



Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and Action Plan

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Foreword

Lambeth is a special place. Diverse, dynamic and full of excitement and opportunity, it attracts people from across the UK, Europe and the rest of the world who want to make it their home.

However, London and the UK is in the grip of a housing crisis which has been fuelled by a lack of government support for a comprehensive home building programme and indifference to rising costs and in some cases poor standards in the private rented sector. These factors, together with ongoing reforms to the benefit system, are combining to form a difficult environment for many residents, with rising numbers finding themselves without a permanent roof over their heads. According to the latest estimates from Shelter UK, 320,000 people in the UK now find themselves in either temporary accommodation or sleeping on our streets.

This is clearly an unacceptable situation. Having access to good quality, suitable and secure accommodation is fundamental to our resident's having happy and successful lives. When it is not available, there is an impact on many other aspects of public service beyond housing, including people's health and children's education.

Seeing people with nowhere to live and sleeping on the streets is arguably the most acute impact of almost a decade of austerity from central government.

Large numbers of homeless people are less visible including those who are 'sofa surfing'; families within families living in appallingly cramped conditions; or families in temporary accommodation for years at a time.

While this picture is bleak, as a borough, we are doing all we can to provide vulnerable residents who find themselves homeless with the support they need and deserve. Over the last five years we have delivered high levels of homelessness prevention. On all three key homelessness measures, prevention actions, homeless acceptances, and temporary accommodation occupation, we report above average performance in the London context.

Despite deep cuts to the council's budget, we have protected many services to help rough sleepers and are continuing to spend around £4 million on a range of support. This includes a rough sleeping team who are out every day and night helping those in terrible circumstances on the streets and a range of hostels which aim to provide long term care that helps homeless residents back into independent living. Our team has bid successfully for funding for a new night shelter in central Lambeth and I was very proud to open Martha Jones House in November 2018 with our partners Thames Reach. I have seen first-hand the excellent work that our teams and our many excellent community organisations do with these resources. Helping homeless people, who have often been let down by society in awful ways, is not easy work. It requires patience, understanding and compassion. Everyone who gives their time to work in this field deserves the highest possible praise.

Alongside this, we have an ambitious programme to build new affordable housing through our new sustainable growth strategy. We are moving forward with our plans to build a 1,000 new council homes, and in the private rented sector are developing a new charter to further protect tenants. And we have worked in partnership with other councils to invest in temporary accommodation, including the Mayor's PLACE scheme and London Council's Real Letting programme.

However, despite all this, the failure of successive governments to invest in the affordable homes we need means that the pressures in this area are likely to persist.

It is essential in these circumstances that we have an approach that emphasises partnerships with other parts of the public sector and specialists in the field, including local charities, as well as a strong central commitment to maintaining our central role as a council in providing effective services to the homeless and rough sleepers. Within this strategy specific commitments to enhance our work with LGBT organisations and representatives are included as part of the council's commitment to the House Proud pledges.

We already have an extremely strong precedent for joint working with a range of providers when it comes to our front line services and I would like to thank all those who have worked with the council and all the fantastic staff and volunteers in the borough, who work tirelessly to help our most vulnerable residents.

Cllr Paul Gadsby

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "P Gadsby".

Executive Summary

Lambeth's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (the Strategy) sets out the borough's priorities to prevent homelessness and stresses the importance of working in partnership to address the wide range of issues that can be linked to homelessness. Homelessness includes people sleeping on the streets, but also those who don't have rights to stay where they are or are living in unsuitable housing. Whilst most of this strategy concerns the latter, there is a specific priority for people sleeping rough who make up a relatively small proportion of those receiving homelessness prevention or relief services.

Our 5 priorities are:-

Priority 1:- Ensuring that all people sleeping rough in Lambeth are supported off the streets and assisted in improving their lives and do not return to the streets.

Priority 2:- Preventing homelessness by supporting households to remain in their homes or helping them to find alternative accommodation.

Priority 3:- Establishing effective pathways internally, with public authorities and partner agencies, to prevent homelessness.

Priority 4:- Making sure there is a supply of suitable accommodation for people to move into.

Priority 5:- Improving the supply and sustainability of Temporary Accommodation.

What we can do as a local authority is constrained, and the Strategy includes a section on how we believe that central government needs to change its approach, "Our Ask from Government".

Introduction

In 2002 the Homelessness Act became law to ensure a more strategic approach to tackling and preventing homelessness. Local authorities are required to undertake a review of homelessness and publish a strategy to prevent homelessness based on that review.

In December 2018 the Government published its Rough Sleeping Strategy delivery plan which provided the following updates:

- i) All local authorities must update their homelessness reviews and strategies and rebadge them as homelessness and rough sleeping strategies.
- ii) Strategies are made available online and submitted to the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government.
- iii) Local authorities report progress in delivering these strategies and publish annual action plans.

We have undertaken a Homelessness Review, which includes detailed information on the current and likely future levels of homelessness in Lambeth. Based on the review, this draft Strategy now sets out broad approach to prevent and tackle homelessness in the five-year period up to 2024.

National and Regional Contexts

Homelessness has been on the rise across the country. Government figures show that in England rough sleeping increased by 169% between 2010 and 2017. From September 2010 to September 2017 total numbers of homeless households living in temporary accommodation increased from 48,000 to 79,000¹.

The key driver is a lack of affordable accommodation for people to move into and a growing disconnect between housing costs and what people are able to pay. This has been exacerbated by the government's austerity measures and reductions in welfare support. A lack of government funded genuinely affordable housing for sale, and built for council rent, has been a further contributing factor.

Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (HRA) came into force on 3 April 2018. It is the most significant change in homelessness law for a generation and has introduced a number of new duties on local authorities

- A strengthened duty to provide advisory services.
- An extension to the period during which an applicant is considered "threatened with homelessness", from 28 to 56 days.
- New duties to assess all eligible applicants (not just those unintentionally homeless and in priority need), and new duties to take reasonable steps to prevent and relieve homelessness.
- A requirement to carry out needs assessments and personalised plans, setting out the actions that the local authority and applicant will take to find somewhere to live
- Services must be designed to meet the needs of specific groups including care leavers, people leaving hospital / prison and victims of domestic violence.
- Public bodies are being encouraged to work together with a mandatory duty to refer.

¹ <https://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/SN02110#fullreport>

The Act deals with homelessness on a wider scale than under the Housing Act 1996. Lambeth was already doing many of the things required under the act, with a strong focus on prevention and specific housing pathways in place for vulnerable adults and children.

Welfare Reform

There have been significant and ongoing changes to welfare benefits from central government since this strategy had its last full review. Most significantly from a homelessness perspective there is now a ‘benefit cap’ in place. In London, this now limits annual payments to £23,000 for families or £15,410 for single people.

Single person private renters under the age of 35 are only entitled to the shared accommodation rate of the local housing allowance, even if they are living on their own. This can limit a single persons’ opportunity to rent in Lambeth, where the average rental price for a one bedroom flat is over twice the local housing allowance. This is because local housing allowance levels, which were originally set at the 30th percentile of local rents, have not risen in line with rent inflation.

Universal Credit is replacing a range of other benefits including child tax / working credits, income support and housing benefit. Since December 2017 all new claimants in Lambeth have been put onto universal credit. National studies have shown that there have been a number of problems with the introduction of universal credit, delays to payments, increased rent arrears and homelessness.

There are measures which we can take to prevent those affected by welfare reform from falling into serious rent areas and facing eviction. Discretionary housing payments and the hardship fund can help those struggling to meet additional costs such as the bedroom tax and Lambeth housing advisers provide tenants practical steps to help manage their finances, such as spending reviews. For benefit capped households, the Housing Support Team work in close partnership with the Job Centre Plus, the DWP and Centre 70 to offer into work schemes, benefit support and debt services.

Private Sector Housing Reforms

The government has introduced a limited series of reforms, giving local authorities some additional tools to tackle rogue landlord behaviour and letting agents. This includes greater powers including civil penalty notices, banning orders and the extension of rent repayment orders which Lambeth has adopted in the 2018 update to its Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy.

These powers have been further supplemented by positive reforms from the Mayor of London, with Lambeth taking part in the “naming and shaming” website for particularly bad cases where landlords have provided substandard accommodation to their tenants.

Lambeth is currently developing a private rented charter and will be considering an expansion of its licensing schemes as part of those proposals.

However, while the general direction of travel is towards strengthening private renters’ rights including the possible introduction of three-year tenancies as standard, there remains a lack of support for local councils to enforce renters rights, including funding to provide local authority staff to ensure standards are maintained in the sector. Rising rent levels have not been addressed in the past decade, although the Mayor of London recently called for rent controls to be considered in London.

MHCLG Rough Sleeping Strategy

In August 2018 the government introduced its new rough sleeping strategy, including a three-part approach of prevention, intervention and recovery. The strategy states that the first of these, prevention, is at the heart of the government’s approach, focussing on timely support before

someone becomes homeless. The second, intervention, sets out how the strategy will help people who are already in crisis get swift, targeted support to get them off the street. The final part, recovery, talks about supporting people to find a new home quickly and rebuild their lives. It also includes a commitment to halve rough sleeping over the next two years and eradicate it by 2027.

The Mayor's London Housing Strategy 2018

The London Mayor's Housing Strategy was published in May 2018 and included the following commitments:

- Providing a package of interventions to address homelessness caused by violence against women and girls.
- Establishing and leading the No Nights Sleeping Rough taskforce to bring together key partners involved in supporting rough sleepers off the streets.
- Allocating around £8.5 million each year to fund pan-London rough sleeping services that work in tandem with the services commissioned by boroughs.
- Developing new services including: a Social Impact Bond to support the most entrenched rough sleepers; services to support vulnerable non-UK nationals; an outreach service to operate on night buses and the Night Tube; a pilot service to help rough sleepers with mental health needs.

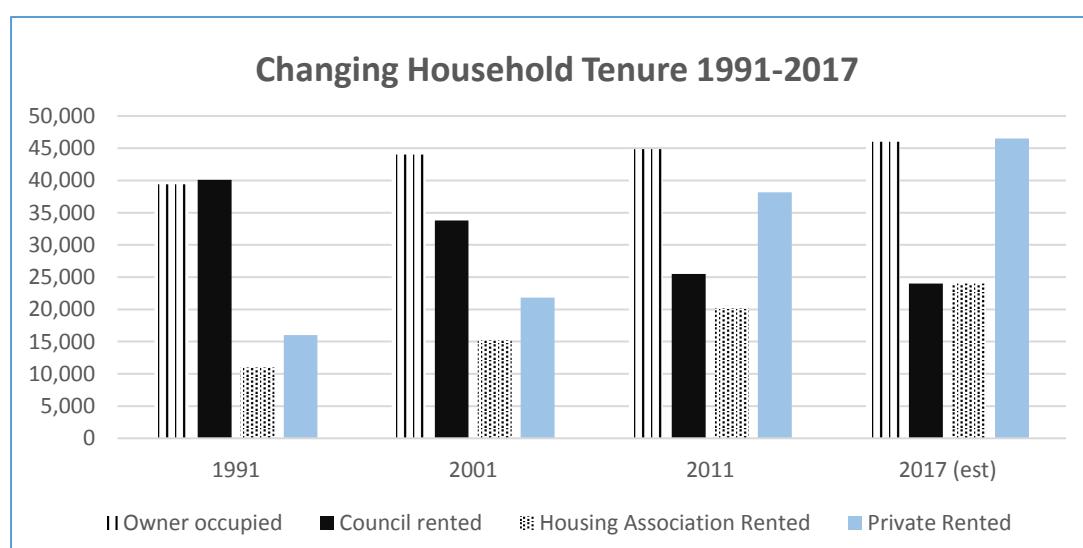
Local Contexts

Over a third of a million people live in the London borough of Lambeth. It has one of the largest geographical areas of any inner London borough, and is situated in south London, between Wandsworth and Southwark, and south from Westminster. It has several distinctive neighbourhoods including Waterloo, Brixton, Clapham, Streatham and Norwood.

Largely residential, it is one of the most densely populated places in the country, with over 100 people living in each hectare, more than twice the London population density. It has a complex social and ethnic mix, with large African and Portuguese populations, and is an important focus for the UK black Caribbean population.

Lambeth has a relatively young age profile. Although it is a largely residential borough, it is a destination for young working age people, rather than families.

As with the rest of London, Lambeth has experienced a significant shift in tenure over the last 20 years with proportion of homes in the private rented sector doubling.



Although rents and house prices have broadly stabilised over the last 3 years, having the financial means to find somewhere to live is a major challenge. To afford to rent the average two bed flat in Lambeth a household needs an income of £57,000, some way higher than the median income of £38,000². To purchase a home is more difficult with average property prices at half a million pounds. Lambeth recently carried out a survey of 500 private renters living in the cheaper parts of the market and in former council owned properties sold under right to buy. The survey showed that 30% of those interviewed were spending over half their gross income on their rent, far in excess of what could be considered reasonably affordable.

As described above, there has been an effective freeze on payments to support people renting in the private sector. The maximum local housing allowance payable for a two bed flat in Lambeth is £1,183 per month, £417 less than the average cost.

Lambeth's Current Approach

Lambeth is developing a new Sustainable Growth and Inclusive Opportunity Strategy which describes sustainable growth as a means to greater prosperity. As the borough grows a key objective is greater resilience, and the growth strategy outlines how we can tackle the social and economic inequality in the borough.

New affordable homes with secure and stable tenancies provided by ethical landlords is a fundamental component of a more resilient community.

Although outside the scope of this document, increasing the supply of new affordable housing is an important long term aim and a key part of how Lambeth can provide housing options and the prevention and relief of homelessness.

The **Borough Plan** details a 10 year commitment to maintaining socially mixed communities with a sustainable supply of houses of all tenures. It includes housing's aim to prevent homelessness by placing people in suitable, affordable, permanent homes as quickly as possible. The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy will work with the goals specified in the Borough Plan to ensure that the outcomes for people facing homelessness in the borough are achieved. The Strategy will strive to play a part in achieving the wider goals outlined in the Borough Plan which include positive health and wellbeing for all and stronger partnership working. In this sense, the Strategy goes further in its ambition to tackle homelessness, reflecting corporate objectives, and includes commitments to work more closely with partners in health and social care to offer wraparound support for those who need it.

To complement the Strategy, Lambeth recently agreed a motion at Council to introduce a Homelessness Charter. The Charter outlines the rights of homeless people in the borough and commits the Council to take action on ending homelessness in all of its forms. It includes the right to housing, the right to adequate sanitary facilities and the right to vote. This Charter is going to be the basis of a new Homelessness Bill of Rights which will be more extensive and introduced in 2020.

Lambeth's Housing Strategy was published in 2017. This reflects wider corporate objectives in the **Borough Plan** to ensure that everyone benefits from investment and growth in Lambeth with a focus on increasing the supply of housing, particularly building an additional 1,000 homes at a council rent. Lambeth has established a wholly owned company, Homes for Lambeth, to build new affordable housing on council owned land, through a mixture of estate regeneration and developing small sites.

² GLA Datastore 2017

In relation to homelessness the Housing Strategy committed the council to:

- Prevent homelessness by supporting households to remain in their home or to help them find alternative accommodation
- Develop tenancy sustainment and support services in the private rented sector to ensure affordable supply and choice of accommodation
- Manage the impact of welfare reforms, commissioning financial and employment advice

Lambeth introduced its [**Allocation Scheme**](#) in 2013. This sets out who is prioritised for social housing. Applicants who are working with us to prevent their homelessness have priority for council and housing association homes. This represented a big shift from the previous scheme where the main entry route into social housing was by first becoming homeless.

The allocation scheme is reviewed on a regular basis with minor adjustments made as required. Recently this has included awarding higher priority to overcrowded households living in temporary accommodation.

Tackling the Climate Emergency.

Our work to improve conditions in the PRS, including energy performance and the supply of new housing built to high energy specifications will contribute to Lambeth's commitment to tackle the climate emergency.

Main findings from the Homelessness Review

The Homelessness Reduction Act has introduced a new approach to preventing homelessness and the way that actions are monitored. As such it is difficult to draw direct comparisons on key areas pre and post-April 2018. The main findings are listed below with detailed performance information and data provided in the Appendix.

Principal findings:-

1. Since the last homelessness strategy was published in 2012 Lambeth has successfully delivered very high levels of homelessness prevention. The net effect has been reducing levels of homelessness acceptances and reductions in new placement demand for temporary accommodation as our work to keep people in their homes or help them to move to new accommodation has prevented them from becoming homeless. On all three key homelessness measures – prevention actions, homelessness acceptances, and temporary accommodation occupation – Lambeth reports above average performance in the London context.
2. Following the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2018 there have been more applications for assistance, and especially more applications for assistance from single person households with support needs.
3. Evictions by Other Family (excluding parents) or Friends was the biggest reason for homelessness acceptances up to March 2018, at almost a third of acceptances.
4. “Other” categories reached 30 per cent of acceptances up to March 2018. “Other cases” mostly encompass mortgage arrears, leaving HM Forces, leaving local authority care, leaving hospital or other institutions.

5. At nearly 30 per cent of homelessness prevention cases, use of the private rented sector is the most widespread method of preventing homelessness.
6. The number of social lettings continues to decline, limiting access to social housing to only those with the highest priority.
7. There has been a general decrease in the new demand for placements in temporary accommodation between April 2017 and March 2019, despite an increase in the number of homelessness applications. This is because we've been very effective at preventing homelessness.
8. From a recent survey we carried out with 500 private renters in Lambeth, we know that many pay an extremely high proportion of their income on their rent. This lack of affordability is the root cause of homelessness in Lambeth.
9. Lambeth has 800 landlords who are 'accredited' one of the highest numbers in London. To become accredited, landlords receive training and on-going professional development. Landlords and agents sign up to a code of conduct and must fulfil the fit and proper person requirement.
10. Reflecting the wider national trend, and particularly in London, the overall number of people in temporary accommodation has increased. Government support to cover actual costs has reduced and the market has changed. As a consequence of this, the use of nightly paid self-contained accommodation has risen substantially, from 3 per cent of temporary accommodation on 31 March 2012 to 54 per cent on 1 July 2019. The use of long-term private sector leasing, which has tended to be more cost-effective, has correspondingly declined.
11. Lambeth has developed a range of successful approaches which have increased the amount of financially sustainable homes to use as TA. This has included the 'meanwhile' use of vacant properties which are in areas with planned redevelopment. Lambeth is investing £30m in the Real Lettings Fund to provide quality housing options and has also signed up to the GLA's PLACE initiative (Pan London Accommodation Collaborative Enterprise), to facilitate a collaborative approach to the construction of modular units to be used as temporary accommodation on council-owned hostel sites.
12. While the use of temporary accommodation outside of Lambeth has grown, nearly 90% of this accommodation is in the adjoining boroughs of Croydon, Bromley, Southwark, Wandsworth, Merton and Lewisham, and unlike some other boroughs, we don't place many families outside of London. The approach has been focussed on keeping people in the borough and London, although this is becoming increasingly difficult.
13. We have introduced methods of moving people out of temporary accommodation. Examples include: direct offers of settled accommodation, reviews of each household's options and opportunities, and putting in place support packages for families who are willing to leave temporary accommodation.
14. The "Flow" category, i.e. people who had never been seen sleeping rough before and are likely to be new rough sleepers, saw a definite decline in numbers between 2013 and 2018. However, the percentage of people continuing to sleep rough in Lambeth from European

Economic Area (EEA) countries continues to grow. These rough sleepers have no recourse to public funds.

The Five Priorities

Priority 1:- Ensure that all people sleeping rough in Lambeth are supported off the streets and assisted in improving their lives and do not return to the streets.

For the purpose of this strategy, rough sleeping is defined as anyone who is bedded down or about to bed down in the open air. This can include on the street, in tents, doorways, parks, bus shelters, stairwells, sheds, car parks, cars, or stations.

Rough sleeping is not only damaging to the person sleeping rough, but it also has wider impacts on local communities, so it is vital that we are responding to this issue and ensuring that services are strategically relevant, are achieving good value for money and are outcome focussed.

KEY STATISTICS

Of those who were recorded as rough sleeping in Lambeth in 2017/18, 50% were only seen rough sleeping once.

39% of the total number of rough sleepers were non-UK nationals.

271 people were accommodated in hostels and supported accommodation in the Vulnerable Adults' Pathway in 2017/18.

During the Autumn 2018 Rough Sleeper Count, 50 people were found to be sleeping rough in Lambeth. There were 1,283 in the whole of London.

Lambeth has a maximum of 444 people living in hostels and supported housing within our Vulnerable Adults' Pathway at any one time.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Lambeth Council commissions a Safer Streets outreach team who work seven days per week across the whole borough. They provide assessments, advice, and referrals to services such as primary healthcare, substance misuse services, counselling, housing advice, and welfare benefit agencies.

Lambeth has a number of specialist services that help with improving the health of homeless people. This includes specialist GP services; specialist nurses; a team of social workers and substance use workers that visit projects across the Vulnerable Adults' Pathway; a number of psychologists based at hostels and a hospital discharge team.

WE WILL

Support people off the streets and into independent living

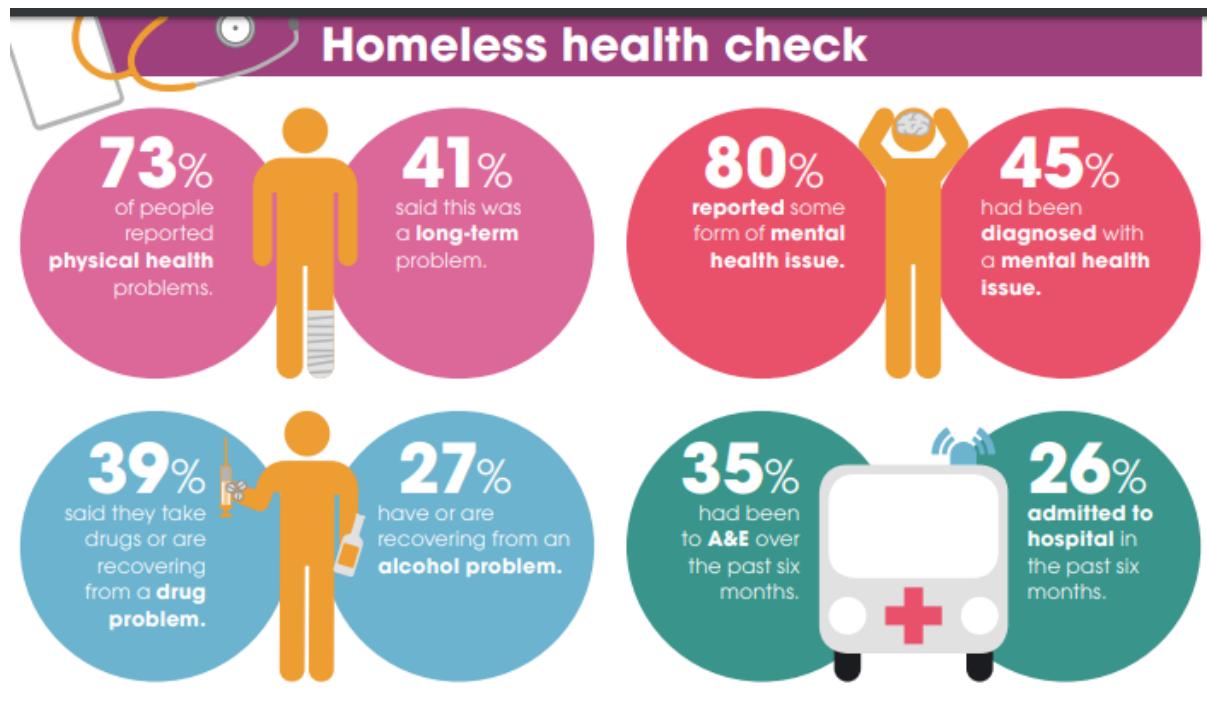
Improve rough sleepers' lives

Support people off the Streets

People who live on the streets die on average 30 years earlier than the general population, with an average life expectancy of 47 years old. Lambeth is committed to ensuring that people sleeping

rough and former rough sleepers are engaged with health and wellbeing services to improve their quality of life and life expectancy.

Lambeth is committed to supporting every person that sleeps rough in the borough. We understand the importance of reaching people quickly and are working towards the Mayor of London's model of 'No Second Night Out'.



Worse than the general public	Health issue	Homeless population	General population
Physical, mental and substance misuse issues remain prevalent among the homeless population and at levels that are much higher than those experienced by the general population.	Long term physical health problems	41%	28%
	Diagnosed mental health problem	45%	25%
	Taken drugs in the past month	36%	5%

Source: The unhealthy state of homelessness. Health audit result 2014

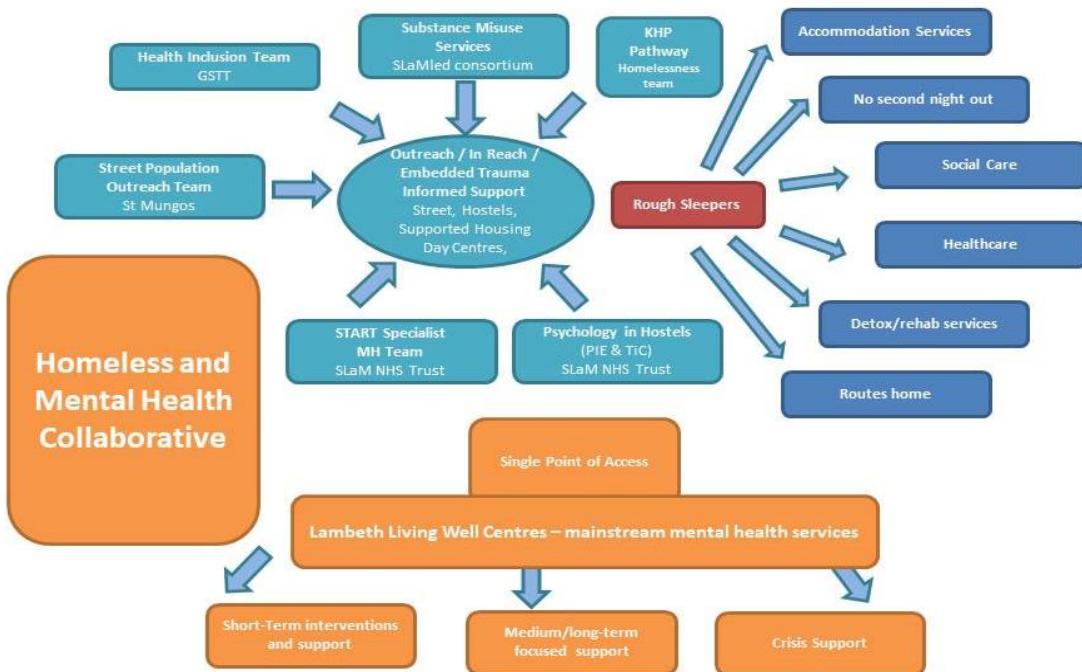
No one living on the streets

We commission a Safer Streets outreach team who work 7 days a week, at various times and across the whole borough. They also respond to reports of rough sleeping via Street Link or Community Champions. They provide assessment, advice and referrals to services such as primary healthcare, substance misuse services, counselling, housing advice and welfare benefit agencies. The Safer Streets Team have direct access to the Lambeth Assessment Centre, the night shelter and the No Second Night Out hubs in London, so any person found sleeping rough can be brought straight into accommodation for further assessment.

The GLA provides a number of other services to support rough sleepers in London. The No Nights Sleeping Rough task force has worked to launch three separate new services – Safe Connections, the Social Impact Bond for Entrenched Rough Sleepers and Night Transport Outreach. These projects offer rough sleepers personalised support whether they are new to the sleeps or have been on the streets for a while.

Lambeth has an excellent record of multi-agency working. The diagram below outlines how our health, homelessness, housing and substance misuse services work collaboratively through an outreach / in-reach model to meet the needs of the rough sleeping population. The Living Well Centres, will offer a step change improvement in access to mainstream adult services.

Integrated working – Rough Sleepers & Homelessness Support in Lambeth



ENDING THE HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT PLEDGE

Lambeth will not facilitate the government's hostile environment policies. This means we will:

1. Refuse to embed Home Office immigration officers in council services
2. Refuse to pass on rough sleeper's data to the Home Office without their express consent
3. Open Severe Weather Emergency Protocol shelters to everyone, regardless of immigration status.

Provide access to suitable, safe and secure housing

The Lambeth Assessment Centre is the gateway to the Vulnerable Adults' Pathway and is often the first option for people who have been sleeping rough. The main aim of the Assessment Centre is to accommodate people sleeping rough or single homeless people with support needs, provide rapid assessment of needs and then offer a suitable housing option.

There are cases where some people struggle to sustain their tenancies or due to their support needs require longer stays in 24 hour support hostels. The benefit of the pathway is that we are able to offer varied options to help support people to maintain housing and not return to the streets.

When people have been assessed as ready to leave the pathway and live independently, we provide a 'Move-On' scheme that supports people in accessing private rented housing.

No recourse to public funds

There is a comprehensive approach to supporting individuals with no recourse to public funds in Lambeth. The safer streets team leads on all cases and works alongside a number of key agencies including; Lambeth public protection, START mental health team, the health inclusion team, accommodation providers and various charities; including safe connections/Praxis.

Lambeth have a dedicated specialist NRPF team comprising social workers and housing officer to assess and provide support to homeless vulnerable families and single adults. Eligible NRPF families that meet destitution criteria are provided with Sec 17 assistance for accommodation and subsistence under the Children Act. Single adults who are destitute and have care needs receive support from NRPF team for housing and maintenance. The NRPF team works very closely with the Home Office to facilitate expedited decision making.

All NRTPF clients have access to a night shelter in Brixton where intensive work is carried out by these key agencies to support the clients to access various services including; substance misuse services, mental health services and welfare and immigration services. Recent funding has been secured to spot purchase bed spaces which will enable NRTPF clients to temporarily access accommodation while rigorous assessments and support is given to secure longer term outcomes.

Improve rough sleepers' lives

Building positive support networks

People who have slept rough or who have been homeless for extended periods of time will commonly have lost contact with family and friends. People can also feel disconnected from society and their local community due to time spent on the street.

Lambeth is committed to ensuring we support people to build positive support networks which may involve reconnecting with family and friends and helping people to have the right tools to be able to engage with the local community and wider society.

Safe Connections, funded by the GLA, supports this work by reconnecting rough sleepers who are new to the streets with their support networks and suitable accommodation.

Managing the impact of Brexit

There are currently over one million EU nationals living in London, who will all need to secure their rights to continue to live, work and study in the UK through the government's EU Settlement Scheme as the UK leaves the EU. As part of the work on EU settlement scheme we have been looking at the particular risks for homeless EU citizens, who might be at a higher risk of not registering under the EU settlement scheme, and therefore their losing citizenship status. We've been talking to some of our homelessness service providers as part of this, and these conversations will feature as part of our work on EU settlement.

Improving opportunities in education, training, volunteering and employment

We know that people who have experienced homelessness face barriers to employment that can include limited skills or experience, low level qualifications, low self-esteem, a lack of opportunity to access jobs that pay a living wage and the potential for discrimination.

We are committed to improving access to employment services that will support people to improve their opportunities in these areas, as we recognise this is a priority for formerly homeless people in moving towards independence.

Improve Health and Wellbeing

Lambeth has a number of specialist services that help with improving the health of homeless people. This includes specialist GP services; specialist nurses; a team of social workers and substance use workers that visit projects across the Vulnerable Adults' Pathway; a number of psychologists based at hostels and a hospital discharge team.

In April 2015, we conducted a Health Needs Audit across the Vulnerable Adults' Pathway with colleagues working in Public Health, Commissioning and Homeless Link. As a result of this initial audit, we are now embedding the Health Needs Audit as part of the initial assessment carried out when people enter the pathway. Each person living in a hostel or supported housing will be completing a health questionnaire with their key worker and this information will be used in support planning to ensure health needs are being addressed as early as possible.

Supporting the LGBT+ Community

We know that the numbers of LGBT+ people finding themselves homeless is disproportionate. According to research, the most common causes for homelessness amongst LGBT+ young people are: parental rejection; familial physical, sexual and emotional abuse; and familial aggression and violence. In July 2019 Lambeth signed up to the House Proud Pledge, meaning that we will ensure that the voice of LGBT+ residents is heard in all our housing policies going forward.

Working with our providers³ we want to:

- Collect data on sexual / gender identity, including providing opportunities for this information to be provided after the initial assessment
- Provide training to staff to understand the unique needs of homeless LGBT+ youth
- Work collaboratively with local services, LGBT+ specific and general, in healthcare (physical and mental) substance and alcohol misuse, skills and employability support, and social services, in order to provide a more comprehensive wrap-around service for homeless LGBT+ people.

Improving communications and publicity

We understand the importance of ensuring that service users and the public are well informed about the support available to those facing homelessness and rough sleeping in the borough. We have updated our website to include more detailed information on the type of support the council can offer individuals and we have added a guide for the public on how they can help people that they see sleeping rough or asking for money on the streets.

Priority 2:- Preventing homelessness by supporting households to remain in their homes or helping them to find alternative accommodation

Lambeth has always taken a proactive approach, with one of the highest rates of homelessness prevention in London prior to the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act.

The Act became law in 2018 and broadens the role of local authorities and triggers earlier and more enhanced work for those threatened with homelessness.

KEY STATISTICS

³ These commitments are based on the Albert Kennedy Trust Report "LGBT Youth Homelessness: A UK national scoping of cause, prevalence, response and outcome"

There were 1,587 prevention / relief interventions in Lambeth in 2017/18.

The main direct cause of homelessness in Lambeth being asked to leave by family and friends.

Over 4,400 applications were made for housing advice in 2018-2019, including online forms received.

ACHIEVEMENTS

There were 1,587 prevention and relief interventions in Lambeth in 2017-2018. During 2018-2019 using the MHCLG 'experimental official statistics' data return there were 1,170 prevention and relief actions.

Over 4,400 applications for housing advice were made during 2018-2019. Although there are no direct comparators to applications received prior to the Homelessness Reduction Act, the number of applications received before 1 April 2018 never exceeded an annual total of 3,000.

Lambeth consistently reported the highest number of prevention outcomes among all inner London boroughs during 2017-2018.

Lambeth Council's dedicated Housing Support Team is helping benefit capped families in local authority accommodation to remain in their existing home and claim exempted benefits, or move into work and out of a "capped" situation as appropriate.

Lambeth Council continues to commission a number of voluntary sector agencies to provide support to residents with welfare benefit and debt issues.

There were 124 sanctuary scheme installations in 2017-2018 to support victims of domestic violence to stay safe in their homes.

WE WILL

Provide effective housing advice and prevention for all

Help people to find alternative accommodation

Provide effective housing advice and prevention for all

We provide quality, timely housing advice with a focus on prevention. All eligible applicants receive a bespoke plan. We consider the cause of each applicants' homelessness and use negotiation and mediation techniques to work with landlords, friends and family members to prevent homelessness. Specific interventions can include working with young people to stay in the family homes, helping them to access supported accommodation which meeting their needs, and helping with benefit claims. We also advise the applicant on the steps they need to take, including the need to be more flexible in terms of the areas they want to live.

Learning from our new duties and improving the way we work

Associated with the new duties the government has also introduced new data reporting requirements, through the Homelessness Case Level Information Classification, or 'H-CLIC', data return. Many London boroughs have reported that this new way of recording information is taking some time to bed in, but in the future promises to provide much more detailed information on the causes and effects of homelessness, long term outcomes and what works to prevent it.

Rogue landlords and private rented tenants' rights

Private renting is now the biggest tenure in Lambeth, and increasingly occupied by a more diverse range of households than in the past, including older people and families with children. Conditions in the private rented sector (PRS) are generally reasonable but, as in other similar boroughs, very expensive relative to earnings. Lambeth has one of the highest number of accredited landlords of any London borough. To become accredited landlords receive training and must sign up to a code of conduct.

However, there remain small numbers of landlords who do not follow the rules and treat renters unfairly. We know from a recent survey of private renters living in Lambeth that many do not know their rights. To counteract these issues Lambeth has introduced policies to make the most of new powers to take firm action against rogue landlords.

We plan to introduce a Tenants Charter. This will set out renters' rights, landlords' obligations, and what support they can expect from the council and other agencies if things go wrong.

The council's private rented sector enforcement activity

- Supporting renters so that their homes are improved to Housing Act standards
- Inspecting 600 privately rented homes a year
- Serving enforcement notices
- Prosecutions / issuing civil penalty notices
- Licensing houses in multiple occupation (HMOs). In April 2019, there were 425 licensed HMO premises in Lambeth.
- Fining letting agents for not adhering to the rules. We issued £50k worth of penalty notices in the first half of 2019.

We are also setting up a specific housing advice hotline and online service for private renters including those who may be affected by homelessness with access to further more specialised support where required.

Lambeth enforces a wide range of statutory provisions relating to housing conditions in privately owned and rented property. The team also takes action against private landlords, provides support to private renters, and ensures that large homes in multiple occupation (HMOs) are licensed. There is a range of enforcement options, from informal action to the serving of notices, civil penalties/fines and prosecutions.

Support people to remain in their homes

The Homelessness Prevention Team works with residents who are eligible for assistance and homeless/threatened with homelessness within 56 days.

- A daily drop-in service is provided. Negotiation and mediation techniques are used when working with family members, friends and landlords to prevent homelessness.
- The Homelessness Prevention Team works closely with other council departments and external agencies to assist applicants in overcoming issues which can lead to homelessness.
- We work proactively with landlords to identify people at risk and assist renters to maintain their tenancies through the housing support and tenancy sustainment teams.
- We have a specific tenancy support and sustainment team who work with residents in all tenures, providing holistic support including help with benefits and joint working with the DWP, recouping benefits, access into employment and training, financial and debt advice, and support to people who the council have placed into the private rented sector. There are a number of other teams across the council who can provide support to those affected by welfare changes, and a number of schemes helping people move into work and manage

their finances. The council has also developed a vulnerable tenants' service offer and floating support who aid those who need additional help in managing their tenancies.

- We incentivise people to stay where they are by giving them a high priority on the housing register.
- The Home Improvement Agency can advise and help vulnerable residents with repairs, improvements and adaptations to their home. Depending upon the actual works required, any owner-occupier, private or social tenant living in Lambeth can access the service.
- Lambeth's Sanctuary Scheme installs measures to make homes more secure for victims of domestic violence, thereby preventing homelessness.

Help people to access alternative accommodation

There are three main routes for using accommodation as a prevention measure:

- i) Referral to the Private Sector Solutions Team. The team undertakes procurement of privately rented accommodation for homeless households and those in housing need. A range of packages are offered to encourage landlords to rent to people on benefits or low income nominated by the Council, such as paying rent in advance and deposits.
- ii) The Self-Sourcing Scheme – households in housing need source their own privately rented accommodation. The Homelessness Prevention Team are then able to negotiate with the landlord to increase the chances of a household gaining the tenancy.
- iii) Supported housing through the Vulnerable Adults Pathway or Children and Young Persons Pathway.

Finding money for a deposit can be a difficult barrier for many. For all eligible applicants we offer the "Homefinder's Deposit". This is a written guarantee (bond) available to anyone who has a local connection to Lambeth and is eligible. Front line council staff verify eligibility and issue these bonds by printing them out. The work we do to encourage landlords to work with us is under priority 4.

Priority 3:- Effective pathways internally, with public authorities and partner agencies, to prevent homelessness.

The main immediate causes of homelessness are people being asked to move out by family or friends and the end of a private rented sector tenancy and being unable to afford their own accommodation. However, a number of groups have more specific needs and Lambeth has developed a range of pathways to support them. Moving into supported housing is a major part of our prevention activity accounting for an average of 28% of our homelessness interventions over the last 3 years.

KEY STATISTICS

There are 12 supported housing schemes and 444 bed spaces in the Vulnerable Adults Pathway.

There are 6 supported housing schemes and 188 units/bed spaces in the Vulnerable Young Persons Pathway.

There are 52 household units in supported accommodation for victims of domestic violence in Lambeth.

There were 124 sanctuary scheme installations in 2017/18 to support victims of domestic violence stay safe in their homes.

The Gaia Service offers support services to female and male Lambeth residents who have experienced, or are at risk of experiencing, gender-based violence.

ACHIEVEMENTS

There were 124 sanctuary scheme installations in 2017-2018 to support victims of domestic violence to stay safe in their homes.

In November 2018 a total of 86 per cent of Lambeth's care leavers aged 19-21 were in suitable accommodation. This is above the regional and national positions which are 82 per cent and 84 per cent respectively.

In early 2019 Lambeth Council was successful in bidding for funding for a Rapid Rehousing Pathways Scheme which covers the whole of the borough including Brixton, Waterloo and Clapham. The scheme will consist of a Prison Release Navigator, a Substance Misuse Navigator, a Hospital Discharge Navigator, and two supported lettings workers.

In March 2019, Lambeth was awarded funding through the MHCLG's Private Rented Sector Access Programme to pilot an insurance-based product with the aim of reducing the amount of cash incentive paid to private landlords.

A new joint protocol between Housing and Children's and Adult social care is being produced, to be completed by March 2020.

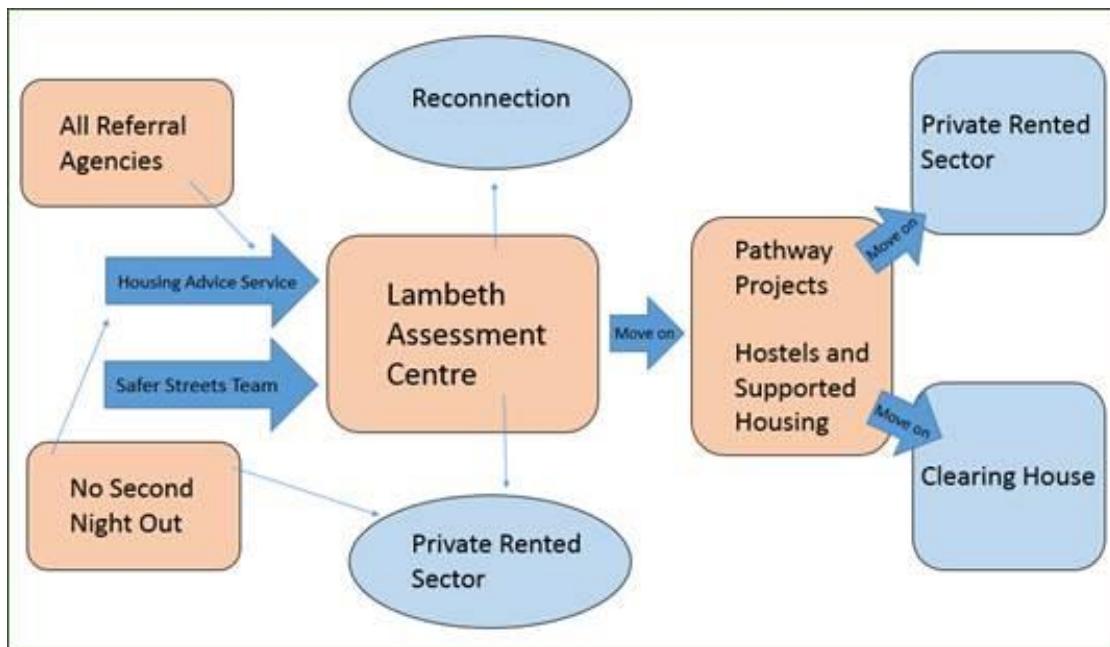
WE WILL

Provide housing pathways for people with support needs

Work in effective partnerships

The Vulnerable Adults Pathway

The Vulnerable Adults' Pathway is an accommodation pathway that is made up of the Lambeth Assessment Centre, various specialist hostels, and shared supported housing schemes. The pathway accommodates people sleeping rough and single homeless people with support needs. All referrals come via the outreach team or the Homelessness Prevention Team. All referrals are centrally co-ordinated by a Pathway Manager who is based at the Lambeth Assessment Centre.



The Vulnerable Children's and Young People's Pathway

The Young People's Pathway Team is responsible for assisting young people aged 16-21 who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in Lambeth. It is an integrated team staffed jointly by housing advisers and social workers, and acts as a single gateway to supported accommodation for all young people in Lambeth. Services include:

- A single front door for youth homelessness for young people aged between 16 and 21.
- Joint assessments completed with Children Services and Housing Services
- A dedicated Social Work team for 16 and 17 year olds.
- Young people going through the pathway have bespoke support packages on various areas including education, training and employment, health and wellbeing, personal safety and independent living.
- Home visits completely jointly between housing officers and social workers when responding to homelessness approaches by young people.
- An Early Help Panel Pilot attended by the Housing Pathway Manager to early identify and respond to the threat or risk of homelessness. This pilot is being rolled out across Lambeth.
- The Care Leavers Rent Panel – to identify earlier triggers of tenancy breakdown or failure.
- Mediation services are provided for 16-21 years olds in partnership with Children's Services.
- Accommodation options for young people include: Homefinder, Rent Guarantee, Supported Housing, and assistance into the private rented sector.
- Faces in Focus is a service which assists young people who have witnessed domestic violence.

As part of our corporate parenting responsibilities, particular support is given to care leavers before and after they move into independent living.

In November 2018 a team from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)'s Homelessness Advice and Support Team visited Lambeth to inspect its services for preventing and reducing youth homelessness and provided a number of suggestions which are being taken forward in the action plan at the end of this document.

Victims of Domestic Violence

Households who are experiencing domestic violence can often be helped to remain in their homes through the Sanctuary Scheme. Lambeth is regarded across the country as a leader in providing a coordinated response, and has a one-stop-shop for victims called the Gaia Centre. The Lambeth Domestic Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference is a monthly meeting where professionals, including police and social workers, share information on high risk cases of domestic violence and put in place risk management plans. The Safer Lambeth Partnership is chaired by Housing and has a strong commitment to tackling violence against women and girls and the internal VAWG strategy includes the provision of housing services. Lambeth is working towards DAHA accreditation, the UK benchmark for how housing providers should respond to domestic abuse in the UK and is fully invested in the partnerships necessary to carry out this work.

There are 52 household units in supported accommodation in Lambeth for victims of domestic violence.

More information on our approach is in our Violence against Women and Girls Strategy.

Serious Youth Violence

As with other inner London boroughs, Lambeth suffers from incidents of serious youth violence, which can be associated with housing estates. While it can be possible for reciprocal transfers to be arranged for those affected by gang violence these are not always sufficient. The council's housing and community safety teams along with the police in Lambeth need to work together flexibly and in a focussed way to react quickly and effectively to provide a reasonable housing option where appropriate, to those affected by youth violence. Serious youth violence is one area where there are opportunities to work more closely with our key housing association partners and this is an area which will be specifically looked at as part of the partnership arrangements.

Housing is part of the corporate serious youth violence action plan and there is a joint post between housing and community safety designed to tackle youth violence on the Tulse Hill Estate. Housing works jointly with Children's Services to discuss individual families and this includes discussions on rehousing options. Housing is to review its approach and policies in relation to serious youth violence and to youth violence in young people's accommodation.

Hospital Discharge

The King's Health Partners Pathway Homeless Team is a multi-disciplinary team which works to improve health and housing outcomes for inpatients who are homeless or vulnerably housed. Its aim is to provide holistic, integrated care for homeless people attending any partner trusts – Guy's and St Thomas', King's College Hospital and South London and Maudesley NHS Foundation Trusts. In particular, the team provides specialist input for homeless people when they are admitted to psychiatric hospital. We have begun to work with our partners in Health to continue to improve our hospital discharge pathways including more active involvement in the complex and delayed transfer of care cases.

People with mental health issues

Lambeth Integrated Support Alliance (IPSA) was launched in 2015 and is a group of organisations who have come together in Lambeth to transform the lives of people with long term serious mental health issues. The council's housing team will be playing a greater role in this group, as we look to improve access into pathways and make sure that vulnerable single adults have the most appropriate housing for their needs.

The Mental Health Housing Co-ordinator's role consists of co-ordinating all referrals into mental health supported accommodation, reviewing and monitoring progress on each person's suitability

for independent living, and facilitating housing options, including private rented, extra care, and sheltered accommodation. Care Co-ordinators also carry out assessments under the Care Act on housing needs. Homelessness applications from people with mental health issues are minimised because of the preventative and collaborative approach taken in the borough. There will be a joint review of the vulnerable persons' pathways to include mental health.

Mental Health Pathway Coordinator and Move on Worker

Housing has decided to appoint a joint ASC-Housing Mental Health Pathway Coordinator. This post will have the sole focus of increasing the flow of from spot purchased supported living and residential placements into block supported accommodation. The post will work across the pathway to increase flow, maximising available voids and move-on across the pathway.

This shared role will improve information management, oversight across the pathway, partnerships with providers and ensure homeless adults' mental health conditions are assessed promptly and placed in the most suitable accommodation for their needs.

Homelessness and Mental Health Collaborative

Further to successfully bidding for funding from NHS England, this newly formed group will develop a clinical and peer support model that comprises of the following:

- Assertive clinical and outreach work delivering trusted assessment and brief intervention
- Integrated mental health and substance misuse treatment through START
- Intensive support provided by trauma and psychologically informed PiH Psychology and Voluntary sector workers
- Support through lived experiences
- Responsive holistic care including physical health care that supports easy access to primary care through the Kings Health Partners Pathway Team and Health Inclusion Team.

This collaborative is also designed to look at the wider service and to establish where productive partnerships can be established to improve the offer for people with mental health issues.

People leaving prison

Often there are complex needs involved with prison release cases, including alcohol misuse and drug abuse. The Rapid Rehousing Pathways scheme mitigates some of these risks and is set out below.

The Rapid Rehousing Pathways scheme

In early 2019 Lambeth Council was successful in bidding for funding via the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's Rapid Rehousing Pathways scheme which will cover the whole of the borough including hotspot areas in Brixton, Waterloo and Clapham. The scheme will consist of the following posts

- A) A Prison Release Navigator – a high percentage of rough sleepers have been in prison, demonstrating that support for individuals leaving prison in the borough is required. Although the number of female rough sleepers is small in Lambeth, the Prison Release Navigator will also work closely with the Beth Centre, a service for female offenders, and the GAIA Centre which provides a service to Lambeth residents experiencing gender-based violence.
- B) A Substance Misuse Navigator – The Substance Misuse Navigator will also work across the Vulnerable Adults Pathway and with the Rough Sleeping Outreach Team to assist people who are currently rough sleeping or are in danger of returning to rough sleeping to access substance misuse services via the Lambeth Treatment Consortium.
- C) A Hospital Discharge Navigator - to work in partnership with the various in-house hospital discharge teams to facilitate effective pathways into appropriate accommodation for single homeless people at risk of rough sleeping.
- D) Two Supported Lettings Workers – to assist people who have moved on to private rented accommodation from the Vulnerable Adults Pathway in managing their homes and their tenancies.

Effective partnership working

Housing associations provide housing for as many renters in Lambeth as the council, and they are our key partners in working to prevent homelessness. We work with housing associations on a range of specific projects to negate the risk of homelessness, for instance supporting the decanting of housing estates to enable regeneration projects.

New Approach with Housing Associations

Lambeth is developing a new Local Housing Partnership with our key housing association partners. The new model will be expressed in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding and will enable us to work collaboratively on various priority work streams, specifically including homelessness and financial inclusion.

Effective processes followed under the duty to refer

In October 2018, the Duty to Refer came into force. We need to make sure that relevant agencies are aware about the duty to refer and that the appropriate policies and procedures are in place.

Joint working with social care

Adults and Health were formed into a new directorate within the council in February 2019. This offers a number of new opportunities to better integrate social care and health. There is also the potential for greater integration between the Home Improvement Agency and adult services, including having a single point of delivery and shared budgets across similar services. These options will be explored through a joint task and finish group. The Care Act clearly defines housing as a health related service, this stipulation forms a clear basis for closer partnership working.

Service providers operating where there are safeguarding concerns should make the necessary referrals under section 24 of the Care Act.

Domestic Abuse

Housing works with a range of partners to develop a robust offer for those facing domestic abuse. As chair of the VAWG board, Housing is able to stay abreast of the range of services offered to those

affected, including culture specific offerings. Lambeth also commissions the Gaia service, a one stop shop for all those facing domestic abuse, at Gaia survivors can access specific housing and emotional support and Gaia representatives, along with housing, attend monthly Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences to make informed decisions on individual cases. Housing is also progressing towards the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance accreditation in domestic abuse best practice. This work has a specific focus on partnership working and has led to an increase in dialogue and shared learning with other authorities regarding best practice in housing.

Health

Funding drawn from Public Health England has enabled housing to adopt a number of shared posts to improve the health of people facing homelessness. This includes the appointment of an Approved Mental Health Professional from MHCLG funding, amongst others, that will offer support to those in need. There are also plans to create a service designed to offer health engagement directly to rough sleepers and homeless people in the borough via a combination of direct nursing care, psychological input and peer advocacy. Work with LEAP, the London Early Action Partnership, is also leading to work with families suffering from overcrowding who have young children.

Housing Support

The Housing Support Team is committed to partnership working in its approach to supporting residents to remain in their homes. Ongoing work with third sector organisations including St Mungo's and Thames Reach, along with the DWP, Job Centre Plus and Centre 70 debt advice means that clients are offered a joined up support service.

Priority 4:- Making sure there is a supply of suitable accommodation for people to move into.

Housing advice is not always going to be enough to prevent homelessness. We need to have a supply of homes that are affordable for people to move into. Most of the people that come to see us for housing advice would like the security and affordability associated with social housing.

While we are doing everything we can to increase the supply of affordable housing for the majority of people this isn't going to be an option and people will need to rent privately.

KEY STATISTICS

Housing market assessment showed a need for 1,500 new affordable housing units to be built each year if we are going to meet need.

30,000 households on the housing register bidding for fewer than 1,000 social lettings each year. The recent number of permanent lettings per year have been: April 2016-March 2017 = 1,190, April 2017-March 2018 = 943, April 2018-March 2019 = 866.

Average Lambeth 2 bed council rent - £100 / week. Average 2 bed private rent - £370 / week.

Maximum Local Housing Allowance for a Lambeth 2 bedroom in April 2019 - £281 / week

ACHIEVEMENTS

There are 800 accredited landlords in Lambeth, landlords who have received training and signed up to a code of conduct

Between April 2018 and March 2019 a total of 492 tenancies were created in the private sector as a prevention or relief of homelessness.

The Private Sector Solutions Team brought a total of 29 empty homes back into use in 2018-2019.

A total of 1,596 new affordable homes were completed in Lambeth between April 2012 and March 2018.

WE WILL

Work positively with private landlords and protect the rights of tenants

Increase the supply of housing, particularly new homes at a council rent

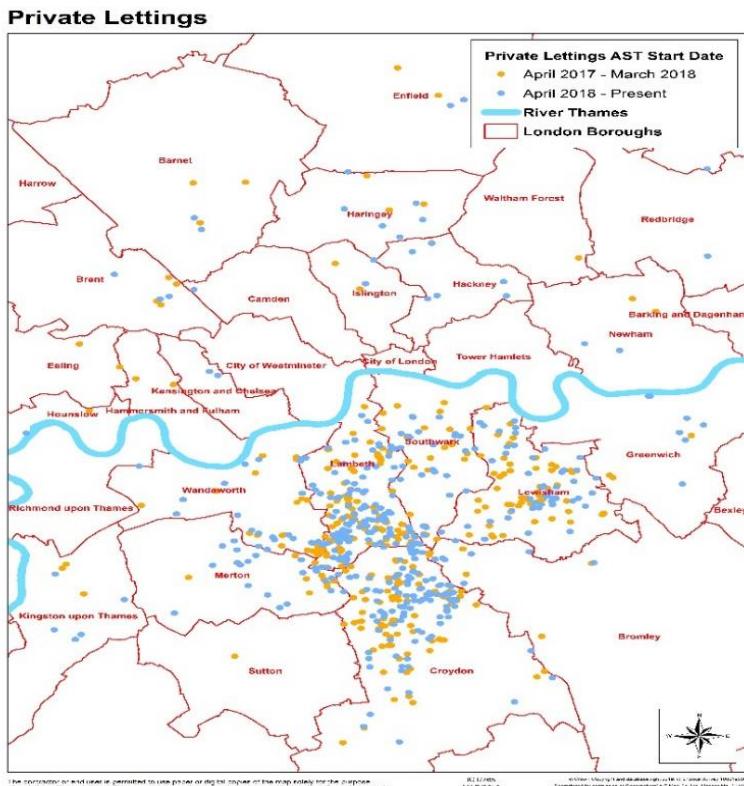
Working positively with private landlords

The main option for those that approach us for housing advice and assistance will be renting privately.

In Lambeth, there is a high demand for accommodation, and a supply of relatively affluent renters who are competition for those on lower incomes also looking for somewhere to live.

The situation is made more difficult because the maximum amount that housing benefit / universal credit will cover is usually much less than the market price of properties. There are more affordable options as you move further away from London.

Lambeth offers tailor made financial packages to encourage landlords to work with us. These include non-refundable incentives, deposit guarantee bonds and rent in advance.



There are a small number of homes in Lambeth that are kept empty and unused for a long period of time. Since April 2019 we have doubled the council tax payable on long term empty homes and we

are looking at ways we can bring them back into use, ideally to provide options for those in housing need. Previous funding sources from the government or GLA are no longer available so more innovative approaches to reduce empty homes need to be considered.

The Private Sector Solutions Team is responsible for bringing empty homes back into use.

Increasing the supply of housing, particularly new homes at a council rent.

Lambeth will continue to work in partnership with housing providers to deliver new general needs homes. In addition Lambeth has set up a new company, Homes for Lambeth, a wholly owned council company and will be delivering an ambitious programme to build new affordable housing on council owned land, particularly via estate regeneration.

Further details on the council's approach to increasing the supply of new homes are available in the council's housing strategy, planning policies and emerging Sustainable Growth Strategy.

Priority 5:- Improve the supply and sustainability of Temporary Accommodation.

Local authorities have a legal duty to provide certain households, who are homeless and in 'priority need' with somewhere to live.

High prices, welfare cuts from central government and a reduced supply of accommodation available to meet everyone's needs, means that households approaching us for assistance are placed initially into 'temporary accommodation' (TA).

Lambeth aims to provide high quality temporary accommodation, including accessible accommodation. We also aim to invest resources with partners in permanent accommodation facilities within the borough, such as through the PLACE and Real Lettings initiatives. However, temporary accommodation in general can be associated with poorer health and wellbeing.

KEY STATISTICS

Temporary Accommodation has increased from 1,200 households in March 2012 to a total of 2,315 in March 2019.

55% of temporary accommodation is outside of Lambeth. Over 90% of out of borough TA is in nearby boroughs (Croydon, Bromley, Southwark, Wandsworth, Merton, Lewisham and Greenwich).

The big increase in TA has been the use of nightly paid, self-contained accommodation. This made up just 3.5% of TA in 2012 but now accounts for over 52% (March 2019).

Landlords letting to us on a nightly basis charge much more than benefits will cover. The net cost for TA in Lambeth is over £10 million each year which is comparable to other similar boroughs.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Lambeth Council's reinvestment in the Real Lettings Property Fund 2, managed by St Mungo's, has delivered 47 new homes (52 tenancies) for families who would otherwise occupy high cost temporary accommodation with a further £15million agreed for additional investment.

A support package is in place for families wishing to leave temporary accommodation for settled homes in the private rented sector. Between April 2018 and February 2019 50 households in temporary accommodation used this service.

A total of 243 general needs and de-commissioned sheltered housing units in regeneration areas have been secured for use as temporary accommodation in the short term at nil cost.

Use of 'nil cost' temporary accommodation increased by 18% in 2018-2019.

WE WILL

Reduce the costs of Temporary Accommodation

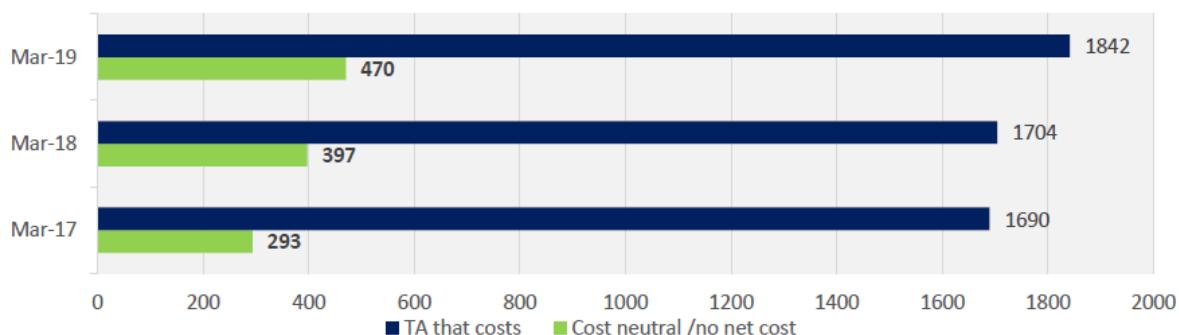
Increase the supply of local and financially sustainable TA

Reduce the costs of temporary accommodation

Prior to 2013, becoming homeless was the main route into social housing in Lambeth. In 2013 Lambeth updated its Allocation Scheme, removing the perverse incentive that encouraged families to apply to the council for TA, when other options were available. This has been a successful approach in encouraging applicants to work with us in preventing their homelessness, but it does mean that once households are in TA, that their chance of successfully bidding for a social rent homes through choice based lettings is reduced. In 2017/18 79% of lettings went to people in Bands A and B who have a higher priority for rehousing than those in TA. Therefore, other measures had to be introduced to assist households to move on from temporary accommodation which are listed below.

A total of 243 general needs and de-commissioned sheltered housing units in regeneration areas were secured for use as temporary accommodation in the short-term, thereby reducing overall costs and increasing the supply of local temporary accommodation. Use of nil cost temporary accommodation increased by 18% in 2018-2019, while use of temporary accommodation which costs increased by 8%.

Reducing temporary accommodation costs, cost neutral accommodation



'High Cost' Direct Offers

We are moving some households out from temporary accommodation by making direct offers. The focus is on those in the most expensive, nightly paid accommodation and those negatively affected by the benefit cap. Between April 2018 and March 2019 a total of 65 permanent tenancies were created through this route. This represents a significant proportion of non-emergency lettings available and we need to continue to monitor the impact on the number of homes available for those with other priorities.

Working with benefit capped households

144 households in temporary accommodation are affected by the benefit cap (February 2019) The Housing Support team provides information on other potential sources of income through additional benefits and offers guidance on possible factors that may make renters exempt from the cap. We also look to support households into the Work Wise initiative, a scheme that supports residents into employment, education or volunteering opportunities to increase their income and employability. Those affected by the benefit cap may be awarded additional priority under the allocation scheme to help them move into social housing.

Supporting people in temporary accommodation

Lambeth is committed to supporting people who feel disconnected from family, friends and the community due to housing disruption and ensuring that they have the right tools to reconnect with their support networks and are able to engage with the local community and wider society.

There is a robust placement policy to ensure that the needs of an individual are considered when temporary accommodation is offered to ensure that the arrangement is suitable and new property inspection officers have been appointed to monitor standards of repair and maintenance and to note and report of any changes in circumstances or potential tenancy issues. These measures are in place to ensure that any potential issues are picked up on early and can be rectified.

We ensure that the Housing Support team remains in contact with households during their stay in temporary accommodation to assist them with managing their income, benefits advice and employment support. Before tenancy sustainment issues reach the point of eviction, housing support workers will contact the client to help them to manage their finances or anti-social behaviours and eviction is always a last resort.

Lambeth has an estate regeneration programme to build a new generation of social housing for Lambeth families. In order to put any empty properties to most productive use in the interim pending the redevelopment of individual estates, we are using many as temporary accommodation. These properties provide low-cost local housing for homeless households who might otherwise have to be accommodated in more expensive accommodation further away. They are entitled to the same services as secure council tenants on the estates regarding issues such as repairs and complaints of anti-social behaviour. They will also be eligible to vote in any ballots on the future of their estate.

Voluntary moves and discharge into the private rented sector

A support package is in place for families wishing to leave temporary accommodation for permanent homes in the private rented sector, sourced by households themselves or by the Lettings Team. In addition, households are encouraged to return to family/friends and bid for permanent housing there with the reward of priority status Band B.

Lambeth's investment in the Real Lettings Property Fund 2 managed by St Mungo's has already delivered 47 new homes (52 tenancies) so far for families who would otherwise occupy high cost temporary accommodation. This investment will secure ninety family homes over two years for households in temporary accommodation.

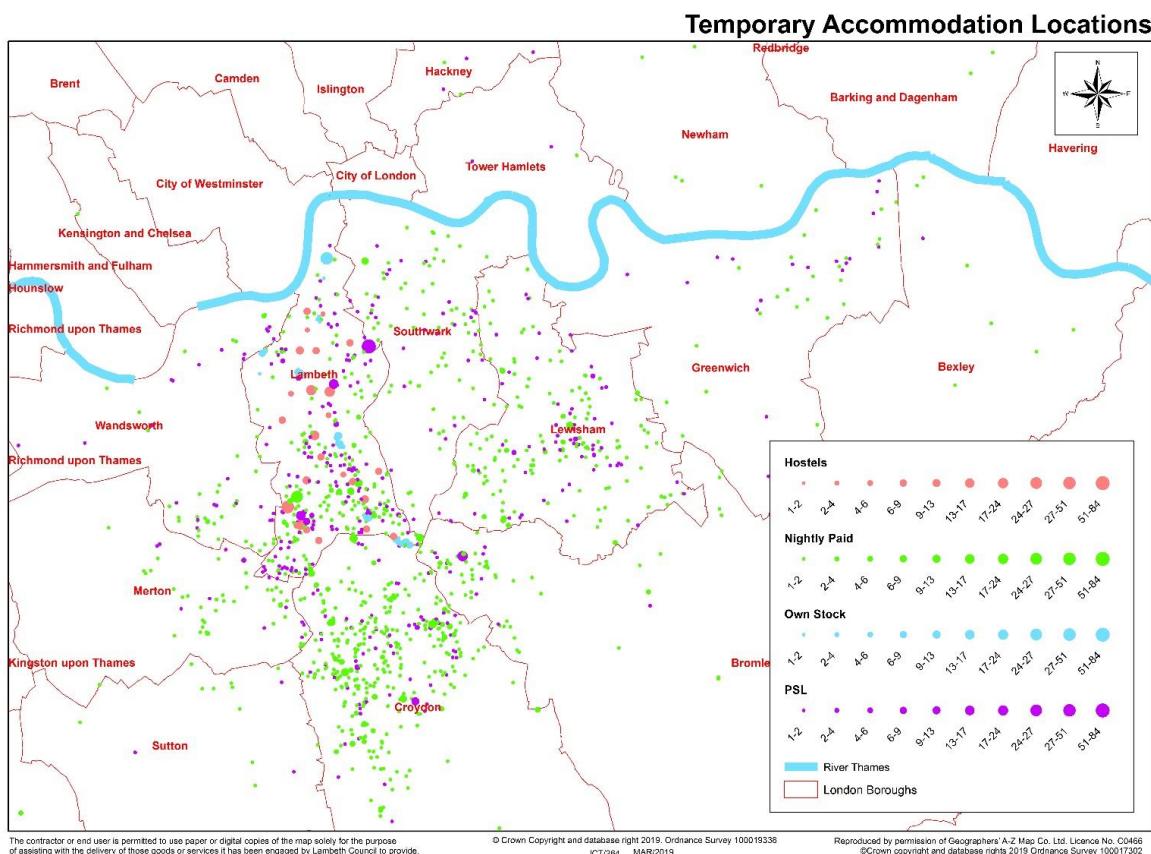
Increase the supply of local and financially stable temporary accommodation

The increased use of nightly-paid accommodation means the cost of temporary accommodation is increasing and has become a significant financial risk for Lambeth.

Lambeth's Placement Policy describes the criteria used to prioritise who gets TA within Lambeth, but in practice it is not possible to keep a supply of vacant TA in borough, and options for people who are literally homeless on the day are very dependent on whatever accommodation is available there and then.

To reduce these costs, and increase the supply of accommodation which is more suitable in terms of cost and location, Lambeth is looking to increase the supply of its own TA by making the best use of building, investing, buying and short term use opportunities. The use of nil cost accommodation also keeps costs down for tenants.

Lambeth has also invested in the London PLACE scheme, developing 72 modular units of temporary accommodation for families in the borough on council-owned sites, 5 of which are wheelchair accessible units. Lambeth has also recovered the lease of a building from London and Quadrant Housing Trust to release more temporary accommodation. More modular temporary accommodation is planned for Hopton, Rutherford Road and Mount Earl Gardens. These units will provide homes of 3- 4 bedrooms for families in need and will be delivered by Lambeth Council. These new temporary homes aim to be made available in 2020.



Short term use

There are a number of opportunities on council owned sites – particularly estate regeneration schemes and sheltered housing redevelopments where properties will be available for several years. These units provide a valuable supply of accommodation that is locally available and financially sustainable for both the occupant and local authority. In April 2019 there were 211 households in this type of TA.

Plans will need to be put in place to provide alternative housing options for when the homes needs to be redeveloped.

Building

We are also making the most of our own hostels through a building and development programme. Remodelling existing properties, and building on underutilised hostel sites to maximise the number of additional hostel units to which we have direct and prompt access for homeless households. In particular there are opportunities to install modular units much more quickly and at a reduced cost to more traditional building techniques.

Investing

In addition to the Real Lettings fund we are continuing to identify investment opportunities where we can put the Council's capital, including Right to Buy Receipts, to work to increase our access to a range of temporary accommodation properties.

Buying

We are also looking to increase and diversify our council owned stock of temporary accommodation units with a focus on acquiring self-contained properties through further capital investment.

To date a number of different approaches and partnerships have been considered. The housing market and other factors are subject to change and this is an option we will continue to keep open.

Our ask from government

What we can do as a local authority has been limited in the past decade by a combination of government cuts and its indifference to the wider housing crisis. From our first-hand experience of tackling homelessness in Lambeth, we believe we need an approach from government that:

- Ends the cuts. Cuts to local government have devastated services to our community, with Lambeth losing £230 million since 2010. We are committed to protecting our vulnerable residents as much as possible from the impacts this reduction in funding has caused but continued austerity means every single year we face impossible decisions about where we can maintain our services. We need the chancellor to start reversing these cuts and properly funding local services again with a sustained programme of investment.
- Addresses our housing crisis. The explosion in housing costs in our borough over the last decade has created a crisis for thousands of families who cannot access good quality and affordable housing. Huge cuts in social housing grant, restrictions on right-to-buy and cuts to affordable housing levels have had a profound impact on the affordability of housing in Lambeth and across London. We need central government to work with us and the Mayor of London to relax restrictions on the use of right-to-buy receipts to build replacement homes, as well as significantly increasing the grant funding available for new social housing. There is a pressing need to remove the viability loophole which allows developers to dodge affordable housing obligations.
- Ends the hostile environment to non-UK nationals. The hostile cultural attitude that has developed towards the homeless needs to be corrected. We support the Mayor of London's call for the reversal of policies since 2014 that restricted benefit entitlements to non-EEA nationals, and we believe there is a need for increase funding for specialist services to enable non-UK nationals to find employment. We also need a commitment that the government opposes harvesting data on homeless people for immigration purposes which is morally unacceptable.
- Improves the private rented sector: Illegal evictions and high prices have fuelled the struggle of families who can't afford to find homes in the places where they grew up. We need to rise

to the challenge of improving standards within the private rented sector so that tenants have a fairer deal and are more protected in their tenancies. We should look to address landlords that refuse to accept tenants on housing benefit to ensure that people can access homes they could otherwise afford.

- Increases early interventions. The key to reducing homelessness is funding and joining up comprehensive services to identify individuals and households that risk losing their home. Once they have lost their home it is complex and costly to re-establish their household. The government needs to adequately resource these early interventions.
- Delivers proper support to homeless people. The government's current approach is to offer too many small, time limited funding opportunities to projects which only a few councils can benefit from. Consistent and across the board funding is needed for councils and other organisations that provide help to those in need. We require a new emergency funding settlement for homeless prevention.
- The bureaucratic requirements of the Homelessness Reduction Act are directing attention away from more practical prevention activities. Government should listen to local authorities on how to make the system more efficient and effective.

Action Plan

The action plan will be monitored and updated by the Housing Strategy Steering Group (HSSG)

Outcomes	Action	Lead(s)	Date
Priority 1 - Ensure that all rough sleepers in Lambeth are supported off the streets and assisted in improving their lives			
No one living on the streets in Lambeth	<p>Lambeth safer streets team operate 7 days a week</p> <p>Rapidly re-house rough sleepers with a connection through the Lambeth assessment centre, those without via the MHCLG funded night shelter</p>	Supported Housing	Ongoing
Access to safe and secure housing	Resettlement worker will support targeted individuals in the Vulnerable Adult's Pathway to access independent accommodation through Clearing House, Housing Associations and the private rented sector		Mar '20
Build positive support networks	Rough sleepers in the night shelter supported to connect with family members and friends as appropriate		Ongoing
Improving Health and Wellbeing	<p>Rough sleepers registered with GPs and have access to primary health care provision</p> <p>Lambeth Safer Streets team work with the Health inclusion Team and START (mental health outreach service) to ensure mental health support is provided</p> <p>Implementation of Health Engagement and Peer Advocacy project (PHE funded)</p> <p>We will work to ensure that the parks service is more closely linked with the homeless service to ensure positive joint working around encampments and put a protocol in place.</p>		Mar '20
Improving opportunities in employment, education and training	Rough sleepers in the night shelter will be supported to acquire the correct ID, make benefit claims and open a bank account, and access to education, training and employment where this is appropriate		June '20
Supporting the LGBT+ Community	Carry out a review into our housing providers' services, checking that they		Mar '20

Outcomes	Action	Lead(s)	Date
	are in line with the commitments made in this Strategy		
Priority 2 - Preventing Homelessness by supporting households to remain in their homes or to find alternative accommodation			
We learn lessons from our new duties and improve the way we work	Annual Report considers new detailed information and whether any difference to our approach to homelessness is required Look at different funding models to pay for services such as social impact bonds Improved partnership working	HSSG HSSG HSSG	Mar '20 June '20
Improved service provided by private landlords in Lambeth	Adoption and delivery of the private rented housing strategy to enforce standards	Housing	Mar'20
Tenants are aware of their rights and supported	Publication of a Homelessness Bill of Rights	Housing	June '20
	Increase access to more specialist tenant advice		Dec '19
	Development of a vulnerable tenants service offer		Oct '19
	Policy developed so that renters are supported to take action against their landlords under the Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation Act)		Mar '20
	Website updated so homelessness prevention is correct, up to date and available on-line across the Council and other partners		Mar '20
	Reviewing PRS licensing options		Mar-20
Priority 3: Effective pathways internally, with public authorities and partner agencies, to prevent homelessness			
Implement the rapid rehousing scheme	Assess the success of the rapid rehousing scheme	Supported Housing	Mar '21

Outcomes	Action	Lead(s)	Date
Vulnerable adults are supported into housing	<p>Delivery of the violence against women and girls strategy.</p> <p>Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance Accreditation</p> <p>Set up board to carry out review of access to accommodation, support and thresholds for vulnerable people across mental health and vulnerable persons pathway</p> <p>Implement recommendations of board</p> <p>Vulnerable Women's Navigator Post</p> <p>Mental Health Coordinator Post</p>	<p>VAWG</p> <p>Housing / VAWG</p> <p>ASC / Housing / Supported Housing / Alliance</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Oct '19</p> <p>Mar '20</p> <p>Mar '20</p>
Effective partnership working	<p>Relationship with housing associations reviewed and new arrangements in place, including set up of a workstream which includes homelessness</p> <p>Establishment of Homelessness and Mental Health Collaborative</p> <p>Raise awareness and set out clear pathways with partners agencies to effectively meet the new Duty to Refer requirements under the HRA</p> <p>Information sharing arrangements with social care and active participation with the Early Help agenda</p> <p>Providers receive safeguarding training, including on specific approaches in Lambeth</p> <p>Housing key partner in the alliance and Lambeth Together.</p> <p>Set up housing and health partnership board to look at a more integrated pathway with hospital discharge, telecare and aids and adaptations, including consolidation of budgets and making the best use of DFG</p> <p>Publication of Crime and Disorder Needs Assessment and Youth Violence Strategy and delivery of relevant housing actions</p>	<p>Housing, Lambeth Housing Partnership</p> <p>Living Well Network Alliance</p> <p>Housing lead, other partners</p> <p>Housing, Social care</p> <p>Housing / ASC / Supported Housing</p> <p>Housing / IPSA</p> <p>Housing/ ASC</p> <p>Housing / Community Safety</p>	<p>Mar '20</p> <p>Mar '20</p> <p>Mar '20</p> <p>Apr-20</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Mar -20</p> <p>Oct '19</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

Outcomes	Action	Lead(s)	Date
Continue to develop young person's pathway to be a model of good practice	<p>Develop the offer to care leavers, including new joint protocols between housing and CYPs</p> <p>Review approaches so all 16/17 year olds who are homeless or at risk of homelessness have a child in need assessment</p> <p>Review arrangements between young person's pathway and YOS</p> <p>Create a joint training plan with children's social care</p> <p>Housing needs assessment of the CYP pathway to inform future commissioning</p>	Housing, Supported Housing, CSC	Mar-20
Review the eviction policy	New eviction policy in place for operation in place for TA and LBL housing	Housing	Mar-20
Defining the role of homelessness in health	<p>Housing have representation on Health and Wellbeing partnership</p> <p>Housing works with public health as the locality approach to services is delivered</p>	Housing / Health	Mar-20
Priority 4: Making sure there is a supply of accommodation for people to move into			
Working positively with landlords	Deliver the private rented sector housing strategy	Housing	Mar-20
	Tenants Charter setting out tenants' rights and our expectation and offer to landlords		Mar'20
	Review the empty property strategy		Jul-20
Increasing the supply of affordable housing	See housing strategy / HfL Business Plan		
Priority 5: Improving the supply and sustainability of temporary accommodation			

Outcomes	Action	Lead(s)	Date
Short term use ('meanwhile' TA)	Maximise use of units on estate regeneration / other meanwhile sites	Housing	Ongoing
Delivering the hostel development programme	Develop modular programme, both in house and through the PLACE scheme	Housing	Mar-20
	Developing Bondway site for use as TA	Housing	Mar-21
Increase the supply of council TA	Complete additional investment of £15m in Real Lettings programme. Explore Other investment options i.e. joint investment vehicles / long term leasing schemes	Housing	Mar-21 Ongoing
Equalities and monitoring			
Ensure the commitments within the strategy are delivered and that equalities impacts are measured.	The Homelessness Strategy Steering Group will be responsible for tracking delivery of the action plan which includes the monitoring of any equality impacts.	The Homelessness Strategy Steering Group	Ongoing

HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY

STATISTICAL APPENDIX

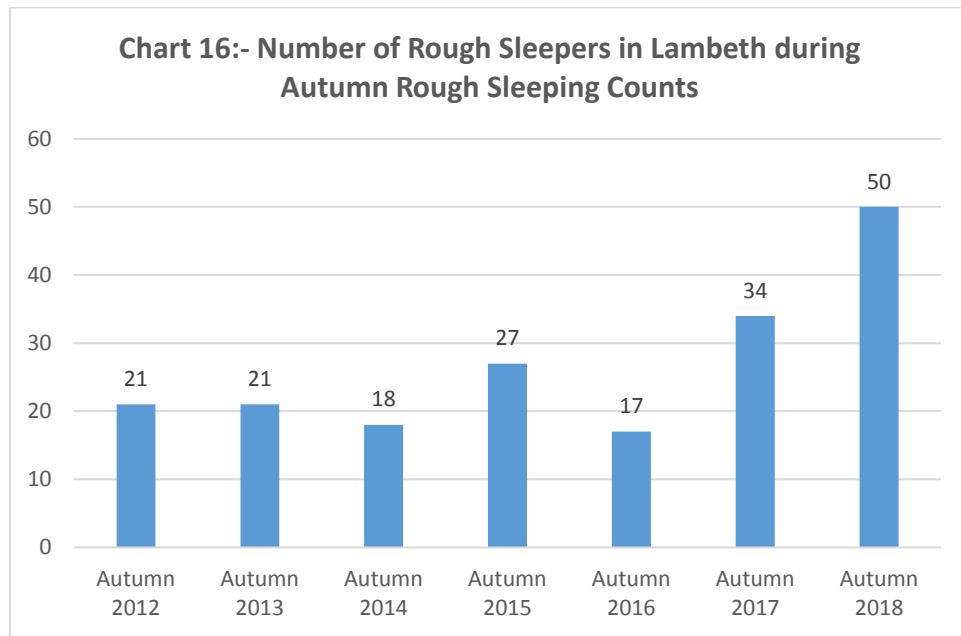
BACKGROUND

It is not feasible to compare directly the homelessness and housing need data from before April 2018 and the homelessness and housing need data from after April 2018 when the Homelessness Reduction Act was introduced. On-line applications for housing advice were first introduced from April 2018. The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) describes the 2018-2019 data as experimental.

Before the Homelessness Reduction Act 2018 was introduced, monitoring focused only on those who were actually seen face to face. Since April 2018, with the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act, data also includes households who were given advice on-line.

PRIORITY 1 – ENSURE THAT ALL ROUGH SLEEPERS IN LAMBETH ARE SUPPORTED OFF THE STREETS AND ASSISTED IN IMPROVING THEIR LIVES AND DO NOT RETURN TO THE STREETS.

Rough sleeper counts take place on “typical” nights to gain a snapshot of rough sleeping in an area. Between 2012 and 2018 autumn rough sleeper counts have produced the following information on the number of rough sleepers in Lambeth.

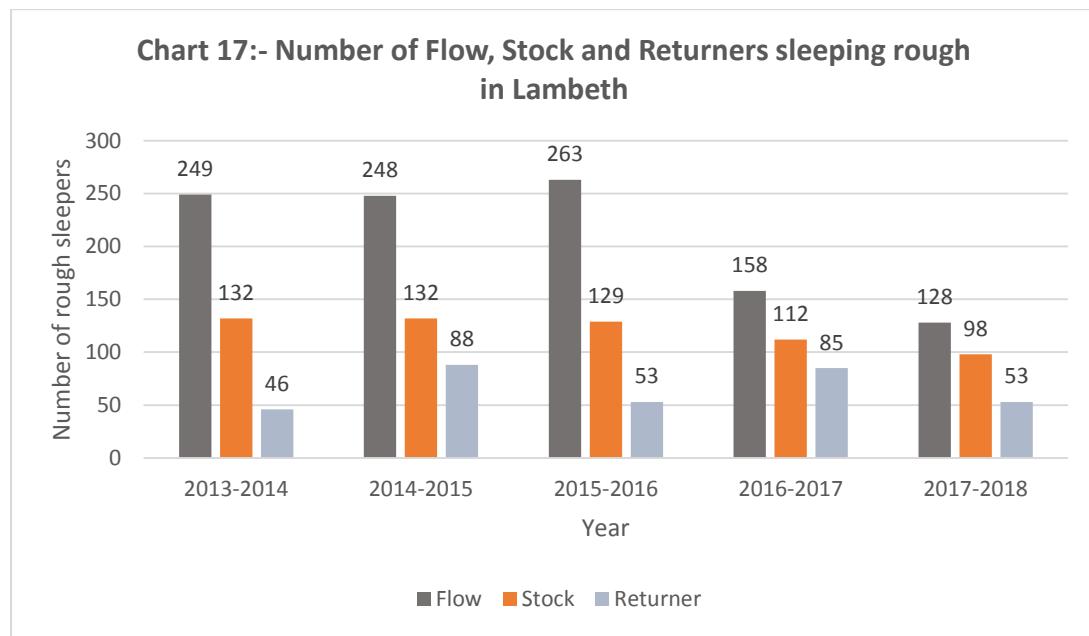


In terms of the total number of people seen sleeping rough by year, numbers are calculated according to the following categories:

- i) Flow - People who had never been seen sleeping rough before i.e. new rough sleepers
- ii) Stock – People who had been seen sleeping rough across a minimum of two consecutive years

- iii) Returners – People who had last been seen sleeping rough more than two years ago, but had then been seen sleeping rough again i.e. those who had a gap in their rough sleeping histories

The number of rough sleepers in Lambeth who have fallen into these categories since 2013-2014 is shown in the figure below.



Source: CHAIN Annual report, Mayor of London, April 2017 - March 2018

PRIORITY 2: PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS BY SUPPORTING HOUSEHOLDS TO REMAIN IN THEIR HOMES OR HELPING THEM TO FIND ACCOMMODATION

The first chart shows the number of cases initially assessed as homeless and owed a prevention or relief duty. This figure is a subset of the total number of advice applications. Almost 60% of all Advice cases opened were assessed as owed a prevention or relief duty, 2,584 cases in total in 2018/19. In the second chart the decisions made on those cases are reported, over 80% were assessed as owed a prevention or relief duty, 42% and 43% respectively.

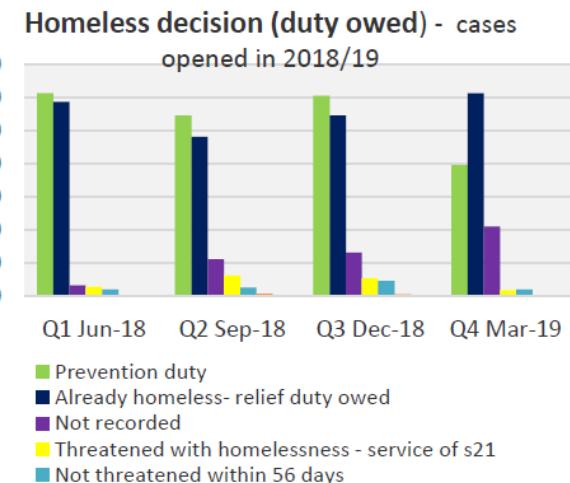
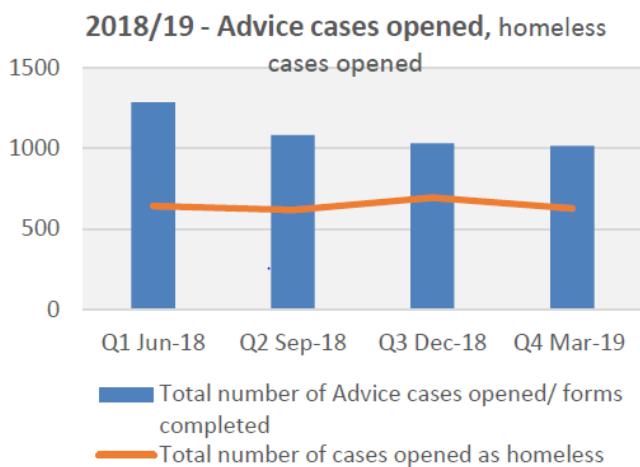
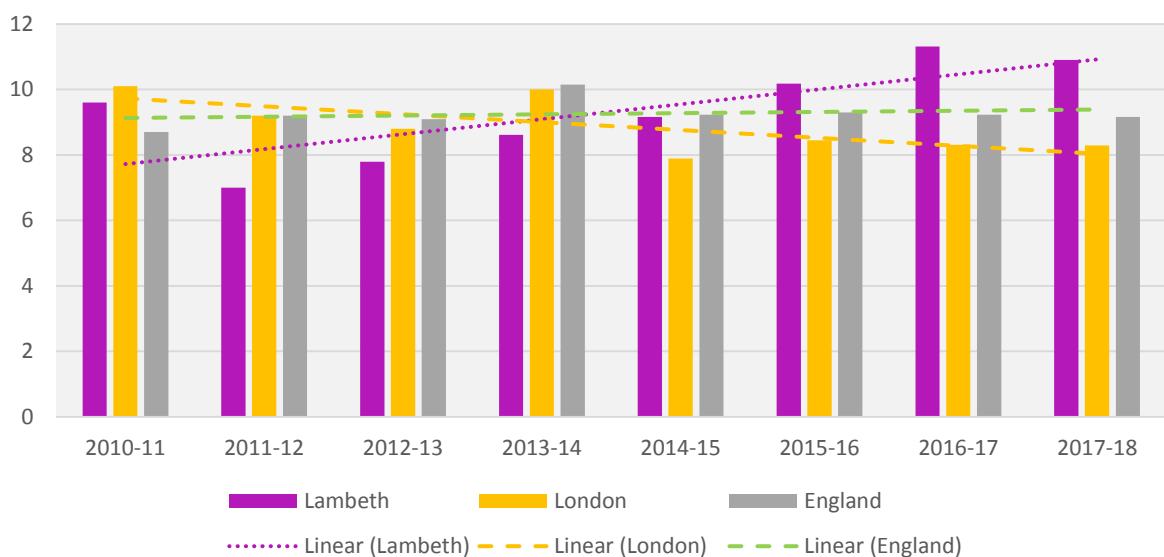


Chart 3:- Homeless prevention and relief 2010-2018 per 1,000 households - Lambeth, London, England



Source; MHCLG Statistical Release June 2018

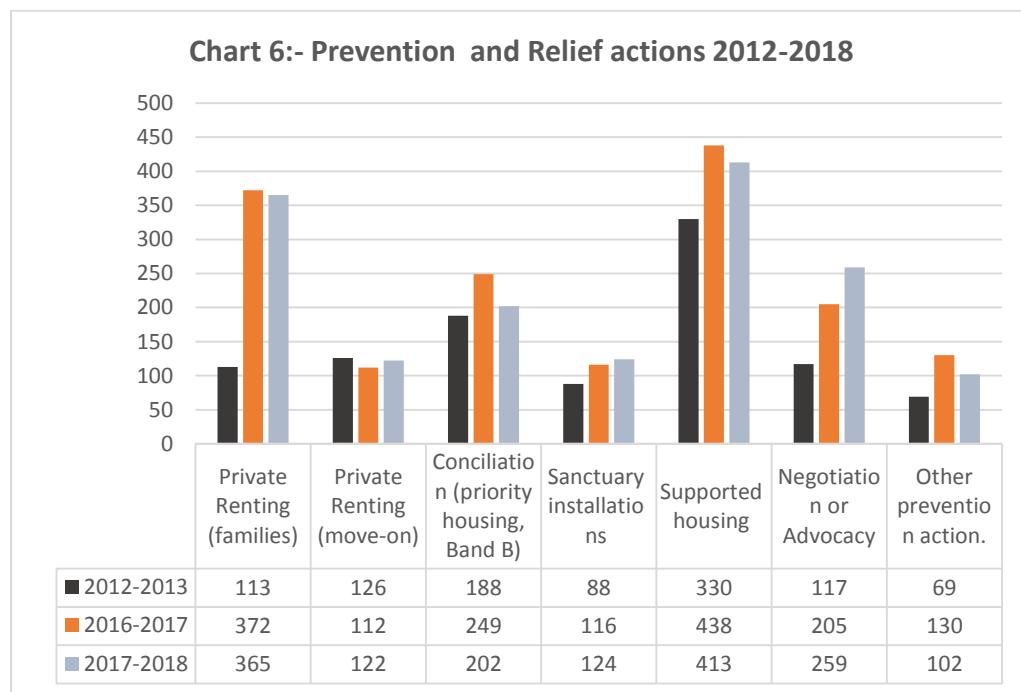
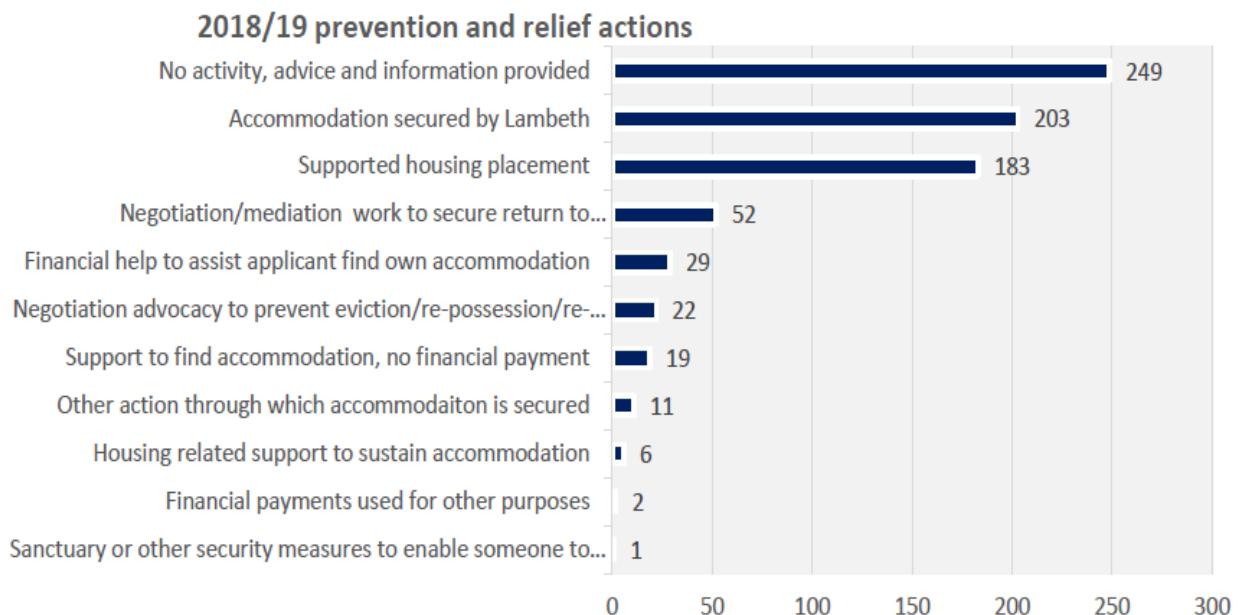
Lambeth's prevention performance April 2010 to March 2018 can be compared with London and England. In 2017-2018 Lambeth delivered 10.9 homelessness prevention outcomes per 1,000 household population. This compares with 8.20 homelessness prevention outcomes per 1,000 household population for London 9.16 prevention outcomes per 1,000 household population for England.

PRIORITY 3:- EFFECTIVE PATHWAYS INTERNALLY, WITH PUBLIC AUTHORITIES AND PARTNER AGENCIES, TO PREVENT HOMELESSNESS

The two charts below show the range of methods used to prevent and relieve homeless. Prevention and relief of homelessness is carried out either by in-house teams or in partnership with outside organisations.

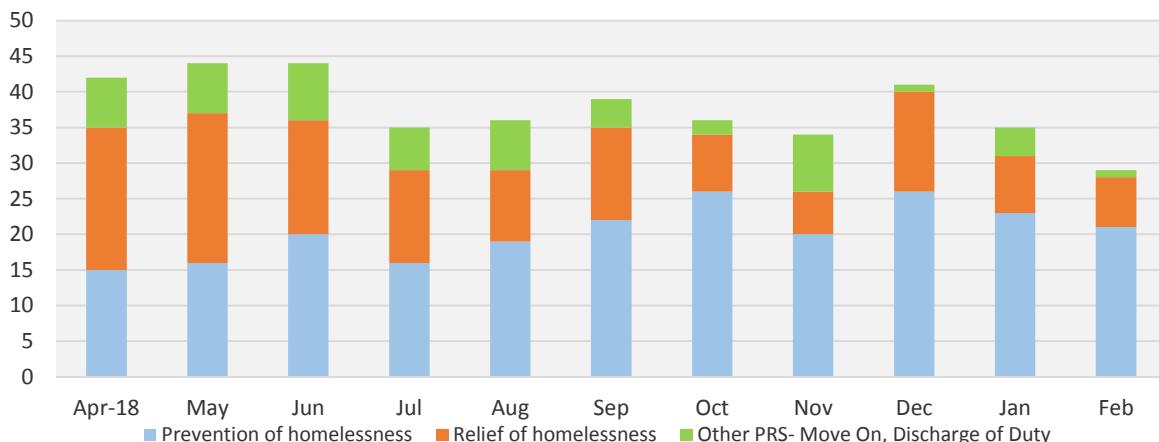
Both before and after the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2018 Lambeth Council made extensive use of its landlord incentive scheme in order to secure accommodation in the

private rented sector to both prevent and relieve homelessness. Between 2012 and 2019 the second biggest method of preventing and relieving homelessness has been supported housing.

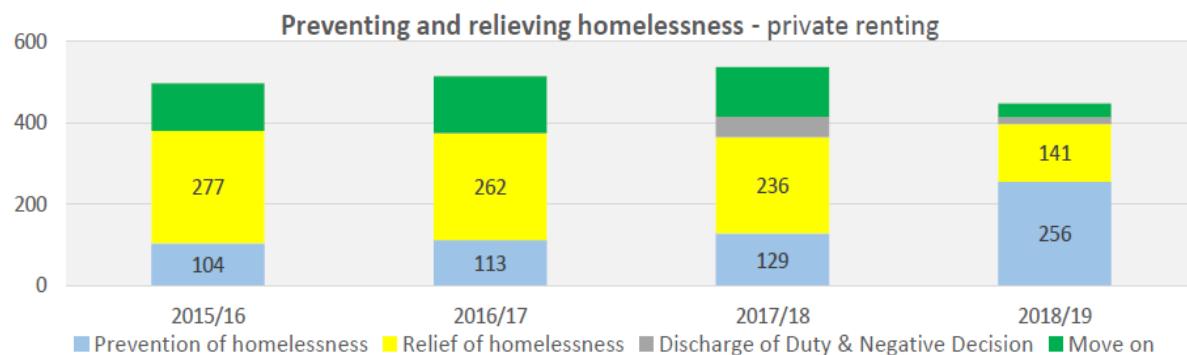


PRIORITY 4:- MAKING SURE THERE IS A SUPPLY OF SUITABLE ACCOMMODATION FOR PEOPLE TO MOVE INTO.

Chart 7:- Preventing and relieving homelessness - private renting through landlord incentives



The principal method of restraining new placement demand for temporary accommodation, and preventing and relieving homelessness, is new tenancies secured in the private rented sector. Tenancies are arranged for households with children, couple households and single person households. A total of 450 private rented sector tenancies were created between April 2018 and March 2019 in order to either prevent or relieve homelessness. Over 300 homes were for families who would otherwise have needed temporary accommodation for the longer term pending an offer of suitable social housing.



PRIORITY 5:- IMPROVING THE SUPPLY AND SUSTAINABILITY OF TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

Temporary accommodation – demand

The potential impact of the wider duties under the Homelessness Reduction Act and its impact on the demand for temporary accommodation is being monitored. The following charts provide information on developments from April 2018. Both charts demonstrate the general reduction in new levels of placement demand from April 2017 to March 2019.

Temporary accommodation placement demand - 2012 -2019

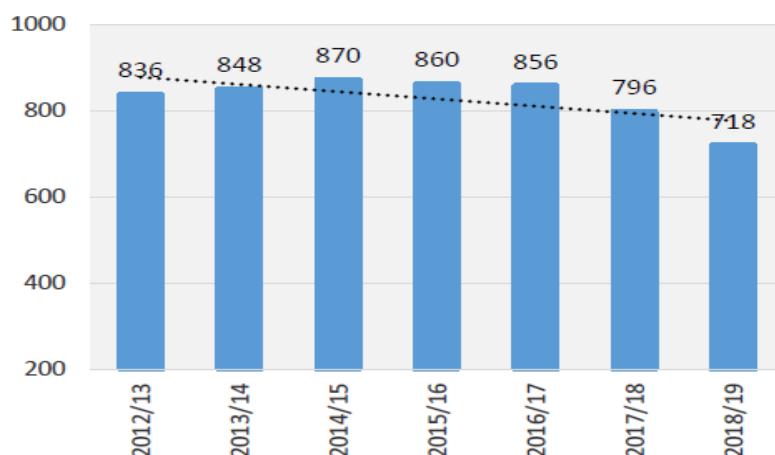
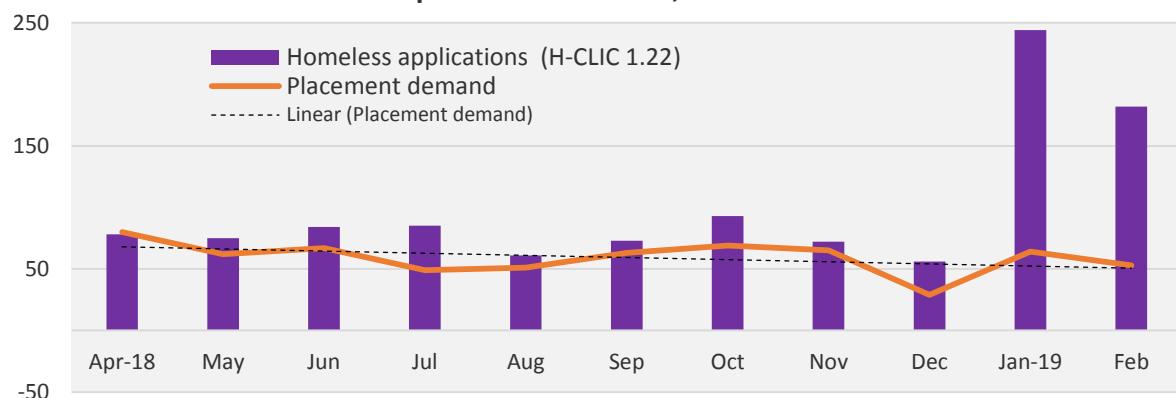


Chart 9:- Homeless cases opened in HOPE, temporary accommodation placement demand, 2018-19



Temporary accommodation – comparisons with London and England

The following two charts contextualise the levels of temporary accommodation per 1,000 borough household population from 2010 to March 2018. At the end of March 2018 the average number of households in temporary accommodation per 1,000 household population was 14.93 in London, 14.43 in Lambeth and 3.4 in England. From 2011 to 2018 Lambeth reports consistently lower and better figures than the London average.

Chart 10:- Households in temporary accommodation 2011-2018 per 1,000 households - Lambeth , London, England

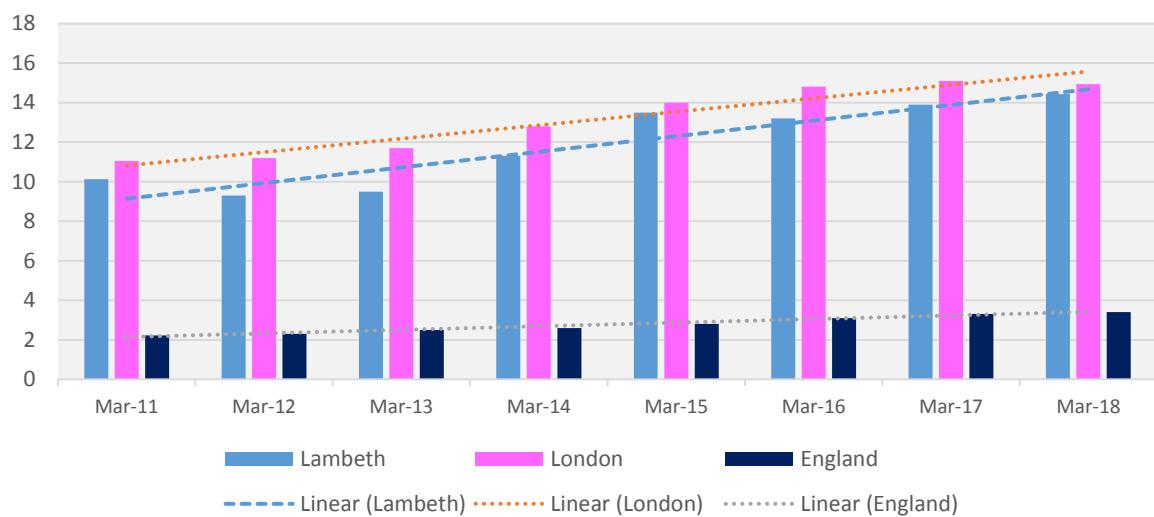
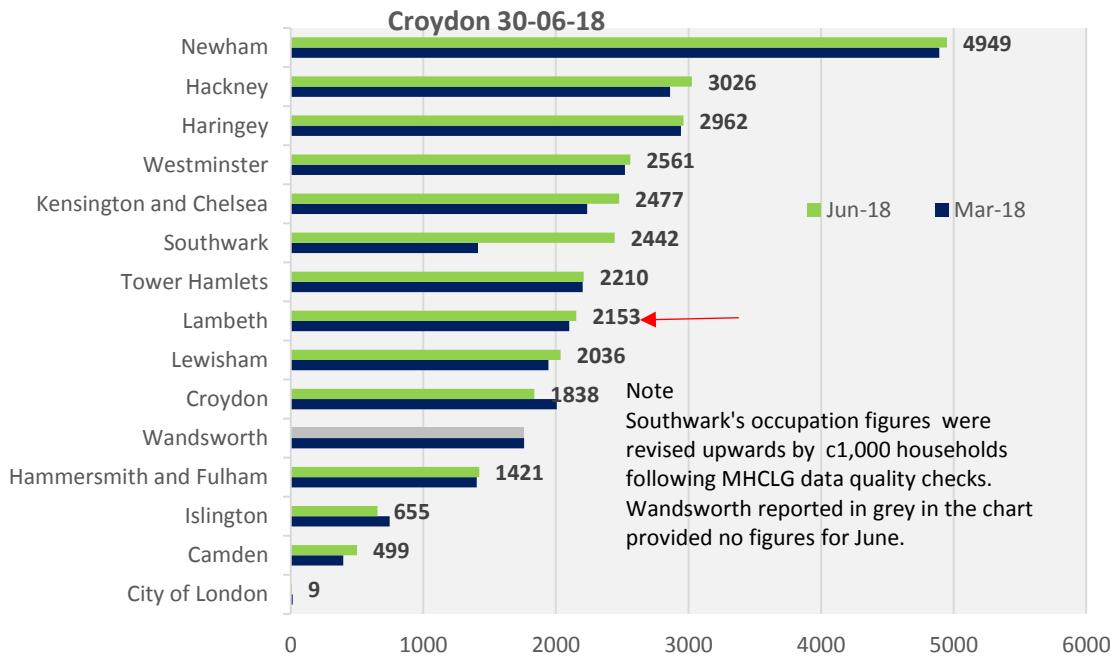


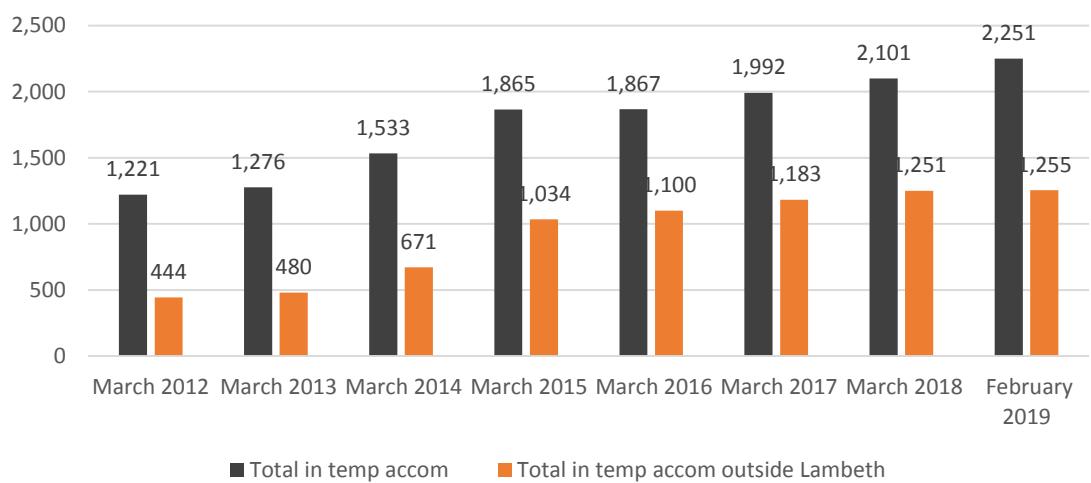
Chart 11:- Temporary accommodation occupation - Inner London including Croydon 30-06-18



Temporary accommodation – inside and outside Lambeth

At the end of June 2019, 43% of households were accommodated in Lambeth and 57% outside, principally in the neighbouring boroughs of Croydon, Lewisham, Bromley and Southwark.

Chart 12:- Comparison of total numbers of Temporary Accommodation units and the number outside Lambeth



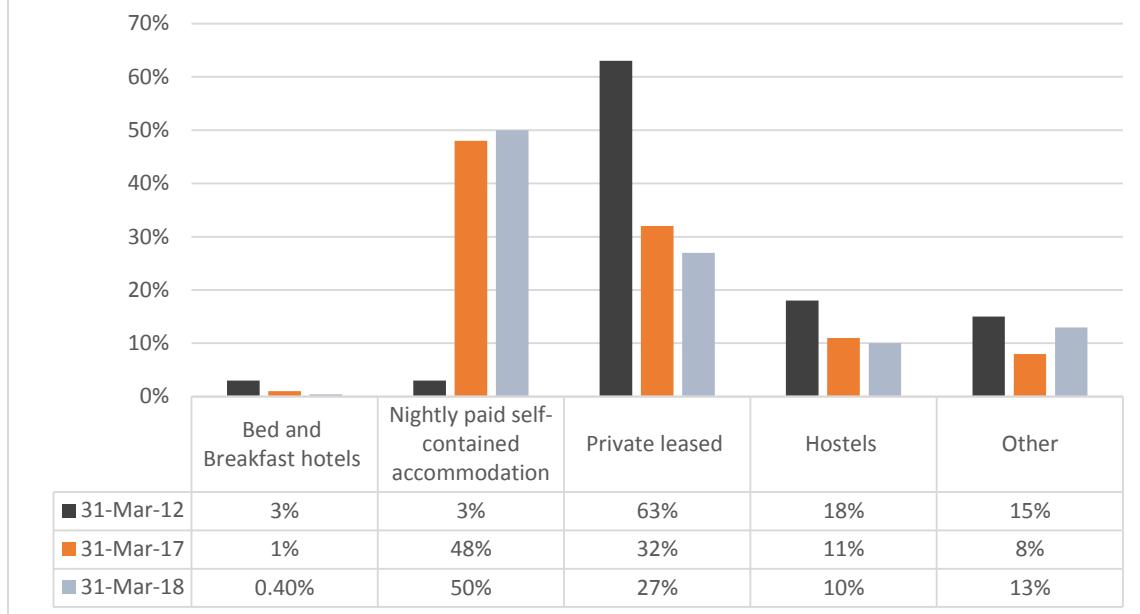
Temporary accommodation – reducing costs

The use of cost-neutral accommodation for use as temporary accommodation is helping to mitigate the increase in both occupation levels and cost. This accommodation consists of council-managed hostels, Lambeth Council-owned estate property in use as temporary accommodation pending estate regeneration, and nil cost housing association managed property. The use of nil cost temporary accommodation increased by 18% in 2018-2019, while the use of accommodation which costs increased by 10%.

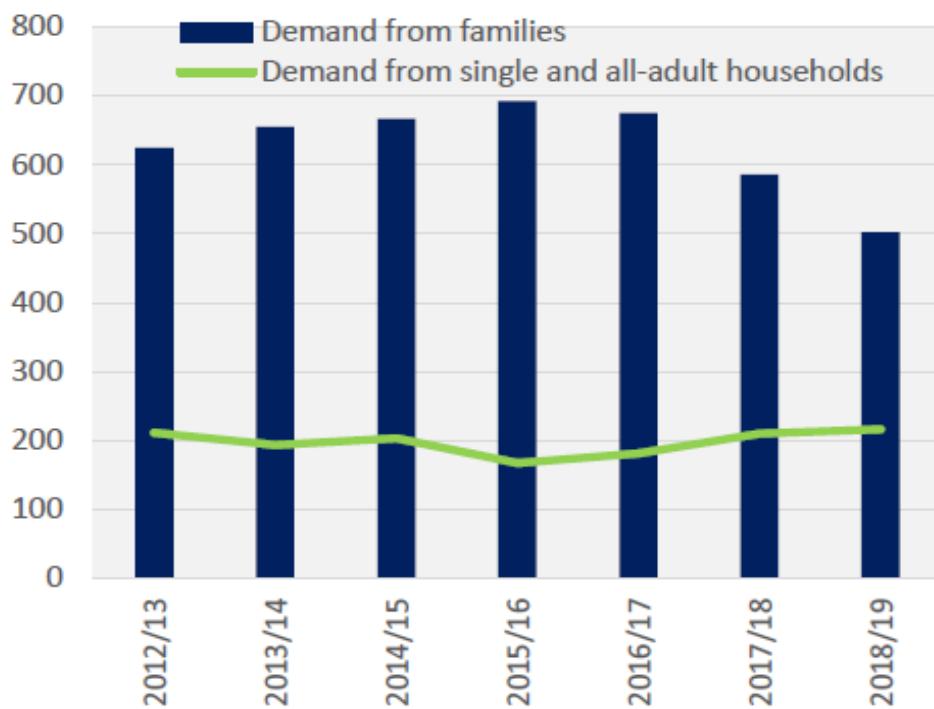


Chart 14 demonstrates why it has been so important to increase the use of cost-neutral accommodation. Between April 2012 and March 2018 there was a steady decrease in the number of private landlords willing to enter into long-term private leasing agreements. Consequently, there was a steady increase in the use of nightly-paid self-contained accommodation which is usually much higher cost.

**Chart 14:- Changes in temporary accommodation type used
2012-2018**



**Temporary accommodaiton placement
demand 2012-2019 - household type**



The type of households in temporary accommodation has seen a slight shift towards more single and all-adult households. On 31 March 2017, of 1,991 households in temporary accommodation, 87.3% were either pregnant women or families with children while 12.7% were single person or all-adult households. On 31 December 2018, of 2,252 households in temporary accommodation, 82.7% were

either pregnant women or families with children, while 17.3% were single person or all-adult households.