



NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

SCRUTINY PANEL 3 – HOMELESSNESS

24 NOVEMBER 2016

BRIEFING NOTE: PUBLISHED PAPERS - HOMELESSNESS

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 At its inaugural meeting, Scrutiny Panel 3 (Homelessness) agreed that it would receive details of published papers regarding homelessness.
- 1.2 Detailed below are summaries of various published reports and briefing papers.

2 House of Commons - Statutory Homelessness in England (October 2016)

- 2.1 It is reported that the House of Commons Library briefing paper provides statistics on statutory homelessness in England and explains local authorities' duties to assist homeless households. The paper includes an overview of, and comment on, Government policy in this area.
- 2.2 The report states that Local authorities in England have a duty to secure accommodation for unintentionally homeless households who fall into a 'priority need' category. There is no duty to secure accommodation for all homeless people. For example, there is no statutory duty to secure housing for homeless single people and couples without children who are not deemed to be vulnerable for some reason. Official statistics on statutory homelessness are published quarterly by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) in March, June, September and December. The Department also publishes annual statistics on Homelessness Prevention and Relief work.
- 2.3 It is noted in the report that the financial year 2010/11 saw a 10% increase in homelessness acceptances by local authorities, representing the first financial year increase since 2003/4. Homelessness acceptances continued to rise over the next three years but fell by 3% between 2012/13 and 2013/14. The 2014/15 financial year recorded a further increase, with acceptances 36% higher than in 2009/10 (but 60% below the peak in 2003/4). The 2015/16 financial year saw acceptances increase by a further 6% on 2014/15.

- 2.4 The report goes on to state that Organisations such as Shelter and Crisis argue that the official statistics do not give a full picture of homelessness in England. The figures exclude those who are homeless but who do not approach a local authority for assistance and those who do not meet the statutory criteria. Local authorities are increasingly adopting informal responses to tackling homelessness, which can result in households falling outside the official quarterly monitoring process. In December 2015 the UK Statistics Authority published [an assessment of compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics](#) in relation to DCLG's homelessness and rough sleeping statistics. The assessment found that the Homelessness Prevention and Relief statistics "do not currently meet the standard to be National Statistics."
- 2.5 Homelessness arising from parents/friends/relatives being no longer willing or able to provide accommodation remains significant, as does homelessness arising from the breakdown of a violent relationship. However, the most frequently cited reason for loss of the last settled home is now the ending of an assured shorthold tenancy in the private rented sector. In the second quarter of 2016 this reason was behind 41% of all statutory homeless acceptances in London.
- 2.6 The report concludes that the increase in statutory homelessness since 2009/10 is attributed to a number of factors, of which the most important is identified as the continuing shortfall in levels of new house building relative to levels of household formation. Housing Benefit reforms are also viewed as a contributory factor, particularly in London.
- 2.7 A copy of the full report can be located: <http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN01164/SN01164.pdf>.

4 Homeless Link – Young People and Homelessness (2015)

- 4.1 Each year, Homeless Link publishes a paper regarding young people and homelessness.
- 4.2 The latest report was published in 2015. The purpose of the report is to explore the reasons young people become homeless, the support available to them, and areas that need to be improved.
- 4.3 The report details key findings:

“Young people are now the most likely group to be living in poverty. Whilst youth unemployment is at its lowest level since the recession, this is still over three times the rate of the older adult working age population. Young people have been adversely impacted by changes to the welfare system, there are increasing challenges to accessing

affordable and suitable housing, and there have been significant cuts to youth services in the past five years.

Based on the experiences young people shared with us, it is now more and more difficult for young people to access the temporary help they need if things go wrong. Nearly half of people living in homeless accommodation services are aged between 16 and 24 and without adequate support or early intervention, homelessness can go on to impact education, employment, health and wellbeing and is more likely to lead to homelessness in older age. Our fifth annual report on youth homelessness focuses on young people accessing both local authorities and voluntary sector providers. It explores who is becoming homeless and the reasons for this, and the provision of homelessness prevention and support services available to you. It goes on to examine the accommodation options young people have at the point of crisis, and longer term move-on from homelessness services. The research is based on two surveys administered to providers of homelessness services and local authorities in September 2015, as well as fourteen interviews with young people living in homelessness services. Scale and profile of youth homelessness .

There is a contrast between the scale of youth homelessness reported by homelessness providers and local authorities. Providers report seeing more young people who are homeless (68% reported an increase) whereas local authorities report seeing fewer young people (20% of people presenting as homeless were under 25, compared to 31% last year). . These changes support evidence that from elsewhere which suggests that declines in official statutory homelessness may have been offset by increases in other forms of homelessness. One explanation is that fewer young people are approaching their local authority for support and are approaching providers, or that young people are being signposted to providers as part of their local authority's advice or prevention .

Parents or carers no longer willing to accommodate continues to be the leading cause of youth homelessness, a causal factor in nearly half of cases (47%) compared to 36% in 2014. A large proportion of young people in homelessness services are aged 18-21 and non-care leavers (44%), and would be potentially affected by the proposed changes to end automatic entitlement for housing support for those aged 18-21.. The proportion of young women in homelessness services was higher than previous years at 46%, compared to 40% in

2014. Despite being homeless, large proportions of young people (65%) are studying, employed or on a work/apprenticeship scheme, including 22% of young people in paid employment. The proportion of young people sleeping rough has decreased slightly – 17% had ever slept rough compared to 19% in 2014 Joint working and provision of prevention services. Compared to 2014, both local authorities and providers were more likely to report the use of a Positive Pathway – 64% of local authorities and 78% of providers report there is a Positive Pathway in their area. This has increased from 49% and 48% respectively last year. . The proportion of cases where youth homelessness was prevented or relieved increased to 23%, up from 19% last year. . The availability of prevention tools remained steady for local authorities, but four in ten (42%) still report they do not have an adequate range of tools to prevent youth homelessness. There are signs of improvement in joint working between Housing and Children’s Services - 64% report that joint working is ‘very effective’ or ‘effective’ which has increased from 58% in 2014. The Positive Pathway’ is the result of research and consultations undertaken with charities, organisations and young people by St Basils in 2012 and updated in 2015.

Young people without recourse to public funds or without a local connection are finding it increasingly difficult to access support as they are more likely to be turned away by services. This year 57% of services turned away young people because they had no recourse to public funds (compared to 24% last year) and young people with no local connection were turned away by 40% of services (compared to 25% last year). . There is a lack of youth appropriate emergency accommodation in many areas – half of areas (49%) do not have Nightstop or a similar scheme, 43 % do not have a youth specific assessment centre or short stay supported accommodation. Local authorities are more likely to have provision of longer term supported housing options for young people compared to emergency accommodation. However there have been some reductions; 29% of areas report that hostels and foyers are either not available or there is less availability and 34% of local authorities report the same for shared housing with floating support.

Bed and Breakfast usage for 16 and 17 year olds does not occur in 41% of local authorities. Yet 59% of local authorities still report rarely or occasionally using B&Bs for this age group. . Whilst slightly lower than last year, 55% of young people living in homelessness

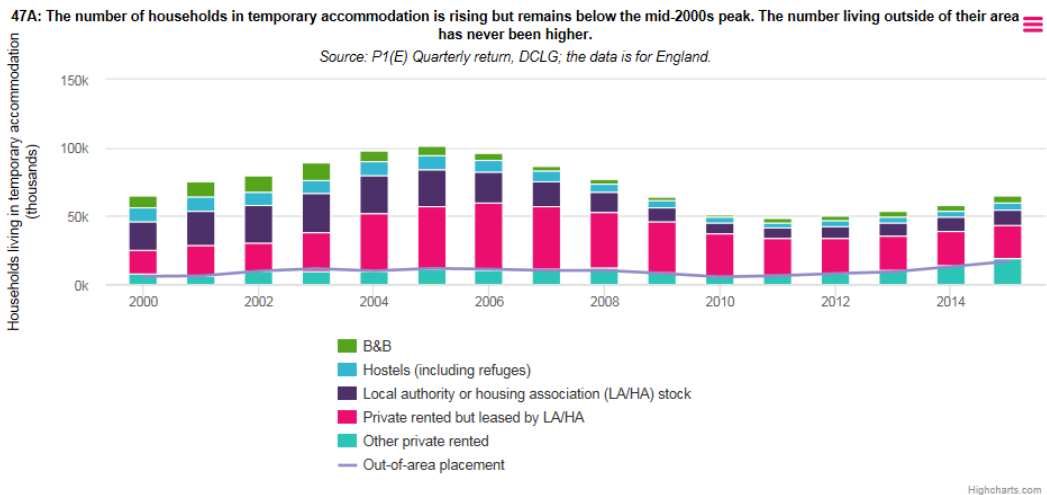
accommodation have complex needs and 34% have mental health issues (an increase from 23% in 2014). . Homelessness providers continue to provide a range of support services for young people. There has been an increase in the proportion of providers offering mediation services 73% compared to 41% in 2014. Homelessness providers report that on average young people spend 16 months in homelessness organisations before they move on, nearly double the length of time in 2014. The most common outcome for young people leaving homelessness providers is the private rented sector (28%). Returning home to family or friends is now the least common outcome for young people leaving homelessness organisations –one in twenty (5%) providers reported this is the most common outcome compared to one in four last year.

Schemes to assist access to the private rented sector varied. Local authorities report that availability of shared accommodation options developed with private landlords and relationships developed with private landlords to let to young people has decreased. The availability of rent deposit or cashless bond schemes has stayed fairly constant (87% of local authorities have one). Sanctions, changes to the Shared Accommodation Rate (SAR) and reductions in Local Housing Allowance (LHA) continue to have a negative impact on young people’s ability to access accommodation; providers were more likely than local authorities to report young people are impacted ‘a great deal’ or ‘quite a bit’ “

4.4 A copy of the full report can be located:
<http://www.homeless.org.uk/facts/our-research/young-and-homeless-research>.

5 Joseph Rowntree Trust (JRT) – Temporary Accommodation details (2015)

5.1 In November 2015, JRT published a graph detailing the number of people living in temporary accommodation:



6 Albert Kennedy Trust

- 6.1 The Albert Kennedy Trust (AKT) reports that it supports young LGBT 16-25 year olds who are made homeless or living in a hostile environment.
- 6.2. In 2008 AKT undertook research examining mainstream providers approach to supporting LGBT young people, focusing on 12 national, regional and local housing and homelessness services.
- 6.3. A summary of the research report:

“Research shows that young LGBT people are at risk of discrimination which directly impacts on their life chances. Negative reactions to a young person’s sexual orientation or gender identity may result in homelessness or housing vulnerability, or may exacerbate an existing housing crisis.

Mainstream housing and support providers need to be equipped to work sensitively and effectively with those young LGBT people. More importantly, they should also be creating a welcoming environment where young LGBT people are willing to present themselves, express their needs and access support and advice in the first place. This is about ensuring services are accessible and fair, but also legally compliant.

It is evident that a number of mainstream housing and support providers are showing an awareness of LGBT equality and the need for inclusive services. The majority of organisations polled for this research had inclusive policies, included sexual orientation and, to a lesser extent, gender identity equality in their training and in some cases had even consulted with LGBT service users and staff. There are clearly pockets of good practice within the housing sector which should be celebrated and shared.

However, AKT’s experience suggests that this type of good practice is the exception rather than the rule. LGBT-specific services and projects are

still needed. The number of young LGBT people accessing AKT's services is increasing, yet across the UK such specialist services are rare. This is in part due to the lack of statistical evidence of the problem, and the failure to monitor LGBT issues at a national level.

The report has prompted AKT to develop in partnership with young people a quality mark 'Making a Difference' which comprises training, audit and the provision of resources which is now available to mainstream providers. "

6.4 The Executive Summary can be located:
<http://www.akt.org.uk/2/SPG349/Research.aspx>

6.5 In 2014/2015 AKT produced a report "LGBT – Youth Homelessness, A UK National scoping of cause, prevalence, response and outcome.

6.6 AKT reports that it examined the causes of youth LGBT homelessness as well as the longer term repercussions of family rejection.

6.7 As a result of the study AKT reports that it made a number of recommendations to local and national government, housing providers and those working in the LGBT sector:

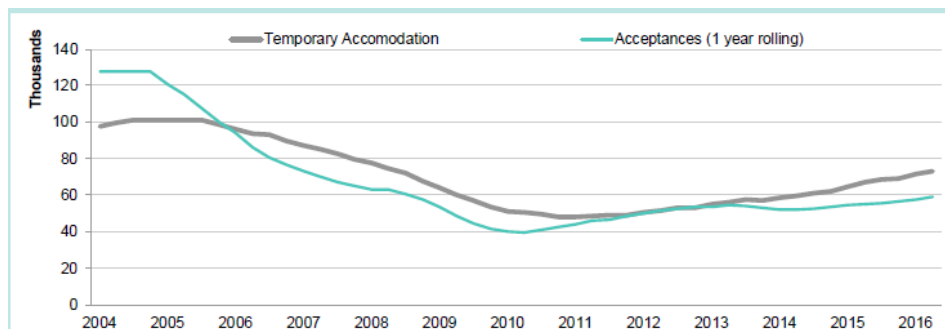
- the government to hold local authorities and housing providers accountable for the accurate and consistent collection, monitoring and application of sexual/gender identity data, using standardised assessments administered by trained staff.
- local authorities to conduct a thorough review of their housing options, policies and procedures to ensure services are appropriate for, and inclusive of, homeless LGBT young people.
- all housing Providers to provide training to staff to understand the unique needs of homeless LGBT youth.
- housing providers to provide staff with LGBT-specific training to ensure that practitioners understand the unique needs of this population of homeless young people.

6.7 A copy of the full report can be located:
http://www.akt.org.uk/webtop/modules/repository/documents/AlbertKennedy_ResearchReport_FINALInteractive.pdf

7 Department of Communities and Local Government – Statutory homelessness and prevention and relief, April to June 2016: England

7.1 The reported purpose of the report is to provide information on the number of households that reported being homeless (or threatened with homelessness) to their local authority and were offered housing assistance.

- Local authorities accepted 15,170 households as being statutory homeless between 1 April and 30 June 2016, up 3% on the previous quarter and 10% on the same quarter of last year.
- These households that are owed a main homelessness duty to secure accommodation as a result of being unintentionally homeless and in priority need.
- The total number of households in temporary accommodation on 30 June 2016 was 73,120, up 9% on a year earlier, and up 52% on the low of 48,010 on 31 December 2010.



- Local authorities took action to prevent homelessness for 50,990 households in April to June 2016, up 4% from 48,820 in April to June 2015.
- A further 3,910 non-priority households were helped out of homelessness (relieved) by local authorities in April to June 2016, up 10% from 3,570 in April to June 2015.

7.2 A copy of the full report can be located:
[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/555808/Statutory Homelessness and Prevention and Relief Statistical Release April to June 2016.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/555808/Statutory_Homelessness_and_Prevention_and_Relief_Statistical_Release_April_to_June_2016.pdf)

8 RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 That the information provided informs the evidence base of this Scrutiny Review.

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21 October 2016