

HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY 2019 -2024

PART ONE – HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY

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PART ONE - HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY

1.1 CRAWLEY OVERVIEW

Private rented sector – accessing the private rented sector can cost more than £2,500 upfront. Average rents are between 19 and 50 per cent higher than the Local Housing Allowance.

Housing market - property prices increased by nearly 40 per cent between 2014 and 2019 to approximately £280,600. Around 11 times the annual household earnings for residents.

Housing supply – more than 800 new build homes at social and intermediate rents have been delivered in the past five years, however there are more than 2,000 households on the housing register, with approximately 600 social homes becoming available for let each year.

Housing stock – there is a mismatch between the size of homes within the borough and the size of households that live here. Half the properties in Crawley have three or more bedrooms but more than half of households are comprised of one or two people.

Homelessness - parental eviction and the end of assured shorthold tenancies in the private rented sector remain the predominant causes of homelessness in Crawley.

Rough sleeping – there is a local and national trend in the rising number of people sleeping rough sleeping.

Our Priorities:

The council has identified five priorities for addressing homelessness within Crawley:

- **Preventing and relieving homelessness**
- **Tackling rough sleeping**
- **Meeting the needs of vulnerable people**
- **Accessing suitable and affordable accommodation**
- **Preventing repeat homelessness.**

1.2 INTRODUCTION

This homelessness and rough sleeping strategy ('the strategy') forms part of the council's response to its statutory duties under the Homelessness Act 2002, to carry out a homelessness review for the borough of Crawley and then produce a strategy outlining the main causes of homelessness and the strategic plans and actions the council has in place to tackle them. The Strategy has been shaped by national and local policy and following a thorough review of housing and homelessness services in Crawley ('the homelessness review' – the details of which are set out in the annex). It takes into account the views of our partners, stakeholders, elected members and the public, attained through a consultation exercise and online surveys.

The strategy presents a forward thinking approach to tackling the complex issues faced by Crawley and the council in addressing housing need and tackling homelessness, and recognises the vital role our partners and stakeholders across the statutory, charitable and voluntary sectors play in delivering appropriate and tailored services to those in housing need. In order to demonstrate its commitment to the strategy and accompanying action plan, one of the council's six corporate priorities for the period 2018 - 2022 concerns housing and homelessness. The council's corporate priorities link to the administration's manifesto, the council's transformation plan and the medium term financial strategy.

Delivering affordable homes for Crawley and reducing homelessness

We will:

- ***Continue to deliver as much affordable housing as possible, particularly council housing, through our own-build and enabling programmes for people with a local connection to Crawley***
- ***Drive down homelessness across the borough and support partner agencies to help those most in need.***

1.3 STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

The work of local authorities is carried out against an evolving backdrop of legislation, guidance, and wider market influences. It is led nationally by central Government, but applied locally through policies and procedures that allow authorities to tailor their services to meet the needs of their residents.

National context:

Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

Homeless households are provided with assistance under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 ('the HRA'), which came into force on 3 April 2018. The HRA renewed the focus on preventing and relieving homelessness, placing duties on local authorities to intervene at earlier stages, and to provide homelessness services to all those affected, not just those who were protected under existing legislation.

On 1 October 2018 the duty to refer came into force, giving certain public bodies a legal duty to refer households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness to a local authority for advice and assistance. Whilst registered providers do not have a duty to refer, a number have signed up to the 'commitment to refer', a voluntary commitment to making referrals where no statutory duty to do so exists. The council encourages registered providers with housing stock in the borough to adopt such practices as it provides earlier opportunities to intervene and potentially prevent homelessness.

Rough sleeper strategy

The Government published a rough sleeper strategy in August 2018 that lays out their commitment to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and end it by 2027. Work to deliver these aims is built around three core pillars: prevention (understanding the issues that lead to rough sleeping and providing timely support for those at risk), intervention (helping those already sleeping rough with swift support tailored to their individual circumstances) and recovery (supporting people in finding a new home and rebuilding their lives). The strategy acknowledges that ending rough sleeping will require central and local government, as well as business, communities, faith and voluntary groups and the general public to work together to tackle the problem.

Welfare reforms

Welfare reforms introduced since the council's previous Homelessness and rough sleeping strategy (as summarised below) present ongoing challenges to households in receipt of benefits and to the organisations and individuals that house and support them.

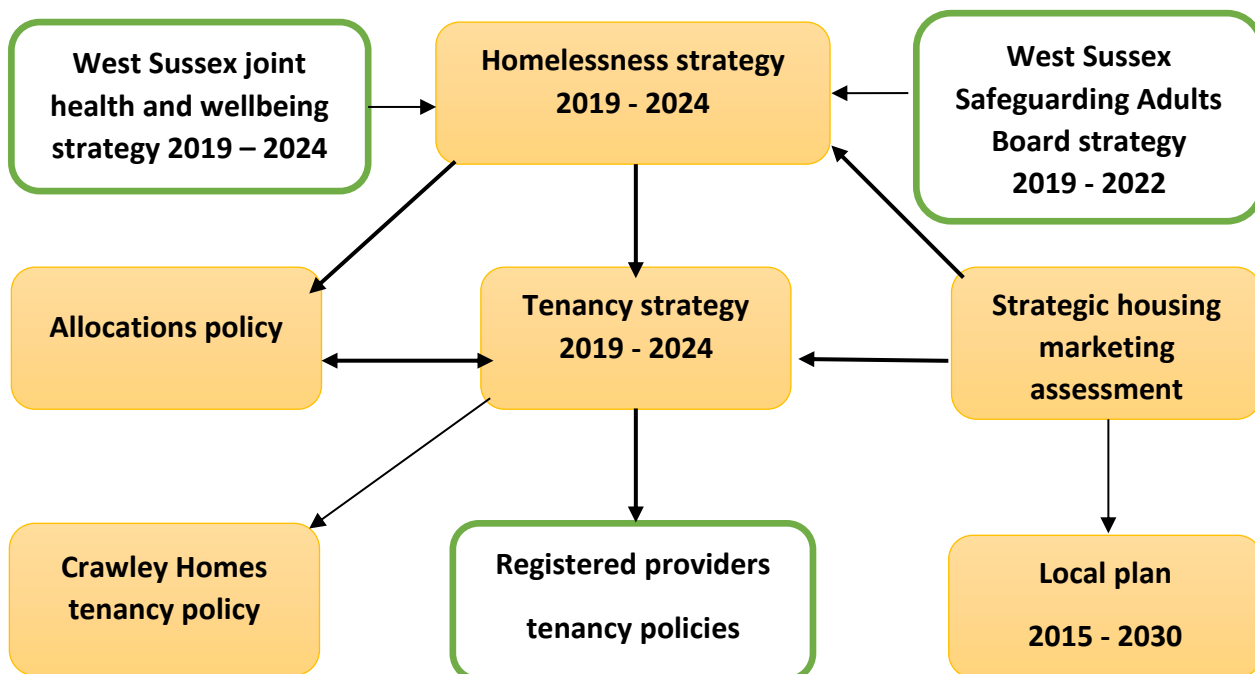


Leaving the European Union

In the national referendum on 23 June 2016 the United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union. The ramifications for housing-related areas (such as the housing market, the labour market, forecasted and actual population growth, the economy, financing programmes and procurement rules) are as yet unknown.

Local context:

The strategy sits within a framework of documents that guide the council's approach to housing and homelessness (as shown below), underpinned by the council's corporate priority and commitment to drive down homelessness in the borough.



Local Plan

Crawley Borough Council's local plan 2015 – 2030 (as adopted in December 2015) sets the way forward for planning the future of Crawley, and provides a clear indication of the council's approach to the development of the town, including how we have identified housing need within the borough and the work underway to meet this need.

Through the strategic housing market assessment, the local plan identified that by 2030 the town would need a further 10,125 new homes to support the full objectively assessed housing needs of the growing population of the town. Due to land constraints, the housing land supply demonstrates a minimum of roughly 5,000 new homes can be built within the borough boundaries, meeting approximately half of the borough's emerging housing needs. This includes properties to be let at social and intermediate rents, and properties for sale on the open market.

The plan commits the council to positively consider all reasonable opportunities for maximising the use of land and increasing housing delivery, alongside working closely with neighbouring authorities (under duty to cooperate requirements) in order to meet the housing need in full, across the wider housing market area.

At the time of publishing the strategy, a consultation was underway to produce a new Local Plan that will guide development in the borough from 2020 to 2035. The draft Crawley local plan review seeks to revise the current adopted Crawley 2030 local plan in order to update it in accordance with national policies and local changes. This will ensure Crawley maintains an up-to-date local plan to support and direct the growth of the borough.

Tenancy strategy

A requirement of the Localism Act 2011 is that local authorities have a tenancy strategy in place which sets out their expectations of social housing providers operating within their district, to ensure that housing is provided to meet local need. Social housing providers are to have regard to this tenancy strategy when adopting or reviewing their own tenancy policies and operating procedures. Crawley's tenancy strategy was rewritten and published in tandem with the homelessness strategy because of the synergies between the two and the role registered providers can play in the prevention of homelessness. The tenancy strategy sets out the council's expectations of registered providers operating in the borough in relation to:

- Social responsibility and the best use of housing stock – managing the balance of helping those in housing need create stable tenancies, whilst ensuring that housing stock is utilised to greatest effect
- Starting, renewing and ending a tenancy – encouraging the use of policies that recognise the importance of creating stable tenancies whilst ensuring that there is a clear process for reviewing and ending a tenancy when and where needed
- Tenancy sustainment and management – encouraging registered providers to invest in tenancy sustainment to support and assist tenants to manage their accommodation, sustain rental payments and reduce the risk of homelessness through loss of tenancy
- The role of registered providers in preventing and relieving homelessness – encouraging the use of practices and procedures that support homeless households to have equitable access to social housing.

The tenancy strategy also encourages registered providers with housing stock in the borough to sign up to the commitment to refer, which is a voluntary commitment to making referrals where no statutory duty to do so exists. The council encourages such practices as it provides earlier opportunities to intervene and potentially prevent homelessness.

Allocation scheme

Part six of the Housing Act 1996 requires local authorities to have a published allocation scheme for defining the procedure to be followed in the allocation of social housing. The council use a banding scheme to assess the relative priority of applicants on the housing register ensuring priority is given to those with a reasonable preference. Households who are homeless within the meaning of part seven of the Act have a reasonable preference, along with others as specified by the scheme.

Social housing is a limited resource and the allocation scheme has to balance the needs of housing homeless households to whom a duty is owed (and whom might be living in temporary accommodation), with those who have had their priority assessed through an application to join the housing register and who are in housing need for one or more other reasons.

Flexibility has been written into the allocation scheme to allow the council to increase the allocation of housing to homeless households to whom a duty is owed in order to address peaks in the usage of nightly paid temporary accommodation for a limited period of time.

Joint health and wellbeing strategy 2019 - 2024

The West Sussex joint strategic needs assessment (JSNA) encompasses detailed needs assessments and a range of briefings and details the evidence base for the joint health and wellbeing strategy 2019 – 2024. The West Sussex joint health and wellbeing strategy 2019 - 2024 is a tool to enable the Health and Wellbeing Board to set out the plan for action by West Sussex Council County, Clinical Commissioning Group, NHS providers, district and borough councils, voluntary sector and other partners to inform their planning, commissioning and provision of services.

To achieve the vision and reduce health inequalities as set out in the strategy, work that sets the direction of travel for health and wellbeing across the county is divided into three themes:

1. Starting well (covering pregnancy to young adulthood)
2. Living and working well (covering adulthood)
3. Aging well (covering later life to end of life).

One of the four goals within the ‘living and working well’ theme is *“People have access to good quality homes providing a secure place for families to thrive and promote good health, wellbeing and independent living”*. This is elaborated on as *“Adequate housing, where people can live in security, peace and dignity, is a basic human right. The quality of housing plays a critical role in creating and maintaining good health, as well as helping individuals to recover from illness and remain independent. We will champion prevention and support targeted action towards those at risk of homelessness, including those in contact with mental health services.”*

One of the key initiatives through which it is envisioned this goal will be achieved is *“Preventing homelessness – working with frontline staff to identify risk factors and intervene early”*. West Sussex County Council (WSCC) are the lead authority for the joint health and wellbeing strategy 2019-2024.

West Sussex Safeguarding Adults Board strategy 2019 – 2022

The West Sussex Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) is a multi-agency partnership of key statutory organisations, non-statutory organisations and lay members in West Sussex. Its purpose is to ensure the effective co-ordination of services to safeguard and promote the welfare of adults in accordance with the Care Act 2014 and the care and support statutory guidance 2014.

The strategy sets out the vision of the SAB, the strategic plan for 2019–22 which outlines the aims and objectives to achieve this vision, providing direction to the annual business plan which includes key actions and target timescales to achieve the objectives. Two of the strategic objectives directly relate to homelessness:

- Accountability and leadership – developing arrangements with other boards to be responsive and adapt to emerging safeguarding themes, one of which is focusing on safeguarding and homelessness.
- Prevention, engagement and Making Safeguarding Personal – build the resilience and promote wellbeing of those who may be at risk of abuse and neglect, including adolescents who are transitioning into adulthood and those who are homeless.

The annual business plan outlines how the SAB intend to work with partner organisations towards meeting these objectives. WSCC are the lead authority for safeguarding adults.

Safer Crawley Partnership

The annual strategic assessment carried out by the Safer Crawley Partnership (SCP) in spring 2019, once again identified the street community as one of the issues that the SCP should be focusing on. This has been a specific priority for the SCP since April 2016. The SCP in relation to this community, focuses on addressing the impact that street homelessness, begging, street drinking and drug use has on the wider community, through encouraging engagement with support services locally, use of enforcement action for those individuals unwilling to engage and through the promotion of responsible giving.

The SCP has invested in increasing the Outreach Service, Community Warden Service and development of responsible giving initiatives. A monthly rough sleeper and street community meeting brings together partners from the statutory and voluntary sector with the aim of supporting rough sleepers off the street and into long term accommodation, supporting other members of the street community and to reduce the impact that these individuals have on the local community. We remain committed to this partnership agenda with the aim of reducing crime and anti-social behaviour, and increasing community cohesion to create economic vibrancy.

1.4 UNDERSTANDING HOMELESSNESS

We know that at different points in people’s lives there are specific triggers and risk factors that affect the likelihood that a person will experience homelessness. However, homelessness and rough sleeping are not inevitable consequences of these drivers, as many people who experience them do not go on to become homeless.

Understanding the events that may lead to or contribute towards homelessness (as shown in Figure 1) assists the council in highlighting who is most at risk of becoming homeless and therefore which organisations and services the council need to work with to maximise opportunities for early intervention and the prevention of homelessness.

Figure 1: triggers and risk factors associated with homelessness.

	0 - 10 years	11 - 15 years	16 - 24 years	25 - 44 years	45 - 59 years	60 + years
Contact with Services	Adverse childhood experiences		Family conflict and relationship breakdown			
	Child in need/looked after child		Care leaver	Vulnerable adult		
		Youth offending	Released from prison			
			Discharged from armed forces			
			Discharged from hospital without appropriate accommodation			
			Refugees required to leave Home Office accommodation			
Social Conditions and Experiences	Domestic abuse					
	Sexual abuse					
	Involved or affected by crime, anti-social behaviour, harassment or discrimination					
	Poor educational attainment		Lack of qualifications and skills			
			Teen pregnancy			
	Insecure or unsuitable housing conditions, disrepair, overcrowding, sofa surfing					
	Poor physical and/or mental health, disability, substance misuse, history of trauma					
Economic Deprivation	Shortage of affordable, suitable housing					
			Low income, debt, pay day loans, rent arrears			
			Lack of employment			
			Lack of affordable childcare			
Welfare Related			Benefit delays, sanctions, conditions			
			Benefit caps			

Source: [Homelessness strategy 2018 Haringey LBC](#)

Housing is often part of a wider problem and systematic of deeper issues. Frequently these underlying causes are not being adequately addressed by the services the person has come into contact with. Often this is because the person does not meet relevant service thresholds where the right expertise may otherwise be available, or because we can sometimes – even when trying to operate collectively – work in isolation. Sometimes the person we need to help is viewed by agencies, including ourselves, through the lens of our own constraints. This strategy looks to challenge that approach and rethink how we work with people and support agencies to improve outcomes for our service users.

1.5 PRIORITY ONE: PREVENTING AND RELIEVING HOMELESSNESS

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 introduced duties to ensure that local authorities focus on working with service users to try to prevent and/or relieve their homelessness. The strategy reflects this approach to service delivery and identifies that the prevention and relief of homelessness is a priority for the council.

Challenges

The homelessness review and feedback from the consultation process which formed part of it, identified the following challenges to preventing and relieving homelessness in Crawley:

- **Expectations** – expectations of accessing social housing are no longer in line with the supply and demand of social housing locally.
- **The private rented sector** – the costs and challenges associated with accessing the private rented sector limit our ability to prevent/relieve homelessness this way. The end of assured shorthold tenancies (within private rented accommodation) is also one of the two most common causes of homelessness in Crawley.
- **Parental eviction** – eviction from the parental home is the other predominant cause of homelessness in Crawley. Young people remaining in or returning to the parental home is often symptomatic of wider issues, such as an inability to afford accommodation locally. Involvement at the point of crisis can mean missed opportunities for early intervention and the prevention of homelessness.
- **Welfare reforms** – single people under the age of 35 who are in receipt of benefits are only able to claim the shared accommodation rate of the Local Housing Allowance. This limits our options for preventing or relieving their homelessness.
- **Hidden homelessness** – identifying and tackling hidden homelessness (where households do not have a place to call home but are not reflected in official statistics as homeless, such as those who are sofa surfing with friends for example) remains a challenge, as the scale of the situation remains largely undetermined.

Action Taken

1. **Allocation scheme** – the council are aware that the expectations of accessing social housing are no longer in line with the supply and demand of social housing locally. Through its published allocations scheme, the council seeks to balance the competing demands of households to whom a housing duty is owed under homelessness legislation and those whose housing needs have been identified through an application to join the housing register (including those who under-occupy or are overcrowded in their existing accommodation).

The council has updated its allocations scheme to provide solutions for households in housing need. It gives households to whom a prevention and/or relief duty is owed reasonable preference on the housing register. Depending on the circumstances of the household, this may mean they are able to access social housing without needing to be placed into temporary accommodation. In the first year after the amendments to the Housing Act 1996 by the HRA came into force, 82 preventions/reliefs into social housing were achieved through the housing register.

2. **Preventing and relieving homelessness** – the council’s focus has always been on the prevention and relief of homelessness. We have a proven track record of working in partnership with agencies to identify early triggers for those at risk of homelessness to finding shared solutions to resolve homelessness. Over the past five years we have worked with a variety of different services and agencies to achieve positive outcomes for households whilst minimising the impact on multiple services and the wider public purse. Projects have included:
- Working with WSCC on the Intentionally Homeless Families Project.
 - Working with health visitors and other health professionals to recognise housing difficulties when visiting people at home.
 - Working with the Integrated Prevention and Earliest Help (IPEH) Team to ensure families are supported when experiencing difficulties.
 - Making referrals to the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) to protect the welfare of children and adults who we come into contact with.
 - Working with the Accommodation Team at WSCC to prevent homelessness in partnership to achieve better outcomes for families and vulnerable adults.
 - Working with Probation Services to jointly fund a housing advisor post to work with offenders and help them access stable accommodation and reduce re-offending.
 - Working with the Youth Homelessness Prevention Team with a co-located Young Persons Homeless Prevention Advisor to secure positive outcomes for young people in West Sussex.
 - Having joint working protocols for agencies in West Sussex to improve outcomes for 16/17 year olds and care leavers.
 - Working with Credit Union to provide ethical lending and money services from the Town Hall for the residents of Crawley.
 - Maximising the use of qualifying discretionary housing payments (DHP) to prevent and relieve homelessness where there are financial difficulties that can be assisted with time limited payments through the housing benefit system to sustain current or access new accommodation.
 - Financing the Homeless Prevention Fund (through the flexible homelessness support grant) to prevent and relieve homelessness where DHP is not an option.
3. **Crawley Deposit Service** – we provide a deposit bond for the prevention and relief of homelessness which assists eligible households into the private rented sector. Eligible households are those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, require the council’s assistance financially, have a connection to Crawley, do not have a debt with the council or previous landlord and have not lost accommodation due to anti-social behaviour in the last five years. Over the last five years, we have facilitated more than 330 households into the private rented sector and at the end of March 2019, had more than 470 live tenancies.

We fund an intensive support service through the flexible homelessness support grant to prevent homelessness from temporary accommodation and Crawley deposit facilitated tenancies. In 2018/19, 39 existing households and 76 new households were referred to and supported by this service.

4. **Support** – we have worked in partnership with WSCC on the West Sussex Homeless Prevention Partnership. Co-located floating support officers in the Housing Options Service have worked closely with households identified as being at risk of homelessness in accommodation such as private rented and the family home. Through the provision of practical support to prevent and

relieve homelessness by sustaining their current accommodation or finding alternative accommodation. Since the partnership began in January 2017, the service has successfully supported 188 households in Crawley to either remain in their existing accommodation or move into new accommodation. This is out of a total of 234 people in Crawley who left the service during this period.

The council's Housing Options Service has funded a Homeless Prevention Money Advice Advisor. The aim of this is to prevent homelessness where possible through the timely delivery of specialist debt and money advice for households at risk of losing their homes. Over the past five years, more than 535 households have been referred and assisted through this service.

5. **Service delivery** – since the Homelessness Reduction Act was introduced in April 2018, the way in which statutory homelessness services are delivered has changed to implement the formal requirements of the new legislation. One of the primary ways in which this has been achieved is by restructuring the Council's Housing Options Service. The assessment service is now the initial point of contact for customers seeking help with their homelessness situation. As well as carrying out the initial assessment and starting any duty owed to the household, they hold a caseload of early intervention cases and have successfully been able to assist households to address their housing situation before a prevention duty would have otherwise been owed.

The Housing Options Service has also updated its IT system to be compliant in the delivery of the new homelessness legislation and create the quarterly H-CLIC statistical return required by central government. This cost was paid for through our new burden's funding.

The council has been developing digital solutions to facilitate easy and convenient contact between customers and the council at an early stage. An online assessment form used to assess duties under the Homelessness Reduction Act and for the council's housing register has been developed and is now live on our website.

6. **Duty to refer** – links and relationships have been formed with agencies who are required to make referrals to local housing authorities under the duty to refer from the 1 October 2018. This has been done in partnership with the district and borough council's across West Sussex to ensure that all relevant agencies are able to make referrals quickly and easily for individuals and households that they come into contact with that are homeless or threatened with homelessness. A generic countywide referral form and dedicated email address for each individual housing authority has been created to make the process as easy and consistent as possible, with information and training offered and delivered as requested.
7. **Commitment to refer** – many Housing Associations, who do not have a duty to refer but who are committed to referring households who are at risk of homelessness to intervene earlier, have signed up to the commitment to refer. This is a voluntary commitment that a housing association will refer an individual or household to a local housing authority if they are homeless or threatened with homelessness, thereby supporting the aims of the Homelessness Reduction Act and particularly the duty to refer. Currently, there are 18 Housing Associations who operate in Crawley who have signed up to this commitment.

8. **Government consultation** – the council has raised and highlighted the affordability issues caused by the difference between the LHA rates and actual rental charges in Crawley with central government at every opportunity.

Future Action

- ✓ *Balance the competing demands and expectations of households to whom a housing duty is owed under homelessness legislation and those whose needs have been identified through a housing register application through its published allocations scheme.*
- ✓ *Create and facilitate opportunities to work in partnership to prevent and relieve homelessness in both Crawley and across West Sussex.*
- ✓ *Review the Crawley Deposit Service to ensure that the allocation of properties is aligned to the Homelessness Reduction Act, in the most cost effective way to the council to maximise opportunities to prevent and relieve homelessness.*
- ✓ *Evaluate the outcomes of the support service funded to prevent homelessness from temporary accommodation and Crawley Deposit Service facilitated tenancies on an annual basis to ensure it continues to meet its objectives and provides value for money.*
- ✓ *Work to support families in crisis to relieve homelessness through the use of private rented accommodation, the council's housing register, through our deposit service and partnership working with both statutory and non-statutory agencies.*
- ✓ *Assess demand coming into the service and evolve our service to ensure it continues to be structured in a way that best meets the needs of our customers.*
- ✓ *Explore and evaluate alternative IT systems as they are developed to ensure the system we are using provides full functionality to deliver our Homelessness Reduction Act duties and provides value for money.*
- ✓ *Keep our allocations scheme under review to ensure it continues to make best use of available social housing stock.*
- ✓ *Develop digital solutions for customers and staff to work and communicate effectively and efficiently.*
- ✓ *Review the referrals received through the duty to refer to establish where further work needs to be completed in terms of links and training to increase the number and quality of these referrals.*
- ✓ *Evaluate the outcomes achieved by the Homeless Prevention Money Advice Advisor against the cost of funding the service on an annual basis to ensure it continues to meet customer and service needs and demands in a cost effective way.*
- ✓ *Highlight the issues of affordability caused by the difference between the LHA rates and actual rental charges in Crawley with central government at every opportunity.*
- ✓ *Pilot a Tenancy Sustainment Officer role to help prevent homelessness and repeat homelessness.*

1.6 PRIORITY TWO: TACKLING ROUGH SLEEPING

Rough sleepers are defined as people seen either sleeping, about to bed down or actually bedded down in the open air (such as streets, in tents, doorways, parks, bus shelters or encampments). People in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as stairwells, sheds, car parks and cars) are also included in this definition.

Many rough sleepers, especially those that have become entrenched, have complex needs that can affect their willingness to engage with service providers and receive support. Even with support in place, some do not feel ready or able to engage with the services that are available. The strategy identifies how services will tackle rough sleeping and ensure everyone has the opportunity to access accommodation when they need it.

The Government's Rough Sleeping Strategy published in August 2018 sets out its aim to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and end rough sleeping by 2027. Its vision to achieve this is through three core principles, prevention, intervention and recovery. These principles will be used as the drivers for our approach to tackling rough sleeping.

Challenges

The homelessness review and feedback from the consultation process which was formed part of it identified the following challenges to tackling rough sleeping in Crawley:

- **Welfare reforms** – single people under the age of 35 who are in receipt of benefits are only entitled to claim the shared room rate of the Local Housing Allowance, meaning the only housing option affordable to them in the private rented sector is a room in a shared house. This limits the council's ability to prevent/relieve homelessness. A room in a shared house may not be an ideal environment for individuals who are vulnerable or have support needs and who may be liable to sleeping rough if they lose their accommodation.
- **Access to non-statutory services** – while support, accommodation and move on services exist locally, they are subject to the same challenges of delivering customer centred services within limited resources.
- **Funding** – funding to statutory and non-statutory services being under threat or reduced on a national and local level. Across West Sussex the budgetary cuts that WSCC are having to make will have a significant impact on service provision going forward.
- **Accessing health services** – the ability to access mental health services and support as and when needed. Any delay in accessing services initially can result in an individual choosing not to engage in the future, potentially making them more susceptible to losing their accommodation, sleeping rough, or becoming entrenched and resistant to support.
- **Reactive services** – the majority of services that exist for single people with housing issues are reactive and respond at or after the point of crisis. The opportunity to prevent homelessness (and thereby minimise the risk of rough sleeping) having passed.
- **Street begging** – begging can be lucrative however not all those who beg are homeless. The presence of people begging can create the perception that the number of people sleeping rough is higher than it is.

Action Taken

1. **Multi Agency working** – the council chairs a monthly rough sleeping and street community meeting which provides a multi-agency approach to share intelligence, agree priorities, and co-ordinate work to identify, engage with and assist rough sleepers off the street and into accommodation and/or treatment pathways.

Through the Multi-Agency Rough Sleeper and Street Community Group, a funding bid of £5,000 was successfully secured from the Police Crime and Commissioner and administered through the Multi-Agency Rough Sleeper and Street Community Group. The funding was used to work with rough sleepers to assist them into accommodation and/or treatment pathways.

The monthly Rough Sleeping and Street Community Multi-agency Group has co-ordinated diverted giving events in the town centre, aimed at educating and encouraging the public to support the local organisations that provide outreach and other services to the street homeless community, rather than giving money directly to individuals.

A task force for community safety partners chaired by the Leader of Crawley Borough Council in relation to the growth in street community and related behaviour has been established to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour in the town centre. The group will work together to use all available resources to improve the situation in the town centre and create a sense of neighbourhood and community. The ongoing work of the task force working on this agenda is to ensure the town is clean, safe and well maintained and that by working together with partners we are ensuring the safety of people living and working in Crawley.

2. **Crawley Open House** – in partnership with Crawley Open House (a day centre and hostel that provides services to Crawley's rough sleeping community) and the Danny Gallivan Trust, the council offered an extended cold weather provision which was piloted from 3 January to 31 March 2019. Using space within the Town Hall building complemented by the Danny Bus (a double decked bus converted to offer sleeping accommodation) the traditional SWEP (Severe Weather Emergency Protocol) provision was enhanced to provide a cold weather shelter.

The council has funded an Outreach Worker at Crawley Open House through its Grants programme, to work in the community and directly with people sleeping rough and/or begging to support them into accommodation and or treatment pathways.

Crawley Open House secured additional funding through the SCP for an additional outreach worker facilitating weekend and evening shifts and to engage and work with a greater number of rough sleepers and street community individuals to reduce the number of rough sleepers and street begging.

3. **Move-on accommodation** – the council purchased three houses for move-on accommodation for individuals and couples who are ready to transition from crisis intervention accommodation into recovery accommodation. These houses are leased to Crawley Open House to manage and provide specialist keyworker support and ultimately, resettlement into general needs accommodation in the wider community.

4. **SHORE** – the council formed part of the Single Homeless Outreach Reconnection and Engagement (SHORE) from 2013-2017. This Sussex partnership was recognised as one of the top rough sleeping and single homelessness partnerships in the country by DCLG and Homeless Link. Through SHORE, hundreds of vulnerable people were helped out of homelessness and supported in their accommodation. Much of the work was delivered by voluntary organisations across Sussex and sustained beyond SHORE funding. SHORE also brought people together from multiple services at various events to help tackle the multiple and complex needs of rough sleepers.
5. **Bid funding** – the council were also part of a successful Sussex-wide rough sleeper bid in 2016, receiving £470,000 to work with rough sleepers across East and West Sussex over two years. This coalition of partners included all district and borough councils across Sussex, East and West Sussex County Councils, Sussex Police, Clinical Commissioning Groups in Sussex, Fulfilling Lives, Community Safety Partnership and Safer West Sussex Partnership. The West Sussex target of 406 interventions for the duration of the project was met through an extension of the TAP Project through Crawley Open House for one year, an Arun Rough Sleeper Outreach worker for two years and Worthing Churches Outreach Worker for two years.

Through the Safer Crawley Partnership, two funding bids of £5,000 each were successful and administered through the Multi-Agency Rough Sleeper and Street Community Group. This funding was used in a flexible way to finance work with rough sleepers to and facilitate them into accommodation and/or treatment pathways

Through the SHORE partnership, the council were successful in securing funding of £10,000, administered through the Multi-Agency Rough Sleeper and Street Community Group. This funding has been used in a flexible way to finance the facilitation of rough sleepers into accommodation and/or treatment pathways.

The council are currently part of a successful West Sussex countywide Rapid Rehousing Pathway bid in partnership with West Sussex County Council and all West Sussex district and borough councils, to commence in the summer of 2019. This bid is to be an early adopter for the Rapid Rehousing Pathway for Navigator and supported lettings funding. Five supported lettings roles across West Sussex will increase housing opportunities for those who have had a history of rough sleeping by encouraging landlords to come forward as can offer additional support to those placed in to accommodation. Four navigators will follow a rough sleeper from the street through to a range of accommodation services, being the constant and consistent connector between services and the individual. The project will be delivered in partnership with Turning Tides, Crawley Open House and Stonepillow and has secured £335,000 to assist 160-180 individuals.

6. **Supported accommodation move-on** – the council has worked with providers to generate vacancies in their accommodation through move-on agreements via the housing register. The resulting vacancies are then utilised by the Housing Options Service for the prevention and relief homelessness.

Future Action

Prevention:

- ✓ *Through the West Sussex countywide Rapid Rehousing Pathway bid provide additional support to vulnerable households with a history of rough sleeping to access the most appropriate form of accommodation*

Intervention:

- ✓ *Evaluate the cold weather provision that was piloted from 3 January to 31 March 2019 and work with partners to agree future provision year on year to capture rough sleepers who are unlikely to engage with service under normal circumstances*
- ✓ *Pilot expanding the Community Warden Team to engage with rough sleepers to promote available services and motivate positive engagement to minimise time on the streets*
- ✓ *Through the West Sussex countywide Rapid Rehousing Pathway Navigators support those with a history of rough sleeping access a range of accommodation services*
- ✓ *Work with partners to maintain the provision of effective outreach services to actively intervene with those who are rough sleeping in Crawley*
- ✓ *Actively promote and participate in the multi-agency diverted giving events, aimed at educating the public to not give money directly to those who are rough sleeping and/or begging and encouraging support for local organisations that provide services to the street homeless community*
- ✓ *Through the Safer Crawley Partnership, a two year project is to start to introduce the structure and systems that support responsible giving to street homeless individuals*
- ✓ *Review the purpose and terms of reference of the monthly rough sleeping and street community meetings to assess support needs and vulnerabilities against risk, evidenced by rationale and information with agreed actions according to risk/vulnerability level.*
- ✓ *Participate in an Anti-social Behaviour Risk Assessment Conference (ASBRAC) with multi-agency attendance to take the appropriate enforcement action in relation to individuals who have been assessed as posing a risk to themselves and/or others, with positive engagement requirements to engage with services and tackle the underlying causes.*

Recovery:

- ✓ *Through the West Sussex countywide Rapid Rehousing Pathway bid increase housing opportunities for those who have had a history of rough sleeping by providing additional support through the Supported Lettings Roles to those placed in to accommodation.*
- ✓ *Support partner bids to expand the move-on accommodation provision for rough sleepers to aid their recovery*
- ✓ *Work with all providers to maximise move-on opportunities for all households into all tenures of accommodation*

1.7 PRIORITY THREE: MEETING THE NEEDS OF VULNERABLE PEOPLE

In the context of homeless applications, a person may be considered vulnerable and in priority need due to physical disability, mental illness, age, having been in care, having served in the armed forces, having been in custody or on remand, or fleeing their home due to actual or threatened violence. People who are vulnerable may require or benefit from additional support when accessing council services and where possible and appropriate, the council will endeavour to put such support in place.

Challenges

The Homelessness Review and feedback from the consultation process which formed part of it identified the following challenges to meeting the needs of vulnerable people:

- **Supply of supported housing** – there are limited opportunities for accessing supported accommodation locally into which homelessness can be prevented/relieved. Whilst there is some provision locally, the council do not have exclusive direct access or nomination rights to all of these. Across West Sussex the budgetary cuts that West Sussex County Council are having to make will have a significant impact on service provision going forward.
- **Access to health services** – demand on health services (in particular mental health services) locally can result in people struggling to access assistance as and when needed. This can affect the individual's future willingness to engage. Historically there has been also a restriction of mental health services to those who have dual diagnosis and are not addressing their alcohol or substance misuse. This resulted in individuals not being able to access mental health services as and when needed.
- **Temporary accommodation** – accessing supported accommodation for people with medium to high support needs is challenging. The nearest temporary accommodation for people with support needs is in Mid-Sussex and there is little settled accommodation within the borough to which the council has direct access or nomination rights.
- Finding both temporary and settled accommodation for people who have been in custody and who are on remand can be challenging, as accommodation providers are able to refuse nominations.
- **Tenancy sustainment** – while an individual or household being young does not necessarily make them vulnerable, if they are living independently for the first time they may benefit from support to help them acclimatise to the responsibilities that come with having a tenancy (regardless of whether living in the private rented sector or in social housing).
- **Working in isolation** – most services work in relative isolation from one another and within their own legal parameters and financial restraints. This can limit the ability to implement approaches across departments/organisations that are able to flexibly respond to situations, best meet the needs of the customer and make best use of the limited resources available.

Action Taken

1. **Multi-agency working** – the Safer Crawley Partnership is attended by the Council, West Sussex County Council Sussex Police, Sussex fire and Rescue Service, Probation Services, the Clinical Commissioning Group, and voluntary services including Victim Support, Crawley Open House and Crawley and Gatwick Business Watch. As well as having a statutory obligation to work together to tackle crime and reduce reoffending, it also focuses on the street community and protecting vulnerable individuals.

We have attended multi-agency meetings with the Police Commissioner, Police, Probation Services, prisons, youth offending institutions, and the Kent, Surrey and Sussex Community Rehabilitation Company. The purpose of the meetings is to identify the accommodation options available to ex-offenders and create positive pathways into accommodation for this client group.

We attend the Crawley Housing and Homelessness Forum, whose function is to be a place where voluntary and statutory agencies dealing with housing and homelessness within the borough can come together to discuss and identify issues of concern, to comment collectively on issues, agree actions and promote the services that are available in Crawley.

2. **Allocations policy** – the council's allocations policy has been amended so people who are in or have served in the armed forces can access social housing regardless of local connection. At the request of Government, this duty is to be extended to former partners who are also affected by not having a local connection to the area in which they have settled.

The policy provides specific move-on arrangements for vulnerable households from supported housing and the resulting vacancy is used to prevent and/or relieve homelessness for other vulnerable households requiring the support being offered.

3. **Creating pathways** – the council has been engaging with local services to identify and provide housing pathways for vulnerable groups of service users. This has been challenging given the pressures many statutory and non-statutory services are under, and is an ongoing and substantial piece of work.

We continue to develop working relationship between agencies and local mental health services in order to better assist service users with mental health issues to achieve successful outcomes.

A Hospital Discharge Worker employed by Southdown Housing through WSCC identifies housing pathways for people who are at risk of being discharged from hospital with no onward accommodation.

4. **Supported accommodation provision** – the council has been actively involved in working with countywide partners to minimise the impact of West Sussex County Council funding cuts affecting supported housing provision across the county. West Sussex County Council have reduced their funding of supported housing services from £6.4 million to £2.3 million per year from April 2020.

In light of challenging financial pressures faced by all local authorities across the county, West Sussex County Council established a Task and Finish Group to explore options for the

commissioning of supported housing services going forward. Drawing on their findings, a set of principals was established that guide the design, development, commissioning and delivery of future services:

- Build on strengths
 - Whole systems approach
 - Design develop and deliver together
 - Focused efficient and valued
 - Outcome based.
5. **Welfare benefit support** – with the introduction and roll-out of Universal Credit, the council delivered budgeting support, debt advice and advice with a benefit claims to households moving on to Universal Credit through in partnership with Citizens Advice and the Job Centre Plus.
6. **Disabled Facilities Grants** – the council has been actively involved in a countywide project to streamline the Disabled Facility Grant process and to minimise the need for households to move through property adaptations enabling them remain in their home as their needs change.

Future Action

- ✓ *Continue to work with stakeholders and partners to identify and provide clear housing pathways for certain vulnerable groups of service users, such as care leavers, prison leavers, hospital discharge, those fleeing domestic violence, young people (aged 16-17), and current/former members of the armed forces.*
- ✓ *Work in partnership with West Sussex districts and boroughs and West Sussex County Council to reconfigure and commission supported housing services to meet the needs of those that require this type of accommodation.*
- ✓ *Ensure established pathways are published and available to view by staff and the agencies involved.*
- ✓ *Develop our portfolio of temporary accommodation to include disabled adapted wheelchair accessible accommodation.*
- ✓ *Continue to engage with the hospital discharge worker to prevent vulnerable households being discharged from hospital without a personal housing plan*
- ✓ *Continue to be actively involved in the countywide Disabled Facilities Grant project to minimise the need for households to move and enable them to remain in their home as their needs change.*

1.8 PRIORITY FOUR: ACCESSING SUITABLE AND AFFORDABLE ACCOMMODATION

The housing market has seen considerable change and continues to evolve in response to local pressures and the wider economic climate. Nationally we have seen the private rental sector grow, partially in response to market conditions and partially due to the widening disparity between incomes and housing costs. As rates of home ownership decline amongst age groups who would have historically been seeking to get on the property ladder, the need to be able to access accommodation across multiple tenures into which duties under homelessness legislation can be discharged is significant.

Challenges

The homelessness review and feedback from the consultation process which formed part of it, identified the following challenges to accessing suitable and affordable housing in Crawley:

- **Welfare reforms** – the cumulative impact of welfare reforms on affordability and a households ability to access settled housing, combined with the gap between wages and/or benefits and housing costs.
- Finding affordable housing for single people, especially those under the age of 35 can be difficult, with housing options restricted to a room in a shared house.
- **The private rented sector** – mortgage lenders, letting agents and landlords continue to deny access to the private rented sector to households in receipt of benefits. Those that are able to access the sector face upfront costs (rent in advance, deposit, agency fees) of up to £2,500. In addition, some households on a low income or in receipt of benefits do not have a guarantor whose earnings would sufficiently cover the rental commitment, therefore are unable to access private rented accommodation.
- Crawley's proximity to London means that London boroughs utilise the private rented sector as it is cheaper than their own, but many offer substantial incentives to landlords for use of the accommodation.
- **Permitted development** – permitted development rights have been used to create large blocks of small units of housing that fall short of the quality developments Crawley wants for the health and wellbeing of its residents.
- **Supported accommodation** – accessing suitable settled accommodation for people with support needs can be difficult, as it may not be in the preferred location and there can be a wait.
- **Funding** – funding to statutory and non-statutory services being under threat or being cut as budgets are reduced.
- **Social housing** – registered providers of social housing are legally able to apply their own criteria for assessing nominations into their social housing and this can result in nominations being refused if criteria is not met. Local authorities do not have the ability in law to challenge registered providers unless they do not meet their legal duty to assist in the discharge of homelessness duties.
- **Temporary Accommodation** – the council have a portfolio of temporary accommodation and limited access to self-contained temporary accommodation that is wheelchair accessible. Nightly paid bed and breakfast style accommodation and is expensive for the council to use and only suitable in an emergency as it is likely to be lacking cooking and laundry facilities.

Action Taken

1. **Landlord forums** – the council run forums two to four times a year (the frequency of meetings depending on topical issues and the release of new legislation) that provide a platform for the council to engage with local landlords in the private rented sector, discuss local and current issues and deliver key messages.
2. **Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO) Licencing** – in October 2018 the law changed and now any accommodation that is occupied by five or more people from two or more households with shared facilities requires a licence. The council's private sector housing team have been working hard to ensure landlords are aware of their new responsibilities and to meet HMO licence application demands which have more than doubled.
3. **Standards in the private rented sector** – the council's Private Sector Housing Team have taken the opportunity of the change in legislation to work with a wider number of landlords to achieve compliance and raise the standard of shared accommodation in Crawley's private rented sector.
4. **Permitted development** – the council have and will continue to lobby central Government to influence and introduce regulation to permitted development so that it provides a good quality housing option that meets local demand.

The council are one of eleven local authorities taking part in a research study overseen by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government and University College London that is looking at the quality of homes delivered through permitted development rights.

5. **Housing delivery** – since the preparation and adoption of the current Crawley Borough local plan in 2015, housing delivery has been increasing, and completions have significantly exceeded the average annual requirement set out in the adopted plan (340 dwellings per annum). Consequently, Crawley comfortably passed the government's national housing delivery test in 2018, at 181 per cent.
6. **Temporary accommodation** – the council expanded its portfolio of self-contained temporary accommodation to provide high standards of accommodation, minimise the use of nightly paid temporary accommodation and keeps households within the borough.

Future Action

- ✓ *Review the Crawley Deposit Service to ensure it is being used in the most effective and efficient way. Incorporate a review of how we work with landlords to encourage them to offer their properties to service users at Local Housing Allowance rates.*
- ✓ *Continue to hold landlord forums to maintain a working dialogue with landlords in the borough.*
- ✓ *Work closely with development partners to build more affordable homes, in line with the borough's local plan.*
- ✓ *Review the allocations scheme at regular intervals to ensure that it continues to make best use of available social housing stock.*
- ✓ *Through the tenancy strategy 2019 – 2024 the council is asking registered providers to ensure that pre-tenancy assessments and offer criteria are equitable and don't hinder access to social housing.*
- ✓ *Keep the council's temporary accommodation portfolio under regular review and to ensure it continues to meet demand, is high in standard, minimises the use of nightly paid accommodation and keeps households in borough. Acquire further properties as required.*
- ✓ *To work with a wider number of landlords requiring a licence for their HMO's and to achieve high standards in HMO's*
- ✓ *Identify accommodation that requires but have not applied for a HMO licence and work with landlords to meet their legal responsibilities and improve standards where needed.*
- ✓ *Commission a housing stock condition survey to help us understand the condition of housing stock in the borough and determine how best to target action to raise standards.*

1.9 PRIORITY FIVE: PREVENTING REPEAT HOMELESSNESS

For some people, homelessness can be a revolving door of seeking assistance, accessing services, only to later become homeless again. The reasons for this vary from person to person but are often linked or attributable to the following:

- Not having the skills needed to maintain a tenancy (such as budgeting, managing debts, understanding utilities, savings and financial products).
- Not having support in place to help sustain the tenancy.
- Poor life choices (such as breaching their tenancy agreement, anti-social or criminal behaviour).
- Alcohol and/or substance misuse, especially if in conjunction with other factors such as poor mental health.

Challenges

The homelessness review and feedback from the consultation process which formed part of it, identified the following challenges to preventing repeat homeless:

- **Tenancy sustainment** – the ability to access tenancy sustainment/support, regardless of tenure. The availability of tenancy sustainment support services. The timing of tenancy sustainment/support (whether support is offered at the beginning of the tenancy or not until the point the tenancy has started to fail). The duration of tenancy sustainment/support (some people may need ongoing support, rather than it being limited to the first few weeks of the tenancy for example). The type of tenancy support available, as some people may have specific needs (if living independently for the first time for example).
- **Life choices** – neither statutory nor non-statutory services can prevent a tenant from making poor life choices or misusing substances. Support can only be put in place to minimise the likelihood of such events, but ultimately it is the individual's decision to act in a manner that will put their tenancy at risk.
- **No fault evictions** – the private rental sector is buoyant and a household may be subject to a no fault eviction from any point after the end of the fixed term. It is not possible to prevent or influence this as it is a consequence of wider market conditions.

Action Taken

1. **Support** – when a household is placed into temporary accommodation with known support needs, where possible and with the agreement of the household, support has been provided by an external agency on behalf of the council.

Where a household is assisted to access private rented accommodation via the Crawley Deposit Service, if there are known support needs they will be offered support by an external agency on behalf of the council.

Future Action

- ✓ *Through the tenancy strategy 2019 – 2024 we encourage registered providers to provide tenancy sustainment support, in particular helping tenants gain skills that will assist them in seeking employment, financial inclusion, wellbeing programs, and tailored support. We also encourage providers to consider the provision of funds to groups/organisations that work in and support the wider community.*
- ✓ *Through the tenancy strategy 2019 – 2024 the council encourage registered providers to ensure that homelessness prevention is at the core of all tenancy policies and procedures, especially those in relation to renewing and ending a tenancy.*
- ✓ *Carry out a review of the support services we provide to service users and see whether there are opportunities to provide a more targeted and efficient service.*
- ✓ *Pilot a Tenancy Sustainment Officer role to help prevent homelessness and repeat homelessness.*

1.10 DELIVERING THE STRATEGY

Consultation

Section 1.14 of the homelessness review comprehensively describes the consultation process that took place with attendees of the Housing and Homelessness Forum, registered providers of social housing with housing stock in the borough, statutory and non-statutory services, the charitable and voluntary sectors, elected members and the public. Consultation feedback was used to shape the strategy and determine its priorities, which in turn leads the work of the action plan. Further consultation took place with stakeholders and partners across the statutory and non-statutory sectors to agree actions for the action plan.

Working in partnership

Whilst the provision of services to homeless households is a statutory duty of the council, in practice the delivery of the service benefits from the support of many formal and informal partners including West Sussex County Council, registered providers, support organisations and agencies including the voluntary and charitable sectors. Moving forward we need to continue to work closely with these partners if we are to realise the ambitions of the strategy. Partnership working across the statutory and non-statutory sectors will become increasingly critical to efficiently utilise resources and deliver effective outcomes for customers.

Action plan

As part of their duties under the Homelessness Act 2002, when developing a homelessness strategy local authorities should develop an effective action plan to help ensure that the objectives set out in the homelessness strategy are achieved. The action plan set out in part two of the strategy expands upon how we will work with partner agencies to deliver the actions identified in the strategy between 2019 and 2024.

Monitoring and review

The strategy has been developed in consultation with partners and stakeholders, who will continue to be involved in the delivery of the strategy and action plan. Every January we will jointly review the previous year's progress against the targets and outcomes set out in the action plan, and produce an update that will be published on the council's website.

PART TWO - ACTION PLAN 2019 – 2024

Whilst the work has been split into priorities, many actions overlap multiple priorities but have not been repeated in each section, therefore the action plan should be considered in its entirety. These actions may be reviewed and replaced following an annual review. The first annual review will be held in January 2021.

Priority one: preventing and relieving homelessness							
	Action	Desired outcomes	Lead	Partners	Resources	Target, timescale and milestones	Monitoring and evaluation
1.1	Keep allocations scheme under review.	<i>Ensure the allocation scheme continues to make best use of available social housing stock and minimise the use of temporary accommodation.</i>	<i>Housing Needs Manager (CBC)</i>	<i>Head of Strategic Housing (CBC), Housing Options Manager (CBC)</i>	<i>No financial resources identified</i>	<i>Review in response to relevant legislative changes or when temporary accommodation quotas are triggered</i>	<i>Annual outcomes monitored</i>
1.2	Create and facilitate opportunities to work in partnership to prevent and relieve homelessness in both Crawley and across West Sussex.	<i>Maximise outcomes across authorities by sharing best practice and pooling resources.</i>	<i>Housing Options Manager (CBC)</i>	<i>All willing partner agencies</i>	<i>Dependent on proposal or opportunity</i>	<i>Review annually in Jan/Feb of each year and in response to relevant changes</i>	<i>Annual update with outcomes achieved</i>

1.3	Review the Crawley Deposit Service to ensure that the allocation of properties is aligned to meet the requirements of the Homelessness Reduction Act.	<i>Properties are allocated in the most cost effective way to the Council to maximise opportunities to prevent and relieve homelessness.</i>	<i>Private Sector Housing Manager (CBC)</i>	<i>Housing Options Team Leader (CBC), Performance Policy and Project Officer (CBC)</i>	<i>No additional financial resources identified</i>	<i>To agree and propose changes by end March 2020</i>	<i>Progress monitored via Strategic Housing Management Team meeting, feeding into annual review</i>
1.4	Evaluate the outcomes of the support service funded to prevent homelessness from temporary accommodation and Crawley deposit facilitated tenancies.	<i>Ensure the service continues to meet its objectives and provide value for money.</i>	<i>Housing Options Manager (CBC)</i>	<i>Private Sector Housing Manager (CBC), Performance, Policy and Project Officer (CBC), Transform Housing</i>	<i>Dependant on evaluation and service provider</i>	<i>Review annually</i>	<i>Annual updates with outcomes achieved</i>
1.5	Measure demands coming into the Housing Options Service.	<i>Structure the service to ensure that it continues to meet demand.</i>	<i>Housing Options Manager (CBC)</i>	<i>Housing Options Team Leader (CBC), Performance Policy and Project Officer (CBC)</i>	<i>Dependent on measures outcome</i>	<i>Review annually</i>	<i>Measures monitored via Strategic Housing Management Team Meeting</i>

1.6	Explore and evaluate alternative IT systems.	<i>Ensure system provides effective and reliable functionality to deliver our Homelessness Reduction Act duties and deliver value for money.</i>	<i>Housing Needs Manager (CBC)</i>	<i>Housing Options Manager (CBC), Housing Options Team Leader (CBC), Performance, Policy and Project Officer (CBC), ICT Team (CBC)</i>	<i>Dependent on IT solution</i>	<i>Scope project Nov – Dec 2019 Start project Jan 2020</i>	<i>Project board would be established to monitor progress. To be picked up in year two review of this strategy (January 2021)</i>
1.7	Develop digital solutions for customers and staff.	<i>Enable staff to communicate effectively and efficiently with customers.</i>	<i>Performance, Policy and Project Officer (CBC)</i>	<i>Strategic Housing Management Team (CBC), ICT Team (CBC)</i>	<i>To be identified</i>	<i>Review annually and in response to relevant changes</i>	<i>Annual update with outcomes achieved</i>
1.8	Review the referrals received through the duty to refer to establish where further work needs to be completed in terms of links and training	<i>Increase the quality of referrals and ensure agencies are aware of their statutory responsibilities and provide training/information where required.</i>	<i>Performance, Policy and Project Officer (CBC)</i>	<i>Housing Options Manager (CBC), West Sussex district and borough Councils, all agencies with a duty to refer</i>	<i>Staff resources (time)</i>	<i>Start project January 2020</i>	<i>To be picked up in year two review of this strategy (January 2021)</i>

1.9	Evaluate the outcomes achieved by the Homeless Prevention Money Advice Advisor against the cost of funding the service on an annual basis.	<i>Ensure the service continues to meet its objectives and provide value for money.</i>	<i>Housing Options Manager (CBC)</i>	<i>Housing Options Team Leader (CBC), Performance, Policy and Project Officer (CBC), Citizens Advice</i>	<i>Dependent on evaluation and service provider</i>	<i>Review annually</i>	<i>Annual updates with outcomes achieved</i>
1.10	Highlight the issues of affordability caused by the difference between the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates and actual rental charges in Crawley with central government at every opportunity.	<i>Feed into central Government LHA review in 2020 when current freeze is lifted. Change to central Government policy to bring LHA rates and private sector rents closer and more affordable.</i>	<i>All relevant CBC staff</i>	<i>All agencies in Crawley</i>	<i>Staff resources (time)</i>	<i>In response to relevant Government consultations</i>	<i>Changes to central Government policy</i>

Priority two: tackling rough sleeping							
	Action	Desired outcomes	Lead	Partners	Resources	Target, timescale and milestones	Monitoring and evaluation
2.1	Review the purpose and terms of reference of the monthly multi-agency rough sleeping and street community meetings. Assess support needs and vulnerabilities against risk, evidenced by rationale and information, with agreed actions according to risk/vulnerability level.	<p><i>Engage with and assist rough sleepers off the street and into accommodation and/or treatment pathways.</i></p> <p><i>Halve the number of rough sleepers in Crawley from 40 in March 2019 to 20 or less in March 2022 in accordance with our corporate priorities and the Government's rough sleeper strategy.</i></p>	<i>Housing Options Manager (CBC), ASB and Hate Crime Co-Ordinator (Sussex Police)</i>	<i>All attendees of the rough sleeping and street community meetings, all relevant agencies in Crawley, all relevant CBC staff</i>	<p><i>Current financial resources available to be used.</i></p> <p><i>Further funding to be identified as required.</i></p>	<i>Halve the number of rough sleepers in Crawley from 40 in March 2019 to fewer than 20 in March 2022</i>	<i>Progress to be monitored at the monthly multi-agency rough sleeping and street community meetings</i>
2.2	Evaluate the extended cold weather provision piloted from 3 January to 31 March 2019. Work with partners on future provision, initially winter 2019/20.	<i>Identify winter Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) provision for winter 2019/2020</i>	<i>Housing Options Manager (CBC)</i>	<i>Director at Crawley Open House plus any additional relevant potential partners</i>	<i>Financial resources to be identified as part of evaluation</i>	<i>Provision agreed ready for winter 2019/2020</i>	<i>Reviewed and evaluated annually</i>

2.3	Actively promote and participate in multi-agency diverted giving events, aimed at educating and encouraging support for local organisations that provide services to the street homeless community rather than giving directly to those who are rough sleeping and/or begging.	<i>Inform the public. Financial resources are directed at charities that are able to achieve wider reaching outcomes with the funds.</i>	<i>Communications (CBC), Chair & Co-Chair of the multi-agency rough sleeping and street community meetings</i>	<i>All attendees of the multi-agency rough sleeping and street community meetings</i>	<i>Marketing, materials</i>	<i>Ongoing project</i>	<i>Annual monitoring of outcomes achieved</i>
2.4	Participate in an Anti-social Behaviour Risk Assessment Conference (ASBRAC) with multi-agency attendance.	<i>Appropriate enforcement action in relation to rough sleepers who have been assessed as posing a risk to themselves and/or others, with positive engagement requirements to engage with services and tackle the underlying causes and reduce rough sleeping and begging in Crawley.</i>	<i>ASB and Hate Crime co-Ordinator at Sussex Police</i>	<i>All Multi-Agency Partners and relevant representatives</i>	<i>Staff time. Other resources to be identified as required</i>	<i>To reduce reported incidents of anti-social behaviour in relation to rough sleepers and the street community</i>	<i>Progress reviewed at monthly ASBRAC meetings</i>

2.5	Through the 12 month countywide Rapid Rehousing Pathway bid provide additional support to vulnerable households with a history of rough sleeping to access the most appropriate form of accommodation.	<i>Reduce the number of rough sleepers and those at risk of sleeping rough across the county by assessing needs quickly and be offered appropriate support to settle into a home with continuing support alongside. Working with a cohort of 160-180 rough sleepers through a resettlement pathway and into accommodation with support.</i>	<i>Crawley Open House, Stonepillow and Turning Tides delivering the bid by employing five supported lettings officers and four Navigators</i>	<i>West Sussex district and borough councils, WSCC and service provider representatives from Crawley Open House, Stonepillow and Turning Tides.</i>	<i>Financial RRP bid award of £336,000</i>	<i>Steering group made up of West Sussex district and borough councils, WSCC, service provider representatives (Crawley Open House, Stonepillow and Turning Tides)</i>	<i>MHCLG Bid Returns for 12 month pilot.</i>
2.6	Submit move-on fund bid to Homes England	<i>Generate stage one move-on provision in the wider move-on pathway to assist more households to independent living</i>	<i>Director, Crawley Open House</i>	<i>Crawley Borough Council</i>	<i>£215,767 applied for</i>	<i>End of September 2019 – decision Beginning January 2020 - build starts End of March 2020 - completion</i>	<i>Quarterly</i>

2.7	Two year project to introduce the structure and systems that support responsible giving to street homeless individuals engaged with local organisations.	<i>Capture modern methods of giving and the use of technology to ensure that funds are personalised to those in need.</i>	<i>Community Services Manager (CBC)</i>	<i>Safer Crawley Partnership</i>	<i>£35,000 Safer Crawley Partnership funding</i>	<i>Project ends 2021</i>	<i>Quarterly Safer Crawley Partnership meetings</i>
2.8	Expansion of the Community Warden Team to support a co-ordinated action plan in the town centre and Memorial Gardens	<i>Tackle and reduce aggressive begging and anti-social behaviour in the town centre associated with rough sleepers on the streets</i>	<i>Community Warden Manager (CBC)</i>	<i>Community Wardens (CBC), Sussex Police, Safer Crawley Partnership, All relevant CBC Staff</i>	<i>Temporary funding of 2 additional part-time wardens for six months at a cost £34,000 funded through the Safer Crawley Partnership</i>	<i>Posts filled from Summer 2019 for six months</i>	<i>Evaluation at end of six month period and next steps agreed</i>
2.9	Work in partnership to maintain the provision of effective outreach services in Crawley.	<i>Actively engage with those who are rough sleeping in Crawley to access accommodation and reduce rough sleeping.</i>	<i>Director, Crawley Open House</i>	<i>Funding and Commissioning Officer (CBC), Safer Crawley Partnership, Housing Options Manager, Multi-Agency Rough Sleeper Group</i>	<i>£28,000 from CBC Community £28,000 from Safer Crawley Partnership,</i>	<i>Identify further funding opportunities as current safer Crawley Partnership funding expires in December 2019. CBC grant is awarded on an annual basis</i>	<i>Quarterly returns, Annual Review and annual applications</i>

2.10	To work as part of a task force to improve the town centre and create a sense of safety, neighbourhood and community.	<i>Ensure the town is clean, safe and well maintained by working in partnership to ensure the safety of people living and working in Crawley</i>	<i>Leader (CBC)</i>	<i>Members of the Task Force</i>	<i>To be identified</i>	<i>To meet as agreed</i>	<i>Annual review</i>
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Priority three: meeting the needs of vulnerable people							
	Action	Desired outcomes	Lead	Partners	Resources	Target, timescale and milestones	Monitoring and evaluation
3.1	Continue to engage with mental health hospital discharge teams to ensure an effective working protocol is in place.	<i>Enable managed moves from mental health hospitals and prevent emergency discharge presentations.</i>	<i>Housing Co-Ordinator - Mental Health (WSCC), Housing Options Team Leader (CBC)</i>	<i>Hospital Discharge Worker (Langley Green Hospital)</i>	<i>WSCC currently fund Hospital Discharge Worker at Langley Green Hospital</i>	<i>Meeting September 2019, draft protocol ready by end December 2020, agreed protocol in place end of March 2020</i>	<i>Leads to evaluate effectiveness of new protocol quarterly</i>
3.2	Through the forum, seize opportunities for reciprocal training for Housing Options staff with local groups and organisations that work with vulnerable people (such as those affected by poor mental health, substance misuse, sexual exploitation or domestic abuse).	<i>Mutually beneficial training to help staff across the statutory and voluntary sectors gain a wider understanding of the issues service users may be facing and the support services available to them locally.</i>	<i>Housing and Homelessness Forum</i>	<i>Partners that attend the Housing and Homelessness Forum</i>	<i>Staff time</i>	<i>To start April 2020</i>	<i>Progress to be monitored via Crawley's Housing and Homelessness Forum</i>

3.3	Create and share a directory of statutory, non-statutory, voluntary and charitable services that assist people affected by homelessness in Crawley.	<i>Address issue of charitable and voluntary organisations knowing what services are available locally.</i>	<i>Housing and Homelessness Forum</i>	<i>Partners that attend the Housing and Homelessness Forum</i>	<i>Staff time</i>	<i>The group meet quarterly so the project can start in December 2019</i>	<i>Attendees of the Forum will be responsible for contributing to and updating the directory on an ongoing basis</i>
3.4	Expand and develop our portfolio of temporary accommodation to include disabled adapted temporary accommodation in borough.	<i>Self-contained disabled adapted temporary accommodation provision within the Borough.</i>	<i>Housing Options Manager (CBC)</i>	<i>Current and potential temporary accommodation providers</i>	<i>Financial resources to be identified</i>	<i>Project starts January 2020</i>	<i>Annual update</i>
3.5	Continue to be actively involved in the countywide Disabled Facilities Grant project.	<i>Help households live in their own home easily and with dignity with the right adaptation when needed</i>	<i>West Sussex County Adaptations Manager (Chichester District Council), Head of Strategic Housing (CBC)</i>	<i>Private Sector Housing Manager (CBC), Project Working group, Steering Group, All West Sussex district and borough Councils, WSCC, Public Health and NHS</i>	<i>Annual Disabled Facilities Grant for CBC £927,566 in 2019/20</i>	<i>Approval for the revised countywide common policy anticipated autumn 2019. Implementation from January 2020. Review of policy impact and assessment of potential for single pooled budget August/September 2020</i>	<i>Working group meets bi-monthly, Steering group meets quarterly. Project overseen by the countywide Chief Executives Board</i>

Priority four: delivering and accessing suitable and affordable accommodation

	Action	Desired outcomes	Lead	Partners	Resources	Target, timescale and milestones	Monitoring and evaluation
4.1	Highlight the issues with accommodation created through use of permitted development rights with central government at every opportunity. Consider the use of Article 4 directives to limit permitted development in Crawley where necessary criteria is met.	<i>Change to central Government policy so that good quality and healthy accommodation is provided and limiting permitted development use in inappropriate areas in Crawley.</i>	<i>Head of Economy and Planning (CBC)</i>	<i>All relevant CBC staff and other agencies (including but not limited to Sussex Police, CCG, Health and Wellbeing Board, and third sector agencies)</i>	<i>Time and opportunity</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Evaluate additional units of permitted development annually in Crawley and progress on Article 4 directives</i>
4.2	Keep the temporary accommodation portfolio under review to ensure it meets the council's statutory duties.	<i>Use and cost of nightly paid temporary accommodation is minimised.</i>	<i>Housing Options Manager (CBC), Performance Policy and Project Officer (CBC)</i>	<i>Housing Needs Manager (CBC), Homeless Accommodation Officers (CBC), Housing Development and Enabling Manager (CBC), Head of Crawley Homes and key staff, registered provider partners</i>	<i>Staff resources (time), financial resources to be identified as required</i>	<i>Ongoing annual monitoring</i>	<i>Annual review Quarterly liaison meetings with registered provider partners</i>

4.3	As part of the review of the Crawley Deposit Service, investigate opportunities to work with landlords in Crawley to maximise access to the private rented sector.	<i>Maximise access to the private rented sector for the purpose of discharging duties under homelessness legislation.</i>	<i>Private Sector Housing Manager (CBC)</i>	<i>Housing Options Team Leader (CBC), Performance Policy and Project Officer (CBC), landlords</i>	<i>To be identified</i>	<i>To agree and propose changes by end March 2020</i>	<i>Progress monitored via Strategic Housing Management Team Meeting, feeding into annual review</i>
4.4	Work with partners and registered providers to enable and deliver new suitable and affordable homes across all tenures.	<i>Homes built that go towards meeting Crawley's objectively assessed housing needs.</i>	<i>Housing Development & Enabling Manager (CBC)</i>	<i>Developers, registered providers</i>	<i>Dependent on project</i>	<i>Project deadlines are site specific. Overall delivery in line with local plan and relevant documents</i>	<i>Progress monitored via Strategic Housing Management Team meeting, feeding into annual review</i>
4.5	Participate in study with MHCLG and University College London regarding the quality of homes delivered through permitted development rights.	<i>To convince Government to revoke residential permitted development rights or at least make them subject to nationally described space standards</i>	<i>Head of Economy and Planning (CBC)</i>	<i>MHCLG, UCL</i>	<i>Staffing resources</i>	<i>UCL work complete end Oct 2019 Review complete end Dec 2019</i>	<i>Conclusions of study /impact on Government policy</i>

Priority five: preventing repeat homelessness							
	Action	Desired outcomes	Lead	Partners	Resources	Target timescale and milestones	Monitoring and evaluation
5.1	Review the support services provided to intervene early to prevent homelessness.	<i>Provision of tailored support (such as tenancy sustainment and debt advice).</i>	<i>Housing Options Manager (CBC), Housing Options Team Leader (CBC), Performance Policy and Project Officer (CBC)</i>	<i>External providers of support</i>	<i>Financial resources to be identified</i>	<i>Review prior to current contract expiry on 31st March 2020</i>	<i>Annual and in accordance with procurement requirements</i>
5.2	Where possible and appropriate, explore options to signpost service users to organisations that can help them back into employment, education or training.	<i>Through the provision of tailored support, service users will be assisted to make positive life choices.</i>	<i>Employ Crawley Partnership, Operations Co-Ordinator (CBC)</i>	<i>External support provider, including multi-agency forums</i>	<i>Time, financial resources to be identified</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Annual review</i>

5.3	Recognising that homelessness often goes hand in hand with other issues outside of our statutory remit, continue to work with partners and the voluntary and charitable sectors to assist service users to access relevant services.	<i>Through the provision of tailored support, service users will be assisted to access services that can provide them with support outside of our statutory remit.</i>	<i>All relevant CBC staff</i>	<i>All agencies in Crawley</i>	<i>Staff time</i>	<i>Continual and ongoing</i>	<i>Annual review as part of wider review of available services in Crawley</i>
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ANNEX - HOMELESSNESS REVIEW

1.1 IN BRIEF

The results of this homelessness review ('the review') is the basis upon which Crawley Borough Council has formulated its strategy.

Key Findings

- **Private rented sector** – landlords and letting agencies remain reluctant to let to households in receipt of benefits. Universal credit is compounding this issue due to concerns about tenant arrears. Upfront costs can equate to more than £2,500 and rents are on average £1,070pcm, 28 per cent higher than the Local Housing Allowance (equating to a shortfall of over £2,500 per annum). This leaves the sector largely inaccessible to households on low incomes or in receipt of benefits.
- **Housing market** – in Crawley the average asking price for a property increased by approximately 40 per cent between 2014 and 2019 to approx. £280,600. Residents can expect to pay around 11 times their annual household earnings to purchase an average priced property in Crawley, making home ownership largely unattainable to households on low incomes.
- **Supply of housing** – while more than 800 homes at social and intermediate rents were developed between 2013/2014 and 2018/2019, the supply of housing is still unable to meet the demand. Approximately 600 social homes will become available for letting each year, but there are more than 2,000 households on the housing register.
- **Housing stock** – there is a mismatch between the size of homes within Crawley and the size of households that live here. More than half the homes in Crawley have three or more bedrooms but half of households are comprised of one or two people. Whilst permitted development has led to the creation of more homes [predominantly studios and one or two bed flats], some are inadequate in terms of size, quality or location, thereby not meeting local housing need or supporting the creation of sustainable communities.
- **Homelessness** – more than 1,200 households approach the council on an annual basis looking for advice and assistance regarding housing and homelessness. Parental eviction and the end of assured shorthold tenancies remain the predominant causes of homelessness within Crawley.
- **Rough sleeping** – there is a local and national trend in the rising number of people sleeping rough. This is not believed to be attributable to one specific issue, but a variety of complex factors, such as the impact of welfare reforms, rising housing costs, mental health issues, and substance addictions, against decreasing resources and supported housing provision.
- **Future funding of housing related support services** – pressure on budgets is placing supported accommodation and services at risk, requiring new models of service delivery or alternative funding streams in order to continue to deliver vital services and pathways across West Sussex.

1.2 INTRODUCTION

The homelessness review ('the review') forms the basis of the council's response to its statutory duties under the Homelessness Act 2002. All local authorities are required to conduct a review of homelessness in their district to determine the extent to which the population in the district is homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, assess the likely extent in the future, identify what is currently being done and by whom, and identify what resources are available to prevent and tackle homelessness. The findings of the review form the basis of the homelessness strategy ('the strategy') and guide the work of the action plan. This strategy underpins the council's corporate priority 2018-2022 to deliver affordable homes for Crawley and reduce homelessness.

Achievements

The council continuously seeks to improve its services to those who present to the council as homeless or at risk of homelessness. Some key achievements during the period of the previous homelessness strategy 2014-2019 are:

The prevention and relief of homelessness: more than 1000 households were assisted to remain in their own home. A further 1800 households were assisted into alternative accommodation

Discharging main homelessness duty: nearly 950 households who had a main duty accepted were assisted into social housing or the private rented sector

Supply of new homes: more than 800 new homes at social and intermediate rents were delivered by the council and registered providers across the borough

Review methodology

The review took place in late 2018/early 2019 and utilise a range of methods to collect information about homelessness within Crawley, as detailed below. The response to this consultation can be found in section 1.14 of this review.

- Statistical analysis of internal data and external data as referenced.
- A consultation event to inform the strategic direction of the action plan and our areas of focus for the next five years. A variety of representatives attended from a broad range of services who are involved with or have an interest in housing and homelessness issues in Crawley.
- A survey of registered providers who have housing stock within Crawley.
- A survey of elected members and the public to ascertain their views on housing and homelessness within Crawley.

The review also incorporates the legislative framework that sets the national agenda on homelessness, welfare reforms that shape the narrative of our customers and the local context in which services are delivered.

1.3 LOCAL CONTEXT

Demographic: Crawley is a compact new town of 40km² with a population of approximately 111,600 (as of 2017). Historically there has been a mismatch between the size of homes available in the town and the size of households living here, as shown in table one. More than half of the homes in Crawley have three bedrooms or more (64%), and yet the majority of households (59%) are comprised of one or two people.

Table 1: Size of households in Crawley Borough compared to property size

	1	2	3	4	5 or more
<i>Crawley's household size</i>	28%	31%	17%	15%	8%
<i>Number of bedrooms in Crawley's housing stock</i>	13%	23%	48.5%	13%	2.5%

Source: [Census 2011](#) (please note percentages rounded to nearest whole number)

Housing stock – the 2011 census identified that terraced housing makes up the largest share of housing stock in Crawley (at 42 per cent), with the rest comprising flats (23 per cent), semi-detached properties (21 per cent) and detached properties (14 per cent). A proliferation of smaller units created through permitted development rights (predominantly studios and one or two bedroom units) and the sub-division of larger properties into flats/apartments is likely to have impacted these figures, in particular increasing the number of smaller flats.

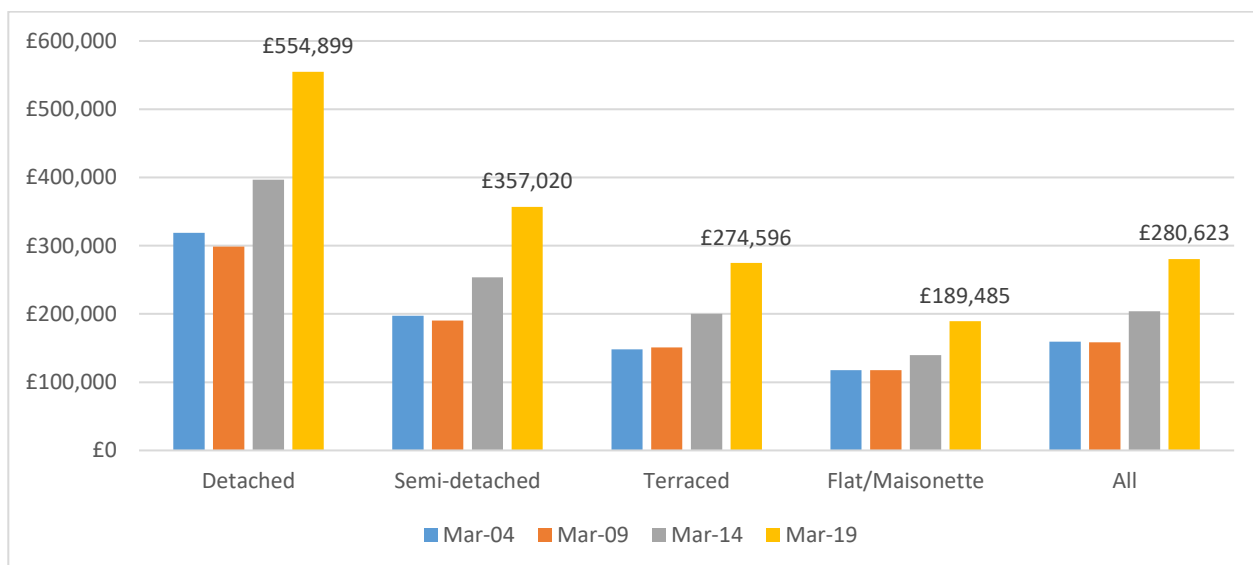
Tenure mix – at the time of the 2011 Census, 59 per cent of dwellings (more than 25,000 properties) in Crawley were owner-occupied, 25 per cent (nearly 11,000 properties) were affordable (social rent, affordable rent or shared ownership), 15 per cent were privately rented (over 6,000 properties) and 1 per cent were living rent free. In 2017/2018 19.5 per cent of households in England lived in the private rented sector (source: [English Housing Survey](#)). It is likely that the private rented sector in Crawley has grown since the 2011 census and more closely reflects the national picture

Economy and employment – Crawley is the largest economic centre in the northern West Sussex sub-region). In 2017 the employment rate in Crawley stood at 77.8 per cent. Of the 95,500 jobs within the Borough, 73 per cent are in services (distribution, hotels, transport, communications, banking and finance) of which Gatwick Airport accounts for approximately 25,000 jobs directly. Average annual earnings in Crawley were £33,493 in 2018, having changed little since that of £33,004 in 2013 (source: [Centre for Cities](#)).

Housing market – chart 1 shows how property prices in Crawley have changed in the fifteen years between 2004 and 2019. Crawley's property prices are below the average for West Sussex and the south east, but approximately £40,000 above the national average for England.

The objective assessment of Crawley's housing and employment needs (published by Chilmark Consulting in March 2015) found that 65 per cent of newly forming households in Crawley are unable to buy without financial subsidy and 55 per cent are unable to rent without financial subsidy. This can lead to people remaining at home for longer, leading to overcrowding/over-occupancy (which is a market signal of unrealised potential demand for housing within existing households).

Chart 1: Crawley property asking prices



Source: [UK House Price Index](#)

Table two looks at the affordability of average priced properties in Crawley. An average priced flat or maisonette is affordable with one income if earning the average wage of £33,493 or more, however buying a house requires two incomes or a much higher than average salary.

Table 2: cost of purchasing a home in Crawley

	Property price*	Deposit (of 20%)**	Mortgage per month***	Approx. household earnings required to purchase property****
Detached	£554,899	£110,980	£2,368	£94,700
Semi-detached	£357,020	£71,404	£1,524	£61,000
Terraced	£274,596	£54,919	£1,172	£47,000
Flat/Maisonette	£189,485	£37,897	£809	£32,500

* Based on average property prices in March 2019, source [UK House Price Index](#)

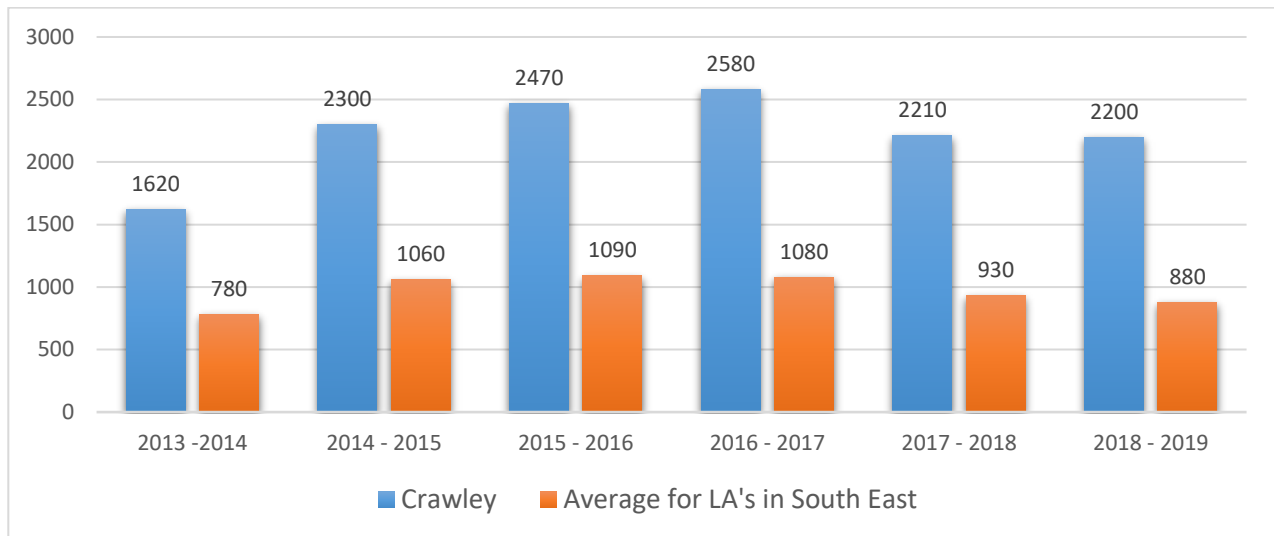
**Based on average deposit size in south east of approx. 20%

***Based on a 25 year term repayment mortgage with an interest rate of 3%

**** Based on mortgage payments being 30% of total household gross earnings

Migration – Crawley’s buoyant economy and labour market attracts people wishing to move to and settle in the UK, with 20 per cent of residents born outside of the UK (source: [Office for National Statistics](#)). National insurance number registrations in Crawley are elevated in comparison with an average of local authorities across the south east as shown in chart two. This is likely to be due to the growth of the town and the prevalence of jobs in the area.

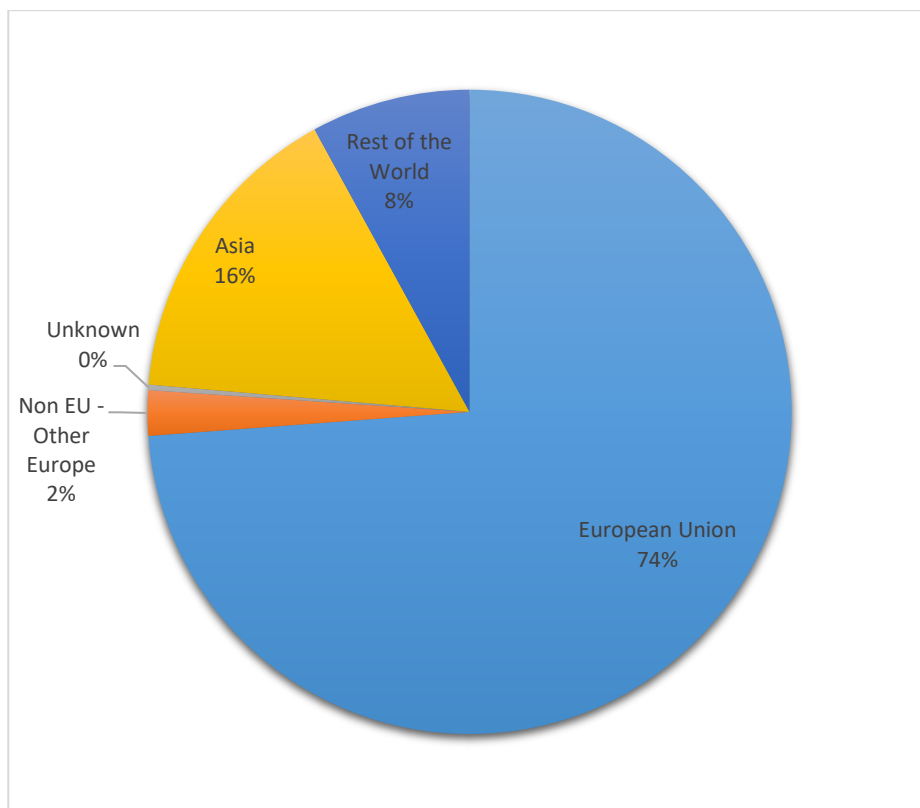
Chart 2: national insurance number registrations in Crawley



Source: Department for Work and Pensions via www.lginform.local.gov.uk/

A breakdown of the regions from which national insurance applicants were from in 2018-2019 is shown in chart three. This shows that the majority of migration into Crawley is from within the European Union with the remaining fifth being from the rest of the world. The impact leaving the European Union over the next few years will have on migration into Crawley remains to be seen.

Chart 3: origins of non UK national insurance number registrants in Crawley in 2018-2019

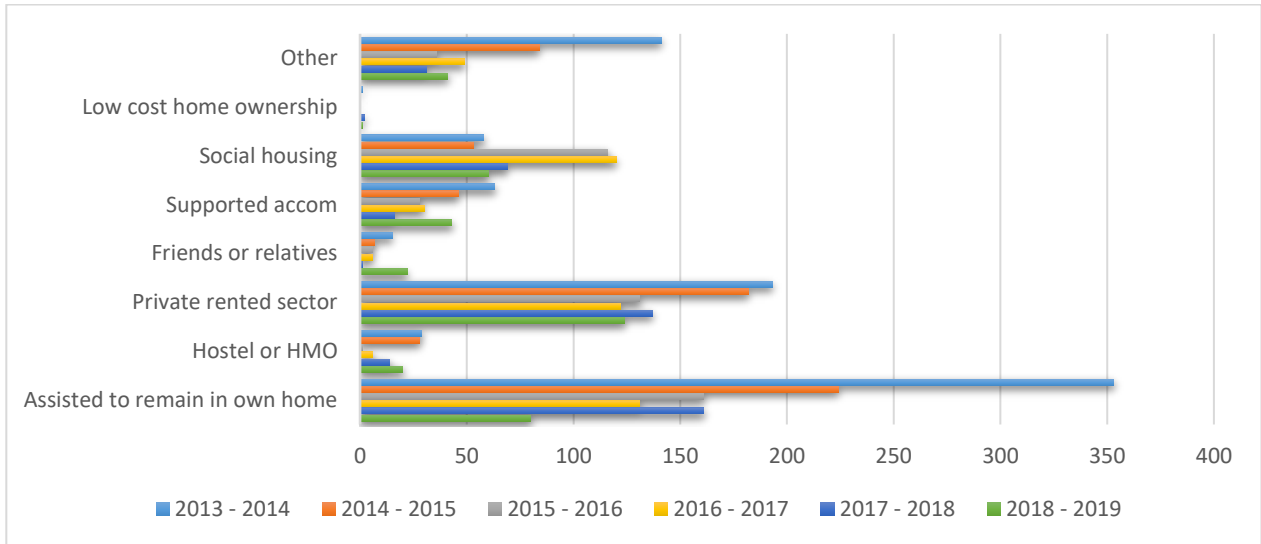


Source: Department for Work and Pensions via www.lginform.local.gov.uk/

1.4 HOMELESS PREVENTION AND RELIEF

Between 2013/2014 and 2018/2019, the council dealt with more than 9,500 requests for advice and assistance regarding housing and homelessness. The predominant causes of homelessness were the loss of a tenancy in the private rented sector and eviction from the parental home. More than 1,100 households were assisted to remain in their own home and 2100 into alternative accommodation, as shown in chart four.

Chart 4: prevention and relief of homelessness

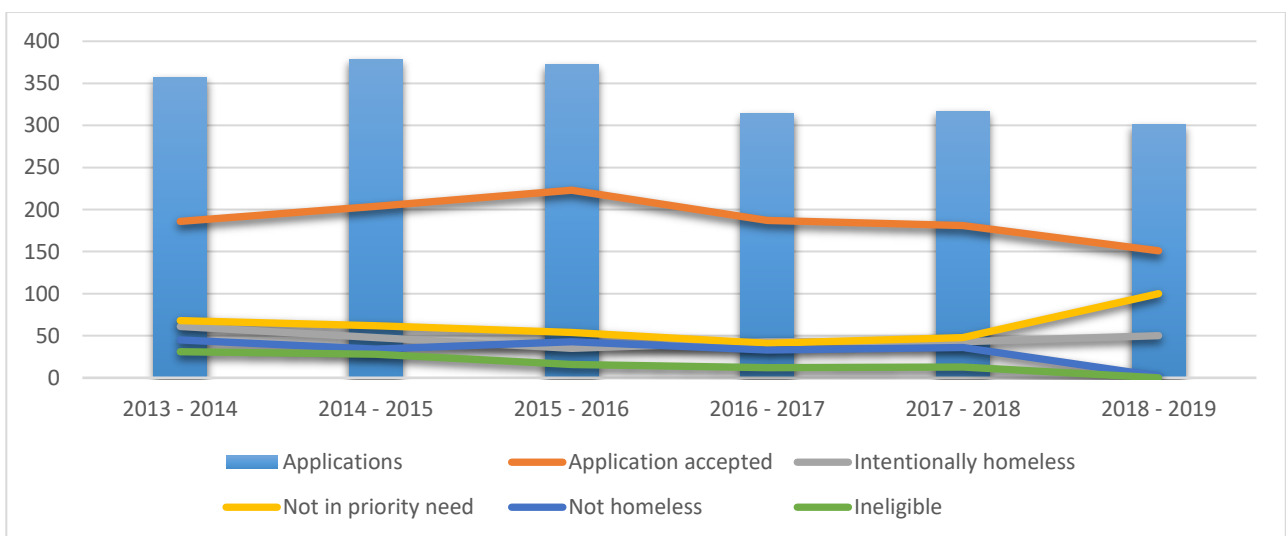


Source: Crawley Borough Council

1.5 HOMELESS APPLICATIONS

Of the 9,500+ households that approached the council, more than 2,000 went on to make a homeless application, as shown in chart five, approximately 900 households had their homeless application rejected and were offered advice and assistance and referred to other services or organisations where possible.

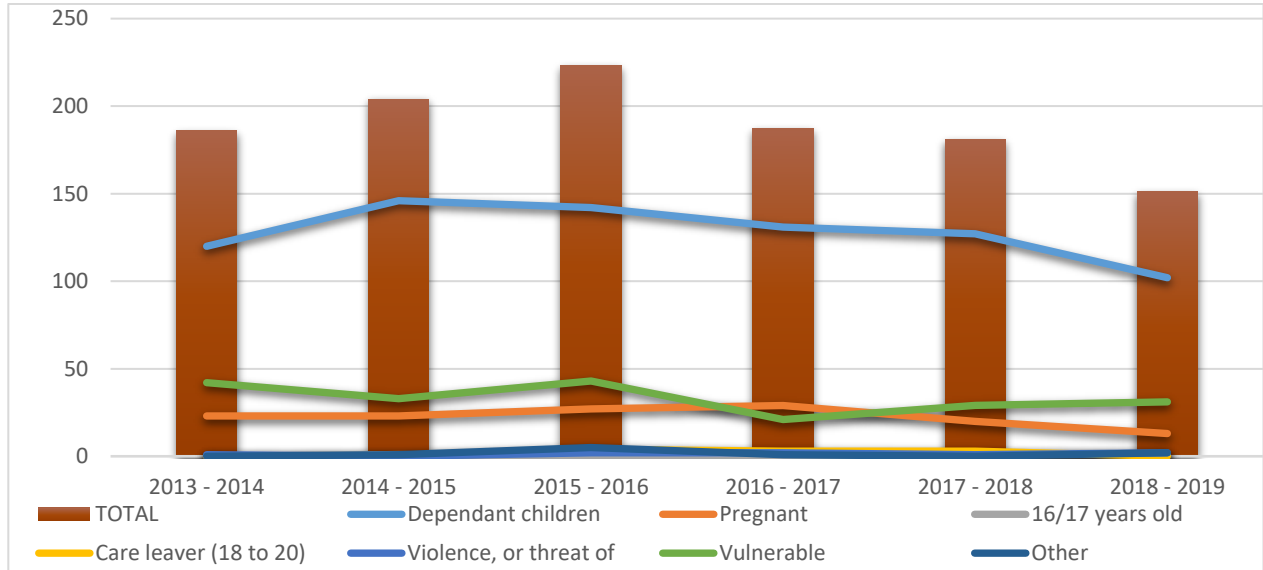
Chart 5: homeless applications and their decisions



Source: Crawley Borough Council

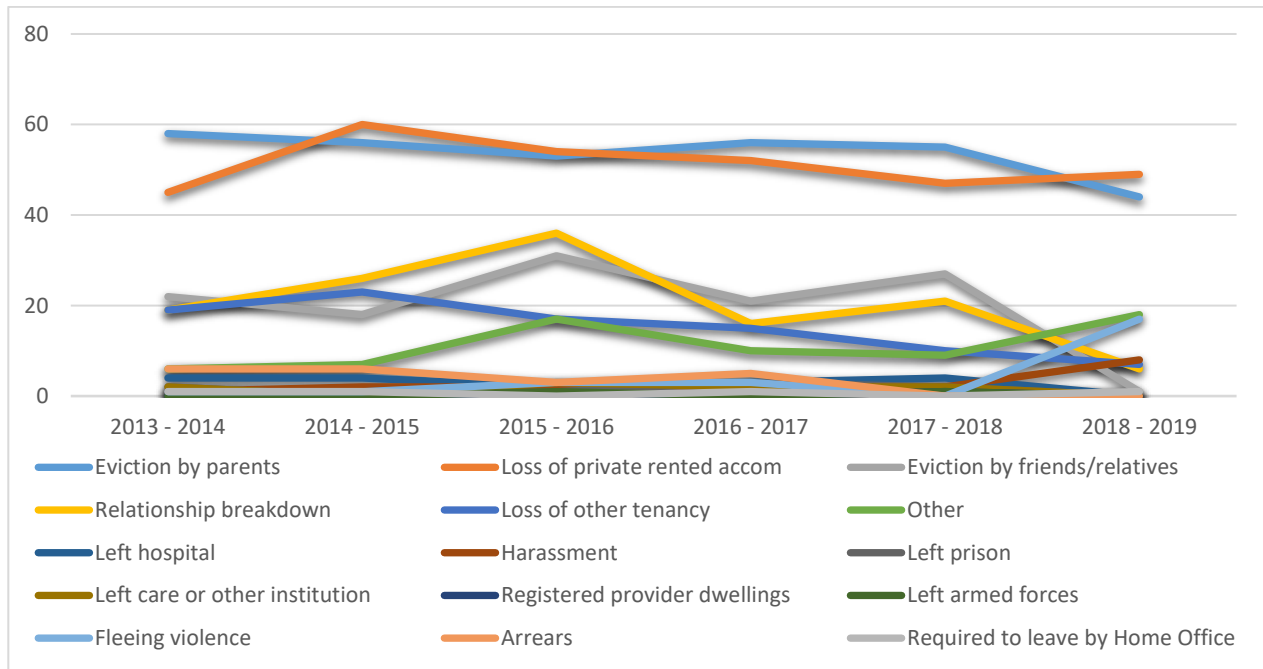
Over the past six years approximately 1,100 applicants had a homeless application accepted. The majority of which were in priority need due to the presence of dependent children within the household (see chart six) and homeless due to the loss of an assured shorthold tenancy in the private rented sector or eviction from the parental home (see chart seven).

Chart 6: accepted homeless households by priority need category



Source: Crawley Borough Council

Chart 7: causes of homelessness of accepted homeless households



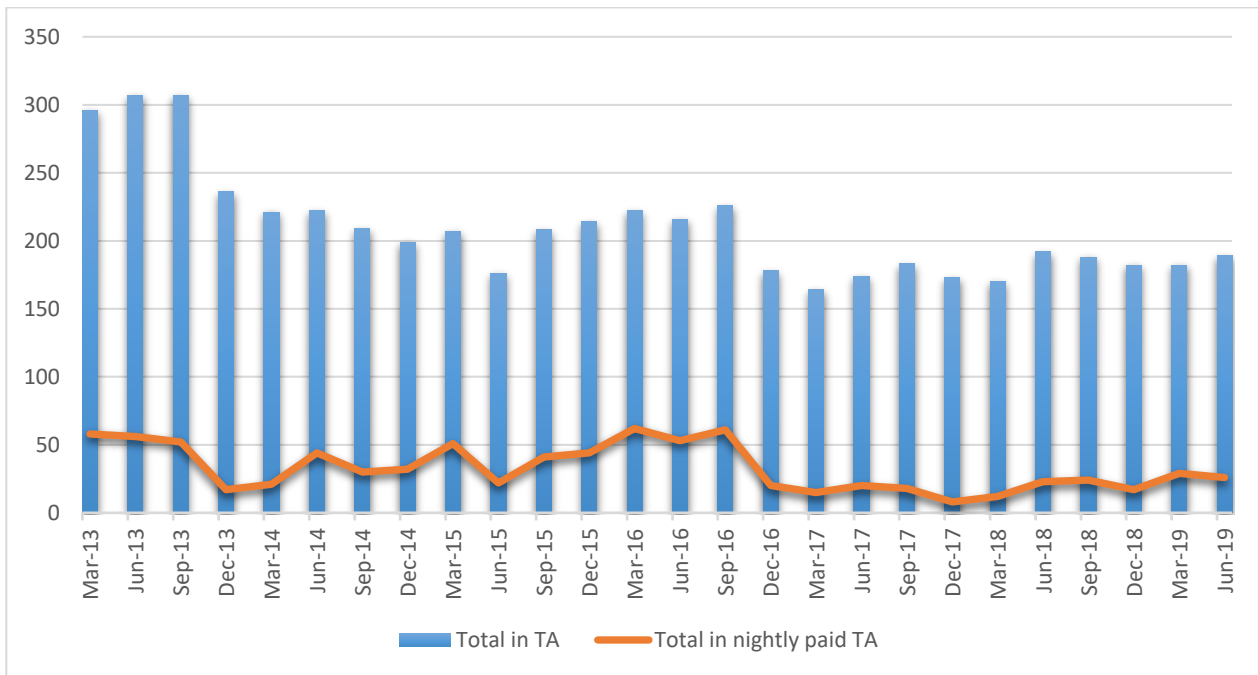
Source: Crawley Borough Council

1.6 USE OF TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

The provision of temporary accommodation (TA) is triggered on there being reason to believe a household may be eligible for assistance, homeless and in priority need. The council own and manage hostel accommodation within the borough, which at the time of publishing the review was comprised of 48 rooms varying in size to accommodate single people through to five person households. The council is also able to access 120 self-contained properties owned or leased by registered providers and the council for use as temporary accommodation. In addition to this, the council can access a small number of rooms in shared houses to support single people with mental health needs; this accommodation is located in Mid-Sussex.

Due to the often unpredictable nature of homelessness, waiting for a vacancy to become available in our hostels or self-contained accommodation is not always possible. In these instances households are placed into “nightly paid” accommodation (bed and breakfasts, hotels and guesthouses). These rooms are charged on a nightly basis, are expensive for the council, who pay the difference between the nightly rate and the weekly customer charge and are not designed to be occupied by households for prolonged periods of time. The use of temporary accommodation and in particular nightly paid temporary accommodation is shown in chart eight.

Chart 8: households in temporary accommodation



Source: Crawley Borough Council

The council always seeks to place households into temporary accommodation within the borough where possible. On occasion this may not be possible due to safety reasons, specialised placements or availability. The use of out of borough accommodation has dropped substantially over the past five years, from an average of 20 placements at any one time (in 2013 – 2014), to two (in 2018 – 2019).

1.7 THE HOUSING REGISTER

The council maintain a register of households in housing need, with their priority assessed using a banding system as set out in the council’s allocation scheme. A snapshot of households on the housing register on 31 July 2019 is shown in table three.

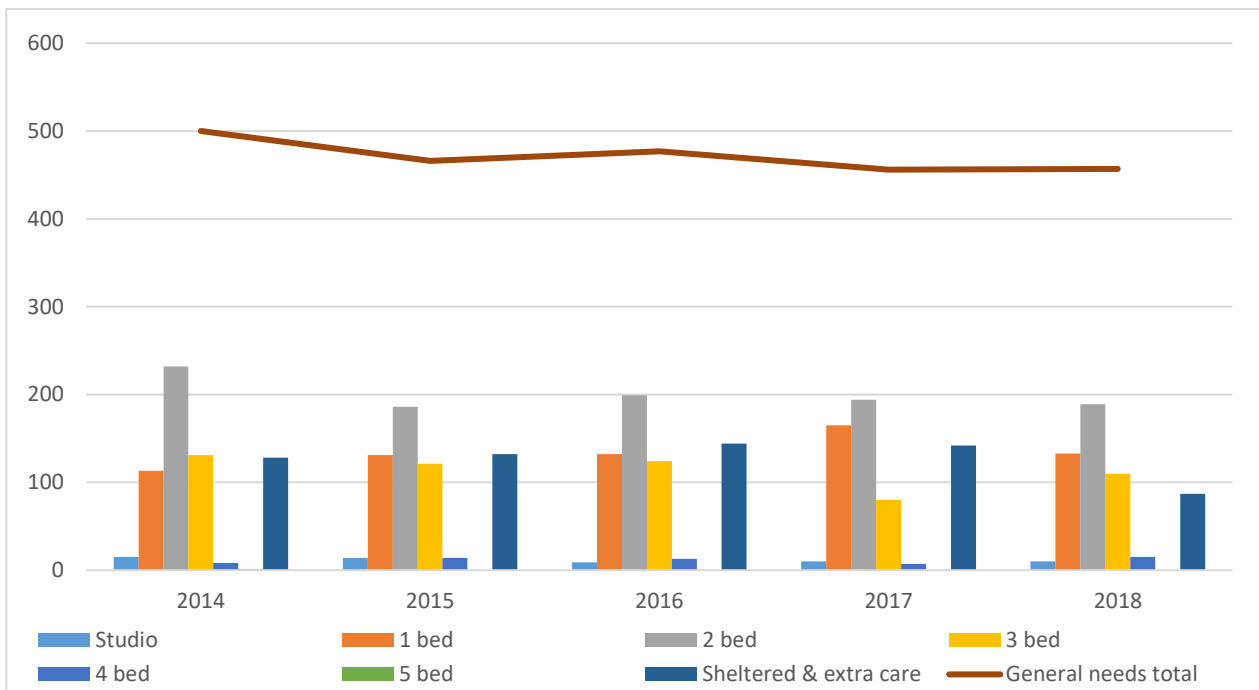
Table 3: housing register demand.

	Band A+	Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Total	Of which were homeless
Studio/one bedroom	4	84	188	46	74	396	22
Two bedroom	4	179	361	14	40	598	79
Two or three bedroom	5	52	190	5	30	282	
Three bedroom	2	51	158	6	27	244	16
Three bed + dining room or four bedroom	5	38	97	5	5	150	4
Sheltered/retirement (applicants over 60)	6	122	233	7	8	376	2
Total	26	526	1227	83	184	2046	123

Source: Crawley Borough Council, percentages rounded to nearest whole number

The supply of social housing that became available to let over the past six years is shown in chart nine.

Chart 9: The supply of social housing from 2013 to 2018



Source: Crawley Borough Council

Whilst chart nine shows that the majority of properties that become available on an annual basis are two bedroom properties, table three demonstrates that two bedroom properties are also in the greatest demand and that supply is not able to meet demand. This is also true of smaller units, but the demand is not as high.

The length of wait for an offer of social housing is dependent on the households banding, priority housing date, the size and availability of the property they are eligible for, and criteria that might limit their options. The allocation scheme has to balance the competing demands of housing homeless households, existing social tenants looking to transfer to another property, and households who have applied to join the housing register for other reasons, such as overcrowding or having medical issues that affect their current housing situation. The council is legally required to give certain categories of housing register applications a reasonable preference, and homeless households are one of these categories.

Accessing social housing

The wider housing and economic climate over the five year period of the previous Homelessness Strategy has brought considerable change across the social housing sector. Many housing associations and stock holding local authorities across the country responded by introducing or strengthening their checks and balances pre-tenancy commencement, including:

- Making rent in advance payments and/or deposits a condition of tenancy sign-up
- Carrying out affordability assessments
- A more considered approach to those who might struggle to sustain a general needs tenancy, unless a support package is in place
- Requirements in local lettings plans on new developments for percentages of tenants to be in paid employment.

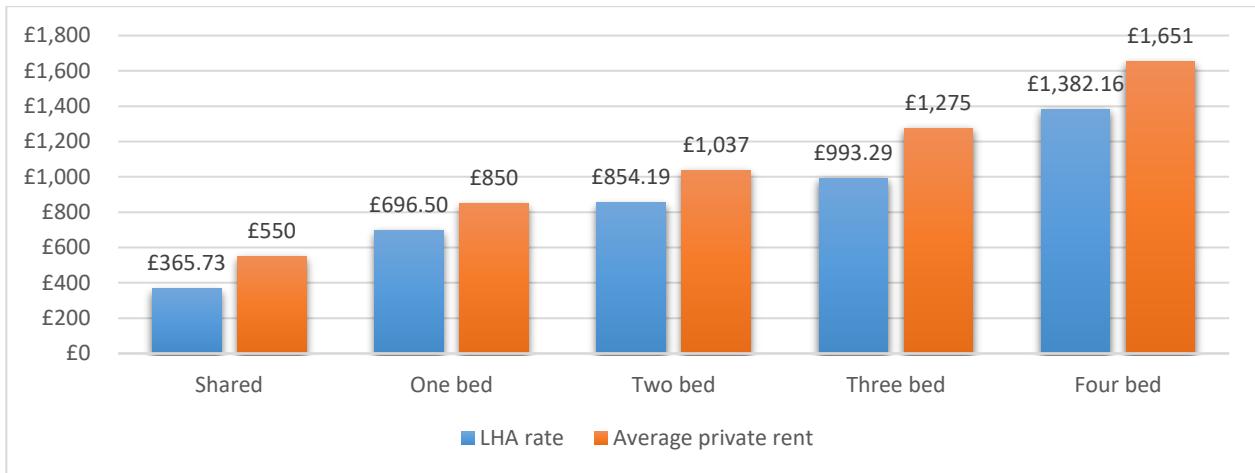
However, social housing providers are also investing in their tenants and the wider community in order to create environments in which their tenants will thrive and in doing so, maximise the likelihood of successful tenancies. Examples of the support and assistance offered by the housing associations with a presence in Crawley are:

- Supporting tenants into work (with CV writing workshops, helping to search and apply for jobs)
- Helping tenants to gain skills that will assist them in getting back to work (including computer skills and internet use)
- Wellbeing programs (addressing issues such as mental health, hoarding and anti-social behaviour)
- Financial inclusion (supporting tenants with budgeting, managing debt, maximizing income, claiming benefits they are entitled to, creating support plans)
- Providing access to funds for groups/organisations that work in the community
- Attending and participating in a range of multi-agency meetings such as the noise and anti-social behaviour liaison meeting and the Crawley housing and homelessness forum
- Tailored support aimed at younger and older people.

1.8 ACCESSING THE PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR

Crawley’s location in the south east and its proximity to London mean that rents in the private sector are high, as shown in chart ten, and those least able to afford it (single people seeking a room in a shared house) are subject to the greatest disparity between rents and the Local Housing Allowance rate.

Chart 10: Average private rents compared to Local Housing Allowance rate



LAH and rent comparison	Shared	One bed	Two bed	Three bed	Four bed
Difference (%)	50% increase	22% increase	21% increase	28% increase	19% increase
Difference (£) per annum	£2,211	£1,842	£2,194	£3,381	£3,226

Source: LHA rate from Crawley Borough Council. Average rents from www.home.co.uk on 28th May 2019

Accessing affordable private rented accommodation locally is challenging:

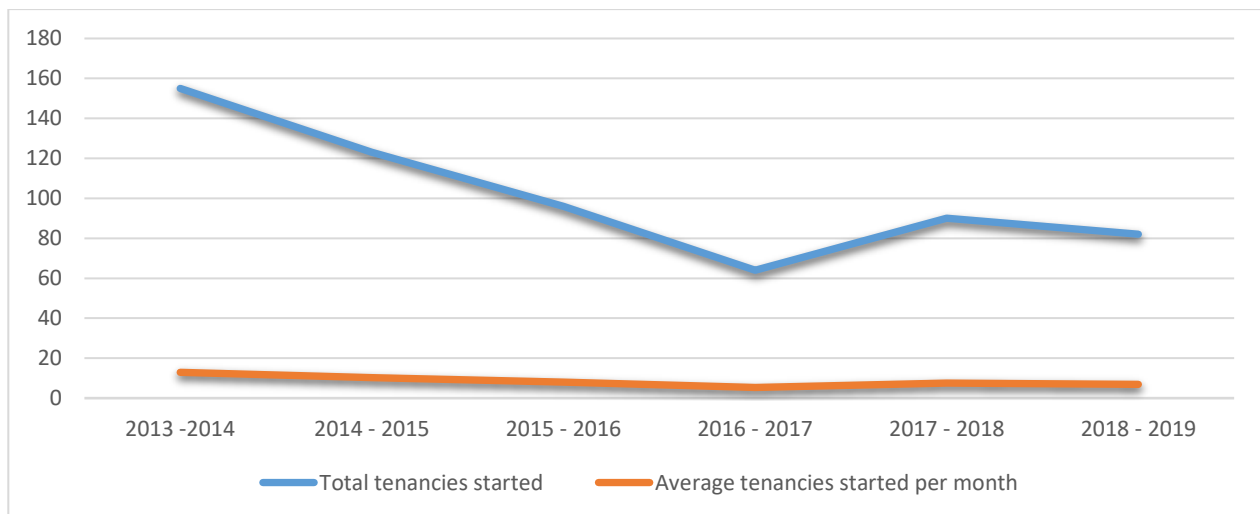
- Rent in advance, a deposit and letting agent’s fees can total in excess of £2,500 for an average sized rental property in Crawley to be paid in full before commencement of a tenancy.
- A number of landlords and letting agents will not let to households in receipt of benefits and some buy-to-let mortgage providers do not allow properties to be let to people in receipt of benefits. The roll out of Universal Credit is further compounding this issue due to concerns about non-payment of rent and households falling into rent arrears.
- Households on low incomes are often asked to provide a guarantor (who would be liable for the rent if the tenant failed to pay), however many households do not have anyone who is able to act in this capacity with the required minimum earnings to qualify.
- Single private renters under the age of 35 are only entitled to the shared accommodation Local Housing Allowance rate. This means that they can only receive housing benefit for a single room in a shared house, even if they are living in a one bedroom self-contained flat. However the average rent for a room in Crawley is 50 per cent over the LHA rate for a room.
- In 2016, Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates were frozen for four years until 2020. This has led to the gap between LHA rates and rents in the private sector widening further.
- Permitted development rights used to convert former commercial buildings to residential dwellings has resulted in developments that do not meet the space, quality or location requirements to fulfil housing need and promote the health and wellbeing of tenants.
- Competition for affordable private rented accommodation as London boroughs utilise Crawley’s private rented sector as it is cheaper than their own.

Crawley Deposit Service

The purpose of the Crawley Deposit Service (CDS) is to assist households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness into the private rented sector. A bond is issued in place of a cash deposit. If at the end of the tenancy the tenant has arrears or leaves the property in a state of disrepair, the landlord or agent can make a claim against the bond.

Local authorities experience the same challenges as the public when trying to access accommodation. Chart 11 shows the number of tenancies started through the Crawley Deposit Service and how this has fluctuated over time. There are approximately 470 active CDS tenancies at any one time. The CDS also carry out sustainment work within the tenancies they have created and during 2018-2019 they prevented 100 tenancies from ending and those households from becoming homeless.

Chart 11: Tenancies started in the private rented sector via the Crawley Deposit Service



Source: Crawley Borough Council

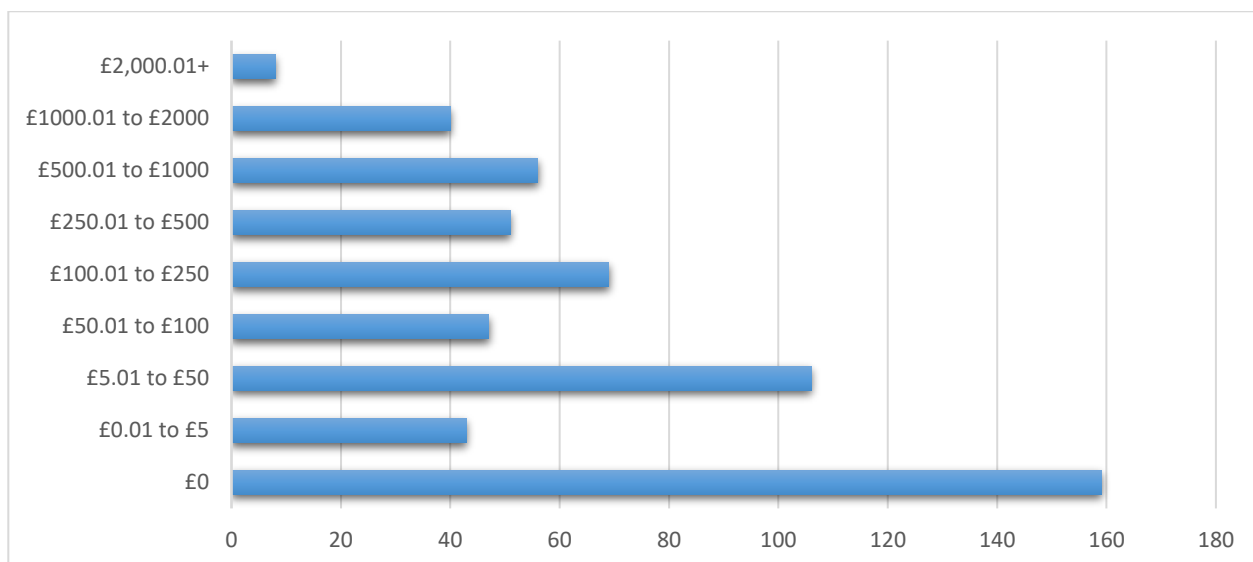
The council provide a free service to landlords and letting agents and offer the following:

- A quick service, minimising void times
- Affordability checks
- Reference checks
- Photographic inventories at the start and end of the tenancy
- Links with the benefits department to address issues
- Draft tenancy agreements
- Tenancy sustainment checks.

The council are always looking at ways to improve the service in order to encourage more landlords and agents to use the service and in doing so, provide homes for those in need within Crawley. The council host between two and four landlord forums (available to all landlords, including those who do not let their properties via the CDS) a year in conjunction with the National Landlords Association to ensure there is an open dialogue with landlords in the borough and to deliver key messages.

When households are assisted into tenancies via the CDS they are asked to open an account with Boom (formerly the West Sussex Credit Union). The purpose being to save during the course of the tenancy and be in a position to repay the council should a claim be made against the bond, and for the households to be financially independent of the council after the tenancy ends as they will have saved for their own deposit. Chart 12 shows a snapshot of the savings held by CDS tenants.

Chart 12: CDS tenants savings with Boom



Source: Boom (data correct as of 8th July 2019)

At the time the data in chart 12 was collated, the total savings were approximately £130,000 and the average saving per household approximately £250. For many households this provides a useful tool to help them adjust to living independently in the private sector.

The future of the private rented sector

At the time of the review being published there were a number of reforms proposed that would benefit households within the private rented sector:

- Longer fixed terms for assured shorthold tenancies (ASTs). The Government has since announced that they would not be pursuing this option.
- Controlling the frequency and rate of rent increases. This was part of a consultation carried out in the summer of 2018, and local authorities await further news of whether these proposals are to be passed into law.
- The abolition of non-fault section 21 notices (that allow landlords to end the tenancy any time after the fixed term has ended).

1.9 THE SUPPLY OF HOUSING

Housing need manifests itself in a variety of ways, such as increased levels of overcrowding, young people living with their parents for longer, acute affordability issues, impaired labour mobility resulting in businesses finding it difficult to recruit and retain staff, and increased levels of homelessness. The delivery of new build social and affordable housing is a crucial step in meeting this need.

The council's local plan 2015 – 2030 (as adopted in December 2015) sets the way forward for planning the future of Crawley, and provides a clear indication of the council's approach to the development of the town, including how we have identified housing need within the borough and the work underway to meet this need. The local plan identified that by 2030 the town would need a further 10,125 new homes—to support the full objectively assessed housing needs of the growing population of the town. Due to the land constraints, the housing land supply demonstrates a minimum of roughly 5,000 new homes can be built within the borough boundaries, meeting approximately half of the borough's emerging housing needs. This includes properties to be let at social and intermediate rents, and properties for sale on the open market. The plan commits the council to positively consider all reasonable opportunities for maximising the effective use of land and increasing housing delivery by working closely with neighbouring authorities. Table four shows actual and forecasted housing delivery.

Table 4: actual and forecasted delivery of homes of social and intermediate tenures in Crawley

		Council			Housing associations		
		Social rent	Intermediate rent	Total	Social rent	Intermediate rent	Total
Actual	2013 - 2014	0	0	0	53	17	70
	2014 - 2015	62	0	62	45	23	68
	2015 - 2016	18	9	27	46	8	54
	2016 - 2017	43	31	74	97	16	113
	2017 - 2018	79	9	88	22	81	103
	2018 - 2019	81	16	97	33	29	62
	Total	283	65	348	296	174	470
Forecasted	2019 - 2020	145	32	177	0	0	0
	2020 - 2021	175	62	237	81	39	120
	2021 - 2022	45	28	73	35	13	48
	2022 - 2021	203	68	271	60	123	183
	Total	568	100	488	176	175	351

Source: Crawley Borough Council

Changes to permitted development rights that came into force in 2016 resulted in the creation of a number of office to residential conversions that have fallen short of the type of quality developments that the council expects for their residents to live healthy lives. The need for mixed developments (of studios, one bedroom and two bedroom flats) that meet housing demand sometimes being disregarded in favour of developments of small studios that maximise occupation across the floor space to maximise income. Rents are set at the maximum Local Housing Allowance rate for one bedroom properties and the developments have attracted large volumes of single people, many with support needs who struggle to find accommodation in their own areas of connection. The lack of tenant mix combined with a failure to introduce robust tenancy screening, management of these buildings and support available, has resulted in these becoming hotspots for anti-social behaviour and undesirable places to live.

Empty homes

The code of guidance produced by the MHCLG encourages local authorities to make use of their powers and the incentives available to tackle long term empty homes within their districts. Across England the number of long-term empty homes (properties that have not become re-occupied within six months of becoming empty) recorded by all local authorities in October 2018 was 216,186, An increase of 16,041 from the 200,145 recorded in October 2016, which saw the first reversal in the downward trend in the number of long-term empty homes that has been seen each year since 2008.

The demand for property in Crawley is such that only a small number of long term empty homes exist at any one time. In October 2018 Crawley reported 30 long term empty dwellings (0.06 per cent of the total dwellings in the borough), significantly lower than the regional and national average (as shown in Table 5). Of those 30, less than half have been empty for over two years. The council work with empty home owners to encourage them to bring their homes back into use. Leaving a property empty is discouraged by removing Council Tax discounts previously applied to long term empty homes. Proposals to increase the Council Tax premiums applied to long term empty homes are to be decided upon by the end of 2019.

Table 5: distribution of long term empty homes across England in 2018

Region	Number	Percentage of total stock
North east	16,679	1.4
North west	39,769	1.2
Yorkshire and Humber	28,071	1.2
East Midlands	19,664	1.0
West Midlands	22,120	0.6
South west	19,148	0.8
East of England	19,950	0.8
South east	27,743	0.7
London	22,481	0.6
England	215,625	0.9

Source: [‘Empty Housing \(England\)’ \(2018\) House of Commons Library](#)

Disabled Facilities Grants

Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) are mandatory grants issued by the council to private sector owners, private tenants and registered social landlords to assist eligible people with physical disabilities to remain living independently within their current home. The grant is subject to a maximum limit and is means tested to ensure that funding goes to those most in need. Whilst DFGs do not affect the supply of new homes, by allowing people to remain in their own homes it can help reduce the need to seek alternative housing (via the housing register for example) or potentially becoming homeless because their home no longer meets their needs.

The annual allocation granted to the council from the Better Care Fund for such works has increased from just over £700,000 in 2015/2016 to just over £900,000 in 2019/2020. The increase in funding has allowed the council to assist more households to remain in their own home, with the figure rising from approximately 70 in 2015/2016 to an estimated 100 in 2018/2019 for Crawley. Over the course of five years (2014 to 2018) the council has assisted 360 households to remain in their own home through the provision of Disabled Facilities Grants.

The council has been working in partnership with West Sussex County Council and the district and borough council's in West Sussex to develop a consistent approach to the provision of DFGs across the county. As part of the project, all of the district and borough councils have adopted a policy regarding the provision of discretionary DFGs under the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002. This has allowed local authorities across West Sussex to pool resources and increase access to grant funding for some households who may otherwise have been ineligible and simplified the application process for others. It has also enabled the council to achieve expenditure levels that ensure central government Better Care Funding is spent assisting Crawley residents.

From January 2018 to March 2019, the council approved £114,000 of discretionary grant funding and helped 21 disabled Crawley residents to have adaptations made to their home that enables them to retain their independence, health and wellbeing.

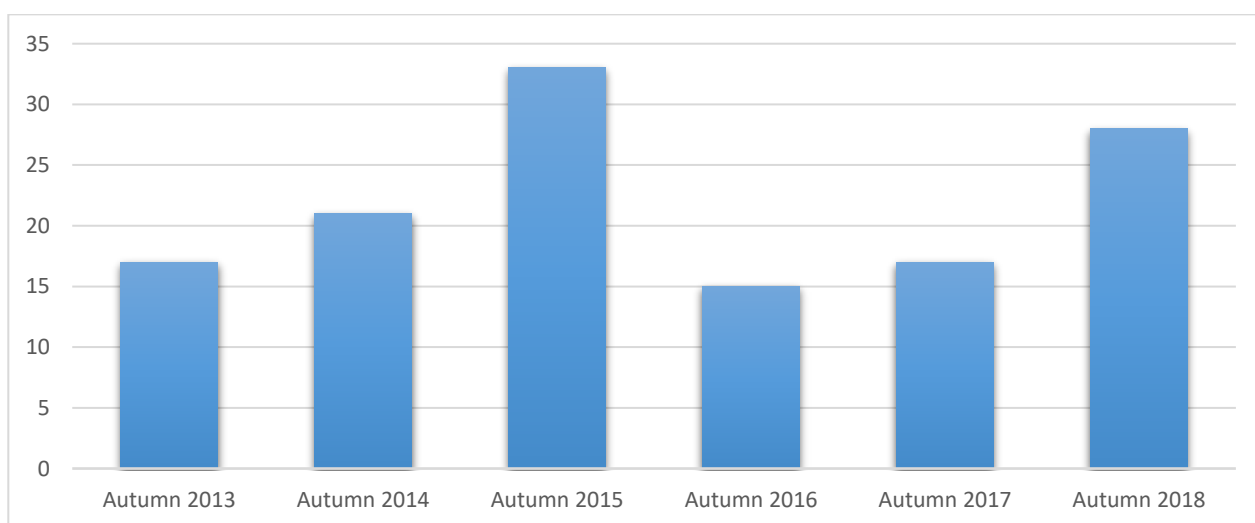
1.10 ROUGH SLEEPING

Whilst there may at times be an overlap between rough sleeping and other forms of street community activity such as drinking or begging, those individuals engaged in wider street activities often have access to accommodation. A number of local services are in place to tackle antisocial street related activities, ensuring that appropriate help and support is in place for vulnerable individuals and that meaningful enforcement action is taken in a coordinated way when necessary.

Many rough sleepers do not qualify for emergency accommodation. Of the rough sleepers that fall within the statutory thresholds for homelessness and / or social care provision, some have complex needs that can affect their willingness to engage with services and to receive support.

It is difficult to determine an absolute figure for the number of people sleeping rough because many rough sleepers hide in order to protect themselves and do not engage with services until they are ready. Government require local authorities to work in partnership with local agencies to submit an annual figure of people sleeping rough within their area on a typical chosen night between 1 October and 30 November, as a snapshot in order to monitor numbers at a national and local level. The results for Crawley are shown in chart 13. This increase is in line with the national picture of rising levels of street homelessness.

Chart 13: rough sleeper figures for Crawley



Source: Crawley Borough Council

The council chair a street community and rough sleeper meeting on a monthly basis. Attendees include representatives from the council (Housing Options, Environmental Health, Nuisance and Anti-social Behaviour, Community Wardens and Community Safety), Sussex Police, West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service, Crawley Open House (including the Outreach Team), Crawley and Gatwick Business Watch, Kent Surrey and Sussex Community Rehabilitation Company, National Probation Service and Change Grow Live (formerly Addaction). The meeting allows the relevant agencies in attendance to share intelligence and agree priorities, co-ordinate engagement, enforcement and to reduce the risk to both individuals and the wider public, minimise the wider costs to the public purse associated with the street community and motivate individuals to engage with services to move forwards positively with their lives.

Outcomes achieved through this group:

- Since November 2014, the group has facilitated 59 individuals into accommodation, medical treatment facilities or assisted them to return to their desired place of connection at their request.
- Medical screening and treatments have been successfully facilitated.
- The group have supported local businesses, charities and churches to assist the street community.
- Both the Police and the council have taken enforcement action where appropriate in the form of Community Protection Warnings (CPW's), Community Protection Notices (CPNs) Community Behaviour Warnings (CBW's), and Community Behaviour Orders (CBOs), with positive requirements to resulting in people re-engaging with services.
- A series of 'diverted giving days' have been held in Crawley town centre to inform the public about the benefits of giving directly to charities and organisations that support the street community (rather than giving directly to individuals) and raise awareness of the services available in the borough.
- Two successful funding bids of £5,000 each in 2017 allowed the group to facilitate action where mainstream funding was not an option, to intervene and achieve outcomes for individuals who were sleeping rough.

Helping people before they sleep rough will not only reduce the human cost of rough sleeping, it will also help to reduce costs to wider services (from providing health care, drug and alcohol treatment, emergency services and costs to the criminal justice system). Estimates of the costs of rough sleeping to the public purse vary depending on the methodology followed and the data used. In the 2015 Hard Edges report, Professor Glen Bramley and co-authors estimated the costs of rough sleeping to the public purse to be between £14,300 and £21,200 per person per year, with the higher cost being incurred if rough sleeping occurred alongside substance misuse and offending. This is three to four times the average cost to public services of an average adult (approximately £4,600). The estimated cost of rough sleeping, excluding the cost of benefits, is therefore between £7,100 and £15,200 per person per year.

Team Around the Person (TAP) Project

The Team Around the Person (TAP) project was developed and piloted by a group of key stakeholders across Crawley to manage and support patients/clients with complex and multiple needs and deliver positive outcomes through multi-agency working. The project was originally formed following recognition that clients with dual diagnosis (when a substance use disorder co-occurs with a psychiatric disorder) received fragmented and limited care and were being trapped in a revolving door scenario often resulting in them presenting at times of crisis and causing significant costs for health, enforcement and housing services.

The TAP project intended to cover the recommendations from the Making Every Adult Matter Model (MEAM) such as flexible and joined up services, coalition to support clients, avoiding overlap and ineffective contact with services. It also aimed to have a positive impact in the wider community by addressing chaotic, anti-social or offending behaviour and reducing unnecessary use of services. The model involved a TAP outreach worker who engaged with the client, providing intensive support to facilitate engagement and coordinate a collaborative joined up approach from the relevant services.

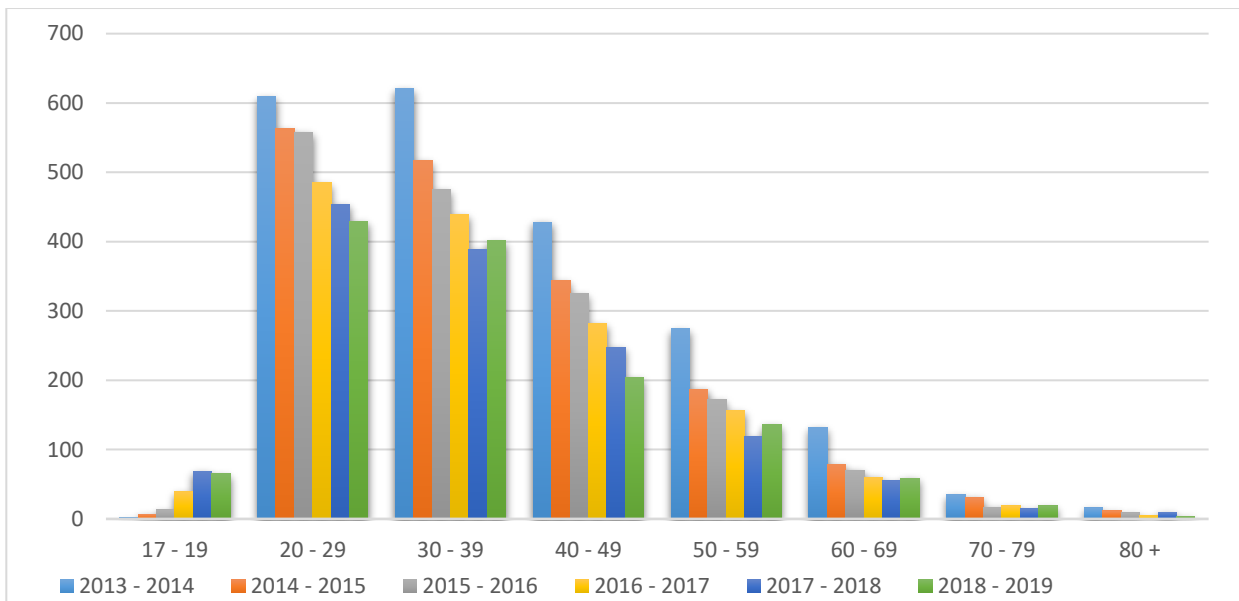
A trial with seven clients (that ran from July 2016 to June 2017) showed joint costs to services (including the Police and NHS) in the year before the trial being nearly £190,000. This was reduced to approx. £85,000 during the project. Factoring in the cost of funding the project, the savings achieved across all services was over £50,000. Due to limitations in the data collected the actual savings are likely to be greater. The TAP project ended in 2017 as the funding was withdrawn by the Crawley Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) which has left a gap for this type of service.

1.11 EQUALITY MONITORING

The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010) requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people when carrying out their activities. We have conducted an equality impact assessment whilst framing this document and as such, our approach and actions to achieve during the life of this document, have been formulated using the latest data (see below) and where necessary we have made relevant adjustments to the document to address any potentially negative effect.

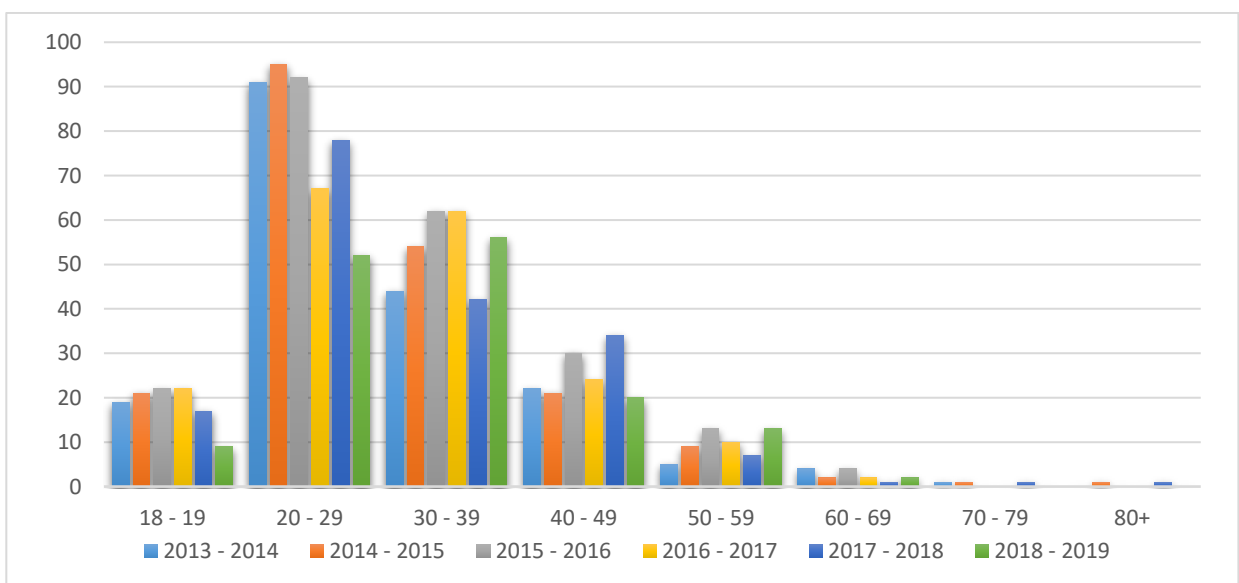
Age – charts 14, 15 and 16 show the age profile of people approaching the council for housing advice/assistance, accepted homeless applicants, and households on the housing register respectively.

Chart 14: age profile of lead applicant who approached the council for homelessness advice



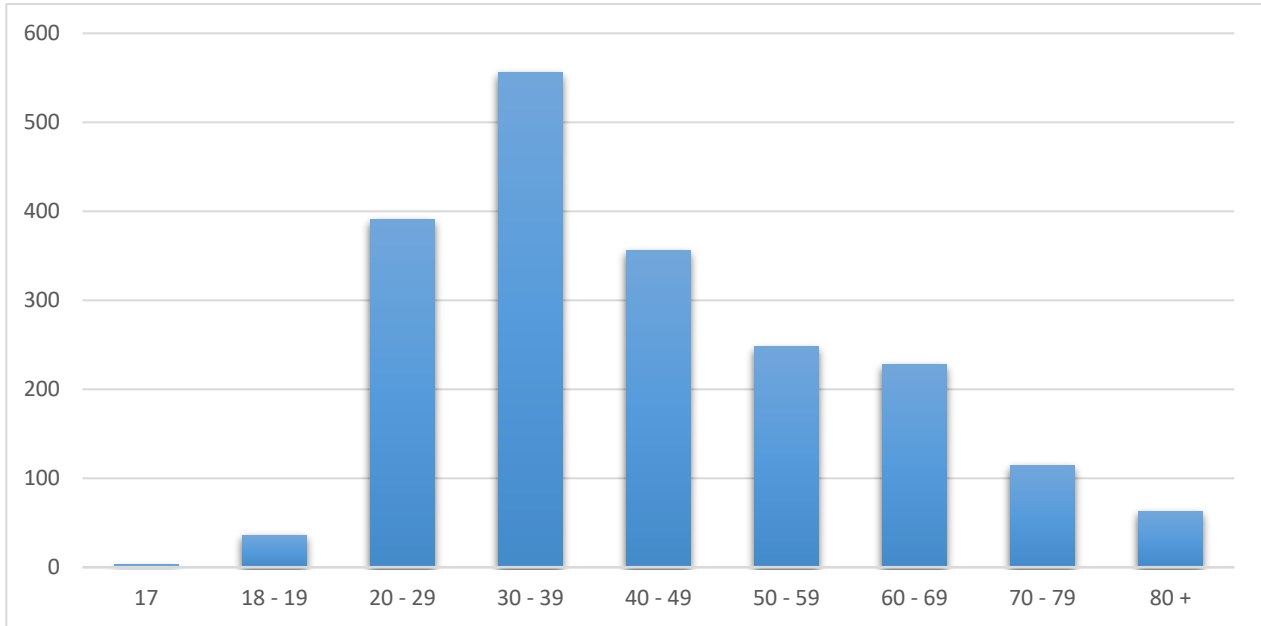
Source: Crawley Borough Council

Chart 15: age profile of accepted homeless lead applicants



Source: Crawley Borough Council

Chart 16: age profile of lead applicants on the housing register

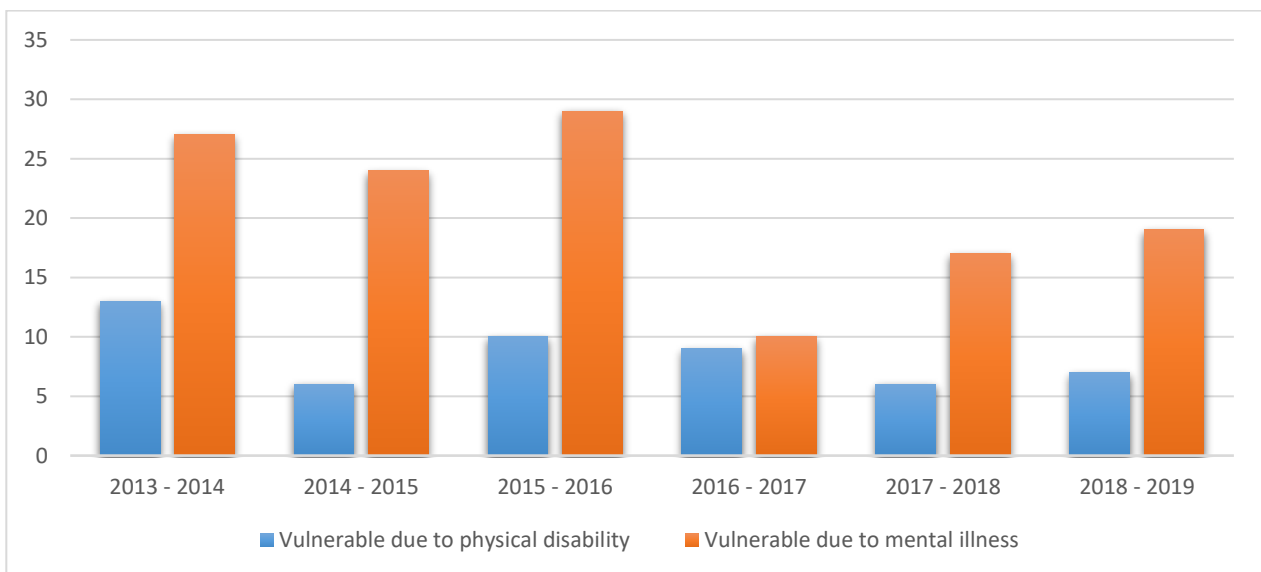


Source: Crawley Borough Council (data correct as of 31st July 2019)

Chart 14 shows a rising trend in young people (aged 17-19) approaching the council for advice and assistance with regard to homelessness. Although this number is still small, this could be in part due to welfare reforms that impact the level of benefits younger people are entitled to and therefore what they can afford locally. It will be important that services consider how best they can support this group to access and sustain suitable housing going forwards if this trend continues.

Physical and mental health – the presence of a person who is disabled, has additional needs, or physical or mental health issues within a household may affect whether they are considered in priority need under homelessness legislation (see charts six and 17 respectively), or considered in housing need if assessing a housing register application (see chart 18).

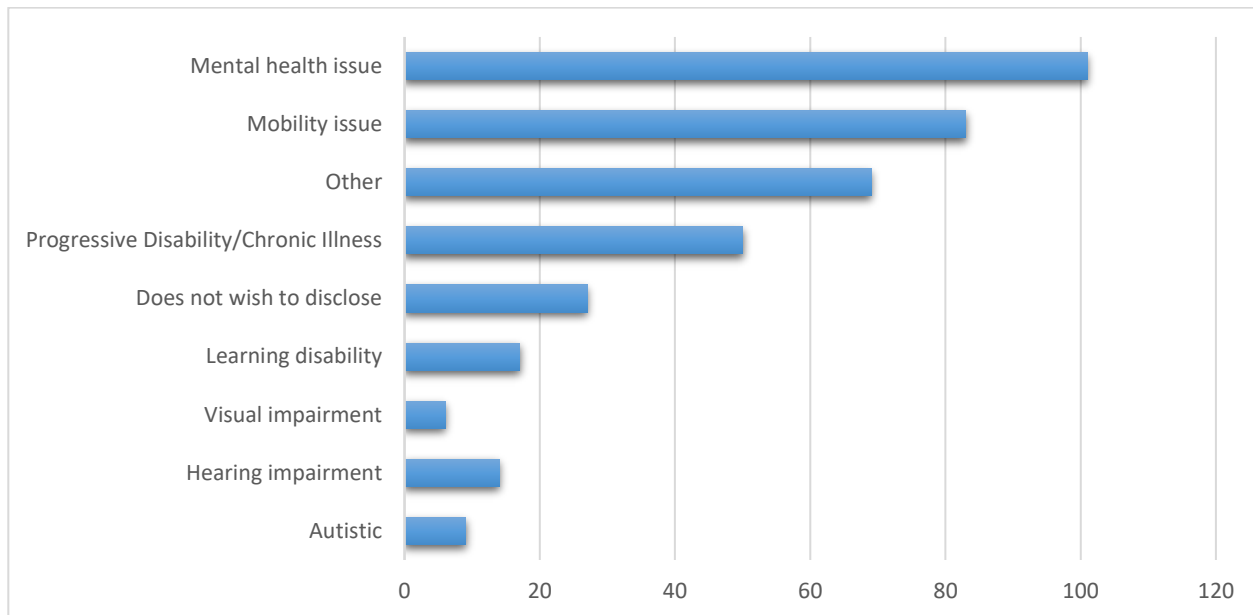
Chart 17: households accepted as homeless due to physical or mental health issues



Source: Crawley Borough Council

The information in charts 17 and 18 may underrepresent the scale of households with members who have physical and/or mental health issues, as it is dependent on the information disclosed at the time of application and how it is held and reported on in the computer database. In practice it is important that we know about such issues in order to put support in place where needed and appropriate.

Chart 18: households on the housing register with physical or mental health issues



Source: Crawley Borough Council (data correct as of 31st July 2019)

Ethnicity – an outcome of the homelessness review carried out in 2014 was the recognition that certain communities were disproportionately affected by homelessness in Crawley in comparison with the general population. Table six compares the ethnicity of homeless applicants in 2018/2019 with the population of Crawley. Table seven compares the ethnicity of homeless applicants in 2013/2014 with that of 2018/2019.

Table 6: ethnicity of homeless applicants in 2018/2019 and the population of Crawley

	White	Black	Asian	Mixed	Other	Not stated
Homeless applicants 2018/2019	58%	11%	9%	2%	5%	16%
Crawley population	80%	3%	13%	3%	1%	0%

Source: Population data from [Census 2011](#). Homeless applicant data from Crawley Borough Council

Table 7: ethnicity of homeless applicants in 2013/2014 and 2018/2019

	White	Black	Asian	Mixed	Other	Not stated
Homeless applicants 2013/2014	229	41	23	4	14	43

<i>Homeless applicants 2018/2019</i>	177	33	26	7	14	48
<i>% Difference</i>	-23%	-20%	13%	75%	0%	12%

Source: Crawley Borough Council

The data in table seven shows that there has been a decrease in applications from certain ethnic groups and an increase in those who identify as mixed race. However, whilst the percentage increase is high, this actually equates to three additional people/households.

Table eight compares the ethnicity of households on the housing register on 31 July 2019 with the population of Crawley. The data in table eight show that black people are disproportionately in housing need in Crawley when compared with the general population. A closer look at the data reveals that this is in part due to migration into Crawley from people overseas. Crawley’s buoyant labour market and economy is attractive to people looking to move, live and work in the UK and there is a trend of households coming to the UK via Gatwick Airport (within the borough boundary) and choosing to settle in Crawley.

Table 8: comparison of ethnicity of households on the housing register and the population of Crawley

	<i>White</i>	<i>Black</i>	<i>Asian</i>	<i>Mixed</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Not stated</i>
<i>Housing register</i>	61%	8%	11%	3%	4%	13%
<i>Crawley population</i>	80%	3%	13%	3%	1%	0%

Source: Population data from [Census 2011](#). Housing register data from Crawley Borough Council (as of 31st July 2019)

Gender and gender re-assignment – the council do not hold data on whether people who approach the service are undergoing gender re-assignment. If it were relevant to a homelessness or housing register application, the information would be held within the computer database but not in a way that is reportable and therefore presentable within this review. It is therefore not possible to determine whether people undergoing gender re-assignment are under or over represented in comparison to the general population of Crawley.

Determining whether there is a gender imbalance of households that are seeking housing advice and assistance is not straightforward due to the way data is stored and accessed within the database (as the majority of main applicants for homelessness and the housing register identify as women, but the majority of those households have a partner that may identify as a different gender).

Gypsy and traveller status – in the 2011 Census there were 77 individuals who identify themselves as ‘White Gypsy or Irish Traveller’ living in Crawley. In 2014 the ‘Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation needs assessment’ was carried out to inform the local plan, and found that four Gypsy and Traveller households were residing on two private sites in within Crawley. Three travelling showpeople households were also located within the borough, sharing a single site. In Crawley, the majority of the travelling community are housed in bricks and mortar accommodation.

Service users are under no obligation to provide information certain information. A very small number of people answer this question and therefore it is not possible to attach any statistical significance to the answers given. A person's gypsy or traveller status would be considered in relation to an approach under homelessness legislation in accordance with the homelessness code of guidance, and in relation to a housing register application in accordance with the allocations policy.

Marriage and civil partnership – whether a person is married or in a civil partnership is not a material consideration under both parts six and seven of the Housing Act 1996 (that deal with the allocation of social housing and homelessness respectively). The 2011 census showed that 47 per cent of households in Crawley are married or in a civil partnership, 35 per cent are single, three per cent are separated, nine per cent are divorced and six per cent are widowed). Whether an applicant is married or in a civil partnership would be held within the computer database but not in a way that is reportable and therefore presentable within this review.

Pregnancy and maternity – the presence of a pregnant women or dependent child (which for the purpose of homelessness legislation is considered to be all children under 16, and all children aged 16-18 who are in, or are about to begin, full-time education or training or who for other reasons are unable to support themselves and who live at home) within a household constitutes a priority need under homelessness legislation (as shown in chart six) and over 80 per cent of households to whom a housing duty was accepted under homelessness legislation in 2017/2018 were found to be in priority need for this reason.

For the purposes of housing register applications, children are able to be considered on a housing application from six weeks before their due date. On 31 July 2019 approximately 60 per cent of households on the housing register had dependent children. In comparison with the 2011 census that showed that in Crawley in 2011, 47 per cent of families had dependent children. This demonstrates that families in Crawley are struggling to access affordable housing locally and are more likely to approach the council for advice and assistance with their housing.

Religious beliefs – while a question about religious beliefs had previously been asked on the forms used when approaching the council for advice and/or assistance with housing matters, the applicant was under no obligation to provide this information. A very small percentage of people answered this question and therefore it is not possible to attach any statistical significance to the answers given. From April 2018 onwards this question was removed from the application form as it was not required for the quarterly HCLIC data returns to the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).

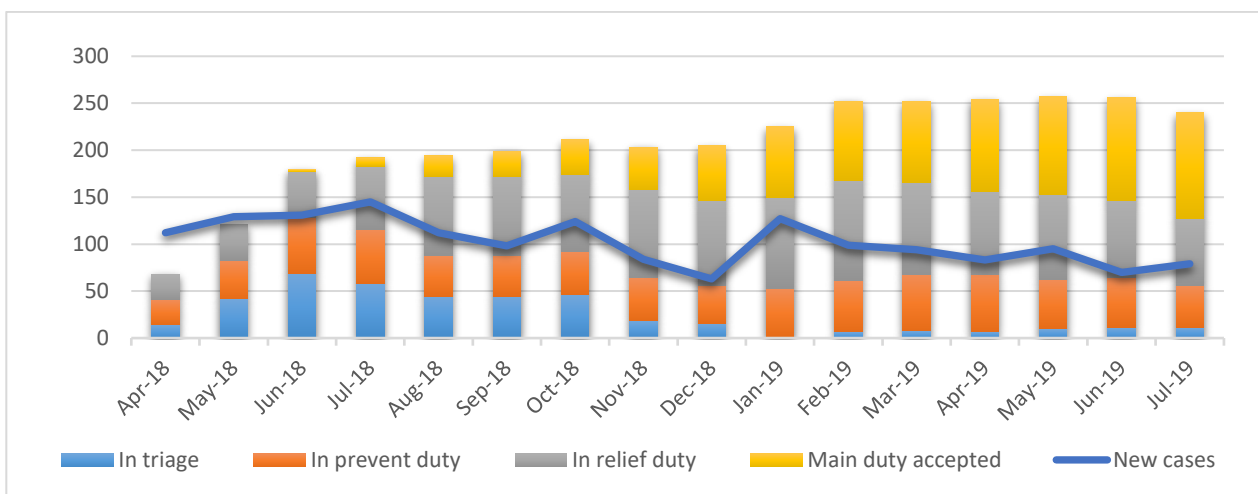
Sexual orientation - while the forms used to gather information about an applicant's housing situation contain a question about sexual orientation, the applicant is under no obligation to provide this information. A very small percentage of people answer this question and therefore it is not possible to attach any statistical significance to the answers given, therefore no analysis of the results is included in this review.

1.12 HOMELESSNESS REDUCTION ACT 2017

At the time of completing the statistical research that formed the basis of the homelessness review, the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (HRA) had been in force for over a year. The experiences of the council during this time are summarised below:

- When the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 was introduced, local authorities were advised that approaches for assistance were likely to increase significantly, based on the experience of Welsh local authorities when similar legislation was introduced in 2015. A straight forward comparison of demand before and after the introduction of the HRA is challenging, as the duties owed to customers are very different, but Crawley has seen around a 20 per cent increase in demand with 1,400 approaches in the first year. Chart 19 shows a snapshot of demand in first year of the HRA.

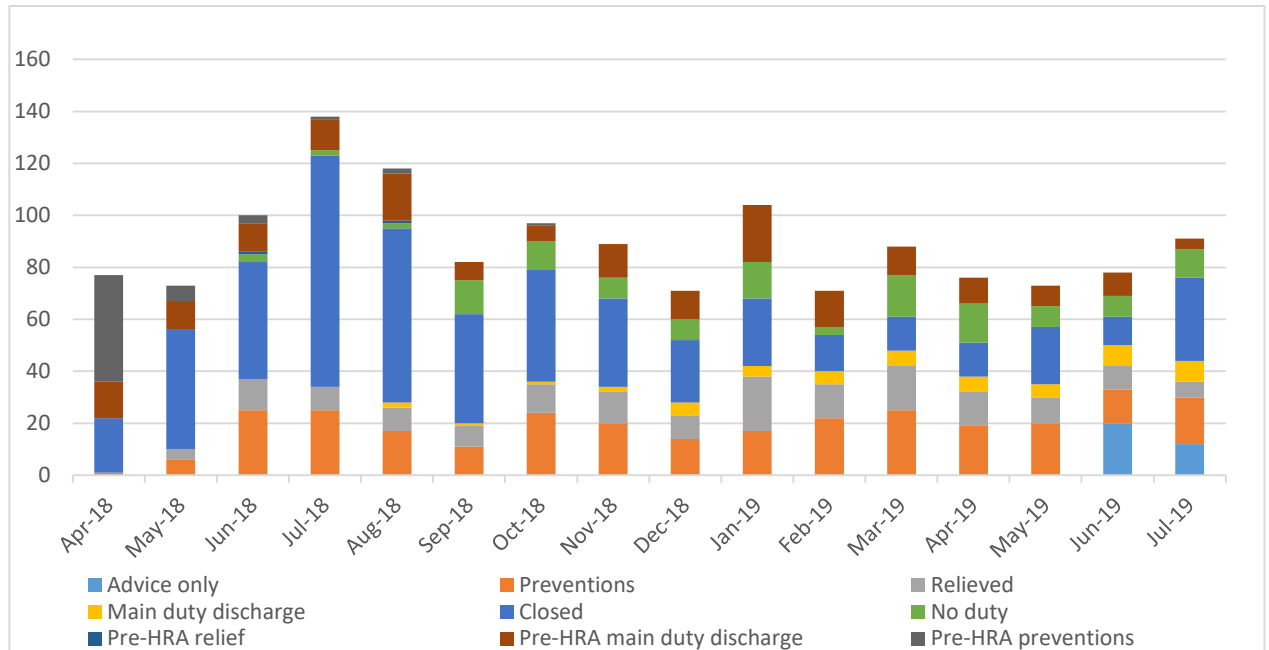
Chart 19: snapshot of HRA demand



Source: Crawley Borough Council

- The HRA introduced additional opportunities for customers to request a review [of a decision made by the council] however this has made little difference with numbers remaining stable with 53 s202 review requests in 2017/2018 (pre-HRA) and 51 s202 review requests in 2018/2019 (HRA). However, it is worth noting that the majority of s202 review requests historically came via the local Shelter office which closed in August 2018, which is likely to have offset any increase.
- The duties to try to prevent and/or relieve homelessness (regardless of intentionality or priority need) have increased the demand for affordable housing across all tenures.
- During the first six months the HRA was in force it became apparent that the way in which customers first access the Housing Options service didn't fit with the new way of working. The Housing Help Point was a drop-in service and as initial assessments were taking longer, wait times increased as a result. A structured and phased approach to changing the service was introduced. The Housing Help Point became the Assessment Centre, which no longer provides a drop in service. Customers are seen by appointment, meaning no queues. Information is requested prior to the appointment (via an online assessment form) to ensure the best use of that time. These changes are working, as opportunities for early intervention are maximised and have produced positive outcomes for customers.
- Chart 20 shows the outcomes that have been achieved since the HRA came into force.

Chart 20: HRA outcomes



Source: Crawley Borough Council

- The duty to refer came into force on 1 October 2018 and gave certain public bodies a duty to refer households who are homeless or at risk of homelessness within 56 days to the council for advice/assistance. In the first ten months the council received 80 referrals, the majority of which were from the JobCentre Plus (Department for Work and Pensions). Some of the bodies able to make referrals are not doing so as frequently as might have been expected, therefore we will be working more closely with these organisations in the future to ensure that they are fully aware of their duties and know how to make referrals into the service.
- What has been apparent throughout the first year of the HRA is that whilst authorities hold additional duties towards customers and hold them for longer, the administrative burden is significant. Keeping customers informed of progress is of course vital to the success of the HRA, but the legal requirements to notify the applicant at various stages of the process has resulted in the development of a suite of more than 100 letters for use by the service which can be challenging to navigate.

1.13 FUNDING SERVICES

Temporary accommodation costs have traditionally been borne by local government budgets. Housing benefit assistance has remained capped at 90 per cent of the January 2011 Local Housing Allowance Rate and on the 1 April 2017, the removal of the temporary accommodation management fee subsidy from the housing benefit subsidy saw an additional financial burden transferred from central government to local government budgets.

In April 2017, the temporary accommodation management fee was replaced by the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant. This grant was designed to offset the loss in housing benefit temporary accommodation management fee subsidy, with the remainder ring-fenced for work to prevent or resolve homelessness. This grant also acknowledged that local authorities may require additional staffing resources and may make additional temporary accommodation placements. Crawley has successfully absorbed these additional costs through the use of its flexible homeless support grant and in addition, has funded a homeless prevention debt advice worker and tenancy sustainment work.

Crawley also received new burdens funding. This was made available to the council for the additional work involved in preparing for the implementation of the new responsibilities bought by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. However in practice this fell short of what was required to increase levels of staffing and fund the new IT requirements of the HRA.

In anticipation of the impact of the Homelessness Reduction Act on the 1 April 2018, the council amended their allocations policy to prevent the number of homeless households in nightly paid temporary accommodation and the associated costs from escalating. This has proved to be a successful in keeping numbers stable.

Challenges for accessing funding in the future have been identified and are reported below:

- The majority of additional funding released by central Government to tackle homelessness is short-term and awarded via various bidding processes. This can create challenges for local authorities due to the timescales between announcing the funding and the deadline for submitting a bid. Identifying resources (both financial and staffing) to write a bid, deliver the project and having an exit strategy in place (once bid funding ends) can be difficult to achieve in the timescale given, especially if the intention is to deliver countywide outcomes and liaison with other local authorities is required.
- New burdens funding (introduced to meet the costs of implementing the additional duties in the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017) appears to end after 2019/2020.
- The future of the flexible homeless support grant is unknown from 2020/2021 onwards and a decision on funding is no likely to be announced until December 2019. This places pressure on services as uncertainty around future funding remains.
- Future funding is likely to be linked to outcomes (such as the prevention and relief of homelessness). This will prove challenging against the backdrop of welfare reform, an expensive private rented market and reduced central government funding for services delivered by county and district/borough councils.
- A countywide group has been established to mitigate the impact of budget reductions and utilise the opportunity to shape and commission supported housing services to meet the needs across West Sussex.

1.14 CONSULTATION

The homelessness code of guidance states that housing authorities must consult with public bodies, voluntary organisations and other relevant persons when adopting or modifying a homelessness strategy. In preparation for drafting the homelessness strategy, the council undertook a three month consultation process that involved the following:

- A consultation event at the local Housing and Homelessness Forum, with a focus on identifying gaps in services locally, the biggest challenges to tackling homelessness in Crawley, what the priorities for the coming five years of the strategy should be, whether Government plans to reduce rough sleeping are achievable within Crawley and how that might be achieved, and how the groups and organisations present can play a role in tackling homelessness in Crawley.
- A survey of relevant stakeholder organisations that looked to gauge opinion on housing need in Crawley, who should be prioritised for social housing, the distribution of social housing, factors that contribute towards homelessness, priorities for the homelessness strategy, how to achieve Government plans to reduce sleeping nationally, and what would have the greatest impact in tackling homelessness and identifying gaps in local service provision. Ten responses were received.
- A public survey to gauge knowledge of local services, opinion on local housing need, who should be prioritised for social housing, the distribution of social housing, what factors contribute towards homelessness locally, and what would have the greatest impact in tackling homelessness in Crawley. 172 responses were received.
- Registered providers were sent a separate survey that combined the consultation for the Homelessness Strategy with the consultation for the tenancy strategy that is being redrafted and published in tandem with this homelessness strategy. Registered providers were asked about the nominations process, the application of pre-tenancy conditions, the provision of tenancy support, the tenancy renewal process, void management, housing management, and how they meet housing need in Crawley. Four responses were received.
- Strategic Housing staff within the council were involved in a consultation exercise that looked at identifying gaps in services locally, the biggest challenges to tackling homelessness in Crawley, what the priorities for the coming five years of the strategy should be, whether Government plans to reduce rough sleeping are achievable within Crawley and how that might be achieved, and how the council should move forward in tackling homelessness in Crawley.
- A seminar was held for elected members that included an update on the HRA and how the service is evolving in response to the changing demands. Members were then sent a survey that gauged their views on local housing need, who should be prioritised for social housing, the distribution of social housing, what factors contribute towards homelessness locally, and what would have the greatest impact in tackling homelessness in Crawley.

1.15 LOCAL SERVICES

One of the functions of the homelessness review is to identify the resources available locally to assist in the prevention and relief of homelessness. In Crawley and the surrounding area there are a variety of services that support, assist, provide and signpost individuals and households who are homeless or at risk of homelessness (see below), along with some multi-agency meetings and forums. Due to the geographically small area of Crawley, links and partnership working is strong amongst the different organisations and groups in the borough, to raise awareness of what is available, to provide complimentary rather than duplicate services and work towards the shared purpose of preventing and relieving homelessness.

SUPPORT SERVICES:- Capital Project Trust, Change Grow Live, Christians Against Poverty, Citizens Advice, Connect, Crawley Open House (day centre and outreach services), Easter Team, Employ Crawley, Family Intervention Project, Find It Out Centre, Giving Back Crawley, DWP Jobcentre Plus, Local Assistance Network, Rape Crisis Sussex and Surrey, Relate, Southdown Housing, Sussex Armed Forces Network, Sussex Night Stop, Turning Tides, Turn2Us, Transform Housing, West Sussex Integrated Prevention and Earliest Help services (IPEH), Worth IDVA Services

ACCOMODATION SERVICES:- Amber Project, Blatchford House, Camelia Botnar Foundation, Camfield, Crawley Open House (hostel and move on houses), Life House, Outreach 3way, Sussex Oakleaf, Southdown Housing Association, YMCA Downslink – Crawley Foyer, Ewhurst Road and move on accommodation, Wayside

Crawley's Housing and Homelessness Forum meet quarterly and represent an important partnership between statutory services, the wider local public, voluntary and charitable sectors. It creates opportunities for discussions about issues that affect homeless people in Crawley and how services are responding to these. The forum is chaired by the voluntary sector and plays an important role in helping to develop and deliver Crawley's homelessness strategy.

Crawley's Rough Sleeper And Street Community Group meet monthly and facilitates a multi-agency approach to support rough sleepers off the street and into long term accommodation. To monitor the levels of rough sleeping and street community activity, to share information and intelligence and to reduce the level of risk and impact that they have on the local community, services and business through targeted support, enforcement and actions. It is currently chaired by the council and co-chaired by Sussex Police and its achievements detailed earlier in this document.

Whilst the availability of support, services and partnership working in Crawley is strong, as part of the review, strategy and consultation, some gaps and opportunities have been identified. The Strategy and accompanying action plan outline how the council will work with partner organisations and agencies towards meeting unmet need locally.

1.16 FUTURE LEVELS OF HOMELESSNESS

It is extremely difficult to predict with accuracy the likely future levels of homelessness, given the links to wider nationally led factors such as economic prosperity and welfare reforms, however based on previous trends both locally and nationally the following can be surmised:

- The number of rough sleepers was higher in autumn 2018 than the previous autumn, reflecting a national trend in the rising number of people sleeping rough. Government plans to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and end rough sleeping by 2027 will only be successful if long-term and sustainable funding is made available to local housing authorities and the wider national issues tackled.
- With high rent and property prices locally, many young people are living with parents for longer or are returning to the parental home. Family relationships can become strained and lead to parental eviction. This is likely to remain a predominant cause of homelessness unless the fundamental causes (young people being unable to access affordable accommodation independently) are tackled at a national level.
- The objective assessment of Crawley's housing and employment needs (published by Chilmark consulting in March 2015) found that in Crawley 62.5 per cent of newly forming households in Crawley are unable to buy and 55.9 per cent are unable to rent in the private market without financial assistance, thus demonstrating an ongoing need for affordable housing options in Crawley.
- The end of an assured shorthold tenancy is likely to remain one of the most predominant causes of homelessness, as the private rented sector continues to thrive in the wake of home ownership being largely unaffordable to those on low incomes. Only action taken at a national level will address the issues within the private rented sector.
- The council's ability to access the private rented sector is likely to remain challenging (given the issues with affordability locally and competition from London boroughs). The council may need to consider how best to work with landlords in the future to meet the housing needs of homeless households in the borough.
- Multiple factors can lead to households being caught in a cycle of repeat homelessness. Breaking the cycle is going to be a key challenge for the future.
- The use of permitted development to create accommodation that fails to meet local housing need is likely to continue unless regulated at a national level. Until such time, such accommodation will continue to generate challenges for the council and other statutory services in the borough.
- The profile of people approaching the council for assistance (age, gender, ethnicity and marital status for example) is likely to remain as reported unless changes such as welfare reforms are brought in or reversed which disproportionately affects particular groups of people.
- The impact leaving the European Union will have on migration into the borough (and the diversity of its population) is difficult to predict at this time.
- The introduction of duties through the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 to prevent and relieve homelessness will continue to ensure there is demand for affordable housing across multiple tenures in Crawley, including supported housing options for those who are not able or ready access general needs accommodation.

By examining past and future levels of homelessness, five key issues emerge. These issues are our priorities for the future, shaping and providing focus for the Homelessness Strategy 2019-2024.

- **Priority one: preventing and relieving homelessness** – the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 introduced duties to try to prevent and/or relieve the homelessness of households who are eligible for the council’s assistance. The difficulty in accessing suitable and affordable accommodation into which these duties can be discharged has led to the prevention and relief of homelessness becoming a priority for the future.
- **Priority two: tackling rough sleeping** – the Government’s rough sleeping strategy was published in 2018 and required local authorities to include rough sleeping in their homelessness strategies, linking in with their aim to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and end it by 2027
- **Priority three: meeting the needs of vulnerable people** – the nature of homelessness is such that a number of the people the service assists are vulnerable. This may be due to physical or mental ill health, or the individual’s personal circumstances. Providing services that meet the needs of vulnerable clients is a priority and must be considered in the context of the wider services and support available across the borough and the county.
- **Priority four: accessing suitable and affordable accommodation** – the high demand for affordable housing in Crawley is characteristic of its location in the south east of England and its proximity to London. The council’s ability to access suitable and affordable housing across multiple tenures is a priority for the future, in order to continue to assist those in housing need.
- **Priority five: preventing repeat homelessness** – for some people, the inability to manage and sustain a tenancy can result in repeat homelessness. Working in partnership with stakeholders across the Borough to help people break the cycle of repeat homelessness and access the support they need is therefore a priority for the future.