Chichester District Council Homelessness Review 2020

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Key Findings

# Executive Summary

The Homelessness Review provides a broad overview of the District Council’s role in preventing homelessness and fulfilling its statutory duties to households who lose their home. The purpose of the Review is to provide the intelligence from which informed decisions on a strategic approach to homelessness can be made.

The District Council has decided that the most effective way of doing this is to incorporate its Homelessness Strategy within one single comprehensive Housing Strategy. By bringing together our approach to homelessness, the private rented sector and the provision of new affordable housing we can offer a single, coherent vision of our strategic vision and objectives which can be shared with partners.

Three specific issues emerge from the range of issues and evidence provided within the Homelessness Review, each of which are framed as strategic priorities within the emerging Housing Strategy for 2020-25. These three issues are summarised below.

## Preventing homelessness through early intervention and support

This is central to the ethos of the Homelessness Reduction Act and is a key priority for the Council. The Review provides details on a range of interventions which aim to identify households at risk of homelessness and provide the advice and support necessary to sustain or secure appropriate accommodation. The context for this continues to be very challenging, not least because of the reductions in funding for housing related support which take effect from October 2019. Our strategy going forward aims to build on the progress of the initiatives described in sections within the Review. The key metric we will use to measure our progress towards this will be the outcome of applications dealt with under with either the Prevention or Relief Duty. Our performance during 2018/19, the first year in which performance has been recorded in this way, is shown at Section 7

The Review highlights the growing need to place homeless households in emergency accommodation which is either non-self-contained or outside of the district. In 2018 the number of placements of this type was twice what it was five years ago. This is by no means unique to Chichester and reflects a trend across West Sussex and the south of increasing demand for temporary accommodation.

## Reducing the number of households placed in non-self-contained out of district accommodation

This will be a key priority for our housing strategy going forward. Chichester is already fortunate in having its own resource of temporary accommodation which meets part of this need and is planning to extend this provision through the development of an additional 17 units of accommodation on a site within the centre of Chichester.

The Review also highlights the persistent and growing problem of rough sleeping within the city of Chichester.

## Tackling rough sleeping

This is the third key priority emerging from the Homelessness Review. Whilst many of the measures designed to prevent homelessness are also relevant to service users within this cohort, the Review also recognises rough sleeping is much more than just a housing problem, since many rough sleepers are likely to have an additional, potentially complex, needs. The Review highlights the way in which the Council is working to build partnerships across a range of agencies both statutory and voluntary, as well as with the public to reduce street homelessness and to mitigate its more harmful impacts on both individuals and the wider community.

# 1) Introduction

Section 1(1) of the 2002 Homelessness Act gives housing authorities the duty to carry out a Homelessness review and formulate and publish a strategy based on the results of that review. Under the Code of Guidance for local authorities by the Ministry of Housing Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) councils are required to formulate a new Homelessness strategy which takes into account the duties introduced by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. The revised Homelessness strategy should be consistent with other local strategies and plans and developed in partnership with relevant service providers. This paper is designed to show the data which will underpin our revised Homelessness strategy.

# 2) Review of the council’s housing strategy objectives 2015 - 2020

| **Objective** | **Action** | **Outcome** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Develop the tools to increase choice for customers and to prevent homelessness** |  |  |
| 1. Continue to develop a wider range of prevention options that meet the needs of individual customers | Minimise impact of welfare reform by formulating interventions for the decrease in Benefit Cap. | Deployed resources to deliver 1-2-1 advice and assistances to any Housing Benefit claimants affected by the Benefit Cap. |
|  | Minimise impact by formulating interventions in the event that the Spare Room Subsidy is increased. | Deployed resources to deliver 1-2-1 advice and assistance to any Housing Benefit claimant affected by the Spare Room Subsidy. |
|  | Apply assertive outreach interventions to engage with residents threatened with homelessness but not approaching services for advice and assistance. | Housing Advice staff provide daily housing advice and assistance services at the Chichester Hub Day centre |
|  | Minimise impact by formulating interventions for claimants affected by Universal Credit. | In April 2018, the Council created a new post Housing Welfare Officer who is responsible for preventing and relieving debt and financial hardship. |
| 1. Maximise the effective use of existing stock and work with our RP partners to increase the provision of new affordable homes. | The RP forum facilitates good working relationships with all registered providers of social housing. |  |
|  | The Housing Strategy 2013-2018 identifies the Council Housing Delivery plan and priorities. Active involvement in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment will ensure that right supply of homes will meet the needs of local people. | Target of 140 new homes per annum so far exceeded, achieving an average of 178 homes per year. |
| 1. Maximising the potential of the Private Rented Sector. | Ensure that the benefits of the Home Finder Scheme are competitive with high street agents. | The Council continues to offer a housing management service to private landlords which is competitive with the open market |
|  | Formulate interventions for the introduction to Universal Credit | The Council’s Tenancy Sustainment Team continue to provide sustainment services to manage Home Finder properties |
|  | Utilise Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) where possible | The Council’s Discretionary Housing Payment budget for 2018/19 was £202k, we spent £176k. The budget for 2019/20 is £178k. |
| 1. Ensure the housing needs of young people and care leavers are met | Continue to work in partnership with WSCC to deliver the Youth Prevention Team service that manages the homelessness of 16 and 17 year olds. | West Sussex District and Boroughs continue to work in partnership with WSCC to deliver the Youth Homelessness Prevention Service for 16 and 17 year olds. |
|  |  | In April 2018 the Council adopted lead user roles to assist in meeting the duty under s.179(2)b. |
|  | Develop protocol for working with care leavers to prevent homelessness | West Sussex Districts and Boroughs worked in partnership with WSCC’s Leaving Care Team to publish the West Sussex Joint Working Protocol for Care Leavers in October 2015. |
| 1. Ensure that ex-offenders have access to housing advice prior to, and on, release. | Regularly attend and contribute to MAPPA meetings. | The Council regularly attends the monthly MAPPA meetings. |
|  | Maintain working relationships with the National Probation Service Housing Co-Ordinator.  The Council regularly attends the monthly MAPPA meetings. | In 2013 low-medium risk offenders were no longer supervised by the National Probation Service and managed by private sector ‘Community Rehabilitation Companies’. In 2016 the Housing Co-Ordinator left employment and the National Probation Service did not replace the appointment |
|  |  | In April 2018, the Council adopted lead user roles to assist in meeting the duty under s.179(2)a. |

| **Assist households to resolve their housing issues** |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1. Reduce rough sleeping to as close to zero as possible | Adopt a No Second Night Out Model |  |
|  | Participate in Sussex-Wide SHORE initiative | Since the demise of the SHORE initiative CDC has worked with other West Sussex Local Authorities on joint schemes including Rapid Rehousing Pathway and Hospital Admission Reduction Pathway |
|  | Carry out annual rough sleeper estimate/and or count | CDC employed a dedicated Rough Sleeper Outreach Worker who was first appointed in 2018. CDC conduct a rough sleeping estimate annually in November. |
|  | Continue to manage the Rough Sleepers Panel | The Rough Sleepers Panel continues to meet the first Tuesday of every month |
|  | Manage the hospital discharge protocol |  |
| 1. Sustain Tenancies and prevent homelessness | Maintain housing support services including, South Down Housing, Richmond Fellowship, Stone Pillow and Think Family | WSCC funded a post providing accommodation support in any tenure and anyone at risk of rough sleeping without accommodation support. This funding ended in September 2019. |
|  |  | The Rapid Re-Housing Pathway funding was used for the employment of a Navigator and a Supported Lettings Officer employed by Stone Pillow. |
|  |  | The Council’s Tenancy Sustainment Officer’s continue to work with homeless households in temporary accommodation and tenants in managed HomeFinder properties to sustain accommodation |
| 1. Make effective use of existing social housing within the District of Chichester, including supported housing. | Review Allocation Scheme as appropriate | A review of the Council’s Allocation Scheme was conducted in November 2018, the policy is currently being re-written in light of key legislative changes. |
| **Implement a policy framework that prioritises homelessness prevention.** |  |  |
| 1. Ensure the Allocations Scheme is fair and lawful | Update the Allocations Scheme to accommodate changes in priorities and legislation. | The Council’s Allocations Scheme is currently being re-written. |
| 1. Ensure that the right supply of homes meet the needs of local people. | Contribute to the Local Plan Review | CDC Local Plan Review reflects up to date analysis of Housing Need |
| **Review provision of temporary accommodation.** |  |  |
| 1. Prioritise void accommodation to applicants who are owed an interim duty | Develop a temporary accommodation service with support for single homeless applicants using void temporary accommodation stock. | The Council has been using void accommodation to accommodate homeless households not in priority need since 2014. |
|  | Develop a temporary accommodation service with intensive support for rough sleepers using void temporary accommodation stock | WSCC funding and Rapid Rehousing Pathway funding has been utilised to provide Tenancy support services to rough sleepers. |
| 1. Ensure the use of temporary accommodation is financially efficient | Offer the use of temporary accommodation service with intensive support for rough sleepers using void temporary accommodation stock. | The Council is committed to helping neighbouring authorities and WSCC where we have capacity or where it is possible to avoid families having to be provided with temporary accommodation in non-self-contained B&B accommodation. |
|  | Review financial management and budgeting processes, including a review of the rent structure | This exercise is completed annually by the Accommodation Service Manager. |
| 1. Make effective use of the temporary accommodation resources | Undertake a review of the use of temporary accommodation | 3 bed house was used as temporary accommodation for families from April 2016. |
| 1. Minimise the number of households in temporary accommodation | Deliver a pro-active support service to households in temporary accommodation to continue addressing their housing needs. | The Council has funded 2FTE Tenancy Sustainment posts supporting households in Council owned temporary accommodation and managed private rented sector accommodation since July 2015. |
| 1. Ensure that households fleeing violence are offered appropriate support services and advice | Maintain good working relationships with WORTH Service and NCDV. | In April 2018 the Council adopted lead user roles to assist in meeting the duty under s.179(2)d. This has strengthened partnership working with DA services. |
|  |  | The Council regularly attends local MARAC meetings working with partner agencies to support victims of DA. |

# 3) Service Demands

The following section will explore the level of service provided by Chichester District Council from 2014 - 2020.

## Number of Housing Advice and Homelessness Applications

The above table illustrates the number of applications for housing advice and homelessness assistance, received by the Council from 2014/15 to 2018/19.The figures demonstrate a trend of annually increasing total applications until March 2018, with a total 32% rise in total applications received over this period. The Homelessness Reduction Act (2017) came into force on 3rd April 2018, and significantly changed the way homelessness services are delivered.

The figures illustrated in the table above indicate a fall in homelessness advice and applications, over the period 2018/19. Whilst it is impossible to make like for like case comparisons, it is possible a change in the way data is now processed and recorded under the HRA, alongside a change in the Council’s case management IT system, has impacted the overall figures.

## Homelessness Advice Applicants by Household Composition (2014/15–2017/18)

Chichester District Council has long received a greater proportion, than the national average of homeless applications from single people and couples with no dependent children. This table shows the breakdown of different household types year on year, and demonstrates a consistent rate of households with children and those without children making applications from 2014/15 – 2017/18. In fact, the proportion of households with no children or pregnancies ranges between 24% and 34% in contrast to the number of households with no children or not pregnant ranging between 59% and 66%. Other household types could include adult siblings, wanting or needing to live together or intergenerational adult families. ‘Not known’ household types could be those where the composition is not confirmed (e.g. dependency of stated children has never been substantiated).

## Homelessness Applicants by Household Composition (2018/19 HRA)

The above table breaks down all 619 unique household applications received under the Homelessness Reduction Act in 2018/19, excluding ‘Other’ and ‘Not Known’ household compositions due to better data collection processes. Figures illustrate that 37% of applications were received from households with dependent children or pregnant women and 63% of applications were received from single people or couples. The latter is in line with previous years, while the former demonstrates a slight increase on previous years but is broadly equivalent to the annual combined figure of dependent children, pregnant and other/known known households.

## Reasons for Homelessness (2014/15 – 2017/18)

| Reasons for Homelessness | 2014/15 | 2015/16 | 2016/17 | 2017/18 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Parent no longer willing to accommodate | 14 | 19 | 22 | 28 |
| Friend/relative no longer willing to accommodate | 10 | 12 | 29 | 16 |
| Non-Violent relationship breakdown with partner | 8 | 9 | 17 | 29 |
| Violent relationship breakdown with partner | 14 | 5 | 20 | 37 |
| Violent breakdown of relationship with an associated person | 2 | 0 | 3 | 5 |
| Other forms of violence | 2 | 0 | 3 | 4 |
| Other forms of harassment | 1 | 1 | 2 | 7 |
| Mortgage re-possession | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| Register Provider rent arrears | 5 | 4 | 13 | 2 |
| Private rented rent arrears | 9 | 2 | 5 | 8 |
| Termination of AST | 24 | 33 | 36 | 43 |
| Loss of tied accommodation | 3 | 6 | 4 | 4 |
| Leaving care | 1 | 0 | 2 | 4 |
| Leaving hospital | 9 | 4 | 3 | 3 |
| Leaving prison | 3 | 2 | 6 | 5 |
| Leaving armed forces | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Rough sleeping | 2 | 5 | 12 | 6 |
| Returning from abroad | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Loss of hostel accommodation | 0 | 0 | 2 | 5 |
| Refugee or asylum seeker | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Other | 13 | 24 | 30 | 27 |
| Not known | 3 | 1 | 2 | 10 |
| Not reported | 16 | 43 | 19 | 18 |
| Total | 139 | 172 | 236 | 265 |

The results illustrated in the table above, demonstrate that for reasons such as ‘termination of an assured shorthold tenancy’, ‘a violent relationship breakdown with a partner’ and ‘parent no longer willing to accommodate’ have been the leading reasons over the period of 2014-2018 for which homelessness is most prevalent.

## The Impact of Brexit

The rights and status of EU, EEA and Swiss Citizens living in the UK will remain the same until 30 June 2021, if the UK leaves the EU with a deal. EU, EEA and Swiss Citizens must apply to the EU Settlement Scheme to continue living and working in the UK after 30 June 2021. On successful application applicants will receive either ‘settled’ or ‘pre-settled status’.

Settled status is acquired if the applicant started living in the UK by 31 December 2020 (or by the date the UK leaves the EU without a deal) or lived in the UK for a continuous 5-year period (known as ‘continuous residence’).

If the applicant does not have continuous residence for 5 years upon application, pre-settled status may be granted. Applicants must have started living in the UK by 31 December 2020 (or by the date the UK leaves the EU without a deal).

There will be a number of eligible EU EEA and Swiss Citizens who will fail to apply for Settled Status before 1 July 2021 and will become ineligible to access public funds including welfare benefits, register for social housing or make a homeless application. This may impact the levels of rough sleeping and increase the requirement for Care Act assessments on households with children and vulnerable single households.

## Reductions in Housing Related Support Services

A reduction of £155m in central Government funding affected the County Council’s ability to maintain the range and level of services provided to communities and residents. Over the past 5 years, a number of services wholly or part funded by West Sussex County Council had funding reduced or cut completely affecting service delivery.

In December 2018, West Sussex County Council announced that significant service reductions would apply to a number of housing related support services which it has commissioned. These services include:

## My Place/Independent Living Scheme

This scheme is provided by Southdown Housing Association and involves the provision of a social housing property which is leased to Southdown Housing Association and sub-let as supported housing to vulnerable residents. Southdown fulfils the Landlord role during this period, supporting residents to develop the skills and experience to sustain the Tenancy independently. While both schemes operate on a similar basis, ‘My Place’ is targeted specifically towards young people, many of whom are care leavers.

Funding for both schemes, will be significantly reduced during 2019/20 and 2020/21. However, the potential to jointly commission a replacement scheme with West Sussex County Council is currently being explored and it is likely that a replacement service will be commissioned during 2020.

## Stonepillow

Stonepillow provides a range of services to rough sleepers and single homeless adults in Chichester and Arun. Key elements of Stonepillow’s service include:

* **Chichester Hostel**: A 17 bed scheme providing emergency accommodation for single homeless people for up to 28 days
* **Chichester Hub**: ‘Drop in’ day service open 5 days per week in Chichester City Centre
* **Restore Chichester**: Social enterprise providing work related activity and support to formerly homeless people
* **Recovery Service**: A 12 Bed Residential Rehab Service for residents with drug and alcohol issues (based in Bognor Regis)
* **Supported Housing**: A range of move on accommodation units across Arun and Chichester

Stonepillow attracts funding from a variety of sources, the largest of which is West Sussex County Council (WSCC). WSCC’s funding was reduced by 15% in 2019/20 which contributed to a reduction in the opening hours of Chichester Hub. However, Chichester District Council has allocated funding to Stonepillow to support the extended opening hours of Chichester Hub.

## Here to Help

This service provided low level housing related support to older people facing housing difficulties in Arun and Chichester. The service met a range of needs which potentially might have resulted in residents losing their accommodation. Typical issues dealt with included hoarding, disrepair, claims for attendance allowance or assistance with moving to more suitable accommodation. This service has now been decommissioned by WSCC and closed in June 2019.

## Services for Former Offenders

WSCC commission Change Grow Live (CGL) to provide a number of units of accommodation across the Country for offenders who potentially present a risk to the public on release from prison. Residents in these schemes are nominated by the National Probation Service who are also responsible for monitoring risks associated with residents and, where necessary, recalling them to custody.

There is concern that if this service closes as result of WSCC’s funding cuts, the potential exists for high risk offenders to be accommodated alongside vulnerable residents in the private temporary accommodation sector. Chichester District Council is working with other local Government and Criminal Justice partners with a view to maintaining the long term sustainability of this service.

A separate service provided by Home Group for young offenders who are homeless on release from prison closed in March 2019. This has contributed to an increase in offenders seeking help from direct access homelessness providers such as Stonepillow in Chichester.

## Chichester Foyer

Chichester Foyer closed in December 2017. This involved the loss of 55 supported bed spaces for young people aged 16-25. The Council played a key role in finding alternative accommodation for most residents, but the loss of this facility continues to be felt in the District since it represented the only dedicated source of supported housing for young people. A consequence of this is that direct access providers such as Stonepillow have seen an increase in the number of 18-25 year olds seeking help.

## Accommodation Resources and Demand

### Private Rental Market Statistics

Figures published within the table below, illustrate average property rental figures across the District, in contrast with Local Housing Allowance rates. Based upon the figures demonstrated, the average shortfall in LHA rates is £248.94, supporting the difficulties many may face with sustaining tenancies, across the District.

| 1 Oct 17 to 30 Sep 18 | Sample | Av Monthly Rent | Local Housing Allowance per month | Shortfall |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Room | 160 | £430 | £318.85 | £111.15 |
| Studio | 30 | £585 | £318.85 | £266.15 |
| 1 Bedroom | 210 | £691 | £580.75 | £110.25 |
| 2 Bedroom | 420 | £884 | £728.00 | £156.00 |
| 3 Bedroom | 290 | £1,147 | £858.48 | £288.52 |
| 4 Bedroom + | 110 | £1,723 | £1,161.46 | £561.54 |

### Numbers on the Housing Register and size of accommodation required

|  | Apr-14 | Apr-19 |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Size | Number of Households |  |
| 1 Bed Need | 1930 | 663 |
| 2 Bed Need | 957 | 330 |
| 3 Bed Need | 433 | 177 |
| 4 Bed Need | 94 | 64 |
| 5 Bed Need | 5 | 9 |
| Total | 3419 | 1243 |

Figures illustrated within the table above, demonstrate a significant decrease in the number of applications on the housing register for each bedroom category over a 6 year period. This decrease can be justified through the introduction of the Localism Act 2011, under which CDC undertook a review of the Allocation Scheme and implemented stricter eligibility criteria, such as local connection requirements and income level restrictions. This has more so, affected applicants within lower bands on the housing register.

### Priority on the Housing Register

The following table illustrates the level of priority within each band on the Council’s housing register.

| Column1 | Apr-14 | Apr-19 |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Band | Number of Households |  |
| A | 36 | 35 |
| B | 188 | 106 |
| C | 980 | 433 |
| D | 2215 | 669 |
| Total | 3419 | 1243 |

### **Mortgage Repossessions**

Levels of mortgage repossessions have significantly reduced within Chichester over a 6 year period, with figures illustrating a 93% decrease in the levels of repossession.

| Mortgage Repossessions |  |
| --- | --- |
| 2014/15 | 29 |
| 2015/16 | 26 |
| 2016/17 | 32 |
| 2017/18 | 9 |
| 2018/19 | 2 |

## Rough Sleeping

The National Rough Sleeping Strategy sets out the Government’s plan to halve the levels of rough sleeping by 2022 and end it by 2027. It includes a range of commitments, intended both to help those who are sleeping on our streets or currently at risk of doing so, and lays the foundations for a system focused on prevention, early intervention, and a rapid rehousing approach to recovery.

### Levels of Rough Sleeping

|  | 2014/15 | 2015/16 | 2016/17 | 2017/18 | 2018/19 | 2019/20 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| April | 14 | 22 | 22 | 32 | 19 | 16 |
| May | 8 | 21 | 21 | 20 | 10 | 27 |
| June | 15 | 9 | 21 | 22 | 14 | 17 |
| July | 12 | 11 | 21 | 11 | 0 | 21 |
| August | 12 | 10 | 14 | 13 | 12 | 29 |
| September | 21 | 10 | 14 | 15 | 0 | 30 |
| October | 11 | 18 | 19 | 16 | 0 | 34 |
| November | 13 | 17 | 19 | 10 | 15 | 31 |
| December | 19 | 17 | 17 | 15 | 13 |  |
| January | 16 | 17 | 0 | 10 | 15 |  |
| February | 15 | 20 | 19 | 5 | 16 |  |
| March | 15 | 18 | 22 | 12 | 0 |  |

The figures above indicate assessments of the number of individual rough sleepers as collated at monthly rough sleeper panel meetings which the Council co-ordinates. Intelligence is shared between a range of statutory and voluntary agencies with names and details of all those deemed to be sleeping rough. This helps to avoid ‘double counting’ and provides a detailed, up to date picture of individuals’ circumstances and potential success of different forms of intervention.

### Annual Rough Sleeping Count

The annual Rough Sleeping Count is taken yearly in England using street counts, evidence based estimates and estimates informed by spotlight street counts. Local Authorities decide on the best method to use, to assess the number of people sleeping rough in their area, and the count is undertaken on a single night between 1st October - 30th November.

The table below illustrates the number of rough sleepers within the area, over a 6 year period.

| Year | Rough Sleeping Count |
| --- | --- |
| 2014 | 14 |
| 2015 | 17 |
| 2016 | 19 |
| 2017 | 10 |
| 2018 | 16 |
| 2019 | 31 |

## Cold Weather Fund and Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP)

The Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) was delivered in partnership with the homeless charity, Stonepillow. As part of the programme, Stonepillow provided additional emergency accommodation in their existing 12 bed hostel, using the Cold Weather Fund which is accessible over the winter period January – March 2019.

Chichester District Council received approval to allocate a proportion of the Cold Weather Fund to provide cash deposits and rent in advance to enable rough sleepers to secure private rented accommodation, with ongoing support to ensure tenancies are sustained.

Finally, the Cold Weather Fund also afforded individual personalised budgets as an effective tool to encourage and assist rough sleepers onto a resettlement pathway.

## Review of the Homeless Reduction Act (HRA)

| Delivering services under HRA |  |
| --- | --- |
| Number of applications from 01/04/2018 to 31/03/2019 | 619 |
| Number of applications with dependent children or a pregnant female | 227 |
| Number of applications from single people or couples (not pregnant) | 392 |
| Number of advice only cases | 202 |
| Number of prevention duties | 113 |

| Of 113 prevention duties: |
| --- |

* 24/113 Prevention duties ended and relief duties accepted
* 62/113 Homelessness was prevented
* 14/113 Still being prevented
* 13/113 Lost contact or withdrew application

| Of 62 prevention duties that have successfully prevented Homelessness | 62 |
| --- | --- |

* 25/62 Secured private rented accommodation
* 26/62 Secured social housing
* 2/62 Secured other accommodation
* 4/62 Sustained private rented accommodation
* 5/62 Sustained social housing

| Of 170 relief duties | 170 |
| --- | --- |

* 60/170 Homelessness relieved
* 1/170 Refused social housing
* 1/170 died
* 16/170 Still relieving the homelessness
* 45/170 Relief duty ended and main duty decision required
* 14/170 relief duty was referred to local authority with local connection
* 33/170 lost contact or withdrew their application

| Number of relief duties that successfully relieved homelessness | 60 |
| --- | --- |

* 27/60 Secured private rented accommodation
* 26/60 Secured social housing
* 6/60 Secured supported accommodation
* 1/60 Secured other accommodation

| Total number of not homeless decisions | 130 |
| --- | --- |

* 27/130 Secured private rented accommodation
* 19/130 Secured social housing
* 2/130 Secured supported accommodation
* 53/130 Lost contact or withdrew their homeless application
* 18/130 had legal rights to accommodation
* 6/130 Sustained private rented accommodation
* 4/130 Sustained social housing
* 1/130 Sustained supported accommodation

## Tenancy Sustainment Team and CDC Temporary Accommodation

Chichester District Council owns 51 self-contained flats located within the District that are used to provide temporary accommodation for homeless households. Residents in temporary accommodation are assigned a Tenancy Sustainment Officer who supports households with sustaining their accommodation and living independently.

Currently, Chichester District Council has 2 Full Time Tenancy Sustainment Officers, each of whom also provide tenancy support to households housed under the Council’s Home Finder scheme to assist them in sustaining their accommodation in the private sector.

### Housing Welfare Officer

In November 2017, Chichester District Council employed a Housing Welfare Officer to provide assistance and advice to households in debt or facing financial hardship in an effort to reduce homelessness, improve access to housing options and educate households on money management.

### Private Rented Sector Officer

In addition to the Council’s social letting agency the ‘Home Finder scheme, the Council operates the ‘Access PRS’ scheme for single people and couples in housing need but not considered to be in priority need.

The Private Rented Sector Officer’s role is to increase the Council’s access to affordable privately rented homes across the District, for households in housing need.

## Home Finder and Access Private Rented Sector

The Council supports three different initiatives to assist households prevent homelessness by accessing privately rented accommodation.

* **Home Finder** *-*involves private sector which the Council manages directly. The scheme can be used for households with or without a priority need.
* **Access PRS**involves the Council placing households directly into owned and managed properties. The scheme is used for couples and single people without who are not in priority need.
* **Rent in Advance and Deposit Bonds**involves the Council meeting the upfront costs of accessing a privately rented and managed tenancy.  The scheme is used for priority need households.

The numbers of households taking up tenancies under these schemes are shown in the table below.

|  | 2014/15 | 2015/16 | 2016/17 | 2017/18 | 2018/19 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Home Finder | 13 | 8 | 6 | 2 | 3 |
| Access PRS | 4 | 5 | 25 | 33 | 22 |
| Rent in advance and deposit bonds only | 22 | 17 | 19 | 12 | 9 |
| Total | 39 | 30 | 51 | 47 | 34 |

## Rapid Rehousing Pathway Funding – Supported Lettings Officer & Community Outreach Officer

The Rapid Rehousing Pathway was launched as part of the Rough Sleeping Strategy in August 2018. The pathway brings together 4 policy elements (Somewhere Safe to Stay, Supported Lettings, Navigators and Local Lettings Agencies) that will help rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping, access the support and settled housing they need to leave the streets for good. As part of the pathway, in 2019 registered charity Stonepillow employed a full-time Community Outreach Officer and a Supported Lettings Officer on a 12 month pilot, as part of the Pathway.

## Youth Homelessness

The Youth Homeless Prevention Team is commissioned by West Sussex County Council and aims to assist those aged 16-17 at risk of homelessness. The figures illustrated within the table below, demonstrate the number of applicants assisted by the Youth Homeless Prevention Team by Chichester District Council.

|  | 2014/15 | 2015/16 | 2016/17 | 2017/18 | 2018/19 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Chichester District Council | 31 | 22 | 22 | 7 | 18 |

## Care Leavers Service

In 2019, within Chichester District there were 31 individuals aged 18- 21 open to the Leaving Care service provided by the Council, and 6 individuals aged 17 or under due to join the Leaving Care service in 2019/20. These results are illustrated within the table above.

| Local Authority Area | Aged 18-21 open to the leaving care service June 2019 | Aged 17 or under & due to join the leaving care service 2019/20 |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Adur | 17 | 6 |
| Arun | 59 | 26 |
| Chichester | 31 | 6 |
| Crawley | 32 | 8 |
| Horsham | 18 | 66 |
| Mid Sussex | 11 | 8 |
| Worthing | 105 | 25 |
| Accommodated outside West Sussex | 87 | 23 |
| Unknown | 10 | 0 |
| Total open to West Sussex leaving care service or due to join 2019/20 | 370 |  |

## Hospital Discharge Co-Ordinators

This service is commissioned by West Sussex County Council (WSCC) and is provided by Southdown Housing. The service aims to identify patients in NHS acute and mental health services who are at risks of homelessness on discharge from hospital. Chichester benefits from a co-located housing support worker who works is co- located with staff from Sussex Partnership NHS Trust, where she is based on the Ward and able to work directly with patients to sustain existing accommodation arrangements or prepare to secure alternative accommodation on release.

The figures below indicate the numbers of successful interventions to prevent unplanned homelessness applications since the service commenced in 2017.

| Chichester | 2017/18 (Jan 2017 – Mar 2018) | 2018/19 (12 months) | 2019/20 (Apr 2019 – Jun 2019) |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Acute Psychiatric Hospital | 25 | 30 | 10 |
| General Needs Hospital | 6 | 8 | 2 |

## Social Prescribers

Social Prescribing is a new service that has been operational since July 2018. The Social Prescribers work out of GP practices across the District. The team is managed and funded by Chichester District Council in partnership with GP’s, West Sussex Council, Hyde Housing and Voluntary Groups. The team work with individuals who are referred by their GP for support with non-medical problems. Evidence has shown that GP’s are frequently meeting patients who are experiencing issues of isolation and loneliness, wishing to find support groups and/or activities in their local community. Social Prescribers assist individuals with issues include housing associated problems, debt and money management and/or support to apply for benefits/employment.

During their first year, the Social Prescribing Team worked with 596 clients and more than 50% suffered from social isolation or loneliness and approximately half had a mental health issue. The team work with clients for up to six sessions over a period of time. They are skilled in supporting the individual to set realistic and achievable goals, ultimately increasing self-efficacy

## Foodbank Pilot

In August 2018, the co-located floating support officer engaged with people using the Foodbank in Chichester, through 24, two hour sessions. The officer communicated with users, to identify their circumstances and what prompted them to use the Foodbank. Additional data was collected by forms provided to households by staff at the Foodbank, with an overall aim to identify households at risk. The data obtained was analysed by the officer and the pilot provided advice and support to a total of 84 households and delivered 162 individual positive interventions.

Following the pilot, the Council and Chichester Foodbank Centre are working in partnership to secure this service on a permanent basis to ensure, households who are experiencing difficulties are provided with ongoing support services and risk factors such as homelessness are mitigated.

## Rough Sleeper Outreach Worker

In August 2018, Chichester District Council employed a Rough Sleeper Outreach Worker to verify and engage with rough sleepers across the District and bring about life style changes through regular engagement with support services.

The Council is committed to support diverted giving through organisations such as The Greater Change Agenda, and as part of this encourage members of the public to not provide basic essentials to people who seem to be in need but to donate to charities directly so that rough sleepers are encouraged to access services where more than their immediate needs can be met.

## Resources available to the Council

The following section will identify and explain a number of resources available to the Council, Social Services and other Public Authorities to fund the listed services within the above section.

## Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs)

DHPs are available to provide support, normally on a short term basis, in circumstances where a residents housing benefit entitlement is not sufficient to meet the full cost of their accommodation. Applications for DHPs are assessed on a discretionary basis but priority is attached to cases where residents might otherwise be at risk of homelessness.

In 2018/19, the Council received a DHP budget of £202,000 of which £176,000 was spent to assist households with a shortfall in their rent. The DHP budget for 2019/20 is £178,000.

## New Burdens

The Government has committed over £72 million to local authorities to meet the new burdens costs associated with the additional duties contained under the Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA). The total funding received over the period for 2017-2020 is listed within the table below.

|  | 2017/18 | 2018/19 | 2019/20 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| HRA New Burdens | £39,312.00 | £36,010.00 +  £26,000 | £38,065.00 |
| HCLIC New Burdens | £454.00 | £3,582.00 | £n/a |

## Flexible Homelessness Grant

The Temporary Accommodation Management Fee (TAMF) distributed to Local Authorities by the DWP was replaced by the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant in April 2017.

The new grant is expected to empower councils with the freedom to support the full range of homelessness services, allowing councils to plan their homelessness services with certainty.

The Flexible Homelessness Support Grant can be utilised to prevent Homelessness across the Private Rented Sector, Temporary Accommodation and the Socially Rented Sector through the new appointment of the Housing Welfare Officer, Housing Interventions Officer, Private Rented Sector Officer, a Business Support Officer and a Housing Admin Officer.

The table below illustrates the amount of funding received by Chichester District Council as part of the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant.

|  | 2017/18 | 2018/19 | 2019/20 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Flexible Homeless Support | £128,047 | £147,331 | £187,830 |
| HRA IT | n/a | £9,202 | n/a |

## Council owned Temporary Accommodation

The Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) Order 2003 came into force stating that:

* B&B accommodation is not to be considered suitable for families with children or pregnant women.
* Such accommodation should only be used where there is no other suitable accommodation available and in any event only for a maximum of six weeks.

The table below illustrates occupancy levels in nightly paid B&B accommodation for each financial year (2014-2018).

|  | Non self-contained B&B accommodation placed outside the District | Self-contained B&B accommodation placed outside the District | Non self-contained B&B accommodation placed inside the District | Self-contained B&B accommodation placed inside the District | Total |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2014/15 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Households with children and/or pregnant women | 20 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 22 |
| Single or non-pregnant couples | 12 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 13 |
| Total |  |  |  |  | 35 |
| 2015/16 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Households with children and/or pregnant women | 11 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 12 |
| Single or non-pregnant couples | 43 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 46 |
| Total |  |  |  |  | 58 |
| 2016/17 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Households with children and/or pregnant women | 24 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 25 |
| Single or non-pregnant couples | 27 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 30 |
| Total |  |  |  |  | 55 |
| 2017/18 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Households with children and/or pregnant women | 36 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 39 |
| Single or non-pregnant couples | 43 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 48 |
| Total |  |  |  |  | 87 |
| Total (2014-2019) |  |  |  |  | 235 |

Chichester District Council’s currently own and manage 51 units of temporary accommodation within the District. These consist of:

* **6 x Shared Bedsits**
* **2 x Bedsits**
* **26 x 1 Bedroom Flats**
* **9 x 2 Bedroom Flats**
* **3 x 3 Bedroom Flats**
* **1 x 3 Bedroom House**

The Council has made a financial commitment of £1 million to expand its level of temporary accommodation through the purchase of an additional site, which is adjacent to our existing temporary accommodation. This will see our temporary accommodation grow by a further 17 flats.

## The Homeless Prevention Fund

The Homeless Prevention Fund is capital funding for assisting households facing mortgage repossession and for the prevention of homelessness. The objectives of this policy are to:

* Ensure that people in genuine financial hardship are supported to claim any help they are entitled to and provided with free debt advice
* Ensure that vulnerable people are supported to manage their financial affairs effectively including the payment of debt
* To adopt a more preventative approach to indebtedness where appropriate
* Reduce the time households spend in temporary accommodation to minimise the impact of homelessness on households
* Increase the turn-over of temporary self-contained accommodation owned and managed by the Council
* Reduce the use and time spent in Bed & Breakfast accommodation by homeless households, especially outside the District

Homeless Prevention Fund payments will only be available to applicants who are homeless or threatened with homelessness and owed a Prevention or Relief Duty, by the Council in accordance with the Homeless Reduction Act.

# Key Findings

* **Access to housing** - Chichester’s housing market provides few opportunities for low income, newly forming households. Although the privately rented sector has grown few properties are available at or below the level of the Local Housing Allowance. Welfare reforms introduced since 2012 have generally made the situation more difficult for low income households seeking privately rented accommodation. This is compounded by the introduction of Universal Credit and with it the associated fears landlords have of tenants incurring rent arrears.
* **Supply and demand for social housing** – There is a very strong demand for most types of social housing within the District. Although the total number of applicants on the Housing Register has been reduced – through a review process which re-defined eligibility criteria – the number of homes available each year through Registered Providers falls well short of those seeking assistance. The supply of new homes for rent through Registered Providers has been maintained throughout the period but this still falls someway short of meeting current expressed need.
* **Current and Future Levels of Homelessness** – for the reasons given above the overall trend in homelessness over the past five years in Chichester is upwards, although this is not reflected in the figures published for 2018/19. This can be explained by changes in the way customers are recorded using the new government’s prescribed system. A noticeable impact of the rising pressure of homelessness is the increasing reliance on B&B placements.
* **Introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act – The** Council has successfully introduced the new approach to homelessness and made effective use of the additional funding provided to offer a more holistic service to residents.
* **Partnership Initiatives to Prevent Homelessness** -The Council is involved in a wide range of partnerships to prevent homelessness, many of these depend on external funding or commissioning arrangements. Whilst many of these initiatives have been successful the short term nature of the fun ding involved makes long term planning difficult, for both agencies and delivery partners. The process of bidding is also resource intensive especially given the short time scales which are frequently involved.
* **Housing Related Support Services** – The reduction in funding for these services over the period has been a major cause for uncertainty over the past five years and especially within the last 18 months. The loss of key services such as the Chichester Foyer and reductions to services such as Stonepillow, the various Offenders’ services amongst others have all impacted on the demands the Council and its partners face.
* **Rough Sleeping** – The most disturbing aspect of the Homelessness Review is the increase in rough sleeping in Chichester’s City Centre. This is not unique to Chichester and is being experience elsewhere. We do not consider that this is attributable to one specific cause but a reflection of several of the issues previously discussed such as welfare reform, access to private renting and reductions in housing support – as well as wider issues in the health and social care sector affecting the care of adults with mental health and substance misuse.