have to await the governments guidance document for clarity on what this includes and how these exemptions will be administered. This change will affect claimants on universal credit full service. In Leicester, full service is planned to go live in March 2018. Therefore, in Leicester there would be an effect on 18-21 years making new claims from March 2018. Existing claimants will not be affected until there is a break in their claim.

## Services for young people

### 3.96 *Housing Division commissioned accommodation based housing related support*

The last strategy proposed to commission a total of 85 units of accommodation for young people and 10 units of accommodation for teenage parents. The total number of units commissioned considered the assessed need of children's services for this type of accommodation based support, at the time of commissioning. Leicester YMCA were commissioned to provide the units of accommodation for young people and East Midlands Housing Association (The GAP project) were commissioned to provide the units of accommodation for teenage parents. Following a further review in June 2015 the units of accommodation for teenage parents were decommissioned.

### 3.97 *Other accommodation services (non-commissioned)*

HITS Home Trust provides 15 self-contained flats that are fully furnished for young people aged between 16 and 25.

Park Lodge Project provides 31 units of supported accommodation for young people aged 16-25. There are 11 rooms for young people who require high levels of support and 12 rooms in four 'outer houses' as a first stage move on properties. There are also 8 self-contained flats that support young care leavers who require support before moving on to independent living.

Leicester YMCA also accepts direct referrals to their shared houses for young people who have low support needs who are in education, employment or training. They have 23 units of accommodation that are not commissioned.

### 3.98 *Other services*

Ambition East Midlands is a partnership between P3, YMCA Derbyshire and The Y, who are leading on the project in Leicester and Leicestershire. It is an innovative 'housing first' support project focussing on homeless young adults who are unable to access existing services and are not in education, employment or training.

Launched in January 2015 and planned to run until the end of 2017, this three-year project ensures vulnerable 18-24 year olds have a secure home from which to build their aspirations for employment and learning. Each young adult referred to Ambition has a dedicated link worker who will provide intensive, personalised support that begins by helping them find a stable place to live. They are then supported to sustain their tenancy and develop the skills and confidence to enter employment, education, training or volunteering. They also get help with wider life issues such as budgeting, health, offending, drug and alcohol addiction or relationships.

In the first-year the service housed 81 young people. Forty of these have sustained accommodation for three months to date, and nineteen have

sustained their accommodation for six months to date. Thirteen young people are now in education, eight are in employment and six are doing voluntary work. The service is also working with Business in The Community to provide six weeks' worth of employment training, which includes work placements and mentoring.

### Commissioned service performance

- 3.99 Over 3 years the commissioned young person's accommodation has received the following number of referrals:

	2014/15		2015/16		2016/17 <sup>16</sup>	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Acceptances	172	74%	175	78%	174	78%
Provider refused	35	15%	27	12%	24	11%
Service user refused	25	11%	21	9%	25	11%
<b>Total</b>	<b>232</b>		<b>223</b>		<b>223</b>	

- 3.100 YMCA is currently the sole provider of commissioned young person's accommodation. On occasions this can cause issues with placements, for example because of dynamics between individuals, or if individual has been excluded as there is no other service provider. Where possible, the YMCA will look to resolve individual issues e.g. by placing individuals at different sites they have available, however this can be difficult depending on their support needs.
- 3.101 In the first 2 years of this service occupancy rates have been at 95% however in 2016/17 occupancy rates reduced to 90% and both the beds out of service and beds not used rates rose.
- 3.102 When commissioning services for younger people it was recognised this group often requires a longer stay in temporary accommodation. For example, because of the difficulties in securing independent accommodation for 16/17 year olds. In around half of cases young people are staying in temporary accommodation for more than 4 months. Of all leavers in 2016/17 the average length of stay in YMCA accommodation was 168 days, of which 51% stayed for up to 4 months, 87% of cases stayed up to a year and 13% of cases stayed over a year. The percentage of evictions against ceased stays has varied from a low of 8% in 2105/16 to a high of 13% in 2016/17. Eviction rates are lower compared with generic singles accommodation.
- 3.103 Commissioned providers are also monitored on how many people achieve independent living (this measures the number of service users who have moved on from supported accommodation in a planned way). On a quarterly basis, this has varied over the 3 years between 66% and 89%. Again, this is higher when compared with the generic single accommodation.
- 3.104 Commissioned providers provide data on the support needs of the service users they provide support to. This records the primary support needs of the

<sup>16</sup> Provisional SAR data for quarters 3 & 4 2016/17

client and main secondary support needs in 2016/17. This shows that 89% of clients in young person's accommodation had a recorded primary need of being homeless with support needs. 13% had no recorded secondary support needs. The top three recorded secondary support needs were; mental health (24%), young people at risk (17%) and no secondary support need (13%).

**3.105 Key points relating to homeless young people:**

- Welfare changes affecting younger people has, and will continue to limit the affordable housing options available
- Preventing homelessness, and if young people become homeless preventing this from reoccurring helps break the cycle of repeat homelessness
- There are opportunities to further develop joint commissioning arrangements between housing and children's services
- The average length of stay in young person's accommodation is generally longer than other accommodation providers. This reflects the needs of this client group

**Offenders / ex-offenders**

3.106 The council has statutory duties for re-housing ex-prisoners that are 'vulnerable' as a result of serving a custodial sentence or being on remand. The local probation service, community rehabilitation company and the housing division also work under a duty to cooperate to ensure those that may be homeless and at risk of reoffending can access homeless services with the aim of reducing reoffending. This is supported by a protocol. This includes working with the Multi Agency Public Protection Agency (MAPPA) which ensures cases that are deemed as high risk in relation to public protection are managed appropriately and accommodation needs are prioritised where required.

3.107 From June 2014 responsibility for delivery of probation services moved from probation trusts to community rehabilitation companies (CRCs) and the national probation service (NPS). CRCs are responsible for managing offenders who pose a low or medium risk of serious harm and the NPS is responsible for managing offenders who pose a high risk of serious harm and those who have committed the most serious offences. There needs to be a review of current pathways, including referral and placement arrangements for specialist housing related support for offenders to ensure we prioritise higher need clients.

3.108 We also need to review homelessness prevention for offenders including people on remand. The Homelessness Reduction Act will introduce a new duty on public services, including criminal justice system services, to notify local authorities if they come into contact with people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.



Services for offenders / ex-offenders

3.109 *Housing Division commissioned accommodation based housing related support*

The last strategy proposed to commission a total of 30 units of temporary accommodation. Following the interim service and spending review in 2016 it was proposed to reduce the commissioned units to a total of 20 units. This reduction was effective from April 2017. Adullum Homes Housing Association's Norman House provides 10 units and another 10 units are provided at Home Group's (Stonham) Bradgate House. All these units are to provide medium-high support, previously there was a mix of medium-high support and low support.

3.110 *Other accommodation services (non-commissioned)*

NACRO Homes Agency have 51 units of accommodation (a mix of single units and shared houses) in Leicester and many clients supported have had an offending history or at risk of offending.

3.111 *Housing Division commissioned floating support services*

The last strategy proposed to commission 42 units of specialist floating support. NACRO were commissioned to provide this floating support service. Following the interim service and spending review in 2016 this contract was ceased from March 2017 and from this point all floating support was provided by the 'generic' floating support providers.

Commissioned service performance

3.112 Over 3 years the commissioned offender accommodation has received the following number of referrals:

<b>Norman House</b>	2014/15		2015/16		2016/17 <sup>17</sup>	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Acceptances	22	92%	33	75%	22	85%
Provider refused	0	0%	4	9%	4	15%
Service user refused	2	8%	7	16%	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>		<b>44</b>		<b>26</b>	

<b>Bradgate House</b>	2014/15		2015/16		2016/17 <sup>18</sup>	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Acceptances	19	86%	29	73%	31	84%
Provider refused	0	0%	4	10%	4	11%
Service user refused	3	14%	7	18%	2	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>		<b>40</b>		<b>37</b>	

<sup>17</sup> Provisional SAR data for quarters 3 & 4 2016/17

<sup>18</sup> Provisional SAR data for quarters 3 & 4 2016/17

Beacon Hill House	2014/15		2015/16		2016/17 <sup>18</sup>	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Acceptances	18	62%	19	50%	22	73%
Provider refused	0	0%	9	24%	4	13%
Service user refused	11	38%	10	26%	4	13%
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>		<b>38</b>		<b>30</b>	

- 3.113 Generally the temporary accommodation for offenders is full or very close to fully occupied. The accommodation providers have worked closely with the Probation Service & the CRC to ensure vacancies are managed.
- 3.114 When temporary accommodation services for offenders / ex-offenders were commissioned the aim for average length of stay was 4 months. The length of stay varies but is longer than in generic accommodation for singles. Of all leavers in 2016/17 the average length of stay in Norman House accommodation was 197 days, of which 33% stayed for up to 4 months. This is the longest average length of stay of all accommodation providers. The average length of stay in Beacon Hill House accommodation was 106 days, of which 63% stayed for up to 4 months and the average length of stay in Bradgate House accommodation was 129 days, of which 53% stayed for up to 4 months.
- 3.115 Commissioned providers are also monitored quarterly on how many people achieve independent living (this measures the number of service users who have moved on from supported accommodation in a planned way). This type of accommodation has the biggest variation in the number of planned moves (from 20% to 100% across providers from quarter to quarter) The average, over 3 years, of how many people achieved independent living was 53.3% at Norman House, 71.8% at Bradgate House & 82.3% at Beacon Hill House. This is probably because of the small number of people accommodated and the client group who may be recalled to prison.
- 3.116 Commissioned providers provide data on the support needs of the service users they provide support to. This records the primary support needs of the client and main secondary support needs in 2016/17. This shows that 57% of client's accommodation at Norman House had a recorded primary need of being homeless with support needs, clients being accommodation at Bradgate House had a primary need of being homeless with support needs in 19% of cases, whilst Beacon Hill House had 0% of clients with a recorded primary need of being single homeless with support needs. As a recorded secondary need, single homeless with support needs was recorded in 21% of cases at Norman House, 86 % of cases of Beacon Hill House & 39% of cases at Bradgate House.
- 3.117 **Key points relating to homeless offenders / ex-offenders:**
- Ensuring best use of limited offender provision to prioritise higher need clients (from offending and housing perspectives)
  - Work with NPS and CRC to identify appropriate and relevant pathways (including all services available not just commissioned housing accommodation services) for known homeless offenders

- Working with accommodation providers to understand the variation in length of stay and any barriers for move-on
- Working earlier, in line with Homelessness Reduction Act, to prevent homelessness. Consider opportunities for partnership working e.g. working with Leicester prison’s ‘through the gate’ team and a specialist housing prevention officer working with CRC & NPS

### Health & wellbeing and homelessness

- 3.118 Good housing helps people stay healthy, and provides a base from which to sustain a job, contribute to the community, and achieve a decent quality of life. Safe and suitable housing also aids recovery from periods of ill-health, and enables people to better manage their health and care needs<sup>19</sup>.
- 3.119 Homelessness has a detrimental impact on physical and mental health, also ill health can put some households at greater risk of housing need and can be a trigger of homelessness.
- 3.120 A primary health care needs assessment of homeless people in Leicester was undertaken in June 2016<sup>20</sup> this considered the health and health care requirements for homeless people. This found:  
Of clients registered with the specialist general practice provision for homeless people in Leicester are predominantly male aged between 20-59 and 75% of from white / white British ethnic backgrounds.
- Homeless clients have higher levels of co-occurring diseases
  - A higher proportion of homeless patients have a long-standing health condition
  - Prevalence’s of cancer, diabetes, renal and cardiovascular disease are lower, and the prevalence’s of mental illness, respiratory disease and epilepsy is higher
  - Accident & Emergency attendance rates are higher (approximately 11 times that of that of Leicester City CCG)
- 3.121 During 2016/17 of all clients using housing funded homelessness services 37.3% of clients indicated that they had mental health issues and 34.9% indicated that they have drug and alcohol problems. The table below breaks this down into the different type of homelessness services funded by the council’s housing division. Nationally research indicates that 17% of the adult population experience mental ill health at any one time indicating that mental ill health is more prevalent for people experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness.

Type of homeless	% clients recorded as	% clients recorded as
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<sup>19</sup> Preventing homelessness to improve health and wellbeing. Public Health England and Homeless Link. July 2015

<sup>20</sup> Rapid Health Care Needs Assessment of Homeless People in Leicester. June 2016. Leicester City Clinical Commissioning Group & Leicester City Council <http://www.leicester.gov.uk/media/181923/homelessness-jspna.pdf>

service	having mental health issue	having a substance use problem
Accommodation based service	38.1%	44.8%
Floating support service	46.6%	28.9%
Day centre	33.6%	28.6%

3.122 The support and outcomes of support received whilst clients are receiving housing funded homelessness services are recorded. The following table shows the health and wellbeing support needed and whether the client thought this outcome had been achieved:

Short term outcome	Support needed	Outcome achieved
Better managing physical health	35%	83%
Better managing mental health	47%	71%
Better managing substance misuse issues	36%	50%
Better managing self-harm	10%	78%
Avoiding causing harm to others	16%	80%
Minimising harm / risk of harm from others	14%	69%
Developing confidence and ability to have greater choice and / or control and / or involvement	48%	81%

3.123 As part of the end street homelessness campaign (November 2017) 91 surveys were completed by homeless people in the city this included some questions about health. These surveys showed:

- 26% of respondents reported long-term physical health issues
- 19% said that their physical disability would limit the type of housing they could access or would make it difficult to live independently because they would need help
- 55% when feeling sick or unwell would avoid asking for help
- 15% thought it would be difficult to stay housed, or to afford housing because of drinking or drug use
- 28% felt their mental health issue/s would make it hard for them to live independently
- 26% responded that they were not taking medication that they ought to be

#### Health & wellbeing services

3.124 Health care services for homeless people including primary health care, mental health, drug and alcohol services are commissioned by Public Health, Adult Social Care and clinical commissioning groups. We work in partnership with these services through the Homelessness Reference Group.

### 3.125 *Hospital Housing Enablement Service*

A housing enablement team (Lightbulb project) works with patients (from the Bradgate Mental Health Unit & University Hospitals Leicester) who are well enough to leave hospital but have no accommodation to return to or their current accommodation is no longer suitable to prevent any delayed transfer of care. The service offers patients an early assessment and offers options to resolve their housing issues and offers support with the transition from hospital to home.

### 3.126 *Primary care services & substance misuse services*

In Leicester, there is a specialist service to provide primary care for homeless people (primarily rough sleepers and singles in temporary accommodation). The current service is provided by Inclusion Healthcare, while based at Charles Berry House and the Dawn Centre, still retains links with hostels and other providers. This service provides a range of services including:

- Ophthalmic optician
- Access to a midwife
- Practice therapist for common mental health problems
- Health checks
- Specialist support for people with alcohol related difficulties
- Support for patients with substance misuse problems
- Outreach service (with the Outreach team) to encourage take-up of the flu-jab

### 3.127 *Homeless mental health service*

The Homeless mental health service offers engagement, mental health assessment and referral to mainstream mental health and support services. This service provides a daily 'drop-in' service at the Dawn Centre and offer appointments at other homeless hostels. This service offers:

- Mental health assessment
- Access to mainstream mental health services
- Supportive counselling
- Brief psychological therapies
- Direction to other support services

### 3.128 *Health visiting homeless families*

A specialist health visitor works with homeless families who monitors and promotes the physical and emotional health of mothers, babies and the general health of their families. They provide advice and support:

- General health
- Nutrition
- Behavioural difficulties
- Child development, including specialist developmental needs
- Postnatal depression and emotional wellbeing
- Domestic violence

- Social issues e.g. housing and finance
- Child protection

### 3.129 *Substance misuse recovery hub*

Since 2003 Inclusion Healthcare in partnership with the Probation Trust have operated a 'wet' day centre for street drinkers. This provided housing advice, pre-tenancy support, a weekly GP surgery, IT classes and a general activities programme as well as other practical support. From April 2018, the city council and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Leicester will fund a 'recovery hub' to provide a service for individuals with long standing and entrenched alcohol-related problems, targeting drinkers identified as 'treatment resistant' who due to lifestyle and complexity find it particularly difficult to engage with treatment services.

### 3.130 *Drug and alcohol services*

The council also funds Turning Point to provide drug and alcohol services who provide a range of services and support including:

- Group work sessions
- Recovery worker support
- Counselling
- Relapse prevention
- Peer mentors
- Substitute prescribing
- Mindfulness
- Harm reduction services
- Needle exchange

### 3.131 *Project LIGHT (Leicester Initiative Good Health Team)*

Project LIGHT is a partnership between the University of Leicester (UoL) and DMU along with the voluntary sector. It is a health and social care project, in which student and staff collaborate with the aim of delivering health promotion & harm reduction sessions to the homeless population of Leicester.

### 3.1329 **Key points relating to health & wellbeing services:**

- Enhance early advice / homelessness prevention advice within primary care setting and ensure referral links in place
- Nationally recognised and CQC highlighted outstanding care provided by Inclusion Healthcare
- The Lightbulb project seen as a 'best practice' example and cited as an example of integrated health, housing and social care services<sup>21</sup>
- Homelessness is not just a housing issue. We need to strengthen partnership working and forge strong working relationships with a range of services / organisations including physical and mental health

<sup>21</sup>[https://www.housinglin.org.uk/assets/Resources/Housing/Practice\\_examples/Housing\\_LIN\\_case\\_studies/H\\_LIN\\_CaseStudy\\_135\\_Lightbulb\\_Project.pdf](https://www.housinglin.org.uk/assets/Resources/Housing/Practice_examples/Housing_LIN_case_studies/H_LIN_CaseStudy_135_Lightbulb_Project.pdf)

services, social care services, criminal justice organisations, employment and advice services to provide wrap-around services as part of the homeless pathway

### **Other homelessness services in Leicester**

3.133 There are a range of other services for homeless people including day centres, befriending, employment services and places to eat.

#### Grant funded services

3.134 *Day centres (The Y Support Service and Centre Project)*

The Y Support service which is based within the Dawn Centre is grant funded to see up to 60 clients a day on a drop-in basis. For those people identified as needing support, but not receiving this from other agencies, the service will produce personal development plans with them. During 2015/16 the Y Support service worked with 67 people to develop such plans of which 67 cases resulted in greater independence for the client. They provide support to help maximise income, manage debt and help to establish contact with external groups and services, family and friends on behalf of the service user.

3.135 The Centre Project provides a range of social activities including food & drinks for vulnerable people, also parish nursing, counselling, practical support, computers and sign posting as well as support and advice. It is funded to deliver a day centre facility, providing a low threshold drop-in service which supports resettlement and tenancy sustainment, for hard-to-reach groups who experience loneliness and isolation.

3.136 Commissioned providers provide data on the support needs of the service users they provide support to. This records the primary support needs of the client and main secondary support needs in 2016/17. This shows that 79% of clients receiving support from the Y Support Service had a recorded housing related primary need (65% 'rough sleeper', 13% single homeless, & 1% family homeless). The Centre Project records show that 16% of their clients had a housing related primary need (14% 'rough sleeper' and 2% single homeless). 89% of the Centre Projects clients had no recorded secondary needs whereas the Y Support Services clients had 10% of clients recorded with no secondary support needs.

#### *Employment projects*

3.137 Leicester City Council previously grant funded Leicestershire Cares to provide a programme of employment support for those with a history or at risk of homelessness. The Council funding for this programme ended in 2016/17. The Council is working with JobCentre Plus to ensure there is effective employment support for homeless people.

3.138 Action Homeless manage a social business Action Trust. This offers cleaning, gardening and property maintenance services in Leicester. All of Action Trusts

employees and volunteers have personal experience of homelessness and receive training and practical support to help them secure ongoing employment.

#### *Befriending project*

3.139 In 2016/17 One Roof Leicester was provided with a one-off grant subsidy payment of £15,000 to enable the implementation of a befriending service with the purpose of addressing loneliness and isolation that can affect those who are homeless. As of March 2017, One Roof Leicester had trained 25 volunteer befrienders, of which 10 went on to become befrienders. There has been a total of 16 referrals as part of the befriending scheme.

#### Other services

3.140 The voluntary and community sector has an important role to play in preventing homelessness and supporting homeless people. These services are often provided by faith groups as free provision based on need.

3.141 NIEBO Project Central and Eastern European Support Service ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017 after their 5-year BIG Lottery funding ended. They provided advocacy, help and support to central and eastern European nationals with accommodation and employment.

3.142 There are a range of groups providing food and drinks; some provide other assistance and a place to meet and chat or creative activities:

- The Bridge, The Salvation Army
- Eat and Meet, St James The Greater Church
- The Full Gospel Mission Pentecostal Church
- Leicester Assistance, The City Retreat
- Midland Langar Seva Society
- New Testament Church of Good
- One Love Project, The City Retreat
- Open Hands Compassion Centre, Trinity Life Church
- Triangle Project, Holy Trinity Church
- Soundcafe, St Martins House

3.143 **Key points relating to other homelessness services:**

- Ensure day services are targeted to support homelessness prevention objectives
- Maximise employment & training opportunities through working with JobCentre Plus
- Homelessness is not just a housing issue. We need to strengthen partnership working and forge strong working relationships with a range of services / organisations including physical and mental health services, social care services, criminal justice organisations, employment and advice services to provide wrap-around services as part of the homeless pathway



## 4. Looking forward

### Consultation

4.1 As part of the review, consultation was carried out with service users and stakeholders between January to May 2017. This included:

- service user questionnaire & meeting with a service user group
- questionnaire for members of the public
- questionnaire for organisations / groups who provide or work in homelessness services
- workshops with the Homeless Reference Group

A summary of feedback gathered is shown below. A full report of consultation findings is available in a separate report. There were 222 responses to the questionnaires, a third were responses from service users (75), around half of responses were from members of the public (119) and rest of the responses were on behalf of organisations working in homelessness services or their staff / volunteers (28).

#### Questionnaires

4.2 The summary of feedback from the consultation is a short summary of the responses received – it does not summarise all the feedback received. The consultation was open for anyone to respond therefore there were a range of views and some will be more informed about what current services are currently available in the city.

All respondents were asked two questions, one about gaps in services and one about priorities. A very high proportion of all respondents felt there were gaps in current provision for homeless people or those at risk of homelessness. A summary of the responses received are shown below.

#### Summary of consultation responses (141)

##### **What are the gaps in current services and how might these gaps be addressed?**

- Help for people falling outside assistance criteria (e.g. those with recourse to public funds, those without a local connection, those not statutorily homeless i.e. single people)
- Lack of help for vulnerable groups whose needs are not met by general services (e.g. those with complex needs, mental health, substance use issues)
- Need for more affordable rented housing
- Lack of all year-round emergency bed accommodation and hostel spaces
- Addressing rough sleeping
- Need for out of hours / flexible services that meet the needs of homeless people
- Interagency / cross service working
- Identifying those most at risk of homelessness and the full extent of

homelessness in the city

- The need for advocacy and mentoring support
- Services available throughout the day for homeless people to reduce isolation and boredom
- Lack of supported housing (move-on accommodation) and support for people to help retain their homes
- The safety of street homeless people

Summary of consultation responses (197)

**What do you think should be the priorities for the next homelessness strategy?**

- Addressing rough sleeping
- Support being available to prevent homelessness and to help establish a settled home
- Sufficient emergency, hostel and supported accommodation available
- Homelessness services to be adequately funded
- Addressing rental housing shortages (social and private)
- Joined up working
- Service flexibility (access and service delivery)
- Assessing and reporting accurate levels of homelessness
- Improved access to and provision of advice / information
- Addressing the needs of vulnerable people
- Increased understanding of homelessness & ensuring homeless people are treated with respect and are safe
- Tackling repeat homelessness
- Address begging in the city centre

- 4.3 Service users were also asked about their views on services they had received and what could have been done better. Four fifths of service users (54) felt they had received the help they needed, at least sometimes, with more than half (35) saying that this had happened 'always / most times'.

**Service users views of what could be improved (60):**

- People's attitude and perception of homeless people and a perceived lack of care / support
- Improved support / information available, especially at an early point of contact to prevent homelessness

***"I felt judged and labelled"***

***"I had to spend 5 weeks living on the street in the freezing cold winter of 2015 before I had a roof over my head again. I have vulnerabilities that were classed as insufficient for requiring emergency housing support for adult social care."***

***“ (My) Homelessness declaration should have been dealt with before”***

- 4.4 People working for homelessness services were asked what they thought were the key successes in tackling homeless in Leicester since 2013 and what they thought the key challenges were now. Some respondents felt that, as since the last strategy there had been a number of closures of accommodation for homelessness people in Leicester they could be no successes. A summary of the responses are shown below.

Summary of consultation responses (28)

**Successes**

- The commitment of staff
- Increased work around prevention
- Work of charities, Outreach team, Revolving Door, floating support services, Inclusion Health, Action Homeless, One Roof, winter bed provision, Y Support day centre
- Introduction of the Single Access and Referral point
- Collaboration with other services (LCC and other agencies, partner agencies and faith groups). Examples given were – data sharing protocols between partners and the multi-agency / faith work to provide winter beds.
- The No Second Night Out pathway
- Development of Ambition East Midlands
- The management of transition in services following the last review
- Reduction in the use of bed & breakfast accommodation
- Support for Psychologically Informed Environments (PIE) training and reflective practice across services.
- One Roof’s directory of services
- Multi-Disciplinary Team meetings
- Strong links between organisations to support homeless health care and provide holistic care. Support for the psychology provision to homeless people helped maintain the service at current levels.

Summary of consultation responses

**Challenges**

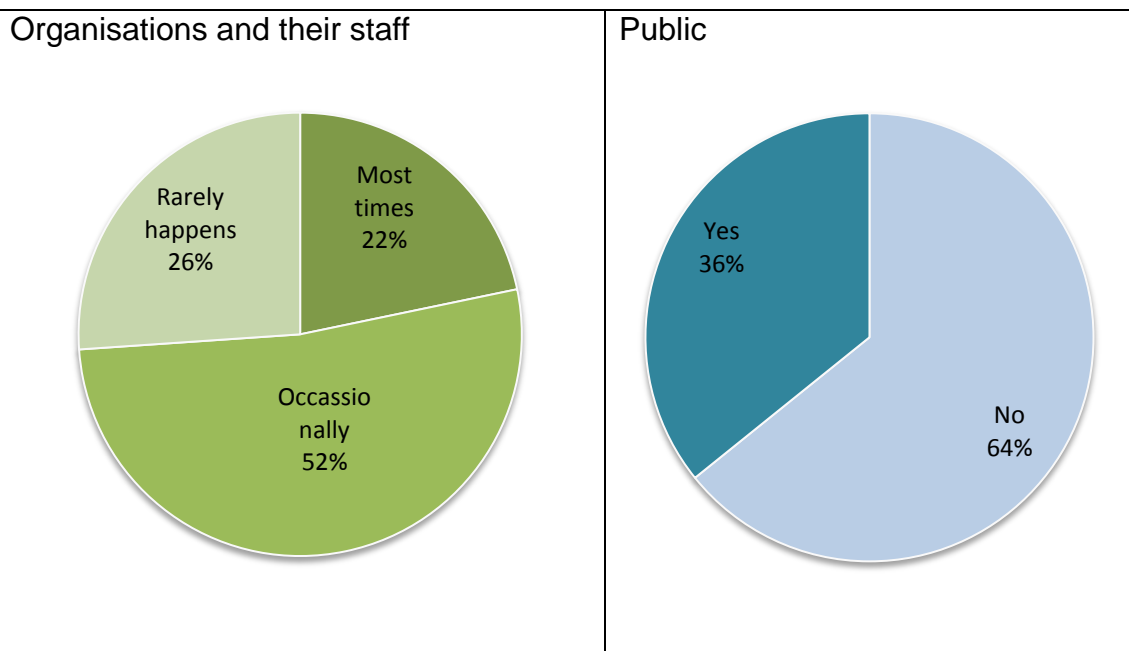
- Addressing current and rising levels of homelessness and rough sleeping
- Shortage in appropriate and accessible affordable rented housing
- Reductions in funding leading to a reduction in homelessness services
- Changes to welfare, the Homelessness Reduction Act and proposed changes to the funding of supported housing
- Helping those that fall outside of the current assistance criteria, such as those who have no recourse to public funds
- Providing temporary accommodation to those who require it
- Having a supply of ‘move-on’ accommodation to support people before

independent living

- Meeting the increasing needs and numbers of those with complex needs
- Engaging with those who are not in accommodation services
- Addressing repeat homelessness
- Making the Single Access and Referral process easier and to access help from Housing Options
- Addressing needs of women now the only women only accommodation has closed
- Working in partnership with different services / agencies

4.5 Six strategic principles were developed as part of the previous homelessness strategy. We asked organisations and their staff and the general public whether they thought these principles had been supported and their view relating to this principle.

4.6 Principle 1: Anyone at risk of homelessness is given advice and support to prevent this whenever possible. The public generally did not think this had been supported, however it is the principle that the public thought was most supported in comparison to the other principles. There were a range of suggestions on how advice and support should be made available (see below).

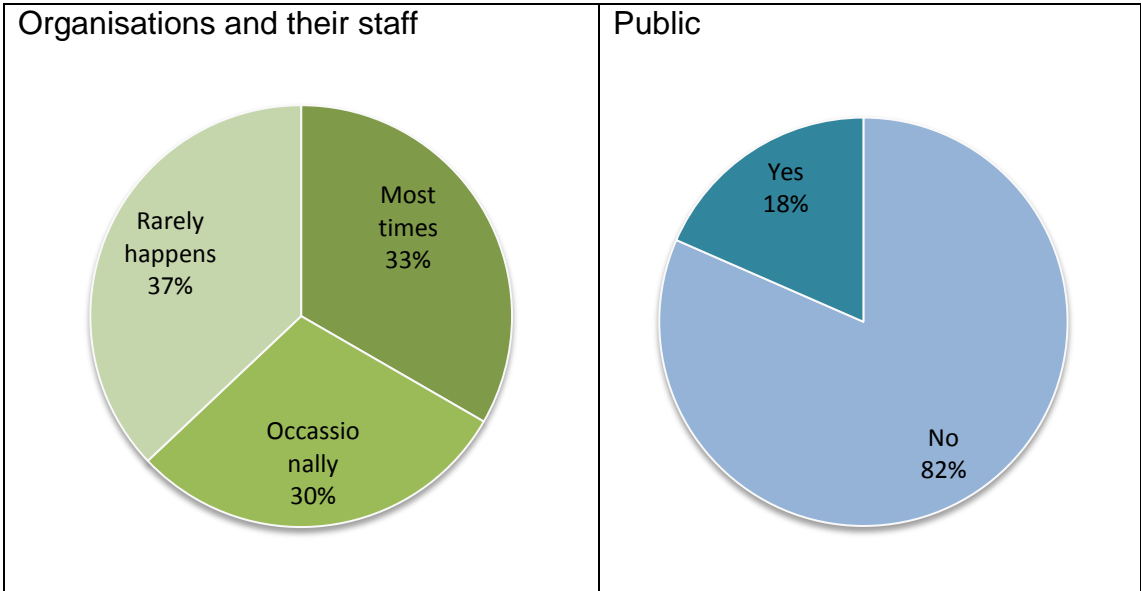


**Summary of consultation responses:**

- More focus on prevention and interventions before crisis (people in the process of being evicted sent away until they become homeless)
- Raise awareness of homelessness and its implications and make people aware of services
- Increase the number of advice access points
- Improve the quality of advice and advice delivery (e.g. people having to wait until the end of the day to know whether they have been allocated a bed / appointment waiting time should be shorter)

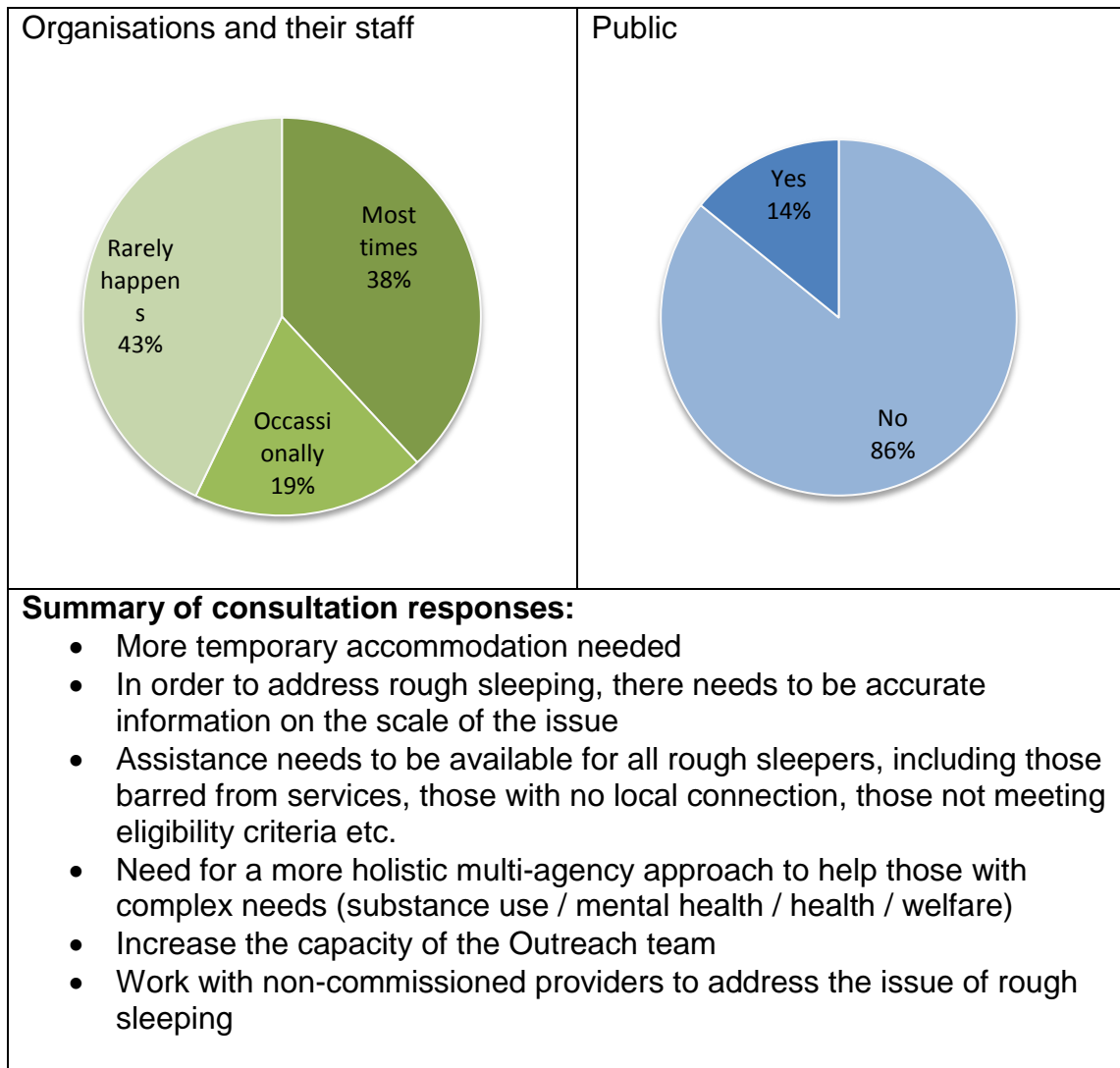
- Better support for non-statutory homeless, those with no local connection or recourse to public funds. Those who are not offered temporary accommodation should receive advice and assistance to find alternative accommodation
- Partnership working – all have a role in providing advice
- Opportunities for self-help advice although some do not have access to IT or have the right IT skills

4.7 Principle 2: When someone is homeless today we aspire to assist them into appropriate accommodation with support. We will ensure that services are tailored to address their needs. The public did not feel that this principle had been supported and felt an increase in rough sleeping evidenced this. Feedback from organisations and the public shown below:



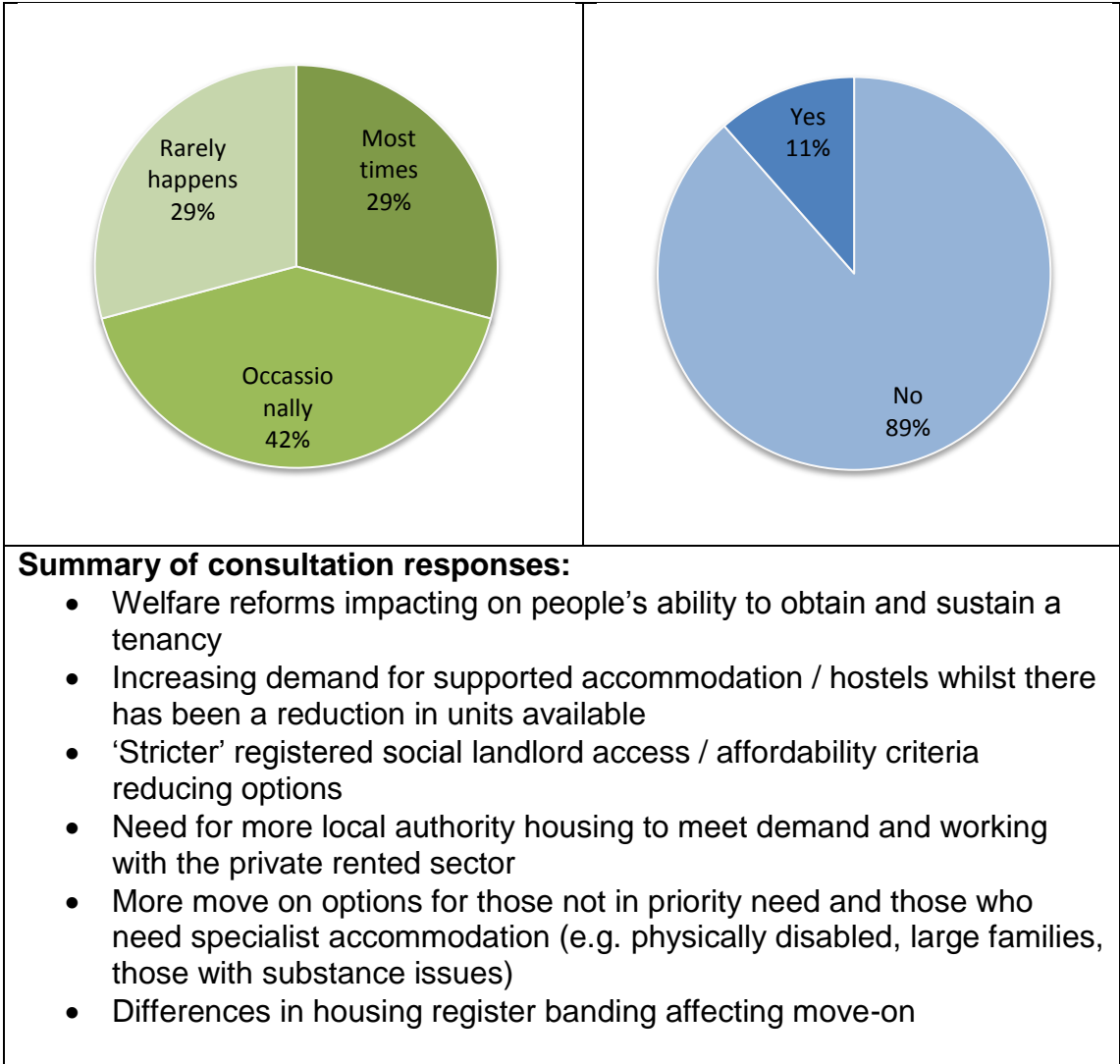
- Summary of consultation responses:**
- Insufficient availability of bed spaces & supported accommodation for homeless people
  - Work with accommodation providers outside the commissioned services and more joined up working between partners / services
  - A lack of affordable independent accommodation options
  - Individual needs are not met. Those with complex needs need specialist support
  - Dawn Centre is not appropriate for everyone
  - Support for those that do not meet the council’s eligibility criteria and who are not statutorily homeless
  - There should be access to accommodation services outside office hours
  - There is insufficient funding / resources. The council should not close any more temporary accommodation

4.8 Principle 3: We will implement ‘No Second Night Out’ to ensure that new rough sleepers will not sleep out for more than one night. Again, the public did not think this principle had been supported and again cited an increase in rough sleeping in the city. However, over a third of homelessness organisations felt this principle had been supported ‘most times’. Feedback from organisations and the public shown below:



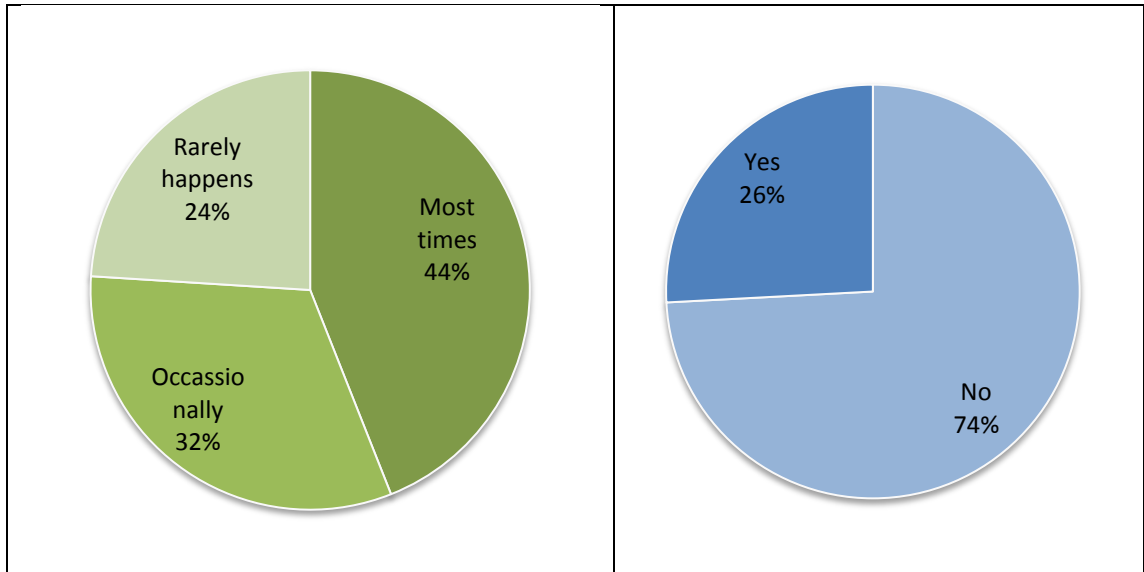
4.9 Principle 4: Anyone who is homeless will be able to move on into appropriate accommodation. The public felt this principle was the least supported. Responses focused on the wider issue of the lack of affordable housing options. Feedback from organisations and the public shown below:

Organisations and their staff	Public



4.10 Principle 5: Anyone who is homeless will get access to services for appropriate healthcare needs. Just over a quarter of members of the public who responded thought this principle had been supported which is higher than all other principles other than principle 1. It was the principle organisations thought was ‘most times’ supported. Feedback from organisations and the public is shown below:

Organisations and their staff	Public
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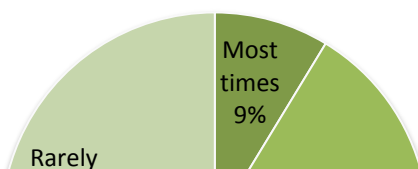


**Summary of consultation responses:**

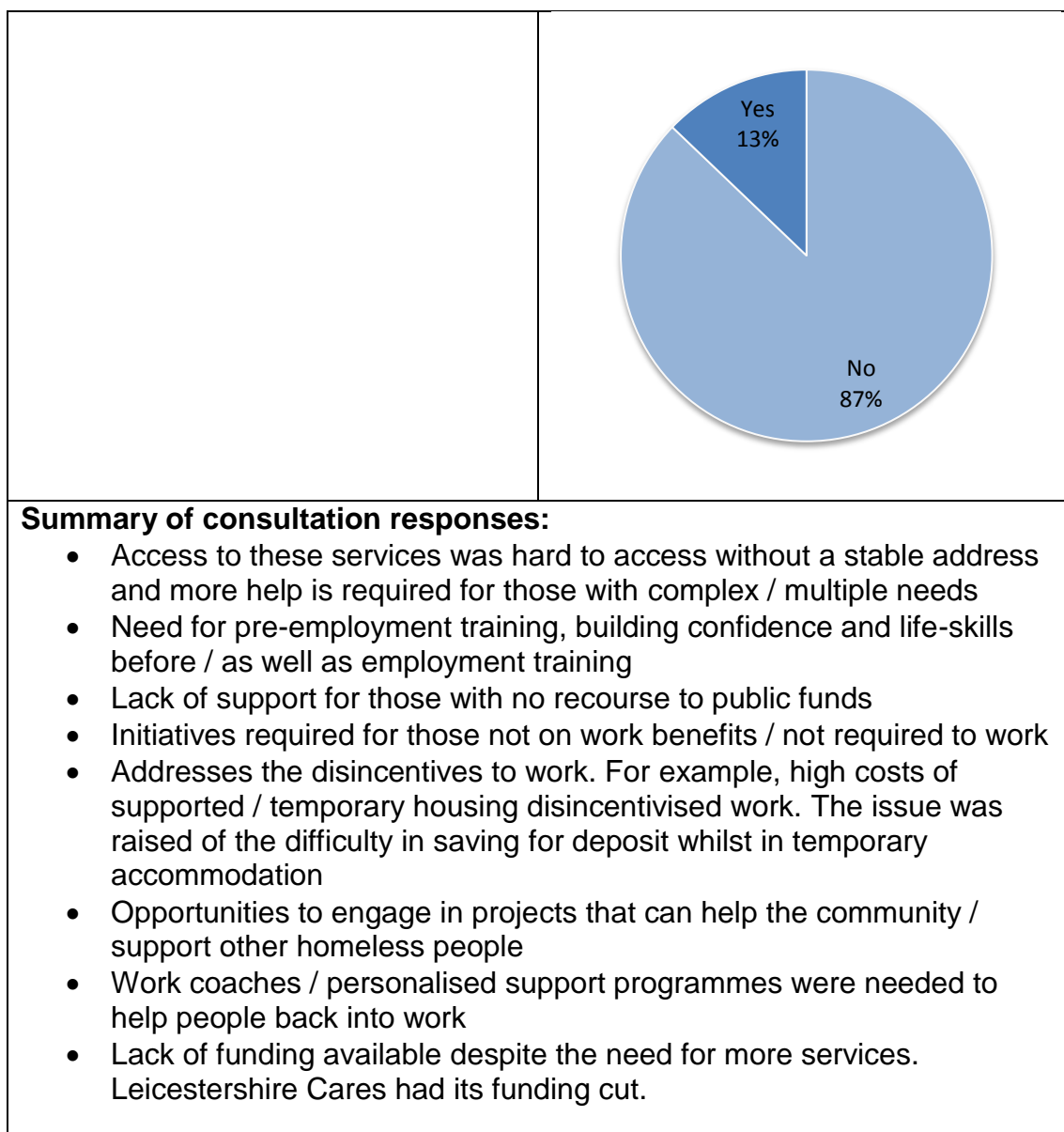
- Need to work more proactively to engage those not engaging with services
- There needed to be more flexibility from secondary care services as homeless people can find it more difficult to interact with services in a conventional way
- More expected of housing services because of more mental health and wellbeing needs; support was required from other services
- Need to raise awareness of services available
- Issues of waiting times and high thresholds to access services being a barrier to people receiving treatment / long-term care
- Barriers to appropriate data sharing that hindered effective support plans being developed by housing providers
- Services had separated from the Dawn Centre so that it was no longer a multi-agency contact point which has reduced client involvement and joint working between professionals
- Require a clear support and supported housing pathway model that links the client to all services required like Housing First model

4.11 Principle 6: There will be opportunities to access training, education, employment and enterprise initiatives. This principle was the one which organisations and their staff felt was least supported 'most times'. Feedback from organisations and the public shown below:

Organisations and their staff	Public
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4.12 As part of the consultation an exercise was undertaken with a service user group at the Y Advice and Support Centre (YASC) on the 16<sup>th</sup> March 2017 with 14 service users. Service users discussed some of the main themes of the consultation, principally what they perceived to be gaps in services and future priorities for homelessness services.

The main themes raised were:

- More emphasis on the prevention of homelessness – early interventions, particularly with regards to vulnerable people. Advice needs to be easier to access and more widely available.
- Difficulties in accessing temporary accommodation if ‘no local connection’
- Address the issue of rough sleeping
- Concern over the introduction of Universal Credit (particularly budgeting)
- The importance of out of hours’ services - ‘Being homeless is not a 9-5 condition.’

- Ensure there is adequate signposting to homelessness services by whichever service has first contact with a homeless person
- Support the drop-in centres
- Provide all year-round emergency /direct access beds
- Engage the community to assist with homelessness (volunteering)
- Provide adequate support (including in accommodation)
- Tackling public perceptions of homelessness, addressing stereotypes
- Address the issue of high rents being a disincentive for work.
- Address the issue of private renting landlord's tendency to not accept people on benefits.
- Ensure services process their duty to homeless people in a timely fashion, as delays can have serious impacts – for instance, delays in benefit payments.
- Improve preparation for those leaving prison
- Communications and technology – don't assume that all homeless people have a mobile phone (and that it has credit) or that they have access to computers and/or the skills to use them for services.
- Council services need to be more joined up
- Life skills training is important for people to settle back into stable tenancies

4.13 Consultation workshops were held with the Homelessness Reference Group 21<sup>st</sup> April 2017. Two workshop groups were held on themes and issues arising from the consultation questionnaire to get suggestions on how and what could be done to address concerns raised. Feedback from the workshops is shown below:

Prevention & Support workshop

4.14 *“The Homelessness Reduction Act will mean there will be significant changes to statutory prevention support available. What other prevention and support do you think should be available?”*

- More could be done with the non-commissioned service i.e. directing non-statutory / ineligible cases to non-commissioned provision
- More signposting to all available homelessness services in the city
- Streamlining of communication channels with Housing Options to reduce repeating case information (would require robust information sharing protocols)
- Improve experience of those presenting at the council's Customer Services centre (not appropriate to direct people to an internal phone in reception)
- Southwark Council is a good practice example of a triaged advice, information and guidance to all individuals that are homeless
- Need for early accurate advice and advocacy before crisis point now (feeling that Housing Options are 'gate-keeping')
- An accommodation central vacancies hub where people are aware of services in real-time including vacancies
- Need to consider language barriers / effective communication & translation when providing advice, information and guidance

- Outreach services should go further afield than the city centre. Use of Streetlink / database to notify to Outreach of incidence of rough sleeping / coordinate information
- Removal of category J from the eligibility criteria would cause an increase in rough sleeping we should continue to accommodate those beyond statutory cases
- Invest in staff to enable them to sustain their compassion and resilience
- Need for affordable housing options especially for the under 35's
- Take homeless declarations for prisoners when release date is known to be 28/56 days before, not on day of release
- Make available quick interventions (resettlement type service) for those who don't have complex needs and don't require longer-term case work
- Change processes so people do not have to move into unfurnished properties (cases where people get an offer on a Friday and have to move in the following Monday) – doesn't allow the 4-week handover period between temporary accommodation support and floating support. Also, could do more to start to prepare people in temporary accommodation for their own tenancy (don't need to wait for moving date)
- Revenues & Benefits looking at an initiative where DHP could be used in a variety of ways to sustain tenancies for looked after children (based on an invest to save approach to prevent tenancy breakdown and the costs of homelessness)

#### Accommodation Workshop

4.15 *"Assuming no additional funds are available, what could be done to improve temporary accommodation provision?"*

- Smaller units across a range of providers and not all complex individuals in one service
- Improve training and development for staff working with chaotic users
- More joint working to address the needs of ever more complex cases. Need more involvement in homelessness cases from Adult Social Care and Children's services.
- Need a more flexible pathway based on the needs of the individual
- Ensure interventions are made at the earliest opportunity – more could be done by social care. Life skills training should be provided as soon as possible
- More joined up working between commissioned and non-commissioned services
- A new model of accommodation for those who don't engage. Look at the St Mungo's model
- Provide community / peer support for those who do not traditionally engage with services
- Increased use of Housing First model
- Go back to using the Dawn Centre as an assessment centre

- Allow time for people to be 'ready' to sustain a tenancy – 4 months in temporary accommodation does not allow this
- Review the benefit of providing catering in hostels as increases costs and may institutionalise individuals
- Create environments of respect towards individuals that are homeless to help them progress
- Consider 'bridging day centres' open to those who have moved on staying with old routines
- Amend housing register banding for non-commissioned providers

#### Other suggestions made at workshop event

- 4.16 Attendants were also given an opportunity to note any other suggestions / comments they might have. Those put forward were:
- Pre-tenancy training was used in the past. Did it work? Can we use the best bits?
  - Consider 'actual' numbers of homeless when shaping future services
  - Nightshelter for people with no access to funds
  - Social care representation at frontline MDT absent for 15 years since it began!
  - Smaller units – intensive support slightly outside city centre but able to access services – need to look at move on and length of stay in project
  - Workshop 2 – staff training to ensure accurate advice is given but also relating to working with complexity (e.g. mental health, drugs & alcohol, LD, assertive flexible relationship building)
  - Workshop 2 – Walk in early advice centres open all day which can be info hubs and give face to face guidance early to prevent homelessness
  - HITS Home Trust. In relation to partnership working and non-commissioned services; Can the council support these services with move-on as they are regarded as supported housing and 'exempt' accommodation by HB therefore they should still have the status of temporary accommodation even if the units are self-contained flats such as Hits Home Trust.
  - HITS Home Trust. Vulnerable people are moved into accommodation not suitable for them. Not all people want to go to commissioned services and are being referred to us.
  - What's done to improve temp accommodation provision? – Longer term security of funding for providers of services. – More "affordable" or subsidised accommodation to enable flow through services in particular for under 35's.
  - Need to engage more with non-commissioned services
  - Improved / smart assessment of needs. – There are some ex-offenders who don't want that label and then fall outside priority need groups and end up street homeless.
  - Improved links with other services (e.g. mental health) within homeless services. It's happening to some extent currently but are there options to improve this? (Possible not when commissioning restricts what these services can/can't do and no spare capacity).

## Resources

4.17 Following the last homelessness strategy 2013-18 there have been reductions in the council budget for homelessness services. The below table shows budgets for homelessness services from 2013/14 to 2017/18:

	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2015/16 (£)	2016/17 (£)	2017/18 (£)
General fund – Homelessness	5,047,100	4,234,400	4,038,400	3,421,700	3,111,400
HRA - Homelessness			177,600	493,800	535,800
General Fund – STAR & FSS	808,600	62,300	36,600	26,800	23,900
HRA – STAR & FSS	1,400,000	1,806,500	1,842,550	1,873,200	1,889,800
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,255,700</b>	<b>6,103,200</b>	<b>6,095,150</b>	<b>5,815,500</b>	<b>5,560,900</b>
Total not including STAR & FSS	5,047,100	4,234,400	4,216,000	3,915,500	3,647,200

4.18 Council budgets include funding from government to support homelessness prevention including:

- Flexible homelessness support grant (FHSG). This was introduced from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 and replaced the Department for Work and Pensions' temporary accommodation management fee (TAMF). The emphasis of the new grant is to provide flexibility to authorities in providing intervention services, moving away from exclusive funding for procurement and funding of temporary accommodation. The government predicted under TAMF funding in 2017/18 Leicester City Council would have been allocated £23k under the 2017/18 FHSG allocation Leicester will be allocated £207k and in 2018/19 £220k
- Homeless prevention grant. Leicester City's allocation of homeless prevention grant for 2016/17 is £530,561 and will reduce by 1% year on year until 2019/20.

4.19 Leicester City Council has also been successful in securing funding through the DCLG's Homelessness Prevention programme & the Rough Sleepers programme in partnership with Leicestershire district council's and Rutland county council.

4.20 This review is happening at a time when continued reductions in government funding mean that Leicester City Council needs to make additional general fund budget savings of £55 million by April 2019. This is on top of the £100 million of savings already made.

4.21 Homelessness services are also funded by the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). This includes the funding of council-run hostels, STAR tenancy support services for council tenants and family support services. There are revenue pressures on the HRA from the government's requirement for

councils to reduce rents by 1% per year from 2016 to 2020, along with increases in the number of sales through right to buy, and sales expected from the high value vacant homes levy. In the 4 years from 2018/19 to 2020/21 the HRA will need to reduce spending by around £11m to manage such pressures.

- 4.22 All council departments will be affected by financial cuts, including Housing, which delivers homelessness services on behalf of the council. As a result, it is important that this review enables us to target services where they are most needed and that homelessness is prevented wherever possible.
- 4.23 The government has also proposed a new model for funding supported housing from April 2019, based on the local housing allowance rate. It is proposing that rents and service charges in supported housing will be paid via universal credit up to the one-bedroom local housing rate only and any shortfall between the local housing rate and the housing costs would be met from a local ring-fenced top-up fund administered by local authorities. The Government has acknowledged that short-term services (such as hostels where stays may be fewer than 28 days) need a different funding model and are currently consulting on possible proposals.

### **Summary of key points**

4.24 Below is a summary of key points from the review of homelessness services and the consultation exercise (with service users, organisations working with homeless people and members of the public):

4.25 **Key points relating to housing in Leicester:**

- Need for more affordable housing
- Affordability is a barrier for people to access home ownership and to rent in the private sector
- Increasingly difficult for people receiving benefits to access private rented accommodation. Welfare changes have had, and continue to have an impact
- Increased demand for social housing however there are fewer lettings available this means waiting times are increasing
- Most lettings in the private rented sector are assured shorthold tenancies which are insecure and often short-term

4.26 **Key points relating to street homelessness:**

- Rough sleeping is increasing
- There is more street begging and the latest figures show more of these individuals are homeless
- Over a third of rough sleepers offered temporary refused this / or failed to go to the accommodation provider. Rough sleepers often have complex needs. Further work is being undertaken to consider alternative offers of support to engage this client group
- Review of no second night out procedures in the city to help ensure timely support is available to all that require it

- We need to consider how interventions can be sustained so that people do not return to the streets

**4.27 Key points relating to family homelessness:**

- Prevention initiatives have worked well so far however numbers seeking support keeps increasing
- Fewer families have needed to go into temporary accommodation
- Reduction in the use of B&B. Currently there are no families in B&B
- Family hostel provision is currently underutilised. Further consideration is required of the number of temporary accommodation units required going forward, also considering predicted future demand
- Risk to sustaining the high level of prevention if numbers presenting to services continue to increase and external factors, such as changes to welfare benefits, which may lead to more family homelessness

**4.28 Key points relating to singles and couple's homelessness:**

- Increasing numbers of singles and couples seeking assistance
- Increased preventions likely to be further strengthened by the implementation of Homelessness Reduction Act
- Repeat homelessness has been reducing however a significant number of individuals have repeat admissions. We need to strengthen services to improve sustained outcomes and reduce abandonment / disengagement. For example; by ensuring support plans follow individuals through breaks in service
- Preventing homelessness is not just about housing. Many homeless people have complex needs which require a multi-disciplinary approach. We will continue to work with others and seek to forge strong working relationships with a range of services / organisations including physical and mental health services, social care services, criminal justice organisations, employment and advice services.

**4.29 Key points relating to floating support services:**

- Floating support services are effective to help individuals sustain their tenancies they are of key importance at the point of transition from temporary accommodation to settled accommodation. We need to improve processes to ensure support is available in a timely fashion when individuals are moving-on from temporary accommodation
- There could be a targeted use of floating support services to provide more intensive support to individuals approaching housing options to prevent homelessness
- Floating support services were commissioned to provide support, on average for no more than 6 months, in a significant amount of cases the length of support provided is longer than 6 months
- The revolving door service was developed in response to the issue of repeat homelessness. Repeat homelessness remains a key issue and ensuring holistic support is available to prevent homelessness from reoccurring is essential

- We need to review the eligibility criteria for floating support services to ensure they are available for those who most require them, and at a time that these services are needed

#### 4.30 **Key points relating to homeless young people:**

- Welfare changes affecting younger people has, and will continue to limit the affordable housing options available
- Preventing homelessness, and if young people become homeless preventing this from reoccurring helps break the cycle of repeat homelessness
- There are opportunities to further develop joint commissioning arrangements between housing and children's services
- The average length of stay in young person's accommodation is generally longer than other accommodation providers. This reflects the needs of this client group

#### 4.31 **Key points relating to homeless offenders / ex-offenders:**

- Ensuring best use of limited offender provision to prioritise higher need clients (from offending and housing perspectives)
- Work with NPS and CRC to identify appropriate and relevant pathways (including all services available not just commissioned housing accommodation services) for known homeless offenders
- Working with accommodation providers to understand the variation in length of stay and any barriers for move-on
- Working earlier, in line with Homelessness Reduction Act, to prevent homelessness. Consider opportunities for partnership working e.g. working with Leicester prison's 'through the gate' team and a specialist housing prevention officer working with CRC & NPS

#### 4.32 **Key points relating to health & wellbeing services:**

- Enhance early advice / homelessness prevention advice within primary care setting and ensure referral links in place
- Nationally recognised and CQC highlighted outstanding care provided by Inclusion Healthcare
- The Lightbulb project seen as a 'best practice' example and cited as an example of integrated health, housing and social care services<sup>22</sup>
- Homelessness is not just a housing issue. We need to strengthen partnership working and forge strong working relationships with a range of services / organisations including physical and mental health services, social care services, criminal justice organisations, employment and advice services to provide wrap-around services as part of the homeless pathway

#### 4.33 **Key points relating to other homelessness services:**

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<sup>22</sup>[https://www.housinglin.org.uk/assets/Resources/Housing/Practice\\_examples/Housing\\_LIN\\_case\\_studies/H\\_LIN\\_CaseStudy\\_135\\_Lightbulb\\_Project.pdf](https://www.housinglin.org.uk/assets/Resources/Housing/Practice_examples/Housing_LIN_case_studies/H_LIN_CaseStudy_135_Lightbulb_Project.pdf)



- Ensure day services are targeted to support homelessness prevention objectives
- Maximise employment & training opportunities through working with JobCentre Plus
- Housing is not just a housing issue. We need to strengthen partnership working and forge strong working relationships with a range of services / organisations including physical and mental health services, social care services, criminal justice organisations, employment and advice services to provide wrap-around services as part of the homeless pathway

**4.34 Key points from consultation on priorities for the next homelessness strategy and challenges:**

- Addressing rough sleeping
- Support being available to prevent homelessness and to help establish a settled home
- Sufficient emergency, hostel and supported accommodation available
- Homelessness services to be adequately funded
- Addressing rental housing shortages (social and private)
- Joined up working
- Service flexibility (access and service delivery)
- Assessing and reporting accurate levels of homelessness
- Improved access to and provision of advice / information
- Addressing the needs of vulnerable people
- Increased understanding of homelessness & ensuring homeless people are treated with respect and are safe
- Tackling repeat homelessness
- Address begging in the city centre
- Addressing current and rising levels of homelessness and rough sleeping
- Shortage in appropriate and accessible affordable rented housing
- Reductions in funding leading to a reduction in homelessness services
- Changes to welfare, the Homelessness Reduction Act and proposed changes to the funding of supported housing
- Helping those that fall outside of the current assistance criteria, such as those who have no recourse to public funds
- Providing temporary accommodation to those who require it
- Having a supply of 'move-on' accommodation to support people before independent living
- Meeting the increasing needs and numbers of those with complex needs
- Engaging with those who are not in accommodation services
- Addressing repeat homelessness
- Making the Single Access and Referral process easier and to access help from Housing Options
- Addressing needs of women now the only women only accommodation has closed
- Working in partnership with different services / agencies

## **What next?**

- 4.35 The findings of this homelessness review will be considered further during the development of the new homelessness strategy. The role of partner organisations is vital in the efforts to meet the housing needs of people in Leicester. We will continue to work with them to develop a new strategy to prevent homelessness.
- 4.36 The draft strategy will be circulated to our partners and made available for consultation on our website before going to the Executive for approval.