

Homelessness Review 2016

Introduction

Homelessness has a devastating effect on the lives of individuals and families. Children's education and life chances suffer, as do the health of homeless people whether living in temporary accommodation or on the streets.

The responsibility for preventing homelessness is shared between a wide range of agencies in the statutory and voluntary sectors, just as the costs of dealing with homelessness are shared. It is estimated that the costs of homelessness are between £24,000 and £30,000 per household. Those costs fall on local councils, health services and the Clinical Commissioning Groups, the Department of Work and Pensions and the criminal justice system.

The Homelessness Act 2002 requires housing authorities to publish homelessness strategies every five years. The Act requires local authorities to carry out a thorough review of the extent and nature of homelessness in their area.

The findings of this Homelessness Review will provide the basis for a new Homelessness Strategy for Eastbourne to ensure the appropriate services and approaches are developed to minimise the risks of homelessness, prevent and relieve homelessness and tackle the effects of homelessness in the town.

The Review includes a profile of Eastbourne residents and households, giving an overview of data available on homelessness in Eastbourne, including details of applications made to the Council by homeless households and those threatened with homelessness. It draws on additional sources of information to explore the specific risks to some households and gives an overview of the housing market and how this impacts on access to affordable housing and levels of homelessness.

We also consider the impact of different services and actions taken to prevent or relieve homelessness, including rough sleeping.

Finally, we consider some of the proposed changes nationally and locally which may present additional challenges or offer new opportunities.

National and local context

The last few years have seen significant changes in the housing market and in national government policy which are likely to have an impact on homelessness.

Local authorities have had to deal with radical reductions in grant from national government, including the removal of the Homelessness Prevention Grant in 2015 and to find ways of protecting essential services with fewer resources. The removal of the ring-fence around Supporting People funding has also required strategic planning and agreement across the County to ensure essential services are protected. Homeless people are amongst the most vulnerable in our communities and a recognition of the costs to a whole range of services has led to an increased focus for the Council and our partners on preventing homelessness.

Changes to Welfare Benefits and the potential impact on housing debt have been a particular concern. To date, those changes already introduced, including the removal of the 'Spare Room Subsidy' for some tenants and the initial Benefit Cap, appear to have had a limited impact on homelessness levels in Eastbourne with many of those affected by these changes being supported through the changes with awards of Discretionary Housing Benefit for short periods.

The introduction of Universal Credit has also been limited to single people making new claims but will extend to all new claimants in the next year or so, and to all current claimants in the next three years.

At the same time, automatic entitlement to housing support for new claims of Universal Credit has been removed for 18 to 21 year olds out of work. Payments of Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) to new claimants who are deemed able to prepare for work have been aligned with Job Seekers' Allowance.

With many further changes in the pipe-line, including major reductions in Benefits and the reforms set out in the Housing and Planning Act 2016, and further cuts to public spending planned, local authorities need to prepare for any additional risks and for the impact these may have on demand and competition for housing which is affordable and on levels of homelessness in their area.

Profile of Eastbourne households

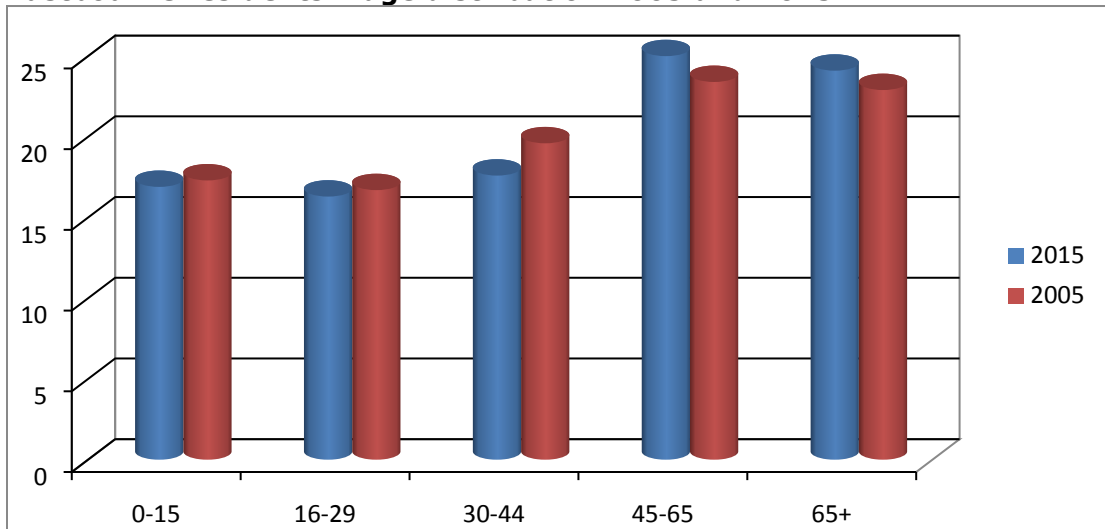
Eastbourne's population is estimated to have risen to 101,547 in 2014 compared with 95,500 in 2005 an increase of 6.2%.ⁱ

The number of households has also increased over this period from 43,347 in 2005 to an estimated 46,264 in 2015, an increase of 6.7% over a ten year period.

These increases alone create a need for additional housing.

The age profile of residents has also changed over the last ten years with an increase in the proportion of those aged 45 – 60 and those aged 65+.

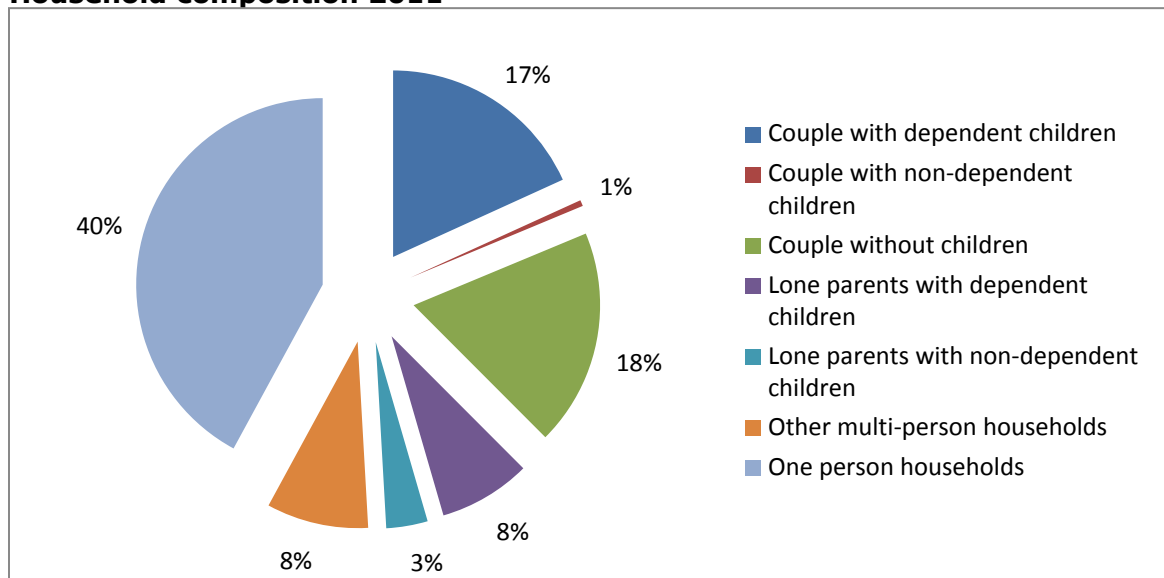
Eastbourne residents – age distribution 2005 and 2015



At the last Census (2011) 40% of all households were single-person households, an increase from 36% of households in 2001.

Couples or lone parents living with dependent children made up 25% and couples with no children accounted for 18%.

Household composition 2011



Economic activity and benefit claimants

At the time of the last Census (2011) almost half of Eastbourne's residents of working age (16 to 74) were employees and just over 10% were self-employed. 4.1% were unemployed but looking for work. 16.8% were retired and 4.5% were long-term sick or disabled.

There were 1,588 households with children where there was no adult in employment at the time.

Economic activity	%
Employee	49.8
Self-employed	10.3
Unemployed	4.1
Economically active full-time student	3.8
Long-term sick or disabled	4.5
Looking after home or family	3.8
Retired	16.8
Economically inactive student	5.2
Other economically inactive	1.8

Average (median) annual earnings in Eastbourne were £19,824 in 2015 and average (median) household income was £25,434.

8,110 people were claiming benefits at the end of 2015, 6,340 of them claiming 'out of work benefits'. Of these, the vast majority are claiming Employment Support Allowance or Incapacity Benefit. 900 people were claiming Job Seekers' Allowance or Universal Credit in January 2016 – down from 1,890 at the beginning of 2014. Of these, 275 had been claiming for more than a year.

7,500 households were receiving tax credits, most of them in employment.

Housing tenure

The last fifteen years have seen major changes in the proportion of people relying on rented accommodation. The proportion of households living in private rented housing almost doubled in the ten year period between the 2001 Census and 2011.

Of the 45,012 households who responded to the 2011 Census, 27,788 (61.7%) were home owners who had either bought or were buying their property, 10,494 (23.3%) were living in private rented housing – 5,953 (13.2%) were living in social rented housing, 295 (0.7%) were living in shared ownership properties and 482 (1.1%) were living in rent-free accommodation.

The increase in the numbers renting was matched in part by the reduction in home ownership from 68.5% over that period to 61.7%. This increasing reliance on renting has major implications for the cost of renting and the ability of those on lower incomes to access housing in the private rental market. The pressures on the rental market are further exacerbated by the reduction seen in social rented housing from 15.9% to 13.2% in the same period.

These changes, taken together, make it increasingly difficult for people on low incomes to access rented housing at rents they can afford and account for the particular difficulties faced by those relying on benefits.

Homelessness in Eastbourne

This section gives details of the figures available to us on homelessness and the number of households immediately threatened with homelessness or at risk of homelessness.

The most detailed information comes from the records of households who apply to the Council as homeless.

Extent of homelessness

2015 saw a significant increase in applications to Eastbourne Borough Council with 124 applications compared an average of 97 per year between 2010 and 2014 – a 28% increase, in line with national increases. The rise in the percentage of households applying as homeless where the Council has accepted a duty has also increased significantly, from just over 16% in 2010 to 54% in 2015. Again, this mirrors the national picture. ⁱⁱ

In addition to those households applying as homeless which the Council has a duty to rehouse, a significant number are found to be 'intentionally homeless' or not 'in priority need'. In 2014 there were 23 households found to be intentionally homeless and this rose to 32 in 2015. 8 households were found to have no priority need under the terms of the Homelessness Act in 2014, and 4 in 2015. One household was found to be ineligible for services in 2015.

There has been a steady increase in the number of adults from abroad registering for National Insurance numbers in Eastbourne – from 720 in 2010 to 899 in 2014. However, this has not been reflected in the number of homeless applications received by the Council. There have been very few applications from non-EEAⁱⁱⁱ nationals in the last three years– two in 2013 and two in 2015.

Similarly, the expansion of the European Union has not led to an increased number of homelessness applications from member states. There were no EEA applicants in 2013 or 2015 and only 1 in 2014.

Main reasons for loss of last settled home

Understanding the reasons why people become homeless is key to developing the services and support needed to prevent homelessness in the future. Records of the reasons given by households accepted as

homeless by the Council under its statutory duties provide part of this picture.

The vast majority of statutory homelessness in Eastbourne over the last three years has arisen as a result of the loss of housing in the private rented sector or tied accommodation. This has seen a particular increase over the last year, rising more than three-fold rising from 12 households who became homeless for this reason in 2014 to 43 in 2015. Again the increase was particularly sharp in second half of the year, with more than half of those becoming homeless for this reason applying to the Council in the last six months. In all but one case this was because their Assured Shorthold Tenancy was brought to an end.

Key reasons for homelessness	2013	2014	2015
Breakdown of a relationship	4	4	17
Violence	5	1	3
Harassment, threats or intimidation	0	2	0
Rent arrears	3	2	0
Loss of rented or tied accommodation	15	12	43
Other reasons (homeless in an emergency, sleeping rough or in a hostel)	11	5	4

The last three years have seen a small number of people becoming homeless as a result of relationship breakdown. This has been the pattern over a number of years following a sharp reduction in the level of homelessness in the early 2000s. However, the last year has seen an increase in this as a cause of homelessness and this is a cause for some concern.

At the same time, there has been a reduction in the numbers of households homeless in an emergency and in the numbers sleeping rough or in a hostel.

Other reasons for the loss of the last home have remained low.

Priority need

The majority of homelessness households who are accepted as having a priority need in Eastbourne are families with children. The number of homeless households with children and / or a pregnant woman quadrupled between 2014 and 2015.

Priority need 2013 to 2015

	2013	2014	2015
Households which include children	21	11	44
Households with a pregnant woman	2	1	8
16/17 year olds	0	1	0
Vulnerable - old age	0	1	1
Vulnerable - physical disability	6	2	6
Vulnerable – mental illness/disability	8	8	8
Other reason	0	2	0

Vulnerability due to poor mental health continues to be the highest reason for priority need for single person households.

There were no households accepted as homeless over the last three years where the primary need was vulnerability as a result of:

- Having formerly been in care
- Drug dependency
- Alcohol dependency
- Formerly an asylum seeker
- Having served in HM Forces
- Having been in custody or on remand
- Having fled their home because of violence or the threat of violence
- Domestic violence

However, it is worth bearing in mind that some of these may have been additional 'secondary' reasons for priority need in some cases. The presence of children or a pregnant woman in a household will always count as the primary priority need.

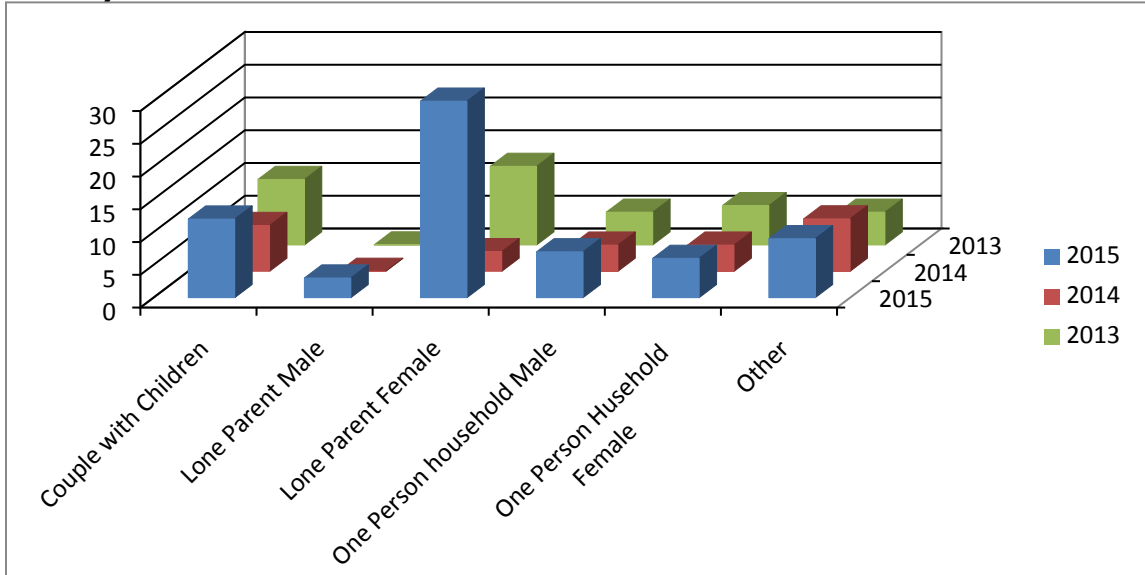
These figures indicate a need to ensure appropriate housing and support is available for families with children and for people who are vulnerable as a result of poor mental health.

There were no Asylum Seekers accepted as homeless during these three years. The nearest dispersal areas where Asylum Seekers are accommodated whilst their applications are assessed are in Hastings, Portsmouth, Dover and London.

Priority need by household type

The predominance of families with children is reflected in the spread of different types of household accepted as homeless with a priority need. There have been sharp rises in the number of women with children becoming homeless. This is likely to relate to the increase in the number of people becoming homeless following a breakdown in their relationship.

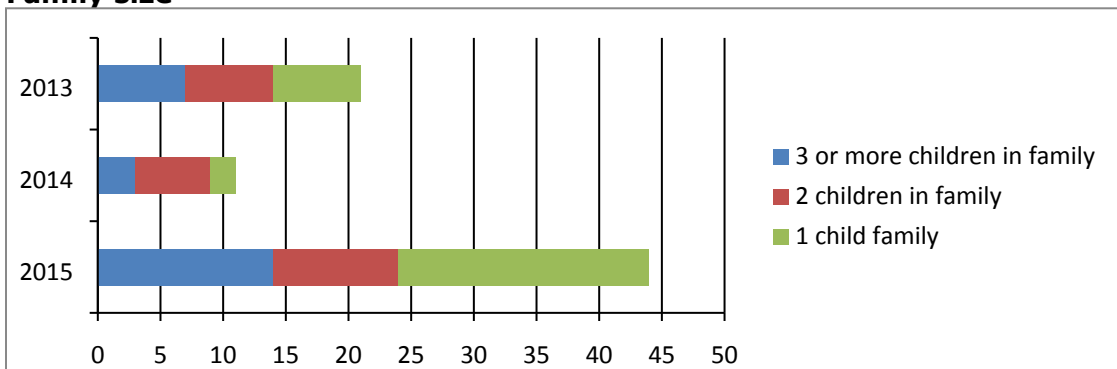
Priority need



The number of children in these households is recorded as one, two or three or more. There was a fairly even distribution of those with one child, two children or more in 2013.

A particular concern in recent months, however, has been the sharp increase in the number of larger families with three or more children becoming homeless and the difficulties this can present for re-housing.

Family size

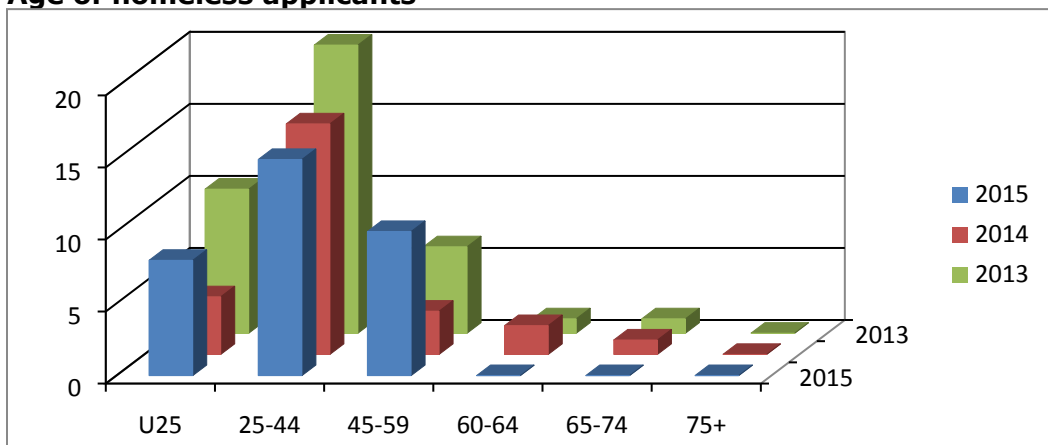


Priority need by age

The majority of households accepted by the authority as homeless are in the 25-44 age range. However, numbers in the 45 to 59 age groups have shown an increase in 2015. It is not clear why this should be as there has been a balancing reduction in the number of households in the 25 to 44 age range and it is likely that the pressures on this group are similar to those in older groups.

There has been an increase in the number of homeless people under 25, possibly a reflection of the reduced level of homelessness which we have been able to prevent through conciliation.

Age of homeless applicants



Since 2010 all homeless young people aged 16 and 17 are assessed by East Sussex County Council's Children's Services under a county-wide protocol. This includes an assessment of the young person's social, emotional and care needs. An appropriate package of support is then put in place to meet these needs. The Case Worker liaises with local housing teams to secure appropriate accommodation for the young person.

In addition to the Staying Put arrangements which encourage young people to remain with their foster carers or in Supported Lodgings, Supporting People currently funds a Foyer and a supported housing scheme run by Eastbourne and Wealden YMCA in Eastbourne. ^{iv}

A Young Person's Housing Coordinator is funded jointly by local authorities in East Sussex.

There has been a sustained reduction over the last three years in the number of Looked-after Children, in line with national trends. At the end of 2014/15 the ESCC Care Leavers Services was working with a cohort of 209 care leavers across county of which 56 were 16/17 year olds and 153 were 18 – 24 year olds.

Young People in temporary accommodation

	Bed and Breakfast	Supporting Lodgings	Total
Q1 14/15	1	0	1
Q2	1	1	2
Q3	2	2	2
Q4	1	2	5
Total 14/15	5	5	10
Q1 15/16	0	0	3
Q2	0	1	4
Q3	0	2	1
Q4	2	0	3
Total 15/16	2	3	11

Teenage pregnancy has reduced across England in the last fifteen years and this pattern has been reflected in the rate of conceptions per 1,000 aged under 18 in East Sussex. There were less than half the number of these teenage conceptions in Eastbourne in 2014 (21.2 per 1,000) compared with 1998 (43.8 per 1,000).

Ethnic diversity

The percentage of BME residents living in Eastbourne as a whole is 5.9% (Census 2011). The percentage of homeless applications from BME households was in line with this over the three years 2013 to 2015 but showed significant variation between these years. The percentage of applications where the Council accepted a duty to rehouse was slightly higher overall.

BME applicants – all non-white combined

Year	No. applied	% of applications	No. accepted	% of duties accepted
2013	3	3%	2	5%
2014	8	12%	6	23%
2015	7	6%	4	6%
TOTAL	18	6%	12	9%

Other sources of information about homelessness

On 1st April 2016 there were 1,974 households on the Council's Housing Register

- 170 were in Band A with the most urgent needs, 514 were in Band B and 880 were in Band C
- 39 were 'statutory homeless' households on the waiting to be re-housed – all in Band A
- 184 needed to be re-housed because of a medical need, 35 in Band A, 49 in Band B and 97 in Band C
- 134 were living in over-crowded housing.

These figures represent a significant reduction compared with previous years. In common with many other local authorities, Eastbourne Borough Council took the decision to restrict its Housing Register to applicants with a local connection to Eastbourne. Other households who would previously been able to Register but no longer qualify are those who are tenants of Housing Associations who have access to alternative housing through their current landlord, and those who have been on the register for 12 months or more but have not 'bid' for any property in that time. The Council has also carried out a thorough review of the Register and removed applicants who have been re-housed or moved away from the area.

Domestic abuse

There has been a slight increase in the number of Domestic Abuse Crimes reported between 2014/15 and 2015/16 (7%) and a more significant increase (17%) in the number of Domestic Abuse Incidents reported.^v The Police and Crime Commissioner's policy over the last two years has been to encourage more reporting of domestic abuse and the Police and members of Eastbourne's Community Safety Partnership have been working proactively in Eastbourne to raise awareness of Domestic Abuse through the White Ribbon Campaign.

There was a slight dip in the number of applications to the Council from people who had become homeless as a result relationship breakdown involving violence in 2014 – from 5 in 2013 to 1 in 2014 and 3 in 2015. Women and children fleeing violence are offered temporary housing out of the area whilst awaiting re-housing.

Households who were enabled to stay in their current home through the Sanctuary Scheme which provides a safe space also dipped from 9 in 2013 to 4 in 2014 before rising again to 8 in 2015.

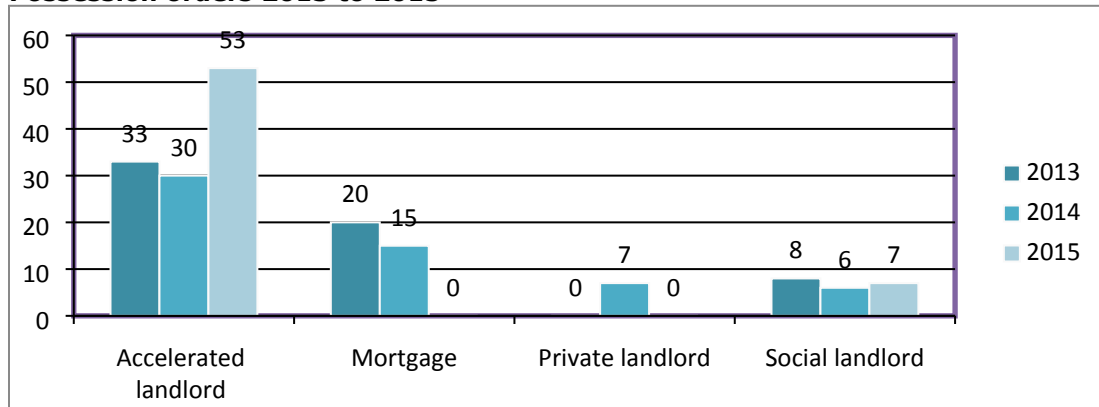
Possession Orders

In addition to data from homelessness applications made to the Council, we can glean information about the pressures on local households and homelessness arising as a result of landlords and lenders applying for repossession. The table below shows the number of Repossession Orders over the last three years

This shows a major increase from 30 in 2014 to 53 in 2015 in the number of accelerated landlord possession orders granted over the three years. These are used predominantly by private landlords and the high level accounts for the low level of other possession orders from private rented housing. In contrast there was a reduction in the number of mortgage repossessions and a consistently low level of other social and private landlord possession orders.

The increase in landlord possession orders is in line with an increase nationally. Across the country, accelerated possession orders rose by nearly 2,000 in 2014 compared with 2013.

Possession orders 2013 to 2015



Prevention and relief of homelessness

The Council uses and funds a range of services and approaches to prevent and relieve homelessness.

The chart below shows the number of cases where homelessness was prevented and households were able to stay in their existing home.

Homelessness Prevented 2013 to 2015

	2013	2014	2015
Mediation using external or internal trained family mediators	1	0	1
Conciliation including home visits for family / friend – threatened exclusions	25	10	13
Financial payment from a homelessness prevention fund	3	5	3
Resolving Housing Benefit problems	6	3	1
Resolving rent or service charge arrears in the social or private rented sector	19	21	3
Sanctuary scheme measures for domestic violence	9	4	8
Crisis intervention – providing emergency support	0	0	0
Negotiation or legal advocacy to ensure that someone can remain in PRS	27	26	23
Providing other assistance to enable someone to remain in PRS	50	25	41
Mortgage arrears intervention or mortgage rescue	10	5	1
Others	1	1	0

These figures show significant reductions in homelessness prevented by conciliation and the use of mortgage arrears interventions in the last two years.

There was also a significant drop in the number of households prevented from becoming homeless by actions to resolve rent or services charge arrears (from 21 households in 2014 to 3 in 2015).

Actions taken to relieve homelessness are shown on the next page.

Securing private rented housing for homeless households both with and without support in the form of a deposit or rent in advance accounts for the majority of actions which are effective in relieving homelessness, pointing up the vital role of the private rented sector.

Again, there has been a significant decrease between 2014 and 2015 in the number of households who had become homeless who were

supported into private rented housing, from 330 in 2014 to 185 in 2015. It has proved increasingly difficult to secure private rented housing for homeless households – with or without financial support.

Homelessness relieved 2013 to 2015

	2013	2014	2015
Hostel or HMO with or without support	5	1	4
Private rented with deposit / rent in advance	159	249	117
Private rented without deposit / rent in advance	156	81	68
Accommodation arranged with friends or relatives	16	13	15
Supported Housing	37	28	55
Part 6 offer	31	20	26
Other	14	10	5

Brighton Housing Trust (BHT) – Eastbourne Advice

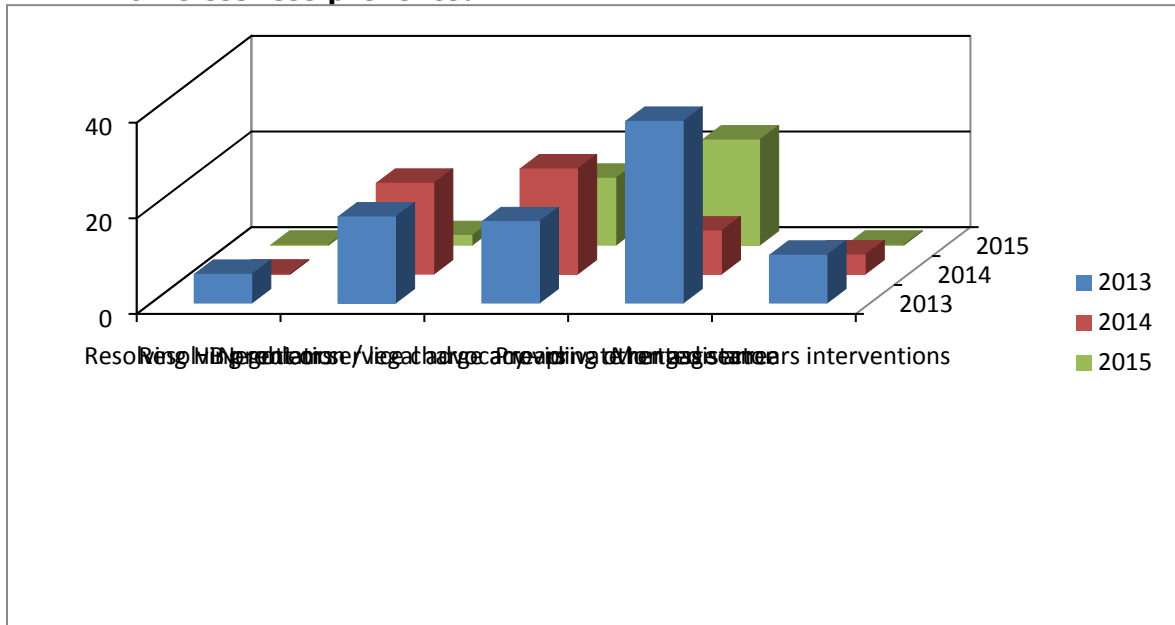
A key partner in preventing and relieving homelessness is Brighton Housing Trust – Eastbourne Advice Centre (BHT). BHT provides advice services across Brighton and Hove, Eastbourne and Hastings. Of the 298 homeless households who sought their advice and support in 2015 64% were single men or single women. The main cause of homelessness was parents, relatives and friends asking clients to leave the property (29%). 25 were homelessness due to domestic violence.

One fifth were homeless due to the end of their Assured Shorthold Tenancy - 24 families with children and 25 single people.

The Council funds BHT to provide Specialist Housing Advice services and legal work not covered by Legal Aid contracts and a Homelessness Prevention service, such as negotiation with private landlords and work to resolve rent arrears.

In 2015 BHT – EA accounted for 38 cases where homelessness was prevented. This was a reduction on previous years where homelessness was prevented in 90 cases in 2013 and 54 cases in 2014.

BHT – Homelessness prevented



BHT’s Housing Access project also works with households who have already become homeless to secure accommodation. The table on the next page shows how people were housed by BHT over the last 3 years.

BHT - homelessness relieved

	2013	2014	2015
Hostel or HMO	3	1	3
Private rented with landlord incentive	7	56	32
Private rented without incentive	9	35	43
Accommodation arranged with friends/ relatives	4	3	2
Supported accommodation	1	5	5
Social housing- management move	1	0	0
Social housing- Part 6 offer	9	3	2
Social housing- negotiation outside Part 6 nomination arrangement	1	0	0
Low cost home ownership / market housing	0	0	0
Other	2	0	0

Again, the vast majority of those re-housed were housed in private rented accommodation, but the number of these reduced over the three years from 106 in 2013 to 75 in 2015.

Eastbourne Citizens' Advice Bureau

In addition to the work of BHT in Eastbourne, the Council funds services provided by Eastbourne Citizens' Advice Bureau (CAB). This includes Benefits, Debt and Money Advice, all of which contributes to an important degree to the ability of households to manage their housing costs. The CAB refers clients who are at immediate risk of becoming homeless to BHT Eastbourne Advice, but also advises and supports those not immediately threatened with homelessness but who have a housing-related need which may put them at risk in the future.

Eastbourne CAB has continued to see an increase in demand. 2,669 clients used the service in 2014/15 compared with 3,658 in 2015/16. Whilst some people were sign-posted to other services, such as BHT, the CAB itself dealt with 9,869 separate advice issues in total.

Direct enquiries about housing issues account for 7% of all enquiries. However, Eastbourne saw a higher percentage of demand for help resolving benefit issues (40%) compared with CABx nationally (33%) and 13% of demand concerns debt.

There has been an increasing use of on-line information, and the complexity of the advice needed by people contacting the CAB is increasing. Many people have a number of different issues which they need help with, and the CAB dealt with a total of 9,869 issues in 2015/16.

Access to Private Rented housing

A key concern over recent months in Eastbourne has been the barriers which face people on low incomes and reliant on housing benefit to help cover their costs in the private rented sector. Increasingly private landlords are asking for guarantors and this can be difficult for a lot of our customers. People are also being asked to pay agents' fees of anything up to £600 as well as a deposit and rent in advance. We estimate that people need to find around £3,000 to be able to begin renting a property.

The Council is using its limited resources to help people overcome some of these financial barriers. In 2016/17 a fund of £45,000 from the Discretionary East Sussex Support Scheme (DESSS) is available to assist with rent in advance. The Council also provides loans for deposits.

Local Housing Allowance (LHA), introduced on 7 April 2008 represented a significant change to the way Housing Benefit (HB) was paid. Under LHA a flat rate is used to decide the eligible rent of all claimants with similar sized households living in a broad rental market area, rather than tying the level of benefit to a specific town or property. The LHA awarded to a claimant is based on the number of bedrooms they are deemed to require rather than the number of bedrooms in the property.

The LHA rate is decided by the Valuation Office and based on the 30th percentile rent of the area. This means only three out of ten properties in the area will be affordable to those claiming HB and significantly limits the number of properties which those households can access.

Since April 2012 the LHA rate has been fixed once a year in April. At a time of rent increases this freeze has further restricted the number of properties which HB claimants are able to afford as the gap between the LHA rate and the costs of renting has widened. In its 2015 budget the Government announced that LHA rates would be frozen for four years. It is likely that, with rents continuing to increase, this will limit access to rented housing even further for those dependent on Housing Benefit.

The table below shows the current rates of Local Housing Allowance for different sized properties in Eastbourne.

Local Housing Allowance Rates 1st April 2016

	Weekly rate	Monthly rate
Shared Accommodation Rate	£67.00	£291.13
One Bedroom Rate	£116.53	£506.35
Two Bedrooms Rate	£151.50	£658.30
Three Bedrooms Rate	£182.45	£792.79
Four Bedrooms Rate	£235.34	£1,022.61

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment carried out in April 2016 reviewed market rents over the period from 2010 to 2015. The review found that the lowest quartile of rents in Eastbourne in 2015 ranged from £399 per calendar month for a studio or bedsit to £1,075 for a 4 bedroom property. The median rent ranged from £451 for a studio or bedsit to £1,200 for a 4 bedroom property. Rents for larger properties were considerably higher.

Market rents in 2015

The table below shows the range of private market rents in 2015 and the number of lettings (count) these figures were based on.

Market rents 2015

Bedrooms	Percentile 25	Mean	Median	Percentile 75	Count
0	399	446	451	477	177
1	524	565	576	615	499
2	724	790	776	849	726
3	849	952	901	997	314
4	1075	1263	1200	1326	90
5	1287	1648	1499	2030	20
6	2349	2375	2375	2401	2
8	325	325	325	325	1
Of which					
Flats	550	673	650	776	1141
Houses	776	896	849	975	688

It is clear from a comparison of the lowest 25% of rents and the monthly Local Housing Allowance rate that anyone relying on welfare benefits to cover their housing costs will struggle to find any market rented housing in Eastbourne to meet their needs which they can afford. The difference for anyone needing a property with more than 4 bedrooms becomes particularly acute.

Lowest rents compared to LHA rates

Bedrooms	Lowest 25% market rents /month	Local Housing Allowance monthly rate	Shortfall
0	£399	£291.13	£107.87
1	£524	£506.35	£17.65
2	£724	£658.30	£65.70
3	£849	£792.79	£56.21
4	£1,075	£1,022.61	£53.39
5	£1,287	£1,022.61	£264.39

Comparing the income required for different tenures (based on data sourced for the Council's Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2016), and bearing in mind the numbers of households reliant on welfare benefits and the average household income in 2015 of £25,434, it is

clear a majority of those people at risk of becoming homeless are likely to be reliant on social housing in the future.

Housing costs and income required

Tenure option	Average costs	Income required
Social Rent (average) monthly	£421	£20,208
Affordable Rent (80% of average private rent) monthly	£606	£29,088
Market Rent - Lower Quartile (monthly)	£576	£27,648
Market Rent - Median (monthly)	£750	£36,000
Market Rent - Average (monthly)	£757	£36,336
Market Sale - Lower Quartile (assumes 10% deposit)	£153,500	£39,471
Market Sale – Median (assumes 10% deposit)	£200,000	£51,429
Market Sale – Average (assumes 10% deposit)	£230,684	£59,319
Starter Home	£230,684	£47,455
Shared ownership (50%)	£115,342	£43,927
Shared ownership (25%)	£57,671	£36,265
Help to buy	£173,013	£32,955

Increasingly organisations working with homeless people are finding it difficult to help people access private rented housing. The initial costs of securing rented housing and reluctance of many landlords to let to people reliant on benefits add to the lack of housing at rents which are affordable and exclude many people from the private rental market. Home ownership including through Help to Buy, Starter Homes or shared ownership is completely unaffordable for a majority of residents.

Supported Housing providers and other partners working with people with additional needs all report particular difficulties. Waiting times for supported housing are increasing as it has become increasingly difficult to move tenants on when they are ready to move. There are particular problems finding landlords willing to accommodate people with a history of homelessness or chaotic lifestyles. The Salvation Army, for example, has seen the number of landlords willing to accommodate their clients reduce over the last year to just two. Providers of supported housing for young people also face specific barriers because most landlords require guarantors.

Welfare Reform

The Government has introduced a range of reforms to benefit entitlement over the last few years. The Council has taken a proactive approach contacting households affected by reforms to benefits to alert them to the changes and sign-post them to support.

The number of households affected by the under-occupancy rules which restrict benefit to the number of rooms deemed to be needed by that household increased from 352 in the first quarter of 2014/15 to a peak of 441 at the end of March 2015. The number affected at the end of March 2016 had reduced slightly to 416.

The Government introduced a cap on the amount of Benefit households can claim in 2014. Currently, the maximum amount of Benefit families with children can claim in Eastbourne is £500 per week. Single people can claim a maximum of £350 per week.

The numbers affected by the Benefit Cap to date in Eastbourne have been relatively low. The majority of those affected so far, when contacted, have said they would manage on the lower amount. The impact of the cap can, however, be severe.

The Government has announced that a lower cap will be introduced in the autumn 2016. The maximum which a family with children will be able to claim in benefits will reduce to £385 per week and single people will be able to claim a maximum of £258 per week.

Based on current claims, it is estimated that up to 150 households will be affected by the lower cap when this is introduced later in 2016 and that all of those currently affected will lose a further £6,000 a year if their circumstances do not change.

Households affected by Benefit Cap

Amount per week↓	2014				2015			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Up to £50	23	24	22	19	17	18	11	13
£51.00 to £100.00	4	6	4	4	3	4	5	6
£101.00 to £150.00	4	3	3	3	3	2	1	2
£151.00 to £200.00	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
Above £200.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total	32	34	29	27	23	24	18	22

A Welfare Reform project in East Sussex was funded initially by Supporting People and established a Benefits Helpline for working-age people seeking advice, coordinated by Sussex Community Development Association. The project also funded additional advice staff in agencies across the county.

The three Clinical Commissioning Groups in East Sussex agreed to fund this project in 2016/17 the service has been expanded to include people of all ages. In addition to the Benefits Helpline, benefit-related support is provided to working-age people by Home Works (East Sussex) and to people aged 65 and over by STEPS.

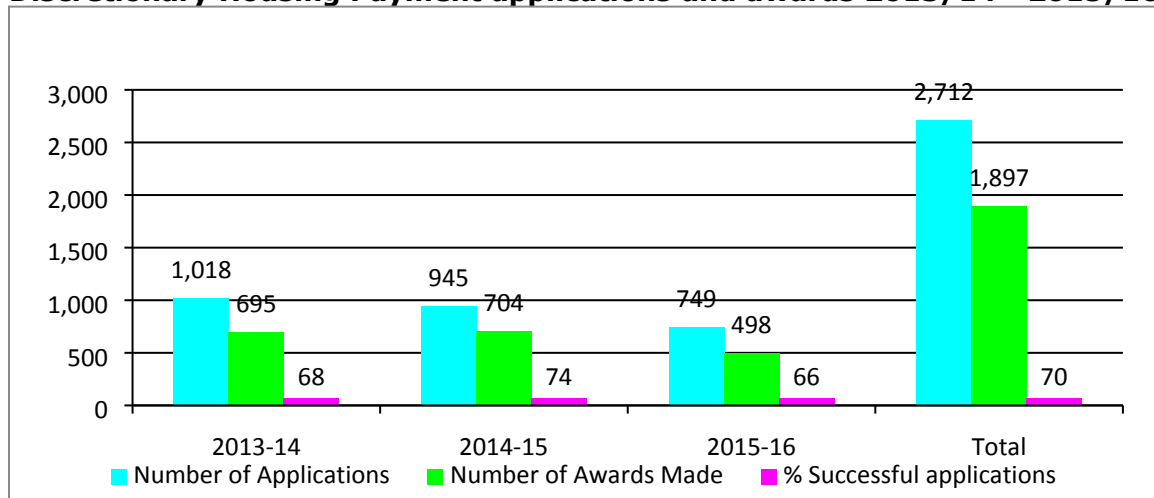
Discretionary Housing Payments

The Council is able to provide short-term financial support in the form of Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) to some people to help meet the shortfall in their housing costs.

DHP budgets have reduced over the last three years - the government allocated £162,574 in 2015/16 compared with £256,602 in 2013/14 and £248,058 in 2015/16. The Council makes every endeavour to spend the DHP budget in full to minimise the risk of further reductions in the budget allocated for this and awarded and over-spent slightly in 2015/16 allocating £162,857 in total.

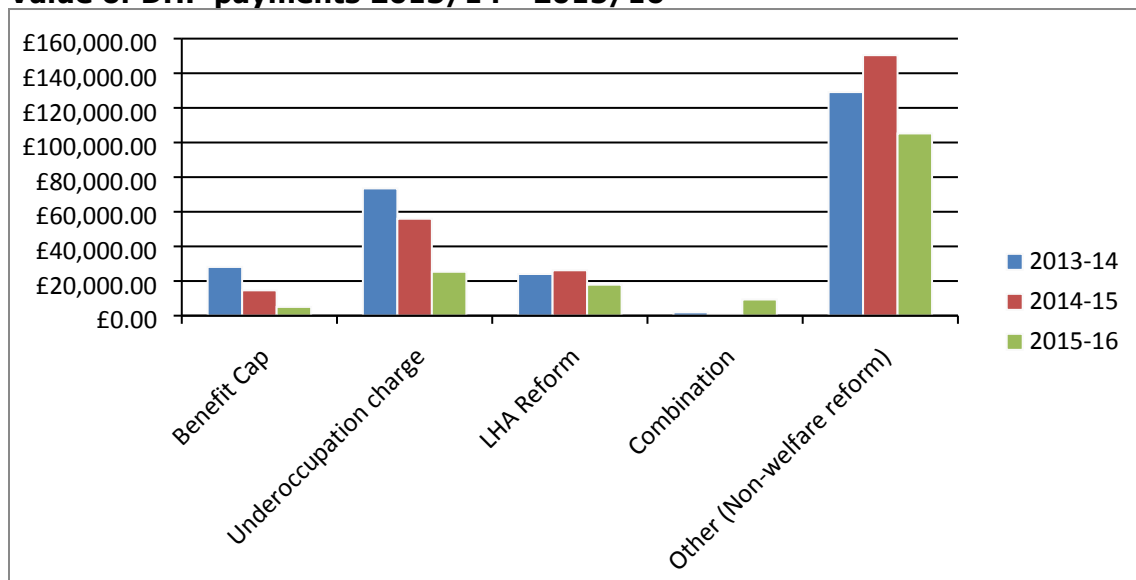
The table below shows the number of applications over the last three years and the number and percentage of DHP awards made.

Discretionary Housing Payment applications and awards 2013/14 - 2015/16



Whilst DHP awarded to support claimants through changes introduced under welfare reform accounts for a significant proportion of payments, this proportion has decreased over the last three years from just under 50% to just over 35%. The value of payments made for welfare reform related reasons and other reasons is shown below.

Value of DHP payments 2013/14 - 2015/16



People claiming income-related benefits are also encouraged to apply to the Department of Work and Pensions for Budgeting Loans for costs such as furniture, household equipment, rent in advance, removal expenses and other expenses.

Homeless households have also been affected by changes to crisis arrangements. Crisis loans were stopped in April 2013. Since then, anyone meeting the eligibility criteria and needing emergency help with food, utilities or household items can apply to a Discretionary East Sussex Support Scheme.

3,831 vouchers for food from Eastbourne’s Foodbank were issued in 2014 (compared with 3,658 in 2013). A small percentage of those people using the Foodbank in 2014 were homeless but, whilst the majority were housed, the reliance on the Foodbank suggests a significant risk of future homelessness as a result of those factors which drive people to use the Foodbank. Almost a third of Foodbank users (31%) were on low incomes and just over a third needed help as a result of delays (25%) or changes (11%) to Benefit payments.

Rough Sleepers

The number of people sleeping rough has grown steadily over the last few years and had more than doubled nationally between 2010 and 2014. The latest national statistics show a further 30% increase between the autumn 2014 and autumn 2015.

The critical importance of tackling rough sleeping is made evident by research which demonstrates that the average life expectancy for homeless men is just 47 and for homeless women it's even lower at 43. With the average mortality rate for the general public being 77, homeless people are dying at least 30 years earlier (Crisis 2011).

Staff and volunteers carry out a count of rough sleepers each year in November. Rough sleeping in the south of England has been rising faster than anywhere else in England and in Eastbourne. Brighton and Hove, just west of Eastbourne on the south coast, had the third highest count nationally of rough sleepers in 2015.

Counts of rough sleepers are currently carried out by St Mungo's Broadway and members of the Council's Neighbourhood First team a minimum of once a week. The team visit known sites where people have been known to sleep rough previously and others identified through the Streetlink service where members of the public can report any rough sleeping they are aware of. The counts take place in the hours before dawn when most people sleeping rough will have bedded down.

The numbers counted in Eastbourne increased from 11 in 2013 to 15 in 2014. 11 people were estimated to be sleeping rough on the same date in 2015. This is a reliable estimate based on the numbers identified by St Mungo's Broadway in the preceding weeks. The number of rough sleepers counted had reduced to an average of 4 by January 2016.

The reduction in numbers of rough sleepers is seen as the result of assertive outreach work carried out as part of the SHORE programme and work done to accommodate rough sleepers. There is a small core of rough sleepers who continue to be difficult to engage.

It is acknowledged that there are a number of 'hidden homeless' – people who report that they are sofa surfing or sleeping in a car. We

are not able to verify these numbers. However, these and others who have a history of rough sleeping or may be insecurely housed and vulnerable for a range of reasons use services such as the Salvation Army and Matthew 25.

There are also significant numbers of people engaged in wider 'street community' activity such as drinking, begging and anti-social behaviour. Taken together, rough sleepers and street community members are estimated to number at least 800 across Sussex (Operation Packet, Sussex Police 2013). St Mungo's Broadway and the Council's Specialist Advisor (Business Crime Group) actively engage with this group to help them access services.

The Sussex Homeless Outreach Reconnection & Engagement (SHORE) initiative

Eastbourne Borough Council is the lead partner for this initiative, which is a partnership between all thirteen District and Borough councils in East and West Sussex, including Brighton and Hove City Council. The initiative, which is funded by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), aims to ensure that homeless people have access to the support they need to move on from homelessness to the ability to secure accommodation. The project also works in partnership with other agencies such as Sussex Police; Probation; County Councils; Health Services; Homeless Link; Salvation Army, Matthew 25 and other local voluntary organisations.

An outreach service is delivered by St. Mungo's Broadway – employing 5 workers across Sussex, including one covering Hastings and Eastbourne. These workers respond to calls from agencies or members of the public (through Street Link) notifying them of people sleeping rough in the area, make contact with them and help find suitable accommodation for them. Services also include a specialist outreach service working with women sleeping rough.

Funding for the project from the Department for Communities and Local Government is set to run out by the end of March 2017 and funding for the outreach project is not being extended beyond then end of September 2016.

A grant of £97,000 from the Department for Work and Pensions which pays for a worker to support rough sleepers and those with multiple

needs into volunteering and employment is also due to run out in March 2017.

Funding for a specialist accommodation-based support project working with women who are sleeping rough in Eastbourne and Hastings is also due to come to an end early in 2017.

It will be a priority to identify alternative ways of continuing those services which have had a significant impact wherever possible. However, we cannot expect to be able to deliver the same level of service to rough sleepers as in recent years.

Eastbourne Pop-Up Hubs 2014 and 2015

The Eastbourne Pop-up Hub was piloted in January 2014. The hub took place over three days and people who were part of the street community were invited in to be assessed. Sussex Police and St Mungo's Broadway engaged with individuals in Eastbourne and persuaded them to attend the hub.

An initial assessment of clients attending the Hub was undertaken by St Mungo's Broadway, who provided support for clients over the three days, and referred them to other services as appropriate. The aim was for clients to be offered a package of support and assistance.

44 people attended the Hub, 32% of them women, a significantly higher proportion than the estimated Sussex and national averages and the national average.

Of those who attended 20 had slept rough in the last year, 6 had been sleeping rough for between 1 and 5 years and 4 for over 5 years.

This client group are experiencing multiple and complex problems. A high proportion of those who were assessed had problems with drugs and/or alcohol and most were experiencing health problems. 50% had physical health issues and 75% had at least one of a range of mental health related issues.

12 people were assessed as having 5 or more long term health conditions.

59% were registered with a local practice, 27 % used the drop in practice and 14% had no GP practice.

More than half had served a prison sentence at some stage.

At the time of the Hub 23 clients were assisted with temporary accommodation. By the end of the post-Hub six month review, 15 clients had been housed in the private sector, 2 by a Registered Housing provider and 2 were accommodated by friends/ relatives. A further 13 were still being accommodated temporarily in the private sector with the hope that some arrangements might be converted to more permanent lettings.

A full report of the Hub is available at

<https://shorehomeless.files.wordpress.com/2014/10/eastbourne-pop-up-hub-final-evaluation.pdf>

The availability of housing which people can afford is key to enabling agencies to work more intensely with vulnerable clients to address their complex. Follow-up meetings clearly identified a need for ongoing tenancy support as key to achieving other outcomes.

The second Eastbourne Hub ran from 24th to 26th March 2015 at the Salvation Army Citadel building with the participation of 11 local agencies and 11 rough sleepers. Unlike the first Eastbourne Hub, this one targeted prolific members of the street community rather than having an 'open door' for all service users. The most significant outcomes at the Hub were improved engagement of clients with various services, improved multi-agency working and 20 placements of rough sleepers into temporary accommodation.

Since the Hub, in the four months to mid July 2015, improved client engagement has been maintained together with better access to long term accommodation. However, to date, there has been limited progress on clients accessing drug and alcohol services and no increase in access to mental health services.

A third hub held in January 2016 saw 9 people.

Health Needs audit

An audit of Health Needs carried out in November 2015 assessed the health needs of homeless people across East Sussex. 40% of the

respondents to the audit (99 people) came from Eastbourne. They identified their current housing status as:

- 38 in hostel or supported accommodation
- 23 Housed (but identified by agencies working with them as at immanent risk of homelessness)
- 16 B&B or other temporary accommodation
- 13 sleeping on sofa or floor of friend /relative
- 6 sleeping rough or in a car
- 2 in emergency accommodation or refuge
- 1 squatting

Headline findings from all respondents to the audit across East Sussex were:

- 51% had more than one visit to A&E in the last year
- 36% had more than one ambulance call out in the last year
- 38% had admissions to hospital in the last year
- 67% reported having a long standing illness or disability
- 39% reported using drugs or alcohol to cope with their mental health problems.

There is a shortage of services for people with mental conditions who struggle to maintain housing and contact with services. Community Mental Health services are available only 2 days a week in Eastbourne and there is a lack of supported housing and rehabilitation services is seen as a significant problem.

Fulfilling Lives

The Fulfilling Lives project is funded by the Big Lottery and works with up to 20 people at a time with multiple and complex needs. The majority of these people are rough sleepers or sofa surfers and many will have been found 'intentionally homeless'.

The purpose of the project is to design and coordinate services to meet needs and support people to manage their lives better. The project is led by BHT and is made up of three local delivery teams of which CRI leads the work in Eastbourne.

Other services to rough sleepers

The **Salvation Army – Eastbourne Citadel** works with people sleeping rough in Eastbourne and those with a history of rough sleeping or at particular risk. The services provided include distribution of food vouchers, evening meals (two evenings a week) shower facilities, a laundry and a range of services provided from the Rebourne Centre. Many services users are those from non-EU countries who are not entitled to benefits and need help to meet their basic needs.

The Salvation Army report that numbers have increased due to the current economic climate, with many people losing their jobs and accommodation. Illiteracy levels amongst service users are high and the lack of computer use makes this group more at risk of benefit sanctions. Many service users have mental health issues. An increasing proportion of people using services are people from abroad who have limited or no access to public services.

The number of people using Salvation Army services increased during while the Winter Night Shelter was open in 2015/16. Calls to the Citadel's Community Service averaged 180 per month between January and November 2015, but rose to 493 in December 2015 and average monthly use of the Rebourne Day Centre services rose from an average of 903 per month between January and November to 1007 in December 2016.

A number of people using Salvation Army services also used services at the **Matthew 25 Mission** which provides meals and other support at the Brodie Hall Drop-in Centre in Seaside. The numbers of people using these services were similar to those using the Salvation Army's services varying from around 800 to 960 each month.

Services include hot meals – breakfasts five days a week for an average of 30 people each day and a hot meal three times a week for between 40 and 50 people, plus a cookery group for 'preparing and sharing a meal together' one day a week; music, gardening and art groups; and a social group run by parents for families with children. The daily average number of visitors to Brodie Hall estimated over the last few months was 50-55.

The **Kingdom Way Trust** runs a number of services for homeless people in Eastbourne:

- Eastbourne Winter Night Shelter – in partnership with local community and faith organisations – offering supervised overnight accommodation to homeless and other vulnerable people who would otherwise be sleeping rough during the winter months (December to February).
- The Bridge – housing for up to 2 years for a maximum of 6 male residents with support to find appropriate work, training, volunteering or work placements.
- Fatfleshed – a Faith kitchen providing meals and companionship to homeless people on Saturday evenings as well as sleeping bags and clothing at All Souls Church in the centre of Eastbourne and Sunday morning tea, coffee and breakfast rolls in Hyde Gardens.

Over the three months (1st December to 1st March) that the **Winter Night Shelter** was open in 2015/16, 69 street homeless 'applicants' (62 male: 7 female) were interviewed for spaces and 59 accepted (53 male: 6 female). The Shelter provides space for up to 15 people on any one night and 22 were accommodated (19 male: 3 female) over the period.

Refugees

In response to the flight of 6.5 million people from Syria, forced to flee their homes, the Government has announced its intention to relocate up to 20,000 of the most vulnerable to the UK. The Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation (VPR) Scheme is designed to rehouse the most vulnerable refugees, namely:

- Women and Girls at risk
- Survivors of violence and/ or torture
- Refugees with legal and/ or physical protection needs
- Refugees with medical needs or disabilities
- Children and adolescents at risk
- Refugees at risk due to their sexual orientation or gender identity (actual or perceived)
- Refugees with family links in resettlement countries

Under the scheme, people will be resettled with 'Humanitarian Protection' leave to stay for up to 5 years. They will have recourse to public funds, and will be able to work and access services in the UK. After 5 years they will be able to apply for permanent residency or return to Syria.

Central Government will meet the costs of the arrivals in terms of support, health and education costs for the first year from arrival. Additional costs, including Local Authority (LA) costs to cover administration of the scheme will also be covered.

It is up to Local Authorities to contact the SVPR Scheme when they are ready to accommodate refugees. As well as identifying appropriate housing, this involves ensuring intensive support and services are in place to ensure the effective integration of this very vulnerable group into our communities. The local authorities in East Sussex have agreed to work together on this and are creating two posts for an initial 12 month period to coordinate work across the county including design and delivery of a resettlement package for individual refugees to facilitate their integration into the community working with a project team of staff from DWP / Job Centres, Health, Social Care and Housing Departments.

Once the necessary resources are in place the aim is to welcome the first refugees to East Sussex within a period of 3 months.

Gypsies and Travellers

Whilst there are no authorised Traveller sites within Eastbourne, there are a number of Gypsies and Travellers living in the town who are less visible as a result, but have a range of needs. Approximately two-thirds of Gypsies and Travellers live in settled housing.

Gypsies and Travellers Area Assessment carried out in East Sussex in 2015 concluded that there is no need for a permanent site for Gypsies and Travellers in Eastbourne but has indicated a need for stopping places in Eastbourne for Travellers moving through and staying on a short-term basis.

Friends, Families and Travellers are based in Brighton but work with Travellers and their families across the whole of Sussex. They work with around 3,000 people each year. As well as carrying out research into the issues affecting Travellers and their families, they offer advice, information and advocacy services and deliver a range of projects to benefit the Traveller community. They have been funded to deliver an outreach project across Surrey and Sussex over 5 years – ending in 2016. The issues most commonly raised relate to health and housing.

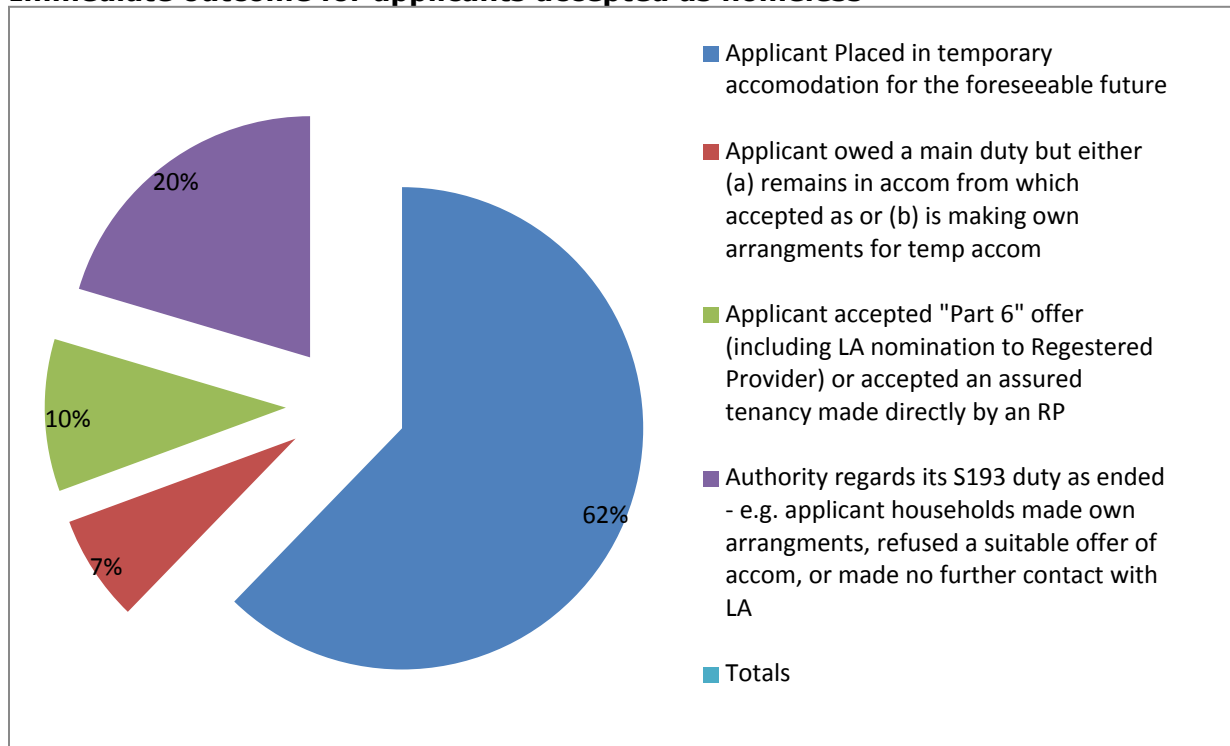
Friends, Families and Travellers were funded through the Council's Community Grants programme to identify these households living in Eastbourne and their needs. They worked with young people from 19 families supporting them to access a wide range of statutory and voluntary services. 63% were helped to access health care services and other outcomes included access to training and education, housing, benefits and legal advice.

Temporary accommodation and re-housing

The majority of households where the Council accepts a duty are placed initially in temporary accommodation.

Overall the figures rose significantly at the beginning of 2015 and remain higher than earlier years indicating increasing pressures on temporary accommodation options.

Immediate outcome for applicants accepted as homeless



Eastbourne Borough Council uses a small number of accommodation providers to house homelessness households. In addition to the impact of homelessness on people themselves and their families, the high financial costs of placing people in temporary accommodation make it

a priority for the Council and its partners to prevent and relieve homelessness as far as possible.

As the level of statutory homelessness has increased, so too spending on placements to temporary accommodation has risen from £146,810 in 2011/12 to £346,739 in 2015/16.

We are aware that an increasing number of households placed in temporary accommodation have income from employment and need to contribute to the costs of their accommodation. This presents additional risks to the Council if those housed do not pay their part of the costs as the Council then becomes liable for the unmet rent.

The numbers of households who make their own temporary housing arrangements or remain in their current home awaiting other accommodation – ‘homeless at home’ – have shown a slight increase in 2015.

There were no homeless households placed outside the Eastbourne district until Q1 2015 when there were two households placed out of the district.

We are aware, however, that other authorities are using Eastbourne hotels for temporary accommodation for homelessness households, but do not have access to data on the numbers. This has been a continuing concern, not only because of the problems we encounter from time to time placing Eastbourne’s homeless households within the Borough, but also because of the vulnerability of these households and potential demands on other services.

We have met with neighbouring authorities at various times over the last few years and agreed to notify each other of any placements made in each others’ authority areas, but implementation of these agreements has been very patchy.

We have had a number of enquiries recently about our provision for homeless people with dogs. We make every endeavor to provide alternative arrangements for pets in those situations where family or friends are unable to take care of them.

The length of time people spend in temporary accommodation is significantly affected by the availability of permanent housing as set out on the next page.

Housing waiting times

11 homeless households were re-housed to permanent accommodation from the Housing Register (through Sussex Homemove) between 1st April 2015 and 1st April 2016.

Of these, one was housed in a studio flat, two in 1-bed flats, five in 2-bed flats, two in 2-bed houses and one in a 3-bed house. The average waiting times for those homeless households needing re-housing were

- 19 days for a studio flat
- 6 weeks for a 1-bed flat
- 3 months for a 2-bed flat
- 6 weeks for a 2-bed house
- 11 months for a 3-bed house

These figures cover significant variations in waiting times from 10 days to 11 months.

For all those households registered as having an urgent need for re-housing (in Band A) the waiting time was longer – averaging

- 7 months for sheltered accommodation
- 5 months for a studio flat
- 14 months for a 1-bed flat
- 8 months for a 2-bed flat
- 7 months for a 2-bed house
- 8 months for a 3-bed house
- 14 months for a 4-bed house

These figures change dramatically for households in Band B. In the same period, those rehoused had been waiting:

- 20 months for sheltered accommodation
- 4 years for a studio flat
- 29 months for a 1-bed flat
- 4 years for a 2-bed flat
- 5 years for a 2-bed house
- 4 years for a 3-bed house
- 31 months for a 4-bed house

Waiting times are expected to increase in the coming years as the impact of the Housing and Planning Act takes effect and high value Council homes are sold.

Looking to the future

There are a number of further changes to the development and delivery of housing and reforms to Benefits which are in the pipe-line and need to be considered in our planning for the future. These are summarised below.

- The Benefit Cap, introduced to limit the total amount of benefit that most working age claimants can receive whilst out of work, will be reduced further to £20,000 per year.
- The roll-out of Universal Credit which started in Eastbourne in 2015 is due to complete by 2020. This replaces several current state benefits and will be paid as a new single monthly payment for people in or out of work.
- Mandatory digital claims are now being rolled out in East Sussex and are expected to be introduced in Eastbourne in 2017.
- The current freeze on working age benefits, including tax Credits and Local Housing Allowance will apply for 4 years from 2016 to 2020. We estimate that around 5,000 benefit claimants will be affected by the freeze on the 'eligible amount' for Housing Benefit in Eastbourne.
- From May 2016 new claimants and current claimants who have a child for the first time will not be awarded the Family Premium of £17.45.
- From April 2016 Mortgage Interest Relief will only be paid to those claimants buying their housing after 39 weeks instead of 13 weeks.
- Housing Benefit claims can currently be backdated six months for working age claimants. This will reduce to one month only from April 2016. This is likely to have a severe impact on tenants who do not claim Benefit immediately. In 2014/15 £200,000 was paid in backdated Housing Benefit.
- The automatic entitlement to housing support for new claims of Universal Credit has been removed for 18 to 21 year olds who are out of work and from April 2017 18 to 21 year olds who are claiming Universal Credit will be affected by a Youth Obligation.

This means after 6 months of claiming they will be expected to apply for an apprenticeship or traineeship, go on a mandatory work placement or gain work based skills.

- Freezing of Local Housing Allowance rates – around 30%
- Payments for new claimants of Employment and Support Allowance who doctors/ assessors deem able to prepare for work will be aligned with Job Seekers Allowance rates.
- Extra funding has been allocated for Discretionary Housing Payments for five years until 2020.
- The amount of rent that Housing Benefit will cover in the social sector will be capped to the relevant Local Housing Allowance. This will include the Shared Accommodation Rate for single under 35's without dependent children.
- The relief on finance costs that landlords of residential properties can get to basic rate of income tax will be restricted from 2017 and will be phased in over 4 years.
- The wear and tear allowance which private landlords can claim against tax will be removed and landlords will only be able deduct costs actually incurred in the future.
- Social Rented Sector rents will be reduced by 1% a year from April 2016, reducing budgets by £560,000 over the next four years, severely constraining Business Plans in the Housing Revenue Account.
- Pressures on Council budgets will become increasingly acute and are likely to affect the resources available for a range of housing and support services. Eastbourne Borough Council will need to reduce their annual budget by £2.7 million by 2020.
- As of April 2016 all working age adults will have to pay a minimum of 20% of Council Tax and there will be changes in the way the incomes of self-employed people are assessed for Council Tax purposes. Approximately 5,500 will be affected overall and some 3,300 people will have to pay Council Tax for the first time.

- Funding for some supported housing, including projects designed to support people to stay in their housing has been reduced and is expected to come under further pressure in the next few years. Funding for the Home Works service was reduced by £300,000 in 2016/17. Funding for the five refuges in the county was reduced by 20%, a saving of £80,000 in 2016/17. The proposed removal of all support funding to supported housing for young people at risk and people with mental health needs was reprieved after the government allowed additional funding to the County Council through the Adult Social Care levy.
- Currently, the biggest threat to supported housing is the freeze on LHA due to come in April 2018 which affects the long-term business plans for providers. Whilst this date was delayed by one year from April 2017, the risk to the future viability of supported housing beyond 2018 is severe. The government has said it will carry out a review of all Supported Accommodation in the next year.

Housing and Planning Act 2016

The Housing and Planning Act 2016 was enacted in May 2016. The detail of how some measures will be implemented is still unknown. The points below cover the key changes.

- Councils are expected to sell their high value housing as this becomes vacant and will be required to pay the Government a sum based on the estimated value of this each year (based on approximately the third highest value properties owned) whether or not they sell the properties. Councils will need to make an assessment of the relative value of selling off or retaining this housing. It is likely that this will affect the availability of affordable housing, particularly social rented housing and depending on the level of the tariff this could significantly impact on the viability of the HRA Business Plan.
- The Right to Buy will be extended to tenants of housing associations and other Registered Providers. The Government will use capital receipts received from Council Housing sales to invest in new housing developed by these Registered Providers.
- Councils and Registered Providers of social rented housing will be required to offer fixed term tenancies of up to 10 years only

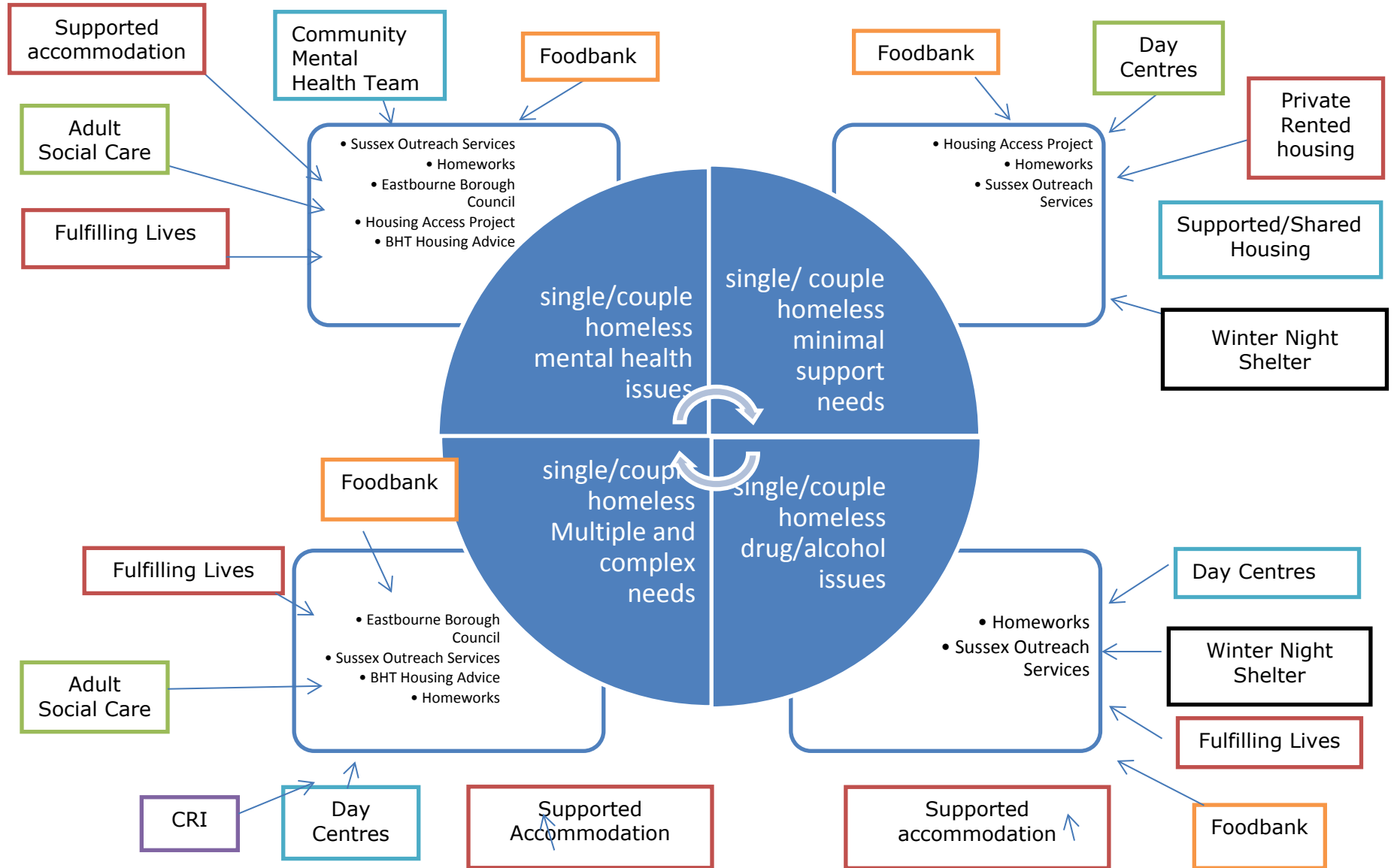
to prospective tenants and these will not be automatically renewed. This will also apply to existing tenants moving to a different social rented property.

- Succession rights will be restricted to spouses and partners only. Social landlords may have discretion to award tenancies to other family members who have had succession rights to date, but can only offer fixed term tenancies.
- It is proposed that social housing tenants with higher household incomes will have to 'Pay to Stay' by paying near or market rent for the properties. Initially this will apply to those with incomes of £30,000 and above. Councils will be required to pay any additional income from this, minus administrative costs, to the Government.

These and other changes are expected to have significant effects on Eastbourne's residents and its housing stock:

- Many households in Eastbourne who receive benefits will find their incomes reduced from a variety of angles.
- Single under 35 year olds reliant on benefits will struggle even more to find accommodation due to Housing Benefit payments for social rented properties being brought into line with Local Housing Allowance rates of benefit.
- The amount and quality of affordable rented accommodation is likely to reduce with private landlords likely to increase rent to cover the reduction in their income due to tax changes.
- There will be a reduction in Council housing due to the requirement to sell properties.
- Providers of supported housing are at particular risk, increasing the risks to people who are particularly vulnerable.

Service map for homeless people in Eastbourne



Supported Housing for homeless people in Eastbourne

The following table sets out the supported housing currently provided for homeless people in Eastbourne

Scheme	Units provided	Waiting list at 1.4.2016
Eastbourne and Wealden YMCA residential centre and Barnabas House	26 units or bedrooms for young people at risk	10 on waiting list at April 2016; longest waiting time is 4 months; increase in recent months because of problems moving people on – lack of affordable private rented housing and higher needs
Eastbourne Foyer and Hyland House	33 bed spaces at Foyer and 15 long-term and 10 short-term supported flats in Hyland House for young people at risk	Average 5–8 young people on waiting list and 2 – 3 weeks wait but increase in last 3 months to 10 weeks because of problems moving people on – lack of affordable private rented housing and higher needs
Hyde Gardens	19 units or bedrooms for people with mental health issues	5 on waiting list at April 2016; average waiting time is 1-2 months – longest is 4 months due to lack of affordable rented housing for people on Housing Benefit
St Aubyns Road	9 units or bedrooms for homeless people with complex needs	4 on waiting list at April 2016; average waiting time is 3 weeks – longest 2 months due to lack of affordable rented housing for people on Housing Benefit
Refuges	5 refuges in East Sussex for women fleeing domestic violence	Always full – there is a very high demand for refuge accommodation in this area

SAHA	5 units or bedrooms for young mothers and their babies	Waiting times can be up to 5 months because it is increasingly difficult to find move-on housing. No-one on waiting list at present as young mothers have to be placed quickly.
The Bridge	5 rooms in shared housing for men with multiple needs and a history of rough sleeping.	This is a relatively new project.

In addition there are currently two services providing support for people with a range of needs including mental health needs:

- Home Works provides a visiting support service for around 850 people aged 16-64 across the county who are at risk of homelessness
- The Supported Accommodation and Independent Living Solutions (SAILS) service provides support to around 360 people with mental health needs and learning disabilities across the county.

Key messages

This section summarises the main trends, concerns, risks and opportunities arising from this review of homelessness and suggests areas we need to focus on in the future:

- The number of homeless applications rose significantly to 124 households in 2015 and continues to rise. The percentage of those where the Council accepted a s193 duty also rose significantly in 2015 as did the number who became homeless as a result of their own actions, such as housing arrears.
- There was an increase in the number of families with children and of households with a pregnant woman accepted as homeless in 2015 and a particularly sharp rise in the number of female lone parents presenting as homeless.
- The main reason applicants to the Council give for the loss of their last home is the termination of their tenancy in the private rented sector.
- There is an urgent need to examine the use and effectiveness of prevention measures and identify any further work that we can do to prevent and relieve homelessness, particularly where this arises as a result of arrears or landlord decisions to end the tenancy.
- There was a marked increase in the number of households becoming homeless as a result of relationship breakdown.
- The main 'priority need' of single homeless households is vulnerability arising from poor mental health and there is an ongoing need for support services to this group.
- A range of housing is needed to meet these needs including
 - Housing with shared facilities to meet the needs of single people under 35 who may be reliant on Housing Benefit
 - 2 and 3-bedroom properties – given the large number of families with children becoming homeless
 - a small number of larger homes. The costs of keeping families in Bed and Breakfast accommodation are particularly high. A shortage of larger family housing may

become particularly acute if the Council sells off larger properties as part of its response to the Government's proposed requirement to sell high-value properties which fall vacant in the future.

- The Joint protocol between Children's Services and housing authorities and the role of the Young Person's Housing Coordinator have proved invaluable keeping numbers of homeless young people at lower levels than in previous years and ensuring they are accommodated appropriately.
- The Sanctuary Scheme continues to be needed given the increase in Domestic Abuse incidents being reported and the number of households becoming homeless as a result of violent relationship breakdown.
- The decrease in the level of homelessness prevented by negotiation with private landlords needs to be addressed.
- The increasing gap between incomes and rents in the private sector is a major cause for concern with particular problems faced by people reliant on Housing Benefit to contribute to their housing costs and those in supported housing ready to move out but unable to access housing. The problems are particularly acute for those people only eligible for the Local Housing Allowance shared room rate, set to include all under-35s.
- Work with Rough Sleepers undertaken as part of the SHORE project has been effective but is at risk of being radically curtailed with the end of government funding for the project.
- Rough sleeping, sofa-surfing, overcrowding and other forms of hidden homelessness are increasing.
- Any increase in demand for services moving into Eastbourne from neighbouring areas needs to be monitored and managed, particularly in light of high levels of rough sleeping recorded in Brighton and the pressures on housing and temporary accommodation in London.
- The Council faces increasing difficulties placing homeless households in temporary housing and there is an urgent need to

explore options which provide greater control over costs and quality.

- The majority of private market housing for rent is unaffordable to people on average household incomes in Eastbourne. The need to prevent homelessness is paramount given the problems of accessible affordable housing in the private market.
- Supported Housing schemes are at significant risk of becoming blocked by a lack of affordable housing which their tenants can move on to when ready. These problems are particularly acute for young people.
- The supply of very low cost accommodation for people with a history of homelessness and/or rough sleeping is extremely limited and reducing further.

ⁱ Mid-2014 Population Estimates (MYE), Office for National Statistics

ⁱⁱ Government figures summarised by Homeless Link :
<http://www.homeless.org.uk/connect/news/2015/jun/24/another-rise-in-homelessness-numbers-shows-further-signs-of-inequality-in>

ⁱⁱⁱ EEA – European Union Countries plus countries with the same rights to live and work in the UK – i.e. Iceland, Lichtenstein and Norway

^{iv} Report on Looked After Children to Local Safeguarding Children Board 28.1.16

^v Based on incidents reported February 2014 to January 2015 and those recorded February 2015 to February 2016.