



SEFTON COUNCIL'S ANNUAL REPORT ON HOMELESSNESS 2019/20

Compiled by

Graham Parry, Alistair Malpas, Debbie McEnaney & Allan Glennon

Sefton MBC

Annual Report on Levels of Homelessness in Sefton 2019/20

Introduction

Sefton's Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018-23 contains an action to,

*'Publish an annual report explaining the current levels of homelessness, to aid elected councillor and chief officer decision making, and
Carry out an in-depth analysis of data collected by the Homelessness Case Level Information Classification monitoring system (H-CLIC).'*

Producing an annual report will give Sefton a snapshot of all types of homelessness across the borough. Over time this will allow us to benchmark where we are compared to previous years and will also enable us to help plan services for future years.

2019/20

This is our second Annual report, and we hope it will provide a useful picture of homelessness in Sefton.

We also want to show the impact that the external MHCLG Rough Sleeper Initiative MHCLG funding has had on services over the year and also a look to the future, with a picture of how we are currently dealing with the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, despite falling within the 2020/21 reporting period.

The Report continues to highlight the impact of the Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) 2017 on Sefton Council. The principle changes of which include:

- a statutory duty to provide homeless prevention services to all people who are threatened with homelessness irrespective of whether they are in priority or not.
- earlier intervention; 56 days from homelessness rather than 28 days previously.
- require each person to be provided with an individual assessment and a "personalised housing plan", irrespective of what legal duty we may owe them if they were to become homeless in the future.

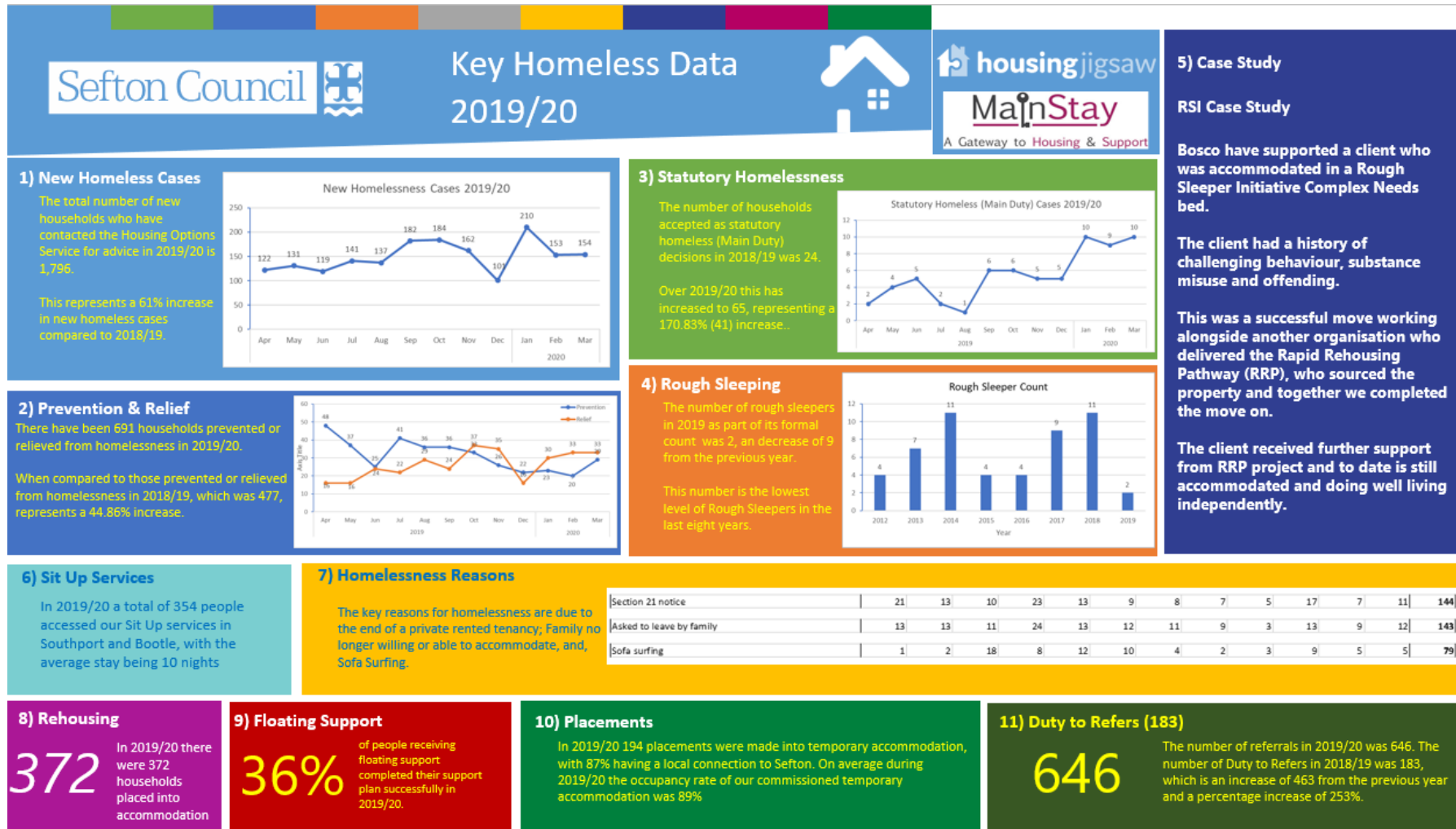
Further, the report provides details of those services commissioned by the Council to provide homeless support services for single people. This report shows the demand for these services and the benefit of providing these to the 'Sefton purse'.

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Homeless Key Data Dashboard

The below table gives a snapshot of key Sefton data from 2019/20, taken from the various data sources contained in the report, below. It uses headline data from the Housing Options service database (H-CLIC) and the Mainstay system.



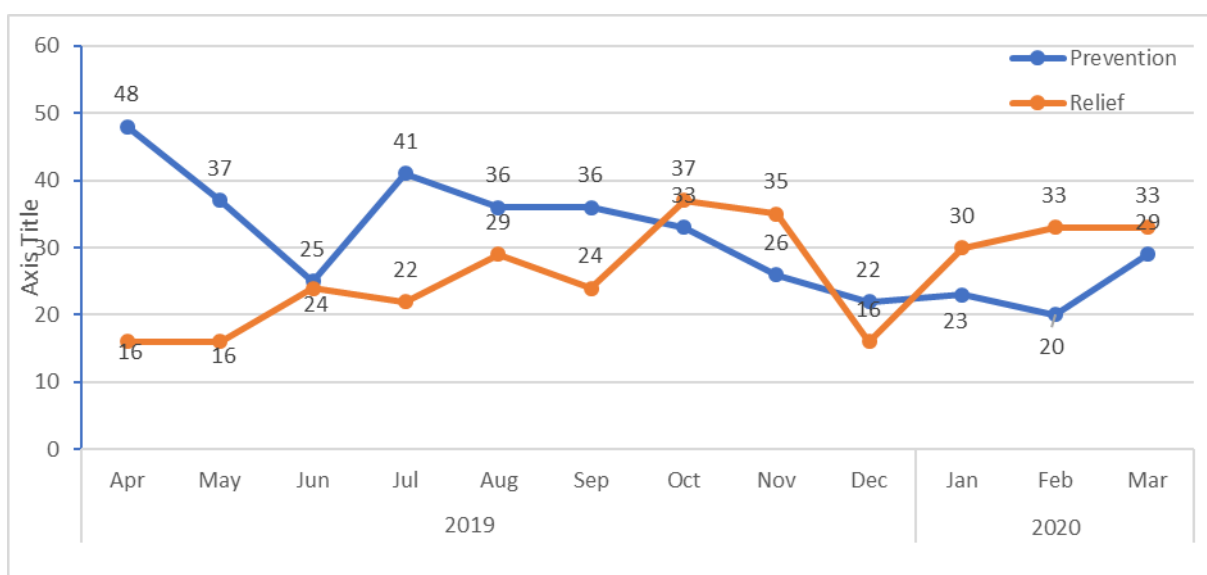
Statutory Homeless data collected through the Council’s Housing Options service, and supplied to Government (H-CLIC)

New Homeless Cases presenting to Sefton Housing Options service



The total number of new households who have contacted the Housing Options Service for advice in 2019/20 is 1,796. **This represents a 60.3% increase in new homeless cases compared to 2018/19.**

Sefton’s homelessness prevention and relief cases



There have been 691 households prevented or relieved from homelessness in 2019/20. When compared to those prevented or relieved from homelessness in 2018/19, which was 477, represents a 44.86% increase.

Outcomes After Prevention & Relief Duty

Prevention Activity

	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Total
Total number of households where prevention duty ended^{1,2}	108	120	96	85	409

Reason for households' prevention duty ending:	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Total
Secured accommodation for 6+ months	62	65	48	46	221
Homeless (including intentionally homeless)	8	9	14	7	38
Contact lost	0	3	1	0	4
Withdrew application / applicant deceased	34	40	26	0	100
56 days elapsed and no further action	1	1	1	28	31
No longer eligible	0	2	4	2	8
Refused suitable accommodation offer	3	0	0	2	5
Refused to cooperate	0	0	2	0	2
Not known	0	0	0	0	0

Existing or alternative accommodation secured for households at duty end:	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Total
Moved to alternative accommodation	48	55	40	37	180
Stayed in existing accommodation	14	10	8	9	41
Total	62	65	48	46	221

Type of accommodation secured for households at end of prevention duty:	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Total
Social rented sector	33	30	29	26	118
Private rented sector	23	28	19	18	88
Staying with family	4	3	0	0	7
Staying with friends	1	3	0	0	4
Owner-occupier	1	1	0	1	3
Other	0	0	0	0	0
Not known	0	0	0	1	1
Total	62	65	48	46	221

Main activity that resulted in accommodation secured for households:	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Total
Accommodation secured by local authority or organisation delivering housing options service	35	44	32	24	135
Helped to secure accommodation found by applicant, with financial payment	2	2	2	1	7
Helped to secure accommodation found by applicant, without financial payment	12	10	4	9	35
Negotiation / mediation / advocacy work to prevent eviction / repossession	3	4	4	6	17
Financial payments to reduce rent service charge or mortgage arrears ³	1	0	1	0	2
Supported housing provided	7	1	3	5	16
Negotiation / mediation work to secure return to family or friend	3	1	3	2	9
Other ⁴	0	3	1	1	5
No activity – advice and information provided	45	55	46	37	183
Total	108	120	96	85	409

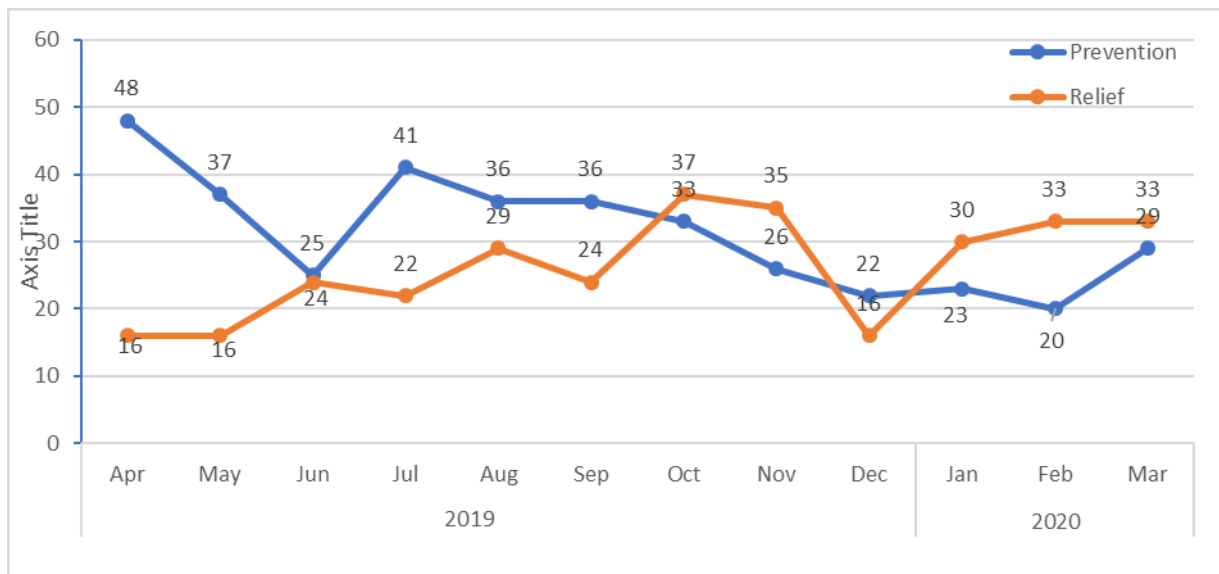
Relief Activity

	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Total
Total number of households where relief duty ended^{1,2}	55	68	71	94	288

Reason for households' relief duty ending:	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Total
Secured accommodation for 6+ months ³	40	55	42	60	197
56 days elapsed	11	8	16	21	56
Contact lost	1	0	5	4	10
Withdrew application / applicant deceased	1	2	3	3	9
Local connection referral accepted by other LA	0	0	2	1	3
Refused final accommodation	1	0	0	3	4
No longer eligible	0	1	1	1	3
Intentionally homeless from accommodation provided	1	2	2	1	6
Notice served due to refusal to cooperate	0	0	0	0	0
Not known	0	0	0	0	0

Type of accommodation secured for households at end of relief duty:	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Oct-Dec	Total
Social rented sector	32	37	34	32	135
Private rented sector	4	10	5	10	29
Staying with family	1	1	0	1	3
Staying with friends	0	0	1	1	2
Owner-occupier	0	1	1	1	3
Other	1	5	1	0	7
Not known	2	1	0	0	3
Total	40	55	42	45	182

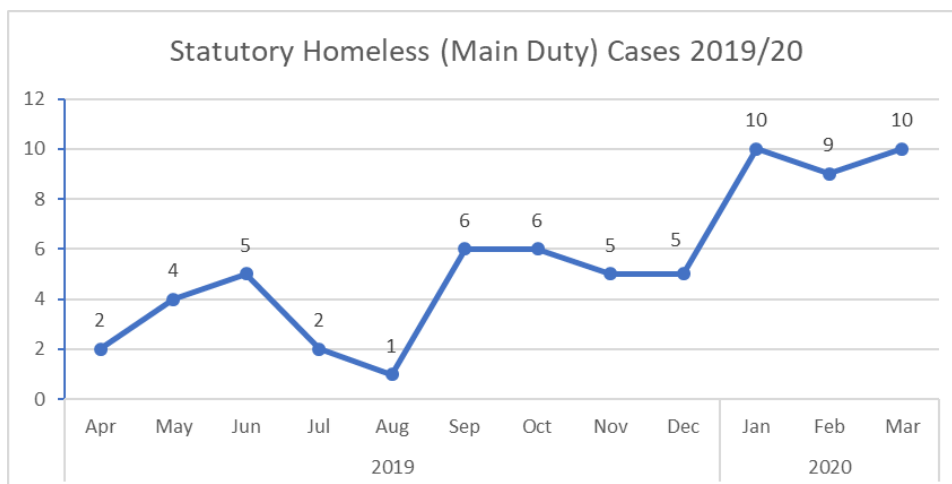
Main activity that resulted in accommodation secured for households:	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Total
Accommodation secured by local authority or organisation delivering housing options service	32	37	34	31	134
Supported housing provided	7	6	4	4	21
Helped to secure accommodation found by applicant, with financial payment	0	1	1	0	2
Helped to secure accommodation found by applicant, without financial payment	3	5	2	1	11
Other activity through which accommodation secured ⁴	1	3	5	2	11
No activity	12	16	25	0	53
Total	55	68	71	38	232



Statutory Homeless (Main Duty) Cases

The number of cases qualifying for Main Duty Assistance in 2019/20

2019									2020		
Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
2	4	5	2	1	6	6	5	5	10	9	10



	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Total
Total number of main duty decisions¹	11	9	16	29	65

Outcome of main duty decision for eligible households:	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	
Homeless + priority need + unintentionally homeless (acceptance)	1	2	6	15	24
Homeless + priority need + intentionally homeless	2	1	1	5	9
Homeless + no priority need	8	6	9	9	32
Not homeless	0	0	0	0	0

The number of households accepted as statutory homeless (Main Duty) decisions in 2018/19 was 24. Over 2019/20 this has increased to 65, representing a 170.83% (41) increase.

**Priority need breakdowns are suppressed for local authorities with fewer than 5 households owed a main duty within a quarter, to prevent disclosure*

Priority need of households owed a main duty (acceptances)³:	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Total
Household includes dependent children	-	-	4	7	11
Household includes a pregnant woman	-	-	0	0	0
Old age	-	-	1	0	1
Physical disability / ill health	-	-	0	2	2
Mental health problems	-	-	0	1	1
Young applicant ⁴	-	-	0	1	1
Domestic abuse	-	-	0	0	0
Other ⁵	-	-	1	3	4
Homeless because of emergency ⁶	-	-	0	1	1
Total	0	0	6	15	21

	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Total
Total number of households where main duty ended	2	1	5	9	17

Outcome of households no longer owed a main duty:	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	
Housing Act 1996 Pt6 social housing offer - accepted	1	1	4	6	12
Housing Act 1996 Pt6 social housing offer - refused	0	0	0	0	0
Private rented sector offer ⁷ - accepted	0	0	1	1	2
Private rented sector offer ³ - refused	0	0	0	0	0
Refused suitable TA offer, withdrew or lost contact	0	0	0	2	2
Ceased to be eligible	1	0	0	0	1
Became intentionally homeless from TA	0	0	0	0	0
Voluntarily ceased to occupy accommodation	0	0	0	0	0

Homelessness Reasons 2019/20

Homelessness Reasons	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Grand Tot	
93 day Notice (MOD, relationship breakdown)				1									1	
Abandoned accommodation			3	1					1			1	6	
Affordability							1		1				6	
Asked to leave by family		13	13	11	24	13	12	11	9	3	13	9	12	143
Asylum Seeker		1	1			2	1						6	
Asylum Seeker- Home Office Accommodation Ended		1			4	6	2	2	7	2	3	4	33	
Bail Condition – unable to return home									1				1	
Bereavement							1						1	
Care leaver			2	1	2	2			1	2	3	1	2	16
Discharge from Psychiatric Unit				1			1	2	1				5	
Emergency (Fire/Flood/Disaster)			1			1			1		1	2	6	
Evicted (NOT s21 or s8 notice)		1	1	1	3	2	5	2	4	3		1	24	
Eviction from supported housing		2	2		1	1	3	1	4	2			18	
Fleeing Domestic Abuse		3	1	6	6	5	2	2	3	2	6	4	42	
Fleeing Harassment		1	3	3	4	4	6	5		1	1	4	35	
Friend no longer willing to accommodate		7	4	4	2	2	3	2	6	1	5	3	44	
Hospital Discharge (Home not suitable to return to)			2				3	2	2		4	2	18	
Leaving armed forces					1								1	
Leaving bail hostel		2		1			1	1			1	1	7	
Leaving prison		2	3	3	2	3	1	3	2	1	5	6	32	
Looking to downsize due to bedroom tax									1			1	2	
Loss of employment		1						1					2	
Loss of tied accommodation				2				2		2	1		7	
Medical discharge from HM Forces						1							1	
Mortgage repossession		1						2					3	
Mortgage Repossession- Applicant			2	1	1								4	
Mortgage Repossession- Landlord							1				1	1	3	
Mortgage repossession proceedings		1					2	1	1				6	
Perpetrator of ASB				1									1	
Property not fit for habitation				2	1			4	4	2			20	
Relationship Breakdown		9	5	1	5	2	4	2	1	2	5	4	44	
Removed from home by police						1		2	1			1	5	
Rent arrears – local authority								1					1	
Rent arrears- Private Sector		1	3		2	1	1	3	2		2		16	
Rent arrears- Registered Provider		2	3	2	1		1	1	1		1		12	
Requires adaptations/ground floor											1	1	3	
Rough Sleeping		3	2	4	4	1	2	3	1	5		3	30	
Section 21 notice		21	13	10	23	13	9	8	7	5	17	7	11	144
Section 8 notice		3	7	5	1	2	1	1	2	1	2	3	28	
Sofa surfing		1	2	18	8	12	10	4	2	3	9	5	79	
Victim of ASB		1		1		1	1		1		3	1	11	
Violent breakdown of relationship		1		1	2		1		1	1	3	1	12	
Total with Reasons	78	73	81	100	75	77	67	67	38	87	66	70	879	
No Reason or Case Closed on Approach	44	58	38	41	62	105	117	95	63	123	87	84	917	
Grand Total	122	131	119	141	137	182	184	162	101	210	153	154	1796	

The most common reasons for homelessness are due to the end of a private rented tenancy (s.21 Notice); Family no longer willing or able to accommodate, and Sofa Surfing.

Section 21 notice	21	13	10	23	13	9	8	7	5	17	7	11	144
Asked to leave by family	13	13	11	24	13	12	11	9	3	13	9	12	143
Sofa surfing	1	2	18	8	12	10	4	2	3	9	5	5	79

Driving Up Standards

Case File Audits

One of the recommendations within Sefton's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy is that Sefton must carry out case file audit of homelessness cases to learn what more could be done to prevent homelessness and ensure adherence to public law. These case file reviews will check the rationality, legality and adherence to public law procedural requirements. In November 2018, NPSS were commissioned to deliver case file reviews on Housing Options cases and deliver training packages to staff to help ensure compliance with HRA in January 2019. We plan to repeat this exercise the next year.

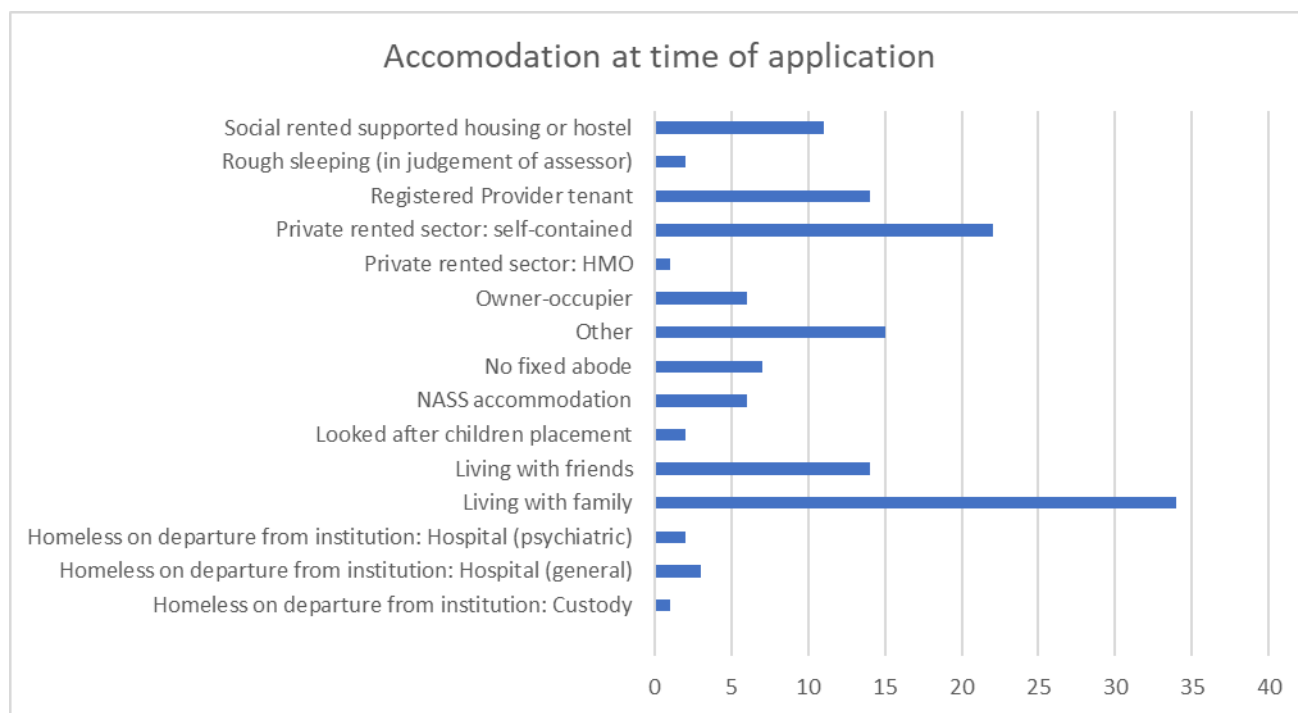
Use of Temporary Accommodation in 2019/20

The cost of using the Council’s own temporary accommodation, Lonsdale Hostel, in 2018/19 was £12,872 (net), whilst the cost of Housing Options placing families within B&B accommodation was £183,276.

- 151 Households provided with temp accommodation
- 62 of these were families including 129 children
- Average number of nights in temp was 16
- Over half were under 35

Families in Accommodation prior to approaching the Council

The below table shows the accommodation that only families approaching the Council for assistance held beforehand

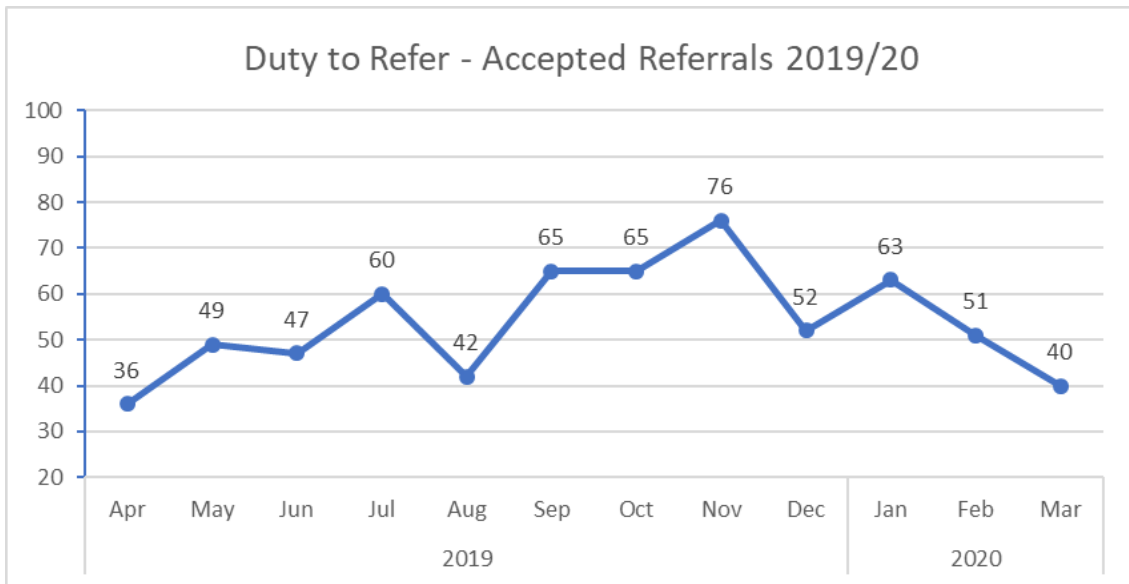


Duty To Refer

An introduction as part of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, the new Duty to Refer is where a “specified public authority” considers that someone they are working with is or may be homeless or threatened with homelessness, they must refer that person’s details to a local housing authority but only if the person agrees to the notification being made.

The Duty to Refer effectively commenced from 1st October 2018 onwards. The number of referrals in 2019/20 was 646. The number of Duty to Refers in 2018/19 was 183 (though this was based on a 6 month period from October 18 to March 19), which is an increase of 463 from the previous year and a percentage increase of 253%.

	2019									2020		
	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Duty to Refer	36	49	47	60	42	65	65	76	52	63	51	40



As the DWP refuse to use the Alert portal for Duty to Refers the below table show the level of referrals from the DWP separately on a monthly basis.

Month/Year	Number of Jigsaw ALERT Duty To Refer – Referrals	Number of DWP Duty To Refer – Referrals	Total Duty To Refer – Referrals
Apr-19	26	10	36
May-19	35	14	49
Jun-19	22	25	47
Jul-19	40	20	60
Aug-19	28	14	42
Sep-19	45	20	65
Oct-19	47	18	65
Nov-19	51	25	76
Dec-19	37	15	52
Jan-20	48	15	63
Feb-20	34	17	51
Mar-20	32	8	40
Total 19/20	445	201	646

Use of Discretionary Housing Payments

A Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) is additional financial support that can be provided to a customer in receipt of Housing Benefit or Universal Credit Housing Costs. The customer needs to make a claim and demonstrate that they require additional support in meeting their housing costs.

The DHP funding is allocated annually by the DWP: –

Year	DWP DHP funding
2014/15	£712,009
2015/16	£600,392
2016/17	£679,361
2017/18	£720,214
2018/19	£763,510
2019/20	£659,531
2020/21	£925,029

The service has consistently managed and monitored the DHP fund, in accordance with the Council's policy, to ensure that the DWP funding is fully exhausted to support some of the most vulnerable customers in the area. In previous years an additional agreed overspend, of no more than £2k was achieved.

The DHP position for 2019/20 is that £660,715.73 has been paid; resulting an overspend of £1,184.73.

There has been a total of 2,214 DHP made awards during 2019/20 with nearly 80% of awards supporting claimants affected by the social sector size criteria (bedroom tax); over 60% awards are now made to Universal Credit claimants.

The DWP have announced that the DHP fund for 2020/21 will be £925,029 an increase of £265,498 (40%) on the previous year.

The forecast is that the demand on the DHP fund will increase this year due to the impact of COVID-19 and the increased fund will be fully exhausted.

Domestic Abuse Target Hardening

In 2019/20 the Council's Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA) service supported 27 victims of Domestic Abuse with target hardening to their existing property costing £8,613.

All victims reported feeling safer as a result.

Given the average annual local authority expenditure per Homelessness application (average one-off and on-going costs associated with statutory homelessness) is £2,724* then the total estimated saving by carrying out this target hardening work to the 27 victims' properties is £73,548.

**Figure from New Economy Manchester Unit Cost Database*

Ongoing work is being done to ensure joint priorities and further data sharing as stated within Sefton's Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy and new Domestic Abuse Strategy.

Sefton's Commissioned Temporary Accommodation for single people (Mainstay Data)

The Council entered into a range of contracts effective from 1st July 2015 to provide Housing Related Support (HRS) Services linked to the prevention, resolution and relief of homelessness in the Borough.

The contracts are scheduled to last for 5 years. The option to extend by another 2 years, taking us up to 2021/22, was approved by Cabinet in December 2019.

Current Contracts

The contracts awarded are as follows

- Accommodation- generic homeless people (including a Sit-Up service)
- Accommodation- substance misuse
- Accommodation- offenders
- Accommodation- single women with complex needs
- Floating Support- generic low level
- Floating Support- offenders in the community
- Floating Support- medium level multiple needs (from April 2016 only)
- Rough Sleepers- outreach team
- Rough Sleepers- community service
- Housing Advice- homeless prevention (Southport and Formby area only)

All service providers use the Mainstay IT system to record client assessments, help match clients to suitable services, and track the support provided to clients. (This system is used by homelessness services across the Liverpool City Region.)

During the last year 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020:

- There were 690 client assessments undertaken (194 by Council's Housing Options and 496 by commissioned service providers)
- There were 333 service users provided with a service
- There were 194 service users provided with temporary supported accommodation and 139 service users provided with floating support

[Contract monitoring](#)

Each service user is assessed based on a set of "needs" and the assessment will determine what service and what level of service they require. The services have been designed to provide support to meet the identified needs of the service users.

Each contract has a range of expected Outcomes; the Outcomes are based on an established range of identified needs, but the anticipated level of the Outcome achievement is different within contracts. Each contract also has a range of priority outcomes which form the prime contract monitoring data. For instance, a service for Offenders would have "reduction of offending" as a priority outcome.

The underlying principle of the contracts is to prevent and relieve homelessness in the borough; but there is also a much wider benefit to the community. Providing stability and support to many service users has a positive impact (and therefore a saving to the public purse)

The table below shows the achieved number of outcomes by the headings- No Need, Met, Not Met and Working Towards. The financial information linked to each Outcome is derived from data compiled from New Economy Manchester Unit Cost Database.

10 Point Support Plan Goal Type	Total No. Of Individuals Scored:	Total: Positive Distance Travelled	Total: Remains Static	Total: Negative Distance Travelled	£ Fiscal Value	£ Savings to Sefton
Drug and alcohol misuse	153	85	56	12	5742	488,070
Emotional and Mental health	153	102	45	6	2197	224,094
Managing Money	153	98	45	10	1134	111,132
Managing Tenancy/Accommodation	153	96	40	17	5752	552,192
Meaningful Use of Time	153	95	50	8	546	51,870
Motivation/taking responsibility	153	102	43	8	0	
Offending	153	70	72	11	663	46,410
Physical Health	153	83	59	11	1632	135,456
Self Care Living Skills	153	98	50	5	0	
Social Networks/relationships	153	97	43	13	0	
Total Goals Scored	1530	926	503	101		1,609,224

Waiting lists for Sefton's homeless commissioned services

Lot No	Lot	Capacity	Waiting list on 17/04/2020
1	Sefton Supported Housing Group Temp Accommm	70	380
2	Humankind Substance Misuse	10	3
3	Excel Single Women	4	15
4	NWPC Offenders	8	9
5	Humankind Floating Support	30	14
6	Whistechapel Floating Support	30	0
7	Humankind Floating Support Offenders	45	5

The above table illustrates the current demand for Temporary Accommodation. The current demand for Hostel Accommodation and/or Dispersed Accommodation across SSHG services was at 380, compared to only 116 at the same point in 2019.

This increase of 264 represents a 228% increase in demand illustrating that demand is far exceeding supply.

Rough Sleeper Initiative Funding

Sefton were successful in receiving Rough Sleeper Initiative funding for 2019/20 from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government for the following interventions:

- Complex Needs Beds - £86,582 to Sefton Supported Housing Group (SSHG)
- Clinical Outreach post - £16,000 to Merseycare
- No Recourse to Public Fund post - £22,000 to Light for Life

As a result of this funding, 8 Complex Needs Beds were set-up within two of Sefton's existing commissioned hostels through the utilisation of unused rooms. These were specifically for Sefton's most entrenched rough sleepers who had a combination of complex needs contributing to their homelessness.

Light for Life Rough Sleeper Outreach Service directly matched these people into the rooms and a support worker was assigned to them within the hostels.

"The extremely positive progress made by one individual who entered our RSI Beds in an extremely poor state has seen the individual address his health problems, putting weight on, engaging well to services, making meals for himself and talking to staff about move-on and future work options. I honestly believe that the RSI Complex Needs Beds have saved people's lives"

Greta Fenney, CEO Light for Life

The No Recourse to Public Fund Worker project was successful in helping to complete applications for passports; contacted and worked with the respective Embassies for clients rough sleeping; helped to secure employments for a number of people; helped to complete Settled Status applications with clients, and, worked alongside an interpreter on the staff team for all aspects of interventions. (*see below qualitative feedback case study*)

Outreach drug and alcohol support for rough sleepers

The Clinical Outreach Post delivered a day's work from a clinical nurse prescriber, which allowed them to get a Mersey Care nurse to work directly with the Rough Sleeper Outreach service. The nurse started accompanying the homeless service on its rounds in the town centre in early 2019. The RSI funding covered the backfill for the nurse.

The nurse carries out assessments, books the clients in for appointments and has even been able to hand out anti-overdose drug treatment naloxone. Alongside the outreach work the nurse is then available at a nearby clinic in the afternoon for the clients to drop-in for further advice, organise access to service and hand out any prescriptions they may need. Due to the success of this project, Sefton's Public Health Team have since mainstreamed the service.

Rapid Rehousing Pathway Funding

Sefton were also successful in bidding for MHCLG Rapid Rehousing Pathway (RRP) funding in early 2019. This gave us access to Navigators and to a Tenancy Support Worker service.

The Navigators supported rough sleepers, former rough sleepers and those within temporary hostel placements from their first contact with services giving a continued single point of contact and support through the pathway system to settled accommodation. The Navigators supported the individual in their recovery to find employment, undertake training, develop budgeting skills, cultivate positive social circles and be better equipped to maintain their accommodation and independence and avoid returning to the street.

The Tenancy Support Workers targeted and worked with people within the Council's commissioned hostels who had low-level support needs and were ready to move-on into either Housing Association or Private Rented Sector properties. The Tenancy Support Workers worked to get these people into their new tenancies and help sustain those tenancies in the early days. This service helped to relieve 'bed-blocking' and free up spaces within our hostels.

Impact of the RSI and RRP Funding

As a direct result of the RSI initiatives introduced in April 2019, the Rough Sleeper Count carried out in November 2019 only found 2 rough sleepers in Sefton. The lowest level it had been for eight years.

The number of rough sleepers that have been accommodated within the eight Complex Needs beds is 25.

Move-on accommodation has been found for the vast majority of those accommodated within the Complex Needs Beds. The Designated Support Workers and the Navigators have worked particularly well to support this cohort whilst they are within the Beds and after they have moved on.

As a result of the Tenancy Support Workers project there have now been 15 placements into either private rented sector properties or Registered Provider tenancies from people who were in Supported Hostel Accommodation and the project is currently actively working with 16 others.

Rough Sleeper Count

Each Local Authority is obliged to advise the Government as to the extent of Rough Sleeping in the borough on an annual basis. The Council can do so by way of a formal Count; by way of an estimate, or, an estimate based on a spotlight count.

The estimate is based on a single, typical night between 1 October and 30 November, and as we have done in previous years the Councils within the Liverpool City region co-ordinated our Counts on the same night. As it is undertaken on one night it can only demonstrate a snapshot of the extent of Rough Sleeping, which can change on a daily basis in reality.

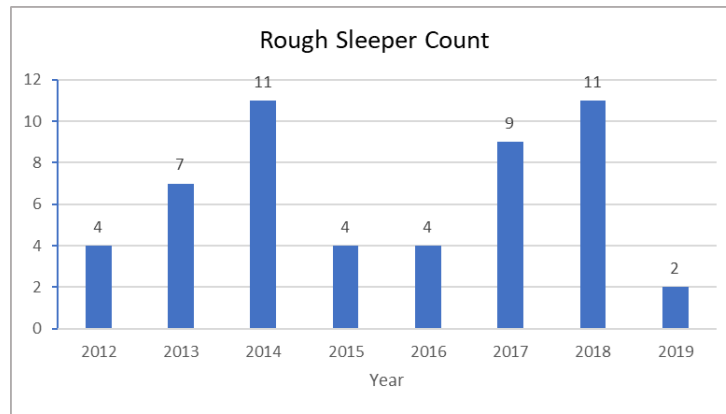
The 'typical night' chosen for the estimate was the evening of the 12th November to the morning of the 13th November 2019.

Sefton's Rough Sleeper Count (people found to be rough sleeping) in November 2019 was two (2) and was done by doing an Estimate Count based on a snapshot count, which is a physical count on the chosen typical night followed up with a multi-partnership data sharing meeting at which partners bring their evidence of people who are known to have slept rough on the chosen typical night.

In comparison to previous years, the below table shows the previous numbers of Rough Sleeping in Sefton on the chosen typical night over the past eight years. 2019 was the lowest number of Rough Sleepers found in Sefton over that period, showing the impact of the Rough Sleeper Initiative funding and projects on that particular group of people.

The reported figures for the last few years are as follows:

- 2012-(4)
- 2013-(7)
- 2014-(11)
- 2015- (4)
- 2016- (4)
- 2017- (9)
- 2018- (11)
- 2019- (2)

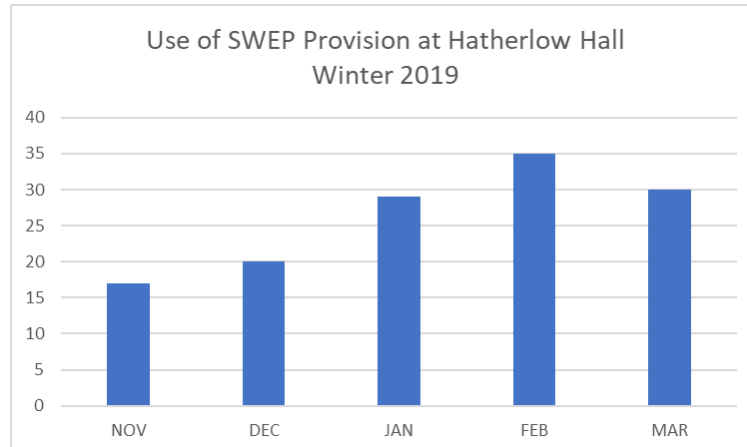


Use of Sit-Up Services & Severe Weather Shelter Winter 2019

Within the accommodation contract for “generic homeless people” is the requirement to provide a Sit-Up service. This service provides an emergency overnight shelter to provide an alternative to Rough Sleeping. The provision of the Sit-Up service helps the Council to reduce the numbers sleeping rough and to offer a No First Night Out to our service users.

In 2019/20, the Sit-Up provision continued to be provided over 3 sites (2 sites in the Bootle area and 1 site in Southport). However, during 2019/20 the decision to relocate the Sit-Up provision in Southport to a larger building within the confines of Leyland Road hostel, using one of the outbuildings to the rear of the Hostel, called Hatherlow Hall. This building allowed for the Sit-Up service to be expanded during the Winter period. Sefton were successful in securing £40,900 MHCLG Cold Weather Funding in order to facilitate this expansion of service.

Unique Individuals Accessing Sit-Up at Southport Sit-Up (Hatherlow Hall) during the Severe Weather Period were as follows:



In total, 354 clients accessed the sit up service over the last year, and the average length of stay was 10 nights. **This is an increase of 221 on the number of people who accessed Sit-Up in 2018/19, representing a 166% increase in usage.**

Given the average annual local authority expenditure per individual rough sleeping is £8,605* then the 354 clients accessing Sit-Up rather than rough sleeping has saved the Sefton purse an estimated £3,046,170.

**Figure from New Economy Manchester Unit Cost Database*

Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy Action Plan

The Homelessness Act 2002, requires every Local Authority to carry out a homelessness review in its Borough every 5 years, to develop and publish a Homelessness Strategy based on this review and to consult with other statutory

and voluntary organisations. The scope of the review includes a comprehensive review of current and projected levels of homelessness in the Borough and a review of current homelessness services.

The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy for Sefton is comprised of three documents:

- The formal [Homelessness Review](#) identified the evidence of needs, and engagement with stakeholders, service providers and service users, in order to collect evidence and opinion of what works well now, what doesn't work well, and what gaps in services there may be.
- This evidential review was then analysed and interpreted to produce the [Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018 - 2023](#).
- [Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Plan](#). This plan will guide future delivery of the strategy and allow progress to be monitored. This document has been developed largely in response to the many recommendations made in the Homelessness Strategy.

[Homeless Prevention Trailblazers](#)

The 2-year Trailblazer funding was allocated to Sefton via the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority operating on a city region-wide basis to provide a variety of initiatives with a local tailored flavour, all aiming to deliver improved homeless prevention services and outcomes.

The Sefton Trailblazer funding will see the introduction of three Early Intervention and Prevention Officers based within its Housing Options Team, who will improve the range of pre-prevention and prevention activities; develop and improve current prevention initiatives and look to further develop rehousing relationships in the private rented sector (PRS).

There will be a focus on engagement with the PRS. This approach appears justified given that the largest cause of homelessness is the ending of private rented sector tenancies in Sefton (24% of all cases). We will seek to prevent households having to leave their tenancies. It is also worth noting that of all Prevention and Relief cases helped to secure rehousing 28% were assisted into private rented tenancies. We will seek to continue to improve access to and the sustainability of tenancies within the private rented sector in particular.

This activity will link to the Council's private sector Housing Standards service activities, in particular it's Housing Licensing schemes, which seek to improve the management and conditions in the PRS. Given we are placing (vulnerable) homeless households into the PRS it is important they access good quality tenancies.

The staff will collaborate with other services such as Jobcentres, Hospitals and Prisons to identify those at risk of homelessness within those services and target prevention interventions, as well as helping obtain assistance with debt, benefits and providing mediation.

[Sefton's successful MHCLG Funding Bids](#)

- Rough Sleeper Initiative Funding 2020/21 (£487,522):
 - Introduction of 8 additional Complex Needs beds for rough sleepers within existing hostels, together with enhanced support services
 - Clinical Outreach Nurse
 - Tenancy Sustainment Officers
 - Navigators & Personalised Budgets
 - Housing Options Officer contribution
 - Somewhere Safe to Stay Hub
 - Psychologist Support Service

Housing First

Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCR CA) are leading the development and implementation of a Liverpool City Region Housing First Initiative.

This is a Housing and Support service model for homeless people with multiple and complex needs, that existing services are unable to effectively support. Unlike a traditional homeless service approach, clients will be assisted to move directly into their own home and receive adequate support for as long as they require. Housing is considered to be the priority need and is a stable base that enables recovery for the homeless clients.

Sefton have developed a close working relationship with LCR CA to help deliver the Housing First pilot within Sefton.

At the time of writing there have been 11 referrals to Housing First from Sefton, with 3 individuals within their own accommodation. The LCR CA will be expanding the service during 2020-21 and providing specific teams to operate in each of the local authority areas. We anticipate there being a single dedicated HF team for Sefton, primarily based in the borough.

Riverside Dispersed Accommodation

In July 2019, Sefton agreed to enter into a 2-year pilot with Riverside Housing Association in order that Sefton move towards a model of temporary accommodation provision which is dispersed across the borough, rather than being based in one location, such as a hostel. This service went live in December 2019 and will ultimately provide 10 temporary homes at any one time.

The homeless families placed into this pilot service are those who require a support service to establish and sustain a tenancy. Some homeless families may have no assessed support needs, and they are more likely to continue to be directed to the Council's hostel until alternative permanent housing is secured. Those accessing this pilot service include families with a history of failed tenancies. When such families become homeless it is more difficult to find alternative accommodation and landlords willing to accommodate them. Hence, they would risk being in our temporary hostel, or B&B, for longer periods.

At the time of writing, there have been five families placed into homes across Sefton with all those families having achieved a 3-month sustainment of their licence.

As part of the pilot project, if a family are successful in sustaining the licence then the property they are living in can be transferred into a general needs tenancy providing that family with a permanent home. In such instances Riverside will provide another alternative property for further clients we seek to place in the service.

CONCLUSIONS

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 is one of the biggest changes to the rights of homeless people in England for 15 years. It effectively bolts two new duties to the original statutory rehousing duty:

- Duty to prevent homelessness
- Duty to relieve homelessness

The Act extends entitlements to help, places a focus on the prevention of homelessness and has the potential to provide more client-focussed, personalised statutory homelessness services.

The above data shows the number of clients provided with prevention and relief services, and the outcomes of those cases.

Further, the data shows the marked increase in presentations to Sefton's Housing Options Team with a 61% increase in new homeless cases compared to 2018/19.

Some key points to highlight:

- The total number of new households who have contacted the Housing Options Service for advice in 2019/20 is 1,796. This represents a 61% increase in new homeless cases compared to 2018/19.
- Of the 1,796 homeless cases, 409 were resolved at the Prevention stage, 288 at the relief stage, with only 65 at the Main Duty stage. 917 cases either gave No Reason or had their case closed on approach.
- Of the 1,795 cases, 435 (24%) were assisted to secure accommodation
- 435 clients were assisted to secure accommodation, 265 (61%) in social housing and 119 (27%) in the private rented sector, 34 (8%) in other.
- 194 service users were provided with temporary supported accommodation and 139 service users provided with floating support services via the Council's commissioned homeless services
- The number of rough sleepers decreased dramatically in 2019 to two (2). This is as a result of the MHCLG RSI & RRP Funding that delivered specific rough sleeper focussed initiatives in Sefton.

There has however continued to be an increase in the use of B&B accommodation by Sefton's Housing Options Team. Whilst there was a reduction in 2017/18 compared to 2016/17, the subsequent increase shows that this will need to be tracked. It would be expected that as more preventative work is carried out with those threatened with homelessness (e.g. via the Trailblazer initiative) that there will be less households presenting at crisis point to Sefton.

Looking to the Future

Corona Virus Covid-19

On the outbreak of the Covid-19 Coronavirus pandemic there was a clear directive from the Minister regarding getting rough sleepers, including those with no recourse to public funds, indoors, and the need to close night shelters where people shared spaces.

At the time of writing, since the start of the Covid Lockdown, Sefton have commissioned emergency temporary accommodation across 5 locations; CLAC, Bold Hotel, (former) Leicester St Guest House, Emmaus hostel rooms, Stables Inn. These provide a total of 102 rooms.

Emergency TA

Location	Number of Rooms
Crosby Lakeside	13
Leicester St	14
Bold Hotel	23
Emmaus	12
Stables Inn	40
Total	102

Further information on the levels of homelessness experienced during the Covid pandemic and the Council's responses will likely feature strongly in the Annual Homeless report for 2020-21, which will be provided next year