

Homelessness- Quarter 2 position statement October 2021

Introduction & Background

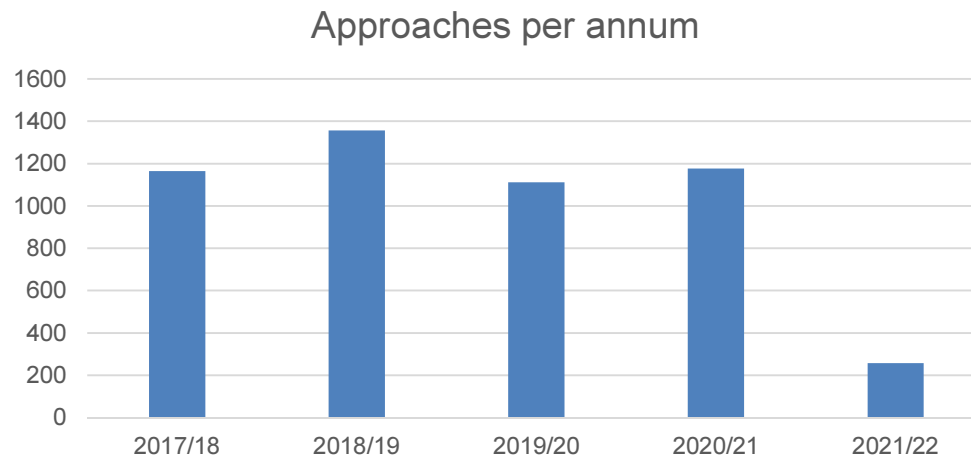


- Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
 - Most significant change in homelessness
 - New approach to tackling homelessness
 - To expand the provision of advice and information about homelessness with prevention and relief of homelessness as a primary focus
 - Extending the period of “threatened homelessness” for households from twenty eight to fifty six days and allow earlier intervention
 - New duties to both prevent and relieve homelessness for all eligible people [irrespective of their priority need or any issues of intentional homelessness]
 - Tailored assessment and Personalised Housing Plan [PHP], setting out actions that local authorities and clients need to take to secure alternative accommodation
 - Encouraging public bodies and agencies to work together to prevent and relieve homelessness through a new legal “duty to refer”
- Implementation April 2018
 - Report presented to the Housing & Health Advisory Committee in September 2018
 - Highlighted key implications and challenges
 - Most significant impact on approaches

Impact of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017



- Increase in approaches to the local authority



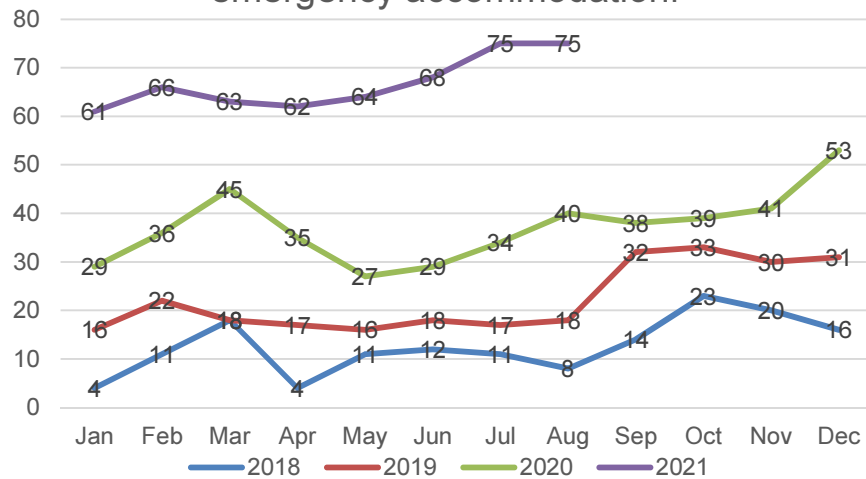
- Increase in single homelessness
- Rough sleeper initiatives
- Duty to refer

Impact of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

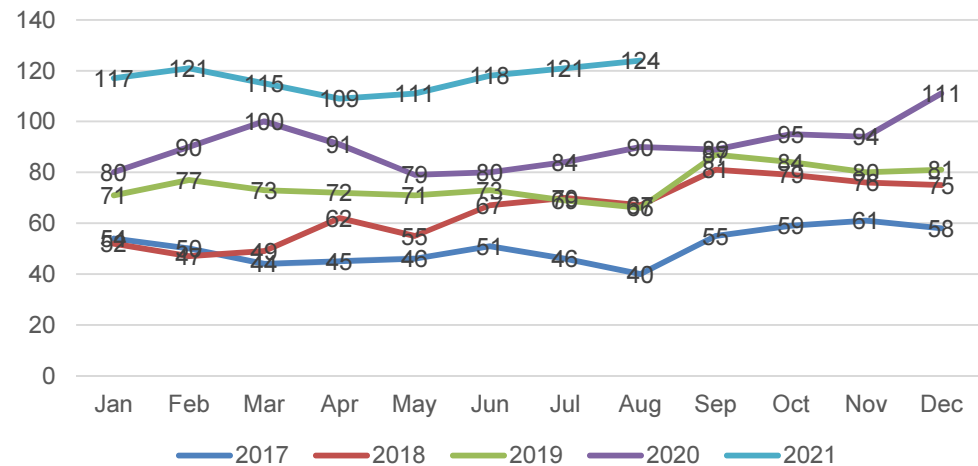


- Increase in emergency accommodation (nightly paid)

Number of households in nightly paid emergency accommodation.



Number of households in all types of emergency and temporary accommodation



Reasons for a rise in homelessness - post April 2018



- The continued impact of the HRA, placing the additional new duties on the local authority including *duty to refer*
- Welfare reform and Local Housing Allowance (LHA) caps
- Lack of affordable housing supply
 - High competition for private rented housing
 - Increased rental costs
 - Increase housing market prices
 - Reduction in new build delivery
- New Buy-to-Let tax rules impacted the private rented market
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021

Reasons for a rise in homelessness - Covid-19



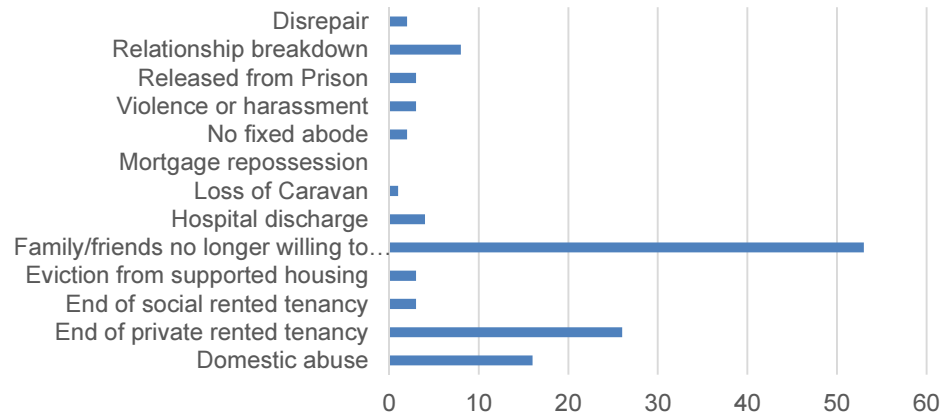
- Covid-19 hit the service hard and had a substantial impact on residents in the District leading to increased levels of homelessness.
- At short notice, following the announcement of a national emergency on 23 March 2020, the Government required rough sleepers or those threatened by rough sleeping to be housed under the “Everyone In” policy.
- Single homelessness - in part attributable to not being able to ‘sofa surf’ between family and friends
- Eviction ban and extension to notice period
- Family and friends now longer will to accommodation
- Funding restrictions/ending

Homelessness - statistics



- HERO support - 2020/21 2021/22
- Increase applications to our housing waiting list -
- Temporary accommodation - consist supply (46 average)
- Assisted XX under 'Everyone In'

Emergency & temporary accommodation placement reasons (August 2021)



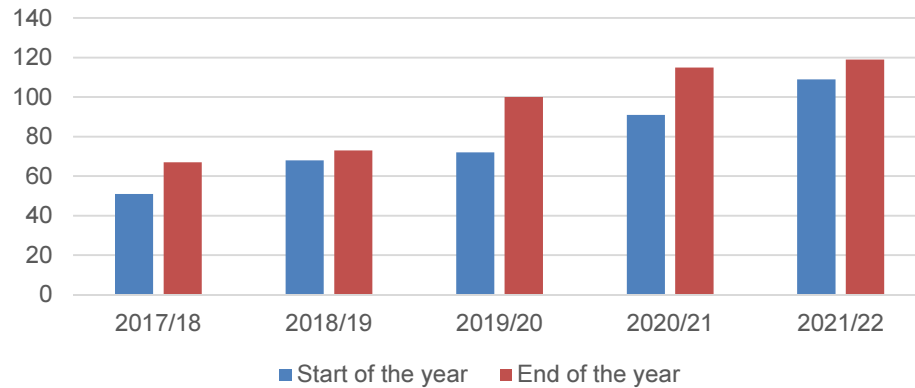
Homeless Prevention Team - a new challenge



- Eviction ban lifting and “standard” notice period returned
- End of furlough - 30 September 2021
- End of universal credit uplift
- Increasing cost of utilities
- Rough Sleeper Action plan (Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities - DLHC)
- Reduction in the use of emergency accommodation (nightly paid)
- Increased approaches due to the new Domestic Abuse Act
- Increased approaches of customers with complex/multiple issues

Emergency & Temporary Accommodation

Temporary Accommodation Figures at the start and end of each financial year (2017-2022)



- Placement assessment
- Charging schedule for nightly paid placements

Actions & Achievements



- Restructure - live from January 2021
- Senior appointments - Homelessness Prevention Manager (November 2020), Head of Housing (March 2021) and Housing Strategy Manager (September 2021)
- Creation of a holistic homelessness prevention and support service - HERO, Housing Advice & Accommodation Services Team
- Holistic approach to homelessness to respond to the HRA - prevent, intervene and recover.
- Temporary Accommodation Action Plan
- Triage service launched - early intervention & assessment
- All temporary accommodation/emergency accommodation placements assessed against the HRA and sign off by senior managers
- Staff training programme
- HRA Assessment Framework introduced

Actions & Achievements



- Yoti - verified electronic signature app to support new customer declaration, consent & authorisation form launched
- Homeless Prevention Team workshop hosted
- Review process in place for reclaiming of housing benefit
- Launch of our Voluntary Relocation Scheme & Family Incentive
- Bid/grant applications to support the delivery of the service
- 37 Vine Court Road - joint supported housing accommodation with West Kent Housing Association (WKHA), Kent County Council commissioning (KCC) & Look Ahead (commissioned homelessness support services)
- Virtual engagement event with local letting agents and landlords
- New Help2Rent rent guarantee insurance policy
- Re-branded private rented sector offer - Help to Let
- Increased funding contribution from WKHA for our HERO service

The next 6 months



- Delivery of 37 Vine Court Road
- Delivery of the District's first Housing-Led project at Orchard Close
- Implementation of our nightly rental and occupation charging schedule
- Launch of our new private sector offer - Help to Let
- Expansion of our HERO team - HERO+ officers
- Procurement of private sector accommodation including emergency accommodation
- Revision of the Council's Allocations Policy
- Handover of 11-13 High Street, Swanley
- Review of Council land assets - potential affordable housing delivery