

# Homelessness Review 2018

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# INTRODUCTION

## What is Homelessness?

1. There are several ways in which a person can be legally defined as homeless or threatened with homelessness:
  - no accommodation available in the UK or abroad
  - no legal right to occupy the accommodation or are unable to secure entry
  - unreasonable to continue to occupy accommodation
  - violence from any person
  - living in a moveable structure but has no place to put this
2. Homelessness can include:
  - Staying with family or friends – often referred to as ‘sofa-surfing’
  - Living in unsuitable conditions
  - Staying in a hostel, night shelter or bed & breakfast
  - At risk of violence or abuse in their home
  - Entrenched rough sleeping

## Why are we carrying out a review of homelessness?

3. The Homelessness Act 2002 places a duty on all local housing authorities to carry out a review of homelessness and homelessness service provision for their area, and, in consultation with local partners and stakeholders, formulate and publish a homelessness strategy based on the results of that review, every five years. The review helps us to understand the levels of homelessness, reasons for homelessness and the type of services we need to provide to enable us to support and assist households in the district.
4. The last review was undertaken in 2013 with Housing and Homelessness Strategy published in 2014.

## Overview of homelessness duties

### Homelessness Reduction Act

5. The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 makes substantial changes to local authorities’ duties under Part 7 – these duties came into force on 3 April 2018. The main changes the Act has implemented on local authorities’ homelessness duties include:
  - a strengthened duty to provide advisory services, particularly in relation to certain groups who are most vulnerable to homelessness;
  - an extension of the period during which an applicant is considered ‘threatened with homelessness’ from 28 to 56 days;
  - a new duty to assess all eligible applicants’ cases (not just those unintentionally homeless and in priority need) and agree a personalised housing plan;
  - a new duty to prevent homelessness for all eligible applicants that are threatened with homelessness; and

- a new duty to relieve homelessness for all eligible applicants over a period of 56 days, during which time a local authority should take reasonable steps to help them find suitable accommodation (for a minimum period of six months). This duty stops short of requiring a local authority to provide accommodation for applicants not in priority need;
- a new duty on certain public bodies to refer service users who they think may be homeless or threatened with homelessness to a housing authority, subject to obtaining the person's consent.

6. These changes are likely to have an impact on local authority resources:

- The time that households are to be considered threatened with homeless is changing from 28 to 56 days. This will increase the number of households for whom local authorities are required to make detailed and resource intensive homeless investigations.
- The Act will require local authorities to fulfil a new 'duty to assess' and produce individual personalised housing plans. The introduction of these duties has meant that local authorities have had to provide enhanced levels of support through earlier and more thorough assessment than previously.
- Local authorities now have a duty to accommodate temporarily those households who are judged to have made themselves homeless intentionally.

7. It is likely there will be more reviews and legal challenges relating to the increased number of duties local authorities have to fulfil and, therefore, will be reviewed and challenged more frequently through the Courts. A detailed description of each of the duties is set out at Appendix 1.

8. The governing legislation for homelessness in England can be found in Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended). Where an applicant is eligible for assistance (mainly based on their immigration status), the Act sets out the local authority duties depending on whether the local authority is satisfied that an applicant is homeless, in priority need, and has not made themselves intentionally homeless through a deliberate act.

9. A local authority in England will only have full rehousing duty if all three of these criteria are met.

10. Under the new duty to relieve homelessness, local authorities have an interim duty to secure accommodation for any homeless applicant who is likely to be in priority need pending the completion of an assessment of their personal circumstances.

11. For an applicant who is homeless and in priority need, but who is deemed to have made themselves intentionally homeless, a local authority has a duty to secure accommodation for their occupation for such period as they consider will give them a reasonable opportunity of securing accommodation for their occupation.

12. The new Homelessness Reduction Act allows local authorities to discharge homelessness duties into the private rented sector, using standard assured short hold tenancies of 6 months.

13. A local authority may refer an applicant to another authority if they establish that they do not have a local connection with their area. Local connections are usually related to residence, work or family.

### **Scope of the review**

14. The review aims to understand homelessness in Rother and the wide variety of factors which are impacting upon the unprecedented rise in demand for homelessness services being seen nationally and locally. The review will consider the provision of homelessness services in the context of wider service provision and partnerships across health, social care, criminal justice and voluntary service provision in order to establish whether the needs of homeless people and those at risk of homelessness are being met and where gaps in provision might exist. The findings from this review, along with other evidence and discussion with local partners and stakeholders, which will include a consultation process, will help inform a Housing and Homelessness Strategy for 2019.

### **How the review was undertaken**

15. The review took place during the summer of 2018 using a broad range of information, including:
  - Monitoring outcomes from existing strategy
  - Housing Needs service data
  - Additional data from NOMIS, Census, Rother Strategic Housing Surveys and East Sussex in Figures (ESiF), a local information system that provides the latest statistics on the social, economic and demographic character of East Sussex and its communities.
  - Consultation with local partners and stakeholders
  - A Scrutiny & Overview Committee led Task & Finish Group which considered four housing themes:
    - Homelessness
    - The impact of welfare reform
    - Affordable housing
    - Land supply issues

### **Existing strategy**

16. The existing strategy sets out a number of areas for action under 3 strategic aims:
17. Housing and our economy – recognising the contribution housing can have to the wider economy and ensuring we capitalise on opportunities to develop affordable homes which supports job creation. In particular, actions were set out for the following:
  - To have in place planning policies to support the provision of affordable housing
  - To support partners to build more high quality, affordable housing for local people on lower incomes
  - To work with partners to deliver well planned homes that support new jobs planned for the district

18. Housing and our residents – working with residents to meet their housing needs and aspirations, including supporting home ownership ambitions. In particular, actions were set out for the following:

- Increase home ownership through provision of advice and access to mortgage schemes, self-build and shared ownership schemes
- Help local people to access education, training and employment as a route to better quality housing, raising aspirations and creating more sustainable communities
- Reduce the numbers of households becoming homeless
- Work in partnership to deliver specialist accommodation that meet the requirements of those with support needs or who require adaptations
- Ensure rough sleeping does not become an issue in the district

19. Housing and our community – listening to concerns which have been raised around anti-social behaviour, empty homes and lack of affordable warmth and planning to deliver actions to tackle these. In particular, actions were set out for the following:

- Reduce the number of poor quality private rented sector homes in the district
- Increase access to the private rented housing sector for those in housing need
- Reduce anti-social behaviour and street homelessness
- Reduce fuel poverty (where people have to pay a big part of their income on heating) and cutting carbon emissions
- Reduce the number of empty homes in the district.

## MAIN FINDINGS

20. This review of homelessness in Rother has found the following:

- There has been a significant increase in homelessness applications, most particularly from households with dependent children, living in privately rented accommodation
- Recent counts suggest a significant increase in the numbers of people rough sleeping in the district
- 25% of rough sleepers in Rother are women, compared to 14% nationally
- Temporary accommodation use has increased in line with the levels of homelessness applications
- The use of all types of temporary accommodation has increased, but particularly privately managed self-contained accommodation – mainly used for households with dependent children
- A high number of applicants who require temporary accommodation are being placed outside of the district, a practice which has increased in recent years
- A large portion of homelessness applicants in need of temporary accommodation require it in Bexhill, where we have very little access to this type of accommodation
- Homelessness prevention activity has decreased (most likely due to the lack of access to privately rented accommodations) whilst homelessness is increasing (most likely due to affordability issues in the private rented sector and landlords issuing s21 notices)

- Some privately renting households who are able to cover their current housing costs but unable to access home ownership may be eligible for shared ownership schemes
- There is a need for a range of affordable tenures and size properties across Rother, with around 27% being for 1 bed, 44% for 2 bed, 21% for 3 bed and 7% for 4 bed
- There is a need for single rooms with shared facilities for those impacted by the Housing Benefit single room rate for those aged under 35
- The predominate need for affordable housing is for households unable to meet their own housing costs at target social rent
- Second home ownership is a particular concern in Camber, Icklesham and Rye
- Excess cold and fuel poverty are issues for some Rother households – potentially impacting on housing affordability
- Rother has significantly higher than national levels of people with long term health problems or a disability
- Benefit take up in Rother is slightly higher than nationally, although the highest levels of take-up are for state pension, poor health and disability related benefits
- Whilst most of the district is not particularly affected by deprivation, some areas are in the top 10% and 20% most deprived areas in the country

## NATIONAL CONTEXT

21. Since the last Homelessness review, there have been significant changes which have impacted homelessness and service provision in the District and nationwide.

### **Rough Sleeping Strategy**

22. Published August 2018, the Government’s Rough Sleeping Strategy sets out its ambition of halving rough sleeping by 2022. The strategy is based around three core pillars: Prevention, Intervention, and Recovery.

#### Prevention

23. The first of the three pillars, Prevention, is at the heart of the Governments approach with the focus on providing timely support before someone becomes homeless, for example, ensuring suitable accommodation is available for those leaving prison.

#### Intervention

24. The second pillar, Intervention, sets out how the Strategy will help people who are already in crisis get swift, targeted support to get them off the streets.

#### Recovery

25. The third, Recovery, emphasises how the Government will support people to find a new home quickly and rebuild their lives via a new rapid housing approach.
26. The Strategy puts in place a number of commitments together with £100m of investment over the next two years to tackle rough sleepers and achieve its ambition. The Strategy builds on the programme already underway to address homelessness as a whole, including the Homelessness Reduction Act (detailed above) and the Rough Sleeping Initiative (see below).



## **Rough Sleeping Initiative**

27. The Government have announced a new package of measures to take the Rough Sleeping Initiative forward to achieving its commitment to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and eliminate it altogether by 2027.
28. The new package of measures – which builds on government action to date – includes:
  - a new Rough Sleeping Team made up of rough sleeping and homelessness experts, drawn from, and funded by government departments and agencies with specialist knowledge across a wide-range of areas from housing, mental health to addiction
  - a £30 million fund for 2018 to 2019 with further funding agreed for 2019 to 2020 targeted at local authorities with high numbers of people sleeping rough – a fund to which East Sussex has formed a successful bid. The Rough Sleeping Team will work with these areas to support them to develop tailored local interventions to reduce the number of people sleeping on the streets
  - £100,000 funding to support frontline Rough Sleeping workers across the country to make sure they have the right skills and knowledge to work with vulnerable rough sleepers.
29. In addition, the government is also working with the National Housing Federation to look at providing additional, coordinated move-on accommodation for rough sleepers across the country. This builds on the existing 3,750 ‘clearing house’ places already provided in London.
30. Rother are partners to a successful bid within East Sussex – led by Hastings and Eastbourne Councils – to the Government’s £30 million Targeted Fund to Reduce Rough Sleeping Programme. The funding will provide additional resources locally, including specialist housing, mental health, social care and drug and alcohol professions dedicated to working exclusively with rough sleepers. The funding will also introduce specialist temporary accommodation units and 20 new units of Housing First accommodation (specialist supported accommodation) providing long-term housing solutions to entrenched rough sleepers.

## **Welfare reform**

31. 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 which brings together a range of working age benefits into one payment, including housing benefit; Personal Independence Payments (PIP) which replaces Disability Living Allowance for people aged 16 to 64; new rules to restrict the amount of Housing Benefit working age council or housing association tenants could claim if they are deemed to be under occupying their home; and a new harsher sanctions regime for Job Seekers Allowance.
32. 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.
33. In April 2008 the Government introduced the local housing allowance (LHA) which set a maximum rent that housing benefit can cover for private tenants. The LHA is the rent figure which a set percentage of all of the rents in the market fall below (currently 30<sup>th</sup> percentile),

ensuring that the same percentage of homes is affordable to low income households. In April 2013 the link with local market evidence was broken with LHA 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 and from April 2016 LHA rates were frozen for four years. Rents tend to rise faster than prices (CPI) and these changes have negatively impacted access to the private rental sector to the extent that, according to a recent 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**

34. 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.

### **The cost of Homelessness**

35. An evidence review into the costs of Homelessness was undertaken by DCLG and published in August 2012. The report intended to provide an initial overview of evidence held by government and other organisations, of the magnitude of financial costs from homelessness. A lack of evidence on the number of homeless people interacting with government services meant the report was unable to provide a comprehensive account of the costs, but did provide the evidence currently available and some rough indications of various costs. The report looked at the additional costs to Health and Support services, the justice system, education and local authorities.

#### Health & Support Services

36. According to a Department of Health study, which provides estimates based on 40,500 rough sleepers or those living in a hostel, homeless people are 3.2 times more likely than the general population to be an inpatient admission, at an average cost 1.5 times higher.<sup>1</sup> This implies a gross cost of £76.2m per year, rising to £85.6m when outpatient usage and accident and emergency attendances are added. The net cost (i.e. over and above the costs for the same number of the general population) is estimated at £64m per year.
37. The most prevalent problems are drug and alcohol dependency and mental health problems, suggesting that the more significant costs to health and support services are likely to come from drug and alcohol treatment and mental health services.

#### Justice System and Policing

38. The relationship between homelessness and crime and offending behaviour is complex. Homelessness is more prevalent in the offender population, particularly among ex-prisoners and evidence suggests there is a self-perpetuating cycle between offending and homelessness.
39. The report suggests there is evidence that the experience of being homeless can exacerbate offending behaviour and play a role in reoffending. The resulting costs to the criminal justice system and policing may be significant. For example the total cost to the criminal justice system

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<sup>1</sup> Dept of Health (2010) Healthcare for single homeless people.

of a male convicted of shop-lifting is estimated to be around £3,500, while the total cost of a drug offence conviction is estimated to be around £16,000.<sup>2</sup>

#### Education

40. The report states there is evidence that frequent residential mobility for adverse reasons, such as homelessness, has a negative effect on educational attainment in secondary schools.

#### Local Authorities

41. According to local authority Revenue Outturn Returns to DCLG, English local authorities' net current expenditure on homelessness in 2010-11 totalled almost £345m. Of this around £100m is providing temporary accommodation; £70m homelessness prevention and the remainder the administration of homelessness functions.

## **LOCAL CONTEXT**

### **Impact of Austerity**

1. Local Authorities are experiencing growing financial pressures as a result of changes to funding arrangements. The Council is undertaking reviews and prioritisation of service delivery at a local level; East Sussex County Council (ESCC) is doing the same at a countywide level, likewise other public services are having to review their financial commitments. This may impact on the delivery of support services which many vulnerable households in housing need rely on, meaning in some cases a loss of service or prioritisation, so that only the most in need can access services.

### **Rother Local Strategic Partnership (RLSP)**

43. Rother's Local Strategic Partnership is made up of a number of statutory, business and voluntary partners including:
  - Hastings & Rother Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)
  - Sussex Police
  - East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service
  - East Sussex County Council
  - Rother District Council
  - Sussex Coast College
  - Rother Voluntary Action
  - Hastings & Rother Transport Action Group
  - Business Sector Representative
44. The RLSP has focused its action plan on housing issues and continues to do so in recognition that homelessness and poor quality housing have implications for service delivery for all partners.

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<sup>2</sup> Ministry of Justice cost estimates.

### **East Sussex Better Together – Bringing services together**

45. The East Sussex Better Together (ESBT) Alliance is a partnership of organisations working together to plan and deliver health and care in Eastbourne, Hailsham, Seaford, Hastings, Rother and surrounding areas. By working together, they aim to deliver sustainable health and social care that better meets the needs of local people, offering high quality care at the right time, in the right place.

ESBT aims are to:

- Improve the health and wellbeing of the local population
- Improve care, quality and experience
- Restore and maintain financial balance within our system

46. The Partnership is fostering closer partnerships through engagement and involvement of a number of public sector partners, to include; community pharmacy, the independent sector, housing, and the voluntary and community sector (VCS). This reflects a willingness and commitment to work collaboratively to enhance the provision of locally appropriate support and services.

47. Rother District Council Housing Services, together with Optivo as the major social housing provider in Rother are represented on the steering and locality groups which help to inform the direction of the Partnership; this ensures that the housing needs of residents are considered at every level in decision making related to health and care services.

### **Working with the voluntary sector**

48. Rother has a strong voluntary sector presence and the Council are working with a number of groups, particularly around design and delivery of homelessness and rough sleeper service provision. These include:

- Citizens Advice
- Rother Voluntary Action
- The Pelham CIC
- Street Pastors
- Local churches
- Sussex Community Development Association (SCDA)

49. More recently a number of these organisations have mobilised to form 'HUG' – Homelessness Unity Group. The group is committed to the provision of support and assistance to those living on the street. The Council have been working with the group to design services for severe weather provision and potentially a homelessness hub in Bexhill.

### **Task & Finish Group – a focus on housing**

50. Following a presentation in November 2017 by Opinion Research Services on findings from Rother's Strategic Housing Research Project and a Housing Overview report, the Council's

Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed that a Housing Task and Finish Group be set up to consider the following subject areas:

- land supply issues / development options;
- affordable and social housing delivery;
- homelessness; and
- managing the impact of welfare reforms.

51. Recommendations from the task and finish group will form the basis for consultation on a final Housing and Homelessness Strategy, along with other priorities coming through from the homelessness review, and recommendations from the Rother Housing Strategic Research Report.

## ROTHER

### Tenure balance in Rother

52. Housing tenure nationally is 63.3% owner occupied; 16.7% private rented; 17.6% social rented. This compares to Rother at 73.5% owner occupied; 14% private rented; and 10.4% social rented. (See Figure 1 below) Noticeably the size of the social rented sector in Rother is significantly less than that nationally, which indicates a potential imbalance in housing tenures locally, placing greater pressures on the private rented sector to accommodate our housing need than nationally.

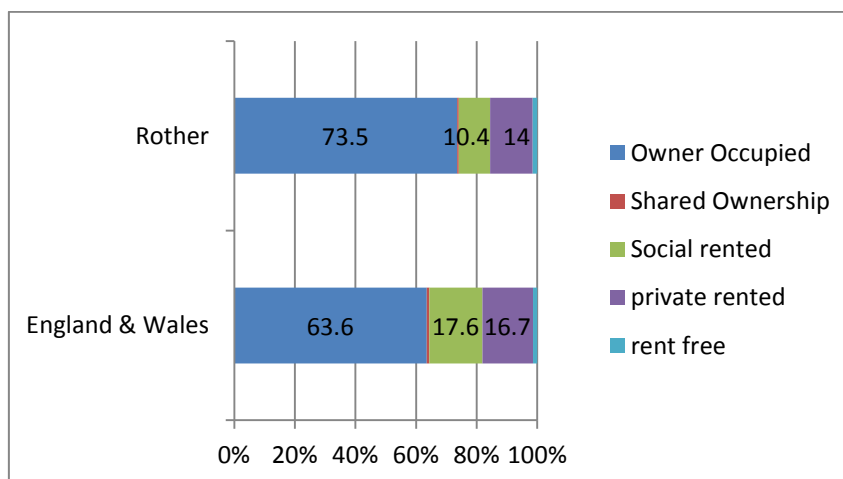


Figure 1: Housing tenure, Rother and England & Wales (Census 2011)

53. Over recent years there has been a distinct shift of housing tenure nationally, more noticeably with the substantial increase of private rented, recorded as 16.7% of total tenure in the 2011 census, up from 11.5% in 2001. This is broadly consistent with the local picture in Rother, with private rent totalling 14% of all housing (2011 Census), or 6,356 households, up from 11.5% in 2001. The recently commissioned Strategic Housing Research Report (SHRR) indicated that this increase in private sector rent has risen to 7,180 households.

- 54. Typically rented properties are of poorer condition than owner occupied accommodation. This is often a feature associated with coastal towns, which have diverse submarkets to include at one end of the spectrum high end luxury accommodation and at the other shared and self-contained accommodation of low quality, often occupied by those on low incomes including those on benefits.
- 55. Rother does have a higher than national average of owner occupation. However numbers of households owning a property with a mortgage have substantially reduced, to levels not recorded since 1981. The SHRR states that the increase in rentals with reduced numbers accessing a mortgage implies that there are many households who would normally have bought a property and have been unable to do so due to the rising cost of market properties. This is perhaps not surprising when considering that 10 x the local average income is required to purchase an average property in Rother (Office of National Statistics).

### Private Rented Housing

- 55. At 14% of the total housing stock, although lower than the national average, private rented housing represents a significant portion of the market in Rother, particularly in urban areas of the district. Access to suitable private rented housing is integral to Rother’s approach to preventing homelessness; we have an obligation to ensure any property we provide access to is in a safe and decent condition. We are aware that the sector has grown in the last decade. At the time of the 2001 census there were 4,393 households in the private rented sector in Rother and the 2011 Census confirmed significant growth, indicating that this had risen to 6,356.
- 56. Figure 2 (below) compares the proportion of private renting households across the various sub-areas of Rother. It is clear that the urban areas have a particularly large private rented sector which is higher than the national average compared to the rural areas of Rother (with Battle an anomaly in this respect).

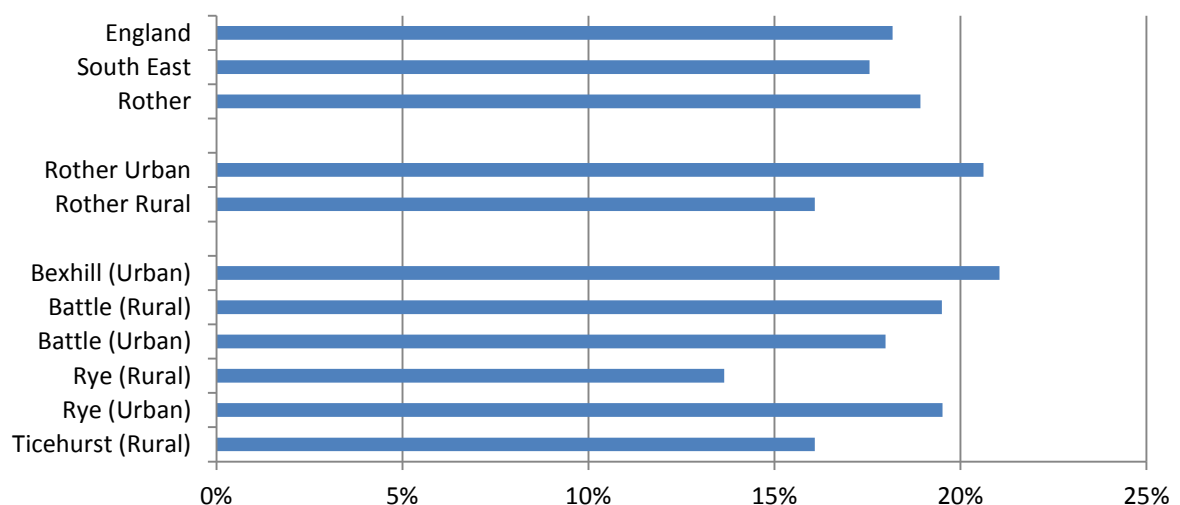


Figure 2: Privately renting households by sub-area, as a proportion of all dwellings (SHRP 2017)

57. The council commissioned Opinion Research Services (ORS) to undertake a housing research project in 2017. This included a stock condition survey of private rented housing in the District. The resulting report (<http://www.rother.gov.uk/housing-research> ) set out issues relating to hazards in the home, and fuel poverty.

Hazards in the Home

58. The overall proportion of dwellings with a Category 1 hazard in the district is 18.5%, which represents a total of around 7,210 dwellings. This compares with 13.2% of dwellings across England. The most prominent Category 1 hazards identified are excess cold (8.1%) and falls on stairs (6.7%), as illustrated in Figure 3 (below).

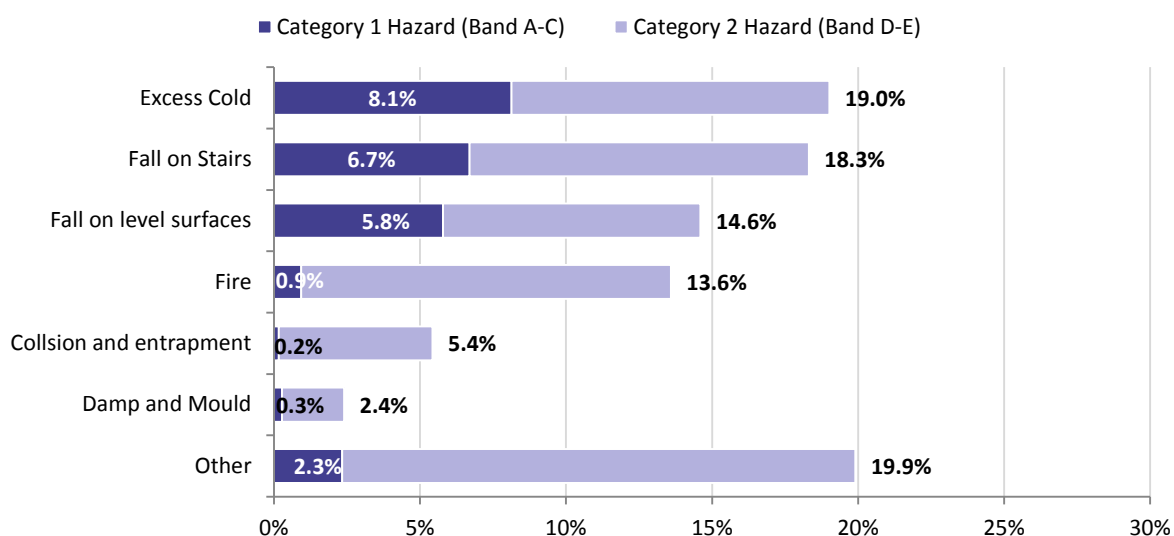


Figure 3: Reasons for failure by Category 1 and Category 2 hazards (SHRP 2017)

Fuel Poverty

59. Using the 'Low Income High Costs' definition of fuel poverty adopted by the government in 2013 and excluding social housing stock, overall the results show that 7.7% of households are in fuel poverty in Rother. This presents issues in terms of energy efficiency and occupier health.

60. Overall there is a slightly higher incidence of fuel poverty in rural than in urban areas, with the highest incidence found in Ticehurst rural. (Figure 4)

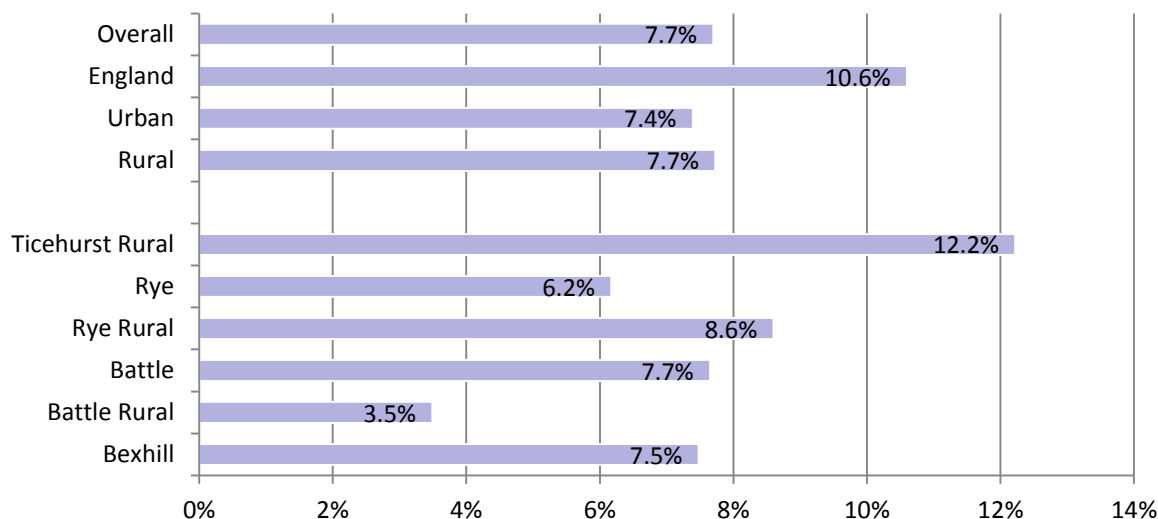


Figure 4: Incidence of fuel poverty by location (SHRP 2017)

### Low Cost Home Ownership

61. Low cost home ownership is regarded as an affordable tenure in both housing and planning terms. Provision of low cost home ownership properties, (usually shared ownership options) is not considered to meet (or very rarely meets) the needs of those on the housing register. This is primarily due to the low income levels of housing register applicants, which would not easily allow savings of a deposit and/or access to a mortgage. Despite this, shared ownership housing addresses a very important area of housing need in the district, as highlighted by the SHRR, which confirmed that potentially 2,470 households in Rother are 'would-be owner occupiers' currently privately renting without support through housing benefit and based on similar housing costs, could afford low cost home ownership options and in turn, release a greater supply of private rented accommodation for those on lower incomes.
62. The SHRR also considers that the lack of low cost home ownership in the district is attributed to the 30% of newly forming households identified from the survey, as expected to leave Rother. This is with the view that while many households may be moving to areas such as Hastings for cheaper rent, many others will be leaving to seek cheaper owner occupation or higher income levels in which to save for a deposit or purchase elsewhere. The loss of economically active households, to include young families in the district, could have serious implications on the long-term demographics and economic sustainability of towns and villages across Rother. Indeed, this is a longstanding trend and this is why the Core Strategy vision and objectives seek to encourage young people to stay in the area through a range of measures, not just in terms of housing types and tenures, but also by broadening employment opportunities.
63. The need for low cost homes such as shared ownership has been further demonstrated by the demand in sales from local residents of Rother to include schemes at Oak Heights in Northiam and more recently at Oakhurst Place in Bexhill and Roselands in Sedlescombe.



## Affordability and Housing Need

64. Under current definitions of affordable housing need and current guidance, there is a need for a range of affordable properties across Rother, with many not able to afford even social/target rent without the assistance from housing benefit. In respect of bed room need, findings show that around 27% have a need for 1 bed properties, 44% for 2 bedrooms, 21% for 3 bedrooms and 7% for 4 bedrooms as set out in Figure 13 below:

		Unable to afford Target Rent	Can afford Target Rent	Can afford Affordable Rent (80% of market median)	TOTAL
<b>25% OF INCOME</b>					
Flat	1 bedroom	329	4	28	361
	2+ bedrooms	180	31	31	241
House	2 bedrooms	264	45	45	354
	3 bedrooms	219	52	24	294
	4 bedrooms	43	14	4	61
	5+ bedrooms	27	9	2	38
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1,061</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>1,349</b>

Figure 4: Affordable housing mix by household affordability (SHRP 2017)

(25% of income) Assuming no Housing Benefit Support to Households (Source: ORS Housing Model. Note: Figures may not sum due to rounding)

65. The predominant need for affordable housing is for households who would be unable to meet their own housing costs at Target Social Rent. However, there are also some households able to afford to cover their own rents on affordable rented properties and they may be suitable for intermediate housing schemes such as shared ownership properties.
66. Additionally, there is a need for low cost, high quality single rooms with shared facilities for those aged under 35 who are constrained by the single room rent for housing benefit.

## Second Homeownership

67. The English Housing Survey reports that 10% of households in Britain own at least one second property and 744,000 properties are used as holiday homes, holiday lets, or for occupation while working.
68. Second home ownership in England is at an all-time high and is crowding out first time buyers adding to the housing shortage and affordability of properties available for local people. Often second homes stand empty for long periods of time, resulting in villages becoming small ghost towns, at risk of increased crime and closure of local amenities such as post offices, schools and

public houses. This has a damaging impact on community cohesion and can distort the demographics of an area as well as local housing markets.

69. In Rother, a total of 1,270 (approx. 3.3%) second homes were recorded in August 2017 (Council Tax records). Figure 5 (below) confirms the villages/towns with the highest level of second homes. Of most concern, is the concentration of second homes in Camber relative to the total number of households, indicating that this area is most likely to see the greatest impact, potentially warranting priority over the allocation of future funding.

	Number of second homes recorded (August 2017)	As a % of total number of homes (based on Census 2011 data)
Bexhill	391	1.9
Camber	229	39.3
Rye	174	8.5
Icklesham	127	9.7

Figure 5: Highest levels of second homes in Rother (Council Tax data)

70. The impact of second homeownership in the UK has now become wide scale, and in response to this the government intervened in 2016 by introducing a stamp duty surcharge. In practice this has meant that those buying a second home must pay an additional 3% more stamp duty than the standard rate. The measure was intended to cool demand for second-home ownership with monies levied redirected back to those communities most affected. This government initiative is known as The Community Housing Fund from which Rother have received a significant amount of funding relative to the rest of East Sussex.

### **Economic factors, health, benefits and deprivation**

#### Economic Factors

71. Rother has lower levels of economic activity (63.4%) in comparison to England and Wales (69.7%) and the South East (71%). This is mainly due to the older population; 22.5% of Rother residents are retired, compared to 13.8% in England and Wales and 13.7% in the South East. Rother has lower than average levels of unemployment at 3.2% compared to 4.4% nationally.

#### Health

72. Rother has significantly higher levels of people with long term health problems or a disability; again this may be a reflection of the older profile of the population. See Figure 6 below:

Type	People with long-term health problem or disability	Day-to-day activities limited a little	Day-to-day activities limited a lot	People without long-term health problem or disability
England and Wales	17.9	9.4	8.5	82.1
South East	15.7	8.8	6.9	84.3
Rother	23.4	12.8	10.7	76.6

Figure 6: Percentage of Residents with limiting long-term illness (Census 2011)

73. A breakdown of the above data by ward areas shows the highest levels of long-term illness and disability are in Bexhill Wards. See Figure 7 below:

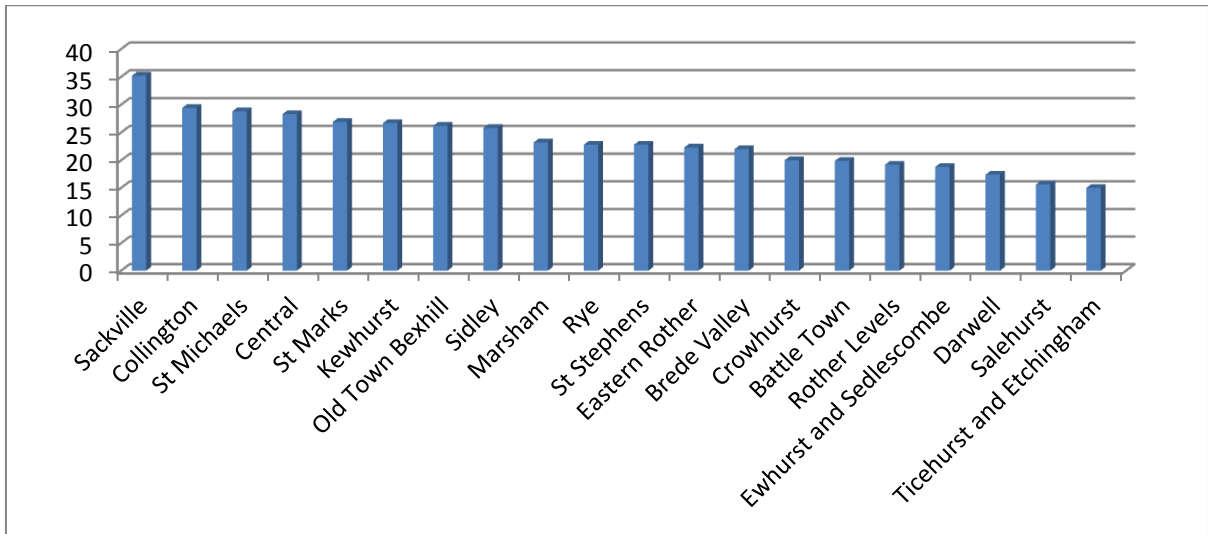


Figure 7: Percentage of Residents with limiting long-term illness broken down by Rother ward (Census 2011)

74. Disabled Facilities Grants are paid under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 for the provision of grant aided adaptations for disabled persons' properties within the UK. A breakdown of Rother grant applications provided in figure 8 below shows an increase from 91 in 2013-14 to 120 applications in 2017-18. During this period DFG spend has increased from £659k to almost £976K.

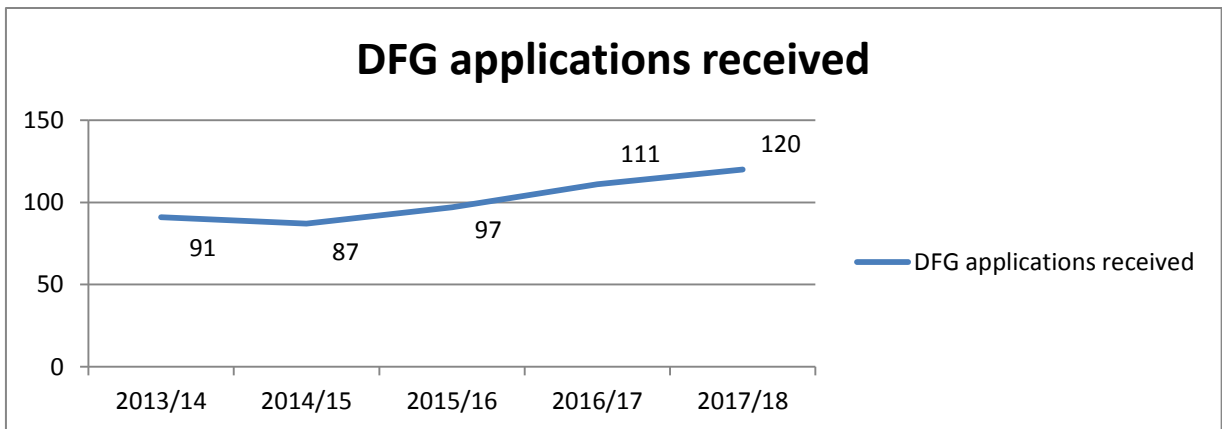


Figure 8: Disabled Facilities grants received 2013-2018 (RDC)

Benefits

75. Benefit take up in Rother is slightly higher than nationally, (Figure 9) although a breakdown of benefit types (Figure 10) shows the highest levels of take up are from poor health and disability related benefits.

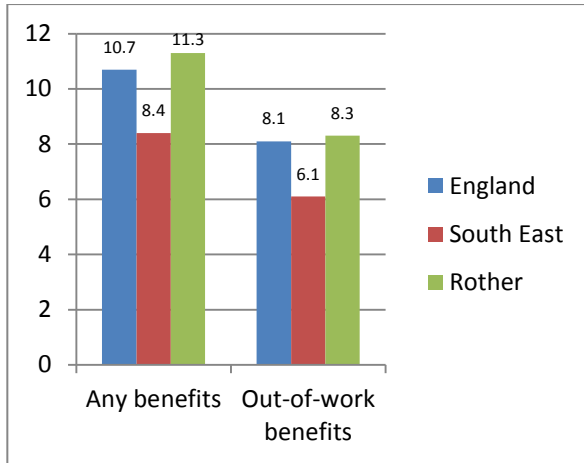


Figure 9: % Benefit take up (2016) (NOMIS/DWP via ESiF)

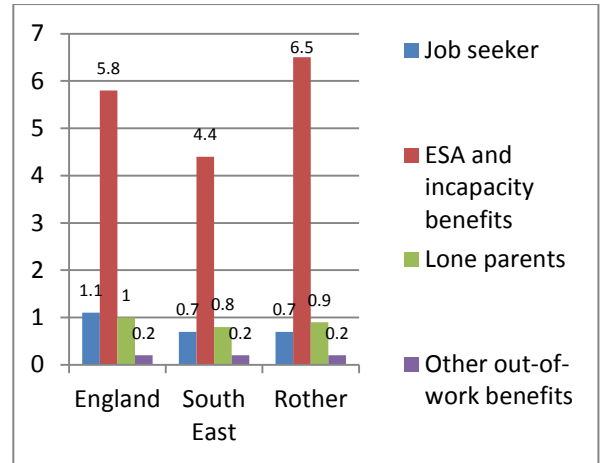


Figure 10: % Benefit take up broken down by benefit type (2016) (NOMIS/DWP via ESiF)

### Deprivation

76. Deprivation is measured in a variety of different ways. The Indices of Deprivation are widely used to analyse patterns of relative deprivation for small areas and to identify local need. They provide a snapshot of conditions in an area, looking at a range of factors including income, employment, education, health, barriers to housing and services, living environment and crime.

### Indices of Deprivation 2015: Index of Multiple Deprivation - Rother

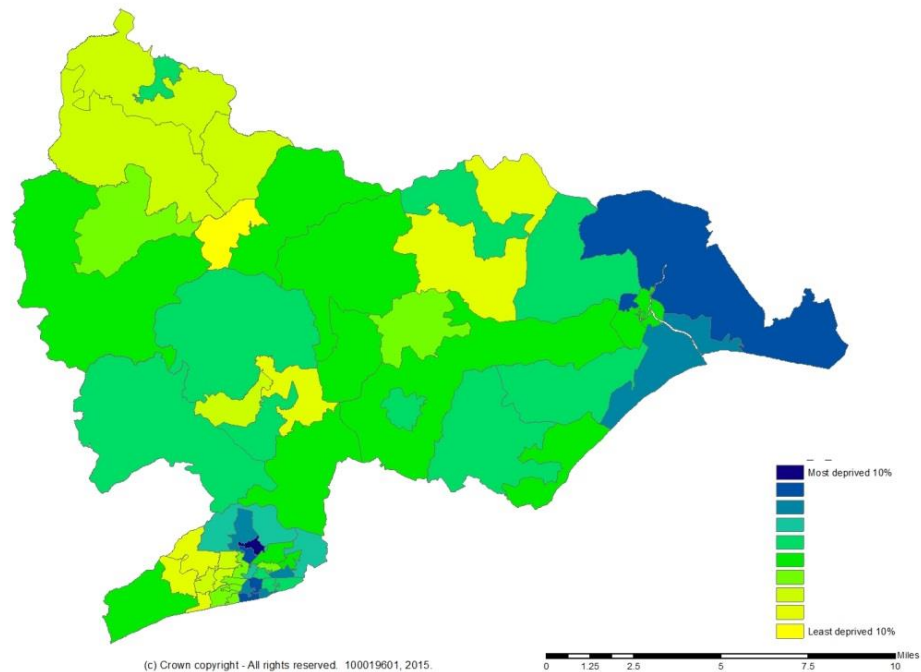


Figure 11 Indices of Deprivation 2015 – Rother (ESiF)

77. The map at Figure 11 shows areas of deprivation in Rother – those shaded dark blue being the most deprived. Whilst most of the district is not particularly affected by deprivation, some

areas are in the top 10% and 20% most deprived areas in the country. These areas are shown in figure 12 below.

Super Output Area	
007E Sidley	10% most deprived
002A Eastern Rother	20% most deprived
004E Rye	20% most deprived
007D Sidley	20% most deprived
011B Central	20% most deprived
011C Central	20% most deprived
002C Rother Levels	20% least deprived
006B Battle	20% least deprived
009B Collington	20% least deprived
009C St Marks	20% least deprived
009C St Marks	20% least deprived
009D St Marks	20% least deprived
001A Salehurst	10% least deprived

Figure 12: Most and least deprived areas in Rother (ESiF)

### Affordable Housing: Supply and Demand

78. There are a number of factors which drive the need for an increase in housing. These include the following:

- a) Increasing population – the projected population in the Rother district is expected to rise by 9,000 between 2011 and 2028. This equates to a 10% increase.
- b) Increasing life expectancy – during the same period, average life expectancy is expected to increase by five years for men and 3.5 years for women.
- c) Reducing average household size – households are expected to reduce from 2.15 in 2015 to 2.10 in 2025. The effect of this is more single person households and consequent under use of housing stock.

79. Added to these drivers are particular circumstances which contribute to a lack of affordable housing to meet local needs. These include:

- a) High demand and low supply
  - i) There are currently (August 2018) 1,396 households registered with the Council in need of affordable rented housing. Highest demand is for one bedroom accommodation, with a total of 678 households currently requiring this size accommodation (see Figure 14 below):

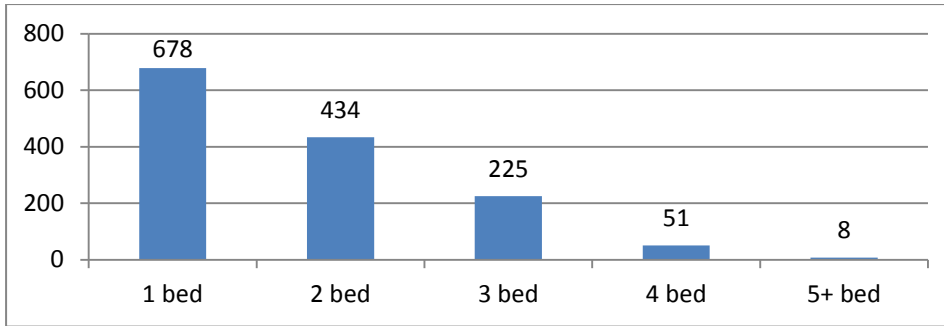


Figure 13: Households on register, broken down by bedroom need (RDC) (August 2018)

80. Of those households on the housing register, we know a high proportion is female and the majority are white British (see Figures 15 and 16 respectively). No households registered are gypsy/traveller; however 97 households declined to provide their ethnicity.

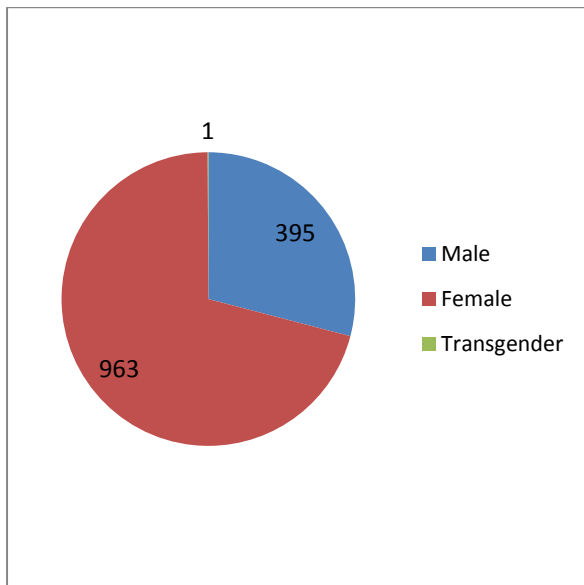


Figure 14: Housing Register profile – Gender (RDC) (August 2018)

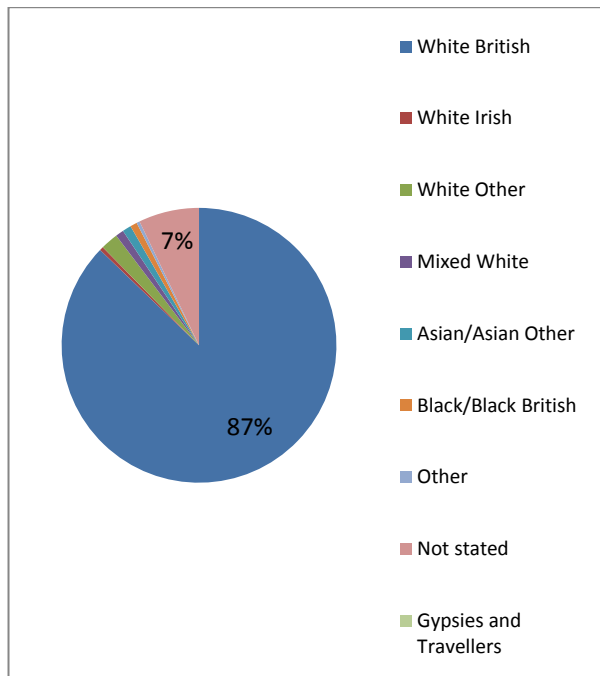


Figure 15: Housing Register profile - Ethnicity (RDC) (August 2018)

81. Figure 17 below shows total supply of affordable housing broken down into new build supply and vacancies from existing stock.

Year	Vacancies	New build	Total
2013 – 14	213	78	291
2014 – 15	164	74	238
2015 – 16	115	107	222
2016 – 17	138	83	221
2017 – 18	146	68	214

Figure 16: Total supply of affordable housing (new build and vacancies), by year (RDC)

81. A significant portion of affordable housing delivery (affordable rented and shared ownership) is dependent on the delivery of private housing schemes. Figure 18 below shows housing delivery

compared to the Local Plan target, broken down by private and affordable housing. The trends in housing delivery in Rother are similar to national trends, showing the ebb and flow of the housing market through economic boom and crash.

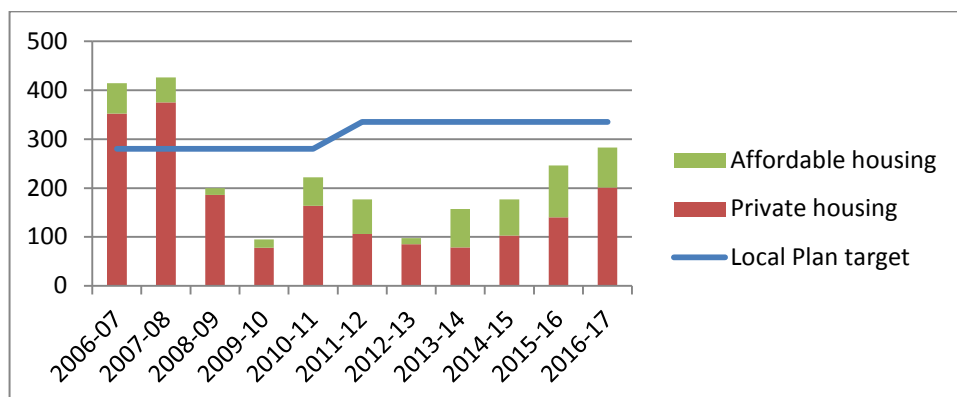


Figure 17: Housing delivery, compared to Local Plan target 2006/7 - 2016/17 (RDC)

82. Although housing delivery for all tenures is increasing, it does not meet the expected Local Plan targets. The circumstances described in this section of the review have led to increasing housing costs, making home ownership and private rental homes inaccessible for many Rother residents. This in turn has meant that demand for affordable social housing for rent and ownership continues to increase, with supply struggling to keep up with this demand, contributing to homelessness, sofa surfing, poor quality living conditions and rough sleeping.

### The Impact of Welfare Reform

83. In Rother there are 48 families who have had their housing benefit capped and the financial loss ranges from 30p to £197.68 per week.
84. Currently 215 working age Rother households are subject to the under occupancy penalty. The shortfall of benefit to rent as a result varies between £12.00 and £28.00 per week. At present 10 of these households are receiving Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) to help with the shortfall in their benefit. This is not however, considered to be a long-term solution, emphasising the need for smaller downsize accommodation.

## HOMELESSNESS

### Homelessness in Rother

85. Statistical data on homelessness in England is compiled by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) from statutory returns which are submitted quarterly by local authorities. The returns contain statistics on statutory homelessness, rough sleeping and homelessness prevention and relief.
86. Figure 19 (below) shows the number of homeless applications made (decisions made) compared to the number of applications accepted (those being eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need) since 2013/14. Applications have increased during this period, reaching a peak of 199 in 2016/17. During the same period accepted applications have been increasing more rapidly, from a 36% acceptance rate during 2013/14 to a 65% acceptance rate

during 2017/18. This could be due to the reduced access to private rented accommodation, which is commonly used to prevent homelessness – where there is no option available to prevent homelessness, an application remains the only option.

87. Another reason for the high levels approaching as homeless is a significant increase in applications from those aged 25 to 44 (see figure 20); these are more likely to be households with dependent children (meaning they have a priority need), living in privately rented accommodation on insecure tenancies. During the same period, loss of assured short-hold tenancy (AST) has also significantly risen (see figure 21). Both of these reasons point to issues with accessing and maintaining tenancies in the privately rented sector which is consistent with national trends as the current leading cause of homelessness.

Year	Homelessness Decisions	Homelessness Accepted	Percentage accepted
2017/18	187	122	65.24%
2016/17	199	110	55.28%
2015/16	178	94	52.81%
2014/15	112	58	51.79%
2013/14	111	40	36.04%

Figure 18: Homelessness application and decision activity by year (P1E)

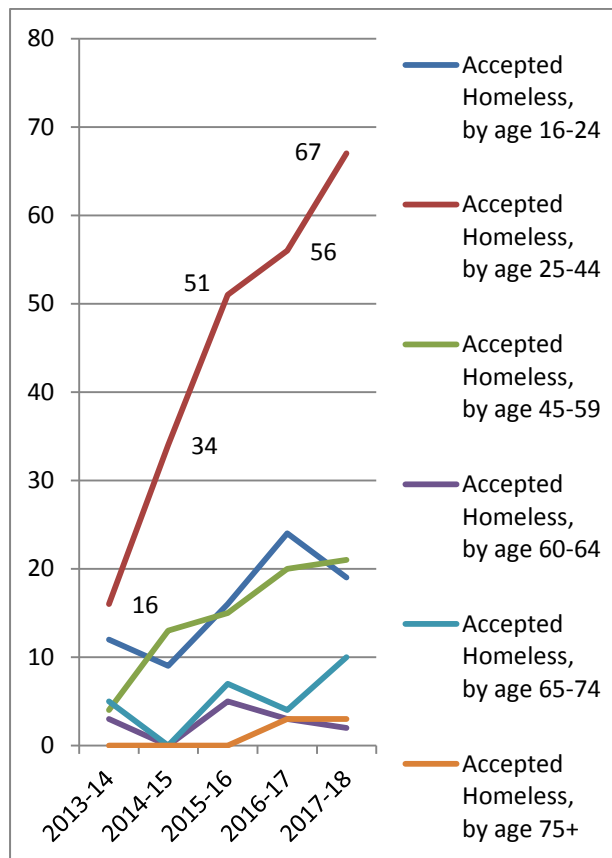


Figure 19: Accepted homeless, by age (P1E)

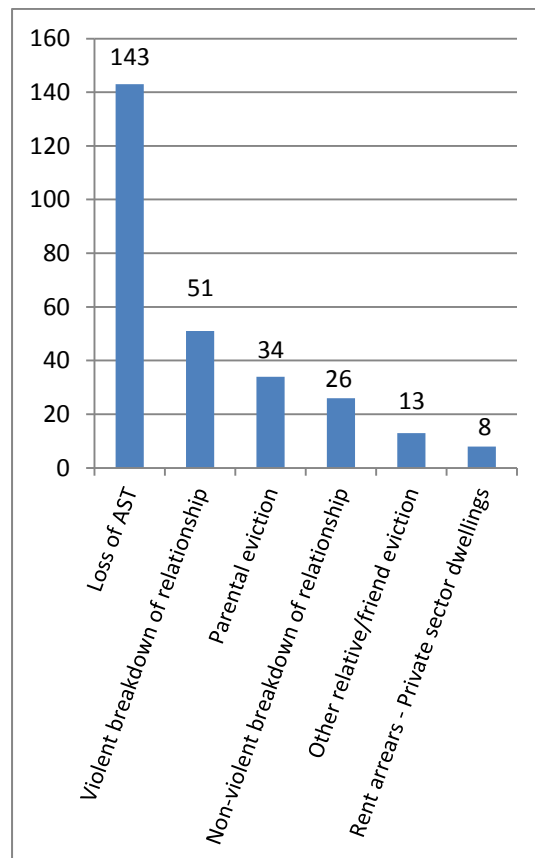


Figure 20: Top 6 reasons for homelessness 2013-17 (P1E)



88. The increasing acceptance rate is shown more starkly in Figure 22 (below), increasing from 40 cases in 2013-14 to 122 in 2017-18. During the same period, numbers of rejected applications have remained fairly stagnant.

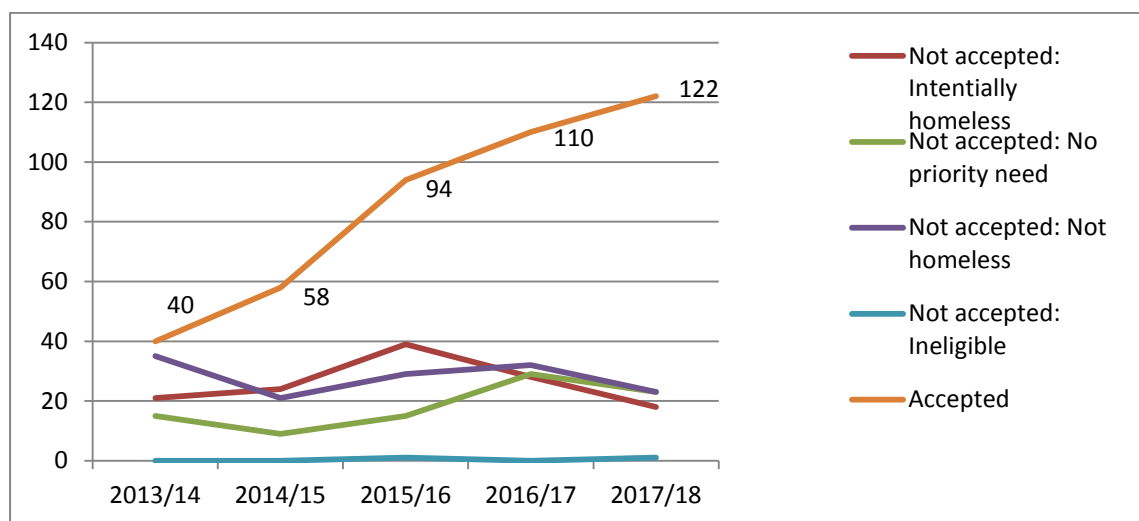


Figure 21: Homelessness applications – decisions (P1E)

89. The Rother data/statistics showing the top reasons for priority need during this period support the evidence so far that families with dependent children in privately rented housing are experiencing homelessness far more frequently than other groups; figure 23 shows the top reasons for priority need in Rother with households with dependent children far outstripping other reasons.

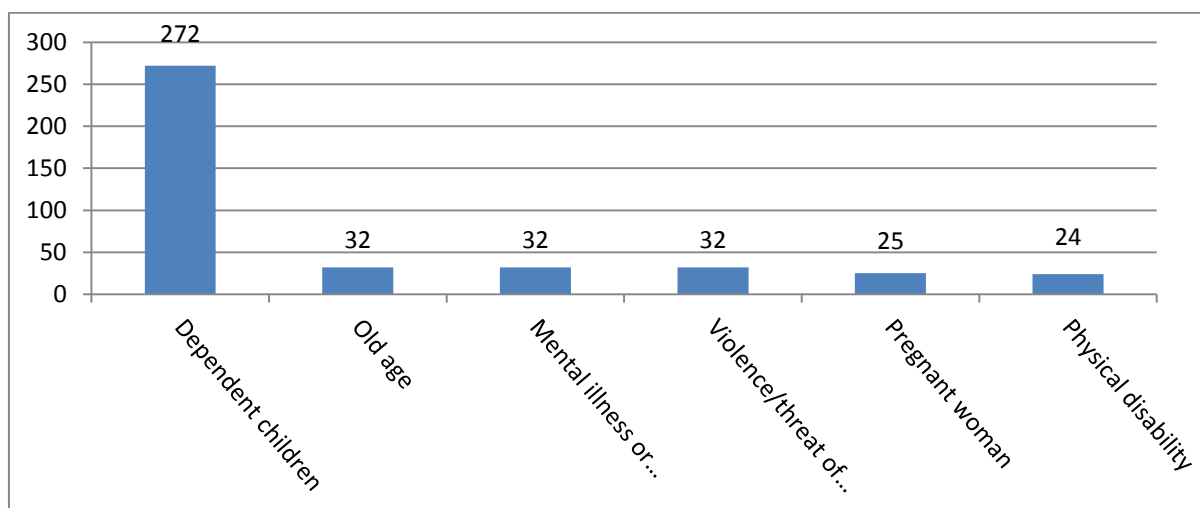


Figure 22: Top 6 reasons for priority need 2013-18 (P1E)

### Rough Sleeping In Rother

90. On 25 January 2018, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) released the autumn 2017 figures for rough sleeping, based on counts and estimates carried out by Local Authorities in England on the same night once a year. The research shows a national

increase of rough sleepers in England of 73% in the last 3 years. However there has been an increase of 169% since the annual recording began in 2010.

91. Rother did not see the same increase as the national picture; neither did Wealden and Lewes (We saw roughly the same numbers as in previous years See Figure 24 below).

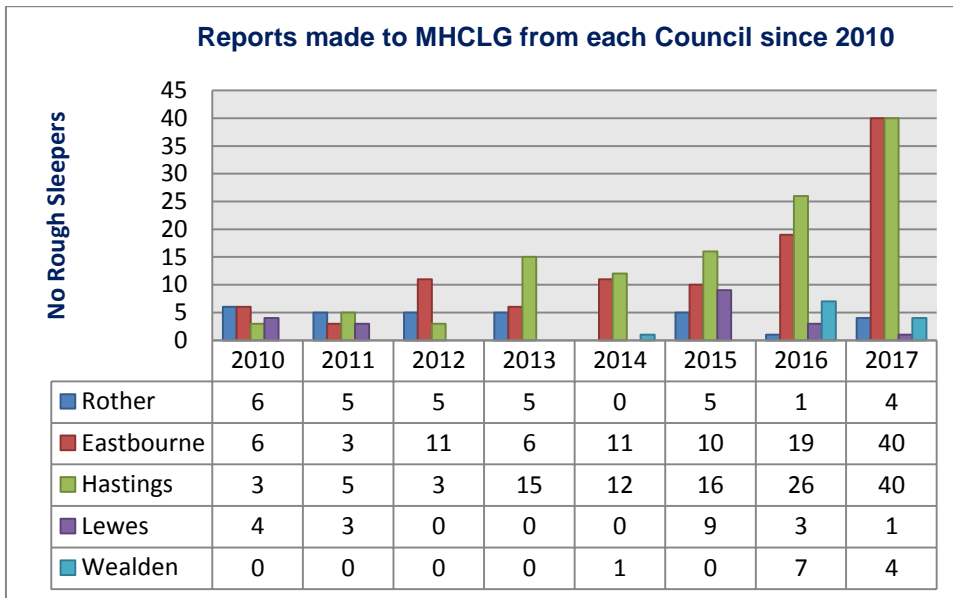


Figure 23: Rough Sleeper Count broken down by year and District (MHCLG)

92. However since this data was collected we have seen a significant increase in rough sleepers. In July and August 2018 a joint piece of work was carried out between Sussex Police and Rother District Council to identify and verify individuals rough sleeping in Rother. Verification in this case means they had been sighted rough sleeping, locations identified, and their name and personal details were confirmed. Complaints and reports from residents, visitors, police reports, Street Link referrals and other sources were checked and verification or otherwise made.

93. As of the 15 August 2018 we have 12 verified rough sleepers in Rother. Of these 12:

- 50% had a Rother connection,
- 33% had a Hastings connection
- 16% were from another area e.g. Devon

94. In the same time period Seaview<sup>3</sup> undertook a rough sleeper count in Hastings and verified 3 additional people with a Rother connection rough sleeping in Hastings. Thus making 15 adults with Rother local connection or currently in Rother verified as rough sleeping.

95. Nationally 14% of the total number of rough sleepers identified were women. The South East of England reported the largest number of women sleeping rough and we currently have three women verified as rough sleeping in Rother and a further one in Hastings. Currently 25% of Rother rough sleepers are women. Of those with a Rother connection 1 woman was verified as

<sup>3</sup> Seaview are a voluntary sector initiative supporting vulnerable people.

rough sleeping on one occasion, were as all other rough sleepers were verified on numerous occasions.

96. There were also reports through the Council’s Housing Department of a further 5 males between the age of 21 and 60 that had presented to their department in the week prior to the 16 August subject to verification. This makes a possible total of 17 rough sleepers in Rother and a further 3 in Hastings. These figures do not include any one sleeping in a vehicle or in prison at the time of the count.
97. Local authorities in East Sussex, Brighton and West Sussex are increasingly recognising that there needs to be an improved joint response to rough sleeping as the population are highly transient between Boroughs and Districts. Initiatives such as the Targeted Funding to Reduce Rough Sleeping are aimed at improving information sharing between partner local authorities and creating joint responses to the challenge of accommodation rough sleepers.

### Temporary Accommodation Use

98. This section of the review considers our use of temporary accommodation. Local Authorities are required to provide interim temporary accommodation to homelessness applicants whilst we are considering their application if we believe they are homeless and eligible (usually related to immigration status) and in priority need. The duty to provide temporary accommodation continues if a homelessness application is accepted, until the full housing duty has been discharged.
99. Unsurprisingly, temporary accommodation use has increased in line with the increased levels of homeless applications (Figure 25).

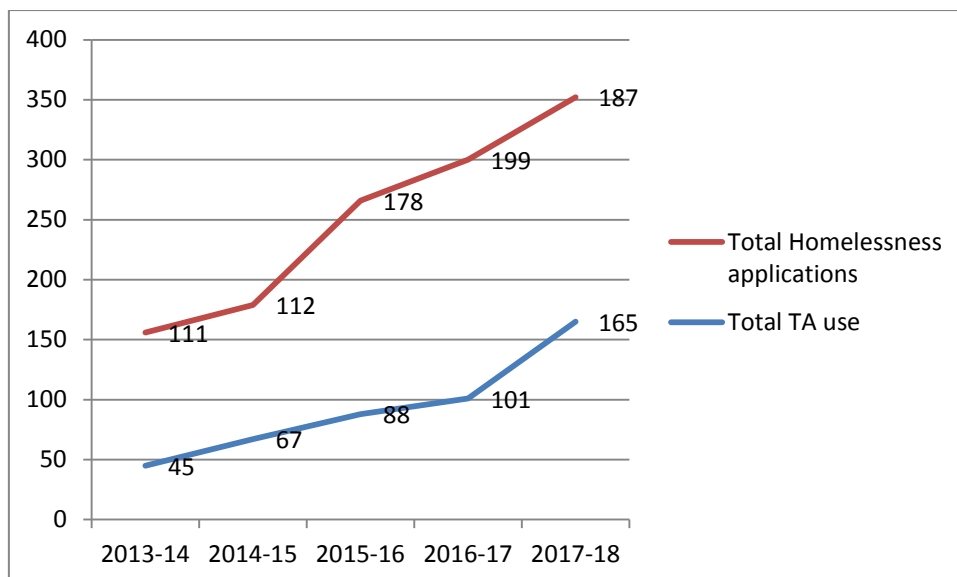


Figure 24: Total households in TA, total homelessness applications 2013-17 (P1E)

100. The council have access to limited types of temporary accommodation, using bed and breakfast as well as privately managed accommodation – some with shared facilities, some which is self-contained. We have access to places in various refuges for women fleeing domestic abuse.

Figure 26 shows that use of all these types of accommodation has increased, but particularly privately managed self-contained accommodation – another indication that we are assisting many more families with dependent children.

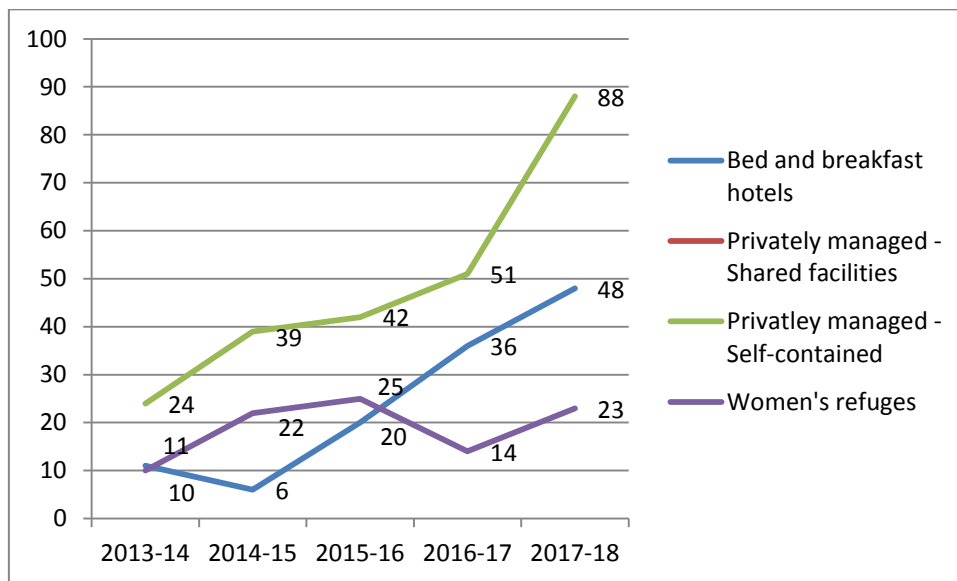


Figure 25: Temporary accommodation use 2013-17 (P1E)

101. A particular issue for Rother is lack of access to temporary accommodation within the District. Figure 27 shows the impact of this – a high number of applicants who require temporary accommodation are being placed outside of the district and this has increased in recent years. Placement out of area can be highly disruptive to a child’s education, compounding disadvantage already experienced through homelessness.

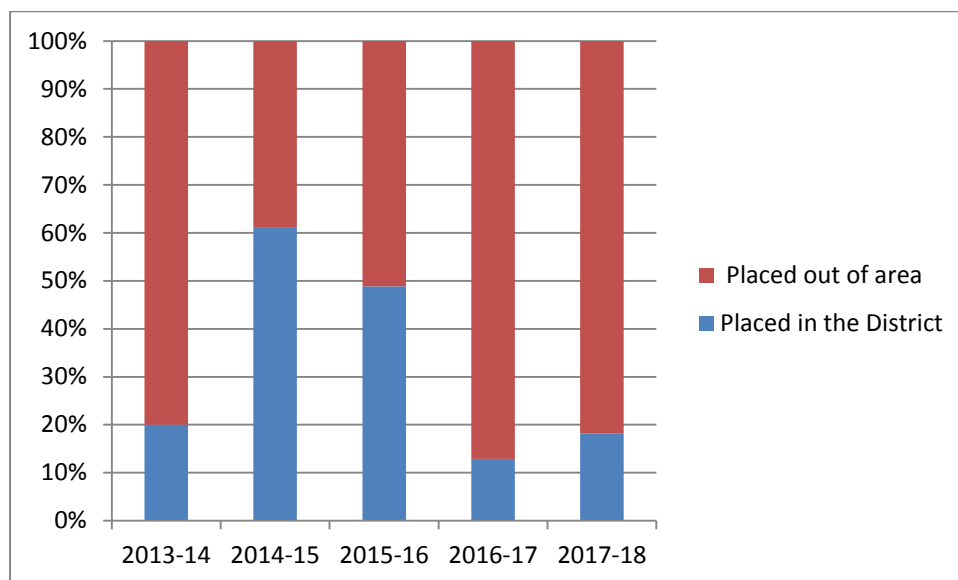


Figure 26: Households placed in TA inside the District compared to outside the District (P1E)

102. The council are considering ways to increase access to temporary accommodation within the District. The recent Housing Task & Finish group have made recommendations regarding this. It is important to understand what temporary accommodation is needed to ensure we are providing access to suitable placements, both in terms of size and location.

103. Figure 28 below shows the areas that homelessness applicants are or were living in prior to making their homelessness application. The data should be treated with some caution as some applications are made whilst living in temporary accommodation. For example, the numbers for Eastbourne, Hastings, Kent and 'other' are likely to be mainly households living in temporary accommodation and this address has been given. What the data does show us is that a large portion of applications are made from households living in Bexhill; we do not have access to temporary accommodation in Bexhill. We can therefore, be fairly certain this is where the local connection originates for these households. This demonstrates that temporary accommodation in Bexhill would be the best option for most cases. A much smaller number of applications come from households living in the rural parts of the district.

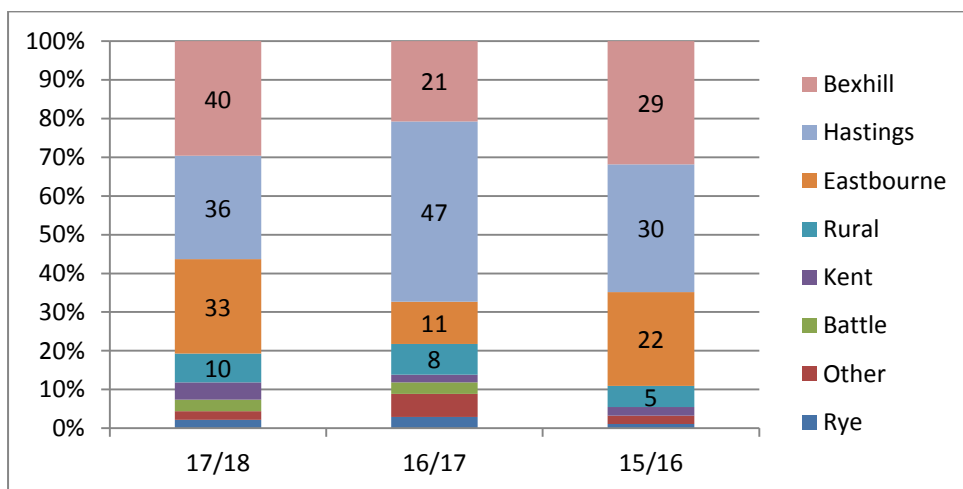


Figure 27: Accepted Homeless - last address (RDC)

### Discharging Homelessness Duties

104. Where a homelessness applicant is eligible for assistance, in priority need and unintentionally homeless, a main housing duty applies. Local authorities are able to discharge this in a number of ways. Figure 29 below shows that in Rother homelessness duties are mainly discharged through the offer of social housing (referred to as a 'Part 6' offer). There is some correlation here with the number of new-build affordable homes being delivered each year and the way in which this type of housing is often allocated – through the Council's housing register. This often frees up family sized accommodation which is then available as a 'Part 6 offer' in the discharge of a full housing duty.

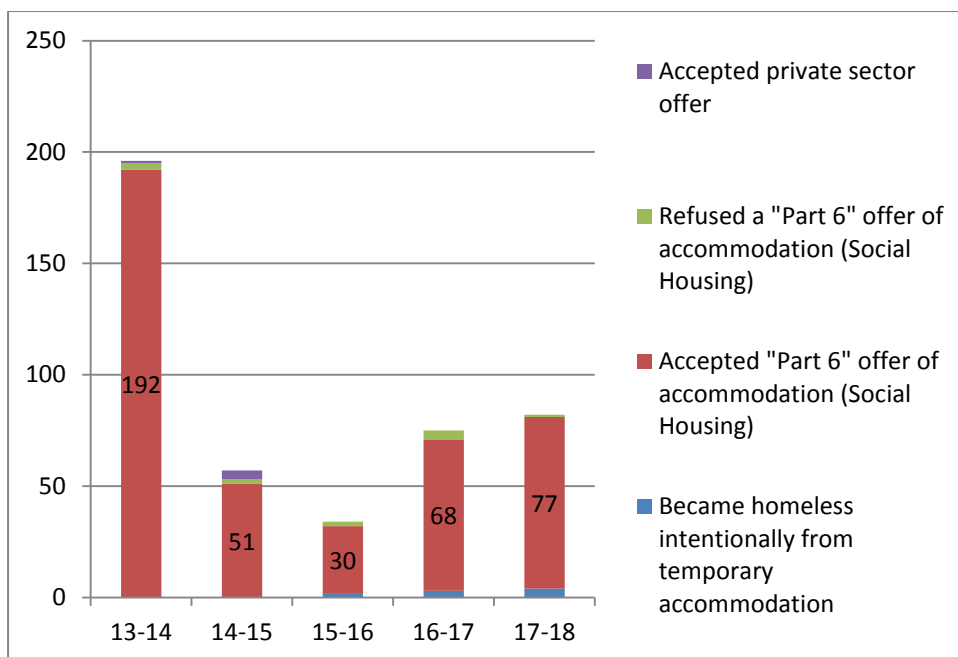


Figure 28: How homelessness duty has been discharged 2013-19 (P1E)

## Homelessness Prevention

105. The Council undertakes a significant amount of homelessness prevention work. The number of households approaching the authority where the Housing Needs Team assisted them to prevent them becoming homeless has risen significantly in recent years. This number is anticipated to rise further in 2018/19.

106. In terms of statistical return, the Government requests data for homelessness prevention and relief<sup>4</sup>. Figure 30 shows the prevention and relief data activity since 2013. The majority of work is focused on prevention, through targeting households where homelessness may become an issue, for example indications of rent arrears building up, or where an eviction notice has been given. Since 2015, prevention work has reduced. This may be a result of reducing access to private sector accommodation which has been used as the main method to prevent and relieve homelessness as well as the resources required to respond to the increased number of homeless applications and often complex investigations.

<sup>4</sup> 'Homelessness prevention' means providing people with the ways and means to address their housing and other needs to avoid homelessness.

'Homelessness relief' is where an authority has been unable to prevent homelessness but helps someone to secure accommodation, even though the authority is under no statutory obligation to do so.

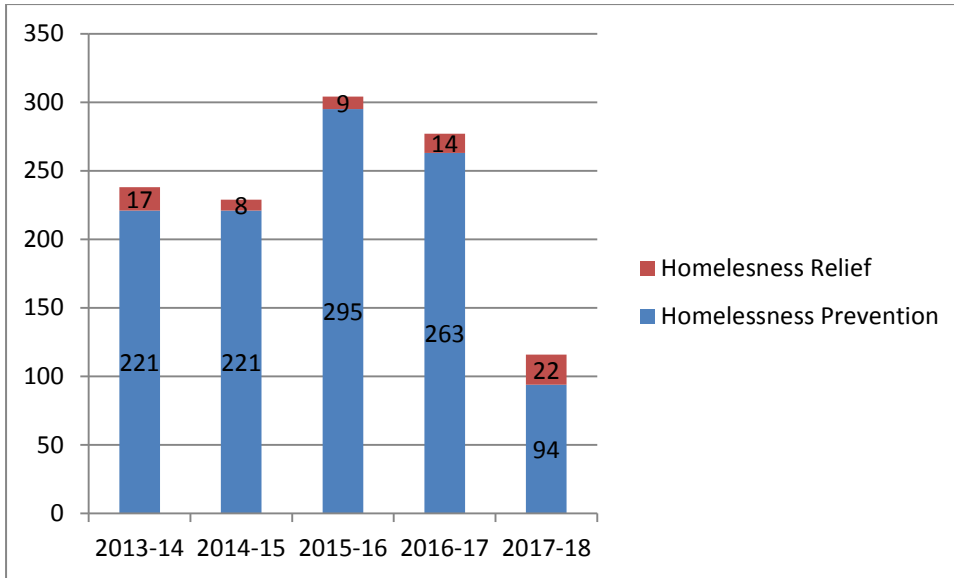


Figure 29: Homelessness prevention and relief activity by year (P1E)

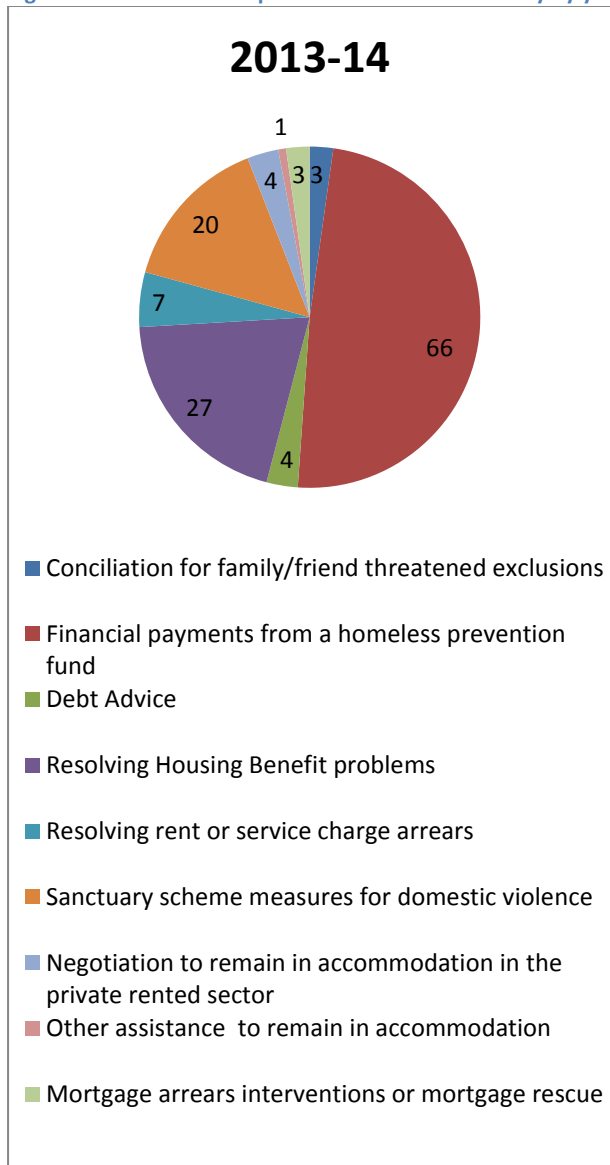


Figure 30: Homelessness prevention and relief activity by type 2013-14 (P1E)

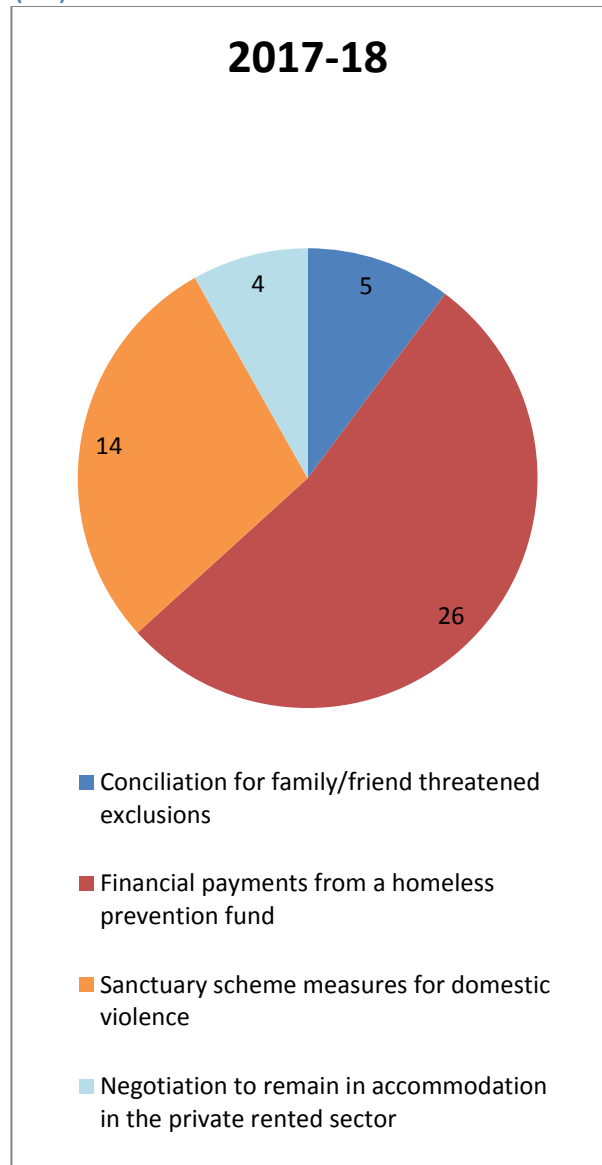


Figure 31: Homelessness prevention and relief activity by type 2017-18 (P1E)

107. Whilst homelessness prevention activity has been reducing, so have the types of options being used for prevention activity. The charts at figure 319 and 32 provide a breakdown of prevention and relief activity during two separate years – 2013-14 and 2017-18. During 2013-14 a range of 9 different options were being used; during 2017-18 this had reduced to only 4 different options. Providing financial payments from the prevention fund (usually for rent deposits and rent in advance payments) remains the most commonly used prevention/relief measure. Sanctuary scheme (for the prevention of domestic violence) also remains a commonly used measure. Negotiation and conciliation, whilst used less frequently, are still seen as a useful activity in preventing homelessness.
108. Mortgage arrears rescue does not appear to have been an issue for some years; the last time this type of assistance was provided was 2013-14. This may be due to the availability of national schemes, mortgage providers being more proactive to support their customers, or advice from other agencies, such as CAB, which might also explain the reduced levels of debt advice activity.
109. Resolving housing benefit issues has also not been used as an option during 2017; this may be due to internal process changes as a result of the Council's 'Lean' and Demand' projects which have led to more efficient processes and better communications with housing benefit issues being resolved more quickly and efficiently, reducing the number of households reaching crisis point, that would otherwise contact the housing needs service for homelessness assistance.
110. Overall, loss of assured short hold tenancy remains the highest reason for homelessness; the most effective homelessness prevention option in these cases is the provision of assistance via the prevention fund for deposit and rent in advance on new accommodation, hence a reduction in the use of other options. The Homelessness Reduction Act may see other options being used more frequently again as we start to work with households from an earlier stage in the homelessness process.

## **SERVICE PROVISION IN ROTHER**

111. As well as the housing advice and assistance service provided by the Council, a number of other organisations provide services across this district. These range from money and debt advice, tenancy sustainment advice, provision of furniture, mediation services, benefits and advice and support aimed specifically at younger people. A full list is provided in Appendix 2.

## **CONCLUSION**

112. The review has highlighted a number of issues which are impacting the levels of homelessness in the district, not least of all how the privately rented sector currently operates. Affordability is undoubtedly impacting on the levels of homelessness and a lack of access is severely impeding our efforts to prevent homelessness. Issues around affordability are linked to the freeze on LHA rates in 2016 and changes to the way in which this is uplifted are a national issue – not something that can be tackled with local landlords. However, it is clear that new build affordable provision for rent and ownership increases supply and reduces levels of housing need and a continuing effort to increase supply across tenures is required.



113. Whilst homelessness is increasing it is apparent that the households most affected are those with dependent children. There is a very high need for 2 bedroom accommodation which means we must consider not only increasing the supply of affordable housing, but also temporary accommodation provision in the short term, ensuring we have the levels of suitable accommodation needed to meet anticipated need.
114. Access to suitably located temporary accommodation is also a concern. It is clear that placing households outside of the district is not appropriate in most cases and an effort needs to be made to increase the levels of temporary accommodation we are able to access locally – it is particularly important that we increase provision within Bexhill where need is greatest.
115. Rough sleeping is increasing and it is concerning that there is such a high level of women rough sleepers in the District – 25% compared to 14% nationally. Whilst work is ongoing to increase the services available to rough sleepers, it is clear that more needs to be done and consideration given to how, where and when services are best made available. Working with the voluntary sector is key; some rough sleepers are wary of accepting assistance from the local authorities. Rother has a very active voluntary sector that is keen to work with us to provide support and assistance in an attempt to reduce, or even eradicate rough sleeping in Rother altogether. Multi agency solutions, including working with partner local authorities are required if meaningful solutions are to be delivered; the Targeted Funding to Reduce Rough Sleeping bid, including a Housing First model is the first step towards providing these solutions.
116. Rother has significantly high levels of households with long-term health problems or disability. This has implications for new build affordable delivery – it is important to have an understanding of the levels of needs in order that we can build or adapt housing to ensure this need is being met. Success here could reduce the levels of disabled facilities grants being applied for, making savings into the future. Of particular concern is that there is very little in place in terms of suitable temporary accommodation for disabled households, making affordable delivery of this type of accommodation all the more important.
117. Further work is needed with partners, particularly health and social care, to develop housing solutions which meet the full range of demand, for example victims of domestic violence, and those with low and medium support needs such as older people, hospital discharges, young people and those with learning disabilities.

## **Appendix 1: Duties under the Homelessness Reduction Act**

### **DUTIES UNDER THE HOMELESSNESS REDUCTION ACT**

#### **Section 1: Meaning of “threatened with homelessness”**

Section 1 sets out the circumstances whereby households are threatened with homelessness, and therefore when they should be offered support from local authorities to try and prevent them from becoming homeless. It extends the period during which someone might qualify as being threatened with homelessness from 28 days to 56 days. It also establishes a duty to treat an applicant as threatened with homelessness if they present a valid section 21 notice that expires in 56 days or less. A section 21 notice, as set out in the Housing Act 1988, is a notice used by landlords to evict tenants and to gain possession of a property that is let under an assured shorthold tenancy when the tenants have not violated the terms of the tenancy agreement. The prevention duty continues to be owed until the local housing authority brings it to an end for one of the reasons set out in the section 4, even if 56 days have passed.

#### **Section 2: Duty to provide advisory services**

Section 2 extends the existing duty on local authorities to provide free homelessness advice and information to any person in their local authority area. This should include advice and information on preventing homelessness, securing accommodation when homeless, the rights of homeless people or those threatened with homelessness, the help that is available from the local authority or others and how to access that help. It also requires advice services to be designed with certain vulnerable groups in mind. This includes care leavers, victims of domestic abuse, people released from prison or youth detention accommodation, former members of the armed forces, people leaving hospital and those suffering from a mental illness or impairment.

#### **Section 3: Duty to assess all eligible applicants’ cases and agree a plan**

Section 3 sets out the process that councils must undertake with all applicants, regardless of priority need, to agree a homelessness plan. This will require local authorities to carry out an assessment in all cases where an eligible applicant is homeless, or at risk of becoming homeless. Following this assessment the council must work with the person who has applied for help to agree the actions to be taken by both parties to ensure the person has, and is able to, retain suitable accommodation.

Personalised plans have already been introduced in Wales, and some local authorities in England are taking a similar approach. The Department for Communities and Local Government has stated that they will apply the learning from these examples in developing the detailed guidance on how this measure should be implemented.

#### **Section 4: Duty in cases of threatened homelessness**

Section 4 sets out a duty on councils to take reasonable steps to prevent homelessness for any individual, regardless of priority need, who is at risk of homelessness. This means either assisting them to stay in their current accommodation, or helping them to find a new place to live. This

requirement interacts with section 1, as the duty applies to eligible applicants who are considered as being threatened with homelessness 56 days before they are likely to become homeless. This duty also sits alongside other measures, in particular the non-cooperation measure that will encourage those who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless to work proactively with their local authority, and the duty on local authorities to provide advice and information.

Section 4 also sets out the circumstances under which an authority's duty to prevent homelessness may be brought to an end by the service of a written notice. This includes the local authority being satisfied that suitable accommodation has been secured where there is a reasonable prospect of that accommodation being retained for six months (or a longer period up to 12 months if prescribed in regulations).

### **Section 5: Duties owed to those who are homeless**

Section 5 places a duty on councils to relieve homelessness for all eligible households, regardless of priority need. This involves taking reasonable steps to help the applicant to secure suitable accommodation. The duty lasts for up to 56 days. The relief duty requires councils to take reasonable steps to help secure accommodation for any eligible person who is homeless. This help could be, for example, the provision of a rent deposit or debt advice.

This section also alters the interim accommodation duty that councils currently owe to homelessness applicants in priority need. The interim duty to accommodate an applicant in apparent priority need ends once the council notifies that applicant that the council is satisfied that they are not in priority need, rather than necessarily enduring for a period of 56 days.

### **Section 6: Duties to help to secure accommodation**

Section 6 interacts with the new prevention and relief duties outlined in sections 4 and 5. It provides councils with the flexibility to assist in resolving people's housing issues by providing support and advice to households, who would then be responsible for securing their own accommodation. It still remains open to the local authority to secure accommodation for eligible applicants where appropriate. Accommodation must be suitable where the council has secured or helped to secure it.

### **Section 7: Deliberate and unreasonable refusal to co-operate: duty upon giving of notice**

Section 7 sets out the actions a council can take if an applicant who is homeless, or threatened with homelessness, deliberately and unreasonably refuses to take any steps set out in the personalised plan. It also sets out the procedure and duties which apply if an applicant who is homeless refuses, at the relief stage, a suitable final accommodation offer.

Councils will not owe the main homelessness duty to those who fail to cooperate. Both the relief duty and main housing duty end for any applicant who, at the relief stage, refuses a suitable offer of settled accommodation that is available for occupation for at least six months. This maintains the safeguard that priority need applicants who fail to cooperate with any local authority actions short

of an actual offer of suitable accommodation will remain eligible for an offer of settled accommodation.

### **Section 8: Local connection of a care leaver**

Section 8 makes it easier for care leavers to show they have a local connection with both the area of the local authority responsible for them and the area in which they lived while in care, if that was different.

### **Section 9: Reviews**

Section 9 extends an applicant's right to request a review of their local authority's homelessness decisions, so they apply to a number of decisions that a local authority might make when discharging the new prevention and relief duties.

### **Section 10: Duty of public authority to refer cases to local housing authority**

Section 10 requires public authorities, specified in regulations, to notify a local authority of service users they think may be homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. The public authority will need to gain the consent of the individual before referring them. Individuals will be allowed to choose which council they are referred to.

### **Section 11: Codes of practice**

Section 11 enables the Secretary of State to produce mandatory codes of practice dealing with local authorities' functions in relation to homelessness or homelessness prevention. It also allows future codes to apply narrowly to specific councils.

The power for the Secretary of State to impose a code of practice at a later date replaced proposals for a new mandatory code of practice in legislation. The code of practice must be approved by both Houses of Parliament before being issued.

### **Section 12: Suitability of private rented sector accommodation**

Under section 12 local authorities must ensure certain suitability requirements are satisfied when they secure accommodation for vulnerable households in the private rented sector.

## Appendix 2: Advice and support service provision in Rother

Organisation	Information	Contact details
Bexhill Foodbank	<p>Providing emergency food right across the Rother District, Bexhill</p> <p>Foodbank work with a range of local agencies, such as Citizens Advice, children's centres and health visitors.</p> <p>If they feel you are struggling to put food on the table, they will issue you with a foodbank voucher.</p> <p>The local agency can also provide long term support if needed to help address some of the issues behind the reasons for your crisis.</p>	<a href="https://bexhill.foodbank.org.uk/">https://bexhill.foodbank.org.uk/</a>
BHT	<p>BHT Hastings Advice's specialist housing advice team are able to provide free and confidential advice to people who are homeless or at risk of losing their home, suffering harassment by their landlord or living with serious disrepair. A short assessment will be undertaken by a staff member from Citizens Advice. If appropriate they will make an appointment for you with a BHT specialist Housing Advisor.</p> <p>In addition, the Court Duty Scheme provides a specialist Housing Advisor from BHT, providing last-minute emergency advice for people facing eviction who have an initial court possession hearing.</p>	<a href="https://www.bht.org.uk/services/hastings-advice-centre">https://www.bht.org.uk/services/hastings-advice-centre</a>
Citizens Advice	<p>Providing free confidential and impartial advice issues affecting people's lives, such as money, housing, or employment problems whether facing a crisis or considering options.</p> <p>There is a wealth of online housing</p>	<a href="http://www.citizensadvice.rotherdistrict.org.uk/">http://www.citizensadvice.rotherdistrict.org.uk/</a>

	<p>information providing your rights and responsibilities, how you can go about renting a home and finding somewhere to live.</p> <p>You can also find advice on handling problems with your landlord and help to avoid losing your home.</p> <p>Details of advice, outreach and telephone sessions are available.</p>	
Connexions 360	<p>C360 is the East Sussex County Council website for young people.</p> <p>Housing advice is provided for young people according to age, as well as additional guidance for contacting the Youth Support team and finding somewhere to live.</p>	<p><a href="https://www.c360.org.uk/blog/category/healthandadvice/housing">https://www.c360.org.uk/blog/category/healthandadvice/housing</a></p>
DESS	<p>DESS is the Discretionary East Sussex Support Scheme. It provides emergency help in certain situations.</p> <p>The scheme does not provide cash or loans but may provide the food, utilities or household items that you need.</p>	<p><a href="https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/community/benefits/dess/dess-household/">https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/community/benefits/dess/dess-household/</a></p>
East Sussex Alcohol and Drug Recovery Service (STAR)	<p>A free dedicated drug and alcohol community recovery service commissioned to deliver drug and alcohol services to people from the age of 18 across East Sussex, working with the local community and partnership agencies to achieve best outcomes for service users.</p>	<p>Thrift House, 13 Wellington Place, Hastings, TN34 1NY</p>
HARC	<p>HARC offer a benefit advice services to residents across Hastings and Rother.</p>	<p><a href="http://www.harcuk.org/benefitseastsussex@harcuk.com">http://www.harcuk.org/benefitseastsussex@harcuk.com</a></p>
Hastings Furniture Service	<p>HFS is a registered charity and social enterprise; all funds raised help to keep the service running. HFS work to help people with low incomes to furnish and equip their homes at affordable rates.</p>	<p><a href="http://hfs.org.uk/">http://hfs.org.uk/</a></p>

Health & Well-being Community Hubs	Health & Well-being Community Hubs help local people and communities to improve and manage their health and wellbeing by giving them access to information, sign posting and support in one convenient place.	<a href="mailto:HealthandwellbeingBexhill@sussexcommunity.org.uk">HealthandwellbeingBexhill@sussexcommunity.org.uk</a> and <a href="mailto:office@thepelham.co.uk">office@thepelham.co.uk</a>
Homestart	<p>Home-Start supports families with children living in poverty, children with disabilities, families who have experienced abusive relationships, and much more, by working directly in family homes, running support groups for parents with young children, and delivering in-depth group support and training with individuals in need.</p> <p>Volunteers provide support for 2-3 hours per week for approximately three months focusing on one or two key objectives. Home-Start East Sussex's aim is to encourage families towards independence so that the volunteer is no longer needed.</p>	<a href="https://www.hses.org.uk/">https://www.hses.org.uk/</a>
Homeworks	<p>Home Works is a free service, available if you are aged 16 to 64 (a single person, a couple or a family), homeless or at risk of losing your home, and need support to live independently.</p> <p>Provides flexible and tailored support to prevent homelessness, how to find and settle into a new home, manage money and bills, reducing debt if applicable and much more.</p>	<a href="https://www.eastsussex1space.co.uk/Services/1379/Home-Works">https://www.eastsussex1space.co.uk/Services/1379/Home-Works</a>
i-rock	Support for young people aged 14-25, i-rock offers friendly advice and support about emotional and mental wellbeing, employment, education and housing.	<a href="mailto:irockhastings@gmail.com">irockhastings@gmail.com</a>
Mediation Service	The Mediation Service offers 'Time to Talk' an intergenerational mediation service aimed at young people and their parents/carers.	<a href="http://www.mediationeastussex.co.uk/">http://www.mediationeastussex.co.uk/</a>

Mental Health Directory of Community Support	Produced by East Sussex Clinical Commissioning Groups and East Sussex County Council.	Mental Health Directory Web-link: <a href="https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/media/11770/mental-health-directory-of-community-support-aug-2018.pdf">https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/media/11770/mental-health-directory-of-community-support-aug-2018.pdf</a>
Money Advice Service	This is a free and impartial money advice, set up by government. A number of advice and guides to help improve your finances can be found, along with tools and calculators to help keep track and plan ahead. In addition, information is provided to help with rent arrears and problems with paying your rent, along with debt advice.  Support can be provided over the phone and online.	<a href="https://www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en">https://www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en</a>
Open for Parents	Open for Parents is a free support services for parents and carers of 2 – 19 year olds. The parenting team can offer free support in a range of areas such as bedtime routines, tantrums, nightmares and night terrors and managing children with additional needs and autism.	<a href="mailto:info@openforparents.org.uk">info@openforparents.org.uk</a> <a href="http://www.openforparents.org.uk">www.openforparents.org.uk</a>
Shelter	Free accessible advice is available online and telephone 365 days a year, providing support to people to help solve their housing problems, whether bad housing, landlord issues or homelessness.  Online articles provides clear step by step guidance from the eviction process to how to get a deposit back.	<a href="http://www.shelter.org.uk">www.shelter.org.uk</a>
Southdown Community Connectors	Community Connectors provide ‘social prescribing’ to help individuals find practical solutions to life challenges. The service supports people to be able to access services and activities in the local community that can help improve mental and emotional wellbeing.	<a href="http://www.southdown.org/mental-health-recovery/community-connectors-east-sussex">www.southdown.org/mental-health-recovery/community-connectors-east-sussex</a>
Step change	Provides free, expert debt advice, offering a wide range of practical debt solutions,	<a href="https://www.stepchange.org">https://www.stepchange.org</a>



	recommended to suit your situation. Step change can also help you set up and support your chosen solution.	<a href="#">org/</a>
STEPS	'STEPS to stay independent' provides a service to people age 65 or over who face housing difficulties. STEPS advisors are trained to provide every aspect of the service and offer person-centered support, designed around the needs of the individual. The service offers a range of support to individuals including: Looking into more suitable accommodation, dealing with tenancy worries, keeping warm and reducing energy bills, ensuring your home is safe, accessing debt management, managing long term physical health conditions.	<a href="https://www.eastsussex1space.co.uk/Services/812/STEPS-to-stay-indepe">https://www.eastsussex1space.co.uk/Services/812/STEPS-to-stay-indepe</a>
Street Pastors	Street pastors are trained volunteers from local churches and work in partnership with the police, local council and other statutory agencies.  Street pastors offer reassurance, safety and support through <b>listening, caring and helping</b> . This service is available at certain times, see online for further details.	<a href="https://streetpastors.org/locations/bexhill/">https://streetpastors.org/locations/bexhill/</a>  <a href="https://streetpastors.org/locations/rye/">https://streetpastors.org/locations/rye/</a>
Streetlink	Enables members of the public to connect people sleeping rough with the local services that can support them.  Details provided are sent to the local authority or outreach service for the area in which you have seen the person to help them find the individual and connect them to support available	<a href="http://www.streetlink.org.uk">www.streetlink.org.uk</a>
Sussex Mental Health line	Sussex Mental Health are there to support people through providing advice, help and support outside of the usual office hours. They provide a telephone service offering support and information to anyone experiencing mental health problems including stress, anxiety and depression.	<a href="http://www.sussexpartnership.nhs.uk/sussex-mental-healthline">www.sussexpartnership.nhs.uk/sussex-mental-healthline</a>

<p>Targeted Early Help</p>	<p>Targeted Early Help, offered by Family Keyworkers in East Sussex is an approach to improving outcomes for families with multiple and complex problems. It aims to provide earlier, coordinated and more effective support to whole families whilst reducing the long-term costs to local services. Family Keyworkers work in partnership with the family for an extended period of time to identify strengths and issues, agree priorities for change, and provide support and challenge.</p>	<p><a href="mailto:0-19.SPOA@eastsussex.gov.uk">0-19.SPOA@eastsussex.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Warm Home Check Service</p>	<p>This service is available for eligible vulnerable households and offers a full assessment of the home and how best to keep it warm. Small preventative works such as improving insulation or repairing boilers can also be accessed.</p>	<p><a href="http://www.winterhomecheck.com/about">www.winterhomecheck.com/about</a></p>