

Appendix
Waverley's Homelessness Review
2023 – 2028
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Waverley's Homelessness Review

1. Introduction

Under the Homelessness Act 2002, the Council is required to produce a Homelessness Strategy for its area at least every 5 years. The previous Strategy was published in July 2018. The Strategy must be based on the results of a Homelessness Review.

The purpose of the Homelessness Review is to:

1. Set the scene as to the current and likely future levels of homelessness and housing need.
2. Identify what is currently being done and by whom to prevent and tackle homelessness.
3. Identify the resources available to the Council and its statutory and voluntary partners to prevent homeless and to provide accommodation and support to those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

The following document updates some of the information gathered as part of the previous homelessness reviews and provides additional information where necessary and relevant.

The gaps and areas to improve are then highlighted and these form the key areas to address in Waverley's Homelessness Strategy.

The first section of the review contains an overview of the Geography and Demography of Waverley.

2. Geography and Demography of Waverley

Waverley is one of 11 local authorities in Surrey. The borough covers 133 square miles and approximately 92% of this area is rural with 61% lying within the Metropolitan Green Belt.¹ The designation of land as part of the Green Belt is intended to prevent urban sprawl encroaching on the countryside and preserve the character of historic towns. This means that the borough has a strongly rural character as each of the urban areas is separated by dense woodland so even when relatively close to urban areas the sightline is predominantly rural.

Waverley has a population of 125,118; three quarters of which live in the four largest towns: Farnham, Godalming, Haslemere, and Cranleigh (in descending population size order).² It is estimated that the population of Waverley will increase by 2% over the lifetime of this strategy.³ Waverley is less ethnically diverse when compared to Surrey and England as a whole. In the 2021 census 93.7% of Waverley residents described themselves as white, whereas across Surrey this was 85.5% and across England it was 81.7%.⁴

Like the rest of the UK, Waverley has an ageing population. In the 2021 census, 22% of the population was aged over 65 and this is predicted to increase to 25% over the course of this strategy (2021 census, 2018 population estimates).⁵ Furthermore, 3.7% of the population of Waverley are over 85, which is the highest proportion in Surrey.⁶ This means that within Waverley there is high and rising demand for housing that caters for the specific needs of elderly people such as extra care and specialist dementia care accommodation. Furthermore, in the 2021 census 26.7% of households stated that they included one or more people with a disability which further increases demand for accessible and supported housing.⁷

Relative to the rest of the UK, Waverley has very low levels of economic deprivation. Its unemployment rate is 2.4% compared to an average of 3.7% across Great Britain (ONS NOMIS statistics 2022).⁸ It was ranked as the 5th least deprived area out of the 317 local authority areas in England in the 2019 Indices of Multiple Deprivation.⁹

¹ Waverley Borough Council. (2012). Core Strategy Pre- Submission, p.15.

² ONS. (2020). Mid-Year Parish Population Estimates 2019. Available at: [Parish population estimates for mid-2001 to mid-2019 based on best-fitting of output areas to parishes - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/articles/mid-year-parish-population-estimates-2019) [Accessed 17/01/23].

³ ONS. (2020). Population Predictions Local Authorities. Available at: [Population projections – local authorities: SNPP Z1 - Office for National Statistics](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationprojections/articles/population-projections-local-authorities-snp-z1). [Accessed: 17/02/23].

⁴ ONS. (2022). Ethnic Group Data from 2021 Census. Available at: [Ethnic group, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/ethnicity/articles/ethnic-group-england-and-wales) [Accessed: 19/01/23].

⁵ ONS. (2022). Age Structure of the Population. [Population and household estimates, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/ageandlifeexpectancy/articles/population-and-household-estimates-england-and-wales) [Accessed: 17/01/23]. ONS (2020). Population Predictions Local Authorities.

⁶ ONS. (2022). Age Structure of the Population.

⁷ ONS. (2023). Disability Data from 2021 Census. Available at: [Disability, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/disability/articles/disability-england-and-wales) [Accessed: 26/01/23].

⁸ ONS NOMIS. (2021). Labour Market Profile – Waverley. Available at: [Labour Market Profile - Nomis - Official Census and Labour Market Statistics \(nomisweb.co.uk\)](https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/labour-market-profile) [Accessed: 27/01/23].

⁹ Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government. (2019). English Indices of Multiple Deprivation. Available at: [English indices of deprivation 2019 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-multiple-deprivation-2019) [Accessed: 26/01/23].

This measure uses seven indicators to give each area a comparable deprivation score. Waverley ranked above 38 on six of the indicators demonstrating that residents enjoy above average incomes and life expectancy, and below average vulnerability to crime. The indicator that Waverley was ranked lowest on was the physical and financial accessibility of housing and local services, in which it was ranked 111th. This is because while there is relatively little deprivation within Waverley, accessing services such as healthcare can be difficult for those living in isolated rural communities and housing is often inaccessible due to the high cost.

The median annual gross pay for full time workers resident in Waverley in 2022 was £44,657 which is significantly higher than the national median which was £33,197. However, it is also significantly higher than the median annual gross pay for those that work in Waverley which was £30,797 in 2022.¹⁰ This is because the location of Waverley means that many residents commute out to higher paying jobs in London and the surrounding areas, while other people commute in to fill the lower income jobs within the borough.

Waverley Housing Stock

There are currently 52,448 households in Waverley.¹¹ In line with the concentration of the population within Waverley, the housing is concentrated around the four main urban areas: Farnham, Godalming, Haslemere, and Cranleigh. Of these 52,488 households, 73% own their home, 12% live in social rented housing, and 15% rent privately or live rent free.¹² Compared to national averages Waverley has a relatively high rate of home ownership as nationally 63% of households own their home.¹³ This restricts access to social and private rented housing by limiting supply, increasing competition, and driving up prices.

The rural and predominantly wealthy nature of the borough mean that detached homes are the most prevalent form of housing, comprising 41.5% of the housing stock and nearly 31% of homes in Waverley have four or more bedrooms.¹⁴ This prevalence of large homes, combined with an ageing population, means that 79.2% homes in Waverley are under-occupied. Under-occupation can place pressure on the housing stock as it means that households with multiple people such as families with children can struggle to find housing that meets their needs. However, only 2.3% of households were recorded as overcrowded compared to a national average of 4.3%.¹⁵ So, in Waverley this reduced supply drives up prices, but it has not led to high levels of overcrowding.

¹⁰ ONS NOMIS (2022). Annual Survey of Earnings and Hours Worked. Available at: [Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings - Data Sources - home - Nomis - Official Census and Labour Market Statistics \(nomisweb.co.uk\)](https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/data/sources/annual-survey-of-earnings-and-hours-worked) [Accessed 01/02/23].

¹¹ ONS. (2023). Tenure Type Data from 2021 Census. Available at: [Housing, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/housing) [Accessed 27/01/23].

¹² ONS. (2023). Tenure Type Data from 2021 Census.

¹³ ONS. (2023). Tenure Type Data from 2021 Census.

¹⁴ ONS NOMIS. (2011). Accommodation Type by Household Spaces. Available at: [Your Data - Nomis - Official Census and Labour Market Statistics \(nomisweb.co.uk\)](https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/data/sources/your-data-nomis-official-census-and-labour-market-statistics) [Accessed: 27/01/23].

¹⁵ ONS (2023). Occupancy Data from 2021 Census. Available at: [Housing, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/housing) [Accessed 27/01/23].

Waverley Housing Affordability

The provision of housing that is accessible to those who work within the borough has both social and economic value. Being able to live in the area in which you work, in housing with long term security allows you to become an integrated part of the community bringing social value. Furthermore, essential workers in services such as education and healthcare that are typically on lower incomes will struggle to find secure and affordable housing when housing costs remain this high. This means that it is harder for these services to recruit and retain staff, impacting service delivery. As the population ages the demand for care workers and healthcare services is only set to increase, worsening this problem.

As described above, Waverley has very low levels of economic deprivation relative to the rest of the country but does face challenges in terms of the accessibility of housing and local services. This inaccessibility of housing is largely determined by the high housing costs. In November 2022 the average house price in Waverley was £580,965 which is almost double the national average of £315,073.¹⁶ More importantly in terms of affordability, this means that the average house price is approximately 18 times the median salary of those that work within the borough. This is the 8th highest ratio of all local authorities within England and Wales. Using these figures and assuming the mortgage will be 90% of the value of the property and four times the household income, an annual household income of £130,717 is necessary to purchase a home that costs the median price within Waverley. Even when using the lower quartile house price, £377,500, under the same assumptions, a household income of £84,937.50 is necessary. Given the median salary of those that work within Waverley is £30,797, home ownership within the borough is inaccessible to most.

For these households finding rented housing is their only option. However, the cost of renting in Waverley is high, relative to both local incomes and the cost of renting in the rest of the country. The median private rent in Waverley in the 12 months leading up to September 2022 was £1,155 which is 44% higher than the national median of £800 (Private Rental Market Statistics). Assuming that rented housing is affordable when the monthly rent is no more than 30% of the household income, households require an annual income of £46,200 to access the median private rented home in Waverley. In comparison, as the average monthly rent for social rented housing in Waverley in the 12 months leading up to April 2022 was £499.56, an annual income of £21,647 is necessary to access social rented housing.¹⁷ As lower quartile earnings in September 2021 were £21,047 this demonstrates that even social rented housing is not affordable to those on the lowest incomes, without accessing some kind of financial support.

Affordability analysis carried out in 2021 demonstrated that based on lower quartile housing costs around two-fifths of households have an income below the level necessary to afford private rented housing. It is these households that rely on affordable housing. Affordable housing is defined by the National Planning Policy Framework as “housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the

¹⁶ UK House Price Index. (2023). House Price Statistics Waverley. Available at: [UK House Price Index \(data.gov.uk\)](https://www.data.gov.uk) [Accessed: 02/02/23].

¹⁷ WBC and RP stock data.

market.”¹⁸ This includes social (typically 55-60% of market rent) or affordable (80% of market rent) rented housing, discounted market sale housing, and shared ownership. When this housing is built, it is safeguarded as affordable housing in perpetuity by a legal agreement that ensures that upon re-let or re-sale, it is again available at a discounted rate to those whose needs are not met by the market. Exceptions apply to this such as properties purchased through Right to Buy or shared ownership staircasing.

There are currently 7,304 affordable homes in Waverley, of which 89% are social rented homes and 10% are shared ownership. The remaining 1% is made up of equity loan, leasehold, and shared equity housing. Of these 7,304 homes, 34% are provided by Private Registered Providers of Social Housing and the rest are provided by Waverley Borough Council. Most of the shared ownership homes, 93%, are provided by the Private Registered Providers, as all but 100 of the 4,820 homes provided by Waverley Borough Council are let at social rent.¹⁹

¹⁸ Department for Levelling Up, Housing, and Communities. (2012). National Planning Policy Framework. Available at: [National Planning Policy Framework - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/262402/nppf-2012.pdf) [Accessed: 02/02/23].

¹⁹ WBC and RP stock data

3. Homelessness - National Context

Homelessness Assessments: January to March 2019 - 2023

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
England – Assessments	76,520	78,890	71,960	76,880	83,240
England - prevention or relief duty owed	71,980	75,140	68,250	74,230	79,840
South East – Assessments	10,680	11,440	10,320	10,150	11,860
South East – prevention or relief duty owed	10,020	10,740	9,570	9,590	10,930

Households in temporary accommodation – 31 March 2023

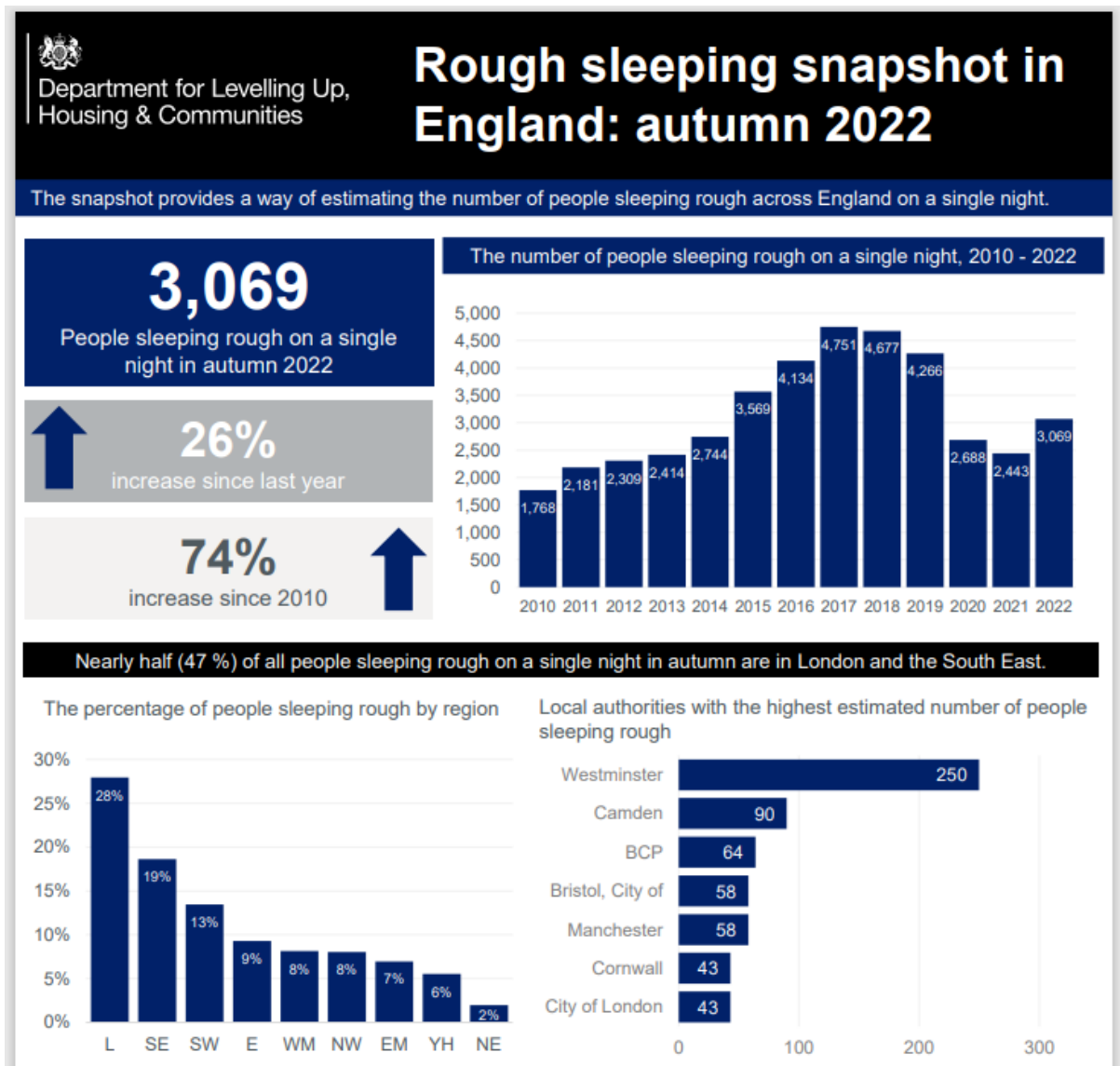
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
England	85,040	92,190	95,450	95,060	104,510
South East	8,870	9,640	10,370	10,930	12,320
Surrey	832	949	797	784	935

Analysis

The tables show a worrying increase in homelessness demand and the need for households to be placed into emergency accommodation. The spike in assessments and temporary accommodation in March 2020 reflects the impact of Covid pandemic and the 'Everyone In' initiative whereby all rough sleepers were required to be offered emergency accommodation. Worryingly, homelessness numbers and households being placed in temporary accommodation are now higher than in the pandemic, reflecting the economic challenges caused by the pandemic in addition to other factors such as the 'cost of living crisis', Ukrainian war, Afghan resettlement scheme etc.

Rough Sleeping

Estimated number of people sleeping rough on a single night in autumn in England since 2010.



Area	2021	2022	Difference	% Change
Yorkshire and The Humber	166	170	4	2
North East	48	61	13	27
East Midlands	175	213	38	22
East of England	241	285	44	18
North West	200	247	47	24
West Midlands	194	250	56	29
South West	334	413	79	24
South East	445	572	127	29
London	640	858	218	34
Rest of England	1,803	2,211	408	23
England	2,443	3,069	626	26

Nearly half (47%) of all people sleeping rough on a single night in autumn are in London and the South East.

Rough sleeping increased in every region compared to the previous year, with London increasing the most (34%), followed by the South East (29%) and the West Midlands (29%)

The Government's *Rough Sleeping Strategy* was published on 3 September 2022. [Ending Rough Sleeping for Good \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

The strategy outlined a £2bn funding commitment over three years to intensify efforts to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping. The goal of the strategy is that by 2025 'rough sleeping is to be prevented wherever possible but when it does occur, it must be rare, brief and non-recurring'.

Crisis Homelessness Monitor 2023

[homelessness-monitor-england_report-2023_v11.pdf \(crisis.org.uk\)](https://www.crisis.org.uk/homelessness-monitor-england-report-2023-v11.pdf)

'The Crisis homelessness monitor is a longitudinal study providing an independent analysis of the homelessness impacts of recent economic and policy developments across Great Britain. Separate reports are produced for England, Scotland and Wales. This eleventh annual report updates our account of how homelessness stands in England in 2023, or as close to 2023 as data availability allows. It also

highlights emerging trends and forecasts some of the likely future changes, identifying the developments likely to have the most significant impacts on homelessness’.

The key findings section is as follows:

Key Findings

These findings come from research methods including a survey of local authorities, interviews with key informants in the public and voluntary sectors, and a statistical modelling exercise that estimates levels of 'core' homelessness and projects trends in these forms of homelessness into the future.

- Some 290,000 eligible households sought help from local authorities on grounds of homelessness in 2021/22. While those judged at risk of homelessness within 56 days increased by 10% over the year, applicants assessed as actually homeless fell by 4%. Nonetheless a large majority of local authority survey respondents (85%) perceived that homelessness service ‘footfall’ had increased in the preceding year - the highest number to say this in any year since the Homelessness Monitor: England local authority survey began. 88% of councils reported an increase in requests for support from those evicted from the private rented sector while 93% anticipated a further increase over the coming year.
- Since bottoming out in 2010/11, total temporary accommodation placements had more than doubled to over 100,000 households by 31st December 2022. Within this, Bed and Breakfast hotel placements have risen more than five-fold since their 2009 nadir. Having increased sharply during the early part of the pandemic, Bed and Breakfast placements once again climbed steeply during 2022, up by 32% in the year to Q4 2022.
- Key informants reported that opportunities for upstream homelessness prevention are contracting because of sustained cuts to public services, a reduction in the supply of affordable rental properties, and a squeeze on household budgets. Deep cuts to Discretionary Housing Payments have further constrained the ability of local authorities to prevent homelessness.
- Following several years of decline, the number of people seen sleeping rough in England grew in 2022. At 3,069 in November of that year, recorded rough sleeping was 26% up on the equivalent figure twelve months earlier. London-specific data also indicates rising rough sleeping since 2021, with around half of those sleeping on the streets of the capital non-UK nationals, many of whom will have No Recourse to Public Funds or other restricted eligibility for statutory support.
- The launch of a refreshed Rough Sleeping Strategy in September 2022 was welcomed by key informants, particularly with regard to its confirmation of sustained investment in the Rough Sleeping Initiative. However, acute concerns remain about addressing rough sleeping amongst people with No Recourse to Public Funds or other restricted eligibility to statutory support, as

pandemic-associated emergency accommodation options for this group have contracted sharply after the ending of specialist public health funding in April 2022.

- 'Core homelessness' in England – a concept which captures the most acute forms of homelessness – is estimated to have totalled 242,000 in 2022, compared to 206,000 people affected a decade ago. This means that on a given night, 1 in 100 households in England are experiencing the worst forms of homelessness.
- Baseline forecasts show core homelessness rising significantly in the immediate future, with overall core homelessness in 2024 one fifth higher than 2020 levels. Current drivers of these increases relate primarily to inflation squeezing real incomes and increasing poverty and destitution, alongside rising private rents and evictions, and declining social rented lettings.
- In the shorter term, the most effective policies for reducing core homelessness would be allocation of a significant proportion of social lettings to core homeless households, increasing the level of the Local Housing Allowance, and maximising prevention activity to the level of the higher performing local authorities.

[Homelessness Monitor 2023 | England | Crisis UK](#)

Afghan Resettlement

As at end of June 2023 the total number of arrivals to the UK as a result of the Afghanistan withdrawal was 24,600. Of these 12,788 individuals have been granted indefinite leave to remain.

At the end of June 2023, 6,575 people were housed in temporary accommodation – bridging hotels or serviced accommodation and 10,983 moved to a home with a further 409 matched to a home and waiting to move in.

In May 2023 the Home Office introduced a new one offer accommodation matching process. If households choose to refuse an offer they are required to leave the bridging hotel and make their own accommodation arrangements. In such instances they can approach a local authority as homeless.

Ukraine Resettlement

As at 10 October 2023, 242,300 Ukrainian Scheme visas holders had been issued - 70,400 under the Ukraine family scheme and 171,800 under the Ukraine sponsorship Scheme.

Inevitably, arrangements to join family or to stay with volunteer host families can break down and this can result in households applying as homeless to local authorities.

As at 31 Aug 2023, local authorities had accepted a homelessness prevention or relief duty to 7760 Ukrainian households, of which 5080 were families with children. 730 households were in temporary accommodation and 3690 had had an offer of settled accommodation.

4. Funding and Data

Extra Government funding has been crucial in enabling Waverley being to implement the HRA 2017 legislation from 2018 and maintaining its efforts to keep the number of households being placed into temporary accommodation to a minimum. The sums awarded are outlined below:

New burdens funding

To cover the additional administrative costs of implementing the new prevention and relief framework in the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (HRA 2017).

Waverley's allocation:

2017-18	£22,396
2018-19	£20,514
2019-20	£21,685
IT Funding	£9,202

Total: £73,797

Homelessness Prevention Grant (previously known as Flexible Homelessness Grant)

Waverley's allocation:

2017-18 -	£131,383
2018-19 -	£151,169
2019-20 -	£479,932
2020-21 -	£479,932
2021-22 -	£603,670
2022-23 -	£603,670
2023-24 -	£616,834

Total: £3,066,590

In addition to the above payments, Waverley has also received a number of one-off or top-up payments relating to specific funding challenges. These have primarily been linked to the impact of the COVID pandemic but more recently they have been to do with the Afghan and Ukrainian crises.

The funding has primarily been used to procure additional supported housing bedspaces in addition to funding additional staffing and the costs in helping clients secure private accommodation.

A potential very significant risk for Waverley is that following a consultation exercise, DLUHC have amended the formula for the grant. Under the revised formula there is the potential for Waverley's grant to reduce from £622,744 24-25 to £346,380 in 25-26. **This 44.4% reduction, unless subsequently revised, represents a very**

significant threat to Waverley’s ability to continue to prevent and relieve homelessness.

Homelessness data

One of the key changes brought about under the Homelessness Reduction Act is the requirement for Waverley to collect a considerable amount of data from each applicant and then submit anonymised data on a quarterly basis to the Government (Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities - DLUHC). This enables the Government to analyse and publish the data and monitor trends in homelessness.

Below is a screen grab from 2023 showing Waverley’s performance in both submitting reliable data and performance in completing cases.

Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities

1) Please select a local authority
Waverley

The overall quality RAG rating is determined by the lowest RAG rating of the four measures:

1. Upload date - shows whether the local authority submitted their data on time. This is Green if data was submitted on time; Red otherwise.
2. Cases Submitted with errors - gives percentage of cases in their submission that contained errors. This is Green if 99% or more of cases were submitted without errors; Amber if between 85-98% of cases were submitted without errors; Red otherwise.
3. Duties Ending - gives an indication of whether a local authority is closing and recording their cases by looking at the ratio of duties ending in the quarter to duties owed in the latest two quarters. This is Green if the number of duties ending is more than 50% of those owed; Amber if the number of duties ending is between 35-50% of those owed; Red otherwise.
4. Published data - shows whether the local authority provided data they signed off as

Overall Quality of Data Submission	
Green	
Upload Date	This local authority uploaded data on time
Green	
Cases Submitted with Errors	This local authority submitted all or more than 99% of their cases without errors.
Green	
Duties Ending	This local authority is submitting data which indicates that they are completing cases
Green	
Published data	This local authority provided data which is accurate and has been published
Green	

[Click here to return to the summary page](#)



Percentage of duties ending in Accommodation

1) Please select a local authority

Waverley

Percentage of prevention and relief
duties owed that ended in
accommodation secured



This measure shows the percentage of prevention and relief duties that ended with accommodation secured for at least 6 months. The measure uses the number of duties that ended in accommodation secured as a proportion of the number of prevention and relief duties owed this quarter. This gives an indication of performance with ending a prevention or relief duty with a positive outcome.

This measure shows red for local authorities in the bottom 25%, green for authorities in the top 25% and amber otherwise.

Prevention duties include any activities aimed at preventing a household threatened with homelessness within 56 days from becoming homeless. This would involve activities to enable an applicant to remain in their current home or find alternative accommodation in order to prevent them from becoming homeless. The duty lasts for 56 days but may be extended if the local authority is continuing with efforts to prevent homelessness.

Relief duties are owed to households that are already homeless and require help to secure settled accommodation. This would involve activities to find accommodation to relieve their homelessness. The duty lasts 56 days and can only be extended by a local authority if the households would not be owed the main homelessness duty.

[Click here to return to the summary page](#)

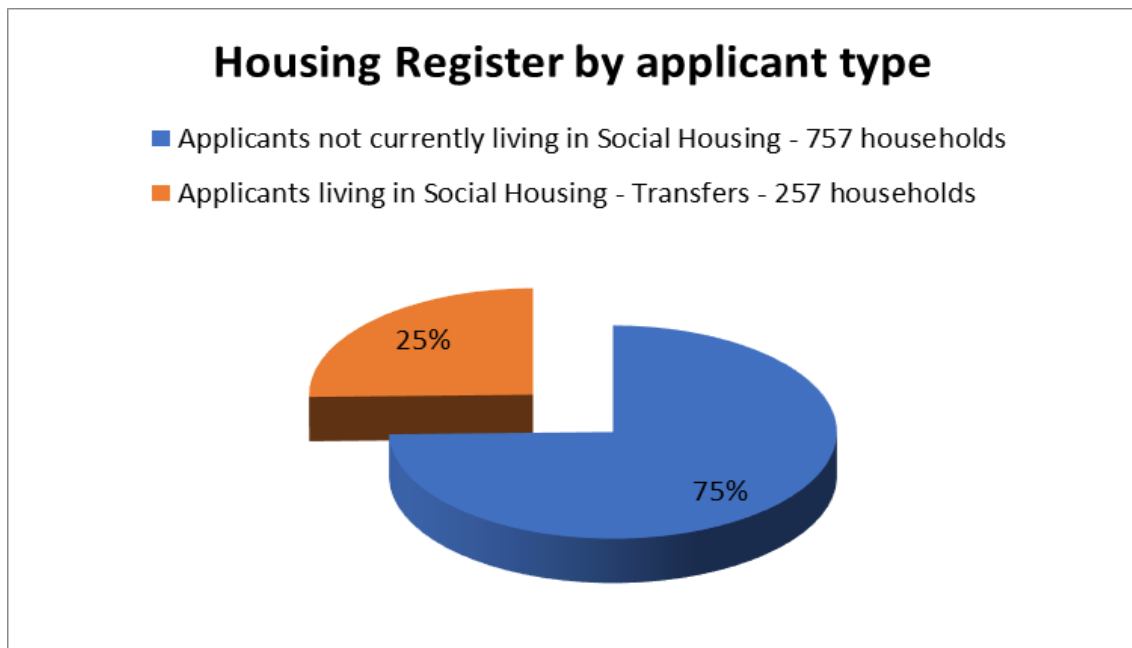
5. Housing Register, Stock and Lettings information for Waverley

a) New housing applications registered each year

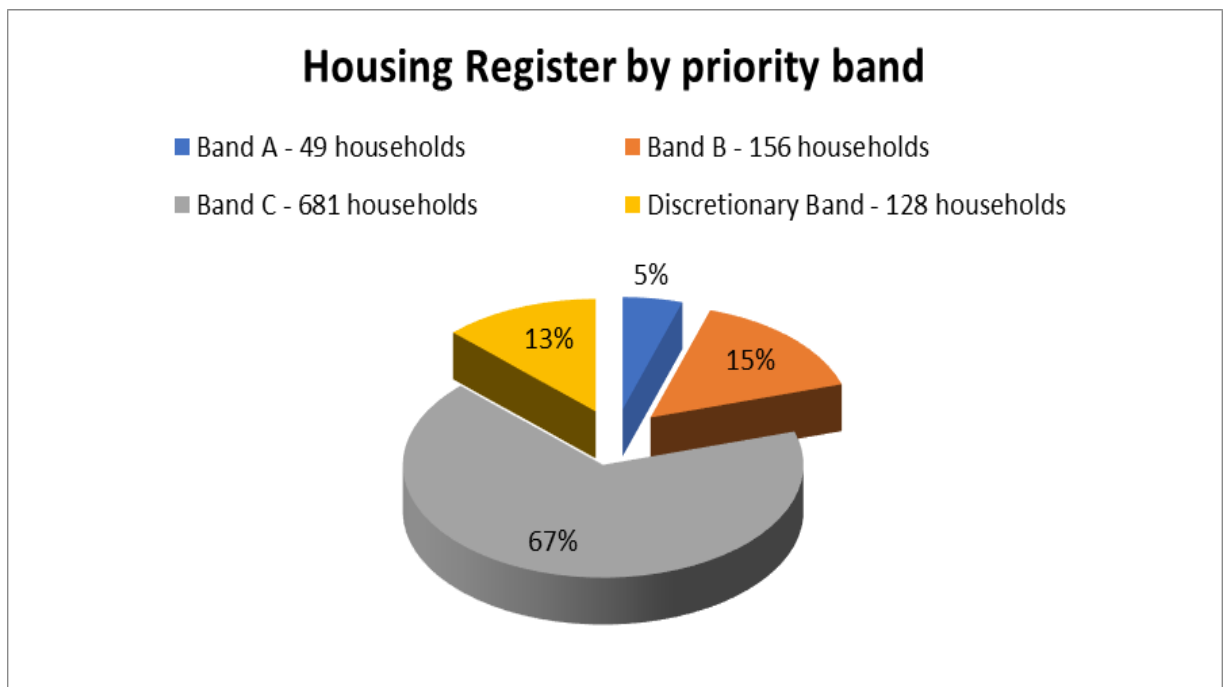
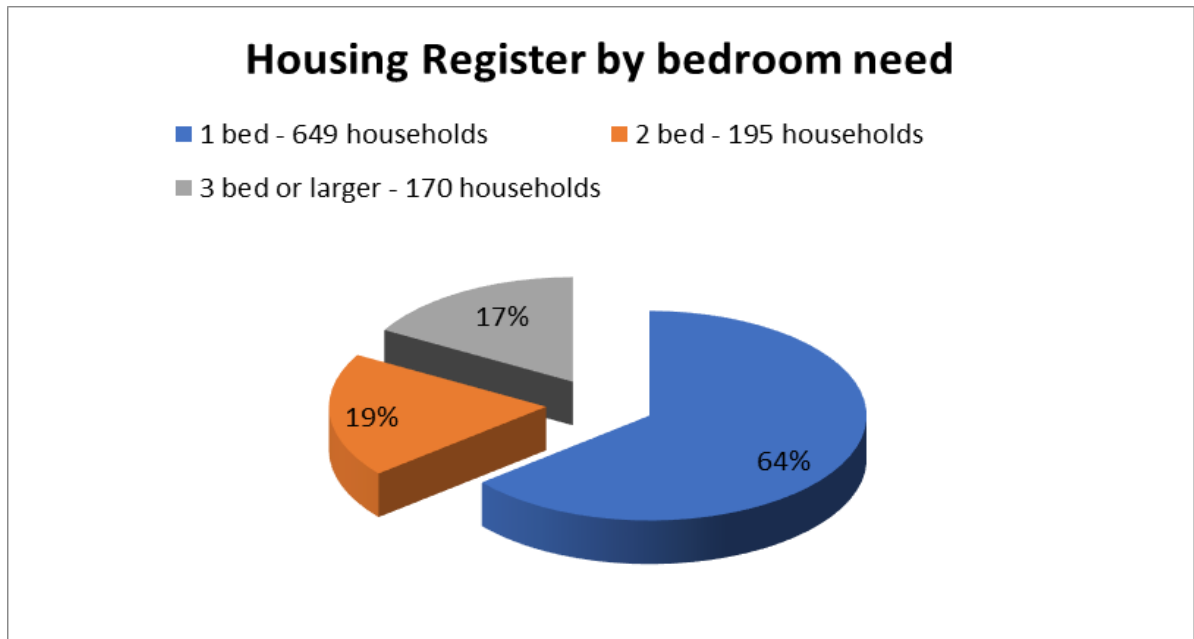
	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23
	503	520	561	499	423	441	566	561	585
Of which transfers	134 27%	136 26%	152 27%	144 29%	148 35%	140 32%	181 32%	166 30%	181 31%

b) Housing Register applicants as at 1 April 2023

The Housing Register shows the number of households in housing need and eligible to be considered for social housing in Waverley.



Housing Register applicants as at 1 April 2023 Cont.



Over 50% of households on the Housing Register (529 households) are either living in private rented accommodation or living with friends or relatives. This means that they are potentially at risk of being made homeless between 28 and 56 days.

c) Waverley Housing Stock information

Social rented housing stock in Waverley as at 1 April 2023 – Council

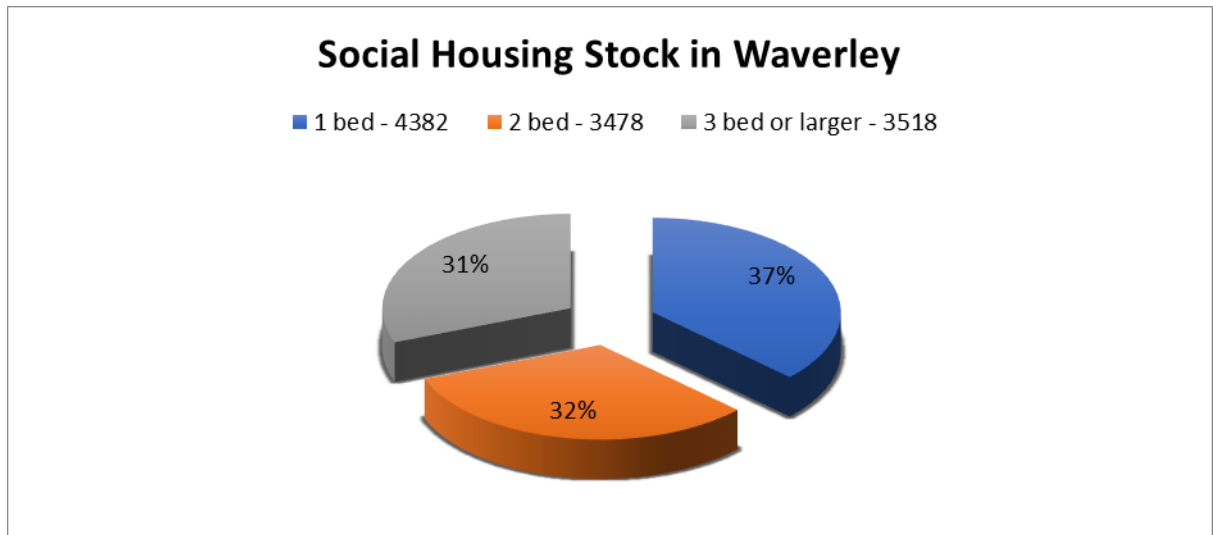
Area	Senior Living 1 bed	Senior Living 2 bed	General Needs 1 Bed	General Needs 2 Bed	General Needs 3+ Bed	Total
Alfold	0	0	8	5	13	26
Badshot Lea	0	0	28	3	13	44
Beacon Hill	0	0	25	0	17	42
Bourne	0	0	10	3	20	33
Bramley	25	3	71	33	55	187
Brook	0	0	0	0	2	2
Chiddingfold	0	0	46	39	43	128
Churt	0	0	46	7	19	72
Cranleigh	26	6	172	86	106	396
Dockenfield	0	0	0	1	12	13
Dunsfold	0	0	33	3	11	47
Ellens Green	0	0	5	0	0	5
Elstead	0	0	73	26	50	149
Ewhurst	0	0	41	18	17	76
Farncombe	32	1	226	213	208	680
Farnham Town	57	4	160	155	174	550
Folly Hill	0	0	4	25	37	66
Frensham	0	0	24	5	15	44
Godalming	0	0	123	177	109	409
Grayswood	0	0	0	6	2	8
Hambledon	0	0	13	5	4	22
Hascombe	0	0	6	4	4	14
Haslemere	0	0	73	126	95	294
Heath End	0	0	18	20	35	73
Hindhead	0	0	17	12	10	39
Milford	21	10	72	74	51	228
Rowley	0	0	0	0	4	4
Shamley Green	0	0	32	34	22	88
Shottermill	30	0	92	53	80	255
Thursley	0	0	4	3	3	10
Tilford	0	0	1	2	1	4
Upper Hale	0	0	22	0	13	35
Weybourne	0	0	24	1	16	41
Witley	0	0	56	47	59	162
Wonersh	0	0	15	16	8	39
Woolmer Hill	0	0	22	13	38	73
Wrecclesham	31	1	79	177	170	458
Total	222	25	1641	1392	1536	4816

c) Waverley Housing Stock information cont.

Social/affordable rented housing stock in Waverley - Housing Association

	Bedsit / 1 bed	2 bed	3+ bed	Total
Housing Association	2519	2061	1982	6562

Total Social Rented Housing Stock in Waverley – Council and Housing Association - by number of bedrooms



New Social rented housing supply and loss through Right to Buy (RTB) –

	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23	Total
New Build (HA)	112	147	93	187	283	822
New Build (Council)	45	3	37	5	21	111
Loss through RTB	14	14	15	28	17	88
Total	153	136	115	164	287	845

d) Lettings - Who was rehoused 2022-2023?

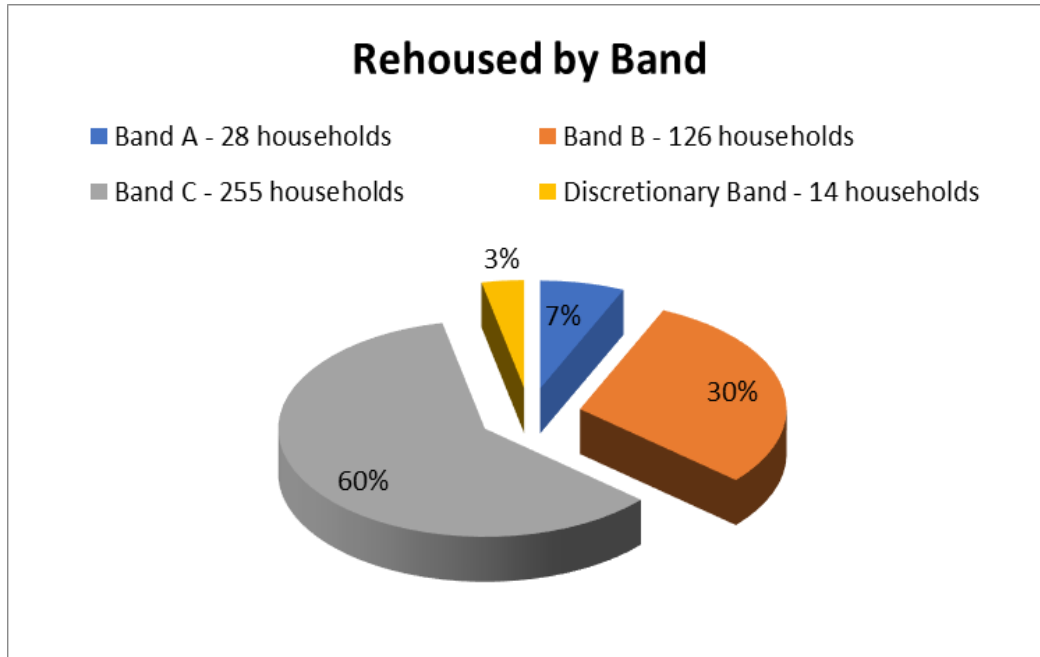
Council homes let

Area	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed or larger	Total
Alfold	0	0	0	0
Badshot Lea	3	0	1	1
Beacon Hill	3	0	1	4
Bourne	0	0	0	0
Bramley	16	3	1	20
Chiddingfold	2	3	1	6
Churt	2	0	0	2
Cranleigh	18	3	3	24
Dockenfield	0	1	1	2
Dunsfold	3	0	0	3
Ellens Green	0	0	0	0
Elstead	2	1	1	4
Ewhurst	5	2	2	9
Farncombe	27	14	5	46
Farnham Town	19	5	4	28
Folly Hill	0	0	0	0
Frensham	1	0	0	1
Godalming	11	18	2	31
Grayswood	0	0	0	0
Hambledon	0	0	0	0
Hascombe	0	0	0	0
Haslemere	5	3	7	15
Heath End	0	1	0	1
Hindhead	3	0	0	3
Milford	15	1	2	18
Shamley Green	3	0	0	3
Shottermill	6	6	1	13
Thursley	0	0	0	0
Tilford	0	0	0	0
Upper Hale	0	0	0	0
Weybourne	2	0	0	2
Witley	5	4	0	9
Wonersh	1	2	0	3
Woolmer Hill	3	1	0	4
Wrecclesham	11	6	6	23
Total	163	74	38	275

d) Lettings - Who was rehoused 2022-2023? – cont.

Housing association homes let 2022-2023

	1bed	2bed	3+bed	Total
Housing Association	68	56	24	148

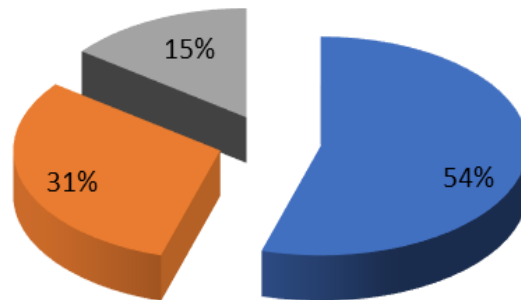


The majority of homes (60%) were let to applicants in band C.

d) Lettings - Who was rehoused 2022-2023? - cont.

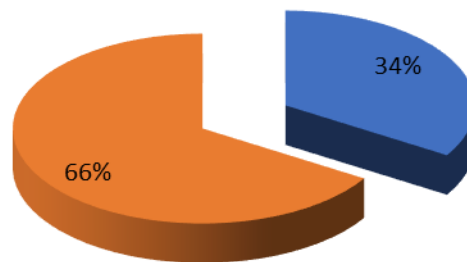
Rehoused by bedroom number

- One bed - 231 households
- Two bed - 130 households
- Three bed or larger - 62 households



Rehoused by applicant type

- Applicants in Social Housing - Transfers - 143 households
- Applicants not previously living in Social Housing - 280 households



d) Lettings - Who was rehoused 2022-2023? - cont.

Housing Register applicants rehoused into stock type

	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23	Average per year
Council	298	278	269	276	225	260	250	275	266 (75%)
Housing Association	70	49	36	85	120	83	139	148	91 (25%)
Total	368	327	305	361	345	343	389	423	357
Total as a % of Housing Register applicants	24%	22%	22%	35%	35%	32%	38%	42%	31%

How long does it take to bid successfully for a new home?

The time that applicants wait on the Housing Register depends on their priority band and how flexible they are in regard to where they want to live. The average number of days that applicants had to wait before being re-housed during 2018-2023 was:

Averages	Band A	Band B	Band C	Discretionary Pool	Average by bed size
1 bedroom	513	585	579	326	567
2 bedroom	510	542	751	25	702
3+ bedrooms	459	547	877	329	646
Average by band	500	562	666	309	622

6. Homelessness in Waverley

Rough Sleeping in Waverley (annual autumn estimate)

2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
0	3	0	2	4	1	2	4	3	2	6	?

The Council is required by the Government to carry out a rough sleeping estimate each autumn. It does this with the help of our statutory and voluntary partners such as the Police, Citizens Advice Waverley, faith groups, Probation and the Council's park rangers. It is important to stress that the relatively low numbers of estimated rough sleeping in Waverley does not necessarily tell the whole story. Rough sleepers sometimes gravitate to areas where there is night-shelter provision. Given that Guildford and Woking have night shelter/homeless hostel provision, it is reasonable to conclude that some rough sleepers with a connection to Waverley sleep rough in the Guildford and Woking area and would be included in their rough sleeping counts/estimates. Anecdotal evidence from statutory and voluntary partners in Guildford and Woking bears this out. Waverley commissions bedspaces at the York Road Project, Woking for Waverley clients and experience has shown that when some of these clients unfortunately have to be evicted due to behavioural issues, they can sometimes remain in the Woking area.

Households contacting the Housing Options Team regarding homelessness 2018 - 2023

18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23
729	672	622	695	744

6. Homelessness in Waverley – cont.

Homeless households in temporary accommodation as at 31 March 2008 - 2023

09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
5	7	2	2	1	4	5	1	1	0	2	5	3	1	8

Homeless households in temporary accommodation in Surrey as at 31 March 2015 – 2023

	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
EBC	38	46	43	26	38	67	49	70	99
EEBC	156	156	155	166	161	219	242	240	224
GBC	34	46	61	57	48	44	41	39	44
MVDC	39	39	48	37	33	49	35	48	55
RBBC	136	142	130	139	153	159	148	151	169
RBC	62	68	101	76	81	78	72	48	47
SBC	113	117	103	108	97	110	114	103	123
SHBC	44	48	49	39	31	39	29	29	23
TDC	25	42	27	35	32	29	20	21	54
Wav	5	1	1	0	2	5	3	1	8
WBC	55	83	112	151	156	150	45	34	112
Total	707	788	830	834	832	949	797	784	935

6. Homelessness in Waverley – cont.

149

Prevention duties accepted 22-23

97

Relief duties accepted 22-23

51

Households helped into private rented accommodation to prevent or relieve their homelessness in 22-23

66

Duty to Refer referrals 22-23

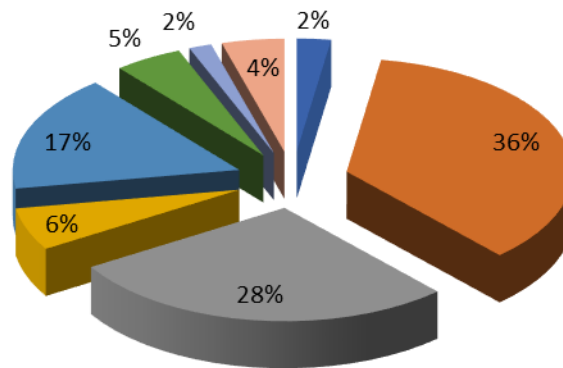
24 of which from probation or prisons

Duty to Refer places a duty on public bodies in England to refer service users they consider may be homeless or threatened with homelessness, to local housing authorities in England. Before making a referral they are required to have consent from the individual, including consent to share their contact details, and allow the individual to identify the housing authority in England which they would like the notification to be made to.

6. Homelessness in Waverley – cont.

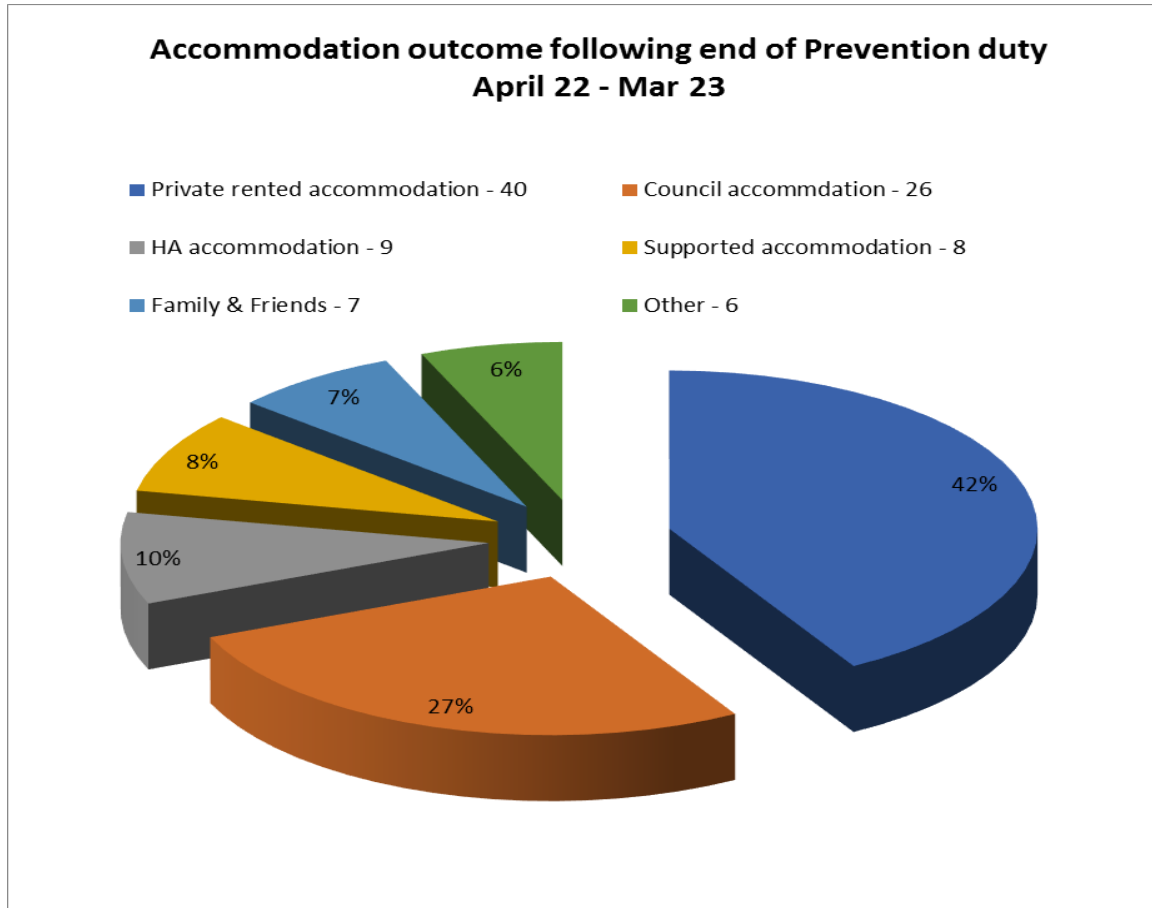
Reasons for Homelessness - April 22 - Mar 23

- Loss of supported accommodation - 6
- Loss of private rented/tied accommodation - 88
- Family no longer willing/able to accommodate - 69
- Other/Not known - 15
- Domestic abuse - 41
- Non violent relationship breakdown - 12
- Loss of Social Housing - 4
- Left institution/home office asylum - 11

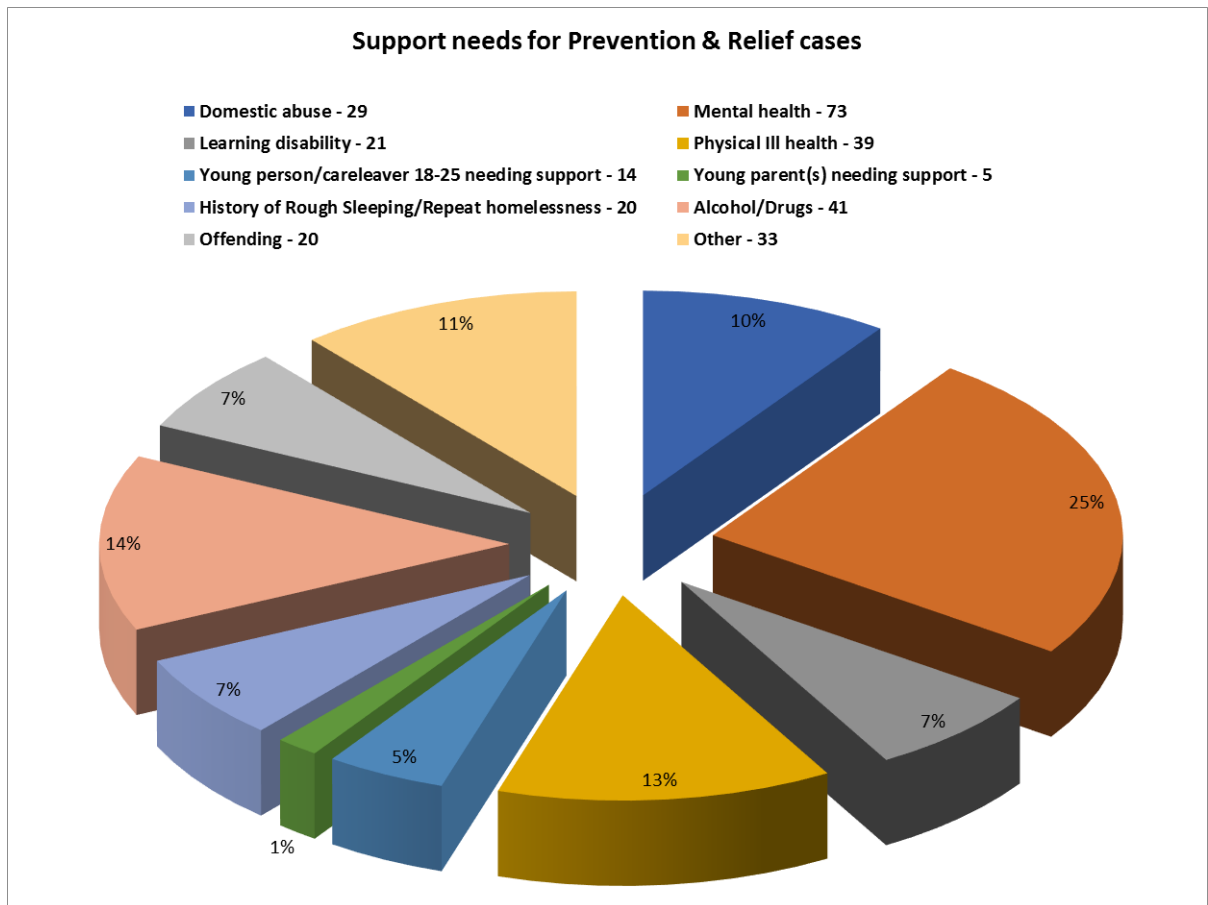


The most common causes of homelessness in Waverley is the loss of private rented accommodation followed by friends/family no longer willing/able to assist and then domestic abuse. This reflects the national picture.

6. Homelessness in Waverley – cont.



6. Homelessness in Waverley – cont.



7. The Council's Housing Options Service

Waverley's Housing Options Service is divided into 3 main teams:

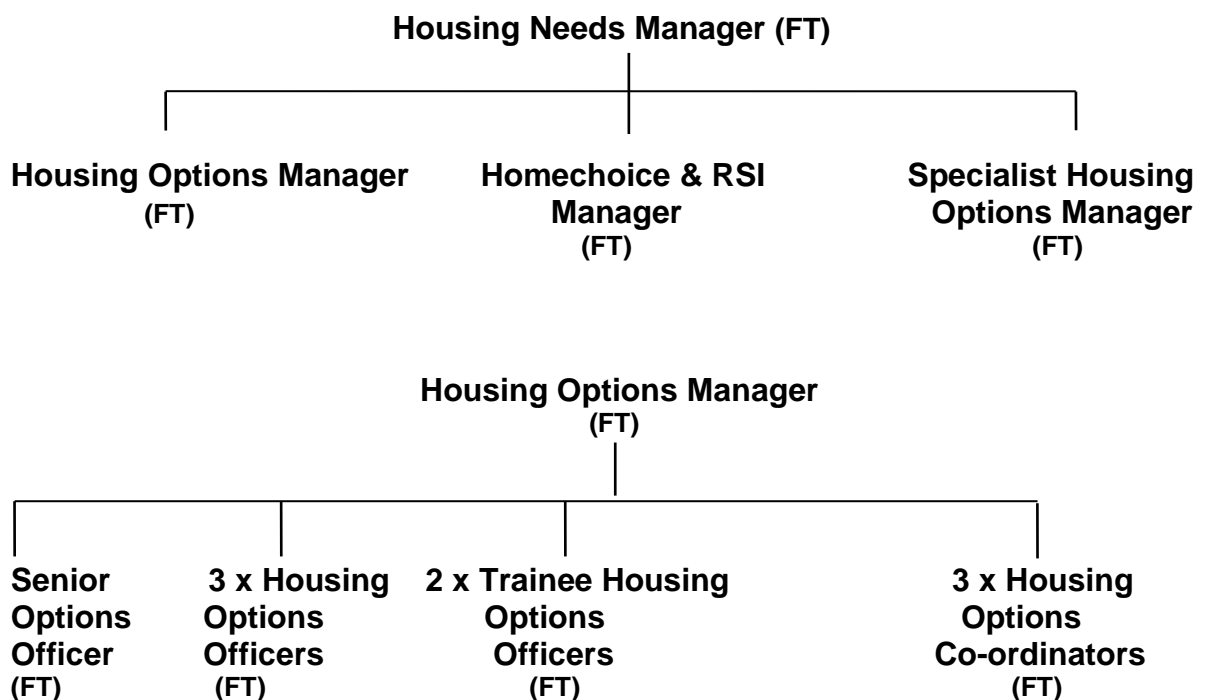
Housing Options Team - deal with homelessness, housing advice and the management of the majority of the Council's Housing Register.

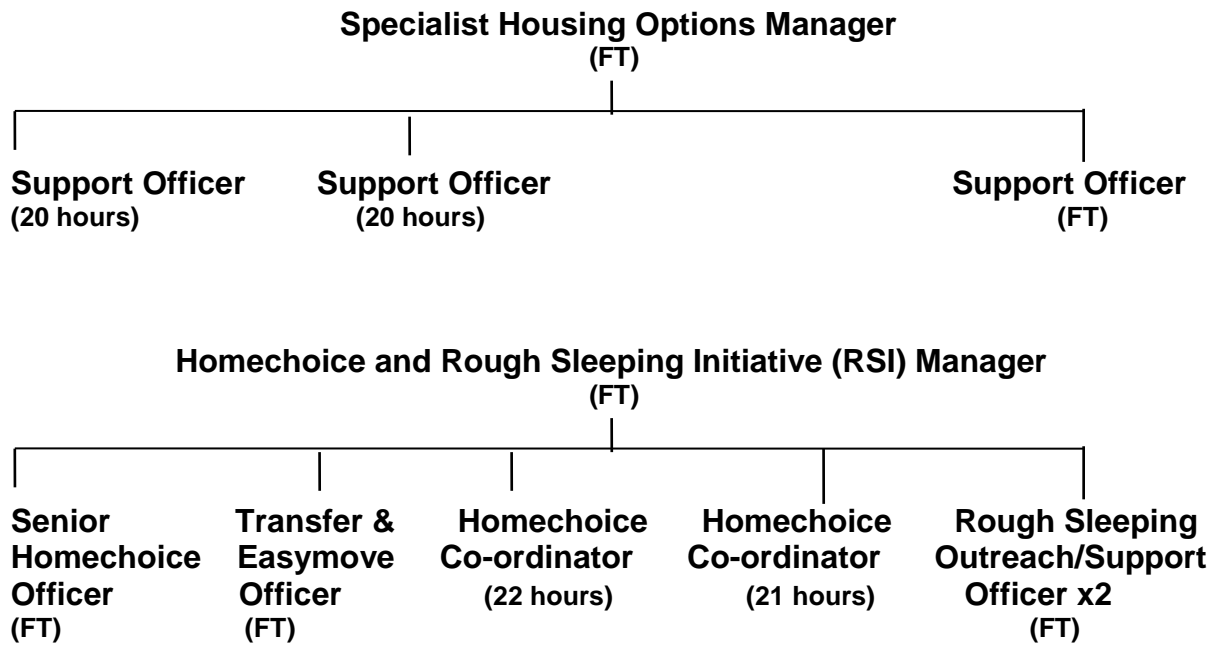
Specialist Housing Options Team - provide advice and housing support to vulnerable homeless clients (e.g. victims of domestic abuse).

Homechoice & Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) Team - responsible for the letting of Council and housing associations properties, managing the Council's Housing Register for applicants already living in social housing and managing the Council's Rough Sleeping Outreach Service.

The management of the Rough Sleeping Outreach and Support Service by the Homechoice Team is a fairly recent development that followed Waverley's successful Rough Sleeping Initiative bid in February 2021.

The Housing Options Service structure is as follows:





Housing Options Team and customer journey

This team has the main responsibility for assessing the Council’s homelessness duties to customers presenting as homeless. Following the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (HRA 2017) the Council invested in a comprehensive IT package (Housing Jigsaw) that enables Officers to record the key details regarding an applicant’s situation, as well as storing documents and issuing decision letters edited from stored templates. Crucially the system also enables the Council to capture the large amount of case the key statistical case data (HCLIC data) required by Government that is submitted on a quarterly basis.

Customers can contact the Council in person, by phone or by email. Following the Covid Pandemic the team had to quickly adapt to delivering the service primarily by phone and email. Following the opening up of the Council Offices with a reduced footprint, the Housing Options Team have continued to mainly assist customers by phone and email though in person unscheduled presentations are catered for, in addition to in person appointments when needed.

The team operate a duty system whereby each weekday a different Housing Options Officer is the lead contact for new homelessness enquiries. Other Officers field queries when the duty Officer has reached capacity in triaging the daily approaches (usually 4-5 cases). Each triage can take anything between 20 – 50 minutes and occasionally depending on the complexity and communication challenges sometimes much longer. The key task for officers is to determine whether a client is or isn’t homeless or threatened with homelessness in 56 days and then to tailor the advice accordingly. Where an applicant is homeless on that day and cannot stay temporarily elsewhere, the Officer will also have to determine whether the Council has a duty to provide emergency accommodation and if so, make arrangements for this.

If a homelessness prevention duty is owed, the Council has a duty to try to prevent the homelessness (e.g. through negotiating with the person / landlord giving the notice as to whether they will be prepared to withdraw or extend any Notice). If the homelessness cannot be prevented in this way, then clients are encouraged to be proactive in looking for alternative accommodation themselves and are given advice about how to do this, as well as advice about housing benefit/Universal Credit rent levels that they may be entitled to.

Applicants will have a follow up Full Housing Assessment, where more detailed information is discussed so a Personal Housing Plan can be agreed and shared.

Applicants are required to provide documentary evidence to verify their homelessness and circumstances such as ID, proof of residence and any Notice to leave, financial circumstances such as income and savings. Additionally, the triage and full housing assessment will capture additional information such as support and medical needs can be discussed and where necessary referrals to other services are made.

Officers will explore with applicants the likely best route to address their housing need which could be supported housing, private rented and in cases where the applicant may have been on the Council's Housing Register for a while, social housing. Officers will exercise a 'professional curiosity' to ascertain the true circumstances in order to best navigate to a realistic homelessness solution.

Solutions could include a negotiation with the landlord, friend or family member who is asking the homeless applicant to leave, to see if the person being made homeless can change anything that will result in the homeless threat being removed. This could be abiding by house or tenancy rules or paying any owed rent. In some instances, it can be cost effective for the Council to offer to pay off rent arrears on behalf of the applicant, particularly if going forward, the applicant is able to cover future payments through benefits or employment.

Whilst applicants are encouraged to help themselves, Officers will also explore other possible housing solutions through the Council's partnerships with supported housing providers, Ethical Lettings and private rented landlords.

Housing options for clients with complex needs can be much harder to secure, particularly if the applicant has a history of being evicted from previous accommodation due to poor behaviour or rent arrears. This inevitably limits options and the Council cannot risk jeopardising its relationships with landlords or other housing providers by making referrals that will inevitably set the client up to fail or would adversely impact the safeguarding of existing residents. As a result of these challenges Waverley has used its homelessness prevention grant and Rough Sleeping Initiative monies to fund additional bedspaces in supported housing schemes. The Council has also benefited from Surrey County Council's bids to secure funding from or the Changing Futures Programme for the Bridge the Gap and Surrey Adults Matters schemes that can provide additional support for complex needs clients to help them sustain accommodation and encourage them to engage in drug/alcohol and mental health support services.

Sadly, the reality of a highly constrained housing market in Waverley means that the available homelessness solutions for all applicants can be very limited. This can often mean that the solutions presented to clients may be far from what they ideally want. For example, accommodation that is not as near as they would like to where they previously lived and where they have established social, educational, employment and support networks. This can lead to difficult conversations that are challenging for both clients and officers. Whilst the Council is very appreciative of the fact that homeless households understandably want to minimise disruption to their lives, the reality is that assistance to prevent or relieve homelessness is more likely to be a safety net solution rather than an ideal solution. This means that if a client is offered what the Council considers is a suitable property to end its prevention or relief duty which is refused (and there are rights to seek a review), then no further offer of accommodation will usually be made. What is explained though is that by registering on the Council's Housing Register (if they have not already done so) does mean that in the medium to long term, applicants can bid for accommodation more suited to their favoured requirements.

In addition to purchasing additional supported housing bedspaces, another key to Waverley's success in preventing and relieving homelessness over the years has been its ability to place clients into private sector accommodation. This has led to the Council's success in reducing the number of households having to be placed in temporary accommodation from 107 in 2004 to 8 in March 2023. To achieve this the Council has cultivated positive relationships with local lettings agents and landlords and has entered into a successful partnership with a Social Letting company called Ethical Lettings. The approach has also included innovation to try to increase supply of available properties such as a local radio advertising campaign. Helping people into private rented accommodation has also involved developing the Council's Rent Deposit Scheme. Under the scheme households who do not have savings can be given an interest free rent deposit loan and help with rent in advance. Some landlords accept the Council's rent deposit bond instead of a cash payment. This is a legal undertaking that the Council will honour a valid and assessed claim for rent arrears or property damage at the end of a tenancy, against the value of the bond. Any claims against the bond are then chargeable to the outgoing tenant. Given that help under the Council's Rent Deposit Scheme involves the tenant accruing a debt to Waverley, in the first instance Housing Options Officers will encourage welfare dependent applicants to apply for a Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) for the upfront housing costs. DHPs are non-repayable grants rather than loans and are Government funded. Claims are assessed by the Council's Benefits team. Waverley's DHP allocation for 22-23 was £113,643 but it is important to note that assistance with rent deposits is just one a number of categories that DHPs can be issued for e.g. short term under-occupation charge assistance, Benefit Cap assistance etc.

Even with the above help, the increasingly challenging economic position means the Council's ability to secure such private rents is much more constrained, particularly as the Local Housing Allowance rates (LHA - the maximum amount payable by housing Benefit/Universal credit for housing costs) have remained frozen since 2019. This has had an inevitable knock-on effect in causing homelessness for those who are already in private rented accommodation and on the Council's ability to source affordable private rented accommodation for those that are homeless. This will inevitably mean that less clients will be prevented from becoming homeless

which in turn leads to increased use of emergency accommodation and greater lengths in stay (and resulting cost for the Council), for those placed into emergency accommodation. Whilst Waverley's temporary accommodation numbers are still modest compared with other Surrey Boroughs and Districts, we did have 8 households in temporary accommodation in March 2023. A salutary fact is that prior to 2012 Spelthorne Borough Council had similar low numbers in temporary accommodation to Waverley but as at 31 March 2023, the Council had 123 households in temporary accommodation.

Specialist Housing Options Team

Within the Housing Options Team is a specialist team of Specialist Housing Options Officers. These Officers take the lead in dealing more vulnerable homeless clients such as those with complex needs or poor coping skills. Such clients may be victims of domestic abuse, those suffering from mental health or learning difficulties or those with drug or alcohol dependencies or a combination of such circumstances. Domestic abuse is the third most common cause of homelessness in Waverley and nationally. Waverley's housing team has long had expertise in the area of domestic abuse resulting from the fact that in past the Council actually ran the local Domestic Abuse Outreach Service in Waverley. (see further below regarding domestic abuse).

The Specialist Housing Options Team also provide tenancy support to clients newly placed in private rented or other accommodation to ensure that clients have applied for the welfare benefits that they need and have linked in with other support structures such as registering with GP's, enrolling children in school and registering on the Council's Housing Register for future long-term housing. The value of this floating support has been recognised by the fact that Surrey County Council contribute towards the costs of employing one of the Officers. The extent of the team's help and support is very evident from case study 2 further below.

Members of the Specialist Housing Options team represent Waverley at the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences that are held for high-risk domestic abuse cases. The meetings are arranged by the Police with other agencies such as Social Services, Health and Education also attend.

Team members will also attend Waverley's regular Community Harm and Risk Reduction Meetings (CHARRM) and they take the lead in advocating for clients applying to the Council's Benefits team for Discretionary Housing Payments to help prevent or relieve homelessness.

Homechoice Team and Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) Team

The Homechoice Team take the lead in managing housing applications from social housing tenants in Waverley and in advertising and letting social housing in Waverley through the Council's Choice Based Lettings scheme – Waverley Homechoice. Whilst the Housing Register is rarely a solution to homelessness, in some cases it can be, particularly if a client who is threatened with homelessness has been registered for a few years.

The Homechoice Team also operate the Council's Easy Move Scheme that seeks to encourage those social housing tenants under-occupying family sized to downsize to smaller accommodation. This helps free up much needed family sized homes and thereby maximises such a precious resource.

The RSI team is a relative new team that was formed following a successful bid under the Government's Rough Sleeping Initiative in 2021. The funding enables Waverley to employ two full time Officers who are able to respond to Streetlink referrals (a nationwide service that enables members of the public to report instances of possible rough sleeping) as well as direct reports to the team from the community or local agencies.

The two RSI Officers also provide much needed support to rough sleepers placed in emergency accommodation such as B&Bs, the York Road Project (see further below) or the Council's own accommodation. Additionally, one of the officers will take the lead in progressing homeless applications from rough sleepers.

The RSI team also take the lead in co-ordinating Waverley's Severe Weather Emergency protocol. Under this protocol Councils are required to provide additional support, that can include accommodation, to rough sleepers during periods of extreme weather. In winter this is triggered when there is a forecast of 3 consecutive days of temperatures of zero or below or in summer during heatwaves or other severe weather events.

8. Accommodation

Among the contributory factors for homelessness is a lack of affordable housing for those living in Waverley. Waverley is one of the most sought after and therefore expensive places to live in the UK. This means house prices and private rent levels are often beyond the reach of many people. As a result people have to live with relatives and friends far longer than either party would wish and this in turn can create tensions in households that leads to homelessness. The development of a range of affordable and supported housing and making best use of existing housing can therefore play a key role in reducing homelessness and providing accommodation for those who are under threat of homelessness.

Temporary accommodation

The Council's excellent performance in preventing homelessness has led to a dramatic reduction in the use of and need for temporary accommodation.

Since the early 2000's and in line with Government policy, Waverley has embraced a homeless prevention approach in order to minimise the need for placing homeless households in temporary accommodation. This has been achieved through either providing advice to help applicants retain their current accommodation when threatened with homeless or, when this is not possible, helping applicants secure alternative medium to long term accommodation, usually in the private sector. As a result of this approach Waverley's dependence of temporary accommodation has significantly reduced as shown by the following tables showing homeless households needing to be placed into temporary accommodation under the Council's homelessness duties:

Homeless households in temporary accommodation in Waverley

31 March 2004	31 March 2005	31 March 2006	31 March 2007	31 March 2008	31 March 2009	31 March 2010	31 March 2011	31 March 2012	31 March 2013
107	80	53	28	17	5	7	2	2	1

31 March 2014	31 March 2015	31 March 2016	31 March 2017	31 March 2018	31 March 2019	31 March 2020	31 March 2021	31 March 2022	31 March 2023
4	5	1	1	0	2	5	2	1	8

Surrey Temporary accommodation numbers (homeless households living in temporary accommodation).

	30 June 22	30 Sept 22	31 Dec 22	31 Mar 23
EBC	70	83	86	99
EEBC	235	232	237	224
GBC	50	41	40	44
MVDC	50	48	48	55
RBBC	165	159	152	169
RBC	46	48	42	47
SBC	102	111	115	123
SHBC	38	31	28	23
TDC	26	32	45	54
Wav	4	2	4	8
WBC	39	40	107	112
Total	825	827	904	935

As a result of its successful homelessness prevention, the Council was able to end its reliance on leasing around 50 private sector homes to supplement its own temporary accommodation, around the years 2004-2005. Since then the Council has gradually been able to decommission some of its own, unused temporary accommodation schemes and either sell the land for housing development or use the land to develop its own social housing or Housing Association homes. This made sense strategically as it reduced rent loss on empty, unused units, as well as increasing much needed, longer term social housing supply.

Thanks for the temporary accommodation figure, it sounds like you guys are doing really well on prevention, please pass my congratulations on to the team.

***Tracy Hendren
Specialist Advisor (South West and South East)
Homelessness, Overcrowding and Worklessness Division - Communities and Local Government
4 July 2008***

More recently the Council has leased its remaining units of temporary accommodation in the borough to a housing association to provide supported housing for homeless households as increasingly we are seeing more homeless clients with support needs.

Given the Council's record of having low numbers of households having to be placed into temporary accommodation has been sustained for many years, it does not make sense to commission additional temporary accommodation units when the Council is usually able to assist clients with longer term housing in the private sector or in supported housing schemes. However, the Council will need to monitor future developing trends and pressures and review matters based on service demand and the Council's ability to continue to source suitable private sector accommodation.

In terms of emergency presentations, the Council makes use of short-term placements in hotels – either specialist B&Bs that cater for homeless households and provide food preparation facilities or in main-stream hotels such as Travelodge or Premier Inn. The Council acknowledges that such placements are usually far from ideal, particularly for families with children. However, it has to balance this against the considerable costs of maintaining a portfolio of temporary accommodation with units standing empty for the majority of the time, due to the effectiveness of its homelessness prevention work. Given the Council is a stockholding authority it retains the flexibility in using its permanent stock on a temporary basis, if absolutely needed.

Accommodation for Rough Sleepers

Guardian properties

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic the Council had been exploring ways to manage the challenge of having properties subject to future demolition standing empty and resulting in loss of rental income. A solution being developed was the introduction of a 'Guardian Property Scheme' where some council employees who were struggling with accommodation issues could potentially act as property guardians.

With the onset of COVID-19 and the 'Everyone In' initiative, Officers decided to adapt this model to see if some rough sleepers who were engaging positively with the Housing Options Team during 'Everyone In', would be suitable to be offered guardian licences. In some ways this was a bit like a 'Housing First' model with support from the rough sleeping outreach officer. Since the pandemic 12 homeless clients have been assisted in this way and have sustained their accommodation. The value of the scheme is it gives a further period for a client to demonstrate that they can sustain accommodation and start to rebuild their lives.

Next Step Accommodation Programme (NSAP) and Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme (RSAP)

One of the positives to come out of the pandemic and the 'Everyone In' programme was the fact that so many single households, who were previously excluded from

accommodation assistance under the homelessness legislation, were able to be assisted with longer term accommodation. Due to this and to help meet its goal of eliminating rough sleeping by 2024, the Government announced a funding programme called the Next Steps Accommodation Programme (NSAP).

Waverley submitted a bid for 6 modular units under the NSAP programme. Whilst only two units were approved in this bidding round, these units have now been delivered in Farncombe and the first residents with a background of rough sleeping moved in in October 2021.

These units, along with the guardian properties, have provided an opportunity for Waverley to pilot a 'Housing First' type housing model where intensive housing support means clients with very complex needs can be housed. This helps break the cycle of revolving door, repeat homelessness. Support is primarily provided by Waverley's Rough Sleeping Support Officer and the Rough Sleeping Outreach Officer. Additionally, very high need clients can also benefit from support through Surrey County Council's 'Changing Futures' programme, along with specialist services such as i-access drug / alcohol services.

In September 2021 Waverley submitted another successful bid under the Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme (RSAP) to provide two self-contained units of accommodation in Farnham for rough sleepers. Due to planning constraints these units will now be developed in Godalming.

Supported Accommodation

Waverley has a range of supported housing schemes in its area but does not have the ability to nominate to all the vacancies in the schemes. It is also very reliant of supported housing schemes outside of Waverley, particularly for single homeless clients. A few services are outlined below as examples but these are not exhaustive:

York Road Project, Woking

Significant progress has been made during the course of the previous and current Homelessness Strategies in improving housing options for single homeless clients. Much of this progress has been achieved by working in partnership with the York Road Project, Woking, (YRP).

YRP operate a 10-bed hostel in Woking plus move on accommodation. The accommodation is more than a roof over clients' heads. YRP staff and volunteers offer assistance with medical and dental referrals, benefits and housing advice and further referrals to specialist services, such as mental health and well-being and drug and alcohol services.

Using its Government homelessness grant, Waverley has purchased bed spaces in the YRP hostel for a number of years. This is often the first step in assisting single

homeless clients whilst the Housing Options Team assess the Council's homelessness duties and, where appropriate, plan longer term accommodation.

Between 20-21 and 22-23 YRP has assisted 61 Waverley clients with an average length of stay of 43 days. The majority of the clients were male (88%).

Transform Housing and Support

Transform Housing operate a number of supported housing schemes across Surrey including Waverley. Some schemes were developed in partnership with Waverley and other local Councils contributing capital funding. Other properties are owned or leased by Transform and the funding for the support for clients is funded either by Surrey County Council or by Waverley directly. The schemes support a range of clients including those with mental health needs, ex-offenders, young people/care leavers, clients recovering from drug or alcohol addictions as well as homeless people who need support to get their lives back on track.

When Surrey County Council stopped funding bed spaces in certain schemes a few years ago, Waverley took the opportunity to fund the bed spaces using its Government homelessness grant or Rough Sleeping Initiative funding, in return for nomination rights to the vacancies. This has been vital in enabling Housing Options Team to provide a housing pathway for those with support needs. Clients are encouraged to register on the Council's Housing Register and when they are ready to move on to live more independently, they can often receive additional priority to do so, thus releasing a much needed vacancy for another homeless person.

Waverley is currently exploring the possibility of providing a move-on house for a Transform Housing Scheme based in Godalming for clients who need mental health support. If this can be achieved, then it will free up valuable vacancies in the may scheme for homeless clients with mental health challenges. As noted in section 5. above, mental health is the most common support need for customers seeking homelessness assistance.

A2 Dominion

A2 Dominion (A2D) are a large housing association operating in London and the South of England. A2D run a number of supported housing schemes in Waverley that assist homeless clients referred by the Council. This includes accommodation for young families and single people. Recognising the need for households to have support to help them sustain their tenancy, the Council has leased units of accommodation previously used as temporary accommodation by the Council, to A2D, to increase the range of supported housing options for homeless households.

Vaughan House, Guildford – Riverside Group

Vaughan House offers supported housing to those who are single, homeless or at risk of homelessness. Residents may have complex support needs such as substance abuse, mental health issues or offending behaviour. Residents have their own room with access to communal bathrooms and kitchens. The scheme is managed by Riverside Housing and whilst it primarily assists those from the

Guildford area or referred by Guildford Borough Council, other Surrey Districts and Boroughs, including Waverley, are often successful in being able to refer clients.

One of the key areas to ensure the availability and turnover of supported housing beds space in schemes such as Vaughan House, is for there to be a move pathway for clients. This is achieved by the referring Council accepting responsibility for clients and when they are ready to move on, sourcing alternative accommodation. This can be moving to lower support schemes, receiving additional priority on the Housing Register or move on to private rented accommodation.

To assist with move on for its referrals to Vaughan House, Waverley has leased a three-bedroom house to Riverside Housing so Waverley clients can start their journey to greater independence, whilst still receiving some support.

Move to Independence (MTI)

MTI provide access to supported housing for people with mental health needs. As previously noted, mental health is the most common support need for clients approaching Waverley as homeless. The support provided by MTI aims to develop daily living skills and helps clients access the community and links them to other services.

One of the successes during the last Strategy was achieved when the Council was able to provide a shared house for MTI when another property used for the service in Waverley was being sold by the housing association that owned it. This helped ensure that a valuable accommodation and support resource was retained in Waverley.

Private rented accommodation

Key to Waverley's partnership approach in tackling homelessness has been the way the Council has forged links with private sector landlords and lettings agents. This has enabled the Council, through its deposit bond scheme, to place households threatened with homeless into suitable private rented accommodation. The Council will continue to work with private landlords and given it is very much a 'landlords' market' it will need to be adaptable in how it can further incentivise private landlords to look favourably on potential tenants referred by the Council. In recent years, just to help households secure private rented properties, the Housing Options Team have had to use larger up-front rent in advance payments to ensure landlords accept referred households. To help maintain accessibility to the private sector the Council will need to keep its current service to private landlords, that already includes free check in and check out inventories for Council referrals, under review. Having the flexibility to offer one off 'golden hello' payments to landlords letting to a Council referral or offering other help and support, can all help, depending on the developing market conditions. Welfare reform changes and increased homelessness demand have already led to London boroughs placing households outside of London into Surrey and Waverley itself, so the Council continues to look at how it can gain a competitive edge to maintain accommodation options.

Ethical Lettings

For a number of years now Waverley has worked in partnership with a social lettings company called Ethical Lettings. Ethical Lettings is a not for profit organisation that specialises in sourcing and managing private rented properties for local authorities.

This partnership has enabled Waverley to have access to more private rented properties both within and outside Waverley than it otherwise would be able to, as the landlords receive guaranteed rent payments and a management service from Ethical Lettings. The properties are let to Waverley clients at or close to the Local Housing Allowance rates. The partnership has added value in that if a landlord of a property wishes to end a tenancy, Ethical lettings can search its portfolio for alternative accommodation thus minimising chances of a new housing options approach to the Council. Ethical lettings also have a small furniture store to help clients furnish properties.

One strategy that has proved effective in attracting additional landlords to the scheme is a radio advertising campaign jointly funded by the Council and Ethical Lettings.

Homeless prevention units

Despite the success of using the private sector to help households threatened with homelessness, it does not provide a suitable solution in all cases. Some clients have a chequered history in regard to managing their finances and successfully maintaining private rented or other previous accommodation. As a result, they are a harder client group to 'sell' to a prospective private landlord. In addition, sourcing private rented accommodation in an area where the client already has support, work or educational networks is not always possible within the timescale of their impending homelessness. Aware of such difficulties some housing association schemes that have been developed in Waverley have a certain number of units set aside to help households under threat of homelessness. This innovative approach has provided a useful additional source of accommodation to help prevent homelessness. To date there are two such units in a housing association scheme in Godalming and nine in Farnham. Provision of these units contributes to the Council maintaining the low number of households in temporary accommodation, despite the challenging economic climate. What has been less successful, is for clients in these units to successfully maintain their tenancies so they can bid to move-on to longer term social housing tenancies through the Council's Housing Register. The Council is continuing to liaise with its housing association partners to improve in this area so there can be a regular flow of vacancies for new homeless clients.

Affordable housing

Developing new affordable housing

Development of new good quality affordable housing in Waverley is always welcome and helps compensate for the loss of social units through the Right to Buy. One welcome development in recent years been that the Council has been able to invest

its rental income in the development of new Council homes. Over the last five years the Council has developed 111 new Council homes and housing associations have developed 822 new homes in Waverley. In 23-24 it is predicted that 72 new association homes for rent (social and affordable) will be developed in Waverley.

Maximising affordable housing stock

One of Waverley's challenges is to maximise its existing stock by reducing under-occupation. Welfare Reform measures introduced in April 2013 mean that any welfare benefit dependent social housing tenants, under pensionable age who are under occupying their homes, are not be entitled to full benefit payments. If the tenants cannot make up the required rent payments, then they have a financial incentive to downsize to smaller accommodation.

The Council's Allocation Scheme has for a long time prioritised the housing applications from social housing tenants who wish to down-size and the Council provides incentive payments to those who wish to do so. In the last couple of years, the Council has built on this by having a Transfer Officer who takes the lead in assisting tenants who need additional help in moving, such as arranging removal companies. Additionally, the Council has been arranging tenancy audits of larger, family sized homes to confirm the current household occupation, and, where appropriate, discuss and encourage the benefits of downsizing.

Since September 2021 the Council has helped 50 households to downsize releasing 28 x 2 bed homes, 21 x 3 bed homes and 1 x 4 bed home.

9. Advice & Support

Waverley benefits from having a number of advice and support providers.

Citizens Advice – South West Surrey

The Council funds the services of Citizens Advice Waverley which has recently merged with Guildford and Ash CAB to form Citizens Advice -South West Surrey. Citizens Advice have a presence in each of the 4 main settlements in Waverley (Godalming, Farnham, Cranleigh and Haslemere). Citizens advice help prevent homelessness by ensuring that clients receive their benefit entitlements, maximise their income, prioritise their debts and negotiate realistic repayment arrangements with landlords and creditors.

The Citizens Advice Bureau network (Woking CAB) also provides help in preventing homelessness through their work at the Court desk at Guildford County Court. The Court desk service provides independent advice to the full range of possession actions such as those facing eviction from social housing, private rented housing as well as from mortgaged properties.

Domestic Abuse

Local Authorities play a vital role in tackling domestic abuse through their community safety role and through funding and co-ordinating services with other partner organisations. Partners include the South-West Surrey Domestic Abuse Outreach Service, Surrey County Council, Salvation Army Housing Association, Your Sanctuary, I Choose Freedom, Community Harm and Risk Management Meetings (CHarMM), Surrey Police (who co-ordinate the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences - MARAC), Social Services and Registered Social Landlords.

A welcome development in recent years has been the expansion of refuge provision in Surrey and the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 that among other things, updated the homelessness legislation and accompanying Code of Guidance in regard to managing homelessness applications from victims of domestic abuse. Additionally, the Act requires Waverley, along other public bodies, to assist Surrey County Council in meeting the support needs of victims of domestic abuse.

Extra Government funding was given to local Government Councils to implement the requirements of the Act. These monies have been used to commission additional refuge accommodation, including self-contained accommodation better suited to meet the needs of a wider range of victims e.g. men, LGBTQ+, transgender etc.

The funding has also been used to ensure a consistent Sanctuary Scheme offer across all Surrey Boroughs and Districts coordinated in the first instance by Domestic Abuse Outreach Services. Sanctuary schemes offer additional security features in a home in situations where the perpetrator no longer has a right to reside and it is considered safe for the family to remain and not move home. These features can range from a video doorbell, change of locks, fire-proof letter box, panic alarm to a safe room. The advantage of these measures for the victim and their

children is that their education, support and employment links can be maintained, which is very rarely possible in situations where a victim has to flee to a refuge.

Waverley helps fund the South-West Surrey Domestic Abuse Outreach Service to co-ordinate the Sanctuary Scheme in Waverley using Government monies awarded under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 to Waverley, to improve support to victims of domestic abuse.

Waverley represents the Surrey District and Borough Housing Needs managers on the Surrey-wide Domestic Abuse Task and Finish Group and the Surrey Domestic Abuse Management Board.

Ukraine, Afghanistan and Syria crises

Over recent years Waverley has played its part in the UK's assistance to households displaced as a result of conflicts in Syria, Afghanistan and more recently, Ukraine.

In regard to Ukraine, help was first offered by local Waverley households volunteering to accept Ukrainian nationals into their homes. However, as the crisis has continued, it has not always been possible for Ukrainian households to continue to remain with their local hosts. To respond to this, Waverley set up a Resettlement Team to either match households to alternative host families or to try secure private rented accommodation using Government funding for upfront costs.

In a number of instances where Notice periods are tight or where there has been a total and irretrievable breakdown in the hosting arrangements, emergency hotel accommodation has been provided.

The work of the Resettlement Team has been crucial in providing a first preventative response for Ukrainian household faced with threatened with homelessness.

The Resettlement Team also supports Syrian households previously assisted with accommodation by Waverley and is currently helping with the resettlement of some Afghan households who are being required to leave bridging hotels.

To help with Afghan and Ukrainian resettlement, Waverley has successfully bid for monies under the Government's Local Authority Housing Fund to purchase 11 properties to add to its stock. This helps ensure that Waverley's help to Ukrainian and Afghan families does not disadvantage local households who already face long waits for scarce social housing and additionally helps prevent homelessness and the demands placed on the over-stretched Housing Options Services

Household Support Fund

With the challenge of the cost of living crisis the Government announced that it will continue to support households across England by providing an additional £842 million in funding. These funds were allocated to individual local authorities to be distributed in line with Government guidance.

The Household Support Fund helps eligible households with the cost of essentials such as food, energy and water bills and wider essentials such as clothing and white

goods. Applications are limited to one per household and the applications can be made to Waverley's communities team or other partners such as Citizens Advice South West Surrey. By helping households with day to day living costs the Household Support Fund indirectly helps prevent homeless by enabling households to have a greater chance of continuing meet their rental or mortgage obligations.

Discretionary Housing Payments

Each year Waverley receives from the Government a grant to award Discretionary housing payments to help assist households eligible for Housing Benefit or Universal Credit, meet their housing costs. The payment requests from resident are assessed by Waverley's Housing Benefit Team. As noted earlier, Waverley Housing Options Team will advise clients to apply for a Discretionary Housing Payment if they need help to secure a deposit for private rented accommodation or to make up shortfall in rent between what they are entitled to through Housing Benefit or Universal Credit and the actual rent chargeable by their landlord. In 22-23 Waverley made 152 awards spending £107,476 – 95% of its Government grant of £113,643.

Private Sector Housing Team

The Council's private sector housing team play an important role in preventing homelessness and ensuring that private sector landlords fulfil their obligations to provide a safe home for their tenants. The team can intervene when tenants report disrepair issues that are not properly addressed by their landlords, as well as in instances of landlord harassment or illegal eviction.

Surrey Adults Matter and Bridge the Gap

Surrey Adults Matter (SAM) is a team set up by Surrey County Council with the aim of improving the lives of adults with severe multiple dis-advantage. Multiple dis-advantage is defined as someone dealing with 3 of the following: Contact with the criminal justice system, mental health issues, substance misuse (drugs or alcohol) homelessness/at risk of homelessness and domestic abuse/violence.

The SAM team liaise with partners such as housing, the police, health, social care, probation and the charity and voluntary sector. Clients accepted onto the programme are supported by multi agency group of professionals a 'Team around the Person'. Regular meetings with the client and their chosen advocate look at what is going well, what is not going well and what needs to change or improve, and an action plan is developed.

The SAM support has been supplemented by the Bridge the Gap service following a successful £3 million bid by Surrey County Council from the national Changing Futures fund. Under Bridge the Gap local third sector providers such as Guildford Action and Catalyst provide clients with support regarding physical and mental care, substance use and harm reduction, help with benefit application and form filling and referrals to other pertinent services.

Whilst SAM/Bridge the gap clients are not always homeless or threatened with homeless often they can be as a result of the their behaviours or addictions negatively impacting their ability to retain accommodation. Working with Waverley's

Rough Sleeper outreach and support officers the services can mean the difference between clients retaining or losing their accommodation.

Whilst recognising the value of this more intensive support, the significant challenge is the services are over-subscribed meaning new referrals cannot benefit from the service until other cases can be closed. A review is taking place of the current case load to ensure that current cases still need the level of support and explore what cases can be closed without jeopardising clients' health and wellbeing and successful sustainment of tenancies.

Other services

The above are just a few of the advice and support services available to customers who are homeless or threatened with homeless in Waverley and Surrey. Others will include statutory services such as Adult Social Care, Childrens Services, hospitals, Drug/Alcohol services (i-Access) Community Mental Health Services, GP services, probation and the police.

Voluntary or charitable services include Guildford Action, Catalyst Support, SSAFA, food banks, furniture recycling services, faith groups, Domestic Abuse Outreach and Refuge services etc.

Help for homeless households is also maximised by partnerships and agreed protocols between Waverley and other Surrey districts and boroughs with each other and with other services. These include: the Mental Health and Housing Protocol, 16-17 year-old Joint Housing Protocol and the Care-Leavers Joint Housing Protocol. Waverley's representation at the bi monthly Surrey Housing Needs Managers meetings not only contributes to the negotiation of these Surrey wide agreements but also provide opportunities for partnership working and bids for targeted Government funding. One fairly recent example of the latter is the successful Surrey-wide bid for Government monies to help rehouse ex-offenders under the Accommodation for Ex-Offenders (AFEO) Scheme.

10. Case Studies

Whilst the statistics and facts and figures help give an idea of trends and demand on services it is vital not to lose sight of the human element and of the interventions that need to be made before homelessness can be prevented or crisis situations stabilised. The following case studies give a flavour of the work carried out by the Housing Options Service to prevent homelessness:

Case Study 1

This first case study was published in 'Voice of the sector: supporting rough sleepers at a time of national crisis'. ([Voice of the sector: supporting rough sleepers at a time of national crisis | Local Government Association](#)).

Prior to COVID-19 Waverley had been exploring ways to manage the challenge of having properties subject to future demolition standing empty and resulting in loss of rental income. A solution we developed was the introduction of a 'Guardian Property Scheme' where some council employees who were struggling with accommodation issues could potentially act as property guardians.

With the onset of COVID-19 and 'Everyone In' we decided to adapt this model to see if some rough sleepers who were engaging positively with the housing options team during 'Everyone In', would be suitable to be offered guardian licences. In some ways this was a bit like a 'housing first' model with support from the local housing officer. Since the pandemic four homeless clients have been assisted in this way and have sustained their accommodation. The value of the scheme is it gives a further period for a client to demonstrate that they can sustain accommodation and start to rebuild their lives.

The following is the case study of one such client (referred to as 'X'):

X has been street homeless for many years and has an addiction to drugs. At the beginning of the pandemic, he was helped into a local hotel as part of 'Everyone In' alongside his pet dog. As the hotel was around 60 miles from Waverley, X left the accommodation after a few weeks, partly due to his addiction. However, he did continue to engage with the housing team and was up front and honest about his challenges.

Given X's engagement we agreed to move him and his dog into a guardian property in May 2020. X has never had to deal with bills and Housing Benefit, so the housing team helped set him up with Council Tax Support and Housing Benefit and a referral to the local drug treatment service.

The local housing officer has helped support X to manage important post and deal with bills including gas and electric meter readings. X has struggled to set aside money for bills and the housing officer is now helping to set up direct payments from his benefits to help him.

X engages well with his neighbours and the community, including putting elderly neighbours' bins out for them. He has a part time job as a gardener and has reduced

his drug use (he did try a medical substitute, but this didn't work for him). He has applied for a bank account and passport now that he has an address.

The property has been kept in good condition and X has proven that although he has an addiction, he can maintain a tenancy/licence with the right support in place.

As a result of the above and given his current property is due to be demolished, we have agreed to offer X another property in the same area. He will move on a 12-month licence and if all is good after the 12 months, we will offer him an 'introductory tenancy' with ongoing support from the housing officer.

X has been made aware of this move and said:

"I am very excited to be able to move across to the other property. I will be forever grateful for the help and support I received. This time last year I was on the streets and out in the cold; Waverley Borough Council have saved my life and given me and my dog a home. I feel very grateful for the council giving me the opportunity and believing in me."

Case study 2

Y called Housing Options for advice on how to complete a Housing Register form. However, it became apparent that Y needed a lot of advice regarding income, accommodation, and employment.

Y was 69 years old and lived in tied accommodation link to his job. He had not worked for over 2 years having developed a debilitating medical condition that severely affected his mobility.

His Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) had ended 18 months earlier and had been living off savings since then. Y had very little money left and had not sought any advice regarding this, believing that he was not entitled to anything.

His employers had been going through a process to terminate his employment and had now given him notice that he would be 'dismissed', a short time in the future.

Y had been told that he would be informed separately about when he would need to leave his tied accommodation, but every indication was that they would let him stay there a short time following his employment termination.

During lengthy discussions with the Specialist Housing Options Officers, Y was advised about benefit entitlement, housing processes and how he urgently needed to be making applications to secure an income which was crucial for his future housing. Y was not digitally knowledgeable and had no access to the internet.

An urgent appointment was made for him to attend CAB to start the process of applying for Universal Credit and Pension Credits.

Y received regular progress calls from the team and he engaged with the CAB in making benefit applications and obtained necessary paperwork from his employers.

However, as time went on, it was apparent that Y was prone to procrastination and struggled to motivate himself to complete very important tasks. He advised that he had not gone to his next appointment with CAB, seemingly making excuses for not having all the evidence required.

Y was offered home visits to assist which were declined. The team suspected this was due to embarrassment about the condition of his home and it was also becoming apparent that he had an alcohol issue. The team were concerned that they had stopped getting responses to phone calls and when Y did pick up, he procrastinated about his actions.

On a support visit arranged to collect the medical form and housing registration forms, the forms had still not been completed. Y explained that he had been in a residential alcohol treatment setting previously which he was reluctant to disclose on the forms. He was reassured that this was nothing new for the team to deal with – the important thing being that the Council had all the information we needed to assist a client in the best way. This conversation also enabled greater understanding of Y's erratic communication and the situation regarding his job.

When asked about his current drinking, Y said that he had reduced his consumption considerably but that he drank when things were difficult and he was stressed.

CAB had established that Y was eligible for state pension and that he would be getting a letter to confirm this. Once he received the letter, the CAB advisor had told him to go back to them for more assistance.

Y advised the team that he had almost finished the housing and medical application forms and said he had envelopes and stamps ready.

As the forms were not received a further visit was made. Y said that he had had a few bad days of feeling low, was in pain with his legs and the delay in planned surgery really seemed to be affecting him. Asked whether had finished completing the housing application form and the medical form he said he was still struggling to complete it, pledging to do so that week.

For the next two weeks the team were unable to get through to Y and his phone was always switched off. A further visit to the property was made and Y answered the door. He apologised for his unkempt appearance. Asked again for the housing application form he said he had got a neighbour to put it in the post for him before the weekend. He said his phone was in the mobile phone shop being fixed because it was broken and that he was due to go and collect it.

He said he lacked motivation and was getting ulcers on his feet - he had been to the GP, and they had suggested some medication.

Further calls were made as the forms had still not been received. Y said that the neighbour he had given them to post had left them in his car and forgotten about them. Y assured the team that he now had the forms back and was going out to post them though the team suspected he may have had the forms all along but was embarrassed to admit that he had still not completed them.

In a further call Y confirmed he had seen his consultant who had looked at his ulcers and pushed for surgery in a couple of weeks. The consultant told him that the surgery would require someone to look after him afterwards and that while in hospital they would be making a Social Services referral. Unfortunately, they then also discovered a more serious medical issue which now required surgery more urgently than his legs.

Y called to let the team know that his surgery had been brought forward to that week - and that he would be in hospital for at least 5 days. He again assured the team that he had put the housing forms in the post, and it was agreed to catch up with him when he came out of hospital. The application forms were finally received and immediately processed.

Y called to say he had had his surgery and had already been sent home. He was distressed about this and felt that he was not ready to leave and could not walk properly. After being told that he would be seen by an OT and other clinical professionals, he was given a pair of crutches and sent home in a hospital car. Y also said that surgery for the more serious medical condition was deemed too much of a risk and they decided not to go ahead. Y had not been instructed about when to take the various medications he had been given and generally did not know what to do. Fortunately, his neighbours realised that he was home and had offered to go and get him food.

The team advised Y that he must phone his GP urgently, insist on an urgent appointment, and request a home visit or for a District Nurse or Paramedic to see him. He did as advised, and the GP gave him an urgent face to face appointment to which his neighbour had given him a lift. The GP apparently stated that their disappointment with the discharge from hospital and that no adult social care referral had been. The GP made a social care referral, tended to his ulcerated feet and arranged for the District Nurses to see him at home and to instruct him around his medication.

Permission was obtained from Y for the team to bid for social housing on his behalf each week and the team liaised with the Council's Homechoice team to give advanced notice of any suitable properties that would become available for him. Whilst an Adult Social Care referral had been made and Y had had an assessment, Y was confused as to what he had been told. The team contacted the social worker and it was confirmed that they did not consider Y to have social care needs and that he was able to meet his own needs according to their core assessment processes. When asked about assistance for Y to relocate when the time came for him to move and for assistance with the mobility to do so, the team were told that they did not have a remit for this.

A suitable ground floor Council property was sourced for Y and a specialist housing options officer attended the viewing along with Y and the Tenancy and Estates Officer. Y accepted the property but was very daunted by the prospect of moving and all that this entailed and was overwhelmed by this. The team outlined to Y the tasks that needed to be done and helped him work through these to enable him to move. The team helped source removals with a reliable company that was used to dealing with vulnerable people. They assisted with a Surrey Crisis loan application for furniture and white goods, liaised with the Council's Tenancy and Estates, Rents

and Council tax teams and the DWP to ensure that Y's financial situation was secure and his rent would be paid.

Once settled, further enquiries were made regarding aids and adaptations to the property for grab rails and a hard standing for the mobility scooter that Y had acquired.

Y is now settled in secure long-term accommodation that meets his needs in the community in which he is familiar and with the relevant benefits in place. He is now able to continue to have his ongoing medical needs addressed with his local surgery and is in a positive place. The team have stepped back but he calls occasionally to let us know how he doing.

Case study 3

Z was one of Waverley's long standing rough sleepers due numerous evictions from supported accommodation over the years brought about by behaviour issues. Following another homeless application and a number of initial refusals to move to the York Road Project in Woking (YRP), Z finally agreed to do so. However, despite an initial positive start at YRP, his behaviour resulted in his eviction. Z was then placed in emergency B&B by drug/alcohol services. However, his presenting needs and history meant there was a strong possibility that supported housing providers the Council has access to would be unwilling to assist again. There was also a strong likelihood that his stay at emergency B&B could end prematurely. Whilst Z had approached Waverley as homeless, given the circumstances surrounding him losing his last settled address with another supported housing provider, there was a strong possibility that following assessment, he would be considered to be intentionally homelessness.

Z's case was referred to the multi-agency Surrey Adult Matters/Bridge the Gap service for those suffering multiple dis-advantage. He was accepted by the service and support was provided to Z by Guildford Action, whilst Waverley assessed his homeless application and looked, with Surrey CC, for alternative accommodation options. After three months, during which Z cooperated with the support from Guildford Action, Waverley was able to refer him to a purpose built, self-contained rough sleeper support accommodation, with additional support provided by Waverley's Rough Sleeper Support worker. This new accommodation was provided as a result of Waverley's successful bid under the Government's Next Steps Accommodation Programme.

Despite a finding of intentional homelessness, upheld following a statutory review, Waverley exercised its discretion to allow Z to continue to live in the accommodation as he was positively engaging with the support provided. Following Z successfully sustaining his tenancy for a year, Waverley was able to prioritise his housing application to move on to long term Council accommodation through its Housing Register. Z bid successfully and has moved to a Council tenancy. Such an outcome would have been impossible without the extra support given to Z that helped him develop the necessary skills and confidence to live independently and the availability

of new accommodation developed specifically for rough sleepers or those under threat of rough sleeping.

These cases give flavour of the work carried out by Waverley's Housing Options Service to prevent homelessness and highlight the extent of Officer engagement to ensure a successful homelessness prevention or relief outcome. It can be the case that despite officers' and partner agencies' best efforts; interventions fail due to chaotic behaviour, mental health difficulties, drug/alcohol or an unwillingness from customers to co-operate. Sometimes it takes a number of interventions from Housing Options Officers and other agencies before customers fully engage and co-operate with the help that is on offer.

11. Consultation

Waverley has consulted on its homelessness strategy with a number of statutory and voluntary partners including the following:

- Adult Social Care
- Surrey Childrens Services
- Citizens Advice South-West Surrey
- Supported housing providers
- Probation
- Mental Health Services
- Ethical Lettings
- South West Surrey Domestic Abuse Outreach Service
- Single Housing Panel
- Housing and Housing Options Service staff

In previous years Officers have arranged an annual homelessness forum to consult on the strategy and update on homelessness trends. Sadly, the service demands on Waverley's team and the staff from other organisations, has meant thus has not be possible for a few years. Hopefully the forum can be revived in future years.

Since the new homelessness legislation introduced in 2018, the Council has not been issuing customer surveys. This is partly due to the fact that these surveys were rarely completed and returned by customers but also due to the fact that the whole process and time of engagement between customers and officers under the new legislation is now so much greater. This means that the administrative burden on both customers and Officers, such as in to regard verification of documents, is also considerably greater.

However, one of the benefits of this increased engagement between officers and customers, in addition to looking at the reasons for homelessness decision review requests and complaints and compliments; is the ability to still capture customer feedback and concerns.

The themes that are apparent do reflect the concerns raised by customers in the last strategy e.g. the need for more social housing to help reduce the time waiting to bid successfully for social homes and the challenges in securing and sustaining private rented accommodation within the housing allowance rates, which means households often cannot be assisted with accommodation in locations in Waverley that they would ideally like. The Strategy highlights the Council's commitment to continue to develop additional social housing itself, as well as working in partnership with housing associations to help enable the development of more homes. The Strategy highlights the benefits of the Council's partnership with local lettings agencies and with Ethical Lettings to try to maximise access to affordable private rented accommodation. The Action Plan also recommends exploring the possibility of re-introducing customer surveys if this can be done in a manner that can effectively be managed by both customers and the Council, within financial and time constraints.

Outcomes from Consultation and issues raised at regularly partnership and staff meetings:

1. Concern in regard to the national rise in homelessness and within Surrey and the budget and service challenges faced by statutory and voluntary services.
2. The need for more social housing and supported housing.
3. Concern regarding the freezing of Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates and the particular challenge faced by people reliant on benefits seeking to privately rent in Farnham, due to Farnham being included in the lower Blackwater Valley LHA rate.
4. The difficulties in accessing suitable supported accommodation for those with higher support needs but who don't meet the eligibility criteria for statutory help from Adult Social Care or the CMRHS.
5. Concern in regard to the reduction in Waverley's Government Homelessness Grant from the year 25-26 onwards.
6. Faced with the upturn in approaches and complexity of cases, the need for additional Housing Options Officers so cases can be effectively managed and homelessness prevented.
7. The need for different agencies to have an improved understanding of the remits and thresholds of each other's services so clients are not given unrealistic expectations as to the help that can be provided.
8. The need to maintain training for staff on important issues such as safeguarding and domestic abuse.
9. The value of working collaboratively and in partnership and explore the possibility of having an annual partnership event to discuss homelessness in Waverley, in addition to the regular liaison meetings.

When dealing with a complaint submitted by an advocate for a homeless client in 2023, concern was raised by the fact that Waverley no longer has temporary accommodation in the Borough. This concern was taken into account when drafting the temporary accommodation section of the Homelessness review.

The following chapter highlights in greater detail some of the Risks, Challenges and Opportunities highlighted following the consultation and review process.

12. Challenges, Risks and Opportunities

Following the consultation and review of services, the following challenges, risks and opportunities have been identified:

- a) The fact that homelessness numbers for all household groups nationally and in Surrey and Waverley are on an upward trend and the challenge this represents. Waverley is on course to have the highest number of homeless presentations in 23-24 since the change in legislation in 2018. The previous highest number was 22-23.
- b) The challenge of having sufficient staff and the difficulties in recruiting, training and retaining enough staff in order to manage the increased work-load, complexity of cases and expectations from customers.
- c) The challenge of providing the necessary well-being support to staff who can adversely impacted in trying to help clients who struggle to engage in a reasonable manner as a result of their own difficult or traumatic circumstances. Dealing with verbal aggression and safeguarding concerns in addition to an increased workload, inevitably takes its toll on staff wellbeing.
- d) The very significant risk that unless the Government homelessness grant formula is changed, Waverley's Homelessness grant will reduce from £622,744 in 24-25 to £346,380. If the amount is not amended or replaced with funding by Waverley, the Council will face a massive impact on staffing and provision of accommodation that will inevitably mean numbers having to be placed into emergency accommodation will increase with the resulting cost and reputational impact on the Council. Waverley is disadvantaged by the fact that Councils with already high temporary accommodation numbers and expenditure may be able to re-invest any savings from any increased homelessness prevention success into their Housing Options Services. However, relative to the majority of Councils, Waverley has very low numbers and expenditure in regard on emergency accommodation costs and this means the Council's ability to fund on going staffing and accommodation costs will be much more challenging.
- e) The risk that as a result of higher interest rates, the already shrinking private rented sector will become even smaller as private landlord's face mortgage increases that make the continued letting of their properties unviable.
- f) The challenge of steadily rising private rent levels coupled, with frozen Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates meaning benefit dependent households are priced out of accommodation. This affects both existing tenants facing unaffordable rent increases as well as the Council's ability to help those needing to access private rented accommodation to avoid homelessness and having to be housed in emergency accommodation. If the LHA rate remains frozen there is inevitably a smaller pool of affordable private rented properties available for housing benefit/UC dependent clients.

- g) The continued challenge faced by people reliant on benefits seeking to privately rent in Farnham, due to Farnham being included in the lower Blackwater Valley LHA rate.
- h) The challenge that as a result of higher thresholds for clients to access support from social services and mental health services and the funding and staffing challenges these services have, Officers routinely face situations where safeguarding concerns are very evident when they are trying to assist applicants. This increasingly means more and more time is taken in reporting and trying to mitigate these concerns, resulting in reduced staffing capacity to effectively prevent and relieve homelessness. This also has an impact on the wellbeing of staff given the emotional impact of dealing with safeguarding concerns.
- i) The ongoing impact of the Ukrainian war. This affects not only the number of Ukrainian households potentially approaching Waverley as homeless following their stay with sponsors ending but also economic impacts in regard to the cost of living and peoples' ability to sustain their current housing. Other conflicts have also increased demand on Waverley's (and other Councils') housing services such as the Syrian and Afghan crises.
- j) The ongoing risk of increased numbers of homeless households being placed in private rented accommodation in Waverley by neighbouring boroughs and by London Boroughs. We are already aware of households being placed in Waverley by a London Borough and given the extra pressures London Boroughs continue to face, the competition to secure affordable private rented properties will increase. It is a sobering thought that a Surrey Borough on the outskirts of London had very similar low numbers in temporary accommodation to Waverley in 2011. Now this Council has numbers above 100. This will partly be the result of London Boroughs widening their search to secure private rented properties in neighbouring Surrey Boroughs. This makes it much more difficult for the Surrey Boroughs and Districts to secure accommodation and drives up prices and costs of trying to incentivise private landlords to continue to let to welfare benefit dependent tenants.
- k) The opportunities the Council has in developing new affordable housing and building on its success in this area to date.
- l) The opportunities to work collaboratively and innovatively with other Councils and statutory and voluntary partners as we all seek sustainable solutions to meet the increased demand on homelessness services. The collaboration with Guildford may provide opportunities to jointly commission services and share best practice.

Following feedback from Waverley's consultation with partners and staff and the Review of homeless services in Waverley, five priorities have been identified to form the basis of Waverley's Homelessness Strategy Action Plan:

- Rough Sleeping Interventions
- Prevention

- Accommodation
- Support
- Partnership Working

1. Rough Sleeping interventions

The successful for bids for Government Rough Sleeping Initiative funding has had a transformative effect on Waverley's engagement with, and support of rough sleepers. The action plan outlines a range of measures to build on this positive work.

2. Homeless Prevention

Successful homelessness prevention has been the cornerstone of the Waverley's housing options approach and success in keeping number having to be laced in temporary accommodation to a minimum. The Action Plan therefore recommends maintaining and building on previous successes in this area. This includes developing our partnership approach in tackling homelessness and continuing to use budgets flexibly on a 'spend to save' basis to prevent homelessness where it is in the Council's and the applicant's interests to do so. Key to ensuring homeless prevention will be to ensure sufficient funding to employ and train enough staff and to commission accommodation options.

3. Accommodation

Among the contributory factors for homelessness is a lack of affordable housing in Waverley. As noted above, Waverley is one of the most sought after and expensive places to live in the UK, which means that house prices and private rent levels are often beyond the reach of many people, particularly those reliant on welfare benefits. Waverley has an excellent track record in pioneering new initiatives to maximise access to private rented accommodation on behalf its customers. The Action Plan therefore recommends that such a proactive approach is continued. In addition, the Council will continue to work with its partners to maximise the availability of existing social and supported housing and also work to develop or commission/enable additional units of such accommodation.

4. Support

One of the key ways to prevent homelessness is to ensure that households receive the necessary support to enable them to maintain their tenancy. This can range from help with filling in forms to claim benefits or setting up utility bills to negotiation and advocacy to engage with landlords and social care and health professionals. Support to help customers retain existing accommodation avoids additional expense for households and the Council in finding and securing alternative accommodation and it also prevents disruption to social, education and employment networks. However, even if retaining existing accommodation is not possible, it is crucial that any alternative private rented accommodation starts on the right footing, particularly as the loss of private rented accommodation is the main cause of homelessness locally and nationally.

Good housing support is key to this particularly given the complexities and vulnerabilities of many homeless customers. Support can take many forms such as expertise and guidance on welfare benefits and debt to outreach support to rough sleepers and families.

5. Partnership Work

In the context of a very challenging financial climate for statutory and voluntary services, it has become even more important to look creatively at how the Council and its partners can maximise diminishing resources by working together. Waverley's success in maintaining its excellent homeless prevention performance over the previous 5 years has been based on building on existing partnership work and developing new partnerships. The Council's partnership with Ethical Lettings, letting agents and private landlords has been key to providing as wide a possible access to affordable private sector properties. Developing a partnership with the York Road Project in Woking has also been key in improving its assistance to single people and rough sleepers.

The Council continues to fund Citizens Advice Waverley (Now South West Surrey CAB) in its work in providing independent advocacy and advice on the full range of issues facing Waverley residents such as welfare benefits, debts, housing, relationship breakdown, employment issues etc.