



WORTHING BOROUGH
COUNCIL

Worthing Joint Strategic Sub-Committee
13 June 2023

Key Decision [/No]

Ward(s) Affected: All
Cabinet Portfolio: Cabinet Member for
Citizen Services

Update on the Housing Needs Assessment for Worthing

Report by the Director for Housing and Communities

Officer Contact Details

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Executive Summary

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This is an update report for Members of the Worthing Joint Strategic Sub-Committee on the delivery of the Housing Needs Assessment for Worthing and which provides an interim data set about our current housing needs.
- 1.2 The Housing Needs Assessment was commissioned in March this year. Officers engaged Cordis Bright to produce two data sets: a quantitative set of data, which will be released in August 2023; and a qualitative data set, which will be released in November 2023. In addition, the 2022/23 full year homelessness data will be available, which is expected to be published by DLUCH in October 2023.
- 1.3 This Assessment is central to the development of Our Plan's Housing Mission - Everyone has a safe, secure and sustainable home. It will provide important evidence for a number of new strategies including, the new Housing Strategy, the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Prevention Strategy, and the Strategic Asset Management Plan which will guide

decisions about the future use of existing residential assets managed by Adur Homes.

1.4 It will also inform Adur and Worthing planning and development strategies for new social and affordable housing supply and more generally it will inform the Housing Needs Team future homelessness prevention activity. This data set is also critical to meet reporting requirements of the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).

2. Recommendations

2.1 Members of the Worthing Joint Strategic Sub Committee are asked to note:

1. the current status of the Adur and Worthing Housing Needs Assessment with quantitative data due in August 2023, and qualitative data to follow in November 2023;
2. the interim data on housing need and demand homelessness as set out below in Section 5 of the report;
3. that further reports will be brought to Committee later in the year following receipt of a final report from the consultants due in November 2023.

3. Background

- 3.1 Our citizens need to have access to safe, secure and sustainable homes. To help address this, our Council is developing a new housing strategy, which must be informed by data and evidence about the needs of our communities. This includes data about the lived experience of citizens that experience homelessness, unstable and unsafe housing.
- 3.2 We have reported previously - [Worthing Housing Strategy Roadmap](#) - the profound challenges around demand for housing, with growing numbers of our citizens requiring access to good quality, affordable and sustainable housing. There are particular challenges for Worthing, which has large gaps between LHA (Local Household Allowance) rates and true housing costs, and which currently has the highest gap in West Sussex for 2 bed properties. This is the result of reduced housing affordability and availability, loss of low cost private rental, lack of additional social housing supply, and the lack of support

provision to ensure people can stay sustainably housed. The impact of Covid-19, the enduring cost of living effects, together with landlords leaving the market as a result of changes in tax and concern over the ending of section 21, have created a perfect storm resulting in significant pressures on our housing waiting lists and costs to the public purse. More importantly the impacts of all of this on some of our citizens and their mental health, during times of vulnerability, can not be understated.

3.3 Having access to good quality, affordable and sustainable housing is a fundamental requirement for all of our citizens. It is core to our developing strategic approach to housing is deeply connected with this Council's core ambitions:

- We want to ensure that everyone has access to safe, secure and sustainable housing (Fair)
- We want to ensure our housing plans actively address climate and ecological emergencies (Green)
- As a Council for the [Community](#) we want to ensure that housing is available in places close to our citizens networks (Local).

3.4 No local authority can tackle the issues of homelessness alone. This needs a whole system approach - partners, communities, businesses - to collectively work together to share the response to these challenges and work together to find local and creative (with diminished budgets) solutions. We need to switch from reacting to demand, to a focus on prevention and early intervention and the relentless pursuit of low cost, good housing supply for our citizens.

3.5 Central to this is the need for much stronger foundations in relation to data, insights and evidence so that the current and future needs of our citizens are better understood, predicted and planned for. This is also to help ensure that the impact of this housing crisis on our citizens is better understood.

4. Context - the Housing Needs Assessment brief

4.1 In February 2023, Adur and Worthing Councils commissioned consultants Cordis Bright to carry out a comprehensive housing needs analysis as the basis for a revised and comprehensive homelessness strategy. This is also a first step in identifying how many new homes should be planned for within a local area, and for understanding the types of homes needed, given the population (both current and future projections), and housing affordability impacts.

- 4.2 Cordis Bright commenced the contract for the work in March 2023, with a delivery date for the analysis of the quantitative data due in August 2023. A further report on qualitative data sourced through interviews with key stakeholders is due in November 2023. It should be noted that Cordis Bright have significant experience in carrying out housing needs assessments for local authorities and understand the needs and issues to satisfy DLUHC guidance.
- 4.3 The project brief for the consultants requires them to deliver a comprehensive housing needs assessment for Adur and Worthing Councils that addresses:
- Analysis of homelessness presentations with emphasis on family/friends and private rented sector evictions and duty to refer to inform prevention and relieving of homelessness
 - Effectiveness of partnership and early identification and target support for those at risk of homelessness (Hospitals, Prisons, Social landlords, Supported housing)
 - Analysis of current housing type provision and housing need demand (protected characteristics)
 - Projected change in percentage of accommodation by type (expressed as a rate and a number over the next 20 years)
 - Demographic population trends that will drive housing need over the next 20 years
 - Current and future demand by housing type - supported housing, temporary accommodation, social housing and affordable housing provision expressed as both a percentage of stock growth and as a number
 - Provision and access to suitable housing for vulnerable single people since Homeless Reduction Act (how we use supported housing and temporary accommodation in this regard)
 - The gap in housing and homelessness provision expressed as a shortfall in stock (for the next 20 years)
 - Current and projected gaps and deficiencies in support provision (for the next 20 years)
- 4.4 All of these will be mapped against demographic data that will include projected population trajectory by household and income type.
- 4.5 The methodology to be used in the Housing Needs Assessment will provide this for Worthing and Adur. Available local and national data will be sourced - census data, homelessness presentations, local authority housing data and ONS housing and population data. Applicable local data and information will

also be used. The consultants will analyse and triangulate the data to respond to the key project questions.

- 4.6 It has been agreed that qualitative data will also provide more texture to the information and interviews with key stakeholders will be scheduled. The qualitative data will be informed by a series of interviews with key community stakeholders and partners, including people sleeping rough, single people in temporary or supported accommodation, homeless households, experts by experience as well as the members of the new Adur and Worthing Homelessness Prevention Partnership, which has just been re-established. This new Partnership comprises experts from other social housing providers, homelessness agencies, county council, health, criminal justice and critical support providers, will guide the development of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Prevention Strategy and will commit to delivering the priorities set out in the Strategy. The group had its first meeting on 17th May 2023.
- 4.7 The findings from the Housing Needs Assessment will form a central part of the deliberations and will directly input into the new Housing Strategy and a number of strategic documents (as set out in the initial summary), adjusting and setting our new strategic path for housing in Worthing.

5. Interim picture of housing need and homelessness data

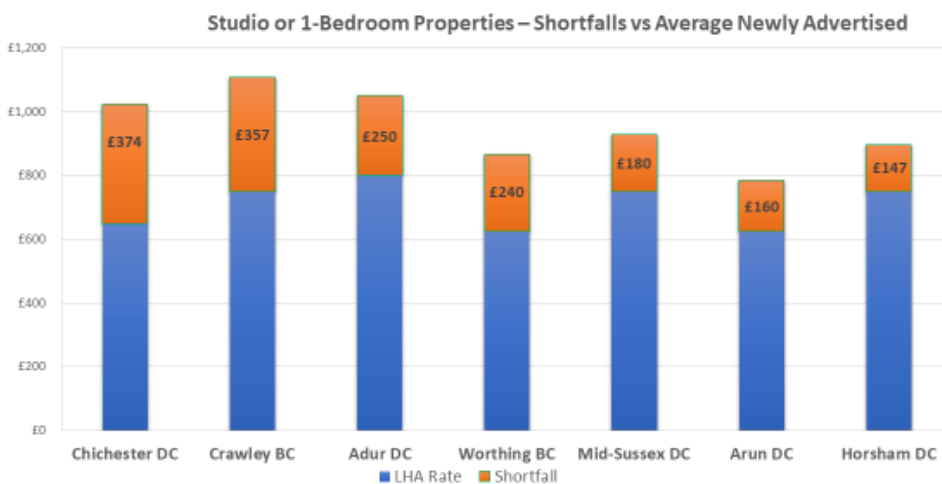
- 5.1 The development of our housing, homelessness and rough sleeping strategy, policy and practice needs to be based upon good data to provide an accurate picture of current and future demand and trends. This will inform our strategy around homelessness and rough sleeping and around our housing supply. Whilst we await these data sets, we have also been reviewing our own data sets to produce an interim and upto-date picture for Members to review about current demand and issues.

5.2 Private Sector housing.

There is a shortfall between the Local Housing Allowance rate and the cost of private sector housing, with Worthing having the biggest gap in West Sussex for 2 and 3 bed properties, with a £578 pcm shortfall in Worthing for 2 beds (and £321 pcm shortfall in Adur). Additionally we have a higher than national average owner occupier population (Worthing 68.2%, Adur 72.7% against a national average of 62.3%) and a lower than national average % of social housing properties. Despite this we are over reliant on the private sector and

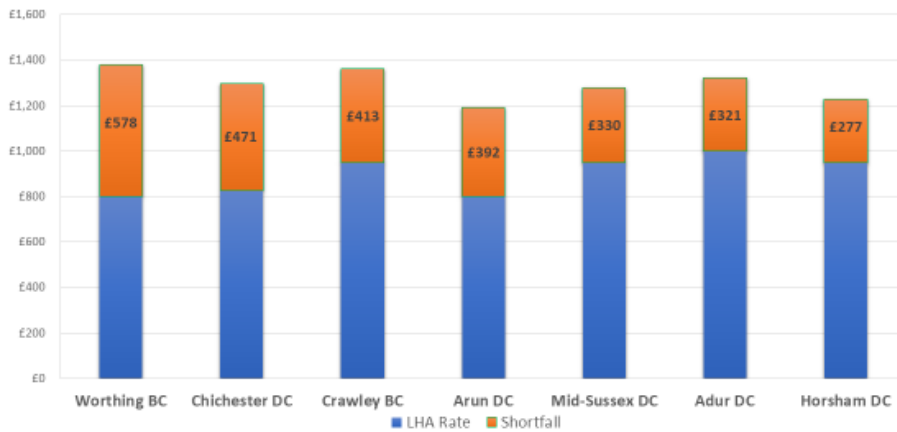
impacted significantly by pressures in the market, with 53.5% of Worthing homeless households being housed in the private sector against a national average of 33.5%.

Whilst being reliant on the private sector to solve homelessness, end of private sector tenancies (S21 no fault evictions) is our biggest cause of homelessness in prevention duty, at 68% against a national average of 38%. This creates challenges for households to afford and secure their own accommodation as well as creating challenges for the Housing Needs Team to be able to prevent or relieve homelessness into private sector tenancies. This challenge is leading to more demand, especially with more working households turning to the council for assistance. Previously these families/individuals would not have needed to turn to the Council, as they would have been able to secure their own accommodation. Many are now being outpriced from the sector and landlords are selecting tenants with higher earnings for their properties:



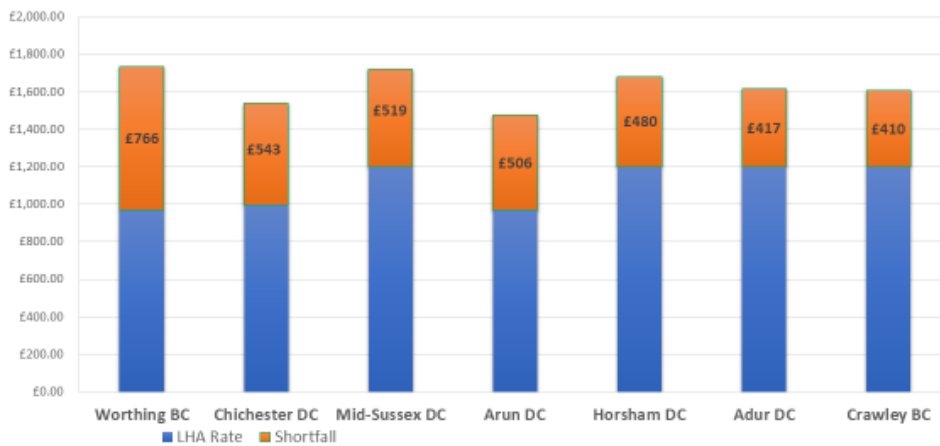
*Based on Rightmove drawn search by district and borough, W/C 24/04/2023.
Excludes 'extreme' outliers whereby a 'normal' household renting would not be expected to live, i.e. luxury holiday lets.

2-Bedroom Properties – Shortfalls vs Average Newly Advertised



*Based on Rightmove drawn search by district and borough, W/C24/04/2023. Excludes 'extreme' outliers whereby a 'normal' household renting would not be expected to live, i.e. luxury holiday lets.

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5.3 Temporary Accommodation

The number of households in temporary accommodation is increasing. The lack of accommodation of all types results in challenges in both preventing and relieving homelessness, leading to increasing numbers of households needing and being eligible for accommodation. In addition, there is limited availability of local temporary accommodation - 62% of all current temporary accommodation placements are out of area compared to 12% nationally and an increase from 45% 6 months ago, which results in people being disconnected from their support networks and services and places additional demands on our staff to

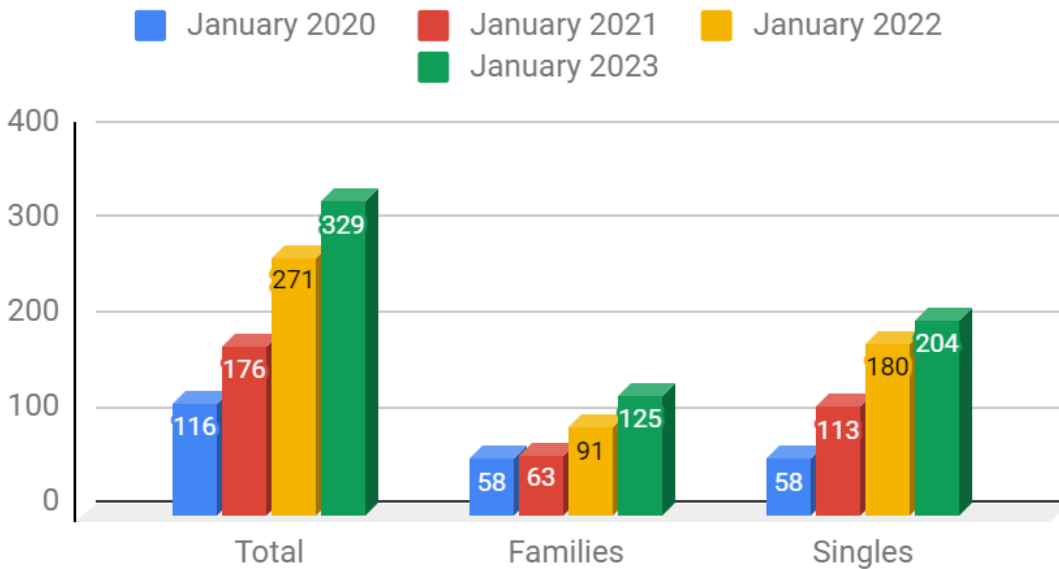
provide inreach support to those in out of area accommodation. The increase in numbers also places additional tenancy management demands on the service.

*tables based on snapshot data

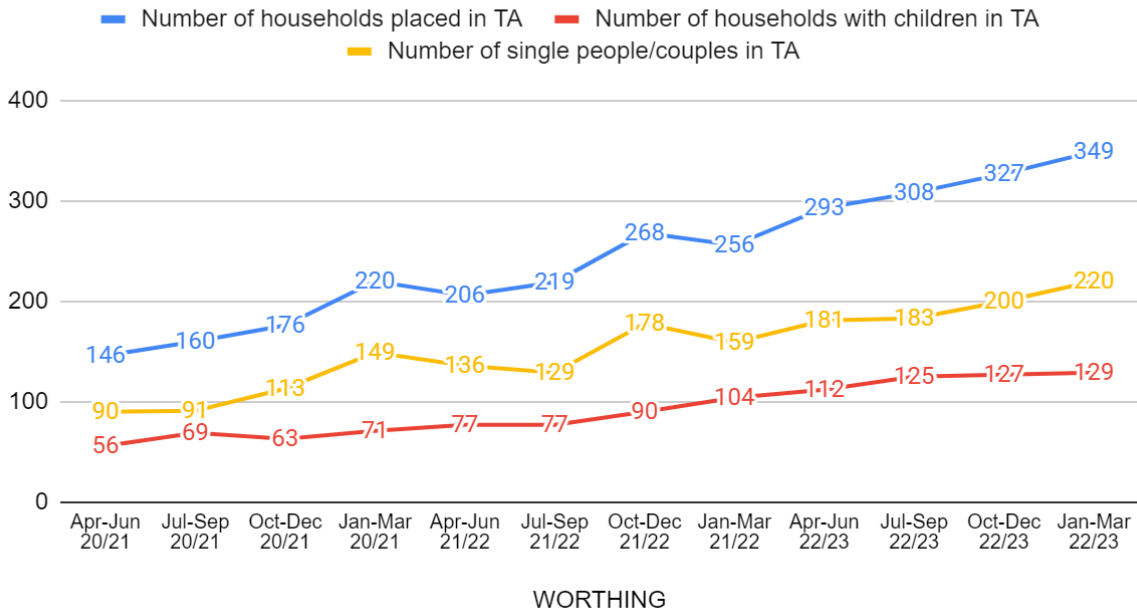
Table 1: WBC emergency accommodation placements

	Placement Areas						Total Households	% of out of area placements
	Worthing	Arun	Adur	Brighton	Outside WAAB but within W Sussex	Outside W. Sussex		
Families	72	32	0	10	1	9	124	42%
Couples (no children)	4	5	0	4	0	2	15	73%
Singles	57	44	16	36	16	42	211	73%
TOTAL	133	81	16	50	17	53	350	62%

Worthing: Numbers in Temporary Accommodation



Number of households placed in TA



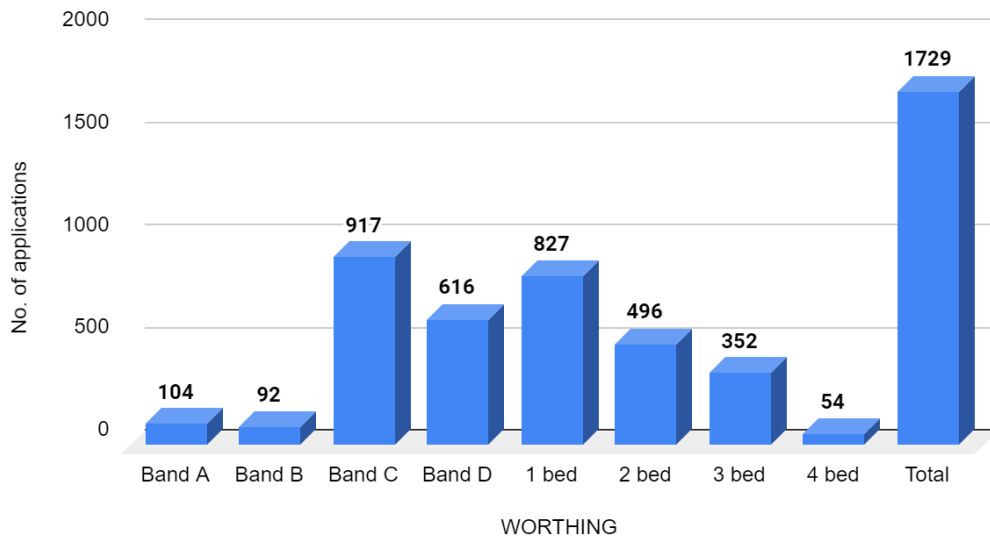
5.4 Housing Register

The number of households on the register is increasing, in part, due to a reduction in the number of properties being made available to let. Through our commissioned data and our work with our new A&W Homelessness Prevention Partnership we want to create more understanding about a number of issues to inform our work and strategy including:

- the impacts of delays in the court system reducing evictions and therefore voids in social housing
- The numbers of people moving on independently from social housing placements and the number of voids in socially rented properties
- The reasons for nominees failing affordability assessments - an emerging trend for single people, particularly affecting under 35's - and the reasons for citizens not being accepted by providers
- The reasons and insights about why nominees are being excluded by social housing providers due to issues such as history of tenancy breakdown

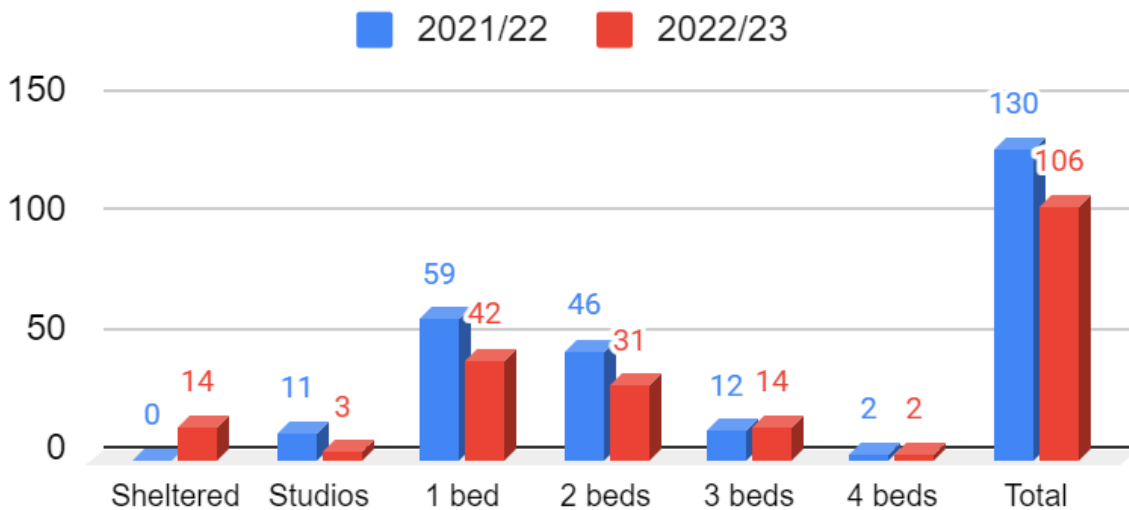
In the last 12 months Worthing total number on the housing register has increased from 1550 total applicants to 1729:

Live Housing Register cases



In the last 12 months Adur total number on the housing register has increased from 837 to 906:

Worthing: Housing Register Lets



Worthing - properties let

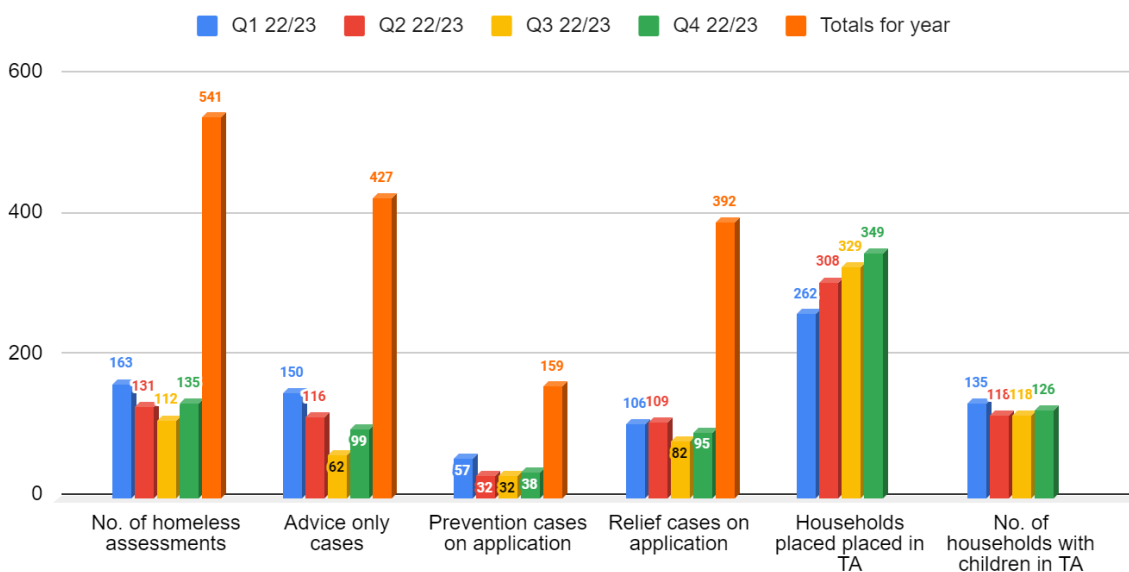
5.5 Homelessness prevention.

The data for homeless application shows an increase of households being accepted at the relief stage, which means that prevention opportunities are being missed. The pressures of housing demands have created some real challenges in the Housing Team shifting from reactive to a more preventative approach.

The housing needs assessment will provide a good set of data to inform how we move more upstream and the newly forming A&W Homelessness Prevention Partnership and strategy will enable officers to mobilise the wider system and strategic approach to focus on ways in which we can work together to prioritise housing and preventing homelessness through a shared purpose, information, support and advice across our system.

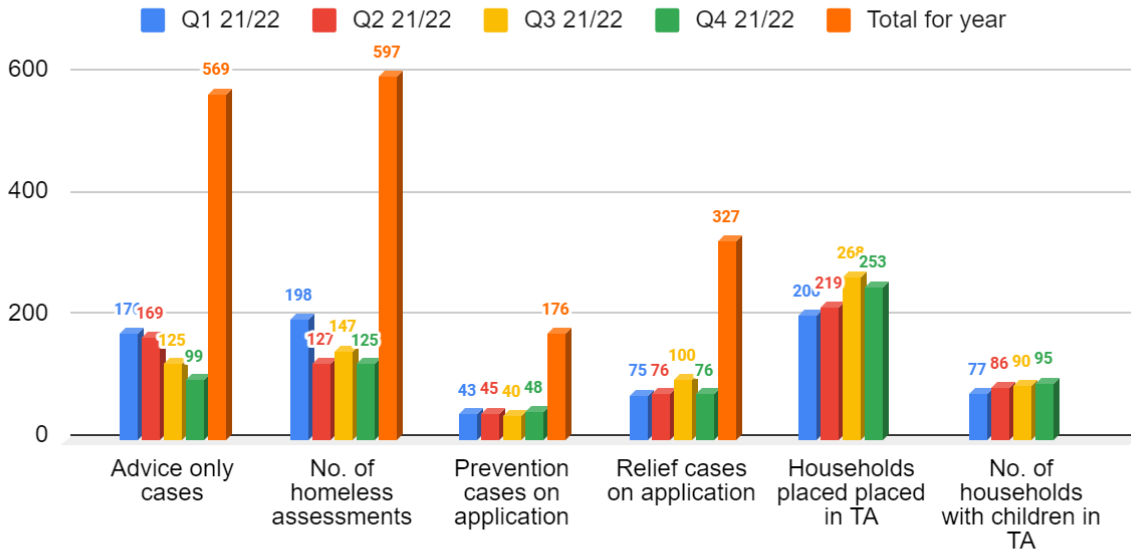
We have a number of strong insights about the triggers for homelessness and can already start to begin the work to develop the right interventions to prevent homelessness and improve wellbeing. The work of Proactive is fundamental here to how we develop our prevention and early help work. Using digital tools such as our LIFT data set and Tell Jo as a digital wellbeing tool, with our developing Proactive team (which will be reported to Members in July) will enable a more preventative approach to how we identify, work with and support people before they become homelessness and at an early stage.

Housing Needs team demand in 2022/23



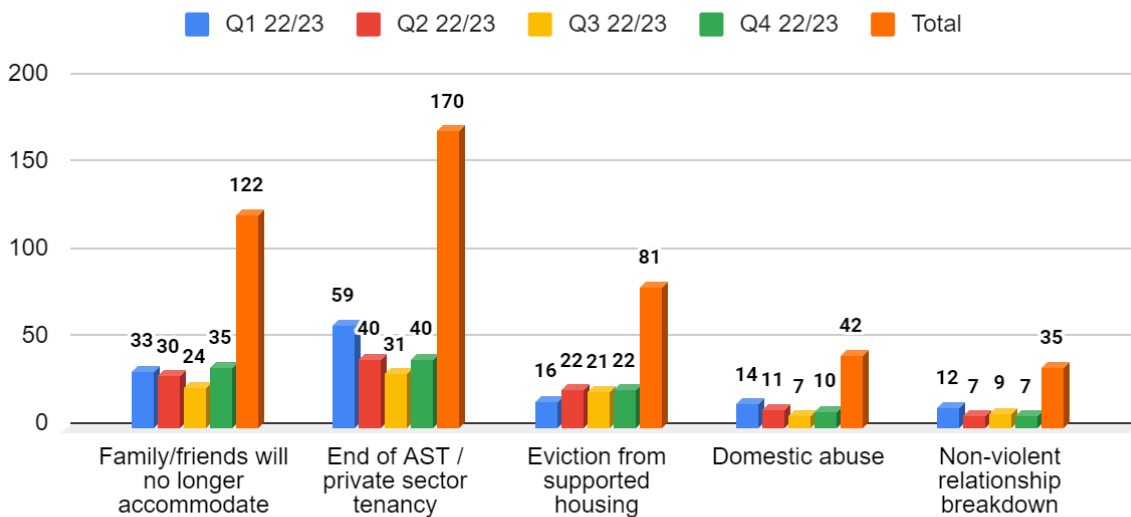
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Housing Needs team demand in 2021/22



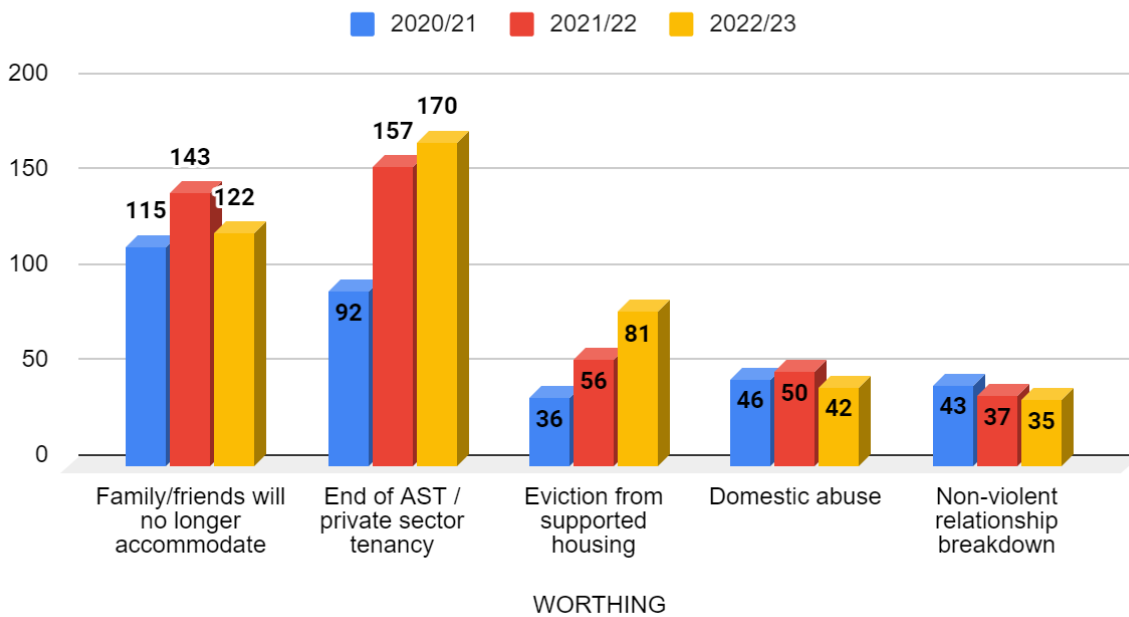
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Main Reasons for homelessness (Prevention & Relief cases) - 2022/23



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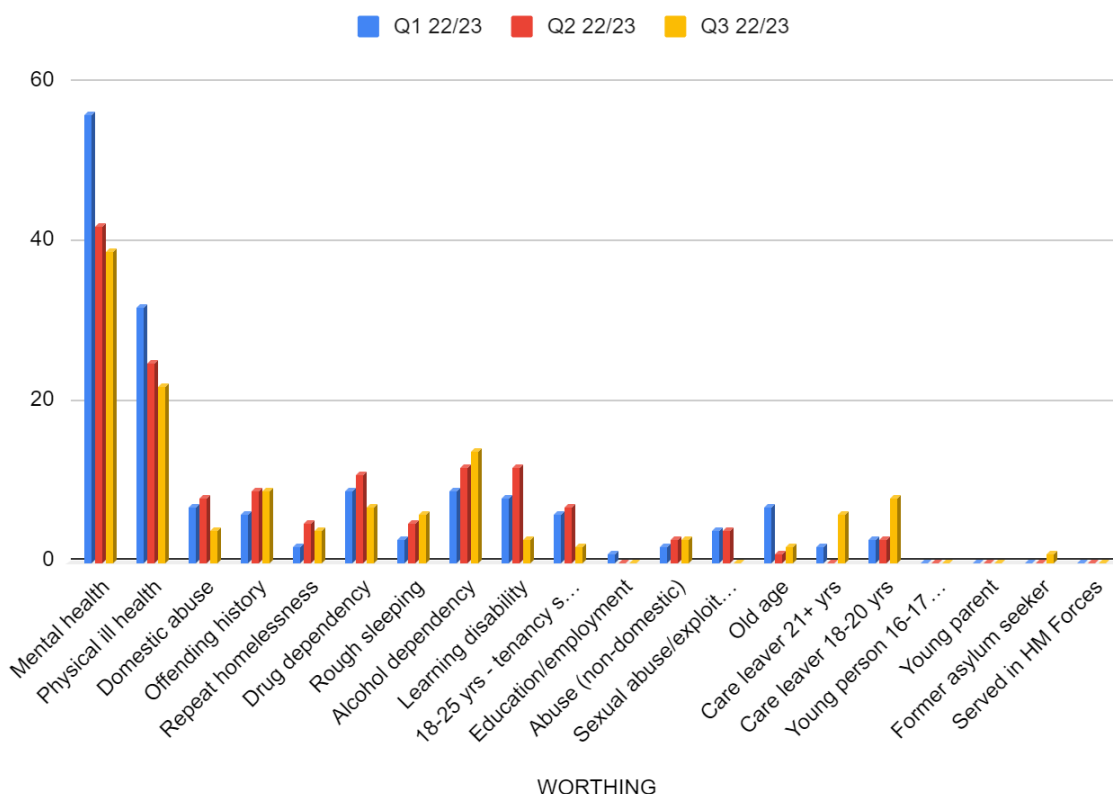
Main Reasons for homelessness (Prevention & Relief cases)



5.6 Homelessness support needs

Those who experience homelessness often have significant support needs, which are often contributory or causal factors in homelessness, highlighting that preventing homelessness is not just about 'four walls' and if homelessness is to be prevented, these support needs will need to be met. There are significant numbers who are housed in a variety of options and repeatedly evicted, resulting in the cycle of homelessness and rough sleeping being repeated. The aim of the needs assessment and strategy will be to bring the system together to develop a collective understanding of these factors and how we might better tackle these together to enable those with support needs to be able to access and maintain accommodation.

Support needs of households owed a prevention or relief duty



Physical and mental health conditions are prevalent amongst homeless households and understanding the impacts on citizens accessing and maintaining accommodation will be critical in preventing homelessness.

5.7 Rough Sleeping

Rough Sleeping is increasing with a considerable cohort of 43 (target priority group: TPG) who continue to repeatedly rough sleep, with some for prolonged periods due to a lack of housing that meets their needs. This cohort is predominantly the same group of people stuck in a cycle of rough sleeping, most have experienced significant trauma and whose health, both physical and mental, deteriorates year on year.

Analysis of those who accessed the night shelter is underway to help us demonstrate the complexity and need of this group and the barriers to them being able to access housing.

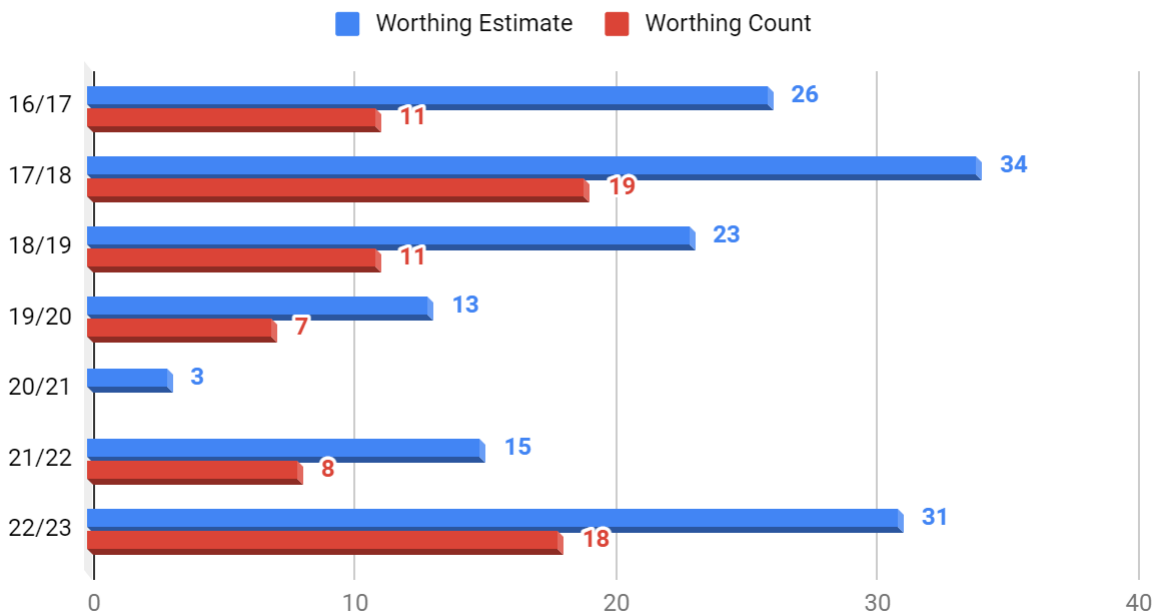
The impact of the loss of 34 supported housing beds with the closure of Lyndhurst Road and no re-provision has been compounded by the lack of move on options which results in people staying in supported housing longer

than they need and means those in need of supported accommodation are waiting longer to access it; additionally the demand for temporary accommodation means we are less able to offer discretionary placements for rough sleepers to support them to access more suitable housing. Lack of move on is multi-faceted with the private sector becoming more unaffordable and difficult to access and many clients excluded from social housing.

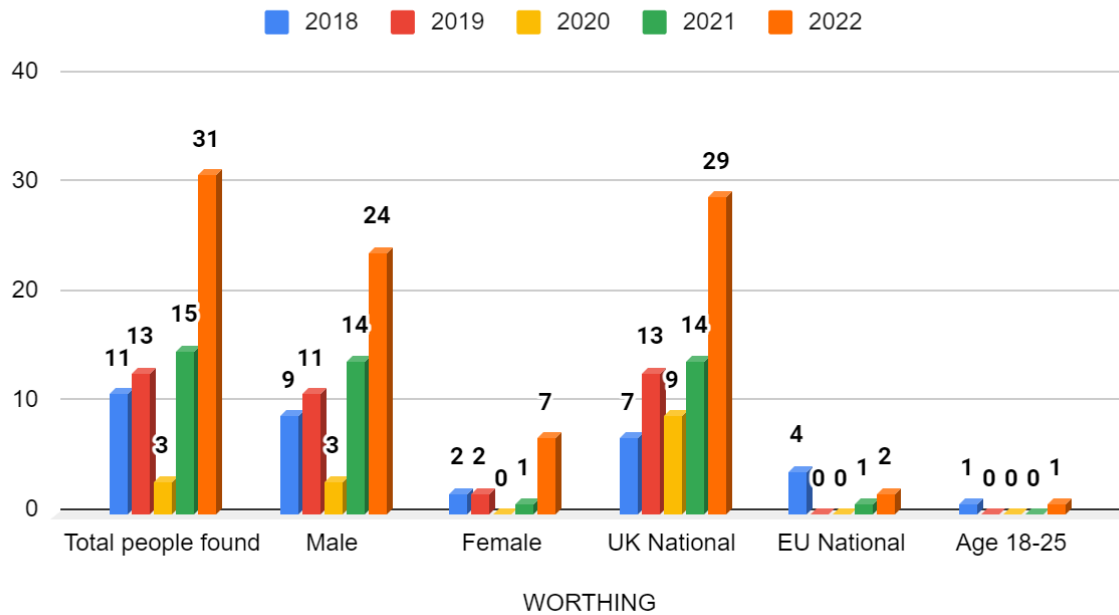
As well as temporary accommodation, additional supported accommodation and move on accommodation is in development, including a project with 21 self contained flats for those with high needs and 22 units of move on accommodation with floating support to help people transition into independent living.

The development of a pathway for those at risk of and those rough sleeping is critical if we are to achieve our aim of eliminating the need to rough sleep.

Worthing Rough Sleeping Counts



Rough sleeping annual count - people



6. Issues for consideration

- 6.1 This approach to understanding what needs to be done to improve responses to homelessness is common to all local authorities. A tender process was held to identify the best consultant both in terms of expertise and price.

7. Engagement and Communication

- 7.1 There has been communication about the development of a Homelessness Strategy and the formation of the Homelessness Strategic Partnership with a wide range of stakeholders. Those partners are aware that a Housing Needs Assessment is underway and are expecting that the outcomes of that analysis will be used to inform the group's deliberations.
- 7.2 All staff in Adur Homes and the Housing Needs Team are aware of the work being undertaken and its purpose. The Cabinet Member has been briefed on this work and will be interviewed as part of this.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1** The Council has a budget of £121,160 to fund homeless initiatives. The proposed work is expected to cost £43,360 which can be accommodated within the budget.

9. Legal Implications

- 9.1** Section 3(1) of the Local Government Act 1999 (LGA 1999) contains a general duty on a best value authority to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
- 9.2** Under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council has the power to do anything that is calculated to facilitate, or which is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of any of their functions.
- 9.3** S1 of the Localism Act 2011 empowers the Council to do anything an individual can do apart from that which is specifically prohibited by pre-existing legislation.
- 9.4** Section 9 of The Housing Act 1985 confers power on the Local Authority to provide, repair and maintain houses for rent.
- 9.5** Section 8 of the Housing Act 1985 continues to place a duty on every local housing authority to consider housing conditions in their area and the needs of the area with respect to the provision of further housing accommodation.
- 9.6** The Homelessness Act 2002 places a duty on a local housing authority to carry out, from time to time, reviews for their borough or district and to formulate and publish a homelessness strategy based on the results of that review.

Background Papers

- DLUHC 'Ending Rough Sleeping for Good' policy paper (Sept 2022):
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ending-rough-sleeping-for-good>
- Adur & Worthing Housing Strategy (2020 - 2023):
<https://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/housing/policies-and-strategies/housing-strategy/>
- Adur & Worthing Housing Needs assessment project brief (2023):
[Adur and Worthing Housing Needs Assessment 2023](#)
- 2023.03.06 - WJSSC - Worthing Cabinet Housing Strategy :
[2023.03.06 - WJSSC - Worthing Cabinet Housing Strategy](#)

Sustainability & Risk Assessment

1. Economic

- 1.1 Thriving Economy is one of the four Missions identified in Our Plan and will therefore become one of the key documents informing the direction and prioritisation of the council's work with regard to Adur Homes.
- 1.2 Providing a decent home that is secure, affordable, warm and modern, supports the wellbeing of our residents, enabling those who are able to work to enter and sustain employment and contribute to economic activity.

2. Social

2.1 Social Value

- 2.1.1 Residents and communities are central to Our Plan and 'Thriving People is one of the four Missions identified in Our Plan. This mission aims to ensure people are healthy, resilient and resourceful, that they can access the right help when they need it and everyone has a safe, secure and sustainable home.
- 2.1.2 One of the most vulnerable groups in our community are rough sleepers and homeless people. Being homeless affects well-being and health outcomes and is a significant barrier to social interactions and employment. The provision of effective housing and support strategies to meet the needs of homeless people means that everyone in the community benefits from the additional social outcomes this brings.

2.2 Equality Issues

- 2.2.1 The council is subject to the general equality duty set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. This duty covers the following protected characteristics: age, gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, and sexual orientation.
- 2.2.2 In delivering housing services the council must have due regard to the need to:
 - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
 - Advance equality of opportunity between different groups
 - Foster good relations between different groups
- 2.2.3 The participative principle in Our Plan describes the council's commitment to providing truly inclusive services by listening to underrepresented voices, creating equal access and meeting our equality duties.

2.2.4 Homeless people and rough sleepers are amongst the most marginalised and unlistened to groups and the development of the Homelessness Strategy will ensure that communication and participation is at the heart of the approach.

2.2.5 The Homelessness Strategy may require an Equality Impact Assessment.

2.3 Community Safety Issues (Section 17)

2.3.1 The council is committed to the promotion of communities as safe places. Our Plan seeks to progress delivery of the councils' community safety commitments by strengthening working partnerships with the Police, communities, businesses and multidisciplinary teams across the council.

2.3.2 Providing supportive and appropriate responses to homeless people and rough sleepers is the most effective way of protecting them from harm in the community.

2.4 Human Rights Issues

2.4.1 The actions set out in the report will enable the council to identify solutions that will enable our most vulnerable households to flourish.

3. Environmental

3.1 Thriving Environment is one of the four Missions identified in Our Plan and key actions include achieving net zero carbon, resilience to climate change and increased biodiversity by restoring natural habitats and minimising waste.

3.2 The Homelessness Strategy will consider the environmental sustainability outcomes generated by its priority actions.

4. Governance

4.1 Performance in relation to the delivery of the Homelessness Strategy and the Regulator referral will be reported quarterly to the Joint Audit and Governance Committee.