

Angus Local Housing Strategy 2023-2028

Topic Paper: Preventing & Addressing Homelessness

The purpose of this paper is to analyse the extent and nature of homelessness in Angus. The paper will provide an evidence base to enable consultation on the key issues and inform development of the Angus Local Housing Strategy (LHS) 2022 -2027 - considering the national legislative and strategic context, homeless data and trends in Angus and the effectiveness of existing approaches and progress of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan in addressing homelessness in Angus.

1. National Legislative & Strategic Context

The powers and duties of local authorities in dealing with applications made under the grounds of homelessness are set out in Part II of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 (as amended by the 2001 and 2003 Acts). The 2001 Act places a statutory duty on each local authority to carry out an assessment of homelessness in its area and to prepare and submit to Ministers, a strategy (as part of the LHS) for the prevention and alleviation of homelessness.

Local Authorities should work closely with a range of stakeholders, including RSLs, private sector landlords, the third sector and health and social care partnerships, to help ensure that collaboration results in a positive and effective contribution being made to the homelessness agenda at a local level. The focus should be on the prevention of homelessness, through the housing options approach, developed by the Scottish Government, COSLA, ALACHO and local authorities. The [housing options guidance](#) builds on the 2009 Scottish Government guidance on prevention of homelessness, which is located [here](#).

The [Scottish Government's Social Housing Charter \(SSHC\)](#), as required by section 31 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010, came into force in April 2012 and sets the standards and outcomes that all social landlords should aim to achieve when performing their housing activities and include standards that people experiencing or at risk of homelessness can expect from social landlords in terms of access to help and advice, the quality of temporary accommodation, and continuing support to help people access and keep a home.

The provision of housing support has been recognised as important in preventing homelessness and repeat homelessness. The [Housing Support Duty](#) came into force on 1 June 2013 and places a requirement on local authorities to complete a housing support assessment for people who are unintentionally homeless or threatened with homelessness and they have 'reason to believe' need the housing support services prescribed in the regulations.

The Programme for Government announced by the First Minister on 5 September 2017 set out a new commitment to eradicate rough sleeping, transform the use of temporary accommodation in Scotland and end homelessness. Ministers subsequently established the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group (HARSAG) to make recommendations on how these transformational changes can be achieved. In June 2018, the HARSAG completed their work, producing a comprehensive set of 70 recommendations aiming to secure strategic changes at both national and local level which would help support delivery on the front-line. Led by best evidence, the cornerstone of the recommendations is a transition to a 'Rapid Rehousing' approach. The Scottish Government's [Ending Homelessness Together Action Plan](#) sets out a range of actions in response to the recommendations of the HARSAG and will transform how those at risk of homelessness receive help.

The Action Plan sets out the steps required to end homelessness by: ensuring a person-centered approach is embedded across strategy and services; increasing the focus on preventing homelessness from happening in the first place; prioritising settled homes for all; increasing investment to respond quickly and effectively whenever homelessness happens; and joining up planning and resources to prevent and tackle homelessness.

As well as updating [homelessness guidance](#) for councils and other organisations to ensure consistency in services, the Scottish Government has brought forward their commitment to address barriers for people facing homelessness by implementing the HARSAG recommendations to commence the Local Connection and Intentionality provisions in the Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003. The provisions to change the duty for a local authority to investigate intentionality to a discretionary power came into force on 7 November 2019. The Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003 (Commencement No. 4) Order 2019 has commenced the provisions to suspend local connection referrals between local authorities and a Ministerial statement setting out the circumstances and general criteria was issued for consultation in August 2020.

In April 2020, the Scottish Government brought forward an amendment to the Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order 2014. The extension of the unsuitable accommodation order came in on the 5th May to all households in all forms of unsuitable accommodation. The extension means that the maximum number of days that local authorities can use unsuitable accommodation for any homeless person is 7 days (temporary coronavirus exceptions have been introduced until 30 September 2021).

The coronavirus pandemic has created new challenges: relationships have been placed under pressure during lockdown, nationally domestic abuse has increased, and the full impact on the economy is yet to be realised. All these factors make it likely that more households will be at risk of homelessness. Due to these new challenges, the Scottish Government recognised the need to review the national plan to end homelessness and in June 2020 the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group (HARSAG) was asked to reconvene to look at what can be done to tackle homelessness now and as we move through the recovery stages. An updated [Ending Homelessness Together action plan](#) builds on the existing priorities and reflects additional actions needed in response to the global coronavirus pandemic.

[Housing to 2040](#) is Scotland's first ever long-term national housing strategy and sets out the Scottish Government's vision that everyone in Scotland should have access to a warm, safe, affordable and energy efficient home that meets their needs in a community they feel part of and proud of. The strategy is based on the principles of social justice, equality and human rights and demonstrates a continued focus on Ending Homelessness, including the introduction of a new cross-public sector homelessness prevention duty.

Building on the commitment made in the Ending Homelessness Together high-level action plan to introduce a homelessness prevention duty, the Scottish Government asked Crisis to convene an independent group of experts to develop legislative proposals to prevent homelessness. Their [report](#) was published in February and includes a number of recommendations that cut across 3 overarching principles:

- Responsibility to prevent homelessness should not rely solely or primarily on the housing / homelessness service but be a shared public responsibility.
- Intervention to prevent homelessness should start as early as possible. In many cases this will be before issues have escalated to a point where homelessness appears imminent.
- People facing homelessness should have choice in where they live and access to the same range of housing outcomes as members of the general public, with any necessary protections to mitigate further risk of homelessness. Housing outcomes should be comparable across the prevention and homelessness duties.

The recommendations are currently being considered by the Scottish Government's Homeless Prevention Strategy Group however if the recommendations in this report are implemented, they have the potential to radically change the face of the homelessness system in Scotland.

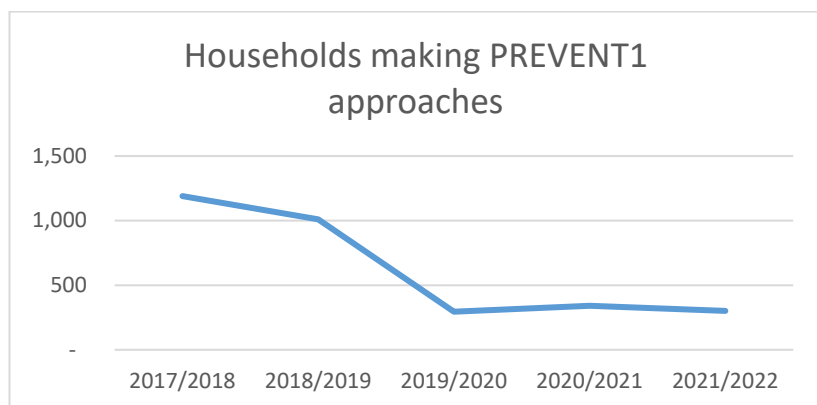
In addition to these legislative proposals to prevent homelessness a [Youth Homelessness Prevention Pathway](#) has been published by "A Way Home Scotland" - a national coalition of different organisations formed to end youth homelessness in Scotland. The pathway highlights the importance of trauma informed practice and services working in collaboration and establishing one point of contact for young people with housing, welfare, employment advice, youth work and other support available. The pathway considers young people on the 'edges of care' who don't meet the legal definition of a care leaver but need support in line with through care or housing first approaches. It also makes recommendations around education and information and support to families and young people, including practical parenting strategies and interventions such as mediation.

The Local Housing Strategy (LHS) 2022-2027 should identify what actions are required to maintain the statutory requirements of existing legislation and meet the statutory requirements of new legislation; continue to meet the principles, standards and outcomes of guidance; and deliver the priorities identified in the Housing to 2040 Strategy and the Ending Homelessness Together action plan to achieve the ambition to end homelessness.

2. Key Statistics and Trends in Angus

2.1 Prevention of Homelessness and Housing Options

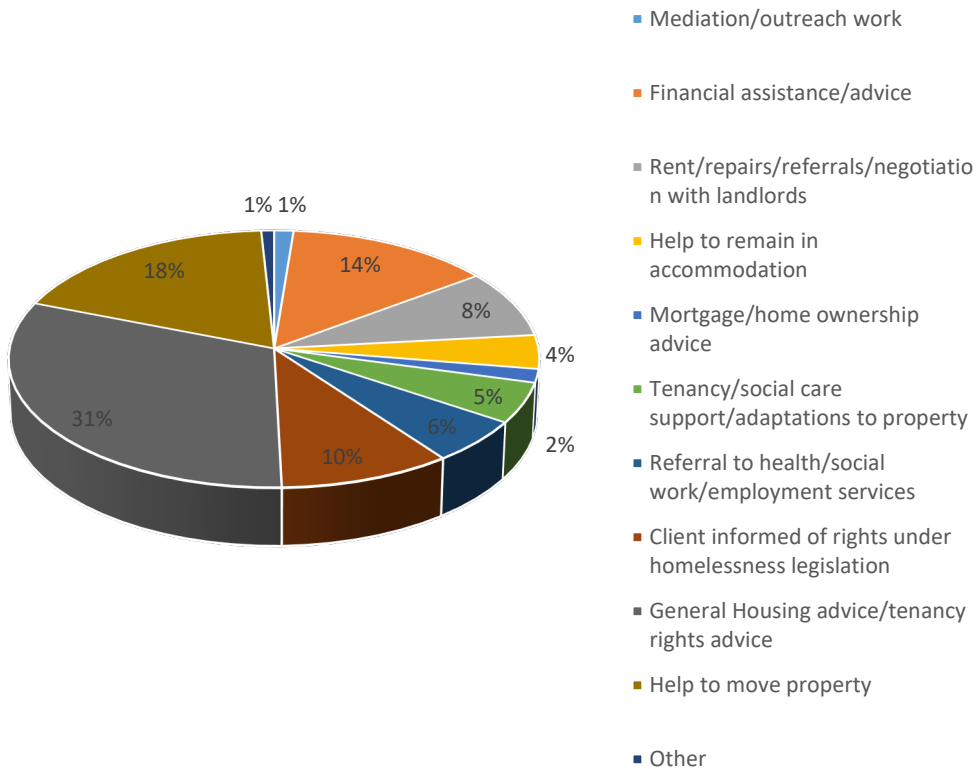
The Scottish Government's Housing Options (PREVENT1) statistics give an overview of key trends and features of housing options work in Scotland. Due to variations of working practices in data input and recording of PREVENT approaches across Scotland, guidance was developed by Scotland's Housing Network and introduced in early 2020. A PREVENT1 case is now registered where the household is not homeless or threatened with homelessness.



Source: PREVENT1, 2022.

The introduction of the new guidance is likely to have attributed to the reduction in approaches in 2019/20 (reduced by 75%) however further exploration is required to understand the continued reduction in approaches recorded. By contrast the number of prevent approaches nationally has reduced by around 13% between 2017/18 and 2021/22.

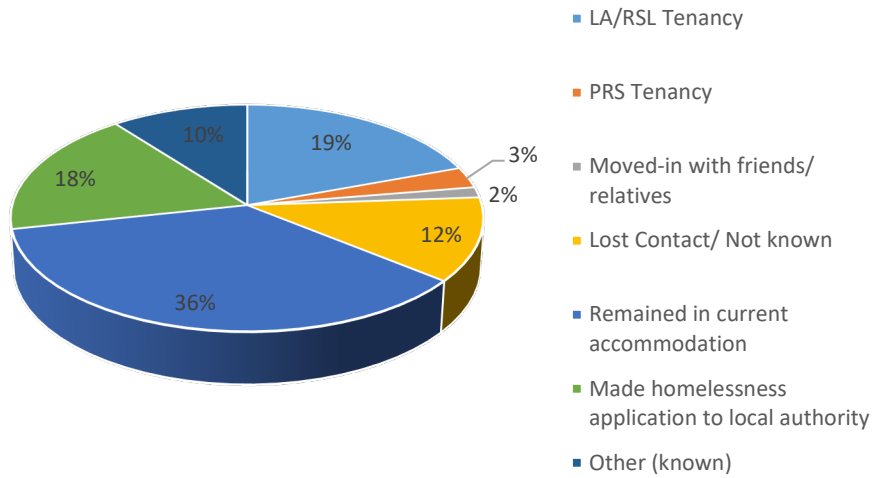
Prevention Activities 2021/22



Source: PREVENT1, 2022

The most common prevention activities in 2021/22 were general housing advice / tenancy rights advice; followed by help to move property, financial assistance / advice and advice regarding homelessness rights and legislation. In Angus a higher proportion of households were given help to move to another property and financial advice than the Scottish average. In contrast far fewer households were given advice of their rights under homelessness legislation (10% compared to 28% nationally).

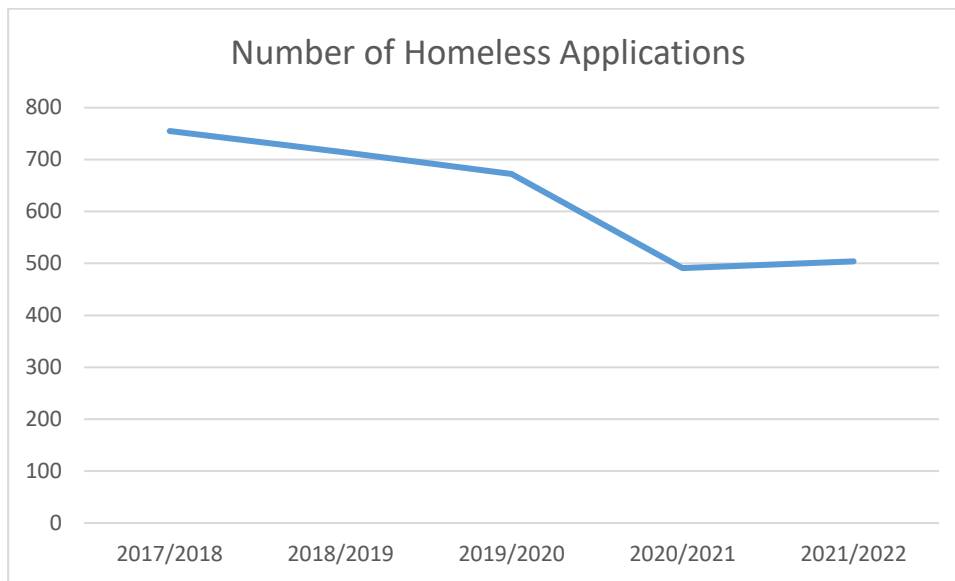
Prevent Outcomes 2021/22



Source PREVENT1, 2022

The majority of households who made an approach for housing options advice in 2021/22 remained in their current accommodation (36%) which is significantly higher than the national average (22%). 18% went on to make a homeless application, compared to the national average of 55% which shows the success of the housing options advice in preventing homelessness in Angus. A higher number of households went onto LA or RSL accommodation in Angus (19%) compared to nationally (5%) which suggests a higher proportion of households in Angus are able to secure a social tenancy move in a planned way following contact with the service. Lost contacts/ outcomes not known are however higher than the national average at 12% in Angus compared to 9% nationally. Consideration is required as to how we maintain contact and confirm outcomes from prevention work and housing options advice.

2.2 Homeless Applications

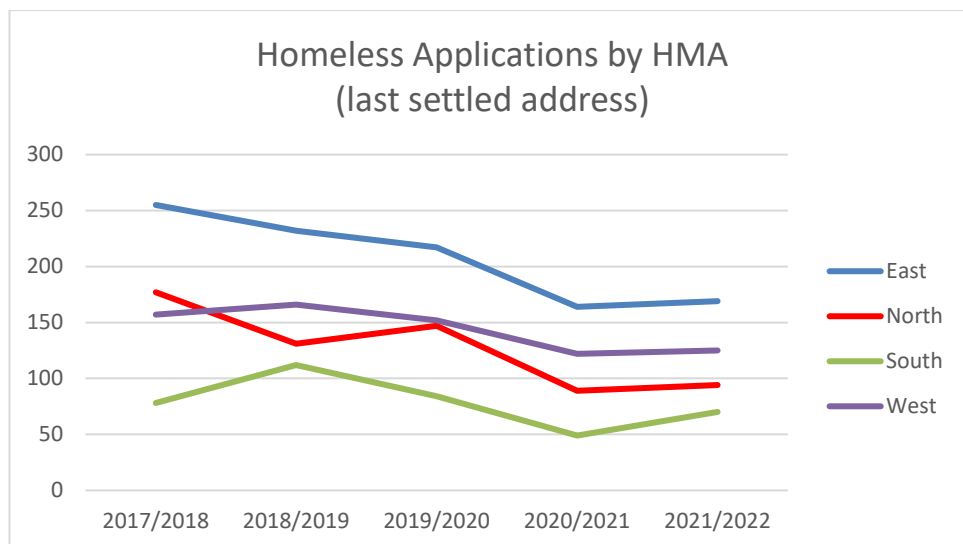


The number of applications has reduced by around 49% since 2015.

The data shows the continued effectiveness of housing options in preventing homelessness in Angus.

Source: HL1, 2022

We are continuing to see significant reductions in homeless applications in Angus, reducing from 851 applications in 2015/16 to 504 applications in 2021/22. Although nationally, there was a decline in applications across Scotland since the introduction of covid-19 restrictions, prior to 2020/21 there had been a 7% increase in homeless applications across Scotland. This was not consistent with applications in Angus with year on year reductions from 2015/16 to 2020/21 with a slight increase in 2021/22.



37% of homeless applications were made from people previously living in the East HMA

The North HMA seen significant reductions in homeless applications (reduced by 71% from 2015)

Source: HL1, 2022

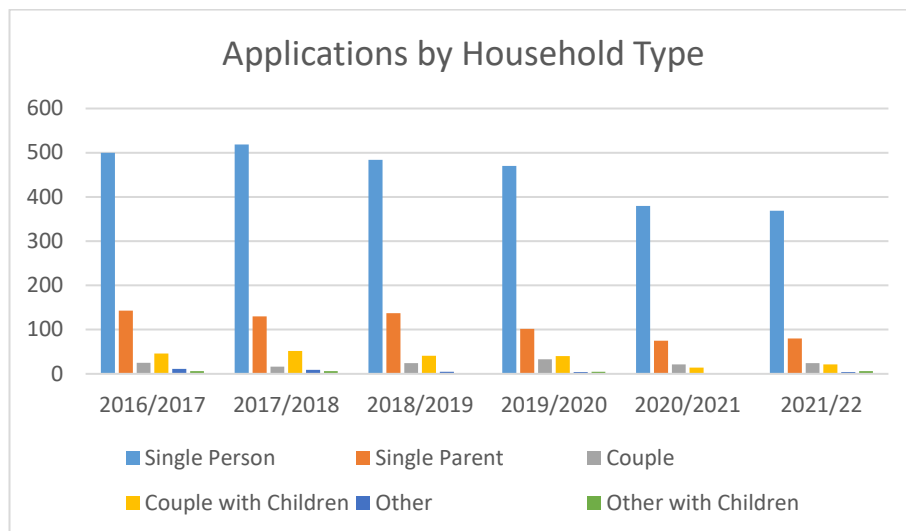
The above chart shows homeless applications broken down to Housing Market Area (HMA) level, based on the household's last settled address. The East continues to see considerably higher levels of homeless applications (37% of all applications) followed by West (27%) and North (21%) HMAs and the South has the lowest levels of homeless applications (15%) but has seen an increase between 2020/21 and 2021/22. The number of applications is not consistent with population levels and likely reflects levels of deprivation seen

in the East compared to the South of Angus. Further upstream prevention activities need to be considered to address homelessness linked to deprivation in East Angus.

While all HMAs have seen reductions in homeless applications since 2017, the North has seen the largest reduction overall (reduced by 47%) followed by East (33%), West (20% reduction), and South (10% reduction).

2.3 Characteristics of Applicants

While the overall number of homeless applications has reduced since 2015, the profile of households has remained largely the same and consistent with the national picture, with the majority of applications being made by single person households.



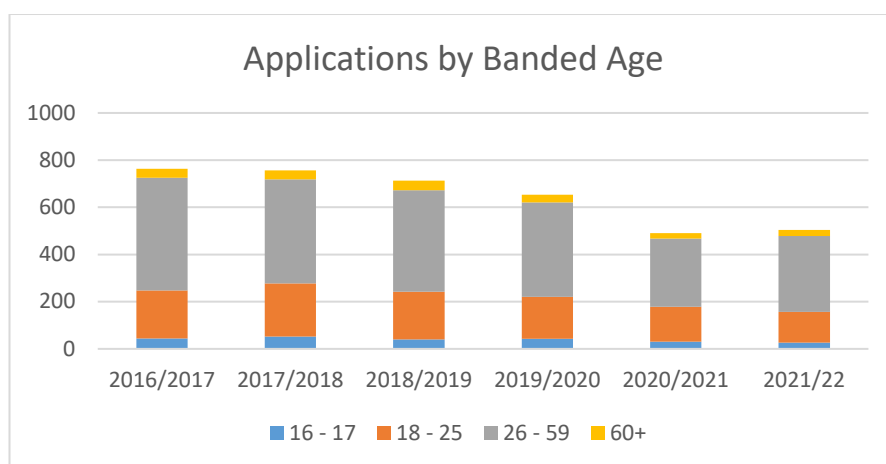
73% of applications were from single person households.

21% of applications included households with children.

75% of households with children were single parent households, 16% of applications overall.

Source: HL1, 2022

The age profile of applicants has also remained consistent since 2015. However Angus has significantly higher proportions of young people applying as homeless compared to the national average. 31% of main applicants were aged 16-25 (compared to 23% nationally).



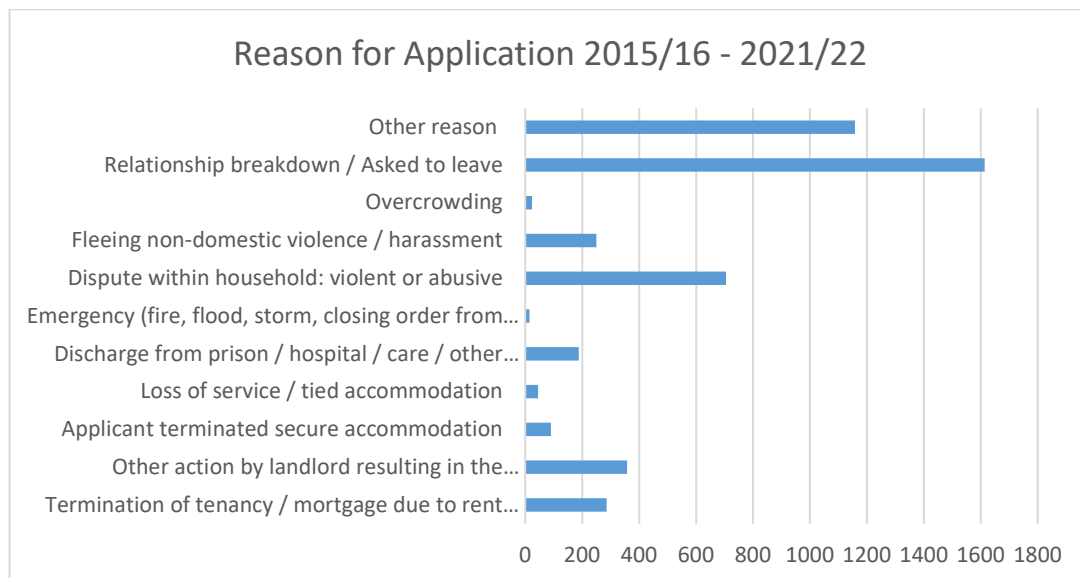
35% of main applicants were aged 16-25, 60% were 26-59 and 5% were 60+.

52% of main applicants were male and 48% female – consistent with the national picture.

Source HL1, 2022

The dominance of young single households applying as homeless needs to be considered as we develop approaches both to prevent and respond to homelessness in Angus. While the impact of welfare reform and the introduction has largely been mitigated through discretionary housing payments and other measures; the LHS must consider the available housing options and impact of Local Housing Allowance rates on this group.

2.4 Reasons for Homelessness



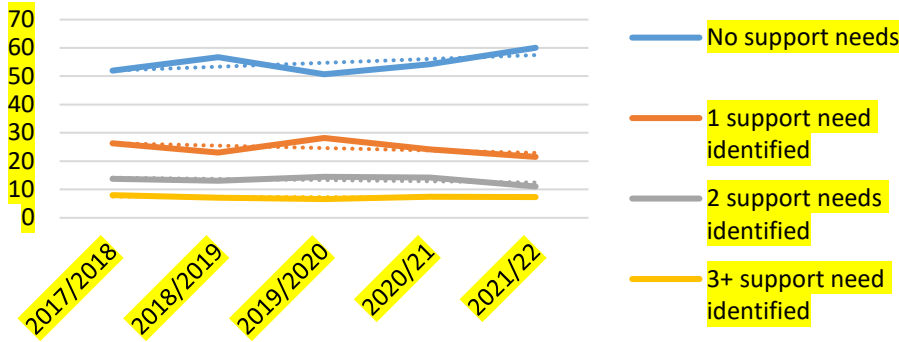
Source: HL1, 2022

The most common reason for making a homeless application in Angus has remained unchanged from previous years and is mirrored by the nationwide data with asked to leave / relationship breakdown continuing to be the main cause of homelessness (34%) followed by dispute within household (violence or abuse) (14%) and action by landlord/ lender (8%).

A number of actions have been identified within the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan to address homelessness caused by relationship breakdown, domestic abuse and tenancy difficulties including the implementation of a mediation and conflict resolution service, the introduction of a domestic abuse policy and additional resources to support private rented tenants.

2.5 Support Needs

Support Needs Summary (% of all homeless applications)

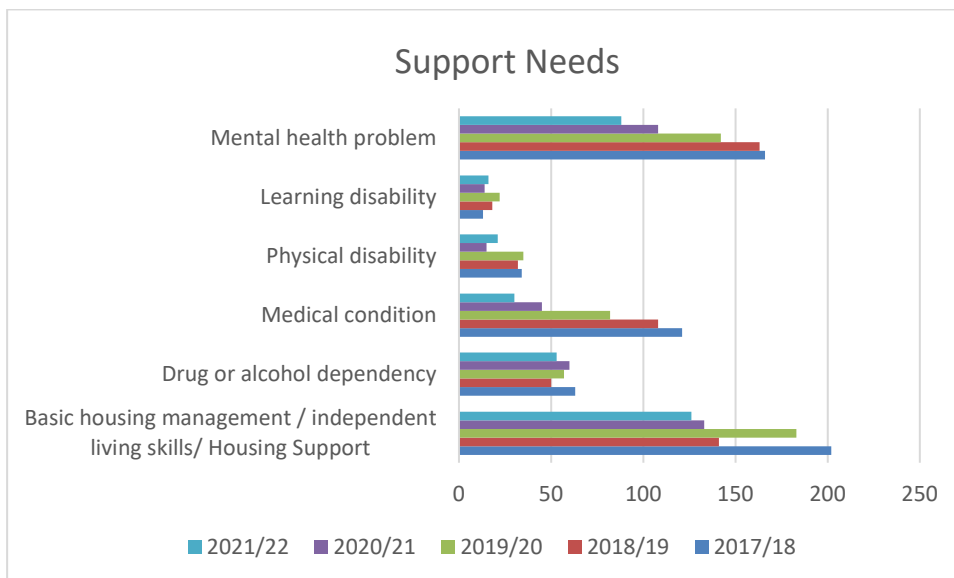


Since 2017, 55% of households applying as homeless have no assessed support needs, 25% have 1 support need, 13% have 2 support needs and 7% have 3 or more support needs identified

Source: HL1, 2022

While the majority of households applying as homeless have no support needs identified at the point of assessment, the proportion of people applying with no support needs has seen an overall reducing trend while the proportions of people applying as homeless with a least 1 support need has increased slightly over the same period.

The majority of homeless households who have identified support needs require support with basic housing management and independent living skills followed by support with mental health and support with a medical condition or substance use.



Source: HL1, 2022

This mirrors the findings of The Hard Edges Scotland, commissioned by Lankelly Chase and supported by The Robertson Trust to bring separate datasets together to reveal how some harms interconnect in the lives of people in Scotland. It follows a similar study based on English data, published in 2015. The Hard Edges Scotland mapped the key drivers of severe and multiple deprivation – homelessness, substance misuse and

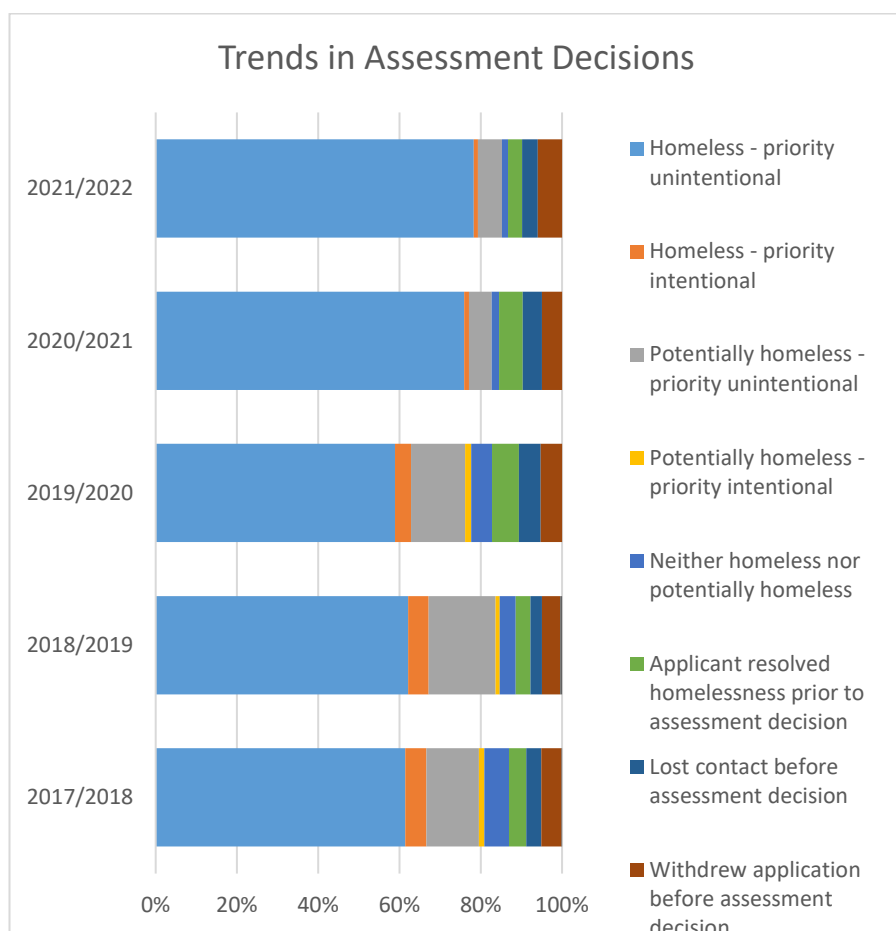
offending. It argued that public services must work together to stop the vicious cycle of crisis, not least due to the cost to the individual but also due to the cost to the public purse.

Angus Council held a stakeholder event in October 2019 with representatives to discuss the Hard Edges Scotland report. In total 51 participants registered for the event which included five workshops on the themes of Domestic Abuse, Homelessness, Offending, Metal Health and Substance use. A large number of ideas were developed for each of the themes, but looking across all 5 themes, it can be seen that the most common recurring themes were not dissimilar to conclusions from the national research, identified as:

1. Early intervention to prevent crises
2. Developing trauma informed, person centred approaches
3. Communication and collaboration, and taking a multi-disciplinary approach across all services and agencies.

The LHS should consider how we work collaboratively across services to respond to homelessness and ensure approaches to supporting homeless households are based on early intervention and are trauma informed and person centred.

2.6 Homeless Assessment Decisions



Source: HL1, 2022

77% of households who applied as homeless were accepted as homeless or threatened with homelessness

4% were considered to intentionally homeless or threatened with homelessness although this has reduced to 1% from 2020/21.

4% were considered neither homeless nor threatened with homelessness.

5% of applicants' homelessness was resolved prior to receiving an assessment decision

It took 29 days on average for an application to be assessed

Since 2017, around 77% of households applying as homeless were accepted as unintentionally homeless or threatened with homelessness, this is similar to the national picture in the same period (78%).

Around 4% of applications were considered intentionally homeless or intentionally threatened with homelessness, and this has reduced significantly from 10% in 2015/16 to 1% in 2020/21. From 1st April 2020 Angus Council implemented its discretionary power not to investigate intentionality when assessing a homeless application, except in cases where there is clear evidence the person is deliberately trying to manipulate the homeless system.

Applications where contact was lost or the household withdrew before a decision was made has remained stable since 2017/18 at around 4%.

Average time (days) from application to assessment

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Scotland	18	17	16	16	19
Angus	24	24	25	40	32

Source: HL1, 2022

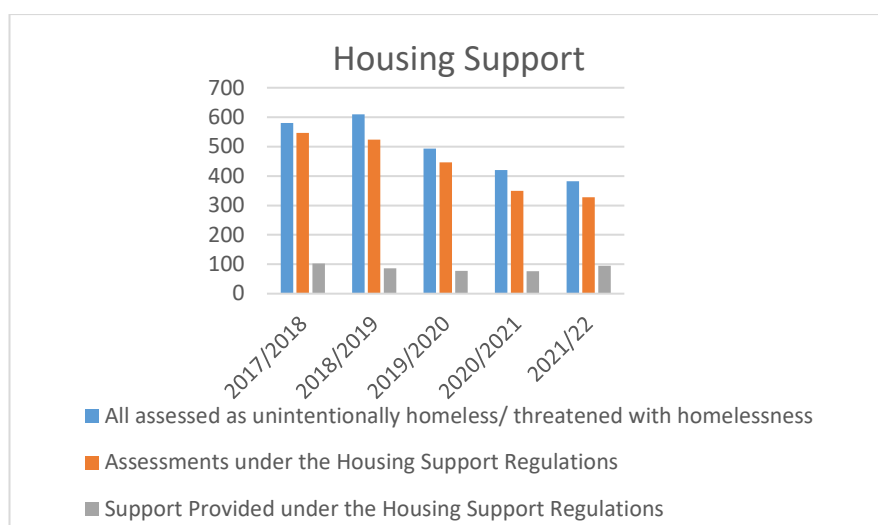
The average time from application to assessment decision has increased significantly from 24 days in 2017/18 to 32 days in 2022, despite the reduction in homeless applications. The national average has not seen similar rise and the LHS should consider how we reduce assessment timescales, minimise lost contacts while continuing to ensure a robust assessment process and maximising opportunities to resolve homelessness during the assessment process.

2.7 Housing Support Regulations

Local authorities have a duty to assess and offer support under the housing support regulations if they have a reason to believe the household is unintentionally homeless or threatened with homelessness and may be in need of a housing support service. Whilst progress is being made in Angus, the monitoring of these regulations is still yet to reach its full potential in terms of recording where support has been provided and outcomes of those in receipt of support. The LHS should consider how we ensure individuals who are homeless and need housing support are referred and go on to receive the support required.

Since 2016/17, 88% of households assessed as unintentionally homeless/ threatened with homelessness were recorded as being assessed under the housing support duty. In 2021/22 82% of all cases were assessed nationally.

However, of those assessed for support since 2017, only around 20% were recorded as going on to have support provided, significantly lower than the Scottish average. In 2021/22, 43% of cases assessed for support received it.



Source: HL1, 2022

2.8 Temporary Accommodation

The majority of temporary accommodation in Angus is provided by the local authority in mainstream, furnished properties based within the community. There are currently 114 dispersed furnished properties designated as homeless accommodation provided by the Local Authority and 13 flats, across 3 homeless person's units provided and managed by Hillcrest Housing Association. Hillcrest also provide 15 interim supported homeless accommodation units for people with significant support needs and Angus Council provides 6 supported homeless accommodation units for Care Leavers. Angus Women's Aid provide 7 units for refuge accommodation.

Most of the temporary accommodation is within the town of Arbroath (94 units) with the remainder spread across the other main towns in Angus. There is no hostel type accommodation in Angus.

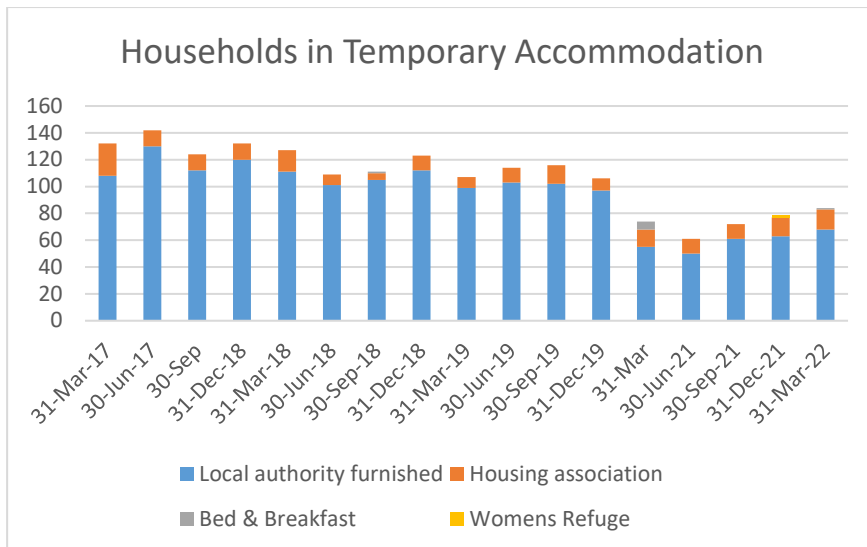
Accommodation	Provider	Capacity
Local Authority Dispersed Accommodation	Angus Council	114
Millgate/Weavers Close, Arbroath	Hillcrest Housing Association	6
North Grimsby, Arbroath	Hillcrest Housing Association	15
Direct Access, North Grimsby	Hillcrest Housing Association	1
Glenmoy Terrace, Forfar	Hillcrest Housing Association	7
Millgate Loan, Arbroath	Angus Council	6
Women's Refuge	Angus Women's Aid	7

The majority of homeless households make their own accommodation arrangements in Angus while waiting on an offer of housing (around 60% of homeless households) and has remained relatively consistent over the past 5 years. This is significantly higher than the national average (36%).

The percentage of households requiring temporary accommodation to whom an offer was made has increased from 49% in 2016/17 to 99% in 2020/21.

The total number of households in temporary accommodation in Angus steadily declined in recent year with 118 households in temporary accommodation as at June 2019, compared to only 69 households in September 2022. B & B use increased during the covid-19 restrictions and there has been one breach of the Unsuitable Accommodation Order recorded up to April 2021. Women's Refuge occupancy was included in Angus HL2 reporting from June 2020.

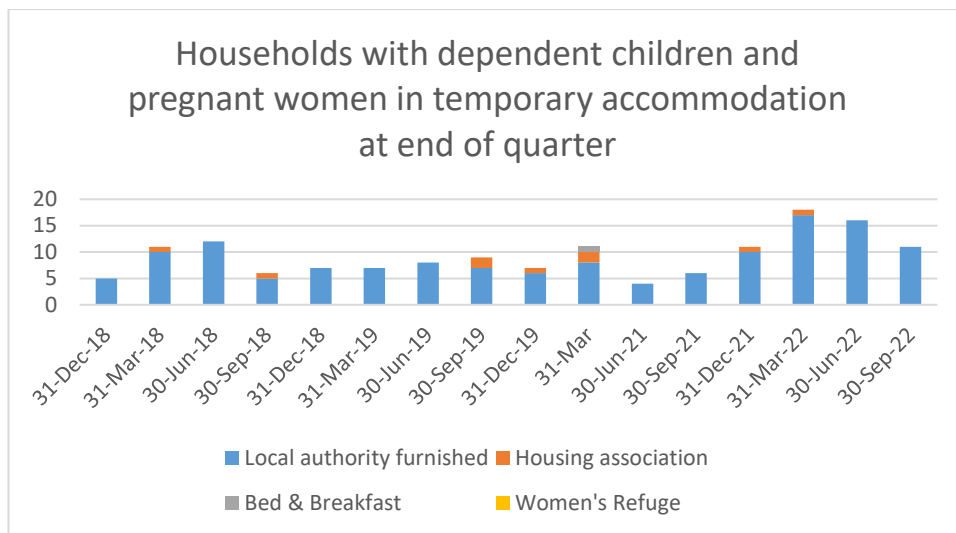
It is anticipated as we progress towards a position of Rapid Rehousing and the use of and time spent in temporary homeless accommodation is minimised, temporary accommodation capacity will reduce.



Around 40% of homeless households require temporary homeless accommodation in Angus, compared with 64% nationally.

There were 11 households that include children in temporary accommodation at 31 March 2022.

HL3, 2022



Source HL3, 2022

There are very few households with children and pregnant women in temporary homeless accommodation and only one occasion recorded in recent years where a household with children and/ or a pregnant woman was in B&B accommodation.

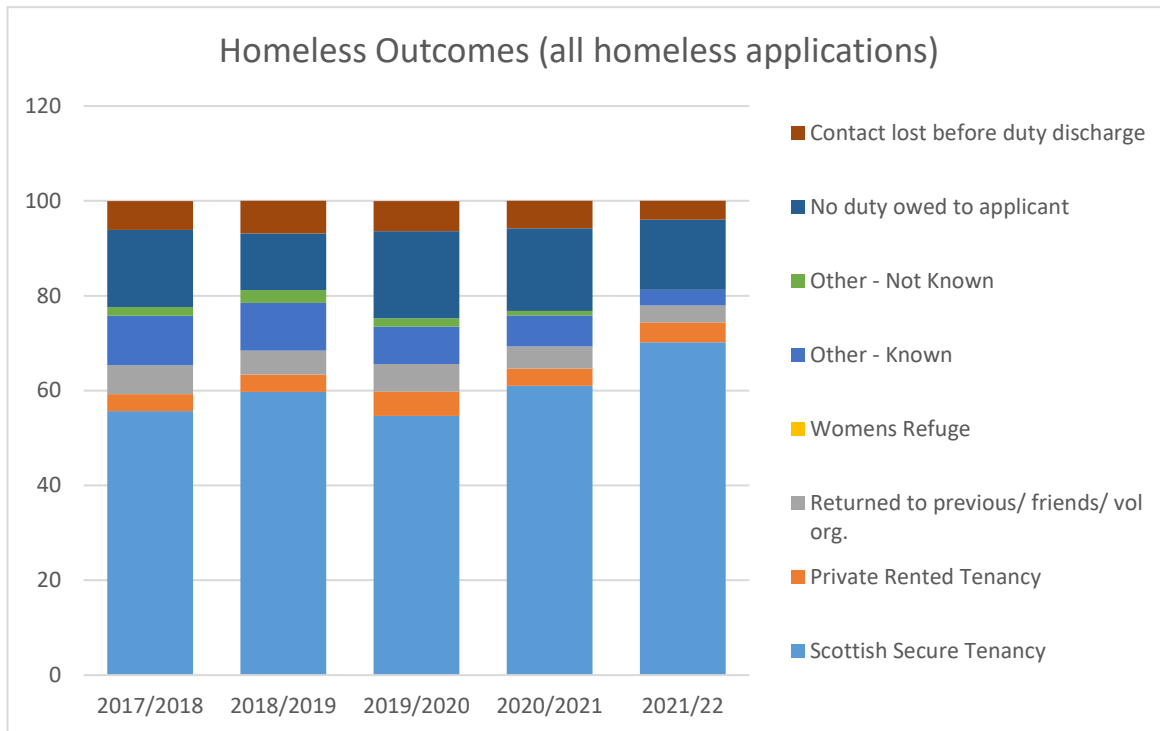
Despite the reduction in homeless applications seen in Angus, the length of time spent in temporary accommodation has increased since 2017/18, peaking in 2020/21 as a result of a temporary suspension of allocations during the first lockdown. The RRTP has identified a number of actions to ensure households can access suitable settled accommodation quickly. The LHS should consider if there are any additional actions to ensure that time spent in any form of temporary accommodation is minimised.

Average no of days in temporary or emergency accommodation – days (all types)

2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
132	158	137	184	146

Source: ARC, 2022

2.9 Homeless Application Outcomes



Source: HL1, 2022

The majority of homeless applications (71% in 2021/22) continue to be discharged into a Scottish Secure Tenancy however despite the good response from private sector landlords during the pandemic and the introduction of the Private Sector Officers in 2021 only 4% of households applying as homeless secured a Private Residential Tenancy in 2020/21 and 2021/22 reducing from 5% in 2019/20.

Of the 310 Scottish Secure Tenancies offered to homeless households in Angus in 2021/22, only 81 (26%) of these were offered from housing associations in Angus despite housing association stock making up around 33% of all social housing stock in Angus. Further engagement is required to ensure Housing Association partners maximise allocations to homeless households.

In order to reach a position of Rapid Rehousing where a settled, mainstream housing outcome is secured as quickly as possible and time spent in any form of temporary accommodation is reduced to a minimum, the Scottish Government provided local authorities with a tool to calculate the gap between supply and demand and establish the required % of lets required to meet homeless demand and reduce the backlog of applications over the course of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan.

Although the reduction in homeless households has reduced the overall proportion of lets required to meet homelessness demand, it is still estimated that 52% of lets need to be made to homeless households (down from 60% based on 20/21 analysis). However, the target of allocation continued to be missed by a considerable margin with only 32% of lets made to statutory homeless households by Angus Council and Common Housing Register (CHR) partners in 2021/22.

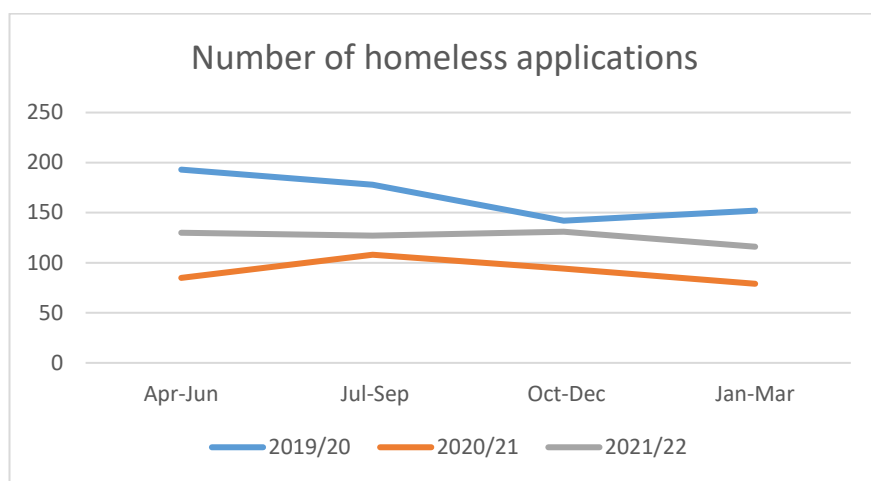
We recognised that applying an Angus wide target to all areas is not sufficient to meet demand due to differences across the 4 locality areas therefore the tool has been completed using locality data to establish the required % of lets for each Housing Market Area (HMA). This is completed annually.

While the number of homeless households and the proportion of lets that need to be made to that group to meet demand have both reduced, the gap between supply and demand has increased as a result of fewer allocations in 2021/22. In September 2022 there was a backlog of 77 homeless cases with a duty to offer settled accommodation (compared to 173 in October 2020). 2021/22 (including lets in social housing, lets in private sector, offers refused and lost contacts) this leaves a gap between demand and supply of 131 (compared to 63 in 2020/21). To meet this gap by social housing alone, we calculated a minimum of 337 lets to homeless households across Angus.

The analysis showed that the existing backlog along with new demand will not be able to be met in the East HMA where the demand from statutory homeless outweighs the supply of social housing available from the CHR by a considerable margin. The findings show that unless urgent action is taken, we will not be able to meet one of the critical milestones of the RRTP which is to remove backlog need from homeless households. If this is not achieved it will be impossible to reduce the length of stay in temporary accommodation or the capacity of temporary accommodation in Angus.

In order to meet the backlog and new demand, we must continue to focus on and consider alternative strategies and initiatives to prevent homelessness increase access to alternative housing options, particularly targeted to the East and South HMAs.

3. The Impact of COVID-19 and Cost of Living



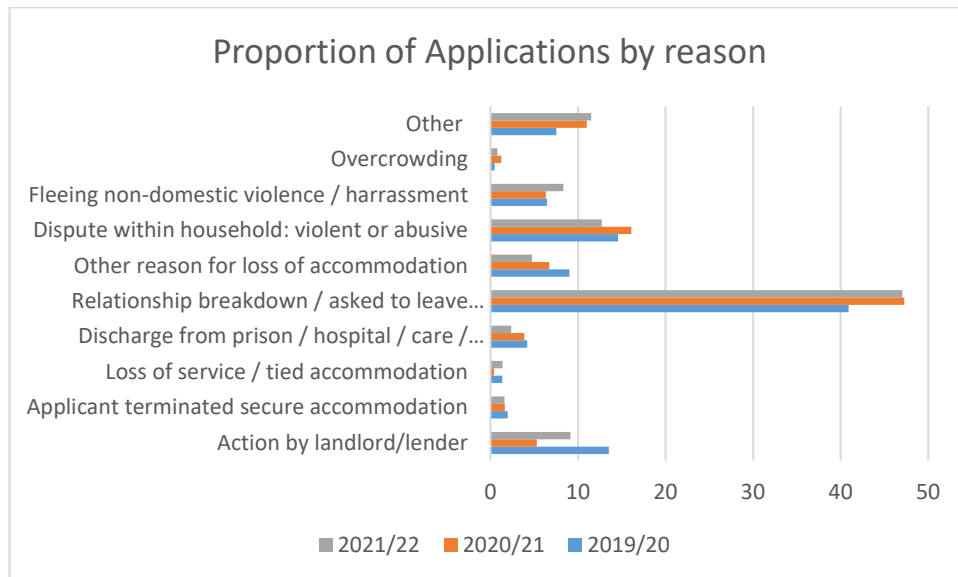
Source: HL1, 2022

The number of homeless applications has reduced significantly compared to 2019/20. While the number of applications was particularly low in 2020/21, they have remained around 25% below pre-pandemic level in 2021/22. The reasons for this remain unclear and it remains to be seen if this trend will continue.

In 2021/22 the profile of applicants was largely consistent with previous years. Single person households continue to make up the greatest proportion of homeless applicants, 73% of applications were from single person households and 21% of applications included children in the household – this is consistent with 2019/20 applications.

Applications from 26-59 year olds continue to make up the majority of homeless applications however this year has seen a slight increase in the proportion of applications from 18-25 year olds, likely to be attributed to family breakdowns effecting this age group during the pandemic. Although the total number of applications from young people aged 16 – 25 reduced in both 2020/21 and 2021/22.

Applications from households with White Scottish and Other British ethnic origin continue to represent the majority of homeless applications in Angus however have decreased slightly year on year from 96% of applications in 2019/20 to 93% in 2021/22 of applications.



Source HL1, 2022

Relationship breakdown/ being asked to leave continues to be the most common reason for homeless applications in Angus. Although the number of applications has reduced across all reasons, the proportion of applications by reason has some variances compared to 2019/20, likely to be largely driven by the impact of pandemic. The proportion of homeless applications resulting from overcrowding and relationship breakdown/ being asked to leave have increased. The proportion of applications as a result of action by landlord/lender decreased significantly in 2020/21 due to sector wide restrictions and although it rose in 2021/22 it remains below pre-pandemic levels. In 2022/23 further restrictions on ending tenancies were announced in response to the ‘cost of living crisis’ therefore it is anticipated this reason for homelessness may remain low for some time.

The UN recognises housing is the first line of defence against Covid-19 and the pandemic brought into sharp focus how closely our home, health and wellbeing are connected. It has also forced faster progress on tackling homelessness, and it is important we protect that progress and ensure there is no backwards movement as we move into the period of recovery from the pandemic.

Excellent partnership working in Angus and collaboration between council services, the third sector, private rented landlords, other accommodation providers as well as health and social care partners, enabled us to support people with an urgent housing need into accommodation quickly and ensure the provision of services, resources and supports are available to people experiencing hardship. The role of the third sector and the Humanitarian Assistance Angus Response Team (HAART) demonstrated that working together in a flexible and proactive way, across service boundaries is effective and hopefully that new way of working will continue as we move forward.

Although there has been a significant reduction in homeless presentations in Angus, we recognise that these may continue to fluctuate as inflationary pressures and the cost of energy and food continue to bite for effect and the LHS should consider what additional actions may be required to mitigate against the ongoing impacts of these.

4. Responding to Homelessness in Angus

4.1 Community Housing Teams

During 2018/19 a service review was undertaken in the Community Housing Teams where homelessness and housing options officers were based. One of the key aims of the review was to move to a one customer, one officer approach from initial contact with the housing service, assessment of housing need, through to allocation and management of the tenancy. It was envisaged this approach would provide a more person-centred, customer-focussed service, which would improve outcomes for the service and customers.

In this new generic role, the housing officer has responsibility for a smaller patch area and has full accountability for everything, from first point of contact through to tenancy management, including the provision of the homelessness and housing options service across tenures in their area. This approach aims to allow a much greater focus on early intervention and prevention and improved customer service with a focus on increased tenancy sustainment however resources within the housing teams are stretched and staff are under pressure to complete competing tasks and priorities.

4.2 Homeless Support Service

The homeless support service sits within adult services, alongside community mental health and drug and alcohol services and is funded by the Angus Health and Social Care Partnership.

The service works with individuals and families from age 16 onwards to:

- support people who are homeless to access housing and/or the transition into their own home.
- support those who are struggling to maintain their tenancy to prevent homelessness

This is achieved through an agreed support plan that promotes independent living skills to enable people to live independently in their own home.

A support plan can include:

- advice on welfare benefits, budgeting and debt
- support setting up and sustaining your tenancy
- assistance to access training, education and employment
- support to contact other local authorities, health care and external agencies

The Homelessness Support Service have recently successfully applied for an Improvement Fund grant of £33,555 from the Corra Foundation. The grant has been awarded specifically for a full-time dedicated Addiction Support Worker who will provide a rapid response service to people in crisis and at risk of losing their tenancy.

The Homelessness Support Service has a key role in preventing and responding to homelessness in Angus, however the Community Housing Teams and Homelessness Support Service currently work independently from each other and the roles and activities are not closely aligned. There is a need to consider and review the resource requirements and ability of existing structures and practices within the housing and

homelessness support services and across the wider public sector to respond to additional homeless prevention requirements.

4.3 A New Homelessness Service

It is now recognised that homelessness is not a standalone issue and needs much more than a purely housing response. 'Hard Edges Scotland', brought together separate datasets to reveal how some harms interconnect in the lives of people in Scotland. It mapped the key drivers of severe and multiple deprivation – homelessness, domestic abuse, mental health, substance use, and offending. It argued that public services must work together to stop the vicious cycle of crisis, not least due to the cost to the individual but also due to the cost to the public purse.

Building on the 'Ending Homelessness Together' high-level action plan to introduce a homelessness prevention duty, the Scottish Government asked Crisis to convene an independent group of experts to develop legislative proposals to prevent homelessness. The recommendations in their final report 'Preventing Homelessness in Scotland' in early 2021, provide the framework for the current Scottish Government and COSLA consultation on prevention of homelessness duties and includes a number of recommendations that cut across 3 overarching principles:

- Responsibility to prevent homelessness should not rely solely or primarily on the housing / homelessness service but be a shared public responsibility.
- Intervention to prevent homelessness should start as early as possible. In many cases this will be before issues have escalated to a point where homelessness appears imminent.
- People facing homelessness should have choice in where they live and access to the same range of housing outcomes as members of the general public, with any necessary protections to mitigate further risk of homelessness. Housing outcomes should be comparable across the prevention and homelessness duties.

It is anticipated that the new duties will be introduced through a Housing Bill expected in 2023 on a range of public bodies and landlords to prevent homelessness, particularly by asking and acting on a risk of homelessness, as well as responsibilities relating to strategic and joint planning. It is also envisaged that existing homelessness legislation will be changed to ensure homelessness is prevented at an earlier stage, including a proposal to extend the duty to take reasonable steps to prevent homelessness up to six months before, to maximise the housing options available to people and to prescribe what reasonable steps may include.

It is recognised that both housing and homelessness support services have a role in preventing and responding to homelessness in Angus, however the teams currently work independently from each other and the roles and activities are not closely aligned. In response to this it has been proposed that a new homelessness / housing options service will be established to sit alongside the homelessness support service within the Angus Health & Social Care Partnership (AHSCP) with the aim of making better use of resources to respond more effectively to homelessness and the additional homeless prevention requirements. Sitting alongside other AHSCP services would also encourage better collaboration with other services, increase access to support for homeless households and help to deliver a multi-disciplinary approach to addressing homelessness in Angus. Work is currently ongoing to establish this service which it is anticipated will commence in April 2023.

4.4 Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan

Drawing on baseline information and projected five year projections, Angus' [Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan 2019/20-2023/24](#) (RRTP) details how we will achieve our goal that people who experience homelessness reach a settled housing outcome as quickly as possible by:

- Increasing the focus on prevention to stop homelessness happening in the first place.
- Ensuring households get through the homeless system faster.
- Ensuring homeless households can access existing housing.
- Ensuring homeless households can access the right type of support at the right time.
- Increasing affordable housing supply to meet needs of homeless households.

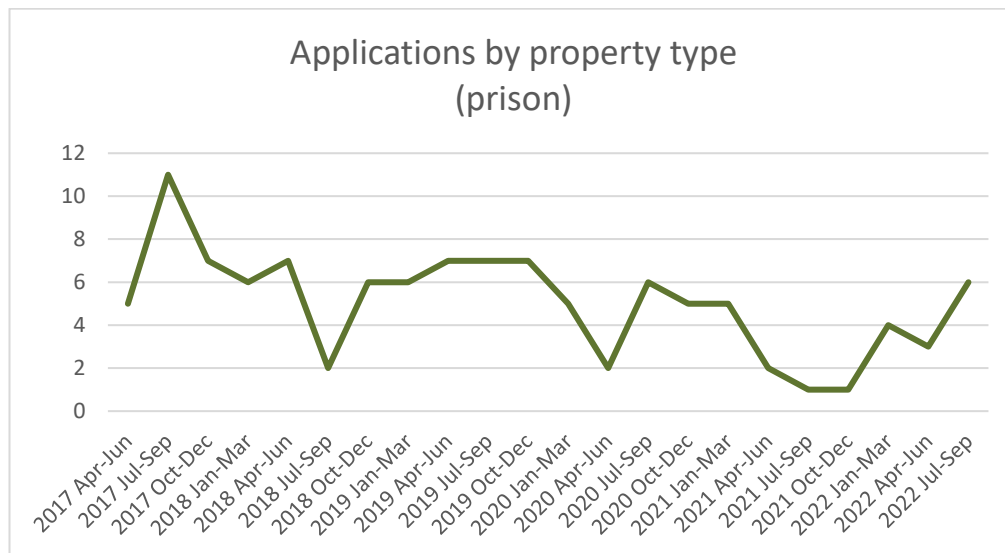
All 32 local authorities submitted their draft RRTPs to the Scottish Government in December 2018. Each plan was assessed by the Scottish Government and feedback was provided capturing areas of good practice and suggested areas for improvement. The final iteration was submitted to the Scottish Government for approval in May 2019 and update reports submitted in June 2020 and June 2021.

Funding has been awarded for each local authority to support the implementation of rapid rehousing and is part of the £50 million Ending Homelessness Together fund announced by the First Minister to support the prevention of homelessness and the implementation of the recommendations from the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group.

Governance for the RRTP sits with the Angus Housing, Health and Social Care Strategic Planning Group who have responsibility for the ongoing development and delivery of the plan. This ensures participation and accountability of all partners and stakeholders in the transition to rapid rehousing in Angus.

Work has progressed against a number of actions identified within the RRTP.

4.5 Implementation of a revised prison protocol



In line with the vision of rapid rehousing, the Sustainable Housing on Release for Everyone (SHORE) National Standards were published in December 2017 to ensure that the housing needs of individuals in prison are handled at an early stage, in a consistent way across Scotland. Supported by the Angus Community Justice Partnership, the Angus Prison Protocol has been reviewed and adopts the pathway concept of the SHORE standards setting out how the housing needs of individuals from Angus should be considered:

- on imprisonment
- during sentence
- prior to and following release.

Where homelessness cannot be prevented, the revised protocol aims to secure permanent accommodation for individuals leaving prison, avoiding prison leavers entering the homeless system and being placed into temporary homeless accommodation, where possible.

The revised protocol was fully implemented in February 2020. Since the protocol was implemented, there has been a substantial reduction of homeless applications made from people who were previously in prison, highlighting the success of the protocol and work to prevent homelessness on release. An evaluation of the revised protocol has been completed and initial findings identified the requirement for training sessions on the protocol and the impact of trauma which have been delivered to the Community Housing Teams in partnership with the Justice service. Further guidance has also been issued to ensure a smoother transition from prison to tenancy where accommodation is required for release.

4.6 Implementation of Revised Common Allocations Policy and Choice Based Lettings

A revised allocations policy and Choice Based Lettings (CBL) was launched in November 2020. The revised policy takes account of the legislative changes introduced by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 as well as setting out a new choice-based approach to allocating properties from the Common Housing Register. To meet our 'reasonable preference' obligations and help us to achieve the aims of rapid rehousing, as well as providing a fair system and continuing to give appropriate priority to people who are in most need of housing, we have reviewed our priority categories. The bedroom eligibility criteria has also been revised to allow single people or couples who wish to be considered for two bedrooms to bid or be matched to larger accommodation. We continue to experience pressures on single person accommodation, particularly from homeless households, and a high turnover of two bed properties in Angus therefore this ensures we make the best use of the stock that becomes available and will help us to increase allocations to homeless people.

At 31 December 2022, a total of 1488 properties had been advertised for let by the Council and its Common Housing Register partners.

A total of 39,274 bids have been received. This is an average of 26 bids per property. Using available reports, we can see that 1751 applicants have placed one or more bids to date, 36% of all applicants eligible to bid.

The introduction of CBL has removed an element of control over the proportion of lets to homeless households. The proportion of lets to homeless households require to be closely monitored and the allocations policy kept under review to ensure a fair approach to the allocation of housing in Angus.

4.7 Implementation of a Domestic Abuse Policy

Angus Council's housing division made a commitment as part of the Chartered Institute of Housing's (CIH) Make a Stand campaign to implement a domestic abuse policy. The policy was drafted based on the recommendations from the [Change, Justice, Fairness](#) research, the CIH Domestic Abuse Guidance for Social Landlords and following discussions with key stakeholders.

The policy supports the aims set out in the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan by focusing on preventing homelessness wherever possible and maximising other opportunities for women experiencing domestic

abuse to access settled accommodation. It sets out how the Housing Division will provide a proactive housing response to preventing and addressing domestic abuse by:

- Providing a confidential, sensitive and supportive response to victims/survivors, whether that be women, children or men
- Working collaboratively across the organisation and with partners to provide a coordinated response to enable victims/survivors to access a range of housing options, advice, information and support
- Holding perpetrators to account – domestic abuse is the responsibility of the perpetrator and action will be taken, where possible, to support victims/survivors to remain in the family home.

The policy was approved in September 2020 and is being implemented alongside guidance and training for staff. Since the policy and guidance was implemented, homeless applications resulting from people experiencing violence or abuse within the household have reduced by 34% from 97 applications in 2019/20 to 64 applications in 2021/22.

A review of the policy is planned for 2023 and will focus on stakeholder engagement to highlight areas of good practice, examples of effective partnership working and any gaps in service provision.

4.8 Review of Housing Options for Care Leavers Protocol

The Housing Options for Care Leavers protocol was agreed and implemented in 2013. Not every child or young person with care experience is included within the legal definitions of a 'looked after child' or a 'care leaver'. Some young people, however, have similar needs and backgrounds to care leavers, yet remain outside these legal definitions, increasing their vulnerability beyond that of their peers. As corporate parents, we are committed to delivering services based on the needs of individuals and recognise that supporting young people as early as possible could protect them from experiencing further disadvantage in later life. The remit of the Horizon service has therefore widened in Angus to include support to young people involved with or on the periphery of offending; offering holistic support to enable them to make better choices and improve their life chances. Therefore, the existing Care Leavers Housing Options protocol has been reviewed to include support to young people involved with or on the periphery of offending.

The revised protocol was implemented in September 2020 and the key changes are:

- Roles and responsibilities have been revised to account for changes in service structures and the introduction of the new allocations policy and choice-based lettings.
- The eligibility criteria has been updated to include young people aged 16-25 involved with or on the periphery of offending who are working with the Horizon service.
- The protocol has been reviewed to focus on housing and support solutions and outcomes for young people.

Joint panel meetings continue to be held where young peoples' housing and support needs are discussed, and actions agreed. The meetings also provide an opportunity to highlight other issues that will impact on practice, such as the introduction of choice-based lettings. The panel meetings have increased from quarterly to bi-monthly and are attended by staff from the Horizon Team, a Team Leader from each of the Community Housing teams, Hillcrest's Housing Manager (Operations), a representative from the Community Investigations & Resolutions team and the Team Manager of the Homelessness Support Service. Other service representatives are invited to attend when required.

Since the protocol was implemented in 2013, the number of young people applying as homeless who had been looked after as a child by the local authority less than 5 years ago has reduced by 59%.

There have also been significant reductions in the number of young people applying as homeless who had been looked after as a child by the local authority more than 5 years ago over the last 3 years. This coincides with an earlier review of the protocol to extend it to care leavers beyond the point of leaving care.

4.9 Implementation of a Mediation & Conflict Resolution Service



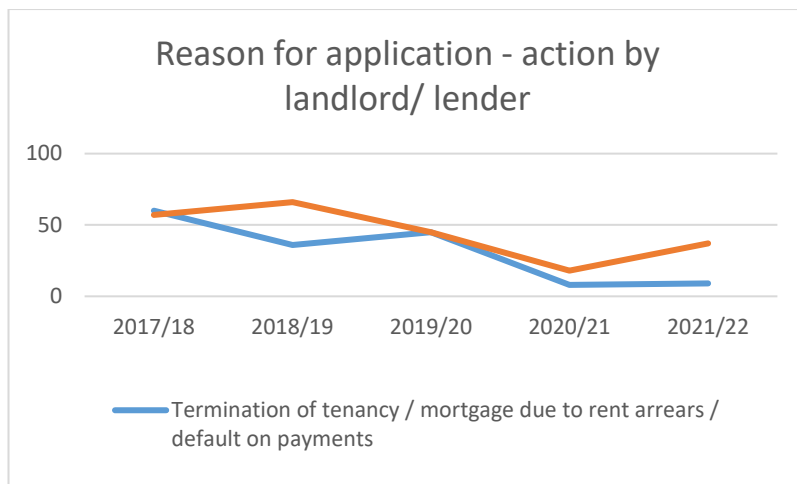
Despite a reduction in applications, relationship breakdown/ asked to leave continues to be the most common reason for homelessness in Angus, supporting the need for the introduction of mediation and conflict resolution intervention.

Relationship Scotland (Family Mediation Tayside & Fife) were contracted to deliver mediation and conflict resolution and the service went live in October 2020.

The service struggled to embed into general referral pathways and processes in Angus, despite significant efforts going into awareness raising, networking and promotion across services. There remains a requirement for mediation and conflict resolution intervention in Angus however continuing with the delivery of this via the existing contract with Relationship Scotland does not represent value for money and the contract ended on 31 July 2022. The Housing, Health & Social Care Strategic Planning Group will consider options for future delivery of mediation and conflict resolution intervention in Angus and agree a new approach.

4.10 Review of Section 11 Guidance

Homeless applications following action by landlord / lender have shown a reducing trend over the past 5 years and as expected have reduced significantly in 2020/21 because of the protection against eviction measures introduced by the Scottish Government during the pandemic. However, it is anticipated that when these measures are relaxed, homeless applications resulting from eviction or repossession action will increase.



To inform a review of existing pathways, prevention and early intervention approaches, a multi-agency case review of Housing Association and Local Authority tenancies that ended in 2017/18 was completed in 2019. The case file review focused on households that had failed to sustain a tenancy for 12 months, where the tenancy had ended under abandonment, households who had been evicted, and section 5 referrals that had ended in abandonment or eviction. The purpose of the review was to identify any gaps in support and consider if there were any changes required to existing eviction and failed tenancy prevention pathways. The case reviewers included representation and input from Housing Strategy, Community Housing, Homelessness Support, Hillcrest Homes, Angus Housing Association, Justice Service, Angus Integrated Drug & Alcohol Recovery Service and the Community Mental Health Service. Twenty cases were selected at random across the four localities and each service provided details of their service involvement.

The findings from the review supported the findings from Hard Edges Scotland which highlighted the complexity of the lives of people facing multiple disadvantage, the mismatch between the range of needs people have and the fact that services are often set up to address single issues. We recognise that a whole systems approach to change is required to ensure services are proactive, provide stickable support and work in collaboration. Prevention and earlier intervention are also recognised as key to addressing multiple disadvantages.

We identified a requirement to revise section 11 and eviction prevention pathways to ensure a coordinated approach to prevent homelessness at the earliest opportunity.

The guidance was implemented from 1 April 2021 and is based on findings and guidance developed from a project established and funded by the North and Islands Homelessness and Housing Options Hub and managed by Scotland’s Housing Network. The lessons that were learned from the project, and are used to inform the guidance, are:

- intervene earlier when the situation can be more readily resolved;
- share more information, and information that will be more useful in terms of seeking to prevent homelessness;
- ensure that communication is between known, named contacts;
- act jointly to prevent repossession;
- standard letters sent in response to section 11 notices are of little practical use;
- keep each other informed of action taken after serving of the section 11 notice;
- actively involve other agencies in preventing homelessness where relevant;
- hold regular joint meetings to review section 11 caseloads, and
- ensure organisational resources are committed to prevention.

4.11 Improve Housing Options and Support in the Private Rented Sector (PRS)

There are just over 7000 registered privately rented properties in Angus and despite this sector seeing a significant increase over the period 2010 to 2015, the number of registered properties has started to marginally decline, on a par with 2015 levels. Since 2015, 20% of households making a homeless application have come from the private rented sector however only 4% of homeless households have gone on to secure a private rented tenancy.

A number of actions have been identified in the RRTP to increase access to the private rented sector (PRS) including introducing flat share initiatives; implementing a rent deposit scheme and establishing a grant for empty home owners to bring back empty homes for letting to homeless households.

Progress in implementing these later initiatives was accelerated because of difficulties allocating tenancies during the COVID-19 pandemic and this has presented an opportunity to engage with private rented landlords in Angus. A call for assistance from landlords resulted in 60+ properties being put forward for helping people with an urgent housing need into PRS tenancies. Rent deposit, rent in advance and rent guarantee schemes have been launched, alongside guidance for housing officers to assist them to negotiate with landlords to help support people to access accommodation.

Work was completed in partnership with the national homelessness charity Crisis, Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City Councils to consider a range of options which will assist us to continue to build on the engagement with landlords and improve private sector housing options and tenancy sustainability. As part of this work, we sent an online survey to registered landlords about working together with the Council to provide housing for people in urgent need and improve tenancy sustainment in the private sector. 1725 landlords completed the survey, many leaving useful comments and suggestions, and over half expressing an interest in hearing more about this area of work in future. Landlords who responded have made it clear they would value more support from the Council when they house someone in housing need and would especially value a single point of contact to access support for tenants who run into difficulties. The additional winter RRTP funding to support the recovery from the pandemic has been used to recruit two new officers to build engagement with landlords in Angus, support people to access the PRS and be a first point of contact for tenants and landlords to prevent homelessness from the PRS.

Since the service was launched in June the officers have had 53 enquiries. 19 referrals have been received for existing tenants experiencing difficulties from a range of sources including landlords, tenants and other services. 23 referrals have been received for people looking for assistance to access accommodation in the PRS and 11 have been general enquiries. The officers are continuing to build engagement with landlords in Angus and raise awareness of the service.

4.12 Review hospital and mental health facility discharge protocols and practice

Through the Housing, Health and Social Care Strategic Planning Group, partners completed a multi-agency review of all delayed discharge cases from 2016/17 to identify any common issues or themes that could be addressed. The case review highlighted several people were unable to return to their existing property due to unmet adaptation needs. Another common theme emerging from the case review was delayed discharge because of poor property conditions.

To support people from all tenures to be discharged in a timely manner, £10,000 annual funding has been allocated from the Angus Health & Social Care Partnership to create a 'prevention fund' to support hospital discharges for the following:

- Cleaning costs of the property
- To clear utility bill debt
- Interim accommodation costs (rent, service charges, council tax)
- Essential furnishings
- Removal/packing costs
- Any other housing costs may be considered

To date, twenty two individuals have been supported through the delayed discharge prevention fund through payments for interim accommodation, cleaning costs and the provision of essential furnishings.

Several other actions have also been identified including the review of the existing multi agency Tayside Admission and Discharge protocol and staff guidance and training. We have experienced difficulties progressing the review of the Tayside Admission and Discharge Protocol due to the number of agencies and local authorities involved however we continue to highlight this as a priority through the Admission and Discharge planning group in Tayside.

4.13 Implementation of Housing First

For people with multiple complex support needs beyond housing, Housing First should be the first response. Housing First provides ordinary, settled housing as a first response for people with complex needs. It recognises a safe and secure home as the best base for recovery and offers personalised, open-ended, flexible support for people to end their experience of homelessness and address their wider needs. The model separates the provision of housing and support, offers choice and control to tenants and works to the principles of harm reduction.

Housing First was implemented in Angus in November 2020 and we have recruited two Housing First support workers within the existing Homelessness Support Service to provide intensive wrap around support to around 15 individuals with a history of repeat homelessness and complex support needs. A multi-agency panel has been established to consider referrals and provide monitoring and oversight and includes representation from the three Community Housing Teams, RSL partners, Homelessness Support Service, AIDARS and the Community Mental Health team.

Sixteen individuals are now being supported by Housing First with good engagement and positive outcomes. An annual check-up has been completed, supported by Homeless Network Scotland, which identified a number of areas of positive practice and some areas for development. Both support workers posts have now been made permanent however there is still a need to consider longer term funding and upscaling of the service. .

4.14 Review of Support Provision

In developing the RRTP it was recognised that the impact of existing support services on homeless households was not well understood in Angus. An action was identified to review outcomes from current support provision to ensure we fully understand the support needs of homeless households in Angus so that these households can access the right type of support.

We commissioned an independent consultant to complete a research project undertaking data analysis, service user research and service provider research. One of the aims of the research was to assess the effectiveness of the current models of supported homeless accommodation in Angus. The research concluded in February 2020 and the findings highlighted concerns around the concentration of people with complex needs and questioned the specific purpose of the provision of supported homeless accommodation in the context of rapid rehousing and introduction of Housing First. The research recommended a full review of the scale and purpose of supported accommodation – considering whether it should be targeted to very specific needs / client groups / age groups, whether there should be more but smaller complexes available elsewhere across Angus and considering whether these should be health and social care responses rather than a homeless response.

A recommendation was also made to consider the level of resources for transition to independent living – the Homelessness Support Service is highly regarded and delivers positive outcomes. In the context of rapid rehousing, there appears to be a greater resource requirement for housing support to enable independent living, particularly for those with more complex needs who require more intense wrap around support.

Work is underway, in partnership with the Angus Health and Social Care Partnership (AHSCP), to complete a full review of existing homeless support provision to ensure this meets the needs of homeless households in Angus and is in line with the shift away from a culture of ‘tenancy readiness’. It is anticipated that resources will be redirected from providing short term supported homeless accommodation to supporting people in their own settled accommodation. The review will also consider whether the existing provision of AHSCP specialist supported accommodation is adequate to meet the needs of the small number of homeless households where independent living within the community is not possible or preferable for whatever reason (safety, risk to self or others, choice) and where residential or supported accommodation is the preferred housing option.

4.15 Planned RRTP Activities

Several additional actions are planned as we progress with the implementation of the RRTP, namely:

- Continue to refresh the RRTP demand and backlog tool at a locality level to establish the required % of lets to homeless households for each Housing Market Area.
- Continue to review households occupying temporary homeless accommodation and convert to secure tenancies where appropriate.
- Development of a youth homelessness strategy. A cross public sector group has been set up in Angus to consider Transitions for vulnerable young adults and will help to inform the development of the strategy.
- Consider the recommendations from the Homelessness Prevention Review Group and any further homeless prevention legislative changes – we will consider if existing resources, structures are sufficient to meet the requirements from any proposed changes.
- Implement an online housing need and homeless assessment case management system.
- Continue to evaluate, explore and develop initiatives to help increase access to the private rented sector.

- Review nominations agreements with RSL partners to increase proportion of lets to homeless households.
- Review the existing processes for the provision of furniture and goods to homeless households - we have worked with our social welfare fund team to review existing processes to ensure applications for community care grants from homeless applications are prioritised and processed quickly in line with the objectives of rapid rehousing. Despite agreement to prioritise applications for homeless households, people continue to experience lengthy waits for community care grant awards. Service user research completed as part of an analysis of support needs and outcomes for people experiencing homelessness in Angus has highlighted that many people had ‘practically nothing’ in place when they moved into their permanent home. As well as continuing to provide second –hand furniture, white goods and starter packs to homeless households in partnership with local recycled goods projects, we will soon pilot the provision of fully furnished tenancies.

The RRTP is a working document and will be under continuous review and development over the remaining 3 years of the transition period. The LHS must be aligned and underpinned by actions and commitments that will contribute to delivering the priorities of the RRTP.

4.16 Housing Options Housing Improvement Team (HIT)

The Housing Improvement Teams were established in 2016 to monitor and improve performance against the Scottish Social Housing Charter outcomes and standards. The Housing Options HIT leads on the performance monitoring and operational improvement actions relating to outcomes 7, 8 and 9: Housing options; 10: Access to social housing; 11: Tenancy sustainment; and 12: Homeless people. Operational developments identified in the LHS and RRTP are taken forward by the HIT and membership currently includes staff from operational and strategic housing teams. However, the work of the HITs has been impacted by the housing service restructure and COVID 19 pandemic.

The role of the Housing Options HIT and membership needs to be considered to ensure that the priorities of the LHS link with the Scottish Social Housing Charter Outcomes and the implementation of these priorities is done in collaboration with key stakeholder and partners.

4.17 The Tayside, Fife and Central Housing Options Hub

Angus has an active role in the Tayside, Fife and Central Housing Options Hub which has been meeting regularly since the end of 2010. It has developed a strong shared focus to take forward various work strands; working in collaboration with local partnering organisations and other Hubs to progress the development of the Housing Options approach, sharing best practice and working together on joint projects, including:

- Development of the housing options training toolkit in partnership with the other Housing Options Hubs
- Stakeholder and awareness raising events during the development of RRTPs
- Development of an arm chair service user participation group
- Procurement of training and guidance on trauma informed practice, housing and homelessness rights of foreign nationals and domestic abuse
- Developing customer E Learning tools – including designing a module to inform young people who are taking on their first tenancy or moving home

- Developing and carrying out Peer Audits of the customer experience in housing options services, involving service users as auditors and assessing performance against the National Standards
- Maintaining the hubs website and service directory to assist front line staff in providing housing options advice
- Collaborating on homelessness/ housing options responses during the COVID-19 pandemic

It is important that Angus continues to contribute to the work of the Hub so opportunities for collaborating with other Hub authorities on priorities identified within the LHS can be considered.

5. Summary

The number of people applying as homeless in Angus has reduced over the course of the current LHS, with 2020/21 seeing the lowest number of applications recorded in Angus since the current HL1 recording was implemented. Although we have seen a reduction in applications and have a number of actions identified in the RRTP to ensure households get through the homeless system faster; case duration and time spent in temporary accommodation has increased since 2017. Homelessness resulting from a relationship breakdown or being asked to leave continues to be the most common reason for making a homeless application, followed by dispute within household (violence or abuse) and action by landlord/ lender. The profile of households making a homeless application has remained largely the same, with the majority of applications being made by single person households. However Angus continues to see higher proportions of young people applying as homeless compared to the national average. The proportion of people applying as homeless who require support with independent living skills, mental health, other medical needs and substance use has also steadily increased over the past 5 years highlighting that homelessness is not a stand alone issue, is interconnected with other harms, and responses based on the principles of early intervention and collaboration and that are person centred and trauma informed are required.

Through its Ending Homelessness Together high level action plan, the Scottish Government has stepped up its commitment to eradicate rough sleeping, transform the use of temporary accommodation and end homelessness. This has been further strengthened by the commitment made in the first national housing strategy, Housing to 2040, to introduce a cross-sector homelessness prevention duty. In response to the Ending Homelessness Together plan and introduction of Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans (RRTP), a number of work streams and initiatives have been progressed in Angus in collaboration with partner organisations and stakeholders to increase the focus on the prevention of homelessness and ensure people who experience homelessness reach a settled housing outcome as quickly as possible.

The pandemic has brought into sharp focus how closely our home, health and wellbeing are connected. It has forced faster progress on tackling homelessness and led to the acceleration of a number of actions identified within the RRTP. Although the last year has seen a significant reduction in homeless applications in Angus, we recognise that applications are likely to rise now that protection against evictions are lifted, and the economic and other wider impacts begin to take effect. It is important we continue with the progress made so far and ensure there is no backwards movement as we recover from the pandemic.

6. Considerations for LHS 2023 -2028

The Local Housing Strategy (LHS) 2023-2028 should identify what actions are required to meet the requirements of new legislation and deliver the priorities identified in the Housing to 2040 Strategy and the Ending Homelessness Together action plan to achieve the ambition to end homelessness. The LHS must also be aligned and underpinned by actions and commitments that will contribute to delivering the priorities of the RRTP. If the recommendations of the Prevention Review Group are implemented they have the potential

to radically change the face of the homelessness system in Scotland. The resource requirements and ability of existing structures and practices within the housing and homelessness support services and across the wider public sector to respond to these duties need to be considered.

The key issues to be addressed through the LHS in relation to homelessness are:

- The LHS should consider how we ensure a consistent approach to responding to homelessness across Angus however approaches need to also take account of the different needs of populations across Angus and further upstream prevention activities need to be considered to address homelessness linked to deprivation, particularly in East Angus.
- Consideration as to how we accurately record prevention work and maintain contact and confirm outcomes from the provision of housing options advice
- The proportion of lets to homeless households require to be closely monitored and the allocations policy kept under review to ensure a fair approach to the allocation of housing in Angus.
- In order to meet the backlog and new demand, there is a need to consider alternative strategies and initiatives to prevent homelessness and increase access to alternative housing options, particularly targeted to the East and South HMAs.
- The dominance of young single households applying as homeless needs to be considered as we develop approaches to prevent and respond to homelessness in Angus. While the impact of welfare reform and the introduction has largely been mitigated through discretionary housing payments and other measures; the LHS must consider the available housing options and impact of Local Housing Allowance rates on single people who are 35.
- The LHS should consider how we work collaboratively and ensure approaches to supporting homeless households are based on early intervention and are trauma informed and person centred.
- The monitoring of the Housing Support Regulations is still yet to reach its full potential in terms of recording where support has been provided and outcomes of those in receipt of support. The impact of the new Homelessness service should be monitored to ensure that it drives improvement in ensuring that individuals who are homeless and need support receive the support they require.
- The LHS should consider if there are any additional actions to ensure that the time spent in any form of temporary accommodation is minimised as well as how we reduce assessment timescales, minimise lost contacts while continuing to ensure a robust assessment process and maximising opportunities to resolve homelessness during the assessment process.
- The role and membership of the Housing, Health & Social Care Strategic Planning Group and Housing Options HIT needs to be considered to ensure that the priorities of the RRTP and LHS link with the Scottish Social Housing Charter Outcomes and the implementation of these priorities is done in collaboration with key stakeholder and partners.