



Test Valley Borough Council

Preventing Homelessness Strategy 2016 to 2019

June 2016

Test Valley Borough Council

**Preventing Homelessness Strategy
2016-2019**

Contents

Foreword by Portfolio Holder.....	3
Corporate Commitment from Chief Executive.....	4
1. Background.....	5
2. Strategic Fit	6
3. Update from the 2014-2016 Strategy.....	8
4. Resources the Strategy.....	12
5. Partnership Working	12
6. Top priorities moving forward.....	13
7. Monitoring and Review	13
8. The Delivery Plan.....	13
Appendices	
1. The Review of Homelessness Evidence Base 2014/16	14-33
2. National Framework and Homelessness Nationally	34-37
3. Financial Assessment.....	38-41
4. The Delivery Plan	42-55
5. Temporary Accommodation Strategy	56-61

Foreword by Councillor Sandra Hawke, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Environmental Health

This is the Test Valley Borough Council's 5th Preventing Homelessness Strategy and comes at a time of considerable change. The new Strategy has been developed in consultation with our stakeholders and with input from service users.

The Council is committed to early intervention and preventing homelessness wherever possible in partnership with our statutory and non statutory services. We are determined to deliver a proactive approach to the prevention of homelessness for all our customers and the strategy sets out the practical ways in which we will seek to achieve this. This will include reviewing and updating the Strategy and seeking to ensure that housing related support arrangements for the most vulnerable are safeguarded, where possible.

A comprehensive review of homelessness has been carried out. The Strategy sets out the issues that are specific to Test Valley and considers the challenges and opportunities that will come forward in the next 3 years.

It provides our priorities for future action, which are:

1. Building on existing services
2. Ensuring that housing related support arrangements for the most vulnerable are safeguarded
3. Supporting people to access suitable alternative accommodation
4. Increased use of the Private Rented Sector
5. Building and maintaining effective partnership working
6. Supporting a successful welfare reform transition in Test Valley.

The Strategy will support the operational delivery of service improvements through the Delivery Plan. We recognise that the Strategy needs to remain relevant and up to date and will therefore be monitored and reviewed on an annual basis through a multi-agency Homelessness Forum to ensure it responds to emerging needs, policy and legislative change.

The Delivery Plan appended (Appendix 4) to this Strategy details how we will aim to meet these challenges over the next three years.

Statement from Chief Executive

Test Valley Borough Council as an organisation is strongly committed to high standards of service delivery and to improving the quality of life for all the people of Test Valley.

The Council's current Corporate Plan 2015-2019 '*Investing in Test Valley*' sets out the Council's direction and highlights housing as one of our four key priorities. In particular it outlines that over the next four years and beyond we will invest in maintaining and developing the safety net for those who are in the greatest housing need and are most vulnerable. This will include reviewing and updating the Homelessness Strategy and seeking to ensure that housing related support arrangements for the most vulnerable are safeguarded.

The previous four year *Corporate Plan* committed to meeting the housing needs of local people, delivered 1,021 affordable homes by 2015. Improving the availability of a range of housing tenures to meet people's needs and maximise housing opportunities, providing greater opportunities for people to choose where they live and sustaining progress in reducing and preventing homelessness in the Borough are all key outcomes of our current plan.

A new Housing Strategy will be developed during the course of 2016 which will reflect the forthcoming anticipated changes brought about by the Government's current legislative programme. It will be important that this Homelessness Prevention Strategy is updated in due course to take account of these developments.

The Council has made more staffing resources available during this period to ensure we are best placed to prevent homelessness, seen the use of bed and breakfast reduce significantly and made effective use of housing related grants and Discretionary Housing Payments to support households in housing difficulties.

Council Services are committed to tackling homelessness together and progress is monitored through the Performance Board whose membership includes representatives from the Chief Executives, Corporate, and Financial Services.

The Preventing Homelessness Strategy and initiatives to tackle and prevent homelessness including Cabinet Reports are presented, discussed, scrutinised and supported corporately through both the Council's Strategic Management Team (Chief Executive and Corporate Directors) and Officers' Management Team (Heads of Service).

The Council, through its Corporate and Service Plans is strongly committed to tackling homelessness. Resources will be allocated to ensure the housing service is best placed to respond to homeless pressures locally. Their activities will be supported by other Council Services, such as Revenues, to maximise Discretionary Housing Payment funds and the Council's planning policies to deliver affordable housing targets. Significant progress has been made in preventing homelessness, and we continue to work with and support our third sector partners to deliver a caring and responsive service to residents in the borough.

Roger Tetstall

1. Background

The Strategy has been produced in consultation with customers, stakeholders and local agencies. It includes a review of homelessness in Test Valley and will help inform a new overarching Housing Strategy for the area. *The Review of Homelessness Evidence Base 2015* is annexed to the Strategy (Appendix 1).

The review considers the way housing options and homeless services are delivered in the Borough. It establishes current levels of homelessness, which households are becoming homeless, locally and why. It has considered available accommodation and support services to identify gaps in provision. The evidence base highlights that our housing options and homelessness prevention services have had significant successes over the past 3 years. The challenge over the life time of this strategy is to maintain progress against the backdrop of increases in homelessness both nationally and elsewhere in Hampshire.

The Preventing Homelessness Strategy is a three year strategy. It has been brought in line with the Corporate Plan 2015-2019 '*Investing in Test Valley*'. It will be reviewed within 12 months of the Council's emerging Housing Strategy, which is due for adoption in the autumn. Early *intervention* and Preventing homelessness where possible, is a key priority for the Borough Council.

The prevention of homelessness remains a primary statutory function for the council. The context for preventing homelessness and delivering sustainable options has become even more challenging and demands innovative joined up responses. The Council must prevent homelessness at the same time as offering a range of suitable and sustainable options which offer real alternatives. Using the private rented sector accommodation will be key in doing this as will effective partnership and sub regional working.

The availability of appropriate support is fundamental in helping vulnerable people access and/or maintain suitable housing, as well as preventing homelessness. Much of this work is delivered in partnership with our key partners who can assist us to deliver sustainable housing options and solution for our customers.

Welfare reform and reductions in housing benefit has placed increased pressures on housing services. Whilst many challenges and issues the Council faces remain outside of the council's direct control, this strategy recognises the importance of partnership working and the need to build on those past successes if we are to continue to meet the challenges of preventing homelessness.

There is a severe shortage of affordable housing in the Borough, which contributes to levels of housing need and risk of homelessness for some. Housing costs are high and vary across the Borough, with property prices higher in Romsey and rural Test Valley compared with Andover, in the north. There is a buoyant private rented market, with households who cannot access social housing unable to compete effectively without some form of financial assistance.

The average income in Test Valley is £28,271 and 38% of households in the Borough are unable to afford market housing without subsidy.

The supply of social housing for rent will remain well below the level of demand for the foreseeable future, with increasing dependence upon the private rented sector. The Delivery Plan within the strategy details action to increase the use of the private rented sector over the next 3 years and on developing our private rented sector offer.

There are 1,963 households on the Council's Housing Register seeking affordable housing. Of these, 67% have an income of below £15,000 a year, 24% of households have an income of between £15,000 - £30,000 and 9% with an income between £30,000 and £50,000. Increasing the supply of affordable rented housing across all tenures remains a high priority of the Council.

Resources are limited. However, as with previous strategies we are confident that by working in partnership with a whole range of services the tasks set out in the delivery plan are achievable.

2. Strategic Fit

a) Corporate Plan

The Preventing Homelessness Strategy 2016-2019 is one of a number of strategies which will deliver the Council's Corporate Plan 2015-2019 '*Investing in Test Valley*'. It will directly support one of the four key priorities for the Council – *Live, where the supply of homes reflects local needs by:*

- Investing in our communities, so they have the tools, confidence and means to be able to work with us to deliver their local housing needs
- Maintaining and developing the safety net for those who are in the greatest housing need and are most vulnerable.
- Making best use of existing housing and improving standards.
- Ensuring that new housing developments provide residents with a quality environment in which to live.

b) Emerging Housing Strategy

The Council is developing a new Housing Strategy, which will be approved in the Autumn. The new strategy will assess the impact of major legislative change brought about by the following, which will influence the Council's ability to meet its statutory homeless responsibilities.

- Housing and Planning Act 2016
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Consultation
- Rent reduction for social housing providers
- Change in Government funding priorities for Social and Affordable Rent Products
- Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016

The Council is able largely to cope with homelessness pressures while still assisting people in housing need from the Housing Register, but only on the basis that there is a sufficient supply of new homes adding to the social housing stock each year, that new homes and temporary homes including those in the private sector are affordable and lastly, that this accommodation is suitable for the needs of homeless households.

**c) Local Strategic Links
Council Strategies**

The Preventing Homeless Strategy will be supported by and sit alongside the following council strategies:

- Housing Strategy
- Local Plan and Affordable housing SPD
- Private Sector Renewal Policy
- Housing Allocation Policy
- Tenancy Strategy
- Home Energy Conservation Act Plan

Joint strategies and specific strategies of our partners: This Strategy will also have a key role in supporting joint strategies and specific strategies of our partners: Hampshire County Council – Prevention and Early Intervention: Joint Hampshire Commissioning Strategies, Adult and Children Services and Safeguarding, Community Safety and Supported Families: Hampshire Health and Well Being Strategy.

d) Hampshire Homeless Officers Group

The Homeless Officers Group is a countywide forum of senior officers that meets quarterly to discuss recent developments concerning homelessness and housing options and consider best practice and joint working.

3. Update from the 2014-2016 Homelessness Strategy

In December 2014, the Council agreed to make two temporary housing options officer posts permanent in order to continue to provide an effective homelessness service and maintain the progress made in reducing both the use of and expenditure on bed and breakfast accommodation. The posts were originally created to address a rise in homelessness and the use of bed and breakfast in 2012/13 and demonstrates the Council's 'spend to save' commitment to tackling homelessness.

The challenges that the Council identified in 2014 remain valid in 2016, made further challenging, by the reductions in resources available for public service provision and welfare announced in the 2015 Spending Review.

3.1 Demand for Services

Since April 2013, the Housing Options Team has assessed 294 homeless applications, prevented 1,235 households from becoming homeless and a further 3,570 households have used the in-house triage service.

3.2 It is possible that the level of approaches from customers could increase with the 'roll out' of Universal Credit, the reduction in funding of housing related support and reforms to the national welfare benefit system, including further reductions in the overall Benefit Cap which will affect more families.

3.3 The main reasons why the Council has accepted homeless duties since April 2013 are;

- Relationship breakdown
 - violent - 32%
 - non violent - 10%
- Eviction by parents, friends or relatives - 31%
- Loss of an Assured Shorthold Tenancy - 17%
- Other reasons – includes arrears, leaving care, emergencies - 10%

3.4 In April 2013, the Council used the new freedoms of the Localism Act to improve the management of its Housing Register, which resulted in the removal of households not in housing need or without a local connection to the Borough. The Housing Register reduced by 1,452 households, and currently stands at 1,963.

3.5 Between April 2013 and January 2016 a total of 1,445 households have been nominated to Registered Providers for social and affordable housing.

3.6 The Council has delivered 1,019 new units of affordable housing, including low cost market housing during 2011-2015. The current housing programme anticipates 200 completions for 2015/16 and similar levels for 2016/17.

3.7 There are 776 households registered with Help to Buy South for low cost market housing in the Borough.

3.8 **Statutory Homelessness**

Levels of statutory homelessness remain relatively low in Test Valley. However, the strategy has alluded to the challenges we face in reducing or maintaining progress against the backdrop of increases in homelessness both nationally and elsewhere in Hampshire.

3.9 The number of homeless applications peaked in 2013/14 (125). 2014/15 saw a 37% reduction in homeless applications compared with the previous year. During the same period the number of households whom the Council had a statutory duty to accommodate (47), increased by 17%.

3.10 In 2015/16, there was an increase in both the level of homeless applications (17%) and acceptances (11%) compared to the previous year.

3.11 The most successful homeless prevention options provided by the Housing and Environmental Health Service since 2013 were:

- Assisting customers to access the private rented sector through the Council Rent Deposit Loan Scheme or by negotiation with private landlords and letting agents – 332 *households* (27%)
- Providing Debt and Money advice, and negotiating with accommodation providers - 219 *households* (18%)
- Provision of alternative accommodation through private sector leasing scheme, supported housing and hostels – 346 *households* (28%)
- Through the Hampshire Home Choice Housing Register - 233 *Households* (19%)

3.12 Sustaining effective partnership working and building on local services to ensure they are fit for purpose and well placed to meet emerging priorities is central to this strategy. The Council is committed to minimising any increases in homelessness locally and to delivering effective early intervention and prevention services to ensure our customers receive appropriate housing options.

3.13 **Bed and Breakfast**

The Council is committed to the reduction and elimination of the use of bed and breakfast accommodation.

3.14 **Temporary Accommodation**

The Council's' Temporary Accommodation Strategy setting out how Test Valley Borough Council will meet its statutory duties to provide temporary accommodation for people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness is detailed in appendix 5.

- 3.15 The Council has access to a portfolio of property that can be used as temporary housing (for those we have a statutory duty to accommodate) and for use as a homeless prevention measure. This portfolio consists of 156 units let on long-term leases to Registered Provider partners who assist the council in meeting its homeless duties, properties available through a private sector leasing scheme and RP owned stock made available for temporary use.
- 3.16 The numbers in temporary accommodation subject to a rehousing duty stands at 61 and this level has been maintained since 2010, when the council met the Government's temporary accommodation target of halving the number of households in temporary accommodation (64).
- 3.17 The Council is committed to the provision of suitable temporary accommodation and to moving households on to more settled accommodation as soon as possible. Additional priority is given to households living in temporary housing through Hampshire Home Choice.
- 3.18 The Preventing Homelessness Strategy will focus on meeting household's preferences wherever possible. However our primary aim will be meeting housing need, our statutory duties and moving people on from temporary accommodation as soon as possible, with community support where appropriate. We will do this by:
- Bidding on behalf of households in temporary accommodation to registered providers.
 - The use of the private rented sector and nominations to registered providers, as compulsory end of duty options will support the Council to ensure it has suitable temporary accommodation options for homeless households.

The emphasis will be on offering suitable accommodation to meet need for households who have been accepted as statutory homeless.

3.19 **Rough Sleeping**

A rough sleeper estimate is conducted annually. The level of rough sleeping in the Borough over the previous three years has been between 6 and 7 individuals. The latest count (November 2015) showed a reduction in the number of rough sleepers from 7 to 3 individuals.

- 3.20 The Council continues to ensure the availability of additional provision of 8 emergency bed spaces in instances of severe weather for rough sleepers. These Severe Weather Emergency Provision (SWEP) arrangements continue to be in place with Two Saints.
- 3.21 The Direct Access Hostel at Dene Court, Andover, has an emergency bed provision for up to 8 people and the Housing Options team can make direct referrals for customers who are roofless.

- 3.22 The Council secured funding from the DCLG to deliver two projects, an Enhanced Rough Sleeper Project and a Homelessness Outreach Project. Both projects delivered by Two Saints from their direct access hostel at Dene Court, Andover.
- 3.23 A dedicated homeless outreach worker based at Dene Court supports single people at threat of homelessness, who are homeless and entrenched rough sleepers. The Council is committed with our partners, to work towards a sustainable and effective longer term approach to eliminating rough sleeping in the Borough.
- 3.24 Working with the private rented sector landlords**
We continue to work with private landlords and letting agents through the Private Landlords and Letting Agents Forum (PLLAF) which meets 3 times a year. This Forum has proved very effective in working with smaller-scale private landlords to increase the access into the private rented sectors for our customers.
- 3.25 By working in partnership with our private landlords we have ensured a steady supply of properties let through the Rent Deposit Loan Scheme, worked proactively with landlords to let their properties without the need for RDLS incentives and matched customers looking for accommodation with our private landlords.
- 3.26 A small sub group of the PLLAF has been established to work more effectively with landlords and agents and to consider how at an operational level we can work more effectively together to encourage landlords to assist our customers and low income households to access the sector. Increases to the bond and rent in advance levels under the RDLS, agreed by Cabinet in December 2013, resulted from work by this group.
- 3.27 Welfare Reform**
Reforms to the welfare benefit system are likely to increase demand for housing options, advice and assistance. The transition into Universal Credit (UC) and in particular, its impact on households in temporary accommodation and supported housing provision will be carefully monitored, along with the impact of UC on Registered Provider tenants and debt advice.
- 3.28 The Council will work with its partners to ensure a coordinated and comprehensive range of support is available to help vulnerable households to transition to the new benefits system and to mitigate against potential homelessness.
- 3.29** 76 social housing tenants impacted by the Spare Room Subsidy have moved to smaller accommodation through Hampshire Home Choice Since the subsidy was introduced in April 2013. 563 households have received Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) since April 2013.

4 Resourcing the Strategy

The Council recognises the need to invest in homelessness prevention services and commits significant financial resources to meeting its statutory and non-statutory homeless duties and prevention activities and these are summarised in Appendix 3.

The Council has been successful in its bid for additional DCLG funding during the lifetime of the current homelessness strategy and we will seek to maximise any additional funding opportunities for grant funding from DCLG for specific initiatives or by supporting our third sector partners.

In 2013 & 2014, the North Hampshire Sub-Regional Homeless Group (Basingstoke, East Hampshire, Eastleigh, Hart, Rushmoor, Test Valley and Winchester) bid and were successful in securing funding to deliver services across the sub regional and locally for single homeless people.

In 2015, an all Hampshire local authorities bid to the DCLG to increase the number of move-on units of accommodation from womens refuges across the County was successful.

a) 2013 - Single Homelessness Fund

Funding (£35,150) Two Saints to deliver a targeted service to the group of complex clients, entrenched rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping (prolonged sofa surfers).The aim of service being to reduce the numbers of rough sleepers in Test Valley.

b) 2014 - DCLG Help for Single Homeless Fund

Funding (£34,000) Two Saints to deliver a comprehensive package of support services for people who are of no fixed abode, sofa surfing, or in temporary accommodation, and for those with a history of rough sleeping. This funding has been used to employ a dedicated Homeless Outreach Worker operating out of Dene Court Direct Access Hostel in Andover.

c) 2015 - DCLG Domestic Abuse Funding

In Test Valley, a grant of £60k to the Andover Crisis and Support Centre has enabled them to purchase two new properties in Andover to provide move-on for residents from the centre into the community.

There are approximately 8,400 affordable housing properties, 156 units of temporary accommodation, and 135 units of supported housing in the Borough. In addition, floating support contracts provide for up to 75 households to access, generic community/housing related support at any one time.

5 Partnership working

We can reasonably predict that levels of statutory and non-statutory homelessness and the use of temporary accommodation will increase during the lifetime of the Preventing Homelessness Strategy 2016-2019. By working proactively with partners we will seek to minimise these increases by maintaining a local focus on prevention to manage and deliver housing options for households who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

The Council works in partnership with wide range of voluntary and statutory agencies (Appendix 3).

There are no additional resources available to the Council to implement this Preventing Homelessness Strategy. Resources will need to come from within existing budgets, from better use of existing staff time and from the benefits derived through partnership working and any opportunities to bid for external funding.

6 Preventing Homelessness Strategy 2016-2019 – Top Priorities moving forward

The key priorities of the Preventing Homelessness Strategy for 2016-2019 are:

1. Building on existing services
2. Ensuring that housing related support arrangements for the most vulnerable are safeguarded
3. Supporting people to access suitable alternative accommodation
4. Increased use of the Private Rented Sector
5. Building and maintaining effective partnership working
6. Supporting a successful welfare reform transition in Test Valley.

7 Monitoring and Review

The multi-agency Homelessness Forum will meet annually from June 2016 to review the Delivery Plan, monitor progress towards meeting the aims of the new strategy and to develop ideas for future action.

Responsibility for driving through this strategy and ensuring that it delivers key objectives lies with the Council's Housing Manager.

8 The Delivery Plan

The Strategy is underpinned by a detailed service delivery plan which sets out the individual actions and activities to be undertaken to deliver the strategic priorities and outcomes. These decisions have been reached by talking with partner agencies about what their main issues and pressures are and matching this with our priorities and likely sources of funding.

The Delivery Plan details how the Council will achieve the aims and objectives of the strategy and for building on existing services. The priority given to activities is indicated clearly in the Delivery Plan. This plan is set out in appendix 4.

Review of Homelessness Evidence Base 2016

Housing Options Service

Preventing homelessness remains a primary statutory function for the Council. The Council and its partners continue to work hard to ensure that all local homelessness services are focused on preventing homelessness. We encourage those people likely to face homelessness, to approach the Council as early as possible to enable sufficient time for effective prevention activity.

1. Triage

The Housing service has operated a triage service since October 2013. This is the first point of contact for customers with housing issues and triage officers provide an immediate response to general housing advice enquiries and filter those requiring more specialist homeless and homeless prevention options to the Housing Options officers.

Table 1 - Triage Service

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	Total since October 2013
Triage Service	143*	904	2,523	3,570

*Triage service commenced October 2013

The following are main reasons customers call into the triage service:

- Hampshire Home Choice enquires and assistance – 36%
- Fact finding and referrals on to Housing Options/homeless officer - 21%
- General private rented accommodation enquiries – 12%
- General Housing Options/referrals for emergency accommodation - 9%
- General tenancy/debt/arrears/benefit advice – 9%

2. Summary of Homeless and Homeless Prevention Activities

In addition to the Triage Service, housing options officers have since April 2013:

- Taken 294 homeless applications and accepted a housing duty towards 139 households
- Prevented 1,235 households from becoming homelessness

Table 2 - Homelessness, Housing Advice and Homeless Prevention figures

Year	Homeless Applications	households prevented from becoming homeless	Total
2013/14	125	461	586
2014/15	79	391	470
2015/16	90	383	473
Total	294	1,235	1,529

Activity in 2015/16, suggests that the level of housing options interviews and approaches for advice and assistance from customers remain stable. However, given a range of other indicators detailed in this review, levels are likely to increase.

The demand for assistance from customers is likely to increase with the introduction of Universal Credit, the impact of further welfare reform, the reduction in funding for housing related support and further reforms to the welfare benefit system.

Homelessness and the number of households in temporary accommodation has increased both nationally and locally and demand for housing options and support is unlikely to reduce during the lifetime of this Preventing Homelessness Strategy.

3. Homeless Prevention Measures

The prevention of homelessness has been defined by the DCLG and is reported quarterly to central government through P1e returns. The P1e relates to local authorities' activities within the statutory homelessness framework and in terms of their activities to prevent homelessness.

The table below sets out the prevention measures undertaken by the Housing Options team and its partners in both managing the demand for accommodation locally and proactively setting out to prevent homelessness wherever possible.

Table 3 – Prevention Measures

	April 2013 To – Mar 2016
Homeless Prevention Measures	
<i>Assisting applicants to remain in their existing home by:</i>	Household (%)
Home visits with mediation to help people return home and resolve differences with their family/friends	45 (3%)
Negotiating with accommodation providers (private and public sector landlords, mortgage lenders, etc.) and finding practical solutions to housing difficulties	85 (7%)
Using homeless prevention funds, Mortgage arrears interventions and mortgage rescue.	36 (3%)
Through Debt and Money Advice and use of Discretionary Housing Payments	134 (11%)
<i>Homelessness prevented or relieved – households assisted to obtain alternative accommodation:</i>	
By helping people to rent privately, with the assistance of the Rent Deposit Loan Scheme.	235 (19%)
Securing hostel placements and Supported housing accommodation such as Andover Crisis and Support Centre, Dene Court hostel, Bridge House and River House.	225 (18%)
Through the Housing Register (Hampshire Home Choice)	233 (19%)
Through the Aster Private Sector Leasing Scheme.	121 (10%)
Assisting people to secure their own private rented accommodation through negotiation with private landlords and letting agents.	97 (8%)
Accommodated with friends or family	12(1%)

Homeless Prevention Measures	April 2013 To – Mar 2016
Other- Low cost home ownership, referral to another local authority.	12 (1%)
Total	1235 (100%)

4. Statutory Homeless Applications and Acceptances

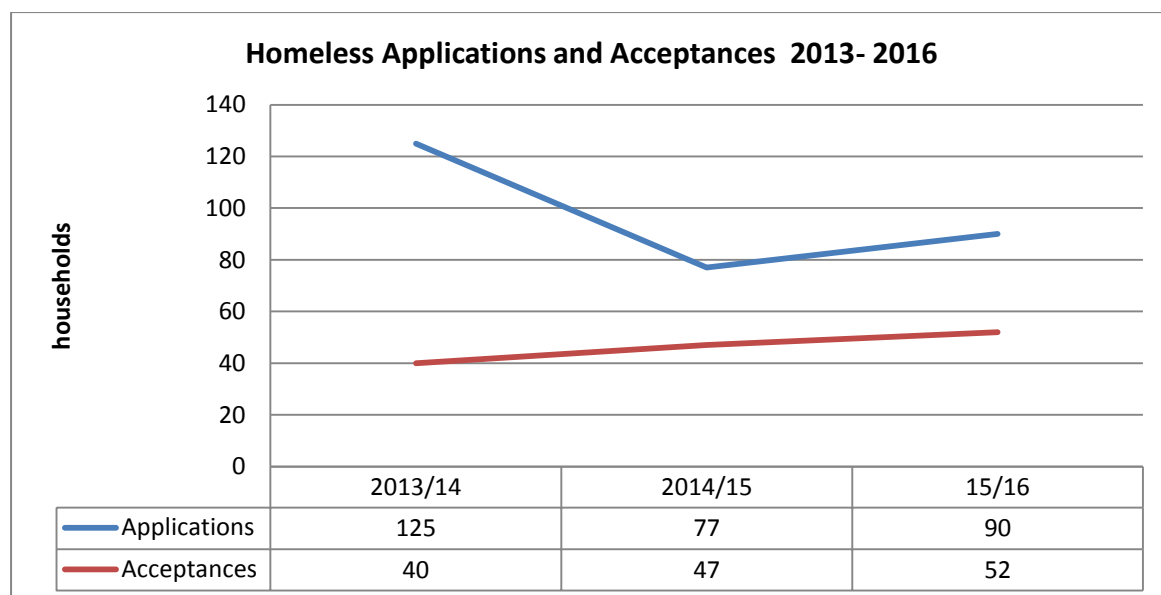
This section will consider statutory homelessness in Test Valley in detail, identifying trends and performance around key indicators.

Despite our homelessness prevention work, there are still people for whom homelessness cannot be prevented. Each year, we continue to take applications, carry out assessments and make decisions on those owed a formal duty by the local authority.

5. Summary of Homeless Applications and Acceptances

The table below show the numbers of homeless applications and acceptances over the last 3 years.

Table 4 – Test Valley Homeless Applications and Acceptances



The number of households applying as homeless in 2014/15 reduced by 38% compared to the previous year as a result of effective early intervention and prevention activities. During the same period, the number of households whom the Council had a statutory duty to accommodate increased by 17%.

In 2015/16 there was an increase in both the level of homeless applications (17%) and acceptances (11%) compared to the previous year.

The Housing and Environmental Health Service will continue to review and monitor how it supports people who are not owed a statutory duty under homelessness. We will continue to refer to supported housing projects, the direct access hostel and emergency bed provision at Dene Court, promote our Rent Deposit Loan Scheme which is available to non-statutory homeless households.

We will monitor the new HCC Social Inclusion Support model that will replace the current Supporting People provision for single generic homeless households in April 2016 to ensure that the service focuses and meets the needs of homeless households locally.

5.1 Homeless Applications (Decisions)

Table 5 – Homeless Applications

Year	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	Total
Number of applications	125	79	90	294
Of which:				
Accepted duty to accommodate	40	47	52	139
Intentionally homeless	12	6	18	36
Non Priority	50	17	14	81
Not Homeless	17	7	2	26
Ineligible	6	2	4	12
Total	125	79	90	294

5.2 Homelessness Acceptances

Where the Council accepts a homelessness duty, it monitors the cause of homelessness. These are set out in the table below. This information is useful because it indicates the areas where we need to target our prevention activities.

Table 6 – Reasons for loss of last settled accommodation for households accepted as statutory homeless since 2013/14.

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	Total since 2013 To date
Parents/friends/relatives no longer willing or able to accommodate	11 (27%)	13 (28%)	19 (36%)	43 (31%)
Loss of assured shorthold tenancy	7 (17%)	8 (17%)	9 (17%)	24 (17%)
Domestic Abuse and violent relationship breakdown with partner	16 (40%)	12 (25%)	17 (33%)	45 (32%)
Non-violent relationship breakdown with partner	5 (13%)	5 (11%)	3 (6%)	13 (10%)
Arrears – mortgage, rent	1 (3%)	2 (4%)	4 (8%)	7 (5%)
All other reasons – includes, leaving care, emergencies	0 (%)	7(15%)	0 (0%)	7 (5%)
Total number of households	40 (100%)	47 (100%)	52 (100%)	139 (100%)

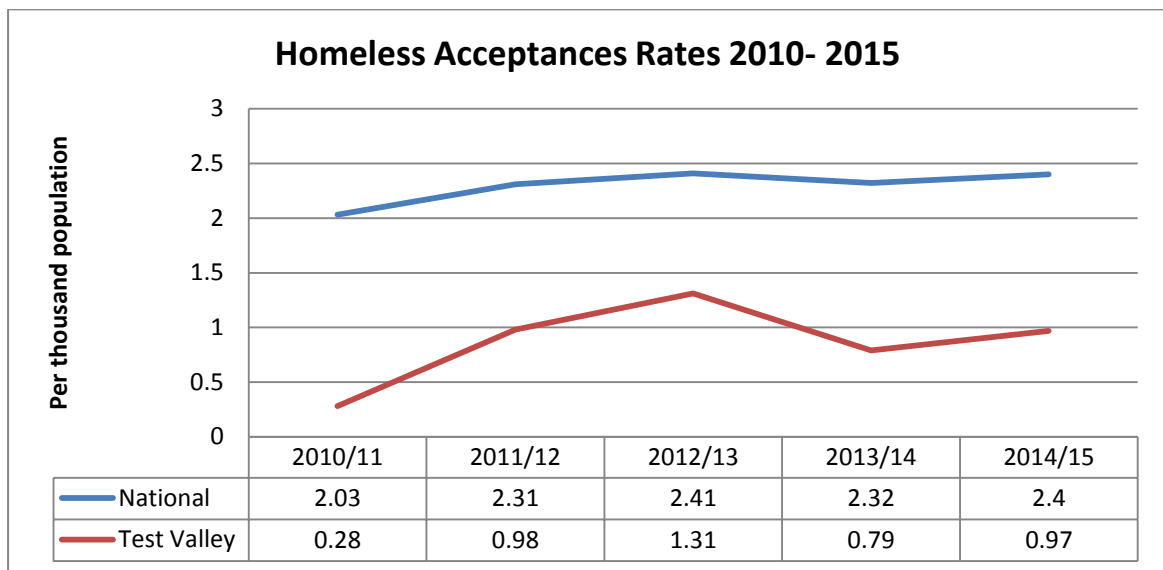
The reasons why households are accepted as homeless coupled with actions and initiatives to prevent homelessness locally, inform our strategic thinking and the Delivery Plan going forward.

The number of homelessness acceptances made by the Council has reduced overall during the period of the current homelessness strategy compared with 2012/13. The commitment of the Council to ensure appropriate levels of staffing resource are available to tackle homelessness, has seen positive results in terms of prevention and homelessness outcomes for customers. Without this, it is likely homelessness acceptance levels would have been significantly higher.

5.3 Homeless Acceptances rates per 1000 population

One of the ways in which the Government measures relative homelessness amongst boroughs/districts, is by looking at its incidence per 1000 head of population. Data for Test Valley and the national picture is set out below:

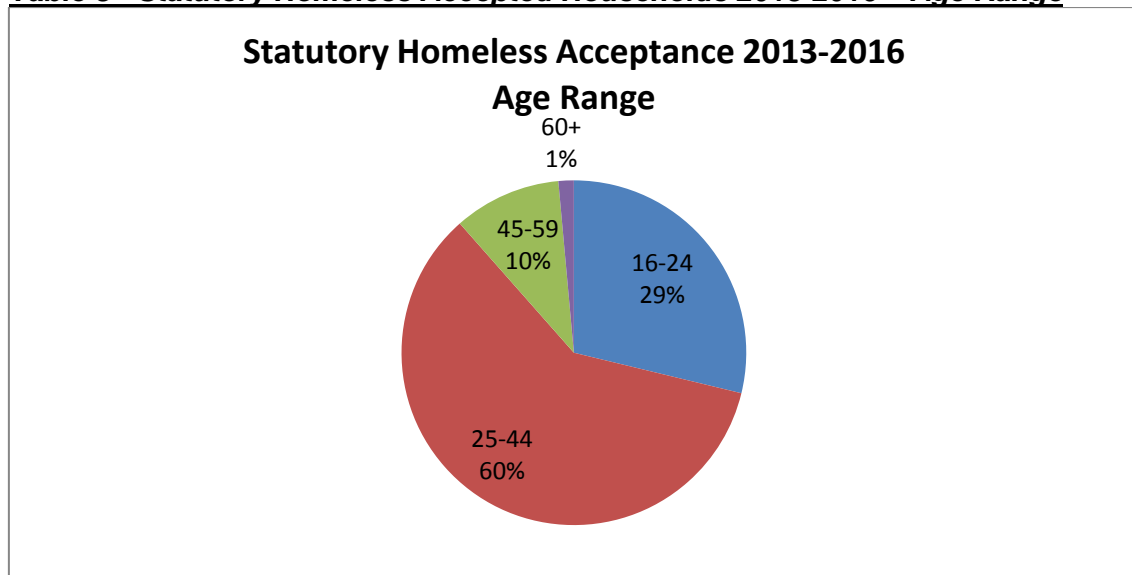
Table 7 - Homeless Acceptances rates per 1000 population



5.4 Homeless Acceptances by Age Range

The vast majority of households accepted as statutorily homeless in Test Valley are aged less than 45 years of age, with a significant proportion between 25-44 years (60%).

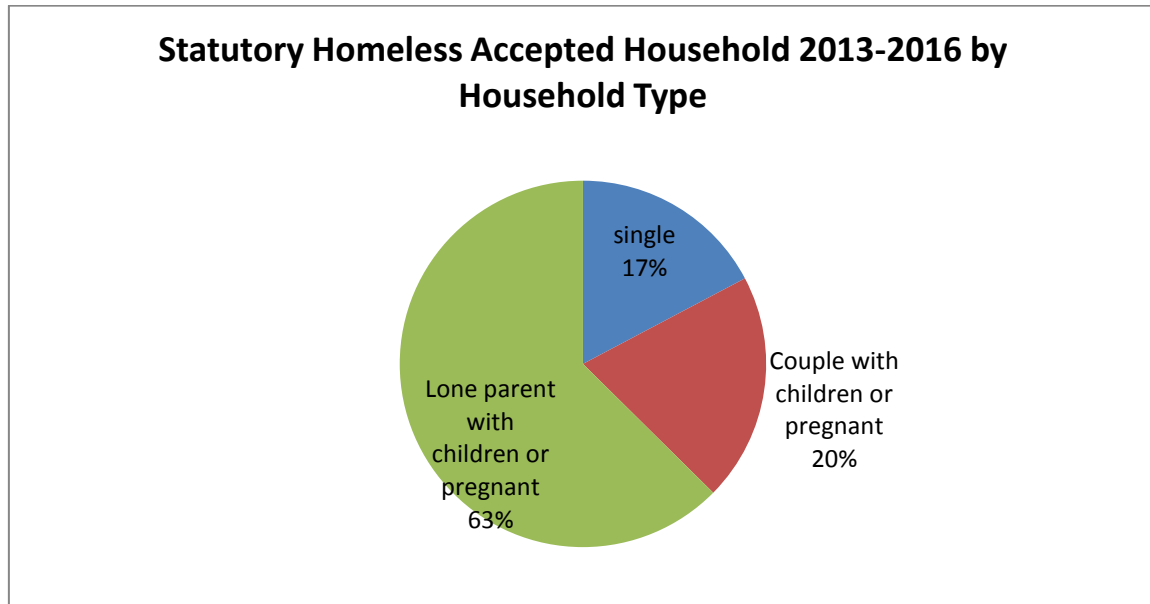
Table 8 - Statutory Homeless Accepted Households 2013-2016 – Age Range



5.5 Homeless Acceptances by Household Type.

83% of statutory household acceptances during 2013-2016 were households with children, the most significant group being lone parents or single pregnant households (63%).

Table 9 - Statutory Homeless Accepted Households 2013-2016 – Household Type



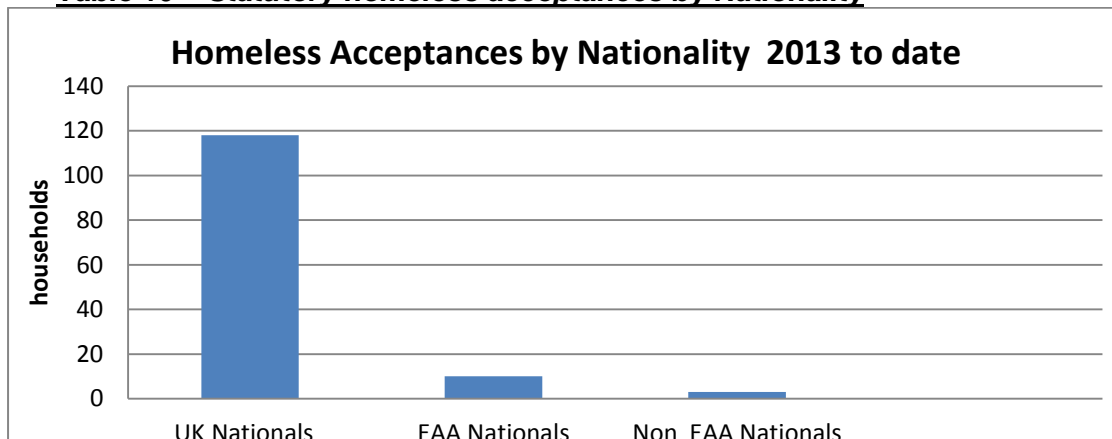
The Preventing Homelessness Strategy will need to ensure that the actions within the Delivery Plan target housing options for these groups. Single households account for 17% of acceptances and we must ensure they receive the appropriate advice and assistance.

Those not owed a statutory duty must also receive appropriate help and support and the safety net is adequate to ensure that wherever possible households do not fall through any gaps in local service, end up rough sleeping or in other unsuitable accommodation.

5.6 Homeless Acceptances by Nationality

90% of statutory homeless acceptances during 2013-2016 were from UK Nationals, with 8% from EAA Nationals and 2% from Non-EAA nationals.

Table 10 – Statutory homeless acceptances by Nationality



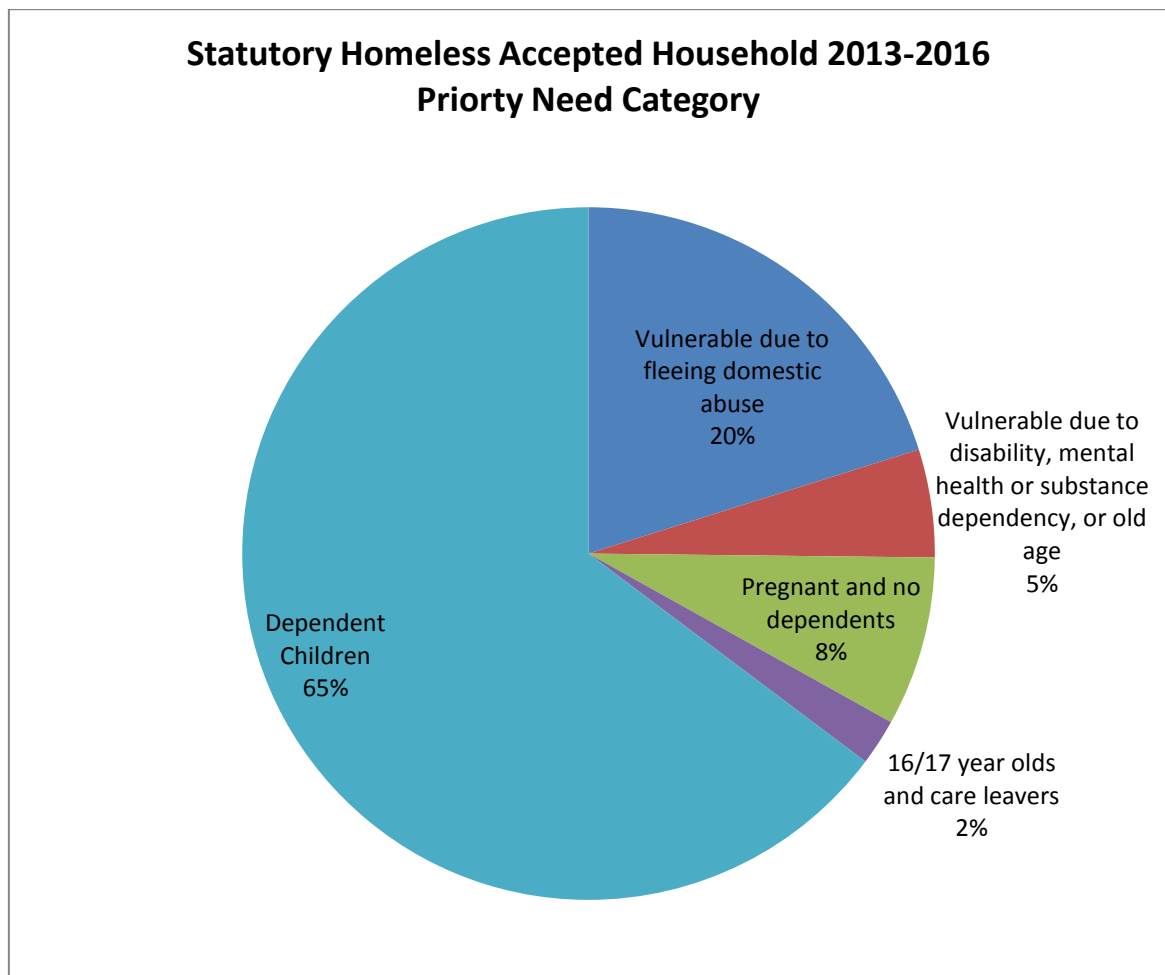
5.7 Homeless Acceptances by Priority Need Categories

Table 10 provides a breakdown of homeless acceptances by Priority Need categories, with 65% of households owed a housing duty by the Council having dependent children. 20% of households are vulnerable due to fleeing domestic abuse, with 5% having a priority need by virtue of a disability, suffering with mental health issues, substance dependency or old age.

The Council needs to work proactively ensuring there is a suitable supply, variety and type of temporary housing to prevent households from being placed in bed and breakfast accommodation. This will continue to be achieved through early intervention and prevention approaches, appropriate housing pathways, move on arrangements and opportunities to be housed through the Council’s Housing Register (Hampshire Home Choice).

The Housing Options team will focus on developing the ‘Private Sector Accommodation Offer’ and compulsory discharge into the private rented sector for households the Council has accepted a statutory homeless duty towards.

Table 10 - Statutory Homeless Households 2013-2016- Priority Need Categories



6 Temporary Accommodation

The Council will continue to meet its statutory duties and provide, where appropriate emergency, temporary accommodation for those who have exhausted all their housing options or where homelessness cannot be prevented.

6.1 Temporary Accommodation Portfolio

A range of self contained temporary accommodation is provided by Aster Communities, Stonewater, Radian and Hyde Housing Associations to meet the Council's legal homelessness duties. There were 61 households in temporary accommodation at 31 March 2016.

In addition, Aster Communities, through its Private Sector Leasing Scheme, leasing agreement with Test Valley for Portersbridge Street provides a further 95 self contained units which the Housing Services uses for homelessness purposes.

The Council is committed to the provision of suitable temporary accommodation and to moving households on to more settled accommodation as soon as possible. Additional priority is given to households living in temporary housing through Hampshire Home Choice and this in turn ensures a steady through flow of households into social and affordable housing, into the private rented sector, where appropriate, and to recycling temporary housing to meet new demands.

In addition, Two Saints Housing Association provides emergency bed provision (8 bed spaces) at its Dene Court Hostel for single homeless households who find themselves with no roof over their head; as well as 18 self contained rooms and 6 move on flats for single households at Prospect Court, Andover.

The Andover Crisis and Support Centre (ACSC) provide 20 self contained supported units at its New Street project for victims of Domestic Abuse, as well as 2 move-on units in the community. The Centre operates at 100% capacity and also provides a drop-in advice services for residents in Test Valley and a counselling service. The Centre also runs the Freedom Programme which focuses on how understanding behaviours and attitudes can change with an understanding of domestic abuse, its impact and strategies to reduce the cycle of domestic abuse. ACSC also runs the CRUSH programme in local schools and this project is about helping young people make safe healthy relationships.

The Preventing Homelessness Strategy will focus on meeting households' preferences wherever possible. However, our primary aim will be meeting housing need, meeting our statutory duties and moving people on from temporary accommodation as soon as possible, with community support where appropriate.

We will do this by bidding on behalf of households in temporary accommodation to registered providers. In the future, the emphasis will be on offering suitable accommodation to meet need for households who have been accepted as statutorily homeless.

The use of the private rented sector and nominations to registered providers, as compulsory end of duty options will support the Council to ensure it has suitable temporary accommodation options for homeless households. The Delivery Plan will include actions to ensure that residents understand these changes and what it means for them. All offers of accommodation will be subject to an affordability and suitability assessment.

6.2 Length of stay in Temporary Accommodation

The table below details the number of households in temporary accommodation at the end of the year, and the average length of time households in temporary housing wait for a Part 6 Housing Act 1996 (Housing Register) offer of accommodation.

Table 11 - length of stay in Temporary Accommodation

Year	Number of households in temporary accommodation end of year	Number of Households duty discharged with Part 6 Offer	Average time in months in temporary accommodation
2011/12	58	5	5
2012/13	64	15	12
2013/14	65	27	19
2014/15	53	31	20
2015/16 to date	61	3	19
Total	291	81	18 months

7 Housing Register

The Council in partnership with 23 Registered Providers, and 4 other local authorities (Eastleigh, East Hampshire, Havant and Winchester) operates *Hampshire Home Choice*, a choice-based lettings scheme.

There are currently 1,963 households on the Housing Register. Table below details household income.

Table Income Levels of Households on the Housing Register

Household Income	Number of Households
Upto £15,000	1,316
£15,001- £20,000	263
£20,001 -£30,000	202
£30,001- £40,000	141
£40,001 - £50,000	41
Total	1,963

Hampshire Home Choice has also proved to be an effective homeless prevention tool with approximately 233 households securing social/affordable housing through the scheme since April 2013 who might otherwise have applied to the Council as homeless.

8 Delivery of new Affordable Homes

During 2011-2015, the development programme has delivered a total of 1,019 new units of affordable housing, including low cost market housing. The current housing programme anticipates 200 completions for 2015/16 and similar levels for 2016/17.

9 Resources

Social/affordable housing

There are approximately 8,400 affordable housing properties in the Borough, 156 units used for temporary accommodation (or homeless prevention), and 135 units of supported housing. In addition, floating support contracts provide for up to 75 households to access, generic floating housing related support at any one time.

Staffing

A team of 12 Housing Options officers (9 fte) provides a housing options and homeless prevention service in the Andover and Romsey offices.

Financial Resources

The Council commits significant financial resources to meeting its statutory homeless duties and prevention activities and these are summarised in Appendix 5 of this Strategy.

10 Use of Bed and Breakfast Accommodation

The law regarding the use of bed and breakfast states that bed and breakfast accommodation is not suitable for families with dependent children, including pregnant women. Councils can place families or pregnant women in bed and breakfast but only if there are no alternatives available and even then only for a maximum of six weeks.

Homeless 16/17 year olds should not be placed in bed and breakfast even in an emergency and local provision should be in place for suitable emergency accommodation for such young people.

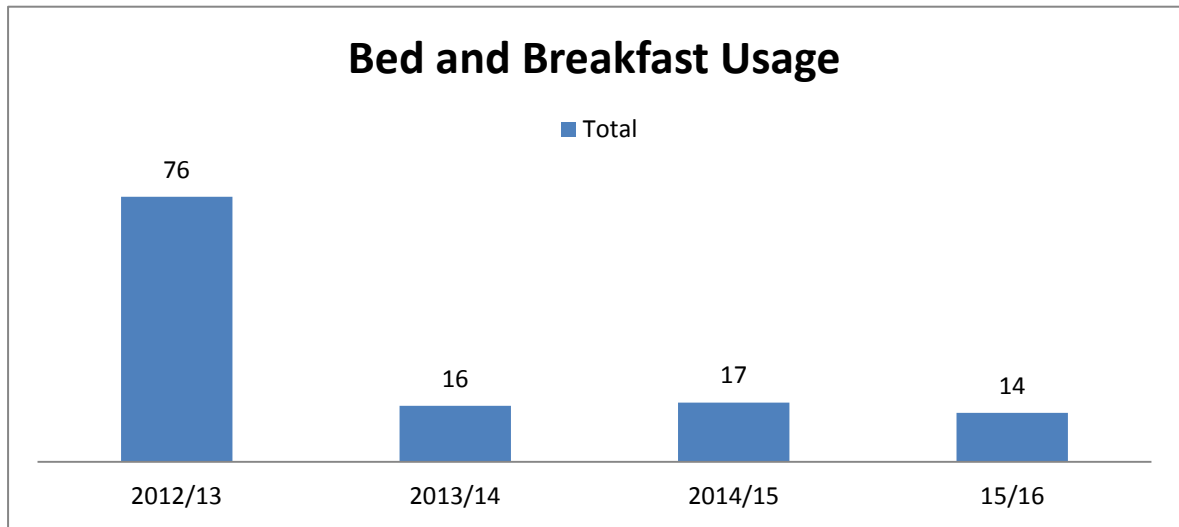
In October 2013, the Local Government Ombudsman published the 'No Place like Home' Report and considers bed and breakfast accommodation as unsuitable and that councils must secure suitable alternative accommodation within no more than six weeks and has explicitly warned that she may find fault even where a family has spent less than six weeks in bed and breakfast if the LGO is of the view that the council could have moved an applicant sooner.

In Test Valley, households will only be placed into bed and breakfast where there is absolutely no alternative accommodation and the following measures are in place:

- All prevention measures have been exhausted and no alternatives available
- An exit strategy is agreed prior to placement in bed and breakfast
- Households in bed and breakfast accommodation are prioritised for the next available temporary housing
- If an applicant is placed out of area they will be moved back as soon as a local vacancy arises
- Keep housing options fully under review whilst in bed and breakfast
- Young people will continue to be referred to Children's Services for assessment in accordance with the protocol.

The table below shows bed and breakfast usage over recent years.

Table 12 – Bed and breakfast Usage



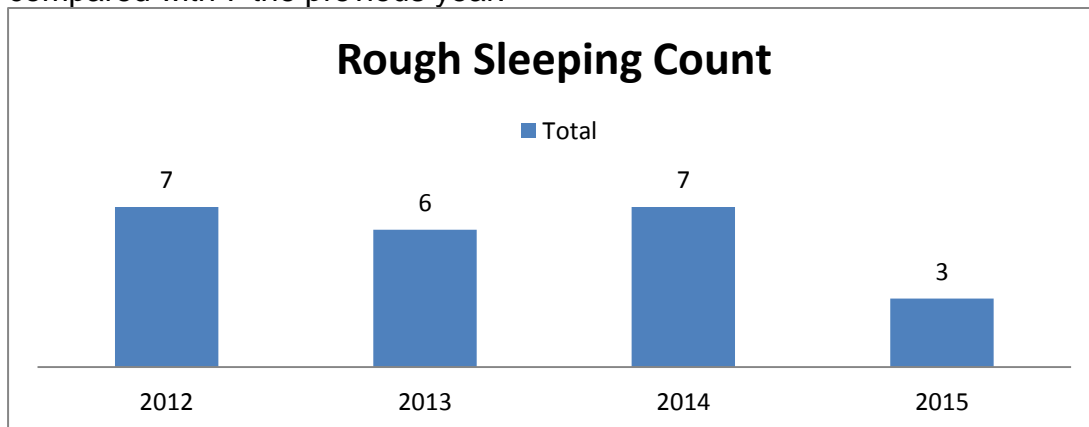
As well as bed and breakfast being an unsatisfactory form of accommodation for people, it is also very expensive. In 2015/16, the Council spent £23,065 on bed and breakfast.

In 2015/16, 14 households have been placed in bed and breakfast. The average length of stay has been 23 days, with one family being in bed and breakfast for over 6 weeks.

11 Rough Sleeping

The DCLG has set out a specific methodology for local authorities to adopt when assessing the level of rough sleeping annually. The local authority can conduct a street count or an estimate involving partner agencies. The Council has opted for the past 3 years to conduct an estimate, as this provides more accurate and reliable data. The level of rough sleeping nationally has increased by 55% since 2010 and by 31% since autumn of 2014.

Levels of rough sleeping in the Borough are relatively low and are monitored through the Two Saints Homeless Outreach Worker on a regular basis. The 2015 count estimated there were 3 households sleeping rough in Test Valley compared with 7 the previous year.



The Council is committed to tackling rough sleeping and will continue to work with local agencies and the community to ensure incidences of rough sleeping are minimised and where possible, eliminated. The Council works sub-regionally with other local authorities and Homeless Link and is committed to No Second Night Out (NSNO) and Reconnection Protocol.

During the lifetime of the current Homelessness Strategy the Council has secured two additional streams of funding from the DCLG through the North Hampshire Single Homeless Group to deliver an Enhanced Rough Sleeper Project in 2014, and a Homelessness Outreach Project in 2015. Both projects are delivered by Two Saints from their Direct Access Project at Dene Court, Andover.

12 Local Housing Markets, Local Housing Allowance and accessing the Private Rented Sector

There are 4 Broad Market Rental Areas (BMRA) in Test Valley, Basingstoke (covering Andover), Salisbury (western Test Valley), Winchester (eastern Test Valley) and Southampton (Romsey).

Local Housing Allowance rates (2015/16) for these areas differ and make privately renting in eastern Test Valley and particularly in Romsey, out of the reach of most housing options customers. LHA rates have been frozen until 2019/20.

	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed
Andover LHA	£582	£703	£835	£1,158
Typical rent levels	£565	£700	£805	£1,140
Romsey	£506	£679	£801	£1,053
Typical rent levels	£650	£810	£960	£1,200

13 Private Rented Sector Landlords

The Housing Service has an excellent relationship with local letting agents and private rented sector landlords. The private rented sector landlords play a vital role in meeting housing need locally and in assisting the service with placing our customers with them.

The Council has an established Private Landlords Forum which meets 3 times a year, with a regular attendance of 50-60 landlords and letting agents. The Forum provides a networking opportunity to share ideas and discuss property related topics with landlords. The housing team provide a regular benefit, environmental health and new legislation update at the forum.

A landlord steering group was set up in 2014. It works alongside the housing service to improve service delivery to tenants, such as promotion of the RDLS scheme, improvements to the bond/deposit element of the scheme and increasing access to the private rented sector for our customers.

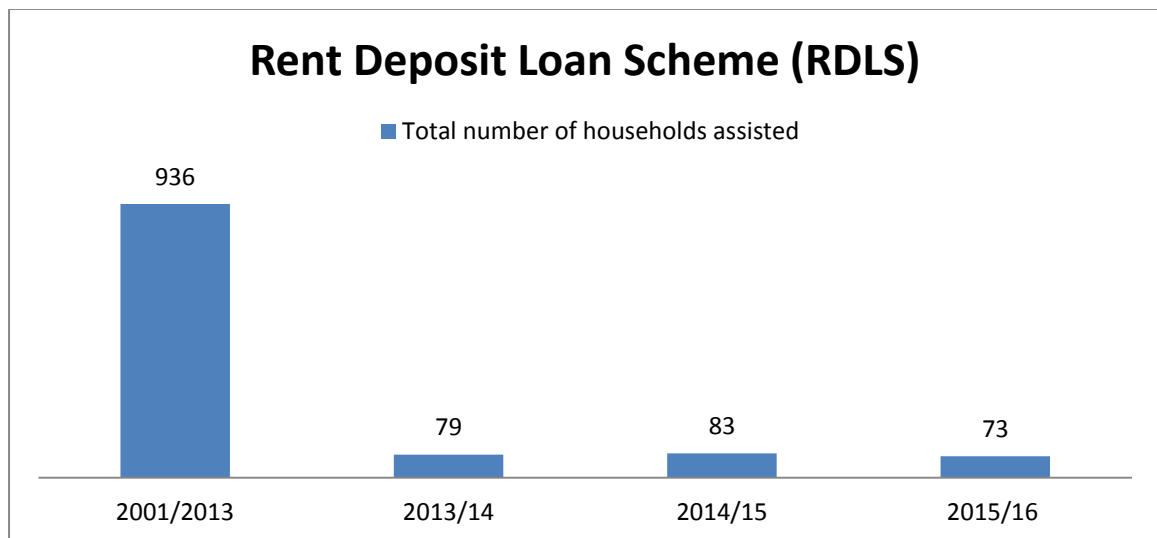
The Council, through its rent deposit loan scheme has assisted 235 households to secure accommodation in the private rented sector since April 2013. It has also assisted a further 97 households to secure their own private rented accommodation through negotiation with private landlords and letting agents.

14 Rent Deposit Loan Scheme (RDLS)

One of the key prevention tools for reducing homelessness and avoiding the use of bed and breakfast is the RDLS. The use of the rent deposit and loan or bond scheme has proved very successful and a preferred option for some households to temporary housing.

The Housing Options team works very closely with private landlords and letting agents through both the Private Landlords Forum and with individual private landlords, to increase options for households seeking accommodation in this sector.

The Council has made a number of policy changes to the RDLS scheme in recent years (increasing the bond and rent in advance levels), in response to landlords requests and in order to increase access to this sector for our customers.



15 Discretionary Housing Payment

The Council makes use of its Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) budget to prevent homelessness. There are four main uses for DHP, and the table below indicates the number of awards in each area.

Table 10 – Use of DHP in 2015/16

Purpose of DHP	Awards in 2015/16
To help secure and move to alternative accommodation (e.g. rent deposit)	2
To help with short term rental costs while claimant secures and moves to alternative accommodation	75
To help with short term rental costs while the claimant seeks employment	1
To help with on-going rental costs for disabled person in adapted accommodation	7
To help with on-going rental costs for any other reason	58
Total	143

16 Expenditure on DHP

Overall expenditure and data on the number of households assisted is set out below:

Table 11- Discretionary Housing Payment Budget

Year	Allocation	Amount Spent	No of customers assisted
2010/11	£25,967	£27,657	65
2011/12	£31,957	£31,915	62
2012/13	£46,565	£32,549	53
2013/14	£114,626	£119,211	237
2014/15	£153,462	£153,986	183
2015/16	£127,431	£95,872	143
2016/17	£150,378		

17 DHP and Welfare Reform

A breakdown of the DHP Award Statistics for 2015/16 is set out below. DHP funding for 2016/17 has been increased by £23,000.

Table 12 – DHP statistics 2015/16

Impact of Welfare Reforms	Number of Awards	Value of Awards
Benefit Cap	1	£644
Social Sector Size Criteria	97	£43,703
Local Housing Allowance restriction	20	£21,470
Other - Not Impacted by Reforms	25	£30,055
Total	143	£95,872

18 Housing Options and Employment

Tackling worklessness within Test Valley is a priority for the Housing and Environmental Health Service and our local Registered Providers (RP). RPs have appointed Tenancy and Employment officers to work more effectively to assist tenants back into work and training.

The Housing and Environmental Health Service works closely with Department of Work and Pensions colleagues through the Test Valley Early Help Hub to improve access to employment services for households who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Housing Options interviews include discussions around accessing employment and signposting to the Job Centre Plus.

The Service will work with vulnerable customers through the transition from the current welfare benefit system to the new Universal credit and provide debt, money and budgeting advice for those moving from benefit to employment.

19 Housing Support Pathways

Supported housing provides support pathways for young people, single homeless people, people with mental health needs, teenage parents, and victims of domestic abuse. The aim of these pathways through the provision of a range of services is to support customers at different stages of their journey to independence.

a) Young People

Under Hampshire County Council's Young People Supported Housing Service the initial point of contact for young people with housing issues is through the Gateway Agency (HCC). The Service provides staged accommodation and supported lodgings services.

b) Single Homeless People

Assessment under the new Social Inclusion Service from April 2016 will be made by Housing Options Team and a referral made to a suitable project.

- Stage 1 - Direct Access Hostel (Two Saints- Dene Court),
- Stage 2- Prospect Court (Two Saints), Bridge House, Stubbs and Turin Court
- Stage 3- Independent living through Hampshire Home Choice or private rented sector with community support.
- Additional support through the Single Homeless Outreach Worker working out of The Bridge.

c) Mental Health Needs

Mental health services across the County are currently under review and details of the new service will be made known in 2016/17. In the meantime, housing options staff will interview applicants and make a referral to Hampshire County Council, Supported Housing Officer to assess and allocate accommodation.

- Stage 1 – Residential/specialist placements
- Stage 2 - Launcelot Close/ Salisbury Road projects.
- Stage 3 - Independent living through Hampshire Home Choice or private rented sector with community support.

d) Teenage Parents

Teenage parents threatened with homelessness are assessed by the Housing Options Team. Applicants with support needs are referred to the Council's family hostel at Junction Road. The options could be:

- Stage 1 – Junction Road hostel or supported lodgings or mother and baby placements through Children's Services.
- Stage 2 – temporary accommodation with community support or Eastfield Lodge (self contained units for families with young children), Station Road, Romsey.
- Stage 3 - Independent living through Hampshire Home Choice or private rented sector with community support accessed through the RDLs.

Before moving-on from Stage 1 or 2 Accommodation, households are required to complete the Young Mums Matters programme covering housing, finance/budgeting, careers advice, personal safety and sexual health.

e) Domestic Abuse

Under the new Integrated Domestic Abuse Service Hampshire (IDASH) referrals are made through a Single Point of Contact (SPOC) to the Andover Crisis and Support Centre (ACSC) to access a range of support services. Monthly Housing Option Drop-In to prevent homelessness and assess housing options.

- Stage 1 - ACSC or alternative refuge accommodation
- Stage 2 - ACSC move-on accommodation, with support
- Stage 3 – Temporary housing, RDLS or Independent living through Hampshire Home Choice.

20 The Social Inclusion Service Model

The Council, along with other Hampshire local authorities, Hampshire County Council (HCC) and statutory partners has reviewed existing 'supporting people' services for non statutory homeless households in light of significant budgetary cuts made by HCC.

The new Prevention and Early Intervention Resettlement Service (PEIRS) will commence on 1 April 2016 and provide accommodation based and community support services across geographical lots. It is a reduced service to the one previously funded through Supporting People.

The wider issues associated with these cuts are being dealt with proactively by the Council and will feed into the Preventing Homelessness Strategy.

21 Summary of our main achievements in relation to the Homelessness Strategy 2014/15

- Introduced an effective Triage Service
- Prevented 1,235 households from becoming homeless
- Assisted 235 households to secure private rented accommodation through the Rent Deposit Loan scheme (RDLS) and a further 97 households through negotiation with private landlords and letting agents.
- Recovered 80% of funds loaned through the RDLS
- Delivered a total of 1,021 new affordable homes (against a target of 200 per year) from 2011-2015.
- Completed Diagnostic Peer Review, achieved Bronze Standard and working towards the DCLG Gold Standard
- Maintained low level use of bed and breakfast accommodation
- Successfully negotiated best outcome for Test Valley under the Hampshire County Council funded new Social Inclusion Service for homeless households
- Council's financial commitment to safeguard the Junction Road, Andover family hostel for a further 3 years
- Reviewed the No Second Night Out (NSNO) and Severe Weather Emergency Provision (SWEP) provision and robust arrangements in place.

- Secure funding through North Hampshire Housing Group for an enhanced rough sleeper pilot and further funding for homeless outreach project to provide more effective service to tackle rough sleeping.
- Secured DCLG funding in 2015 to increase the provision of move-on accommodation (additional 4 units) from the Andover Crisis and Support Centre.
- Reviewed and improved the RDLS 'offer' to private landlords
- Financially support the Young Mums Matter pre tenancy programme to enable the programme to continue beyond 2014.
- Implemented Supporting People strategic reviews of homeless and Domestic Abuse services
- Housing Grant funding for Andover Crisis and Support Centre (Refuge) and Dene Court (Direct access hostel) secured for 2016-2019.
- Effective targeting of Discretionary Housing Payment funding to prevent homelessness

22 Likely future levels of homelessness

Welfare spending is planned to reduce by around £18bn by 2014-15 and by a further £12 billion during this parliament. Levels of statutory homelessness and the use of temporary accommodation are likely to increase across the lifetime of the Preventing Homelessness Strategy 2016-2019. The Council will have to work proactively with our partners to manage these increases and deliver housing and prevention options locally to best manage demand from households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.

Reform of the welfare benefit system is likely to increase demand and as we transition into the new Universal Credit system, Registered Provider tenants impacted by these changes may require advice and support to manage their tenancies.

For those who rent privately, there is a concern that they may not be able effectively to set aside the rent element from their benefit each month and pay landlords rent due, on time. This could lead to increased legal and possession action and an increased threat of homelessness.

There are a number of other issues that will impact on the workloads of those working locally to tackle homelessness:

- Affordability of housing is a key driver of housing need. House prices continue to increase and market rents are high. This is complicated by having 4 Broad Market Rental Areas in Test Valley where local housing allowances based on the cheaper Southampton BMRA puts private rented options in Romsey out of the reach of most of our customers.
- Increasing demands on the private rented sector and the power for the Council to make private rented sector offers to homeless households as a discharge of its legal duty.

It is also likely that these factors will lead to an increased demand for services and pressure on resources. Whilst the strategy needs to plan effectively for the future it will need to be realistic and identify what resources are required to deliver the objectives and how they are to be provided in an environment when value for money and doing more with less will be prevalent. It is imperative to use what resources we have to maximum effect.

23 Partners and Stakeholders

The Council works with a range of voluntary and statutory agencies to prevent homelessness and agree appropriate move-on/rehousing arrangements. MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference), MAPPA (Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements), and the Test Valley Early Help Hub arrangements ensure a joint approach where possible to address needs.

The stakeholder workshop that helped generate the ideas and initiatives contained within this strategy was the first step in achieving this and we will harness this and continue to develop this partnership approach over the life of the strategy.

List of partners the Housing Options Team works with is detailed in Appendix 5 – Financial assessment.

24 Diagnostic Peer Review (DPR)

The DCLG has funded a national DPR framework as part of the national Gold Standard Challenge. The housing options and homeless services was subject to a DPR in October 2014 and achieved an overall score of 71%, the highest of Hampshire local authorities participating in the Gold Standard.

A Continuous Improvement Plan to support on going development was identified along with recognition from the DPR team of a range of good practice and positives at Test Valley.

The key areas that the peer review considered and made recommendations included:

- Homelessness Strategy
- Website, information and reception assessment
- Interview and casework reviews
- Partnerships
- Multi agency forums
- Temporary accommodation
- Quality of Housing options

Local authorities are required to score 60% or more in order to be considered eligible for the national Gold Standard. The Standard consists of 10 key challenges to local housing authorities. Test Valley has achieved the Bronze Standard will be working towards silver and gold standard during lifetime of this strategy.

The DPR has assisted with the review of homelessness and its findings will inform the Preventing Homelessness Strategy 2016-2019.

25 Consultation: Developing the Strategy and engagement with Others

We have worked closely with our partners, and with service users in developing this Strategy. This work was undertaken on our behalf by JenkinsDuval Consultants who ran a workshop with key stakeholders and conducted interviews with customers at three homeless accommodation based services and the Young Mums Matters pre tenancy training course.

- a) **Stakeholder Consultation** – A stakeholder workshop was held 22 June 2015. The event was well attended with wide variety of statutory, non statutory and third sector representatives. The workshop focused on:
- Existing services and partnership working,
 - Helping vulnerable people,
 - Accessing the private rented sector,
 - Welfare reform,
 - Helping young people and
 - Dealing effectively with cuts to the Supporting People budget.

Emerging issues and priorities were identified and these form the basis of the Delivery Plan to improved services and improved outcomes for those threatened with homelessness in Test Valley.

- b) **Customer Consultation** – As part of the homelessness review process, JenkinsDuval Consultants talked to a number of service users face to face, sought feedback on services to gain an understanding of individual experiences about being homeless in Test Valley. Service users living at Dene Court (direct access hostel), Junction Road family hostel, Andover Crisis and Support Centre (women's refuge) and Young Mums Matter (accredited tenancy training for young mothers), were interviewed.

The feedback from residents was very positive about the schemes, the support staff at the schemes and the quality of service received from housing options staff. The main area of concern for customers was around being kept informed about the move on process from temporary to more settled housing. We will address this in the Delivery Plan.

- c) **Customer Feedback** - The key feedback points arising from this face-to-face work with service users were:
- Regular housing options surgery at Dene Court to inform of housing options / move on & training on using Hampshire Home Choice. This session can also be used to trouble shoot move on issues, structured as a fortnightly or monthly drop in.
 - More targeted activities during the day. There should be some meaningful engagement with clients to ensure the hostel is a place of change, rather than simply a bed.
 - Review leaflets given out at housing options interview stage and at sign up at Junction Road.
 - Review move on arrangements from temporary accommodation where residents are in rent arrears or have a former debt

- Residents asked for feedback on how they were placed on the Hampshire Home Choice register and how long they will have to wait before they are successful with their bidding. They know their queue position at shortlist but cannot gauge from this the waiting times.

Feedback was very positive about the service and the staff, both at the Crisis Centre and at the Housing Options Service.

- *Ruth was helpful, she told me about the help she could give with deposits” (TVBC)*
- *There was really positive feedback about the scheme and about staff. This should be fed back to Aster(Junction Road Family Hostel)*
- *Having lived in the refuge for a year she is ready to move on and has been offered a house – she says she feels “very lucky”. She has talked to the Police and the council and sanctuary measures are going to be fitted in the new home (ACSC)*
- *All female residents had attended, or were in the process of attending this programme. Feedback was really positive (YMM)*

d) Private Landlords and Letting Agents Forum Consultation

The Housing Service canvasses the views through the private landlords and letting agents’ forum which meets 3 times a year. Aims of the Forum are:

- Improved partnership working and increased accommodation options in the private rented sector
- Improved quality of private rented sector accommodation
- Professional advice to landlords and letting agents
- Networking

e) Housing Options Team Consultation

Housing Options staff and wider Council services have been consulted as part of the review of homelessness.

We are extremely grateful to those who gave of their time to talk to us. Actions arising from this work are included in the Delivery Plan.

National Framework and National Homelessness Situation

National Framework

New National Objective

The present Government is committed to tackling and preventing homelessness, working in partnership with voluntary sector partners, local authorities and housing associations. Its main focus is on:

- rough sleeping
- homelessness prevention
- preventing repossessions

Welfare Reform

The Welfare Reform programme to date, aims to reduce the budget deficit, slow down growing benefit expenditure, increase fairness, increase work incentives and end benefit dependency.

In April 2011, the follow changes were introduced:

- Local Housing Allowance (LHA) calculated using 30th percentile of rents in the area. LHA rates will only be up rated annually by CPI from April 2013.
- Removal of 5-bedroom LHA rate from April 2011 on new claims and changes of address.
- Introduction of caps for 1 to 4 bedroom rates. The national weekly caps currently stand at
 - £250 one bedroom
 - £290 two bedrooms
 - £340 three bedrooms
 - £400 four bedrooms
- The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) has increased the DHP (Discretionary Housing Payment) budget. An extra £10 million was made available in 2011-12 (total allocation is £30 million). An extra £40 million was also available in 2012-13 (total allocation is £60 million).
- Single people between 25 and 34 only able to claim LHA at shared accommodation rates (the rates previously allowed for under 25 year olds).
- An increase in non-dependant deduction charges (phased in between 2011 to 2014).

- Property size restrictions for working-age people in social housing (April 2013), bringing in the same rules that apply to private sector lettings. This bedroom subsidy rule requires under-occupiers of social housing properties to pay a charge for each bedroom in excess of their needs, taken as a reduction in benefit payable.
- The introduction of the overall benefits cap (2013) of £26,000 per annum for families.
- Many households working and in receipt of benefits will be limited to annual increases of 1% from April 2013.
- moving towards the full implementation of Universal Credit (2014 to 2021)

The Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016

The measures contained within this Act implements the policies outlined in the Conservative Party manifesto and the measures that were announced in the Budget on 8 July 2015. These measures are intended to support the Government's commitment to increase employment; slow the growth of the welfare budget to help achieve a more sustainable welfare system; and support the policy of rewarding hard work while increasing fairness with working households. These are:

- Reducing the benefit cap from £23,000 to £20,000 outside London.
- Abolition of Housing Benefit for 18-21 year olds
- Freezing certain social security benefits and tax credits for 4 years
- Limiting the child element of universal credit tax credits to maximum of two children
- Registered providers of social housing in England to reduce social housing rents by 1% a year for 4 years from a frozen 2015 to 2016 baseline.

•

All of these will place new challenges on local authorities and will become important in shaping future housing advice and homelessness services.

Housing and Planning Act 2016

- Starter Homes
- Implementing the Right to Buy on a Voluntary Basis.
- High Income Social housing tenants: mandatory rents (pay to stay) - £31,000pa.
- Sale of higher value vacant local authority homes
- Mandatory use of fixed term tenancies
- Neighbourhood Planning

Homelessness nationally

During the 2014/15 financial year, 54,430 households were accepted by local authorities as being owed the main homelessness duty. This is an increase of 4% from £52,290 in 2013/4.

The three main causes of homelessness nationally are:

- Parents, relative of friends (mostly parents) not being able, or willing, to accommodate (39%)

- Ending of an assured shorthold tenancy (31%).
- Breakdown of a relationship with a partner (18%), with 69% of these cases involving violence.

Households in Temporary accommodation

The total number of households living in temporary accommodation while awaiting placement in a settled home is measured on the last day of each quarter. On 30 September 2015 there were 68,560 households in temporary accommodation, 13 per cent higher than at the same date in 2014.

This was a 20% increase in the number of households in temporary accommodation in England (excluding London) compared with September 2014 and marks the 17th quarterly increase in the number of households living in temporary accommodation.

Of the 68,560 households in temporary accommodation at 30 September 2015:

- 78% had been accepted as owed a main homelessness duty and were being housed in temporary accommodation by the authority until a settled home became available.
- The remaining 22 % were being accommodated pending a decision on their application, the outcome of a local authority review or an appeal to the County Court on the authority's decision, or possible referral to another local authority. Alternatively they could have been found to be intentionally homeless and in priority need and subsequently temporarily accommodated for such a period as would give them a reasonable opportunity to find accommodation for themselves.
- At the end of September 2015, 84% of households temporarily housed were in self-contained accommodation. This was the same as at the same date last year.
- Of the 68,540 households in temporary accommodation, 53,480 households (78%) included dependent children and/or pregnant women. Average number of children in temporary accommodation is 1.9.
- The number of households in bed and breakfast, *hostel accommodation and women's refuges* increased by 16% compared to the same date in previous year to 11,220.
- 18,600 (27%) were in accommodation in another local authority district. This is an increase of 20%, from 15,460 at the same date last year. 17,120 were from London (92% of the England total). This is an increase of 19% from same date last year.

Bed and Breakfast

- 5,910 households were in *bed and breakfast style accommodation*, 26% higher than the same time last year. London accounts for 57% of the number of households in bed and breakfast style accommodation, where the number has increased by 42% since the same quarter last year (2,380 to 3,370 households).
- 3,000 families with children were in bed and breakfast style accommodation at 30 September 2015. This is an increase of 45% from a year earlier.
- Of these 3000 families, 640 (32%) have been in B&B accommodation for more than 6 weeks, an increase of 105% at end of same quarter last year
- The number of households in B&B accommodation at 30 September 2015 in London was 3,370, an increase of 42% and accounting for 57% of the total England B&B figure.

Households leaving temporary accommodation

Between 1 July 2015 and 30 September 2015, the main homelessness duty was ended for 10,410 households who had previously been in temporary accommodation or had remained, with consent, in their existing accommodation while awaiting the provision of alternative accommodation. This is a 3% decrease from same quarter in 2014. Of these households:

- 7,060 (68%) of these households accepted a Part 6 offer (housing register) of a tenancy in local authority or housing association accommodation. A fall of 1% in the same quarter of 2014.
- 340 households accepted an offer of settled rented accommodation in the private sector made under the Localism Act power, down from 360 in the same quarter the previous year.
- 490 households became intentionally homeless from temporary accommodation while 1,490 households voluntarily ceased to occupy temporary accommodation.
- In England, 63% of those leaving temporary accommodation between 1 July and 30 September 2015 did so less than 6 months after acceptance, and 78% less than a year after acceptance.

Preventing Homelessness - financial assessment

1. Resources available to tackle homelessness and homelessness prevention

The Council works in partnership with the following range of agencies and organisations to maximise the resources available to prevent and tackle homelessness:

- Alabare – Test Valley Foyer
- Andover Crisis and Support Centre
- Andover and Romsey Citizen's Advice Bureaux
- Andover Young Mums Matter
- Chapter 1 - Young People's Hostel
- Children And Adult Services
- Community Mental Health Team
- Child and Adolescence Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
- Inclusion – Drug and Alcohol Service
- Department of Work and Pensions (DWP)
- Domestic Abuse Services
- Community Support – Two Saints
- HOPE Churches
- Leaving Care Team
- National Landlords Association
- Private Landlords and Letting Agencies
- Probation Service and Youth Offending Teams
- Registered Providers
- Sanctuary Housing Association - Bridge House
- Supported Families and Transform
- Hampshire County Council Prevention and Early Intervention
- Test Valley Community Services
- Trinity Food Bank
- Two Saints - Dene Court Resettlement Hostel
- Credit Union
- Victim Support Services
- Young Carers
- Yellow Brick Road
- Youth in Romsey
- Youth Support Service

2. Homelessness Prevention Grant

The Council is responsible for spending its allocated resources according to local priorities and in the interests of its residents. None of the Settlement Funding Assessment received from Government is ring-fenced for specific purposes. However, as part of the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement, the Government has provided the following indicative figures relating to what was previously paid as a separate grant for Homelessness Prevention:

2016/17 £86,332
 2017/18 £86,451
 2018/19 £86,619
 2019/20 £86,909

This is not new, or additional money as it is included in amounts receivable in Revenue Support Grant and in the retained share of Business Rates. These notional amounts have been provided “in order to signal the priority the Government attaches to homelessness and to encouraging local prioritisation of Homelessness Prevention”.

3. Cost of the homeless and homeless prevention service

The Council funds its homeless and homeless prevention activities through the General Fund. In 2013/14 the cost of the service was £401,724. The anticipated cost of the service for 2016/17 is £366,268.

Expenditure	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17 Estimate
Salary Costs	224,301	223,381	230,376	241,151
Bed & Breakfast	21,748	20,574	23,065	31,000
Service Controlled Costs including Housing Revenue Grants	194,607**	115,257***	120,802	124,667
Total Expenditure	440,656	359,212	374,243	396,818
Income				
DCLG grant	*	*	*	
One-off grants	10,000			
Bed and breakfast subsidy/hostel	28,932	22,354	27,536	30,550
Total Income		22,354	27,536	30,550
Net Total	401,724	336,858	346,707	366,268

*Grant funding previously specific to homelessness is now part of the Revenue Support Grant. The balance of our expenditure on homelessness is therefore drawn from the General Fund

** Higher expenditure cost due to CSU recharges of £40k - not been charged previously

*** Lower expenditure due to adjustment to bad debt provision – over provided in previous years

4. Rent Deposit Loan Scheme

One of the key prevention tools for the reducing homelessness and avoiding the use of bed and breakfast is the RDLS. Table 2 details the number of households assisted by the RDLS, the cost to the Council of loans provided to applicants under the scheme and income received from applicants.

Table 2 - Expenditure on Rent Deposit Loan Scheme

	2003-2013	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	Total
Households assisted	936	79	83	73	1,171
Loans provided	948,387	113,244	116,284	103,180	1,281,095
Income/loan recovered	697,500*	104,750*	117,265*	108,990	1,028,505
Net cost of RDLS	250,887				252,590

*includes monies recovered against previous years debts

The net cost of the RDLS scheme since 2003 to 2016 is £252,590. This is an average cost of £216 per loan compared with £408 per household in bed and breakfast. The RDLS provides good quality accommodation on assured shorthold tenancies of at least 6 months, in an area in which applicants choose to live.

During the period 2003–2013 the RDLS recovery rate was 73%. The Council has recovered the equivalent of 80% of RDLS loans provided since 2003. 73 Households have accessed the private rented sector with the assistance of RDLS in 2015/16 to date at a cost of £103,180.

5. The cost of Bed and Breakfast Accommodation

In Test Valley, bed and breakfast is only ever used in an emergency and where there are absolutely no alternative accommodation options for people. The table below shows usage and expenditure since 2003. In 2012/13, 76 households were placed in bed and breakfast accommodation at gross cost of £126,700. 14 households have been placed in bed and breakfast accommodation in 2015/16 at gross expenditure of £23,065.

Table 3 - The cost of Bed and Breakfast Accommodation

	2003-2013	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/16	Total
Households placed in B&B	441	16	17	14	488
Gross Cost of B&B	740,008	21,748	20,574	23,065	805,395
Net cost of B&B	191,993	1,084	4,320	1,629	199,026

(The net bed and breakfast cost includes contributions from households placed in bed and breakfast, housing benefit and the central government subsidy).

The most effective alternative to the use of bed and breakfast accommodation is to look to secure accommodation in the private rented sector. Doing this is part of the prevention work of the Housing Options team. Where it is required, the Council can assist in securing property through the rent deposit loan scheme.

However, whilst the Council remains fully committed to limiting the use of bed and breakfast, it has been necessary to use this form of accommodation in response to emergency situations.

6. Support for preventing homelessness

The use of Community Support and tenancy support is crucial in preventing homelessness and enabling applicants to maintain their tenancies. The generic Community Support service in Test Valley is provided by Two Saints.

7. Housing Revenue Grants

The Council has agreed revenue funding for 2016-2019 to the Andover Crisis and Support Centre (£35,700), and Two Saints - Dene Court (£31,500) who are key partners in helping the Council achieve the actions set out in the Homelessness Strategy.

The Council has also supported (£2,000) the Young Mums Matter Course. The Course runs over 12 weeks and offers the opportunity for households to learn how to manage independently and successfully as a family, covering Home Matters (preparing for a tenancy), Money Matters (budgeting, housing benefit, debt and spending), Work Matters (CV writing, interview techniques, and local college visits) and Youth Matters (sexual health, emotional well Being, internet safety and building positive relationships). Young Mums Matter is an accredited course run by Yellow Brick Road Projects Limited.

8. External Funding

Since 1014, the Council in partnership with other Hampshire local authorities has successfully bid and attracted the following additional funding into the borough from the DCLG:

d) 2013 - Single Homelessness Fund (£35,150)

Two Saints has delivered a targeted service to a group of complex clients, entrenched rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping (prolonged sofa surfers). The aim of service being to reduce the numbers of rough sleepers in Test Valley.

e) 2014 - DCLG Help for Single Homeless Fund (£34,000)

Two Saints has delivered a comprehensive package of support services for people who are of no fixed abode, sofa surfing, or in temporary accommodation, and for those with a history of rough sleeping. This funding has been used to employ a dedicated Homeless Outreach Worker operating out of Dene Court Direct Access Hostel in Andover.

f) 2015 - DCLG Domestic Abuse Funding (£60,000)

In Test Valley, a grant of £60k to the Andover Crisis and Support Centre has enabled them to purchase two new properties in Andover for this purpose.

**Preventing Homelessness Strategy 2016 – 2019
Delivery Plan**

Priority 1 – Building on Existing Services						
REF	Action	Outcome and how will we achieve it	How will we measure Success? Performance targets	Resources Required	Who will deliver this?	When will we do it by?
1.1	Reduce and eliminate where possible, the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for families and young people	<p>Only using this form of accommodation in the event of an emergency and for no longer than 6 weeks.</p> <p>Explore alternatives to B&B:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mobile Home parks - Nightly lets - Private landlords' provision of interim accommodation 	<p>Maintain the reduction in the use of bed and breakfast and spend against budget (£30k).</p> <p>Nil use of B&B for all vulnerable 16/17 year olds</p>	<p>Bed and breakfast budget</p> <p>Staff time</p>	H&EH	On going up to June 2019
1.2	Review the effectiveness of the 'triage' service in preventing homelessness and the delivery of housing advice and options to customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Undertake an evaluation - Timely interventions for customers - More effective use of staff resources 	Customers seen within 30 minutes and provided with appropriate housing options.	Within existing resources	H&EH	Dec 2016

Test Valley Borough Council – Cabinet – 22 June 2016

1.3	Provide clear advice on housing options to households placed in temporary accommodation	<p>Monthly drop in sessions at</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Junction Road Hostel, ACSC - Community Support Drop In <p>- Review standard letters</p>	<p>Reduction in the length of stay in temporary accommodation before moving on.</p> <p>Improved customer satisfaction</p>	Within existing resources	H&EH, Aster, Two Saints and ACSC	Sept 2016
1.4	To develop our approach to tackling Empty Homes	<p>Develop our approach to bring empty homes back in to use</p> <p>Ensure our approach is sufficiently robust to satisfy a Compulsory Purchase Order procedure</p>	Reduce the number of empty homes year on year and increase options for households in need.	Within existing resources	H&EH, Planning Enforcement and Legal.	Dec 2016
1.5	Monitor and review our current local No Second Night Out model.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No Second Night Out provision for any rough sleeper - SLA agreement with Two Saints detailing Outcomes to be met. - Housing Grant approved 2016-2019 	All rough sleepers to be offered NSNO response within 24 hours.	<p>Within existing resources</p> <p>Agreed Housing Grant 2016-2019</p>	H&EH, Homeless Link Two Saints Police, Churches, N Hants Officer Group	Sept 2017
1.6	Deliver SWEP provision annually to prevent rough sleeping during severe weather	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Emergency accommodation is available to anyone who may otherwise sleep rough in severe weather - SLA agreement with Two Saints detailing Outcomes to be met. - Housing Grant approved 2016-2019 	No one sleeping rough in severe weather.	<p>Within existing resources</p> <p>Agreed Housing Grant 2016-2019</p>	H&EH, Homeless Link Two Saints Police, Churches, N Hants Officer Group	ongoing

Test Valley Borough Council – Cabinet – 22 June 2016

1.7	Review future funding arrangements for NSNO and SWEP arrangements beyond April 2019.	The provision of an effective NSNO offer and SWEP arrangements	Suitable arrangements in place to meet the Council obligations in respect of NSNO and SWEP.	Within existing resources	H&EH	April 2018
1.8	Review housing options information on the website ensuring the customer has access to accurate, useful and comprehensive information about housing options, making clear councils statutory duties.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Comprehensive set of up to date literature available electronically - Periodic review of all literature. - Develop a range of self-help tools/packs and make these available for download from the housing options website 	Fully up to date information across the service and plan in place for periodic review.	Within existing resources	H&EH	Mar 2017
		-				
1.9	To progress work against the DCLG Gold Standard prioritising those areas which will have the most impact.	<p>Review service against the following Local Challenges :</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Corporate Commitment to tackling homelessness 2. Use of Bed and Breakfast 3. Preventing Homelessness Strategy 4. Housing Options prevention service to all clients 5. No Second Night Out model or an effective local alternative. 	<p>To submit 3 of the Local Challenges by end of Dec 2016.</p> <p>Submit further 2 Local Challenges by Feb 2017.</p>	Within existing resources	H&EH,	March 2017
1.10	Identify training needs and delivery training to meet any skill gaps and updates on new legislation and case law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fully trained and up to date staff - Consistent and accurate decision making 	Homeless decision made within 9 working days	Service training budget	In house , other local authorities or established trainers	ongoing

Test Valley Borough Council – Cabinet – 22 June 2016

1.11	Provide victims of domestic abuse with information to enable them to stay within their homes where it is safe to do so	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote the new Hampshire Staying Safe Scheme - Signpost and make appropriate referrals to the scheme at interview 	No of households able to remain in home as result of target hardening measures.	External funding secured through DCLG	HCC, Blue Lamp Trust	Review in Nov 2016
1.12	Review of the 'Drop in ' service at ACSC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ACSC to carry out an annual review as per SLA - The provision of advice and assistance to households approaching the ACSC on range of issues, including housing. 	Outcomes met by ACSC as per SLA	Agreed Housing Grant 2016-2019	H&EH,ACSC	Apr 2017
1.13	Review policies and practice in light of recent successful legal challenges and case law on vulnerability.	All non-Priority Need decision to incorporate a support plan.	Robust decision making and reduction in number of appeals	Within existing resources	H&EH	Sept 2016
	The continued provision of training around: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Relationships b) Accredited Pre-tenancy training for Young Mums in temporary accommodation 	<p>ACSC to secure funding to continue to run the Freedom Programme.</p> <p>Young Mums Matter to secure funding to continue to deliver pre tenancy training beyond 2016.</p>	Increased awareness of issues surrounding homelessness, relationships, tenancy management and sustainment and domestic abuse.	<p>ACSC fund raising</p> <p>Within existing resources</p>	<p>ACSC</p> <p>TVBC</p>	Oct 2016

Priority 2 - Ensure that housing related support arrangements for the most vulnerable are safeguarded						
REF	Action	Outcome and how will we achieve it	How will we measure Success? Performance targets	Resources Required	Who will deliver this?	When will we do it by?
2.1	<p>Monitor the impact of the new Prevention and Early Intervention Resettlement Service (PEIRS), introduced in April 2016 its impact on services in Test Valley.</p> <p>Review the funding arrangements for the Service beyond 2019.</p>	<p>The new PIERS Service meets the needs of residents in the borough through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sustained levels of accommodation based and community support for Test Valley residents. - The continuation of effective Housing pathways and referral arrangements with key agencies that includes appropriate accommodation and support. 	<p>Maintain or reduce current levels of homelessness</p> <p>HCC Quarterly Performance targets – usage, move on from schemes, up to 70 households assisted through community support at any one time, Payment by Results.</p> <p>TVBC – Ensuring TVBC residents are prioritised for local services.</p>	<p>Within existing resources</p> <p>HCC External Funding</p>	<p>H&EH, HCC, Two Saints, Alabare.</p>	<p>April 2017 and ongoing</p>

<p>2.2</p>	<p>To maintain a family hostel in Andover following the withdrawal of funding resulting from the Social Inclusion Review.</p> <p>Review the funding arrangements for the Junction Road hostel beyond 2019.</p>	<p>The provision of a family hostel at Junction Road, Andover from April 2015.</p> <p>SLA agreement with Aster Communities to manage the hostel and flats at The Junction.</p>	<p>Reduction in the use of bed and breakfast</p> <p>Monitor the SLA agreed with Aster Communities</p>	<p>Revenue funding agreed by Cabinet for 2016-2019.</p>	<p>H&EH, Aster Communities</p>	<p>April 2016</p> <p>April 2018</p>
	<p>Monitor the impact of the Young Persons Accommodation Service introduced in April 2015 and its impact on services in Test Valley.</p> <p>Review the funding arrangements for the Service beyond 2018</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provision of accommodation based support for 16-17 year olds and care leavers. - Effective Housing pathway and referral arrangements for young people, that includes appropriate accommodation and support. 	<p>HCC Quarterly Performance targets</p>	<p>HCC External Funding</p>	<p>H&EH, Childrens Services, Alabare</p>	<p>2017 and on going</p>

Test Valley Borough Council – Cabinet – 22 June 2016

	<p>Monitor the impact of the new Mental Health accommodation Service introduced in April 2016 and its impact on services in Test Valley.</p> <p>Review the funding arrangements for the Service beyond 2019.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sustained levels of accommodation based and community support for Test Valley residents. - The continuation of effective Housing pathways and referral arrangements with Mental Health providers, including accommodation and support. 	HCC Quarterly Performance targets	HCC External Funding	H&EH, Childrens Services, Alabare	2018 and on going
2.3	Increase move-on provision for victims of Domestic abuse in Test Valley	2 more properties to be secured through the Hampshire Making Safe Scheme for move on from Andover Crisis and support Centre (ACSC)	Meet the move-on target from the ACSC under the Integrated Domestic Abuse Service Hampshire (IDASH)	Funded through the Hampshire Staying Safe project (49k)	ACSC and Aster Communities	July 2016
2.4	Provide Revenue Funding to Housing Projects to assist Council in meeting its homelessness duties	SLA with Andover Crisis and Support Centre (Women’s Refuge) and Two Saints (Direct Access Hostel) for 3 year funding 2016-2019	Annual review of SLA against outcomes.	Service Budget	ACSC and Two Saints	ongoing subject to review in autumn 2018
2.5	Evaluate the impact of the DCLG funded Homeless Outreach pilot.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Joint evaluation with Two Saints - Reduction in rough sleeping and more effective targeted services. - Explore alternative provision and funding 	<p>Two Saints quarterly returns</p> <p>Meet obligations under NSNO AND SWEP</p>	DCLG Funding		Oct 2016

2.6	Take advantage of any potential funding streams (DCLG) for future service delivery or support voluntary sector partners in their bids for funding to prevent or tackle homelessness	Partnership bids for funding to support local services and increase funding in to Test Valley to tackle homelessness	Increased funding in Test Valley to tackle homelessness	Within existing resources	Voluntary sector partners	ongoing
2.7	To assist the government with the resettlement of Syrian refugees	Rehouse 2 Syrian refugee households per year for life time of current parliament	Successful integration into Test Valley Annual Evaluation	Home Office Funding	H&EH, Aster Hants CC, British Red Cross, Support agencies.	2015-2020

Priority 3 – Supporting People to access suitable alternative accommodation

REF	Action	Outcome and how will we achieve it	How will we measure Success? Performance targets	Resources Required	Who will deliver this?	When will we do it by?
3.1	Deliver 800 affordable homes by 2019	800 homes developed through planning policy and working in partnership with local communities, housing providers and landowners and developers.	Delivery of 800 new affordable units by 2019.	Grants, use of S.106 monies, RTB receipts and cross subsidies	Legal, H&EH, Registered Providers, Developers, Planning Policy and DC Planning.	March 2019

3.2	Enable older people with disabilities to continue to live independently in their homes for as long as possible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue to fund a capital programme for Disabled Facilities Grants and housing renewal grants. - Develop a range of housing including extra care for older and disabled people. 	<p>Enable older people to remain independent in their own homes.</p> <p>Meeting need, making best use of extra care and social housing stock in the borough.</p>	Funding of DFG and Housing Renewal Grants	<p>H&EH, Hampshire County Council</p> <p>Extra Care Panel, Aids & Adaptation Panel</p>	ongoing
3.3	Review the supply of temporary accommodation and identify future local temporary accommodation needs and how these can be best met.	<p>Explore the following alternatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hostel accommodation - Mobile Home parks - Nightly lets - Difficult to let social housing - Private landlords provision of interim accommodation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Portfolio of temporary accommodation to meet councils needs - Reduction of B&B accommodation - Minimise time spent in temporary housing. 	Within existing resources	H&EH, RPs, Private Landlords and Letting Agents Forum (PLLAF)	ongoing
3.4	Introduce compulsory discharge of duty into the Private Rented Sector where appropriate.	<p>Review Private Rented Sector Offer (PRSO) policies with neighbouring authorities</p> <p>Use PRSO offers when appropriate, to discharge homelessness duties.</p>	Make 5 PRSO per annum	Within existing resources	H&EH, PRS landlords	June 2017

3.5	For Households in temporary accommodation introduce automatic bidding alongside the use of, where appropriate, the use of compulsory Private Rented Sector Offers.	Ensure all PRSO meet suitability standards set out in Suitability order and Code of Guidance. Revise policy and procedures and HO proforma for this purpose.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Shorter stay in temporary accommodation – Better use of temporary housing – Use of the PRS as discharge of homeless duty 	Within existing resources	PLLAf, Letting agents, private landlords	Jan 2017
-----	--	---	--	---------------------------	--	----------

Priority 4 - Increased use of the Private Rented Sector						
REF	Action	Outcome and how will we achieve it	How will we measure Success? Performance targets	Resources Required	Who will deliver this?	When will we do it by?
4.1	Assist households threatened with homelessness to access the private rented sector	Increase access to the private rented sector through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Successful negotiation with landlords – Weekly promotion of letting agents vacancies – Promotion of the Rent Deposit Loan Scheme 	Minimum of 80 new placements into private rented sector using RDLS per annum Assist 40 households per annum to secure a PRS property without the RDLS	Within existing resources	H&EH, Private landlords and letting agents	ongoing
42	Manage the termination of the PSL scheme with Aster	Replacement of PSL properties(86) with portfolio of temporary accommodation within Aster Stock	Mixed portfolio of 100 Temporary accommodation units	Within existing resources	H&EH, Aster Communities	April 2017

4.4	Promotion of the Rent Deposit Loan Scheme to landlords impacted by the termination of the PSL Scheme.	Increased in the number of properties available for applicants under the RDLS scheme.	Existing tenants of PSL properties have an opportunity to remain and rent their existing accommodation.	Within existing resources	H&EH, PLLAF, Aster	March 2017
4.5	Support and advise private sector landlords about Universal Credit	Regular UC updates at the Private Landlords and Letting Agents Forum (PLLAF) to make landlords fully aware of UC and its implication and how we can work together to support our customers on low incomes to continue to access the PRS.	Increased use of the PRS for customers threatened with homelessness and those on low incomes.	Within existing resources	H&EH, PLLAF,	Regular item at PLLAF

Priority 5 - Building and maintaining effective partnership working

REF	Action	Outcome and how will we achieve it	How will we measure Success? Performance targets	Resources Required	Who will deliver this?	When will we do it by?
5.1	Working in partnership to ensure appropriate Multi-agency joint working and referral arrangements in place for new Prevention and Early Intervention Resettlement Service (PEIRS) Service.	Establish Steering Group Local operational arrangements with Two Saints around referral process, decision making and placement of clients to appropriate projects and access to community support.	Meet the performance targets in the Prevention and Early Intervention Resettlement Service (PEIRS)	Within existing resources	Housing Options, Two Saints and Children's Services	?date

5.2	Work with Hampshire CC and other Hampshire local authorities to deliver local housing related support provision under PEIRS Model beyond 2019.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sustained levels of accommodation based and community support for Test Valley residents. - The continuation of effective Housing pathways with key agencies that includes appropriate accommodation and support. 	Safeguard existing services and Sustain levels of accommodation based and community support for Test Valley residents	<p>Within existing resources</p> <p>HCC Funding</p>	H&EH, HCC,	April 2018
5.3	Review how the housing service and partners are tackling underlying causes of homelessness, social inclusion and on going support needs of clients	<p>Annual review of Homelessness Strategy to respond to emerging needs.</p> <p>Homelessness Forum to monitor the delivery Plan with housing providers and key agencies</p>	Up to date Action Plan reviewed by multi agency forum on annual basis	Within Existing resources	TVBC, Two Saints, Children’s Service, Probation	Annual Review
5.4	Review the deliver of pre tenancy education in schools, covering the prevention of homelessness and tenancy sustainment.	<p>Set up focus Group to identify gaps, and report back to SLFF Strategic Group on new model of delivery for pre tenancy training to existing and prospective tenants.</p> <p>Bid for funding through the Supporting Families Programme to deliver pre-tenancy education.</p>	Increased awareness of issues surrounding homelessness, relationships, tenancy sustainment and domestic abuse	Supported Families Funding	Strategic Local Families Forum, ACSC, Aster and H&EH	Dec 2016

5.5	Working in partnership with Adult Services and statutory and voluntary agencies through the Early Help Hub to prevent homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Weekly Attendance at Test Valley Early Help Hub (TVEHH) - Holistic assessment considers the needs of the family, and specifically the developmental needs of a child within the family. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prevention of Homelessness TVEHH Outcome monitoring		E&EH, TVEHH	ongoing
5.6	Raise the awareness of the realities of homelessness within schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deliver housing and tenancy education to Year 9 students - ACSC to deliver CRUSH programme in local schools 	Outcome Star Model	Winton School	H&EH, Young Mums Matter, TVCS, ACSC, Supported Families	2017/8

Priority 6 - Supporting a successful welfare reform transition in Test Valley

REF	Action	Outcome and how will we achieve it	How will we measure Success? Performance targets	Resources Required	Who will deliver this?	When will we do it by?
6.1	Support Test Valley BC Revenues Service to make effective and targeted use of Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP)	Prevention of homelessness using DHP where possible.	Effective use of DHP to support local households	DHP Budget	TVBC	ongoing
6.2	Working with CAB, Aster and RPs to prevent homelessness and provide debt advice re UC and welfare reform.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Briefing sessions with CAB - Appropriate referral arrangements to CAB for debt advice and management 	Maximise opportunities to provide debt advice and prevent homelessness. Recorded on Pie	Within existing resources		ongoing

Test Valley Borough Council – Cabinet – 22 June 2016

6.3	Review RDLS in light of UC changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make the RDLS scheme robust and responsive to changes in tenants rental liabilities under UC - Adjustments in policy to cover 6 week rent in advance to assist with new UC claims. - Alternative Payment arrangements for vulnerable applicants - Build DWP processes into the RDLS procedure. 	Households in receipt of UC assisted to access the private rented sector.	Within existing resources	H&EH.	April 2017
6.4	Monitor the impact of impact of the Benefit Cap, changes to Local Housing Allowance (LHA), Abolishing HB for under 21's and UC.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop targeted action plan to identify applicants affected and provide appropriate support, advice and sign posting. 	Reduction in evictions and debt	Within existing resources	H&EH, Revenues, DWP, RPs	March 2017
6.5	Introduce effective working relations with DWP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Affordability assessments - Establish arrangements for direct payments to landlords - Support vulnerable households - Establish DWP role within RDLS processes - Work with Job Centre Plus to promote back to work opportunities, providing advice, debt management and Sign posting to services. 			H&EH, DWP	ongoing

Appendix 5

Test Valley Borough Council

Temporary Accommodation Policy

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Council has statutory duties to provide temporary accommodation (TA) for homeless applicants in certain circumstances. These duties are set out in Part 7 Housing Act 1996 (as amended by Homelessness Act 2002). There is further statutory guidance and relevant case law on how the Council should operate and perform these duties.
- 1.2 This Temporary Accommodation policy sets out how Test Valley Borough Council will meet its statutory duties to provide temporary accommodation for people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.
- 1.3 The Temporary Accommodation policy covers:
 - a) The procurement of temporary accommodation.
 - b) The allocation of temporary accommodation to people owed a duty under homelessness legislation.
 - c) How tenants will be moved on from temporary accommodation into a property which will discharge Council's statutory housing duty to provide rehousing.
- 1.4 The Temporary Accommodation policy will be reviewed periodically, or when new legislation is enacted.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Council's fifth Preventing Homelessness Strategy 2016-2019, sets out our key strategic priorities. The Delivery Plan details actions and activities to deliver these priorities and outcomes and to ensure services are geared to prevent homelessness effectively and efficiently. The Preventing Homelessness Strategy 2016-2019 is available to download at www.testvalley.gov.uk
- 2.2 The Council will, wherever possible, seek to prevent homelessness, or where this is not possible, to relieve homelessness by finding an alternative housing option for the client.
- 2.3 Where this approach does not succeed and/or homelessness cannot be avoided, the Council may be under a duty to provide temporary accommodation. The Council will ensure sufficient temporary accommodation is available for households whom homelessness could not be prevented or alleviated, where there are statutory duties to accommodate them. Temporary accommodation is procured to enable the Council to fulfil its duties under the Housing Act 1996, Part 7.
- 2.4 The Council has a mixed portfolio of temporary accommodation, so as to ensure there a balance of stock is available and there are options for increasing this stock as required. The Council will procure appropriate temporary accommodation to enable it to discharge relevant homelessness duties in the following ways:

- a) Council owned accommodation leased to Registered Providers. These are self-contained units at Portersbridge Street Romsey, Station Road, Romsey, and New Street, Andover, Atholl Court managed by Aster Communities.
 - b) Social Housing units at Vespasian Road provided by a range of Registered Providers (Hyde-Marlet, Stonewater, Radian).
 - c) Portfolio of temporary accommodation provided by Aster Communities.
 - d) Aster Communities Private Sector leasing scheme.
 - e) Making use of Private Rented Sector (PRS) accommodation and the Council's Rent Deposit Loan Scheme to secure accommodation, where this is necessary.
 - f) Family Hostel (Junction Road and The Junction Flats) and Eastfield Road self contained units in Andover.
 - g) Temporary direct access hostel accommodation at Dene Court, Andover, where this is necessary.
 - h) Emergency Bed provision at Dene Court Direct Access Hostel.
 - i) Securing temporary refuge accommodation, at Andover Crisis and Support Centre and through the Integrated Domestic Abuse Service Hampshire (IDASH).
 - j) Accommodation based services for single generic homeless households at Bridge House, Stubbs and Turin Court, Andover.
- 2.5 Temporary accommodation will be managed by the provider, in all instances.
- 2.6 Wherever possible, TA will be provided within the district. However, this will not always be possible, and in these situations accommodation will be secured with due regard to the suitability of available options in other areas.
- 2.7 If an out of district placement is made, the Council will endeavour to make the applicant an offer of suitable temporary accommodation in the Borough, as soon as possible.
- 2.8 Bed and breakfast (B&B) accommodation will only be used as a last resort, where all other housing options have been exhausted and only in an emergency.
- 2.9 The Council will have regard to statutory requirements including the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2003.
- 3 The Letting of Temporary Accommodation**
- 3.1 The Council will let temporary accommodation in accordance with the following guiding principles.
- 3.2 General Principles:
- 3.3 All lettings are made subject to a suitability assessment to determine the type and location of temporary accommodation that should be offered.

- 3.4 An Individual's needs must be assessed on their own merits. It maybe appropriate in exceptional circumstances, to exercise discretion. In such circumstances, decisions are made at the discretion of the Housing Manager in consultation with the Head of Housing and Environmental Health, having regard to an individual's circumstances and the competing demands for emergency accommodation at that time.
- 3.5 All placements into temporary accommodation will be made with a view to making the best use of local housing stock, ensuring best occupancy is utilised based on the needs of those requiring temporary accommodation and with regard to the housing circumstances in the area.
- 3.6 Housing Options Officers will seek to ensure that units at the Family Hostel and The Junction are let in accordance with the Service Level Agreement between the Council and Aster Communities and with due regard to competing demands for temporary accommodation.
- 3.7 Housing Options Officers will review cases in B&B. They may prioritise homeless families in B&B for vacant temporary accommodation units, as and when temporary accommodation becomes available. These decisions will be taken with due regard to the needs of individual households, statutory requirements including the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2003, Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) guidance, and in consideration of all other competing demands from households who are owed a temporary accommodation duty that day.

4 Considering Individual Households & Competing Demands

Housing Options Officers will look at all of the stock that is available on the day temporary accommodation is required by individual applicants and will decide which is the most suitable property available to them for that particular person or household.

- 4.1 The property offered will be suitable for the needs of the particular homeless household (including each member of the household). The location of the accommodation will be a factor considered in determining suitability along with all other relevant considerations set out in statute and accompanying guidance.
- 4.2 Where there is more than one temporary accommodation option available, the most suitable property will be chosen. Before making an offer of temporary accommodation, the Housing Options Officers will consider:
 - a) The size of the household in relation to the temporary accommodation available.
 - b) The income and expenditure of the household and the costs of the temporary accommodation (affordability).
 - c) Employment and the client's need to reach their normal workplace.
 - d) Whether there is a need to minimise disruption to education e.g. with a child at a critical point in education such as close to taking GCSE examinations.

- e) Where possible, avoiding isolation e.g. where accommodation is away from public transport, shops and other relevant facilities.
 - f) Which units may be closest to where the applicant had been living so they can retain links with schools, doctors, social workers and other key services and support that may be essential to the well-being of the applicant or their household.
- 4.3 No pets are allowed in most available forms of temporary accommodation except assistance dogs for the disabled. Where possible, applicants will be accommodated with their pets but this may not be realistic due to restrictions on most temporary accommodation options. Households will be supported in exploring their options around fostering and or re-homing any pets prior to moving in to temporary accommodation.
- 4.4 The unreasonable refusal of a suitable offer of temporary accommodation will usually mean the Council discharges the temporary accommodation duty and the applicant will be expected to seek accommodation for themselves.

5 A final housing offer from Temporary Accommodation

- 5.1 Test Valley Borough Council has the following options available to end the main homelessness duty:
- a) Offer of a PRS property with a tenancy of a minimum 12 months
 - b) Social housing via Choice Based Lettings (CBL)
- 5.2 As a general rule additional priority (Band 3 to Band 2) will be given to households accommodated in temporary accommodation in accordance with the current Allocations Policy as follows:
- a) Andover Crisis and Support Centre – 6 months from the date the Council has accepted the ‘full housing duty’ under homelessness legislation.
 - b) Eastfield Lodge, Andover and Station Road, Romsey – 1 year from the date the Council has accepted the ‘full housing duty’ under homelessness legislation.
 - c) Portersbridge Street, Romsey – 1 year from the date the Council has accepted the ‘full housing duty’ under homelessness legislation.
 - d) Registered Provider/Local Authority Owned Stock – 2 years from the date the Council has accepted the ‘full housing duty’ under homelessness legislation.
 - e) Private Sector Leasing Scheme (PSL) properties – 2 years from the date the household moves in.
- 5.3 Where an applicant is not bidding, the housing options team will place bids for them on suitable properties.

- 5.4 Given the shortage of housing association homes in the area it may take some considerable time for an applicant to receive an offer of social housing.
- 5.5 The Council will always have due regard when seeking to end the main housing duty with a PRSO, to the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2012 and associated statutory guidance.