



# People and Health Overview Committee

**Date:** Tuesday, 6 July 2021  
**Time:** 10.00 am  
**Venue:** A link to the meeting can be found on the front page of the agenda.

## Membership: (Quorum 3)

Andrew Kerby (Chairman), Pauline Batstone (Vice-Chairman), Tony Alford, Pete Barrow, Toni Coombs, Ryan Holloway, Stella Jones, Beryl Ezzard, Rebecca Knox and Daryl Turner

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**Chief Executive:** Matt Prosser, County Hall, Colliton Park, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1XJ (Sat Nav DT1 1XJ)

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[People & Health Overview Committee](#)

**Members of the public wishing to view the meeting from an iPhone, iPad or Android phone will need to download the free Microsoft Teams App to sign in as a Guest, it is advised to do this at least 30 minutes prior to the start of the meeting.**

**Please note** that public speaking has been suspended. However Public Participation will continue by written submission only. Please see detail set out below.

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# AGENDA

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## 1 APOLOGIES

To receive any apologies for absence.

## 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To disclose any pecuniary, other registerable or personal interest as set out in the adopted Code of Conduct. In making their disclosure councillors are asked to state the agenda item, the nature of the interest and any action they propose to take as part of their declaration.

If required, further advice should be sought from the Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting.

## 3 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

To receive questions or statements on the business of the Committee from town and parish councils and members of the public.

**The deadline for submission of the full text of a questions or statements is 8.30 on Thursday 1 July 2021.**

Details of the Council's procedure rules can be found at: [Public Participation at Dorset Council meetings](#)

## 4 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

To receive any questions from members in accordance with procedure rule 13. The deadline for the receipt of questions is **Thursday 1 July 2021**.

## 5 THE IMPACT OF COVID ON SCHOOLS AND YOUTH PROVISION

5 - 16

To receive a report from the Executive Director for People, Children.

## 6 DORSET COUNCIL HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY 2021 - 2026

17 - 292

To receive a report from the Interim Executive Director People, Adults.

**7 DORSET COUNCIL GRANTS PROTOCOL** 293 - 302

To receive a report from the Executive Director for Corporate Development.

**8 COMMITTEE'S FORWARD PLAN AND CABINET'S FORWARD PLAN** 303 - 316

To consider the Committee's Forward Plan and that of the Cabinet.

**9 URGENT ITEMS**

To consider any items of business which the Chairman has had prior notification and considers to be urgent pursuant to section 100B (4)b) of the Local Government Act 1972. The reason for the urgency shall be recorded in the minutes

**10 EXEMPT BUSINESS**

To move the exclusion of the press and public for the following item in view of the likely disclosure of exempt information within the meaning of paragraph 3 of schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

The public and the press will be asked to leave the meeting whilst the item of business is considered.

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## People and Health Overview Committee 6 July 2021 The impact of Covid on schools and youth provision

### For Review and Consultation

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr A Parry, Children, Education, Skills and Early Help

**Local Councillor(s):** All  
**Executive Director:** T Leavy, Executive Director of People - Children

**Report Author:** Vik Verma  
**Title:** Corporate Director for Education and Learning  
**Email:** [vik.verma@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:vik.verma@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk)

**Report Status:** Public

#### Recommendation:

That the Committee note and support the work being done to support Dorset schools and youth providers and the efforts of schools that have continued to deliver support in their communities.

#### 1. Executive Summary

1.1 This paper sets out the impact during the Covid-19 pandemic on schools and youth provision in Dorset and how schools, Dorset Council Children's Services and partners responded together.

There have been over 300 pieces of guidance and policy changes from the DFE and other government departments relating to children's services delivery. One of the most significant was the decision taken to close schools for most pupils on the 18<sup>th</sup> March 2020 with no clear timeline for when they would re-open.

Our education community has never worked more closely together. Schools, education settings, community partners, health partners, children, young people and their families have worked together with the Council in generating innovative

solutions to the challenges faced during Covid-19. The partnership mobilised, responded quickly, demonstrated agility and most importantly lived a one team, one Dorset, approach to support our vulnerable children and young people.

During Covid-19, services have been given greater permission to share information to better identify and support families with needs resulting in new ways of working, increased agility in the workforce and more timely and co-ordinated interventions.

### **Leadership timeline of our response to Covid-19**

The Dorset Council Children's Services Leadership Team worked closely with systems leaders in other parts of the council; Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group; Public Health Dorset; educational settings; NHS health providers; police, fire and rescue; town and parish councils as well as the community and voluntary sector to deliver our ongoing response to the pandemic.

The leadership task throughout this period was four-fold:

1. providing organisational responses to government advice, guidance and new duties;
2. coordinating and participating in partnership responses;
3. to deliver business continuity responding to questions and concerns about how employees could undertake their work and most importantly providing information to; and
4. responding to feedback on the impact of the pandemic on children, young people and families.

To coordinate our responses, we set up a network of headteachers, representing geographical and phase clusters that met daily to plan together and address concerns. We focused on supporting the most vulnerable, who would not be able to be in school, setting up a local school voucher scheme on behalf of Dorset schools, prior to the national scheme, to address issues of supplier failure as well as meeting the needs of a rural county. Together we developed a Vulnerable Children's Tracker which focused on attendance, shared risk assessments and worked with Public Health to ensure our schools had the information they needed to respond to outbreaks. We set up new communications channels and redeployed council officers to work alongside schools to remain open over the Easter holidays and beyond.

We have refined our partnership approach to working together to meet the needs of children and young people with weekly partnership meetings to highlight and address risks and issues for the most vulnerable. More recently we have worked as multi-agency partners to support the return to school through the provision of information, advice and support to those that may have found it more challenging, in particular smaller schools.

We sought, throughout this period to keep listening to the experiences of our children, young people and families. Close working with our Dorset Parent Carer Council (DPCC) to both listen to, and respond together to, the issues expressed by parents of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

As multi-agency leaders we continued to focus on our collective ambition for all our children, young people and families to deliver our new Children and Young People's Plan and the implementation of our new model of Children's Services delivery - Dorset Children Thrive.

## **1.2 School attendance tracker**

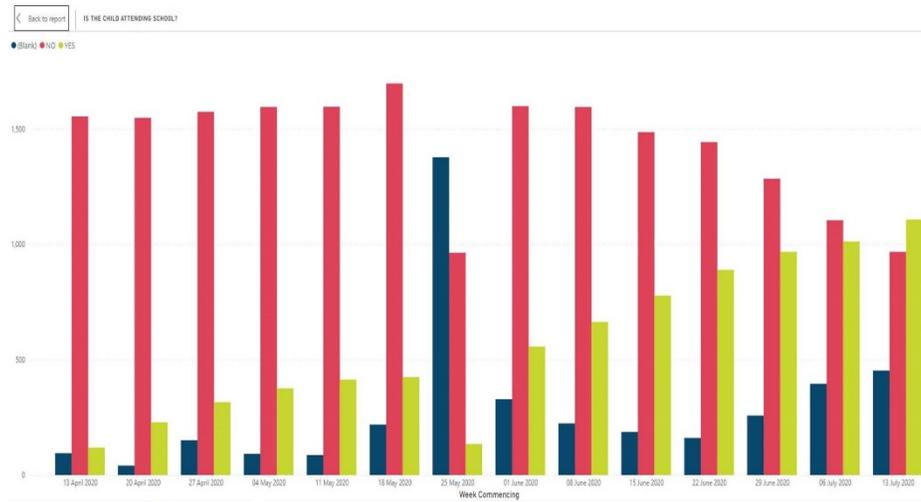
In response to school closures we created and implemented a new system to track attendance; the list of children was brought together based on the Department for Education definition of vulnerable children.

Each school, regardless of whether they are an Academy, Free or Maintained, was allocated a link worker from the Early Help workforce or Educational Psychology service. All maintained special schools had an educational psychologist as their link worker. The link worker had a weekly meeting with the school. The regular meeting of school cluster leads and link workers provided a key avenue for communicating with schools and helped to set up a successful monitoring process which included collecting attendance and risk judgement data from schools on a weekly basis to allow early intervention where issues were identified (such as low attendance of key cohorts).

We also developed links with non-maintained schools and settings and had internal Council departments link with different settings to collect weekly attendance and risk data.

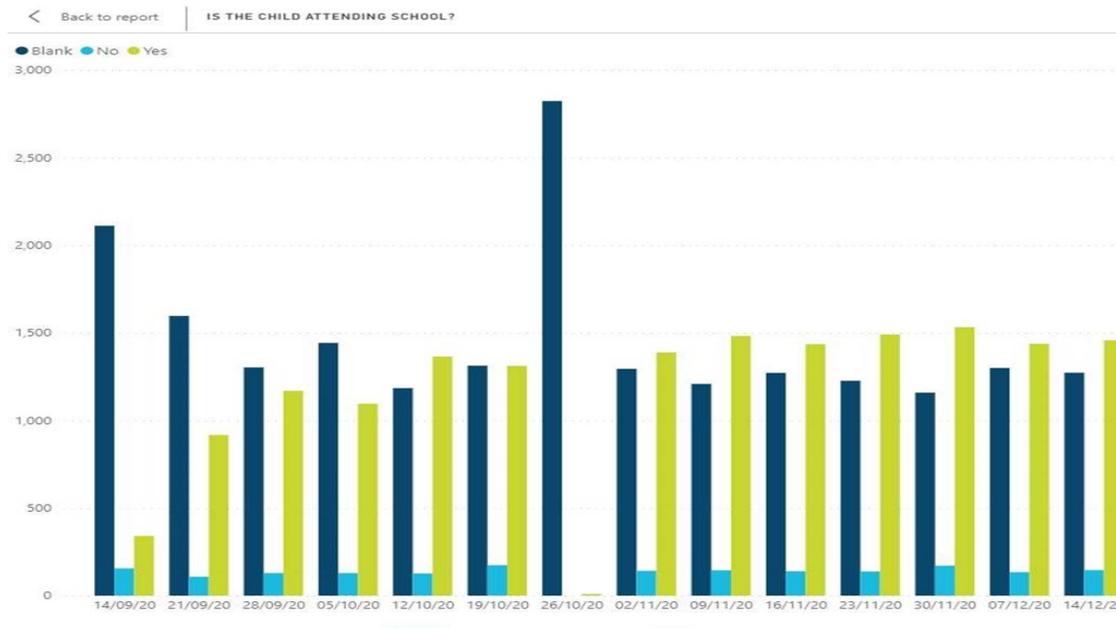
From April 2020 to July 2020 we could see that the attendance for children and young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan increased.

The Figures below set out examples of the live dashboard used to track data.



*Figure 1: Focus on children with a Dorset Education, Health and Care Plan attendance over the summer term, demonstrating the success of getting more pupils back to school each week:*

We have continued to use the Vulnerable Children Tracker with the support of our schools and can see how the attendance was sustained during the autumn term 2020 despite a lockdown during the month of November.



*Figure 2: Focus on children with a Dorset Education, Health and Care Plan attendance over the autumn term 2020 to March 2021.*

We had particularly good responses from the Dorset special schools, with 100 percent response rate for every week of the summer term. In the final week of term for special schools, 61% of children attended school. We continued to track attendance in the Dorset maintained special schools and to have regular link worker meetings.

During the Autumn term the attendance increased considerably and in many of the schools this was over 90%. In January 2021 this dropped during the third lockdown period, we continued to work with the schools and families to provide home learning activities and to ensure they were safe and receiving meaningful learning activities for their age, ability and aptitude. Our services worked together and with the schools to identify support that was needed from a range of other professionals. The schools worked with the families and children and our SEND provision Leads to ensure the children and young people were receiving appropriate provision.

### **1.3 Education Psychology Covid-19 parent helpline**

At the outset of Covid-19 parents and carers of children and young people with SEND had increased worries about education, routines and the challenges of home schooling given the level of support our children and young people receive at educational settings. Working together with the Dorset Parent Carer Council (DPCC) the service agreed to set up a telephone helpline to respond to queries they were receiving from parents, offering telephone consultations with an education psychologist five days a week morning and afternoon. The helpline was open to all families, not just those with SEND.

The helpline was clearly promoted both through DPCC but also through the Council's communications, website, the SEND newsletter and via schools.

Between 27<sup>th</sup> April – 26<sup>th</sup> August a total 115 telephone consultations took place

Most of the enquiries related to children and young people who attended a Dorset school including two independent schools. At least two of the children and young people were Electively Home Educated.

The nature of the calls focused on:

- Raised anxiety of both children and young people and parents and managing behaviours at home
- Relationships between siblings and managing fallouts
- Support and advice for children and young people with neurodevelopmental difficulties such as Autistic Spectrum Condition and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and managing these at home
- Home learning and how to support their child with SEND
- Shared care between parents and how to manage this during lockdown with an anxious child
- Access to other agencies and mediating between home and school
- Anxiety about return to school and getting ill
- How to support their child when schools reopen
- Transition to a new school when the usual transition process has not been available
- Seeking support to talk school and other agencies for support what to do and who to talk to

Parents and carers who would not typically have accessed support from an Education Psychologist were able to get support quickly and in a reassuring way. The service was able to email helpful resources to parents such as social stories and five-point scales to give parents and carers tools to support.

This support in addition to the support parents and carers were receiving from schools was an additional layer of essential support to our children and young people. Education psychologists were able to follow up consultations with schools and other agencies where additional support was needed, creating a valuable front door to access services for our families.

We have continued to provide this offer throughout the pandemic. Since 13 October 2020 to 24 April 2021 we have received 57 calls. 44 of the calls were during the period of January 2021 to end of March 2021. We will continue to offer this helpline as we progress. We have delivered all of this within existing resources.

#### **1.4 Risk Assessments**

We worked with the schools to establish a shared system for schools to share their evaluations about the vulnerabilities of children and young people within their settings. This included those children and young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan and specifically any children being supported through SEN Support that the school felt required a risk assessment. Schools developed their own risk assessments based on the DfE guidance and we worked closely with schools to use their own professional judgements in partnership with the parents and carers.

The risk assessment process was triangulated with our professional services and SEND team judgements based on a simple proforma asking the following questions:

- How are you keeping in contact with ...? How often is this?
- What activities and how are you providing for ...?
- How are you trying to maintain progress towards the Education, Health and Care Plan outcomes?
- What are you doing to maintain a sense of belonging to the school community?

- Do you or the family need additional support with any of the above or anything else? If so, what do you think would be helpful?
- Can any of the SEND specialist services fulfil this? EP, SENSS, HVSS, PMNS
- How do you know that ... is safe?
- Do you speak to ... or have you seen them virtually?
- What is in place for the family if things change? Who would they contact?

### **1.5 Youth Club and Youth Centre re-opening – June 2021**

In Dorset youth clubs are provided by community led organisations. In the larger towns, these operate from purpose-built youth centres, with smaller towns and villages providing a youth club from a wider community buildings, such as village halls.

The current pandemic has had a significant impact on youth centres and youth clubs and almost all clubs ceased their open access youth provision in March 2020 with the original lockdown. Most youth clubs made use of the furlough scheme, but some did keep a level of youth work capacity in play, offering some virtual youth work sessions to young people in their community, or engaging in detached youth work. There was a limited re-opening in the autumn of 2020 but most closed again for the duration of 'Lockdowns 2 and 3'

Those that did maintain a level of alternative youth provision were key partners over the different lockdowns. In some cases, these were the only professionals in regular contact with isolated young people and their families. These virtual sessions were helpful in supporting those that missed social contact the most.

The other alternative provision that emerged was several youth centres began to deliver detached youth work or increased their existing detached youth work to more evenings or different locations. This has been vital in engaging young people to prevent the spread of Covid, but also reducing anti-social behaviour and addressing the risks of County Lines and Child Exploitation. One of the legacies of the pandemic has been that several clubs have continued their commitment to detached and outreach youth work in their communities, which will continue to support our efforts to tackle these issues. There have also been

several community groups exploring outreach vehicles for youth work delivery including buses and a converted ice-cream van.

Alongside the contribution of our voluntary sector partners, Children's Services took a lead role in co-ordinating a response to young people throughout the pandemic. Shortly after the first 'lockdown', each locality team identified a youth 'lead' to link together voluntary sector and community organisations, schools, police, town and parish councils to ensure a joined up approach to supporting young people in their community.

As we have pressed ahead with our Dorset Thrive Model, we have recruited a Targeted Youth Worker for each locality and produced a Targeted Youth Work Offer, which members contributed to via the Executive Advisory Panel. Central to our Targeted Youth Work offer is to provide continuing support to voluntary sector youth clubs and youth centres.

In addition, these roles are central to our Contextual Safeguarding approach to address some key challenges we face around child exploitation and 'county lines'. The link meetings established during the first lockdown have provided a platform for a new monthly Youth at Risk Meeting for each locality, looking at young people at emerging or moderate risk of child exploitation.

Of the youth clubs that Dorset Council is aware of, 19 have re-opened, one is currently offering detached youth work and three more are currently doing the planning work needed to re-open. Understandably, current provision is limited to a degree in order to comply with Covid restrictions as youth clubs take a measured approach to how long they re-open, how often and for how many, but most are planning to be back to normal when restrictions end.

In addition, many clubs are now beginning to plan summer activities programmes for young people to take part in over the summer holidays, supported by funding from the Youth Fund approved by Dorset Cabinet and the funds available through the Holiday and Activity Fund from Central Government. These activities will supplement the programme being planned through Summer in Dorset.

## **1.6 Next steps**

We do not yet know the full extent of the impact of Covid-19 on our children, young people and families, but together as partnership we will make sure we are

able to respond effectively and continue to support our most vulnerable children both through the pandemic but also as services increasingly move to educational recovery activities.

We are taking forward the positive learning from our experience in Covid-19 to help us accelerate our work to deliver the best services for children and young people and to support professionals to work across organisational boundaries in the interests of improving family and child outcomes.

We have sought, throughout this period to keep listening to the experiences of our children, young people and families through the creation of regular foster carer forums, young people forums, formal and informal view seeking.

## **2. Financial Implications**

The government provided significant levels of additional financial support to Councils throughout 2020/21 pandemic with the majority of funding targeted to support increased costs in adult social care and lockdown grants to support local businesses. There was minimal additional funding ringfenced for Children's services meaning that any covid related pressures had to be absorbed by existing budgets.

We do not yet know the full extent of the impact of Covid-19 on our children, young people and families, and there may well be additional cost pressures in the future. These will need to be assessed and where appropriate incorporated in the Council's medium term financial plans.

## **3. Well-being and Health Implications**

Emotional health and wellbeing of children and young people with SEND is a priority for our services. We are working with colleagues in the CCG and from Dorset Healthcare Trust to strengthening our services for our most vulnerable children and young people with SEND.

## **4. Climate implications**

No climate implications have been identified in this report.

## **5. Other Implications**

No other implications have been identified.

## **6. Risk Assessment**

No Risks identified

## **7. Equalities Impact Assessment**

No equality impact assessment has been prepared as the report does not recommend a change of policy.

## **8. Appendices**

There are no appendices.

## **9. Background Papers**

There are no background papers.

[Please do not delete the footnote.](#)

### **Footnote:**

Issues relating to financial, legal, environmental, economic and equalities implications have been considered and any information relevant to the decision is included within the report.

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## People and Overview Committee 6 July 2021 Dorset Council Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2021 - 2026

### For Recommendation to Cabinet

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr G Carr-Jones, Housing and Community Safety

**Local Councillor(s):** All Councillors

**Executive Director:** V Broadhurst, Interim Executive Director of People - Adults

Report Author: Sharon Attwater

Title: Service Manager Housing Strategy and Performance

Tel: 01929 557371

Email: [Sharon.attwater@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:Sharon.attwater@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk)

**Report Status:** Public

**Recommendation:** That members of the committee recommend that Cabinet:

Endorse the work and recommend to Full Council:

1. The adoption of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2021 - 2026
2. Delegation of authority to the Portfolio holder for Housing and Community Safety to make minor amendments to the strategy and action plan and any amendments necessary to reflect legislative change.

**Reason for Recommendation:** To ensure Dorset Council has a legally compliant Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy that meets our responsibility for tackling and preventing homelessness.

## **1. Executive Summary**

Under the Homelessness Act 2002 local authorities have strategic responsibility for tackling and preventing homelessness. In accordance with the provisions in The Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole (Structural Changes) Order 2018 Dorset Council requires a new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy by 1 April 2022.

This report outlines the process in drafting a new strategy and asks the committee to consider the draft strategy and action plan and recommend to Cabinet the approval of the Dorset Council Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2021 - 2026.

## **2. Health and Wellbeing Implications**

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) published independent research on the causes of homelessness and rough sleeping in 2019. The rapid evidence assessment concluded:

For families, causes are linked to:

- Domestic Abuse
- Relationship breakdown
- Financial Issues
- Poverty
- Lack of suitable housing

For single households, causes are linked to:

- Relationship breakdown
- Mental Health
- Substance misuse

The strategy identifies and supports action to improve the health and wellbeing of homeless and rough sleeping households and addresses each factor.

## **3. Financial Implications**

The resources required to deliver the housing service strategy are expected to be affected. A service wide restructure will be completed in 2021 which is intended to reprioritise council resources to deliver the strategy and action plan. Where necessary, relevant costs will be identified through the 2022/23 budget setting process.

It is also anticipated that Dorset Council will continue to provide capital contributions – this is a required criteria the council must meet in order to submit bids for some of the external homelessness and rough sleeping funding streams in the future.

In addition, the strategy anticipates continued Government support for homelessness and rough sleeping households e.g. Next Steps Accommodation Programme, Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme and Rough Sleeping Initiative. Funding opportunities tend to be short notice and short term and rely on the submission of successful funding bids submitted by the council. A reduction in government funding would reduce Dorset Councils ability to deliver the strategy.

#### **4. Climate implications**

It is not anticipated that the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy will have an adverse effect on the environment or climate change.

#### **5. Other Implications**

##### Partnership Working

The housing service works closely with internal and external partners on areas of mutual interest, including adult and children’s services, homelessness support providers; safeguarding boards; social landlords; private landlords; voluntary and community sector; NHS, Police and National Probation Service. This work includes having joint approaches to lessons learnt and good practice.

##### Property and assets

In order to address the current shortfalls in accommodation and support the council’s responsibility to provide suitable temporary accommodation, the strategy anticipates an increase in property assets from the following identifiable sources:

- Acquisitions – leased and purchased
- Improved access to private rented sector accommodation
- Social landlord development programmes and management arrangements
- Use of council assets

A new Dorset Council Housing Strategy will emerge during 2021 and will support an incremental increase in the amount of suitable accommodation available to

Dorset residents offering additional support to the delivery of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy aims.

### Community Safety

The strategy identifies appropriate partners to form the Dorset Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Steering Group including representatives from:

- HMP Guys Marsh
- HMP Portland
- National Probation Service
- Dorset Police and Crime Commissioner

### Safeguarding Children and Adults

The strategy seeks to maximise opportunities at all stages to strengthen support and makes provision for the creation of appropriate multi-agency thematic casework groups.

## **6. Risk Assessment**

Having considered the risks associated with this decision using the council's approved risk management methodology, the following High risks have been identified and proposed mitigation noted:

- Risk Category Strategic Priority - A new Dorset Council Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy is required by 1 April 2022.
- Mitigation - Advanced approval provides necessary mitigation to commence activity and achieve identified target dates.
- Risk Category Service Delivery - A period of implementation is necessary to establish governance arrangements and appropriate memberships  
Mitigation - Housing service resources will be required to support this work and are being planned.
- Risk Category Strategic Priority – There is no current strategic framework directing a programme of work reflecting the council's responsibility to tackle homelessness for the next 5 years.
- Mitigation – Advanced approval provides necessary mitigation to commence activity and achieve identified target dates.
- Risk Category Service Delivery – Demand on council capital investment may be required in order to access short notice external funding streams.
- Mitigation – council feedback has been submitted to Government promoting longer notice of funding opportunities; inclusion in programme of capital funding at budget planning process.

Current Risk: Low

- Risk Category Legislation – Changes to legislation occur during the lifetime of a homelessness and rough sleeping strategy and require minor amendments
- Mitigation – the draft policy includes the ability for minor amendments to reflect current legislation can be made with approval from the housing portfolio holder.

Residual Risk: High

Having considered the risks associated with this decision using the council's approved risk management methodology, the following residual high risks have been identified and proposed mitigation noted:

- Risk Category Service Delivery – Availability of financial resources remains uncertain due to current climate and budgetary pressures.
- Mitigation – Maximisation of external funding streams and corporate commitment to financial support for strategy delivery.

Residual Risk: Low

Changes to legislation and guidance will be captured during the lifetime of the strategy and during each annual review.

Annual reviews will identify any appropriate revision of the strategy and monitor delivery.

## **7. Equalities Impact Assessment**

The housing service sought advice from the Dorset Council Equality and Diversity officer. The strategy has been approved by the Dorset Council Equality and Diversity Action Group.

The public consultation responses were analysed. Respondents with protected characteristics included age; disability; gender; race; sex.

Reponses were compared to provision in the strategy and appropriate amendments made.

Supported by engagement feedback the policy strengthens support to vulnerable people to ensure all people can fully participate in the scheme.

An annual review will monitor delivery against the approved equality impact assessment.

## **8. Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy
- Appendix 2 – Draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Plan
- Appendix 3 – Review of Homelessness and Rough Sleeping
- Appendix 4 – Equalities Impact Assessment
- Appendix 5 – Results of the public consultation
- Appendix 6 - Feedback consideration and actions

## **9. Background**

- 9.1 Due to Local Government Reorganisation on the formation of Dorset Council a new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy is required in accordance with the provisions in The Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole (Structural Changes) Order 2018. Previously, the 5 district and borough authorities that formed Dorset Council applied a single homelessness strategy for the period 2015 to 2019. The new strategy will provide a strategic framework for the council to tackle homelessness for a maximum period of 5 years.
- 9.2 The design of a new strategy has involved a working group led by People and Health Overview Committee and additional Councillors made up of Graham Carr-Jones; Andrew Kerby; Gill Taylor; Laura Miller; Simon Gibson; Toni Coombes; Anthony Alford; Les Fry; Molly Rennie; Beryl Ezzard; David Walsh; Pauline Batstone; Daryl Turner; Kate Wheller; Clare Sutton; Rebecca Knox; Jane Somper; Stella Jones; Peter Barrow; Ryan Holloway and Kevin Moore. The group were supported by external consultants Neil Morland & Co. commissioned by the service and the following housing service staff: Andrew Billany; Fiona Brown and Sharon Attwater.
- 9.3 The group met twice and considered the contents of an independent review of homelessness in the Dorset Council area and the current service provision carried out by Neil Morland & Co., considered and agreed the strategy aims and the associated action plan.
- 9.4 The review benchmarked their findings against:
- All England
  - England excluding London
  - South West
  - Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council
- 9.5 In preparing the strategy a wide-ranging public consultation took place. This ran from 22 March 2021 to 07 May 2020. Including the review and the public consultation, engagement took place with;

- Homeless Service Users
- Housing Services
- Social Landlords
- Internal stakeholders (Adults and Children's services)
- Provider Partners (e.g. homelessness support charities)
- Private Landlords
- Clinical Commissioning Groups
- Homeless Health Service for Dorset - NHS
- Town & Parish Councils
- Voluntary Sector Organisations
- Councillors

9.6 Analysis of feedback suggested:

- Response levels were fair and reasonably representative of the Dorset population
- 70% thought the strategy wholly or partially identified key issues affecting homelessness
- Support was across individuals and organisations
- Over 80% totally or partially supported the proposed actions in the strategy

9.7 Highlighted issues include:

- Support for use of evidence base
- The basic need for building more houses needs addressing
- Concern that funding might not meet the ambition of the plan
- The important link between health and homelessness

Appendix 5 contains the results from the public consultation.

## 10 Proposals

10.1 The draft strategy can be found in appendix 1. Key proposals in the strategy are:

- 5 Strategic Objectives
  - Reduce current and future levels of homelessness
  - Prevent homelessness
  - Ensure there is enough suitable accommodation for people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness

- Ensure there are adequate services to support people who are homeless, or threatened with homelessness, or were previously homeless, to prevent a reoccurrence of homelessness
  - Appropriately resource the delivery of this Homelessness and Rough Sleeping strategy
  
- A comprehensive action plan that shows clearly:
  - Which organisations are going to be involved in completing each action
  - Specifics of each action to be taken
  - A deadline for when each action is expected to be completed
  - The resources that will be needed to complete each action
  - The steps that will follow each completed action
  
- New delivery arrangements
  - Establish a new steering group to oversee the delivery of the strategy
  - Short-life (12 months) task and finish groups
  - Refreshed homelessness forum
  - Thematic and multi-agency casework action groups
  - Dorset Homelessness Service Providers Forum
  - Service user panel
  
- Accountability structure
  - Dorset Council Cabinet – annual report
  - People and Health Scrutiny Committee – annual report
  - Cabinet lead for homelessness, Scrutiny chair for homelessness & Corporate Director for Housing and Community Safety – regular updates

**Footnote:**

Issues relating to financial, legal, environmental, economic and equalities implications have been considered and any information relevant to the decision is included within the report.



**Dorset**  
Council

Dorset Council  
Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy  
2021 - 2026

DRAMA

**Dorset Council**

Dorset Council is a unitary local authority that was founded on 01<sup>st</sup> April 2019. The Councils' boundaries are largely co-terminus with those of the Dorset Ceremonial County area. The Council's leadership consists of a Chair of the Council, Leader of the Council and Chief Executive. The Council has 82 seats.

Acknowledgement: This Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy was commissioned and funded by Dorset Council and formulated by Neil Morland & Co Housing Consultants. Thanks go to Sharon Attwater, Andrew Billany, Fiona Brown and Sarah How from Dorset Council for providing invaluable assistance. The time and materials that numerous people and organisations have generously contributed to help produce this Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy, especially those persons with lived experience of homelessness, is very much appreciated.

Disclaimer: All views and any errors contained in this Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy are the responsibility of the authors. The views expressed should not be assumed to be those of Dorset Council or any of the persons who contributed to this Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy. The information contained in this Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy is accurate at the date of publication. The information in this Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy should not be considered legal advice. Dorset Council, nor Neil Morland & Co, are not authorised to provide legal advice. No responsibility can be taken by the commissioners or the authors of this Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy for any loss or damage incurred, by any persons or organisation acting or refraining from action as result of any statement in this Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy

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Dorset Council was formed in 2019 and as we continue to emerge as a new Council, I am proud to be the Portfolio holder for Housing. We have worked hard to manage the effects of the current pandemic on all our residents and during this time, we have also thought about those households who need our help to tackle the pressures of homelessness and rough sleeping. I am delighted to have been involved with the development of this new Dorset Council Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.



We commissioned a review of homelessness in the Dorset Council area. The extensive research with many of the organisations we work with, people who have been or are homeless, our own Council services and Councillors, has helped us to develop the strategy and its action plan for the next 5 years.

This strategy aims to provide us the right strategic approach needed to achieve this. It was also clear the very important role our community partners and voluntary organisations have in supporting us to deliver the help where it is most needed. From these conversations it is clear there are specific areas of focus if we are to truly tackle homelessness and rough sleeping.

By focussing our efforts we hope to be able provide better support for vulnerable families and communities where homelessness exists: Improve the help for people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness: Take action against any of the reasons that cause homelessness: Work well in collaboration throughout our Council services especially housing, adult social care, children services and public health so that we can demonstrate need and fund the right activities: Benefit from the essential contribution by local and national public bodies, housing associations, voluntary organisations and community groups.

This strategy provides a single plan for all the agencies across Dorset including the Council and will help to concentrate our efforts for tackling and preventing homelessness over a short-medium term for all people who are at risk of homelessness.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those organisations and individuals that contributed to the development of the strategy and action plan and look forward to working together to deliver it.

Cllr Graham Carr-Jones  
July 2021

## 1.0 Introduction

The approach taken to formulating this Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy, complies with the obligations found in the Homelessness Act 2002. This legislation requires local authorities to take strategic responsibility for tackling and preventing homelessness.

This Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy provides a single plan for all Dorset agencies to concentrate their activities for tackling and preventing homelessness.

In formulating this strategy, Dorset Council's housing services were assisted by its adult social care and children services and had the co-operation of housing associations. Numerous other agencies also made contributions. Elected Councillors were actively involved via workshops and individual discussions.

It is intended to be in place for a maximum of five years, from 2021-2026. A new strategy shall be published sooner, if there are substantial changes to homelessness legislation or significant revisions to statutory guidance on homelessness.

Prior to this Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy being formulated, a review of homelessness (the Homelessness Review) was completed, to evaluate the current picture of homelessness in Dorset. This concentrated on:

- levels of homelessness,
- activities for preventing homelessness,
- activities for securing accommodation,
- activities for providing support, and
- the resources available to deliver the above activities.

The strategy is a forward-looking document that includes a summary of the findings from the Homelessness Review. This separate document paints a picture of homelessness at the time the research was carried out, looking at what has happened over the past five years.

It incorporates a comprehensive action plan, that shows clearly:

- which organisations are going to be involved in completing each action,
- specifics of each action to be taken,
- a deadline for when each action is expected to be completed,
- the resources that will be needed to complete each action,
- the intended change that accomplishing each action will achieve, and
- the steps that will followed to complete each action.

The strategy includes an explanation about the delivery and accountability of achieving the agreed objectives and actions. This encompasses arrangements for democratic oversight of a Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy, steering the enactment of the action plan, sharing good practice, and case conferencing of complex cases.

When formulating this strategy, the objectives of Dorset Council's Housing Allocation Scheme and Tenancy Strategy have been cross-referenced. Statutory guidance on

homelessness strategies was also considered, as was national guidance published the by Local Government Association.

The action plan forms part of this strategy and shall be updated annually. Doing so will help Dorset Council demonstrate which actions have been completed and which are yet to be carried out. This will ensure accountability and explain why any actions might be behind schedule, or have been completed early, or are no longer relevant.

Dorset Council carried out consultation on the objectives and actions of the strategy, prior to publishing it.

This Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy is available to download from Dorset Council's website. It can be viewed at the Council offices during usual opening hours. Copies are also available free of charge.

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## 2.0 Summary

### 2.1 Introduction

This Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy seeks to tackle all forms of homelessness, including those who are owed a statutory duty of assistance and often living in temporary accommodation, as well as people who are staying in supported housing, sleeping rough on the streets, or have other transient arrangements (e.g. sleeping on a friend's sofa).

#### **Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy Objectives:**

- 1) Reduce the current and future levels of homelessness.
- 2) Prevent homelessness
- 3) Ensure there is enough suitable accommodation for people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.
- 4) Ensure there are adequate services to support people who are homeless, or threatened with homelessness, or were previously homeless, to prevent a reoccurrence of homelessness.
- 5) Appropriately resource the delivery of this Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy

A range of actions has been identified for Dorset Council, along with other public bodies, housing associations and voluntary organisations, that can help tackle and prevent homelessness. Specific actions have been included for people who are more at risk of homelessness. The priorities and actions contained in this strategy have had regard to the functions exercised by Dorset Council in respect of its housing, adult social care, and child social care services. It promotes working across organisations and policy boundaries, to ensure social inclusion and equality of access to services. When developing this strategy, a broad range of organisations have been consulted including support providers, voluntary organisations and health services as well as people who were experiencing homelessness or had done so previously.

### 2.2 National homelessness context

There is national legislative framework setting out the rights of people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness and the responsibilities of local authorities, other public bodies and private registered providers of social housing (housing associations).

Causes of homelessness include poverty, inadequate housing, health problems and relationship breakdown. All contribute to why people become homeless.

Nationally, levels of homelessness have increased over the past decade, with more people approaching local authorities for assistance and rising numbers of people sleeping rough. The number of households living in temporary accommodation has doubled since March 2010 from 50,000 up to 93,000 at March 2020. Persons of black ethnic origin are disproportionately more likely to become homeless, as are young people aged 16-25 years of age.

The UK Government has an ambition to end rough sleeping by 2024. As part of their pursuit of this objective, an internationally proven method of helping people exit street

homelessness, known as the Housing First approach, is being piloted. During 2020, the UK Government launched the Everyone In campaign as part of its response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in over 29,000 people being helped to find accommodation.

Since December 2019, The UK Government has allocated over £700m to local homelessness services, with over 300 councils across England receiving a share of funding to support people experiencing homelessness in their areas.

### **2.3 Local homelessness context**

The information in Section 4 of this Strategy is a summary of the evidence found in the recent review of homelessness<sup>1</sup>.

When formulating this strategy, regard was had to the conclusions of the Review, which assessed the levels and patterns of homelessness, and identified gaps in local knowledge and services. Regard was also had to local Housing Allocations Scheme and Tenancy Strategy, plus other relevant strategies and policies.

Households aged 24 to 44 years, with dependent children and of White British origin are the main type of household to seek assistance from the council in relation to homelessness in line with national trends. In addition, a growing number of single male and single females who have difficulties as a result of physical and mental health problems are becoming homeless in Dorset, also in line with national trends.

Levels of homelessness in Dorset have increased over the past five years and several factors indicate that this is set to continue including; 23.6% of children in Dorset living in poverty; high house price to income ratios; and the impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic leading to potential job losses and reduced incomes.

It is clear from the Review that activity to prevent homelessness and support for those who are or may become homeless is the key to tackling homelessness in Dorset. The council has developed excellent partnerships with services in Dorset that have been commissioned to support homeless people and help to prevent homelessness. These services are well placed, experienced and keen to expand to help meet the growing need.

The Action Plan accompanying this Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy has been designed, with input from stakeholders, to help meet the growing levels of homelessness and secure additional suitable housing for those in need.

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<sup>1</sup> Morland, N, Christou, A, A Review of Homelessness in the Dorset Council Local Authority Area, 2021.

## 3.0 National Homelessness Context

The UK Government is responsible for making decisions about homelessness law and strategy for England. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) is charged with leading on policy formulation and programme delivery.

The Homelessness Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities, to formulate a Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy at least every five years. A review of homelessness in a local housing authority area must take place prior to a Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy being formulated and published. The legislation requires local authorities to take strategic responsibility for tackling and preventing homelessness in their area. This duty complements other duties local authorities have, to freely provide advice to anyone at risk of homelessness and assist persons in specified circumstances who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.

### 3.1 Homelessness legislation

A legal framework setting out the rights of people who are experiencing homelessness and duties local authorities must administer, has been in force since 1977<sup>2</sup>, with significant amendments being made to it 1985<sup>3</sup>, 1996<sup>4</sup>, and 2017<sup>5</sup>.

#### Definition of homelessness

Households (single persons, couples, families with dependent children are all covered by the term) who are homeless or threatened with homelessness include those who:

- are street homeless
- are hidden homeless
- have been illegally evicted,
- are living in accommodation that is unaffordable, unfit, overcrowded, are experiencing domestic abuse or threats of domestic abuse, and other exceptional circumstances,
- are at risk of becoming homeless due to parents/family/other no longer willing or able to accommodate, leaving care, prison, the armed forces or escaping domestic abuse), and
- have been served a valid notice to quit their tenancy by their landlord.

All local authorities have a duty to ensure advice and information is available and free of charge to any household, about preventing homelessness, finding a home, rights when homeless and help available locally.

Any adult, or child aged 16-17, who believes they are homeless or threatened with homelessness, is entitled to make an application for assistance to any local authority.

<sup>2</sup> Housing (Homeless Persons) Act 1977

<sup>3</sup> Housing Act 1985

<sup>4</sup> Housing Act 1996, Part 7

<sup>5</sup> Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

A household who usually lives in the UK and has a right to enter and remain in the country without any restrictions, is normally eligible for assistance.

### **Local authority duties**

When a household is eligible for assistance, local authorities must:

- Carry out an assessment of their housing and support needs and formulate a personal plan to meet these needs.
- Arrange temporary accommodation, when a local authority believes they have a priority need for accommodation due to them having a specified vulnerability.
- Attempt to prevent homelessness for them if they are likely to become homeless within 56 days of them making their application for assistance.
- Attempt to relieve homeless for up to 56 days, when they are already homeless, when making an application for assistance.
- Arrange short-term accommodation when they are intentionally homeless and have a priority need.
- Obtain permanent accommodation where they are unintentionally homeless and have a priority need.

Local authorities have discretion to consider whether a household has a local connection with the local authority to which they have made an application for assistance.

A household has a right to request review of certain decisions made their application.

When administering their public law homelessness duties, local authorities must co-operate with each other and can expect co-operation from housing associations and child social care services. Specified public authorities have a duty to refer a household who is at risk of homelessness to a local authority.

### **3.2 Causes of homelessness**

MHCLG with the Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) published independent research on the causes of homelessness and rough sleeping<sup>6</sup>. An assessment of evidence concluded that for families there was strong evidence of domestic abuse, relationship breakdown, financial issues, poverty and lack of social housing being the causes of homelessness. For single persons there was strong evidence that relationship breakdown, mental health and substance misuse were the causes. In terms of rough sleeping, the strongest cause identified was relationship breakdown.

### **3.3 Homelessness statistics**

Official statistics published by the UK Government, for April 2019 – March 2020<sup>7</sup>, showed:

- Households with children are more likely to be owed a prevention duty at initial assessment than a relief duty
- Single adult households are the largest group of households owed a prevention or relief duty, representing 60.1% of all households who had a duty accepted.

<sup>6</sup> Alma Economics. 2019. Homelessness: Causes of homelessness and rough Sleeping: rapid assessment of evidence, London, Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government and Department for Work & Pensions

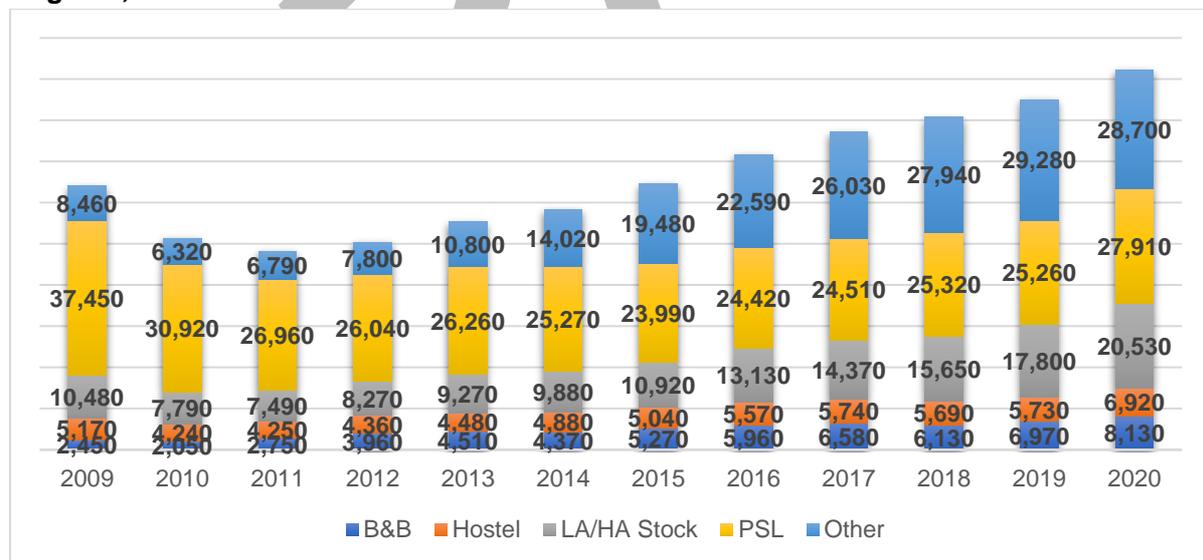
<sup>7</sup> Statutory Homelessness Annual Report, 2019-20, England. Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government.

- 57.6% of single adults are initially accepted under the relief duty.
- Of the households that were owed a duty in in 2019-20, those that were owed a prevention duty were more likely (58.5%) to have an accommodation secured outcome than households owed an initial relief duty (40.0%)
- Accommodation secured under the prevention duty is more likely to be in self-contained private rented sector accommodation at 36.3%, or in a social rented sector registered provider tenancy at 21.7%.
- Accommodation secured at relief is more likely to be a social rented supported housing or hostel offer at 26.6%
- Main duty acceptances have reduced by 29.3% over the past three years, due to the number of households who are prevented from becoming homeless or have homelessness relieved

The number of households owed the main duty of assistance (obtain permanent accommodation for households that are unintentionally homeless and have a priority need) has decreased 29.3%, from 56,600 in 2017-2018 before the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (HRA17) to 40,040 in 2019-2020, two years after the new legislation came into force. This is because more households are receiving assistance at an earlier stage, through prevention and relief duties, one of the aims of the legislation.

The number of households in temporary accommodation has risen to 93,000 on 31st March 2020, the highest level in almost 15 years. This is largely driven by single households, while the number of households with children in temporary accommodation has remained more stable.

**Chart 1: Households in temporary accommodation, annual snapshot taken on 31<sup>st</sup> March, England, 2009 - 2020**



Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

### Demographics of homeless households

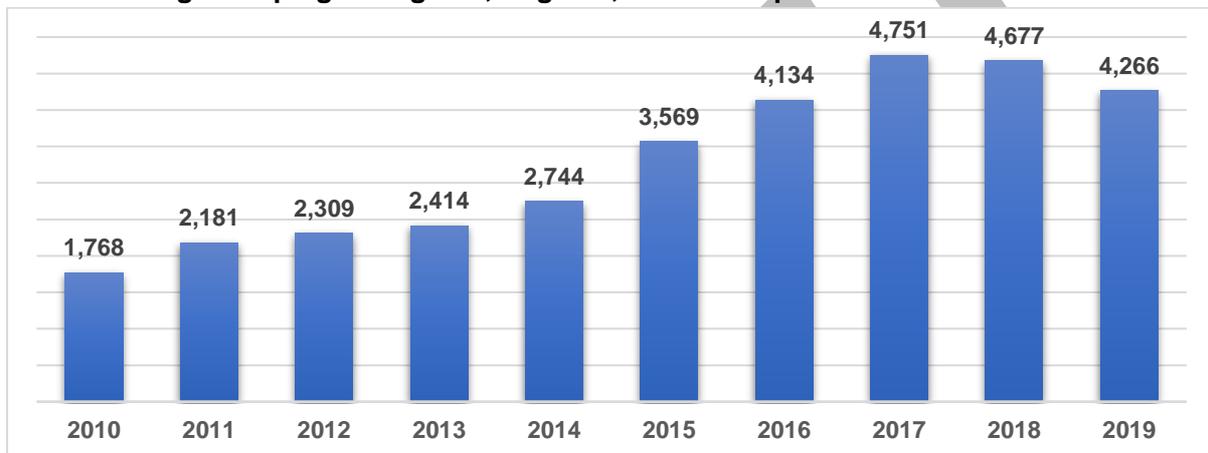
During 2019-20 69.8% of homeless households had a White lead applicant, while 84.6% of individuals in England are White, suggesting White households are less likely to be homeless. Households containing an Asian lead applicant are also underrepresented as

they account for just 6.3% of homeless applications and for 8.1% of the population. Households with a Black lead applicant are the most disproportionately homeless as they account for 10.7% of those owed a duty while they are estimated to comprise of 3.6% of the population.

In 2019-20, the most common age group of lead applicants in households owed a prevention or relief duty were aged between 25 and 34 years old, making up 87,990 households or 30.5% of the total.

The latest rough sleeping snapshot statistics<sup>8</sup> show that in 2019 there were 4,266 individuals recorded as sleeping rough on a single night in England.

**Chart 2: Rough sleeping in England, England, annual snapshot taken Autumn 2010-2019**



Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

### 3.4 Homelessness Policy

The UK Government has an ambition of ending street homelessness by 2024<sup>9</sup>.

From 2017-2019, the UK Government invested £1.2bn to tackle homelessness, which included £76m for an initiative to reduce street homelessness and £28m to pilot the Housing First approach. In August 2018, the MHCLG published a Rough Sleeping Strategy<sup>10</sup>.

The UK Government appointed an independent advisor to lead a review into the causes of street homelessness, that will provide advice on additional action required to end street homelessness by the end of 2024.

#### Everyone In campaign

The UK Government's initial response to COVID-19 and rough sleeping in March 2020 was to bring in those people experiencing street homelessness to protect their health and stop wider transmission, particularly in hot spot areas, and those in assessment centres and shelters that are unable to comply with social distancing advice.

<sup>8</sup> Rough sleeping snapshot in England: autumn 2019. Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government.

<sup>9</sup> The Conservative and Unionist Party, Manifesto 2019.

<sup>10</sup> The rough sleeping strategy, 2018, Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

By September 2020, over 29,000 people were reported as being helped, with 10,000 provided with emergency accommodation and nearly 19,000 provided with settled accommodation or move-on support.

An eviction ban for six months was put into force. Subsequently the law was changed to increase notice periods to six months. Bailiff enforcement action is not permitted during national restrictions.

All local authorities were asked to update actions plans for tackling rough sleeping by the end of 2020, following which they have been expected to carry out a rapid assessment of need for everyone they assist who is experiencing street homelessness.

As new restrictions came into force in from January 2021, MHCLG asked local housing authorities once again to make sure those experiencing street homelessness were helped to obtain accommodation and register with a GP.

An independent review of the HRA 2017<sup>11</sup>, commissioned by MHCLG, concluded that more people are getting help who previously would not. The review also identified improvements could be made to how the HRA is being administered, data collection and joint working.

Research<sup>12</sup> carried out by MHCLG with over 500 people who had experienced street homelessness found that before sleeping rough most had not been in stable accommodation. The research estimated the annual cost of a person who is experiencing street homelessness was £12.2k, compared to £3.1k for people at risk of homelessness who do not have to sleep rough.

### **3.5 Homelessness Funding**

Since December 2019, The UK Government has allocated over £700m to local homelessness services, with over 300 councils across England receiving a share of funding to support people experiencing homelessness in their areas.

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<sup>11</sup> Knight, Tim., Greenstock, Jane., Beadle, Shane., Charalambous, Steph., Fenton, Catherine. 2020. Evaluation of the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act: Final Report. Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government. London.

<sup>12</sup> 2020. Understanding the multiple vulnerabilities, support needs and experiences of people who sleep rough in England. Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government. London.

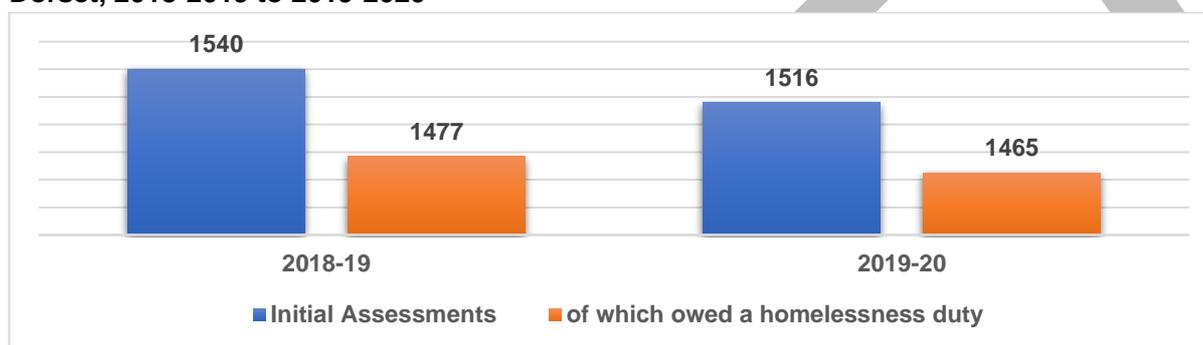
## 4.0 Local Homelessness Context

The information in this section of this Homelessness Strategy is a summary of the evidence found in a recent review of homelessness in Dorset<sup>13</sup>.

### 4.1 Levels of Homelessness

Initial assessments, introduced by the HRA17<sup>14</sup>, determine if a duty is owed to a person who is homeless or threatened with homelessness. The number of assessments carried out by Dorset Council, and former component housing authorities, reduced by 1.5% between 2018-2019 and 2019-2020. Of those assessed, 95.9% during 2018-2019 and 96.6% during 2019-2020 were found to be owed a homelessness duty.

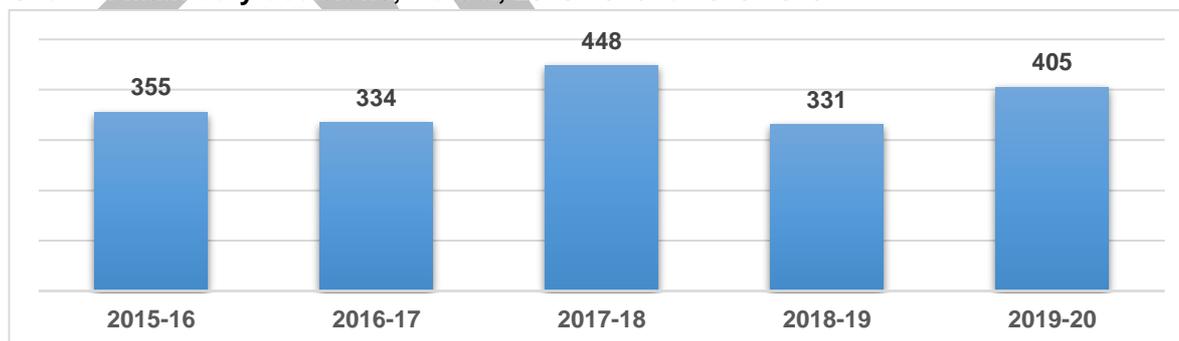
**Chart 3: Number of households initially assessed for a homelessness duty post enactment of HRA17, Dorset, 2018-2019 to 2019-2020**



Source Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

The number of main housing duty<sup>15</sup> decisions made on homelessness applications in Dorset for the period 2015-2016 to 2019-2020, was at a peak in 2017-2018, reducing by 25% the following year to the lowest number for the five-year period. It is not clear why there was an increase in 2017-2018, but Dorset Council followed the national trend in 2018-2019, all showing significant reductions with the enactment of the HRA17.

**Chart 4: Main duty decisions, Dorset, 2015-2016 to 2019-2020**



Source Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

During 2019-2020, 65.18% of main duty decisions found applicants to be eligible for assistance, in priority need and homeless. 18% were found to be not homeless. The proportion of not homeless

<sup>13</sup> Morland, N., Christou, A., (2019). A review of homelessness in the Local Authority of Dorset

<sup>14</sup> The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (Commencement and Transitional and Savings Provisions) Regulations 2018

<sup>15</sup> Housing Act 1996, Pt VII s193(2)

applicants has reduced significantly since the enactment of HRA17, as should be expected with an increase in prevention activity.

The main ethnic group was white and main applicants were predominantly aged between 25-44 years. Households which included dependent children were the majority household type that were found to be eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and having a priority need for accommodation.

For the period 2015-2016 to 2019-2020 the use of all types of temporary accommodation has increased in Dorset, in particular the use of bed and breakfast accommodation which for the last quarter of 2019-2020 was the most commonly used form of accommodation.

The levels of rough sleeping in Dorset have remained low over the past 5 years (2015-2019), recording 18 persons sleeping rough on the 2019 annual count.

The relative rate of homelessness, temporary accommodation usage and rough sleeping for Dorset is lower than that of Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole (BCP), South West England, England not including London, and the whole of England.

To forecast future levels of homelessness, child poverty rates, labour market statistics, and house price data has been analysed.

At a local level 23.4% of Dorset children were identified as living in poverty, according to the latest data. The number and portion of children in poverty in Dorset is lower than BCP, South West, England without London and the whole of England.

**Chart 5: Number of children in poverty after housing costs, Dorset, 2014-2015 to 2018-2019**



Source: Child Poverty Action Group. End Child Poverty

#### **Indicators of future likely levels of homelessness**

In Dorset the percentage of 16-64-year-olds recorded as unemployed is lower compared to elsewhere. Of the Dorset population aged 16-64, 2.7% are in receipt of out of work welfare benefits. Of these, 52% are between the ages of 25 to 49 years This is lower than BCP, South West England, and all of England. The percentage of 16-64-year-olds in employment in Dorset is lower than BCP, South West England and all of England, while there are a higher percentage of self-employed workers.

Gross weekly pay is on average lower in Dorset compared with BCP, South West England and all of England.

Conversely, median house prices in Dorset are higher compared to BCP, South West England, and England which means a higher than average house price to earnings ratio of 10.06 times median gross annual earnings for Dorset. This is higher than BCP, South West England and all of England.

## 4.2 Preventing Homelessness

### Duty to refer

A dedicated online referral form and specific email address is available on Dorset Council's website for public authorities and other organisations to use when contact is made with someone who might be at risk of homelessness. 202 referrals were made during 2019-2020, of which 31% were from public authorities. In addition to the Duty to Refer<sup>16</sup>, many housing associations that hold stock in the Dorset Council area have signed up to the National Housing Federation's voluntary Commitment to Refer<sup>17</sup>.

Responsibilities performed by Dorset Council include:

- Providing housing advice,
- Taking applications for homelessness assistance,
- Determining eligibility for assistance,
- Providing accommodation for an interim period to people who might be homeless, eligible for assistance and have a priority need,
- Completing assessments and formulating personalised plans,
- Fulfilling duties to prevent and/or relieve homelessness, provide accommodation to people who are unintentionally homeless and have a priority need, plus provide advice and accommodation for a reasonable period to people who are intentionally homeless and have a priority need,
- Making referrals to other local authorities for persons who do not have a connection to Dorset,
- Completing reviews of decisions made about entitlements to assistance,
- Ensuring suitability of accommodation offered, protection of a household's belongings, working with children services when cases involve children, receiving referrals from specified public authorities, and
- Detecting fraudulent applications for assistance.

Dorset Council's website has a specific page which includes details about how to access the housing and homelessness services, plus links to information and services for:

- Rough sleeper outreach workers
- Dedicated support for victims of domestic abuse
- Initiatives that can prevent homelessness (e.g. landlord incentives that can assist to secure private rented sector (PRS) accommodation)
- Facts about peoples' rights to assistance when homeless.

Dorset Council also offers a range of information about homelessness within its web pages, including:

- The duty of specified public authorities to refer cases of homelessness to a local authority,
- Rights to make an application for homelessness assistance,
- Provision of temporary accommodation, and
- Entitlements to seek a review of a homelessness decision.

<sup>16</sup> Homelessness (Review Procedure Etc) Regulations 2018, Part 4 Duty to Refer

<sup>17</sup> National Housing Federation. (2018). Commitment to refer: guidance for housing associations

Dorset Citizens Advice office operates a face to face triage service, five days each week at the Dorchester Branch. Advice is also available online and at other branches, by telephone, email webchat, and video link.

An officer from Dorset Council's Homelessness Service will attend a local Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangement meeting if required.

Dorset Council's Homelessness Service and Children's Social Care work with children aged 16 and 17, plus young adults leaving care aged 18, 19, or 20 years, each fulfilling any relevant duty owed. Children's Social Care facilitate the organisation of a personal adviser for each person leaving care, to provide support until their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday (or 25<sup>th</sup> if they remain in full time education). For 16- and 17-year olds there is a joint protocol setting out how officers from both services will work together to ensure that these children receive a seamless service from the first approach as homeless or threatened homelessness. Following the introduction of the HRA17, new guidance was published jointly with MHCLG and the Department of Education on the provision of accommodation for 16 and 17 years-olds who may be homeless and/or require accommodation<sup>18</sup> therefore a review of the current protocol is required.

There are some specific homelessness prevention initiatives to respond to the common characteristics of adults who experience homelessness. Contact details are available on the council website [insert link](#)

The You First Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Sexual Violence Integrated Service provides outreach support in the community and accommodation-based services in Dorset, including a safe house for those at significant risk of harm.

The Lantern Trust in Weymouth help to prevent homelessness by mediating and advocating with landlords on behalf of individuals and assisting with rent deposits. The Lantern Trust has their own housing and benefits team and provide premises for Shelter Housing First, and Citizens Advice, who has a drop-in service two days each week plus a GP service each Friday. The Dorset Council Integrated Prevention Support Service fund the core running costs of the Trust.

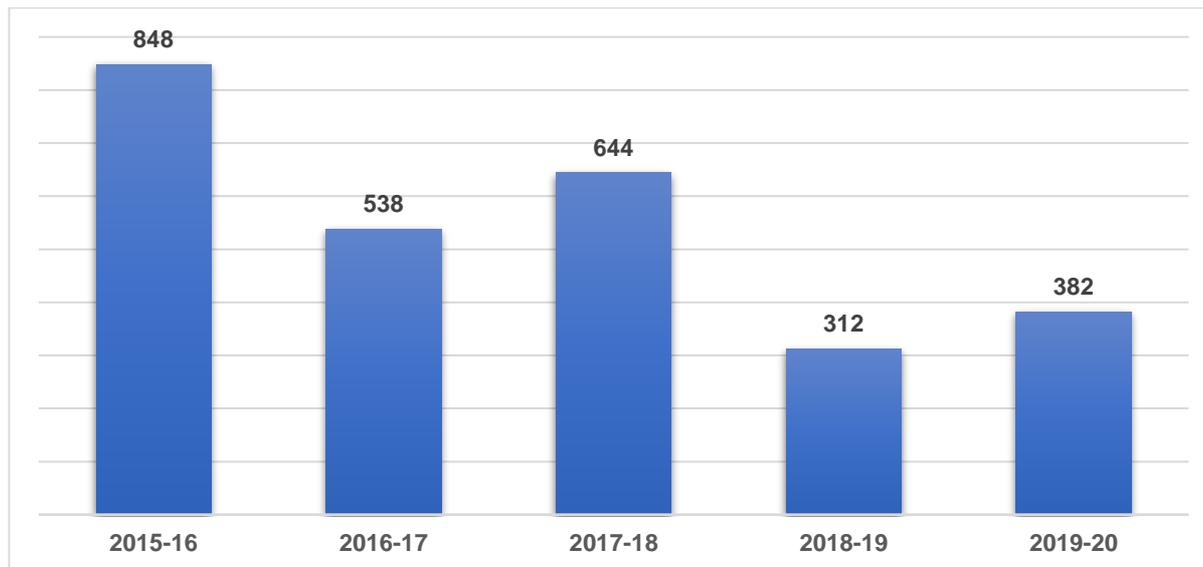
Royal British Legion and SSAFA provide access to welfare benefits, debt and money advice and other support to anyone who has served in the armed forces, including helping rough sleeping veterans off the street and into move on accommodation when they are ready.

The number of cases where positive action by Dorset Council (and the local authorities that preceded it) prevented homelessness was highest in 2015-16, and has reduced each year since, becoming lower in 2018-2019 than all other years. This coincided with the implementation of the new HRA17 duties, and new recording methods being instigated by MHCLG, as well as the reorganisation of local government in Dorset.

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<sup>18</sup> Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Department for Education. (2018). Prevention of homelessness and provision of accommodation for 16 and 17-year old young people who may be homeless and/or require accommodation. Guidance to children's services authorities and local housing authorities about their duties under Part 3 of the Children Act 1989 and Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 to secure or provide accommodation for homelessness 16 and 17-year-old young people

**Chart 5: Number of cases where positive action succeeded in preventing homelessness, Dorset, 2015-2016 to 2019-2020**



Source Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

The majority of main applicants of households owed a prevention or relief duty are between the ages of 25-34 for both 2018-2019 and 2019-2020, followed by those aged 18-24 and those aged between 35-44. All three aged groups had small reduction in numbers for the two-year period, while those aged 75+ increased by 46% to 32 households. Those aged 16 to 17-year olds, the age group who cannot yet be legally responsible for a tenancy, increased by 28% to 23 households.

For 2019-2020, the main ethnic group of those owed a prevention or relief duty in Dorset was White British at 95.4%, followed by Mixed at 0.7%, Black or Black British and Asian or Asian British, both at 0.5% and Other Ethnic Origin at 0.4%. 2.5% of cases had no ethnic group stated.

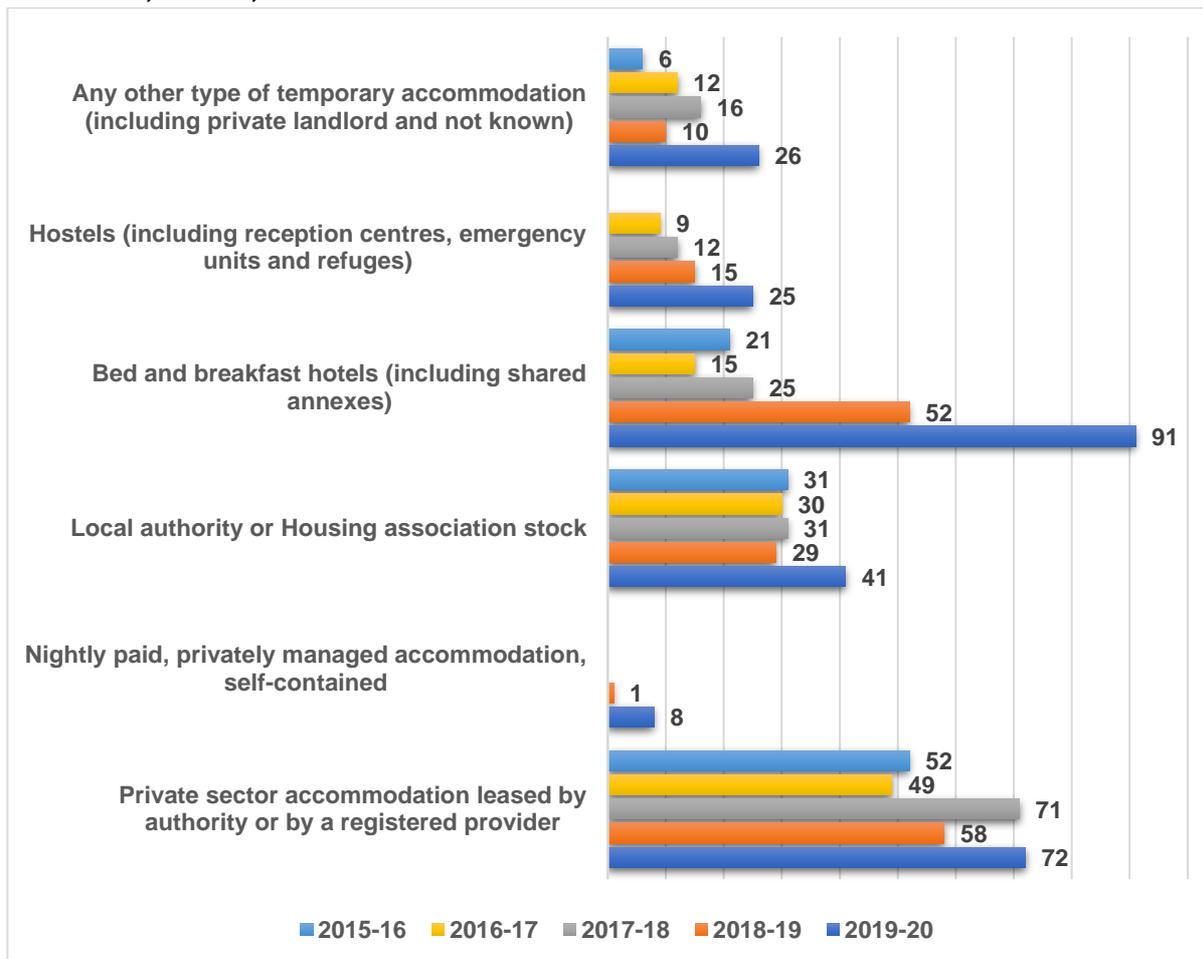
### 4.3 Securing accommodation

#### Housing homeless households

Dorset currently have access to 224 units of temporary accommodation located across the area and is seeking to increase this portfolio. Emergency bed and breakfast accommodation in the towns of Weymouth (in the south west of the local authority area) and Bournemouth (in a neighbouring local authority area) is also used regularly. During the past five years, temporary accommodation usage has increased across Dorset, BCP, South West England, England not including London, and the whole of England. The relative and actual usage of temporary accommodation is lower in Dorset than all comparator areas.

Most households to whom Dorset Council owe a duty because they are eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and have a priority need for accommodation, are provided with temporary accommodation for the foreseeable future. Leasing of private sector housing for use as temporary accommodation, is the most common method used to accommodate homeless households in Dorset and all comparator areas.

**Chart 6: Number of households in temporary accommodation at end of final quarter by type of accommodation, Dorset, 2015-2026 to 2019-2020**



Source Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

Homelessness relief activities are typically carried out by Dorset Council's homelessness service, as well as the commissioned Integrated Prevention Services.

449 cases of accommodation being secured to relieve homelessness, have been recorded in the two years since the commencement of the HRA 17. The number of relief cases increased between 2018-19 and 2019-20 across Dorset and all comparator areas.

There are three common forms of accommodation used to relieve homelessness, locally and nationally: (i) supported housing, of which there is only a limited amount in Dorset; (ii) private rented sector accommodation; and (iii) social rented housing. Demand for all types of accommodation exceeds the supply available. The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping action plan includes activity to increase the housing supply and make best use of stock.

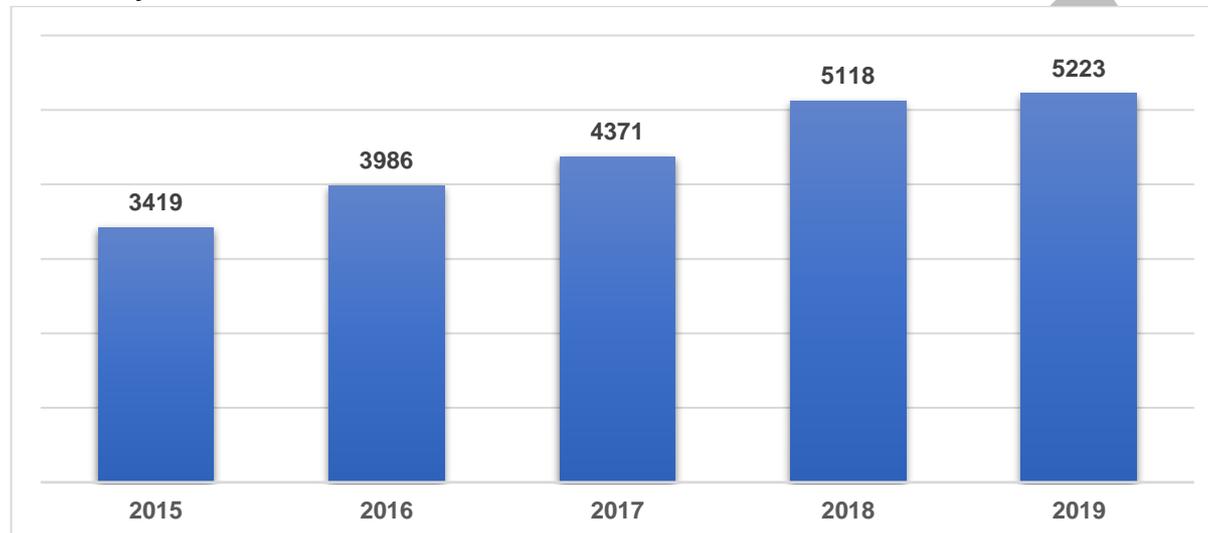
The former districts making up Dorset Council, previously adopted the use of discretionary powers to make a suitable<sup>19</sup> offer of private sector housing<sup>20</sup> to make an offer of accommodation to people who are homeless. In order to assist with securing this accommodation, Dorset Council's Homelessness Service works with housing benefit administrators to arrange discretionary housing payments, to help cover rent in advance and/or rental security deposits.

<sup>19</sup> Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2012.

<sup>20</sup> Private Rented Sector Offer (PRSO) Policy 1. Policy Christchurch Borough Council & East Dorset District Council, 2017

Dorset Council has a common housing allocation scheme, named Dorset Home Choice, with BCP Council, plus with seven housing associations. Between 2015 and 2019 the number of households on the Dorset Council's housing waiting list has increased each year. This is slightly contrary to trends in the other comparator areas which have seen increases only since 2018.

**Chart 7: Number of households registered for an allocation of social rented housing at end of calendar year, Dorset, 2015 to 2019.**



Source Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

Social rented accommodation is still the main type of housing secured for those owed a main homelessness duty, with 128 properties being allocated to homeless household owed the main duty in 2019-2020 and a further 127 properties allocated in the same period to those owed a relief duty.

1.4% of Dorset's active housing applicants have indicated that they are homeless or threatened with homelessness. Additionally, 0.9% are owed a prevention or relief duty and 0.8% are owed a main duty.

The Dorset Home Choice policy was reviewed following public consultation in November 2020, with changes to be implemented in during 2021. Homeless households owed a full housing duty<sup>21</sup> will be placed in Band A<sup>22</sup>, alongside exceptional housing need: disrepair, medical and welfare, and statutory overcrowding<sup>23</sup>. Those owed a relief duty<sup>24</sup> will be placed in Band B, and those owed a prevention duty<sup>25</sup> will be placed in Band C. The policy also confirms that serving prisoners with a local connection who will be homeless will have their application considered up to 2 months prior to their release date.

Dorset Council Tenancy Strategy<sup>26</sup> sets out the matters that must be considered by all social landlords in Dorset Council area when developing their own tenancy policy. The strategy included a commitment to prevent the termination of a fixed term tenancy from leading to an increase in homelessness approaches and requiring registered providers to provide households affected by the termination of a tenancy with relevant advice and assistance to enable them to relocate to alternative suitable accommodation.

<sup>21</sup> Housing Act, 1996, Part 7, section 193 Duty to persons with priority need who are not homeless intentionally

<sup>22</sup> Dorset Council Housing Allocations Policy, 2021 – 2026, p.21

<sup>23</sup> Housing Act 1985, Part X, section 324 definition of overcrowding

<sup>24</sup> Housing Act 1996, Part 7, Section 189B Initial duty owed to all eligible persons who are homeless

<sup>25</sup> Housing Act 1996, Part 7, section 195(2) Duties in cases of threatened homelessness

<sup>26</sup> Dorset Joint Tenancy Strategy, Dorset Councils, plus Christchurch and Poole, 2012 to 2015

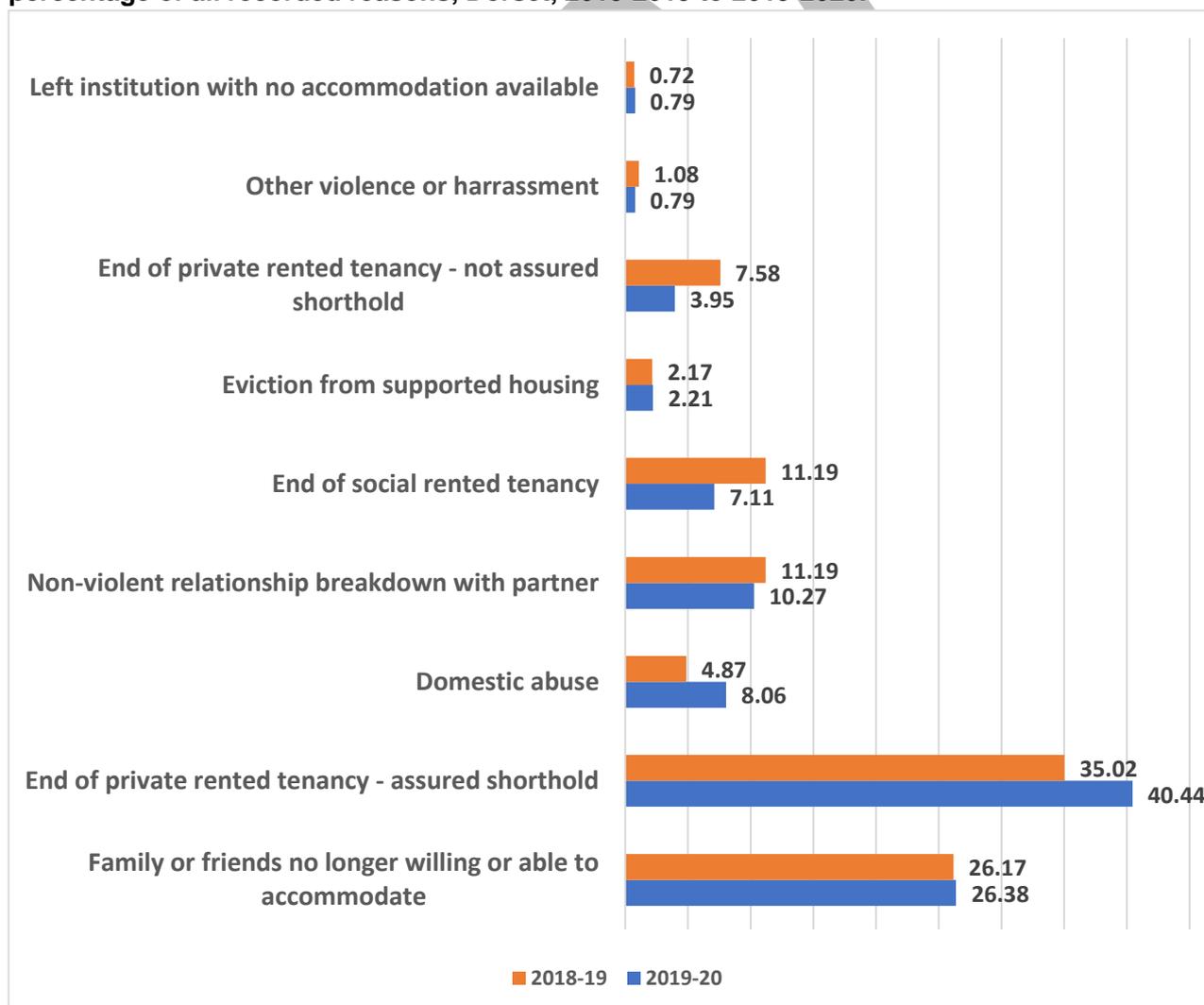
In 2021 work will begin to develop a new Housing Strategy which will set out a 5-year plan for housing in the new unitary area of Dorset Council. This will contain our plans to increase the supply of housing for all sections of the Dorset community, to drive incremental improvements to the quality of Dorset housing and to address housing needs across all localities, vulnerabilities and for all groups of vulnerable residents. This strategy will support objectives and action plan of the Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy.

#### 4.4 Providing Support

The type and prevalence of support needs for households owed a prevention, relief or main duty has been monitored since the introduction of the HRA 17. During 2019-20, 47% of households owed any homelessness duty by Dorset Council, had a support need, of which 69% had more than one support need.

Of all households owed a homelessness duty, 26.57% lost their last settled home as a result of friends and family no longer willing or able to accommodate, 21.57% due to end of private rented assured shorthold tenancy, 12.8% due to non-violent relationship breakdown and 7.64% due to domestic abuse. 7.16% were due to the end of social rented tenancy, 2.65% as a result of eviction from supported housing and 1.70% due to leaving an institution with no accommodation to go to.

**Chart: 8 Reason for loss of last settled home for households owed a homelessness duty, by percentage of all recorded reasons, Dorset, 2018-2019 to 2019-2020.**



Source Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

The main type of nationality of main applicant to whom the local authority has accepted a duty of assistance are UK Nationals.

Presently, information, advice and assistance for people experiencing street homelessness is provided by the Council from each of the former district or borough locations. Support is also provided by Julian House who have a dedicated assertive outreach service that help provide food, assist with access to drug and alcohol services, mental health support and accommodation to people sleeping on the streets.

The Lantern Trust in Weymouth is commissioned to deliver a supported lettings service for rough sleepers, assisting with rent deposits, applications for welfare benefits, organising GP access and helping to set up tenancies. People who use this service receive a personal budget of £800, funded through short-term grant awarded by MHCLG as part of its Rough Sleepers Initiative, which enables a fast tenancy set up, purchasing of white goods and other necessities.

The Dorset Healthcare University NHS Trust Homeless Health Service<sup>27</sup> provides intensive medical support for people experiencing street homelessness, who have a physical or mental health problems. The links between health and housing are recognised in this strategy. The action plan includes commitments to maximise opportunities to strengthen the provision of support to people experiencing complex and multiple health needs.

Support from community groups is valuable. The strategy recognises the valuable contribution positive community engagement has for people who are homeless and encourages the inclusion of community representation in delivering the objectives set out.

#### **4.5 Resources**

Alongside the money committed from Dorset Council's General Fund budget to fund homelessness services, funding has been awarded by MHCLG to support prevention and reduction of homelessness and rough sleeping:

- £225,777 – Homelessness Reduction Grant 2020-2021
- £442,352 – Flexible Homelessness Support Grant (FHSG) 2020-2021
- £472,470 – Rough Sleeper Initiative 2020-2021
- 624,000 – Next Steps Accommodation Programme Short Term and Intermediate Support fund
- £1,556,730 – Next Steps Accommodation Programme Longer Term and Move on Accommodation Capital Funding

The Homelessness Reduction Grant and Flexible Homelessness Support Grants have from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021, been combined into a Homelessness Prevention Grant, and uplifted by £47m nationally. Dorset has been awarded £889,494 has been awarded for 2021-2022. This does not currently fully fund the cost of homelessness in Dorset but contributes to work to reduce the financial and human impact.

Dorset Council, and the former constituent local authority areas, have received a grant funding from MHCLG to enable the delivery of local strategies and services since 2003. The funding can be used for initiatives carried out by the local authority or invested into projects operated by voluntary organisations.

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<sup>27</sup> Homeless Health Service [www.dorsethealthcare.nhs/homeless-health-service](http://www.dorsethealthcare.nhs/homeless-health-service)

Dorset Council employs a total of 31 officers (26.2 full-time equivalent) to administer public law homelessness duties. A service review is currently underway to ensure that the necessary number of experienced officers are in the appropriate locations across Dorset in order to meet current and future demand.

In accordance with Council rules a new IT system is presently being procured. The new system should continue to deliver a range of automated efficiencies including effective case management, compiling statistics and receiving referrals.

#### **4.6 Consultation**

Interviews of 22 stakeholders and staff were carried out to inform the Homelessness Review and this Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy.

Two online surveys were made available, one for service users, another for stakeholders. A total of 30 responses were completed by people who had experienced homelessness. 27% of these described themselves as currently homeless, including two people describing themselves as currently sleeping rough, 20% as being threatened with homelessness and 43% as formerly homeless, now in settled housing. 12% of respondents had been homeless on at least one previous occasion and 46% believed being helped up to two months before crisis would help them prevent homelessness.

53% thought that the best housing option when homeless or threatened with homelessness was social rented housing. 70% felt that when homeless or threatened with homelessness, the most important matter to get help with was to find a house and 67 of service users agreed that homelessness funding should be used to secure additional accommodation.

57% of service users completing the survey were female, and 51% were aged 25 to 54 years. 43% lived alone and all stated they were of a white ethnic origin.

A total of 8 responses were received from stakeholders, an 11% response rate.

75% of these work for a public authority within Dorset and the same number believe that homelessness has increased during the past five years, with 62.5% believing it will continue to increase. The number of respondents was insufficient to provide information on the questions within the survey.

## 5.0 Delivering this Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy

### 5.1 Delivery arrangements

Legal and regulatory requirements require the delivery of this Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy to involve close working between Dorset Council's housing, adult social care and children services. Additionally, housing associations are also expected to play an active role.

A steering group shall be established to oversee the delivery of the strategy. The Dorset Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy Steering Group shall meet every three months, covering an agenda that will include:

- information about the current levels of homelessness,
- discussion about the progress towards achieving the objectives and actions of the strategy, to prevent homelessness, secure accommodation and provide support, and
- decisions about the allocation of resources to deliver the strategy.

The Dorset Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy Steering Group shall be responsible for changing or recommending updates to the action plan, to ensure it remains relevant. The steering group shall be chaired by Dorset Council's Corporate Director of Housing and Community Safety. Other members of shall include chief or principal officers from bodies that have a statutory obligation to assist with delivering the strategy and administering homelessness duties, these being:

- Adult Social Care,
- Children's Services (social care, leaving care, youth offending), and
- Housing Associations (especially those that own social rented housing previously voluntarily transferred by the former Dorset district local authorities – Magna Housing Limited, Sovereign Housing Association Ltd, and Synergy Housing Limited - a subsidiary of Aster Group).

Senior officers for the following public bodies shall also be invited to be members of the Dorset Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy Steering Group, as these organisations have duties to refer individuals who are homeless or threatened homelessness, and/or are responsible for setting local policy for people who are more at risk of homelessness:

- Local prisons
- National Probation Service:
- Jobcentre Plus
- NHS
- Public Health Dorset
- Dorset Police & Crime Commissioner
- Chairpersons of any casework action groups
- Chairperson of the Dorset Homelessness Service Providers Forum
- Chairperson of the Dorset Homelessness Lived Experience Panel

Membership could also include periodic attendance, whenever a specific reason warranted it, from other agencies who can contribute to tackling homelessness, such as –

- other public authorities,
- voluntary and community organisations (or a representative body on behalf of the sector), and
- Any other interested persons (including those with experience of homelessness).

Short life (e.g. less than 12 months) task & finish groups shall be created as and when needed, to accomplish a specific action from the strategy. Membership of these groups shall vary, depending on the

specifics of any given actions. Nevertheless, it will be necessary for a member of the steering group to chair any task & finish group, to ensure accountability and deliverability.

A homelessness forum shall take place, twice a year, to promote progress towards achieving the objectives and actions of this Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy. Attendance at the Dorset Homelessness Forum shall be open to everyone with an interest in tackling and preventing homelessness. The Dorset Homelessness Forum shall be chaired by a Dorset Council cabinet member, whose responsibilities include homelessness. Local or national expert figures shall be invited to speak at the forum. A core agenda will cover the following matters:

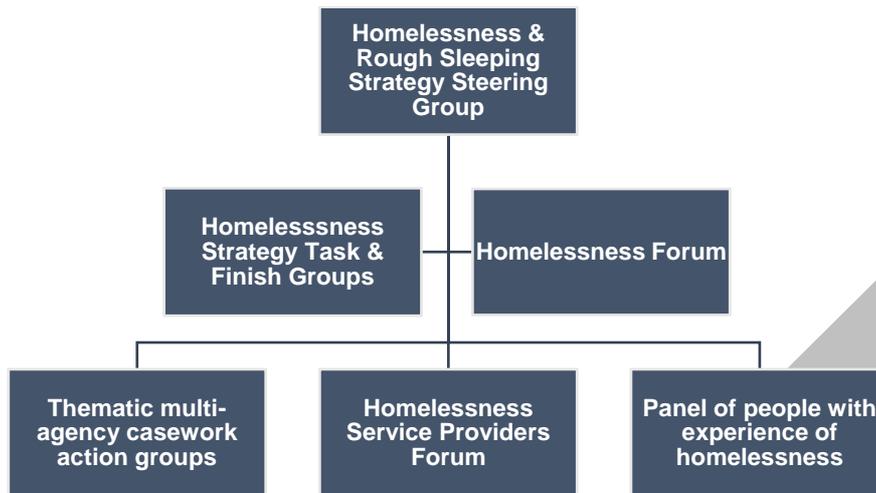
- a report from the Chair of the Dorset Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy Steering Group, on progress being made to accomplishing the objectives and actions of this Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy,
- reports from any Dorset Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy Task & Finish Groups, on the work they have completed,
- recruitment of volunteers to join any Dorset Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy Task & Finish Groups, to carry out actions from this Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy before the next meeting of the Dorset Homelessness Forum,
- reports from thematic and multi-agency casework action groups, that might meet to better co-operate to tackle and prevent homelessness,
- a report from any service provider forum that might meet to improve practice and service standards, and
- a report from any forum of people with experience of homelessness that might meet, to share their expertise and advocate for improvements to policy and practice.

Any number of casework action groups might be set-up, to better coordinate activities across agencies that either commission or provide services for people experiencing any form of homelessness (e.g. street homelessness or hidden homelessness), or due to specific characteristics (e.g. young adults aged under 24 years, persons of a black or other minority ethnic origin), or due to specific causes of homelessness (e.g. persons leaving care, hospital or prison). Chair of such any forums shall attend the Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy steering group, to represent views of the forum members.

A forum for organisations that provide services to tackle homelessness, shall be formed, to benchmark service standards relating to advice, accommodation, support, and other matters. The Chair of the Dorset Homelessness Service Providers Forum shall attend the Dorset Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy Steering Group, to represent views of the forum members.

A panel of service users shall be established, to review the progress of delivering the objectives and actions from the strategy, plus be consulted about the priorities looking ahead. Their know-how can be used to ensure that the actions carried out will have a relevant impact on the lives of those who it is intended to benefit. The Chair of the Dorset Homelessness Lived Experience Panel shall attend the Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy steering group, to represent views of the panel.

**Graphic 1: Dorset Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy Delivery Structure**



Any of the above groups, forums and panels shall be extended to cover neighbouring local authority areas, when there is evidence that doing so would improve the deliverability of this strategy.

## **5.2 Accountability Structures**

Elected councillors have seen the findings from the Homelessness Review and understand how this affects the wards they are elected to represent. Councillors have been active in decision-making about homelessness matters, taking responsibility to develop and review the strategy.

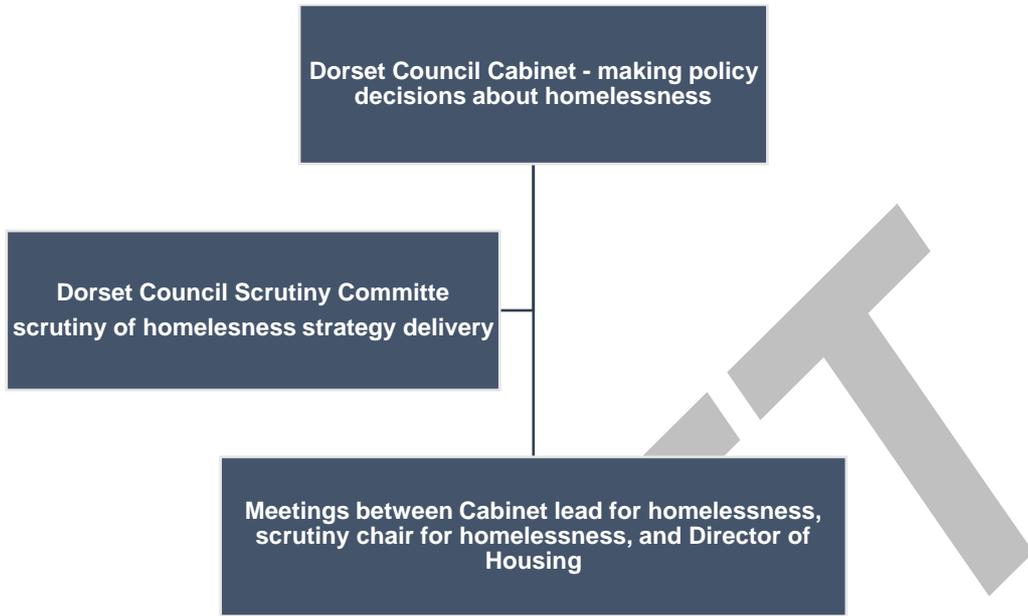
Elected councillors that are members of Dorset Council’s Cabinet, have taken decisions about this strategy. Evidence from the Homelessness Review, plus annual action plan updates shall provide valuable information for members of Dorset Council’s Cabinet to consider. Enough time shall be set aside for a discussion by members of Dorset Council’s Cabinet, to consider how the council’s policies can help deliver this strategy. The member of Dorset Council’s Cabinet whose portfolio of responsibilities includes homelessness, will benefit from regular (e.g. quarterly) updates, from the Director of Housing, about the delivery of the strategy, plus information on the levels of homelessness and activities being carried out to tackle homelessness.

A committee of elected councillors, who are not members of Dorset Council’s cabinet, have scrutinised the findings from the Homelessness Review and the priorities and actions of this Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy. A committee of elected councillors shall scrutinise its delivery and any subsequent modifications made to the action plan that accompanies it.

A committee charged with scrutinising homelessness policy and strategy, shall do so at least annually. The chairperson of such a committee, on behalf of the other members of the committee, will benefit from receiving updates from Dorset Council’s Director of Housing, akin to what is set out above for the cabinet member with responsibility for homelessness.

To help ensure all elected councillors understand the statutory homelessness duties the council is charged with, training and briefing notes shall be provided when a councillor is first elected, and periodically thereafter.

**Graphic 2: Dorset Council's Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy Accountability Structure**



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## Objective No. 1

### Reduce the current and future likely levels of homelessness

#### Impact

1. Advice and information is accessible within communities at every opportunity to educate and inform those who are likely to face the threat of homelessness in the medium to long term
2. Families are able resolve the issues that lead to homelessness.
3. Homelessness in families and young people is reduced in long term.

#### Progress measures

- Number/amount of pre-56 days early prevention activity (new local measure)
- Ratio or positive outcome duty ended prevention cases against all duty owed cases of families with children (Higher is good)
- Number of 'no duty owed' initial assessment outcomes (lower is positive)
- Ratio of potential or threatened homelessness cases referred by public authorities and other organisations against all referred cases

No.	Action	Resources Required	Lead Officer	Timescale	Progress
1.1	<b>Prevent today's six-to-eight-year olds from becoming homeless at 16 -18 years.</b>				Red = not started Yellow = underway Green = completed
1.1.1	<p>Develop, implement and embed a proactive, early homelessness prevention and support service, beginning in the wards with the highest levels of child poverty, seeking out and targeting households in, or at risk of poverty including those:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• with children living in poverty,</li> <li>• in receipt of in-work means tested welfare benefits</li> <li>• known to have difficulty managing welfare benefit claims</li> </ul>	<p><b>Budget:</b> Funding through future recommissioning of prevention services and uplift in MHCLG Homelessness Prevention Grant.</p> <p><b>IT:</b> IT system to have progress measure a) added to integrated data collection, with reporting function.</p> <p><b>People:</b> Strategic housing commissioning resources; Dorset families matter; Homelessness services; Adult Services/ supporting people commissioning officer; Adult services mental health specialist worker; Revenue and Benefits service lead;</p>	Service Manager for Housing Strategy	<p>Programme of early prevention services ready for commissioning March 2025</p> <p>Services go-live October 2026</p>	Once implementation begins, progress on the above measures should be reported quarterly and annually. Review at year end to agree future of each activity depending on cost-benefit.

No.	Action	Resources Required	Lead Officer	Timescale	Progress
1.1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• in receipt of Council Tax Benefit,</li> <li>• known to not engage with other services</li> <li>• regularly visiting foodbanks</li> </ul> <p>Ensure that effective early prevention information, advice and support is available at points across Dorset that are naturally accessed, such as schools, DWP, supermarkets, sports clubs, foodbanks, GP surgeries and hospitals etc, to alleviate real poverty and prevent the threat of homeless at every possible opportunity.</p>	<p>Department for Work and Pensions local service lead;            Children’s social services Commissioning lead;            Primary and secondary schools;            Housing Associations;            NHS Trust;            Clinical Commissioning Group;            Other public authorities;            Voluntary organisations;</p> <p><b>Other materials:</b>            Training resources            Printed and online Information            Venues for training/promotion/information (e.g. foodbanks, sports clubs, etc.)</p> <p><b>Budget:</b> Funding through future recommissioning of prevention services and uplift in MHCLG Homelessness Prevention Grant  <b>IT:</b> design of training resources  <b>People:</b> Task and finish group of families in, and at risk of, poverty, as well as families at each stage of homelessness;            Education authority;            Homelessness services officer(s);            Children’s commissioning lead &amp; troubled family’s worker;            Project manager homelessness &amp; improvements;</p>	Service Manager for Housing Strategy	Material available by March 2025	

No.	Action	Resources Required	Lead Officer	Timescale	Progress
1.1.3	Teach homelessness awareness in primary and secondary schools, plus provide teaching resources and training for teachers to deliver within curriculum.	<b>Budget:</b> Funding through future re-commissioning of prevention services and uplift in MHCLG Homelessness Prevention Grant <b>IT:</b> design of training resources <b>People:</b> Task and finish group of families in, and at risk of, poverty, as well as families at each stage of homelessness; Education authority; Homelessness Services officer(s); Project manager homelessness and improvements;	Service Manager Homeless Prevention and Housing Advice	Teaching and training programme approved by the Local Education Authority approved and ready to start at September 2026 term.	
1.2 1.2.1	<b>Housing waiting list as early prevention tool.</b>  Ensure the housing register application and assessment process include mandatory identification of applicants who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, and automatically refer to Homelessness Services to provide prevention/relief support to those identified.	<b>Budget:</b> Funding for IT system alteration. <b>IT:</b> System to create mandatory fields and automated workflow or email referral and effective and reporting <b>People:</b> Software implementation team; Housing registration/allocations officers; Homelessness service team leaders; Strategic housing performance officer;	Service Manager for Housing Solutions	Plan and monitoring in place October 2021  First annual report due October 2022	

No.	Action	Resources Required	Lead Officer	Timescale	Progress
1.2.2	Identify through housing register applicants who are not eligible for housing association accommodation due to housing association (HA) lettings policies and provide advice/prevention/relief support or signpost to other services.	<b>Budget:</b> Within existing resources <b>IT:</b> New housing system <b>People:</b> Housing registration/allocations officers; Housing officers; <b>Other materials:</b> HA lettings policies	Service Manager for Housing Solutions	Start date October 2021	
1.3	<b>Maximise early referral opportunities.</b>				
1.3.1	Use Duty to Refer data and other referral data to map service user route to the referring agency, using this information to identify and use early opportunities to divert early homelessness prevention interventions.	<b>Budget:</b> Within existing resources <b>IT:</b> simple analytical tool, e.g. spreadsheets <b>People</b> Project manager homelessness and improvements; Homelessness team leaders; Front Door programme; Homelessness Forum;	Service Manager for Homelessness & Housing Advice	Review and mapping complete December 2023 using two year's Data to October 2023	
1.4	<b>Explore early homelessness prevention and support options for those with poor health outcomes, including mental health.</b>				
1.4.1	Improve joint working with mental health and public health services to prevent homelessness, especially people who misuse alcohol and/or drugs.	<b>Budget:</b> Within existing resources and potential funding opportunities <b>People:</b> Homelessness team leaders; Public health leads; Adult service leads; NHS mental health homeless service;	Service Manager for Homelessness & Housing Advice	Begin October 2021	

No.	Action	Resources Required	Lead Officer	Timescale	Progress
1.4.2	Improve joint working with diversity and inclusion services to review and mitigate challenges and ensure suitable support is available to households with protected characteristics.	<p>NHS mental health and substance misuse lead(s); Dorset Healthcare; Relevant commissioned service providers; Police; Probation; Service Users;</p> <p><b>Budget:</b> Within existing resources and potential funding opportunities <b>People:</b> Homelessness team leaders; Diversity and inclusion service lead; Relevant support providers; Service users;</p>	Service Manager for Homelessness & Housing Advice	Begin December 2021	

## Objective No. 2

### Prevent homelessness

#### Impact

- Homelessness is prevented at the earliest possible stage
- More households able to either remain in existing accommodation or move to a sustainable alternative home within the 56-day prevention of relief period,
- Proportionately fewer households needing temporary accommodation.

#### Progress measures

- (a) Ratio of prevention duty owed cases against number of prevention or relief duty owed (higher is positive)
- (b) Ratio of relief duty owed cases against number of prevention or relief duty owed (lower is positive)
- (c) Ratio of numbers in temporary accommodation against number of cases owed a duty
- (c) Number of people whose homelessness resolved before leaving prison/young offenders institute, care, armed forces or hospital

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No.	Action	Resources Required	Lead Officer	Timescale:	Progress
2.2	<b>Continually improve the range and quality of homelessness assistance and housing advice services across Dorset.</b>				
2.2.1	Review homelessness cases that move from the prevention stage to the relief stage, and to the main duty stage. Map the flow from the prevention duty owed stage to other stages to determine why households move through the stages to establish any trends, including household type or location, that require specialist support to prevent homelessness.	<p><b>Budget:</b> Review within existing resources.</p> <p><b>People:</b> Homelessness team leaders; Homelessness services front line staff; Homelessness forum; Service users;</p>	Service Manager for Homelessness & Housing Advice	Review start September 2021	

No.	Action	Resources Required	Lead Officer	Timescale:	Progress
2.2.2	Capture homelessness prevention outcomes achieved by all stakeholders, including Dorset Council, to inform a strategic approach to prevention. This includes early prevention activity that has not been commissioned as a homelessness prevention service, (e.g. housing association tenancy support, DWP employment support, money advice workshops at food banks, etc.)	<b>Budget:</b> Monitoring within existing resources. <b>IT:</b> possible adjustment to Housing software <b>People:</b> Local housing authority; Project manager; homelessness and improvement; Homelessness forum; Integrated prevention services commissioning officer; Public authorities; Housing associations; Voluntary organisations; Service users;	Service Manager for Housing Strategy & Performance	Review start October 21	
2.2.3	Review homelessness cases that move from the prevention stage to the relief stage, and to the main duty stage. Map the flow from the prevention duty owed stage to other stages to determine why households move through the stages to establish any trends, including household type or location that require specialist support to prevent homelessness.	<b>Budget:</b> Review within existing resources. <b>People:</b> Homelessness Team Leaders Strategic Homeless Officer Service Manager for Housing Strategy Homelessness Services front line staff Homelessness forum Service Users	Service Manager for Homelessness & Housing Advice	Start review October 2021 and complete March 2022	

No.	Action	Resources Required	Lead Officer	Timescale:	Progress
2.3	<b>Using data from 2.2.1 and 2.2.2 above, Increase the range of early homelessness prevention activities within the recommissioning of Dorset Integrated Prevention Services.</b>				
2.3.1	Review commissioned services to ensure best practice and achieve improved value for money in priority areas. Matching services to identified need to provide greater financial security to a wider range of organisations who provide services within Dorset.	<b>Budget:</b> Within existing council resources. <b>People:</b> Integrated prevention services; Commissioning officer; Homeless service team leaders; Homelessness forum; Commissioned services; Project Manager homelessness & Improvement; Service users;	Service Manager for Housing Strategy  Corporate Director for Housing & Community Safety	1 December 2021	
2.3.2	Review existing arrangements with criminal justice agencies and agree a joint pathway with to prevent offenders becoming homeless following release from all secure estates. Consider carrying out case reviews of a selection of cases over last 12 to 18 months in all areas.	<b>Budget:</b> Within existing resources <b>People:</b> Service manager for housing solutions; Homelessness officers; Governors/Directors of prisons; Youth offenders service; Dorset Healthcare - forensic team; Probation service;	Service Manager for Homelessness Prevention & Housing Advice	Complete March 2022	

No.	Action	Resources Required	Lead Officer	Timescale:	Progress
2.3.3	<p>Review existing arrangements of the joint work to update how care leavers and other young people are prevented from becoming homeless, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• updating the 16 /17 year olds protocol to include any new legislative developments</li> <li>• building on the key trained officer role within housing to develop a champions role in each service where joint cases can be administered</li> <li>• Take up co-location opportunities to maximise benefit to service user</li> </ul>	<p>Police; Jobcentre Plus; Voluntary organisations; Private registered providers of social housing; Adult services;</p> <p><b>Budget:</b> Review within existing resources <b>IT:</b> None <b>People:</b> Young persons; Homelessness officers: Homelessness Team leaders; Children’s social services; Adult services transitioning team; Service users; Youth hub/advice and information centres;</p>	<p>Service Manager for Homelessness Prevention and Housing Advice</p> <p>Corporate Director for Housing &amp; Community Safety</p>	<p>Completed by March 2022</p>	
2.3.4	<p>Review homeless prevention activities available to members or former members of the Armed Forces and ways of identifying former serving personnel to raise awareness of and refer to the specialist support available.</p>	<p><b>Budget:</b> Within Existing Resources <b>IT:</b> Possible modification to housing Software <b>People:</b> Homelessness team leader; Housing allocations team leader Armed Forces covenant lead officer; Royal British Legion;</p>	<p>Service Manager for Housing Strategy &amp; Performance</p>	<p>Completed by March 2022</p>	

No.	Action	Resources Required	Lead Officer	Timescale:	Progress
2.3.5	Adopt a Homeless from Hospital Discharge Policy to prevent patients from becoming homeless when leaving acute and mental health hospitals.	<p>SAAFA; Homelessness forum; Dorset Healthcare – operation courage lead; Service users;</p> <p><b>Budget:</b> Within existing resources <b>People:</b> Homelessness services team leaders; Project manager homelessness &amp; improvements; Adult services homes first lead; Adult services occupational therapy lead; Adult services mental health lead; NHS Hospitals Dorset Healthcare; Clinical Commissioning Group; Housing associations;</p>	Service Manager for Housing Strategy & Performance	Completed March 2022	
2.3.6	Explore opportunities with Clinical Commissioning Group for a multi-disciplinary approach.	<p><b>Budget:</b> within existing resources <b>IT:</b> not applicable <b>People:</b> Homelessness team leaders; Clinical Commissioning Group; Dorset HealthCare; Community providers;</p>	Service Manager for Homelessness Prevention & Housing Advice	Complete March 2022	

No.	Action	Resources Required	Lead Officer	Timescale:	Progress
		Adult Services;			
2.4	<b>Evaluate and improve early warning systems used to prevent homelessness when tenancies are coming to an end.</b>				
2.4.1	Review social landlord activity against the Dorset Tenancy Strategy, then carry forward the findings to formulate a new tenancy strategy.	<b>Budget:</b> Within existing resources <b>IT:</b> Council and Housing Association lettings IT <b>People:</b> Homelessness team leaders; Service Manager for housing solutions; Project manager homelessness & improvement; Housing associations;	Service Manager for Housing Strategy & Performance	New Tenancy Strategy in Place March 2023 Ongoing monitoring and annual review	
2.4.2	Develop an early warning system for tenancies coming to an end in a) the social sector and b) private sector	<b>Budget:</b> Within existing resources <b>IT:</b> Potential modifications to existing <b>People:</b> Dorset landlord local authority partnership (LLAP); Chair of landlord forum; Housing associations; Homelessness forum; Housing benefits lead; Housing standards lead; Housing allocations officer; Current and former private and social tenants;	Service Manager Homelessness Prevention & Housing Advice	Complete March 2023	

No.	Action	Resources Required	Lead Officer	Timescale:	Progress
2.5	<b>Improve understanding of local homelessness to encourage earlier approaches to homeless services in order to reduce repeat homelessness and seek out hidden homelessness</b>				
2.5.1	<p>Research and analyse local patterns of and reasons for rough sleeping and rough sleeper service provision with neighbouring counties to ensure:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. appropriate services and accommodation are in place locally to support rough sleepers</li> <li>2. reduce the transience of rough sleepers and help to prevent rough sleeping</li> <li>3. rough sleeper action plan is updated</li> </ol>	<p><b>Budget:</b> Within existing budgets  <b>People:</b> Homelessness forum  Project manager homelessness &amp; improvement;  Homeless team leaders Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council (BCP) and other neighbouring council homelessness leads;  Commissioned rough sleeper services;  Service users;</p>	<p>Service Manager for Homelessness Prevention &amp; Housing Advice</p>	<p>Complete March 2022</p>	

No.	Action	Resources Required	Lead Officer	Timescale:	Progress
2.6	<b>Better demonstrate the impact of social landlords on tackling homelessness</b>				
2.6.1	<p>Introduce a peer led benchmarking scheme for social landlords to evidence activity against the following themes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Board member commitment to tackling homelessness and evidence of spend to tackle homelessness</li> <li>2. Prevention of evictions due to rent arrears</li> <li>3. Actions for tackling homelessness featuring in organisational strategy</li> <li>4. Involvement of tenants in activities to prevent homelessness</li> <li>5. Prioritisation of homeless applicants when letting homes</li> <li>6. Prevention of homelessness due to anti-social behaviour and neighbour nuisance</li> <li>7. Effective early warning and joint working with local authority homelessness and housing benefits services to prevent homelessness in complex cases</li> </ol>	<p><b>Budget:</b> Within existing <b>People:</b> Corporate director for housing &amp; community safety; Project manager homelessness &amp; improvement; Housing allocations officer; Service manager for homelessness prevention &amp; housing advice; Housing benefits lead; Housing association directors; Service users including those on waiting list not yet tenants;</p>	Service Manager for Housing Strategy & Performance	Completed April 2024	

## Objective No. 3.

### Arrange for suitable accommodation to be available for everyone

#### Impact.

Suitable housing available for all households in need; the right location, the right cost, the right quality, the right size, and the right tenure.

#### Progress measures

(a) number of new social rented homes provided each year

(b) number of new supported homes provided each year

(c) number of suitable private sector rented discharge of duty acceptances

Of which: (c)(i) requiring Discretionary Housing Payment to ensure rent is affordable

(d) number of temporary accommodation units at rates not requiring a discretionary housing payment or exempt/specified housing benefit payment

No	Action	Resources Required	Lead Officer	Timescale:	Progress
3.1	<b>Increase housing supply and make best use of stock.</b>				
3.1.1	Formulate housing strategy that prioritises: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. increasing the supply of affordable housing, including one-bedroom accommodation suitable for single people with complex needs</li> <li>2. maximise the potential of the private rented sector across Dorset</li> <li>3. bringing empty homes back into use</li> <li>4. rough sleepers or with temporary housing solutions due to end</li> </ol>	<b>Budget:</b> Approved council transformation fund <b>People:</b> Corporate director of housing & community safety; Housing enabling team; Housing standards lead; Empty homes officer; Homelessness team leader; Planning lead; Housing associations; Housing developers; Corporate property & estates lead; Housing benefits lead; Service users;	Service Manager for Housing Strategy & Performance	Housing Strategy adopted: September 2022	

No	Action	Resources Required	Lead Officer	Timescale:	Progress
3.2	<p><b>Ensure all temporary accommodation (TA) is appropriate in size, type, location, quality, cost, and support levels.</b></p> <p>3.2.1 Undertake a strategic review of all temporary accommodation including an options appraisal into future TA arrangements, including private sector leasing and use findings to update policy for how temporary accommodation will be procured and allocated.</p>	<p><b>Budget:</b> MHCLG Next Steps Programme Fund;</p> <p><b>IT:</b> Temporary accommodation module integrated with homelessness system</p> <p><b>People:</b>            Service manager for housing solutions;            Temporary accommodation officer;            Homelessness team lead;            Temporary accommodation providers;            Support providers;            Housing benefits lead;            Housing standards lead;            Children's services;            Adult services;            Housing associations;            Service users;</p>	Service Manager for Housing Strategy & Performance	Start October 2021	

No	Action	Resources Required	Lead Officer	Timescale:	Progress
3.2.2	Adopt a new temporary accommodation placement policy which includes information to the service user on costs of the accommodation, the standards, the level of housing management and any support they can expect as early as possible.	<b>Budget:</b> Within existing resources <b>People:</b> Homelessness services TA placement officers; Temporary accommodation owners; Housing Standards lead Housing benefits lead; Service users;	Service Manager for Housing Solutions	Complete September 2021	
3.3  3.3.1	<b>Create a pre-tenancy accreditation award for homeless households.</b>  Develop pre-tenancy training and a qualification to equip households to become tenancy ready, including saving for rent in advance, resolving former tenancy debts or demonstrating sustained improvement in behaviour which would normally be a barrier to being offered a tenancy.	<b>Budget:</b> within existing resources <b>People:</b> Homelessness team leaders Resettlement officers Project manager homelessness & improvement; Service manager for housing solutions; Housing associations; Service users; Credit Union; Landlords;	Service Manager for Housing Strategy & Performance	Available from October 2022	

## Objective No. 4

### Support households to retain their accommodation

#### Impact

Improvement in tenancy sustainment, reduced homelessness and repeat homelessness, proportionate reduction in costs of temporary accommodation in the long term.

#### Progress measures

- (a) Number of tenancies sustained for more than six months after homelessness
- (b) Number of cases of repeat homelessness
- (c) Number of relief cases
- (d) Proportion of households in temporary accommodation against those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness

No	Action	Resources Required	Lead Officer	Timescale:	Progress
4.2	<b>Improve monitoring and review of local support services in relation to homelessness outcomes.</b>				
4.2.1	Complete a housing needs and gap analysis for properties where support is provided, to better understand whether current provision reflects the needs of actual and potential users who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.	<p><b>Budget:</b> Within existing resources</p> <p><b>IT:</b> Collection of H-CLIC style support data for wider groups, such as housing register applicants, as well as other agencies data.</p> <p><b>People:</b> Service manager for housing strategy &amp; performance; Project manager homelessness and improvements; Adult services; Children's services; NHS – Dorset Healthcare; CCG; Housing benefit lead;</p>	Service manager for homelessness prevention & housing advice	Complete by January 2022	

No	Action	Resources Required	Lead Officer	Timescale:	Progress
4.2.2	Agree a method for carrying out performance inspections of support services that benefit people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness to understand if collaboration, co-location or other partnership initiatives would improve performance and outcomes of these services.	<p>Supporting people commissioning officer; Commissioned services; Supported housing providers; Housing associations; Homelessness forum;</p> <p><b>Budget:</b> Within available resources. Will include the cost of inspection training and potentially additional staff resources. <b>People:</b> Supporting people commissioning manager; Project manager for homelessness &amp; improvements; Support services; Service users;</p>	Service Manager for Housing Strategy & Performance; Commissioning Manager for Housing;	Inspections Programme available March 2022	
4.2.3	Develop a series of prevention, relief and support initiatives that will benefit people who otherwise would remain in unsupported temporary accommodation or 'sofa surfing' as hidden homeless.	<p><b>Budget:</b> within existing resources <b>People:</b> Homelessness service team leaders; Service manager for housing solutions; Project manager homelessness &amp; improvements; Commissioned service manager; Housing benefits lead; Service users;</p>	Service Manager for Housing Strategy & Performance	Start April 2022	

## Objective No. 5

### Suitably resource activities for tackling homelessness

#### Impact

The Council Homeless Service is lawful and effective at providing services to Dorset Residents, and commissioned services are appropriate in scale, scope, and effectiveness.

#### Progress measures

Progress measures: (a) Percentage of Council funds spent on homelessness; (b) Working days spent on receiving training.

a) Percentage of Council funds spent on homelessness

(b) Working days spent on receiving training.

(c) Number of successful prevention cases

(d) Number of relief cases

(e) Number of main duty cases

No	Action	Resources Required	Lead Officer	Timescale:	Progress
5.1	<b>Ensure resources required to deliver activities are available.</b>				
5.1.1	Ensure staff levels are sufficient to administer statutory homeless duties and deliver activities identified.	<b>Budget:</b> Within existing resources subject to restructure and 22/23 budget setting <b>People:</b> Homelessness team leaders	Service Manager for Homelessness Prevention & Housing Advice	September 2021	
5.1.2	Procure and implement a new housing software system that can deliver the necessary functionality to deliver the requirements of the Housing Service.	<b>Budget:</b> Capital identified from Dorset Council plus annual service and maintenance charges <b>IT:</b> Software supplier and Dorset Council ICT support <b>People:</b>	Service Manager for Housing Strategy & Performance	October 2021	

No	Action	Resources Required	Lead Officer	Timescale:	Progress
5.1.3	Explore Care Act funding opportunities with Clinical Commissioning Group	<p>Project manager for homelessness &amp; improvements;  Service manager for homelessness prevention &amp; housing advice;  Homelessness team leaders;  Service manager for housing solutions;  Housing solutions team leader;  Housing service officers;  ICT;  Procurement;  Legal;</p> <p><b>Budget:</b> within existing resources  <b>IT:</b> N/A  <b>People:</b>  Homelessness team leaders;  Clinical Commissioning Group;  Housing enabling team;  Adult social care MH lead;</p>	Service Manager Housing Strategy & Performance	March 2022	

No	Action	Resources Required	Lead Officer	Timescale:	Progress
5.2	<b>Demonstrate effective, value for money, services delivered to a high standard.</b>				
5.2.1	<p>Develop effective performance management arrangements through:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. regular auditing of performance information such as HCLIC</li> <li>2. consistent application of appropriate quality assurance systems</li> <li>3. benchmarking the range and success of activities in place to prevent homelessness with other local housing authorities.</li> <li>4. monitoring and reporting on outcomes against each funding stream, including case studies in reporting.</li> <li>5. carrying out cost benefit analysis of activity within each programme to test value for money</li> <li>6. the use of peer review assessments.</li> <li>7. Form a benchmarking club with like housing authorities, potentially BCP and Wiltshire to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• support the development of effective performance management</li> <li>• improvement</li> <li>• share staff training curriculum</li> <li>• external peer audit function for regular casework audits and independent file reviews.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	<p><b>Budget:</b> within existing resources  <b>IT:</b> Effective monitoring function on homelessness ICT system  <b>People:</b> Local housing authorities, e.g. BCP and Wiltshire; Project manager homelessness and improvements; Service manager for homelessness prevention &amp; housing advice; Homelessness team leaders; Corporate performance lead;</p>	Service Manager for Housing Strategy & Performance	All arrangements in place by April 2023	

No	Action	Resources Required	Lead Officer	Timescale:	Progress
5.3	<b>Maximise the productivity and effectiveness of operational resources.</b>				
5.3.1	Review all operational policies, procedures, and paperwork associated with administering the homelessness service from the perspective of the merged council services and the new duties arising from the HRA17.	<b>Budget:</b> Within existing resources <b>People:</b> Project manager homelessness & improvements; Homelessness officers; Housing allocations officers; Housing solutions lead; Service users;	Service Manager for Homelessness Prevention & Housing Advice	April 2022	
5.3.2	Develop a comprehensive training programme including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. induction for new homelessness and housing allocations staff,</li> <li>2. 12 month programme in housing and homelessness policy, practice and law for those new to the housing service,</li> <li>3. regular refresher training for homelessness and allocations assessment officers</li> <li>4. additional regular training for all staff covering case law and other legislative updates training</li> <li>5. best practice and new initiatives updates training</li> <li>6. ICT and monitoring systems training for all system users</li> <li>7. Specialised training for those managing the monitoring and reporting of H-CLIC</li> </ol>	<b>Budget:</b> Training budget; Officer time for training <b>People:</b> Service manager for homelessness prevention & housing advice; Homeless team leaders; Service manager for housing solutions; Housing benefits lead; Housing association lead; Adult services; Children's services; Service users; Diversity & Inclusion lead;	Service Manager for Housing Strategy	Programme in place March 2022	

No	Action	Resources Required	Lead Officer	Timescale:	Progress
	<p>and other data to ensure that evidence is always accurate and current to provide for evidence-based decision making.</p> <p>8. Housing benefit regulations and practice annual update training from Housing Benefits Team.</p> <p>9. Internal training programme for internal services e.g. Adult and Children's Services</p> <p>10. Diversity and Inclusion training for housing staff</p> <p>with consideration of making some of the above training available to stakeholders and peers.</p>	<p><b>Other materials:</b> Access to specialist legal texts and case law updates</p>			
5.4	<p><b>Utilise feedback and consultation resources to help focus and refine activity that provides the most successful outcomes.</b></p>				
5.4.1	<p>Through the established homelessness forum, harness stakeholder enthusiasm and resources for tackling homelessness by carrying out cost benefit analyses and joint bidding for external funding.</p>	<p><b>Budget:</b> within existing budget <b>People:</b> Elected members; Service manager for homelessness prevention &amp; housing advice; Homelessness forum; Adult services; Children services; Director of Public Health; Police and Crime Commissioner; Voluntary organisations; Youth offending team;</p>	<p>Service Manager for Housing Strategy &amp; Performance</p>	<p>April 2023</p>	

No	Action	Resources Required	Lead Officer	Timescale:	Progress
5.4.2	<p>Seek out feedback from service users to ensure their knowledge helps to shape policy and practice.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. during the provision of the service at regular points such as initial assessment, placement in temporary accommodation etc.</li> <li>2. through regular customer satisfaction consultation including an annual consultation exercise which includes stakeholders</li> <li>3. through an annual event, at which users of homelessness services are invited to put questions to key decisions makers about what works well and what could work better.</li> </ol>	<p>Jobcentre Plus; Housing benefit administrators; NHS Trusts; Service users; Clinical Commissioning Group;</p> <p><b>Budget:</b> Consultation budget required <b>People:</b> Lead Member for homelessness; Director of Housing; Service manager for housing strategy &amp; performance; Service manager for homelessness prevention &amp; housing advice; Service manager for housing solutions; Corporate consultation lead; Homelessness forum; Housing associations; Service users; People with lived experience of homelessness who are not service users;</p> <p><b>Budget:</b> Training Budget</p>	Project Manager for Homelessness & Improvements	Points 1 and 2 in place by July 2022 Point 3 planned for May 2023	

No	Action	Resources Required	Lead Officer	Timescale:	Progress
5.4.3	Develop a process for feedback and complaints from service users to be cascaded to the homelessness and housing advice team. Consider any training needs or changes to processes if required.	<b>People:</b> Homeless team leaders; Housing allocations officer; Housing review & complaints officer; Corporate complaints lead; Homelessness forum;	Service Manager for Housing Strategy & Performance	Training in Place December 2021	

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# A review of homelessness in the Dorset Council local authority area

January 2021

Neil Morland & Amber Christou



**NEIL MORLAND CO**  
HOUSING CONSULTANTS

**Dorset Council**

Dorset Council is a unitary local authority that was founded on 01<sup>st</sup> April 2019, with a history dating back to ancient times. The Councils' boundaries are largely co-terminus with those of Dorset Ceremonial County area. The Council's leadership consists of a Chair of the Council, a Leader of the Council and a Chief Executive. The Council has 82 seats. The Council is responsible for administering the whole range of local government functions, including adult social care, children services, housing services, and much more.

**Neil Morland & Co**

Neil Morland & Co are housing consultants, working throughout England, Scotland and Wales. Formed in 2011, we provide advice and assistance to national and local government, housing associations, voluntary organisations and others. We believe there should be adequate housing for everyone. Using authoritative evidence and our unique expertise, we improve the quality and potential of landlord, communitywide and specialist housing services.

Acknowledgement: This Homelessness Review was commissioned and funded by Dorset Council and formulated by Neil Morland and Amber Christou. Thanks go to Sharon Attwater, Andrew Billany, Fiona Brown and Sarah How from Dorset Council for providing invaluable assistance. The time and materials that numerous people and organisations have generously contributed to help produce this Homelessness Review, especially those persons with lived experience of homelessness, is very much appreciated

Disclaimer: All views and any errors contained in this Homelessness Review are the responsibility of the authors. The views expressed should not be assumed to be those of Dorset Council or any of the persons who contributed to this Homelessness Review. The information contained in this Homelessness Review is accurate at the date of publication. The information in this Homelessness Review should not be considered legal advice. Dorset Council, nor Neil Morland & Co, are not authorised to provide legal advice. No responsibility can be taken by the commissioners or the authors of this Homelessness Review for any loss or damage incurred, by any persons or organisation acting or refraining from action as result of any statement in this Homelessness Review.

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# Executive summary

## 1. Levels of homelessness

The levels of homelessness in Dorset over the past five years have increased in line with the national trend. Factors including the current economic environment, housing market, and the impact of Coronavirus, strongly indicate that homelessness in Dorset is forecast to increase for the foreseeable future.

The main household groups becoming homeless in Dorset over the past five years are households aged 25 to 44 with dependent children and of White British origin, in line with national trends. During 2019-20, 1516 new households contacted, or were referred to Dorset Council Homelessness Service as they were threatened with homelessness or already homeless, and 1464 (96.6%) of these were found to be owed a homelessness duty.

This means that an average of 28 additional households are known to become homeless or at risk of homelessness each week in the Dorset Council area. The remaining 52 households assessed as not being owed a homelessness duty during 2019-20 are still at risk of homelessness in the medium term and may require a further assessment.

The number of rough sleepers counted for the same year was 19. During the Everyone-In response to the Coronavirus Pandemic, this number was greater, which is almost certainly due to hidden homeless households coming forward. Hidden homelessness is projected to be 12 times higher than rough sleeping nationally<sup>1</sup>.

The main reasons for loss of last settled home is family and friends no longer able to accommodate, followed by loss of private rented assured shorthold tenancy.

## 2. Preventing homelessness

The number of households whose homelessness was prevented in Dorset during 2019-20 was 382.

There is a wide range of activity in place to prevent homelessness across Dorset; 234 households owed a prevention duty in 2019-20 were assisted to secure new accommodation for at least 6 months, and 78 were helped to remain in their existing home. The most successful recorded activity for 2019-2020 being mediation, negotiation, and advocacy, followed by financial support.

At the time of their application during 2019-20, 160 households owed a prevention duty were living in the social rented sector. This is a high level and must be address with partner housing associations. 243 households owed a relief duty had no fixed abode, 167 were living with friends and family and 46 were sleeping rough at the time of their application.

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<sup>1</sup> London Assembly Housing Committee (September 2017), Hidden homelessness in London

Public authorities and non-public authorities, such as housing associations, referred 202 households who were homeless or threatened with homelessness, to Dorset Council during 2019-2020 including 73 made under the Duty to Refer<sup>2</sup>.

Specialist activity to prevent homelessness for specific groups who have difficulty securing and maintaining accommodation is in place. These groups include 16 to 17 year olds and former and serving armed forces personnel for example. There are however other cases which require resourcing, such as offenders released from a secure estate such as prison or youth detention, to ensure they have the benefit of the early joint working required to prevent homelessness on release.

### **3. Securing accommodation**

The Council Housing Options service were assisted in securing accommodation during 2019-20 with the use of financial assistance through rent in advance payments, rent deposits and deposit bonds and Discretionary Housing Payments are all used to help secure new or existing accommodation, and their use is increasing year on year.

Temporary accommodation use has increased in Dorset during the last five years. At the end of 2019-20 there were 263 Dorset households in temporary accommodation, and with 224 units of accommodation available to the Council some households had to be placed in other Council areas. A review of temporary accommodation is needed to ensure that provision meets the growing demand in the future.

Delivering more social rented housing in Dorset is essential, and one innovation through partnerships that can be replicated for both temporary accommodation and longer term accommodation is the East Boro Housing Trust housing scheme for adults with care needs using relocatable units on meanwhile land.

Social rented housing is still the main tenure used to prevent and relieve homelessness and is increasingly in use as temporary accommodation. There is a shortage of most types of temporary accommodation which inevitably leads to using accommodation in other local authorities.

The use of the private rented sector is increasing through the rent deposit/bond scheme(s), although many privately rented assured shorthold tenancies are supported but Discretionary Housing Benefit Payments (DHP) to make them affordable.

### **4. Providing support**

Providing support to households who are homeless or at risk of homelessness is now essential in many cases to help give the best chance of sustaining independent living and preventing homelessness from happening again. Almost half of those who Dorset Council owed a homelessness duty during 2019-20 require support to sustain a tenancy, and many have more than one support need, in particular mental ill health. 577 households owed a duty during 2019-2020, had a mental health support need, 354 had a physical health and

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<sup>2</sup> Homelessness (Review Procedure Etc.) Regulations 2018, Part 4 Duty to Refer

disability support need, and 234 required support because they are at risk of or have experienced domestic abuse.

These types of support are specialist and often required to be regular and intensive. The Integrated Prevention and Support Services funded by Dorset Council and MHCLG are making a difference to homeless and vulnerable people, but they are all operating at full capacity and so are unable to meet the growing demand.

## **5. Resources**

Financial resources for homelessness include MHCLG funding including: Homelessness Reduction Act Grant, Flexible Homelessness Support Grant, Rough Sleeper Initiative, and short and long term Next Steps Accommodation Programmes. These funding streams have conditions attached for specified purposes, and the councils general fund should cover the day to day costs of core staff for example.

As a public law function, the Dorset Council Homelessness Service has some experienced and proactive officers who are competent to legal homelessness decisions, but regular legal training is required to ensure that all homelessness officers are able to carry out these functions.

A greater level of benchmarking with similar local housing authorities is required to continually assess the range and scale of activity in place to prevent homelessness, to ensure the strategic approach to preventing homelessness covers the range and scale needed.

The homelessness Forum is an example of good practice, is well regarded by partners, and the level of joint working to tackle homelessness, is an excellent shared resource.

## **6. Consultation**

The consultation included workshops with Elected Members, staff and stakeholder interviews and surveys of staff, stakeholders and service users with lived experience of homelessness. The main findings from consultation were:

- Social rented housing is still the preferred accommodation for people in housing difficulty due to the affordability and security of tenure.
- The number of single males and single females presenting as homeless with mental and physical health problems resulting in homelessness or exacerbating their difficulties in maintaining accommodation.
- The right support is successful in preventing and relieving homelessness, and local support services are delivering this, but they are too stretched and much more is needed.

# 1.0 Introduction

## 1.1 Preamble

The Homelessness Act 2002 places a duty on English local housing authorities, to formulate a homelessness strategy at least every five years. A review of homelessness in a local housing authority area must take place prior to a homelessness strategy being formulated and published. The legislation requires local housing authorities to take strategic responsibility for tackling and preventing homelessness in their local authority area. This duty complements other duties local housing authorities have to advise and assist persons who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.

The law requires that a homelessness review concentrate on:

- current and future likely levels of homelessness,
- activities to prevent homelessness,
- activities to securing accommodation for people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness
- activities to provide support for people who are homeless, threatened with homelessness, or have previously experienced homelessness, and
- the resources available to deliver the above activities.

This Homelessness Review has been carried out following the creation of the new Dorset Council in April 2019. The UK Government agreed to the re-organisation of local government bodies for Dorset, resulting in the creation of two new unitary local authorities. Dorset Council has succeeded the following former local authorities:

- Dorset County Council
- East Dorset District Council
- North Dorset District Council
- Purbeck District Council
- West Dorset District Council
- Weymouth & Portland Borough Council

This Homelessness Review considers all of the activities being carried out to tackle homelessness in the local authority area of Dorset Council. This encompasses the public law homelessness functions that Dorset Council is responsible for, plus those also provided by various public authorities, housing associations, voluntary organisations, community groups and others.

The decision by Dorset Council to appoint Neil Morland & Co Housing Consultants to complete this homelessness review, ensured impartiality and transparency in the findings.

The aim of this Homelessness Review was to identify if the activities for tackling homelessness in the Dorset Council area, are reflective of good practice, delivering good outcomes for people experiencing homelessness, and are of value for money to the public purse.

There are two important contextual factors that have influenced Homelessness Review. The first of which is the commencement of new homelessness legislation from April 2018. The enactment of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (HRA17), brought about the most significant change to homelessness law in the past 40 years. The improved rights of people who are at risk of homelessness, are equally matched the additional responsibilities of local housing authorities. The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic during 2020, has also had a significant impact, nationally and locally, on the strategies and services being delivered to households at risk of homelessness, especially people who are sleeping rough or likely to do so.

The ambition for this Homelessness Review is to identify key objectives and actions that should be pursued to tackle homelessness in the Dorset Council local authority area, which can be carried forward to form a new local homelessness strategy.

The structure of this Homelessness Review is shown below:

- Chapter two reviews the current and future likely levels of homelessness.
- Chapter three reviews the activities for preventing homelessness.
- Chapter four reviews the activities for securing accommodation for people who are homeless.
- Chapter five reviews the activities for supporting people who have previously been, are presently, or might be in the future, homeless.
- Chapter six reviews the resources available to carry out the aforementioned activities.
- Chapter seven sets findings from consultation with service users and stakeholders
- Chapter eight out the conclusions and recommendations from the review.

## 1.2 Definition of homelessness

The law<sup>3</sup> defines a person being homeless or threatened with homelessness if they:

- Have no accommodation (e.g. sleeping rough);
- Have accommodation, but it is unavailable to them (e.g. due to an emergency or disaster);
- Have accommodation, but no right to occupy it (e.g. squatting, or informal arrangements with family, friends or others);
- Have accommodation, but it is unreasonable to occupy (e.g. due to it being unaffordable, unfit, overcrowded, being victim of domestic abuse, or another special reason);
- Have accommodation, but it will not be available within 56 days (e.g. due to being asked to leave, by ether family, friends or others, or from public authority institution);
- Have accommodation, but have been served a valid notice of eviction by their landlord (e.g. Section 21 notice to bring an assured shorthold tenancy to an end)
- Have accommodation, but it is not available for the whole household (e.g. due to a household member requiring an aid or adaptation to access and/or move around it).

Any usual household members of a person whose circumstances matches the above legal definition is also homeless or threatened with homelessness.

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<sup>3</sup> Housing Act 1996, Part 7, section 174

There is considered to be four forms of homelessness<sup>4</sup>. A person might experience only one of these forms, but could encounter some or all of them:

- statutory homelessness – persons owed the main duty of assistance by a local housing authority;
- single homelessness – persons living in supported housing (including hostels, refuges and also supported lodgings), usually commissioned by a local authority;
- street homelessness – persons sleeping rough in places not designed for habitation;
- hidden homelessness – persons accommodated in insecure arrangements often with relatives or friends, but just as often with people not previously known to them.

### **Rough sleeping**

The Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) (the UK Government department responsible for homelessness policies and programmes), has defined street homelessness, as ‘people sleeping, or bedded down, in the open air (such as on the streets, or in doorways, parks or bus shelters); people in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations, or ‘bashes’)<sup>5</sup>.

## **1.3 Methodology**

This Homelessness Review has been carried out in accordance with the law<sup>6</sup>, statutory guidance<sup>7</sup>, national guidelines<sup>8</sup> and national good practice<sup>9</sup>.

This Homelessness Review provides an accurate portrayal of homelessness in the Dorset Council area at the time of it being completed. This Review contains all the evidence that has been assessed, the conclusions reached and the resulting recommendations made.

This Homelessness Review has clear findings about:

- what is working well to tackle homelessness,
- what must be done better to tackle homelessness, and
- what needs to be the future priorities for tackling homelessness.

The following parties were invited to contribute to this Homelessness Review:

- Dorset Council’s housing services
  - homelessness,
  - allocations and lettings
  - private sector housing
  - housing strategy
- Dorset Council’s adult social care services
- Dorset Council’s children services
  - social care

<sup>4</sup> Fitzpatrick, S. (2005), ‘Explaining homelessness: a critical realistic perspective’, *Housing & Society*, 22(1): pp.1-17

<sup>5</sup> Department for Communities & Local Government (2010), ‘Evaluating the extent of rough sleeping.’

<sup>6</sup> Homelessness Act 2002, sections 1-3

<sup>7</sup> Homelessness code of guidance for local authorities, Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, published 2018 and most recent updated 31 December 2020 (as of the date this Homelessness Review was carried out).

<sup>8</sup> Homelessness: applying All Our Health, Public Health England, November 2018

<sup>9</sup> Morland, Neil. 2019. Making homelessness strategies happen: ensuring accountability and deliverability. Local Government Association. London

- leaving care
- youth justice
- housing associations
- various local and national public authorities, such as
  - prisons,
  - youth offender institutions
  - National Probation Service
  - Jobcentre Plus,
  - NHS Trusts and NHS Foundations Trusts
  - numerous others
- voluntary organisations, such as
  - registered charities
  - community groups
  - faith organisations
- any other interested person, such as
  - persons who have lived experience of homelessness

Representation from these bodies were at a sufficiently senior level of responsibility that afforded decision making powers, especially in respect of policy and/or budgets.

### **1.3.1 A review of the levels of homelessness**

The first step was to analyse the current and future likely levels of homelessness in the Dorset Council area. A comparison was made to the neighbouring local authority area of Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole (BCP), and also a collective total of local authorities from South West England, England excluding London and the whole of England. Data was sought from Dorset Council together wide range of public authorities, private registered providers of social housing (housing associations) and voluntary organisations.

The implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, with a greater emphasis on preventing and relieving homelessness, necessarily required a change in monitoring away from the P1E. The new annual and quarterly monitoring requirement is HCLIC (Homelessness Case Level Collection, which retains little exact detail of its predecessor P1E requirements and is not therefore always comparable.

In order to fully understand homelessness in the Dorset Council area, the analysis in this review covers the preceding five years (2015-16 to 2019-20), which requires collection and analysis of both the discontinued P1E and HCLIC data for each of the five former districts, therefore in some cases only two years HCLIC data or three years P1E data is available, and not both. MHCLG update and amend HCLIC data as new information is acquired, as it remains an experimental system for MHCLG and local housing authorities, so for the time being data is subject to minor amendment. The HCLIC data collected for this review was last checked by the authors on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2020.

An analysis of statistics from these data sets, was carried out to understand trends such as:

- numbers of applications for assistance,
- number of decisions made by outcome,
- characteristics of people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness,

- household size,
- support needs assessed,
- reason for loss of accommodation,
- types of prevention activity,
- types of relief activity,
- types of decisions made,
- types of activities to end the main duty,
- assistance received by households with their support needs,
- local connection referrals made and received,
- number of households living in temporary accommodation (by type),
- length of stay in temporary accommodation,
- number and types of reviews requested and decisions made, and
- nationality of applicants.

Authoritative sources, such as the Office for National Statistics, were used to forecast future levels of homelessness, by looking at child poverty rates, labour markets factors, housing market factors and other any other relevant trends.

### **1.3.2 A review of activities to prevent homelessness**

A review of the activities to prevent homelessness was divided into three strands, to inform the focus of the review:

1. early prevention – information and advice to prevent homelessness or a threat of homelessness (including those being at more risk of homelessness)
2. crisis prevention – assistance to help people remain in existing accommodation or secure alternative housing (including provision of temporary accommodation)
3. reoccurrence prevention – support to sustain accommodation (both accommodation-based and communitywide)

The Ministry of Housing Communities & Local Government issued findings from an external evaluation of its £20m Homelessness Prevention Trailblazer programme, in March 2019<sup>10</sup>. The findings from this research was used to inform a local review of prevention activities.

The review of early prevention activities looked at the duty to provide advisory services<sup>11</sup>. This focused on the advice offered by Dorset Council, plus also from other providers of housing advice. Concentrating on the quality, availability/accessibility, and accuracy of the advice provided. This encompassed arrangements for assistance to be available outside of usual working hours.

Many early homelessness prevention activities focused on those most at risk of homelessness. Homelessness legislation<sup>12</sup> recognises some characteristics and circumstances when a person has a heightened risk of homelessness, such as:

- leaving prison or youth detention accommodation,
- leaving care of a children services authority,

<sup>10</sup> Knight, T., Purdon, S., Lloyd, R., Bryson, C. (2018) Evaluation of the Homelessness Prevention Trailblazers, Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government. London

<sup>11</sup> Housing Act 1996 (amended by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017), Part7 section 179

<sup>12</sup> Housing Act 1996 (as amended) Part 7 section 179(2)

- regular armed forces veterans,
- victims of domestic abuse,
- leaving hospital, and
- experiencing mentally illness.

The above list is not exhaustive, as many other persons have a heightened risk of homelessness, for example due to being a young adult, a victim of violence or sexual abuse, a victim of harassment, having a drug or alcohol addiction, being a victim of trafficking, or possessing any of the characteristics protected under the Equality Act 2010. This Homelessness Review looked at local arrangements to provide information, advice and assistance to the above listed persons, to see whether they are fit for purpose. Identification of and analysis of joint working protocols, pooled budgets, share commissioning, and common service delivery arrangements were also carried out.

#### **Duty to refer**

In relation to early prevention activity, the impact of the 'duty to refer', which came into force from October 2018<sup>13</sup>, for specified public authorities, was also reviewed, with an analysis of the effectiveness of local arrangements being carried out. This has been carried out with reference national good practice<sup>14</sup>.

A review of crisis prevention activities focused on the duties to prevent or relieve homelessness<sup>15</sup>. This Homelessness Review seeks to understand how the new burdens arising from the Homelessness Reduction Act have impacted on the how the local authority administered its duties. There has also been scrutiny of the outcomes for people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. This extends to how assessments and personalised plans are being completed, plus the effectiveness of these. This Homelessness Review has probed how people are helped to remain in their existing accommodation, or when this is not safe or possible, assisted to secure alternative accommodation. The effectiveness of joint working arrangements with housing benefit administrators, debt advice services, private rented sector enforcement officers, sanctuary schemes, housing possession court desks and pre- eviction protocols with private registered providers of social housing have all be reviewed.

A review of activities to prevent the reoccurrence of homelessness, has focused on the support, advice, assistance and counselling people receive to be able to sustain their accommodation. This includes activities carried out by Dorset Council, either via its own homelessness service, or as a commissioner of support services. Logically, a review of activities to prevent the reoccurrence of homelessness has also extended to those undertaken by numerous public authority, voluntary organisations, housing associations and others. Both community-wide and accommodation-based support has been investigated for its quality, effectiveness and impact.

#### **1.3.3 A review of activities to secure accommodation**

A review of activities to secure accommodation for people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, has concentrated on:

- temporary accommodation provision,

<sup>13</sup> Homelessness (Review Procedure Etc.) Regulations 2018, Part 4 Duty to Refer

<sup>14</sup> Morland, Neil. 2018. Duty to refer: an opportunity to co-operate. Local Government Association. London.

<sup>15</sup> Housing Act 1996, Part 7, sections 195 - 196

- social rented housing allocations to persons who are homeless or owed a homelessness duty of assistance, and
- private rented sector accessibility for persons who are homeless or owed a homelessness duty of assistance.

### **Temporary accommodation**

A review of temporary accommodation provision has covered arrangements for procuring, allocating and managing temporary accommodation, to ensure they it is fit for purpose. An analysis of the types and suitability of temporary accommodation used (including use of bed and breakfast accommodation), length of stay, out-of-borough placement, characteristics of households placed in temporary accommodation (including those with children and/or a pregnant woman, 16/17-year olds) has also been carried out. This has been carried out with reference to national good practice<sup>16</sup>.

A review of how Dorset Council's housing allocation scheme helps people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, to secure social rented housing has been carried out. An analysis of data associated with applications to join the local housing allocation scheme from persons who are homeless, or owed a duty of assistance, plus lettings made to these groups of people was also carried out. This data was analysed over a period, of five years in order to clearly understand the trends. The UK Government publishes data about the lettings and sales of social housing in England, via its CORE website <https://core.communities.gov.uk>. This information is usually updated annually, sourced from housing associations, and is available on a local authority area basis. The statistics provided intelligence on trends in social lettings, characteristics of new tenants, the properties available, and more. Additionally, an analysis of MHCLG published tables showing numbers of households on local authorities' waiting lists was also carried out.

In regards to Dorset's Housing Allocation Scheme, a review was carried out of:

- the housing options available to persons who are homeless or owed a duty of assistance, who are not eligible for an allocation of social rented housing,
- how grounds for disqualification from joining a housing allocation scheme, might impact on persons who are homeless or owed a duty of assistance,
- the advice, information, and assistance on making an application for social rented housing, provided to persons who are homeless or owed a duty of assistance,
- the choice and opportunities of persons who are homeless or owed a duty of assistance, to express a preference of what social rented housing is allocated them
- the degree of reasonable preference afforded to persons who are homeless or owed a duty of assistance, and
- whether persons more at risk of homelessness (e.g. persons leaving prison, offenders, care leavers, persons leaving hospital, the armed forces, escaping domestic abuse, that are a vulnerable adult, or others) are regarded as having a reasonable preference for an allocation of social rented housing, or have been given additional preference.

A review was carried out on the trends associated with the types of tenancy agreements issued to persons who were homeless or owed a duty of assistance by housing associations. The UK

<sup>16</sup> Gray, Tim., Messenger, Gary. 2018. Housing our homeless households. Local Government Association. London.

Government publishes data about the types of tenancy agreements, via its CORE website <https://core.communities.gov.uk>. This information is usually updated annually, sourced from housing associations and is available on a local authority area basis.

Having regard to the requirements of the tenancy strategy, a review was carried out of:

- The type of tenancies granted to persons who were homeless or owed a duty of assistance,
- The circumstances in which social landlords will grant persons, who were homeless or owed a duty of assistance, a tenancy of a particular kind,
- where social landlords have granted persons, who were homeless or owed a duty of assistance, tenancies for a certain length of term, and
- Circumstances where social landlords have granted persons, who were homeless or owed a duty of assistance, a further tenancy when an existing tenancy came to an end.

A review of private rented sector access schemes for people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, has been carried out. This has focussed on the types and effectiveness of landlord incentives used. The use and impact of initiatives such as rent-in-advance, cash deposits, bonds, and other measures has also been probed.

In tandem with this Homelessness Review being carried out, Dorset Council is also formulating a Housing Strategy. This work will look at housing market supply and affordability factors. Separately a local housing needs survey, social and/or private sector stock condition survey, will be carried out in due course. This research will provide evidence about affordability of accommodation, not only of market rates but also how people pay for their accommodation, especially in respect of those who need to claim welfare assistance with housing costs. The findings from these projects will be taken account of once they have been published and will influence future updates of the local Homelessness Strategy.

#### **1.3.4 A review of activities to provide support**

A review of the support provided to people who are homeless, at risk of homelessness or have previously been homeless has looked at the activities carried out to stop households becoming homeless and avoiding a repeat occurrence of homelessness in the future. This has included:

- the types and prevalence of support needs, the types of accommodation-based support services and the outcomes they are achieving,
- the types of non-accommodation-based support services and the outcomes they are achieving,
- support provided by public authorities under public law duties, and
- support provided by voluntary organisations, both commissioned and non-commissioned.

MHCLG with the Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) published independent research on the causes of homelessness and rough sleeping<sup>17 18 19</sup>, the findings from this research have been used to inform a local analysis of support needs.

A review of the types of accommodation-based support services (e.g. hostels, refuges) and the outcomes they are achieving has considered:

- the accessibility of this provision,
- the standard of accommodation,
- the staffing arrangements and support philosophy,
- the rules for exclusions and evictions,
- move-on support, and
- and other matters.

A review of the types of non-accommodation-based support services (e.g. floating support, Housing First provision) and the outcomes they are achieving, has considered matters such as:

- whether the support being provided is sufficiently personalised,
- the joint working arrangements between the support provider and the accommodation provider,
- the efforts being made to help people feel part of their community and take-up employment,
- whether the support is outcome focused and asset-based, and
- how people are being helped to increase their personal income and improve their wellbeing.

For both accommodation-based and non-accommodation-based support services, service users, staff and stakeholders have all been consulted. An analysis of performance results and outcomes has been carried out, where reliable data is available.

#### **Response to rough sleeping during the COVID 19 pandemic review**

We reviewed activities to house people who were rough sleeping and those at risk, during the COVID-19 pandemic, referencing national good practice<sup>20</sup>.

We focused on steps taken to source accommodation and support, whilst also looking at the funding and procurement arrangements that were put in place. Particular attention was paid to how Dorset Council delivered its own homelessness services, involvement from health services, measures taken to safeguard people who were sleeping rough, and female specific issues when sleeping rough.

<sup>17</sup> Alma Economics (2019). Homelessness: causes of homelessness and rough sleeping rapid evidence assessment. Ministry of Housing Communities & Local Government and Department for Work & Pensions. London

<sup>18</sup> Alma Economics (2019). Homelessness: causes of homelessness and rough sleeping review of models of homelessness. Ministry of Housing Communities & Local Government and Department for Work & Pensions. London

<sup>19</sup> Alma Economics (2019). Homelessness: causes of homelessness and rough sleeping feasibility study. Ministry of Housing Communities & Local Government and Department for Work & Pensions. London

<sup>20</sup> Coombs, Jenny., Gray, Tim. 2020. Lessons learnt from councils' response to rough sleeping during the COVID-19 pandemic. Local Government Association. London.

When completing this aspect of the review, we follow the national guidance formulated by an NM&Co associate and issued by the LGA in November 2019, titled 'Lessons learnt from councils' response to rough sleeping during the COVID-19 pandemic'

A review of support provided by public authorities under public law duties, has looked at how a Dorset Council's homelessness service is working with:

- adult social care services to fulfil duties owed to vulnerable homeless adults owed a duty under the Care Act 2014,
- child social care services to fulfil duties owed to homeless 16- and 17-year olds and other cases involving homeless households where dependent children reside under the Children Act 1989,
- NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups, NHS Trusts and NHS Foundation Trusts to fulfil duties owed to adults who are mentally ill owed a duty under the Mental Health Act 1983, and
- Dorset Council's private sector housing colleagues to fulfil public law housing duties to various persons in specified circumstances.

When reviewing how vulnerable homeless adults are supported, there was scrutiny of joint working between Dorset Council's homelessness service and adult social care services in respect of<sup>21</sup>:

- using powers and duties to provide accommodation,
- carrying out assessments and care planning to meet support needs,
- preventing homelessness and promoting wellbeing, and
- supporting persons from abroad who are not eligible for homelessness assistance.

When reviewing how 16- and 17-year olds and other homeless households where dependent children reside are supported, there was scrutiny of joint working between Dorset Council's homelessness service and children services in respect of<sup>22</sup>:

- assessment of causes of homelessness, housing and support needs, and whether a child needs services to achieve or maintain their health and wellbeing, or avoid it being significantly impaired,
- provision of services to meet a child's identified needs,
- support for children from abroad,
- individual children who have no parents or carers,
- young people who need care beyond the age of 18 years, and
- generally performing obligations under the Children Act 1989.

When reviewing how adults who are mentally ill are supported, there was scrutiny of joint working between Dorset Council and NHS authorities in respect of<sup>23</sup> those who are leaving hospital after having been unwell and need after-care.

MHCLG published an independent evaluation of the Skills, Training, Innovation and Employment (STRIVE) pilot, in August 2018<sup>24</sup>. This programme was targeted at single people

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<sup>21</sup> Care and Support Statutory Guidance, Department of Health, June 2014

<sup>22</sup> Working together to safeguard children, Department of Education, March 2015

<sup>23</sup> Code of Practice: Mental Health Act 1983, Department of Health, 2015

<sup>24</sup> ICF Consulting. (2018). STRIVE Evaluation: Final report. Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government. London

experiencing homelessness in London, who were claiming unemployment welfare benefits. Together with the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (now known as Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy) £297,000 of funding was provided. STRIVE was commissioned to pilot an alternative to the Work Programme, which had been identified as being unsuitable for the target cohort. The findings from this research was used to inform a local review of how support is provided to be people who are, or have, experienced homelessness to secure employment.

### **1.3.5 A review of resources available to fund activities for tackling homelessness**

A review of the resources available to carry out activities to tackle homelessness covered money, people, and I.T.

A review of money looked at both a local housing authority's own spending on homelessness activities, plus also grants received from MHCLG and other UK Government bodies.

In terms of a local housing authority's own spending, scrutiny of forecast and actual spend of Dorset Council's homelessness service budget was carried out. There was also consideration of spending by Dorset Council on commissioning housing association, voluntary organisations and others to prevent homelessness, supply accommodation and provide support. Spending by other public authorities on activities to tackle homelessness was also be examined, as was funding available to housing association and voluntary organisations from philanthropic trusts, social enterprise trading, investment national bodies, non-governmental bodies and other public sector agencies.

In terms of grants received from MHCLG, inquiries were made about whether the total amount allocated is used for its intended purpose, the success of bidding for additional funding was also probed. The money available to a local authority was be benchmarked against that of other local authorities, to ascertain if income and expenditure is satisfactory.

The review also considered securing investment from the commercial sector, via a social impact bond, and using a payment by results arrangements with commissioned providers. MHCLG published an independent evaluation of its Fair Chance Fund programme, in April 2019<sup>25</sup>. Together with the Cabinet Office and Department for Digital, Culture Media and Sport, funding was provided via Social Impact Bonds (SIB), using a payment by results (PBR) approach to improve accommodation, education and employment for people aged 18 to 24 years, who were experiencing homelessness. The findings from this research was used to inform a local review of how private sector resources being secured for tackling homelessness.

A review of staffing looked at the employees of the local housing authority. There was consideration of the staffing structure, the procedures and processes in force and whether there is enough staff to cope with caseload levels. Additionally, the training that staff receive, both in terms of the specifics of homelessness legislation (e.g. knowledge of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, the Housing Act 1996, etc.) and the general skills (e.g. providing advice, carrying out assessments, etc.) to undertake their role was also be assessed.

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<sup>25</sup> ICF Consulting. (2019). Fair Chance Fund: Final Evaluation. Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government. London

A review of IT looked at the software and hardware available to help administer homelessness functions and assist people who are at risk of homelessness. This involved investigating the use and effectiveness of software for:

- self-service housing advice,
- receiving referrals for cases of homelessness
- formulating personalised plans,
- case management,
- data reporting (e.g. H-CLIC),
- temporary accommodation property and void management,
- controlling referrals and use of housing related support services, and
- other modules to help enhance the administration of homelessness functions, such as online forms, applications, reports, information packs, letter templates.

Connectivity to software for administering a housing register, mutual exchange schemes, and a social lettings agency was also reviewed. An appraisal of hardware available to deliver homelessness services was also undertaken, looking at the use of self-service housing advice.

## 1.4 National homelessness context

The UK Government is responsible for making decisions about homelessness law and strategy for England. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) is charged with leading on policy formulation and programme delivery.

The Homelessness Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities, to formulate a homelessness strategy at least every five years. A review of homelessness in a local housing authority area must take place prior to a homelessness strategy being formulated and published. The legislation requires local authorities to take strategic responsibility for tackling and preventing homelessness in their area. This duty complements other duties local authorities have to freely provide advice to anyone at risk of homelessness and assist persons in specified circumstances who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.

### 1.4.1 Homelessness legislation

The current legal framework setting out the rights of people who are experiencing homelessness and duties local authorities must administer, has been in force since 1977<sup>26</sup>, with significant amendments being made to it 1985<sup>27</sup>, 1996<sup>28</sup>, and 2017<sup>29</sup>. The most recent adjustments have substantially increased the assistance local authorities must provide to people who are homeless and threatened with homelessness.

The legal definition of is set-out in section 1.2 of this Homelessness Review and is summarised again below.

#### Definition of homelessness

<sup>26</sup> Housing (Homeless Persons) Act 1977

<sup>27</sup> Housing Act 1985

<sup>28</sup> Housing Act 1996, Part 7

<sup>29</sup> Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

Households (single persons, couples, families with dependent children are all covered by the term) who are homeless or threatened with homelessness include those who:

- are street homelessness,
- are hidden homelessness,
- have been illegally evicted,
- are living in accommodation that is unaffordable, unfit, overcrowded, are experiencing domestic abuse or threats of domestic abuse, and other exceptional circumstances,
- are at risk of becoming homeless due to parents/family/other no longer willing or able to accommodate, leaving care, prison the armed forces or escaping domestic abuse), and
- have been served a valid notice to quit their tenancy by their landlord.

All local authorities have a duty to ensure advice and information is available, free of charge to any household, about preventing homelessness, finding a home, rights when homelessness, and help available locally.

Any adult, or child aged 16-17, who believes they are homeless or threatened with homelessness, is entitled to make an application for assistance to any local authority.

A household who usually lives in the UK and has a right to enter and remain in the country without any restrictions, is normally eligible for assistance.

#### **Local authority duties**

When a household is eligible for assistance, local authorities must:

- Carry out an assessment of their housing and support needs and formulate a personal plan to meet these needs.
- Arrange temporary accommodation, when a local authority believes they have a priority need for accommodation due to them having a specified vulnerability.
- Attempt to prevent homelessness, for a them if they are likely to become homeless within 56 days of them making their application for assistance.
- Attempt to relieve homeless for up to 56 days, when they are already homeless, when making an application for assistance.
- Arrange short-term accommodation when they are intentionally homeless have a priority need.
- Obtain permanent accommodation they are unintentionally homeless and have a priority need.

Local authorities have discretion to consider whether the household has a local connection with the local authority to which they have made an application for assistance.

A household has a right to request review of certain decisions made their application.

When administering their public law homelessness duties, local authority housing services must co-operate with each other and can expect co-operation from housing associations and child social care services. Specified public authorities have a duty to refer a household who is at risk homelessness to a local authority.

### 1.4.2 Causes of homelessness

MHCLG with the Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) published independent research on the causes of homelessness and rough sleeping<sup>30</sup>.

An assessment of evidence concluded that for families there was strong evidence of domestic abuse, relationship breakdown, financial issues, poverty and lack of social housing being the causes of homelessness. For single persons there was strong evidence that relationship breakdown, mental health and substance misuse were the causes. In terms of rough sleeping, the strongest cause identified was relationship breakdown. Structural factors were more likely to cause homelessness for families, whereas, individual personal factors more often caused singles persons to become homeless, and individual health related factors was a more common cause of street homelessness.

The researchers went on to conclude that a mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods need to be used to understand the current and future likely causes of homelessness, plus the impact policies are having, or might have, on preventing and reducing homelessness. It was recommended that MHCLG and DWP develop a range of sophisticated modelling tools, that produce detailed information to better understand the causes of homelessness, but which are easy to use and maintain by their in-house analysts.

### 1.4.3 Homelessness statistics

Official statistics published by the UK Government, for April 2019 – March 2020<sup>31</sup>, showed:

- Households with children are more likely to be owed a prevention duty at initial assessment than a relief duty
- Single adult households are the largest group of households owed a prevention or relief duty, representing 60.1% of all households who had a duty accepted.
- 57.6% of single adults are initially accepted under the relief duty.
- Of the households that were owed a duty in in 2019-20, those that were owed a prevention duty were more likely (58.5%) to have an accommodation secured outcome than households owed an initial relief duty (40.0%)
- Accommodation secured under the prevention duty is more likely to be in self- contained private rented sector accommodation at 36.3%, or in a social rented sector registered provider tenancy at 21.7%.
- Accommodation secured at relief is more likely to be a social rented supported housing or hostel offer at 26.6%
- Main duty acceptances have reduced by 29.3% over the past three years, due to the number of households who are prevented from becoming homeless or have homelessness relieved

Of all cases

- 54.8 of households secured accommodation for 6+ months,
- 26.3% lost contact or withdrew their application for assistance,
- 12.5% were owed a main duty, and
- 6.3% were deemed to be not homeless or not owed a main duty following relief.

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<sup>30</sup> Alma Economics. 2019. Homelessness: Causes of homelessness and rough Sleeping: rapid assessment of evidence, London, Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government and Department for Work & Pensions

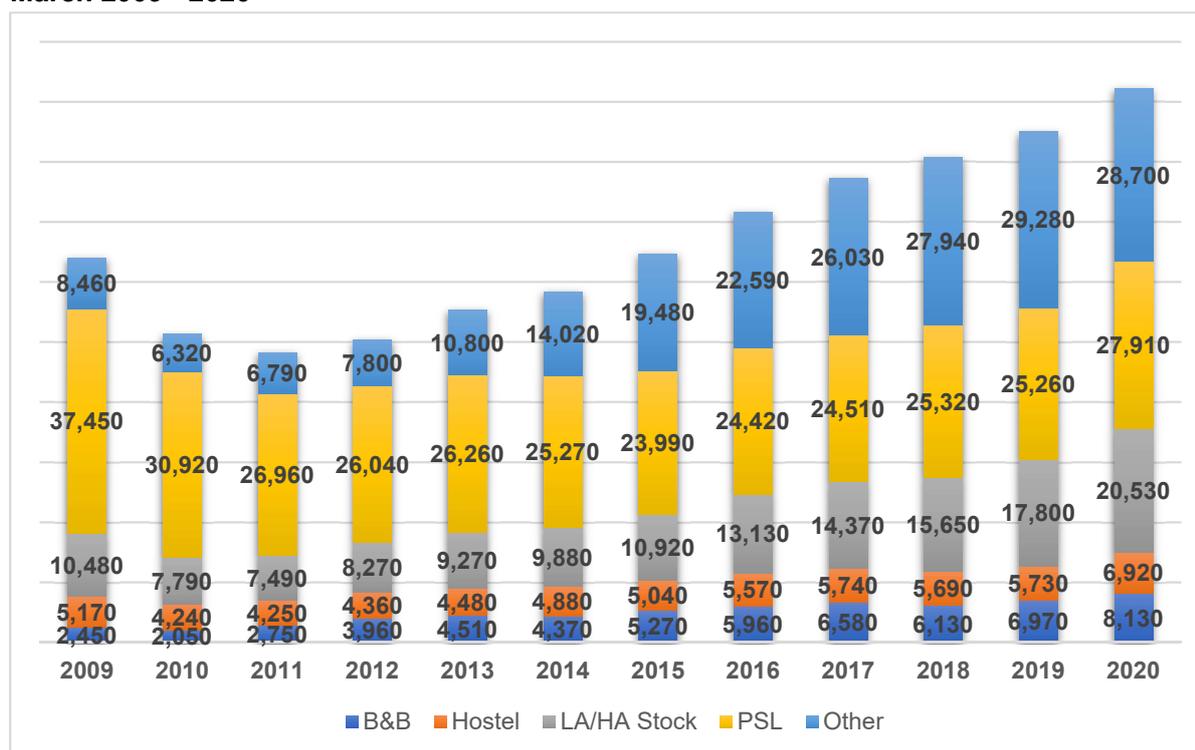
<sup>31</sup> Statutory Homelessness Annual Report, 2019-20, England. Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government.

- A greater proportion of households with children were owed a main duty (21.9% versus 12.5%).
- Fewer family households left the system for Other reasons (19.5% versus 26.3%).
- More single males aged 18-34 left the system for Other reasons (36.0% versus 26.3% overall)
- a greater proportion of single males were homeless and not owed a main duty following relief (11.4% versus 6.3% overall), most commonly as a result of having no priority need.
- For applicants sleeping rough on approach, 48.5% of duties ended without an accommodation secured outcome or main duty acceptance.

From 2017-18, before the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (HRA 17)), to 2019-20 the number of households owed the main duty of assistance (obtain permanent accommodation for households that are unintentionally homeless and have a priority need) has decreased 29.3%, from 56,600 to 40,040. Despite more households being owed an initial prevention or relief duty, including priority needs groups such as households with children, there are fewer main duty acceptances as more households are receiving assistance at an earlier stage, through prevention and relief duties.

There has been a 9.4% increase in the number of households in temporary accommodation from 85,040 on 31st March 2019 to 93,000 on 31st March 2020, the highest level in almost 15 years. This is largely driven by single households, which have increased 41.2% from 22,870 to 29,390 households, while the number of households with children in temporary accommodation has remained more stable (a 3.3% increase from 62,170 to 63,610 households). The COVID-19 pandemic will inevitably adversely impact on the number of people experiencing homelessness, the amount many households occupying temporary accommodation and the levels of rough sleeping.

**Chart 1: Households in temporary accommodation, England, annual snapshot taken on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009 - 2020**



Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

### Demographics of homeless households

During 2019-20 69.8% of homeless households had a White lead applicant, while 84.6% of individuals in England are White, suggesting White households are less likely to be homeless. Households containing an Asian lead applicant are also underrepresented as they account for just 6.3% of homeless applications and for 8.1% of the population. Households with a Black lead applicant are the most disproportionately homeless as they account for 10.7% of those owed a duty while are only estimated to comprise of 3.6% of the population.

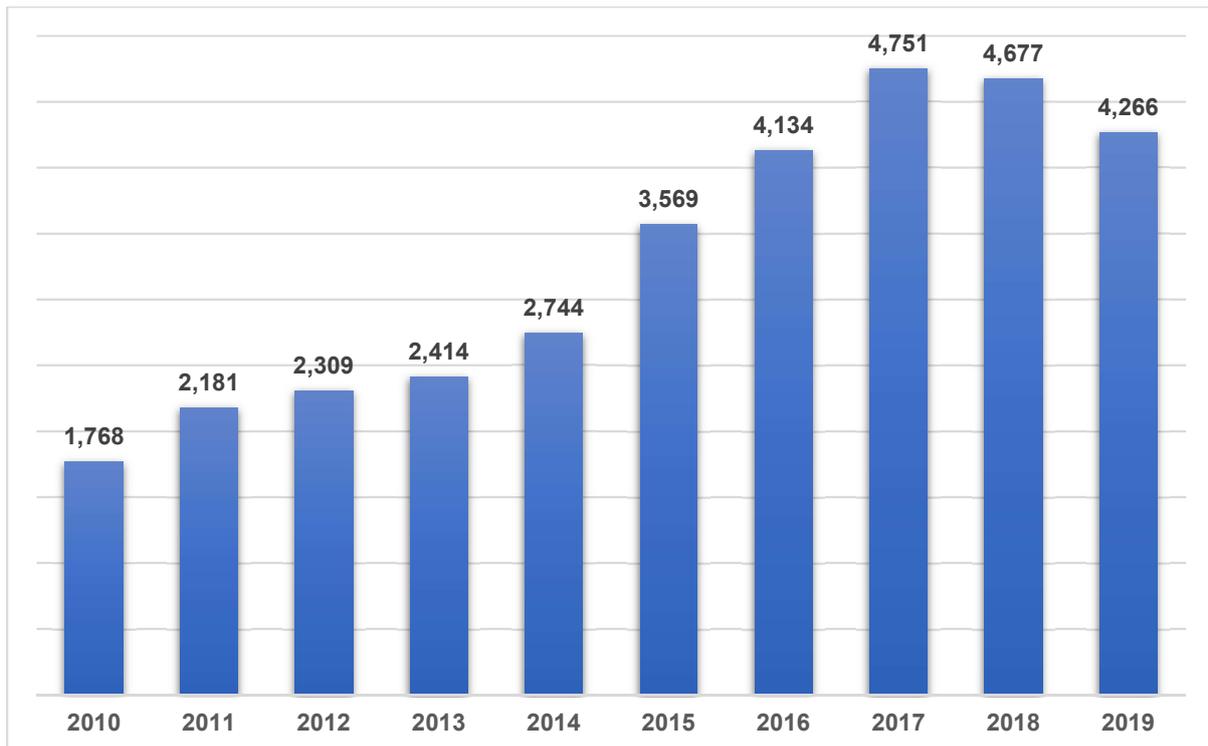
In 2019-20, the most common age group of lead applicants in households owed a prevention or relief duty were aged between 25 and 34 years old, making up 87,990 households or 30.5% of the total.

The most common employment status for lead applicants of households owed a prevention or relief duty were registered unemployed (88,030 or 30.5%) in 2019-20,

The latest rough sleeping snapshot statistics<sup>32</sup> show that in 2019 there were 4,266 individuals recorded as sleeping rough on a single night in England.

**Chart 2: Rough sleeping in England, England, annual snapshot taken Autumn 2010-2019**

<sup>32</sup> Rough sleeping snapshot in England: autumn 2019. Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government.



Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

In 2018-19, 15% of the 314,000 total new social lettings went to households that were classed as statutory homeless and owed a main homelessness duty<sup>33</sup>.

In 2018-19, £144m was spent on prevention; £68m on support; £1bn on temporary accommodation (excluding non-housing revenue account accommodation)<sup>34</sup>.

In 2018-19, according to the English Housing Survey, 541,000 (2%) households reported that they had someone living with them in the last 12 months who would otherwise be homeless (i.e. 'sofa surfing' or hidden homeless)<sup>35</sup>. A further 1.6 million concealed households were reported, defined as households containing an adult who would prefer to buy or rent their own accommodation but cannot afford to do so, equating to 7% of all households in England. An additional 154,000 households were living in self-reported temporary or emergency accommodation, either provided by a local authority, housing association, or private landlord.

The latest figures from the Ministry of Justice, for 2018-19, show that 2,017 individuals were classed as 'Rough sleeping', and 5,206 individuals were classed as 'Other homeless' in England<sup>36</sup>.

The Ministry of Justice also publishes quarterly statistics on Mortgage and Landlord Possession in England and Wales. Figures for 2019-20, show 13,637 social landlord possessions, and

<sup>33</sup> Social housing lettings: April 2018 to March 2019, England. Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government.

<sup>34</sup> Local authority revenue expenditure and financing: 2018-19 final outturn, England. Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government.

<sup>35</sup> English Housing Survey, 2018-2019. Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government.

<sup>36</sup> Community performance quarterly release to March 2019. Ministry of Justice.

7,001 private landlord possessions, with 7,479 of all landlords using the accelerated procedure<sup>37</sup>.

#### 1.4.4 Homelessness Policy

The UK Government has an ambition of ending street homelessness by 2024<sup>38</sup>.

From 2017-2019, the UK Government invested £1.2bn to tackle homelessness, which included £76m for an initiative to reduce street homelessness and £28m to pilot the Housing First approach. From April 2018 new legislation came into force ensuring more households got more help, at an earlier stage and over a longer period<sup>39</sup>. In August 2018, the MHCLG published a Rough Sleeping Strategy<sup>40</sup>.

##### **Housing First**

The Housing First Pilots in Greater Manchester, Liverpool City Region and West Midlands, have helped more than 200 rough sleepers to-date. The Housing First approach supports vulnerable people into their own homes where they can rebuild their lives. The pilots are replicating the success seen across Europe, where Housing First projects have been successful in preventing repeat homelessness for at least eight out of 10 people in such projects.

MHCLG has published two evaluation reports, carried out by independent researchers on the Housing First Pilots. The first report<sup>41</sup>, provides key learning and recommendations both national and local government, regarding development, preparation and early delivery. The second report<sup>42</sup> focuses on the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Housing First Pilots, reporting findings from weekly calls during the lockdown period during Spring 2020.

Groundswell and the London Homeless Health Programme have produced 'My Right to Healthcare' cards for people experiencing homelessness which explain this population have a right to register with GP surgeries. NHS England have committed to rolling out the card nationally.

The UK Government appointed an independent advisor to lead a review into the causes of street homelessness, that will provide advice on additional action required to end street homelessness by the end of 2024.

##### **Everyone In campaign**

The UK Government's initial response to COVID-19 and rough sleeping in March 2020 was to bring in those people experiencing street homelessness to protect their health and stop wider transmission, particularly in hot spot areas, and those in assessment centres and shelters that are unable to comply with social distancing advice. This approach sought to reduce the impact of COVID-19 on people facing homelessness and ultimately on preventing deaths during this

<sup>37</sup> Mortgage and Landlord Possession statistics: April to June 2020. Ministry of Justice.

<sup>38</sup> The Conservative and Unionist Party, Manifesto 2019.

<sup>39</sup> Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

<sup>40</sup> The rough sleeping strategy, 2018, Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

<sup>41</sup> ICF Consulting Services, Heriot Watt University, Homeless Link, BPSR and IER. 2020. Evaluation of the Housing First Pilots: interim process evaluation report. Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government. London

<sup>42</sup> ICF Consulting Services, Heriot Watt University, Homeless Link, BPSR and IER. 2020. Effects of the pandemic on the Housing First Pilots and service users. Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government. London

public health emergency. MHCLG asked local authorities to lead a local programme of actions. The UK Government put in place an exemption for hotels, hostels and B&Bs to open so they could offer accommodation to key workers and support rough sleepers.

This resulted in 5,400 people being helped off the streets by the end of April 2020. 90% of people known to local authorities as being street homeless at the beginning of the crisis were offered accommodation where they could self-isolate. By May 2020, a total of 15,000 people who were at risk of homelessness were reported as being helped to obtain accommodation. By September 2020, over 29,000 people were reported as being helped, with 10,000 into emergency accommodation and nearly 19,000 provided with settled accommodation or move-on support.

Following this, a new taskforce was created by the UK Government, to lead the next phase of support for people experiencing street homelessness during the pandemic. Businesses, faith groups and local communities have been encouraged to help the new Rough Sleeping Taskforce.

During summer 2020, the UK Government suspended for 12 weeks, rules that restricted the assistance local authorities could provide to EEA nationals who were experiencing street homelessness, to find employment, accommodation and facilitate a reconnection.

An eviction ban for six months was put in to force, subsequently the law was changed to increase notice periods to 6 six months. Bailiff enforcement action is not permitted during periods national restrictions.

A new scheme, the Protect Programme, was launched late autumn 2020, to run alongside the Everyone In campaign, concentrating on areas with high levels of people experiencing street homelessness. All local authorities were asked to update actions plans for tackling rough sleeping by the end of 2020, following which they have been expected to carry out a rapid assessment of need for everyone they assist who is experiencing street homelessness.

As new restrictions came into force in January 2021, MHCLG asked local housing authorities to once again make sure people experiencing street homelessness were helped to obtain accommodation and register with a GP.

A study published by the Lancet showed that the Everyone In campaign helped avoid 266 deaths during the first wave of the pandemic amongst England's homeless population, plus thousands of infections and hospital admissions.

An independent review of the HRA 2017<sup>43</sup>, commissioned by MHCLG, concluded that the more people are getting help who previously would not. The review also identified improvements could be made to how the HRA is being administered, data collection and joint working.

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<sup>43</sup> Knight, Tim., Greenstock, Jane., Beadle, Shane., Charalambous, Steph., Fenton, Catherine. 2020. Evaluation of the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act: Final Report. Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government. London.

MHCLG and the Department of Education published good practice advice<sup>44</sup> to support the development of joint protocols that can help local authorities meet the needs of care leavers, to prevent them from becoming homeless.

Research<sup>45</sup> carried out by MHCLG with over 500 people who had experienced street homelessness found that before sleeping rough most had not been in stable accommodation, had high levels of vulnerabilities, had experienced adverse childhood events, were not currently in employment, but were registered at a GP surgery and had previously sought help from a local authority. Half had been involved with the criminal justice system. The research estimated the annual cost of a person who is experiencing street homelessness was £12.2k, compared to £3.1k people at risk of homelessness who were not having to sleep rough.

### 1.4.5 Homelessness Funding

Since December 2019, The UK Government has allocated over £700m to local homelessness services, with over 300 councils across England receiving a share of funding to support people experiencing homelessness in their areas. Money distributed includes:

- £200m (2020-2021) for all local authorities to obtain accommodation for households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.
- £62.9m (2020-2021) for all local authorities to prevent and relieve homelessness
- £23m Cold Weather Fund (£13m 2019-2020, £10m 2020-2021) for people experiencing street homelessness, to provide more emergency accommodation during the winter.
- £3m to homelessness support funding for Jobcentres to help people experiencing street homelessness to claim benefits and find work.
- £433m to offer accommodation for up to 6,000 people experiencing street homelessness and those at most immediate risk of having to sleep rough, with the intention of 3,300 homes becoming available by May 2021. To-date, 276 schemes have been approved across England, which will provide 904 homes.
- £6m for voluntary organisations that provide, advice, accommodation and support to households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.
- £700k for local authorities to support people leaving care at risk of homelessness
- £3.2m emergency funding to help people experiencing street homelessness self-isolate to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- £105m to support people experiencing street homelessness and people threatened with homelessness, to help them secure accommodation during the COVID-19 outbreak, which was allocated to 274 local authorities.
- £75m (£23m 2020-2021, £52m 2021-2022) substance misuse funding allocated to 43 areas, to help people experiencing street homelessness recover from alcohol or drug dependency
- £90k for St Basil's Youth Voice Programme, to ensure the voices of people with lived experience of homelessness inform and influence national and local homelessness policy and strategy.
- £2m Transformation Fund, administered by Homeless Link, for voluntary and organisations to make more self-contained emergency accommodation available.

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<sup>44</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/joint-housing-protocols-for-care-leavers/joint-housing-protocols-for-care-leavers-good-practice-advice>

<sup>45</sup> 2020. Understanding the multiple vulnerabilities, support needs and experiences of people who sleep rough in England. Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government. London.

- £15m allocated to 19 local authority areas with the highest levels of rough sleeping, to make sure they have accommodation, as new national restrictions start.
- £310m homelessness prevention grant for all local authorities, to deliver local strategies and services for preventing homelessness.
- £10m allocated to all local authorities to house people experiencing street homelessness and help them register with a GP, during the restrictions that came into force in early 2021.

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## 2.0 Levels of homelessness

This chapter considers the current and future likely levels of homelessness in the Dorset Council area, comparing these to regional and national trends.

Dorset Council collects statistics on statutory homelessness, plus some intelligence on single and street homelessness. There is no coordinated collection of statistics on hidden homelessness from either public authorities or voluntary organisations, however, this is typical of elsewhere in the country. It has been predicted that the levels of hidden homelessness are thirteen times higher than street homelessness, with young people, persons who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender, and those escaping domestic abuse, being more likely to experience this form of homelessness<sup>46</sup>.

Where data is available, Dorset Council's levels of homelessness have been compared with that of (i) Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole, (ii) South West England, (iii) England excluding London (iv) and all of England. Collectively these areas are referred to throughout the report as the benchmarking group.

Criminal justice agencies monitor the number of offenders who leave prison with no fixed abode. While this data is submitted to national governments, local authorities do not benefit from having this intelligence shared with them.

### 2.1 Current levels of homelessness

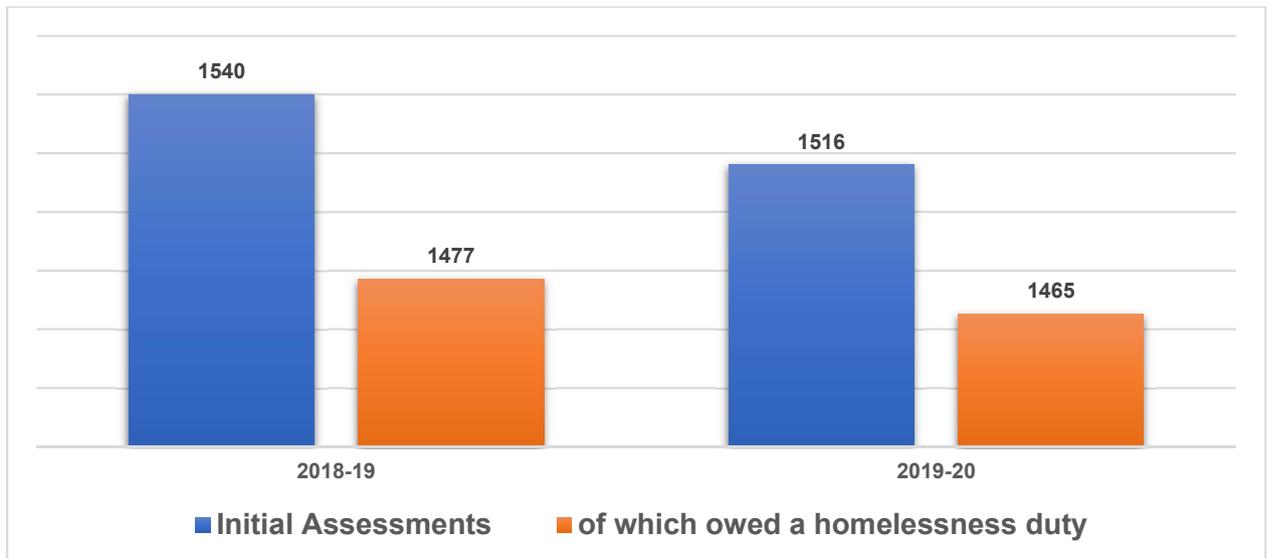
The number of households in Dorset who were provided with an initial assessment of their needs in accordance with the new duty imposed by HRA17<sup>47</sup> fell by 1.5% between 2018-2019 and 2019-2020. The numbers recorded equate to an average of just under 30 new initial assessments being carried out each week by Dorset Council to establish their eligibility and homelessness status, as well as what, if any duty is owed to each approaching household. 95.9% of those initially assessed in 2018-2019 and 96.6% were found to be owed a homelessness duty.

#### **Chart 3: Homelessness Initial Assessments, Dorset Council, 2018-2019 to 2019-2020**

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<sup>46</sup> London Assembly Housing Committee (September 2017), Hidden homelessness in London

<sup>47</sup> Housing Act 1996 s.189A(1)

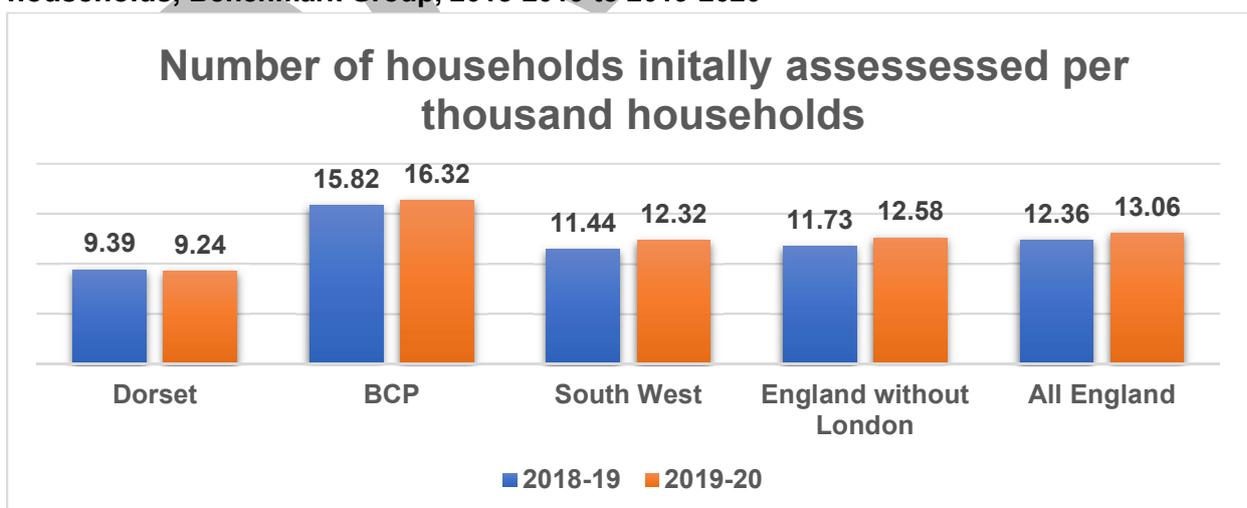


Source: Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

The reduction in initial assessments shown in Chart 1 for 2019-2020 appears positive, although the new HRA17 statistical recording is mostly too young to analyse by itself and will require at least five years of data before trends will become clear. Additionally, the UK Government's response to the Covid-19 pandemic, in placing rough sleepers in temporary accommodation and banning evictions for a period, will impact on the homelessness service and the statistics, and this will inevitably take some time to resolve.

When comparing Dorset Council with the Benchmark Group, the local authority completed the lowest numbers of initial assessments per thousand households during 2018-19 to 2019-20, with BCP completing the most. Dorset was the only area which saw a reduction between the two years, at 0.15 per thousand households less for 2019-20 than 2018-19.

**Chart 4: Number of households initially assessed for a homelessness duty per thousand households, Benchmark Group, 2018-2019 to 2019-2020**

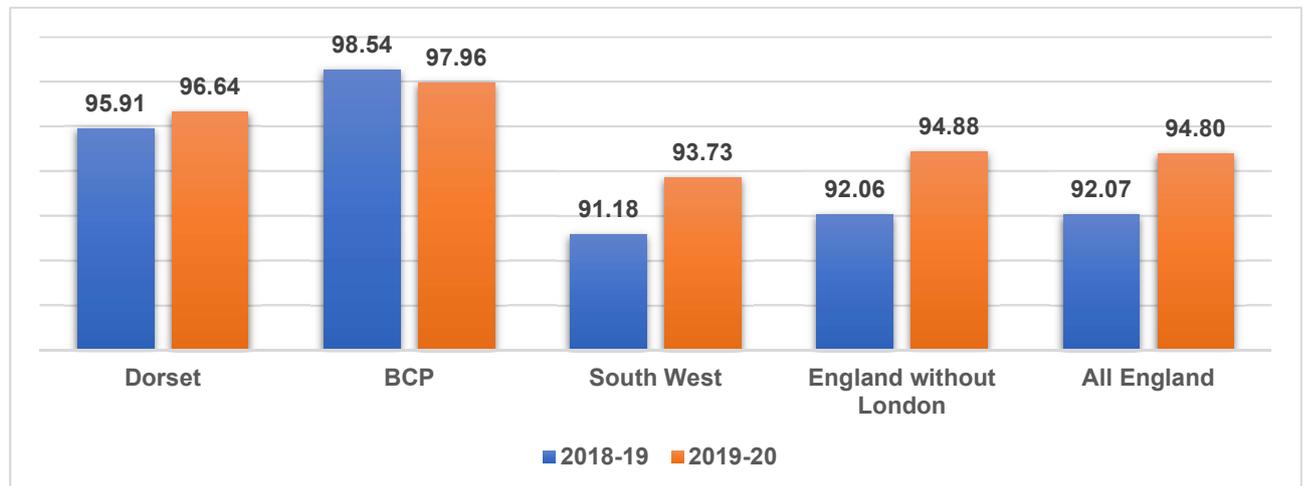


Source: Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

The number of households found to be owed a homelessness duty by Dorset Council following the initial assessment, reduced by 12 between 2018-2019 and 2019-2020. The proportion of

households owed a homelessness duty following the initial assessment was above 90% for the two-year period 2018-19 to 2019-20 for all the Benchmark Group. Dorset Council accepted a greater proportion of homelessness duties than the Benchmark Group, following the initial assessment, for both years, with the exception of BCP. Dorset, the South West, England without London and All England saw a proportionate increase.

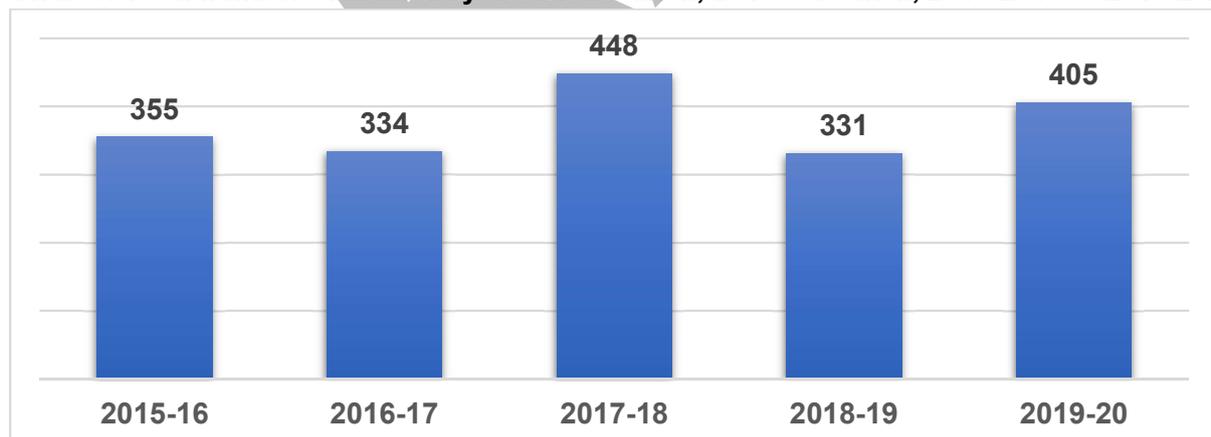
**Chart 5: Percentage of assessed households owed a homelessness duty, Benchmark Group, 2018-2019 to 2019-2020**



Source: Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

The number of main housing duty<sup>48</sup> decisions made on homelessness applications by Dorset Council for the period 2015-2016 to 2019-2020, reached a peak in 2017-18, reducing by 25% the following year to the lowest number of the period. This followed national trend in 2018-2019, all showing significant reductions alongside the enactment of HRA 17.

**Chart 6: Total number of main duty decisions taken, Dorset Council, 2015-2016 to 2019-2020**



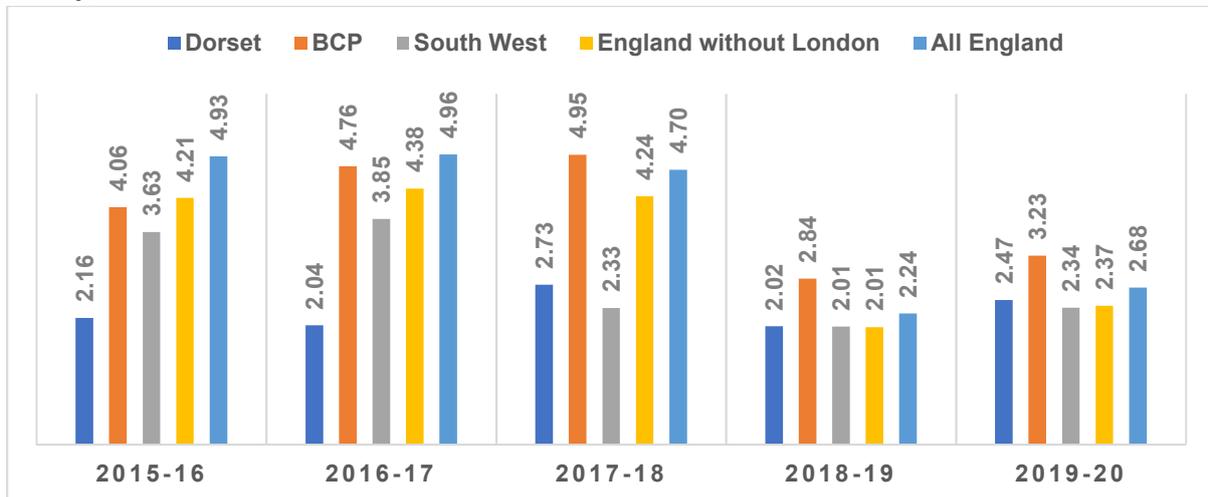
Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

Dorset Council made the lowest number of main duty decisions per thousand households compared with the Benchmark Group for the period 2015-2016 to 2016-2017. As stated above, the reduction in main duty decisions at 2018-2019 reflects the national picture, likely due to the enactment of HRA 17 requiring prevention and relief decisions to be made prior to a main duty

<sup>48</sup>Housing Act 1996, Pt VII s193(2)

decision. The numbers increased again in 2019-2020 for all the Benchmark Group, and although Dorset Council rate had its highest increase of 0.45 per thousand households between 2018-2019 and 2019-2020, this remains lower per thousand household than BCP and All England.

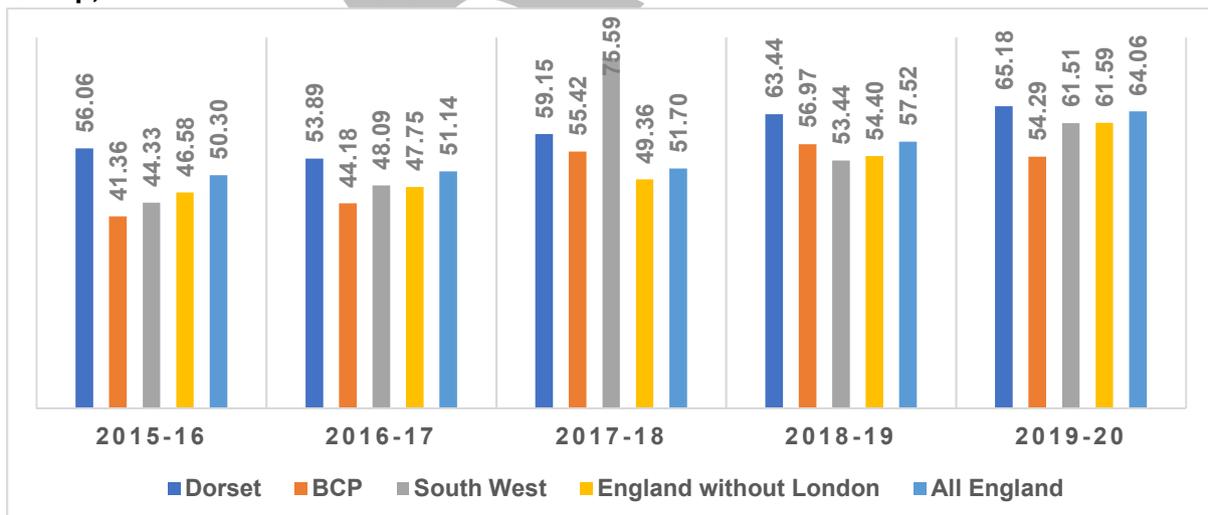
**Chart 7: Total number of main duty decisions taken per thousand households, Benchmark Group, 2015-2016 to 2019-2020**



Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

Dorset Council accepted a higher proportion of main duty cases than all other benchmark areas for all years within the period except for 2017-18 when there was a spike in the South West Region. Dorset, England without London and All England had their highest rate of housing duty acceptances for 2019-2020, and Dorset Council continues to have the highest rate at 1.12% higher than the All-England average.

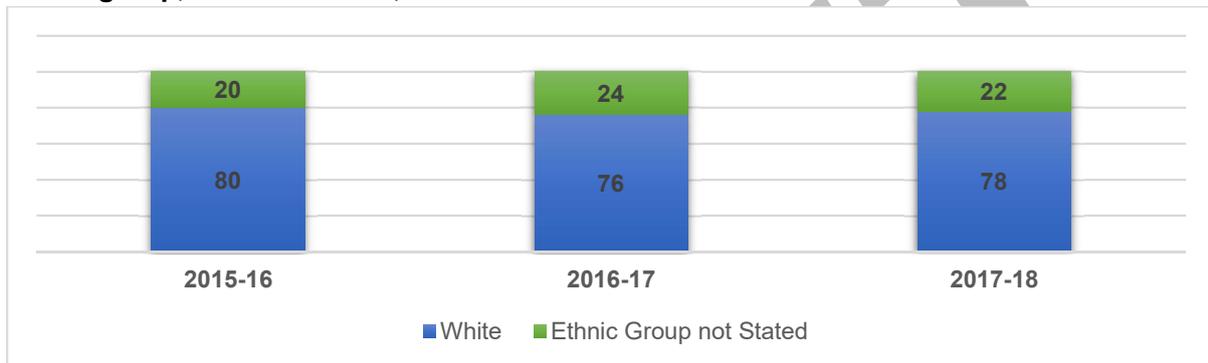
**Chart 8: Main housing duty acceptances as a percentage of decisions taken, Benchmark Group, 2015-2016 to 2019-2020**



Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

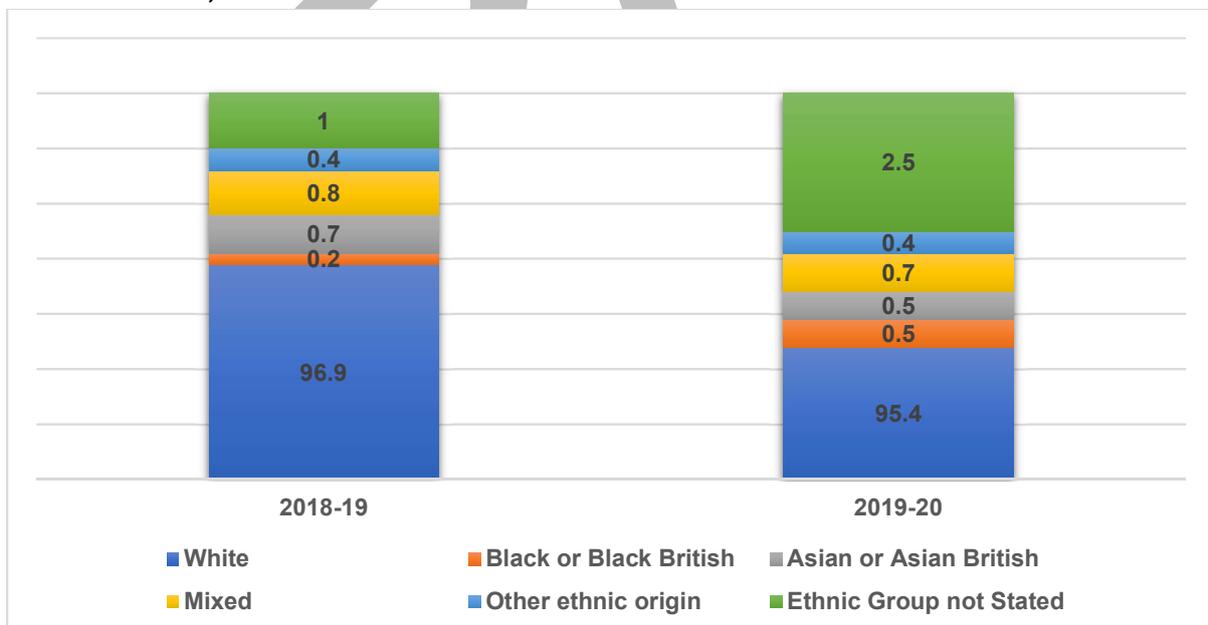
95.6% of Dorset residents are recorded as white British and 4.4% as Black and Minority Ethnic<sup>49</sup>. An average of 22% of main applicants accepted for the main duty in Dorset for the period 2015-2016 to 2018-2019 were recorded as 'Ethnic Group not stated', with no recording of 'Black and Minority Ethnic' main applicants. This data provides insufficient evidence for comparison with the general population. Ethnicity data is now recorded in HCLIC at the stage of prevention or relief duty. For those owed a prevention or relief duty for 2018-2019 and 2019-2020, 'ethnic group not stated' is recorded as lower, at 1% and 2.5% respectively, but remains higher than other recorded ethnic groups. Those recorded as White British for 2018-2019 at 96.9%, and 2019-2020 at 95.4%, are 1.3% higher and 0.2% lower than the general population of Dorset.

**Chart 9: Percentage of lead applicants accepted as being homeless and in priority need by ethnic group, Dorset Council, 2015-2016 to 2017-2018**



Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

**Chart 10: Percentage of lead applicants owed a prevention or relief duty by ethnic group, Dorset Council, 2018-2019 to 2019-2020**



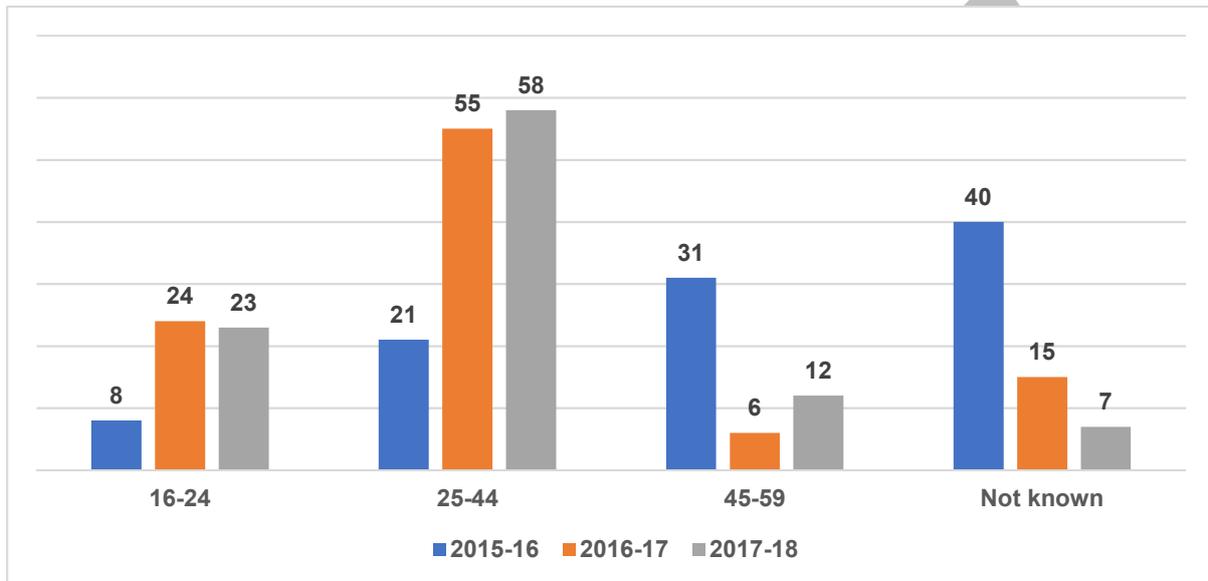
Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

The age group of the main applicant most accepted for a main duty in Dorset for the period 2015-2016 to 2017-2018 was those aged 25 to 44 years. Age Group is no longer recorded for

<sup>49</sup> Office of National Statistics 2011 Census

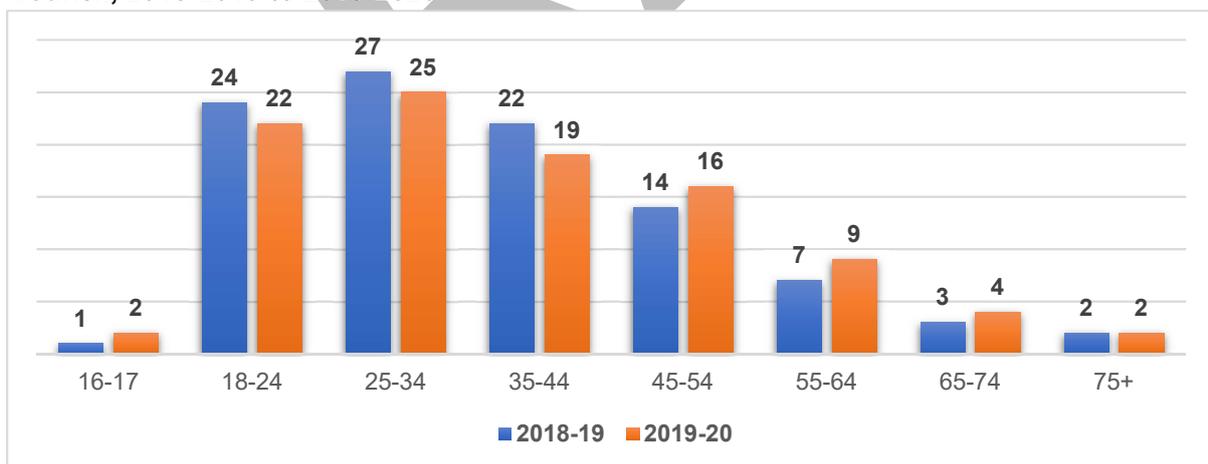
those owed a main duty but is now recorded for those owed a prevention or relief duty, and the age groups are broken down further. Chart 10 shows the age group of the main applicant accepted for a prevention or relief duty is 25 to 44, followed by 18-24. The 18-24-year old age group being the second highest age group is different to previous years for those owed the main duty, but when these are grouped together 25 to 44 years for those owed a prevention or relief duty there is little change between the years 2016-2017 to 2019-2020.

**Chart 11: Age group of main applicants owed a main duty by percentage, Dorset Council, 2015-2016 to 2017-2018**



Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

**Chart 12: Age group of main applicants owed a prevention or relief duty by percentage Dorset Council, 2018-2019 to 2019-2020**



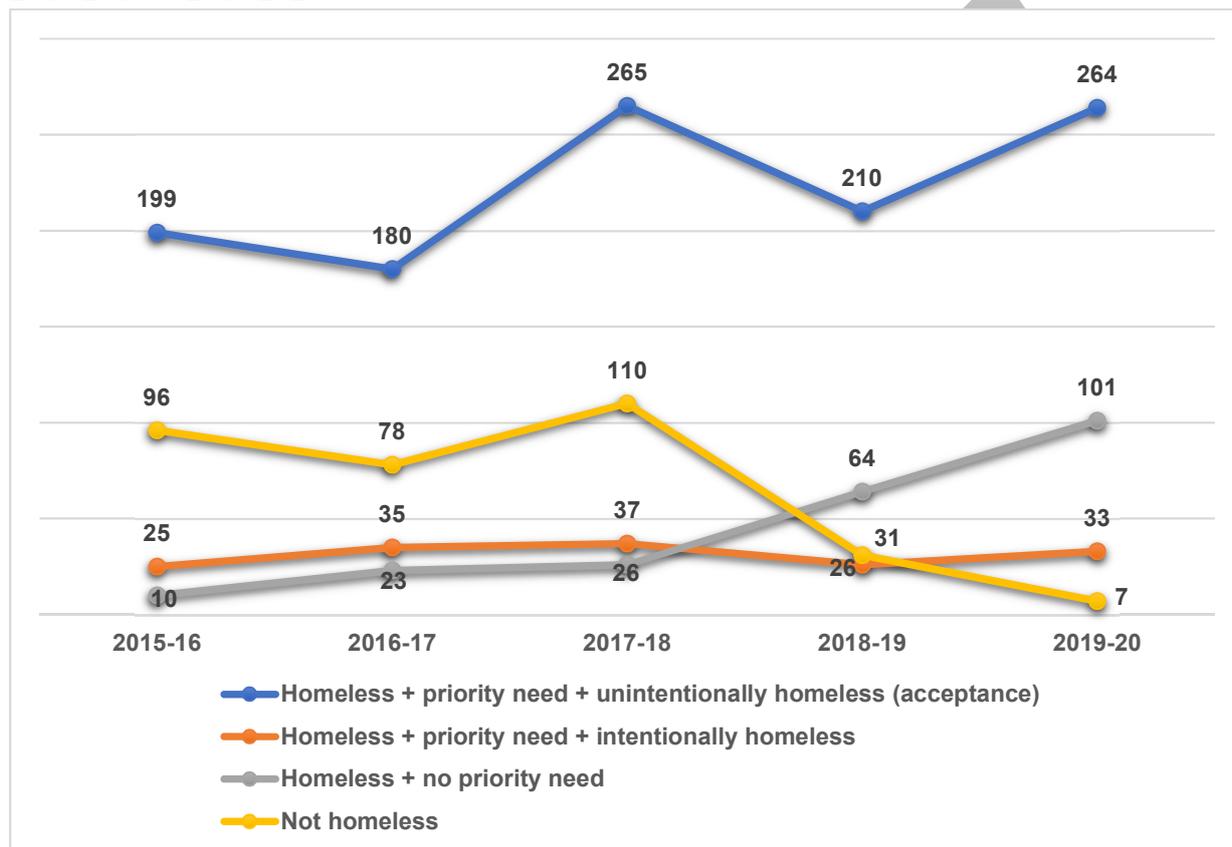
Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

Of the 405 main duty decisions made by Dorset Council during 2019-2020, 65.18% were accepted as being eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need; owed the main homelessness duty to secure accommodation<sup>50</sup>. This is an increase of 26% on the previous year and the second highest number of acceptances of all five years.

<sup>50</sup> Housing Act 1996, Pt VII s193(2)

Those who were found to be eligible but not homeless in 2018-2019 reduced by 93% from its highest level in 2017-2018 to just 7 households in 2019-2020, and the number who were found to be eligible, homeless but not in priority need, was more than ten times greater between 2015-2016 and 2019-2020, increasing to 101 households. The number of households found to be eligible, homeless and in priority need, but intentionally homeless, has remained relatively steady throughout the period, at 8% of all decisions for 2019-2020.

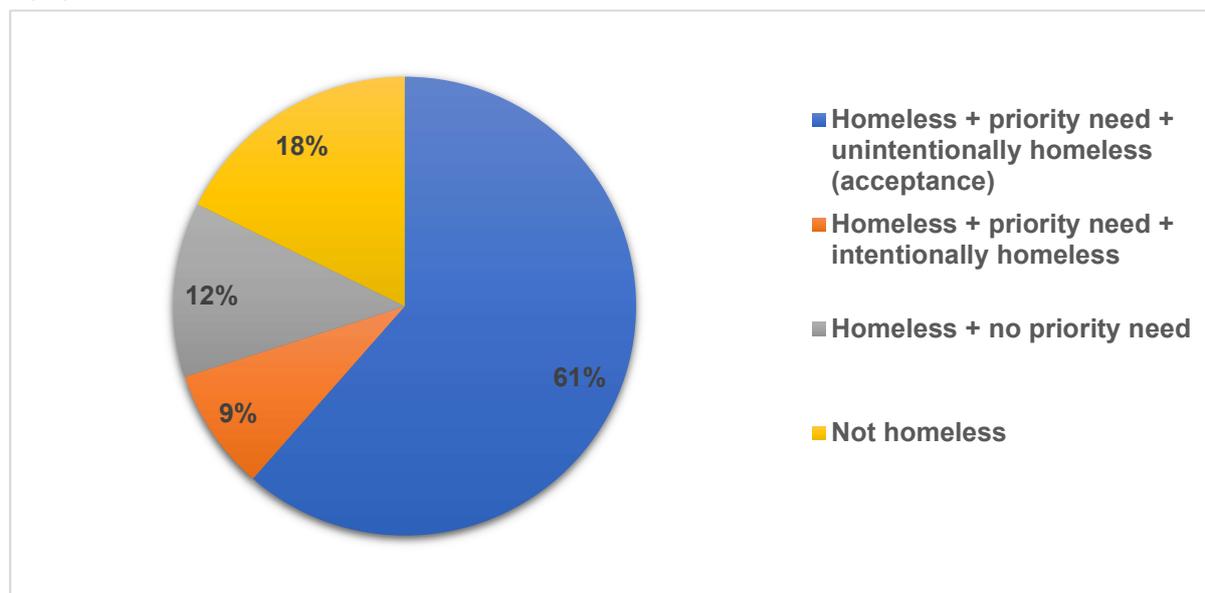
**Chart 13: Outcome of main housing duty decision for eligible households, Dorset Council, 2015-2016 to 2019-2020**



Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

The cumulative number of households assessed who were found to be eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need during the period analysed for this review, at 1118 households, is 61% of all decisions across the five-year period, 4% lower than for 2019-2020. While the remaining 39% were not considered to be owed the main duty following assessment, there still a duty to provide advice and assistance\*, and in some cases, further support to help resolve their homelessness difficulties, including those determined as 'not homeless'.

**Chart 14: Cumulative main duty decisions by outcome, Dorset Council, 2015-2016 to 2019-2020**



Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

All households with dependent children are required to be recorded as being in this priority need category, irrespective of any other priority need(s) they may have. All other priority need categories will therefore only include single persons, couples, or families with no dependent children. Most households in Dorset owed the main duty are recorded as being in priority need due to being a household which includes dependent children, with the exception of 2015-2016 when a greater number of households were recorded in the category 'Other'.

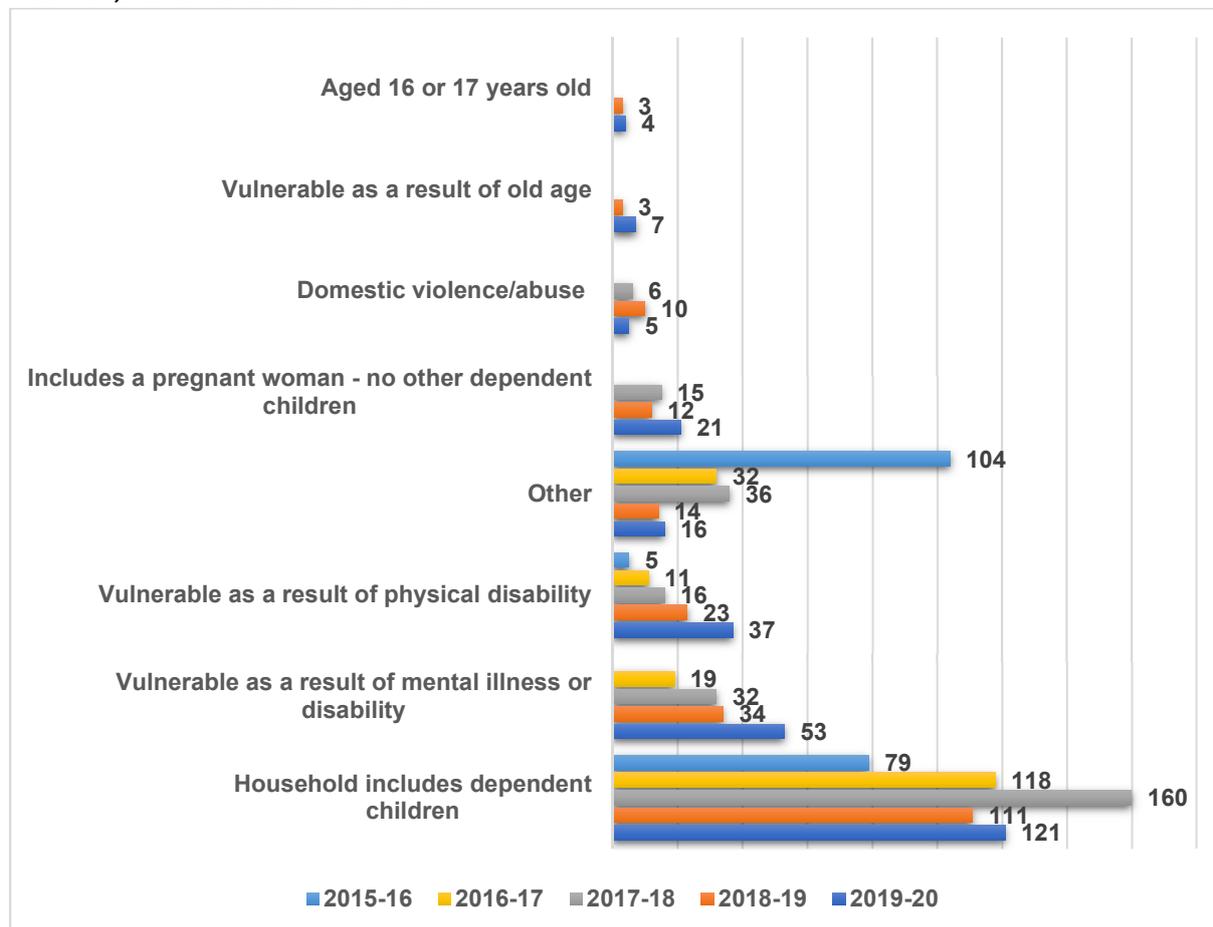
While the number of households which include a dependent child and are owed a main duty fell by 24% in 2019-2020 from its highest level of 160 at 2017-2018, the number households with no dependent children owed a main duty in Dorset with a priority need due to mental health problems has risen, from no recorded cases in 2017-2018, to the second highest priority need at 53 recorded cases in 2019-2020. This is also the case for those with priority need due to physical disability or ill health, which increased by 32 households to become the third highest priority need at 37 recorded cases in 2019-2020. For 2015-2016 to 2016-2017 there were no cases recorded under the priority need category, households which included a pregnant woman, although there may be households which include a pregnant woman among households, which include dependent child and therefore recorded as being in priority need for that reason.

Priority need due to domestic violence or abuse reduced by 50% to 5 households between 2018-2019 and 2019-2020, with no cases recorded within this category prior to 2018-2019. There will also be cases where domestic abuse is a priority need for a household with dependent children but will not be recorded within the domestic violence or abuse category as they are an automatic priority due to the dependent children. The reason for homelessness will however be recorded as being due to domestic violence or abuse.

No households were recorded as being in priority need due to an emergency, such as fire or flood, and the number of households in priority need due to being a young person, or due to old

age, are low at 3 and 7 respectively for 2019-20. Households recorded as 'Other' priority need category has reduced by 82% between in 2015-2016 and 2019-2020, to 16 households,

**Chart 15: Households owed a main homelessness duty by priority need category, Dorset Council, 2015-2016 to 2019-2020**



Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

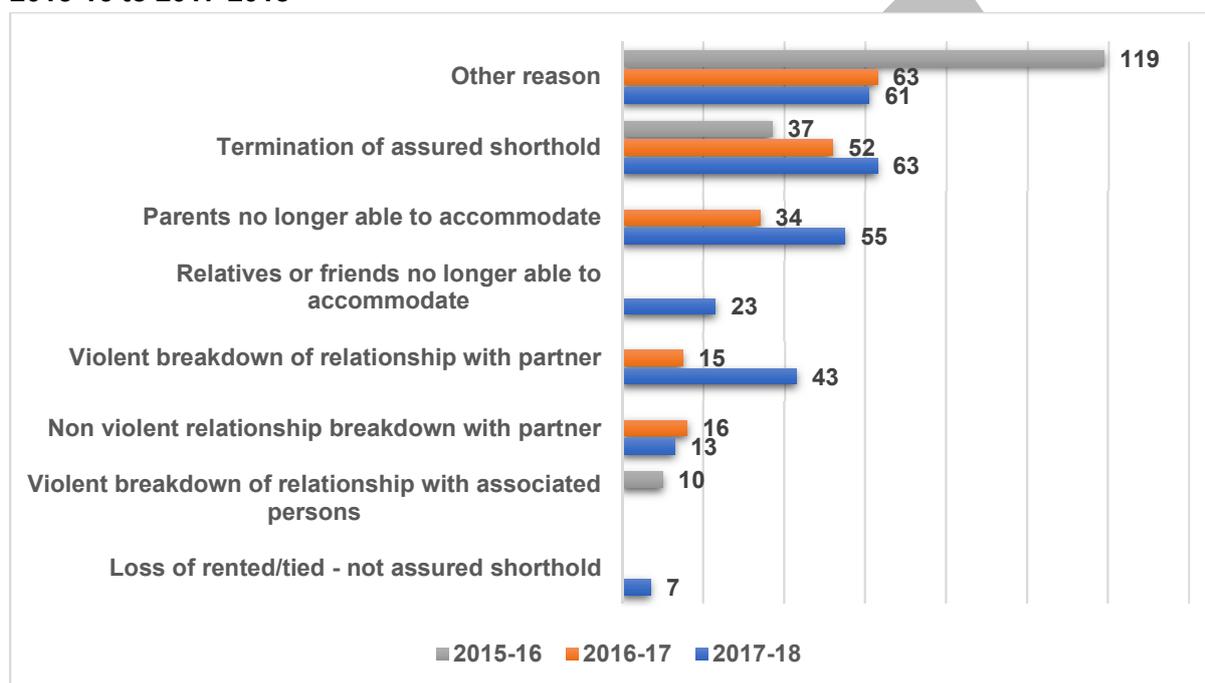
Additional priority need data collection categories with zero cases recorded include:

- Other violence/threat of violence
- Drug dependency
- Alcohol dependency
- Former asylum seeker
- Vulnerable as a result of having been "in care"
- Vulnerable as a result of having served in HM forces
- Vulnerable as a result of having been in custody/on remand
- Formerly "in care", and aged 18 to 20

As a result of the changes made by HRA 17, the 'reason for loss of last settled home' is now recorded for households owed a prevention or relief duty, and not for households owed the main duty. The chart below therefore only covers the reason for loss of last settled home for those households owed the main duty for the period 2015-2016 to 2017-2018. Other reasons' is the highest recorded reason for loss of the last settled home for those households owed a main

duty during 2015-2016, and just below 'termination of assured shorthold tenancy' during 2016-2017. 'Parents no longer willing or able to accommodate' and 'Violent relationship breakdown with partner, both had no recorded cases in 2015-2016 but recorded 55 and 43 cases respectively in 2017-2018. Other friends or relatives no longer willing or able to accommodate was also not recorded until 2017-2018, when 23 households gave this as their reason for losing their last settled home. The most common reasons nationally for these years are termination or loss of assured shorthold tenancy and parents or other family or friends no longer willing or able to accommodate, it therefore stands to reason that some or many of the cases recorded as 'other' are in fact one of the most common reasons.

**Chart 16: Main reason for loss of last settled home for households owed a main duty, Dorset, 2015-16 to 2017-2018**



Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

Additional loss of last settled home data collection categories with zero cases recorded include:

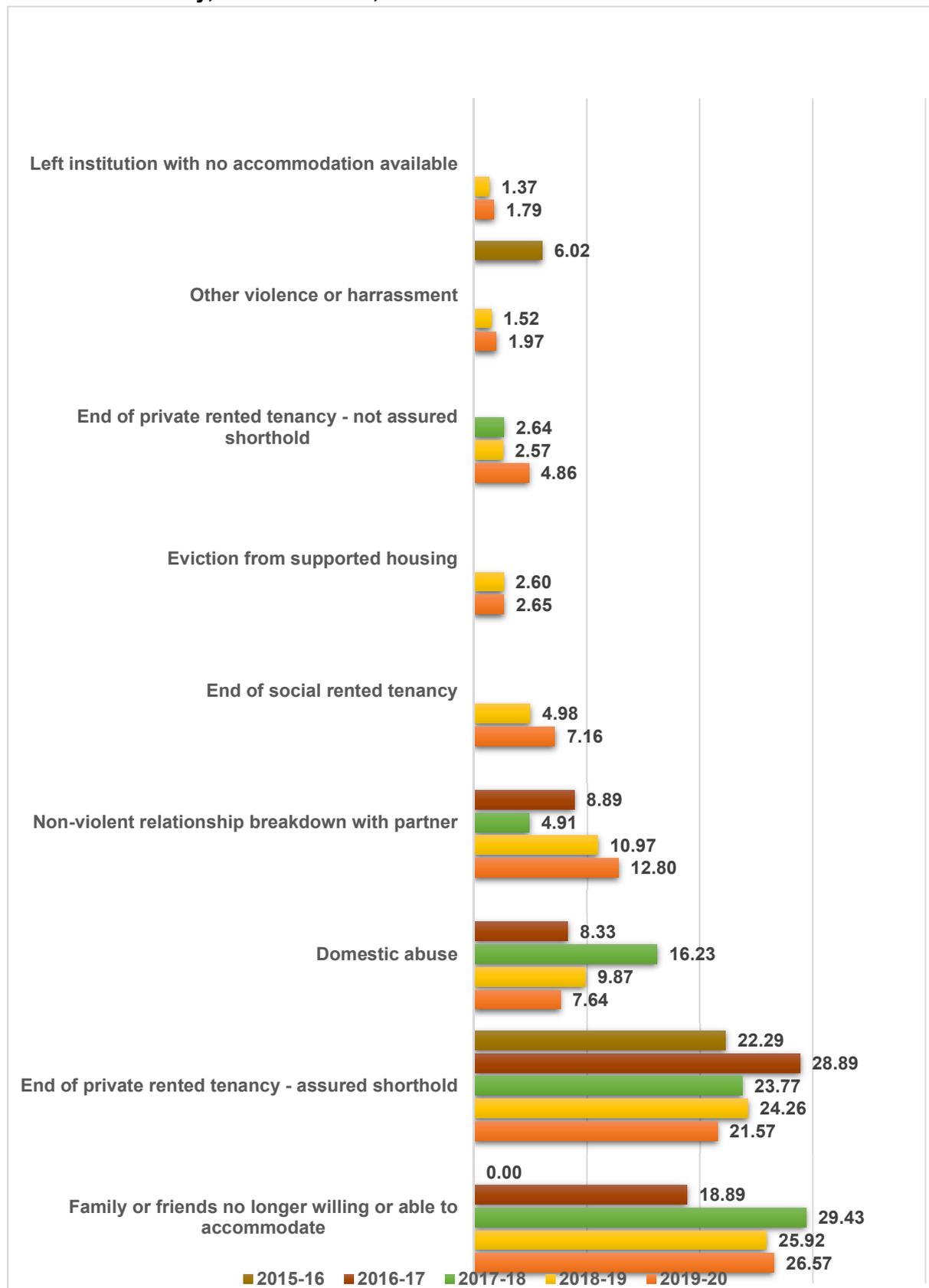
- Racially motivated harassment
- Other forms of harassment
- Mortgage arrears
- Rent arrears – all tenure
- Left an institution such as prison, hospital, or left local authority care
- Left HM forces

The highest proportion of households whose loss of their last settled home where a reason was recorded for 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 is end of private rented assured shorthold tenancy. Following this, family or friends no longer willing to accommodate is the highest recorded reason between 2017-2018 and 2019-2020, with end of private rented assured shorthold the second highest reason. Non-violent relationship breakdown with partner is increasing year on year, and while the proportion of domestic abuse being the reason for loss of last settled home has reduced to 7.64% of cases where a reason is recorded, this does not mean that these are the only cases where domestic abuse is or has been the main factor and specialist advice and

support is still essential. As all cases recorded within this data set have been accepted as unintentionally homeless, the end of social rented tenancy and eviction from support housing are both areas that require full investigation, particularly as these are recorded within the two most recent years, as in such cases the landlord is usually a local authority partner, where successful prevention activity should be completely embedded.

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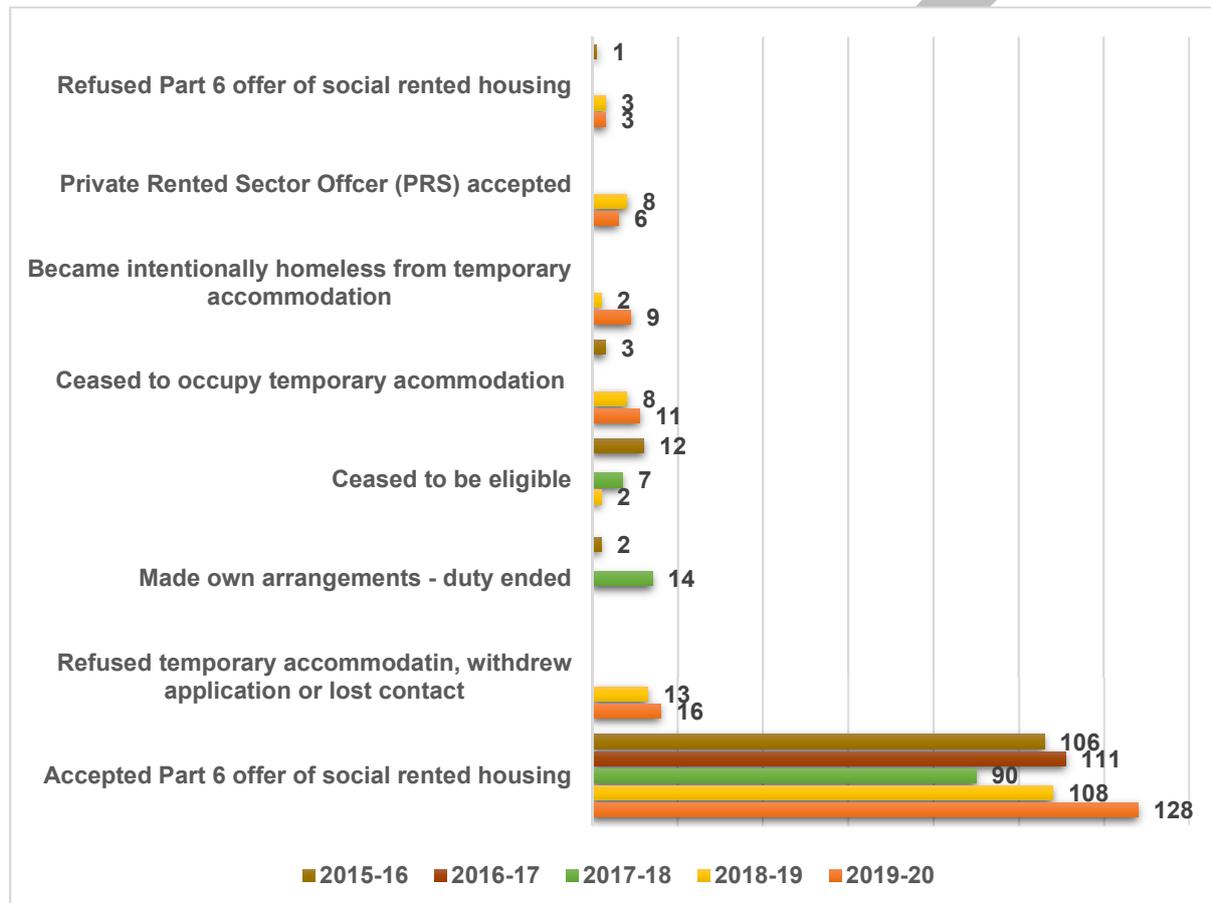
**Chart 17: Reason for loss of last settled home by percentage of households owed a homelessness duty, Dorset Council, 2015-2016 to 2019-2020**



Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

The offer and acceptance of a social rented home was the main outcome each year for households no longer owed a main homelessness duty in Dorset over the period analysed, increasing by 76% between 2015-2016 to 2019-2020. During 2018-2019 and 2019-2020, 14 households accepted a private rented sector offer. All other households had negative or unknown outcomes, including refusing social rented housing or suitable temporary accommodation, becoming intentionally homeless from temporary accommodation, or ceasing to be eligible for assistance.

**Chart 18: Outcome of households no longer owed a main duty, Dorset, 2015-2016 to 2019-2020**

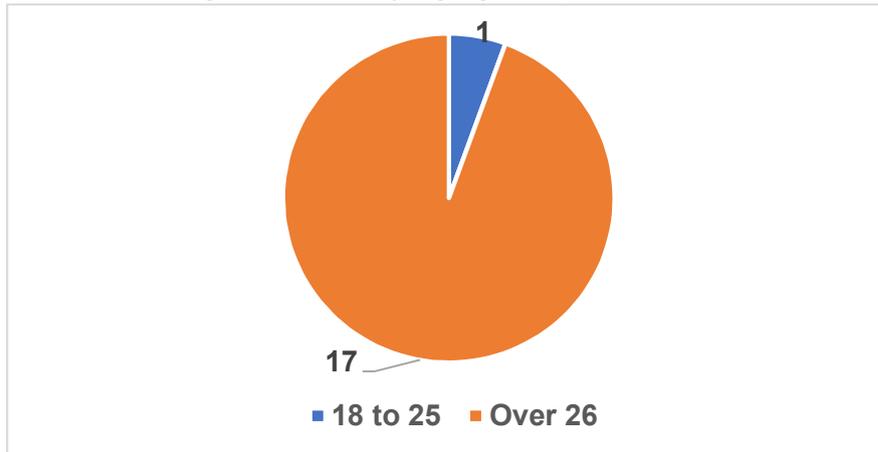


Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

An evaluation of the levels of rough sleeping is carried out annually in Dorset, in accordance with national guidance<sup>51</sup> and in consultation with the voluntary sector, Police, outreach workers, plus mental health and substances misuse agencies. For the 2019 evaluation this group estimated that there were 18 people sleeping rough in the area in total, the majority of whom were males over 26 years of age.

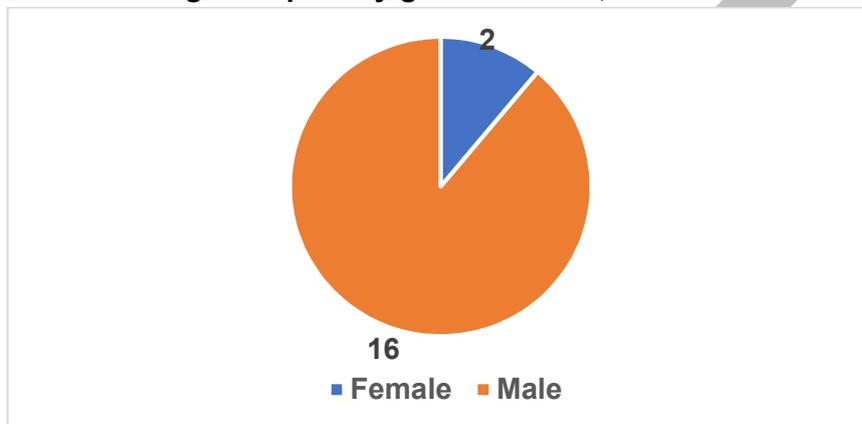
<sup>51</sup> Department for Communities and Local Government. (2010). Evaluating the extend of rough sleeping: A new approach.

**Chart 19: Rough sleepers by age group, Dorset 2019**



Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

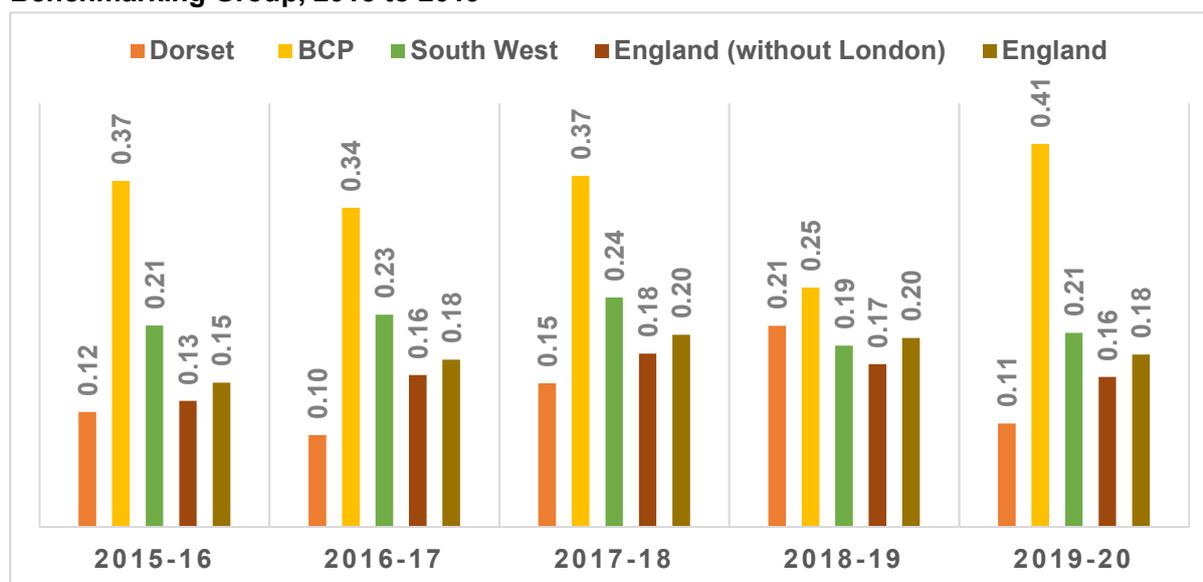
**Chart 20: Rough sleepers by gender Dorset, 2019**



Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

The numbers of rough sleepers in Dorset have been low compared with the other Benchmark areas each year from 2015 to 2019. The NHS Homeless Support Service sees rough sleepers migrate between Dorset and BCP so there can be crossover in caseloads.

**Chart 21: Number of people sleeping rough (autumn count) per 1000 households, Benchmarking Group, 2015 to 2019**



Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

In 2019-2020, single households make up 66.2% of those owed an initial prevention or relief duty nationally, reflecting the changes brought in by HRA17. Households with children are more likely to approach a local authority at prevention stage, whereas single households are more likely to approach when they are already homeless. A greater proportion of single males who were homeless were not owed a main duty following relief, usually as they were assessed as having no priority need.

## 2.2 Future levels of homelessness

Research<sup>52</sup> published in 2017 shows the primary cause of homelessness to be childhood poverty. This is closely followed by labour and housing market factors as secondary causes.

To forecast future levels of homelessness, we have taken account of trends shown in homelessness statistics analysed in section 2.1 of this chapter, plus other sources of data relating to the main causes, to create as accurate a forecast as is possible.

The latest child poverty figures, published July 2020, state that in the UK in 2018-19 there were 4.2 million children (30% of all UK children) living in poverty. Housing and childcare are the two primary factors that have been identified as putting pressure on family budgets<sup>53</sup>. Figures published by the UK Government, showed the percentage of children living in poverty increased by 1% from 2015 to 2016 and have subsequently remained unchanged. This means current rates of child poverty are at the same level as seen in 2009/2010. Children are more likely, compared to the overall population, to be living in low income households<sup>54</sup>.

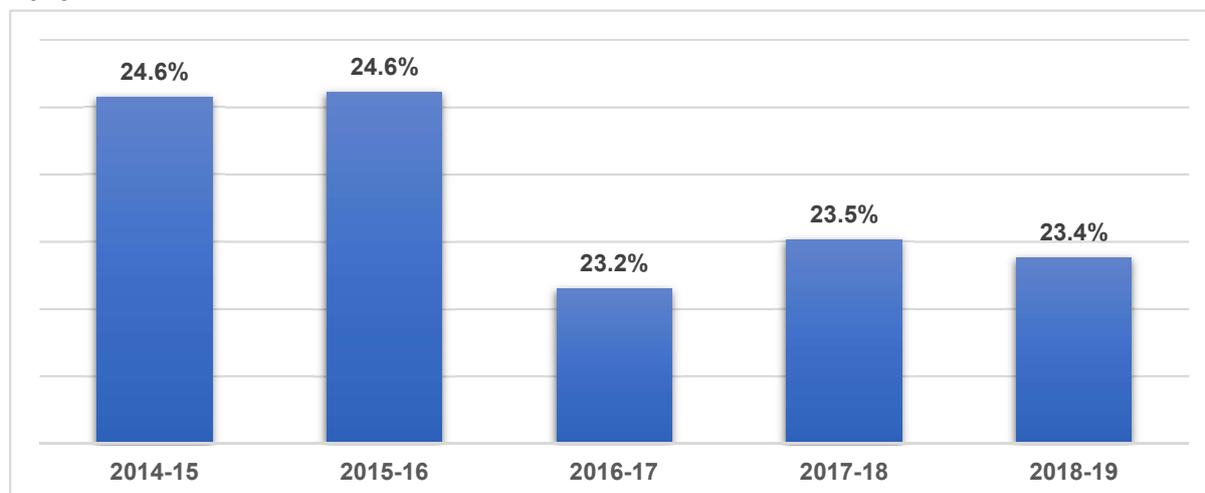
<sup>52</sup> Professor Glen Bramley & Professor Suzanne Fitzpatrick (July 2017), 'Homelessness in the UK: who is most at risk', Housing Studies Journal, pp1-21

<sup>53</sup> <http://www.cpaq.org.uk/content/child-poverty-facts-and-figures>

<sup>54</sup> <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk>

The percentage of all children in Dorset living in poverty after housing costs are taken account of is lower than the UK as a whole, and reduced marginally to 23.4% in 2018-19.

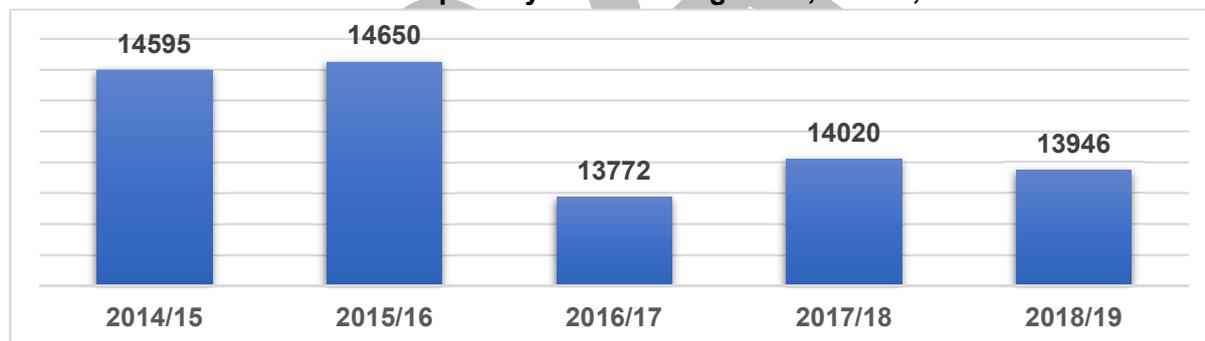
**Chart 22: Percentage of children in poverty after housing costs, Dorset, 2014-2015 to 2018-2019**



Source: Child Poverty Action Group. End Child Poverty

The most up to date figures show 13,946 children living in Dorset in households in poverty, after housing costs, in 2018-19.

**Chart 23: Number of children in poverty after housing costs, Dorset, 2014-2015 to 2018-2019**



Source: Child Poverty Action Group. End Child Poverty

Recently published research from Homeless Link<sup>55</sup> found that one of the barriers to homeless young people succeeding included difficulty in gaining access to education training and employment, and in sustaining it. According to the Research, appropriate, individual support by organisations that recognise the challenges young people face, is what is needed to help them thrive. The key recommendations for all tiers of government and service providers resulting from the research include several that Dorset Council could consider, such as

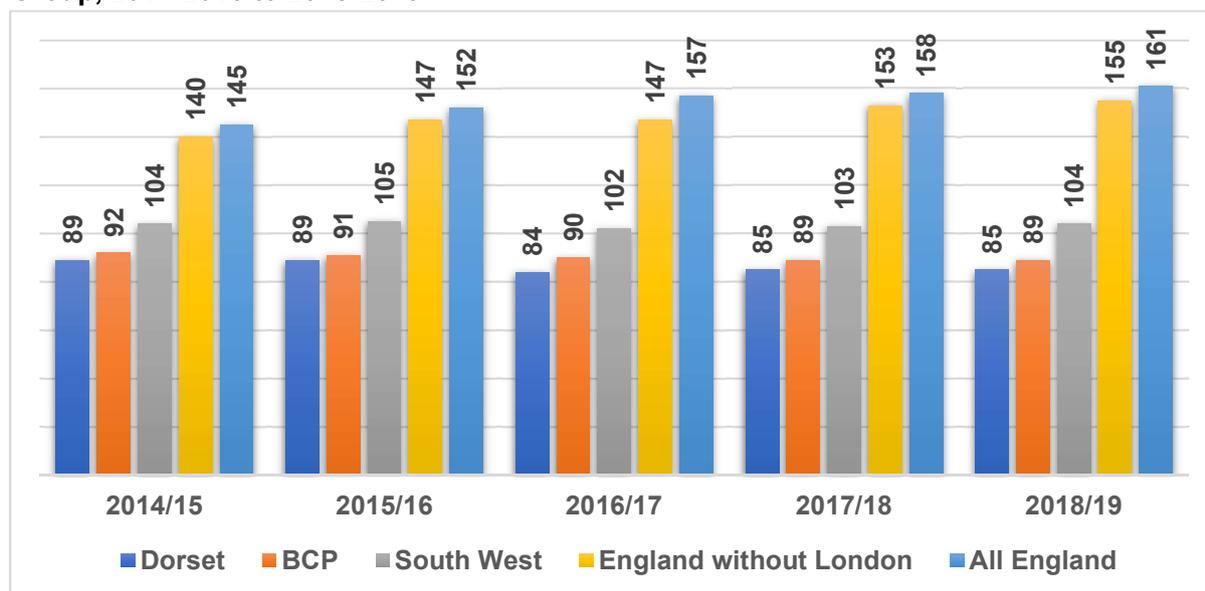
- recognise housing precarity within the responsibility for Children in Need
- fund schools to identify and support young people at risk of homelessness<sup>52</sup>

The number of children living in poverty after housing costs per thousand households, show that Dorset had the lowest figures compared with the Benchmark Group for the five-year period

<sup>55</sup> Young and Homeless 2020, Homeless Link October 2020

2014-2015 to 2018-2019. The figures for BCP and the South West are slightly higher than Dorset, but also lower than the remaining areas. The All England and England without London numbers of children in poverty per thousand households have increased year on year, and for 2018-2019 are almost double that of Dorset.

**Chart 24: Children living in poverty after housing costs per 1000 household, Benchmark Group, 2014-2015 to 2018-2019**

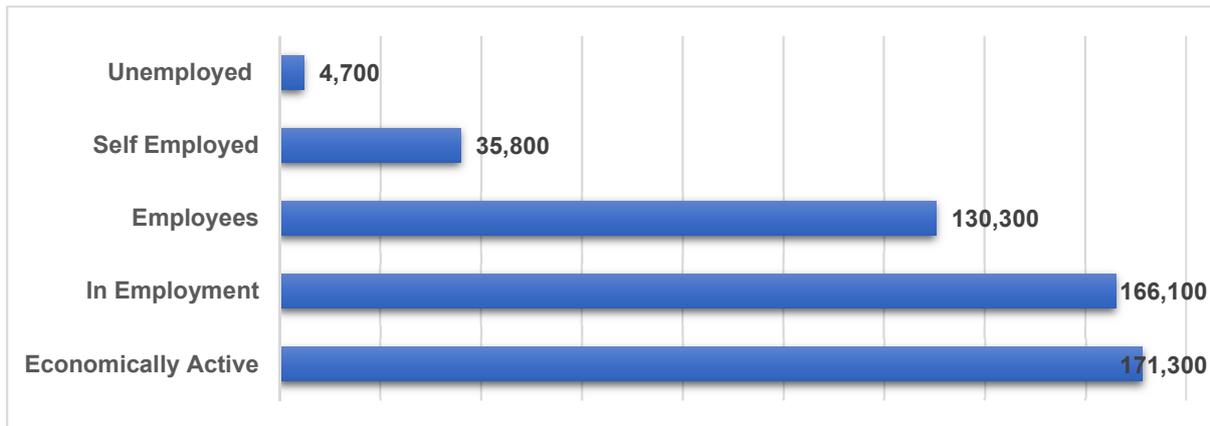


Source: Child Poverty Action Group. End Child Poverty

The number of people between the ages of 16 to 64 years who were unemployed in Dorset at June 2020 was 4,700, which is 2.7% of all economically active people. The proportion of the working age (16-64) population who are unemployed in Dorset is lower than all areas within the Benchmark Group and 1.1% lower than the All England 3.9% figure. The proportion of people in employment is higher than All England but lower than BCP and the South West, while the proportion of self-employed people in Dorset is higher than all the Benchmark Group. Dorset Council has prioritised economic growth<sup>56</sup> through raising career aspirations and improving skills, which may create additional job opportunities in the future.

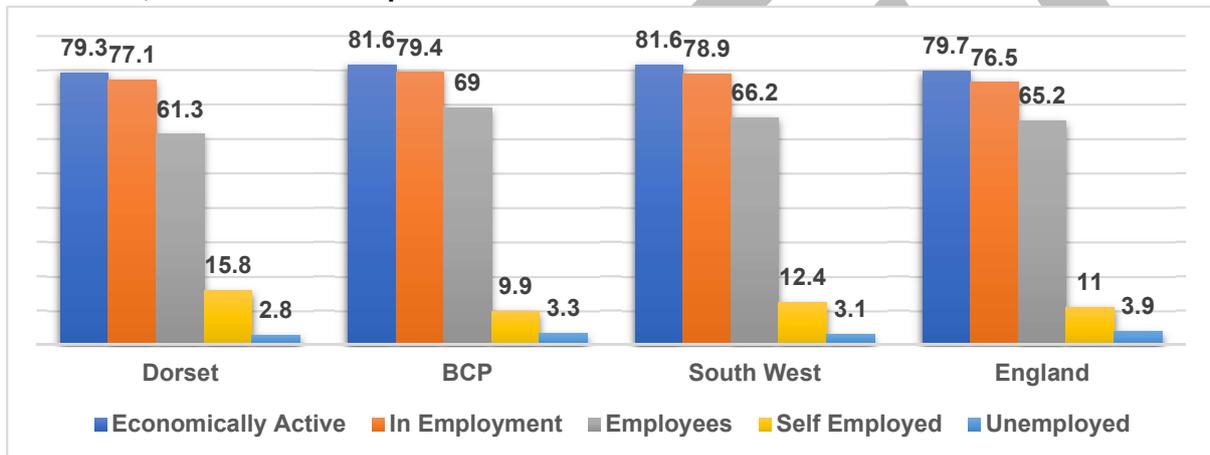
<sup>56</sup> <sup>56</sup> Dorset Councils Plan 2020-2024, p4, Dorset Council

**Chart 25: Employment and unemployment by number of 16 to 64-year olds, Dorset, July 2019 to Jun 2020**



Source: ONS annual population survey

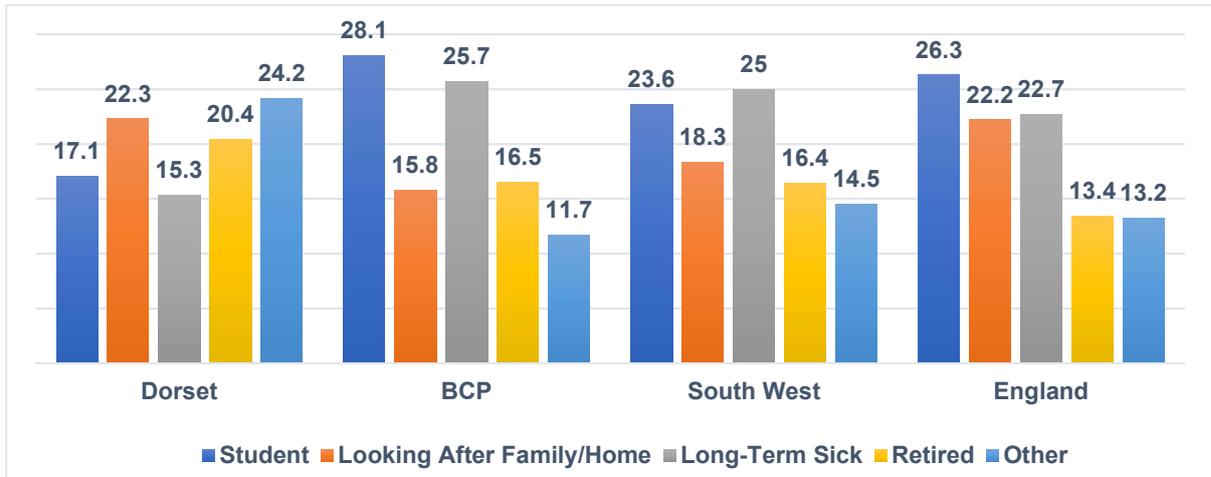
**Chart 26: Employment and unemployment by percentage of 16 to 64-year olds, July 2019 to June 2020, Benchmark Group**



Source: ONS annual population survey

The composition of households who are economically inactive by reason for inactivity in Dorset is not reflective of the national picture or any of the Benchmark Group areas. Dorset has the lowest proportion of people recorded as economically inactive due to long term sickness, 10.4% lower than BCP and 9.7% lower than the South West region, and the highest proportion of people recorded as retired at 20.4% of those economically inactive for those aged 16-64 years, 7% higher than England. Households recorded as 'other' reason for economic inactivity is also high in comparison with the other areas at 24.2%.

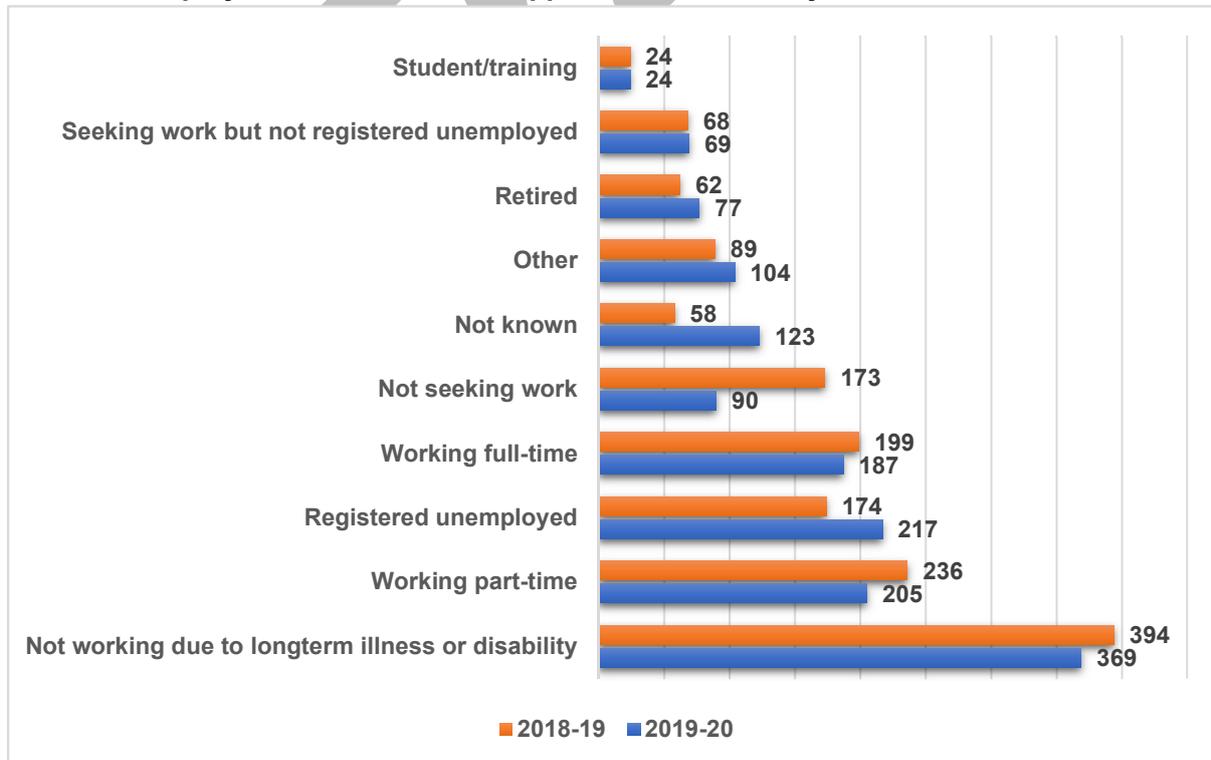
**Chart 27: Economic inactivity by percentage of those aged 16-64, July 2019 to June 2020, Dorset**



Source: ONS annual population survey

The most commonly occurring employment status of the main applicants owed a homelessness duty in Dorset is those not working due to long-term illness or disability for both 2018-2019 and 2019-2020, although these have reduced slightly by 6% during the two years. Of those main applicants who are working, there are a greater number working part time than full time for both years, and the number not seeking work has fallen by 52% between 2018-19 to 2019-20. The numbers for both 'other' and 'not known' have increased by 54% collectively. The number of applicants registered unemployed has increased by 25% to 217 between 2018-2019 to 2019-2020.

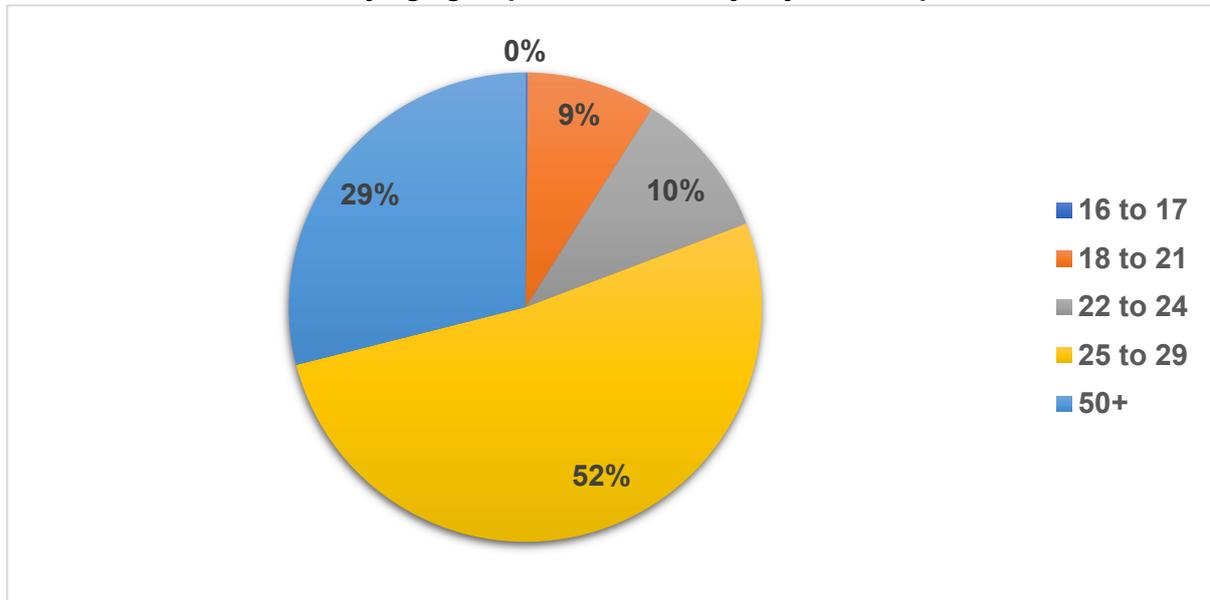
**Chart 28: Employment status of main applicants owed a duty in Dorset**



Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

The age group with the greatest proportion of claimants of out of work benefits in Dorset is the 25 to 49 years at 52% of all claimants, followed by the 50+ age group at 29%, with the fewest in the 16 to 17-year-old age group at 0.01%.

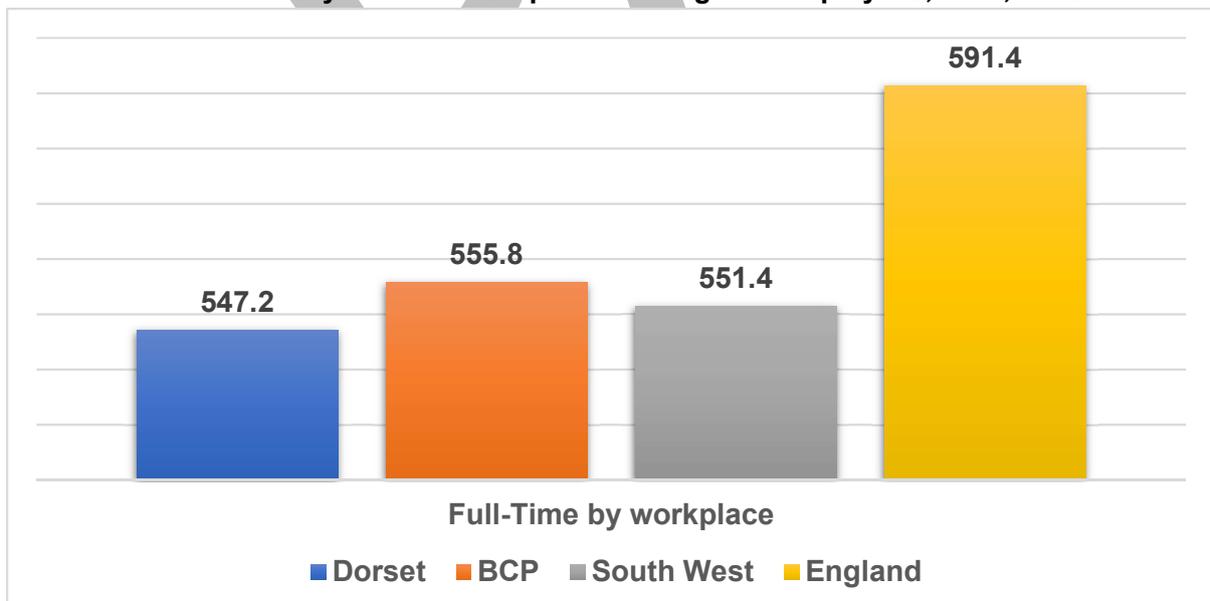
**Chart 29: Claimant count by age group - not seasonally adjusted, September 2020, Dorset**



Source: ONS Claimant count by sex and age

Median gross weekly earnings in Dorset by workplace is the lowest of the Benchmark Group at £547.20 per week; £4.20 lower than the South West, £8.60 lower than BCP, and £44.20 lower than All England.

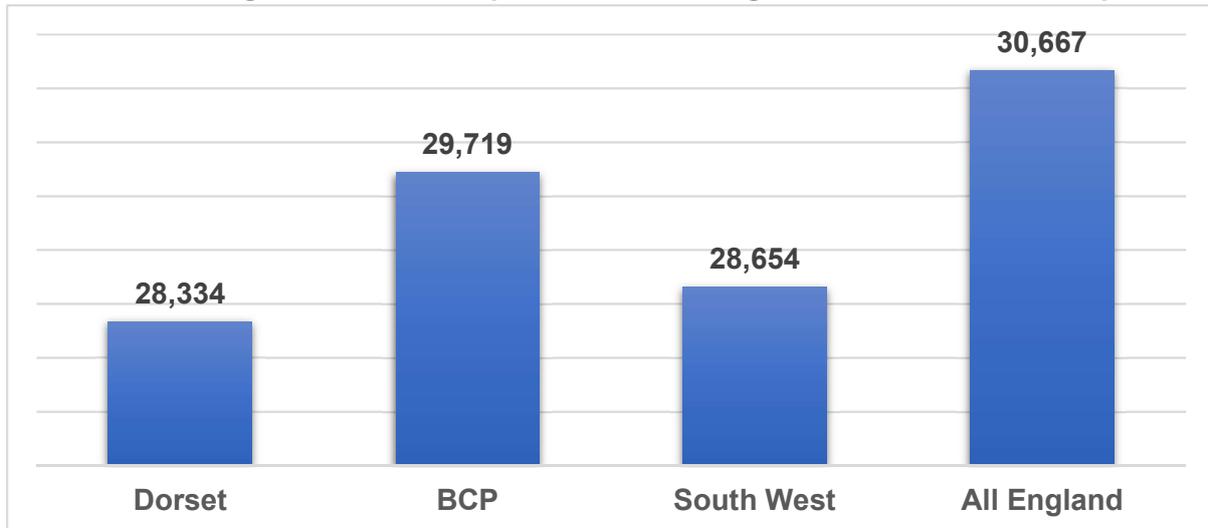
**Chart 30: Median Weekly full-time workplace earnings for employees, 2019, Dorset**



Source: ONS employment and labour market statistics

Median gross annual workplace earnings were the lowest of all Benchmark Group areas at 2019 including 8% lower than All England.

**Chart 31: Median gross annual workplace-based earnings, 2019, Benchmark Group**



Source: ONS Employment and Labour Market Statistics

Dorset median house prices at September 2019 were the highest of all Benchmark Group areas, including 19% higher than All England average.

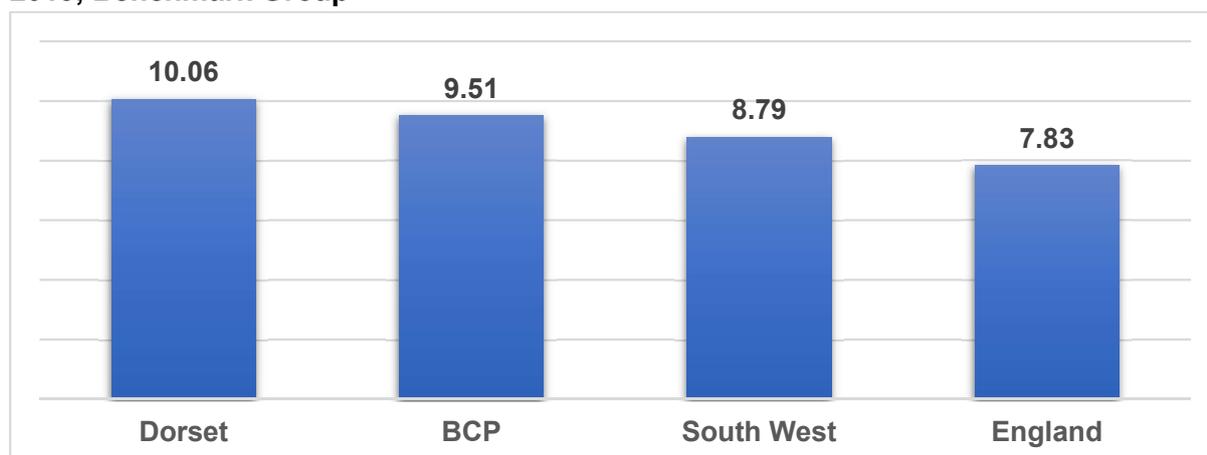
**Chart 32: Median house prices at September, 2019, Benchmark Group**



Source: ONS Median house price by local authority district, England and Wales

The ratio of median house prices to median gross annual workplaces earnings in Dorset is higher than all benchmark areas, with 10.6 times the average annual workplace salary needed to buy the average priced Dorset home. This is 0.55 greater than BCP, 1.27 greater than the South West and 2.23 greater than All England.

**Chart 33: Median house price to median gross annual workplace-based earnings ratio, 2019, Benchmark Group**



Source: Office for National Statistics: House Price to Earnings Ratio.

### **2.3 Conclusions about the levels of homelessness**

Taking account of the current levels of homelessness alongside the range of predictive factors, and, considering the immediate and potential long-term impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on the housing market, the economy, and households generally, the levels of homelessness in Dorset Council area are forecast to continue to increase across all groups, particularly families with dependent children, single males and single females with mental and physical health problems.

The dominant characteristics of people applying for assistance from Dorset Council are however in line with national trends; households with dependent children aged 25 to 44 and of a White British origin. The proportion of those seeking assistance recorded as 'ethnic group not stated', is greater than all other groups apart from White British. Disclosing which ethnic group a person belongs to, is rightly optional for the main applicant, however this important data set should be monitored to ensure that the Council can demonstrate that it fulfils its public equality duty to ensure equality of opportunity is provided to those who share a protected characteristic under the Equality Act<sup>57</sup>, including race, and those who do not.

The levels of homelessness in Dorset over the past five years reflect the overall increase in homeless decisions seen across England. The additional duties introduced by HRA17, appropriately designed to assist all eligible households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness to secure suitable, sustainable accommodation, have resulted in a greater amount of work for the Council, at each stage of homelessness. Single male and single female households are increasing in number, but the dominant characteristics of people applying for assistance from Dorset Council are in line with national trends; households with dependent children aged 25 to 44 years of age and of White British origin.

13,946 children living in Dorset (23.6%) are living in poverty after housing costs are taken account of. These households cannot afford the accommodation they are living in and will be unlikely to be able to afford alternative accommodation, with the possible exception of social

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<sup>57</sup> Equality Act 2010, s.149

rented housing. Not all these children's families will approach Dorset Council for help to resolve their homeless situation and may therefore remain in poverty until the children become young adults, many of whom may be disadvantaged and repeat the cycle of poverty and homelessness unless they have access to effective advice, support and suitable housing.

Economic growth is one of five overarching Corporate Plan 2020-2024<sup>58</sup> priorities for Dorset Council and includes the aim 'enhance people's aspirations and skills to improve social mobility' 'work with schools, colleges, universities and businesses to raise career aspirations and improve skills'. This is encouraging in its aspiration and may help to encourage such institutions and employers to work with households living in poverty to offer the support and training of skills required to improve employment opportunities and household incomes to lift children out of poverty and stop this cycle.

The house prices to earnings ratio is a financial challenge that most of those not already in homeownership in Dorset cannot meet, and while shared or low-cost home ownership may be options to help some income earning households, affordable private rented and social rented housing needed to help prevent homelessness for all are the main tenure required for development.

The number of eligible but not homeless decision outcomes for 2015-2016 to 2017-2018 were high, and a recommendation of a sample audit of these cases would normally be of use to provide insight into the reasons for this. However, the number of such cases for 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 has reduced, as is to be expected with HRA17 prevention and relief duties, leaving only those whose homelessness could not be prevented or relieved to be assessed for a main duty decision. The increase in the number of cases assessed as non-priority is also to be expected as all prevention and relief cases have the potential to progress to an assessment for a main duty decision if prevention and relief activity are unsuccessful, and this includes those who do not fall within a priority category.

The increase in the number of households recorded as having a priority need due to mental and physical health is concerning, as while these may not be proportionally high, these households often face additional challenges in accessing and sustaining suitable homes. As with other priority need categories there are also likely be households which include dependent children with a household member facing difficult mental and physical health problems that are not included within the mental and physical health categories, but still require additional support in making the application and securing a suitable home.

The most common type of accommodation secured for those whose duty has ended in Dorset, is social rented housing, evidencing the need for greater provision. The reliance on social rented housing to end any homelessness duty will not be sustainable, should numbers of homeless households continue to increase as projected, and new social rented housing continue to be provided at a much lower rate. Starting to use the private rented sector is positive but it is becoming less affordable and cannot be sustained with enhanced housing benefits on a permanent basis.

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<sup>58</sup> Dorset Councils Plan 2020-2024, Dorset Council

### 3.0 Preventing homelessness

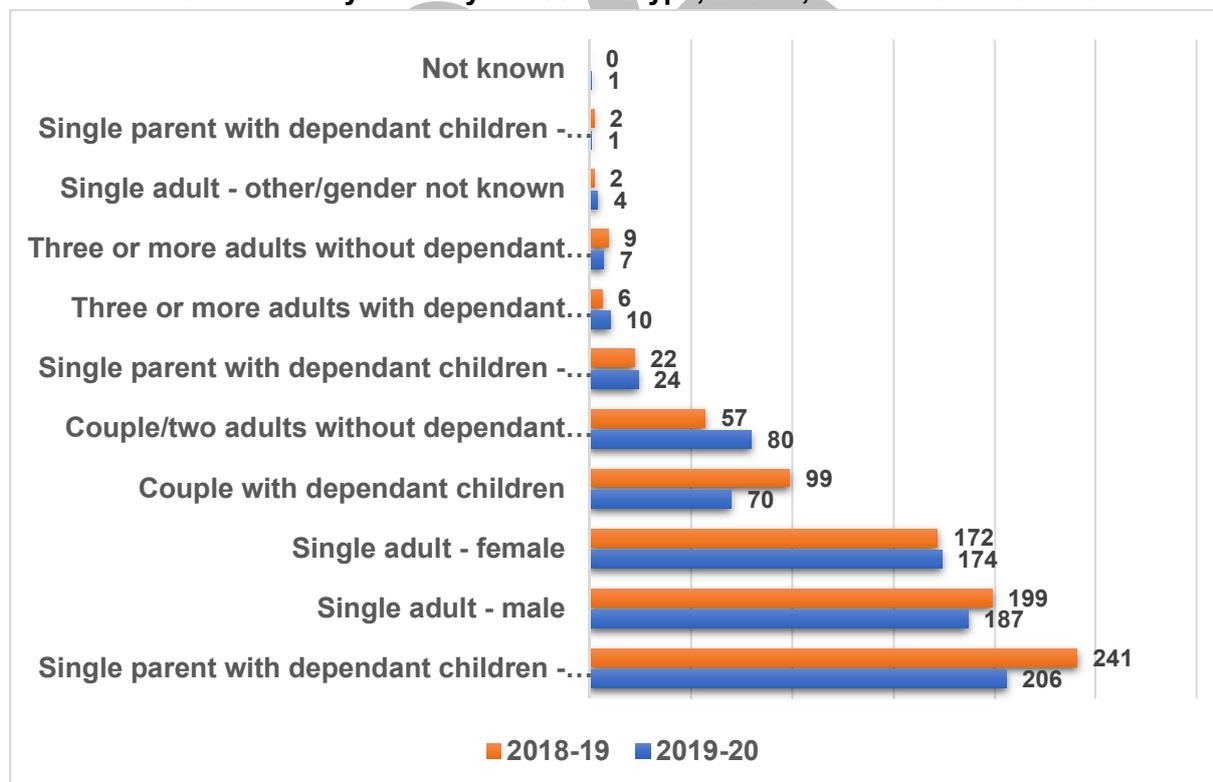
This chapter considers activities to prevent homelessness in Dorset and compares these activities regionally and nationally.

Homelessness prevention activity has been divided into three recognised strands<sup>59</sup> to inform the focus of this review:

1. Early prevention – those most at risk are identified and services provided to prevent problems escalating
2. Pre-crisis prevention – advice services, mediation, or negotiation with landlords to avoid the imminent loss of a home
3. Preventing recurring homelessness – tenancy sustainment services are provided to address other support needs

The main type of household recorded as being owed a prevention duty by Dorset Council is single parent females with dependent children. This fell by 15% to 206 households in 2019-2020 but remains more than 10% larger than the next largest group, single adult males. Single adult females increased by only two additional cases between 2018-19 and 2019-2020, though they are now the third most common household type owed a prevention duty, with over 100 more cases than couples with dependent children in 2019-2020.

**Chart 34: Prevention duty owed by household type, Dorset, 2018-2019 to 2019-2020**

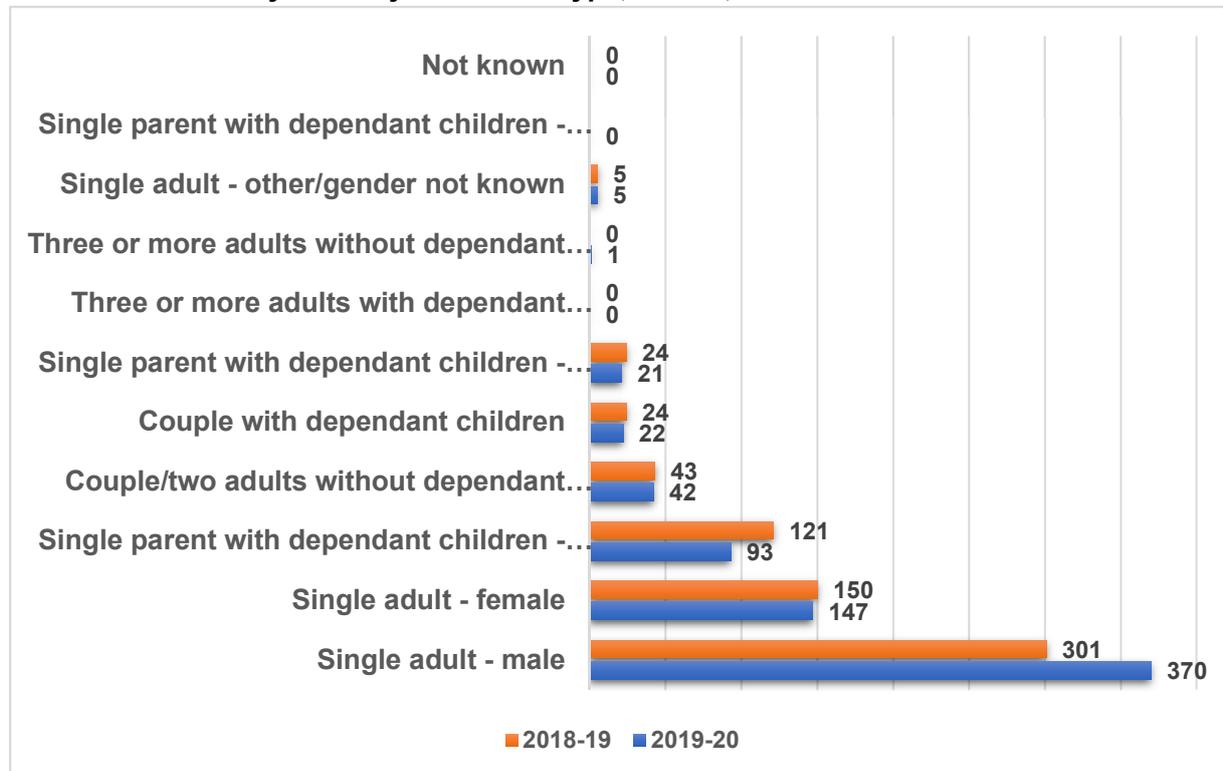


Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

<sup>59</sup> Hal Pawson, Gina Netto, Colin Jones, Fiona Wager, Cathie Fancy, Delia Lomax (2007), Evaluating Homelessness Prevention, London, Department for Communities & Local Government

The most common type of household owed a relief duty for the period 2018-2019 to 2019-2020 were single adult males, which increased by 23% to 370 households. This was followed by single adult female households, which reduced by 2% to 147 households. Couples with dependent children and single parent male households went down as did single parent female households, which reduced by 23% to 93 households.

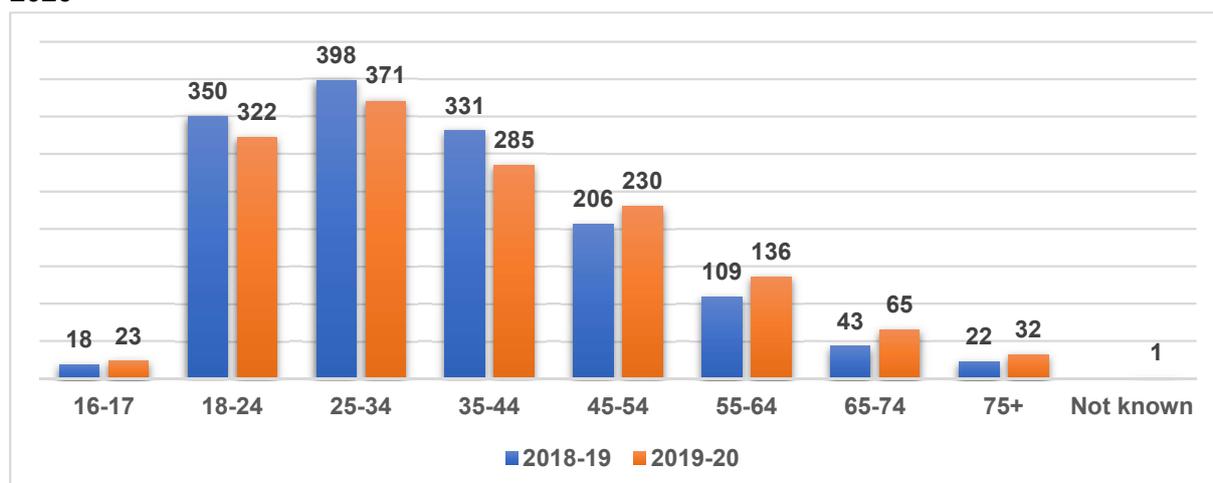
**Chart 35: Relief duty owed by household type, Dorset, 2018-2019 to 2019-2020**



Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

Most main applicants of households owed a prevention or relief duty are between the ages of 25-34 for both 2018-2019 and 2019-2020, although the number of applicants in this age group did reduce by 3.8% to 371 households for the same period. The number of main applicants aged 18-24 also reduced by 8% to 222 households and those aged between 35-44 reduced by 14% to 285 households. The increases that balance these reductions are within all other age groups owed a prevention or relief duty for the period; including those aged 75+ which increased by 46% to 32 households and 16 to 17-year olds, the age group who are not yet legally responsible to hold a tenancy, which increased by 28% to 23 households.

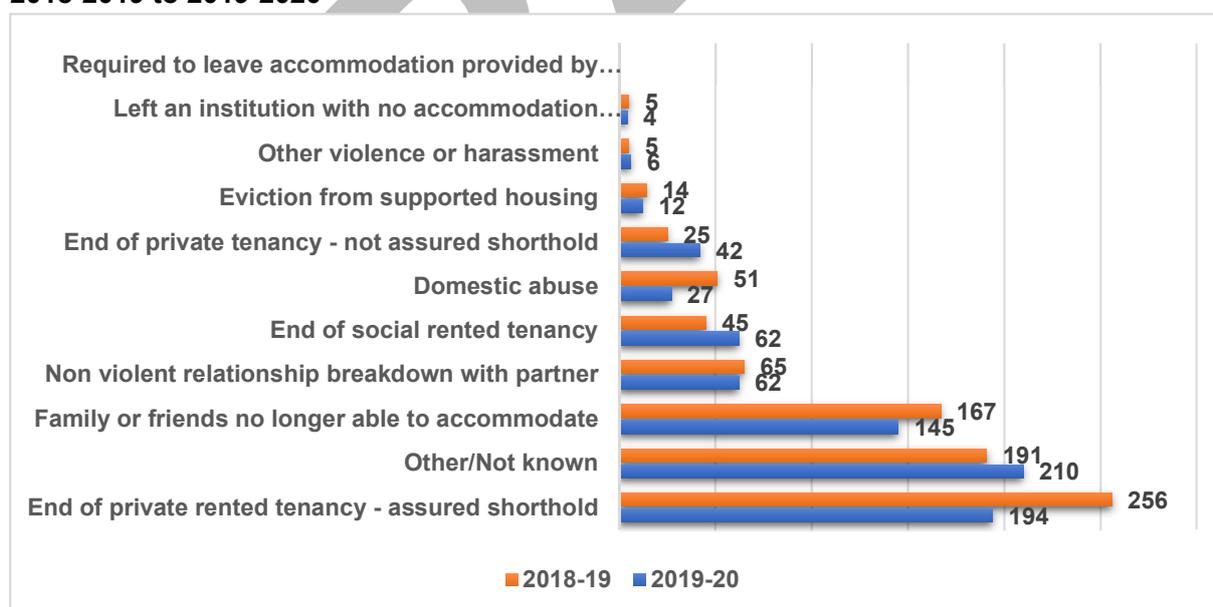
**Chart 36: Age of main applicants owed a prevention or relief duty, Dorset, 2018-2019 to 2019-2020**



Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

The end of private rented tenancy - assured shorthold is the most commonly specified reason for the loss of last settled home for the period 2018-19 to 2019-20, for those owed a prevention duty. This has reduced by 24.3% to 194 households, followed by family and friends no longer willing or able to accommodate, which fell by 13.3% to 145. The end of a social rented tenancy at 62 households during 2019-20 is an increase of more than 30% on the previous year. The number of households recorded under Other Reasons/Not Known for loss of last settled home for those owed a prevention duty in Dorset, increased by 10% to 210.

**Chart 37: Reason for loss of last settled home for those owed a prevention duty, Dorset, 2018-2019 to 2019-2020**

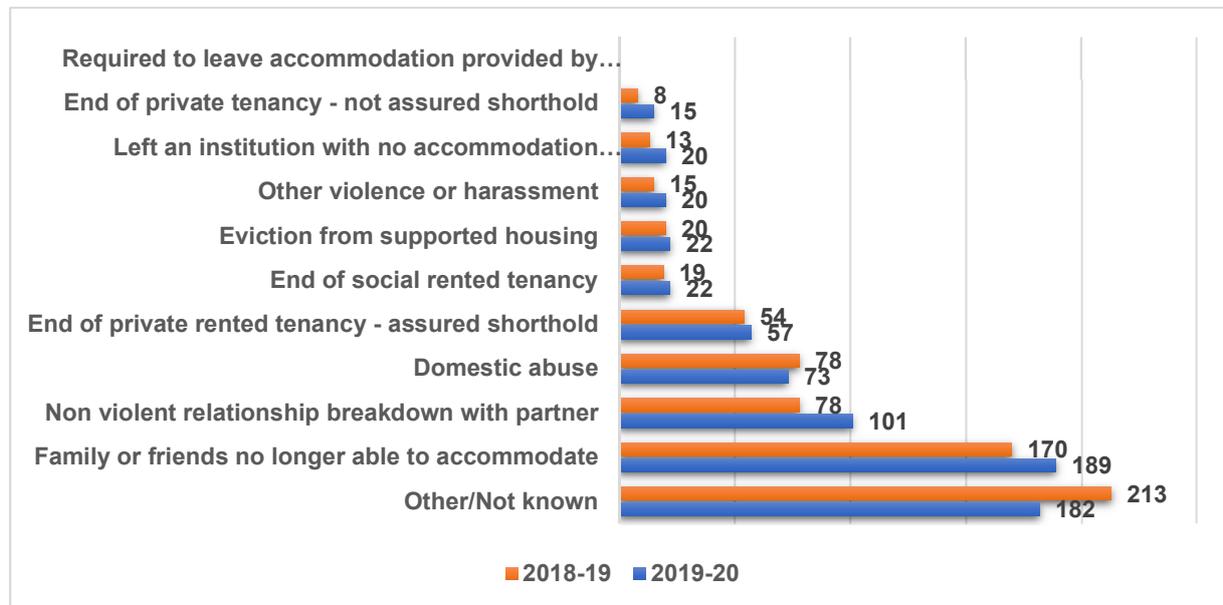


Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

The most commonly recorded reason for loss of last settled home for households owed a relief duty is family or friends no longer willing or able to accommodate which increased by 19 households to 189 for 2018-2019 to 2019-2020. Households owed a relief duty losing their home due to non-violent relationship breakdown with partner increased by 23 households 101.

Domestic abuse reduced as a reason for loss of last settled home by 5 households, while other violence and harassment increased by 5 to 20 households. Those recorded as 'other reasons/not known' reduced by 31 households but remains high and the number of households evicted from a social rented tenancy increased by 3 to 22, the same number as supported housing eviction.

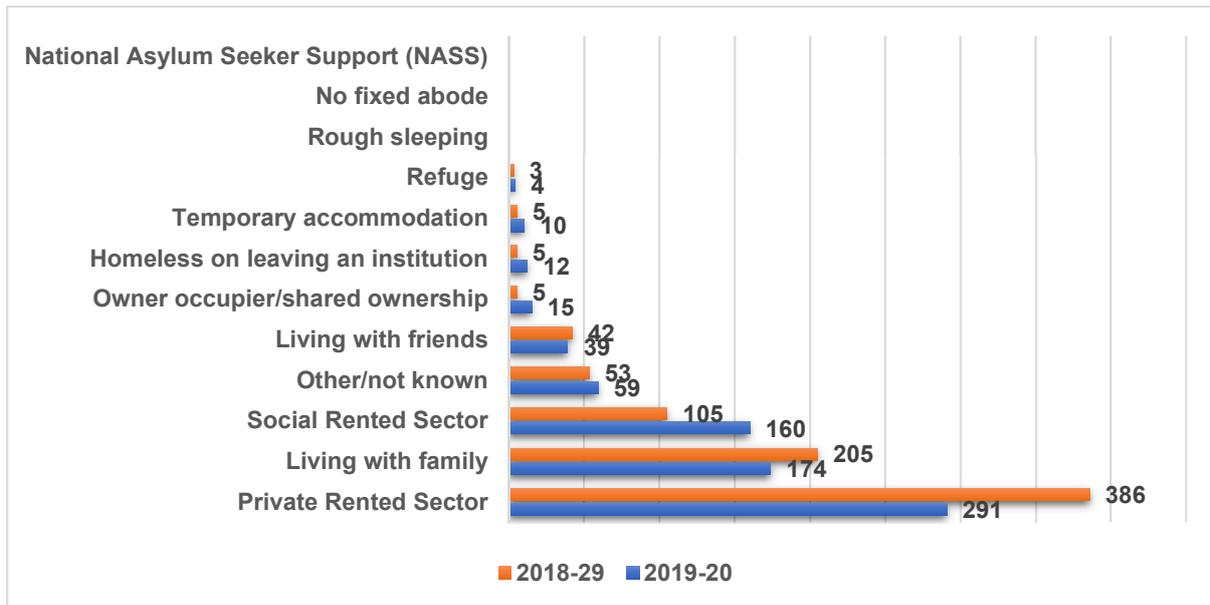
**Chart 38: Reason for loss of last settled home for those owed a relief duty, Dorset, 2018-2019 to 2019-2020**



Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

The majority of households owed a prevention duty for 2018-2019 to 2019-2020 were living in privately rented accommodation at the time of application, although this reduced by 24.5%. The number of households living with family reduced by 15%, and those living with friends also showed a small reduction. The number of households owed a prevention duty who were living in the social rented sector at the time of application increased by 27% to 160 households.

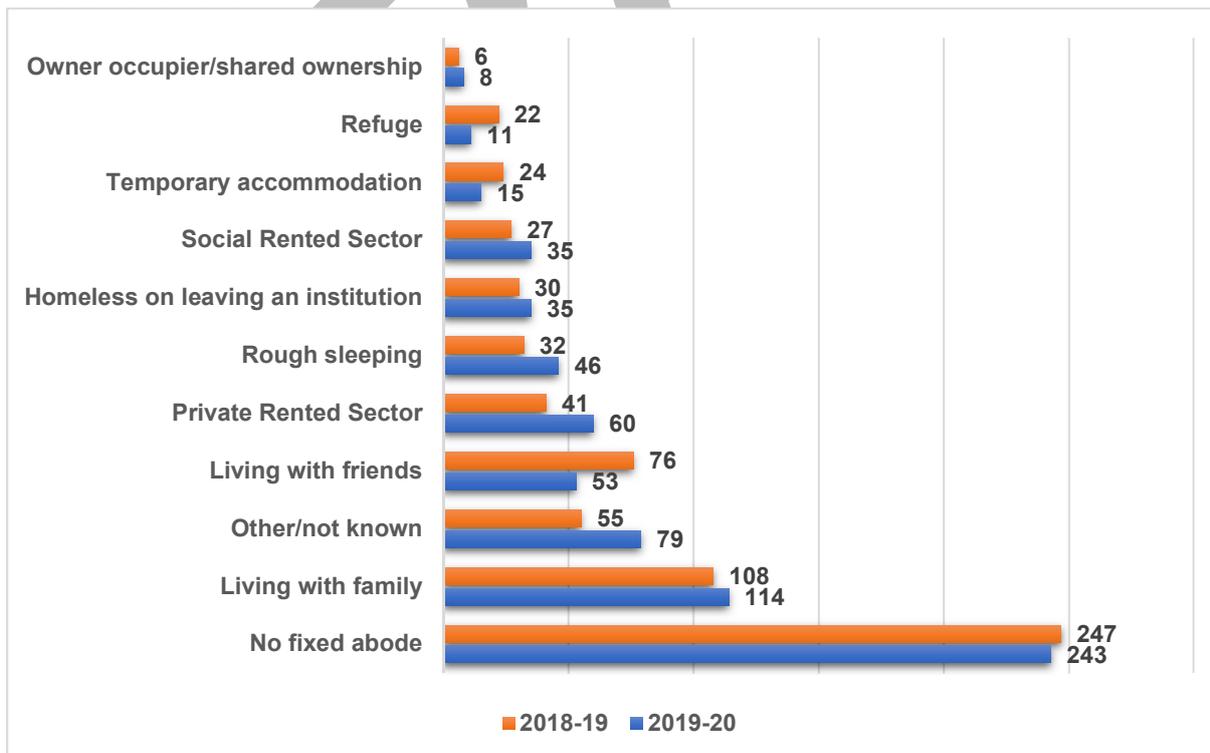
**Chart 39: Accommodation at time of application for those owed a prevention duty, Dorset, 2018-2019 to 2019-2020**



Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

No fixed abode was the most common recorded form of accommodation at the time of application for households owed a relief duty for 2018-19 to 2019-20, followed by living with family which increased slightly during the two years. The number of households living with friends reduced by 30%, and those sleeping rough increased by 33% to 46.

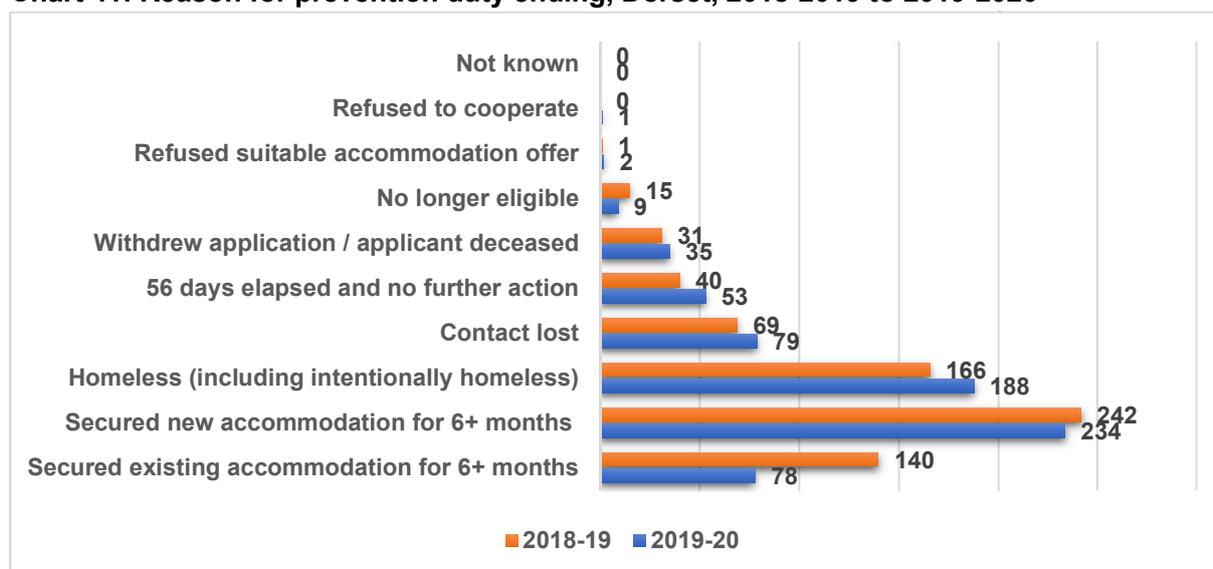
**Chart 40: Accommodation at time of application for those owed a relief duty, Dorset, 2018-2019 to 2019-2020**



Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

35% of all household's whose prevention duties ended in 2019-20 were due to new accommodation secured for at least 6 months, while those whose duty ended due to remaining in existing accommodation was 12%, a reduction of almost 45% of cases on the previous year. The remaining 53% of households whose prevention duties ended in Dorset were potentially negative outcomes, some of which would have progressed to the relief duty while others would have no further action from the council, which may not result in an unresolved homelessness situation for the household.

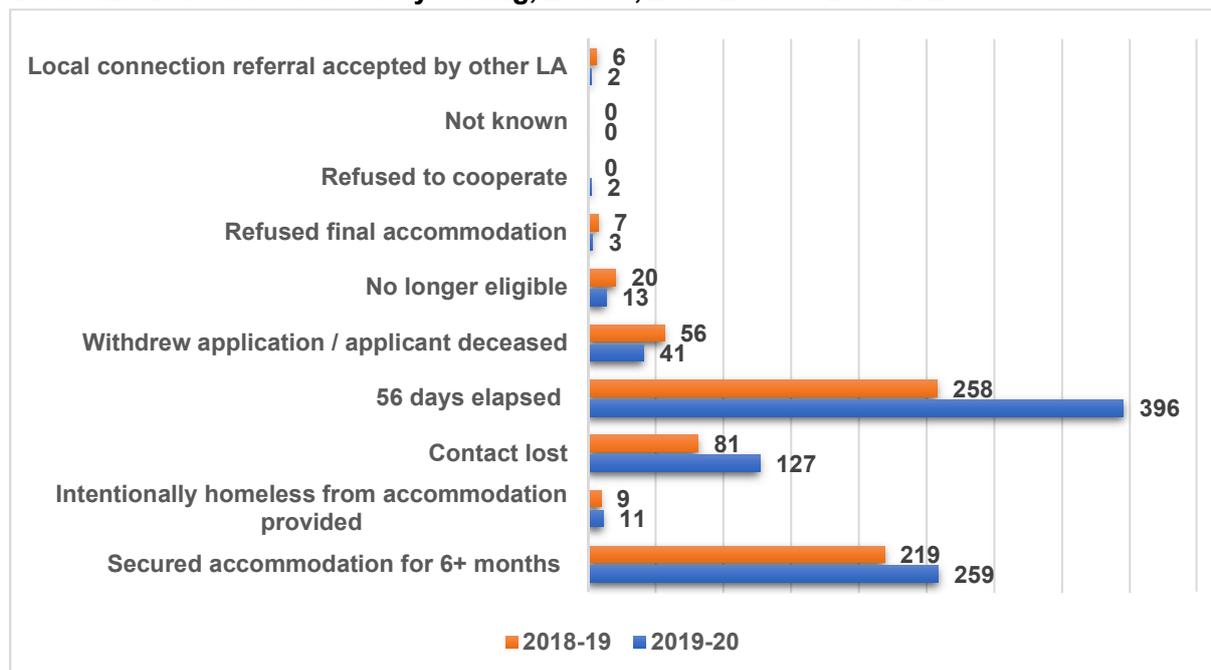
**Chart 41: Reason for prevention duty ending, Dorset, 2018-2019 to 2019-2020**



Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

The most common reason for the relief duty ending in Dorset is 56 days elapsing, which increased by 138 households between 2018-2019 and 2019-2020. This is followed by accommodation secured for 6+ months, though this data set does not record the tenure of such accommodation. 127 households are recorded as contact lost as the reason for the relief duty ending, which leaves just 33% households owed a relief duty and 30% where homelessness is confirmed to have been resolved for at least 6 months, and the remaining 67% and 70% respectively, may still be homeless or at risk of homelessness in Dorset.

**Chart 42: Reason for relief duty ending, Dorset, 2018-2019 to 2019-2020**



Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

## 3.1 Early Homelessness Prevention Activities

### 3.1.1 Universal advice and information

A new 'duty to refer' came into force from October 2018<sup>60</sup>. Specified public authorities are obliged to ask any person they believe might be homeless or threatened with homelessness if they wish to be referred to a local authority of their own choosing.

Dorset Council have made information available to relevant public bodies, such as probation services, prisons, social services, armed forces and local NHS Trusts, about how to make referrals of cases of homelessness. A joint Duty to Refer Protocol<sup>61</sup> was established with Dorset and BCP District councils and this remains in place today, while a dedicated online referral form is available on Dorset Council website<sup>62</sup>, plus a specific email address has been set-up. There is also an online form for non-public authorities to make a referral for someone they are working with.

During 2019-2020, 202 referrals were made to Dorset Council, including 31% made under the new Duty to Refer. The majority of referrals made to the Council were made by non-public authorities, such as local support agencies, Citizens Advice offices and housing associations, who are not required to use the formal duty to refer process.

**Table 1: Households assessed for homelessness as a result of a referral including under the duty to refer, Dorset, 2019-2020**

Referrals made to Dorset Council including under Duty to Refer* 2019-20
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<sup>60</sup> Homelessness (Review Procedure Etc) Regulations 2018, Part 4 Duty to Refer

<sup>61</sup> Dorset Duty to Refer Protocol for Public Authorities, Dorset Housing Authorities, 1<sup>st</sup> October 2018,

<sup>62</sup> Duty to Refer online form <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/housing/homelessness/duty-to-refer-for-public-authorities.aspx>

Organisation Type	Number of referrals
Agency not subject to Duty to Refer	93
Other organisation type/not known	36
Children's Social Services	17
National Probation Service	11
Adult Social Services	10
Hospital A&E, Urgent Treatment Centres of in-patient care	9
Mental health in-patient care	8
Adult secure estate (Prison)	5
Other local authority	5
Job Centre Plus	5
Community rehabilitation company	3

Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

Many housing associations that own social rented housing stock in Dorset Council area have signed up to the National Housing Federation's voluntary Commitment to Refer<sup>63</sup>, including:

- Hastoe Housing Association
- Sovereign Housing Association
- Tamar Housing
- The Guinness Partnership
- Abri Housing Group

The prevention of homelessness often starts with good housing advice. Dorset Council manages housing advice in house, currently from across the former district areas. The responsibilities performed by Dorset Council include:

- Providing Housing advice,
- Taking applications for homelessness assistance,
- Determining eligibility for assistance,
- Providing accommodation for an interim period to people who might be homeless, eligible for assistance and have a priority need,
- Completing assessments and formulating personalised plans,
- Fulfilling duties to prevent and/or relieve homelessness, provide accommodation to people who are unintentionally homeless and have a priority need, plus provide advice and accommodation for a reasonable period to people who are intentionally homeless and have a priority need,
- Making referrals to other local authorities for persons who do not have a connection to Dorset Council.
- Completing reviews of decisions made about entitlements to assistance,
- Ensuring suitability of accommodation offered, protection of persons property, working with children services when cases involve children, receiving referrals from specified public authorities, and
- Detecting fraudulent applications for assistance.

In addition to housing advice, Dorset Council is also responsible for:

- Responding to requests for assistance from other local authorities to discharge their homelessness duties, and

<sup>63</sup> National Housing Federation. (2018). Commitment to refer: guidance for housing associations

- Completing a homelessness review and formulating a homelessness strategy.

The Council currently delivers the homelessness functions from the former local authority offices at each location. The Dorset Council website has a specific housing link which is easily identifiable on its homepage, with a visible tab leading to the dedicated homelessness page, which includes details about how to access the service in each location, plus information about:

- Where to get independent advice, with links to Shelter and Citizens Advice websites
- All voluntary and statutory services in each former district area that may be of help to the applicant
- The Rough Sleeper Assertive Outreach and Engagement Services
- Dedicated support for victims of domestic abuse.

The information on the Dorset Council website regarding threatened homelessness provides contact details for each homelessness service in the former council locations, and explains the assessment procedure, the personal plan, and the information and evidence required by Dorset Council from households threatened with homelessness. This is followed by information on the ways in which Dorset Council can help the service user remain in their current home such as mediation with landlord or mortgage lender, maximising income and helping to manage debt, and where this is not possible, how they can assist in finding an alternative home, such as helping to search the private sector and referral to financial assistance schemes. There are links to information on how the Rent Deposit and Bond Schemes works and who can access the schemes, plus the rent deposit or bond application form. There is also a link to a page which provides information on the homelessness relief duty, temporary accommodation, and the main duty.

The provision of much of this work is through commissioned services.

Dorset Citizens Advice operates a face to face triage service five days each week offering housing and debt advice casework. Advice is also available at other times via self-help and at other branches by telephone, email webchat, and video link. During the COVID-19 pandemic they have remained open offering face to face support and helped with a range of issues, including helping new tenants and some in TA with problems setting up gas and electricity services.

#### **Case Study: Reach Out**

Dorset Council and Dorset Citizens Advice are currently working together on the Reach Out<sup>64</sup> initiative to encourage people living in Dorset to seek financial, housing, health and wellbeing and employment advice as early as possible if they have been affected in any of these areas by the Covid-19 pandemic. This campaign is well promoted with simple webpages signposting to a wide range of support, all of which provides early help to prevent homelessness.

Shelter is working to keep people in their private rented sector homes including helping with disrepair. At present they have a DIY skills adviser, funded by Nationwide, who works with tenants to clear mould from condensation for example, and engages with landlords to work

<sup>64</sup> <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/emergencies-severe-weather/emergencies/coronavirus/reaching-out/reaching-out-financial-and-emotional-support-during-covid-19.aspx>

jointly with the tenant on improving the property. They also have a new community engagement worker in post, whose role is to get out into communities and understand the issues, find out what's going on for people with regard to housing, particularly those with multiple and complex needs. The officer will offer training, such as workshops for foodbank volunteers on referrals to support services and talking with foodbank users about basic issues like damp and mould to assist with early prevention.

Dorset Council's housing benefit administrators have an excellent relationship with the homelessness service. As the majority of those placed in TA do claim housing benefit they have worked together to redesign processes to address all the issues they have identified over the years and have a specific application designed just for the homelessness team to use. When procuring new accommodation both services work together to see what arrangements need to be put in place and any work doing to find alternative to B&B is supported by HB officers, including discussing benefit levels in very early stages and setting charges later on. Housing benefit and council tax benefit claims are applied for online but this is not yet fully automated. There are a lot of Discretionary Housing Payment applications from homelessness officers who are supporting people with arrears or threat of homelessness. Housing Benefits staff also work closely with Aster and Magna housing associations who have in-house money matters advisers working with tenants who have arrears.

### **3.1.2 Targeted action**

There are specific homelessness prevention initiatives to respond to the common characteristics of adults who experience homelessness, such as alcohol dependency, street drinking, use of hard drugs, begging, injecting drugs, being charged with a violent criminal offence, abuse of solvents/gas/glue, engaging in sex work, being a victim of a sexual assault<sup>65</sup>.

The You First Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Sexual Violence Integrated Service provides outreach support in the community and accommodation-based services in Dorset, including a safe house for those at significant risk of harm, and target hardening to help people remain in their own home.

Dorset Council's website for its children services pages include simple to access information for care leavers with details of the Dorset Local Offer<sup>66</sup>, which includes information about accommodating care leavers. There is a link to apply to Dorset Homechoice for social rented housing and details of three specific housing options for care leavers including remaining in foster care at 16, until the age of 21, supported lodgings for 16 to 25-year olds, and the Supported Housing Alliance which may identify supported accommodation provision. The pages are clear and simple and the website explains that care leavers over 18 will have a personal adviser to assist them in finding suitable housing, which may include working with housing services, plus providing support to apply for benefits, utilities and help with budgeting. When a care leaver is found to be intentionally homeless it is usually more difficult for these young people to resolve their housing problem. They are less likely to have informal networks of support that can be available to the general population and without a safety net, can and do become part of the rough sleeper population very quickly.

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<sup>65</sup> Professor Suzanne Fitzpatrick, Dr Sarah Johnsen, Dr Michael White (2011), 'Multiple Exclusion Homelessness in the UK: Key Patterns and Intersections', *Social Policy & Society*, 10(4), p501-512

<sup>66</sup> <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/children-families/childrens-social-care/children-in-care/local-offer-for-care-leavers/accommodation.aspx>

Dorset Council's homelessness service and children's social care service, work with children aged 16 and 17 years, plus young adults aged 18, 19, or 20 years, each fulfilling any relevant duty owed. The children social care service facilitate the organisation of a personal adviser for each person leaving care, to provide support until their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday (or 25<sup>th</sup> if they remain in full time education). For 16- and 17-year olds there is a joint protocol setting out how officers from both services will work together to ensure that these children receive a seamless service from the first approach as homeless or threatened homelessness. Following the introduction of HRA17, new guidance was published jointly with MHCLG and the Department of Education (DfE) on the provision of accommodation for 16 and 17 years-olds who may be homeless and/or require accommodation<sup>67</sup> therefore a review of the current protocol is required. More recently, MHCLG DfE have published good practice advice on joint housing protocols for care leavers, which should be used to inform local practice<sup>68</sup>.

Dorset Nightstop is accommodation provided for one to three nights for 16 to 25-year olds hosted by volunteers. This provision allows time for the agencies that are working with the young person time to find a solution to their homelessness while knowing they are in a safe environment. Those young people that do find themselves at risk of, or become, homeless often have multiple and complex difficulties that are not easily addressed. Some stakeholders shared that they have specific concerns about care leavers as they are often placed in accommodation they cannot manage and, as teenagers, they do not always have the emotional language to talk with services who often see them later as older adults sleeping rough.

**Good Practice Example: Dorset Council**

Children's Services and Housing Options working relationship is aided by the provision of a housing officer with responsibility as 'Care Leaver Champion'. The officer spent some time working in children's services to gain an understanding of their responsibilities and now acts as a conduit for children's services colleagues to coordinate with housing services for advice and guidance and liaison with housing colleagues across the County.

A combined Youth Offending Service works with young people across Dorset and BCP council areas, with both local authorities and the Dorset Police, the National Probation Service and local NHS Trusts. There is some referral data, but no statistical monitoring specific to the Dorset Council area about the number of people leaving prison, young offender institutes etc who are homelessness at the date of release. There is an early intervention protocol in place with Adult Services Occupational Therapy Service as some of those leaving The Verne Prison have a social care need and/or are disabled.

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<sup>67</sup> Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Department for Education. (2018). Prevention of homelessness and provision of accommodation for 16 and 17-year old young people who may be homeless and/or require accommodation. Guidance to children's services authorities and local housing authorities about their duties under Part 3 of the Children Act 1989 and Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 to secure or provide accommodation for homelessness 16 and 17-year-old young people

<sup>68</sup> Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Department for Education. 2020. Joint housing protocols for leavers: good practice advice

There are 58,000 armed forces veterans and 6,000 serving personnel resident in the county of Dorset<sup>69</sup>. While there is no statistical monitoring specific to Dorset Council about the number of armed forces veterans who become homeless, there is a strong partnership between Dorset and BCP Councils, NHS, Police and Crime Commissioner, Royal British Legion, the Military bases and others under the umbrella of the Armed Forces Covenant Programme. Within the programme, there is no specific aim regarding homelessness, although improving health and wellbeing, improving access to information, services and support and being better equipped to integrate into communities are all identified outcomes<sup>70</sup>. A housing provider located outside of the Dorset Council Area has designated a small amount of accommodation for use of armed forces veterans from Dorset and BCP. Royal British Legion and the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association (SSAFA) provide access to welfare benefits, debt and money advice and other support to anyone who has served in the armed forces, including helping rough sleeping veterans off the street and into move on accommodation when they are ready.

The Lantern Trust in Weymouth help to prevent homelessness and support rough sleepers by mediating and advocating with landlords on behalf of individuals and assisting with rent deposits. The Lantern Trust have their own housing and benefits team and provide office space to Shelter Housing First. Citizens Advice has a drop-n service two days each week and a GP service is offered each Friday.

Dorset Healthcare NHS Trust have commissioned a review into working more closely with housing associations to support tenants and potential tenants with complex needs, delayed discharges from hospital and the provision of high-level supported accommodation, such as those with fire setting histories. The Mental Health Rehabilitation Services review<sup>71</sup> in Dorset, has resulted in one of three inpatient rehabilitation units closing. The aim of the Trust is to use the savings from closing one of the units and replace it with a specialist rehabilitation team working with tenants in new mental health supported housing. 21 units of units of supported housing has been identified as needed for this group, across the whole of Dorset, and the Clinical Commissioning Group officer with housing responsibility is working to secure this.

The new community rehabilitation team will link up with other services, including homelessness services, to provide medical support for those with a serious mental illness. A three-year investment in the integrated care programme will also see mental health teams set up around primary care network to try and address the mental health of the local population. Staff will be trained to understand housing pathways, and there may be potential for co-location with council services.

There is not enough statistical monitoring specific to Dorset Council about of the number of people with mental ill health who are homeless or the number of people being discharged from hospital who are homeless.

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<sup>69</sup> Factsheet RUC 3: Background information and demographics, Dorset Armed Forces Covenant Programme

<sup>70</sup> Factsheet RUC 2: Introduction to the Dorset Armed Forces Covenant Programme

<sup>71</sup> <https://www.dorsetccg.nhs.uk/mental-health-rehabilitation-services-update/>

## 3.2 Pre-crisis homelessness prevention activities

Pre-crisis homelessness prevention activities are carried out by Dorset Council Homelessness Service and commissioned services. These activities can be divided into two broad areas: assistance that helps people to remain in their existing accommodation or, when this is not safe or possible, help to obtain alternative accommodation. These activities are typically carried out anytime between when someone is homeless, and up to two months prior to someone potentially losing their home, and occasionally even further ahead in time. MHCLG's homelessness statistical recording from 2009/10<sup>72</sup> (until 2017/18, following which recording methods were changed), detailed pre-crisis homelessness prevention activities typically carried out throughout England as shown below:

### ***Homelessness Prevention Activities to Remain in Existing Home***

Mediation using external or internal trained family mediators  
Conciliation including home visits for family/friends threatened exclusion  
Financial payments from a homelessness prevention fund  
Debt advice  
Resolving housing benefit problems  
Resolving rent or service charge arrears in the social or private rented sectors  
Sanctuary scheme measures for domestic violence  
Crisis intervention – providing emergency support  
Negotiation or legal advocacy to ensure someone can remain in accommodation in the private rented sector  
Providing other assistance that will enable someone to remain in the private rented sector  
Mortgage arrears interventions or mortgage rescue

### ***Homelessness Prevention Activities to Obtain Alternative Accommodation***

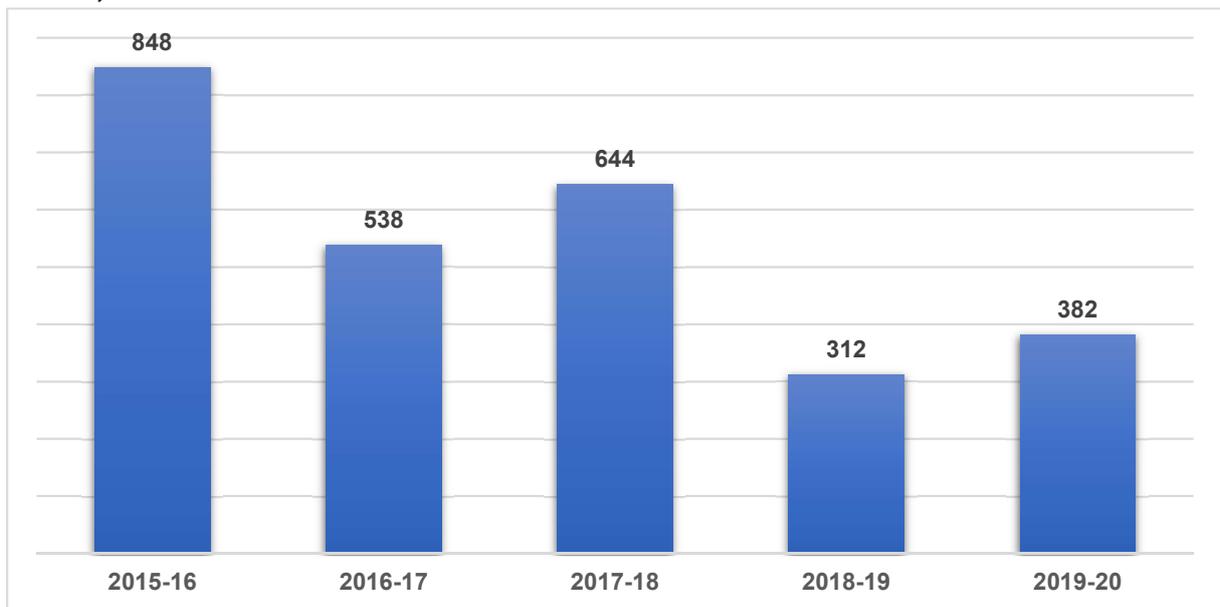
Any form of hostel or house of multiple occupation with or without support  
Private rented sector accommodation with landlord incentive scheme  
Private rented sector accommodation without landlord incentive scheme  
Accommodation arranged with friends or relatives  
Supported housing, including supported lodging schemes  
Management move of an existing social housing tenant  
Housing register offer or nomination of accommodation to a social landlord  
Negotiation with an RSL outside housing register or nomination arrangements  
Low cost homeownership scheme or low-cost market housing solution

The number of cases where positive action succeeded in preventing homelessness set out in Chart 41 below includes both the actions recorded in the Dorset Council's P1E records for 2015-2016 to 2017-2018, and the actions taken to prevent homelessness recorded in the Dorset HCLIC statistical monitoring for 2018-2019 and 2019-2020. The number of cases where positive action by Dorset Councils prevented homelessness is highest in 2015-16, and subsequently reduced by 36.6%. The number of cases where positive action prevented homelessness was lower post enactment of the HRA17.

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<sup>72</sup> Department for Communities and Local Government. (2009). Recording homelessness prevention and relief at E10 of the P1E quarterly return: Further guidance for local housing authorities.

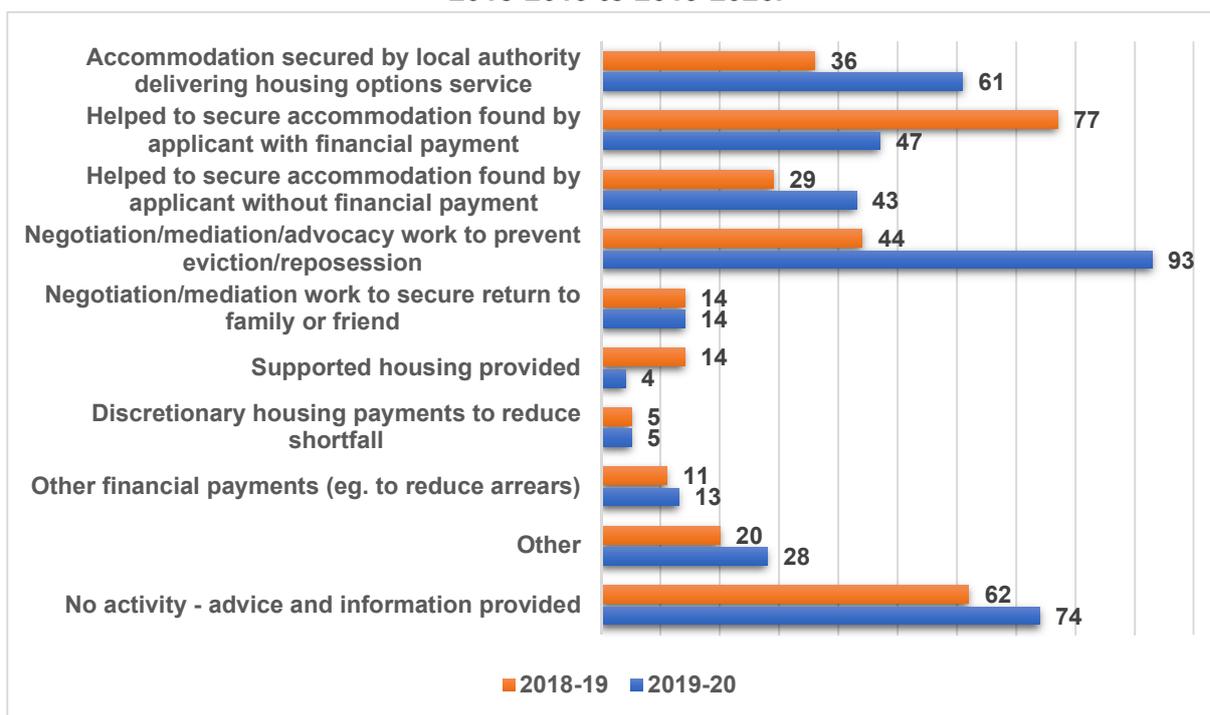
**Chart 43: Number of cases where positive action succeeded in preventing homelessness, Dorset, 2015-2016 to 2019-2020**



Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

The most commonly recorded main prevention activity for 2019-2020 that resulted in accommodation being secured for households in Dorset was the negotiation and mediation/advocacy work to prevent eviction, though in 2018-2019 this was the third most common activity behind financial support for accommodation and advice and information provided. Council staff do not include trained mediators but the Dorset Council funded Citizens Advice, who provide debt advice and debt counselling and some legal advocacy work, and the council carry out informal negotiation with landlords. In 2019-2020, 20% of main prevention activity resulting in accommodation being secured was giving advice and information with no other action, this was an increase from 15.5%. The category 'Other' includes the H-CLIC fields: debt advice, resolved benefit problems, sanctuary or other security measures to home, not known, housing related support to sustain accommodation.

**Chart 44: Main prevention activity that resulted in accommodation being secured, Dorset, 2018-2019 to 2019-2020.**

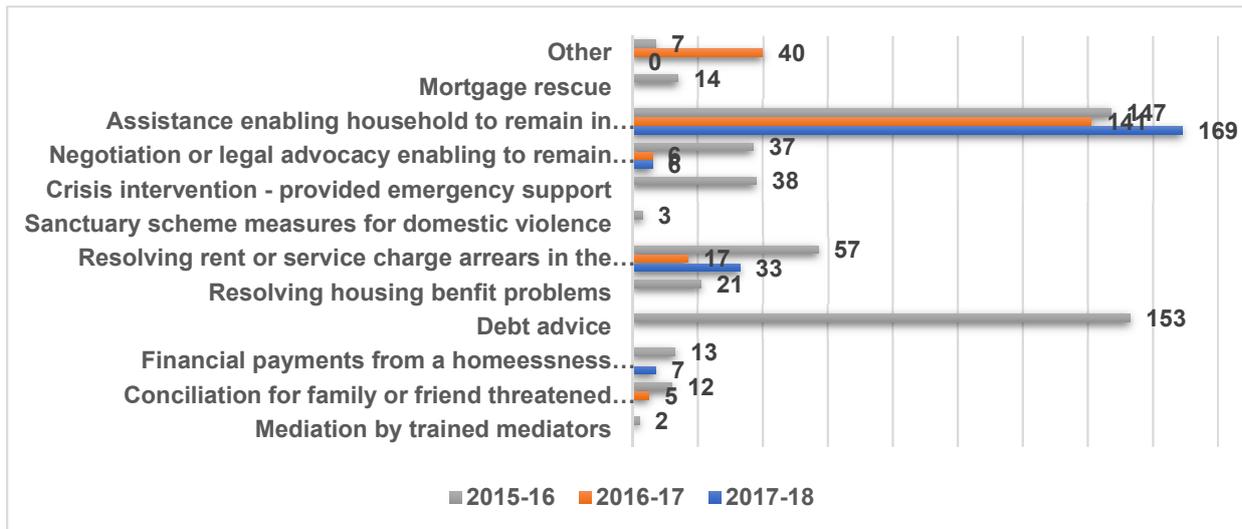


Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

The following charts, provide information regarding activity to prevent homelessness recorded for the former P1E homelessness statistics, prior to the introduction of the HRA17.

The main activity preventing homelessness for 2015-2016 to 2017-2018 was to enable households to remain in the private or social sector, this data is not broken down further into the components of such enabling. In 2015-2016, debt advice was the most common activity, however this is also now recorded within 'Other' prevention activity category for HCLIC recording, so understanding the demand for this activity requires some further investigation. This is also true for (i) assistance to resolve housing benefit problems, (ii) sanctuary or other security measures to remain at home, and (iv) housing related support to sustain accommodation.

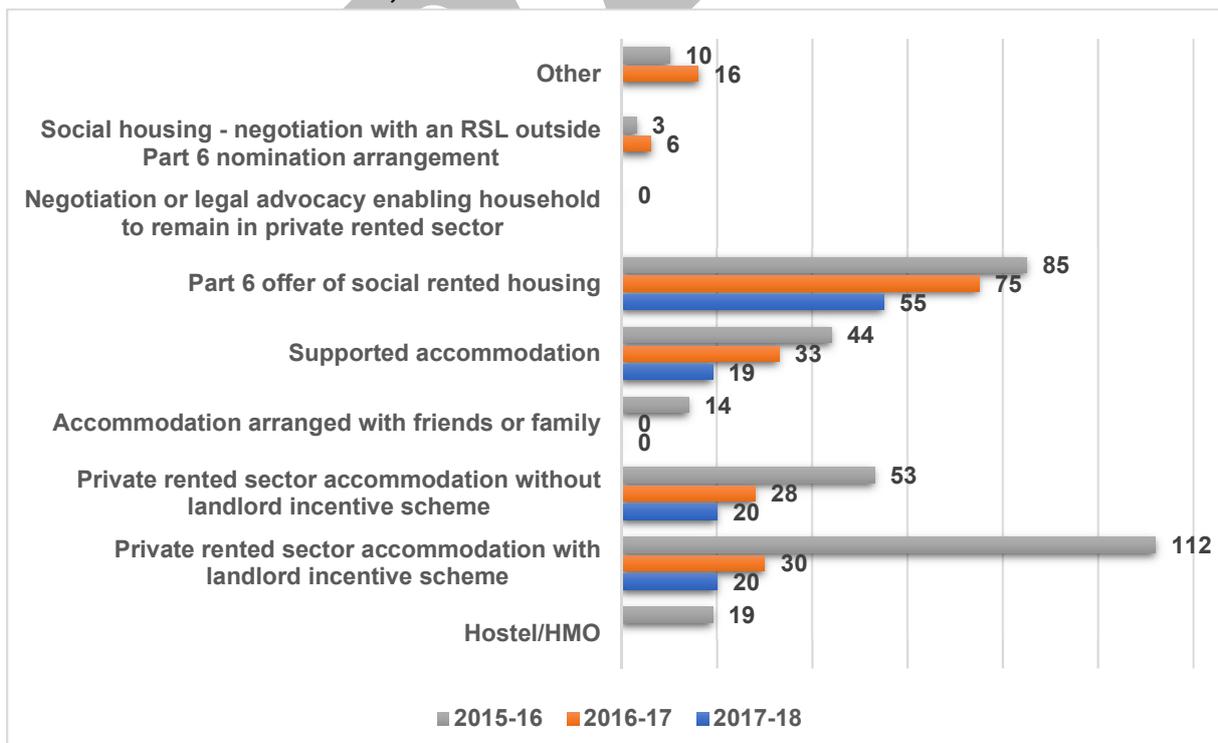
**Chart 45: Homelessness prevented - households to remain in existing home, Dorset, 2015-2016 to 2017-2018**



Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

The most common homelessness prevention activity leading to securing alternative accommodation for 2016-2017 to 2017-2018 was a Part 6 offer of social rented housing. In 2015-2016 the successful landlord incentive scheme was the most common activity, but this reduced to second most common activity, along with private rented accommodation without incentives, closely followed by supported housing.

**Chart 46: Homelessness prevented or relieved – households assisted to obtain alternative accommodation, Dorset 2015-2016 to 2017-2018**



Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

### **3.3 Preventing the reoccurrence of homelessness**

Prevention of the reoccurrence of homelessness is typically carried out by a mixture of public authorities, housing associations and voluntary organisations. This might involve providing information, advice, assistance or counselling about health, education, relationships, housing, money, employment and much more. There is variable local verifiable statistical evidence on the volume of activity being carried out, and varying outcomes being achieved. There is plenty of anecdotal material that has been considered as part of this review. An evaluation of this can be found in chapter 5 of this Homelessness Review.

### **3.4 Conclusions about activities to prevent homelessness**

There is a good range of activities in place to prevent homelessness across Dorset, including those activities delivered by commissioned and non-commissioned services and other public agencies, although this is not always monitored or recorded as homelessness prevention activity.

For effective prevention activity, the route(s) to homelessness for people with multiple and complex needs, should be mapped. Such mapping will include all voluntary and statutory services they interact with, and the location of these services, to allow appropriate prevention intervention at the earliest time and place.

There is a lack of clarity over the route to housing when an offender is released from secure estates, although there is extensive multi agency working with Police and others as required.

There has been some effective prevention between Homelessness and Children's services due to effective training but this does need to be strengthened, as does joint working with adult services to develop a hospital discharge policy to prevent homelessness from hospital.

Alongside a strong Armed Forces Covenant there is provision for Armed Forces and former Armed Forces personnel who find themselves homeless, accessed through Royal British Legion and The Lantern, however identifying those former armed forces personnel can be difficult.

Applicants found to be intentionally homeless are proportionally low compared with the number of those where the main homelessness duty has been accepted. Where poor choices or deliberate action has led to homelessness, and is then deemed intentional, it can benefit both parties for the Council to provide at least a limited amount of assistance and support in order to help resolve their immediate housing difficulty and help to prevent them from becoming homeless again in the future.

The transience of rough sleepers who migrate between Dorset and BCP council areas may continue if the reasons for this are not understood and addressed.

## **4.0 Securing accommodation**

This chapter focuses on activities to obtain accommodation for people who are or may become homeless. This includes temporary accommodation arranged by Dorset Council, for households

owed a duty of assistance and other accommodation secured to relieve homelessness from housing association and private sector housing.

## 4.1 Temporary accommodation

At the time writing this report, Dorset Council's portfolio of temporary accommodation currently consists of 224 units, using its own stock and also properties provided by housing associations and private sector landlords. Temporary accommodation is distributed across two areas of the local authority area and consists of a mixture of property types with varying numbers of bedrooms. Importantly Dorset Council has accommodation adapted for people with a physical disability.

**Table 2: Temporary accommodation portfolio, Dorset Council, 2020**

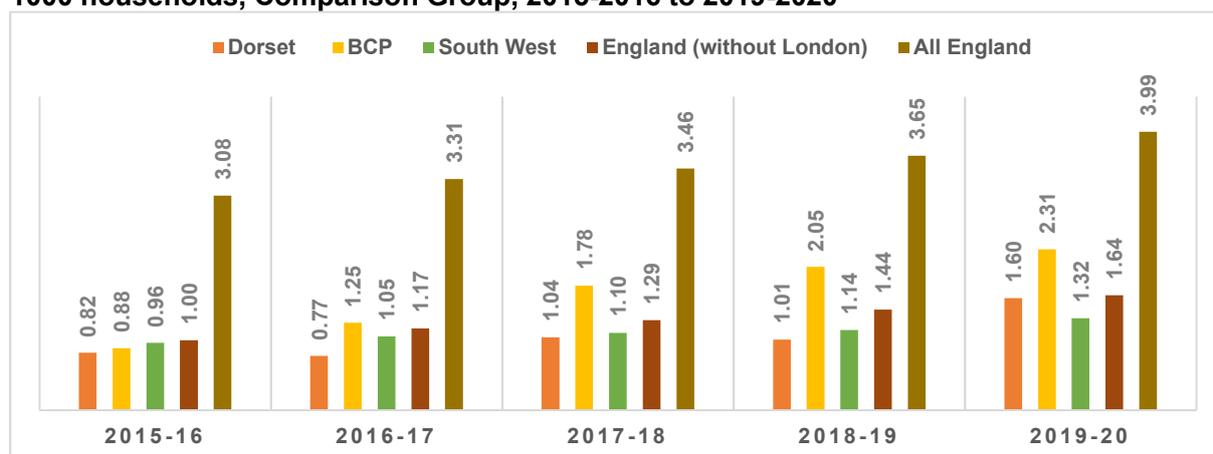
Location	Landlord	Number	Property size
East Dorset West Dorset North Dorset, Purbeck Weymouth & Portland	Dorset Council owned or leased	68	Room/Bedsit
		18	One bedroom
		36	Two bedrooms
		24	Three bedrooms
		6	Four/five bedrooms
East Dorset Purbeck West Dorset Weymouth & Portland	Housing Association or private sector housing Dorset Council	15	Room/bedsit
		9	One bedroom
		37	Two bedrooms
		10	Three bedrooms
		1	Four/five bedrooms
<b>Total Properties</b>		<b>224</b>	

Source: Dorset Council

Emergency accommodation in the form of bed and breakfast is also used in Weymouth and Bournemouth when necessary, and there is a longstanding arrangement with a caravan park in Swanage.

The count of households in local housing authority arranged temporary accommodation in England is taken on the last day of each quarter and published by MHCLG. The number per thousand households for those in temporary accommodation in Dorset has been lower than the other benchmarked areas for each year analysed until 2019-2020 when it increased by 0.59 on the previous year. This increase is higher than the increases for other benchmarked areas, however these areas also had steady year on year increases between 2015-2016 to 2019-2020.

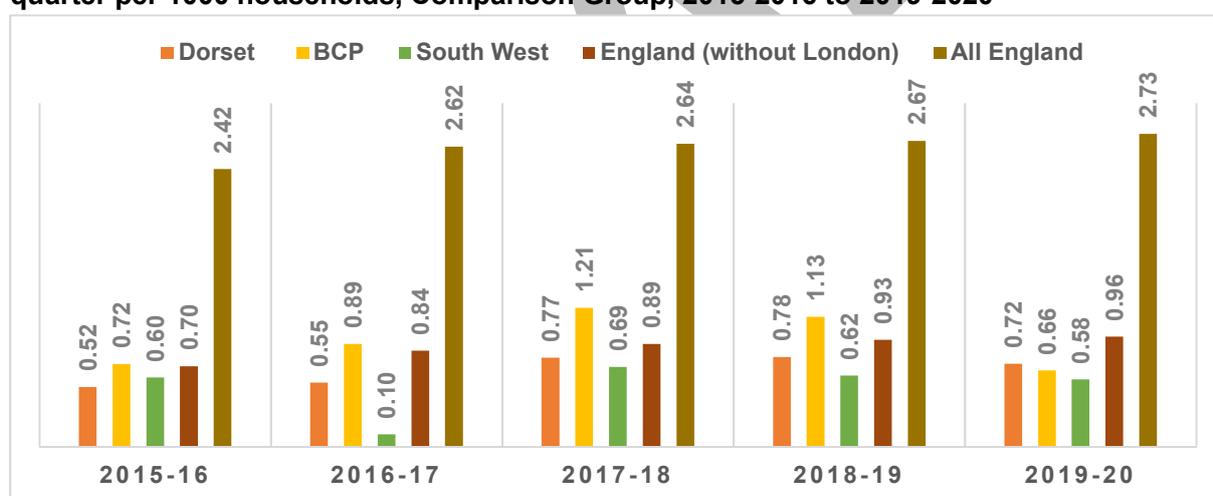
**Chart 47: Number of households in temporary accommodation at end of final quarter per 1000 households, Comparison Group, 2015-2016 to 2019-2020**



Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

The number of households with children living in temporary accommodation per 1000 households is lower in Dorset than All England, which was consistently high compared to the other benchmarked areas. For 2019-2020, BCP had 0.06 fewer households with children in temporary accommodation, per 1000 households, than Dorset, but for each other year BCP numbers were greater.

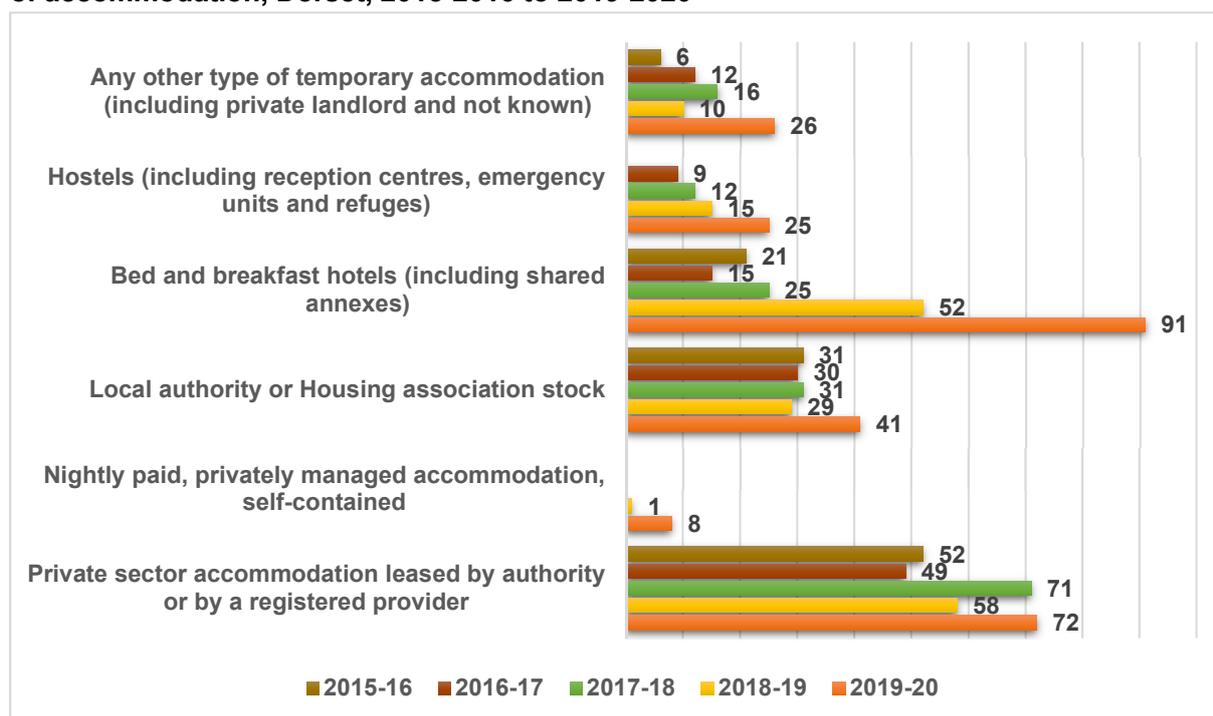
**Chart 48: Number of households with children in temporary accommodation at end of final quarter per 1000 households, Comparison Group, 2015-2016 to 2019-2020**



Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

The use of all types of temporary accommodation have increased in Dorset for the period 2015-2016 to 2019-2020, in particular the use of bed and breakfast which for the last quarter of 2019-2020 was the most commonly used form of accommodation. The increase in the use of housing association stock as temporary accommodation is an indication of partnership working, where one of more local social housing providers is willing to support the Council in its efforts to provide additional and alternative temporary accommodation.

**Chart 49: Number of households in temporary accommodation at end of final quarter by type of accommodation, Dorset, 2015-2016 to 2019-2020**



Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

**Case Study: Dorset Council and East Boro Housing Trust**

The relocatable social housing provision for 18 adults with care needs, supported with expertise from the LGA One Public Estate<sup>73</sup> team, has been placed on the Wareham Middle school site while plans are progressed for a new health, care and housing scheme in Purbeck. This innovative ‘meanwhile’ housing solution on public land will reduce the burden on homelessness and care services as well as help to improve the lives of the residents who will eventually be moved to the new scheme once built. The Wareham Middle School relocatable housing provides proof of concept for replicating this on other public sites. This has the potential to align with the 2020-2024 Property Strategy & Asset Management Plan, approved by Dorset Council in November 2020, which includes actions to re-establish the public sector body working group and review the ‘One Public estates’ opportunities plus to establish a legal and financial model for possible joint venture or joint working arrangements.

Relocatable units have come a long way from shipping containers and do not need to look temporary or stand out negatively in a community. These units provide the potential to deliver much needed decent, warm, affordable homes on public sites that may have several years consultation, planning and fundraising ahead before there will be shovels in the ground.

Some stakeholders identified that temporary accommodation can be of low quality and would like to see some quality assurance around this. Unstable accommodation can exacerbate difficulties with emotional wellbeing and physical health, and stakeholders would like to see alternatives to bed and breakfast being made available for ‘emergency’ accommodation, particularly for young people. At the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 count, 43% of homeless households form

<sup>73</sup> <https://www.local.gov.uk/topics/housing-and-planning/one-public-estate/about-one-public-estate>

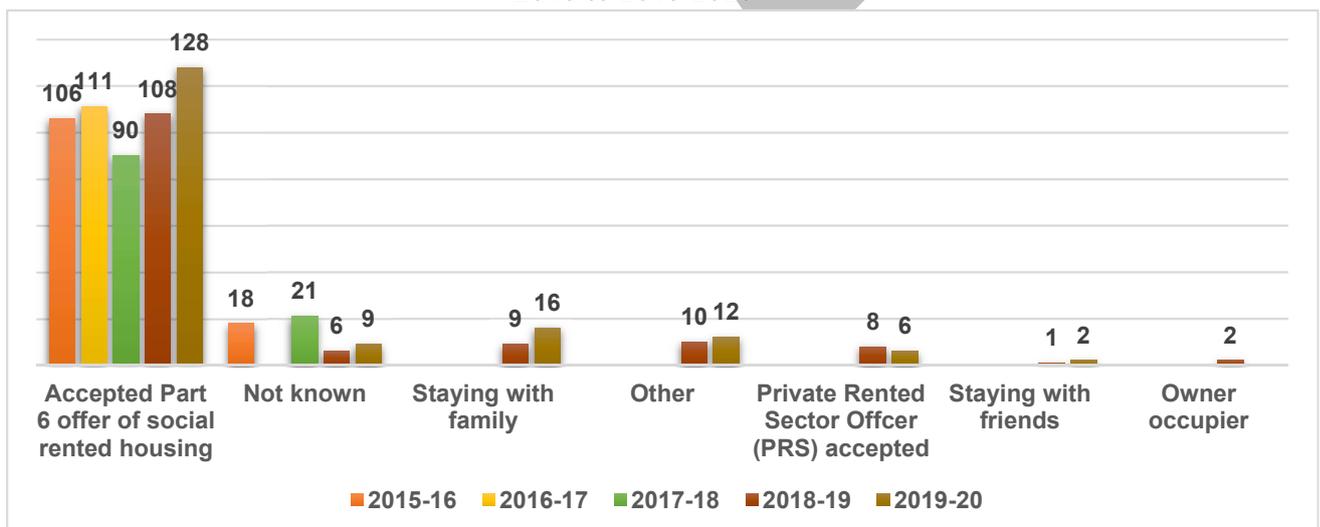
Dorset were in temporary accommodation outside of the Dorset Council area. This is an issue which is inherent with challenges for the placing and receiving Councils in addition to the homeless household, though does provide evidence to support the need for a review of a temporary accommodation.

The suitability of accommodation policy should resolve this for TA, but for private rented sector tenancies care leavers have a specific challenge in providing a guarantor and if this tenure is to be used to prevent or relieve homelessness for care leavers, a solution to this must be developed.

## 4.2 Other accommodation

In line with the England average, an offer of social rented housing was the most common type of accommodation secured to bring the main homelessness duty to an end at 74% of all accommodation types secured for 2019-20. The use of Private Rented Sector Offers is enabled by adoption of the Dorset Council Private Rented Sector Offer Policy in March 2018\*, however the numbers of PRS offers are still in single figures as the private rented sector remains both expensive and relatively small.

**Chart 50: Type of accommodation secured for households at end of main duty, Dorset, 2015-2016 to 2019-2020**



Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

The recent Everyone In campaign to help rough sleepers off the street has by many accounts strengthened joint working between housing and support partners and the Council. Abri Housing Association are working with Dorset Council to develop and test innovative solutions, including piloting the Housing First approach and assessing what can be offered to specific groups of residents, for example care leavers, and making sure this meets local needs.

### **Good Practice: Commitment to tackle homelessness, Abri Housing Association.**

Abri Group Housing Association, recently formed through a merger of Yarlinton Housing Association and Radian Housing Association, demonstrate their commitment to working with local housing authorities to tackle homelessness in their corporate plan goals:

- tackling homelessness,
- fixing inequality,
- improving health and wellbeing in our communities and in the workplace,

- giving people opportunities to better their lives, and
- make a positive impact on the environment.

Abri Group Housing Association have identified urban Dorset as a community investment zone, which, alongside their own funding could help to attract additional investment to help local communities to succeed and thrive. Abri Group Housing Association will work in partnership with their tenants and other residents, the Council and other agencies where a bespoke local approach will be developed. The investment zone classification, one of 8 that Abri board members have committed to, is in the early stages of development and will be focussed on health and wellbeing, employment and community empowerment.

In December 2020 an article<sup>74</sup> by Abri Group Housing Association, published by Inside Housing, focused on commissioned nationwide research into the public attitude towards homelessness and the impact of Covid19. The research found that 38% of UK adults were worried about losing their jobs due to Covid-19 and 28% were worried about losing their homes. This research and the partnerships they have been involved with over the last nine months to help with the Covid-19 response, has led to Abri working on a homelessness prevention strategy, within which they want to include an immediate response to help rough sleepers off the street, and a long-term prevention strategy.

#### 4.2.1 Activities to relieve homelessness

Homelessness relief activities are carried out by Dorset Council. Examples of homelessness relief actions, are shown in the box below.

##### ***Homelessness Relief Activities to Obtain***

Any form of hostel or house of multiple occupation with or without support  
 Private rented sector accommodation with landlord incentive scheme  
 Private rented sector accommodation without landlord incentive scheme  
 Accommodation arranged with friends or relatives  
 Supported housing, including supported lodging schemes  
 Management move of an existing social housing tenant  
 Housing register offer or nomination of accommodation to a social landlord  
 Negotiation with an RSL outside housing register or nomination arrangements  
 Low-cost homeownership scheme or low-cost market housing solution

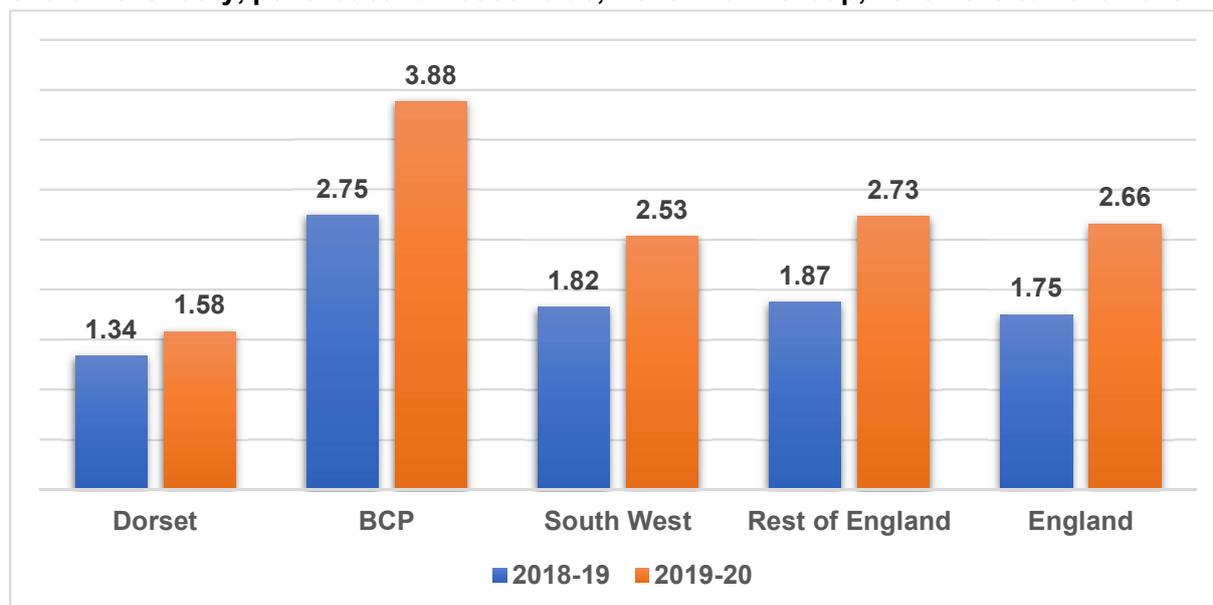
Throughout England, relief casework has historically accounted for 6% of all activity carried out by local authority homelessness services. In Wales, where legislation similar to the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 has been in force since 2015, the rate is 51% of all casework activity<sup>75</sup>.

In the two years since the implementation of the relief duty, 2018-2019 and 2019-2020, the number of households in Dorset, where activity to relieve homelessness resulted in accommodation being secured, increased by 0.24 per thousand households. Despite this increase Dorset remains the lowest in terms of successful relief activity per thousand households within the Benchmark Group for each year, with BCP the highest at 2.3 per thousand households higher than Dorset for 2019-20.

<sup>74</sup> <https://www.insidehousing.co.uk/comment/comment/homelessness-is-still-a-crisis-68991#SurveyResults>

<sup>75</sup> <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Housing/Homelessness>

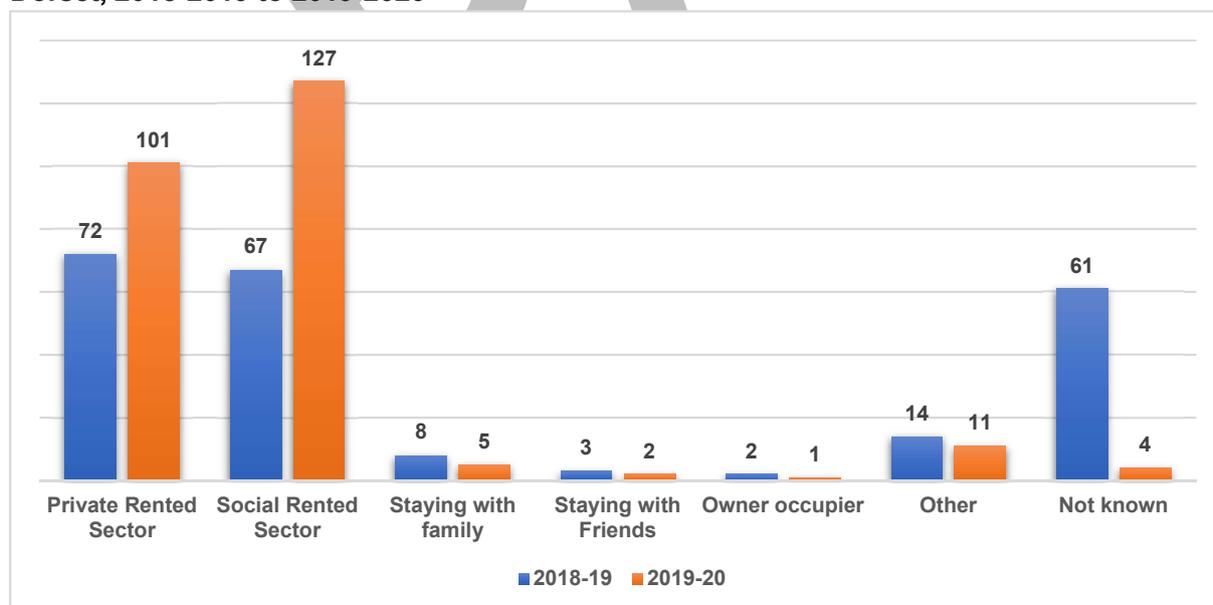
**Chart 51: Number of households for whom activity resulted in accommodation secured at the end of relief duty, per thousand households, Benchmark Group, 2018-2019 to 2019-2020**



Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

The main type of accommodation used by Dorset Council to end the relief duty during 2019-2020 was social rented housing, followed by privately rented accommodation; the opposite of 2018-2019. The increased use of both types of accommodation accounts for the reduction in the not known category from 61 to 4 households across the two-year period. The use of staying with family or friends, owner occupier, and other categories have all gone down.

**Chart 52: Number of households whose relief duty ended by type of accommodation secured, Dorset, 2018-2019 to 2019-2020**

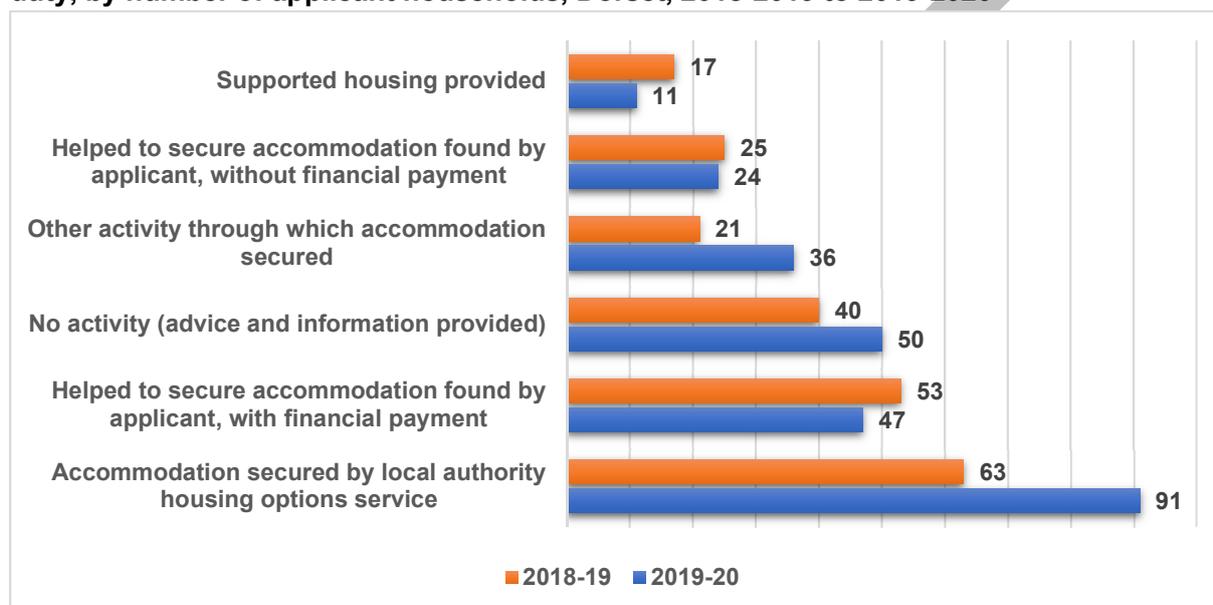


Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

The main activity resulting in accommodation being secured at the end of end the relief duty was mainly that activity of the Dorset Council Housing Options Services for both years. While the second most common activity was through financial support by the Council, it is not clear

how many households also benefited from financial support where the Council found the accommodation, whether this was privately rented or social rented housing. 'No activity', where information and advice is provided, was the third and second highest outcome for ending the relief duty with accommodation, in 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 respectively. The category 'other activity' includes negotiation/mediation work to secure a return to family or friend or a landlord, sanctuary or other security measures to enable return home and 'other'. As a group, 'other' saw an increase of 40% across the two-year period.

**Chart 53: Main activity that resulted in accommodation being secured at the end of a relief duty, by number of applicant households, Dorset, 2018-2019 to 2019-2020**



Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

Demand for all of types of accommodation exceeds the supply available, including the three common forms of accommodation used to relieve homelessness, locally and nationally: (i) supported housing; (ii) private rented sector accommodation; and (iii) social rented housing. These are explored in more detail below.

#### 4.2.2 Housing Support

Nationally, hostels or supported housing, including supported lodgings, are the most common type of accommodation obtained to relieve homelessness. A detailed analysis of supported housing during the past five years, and temporary accommodation usage for Dorset Council can be found in chapter five of this review.

Guidance for the National Statement of Expectations<sup>76</sup> was published in October 2020, to support local authorities in assessing the local need, with housing associations and other providers, and clarifying what 'good' looks like. This will be important for Dorset Council as there are very few supported housing units in the Council area.

#### 4.2.3 Private Rented Sector

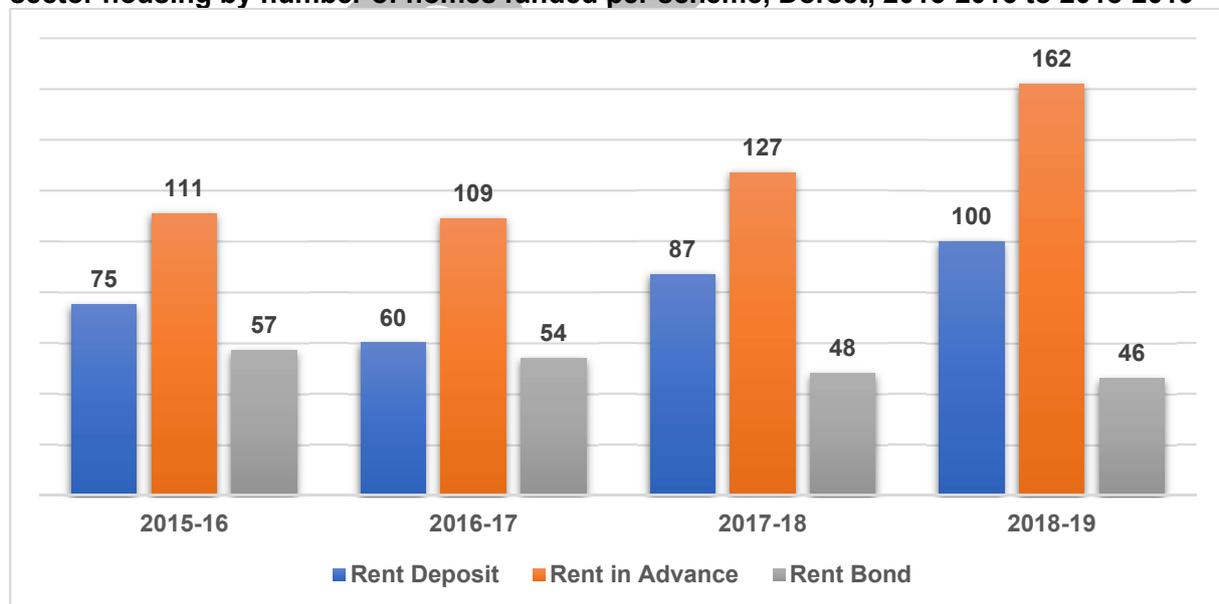
<sup>76</sup> National Statement of Expectations, DWP and MHCLG, October 2020

Nationally, obtaining accommodation in the PRS is second most common method to relieve homelessness, either with or without use of a landlord incentive.

Dorset Council provide financial assistance to help people into the private rented sector to either prevent or relieve homelessness using rent deposits, rent in advance, and deposit bonds. Rent in advance is normally a loan to the applicant, and rent deposits are normally paid to the landlord and claimed back at the end of the tenancy, less any deductions made for property damages or rent arrears. The rent bond is a type of insurance against damage or rent arrears and only paid out at the end of the tenancy if these occurred, rather than being paid up front like the rent deposit.

Between 2015-2016 and 2018-2019, 322 rent deposits and 509 rent in advance payments were made, and 205 rent bonds agreed to help secure privately rented accommodation in Dorset. The use of rent deposit and rent in advance payments have increased each year since 2016-2017, while deposit bond agreements are reducing year on year, indicating that landlords are not as willing to accept a bond agreement in place of a cash deposit, even where they must have the cash deposit registered under a deposit protection scheme. For 2018-2019 the average deposit bond agreed, at £909.89 was slightly higher than the average rent deposit paid at £897.50. The average rent in advance was lower at £780.05. There will be cases where a landlord requires both a rent in advance payment and cash deposit or deposit bond, and both funds will then be utilised. The Rent in Advance budget is also used to fund rent in advance for social housing tenancies where the social housing landlord requires this, and the ingoing tenant does not have the funds.

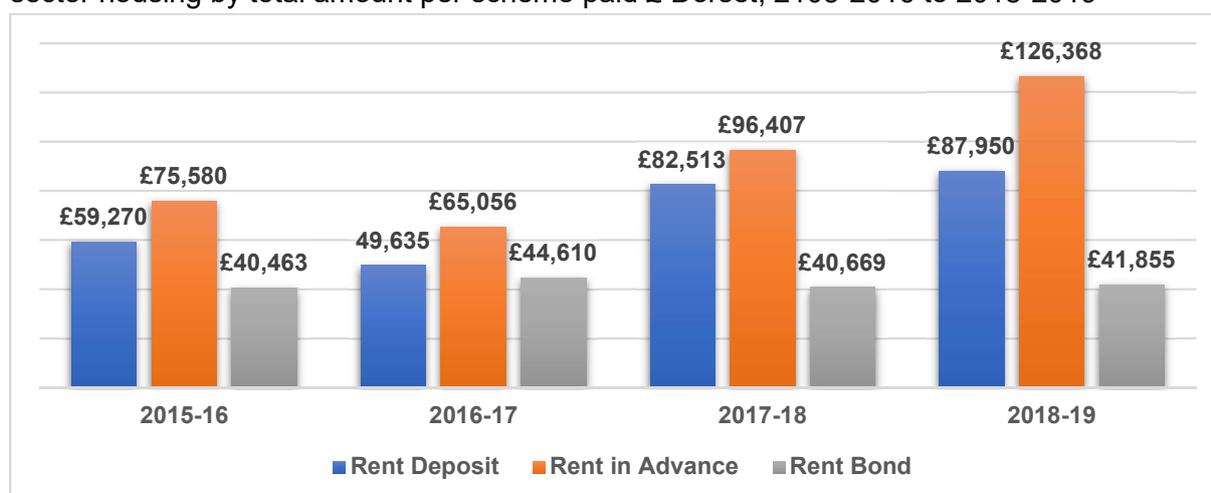
**Chart 54: Financial Assistance to help prevent or relieve homelessness into private rented sector housing by number of homes funded per scheme, Dorset, 2015-2016 to 2018-2019**



Source: Dorset Council

The total costs of each of the three schemes can be seen in chart 55 below.

Chart 55: Financial Assistance to help prevent or relieve homelessness into private rented sector housing by total amount per scheme paid £ Dorset, 2105-2016 to 2018-2019



Source: Dorset Council

#### 4.2.4 Social Rented Housing

Nationally, a social rented housing offer, or nomination to a social landlord, is the second most common method of preventing or relieving homelessness, equalling 27.4% of cases<sup>77</sup>.

Dorset currently has 182,677<sup>78</sup> homes, 12.3%<sup>79</sup> of which are social rented housing, which is 30% lower than England at 17.6%. The 2015 update to the Eastern Dorset Strategic Housing Market Assessment<sup>80</sup> (SHMA) which included East Dorset, North Dorset and Purbeck, along with the BCP districts, estimated a net annual housing need level of 558 affordable homes for the three Dorset Council districts. This was based on the backlog of housing need, estimated newly forming households and existing households falling into need, minus the supply of new lettings. This shortfall is considerable, even without the additional assessment of need for West Dorset and Weymouth and Portland. As charts 54 and 55 below show, the number of households recorded on the housing waiting list as being in housing need has increased since the 2015 SHMA, and new lettings of social rented housing have reduced, which combines to create a greater and increasing backlog of need. Dorset Council will assess and take account of up-to-date levels of housing need across the new council wide area within local and neighbourhood plans, and other policies requiring this evidence base, which includes projections of an increase in newly forming households and numbers of existing households falling into need.

There is much needed work being done to improve housing opportunities for vulnerable residents, such as the Dorset Council and Dorset CCG partnership; Building Better Lives scheme for health, care and housing across Dorset is actively delivering their programme of social care and housing solutions, including temporary housing for adults with a social care need, in partnership with East Boro Housing Trust, and planning older persons or housing for adults with disabilities alongside GP practices. This positive joint programme has active involvement and input from housing services, who are responsible for developing the delivery of

<sup>77</sup> Annual Statutory Homelessness Release 2019-20, Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government

<sup>78</sup> Office of National Statistics, Mid-Year Estimates 2019

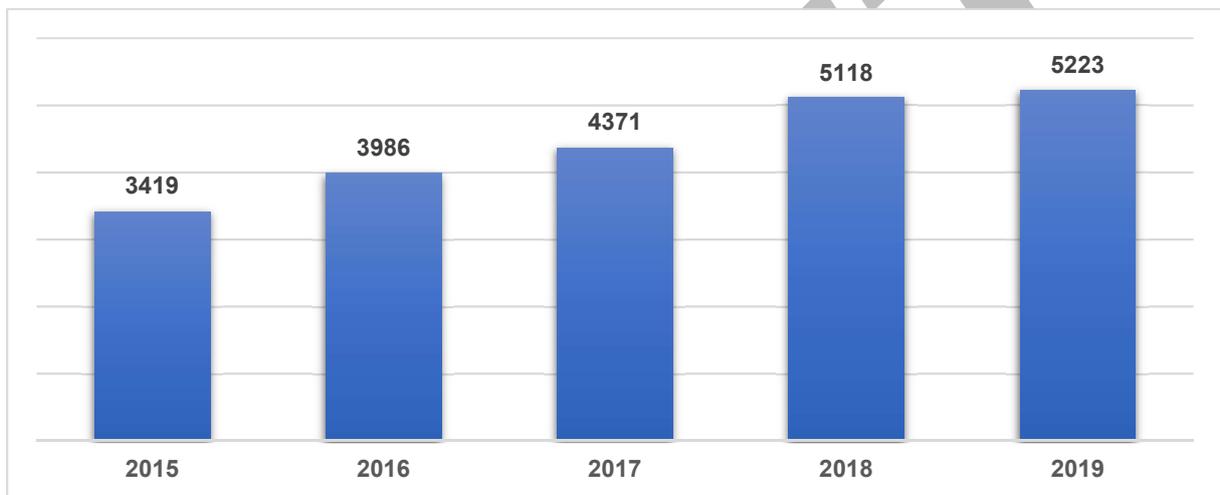
<sup>79</sup> Office of National Statistics, Mid-Year Estimates 2019

<sup>80</sup> Eastern Dorset Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2015, GL Hearn

the Dorset Housing Strategy, including an assessment of housing need for all household groups, and providing expertise in enabling in partnership with housing associations.

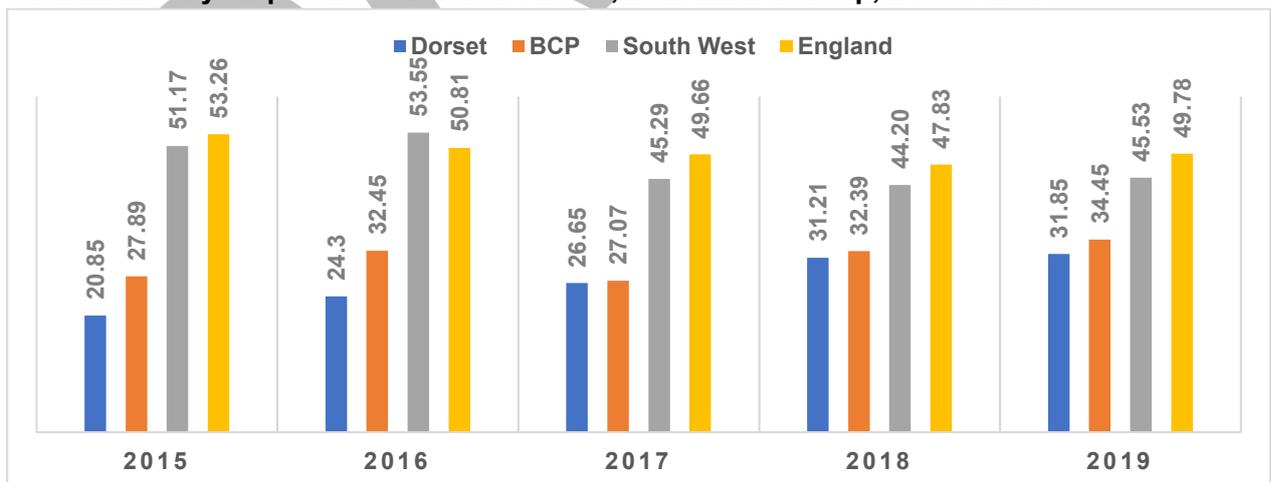
The number of households registered on the local authority housing waiting list has increased in Dorset year on year between 2015 and 2019. This is not in line with the local, regional, or national picture, whose numbers varied across the five-year period. Despite the annual increase, Dorset has fewer number of households registered per thousand households at March 2019 than all other areas in the Benchmark Group who have all seen increased household numbers on their waiting lists between 2018 and 2019, the greatest being that of BCP at 2.06 per thousand households increase, with Dorset having the lowest increase at 0.64 per thousand households increase.

**Chart 56: Number of households registered for an allocation of social rented housing, Dorset, 2015 to 2019**



Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

**Chart 57: Number of households registered on local authority housing waiting lists at end of each financial year per thousand households, Benchmark Group, 2015 to 2019**

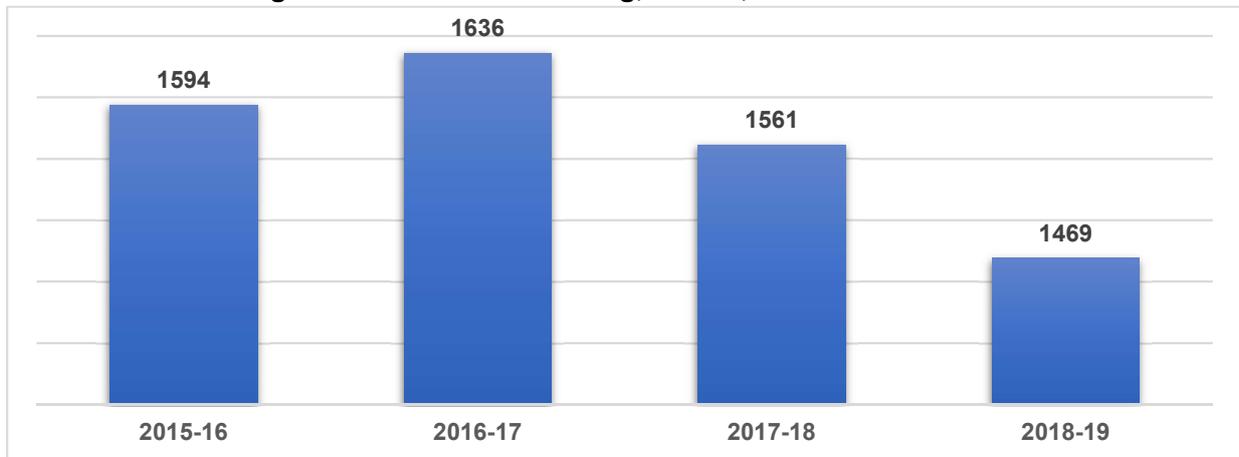


Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

The number of new lettings of social rented housing in Dorset have reduced since 2016-17 by 167 new lettings in 2017-18. Unlike Dorset, the number of new lettings of social rented housing in England has increased each year since 2016-17 and remains higher than Dorset and BCP.

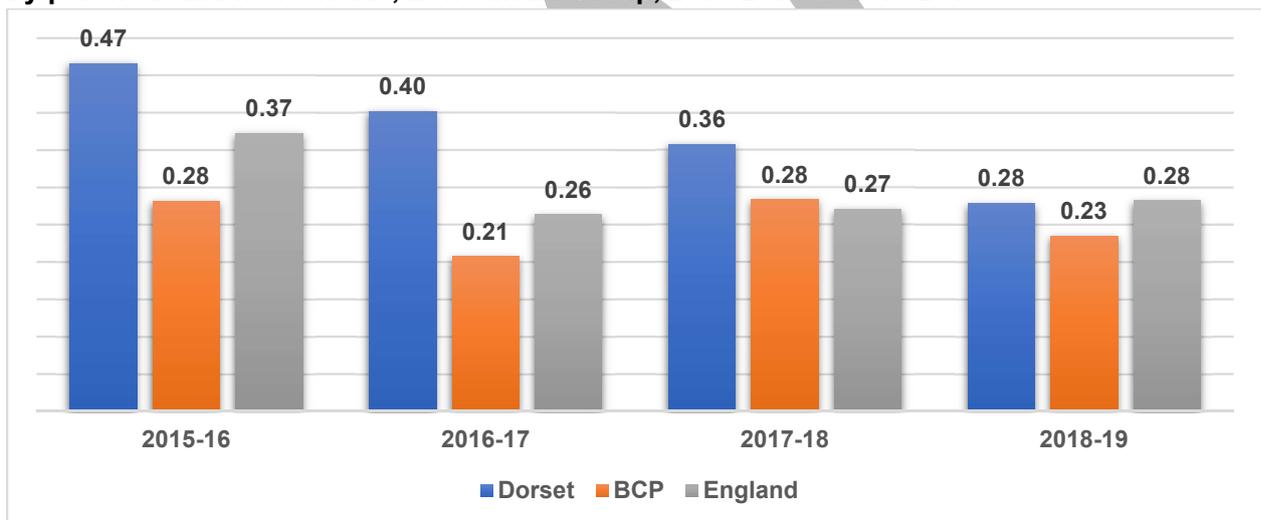
For 2018-19 England had 4.52 more social rented lettings per thousand households than Dorset.

**Chart 58: New lettings of social rented housing, Dorset, 2015-2016 to 2018-2019**



Source: ONS Social housing lettings in England.

**Chart 59: Ratio of New lettings of social rented housing to number on housing waiting lists by per thousand households, Benchmark Group, 2015-2016 to 2018-2019**



Source: ONS Social housing lettings in England.

It is important to note that although Dorset Council has chosen to transfer its housing stock, it cannot absolve itself of the legal responsibility to<sup>81</sup>:

1. Determine which persons qualify for an allocation of social rented housing,
2. Have an up-to-date housing allocation scheme,
3. Ensure allocations for social rented housing are made in accordance with the local scheme, and
4. Ensure information about the housing allocation scheme is readily available.

The administration of its public law housing allocation responsibilities include:

<sup>81</sup> The Local Authorities (Contracting Out of Allocation of Housing Accommodation and Homelessness Functions) Order 1996.

- Determining which applicants are eligible and qualify for an allocation of social rented housing,
- Notifying applicants of decisions made about their application for social rented housing,
- Providing advice, information, and assistance about making an application for social rent housing,
- Determining which applicants have priority for an allocation of social rented housing
- Determining if an applicant has a local connection that qualifies them for an allocation of social rented housing,
- Providing a summary of the how the Dorset Home Choice scheme operates, and
- Detecting any fraudulent application made for an allocation of social rented housing

The law<sup>82</sup> stipulates that a fairly good advantage for allocation of social rented housing must be given to any person who at risk of being homeless, this includes applicants in the following circumstances:

- Homeless<sup>83</sup> (including those owed a local housing authority duty to have their homelessness relieved<sup>84</sup>, but also people for whom the relief duty has come to an end and no further duty is owed, plus those who have never made an application for assistance)
- Intentionally homeless, eligible for assistance, and have a priority need for accommodation<sup>85</sup> (owed a duty by a local housing authority to have advice and accommodation for a reasonable period)
- Not intentionally homeless, eligible for assistance and have a priority need for accommodation<sup>86</sup> (owed a duty by a local housing authority to be provided with suitable accommodation)
- Threatened with homelessness and eligible for assistance<sup>87</sup> (owed a duty by a local housing authority to be prevented from becoming homeless).

Within the current Banding system, 73% of applications have been placed in two bands; Band 3: Silver, which includes households accepted for a prevention or relief duty; and Band 4: Bronze, which includes those threatened with homelessness as they have indicated on their application that they have been asked to leave their accommodation but have not been assessed for a homelessness duty. The 2% of applicants who are owed the main housing duty<sup>88</sup> are currently placed in Band 1: Emergency for a limited period for each of the former council areas.

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82 Housing Act 1996, Part 6, section 166A Allocation in accordance with allocation scheme, subsection (3)(a)(b)

83 Housing Act 1996, Part 7, section 175 Homelessness and threatened with homelessness

84 Housing Act 1996, Part 7, Section 189B Initial duty owed to all eligible persons who are homeless

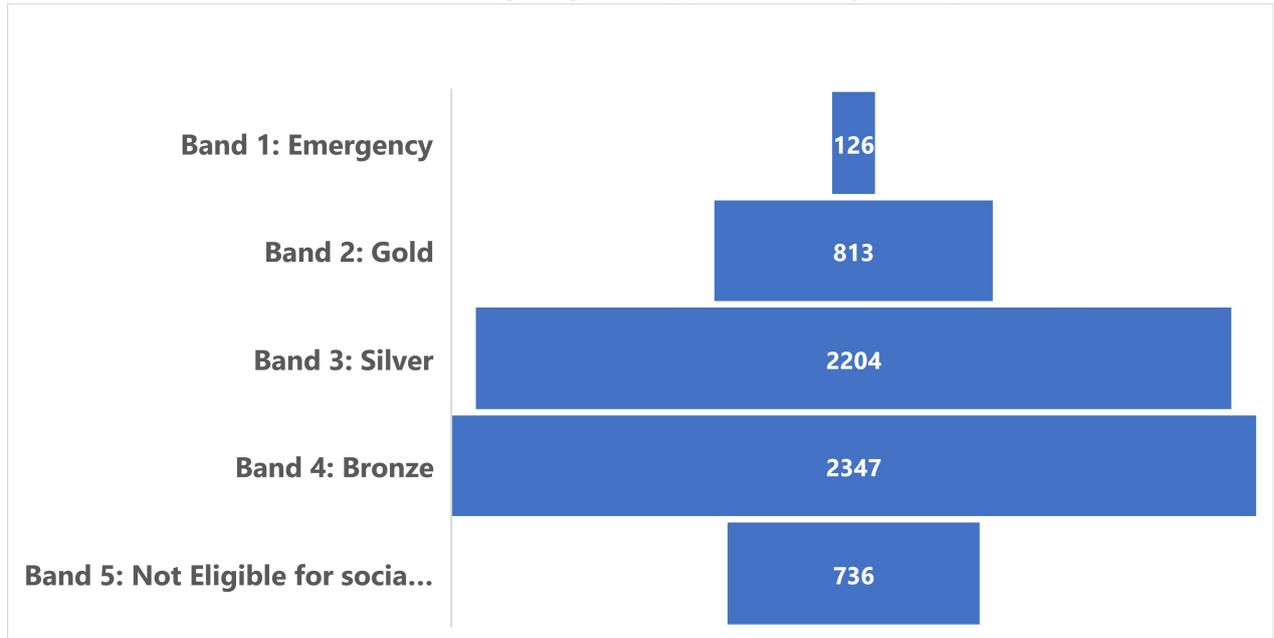
85 Housing Act 1996, Part 7, section 190 Duties to persons becoming intentionally homeless

86 Housing Act 1996, Part 7, section 193 Duty to persons with priority need who are not homeless intentionally

87 Housing Act 1996, Part 7, section Duties in cases of threatened homelessness

88 Housing Act 1996, Part 7, section 193 Duty to persons with priority need who are not homeless intentionally

**Chart 60: Number of Dorset Housing Register applications by Band, October 2020**



Source: Dorset Housing Register, October 2020

The proportion of households who have indicated on their housing application that they are at risk of homelessness due to being asked to leave their accommodation is 1.4% of those on the housing register, and those owed a prevention duty, relief duty or main duty make up a further 0.3%, 0.6% and 0.8% of the housing register respectively. This suggests that only 3.15% of the current Dorset housing register has stated in their application that they are at risk or homelessness, are homeless, or have been identified as such when being assessed for the register.

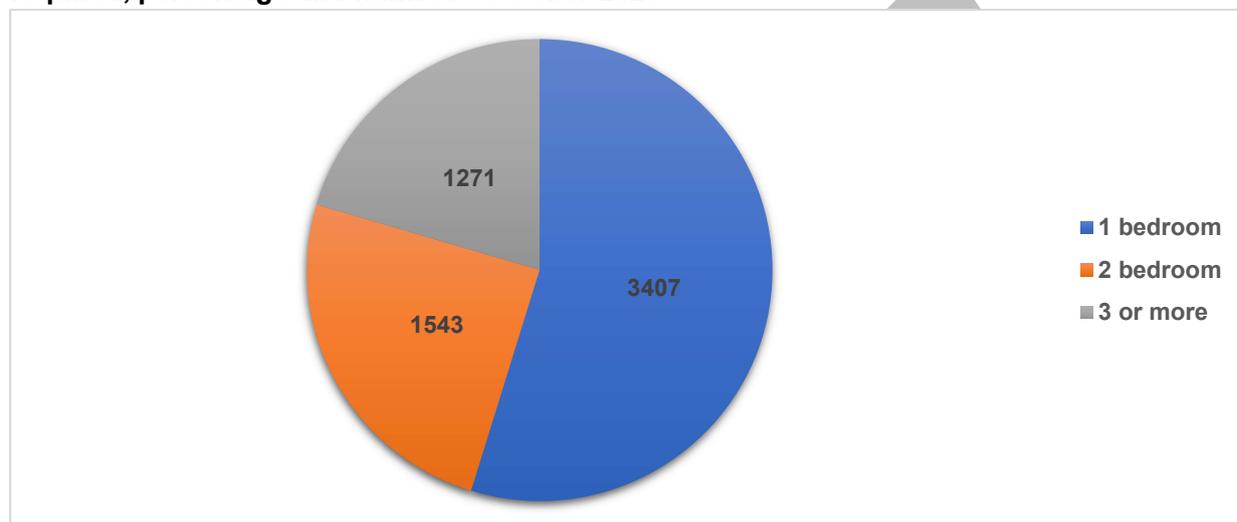
**Chart 61: Homelessness indicated on Dorset Housing Register application, by number of cases at each stage of homelessness, October 2020.**



Source: Dorset Council Housing Register October 2020

The largest proportion of households seeking social rented accommodation in Dorset through the housing register require one-bedroom accommodation. The growing numbers of single households with mental and physical health issues which can impact on the ability to secure and maintain appropriate accommodation is likely to increase further should the needs of these groups not be met.

**Chart 62: Number of Households registered on Dorset Housing Register number of bedrooms required, percentage and number - October 2020**



Source: Dorset Housing Register October 2020

Dorset Council is currently preparing for the implementation of the recently adopted Dorset Council Housing Allocations Policy<sup>89</sup>. The Statement on Choice within the policy confirms that the housing allocations ‘...scheme prioritises the need to reduce and eliminate homelessness...’<sup>90</sup>, and goes on to explain the ways in which applications from households owed a homelessness duty will be managed with regard to bidding for properties<sup>91</sup>.

Homeless households owed a full housing duty<sup>92</sup> will be placed in Band A<sup>93</sup>, alongside exceptional housing need: disrepair, medical and welfare, and statutory overcrowding<sup>94</sup>. Those owed a relief duty<sup>95</sup> will be placed in Band B, and those owed a prevention duty<sup>96</sup> will be placed in Band C.

### 4.3 Conclusion about activities to secure accommodation

Social rented housing is still the most sought after accommodation tenure and housing association partners have committed to building more of this. The increase in the use of social rented housing as temporary accommodation demonstrates that social housing providers are

89 Dorset Council Housing Allocations Policy, 2021 – 2026.

90 Dorset Council Housing Allocations Policy, 2021 – 2026, p.7, 4.4

91 Dorset Council Housing Allocations Policy, 2021 – 2026, p.7, paras 4.6 – 4.10

92 Housing Act, 1996, Part 7, section 193 Duty to persons with priority need who are not homeless intentionally

93 Dorset Council Housing Allocations Policy, 2021 – 2026, p.21

94 Housing Act 1985, Part X, section 324 definition of overcrowding

95 Housing Act 1996, Part 7, Section 189B Initial duty owed to all eligible persons who are homeless

96 Housing Act 1996, Part 7, section 195(2) Duties in cases of threatened homelessness

working more closely with the Council to support homeless households and provides a basis for increasing this provision.

It is somewhat inevitable that as homelessness has increased, the need for emergency and temporary accommodation has increased and as there is a shortage of most types of temporary accommodation this can also lead to an increase in the use of bed and breakfast and at times this is necessarily outside of the local authority area.

The number of Private Rented Sector Offer (PRSO) accommodation offers are currently low, but there is good use of the private rented sector evidenced by the rent deposit figures. The PRSO policy is not yet fully implemented county wide and this should be used in conjunction with a Dorset wide Suitability of Accommodation policy.

As an indicator of performance in reducing or maintaining the number of households in temporary accommodation, Dorset are performing well compared with the benchmark group, although there are clearly other councils in the South West and wider areas who have lower numbers of households in temporary accommodation per thousand households who could provide good practice examples.

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## 5. Providing support

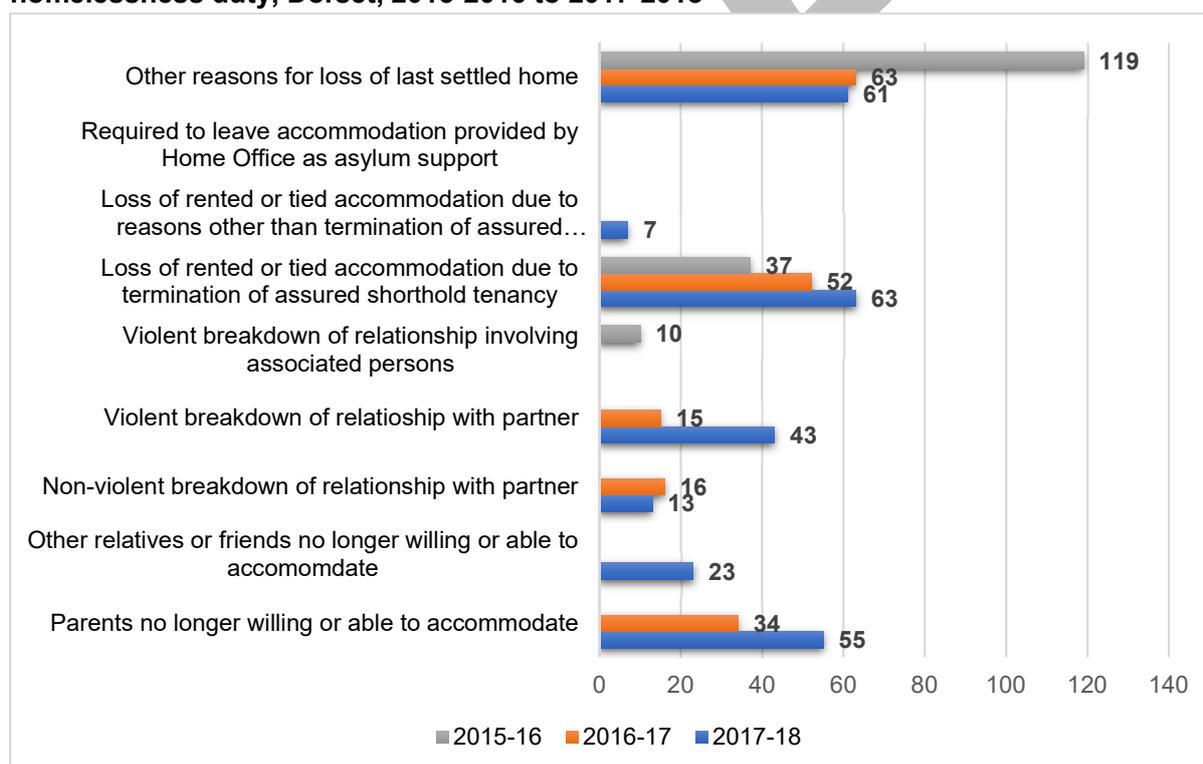
This chapter reviews the support provided to people who are homeless or have been homeless. Support can mean information, advice or assistance, all of which can help a person to stop being homeless, plus avert a repeat occurrence of homelessness in the future.

### 5.1 Support needs of people experiencing homelessness

The reasons why people become homeless offer an indication as to the support people require. Dorset Council collects some information on these factors, which has been analysed for the purpose of this review.

The main reason for the loss of the last settled home for those owed a main duty is termination of assured shorthold tenancy for 2017-2018. For the two years prior to this the main reason was recorded as 'Other', which for this data set includes left HM forces, homeless in emergency, sleeping rough or in hostel, or returned from abroad.

**Chart 63: Main reason for loss of last settled home for households owed a main homelessness duty, Dorset, 2015-2016 to 2017-2018**



Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

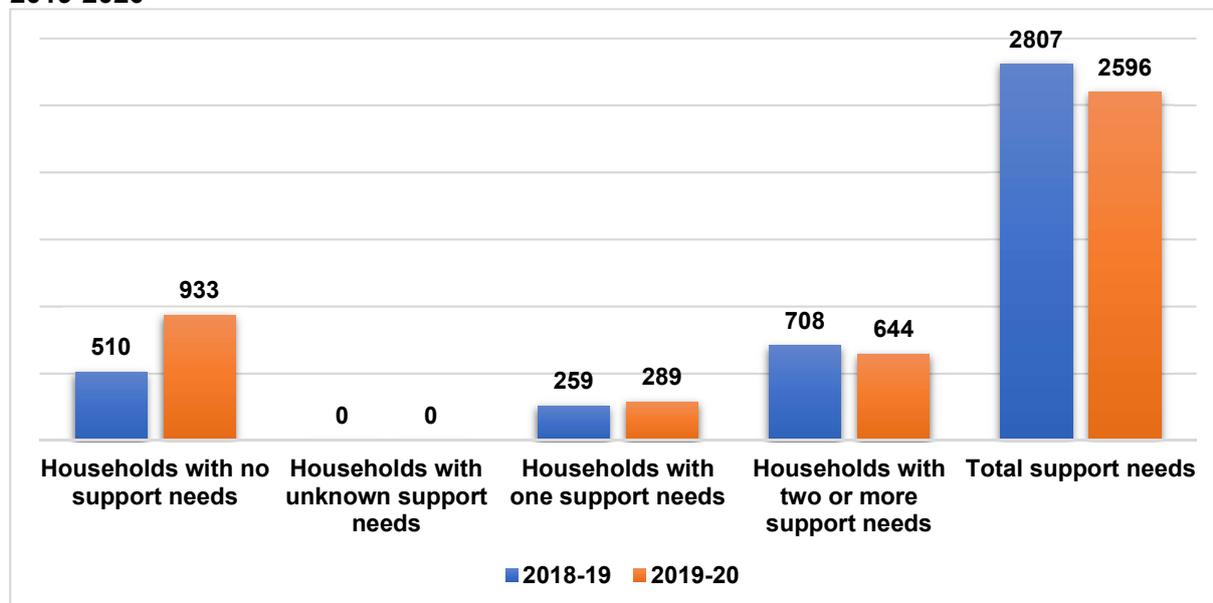
**Table 2: Reason for loss of last settled home (for those owed a prevention or relief duty). England, April to June 2020**

Family and friends no longer willing or able to accommodate	74,130
Non-violent relationship breakdown with partner	22,650
Violent relationship breakdown with partner or associated persons	26,580
Loss of rented or tied accommodation	90,030
Other reasons	75,110

Source: Ministry of Housing Communities & Local Government

The number of households owed a homelessness duty with support needs reduced between 2018-2019 and 2019-2020, with a subsequent reduction in the number of support needs. Of the households owed a homelessness duty with support needs, almost 70% have more than one support need.

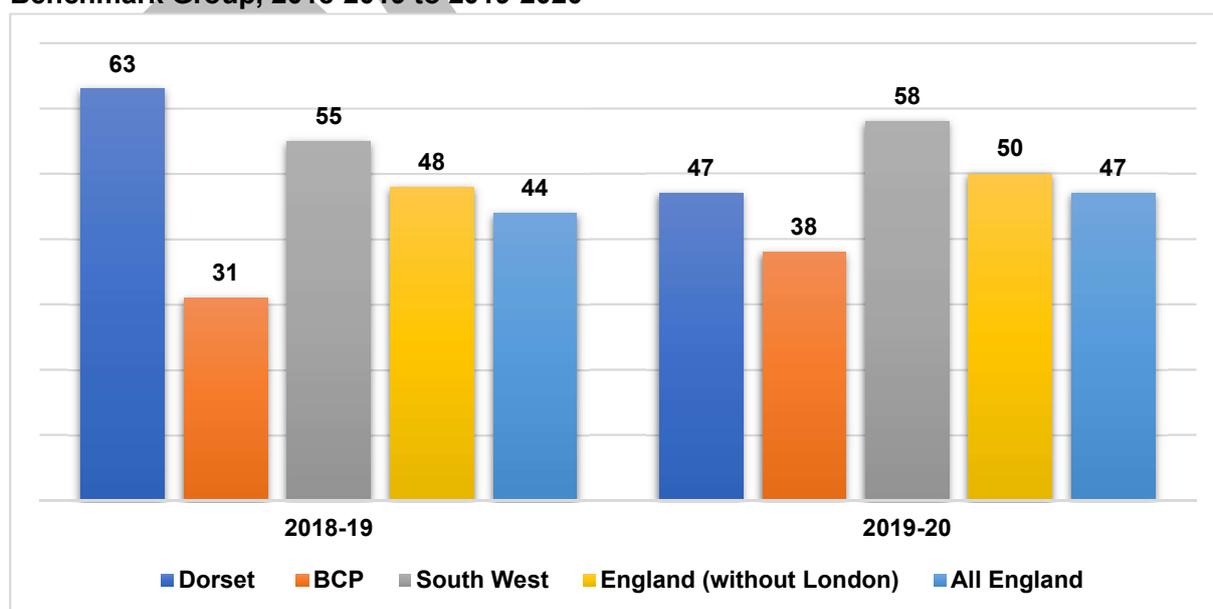
**Chart 64: Households with support needs owed a homelessness duty, Dorset, 2018-2019 to 2019-2020**



Source: Ministry of Housing Communities & Local Government

When compared as a percentage, the only reduction in the percentage of households owed a homelessness duty for 2018-2019 to 2019-2020 who have support needs was in Dorset, which reduced by 17% to 47%, the same level as All England.

**Chart 65: Percentage of households owed a homelessness duty that have support needs, Benchmark Group, 2018-2019 to 2019-2020**

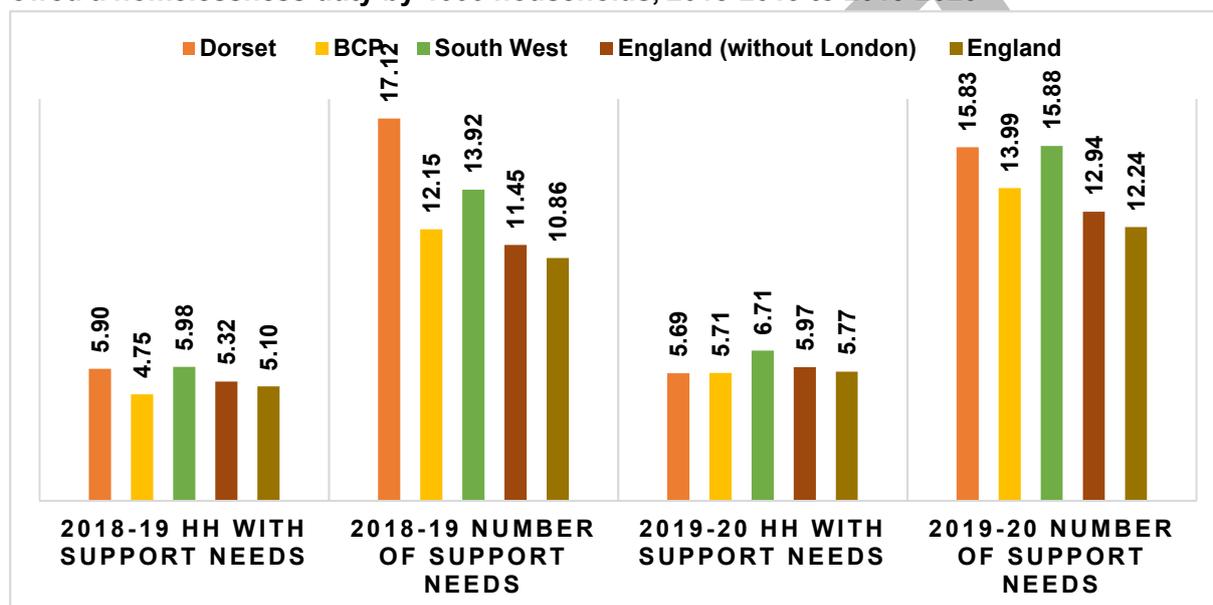


Source: Ministry of Housing Communities & Local Government

The number of households with support needs per one thousand households has increased in each of the benchmarked areas, with the exception of Dorset which reduced by 0.21 per thousand households to 5.69.

Support needs per thousand households also decreased for Dorset by 1.34 per thousand households to 15.83 for the two years analysed, while all other benchmarked areas have increased. The South West region has 0.05 per thousand support needs greater than Dorset for 2019-20, while BCP has 1.84 fewer, England without London has 2.89 fewer and England All has 3.59 fewer support needs per thousand households.

**Chart 66: Total number of households with support needs, and support needs among those owed a homelessness duty by 1000 households, 2018-2019 to 2019-2020**

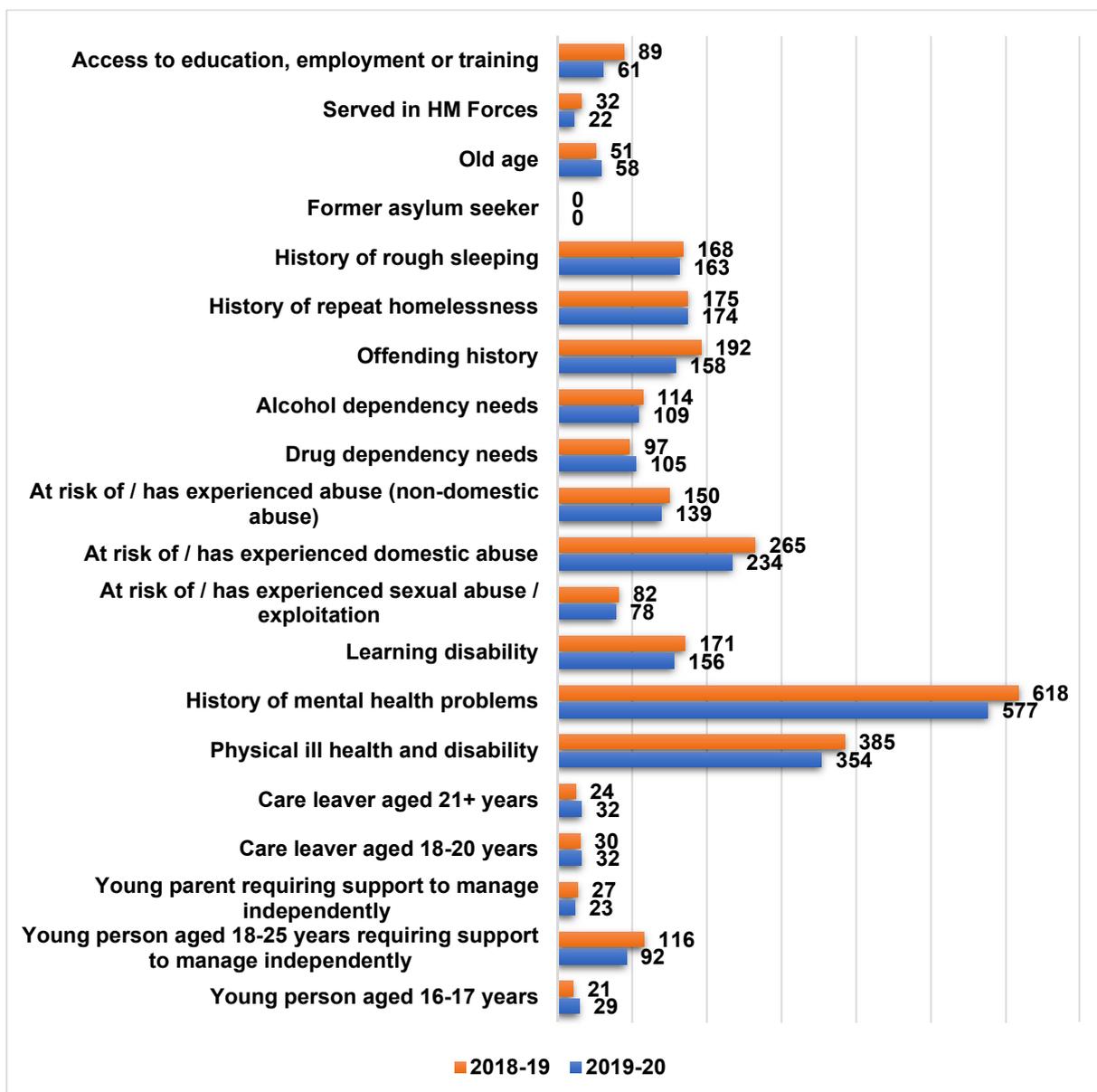


Source: Ministry of Housing Communities & Local Government

## 5.2 Housing support

The most commonly required support need of households in Dorset who are owed a homelessness duty is due to a history of mental ill health at 577 households in 2019-2020, down by 41 in 2018-2019. This is followed by physical health and disability, down by 31 households from 2018-2019 to 354 in 2019-2020. Households requiring support because they are at risk or have experienced domestic abuse is the third most commonly required support need, at 234 households in 2019-20. Those requiring support due to a history of rough sleeping, offending, or repeat homelessness, or those with a learning disability are all at similar levels for both years but remain significant.

**Chart 67: Households owed a homelessness duty by support need, Dorset, 2018-2019 to 2019-2020**



Source: Ministry of Housing Communities & Local Government

### 5.3 Other support

The Integrated Prevention and Support Services budget and commissioning is managed by Adult Services Commissioning Team. These services are focussed on housing and wellbeing and linked to emergency local assistance, which helps to prevent homelessness, and designed so that the money follows the individual. The following organisations are some of those that have been commissioned to deliver support services within this programme.

- First Point, a self-referral service in Weymouth, offers people over 16 housing related support to tackle housing related issues, including budgeting, eviction and court action as well as helping to secure suitable accommodation. First point will also assist people experiencing domestic abuse and provide the You First domestic abuse helpline for Dorset, part of The You Trust Charity.

- Shelter Housing First is funded by Dorset Council and because of extensive work with PRPs during the commissioning the support resources were at the right level for the residents. There are 3 support workers supporting 11 residents and there is close working with the Council Homelessness Service, NHS and The Lantern as well as increasing collaboration with registered providers. The scheme is to be evaluated financially as there is identified need and the potential, to expand. Shelter also have a legal aid contract for Dorset and are working to defend housing possessions but much of their work is because families feel that things are not going well with their housing or homelessness application or where people have been in B&B too long. Like other organisations Shelter worked closely with the Council's homelessness service during the Everyone In work and devised an assessment for people placed in the hostels which MHCLG commented was very thorough. As there is an appetite for this work to continue, they would like to build on this.
- Julian House has a dedicated assertive outreach service in Dorset that aims to help provide food, drug and alcohol treatment, mental health support and accommodation to people sleeping on the streets. Julian House started with just two part time staff in 2015 but took on the Dorset contract in December 2017 and have grown from there attracting other funding. The MHCLG Rough Sleeper Initiative paid for two full time outreach workers and a navigator. The navigator service works with people from the street, through B&B and into rented properties. Additional Rough Sleeper Initiative funding and Rapid Rehousing Pathway enabled three full time navigators and another one and a half outreach workers to cover the whole of the Dorset Council area, who helps to support some long-standing clients tucked away in wooded areas, who are very unwell.
- The Lantern receive funding from Dorset Council Integrated Prevention Support to fund the core running costs of the community resource centre, deliver outreach work in West Dorset, manage a micro-hostel and a supported lettings service for rough sleepers. Supported letting residents receive a personal budget of £800 funded through the MHCLG Rapid Housing Pathway which enables a fast tenancy set up purchasing white goods and other necessities. Some staff have lived experience of homelessness and understand the difference this type of support makes when starting a tenancy. The Lantern believe in mobilising support to meet people where they are at. They consider themselves an old school charity, who apply for pots of money that are really dynamic and flexible, for example, COVID-19 money bought PlayStations for people that had been on the street for a length of time and were now in their room alone. People that seek support from The Lantern are, in their words, very eclectic. As well as those living on the street, working people approach, for financial support. The Lantern find that there is a transience of service users that travel between Bournemouth, and Weymouth which needs addressing between the two councils to try and find more settled accommodation for those that migrate between the two areas.
- The Bus Shelter Dorset is based in Weymouth and works with rough sleepers and receives self-referrals and referrals from agencies such as Probation, with the aim of giving a dry place to sleep for the night, a hot meal, a PO box to enable registering with a GP and applying for benefits and some support if they are ready for it. The double decker bus did have 14 beds as shared accommodation, but at the beginning of the

COVID-19 crisis their residents were put into firstly a hotel, then a hostel, and are now living in a large house with self-contained units. These units have a shower and toilet and training room. Initially the idea of the Bus in Dorset was controversial as it is a new charity and there were local concerns with the bus being located on a corner of the beach car park. The charity proved it is well run, housing benefit staff visited to appraise the set up and the Council are now supportive, helping to secure funding and providing a direct line to a housing benefit officer as the residents are now in accommodation with an occupancy agreement. The Bus has been relocated close to the Park and Ride further out of town on Dorset Council Land. They have a wood workshop where one long standing resident teaches others woodwork skills, and another teaches cookery skills. They consider that the right support at the right time is the only thing that works; the route out of homelessness is different for everyone and some may never get off the bus. The charity is hopeful that they and others will be able to secure capital funding to improve opportunities for move on to suitable accommodation with a support worker as needed.

There are also several foodbanks across the county managed by various charities with access through CAB, housing associations, and Dorset Council.

#### **Good Practice: Dorset NHS Trust Homeless Health Service**

The Dorset Healthcare University NHS Trust Homeless Health Service<sup>97</sup> provides intensive support for rough sleepers who have a physical or Mental Health condition. During the 'Everyone In' programme this team of five, including two Mental Health Nurse Practitioners and two Physical Health Nurse Practitioners, worked with other services to provide much needed medical support, in hotels where rough sleepers were being temporarily housed. The team cover all Dorset, including BCP areas, and have a base in Weymouth but see patients in the community, even when they are sleeping rough. Many rough sleepers have complex mental health support needs and are not able to access mainstream services, so this is a vital service that any agency or individual can refer into. The service recently successfully supported Dorset Council Housing and Public Health, through strategic groups to secure £306,713 for substance misuse services from MHCLG as many homeless patients require detox services and intensive support to help them move towards living independently. The Service have found that rough sleepers need vocational support as well as practical, to help them sustain a life off the street. All have early trauma and substance misuse problems and do not know who to trust. The most entrenched rough sleepers in Dorset struggle with rules, procedure, routine, and don't like being told what to do. Many of this group have mental health disorders for which there is currently no medication or quick fix treatment pathway. The approach to this group needs to be very tailored and it has been recognised that this is an increasing issue. There is now a NICE guidance pathway for this and the Community Mental Health Team recognise the issue but are concerned that substances like spice are being used regularly, which makes it very difficult to help the rough sleeper.

In response to the national NHS Long Term Plan<sup>98</sup> Dorset Council and local NHS services are working in partnership through Our Dorset integrated care partnership to deliver a shared plan

<sup>97</sup> Homeless Health Service [www.dorsethealthcare.nhs/homeless-health-service](http://www.dorsethealthcare.nhs/homeless-health-service)

<sup>98</sup> NHS Long Term Plan v1.2 August 2019, <https://www.longtermplan.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/nhs-long-term-plan-version-1.2.pdf>

to improve the health and wellbeing of residents. The plan acknowledges the influence of housing on mental and emotional health and wellbeing, as well as the lack of suitable affordable housing leading to high numbers of households in temporary accommodation. Joint aspirations include:

- Increasing the supply of new homes to meet local needs including affordable, sustainable housing
- Reducing dependence on bed and breakfast accommodation by increasing temporary accommodation.
- Helping those with specialist care and support needs to live independently
- Developing services to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping

The plan was tabled at the Dorset Health and Wellbeing Board on 30 October 2019. Following this Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group carried out the Mental Health Rehabilitation Review<sup>99</sup> which recommended:

- 2 Community Rehab Units (one east and one west of the county)
- Community Rehab and Assertive Outreach Teams working across the county
- Supported Housing available across the county
- 1 High Dependency Unit

## **5.4 Conclusions about activities to provide support**

Almost half of all households owed a homelessness duty in 2019-20 have at least one support need. While this is a small reduction the previous year, it is significant and again demonstrates the need to ensure that it is available to prevent, relieve and stop the repeat of homelessness. Comparing support needs per thousand households provides further understanding of the scale of the issue. As neighbouring BCP has a lower number of households with support needs and fewer per thousand households, understanding the reasons for this may be useful for Dorset in commissioning the type and level of support activity required to bring this level down.

The support services commissioned by Dorset Council to help tackle homelessness are providing wide ranging and innovative outcomes and making a real difference to homeless and vulnerable people. These services are at capacity the majority of the time and are continually seeking resources to expand to meet the need.

The increase in the number of households recorded as having a priority need due to mental and physical ill-health has led to the NHS and adult services looking to assess needs and secure bespoke accommodation for their service users.

The remaining former supporting people budget is managed by Adult Services Commissioning Team to provide the Integrated Prevention and Support Services. These services are focussed on housing and wellbeing, linked to emergency local assistance and designed so that the money follows individual which all helps to prevent homelessness,

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<sup>99</sup> The Mental Health Rehabilitation Review, 2019, <https://www.dorsetccg.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/09.6-Mental-Health-Rehabilitation-Review-170719.pdf> report 3.7.19

## 6. Resources for tackling homelessness

This chapter reviews the resources available to carry out activities to tackle homelessness. For the purpose of this review, resources being considered are the money, people and I.T. available to the local housing authority.

### 6.1 Money

Dorset Council is legally obliged to discharge the administration of homelessness and is responsible for funding this. The homelessness service carries out a range of activities including homelessness prevention, housing options advice and the provision and management of temporary accommodation. These activities are described in chapters three and four of this review. Alongside the money committed from Dorset Councils revenue budget, additional funding is awarded by MHCLG.

The UK Government has made the Homelessness Reduction Act Grant available to help fund the new burdens arising from the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. This has been used, for example to upgrade case management and data collection IT systems and to fund additional staff to assist with the newly introduced initial assessments. This funding is currently only guaranteed until 2021.

**Table 3: MHCLG Homelessness Reduction Act Grant, Benchmark Group 2020-2021**

Area	Amount	% of budget
England	£62m	100% of national budget
South West	£3,888,513	6.27% of national budget
BCP	£ 274,127	7.05% of regional budget
Dorset	£225,777	5.8% of regional budget

Source: Ministry of Housing Communities & Local Government

Flexible Housing Support Grant replaced the Temporary Accommodation Subsidy regime previously administered by the Department for Work & Pensions, for more than a decade until March 2017<sup>100</sup>. The new funding arrangement replaced a tightly controlled subsidy system to procure and manage temporary accommodation, which could only be used once a person had become homeless. The new grant system enables flexibility to spend the funding on preventing homelessness, in addition to assisting those who are homeless.

**Table 4: Flexible Homelessness Support Grant, Benchmark Group 2020-2021**

Area	Amount	% of budget
England	£200m	100% of national budget
South West	£11,769,370	5.88% of national budget
BCP	£1,181,860	10.04% of regional budget
Dorset	£442,352	3.76% of regional budget

Source: Ministry of Housing Communities & Local Government

The new round of Rough Sleeper Initiative funding allocations announced in January 2020 was to help more rough sleepers into accommodation, designed to deliver 6,000 additional bedspaces and 2,500 support staff. The funding is to support or create street outreach

<sup>100</sup> Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government. (2017). Flexible homelessness support grant – funding allocations formula explanation

services, secure hostel and shelter type accommodation, and deliver specialist support to rough sleepers to help them remain off the street.

**Table 5: Rough Sleeper Initiative, Benchmark Group 2020-2021**

Area	Amount	% of budget
England	£112m	100% of national budget
BCP	£ 1,401,333	1.2% of national budget
Dorset	£472,470	0.42% of national budget

Source: Ministry of Housing Communities & Local Government

The Next Steps Accommodation Programme short-term funding is for interim accommodation and support for those rough sleepers accommodated during the pandemic, funding such activities as helping people into private rented accommodation or helping to reconnect them with their community, as well as the procurement of interim accommodation. This is revenue funding only and must be used in 2020-2021.

**Table 6: Next Steps Accommodation Programme funding 2020/21 - Short term accommodation and intermediate support funding – revenue only, Benchmark Group 2020-2021**

Area	Amount	% of budget
England	£105m	100% of national budget
South West	£7,398,160	7.05% of national budget
BCP	£1,884,766	2.06% of national budget
Dorset	£624,000	0.65% of national budget

Source: Ministry of Housing Communities & Local Government

The Next Steps Accommodation Programme capital funding, allocated to secure new units of accommodation, has also been made available for use during 2020-2021, to bring forward long term move-on accommodation as part of a four-year £433 million programme to secure 6,000 additional supported homes in England, 3300 to be delivered in 2020-2021. MHCLG guidance confirms that this funding allocation is for both capital and revenue based longer term accommodation provision, and that the deadline for delivering the new units of accommodation is 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021.

**Table 7: Next Steps Accommodation Programme Capital Funding – Longer Term move on accommodation funding, Benchmark Group 2020-2021**

Area	Amount	% of budget
England	£161,000,000	100% of national budget
BCP	£5,048,634	3.14% of national budget
Dorset	£1,556,730	0.97% of national budget

Source: Ministry of Housing Communities & Local Government

As part of the £6million MHCLG Covid19 Emergency Response fund for small charitable organisations dealing with homelessness, several South West charities successfully bid for funding to help rough sleepers and other vulnerable people during the pandemic. While the successful charities are not located within the Dorset Council boundaries their services may still be accessible in Dorset and are therefore a potential additional resource.

## 6.2 People

The structure of the Housing Options and Homelessness teams in place following the merger of the former district and county councils into the new single Dorset Council, and at the time of writing this report, were under review following initial arrangements that were adopted. There are some vacant posts due to leavers and secondments, and the service still appears to be working as separate services. The teams are still mainly operating from the former district locations under three team leaders, while the homelessness accommodation function is being carried out separately. This has occasionally caused some issues with refusal of homeless placements where the Council have an interim accommodation duty, but the history and behaviour of the service user is seen as a risk if they were placed in temporary accommodation. These issues may be easily resolvable if there was no physical or managerial separation of these functions.

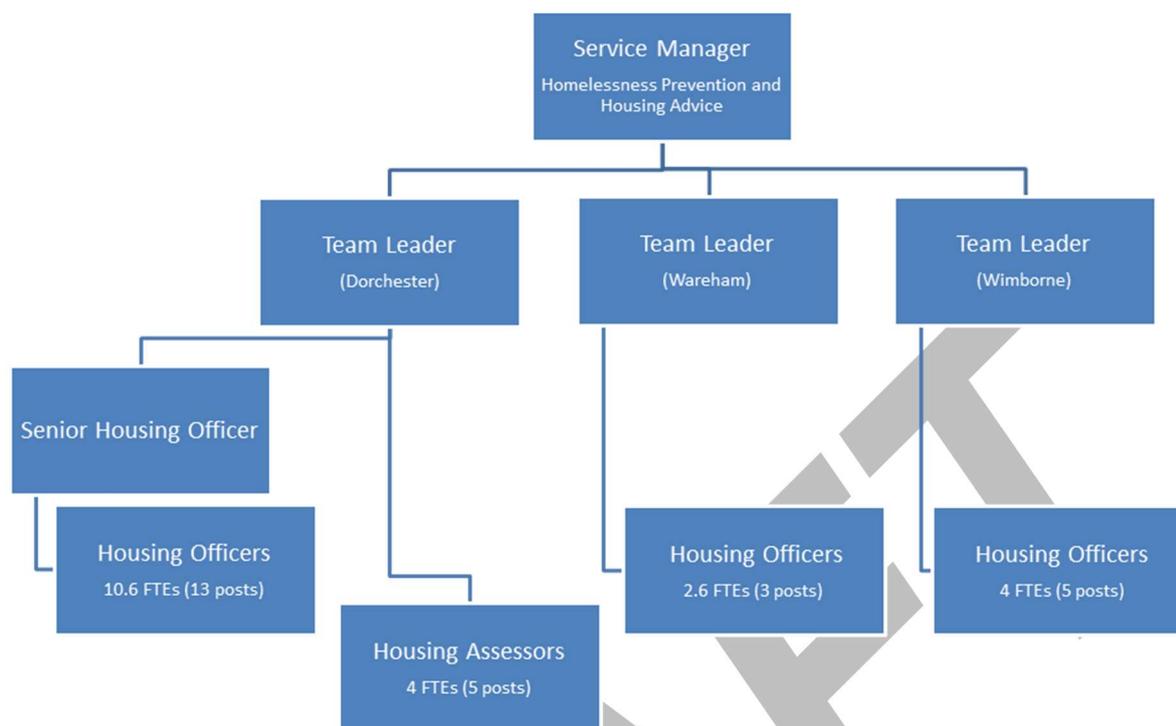
There is a great deal of experience within the service, both in local government housing and homelessness as well as from related external organisations. A concern was expressed by officers that there have been a number of secondments of homelessness team members which have destabilised teams a little, and although it is seen as positive that staff have such opportunities, it would be best to let the service settle and new structures and working practices embed after the many changes, before offering placements elsewhere.

Officers consider that homelessness casework is good, but that training is not yet coordinated which means, for example, that caselaw updates have not been disseminated. Some additional staff are needed to ensure casework is thoroughly completed every opportunity is taken to prevent homelessness. A dedicated review officer will be coming into post shortly.

The merger of Dorset councils has left some strategic gaps within the Housing Service and this is evidenced when looking at the housing enabling function, which is currently being resolved in order to enable a great deal more affordable and supported housing, and this expertise and support would benefit the Building Better Lives Programme.

A current structure chart for the team is shown below.

**Diagram 1: Dorset Council Homelessness Service staffing structure, November 2020**



### 6.3 I.T.

The current IT system used across Dorset Housing Service is a modular system with components to support the functions of advice, initial assessment including PHP, prevention and relief, main duty, and temporary accommodation as well as housing register.

There is an online portal within which all able service users are required to apply and self-serve. The system components have not been fully integrated across Dorset as the original commission for the software was for the former individual districts. The procurement of a single, integrated IT system to support the service will take place during 2021-22.

The current statistical collection provided to MHCLG each quarter is still termed 'experimental' by MHCLG in this third year of usage, and there is anecdotal evidence at local level, including in Dorset, that there are still concerns about the accuracy of data collection which should be addressed. There have been concerns from MHCLG regarding the numbers of households who are recorded as having been evicted from supported housing. It is probable that these are general needs social housing evictions and not supported social housing evictions, but some service users have not always understood the terms used and recorded their former accommodation incorrectly. These are both social housing, and eviction is a serious concern generally, but eviction from supported housing, where a person with support needs is being helped to sustain a tenancy and this has failed, is a far more complex issue. Ensuring accurate data requires time spent on case management and effective verification. This investment in time will help to ensure focussed, targeted prevention services will be more effective and help to reduce additional time and costs through the homeless process.

The data collected through H-CLIC is relevant and comprehensive and useful to underpin evidence-based policy decisions. There are still additional datasets which are not recorded on H-CLIC which would be of use to Dorset in planning and delivering services, which should be collected outside of the system.

## **6.4 Conclusions about resources for tackling homelessness**

Performance management, including the recording and analysis of performance data needs to be accurate and supported by regular audit to ensure accuracy. Benchmarking the range and success of activities currently in place to prevent homelessness against other local housing authorities is not currently completed regularly.

Local housing authority homelessness service is a public law function, and as part of this function homeless decisions must be made, usually following a thorough investigation of the facts of the case. To be competent to fulfil this duty, appropriate and regular training in housing and homelessness law is required.

All policies and procedures should be reviewed with the exception of the newly adopted Housing Allocations Policy to ensure that they are up to date and adhered to.

The homelessness Forum is an example of good practice and could be used to bid for external resources or effectively engaging with service users.

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## **7. Consultation**

This chapter shows the results from two surveys carried out with service users and stakeholders. The surveys were carried out to gather quantitative data on people's attitudes, opinions and experiences of homelessness in Dorset Council.

### **7.1 Service user consultation**

Between 14/11/2020 to 8/12/2020 a total of 30 responses were received by people who had experienced homelessness and homelessness services in Dorset by way of an online survey to complete the Dorset Council Homeless Strategy April 2021. The survey was made up of 12 questions and achieved an 100% response rate.

27% of these described themselves as currently homeless, including two people describing themselves as currently sleeping rough, 20% as being threatened with homelessness and 43% as formerly homeless, now in settled housing.

12% of respondents had been homeless on at least one previous occasion and 46% believed being helped up to two months before crisis would help them prevent homelessness.

53% thought that the best housing option when homeless or threatened with homelessness was social rented housing. 70% felt that when homeless or threatened with homelessness, the most important matter to get help with was to find a house and 67% of service users agreed that homelessness funding should be used to secure additional accommodation.

57% of service users completing the survey were female, and 51% were aged 25 to 54 years. 43% lived alone and all who stated an ethnic group were of a white ethnic origin.

The full survey and summary responses can be seen at Appendix 2.

### **7.2 Stakeholder consultation**

Councillors including members of the People and Health Overview Committee were consulted on two occasions before and after this Homelessness Review and helped to develop the strategy and action plan.

Interviews of 22 stakeholders and staff were carried out to inform the review and strategy. A summary of responses to stakeholder interview questions can be seen at Appendix 3

There was also an online survey were made available for stakeholders. A total of 8 responses were received, an 11% response rate. The number of respondents was insufficient to provide information on the remaining questions within the survey however, the summary of survey responses can be seen at Appendix 4.

### **7.3 Conclusions about consultation**

The response to the service user survey was good, with a range of household types and reasons for homelessness.

The Elected Member Workshops were also useful and Member input helped to formulate the Strategy and Action Plan.

The Stakeholder survey response rate was low however the stakeholder interviews were comprehensive and provided much useful information and recommendations.

The overriding findings from the consultation were:

- Social rented housing is still the preferred accommodation for people in housing difficulty due to the affordability and security of tenure.
- The prevalence of single males and single females presenting as homeless with mental and physical health problems, resulting in homelessness or exacerbating their difficulties in maintaining accommodation.
- The right support is successful in preventing and relieving homelessness, and local support services are delivering this, but they are too stretched and much more is needed.

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## 8. Findings

This chapter re-visits the conclusions set out at the end of each chapter of the report. As a direct response to the conclusions are a series of recommendations. These recommendations are for the use of the local authority to prioritise actions for the next homeless strategy.

### 8.1 Conclusions

#### 8.1.1 Levels of Homelessness

1. Over 24% of children in Dorset are living in poverty, at risk of homelessness, and the repeat cycle of poverty.
2. Ensure that effective information, advice and support is available at points across Dorset that are naturally accessed by all households, such as schools, DWP, supermarkets, sports clubs, foodbanks, GP surgeries and hospitals etc, to alleviate real poverty and prevent the threat of homeless at every possible opportunity.
3. Enable the teaching of homelessness awareness in primary and secondary schools, plus provide teaching resources and training for teachers to deliver within curriculum.
4. The housing register application process relies on the applicant's online entry or assessment officer validation to identify households that are threatened with homelessness or at risk of homelessness. This could be resulting in many missed opportunities to provide early intervention to prevent homelessness.
5. Some housing associations are refusing nominations, including those of homeless households, as they do not meet their lettings criteria. This is mainly due to a high level of rent arrears or previous anti-social behaviour.
6. Most referrals to the homelessness service were not required to be sent under the Duty to Refer but it is hoped that these will increase over time.
7. There is an increasing number of single adults with poor mental or physical health becoming homeless, as well as those with problems with drugs and alcohol. The NHS is targeting this issue and remodelling its rehabilitation services across Dorset in response to this need.

#### 8.1.2 Activities to prevent homelessness

1. Homelessness prevention is being achieved by other agencies in addition to the Council and the commissioned services, including early prevention activity that is not commissioned as a homelessness prevention service such as housing association tenancy support. This data should be recorded and shared to inform services.
2. The flow and numbers from the prevention duty owed stage to other duty owed stages is not yet clear.
3. The Homeless Services still appears to be working as separate local authority areas, due to the geographical scale of Dorset. This can cause difficulty for staff who do not yet have wider knowledge of Dorset
4. The commissioned support services require recommissioning in 2022, which provide an opportunity for Housing and Homelessness Services to engage more fully in defining their requirements.
5. The number of offenders recorded as becoming homeless from secure estates is small, but there are reportedly a greater number rough sleeping or sofa surfing as they were homeless following release.
6. A housing officer trained by Children's services to liaise between the two services is an excellent resource for both services. There is still a complex area of work that would benefit from additional focus to help care leavers and other young people to resolve their housing difficulties.

7. There are a range of prevention activities available to members or former members of the Armed Forces delivered by voluntary and statutory agencies, but it is reportedly difficult to identify former serving personnel who are in housing difficulty, to refer into those services.
8. There are a small number of people discharged from hospital following illness or injury, who are unable to access their former rented home, and have no alternative accommodation. The shortage of adapted temporary or permanent housing can result in substantial costs to the council in funding an inpatient bed.
9. The Dorset Tenancy Strategy requires a review and a new strategy formulated.
10. The end of an assured shorthold tenancy is one of the main reasons recorded for the loss of the last settled home in Dorset, and although housing association tenancies coming to an end is a small number, it is significant. More work must be done on both tenure to intervene at an earlier stage to prevent homelessness.
11. Case file checks are carried out by Homelessness Services Team Leaders to ensure accuracy of decisions and identify training needs. There is also an opportunity to learn what more could be done, and at what stage, to prevent homelessness, if these files were considered from a different perspective.
12. Negative outcomes of an assessment, whether it be prevention, relief or main housing duty, such as someone found to be intentionally homeless, lost contact with the Council, etc, leaves the risk of a continued cycle of homelessness for that household.
13. Rough sleepers are moving between Dorset and BCP on a regular basis, and although this transience is not unusual, it can be indicative of low levels of support and other appropriate services to support rough sleepers locally.
14. Housing Associations who are working in partnership with Dorset Council are working hard to house and support homeless households, but this is not the case overall. In addition, the number of evictions from social housing in Dorset is high, and more could be done to encourage these landlords to help tackle homelessness in Dorset.
15. There is no early identification of potential cases of threatened homelessness, prior to the time a prevention duty would be assessed, outside of agency referrals including under the Duty to Refer.

### **8.1.3 Activities to secure accommodation**

1. Housing association partners have expressed their commitment to increase their housing stock within the Council area. There is no current housing strategy to support this or other initiatives that could help to secure additional accommodation across tenures.
2. Households are regularly placed in TA away from their community in another unfamiliar part of Dorset, and even outside of the Dorset Council area, as there is a shortage of all types of temporary accommodation locally, which needs addressing.
3. Housing association partners are not always able to accept nominations for their accommodation as the nominee does not meet the requirements of their lettings policy, regardless of their position on the housing register. This also applies to homeless households who may have former tenancy debts for example. Nominees are not always aware that they are bidding on properties that they will not qualify for with the housing association.
4. Feedback regarding temporary accommodation varies with some stakeholders dissatisfied about the location quality of some accommodation as well as the levels of housing management available.
5. Good use has been made of the PRS with financial assistance but figures for PRSO's have been low. There is a Private Rented Sector Offer/discharge Policy (PRSO) but this does not cover the whole of Dorset and would benefit from reviewing and being updated alongside a Suitability of Accommodation policy

#### **8.1.4 Activities to provide support**

1. There is considerable good practice and innovation from the majority of commissioned support services as well as Homelessness Services in preventing and relieving homelessness, but this has not been showcased or used to demonstrate the need for additional support resources.
2. There is a clear need for additional support services and supported housing but there is no up to date needs assessment which includes the needs of adults and children's services as well as that of the NHS, and there is a risk that several needs assessments and strategies to deliver these homes and services will be completed in silos.
3. There is limited outreach support, but there should be more understanding of how people in need of support to resolve homelessness problems can be reached before they access public services, to allow earlier engagement.
4. The external support services are not commissioned by housing and are not therefore formally inspected by them. The Commissioning team work very closely with Homelessness Services in commissioning and reviewing the services, but regular service inspections from the perspective of the housing service user is not currently in place.
5. Council departments and external agencies are working with the same service users as homelessness services, providing money advice, employment support, corporate parenting etc, and joint working for the benefit of the service users and the services could be enhanced by the colocation of services.
6. Many homeless households are not accessing support services because of their special circumstances, such as those living in TA without a support worker, or those hidden homeless sofa surfers, and even low levels of support may be of great benefit to these groups.
7. There is an increasing number of single adult males and single adult females becoming homeless in Dorset, in line with England, but the reasons for this is not yet well understood.
8. There is some joint work between Children's Services and Homelessness Services, and with the increase in homelessness generally this should be built upon, but there is a need for both to understand the other's roles and responsibilities.

#### **8.1.5 Conclusions about resources for tackling homelessness**

1. Performance management arrangements have been complicated by the introduction of HRA17 and evolving arrangements through the Dorset Councils merger. The recording and analysis of performance data needs to be supported by regular case file and data audit to ensure accuracy and effectiveness of information.
2. There is little benchmarking carried out at present and this makes it more difficult to understand performance and service demand from an external perspective. There is a good amount of resource and activity in tackling homelessness in Dorset and comparing this with other Councils would help to understand the effectiveness of arrangements.
3. Funding has been awarded from various national streams as well as locally, and there have been positive outcomes from many of the programmes being delivered, but these outcomes are not routinely presented other than as performance data, and would benefit from being published as case studies where possible in order to demonstrate the added value that Dorset Council and its partners can deliver.
4. The lack of formal benchmarking, other than national H-CLIC statistics, could leave Dorset Council fairly isolated in regard to external perspectives on performance, as the merger does mean there are few similar housing authorities to compare with at present.

5. Former arrangements for shared staff training on new legislation or caselaw updates have reduced again as a result of the merger, and the benefit of external input from other councils during training, or peer opportunities is missed, for example peer casework audits.
6. There are many required policies and procedures in place for use in carrying out homelessness functions, however few are Dorset wide or current.
7. Training on all aspects of carrying out homelessness functions including making homelessness decisions should be provided regularly. The Council have shared case law information but there is no specific training in place to show evidence based, lawful decisions are being made. As the service is becoming busier even less time is allocated to training.
8. The homelessness forum is an excellent example of local networking and partners are committed to the joint working opportunities this provides. There have been some joint bids for external resources, but there is more opportunity that could be realised.
9. More use could be made of feedback from service users at each stage of interaction with homelessness and related services, such as when in temporary accommodation.
10. Complaints from service users against homelessness services regarding the level of service provided are uncommon, but when these are received, they should be of use as a training tool.

### **8.1.6 Conclusions about consultation**

Elected Member, stakeholders, service users and staff all want homelessness to be tackled in Dorset and have seen the change made with the 'Everybody In' programme in response to Covid-19, which provided evidence of what can be achieved in a very short space of time with appropriate resources in place.

A good response rate from service users, stakeholder interviews and elected members input has resulted in broad agreement that social rented housing is the preferred housing tenure due to security and cost. There was also agreement with the desktop review findings that the number of single people with mental and physical ill-health who are finding themselves homeless is increasing, and that more support to prevent and relieve homelessness was needed generally.

## **8.2 Recommendations**

### **8.2.1 Current and future levels of homelessness**

1. Develop, implement and embed a proactive, early homelessness prevention and support service, beginning in the wards with the highest levels of child poverty, seeking out and targeting households in, or at risk of, poverty including those with children living in poverty, in receipt of in-work means tested welfare benefits, known to have difficulty managing welfare benefit claims, in receipt of Council Tax benefit.
2. Ensure that effective information, advice and support is available at points across Dorset that are naturally accessed by all households, such as schools, DWP, supermarkets, sports clubs, foodbanks, GP surgeries and hospitals etc, to alleviate real poverty and prevent the threat of homeless at every possible opportunity.
3. Enable the teaching of homelessness awareness in primary and secondary schools, plus provide teaching resources and training for teachers to deliver within curriculum.

4. Ensure that the housing register application and assessment process include mandatory identification of applicants who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, and automatic referral to Homelessness Services to provide prevention/relief support to those identified.
5. Review housing register to identify applicants who are not eligible for main housing association accommodation due to HA lettings policies and provide prevention/relief support. Ensure Housing Register software can identify new cases at registration, and automatically refer to Homelessness Services to provide prevention/relief support to those identified.
6. Use Duty to Refer data and other referral data to map service user route to the referring agency, using this information to identify early opportunities to divert early homelessness prevention interventions.
7. In partnership with NHS and Public Health Services develop a range of activities to prevent and relieve homelessness for people who have poor health outcomes, especially people who misuse alcohol and/or drugs and have mental ill health.

### **8.2.2 Preventing homelessness**

1. Capture all homelessness prevention outcomes achieved by all stakeholders, including those achieved by Dorset Council services, to inform a strategic approach to prevention. This includes early prevention activity that has not been commissioned as a homelessness prevention service, (eg, housing association tenancy support, DWP employment support, money advice workshops at food banks, etc).
2. Review homelessness cases that move from the prevention stage to the relief stage, and to the main duty stage. Map the flow from the prevention duty owed stage to other stages to determine why households move through the stages to establish any trends, including household type or location, that require specialist support to prevent homelessness.
3. Complete an options appraisal on the way in which the merged Dorset Council homelessness service should be delivered, including for example:
  - Remotely or face to face – or a combination of both
  - Location(s) of staff and services
  - Colocation with other public and voluntary sector services, full or part time
4. Produce a modern procurement strategy to apply best practice and achieve improved value for money in priority areas to develop a prospectus for commissioned prevention services, including extending the length of contract to provide greater financial security to a wider range of organisations to provide services within Dorset.
5. Review existing arrangements with criminal justice agencies and agree a joint pathway with to prevent offenders becoming homeless following release from all secure estates.
6. Review existing arrangements of the joint work to prevent care leavers and other young people from becoming homeless, including:
  - updating the 16 /17 year olds protocol to include any new legislative developments
  - building on the key trained officer role within housing to develop a champions role in each service where joint cases can be administered
  - locating Homelessness Officers in the Youth advice and information centres.

7. Review homeless prevention activities available to members or former members of the Armed Forces and ways of identifying former serving personnel to raise awareness of and refer to the specialist support available.
8. Adopt a Homeless from Hospital Discharge Policy to prevent patients from becoming homeless when leaving hospital.
9. Review social landlord activity against the Dorset Tenancy Strategy, then carry forward the findings to formulate a new tenancy strategy.
10. Develop an early warning system for tenancies coming to an end in the private and social sectors.
11. Carryout regular case file audit of homelessness cases to learn what more could be done, and at what stage, to prevent homelessness. Check the rationality, legality, and adherence to public law procedural requirements.
12. Review all cases with negative outcomes within a three- month period, including intentionally homeless, not homeless, no duty owed, lost contact etc., to ascertain how/if they resolved their own homelessness and analyse the cost/benefits of assisting these households to secure settled accommodation.
13. Research and analyse local patterns of and reasons for rough sleeping, and rough sleeper service provision, with neighbouring counties to ensure that appropriate services and accommodation are in place locally to support rough sleepers and reduce the transience of rough sleepers and help to prevent sleeping.
14. Introduce a peer led benchmarking scheme for social landlords to evidence that activity against the following themes:
  1. Board member commitment to tackling homelessness, and evidence of spend to tackle homelessness
  2. Prevention of evictions due to rent arrears
  3. Actions for tackling homelessness featuring in organisational strategy
  4. Involvement of tenants in activities to prevent homelessness
  5. Prioritisation of homeless applicants when letting homes
  6. Prevention of homelessness due to anti-social behaviour and neighbour nuisance
  7. Effective early warning and joint working with local authority Homelessness and Housing benefits services to prevent homelessness in complex cases
15. Proactive and highly effective arrangements need to be in place for early identification of potential cases of threatened homelessness and the need for housing advice (e.g. early intervention protocols with Social Housing management services, Domestic Violence agencies, National Offender Management Service, private sector and anti-social behaviour teams).

### **8.2.3 Securing accommodation**

1. Formulate a housing strategy that prioritises:
  - increasing the supply of affordable housing, including one-bedroom accommodation suitable for single people with complex needs
  - maximising the potential of the PRS across Dorset
  - bringing empty homes back into use

2. Undertake a strategic review of all temporary accommodation including an options appraisal into future TA arrangements, including private sector leasing, and use findings to update policy for how temporary accommodation will be procured and allocated.
3. Housing association partners to develop a pre-tenancy training and qualification to equip households placed in temporary accommodation to become tenancy ready, including saving for rent in advance, resolving former tenancy debts or demonstrating sustained improvement in behaviour which would normally be a barrier to being offered a tenancy.
4. Adopt a new temporary accommodation placement policy which provides information to the service user on costs of the accommodation, and the standards and the level of housing management and any support they can expect as early as possible.
5. Review and adapt the Private Rented Sector Offer/discharge Policy (PRSO) and develop a Suitability of Accommodation policy for all of Dorset that aims to reduce or remove any reliance on discretionary housing payments to subsidise rents.

#### **8.2.4 Providing support**

1. Publish an annual report promoting the work of homelessness services and showing how funding streams have been utilised to support households for the prevention and relief of homelessness, including case studies that:
  - highlight local good practice,
  - demonstrate the need for additional or more intensive support for some households,
  - show the positive practices used to help households in temporary accommodation to move on within six months, and
  - demonstrate the need for additional support resources
2. Complete a supported housing needs and gap analysis, to better understand whether current provision reflects the needs of actual and potential users who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.
3. Review access points to support with service users, to ascertain how, if any, improvements can be made.
4. Agree a method for carrying out performance inspections of support services that benefit people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.
5. Evaluate the potential for co-location of services that are working with the same service users, and other partnership initiatives would improve performance and outcomes of these services.
6. Develop a series of prevention, relief and support initiatives that will benefit people who may not access these services for example if they are currently living in unsupported temporary accommodation or 'sofa surfing' as hidden homeless.
7. Commission research to understand why the level of homelessness among single adult male and single adult females is increasing (pre-Covid increases) and what is needed to reduce or prevent this.
8. Explore options for homelessness officers to be involved with locality-based working alongside Early Help and Adolescent services and service providers, such as Youth Hubs, and vice-versa, including when providing support in temporary accommodation.

## 8.2.5 Resources

1. Implement effective performance management arrangements to drive improvement and deliver value for money using regular internal audit of performance information and data collection.
2. Benchmarking the range and success of activities currently in place to prevent homelessness against other local housing authorities.
3. Monitor the quality of outcomes against each funding stream and report on these, publishing case studies to demonstrate positive outcomes to residents and central government.
4. Form a benchmarking club with like housing authorities, potentially BCP and Wiltshire, to support the development of effective performance management and improvement.
5. Develop a shared staff training curriculum and external peer audit function for regular casework audits.
6. Review all operational policies, procedures, and paperwork associated with administering the homelessness service from the perspective of the merged council services and the new duties arising from the HRA17.
7. Develop a comprehensive training programme including:
  - induction procedures for new homelessness and housing allocations staff
  - a 12 month programme in housing and homelessness policy, practice and law for those new to the housing service, as well as the opportunity to complete a recognised housing qualification
  - regular refresher training for homelessness and allocations assessment officers
  - additional regular training for all staff covering case law and other legislative updates
  - best practice and new initiatives updates training
  - ICT and monitoring systems training for all system users
  - Specialised training for those managing the monitoring and reporting of H-CLIC and other data to ensure that evidence is always accurate and current to provide for evidence-based decision making.
  - Housing benefit regulations and practice annual update training from Housing Benefits Team.
8. Using the established homelessness forum, harness stakeholder enthusiasm and resources for tackling homelessness through engaging with cost benefit analyses and joint bidding for external funding.
9. Seek out feedback from service users to ensure their knowledge helps to shape policy and practice:
  - during the provision of the service at regular points such as initial assessment, placement in temporary accommodation etc.
  - through regular customer satisfaction consultation including an annual consultation exercise which includes stakeholders
  - through an annual event, at which users of homelessness services are invited to put questions to key decisions makers about what works well and what could work better.
10. Develop a process for complaints from service users against homelessness services and stakeholder services to be used as training tool for all staff and publish the learning from this.

## **Appendices**

Appendix One – Record of Contributors

Appendix Two – Service User Consultation Responses

Appendix Three – Stakeholder Interview summaries

Appendix Four – Stakeholder Consultation Responses

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## Appendix One – Record of Contributors

The following persons and organisations generously gave their time to contribute evidence to this Homelessness Review:

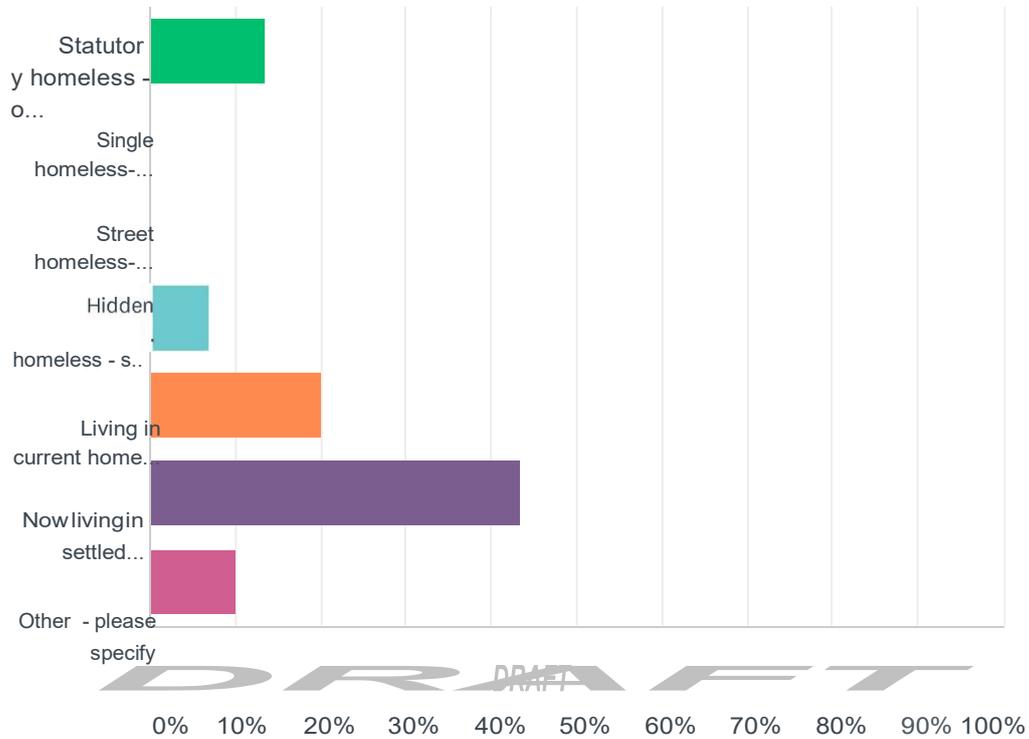
- Cllr Graham Carr-Jones
- Cllr Andrew Kirby
- Sharon Attwater
- Andrew Billany
- Fiona Brown
- Sarah How
- Melissa Johnson
- Maria Byrne
- Miriam Smith
- Louise Capaldi-Tallon
- Richard Conway
- Andy Frost
- Diana Balsom
- Tina Frampton
- 16+ Team
- Citizens Advice
- Shelter
- Chair of Weymouth & Portland Landlords Forum
- Magna Housing Association
- Abri Housing Group
- Royal British Legion
- Armed Forces Covenant Co-ordinator
- The Lantern
- The Bus Shelter
- NHS Trust
- NHS Homeless Health Service
- Julian house

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## Appendix Two – Service User Survey Responses

Q1 How would you describe your current experience of homelessness?

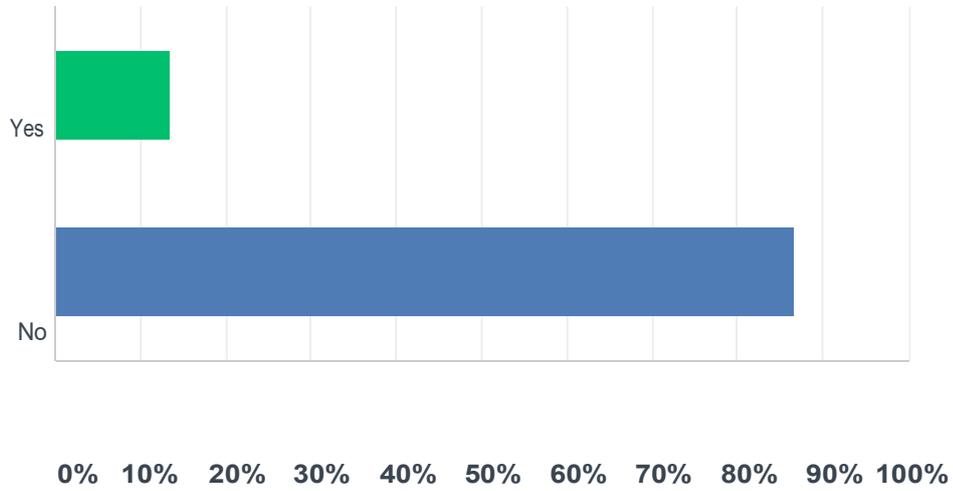
Answered: 30 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Statutory homeless - owed a duty by a local authority	13.33%	4
Single homeless - living in supported housing	0.00%	0
Street homeless - sleeping rough	6.67%	2
Hidden homeless - sofa surfing with friends or family	6.67%	2
Living in current home but risk of losing it	20.00%	6
Now living in settled accommodation, but previously homeless in one of the above situations	43.33%	13
Other - please specify	10.00%	3
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>30</b>

Q2 Have you been homeless before this occasion, ie. Is this repeat homelessness?

Answered: 30 Skipped: 0

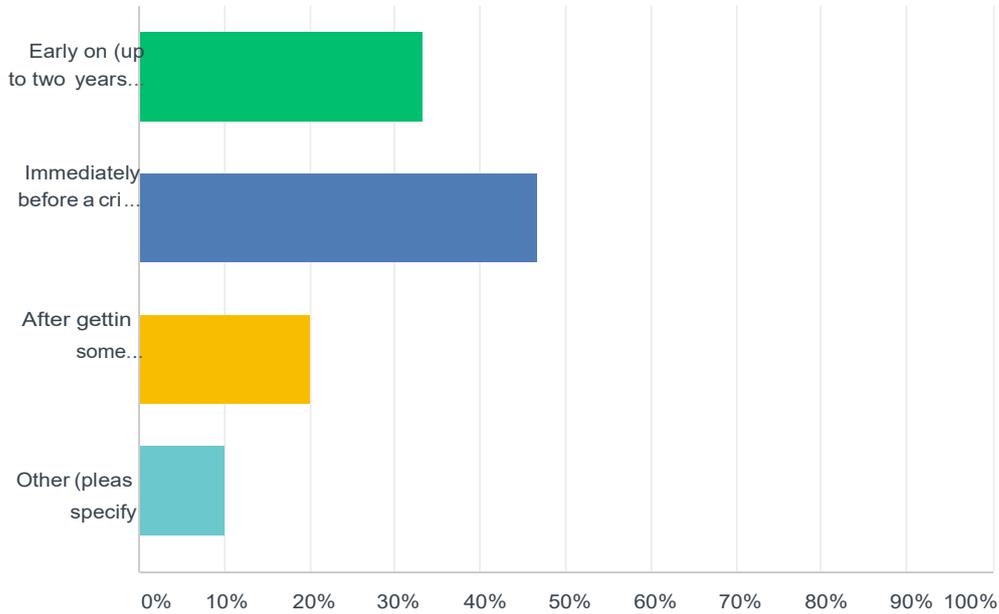


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	13.33%	4
No	86.67%	26
Total Respondents: 30		

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Q3 What do you think is the best way to prevent homelessness?

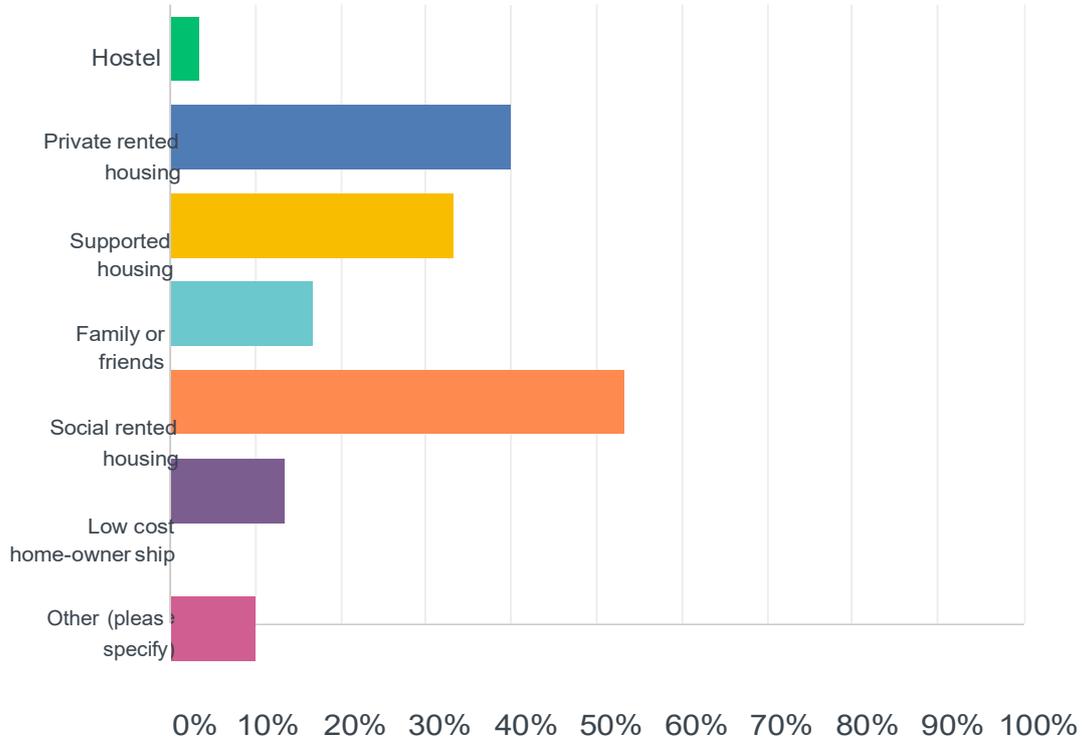
Answered: 30 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Early on (up to two years before)- for example being helped prior to leaving prison, care, armed forces, hospital, escaping domestic abuse etc.	33.33%	10
Immediately before a crisis (up to two months before) being helped to stay in your current home or getting help to find somewhere else to live.	46.67%	14
After getting some accommodation, to stop a repeat occurrence of homelessness.	20.00%	6
Other (please specify)	10.00%	3
Total Respondents: 30		

Q4 When homeless or threatened with homelessness, what do you think is the best housing option?

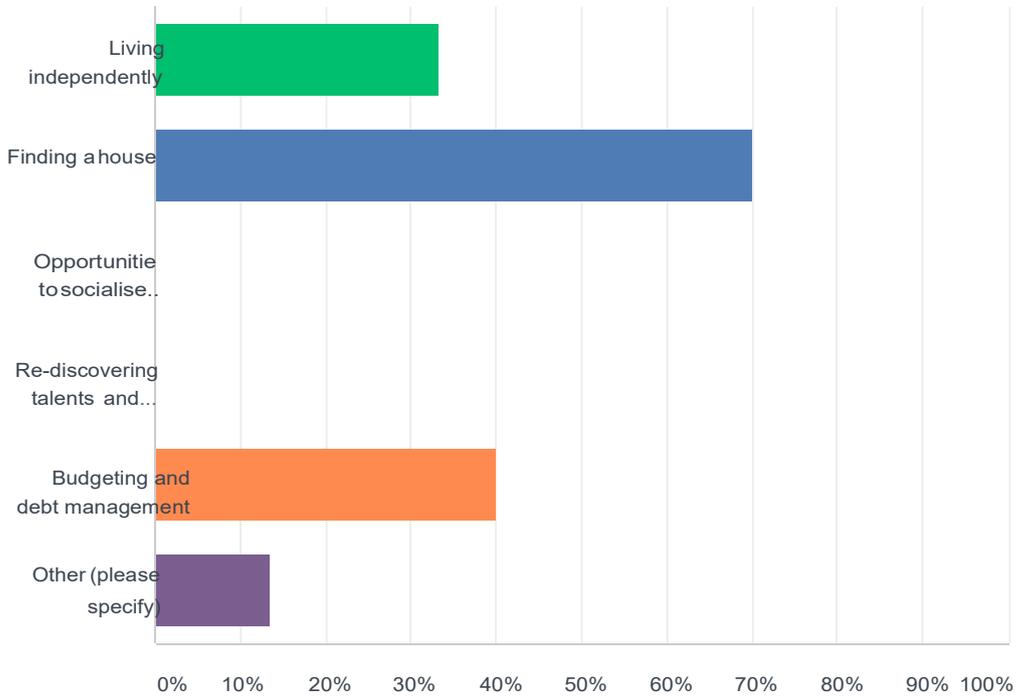
Answered: 30 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Hostel	3.33% 1
Private rented housing	40.00% 12
Supported housing	33.33% 10
Family or friends	16.67% 5
Social rented housing	53.33% 16
Low cost home-ownership	13.33% 4
Other (please specify)	10.00% 3
Total Respondents: 30	

Q5 When someone is, or has recently been homeless, what is the most important thing they need help and support with?

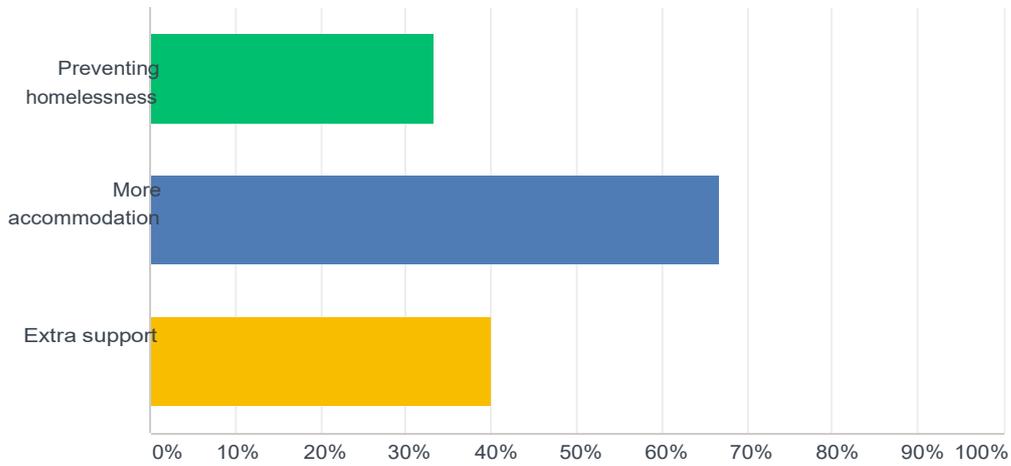
Answered: 30 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Living independently	33.33%	10
Finding a house	70.00%	21
Opportunities to socialise and find a job	6.67%	2
Re-discovering talents and interests	0.00%	0
Budgeting and debt management	40.00%	12
Other (please specify)	13.33%	4
Total Respondents: 30		

Q6 How do you think homelessness funding should be spent?

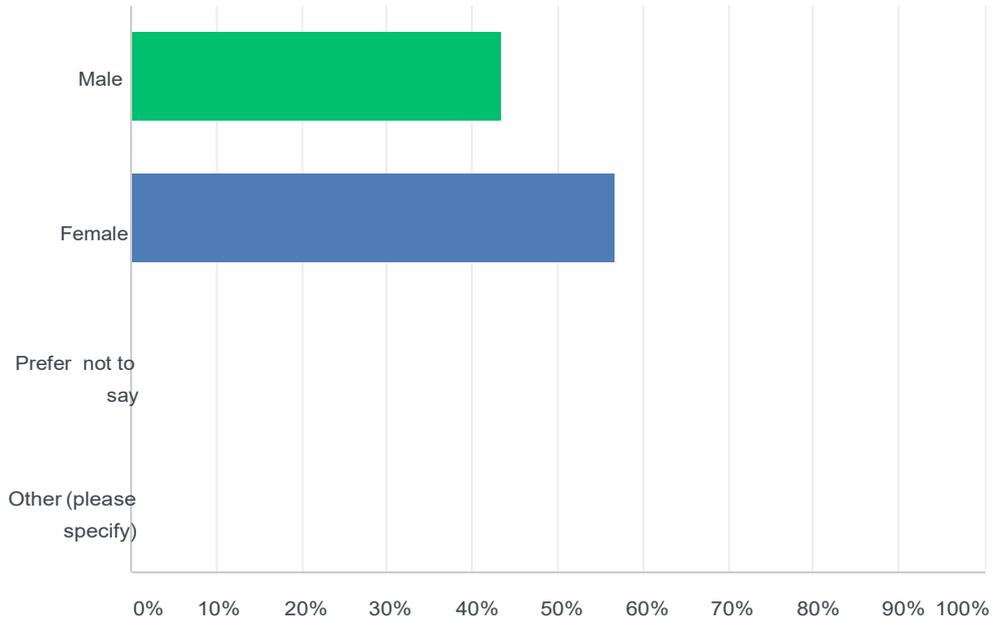
Answered: 30 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Preventing homelessness	33.33% 10
More accommodation	66.67% 20
Extra support	40.00% 12
Total Respondents: 30	

Q7 What gender are you?

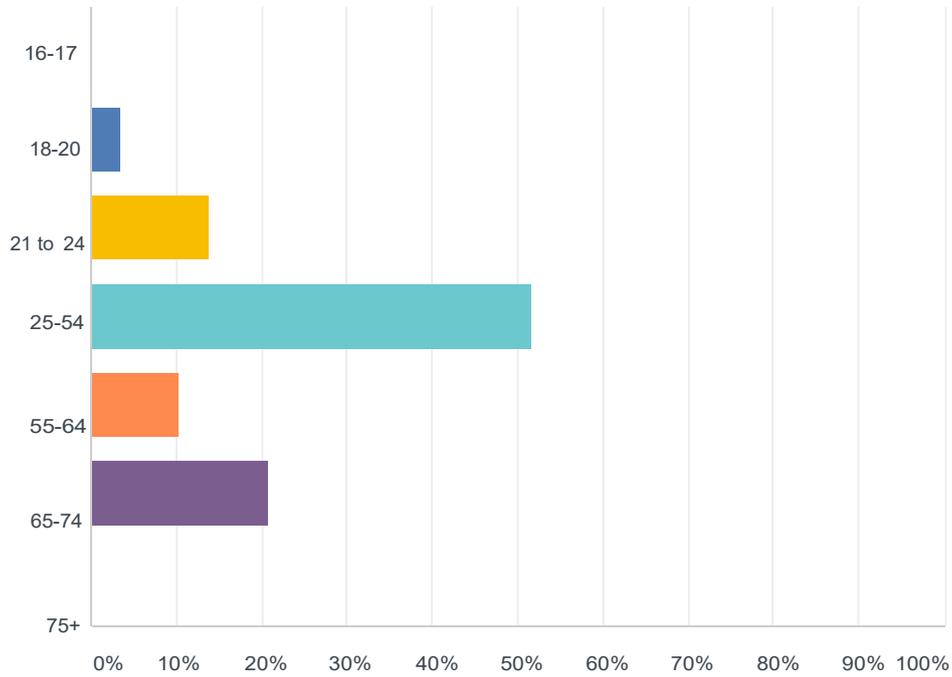
Answered: 30 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Male	43.33%	13
Female	56.67%	17
Prefer not to say	0.00%	0
Other (please specify)	0.00%	0
TOTAL		30

Q8 What age are you?

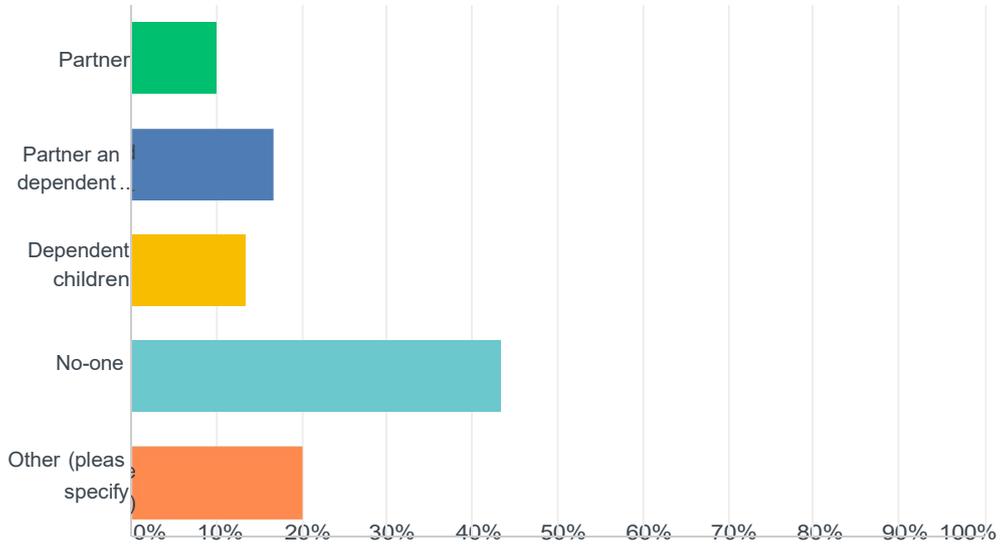
Answered: 29 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
16-17	0.00% 0
18-20	3.45% 1
21 to 24	13.79% 4
25-54	51.72% 15
55-64	10.34% 3
65-74	20.69% 6
75+	0.00% 0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>29</b>

Q9 Who else normally lives with you?

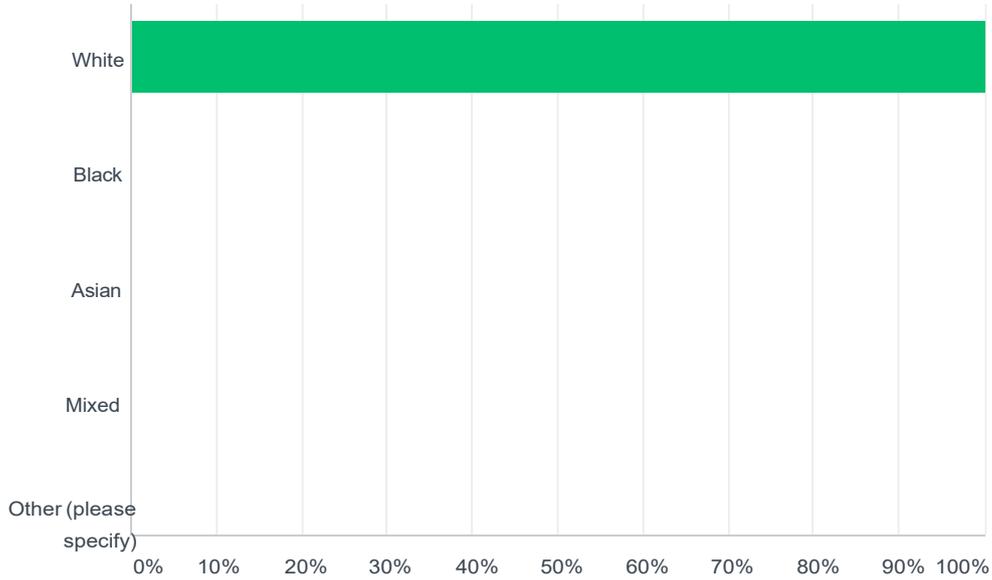
Answered: 30 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Partner	10.00%	3
Partner and dependent children	16.67%	5
Dependent children	13.33%	4
No-one	43.33%	13
Other (please specify)	20.00%	6
Total Respondents: 30		

Q10 What is your ethnic origin?

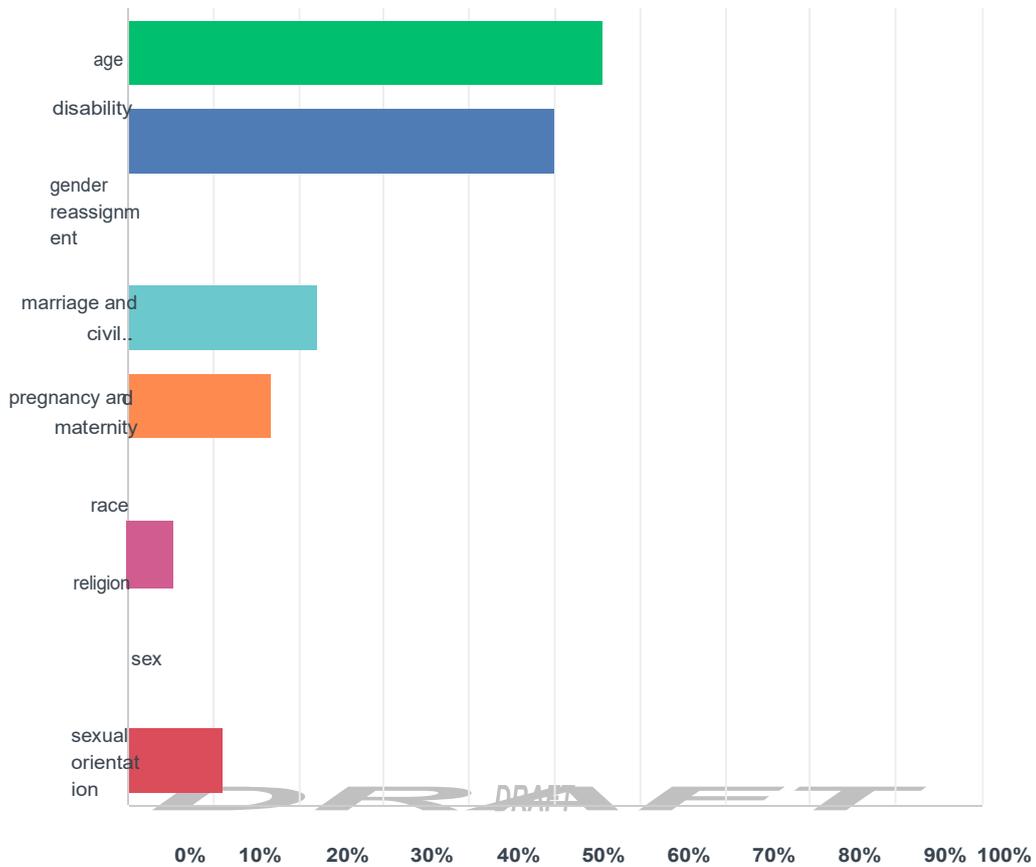
Answered: 29 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
White	100.00%	29
Black	0.00%	0
Asian	0.00%	0
Mixed	0.00%	0
Other (please specify)	0.00%	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>29</b>

Q11 Do you personally identify with any of the following characteristics? (Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics)

Answered: 18 Skipped: 12

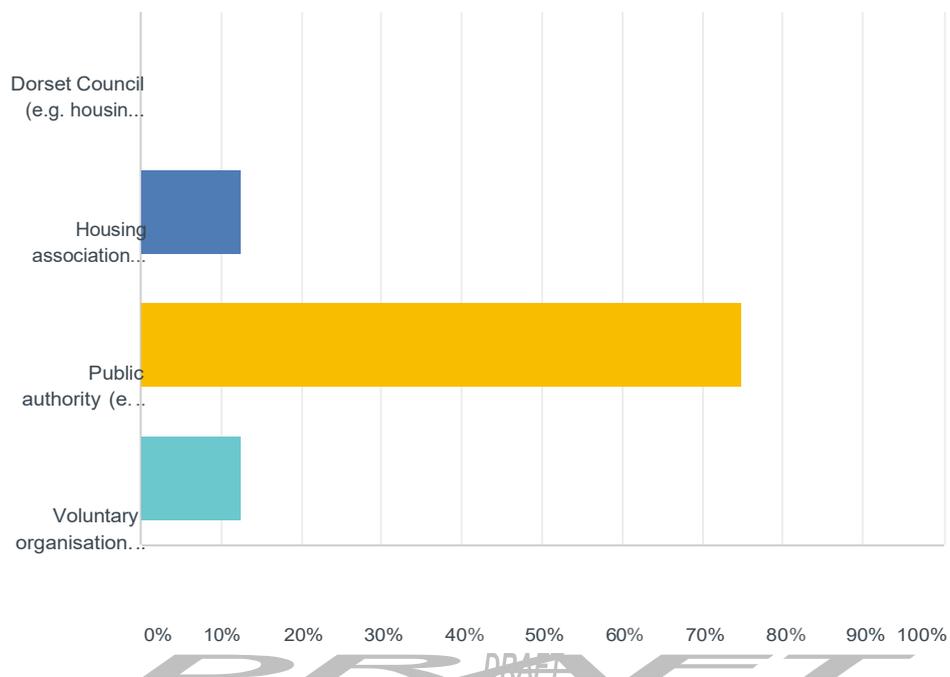


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
age	55.56%	10
disability	50.00%	9
gender reassignment	0.00%	0
marriage and civil partnership	22.22%	4
pregnancy and maternity	16.67%	3
race	0.00%	0
religion or belief	5.56%	1
sex	0.00%	0
sexual orientation	11.11%	2
Total Respondents : 18		

## Appendix Three – Stakeholder Survey Responses summaries

### Q1 Which type of organisation do you work for?

Answered: 8 Skipped: 0

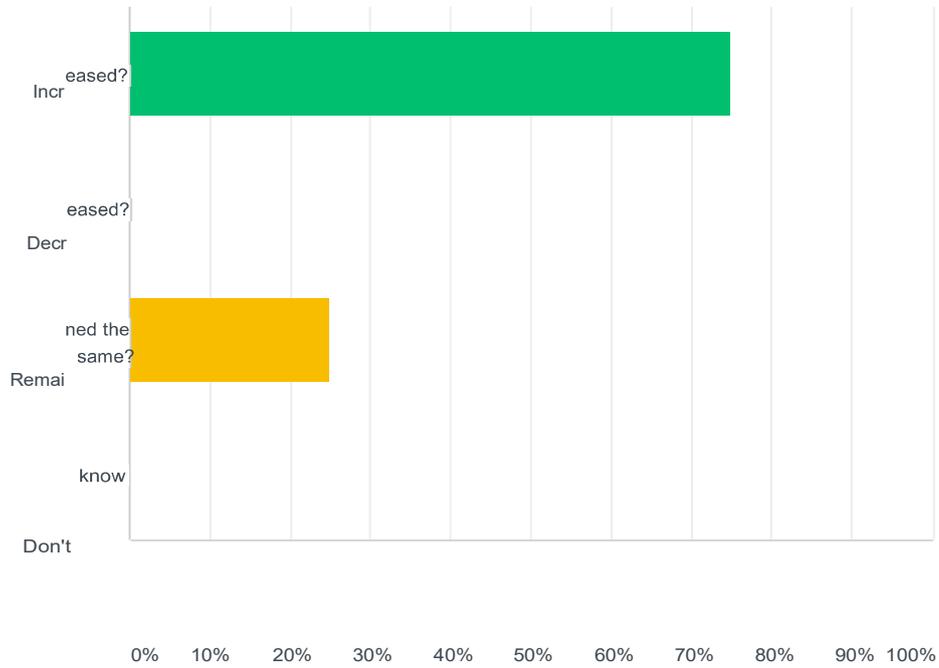


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ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Dorset Council (e.g. housing, adult social care, children's services, etc)	0.00%	0
Housing association (registered provider of social housing)	12.50%	1
Public authority (e.g. prison, armed forces, NHS, police, etc)	75.00%	6
Voluntary organisation (e.g. not for profit organisation, community/faith group etc)	12.50%	1
Total Respondents: 8		

**Q2 What do you believe has happened to the levels of homelessness during the past five years?**

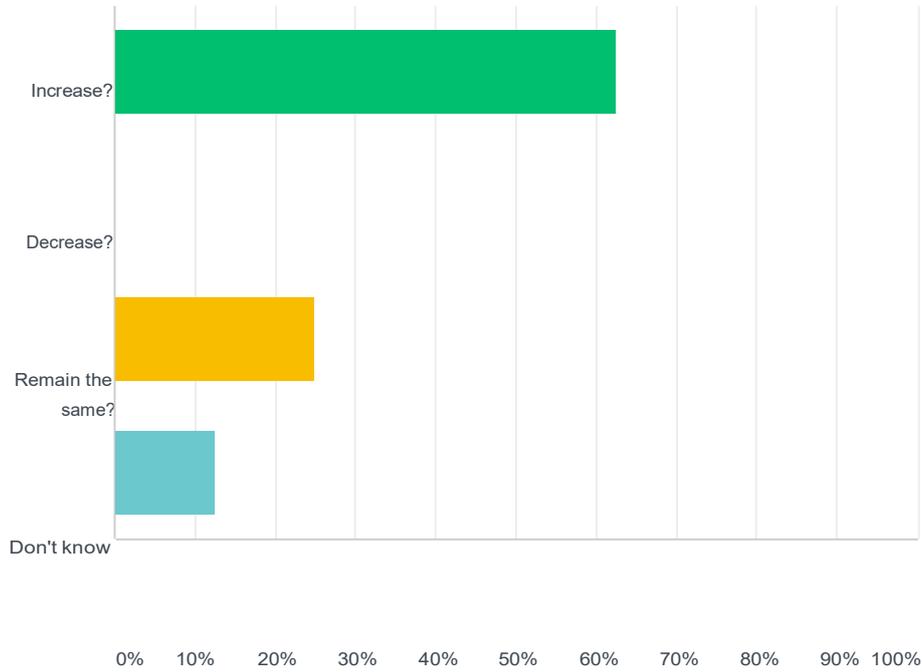
Answered: 8 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Increased?	75.00% 6
Decreased?	0.00% 0
Remained the same?	25.00% 2
Don't know	0.00% 0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8</b>

**Q3 What do you believe will happen to the levels of homelessness during the next five years?**

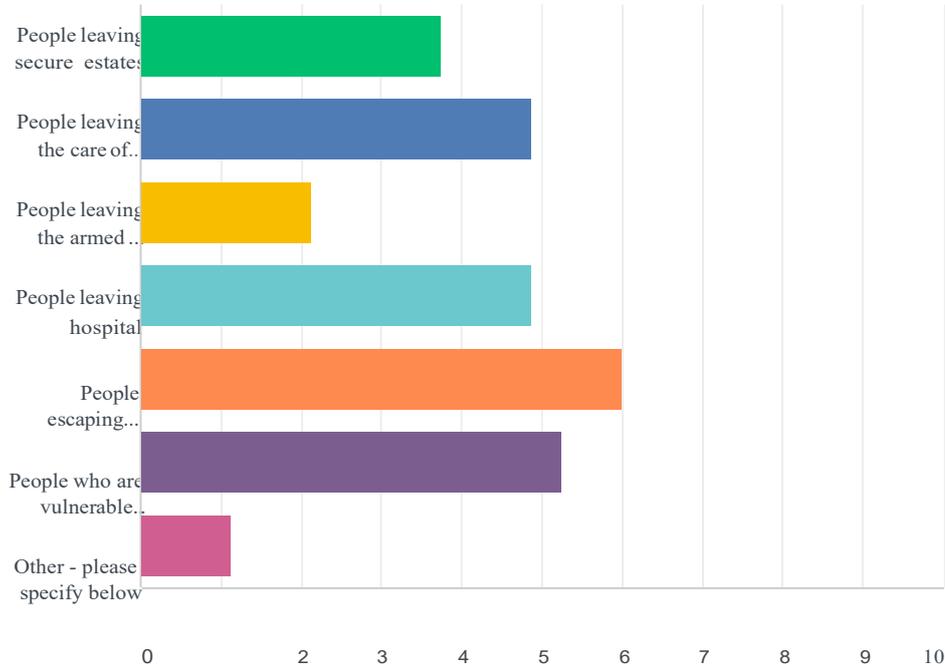
Answered: 8 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Increase?	62.50% 5
Decrease?	0.00% 0
Remain the same?	25.00% 2
Don't know	12.50% 1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8</b>

**Q4 When preventing homelessness, in what order should the groups of people shown be prioritised?  
Please rank from 1 to 7, with 1 being the highest priority and 7 being the lowest:**

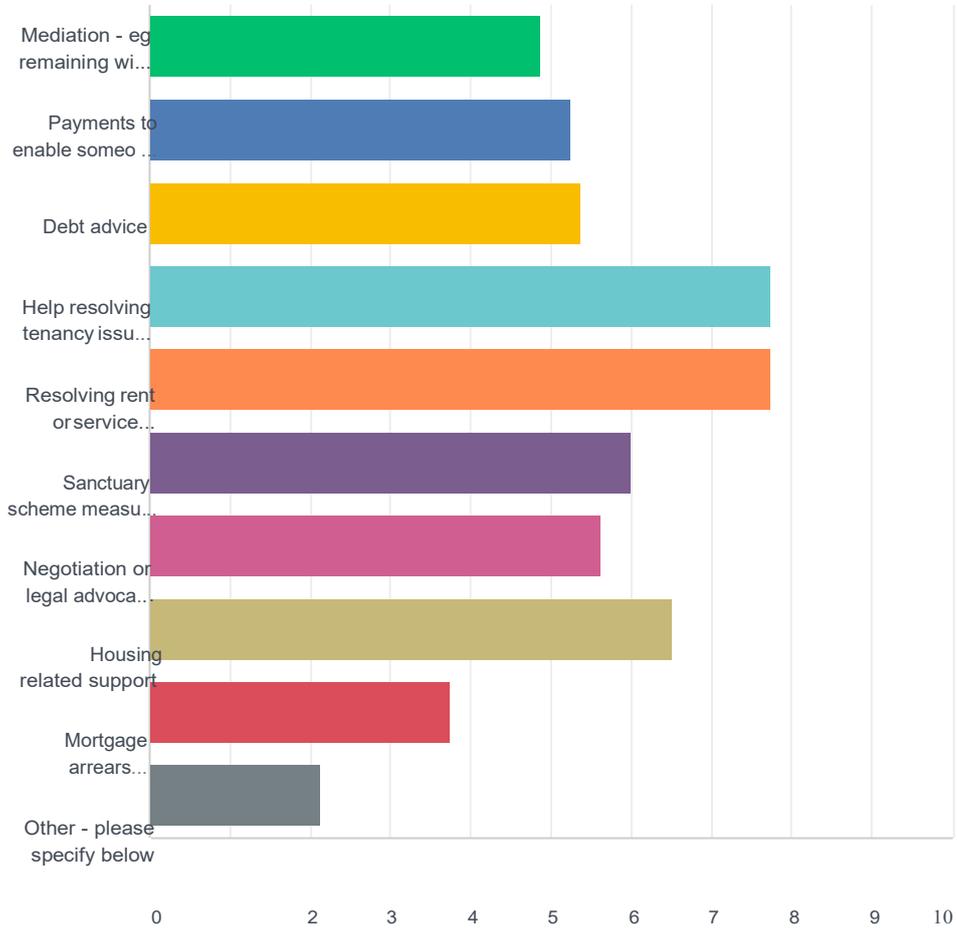
Answered: 8 Skipped: 0



	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	TOTAL	SCORE
People leaving secure estates	0.00% 0	25.00% 2	12.50% 1	0.00% 0	37.50% 3	25.00% 2	0.00% 0	8	3.75
People leaving the care of children's services	25.00% 2	0.00% 0	37.50% 3	12.50% 1	25.00% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	8	4.88
People leaving the armed forces	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	25.00% 2	62.50% 5	12.50% 1	8	2.13
People leaving hospital	12.50% 1	25.00% 2	0.00% 0	62.50% 5	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	8	4.88
People escaping domestic abuse	62.50% 5	0.00% 0	12.50% 1	25.00% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	8	6.00
People who are vulnerable adults	0.00% 0	50.00% 4	37.50% 3	0.00% 0	12.50% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	8	5.25
Other - please specify below	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	12.50% 1	87.50% 7	8	1.13

**Q5 When preventing homelessness, which is the most helpful method to help someone remain in their existing home? Please rank from 1 to 10, with 1 being the highest priority and 10 being the lowest:**

Answered: 8 Skipped: 0

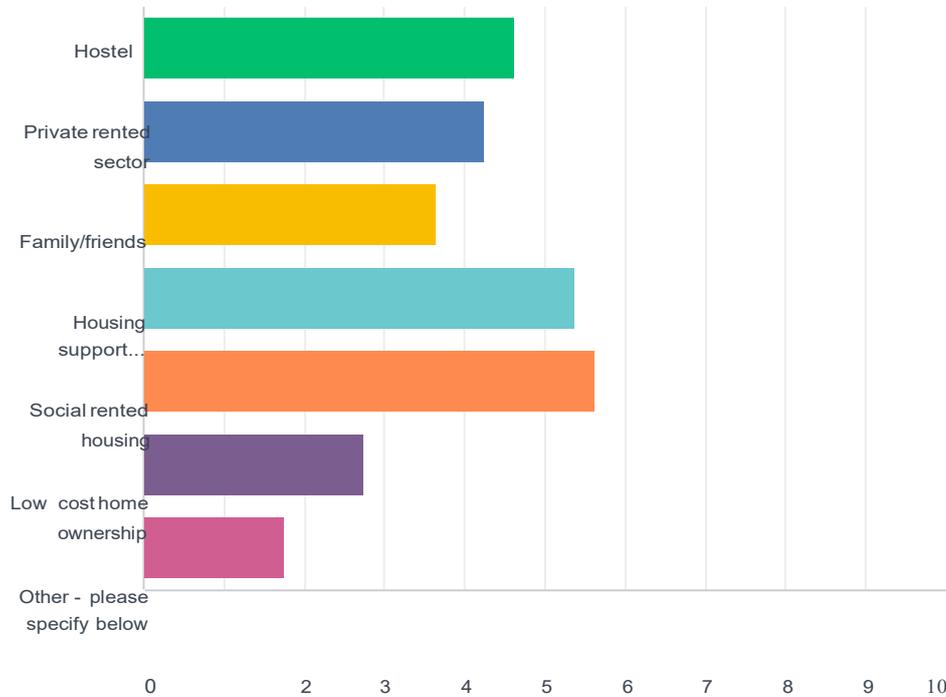


A review of homelessness in the Dorset area: Stakeholders

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	TOTAL	scd
Mediation-eg remaining with family and friends	12.50% 1	25.00% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	25.00% 2	25.00% 2	12.50% 1	8	4
Payments to enable someone to remain in the existing home	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	37.50% 3	12.50% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	12.50% 1	12.50% 1	25.00% 2	0.00% 0	8	5
Debt advice	0.00% 0	25.00% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	12.50% 1	25.00% 2	12.50% 1	12.50% 1	12.50% 1	0.00% 0	8	5
Help resolving tenancy issues and housing benefit problems	25.00% 2	12.50% 1	12.50% 1	12.50% 1	37.50% 3	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	8	7
Resolving rent or service charge arrears	25.00% 2	12.50% 1	12.50% 1	37.50% 3	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	12.50% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	8	7
Sanctuary scheme measures for victims of domestic abuse	12.50% 1	0.00% 0	25.00% 2	12.50% 1	0.00% 0	12.50% 1	25.00% 2	0.00% 0	12.50% 1	0.00% 0	8	6
Negotiation or legal advocacy to enable someone to remain in their existing home	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	12.50% 1	25.00% 2	0.00% 0	50.00% 4	0.00% 0	12.50% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	8	5
Housing related support	12.50% 1	25.00% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	25.00% 2	12.50% 1	12.50% 1	12.50% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	8	6
Mortgage arrears intervention or mortgage	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	25.00% 2	0.00% 0	25.00% 2	25.00% 2	25.00% 2	0.00% 0	8	3

**Q6 When obtaining accommodation for someone who is homeless or threatened with homelessness, which is the best housing option? Please rank from 1 to 7, with 1 being the highest priority and 7 the lowest:**

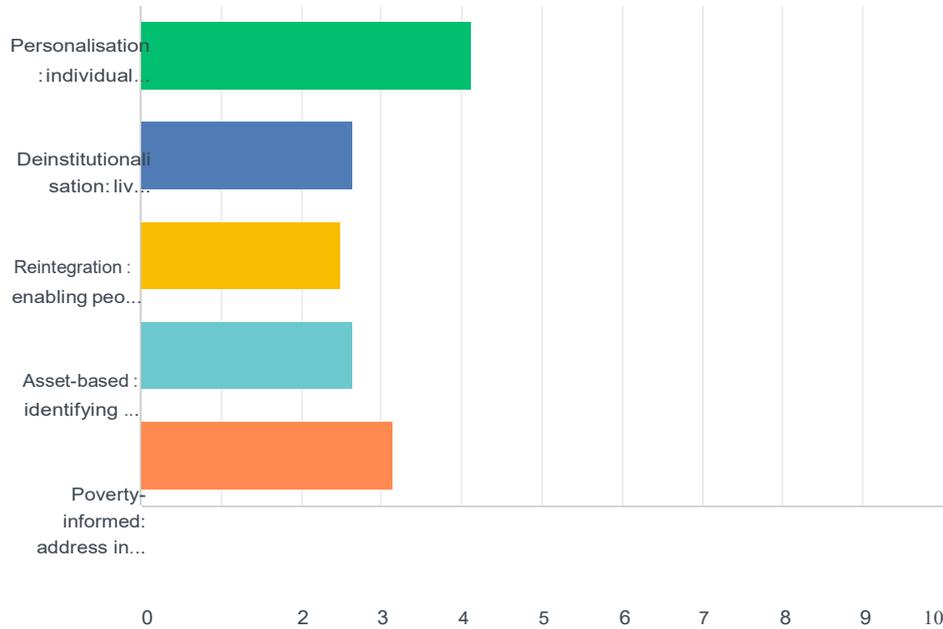
Answered: 8 Skipped: 0



	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	TOTAL	SCORE
Hostel	0.00% 0	37.50% 3	0.00% 0	50.00% 4	12.50% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	8	4.63
Private rented sector	0.00% 0	12.50% 1	37.50% 3	25.00% 2	12.50% 1	12.50% 1	0.00% 0	8	4.25
Family/friends	0.00% 0	12.50% 1	25.00% 2	25.00% 2	0.00% 0	25.00% 2	12.50% 1	8	3.63
Housing support services	25.00% 2	37.50% 3	12.50% 1	0.00% 0	25.00% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	8	5.38
Social rented housing	62.50% 5	0.00% 0	12.50% 1	0.00% 0	12.50% 1	12.50% 1	0.00% 0	8	5.63
Low cost home ownership	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	12.50% 1	0.00% 0	37.50% 3	50.00% 4	0.00% 0	8	2.75
Other - please specify below	12.50% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	87.50% 7	8	1.75

**Q7 When supporting someone who is, or has been homeless, how important are the following - please rank from 1 to 5 with 1 being the highest priority and 5 the lowest?**

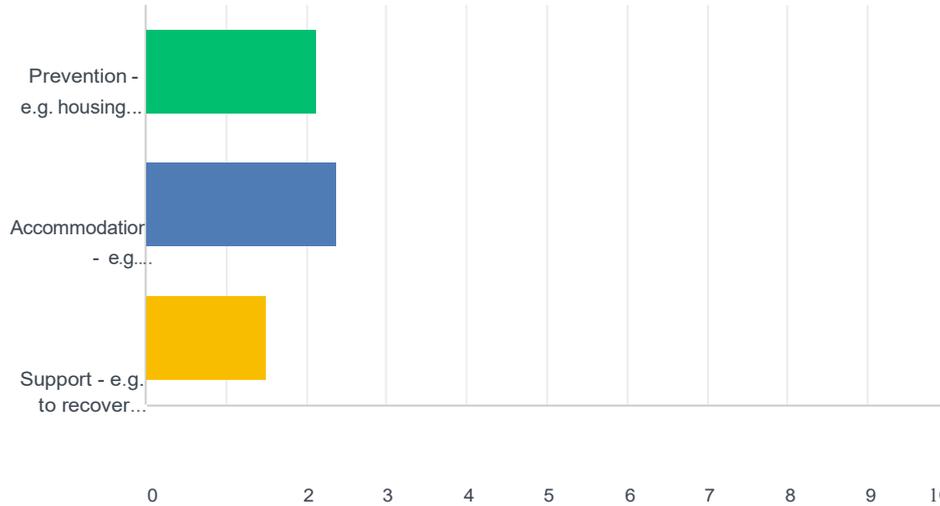
Answered: 8 Skipped: 0



	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL	SCORE
Personalisation: individually tailored, open ended, persistent, flexible and coordinated support	50.00% 4	25.00% 2	12.50% 1	12.50% 1	0.00% 0	8	4.13
Deinstitutionalisation: living in mainstream housing rather than specific, separate institutions	0.00% 0	37.50% 3	25.00% 2	0.00% 0	37.50% 3	8	2.63
Reintegration: enabling people to socialise in ordinary social settings and work in ordinary mainstream settings (where employment is a realistic prospect)	12.50% 1	0.00% 0	37.50% 3	25.00% 2	25.00% 2	8	2.50
Asset-based: identifying and nurturing peoples' strengths and assets, as well as addressing their needs	12.50% 1	12.50% 1	12.50% 1	50.00% 4	12.50% 1	8	2.63
Poverty-informed: addressing the financial and material hardship people face as well as tackling challenging behaviours sometimes associated with homelessness.	25.00% 2	25.00% 2	12.50% 1	12.50% 1	25.00% 2	8	3.13

**QB Thinking about the resources need to tackle homelessness, what should be prioritised for funding- please rank from 1 to 3, with 1 being the highest priority and 3 the lowest**

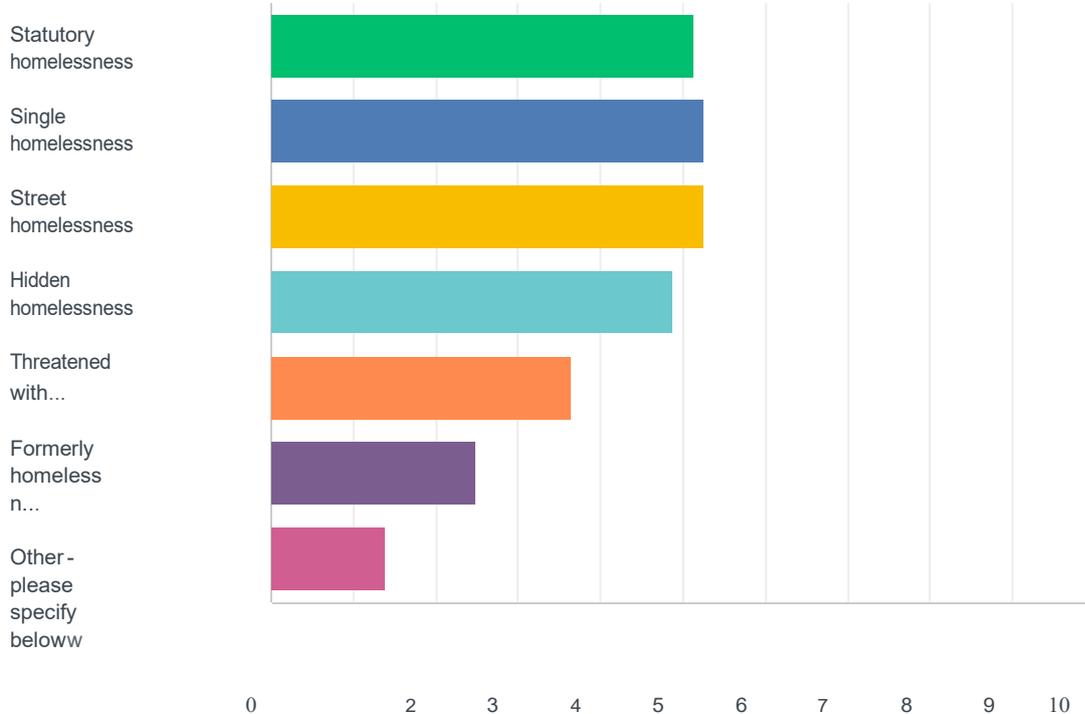
Answered: 8 Skipped: 0



	1	2	3	TOTAL	SCORE
Prevention - e.g. housing advice, help to remain in existing home, obtain alternative accommodation, etc	25.00% 2	62.50% 5	12.50% 1	8	2.13
Accommodation - e.g. affordable housing to rent or buy, social rented housing, emergency/temporary accommodation, etc	62.50% 5	12.50% 1	25.00% 2	8	2.38
Support - e.g. to recover wellbeing, improve relationships, live independently, manage money, etc	12.50% 1	25.00% 2	62.50% 5	8	1.50

**Q9 Which type of homelessness do people who use your organisation typically experience? (tick as many that are applicable)**

Answered: 8 Skipped: 0



	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	TOTAL	SCORE
Statutory homelessness - e.g. living in local authority temporary accommodation	37.50% 3	0.00% 0	25.00% 2	12.50% 1	25.00% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	8	5.13
Single homelessness - e.g. living in supported housing	0.00% 0	50.00% 4	25.00% 2	25.00% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	8	5.25
Street homelessness - e.g. sleeping rough	37.50% 3	12.50% 1	25.00% 2	0.00% 0	12.50% 1	12.50% 1	0.00% 0	8	5.25
Hidden homelessness - e.g. sofa surfing	12.50% 1	25.00% 2	12.50% 1	37.50% 3	12.50% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	8	4.88
Threatened with homelessness - living current home, but at risk of losing it	12.50% 1	0.00% 0	12.50% 1	12.50% 1	37.50% 3	25.00% 2	0.00% 0	8	3.63
Formerly homeless - now living settled accommodation, but previously in one of the above situations	0.00% 0	12.50% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	12.50% 1	62.50% 5	12.50% 1	8	2.50
Other - please specify below	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	12.50% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	87.50% 7	8	1.38

## Appendix Four – Stakeholder Interview Responses

**1. What difference do you think the previous homelessness strategy (2015-2019) made?**

Most Stakeholders have not been involved in previous strategies so had no comments.

**2. Is there any particular form of homelessness (e.g. statutory, single, street, hidden, threatened, repeat) that should be prioritised in the new homelessness strategy?**

Single homelessness, men and women, with complex problems, particularly mental health. Mental health across all groups of people is becoming more difficult, and drug and alcohol use is also growing.

There are more single males and females who are homeless and most have MH and or addiction who are difficult to assess. The vulnerability assessment with indicators for all guidelines laid out in Solihull judgement etc. is used but the suitability assessment preamble reminds officers of indicators they must consider rather than the impact on the homeless persons.

Hidden homelessness needs addressing in some way.

**3. Do you have any records that monitor the number of people experiencing homelessness who use your services, if so, does this show whether levels are currently increasing or decreasing and whether they are likely to do so in the future?**

Where these are recorded, levels are increasing and have been for some time as funding is cut and solutions are less available. Stakeholders feel this will continue and get worse with Covid-19.

**4. What works well and what could work better to prevent homelessness?**

There is no mediation service used and no staff trained. There is informal negotiation with landlord and family but not trained. Mediation should be put in place when people are in TA which gives breathing space between partners to allow for a solution to be agreed.

Homeless officers feel their tool bag for preventing homelessness is empty. As the investment in prevention work is in the commissioned services. Not enough people are encouraged into private rented accommodation and that needs to change. Advice to applicants is the housing register takes a while, so look in the PRS and here are the LHA rates.

A barrister at CAB commissioned to do homelessness prevention work to help get debts under control, encourage landlord to withdraw notice etc used the Spend to Save Fund

to pay off rent arrears and used rent deposit scheme. Match funding CAB paid for support for this service for three days a week.

**5. Is there effective collaboration and cooperation to prevent homelessness?**

Responding to the Covid-19 impact on service users was the priority for 2020 and the commissioned services worked well to support this response. A number of providers are now piloting new approaches to homelessness prevention, and the Everyone In and Next Steps initiatives have led to some very good partnerships with enhanced relationships.

‘Everyone in’ worked really well. There were regular meetings around hostels and a the next steps which has led to intensive housing support work

**6. What works well and could work better to obtain accommodation for people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness?**

In the past rent deposits were really, and they are still used but DHP is the most useful but does not help make the tenancies sustainable. The only real solution is more social and supported housing from housing associations.

**7. How suitable is the temporary accommodation provided to homeless households?**

TA is not always suitable. It can be poor condition and in an area that the homeless person doesn't know at all. They are often sent to Bournemouth with others that are in chaotic situations and this can make them vulnerable. It is not always much of a step up from the street, so more housing first needed.

**8. What works well and what could work better to provide support to people who are homeless, have been so in the past or could be in the future?**

There is not enough support time to carry out the intensive support needed to set a person up to succeed. It is not always easy to know who is leading on each funding stream and who is commissioning which services and would like to see oversight of all funding for housing and homelessness services, including the early prevention for Adult Services which ultimately helps to prevent homelessness located in a single commissioning area within the Housing Directorate. Most contracts are to be recommissioned in 18 months which provides an opportunity to evaluate the outcomes of services provided during the current contract period to refine the service specifications to provide for innovation and implementation of what works across services as well as appraising the potential for housing advice and homelessness officers to become embedded within commissioned services.

**9. Is the impact of homelessness on health understood?**

This is understood by stakeholders and service providers but there does not appear to be understood outside of this. It is something that should be at the core of why homelessness services are in place.

**10. In terms of the help you provide to people at risk of homelessness, where does your funding come from and how secure is it?**

Funding is from a range of sources: MHCLG, NHS, Council budgets for core and commissioned services, and fundraising.

**11. What should be the priorities for the new homelessness strategy?**

There is a need to map out who is involved in homelessness, what the voluntary sector response is, what services are available, and how to refer to all services and accommodation.

There needs to be a creative solutions approach, with a panel at senior level from all services including substance misuse adult social care, mental health services and housing providers, to agree package they can put together for the really complex cases that housing have tried to help many times, such as those with a reputation for being aggressive or unresponsive.

Shared offices and joint teams is the way forward generally. It doesn't need to be complicated, just group needs together and set up a team around that.

Pathways created from the perspective of the clients story.

All services for children need to be mapped from the customer point of view as many who are or have been street homeless for a long time had problems starting young with trauma. They may not be the largest cohort but helping them could make the biggest difference so a new YP pathway understanding this needs to be agreed.

Need pre- eviction protocol needed for own TA.

PHP needs to be effective. Need consistent service across all areas to interact with PHPs to provide a person centred approach, 'tell us your story, what do you need?',

Need more qualified or experienced debt advisers. CAB, and Christian aid are used but we need more resource as well as someone independent, to do bankruptcy or debt relieve orders.

Internet and signposting needs improving. It is not clear or comprehensive for clients or advocates to use.

Not enough supported accommodation.

If people are intentionally homeless there is not enough help.

Staff would like to take an approach where, for example, a young mum asked to leave by family is encouraged to stay at home on the condition that her housing register application is progressed as if she were homeless - a homeless at home agreement.

Working between Housing and Children's Services needs to improve. The Corporate Parenting responsibilities of the Council towards care leavers should extend to housing needs and this requires a more comprehensive collaboration between housing services and children's services to be developed plus a commitment that no young person who

has left care in Dorset is left to secure their own housing, even those determined as intentionally homeless.

We would also like to see something in the strategy about increasing the capacity for single person accommodation in the social rented sector.

**12. What more, if anything, could housing associations do tackle homelessness?**

More work needs to be done with social landlords on their lettings policy as they are not willing to accept people who owe tenancy money, or have former criminal activity etc. and there needs to be a wider conversation about rent in advance and expectation of a DHP.

Too many housing association tenants are being evicted and that needs to be addressed with the support of other agencies to see how it can be reduced.

**13. What types of tenancies should people experiencing homelessness be awarded?**

Mostly social rented housing but where the private sector is good condition and affordable this is a good option.

**14. Are the current arrangements for the homelessness forum fit for purpose?**

The Homelessness forum is highly regarded by every stakeholder. Since Covid response this has not met so people are looking forward to when it starts to meet again. The right people are in the room and the networking is excellent. Dorset is built on informal partnerships and good people, but this relies on everyone staying in their post.

This group was used to develop a response to Covid and that worked so well.

**15. Are those responsible for delivering the homelessness strategy held to account well enough?**

The front-line services are held to account on a case by case basis where there is an advocate, but there isn't a structure for this to happen otherwise. The homelessness forum is not at the right level to do this.

## Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Before completing this EqIA please ensure you have read the guidance on the intranet.

### Initial Information

Name:	Sharon Attwater
Job Title:	Service Manager Housing Strategy & Performance
Email address:	Sharon.attwater@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk
Members of the assessment team:	Andrew Billany, Fiona Brown
Date assessment started:	January 2021
Date of completion:	21 May 2021
Version Number:	2

### Part 1: Background Information

Is this (please tick or expand the box to explain)

Existing	
Changing, updating or revision	√
New or proposed	
Other	

Is this (please tick or expand the box to explain)

Internal (employees only)	
External (residents, communities, partners)	
Both of the above	√

What is the name of your policy, strategy, project or service being assessed?

**Dorset Council Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy**

What is the policy, strategy, project or service designed to do? (include the aims, purpose and intended outcomes of the policy)

#### The strategy will:

- Describe homelessness and rough sleeping
- Explain Dorset Council's public law duties in respect of homelessness and rough sleeping
- Provide a single plan to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping in the Dorset Council area for the period 2021 to 2026
- Provide information in the form of description and data evidence in national and local context

- **Consider levels of homelessness; preventing homelessness; securing accommodation; providing support and resources**
- **Provides a framework of accountability and delivery arrangements**
- **Identify and explain objectives and outcomes**
- **Include an action plan to deliver the objectives**

What is the background or context to the proposal?

Due to Local Government Reorganisation to form Dorset Council and Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council a new Dorset Council Homelessness Strategy is required.

The Homelessness Act 2002 requires local authorities to take strategic responsibility for tackling and preventing homelessness.

Prior to the formation of Dorset Council, the relevant district and borough authorities each had homeless strategies all of which are now expired.

## **Part 2: Gathering information**

What sources of data, information, evidence and research was used to inform you about the people your proposal will have an impact on?

Dorset Council commissioned Neil Morland Housing & Co. Consultants who carried out a review of the current homeless service.

The review included benchmarking homelessness in the Dorset Council area with Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council area; The South of England; All of England and All of England with London. Data sources included:

- Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCL)
- Department for Work and Pensions
- STRIVE evaluation: Final Report
- ICF Consulting
- Fair Chance Fund: Final Report
- Alma Economics 2019 Homelessness: Causes of homelessness and rough sleeping
- Community Performance quarterly release March 2019. Ministry of Justice
- The Conservative and Unionist Party, Manifesto 2019
- Heriot Watt University
- Homeless Link
- London Assembly Housing Committee (September 2017), Hidden Homelessness in London

- Office of National Statistics 2011 Census
- Department for Communities and Local Government (2010)
- Child Poverty Action Group
- Professor Glen Bramley & Professor Suzanne Fitzpatrick – Homelessness in the UK 2017
- Housing Studies Journal
- Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (2005), Sustainable Communities: settled homes, changing lives, London, UK
- National Housing Federation
- Dorset CCG

\*This list is not exhaustive.

The review considered:

- Levels of homelessness
- Activities for preventing homelessness
- Activities for securing accommodation
- Activities for providing support
- The resources available to deliver the above activities.

Consultation was carried out by Neil Morland & Housing Co. (see later section 3) as part of the review.

What did this data, information, evidence and research tell you?

Elected members, stakeholders, service users and employees are committed to tackling homelessness in Dorset. There has been broad agreement that social rented housing is the preferred housing tenure due to security and cost. There was also agreement from the review findings that the number of single people with mental and physical ill-health who are finding themselves homeless is increasing and more support to prevent and relieve homelessness is needed generally.

### **Levels of homelessness**

24% of children living in Dorset are living in poverty, at risk of homelessness and the repeat cycle of poverty. This is a reduction of 5% compared to 2018/19 and is lower than the national average and the lowest of the benchmarking group.

The proportion of working age (16 to 64) unemployed in Dorset is the lowest in the benchmarking group. Those in employment is lower than all England but higher than BCP and South West. Those self-employed is the highest of the benchmarking group.

An increasing number of single adults with poor mental or physical health becoming homeless as well as those with drug and alcohol problems.

An average of 30 new initial assessments were carried out each week; 90% of these assessments were owed a homeless duty following the initial assessment; the number of main duties accepted reduced from 448 in 2017/18 to 405 in 2019/20 following the national trend.

95.6% of main applicants are recorded as white British, 4.4% as Black and Minority Ethnic; 22% were recorded as 'Ethnic Group Not Stated'.

The aged group for main applicants with the highest number of accepted prevention or relief duties is 25 to 44.

The number of decisions resulting in an acceptance as being eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need has increased by 26% in 2019/20 and is 61% of all decisions of the 5-year period reviewed.

The number of households with dependent children owed a main duty fell by 24% in 2019/20.

The number of households with no dependent children owed a main duty with mental health problems has risen at 53 cases in 2019/20.

The number of households with priority need due to physical disability or ill-health was the third highest at 37 cases in 2019/20.

The number of households with priority need due to domestic violence or abuse reduced by 50% to 5 households between 2018/19 and 2019/20.

The top two reasons for loss of last settled home in Dorset is the termination of assured shorthold tenancy and family or friends no longer able to accommodate.

76% of outcomes for those owed a main duty is the offer and acceptance of a social rented home.

Dorset has the lowest number of rough sleepers compared to the benchmark group most of whom are single males.

Households with dependent children are most likely to approach at a prevention or relief stage. Single households are most likely to approach when they are already homeless.

### **Preventing Homelessness**

There is a good range of commissioned and non-commissioned activities to prevent homelessness.

The route to housing for offenders released from secure estates needs clarification.

There is a strong provision for Armed Forces and former Armed Forces personnel who become homeless.

The top 3 types of household in Dorset recorded as being owed a prevention duty are single parent families with dependent children; single adult males; and single adult females.

The top 3 types of household in Dorset recorded as being a relief duty are single adult males; single adult females; and single parent families.

The top 3 age ranges of those main applicants owed either a prevention or relief duty is 25-34 years; 18-24 years; and 35-44 years.

The top 2 reasons recorded for households owed a prevention duty is the end of private rented tenancy – assured shorthold followed by family or friends no longer able to accommodate.

The top 2 reasons recorded for households owed a relief duty is family or friends no longer able to accommodate followed by non-violent relationship breakdown with partner.

Most households owed a prevention duty were living with family or friends at the time of their application.

Most households owed a relief duty were of no fixed abode at the time of their application.

Dorset is the lowest of the benchmark group in terms of successful relief activity per thousand.

The most common reason for the ending of prevention duty (35%) is new accommodation secured for at least 6 months.

The most common reason for the ending of relief duty (138 households) is that 56 days elapsed.

31% of referrals were under the new Duty to Refer mostly from non-public authorities e.g. Citizens Advice and Social Landlords.

The most commonly recorded main prevention activity for 2019/20 was negotiation and mediation/advocacy work to prevent eviction.

The number of intentionally homeless households is low compared to the number where the main homelessness duty has been accepted.

Further investigation is required to mitigate rough sleepers migrating between Dorset Council and Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council areas (BCP).

## **Activities for securing accommodation**

Dorset Council has access to a portfolio of 224 units of temporary accommodation (as at February 2021) including accommodation adapted for people with physical disability.

Additionally, bed and breakfast accommodation is used to provide temporary accommodation.

The number of households per thousand placed into temporary accommodation by Dorset Council is lower than all the benchmarking group except South West.

The number of households with children in temporary accommodation is higher in Dorset than BCP and South West but lower than England and All England.

The type of temporary accommodation used by Dorset in order of high to low 2019/20 is:

- Bed & breakfast hotels (including shared annexes)
- Private Sector leased by authority or social landlord
- Local authority or social landlord stock
- Any other type of temporary accommodation (including private landlord and not known)
- Hostels (including reception centres, emergency units and refuges)
- Nightly paid, privately managed accommodation, self-contained

43% of Dorset homeless households as at 31.3.2020 were in temporary accommodation outside the Dorset Council area.

74% of households ended their main homeless duty due to an offer of social rented accommodation.

Successful activity to secure accommodation in the order of high to low is:

- Activities of Dorset Council Housing Solutions Team
- Financial support from Dorset Council
- Information and advice

Private rented sector accommodation is nationally the second most common method to relieve homelessness.

Financial assistance to help prevent or relieve homelessness in 2018/19 (latest data available) is:

- £41,855 – Rent Bond
- £87,950 – Rent Deposit
- £126,368 – Rent in Advance

Dorset has 182,677 homes and 12.3% are socially rented.

In 2019 there were 5223 households registered with Dorset Council for an allocation of social rented housing.

The number of new lettings of social housing has declined from 1636 in 2016/17 to 1469 in 2018/19.

3.15% of the 2019/20 housing register stated in their application they are at risk of homelessness, are homeless or have been identified as such during their assessment.

1 Bedroom properties are the most common size property required, then 2 bedrooms then 3 or more bedrooms.

### **Activities for providing support**

Almost half the households owed a homelessness duty in 2019/20 have at least one support need.

Over (644)70% of the households owed a homeless duty with support needs had more than one support need in 2019/20.

Although there has been a reduction in Dorset from 2018/19 to 2019/20 the total number of households with support needs per one thousand is higher than BCP.

The most common support need is due to mental health followed by physical health and disability and the third most common support need is due to domestic abuse.

### **Resources available to deliver the above activities**

Dorset had an award of £225,777 from Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) Homelessness Reduction Act Grant 2020-21 to help fund new burdens from the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act.

Dorset had an award of £442,352 Flexible Homelessness Support Grant 2020-21 to spend on preventing homelessness and assisting those who are homeless.

Dorset had an award of £472,470 Rough Sleeper Initiative 2020-21 funding to support or create street outreach services, secure hostel and shelter type accommodation and deliver specialist support to rough sleepers to help them remain off the streets.

Dorset had an award of £624,000 Next Steps Accommodation Programme Revenue funding 2020-21. This is for interim accommodation and support for those rough sleepers accommodated during the pandemic.

Dorset had an award of £1,556,730 Next Steps Accommodation Programme Capital Funding 2020-21. This is to bring forward long term move-on accommodation.

Dorset works with several commissioned and non-commissioned providers to deliver a range of activities and support.

70% of respondents to the public consultation either agreed or partially agreed with the strategy proposals.

Respondents agreed with the need to provide

Is further information needed to help inform this proposal?

**No**

### **Part 3: Engagement and Consultation**

What engagement or consultation has taken place as part of this proposal?

As part of the external review of the homeless service Neil Morland and Housing Co. carried out stakeholder interviews with internal services including:

- Dorset Council's Housing Service
- Adult Social Care Service
- Children's Services

Stakeholder interviews were offered to all our partner organisations. 8 external partner organisations took part including:

- Social landlords
- Public Authorities such as Armed Forces, Prisons, Police and NHS
- Voluntary Organisations such as not for profit groups, community and faith groups for example those providing outreach and support and homelessness advice

Stakeholder interviews were offered to our service users and 30 took part including:

- 4 Statutory Homeless Households– owed a duty by a local authority
- 0 Single Homeless Households – living in supported accommodation
- 2 Street Homeless Households – sleeping rough
- 2 Hidden Homeless Households – sofa surfing with family or friends
- 6 Households living in current home but at risk of losing it
- 13 Households now living in settled accommodation but previously homeless in one of the above situations

- 3 Other households who did not meet the above definition.

\*In the above description 'Household' can mean an individual or more than one individual.

A public consultation started on 22 March 2021 and ended on 7 May 2021. Any individual or organisation could responses and 106 responses were received. The response from residents was reasonably representative of the Dorset population.

There was an uneven balance between males and females with 57% from females and 37% from males. Responses came from a wide range of ages but 48% came from respondents aged 65 or older. This compares to only 29% of the population being in this age band in the wider Dorset population. With 88% of the respondents saying their ethnic group was White British this is fairly typical of the wider population. Responses from disabled people were above average at 6.5% of responses compared to a Dorset figure of 5% based on those claiming either Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence Payments or Attendance Allowance.

There were 17 organisational responses with 11 of them providing an official organisational response.

The responses indicate overall good support for the strategy with confirmation that health, wellbeing, money and employment factors ranking as influential factors people are concerned about. Other respondents highlight the lack of accommodation and financial resources to tackle this matter as concerning. One respondent mentioned support for LGBT households was not specifically mentioned in the draft. A new action has been added to review the support and challenges faced by households with protected characteristics.

Dorset Council communications team used social media, Dorset Council website, focussed emails, e-newsletters and general media sources to promote the public consultation. We promoted the consultation with organisations working locally with people from minority ethnic backgrounds.

During the development of the strategy and action plan two workshops were held with members of the Dorset Council People and Health Overview Committee, plus additional Dorset Council councillors including People and Health Scrutiny members, the Portfolio Holders for Adult Services and the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, Neil Morland & Co. Housing Consultants and Dorset Council Housing Service.

During the workshops, details about the structure of the review were discussed. Results of the review were received and discussed. Options were discussed and agreed to identify the strategy objectives and future actions.

How will the outcome of consultation be fed back to those who you consulted with?

**On the Dorset Council website and where appropriate as part of future working groups to deliver the agreed objectives.**

**Please refer to the Equality Impact Assessment Guidance before completing this section.**

Not every proposal will require an EqlA. If you decide that your proposal does **not** require an EqlA, it is important to show that you have given this adequate consideration. The data and research that you have used to inform you about the people who will be affected by the policy should enable you to make this decision and whether you need to continue with the EqlA.

**Please tick the appropriate option:**

An EqlA is required (please continue to Part 4 of this document)	√
An EqlA is <b>not</b> required (please complete the box below)	

This policy, strategy, project or service does not require an EqlA because:

Name: Sharon Attwater      Job Title: Service Manager for Housing Strategy and Performance  
Date: 21 May 2021

Please send a copy of this document to [Diversity & Inclusion Officer](#)

**Next Steps:**

- The EqlA will be reviewed by Business Intelligence & Communications and if in agreement, your EqlA will be signed off.
- If not, we will get in touch to chat further about the EqlA, to get a better understanding.

**Part 4: Analysing the impact**

Who does the service, strategy, policy, project or change impact?

- If your strategy, policy, project or service contains options you may wish to consider providing an assessment for each option. Please cut and paste the template accordingly.

For each protected characteristic please choose from the following options:

- Please note in some cases more than one impact may apply – in this case please state all relevant options and explain in the ‘Please provide details’ box.

Positive Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the proposal eliminates discrimination, advances equality of opportunity and/or fosters good relations with protected groups.</li></ul>
Negative Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Protected characteristic group(s) could be disadvantaged or discriminated against</li></ul>

Neutral Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No change/ no assessed significant impact of protected characteristic groups</li> </ul>
Unclear	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not enough data/evidence has been collected to make an informed decision.</li> </ul>

Age:	<i>Choose impact from the list above</i>
What age bracket does this affect?	All ages. Positive
Please provide details:	Identified activity to work to tackle future levels of homelessness amongst young people from age 6 via education routes; recognises those age groups most commonly affected from current data and seeks to improve understanding and options tailored to each age group; review joint working for care leavers and other young people; align the work of early help and adolescent services with homeless services.

Disability: (including physical, mental, sensory and progressive conditions)	Positive
Does this affect a specific disability group?	It is not restrictive but recognises those households with physical, emotional and mental health disabilities as groups who require tailored responses to tackle homelessness more effectively.
Please provide details:	Action plan includes specific work to explore early homelessness prevention and support options for those with poor health outcomes; to consider the location of services and map to need including accessibility; review hospital discharge policy; review housing supply in regard to accommodation suitable for single people with complex needs; complete a supported housing needs gap analysis

Gender Reassignment & Gender Identity:	Positive
Please provide details:	Data did not illustrate any significant requirements that are not captured in the activities identified to tackle homelessness in the wider context. The strategy is clear that all homelessness is serious and seeks to support any household to prevent homelessness. Action plan includes review of challenges and support available to households with protected characteristics.

Pregnancy and maternity:	Positive
Please provide details:	Data did not illustrate any significant requirements that are not captured in the activities identified to tackle homelessness in the wider context. The strategy is clear

	that all homelessness is serious and seeks to support any household to prevent homelessness. The public law duty in relation to the use of bed and breakfast for households with pregnant women or children is limited to 6 weeks. Action plan includes review of challenges and support available to households with protected characteristics.
Race and Ethnicity:	Positive
Please provide details:	Data did not illustrate any significant requirements that are not captured in the activities identified to tackle homelessness in the wider context. The strategy is clear that all homelessness is serious and seeks to support any household to prevent homelessness. The service seeks to ensure these households can fully participate in the homeless service. Actions include review of challenges and support available to households with protected characteristics.
Religion or belief:	Neutral
Please provide details:	The action plan includes review of challenges and support available to households with protected characteristics. Consideration will be given to the findings of the review although no specific requirements were identified in the review.
Sexual orientation:	Positive
Please provide details:	Data did not illustrate any significant requirements that are not captured in the activities identified to tackle homelessness in the wider context. The strategy is clear that all homelessness is serious and seeks to support any household to prevent homelessness. Actions include review of challenges and support available to households with protected characteristics.
Sex (consider both men and women):	Positive
Please provide details:	Data did not illustrate any significant requirements that are not captured in the activities identified to tackle homelessness in the wider context. The strategy is clear that all homelessness is serious and seeks to support any household to prevent homelessness. The public law duty in relation to the use of bed and breakfast for households with pregnant women or children is limited to 6 weeks. Actions include review of challenges and support available to households with protected characteristics.
Marriage or civil partnership:	Neutral

Please provide details:	The action plan includes review of challenges and support available to households with protected characteristics. Relationship breakdown is a recognised factor that can lead to homelessness. Consideration will be given to the findings of the review although no specific requirements were identified in the review.
Carers:	Positive
Please provide details:	The action plan includes numerous activities to enhance prevention work for people who may be at risk of homelessness. This work seeks to support the household. Working with those who care for others to prevent their homelessness would be included but it is not specifically focussed on this group alone. Action includes review of challenges and support available to households with protected characteristics.
Rural isolation:	Positive
Please provide details:	The actions include mapping access to services and support, improving the outcomes or removing barriers and identifying reasons for homelessness this includes those households in rural isolation.
Single parent families:	Positive
Please provide details:	The activities to tackle homelessness considers the reasons for single parent homelessness, the events that trigger approaches to the service and the associated reasons. The strategy seeks to improve outcomes for these households and identifies joint work with Dorset Council Children's Services and other external organisations that can be carried out.
Social & economic deprivation:	Positive
Please provide details:	The impact of social and economic deprivation is recognised as a factor in causing homelessness. Locally focussed actions are identified to better tackle homelessness for households in this specific group.
Armed Forces communities	Positive
Please provide details:	There is recognition these households experience different factors that impact on homelessness. The current support and routes to support for these households is acknowledged and actions are identified to strengthen this.



## Part 5: Action Plan

Provide actions for **positive**, **negative** and **unclear** impacts.

If you have identified any **negative** or **unclear** impacts, describe what adjustments will be made to remove or reduce the impacts, or if this is not possible provide justification for continuing with the proposal.

Issue	Action to be taken	Person(s) responsible	Date to be completed by
Age	Review joint working for care leavers and other young people; align the work of early help and adolescent services with homeless services; develop awareness training for school settings; analyse and invest in measures to ensure housing is suitable to need.	Service Manager for Housing Strategy Service Manager for Homelessness Prevention and Advice Service Manager for Housing Solutions Service Manager for Housing Standards	March 2022
Disability	Explore early homelessness prevention and support options for those with poor health outcomes; consider the location of services and map to need including accessibility; review hospital discharge policy; review housing supply of accommodation suitable for single people with complex needs; complete a supported housing needs gap analysis	Service Manager for Housing Strategy Service Manager for Homelessness Prevention & Housing Advice	2022
Gender	Action plan seeks to review current challenges and support	Service Manager for Homelessness Prevention & Advice	2022
Pregnancy	The public law duty in relation to the use of bed and breakfast for households with pregnant women or children is limited to 6 weeks. Action plan includes review of challenges and support available.	Service Manager for Homelessness Prevention & Advice	2022

Race & Ethnicity	Action plan includes review of challenges and support available.	Service Manager for Homelessness Prevention & Advice	2022
Religion or belief	Action plan includes review of challenges and support available.	Service Manager for Homelessness Prevention & Advice	2022
Sexual Orientation	Action plan includes review of challenges and support available.	Service Manager for Homelessness Prevention & Advice	2022
Sex	Action plan includes review of challenges and support available.	Service Manager for Homelessness Prevention & Advice	2022
Carers	The action plan includes numerous activities to enhance prevention work for people who may be at risk of homelessness. This work seeks to support the household. Working with those who care for others to prevent their homelessness would be included but it is not specifically focussed on this group alone. Action includes review of challenges and support available to households with protected characteristics.	Service Manager for Homelessness Prevention & Advice	TBA
Rural Isolation	Map access to services and support, improving the outcomes or removing barriers and identifying reasons for homelessness this includes those households in rural isolation.	Service Manager for Housing Strategy	2022
Single Parent Families	Action beginning in wards with the highest levels of child poverty seeking out and targeting households in or at risk of poverty to develop and embed early, proactive homelessness prevention and support. Make available information and support across the area at natural locations such as schools, DWP, supermarkets and GP surgeries.	Service Manager for Housing Strategy	2026

Social & Economic Deprivation	Action beginning in wards with the highest levels of child poverty seeking out and targeting households in or at risk of poverty to develop and embed early, proactive homelessness prevention and support.	Service Manager for Housing Strategy	2026
Armed Forces	A review of homelessness prevention activities and ways of identifying these households to raise awareness of and refer to specialist support available.	Service Manager for Housing Strategy	2022

### EqIA Sign Off

Officer completing this EqIA:	Sharon Attwater	Date:	21 May 2021
Equality Lead:	Susan Ward-Rice	Date:	27 May 2021
Equality & Diversity Action Group Chair:	Rick Parry	Date:	27 May 2021

### Next Steps:

- Please send this draft EqIA to: [Diversity & inclusion Officer](#)
- The report author will be invited to an Equality & Diversity Action Group (these are held monthly - dates are available on the intranet)
- The Equality & Diversity Action Group will review the EqIA and you may be asked to make some alterations
- EqIAs are signed off and published
- The report author is responsible for ensuring any actions in the action plan are implemented.

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# Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

## **Consultation Response Report**

Including appendix of all redacted comments and survey

Produced by Mark Simons  
for **Dorset Council**

**May 2021**

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# Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

## Consultation Response Report

<b>What was the consultation about?</b>	Councils must publish a new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy every 5 years. Dorset Council have developed a new homelessness and rough sleeping strategy. The purpose of this strategy is to shape the way advice and assistance is provided to people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness over the next 5 years.
<b>What did we need to find out</b>	The council needs to understand whether our draft strategy met the requirements of the public, service users, partners and other organisations.
<b>Over what period did the consultation run?</b>	The consultation originally lasted for 6 weeks, between Monday 22 March until midnight on 30 April 2021. It was then extended for a further week closing on 7 May 2021.
<b>What consultation methods were used?</b>	The consultation involved an online and paper consultation survey. This included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Online survey. This included set questions and free text section for people to explain their answers.</li><li>• Paper surveys available direct from Dorset Council</li></ul>
<b>How many responses were received overall?</b>	106 overall responses were received. 75% of responses were from members of the public. The other replies came from a variety of respondents including services users, service providers, private and social landlords and community organisations
<b>How representative is the response to the wider population?</b>	The response size is fair for a council consultation of this type. As this was an open survey it is not possible to define a statistically valid sample size. The response from residents was reasonably representative of the Dorset population. There was an uneven balance between males and females with 52% of responses from females and 37% from males. This is not unusual in consultation responses. Responses came from a wide range of ages but 34% came from respondents aged 65 or older. This compares well to 29% of the population being in this age band in the wider Dorset population. This age group is often overrepresented. With 74% of the respondents saying their ethnic group was White British this is fairly typical of the wider population. Responses from disabled people were above average at 15.1% of responses compared to a Dorset figure of around 5% based on those claiming either Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence Payments or Attendance Allowance.
<b>Where will the results be published?</b>	Results will be published on the council's website <a href="http://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk">www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</a>

<b>How will the results be used?</b>	Councillors will make the final decision on adoption of the final strategy in Dorset having regard to the feedback received during this consultation.
<b>Who has produced this report?</b>	Mark Simons, Consultation Officer, Dorset Council May, 2021

## Executive Summary

- Fair response for a technical strategy consultation, with 106 responses
- Good mix of responses by respondent type and well spread over the Dorset Council area and beyond
- Nearly 70% of respondents thought the Homeless and Rough Sleeping Strategy wholly or partially identified the key issues affecting homelessness.
- The support was across both individual and organisational responses
- There was over 80% who totally or partially supported the proposed actions in the strategy
- There were a range of issues highlighted including:
  - Support for the use of an evidence base
  - The basic need of building more houses needs addressing
  - Concern that funding might not meet the ambition of the plan
  - The important link between health and homelessness

## Background

### The council explained in the consultation:

*In November 2020 Dorset Council commissioned a review of homelessness in Dorset. Councils must publish a new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy every 5 years. Dorset Council have used the information gathered to develop a new homelessness and rough sleeping strategy. The purpose of this strategy is to shape the way advice and assistance is provided to people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness over the next 5 years.*

### **Homelessness Review**

*The review carried out by Neil Morland & Co Housing Consultants examined what is currently available to people who are homeless or may become homeless in Dorset. It considered: ~ Current and likely future levels of homelessness in Dorset ~ What we do to prevent homelessness ~ The accommodation available for people who are or may become homeless ~ The support available to people who are homeless, may become homeless or have been homeless ~ The resources available to the Council, other public authorities, voluntary organisations and others providing these services You can read the review [here](#).*

### **Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy**

*Dorset Council has produced a draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy to: ~ Prevent homelessness in Dorset ~ Ensure enough accommodation is and will be available for people in Dorset who are or may become homeless ~ Ensure there are adequate services to support people who are or may become homeless ~ Ensure there are adequate services to support people who have been homeless and need support to prevent them becoming homeless again. A draft action plan has been developed that details how work will be carried out by Dorset Council, other public authorities, housing associations, voluntary organisations, and others to achieve the aims of the Strategy. To monitor our progress in delivering the strategy, the action plan will be reviewed each year. You can read the draft Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy [here](#) (link on survey)*

## The Consultation

*This purpose of this survey is to tell us what you think about homelessness in Dorset, the proposed aims and actions outlined in the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and draft action plan. This consultation will last for 6 weeks, between Monday 22 March until midnight on 7 May 2021. If you would prefer to complete a paper survey, please download it [here](#). Please return your survey to The Housing Service, South Walks House, South Walks Road, Dorchester, DT1 1UZ Please contact us by email [customerservices@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:customerservices@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk) or phone 01305 221000 if you need the survey in another format or would like to respond in a different way."*

No questions were compulsory. A copy of the survey is available in the appendix.

**Analysis Method:** Questions were considered on an individual basis. Overall responses were examined and specific responses of respondents who said they had a disability.. The official organisational responses were looked at separately. The main method of analysis was looking at the percentage of respondents who expressed a view on each question.

For each open question the text comments have been studied and “coded” depending on what issues were raised. The coded comments are then reported on based on the amount of times those individual issues have been raised. Total redacted comments are provided in an appendix.

Note: some figures may not sum due to rounding.

## Response Method

Overall, 106 responses were received. All of these were electronic responses.

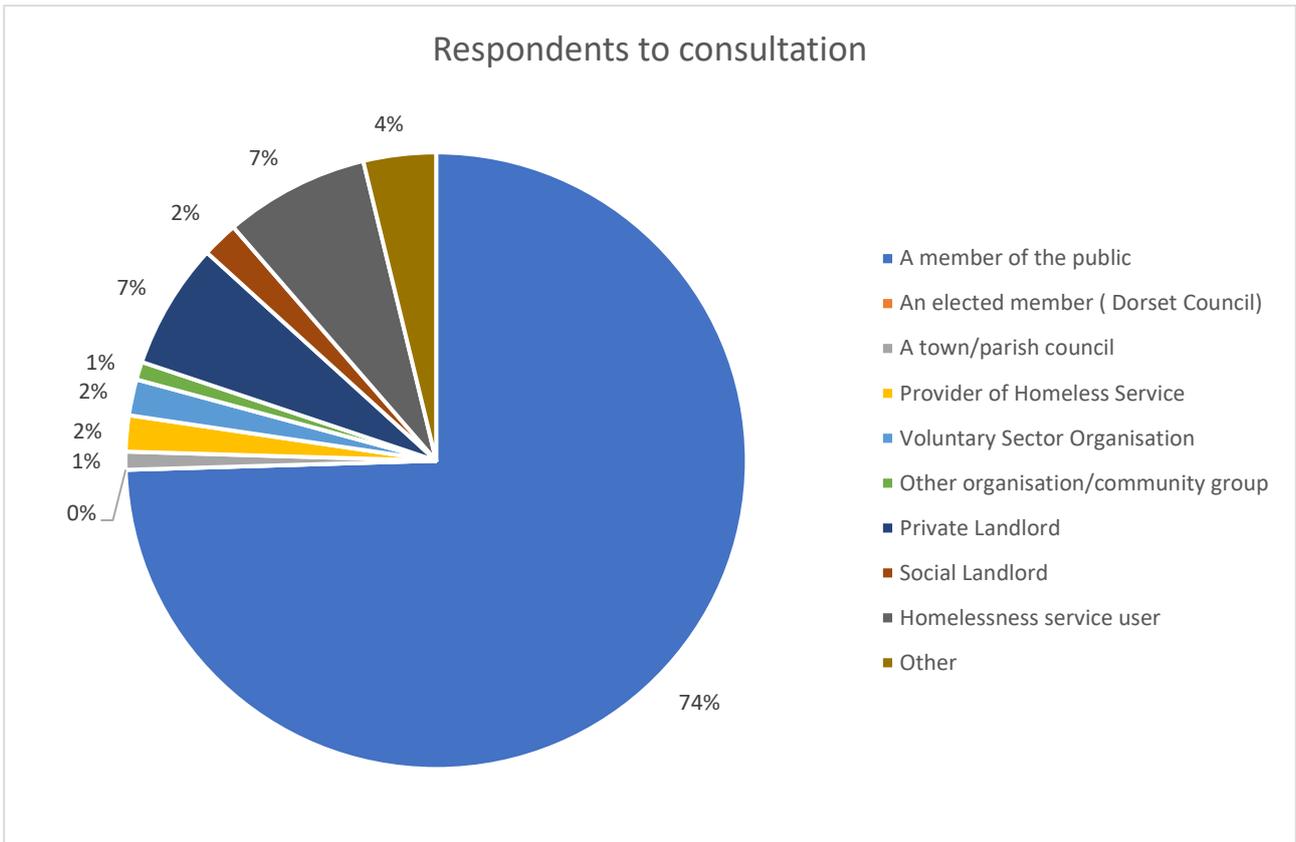
## About respondents

106 overall responses were received.

### Q Are you responding as:

#### Respondents:

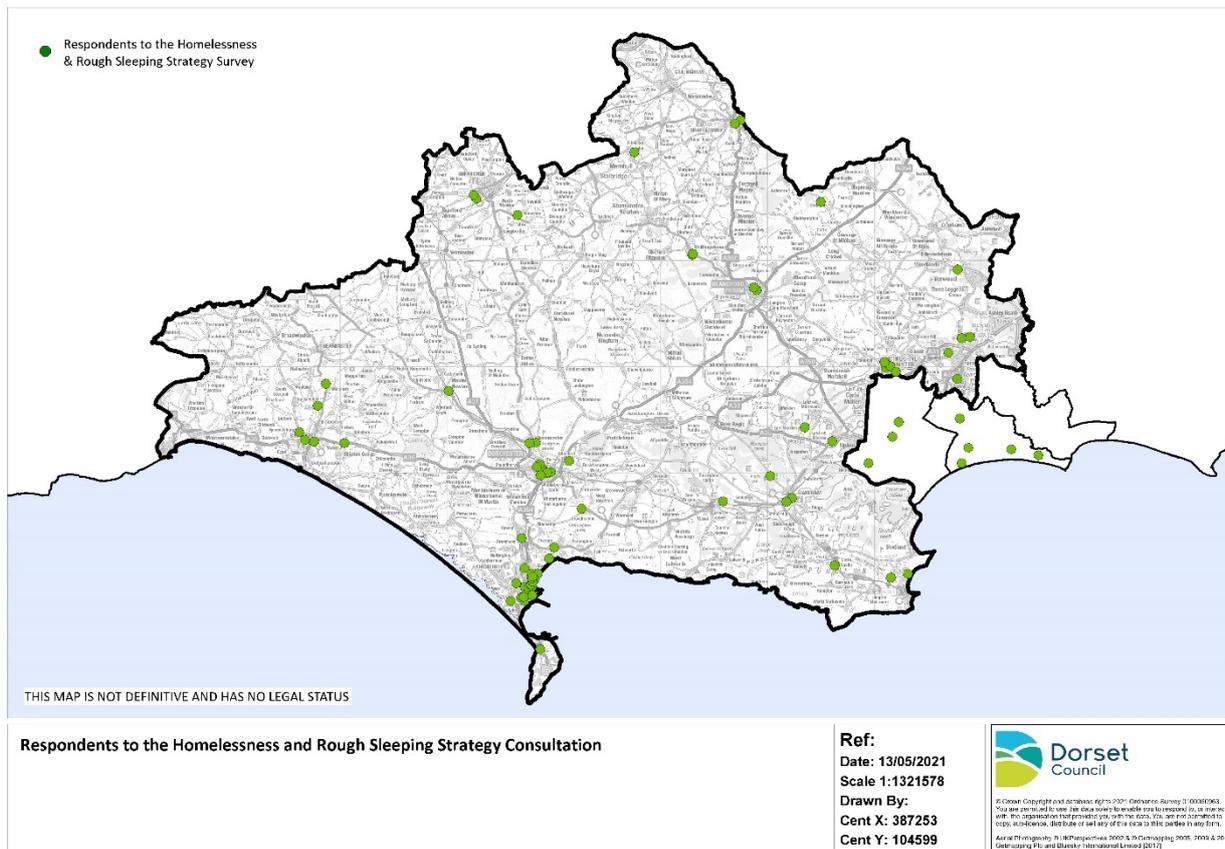
	% of all respondents	Number
A member of the public	74.5%	79
An elected member ( Dorset Council)	0.0%	0
A town/parish council	0.9%	1
Provider of Homeless Service	1.9%	2
Voluntary Sector Organisation	1.9%	2
Other organisation/community group	0.9%	1
Private Landlord	6.6%	7
Social Landlord	1.9%	2
Homelessness service user	7.5%	8
Other	3.8%	4



75% of respondents were responding as members of the public. Other responses came from a wide range of people and organisations. The second highest group was homelessness service users (with 8 responses) closely followed by private landlords with 7 responses. The rest of the responses came from across community groups, homeless service providers, voluntary sector and social landlords. There were 4 respondents who specified “other”. They were from someone who was a “Retired Manager of Rough Sleepers Hostels in London”, “A family that is to be evicted in July” and “Parent of a homeless person” and one other.

# Map of responses to the consultation

Postcodes were supplied by most of the respondents with the majority of those living in the Dorset Council area. The map shows the distribution of overall responses to the consultation demonstrating a good spread across the geographical area. Promotion of the consultation appears to have been successful across all areas.



## Parish/Town Councils

1 response came back saying they were responding on behalf of a parish/town councils. This was from: East Stoke Parish Council. This wasn't their official response.

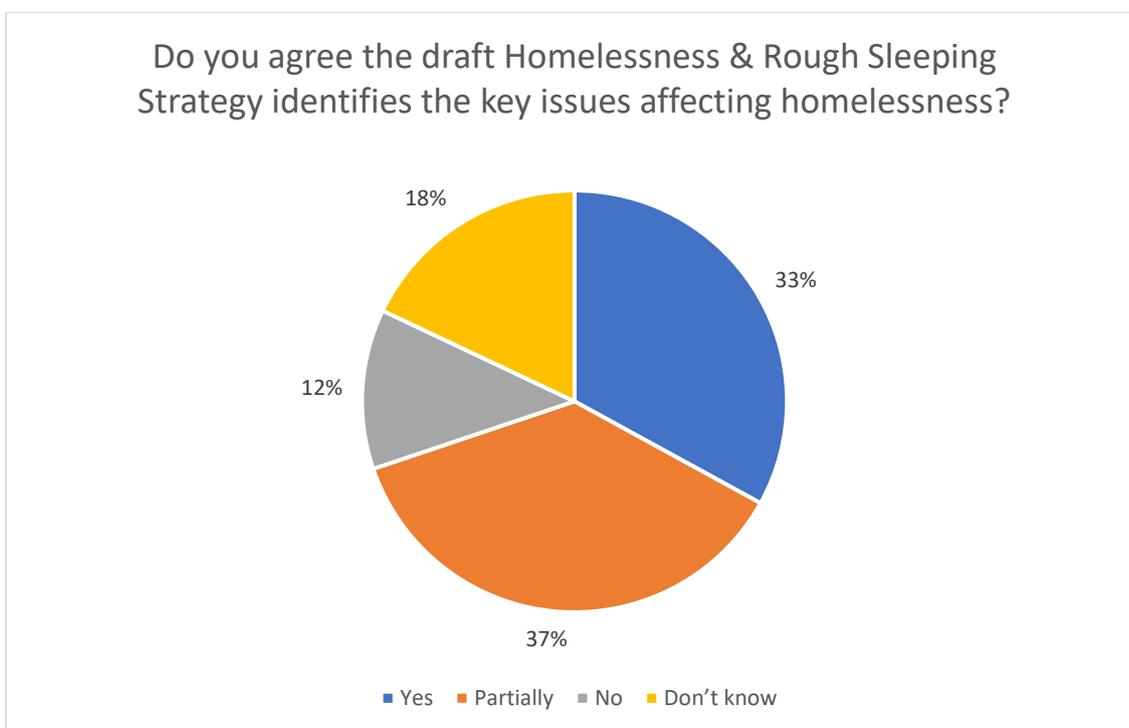
## Official Organisational Responses

There were 17 organisational responses with 11 of those providing the official response of the organisation. These included:

Organisation
Homeless Health Service for Dorset ( NHS)
Bridport Local Area Partnership
Sovereign Housing Association
Citizens Advice in Dorset (CAiD)
Alastair and Davina Mackay
Self employed
Ian Bruce Associates Ltd
KEN ROEBUCK
Unspecified
Magna Housing Ltd

## Question 1- Do you agree the draft Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy identifies the key issues affecting homelessness?

Overall	% of all respondents	Number
Yes	33.0%	35
Partially	36.8%	39
No	12.3%	13
Don't know	17.9%	19



Overall, there is strong support suggesting that the rough sleeping strategy has identified the key issues affecting homelessness. 33% gave an unqualified yes to this question and a further 37% suggested it had partially identified them. Only 12% said it failed to identify them and 18% were not sure.

Looking at responses specifically from key partner organisations we find support for the identification of the key issues. **Sovereign Housing Association** say the issues are partially identified and say *“We think that the strategy does highlight the majority of issues ... What is less clear from the strategy is actions to address these, with a lot of actions in the plan around doing further work to understand possible solutions, given the pandemic and the expected increase in homelessness some of these time frames seem very long given that there would be a significant amount of work to then put the solutions in place.”* **Magna Housing Association** thought the issues were identified saying *“The draft strategy*

is based on a comprehensive evidence base and is well thought out in terms of draft recommendations & actions.”

**Homeless Health Service for Dorset ( NHS)** said they thought the issues were identified and that *“To address homeless for the long term, need to prioritise sustainable accommodation that is person centred.”*

**Dorset Healthcare** said they thought the issues were identified and said *“Detailed report with good evidence identifying factors impacting homelessness.”*

**Private Landlords** were much less sure, with some saying the issues were partially identified or that they didn’t know.

**Homelessness Service Users** were equally unsure with only one yes and most saying they thought they were partially, or they didn’t know.

Looking specifically at responses from **disabled people** there was no significant deviance from the overall response. 39% agreed the strategy identified the key issues.23% felt it partially identified them and 15% said it didn’t address them. There were no comments that suggested disabled people felt the strategy discriminated against them in any way and on the contrary a number of respondents stressed the importance of the link between mental health and homelessness.

**Q1 Comments from those saying the strategy hadn’t identified the key issues of homelessness**

Looking firstly at those who said the strategy didn’t identify the key issues affecting homelessness. Thirteen respondents replied in this way. This was made up from:

- Members of the public 10
- Provider of Homeless Service 1
- Private Landlord 1
- Homelessness service user 1

Issues raised
Current allocation system doesn’t work and leads to homelessness
Council does what it wants anyway
Concerns that the strategy doesn't link homelessness and LBGT+
Need to build the right sort of homes to avoid homelessness
Need action and results not a talking shop
Poor local insight into the issue
Not enough innovation
Private Rented sector has a poor record
Council staff training welcomed
As an attractive area we will draw people adding to the homelessness issue
The strategy needs to be closely linked to a comprehensive mental and general health support system

## Q1 Comments from those saying the strategy **partially identified** the key issues of homelessness

Looking now at those who said the strategy partially identified the key issues affecting homelessness. 39 respondents replied in this way. This was made up from:

Members of the public 26  
 Voluntary sector organisation 2  
 Private Landlord 3  
 Other 3  
 Social landlord 1  
 Homelessness service user 3  
 A town/parish council 1

### **32 respondents made comments**

Full comments are available in the appendix.

## **Summary of issues raised**

Issue	Mentions
Need to closely link homelessness and health care etc	4
The lack of homes and how that is going to be dealt with needs better explanation	2
Need more local analysis	2
Difference between differing types of relationship breakdown ... Some are abusive	2
Complicated subject	2
Homeless people solution is not private rented	2
Bringing empty properties back into use - how in strategy	2
Cost of temporary accommodation	2
Private tenants are not well protected from being made homeless	1
Don't believe the council will address the problem	1
Method used probably undercounts homeless	1
County is varied and large impacting response needed	1
Monitoring vital	1
Need to be more reactive to avoid people becoming homeless	1
Plan acks ambition but meets requirements	1
Small sample in interview	1
Private accommodation unaffordable	1
Language in report - "ensure" is too woolly	1
Using outside consultants	1
Homeless people with learning disabilities are not considered	1
Causes of rough sleeping need expanding	1
Need safe accommodation for homeless	1
Needs more focus on solutions e.g. Use of B&Bs	1

Use of temporary accommodation in local areas important and need more on this	1
Single homeless people - not just the causes listed	1
Weymouth problem of incoming rough sleepers not addressed	1
Aggressive begging needs a solution	1
People need right solution for circumstances	1
How are hidden homeless being dealt with	1
All people should work or volunteer	1
Doesn't focus enough on issues of high rents and rogue landlords causing homelessness	1

Analysis of the comments showed most issues raised were individual items and not consistent and repetitive themes. The above table shows some themes emerging but the only main one being the important link between homelessness and health.

### **Q1 Comments from those saying the strategy **did identify** the key issues of homelessness**

Looking now at those who said the strategy identified the key issues affecting homelessness. 35 respondents replied in this way. This was made up from:

- Members of the public 30
- Other 1
- Social landlord 1
- Homelessness service user 1
- Other organisation/community group 1
- Provider of Homeless Service 1

### **10 respondents made comments**

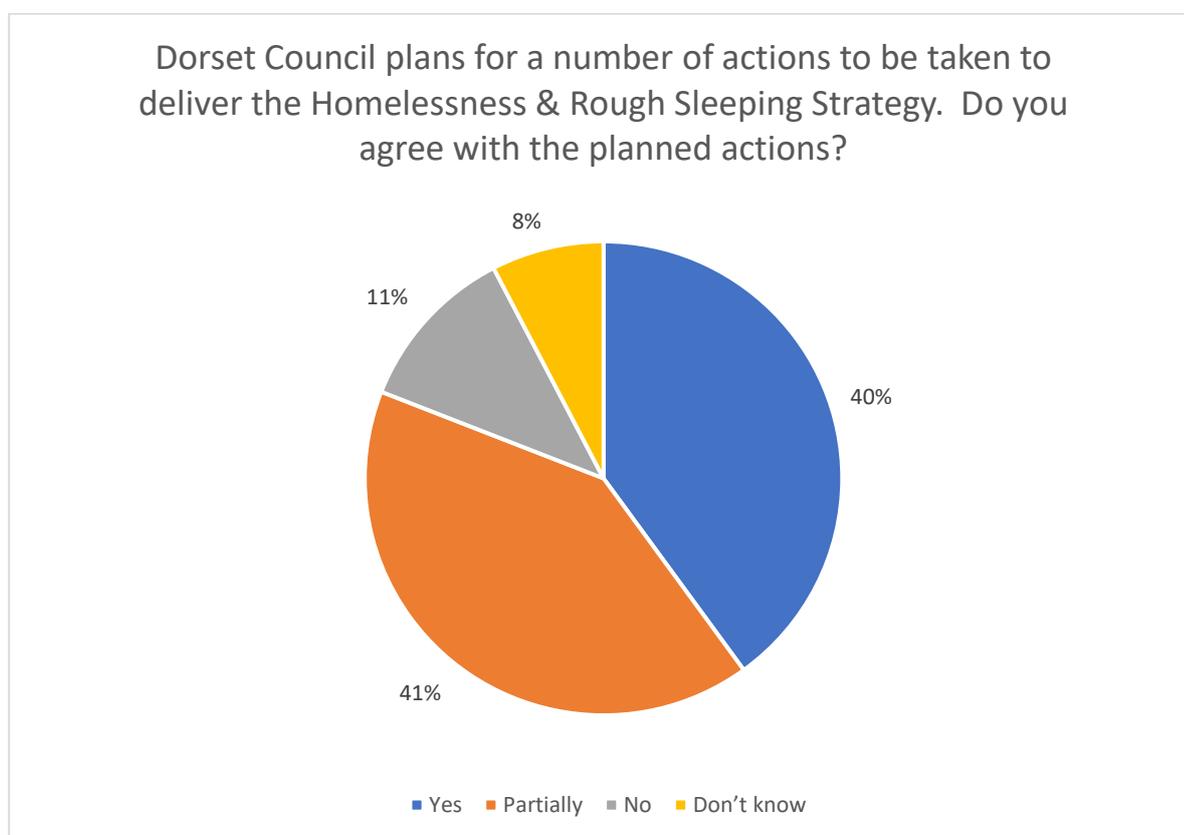
Full comments are available in the appendix.

Issue	Mentions
Good evidence base informing strategy	4
Simple and clear	3
Needs to be done	2
Improvement on previous situation	1
Think outside the box	1
Think long term	1

Those who felt the issues had been identified generally backed this up in the comments.

**Question 2 - Dorset Council plans for a number of actions to be taken to deliver the Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy. You can see them here. Do you agree with the planned actions?**

Overall	% of all respondents	Number
Yes	40.0%	42
Partially	41.0%	43
No	11.4%	12
Don't know	7.6%	8



The table above shows strong overall support for the actions proposed in the strategy, with 40% fully agreeing with the actions and a further 41% partially agreeing with them. Overall, only 11% disagreed. A further 8% were unsure.

Looking at responses specifically from key partner organisations we find support for the identification of the key issues. **Sovereign Housing Association** say they partially agreed with the strategy actions and comment *“As already mentioned the action plan has a lot of references to mapping, reviewing and evaluation with limited commitment around new services, initiatives etc, and whilst we are sure that Dorset will look to use the information it collates to do this in the future this would be a few years away and given the expected rise in homelessness as a result of the pandemic there may be a need to be taking action much earlier. With regard to specific actions there are a few things we would flag. Given*

*that Housing Associations play a key role in meeting the housing need, providing support and signposting to those who do not qualify for social housing potentially will not solve their long-term housing need. We appreciate there are other references around making people more tenancy ready (pre-tenancy training) which will help but is there a challenge back to social landlords (including ourselves) around our criteria and exclusions. When looking at TA services it talks about accommodation standards which we would fully support and about the potential of private sector leasing, we appreciate that there is a need to offer a range of options and solutions and would encourage you to explore what TA arrangements can be provided by your social landlords. These can often be more cost effective bring added value of access to employment and training services and tenancy support. We have a number of services in place with other LA's. We like the idea of the placement policy but would like to understand how this will work in practice, we presume it is around giving choice and control back to clients which we would fully support but we equally recognise the challenges this may bring in terms of allocations and occupancy rates. The pre-tenancy training have you got by in from landlords and will this give those how complete it any priority for housing? There are references to health issues and working with mental health teams and we wondered whether joint commissioning of services had been considered?"*

**Magna Housing Association** agreed with the actions saying, *"The actions identified and the implementation structure is comprehensive and inclusive, ensuring that the relevant interested agencies and partners are involved at relevant stages & in relevant work."*

**Homeless Health Service for Dorset ( NHS)** said they agreed with the actions and said that *"There is a need to address homeless at the point that is occurring or about to occur, and to liaise in collaboration with all key agencies"*

**Dorset Healthcare** said they partially agreed with the actions and said *"Need to bear in mind the mental health homeless service is approx 3 WTE for the entire county - so a very small resource currently. We should be considering the opportunities linked to the MH integrated community care programme and the development of MH hubs in primary care over the next 3 years arising from the long term plan. Also - Could not see mention of challenges around forensic mental health client group (or reference to working with the Dorset Forensic Team in the action plan) or those with history of arson - this remains a key challenge. Also need to link with the new Operation Courage service launching for veterans in 2021. The proposed demand analysis of supported accommodation is absolutely key for MH - please involve Dorset HealthCare. Linking with MH hospitals around processes for people leaving hospital potentially at risk of homelessness key - not just acute hospitals."*

**Private Landlords** were much less sure, with equal numbers saying they agreed, partially agreed and disagreed with the actions.

**Homelessness Service Users** were generally in support of the actions with 4 agreeing, 1 partially agreeing, 1 disagreeing and 1 don't know.

Looking specifically at responses from **disabled people** there was no significant deviance from the overall response. 39% agreed the strategy actions. 31% partially agreed them and 23% said it didn't agree them. There were no comments that suggested disabled people felt the strategy discriminated against them in any way and on the contrary a number of respondents stressed the importance of the link between mental health and homelessness.

## Q2 Comments from those saying they **didn't agree** with the planned actions in the strategy

Looking firstly at those who said they didn't agree with the planned actions in the strategy. 12 respondents replied in this way. This was made up from:

Members of the public 8  
Private Landlord 3  
Homelessness service user 1

### **The following issues were raised:**

Issue	Mentions
Too complicated/difficult to understand	4
Failure of HAs	1
Misses main issue- shortage of properties	1
Not specific enough	1
Too slow	1
Dorset issue	1

The main concern was over how complicated the issue and/or the supporting documents were.

## Q2 Comments from those saying they **partially agree** with the planned actions in the strategy

Looking now at those who said they partially agree with the planned actions in the strategy. 43 respondents replied in this way. This was made up from:

Members of the public 34  
Private Landlord 2  
Homelessness service user 1  
Other 1  
Social landlord 1  
Other organisation/community group 1  
Provider of Homeless Service 1

### **The following are the main issues from the 36 comments made.**

Full comments are available in the appendix.

Issue	Mentions
Build affordable housing	7
Is the budget sufficient to deliver	6
People need to help themselves	3
Need to give people life skills	3
Want action on Weymouth rough sleepers	2
Too complicated	2
Need faster action/more ambition	2
Important working with partner organisations	2

Nothing will change	2
Community support available	2
Link to healthcare important	2
Big question about how stock will be increased	1
Can't help everyone	1
Need to work better with disabled people	1
Follow other good practise	1
Key issues not addressed	1
More older people's housing	1
Mental health support a big issue	1
Emphasis on prevention	1
Detailed response on housing system	1
Issues over the benefits system	1
Issues over benefits tourism	1
Rural county needs different solutions	1

The most consistent concerns were around the need to build more affordable housing together with concerns over the whether the budget was sufficient to achieve the aims of the strategy. Also, people felt the need for imparting life skills (e.g. budgeting etc) vital.

## **Q2 Comments from those saying they agree with the planned actions in the strategy**

Looking now at those who said they **agree** with the planned actions in the strategy. 43 respondents replied in this way. This was made up from:

Members of the public 31  
Private Landlord 2  
Homelessness service user 4  
Other 3  
Social landlord 1  
Provider of Homeless Service 1  
Town/Parish Council 1

### **The following are the main issues from the 15 comments made:**

Issue	Mentions
Actions sound appropriate	4
Anything new would be better	2
Private landlord/council collaboration essential	1
Partnership working is commended	1
Must be adequately funded	1
Life skills important	1
Prevention is important but landlords need support too	1
Re-using empty properties is a good idea	1
Needs to fit with other strategies	1
Link to Planning for new homes	1
Village locations not so easy	1
Prevention is so important	1

Most comments related to individual issues other than general support for the proposed actions

## Further Comments

There were 61 further comments. The table below pulls out the key issues raised. Whilst some people had nothing further to add, there was positive support for the process and output. Whilst some people felt the solution was simple (build more accommodation), others felt the issues were geographical (particularly Weymouth). Some felt the issues of mental health dominant and this was where the help was needed. In contrast some felt we shouldn't help homeless people and rough sleepers as much as we do. Several commentators felt the documentation was too complicated

Issue	Mentions
Good/thoughtful/well-structured etc.	6
Create/build accommodation	6
Nothing further	6
The Weymouth problem	5
Stop helping them/encourages people in	5
Mental health issues are paramount in the solution	4
Needs simplification	4
Urgent problem requiring more funding	3
Other	3
Problem of co-location of homeless people	2
No one should be homeless	2
Lip service/need more ambition	2
Temporary accommodation needs to be a decent standard	2
Not Dorset specific enough and bland	2
Local Community could help	1
Empty properties important in solution	1
Need to help ex-military	1
Social housing must be included in developments	1
Difficult issue	1
Hidden homeless	1
Make it work	1
Shouldn't use consultants	1
Partnership with social housing providers is very important	1
Important work with partners CA, BLAP etc.	1

# Demographic Information

## Age

The tables below show the profile of people taking part in the consultation. The consultation is slightly dominated by responses from those in the older age groups, with those aged 65+ making up 34% of respondents compared to only being 29% of the Dorset population. Compared to many other council surveys the response is reasonably spread across the age groups.

12.8% of respondents preferred not to disclose their age group.

	Under 18	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-and over	Prefer not to say
<b>% of responses in age group</b>	0.0 %	4.7 %	5.8 %	9.3%	15.1 %	18.6 %	33.7 %	12.8 %

## Gender

The current profile of the residents of Dorset show 49.8% male and 51.1% female. As the table below shows the responses from females, does vary considerably from the Dorset profile but this is not unusual in this type of survey.

	Male	Female	Prefer to self describe	Prefer not to say
<b>What best describes your gender?</b>	36.5%	51.8%	0.0%	11.8%

There was a slight uneven balance between males and females with 52% of responses from females and 37% from males. This gender imbalance is a common feature of council surveys.

## Disability

15.1% of respondents considered they had a disability. This equates to 13 people. Responses from disabled people were above average at 15.1% of responses compared to a Dorset figure of 5% based on those claiming either Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence Payments or Attendance Allowance. The data has been used when analysing the responses to all the questions to see if people who have a disability had a different view to the majority on the key questions in the consultation.

	Yes	No	Prefer not to say
<b>Do you consider yourself to be disabled as set out in the Equality Act, 2010?</b>	15.1%	74.4%	10.5%

When looking at the specific disabilities of the 13 people responding 5 said they had a physical disability 4 had a longstanding illness, 8 had a mental health condition, and 2 a sensory impairment.

The vast majority of the disabled people responding were replying as members of the public, but 2 were responding as users of the homelessness service.

## Ethnic Group

	What is your ethnic group?
White British	74.1%
White Irish	3.5%
Gypsy/Irish traveller	2.4%
Any other white background	2.4%
Asian/ Asian British - Bangladeshi	0.0%
Asian/ Asian British - Chinese	0.0%
Asian/ Asian British - Indian	0.0%
Asian/ Asian British - Pakistani	0.0%
Any other Asian background	0.0%
Black/Black British - African	0.0%
Black/Black British - Caribbean	1.2%
Any other black background	0.0%
Mixed ethnic background – White and Asian	0.0%
Mixed ethnic background – White and Black African	0.0%

Mixed ethnic background – White and Black Caribbean	0.0%
Any other mixed background	0.0%
Prefer not to say	15.3%
Any other ethnic group	1.2%

With 74% of the respondents saying their ethnic group was White British this is fairly typical of the wider population, particularly with 15.3% preferring not to respond to this question.

# Appendix - Comments

Comments are identified by respondent type according to the following code included at the end of the individual comment:

- Members of the public (unspecified)
- Private Landlord (PL)
- Homelessness service user (HSU)
- Other (O)
- Social landlord (SL)
- Other organisation/community group (CG)
- Provider of Homeless Service (HS)
- Town and Parish Council (TP)

## Question 1- Do you agree the draft Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy identifies the key issues affecting homelessness?

### Q1 Comments from those saying the strategy **hadn't identified** the key issues of homelessness

Response
1.last private landlord issued no fault eviction and stated she would give a negative reference despite never missing payment and returning property ready to let .private renting rejected since. 2.99% of Dorset 1 bedroom social properties only available for aged 50/55 plus and or sheltered.1% that are not are several hours by bus to sherborne where my children live with their mother.,the bus fair is not affordable.many also subject to local connection that I don't have. 3.the 2 bed properties stating single person occupation considered i have applied for have been let to people as low as bronze level for 2weeks while I have been on silver from December 2019 rising to emergency currently. (HSU)
Because you only ever talk about and put money to what you want to not what needs it !!
I can't see anywhere that someone has suffered homophobic or transphobic abuse. Nationally 1 in 4 people how are homeless are LGBT+ - many of whom have been rejected from their families

I think there are different types of homelessness but people are treated the same. As the treating everyone the same, human rights policy is understandable on the overall scheme of things, things have changed...Covid wasn't an issue 5yrs ago but it has changed and taken many lives. My husband and i were both working earning decent money and living in beautiful private rented accommodation in a very good neighbourhood. We enjoyed a peaceful private existence, doing our garden, and having grandchildren fulfilling our lives. Now ...we are broke due to having lost jobs, have only one car that keeps breaking down, a notice to quit because the landlord has also been affected and has to sell. We have had to sell some of our furniture knowing we are going to be homeless in a couple of months. We have two pets, a 11yr old jack Russell and a 7yr old cat, and have been told we have to rehome them!! My anxiety has gone through the roof and we are both devastated. We cant find another private rent because no decent landlord wants to touch universal credit. We are dreading living in a flat having to share entrance doors, no garden and no privacy but we are apparently no different to anyone else and thats what we will be given. My family lives in wareham so thats where i want to be now, as i had a diagnosis of macula degeneration 2yrs ago so could go blind at any time. Please build more sheltered accommodation for the not so elderly that do not want to be living without the sunshine at the door to walk out onto and a garden to retire to and a feeling of being trapped in a flat!! I know its a roof and somewhere to live but not all of us have got to this position expecting it.

It does nothing to reduce the number of homeless and rough sleepers except to form a very large panel which may just be a talking shop

Poor local insight (HS)

Poor representation of prs, lacks innovation. The council has a poor record of simple customer homeless service. I do welcome the staff training. (PL)

We are fortunate to live in a very attractive country and county . If you make facilities available for people to move here they will in ever increasing numbers. That is just a fact of life

Without linking the Strategy to a comprehensive mental and general health support system, any strategy would fail. Homelessness is inextricably linked to a range of health and 'dependency' issues. Successful 'intervention' is directly attributable to the provision of not just housing options but a range of health and social care support as well. Primary and secondary local health services are currently being 'reconfigured' ( effectively placing them even further out of reach of homeless people. This 'dissonance' is a major contributor to homelessness and rough sleeping as is joblessness.

## Q1 Comments from those saying the strategy **partially identified** the key issues of homelessness

Comments
all they need is a house or flat no middle accommodation is needed just compulsory purchase unused shops and convert to accommodation
I am not sure enough attention is paid to the single homeless, especially following relationship breakup. The lack of social housing in comparison to those in need must be addressed.
I have a friend living in Australia whose Brother is homeless in Weymouth, she flew over 13months ago and got him into a rented room where he stayed till recently when he couldn't cope with a new boarder so made himself homeless again. He is paranoid with people in authority who he thinks are out to get him which is impossible to deal with.....
I observe that there are empty properties, boarded up even! Why are these places not put to use?
I saw nothing re the provision of new housing, either by the Council or in support of those who do. (Sorry later in the survey I found something - shows how difficult it is to get your head round something like this.)
I think that the mental health affects of homelessness need to be prioritised more. Thankyou

I think the document does not give sufficient weight to a major cause of homelessness being the steady decline of social housing, steep rise in rents (although it does mention very briefly a 'lack of social housing' and 'unaffordable' housing). Also the rise in 'rogue' landlords being too willing to evict if someone complains about poor conditions, problems with discrimination towards people on benefits, perhaps the move from paying rent direct to landlord so leading to eviction, the behaviour of letting agents, ie the whole culture of private housing that has developed, or that has been endemic. It also does not give sufficient attention in the initial analysis to the huge costs of temporary accommodation even where it is very poor quality, although it does put as one action {3.2} 'ensure temporary accommodation is appropriate ... in quality and cost..". How will you bring the overblown costs of temporary down?

I think you should give everyone a "job" instead of the support for "hanging around" and "sitting" on the street. There's a lot of volunteer work in the area to do. Even they have some disabilities - for cleaning, clearing or other jobs the council has a lot of job's to do. How they the buddism: teach the people to angle and give it not the fish, or similar. Also the companies are involved have to "save" their job as well, so this mean they can't be interested in to "release" the homelessness otherwise they "loose" their jobs.(O)

I was seeking information within the draft that detailed how the number of empty properties would be brought back into use as accommodation and was unable to spot this within the resources section? I feel this is a key element to a successful strategy, and will also contribute to a less derelict appearance of local neighbourhoods/town centre. What incentives have been considered to persuade those Landlords of empty properties, especially in the town centre to be part of the solution - even it it is just for move on accommodation?

I would be interested to know about how you will find and engage with those that are risk of homeless and how you will work with the hidden homeless

I wouldn't really agree that homeless people should seek private rented accommodation. Landlords want people who are working and earning enough to pay the rent. I think some sort of basic emergency accommodation should be provided by the Council. No one should sleep out on the pavement Begging for money as well is wrong and reduces the quality of a town centre experience for all I think you should look at placing them appropriately. If mentally ill, a bed at Mental Health Hospital If capable of work, somewhere with work, like on a farm Under 18, with Foster parent Vulnerable woman, in a woman's refuge Drink and drugs, into a rehab (PL)

If Homelessness is through no fault of the persons concerned then I think those persons should be helped and assisted. If as is the norm and the Beggars who harass persistently passer bys then these persons need a separate course of action. i.e. to take them off the Streets and put them out of harms way. I feel very vulnerable when I go shopping alone and these Beggars aggressively approach me!!

It doesn't address one of the causes of homelessness and rough sleepers in my town of Weymouth. That is the inbound rough sleepers who come from other areas some are career beggars who live outside of the town and come in to beg. This is detrimental to the town and also genuine homeless people who need help.

It looks comprehensive to me but I'm very aware that there are many uncertainties about the coming year(s) and it would be foolish to be overconfident.

It states on P.8 'For single persons there was strong evidence that relationship breakdown, mental health and substance misuse were the causes.' This reads as though they are the only possible cause. Other factors are debt, job loss through redundancy. A better wording would be For single persons there was strong evidence that relationship breakdown, mental health and substance misuse were the MAIN causes.

It was good to read the detailed description of how the Strategy and Action Plan would be delivered and monitored, with a clear indication of how statutory and voluntary groups would form various groups, forums and panels to give feedback and contribute to its development. The Strategy contains a great deal of facts and statistics about homelessness nationally and in Dorset, but it doesn't make many judgements about any particular homelessness issues that the Council faces in Dorset or any indications of how it might focus its approach in dealing with them. For example, we know that there's a particular issue with the high level of B&B being used for temporary accommodation, although this isn't highlighted or commented on in the Strategy. In the Strategy document, we would have liked to have read more about the strategic thinking behind some of the actions given in the Action Plan. Temporary Accommodation: The Strategy doesn't give information on the geographical suitability of the temporary accommodation it offers. For example, our experience is that an issue for people in Bridport is being relocated to Weymouth. The areas where temporary accommodation is set up creates problems for some clients and we feel that the Council could try to establish temporary accommodation in more towns, so homeless individuals do not have to travel and can continue to make use of local resources and support. The Draft Strategy does not mention the highly relevant information on temporary accommodation given in the paper by Dorset's Corporate Director Housing, at the Dorset Cabinet meeting on 8 September 2020. The paper states: • The Ministry of Housing Community and Local Government (MHCLG) had advised Dorset Council that its use of B&B placements for temporary accommodation is disproportionately high compared to other local authorities, including families in B&B over the six-week statutory limit. MHCLG had said that the Council's over-reliance on B&B placements is due to the lack of property under its ownership and control. • Additional grant funding from MHCLG has been made available to provide long term accommodation solutions and ease the pressure on B&B. • Dorset has already made plans for putting this funding (Next Steps Accommodation Programme Longer Term and Move on Accommodation Capital Funding) towards refurbishing a hostel and increasing the number of beds, converting an ex-refuge to single unit accommodation and purchasing suitable street properties. We think that the Strategy should include this information because it covers some key issues affecting homelessness. (VSO)

It's a good overview and probably does as much as it can given the problems collating information during the pandemic although I should have liked to have seen more local detail although the reference to national trends is very useful.

More effort needs to be made to secure long term decent accommodation for homeless people they are vulnerable and must feel safe when they are given accommodation

My particular interest is the rough sleeping aspect and I would have liked more information about the issue in this county, commencing with the causes, the services available and the prevention of repetition. Fraudulent applications for accommodation is mentioned. I managed a hostel which we operated on behalf of the local authority and this was a serious problem because we had a quota of local authority accommodation. (O)

Not particularly considered the additional issues related to disability and homelessness. There have been people with learning disabilities homeless in Dorset and no integrated strategy.

Not sure it fully covers, or separates out the difference in relationship breakdown between abusive - physical, emotional and sexual and issue of young people who are not in any danger but simply not prepared to accept reasonable house rules of family home or respect those who pay the bills. Not sure if it affects Dorset as opposed to BCP but there are also those who leave homes elsewhere and travel and stay as simply wish to come to an area near the beach, better weather etc

Not yet read the draft report but from the pre-amble it seems the Council who have an excellent and experienced housing team are resorting to outside consultants instead of reporting themselves. (PL)

<p>Rather than use the word 'ensure', it would be more appropriate, in terms of measuring performance against meeting objectives, to insert the word 'guarantee'. The Council will unequivocally know when/if it has not met its objectives. Ensure, as a term, is a bit woolly. (HSU)</p>
<p>substance and alcohol misuse, and mental health conditions plays a significant part in why people may become homeless, with targeted drug and alcohol and better mental health support services and funding needed to better support individuals to retain and stay in accommodation.</p>
<p>The consultation only interviewed 22 people so it probably does not reflect people's lived experience. The lack of accessible private rented accommodation is a significant factor in homelessness in the area, it is unaffordable, with too many constraints on who will be accepted by landlords. There is not enough social housing for single people under 50, (HSU)</p>
<p>The document presents a lot of statistical analysis of the current understanding of why people are homeless, there appears to be no information in the strategy to identify early on those who may become homeless. In effect it appears to be a reactive rather than proactive application of the current legislation. To my thinking this is more of a plan that responds to the government requirements to implement a strategy every 5 years or so. It lacks ambition and wider thinking of dealing with homelessness. (TPC)</p>
<p>The Strategy along with its Action Plan identifies and proposes to tackle the most pressing issue i.e. lack of suitable accommodation. The solutions to overcome absence of a home, along with the inevitable problems for the homeless, lack explanation and must be explained in greater detail, remaining at the forefront of decision and allocation. There needs to be a drive to source more private accommodation, especially for those with mental health issues. The shortfall must be better publicised to alert potential landlords to the need. The majority of underlying issues and complications challenging homeless people lie in related agendas. The Strategy cannot look at homelessness in isolation and must address the overlaps between housing/homelessness and health care, social services, public transport provision, education, welfare services, job training and opportunities etc. Has study been made of the demands on Bridport's homeless not occurring in say Weymouth? Consultants working on the Strategy interviewed some of the support organisations who are members of the Bridport Local Area Partnership's (BLAP's) working group and this was encouraging. However BLAP understands that statistics quoted in the strategy are based on the annual street count. Over time, rough sleepers may move in and out of that particular category e.g. when sofa surfing. Hence these numbers are at variance and there is the potential to understate the scale of the issue in the Bridport area alone. The numbers known to associated agencies appear to bear this out. Annual monitoring to review progress and generate transparent reports is important to ensure the effectiveness and relevance of the Strategy and its Action Plan. Dorset is a large and varied county; access to support services is frequently harder in outlying rural locations. The collection of monitoring data and subsequent analysis of patterns within and across the county is needed to inform and make best use of Outreach. (VSO)</p>
<p>There has always been a problem that councils ignored until Covid when central government told local councils to act. I do not believe that local councils will do anything to address the problems apart from lip service</p>
<p>There is little or no security for private tenants who can on a whim be made homeless within a number of month's, consequently putting extra strain on the limited resources available.(O)</p>

There is obviously issues with homelessness in a seaside town. However, the homeless are not the only vulnerable. When housed in a small area together, their chaotic lifestyles cause local residents anti social behaviour and feeling intimidated, scared and wanting to move from their homes. These local residents need to be as important as those needing to be housed. For someone that has been homeless, this does not mean that you have to act in such a way you cause problems for others. Currently the systems in place allow people in Dorset to declare themselves homeless easily and then can be housed with others that have problems, allowing them to build a web as a drug dealing and making those vulnerable, more vulnerable. There is nothing here put in place to help these individuals, they don't need hand outs, they need self esteem. By being allowed to sit around and then mixing with others to get them in trouble they sink lower and lower. There needs to be projects where homeless arrive daily at 10am, they are helped to see how to pay bills, write CV's, prepare meals, learn a trade. If they don't arrive at this type of project then they don't want help, just hand outs. Everyone is one step from being a victim or a survivor in these situations. Dorset Council should be making them all survivors.

There needs to be a proper look at why someone becomes homeless. Also look at the negativity around the homeless particularly in relation to drink and drugs. Such as which came first is their addiction due to their situation.

We think that the strategy does highlight the majority of issues we would expect to see and we appreciate that there has been a significant amount of research completed to understand national and local issues. What is less clear from the strategy is actions to address these, with a lot of actions in the plan around doing further work to understand possible solutions, given the pandemic and the expected increase in homelessness some of these time frames seem very long given that there would be a significant amount of work to then put the solutions in place. Given the pandemic and the potential impact on unemployment and poverty which in turns links to homelessness, we would suggest that it might be useful to address these in the strategy around prevention. (SL)

## Q1Comments from those saying the strategy **did identify** the key issues of homelessness

Comment
Any strategy will be an improvement on current policies.
Detailed report with good evidence identifying factors impacting homelessness.
Has simple clear aims and goals (HSU)
Homelessness and rough sleeping in modern-day Britten should have been eliminated by now. This is an area of government / local authority duty that has been poorly addressed, if was can not help these people what sort of society are we?
I am not experienced in this area but the strategy seems to identify the reasons why someone finds themselves homeless.
I feel more council houses need to be built or bought back by the council to help with the demand for cheaper housing. Some of the redundant office space could be used for community warden led apartments, made available for single homeless people keeping them off the streets at night for an affordable rent. If person is receiving benefits any rental payments should be taken at source. The people living in the warden led homes will be given jobs eg window cleaners, gardeners, path sweepers, litter pickers, keeping bin area clean and tidy, IT help, repairs, teaching to read, to help with costs for the affordable rents they will paying.
S0mething has to be done
The Draft Strategy explains this very concisely and as far as I can judge comprehensively.

The draft strategy is based on a comprehensive evidence base and is well thought out in terms of draft recommendations & actions.(SL)

To address homeless for the long term, need to prioritise sustainable accommodation that is person centred. (HS)

**Question 2 - Dorset Council plans for a number of actions to be taken to deliver the Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy. You can see them here. Do you agree with the planned actions?**

**Q2 Responses from those saying they didn't agree with the planned actions in the strategy**

**The following are the comments made:**

Comment
The planned actions are of such a length, couched in such language and containing so many jargon terms/titles that only a paid official would plough through them. Almost appears a job creation scheme/tickbox exercised. Certainly an almost bottomless pit of spending looms. Whatever happened to the KISS principle.
For £20,000 I could write a better and more relevant report. Why when decades ago Housing Associations were set up to deal with social housing they have failed to do so. In Dorset Housing Associations have been selling off at low prices properties which have been subsidised by the tax payer and other new build developers. This is particularly true of one bed properties which are the most suitable for those who end up as rough sleepers.(PL)
Just a load of paid staff filling out forms, nothing will actually change. (PL)
Looks like a very complicated and expensive way to focus on monitoring and tracking facts and figures with a longer term view as an after thought of addressing the real problems of general shortage of properties and fair none discriminatory allocation that could be addressed now. not in 2or 3 years time.New built housing stock appears to be mostly 2 beds which which policy makes them not available to single people. single properties then mostly excludes under 50 year olds .together these policies will lead to homelessness in under 50s. (HSU)
Not specific enough in action planning. Some odd actions, lacks detail specific to dorset issues (PL)
Takes to long (HSU)
We are fortunate to live in a very attractive country and county . If you make facilities available for people to move here they will in ever iincreasing numbers. That is just a fact of life

**Q2 Responses from those saying they partially agree with the planned actions in the strategy**

The following are the 36 comments made:

Comment
3.1 - 'Increase supply of affordable housing and make best use of stock'. This is a crucial point but gives no indication of how this will be done. It is supposed to be done 'within existing budgets', so is unlikely to be very effective. There is huge opportunity for local government to both enhance its asset base and help local people by going into partnership to build or obtain more social housing so creating truly affordable accommodation. In the past few years, the words 'affordable housing' mean little as it only means it is slightly less than local market rates, which remain much too high for many low income people - leading to the taxpayer shouldering burden of excessive housing benefit, or leaving people in extremely poor housing as the only truly affordable option. Another issue would be to stop developers getting around - or totally ignoring - requirements to include a percentage of 'affordable' units (and as I said often this "affordable" is not really affordable) in their new developments. Again, reverting to payment of housing benefit rents direct to landlords rather than to recipients of the benefit. I used to work in social housing and we were horrified at this change, which we knew would lead to higher arrears, and meant we could not use our efficient systems of rent payments.
Action is not adequate and more supervision ought to be carried out especially at the railway station area.
Again put a program in place to help these people develop in to individuals that can have self respect. Art projects, understanding money, daily activities that they need to attend, learning to cook, make things, repair things, help people. Then they help themselves. Don't empower the cycle of benefits, drug / alcohol abuse - get them believing with activities that they can improve their lives. Talking from experience, they are the only ones that can make the change, not the Council or charities, the individuals needs to want to improve their lives. This they will do if they have something to work for. Everything handed on a plate is not the answer, it is just easier to find a bottle of alcohol or drugs, crime, asb as they don't have any respect for themselves, belongings or others.
Again, I think we have to do everything to support the people, but this should be so individual as the homeless person is. There's a reason why they are in this situation. Here has the support to start and to find out what went "wrong" in the past. When I see that the people under 65 are homeless - then I ask myself - why? what on earth have they done "wrong"???? Important is to have a perspective in the next day and not weeks, months, years. They need to do something what makes "sense". Just to give them everything and do everything for them is too less. They have to learn again responsibility for themselves and for the community. (O)
All of these actions are common sense and although some will be helped others slip thru the net
all to complicated just build some more single persons housing you have been given 1.8 million i know how many houses that equates to its it is more than is needed
As above

As already mentioned the action plan has a lot of references to mapping, reviewing and evaluation with limited commitment around new services, initiatives etc, and whilst we are sure that Dorset will look to use the information it collates to do this in the future this would be a few years away and given the expected rise in homelessness as a result of the pandemic there may be a need to be taking action much earlier. With regard to specific actions there are a few things we would flag. Given that Housing Associations play a key role in meeting the housing need, providing support and signposting to those who do not qualify for social housing potentially will not solve their long-term housing need. We appreciate there are other references around making people more tenancy ready (pre-tenancy training) which will help but is there a challenge back to social landlords (including ourselves) around our criteria and exclusions. When looking at TA services it talks about accommodation standards which we would fully support and about the potential of private sector leasing, we appreciate that there is a need to offer a range of options and solutions and would encourage you to explore what TA arrangements can be provided by your social landlords. These can often be more cost effective bring added value of access to employment and training services and tenancy support. We have a number of services in place with other LA's. We like the idea of the placement policy but would like to understand how this will work in practice, we presume it is around giving choice and control back to clients which we would fully support but we equally recognise the challenges this may bring in terms of allocations and occupancy rates. The pre-tenancy training have you got buy in from landlords and will this give those how complete it any priority for housing? There are references to health issues and working with mental health teams and we wondered whether joint commissioning of services had been considered?(SL)

Became I don't believe you will do what you say,

Dorset needs to demand developers build at least 35% of affordable or social housing every time the Planning Dept approve any new development

Ensure the skills in homelessness services to communicate effectively with people with disabilities and or communication challenges. This needs to be at the beginning of engagement with individuals. If this is not possible use the skills of others in the Council or other support services. Needs to be immediate

I believe the UK should follow the Finland 'Housing First' strategy that is solving this problem. Dorset could lead the way.

I don't see any expectation that central government will be lobbied to provide sufficient funding.

I fear these plans will become diluted as pressure to save money is applied, I do not trust councils or government to make this issue the priority it should be.

I wonder if there is more you could do to help those living with precarious finances. Perhaps a partnership with a credit union that could support budgeting etc? And is there a way of utilising some of the under-occupied homes?

In objective 3.1 you need to mandate the Council Planning dept to adhere to the affordable housing targets rather than cosy up to developers by continually reducing the targets for them. Vearse Farm started with a pledge for 35% affordable homes but already has dropped to 16% or less. There are 400+ local families seeking accommodation and they should be housed before any incomers are permitted to purchase property at Vearse Farm. The Council needs to join up the dots and apply some intelligence to departmental working in conjunction

Key issues remain not addressed (PHS)

More sheltered 1bed houses/ bungalows for over 55

Need to bear in mind the mental health homeless service is approx. 3 WTE for the entire county - so a very small resource currently. We should be considering the opportunities linked to the MH integrated community care programme and the development of MH hubs in primary care over the next 3 years arising from the long term plan. Also - Could not see mention of challenges around forensic mental health client group (or reference to working with the Dorset Forensic Team in the action plan) or those with history of arson - this remains a key challenge. Also need to link with the new Operation Courage service launching for veterans in 2021. The proposed demand analysis of supported accommodation is absolutely key for MH - please involve Dorset HealthCare. Linking with MH hospitals around processes for people leaving hospital potentially at risk of homelessness key - not just acute hospitals.(CG)

Need to lobby for children to be given comprehensive lessons on budgeting and finance whilst at school

No apparent plan to increase level of social housing of all sizes.

No mention of Rough Sleepers who have all been sent to Weymouth and are a cause of significant Anti Social Behaviour which affects visitors perception of the Town

no use of social media, advertising with bloggers that youngster follow, sponsorship of film regarding budgeting, homemaking skills, paying bills, homelessness. Actors in school, school plays More to educate secondary school pupils to prevent H/L

Objective 1 Reduce the current and future likely levels of homelessness: We are pleased to see that throughout the Action Plan, there is an emphasis on preventing homelessness. The opportunity of using the Housing waiting list as an early prevention tool as stated in Section 1.2 is particularly welcome with its requirement of mandatory identification of applicants who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, and automatic referral to Homelessness Services to provide prevention/relief support to those identified. Section 1.1.3. We think that the programme to educate children on homelessness awareness should be far wider to cover budgeting, debt, benefits, managing household bills, tenant responsibilities/rights, and how to search for accommodation, with the scope of the programme being graduated according to age. East Dorset and Purbeck Citizens Advice have previously run some small-scale training initiatives for secondary-age children in school and at a successful lunchtime youth club. A programme like this should be part and parcel of educating our young people for an independent life. Objective 2 Prevent Homelessness: Actions in Section 2.2 seek to continually improve the range and quality of homelessness assistance and housing advice services across Dorset. The Council's duty to give information and advice on homelessness is owed to all. Our advisers say that the questions on the online Housing Assistance referral form are geared towards those already homeless and are not so suitable for those threatened with homelessness, especially beyond 56 days. So, we feel that the Action Plan should include a review of how people can more easily access advice from the Council, including a re-wording of the questions in the Housing Assistance referral form so that even if a duty of assistance is not owed to those threatened with future homelessness, advice on preventing homelessness can become more accessible to them. We find that Clients who are not owed a main housing or interim accommodation duty by the local authority struggle to find private rented accommodation, especially if they rely on benefits to pay their rent. We find that clients seem to be offered little guidance about what to do when they are unsuccessful in their housing search. We acknowledge that the Council has four Resettlement Officers who will assist in building relationships with private landlords. We believe there needs to be further support in helping homeless people find private rented accommodation. Section 2.5.1 The Action Plan mentions 'rough sleepers' in this paragraph. The Next Steps funding provided by the government to rehouse homeless individuals in emergency accommodation during the pandemic will come to an end. We would like clarification on how the Council plans to mitigate the impact on previously homeless people of this support ending. Objective No. 3. Arrange for suitable accommodation to be available for everyone: In Section 3.2.1 of the Draft Action Plan, there is mention of a strategic review of temporary accommodation and an updating of the policy, but nothing is stated about projects that have already been started or might be planned. We feel that the Action Plan should include details of those projects that have been planned but not yet completed or started, such as Portland YHA -Phase 2. The Dorset Cabinet meeting on 8 September 2020 approved the allocation of £3.13m 2020/21 and a further £1.65m 2021/22 to purchase and refurbish accommodation to support the homeless and rough sleeper households, but the plan the Council has already made on this is not mentioned in the Action Plan. Objective No. 4. Support households to retain their accommodation: This objective is relevant to the two Housing Projects currently run by East Dorset and Purbeck Citizens Advice where a Housing, a Benefits and a Debt Caseworker work with clients over a 6 -12 month period. This is a

holistic approach taken to prevent future homelessness. These holistic sorts of projects could be replicated across the County. We know that the Council recognises the value of Housing First and housing support principles and has provided funding under an Integrated Prevention and Support contract to provide housing support. It would be helpful if an evaluation of the effectiveness of these services could be included to inform the strategy and action plan. Para 4.2.1 mentions the need to understand whether the Council's current provision reflects the needs of actual and potential users who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. Some of our clients are digitally excluded and we have seen how the current provision does not meet their needs, especially as they relate to homelessness. Digital exclusion, for whatever reason, impacts housing applications, access to support and welfare benefits, and becomes a significant barrier in becoming re-established and independent. This is particularly an issue during the pandemic and lockdowns as people who are IT literate may also be disadvantaged due to being unable to access public computers at public locations such as the library, the Jobcentre, and the Lantern. Likewise, getting registered to be on the housing list is an online process that may not be accessible to all homeless individuals. We feel strongly that there should be better provision of non-digital assistance and that this issue needs to be addressed in the Strategy Document and Action Plan. (VSO)

One issue is the benefits system. 1. There is a worrying trend for younger women to have babies in order to climb the waiting list for housing. I have become aware of many single mothers who have children with 2 or more men who do not take any responsibility for their actions. This issue is a national one that needs to be addressed by DWP & local Councils. 2. Benefits tourism-my impression is that people come to the seaside and Dorset to claim benefits here putting more pressure on Council tax payers. We have one of the highest council tax rates in the country, this partially because of our high unemployment rate and comparatively high crime rate caused in part by this and drug problems. I think there should be a moratorium on benefits tourism by imposing a rule that someone cannot move to an area of higher unemployment than their own town/city. Inbound benefits tourists jsut put more pressure on the local residents.

Plans to build more affordable social housing are not clear.

same as before

The first priority must be to understand how they became homeless in order to give them hope for the future

The majority of the funding listed under 'Resources Required Budget' in the Action Plan is referred to as "to be considered; within existing resources/budget" and 'to be identified' implying that financing may not be forthcoming or is indeed inadequate, therefore clarity on and extent of resources is required. The strategy is in line with the Government's 'councils must publish a homelessness and rough sleeping strategy every five years' Different councils have different priorities; to be meaningful, Dorset's Strategy must take into account the uniqueness of our county; tailoring action to cater for the variance in type of population, job access and availability. Without for example training, qualifications, regular transport how can adults find and remain in employment? How can they generate an income and savings to find the 'deposit', meet the costs of living in 'affordable' housing let alone start families? Digital exclusion and gaps in adequate support impede early homelessness prevention, especially in rural locations. The focus on early preventative measures, 'so that (for example) high risk children receive good support and do not become the homeless of tomorrow' facilitates in-school and in-service delivery of a 'comprehensive training programme'. Understanding, tolerance of and empathy for homelessness can only be raised through enhanced, cohesive education of all sectors of the population, regardless of age. Publicity dedicated to raising the profile of homeless people would do much to reduce tension and negative imagery. To ensure better self-support for 16-18 year olds are there resources to address inequality of educational/social opportunity amongst peers i.e. IT and broadband access ensuring that all can fully access and respond to the curriculum; is there automatic inclusion on school trips for everyone; outside of bus timetables is there transport home from after school activities / to and from works experience / places of further education. Isolation and ignorance of ways of life further afield do limit developmental horizons.

The plan should be more ambitious than to "reduce" homelessness. The metrics are not easily measurable. Many of the timescales are too long.
The word 'review' appears a lot in the action plan with few new initiatives. There appears to be a lack of blue sky thinking which may affect future strategy. As someone who has never engaged with the problem formerly but always supported the homeless community by offering donations etc, I've become keen to help if I can. I've always felt that if someone came to me and said can this person borrow your spare room otherwise they will be sleeping outside, the answer is of course yes. I think more could be done to actively engage the local community so that spare rooms, garages etc can be used to give these people shelter at the very least. If someone stayed in my spare room, they'd get breakfast in the morning and an offer of a shower. As a business owner, I might be encouraged to help that person obtain a job. That's just me, what about everyone else? I feel that the community can be part of the solution. Is awareness an issue? More awareness can be brought to highlight the issues via local events. As an event organiser I'd be happy to help.
There are some good measures. there. I agree with bringing empty homes back into use You mention discharge from Hospital is a problem. Why have we closed so many Community Hospitals? And reduced mental health beds. Also seeing the long term affects of selling off council houses (PL)
There is a lot of advice and support mentioned but little else. Advice and support is USELESS if there is no action that people can take to secure somewhere to live. The rules on homelessness are complex and difficult to navigate and the uncertainty of knowing if you will be helped is unbearable and stressful. My daughter became homeless when her shared accommodation was sold and she was unable to rent privately - we didn't know if she would be helped until the day she was on the street and that is wrong. It seemed that council officials were not able to help until they absolutely had to, even though she was classified as a vulnerable adult as she is disabled. Stopping the endless building of retirement flats and starting building homes for local people would be a start - integrating planning policy with homelessness strategy - is the homelessness strategy even considered when reviewing planning applications?
There seems to be a genuine will to prevent homelessness, but is there a budget to support this? We know that there are very vulnerable individuals and families, but without enough housing and personnel about to support and lead initiatives, then good will is meaningless
ultimately, more funding and resource is needed in all areas as well as more affordable homes locally
Use of pharmacies for signposting would be a useful benefit

## Q2 Responses from those saying they agree with the planned actions in the strategy

Comments
Actions are identified as a way to provide solutions and prevent a person becoming homeless.
Again, any plans to improve the current situation will be essential.(O)
as a private landlord I have found it very helpful having support of the council when I take on tenants receiving benefits.(PL)
Bringing together all relevant organisations is a good strategy if open and transparent and fairly funded
Existing resources are inadequate - so reviewing the budget within existing resources is surely going to limit action. More money needs to be diverted to the issue. As a council tax payer, I would rather see my money spent on local people.

I agree strongly with the plan to try to prevent homelessness before it happens but landlords should also be protected, the rental of their property might be their income, if that is taken away because a client is not paying the rent then a new problem has been created - which is why I think rents should be taken at source if people are on benefits. Ask banks to run free money skills days to teach people to understand the importance of budgeting and what is important/sensible to spend their money on. Follow up session to draw up a plan. Face to face sessions not online - not everyone has access to a good computer or even a computer.

I am particularly pleased to see that bringing empty properties back into use has been identified as an action. And that support for people who have or are in danger of becoming homeless is prioritised. I am concerned that there may be insufficient support available for all those who require it. I am also interested in how this Strategy fits with other strategies including those related to housing and building - to ensure that sufficient homes are built / made available to support this Strategy, prioritising the needs of homeless and rough sleepers. This may of course include encouraging those who can afford to buy their own property to move out of social housing to free it up for those who can not afford to buy. I am also interested in how the sale of social housing can be reduced to ensure that social housing does not fall into private ownership - or that if it does, it is quickly replaced by additional social housing units. Additional units, not ones which the council / housing associated was going to build anyway.

it's a good start. Very good but I would like to add a couple of caveats/suggestion; I live in a large village with quite a number of empty properties suitable for families of say two adults three children and this village would be a good location having a primary school, shops, doctors' surgery and a railway station but there is next to nothing for teenagers to do and there is no longer a bus service so unless people have their own transport getting to work is tricky. I think more thought should be given to placing homeless people where they can access services, work education otherwise there will be unhappiness on all fronts.

The actions identified and the implementation structure is comprehensive and inclusive, ensuring that the relevant interested agencies and partners are involved at relevant stages & in relevant work.(SL)

The planned actions that aren't included in the strategy document itself appear to be the actual strategy. (TPC)

The prevention of homelessness must always be preferred to helping those made homeless, and the Strategy rightly prioritises this. I am pleased to see that there are plans to include those with lived experience of homelessness in the Strategy's delivery mechanisms.

There is a need to address homeless at the point that is occurring or about to occur, and to liaise in collaboration with all key agencies (PHS)

They appear to be the logical progression, personally I could not see any reason to amend or add to them. Referring to my previous answer, those issues would be addressed in one of the forums.(O)

They are definitely an improvement.(O)

They seem to be sensible (HSU)

# General Comments

## Responses from:

Comments
A really thoughtful useful stat. good luck implementing it.
Adding to what I put on the previous page, software could be developed which gave the local community an ability to highlight what resources they could offer to help the initial homeless problem. Vacant spare rooms, garages, farm buildings etc could be highlighted. The offer of breakfast, or any meal etc. This could be communicated to individuals directly or via the local support groups.
As before with my previous comments I am fully supportive of coordinating resources across the various organisations but feel resolving the multiple empty properties, even if it is for temporary accommodation must be considered. It is appalling that properties lay empty causing staff to waste time chasing and dealing with repeat queries from the same individuals and families.
As I understand it many homeless people are ex-military suffering mental problem as a result of there service to this country, if this is so then it is a scandal. Anyone in such difficult situations should be helped, no I should say must be helped and if that means taxes rise then so be it.
Be kinder
By housing lots of those with problems, issues and homeless in small areas makes the area deprived and then other's become vulnerable and therefore the Council have just increased the number of those seeking mental health support and actually making more homeless. The directive everyone In increased homeless numbers not decreased it.
Develop brownfield sites for housing
Developers should be made to provide a high proportion of social housing within new developments (whether on or off site). This should be non-negotiable and compulsory (no lame excuses accepted re profitability, especially after the development has started). Brown-field sites should be prioritized including abandoned and derelict buildings and sites. No-one should have the 'right to buy' social housing as it results of units being lost to the social housing register whilst allowing those privileged individuals who were lucky enough to be allocated accommodation to profit massively in the long-term at the expense of others.
During Covid many were grouped together in local B&Bs and the Riviera Hotel in Osmington. I have spoken to some who are genuinely looking for work etc. Their had their belongings stolen and were subjected to abuse. The Park District area of Weymouth became a crime hot spot caused by a handful of alcoholic drug users who cause no end of anguish locally. They congregate on the Promenade and harbourside during the day using abusive language in clear earshot of young children. This is a huge issue but the Police seem powerless to deal with it longer term. One solution is not to allow people to move to Weymouth to claim benefits in the first place.
Far too many words masking fact that very little improvement is likely to flow from all this process-lovers' approach. No understanding of the scale and immediate urgency of the problem. A fatal flaw is the ubiquitous use of the phrase "within existing resources" which says it all about the strategy's cynicism
Homelessness is very sad for those who have no control over what has made them homeless. It's good to learn a plan is in place to help people in this situation.
I am pleased to see that the issues of homelessness is being taken very seriously, and I am impressed by the depth of analysis and planning that appears to be going into this. There appears to be care taken to provide accountability structures built into the Strategy, and this should prevent, or ameliorate, "lessons learned" reviews and other such sorry attempts at remediation down the line.

I assume all the 18no rough sleepers in 2019 were located in Weymouth as there are at least that number here currently? Need to provide studio-flats or hostel placements for young single persons Need to discourage rough sleepers travelling to the county from other areas Need more social housing. Private developers should not be allowed to get away with rescinding on commitments to include social housing within their developments pleading non- profitability/ high costs following the granting of planning permission. A reasonable element of social housing (whether on or off-site) should be a mandatory feature of all new developments. The use of brown sites should be the preferred option and retail premises changed to housing. More accommodation should be provided for older single persons who do not have children.

I m not sure if this was in the document but I don't agree with always moving homeless people off the seafront in Weymouth .

Is there more that could be done for those who find living in shared housing difficult, because of mental health issues?

It is a reasonable plan but it must be implemented with kindness care and no judgements

it should be fixed in law that people have a right to have a place to live. There should be no homeless children or families.

It will depend on how the plan progresses. Will it actually happen in full.

It would be great for Dorset Council to receive continued funding for this area.

It's almost impossible for a reasonably intelligent person (as I rate myself) to read, digest and understand reports of so many words and quite a bit of jargon without a tremendous amount of time and effort. Hence why I discovered after my comment re housing stock that it had been addressed. Any hope of some summaries that ordinary people can understand?

just get on with building them housing asap

More single person accommodation needed - Perhaps you could use the properties in Wimborne such as Pippins & the court house

Most of the options were of the sort: information gathering, advice giving, training, educating, monitoring, referring, ie what might be termed 'soft' actions, so although this is crucial as a starting point, I feel that the strategy and action plan seems to be only a first stage of truly tackling homelessness and rough sleeping, and gives the impression that Dorset wants to show activity in this area, but is not really committed to helping people in housing need or tackling abuses in the private sector.

Much more mental health support and understanding of people living with mental issues when they can't cope with a situation instead of writing them off

My concerns as a resident of Weymouth is that you seem to house a disproportionate amount of rough sleepers and homeless in Weymouth, why is that? We are a tourist destination and yet alot of them are housed in B&Bs in and around the seafront and so they naturally gravitate to the seafront and hang around the shelter there. As they drink throughout the day they become noisier and often abusive to passers by. I know because i've been at the end of it when walking our dogs. I've not seen it myself but alot of people i know personally have said they have seen some of them relieve them selves on the beach. I'm sure you have been made aware of the amount of trouble that occurs during the evenings in the summer around Lennox St. and the B&B at the top of that road on the seafront, there are security guards in the summer outside 24/7 but it doesn't stop it all kicking off most evenings. All very unpleasant, and not nice if you live around here or take a holiday in Weymouth. It's great Councils try to help the homeless but what about the law abiding residents, what about our lives?

My daughter became homeless and the team was brilliant but constrained by the 56 day rule, which caused a lot of stress. They would/could not offer accommodation right up until the day she was evicted which was very frightening, even though it was clear she had not been able to secure accommodation. There was no temporary accommodation that would accept a dog - which caused more stress and upset. The temporary accommodation provided (in Weymouth) was very low in quality, and the landlord clearly making a fortune. There were families in one room who had been there for months, there were people passed out on the stairs and it was a scary place to be. There was no wi-fi, meaning accessing services was very difficult. With the council's increasing turn to digital, it should be mandatory that temporary accommodation provides wi-fi for people housed there. Temporary accommodation should be of a much higher standard and families housed separately from street homeless and people with drug/alcohol problems. After my daughter was housed, (in Dorchester) someone who had been street homeless was moved into her block of flats, allegedly with full support from the voluntary sector. This person did not get the support they needed and the housing association has been struggling to deal with destruction of property, aggressive begging, parties and groups of drunk people trying to gain access to the building. Adequate support needs to be put in place and followed up when people with obvious problems are housed.

No
no
no
Not necessary to keep helping people who are druggies or alcoholics with the public purse
Not wanted here.
Rough sleepers should be sent back to their own localities to be housed. Locals should not be paying for people who decide to move away from their own locality to use taxpayer services
Send people back where they came from if they do not have a job or reason for being here
The housing market is far too expensive for the average wage in Weymouth. There are too many poor standard of accommodation in the private sector. Too many properties being turned into holiday and second homes.
The strategy is sound as to be adequate if it can be made real. Funding is my concern and surely this should be funded from central funds and not be another burden put upon local authority budgets
Too long, too full of statistics and a myriad of titles/organisations mentioned. How do you expect any unpaid member of the public to wade through the "Strategy" and have the time or commitment make sensible comments on it. You probably don't, but are required to ask for comments in order to tick a process box.
Would have been helpful perhaps to have just been given the main points rather than the full detailed report as it's very long and not sure people will take the time, or have the time, to read all that information and may put people off from completing the survey!
Yes put your money where your mouth is and do better than your doing and way moor than you plan on, Build temperery housing for all riff sleepers and money into getting them back into Society
Yes the problems are when children in care are not looked after properly then are left to fend for themselves at 18 snd end up in the hands of unscrupulous people
The document focusses on those eligible for duty of prevention or relief, there is no data on those homeless who are found ineligible. Any strategy must deal with all homelessness otherwise it is just a plan to implement council legislation. The implementation document states under objective 1 that prevention of 6 to 8 year olds in schools becoming homeless at 16 to 18 is part of the action plan, this clearly looks out 10 years, which is the minimum a strategy should address. Overall, the implementation plan is good, the strategy document itself poorly written, does not identify the key strategic direction of addressing homelessness and parrots back Government legislative requirements as its aims. (TPC)
It needs to much information for u to help (HSU)
Keep it simple and focus on the long known issues right now.not kicking it down the road. (HSU)
Listen to where people need to be homed in terms of jobs and transport links (HSU)

No (HSU)
You should do more than the basic legal requirement. (HSU)
I think I have made my comments in previous answers. I am retired now but having spent 15 years working with rough sleepers I still take a great interest in the issue.(O)
Make sure this new strategy works. There are too many people sleeping rough with no support. This should not be happening in this day and age. A good percentage of homeless people do not get support. I was told my son was not a priority for several reasons, he was sleeping in disused buildings, sometimes sleeping in a car, I could go on. Unless he was deemed as being close to death, confirmed by a Doctor, then he wouldn't be considered for housing. When you are living in the gutter and so depressed you consider taking your own life, tell me how you get the courage to ask for help, you feel unworthy. I have several emails between myself and housing officials which confirms the above statement.(O)
Of course there is a lot to say about the homelessness people - living on the road. Bu I said basicly roughly what I have to say and what is in my view the start for effectiveness to "reduce" the homelessness and not to "encrease". (O)
We should all try harder to avoid this happening to anyone. (O)
no (OCG)
Get a grip. (PL)
Give officers more responsibility for this work, using consultants does question the credibility of an important issue. The portfolio holder knows this issue well, this poor quality doc surprised me (PL)
Noto specifically but I feel more landlords could be encouraged to offer their properties to what I believe is still known as 'DSS' applicants. I believe over the years landlords have felt it 'a risk' to take tenants on benefits and my experience is that the department who helps support landlords and their tenants works very well. My experience with several extremely challenging tenants made me very wary who I offered my property to but your department has been very supportive. (PL)
Usual tedious long drawn out drivel designed to employ lots of advocates for people who are often just inherently chaotic and antisocial. Usual bestowing of victim status which makes them hero's because the concept of self responsibility is so derided by the many who sign up to the guff and/or make their living from it. (PL)
No (PHS)
Poorly representation of issues. This could be any councils strategy. What makes it dc (PHS)
As one of the main social housing providers in Dorset we have a key role to play in implementing this strategy and action plan. We have a significant stock of social rented homes for single people, families and older and vulnerable people and a development pipeline of new social rented homes that will be utilised effectively to help deliver this strategy. We have a strong existing working relationship at both strategic and operational levels with the Councils Housing options and homelessness team. While we are not a specialist provider of temporary homeless or rough sleeper accommodation, we do work in partnership with other Dorset based organisations ( such as the You Trust) & the council itself , who then provide the specialist management & support in Magna owned homes and housing schemes. We are always keen to explore new opportunities to meet the needs of those who find themselves homeless.(SL)
The strategy has been developed on some very solid prework and we recognise the time and effort Dorset has put in to be inclusive in this.(SL)

In the Strategy document 4.2 Preventing Homelessness page 15, there is a reference to Citizens Advice, particularly the Dorchester branch offering face to face triage, five days a week. We would like to highlight that Citizens Advice in Dorset provides information, advice and guidance (IAG) on housing and homelessness from the three Local Citizens Advice offices; Bridport and District, Central Dorset and East Dorset and Purbeck Citizens Advice. IAG can be easily accessed through multiple channels, including face to face, phone and email. There is a good coverage of physical locations across the County to enable access face to face services which are being phased back in as recovery from the pandemic continues. We believe it is vital people experiencing homelessness, who are amongst some of the most vulnerable, have adequate access to face to face advice. We welcome the Dorset Council funding that East Dorset and Purbeck Citizens Advice and Central Dorset receive to help provide much-needed housing and homelessness advice services and casework support. In addition, we have funding for a County-wide project which supports people to represent themselves at Court, including housing casework such as possession hearings in conjunction with several partners, including Shelter. Finally, we would like to ask to what extent the strategy has considered significant changes that are looming, specifically factors such as the lifting of the eviction ban on 31 May and the reduction to the Discretionary Housing Payment budget. (VSO)

Why is 2.2.1 repeated in 2.2.3 apart from the inclusion of a homeless officer service manager for housing strategy; review start 20.10.2022? Reviews of successful practice in similar areas of the country should be included and where appropriate put forward for inclusion in the Strategy. The Bridport Local Area Partnership's role is to work with Town and Parish Council's, community organisations and individuals to improve the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the Bridport and surrounding areas. This includes encouraging organisations, authorities and volunteers providing support to work together to meet local needs more effectively. Since 2017, BLAP has convened a Homelessness and Rough Sleepers Working group. Meetings are hosted every 2 months and members from supporting agencies including Pilsdon, Julian House, Age Concern, representatives of the various food banks in Bridport, the Police, Bridport CAB, Town & Parish council's and individuals with an interest also attend. Due to Covid-19 restrictions we have received updates from members which have been circulated via a monthly newsletter to keep members of the group up to date. The working group have also held virtual meetings. Once the Covid-19 restrictions have been lifted the Working Group will go back to face-to-face meetings. Information is also sent out through a fortnightly BLAP Bulletin to inform all members of the partnership. This comprises of 14 Parish Councils, Bridport Town Council and over 90 organisations hence reaching the wider public. The Strategy should celebrate the value of BLAP's outcomes, along with those of similar collaborations and the use outcomes as input to the Strategy Objective's Plan and Progress'. (VSO)

## Introduction

In November 2020 Dorset Council commissioned a review of homelessness in Dorset. Councils must publish a new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy every 5 years.

We have used the information gathered to develop a new homelessness and rough sleeping strategy. The purpose of this strategy is to shape the way advice and assistance is provided to people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness over the next 5 years.

## Homelessness Review

The review carried out by Neil Morland & Co Housing Consultants examined what is currently available to people who are homeless or may become homeless in Dorset. It considered:

- ~ Current and likely future levels of homelessness in Dorset
- ~ What we do to prevent homelessness
- ~ The accommodation available for people who are or may become homeless
- ~ The support available to people who are homeless, may become homeless or have been homeless
- ~ The resources available to the Council, other public authorities, voluntary organisations and others providing these services

**You can request a copy of this report from Dorset Council or access it online at [www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/homelessness-strategy](http://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/homelessness-strategy)**

## Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy

Dorset Council has produced a draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy to:

- ~ Prevent homelessness in Dorset
- ~ Ensure enough accommodation is and will be available for people in Dorset who are or may become homeless
- ~ Ensure there are adequate services to support people who are or may become homeless
- ~ Ensure there are adequate services to support people who have been homeless and need support to prevent them becoming homeless again.

A draft action plan has been developed that details how work will be carried out by Dorset Council, other public authorities, housing associations, voluntary organisations and others to achieve the aims of the Strategy. To monitor our progress in delivering the strategy, the action plan will be reviewed each year.

You can request a copy of draft **Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy and also the draft Action Plan** from Dorset Council or access it online at [www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/homelessness-strategy](http://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/homelessness-strategy)

## **Consultation**

This purpose of this survey is to tell us what you think about homelessness in Dorset, the proposed aims and actions outlined in the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and draft action plan.

This consultation will last for 6 weeks, between Monday 22 March until midnight on Friday 7 May 2021.

The information you provide will be stored safely according to our data protection policy. available at <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/homeless-survey>

Please return your survey to The Housing Service, South Walks House, South Walks Road, Dorchester, DT1 1UZ

Please contact us by email [customerservices@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:customerservices@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk) or phone 01305 221000 if you need the survey in another format or would like to respond in a different way.

## **Help when homeless or threatened with homelessness**

The Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy will not make any changes to the rights people have to get advice, information and assistance from Dorset Council when homeless or threatened with homelessness.

Help for anyone who might be homeless or at risk of homelessness, can be found on our website at [www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/homelessness](http://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/homelessness)

# The Survey

**Are you responding as...?** (Choose one category please)

- A member of the public
- An elected member (Dorset Council)
- A Town/Parish Council
- Provider of Homeless Service
- Voluntary Sector Organisation
- Other organisation/community group
- Private Landlord
- Social Landlord
- Homelessness service user
- Other (please specify)

**What is your postcode?** (or local area if no postcode) (mandatory field)

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**For organisational responses only. Otherwise continue to page 4**

**Name of your organisation**

- Yes
- No

**Are you providing your organisation's official response?**

**Your name** (as a member of the public or service user you may respond anonymously if you prefer)

**Your contact email/phone if responding on behalf of an organisation** (optional)

**Question 1- Do you agree the draft Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy identifies the key issues affecting homelessness?**

- Yes
- Partially
- No
- Don't know

**Please explain**

**Question 2 - Dorset Council plans for a number of actions to be taken to deliver the Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy. These are shown in the draft Action Plan**

**Do you agree with the planned actions?**

- Yes
- Partially
- No
- Don't know

**Please explain**

**Question 3 – Do you have any other comments about Dorset Council’s draft Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy?**

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin grey border, intended for the user to provide their comments on the draft Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy.

# About you

We collect diversity information, not only to ensure any changes do not unfairly impact on specific sectors of the community, but also to try to make sure our consultation response comes from a representative sample of local residents. We would appreciate if you can complete the following details.

## Which age group do you belong to?

- Under 18     35 - 44     55-64  
 18 - 24     45 - 54     65 or over  
 25-34     55 - 64     Prefer not to say

## What is your gender?

- Male                       Prefer to self describe  
 Female                       Prefer not to say

Please self describe below

The Equality Act 2010 describes a person as disabled if they have a longstanding physical or mental condition that has lasted, or is likely to last 12 months; and this condition has a substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. People with some conditions (cancer, multiple sclerosis and HIV/AIDS for example) are considered to be disabled from the point that they are diagnosed.

## Do you consider yourself to be disabled as set out in the Equality Act 2010?

- Yes     No     Prefer not to say

**If yes, please tell us which type of impairment applies to you.** You may have more than one type of impairment, so please select all the impairments that apply to you

- Physical disability  
 Learning disability / difficulty  
 Long-standing illness or health condition  
 Mental health condition  
 Sensory impairment (hearing, Sight or both)  
 Prefer not to say  
 Other (please specify)

**Please specify your ethnic group?**

- White British
- White Irish
- Gypsy/Irish traveller
- Any other White background
- Asian/Asian British - Bangladeshi
- Asian/Asian British - Chinese
- Asian/Asian British - Indian
- Asian/Asian British - Pakistani
- Any other Asian background
- Black/Black British - African
- Black/Black British - Caribbean
- Any other Black background
- Mixed ethnic background - White and Asian
- Mixed ethnic background - White and Black African
- Mixed ethnic background - White and Black Caribbean
- Any other mixed background
- Prefer not to say
- Any other ethnic group (please specify)

**What best describes your religion/belief?**

- Buddhist
- Christian
- Hindu
- Jewish
- Muslim
- Sikh
- No religion
- Other (please describe)
- Prefer not to say

Thank you for your time completing this consultation. Please return your survey to The Housing Service, South Walks House, South Walks Road, Dorchester, DT1 1UZ by 7 May 2021

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## Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Feedback to Action Record

Source	Comment
Adults Service	For the work with 6 - 8 year olds please link with a specialist Adult Mental Health worker to pick up their clients
Adults Service	Adult services are developing an Accommodation and Allocation Strategy - this needs to reflect the service provision for mutual homeless households
Adults Service	Two managers in Adult Service are responsible for people under or over 65 years
Adults Service	All clients with care eligibility needs must be considered. Housing to link to Adult Services in each scenario
Adults Service	All clients who have mental health needs are considered. Housing to link to Adult Services in each scenario
Adults Service	There are different uses for the term 'supported housing' depending on service area which may lead to confusion
Adults Service	The Adults service support mutual customers to access the homelessness and housing services and will need training on new software and new processes
Children's Services	Ensure Children's Services colleagues are included in relevant resource lists in action plan
Children's Services	Incorrect reference to Youth Offending Institute in draft
Children's Services	Armed Forces support is available from SAFA
Clinical Commissioning Group	Are commissioning a new homeless health strategy and would like to link with DC - to develop a health provision for this client group
Clinical Commissioning Group	Funding opportunities need to be explored
Clinical Commissioning Group	Multi-disciplinary approach adopted by Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council and could be considered by Dorset Council and CCG

Sovereign Housing Association - Public Consultation	We think the strategy does highlight the majority of issues... what is less clear from the strategy is actions to address these, with lots of actions in the plan around doing further work to understand possible solutions, given the pandemic and the expected increase in homelessness some of these time frames seem very long given that there would be significant amount of work to then put solutions in place.
Homeless Health Service for Dorset (NHS) - public consultation	To address homelessness for the long term, need to prioritise sustainable accommodation that is person centred.
Dorset Healthcare	Resources for whole area is 3 FTE so small resource. Promote opportunities linked to Mental Health integrated community care programme and the development of mental health hubs in primary care over the next 3 years
Dorset Healthcare	Could not see a mention of challenges around forensic mental health client group (or reference to working with Dorset Forensic Team in action plan) or those with a history of arson - this remains a key challenge.
Dorset Healthcare	Need to link with Operation Courage service launching for veterans in 2021
Dorset Healthcare	The proposed demand analysis of supported accommodation is absolutely key for MH please involve Dorset Healthcare
Dorset Healthcare	Linking with MH hospitals around processes for people leaving hospital potentially at risk of homelessness key - not just acute hospitals
Other - public consultation	Current allocation system doesn't work and leads to homelessness
Other - public consultation	Concerns that the strategy doesn't link homelessness and LGBT+

Other - public consultation	Need to build the right sort of homes to avoid homelessness
Other - public consultation	Poor local insight into issue
Other - public consultation	Not enough innovation
Other - public consultation	Private rented sector has a poor record
Other - public consultation	Council staff training welcomed
Other - public consultation	The strategy needs to be linked to a comprehensive mental and general health support system
Other - public consultation	The lack of homes and how that is going to be dealt with needs better explanation.
Other - public consultation	Difference between different types of relationship breakdown...some are abusive
Other - public consultation	Homeless people solution is not the private rented sector
Other - public consultation	Bringing empty properties back into use - how in the strategy
Other - public consultation	County is varied and large impacting response needed
Other - public consultation	Need to be more reactive to avoid people becoming homeless

Other - public consultation	Plan lacks ambition but meets requirements
Other - public consultation	Small sample in interview
Other - public consultation	Language in report - "ensure" is too woolly
Other - public consultation	Homeless people with learning disabilities are not considered
Other - public consultation	Causes of rough sleeping needs expanding
Other - public consultation	Needs more focus on solutions e.g. use of B & Bs
Other - public consultation	Weymouth problem of incoming rough sleepers not addressed
Other - public consultation	Aggressive begging needs a solution
Other - public consultation	How are hidden homeless being dealt with
Other - public consultation	Too complicated and difficult to understand
Other - public consultation	Failure of housing associations
Other - public consultation	Misses the main issue - shortage of properties
Other - public consultation	Not specific enough

Other - public consultation

Build affordable housing

Other - public consultation

Is the budget sufficient to deliver

Other - public consultation

Need to give people life skills/people need to help themselves

Other - public consultation

Community support available

Other - public consultation

More older peoples housing

Other - public consultation

Issues over benefits system

## Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Feedback to Action Record June 2021

Understanding	Action
MH Adults colleagues receive early notification from Children's services of people likely to transition to Adult services.	Action plan item 1.1.1 - Add Adult Services Mental Health specialist to resources list
Ensure Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy is appropriately cross-referenced	Action - Adults & Housing working group developing the AA Strategy consider impact of this strategy.
Both managers to be included in relevant work to delivery the strategy	Homeless service aware
Ensure equitable service and all needs are met	Action plan items 2.3.2 & 2.3.3- Add Adult Services to resources list Action plan item 2.3.5 - Add Adult Services colleagues to resources
Ensure equitable service and all needs are met	Action plan item 4.2.1 wording to be amended
Change to wording in action plan to make it less open to confusion	Action plan item 5.3.2 - to include internal services who require training
To ensure colleagues are able to offer the right level of support to customers	Action plan items 1.1.1 & 1.1.2 are amended to include new resources
Children's commissioning leads could assist with support regarding schools, have their own business intelligence resources and work with troubled families could lend insight. draft action plan referred to Youth Offending Service	Action plan item 2.3.2 updated
Omission of this resource from draft action plan	Action plan item 2.3.4 updated with resource
Representation from CCG to be included in delivery of strategy	Action plan item 5.4.1 - to include as resource in refreshed homelessness forum
S.256 and S.117 Care Act funding opportunities could be further explored to support this strategy	Action plan - consider new action under 5.1. Added new item 5.1.3
This is a method to consider further and see if it adds value to current plan.	Action plan - Added new item 2.3.6

The draft plan has 35 separate actions. 4 are research only of these 3 are for 2021 and 1 is for 2022. 3 actions have start dates only all of which are 2021. The remaining actions have 8 in 2021; 10 in 2022; 5 in 2023; 1 in 2024; 2 in 2025 and 1 in 2026.

Action - consider whether actions are worded incorrectly. Many use the phrase 'review' but could be reworded as they represent action that will lead to change or new provision and this may be causing confusion? Agreed - carried out with minor amendments to reflect the outcomes anticipated. No further changes needed.

Action plan items in 4.2 addresses this work

Action - consider whether the wording of any/all of these action items needs to be amended to illustrate the anticipated outcomes. Discussed no changes needed

Action plan includes linking with mental health resources in item 1.4

Should we have a new action plan item to link to the MH integrated community care programme and another for the development of MH hubs in primary care? Added to new 2.3.6. agreed

Action plan includes linking with mental health resources in item 1.4.

Do we need an additional action for forensic mental health or do we just need to add the teams to the resources list? Added to 2.3.2. agreed

Action plan includes Armed Forces work in item 2.3.4

Do we need to add this as a resource or have a new action in relation to this item alone? Added to 2.3.4. agreed

Action plan item 4.2.1 includes NHS as a resource

Amend to read Dorset Healthcare as a resource

Action plan item 2.3.5 refers to hospital discharge policy but not specially acute or mental health

Amend to read acute and mental health and add Dorset Healthcare as resource

New Dorset Council Housing Allocation will be implemented in 2021 when new software is implemented. New policy seeks to support homeless households and meets current legislative requirements. Improved signposting and access to support and guidance for homeless households is planned for the same time.

No further action required - new allocation policy is subject to monitoring and review to capture effects.

Does the strategy and action plan reflect the effect protected characteristics have for homeless households sufficiently

Action - add a new action plan item to review challenges faced by those with protected characteristics to identify any work required to mitigate

Action plan 3.1 addresses this concern	Development of new Dorset Council Housing Strategy is starting in 2021 and seeks to provide incremental increase in suitable housing for all Dorset. Does the strategy reflect this? Ensure Strategy refers to emerging Housing Strategy
Independent review provides extensive evidence about homelessness and rough sleeping Dorset Council area, benchmarks against relevant group and compares to national trends	No further action required
Strategy aims are appropriate. Action plan items may lead to innovative methods to respond to new or improved service delivery options	No further action required
The action plan includes items to work with private landlords, to develop an incentive scheme which includes support and to tackle empty homes.	No further action required
The review recognised the excellent service the council offers. The action plan includes items 5.3.2 and 5.4.3 to ensure comprehensive training is provided	No further action required
Is the strategy not specific enough about this? Action plan items are included to address this concern.	Action review strategy wording and strengthen if required - agreed and further text inserted to strategy 4.4 page20
Is the strategy not specific enough about this? Action plan items are included to address this concern.	See line 27
The new Dorset Council Housing Allocation policy offers support and exemption from local connection criteria for those experiencing domestic abuse.	Reviewed and already included in strategy but need to work up link to specific domestic abuse resources and responses
Understand concerns relating to affordability and view that PRS is less secure may be the concern. Duty can be met using PRS.	The action plan already has item 3.1.1 that addresses these concerns. Strategy is clear about current use of accommodation types and additional para on page 19 of strategy reaffirms housing strategy commitment to support lack of supply. No further change to strategy or action plan
Not described in detail in strategy noted	Added a line in the strategy, page 17 Action plan item 3.2.1 addresses this challenge
Prevention is one of the strategic aims and there are several action plan items	No further action required

Strategy and action plan covers 5 year period. During lifetime of strategy further developmental work and actions are anticipated as actions are completed.	Action plan will be monitored and developed. No further action required.
Extensive invitations were made during review. Assurances have been provided to housing service that the response is representative of council population and at expected levels.	Strategy introduces refreshed accountability and inclusion across all stakeholders to ensure collaborate and appropriate development and delivery of strategy and action plan. No further action required.
Review is independent document.	Noted - communications and accountability will be checked for clarity as ongoing practice
Adult Services have provided feedback. Will include all homeless households.	Does the action plan need amending? Added new action 1.4.2. agreed
The strategy has a small paragraph 3.2. 'Causes of homelessness'	The strategy has a brief paragraph that lists the main causes followed by data about some of the causes and the data we have in relation to that.
This suggests strategy is not clear on solutions. Action plan item 3.2.1 reflects a review of all accommodation suitability	No change to strategy or action plan. agreed
Not included specific area responses in strategy or action plan	Noted - no change to strategy or action plan. agreed
Not remit of strategy or action plan	Housing work with other services or bodies to support their work in this area. No change to action plan or strategy
Action plan item 4.2.3 addresses this	No change to strategy or action plan
Topic is complex - 4 respondents made this comment	106 responses were received. Topic is complex. Content is appropriate and language has been considered. Ensure communications about activity and inclusion are at suitable level during lifetime of strategy and action plan is reasonable mitigation
Response is not detailed enough to consider changes. Action plan includes items include Housing Associations as resources and will be further strengthened within developing housing strategy.	No further action required
Strategy and action plan include accommodation shortages. Action plan items in objective 3 seek to address this factor.	No further action required
Response is not detailed enough to consider changes. Action plan is extensive.	No further action required

Strategy and action plan include accommodation shortages. Will be further supported in emerging Local Plan and Housing Strategy which are better placed to tackle this factor. No further action required

Current levels of internal and external funding will need to be increased and are addressed in strategy and action plan. Working with partners to deliver the strategy will make the most efficient use of all funding in the council area. No further action required

Action plan items in 1.1.3, 2.2.2 & 4.2.2 seek to provide the right support and opportunities e.g. pre tenancy & resettlement support No further action required

This comment suggests the strategy and action plan are not clear about opportunities to link with community support and any future developments . Strategy amended with additional para in 4.4 page 20

Action plan item 3.1 reviews accommodation. Age is not a factor recognised in isolation as leading to homelessness or rough sleeping. No further action required

Action plan items 1.1.2 & 2.2.2 seek to include DWP within resources. This strategy does not seek to influence government policy regarding the welfare system at this time. No further action required.

Response

Agreed - Action plan updated

No Action to Strategy or Action Plan - Housing are represented on the working group already.

No change to strategy or action plan

Agreed - Action plan updated

No change to strategy or action plan

Agreed - action plan updated

No change to strategy or action plan

Agreed - Action plan updated with new  
action at 1.4.2

Agreed - no change to action plan and strategy reviewed and updated page19

No change to strategy or action plan

Strategy updated

Agreed - strategy updated page 19 no change to action plan

No change to strategy or action plan

strategy updated page 19

Strategy updated

No change to strategy or action plan

Agreed - action plan updated

No change to strategy or action plan

Agreed -action plan updated

No change to strategy or action plan

No change to strategy or action plan

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## **People and Health Overview Committee 6 July 2021 Dorset Council Grants Protocol**

### **For Review and Consultation**

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr J Haynes, Customer and Community Services

**Executive Director:** A Dunn, Executive Director, Corporate Development

Report Author: Laura Cornette

Title: Business Partner – Communities and Partnerships

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**Report Status:** Public

#### **Recommendation:**

Members of the People and Health Overview Committee consider the proposed Grants protocol for decision on whether Dorset Council will adopt it as a baseline standard for all competitive grants offered to the Voluntary Community Sector.

#### **Reason for Recommendation:**

Prior to Dorset Council there were several competitive grants programmes with differing criteria and processes. As part of the harmonisation work it has been deemed imperative there is a minimum set of standards and defined process for all awarding officers to follow to ensure Dorset Council has a fair and transparent process and secures best value for money.

#### **1. Executive Summary**

Following LGR, a programme of work to harmonise the grants and financial arrangements with the Voluntary Community Sector (VCS) has been completed.

The purpose of the Grants Protocol is to clarify the process and minimum standards for distribution of competitive funds to the VCS for applications meeting one or more of the Dorset Council's corporate objectives using Dorset Council's funds. The process is to ensure an impartial, unbiased and auditable

procedure in the distribution of grants. It will also ensure Dorset Council gets best value and critical data on our investments.  
The Grants Protocol is found in Appendix 1.

## **2. Financial Implications**

Dorset Council support the VCS through a financial package of £1.8 million and this protocol will help to ensure a consistent approach to it's distribution.

## **3. Well-being and Health Implications**

Well-being and Health implications will be addressed in meeting the Dorset Council Corporate priorities in the individual grant fund applications

## **4. Climate implications**

Climate implications will be addressed in meeting the Dorset Council Corporate priorities in the individual grant fund applications

## **5. Other Implications**

Other implications regarding sustainability, voluntary organisations, public health, safeguarding and physical activity will be addressed in meeting the Dorset Council Corporate priorities in the individual grant fund applications

## **6. Risk Assessment**

Having considered the risks associated with this decision, the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: low

Residual Risk: low

## **7. Equalities Impact Assessment**

Incorporated under the EqIA for the Voluntary Sector Grants review

## **8. Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Draft Dorset Council Grants Protocol

## **9. Background Papers**

[Cabinet Paper – Financial Provision to the Voluntary and Community Sector 6<sup>th</sup> October 2020](#)

## **1. Background**

1.1 Following Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 the Dorset Council Communities and Partnerships team, Culture & Arts team, Council Members and colleagues undertook a comprehensive review of its historical grants issued to Voluntary Community Sector Organisations (VCSOs) including competitive grants programmes inherited from the six sovereign councils which, following a public and community consultation (January-March 2020) took a report with the findings and recommendations to Cabinet on the 6<sup>th</sup> October 2020 (background paper 1).

1.2 Part of the purpose of the review was to consider and harmonise the existing competitive grants programmes to the VCS in existence before LGR and to harmonise these into standardised grants programmes that make a positive and lasting difference in our communities, prioritise our resources, support marginalised and under-served groups across the Dorset Council area.

1.3 In addition to the corporate competitive grant's programmes for the VCS, other competitive grant programmes for the VCS have been developed within directorates as a form of commissioning. Individual grant detail is in section 3.

## **2. Grants protocol**

2.1 Administering a grant scheme can be complex and due regard must be given to important factors when developing and launching a scheme such as pre-determined criteria, the application process, assessment and shortlisting principles, advertising and monitoring and evaluating of council grants. It is vital that Dorset Council puts in place adequate systems and processes to assess the suitability of grant applications in order to ensure the application process is fair and transparent. These systems and processes will be adopted by any council department with funding to offer a competitive grants process.

2.2 The purpose of the Grants Protocol is to clarify the process and minimum standards for distribution of competitive funds to the VCS for applications meeting one or more of the Dorset Council's corporate objectives using Dorset Council's funds.

2.3 Not all grants issued by Dorset Council are in scope of this protocol. Out of scope of the grants protocol are:

- a) Dorset Council Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Section 106 funds.
- b) Dorset Council non-competitive commissioned grants. These will be covered under the Procurement and Commissioning strategy and policy.
- c) Dorset Council grants to businesses or individuals which are not considered part of the voluntary community sector (VCS).
- d) Grants distributed on behalf of external agencies or Government departments may be deemed appropriate to be distributed if they do not come with their own specified application procedure and standardised forms.

### **3. Current Grant Funds**

3.1 The current competitive grant funds offered to the VCS within Dorset Council for which the Grants protocol will apply are currently:

3.2 Organisation Revenue Support Fund (ORSF) – is a fund that will offer a small number of organisations that clearly demonstrate how they meet Dorset Council's corporate priorities core funding for between 1-3 years.

3.3 Community & Culture Project Fund (CCPF) is the small grants programme that replaces the Social Inclusion Fund, Leisure Development Fund and the Community Impact fund. The Grant programme cuts across several themes including: Communities, Play, Sport, and Culture (Arts and Museums). It is focussed upon providing a small one-off grant for up to one year for the delivery of projects or specific activities that meet Dorset Council's fund objectives.

3.4 Capital Leverage Fund – Currently under development. This fund will support funding to be levered into Dorset Council for Capital Projects by Dorset Council inputting a small amount of funding which can only be claimed against once the applicant has been awarded funding for their capital project. This fund brings together the capital element of the Leisure Development Fund and the Special Projects Leverage Fund.

3.3 Targeted Youth grants – An annual competitive fund from the Children's Services budget is distributed via a competitive process to former Dorset County Council Youth Centres. This budget had previously been distributed via Crowdfunder projects.

#### **Footnote:**

Issues relating to financial, legal, environmental, economic and equalities implications have been considered and any information relevant to the decision is included within the report.

## Appendix 1 – Competitive Grants to Voluntary Community Sector Protocol



### **Dorset Council Grants Protocol Voluntary and Community Sector (including Arts, Heritage, Culture, Social Enterprises)**

#### **Scope of this Protocol**

This protocol explains the process and minimum standards for distribution of competitive funds for applications meeting one or more of the Dorset Council's corporate objectives.

These grants to the Voluntary and Community Sector via application use Dorset Council's funds. Competitive grants are a form of commissioning. The purpose of these standards and process is to ensure an impartial, unbiased and auditable procedure in the distribution of grants. It will also ensure Dorset Council gets best value and critical data on our investments. However, there may be exceptional circumstances where these standards need to be adjusted and officer discretion applied. In this instance, it must be authorised in advance of advertisement by the Member Portfolio Holder for Communities.

Dorset Council define VCS as the following types of organisation:

- Registered Charities
- Social Enterprises (Companies limited by guarantee that have a clear not-for-profit clause in their governing document and clear charitable or social objectives that meet the priorities of the funding programme)
- Faith groups and Churches (provided they are not promoting religious beliefs)
- Newly established groups that can meet the council's mandatory governance requirements (detail later in this document)
- Constituted Community groups and Voluntary & Community sector organisations
- Un-constituted community groups
- Community Interest Companies (CIC) that are Limited by Guarantee Must be registered with the Office of the Regulator of CICs and must be Limited by Guarantee.
  - Must have a minimum of 3 directors, 2 of which are unrelated
  - Must have objectives that show clear community benefit.
  - Must have a sound business model where 50% or more is earned through trading, unless the CIC is less than 3 years old or is able to demonstrate why this is not achievable.
  - Salaries and benefits paid to directors must be reasonable and proportionate to the work that they do and the financial position of the organisation, in order to prioritise the services/activities being delivered.
  - Must have an asset lock statement

Dorset Council categorises VCS grants as either micro grants or grants. They are defined as the following:

- Micro grant – up to the value of £2000
- Grant – value above £2000

#### **Not in scope of this Protocol**

- Dorset Council Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Section 106 funds.
- Dorset Council non-competitive commissioned grants. These will be covered under the Procurement and Commissioning strategy and policy.
- Dorset Council grants to businesses or individuals which are not considered part of the voluntary community sector (VCS).
- Grants distributed on behalf of external agencies or Government departments may be deemed appropriate to be distributed if they do not come with their own specified application procedure and standardised forms.

#### **Grant Application**

- The standard method for accessing any fund detail and full information will be the Dorset Council website: [www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk](http://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk)
- The standard method of application is via an online application form using the Dorset Council Case viewer system. The application form is fully accessible, however if an applicant cannot access the online form, Dorset Council will either provide a paper copy form or support the applicant with a digital champion to support with the application. This will be specified in the guidance.
- Dorset Council will not accept any applications that are submitted after the publicised closing date.
- Dorset Council welcomes discussions with applicants about their project prior to submitting their application – details of how the applicant can contact an appropriate officer must be provided in the guidance.

- All application forms must include at least the following fields:

##### **Organisational Information**

- Organisation Name
- Organisation status (e.g. Registered charity)
- Organisation registration number (if applicable)
- Organisation registered address
- Organisation telephone number
- Organisation email address
- Organisation website / social media
- Start date of the organisation
- Main contact name
- Main contact telephone number
- Main contact email address
- Main contact position within the organisation

##### **Activity Information**

- How much the applicant is applying from the fund
- A description / summary of what the applicant is applying for
- When the funded work / project will begin and end
- Which of Dorset Council's priorities will the work / project be working towards
- What are the expected outcomes of the work / project
- How you intend to measure the outcomes

### **Thematic and Geographical Information**

- Which geographical area within Dorset Council area will the work / project benefit
- Which disadvantaged groups will the work / project benefit

### **Financial Information**

- Whether the organisation is currently in receipt of a Dorset Council grant
- If the funding is for a project, a basic breakdown of costs
- Whether match funding will be required, and at what percentage of the overall budget cost. To ensure best value, on project-based funds, the expectation will be that usually at a percentage contribution from fundraising (excluding in-kind). Each fund will define the minimum percentage contribution required.
- If match funding is required, the source and status of the funding.
- Declaration that the application is true and correct, signature, date, position in organisation

### **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

- We expect applications to consider how their services / projects proactively consider how their provision is inclusive and support Dorset Council's delivery of our [Equality Scheme](#)

### **Fund Guidance**

- All grant funds will publish clear application fund guidance stating at least the following:
  - Open and close date of the fund (if applicable)
  - Panel assessment date
  - Applicants informed date
  - Total available fund Budget for the current round (if there is more than one in a financial year)
  - Maximum and minimum grant amount
  - How many of the [Dorset Council's priorities](#) the applicant is expected to address – this should be relative to the grant amount available.
  - What are the desired outcomes of the fund
  - Whether the fund is for Revenue or Capital applications
  - Eligibility criteria of the fund
  - Scope (examples) of what the fund may and will not consider
  - When the applicant is expected to begin the work / project following the fund award. For revenue projects this should be no later than 12 weeks following the award letter. For capital projects conditional of external match funding, this should be no more than 24 months following the award letter.
  - Make clear if partial grant awards will be offered.
  - Terms and conditions of the grant fund
  - Appeal process for the fund
  - Contact details for the officer/s for queries on the fund
  - How to submit the application

### **Compliance & Supporting Documents**

Dorset Council has a responsibility to take upmost care with public funds and will require evidence of the following documents. Some funds may require additional documentation.

Document	Micro-grants	Grants	Why Do We Need It
<b>Constitution/Memorandum of Articles and Association</b>	If appropriate	Yes	Demonstrates the organisation has guidelines to its purpose and how it is governed. A management committee, Board of Trustees or Board of Directors with at least 3 unrelated people as members
<b>Annual Accounts</b>	No	Yes	These can be audited or independently examined accounts or an income/expenditure spreadsheet depending on the size of the organisation. Demonstrates the financial position of the organisation regarding income, expenditure, loans, liabilities etc. New organisations without annual accounts may submit a financial forecast as an alternative
<b>Bank Statement</b>	Yes	Yes	Demonstrates that the organisation has a bank account in their name with 2 unrelated signatories, and we can confirm bank account details. Important that it shows account name, sort code and account number clearly of applicant.
<b>Safeguarding Policies / Equal Opportunities</b>	If appropriate	Yes	To demonstrate that the organisation has robust policies in place.
<b>Environmental Policy or Statement</b>	If appropriate	Yes	To demonstrate the organisation considers how their work has an environment impact
<b>Public Liability Insurance</b>	If appropriate	£10,000,000	To demonstrate the organisation has appropriate safeguards in place

#### **What Dorset Council will not fund**

The following are not eligible for funding:

- Public bodies to carry out their statutory obligations
- The promotion of religious or political causes
- Retrospective funding – grants for work that has already started or been completed
- Organisations seeking to provide a Bursary; 1:1 coaching or an individual Grants programme using our funding
- Organisations seeking to use grant funding outside of the Dorset Council area (including the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council area).
- Organisations with excessive amounts of unrestricted funding (more than 12 months' reserves)
- Medical research, feasibility studies

- Organisations previously funded who have not completed their end of project report
- Dorset Council will not support national charities but may support local branches of national charities if they are financially independent and locally managed.
- Educational establishments such as schools, colleges and Universities (unless friends of or PTA)
- Projects duplicating an existing commissioned service or provider in the same locality

#### **Assessment process**

- The initial assessment of the applications will always be conducted by more than one officer using a scoring matrix against the outcomes of the fund for transparency.
- Applications will only be assessed if they were submitted by the deadline and on the case viewer or via the official paper copy by prior agreement.
- The award will be made after financial checks have been conducted and the panel are as satisfied to the best of their ability the organisation will have the resources to manage the work / project successfully
- An award will only be made on the receipt of supporting documentation and a signed agreement which includes details of the terms and conditions of the grant
- Each assessment Panel will comprise of a minimum of two Specialist Dorset Council Officers (one acts as the panel Chair), the Portfolio holder and where possible at least one representative from an appropriate external partner organisation
- Where a conflict of interest occurs the relevant Officer / representative will not take part in the assessment and the declaration of interest will be recorded and kept with the assessment records.
- The Panel will assess each application against the fund criteria and use a scoring matrix to agree and prioritise awards. Decisions are made by a majority vote. Where there is no majority, the council's relevant Portfolio holder will have the deciding vote. The panel decision is final.
- An assessment summary of all eligible and shortlisted applications, with Officer recommendations will be kept as a record of the decision process.
- If an applicant withdraws their application after the panel decision has been made, the Chair, in consultation with the other panel members, can agree to award the grant to another applicant.
- Any decision to amend the award if the project or organisation has changed, or new information comes to light that affects the application, will be considered by the Grants awarding officer/manager and Panel Chair, in consultation with other panel members as appropriate

#### **Communication of Award & Release of Funding**

- Dorset Council will provide all applicants with a decision within 6 weeks of the grant fund closing date.
- The Panel / Officers may also need to obtain further information about the application, and this may require additional time before confirming a decision. Where this is the case the applicant will be notified.
- Successful applicants will receive a grant offer letter and grant terms and conditions which they will need to sign and return prior to start of the work / project
- Unsuccessful applicants will be notified via the case viewer

- Awarded funds may be paid in 1 or more payments, dependant on the level and purpose of grant and the nature of the organisation.
- Grant payments will be via BACS payment upon receipt of an appropriate invoice from the applicant

#### **Appeals, Complaints & Feedback Process**

- Where an application has been declined, feedback will be provided if requested by the applicant.
- Dorset Council welcomes feedback from all applicants on our application process and we are continually looking at ways to make improvements to ensure that the process is efficient and effective
- In the event that an applicant is not satisfied with the service or advice that has been provided by the council, they can make a complaint following Dorset Council's Complaints Procedure which is available on the homepage of the council's website.

#### **Monitoring & Evaluation**

Dorset Council has in place a robust and consistent process for monitoring and evaluating its grant monies. The process will include:

- Agreed outcomes contained in the applicants grant agreement
- Clear information and timescales relating to the monitoring process which may also include the collection of data around social impact, return on investment, or community benefit (impact).
- A range of monitoring methodologies e.g. face to face; phone; virtual or via a grant survey
- Proportionality – the monitoring process will be proportionate to the size of the grant awarded.
- A 'Designated Officer' being allocated for your project for the term of the grant
- Regular monitoring which will be at six monthly intervals followed by the completion of an end of project report. In some cases, where the level of investment and risk to the council is higher additional monitoring may be carried required
- Feedback from the 'Designated Officer' to the applicant where performance issues exist and suggestions on how to improve
- Expectation of organisations to provide monitoring in a timely manner as agreed at the award....

#### **Data Sharing and Promotion**

- Dorset Council will promote all successful grant awards on the Dorset Council website and relevant media
- The relevant Dorset Council officer will inform any relevant Members including those which have projects / work in their ward
- Dorset Council may share basic data information regarding applications with other local grant managers/funding streams. This will enable us to make informed funding decisions, avoid duplication of funding and ensure value for money is achieved through our grant making processes.
- Dorset Council will ensure that applicants' data is stored and destroyed appropriately 6 months for unsuccessful and 6 years for successful applicants.

**People and Health Overview Committee – Forward Plan**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Date of Committee Meeting</b>	<b>Requested by</b>	<b>Report Author</b>	<b>Portfolio Holder/s</b>	<b>Other Meetings (CLT, SLT, Cabinet etc)</b>
Updated Council Plan	To discuss and agree the updated Council Plan.	<b>2 September 2021</b>	Rebecca Forrester	Rebecca Forrester, Business Partner Policy, Research and Performance	The Leader of the Council and the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Change	Place & Resources 31 August 2021 Cabinet 5 October 2021
Update on the Care Leaver Offer (Minutes 040321 refers)	Update on the implementation of the Care Leaver offer	<b>9 November 2021</b>	Chairman	Theresa Leavy, Executive Director of People – Children Matt Chislett Service Manager, Corporate Parenting and Permanence Louise Drury, Performance Quality Assurance Consultant	Portfolio Holder for Children, Education, Skills and Early Help	
Communities Strategy	Strategy that will shape how Dorset Council engages and enables of communities	<b>9 November 2021</b>	Laura Cornette	Laura Cornette, Corporate Policy and Performance Officer	Portfolio Holder for Customer and Community Services	Cabinet TBC
		<b>24 January 2022</b>				
Youth Justice Plan	TBC	<b>24 March 2022</b>	Annual item	David Webb, Service Manager, Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service	Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Safety	TBC

Title	Description	Date of Committee Meeting	Requested by	Report Author	Portfolio Holder/s	Other Meetings (CLT, SLT, Cabinet etc)
		3 May 2022				



## The Cabinet Forward Plan - May to August 2021 (Publication date 24 May 2021) Updated on 7 June 2021 For the period 1 JUNE 2021 to 30 SEPTEMBER 2021

### Explanatory Note:

This Forward Plan contains future items to be considered by the Cabinet and Council. It is published 28 days before the next meeting of the Committee. The plan includes items for the meeting including key decisions. Each item shows if it is 'open' to the public or to be considered in a private part of the meeting.

### Definition of Key Decisions

Key decisions are defined in Dorset Council's Constitution as decisions of the Cabinet which are likely to -

- (a) to result in the relevant local authority incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the relevant local authority's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates (**Thresholds - £500k**); or
- (b) to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards or electoral divisions in the area of the relevant local authority."

On determining the meaning of "*significant*" for these purposes the Council will have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State in accordance with section 9Q of the Local Government Act 2000 Act. Officers will consult with lead members to determine significance and sensitivity.

### Cabinet Portfolio Holders 2021/22

<b>Spencer Flower</b>	Leader / Governance, Performance and Communications
<b>Peter Wharf</b>	Deputy Leader / Corporate Development and Change
<b>Gary Suttle</b>	Finance, Commercial and Capital Strategy
<b>Ray Bryan</b>	Highways, Travel and Environment
<b>Tony Ferrari</b>	Economic Growth, Assets & Property
<b>David Walsh</b>	Planning
<b>Jill Haynes</b>	Customer and Community Services
<b>Andrew Parry</b>	Children, Education, Skills and Early Help
<b>Laura Miller</b>	Adult Social Care and Health
<b>Graham Carr-Jones</b>	Housing and Community Safety

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Other Committee(s) consulted and Date of meeting(s)	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact
June					
<b>Dorset Council Budget Quarterly Performance Report - Q4</b>  <b>Key Decision - No</b> <b>Public Access - Open</b>	<b>Decision Maker Cabinet</b>	<b>Decision Date 22 Jun 2021</b>	Audit and Governance Committee 19 Apr 2021	Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercial and Capital Strategy	<i>Jim McManus, Corporate Director - Finance and Commercial</i> <i>J.McManus@dorsetcc.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, Corporate Development - Section 151 Officer (Aidan Dunn)</i>
<b>Dorset Council Plan Quarterly Performance Report - Q4</b>  <b>Key Decision - No</b> <b>Public Access - Open</b>  To consider performance against the council plan January to March 2021.	<b>Decision Maker Cabinet</b>	<b>Decision Date 22 Jun 2021</b>		Deputy Leader - Corporate Development and Change	<i>Rebecca Forrester, Business Intelligence &amp; Performance</i> <i>rebecca.forrester@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk, Elizabeth Crocker</i> <i>Elizabeth.Crocker1@dorsetcc.gov.uk</i> <i>Chief Executive (Matt Prosser)</i>
<b>Update on Dorset Council's response to Covid-19</b>  <b>Key Decision - No</b> <b>Public Access - Open</b>  To update Cabinet on Dorset Council's Covid-19 response.	<b>Decision Maker Cabinet</b>	<b>Decision Date 22 Jun 2021</b>		Leader of the Council	<i>Rebecca Forrester, Business Intelligence &amp; Performance</i> <i>rebecca.forrester@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk, Nina Coakley, Programme Manager</i> <i>n.coakley@dorsetcc.gov.uk</i> <i>Chief Executive (Matt Prosser)</i>

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Other Committee(s) consulted and Date of meeting(s)	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact
<p><b>Weymouth Harbour and Esplanade Flood and Coastal Risk Management Strategic Outline Case</b></p> <p><b>Key Decision - Yes</b> <b>Public Access - Open</b></p> <p>This project will utilise the adopted 2020 strategy to produce a Strategic Outline Case (SOC) that gains approval from the Environment Agency's Large Project Review Group. It will provide companion document to the adopted 2020 strategy, containing additional technical detail in line with the Environment Agency's guidance for producing SOC's</p>	<p><b>Decision Maker Cabinet</b></p>	<p><b>Decision Date 22 Jun 2021</b></p>	<p>Place and Resources Overview Committee 1 Jun 2021</p>	<p>Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment</p>	<p><i>Sarah Cairns, Service Manager - Major Projects</i> <i>sarah.cairns@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, Place (John Sellgren)</i></p>
<p><b>Street Naming and Numbering Policy</b></p> <p><b>Key Decision - No</b> <b>Public Access - Open</b></p> <p>The Street Naming and Numbering policy provides a framework for Dorset Council to operate the service effectively and efficiently for the benefit of Dorset Council residents, businesses and visitors.</p>	<p><b>Decision Maker Cabinet</b></p>	<p><b>Decision Date 22 Jun 2021</b></p>	<p>Place and Resources Overview Committee 1 Jun 2021</p>	<p>Deputy Leader - Corporate Development and Change</p>	<p><i>Emma Webb, Business Solutions Analyst</i> <i>emma.webb@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, Corporate Development - Section 151 Officer (Aidan Dunn)</i></p>
<p><b>Dorset Care Framework</b></p> <p><b>Key Decision - Yes</b> <b>Public Access - Open</b></p> <p>To review and approve the new framework for Adult Social Care</p>	<p><b>Decision Maker Cabinet</b></p>	<p><b>Decision Date 22 Jun 2021</b></p>		<p>Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health</p>	<p><i>Lesley Hutchinson, Corporate Director for Adults Commissioning</i> <i>Lesley.Hutchinson@dorsetc.c.gov.uk</i> <i>Vivienne Broadhurst</i></p>

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Other Committee(s) consulted and Date of meeting(s)	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact
<p><b>Learning Disability and Mental Health Non Framework Contracts</b></p> <p><b>Key Decision - Yes</b> <b>Public Access - Fully exempt</b></p> <p>To consider a review of encompass contract</p>	<p><b>Decision Maker Cabinet</b></p>	<p><b>Decision Date 22 Jun 2021</b></p>		<p>Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health</p>	<p><i>Lesley Hutchinson, Corporate Director for Adults Commissioning</i> <i>Lesley.Hutchinson@dorsetc.c.gov.uk</i> <i>Vivienne Broadhurst</i></p>
<p><b>Arne Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2018 - 2034</b></p> <p><b>Key Decision - Yes</b> <b>Public Access - Open</b></p> <p>The item relates to the making (adoption) of the neighbourhood plan following on from an independent examination and referendum.</p>	<p><b>Decision Maker Cabinet</b></p>	<p><b>Decision Date 22 Jun 2021</b></p>		<p>Portfolio Holder for Planning</p>	<p><i>Ed Gerry, Prinicpal Planning Policy Team Leader</i> <i>ed.gerry@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, Place (John Sellgren)</i></p>
<p><b>Blandford + Neighbourhood Plan 2011 - 2033</b></p> <p><b>Key Decision - Yes</b> <b>Public Access - Open</b></p>	<p><b>Decision Maker Cabinet</b></p>	<p><b>Decision Date 22 Jun 2021</b></p>		<p>Portfolio Holder for Planning</p>	<p><i>Ed Gerry, Prinicpal Planning Policy Team Leader</i> <i>ed.gerry@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, Place (John Sellgren)</i></p>
<p><b>Chickerell Town Neighbourhood Plan 2019 - 2036</b></p> <p><b>Key Decision - Yes</b> <b>Public Access - Open</b></p> <p>The item relates to the making (adoption) of the neighbourhood plan following on from an independent examination and referendum.</p>	<p><b>Decision Maker Cabinet</b></p>	<p><b>Decision Date 22 Jun 2021</b></p>		<p>Portfolio Holder for Planning</p>	<p><i>Philip Reese, Senior Planning Policy Officer</i> <i>philip.reese@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, Place (John Sellgren)</i></p>

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Other Committee(s) consulted and Date of meeting(s)	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact
<p><b>Milton Abbas Neighbourhood Development Plan 2019 - 2031</b></p> <p><b>Key Decision - Yes</b> <b>Public Access - Open</b></p> <p>The item relates to the making (adoption) of the neighbourhood plan following on from an independent examination and referendum.</p>	<p><b>Decision Maker Cabinet</b></p>	<p><b>Decision Date 22 Jun 2021</b></p>		<p>Portfolio Holder for Planning</p>	<p><i>Philip Reese, Senior Planning Policy Officer philip.reese@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, Place (John Sellgren)</i></p>
<p><b>Portland Neighbourhood Plan 2017 - 2031</b></p> <p><b>Key Decision - Yes</b> <b>Public Access - Open</b></p> <p>The item relates to the making (adoption) of the neighbourhood plan following on from an independent examination and referendum.</p>	<p><b>Decision Maker Cabinet</b></p>	<p><b>Decision Date 22 Jun 2021</b></p>		<p>Portfolio Holder for Planning</p>	<p><i>Joanne Langrish-Merritt, Senior Planning Policy Officer joanne.langrish-merritt@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, Place (John Sellgren)</i></p>
<p><b>Puddletown Neighbourhood Plan 2019 - 2031</b></p> <p><b>Key Decision - Yes</b> <b>Public Access - Open</b></p> <p>The item relates to the making (adoption) of the neighbourhood plan following on from an independent examination and referendum.</p>	<p><b>Decision Maker Cabinet</b></p>	<p><b>Decision Date 22 Jun 2021</b></p>		<p>Portfolio Holder for Planning</p>	<p><i>Joanne Langrish-Merritt, Senior Planning Policy Officer joanne.langrish-merritt@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, Place (John Sellgren)</i></p>
<p><b>Shaftesbury Neighbourhood Plan 2019 - 2031</b></p> <p><b>Key Decision - Yes</b> <b>Public Access - Open</b></p> <p>The item relates to the making (adoption) of the neighbourhood plan following on from an independent examination and referendum.</p>	<p><b>Decision Maker Cabinet</b></p>	<p><b>Decision Date 22 Jun 2021</b></p>		<p>Portfolio Holder for Planning</p>	<p><i>Philip Reese, Senior Planning Policy Officer philip.reese@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, Place (John Sellgren)</i></p>

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Other Committee(s) consulted and Date of meeting(s)	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact
<p><b>Management of Council Owned Tree Policy</b></p> <p><b>Key Decision</b> - Yes <b>Public Access</b> - Open</p> <p>Recommendation from Place &amp; Resources Overview Committee The policy defines the way in which Dorset Council will manage the Trees that the Council own and are responsible for.</p>	<p><b>Decision Maker Cabinet</b></p>	<p><b>Decision Date 22 Jun 2021</b></p>	<p>Place and Resources Overview Committee 1 Jun 2021</p>	<p>Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment</p>	<p><i>Matt Reeks, Service Manager for Coast and Greenspace matt.reeks@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, Place (John Sellgren)</i></p>

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<p><b>Asset Transfer Policy</b></p> <p><b>Key Decision</b> - Yes <b>Public Access</b> - Open</p> <p>To review the policy for the transfer of assets to towns, parish and community groups.</p>	<p><b>Decision Maker Cabinet</b></p>	<p><b>Decision Date 27 Jul 2021</b></p>	<p>Place and Resources Overview Committee 1 Jun 2021</p>	<p>Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Assets and Property</p>	<p><i>Dave Thompson, Corporate Director for Property &amp; Assets dave.thompson@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, Place (John Sellgren)</i></p>
<p><b>Dorset Council Homelessness &amp; Rough Sleeper Strategy</b></p> <p><b>Key Decision</b> - Yes <b>Public Access</b> - Open</p> <p>A Homelessness &amp; Rough Sleeper Strategy for Dorset Council replacing previous district and borough strategies. To determine, prioritise and explain the Council's strategy</p>	<p><b>Decision Maker Cabinet</b></p>	<p><b>Decision Date 27 Jul 2021</b></p>	<p>People and Health Overview Committee 6 Jul 2021</p>	<p>Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Safety</p>	<p><i>Sharon Attwater, Service Manager for Housing Strategy and Performance sharon.attwater@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, People - Adults</i></p>

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Other Committee(s) consulted and Date of meeting(s)	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact
and action plan to meet our objectives to reduce homelessness and rough sleeping and improve services available to those households.					
<p><b>Dorset Council Budget Quarterly Performance Report - Q1</b></p> <p><b>Key Decision - No</b> <b>Public Access - Open</b></p> <p>To consider the Budget Performance report for Quarter 1.</p>	<p><b>Decision Maker</b> <b>Cabinet</b></p>	<p><b>Decision Date</b> <b>27 Jul 2021</b></p>		<p>Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercial and Capital Strategy</p>	<p><i>Jim McManus, Corporate Director - Finance and Commercial</i> <i>J.McManus@dorsetcc.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, Corporate Development - Section 151 Officer (Aidan Dunn)</i></p>
<p><b>Review of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Expenditure</b></p> <p><b>Key Decision - Yes</b> <b>Public Access - Open</b></p> <p>Recommendation from Place and Resources Scrutiny Committee Position report on CIL governance and expenditure to date. Report to provide a platform for potential review to ensure that developer contributions end up in the right places and that contributions are put back into community facilities.</p>	<p><b>Decision Maker</b> <b>Cabinet</b></p>	<p><b>Decision Date</b> <b>27 Jul 2021</b></p>	<p>Place and Resources Scrutiny Committee 13 Jul 2021</p>	<p>Portfolio Holder for Planning</p>	<p><i>Andrew Galpin, Infrastructure &amp; Delivery Planning Manager</i> <i>andrew.galpin@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, Place (John Sellgren)</i></p>
<p><b>Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan Area Designation</b></p> <p><b>Key Decision - Yes</b> <b>Public Access - Open</b></p> <p>A final determination as to whether to designate a Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood plans area.</p>	<p><b>Decision Maker</b> <b>Cabinet</b></p>	<p><b>Decision Date</b> <b>27 Jul 2021</b></p>		<p>Portfolio Holder for Planning</p>	<p><i>Nick Cardnell, Senior Planning Officer</i> <i>Nick.cardnell@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, Place (John Sellgren)</i></p>

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Other Committee(s) consulted and Date of meeting(s)	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact
<p><b>Part of Steamer plot land sale at Dorset Innovation Park</b></p> <p><b>Key Decision - Yes</b> <b>Public Access - Fully exempt</b></p> <p>To approve sale of land within Steamer area at Dorset innovation Park.</p>	<p><b>Decision Maker Cabinet</b></p>	<p><b>Decision Date 27 Jul 2021</b></p>		<p>Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Assets and Property</p>	<p><i>Dave Thompson, Corporate Director for Property &amp; Assets</i> <i>dave.thompson@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, Place (John Sellgren)</i></p>
<p><b>Part of Zenith plot land sale at Dorset Innovation Park</b></p> <p><b>Key Decision - Yes</b> <b>Public Access - Fully exempt</b></p> <p>Cabinet approval for the sale of land within Zenith area at Dorset Innovation Park.</p>	<p><b>Decision Maker Cabinet</b></p>	<p><b>Decision Date 27 Jul 2021</b></p>		<p>Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Assets and Property</p>	<p><i>Dave Thompson, Corporate Director for Property &amp; Assets</i> <i>dave.thompson@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, Place (John Sellgren)</i></p>
<p><b>September</b></p>					
<p><b>Annual Safeguarding Board Report</b></p> <p><b>Key Decision - Yes</b> <b>Public Access - Open</b></p> <p>To receive the Annual Safeguarding Board Report from Anthony Douglas Independent Chair and Scrutineer of the Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Partnership</p>	<p><b>Decision Maker Cabinet</b></p>	<p><b>Decision Date 7 Sep 2021</b></p>		<p>Portfolio Holder for Children, Education, Skills and Early Help</p>	<p><i>Executive Director, People - Children (Theresa Leavy)</i></p>

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Other Committee(s) consulted and Date of meeting(s)	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact
<p><b>Additional Procurement Forward Plan Report over £500k (2021 - 22)</b></p> <p><b>Key Decision - Yes</b> <b>Public Access - Open</b></p> <p>Cabinet is required to approve all key decisions with financial consequences of £500k or more. A procurement forward plan report for 2021-22 was approved by Cabinet on 2 March 2021. As stated in the said report, as service and transformation plans are developed it may be necessary to bring further approval requests to Cabinet.</p>	<p><b>Decision Maker Cabinet</b></p>	<p><b>Decision Date 7 Sep 2021</b></p>		<p>Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercial and Capital Strategy</p>	<p><i>Dawn Adams, Service Manager for Commercial and Procurement dawn.adams@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, Corporate Development - Section 151 Officer (Aidan Dunn)</i></p>
<p><b>Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP)</b></p> <p><b>Key Decision - Yes</b> <b>Public Access - Open</b></p> <p>To review and approve Dorset Council's outline Bus Service Improvement Plan, which is a statutory requirement for all Local Authorities as part of the government's National Bus Strategy 2021.</p>	<p><b>Decision Maker Cabinet</b></p>	<p><b>Decision Date 7 Sep 2021</b></p>		<p>Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment</p>	<p><i>Sue McGowan, Head of Travel Dorset s.m.mcgowan@dorsetcc.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, Place (John Sellgren)</i></p>
<p><b>October</b></p>					
<p><b>Tricuro Options Paper</b></p>	<p><b>Decision Maker Cabinet</b></p>	<p><b>Decision Date 5 Oct 2021</b></p>		<p>Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and</p>	<p><i>Jeanette Young, Interim Head of Commissioning &amp;</i></p>

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Other Committee(s) consulted and Date of meeting(s)	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact
<b>Key Decision - Yes</b> <b>Public Access - Fully exempt</b>				Health	<i>Improvement</i> <i>jeanette.young@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Vivienne Broadhurst</i>
<b>November</b>					

<b>Communities Strategy</b>  <b>Key Decision - No</b> <b>Public Access - Open</b>  The Communities Strategy will shape how Dorset Council engages and enables of communities.	<b>Decision Maker</b> <b>Cabinet</b>	<b>Decision Date</b> <b>7 Dec 2021</b>	People and Health Overview Committee 9 Nov 2021	Portfolio Holder for Customer and Community Services	<i>Laura Cornette, Corporate Policy &amp; Performance Officer</i> <i>Laura.cornette@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Chief Executive (Matt Prosser)</i>
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**Private/Exempt Items for Decision**

Each item in the plan above marked as 'private' will refer to one of the following paragraphs.

1. Information relating to any individual.
2. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
4. Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.
5. Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.
6. Information which reveals that the shadow council proposes:-
  - (a) to give under any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or
  - (b) to make an order or direction under any enactment.
7. Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.

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