

West Suffolk Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018 – 2023

Home is where
the start is



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A note on the data: Where data in this strategy is given for Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council, this relates to when the councils operated as two separate entities before becoming West Suffolk Council on 1 April 2019.

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Foreword

We know what a wonderful place West Suffolk is to live and work in. It is not just our beautiful countryside and our historic towns and villages that makes the area so appealing to so many – it is also the people that live here, our way of life and the strong community support that people have for each other. A great many people across West Suffolk naturally want to remain close to their families and the communities where they grew up. There are also many people looking to relocate to West Suffolk, to grow their business or to capitalise on the job opportunities that are being created here. The only drawback is with West Suffolk in such high demand, housing can be expensive which puts pressure on the Council to ensure that there are suitable and sustainable places for people to live.

Housing impacts our health, quality of life, employment and education. A home should be a sanctuary where people feel safe and secure. But for many, this is not the case. The reasons for this are varied and complex but it can often lead to homelessness, and at its worst extreme, rough sleeping.

If we are to succeed in reducing homelessness, then as agencies we will need to work even more closely than we have ever done before. West Suffolk Council has forged strong bonds with the public, private and voluntary sector agencies to not only help people find a home but to give them any support that they may need to move on with their lives. How we want to do that, with our partners, is set out in the pages of this strategy. Together we all need to play our important role in preventing homelessness.

This strategy builds on the good work we have already carried out and shows how we, with partners, are responding to meet national challenges and new major changes to statutory duties. At the heart of what we do are individuals and families, sometimes with challenging issues, in need of our help. This strategy ensures their needs are identified and that they are assisted as they engage and work through their personalised plans.

I want to thank our partners who have helped produce this strategy and I know they, together with us in West Suffolk are committed to preventing and reducing homelessness, tackling its main causes and supporting those in need.

Cllr Sara Mildmay-White,
Cabinet Member for Housing

1. Introduction

The Homelessness Act 2002 places a statutory duty on local authorities to undertake a review of homelessness in their area, and based on the findings, develop and publish a strategy to prevent homelessness.

West Suffolk Council produced its first Homelessness Strategy in 2015, which covers the period to 2018. The strategy has been reviewed and this new strategy published. The timing of this new strategy is particularly relevant as the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, the biggest change to homelessness legislation in 40 years, came into force in April 2018.

The Act has an emphasis on the prevention of homelessness and on partnership working with statutory, voluntary and third sector agencies. This ensures individuals' needs are identified and that they are assisted as they engage and work through their personalised plans.

The Act has a focus on helping individuals to access housing and we need to make sure that we have effective pathways to work collaboratively with and encourage people to secure their own accommodation.

In August 2018, central Government introduced a Rough Sleeping Strategy. The focus is on prevention, which is at the core of the Homelessness Reduction Act, intervention, where people experiencing rough sleeping are supported with help to ensure it never happens again and recovery, where sustainable accommodation and flexible support is given so people can maintain a stable home. This strategy has been updated in response to the Rough Sleeping Strategy and the commitments are reflected in our existing actions.

Residents in West Suffolk need suitable and affordable housing to achieve their ambitions, whether for family life, career development or

a fulfilling retirement. The local conditions in West Suffolk make housing particularly difficult to afford, given relatively high house prices and low wages. The council therefore has an important role to play in seeking to address this situation and to ensure housing is suitable for changing demographics, including an ageing population. West Suffolk Council is also working to improve the quality of housing, so as to ensure it supports the health and wellbeing of residents, both in our towns and in our rural areas. In recent years, while the focus has increased on the supply of appropriate housing, the Council has also responded to rising homelessness in West Suffolk by investing resources in prevention and securing suitable accommodation for those people in crisis.

The development of this Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeping Strategy is an important part of our approach to preventing and reducing homelessness across West Suffolk. Other activities that support the reduction of homelessness are outlined in West Suffolk's Housing Strategy and in the Strategic Framework 2018-2020.

Since the publication of our first Homelessness Strategy, we have made progress both in preventing homelessness and helping individuals who have, for whatever reason, become homeless:

1. In 2015, West Suffolk invested in a property and converted a former bed and breakfast facility into a property that can accommodate up to six families who have become homeless and are in need of temporary accommodation. A property was also purchased in Bury St Edmunds to provide five units of accommodation for those with low level support needs.
2. We focused much of our work on prevention – in 2017 we actively assisted

- or prevented some 500 households across West Suffolk, from becoming homeless.
3. We established a number of arrangements with housing providers to secure supported accommodation, including Newmarket Open Door, YMCA and Home Group.
 4. We continue to ensure that no family would have to spend more than six weeks in bed and breakfast accommodation.
 5. We successfully bid for funding from the then Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) domestic abuse accommodation fund. Funding of £516,244 has been granted to partners to provide accommodation for victims of domestic abuse across Suffolk.
 6. We were also successful in our bid for funding for a rough sleeper outreach worker to work across the areas cover by West Suffolk, Babergh and Mid-Suffolk councils. The outreach worker helps us further achieve our aim to reduce rough sleeping by providing a point of contact for individuals who are either rough sleeping or who are homeless and at risk of rough sleeping. The outreach worker also has a role working with agencies and our partners to develop ways of preventing homelessness. This post is now included within the councils' staffing structure.
 7. We have further increased our outreach services with joint funding for two more outreach workers, one of which will specialise in helping people trying to overcome drink or drug issues.
 8. We invested £250,000 in the housing team to provide additional resourcing for advice and prevention. This includes the establishment of new posts to provide housing solutions including Welfare Support.
 9. We provided additional funding to Citizens' Advice to increase capacity for budgeting advice to support those people who are receiving Universal Credit.

10. We established a Winter Night Shelter to provide accommodation for rough sleepers over the winter months.
11. We continue to fund a specialist post within the Probation Service to find accommodation and support those leaving the criminal justice system.
12. We have begun to develop a No Second Night Out partnership.
13. We funded two bed spaces for prolific offenders, working with police and probation to support rehabilitation.

In order to develop this new Strategy we have: (i) reviewed progress since the approval of the first strategy; (ii) undertaken detailed analysis of homelessness in the area (Appendix A); and (iii) consulted a number of partners in the statutory and voluntary sector.

In accordance with the Homelessness Act 2002, West Suffolk Council has conducted a review of homelessness in the area between November 2017 and April 2018. The review takes the form of an evidence base that is attached as Appendix A to the Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeping Strategy. The depth and scope of the review has contributed to a comprehensive understanding of the key issues behind homelessness in West Suffolk. It has enabled us to consider where we need to focus our attention in the future.

2. Our vision

West Suffolk Council is committed to preventing and reducing homelessness, tackling the main causes of homelessness and supporting those in need.

Through this new Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeping Strategy, West Suffolk Council is responding to a period of change, not only through the Homelessness Reduction Act but also the significant financial challenges to public services, housing demand which squeezes affordability and as a result puts pressure on social housing and the impact of welfare reforms. This strategy builds on the recent achievements already described and responds to the new ways in which homelessness and support services are delivered.

The vision of this strategy is to:

Deliver a focused and accessible service to prevent homelessness and assist homeless people to find a settled home.

The main objectives are to:

1. provide a service with a focus on preventing or relieving homelessness ensuring those people have access to effective support services
2. ensure that homeless people are supported to secure a settled home
3. work collaboratively in finding housing solutions for those people threatened with homelessness.

In order to achieve these objectives, we have identified five priorities to deliver.

These priorities have emerged from a combination of analysis of the outcomes of the first Homelessness Strategy, consultation with our partners and public, the changing national and local context which is a response to the ongoing welfare reforms and new legislation, in particular the Homelessness Reduction Act.

The five priorities are set out overleaf and they are explored in further detail, together with actions, in section 6:

Priority one: Homelessness prevention

We will continue to focus on preventing homelessness.

Priority two: Tackling rough sleeping

Central government has set a target to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and to eliminate it altogether by 2027. We will continue to invest in tackling rough sleeping. One of the ways that we will do this is by establishing a No Second Night Out partnership which will support the Government's aims.

Priority three: Supporting vulnerable households

We will ensure that our services remain accessible to all and that there is targeted support for the most vulnerable households, such as those affected by domestic abuse, people leaving care, people with mental health issues, members of the Armed Forces and prison leavers.

Priority four: Increasing accommodation options

We will respond to the challenging local housing market conditions enabling a wide range of accommodation options, including providing advice and support to landlords to help develop a private rented sector that is better suited to local needs.

Priority five: Supporting the implementation of welfare reforms

We will work in partnership with support agencies and services to offer solutions that help people to maintain tenancies.



3. National and regional context

National and regional homelessness trends

The Homelessness Monitor: England 2017 commissioned by Crisis provides a useful overview of the current national and regional context in terms of homelessness.

The report shows that homelessness application acceptance rates have gone up nationally and regionally in recent years. At nearly 58,000, annual homelessness application acceptances were some 18,000 higher across England in 2015/16 than in 2009/10. With a rise of 6% over the past year, application acceptances now stand 44% above their 2009/10 low point.

The number of people sleeping rough has been increasing nationally for a number of years and more recently in West Suffolk (see Appendix A for more detail of homelessness and rough sleeping data).

Statutory duties, policy and guidance

The Homelessness Reduction Act

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 changes the way homelessness advice and assistance is provided by councils.

The Act reforms the homelessness duties to ensure that councils provide meaningful advice and assistance to those people who do not fall into a priority need category or who have been found to be intentionally homeless.

In particular this is likely to have a positive impact for singles or couples with no children where previously legislation had not prescribed much to assist them.

The Act has introduced the following:

1. The definition of being threatened with homelessness be extended from 28 days to 56 days, meaning councils can start working with people at an earlier date.
2. Councils must accept a valid 'section 21' notice as evidence that the tenant is threatened with homelessness.
3. A greater duty to give advice and information to a wider range of people at a much earlier stage than previously offered.
4. Duty to assess all eligible applicants' cases and agree a plan (known as the 'personal housing plan').
5. The creation of a stronger prevention duty for anyone threatened with homelessness and eligible for assistance. This can involve assisting them to stay in their current accommodation, or helping them to find a new place to live.
6. A new relief duty which is available to all those who are homeless, have a local connection and are eligible regardless of whether they have a priority need. It requires councils to take reasonable steps to help secure accommodation. This help could be, for example, the provision of a rent deposit or debt advice. Those who have a priority need (for example they have dependent children or are vulnerable in some way) may be provided with interim accommodation while the council carries out the reasonable steps.
7. Duties to help to secure accommodation.
8. Incentives to people to engage in prevention and relief work by allowing councils to discharge their prevention and relief duties if an applicant unreasonably refuses to cooperate with the course of action proposed.
9. A right for councils to discharge the prevention and relief duties by providing

accommodation with a reasonable prospect of this being available for at least the next six months. This does not need to be social housing.

10. A right to a review at the prevention, relief and main duty stages to ensure councils are held to account.
11. A requirement to collect data in order to monitor the overall effectiveness of the new legislation.

West Suffolk Council already take steps at an early stage to help those threatened with homelessness. However, the additional requirements as a result of the Homelessness Reduction Act have also meant a redesign of the way services are provided, with additional members of staff and a new approach to the way advice and support is provided.

Other legislation

In addition, the housing team has to consider duties under the following and/or are impacted by the following legislation:

- Localism Act 2011
- Welfare Reform Act 2012
- Deregulation Act 2015
- Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016
- Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities 2018
- Housing and Planning Act 2016
- National Planning Policy Framework
- Health and Social Care Act 2012
- Children and Social Care Act 2017

4. The West Suffolk context

This section provides an overview of the West Suffolk area with a focus on its population, deprivation, economic activity and housing availability.

More detailed data on housing demand and is contained in Appendix A.

Population

West Suffolk’s population is set to grow significantly in the future, and with an ageing demographic in comparison with many parts of the country. This poses challenges for the Council in ensuring the right kinds of housing, together with employment and infrastructure, are available for our growing population in both urban and rural areas.

The ONS 2016 Mid-year population estimates that the total population of West Suffolk in 2016 was 177,385. It shows that 9.3% of West Suffolk’s population was over 75 (compared to 8.1% of England’s population). Between 2017 and 2030, the population of West Suffolk is predicted to grow by 8% (compared to 9% in England as a whole). The over 75s population is predicted to grow by 55% (compared to 47% in England as a whole).

This clearly presents West Suffolk with significant challenges in terms of the increased population of over 75 year olds and how we help meet their needs.¹

The Index of Multiple Deprivation

The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) provides indicators of deprivation at local authority and lower super output area level (LSOA). Lower super output areas are a statistical geography and are smaller in size than wards. They are a

statistical cluster of around 1,500 people.

There are seven domains that look at deprivation and together they represent the IMD.

Domain	Rank	
	Forest Heath	St Edmundsbury
Overall IMD Rank	140	196
Income	208	240
Employment	250	230
Education	20	129
Health	180	203
Crime	140	198
Barriers to Services	26	32
Living Environment	187	257

Ranked out of 326 local authorities where 1 = most deprived

Forest Heath ranks poorly for education and both Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury rank poorly for barriers to services.

There are 32,844 LSOAs in England, 66 of these are in St Edmundsbury and 34 in Forest Heath. Of the 100 LSOAs in West Suffolk only two (2%) are in the **most** deprived 20% of all LSOAs nationally. 14 (14%) are in the 20% **least** deprived LSOAs in England.

Socio-economic

West Suffolk’s workforce is growing faster than surrounding areas and the country as a whole, and employment among young people is particularly healthy. However, wage levels remain below the national average, leading to a renewed focus on attracting high quality

¹ ONS 2014-based Sub-National population projections

employment to the area, supported by training and skills development.

In 2016 workers in West Suffolk were employed in the five following main sectors: business administration and support services, manufacturing, health, retail and accommodation and food services.²

Economic activity

Between October 2016 and September 2017, the percentage of 16-64 year olds who were economically active³ was 83.4% across West Suffolk compared to 78.1% for Great Britain as a whole.

In 2015, 83.3% of West Suffolk employees worked in services, 11.1% worked in manufacturing and 4.4% worked in construction.⁴

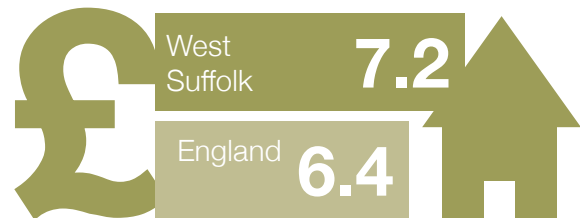
The weekly median pay (gross) for full time workers in Forest Heath in 2017 was £506.70, in St Edmundsbury it was £536.40 compared to £555.30 in England.⁵

Housing affordability

The infographic below shows that compared to earnings, property in West Suffolk is less affordable than England as a whole which has a significant impact on options available to local people and on the services we deliver.

As of November 2017, the percentage of out-of-work benefits claimants in Forest Heath was 0.7%, in St Edmundsbury it was 1.1% and across Great Britain it was 1.9%.⁶

The estimated ratio of average earnings to average property price in West Suffolk in 2017 was 7.2 compared to a ratio of 6.4 for England as a whole.



Ratio of average earnings (full time workers' mean gross annual pay) : (Mean semi-detached property price). Comparisons using ratios of lower quartile earnings to lower quartile house prices can also be used, which show further problems with affordability in West Suffolk. As a rule of thumb, house prices of up to 3 - 3.5 times household income are considered affordable.

Source: Wage levels - Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings. House prices - Gov.uk - UK House Price Index: data downloads Aug 2017

It should be noted that under Universal Credit, a broader span of claimants are required to look for work than under Jobseeker's Allowance. As Universal Credit Service is rolled out in particular areas, the number of people recorded as being on the Claimant Count is likely to rise.

Health and wellbeing

Housing that meets the minimum standard and is suitable and warm, is essential to ensure the health and wellbeing of residents. We understand that housing is a wider determinant of health.

Male life expectancy is 80.5 years in Forest Heath and 81.9 years in St Edmundsbury compared to 79.5 years in England. Female life expectancy is 83.3 years in Forest Heath

² Business Register and Employment Survey

³ NOMIS Annual population survey October 2016 to September 2017

⁴ NOMIS Annual population survey 2015

⁵ Annual survey of hours and earnings

⁶ ONS claimant count

and 84.6 years in St Edmundsbury compared to 83.1 years in England. Across Suffolk, healthy life expectancy for males is 65.1 years compared to 63.4 years in England⁷. Healthy life expectancy for females across Suffolk is 66.7 compared to 64.1 years in England. Healthy life expectancy is an estimate of the number of years lived in “very good” or “good” general health, based on how individuals perceive their general health.

In 2015, the top three causes of death across West Suffolk were cancers, diseases of the circulatory system and diseases of the respiratory system⁸.

In 2015/16, the prevalence of depression in Suffolk was 8.9% compared with 8.3% in England.⁹ In 2015/16, the prevalence of severe

mental illness for those registered with a GP was 0.78%, this is lower than the England value of 0.990% and equates to 1,919 individuals in West Suffolk. In 2014/15, 7,516 of people who are registered with a GP in Suffolk have been diagnosed with schizophrenia, bipolar or other psychoses¹⁰.

In 2015/16 a personal wellbeing survey¹¹ for those aged 16+ in Suffolk found that: 1 in 3 reported low happiness (7-8%), 1 in 5 reported high anxiety (18.8%), 1 in 25 reported low life satisfaction (4.4%) and 1 in 30 reported low worthwhileness (3.5%).

7 www.phoutcomes.info (2013-15)

8 NOMIS

9 [Healthy Suffolk.org.uk/JSNA](http://HealthySuffolk.org.uk/JSNA)

10 www.fingertips.phe.org mental health profile MH JSNA

11 ONS.gov.uk/people, population and community/wellbeing/localauthorityupdate2015to2016

5. Strategic context

This section outlines the key strategies which need to be taken into account alongside the delivery of this Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeping Strategy.

West Suffolk Strategic Framework 2018-2020

West Suffolk Council's strategic framework sets out the vision and aims that the Council will be working with others to achieve over the next two years, as follows:

Supporting and investing in our west Suffolk communities and businesses to encourage and manage ambitious growth in prosperity and quality of life for all.

To achieve this vision, the focus will be on the three main strategic priorities which are:

1. growth in West Suffolk's economy for the benefit of all our residents and UK plc
2. resilient families and communities that are healthy and active
3. increased and improved provision of appropriate housing in West Suffolk both in our towns and rural areas.

With a particular focus on housing, the priorities as set out in the Strategic Framework are to:

- plan for housing to meet the needs of current and future generations throughout their lifetimes, that is properly supported by infrastructure, facilities and community networks
- improve the quality of housing and the local environment for our residents
- enable people to access suitable and sustainable housing.

West Suffolk Housing Strategy

Our Housing Strategy sets out the Council's priorities for increasing the overall supply of housing in the area. The Strategy will be developed later in 2018 and will support the delivery of the Council's housing priorities which are:

1. plan for housing to meet the needs of current and future generations throughout their lifetimes, that is property supported by infrastructure, facilities and community networks
2. improve the quality of housing and the local environment for our residents
3. enable people to access suitable and sustainable housing.

Domestic Abuse Strategy

The Suffolk Health and Wellbeing Board has widened its responsibilities around domestic abuse to include Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) which is in line with a refreshed strategy published by central Government. It acknowledges however that victim and perpetrators can be women, men, girls and boys.

The vision for Suffolk's Violence Against Women and Girls Multi Agency Strategy is as follows:

Ensure that victims of abuse in Suffolk are safe and supported.

To achieve this the main objectives are:

1. to reduce the prevalence of all forms of VAWG in Suffolk
2. increase the early identification and intervention with victims of VAWG

3. build cross-agency skills and capability to provide effective VAWG advice and support services
4. improve the criminal justice response to VAWG.

Suffolk Health and Wellbeing Strategy

Suffolk's Health and Wellbeing Board was established in 2013 and it has a duty to encourage integrated working between health, care, police and other public services in order to improve wellbeing outcomes for Suffolk. It has an important strategic influence in encouraging joined up, integrated and system wide working to improve outcomes for local people.

In 2015, Suffolk's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2012-2022 was refreshed. The following strategic outcomes for years 4-6 of the strategy were agreed:

- Outcome one: Every child in Suffolk has the best start in life
- Outcome two: Improving independent life for people with physical and learning disabilities
- Outcome three: Older people in Suffolk have a good quality of life
- Outcome four: People in Suffolk have the opportunity to improve their mental health and wellbeing

Given that housing is a wider determinate of health, it is important that the actions within this strategy support the delivery of the Health and Wellbeing Board's outcomes. Furthermore, given that the Council requires the support and expertise of other agencies to meet its homelessness duties, it is vital that effective partnership working is central to this strategy. While the statutory duty to prevent and relieve homelessness rest with the Council, the reality is that input from a wide cross-section of public and voluntary partners is needed to find and

retain accommodation.

Housing Forum

The councils' Chair the West Suffolk Housing Forum. The purpose of this forum is to bring together statutory and voluntary sector partners, including housing providers, to support some of the most vulnerable individuals and households. Cases discussed are usually about those people who are sleeping rough or those who are struggling to maintain tenancies. The aim is to have a joint approach with all organisations so that information can be shared and action co-ordinated. Any organisation can add cases for discussion and outcomes are shared.

Working in partnership

The Council works closely with a range of partners in the statutory and voluntary sector and recognise that there are a range of factors that contribute to homelessness. Furthermore the solutions for these can only be found by partners working together as part of a coherent approach to tackling homelessness. Examples of joint working include:

Suffolk and Cambridgeshire partnerships:

A number of Suffolk and Cambridge-sub region partnership meetings are in place to provide a forum for senior managers to discuss best practice, sharing resources and agreeing collective training and development. They also provides an opportunity for organisations to discuss strategic and operational matters with a wider range of district housing authorities.

Joint pathways for support: Suffolk housing authorities are working together to develop pathways for support, particularly for vulnerable individuals such as people with mental health issues, people leaving care, people leaving prison. These pathways will provide consistency of support for the individuals and enable

organisations working across the county (and wider) to understand the requirements of housing teams.

Joint staffing: The Council continues to explore opportunities for sharing resources, including joint staffing posts, to increase resilience and access to specialist skills and support services. Joint posts are currently in place for outreach work and for domestic abuse support and the Council will continue to identify opportunities for sharing staff with other organisations where there is mutual benefit. Further conversations are being explored

with partners, particularly in order to increase capacity for helping people with mental health issues.

Universal Credit partnership: The councils have coordinated the local response to Universal Credit to ensure the right level of support is in place and that organisations are able to signpost effectively. The council chairs a partnership of the Citizens Advice Bureau, local housing providers, Jobcentres and the county council.

6. 2018-2023 homelessness priorities

This five year strategy covers the period 2018-2023, and seeks to further strengthen the partnership working in place in West Suffolk and to continue to make significant improvements in alleviating homelessness.

We will continue to work to prevent homelessness and help local families and individuals. This will be achieved through the adoption of the following five inter-relating priorities. Key actions across each of the five priorities are detailed in the delivery plan attached as Appendix B.

Our priorities and actions are aligned with our Strategic Plan 2018-2020 and with the Housing Strategy.

The five priorities are:

Priority one: Homelessness prevention

We will continue to focus on prevention of homelessness in the first instance as has been our strategy prior to its emphasis in the Homelessness Reduction Act. We will work in partnership with residents, communities, registered providers and other partner organisations to prevent homelessness and ensure families and individuals are appropriately housed.

We know that many people are experiencing housing difficulties and sometimes this can reach a crisis point before they ask for advice from homelessness services. We want to reach people earlier with the right advice, practical help and support to help them to either keep their current home or move home in a planned way rather than through eviction.

The Homelessness Reduction Act enables us to support people much earlier in the process

(56 days as opposed to 28 days). It also places a duty on public sector organisations to refer cases to us who they consider to be homeless or threatened with homelessness. This statutory duty does not include registered providers (housing associations). We have, however, already put in place local arrangements for these referrals so that support can be provided at a much earlier stage.

The Act strengthens our duty to prevent homelessness for all eligible applicants including those who do not have priority need or those who may be considered intentionally homeless and regardless of local connection. Given the increased number of people who will require support, we must make sure that responses are both timely and every contact is made to count whether directly to housing or with other services.

The housing team must report to Government each quarter detailing what prevention activity has been undertaken. In order for the council to discharge the prevention and relief duties, it has to be satisfied that accommodation is available and that there is a reasonable prospect of this being available for at least the next six months. This accommodation could be social housing or private housing. As a consequence, the Council will need to provide advice and information to applicants to ensure that they are fully aware of all accommodation options available to them. Furthermore, given the lack of social housing availability, the affordability of housing and the costs in the private rented sector, the Council will need to be proactive and enable different accommodation options. This will include boosting the availability of affordable private rented homes (see priority four for more detail).

To deliver this priority we will:

- Provide high quality timely advice to all residents on their housing options.
- For people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, we will agree a personal housing plan that sets out the actions they can take and we will take to enable the applicant to help themselves. We will review our casework management system to ensure we can monitor progress and report on the outcomes of advice given.
- Identify people at risk of homelessness at an earlier stage and develop interventions to prevent them from being threatened with or becoming homeless.
- Identify ways to encourage tenancy sustainment and prevent recurring homelessness by helping people sustain settled accommodation.
- Provide tailored advice for people at greater risk of homelessness including young single people, people released from prison, people leaving care, victims of domestic abuse, former members of the armed forces, people leaving hospital, people with learning difficulties, people with mental health issues and Gypsies and Travellers (also linked to actions around priority three).
- Develop a prevention toolkit, training and advice to help organisations respond to the risk of homelessness at an earlier stage.
- Ensure that the statutory and voluntary sector are aware of the requirements and expectations of the Homelessness Reduction Act so that they can provide the right support and advice.
- With partners, agree clear pathways and referral routes. This will include public bodies that will have a new duty to refer cases as well as implement protocols for information sharing between services working with customers at risk of homelessness.
- Improve our data collection and recording. Use data and predictive analysis to help

target resources to prevent homelessness and identify and interact with people in need of support and advice, in order to prevent homelessness from occurring. This will include developing local community based responses offering specialist advice and signposting to services in those geographical areas identified as having higher levels of homelessness.

- Make better use of debt and financial advice to improve prevention work.
- Better align assessment processes with statutory services and explore housing issues where appropriate as a key line of questioning.
- Work with partners through the Suffolk Health and Wellbeing Board to ensure that the health benefits of individuals and families having a settled home, remain high on its agenda.
- Ensure that people in temporary accommodation are supported to access services and ensure that referrals are made to relevant floating support. Floating support provides the flexibility to support people wherever they are living.

Priority two: Tackling rough sleeping

Central government has set a target to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and to eliminate it altogether by 2027. We will continue to invest in alleviating rough sleeping by establishing a No Second Night Out partnership which will support the Government's aims.

We want to see an end to rough sleeping in West Suffolk by doing more to prevent the risk and improve the support that is available. The main focus currently is on dealing with rough sleeping at crisis point or mitigating the impact. There are a range of services but the activity needs more co-ordination. We will concentrate more on preventing rough sleeping happening and improving the effectiveness of services for entrenched rough sleepers.

The Government defines rough sleeping as people sleeping or bedded down in the open air and people in buildings or other places not designed for habitation. A long term rough sleeper is defined as someone who has been identified as sleeping rough on at least 50 occasions over a five year period.

People who become entrenched in rough sleeping are more likely to have complex mental and physical health needs and a shortened life expectancy. Most have previously been involved in programmes of support and have lost permanent and supported housing. Supporting entrenched rough sleepers will link to our work under priority three to improve partnership work for the most vulnerable to homelessness.

West Suffolk has seen a sharp increase in numbers of rough sleepers. We have, and will continue, to work hard with partners to address that situation. In 2011, there were four rough sleepers across West Suffolk and this number increased to 29 rough sleepers in 2017. Of the 325 local authorities, in 2017 West Suffolk ranked 284 out of 325 (a ranking of 325 indicates the highest number of rough sleepers per 1000 head of population).

In 2017/18, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government launched a £30 million fund to help areas with the highest levels of rough sleepers. West Suffolk secured Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI) grant to deliver targeted interventions that could be implemented quickly and make a real difference to the number of rough sleepers on the streets. In 2018/19 West Suffolk received £245,782 of RSI funding and £345,562 in 2019/20. The RSI grant funded the following: a rough sleeper co-ordinator role, outreach provision, increased floating support, extension to the existing emergency accommodation and identifying and funding temporary accommodation. The specific actions put in place as a result of the RSI funding are included in the actions below.

To deliver this priority we will:

- Use dedicated support to work with rough sleepers and try to address the problems that lead to rough sleeping and being at risk of sleeping rough. This will include the development of a 'No Second Night Out' partnership. No Second Night Out is aimed at ensuring that people who spend a night sleeping rough for the first time do not spend a second night on the streets. This means that rapid support is provided to new rough sleepers so that they do not have to sleep out for a second night.
- Implement pathways for tackling homelessness, including identifying risks early, promoting self-help and resilience for those who are able to help themselves and proactive help for those who are too vulnerable to help themselves.
- Deliver robust services for those who are homeless. Our work will recognise that some people need more than just a roof over their head. We will work in partnership to provide support and stability to their lives, with the aim of breaking the cycle of homelessness.
- Work with local authorities across Suffolk and the Cambridge sub-region to improve the service offer and outcomes over the next two years including support to people leaving institutions (for example hospitals and prisons).
- Further enhance coordination across statutory, commissioned and voluntary services that are working with rough sleepers to coordinate activity, share information and work together on initiatives.
- Continue to access external funding to support outreach and prevention activity, building on the success of previous bids for funding from government and Suffolk Public Health.
- Continue to provide Severe Weather Emergency Provision (SWEP)
- Help people with entrenched patterns of rough sleeping more holistically through

better collaborative working and support tailored to their individual needs.

- If people have come from another area, should they wish, we will reconnect them back to their local community where they have support that they need. There will however be some occasions when there is a good reason why they shouldn't return to a previous area, and naturally we will respect this.
- Provide effective information to the public about rough sleeping and how they can help if they have concerns.
- Recruit and establish Rough Sleeper Outreach Team (1 x Co-ordinator, 1 x Mental Health specialist, 1 x Drug and Alcohol specialist, 2 x Outreach and Resettlement).
- Increase the accommodation options available ring fenced for rough sleepers, including the recruitment of additional support staff.
- Extend emergency accommodation provision by the provision of additional night support worker.
- Agree, manage and monitor service level agreements with each provider for the use of ring fenced accommodation.
- Use additional £25,000 fund for provision of SWEP accommodation.
- Undertake rough sleeper counts every two months from September 2018.
- Work with the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government and our partners to tackle street activity.

Priority three: Support for vulnerable households

We will ensure that our services remain accessible to all whilst ensuring there is targeted support for the most vulnerable households. We aim to increase the resilience of people and communities, equip them with the necessary skills to prevent crises, such as homelessness, before they occur.

For some people who become homeless the provision of suitable accommodation is the only problem that needs to be addressed. However, many other people can become homeless or threatened by homelessness due to a range of support needs. Some vulnerable groups are at a greater risk of homelessness and/or repeated incidence of housing instability. This includes young people, those with complex needs, substance misusers and victims of domestic abuse. There are also groups with very complex needs who may be substance misusers, have mental health issues and have had contact with the criminal justice system. We will improve our targeted interventions and partnership work to help people find lasting housing solutions. This includes how we assess needs and plan support jointly across agencies and design the specific services to be provided.

By working with our partners to provide targeted, specialist support, we endeavour to limit the number of vulnerable people who become homeless.

We aim to achieve this by developing new ways of co-commissioning services with partners, exploring the Housing First model. The model is a new evidence-based approach to supporting people with high needs and a history of entrenched or repeat homelessness to live in their own homes. The aim is to provide a stable and independent home with intensive personalised support to people with multiple and complex needs.

We will continue to influence commissioning and services provided by other organisations to ensure there is effective support in place for those who need it.

This updated strategy includes a Temporary Accommodation Procurement and Placement Policy (Appendix C). The purpose of the policy is to set out how we will procure sufficient units of temporary accommodation to meet demand and how we will place households in temporary accommodation for the best possible outcomes.

To deliver this priority we will:

- Explore options for the provision of more temporary accommodation, in order to house individuals and families, including those who have experienced domestic abuse.
- Support the monitoring of housing related support, we will work with partners to identify the resources that are available to meet the support needs of all those groups that are at high risk of homelessness.
- Explore the Housing First model and continue to influence commissioning decisions, made by other agencies, in order that contracts support the outcomes we are aiming to achieve and that appropriate resources are allocated to West Suffolk.
- Continue to monitor and review pathways and referral processes for vulnerable groups to ensure that they provide the right level of support and are fit for purpose.
- Work with partners across Suffolk to ensure there is appropriate provision of domestic abuse support and accommodation, including building on the satellite accommodation already in place.
- Continue to identify opportunities to share resourcing, including staff, to support vulnerable households. Share posts and have funding in place to support domestic abuse, and rough sleepers.
- Explore opportunities to increase access to mental health services with a view to promoting these services to housing customers.
- Continue to operate the Housing Forum to provide a multi-agency approach to vulnerable customers, including those who

are rough sleeping and those in supported accommodation.

- Continue to hold and attend case management meetings with agencies, including adult and children services, to help prevent the most vulnerable families from becoming homeless.

Priority four: Increasing accommodation options

We need to improve the range of housing options available to both prevent homelessness and meet rehousing needs. As well as providing housing, we also want to improve the support available to help people keep their home and live independently. The West Suffolk Housing Strategy sets out in detail how the council will use its influence, including through its planning and regulatory services, to increase the supply of housing in the area.

The Housing Team proactively source a wide range of accommodation options, either by direct provision or encouraging providers and commissioners, including: lodging schemes; shared accommodation; six months' tenancies; temporary accommodation; supported accommodation; and increased private sector provision.

We will respond to the challenging local housing market conditions by working collaboratively with, and offering advice and support to people and landlords to develop suitable private rented sector offers.

Having a settled home enables people to access support services, integrate into their local community and to obtain and sustain work and training. We will continue to manage the expectations of customers and ensure that we maximise access and availability not only to social rented accommodation but to other housing options. This approach will help us to meet housing need, prevent homelessness and reduce the use of temporary accommodation.

The homeless legislation expands the circumstances in which we can help an applicant find a private sector tenancy. We will therefore need to increase access to private rented housing for people who we have a duty to rehouse and other groups in housing need. This will help us provide meaningful options for people that we must help under the Homelessness Reduction Act. It enables us to offer more choice of property type and areas as well as recognising that not everybody is looking for a lifetime home.

This presents a challenge, as finding enough properties can be difficult due to the supply of housing, a very competitive housing market which means more people are private renting, the pressure that then puts on social rented accommodation, and issues around benefits.

The lower security of tenure is also an issue as the loss of Assured Shorthold Tenancy is one of the main reasons for homelessness.

To deliver this priority we will:

- Improve access to good quality private rented housing to expand choices and provide affordable housing options for families and individuals. This includes supporting both tenants and landlords in developing new approaches that are attractive to all parties.
- Work with private sector landlords and developers to maximise the use of resources and opportunities for all vulnerable people across West Suffolk.
- Continue to review the effectiveness of the West Suffolk Lettings Partnership to increase access to quality private rented accommodation.
- Encourage private landlords to engage with the council by holding Landlord Forums which share best practice and offer advice and support.
- We will focus more on sustaining tenancies and providing timely advice to prevent a

housing crisis arising in the rented sector and working positively with landlords and tenants to improve positive outcomes.

- Work with registered providers and voluntary sector to increase access to accommodation, including: lodging schemes; shared accommodation (particularly for under 35s); temporary accommodation; and tenancies to support move on.
- Continue to influence the provision of supported accommodation by identifying need and demand.
- Support Suffolk County Council to manage its existing contracts, by providing robust operational feedback, and influencing the new contracts from 2020.
- Monitor use of bed and breakfast accommodation to ensure use only in emergency situations. Manage move on as soon as possible to improve the outcomes for individuals and families and reduce cost to the taxpayer.
- Ensure procedures are followed to manage the use of temporary accommodation and when used, to ensure that plans are in place to manage move on.

Priority five: Supporting the implementation of welfare reforms

We will continue to work in partnership with support agencies and services to offer solutions that help households to maintain tenancies. We already support households to maximise their income and to minimise outgoings to ensure they are able to manage rent or mortgage payments. Our Welfare Support and Income Recovery roles support individuals and households and identify ways of supporting them to sustain existing tenancies or to help whilst better accommodation options are found. This can include effective use of Discretionary Housing Payments.

We already work with partners at the Department of Work and Pensions, Jobcentres, Citizens' Advice, Anglia Revenues Partnership and registered housing providers, to ensure there is a collective response to Universal Credit. The partnership ensures there is effective signposting for support and contacts for helping vulnerable people. Digital assistance and personal budgeting support is provided by the council and partner agencies, such as Citizens' Advice.

To deliver this priority we will:

- Continue to develop the role of our Welfare Support Officer and Income Recovery posts to ensure they continue to support people to maximise income and minimise expenditure.
- Develop early intervention protocols with registered providers to ensure tenants retain their accommodation.
- Work with Anglia Revenues Partnership, the Citizens' Advice Bureau, Jobcentres,

Department of Works and Pensions and registered providers to support the roll out of Universal Credit.

- Work with partner organisations to provide timely financial advice to households that are homeless or at risk of homelessness due to debt.
- Support private sector landlords to understand the impact of Universal Credit and other welfare reform matters through the West Suffolk Lettings Partnership and Landlords Forum.
- Support customers with financial management advice and signpost to appropriate agencies.
- Work with Anglia Revenues Partnership to ensure effective allocation of Discretionary Housing Payment to support those who are experiencing difficulties as a result of welfare reform.

7. Equality analysis

An equality impact assessment (EqIA) has been undertaken on this strategy to ensure that there are no adverse effects for any particular group. The strategy contains priorities and actions which will be delivered to prevent homelessness and respond to those in housing need. It has relevance to equality because it impacts on West Suffolk's most vulnerable people. Additional support is identified for those who have priority needs, including people who are:

- pregnant or have dependent children
- vulnerable due to old age, mental illness or physical disability
- care leavers and young people
- veterans and those leaving the armed forces
- prison leavers
- people experiencing violence or threats of violence
- people experiencing homelessness as a result of an emergency

8. Governance and delivery of the strategy

The Council is committed to ensuring that together with partners, we have the skills, structures and infrastructure for the delivery of the strategy's priorities over the next five years.

West Suffolk Council is committed to working with partners to ensure that the priorities set out in the Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeping Strategy are delivered. The objectives in the Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeping Strategy will be achieved using the delivery plan (Appendix B) that identifies the main tasks needed to tackle and prevent homelessness over the next five years. Given the context of rapid change, the delivery plan will be reviewed every year to ensure that the tasks remain relevant and are revised where appropriate. A mid-term review is also planned for 2020.

Progress towards the Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeping Strategy delivery plan (Appendix B) will be monitored with feedback, if necessary, on the barriers to delivering the Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeping Strategy.



Appendix A: Homelessness data 2018

The purpose of this data and analysis is to support the development of the Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeping Strategy. It is intended to determine the extent to which people in West Suffolk are 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.

Data is provided under the following sections:

1. Identifying current and future levels of homelessness
2. Suffolk-wide support
3. Formulating a strategy to prevent homelessness
4. Reviewing accommodation needs and resources

1. Identifying current and future levels of homelessness

Homelessness statistics: Data relating to the period since the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

Following implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 on 3 April 2018, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has changed the way of collecting data from local authorities on statutory homelessness. From April 2018, statutory homelessness statistics include prevention and relief duties carried out under the Act.

This report contains data for the period April to December 2018. The statistics will be updated to include data for January to March 2019, therefore completing this data set, once the data has been released by the MHCLG.

Section 3 of the Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeping Strategy sets out the changes implemented through the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. The legislation introduces the creation of a stronger prevention duty for anyone threatened with homelessness and eligible for assistance. A new relief duty was also introduced for those who are homeless, have a local connection and are eligible regardless of whether they have a propriety need.

The emphasis is, therefore, on working to prevent and relieve homelessness so that households can maintain and secure a settled home. The following charts show that West Suffolk has had significant success in this area.

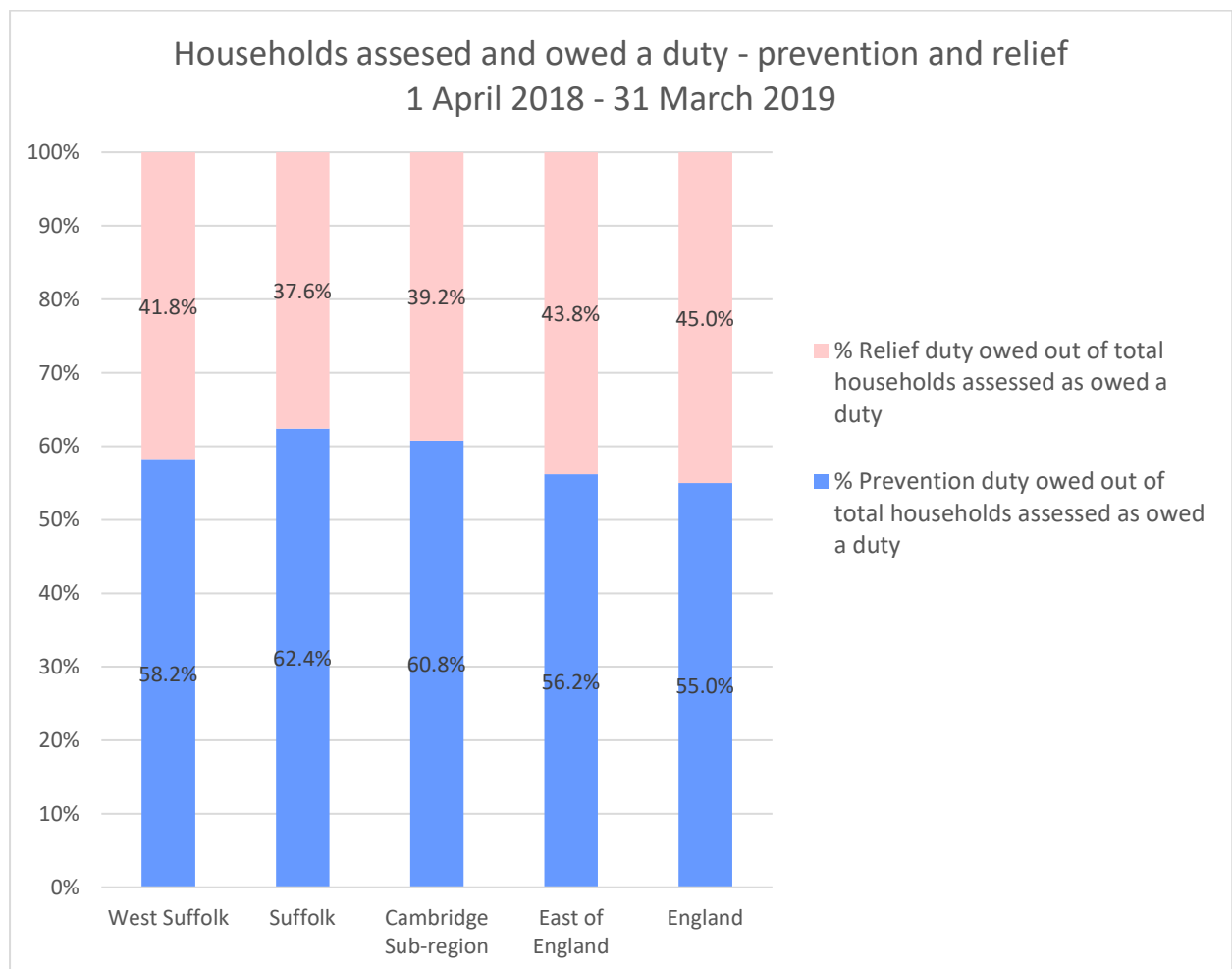
Data relating to homelessness statistics up to 2017/18 are provided on pages 13 to 19 in this appendix.

Households assessed and owed a duty

Between April 2018 and March 2019, the number of homelessness cases (or the number of households presenting as homeless or at risk of becoming homeless) across West Suffolk was **3,133**.

Figure 1 (below) shows that the number of households assessed as being owed a duty was 1,116. Out of all of those assessed as being owed a duty, 649 were owed a prevention duty and 467 a relief duty.

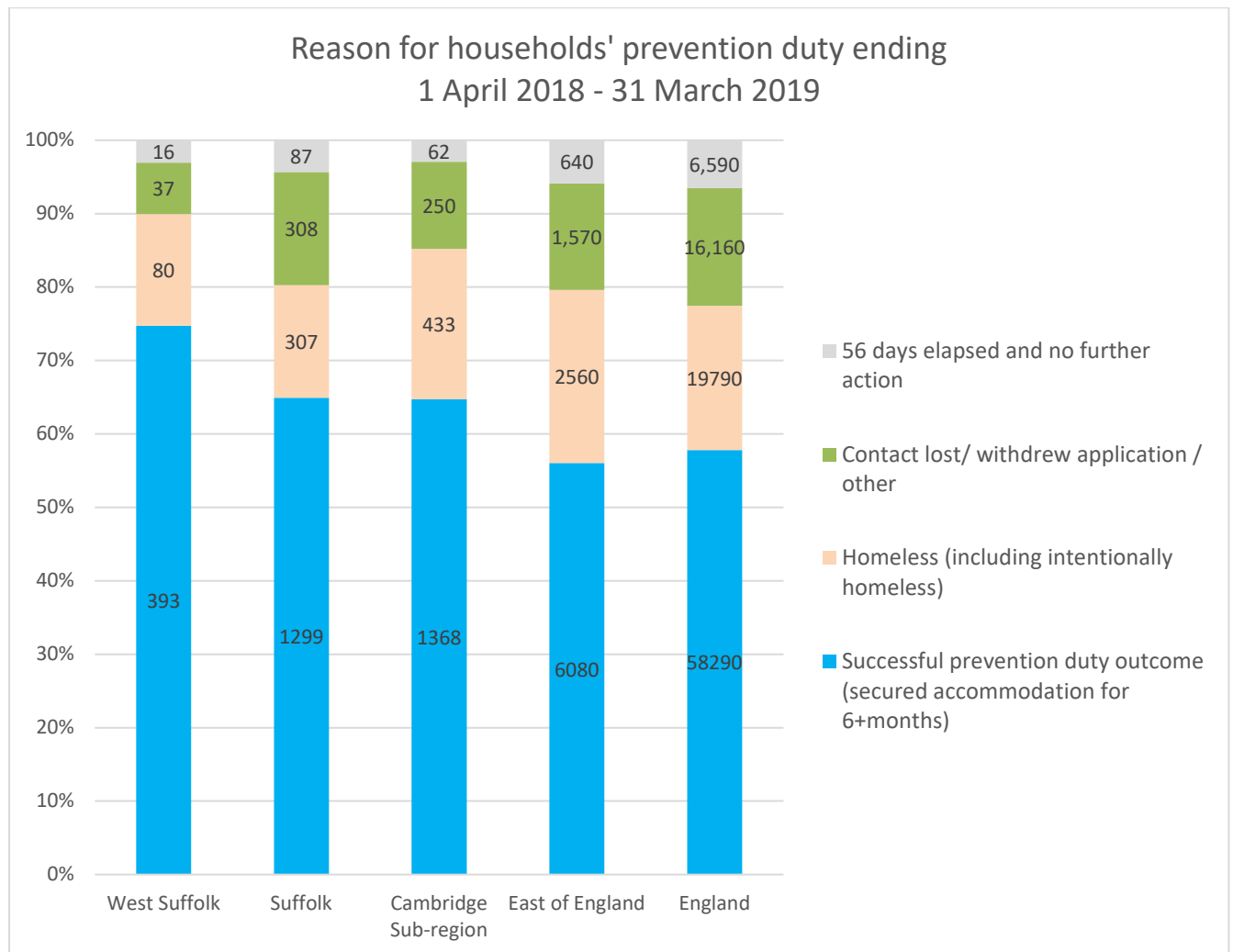
Figure 1



Prevention duty owed

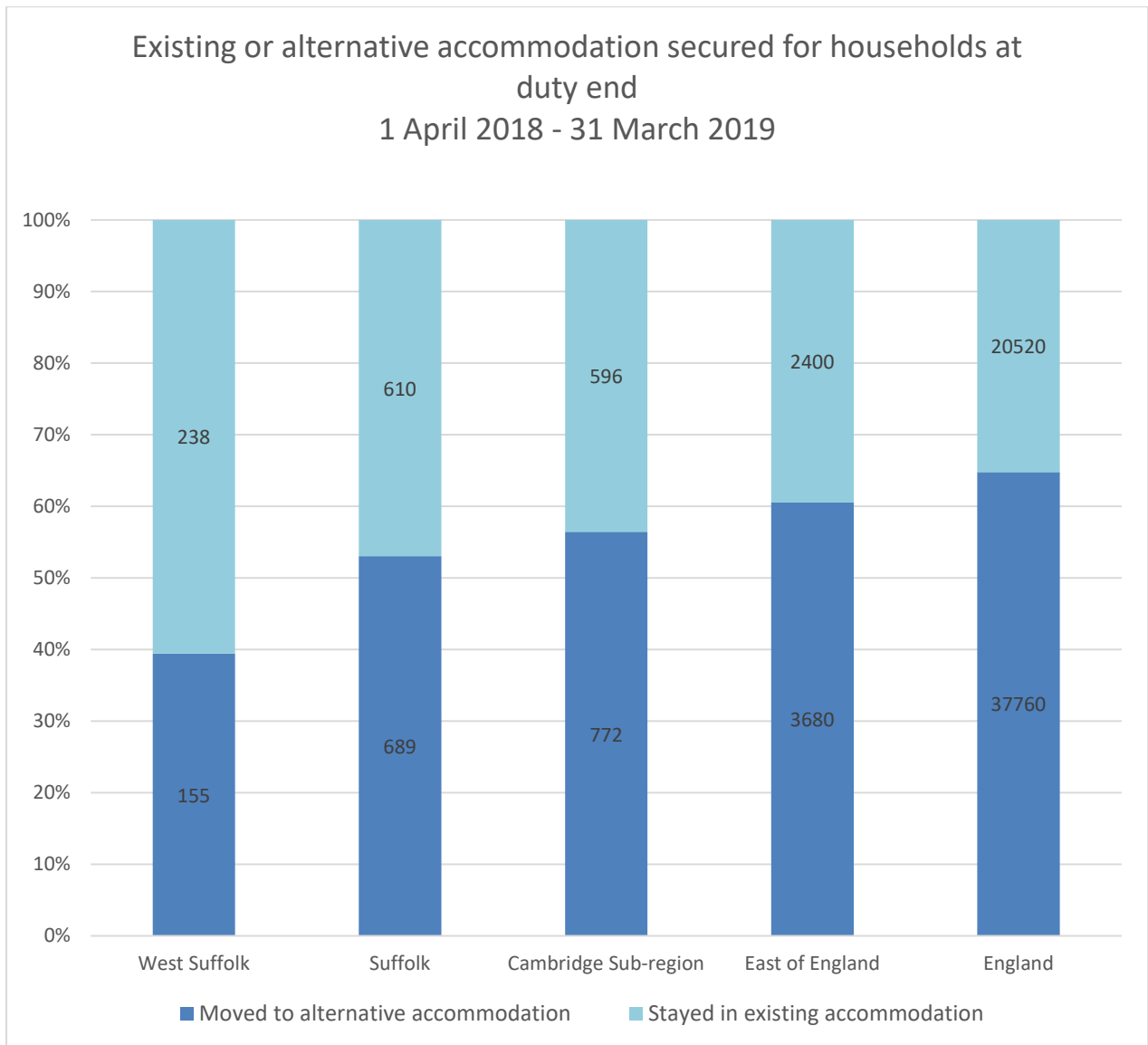
Where a prevention duty was owed, figure 2 (below) sets out the reasons for the prevention duty ending. 77% of West Suffolk households with a prevention duty ending resulted in a successful prevention duty outcome, which is secured accommodation for 6+ months. This is higher than Suffolk, the Cambridge Sub-region, East of England and England. The actual numbers are also given.

Figure 2



The households that were owed a prevention duty and had existing or alternative accommodation secured for them is set out below in figure 3. In West Suffolk, 62% of the successful prevention duty outcomes resulted in households staying in their existing accommodation. This is higher than for Suffolk, the Cambridge Sub-region, East of England and England.

Figure 3



Those households that were secured accommodation (whether existing or alternative accommodation), figure 4 below sets out the type of accommodation provided. In West Suffolk there is a particularly high percentage of households being placed in social rented accommodation.

Figure 4

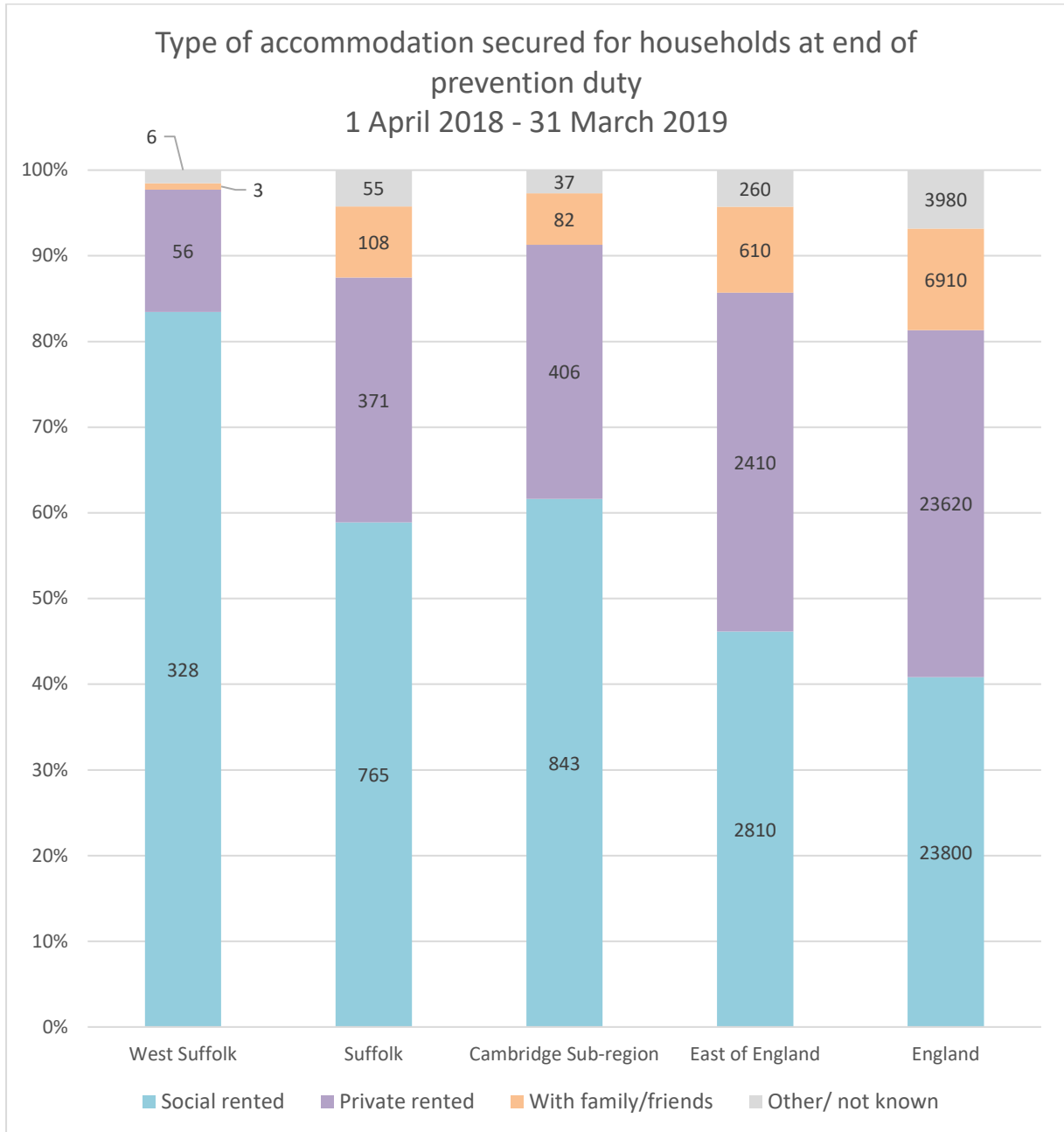
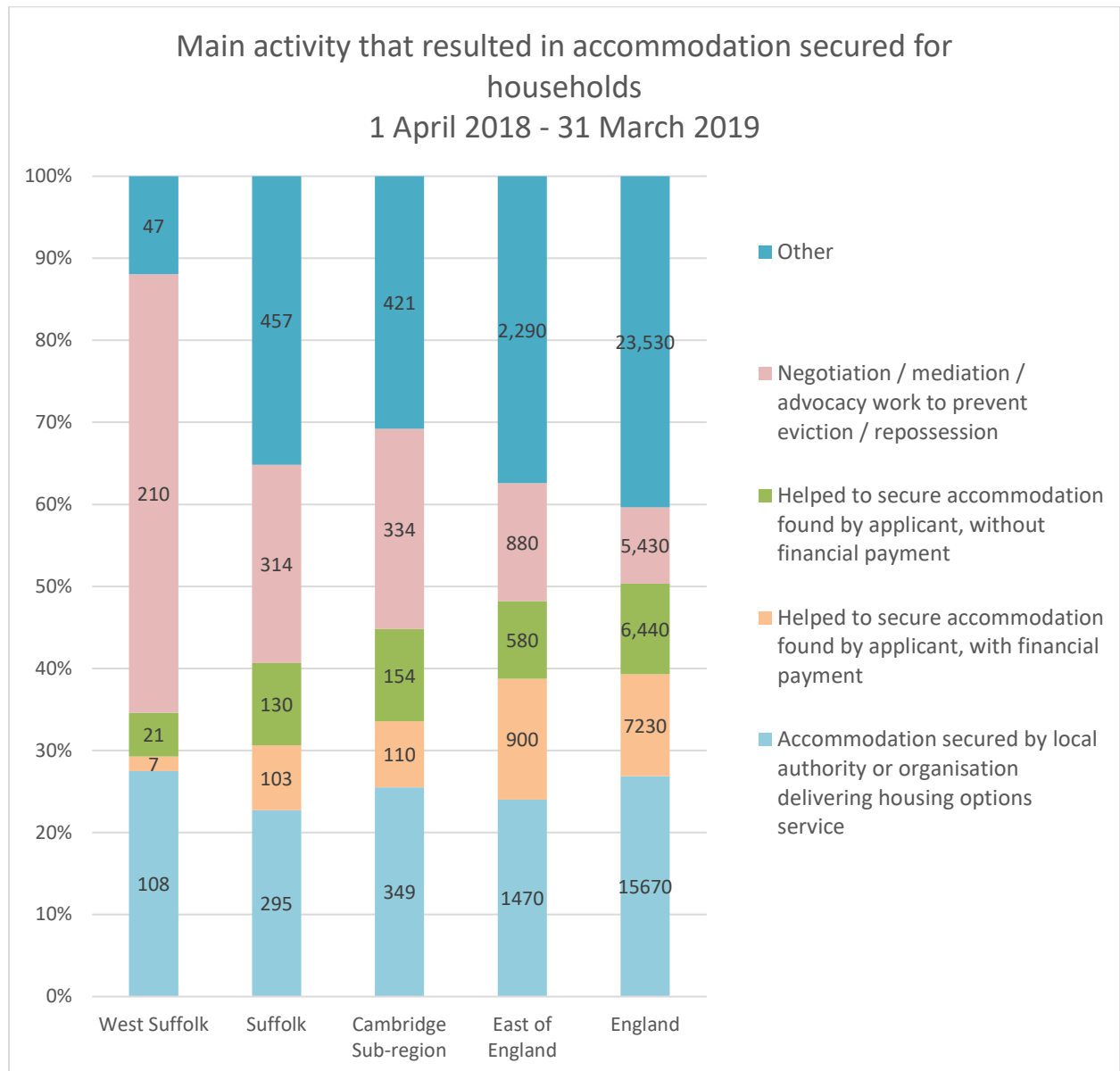


Figure 5 below shows the main activity carried out by West Suffolk Council that resulted in accommodation being secure for households.

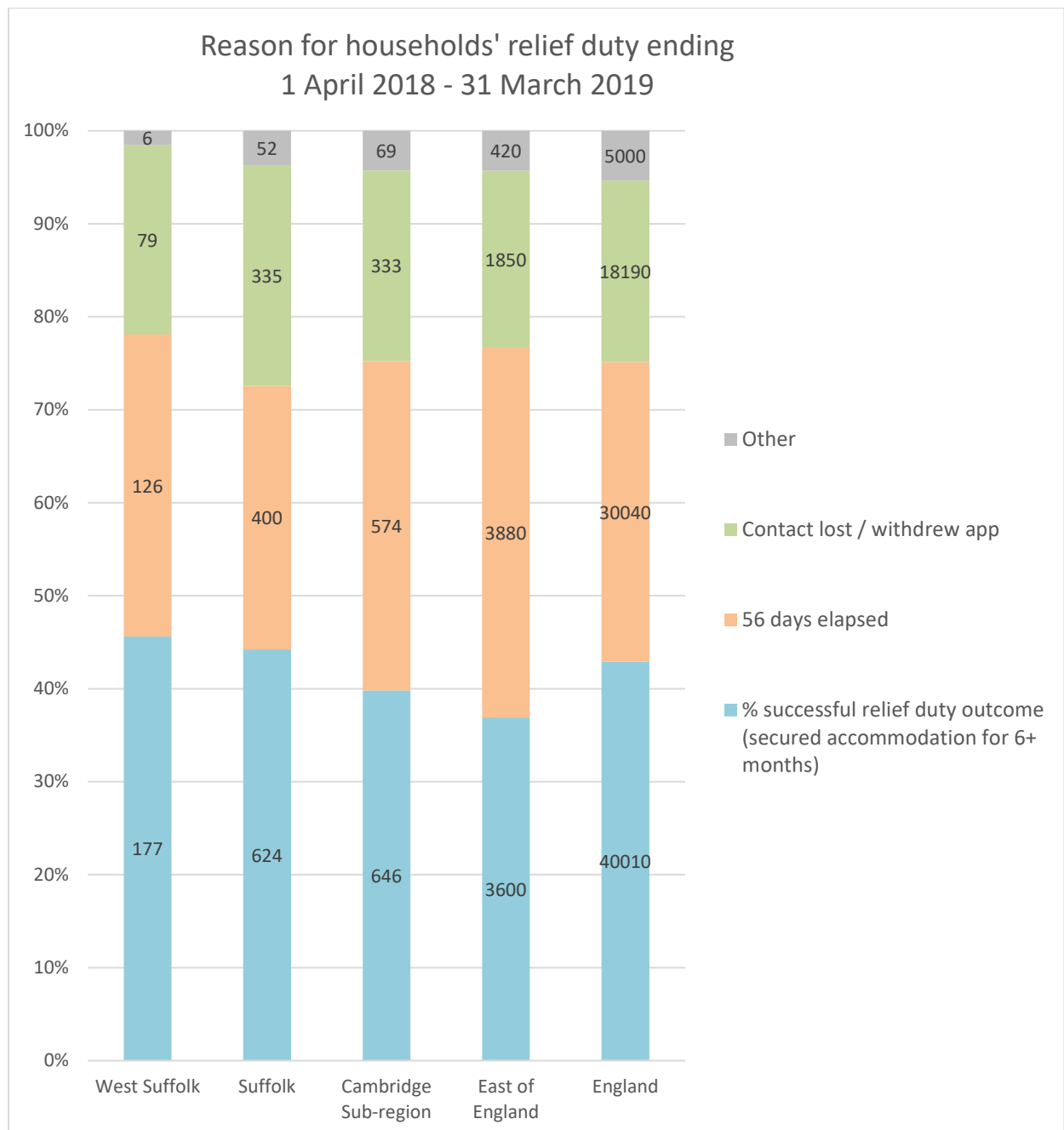
Figure 5



Relief duty owed

Where a relief duty was owed, figure 6 below presents the reasons for the relief duty ending. West Suffolk has the highest percentage of households with a relief duty ending due to a successful relief duty outcome (48%)

Figure 6



The households that were owed a relief duty and had accommodation secured for them, are set out below in figure 7.

Figure 7

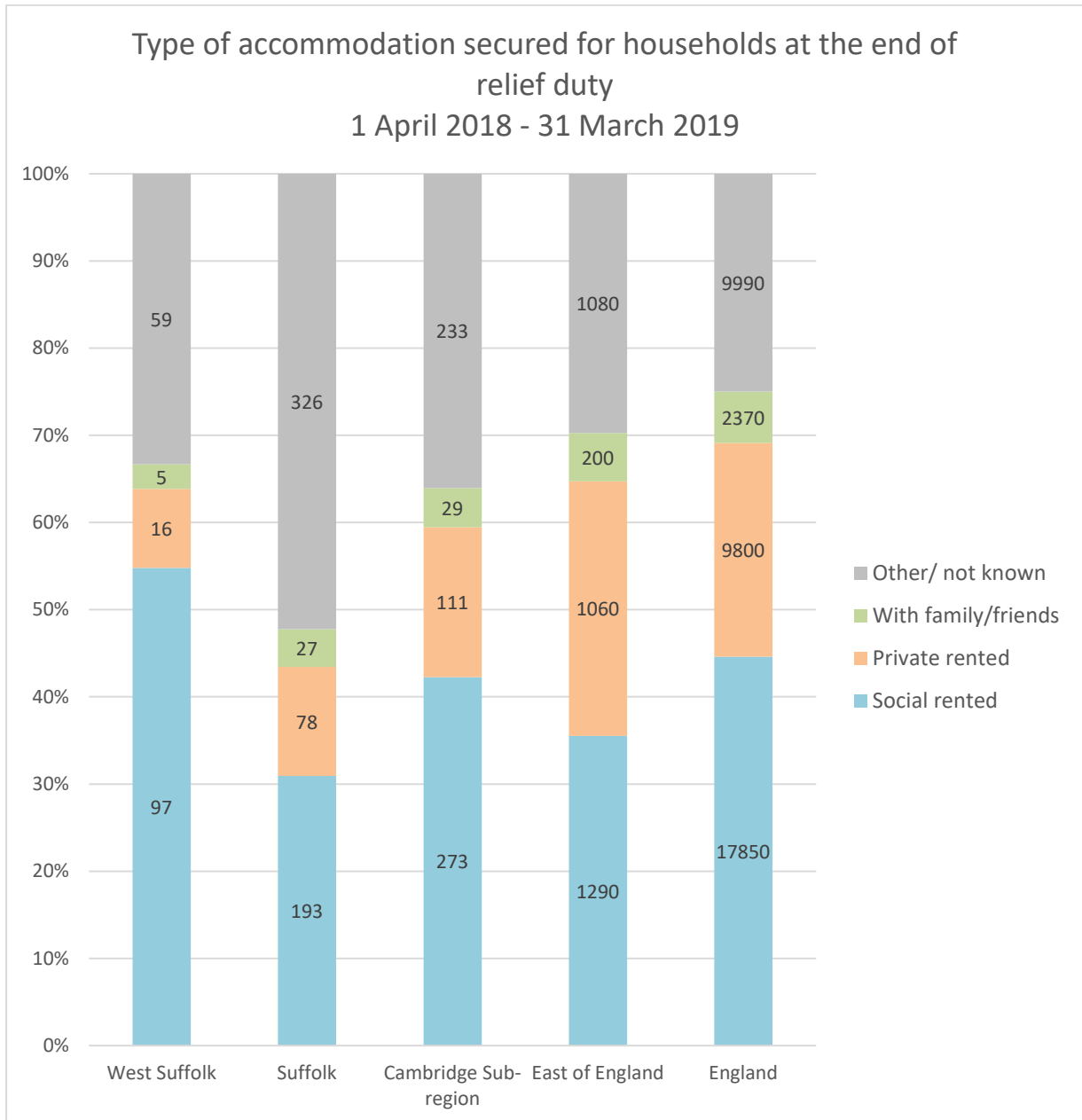
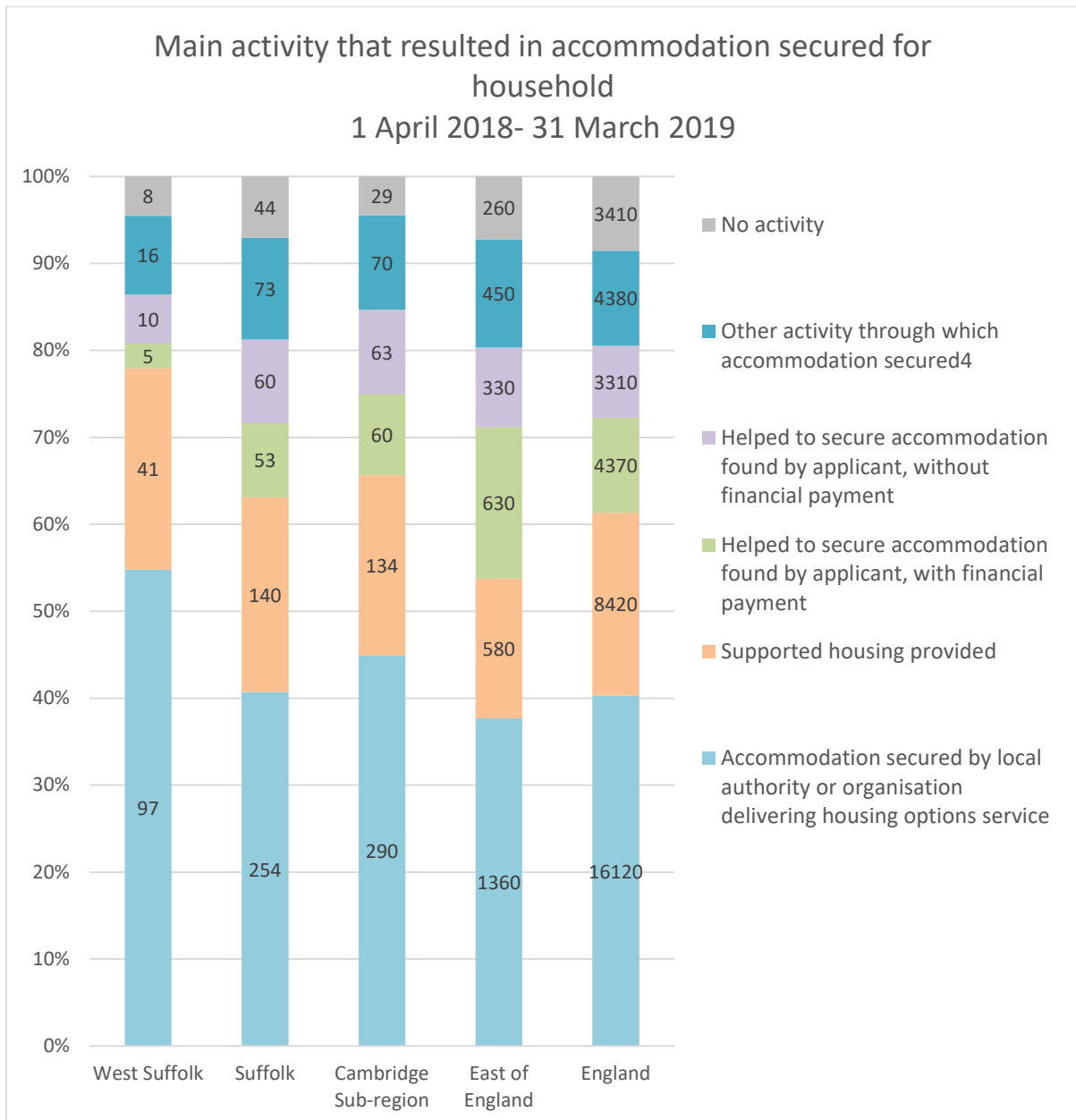


Figure 8 below shows the main activity carried out by West Suffolk Council that resulted in accommodation being secure for households. In West Suffolk, 55% of these secured accommodation outcomes are due to the accommodation being secured by the local authority or organisations delivering a housing options service.

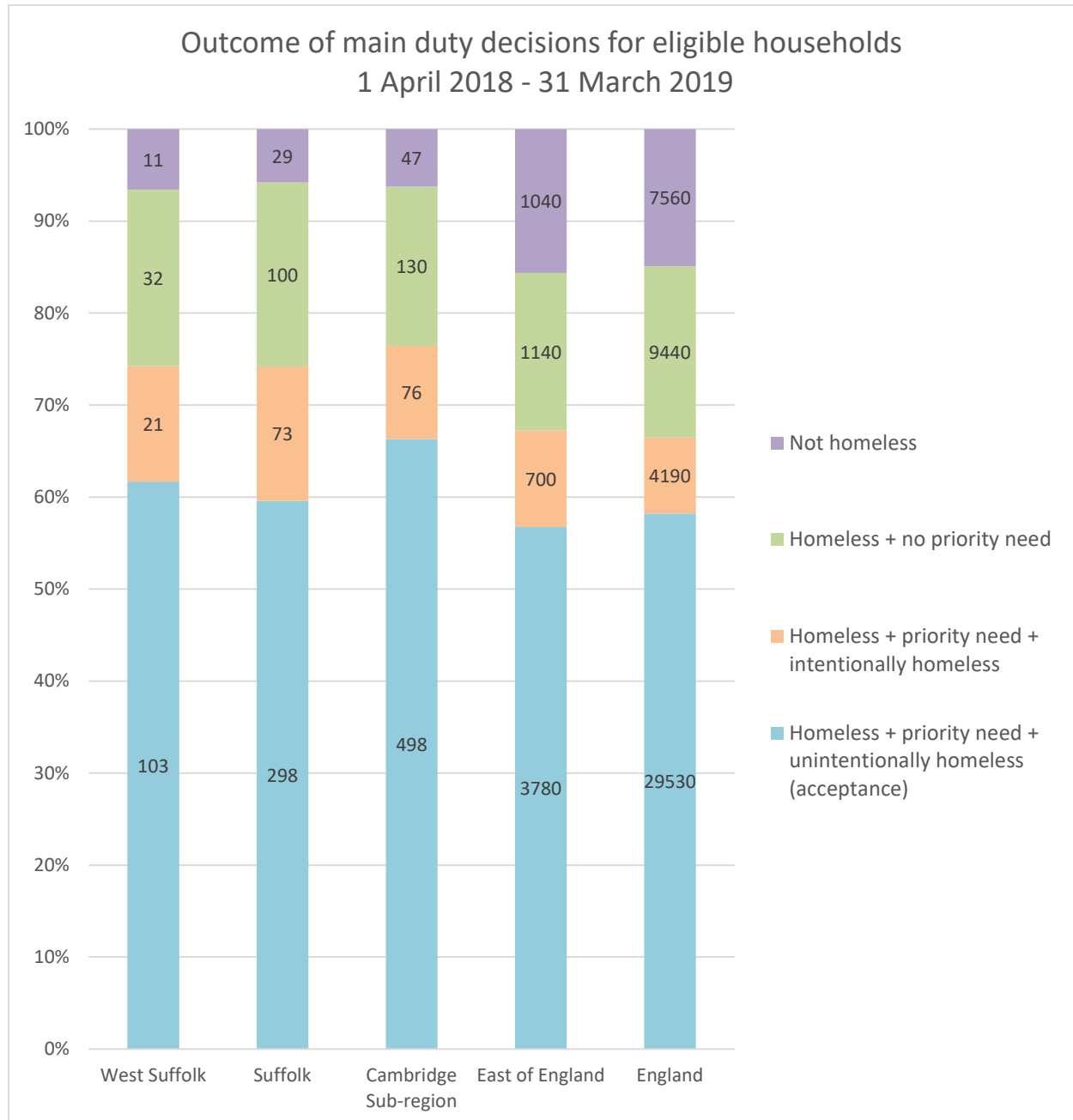
Figure 8



Main duty accept

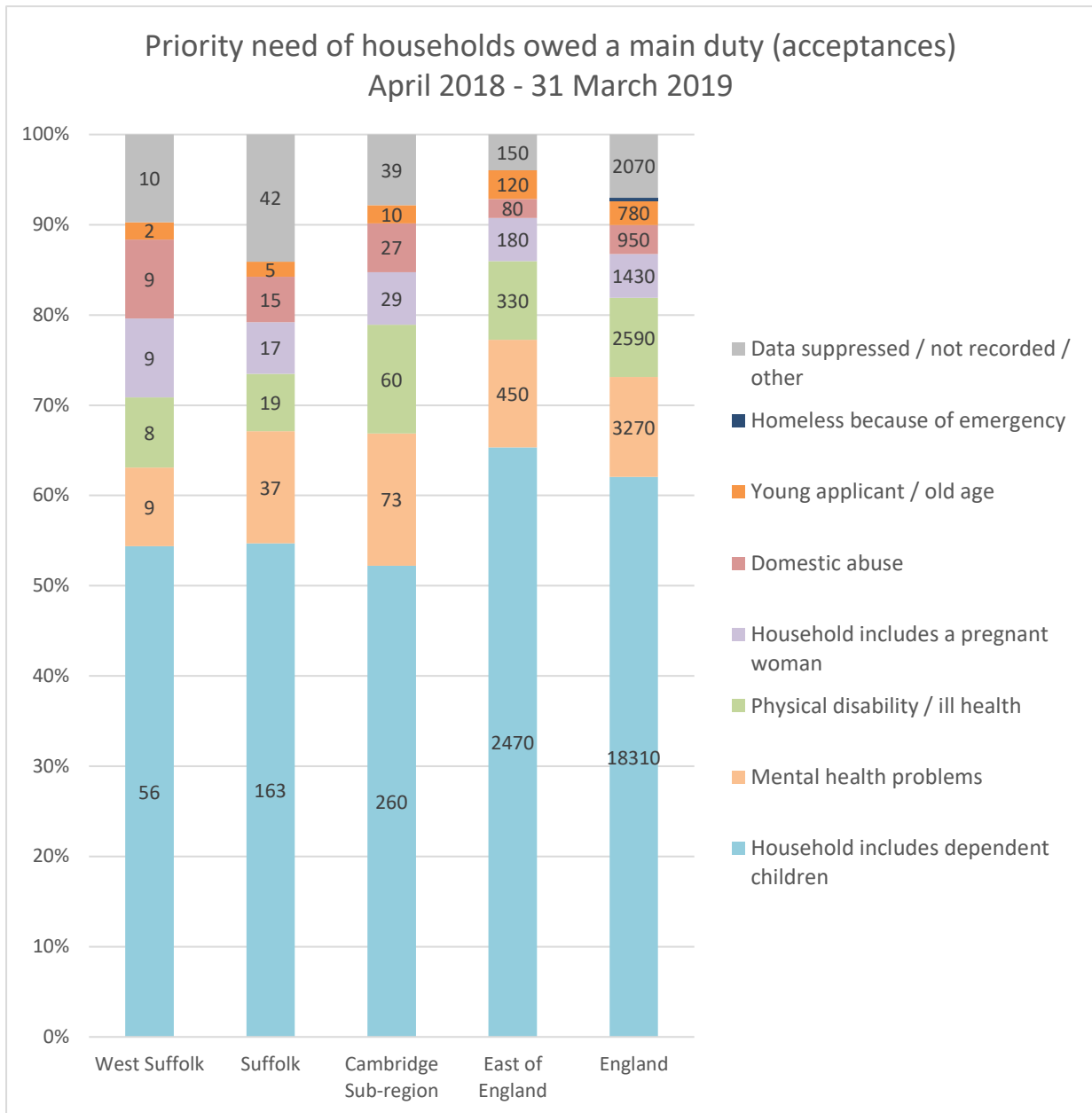
The main duty decision outcomes are set out in figure 9 below. Main duty decision acceptances (homeless, priority need and unintentionally homeless) are at similar levels across all areas.

Figure 9



The priority need of households owed a main duty are set out in figure 10 below.

Figure 10

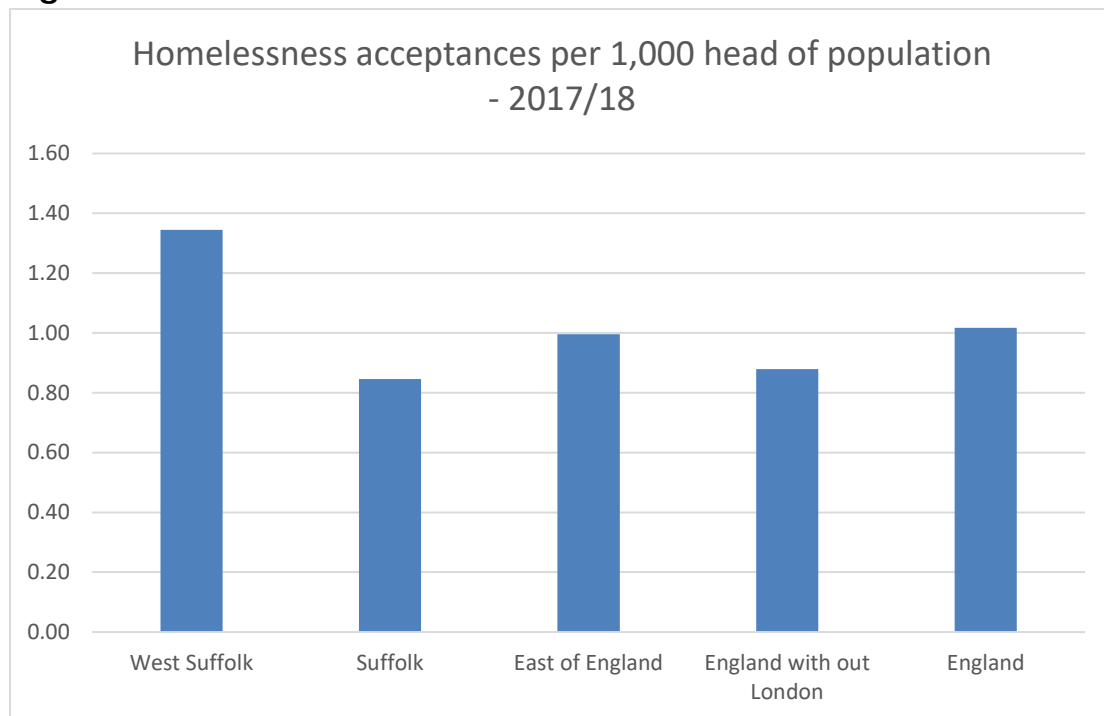


Homelessness applications and acceptances: Data relating to homelessness statistics up to 2017/18 (before the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017)

Detailed information on people who have made a homelessness application to West Suffolk councils was recorded on the P1E returns that are sent to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government quarterly (formerly the Department for Communities and Local Government) up until the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

The P1E provides data on households who have presented themselves as homeless to the Local Authority, and those who have been accepted as unintentionally homeless and in priority need. From April 2018, information is being provided to government through the new H-CLIC system.

Figure 11



Source: DCLG P1E return

Figure 11 shows the number of people accepted as homeless per 1000 head of population. The chart shows that there is a higher number of people being accepted as homeless in West Suffolk than across the rest of England.

Figure 12

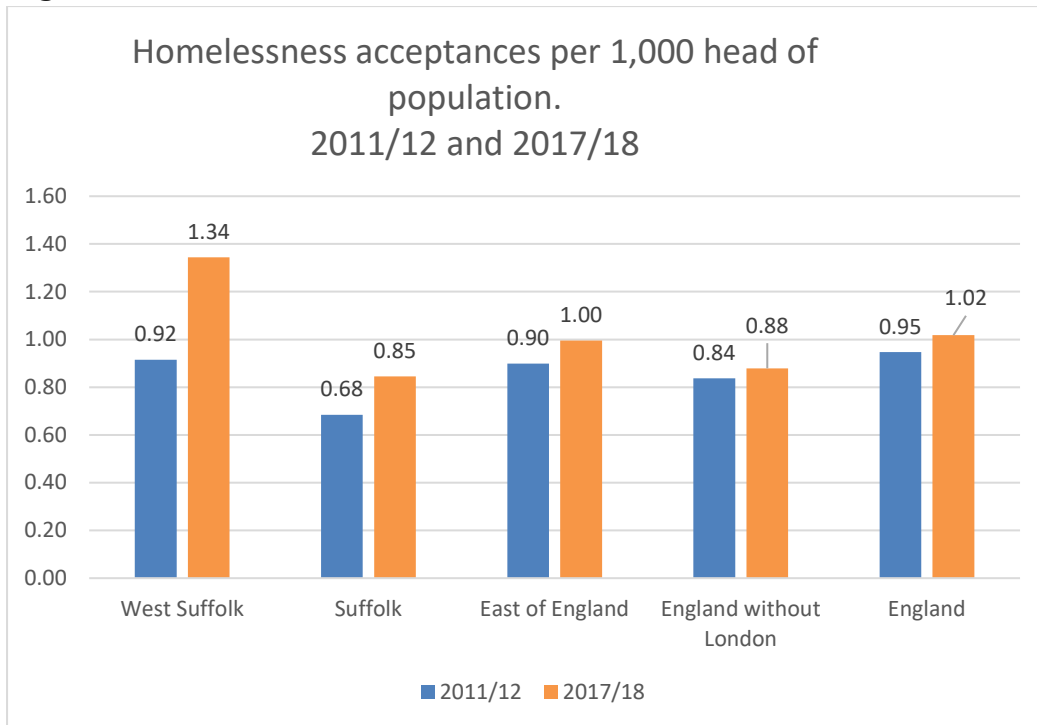
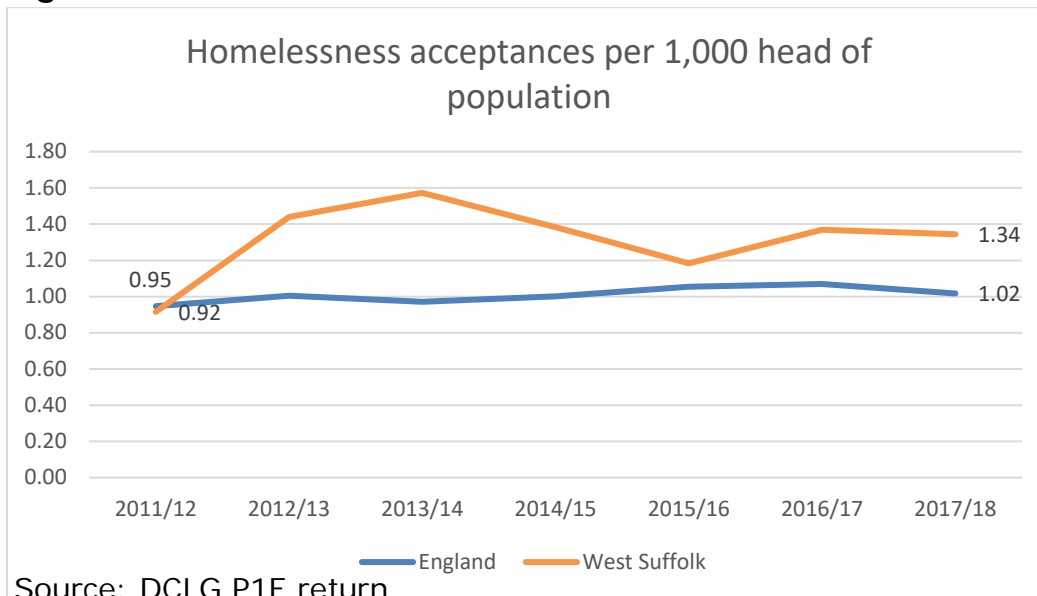


Figure 12 sets out the comparison between homelessness acceptances per 1000 head of population between 2011/12 and 2017/18. Homelessness acceptances have increased in West Suffolk at a faster rate than the rest of England.

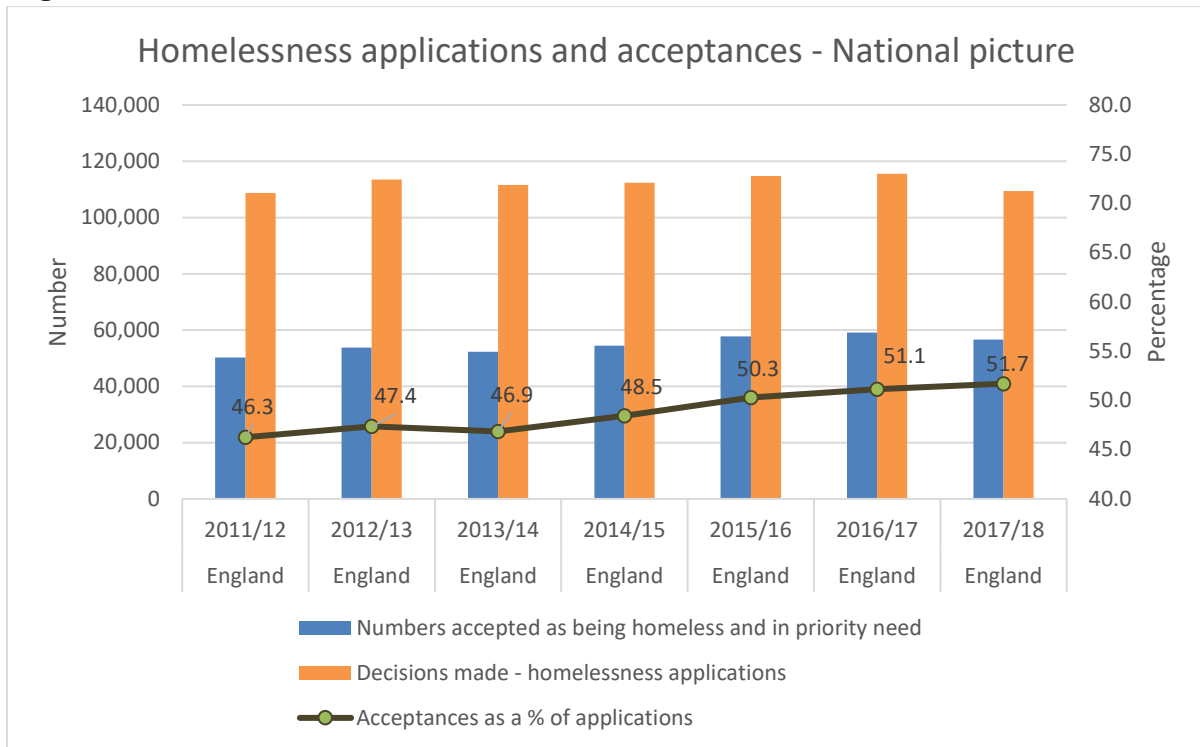
Figure 13



Source: DCLG P1E return

The number of homeless acceptances across England has shown a slight decrease in 2017/18. As shown in figure 13, the percentage of accepted homelessness applications in West Suffolk remains higher than the national trend.

Figure 14

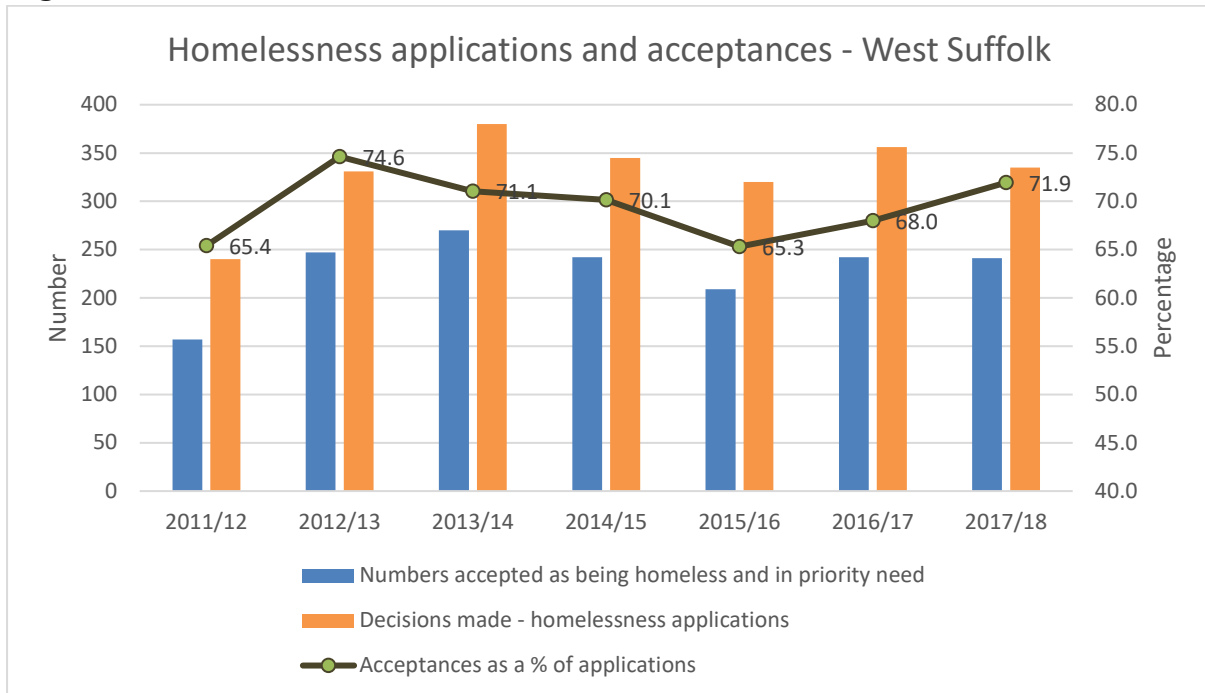


Source: DCLG P1E return

During the 2017/18 financial year, 109,470 decisions were made by local authorities nationally. This is a decrease of 5.29 per cent from 115,590 in 2016/17, as shown in figure 14.

During the 2017/18 financial year, 56,600 households were accepted by local authorities as being owed the main homelessness duty. This is a decrease of 4.25 per cent from 59,110 in 2016/17.

Figure 15



Source: DCLG P1E return

During the 2017/18 financial year, 335 decisions were made by West Suffolk councils compared to 356 in 2016/17, this was an overall decrease in decisions of 5.9 per cent, as shown in figure 15.

During the 2017/18 financial year, there were 241 households accepted by West Suffolk councils as being owed the homeless duty compared with 242 accepted in 2016/17, this was an overall increase in acceptances of 0.4 per cent.

Figure 16

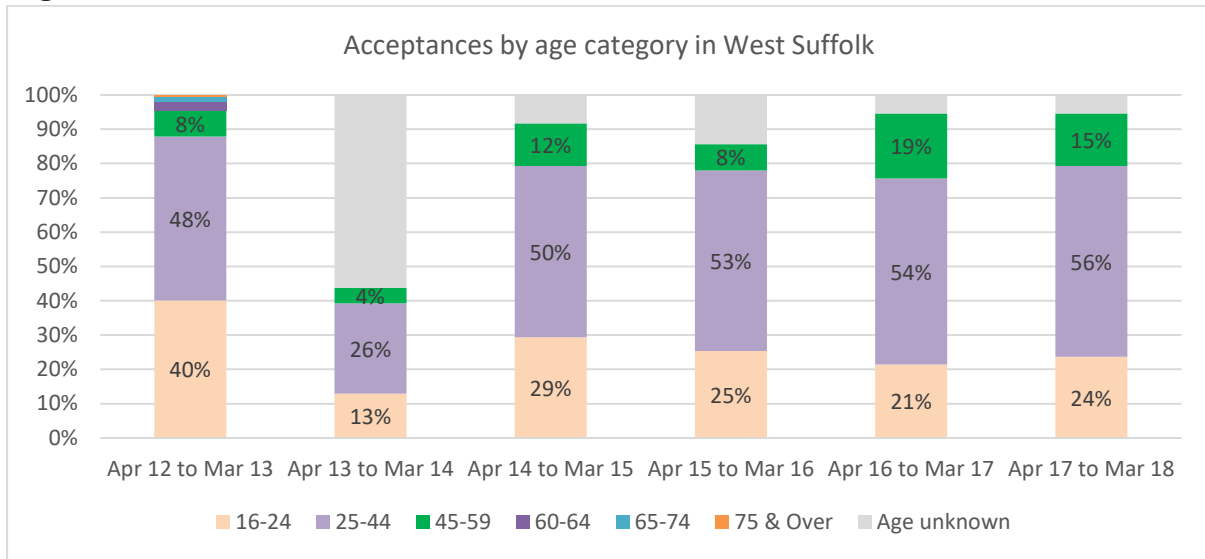
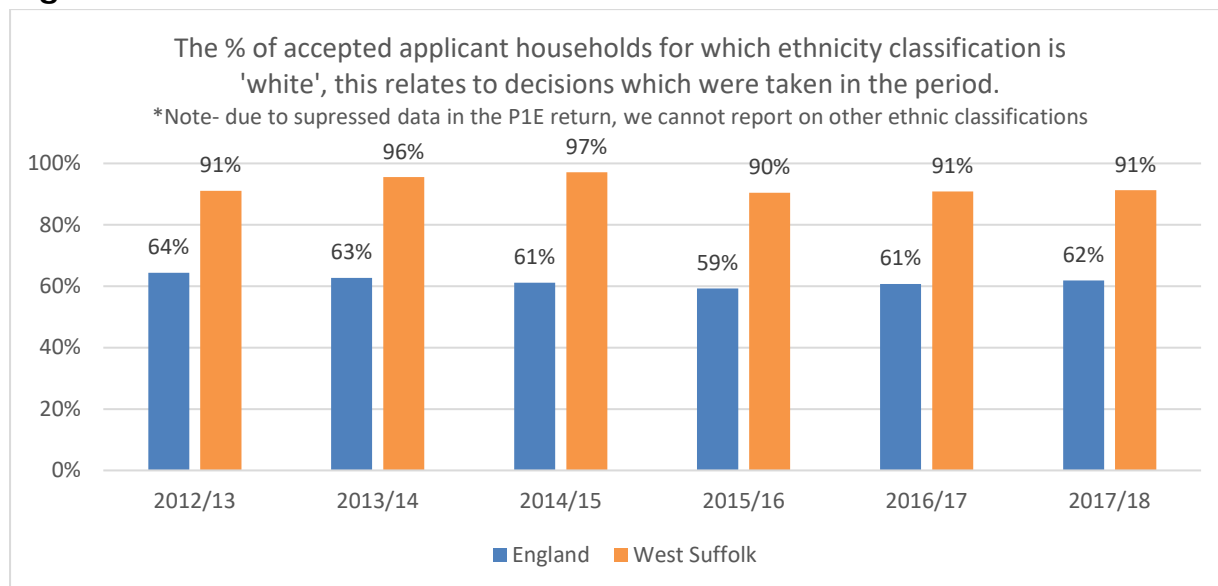


Figure 16 above shows that the highest proportion of homelessness acceptances in 2017/18 is predominantly made up of the 25-44 age category.

Figure 17



Source: DCLG P1E return

In comparison to the rest of England, a significantly higher proportion of households applying for housing is white. However this should be taken in the context that St Edmundsbury is 91.6% white (English, Welsh, Scottish and Northern Ireland) and Forest Heath is 77.2%. It should be noted that there are difficulties in using the figure for Forest Heath due to the large United States Visiting Forces (USVF) population which is more ethnically diverse but not eligible for housing support from the housing authority.

Reasons for loss of last settled home

The three main reasons why households have been accepted as homeless due to loss of their last settled home over the last five years are detailed in figure 8 below.

Consistently both nationally and locally the three main reasons why people have lost their last settled accommodation are due to loss of rented or tied accommodation due to termination of assured short hold tenancy, parent no longer willing to accommodate and violent relationship breakdown involving a partner or associated person.

Figure 18

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Parent, family or friend eviction	85 / 34%	27 / 10%	40 / 17%	26 / 12%	48 / 20%	47 / 20%
Relationship breakdown (violent and non violent)	41 / 17%	58 / 21%	33 / 14%	25 / 12%	76 / 31%	69 / 29%
Violence (not involving a partner) and/or harassment	8 / 3%	-	-	-	5 / 2%	16 / 7%
Loss of Private rented or Tied accommodation or mortgage arrears	97 / 39%	87 / 32%	89 / 37%	75 / 36%	84 / 35%	72 / 30%
Other	16 / 6%	-	-	-	7 / 3%	10 / 4%
Not stated	-	98 / 36%	80 / 33%	83 / 40%	22 / 9%	28 / 12%
Total households	247	270	242	209	242	241

Source: DCLG P1E return

In response to the high number of 'not stated' information, the Council will ensure that procedures are in put in place to collate all appropriate data so that we can better understand the reasons for homelessness and in so doing, reduce the level recorded under this particular heading.

Figure 19

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Applicant homeless in emergency						6
Households with dependant children	155 (63%)	163 (60%)	153 (63%)	130 (62%)	132 (55%)	130 (54%)
Households with pregnant member & no other dependent children	42	9	6	6	23	24
Aged 16/17 years old	3					
In care and aged 18 to 20						
Old age	4	5				
Physical disability	15	0			29	20
Mental illness or handicap	14	15	24	7	23	23
Drug dependancy		0				
Alcohol dependency	1	0				
Former asylum seeker						
Other	1					
Been in care	3					
Served in HM forces						
Been in custody/on remand						
Violence/threat of violence	9	16	7	6	26	28
of which Domestic violence	4	5	5	5	21	18
Priority need not given		62	52	60	9	10
Total households	247	270	242	209	242	241

Source: DCLG P1E return

As shown in figure 19, the main priority need category for people accepted as homeless continues to be those households with dependent children. The Housing Options team continues to try to prevent homelessness for families with children by helping to keep them in their homes or helping them to access accommodation in the private rented sector.

Personal and structural factors that may contribute to people becoming homeless

Personal factors that could contribute towards people becoming homeless include **individual** factors such as a lack of qualifications, a lack of social support, debt, poor physical and mental health, and becoming involved with crime at an early age. Factors relating to **family background** such as family breakdown, abuse in childhood and previous experience of family homelessness may also contribute to homelessness. An **institutional background** such as having been in care, in the armed forces or in prison, can also play a part in the variety of reasons that lead to people becoming homeless.

Structural causes of homelessness are often social and economic and outside of the control of the family or individual concerned. These might include unemployment, poverty and lack of affordable housing.

In West Suffolk we have a very good understanding of the factors that are contributing to people becoming homeless. From figure 8 above we know that, after households with dependent children, the groups most affected by homelessness are households with a pregnant member, people with a physical disability, people with a mental illness or handicap and people experiencing violence or being threatened with violence.

Identifying those most likely to become homeless or threatened with homelessness

We recognise how important it is to understand which groups of people are more likely to be threatened with homelessness. This helps us to focus appropriate resources and advice to the right groups and at the right time. We know, from figure 9 above, that households with dependent children represent the largest proportion of priority need for people accepted as homeless but we are working with colleagues from across Suffolk to look at trends so we can understand which groups may be more likely to become homeless or threatened with homelessness.

The range of factors that may affect future levels of homelessness

There are a range of factors that may affect the future levels of homelessness. Undoubtedly the overall availability of affordable and suitable homes to buy and rent has an impact. The provision of prevention and support services to provide advice and help to those who are more vulnerable is key as it impacts on people's ability to secure and retain accommodation. Some of these factors are addressed in the Homelessness Reduction Strategy and the Housing Strategy. All of these factors require a collective response from a number of different organisations.

Discretionary Housing Payments

The gap between benefit received (where capped) and local market rents continues to increase. [Discretionary Housing Payments](#) is a limited fund that we can access on a short term basis in exceptional circumstances. In 2018/19 £263,750 worth of DHP was awarded across West Suffolk. In 2019/20 £234,870 is available for DHP although it should be noted that this is not all allocated to those in temporary accommodation; it is used to prevent or relieve homelessness.

Figure 20: Number of placements in temporary accommodation by location (as at 1 April 2019)

Temporary Accommodation		
Location	Number of Units Available	Number of Units Used
Bury St Edmunds	40	33
Brandon	8	6
Newmarket	19	16
Haverhill	5	3
Mildenhall	5	1
Total	77	59

Figure 21: Number of households in temporary accommodation awaiting a move (as at 1 April 2019)

Temporary Accommodation	
Name of Accommodation	Households waiting to move
Britannia House	1
The Elms	1
Dick Perryman	4
Newmarket Road	1
Lake Avenue	1
Wamil Way	1
Total	9

2. Suffolk-wide support

Housing Related Support

Housing Related Support is available across Suffolk and it is used to help people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless to help resolve the problems that are contributing to their housing issues. This could include managing their physical or mental health, problems with drugs or alcohol, difficulties with debt, managing finance or problems with staying in work or education.

Single homeless and rough sleepers

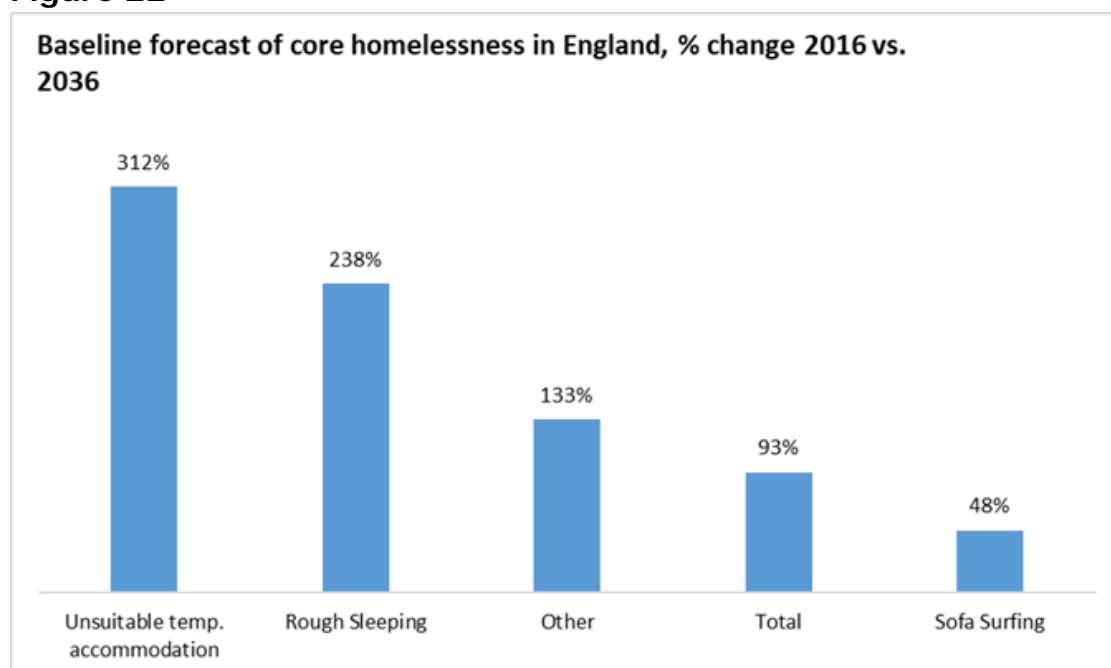
There are a significant number of single homeless people in West Suffolk that the councils did not owe a duty to house because they were not priority need as set out by Homelessness legislation. This however has changed with the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act which came into effect in April 2018.

- **Predicted levels of homelessness**

Data is not currently available at the West Suffolk level. However, the forecast for England is that homelessness will almost double (+93%) across England over the next 20 years. This forecast is based on current assumptions about the labour market and economy alongside current policy settings. It is predicted that this will lead to a 312% increase in people in unsuitable accommodation and a 238% increase in rough sleeping between 2016 and 2036.

Figure 22 below sets out how homelessness is expected to increase by 2036 as compared with 2016.

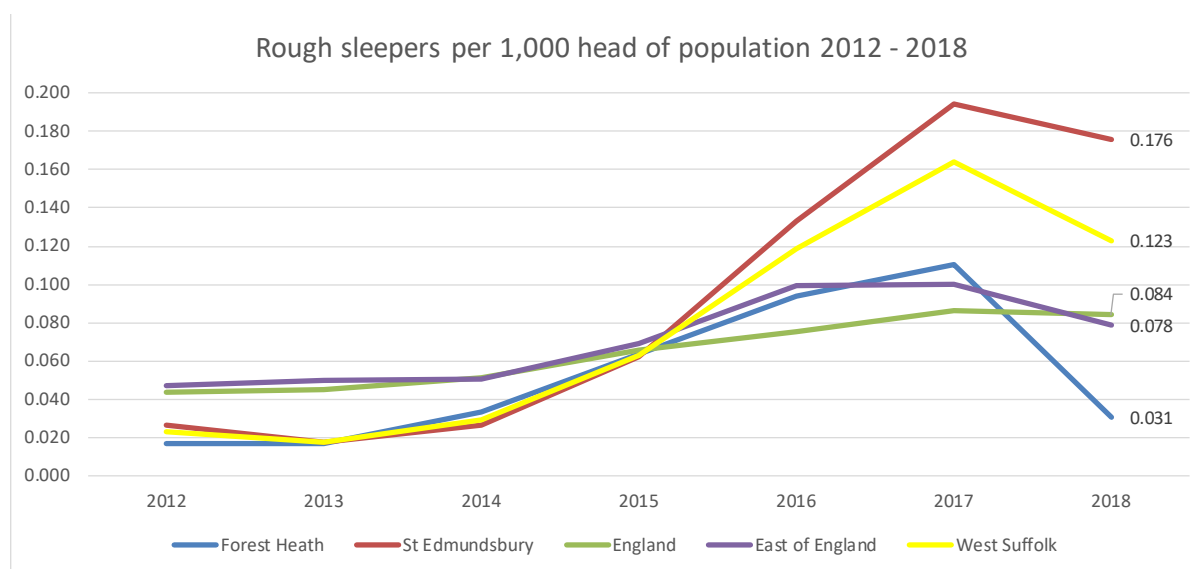
Figure 22



Source: Crisis report on Homelessness Projections: Core homelessness in Great Britain (summary report).

Figure 23 below shows that up to 2017, rough sleepers per 1,000 head of population have steadily increased for West Suffolk and were nearly double that of the England figure. By implementing actions through Rough Sleeper Initiative funding, the figure for West Suffolk has reduced from 29 in 2017 to 22 in 2018.

Figure 23



Source: ONS data: Rough sleeping in England: autumn 2018

Support available for young single homeless and rough sleepers through Housing Related Support.

Figure 24 below sets out the current level of Housing Related Support (HRS) housing provision for particular groups of young people:

Figure 24

Age Group	Provider	Locality	Units
Under 21	YMCA	St Edmundsbury	16
Under 21	Riverside – Cangle, Haverhill	St Edmundsbury	25
Under 21	Newmarket Open Door	Forest Heath	15
			56 Units

Age Group	Provider	Locality	Units
Over 18	Tayfen House and move on, Bury St Edmunds	St Edmundsbury	50
Over 18	Genesis Bury	St Edmundsbury	28

Over 18	Genesis Haverhill	St Edmundsbury	23
			101 Units

Levels of demand and the use of commissioned services

As of January 2018 there were 661 applications (509 in St Edmundsbury and 152 in Forest Heath) on the HRS database applying for accommodation-based support within West Suffolk. 390 (59%) of these were for accommodation-based support, with the balance being for an outreach worker or floating support.

The waiting list includes a number of people for whom offers of support have been considered and rejected because the person's needs are higher than can be met by HRS services. Equally there are applications for people who have subsequently moved on but whose data has not been updated to reflect this. As a result, the figure of 661 is likely to be an overestimate.

Of the 661 applicants, 233 have been considered and declined, with 31 of these being declined three or more times.

In the six months to October 2017, 188 tenants moved-on from HRS services within West Suffolk, creating space for new services to be offered to those on the waiting list. HRS services are expected to consider those in the highest need first.

A number of voluntary sector organisation in West Suffolk provide valuable advice, support and accommodation for the growing number of single homeless people.

Figure 25 below shows the number of applicants whose nearest town is in St Edmundsbury or Forest Heath who are accessing support from other agencies for example Turning Point, Alcoholics Anonymous, health outreach and/or probation with regards to their mental health or substance misuse.

Figure 25

St Edmundsbury	Forest Heath
118 Mental Health (mainly through GP)	28 Mental Health (mainly through GP)
99 Drug and Alcohol services	13 Drug and Alcohol services
183 in total have accessed a service	38 in total have accessed a service

HRS also takes referrals for young people. Between 1 April 2017 and 31 December 2017 referrals were received from the following agencies (in figure 15 below), split between St Edmundsbury and Forest heath. Self-referrals are also accepted.

Figure 26

St Edmundsbury	Referrals	Forest Heath	Referrals
Housing Options	9	Housing Options	2
SCC CYPS	19	SCC CYPS	3

Probation	1	Probation	1
Housing Assoc	2	Housing Assoc	3
Lighthouse WA	1	NSFT	2
NSFT	1	Supported Housing	9
Homegroup	2		
Supported Housing	1		
TOTAL	36	Total	20

Assistance from Social Services

With Social Services, across Suffolk we are developing ways of understanding and helping vulnerable adults and children in the area. We do, however, know some of the problems we are facing, as highlighted in the following statistics:

- In 2016/17 a total of **1,972 adults** were in treatment for **substance misuse**.
- In 2015/16, **9%** of the support provided by the **Drug Alcohol Outreach Service was housing related** and this increased to 15% in 2016/17.
- Approximately **30%** of people in the Housing Related support system have a **criminal conviction**.
- It is estimated that 1 in 4 people, which equates to **186,000 people in Suffolk**, are estimated to have **ongoing mental health issues**. It is estimate that 1 in 8 people, which equates to **93,000 people in Suffolk**, are **receiving treatment** in Suffolk.
- In children's services (at the end of 2017) **1,783 early help cases were open**.
- In 2016/17, **292 care leavers were seeking accommodation**.
- As at November 2017, there were 12 care leavers under children's services.

We will continue to work with Suffolk County Council to monitor the effectiveness of its existing Housing Related Support contracts, and to plan for the new contracts which will be in place from 2020. These new contracts will be commissioned on the basis of a new government funding model which has yet to be confirmed.

3. Formulating a strategy to prevent homelessness

Homelessness prevention

From April 2018, new legislation will fundamentally change the work of housing teams and prevention and relief duties will be very different.

Figure 27

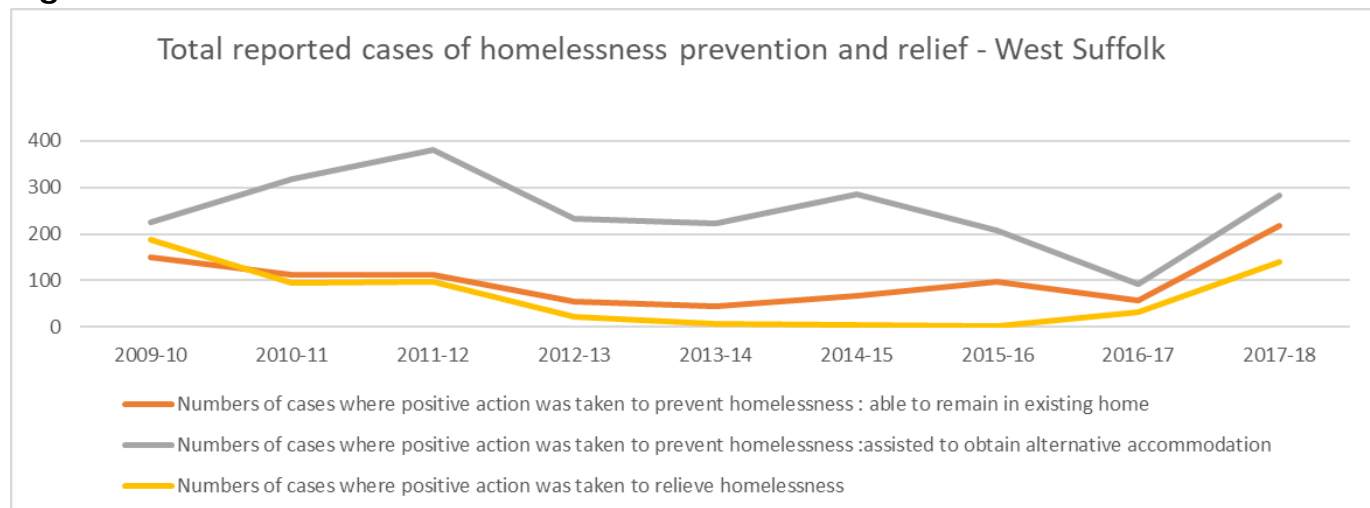


Figure 27 above shows the number of cases where homelessness has been prevented or relieved in West Suffolk.

Possession actions in the private and public sector

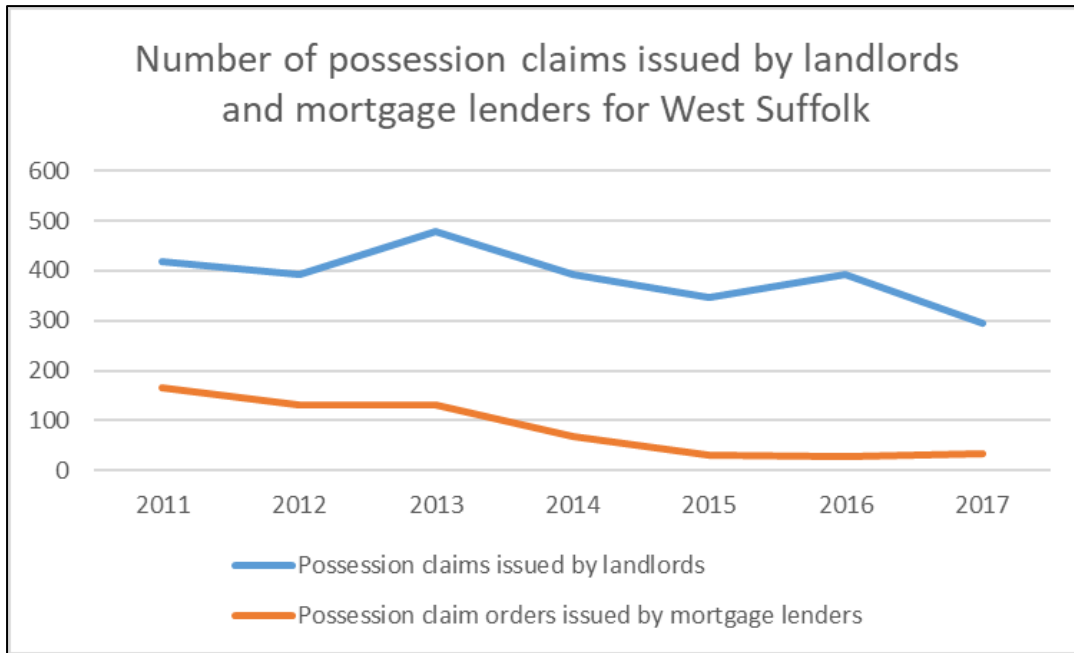
Landlord possession actions

As shown in figure 28 below the number of landlord (social and private) possession claims (or actions) have been decreasing since a peak in 2013.

Mortgage possession actions

Figure 28 further shows that since 2011 the number of mortgage possession claims have fallen. The fall in the number of mortgage possession actions coincides with lower interest rates, a proactive approach from lenders in managing consumers in financial difficulties and other interventions from the Government, such as the Mortgage Rescue Scheme. This fall in the number of mortgage possession claims could also be due to the introduction of the Mortgage Pre-Action Protocol and a decrease in the number of owner-occupiers.

Figure 28



4. Reviewing accommodation needs and resources

In this section we will look at a review of the existing supply of accommodation available to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and identify where there are gaps, or where existing resources do not match the most pressing need.

Social and affordable housing held by the housing authority and private registered providers

Figure 29 below shows the total number of social and affordable housing lets for West Suffolk (the first date relates to when the lettings database Abrisas was first implemented):

Figure 29

Date	Forest Heath	St Edmundsbury	West Suffolk
June 2016 – June 2017	231	343	574
June 2017 – March 2018	344	248	592
Total	575	591	1,166

Source: Abrisas

A further analysis of the data shows that for affordable rent and social rent, two bedroom houses are most frequently bid for across West Suffolk, followed by one bedroom houses. The average affordable rent for a two bedroom house is £131 per week and for social rent the average is £97 per week.

Households in temporary accommodation

Figure 30 below shows the number of households that have been housed in temporary accommodation between 2013 and 2019.

Figure 30

Number of households annually		
Year	Bed and Breakfast	Other temporary accommodation
2013-2014	266	136
2014-2015	203	144
2015-2016	200	163
2016-2017	155	146
2017-2018	139	145

2018-2019	164	95
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Source: DCLG P1E return

Affordable housing units delivered by Registered Social Landlord partners

Figure 31 below shows the number of affordable housing units delivered by registered provider schemes, where 100% is usually affordable housing, section 106 schemes, and open market schemes where we usually achieve our target of 30% affordable housing that is then managed by a registered provider.

Figure 31

	Registered provider lead schemes (units delivered)	Section 106 schemes (units delivered)
2014/15	101	44
2015/16	87	110
2016/17	101	41
2017/18	92	190
2018/19	17	190

Support accommodation available for particular groups of people in need of accommodation with support

The data given in the table below is for the whole of Suffolk.

Figure 32

Waiting list	1523	74%	Waiting for accommodation
Waiting list – offer made	3	0%	Waiting for support
Accepted – service pending	12	1%	In accommodation
Accepted – service being provided	315	15%	In accommodation
Manual waiting list	2	0%	On hold
Service finished	152	7%	Accommodation or support ended
Accepted – service finished	62	3%	Accommodation or support ended
Total	2069	100%	

Figure 33 below sets out the services that are available for people with a **mental health diagnosis** who are in the care of the secondary mental health team.

Figure 33

Accommodation	Units Available
Bury St Edmunds	<p><u>12 self-contained flats</u> 2 of these flats are used for an alternative use; 1 Short Stay Respite Accommodation and 1 Short Stay Emergency Supported Accommodation Admission Prevention bed (APS)</p> <p><u>Assured Short Hold Tenancy</u> There are also 6 flats which although form part of the service at Hospital Road.</p> <p><u>18 individual flats on one site</u></p>
Newmarket	3 flats
Haverhill	5 flats
Total	44

Supply and demand for low cost home ownership schemes

Supply

The number of shared ownership schemes or shared equity housing completed in West Suffolk was 17 in 2015/16, 23 in 2016/17 and 60 in 2017/18 (anticipated).

Demand

The number of people in West Suffolk applying for low cost ownership schemes was 191 in 2015, 199 in 2016 and 270 in 2017. As this data shows, the demand has significantly increased since 2015.

We are also working with registered providers to put mechanisms in place so that we know how many low cost home ownership schemes will be forthcoming.

Welfare Reform

The Welfare Reform Act introduced the most fundamental reforms to the social security system for 60 years. People who need help and support in relation to housing have mainly seen impacts from four policy areas:

- The Benefit Cap
- The removal of the spare room subsidy in the social rented sector (under occupation)
- Introduction of Local Council Tax Support
- Universal Credit

Benefit Cap – from April 2013

The maximum level of benefits, including household benefit, has been capped at £500 weekly for families and couples and £350 for single people.

In November 2017, 111 Households across **West Suffolk** were affected by the Benefit Cap. All of these were households with dependent children, with the vast majority (90) being lone parents. 16 of the 111 households had 2 dependent children, 62 had 3 dependent children with the remainder having 4 or more dependent children.

In terms of tenure, the majority of the 111 households that had their benefits capped were in social rented accommodation (90).

The average weekly amount capped amount per household was £50.81 in November 2017, however this average masks a wide range, as there were:

- 19 households that were capped between £50 to £75 per week
- 12 households that were capped £75 to £100 per week
- 18 households were capped between £100 to £200 per week

Lone parents with dependent children in West Suffolk were capped by an average of £51.67 per week.

The removal of the spare room subsidy – from April 2013

Social sector tenants of working age renting from a local authority, housing association or other registered social landlord receive housing support based on household size. A version of this already applies to private tenants.

The allowance is for one bedroom for each person or couple living as part of the household. Two children under 16 of the same gender are expected to share a room, as are two children under 10 regardless of gender.

Household size criteria will also allow one bedroom for a non-resident carer if a tenant or their partner is a disabled person who needs overnight care.

Households with a disabled child may retain housing benefit for an additional room, if the nature and severity of the child's disability disturbs the sleep of the other child that they would normally be expected to share with.

Where a property is deemed 'under occupied' the eligible rent under Housing Benefit will be reduced by 14 per cent for one room and 25 percent if under occupied by two rooms or more.

In **West Suffolk**, of the 8,933 households on housing benefit in August 2017, 7.4% (665) had a reduction of £16.21 per week to their benefits and allowances due to the spare room subsidy being applied.

Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) – from 1 April 2018

- **St Edmundsbury Borough Council – Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme**

Residents who have reached State Pension Credit Age have their Council Tax Reduction calculated in the same way as they did under Council Tax Benefit rules (pre April 2013).

The following criteria applies to those residents of working age who make an application for Council Tax Reduction:

- Applicable amounts have increased to match the Housing Benefit rates.
- Non-dependant deductions for working age have been increased to match those for pension age.
- New and existing claims for the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) will no longer be awarded the work related component in their applicable amount if the ESA claim does not include it.
- All new claims from 1 April 2018 - applicable amounts will be restricted to two child premiums except in some limited prescribed circumstances. For existing claims, from 1 April 2018 onwards, child premiums for new additions to the household will no longer be awarded if the two child limit is exceeded except in some limited prescribed circumstances.
- All new claims from 1 April 2018 for working age residents will no longer have the family premium applied to the applicable amount. This was already removed from pension age residents.

- Currently around 4965 residents are in receipt of LCTRS
- 3052 of working age
- 1913 of state pension credit age

- **Forest Heath District Council – Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme**

Residents who have reached State Pension Credit Age have their Council Tax Reduction calculated in the same way as they did under Council Tax Benefit rules (pre April 2013).

The following criteria applies to those residents of Working Age who make an application for Council Tax Reduction:

- Applicable amounts have increased to match the Housing Benefit rates.
- Non-dependant deductions have been increased to match those for pension age.

- New and existing claims for LCTRS will no longer be awarded the work related component in their applicable amount if the ESA claim does not include it.
 - All new claims from 1 April 2018 - applicable amounts will be restricted to two child premiums except in some limited prescribed circumstances. For existing claims, from 1 April 2018 onwards, child premiums for new additions to the household will no longer be awarded if the two child limit is exceeded except in some limited prescribed circumstances.
 - All new claims from 1 April 2018 for working age residents will no longer have the family premium applied to the applicable amount. This was already removed from pension age residents.
- Currently around 3563 residents are in receipt of LCTRS
 - 1816 of working age
 - 1747 of state pension credit age

Universal Credit – from April 2013

Universal Credit aims to make the welfare system simpler by replacing six benefits and credits with a single monthly payment for those residents on a low income or out of work. It includes support for the costs of housing, children and childcare, as well as support for disabled people and carers.

Between April 2013 and the end of 2017, Universal Credit replaced:

- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-based Employment and Support Allowance
- Income Support
- Working Tax Credit
- Child Tax Credit
- Housing Benefit

In St Edmundsbury, full service rollout of Universal Credit began in October 2017 and in Forest Heath it will commence in autumn 2018. 55 per cent of those receiving Universal Credit in St Edmundsbury in December 2017 were not in employment. Over one in four of those receiving Universal Credit in St Edmundsbury were between the age of 16 and 24 and 54 per cent were below 35 years of age. There are approximately 1000 people in St Edmundsbury in receipt of Universal Credit.

Appendix B: Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeping Strategy – delivery plan

This plan has been developed so that we can deliver against the priorities and actions set out in the Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeping Strategy. It will be regularly reviewed and updated as we make progress in our priorities and as circumstances change.

In January 2019, and with the agreement of the Portfolio Holder, this delivery plan was been updated to reflect actions contained in our Rough Sleeper Initiative Funding action plan (see actions 2.11 to 2.17 for details).

We will resource the delivery of our priorities and actions through existing budgets and resources including the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant, and through the use of new burdens funding that local authorities have been allocated to implement the Homelessness Reduction Act. We will also continue to access external funding opportunities through central Government, commissioning and our partners.

This delivery plan review represents the work that has been undertaken in the first year of a five year plan and as such there are a number of areas that remain a work in progress. We have made significant progress towards achieving a number of our actions, but there have also been challenges.

Priority One: Homelessness Prevention

No	Action	Key milestones	Outcomes and monitoring	Lead officer	Key partners	Progress as at June 2019
1.1	Provide high quality timely advice for all residents on their housing options.	<p>April 2018 – targeted guides available on website and hardcopy</p> <p>Quarterly monitoring and update of advice guides</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful homeless preventions. • Increased use of online resources on the West Suffolk website and Homelink page. • Monitoring customer contact to establish if online and self-help has affected the number or frequency of contact. • Increased use of self-help guides to ensure that those who can, are able to access up-to-date and relevant advice about housing options 	Service Manager – Housing Options and Homelessness	Customer Services	<p>Information now available on our webpages for: rough sleepers, care leavers and young people, domestic abuse, ex-armed forces, hospital discharge, released from prison, older people, being asked to leave accommodation provided by family or friends, evicted from the private sector, relationship breakdown (non-violent).</p> <p>Information to be added for: leaving care (needs SCC feedback); rough sleeping page; leaving hospital; mental health. Add one on relationship breakdowns (homeowner).</p> <p>All advice leaflets to be reviewed in April 2019.</p>

No	Action	Key milestones	Outcomes and monitoring	Lead officer	Key partners	Progress as at June 2019
1.2	Agree a personal housing plan (PHP) for anyone homeless or threatened with homelessness. We will review our casework management system to ensure we can monitor progress and report on the outcomes of advice given.	Housing Plans in place from April 2018 Ongoing training of staff to ensure that plans are robust and that success is measurable using the SMART principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal housing plans are developed for all housing applicants and successfully lead to the prevention of homelessness. Use Locata to ensure that housing plans are tailored and monitored 	Housing Options and Homelessness team	Specialist training providers as appropriate	<p>All PHPs are being completed and the procedures are working.</p> <p>They have been tailored to local services and constantly being reviewed.</p> <p>Need to amend the procedure of customers from triage to solutions to create small PHP, especially where there is an RP referral this is an interim step to progress the case.</p>
1.3	Identify people at risk of homelessness at an earlier stage and develop interventions to prevent them from being threatened with or becoming homeless.	April 2018 – targeted advice available. Ongoing monitoring. Quarterly monitoring of data for prevention and relief actions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tailored Housing Options advice information available for those particularly at risk of homelessness. Effective advice and prevention pathways in place to ensure they meet the requirements of 	Housing Options and Homelessness team	<p>Anglia Revenues Partnership, Citizens Advice, Jobcentre.</p> <p>Pathway support provided by a range of agencies, including</p>	<p>Target some risk groups, for example through Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB).</p> <p>Referrals are being received from partners.</p> <p>Housing Options interns have been tasked with holding a mutual exchange event to promote housing options that will take place over summer 2019.</p>

No	Action	Key milestones	Outcomes and monitoring	Lead officer	Key partners	Progress as at June 2019
		Regular liaison with key partners to discuss case management and strategic support	<p>the Homelessness Reduction Act and review to ensure they are effective.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groups who are particularly at risk of homelessness are identified and targeted, early intervention is provided to those who have housing needs, in order to facilitate planned moves rather than crisis management. • Fewer homeless individuals and households, lower spend on bed and breakfast and temporary accommodation. • Monitoring to compare with 		mental health, probation and social care.	Volume means we cannot be as proactive as we would want to be and engage with third sector.

No	Action	Key milestones	Outcomes and monitoring	Lead officer	Key partners	Progress as at June 2019
			existing statistics and national baseline against the new Act.			
1.4	Identify ways to encourage tenancy sustainment and prevent recurring homelessness by helping people sustain settled accommodation.	Ongoing caseload management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fewer instances of contact meaning less cost and time spent housing people. Effective case management of households to ensure support is in place Timely interventions by the Housing Options Solutions Team to provide effective intervention and signpost to support. 	Housing Options and Homelessness team	Landlords, registered providers, housing, Anglia Revenues Partnership, Suffolk County Council and support agencies.	<p>There is now increased capacity in the solutions team.</p> <p>Welfare issues being monitored through a reporting system.</p> <p>Better use of Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) as evidenced by the statistics. In 2018/19, DHP spend was 98.5% in St Edmundsbury and 100% in Forest Heath.</p>
1.5	Provide tailored advice for people at greater risk of homelessness, including young single people,	April 2018 – targeted advice available. Ongoing monitoring.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Groups at particular risk of homelessness are identified and tailored advice and prevention 	Housing Options and Homelessness team	Customer Services, Children and Young Peoples Services, health,	<p>See 1.1 above.</p> <p>Duty to Refer came into force in October 2018 and need to monitor once the legislation has been in place for longer.</p>

No	Action	Key milestones	Outcomes and monitoring	Lead officer	Key partners	Progress as at June 2019
	prison leavers, hospital leavers, victims of domestic abuse, people leaving care, former members of the armed forces, people with learning difficulties, people with mental health issues and Gypsies and Travellers (also linked in actions around priority three).	Quarterly monitoring data of prevention and relief actions. Regular liaison with key partners to discuss case management and strategic support.	leaflets/pathways identified. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease the likelihood of those most at risk presenting as homeless and requiring the new statutory duty. • Track frequency and referral route for these cases. • Monitor expenditure for those accepted under these risk factors to see the amount of decrease. 		probation, prisons services, adult care, police, registered providers, Anglia Revenues Partnership	Statutory referrals are coming from prison service in particular and mental health services aware. Referrals also now coming from DHP.
1.6	Develop a prevention toolkit, training and advice to help organisations respond to the risk of homelessness	October 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures a standardised approach to information for all partner organisations. • Reduces cost of information from multiple streams being referred to 	Housing Options and Homelessness team	Police, registered providers, third sector agencies	Review due in June 2019 and need to look at examples of other toolkits.

No	Action	Key milestones	Outcomes and monitoring	Lead officer	Key partners	Progress as at June 2019
	at an earlier stage.		<p>the correct department.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduces the risk of information being lost between partners. 			
1.7	Brief the statutory and voluntary sectors of the requirements of the Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) so they can provide the right support and advice.	<p>Initial briefings completed before April 2018</p> <p>Programme of briefings in place by October 2018 (duty to refer implementation date).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased knowledge of HRA and approach to reducing homelessness. Improved referral times due to having information on referral process and statutory responsibilities. 	Service Manager – Housing Options and Homelessness	Customer Services, Children and Young Peoples Services, health, probation, prisons services, adult care, police, registered providers, Anglia Revenues Partnership	Completed.
1.8	With partners, agree clear pathways and referral routes. This will include public bodies that will have a	By October 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partners have access to effective and efficient referral routes for the Housing Options Service, 	Service Manager – Housing Options and Homelessness	Customer Services, children and young people’s services, health,	All in place – email set up with an out of office. Referral form set up and on website.

No	Action	Key milestones	Outcomes and monitoring	Lead officer	Key partners	Progress as at June 2019
	new duty to refer. Implement protocols for information sharing between services working with customers at risk of homelessness.		including an online referral form.		probation, prisons services, adult care, police.	
1.9	Improve data collection and recording. Use data and predictive analysis to help target resources to prevent homelessness and identify and interact with people in need of advice and support, in order to prevent homelessness from occurring. This will include developing local	Use of quarterly data from June 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Streamline resources and reduce cost at expensive relief stage. • Reduced use of temporary accommodation and build more detailed picture of hidden homelessness in the West Suffolk area allowing for pin pointed strategies in housing and provision for families at risk. 	Service Manager – Housing Options and Homelessness As at May 2019	ICT, Housing Options.	As at July 2019, Q1, Q2 and Q3 data available that will be used to target resources and provide advice and support where needed.

No	Action	Key milestones	Outcomes and monitoring	Lead officer	Key partners	Progress as at June 2019
	community based responses in areas with higher levels of homelessness including specialist advice and signposting.					
1.10	Make better use of debt and financial advice to improve prevention work.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Households that are likely to be at risk identified and signposted or referred to relevant advice services. • Timely intervention from the Solution's Team alleviating crisis situations and referring to ongoing support. • Locata reporting on stages of homelessness and those prevented due to financial advice. 	Housing Options and Homelessness team	Citizens Advice Bureau, Housing Options, floating support, customer services.	<p>Currently signposting households to CAB and Reach services, Vineyard Church, Financial services webpages for advice.</p> <p>Plans are in place to upskill staff to provide basic debt advice.</p>

No	Action	Key milestones	Outcomes and monitoring	Lead officer	Key partners	Progress as at June 2019
1.11	Better align assessment processes with statutory services and explore housing issues where appropriate as a key line of questioning.	By December 2018 (and ongoing review).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective use of referral and pathway services • Reduced incidences of crisis management as partners consider housing situation as part of their assessment processes – particularly target hospitals, mental health services and probation. • Reduction in 'Relief' stage homelessness cases. 	Housing Options and Homelessness team	Hospitals, mental health services and probation	<p>Fortnightly attendance at hospital for meetings on the delayed transfer of care, which may need to increase as the service develops.</p> <p>Challenges around engagement with mental health. Service Manager attends the monthly Integrated Case Management meetings (some of them involve housing). No referrals as yet.</p> <p>Probation – some improved links made with a local senior manager.</p> <p>MAPPA Manager spent time at West Suffolk Council to further improve links.</p>
1.12	Work with partners through the Suffolk Health and Wellbeing Board to ensure that the health benefits of individuals and	Ongoing (as Health and Wellbeing Board forward plan).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced costs and impact on health and care services. • Increased stability for households and long term 	Lead West Suffolk Councillor on Health and Wellbeing Board, Assistant Director –	Suffolk Health and Wellbeing Board	<p>HWB received a housing and health update in March which was well received. Similar presentation made to West Suffolk Alliance.</p> <p>Team Leader in the Housing Options and Homelessness service is now attending Housing</p>

No	Action	Key milestones	Outcomes and monitoring	Lead officer	Key partners	Progress as at June 2019
	families having a settled home remain high on its agenda and that National policy is reflected across local strategic priorities.		community benefits.	Families and Communities		Sub-group of the Adult Safeguarding Board.
1.13	Ensure that people in temporary accommodation are supported to access services and ensure that referrals are made to relevant floating support.	Ongoing case management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduces risk of repeat homelessness or impact of existing homelessness on health and wellbeing of the individual or family. 	Housing Options and Homelessness team	Housing options, third sector partners, health services, and other statutory partners.	<p>Appropriate referrals continue to be made but issues of capacity in floating support.</p> <p>From April 2019: 40% reduction in SCC floating support contract. Will now be made available over the telephone and through drop-in centres.</p>

Priority two: Tackling rough sleeping

No	Action	Key milestones	Outcomes and monitoring	Lead officer	Key partners	Progress as at June 2019
2.1	Use dedicated support to work with rough sleepers and try to address the problems that lead to rough sleeping and being at risk of sleeping rough. This will include the development of a 'No Second Night Out' partnership.	Additional outreach support secured (two posts for 12 months) – April 2018. Further outreach and 'in reach' support to be secured as funding opportunities emerge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction in the number of rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping. Reduction in evictions from supported housing 	Rough Sleepers co-ordinator	'No Second Night Out Partnership', police, health, care, mental health and substance misuse partners.	<p>Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI) resources being used to get rough sleeper service up and running.</p> <p>The rough sleeper team is liaising with partners in Bury St Edmunds on a regular basis with the aim of formalising the approach to reducing the number of rough sleepers. This will be reviewed in Autumn 2019 but it links to the government's proposal for a Homelessness Reduction Board (which is currently being consulted on).</p>
2.2	Implement pathways for tackling homelessness: identifying risks early, promoting self-help and resilience for those able to help	Monthly Housing Forum meetings. Ongoing individual case management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Successful homelessness preventions resulting in lower risk of persistent homelessness and use of bed and breakfast. Fewer mandatory homelessness case acceptances 	Rough Sleepers co-ordinator and support worker	Home Group and other floating support services	<p>RSI funding being used.</p> <p>Separate rough sleeper meetings taking place with Home Group, Havebury, Riverside, Cambridge Pringle Group and ACT</p> <p>Regular Housing Forum meetings are taking place to</p>

No	Action	Key milestones	Outcomes and monitoring	Lead officer	Key partners	Progress as at June 2019
	themselves and proactive help for those who are too vulnerable to help themselves.		<p>and lower effect on health and wellbeing services in the area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring carried out through conversations and access to Positive Pathways leavers and those that become homeless later. 			address the very individual journeys that are taking place.
2.3	Deliver robust services for those who are homeless. Working in partnership, provide support and stability to people who are homeless, with the aim of breaking the cycle of homelessness.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure pathways to accessing support and information are available. Monitor repeat homelessness and identify underlying causes and potential solutions. Reduction of rough sleepers/homelessness and those at risk of rough sleeping/homelessness. 	Rough Sleepers co-ordinator	Local authorities, third sector partners, police, health services and other statutory partners.	<p>RSI funding being used.</p> <p>Outputs from the team are being regularly reviewed.</p> <p>There has been a reduction in the number of rough sleepers across West Suffolk. As at Autumn 2018, the number of rough sleepers across West Suffolk was 22. 11 rough sleepers were found during the rough sleeper count in May 2019.</p> <p>Support is being provided with third sector including Newmarket Interfaith Forum, Newmarket Churches</p>

No	Action	Key milestones	Outcomes and monitoring	Lead officer	Key partners	Progress as at June 2019
						Together, Bury Drop-in, REACH (Haverhill)
2.4	Work with local authorities across Suffolk and the Cambridge sub-region to improve the service offer and outcomes including for those leaving institutions (for example, hospitals and prisons).	Ongoing liaison meetings with hospitals and probation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction of rough sleepers/homelessness and those at risk of rough sleeping/homelessness. Lower cost per head due to cross system working. 	Service Manager – Housing Options and Homelessness	Local authorities, police, prisons, health and care services.	<p>Improved referral routes to Addenbrooke’s and work is still ongoing.</p> <p>As at April 2019, prison protocol is currently being written, will be Suffolk-wide and due to be discussed by prisons and probation service in May 2019. The protocol in line with Norfolk’s protocol.</p> <p>Mental health discharges – there is no protocol in place but the current procedures are working – invited to weekly meetings</p>
2.5	Further enhance coordination across statutory, commissioned and voluntary services to coordinate activity, share information	Ongoing – regular series of meetings with key partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction in persistent homelessness. Reduced spend on bed and breakfast. Reduced workload for outreach workers and those working directly 	Service Manager – Housing Options and Homelessness	Local authorities, third sector partners, police, health services and other statutory partners.	<p>RSI – no second night out work</p> <p>Housing Related Support joint post in place to look at future of services. Meeting has taken place with Drug and Alcohol services, a coordinated approach has been agreed with the Turning Point service.</p>

No	Action	Key milestones	Outcomes and monitoring	Lead officer	Key partners	Progress as at June 2019
	and work together on initiatives.		<p>with the homeless/those at risk of homelessness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased knowledge base to aid prevention work. 			Attendance at multi-agency case meetings (as below)
2.6	Continue to access external funding to support outreach and prevention activity building on that already secured from government and Suffolk Public Health.	As funding opportunities become available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance, and where possible, expansion of services and key homelessness provision. 	Rough Sleepers – prevention and support worker	Local authorities, central Government.	<p>Completed – but need to maintain performance and continue to bid.</p> <p>£25,000 from SWEP (government) which enables us to accommodate people on an emergency basis and work to get them off the streets.</p> <p>Public Health has received funding for mental health outreach provision which we are hoping to access.</p> <p>As at April 2019, a rapid rehousing pathway bid has been submitted.</p>
2.7	Continue to provide Severe Weather Emergency	SWEP provision for winter 2018/19 secured.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower risk of homeless fatalities or 	Service Manager – Housing	Registered housing providers, Suffolk	<p>RSI funding being used.</p> <p>An additional £25,000 received for 2018/19.</p>

No	Action	Key milestones	Outcomes and monitoring	Lead officer	Key partners	Progress as at June 2019
	Provision (SWEPE).	Winter 2019/20 to be secured by December 2018.	<p>injury incurred due to weather.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased chance of outreach and contact with those less likely to engage with statutory services. 	Options and Homelessness	County Council (housing related support).	<p>Meeting with Reverend Haworth who would be able to set-up winter shelters in churches across Bury St Edmunds.</p> <p>Provision for winter 2019/20 has been secured and there are sufficient beds. In ongoing discussion with Churches Together.</p>
2.8	Help people with entrenched patterns of rough sleeping more holistically through better collaborative working and support tailored to their individual needs.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction of rough sleepers/homelessness and those at risk of rough sleeping/homelessness. Targeted reporting from outreach, third party organisations and customer services. 	Rough Sleepers – co-ordinator	Local authorities third sector partners, police, health services and other statutory partners.	<p>RSI funding being used.</p> <p>Still need to have joint commissioning conversations – need to continue to push this.</p> <p>Putting together case studies and understanding the individual experiences of people is helping to improve the approach to supporting people with our partners.</p>
2.9	Reconnect those from other areas back with their local	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased likelihood of those in need of help receiving help from the 	Rough Sleepers – co-ordinator	Other local authorities	<p>RSI funding being used.</p> <p>Ongoing with funding in place.</p>

No	Action	Key milestones	Outcomes and monitoring	Lead officer	Key partners	Progress as at June 2019
	community unless there is a good reason why they should not return.		appropriate services and established support networks.			
2.10	Provide effective information to the public about rough sleeping and how they can help if they have concerns.	Ongoing communications plan Introduce alternative given schemes by December 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased public knowledge on referrals and ways to help those threatened with homelessness or those sleeping rough. • Monitor through online traffic and rate of click through to relevant service area or local authority. • Effective use of alternative giving schemes to encourage people to support organisations to assist rough sleepers. 	Rough Sleepers – co-ordinator and Communications Team	Communications Team, Families and Communities Team, voluntary and community groups	Communications plan in place including social media messaging. Development of our webpages and launch/promotion of the Looking for Change campaign.

No	Action	Key milestones	Outcomes and monitoring	Lead officer	Key partners	Progress as at June 2019
2.11 (RSI)	Recruit and establish Rough Sleeper Outreach Team (1 x Co-ordinator, 1 x Mental Health specialist, 1x Drug and Alcohol specialist, 2 x Outreach and Resettlement)	Recruitment by end of September 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional capacity to support rough sleepers into accommodation • Reduction in the number of rough sleepers • Targets for prevention and relief of homelessness identified in bid to Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 	Service Manager- Housing Options and Homelessness	NSFT and Turning Point	Team recruited and in place.
2.12 (RSI)	Increase the accommodation options available ring fenced for rough sleepers, including the recruitment of additional support staff.	Identified and in place by end of September 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional accommodation available for rough sleepers in locations across West Suffolk. • Appropriate levels of support in place 	Service Manager- Housing Options and Homelessness	Registered Providers	Accommodation is available and we continue to look for other options.
2.13 (RSI)	Extend emergency	By September 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional emergency 	Service Manager-	Registered Providers	Accommodation is available and the provider is managing

No	Action	Key milestones	Outcomes and monitoring	Lead officer	Key partners	Progress as at June 2019
	accommodation provision by the provision of additional night support worker		accommodation in place with the appropriate level of support in place	Housing Options and Homelessness		this provision through existing resources.
2.14 (RSI)	Agree, manage and monitor service level agreements with each provider for the use of ring fenced accommodation	SLAs signed by end of September 2018 Continued monitoring of performance by providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly agreed level of service to be provided. Risk assessments and other mechanisms in place and being used appropriately Performance information provided by accommodation providers. 	Service Manager- Housing Options and Homelessness	Registered Providers	Regular contact maintained with providers, comfortable with performance levels – service has been provide as agreed with SLAs Difficulty in placing very high risk individuals due to provider service constraints.
2.15 (RSI)	Use additional £25,000 fund for provision of SWEP accommodation	From December 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	Rough Sleeper co-ordinator	Accommodation providers	Funding utilised to ensure that rough sleepers were accommodated throughout the cold weather periods and, wherever possible, for longer a longer period.
2.16 (RSI)	Undertake rough sleeper counts every two months	September 2018 November 2018 January 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that there is an accurate picture 	Rough Sleeper co-ordinator		The rough sleeper count for West Suffolk in May 2019 was 11.

No	Action	Key milestones	Outcomes and monitoring	Lead officer	Key partners	Progress as at June 2019
	from September 2018	March 2019 May 2019 July 2019 September 2019	<p>of the number of rough sleepers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use intelligence from partners to monitor instances of rough sleeping throughout the area on an ongoing basis 			
2.17 (RSI)	Work with the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government and our partners to tackle street activity	From December 2018	Improve understanding of the drivers and impacts of street activity and its links to rough sleeping.	Rough Sleepers co-ordinator	MHCLG	<p>Launch of the Looking for Change campaign in Bury St Edmunds and Newmarket.</p> <p>A Public Space Protection Order relating to begging has been put in place for Bury St Edmunds.</p> <p>Police are attending anti-social behaviour meetings.</p> <p>Engaging with police to ensure robust reporting of those who are homeless opposed to those who are begging but have accommodation.</p>

Priority three: Support for vulnerable households

No	Action	Key milestones	Outcomes and Monitoring	Lead Officer	Key Partners	Progress as at June 2019
3.1	Explore options for the provision of more temporary accommodation to house individuals and families, including those who have experienced domestic abuse.	<p>Ongoing discussions with registered providers.</p> <p>Investment opportunities explored as appropriate (link to Asset Strategy and Plan).</p> <p>Develop a Temporary Accommodation Procurement and Placement Policy which will be added as an appendix to this strategy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sufficient availability of temporary accommodation bed and breakfast accommodation to meet demand from households who become homeless in an emergency. • Effective use of move on accommodation to free up temporary accommodation. 	Service Manager – Housing Options and Homelessness	Property Team, registered providers	<p>College Heath Road property available. Newmarket Avenue property will be ready in July 2019. Brentgrovel Street secured a 10 year lease.</p> <p>We continue to seek other opportunities.</p>
3.2	Support the monitoring of housing related support (HRS) to identify resources for	HRS placements monitored at monthly Housing Forum.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased knowledge on referrals and ways to help those threatened 	Service Manager – Housing Options and Homelessness	Suffolk County Council Adult Social Care and Children and Young People	<p>SCC contract manager is providing update on HRS.</p> <p>New HRS review post in place.</p>

No	Action	Key milestones	Outcomes and Monitoring	Lead Officer	Key Partners	Progress as at June 2019
	those groups that are at high risk of homelessness.	Re-commission of HRS contract by 2020, monitored via Suffolk Housing Board	<p>with homelessness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher proportion of those arriving in the prevent stage rather than the relief stage to allow for lower risk of repeat/persistent homelessness. • Effective involvement in the recommission of HRS services (led by Suffolk County Council) providing a contract which prevents and relieves homelessness. 		Services, registered providers, Housing Forum members	Monitoring of this contract remains challenging. Floating support provision has been reduced (see 1.13) however, contract extended until 2021.
3.3	Explore the Housing First model and continue to influence commissioning decisions, made by other agencies, in	<p>Monthly Housing Forum meeting</p> <p>Monthly Suffolk Housing Board</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning from Housing First pilots. • Influencing commissioning decisions to support the Housing First model. 	Service Manager – Housing Options and Homelessness	Local authorities, central Government, registered providers.	Being included as part of the review being undertaken by the new HRS post.

No	Action	Key milestones	Outcomes and Monitoring	Lead Officer	Key Partners	Progress as at June 2019
	order that contacts support the outcomes we are aiming to achieve to ensure that appropriate resources are allocated to West Suffolk.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessing funding to implement the principles of Housing First on individual cases. 			
3.4	Continue to monitor and review pathways and referral processes for vulnerable groups to ensure that the right level of support is maintained.	Monthly Housing Forum meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to maintain and improve services to ensure they respond to changing needs of people at risk of homelessness or those seeking advice. • Monitoring varied out through customer feedback, information of prevention and levels of contact with relevant services. 	Service Manager – Housing Options and Homelessness	Customer Services, Housing Options, Housing Forum partners	<p>Children and Young People’s (16/17) protocol agreed across Suffolk.</p> <p>Working on prison discharge protocol for Suffolk, approval expected in May 2019.</p>

No	Action	Key milestones	Outcomes and Monitoring	Lead Officer	Key Partners	Progress as at June 2019
3.5	Work with Suffolk partners to ensure that accommodation and support for victims of domestic abuse is appropriate; and add to pre-existing satellite accommodation.	Suffolk Domestic Abuse Forum meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued access to satellite accommodation for the most vulnerable and those potentially at risk of further domestic violence. 	Service Manager – Housing Options and Homelessness	Suffolk’s Violence Against Women and Girls Multi Agency	<p>Contract is working well. Another funding bid gone into government.</p> <p>One year additional post in place to support Domestic Abuse/Specialist Substance Misuse work.</p> <p>SCC has been awarded £250,000 to extend support available for this group. Continue to work with SCC to ensure West can access this funding. At the time of writing a funding decision is yet to be made.</p>
3.6	Identify and share resources, including staff, to support victims of domestic abuse, and rough sleepers.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted resource management and insight to support individuals and families in need. Access to schemes and methods of tackling domestic violence and its lasting effects. 	Service Manager – Housing Options and Homelessness and Rough Sleepers – prevention and support worker	Housing options, local authorities, third sector partners, police, health services and other statutory partners.	As above

No	Action	Key milestones	Outcomes and Monitoring	Lead Officer	Key Partners	Progress as at June 2019
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring carried out through referrals on Locata and Inform, the support plan system used by outreach services. 			
3.7	Explore opportunities to increase access to mental health services with a view to promoting these services to housing customers.	<p>Discussions underway with Norfolk and Suffolk Foundation Trust (NSFT).</p> <p>Seconded post by October 2018 (funding dependent).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure pathways to accessing mental health services for those in need of support. 	Service Manager – Housing Options and Homelessness	Mental Health Services and Clinical Commissioning Group	<p>Mental health temporary post in place from end of October 2018.</p> <p>Continue to lobby Clinical Commissioning Group about benefits of having shared posts</p> <p>Engaged in the redesign of mental health services in Suffolk which we continue to try to influence.</p>
3.8	Continue to operate the Housing Forum to provide a multi-agency approach to vulnerable customers including rough	Monthly Housing Forum meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the Housing Forum continues to be fit for purpose and helps the most vulnerable individuals and families in our communities. 	Service Manager – Housing Options and Homelessness	Housing Forum partners.	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>The Housing Forum is dealing with people in and out of temporary accommodation but the weekly meeting discusses rough sleepers.</p>

No	Action	Key milestones	Outcomes and Monitoring	Lead Officer	Key Partners	Progress as at June 2019
	sleepers and those in supported accommodation.					
3.9	Continue to hold and attend case management meetings with agencies, including adult and children services, to prevent the most vulnerable families from becoming homeless.	Ongoing – case meetings as appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fewer of our most vulnerable families or individuals presenting as homeless. 	Service Manager – Housing Options and Homelessness	Children’s Services, Adult Services,	Ongoing Multi-disciplinary case management meetings taking place with: Mult-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC) and child protection Mult-agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)

Priority four: Increasing accommodation options

No	Action	Key milestones	Outcomes and monitoring	Lead officer	Key partners	Progress as at June 2019.
4.1	Improve access to good quality private rented housing to expand choices and provide affordable housing options	<p>Quarterly Landlord Forums</p> <p>Self-help guides for private renting – April 2018</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective support is in place to enable more households to retain short hold tenancies. 	Service Manager – Housing Options and Homelessness	Landlords, registered landlords, Housing Forum, West Suffolk Lettings Partnership.	<p>West Suffolk Lettings Partnership review needed to identify progress and outcomes.</p> <p>Difficulty accessing the private rented market due to the 30% difference in rent levels and</p>

No	Action	Key milestones	Outcomes and monitoring	Lead officer	Key partners	Progress as at June 2019.
	for families and individuals. This includes supporting both tenants and landlords in developing new approaches that are attractive to all parties.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the supply of good quality housing in the private rented sector. 			<p>local housing allowance. Currently building a proposal to offer landlords incentives to increase access. Expected to commence July to September 2019 then review for effectiveness.</p> <p>Review access to PRS funding bid.</p> <p>Currently looking to recruit to the new Tenancy Sustainment Post however there are challenges around limited funding.</p> <p>Since April 2018, Rent Deposit Bonds – 39 existing, 10 new agreements, five opened and ended. 12 existing guaranteed Rental agreements are in place.</p> <p>Currently staffing levels are: 2 x 0.8 full time equivalents landlord liaison officers 1 x 0.5 officer (due to return from maternity leave in May 2019)</p>

No	Action	Key milestones	Outcomes and monitoring	Lead officer	Key partners	Progress as at June 2019.
4.2	Work with private sector landlords and developers to maximise the use of resources and opportunities for all vulnerable people across West Suffolk.	Quarterly Landlord Forums	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring through the private sector offer currently available in the Local Authority area. Note: specific actions relating to developers included within the Housing Strategy 	Service Manager – Housing Options and Homelessness	Landlords, registered providers, growth, planning.	<p>Holding Landlord Forums</p> <p>Have a positive approach in terms of what the landlords can provide.</p>
4.3	Review effectiveness of the West Suffolk Lettings Partnership to increase access to quality private rented accommodation.	Initial review undertaken by September 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor number of households housed through the West Suffolk Lettings Partnership Increased satisfaction amongst private sector landlords and tenants using the West Suffolk Lettings Partnership 	Service Manager – Housing Options and Homelessness	West Suffolk Lettings Partnership	As 4.1
4.4	Hold Landlord Forums to engage with private	Quarterly meetings established	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor attendance at meetings and outcomes. 	Housing Options and Homelessness team	Anglia Revenues Partnership, Public Health	Ongoing – continue to monitor its effectiveness.

No	Action	Key milestones	Outcomes and monitoring	Lead officer	Key partners	Progress as at June 2019.
	landlords, share best practice and offer advice and support.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased input and support from other partners at the Forum. 		and Housing Team	<p>Create more of a link between landlords evicting tenants and a route to WSLSP.</p> <p>At the Forums topics discussed have include: Anglia Revenues Partnership, Housing Benefit and Discretionary Housing Payment, Public Health and Housing, Warm Homes Healthy People, Department for Work and Pensions, tenure and notice periods, legal process and illegal evictions, empty homes, resolving tenancy difficulties.</p>
4.5	Focus on sustaining tenancies and provide advice and support to prevent a housing crisis arising in the rented sector and work with landlords and tenants to improve	Ongoing monitoring of interventions by the Solutions Team and Advice and Prevention Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fewer families presenting as homeless due to lack of suitable accommodation. 	Service Manager – Housing Options and Homelessness	Landlords, registered providers	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Currently 49 Rent Deposit Bonds being monitored and 12 Guaranteed Rent agreements by WSLP.</p> <p>Additional work through the welfare benefit officers to sustain PR tenancies.</p> <p>Between April 2018 – 2019, WSLP received 202 referrals</p>

No	Action	Key milestones	Outcomes and monitoring	Lead officer	Key partners	Progress as at June 2019.
	positive outcomes.					for support and the welfare benefits officers received 205. Currently tenure and performance outcomes are not measured outside of the homelessness database.
4.6	Work with registered providers and voluntary sector to increase access to accommodation including lodging schemes; shared accommodation (especially for under 35s); temporary accommodation and tenancies to support move on.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fewer families presenting as homeless due to lack of suitable accommodation. • Increase in variety of housing options and ease of access for single households outside of priority need. 	Service Manager – Housing Options and Homelessness	Landlords, registered providers, third sector partners	On hold. Need to look at viable options for West Suffolk. Advice around shared environments on the Council’s website. Service continue to provide advice.
4.7	Continuing to influence the provision of supported	Regular liaison with the Strategic Housing Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fewer families presenting as homeless due to 	Service Manager – Housing	Strategic Housing Team	Ongoing Giving support and information to new HRS post

No	Action	Key milestones	Outcomes and monitoring	Lead officer	Key partners	Progress as at June 2019.
	accommodation by identifying need and demand.		lack of suitable accommodation.	Options and Homelessness		Significant concern regarding withdrawal of Notting Hill Genesis (NHG) in Norfolk and Suffolk. NHG currently provide 235 beds (19 units) 65 of which are in West Suffolk. Working with SCC and district colleagues to attempt to respond to this situation.
4.8	Support Suffolk County Council to manage its existing contracts and influence contracts from 2020 through robust operational feedback (links to action 3.2 above)	HRS placements monitored at monthly Housing Forum Re-commission of HRS contract by 2020, monitored via Suffolk Housing Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the picture of the housing need in Suffolk to ensure we have the correct supply of housing and types of housing around the Suffolk area. 	Service Manager – Housing Options and Homelessness	Suffolk County Council	HRS progress We are influencing future development of the contract but cannot amend the current contract. Acknowledge reduction in funding.
4.9	Monitor use of bed and breakfast accommodation to ensure use only in emergency situations.	Weekly monitoring of bed and breakfast use (reported quarterly to Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure compliance with the legal standards for use of emergency accommodation. 	Housing Options and Homelessness team		Process in place regarding B&B to check before placement. Can only have one night and then have to be seen the following day. If not the accommodation is lost.

No	Action	Key milestones	Outcomes and monitoring	Lead officer	Key partners	Progress as at June 2019.
	Manage move on as soon as possible to and improve outcomes for families and individuals and reduce cost to the taxpayer.	and Audit Committee)				<p>Friday is weekend only and then seen on Monday.</p> <p>Not seen a decrease in placements but fewer inappropriate placements. People being seen much quicker.</p> <p>Note we have seen an increase in requests for housing from single people</p>
4.10	Ensure procedures are followed to manage the use of temporary accommodation and when used, to ensure that plans are in place to manage move on.	<p>Weekly monitoring of case load.</p> <p>Escalation procedures in place to approve use of temporary accommodation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce spend on temporary accommodation and reduce the number of people at risk of prolonged homelessness. 	Housing Options and Homelessness team		<p>Similar process to Bed and Breakfast.</p> <p>Most going into temporary accommodation are not going in immediately, it is part of a planned process.</p> <p>January 2019: Issues with bed blocking and rent arrears in temporary accommodation. Support is provided by the solutions team where appropriate. Working with providers to move on as quickly as possible.</p>

Priority five: Supporting the implementation of welfare reform

No	Action	Key milestones	Outcomes and monitoring	Lead officer	Key partners	Progress as at June 2019.
5.1	Continue to develop the role of our Welfare Support Officer and Income Recovery posts to support people to maximise income and minimise expenditure.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decreased likelihood of persistent rent arrears or incorrect benefit allocations leading to decreased likelihood of homelessness. 	Service Manager – Housing Options and Homelessness	Anglia Revenues Partnership	<p>Increased capacity in this team.</p> <p>A review is taking place to understand the outcomes of this team. Data being used to support the review.</p> <p>Update of review in June/July.</p>
5.2	Develop early intervention protocols with registered providers to ensure tenants retain their accommodation.	April 2018 – regular monitoring meetings with providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced risk of loss of short hold tenancies and ensure tenants retain their accommodation. Monitored through contact made with Customer Services and Housing Options by Landlords and those looking to prevent the loss 	Service Manager – Housing Options and Homelessness	Registered providers	<p>In place for most RPs. Some of the RPs who are not local and have a low number of stock not in place.</p> <p>Protocols are in place but they are not being followed as some providers struggling with rent accounts</p> <p>Event taking place in July 2019 to build relationship with RPs and smaller stockholders. A county-wide protocol for how to deal with rent arrears is being developed.</p>

No	Action	Key milestones	Outcomes and monitoring	Lead officer	Key partners	Progress as at June 2019.
			of a short hold tenancies.			
5.3	Work with Anglia Revenues Partnership, the Citizens' Advice Bureau, Jobcentres, Department of Works and Pensions and registered providers to support the roll out of Universal Credit (UC).	Quarterly meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the implementation of welfare reform and provide support to individuals and families receiving UC. 	Service Manager – Customer Service and Transformation	Anglia Revenues Partnership, Citizens Advice Bureau, Jobcentres, Department of Works and Pensions and registered providers.	Ongoing April 2019: Government funding stopped from 1 April. However we continue to fund meetings to support transition of UC. Linking with DWP on moving legacy benefits to UC.
5.4	Work with partner organisations to provide timely financial advice to households that are homeless or at risk of homelessness due to debt.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced risk of homelessness due to loss of tenancy resulting from financial difficulty. 	Service Manager – Housing Options and Homelessness	Citizens Advice Bureau, Jobcentres, Department of Works and Pensions and registered providers, customer services, housing needs.	Ongoing UC rollout – welfare benefit officers in the housing options team providing advice. Service Manager for Customer Services and Transformation chairs Universal Credit partner meeting so continuity and overview maintained. Links made with Job Centre regarding vulnerable people.

No	Action	Key milestones	Outcomes and monitoring	Lead officer	Key partners	Progress as at June 2019.
5.5	Support private sector landlords to understand the impact of Universal Credit and other welfare reform through the West Suffolk Lettings Partnership and Landlords Forum.	Quarterly Landlord Forum UC guide for landlords launched – May 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased likelihood of retention of assured short hold tenancies and other housing arrangements for those otherwise at risk of homelessness. 	Service Manager – Housing Options and Homelessness	Anglia Revenues Partnership, the West Suffolk Lettings Partnership and Landlord Forum, private sector landlords, Department of Works and Pensions, citizens advice	Ongoing through Landlord Forum.
5.6	Support customers with financial management advice and signpost to appropriate agencies.	Ongoing – quarterly reports submitted to Department of Works and Pensions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriate financial advice and signposting provided. Ensuring that customer access support for personal budgeting and digital assistance 	Service Manager – Customer Services and Transformation	Customer services and citizens advice	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>UC enquiries being referred to CAB.</p> <p>In 2018/19 we supported UC customers in the following ways:</p> <p>Personal budgeting support – 13 in Forest Heath and 130 in St Edmundsbury.</p> <p>Assisted digital support – 25 in Forest Heath and 82 in St Edmundsbury.</p>

No	Action	Key milestones	Outcomes and monitoring	Lead officer	Key partners	Progress as at June 2019.
						Please note that the figures are lower for Forest Heath because Universal Credit was introduced in quarter 4.
5.7	Work with Anglia Revenues Partnership to ensure effective allocation of Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) to support those who are experiencing difficulties as a result of welfare reform.	Quarterly monitoring of DHP	Increased use of the DHP Budget Increased homeless prevention cases by resolving housing benefit and debt issues	Service Manager – Housing Options and Homelessness	Anglia Revenues Partnership.	Good progress with DHP. Some procedural work with ARP could be improved but ongoing. 99.99% of DHP budget was spent by year end. Better processes are in place and there is more effective working with third sector, as evidence by spend.

West Suffolk Temporary Accommodation Procurement and Placement Policy

Version 3
September 2018
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1. Introduction

1.1 This policy is an appendix to West Suffolk Council's Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018-2023. The purpose of this policy is to set out how West Suffolk Council will procure sufficient units of temporary accommodation and place households in temporary accommodation.

Procurement of temporary accommodation to meet anticipated demand will be undertaken following the principles of:

- achieving value for money for the Council and its residents;
 - providing suitable accommodation for households in housing need; and
 - complying with the Council's contract standing orders.
- 1.2 Temporary accommodation is procured for households for whom homelessness cannot be prevented. It is required for the purposes of:
- accommodating new statutory accepted homeless applicants;
 - accommodating households while homelessness cases are investigated; and
 - reducing the use of nightly paid (bed and breakfast) accommodation.
- 1.3 The Council aims to procure sufficient **temporary accommodation** to accommodate homeless households within the local authority area as far as reasonably practicable or as close to where they were previously living. Temporary accommodation is usually provided on an ongoing short-term basis. The Council understands the resources available for use, the difficulties in procuring sufficient units of temporary accommodation at affordable prices and the need to procure accommodation in nearby authorities.
- 1.4 **Emergency accommodation** is procured on a nightly paid basis in bed and breakfast accommodation, guest houses and hotels and is available for a short period, usually at a point of housing crisis. Due to increasing demand it is not always possible to procure sufficient emergency accommodation within West Suffolk. It is therefore sometimes necessary to procure emergency accommodation out of the area. When this happens it will be in an adjoining district where possible to minimise the distance. The household will be identified as requiring an in area placement and be prioritised for a move.
- Placement of households in temporary accommodation,** both within and outside the area. The Council has a duty to provide temporary or interim accommodation for households who approach the Council as homeless and who meet the criteria set out in The Housing Act 1996, Part VII as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002.
- 1.5 This policy covers both the interim placements made under Section 188 Housing Act 1996, while homelessness enquiries are undertaken, and

longer term temporary accommodation placements for households accepted as homeless under Section 193 of the same Act. Within this document, placements under both of these duties will be referred to as temporary accommodation placements.

- 1.6 The Council is dependent on a supply of accommodation to meet the needs of households who have been required to leave their previous accommodation and have not been able to secure alternative accommodation themselves or whilst the Council works with them to prevent their homelessness. In some cases, households have not been given warning and therefore may require emergency assistance to source such accommodation. The Council must have options in place to deal with such emergencies.
- 1.7 In accordance with the Housing Act Section 208 and paragraph 16.7 of the Homelessness Code of Guidance, the Council will, wherever reasonable and practical, try to secure suitable accommodation within West Suffolk to allow a household to maintain their existing networks, such as employment, schooling, medical care as well as family and social support. The Council has to be mindful of current prevailing housing conditions as well as demand and pressures that affect the Council on a daily basis, whilst taking into account the individual needs of the households requiring assistance.
- 1.8 Whilst the Council will have regard to this policy when allocating temporary accommodation, the Council retains its discretion to take into account any particular personal circumstances of an applicant or the household when allocating accommodation.
- 1.9 This policy operates in conjunction with the [Home-Link Lettings Policy](#), the [Discharge of the homelessness duty into the private rented sector](#) and the Council's Asset Management Strategy (note: currently being developed).

2. Procurement of temporary accommodation

This section sets out the current levels of homelessness, the need for temporary accommodation, types of temporary accommodation provided and how the Council will look to meet demand.

Homelessness in West Suffolk

- 2.1 The Council both maintains its own stock of temporary accommodation and has access to temporary accommodation in the area. In addition, the Council has procured additional temporary accommodation, usually in an emergency, from other providers and some of these are out of the area.
- 2.2 Please see Appendix A of the Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeping Strategy for data on homeless applications, homeless acceptances, reasons for homelessness, number of households in temporary accommodation and the reasons for homelessness.

Understanding the need for temporary accommodation

- 2.3 Please see section 1 (identifying current and future levels of homelessness) in Appendix A of the Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeping Strategy. It sets out factors that contribute to people becoming homeless, those most likely to become homeless or be threatened with homelessness and the factors that may affect future levels of homelessness.

Supply of temporary accommodation

- 2.4 We will continue our focus on the prevention of homelessness and wherever possible the Council provides longer-term accommodation before an applicant becomes homeless as a homeless prevention. However, it is sometimes necessary to use interim or temporary accommodation before longer-term accommodation becomes available either as homelessness relief or once the 56 day period ends pending a discharge of any duty owed.
- 2.5 The types of temporary accommodation currently used by the Council are set out below:
 - **Interim and emergency accommodation:** this is normally in the form of hostels, most of which have shared facilities and is provided within the district. This can also be nightly paid accommodation which is located outside of the district with either shared facilities or self-contained.
 - **Temporary accommodation:** provided by either West Suffolk Council or a third party providers usually in the district.
 - **Specialist accommodation:** there are different types of supported housing available for particular groups including young single homeless and rough sleepers, mental health needs, substance misuse and refuge accommodation and younger families. Allocations to these schemes are determined by Housing Related Support, registered provider or agencies

running the schemes (as appropriate). The Housing Related Support contract is managed by Suffolk County Council.

- 2.6 The table below sets out the sources and numbers of units of temporary accommodation supplied both in and out of the district as at July 2019.

Type of unit	Number as at 1 July 2019
Temporary accommodation	
- of which Registered Provider	34
- of which charity owned	53
- of which Council owned	4
Total	91

- 2.7 There are occasions when we use Bed and Breakfast accommodation for emergency or temporary accommodation. In 2018/19 there were approximately 15 families or individuals in Bed and Breakfast accommodation at any one time.

Maintaining supply to meet demand

- 2.8 The Council will explore ways to maintain the supply of good quality temporary accommodation that provides value for money to meet demand by:
- Seeking to increase the number of landlords engage in the West Suffolk Lettings Partnership;
 - Seeking to reduce the reliance on spot purchased nightly paid accommodation and bed and breakfast as far as possible by increasing the number of temporary accommodation properties available;
 - Seeking to expand the range of properties either in partnership with registered providers or, where value for money can be demonstrated, in the private rented sector;
 - Continuing to explore options for purchasing properties on the open market, subject to business cases and in accordance with the Council's Asset Management Strategy; and
 - Exploring options for working with lettings agencies.
- 2.9 The Council has increased its provision of temporary accommodation in recent years and will continue to monitor its requirements and take action accordingly. The long-term aim is to reduce reliance on spot purchased accommodation and to procure accommodation on a longer term basis whilst maintaining sufficient flexibility to allow for demand fluctuation and avoid a costly over supply of temporary accommodation.

Meeting quality standards

- 2.10 All of our temporary accommodation must meet the appropriate suitability and quality checks. When appropriate, the Council carries out spot checks on nightly paid units. Furthermore the West Suffolk Landlords Forum meets on a quarterly basis to discuss the latest regulations, good practice and landlord obligations. To review the current accommodation offer and future needs. Monthly meetings on management on properties, RPs and providers and monitoring of SLAs.

3. Placement of households in temporary accommodation

This section sets out factors the Council will consider when placing households in temporary accommodation.

Suitability of accommodation

- 3.1 This policy takes into account the statutory requirements on councils in respect of the suitability of accommodation, including the Suitability of Accommodation Order 2012 and has regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, as required by Section 11 of the Children Act 2004.
- 3.2 When deciding if a temporary accommodation placement is suitable, consideration will be given to Chapter 17 of the Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities (dated [April 2019](#)) which states that the following factors need to be taken into account:

a. Needs, requirements and circumstances of each household member

- 3.3 The needs, requirements and circumstances of each household member should be considered, this includes any identified health or mobility issues, any care or support provided by agencies or the need to access specialist medical services.
- 3.4 The key factor to consider when assessing medical issues is whether the condition itself would make the accommodation unsuitable, for example offering a flat above the ground floor to a household member without the ability to climb stairs.
- 3.5 Consideration will be given to whether the accommodation is affordable for the applicant and their household.

b. The location of the accommodation

- 3.6 Factors to be considered include the ability to access the workplace if in paid employment, avoiding disruption to the education of young people, in particular those who are at critical education points such as those close to sitting GCSE examinations.

3.7 Where possible the Council will avoid placing applicants in isolated accommodation away from public transport, shops and other facilities in order for them to maintain established links with schools, doctors and key services to ensure the wellbeing of the family is maintained.

c. The size and facilities of the accommodation

3.8 The accommodation provided should have adequate space for the household and this would be assessed by taking into account the needs, requirements and circumstances of the household as outlined above.

3.9 Households requiring temporary accommodation will often be placed into accommodation that has fewer bedrooms than a household may be entitled to on a permanent basis. The condition of the decoration, furniture in the property (where applicable), the layout or type of accommodation, provision of parking and lack of access to a garden are extremely unlikely to be classed as acceptable reasons for refusals of offers.

3.10 Assessments in regard to suitability of temporary accommodation placement will be completed on a case by case basis to ensure that any temporary accommodation offered is considered reasonable and suitable for the household involved. These assessments are made within the context of the accommodation and resources that are available to the Council.

3.11 The individual needs and requirements of a household will be assessed by the Advice and Prevention Officer alongside the Accommodation Officer to confirm the allocation is suitable. Consideration is given to any risks that an applicant may pose to existing residents or members of the public.

3.12 Wherever possible, attempts will be made to identify suitable accommodation within the Council's accommodation, local registered provider stock or in the private rented sector.

Placements

- **Bed and Breakfast placements**

3.13 Circumstances may arise which require short notice placements of households into emergency temporary accommodation and therefore the options available can be very limited. In these cases the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation may be the only option available to fulfil the Council's temporary accommodation duty. In addition, if an applicant contacts the Housing Options team outside of office hours and requires emergency accommodation, Bed and Breakfast will be the only available option.

3.14 Consideration is given to the code of guidance which states that Bed and Breakfast accommodation is not to be regarded as suitable for 16 and 17 year olds or applicants with family commitments, therefore Bed and Breakfast placements for households of this type are only to be used if no

other accommodation is available. The Council aims for all Bed and Breakfast placements not to exceed a period of six weeks, however there may be exceptions to this if no other suitable accommodation options can be identified with the six week period. The average length of time a household spent in Bed and Breakfast accommodation in 2018/19 was 19 days.

3.15 Whenever an applicant is accommodated in Bed and Breakfast, action will be taken to identify alternate temporary accommodation as quickly as possible.

- **Out of district placements**

3.16 Wherever possible the Council will seek to provide temporary accommodation within West Suffolk.

3.17 There are circumstances in which the Council needs to place households into Bed and Breakfast accommodation outside of West Suffolk, such as in cases where accommodation is required in an emergency and there is no availability located within West Suffolk with whom the Council has agreements in place.

3.18 Whenever an applicant is placed outside of West Suffolk, attempts will be made to identify alternate accommodation within the district as soon as possible.

3.19 In some circumstances, it may be more appropriate for a placement outside of the area to be arranged, for example where an applicant may be at risk within West Suffolk.

Offers and refusals

3.20 Applicants who are provided with temporary accommodation will be made one offer of suitable accommodation. The Council is under no legal obligation to allow the applicants to view this accommodation prior to acceptance.

3.21 For interim placements made under Section 188 of the Housing Act 1996 while homelessness enquiries are being undertaken, applicants do not have the right to request a review of the Council's decision as to the suitability of an offer. However applicants do have a right of review of temporary accommodation placements once accepted as homeless under section 193 of the same Act.

3.22 If an applicant refuses an offer of temporary accommodation, they will be asked to provide a reason for their refusal which will be considered by the Advice and Prevention Officer. If the accommodation is still considered as suitable the Council will be under no obligation to offer any further

temporary accommodation. The applicant would then need to decide whether to accept the offer or to source accommodation themselves.

- 3.23 If the specified reasons for refusal are considered valid, the offer would be withdrawn and alternate temporary accommodation options would be considered.
- 3.24 Where the Council decides that homeless applicants housed under Section 188 are not owed the main homelessness duty, they will be asked to leave their interim accommodation placement following a reasonable notice period, once being informed of the Council's decision in respect of their homeless application. This length of notice will vary depending on the household individual circumstances.