



SEFTON COUNCIL'S ANNUAL REPORT ON HOMELESSNESS 2020/2022

Compiled by

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Introduction

Sefton's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018/2023 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. This is Sefton's third Annual homelessness report since the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act, which combines information from 2020/2021 and 2021/2022 and provides useful insight into homelessness across the borough.

We also want to show the impact on homelessness, which Covid and the cost-of-living crisis has had, and continues to do so, by looking at data over the last two years.

The report will also detail the external funding that the Council has been successful in bidding for in order to continue to improve homeless services and move to a point where rough sleeping in Sefton is ended for good.

The Report continues to highlight the impact of the Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) 2017 on Sefton Council. The principal 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'.

Homeless Key Data Dashboard

Key Homeless Data 2020/22

A Gateway to Housing & Support

1) New Homeless Cases

The total number of new households who have contacted the Housing Options Service for advice in 2020/21 is 2,003, 2021/22 is 2,525.

This represents a 12% increase in 2020/21 in new homeless cases compared to 2019/20 and 26% increase in 2021/22 compared to 2020/21.

New Homelessness Cases 2020/22

2) Prevention & Relief

There have been 715 households prevented or relieved from homelessness in 2020/21 (3% increase on previous year).

There have been 910 households prevented or relieved from homelessness in 2021/22 (27% increase on previous year).

Prevention & Relief

3) Statutory Homelessness

The number of households accepted as statutory homeless (Main Duty) decisions in 2019/20 was 65.

Over 2020/21 it was 41, representing a 37% decrease. In 2021/22 it was 57 an increase of 39%.

Statutory Homelessness (Main Duty) Cases

4) Rough Sleeping

The number of rough sleepers in 2021 as part of its formal count was 0, a decrease of 3 from the previous year.

Rough Sleeper Count

5) Case Study

RSI funded pilot Psychologist feedback

'I would like to say a huge thank you to the commissioners of this psychology service. It is an intrinsic part of the pathway to provide holistic care for people affected by addictions such as my brother.

Your insight into the needs of people affected by alcohol has ensured he is on the road to recovery having a detox and rehab placement commencing this week.

This is within eight weeks of the first intervention by the Psychologist.

You have created a wonderful opportunity for my brother to get his life back.'

Service User's sister

6) Sit Up Services

Since 1st July, a total of 42 people accessed our Sit Up services in Southport and Bootle, with the average stay being 4 nights

7) Homelessness Reasons

The key reasons for homelessness between 2020 and 2022 are due to being asked by family to leave, friend no longer willing or able to accommodate, Sofa Surfing or relationship breakdown.

Homelessness Reasons	2020/21				Total	2021/22				Total
	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar		Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	
Asked to leave by family	61	46	55	69	231	59	57	55	70	241
Friend no longer willing to accommodate	21	20	19	30	90	10	32	35	56	133
Sofa surfing	22	20	13	23	78	22	34	21	21	98

8) Planned Moves

Since 1st July, 74% of accommodation placements have had a successful planned move

9) Floating Support

80% of people receiving floating support either completed their support plan successfully or were rehoused, since 1st July 2022

10) Placements

Since 1st July, 66 placements were made into temporary accommodation, with 97% having a local connection to Sefton. Since 1st July, on average the occupancy rate of our commissioned temporary accommodation was 89%.

11) Duty to Refers

The number of referrals in 2019/20 was 646. The number of referrals in 2020/21 was 876 (36% increase on previous year). In 2021/22 it was 1154 (32% increase on previous year).

The Infographic gives a snapshot of key Sefton data from 2020/21 and 2021/22, taken from the various data sources contained in the report. 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 2020/2021 is 2,003. This represents a 12% increase in new homeless cases compared to 2019/2020.

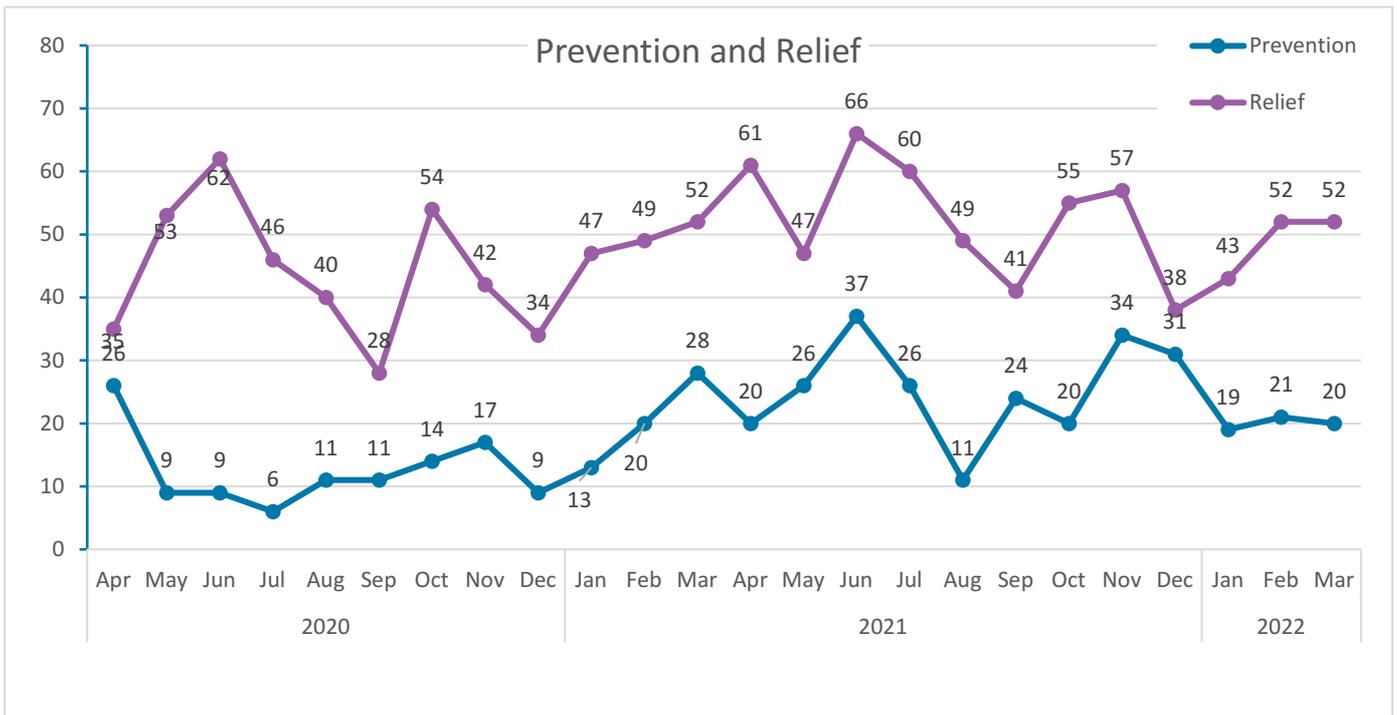
The total number of new households who have contacted the Housing Options Service for advice in 2021/2022 is 2,525. This represents a 26% increase in new homeless cases compared to 2020/2021.



Sefton's homelessness prevention and relief

There have been 715 households prevented or relieved from homelessness in 2020/2021. When compared to those prevented or relieved from homelessness in 2019/2020 (691) this represents a 3% increase.

There have been 910 households prevented or relieved from homelessness in 2021/2022. When compared to those prevented or relieved from homelessness in 2020/2021 this represents a 27% increase.



Outcomes After Prevention & Relief Duty

Prevention Activity

Of the 267 households where the prevention duty was ended, 105 households were secured accommodation for 6+ months by Sefton's Housing Options Team.

	2020/21					Total	2021/22					Total
	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar			Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar		
Total number of households where prevention duty ended	47	44	34	40	165	75	76	39	77	267		
Reason for households' prevention duty ending:	2020/21					Total	2021/22					Total
	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar			Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar		
Secured accommodation for 6+ months	21	22	18	20	81	31	23	14	37	105		
Homeless (including intentionally homeless)	5	2	5	4	16	11	11	4	4	30		
Contact lost	0	0	1	2	3	5	12	8	5	30		
56 days elapsed and no further action	15	14	8	10	47	18	24	8	23	73		
Withdrew application / applicant deceased	5	2	1	2	10	4	1	2	3	10		
No longer eligible	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	1	4		
Refused suitable accommodation offer	1	4	0	1	6	4	3	3	3	13		
Refused to cooperate	0	0	1	1	2	0	1	0	1	2		
Not known	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Existing or alternative accommodation secured for households at duty end:	2020/21					Total	2021/22					Total
	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar			Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar		
Moved to alternative accommodation	18	20	16	18	72	24	20	13	30	87		
Stayed in existing accommodation	3	2	2	2	9	7	3	1	7	18		
Total	21	22	18	20	81	31	23	14	37	105		
Type of accommodation secured for households at end of prevention duty:	2020/21					Total	2021/22					Total
	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar			Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar		
Social rented sector	12	13	11	14	50	16	12	12	27	67		
Private rented sector	7	7	6	6	26	7	5	1	5	18		
Staying with family	2	1	1	0	4	6	2	0	3	11		
Staying with friends	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	0	1	5		
Owner-occupier	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Other	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	3		
Not known	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1		
Total	21	22	18	20	81	31	23	14	37	105		

Main activity that resulted in accommodation secured for households:	2020/21					Total	2021/22					Total
	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun		Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar			
Accommodation secured by local authority or organisation delivering housing options service	13	13	14	15	55	19	16	12	19	66		
Helped to secure accommodation found by applicant, with financial payment	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	4	7		
Helped to secure accommodation found by applicant, without financial payment	0	0	0	1	1	3	2	0	7	12		
Negotiation / mediation / advocacy work to prevent eviction / repossession	2	1	1	0	4	0	0	0	1	1		
Negotiation / mediation work to secure return to family or friend	2	2	1	0	5	1	1	0	1	3		
Supported housing provided	1	0	1	2	4	2	1	0	0	3		
Discretionary Housing Payment to reduce shortfall	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Other financial payments (e.g. to reduce arrears)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Other	1	1	0	0	2	2	1	1	2	6		
No activity – advice and information provided	2	5	1	2	10	2	2	0	3	7		
Total	21	9	4	5	26	31	23	14	37	39		

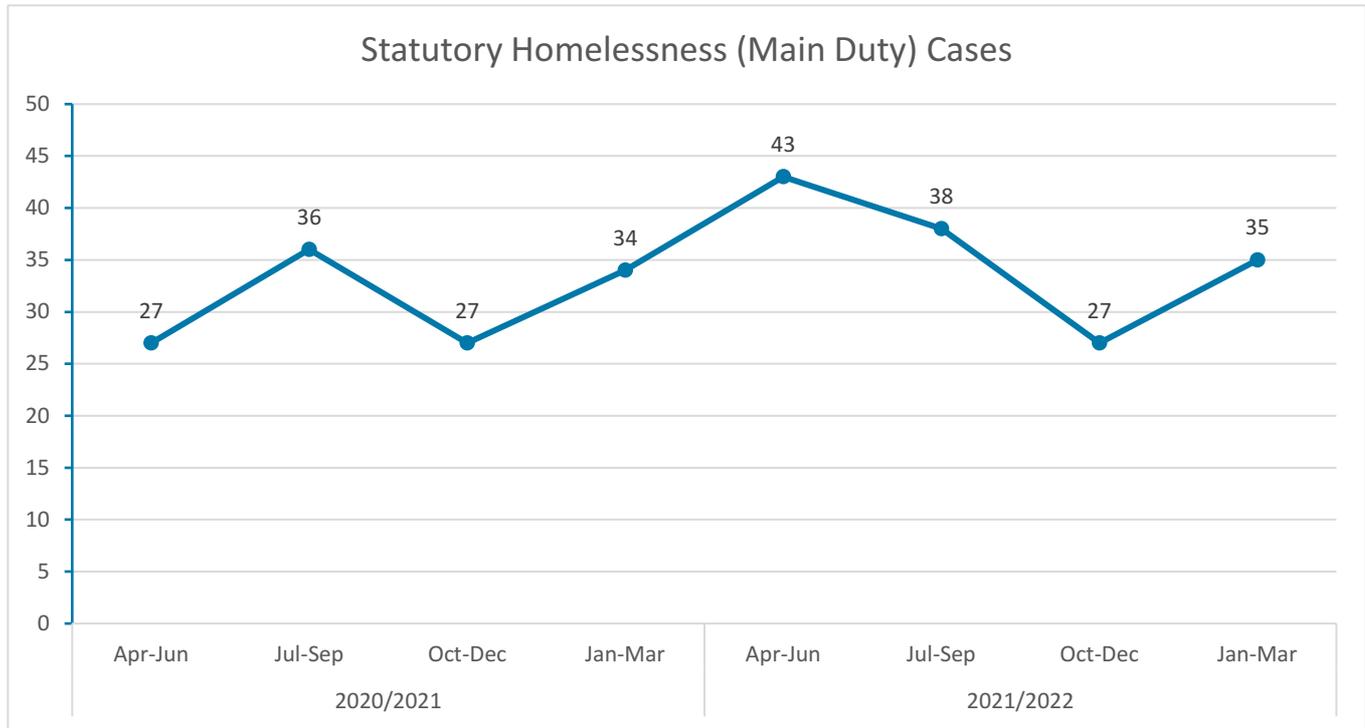
Relief Activity

Of the 518 households where the relief duty was ended, 310 households were secured accommodation for 6+ months by Sefton's Housing Options Team.

Total number of households where relief duty ended	2020/21					Total	2021/22					Total
	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun		Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar			
	84	146	123	145	498	170	156	65	127	518		
Reason for households' relief duty ending:	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Total	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Total		
Secured accommodation for 6+ months	44	90	74	92	300	109	89	41	71	310		
56 days elapsed	23	30	21	23	97	21	28	8	21	78		
Contact lost	3	7	7	7	24	22	10	7	6	45		
Withdrew application / applicant deceased	6	3	8	5	22	7	8	3	14	32		
Refused final accommodation	3	5	4	9	21	3	12	4	11	30		
Intentionally homeless from accommodation provided	2	3	1	0	6	1	0	0	1	2		
Local connection referral accepted by other LA	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1		
No longer eligible	3	7	3	4	17	2	2	2	1	7		
Notice served due to refusal to cooperate	0	1	5	5	11	5	6	0	2	13		
Not known	0	0	0	0	0	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	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Total		
Social rented sector	32	62	59	68	221	71	59	27	39	196		
Private rented sector	6	23	8	11	48	10	8	2	12	32		
Staying with family	2	0	2	4	8	6	4	7	8	25		
Staying with friends	1	0	2	0	3	4	2	0	2	8		
Owner-occupier	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1		
Other	2	2	2	9	15	16	15	4	9	44		
Not known	1	3	1	0	5	2	1	0	1	4		
Total	44	90	74	92	300	109	89	41	71	310		
Main activity that resulted in accommodation secured for households:	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Total	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Total		
Accommodation secured by local authority or organisation delivering housing options service	27	65	53	64	209	84	76	36	56	252		
Supported housing provided	10	11	13	21	55	16	8	3	3	30		
Helped to secure accommodation found by applicant, with financial payment	0	1	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0		
Helped to secure accommodation found by applicant, without financial payment	0	3	2	4	9	1	1	1	1	4		
Other activity through which accommodation secured	4	2	3	1	10	8	4	1	9	22		
No activity	3	8	2	2	15	0	0	0	2	2		
Total	44	90	74	92	300	109	89	41	71	310		

Statutory Homeless (Main Duty) Cases

The number of cases qualifying for Main Duty Assistance in 2020/2021 was 132 and in 2021/2022 it was 146.



	2020/21					2021/22				
	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Total	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Total
Total number of main duty decisions	28	36	31	37	132	52	40	19	35	146
Outcome of main duty decision for eligible households:										
Homeless + priority need + unintentionally homeless (acceptance)	12	6	9	14	41	24	19	5	9	57
Homeless + priority need + intentionally homeless	1	6	7	5	19	2	0	0	4	6
Homeless + no priority need	15	24	15	18	72	26	21	14	22	83
Not homeless	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

The number of households accepted as statutory homeless (Main Duty) decisions in 2019/2020 was 65. Over 2020/2021 this was 41 accepted, representing a 37% decrease (24). In 2021/2022 there were 57 accepted an increase of 39% on the previous year.

*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):	2020/21					Total	2021/22					Total
	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar			Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar		
Household includes dependent children	3	2	0	3	8	2	5	0	2	9		
Physical disability / ill health	3	1	2	3	9	1	4	2	1	8		
Mental health problems	2	1	2	6	11	9	2	2	3	16		
Household includes a pregnant woman	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1		
Domestic abuse	0	2	1	0	3	0	3	0	0	3		
Young applicant	1	0	1	1	3	0	1	0	1	2		
Old age	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0		
Homeless because of emergency	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0		
Other	1	0	2	1	4	8	4	1	1	14		
Vulnerable with children	0	0	1	0		4	0	0	0			
Total	12	6	9	14	40	24	19	5	9	53		

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

Total number of households where main duty ended	2020/21					Total	2021/22					Total
	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar			Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar		
	11	8	10	15	44	22	9	14	12	57		

Reason for end of main duty:	2020/21					Total	2021/22					Total
	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar			Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar		
Housing Act 1996 Pt6 social housing offer - accepted	6	6	3	5	20	6	2	5	5	18		
Housing Act 1996 Pt6 social housing offer - refused	2	0	0	0	2	0	2	2	0	4		
Private rented sector offer - accepted	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0		
Private rented sector offer - refused	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Voluntarily ceased to occupy	3	0	3	1	7	1	0	0	0	1		
Refused suitable TA offer, withdrew or lost contact	0	1	4	7	12	10	4	7	6	27		
Became intentionally homeless from TA	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	3		
Ceased to be eligible	0	0	0	1	1	4	0	0	0	4		
Not known	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		

Homelessness Reasons 2020/2021 and 2021/22

Homelessness Reasons	2020/21					2021/22				
	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Total	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Total
Abandoned accommodation	4	4	4	6	18	2	2	3	3	10
Advice on Tenant / Landlord rights & responsibilities					0		1	1	1	3
Affordability	1		2		3		1	2	1	4
Asked to leave by family	61	46	55	69	231	59	57	55	70	241
Asylum Seeker		1		1	2		1			1
Asylum Seeker- Home Office Accommodation Ended	1	2	4	12	19	13	4	10	7	34
Bail Condition – unable to return home	3			2	5		2	1	4	7
Bereavement	1			1	2		1	1	1	3
Care leaver	7	2	4	2	15		6	14	6	26
Current accommodation is detrimental to health				1	1	4	3	1	1	9
Discharge from Psychiatric Unit	5	7	4	2	18	1	2		3	6
Emergency (Fire/Flood/Disaster)			3	1	4	1		1	2	4
Evicted (NOT s21 or s8 notice)	4	8	9	4	25	12	18	14	26	70
Eviction from supported housing	14	8	6	19	47	15	17	13	12	57
Fleeing domestic abuse	13	13	11	14	51	23	13	19	15	70
Fleeing Harassment	7	16	9	10	42	9	27	10	15	61
Friend no longer willing to accommodate	21	20	19	30	90	23	20	18	12	73
Hospital Discharge (Home not suitable to return to)	3	8	3	4	18	8	3	2	2	15
Landlord harassment/unlawful eviction				1	1	1	1		2	4
Leaving bail hostel	5	3	3	4	15		2	4	12	18
Leaving prison	21	18	13	12	64	11	10	9	5	35
Loss of employment					0				1	1
Loss of private rented - other reason				2	2	1	2	1		4
Loss of tied accommodation					0	1				1
Mortgage repossession					0		3			3
Mortgage Repossession- Applicant					0		1			1
Mortgage Repossession- Landlord					0			1		1
Mortgage repossession proceedings					0			1	2	3
Overcrowding - asked to leave				1	1	3	3	1	3	10
Perpetrator of ASB	1		2		3		3			3
Property not fit for habitation	3	1	6	5	15	3	2	2	1	8
Racially motivated violence or harassment		1			1					0
Rehousing options		2	4	5	11	4	5	1	6	16
Relationship Breakdown	13	10	22	27	72	22	34	21	21	98
Removed from home by police		1	1	1	3	2	3		2	7
Rent arrears- Private Sector	1		1	1	3	3	1	2	4	10
Rent arrears- Registered Provider		1			1	1	1		1	3
Requires adaptations/ground floor	1			1	2					0
Rough Sleeping	20	18	15	19	72	14	5	16	9	44
Section 21 notice	3	9	4	16	32	10	32	35	56	133
Section 8 notice		1	3	2	6	6	3	6	9	24
Sofa surfing	22	20	13	23	78	20	24	20	18	82
Supported housing - ready for move-on					0	4	1		2	7
Threatened with eviction from a Privately Rented					0					0
Tenancy but not homeless within 56 days					0	1	1			2
Victim of ASB	3	1	1	1	6	3	1	2	1	7
Violent breakdown of relationship	9	5	3	5	22	1	3	3	4	11
Total with Reasons	247	226	224	304	1001	281	319	290	340	1230
					0					0
No Reason or Case Closed on Approach	223	288	172	319	1002	292	309	297	397	1295
Grand Total	470	514	396	623	2003	573	628	587	737	2525

Most common reasons for homelessness in 2020/2021:

- Asked to leave by families (231).
- Friend no longer willing to accommodate (90), and
- Sofa surfing (78).

Most common reason for homelessness in 2021/2022:

- Asked to leave by families (241).
- Section 21 notice (133), and
- Relationship Breakdown (98).

Homelessness Reasons	2020/21				Total
	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct- Dec	Jan-Mar	
Asked to leave by family	61	46	55	69	231
Friend no longer willing to accommodate	21	20	19	30	90
Sofa surfing	22	20	13	23	78

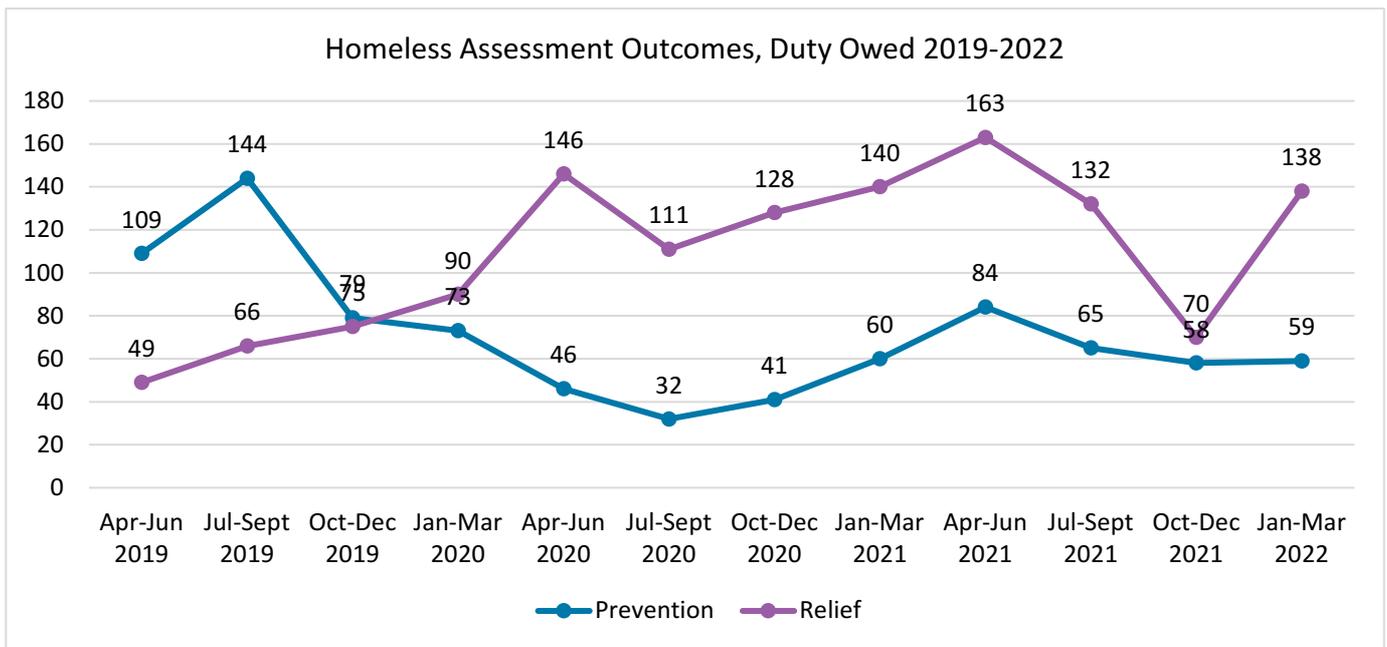
Homelessness Reasons	2021/22				Total
	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct- Dec	Jan-Mar	
Asked to leave by family	59	57	55	70	241
Section 21 notice	10	32	35	56	133
Relationship Breakdown	22	34	21	21	98

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 May 2020, National Practitioner Support Service (NPSS) were commissioned to deliver case file reviews on Housing Options cases and deliver training packages to staff to help ensure compliance with the Homeless Reduction Act. Sefton plan to repeat this exercise in 2023.

Use of Temporary Accommodation

Temporary accommodation has been in high demand during this period, compounded by the pandemic. Pressures on households requiring temporary accommodation were rising before the pandemic, during Quarter 3 2019/2020. Prior to then the number of assessed households owed the Relief duty had always been lower than the number of households owed the Prevention duty. However, as the pandemic approached this changed and has continued to be the case since.

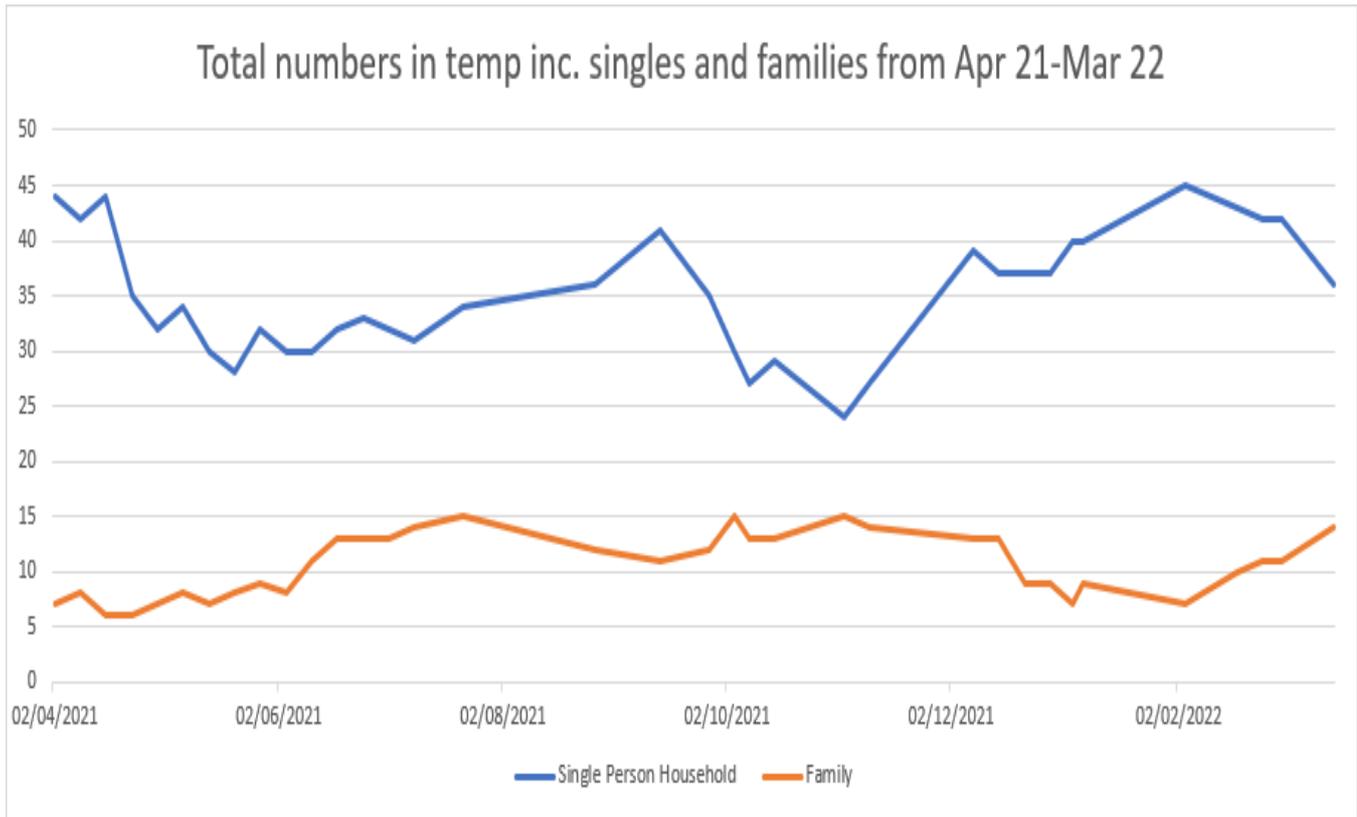


Consequently, this increase in the need for temporary accommodation can often mean that households have to spend longer periods of time in that accommodation as the availability of housing does not increase at the same rate. This issue is reflected across the region and England.

The table below shows the increase of assessed households owed the Relief duty from the same period in 2019.

	% Change from 2019
Apr-Jun 2020	+198%
Jul-Sep 2020	+68%
Oct-Dec 2020	+71%
Jan-Mar 2021	+56%
Apr-Jun 2021	+233%
Jul-Sept 2021	+100%
Oct-Dec 2021	-7%
Jan-Mar 2022	+53%

Single person households still remain much higher than pre-pandemic levels.



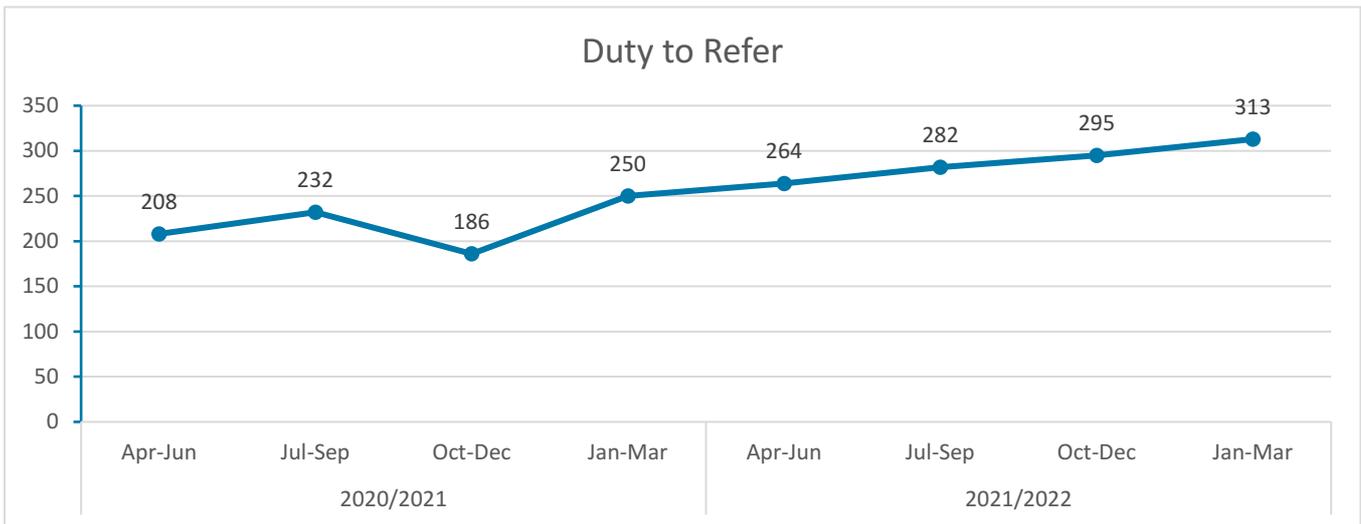
Increased resource has been allocated to early intervention and prevention activity which has helped reduce the volume of Relief referrals, however, Quarter 4 2021/2022 has started to see this increase again. Focussing on prevention will help households sustain their tenancy for longer and prevent them from requiring temporary accommodation.

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 2019/2020 was 646. The number of Duty to Refers in 2020/2021 was 876, this was an increase of 35.6%. The number of Duty to Refers in 2021/2022 was 1154 an increase of 31.7% on the previous year.

Although, the increase in numbers of people referred to Housing Options can be seen as a positive (despite the increased workload) as these people will be assisted earlier and their homelessness hopefully prevented.



As the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) refuse to use the Alert portal for Duty to Refers, the Council records them separately and can report a total of 171 in 2020/2021 and 265 in 2021/2022.

	2020/2021					2021/2022				
	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Total	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Total
Jigsaw Alert Duty to Refer	167	189	151	198	705	209	224	222	234	889
DWP Duty to Refer	41	43	35	52	171	55	58	73	79	265
Total	208	232	186	250	876	264	282	295	313	1154

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
2014/2015	£172,009
2015/2016	£600,392
2016/2017	£679,361
2017/2018	£720,214
2018/2019	£763,510
2019/2020	£659,531
2020/2021	£925,029
2021/2022	£698,914
2022/2023	£495,361

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 2021/2022 is that £699,893 has been paid; resulting an overspend of £979.

There has been a total of 2,021 DHP made awards during 2021/2022 with nearly 80% of awards supporting claimants affected by the social sector size criteria (bedroom tax); the majority of awards are now made to Universal Credit claimants.

The DWP have announced that the DHP fund for 2022/23 will be £495,361 a reduction of £203,553 (29%) on the previous year.

The forecast is that the demand on the DHP fund will remain high due to the cost-of-living crisis that the country as a whole faces.

Domestic Abuse Target Hardening

In 2020/2021 the Council's Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA) service supported 7 victims of Domestic Abuse with target hardening to their existing property costing £3,831.

In 2021/2022 the Council's Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA) service supported 16 victims of Domestic Abuse with target hardening to their existing property costing £8,227.

All victims reported feeling safer as a result.

Given the average annual local authority expenditure for each Homelessness application is £3,189, which is the average one-off and on-going costs associated with statutory homelessness, then the total estimated saving by carrying out this target hardening work to the 23 victims' properties is £73,347. The £3,189 cost is from The Greater Manchester Combined Authorities Unit Cost Database.

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

Sefton's Commissioned Temporary Accommodation for single people

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 30th June 2021/22, was approved by Cabinet in December 2019.

Sefton had been looking to the future needs of homeless services in terms of demand.

1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022 Accommodation Services:

- 299 new individuals assessed by MainStay Sefton accommodation services
- 242 individuals had made a repeat presentation having previously been assessed on the MainStay system
- 277 Individuals were placed in an accommodation service and there were 353 placements

Average Length of Stay for Residents Supported in Accommodation between 01/04/2021 and 31/03/2022

Service	Average Length of Stay	Throughput Year To Date	Total clients supported in period
Bosco Lodge	148	385%	50
Bosco Society – Bosco House	226	331%	43
Bosco Society – Dispersed	262	230%	23
Excel – Bedford Road	184	300%	24
Excel – Windsor House	350	189%	17
Excel Housing Complex Needs Women	222	200%	8
Humankind Royal Terrace Project	360	200%	20
N.W.P.C St Catherine's Rd Probation Hostel	241	175%	14
New Start – Leyland Road	126	354%	46
New Start Leicester St Hostel	177	440%	26
Venus – Dispersed and Shared	521	147%	25
ALL SERVICES TOTAL	256	268%	296

The below table illustrates the current demand for Temporary Accommodation. The demand for Hostel Accommodation and/or Dispersed Accommodation across Sefton Supported Housing Group (SSHG) services in April 2022 is 435.

It was at 380 in 2020, compared to only 116 at the same point in 2019.

The figure in 2019 compared to the waiting list in 2022, is an increase of 319, which represents a 275% increase in demand illustrating that demand is far exceeding supply.

This was the reason for increasing the number of commissioned bedspaces in the new homeless service from July 2022, to 140.

Service Name	Number of beds	Number of clients on waiting list on 13/04/2022
Bosco Lodge	13	33
Bosco Society – Bosco House	13	90
Bosco Society - Dispersed	10	63
Excel – Bedford Road	8	46
Excel – Windsor House	9	38
Excel Housing Complex Needs Women	4	12
Humankind Royal Terrace Project	10	15
Excel St Catherine's Road Probation Hostel	8	8
New Start – Leyland Road	13	15
New Start – Leyland Road Additional 5 beds	5	19
Venus – Dispersed and Shared	17	96
ALL SERVICES TOTAL	110	435

Looking to the Future

In late 2021, the Council started a procurement process to replace the Homeless and Housing Related Support contracts with an Integrated Homeless Service from July 2022 onwards.

The initial contract term of five years to commence from 1st July 2022, with the option to further extend for a period of up to five years.

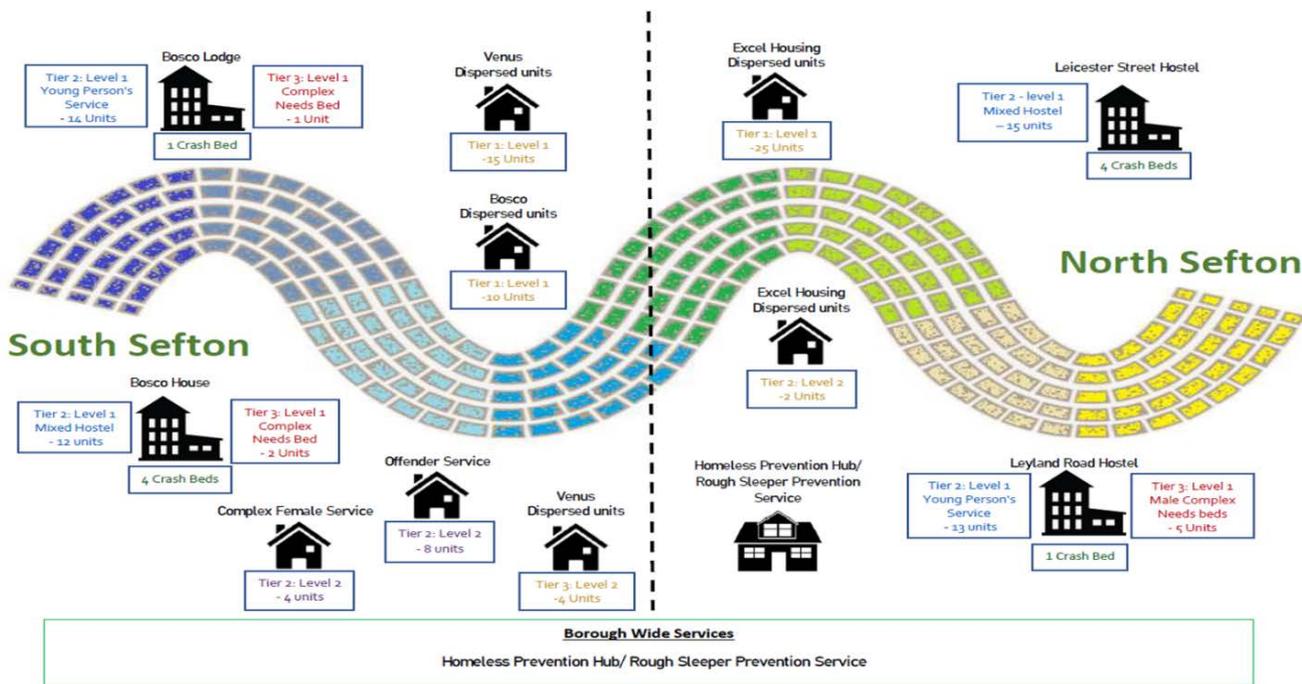
Sefton Integrated Homeless Service

The new Integrated Homeless Services contract of four elements, which are:

- Rough Sleeper Prevention Service
- Supported Temporary Accommodation Service
- Navigator Support Service
- Floating Support Service

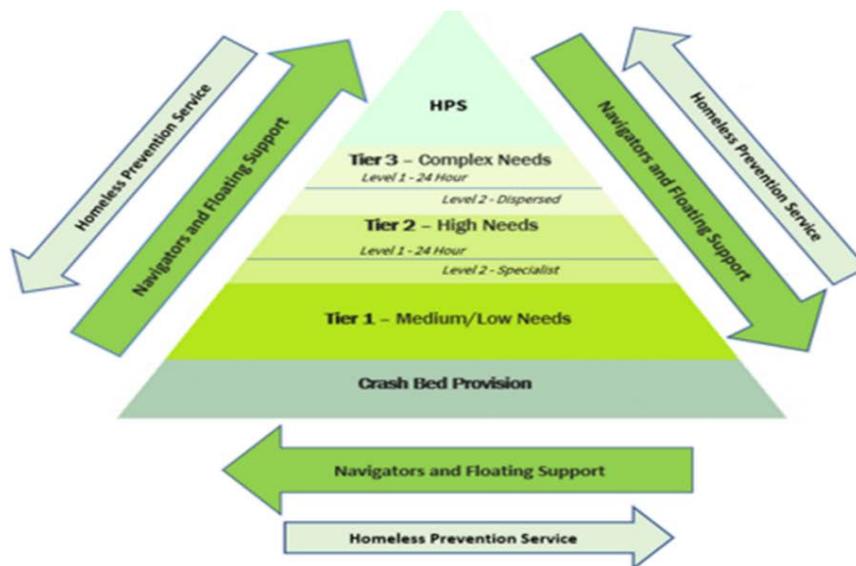
Following a procurement exercise, the successful bidder was the Sefton Supported Housing Group Consortium. This Consortium comprise of Bosco Society, Excel Housing, Light for Life, New Start and Venus.

The new Integrated Homeless Service is a range of Accommodation Options and Support Services that aim to work together to help people move away from rough sleeping, access accommodation, gain improved well-being, and eventually recover from homelessness.



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.

Sefton's Integrated Homeless Service now has a tiered approach, enabling people to access different tiers of services based on their complexity and needs.



Strengths Based Practice

One of Sefton's commissioning priorities is to introduce a Strengths-Based approach within their homeless services and move away from the deficit-based 10-point star model. Services should be geared towards enabling individuals to achieve their goals, with an increase in Well-Being being the ultimate outcome and indicator of success.

The support plans for clients in homeless services will be worked in partnership with individuals in order that the service enables and empowers the individuals to help their own personal goals in these areas in order to achieve an improved sense of wellbeing by using the 9 areas of wellbeing assessment and the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS) assessment tool as a measurement of that client's progress.

Nine Areas of Wellbeing

1. Work, Education, training & recreation
2. Social & economic wellbeing
3. Personal dignity
4. Physical, mental & emotional health
5. Protection from abuse & neglect
6. Domestic, family & personal relationships
7. Personal contact
8. Individual contribution to society
9. Suitability of living arrangements

Sefton's Rough Sleeper Initiative Funding Bids

Rough Sleeper Initiative Funding 2020/2021 (£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

The psychologist pilot was particularly well received by the Homeless Providers, which had the pilot based with them. As a result of the Psychologist pilot, the identified nursing needs of clients have started to be met because the tailored approach has enhanced engagement. Where Multi-Disciplinary Teams have been arranged there have been positive results as there has been a shared understanding of needs and the resident has been involved in the process.

The following feedback was received from James Heller, Manager at Bosco Society:

'I can honestly say that the feedback received from all of the staff who attended has been very positive. From my point of view, the Alcohol Related Brain Damage (ARBD) session stimulated some major reflection on my previous professional practice when working with people who are alcohol dependent and has caused me to re-consider how we work with the client group. It is for this reason that I believe that the ARBD session that you provided has possibly been one of the most influential training sessions that I have attended while working in homelessness.'

'I have gauged a sense of empowerment amongst some staff members who feel more able to advocate on behalf of our clients since attending the ARBD training. I can actually point to a specific client who has been supported successfully to achieve some outcomes towards achieving their overall goals. The staff member involved in this case has stated that she had grown in confidence while working with the client group, advocating on their behalf and working with other professionals since attending both the Trauma and the ARBD training.'

The following feedback was received from a client's sister following their work with the psychologist:

'I would like to say a huge thank you to the commissioners of this psychology service. It is an intrinsic part of the pathway to provide holistic care for people affected by addictions such as my brother.'

Your insight into the needs of people affected by alcohol has ensured he is on the road to recovery having a detox and rehab placement commencing this week.

This is within eight weeks of the first intervention by the Psychologist. You have created a wonderful opportunity for my brother to get his life back.'

2022/2025 RSI Funding

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities took the decision to award RSI funding for a three-year period to allow Councils to be able to plan more effectively

Sefton have been awarded £1,157,533 Rough Sleeper Initiative funding for 2022/2025, for the following initiatives:

- Crash Bed Workers – Sefton Supported Housing Group
- Hospital In-Reach Worker – Sefton Supported Housing Group
- Housing Options Team Officer – Sefton Housing Options
- Resettlement Workers – Sefton Supported Housing Group
- Sefton Psychologist Service – Merseycare NHS Foundation Trust

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 9th November to the morning of the 10th November 2021, 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.

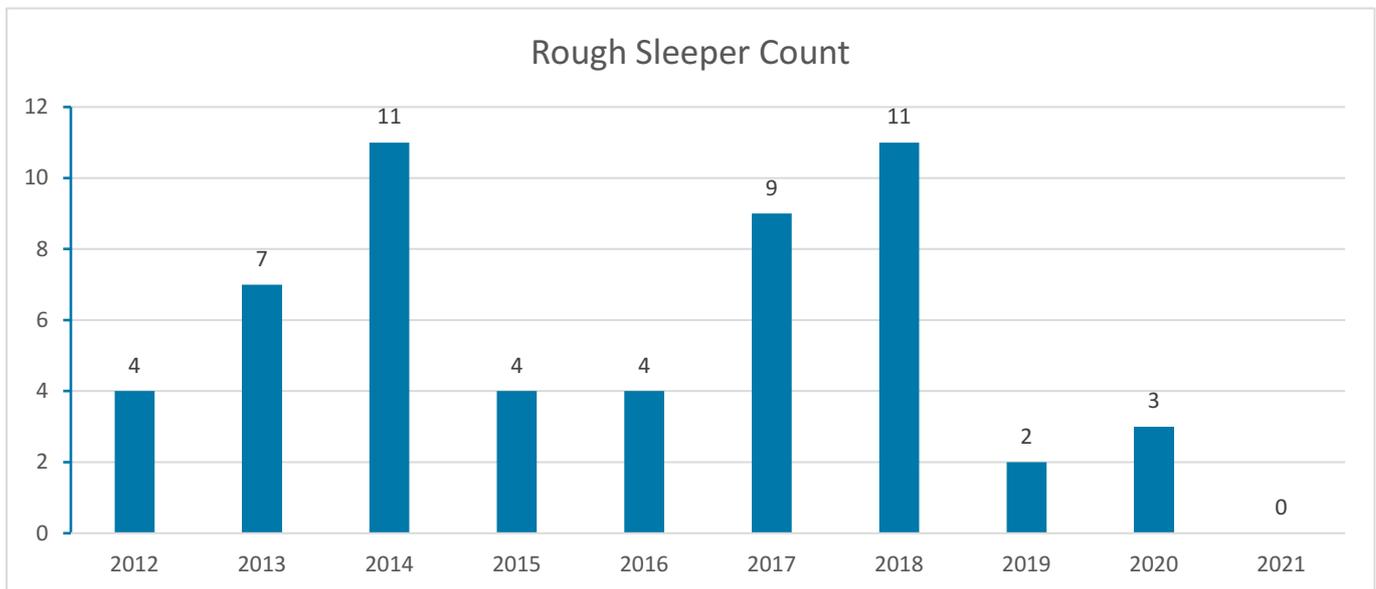
Sefton's Rough Sleeper Count (people found to be rough sleeping) in November 2020 was three (3) and was done using only a Verification Meeting, due to the restricted movement caused by Covid.

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 ten years.

2021 was the first time that zero (0) Rough Sleepers were found in Sefton over that period, showing the positive impact of the Rough Sleeper Initiative funding and projects on that particular group of people.

The numbers of rough sleepers in the years prior to 2021 were:

2012 (4), 2013 (7), 2014 (11), 2015 (4), 2016 (4), 2017 (9), 2018 (11), 2019 (2), and 2020 (3).



Use of Sit-Up Services & Severe Weather Shelter Winter

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.

The number of people approaching the Council's Housing Options Team and then being placed into a Crash Bed to prevent rough sleeping has risen dramatically since the pandemic began. The average daily presentations (Mon-Fri) for 2021 was 6.6, peaking at 14. This average is double the average for pre-pandemic levels.

The average number of cases per week is 33, peaking at 50 week commencing 3 December 2021.

The crash-beds are helping to prevent rough sleeping in Sefton. The few cases that are being found by the Council's Rough Sleeper Outreach Service are also being placed into Crash Beds.

Given the average annual local authority expenditure per individual rough sleeping is £10,074 (Figure from The Greater Manchester Combined Authorities Unit Cost Database), the 12 clients accessing Sit-Up rather than rough sleeping will have saved the Sefton purse an estimated £120,888 over the year.

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

Sefton has received Trailblazer funding from the Combined Authority since 2019. This initial, 2-year funding enabled Sefton to increase homeless prevention activity by recruiting three Early Intervention and Prevention Officers based within its Housing Options Team. These staff help to improve the range of pre- statutory prevention work, including developing and improving current prevention initiatives and developing rehousing relationships in the private rented sector (PRS). Agreed outcomes included:

- Tenancy Sustained
- Health or mental health support
- Housing Related Support Services
- Financial Support
- Education Support
- Drug and Alcohol Services
- Criminal Justice
- Mediation Services

The programme started in Sefton during Quarter 3 of 2019/2020 and after initially making a positive start; promoting the service and collocating with partners, the pandemic started, and progress stalled. The team were receiving very few referrals during this time but continued to raise awareness of the service and supported the wider Housing Options statutory functions. This had the benefit of upskilling the officers in the statutory work and improved their relationships with partnering agencies. Due to this expansion of their duties, partnership working improved. Officers were allocated a particular focus area, and this helped grow their knowledge within that specialist area (e.g., leaving care, DWP, etc).

The private rented sector became an area of focus in August 2021 as the government lifted the ban on evictions as the pandemic restrictions began being lifted. The team were promoting their service to landlords, as well as tenants, encouraging contact at the earliest opportunity so that housing issues can be resolved prior to any necessary statutory interventions.

Since the start of the service Sefton's Homeless Prevention Team dealt with 538 referrals, of which 474 have been engaged and 231 have sustained their tenancy. The table below shows some of the additional outcomes achieved in Quarter 2 of 2021/22.

Quarter	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Year	2019-20	2020-21	2020-21	2020-21	2020-21	2021-22	2021-22	2021-22	2021-22
Health or mental health support	4	12	24	16	14	5	11	8	4
Housing Related Support Services	5	20	58	40	43	8	28	8	4
Financial Support	5	13	28	20	15	2	18	8	4
Education Support	1	2	1	2	0	0		7	4
Drug & Alcohol Services	0	1	2	2	1	1	1	7	4
Criminal Justice	0	0	0	1	0	0		7	4
Mediation Services	1	0	3	5	2	1	2	7	4
Tenancy Sustained	2	15	49	35	39	8	28	8	4
Average number of outcomes per service user		3.2	2.8	3	2.5	2.8	0.6	6.7	4

Due to the successful implementation for the first phase of programme across the City Region, continuation funding was granted for 2 officers for a further 3 years from 2022/23.

Housing First

The Housing First programme was established across the City Region in March 2018 with an initial phase of Test and Learn. One team of support workers was established to operate across the whole City Region and an initial cohort of 60 service users were identified for the Housing First support.

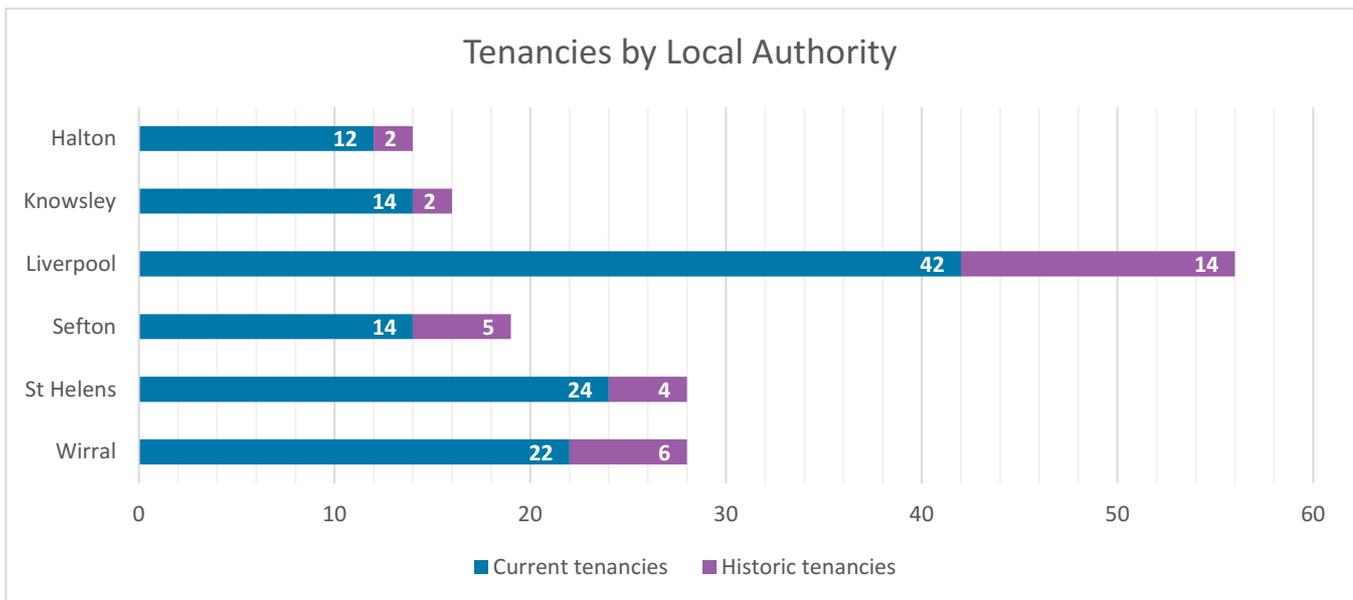
In early 2020, an evaluation of the programme was completed, and decisions were subsequently taken to move to a locality approach with 6 teams operating across the Local Authority areas: 2 teams operating within Liverpool City Council; 1 shared team between Knowsley Council and Halton Council and 1 team for each of Sefton Council, Wirral Council and St Helen's Council.

Both the Housing First team and Local Authority staff hold a pre-panel meeting where they are able to ensure all referral information is correct, this prevents any delays from occurring. Key to the success of the service within Sefton has been the willingness and response from Local Authority colleagues who have worked to help support and drive the implementation of the model. The Sefton panel continues to develop, and it is evident that the localised approach is responding and developing responses in partnerships with services to meet the housing, health and care needs of the cohort.

Working together has enabled Sefton to be able to achieve a bespoke and flexible response, Sefton are leading on embedding a collaborative and collegiate culture across the panel that endorses challenge, values information-sharing and discussion, appreciates the value of integrated approaches towards prevention and of sharing expertise, and supports practitioners. Underpinning this approach is the promotion of a whole system approach rather than an individual service response.

Tenancies by Local Authority

There has been a total of 19 people provided with their own tenancy in Sefton, with 14 of those people still in their accommodation.



Riverside Dispersed Accommodation

In July 2019, Sefton agreed to enter 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.

Evaluation of the pilot

The Evaluation concluded that without this service, customers' progression to living in independent accommodation would have been much slower. This could have consequences relating to health, wellbeing, family cohesion, etc. The Council believe that customers would, eventually, have secured private rented accommodation if the service had not been available. However, it concluded that customers would have experienced an extended stay in temporary accommodation and not received the intensive support that has been so transformational.

The Evaluation also concluded that the return on investment for every £1 which Sefton Council spent was £3.36. This represents potential public spending costs savings associated with homeless families of £24,394 per family.

Pilot Outcomes

Under the pilot, 36 families were offered a property with support on a licence.

Only one of the families left the pilot due to receiving another property from a Registered Provider.

As part of the pilot project, all remaining families have been successful in sustaining the licence, with the property, they are living in being transferred into a general-needs tenancy providing that family with a permanent home.

Northern Housing Awards

The pilot has recently been shortlisted for the 2022 Northern Housing Awards within the category for Best Initiative for Tackling Homelessness. The Awards Ceremony was held on 17th May 2022.

Whilst the project did not win, it did tremendously well to be shortlisted for the Awards Ceremony.



Future Dispersed Temporary Accommodation

In 2022, Riverside were commissioned to deliver a two-year programme of dispersed temporary accommodation across the borough for homeless families requiring support.

The service will support families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness with a variety of support needs and some will have a history of failed tenancies. Support is required to help them to sustain a tenancy and they will be provided with support to live independently. Families will also be referred/signposted to specialist agencies e.g., substance misuse, mental health, within the community. Each family will have a designated support worker who visits regularly, and dependent upon their person-centred support plan will attend meetings/case conferences, where needed.

This programme provides at least 20 families with a supported property on licence, prior to the property being given to the family placed there, if successful. When a family transfers to a general-needs tenancy, another 2 or 3 bed property will be transferred so the total units on the service will not decrease.

Coronavirus Covid-19

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

Since the start of the Covid Lockdown, Sefton Council commissioned emergency accommodation across 5 locations; Crosby Lakeside, Bold Hotel, (former) Leicester St Guest House, Emmaus hostel rooms, Stables Inn. These provided a total of 102 rooms.

Emergency TA

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

Sefton Council accommodated around 400 people into temporary accommodation during the Covid pandemic period. This included support and security at each of the locations to ensure those people with support needs continued to receive it.

Cabinet Member supported a (temporary) move to 'Direct Lets' for Registered Provider vacancies – matching homeless clients to vacancies rather than them bidding for properties in competition with other housing applicants on the housing register. This helped to move-on those placed into temporary accommodation.

The Government also introduced the Next Steps Accommodation Fund, which was used to help facilitate move-on options for those in temporary accommodation, such as Landlord Incentive Schemes.

Sefton also looked to reconfigure its emergency communal Sit-Up service. The Department of Levelling Up, Housing & Communities have expressed a desire that Councils move to nightly ensuite self-contained sleeping spaces. Sefton started reconfiguring one of its communal areas in one of the commissioned hostels in mid-2022.

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 in 2021/2022 of 2,525 representing a **131% 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 2021/2022 is 2,525. Below shows the year-on-year increase in new presentations to Sefton's Housing Options Team:
 - 2018/2019 – 1,095
 - 2019/2020 – 1,796
 - 2020/2021 – 2,003
 - 2021/2022 – 2,525
- Of the 2,525 homeless cases, 267 were resolved at the Prevention stage, 518 at the relief stage, with only 146 at the Main Duty stage. 1,295 cases either gave No Reason or had their case closed on approach.

- **Of the 2,525 cases, 561 (24%) were assisted to secure accommodation.**
- 561 clients were assisted to secure accommodation, 281 (50%) in social housing and 50 (8%) in the private rented sector, 54 (9%) in other **(the levels moved into social housing in 2019 report was 67%).**
- 277 service users were provided with temporary supported accommodation and 197 service users provided with floating support services via the Council's commissioned homeless services
- **The number of rough sleepers decreased dramatically in 2021 to zero. This is as a culmination of the work done by Housing Options and Sefton's commissioned Homeless Providers to end rough sleeping in Sefton.**

