



Directorate for People
Commissioning Centre of Excellence
Homelessness Review 2016/17

Purpose: The purpose of the Homelessness Review – undertaken with extensive involvement and input from stakeholder - is to:

- Examine the extent, nature and causes of homelessness in the city
- Understand who is affected by homelessness and the impact that homelessness has on households and individuals
- Assess the policies, resources and services to tackle homelessness and evaluate their effectiveness
- Contribute to an evidence base for the Homeless Strategy for the commissioning of services

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Homeless Review 2016/17 – Executive Summary

Introduction

The Homelessness Act 2002 places a legal requirement on local authorities to carry out a review of all forms of homelessness in their district and publish a Homelessness Strategy.

The Homelessness Review is intended to provide part of an evidence base for developing the new Homelessness Strategy in relation to:

- Preventing homelessness;
- Ensuring accommodation is available for people who are, or who may become homeless;
- Commissioning support for people who are or who may become homeless.

Defining Homelessness

“A household is legally homeless if, either, they do not have accommodation that they are entitled to occupy, which is accessible and physically available to them or, they have accommodation but it is not reasonable for them to continue to occupy this accommodation”

- This is a definition of statutory homelessness, leading to a duty on the local authority to provide assistance.
- However the Homeless Review and Strategy should take a wider view of the population affected by homelessness and insecure housing; including street homelessness. The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) definition of street homelessness is:

“People sleeping, about to bed down (sitting on/in or standing next to their bedding) or actually bedded down in the open air (such as on the streets, in tents, doorways, parks, bus shelters or encampments). People in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as stairwells, barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations, or “bashes”).”

Housing in Birmingham

- The local population is growing at a faster rate than homes are being built, leading to an increase in overcrowding across all tenures of housing.
- There are more than 20,000 households on the BCC Housing Register (April 2016).
- Annually social housing allocations meet a quarter of Birmingham’s overall registered housing need.
- There is a shrinking affordable housing sector.
- There are reducing housing options for low-income and benefit-dependent households – especially U-35s and large households affected by Benefit Cap.
- There is a growing private rented market – but high demand and competition in the market with a comparatively low Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rate.

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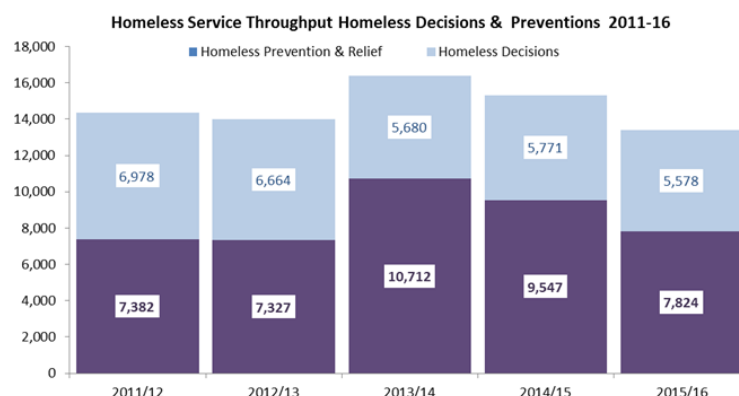
- Relative to local incomes, Birmingham is one of the most expensive places to rent in the country. Housing costs in the City equate to 47% of household income compared to 49% in London.
- There are 113,000 recipients of housing benefit in Birmingham, of which 28% live in the Private Rented Sector (PRS).
- Birmingham is a mortgage repossession hotspot, where 1 in 69 households face the threat of losing their home compared to 1 in 108 households in England.

Homelessness in Birmingham

The Scale of Homelessness in Birmingham

- More than 20,000 (est.) households in Birmingham each year are either homeless, at risk of becoming homeless or transitioning out of homelessness – this is based on a broad view including priority and non-priority groups and those who are “hidden” to the Council
- Council and commissioned services collectively respond to over 14,000 household contacts for housing advice and assistance per year. Other registered provider and Third Sector services also handle significant caseloads
- In 2015/16, almost 8,000 homeless prevention and relief interventions were delivered and c.6,000 homeless decisions were made (Fig. 1).

Figure 1: Homeless Service Throughput Decisions and Preventions 2011-2016



Source: Birmingham City Council 2016

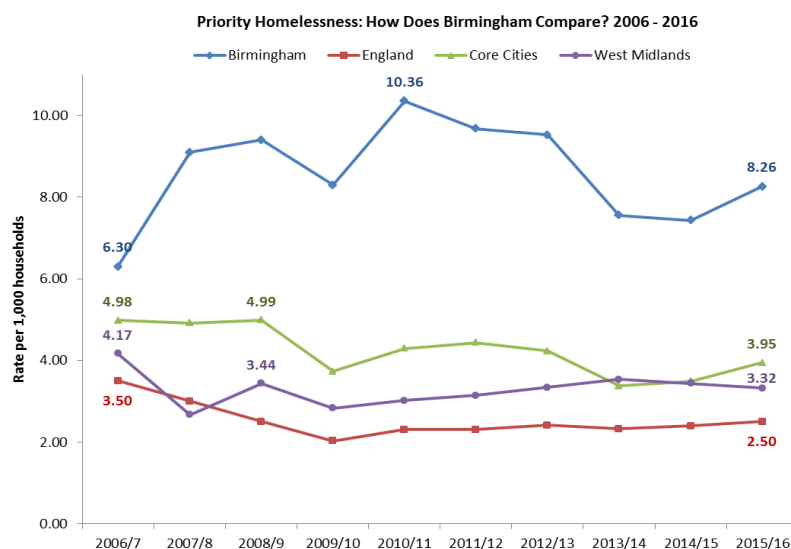
- 78% of households who make a homeless application have dependent children.
- 90% of applicants are of working age (18-64), mostly below 35 years old.
- 15% of applications are from outside of Birmingham – approximately half of which are related to domestic abuse.
- Most notable change in previous housing tenure/circumstances of households approaching the Local Authority as homeless is the increase in applicants whose previous tenure is private renting.

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Homeless and in Priority Need

- Birmingham has more than three times the rate of priority homelessness than the national average and double the rate of Core City neighbours (Fig. 2).

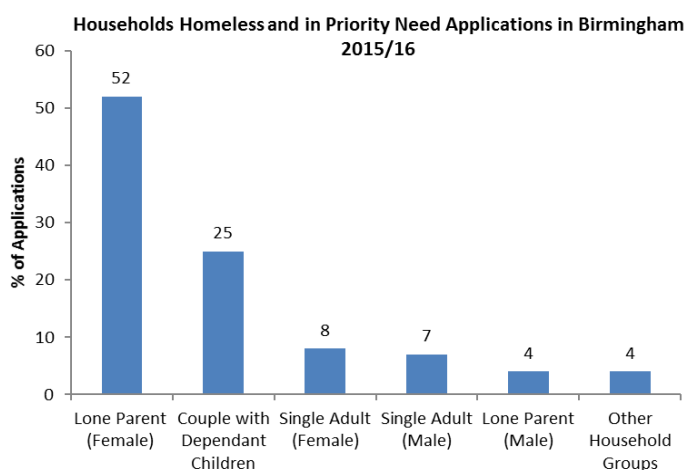
Figure 2: Priority Homelessness Trends (2006 - 2016)



Source: Department for Communities and Local Government 2016

- There are disproportionately higher level of applications from Black and Minority Ethnic groups.
- More than three quarters of applicants accepted as homeless and in priority need have children – either with a lone parent (female 52%, male 4%), or as dependants of a couple (25%) (Fig. 3).

Figure 3: Applications Accepted as Homeless and in Priority Need (%)



Source: Birmingham City Council 2016

- The most frequent presenting reasons for those deemed, priority homeless are end of assured short hold tenancy (24.9%), domestic abuse (19.8%) and parental exclusion (12.2%) (Table 1).

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Table 1: Reasons for Homelessness – Priority Homeless Households 2015/16

Rank	Priority Homeless by Homeless Reason	%
1	End of Assured Shorthold Tenancy	24.9
2	Domestic abuse (involving partner or associated persons)	19.8
3	Parental exclusion	12.2
4	Relatives/ friends no longer willing to accommodate	12.1
5	Property related disrepair, overcrowding, returned from abroad and other	7.2
6	Violence and harassment (all types including racial)	5.4
7	Rent arrears and repossession (all tenures)	4.0
8	Required to leave National Asylum Support Service accommodation	4.0
9	Relationship breakdown with partner (non-DA)	3.8
10	Other reason - homeless in emergency	3.1
11	Left Social Care, Health or other LA Care	2.6
12	Left hospital	0.5
13	Left prison	0.2
14	Perpetrator of DA/ ASB	0.2
15	Left HM Armed Forces	0.0

Source: Birmingham City Council 2016

- In comparison to recorded levels of households who are homeless in priority need 2015/16, the number of households in Birmingham who are deemed homeless and not in priority housing need is markedly lower (426).

Street Homelessness

- In line with national trends, the rate of street homeless has significantly increased in recent years. Whilst national rates saw an annual increase of 16% however, local levels increased by 53% in the equivalent period (2015 -2016) (Table 2).

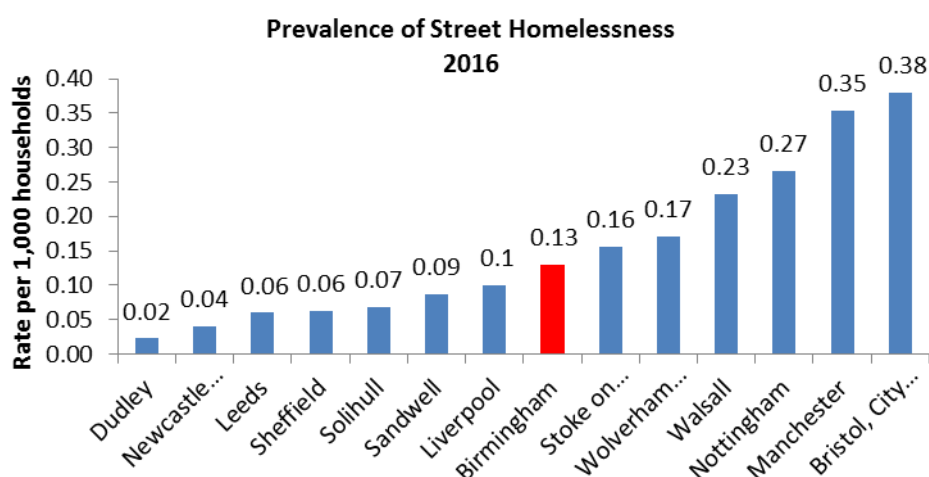
Table 2: Street Homelessness Comparisons – Core City and Neighbouring Authorities

Area	2016 Count	% change on previous year	% change since 2010
Birmingham	55	53%	511%
Bristol	74	-24%	825%
Leeds	20	54%	233%
Liverpool	21	40%	600%
Manchester	75	7%	971%
Newcastle	5	-38%	67%
Nottingham	35	150%	1067%
Sheffield	15	36%	88%
Coventry	13	44%	160%
Dudley	3	0%	0%
Sandwell	11	175%	450%
Solihull	6	20%	100%
Stratford	13	160%	63%
Walsall	26	271%	225%
Wolverhampton	18	38%	100%

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- Birmingham's overall prevalence of street homelessness is 0.13 per 1,000 households. Unlike statutory homeless where the local rate is more than 3 times the national average, Birmingham's rate of street homelessness is lower than the England average (0.18).
- When considering the number of households in the city, the prevalence of street homelessness is lower in Birmingham than the national average; ranking fourth of eight Core Cities (Fig.4).

Figure 4: Prevalence of Street Homelessness (2016)



Source: Department for Communities and Local Government 2016

- An initial root cause analysis of 217 individuals on the street was undertaken to better understand the recent sharp rise in people sleeping on the streets in the City. The findings are summarised in Table 3.

Table 3: Street Homelessness Initial Root Cause Analysis (January 2016 Snapshot Survey)

Reason for Homelessness?		Last Accommodation?		Previous Area?	
Refused to Say/Unknown	113	Refused to Say / Unknown	92	Birmingham	203
Evicted / Excluded	53	Hostel	52	Poland	5
Asked to Leave Family/Friends	22	Private Landlord	18	London	4
Relocated for Work	7	Friends	16	Germany	2
Abandoned	6	Other	16	Dudley	1
Relationship Breakdown	4	Family Home	11	Wolverhampton	1
Chose to Move On	4	Supported Housing	7	Elsewhere	1
Left Due to Other Tenants	3	Hostel (Poland)	3		
Discharge Hospital / Prison	3	BCC Tenancy	2		
Travelled Abroad	1				
Licence Expired	1				

Source: Birmingham Street Intervention Team 2016

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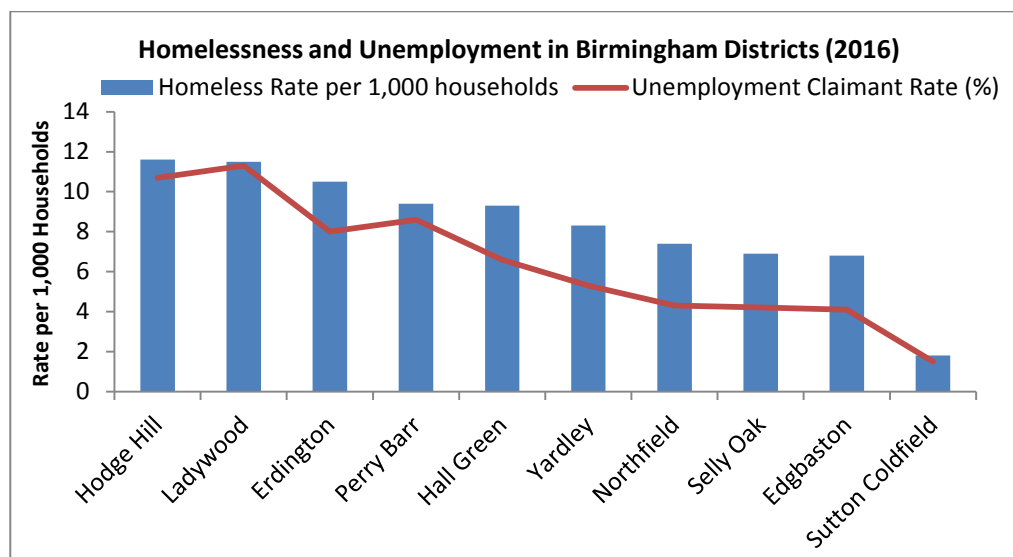
Youth Homelessness

- In 2015/16, there were 4,118 young people facing homelessness in Birmingham. Locally, young people aged 18-21 appear disproportionately affected
- The majority of young people threatened by homelessness are on either low or no income. Almost one third of young people did not receive any kind of benefit despite being entitled to do so.
- Overall, young people are most likely to have been made homeless from their family home (42%). This is true across all age groups, but particularly common for those under 18 (62%).
- It is common for there to be other underlying factors that could contribute to or increase the risk of a young person becoming homeless. Lack of tenancy experience was the most common secondary factor reported by homeless young people (43.8%, followed by mental health issues (31.2%).
- In 2015/16, there were 319 homeless young people aged 16-21 who were historically known to Birmingham Childrens Services, and 325 who had current involvement.

Structural Causes of Homelessness

- There is a clear relationship in the City between deprivation – particularly unemployment – and homelessness.
- This reinforces the importance of access to employment as a key mechanism for preventing homelessness across all Birmingham Districts (Fig.5).

Figure 5: Unemployment and Homelessness in Birmingham



Source: Birmingham City Council 2016

Investment in Homeless, Homeless Prevention and Housing Support Services

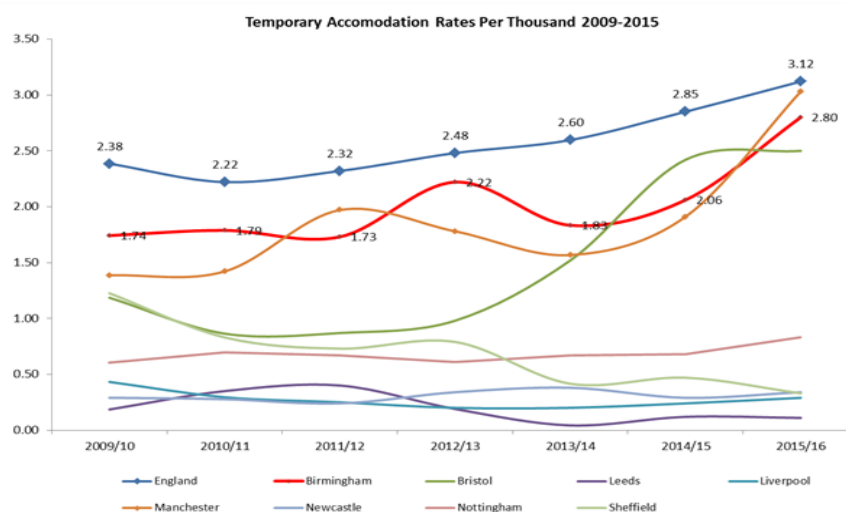
- Birmingham has an excellent track record of innovation in the delivery of homelessness services.
- The City is recognised as having examples of national best practice, for example the Positive Pathways model for youth homelessness, and strong Community and Third Sector organisations who work well in partnership with the Council.
- Statutory services are supported by commissioned housing support and homeless prevention services.
- Homelessness services in Birmingham include:
 - **Housing Options Service** has the responsibility for delivering the Council's statutory duties including assessing applications for assistance under the homeless legislation and providing temporary accommodation for priority homeless households who are awaiting the offer of permanent accommodation;
 - **Homeless Prevention Grant** (c.£1m per annum) is a DCLG grant. Whilst it is no longer ring-fenced, there is a very clear expectation from Government that the funding is used to prevent homelessness based on a local understanding of the key drivers;
 - **Legal Advice and Enforcement** of standards within the Private Rented Sector;
 - **BCC Commissioned Housing Support services** (currently £24m per annum) are mainly delivered via contracts with Third Sector providers and Housing Associations:
 - The contracts deliver housing related support services to key groups of vulnerable adults including homeless singles, families, young people (inc. dedicated provision for care leavers), victims of domestic abuse, ex- offenders, learning disabilities, mental health, physical and sensory disabilities, gypsies and travellers;
 - The young people's housing related support services draw in an additional resource of £3.165m through Supporting People contracts being matched to the European Social Fund – Youth Employment Initiative;
 - During 2015/16, 1,619 applicants were supported to remain in their existing home as a result of prevention interventions, and 6,205 were assisted to obtain alternative accommodation, in the form of Private Rented Sector accommodation;
 - All services are delivered through a payment by outcomes contracting methodology and include outcomes relating to a person's ability to live independently within their own home, improved health and wellbeing, and access to employment, training and volunteering.

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Current Service Response

- Birmingham delivered over 35,000 homeless prevention and relief interventions during the period 2012-16; 60% of which were cases assisted to obtain alternative accommodation.
- Temporary accommodation is used to provide emergency accommodation whilst undertaking investigations into homelessness and following the acceptance of a homeless duty to accommodate households waiting for the offer of permanent accommodation.
- The rate of temporary accommodation usage in Birmingham (2.80 per 1,000 households) was below the national average for 2015/16 (3.12) but was higher than all but one of the Core Cities (Fig. 6). Since this time, use of temporary accommodation has continued to increase.

Figure 6: Temporary Accommodation Comparisons 2009 – 2016



Source: Department for Communities and Local Government 2016

- There are currently 1,759 commissioned bed spaces in supported housing which provided accommodation the following clients affected by homelessness over the last 12 months:
 - 980 single homeless clients (25 years and over in supported housing);
 - 900 young people aged 16-24;
 - 534 people experiencing domestic abuse;
 - 227 ex -offenders.
- The Youth Hub made 1,307 onwards referrals for young homeless people. Nearly half of these referrals were for Step Down and over a third were for young people who required immediate access accommodation.

Service Improvements, Developments and Innovation

- Services commissioned or established through the Housing Support and Homeless Prevention Grant programme and through successfully securing additional funding from specific Government funding initiatives include:

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- Let to Birmingham Social Lettings Agency which improves access to decent private rental accommodation. It contributes in the region of 200 homelessness prevention and relief interventions per annum;
- Maintaining investment in a Street Homeless Outreach service which has been in operation for over 15 years;
- Funding drop-in welfare services for people to access food and showering facilities since April 2011;
- Re-commissioning immediate access accommodation for vulnerable single people in need of accommodation and support;
- Funding the continuation of a pilot Hospital Discharge Pathway Service for people being discharged from hospital with no fixed abode with the aim of reducing Accident and Emergency re-admissions;
- Trialling a Homeless Street Triage (HOST) service in 2015 to link up and co-ordinate responses to street homelessness between the public, Police and Homeless Outreach Teams;
- Recently re-commissioned supported accommodation provision for former offenders;
- Increasing refuge provision for people experiencing domestic abuse;
- Since 2010, continually investing in service provision for young people at risk of homelessness delivered via a multiagency Youth Hub which includes the Council's Homeless and Children's services. The Youth Hub works with over 4,700 young people each year; 84% of those young people are positively prevented from accessing statutory Homeless or Children's Social Care services;
- Maintaining provision of cold weather emergency accommodation and partnership working with faith communities to help expand this across the City;
- Launching an Accreditation Scheme for co-ordinating and making best use of Community and Voluntary outreach services.

Service Users, Service Providers and Citizens: Views and Experiences

- During the review, we engaged with many stakeholders and providers of Homeless Services. Key issues in respect of gaps in current services are summarised below:
 - Scope to better track client progress between services and understand more about the impact and sustainability of current prevention interventions;
 - There is a role for targeted earlier intervention and prevention e.g. schools education;
 - Gap in support for vulnerable clients navigating and accessing services relating to welfare and tenancy - especially in the Private Rented Sector;

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- Private Tenancy breakdown is a major issue and should be a focus for prevention activity;
- Approach to homelessness as a result of domestic abuse needs refreshing;
- Shortages of move-on accommodation for those transitioning out of supported housing;
- LHA shared room rate is an issue in Birmingham – Black Country Broad Rental Market Area (BRMA) is more generous than Birmingham BRMA rents set by the Valuation Office Agency;
- Could do more through partnership work on shared housing provision.

National and Local Policy - Emerging Issues

- A range of national housing policies are likely to increase the pressure on homelessness services in Birmingham:

Welfare Reform and Housing Costs:

- Introduction of the U35's shared accommodation rate into social housing will create difficulties in discharging homeless duties to those under 35 years of age;
- Benefit Cap - over 4,000 households affected locally. This will have a particular impact on larger households;
- Restrictions on Housing Benefit entitlement for 18-21 year olds;
- Reform of supported housing funding.

Supply of Accommodation:

- Competition from other local authorities placing homeless households into Birmingham;
- Devolved Housing Benefit budgets for management of temporary accommodation;
- Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) investment focused on homeownership;
- Broader classification for "affordable housing" including starter homes;
- -1% p/a reduction in social housing rental income;
- Right to Buy for Housing Association tenants.

Homelessness Reduction Bill:

- When enacted this will place new legal duties on local Councils to assess every eligible applicant, regardless of priority need, and help those who are threatened with homelessness to keep their home or find an alternative.

Homelessness Review – Key Messages

- National housing and welfare policy is contributing to extreme pressure on homelessness services in the City, and a significant increase in the levels of street homelessness. Recent DCLG figures on street homelessness clearly show that this is a national issue. We should seek to use all channels to maintain a national debate on this issue.
- Birmingham can build on its excellent record of partnership working and innovation, led by key players in the City to broker new deals with Government. These assets and expertise can also continue to successfully bring in new funding opportunities as they arise.
- Within the City we need to develop a new Homelessness Strategy to make best use of the assets that we have. The scale of the challenge and the budget pressures facing the Council will necessitate fundamental changes in the way in which services are delivered. The creation of a single homeless system adopting a positive pathway model bringing together opportunities from health, education, training and employment in addition to housing should be prioritised. This vision demands a different approach to commissioning that is more flexible both in terms of the use of funding streams and in its ability to respond to evidence of changing demands.
- In terms of our policy and commissioning approach – to be outlined in a new strategy - we need to review:
 - Approaches to enable people to access and sustain Private Rented tenancies;
 - Provision of hostel accommodation in the City in the context of changes to supported housing funding;
 - Further work on the root cause analysis of homelessness; including street homelessness. Engaging with experts by experience will be particularly critical for this activity;
 - Housing options for 18-21 year olds and single under-35's affected by benefit changes – with a clear link to employment and training;
 - Links with the new Domestic Abuse Prevention strategy to identify the most appropriate options for people experiencing domestic abuse;
 - The opportunity to bring together funding streams for 16-plus Supported Accommodation and associated support services from across Supporting People, Children in Care, Public Health and Homelessness Prevention budgets to jointly commission services using the Positive Pathway model which has been recognised as best practice by DCLG;
 - How we learn from other Local Authorities including establishing a regional and Core City learning and best practice hub;
 - Our approach to securing temporary accommodation in the context of welfare benefit changes;
 - How we configure services to respond to the forthcoming Homeless Reduction Act.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background to the Review

The Homelessness Act 2002 places a legal requirement on local authorities to carry out a review of all forms of homelessness in their district and publish a Homelessness Strategy.

The Homelessness Review is intended to provide part of an evidence base for developing the new Homelessness Strategy in relation to:

- Preventing homelessness;
- Ensuring accommodation is available for people who are, or who may become homeless;
- Commissioning support for people who are or who may become homeless.

1.2 Defining Homelessness

1.2.1 Statutory Homelessness

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) definition of statutory homelessness leading to a duty on the Local Authority to provide assistance is:

“A household is legally homeless if, either, they do not have accommodation that they are entitled to occupy, which is accessible and physically available to them or, they have accommodation but it is not reasonable for them to continue to occupy this accommodation”

Statutory homelessness refers to those people who have made a homeless application and have met the criteria set out in legislation (Housing Act 1996, Homelessness Act 2002) to be accepted by the Council as eligible for assistance (according to immigration status), homeless and in priority need.

This includes families, pregnant women and single people who are particularly vulnerable. A household may be accepted as ‘homeless’ because they are going to be evicted or are living in accommodation so unsuitable that it is not ‘reasonable’ for them to remain there. The Council has a duty to provide temporary accommodation to statutory homeless households.

1.2.2 Non-Statutory Homelessness

Non-statutory/non-priority homeless people are typically single people/childless couples who are not assessed as being in ‘priority need’ and are only entitled to ‘advice and assistance’ if homeless. Some non-priority homeless people are offered access to Council-commissioned housing support services.

1.2.3 Street Homelessness

The Homeless Review and associated forthcoming Strategy will take a wider view of the population affected by homelessness and insecure housing, including street homelessness.

The DCLG definition of street homelessness is:

“People sleeping, about to bed down (sitting on/in or standing next to their bedding) or actually bedded down in the open air (such as on the streets, in tents, doorways, parks, bus shelters or encampments).”

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People in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as stairwells, barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations, or “bashes”).”

Street homeless people are those who are roofless and are bedding down on streets, parks or other places where they may or may not be seen by the public. They are a small proportion of the much larger group of people affected by homelessness.

Whilst the street homeless population is relatively small there is a strong national policy and funding focus for this group.

1.3 Purpose of the Review

The Homelessness Act 2002 places a legal requirement upon all Local Authorities' to:

- Undertake a review of homelessness in their district;
- Publish a Homelessness Strategy once every five years.

The purpose of the Review is to:

- Examine the extent, nature and causes of homelessness in the city
- Understand who is affected by homelessness and the impact that homelessness has on households and individuals
- Assess the policies, resources and services to tackle homelessness and evaluate their effectiveness
- Contribute to an evidence base for the Homeless Strategy for the commissioning of services

Further information on the methodology for undertaking this Review can be found in Appendix 1.

2. Housing in Birmingham

Key Findings:

- Population growth continues to outpace the construction of new homes in the City with the population forecast to grow by over 100,000 households by 2031. This gap has led to an increase in overcrowding across all tenures of housing.
- There are more than 20,000 households on the Council Housing Register.
- Annually Social Housing Allocations meet a quarter of Birmingham's overall registered housing need.
- There is a shrinking affordable housing sector.
- There are reducing housing options for low-income and benefit-dependent households – especially those aged under-35 and large households affected by the Benefit Cap.
- There is a growing Private Rented market – but there is also high demand and competition in the market with a comparatively low Local Housing Allowance rate.
- Relative to local incomes, Birmingham is one of the most expensive places to rent in the country. Housing costs in the city equate to 47% of household income compared to 49% in London.
- There are 113,000 recipients of Housing Benefit in Birmingham, of which 28% live in the Private Rented Sector.
- Birmingham is a mortgage repossession hotspot, where 1 in 69 households face the threat of losing their home compared to 1 in 108 households in England.

2.1 The Housing Supply Challenge in Birmingham

Birmingham is a growing city, home to a population of over 1.1 million residents and over 410,000 households. Locally, it is forecast that the number of households will increase by over 100,000 households over the next twenty years¹.

The city is occupied by residents from a wide range of national, ethnic and religious backgrounds and is one of the youngest in Europe, with under-25 year olds accounting for nearly 40% of the population.

Taking into account all residential property (including empty homes), there are over 425,000 dwellings in the city. Birmingham's household tenure profile reveals a markedly different picture to the national average (Table 4).

Locally, just over half of all households are owner occupiers (55.2%) compared to 63.4% nationally. In contrast, 24% of Birmingham households are social renters compared to 18% across England.

¹ Office for National Statistics, 2039 Household Projections

Table 4: Birmingham's Household Tenure Profile (%)

Household Tenure	England	Birmingham	% Difference
Owned Occupation	63.4	55.2	-8.2
PRS Landlord or Letting Agent	15.4	16.7	1.3
Council Rented	9.4	15.4	6
Other Social rented	8.3	8.8	0.5
Private Rented: Rent Free	1.3	1.7	0.4
Private Rented: Other	1.2	1.4	0.2
Shared Ownership	0.8	1	0.2

Source: ONS 2011 Census

2.2 Housing Supply

Birmingham faces its own set of unique housing circumstances. The city is facing an acute shortage of all sizes, types and tenures of housing with house building output in Birmingham well below the levels required for an efficient and fully functioning housing market.

The scarcity of land in the city means that even if all available opportunities to build new homes were taken up there would still be a shortfall of almost 40% of the city's future housing requirements in the next twenty years².

A consequence of housing shortages in the city is increasing levels of overcrowding locally. There were 50,930 overcrowded households in Birmingham on the day of the 2011 Census, an increase of 13,000 over a ten-year period (2001-2011)³.

To address the slowdown in construction of new homes in the city, the Council has established a house-building programme delivered by the Birmingham Municipal Housing Trust (BMHT). The programme has successfully completed over 2,000 homes since it started in 2009. It was responsible for a third of new homes in the city in the last financial year (2015/16), making it the single biggest contributor to the supply of new homes in Birmingham. Despite this, the overall construction output of new homes remains below the required rate of 4,500 net housing completions.

In the last financial year (2015/16), 3,113 additional units of housing were completed. Whilst encouraging, repeating this output will itself be challenging as this figure included 1,000 units of purpose built student accommodation.

2.3 Housing Market Affordability

Relative to local incomes, Birmingham is one of the most expensive places to rent in the country after London. Housing costs in the city equate to 47% of household income compared to 49% in the capital. For those on low or moderate incomes, it has become increasingly financially challenging to meet the cost of housing.

² BCC, SHMA 2013

³ The Bedroom Standard, ONS, 2013

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To become a homeowner in Birmingham, a household with an average income of £25,386 per annum would need to borrow 6.8 times that amount to afford to buy a home of average value in the city.

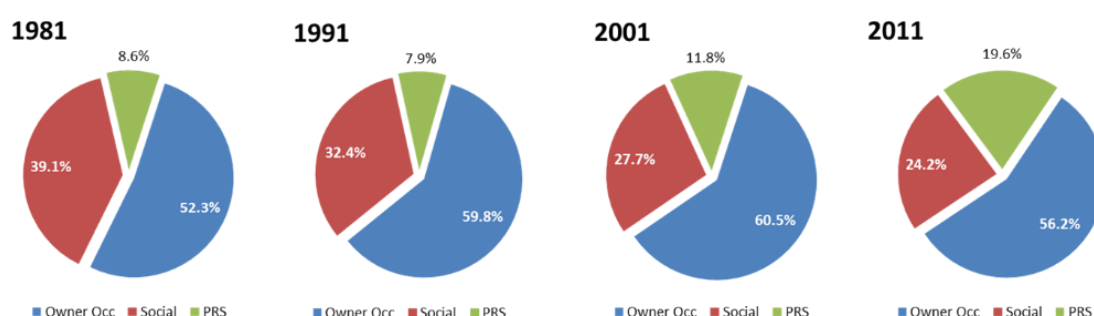
A similar hurdle is faced with households seeking to rent a home. Nationally, between 2013-14 and 2014-15, the proportion of private renters in work and in receipt of housing benefit known as Local Housing Allowance (LHA) increased from 14% to 18%⁴. Across the sector as whole, private renters in England pay out almost half (43%) of their average income on their housing costs, compared to 23% of income spent on mortgages by owner-occupiers (Survey of English Housing 2015).

2.4 Birmingham's Changing Tenure

Rented sector housing has grown in the city (particularly renting from landlords or letting agents) and is now larger in size relative to Council housing but smaller than the overall numbers of households in social housing as a whole (Council and Housing Associations).

Social housing aims to provide affordable accommodation to people on low incomes, with limits to rent increases set by law to ensure they are kept affordable. Whilst the supply of all social housing in Birmingham remains above the national level, tenure trends are following the national direction of travel with a rapid growth in private renting over the period 2001-11 (Fig. 7).

Figure 7: Changes in Birmingham Housing Tenure 1981 – 2011



Source: ONS Census 1981-2011

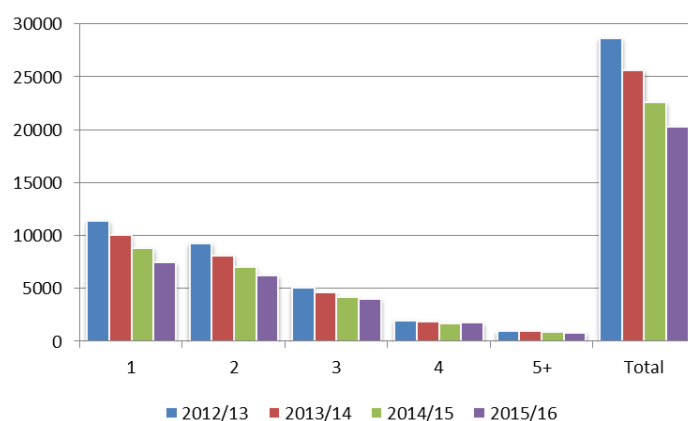
2.5 Meeting Current Housing Needs

Demand for social housing in Birmingham remains significant. Social housing is provided to households according to the Birmingham City Council's Housing Allocation Scheme.

To manage demand, the Council maintains a Housing Register managed in accordance with national guidance and local policy. Despite falling from over 28,000 households to just over 20,000 households on the Housing Register (2012/13 to 2015/16), the scale of social housing needs in Birmingham are high relative to the supply. There were 20,292 households on the Housing Register at the beginning of April 2016 (Fig. 8).

⁴ English Housing Survey, 2014/15 Headline Report, DCLG, February 2016

Figure 8: Birmingham City Council Housing Register 2012-2016



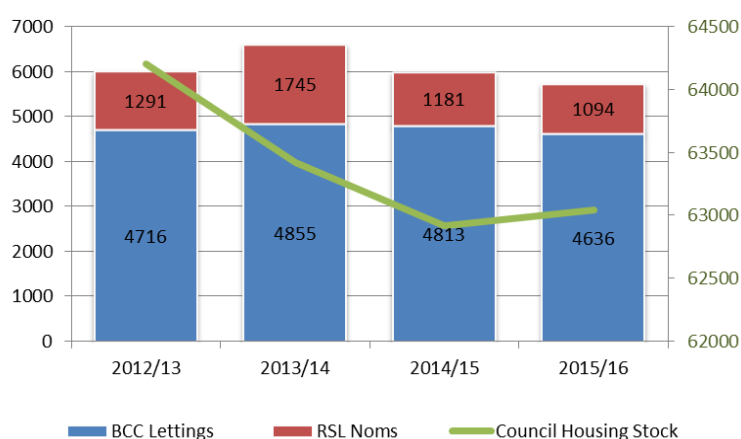
Source: Birmingham City Council Home Options Service 2016

Recent Housing Register trends indicate that over two thirds of current registered housing needs sit within the 1 and 2 bed sized categories (37% and 31% respectively). Requirements for four and five or more bed needs have remained largely unchanged in numbers over the same period. Although the need for larger housing appears proportionally small in size (2,596 households in 2015/16), it should be noted that the supply of larger social rented homes is severely constrained.

2.6 Social Housing: Lettings and stock

Each year the Council lets approximately 4,500 Council homes to households on the Housing Register, allocated on the basis of housing need (Fig. 9). This includes homeless households, and other households registered as requiring transfers to smaller / larger homes, or into and out of supported or sheltered housing.

Figure 9: All Birmingham Social Lettings and Council Housing Stock Numbers 2012- 2016



Source: Department for Communities and Local Government Service

In addition to Council lettings, Housing Associations provide a proportion of rented homes for lettings to households on the Housing Register, known as nominations.

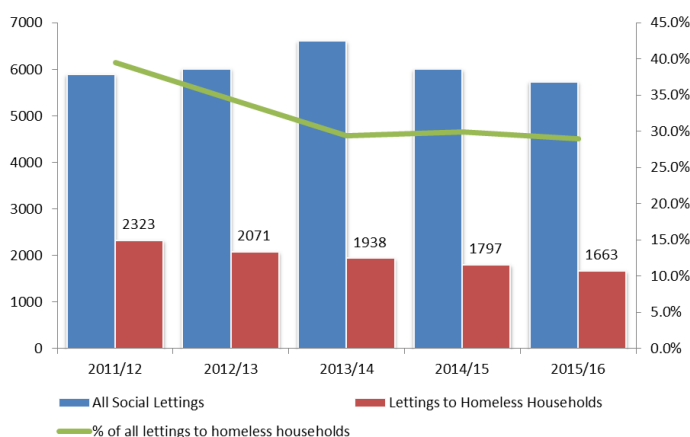
In 2015/16, nominations and Council lettings collectively totalled 5,730, falling below 6,000 for the second consecutive year. As the bulk of social lettings are still predominantly made from the letting of

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Council housing, this continued decrease may be in part due to the overall decline in Council housing stock.

As social lettings and Council housing stock have declined in overall numbers, so too have the numbers of lettings made to homeless households, going from 2,323 lettings (39% of social lettings) in 2011/12 to 1,663 (29%) in 2015/16 (Fig. 10).

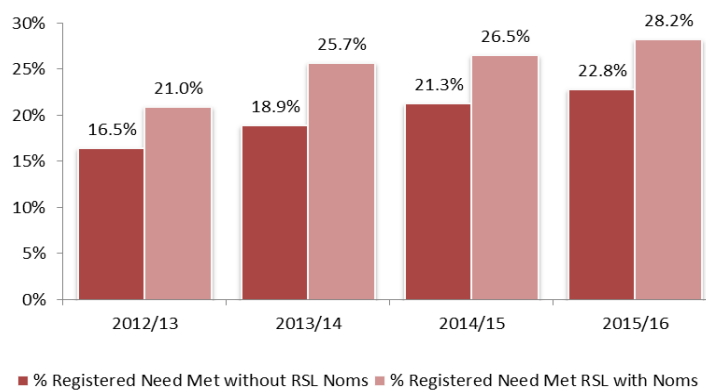
Figure 10: Social Lettings to Homeless Households 2011- 2016



Source: Department for Communities and Local Government 2016

With a limited supply of less than 5,000 lettings available from BCC housing stock, just over a fifth of registered housing needs can be met through Council lettings on annual basis (Fig. 11).

Figure 11: Proportion of Registered Housing Needs met through the Allocation of Social Housing



Source: Birmingham City Council 2016

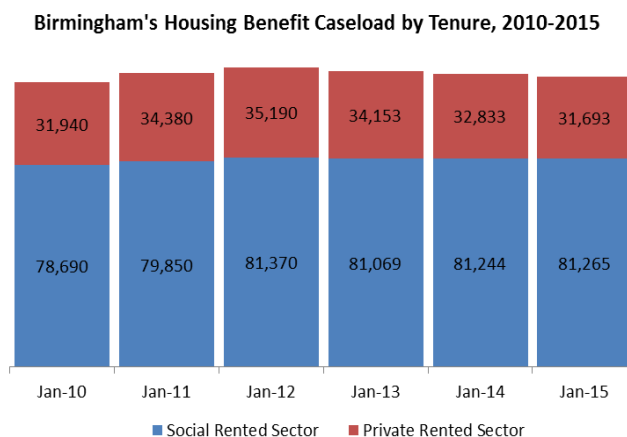
The additional lettings secured through successful Nominations boosts this to over a quarter (28.2% in 2015/16) however this still leaves on average three quarters of households with unmet housing needs.

2.7 Private Rented Accommodation

With capacity in the social housing sector limited (see section 2.6), alternative sources of accommodation at low cost need to be identified. These include privately rented accommodation that is available for let at levels that fall within LHA rates (rates set according to property size, claimant age and household size).

There are currently 113,000 recipients of Housing Benefit in Birmingham, of which 31,693 (28%) live in the PRS LHA market (Fig. 12). This is a decline of 3,497 claimants since the peak in 2012.

Figure 12: Housing benefit caseload by housing tenure 2010 – 2015

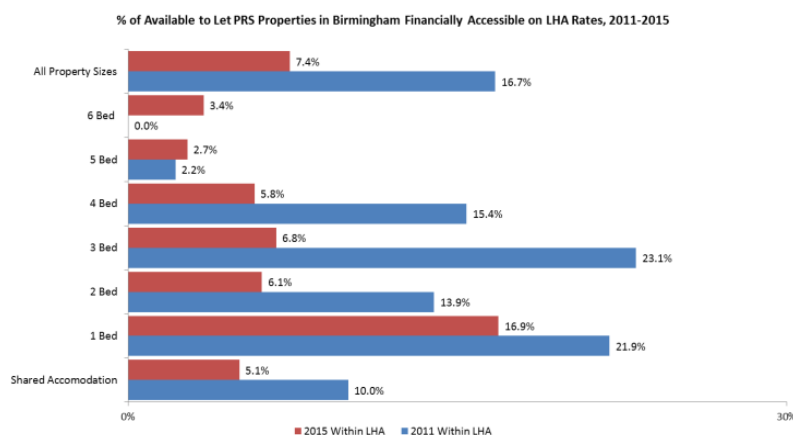


Source: Department for Work and Pensions

Availability of affordable private rental accommodation has decreased in the Birmingham Broad Rental Market Area (BRMA) since the LHA rates were lowered by the Treasury in 2011. The BRMA covers all of Birmingham and some neighbouring localities in North Solihull, East Sandwell and South Walsall.

In 2011, a survey of market rental data revealed 16.7% of all advertised properties in Birmingham were available to rent within LHA limits. Since the introduction of lower LHA rates, the availability of affordable private rental accommodation has seen a stark reduction. When the same survey was repeated in 2015, the availability of local properties had reduced by 56%; with less than 8% shown to now be accessible on LHA rates (Fig. 13).

Figure 13: Access to Private Rented Sector Housing on LHA Rates



Source: Birmingham City Council, Private Rent Survey 2011-2015

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In setting LHA rates, HM Treasury takes a Birmingham-wide approach to its application however there is considerable variability with regards to size, type and location of available properties.

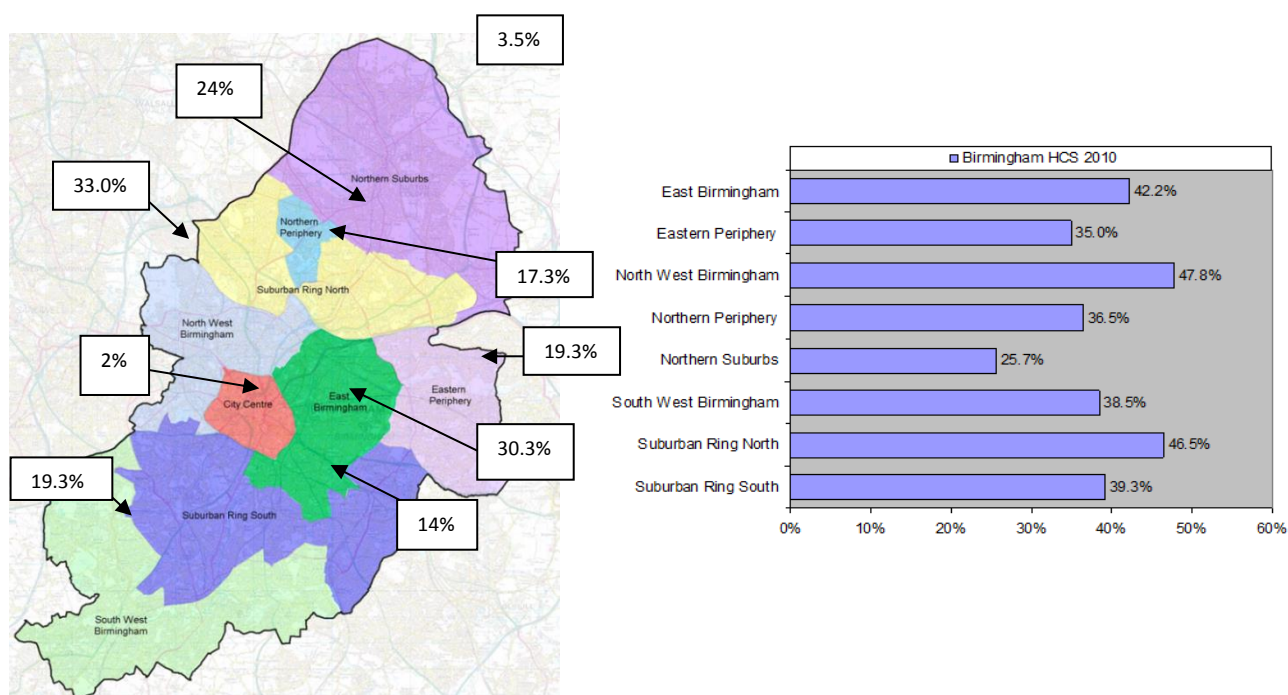
The greatest impact was seen with 3 bed properties where financial accessibility shrunk from 23.1% to 6.8% over the last four years (2011-2015).

Shared accommodation has also been impacted by the LHA rate change and is also increasingly less available with 5.1% of private rented accommodation with the Shared Accommodation Rate (SAR) available in 2015 in comparison to 10% in 2011 (Fig. 13).

Although LHA rates are more generous for larger homes, availability of properties in the rental market within the rental limits is sparse.

Accommodation in certain parts of the City is more financially accessible on LHA rates than others, for example 2% of housing in the City Centre compared to 33% in North West Birmingham (Fig. 14).

Figure 14: Accommodation available for rent & within LHA rates, 2014



Source: Birmingham City Council

Whilst some areas may appear to be more affordable, they also coincide with locations with the highest proportion of properties that are unsuitable in terms of property condition.

For example, almost half (48%) of private sector accommodation in North West Birmingham failed to meet the Decent Homes Standard according the Birmingham Private Sector House Condition Survey (2010) – this is the part of the city with greatest access to private rental housing on LHA rates.

Although the Northern Suburbs appear to have almost a quarter (24%) of properties accessible on LHA rates, these are largely concentrated in the Erdington & Stockland Green wards.

3. Homelessness in Birmingham

Key Findings:

- There are an estimated 20,000 households in Birmingham each year who are homeless, at risk of becoming homeless, or who are transitioning out of homelessness.
- Council and commissioned services collectively respond to over 14,000 household contacts for housing advice and assistance per year. Other registered provider and third sector services also handle significant caseloads.
- The rate of priority homelessness in Birmingham is more than 3 times higher than the national average and double the rate of our Core City neighbours.
- More than three quarters of statutory homeless applicants have dependent children.
- The most frequent presenting reasons for those deemed homeless and in priority need are end of assured short hold tenancy, domestic abuse, and parental exclusion.
- Over 40% of homeless applications from outside of Birmingham are associated with homelessness resulting from Domestic Abuse.
- Street homelessness in the City has increased by 53% since last year; continuing the year on year increases seen since 2010.
- Young people are the most disadvantaged in the housing market because they are likely to have a low income and are viewed by Landlords as potentially high risk. In a large and growing City like Birmingham where almost 50% of the population are estimated to be under-30 years of age, the challenges for young people and housing are further compounded.
- Homeless households experience health inequalities with higher morbidity and mortality than the rest of the population. Tackling and preventing homelessness will therefore contribute to reducing health inequalities.
- Deprivation and associated poverty / low incomes are key barriers for accessing suitable housing and maintaining stable and financially sustainable tenancies. Access to employment is a key mechanism for preventing homelessness.

3.1 Estimating the Scale of Homelessness in Birmingham

Homelessness is a major issue for Birmingham . It presents a significant social and financial burden upon the individuals and households experiencing the crisis of not having somewhere safe/ affordable to live; in turn, affecting their ability to build successful and stable to lives.

There are an estimated 20,000 households in Birmingham each year who are homeless, at risk of becoming homeless, or who are transitioning out of homelessness. This is based on a broad view including priority and non-priority groups and those who are 'hidden' to the Council (Table 5).

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Table 5: Estimating the Number of Households Affected by Homelessness in Birmingham

Household Status	Estimated Average No. Households in Birmingham
Homeless prevention	9,400
Homeless acceptance priority need	3,250
Homeless non priority need	525
Young people transitioning out of supported housing	850
Single homeless transitioning out of supporting housing	950
Leaving refuge accommodation	400
In receipt of housing related support to sustain tenancies/maintain independence	1,700
Households accessing non council services*	1,750
Households Leaving ,Entering, Living in Temporary Accommodation	1,000
Total Estimated Homeless Households	19,975

Source: Birmingham City Council 2016

To gain an understanding of the scale of the issue in the city, the following methodology was applied. The number of households affected by homelessness, and accessing Council commissioned or managed services was based on a 3-5 year average (where the data is available). Estimates for non-Council managed services used a very conservative methodology as clients are often sign posted back to the Council if they are likely to fall into the priority housing need category (Table 5).

Estimates for non-Council commissioned or managed services were based on a snapshot sample (October 2015) of services that operate independently of the Council. Organisations with the greatest footfall of clients were featured including Citizens Advice Bureau, Crisis and South Birmingham Youth Homeless Project. The estimates utilised figures published in Annual Reports of these organisations.

3.2 Housing Advice and Assistance

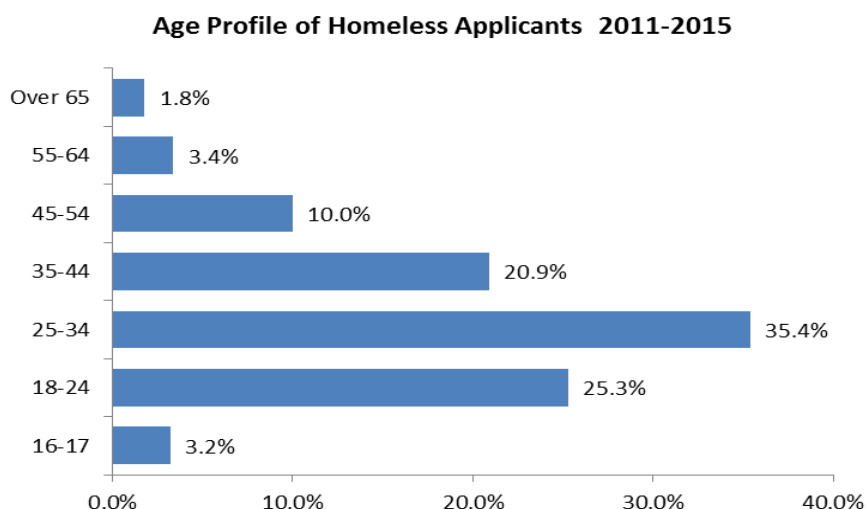
Council and commissioned services collectively respond to over 14,000 household contacts for housing advice and assistance per year. Other Registered Providers and Third Sector services also handle significant caseloads. In 2015/16, almost 8,000 homeless prevention and relief interventions were delivered (see Chapter 4 for further detail on the type of response provided).

3.3 Statutory Homelessness

On average, the Council receives c.6,000 homeless applications each year. The experience of being homeless does not appear to be confined by age, with applications received across the age range 16-65+ years. That said, the under-35-year old population does appear to be disproportionately affected, accounting for more than 60% of the total homeless applications made to the Council between 2011-2015 (Fig. 15).

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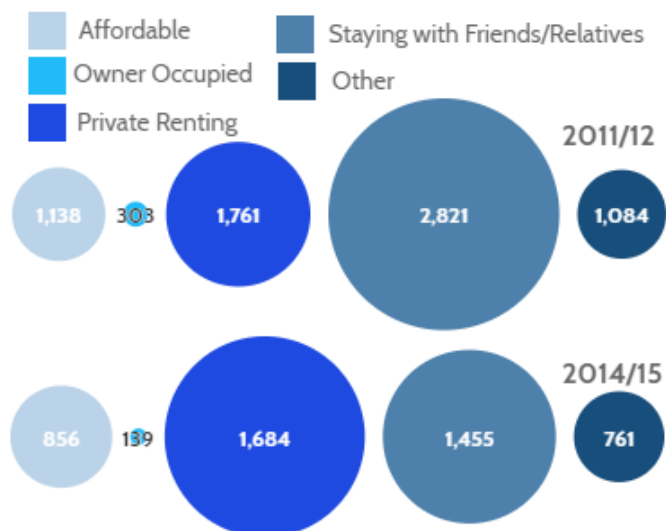
Figure 15: Age profile of homeless applicants 2011-2015



Sources: Birmingham City Council, Department for Communities and Local Government

From 2011/12 to 2014/15, there is an apparent shift the homeless applicant tenure profile, with the largest share of applications moving from those staying with friends/ relatives (2011/12) to applications from people living in the PRS Sector (2014/15) (Fig. 16).

Figure 16: Homeless Applicant Tenure Profile (2011-14)



Source: Birmingham City Council 2016

The homeless applicant profile also reveals that:

- 90% of applicants are of working age;
- 72% of applications concerned families with dependent children;
- Out-of-Birmingham applications related to around 15% of caseload;

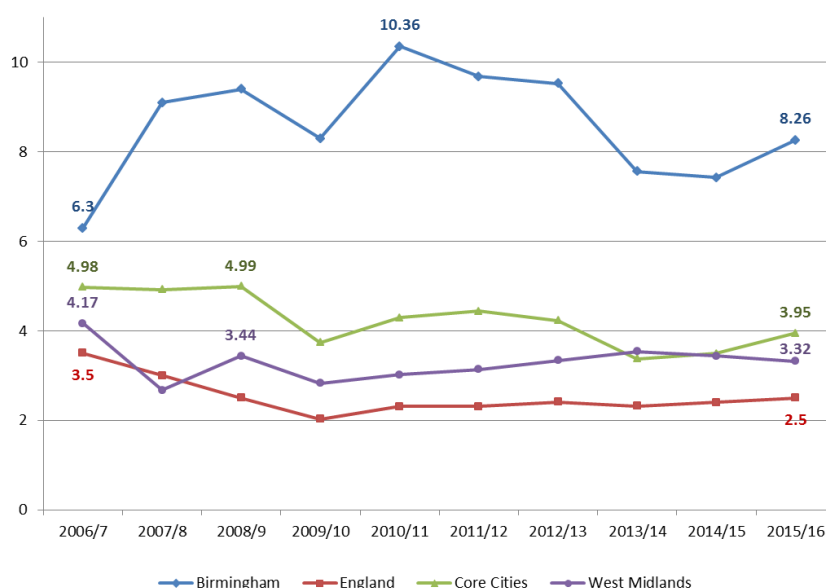
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3.4 Homeless and Priority Housing Need

Birmingham experienced a significant peak in its statutory homeless rate in 2010/11 (10.26 per 1,000) followed by a year on year decline over a period of 4 years to 2014/15. In contrast, national and regional rates have remained relatively stable over the same period.

The latest available data shows the first increase in Birmingham since 2010/11. The rate of statutory homeless (8.26 per 1,000 households) in the city is now more than three times the national average (2.5 per 1,000) and double the rate of its Core City neighbours (3.95 per 1,000) (Fig. 17).

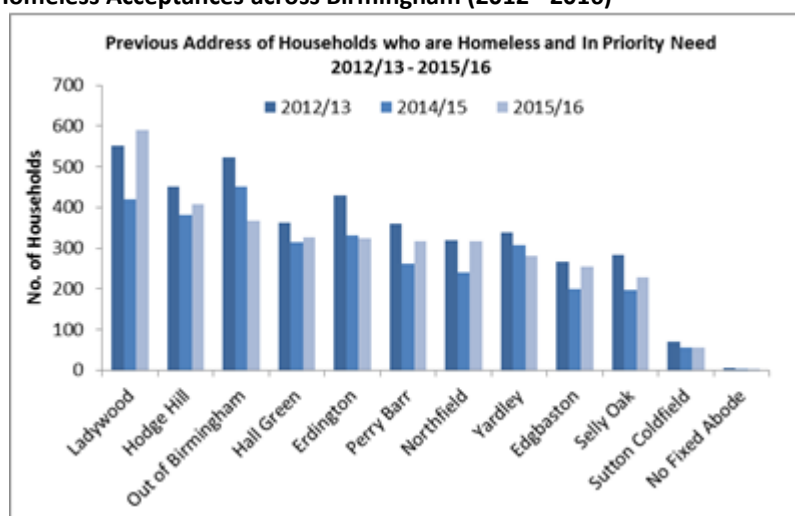
Figure 17: Homeless and in Priority Need – How Does Birmingham Compare?



Sources: Birmingham City Council, Department for Communities and Local Government

When looking at the how homeless priority need acceptances are geographically distributed across the city according to previous address, Ladywood had the most homeless acceptances of all the Birmingham districts (591) (2015/16) (Fig. 18).

Figure 18: Priority Homeless Acceptances across Birmingham (2012 - 2016)



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This was followed by Hodge Hill (409) and Out of Birmingham acceptances (368). In contrast, Sutton Coldfield had the lowest number of acceptances (56).

Out of area acceptances have declined during the period 2012-2015, although still present the third highest category of origin.

3.4.1 Profile of Households in Priority Housing Need

In 2015/16, almost three quarters (74%) of applications deemed homeless and in priority need were female applicants; with 26% being male.

Over the same period, nearly two thirds of households deemed to be in priority need were headed up by people aged between 25 and 44 years old (65%). This was followed by those aged 16-24 (29.6%) (Table 6).

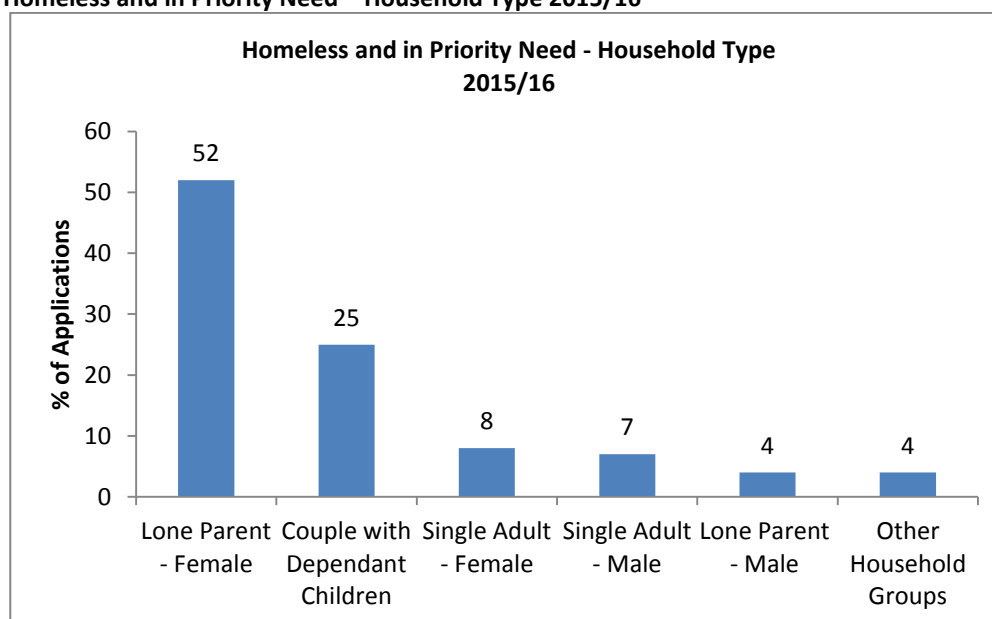
Table 6: Age Profile of Priority Homeless Households

Age Profile	% of Households Homeless and in Priority Need
16-24	19.6
25-44	65.0
45-59	12.3
60-64	1.1
65-74	1.4
75 & Over	0.7

Source: Birmingham City Council 2016

More than three quarters of priority homeless acceptances were associated with households that have dependent children (81%); the majority are lone female parents (52%) and couples with dependent children (25%) (Fig. 19).

Figure 19: Homeless and in Priority Need – Household Type 2015/16



Source: Birmingham City Council 2016

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There are also significant numbers (672) of priority homeless households that are either single person or other household types as shown in Table 7. Single person and other types of households without dependent children are concentrated in the 25-44-year age group although there does appear to be a greater distribution across the other age ranges when compared to priority need households with dependent children.

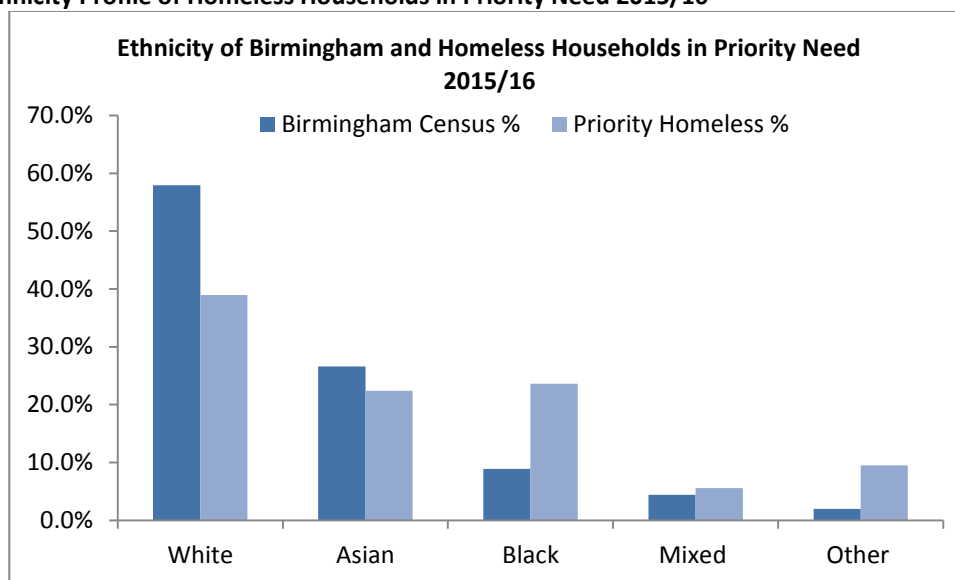
Table 7: Priority Homeless- Single and other households without dependent children

Priority Homeless: Households without dependent children	16-24	25-44	45-59	60-64	65-74	75+
Other Household Groups	14	52	54	7	9	6
Single Adult - Female	56	144	50	10	13	6
Single Adult - Male	41	108	61	9	24	8
Total No. households without children	111	304	165	26	46	20
Total % of households without children	16.5%	45.2%	24.6%	3.9%	6.9%	3.0%

Source: Birmingham City Council 2016

Compared to the ethnicity profile of Birmingham, all black and minority ethnic (BME) groups are disproportionately overrepresented when considering households deemed homeless and in priority need. Of the overrepresented BME groups, the biggest difference is reflected in the Other Ethnic group; which accounts for 8.5% of priority need households and just 1% of the city's population. This is small group in percentage terms but accounts for just over 250 households from a diverse range of ethnicities including Afghan, Albanian, Kosovar, Kashmiri, Roma, Iranian, Iraqi, Kurdish, Vietnamese and Yemeni (Fig. 20).

Table 20: Ethnicity Profile of Homeless Households in Priority Need 2015/16



Source: Census 2011, Birmingham City Council 2016

When assessing whether an individual making a homelessness application on behalf of a household is in priority housing need, the applicant's vulnerability is considered. Household circumstances, personal health, disability and other factors such as domestic abuse are all factors taken into account.

In 2015/16, over three quarters of households in priority need had dependent (school age) children (76.5%), the next largest group were represented by those with mental health needs 6.1% (Table 8).

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Table 8: Vulnerability Profile of Priority Need Homeless Households 2015/16

Vulnerability Profile – Priority Need	% of Households
Dependent Children	76.5
Mental Health	6.1
Pregnant & No Other Children	5.7
Physical Health Disability	5.2
Domestic Abuse	2.7
Vulnerable Due to Violence/Threats	1.3
Elderly Frail	1.3
Formerly in Care 18/20-Year-Old	0.8
Homeless in an Emergency	0.2
Vulnerable as Ex Prisoner/Remand	0.1
Aged 16 or 17	0.1
Vulnerable due to having been In Care	0.0

Source: Birmingham City Council 2016

Households can present with multiple vulnerability factors for example, having dependent children can also include those who are vulnerable due to domestic abuse.

3.4.2 Reasons for Homelessness – Priority Homeless Households

The number of households accepted as homeless and in priority need due to the end of assured short hold tenancy has risen sharply since 2011/12 and appears as the top reason for homelessness in 2015/16. This reason is cited by just under one a quarter of priority-need homeless acceptances (24.9%) (Table 9).

Just under one fifth (19.8%) of priority need households cite domestic abuse as the main reason for homelessness; making it the second most common reason in Birmingham. There is a significant out of area dimension to homelessness linked to domestic abuse that appears at a national, regional and city level. Factors influencing this may include the location of refuge provision and safety considerations of the people involved.

Parental exclusions (12.2%) and other family and friends no longer willing to accommodate (12.1%) continue to constitute a major cause of homelessness amongst priority homeless cases; ranking third and fourth respectively in terms of top reasons for homeless. Although the presenting reason for homelessness is an exclusion from the most recent home, these households are likely to have multiple episodes of and routes into homelessness. For example, some may have been living with a family member or with friends for a relatively short period of time after becoming homeless from a previous address.

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Table 9: Reasons for Homelessness – Priority Homeless Households 2015/16

Rank	Priority Homeless by Homeless Reason	% of Households
1	End of Assured Shorthold Tenancy	24.9
2	Domestic Abuse (involving part or associated persons)	19.8
3	Parental Exclusion	12.2
4	Relatives/Friends No Longer Willing to Accommodate	12.1
5	Property Related Disrepair, Overcrowding, Returned from Abroad & Other	7.2
6	Violence and Harassment (All types including racial)	5.4
7	Rent Arrears & Repossession (All Tenures)	4.0
8	Required to leave National Asylum Support Service accommodation	4.0
9	Relationship Breakdown with Partner (Non-DA)	3.8
10	Other Reason - Homeless in Emergency	3.1
11	Left Social Care Health or other LA Care	2.6
12	Left Hospital	0.5
13	Left Prison	0.2
14	Perpetrator of DV / ASB	0.2
15	Left HM Armed Forces	0.0

Source: Birmingham City Council 2016

3.5 Homeless and Non-Priority Housing Need

Although the assessment of being in homeless and priority need places a higher level of assistance in law through a duty to provide accommodation whilst waiting for the offer of a settled home, all households including non-priority homeless applicants are entitled to advice and assistance from their local authority.

In comparison to recorded levels of statutory homelessness in 2015/16, the number of people in Birmingham deemed homeless and not in priority housing need is markedly lower (426) (Table 10).

Table 10: Non-priority Homelessness - Core City Comparison 2015/16

Core City	Homeless Not in Priority Housing Need	Rate per 1,000 Households
Leeds	1,338	4.04
Manchester	548	2.55
Sheffield	501	2.11
Birmingham	426	1.00
Bristol	152	0.80
Liverpool	11	0.05
Newcastle *	-	0.00
Nottingham	14	0.11

Source: Department for Communities and Local Government

* Newcastle did not submit a return to DCLG for this figure

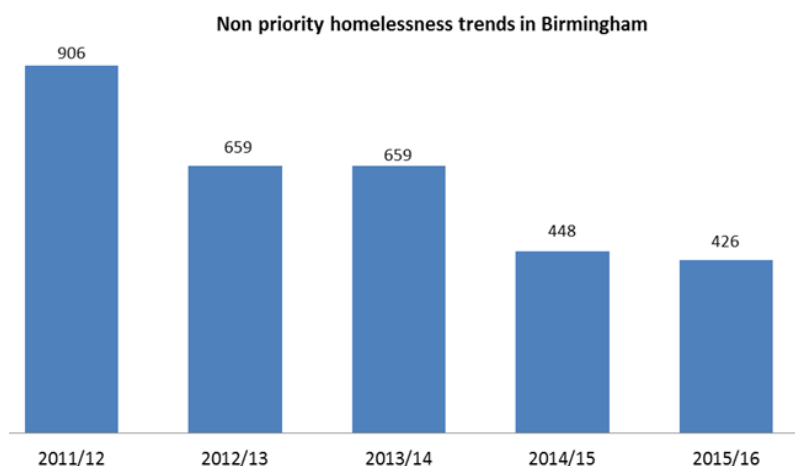
The rate of non-priority homelessness in Birmingham is 1.00 per 1,000 households; ranking the city fourth of the eight English Core Cities. Leeds has the highest rate of non-priority homeless caseloads

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(4.04), followed by Manchester (2.55) and Sheffield (2.11). Liverpool has the lowest rate at 0.05 per 1,000.

Since 2011/12, non-priority homelessness in Birmingham has reduced by 53% to 426 cases in 2015/16; the lowest caseload level of the whole period (Fig. 21).

Figure 21: Non-Priority Homeless Trend in Birmingham 2011 - 2016



Source: Department for Communities and Local Government 2016

3.5.1 Profile of Households in Non-Priority Housing Need

In contrast with the 2015/16 profile of households deemed homeless and in priority need, the non-priority need group are predominantly male (59.2%); with 40.8% female.

Over 95% of households in non-priority need are of working age (16-59) with the largest share (57%) represented by those aged 25-44 (Table 11).

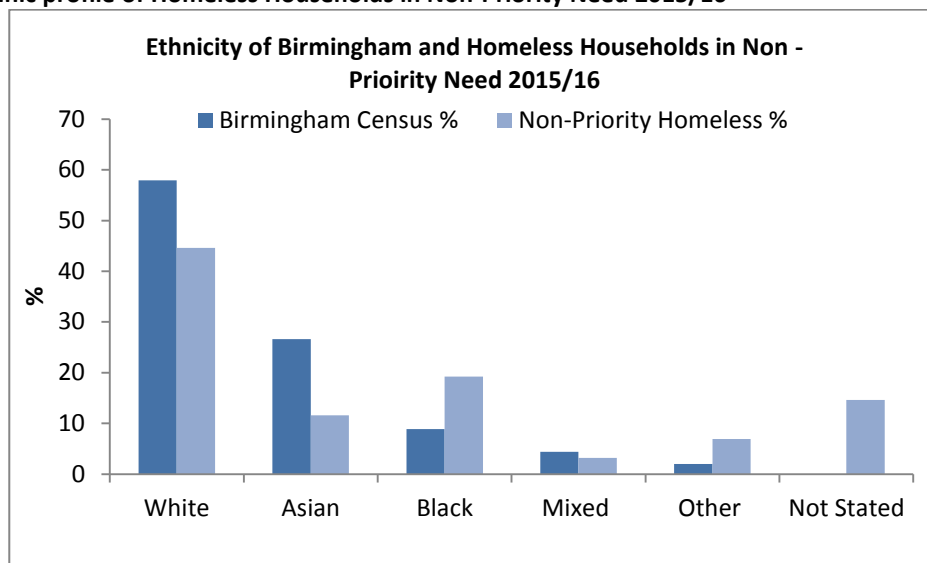
Table 11: Age profile of Non Priority Homeless Households 2015-2016

Age Group	% of Non-Priority Households
16-24	9.2
25-44	57.7
45-59	28.5
60-64	3.1
65-74	1.5

Source: Birmingham City Council 2016

The ethnic profile of non-priority homeless households shows four in every ten households are of White origin (Fig. 22). In comparison to homeless priority need households, the non-priority ethnic profile follows that of Birmingham more closely, however Asian ethnic groups (Pakistani and Bangladeshi in particular) are somewhat underrepresented in comparison to the profile of the city.

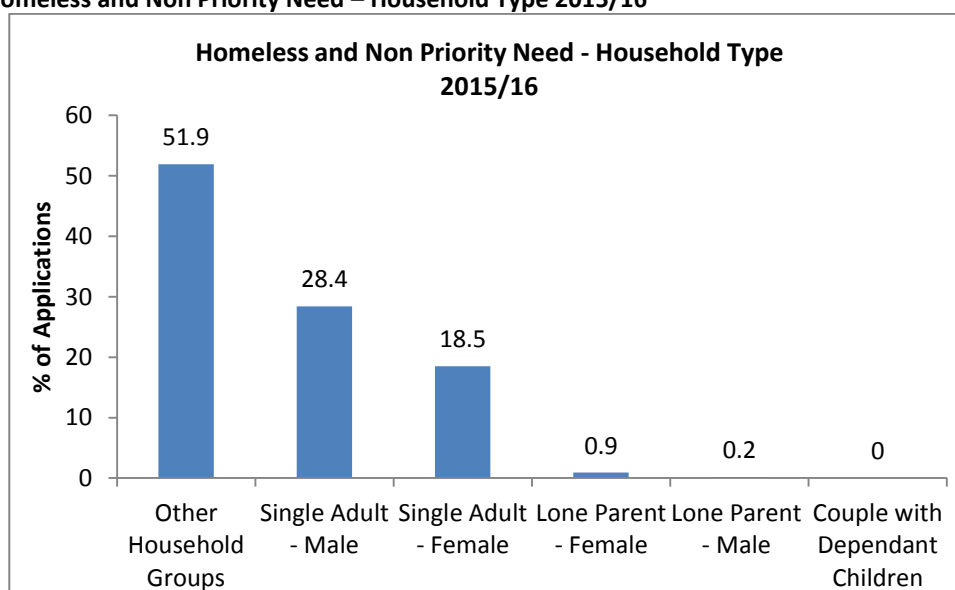
Figure 22: Ethnic profile of Homeless Households in Non-Priority Need 2015/16



Source: Census 2011, Birmingham City Council 2016

Single person households (male and female) feature in greater proportions amongst non-priority need households (46.9%) than priority need households (15.2%) (Fig. 23).

Figure 23: Homeless and Non Priority Need – Household Type 2015/16



Source: Birmingham City Council 2016

3.5.2 Reasons for Homelessness – Non Priority Homeless

For non-priority homeless cases, other family and friends no longer willing to accommodate is the most common reason for homelessness (24%) in Birmingham (Table 12). This group are likely to be in temporary housing arrangements such as staying with friends, and include those termed as 'sofa surfers'.

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As with priority homeless cases, the increase in the numbers of households accepted as homeless due to end of assured short hold tenancy is a common reason cited for non-priority homeless cases, accounting for over one in five cases (21.1%) in 2015/16.

Table 12: Reasons for Homelessness – Non- Priority Homeless Households 2015/16

Rank	Non-Priority Homeless Households by Homeless Reason	% of Households
1	Relatives/Friends No Longer Willing to Accommodate	23.9
2	End of Assured Shorthold Tenancy	21.1
3	Parental Exclusion	9.9
4	Domestic Abuse (involving part or associated persons)	9.4
5	Rent Arrears & Repossession (All Tenures)	8.5
6	Relationship Breakdown with Partner (Non-DA)	7.0
7	Required to leave National Asylum Support Service accommodation	4.2
8	Left Social Care Health or other LA Care	4.2
9	Property Related Disrepair, Overcrowding, Returned from abroad & Other	3.3
10	Violence and Harassment (All types including racial)	3.1
11	Other Reason - Homeless in Emergency	2.1
12	Perpetrator of DV / ASB	1.6
13	Left Prison	1.4
14	Left Hospital	0.2

Source: Birmingham City Council 2016

In contrast to priority cases where domestic abuse featured as the second reason for homelessness, this is significantly lower for non-priority household, being cited in less than 10% of cases (9.4%) and ranking fourth most common reason for homelessness.

3.6 Street Homelessness

Street homeless people are one of the most vulnerable groups in society; studies have found strong correlations between homelessness and multiple, and increasingly severe, physical and mental health conditions. Street homeless people are over nine times more likely to commit suicide than the general population; and on average rough sleepers die at age 47 (age 43 for women)⁵.

Given the shifting populations involved and the ‘snapshot’ nature of street counts, any data relating to street homelessness tends to underestimate the numbers of people affected over the long term. It can however give an indication of trend. It is also difficult to provide absolute figures for the number of street homeless people. One reason for this is that many street homeless people hide themselves away in places where they are difficult to find in order to protect themselves. This is especially true for women.

A new data collection methodology was introduced in Autumn 2010. Since then the street homeless count for England has risen from 1,768 in 2010 to 4,134 in 2016.

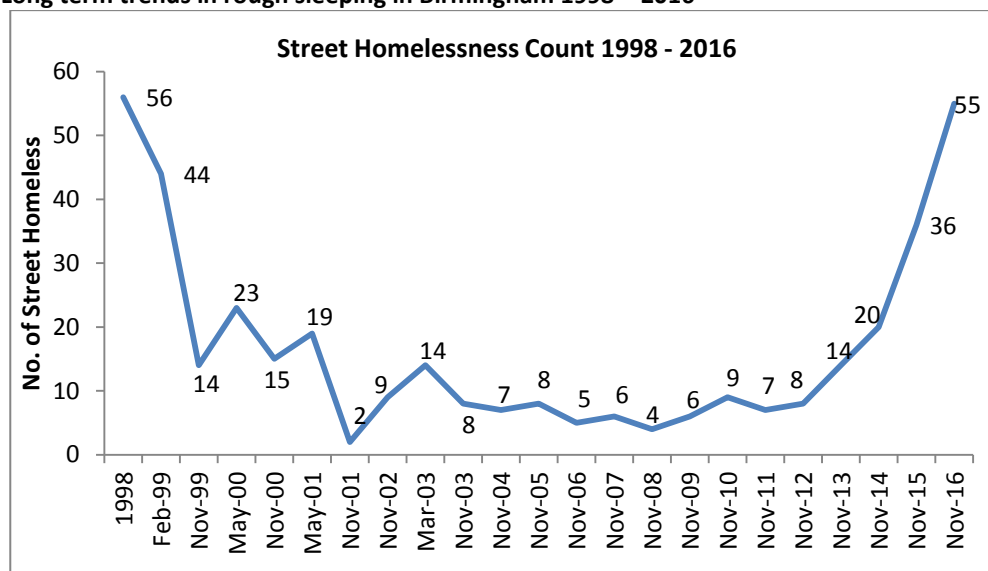
⁵ Wilson, W (2016) Rough Sleeping (England) – Briefing Paper Number 02007. House of Commons Library

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3.6.1 Street Homelessness in Birmingham

Birmingham experienced its steepest increase in street homelessness between 2014 and 2015 when figures rose from 20 to 36; increasing again at the latest count (2016) to 55 (Fig. 24).

Figure 24: Long term trends in rough sleeping in Birmingham 1998 – 2016



Source: Department for Communities and Local Government 2016

In Birmingham, street homelessness increased by 53% last year, a far sharper rise than was seen nationally (16%). Of Core and Regional neighbours, Walsall saw the most dramatic change against its previous year's count, increasing by 271% (Table 13).

Table 13: Street Homeless Comparisons – Core City and Neighbouring Authorities

Area	2016 Count	% change on previous year	% change since 2010
Walsall	26	271%	225%
Sandwell	11	175%	450%
Stratford	13	160%	63%
Nottingham	35	150%	1067%
Leeds	20	54%	233%
Birmingham	55	53%	511%
Coventry	13	44%	160%
Liverpool	21	40%	600%
Wolverhampton	18	38%	100%
Sheffield	15	36%	88%
Solihull	6	20%	100%
Manchester	75	7%	971%
Dudley	3	0%	0%
Bristol	74	-24%	825%
Newcastle	5	-38%	67%

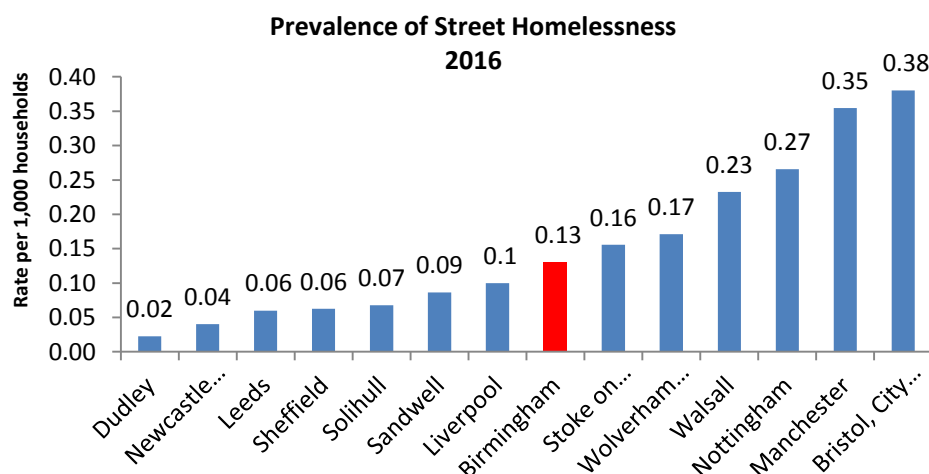
Source: Department for Communities and Local Government 2016

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Birmingham's overall prevalence rate of street homelessness is 0.13 per 1,000 households. Unlike statutory homelessness, where Birmingham's rate is more than three times the national rate, the local rate of street homelessness is lower than the England average (0.18) (Fig. 25).

Bristol had the highest rough sleeping rate of the Core Cities at 0.38 rough sleepers per 1,000 households, followed by Manchester (0.35) and Nottingham (0.27). Newcastle had the lowest Core City rate at 0.04 per 1,000 households (Fig. 25).

Figure 25: Prevalence of Street Homelessness 2016



Source: Department for Communities and Local Government 2016

When comparing regional neighbours, Walsall had the highest rate of rough sleepers (0.23). This was followed by Wolverhampton (0.17) and Stoke on Trent (0.16). Dudley saw the lowest rate at 0.02.

3.6.2 Reasons for Rising Street Homelessness

In 2016, a number of issues were highlighted as factors contributing to the rise in street homelessness in England. These include:

- Welfare reforms, particularly reductions in entitlement to Housing Benefit/LHA;
- Reduced investment by Local Authorities in homeless services;
- Flows of non-UK nationals who are unable to access benefits⁶.

These are consistent with national research undertaken by Sheffield Hallam University (2015) across 21 different Cities (and which included in-depth interviews in Birmingham). One-fifth (20%) of participants cited welfare reform as an additional driver of street homelessness. Pro-longed waiting times for benefit payments – in particular, the payment of Universal Credit in arrears - created practical financial constraints in sourcing housing and managing rent payments.

⁶ Wilson, W (2016) Rough Sleeping (England) – Briefing Paper Number 02007. House of Commons Library

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The overall increase in demand for housing, which has driven up rents and reduced the availability of affordable rented accommodation, along with increased eviction rates and the conditionality of employment were also found to be push factors linked with people sleeping on the streets. In 2016, Birmingham's Street Intervention Team and a multi-agency group chaired by the Council commenced work with a range of organisations involved with or affected by street homelessness to undertake a root cause analysis of the recent sharp rise in people sleeping on the streets in the city. The aim of this work was to elicit a better understanding of the street homelessness profile in Birmingham.

During a two-week period in January 2016, the Team had contact with 217 individuals on the streets. A proportion of this group were individuals known to Birmingham's outreach service however not all were street homeless according to the Government definition. A series of questions were asked including reason for homelessness, last settled accommodation and the previous area where they lived (Table 14).

Table 14: Street Homeless Engagement – January 2016

Reason for Homelessness		Last Settled Accommodation		Previous Area	
Refused to Say/Unknown	113	Refused to Say / Unknown	92	Birmingham	203
Evicted / Excluded	53	Hostel	52	Poland	5
Asked to Leave Family/Friends	22	Private Landlord (Birmingham)	18	London	4
Relocated for Work	7	Friends	16	Germany	2
Abandoned	6	Other	16	Dudley	1
Relationship Breakdown	4	Family Home	11	Wolverhampton	1
Chose to Move On	4	Supported Housing	7	Elsewhere	1
Left Due to Other Tenants	3	Hostel (Poland)	3		
Discharge Hospital / Prison	3	BCC Tenancy	2		
Travelled Abroad	1				
Licence Expired	1				

Source: Birmingham Street Intervention Team 2016

Of the 217 people that engaged with the Team during this period, 203 people were from the local Birmingham area, and almost 35% had become homeless due to being evicted, excluded or asked to leave their previous accommodation. Of those who reported their last settled accommodation, the majority had been in hostel accommodation (23.9%) or with a Private Landlord in the City (8.3%).

3.7 Youth Homelessness

For people on low incomes, the supply of social housing, accessibility and affordability of private rented accommodation and the impact of welfare reform are common concerns both nationally and in Birmingham.

Young people are the most disadvantaged in the housing market because they are likely to have a low income and are viewed by Landlords as potentially high risk. In a large and growing City like Birmingham where almost 50% of the population are estimated to be under-30 years of age, the challenges for young people and housing are further compounded.

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During 2015/16, a total of 4,118 referrals received by the St Basils Youth Hub for young people aged 16 - 25 who were homeless and seeking advice on accommodation and support.

3.7.1 Profile of Youth Homelessness

In Birmingham, young people aged 18-21 years appear to be disproportionately affected by youth homelessness. This group made up more than half (57%) of the total referrals made to St Basils during 2015/16 (Table 15).

Table 15: Age Profile of Young People 2015/16

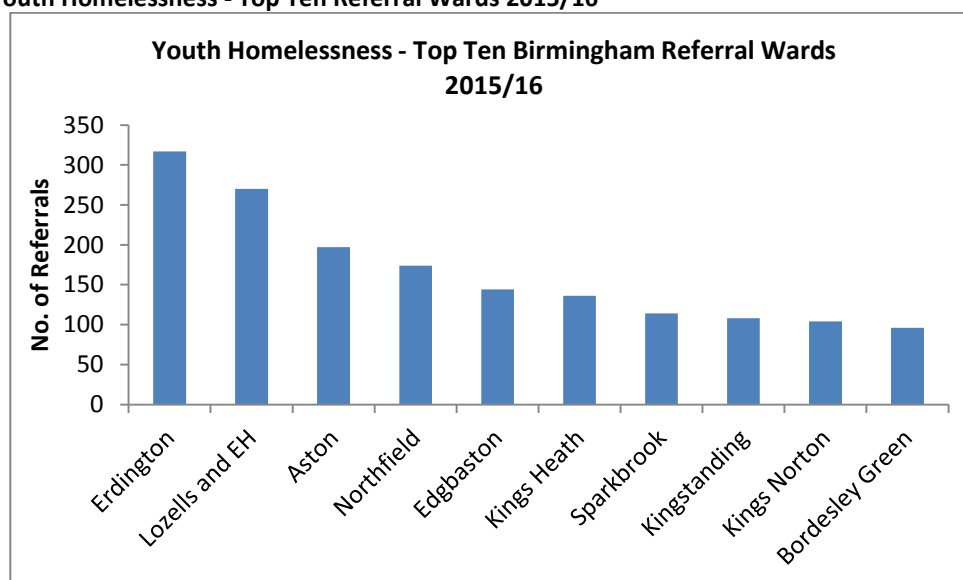
Age Range	Total Referrals	% of Total Referrals
<18	784	19
18-21	2,337	57
22-25	997	24
Total	4,118	100

Source: St Basils Youth Hub 2016

Overall, young men were more likely to be referred for support (54%) compared to young women (46%). This balance reversed for the under-18 group where 60% of referrals were for young women.

Almost 90% of young people facing homelessness were from Birmingham. Erdington was the most common ward that young people presented from (7.7%), followed by Lozells and East Handsworth (6.6%) and Aston (4.8%) (Fig. 26).

Figure 26: Youth Homelessness - Top Ten Referral Wards 2015/16



Source: St Basils Youth Hub 2016

Across all age groups, young single people were most likely to be seeking advice and guidance (84%). There were a total of 460 referrals for young parents/ parents to be, equal to 11% of the total (Table 16).

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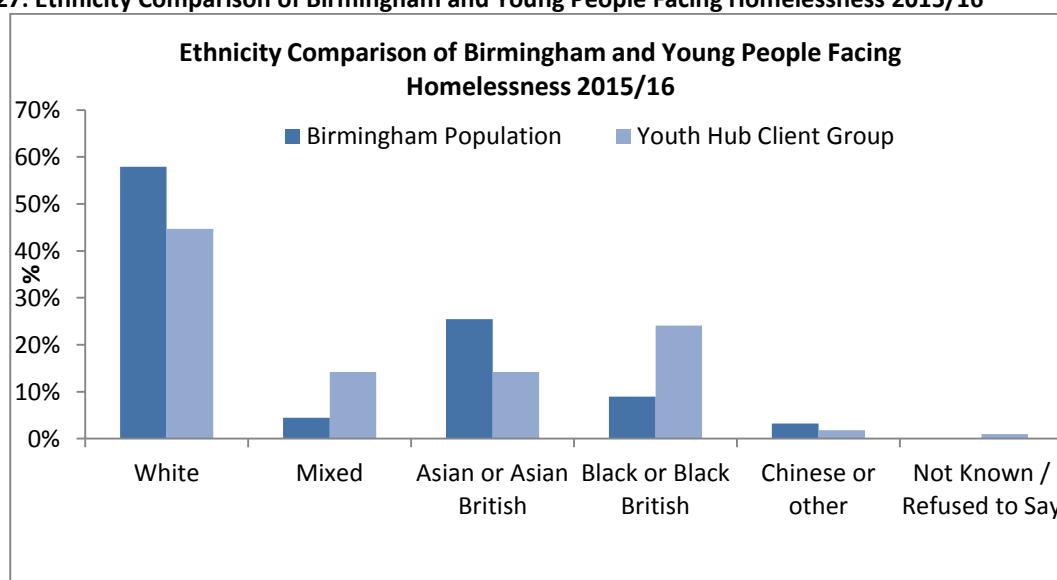
Table 16: Young People's Household Type 2015/16

Household	Total Referrals	% of Total Referrals
Single	3,477	84
Single Pregnant	268	7
Couple	181	4
Single Lone Parent	158	4
Couple with Children/Expecting	34	1
Total	4,118	100

Source: St Basils Youth Hub 2016

Young people from a White ethnic background make up just under half (45%) of referrals in 2015/16, followed by Black (24%), and Asian and Mixed heritage (both 14%) young people. When compared to the ethnicity profile for the city, there is an over-representation of young people from Black and Mixed heritage groups referred to the service (Fig. 27).

Figure 27: Ethnicity Comparison of Birmingham and Young People Facing Homelessness 2015/16



Source: St Basils Youth Hub 2016

The majority of young people referred to the Youth Hub had British Citizenship (88%). There were also 313 referrals for refugee or asylum seeking young people (8%).

The majority of young people threatened with homelessness are on either low or no income. In 2015/16, almost one third of all young people referred did not receive any kind of benefit (30%). It is common for young people not to have claimed for benefits despite being entitled to do so.

In the same year, 2,927 young people were not in any kind of employment, education or training (71%). Young people can experience difficulty in claiming benefits when they are in full time education, others are on apprenticeships and earning a low income. These are examples of circumstances that can make sourcing accommodation difficult for young people.

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Overall, young people are most likely to have been made homeless from their family home (42%). This is true across all age groups, but particularly common for those age under 18, where almost two thirds (62%) come from the family home (Table 17). Reasons for needing to leave a family home may include arguments/ disagreements, changing family financial status/ parental eviction, and overcrowding.

Table 17: Accommodation Status of Young People Facing Homelessness 2015/16

Accommodation Status	Total Referrals	% of Total Referrals
Family Home	1,736	42.2
Friends/Sofa Surfing	738	17.9
Family Members	397	9.6
Supported Housing	297	7.2
HMO	206	5.0
Social Services Accommodation	139	3.4
Private Tenant	127	3.1
NASS Accommodation	94	2.3
Direct Access Accommodation	84	2.0
Hostel	81	2.0
Local Authority Tenant	50	1.2
HM Prison	49	1.2
Other	30	0.7
BCC Temporary Accommodation	27	0.7
Hospital	21	0.5
Rough Sleeping	12	0.3
DV Refuge	10	0.2
Probation Hostel	9	0.2
Housing Association Tenant	6	0.1
Not Reported / Unknown	5	0.1
Total	4,118	100

Source: St Basils Youth Hub 2016

Some young people facing homelessness and referred to St Basils, are already known to the Council's Children's Services – either in a current or historic capacity. In 2015/16, there were 319 homeless young people aged 16 – 21 who had previous involvement, and 325 who were currently involved with Children's Services in Birmingham.

3.7.2 Reasons for Homelessness

The main reason cited by young people referred to St Basils was parents no longer willing or able to accommodate (41.6%), loss of accommodation from friend or other relatives (30.5%), and 'other reason for loss of rented accommodation' (7.7%). These were the top three reasons overall and within each age group (Table 18).

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Table 18: Reasons for Youth Homelessness 2015/16

Reasons for Homelessness	No. of Young People Citing Reason*	% of Total Reasons
Parents no longer willing/able to accommodate	2,018	41.6
Other relatives / friends no longer willing/able to accommodate	1,479	30.5
Other reason for loss of rented accommodation	374	7.7
Other	279	5.7
Refugee - required to leave NASS accommodation	164	3.4
Rent arrears - RSL	98	2.0
Breakdown of relationship with partner - non violent	91	1.9
Leaving direct access hostel	68	1.4
Expiry of assured shorthold tenancy	66	1.4
Breakdown of relationship with relative - violent	62	1.3
Threats of other violence	54	1.1
Rent arrears - Private Sector	44	0.9
Rent arrears - Local Authority	26	0.5
Threats of other harassment	17	0.4
Breakdown of relationship with partner – domestic violence	11	0.2
Implications due to welfare/benefits sanctions	2	0.0
Total	4,853	100

Source: St Basils Youth Hub 2016

*Young people may cite more than one reason

It is common for there to be other underlying factors which could contribute to or increase the risk of a young person becoming homeless. Lack of tenancy experience was the most common secondary factor reported (43.8%), followed by mental health issues (31.2%). Just over one fifth of young people cited criminal convictions (21.2%) and learning difficulties (20.6%) as impacting on homelessness.

3.8 Health and Homelessness

The links between homelessness and health inequalities are stark. Although there have been improvements in the health of the general population, the health of homeless people remain unacceptably poor.

Being homeless has a significant negative impact on health, resulting in homeless people having some of the worst health issues in the city. Homeless people are more vulnerable to illness, poor mental health, and drug and alcohol problems. They are also more likely than the general population to have multiple and complex physical and mental health needs.

Homeless households experience health inequalities with higher morbidity and mortality than the rest of the population. Tackling and preventing homelessness will therefore contribute to reducing health inequalities.

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The following section provides a brief summary of the health of homeless people in Birmingham. Further detail can be found in the [Birmingham Homeless Health Inquiry](#) published in 2015.

3.8.1 Physical Health

Physical health problems in homeless people are 2-3 times more common than the general population. People who are homeless or living in poor quality accommodation can often suffer worse health than those in settled accommodation due to their physical surroundings.

Homeless people suffer significantly higher levels of respiratory and circulatory problems, in particular chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, pneumonia and skin issues than the general population. The resulting health care needs are often more complex than the average patient due to the need to address often multiple, chronic illnesses and diseases.

3.8.2 Substance Misuse

Alcohol is often a contributing factor to becoming homeless, as well as a problem that develops because of homelessness. It is not uncommon to find that addiction to drugs and / or alcohol develops as a means to coping with the day-to-day challenges being homeless presents.

The effects of drug and alcohol dependency have a highly detrimental effect on physical health. Homeless people with alcohol dependency are 28 times more likely to have an emergency admission to hospital than the general population.

3.8.3 Mental Health and Wellbeing

Poor mental health is both a cause and consequence of homelessness. There are also complex associations with issues such as childhood trauma, substance misuse, and domestic abuse.

The prevalence of mental ill health is far greater amongst homeless people than the general population. Of those who responded to the Birmingham Homeless Health Needs Audit, 80% reported some level of mental health problem, with 45% having a mental health diagnosis compared to 25% of the general population.

Serious mental health is often accompanied by substance misuse (drug and / or alcohol) problems; resulting in a dual diagnosis. It is estimated that between 10-20% of homeless people would fulfil the criteria for dual diagnosis.

3.8.4 Dental Health

People who are homeless often have poorer dental health than the general population and therefore have a higher treatment need. When appointments are made, they have poor attendance and therefore poor access to services.

Locally, 60% of homeless people who responded to the Birmingham Homeless Health Needs Audit were registered with a dentist, with the over-25 group least likely to be registered.

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3.8.5 Homelessness and Hospitals

3.8.5.1 Accessing Accident and Emergency

During the period 2013-2015, there were 2,949 attendances at Accident and Emergency (A&E) departments by 1,290 people who were registered with a Birmingham Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and report as 'no fixed abode' (Table 19). Almost one-third (31.4%) of people had more than one attendance during this period.

Table 19: A&E Attendance of People with No Fixed Abode (2013 – 2015)

Hospital	A&E Attendances	No. of Patients	Patients with > 1 Attendance	% Patients with >1 Attendance
Sandwell & West Bham	1,251	430	183	42.6
University Hospitals Bham	836	481	98	20.4
Other	267	148	47	31.8
Heart of England FT	263	116	36	31.0
Black Country	168	66	19	28.8
Wolverhampton	75	31	16	51.6
Walsall	68	10	6	60.0
Coventry & Warwickshire	21	8	0	0.0
Redditch	0	0	0	0.0
Worcestershire	0	0	0	0.0
Total	2,949	1,290	405	31.4

Source: Birmingham Public Health 2016

3.8.5.2 Admission to Hospital from Accident and Emergency

Between 2013-2015, there were 589 admissions to hospital from A&E for 411 patients who were registered with a Birmingham CCG and reporting as 'no fixed abode' (Table 20). Just over 15% of patients had more than 1 admission during that period.

Table 20: Admission to Hospital from A&E of People with No Fixed Abode (2013-2015)

Hospital	Admissions to Hospital from A&E	Patients with Admissions	Patients with >1 Admission	% of Patients with >1 Admission
Sandwell & West Bham	247	150	43	28.7
University Hospitals Bham	178	149	15	10.1
Other	73	52	6	11.5
Heart of England FT	46	37	0	0.0
Black Country	37	23	0	0.0
Walsall	8	0	0	0.0
Redditch	0	0	0	0.0
Worcestershire	0	0	0	0.0
Wolverhampton	*	0	0	0.0
Coventry & Warwickshire	*	0	0	0.0
Total	589	411	64	15.6

Source: Birmingham Public Health 2016

*Total less than 5 have been suppressed

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3.9 Structural Causes of Homelessness in Birmingham

3.9.1 Deprivation, Poverty and Homelessness

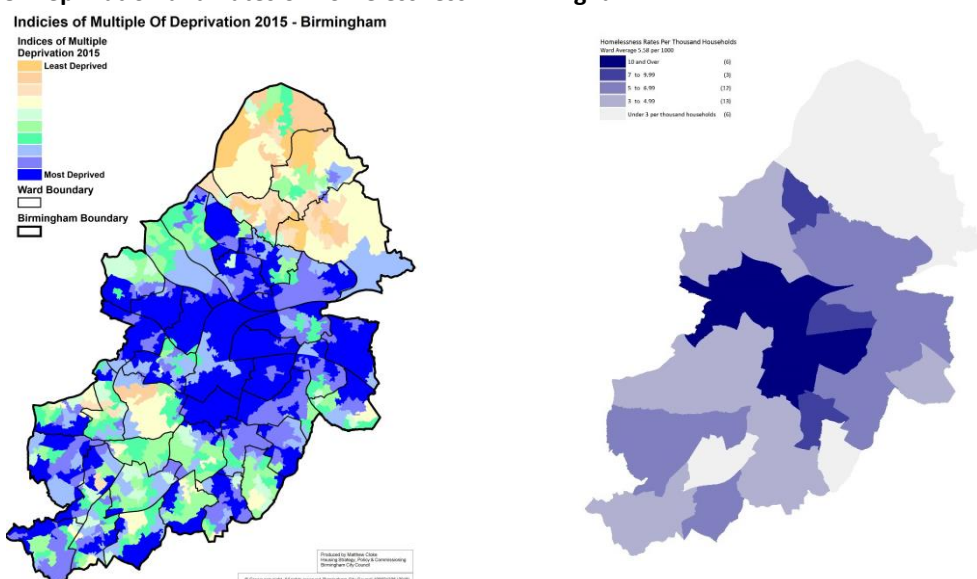
Birmingham suffers from high levels of multiple deprivation. The scale of deprivation in the City reveals that Birmingham is:

- The 6th most deprived authority nationally;
- The most deprived authority in the West Midlands metropolitan area;
- The most deprived of all the greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP local authorities;
- The third most deprived Core City after Liverpool and Manchester.
- Just under 40% of the population live in areas described as in the most deprived 10% in the country;
- Almost a third of all children in Birmingham experience child poverty.

Homelessness both causes and is caused by many aspects of poverty, including financial pressures and unemployment. Birmingham is ranked the most deprived city for numbers of people who are income or employment deprived – this is largely influenced by the size of the authority compared to other major cities.

Parts of the City which feature high levels of deprivation also have high rates of statutory homelessness (Fig. 28). Poverty and low income prevent access to many potential housing options, or make them hard to sustain. People living in poverty generally have less good, and less desirable, housing conditions, including homelessness.

Figure 28: Deprivation and Rates of Homelessness in Birmingham



Sources: Department for Communities and Local Government, Birmingham City Council, Census 2011

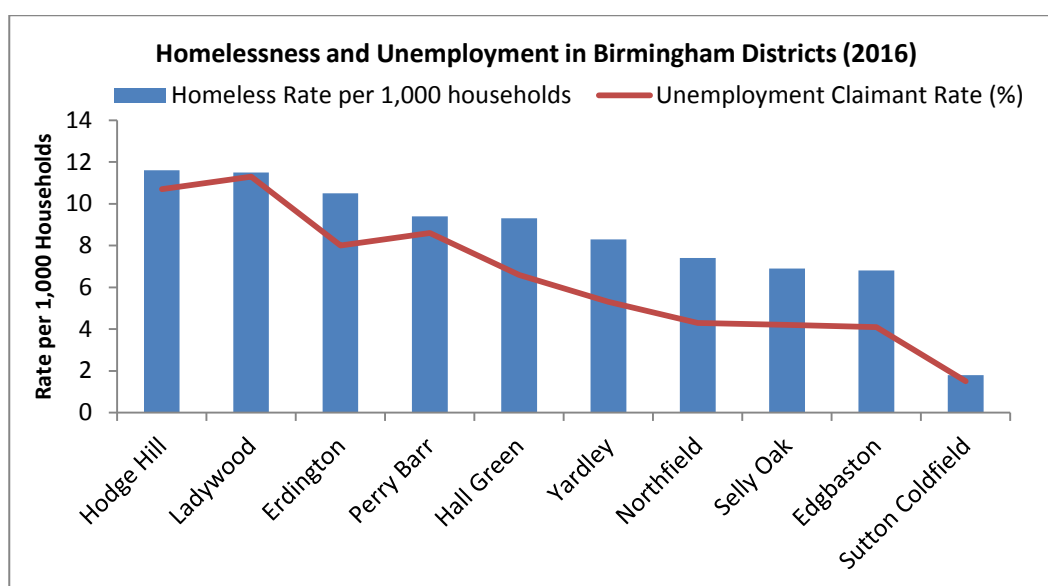
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Deprivation in Birmingham is concentrated in the Ladywood, Erdington, Hodge Hill and Yardley districts. There is also high deprivation found along the southern borders of the City. Homelessness in the city follows a similar picture with highest rates seen in Hodge Hill, Ladywood and Erdington districts respectively.

3.9.2 Unemployment and Homelessness

The relationship between unemployment and levels of homelessness in the City over the long term indicates that levels of statutory homelessness broadly follow rises and falls in the numbers for unemployed people in terms of the claimant count trends.

Figure 29: Homelessness and Unemployment by Birmingham District (2016)



Source: Birmingham City Council 2016

As with homelessness, Birmingham's unemployment claimant count (6.3%) is approaching almost three times the national average (2.3%). Birmingham's claimant unemployment rate is the highest of the Core Cities – approximately 1.5 times the Core City average of 4.1%. This relationship is replicated across Birmingham's ten districts (Fig. 29).

3.10 Predicting the Future of Homelessness in Birmingham

Whilst it is difficult to accurately predict future levels of homelessness in Birmingham, there are a number of indicators which suggest it is likely to continue to rise in all forms:

- Homelessness trends are influenced by the prevailing national and local economic environment. Birmingham's rate of statutory homelessness (8.36 per 1,000 households) remains double the Core City average (3.95) and around three times higher than the English average (2.5). This is also mirrored in local wards and parts of the city experiencing high levels of persistent social and economic deprivation;
- Statutory homelessness was reducing and stabilising from a peak in 2010 up until 2014, but has increased sharply over the course of the last financial year (2015/16);

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- The number of households being placed in temporary accommodation continues to rise. Levels are approaching the national rate (3.1 per 1,000 households), with an all-time peak of more than 1,500 households recorded at the end of 2015/2016;
- While comparatively lower than many Core Cities, the street homeless rate in Birmingham (0.13 per 1,000 households) is following the established national trend of year-on-year count increases since 2010. The latest count in the city (55) is just one short of the previous historical peak of 56 recorded back in 1998;
- Existing and forthcoming national austerity measures in relation to welfare savings have made meeting the cost of housing financially challenging. As a result, this is giving rise to increased levels of homelessness across all housing tenures. Alongside ongoing homelessness triggered by the Bedroom Tax/Under Occupancy Charge and Benefit Cap, a new 2016 Benefit Cap is expected to affect over 4,000 households in the city;
- In April 2017, the removal of the automatic entitlement to Housing Support for new claims in Universal Credit for 18-21 year olds comes into effect. This will have a disproportionate impact in Birmingham due to its younger age profile;
- Additional demand is likely to increase from displaced homeless households from parts of the country where housing is the more unaffordable. During 2015/16, there were 130 homeless households received from other Local Authorities into Birmingham. These households are usually, although not exclusively, from a number of different London boroughs.

4. Tackling Homelessness in Birmingham: Resource and Response

Key Findings:

- Birmingham has an excellent track - record of innovation in the delivery of homelessness services.
- The city is recognised as having examples of national best practice including the Positive Pathway model for Youth Homelessness.
- Statutory services in Birmingham are supported by commissioned Housing Support and Homeless Prevention services. Homelessness services in Birmingham include:
 - Housing Options Service
 - Homeless Prevention Grant Programme
 - Legal Advice and Enforcement
 - Housing Support Services
- In partnership with a number of Third Sector organisations and neighbouring Local Authorities, the Council has established new services and responses to homelessness through successfully securing additional funding from specific Government Grant initiatives.
- Demand across all homeless service provision (statutory and non-statutory) remains high despite improving service performance and associated outcomes.
- The Supporting People programme accounts for 60% of the controllable spend for tackling and preventing homelessness in Birmingham.

4.1 Investment in Homeless, Homeless Prevention and Housing Support Services

The level of investment made by the Council in Homelessness services is substantial and multi-faceted.

Homelessness services in Birmingham include:

- The **Housing Options Service** which holds responsibility for delivering the Council's statutory duties including:
 - Assessing homeless applications for assistance under the Homeless Legislation
 - Providing temporary accommodation for priority homeless households awaiting the offer of permanent accommodation.
- The **Homeless Prevention Grant Programme** - a DCLG grant fund of c.£1m per annum. Whilst this grant fund is no longer ring fenced, there is a very clear expectation from Government that the

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funding is used to prevent homelessness with approaches being informed by an understanding of local key drivers.

- **Legal Advice and Enforcement** of standards within the Private Rented Sector
- **BCC Commissioned Housing Support Services** (currently £24m per annum) are mainly delivered via contracts with Third Sector organisations and Housing Associations. Key to these services are:
 - The delivery of housing relating support to key groups of vulnerable adults including homeless singles, families, young people (including dedicated provision for care leavers), people experiencing domestic abuse, ex-offenders, people with learning, physical and sensory disabilities, mental health needs, and gypsies and travellers;
 - The Young People's Housing Related Support Services which draws in an additional resource of £3.165m through Supporting People contracts being matched to the European Social Fund – Youth Employment Initiative;
 - Delivery through a payment by outcomes contracting methodology which includes outcomes relating to a person's ability to live independently within their own home, improved health and wellbeing, and access to employment, training and volunteering.

Even with the extensive investment in Housing Support and Homeless Prevention outlined above, the direct costs incurred in the delivery of the Council's statutory homelessness duty remain substantial.

Provision of temporary accommodation in Birmingham cost the Council almost £11m in the 18 month period to May 2016. Whilst the bulk of this is recovered from Housing Benefit, it is not possible to fully recover all costs – in particular the full cost to the council incurred by the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation. Within the context of a high-demand housing market, temporary accommodation tends to be significantly more expensive than permanent forms of occupancy.

4.2 Current Service Response

4.2.1 Applications, Prevention and Relief

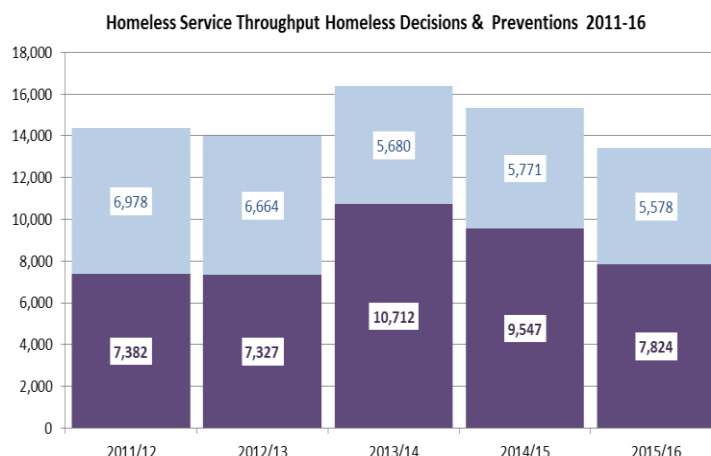
Over the period of the Homelessness Strategy (2012-2016), services that were commissioned or directly provided by the Council dealt with over 59,000 inquiries (av. 14,700 per annum) related to homelessness.

Over the same period, the Housing Options Service received and made decisions upon 23,963 homeless applications; equivalent to an average of almost 6,000 per year. The lowest number to date was seen in 2015/16 with 5,578 homeless applications received and decisions made (Fig. 30).

DCLG defines a 'homeless prevention' as one that removes the threat of homelessness for a minimum period of 6 months. Based on this criterion, Birmingham delivered over 35,000 homeless prevention and relief interventions during the period 2012-2016; equivalent to an average of 8,800 per year and exceeding the number of homeless applications over the same period. As with homeless applications, 2015/16 saw the lowest number of preventions delivered to date (7,824) (Fig. 30).

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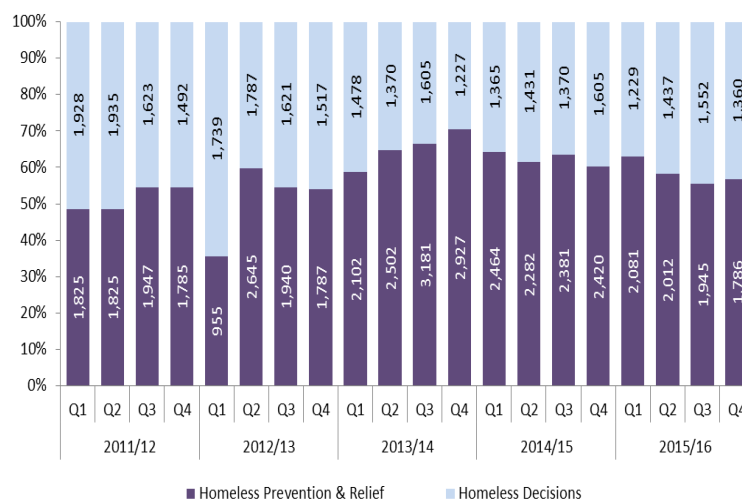
Figure 30: Homeless Preventions and Decisions 2011- 2016 – Annual Trends



Source: Birmingham City Council 2016

When looking in more detail, the number of homeless preventions has consistently exceeded homeless applications since the first quarter of 2012/13. Latest figures (Q4 2015/16) continue to demonstrate this trend with preventions exceeding applications by 1,736 to 1,360 respectively (Fig. 31).

Figure 31: Homeless Preventions and Decisions 2011-2016 – Quarterly Trends



Source: Birmingham City Council 2016

In Birmingham, interventions for the prevention and relief of homeless are delivered through a range of projects and services. These interventions focus on assisting households to remain in their existing home or to obtain alternative accommodation.

Of the c35,000 homeless preventions delivered between 2012-2016 , 60% of cases were assisted into alternative accommodation and 40% assisted to remain in current home. The latest available year (2015/16) shows a substantial increase in the proportion of cases assisted to obtain alternative accommodation (79%). Over the same period, just over one fifth of cases were assisted to remain in their current home (21%).

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Of the 6,205 cases assisted to obtain alternative accommodation in 2015/16, just over a third (37.7%) were assisted to obtain supported accommodation (Table 21).

Table 21: Homeless Prevention Interventions – Cases obtaining alternative accommodation (2015/16)

Case assisted to obtain alternative accommodation:	Total Cases	% of Total Cases
Supported accommodation	2,337	37.7
Hostel or House in Multiple Occupation (HMO)	1,795	28.9
Other	949	15.3
Private rented sector accommodation with landlord incentive scheme	338	5.4
Accommodation arranged with friends or relatives	261	4.2
Social housing - management move of existing LA tenant	256	4.1
Social housing Part 6 offer of LA accommodation or nomination to PRP	151	2.4
Private rented sector accommodation without landlord incentive scheme	100	1.6
Social housing - negotiation with an PRP outside Part 6 nomination arrangement	17	0.3
Low cost home ownership scheme, low cost market housing solution	1	0
TOTAL	6,205	100

Source: Birmingham City Council 2016

Just under one third of these cases (28.9%) assisted to obtain alternative accommodation were housed in hostels and/or HMOs; two property types which can vary considerably in terms of provision. Some hostels are classified as providing support on site and are being included as Exempt Accommodation schemes under Housing Benefit regulations. There are also examples of HMO's where tenants are supported by Floating Support workers. In both property types, the availability of support alongside accommodation can vary greatly.

Of cases assisted to remain in their existing home, the majority were provided with a crisis intervention in the form of emergency support (42.2%) (Table 22).

It may be surprising to note that resolving Housing Benefit problems in the context of ongoing welfare reform has not featured higher in terms of interventions used (just 6.9%). Nationally this type of intervention accounts for over a fifth of homeless preventions. The difference may be due to variations in local recording practice.

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Table 22: Homeless Prevention Interventions – Cases assisted to remain at existing home (2015/16)

Case able to remain in existing home, as a result of:	Total Cases	% of Total cases
Crisis intervention - providing emergency support	684	42.2
Assistance enabling household to remain in private or social rented sector	466	28.8
Resolving housing benefit problems	111	6.9
Mediation using external or internal trained family mediators	101	6.2
Other	84	5.2
Financial payments from a homeless prevention fund	61	3.8
Conciliation including home visits for family or friend threatened exclusions	53	3.3
Debt advice	29	1.8
Negotiation or legal advocacy enabling household to remain in private rented sector	18	1.1
Resolving rent or service charge arrears in the social or private rented sector	8	0.5
Mortgage arrears interventions or mortgage rescue	3	0.2
Sanctuary scheme measures for domestic violence	1*	0.1
TOTAL	1619	100

Source: Birmingham City Council 2016

**Latest update shows the actual number of cases to receive Sanctuary measures during 2015/16 = 67*

4.2.2 Accommodation for Homeless Households

4.2.2.1 Temporary Accommodation usage including Bed & Breakfast Provision

Amongst the overall numbers of people who experience homelessness, are those accommodated by the Council in hostels, shelters and temporary accommodation. Temporary accommodation encompasses a range of accommodation from properties leased from Private Landlords and Housing Associations, to hostel-type provision, Bed & Breakfast (B&B) accommodation or rooms in hotels for shorter periods of stay (days or weeks).

The provision of temporary accommodation serves a critical role in responding to immediate and acute housing needs. Nationally, the number of households living in temporary accommodation stood at 59,710 at the end of June 2014; 6% higher than at the same date in 2013. By 2015, this figure had risen to 71,540 with over 50,000 of the figure distributed across London boroughs, underlying the difficulty in finding suitable settled housing.

Temporary accommodation services managed by the Council contribute to a network of housing provision and services for individuals and households at risk of becoming roofless. Without this provision, statutory homeless households (which typically include families with children) could face destitution and the potential prospect of street homelessness.

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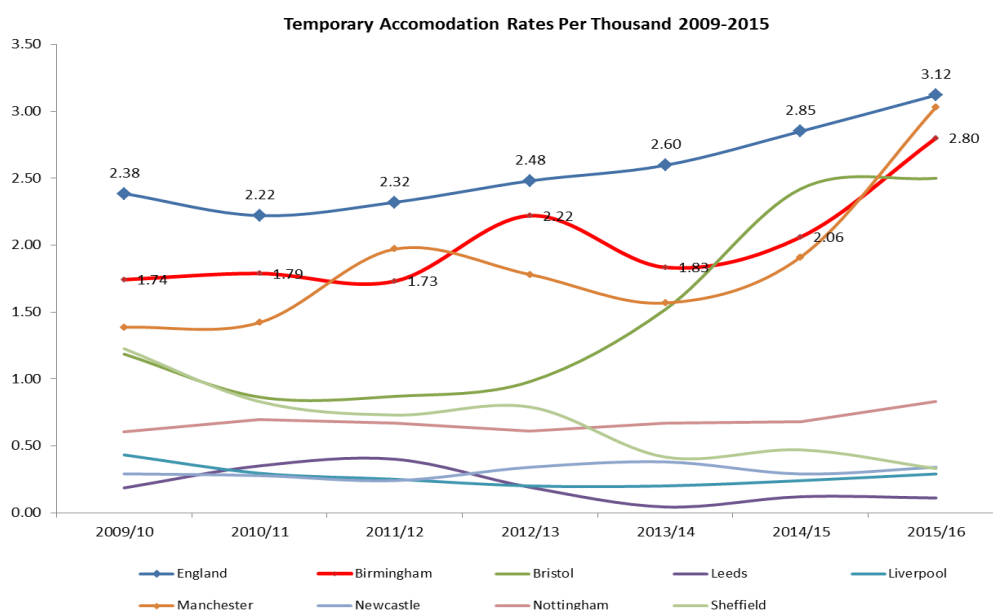
Council-managed temporary accommodation services serve two distinct sets of circumstances in order to manage the impact upon individuals and households having nowhere suitably safe and appropriate to stay. These are:

- The provision of emergency safety accommodation at the time of making a homeless application when there is an immediate risk of having nowhere else to stay - legally termed an '**Interim Housing Duty**' to provide accommodation;
- Individuals and households already assessed to be unintentionally homeless and in priority housing need awaiting the offer of permanent settled housing.

The dynamics of homeless trends and housing needs in Birmingham present a number of challenges in both of these circumstances. Firstly, the level of demand upon Council housing and Homeless Services is unprecedented. Following a decline in the total numbers of households in temporary accommodation since its peak in 2013, a recent surge during the last financial year (2015/16) has pushed the rate of households in temporary accommodation to record levels.

Currently, the rate of temporary accommodation usage in Birmingham (2.80 per 1,000 households) remains below the national average (3.12) but is higher than all but one of the Core City neighbours (Fig. 32).

Figure 32: Temporary Accommodation Usage Rates 2009-16



Source: Department for Communities and Local Government 2016

Since 2012/13, there have consistently been c.1,000 households in temporary accommodation each year. This reliance on temporary accommodation is a response to the demand of general needs housing accommodation available for letting outstripping supply, and the lack of availability of other sources of suitable housing.

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The number of households in temporary accommodation has increased by 70% during the period 2011/12 to 2015/16; equivalent to 493 households. Financial year 2015/16 has seen Birmingham reach a 5-year high with 1,194 households in temporary accommodation (Table 23).

Table 23: Temporarily Accommodated Households in Birmingham 2011 - 16

Year	Households Placed in TA	Households in B&B	% TA Households placed in B&B
2011/12	701	57	8.1
2012/13	922	115	12.5
2013/14	768	149	19.4
2014/15	870	72	8.3
2015/16	1,194	128	10.7

Source: Department for Communities and Local Government 2016

Spikes in demand often mean that households owed an interim housing duty are placed in B&B accommodation once vacancies in other types of temporary accommodation are fully utilised. The number of households placed in B&B provision has risen by 124.6% in the last 5 years (2011/12-2015/16). This is significantly higher than the increase in households in temporary accommodation generally (70%) during the same period (Table tbc). Currently 10.7% of temporarily accommodated households are in B&B provision (2015/16).

Successfully moving households out of temporary accommodation is ultimately dependent upon the availability of affordable decent rented housing. One of the consequences of housing shortages is the growing disparity between the availability of social housing for letting and the growth of housing waiting lists and households in temporary accommodation.

4.2.2.2 Rehousing Homeless Households

In 2015/16, there were 2,615 homeless households waiting to be rehoused. Two thirds of these households had opted to remain in their current address rather than take up the offer of temporary accommodation - this group is sometimes referred to as 'Homeless at Home'.

The bed size requirements for households in temporary accommodation or those homeless at home are broadly similar (Table 24). In both cases, the proportion of households requiring 2 bed properties far outweighed other bed size requirements.

Table 24: Bed size requirements for homeless acceptances awaiting rehousing (2015/16)

Bed Size	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	5 Bed	6 Bed	7 Bed+
In TA	10%	49%	19%	14%	7%	2%	0.2%
Not in TA (Homeless at Home)	9%	55%	17%	12%	5%	2%	0.50%

Source: Birmingham City Council

Of those households waiting to be re-housed at the end of 2015/16:

- 41% have been registered during the last six months;
- 39% for 6 months to 2 years; and,

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- 20% for more than 2 years.

For those in temporary accommodation the length time stay at the end of the 2015/16 financial year revealed:

- Over 50% registered in the last six months;
- a third had been staying in temporary accommodation between 6 and 18 months; and,
- 17% for over 18 months.

The number of households accepted as homeless and awaiting re-housing in Birmingham rose from 1,283 (Q1 2011/12) to a peak of 2,366 in Q2 2014/15. Since then, the total has decreased by 164 cases to 2,202 however this still represents an overall increase of 79.4% acceptances over the period (Figure 33).

Figure 33: Homeless acceptances waiting to be re-housed 2011 - 2015



Source: Birmingham City Council

It is worth noting that if all Homeless at Home cases had taken up the offer of temporary accommodation, Birmingham's overall temporary accommodation rate would exceed the national rate (3.12 per 1,000).

4.2.2.3 Supported Housing

Supported housing provides support for people who are making a transition from homelessness into settled accommodation. The aim of this type of service is to maintain a tenancy, increase independence and to encourage people to live a healthy and enjoyable life.

Supported housing provision can encompass short stays accompanied by intensive support (0-3 months), or less intensive support for longer periods up to 12 months, where residents are prepared and equipped to manage their own tenancies in settled accommodation.

Managed by a range of providers in the City, placements into supported housing contribute towards keeping the number of single homeless households comparatively low. This includes those single households who are deemed not to be in priority housing need.

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There are currently 1,759 commissioned bed spaces in Birmingham with an available duration of stay ranging from <3 months to 2 years (Table 25). The length of time someone is in supported housing is variable and generally guided by the support needs of the individual or household concerned.

Table 25: Specialist, Transitional and Supported Accommodation Services

Client Group and Service	No. of Bed Spaces	Duration of stay (Months)
Domestic Abuse - Refuge	143	6
Ex-Offenders - Accommodation	127	12
Young People - Immediate Access	115	0-3
Young People - Step Down	430	12
Young People – Places of Change	107	12
Young Offenders Accommodation	20	12
Young People - Supported Lodgings	24	12
Single Homeless - Accommodation	628	3-6
Homeless - Short Term Complex Needs	33	12
Homeless - Long Term Complex Needs	86	24
Homeless – Places of Change	46	6
Total No. of Bed Spaces	1,759	

Source: Birmingham City Council 2016

Annual (12-month period to December 2016) throughput of clients accessing these services reveals the following:

- 980 single homeless clients (25 years and over) in supported housing;
- 900 young people 16-24 years of age;
- 534 people experiencing domestic abuse;
- 227 ex-offenders.

By receiving support and/ or supported accommodation, some particularly vulnerable client groups have been prevented from becoming statutory homeless due to an escalation of need. Social Inclusion and Disability support services for ex-offenders and people with physical or mental health needs supported 4,696 clients over the previous 12 month period (to December 2016) of which 3,928 (84%) were new service users.

Without these interventions, it is likely that levels of single and street homelessness would be considerably higher.

4.2.3 Youth Homeless Services

4.2.3.1 Accessing the Youth Hub

The Birmingham Youth Hub provides a multiagency single point of access for young people aged 16-25 who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. The Youth Hub is a partnership between St Basils, and the Council's Homeless and Childrens Services.

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Young people aged over 18 with dependent children are not within the Youth Hub criteria however they are still able to access other services such as floating support, family mediation or supported accommodation.

During 2015/16, the Youth Hub received referrals to support 4,118 young people who were facing homelessness.

Self-referral was the most common access route to the Youth Hub in 2015/16, with 2,440 young people referring themselves for advice and support (59%). The Youth Offending Service made a quarter of the total referrals (24.8%) during 2015/16, making them the most frequent referring agency for that period (Table 26).

Table 26: Source of Referrals to the Youth Hub 2015/16

Referral Source	Total No. Referrals	% Total Referrals
Self Referral	2,440	59.3%
Youth Offending Service	1,023	24.8%
Family/Friends	443	10.8%
BCC Housing Advice Centre	417	10.1%
Social Services Aftercare Advisor	230	5.6%
Accommodation Provider	110	2.7%
Other	91	2.2%
Supporting People Provider	63	1.5%
St Basils service	50	1.2%
Education Service	48	1.2%
Health Service	47	1.1%
Housing Advice Service	40	1.0%
Probation	35	0.8%
Police	26	0.6%
Voluntary Organisation	20	0.5%
Prison	13	0.3%
Single Gateway	11	0.3%
CYPF Services	6	0.1%
CYPF (non-bham) Services	1	0.0%

Source: St Basils Youth Hub 2016

4.2.3.2 Youth Homelessness Outcomes – Prevention Service

Almost three quarters of the young people (3,017) referred to the Youth Hub during 2015/16 went on to attend an appointment with a Homeless Prevention worker within the service.

Following assessment, the Prevention Worker determines the immediate accommodation that the young person will be staying. Almost half of young people aged 16-17 were supported to return to live with family members (37.7%) or go on to live with friends (9.8%). These young people were able to rely on their family and support networks to manage their current situation rather than need to access emergency accommodation.

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In some situations, it was deemed unsafe for a young person to return home due to safeguarding concerns. In 2015/16, the Youth Hub made 25 referrals to the Council Children's Services for a multiagency assessment under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989.

Young people aged 18-21 are less likely to be recognised as a 'vulnerable client' under the Council's Temporary Accommodation assessment. This makes this group more reliant on other means of emergency or longer term accommodation; for example Supported Accommodation. When identifying immediate accommodation with 18-21 year olds, the most common outcome has been Direct Access Accommodation (19.3%) and Supported Housing (18.7%).

For young people aged 22-25, Supported Accommodation was the most common outcome for immediate accommodation (21.3%), followed by living with Friends (16.6%).

4.2.3.3 Youth Homelessness Outcomes – Accommodation Sourcing

The Accommodation Finding service is a small team within the Youth Hub who make referrals to generic and specialist supported housing and the private rented sector. In order for these referrals to be made, young people need to be receiving the correct income, either in salary or benefits. In 2015/16, 1,228 young people were provided with financial advice and assistance.

Following financial advice and assistance, the Youth Hub made 1,307 onward referrals for young people into Supported Housing and the Private Rented Sector (Table 27). Nearly half of these referrals were for Step Down (44.4%) and over a third were for young people who required Immediate Access Accommodation (37.7%).

Table 27: Referrals made by Youth Hub for Onward Support 2015/16

Move On Options*	Total No. Onward Referrals	% Total Onward Referrals
Referred to Step Down	580	44.4
Referred to Immediate Access	493	37.7
Referred to Places of Change	134	10.3
Referred to other Supported Accommodation	93	7.1
Referred to Private Rented Sector	5	0.4
Referred to specialist Supported Accommodation	2	0.2
Referred to complete Part 6 Housing Application	0	0.0
Total	1,307	100.0

Source: St Basils Youth Hub 2016

*young people may be referred to >1 provision

During 2015/16, referrals were also made by Youth Hub to Housing Related Support (393), LSW (101) and Family Mediation (93).

In total, Birmingham Youth Hub prevented homelessness for 83.2% of young people accessing the service; where prevention is defined as not needing to return to the service within 6 months following appointment.

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4.2.4 Health Related Homeless Services

Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health Foundation Trust (BSMHFT) are commissioned by the Joint Commissioning Team to provide a primary care and mental health service to the homeless people of Birmingham. The **Homeless Health Exchange Primary Care Service** is a GP-led service for homeless adults (18+). The Exchange has c.850 patients with a high turnover of approx. 50% per year. The client group is majority male (90%) and there are very few over the age of 60.

The Homelessness Community Mental Health Service provides a city wide service for homeless adults (18+). The service offers community psychiatric support, medication, and psychiatric nursing care to service users requiring clinical management by a Consultant Psychiatrist.

A dedicated **Dental Drop In Service** for people who are homeless in Birmingham opened in 2012. The service delivered by Birmingham Community Health Care Trust Special Care Dentistry Team offers check ups, x-rays, fillings, scale and polish, extractions and emergency treatment for toothache and swelling. The service also provides preventative advice, screening for oral cancer and information on accessing dental services for more comprehensive care.

The **Homeless Service Walk In Centre** offers a prescribing clinic for homeless clients with GP and substance misuse staff available on site. Assessment, advice, drug screening and prescribing are all available. Clients who are not in accommodation can also access chiropody, showering and laundry facilities.

4.2.5 Other Homeless Services

Outside of Council-commissioned and managed services, there is a good level of diversity of service provision across the City. These services cater for a range of different client groups with varying housing needs including street homeless people, young people, refugees and asylum seekers including those with no recourse to public funds (NRPF).

Provision is delivered through strong established Community and Third Sector organisations who work well in partnership with the Council. Private sector provision includes accommodation for 900 bed spaces in the housing benefit supported exempt sector.

There is no single source which captures the range of services that operate across Birmingham in complete detail. However, throughout this review process, a range of services were identified. Many but not all work independently of Council funded services and refer and sign post clients into Council services (Table 28).

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Table 28: Non-council funded homelessness and housing aid and advice services

Service Provider	Service	Advice	Homeless Prevention services	Estimated client caseload and/or client profile
Birmingham Churches Winter Night Shelter	Emergency overnight stays across a circuit of 14 locations open 85 night per year	Referrals to other organisations	Signposting	Total of 28 guests utilised service – capacity of 1,020 bed spaces over the course of 85 days
Citizens Advice	Signposting	Financial advice Case work Linked to Community Law Partnership	Mortgage Repossession	1,500 clients per annum (estimated)
Crisis	Private Rented Sector Access Scheme	Money/Debt Advice Employment/Training Support	PRS Access Case work (all tenures)	NA
Hope Housing	For destitute asylum seekers expect UASCs'* up to 6 months	Advocacy Case work		65- 85 per annum (estimated)
South Birmingham Young Homeless Project	Referrals to other providers	Money/Debt Advice Employment/Training Support	Resettlement and tenancy support. Drug and alcohol advice and support	16-24-year-old – 450 clients per annum (estimated)

*Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

4.3 Service Improvements, Developments and Innovation

Birmingham has an excellent track - record of innovation in the delivery of homelessness services, and has been recognised as having examples of national best practice including the Positive Pathways model for youth homelessness.

Services commissioned or established through the Housing Support and Homeless Prevention Grant programme and through successfully securing additional funding from specific Government funding initiatives over the course of the Strategy include:

- Let to Birmingham Social Lettings Agency which improves access to decent private rental accommodation. It contributes in the region of 200 homelessness prevention and relief interventions per annum;
- Maintaining investment in a Street Homeless Outreach service which has been in operation for over 15 years;
- Funding drop-in welfare services for people to access food and showering facilities since April 2011;

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- Re-commissioning immediate access accommodation for vulnerable single people in need of accommodation and support;
- Funding the continuation of a pilot Hospital Discharge Pathway Service for people being discharged from hospital with no fixed abode with the aim of reducing Accident and Emergency re-admissions;
- Trialling a Homeless Street Triage (HOST) service in 2015 to link up and co-ordinate responses to street homelessness between the public, Police and Homeless Outreach Teams;
- Recently re-commissioned supported accommodation provision for former offenders;
- Increasing refuge provision for people experiencing domestic abuse through;
- Since 2010, continually investing in service provision for young people at risk of homelessness delivered via a multiagency Youth Hub which includes the Council's Homeless and Children's services. The Youth Hub works with over 4,700 young people each year; 84% of those young people are positively prevented from accessing statutory Homeless or Children's Social Care services;
- Maintaining provision of cold weather emergency accommodation and partnership working with faith communities to help expand this across the city;
- Launching an Accreditation Scheme for co-ordinating and making best use of Community and Voluntary outreach services.

4.4 Enhancing Existing Service Provision

Birmingham has also taken part in the following programmes aimed at enhancing existing service provision:

- 'Homelessness Change' and 'Platform for Life' capital investment programmes delivering specialist accommodation for single homeless adults (over 25) and shared living units of accommodation for young people (16-24);
- Delivery of Fair Chance Fund to support the most disadvantaged young homeless people to sustain their housing/tenancies. The scheme is delivered across Birmingham and Solihull with outcomes including sustaining accommodation, achieving NVQ level qualifications, and participation in employment and volunteering;
- West Midlands Housing First initiative supports people who are homeless and have experienced institutional care, substance misuse and / or chaotic street lifestyles. The service provides 2-year tenancies and includes a programme of intensive support to address e.g. mental health, substance misuse issues.

5. Service Users, Service Providers and Stakeholders: Views and Experiences

Key Findings

- There is scope to better track client progress between services and understand more about the impact and sustainability of current prevention interventions.
- There is a role for targeted earlier intervention and prevention, for example through education in schools.
- Gaps in support for vulnerable clients navigating and accessing services relating to welfare and tenancy need to be addressed – especially those within the Private Rented Sector.
- Private Rented Sector tenancy breakdown is a major issue and should be a focus for prevention activity.
- The approach to homelessness as a result of domestic abuse needs to be refreshed.
- There are shortages of ‘move on’ accommodation for those transitioning out of supported accommodation.
- The Local Housing Allowance Shared Accommodation Rate is an issue for Birmingham. Set by the Valuation Office Agency, the Broad Rental Market Area rents in the Black Country are more generous than those in Birmingham.
- Birmingham Budget consultations have continued to draw strong support for the protection of homelessness and homeless prevention services.
- There are opportunities to work in partnership to further develop shared housing provision.

5.1 Service User Feedback - Living in Temporary Accommodation

As part of this Review, a telephone survey was undertaken with 50 households in temporary accommodation (TA). These households were selected at random in May 2016.

The aim of the survey was to examine the impacts of short term accommodation on households in relation to health, education (where children were included in the households), learning, training and employment.

5.1.1 Survey of Households - Participant Profile

The overwhelming majority of participants were households with children (82%) (Table 29).

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Table 29: Household profile of survey participants

Household Type	% of Survey Participants
Lone parents (one adult with children in household)	46.0
2 or more adults plus children in household	36.0
Single persons	12.0
2 or more adults no children in household	6.0

Source: Birmingham City Council 2016

The length of time participants had spent in TA ranged from less than 3 months (37%), between 3 months and one year (38%) and more than one year (25%).

In terms of socio-economic status, just under two thirds of respondents were either looking after their family (32.7%) or unemployed (30.6%), and over a quarter (26.5%) of respondents were in employment or education (Table 30).

Table 30: Socio-economic status of survey participants

Status	% of Survey Participants
Looking after family	32.7
Unemployed	30.6
In employment or education	26.5
Part time employment	18.4
Disabled / long term sickness	10.0
Full time education	4.1
Full time employment	2.0
Self employed	2.0

Source: Birmingham City Council 2016

Although the sample size of 50 randomly selected cases appears to be relatively modest the survey achieved a was good representation of population residing in TA arranged by the Council.

5.1.2 Findings: Health

Over one in fifth (22.5%) of respondents reported barriers to accessing health services since being placed into TA. The main barriers experienced were delays resulting in the change of address (50%), increased travel distances (20%) and issues with accessing GP services as a result of not having a permanent address (10%).

Almost two thirds of respondents reported their own health status had either been maintained (49%) or had improved (12.2%) since being placed in TA. There had been a negative impact on health status for 38% of households.

A combination of physical and mental health issues were reported to be responsible for the deterioration in health. Respondants were unprompted for their answers and could describe more than one single reason or cause. The stress of moving home and the associated loss of social networks accounted for 31.6% of mental health decline, followed by depression (26.3%). The combination of the housing environment and personal physical health accounted for over 40% of respondents reporting a decline in physical health.

Of the 82% of households with children, two thirds reported child health had improved or remained the same. The following reasons were provided for those reporting a decline in their children's health:

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- Lack of suitable outdoor facilities or space for children to play (33%)
- Property related issues conditions/overcrowded (33%)
- Loss of social networks or isolation from other friends and family

5.1.3 Findings: Employment, Education and Training

With regards to progressing or maintaining employment, training and learning, broadly speaking 3 out of every 10 households in TA were either fairly dissatisfied or very disatisfied. The main reasons cited were lack of opportunities near to their TA, parental responsibilities (particularly single parents), and the lack of available support or advice.

When asked about steps households had taken on their own in relation to improving their employment prospects whilst in TA, 24% of respondents had accessed Department of Work and Pensions services such as Job Centre Plus, Work Coaches or the Work Programme. Almost one fifth (18%) of respondents had started a course of education or training whilst in TA, and 8% had got a new job.

With regards to what TA residents valued most in terms of assisting them into employment training and education, the three most cited responses were (1) Courses that lead onto job opportunities (2) Courses that lead onto qualifications and (3) Help with travel costs. In addition residents were also asked about access to education and training and what they valued most in terms of assistance. A quarter cited access to information on what training and information would be available for them to access.

5.1.4 Findings: Child Development and Education

Respondents with children were asked about the development and educational progress the child/ren had made whilst in TA. Just under half (49%) of respondents very (33.3%) or fairly (15.4%) satisfied with their child's development and just over a quarter (25.6%) of respondents stated they with neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

The top response cited in relation to satisfaction was academic success (46.7%), followed by one in five highlighting the support received from their school. Just 6.7% associated an environmental improvement as reason for satisfaction with development and education.

The survey also explored the reasons for dissatisfaction. The majority of responses were associated with circumstances linked to being isolated in TA – 30% raised the issue of travel distances to school, 20% highlighted being cut off from friends or nowhere for children to play and further 10% cited transport barriers. One fifth stated disability was a factor.

When asked what would improve child development, unsurprisingly the move to more permanent living arrangements was cited as the top issue (15.4%) (Table 31).

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Table 31: Improving Child Development in Temporary Accommodation

Improving Child Development	%
Permanent property	15.4
Leaving the area	11.5
Being placed closer to schools	11.5
Improving language/ English courses	11.5
Individual tutoring	11.5
More room to work	11.5
Can't think of anything extra	11.5
Nothing, (children/child) too young	11.5
Better transport to school	7.7
Space to play	3.8
Cleaner accommodation	3.8

Source: Birmingham City Council 2016

A range of other priorities or issues raised in equal mention included leaving the area, living closer to school, individual tutoring and more space to do homework (all 11.5% respectively).

5.2. Stakeholder Feedback – Gaps and Challenges

In addition to engagement with service users, the Review process sought to engage with a range of key stakeholders including providers of homelessness and homeless prevention services. Engagement with key stakeholders included:

- An open call for evidence inviting all providers of Homeless Services to submit written evidence into the Review;
- A specifically arranged session on service gaps, organised by the Council and attended by a range of Homeless and Housing Service Providers;
- Regular feedback and updates at Birmingham's Homelessness Forum over the course of the Review;
- Attendance at Birmingham's Landlord Forum Steering Group and interview with BCC Private Tenancy Services officers;
- A specific workshop on street homelessness held by the Council to share information and intelligence with partners and organisations including West Midlands Police, Colmore Business Improvement District and the city's outreach service provider, Midland Heart.

The following themes were explored:

- Welfare reform;
- Street homelessness;
- Private rented sector.

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5.2.1 Welfare Reform

5.2.1.1 Welfare Reform in the Private Rented Sector

The introduction of Universal Credit will make those receiving Housing Benefit less appealing to reputable Landlords given its perceived unpredictability. This may leave less reputable Landlords and poorer quality housing available to homeless client groups; thus potentially generating safeguarding issues.

5.2.1.2 Local Welfare Provision

There is scope for Local Authorities to look at innovative ways to deliver discretionary support e.g. combining Local Welfare Assistance, Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP), and Council Tax Benefit into a single pot so that it can be used flexibly to meet people's needs.

Combining local welfare budgets with neighbouring areas in the region, perhaps as part of City devolution packages, and commissioning employment support for the hardest to help claimants were also suggested.

5.2.1.3 Employment Support

The vast majority of homeless people want to work and with the right support, many can be enabled to overcome significant barriers to the labour market. Many employment support programmes can however act as a barrier to homeless people moving on in their lives, and in some cases actually cause homelessness.

Jobcentre Plus and the Work Programme often do not identify people as being homeless early enough and so do not provide them with the tailored support they need. There are increasing numbers of clients approaching Homeless and Homeless Prevention services to assist with the completion of Employment Support Allowance claims – this is also a potential service gap.

5.2.1.4 Benefit Cap

Legal and Advice teams assisting families affected by the Benefit Cap have noticed particular Black and Minority Ethnic groups disproportionately affected.

Courts are becoming less lenient as they are not convinced about the success of DHP claims.

There are renewed concerns that issues will increase after April 2016 with new caps e.g. self-contained temporary accommodation may not be the best/most appropriate solution.

Rent payments of £250 p/w are not affordable and are resulting in many families accruing large rent arrears, being placed in temporary accommodation, or facing a financial barrier to meeting the cost of rent if securing employment.

5.2.2 Street Homelessness

Many stakeholders called for further joined up, partnership work to enable prevention to take place earlier, before the point of crisis and escalation of needs. The following gaps were identified:

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- Facilitated outreach approach through greater levels of information sharing and partnership working around street homeless engagement. In the absence of a CHAIN-style database, similar to that used in London, a minimum approach would be a contact log shared across agencies.

This would help avoid potential delays for clients in accessing the support needed to encourage stability (and in turn a tenancy) e.g. local mental health and drug treatment. There are some clients who wait up to six weeks for a drug treatment appointment, and mental health referrals are becoming increasingly process driven.

- A gap in provision is potentially emerging as result of people who have no recourse to public funds. These people face a number of additional barriers to overcome their homelessness including lost or stolen ID documents, and poor health.
- Rough Sleepers with multiple needs e.g. health and housing, face a number of issues that make it difficult for them to navigate the benefits system and book appointments with advice agencies.
- Some advice services such as Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) need to work more closely with homeless services. In response to the Review Evidence Call Submission, one response stated:

"DWP services do not recognise the difficulties faced by rough sleepers that have disproportionate levels of poor physical and mental health...Clients face barriers navigating systems and using helplines, this can exacerbate benefit sanctioning which makes resolving homelessness more difficult."

5.2.3 Private Rented Sector

The Private Rented Sector (PRS) expansion has taken place during a period in which Advice Services and discretionary expenditure into services for private Landlords and tenants operated or supported by local authorities, have come under severe financial pressures. It is also at time when the sector includes a considerable number of households (30,000) in the Housing Benefit part of the PRS.

There is gap in capacity of advice and support services covering private tenants and Landlords operating and living in the sector. Despite recent changes to the legislative framework, the opportunity to simplify regulations and legislation that governs the PRS remains disparate and complex (features across 80 different pieces of primary and secondary legislation). Neither the Housing and Planning Act 2016 or the Deregulation Act 2015 rationalise this framework and additional legislation such as the Immigration Act 2016 adds another layer of complexity to regulations affecting the sector.

Deregulation/changes in the regulation of the Specified Supported Exempt Accommodation sector (including hostel accommodation) have resulted in some Homeless Service providers becoming less confident in or reluctant to use this accommodation. These concerns are linked with quality, standards of services, and accommodation provided.

5.2.4 Other Issues

Service provision for people experiencing domestic abuse does not extend across the range of circumstances covered by the new legal framework following a broadening of the Government definition and associated legislation.

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Young people (16-24) need to be better informed about their housing options when leaving home in the event of family breakdown. Where staying at home is not option, shared housing solutions will need to be developed in addition to provision of support with education, training and employment. Family mediation services also could be more targeted as a prevention intervention.

6. National and Local Policy: Housing and Homelessness

Key Findings

- A range of national housing policies are likely to increase the pressure on Homelessness Services in Birmingham:
 - **Welfare Reform and Housing Costs:**
 - Introduction of the U-35 Shared Accommodation Rate into social housing will create difficulties in discharging homeless duties to those under 35 years of age;
 - Benefit Cap affects more than 4,000 households locally. This will have a particular impact on larger households;
 - Restrictions on Housing Benefit entitlement for 18-21 year olds;
 - Reform of supported housing funding.
 - **Supply of accommodation:**
 - Competition from other Local Authorities placing homeless households into Birmingham;
 - Devolved Housing Benefit budgets for management of temporary accommodation;
 - Homes and Communities Agency investment focused on homeownership;
 - Broader classification for 'affordable housing' including starter homes;
 - -1% per annum reduction in social housing rental income;
 - Right to Buy for Housing Association tenants.
 - **Homelessness Reduction Bill**
 - When enacted, this will place new legal duties on Local Authorities to assess every eligible applicant, regardless of priority need, and help those threatened with homelessness to keep their home or find an alternative.

6.1 National Policy and Implications for Homelessness

6.1.1 The Localism Act 2011

The Localism Act 2011 introduced significant changes to social housing policy and planning as part of the Government's [Laying the Foundations: A Housing Strategy for England](#).

Key reforms specifically related to homelessness and social housing included:

- Social Housing Reform that gives flexibility to individual social housing providers to grant tenancies for a specified term instead of a 'life-time' tenancy;
- Allocation Reform gave Local Authorities greater control over who is entitled to register for social housing;

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- Homelessness Legislation Reform gave Local Authorities powers to discharge their housing obligations to homeless people through offering a minimum 1 year tenancy assured short hold tenancy in the Private Rented Sector.

6.1.2 Ministerial Working Group on Homelessness – 2010 and 2015

Outside of the national Housing Strategy, the Government's commitments to tackling and preventing homelessness have are mainly driven through the work of a Ministerial Working Group (MWG) on Homelessness.

Originally established in 2010, the remit of the MWG is to coordinate cross-department Government policy to prevent more households becoming homeless. The MWG was reconvened under the direction of the current Conservative Government in 2015.

6.1.3 Deregulation Act 2015

Under the Deregulation Act, a range of legislative changes came in to force governing the Private Rented Sector. These include regulations on:

- The grounds under which a landlord can serve a Section 21 notice to quit an assured short hold tenancy (in England only);
- The installation of smoke and carbon monoxide alarms;
- How tenancy deposits are managed and protected;
- How tenants are protected from retaliatory eviction when requesting repairs to the property they live in;
- Energy Performance and Gas Safety Certificates.

Clearly, a number of the changes introduced include standards designed to improve the safety of and consumer protections for tenants. These new requirements will however require adequate advice and information resources to be put into place for tenants and Landlords to raise their awareness of their existence.

6.1.4 Budget, Spending Review 2015 and Autumn Statement 2016

As part of its fiscal consolidation and deficit reduction policy, the Government announced its package of measures to further reduce welfare spending by £12bn over the course of Parliament.

Each of the reforms includes a potential impact on demand for Homeless Services. The main announcements affecting finances in relation housing costs are as follows:

- Funding for new affordable homes will double from 2018, but will also cover spending on supporting new homes for low cost home ownership, rather than to rent;
- Housing Benefit in the social housing sector will be capped at Local Housing Allowance rates for new tenants, including extending the shared room rate, whereby single people under 35 are only eligible

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for enough support to cover the cost of a room in a shared house. The change will apply to tenancies starting from April 2016 and will take effect from 2018;

- There will be changes to the way the management of temporary accommodation is funded. The management fee currently paid by the DWP to Local Authorities on a per household basis will end from 2017-2018.
- The new Benefit Cap (2016/17) sets a lower limit on the total amount in benefits that most working-age people can claim. There are currently more than 4,000 households affected by the revised DWP Benefit Cap in Birmingham.
- A 4-year freeze of Housing Benefit and the introduction of LHA Cap rates across the social rented and specialist supported housing sectors will be implemented. The timing of the LHA cap has been postponed for one year in the social rented sector with its introduction in the supported housing sector to be confirmed pending the outcome of a review of the supported housing sector – consultation is currently live in this area.
- To support the mitigation from hardship resulting from the new Benefit Cap, there will be a temporary increase to Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) funding. It is likely, however that there will be multiple calls on the use of DHPs by Local Authorities that seek to mitigate the impact of a series of welfare reforms.
- Alongside this, there will be a continuation of the Homelessness Prevention Grant (maintained at 2010 levels) until 2019/2020.

6.1.5 Welfare Reform

6.1.5.1 Local Housing Allowance Rents in the Supported Housing Sector

The introduction of LHA rents in the supported housing sector has the potential to undermine the goals of the Homelessness Change and Platform for Life capital investment programmes. Before this measure is applied, the Government have stated their intention to carry out a review of the supported accommodation sector in order to put in place any protections deemed necessary.

The Government's recent consultation paper indicates devolved funding to Local Authorities will be made available to provide additional 'top-up' funding to providers where necessary, prior to a new ring fenced financial regime being introduced in 2019.

The new system proposes to apply the LHA cap to all claims in supported and sheltered housing with a top-up paid by the Local Authority. A reduced LHA rate will be used for people under 35 living in supported housing – this will create difficulties in discharging homeless duties for this age group.

6.1.5.2 Welfare Reform and Homelessness

Homelessness Monitor⁷ provides an annual report on the impacts of the 2008/9 economic downturn, and the effects of Government welfare and housing reforms on homelessness.

⁷ Homelessness Monitor is the national annual independent audit delivered by Crisis and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation

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There were a number of commendable aims behind welfare reform such as simplification of the benefit system, and the introduction of a 'National Living Wage'. There have also been some unintended consequences; most pertinent to this Review are the rising levels of homelessness.

Since 2011/12, Homeless Monitor has consistently reported that welfare reforms are a primary contributor of homelessness in England, in particular:

- Housing Benefit caps coupled with shortages of social housing have led to homeless families being increasingly placed in accommodation outside their local area, particularly in London.
- Welfare reforms such as the 'bedroom tax' contributed to an increase in repossession actions by social Landlords in 2013. Although they have subsequently eased in more recent years, there remains concerns that arrears and Landlord possession action could rise as a potential result of further welfare reforms.
- Housing Benefit cuts played a large part in the third of all cases caused by Landlords ending a private rental tenancy, and made it harder for those who lost their home to be rehoused.

Loughborough University's Centre for Research in Social Policy demonstrated Birmingham's link to welfare reform and economic hardship in their report 'Making Ends Meet in Birmingham: Assessing the Impact of the Living Wage and Welfare Reform' (2015). This report highlighted:

- The increasing difficulty faced by low income, working age households in the city to secure rented accommodation;
- Households in the rented sector are more likely to have lower incomes, and the shrinking social rented sector may make it ever more difficult for low-income households to meet their housing needs.

6.1.6 Housing and Planning Act 2016

The Housing and Planning Act 2016 is part of the Government's national policy agenda on housing. The Act, which received Royal Assent in May 2016, sets out the Government's overall policy approach to the supply of housing in forthcoming years.

The Act also sets out a number of provisions linked to the regulation and management of the Private Rented Sector. These changes are connected to recent legislation; namely the Deregulation Act 2015 (see section 6.1.3) and Immigration Act 2016 (see section 6.1.7).

The focus of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 is primarily concerned with boosting housing supply through changes in the planning system and promoting access into owner occupation.

Whilst the new legislation also contains some changes to the regulatory regime that governs standards in the private rented sector, it appears to contain a number of significant challenges for providers of social housing and particularly profound financial challenges for Council housing provision.

A fundamental feature of the Act is the revision of the current definition of affordable housing to include starter homes and custom build homes. At present, these fall within the area of subsidised access into homeownership.

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Other key aspects of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 are:

- The voluntary extension of the Right to Buy (RTB) to Housing Association tenants;
- A compulsion for local Councils to sell-off their most 'valuable' homes, with the proceeds to be used to pay for RTB subsidies for Housing Association homes;
- The abolition of lifetime 'secure' tenancies which primarily feature in Council tenancies across the social housing sector;
- 'Starter Homes' (up to the value of £250k outside of London) to be included as affordable housing;
- The introduction of measures designed to tackle 'rogue' Private Sector Landlords;
- Powers to reduce regulatory control over Registered Providers of housing (mainly Housing Associations).

6.1.6.1 Housing and Planning Act 2016: Implications for Social Housing Measures

The pending enactment of this legislation will provide new additional financial burdens on social housing providers, with Councils specifically targeted as the primary means of financing or resourcing measures.

Previous housing policies (tenure reforms and re-invigorated Right to Buy) have already resulted in a reduction of social rented provision, adding further pressures to Council housing waiting lists.

The Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) estimates that, nationally 370,000 homes could be lost from the stock of social rented housing by 2020.

6.1.6.2 Housing and Planning Act 2016: Implications for Private Rented Sector Housing Measures

Aside from introducing new administrative burdens upon Local Authorities and good private Landlords, the additional protections from rogue Landlords should help drive up standards and protect vulnerable tenants.

Many campaigning organisations such as Shelter and Crisis have expressed their disappointment that the Government did not go further to improve access to stable and affordable private renting. In particular, critics cited a lack of measures to enhance the security of tenure in the sector through longer tenancies so that private renting can play a greater role in meeting the needs of homeless households.

6.1.7 Immigration Act 2016 and the Private Rented Sector

Specific elements of this legislation relevant to homelessness include the provision of Private Rented Sector housing linked to eligibility under immigration legislation and further restrictions on accessing mainstream welfare benefits according to immigration and nationality status. Eligibility linked to immigration legislation was first piloted in the West Midlands in 2014/15 with the Right to Rent scheme.

The 2016 Act triggers a national roll out of this pilot scheme that requires private Landlords to perform nationality status checks on tenants renting their property with a potential fine for failure to do so. The Act also applies further restrictions on access to mainstream benefits to migrants who have been

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granted leave to remain in the UK, and disqualifying of access to engage in employment for migrants who do not have any immigration permission.

There is potential for levels of destitution to rise in migrant communities whose immigration status is deemed 'legal' or 'illegal' and is likely to be in the form of homelessness (including street homelessness). This will affect a range of homeless services across the country, including services for those homeless and on the streets, and those living in the Private Rented Sector.

6.1.8 Department for Communities and Local Government Inquiry on Homelessness - 2016

In December 2015, DCLG announced an inquiry into the causes of homelessness as well as the approaches taken by national and local Government to prevent and tackle homelessness. The conclusion of the [inquiry](#) in 2016 called for a renewed Government-wide strategy in response to a demonstrable increase in homelessness driven by the cost and availability of housing.

The all-party Committee also took the unusual step of endorsing a Private Members [Homelessness Reduction Bill 2016/17](#).

6.1.9 Homelessness Reduction Bill 2016/17

The Homelessness Reduction Bill introduced by Conservative backbench MP Bob Blackman as a Private Members' Bill, seeks to address the variability of homelessness service provision, particularly in relation to people who fall within the single homeless or non-priority housing need groups.

When enacted, the Bill will place new legal duties on Local Authorities to assess every eligible applicant, regardless of priority need. It is also expected to deliver direction for Local Authorities to help those who are threatened with homelessness, to keep their home or to find alternative accommodation.

6.2 Local Policy and Implications for Homelessness

6.2.1 Birmingham's Commitment to Homelessness

Alongside the 2012 Homelessness Strategy, the Council has committed to developing the following areas of policy linked to homelessness:

- The first Local Authority to sign up to the Pledge to End Youth Homelessness;
- Reviewed and revised Council's Housing Allocation Scheme in light of changes to statutory guidance on Allocations;

6.2.2 Birmingham Declaration on Social Inclusion

In 2014, Birmingham signed a Declaration on Social Inclusion forming part of a National Social Inclusion Network (NSIN). The declaration acknowledges significant social and material inequalities in our towns and cities, and to tackle these, it is necessary to focus resources and expertise around targeted actions that will mitigate further inequality and exclusion.

The NSIN recognises the high level of disadvantage that persists across cities such as Birmingham could worsen and solving it is beyond what the Council or national Government can alone, particularly in the current economic climate. In view of this, the declaration calls for a wider shared vision developed by people and organisations across a range of sectors across the city.

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6.2.3 Investing in Prevention and Early Intervention

In light of the unprecedented financial challenges faced by the Council, there is a need to manage and reduce demand for high cost services. To achieve such significant savings, both in the short and longer term, investing in prevention and early intervention must be integral to the Council's strategy.

Costs arising from homelessness are extensive, wide ranging and sector-wide. Prevention and Early Intervention directly links with the national framework set out in the MWG report 'Making Every Contact Count: A Joint Approach to Preventing Homelessness' (2012) Homelessness rarely arises in isolation and is generally a symptom of a range of other issues and vulnerabilities.

The MWG report recognises that intervening earlier to prevent homelessness is key, particularly in terms of supporting the most disadvantaged individuals and families by tackling many of the underlying problems that can contribute to homelessness and a range of other inter-related issues. Birmingham must therefore work to ensure that all opportunities to prevent or identify earlier the issues contributing to homelessness in the city are prioritised.

6.2.4 The Future Council

There have also been a number of significant policy developments of direct and indirect relevance to how the Council develops future strategies and works with partners to address the level of demand placed on Council managed and funded services.

In particular, the Future Council Programme was established to respond to the need to deliver services differently to cope with growing demand stemming from issues such as welfare reform and a growing, ageing population. Critical to the success of this programme will be how the Council works to manage demand by working more closely with key partners, communities and individuals.

A key area of national policy relevant to homelessness and housing, concerns the financing of housing costs and funding for new affordable housing supply. Critically capital investment in affordable housing and rates of Housing Benefit are significant sources of finance. The future spending on this and associated welfare policy was set out in the Government's Summer Budget, Autumn Statement and Spending Round all of which concluded in 2015.

6.3 Other Government Policies and Programmes Linked to Homelessness

6.3.1 Homelessness and Community Safety

[Transforming rehabilitation](#) is a reform programme aimed at changing the way offenders are managed with a greater emphasis on community-based placements. The reorganisation of the prison system included a policy to resettle offenders in a resettlement prison close to their community at least 3 months prior to release.

For this policy to be successful, it will require closer partnership working between Local Authority housing services, Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs) and National Probation Service (NPS) to prevent homelessness and secure sustainable accommodation outcomes for ex-offenders. Ex-offenders are amongst those individuals who experience homelessness at higher rates when compared to the wider population.

The programme links homelessness as securing settled accommodation has been identified as one of the seven key pathways to reducing reoffending, with community safety citing this can reduce the likelihood of re-offending by more than 20%. The NPS and CRCs are the two bodies that work closely

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with local authorities with a focus on preventing homelessness and supporting offenders to access and maintain settled accommodation.

6.3.2 Homelessness and Public Health

[The Public Health Outcomes Framework Healthy lives, healthy people: Improving outcomes and supporting transparency](#), sets out a vision for public health and the outcome measures required to evidence the health of the population. Homelessness is recognised as a key public health issue with indicators on statutory homelessness and households in temporary accommodation included in the Public Health Outcomes Framework (PHOF).

These indicators are included in 'Wider Determinants of Health' module of the PHOF and call for a broader focus on the health of the homeless population, specifically households in temporary accommodation and single homeless people who are / at risk of becoming street homeless.

A review conducted by Homeless Link on behalf of Public Health England⁸ (June 2015), strengthens existing evidence on the impact of early intervention in reducing health inequalities amongst homeless people. The review concludes that a good quality stable home is critical to maintaining and improving physical and mental health, providing a foundation from which to seek and find employment.

There is still considerable potential for commissioning across NHS and Public Health services to incorporate co-ordinated preventative approaches both within the services already commissioned and targeted activity to those known to be more at risk of homelessness.

⁸ Preventing Homelessness to improve Health and Wellbeing. Putting the evidence into Practice, Homeless Review, June 2015

Key Messages

- National housing and welfare policy is contributing to extreme pressure on Homelessness Services in the city, and a significant increase in the levels of street homelessness. Recent DCLG figures on street homelessness clearly show that this is a national issue. We should seek to use all channels to maintain a national debate on this issue.
- Birmingham can build upon its excellent record of partnership working and innovation, led by key players in the city to broker new deals with Government. These assets and expertise can also continue to successfully bring in new funding opportunities as they arise.
- There is a need to develop a new Birmingham Homelessness Strategy to make best use of the assets we have.
- The scale of the challenge and the budget pressures facing the Council will necessitate fundamental changes in the way in which services are delivered. The creation of a single homeless system adopting a Positive Pathway model bringing together opportunities for health, education, training and employment in addition to housing should be prioritised. This vision demands a different approach to commissioning that is more flexible both in terms of the use of funding streams and in its ability to respond to evidence of changing demands.
- In line with the new policy and commissioning approach for Birmingham, there is a need to consider:
 - Understanding of the root causes of homelessness (including street homelessness);
 - Configuration of services to response to the forthcoming Homeless Reduction Act;
 - Approaches to enable people to access and sustain Private Rented tenancies;
 - Provision of hostel accommodation in the context of changes to Supported Housing funding;
 - Housing options for 18-21 year olds and single under-35's affected by benefit changes, with clear links to employment and training;
 - Links with the new Domestic Abuse Prevention Strategy 2017-2020 to identify the most appropriate options for people experiencing domestic abuse;
 - Jointly commissioning the Positive Pathway model for 16-plus Supported Accommodation and associated support services utilising joint funding from across Supporting People, Children in Care, Public Health and Homelessness Prevention budgets;
 - Approaches to temporary accommodation in the context of welfare reforms;
 - Approaches to learning and sharing best practice with other Local Authorities including establishment of a regional and Core City learning and best practice Hub.

A1. Homelessness Review Methodology

A1.1 Background to Homelessness Reviews

The Homelessness Act 2002 places a legal requirement upon all Local Housing Authorities to undertake a review of homelessness in their district and publish a Homelessness Strategy at once least every five years.

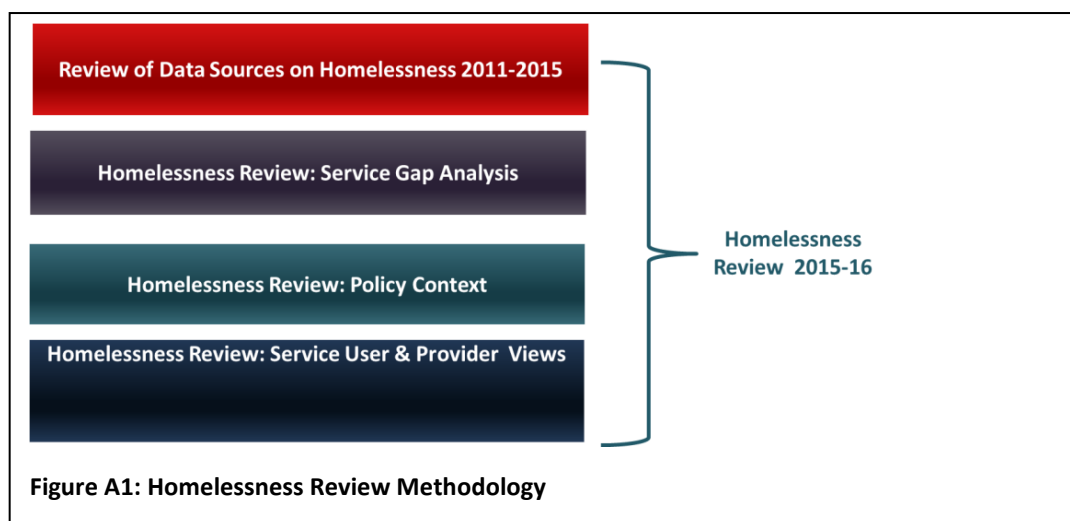
The Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities (July 2006) states that the purpose of such a review is to establish the extent of homelessness in the district, assess its likely extent in the future, and identify what is currently being done, by whom, and what level of resources are available, to prevent and tackle homelessness.

A1.2 Homelessness Review Steering Group

In September 2015, a steering was established with representatives from providers of services working in the City from the Housing Association, private rented and third sectors. Supported by the officers from Birmingham City Council Strategy and Research team, the steering group oversaw and directed this Review.

A1.3 Review Methodology

The approach used to develop this Review involved using a range of methods deployed across the following work streams (Fig. A1):



A1.4 Review of Data Sources

Along with all Local Housing Authorities in England, Birmingham City Council collects a significant amount of data and submits quarterly returns relating to statutory homelessness and prevention of homelessness to the Department for Communities and Local Government.

While these statutory returns can assist in identifying root causes and levels of homelessness they can only ever present part of the picture. These figures should be then taken into account alongside other

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Council managed or funded services such as Social Inclusion Services for single homeless adults and couples (over 25) and young people (18-24).

Information from over 24,500 homeless applications received and processed by Birmingham Homeless and Pre-Tenancy services were analysed.

A1.5 Gathering Stakeholder Views

In carrying out a review of homelessness, Local Housing Authorities are expected to consider the views of other service providers and partner organisations. This review has coincided with a significant round of public consultations concerning homelessness and Council services. These include consultations on:

- [Housing Advice Centre Services](#) (November 2015-January 2016)
- [Birmingham's Budget Consultation 2016+](#) (December 2015 to January 2016)
- [Birmingham's Budget Consultation 2017+](#) (December 2016 to January 2017)

The Council consultation on proposals for selective and additional licensing of Private Rented Sector housing is also relevant to this Review. The proposals explore the licensing of hostels in the city and a number of potential area-based selective Private Rented Sector licensing schemes (Erdington/Stockland Green and Selly Oak/Bournbrook). At the time of undertaking this review, these proposals are early in development and have therefore not been incorporated.

In recognition of this engagement with Citizens, the Review has focused on engagement in particular with individuals and households who are experiencing street homelessness and living in temporary accommodation. This was a theme of interest which emerged from the Review Steering Group following the findings of the interim data source review.

Engagement with Housing and Homeless Service providers for this Review was progressed through an Evidence Call, and attendance at and discussions held with groups such as Birmingham's Homelessness Forum and Birmingham Private Landlord Forum Steering Group. A number of responses were received including case studies of service providers.

In addition, bespoke sessions were held with partner organisations involved in the delivery of Housing and Homeless Services to explore gaps in service provision, as well as an interview with the Birmingham City Council Private Tenancy Unit.

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