



Homelessness Review

January 2020

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this review is to gather information in order to inform a new homelessness strategy for the borough, due to be published next year.
- 1.2 The duty on a local housing authority to carry out a review of homelessness in its area and formulate a homelessness strategy is contained in section 1 of the Homelessness Act 2002. The latest Homelessness Code of Guidance (published in Feb 2018) sets out the essential requirements of a review, which in summary comprises an assessment of:
 - current and projected future levels of homelessness
 - activities undertaken to prevent homelessness, secure accommodation for homeless households and provide support to the homeless and potentially homeless
 - the resources available for the above activities
- 1.3 Prior to April 2017 local authorities deemed 'excellent' under the old Comprehensive Performance Assessment regime (as Sutton was) were exempted from the requirement to publish stand-alone homelessness strategies. Accordingly homelessness was incorporated into the Council's wider housing strategy. This was last published in 2015 and is due for review. However, given the ongoing rise in the number of families in temporary accommodation, it was felt that the priority at this point in time should be to focus our strategic attention specifically on tackling homelessness.
- 1.4 The Code of Guidance requires homelessness reviews to cover the needs of all groups who are or may become homeless. It also makes clear that reviews should be carried out in close liaison with social services and providers of services that have early contact with those at risk of becoming homeless.
- 1.5 Following the requirements of the Code of Guidance, this review, in chapter 3, describes the current extent of homelessness in the borough alongside trends over the last five years. The following four chapters then focus in turn on: (i) prevention, (ii) accommodation provided to homeless households, (iii) provision of support, and (iv) the cost of homelessness and the resources applied to tackling the issue. To inform the homelessness strategy the final chapter attempts to project key trends and analyse gaps in service provision.
- 1.6 The review was published initially as a draft for consultation, with a number of questions for consultees to respond to set out at the end of the document. This updated version takes into account ideas and suggestions from the consultation feedback received.
- 1.7 Drawing from the outcome of the review, a draft homelessness strategy is due to be published for consultation by the end of December. This will then be finalised for committee approval and publication in March 2020.

2 Background and context

2.1 For decades homelessness has been the subject of a great deal of legislation, government guidance and national policy. In addition, a substantial body of case law has built up setting parameters for individual decisions on homelessness. By way of background to the review this chapter looks at both the legislative and national policy context surrounding homelessness. It then goes on to examine the policy context at the regional and local level. Finally, the chapter briefly examines some of the wider factors that influence homelessness.

Legislative background

2.2 There is a wide range of primary legislation covering homelessness and related housing activity; the essential provisions are summarised below.

Housing Act 1996

- Sets out, in Part VII, a local housing authority's duties to prevent homelessness and provide assistance to households actually homeless or threatened with homelessness. It covers eligibility criteria, how priority need is determined, the meaning of 'threatened with homelessness', intentionality and local connection. The 1996 Act includes the duty to provide 'interim' accommodation in certain circumstances (s188) and 'temporary accommodation' (s193) where a household is accepted as qualifying for the 'main duty'.
- Part VI of the Act governs the qualifying criteria that determine which households may be included within a local authority's housing register. It also sets criteria around the degree of priority to be given to households in allocating social housing.
- Parts VI and VII of the 1996 Act have since been substantially amended by the Homelessness Act 2002, the Localism Act 2011 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, as well as being augmented by regulation.

Homelessness Act 2002

- The Homelessness Act 2002 - and the subsequent secondary legislation *Homelessness (Priority Need for Accommodation) (England) Order 2002* - introduced the requirement on local authorities to regularly review the levels (and likely future levels) of homelessness in their areas, and to formulate a homelessness strategy. It strengthened the assistance to be made available to people by extending the definition of 'priority need' to include homeless 16 and 17 year olds, care leavers up to the age of 20 and those deemed vulnerable as a result of leaving either a care setting, the armed forces or prison as well as those fleeing domestic violence

Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2003

- Deemed bed and breakfast (B&B) accommodation unsuitable for families with children or a household containing a pregnant woman unless there is no alternative, and requires that no such households should be kept in B&B for longer than six weeks. The Government has also since deemed B&B accommodation unsuitable for 16 and 17 year olds.

Equality Act 2010/Human Rights Act 1998

- Requires that housing authority policies and decisions do not amount to unlawful conduct and that the public sector equality duty is complied with in relation to homelessness administration. In exercising their functions authorities must have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between persons of different protected characteristics.
- Housing authorities are also expected to consider the human rights implications of their actions in the exercise of their powers or risk having decisions overturned by the courts.

Localism Act 2011

- The Localism Act amended the Housing Act 1996 by giving local authorities the power to end the main housing duty by arranging an offer of suitable accommodation in the private rented sector.
- The Secretary of State was given the power to issue regulations to specify details regarding the homelessness provisions, and has done so to prescribe:
 - additional categories of people in priority need
 - persons from abroad who are eligible for assistance
 - suitability of accommodation criteria.

Welfare Reform Act 2012

- The provisions of this act, which have had significant implications for housing and homelessness, include:
 - introduction of Universal Credit to provide a single streamlined benefit paid to claimants directly including for housing costs;
 - Local Housing Allowance (LHA) reductions including total LHA caps and the limiting of LHA to the 30th percentile of market rents;
 - the Benefit Cap, limiting maximum benefits that a household can receive, with benefit removed from housing benefit payment or the housing element of Universal Credit;
 - removal of the Spare Room Subsidy (popularly known as the 'Bedroom Tax') reducing housing benefit entitlement to social housing tenants considered to be under occupying their homes;
 - the Single Accommodation Rate limit applied to people under the age of 35 regardless of the size of the property being rented.

Health and Social Care Act 2012

- Confers a legal duty on local authorities to take steps to improve the health of their populations, including those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Authorities are expected to coordinate homelessness strategies with their health and wellbeing strategies and that their reviews of homelessness are informed by their (health-related) Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

Children Acts 1989, 2004 and 2014

- Confer on local authority social services an ongoing general duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of 'children in need' (including those of 16/17 year olds and their families) in their area, which can include providing accommodation.
- Requires social services authorities to involve families and children in discussions and decisions relating to their care and education; and provide impartial advice, support and mediation services. Councils must inform young people and parent carers of the support they are entitled to.

Care Act 2014

- The Care Act sets out in one place, local authorities' duties in relation to assessing people's needs and their eligibility for publicly funded care and support. Prior to the implementation of the Act, there was a duty to provide accommodation under s21, National Assistance Act 1948 for a person aged 18 or over who needed "care and attention" because of illness, disability, old age or another reason, as long as the care and attention was not "otherwise available". The Care Act replaced the specific statutory duty to provide accommodation with a general duty to "meet the needs" of a person who needs care and support.

Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016

- This act conferred reporting responsibilities on local authorities on their support for troubled families, employment and apprenticeships and children living in low income households. It reduced the Benefit Cap limits, from £26,000 to just £23,000 p.a. for London households (£20,000 for households elsewhere in the country). At the same time it froze a number of welfare benefits, including LHA rates, and reduced social rents by 1% p.a. for four years.

Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

- This act introduced some significant changes to homelessness legislation, extending the duties of local housing authorities. The key measures are:
 - an extension of the period where a household can be deemed to be threatened with homelessness from 28 to 56 days;
 - a new duty to prevent homelessness for all eligible applicants threatened with homelessness, regardless of priority need;
 - a requirement to carry out an assessment and agree a "personalised housing plan" for all presenting households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness regardless of priority need;
 - duties to take reasonable steps to prevent homelessness, and relieve homelessness where it has occurred, again regardless of priority need;
 - allows for care leavers to have a local connection with either the area of the responsible authority or where they had lived when in care if different;
 - a 'duty to refer' requiring public services to notify a local housing authority if they come into contact with someone they think may be homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

Domestic Abuse Bill

- The Domestic Abuse Bill, currently going through Parliament, aims to give local councils greater powers to protect and support survivors. In relation to housing, this includes a requirement on the local housing authority to offer a 'lifetime' tenancy to a victim of domestic abuse, thus affording greater security and reducing the likelihood of future homelessness.

Other sources of legislative provision

- 2.3 Other legislative provisions in relation to homelessness are found in regulations and orders, known as statutory instruments, an example being the aforementioned *Homelessness (Priority Need for Accommodation) (England) Order 2002*. Also, judgments of the courts may form a precedent (binding on lower courts) in terms of how a legislative provision is to be interpreted. This is known as 'case law' and there have been many instances over the years of often-quoted judgements that authorities need to take into account in their decision making.

National and regional policy context

- 2.4 Although it produced a rough sleeping strategy in 2018 (see below), the Government has no published strategy on tackling homelessness more widely. The most recent national housing strategy, *Laying the Foundations*, was published back in 2011 under the Coalition Government, and had no specific chapter or section on tackling homelessness. Its essential focus was on the pressing need to produce more homes, including affordable housing, which may indirectly help to prevent or at least reduce the increase in homelessness.
- 2.5 The Government's 2017 White Paper - *Fixing our broken housing market* - continued the emphasis on new supply and only at the very end of the document is there a brief mention of homelessness. This includes the Government's stated support for the Private Member's Bill that eventually became the Homelessness Reduction Act. It also referred to a £20m "Homelessness Prevention Trailblazer Fund" to be made available to support innovative new approaches to prevention.

Homelessness Code of Guidance

- 2.6 The *Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities* provides statutory guidance on how to interpret and apply homelessness legislation, and contains details of good practice that local authorities should adopt. The current (2018) guidance reiterates the continuing duty on housing authorities to undertake and publish homelessness reviews and strategies. It also updates on the new Homelessness Reduction Act duties including outlining the circumstances under which the local authority can bring the prevention or relief duty to an end.

Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018

- 2.7 In July 2018 the Government launched a new national strategy to tackle the increasing numbers of people sleeping rough. This strategy requires local housing authorities to adopt a clear focus in tackling rough sleeping in order to support the Government's

stated aim of ending rough sleeping by 2027, including drafting strategic actions in their own homelessness strategies to support the initiative locally.

No Second Night Out Policy

- 2.8 In 2011 the Coalition Government adopted the idea of 'No Second Night Out', this meant having the right services in place to:
- identify new rough sleepers and get them off the streets immediately
 - engage the public who can inform services if they see any rough sleepers
 - take rough sleepers to a safe place and assess them for further help
 - enable rough sleepers to access emergency accommodation
 - ensure rough sleepers can get housing and support near their family and friends.
- 2.9 The concept was for teams of outreach workers to bring rough sleepers to assessment hubs where they would be assisted to exit rough sleeping including through reconnection with their home areas. No Second Night Out began as a pilot project which operated across 10 central London boroughs. From 1st June 2012 it was rolled out to all boroughs and subsequently nationally. St Mungos won a £5m contract to run the scheme in London from June 2013.

National Homelessness Advice Service

- 2.10 The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) funds the National Homelessness Advice Service (NHAS) which provides a range of free specialist services to local housing authorities, voluntary sector advice agencies and public authorities with a duty to refer. Since April 2017, NHAS has provided specific training and roadshows that focus on new duties under the Homelessness Reduction Act. Alongside this, NHAS also offers free information resources and provides an advice line, which provides homelessness, debt and welfare benefit advice for front line staff. The advice line is accessible via telephone, email and online webchat.

No Nights Sleeping Rough Taskforce

- 2.11 The Mayor of London's No Nights Sleeping Rough task force brings together key partners to tackle rough sleeping in the capital in order to:
- identify interventions that will contribute to assist rough sleepers
 - where possible, implement interventions identified and monitor how effective they are in tackling rough sleeping.

London Housing Strategy

- 2.12 The London Housing Strategy, published in May 2018, sets out the Mayor's plan to tackle London's housing crisis and to provide affordable housing to its residents. The Mayor wants to develop new homes and to help people who have no home and people who are sleeping on the streets. The strategy cites that about one in every 50 people in London have no home and about 8,000 people are sleeping on the streets. Through the London Housing Strategy the Mayor is seeking to tackle the causes of homelessness and to help homeless people into accommodation.

- 2.13 To achieve his aims the Mayor is intending to press the Government for more funding for boroughs to deliver on their Homelessness Reduction Act duties, lobby for the reform of private renting and the reversal of welfare cuts and increase affordable housing provision. He is also seeking to co-ordinate procurement of accommodation for the homeless and build a fairer funding regime.

Housing First Pilots

- 2.14 The 'Housing First' approach to tackling rough sleeping, which originated in the USA, is simply one where rather than wait until a homeless person has become 'tenancy-ready', which can take a long time for very vulnerable individuals, accommodation is provided at the outset alongside appropriate support. In the UK a number of housing first pilots have been run over a few years - notably in Liverpool, Greater Manchester and the West Midlands - and have proved to be highly successful.
- 2.15 Housing First was also recently piloted in Sutton, through a joint scheme run with LB Merton and RB Kingston. Last year the Council opened its own a small scheme, providing accommodation for four rough sleepers in Sutton, and St Mungos who are now a commissioned support provider for a number of client groups in the borough, is also developing a similar Housing First project.

Capital Letters

- 2.16 Capital Letters is a collaboration between London boroughs working together with the aim of improving housing options for homeless households. Capital Letters has been established as a not-for-profit organisation that will procure accommodation on behalf of participating boroughs. Currently there are 13 boroughs participating, with Tower Hamlets the lead authority.
- 2.17 The initiative should reduce competition between councils and produce better outcomes for London's homeless households. Through this joint working, boroughs will become more efficient in securing accommodation within London and will be able to place households closer to home. MHCLG is allocating £38m to support the initiative over a three-year period.
- 2.18 The launch of Capital Letters has been coordinated by the umbrella body London Councils and the London Housing Directors' Group. Capital Letters is currently based at London Councils' offices in Southwark Street. In June 2019 Capital Letters secured its first homes in Tower Hamlets.

PLACE initiative

- 2.19 PLACE (the Pan-London Accommodation Collaborative Enterprise) is a new approach to tackling homelessness through acquiring modular temporary accommodation. Through PLACE, participating London boroughs will use modular housing units to increase the supply of high-quality, temporary accommodation options for people needing a home. The scheme's modular homes will be of high quality, will meet the London Plan's space standards and can be moved from one site to another as required. PLACE is being supported by the GLA and London Councils and is being led by Tower Hamlets BC.

The Cost of Homelessness in London

- 2.20 A report commissioned by London Councils in 2019 attempted to estimate the likely future spend on homelessness by London boroughs. It predicted that expenditure in the capital will increase to over £1bn p.a. by 2021/22 if current trends continue, creating a considerable extra burden for authorities' budgets.

Local Policy Context

Corporate Plan

- 2.21 The Council's corporate plan, *Ambitious for Sutton*, https://www.sutton.gov.uk/info/200564/opportunity_sutton/1784/ambitious_for_sutton has as its housing focus the regeneration of a number of town centre estates, which will provide many additional homes and new affordable housing, including new council-owned homes as well as those to be produced by an arms length development vehicle. It also specifically seeks to ensure the effective implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act.

Housing strategy

- 2.22 The Council's housing strategy https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B19JvL_vJMV1RZGVJZWpicl8tNWc/view contains a number of key strategic aims, one of which is to "provide housing options advice and address homelessness". Under this broad aim are a number of more specific objectives covering housing advice, homelessness prevention, accessing accommodation in the private sector for homeless households, providing suitable temporary accommodation and helping residents who face difficulties as a result of changes to benefits.

Temporary accommodation strategy

- 2.23 In 2015 the Council produced a strategy for addressing the issues around temporary accommodation. Its main aims were to reduce the time spent by households in expensive nightly-paid accommodation, address the shortfall in the availability of other forms of temporary housing and generally improve the condition of the accommodation used. It was produced at a time when relatively low levels of temporary accommodation were showing signs of an upward trend, with the Council facing increasing costs as a consequence. It looked, in particular, into the options of developing an in-house private leasing scheme, developing off-site constructed modular homes and reviewing policy around the size of units offered to households.

Supported housing strategy

- 2.24 In 2017 the Council produced a new commissioning strategy for housing support, with the aim of ensuring that practical support and guidance was provided to vulnerable adults in order to help them sustain or achieve independent living. A specific section on homelessness presented a range of data on the subject, at both national and local levels, analysed trends and attempted to assess the need for homelessness support into the future.
- 2.25 The strategy went on to describe current models of support including floating support and the operation of a single homelessness pathway. It also captured some user

views on the services provided before outlining gaps in provision and some opportunities to be explored. This is discussed further in chapters 6 and 8.

Health and wellbeing strategy

- 2.26 The Council and the Sutton Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) produced a joint strategy on health and wellbeing in 2015.
<https://moderngov.sutton.gov.uk/documents/s46667/Sutton%20Joint%20Health%20and%20Wellbeing%20Strategy%20-%20Appendix%20A.pdf> It's principal aim was to improve health and reduce health inequalities within the borough. One of its areas for action is to create warmer and safer homes. Although not directly focused on tackling homelessness, improving housing conditions and promoting independent living can often contribute to the wider prevention agenda.

Draft joint mental health and wellbeing strategy

- 2.27 This strategy seeks to ensure that there is a range of supported housing options for people with mental health issues alongside opportunities for 'step-down' into independent accommodation, with an improved pathway to promote recovery and thus reduce the risk of future homelessness. It also aims to improve social networks for people with mental health issues and tackle wider concerns around employment, physical health and housing.

Sutton Health and Care Plan

- 2.28 The Sutton Health and Care Plan has a number of links to housing and homelessness, in particular its priority given to social prescribing, which forms part of the Plan's 'Age Well' theme. Social prescribing is a way of linking people into their GP practice, which can then direct them to non-medical sources of help and advice, which can have particular benefits for the homeless.

Factors influencing homelessness/rough sleeping

- 2.29 Research suggests the causation of homelessness is complex and that there is no one single event that triggers it or is necessary for it to occur. Factors relating to an individual, their relationships, housing and employment all play a part. Housing market trends and policies have a more direct impact on homelessness, whereas economic and labour market factors have a less direct impact, are subject to delay, and can be mitigated by welfare policies. That said, a report by the National Audit Office in 2017 identified the loss of private sector assured shorthold tenancies as the single biggest driver of statutory homelessness in England.
- 2.30 Individual factors including vulnerability, mental and physical ill health, support needs, addiction and substance misuse can all play a part in homelessness, which can also be exacerbated by poverty and disadvantage. Family and other relationships, which help support people and prevent homelessness, can be strained by economic circumstances and result in relationship breakdown and loss of accommodation. There is also the issue of domestic violence, families being hostile to their LGBT members as well as the additional vulnerability of people who are care leavers. Notwithstanding this complexity some of the key factors are briefly summarised below.

Welfare reform

- 2.31 The welfare reforms with the most significant implications for housing and homelessness were introduced by the Welfare Reform Act 2012. As listed above, these include the introduction of Universal Credit, reductions in LHA rates, LHA caps and the limiting of LHA to the 30th percentile of market rents.
- 2.32 The Benefit Cap, also introduced by the 2012 Act, limited the maximum benefits that a household can receive, with the benefit removed from housing benefit payment or the housing element of Universal Credit. A further measure was the Spare Room Subsidy or 'Bedroom Tax' reducing housing benefit entitlement to social housing tenants considered to be under occupying their homes. Also, for younger people, the Single Accommodation Rate limit was applied to those under the age of 35 regardless of the size of the property being rented, greatly limiting the range of properties that could be afforded by those on low incomes.

Health

- 2.33 The links between homelessness and health, both mental and physical, are complex, as many studies have shown. Mental health issues can be both a cause or a consequence of homelessness. Homelessness also has a negative impact on children who can often experience stress and anxiety leading to depression and behavioural issues which can have a lasting effect on their education.
- 2.34 Surveys carried out by Shelter have shown that 60% of people sleeping rough may have had a mental health problem, and 30% of rough sleepers have been diagnosed with psychotic illness after sleeping rough for more than a year. Also, people with substance misuse problems can sometimes lose their homes and find difficulty with sustaining their tenancies and lead to family disputes or time spent in prison. The links between health and homelessness are explored in more detail in Sutton's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, which can be found at: https://data.sutton.gov.uk/sutton_jsna/
- 2.35 The NHS Long Term Plan, published January 2019, outlines how an additional £20bn is to be spent, with a focus on prevention and encouraging coordinated working across the public sector, breaking down traditional care institutional barriers. It picks up on good practice case studies focused on supporting the health needs of the homeless and those in temporary accommodation and the potential for creating teams within hospitals to help support homeless people.

Unemployment

- 2.36 Homelessness can arise due to the loss of employment, insecure employment or insufficient income from employment or benefits to meet housing related costs. Families who are on lower incomes renting in the private sector can be at risk of landlords seeking to increase their rental income at the end of their tenancy. The threat and anxiety of becoming homeless may affect existing employment.

Wider socio-economic factors

- 2.37 Family conflict or relationship breakdown can lead to homelessness when people have to leave their homes. People leaving institutions can lack support networks from families or communities who may have helped them to find accommodation. It has

been found that care leavers often find it difficult to find somewhere to live as well as securing the necessary support to live independently. Almost half of people sleeping rough have either been in prison or in a young offenders institute. People leaving prison may not often have anywhere to live and find it difficult to find employment which in turn can make it difficult to pay for accommodation.

3. Current extent of homelessness

- 3.1 This chapter begins with a brief overview of homelessness at a national and regional level using the latest data available. It then goes on to look in detail at homelessness in all its manifestations at the local or borough level.

Homelessness at the national and regional level

Homelessness acceptances

- 3.2 Annual homelessness acceptances in England reached a high of 135,420 during 2003/04. The number reduced to just over 40,000 by 2009/10 but has since been increasing, reaching 109,480 in 2017/18. The number fell to just 29,530 in 2018/19 with the introduction of the initial homelessness duties under the Homelessness Reduction Act which created a break in the time series, with assistance prior to being assessed for a main duty being now recorded. Interestingly, the sharp national reduction hasn't been reflected locally, which may be due to a number of reasons including delays in data processing and collection and differences in how legacy cases are treated by other local authorities.
- 3.3 Since 2003/04 there has also been a gradual increase in the proportion of accepted households with dependent children, reaching 62% in 2018/19. Latest national figures show vulnerable households accounting for around 33% of all acceptances of which mental health issues was the most prevalent reason for vulnerability, and the proportion has been gradually increasing over the last 20 years.
- 3.4 In London, homelessness acceptances dropped from a high of 37,550 in 1992 to 9,460 in 2009/10. Following the national trend, the number has since risen gradually, reaching 15,470 in 2017/18, this accounting for 27% of the England total. Acceptances in Sutton accounted for 1.5% of the 2017/18 London total.

Prevention and relief of homelessness

- 3.5 Following the coming into force of the Homelessness Reduction Act in April 2018, the MHCLG has reported that during 2018/19 a prevention duty was brought to an end for 100,840 households in England. Of these, 19,790 (20% approx) secured accommodation for six months or more: 11,440 through a move to alternative accommodation; the remainder staying in their existing home.
- 3.6 Over the same period the relief duty was brought to an end for 93,220 households, of which 40,010 (43%) secured accommodation for a period of six months or more. Of those securing accommodation 45% were provided with a social tenancy while 25% rented a home in the private rented sector. Of the households where accommodation was secured only 25% contained children, while 70% were single adults.

Households in temporary accommodation

- 3.7 Matching the trend in acceptances, the number of households in all forms of temporary accommodation in England rose to over 101,000 in 2005. The number then dropped to around 48,000 in 2010 but has since increased to 84,740 at the end of 2018/19.
- 3.8 Households accommodated in B&B reached a national high of almost 14,000 back in 2002. This figure dropped to below 2,000 by 2009 but has since risen to over 7,000 as

at end March 2019. The numbers of households living in self-contained nightly-paid units has been gradually increasing since 2002, from around 4,000 back then to over 22,000 in 2019. There has also been an increase in households placed out of their accepting borough, the England total standing at 22,380 as at end March 2019.

- 3.9 In London the number of households in temporary accommodation reached 63,800 in 2005, accounting for 63% of the national total. This fell to below 36,000 by 2011 but then rose again to 56,280 by the end of 2018/19. Sutton's equivalent figure at that point in time was 637, representing 1.1% of the London total.

Rough Sleeping

- 3.10 Since 2010 there have been sharp increases in incidents of rough sleeping in London and the South East of England. There was a small decrease of 2% from 2017 to 2018 but since 2010 rough sleeping estimates show an increase of 165%. The latest returns showed that 8,855 people were seen sleeping rough in the capital during 2018/19, of which, 5529 were seen for the first time. The vast majority of rough sleeping was found in the inner boroughs.

Homelessness at the local level

- 3.11 In examining the extent of homelessness in Sutton, alongside how the problem is dealt with, there is a need to distinguish between the situation prior to the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act in April 2018 and the period since. The legislative changes brought about by the Act mean that it is not always easy or possible to compare figures drawn from the pre and post April 2018 periods due to the significant changes in how homelessness activity is assessed, in particular resulting from the new prevention and relief duties.
- 3.12 Prior to April 2018 local authorities reported on homelessness to central government through a standard form known as P1E, which had been used consistently for many years. A new web-based form of submission - H-CLIC - was introduced from April 2018 to pick up on the new requirements of the Homelessness Reduction Act.

Homelessness applications and decisions

- 3.13 The following table sets out the numbers of households applying as homeless and the outcome of the decisions taken over the last five years, with figures taken from the Council's P1E and H-CLIC returns to government. In terms of the process that households go through, set out at Appendix A is a simplified but typical example of the various stages in the case of a household that loses its private sector tenancy.

Table 3.1: Homelessness applications and decision outcomes

Decision outcome	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Accepted for main duty*	277	309	316	231	243
Not eligible**	16	1	9	3	13
Eligible but not homeless	57	43	49	47	86
Eligible, in priority need but intentionally homeless	35	38	28	52	20
Eligible, unintentionally homeless but not in priority need	54	39	45	93	80
Eligible, unintentionally homeless, in priority need but refused to cooperate***					3
Eligible, unintentionally homeless, in priority need but no local connection***					1
Lost contact prior to assessment***					89
Withdrew prior to assessment***					23
Total applications	439	430	447	426	558

*Where the household is eligible, is homeless unintentionally, in priority need and has a local connection

**Households may be ineligible for assistance if, for example, they are a person from abroad who is ineligible for housing assistance under Part VII, Housing Act 1996

***Categories introduced by the Homelessness Reduction Act

- 3.14 As the table below shows, the overall number of applications was broadly the same each year up until 2018/19 when it rose dramatically, this being due to the changes brought about by the Homelessness Reduction Act prior to which the duty was much more limited. The number of households accepted, on the other hand, rose to a peak in 2016/17 but subsequently fell dramatically the following year.
- 3.15 The subsequent table illustrates that consistently the large majority of accepted households are from the 25-64 age group, albeit that there a significant number of young adults accepted. However, very few people of retirement age are ever accepted as homeless.

Table 3.2: Accepted households by age group

Age group	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
16 - 24 years	74	76	93	68	55
25 - 64 years	194	227	220	162	184
65 + years	9	6	3	1	4
All groups	277	309	316	231	243

3.16 The table below confirms that the proportion of accepted households from BME groups, which constitute around 21% of the borough's population, are overrepresented amongst accepted households and that this situation has remained the same over the years, albeit the degree of overrepresentation has fluctuated. The subsequent table shows that over time a notably greater proportion of applications from BME households are accepted compared to their White counterparts.

Table 3.3: Accepted households by ethnicity

Ethnicity	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
White	176	189	219	145	144
Black	42	45	37	40	44
Asian	26	42	31	34	31
Mixed	16	17	13	7	13
Other	4	11	8	4	2
Not stated	13	5	8	1	9
All groups	277	309	316	231	243
Proportion of White*	66.7%	62.2%	71.1%	63.0%	61.5%
Proportion of BME**	33.3%	37.8%	28.9%	27.0%	38.5%

*Excludes not stated

**Excludes not stated; includes all groups other than White

Table 3.4: Proportion of homelessness applications accepted by ethnicity

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Proportion of White applications accepted	63.5%	67.5%	72.4%	51.8%	41.1%
Proportion of BME applications accepted	68.4%	78.4%	70.5%	54.1%	52.1%
Proportion of All applications accepted	63.1%	71.9%	70.1%	54.2%	43.6%

NB: the figures for the White and BME groups were calculated prior to the finalisation of the P1E submission whereas the figures for All groups were taken from the published P1E submission

- 3.17 From the following table it can be seen that by far the largest household type accepted as homeless are female lone parents, comprising some 62% of the total in 2018/19. Households with children comprised 81% of all those accepted in 2018/19.

Table 3.5: Accepted households by composition

Household composition	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Couple with children	69	90	81	62	38
Female lone parent	140	158	151	118	151
Male lone parent	14	12	8	12	9
Single female	25	22	28	12	13
Single male	23	18	41	21	26
Other	6	9	7	6	6
All types	277	309	316	231	243

- 3.18 In terms of reason for being in priority need, the table below clearly show that having dependent children is by far the largest category, accounting for around 73% of accepted households in 2018/19. Single people constitute just 16% of accepted households.

Table 3.6: Accepted household by priority need category

PN Category	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19*
Dependent children	196	238	231	181	177
Pregnant	31	29	12	15	18
16-17 year old	0	0	0	0	2
Care leaver	0	0	9	3	2
Old age	7	5	2	1	1
Physical disability	16	8	12	15	21
Mental illness/disability	21	22	37	15	16
Vulnerable from being in care	0	1	2	0	1
Fleeing (incl from domestic violence)	4	4	7	0	2
Emergency (fire etc)	2	2	3	0	1
Other	0	0	1	1	2
All categories	277	309	316	231	243

* The priority need classification differs slightly between the P1E and H-CLIC returns

- 3.19 In terms of the reasons for being or becoming homeless, the next table shows that the two most significant factors currently are (i) family or friends no longer wishing or able to accommodate the household and (ii) loss of a private sector assured shorthold tenancy (AST). Relationship breakdown (either involving violence or not) also represents a significant proportion of accepted households. It is not always easy to spot clear trends but there was a notable recent drop in the numbers of households losing an AST, from a high of 128 in 2016/17. It is difficult to be sure of the reason for this, though it may be due to an increase in intervention work around that time coinciding with the change over to Universal Credit.

Table 3.7: Accepted households by reason for homelessness

Reason for homelessness	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Family / friends no longer willing to accommodate	93	102	91	96	89
Loss of private sector AST	75	113	128	64	69
Other tenancy loss	10	15	9	9	18
Violent relationship breakdown / other violence	43	40	43	25	31
Non-violent relationship breakdown	11	9	8	9	12
Harassment	3	4	4	0	0
Mortgage arrears	3	4	0	2	0
Rent arrears	15	9	8	8	0
Left institution / care	10	5	12	7	3
Other	14	8	13	11	21
All reasons	277	309	316	231	243

NB: The reasons for homelessness classification differs slightly between the P1E and HCLIC returns

3.20 The following table shows the size of property required by households that are accepted as homeless. As can be seen, by far the largest requirement is for two bedroomed homes, comprising 70% of all households accepted in 2018/19.

Table 3.8: Accepted households by size of property required

Property size required	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Bedsit / 1 bed	25	28	29	21	22
2 bed	194	216	221	161	170
3 bed	51	57	58	43	45
4+ beds	7	8	8	6	6
Total	277	309	316	231	243

3.21 In terms of the immediate outcome for a household once accepted as homeless (see table below), the vast majority are placed in emergency accommodation, with very few made an offer of social housing accommodation under Part VI, Housing Act 1996 or accepting an offer of a private let.

Table 3.9: Immediate outcomes of accepted households

Immediate outcome	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Placed in emergency accommodation	270	306	317	231	224
Remains in current accommodation	4	2	0	0	0
Accepts offer of PRS AST*	1	0	0	0	7
Refuses offer of PRS AST*	0	0	0	0	1
Accepts Part VI** offer	6	0	0	0	10
Makes own arrangements / makes no further contact	1	2	0	0	1
All outcomes***	282	310	317	231	243

*Private rented sector assured shorthold tenancy

**Part VI, Housing Act 1996

***Totals include all accepted households plus those owed the 're-application duty' under s195a Housing Act 1996

3.22 The next table clearly shows that the large majority of accepted households in Sutton are from the UK, accounting for over 80% of the total last year, with the number of households from the European Economic Area (EEA) being half the number of non-EEA households.

Table 3.10: Homelessness acceptances by nationality

Nationality	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
UK (habitually resident)	225	254	269	204	197
Other EEA	32	26	19	6	16
Non EEA	20	29	28	21	30
Total	277	309	316	231	243

3.23 As can be seen from the following table, only very few households are ever referred to another local authority or accepted from another authority referring them to Sutton.

Table 3.11: Local connection and acceptances referrals

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/19	2018/19
Referrals to another LA	0	0	1	0	0
Referrals from another LA	1	0	1	0	3
Accepted with no local connection anywhere	0	2	3	2	0

NB: All figures refer to accepted households. The figures for 2018/19 cannot be directly compared to previous years as under the Homelessness Reduction Act referrals are made at relief rather than acceptance stage.

- 3.24 The following table shows the number of prevention and relief cases opened during 2018/19, with a household type breakdown by families and singles or adult only households. This shows that there has been a general increase in both new prevention and relief cases being opened across the year. In the case of preventions, families make up almost 70% of all cases, whereas relief cases are split roughly 50/50 between families and singles/adult only households.

Table 3.12: New homelessness prevention and relief cases opened during 2018/19

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Prevention cases					
Total no. cases	89	64	75	97	325
of which families	65	43	51	65	224
of which singles	24	21	22	32	99
Relief cases					
Total no. cases	110	141	134	158	543
of which families	53	77	67	80	277
of which singles	57	64	67	78	266

- 3.25 During 2018/19, of the applications where a prevention/relief duty was owed a 'not eligible' decision was made in 12 cases and a 'not homeless' decision made in 61 cases.
- 3.26 In some cases households will request a review of the homelessness decision. The number of requests made over the last two years, broken down by the nature of the decision are shown in the following table. The subsequent table shows the outcomes in terms of whether upheld/not upheld etc. As can be seen, the numbers of reviews undertaken prior to and after the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act are broadly the same. Notably the proportion of reviews where the original decision is upheld (approx 80%) have remained much the same.

Table 3.13: Homelessness decision reviews

Original decision	2017/18	2018/19
Intentionally homeless	18	13
Not homeless	2	5
Not in priority need	24	24
No local connection	0	1
Duty discharged	4	3
Permanent residence deemed suitable	1	0
Temporary accommodation deemed suitable	2	9
All	51	55

Table 3.14: Homelessness review outcomes

Outcome of review	2017/18	2018/19
Upheld	41	44
Overturned	1	6
Withdrawn	7	3
New decision	2	1
In progress	0	1
All	51	55

Youth homelessness

- 3.27 Across the country thousands of young people between the ages of 16 and 25 are known to sleep rough every night or are sleeping on sofas, floors, night buses or with strangers; the latter are often referred to as 'hidden homeless'. There are many reasons why young people become homeless. This can often be through relationship breakdown with parents resulting in the young people leaving home with nowhere to stay. Also, more than a third of homeless young people have mental health issues, such as depression and anxiety along with substance misuse.
- 3.28 Information held within the Council's housing register showed that as at November 2019 there were 237 applicants listed as living with family or friends, 19 'sofa surfing' and a further 18 with no fixed abode, giving 274 in total, most of whom will be young people.

3.29 Exclusion from school and not being in education can make it more difficult for young people to access help with home or health issues, and missing out on education can make it difficult for them to find work, further increasing the likelihood of them ending up homeless. Also, young people are often affected by gang-related problems, and sometimes it may become too dangerous for them to stay in their local areas which in-turn can make them homeless.

Care leavers

3.30 Young people leaving care face particular challenges with living independently at a young age, and traumas they faced in their early lives make care leavers more vulnerable than others within the community. Housing remains a key challenge for many care leavers nationally, with Barnardos reporting that young people who go straight from care to independence, without a support package, often experience difficulty and are at greater risk of eviction. Even with support, young people leaving care can find it difficult to manage their bills and to progress well in independent accommodation.

3.31 The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2001 placed a new duty on local authorities to ensure that care leavers are provided with suitable accommodation, which does not include temporary accommodation. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 extended the period of corporate parenting responsibility on local authorities, to all care leavers up to age 25 if they want this support. Corporate parenting responsibilities and principles apply to the whole of the local authority and are particularly important for local authority departments whose services have a significant impact on care leavers' outcomes, such as housing services.

3.32 Since 2018 the housing situation for care leavers in Sutton has become more challenging. This is due to a number of factors, including an increase in the number of young people being supported by the Council's Leaving Care Team, an increase in the number of looked after children reaching 16, an increase in the number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children for whom the local authority has become responsible and an increase in the number of young people remaining supported by the team beyond their 21st birthday. Furthermore, the introduction of Universal Credit has significantly impacted on the ability of care leavers to budget well.

Homelessness acceptances of young people

3.33 The following table summarises the young people, between the ages of 16 and 25, who have approached Sutton Council in recent years and been accepted as homeless. After a gradual drop in the number of approaches over the years to 2017 there was a significant spike in the number during 2018/19, reflecting the wider duties introduced by the Homelessness Reduction Act. Interestingly, the number of acceptances fell significantly in 2018/19 when compared to the last three calendar years reflecting the preventative work undertaken in the borough.

Table 3.15: Young person homelessness approaches and acceptances

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018/19
Approached the Council as homeless	Not available	238	161	140	247
Accepted as homeless	66	84	81	84	53

NB: Figures up to 2017 are for calendar years. From April 2018 the Homelessness Reduction Act came into force and figures are for the financial year

Rough sleeping

- 3.34 Historically the extent of rough sleeping in Sutton has been very low compared to many other London boroughs. To assess the extent of rough sleeping, local housing authorities are required to undertake a Rough Sleepers Count annually, on a government-nominated night of the year. In November 2018 Sutton reported a figure of five for 2018; for the previous year the figure was just three. These small number may not, however, reflect the true scale of rough sleeping locally.
- 3.35 Despite the relatively small scale of the problem, the Council chairs a multi-agency rough sleepers group to discuss and share information and agree plans of action for each identified individual in an effort to end their rough sleeping. The group includes representatives from the police, Salvation Army, StreetLink, Sutton Community Works, Mental Health Services, Drug Services, Adult Social Care, the DWP, CAB, SPEAR and St Mungo's.
- 3.36 The group seeks to identify the person's 'home' borough so they can be supported to return where possible. Support is also offered to help rough sleepers access emergency accommodation, though some choose not to take up the options offered and some simply do not engage well with services or follow the advice given to end their homelessness.
- 3.37 StreetLink operates across the capital and aims to 'verify' a rough sleeper through outreach services within 72 hours of an alert. Once verified, the individual will be recorded on CHAIN, which is a multi agency database recording information about the wider street population in London. For new rough sleepers a space in the No Second Night Out Hub, run by St.Mungos, may be offered whilst the charity continues to work with them to resolve their rough sleeping.
- 3.38 The local rough sleeper outreach service in Sutton is provided by SPEAR (Single Persons Emergency Accommodation in Richmond), which was commissioned by the Council. SPEAR, which works across a number of authority areas, also runs a weekly advice drop in at the Civic Offices every Wednesday afternoon for those who are rough sleeping or at risk of doing so and provides advice and support to help end their rough sleeping.
- 3.39 Although there are no direct access hostels in the borough, the Council operates a Single Homeless Pathway, which provides accommodation with support for single people. As part of this pathway, there is an assessment centre, which is a six-bed

space shared house. Rough sleepers with a Sutton connection are given priority for any vacancies. Residents stay for up to 13 weeks so their needs can be assessed, and a support plan drawn up in conjunction with the service user, with an appropriate move on plan. Move-on can be a move further down the Pathway, into other supported housing, alternative supported housing with another provider better able to meet the assessed needs of the service user, or assistance and support to the resident to secure accommodation in the private sector.

- 3.40 SPEAR also manages a number of SW London sub regional shared houses for male rough sleepers; these are situated in Merton, Kingston, Wandsworth and Richmond, and one has recently opened in Sutton. There is also a project for rough-sleeping females in Kingston. Sutton, along with the other SW region boroughs, has referral rights to these projects.
- 3.41 As well as commissioned services, there are various local voluntary organisations that support rough sleepers, including Sutton Community Works and the Salvation Army. The former is a Christian charity comprising 15 churches who work together for the benefit of the community. Their initiatives include:
- Sutton Street Pastors, who will identify rough sleepers on their late night patrols, alerting, and signposting to appropriate agencies, and providing food and sleeping bags where appropriate,
 - Sutton Foodbank, providing emergency food to clients, including individuals sleeping rough,
 - a winter night shelter across three different locations offering accommodation and food for up to 10 rough sleepers each night.
- 3.42 The Sutton Salvation Army supports all rough sleepers in the borough and will give advice and offer signposting to appropriate services. They also provide hot snacks and drinks, internet access and emergency phone calls. As well as this, they host a foodbank each week and have basic shower facilities that rough sleepers can use.
- 3.43 In 2015 Sutton Night Watch began operating a soup kitchen in the borough. Sutton Night Watch supports a variety of households, in addition to those that may be rough sleeping.
- 3.44 As well as the various organisations providing services, there is the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) that comes into force when the overnight temperature dips below zero degrees for three consecutive nights. People at risk of rough sleeping during this time are offered emergency bed and breakfast accommodation until the temperature rises above zero. During the cold weather in January/February 2019, 27 households were placed into emergency accommodation through the SWEP provisions, for an average of seven days, some of whom were not previously known to the service, or were not rough sleeping prior to placement.
- 3.45 Sutton has also been successful in securing funding from the Government's Cold Winter Fund this year. The additional resources are being used to open a winter night shelter to operate for 7 - 8 weeks from the end of December. The money will also be used to fund a drug and alcohol outreach worker from Inspire to support rough sleepers with addictions.

3.46 The table below shows the activity that has taken place over the last four calendar years to tackle rough sleeping in terms of individuals' outcomes. Tracking continues for as long as Encompass know of the case and the rough sleeper engages with the service. Once there are no longer any sightings/contact is lost, tracking will stop after around one to two months; it will also cease once accommodation has been secured.

Table 3.16: Rough sleeper outcomes

Outcome	2015	2016	2017	2018
Open cases*			2	8
Assisted into accommodation	6	15	7	10
Found own accommodation	2	3	0	0
Home borough resolved	1	3	2	0
No further sightings/not verified	13	24	28	12
Found to be not rough sleeping	4	7	13	20
Placed in B&B / given council accommodation	5	7	6	2
Went to prison	3	1	1	2
Returned to property	1	0	1	2
Provided supported housing	2	6	0	0
Accommodated with family / friends	4	7	2	1
Outcome unknown / other	2	3	5	3
Total	43	76	67	60

*These figures are updated as we go along rather than identified at a specific point in time so there may be no cases still open from as far back as 2015/16

NB: the table shows the approach or identification year not the outcome year

3.47 As of November 2019 there were 19 open cases with SPEAR, some of whom have not been verified as rough sleeping or seen since the initial report but are kept open for two months to enable further sightings to be addressed and for intelligence to be shared. A number of the open cases are complex, where the individuals are not currently engaging with services or accepting the help that has been offered. Nevertheless, work will continue with this cohort to try to end their cycle of rough sleeping.

4. Prevention of homelessness

- 4.1 As in chapter 3, in looking at prevention there is a need to distinguish between the situation prior to the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act in April 2018 and the period since in view of the new statutory duties introduced by the Act.

Pre Homelessness Reduction Act

- 4.2 The following table shows that prevention and relief numbers have been broadly similar over the period since 2014/15.

Table 4.1: Homelessness preventions and reliefs

2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
332	301	310	313

- 4.3 In the table below it can be seen that work to help maintain a private let and family mediation account for the vast majority of prevention activity, representing 85% of the total in 2017/18.

Table 4.2: Prevention of homelessness activity

Prevention activity	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Advocacy / help to maintain private rented accommodation	54	45	52	68
Mediation / family reconciliation	42	60	70	51
Housing benefit / private rent rent issue resolution	12	8	45	8
Debt advice	1	2	1	3
Financial payment	0	1	0	3
Crisis intervention - emergency support	0	0	6	0
Mortgage intervention / rescue	1	0	0	1
Other	0	0	2	6
All	110	116	136	140

NB: These figures are only relate to where the household was assisted to remain in their existing home

Post Homelessness Reduction Act

- 4.4 From April 2018 all households approaching as homeless or threatened with homelessness a Personalised Housing Plan (PHP) is produced. The PHP describes action that both the household and the Encompass adviser will take to prevent or relieve the homelessness. The case management officer will support the client to

progress the agreed tasks, maintaining regular contact and giving practical support where needed.

- 4.5 Generic floating support including tenancy sustainment support is provided by Encompass to households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness in order to help them navigate through services and resettle in new homes. Encompass also provides general support to households to maintain their homes during periods of instability. At the same time, St Mungo's has been contracted to support households requiring specialist or more complex support such as those with mental health and/or substance misuse issues or ex-offenders.
- 4.6 Encompass also employ wellbeing coaches who are focussed on early intervention and addressing issues with households that could trigger homelessness such as signs of financial difficulties, employment / training needs etc. The aim is to build resilience in those households and provide them with the tools and contacts to avoid reaching crisis point. The coaches mainly identify households at risk through referrals arising from housing register applications, some homelessness approaches and from drop-ins run by various agencies - e.g. the domestic violence one stop shop.
- 4.7 Encompass operates a sanctuary scheme which is funded through the Government's Homelessness Prevention Grant and is designed to install 'target hardening' facilities to homes to enable victims of abuse to remain in their home. This can range from installing additional locks and bolts to doors and windows to creating a safe room in the property. During 2018/19 eight households were assisted through the scheme.
- 4.8 The Council's welfare support outreach team also undertakes homelessness prevention work through providing a wide variety of advice and support to struggling households. This includes providing budgeting support to households affected by the benefit cap, facilitating the take up of discretionary housing payments (see below), helping people to negotiate Universal Credit claims and maximising benefit take-up and sustaining tenancies.
- 4.9 The table below shows the level of success achieved in 2018/19 in terms of early intervention activity. The subsequent tables show the numbers of prevention and relief cases opened, together with the number of preventions and reliefs made, during 2018/19 and 2019/20 to date.

Table 4.3: Early interventions and outcomes 2018/19

Early interventions	
Total no. of households receiving an intervention	178
Successful cases	93
Success rate	52.2%
Successful reasons	
Intervention successful	67
Invalid s21 notice challenged (Court action)	3
Invalid s21 noticed challenged (no Court action)	16
Other	7
Total	93

NB: "Intervention successful" will include, for example, cases where interventions with a landlord have resulted in a notice being withdrawn. In all cases homelessness will have been prevented for at least a six month period.

Table 4.4: Prevention and relief duty cases during 2018/19 by quarter

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Prevention duties started	89	64	75	97	325
Preventions	17	35	40	41	130
Relief Duties started	110	141	134	158	543
Reliefs	8	31	31	29	99

Table 4.5: Prevention and relief duty cases during 2019/20

	Q1	Q2
Prevention duties started in 2019/20	114	107
Preventions	41	57
Relief duties started in 2019/20	144	170
Reliefs	23	30

4.10 The following table shows the number of referrals received from other organisations under the Homelessness Reduction Act's duty to refer. In the main, referrals are from job centres, prisons or the probation service and hospitals.

Table 4.6: Homelessness referrals received since April 2018

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Received in 2018/19	0	4	57	67	128
Received in 2019/20	55	55			

Use of Discretionary Housing Payments

- 4.11 To support the recent changes to the welfare reform system, the government has provided funding to local authorities for Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) to be made to households who face immediate financial difficulties. The Council received a total grant of £492,118 in 2018/19; this was used to make DHPs to a total of 525 households of which 291 contained children. During 2018/19, a total of 173 households were helped to sustain their tenancies and thus prevent homelessness.

Use of Disabled Facilities Grants

- 4.12 Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) may on rare occasions contribute to preventing homelessness. In addition to funding adaptations to an existing home, discretionary DFGs are available to assist a person to move to alternative accommodation. Someone living in privately rented accommodation who becomes disabled - for example, as a result of an accident - may need some form of adaptation to allow them to continue to live in their property. However, this may not be possible or the landlord might refuse to have their property altered, and may be prompted to serve notice should the tenant need to resort to welfare benefits.

5 Accommodating homeless households

- 5.1 Local housing authorities have a statutory duty to provide “interim” or emergency accommodation to those deemed to be in priority need and who are homeless or threatened with homelessness under s188 Housing Act 1996 (see chapter 2). Presenting households are thus placed in such housing, usually in B&B or other nightly paid accommodation initially, while their case is assessed and a decision ultimately made as to whether or not the main duty to secure accommodation, under s193 Housing Act 1996 as amended, applies.
- 5.2 Where the main duty is found to apply the household will usually remain in their temporary home until either they are provided with a social housing tenancy, under Part VI Housing Act 1996, or are successful in securing accommodation in the private rented sector. Where it is decided that the household is not owed the main duty - for example, they were found to be intentionally homeless - they will be given reasonable notice to leave their temporary home, with advice as to how best to secure their own accommodation. Where there are children in the household, social services are advised of the decision and when the accommodation will cease being available for them to occupy, so they can carry out their own assessment of need.
- 5.3 The length of time spent in temporary accommodation will depend largely on the availability of suitable alternative housing, which will vary according to the particular needs of the household. The time homeless households spend in temporary accommodation now averages at 25 months. However, some households can remain in temporary housing for up to 4 ½ years.

Temporary accommodation trends

- 5.4 The following table shows the trend in the numbers of households in all forms of temporary accommodation at financial year end since 2014, broken down by type of unit. As can be seen, the overall number has increased by almost three fold. The numbers in B&B have reduced over the last couple of years, largely due to additional ‘hostel’ provision coming on stream offering a better standard of accommodation. At the same time, the use of the Council’s permanent stock as temporary accommodation has increased by around 150% over the last six years, these units being made up mainly of one bedroom properties for smaller families, homes set for future regeneration and, more recently, ex-council stock acquisitions or ‘buy backs’.

Table 5.1: Households in temporary accommodation 2014 to 2019 (at 31 March)

Accommodation type	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
B&B	35	52	77	115	63	58
Self-contained nightly paid	25	45	122	155	198	164
Oakleigh House	0	0	0	35	38	33
Private sector leased	60	45	53	57	86	95
Own stock	103	137	158	171	183	275
HA stock	2	1	1	1	0	11
Other	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total	225	280	411	534	569	637
Of which out of borough	39	77	182	239	224	186

NB: Figs up to and including 2018 are taken from P1E returns; the figures for 2019 are taken from internal management statistics.

- 5.5 The table below gives a breakdown of household make up over the same period. This shows that broadly the proportions of household types remain fairly consistent, with female lone parents making up more than half of all households in temporary accommodation. The table also illustrates that there has been an overall increase in BME representation, with BME households recently accounting for around one third of all households accommodated. This is significantly higher than the proportion of BME households in the borough as a whole and reflects how homelessness disproportionately affects this group.

Table 5.2: Numbers in temporary accommodation by household type and ethnicity

Household type	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Couple + children	54	56	91	106	125	139
Female lone parent	117	164	233	282	310	358
Male lone parent	9	11	14	16	26	19
Single female	16	18	21	35	26	40
Single male	26	28	41	77	67	71
Other	3	3	11	18	15	10
Total	225	280	411	534	569	637
Proportion White	71.6%	73.9%	80.5%	72.3%	66.8%	65.2%
Proportion BME	28.4%	26.1%	19.5%	27.7%	33.2%	34.9%

NB: Figures are as at 31 March

- 5.6 The following table shows approximately how long households remain in temporary accommodation after the decision is made that they are owed the main homelessness duty. The total numbers have remained broadly similar over the years as has the spread across the time bands, although the number of households waiting in temporary accommodation for over three years has increased significantly from very low numbers a few years ago.

Table 5.3: Length of stay in temporary accommodation

Time since main duty ended	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19*
Under 6 months	50	73	86	59	39	37
6 months to 1 year	46	36	40	42	30	25
1 year to 2 years	36	31	52	110	69	46
2 years to 3 years	25	14	13	20	35	48
Over 3 years	29	4	2	5	14	21
Total	186	204	193	236	187	177

NB: These figures relate to households in temporary accommodation for whom the main duty was ended (for whatever reason) between 1 April and 31 March of the year in question

*This is not reported through H-CLIC so is a best estimate from internal management systems.

- 5.7 The table below gives an analysis of length of stay in nightly paid accommodation during 2018/19 by household type and by whether the accommodation is in or out of

borough. It shows that out of borough placements on the whole are slightly shorter than those made in borough.

Table 5.4: Average length of stay in nightly paid accommodation 2018/19

	Average length of stay (weeks)
All singles	25
Singles out of borough	23
All families	29
Families out of borough	27

- 5.8 The latest position in terms of the number of households living in the various forms of temporary accommodation is shown in the table below. Even since the end of 2018/19, the numbers have increased significantly, rising from 637 at 31 March to 702 as at 13 January 2020.

Table 5.5: Households in Temporary Accommodation at 13 January 2020

Accommodation type	No. households
Singles in shared facilities B&B	50
Singles in self-contained accommodation	18
Other household types in shared facilities B&B	6
Other household types in self-contained accommodation	6
Families in self-contained accommodation	132
Families in shared facilities B&B	12
Andrewes House	23
Oakleigh House	35
Housing association owned accommodation	11
Private sector leased units	110
LB Sutton owned stock	298
Other	1
Total	702
Of which placed out of borough	153

- 5.9 Of the 703 households accommodated, 548 (78%) include dependent children, of which there are 968 in total. The proportion of those where the main duty decision has been made is also approximately 80%.
- 5.10 A recent study undertaken by Public Health in Sutton looked at the impact on children living in temporary accommodation in terms of their health and education. From information collated from a number of agencies it identified a wide range of issues that adversely affected children's life chances including: problems with sleeping, poor nutrition, poor hygiene, risks presented by other accommodated client groups (e.g. ex-offenders), the impact of relationship breakdown, disrupted schooling.
- 5.11 Of households that are provided with temporary accommodation only a very small proportion would not be eligible to go onto the Housing Register, and this would primarily be due to their financial means. Some households may be suspended from going on to the Register due to rent arrears or behaviour issues but would be able to join or rejoin when the situation changes.

Rehousing of homeless households

- 5.12 The following table shows, over the last five years, lettings within the social stock by priority group, highlighting homeless households (held within band B on the Housing Register). As can be seen, total lettings have reduced by more than half since 2014/15, partly due to reduced numbers of new build social homes and fewer social tenants moving out of the sector, this possibly reflecting prevailing economic circumstances.
- 5.13 With reducing social lets becoming available there was a significant increase in the proportion of these going to homeless households between 2014/15 and 2015/16. As at end November 2019 there were 1,827 applicants on the Housing Register of which 410 (22%) were homeless households held within band B.

Table 5.6: Letting of permanent general needs social stock to homeless households

General needs lettings	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Other high priority groups (band A)	159	83	85	79	85
Homeless (band B)	141	128	156	101	111
Other reasonable preference groups (bands C and D)	248	103	121	99	99
Non reasonable preference groups (TNN/OPEX)*	84	9	2	1	2
Let as temporary accommodation	0	0	31	14	0
Total	632	323	395	294	298
Proportion of all lettings to homeless households	22.3%	39.6%	39.5%	34.4%	37.3%

NB: the above figures exclude lettings to 'sheltered' stock

*Includes tenant 'no need' transfers and older people held on an exceptions list

5.13 The following table shows, on a year by year basis, the number of accepted households that are rehoused in social lets (council and housing association) and those that secure accommodation in the private sector. The penultimate row shows the numbers rehoused (in both sectors) deducted from the total accepted household figures. Cumulative figures are shown in the final row. As can be seen, each year the number of households rehoused is significantly less than the number accepted as homeless, with the cumulative shortfall reaching 600 by 2018/19. This essentially is the root cause of the year on year increase in temporary accommodation usage.

Table 5.7: Nos. of households accepted vs nos. rehoused

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Nos. households accepted (A)	277	309	316	231	243
Re-housed in social housing (by bedrooms required)					
<i>1 bed</i>	23	15	10	11	13
<i>2 beds</i>	70	67	95	68	66
<i>3 beds</i>	42	38	50	20	29
<i>4 beds</i>	8	8	1	2	3
Total (B)	143	128	156	101	111
Re-housed in the PRS (C)	46	34	12	21	24
Rehousing shortfall: A - (B+C)	88	147	148	109	108
Cumulative shortfall	88	235	383	492	600

Accessing private sector accommodation

5.14 The Council, through Encompass, assists homeless households to access renting in the private sector by providing a deposit guarantee or cash deposit to the landlord, and providing an interest free loan to the household to pay for the required rent in advance. Set out in the table below are the amounts paid, since 2014/15, on rent deposits and payments in advance.

Table 5.8: Rent deposit and payments in advance

Year	Amount paid (£)
2014/15	207,607
2015/16	198,299
2016/17	170,036
2017/18	144,962
2018/19	113,968
2019/20 to end August	100,926

5.15 Encompass works with a number of landlords in the area, and continues to reach out to new landlords through its landlords forum, run in conjunction with the National Landlords Association, and also by cold calling landlords advertising in the area.

Encompass also assists homeless households who find a property to rent, but cannot afford the deposit or rent in advance.

- 5.16 The following table shows, since 2014/15, the number of households assisted and the amounts that have been paid to private landlords as by way of incentives to let their properties to households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.

Table 5.9: Cash incentives paid to private landlords

Year	No. households assisted	Amounts paid (£)
2014/15	91	187,849
2015/16	65	153,700
2016/17	44	94,500
2017/18	54	100,380
2018/19	61	117,613
2019/20*	54	111,850

*As at 31 October 2019

- 5.17 We currently have 106 units of temporary accommodation through a private leasing scheme, which is more cost effective and provides a higher standard of accommodation compared to nightly paid units. However, the private rented sector stock is also used to prevent homelessness, and it is more cost effective to use these units to prevent homelessness rather than as temporary homes.

Use of Council-owned accommodation

- 5.18 Since 2017 the Council, working through Sutton Housing Partnership, has been buying back homes (mainly one and two bedroom flats on council estates) previously sold under the Right to Buy. Nearly 90 have now been acquired, and all of these units, which are let at the relevant LHA rent level, provide a preferable form of temporary accommodation, with advantages over private leased units in terms of both cost and the quality of management offered.
- 5.19 As well as units bought back, over the years the Council has used a limited number of its permanent rented homes for temporary accommodation, letting them out under licence under Part VII Housing Act 1996. Often this has been accommodation that has been subject to regeneration programmes where otherwise the properties would be left empty for a period once they become void.
- 5.20 For many years the Council has used a former sheltered block located within one of its town centre estates - Andrewes House - for temporary accommodation, providing 23 self-contained units. More recently an ex-care home - Oakleigh House - also located close to Sutton town centre, was converted to self-contained temporary housing,

managed by a third party agent. The conversion provides both more suitable and cheaper accommodation.

Standards of temporary accommodation

- 5.21 In procuring units for use as nightly paid emergency accommodation, the standards prescribed in the Government's *Setting the Standard* policy document are used as a minimum when assessing suitability. Following a project to reduce the costs of this type of accommodation in November 2015, when there was a pan London agreement of maximum rates to work with, we have seen a decline in standards with some of the providers. We have also seen some providers remove themselves from this market as they felt it was not cost effective to continue.
- 5.22 The increase in temporary accommodation units as a result of the Council's acquisition programme and the expansion of its private sector leasing scheme has provided better quality accommodation within the borough and has contributed to the reduction of households accommodated in emergency accommodation outside of the borough.

Temporary accommodation for vulnerable households

- 5.23 The Council has commissioned refuge accommodation for women fleeing domestic violence. Ten units are currently being provided to residents to ensure safety, support to access benefits, obtain school places for their children, support health and well being as well as provide advice to access stable and longer term housing.
- 5.24 Encompass also has access to four bed spaces in a local hostel for the homeless operated by SPEAR. In addition, there is access available to hostels in other boroughs on a reciprocal basis but this is proportionate to the number of spaces Sutton has. However, due to the delays in opening the Sutton hostel, in net terms the Council probably owes to the pool at the moment.
- 5.25 The Council recently commissioned St Mungo's to deliver a consolidated housing support service for vulnerable adults with mental health needs, drugs and alcohol dependency and ex-offenders (see chapter 6). The tiered pathway model being applied includes a Housing First approach (see chapter 2) where self-contained accommodation is offered to clients at the outset along with wrap around support to prevent homelessness occurring or recurring.
- 5.26 Some households will be allocated move on accommodation through agreed quotas on the housing register. Others will be assisted to access private lets (supported by St Mungos), but as with other households lack of supply is an issue.

6 Homelessness support

- 6.1 The Council commissions housing related support services for a range of vulnerable people including care leavers, homeless young people, people with a learning disability, women at risk of domestic violence, older people, people with mental health needs and/or substance misuse problems and ex-offenders. In many cases the support provided directly or indirectly helps to prevent or relieve homelessness as well as providing help with other issues that people face.
- 6.2 The current short term supported housing and floating housing support services were commissioned to deliver specified outcomes identified during the review of previous housing support services. These services are expected to provide cost effective, flexible and high quality support, enabling clients to gain the ability and confidence to move from supported living settings into independence, to retain their independence and continue to live in their own home for as long as possible.
- 6.3 The following table sets out the commissioned housing related support services currently being delivered.

Table 6.1: Commissioned housing related support services

Provider	Client Group	Service Description
St Mungos	Single homeless adults with mental health needs and/or substance misuse and ex-offenders	130 units of supported housing across 44 properties and a minimum of 150 resettlement and floating support service clients per annum
CAYSH	Care leavers and young homeless people	36 units of supported housing across 9 properties and 6 weeks to 6 months resettlement support service
Sutton Women's Aid	Women experiencing domestic violence	10 units of refuge accommodation with a floating support service also available to other clients to help maintain tenancies and secure a sanctuary service
Walsingham Support	People with a learning disability, difficulty and cognitive development needs	33 supported housing units across 8 properties and a minimum of 39 floating support service clients per annum

Provider	Client Group	Service Description
Encompass	Single people, couples and families	Generic floating support and tenancy sustainment work for 120 households per year. Wellbeing coaches supporting up to 120 households per year providing early intervention to reduce risk of crisis and homelessness and build resilience, including financial resilience through employment and training.
Sutton Housing Partnership	Older people aged 55+ with requiring a high level of housing support	Floating support service for a minimum 120 clients per annum.

6.4 Along with an increase in the number of Looked After Children in Sutton since 2011, the number of Care Leavers with complex needs has also risen. These needs and associated concerns are a challenge to the local authority, to both support and to accommodate within the supported housing pathway. As a result, the Council has identified a suitable property for high support needs young people and is preparing to commission a suitable provider to deliver the support.

6.5 To support the needs of clients with complex needs, including mental health needs and/or substance misuse problems the Council and Sutton Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) have commissioned the following services.

Sutton Uplift

6.6 The Sutton Uplift service has been in operation since 2013 and is commissioned by Sutton CCG. The service is delivered by South West London & St Georges Mental Health Trust. The value of the contract is £2.4m per annum.

6.7 The Sutton Uplift service has four separate pathways, all of which are free and accessible to homeless people:

- Single Point of Access to all mental health referrals
- Wellbeing Pathways linked with third sector providers offering follow-ups for mild to moderate mental health service users
- Primary Care Mental Health Service
- Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) Core Service and IAPT LTC (Long Term Conditions)

Sutton Home Treatment Team

6.8 This Sutton CCG service, which forms part of South West London & St Georges Mental Health Trust block contract, operates from Jubilee House in Wallington and provides a 24/7 service to Sutton residents. It delivers mental health interventions in the community as an alternative to admission to hospital for clients aged 18-75. It also

responds to the needs of individuals who may be in hospital and/or suffering a mental health crisis. Investment in this service has increased in 2019/20 in order to offer an enhanced service with a high level of workforce capacity.

Sutton Street Triage Service

- 6.9 The Sutton CCG-funded Sutton Street Triage Service is part of the Crisis Resolution Team and provides access to the Police for assessment of individuals picked up under Section 136 for public disorder and/or mental disorder. This service is currently co-located with Sutton Police Station.
- 6.10 The service operates from Thursday to Monday between the hours of 5pm until 2am, and is delivered through a Mental Health Nurse Specialist working alongside police officers. This service is also part of South West London & St Georges Mental Health Trust Block Contract and it is under review in 2019/20 for re-modelling as part of Urgent Emergency Care Pathways.

Inspire

- 6.11 Inspire is the name of the Integrated Substance Misuse service commissioned by the Council to deliver treatment and care for those abusing drugs and alcohol. Cranstoun is the provider of the service, and care is delivered in conjunction with South West London & St George's Mental Health NHS Trust and Sutton GP Services Limited.
- 6.12 The service is open to all Sutton residents in need of support or those registered with a Sutton GP and provides a range of services for both adults and young people. Inspire not only supports clients with their addictions but also with detox treatments and recovery once stable.
- 6.13 The provision of this service is part of the conditions of the Public Health Grant under the Health & Social Care Act 2012. Local authorities have a duty to reduce health inequalities and improve the health of their local population by ensuring that there are public health services aimed at reducing drug and alcohol misuse. This also includes improving wider determinants of health through public health indicators - for example, violent crimes and child poverty.
- 6.14 Homelessness is associated with severe poverty and is a social determinant of health. It is also associated with adverse health, education and social outcomes, particularly for children. In Sutton it is recognised that in order to support residents to achieve the best outcomes, a holistic approach to how we manage people's health and care is essential. Inspire works in partnership with local agencies to support clients with a wide range of issues, including Welfare Reform Team, Sutton Uplift and the Council's Housing Support team, so that clients are able to seek information and advice on how to improve their situation without having to visit multiple agencies.

Advice Link Partnership (ALPS)

- 6.15 In April 2016 the Council commissioned an integrated information and advice service. The vision for this service is to encourage and enable all Sutton residents to access information and advice through the most appropriate channel and at the right time in order to stay well and lead as full a life as possible. In order to achieve this vision, the commissioned provider is required to offer information and advice for all residents at key life stages (e.g. retirement, making a benefit claim, taking on a caring role, etc).

The service is currently delivered by Sutton CAB who also sub-contract the delivery of this service to Sutton Carers Centre and Age UK Sutton.

- 6.16 Through this service, residents are able to access information and advice on benefits, welfare and housing options. In 2018/19, ALPS delivery partners received a total of 21,179 initial contacts, which includes telephone, drop-in and online enquiries. Of these, over 4,103 were from people needing to make claims for welfare benefits and over 1,554 were from people with debt problems.
- 6.17 As well as the commissioned information and advice service, homeless households or those threatened with homelessness are able to access a range of other national and local information and advice services related to finance and welfare issues.

[Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference \(MARAC\)](#)

- 6.18 MARAC is a standing monthly meeting to discuss issues relating to the top 10% high risk cases in the borough. Information is shared and actions discussed and assigned as part of a safety plan to ensure the safety of high risk domestic abuse victims and their families. The work of Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) is integral to the MARAC process. Advice and support is provided to prevent risk from escalating and households from becoming homeless due to domestic abuse.

[Sutton Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements \(MAPPA\)](#)

- 6.19 MAPPA is a National Probation Service coordinated process through which the police, probation and prison Services work together with other agencies to manage the risks posed by violent and sexual offenders living in the community in order to protect the public. MAPPA is not a statutory body in itself but is a mechanism through which agencies can better discharge their statutory responsibilities and protect the public in a coordinated manner. Agencies at all times retain their full statutory responsibilities and obligations.

[Support for families with no recourse to public funds](#)

- 6.20 Local authorities have statutory duties in relation to safeguarding the welfare of children in their area where the parents have no recourse to public funds and they require accommodation and or financial assistance. In such scenarios where an assessment has taken place, provision is made under s17, Children Act 1989.
- 6.21 When assessing the needs of families presenting as having no recourse to public funds, the Council considers if a child is deemed to be destitute without the local authority's support and intervention. In addition to subsistence payments, where the family is homeless the Council has a duty to provide accommodation. Given the limitations that Children's Social Care has, housing provision is generally provided as either bed and breakfast accommodation or a placement with a host family.

[Support offered by the DWP](#)

- 6.22 The DWP supports families by removing barriers to enable movement into appropriate and sustainable employment/ training. It also supports and up-skills local authority and JobCentre Plus staff and other external partner organisations. This includes:
- Promoting the benefits of employment as a key part of the Troubled Families (TF) programme

- Providing families with a direct employment advisory and support role using expertise of the local labour market, skills provision, and calculating in-work benefits
- Developing local labour market knowledge, working with employers, taking into account skills needs to create employment and apprenticeship opportunities
- Supporting referrals to local partners such as the family's local employer partnerships
- Providing advice and support to authorities and local partners on the eligibility, referral process, support packages and benefits of DWP's mainstream employment provision.
- Supporting the local authority team by attending family team meetings to ensure work focussed actions are incorporated into the whole family approach.
- Proactively participating in case conferencing

6.23 The DWP also employs a homelessness outreach worker who works with street homeless, those in temporary accommodation, those under threat of eviction and those in inappropriate accommodation (e.g. overcrowded households. sofa surfers etc). Specifically the support services offered by the postholder include:

- Assistance with benefits advice and guidance including new claims and ongoing maintenance
- Signposting to other appropriate professionals such as councils, hostels etc.
- Assist with applications for housing, grants etc.
- Safeguarding
- Advice on training and job search
- Supporting JobCentre Plus coaches with advice on supporting homeless clients

7 Costs and resources

7.1 This chapter sets out the overall financial cost of homelessness to the borough alongside the resources available in terms of grants and other funding sources. The costs comprise the various homelessness-related statutory functions carried out by Encompass on the Council's behalf. In addition, are the direct costs of providing temporary accommodation in its various forms.

Encompass staffing costs

7.2 The following table summarises the cost of the homelessness and homelessness-related functions carried out by Encompass, set against the various sources of funding that the company receives. These cover the outturns for 2017/18 and 2018/19 along with the budgets for 2019/20. Encompass currently employ 61.7 FTE members of staff who work on homelessness, housing advice and the management of temporary accommodation.

Table 7.1: Encompass staffing costs 2017/18 to 2019/20

	2017/18 outturn (£)	2018/19 outturn (£)	2019/20 budget (£)
Expenditure			
Advice, assessment and information	1,409,583	1,957,091	2,373,008
Business support services	62,341	135,614	149,816
ICT	11,152	12,467	24,257
Totals	1,483,076	2,105,173	2,547,081
Resources (for advice, assessment and information only)			
Contract sum (from the Council)	1,243,519	1,155,590	1,211,172
Flexible homelessness support grant	166,063	801,501	1,113,966
PRS Access Fund	0	0	47,871
Totals	1,409,583	1,957,091	2,373,008

NB: Figures may not add up exactly due to rounding

7.3 The Council also receives a number of government sources of funding to supplement its budgets for tackling homelessness. The amounts received under each during the last three years is summarised below.

Table 7.2: Government funding received 2017/18 to 2019/20

Type of funding	2017/18 (£)	2018/19 (£)	2019/20 (£)
Flexible Homelessness Support Grant	891,560	1,056,877	1,169,725
Homelessness Reduction Act (New Burdens) funding	151,492	138,766	131,260
H-CLIC implementation funding*		7,311	
Homelessness Prevention Top Up		30,000	
Rough Sleepers Initiative (RSI)			93,167
PRS Access Fund		57,000	470,000
Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) funding	411,504	492,118	463,784

NB: The above are all 'mandatory' grants, with the exception of the PRS Access Fund, which was the outcome of a bidding process.

*H-CLIC is the new Government-required statistics reporting system brought in with the Homelessness Reduction Act

- 7.4 The Flexible Homelessness Support Grant has been used in a number of different ways, with the essential aim of preventing homelessness and minimizing the use of temporary accommodation; largely, the funding has been used to increase staffing. The Homelessness Prevention Top Up was allocated to SPEAR to fund a project worker; the H-CLIC implementation money was used to fund a data and performance officer while the RSI funding was used to cover a funding gap in relation to Sutton's new rough sleeper accommodation.

Temporary accommodation costs by type

- 7.5 The table below shows net annual expenditure on temporary accommodation over the last three years, split between emergency accommodation (B&B and other nightly-paid units) and private leased properties. As can be seen, the cost of emergency (nightly paid) accommodation fell by almost 50% between 2017/18 and 2018/19. Private leasing, on the other hand, increased hugely between 2016/17 and 2017/18, with a small reduction in 2018/19.
- 7.6 The reason for the changes in the net cost of nightly paid accommodation is that Universal Credit had a significant impact on the collection rates, and arrears increased after the roll out in 2016/17. This was the main reason for the increase to the net annual cost to the authority for this type of accommodation. Improvements were made in 2017/18 in collecting rents from households on Universal Credit which reduced the net spend going forward. There was then a change in government policy in April 2018, where households in temporary accommodation no longer claimed their housing costs through Universal Credit, and went back to claiming Housing Benefit.

- 7.7 With regard to the increase in the costs of private leasing, the scheme started in January 2016, with nine units held within the leased portfolio by March 2016. A further 65 units were procured in 2017/18 which lead to the considerable increase in costs.

Table 7.3: Net annual cost of temporary accommodation by type

	2016/17 (£)	2017/18 (£)	2018/19 (£)
Nightly paid units	1,201,114	1,319,663	698,237
Private leased units	4,753	147,235	129,963
Total	1,205,867	1,466,898	828,200

- 7.8 Sutton Council signed up to the Pan London Inter-borough Accommodation Agreement (IBAA) in 2015, which sought to cap what authorities would pay for nightly paid accommodation. This was in an effort to reduce costs and put an end to authorities competing against each other in the market and thus inflating prices. Each authority set its rates for their areas and these are shared throughout London. Whilst this had the desired effect of reducing costs, it had the side effect of reducing standards, and some providers removing themselves from this market completely.
- 7.9 The following table shows the respective average weekly costs of nightly paid and private leased temporary accommodation - the net cost to the Council and the charges made to the occupying household. Clearly it can be seen that the latter is significantly cheaper, with a two bed private leased unit on average costing £75 pw less than an equivalent sized nightly paid unit.

Table 7.4: Current average weekly costs of temporary accommodation

Unit size	Nightly paid (£pw)			Private leased (£pw)		
	Gross cost to the Council	Fee charged to the household	Net cost to the Council (assuming 100% collection rate)	Gross Cost to the Council	Rent charged to the household	Net cost to the Council (assuming 100% collection rate)
Single shared	203	181	22			
Shared B&B Families	266	191	75			
Self-contained Studios	266	215	51			
One bedroom	266	211	54	195	204	-9
Two bedrooms	320	239	81	236	230	6
Three bedrooms	397	289	108	285	274	11

NB: As the transition back from Universal Credit to Housing benefit continues for households in temporary accommodation, we will see this net cost increase, since the rent charged to clients will decrease. We also have maintenance costs on top of these charges which works out on average £5pw per unit.

Supported Housing and Floating Housing Support Services

7.10 The following table shows the cost of providing supported housing and floating housing support services over the last three years. These services provide short term supported accommodation for homeless care leavers and vulnerable adults as well as support to enable service users to sustain their accommodation.

Table 7.5: Housing support services for vulnerable adults and young people

Client Group	2016/17 (£)	2017/18 (£)	2018/19 (£)
Care leavers and homeless young people	296,666	373,903	356,000
Women experiencing domestic violence	122,750	122,750	122,750
People with a learning disability, difficulty and cognitive development needs	134,972	114,552	125,000
Adults with mental health needs and/or substance misuse and ex-offenders	1,099,000	1,099,397	959,500
Older people aged 55+	349,468	204,928	200,000
Total	2,002,856	1,915,530	1,763,250

7.11 As well as the costs and resources of the Council and Encompass, there are many other agencies that play a role in dealing with homelessness. Within the statutory sector are the health service, probation, the police and criminal justice, drug and alcohol services. Some voluntary sector organisations, such as SPEAR and St Mungos, are commissioned and thus funded by the Council while others may receive council grants. Other bodies, for example Sutton Nightwatch and the Salvation Army, rely on other sources of funding although the Council does provide the former with rent free accommodation.

8 Projections and gaps in service provision

- 8.1 This chapter begins by attempting to make some projections in relation to homelessness over the next few years, in particular regarding the number of households to which the Council will owe the main homelessness duty and the likely demand for temporary accommodation. It should be understood that due to the nature and multiplicity of the factors influencing homelessness it is very difficult to predict future needs with any degree of certainty.
- 8.2 The chapter then looks briefly at gaps in service provision, beginning with the need for accommodation. Gaps in prevention and support services are also considered although it is anticipated that the process of consulting upon the review will help to flesh out our understanding in these areas.

Homelessness projections

- 8.3 The following table shows, by way of illustration, the number of main duty homelessness acceptances, with a breakdown by property size requirement, that could arise over this and the next three years. These projections are based purely on trends since 2014/15, using a simple five year moving average, while also taking into account the number of acceptances in 2019/20 to date.

Table 8.1: Projected homelessness acceptances by property size requirement

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Bedsit / 1 bed	26	25	24	24
2 bed	195	193	188	181
3 bed	52	51	50	48
4+ beds	7	7	7	7
Total	280	276	269	260

- 8.4 Based on the above projected acceptances, and again using moving averages, the following table takes into account trends in the numbers of lettings becoming available and homeless households allocated social housing, as well as those that secure a private let. The table then extrapolates the rehousing shortfall, annually and cumulatively, over the coming years.

Table 8.2: Projected numbers of households accepted vs numbers rehoused

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Nos. households accepted (A)	280	276	269	260
Nos. re-housed in social housing (B)	128	125	124	118
Re-housed in the PRS (C)	27	24	22	24
Rehousing shortfall: A - (B+C)	125	127	123	118
Cumulative shortfall	125	252	375	493

- 8.5 As the table shows, on the basis of the assumptions made, and that all else remains equal, the rehousing shortfall continues at much the same level each year. The cumulative shortfall reaches almost 500 by 2022/23, with the potential for an increase of that order of additional households residing in temporary accommodation. Given that there are already almost 700 households in temporary accommodation that could result in a total approaching 1,200 by 2022/23.

Gaps in service provision

- 8.6 This section briefly summarises our current understanding of the gaps that exist in relation to homelessness, in terms of both accommodating homeless households and prevention and support services.

Accommodation

- 8.7 Clearly from the above analysis, notwithstanding the illustrative nature of the figures presented, the major gap to be addressed in relation to accommodation is the lack of rehousing opportunities that the Council has to discharge its main homelessness duty. In addition, while the shortfall between homelessness acceptances and main duty discharge continues, there will also be a need for further temporary accommodation, including for non-priority households and households requiring ongoing or long term support.
- 8.8 The need for additional affordable housing more generally was calculated as part of Sutton's 2015 Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), which uses a Government prescribed methodology. The SHMA identified a requirement for 1,018 net additional affordable homes in the borough each year over the period to 2031. It also provided a breakdown of the need by property size and tenure. Of the total requirement 76% was for social/affordable housing and 24% for intermediate housing. In terms of dwelling size, the requirement was for 7.9% one bedroomed, 27.6% two bedroomed, 43.9% three bedroomed and 20.6% four + bedroomed.

Prevention and support

- 8.9 As has been illustrated, a considerable amount of activity goes on in the borough to try and prevent households from becoming homeless, whether this be through the work of Encompass or the multitude of other agencies and organisations, operating both within the statutory and voluntary sectors. However, it is not fully clear the extent to which the voluntary sector is contributing to homelessness prevention and support.

Notwithstanding this a key question here is to what extent is preventable homelessness actually prevented. And further, if more could be done, how would the additional intervention work best be delivered and can the resources be found?

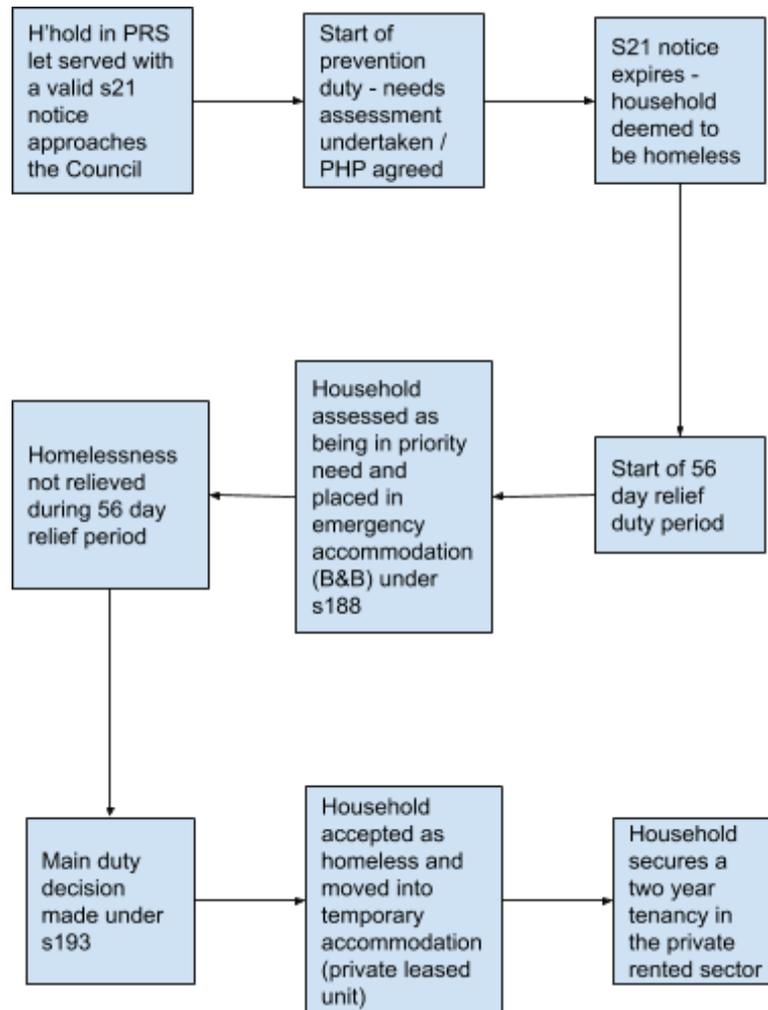
- 8.10 In terms of gaps in support provision, Encompass's operational activities suggest a need for more supported housing, particularly that which allows quick access for rough sleepers. There is also an emerging need for longer-term support, both accommodation-based and in the form of floating support.
- 8.11 In terms of specific client groups, gaps in service provision have been identified for people with learning difficulties and disabilities as well as for people with mental health needs. As part of a Council review process, the housing support needs of clients with a mental health need and those with learning difficulties and disabilities will be reassessed, the outcomes informing future commissioning priorities and the supported housing pathway for each client group.
- 8.12 The Leaving Care Team has identified a lack of good quality supported housing options in the borough to meet the complex needs of care leavers over the age of 18, particularly those associated with mental health issues, substance misuse and the pull of criminal and anti-social behaviour. Discrimination against care leavers and the lack of communication by some social landlords, when a young person displays problems with managing their tenancy, have contributed to them losing their accommodation. Further, where care leavers are evicted, there is no clear pathway specifically designed for them through the homelessness system, and they are often assessed as intentionally homeless.
- 8.13 Where care leavers are placed in emergency or temporary accommodation, the quality of the accommodation and its location can sometimes make it difficult for the Leaving Care Team to support young people to change their behaviour, pay their bills, manage their debts etc. The options for move-on from temporary accommodation are also very limited.
- 8.14 St Mungos have identified a gap in the provision of advocacy advice for rough sleepers and those of no fixed abode who wish to appeal decisions. They also believe that there is a lack of supported housing for young people (18 to 25) and have raised a concern that mixing care leavers who have mental health/behavioural issues with older adults with more entrenched behaviour could place the former at risk.

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Example of a homeless household pathway



Notes

PRS = Private rented sector

s21 notice is a notice to quit served under the Housing Act 1988

PHP = Personal Housing Plan

s188 and s193 are in relation to the Housing Act 1996