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Introduction: What is homelessness?

The term homelessness can describe many ways that a person or family may find themselves without a secure place to live. It is not always about whether they actually have a roof over their head.

Why do we do a homelessness review?

We need to carry out a homelessness review by law, to help us develop a new Housing and Rough Sleeping Strategy. The review sets out demand for homelessness services, the support that is available and how this may change in the future.

The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has said that all local authorities must develop new homelessness strategies. This is to take account of the changes introduced by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

You don’t have to be living on the street to be homeless. You may be legally classed as homeless if you are sleeping on a friend’s sofa, staying in a hostel, suffering from overcrowding or other bad conditions.

Shelter
Summary of review findings

**Homelessness Presentations**
The number of people presenting to the Hastings Borough Council as homeless has remained quite stable over the past 3 years.

- People aged 35 or under make up over half of all those who asked for our support
- In 2018/19, 18% of people coming to us as homeless had a mental health support need
- The most common reason for homelessness is eviction from the private rented sector

**Social housing**
There are 5990 units of social housing in Hastings.

The largest social landlord is Optivo. They own approximately 4 times the number of homes owned by Orbit, which is the next largest social landlord provider.

The number of people moving into of social housing is much lower than before. Only 0.92% of the people are able to access this type of housing. This is because of the lack of availability.

There are currently 1743 households waiting for social housing in Hastings, and waiting times are very long.

The average waiting time is 537 days.

Waiting times for family accommodation are much higher. Families searching for a 2 bedroom house can wait up to 3 years for a property. This is even if they are in the highest priority banding.

**Private rented sector**
The private rented sector is large compared to the social housing sector. Privately rented homes account for 38% of all housing stock in Hastings.

The size of this sector increased by 99% between 2001 and 2019, from 6,689 units to 13,342 units. Between 2001 and 2019 the amount of people using the rented sector in Hastings increased by 99%.

In some wards of the town it accounts for over half of the total housing stock in the area.

This growth looks like it will continue, in the short term. But in the longer term we will see new energy efficiency requirements for rented properties. There will also be changes to tax incentives for landlords. These new ways of doing things may create changes in this sector.

Despite the growth in the rental market, private rented accommodation has become more and more
competitive. The higher costs of rents have made renting a home unaffordable for many people. Rents have grown faster in Hastings than the rest of East Sussex and national trends. The quality of accommodation on offer can also vary considerably.

**Emergency accommodation**

Because of the reasons above, there have been more and more people living in emergency accommodation. People also have to spend longer in emergency accommodation before moving on to long term housing. This trend can have negative effects on the quality of life of for households in emergency accommodation. This has also a significant financial impact on the council. The council has plans to reduce its use of emergency accommodation in the future. But these plans will take at least another year to be fully set up. This is a continual process and we are always looking at ways to improve this service.

**Local Housing Allowance**

Local Housing Allowance (LHA) has failed to keep up with local rising rents. LHA is now often 40% lower than the average rents in the private sector. Benefit dependent households have also been affected by the cap on the amount of welfare benefit an individual household can claim per year. This means that there is a growing affordability gap for many households. This especially affects those with larger families.

**Funding reductions to the council and its partners**

We have seen funding reductions to our partner services, particularly social care. This has contributed to the rising demand for homelessness services. For example, people who would previously been able to access supported accommodation now have to access emergency accommodation. This is due to a lack of suitable and available housing.

**Short term funding**

The council needs government grant funding to keep our homelessness services going. We need this money so that we can meet the needs of our community. Much of the funding we receive is only for the short-term. This creates challenges for us when we develop and plan our approach to reducing homelessness.
National Context

Homelessness Legislation

The services the council has to provide by law to prevent homelessness and help people who are threatened or already homeless are set out in Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996.

In 2002, the Government amended the homelessness legislation through the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Homelessness (Priority Need for Accommodation) (England) Order 2002 to:

- Ensure a more strategic approach to tackling and preventing homelessness, in particular by requiring a homelessness strategy for every housing authority district.
- Strengthen the assistance available to people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness by extending the priority need categories to:
  - homeless 16 and 17 year olds
  - care leavers aged 18, 19 and 20
  - people who are vulnerable as a result of time spent in care
  - people who have been in the armed forces
  - people leaving prison or custody
  - People who are vulnerable because they have fled their home due to violence

Local councils use a number of definitions for different types of homelessness:

Priority Need

The council must provide emergency accommodation if it has reason to believe a homeless person has priority need. Someone may have priority need if:

- Children live with them
- They are pregnant
- Aged 16 or 17
- A care leaver aged 18 to 20
- They are classed as vulnerable:
  - because of old age
  - physical and learning disabilities
  - mental health problems
  - fleeing domestic abuse or violence
  - have spent time in care, prison or the armed forces
**Statutory homelessness**
This refers to those people who have made a homeless application to their local authority and meet the criteria that is the legislation.

A household may be accepted as statutorily homeless if they are going to be evicted or are living in unsuitable housing.

**Non-statutory / non-priority homeless**
People in this group tend to be single people or childless couples who are not assessed as being in priority need. They are entitled to advice and assistance from their local authority.

Many single homeless people can be described as ‘hidden homeless’, if they are sofa surfing, staying with friends or family and not using the homelessness services that are available.

To find out the true levels of hidden homelessness locally and nationally is extremely challenging. We often do not find out about the people who are facing this issue until they are at crisis point.

This can be because the people who are experiencing this issue do not feel that they are homeless when in actual fact they are. They do not always know that there is support available to them.

**Rough sleepers**
This is someone who is literally ‘roofless’, they make their beds on the street or in other locations.

This group is a small part of the much larger group of non-priority homeless people.
The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 gives local housing authorities new duties to intervene earlier to prevent homelessness. The Act aims to improve the quality of the support provided to people who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness.

Some of the key requirements of the new Act are:

**Advice**
Providing free information and advice on preventing homelessness and the rights of homeless people to all residents.

All councils need to make sure the advice and information they provide is designed to meet the needs of groups who are particularly at risk of homelessness.

These groups might include:

- care leavers
- people leaving prison
- people who have left the armed forces
- survivors of domestic abuse and those suffering from a mental illness

**Personalised Housing Plan**
Homeless people coming to the council are supported by a housing options officer. The housing options officer will create a Personalised Housing Plan with the client. This plan takes a ‘whole person’ approach and the looks at different actions that can be taken to improve the client’s housing situation.

The plan must be reviewed regularly.

**Prevention Duty**
Councils can now work with people 56 days before they become homeless or are at risk of homelessness. This has changed from the 28 days before the act.

This means that housing authorities must work with people to prevent homelessness at a much earlier stage.

**Relief Duty**
A new duty for those who are already homeless.

Housing authorities will support households for 56 days to end their homelessness by helping them to secure accommodation.

The relief duty of local authorities means that they must now provide emergency housing for the people who are owed this duty.
Duty to Refer
As part of act, the ‘Duty to Refer’ was introduced in October 2018.

This means that some public agencies have to refer people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to the council. It makes sure that clients are able to access appropriate advice and support.

The agencies subject to the new duty are:

- prisons
- youth offender institutions
- secure training centres
- secure colleges
- youth offending teams
- probation services (including community rehabilitation companies)
- Jobcentre Plus
- social service authorities
- emergency departments
- urgent treatment centres
- hospitals in their function of providing inpatient care
- Secretary of State for Defence in relation to members of the regular armed forces.
Rough Sleeping Strategy

In August 2018 the government published the national rough sleeping strategy.

The strategy sets out the government’s commitment to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and end it completely by 2027.

The strategy sets out key areas of work around:
- prevention
- intervention
- recovery

The main feature has been to highlight the importance of partnership working between the statutory and community sectors.

Welfare reform

The government has introduced a number of changes as part of its welfare reform programme through the Welfare Reform Act 2012.

These changes include the introduction of Universal Credit. This went ‘live’ in Hastings in December 2016.

Universal Credit brings together a range of working age benefits into one payment, including:

- housing benefit
- and Personal Independence Payments (PIP).
  Which replaces Disability Living Allowance for people aged 16 to 64

New rules were also introduced which restrict the amount of housing benefit working age housing association tenants can claim if they are deemed to be under occupying their home.

The sanctions regime for Job Seekers Allowance has also been reviewed and updated.

Welfare reform continues to have an impact on those receiving benefits. Nationally, statistics show that 67,000 families (63,000 housing benefit, 4,000 Universal Credit) have had their benefit capped as at November 2017.
In April 2008 the Government introduced the Local Housing Allowance (LHA).

LHA is used to work out how much housing benefit or universal credit households are eligible get if renting from a private landlord.

It is the rent figure which a set percentage of all of the rents in the market are below.

The percentage set is at the 30% this is also known as the 30th percentile.

This is to ensure that the same percentages of homes are affordable to low income households.

To date, the LHA has not kept up with the rent increases in Hastings and this is having a very big impact on many households in the area:

- April 2013 the link with local market evidence was broken with local housing allowance rates being uprated by the consumer prices index (CPI) or a lower figure set by the government
- From April 2014 for two years the uprating index was capped at one per cent
- From April 2016 Local housing allowance rates were frozen for four years

According to a report by Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH, August 2018), private renting has become unaffordable for most low income households.

**Decision to leave the European Union**

The impact of the decision to leave the European Union impact is hard to predict; depending on the deal.

We could see a number of EEA nationals with uncertain statuses with regard to employment, benefits and housing rights.
Local Context

Progress against our last strategy
We set three priorities in our last strategy, which was in place from 2016 to 2018. By working with our partners we’ve made progress towards achieving them:

Prevent and minimise homelessness

- We have successfully implemented the legislative changes brought about by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, including the new prevention and relief duties
- Secured additional funding for the Hastings and Eastbourne Rough Sleeping Initiative and the Rapid Rehousing Pathway, to improve access to statutory services, temporary accommodation and long term housing for rough sleepers
- Sussex Rough Sleeping Prevention Project successfully delivered. The project achieved 282 interventions and successfully prevented rough sleeping in 94% of cases.
- Piloted the co-locating of housing options officers within the i-rock service, a drop in mental health service for young people aged 14 to 25.
- Committed the first round of investment in council-owned emergency accommodation

Improve access to good quality, well managed accommodation in the private rented sector

- Continued to lease private sector housing through our Social Lettings Agency
- Continue to ensure standards are maintained through our Selective licensing scheme
- Bring long term empty homes back into use as social housing through our Coastal Space Partnership. Phase 2 completed and phase 3 underway
- 209 new affordable homes created
- 508 long term empty homes (2 plus years) brought back into use
- Brought 884 private sector dwellings in line with the required standard
- Secured additional funding through the Accessing the Private Rented Sector Scheme to support households living in emergency accommodation to find a new home
- Given interest-free loans for rent in advance and deposits provided to homeless households to access new accommodation in the private sector
Work jointly to deliver quality housing and support services

- New street community partnership formed to improve co-ordination between support and enforcement services
- Regular meetings of the Hastings and Support Services Group (HASS) to monitor progress against our strategic priorities
- Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) delivered in partnership with voluntary and statutory agencies, including implementing an emergency night shelter at Christ Church, St Leonards
- Hastings Borough Council lead work across the five local housing authorities and statutory partners to develop new protocols for the duty to refer, which was introduced in October 2018
- New referral process agreed for community based support services
- Used funding from Hastings and Rother Clinical Commissioning Group’s programme to reduce health inequalities, to improve services for rough sleepers
- New Care Leaver Pathway developed and implemented
- Regular meetings of the Landlords Forum
- Successful co-location of floating support officers which has improved services for clients with multiple and complex needs living in emergency accommodation to access long term housing.
- Ongoing work with supported accommodation providers to improve move-on options for clients.
Corporate Plan

The council’s corporate plan includes a key programme of work to tackle homelessness and disadvantage. This states that we will continue our work to reduce homelessness in the town and develop a new homelessness strategy.

Impact of Austerity

Local authorities are experiencing growing financial pressures as a result of changes to the way we are funded. Rising demand for homelessness services, particularly emergency housing, have a major financial impact on the council.

The council is continuing to look at all areas of our spending to see if services can be delivered more cost effectively. We are also exploring ways to generate additional income.

East Sussex County Council is doing the same across the whole county. Other public services also have to review their financial commitments.

This may impact on the delivery of the support services available. It is very challenging as many vulnerable households in housing need rely on these services. This means that, in some cases, only the most in need will have access to these services. This will leave a gap in the provision for more universal services to be provided.

Partnership working

East Sussex Housing Options Officers Group (ESHOG)

Hastings, Eastbourne, Lewes, Rother and Wealden councils are members of ESHOG.

This is a strategic group reporting to the East Sussex Chief Executives Group on the delivery of housing and homelessness services across the county.

ESHOG is responsible for reporting to the East Sussex Chief Executives Group on the delivery of housing and homelessness services across the county.

The group is chaired by Hastings Borough Council’s Assistant Director for Housing and Built Environment.

Rough Sleeping Initiative Strategic Board

The strategic board brings together senior level representatives of health, mental health, social care, substance misuse and housing professionals.

The board meets every six months and is chaired by the Assistant Director for Adult Social Care at East Sussex County Council.

The purpose of the board is to ensure that learning from the rough sleeping initiative informs the design of future service delivery for vulnerable groups.
The strategic board also plays a key role in identifying and securing alternative sources of funding, to ensure the long term sustainability of these activities.

**Hastings Street Community Partnership**
This partnership co-ordinates work across statutory and voluntary sector partners to address issues facing the street community, including rough sleepers. The meetings enable partners to identify any gaps in provision and avoid duplicating activities.

**Housing and Support Services (HASS)**
This is a multi-agency board which includes statutory and voluntary sector partners. This group is responsible for overseeing the delivery of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and action plan.

**East Sussex Better Together**
The East Sussex Better Together Alliance is a partnership of organisations working together. It plans and delivers health and care in Eastbourne, Hailsham, Seaford, Hastings, Rother and surrounding areas.

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**Working with the voluntary sector**
Hastings has a strong voluntary sector presence and the council is working together with these services. Together we want to improve support for homeless households and rough sleepers.

The services include:
- Citizens Advice
- Seaview Project
- Fulfilling Lives
- Hastings Voluntary Action
- Snowflake Night Shelter
- Hastings Advice and Representation Centre
- Brighton Housing Trust

Many of these organisations are members of the Housing and Support Services (HASS) group.
Accommodation in Hastings

Table 1 below shows the tenure of accommodation in Hastings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TENURE</th>
<th>NUMBER OF UNITS IN 2011</th>
<th>% OF TOTAL STOCK</th>
<th>NUMBER OF UNITS IN 2019</th>
<th>% OF TOTAL STOCK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Owner occupier</td>
<td>22,706</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>15,636</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social housing</td>
<td>6,181</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>5,990</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private rented sector</td>
<td>11,863</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>13,342</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When compiling this information, Shelter used census data as well as the latest information from the YouGov survey.
Social Housing

There is a limited supply of social housing in Hastings and the size of this sector has shrunk slightly over recent years. Turnover of social housing units is also low, at 0.92% of stock.

There are currently 1742 households on the housing register (the waiting list for social housing).

The council operates a choice-based lettings approach to allocate social housing. This means that people on the housing register can bid for suitable properties when they are advertised.

How people on the housing register are prioritised is set out in the Sussex Homemove Allocation Scheme. Households on the housing register are given a priority banding from A – D, depending on their circumstances.

The average waiting time for social housing has increased from 341 days in 2016/17 to 537 days in 2018/19. However, waiting time for some types of housing can be much longer.

The table below sets out the number of properties that were let between 1 April 2018 and 31 March 2019:

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SIZE</th>
<th>BAND A</th>
<th>BAND B</th>
<th>BAND C</th>
<th>BAND D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. waiting</td>
<td>No. of lets</td>
<td>No. waiting</td>
<td>No. of lets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 bed</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 bed</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 bed</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 bed</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 bed</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

April 2018 and 31 March 2019:
The council carried out a short-term review of its allocation scheme in 2018 to ensure it reflected the requirements of the new Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. However, we will need to carry out a full review in 2019/20.

Given the limited availability of social housing, it is often not a viable solution for homeless households.
Private Rented Sector

The private rented sector has grown considerably over recent years. Table 3 below shows a breakdown of private rented sector properties by ward.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WARD</th>
<th>NO. OF PRIVATE RENTED PROPERTIES</th>
<th>% OF HOUSING STOCK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Braybrooke</td>
<td>1021</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castle</td>
<td>1898</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central St Leonards</td>
<td>2433</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gensing</td>
<td>1666</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Hastings</td>
<td>691</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ore</td>
<td>675</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tressell</td>
<td>730</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashdown</td>
<td>409</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baird</td>
<td>361</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conquest</td>
<td>465</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hollington</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maze Hill</td>
<td>571</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Helens</td>
<td>442</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silverhill</td>
<td>637</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West St Leonards</td>
<td>512</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wishing Tree</td>
<td>441</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>13,342</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is expected that growth in the private rented sector will continue in the short term.

However, changes to the energy efficiency standards for rented properties and tax incentives for private landlords may lead to increase instability in this sector in the longer term.

Although the size of private rented sector has increased, it has also become more and more difficult for homelessness households to access.

Some of the reasons for this are:

- **Affordability** – local housing allowance have not stayed in line with rising rents in the private rented sector
- **Tenancy sustainment** – landlords are increasingly reluctant to accept tenants, who they perceive to be high risk. This includes people with a poor history of tenancy sustainment
- **Low turnover** – as house prices have increased in Hastings, people are renting for longer in the private sector, which has reduced turnover of properties
Supported Accommodation

There are currently 150 units of supported accommodation in Hastings. There are different types of supported accommodation, such as:

- providing the support older people need to maintain their independence
- providing emergency refuge and support for victims of domestic violence, should be helping them to stabilise their lives and engage with other services
- working with homeless people with complex and multiple needs to help them make the transition from life on the street to a settled home, education, training or employment
- supporting people with mental health needs to stabilise their lives, recover and live more independently
- supporting people with learning disabilities in the longer term to maximise their independence and exercise choice and control over their lives.

Supported accommodation in Hastings is delivered by SAHA, Refuge, YMCA, Sanctuary Supported Living and Brighton Housing Trust. Approximately half of the supported accommodation units in Hastings are commissioned by East Sussex County Council.

During the last round of funding reductions to adult social care, the number of supported accommodation units was reduced by 12 beds.

Supported accommodation is usually temporary. It can often be difficult for people leaving supported accommodation to find a new home, especially in the private rented sector. This reduces the turnover of units and restricts access for people who require a higher level of support.
Supply of new accommodation

Table 4 below shows the number of new market and affordable homes completed over the past 3 years.

Supply of new housing in Hastings has not kept pace with rising demand. Because of this, the council continues to explore new ways to increase the supply of new accommodation and make the best use of existing stock.

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>YEAR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2016/17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hastings</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Sussex</td>
<td>645</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(excluding Hastings)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Affordability

Table 5 below shows the average private rents for different types of private rented accommodation in Hastings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NUMBER OF BEDROOMS</th>
<th>MEDIAN PRIVATE RENTS (PER MONTH)</th>
<th>% INCREASE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Room</td>
<td>£385</td>
<td>£459</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 bed</td>
<td>£450</td>
<td>£475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 bed</td>
<td>£580</td>
<td>£650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 bed</td>
<td>£750</td>
<td>£825</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 or more bed</td>
<td>£998</td>
<td>£995</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Average private rents in Hastings have increased by 8% between 2016 and 2018, compared to a 7% increase across East Sussex and a 4% increase nationally.

Higher private rents have created an affordability gap for benefit dependent households. Table 6 below shows the gap between local housing allowance and current median rents in the private sector.

Table 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NUMBER OF BEDROOMS</th>
<th>LOCAL HOUSING ALLOWANCE (PER WEEK)</th>
<th>MEDIAN PRIVATE RENTS (PER CALENDAR MONTH)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Room</td>
<td>£69.77</td>
<td>£368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 bed</td>
<td>£92.05</td>
<td>£525</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 bed</td>
<td>£120.29</td>
<td>£675</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 bed</td>
<td>£159.95</td>
<td>£875</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 or more beds</td>
<td>£195.62</td>
<td>£1,100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This trend is particularly important in Hastings due to the size of the private rented sector. Not only are low-income and benefit dependant households more likely to be priced out of the private rented market, they have fewer options to secure alternative accommodation.
Who uses our homelessness services?

The number of people presenting to the council as homeless has remained relatively stable over the past 3 years.

In 2018/19, slightly more females presented to the council as homeless (51% of presentations).

In 2018/19, around 72% of the individuals who presented as homeless after their friends were no longer willing to accommodate them were male.

Over half of homelessness presentations are by people aged 35 or under. People in this age range present as homeless following eviction by a family member or friend. This group is over-represented in homelessness presentations, compared to the community as a whole.

Loss of accommodation in the sector continues to be the most common reason people present as homeless.

We are seeing people with more complex needs than before. In 2018/19, 18% of people were accepted as being in priority need due to their mental health. However, many more reported a mental health support need. While reported levels of anxiety and depression amongst homeless households are much higher.

The number of presentations resulting in a placement in emergency housing has increased sharply.

This is partly due to the legislative changes introduced by the Homelessness Reduction Act. This has increased local authorities duties to provide emergency accommodation. It also suggests that homeless households are finding it more difficult to access alternative accommodation.

The council has not received any homelessness presentations by members of the gypsy or travelling community over the past 3 years.
Why are people homeless?

Table 7 below shows the 5 most common reasons people presented as homeless to the council in 2016/17, as percentage of the total number of presentations.

### Table 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRESENTATION REASON</th>
<th>% OF PRESENTATIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Loss of rented or tied accommodation due to: Termination of assured shorthold tenancy</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other relatives or friends no longer willing or able to accommodate</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents no longer willing or able to accommodate</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence : Violent breakdown of relationship, involving partner</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of rented or tied accommodation due to:</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 2018/19, around 72% of the individuals who presented as homeless after their friends were no longer willing to accommodate them were male.

### Table 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRESENTATION REASON</th>
<th>% OF PRESENTATIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>End of Private Rented Sector Tenancy</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family no longer willing to accommodate</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship with partner ended (non-violent breakdown)</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Abuse</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends no longer willing to accommodate</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8 below shows the 5 most common reasons people presented as homeless to the council in 2018/19, as percentage of the total number of presentations.

In 2018/19, around 72% of the individuals who presented as homeless after their friends were no longer willing to accommodate them were male.
### Age range
Table 9 below shows the number of people presenting to the council for homelessness advice by age.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE RANGE</th>
<th>NUMBER OF PRESENTATIONS IN 2016/17</th>
<th>NUMBER OF PRESENTATIONS IN 2017/18</th>
<th>NUMBER OF PRESENTATIONS IN 2018/19</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16 to 25</td>
<td>472</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>399</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 to 35</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>323</td>
<td>393</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 to 45</td>
<td>332</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46 to 55</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56 to 65</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66 to 75</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76 to 87</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>1722</td>
<td>1215</td>
<td>1456</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Homelessness Acceptances
Table 10 below shows the number of cases the council accepted a homeless duty to.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>NUMBER OF ACCEPTANCES</th>
<th>AS A PROPORTION OF HOMELESS PRESENTATIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016/17</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017/18</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018/19</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It should be noted that the reduced number of decisions in 2018/19 is due to the new prevention and relief duties which were introduced by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, which must be completed before a homelessness application can be accepted.
Emergency Accommodation

In Hastings the number of people living in emergency accommodation has increased by 192% over the past 3 years, from:

- 51 at the end of 2016/17
- to 149 at the end of 2018/19

Across East Sussex, the number of people living in emergency accommodation has increased by 90% over the same period. This trend has been particularly acute in urban areas.

Eastbourne has also seen a 214% increase in the number of households living in emergency housing.

The average length of stay in emergency accommodation has also increased to 111.4 days in Hastings, compared to 87.99 across East Sussex.

There has also been a change in the type of households that we are now seeing. There has been a recent increase in the number of families living in emergency accommodation. They now account for around half of our total placements.

Rough Sleeping

The number of people rough sleeping on a typical night in Hastings has increased by 85% over the past 3 years, from 26 people in 2016 to 48 in 2018. This compares to a 13% increase nationally, and a fall of 2% in the South East over the same period.

The number of people rough sleeping can vary considerably throughout the year, with some rough sleepers also spending time sofa-surfing or moving between other towns.

Around 14% of rough sleepers in Hastings are women and 58% of rough sleepers have a local connection to the town, which is similar to other areas.

The average age of rough sleepers in Hastings is higher than other parts of East Sussex. Only 4% were aged 25 or under.
Impact of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

The council has been monitoring the effect of the new Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 since it came into force in April 2018. Below is a summary of performance for the new duties.

**Prevention Duty**
The council accepted a prevention duty to 292 people in 2018/19, achieving a positive outcome in 121 cases.

**Relief Duty**
The council accepted a relief duty to 166 people in 2018/19, achieving a positive outcome in 86 cases.

**Duty to Refer**
Hastings Borough Council has led work across the 5 local housing authorities in East Sussex to develop a consistent approach to the new duty to refer.

We have worked with our statutory partners so that the different teams are able to identify someone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness as soon as possible. They are referred to us for advice and support.

Joint protocols are now in place between the agencies and the housing authorities. The council has also introduced an online form for professionals to use when they have identified someone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness.

The chart below sets out the number of referrals received by Hastings Borough Council since the duty was introduced in October 2018.
Services for homeless people

Housing Options
The council’s housing options service is made up of:

- one housing options manager post
- two team leaders
- nine housing options officers.

They provide advice and guidance and work with homeless households through the prevention and relief duties. This is until a decision is made on their case.

The team will issue decisions in accordance with the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by subsequent Acts).

The Housing Options team also provides financial support to homeless households to secure new accommodation or help them to keep their existing tenancy, if possible.

This support includes interest free loans for:

- Rent in advance and deposits
- Tenancy sustainment (for example, clearing rent arrears)

Emergency Accommodation
Under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, councils must also provide emergency accommodation to homeless households who they believe may have priority need.

Clients also need to meet the relevant immigration and residency conditions.

The council’s temporary accommodation team are responsible for securing housing. They work closely with the housing options officers to manage the placements.

Social Lettings Agency
The council established a Social Lettings Agency in February 2015. The purpose of the Social Lettings Agency is to improve access to good quality, well managed accommodation in the private rented sector.

The Social Lettings Agency currently leases 32 properties from the private rented sector.

The Social Lettings Agency also provides property management services for council-owned emergency accommodation. It also manages a property owned by Hastings Housing Company.
Services for rough sleepers

Outreach
The council part funds a rough sleeper outreach service, which is delivered by the Seaview Project.

The outreach service ensures the council has accurate information about the number of people rough sleeping in the town. It also makes sure that individual rough sleepers are linked with appropriate services as soon as possible.

Specialist Housing Options Officer
The council has employed a specialist housing options officer to working with rough sleepers. The officer is based at the Seaview Project part-time and also carries out street engagement.

The role is responsible for ensuring rough sleepers are able to access homelessness advice.

Severe Weather Emergency Protocol
The council has a Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) with statutory and voluntary sector partners. This is in accordance with national guidance from Homeless Link.

This protocol, which is reviewed each year, has two key aims:

1. To ensure that no one dies on the streets due to extreme weather
2. To ensure that every effort is made to engage with individuals during the extreme weather period so that they can access appropriate services

The council has lead successful work across the county to secure additional grant funding to improve services for rough sleepers.

Recent projects include:

Housing and Wellbeing Hub at Seaview
This is an open access service with different agencies present every Thursday morning. Services include:

- housing advice
- St John’s Ambulance
- CGL substance misuse worker
- street triage mental health team
- and HomeWorks

It makes sure that people who are rough sleeping can access all these services in one place.

Breakfast and lunch is available, as well as washing facilities.

The project is funded as part of the Clinical Commissioning Group’s programme to reduce health inequalities.
Sussex Rough Sleeping Prevention Project
(March 2017 to March 2019)
Hastings Borough Council led a partnership project across the five local housing areas. The project was set up to deliver intensive homelessness support to people at high risk of rough sleeping.

Often these individuals had experienced a traumatic life event or had identified mental health or substance dependency needs.

The project carried out 282 interventions and successfully prevented rough sleeping in 94% of cases.

The project team was co-located within the Job Centres, local food banks and charities. This enabled direct referral routes for people at risk of rough sleeping.

Project officers also had relatively small caseloads, which meant they were able to deliver quick responses and an intensive level of support.

The project was funded by the Department for Communities and Local Government.

Hastings and Eastbourne Rough Sleeping Initiative
(June 2018 – March 2020)
Hastings and Eastbourne Councils developed a joint project to improve access to statutory services. It provides temporary accommodation and long term housing solutions for the most entrenched rough sleepers. This service is available in both towns.

The project has provided accommodation for 44 former rough sleepers, as at August 2019, and is continuing to deliver intensive wrap around support.

It is funded by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government, until 31 March 2020.

Rapid Rehousing Pathway
(March 2019 – March 2020)
Hastings Borough Council led a successful bid on behalf of the five East Sussex Housing authorities. This project works with rough sleepers with low / medium level and support needs. It also supports people at high risk of rough sleeping. The purpose of the project is to help these groups access new accommodation.

The project is based on a supported lettings model. The team provide ongoing support to individuals to help reduce the risk of them returning to rough sleeping in the future.

Since it began, the project has successfully achieved:

- 7 relief interventions for rough sleepers
- and 5 preventions
Young People
The council also part funds a Youth Homelessness and Accommodation Manager. This is in partnership with the five local housing authorities in East Sussex and the County Council’s Children’s Services.
This role provides strategic oversight of homelessness issues for 16 to 17 year olds and care leavers. It also co-ordinates partnership work to prevent homelessness and secure new accommodation options for young people.

Community Based Support
East Sussex County Council commission a community based support service for homeless households. It provides additional advice and support to help people secure new accommodation.

Syrian Resettlement Programme
The district and borough councils within East Sussex have all offered to assist the government in resettling between 200 and 260 Syrian Vulnerable Persons (SVPs) by 2020.
This support is given by the Syrian Resettlement Programme (SRP).
40 Syrian Refugees will be resettled in each local authority area in East Sussex. Hastings Borough Council committed to resettle an additional 60 people if possible.
Hastings Borough Council will meet its target to resettle 100 individuals in summer 2019.
Across East Sussex SRP has now settled a total of 192 people since the beginning of the programme.
How are the council’s homelessness services funded?

Our housing options and temporary accommodation team deliver the services we have to provide by law.

Around 60% of the staff are funded through the council’s core budget.

The other 40% is funded through grant programmes.

We have enhanced our homelessness prevention activity using our Flexible Homelessness Support Grant funding. The grant has also been used to add to the tools we have to prevent homelessness, for example through rent in advance and deposits.

Without these additional resources the council would not be able to meet its statutory duties under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

If this funding was no longer available, our successful preventions would reduce and the cost of delivering homelessness services would increase.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Funding Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40%</td>
<td>core funding (HBC)</td>
<td>£1,191,508</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31%</td>
<td>Flexible Homelessness Support Grant (MHCLG)</td>
<td>£899,258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2%</td>
<td>Homelessness Prevention Grant (MHCLG)</td>
<td>£71,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1%</td>
<td>Reducing Health Inequalities (CCG)</td>
<td>£20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14%</td>
<td>Rough Sleeping Initiative (MHCLG)</td>
<td>£412,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3%</td>
<td>Rapid Rehousing Pathway (MHCLG)</td>
<td>£88,571</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Accessing the Private Rented Sector (MHCLG)</td>
<td>£133,875</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3%</td>
<td>Community Partnership Fund (HBC)</td>
<td>£96,737</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1%</td>
<td>H-Clic Grant (MHCLG)</td>
<td>£5,443</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Population of East Sussex

The population of East Sussex is projected to increase by more than 55,000 between 2017 and 2032, to 607,000.

The number of households is expected to increase by 14.4%, while the population is projected to increase by 10.0%.

The over 65s now represent a quarter of the county’s population and are projected to make up nearly a third of all people by 2032.

All elderly age groups are expected to increase in size, with the number of very elderly people aged 85 and over expected to increase by 73%, from around 21,800 in 2017 to 37,800 in 2032.

It is projected that there will be a marginal decline in the working age population (18-64) of 0.7%, from 305,700 to 303,700 people in 2032.

The number of older households (aged 65 and over) is projected to increase by 40% by 2032, while middle-aged households (aged 35-64) will barely change in number (up 1%), and the number of households headed by younger people aged 15-34 is expected to fall by 10%.

Population projections between 2017 and 2032

This chart below shows the 2017-based population projections (dwelling-led) for the period 2017 to 2032.

These population projections (previously called policy-based projections) are constrained to reflect the number of extra dwellings being planned for future years by local authorities in East Sussex.

This sees the most up to date housing provision figures available as in April 2019, provided by each borough and district.

They are also based on the latest 2017 data on population estimates, births, deaths and migration released by ONS in June 2018.

Further population growth will increase pressure on housing and homelessness services. It is therefore essential that the council continues its work to increase supply of new accommodation and make best use of existing stock.
Strategic Priorities

The findings of the homelessness review, together with our ongoing work with partners have helped inform the priorities for the new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.

The 3 priority areas are:

- Reduce rough sleeping
- Minimise our use of emergency accommodation, by improving access to housing solutions
- Adapt our services to meet local needs