



# Homelessness Review

## 2023

July 2023

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# 1 Background

## 1.1 The Homelessness Act 2002

The Homelessness Act 2002 places a legal requirement on local authorities to carry out a review of all forms of homelessness in their district and publish a Homelessness Strategy at least every 5 years. The Homelessness Review is intended to provide part of an evidence base for developing the new Homelessness Strategy. For the purposes of this Act “homelessness review” means a review by a local housing authority of:

- the levels, and likely future levels, of homelessness
- the activities which are carried out to address homelessness
- the resources available to the council for such activities.

## 1.2 The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (hereafter HRA) was one of the biggest changes to the rights of homeless people in England for many years. The Act placed new legal duties on local housing authorities and amends the existing homelessness legislation in the Housing Act 1996.

Amongst a number of changes the HRA made to the legislation that was in place at the time of the last review, the following points are important to note:

- The HRA duties apply to all eligible applicants (i.e. on the basis of immigration status), and ignore intentionality and priority need. The Act requires thorough assessment of homelessness applications and a personalised response; placing new duties on local authorities to properly assess the cause of homelessness, circumstances and needs of all household members, including children (s.3).
- The HRA places renewed emphasis on prevention of homelessness; extending from 28 to 56 days the period in which a household is defined as ‘threatened with homelessness’ (s.1). the Act places a new ‘prevention’ and ‘relief’ duty on local authorities to ‘take reasonable steps’ to prevent the threatened or actual homelessness of anyone who is eligible (s.4), and to develop and agree with applicants a personalised plan of the steps that will be taken to prevent or relieve homelessness (s.3).
- If the relief duty expires (after 56 days) and the household is unintentionally homeless and in priority need, then the existing main rehousing duty applies and they must be offered suitable settled accommodation (or temporary accommodation until a suitable offer of settled accommodation has been made).
- The HRA aims to encourage joint working to tackle homelessness by placing a new duty on public authorities, such as hospitals and prisons, requiring them to make a referral, with the individual’s consent, to the local housing authority if someone they’re working with appears to be homeless or threatened with homelessness.

### 1.3 ESBC's Homelessness Strategy 2013-2017

The last [Homelessness Strategy](#) covered the period 2018-2023 and set out the following strategic priorities:

- (1) Avoidance of homelessness
- (2) Prevention of homelessness
- (3) Availability of accommodation

Further details can be found in the strategy document.

## 2 Defining homelessness

Under [section 184](#), if a housing authority has reason to believe that a person applying to the housing authority for accommodation, or assistance in obtaining accommodation, may be homeless or threatened with homelessness, it must make inquiries to satisfy itself whether the applicant is eligible for assistance and if so, what duties – if any – are owed to that person.<sup>1</sup>

### 2.1 Threatened with Homelessness

Under [section 175\(4\)](#), a person is 'threatened with homelessness' if they are likely to become homeless within 56 days. Under [section 175\(5\)](#), a person is also threatened with homelessness if a valid notice under section 21 of the Housing Act 1988 has been issued in respect of the only accommodation available for their occupation, and the notice will expire within 56 days. [Section 195](#) provides that where applicants are threatened with homelessness and eligible for assistance, housing authorities must take reasonable steps to help prevent their homelessness.<sup>2</sup>

### 2.2 Already Homeless (also known as 'Homeless Tonight')

There are a number of different factors that determine whether a person is homeless. Under section 175, a person is homeless if they have no accommodation in the UK or elsewhere which is available for their occupation and which that person has a legal right to occupy. A person is also homeless if they have accommodation but cannot secure entry to it, or the accommodation is a moveable structure, vehicle or vessel designed or adapted for human habitation and there is nowhere it can lawfully be placed in order to provide accommodation. A person who has accommodation is to be treated as homeless where it would not be reasonable for them to continue to occupy that accommodation.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homelessness-code-of-guidance-for-local-authorities/chapter-18-applications-decisions-and-notifications>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homelessness-code-of-guidance-for-local-authorities/chapter-12-duty-in-cases-of-threatened-homelessness-the-prevention-duty>

## 2.3 Street Homelessness

Street homelessness is the most visible form of homelessness, often referred to as rough sleeping. For the purpose of the annual Rough Sleeping Snapshot,<sup>3</sup> people sleeping rough are defined as:

“People sleeping, about to bed down (sitting on/in or standing next to their bedding) or actually bedded down in the open air (such as on the streets, in tents, doorways, parks, bus shelters or encampments). People in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as stairwells, barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations, or “bashes”).”

## 3 Levels of homelessness in East Staffordshire

### 3.1 Homelessness Duties Accepted

The duties described in Table 1 below are triggered in the following ways:

- An applicant household is confirmed as threatened with homelessness within 56 days – the ‘Prevention duty’ is accepted.
  - Successful Prevention – the household is either assisted to remain in the property from which homelessness was threatened, or new accommodation is secured prior to becoming homeless.
  - Unsuccessful Prevention – homelessness cannot be prevented, and the household becomes homeless moving to the next stage, known as the Relief Duty, below.<sup>4</sup>
- An applicant household is confirmed to be homeless – the ‘Relief Duty’ is accepted.
  - Successful Relief – the household is secured into alternative suitable accommodation within 56 days of the duty being accepted.
  - Unsuccessful Relief – no alternative accommodation is secured within 56 days.
- An applicant’s Relief Duty has come to an end, normally following the expiry of 56 days – the ‘Final Decision’ falls to be made.

Thus households applying as homeless can enter the process at the ‘Prevention’ or ‘Relief’ Stage. Some households accepted for a Prevention Duty will go on to have Relief Duty where prevention is unsuccessful, and some households accepted for a Relief Duty will go on to have a Final Decision.

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<sup>3</sup> Statistical release about the annual single night snapshot of the number of people sleeping rough in local authorities across England. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/rough-sleeping-snapshot-in-england-autumn-2022>

<sup>4</sup> There are other ways that the Prevention and Relief Duties can be brought to an end, for a full list please see - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homelessness-code-of-guidance-for-local-authorities/chapter-14-ending-the-prevention-and-relief-duties>

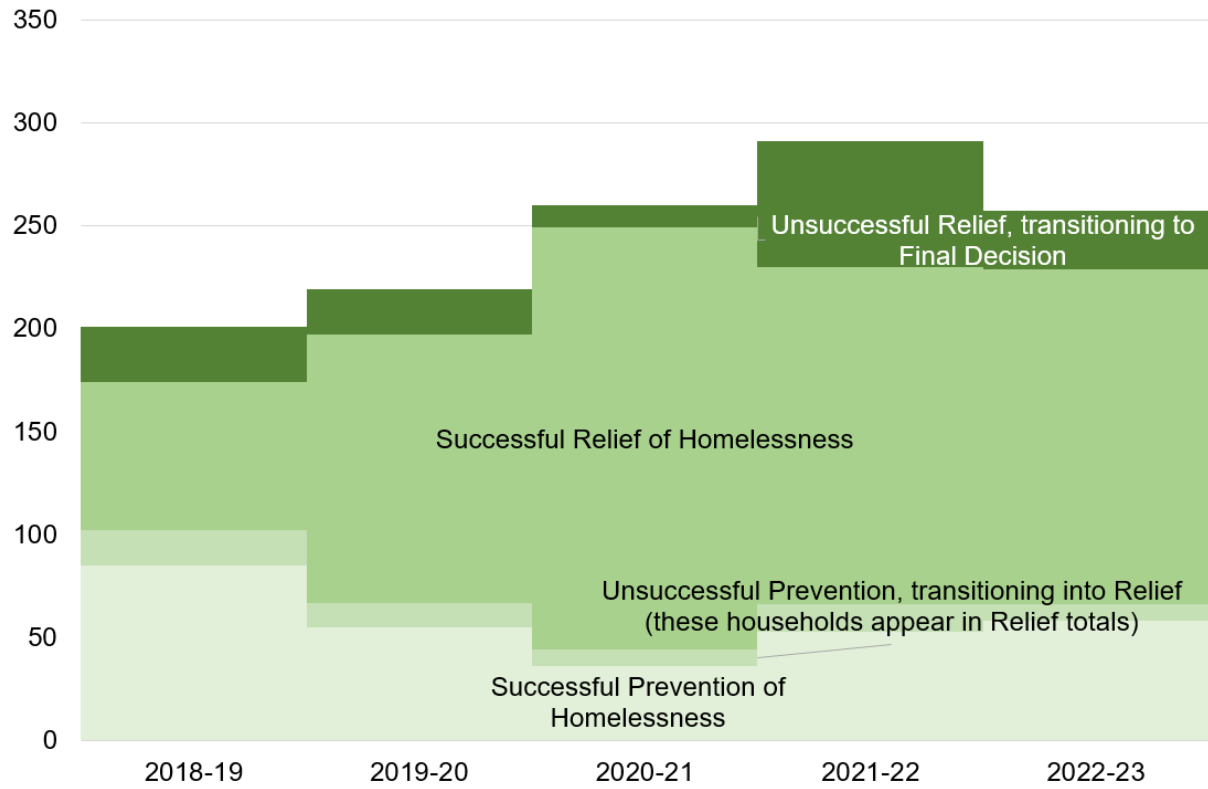
**Table 1:** Prevention and Relief of Homelessness - 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2023 by year

Description	Total, 2018 to 2023	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Enquiries not resulting in a homelessness decision	2,739	630	580	398	528	603
Successful Prevention of Homelessness	287	85	55	36	53	58
<i>Unsuccessful Prevention, transitioning into Relief (these households appear in Relief totals)</i>	58	17	12	8	13	8
Successful Relief of Homelessness	734	72	130	205	164	163
Unsuccessful Relief, transitioning to Final Decision	149	27	22	11	61	28
<b>Total Homelessness Service Enquiries</b>	3,912	815	788	651	806	852
<b>Total Homeless Households receiving a Duty</b>	1,170	184	207	252	278	249

It is noticeable that there is an overall decline in all activity in 2020-21 due to Covid-19 and the associated restrictions on the housing market.<sup>5</sup> This resulted in an uplift of activity in the following 2 years which now appears to be stabilising.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2021/164/made>

**Table 2:** Bar chart of Homeless Duties by Year



Prevention activity peaked in the first year of the HRA, and has since stabilised with the exception of 2020-21 when Covid-19 restrictions applied. The year of peak demand saw the largest amount of final decisions, presumably because the routes into accommodation were under abnormal pressure increasing wait times beyond the 56 day limit of the Relief Duty.

**Table 3: Eligible decisions on homelessness applications – 2018-2023 (HO data)**

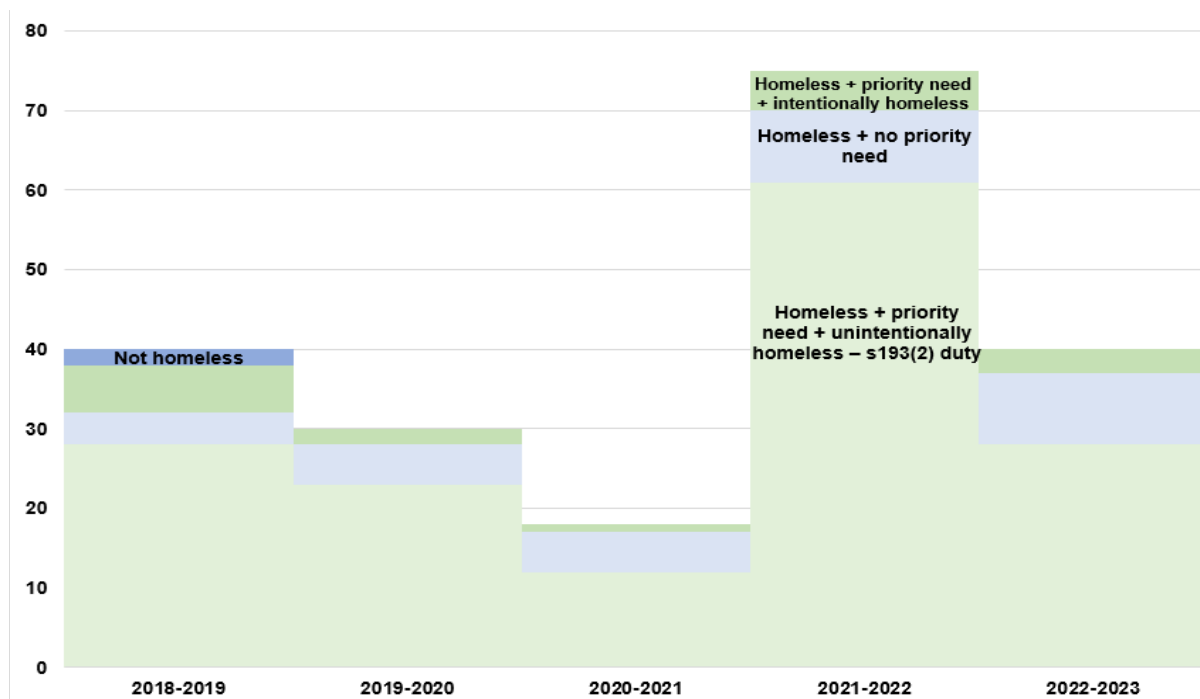


Table 3 demonstrates that the vast majority of those receiving a final decision are owed the main homeless duty, with a very small number of applicant households receiving an intentionally homeless decision over the last 5 years.

### 3.2 Homeless Applicant Demographics

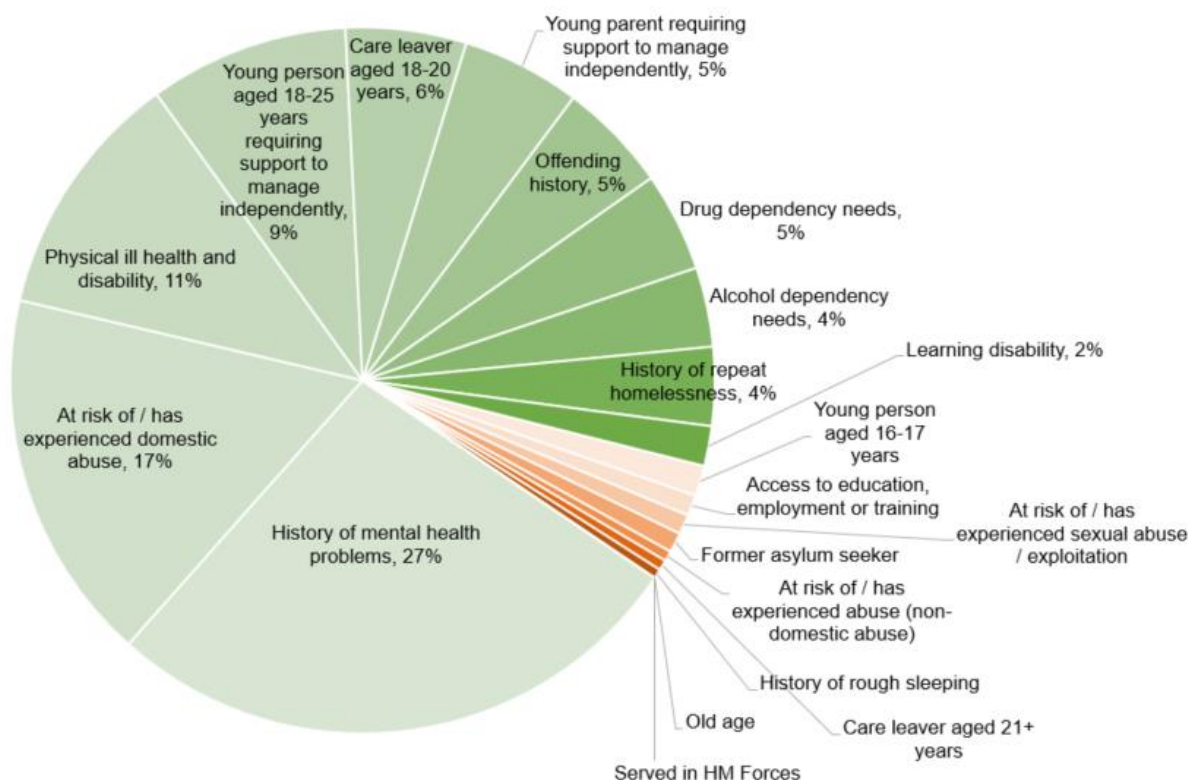
The following general trends can be observed from the data presented below:

- 88% are 1<sup>st</sup> time enquiries, thus 12% are experiencing repeat homelessness.<sup>6</sup>
- 53% are female.
- 72% have no dependants. Of those with dependants 47% have 1 child, and 28% have 2 children.
- 84% of applicants were under 50
- 3% of applicants were over 67
- The majority of applicants (83%) considered themselves to be of white ethnic origin
- Average profile of the Housing Options service user is single male/female, no dependants between the ages 18-44 or single female parent 18-34 years old with 1-2 children

<sup>6</sup> This is for the period 1 July 2021 to 31 March 2023



**Table 4:** Average of Identified Support Needs for the period 2018-19 to 2021-22<sup>7</sup>



A history of mental health problems is higher than the national average, but not alarmingly so.<sup>8 9</sup> However, this information is collected in such a way as to suggest that mental health remains an ongoing support need and thus may not be suitable for this comparison. Domestic abuse as the second most common support need corresponds to the prevalence of the same as the reported reason for seeking homelessness assistance, where it is in third position.

<sup>7</sup> Orange-coloured segments are all 1% or less of the total

<sup>8</sup> <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/data-tools-and-services/data-services/mental-health-data-hub/mental-health-prevalence-surveys>

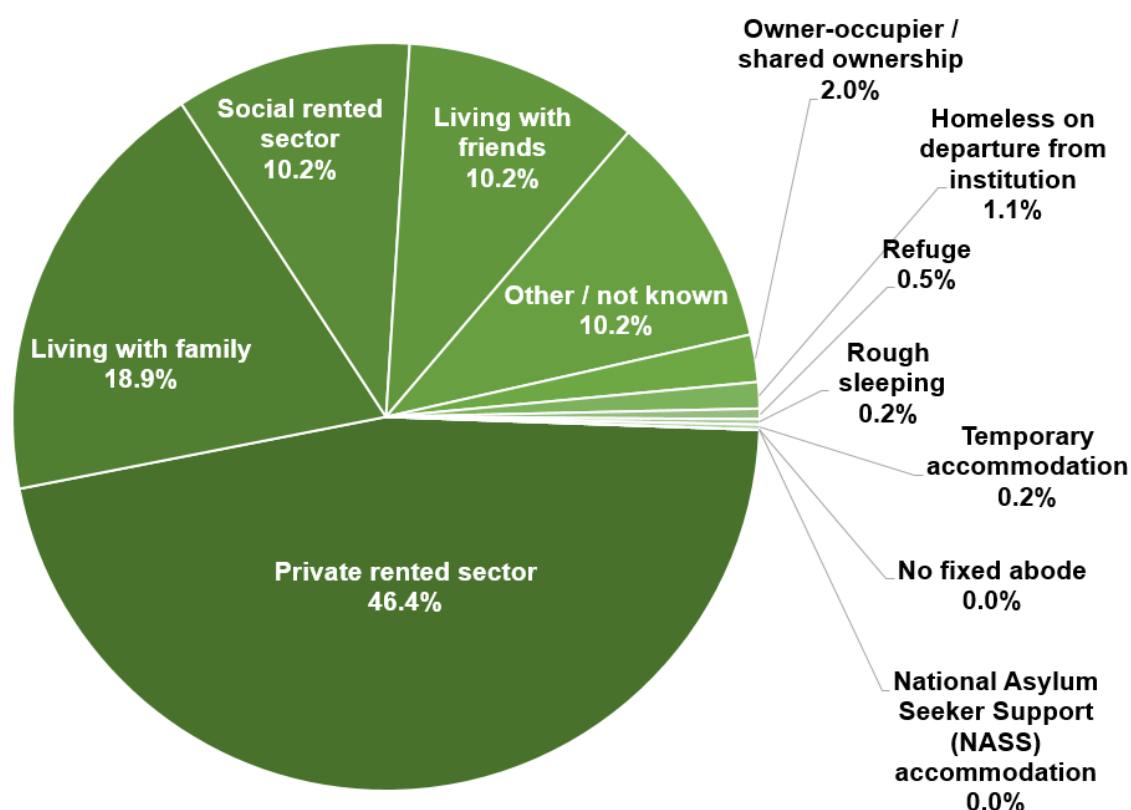
<sup>9</sup> <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/data-tools-and-services/data-services/mental-health-data-hub/mental-health-prevalence-surveys>

**Table 5:** No. of Children in the Household of Homeless Applicants

No of Children	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	Grand Total
0	511	614	503	584	623	2835
1	125	82	76	109	111	503
2	96	52	42	55	61	306
3	56	21	14	36	31	158
4	17	12	11	13	18	71
5+	10	7	5	9	8	39
<b>Total of Households with Children</b>	<b>304</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>1077</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>815</b>	<b>788</b>	<b>651</b>	<b>806</b>	<b>852</b>	<b>3912</b>

Of those households with children, 10% had more than 3 children.

**Table 6:** Housing Status of Homeless Applicants by Overall Percentage



Close to 50% of homeless originates from the private rented sector, which correlates with the second and third ranked reason for homelessness in section 4. Another 29% of applicants are residing in lodging arrangements with friend and family, which have virtually no security once relationships become strained. The '0.0%' are included for

completeness, as this are categories of applicant who are recorded in a particular way for national statistics.

### 3.3 People aged 18-24

During the 5 year period, 36% of 18-24 year olds quoted parental eviction as the reason for homelessness, and 15% due to other family or friends no longer willing or able to accommodate. Overall, 18-24 year olds represent 40% of all evictions where family are no longer willing or able to accommodate. This is a disproportionately large percentage when compared to other age groups, and in keeping with their stage in life.

### 3.4 Rough Sleeping

The Council has made significant and sustained strides in reducing rough sleeping over the last 5 years. This can broadly be attributed to the following:

- The DLUHC funded interventions delivered under the Rough Sleeping Initiative,<sup>10</sup> and the joint work in designing a pathway for rough sleepers to enter suitable and secure accommodation.
- The rise in voluntary and community activity, which has been harnessed by the Burton and East Staffs Homeless Partnership.<sup>11</sup>
- Implementation of the Homeless Reduction Act in April 2018, and the recruitment of a Housing Outreach Officer to strengthen the Housing Options Team.

**Table 7:** Annual Rough Sleeping Snapshot Statistics for East Staffordshire

15 Nov 2011	19 Nov 2012	14 Nov 2013	18 Nov 2014	12 Nov 2015
4	7	2	3	7

16 Nov 2016	15 Nov 2017	14 Nov 2018	16 Oct 2019	4 Nov 2020
6	16	11	5	0

20 Oct 2021	13 Oct 2022
0	2

The Council has adopted a 'No First Night Out' approach,<sup>12</sup> effectively replicating the arrangements under 'Everyone In.'<sup>13</sup> This means that people stating they have no

<sup>10</sup><https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rough-sleeping-initiative-2022-to-2025-funding-allocations>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.burtones-homeless.co.uk/>

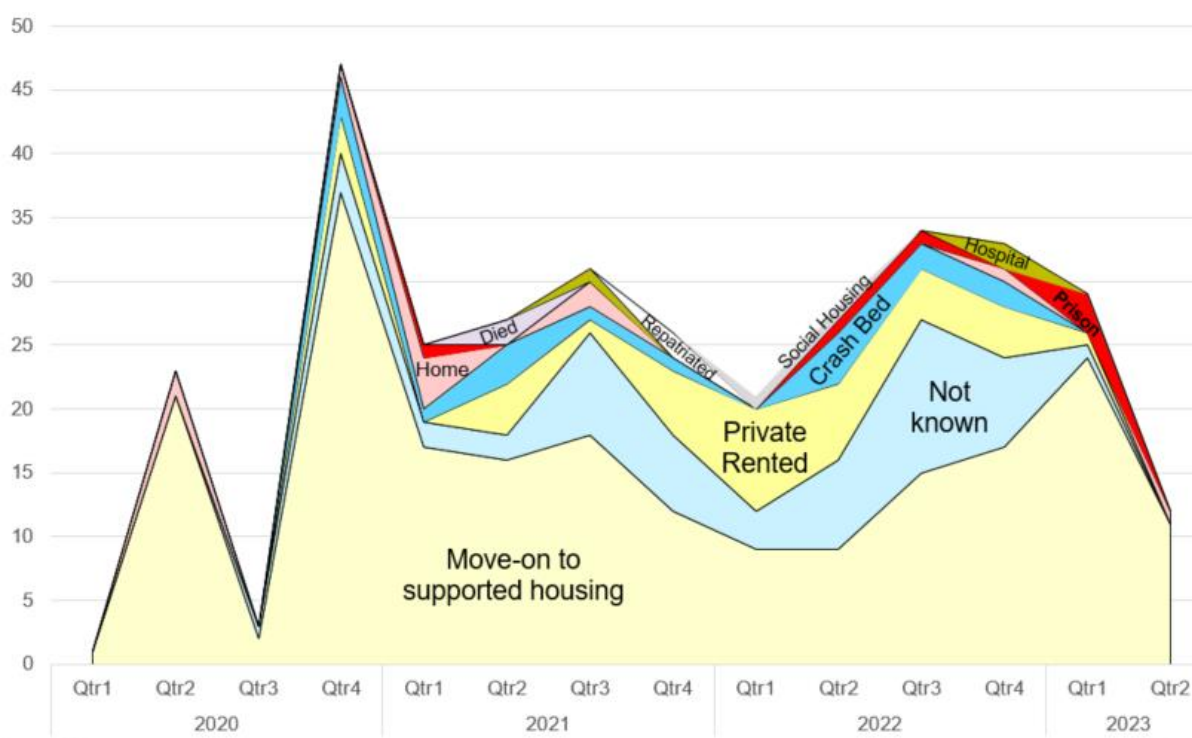
<sup>12</sup> This is supported by Dluhc funding until 2025, after which the intervention will be subject to a further decision.

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/letter-from-minister-hall-to-local-authorities>

accommodation available to them will be made an offer of emergency accommodation if they are not eligible for the same under the applicable legislation and duties.<sup>14</sup> The current approach and associated interventions have been in place since November 2020 and are now embedded; responding effectively to the flow of people presenting as homeless tonight.

Resettlement arrangements are case specific and led by the Housing Options Team working in conjunction with the Navigator,<sup>15</sup> relying where appropriate on the Partnership arrangements for accessing supported accommodation. The graph below sets out where people move to next following their initial placement in emergency hotel accommodation under 'No First Night Out' arrangements, as well as showing the number of people that have been assisted over the period that this intervention has been in place.

**Table 8:-** Move-on from initial hotel placement under Everyone In



<sup>14</sup> DLUHC funding only applies to individuals who would not ordinarily be provided with temporary accommodation under the legislative arrangements.

<sup>15</sup> The Navigator is a full time member of staff dedicated to supporting rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping.

## 4 Reasons for homelessness in East Staffordshire

The top 7 reasons for homelessness are largely the same as they were at the last review, with the exception of 'eviction from supported housing' which is a new entrant. Comparison is slightly complicated, in that many of the recording categories were changed with the arrival of the HRA which sought to collect and analyse case level homelessness data.

**Table 9:** Top 7 reasons given for homelessness by Housing Options service users March 2018 to April 2023 (HO data)

Reason Given for Homelessness	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	Grand Total
Family no longer willing or able to accommodate	113	125	168	129	169	704
End of private rented tenancy – not assured shorthold tenancy	100	68	29	105	142	444
End of private rented tenancy – assured shorthold tenancy	49	60	41	70	74	294
Relationship with partner ended (non-violent breakdown)	60	73	71	65	72	341
Eviction from supported housing	23	28	51	52	68	222
Friends no longer willing or able to accommodate	38	34	43	54	49	218
Other	278	223	81	105	46	733

The distinction between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> ranked reason for homelessness is the phase of the private rented sector tenancy, i.e. for households experiencing the '2<sup>nd</sup> reason' the fixed term or assured phase has come to an end and the tenancy is now periodic.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/private-renting-tenancy-agreements>

## 5 Predicting future levels of homelessness in East Staffordshire

### 5.1 The Housing Market in East Staffordshire - Availability & Affordability

According to the 2014 Strategic Housing Market Assessment (hereafter SHMA), only 35% of East Staffordshire households could afford the median house price in the Borough.<sup>17</sup>

**Table 10:** Housing Tenure in East Staffordshire<sup>18</sup>

Tenure	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Private Rent	8080	8458	8729	9011	9190	9126	9106	9063	9147	9329
Social Rent	6464	6440	6534	6680	6572	6641	6675	6732	6723	6836
Owned Outright	17881	17978	18187	18524	18996	19537	20065	20548	21846	23020
Owned with Mortgage or Loan	16934	16752	16411	15999	15915	15904	16043	16309	15678	14899

The private rental sector as a housing tenure grew by 77% 2001-2011,<sup>19</sup> but as a percentage of all dwellings has only grown by 1% between 2012 and 2021. However, private rented housing is not readily available to all households in housing need. The main reasons for this are:

- The market is sufficiently competitive to allow landlords to be selective about tenants. This means benefit claimants and low-income or insecure income households have difficulty finding and securing suitable private rented housing.<sup>20</sup>
- The Local Housing Allowance (LHA) is limited to the 30th percentile on a list of rents in the broad rental market area,<sup>21</sup> and the Benefit cap further limits the options of affordable private rented housing to claimants.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> [Strategic Housing Market Assessment Oct 2013](#), updated April 2014, ESBC p.74

<sup>18</sup>

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/subnationaldwellingstockbytenureestimates>

<sup>19</sup> Office for National Statistics Census 2001 and Census 2011

<sup>20</sup> SHMA p. 182

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/understanding-local-housing-allowances-rates-broad-rental-market-areas>

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/benefit-cap>

**Table 11:** Per Week Cost of the Private Rental Sector (PRS) Market Statistics compared to LHA Rates<sup>23</sup>

Type of Accommodation	Lower Quartile of PRS (2021-2022)	LHA as at May 2023
Room in Shared Accommodation	£74.80	£67.08
One bedroom	£109.32	£97.81
Two bedrooms	£132.34	£120.82
Three bedrooms	£149.60	£143.84
Four or more bedrooms	£201.38	£182.96

The Council offers support to benefit claimants who are struggling to pay their rent through administration of the Discretionary Housing Payment scheme.<sup>24</sup> The application process asks applicants to specify the reason they are struggling, and the below table sets out the reasons provided by benefit claimants in this context.

**Table 12:** Impact of welfare reforms as reason for Discretionary Housing Payment

Impact of Welfare Reforms	Number of Awards				
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Total
Removal of Spare Room Subsidy	215	118	157	125	615
No impact	156	100	49	32	337
LHA Restriction	86	65	56	68	275
Combination of Reforms	15	2	26	5	48
Benefit Cap	6	4	2	3	15
Total	478	289	290	233	1290

The primary alternative for people who are unable to access market housing is social rented housing, but there are around 3 applications to every allocation of social rented housing provided by a housing association. The SHMA estimates a need for an additional 1,483 affordable homes between 2012-31<sup>25</sup>. The Local Plan seeks the construction of an average of 112 affordable houses to be built each year throughout the plan period. During this monitoring year 233 affordable homes have been completed, mostly within Burton upon Trent. Since the adoption of the Local plan 1205 affordable dwellings have been completed which averages at 121 each year, which is in excess of the Local Plan target. Affordable housing completions are

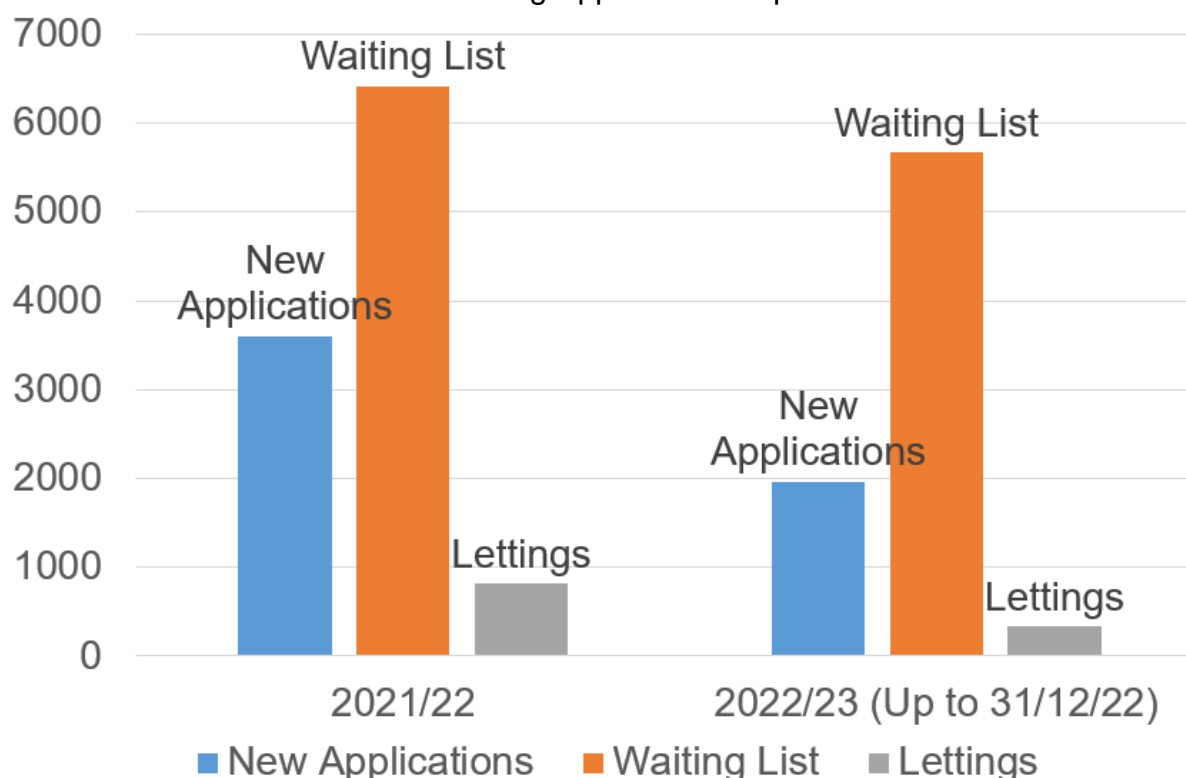
<sup>23</sup> [ONS](#)

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.eaststaffsbc.gov.uk/benefits-and-support/housing-benefit/discretionary-housing-payments>

<sup>25</sup> 42% of projected outstanding permissions for market housing led development above the threshold. SHMA p. 194.

expected to continue to be above the requirement for the coming years as larger sites which have planning permission are now delivering their affordable housing elements and three schemes for 100% affordable housing are underway.

**Table 13:** Number of New and Existing Applicants compared to Allocations<sup>26</sup>



The data above only covers a 21 month period due to a change in the operating system which has made producing comparable data prior to April 2021 exceedingly difficult.

## 5.2 The Housing Register

When people are at risk of homelessness they can approach the Council. When people are not at risk of homelessness, but still have a housing need, they can apply on the Housing Register. The Register is currently operated by Trent and Dove Housing on behalf of the Council and is open to applicants from both within and outside East Staffordshire where they meet basic eligibility criteria.

Housing Register applicants are then categorised by their level of housing need in one of 4 “Bands”. Band 1 means highest priority: it includes those owed the top homelessness duty by the Council, or other situations such as where their home is subject to a Prohibition Order or is it severely detrimental for medical/welfare reasons. Lower Bands signify lower levels of need for housing within East Staffordshire. The Band in which an applicant has been categorised then determines, along with their date of application, their priority when a tenant is being selected for a vacant dwelling.

Based on their place on the Register, applicants may express an interest in individual vacant rented dwellings advertised by Trent and Dove and several other housing associations - this is known as a *Choice-Based Lettings Scheme*.

<sup>26</sup> Data from the East Staffordshire Housing Register



## 6 Tackling homelessness in East Staffordshire

### 6.1 Housing Options

The Council's Housing Options service is the primary service to prevent and address homelessness in the Borough.

**Table 13:** Outcome of Prevention Duty

Row Labels	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Secured alternative accommodation for 12 or more months	27	18	11	22	22
Secured alternative accommodation for 6 months	23	12	7	6	
Homeless	19	10	6	7	5
Contact lost	15	9	7	7	4
Secured existing accommodation for 12 or more months	4	6	7	10	7
Secured existing accommodation for 6 months	6	4	2	3	4
Withdrew application / applicant deceased	4	4	2	3	
56 days or more expired and no further action	2	2		2	3
Refused suitable accommodation		1	2	1	
No longer eligible				2	
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>45</b>

Whether the accommodation is likely to be available for 12 months or 6 months, as per the first and second outcomes on the list above, is a forecasting exercise undertaken by the Housing Options Officer at the point of closing the case. This may for example depend on the length of tenancy secured, or the strength of the negotiated settlement to remain in the existing accommodation.

**Table 14: Reasons for End of Relief Duty**

<b>Row Labels</b>	<b>2018-2019</b>	<b>2019-2020</b>	<b>2020-2021</b>	<b>2021-2022</b>	<b>2022-2023</b>
Secured accommodation for 12 months	29	41	90	74	59
56 days elapsed	33	31	23	79	36
Secured accommodation for 6 months	15	52	62	31	22
Contact lost	10	19	21	19	19
Withdrew application / applicant deceased	4	6	10	7	1
Refused final accommodation or final part six offer	4	1	3	2	4
No longer eligible		2	6		
Local connection referral accepted by other LA	1			4	2
Notice served due to refusal to cooperate	1				
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>143</b>

The low number of refusals across both the Prevention and Relief duties is a positive fact in what is a dynamic area, needing to take into account very personal choices about where and what type of accommodation homeless applicants want to live in.

## 6.2 Homelessness Prevention Fund

The Council also uses a Homelessness Prevention Fund to make cash payments to prevent homelessness, or to enable applicants to finance the upfront costs of securing affordable PRS accommodation.

Over the period 2021/22 and 2022/23 the Council has paid out £57,193.67 and £48,303.93 respectively. Typical usage includes support with costs like rent in advance, clearing of rent arrears, admin and application fees, deposits and crisis grants in order to help homeless households keep or secure accommodation.<sup>27</sup>

## 6.3 Emergency/Temporary Accommodation

Housing Options has a statutory duty to secure interim accommodation<sup>28</sup> for a household if it has reason to believe may be eligible, homeless and have a priority need. There is a subsequent duty to provide temporary accommodation<sup>29</sup> for households found to be eligible, homeless and to have a priority need. The Council currently leases 9 properties from Trent & Dove Housing for this purpose, but many households have to be housed in bed & breakfast establishments.

<sup>27</sup> Figures include payments made under the Vulnerable Renters Payment Scheme

<sup>28</sup> Housing Act 1996 Part VII, s.188

<sup>29</sup> Housing Act 1996 Part VII, s.190 or s.193

In addition to the performance of statutory duties, the Council has also adopted a 'No First Night Out' (hereafter NFNO) approach to prevent rough sleeping, further detail is provided above at section 3.4.

**Table 15:** Total nights of B&B and assoc. costs to ESBC<sup>30</sup>

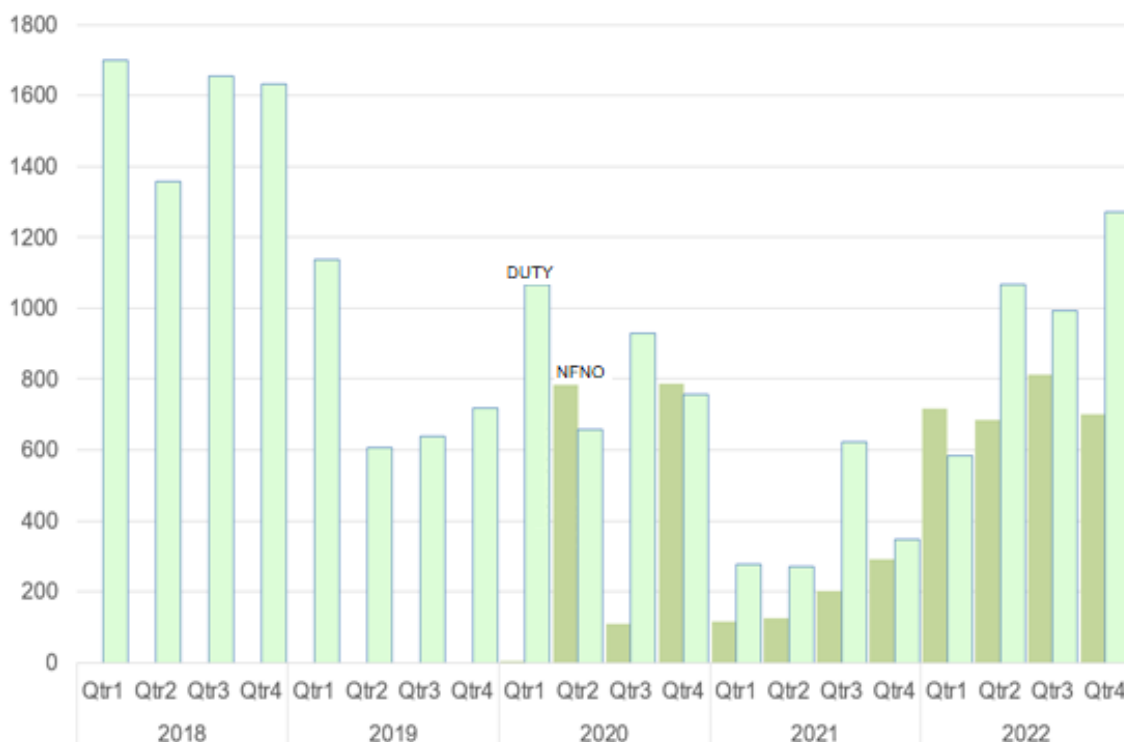
Calendar Year	NFNO Nights	Interim or TA Duty Nights	NFNO Cost	Duty Cost	Total Nights	Total Cost
2018		6348		£361,849	6348	£361,849
2019		3097		£145,629	3097	£145,629
2020	1681	3411	£66,340	£149,687	5092	£216,027
2021	734	1516	£23,320	£62,965	2250	£86,285
2022	2915	3916	£114,265	£176,550	6831	£290,815

In the most recent year, 97% of homeless households were placed inside East Staffordshire (340 placements out of 349). In cases where the applicant was placed outside the borough there may have been good reason to do so, for example fleeing domestic abuse.

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<sup>30</sup> Housing Options Data

**Table 16:** Nights of B&B by Quarter



The Council has made progress in reducing the duration of applicants stay in B&B; in 2018, 117 households were housed for 6348 days in total making an average of 54 days. In 2022, 233 households were housed for 6831 days in total making an average of 29 days per household.

#### 6.4 Housing Benefit and Discretionary Housing Payments

Following the introduction of Universal Credit, most housing costs are now administered by the Department of Working and Pensions alongside the benefits that are paid for living costs. The Council administers Housing Benefit<sup>31</sup> for Pensioners, and those living in specified<sup>32</sup> or temporary accommodation.<sup>33</sup> There are currently around 6,000 claims administered by the Council.

The Council also makes Discretionary Housing Payments<sup>34</sup> to provide short-term (up to 13 weeks) assistance to households who cannot afford their rent whilst they find themselves alternative affordable accommodation.

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.eaststaffsbc.gov.uk/benefits-and-support/housing-benefit/make-a-claim>

<sup>32</sup> Specified Accommodation is accommodation provided to those who need care, support or supervision.

<sup>33</sup> This accommodation provided to homeless households by the Council.

<sup>34</sup> <http://www.eaststaffsbc.gov.uk/benefits-and-support/housing-benefit/discretionary-housing-payments>

**Table 17:** No. of Awards by purpose of DHP

<b>Purpose of DHP</b>	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Grand Total
To help with on-going rental costs for any other reasons	236	222	199	142	799
To help with ongoing rental costs for disabled person in adapted accommodation	95	40	56	71	262
To help with short-term rental costs while the claimant seeks employment	138	14	20	16	188
To help secure and move to alternative accommodation (e.g. rent deposit)	3	12	14	4	33
To help with short-term rental costs while the claimant secures and moves to alternative accommodation	6	1	1	0	8
To help with ongoing rental costs for foster carer	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	478	289	44651	233	1290

**Table 18:** Total Value of DHP Awards

<b>Value of Awards</b>			
Up to year ending			
2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
£179,840.27	£134,895.92	£161,492.80	£113,938.57

It is apparent that the DHP scheme remains a well utilised support mechanism, investing relatively large sums into supporting households with their housing costs potentially avoiding homelessness.

## 6.5 Housing Support

Currently in East Staffordshire only the following service is provided:

Provider	Who for
New Era Domestic Abuse Service	Women or Men suffering or at risk of domestic violence

This service is commissioned by Staffordshire County Council. Information is also available on its [website](#).

There are a number of voluntary organisations offering housing and homelessness support; including Burton HOPE<sup>35</sup>, Burton YMCA<sup>36</sup>, Love Inspire Foundation<sup>37</sup>, Humanity Unites<sup>38</sup> and The Eaton Foundation<sup>39</sup>.

## 6.6 Target Hardening

Target hardening provides security enhancement works to the homes of people at risk of violence so that they are safe to stay living in the home rather than having to leave and become homeless. The Staffordshire Police Crime Reduction Officer and the Fire Service assess the property and identify what works are needed. The Council verifies the information and commissions the contractor to undertake the required works. The scheme has assisted 9 households pa on average over the past 3 years, and is currently paid for by Domestic Abuse funding received from DLUHC.

## 6.7 Mortgage Repossession Letters

Mortgage companies are required to notify the Council whenever they have scheduled a date at court for mortgage repossession. They provide the name and address of the borrower and the date of the hearing. The Council writes to all borrowers with advice and encouraging them to contact Housing Options for assistance.

## 6.8 Activities to Increase Housing Supply

The Council engages in a number of activities which aim to increase housing supply. See the Council's [Housing Strategy 2021 - 2025](#) for the Council's overall strategy for housing supply.

## 6.9 Supported Accommodation

The number of general needs beds has grown significantly in recent years, and this has had a beneficial impact on rates of rough sleeping. For quality assurance and budgetary reasons the Council intends to increase the percentage of supported beds

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<sup>35</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/HelpingOurPeopleEat/>

<sup>36</sup> <http://www.burtonymca.org/>

<sup>37</sup> <https://loveinspire.wpengin.com/>

<sup>38</sup> [https://www.facebook.com/Humanityunitesuk/?hc\\_location=ufi](https://www.facebook.com/Humanityunitesuk/?hc_location=ufi)

<sup>39</sup> <http://www.theeatonfoundation.org.uk/>

provided by Housing Associations. To this end, the Council has recently employed a Supported Housing Visiting Officer to review adherence to Housing benefit regulations, and ensure value for money.

**Table 19:** Supported accommodation places in East Staffordshire

Service	Provider	Client Group	units
Epworth House	Sanctuary Housing Association	People with Learning Disabilities	13
Staffordshire Additional Housing Management Service	Rethink	People with Mental Health Problems	7
Refuge Asian Women's Service	Refuge	Women at Risk of Domestic Violence	3
YMCA Housing (Milton House & George Williams House)	YMCA Burton & District	Homeless adults 18-35	40
YMCA Housing (Reconnect & James Court)	YMCA Burton & District	Homeless adults 18-64	31
BAC O'Connor Rehabilitation Centre (leased portfolio)	The Burton Addiction Centre Ltd	Accommodation for persons who require treatment for substance misuse	Total across all sites 55
Girica CIC (leased portfolio)	Girica Support Services Ltd.	Homeless adults	21
Prospect Housing Trust CIC (leased portfolio)	Prospect Housing	Disadvantaged vulnerable adults, Mental Health, homelessness	45
NHA (leased portfolio)	Nacro Housing	Adults at risk of homelessness, ex-offenders	31
Derventio Housing Trust CIC (leased portfolio)	Derventio	Homeless, supported accommodation	32
Bridgeside	Auckland Home Solutions C.I.C	Supporting vulnerable adults	3

Chrysalis	Chrysalis Supported Association Ltd	Vulnerable adults	3
Empire of God (leased portfolio)	Empire of God Ministries Ltd.	Homelessness and additional needs	84
Right Care (leased portfolio)	Right Care Services CIC	Homelessness and additional needs	5

## 6.10 Debt Advice and Related Assistance

Residents of East Staffordshire can access Citizens Advice services based in Swadlincote.<sup>40</sup> Debt support is also available from Christians Against Poverty,<sup>41</sup> and the national online debt charity Step Change.<sup>42</sup>

## 6.11 Family Mediation Scheme

Burton YMCA deliver a scheme providing mediation between young people and their parents with the aim of preventing homelessness. The Scheme received 82 referrals in 2022/23 and conducted 570 hours of mediation.<sup>43</sup>

# 7 Resources available to the council for tackling homelessness in East Staffordshire

## 7.1 The Council's Budget

The Council's budget for homelessness over the coming years is as follows:

2022/2023 Budget		2023/2024 Budget	2024/2025 Budget
£		£	£
252,849	Employees	322,608	291,482
34,500	Premises-Related Expenditure	64,164	64,164
2,300	Transport-Related Expenditure	4,940	3,500
236,650	Supplies & Services	431,368	420,417
(207,883)	Income	(477,194)	(426,148)
<b>318,416</b>	<b>Housing Options</b>	<b>345,886</b>	<b>353,415</b>

The Council is receiving the Homelessness Prevention Grant 2023 to 2025<sup>44</sup> to support the delivery of services to prevent and tackle homelessness. These funds are allocated in year to projects and services that meet the criteria attached to the funding.

<sup>40</sup> <https://www.citizensadvicemidmercia.org.uk/>

<sup>41</sup> <https://capuk.org/>

<sup>42</sup> <https://www.stepchange.org/>

<sup>43</sup> [https://burtonymca.org/AR\\_2023/index.html](https://burtonymca.org/AR_2023/index.html)

<sup>44</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/homelessness-prevention-grant-2023-to-2025>



## **7.2 Council Reserves**

The Council holds £164,126.78<sup>45</sup> in homelessness reserves. A portion of these funds is currently earmarked as follows:

- To enact best practice in relation to driving up standards in the supported housing sector, as there is currently a large number of single homeless people with additional needs accommodated in this type of housing. There is currently 1 FTE post on a 12 month contract, with a project evaluation at month 10.

## **7.3 Council Staffing and Buildings**

The Council's Housing Strategy and Housing Options Department provides housing advice and homelessness services, and comprises 6 full time staff.

Face to face services are delivered at the applicants own home or temporary accommodation as required, and the Council's office space is provided at Burton Town Hall.

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<sup>45</sup> Comprised of the Homelessness Reduction Act Funding Reserve - £58,465.76, and the Housing Options Fund - £105,661.02. Figure is correct as at 10 July 2023.