



SEFTON COUNCIL'S LEVELS OF HOMELESSNESS 2022/2023

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1 Introduction

Sefton's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018/2023 contains an action to:

'Publish an annual report explaining the current levels of homelessness, to aid elected Councillor and chief officer decision making, and

Carry out an in-depth analysis of data collected by the Homelessness Case Level Information Classification monitoring system (H-CLIC)'.

Producing an annual report will give Sefton a snapshot of all types of homelessness across the borough. Over time, this will allow us to benchmark where we are compared to previous years and will also enable us to help plan services for future years. This is Sefton's fourth Annual homelessness report since the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act, which provides the Council with useful insight into homelessness across the borough.

We also want to show the impact on homelessness, which Covid and the recent increase in cost-of-living has had, and continues to do so, by looking at the increase in demand for homeless services across the borough.

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

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

- A statutory duty to provide homeless prevention services to all people who are threatened with homelessness irrespective of whether they are in priority or not.
- Earlier intervention; Local Authorities' must take reasonable steps to prevent homelessness for any eligible applicant, at risk of homelessness within 56 days, regardless of priority need.
- Require each person to be provided with an individual assessment and a "personalised housing plan", irrespective of what legal duty we may owe them if they were to become homeless in the future.

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

The data used in this release are from the Homelessness Case Level Information Collection (H-CLIC) data system. This system is used as a reporting requirement of local authorities to provide data on statutory homelessness for those approaching local authorities for help with homelessness in line with the Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA). H-CLIC collects detailed data on activities undertaken by local authorities to help prevent or relieve homelessness, and the outcomes of these activities.

The statistics reported in this release show total activity over the 2022-23 financial year, except for data on supported accommodation which is data from the beginning of the contract with Sefton Supported Housing Group that started on 1st July 2022.

Statistics referenced from the accompanying tables on prevention and relief duties owed refer to the initial duties owed on assessment i.e. any references to relief duties owed do not include those who are owed the relief duty following an unsuccessful prevention duty.

The report helps to illustrate the increasing pressure that the Council is under in terms of the levels of people and families presenting to it for assistance to prevent and relieve their homelessness. This has largely occurred since the Covid pandemic and the increase in the cost of living.

2 Homeless Key Data Dashboard



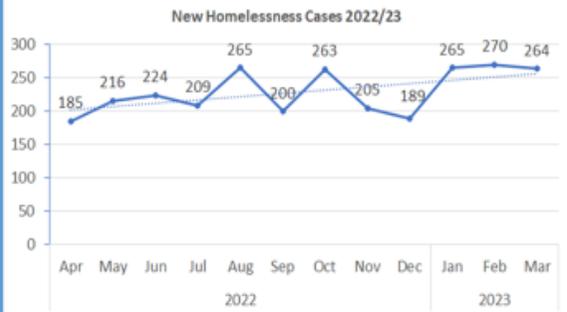
Key Homeless Data 2022/23



1) New Homeless Cases

The total number of new households who have contacted the Housing Options Service for advice in 2022/23 was 2,755.

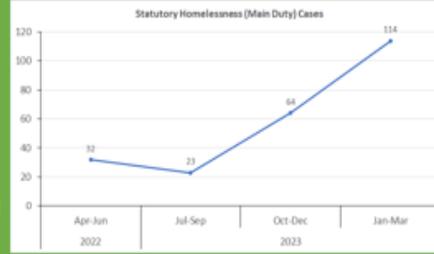
This represents a 9% increase in 2022/23 in new homeless cases compared to 2021/22 and represents a 37% increase compared to 2020/21



3) Statutory Homelessness

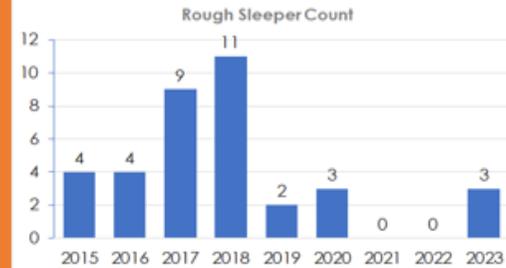
The number of households accepted as statutory homeless (Main Duty) decisions in 2023/23 was 233.

In 2021/22 this number was 146, which represents a 60% increase in 2022/23 compared to the previous year.



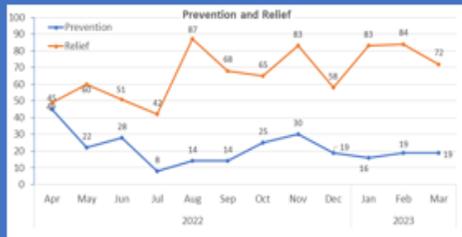
4) Rough Sleeping

Sefton recorded zero rough sleepers for the second consecutive year in 2022.



2) Prevention & Relief

There have been 1,061 households prevented or relieved from homelessness in 2022/23, which represents a 16% increase on the number in 2021/22 (911) and a 50% increase on the number of households prevented or relieved from homelessness in 2020/21 (705)



6) Sit Up Services

Since 1st July 2022 until 30th June 2023, a total of 361 people accessed our Sit Up services in Southport and Bootle, with the average stay being 7 nights

7) Homelessness Reasons

The key reasons for homelessness in 2023/23 are due to being asked by family to leave, being served a Section 21 Notice or due to a relationship breakdown.

Homelessness Reasons	2022/23				
	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct- Dec	Jan-Mar	Total
Asked to leave by family	61	70	78	72	281
Section 21 notice	42	33	55	86	216
Relationship Breakdown	21	31	31	31	114

8) Planned Moves

Since 1st July 2022, 67% of accommodation placements have had a successful planned move

67%

9) Floating Support

62% of people receiving floating support either completed their support plan successfully or were rehoused, from 1st July 2022 until 30th June 2023

62%

10) Placements

Since 1st July 2022 until 30th June 2023, 224 placements were made into temporary accommodation, with 95% having a local connection to Sefton. Since 1st July, on average the occupancy of our commissioned temporary accommodation was 93%.

11) Duty to Refers

The number of referrals in 2022/23 was 1,095, which was a slight decrease on the number of Duty To Refers in 2021/22 which was 1154.

1095

5) Case Study

'I was able to witness how the staff team at Light for Life engage with the homeless community in a variety of settings, hear conversations with individuals who had faced unimaginable hardships which revealed resilience, strength, and an unwavering spirit to persevere despite their circumstances.'

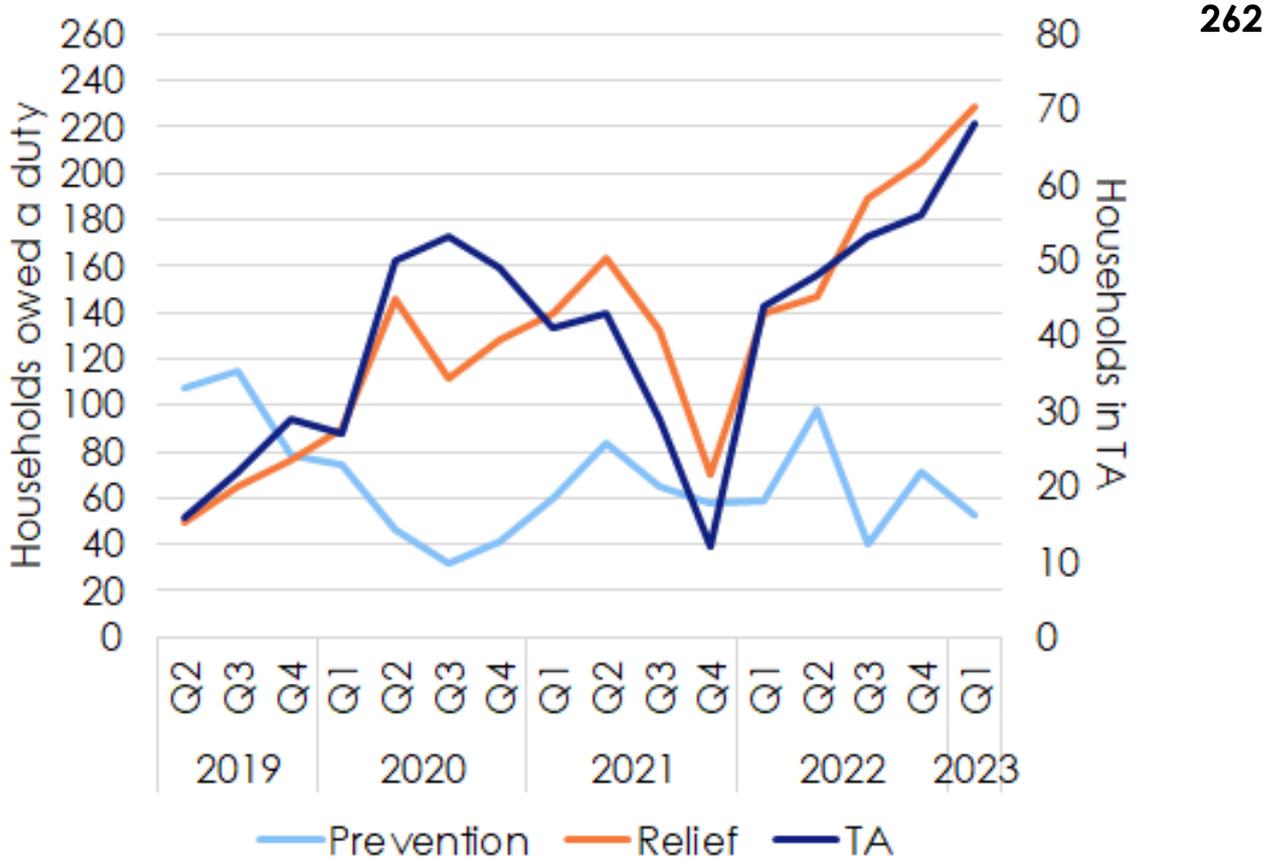
'One of the most impactful aspects of my placement was witnessing the power of small gestures. A hot meal, a warm coat, or a genuine conversation could make a significant difference in someone's day. It wasn't just about meeting basic needs; it was about restoring dignity and acknowledging the humanity in each person, often overlooked by society.'

Ellen Hanks - Adult Nursing student

The Infographic gives a snapshot of key Sefton data from 2022/23, taken from the various data sources contained in the report. It uses headline data from the Housing Options service database (H-CLIC) and the Mainstay system.

3 Overall

Figure 1: Trends in prevention, relief and temporary accommodation since 2019 Q2 to Q1 of 2022/23



households were owed a prevention duty in 2022-23, down by **1.5%** from 2021-22. Of which there was:

- **56.7%** increase in households with children owed a prevention duty to **105** households.
- **-21.1%** decrease in single households owed a prevention duty to **157** households.

771 households were owed a relief duty in 2022-23, up **52.4%** from 2021-22. Of which there was:

- **79.1%** increase in households with children owed a relief duty to **120** households
- **48.3%** increase in single households owed a relief duty to **651** households

On 31 March 2023, 68 households were in temporary accommodation, and increase of 54.5% from 31 March 2022.

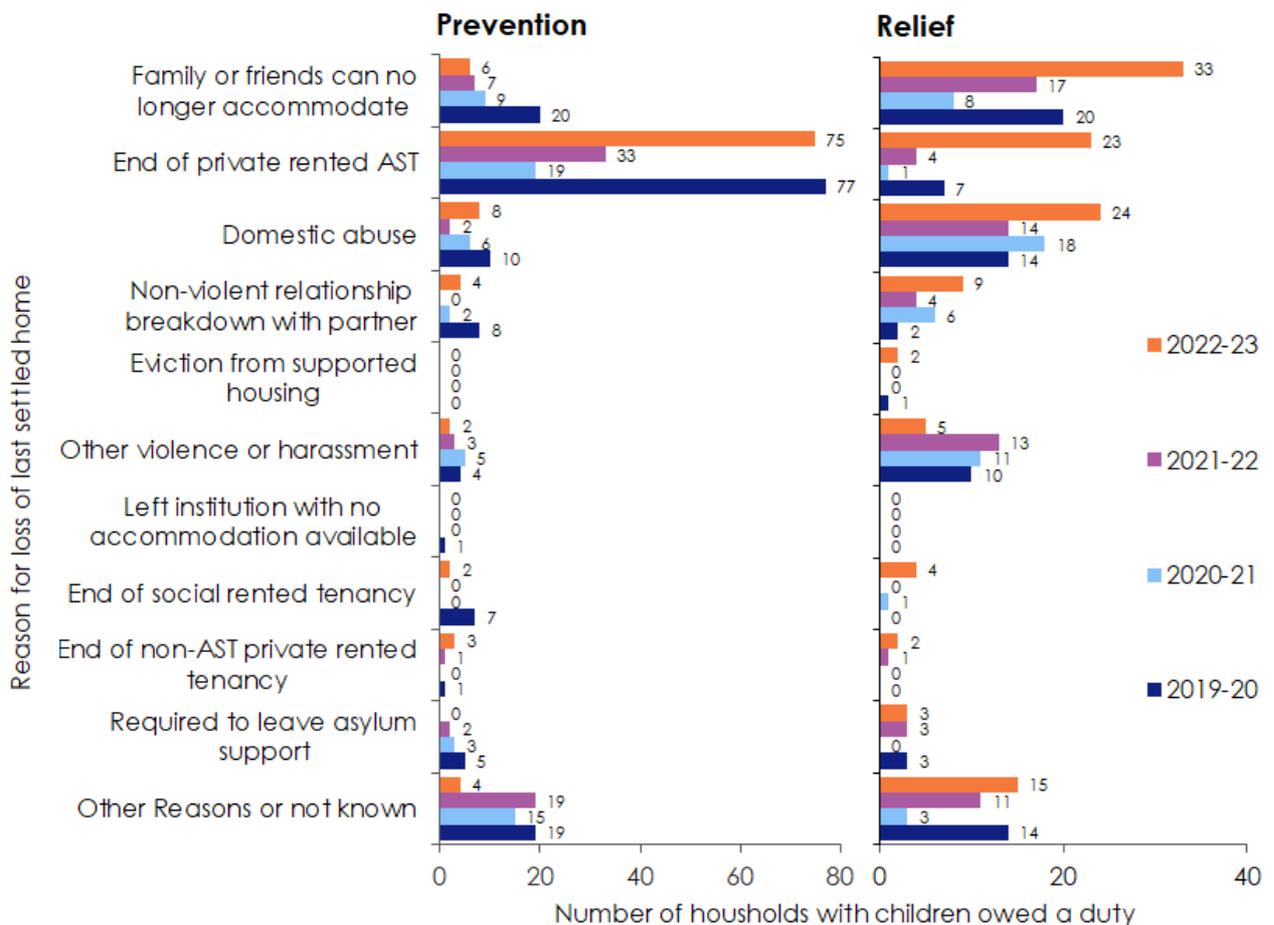
4 Households with children

105 households with children were owed a prevention duty in 2022-23, up **56.7%** from 2021-22

120 households with children were owed a relief duty in 2022-23, up **79.1%** from 2021-22.

39.6% of households with children owed a prevention or relief duty in 2022-23 had at least one support need, compared to 46% of households in 2021-22.

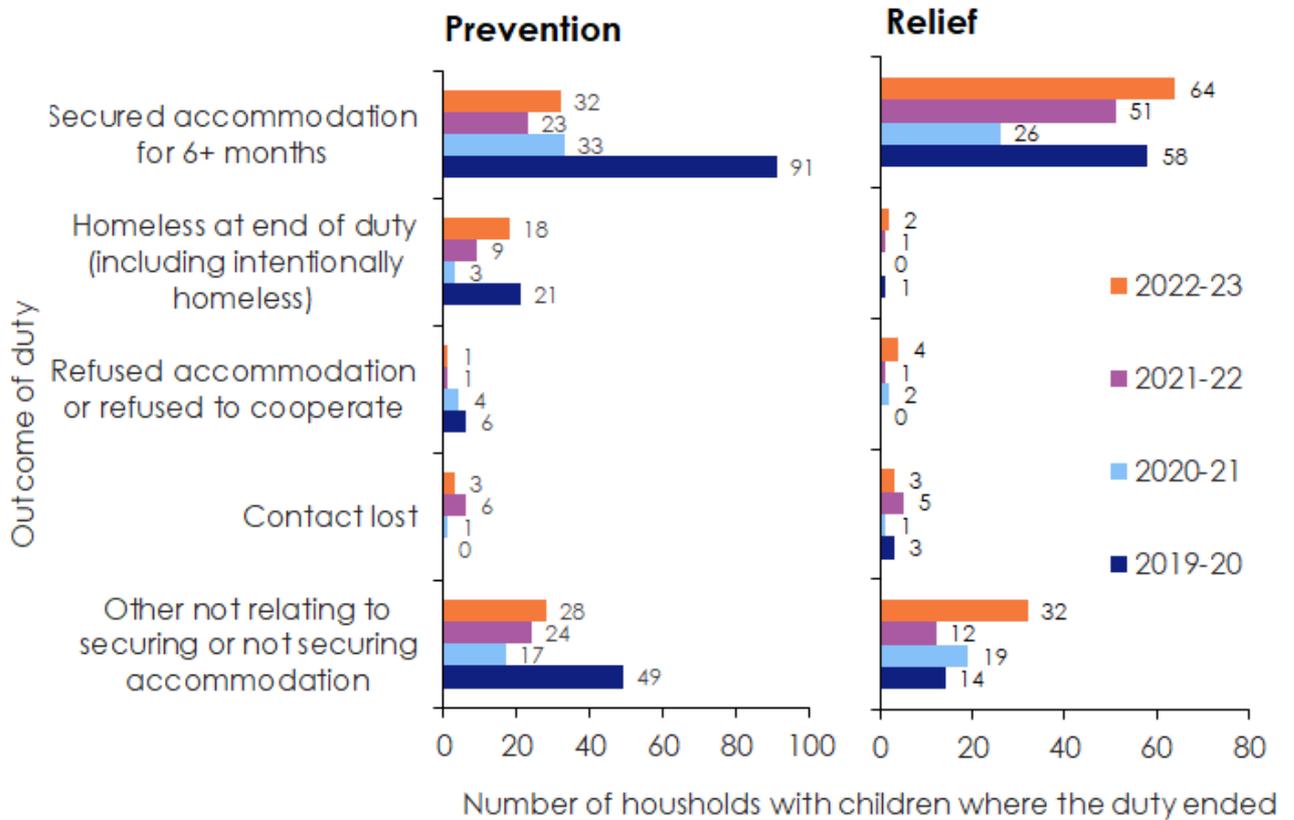
Figure 2: Proportion of households with children owed a prevention or relief duty, by reason for loss of last settled home.



For those owed a prevention duty, the most common cause was due to the end of their private rented assured short hold tenancy (AST) at **75** (31,320) households, an **increase of over 127.27%** from 2021-22.

For those owed a relief duty, the most common cause was due to domestic abuse at 24, **up 71.43% from 2021-22.**

Figure 3: Proportion of households with children whose duty ended by outcome



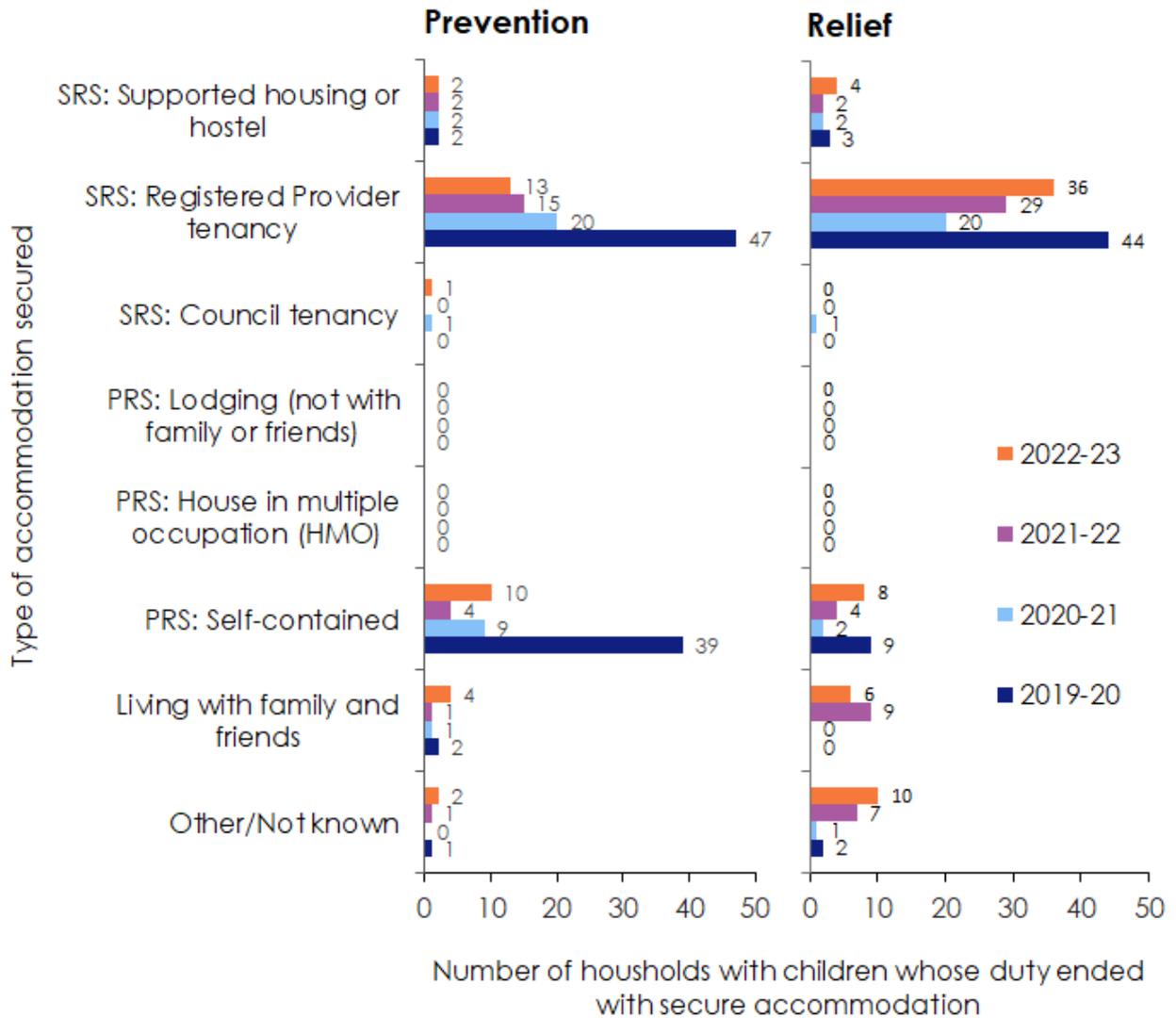
82 prevention duties ended for households with children in 2022-23.

39.0% of households with children whose prevention duty ended **secured accommodation for 6 months or more** and were no longer threatened with homelessness, this is **higher than 36.5% in 2021-22.**

106 relief duties ended for households with children in 2022-23.

25.5% of households with children had their relief duty end because their **homelessness had not been relieved within 56 days** and at this point the local authority would need to assess whether a main duty is owed to them.

Figure 4: Proportion of households with children who secured accommodation by type.



Of the households with children whose prevention duty ended and were able to secure accommodation, the most common accommodation secured was **registered provider tenancy in the social rented sector 40.6%**.

For those whose relief duty ended with secured accommodation, the most common accommodation secured was in a **registered provider tenancy in the social rented sector 56.3%**.

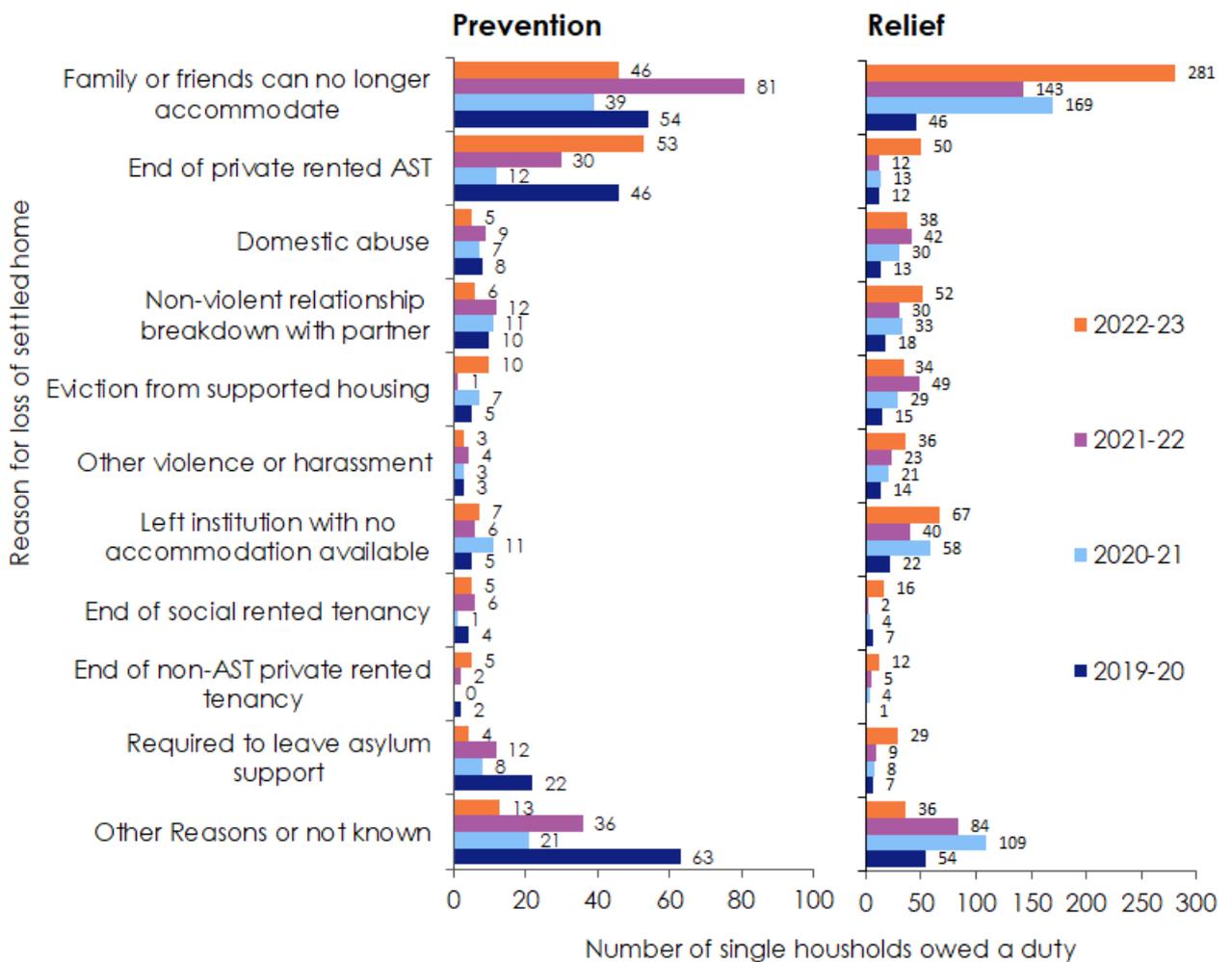
5 Single Households

157 single households were owed a prevention duty in 2022-23, down **21.1%** from 2021-22.

651 single households were owed a relief duty in 2022-23, up **48.3%** from 2021-22

65.6% of single households had at least one support need, compared with **64.1%** in 2021-22.

Figure 5: Proportion of single households owed a prevention or relief duty, by reason for loss of last settled home.

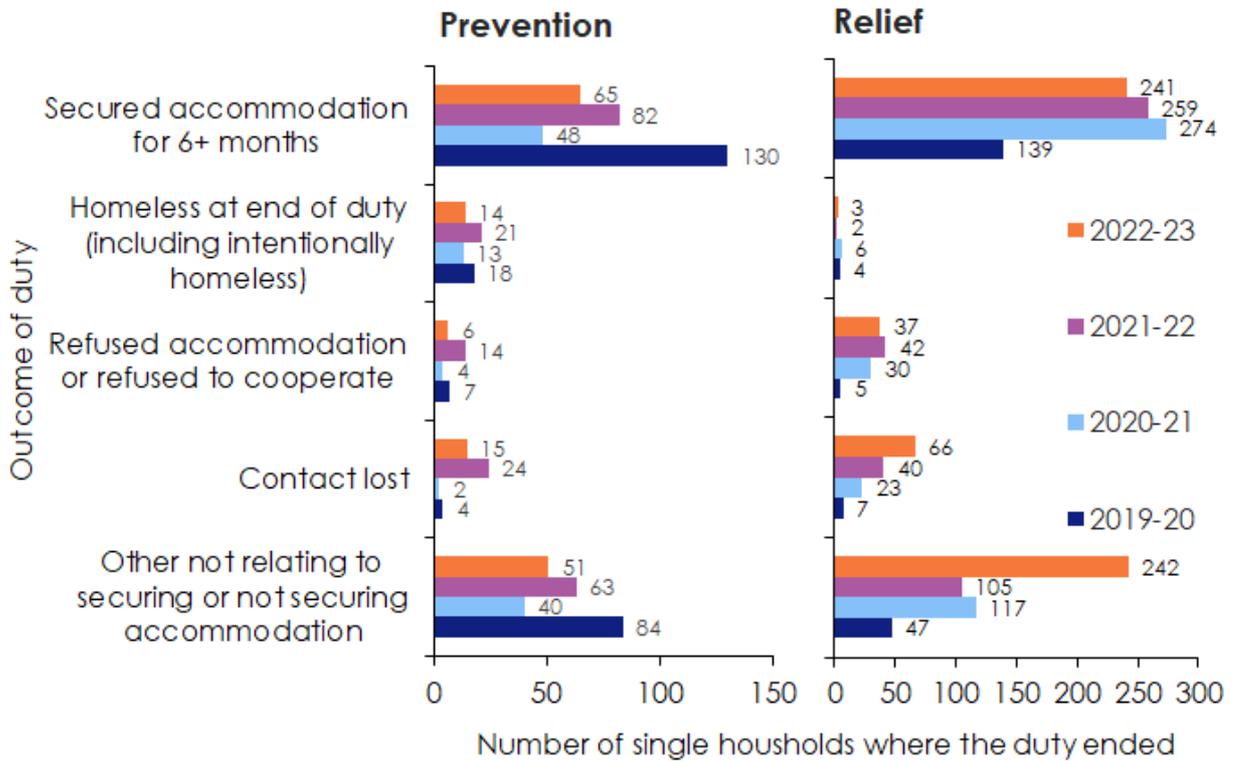


The most common reason for loss of last settled home for single households was End of private rented Assured Shorthold Tenancy and family or friends no longer able to accommodate.

This accounted for **53 households or 76.7%** of single households owed a prevention duty, **up by 23.6%** from 2021-22.

For single households owed a relief duty, this accounted for **281 households or 43.2%**, an **increase of 96.5%** from 2021-22.

Figure 6: Proportion of single households whose duty ended by outcome.



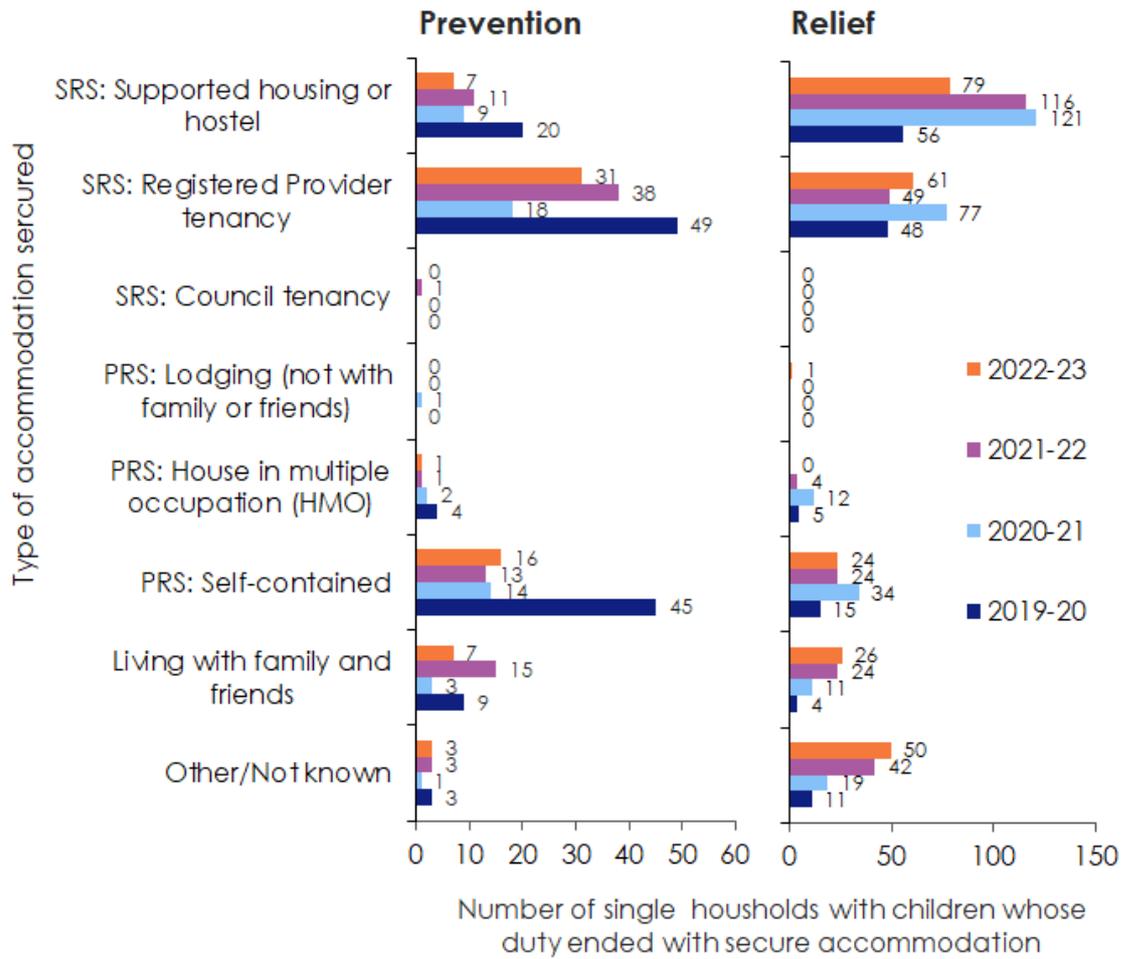
151 prevention duties ended for single households in 2022-23.

43.0% of single households whose prevention duty ended **secured accommodation for 6 months or more**.

570 relief duties ended for single households in 2022-23.

42.3% of single households whose relief duty ended **secured accommodation for 6 months or more**.

Figure 7: Proportion of single households who secured accommodation by type.



For single households whose prevention duty ended in accommodation secured, the most common type secured **was registered provider tenancy in the social rented sector at 47.7%**.

For single households whose relief duty ended in accommodation secured, the most common type was in **supported housing or hostel accommodation at 32.8%**.

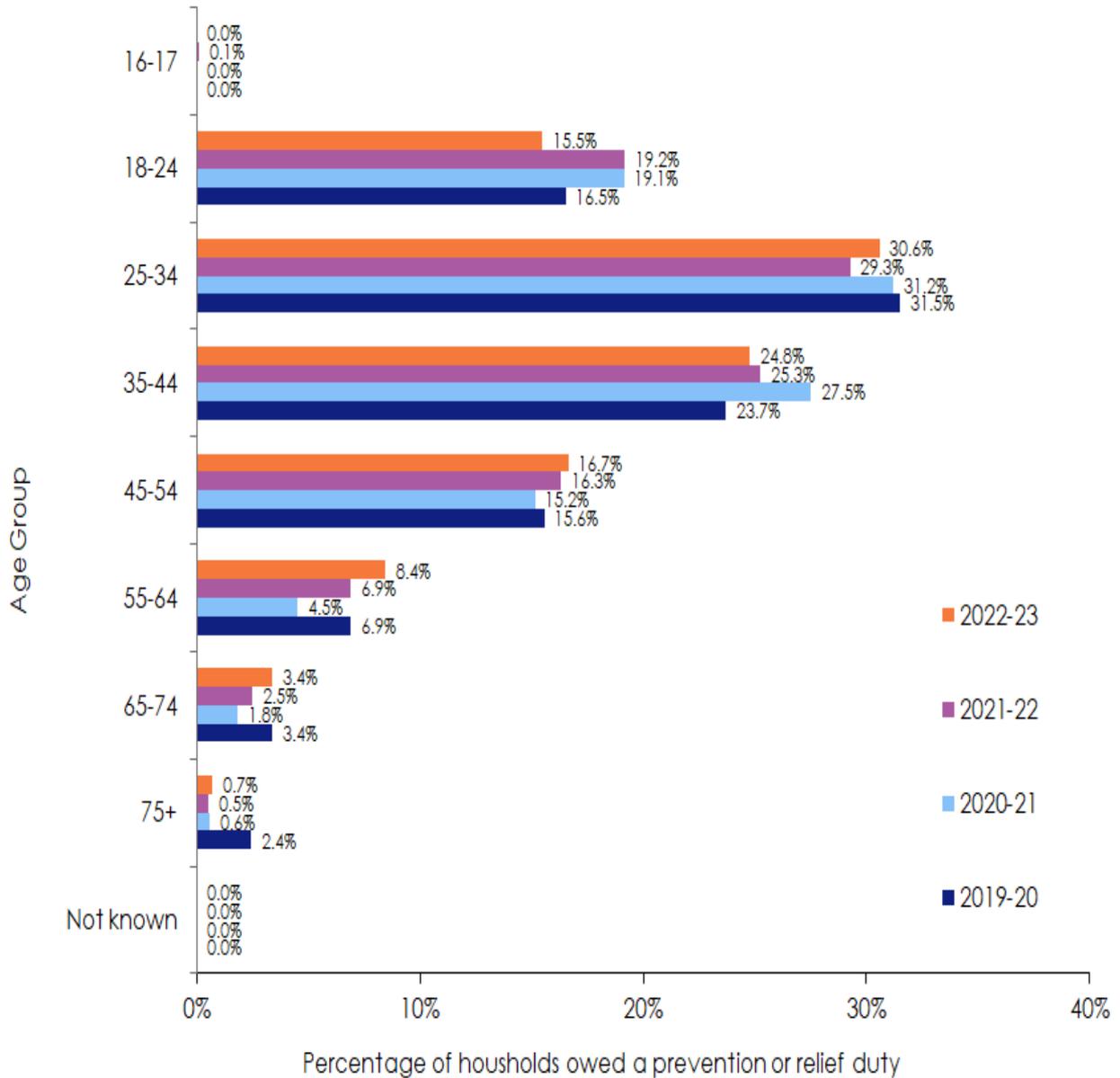
6 Other demographics

Ethnicity

During 2022-23 **91.6%** of homeless households had a White lead applicant. Compared to England population estimates White households seem to be overrepresented in the those owed a homelessness duty. Households with an Asian/Asian British lead applicant are also underrepresented as they account for **6.4%** of those

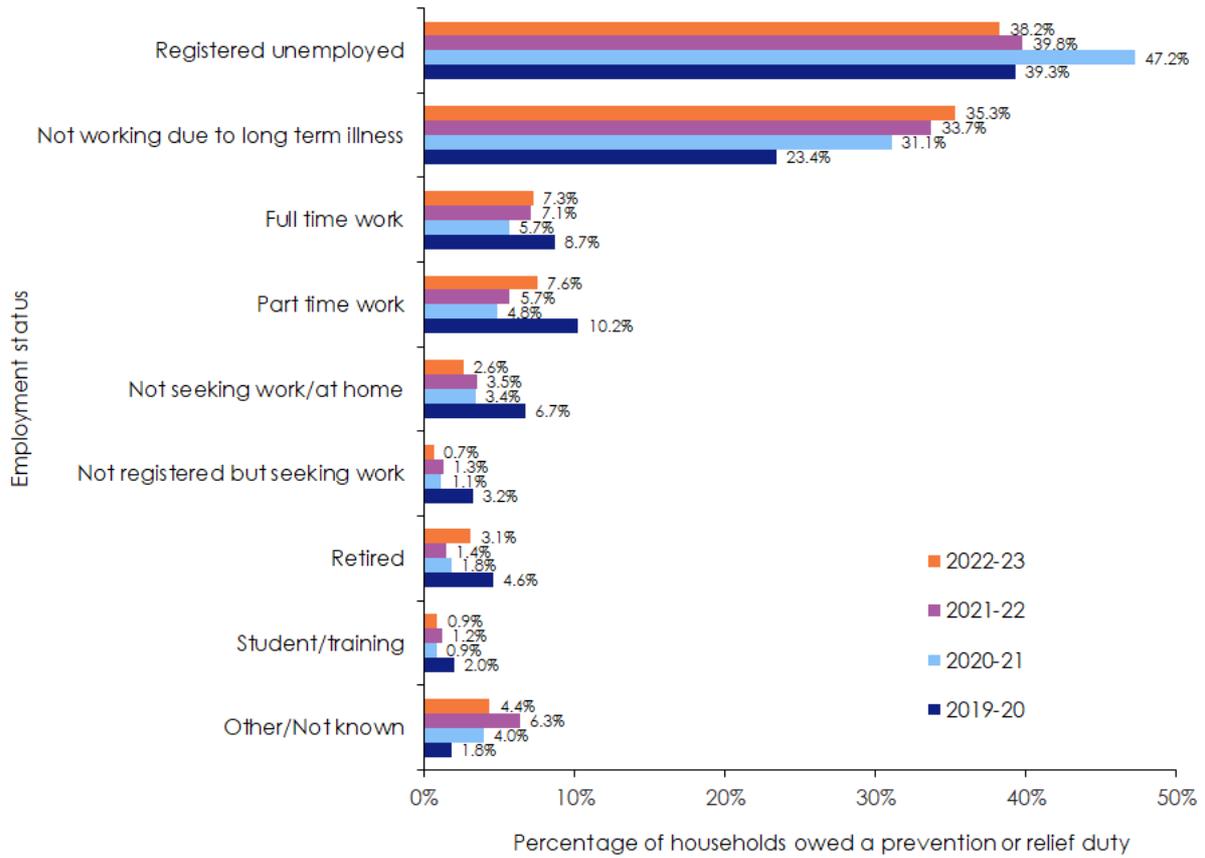
owed a homelessness duty. Conversely, households with a Black, Black British, Caribbean, or African lead applicant are most likely to be overrepresented as they account for **10.2%** of those owed a homelessness duty.

Figure 8: Age of lead applicant



In 2022-23, the most common age group of lead applicants was those aged between **25 to 34 years old**, making up **30.6%** households owed a prevention or relief duty.

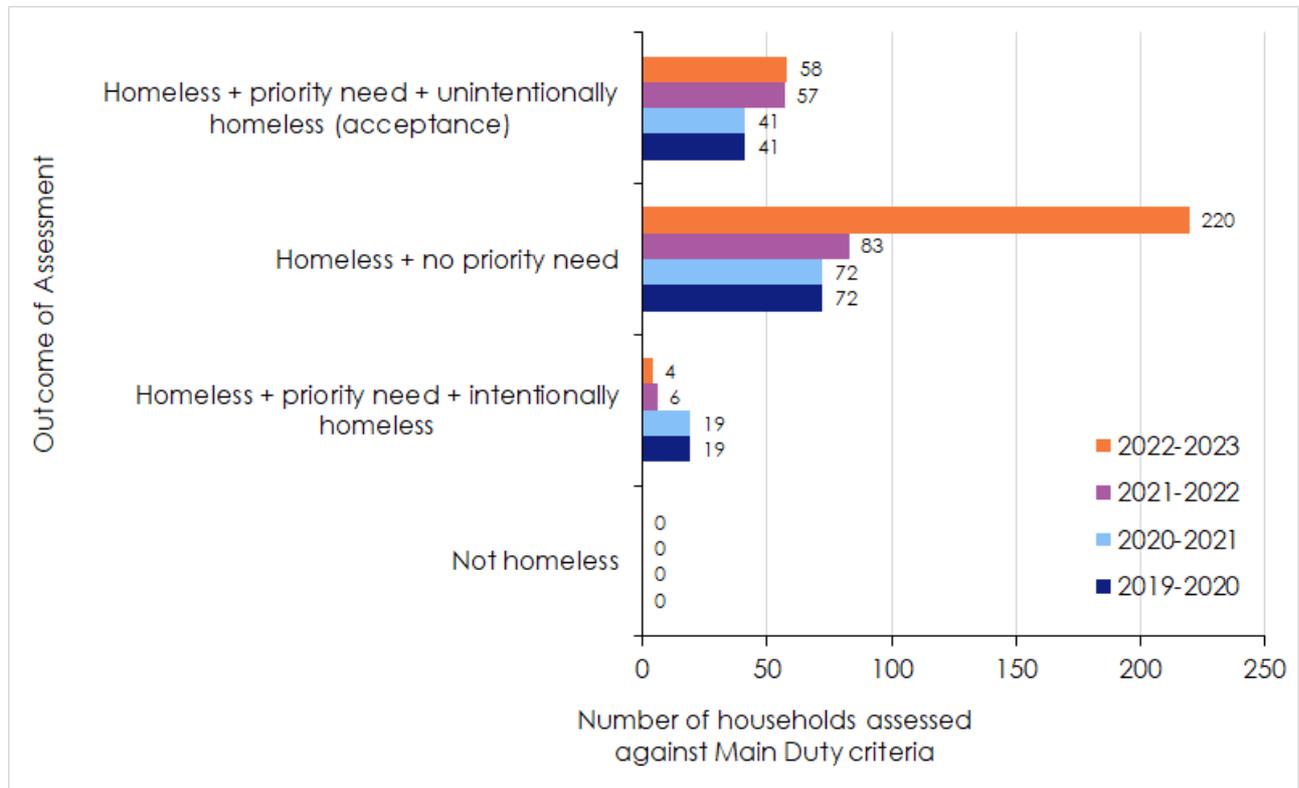
Figure 9: Employment status of lead applicant



The most common employment status for lead applicants of households owed a prevention or relief duty was **registered unemployed**, accounting for **38.2%** of households in 2022-23.

7 Main duty

Figure 10: Number of households assessed against a main duty decision, by outcome.

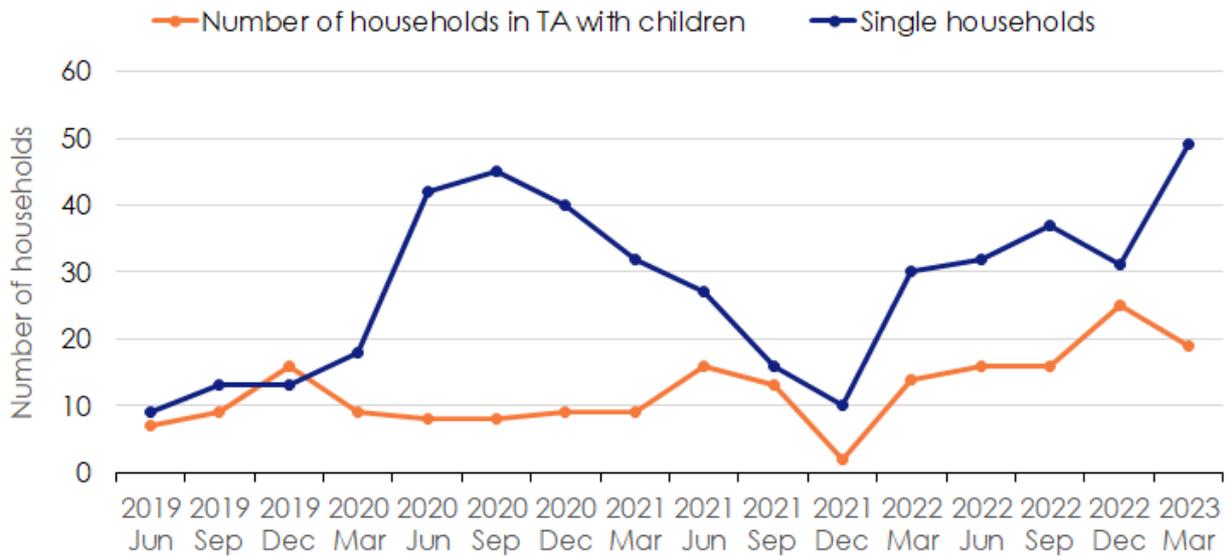


Local authorities made **282** main homelessness duty decisions in 2022-23, up **93.2%** from 2021-22.

Of these **20.57%** were owed a main homelessness duty, a **decrease of 18.5%** compared to the proportion of main duties which were accepted in 2021-22.

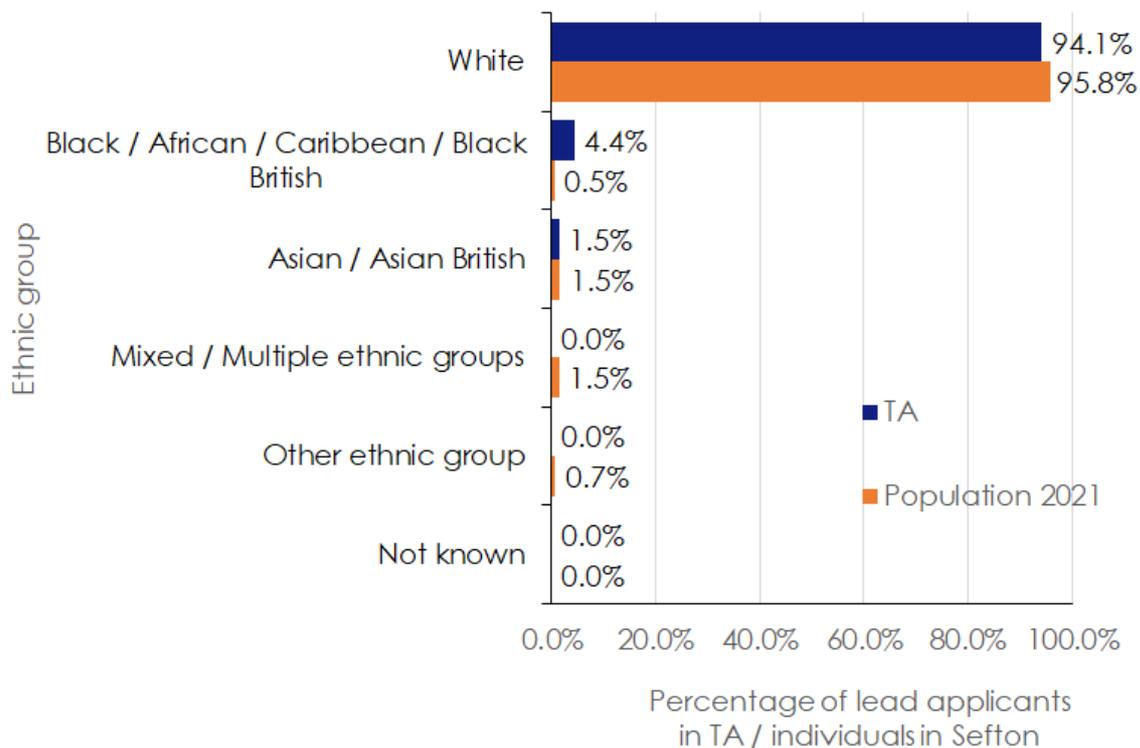
8 Temporary accommodation

Figure 11: Number of households in temporary accommodation since Q2 2019, by household type



On 31 March 2023, **68** households were in temporary accommodation, **up 54.5%** from the same period last year.

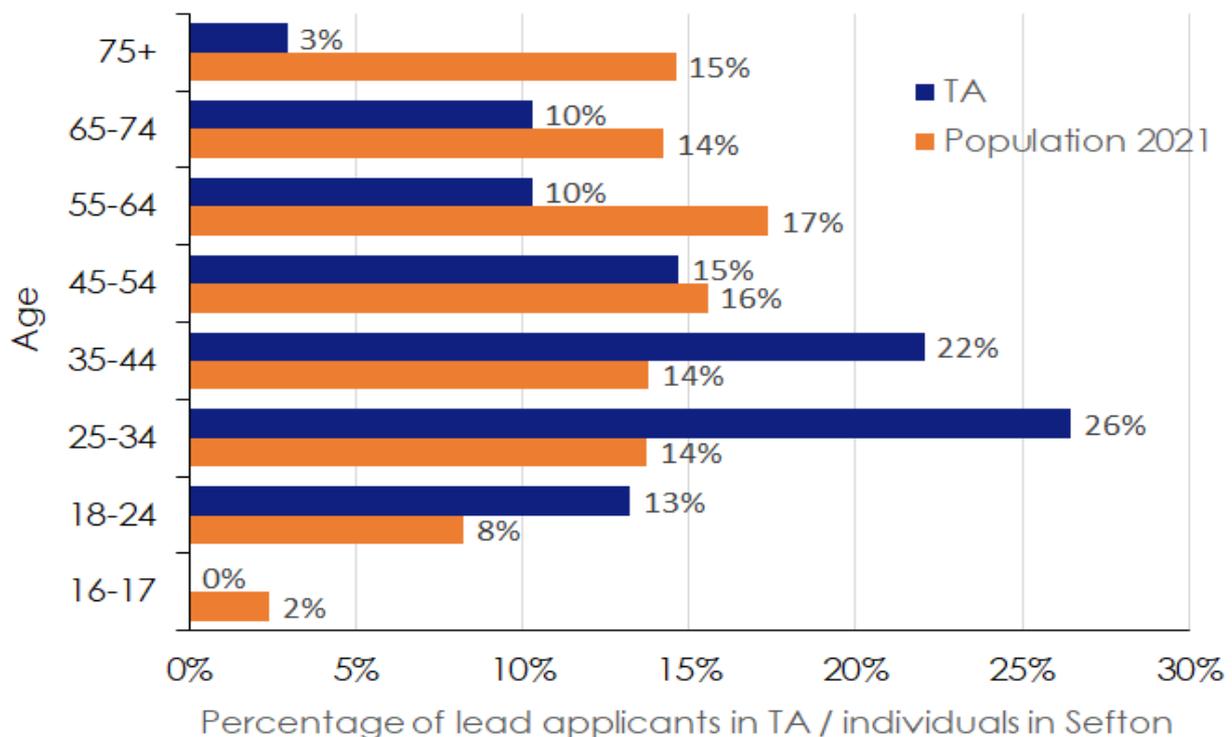
Figure 12: Households in temporary accommodation on 31 March 2023, by ethnicity of lead applicant.



The most common ethnic group for lead applicants in temporary accommodation is white, accounting for 94.1% of households in temporary accommodation. 95.8% of Sefton's population is white.

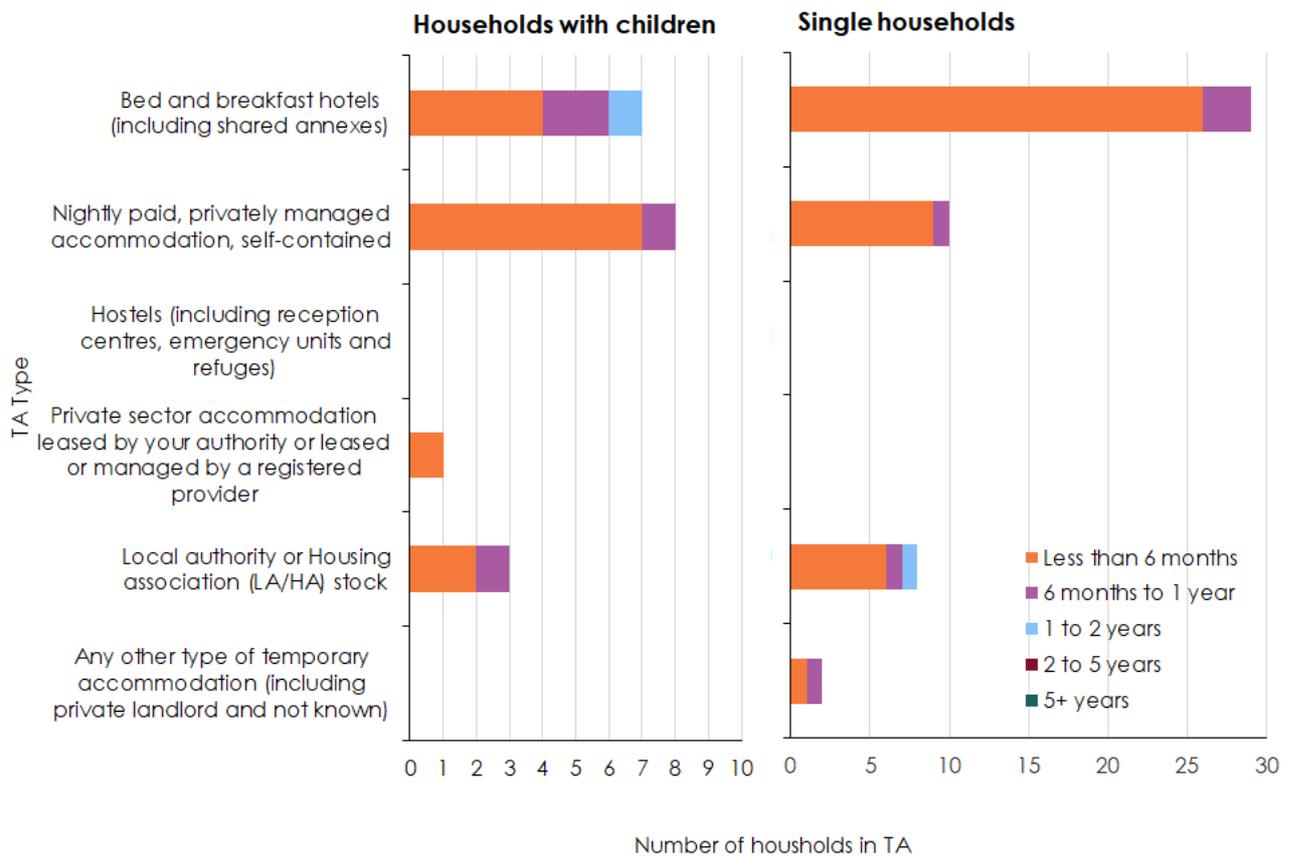
Households in temporary accommodation where the main applicant is Black/African/Caribbean/Black British is 4.4% and are overrepresented compared to Sefton's population for this ethnic group which is 0.5%.

Figure 13: Households in temporary accommodation on 31 March 2023, by age of lead applicant



The most common age for lead applicants in temporary accommodation was 25-34 which represents 26% of those in temporary accommodation, followed by 35-44 with 22%. 25-34-year-olds represent 14% of Sefton's population, 35-44-year-olds also represent 14% of Sefton's Population.

Figure 14: Type of accommodation for households in temporary accommodation on 31 March 2023, by length of stay and household type.



The most common length of time for households with children to be in temporary accommodation was for **less than 6 months** (2 to 5 years) accounting for **73.7%** of households with children.

The most common length of time for single households to stay in temporary accommodation was **less than 6 months** (less than 6 months), accounting for **85.7%** of single households.

Temporary accommodation has been in high demand during this period, compounded by the pandemic and exacerbated by the increase in cost of living. Pressures on households requiring temporary accommodation have continued to rise since the years of the pandemic.

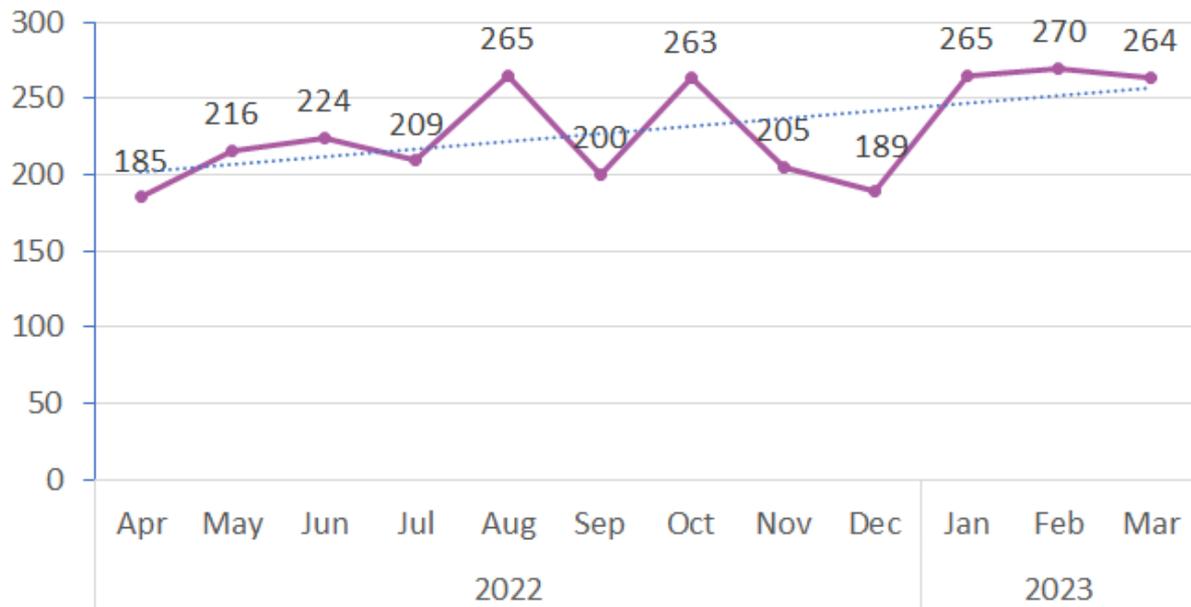
Younger single person households still remain the largest group in temporary accommodation over 2022/23.

9 Things to know about these statistics.

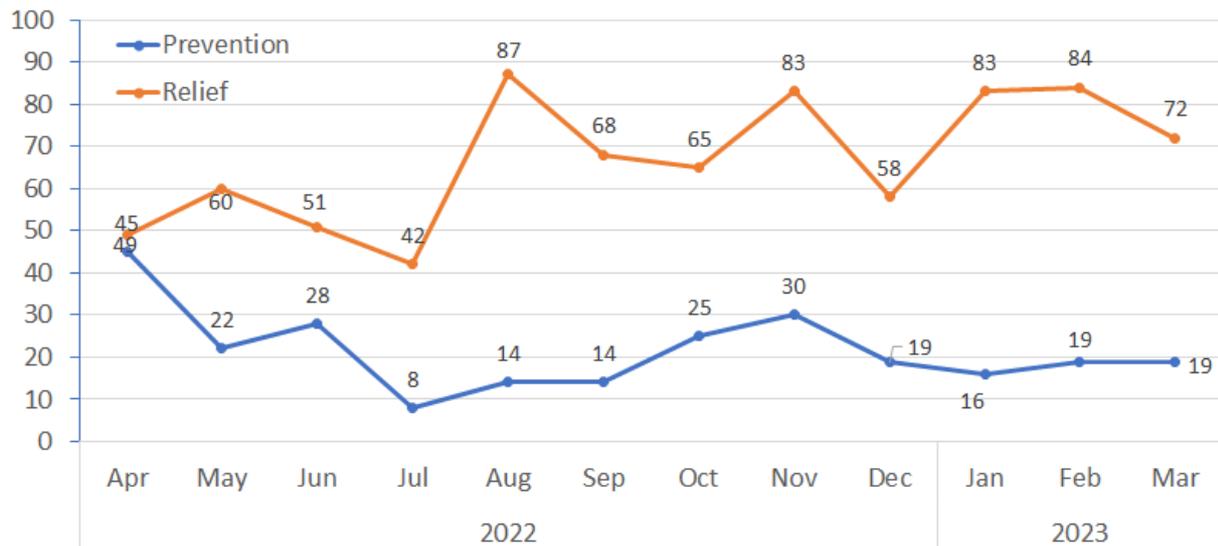
- Statutory homelessness concerns duties placed on local authorities to take reasonable steps to prevent and relieve homelessness to eligible houses.
- Each case included in this report is representative of a household, which includes households with children as well as single adult houses.
- This report only covers those owed a duty between 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023
- All figures except for temporary accommodation are a cumulative count over the period of the reported financial year, temporary accommodation is a snapshot of the last day of the year.
- Data is collected via the Homelessness Case Level Information Collection, submitted quarterly by local authorities. This method of collection was introduced in 2018 alongside significant homelessness legislation; before this statutory homelessness was recorded in the PIE.
- Definitions and a comprehensive breakdown of the quality assurance process can be found in the technical note.

10 Overview of Homelessness in 2022-23

Figure 15: New Homeless Cases presenting to Sefton Housing Options Service



The total number of new households who have contacted the Housing Options Service for advice in 2022/2023 is 2,755. This represents a 9% increase in new homeless cases compared to 2021/2022.

Figure 16: Homelessness prevention and relief.

There have been 1,061 households prevented or relieved from homelessness in 2022/2023. When compared to those prevented or relieved from homelessness in 2021/2022 (910) this represents a 16% increase and when comparing this with the numbers prevented or relieved from homelessness in 2020/21 (691) this represents a 53% increase.

11 Outcomes After Prevention & Relief Duty

Prevention Activity

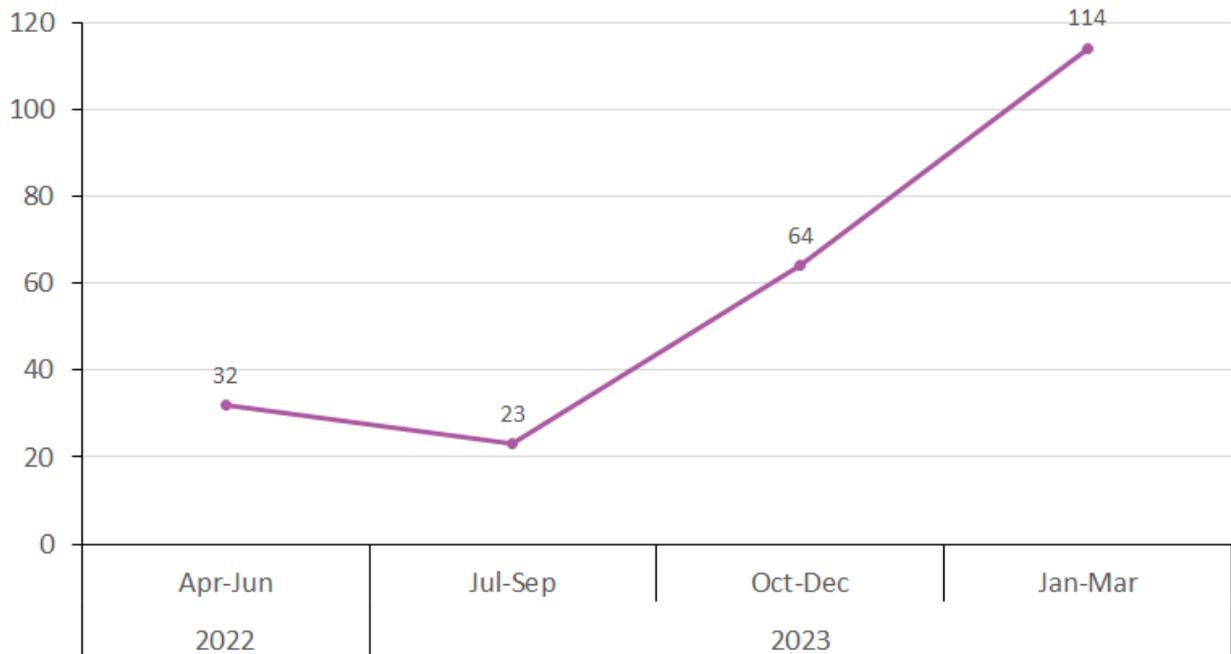
Of the 233 households where the prevention duty was ended, 97 households were secured accommodation for 6+ months by Sefton's Housing Options Team.

Relief Activity

Of the 676 households where the relief duty was ended, 305 households were secured accommodation for 6+ months by Sefton's Housing Options Team.

Statutory Homeless (Main Duty) Cases

The number of cases qualifying for Main Duty Assistance in 2022/23 was 233. In 2020/2021 was 132 and in 2021/2022 it was 146.

Figure 17: Statutory Homelessness (Main Duty) Cases

The number of households accepted as statutory homeless (Main Duty) decisions in

- 2019/2020 - 65.
- 2020/2021 - 132
- 2021/2022 - 146
- 2022/2023 - 233

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

12 Homelessness Reasons 2022/23

Homelessness Reasons	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Total
93-day Notice (MOD, relationship breakdown)					0
Abandoned accommodation	1	3	6	7	17
Advice on Tenant / Landlord rights & responsibilities	1			1	2
Affordability	1	2	6	12	21
Asked to leave by family	61	70	78	72	281
Asylum Seeker			1	2	3
Asylum Seeker- Home Office Accommodation Ended	6	5	14	9	34
Bail Condition – unable to return home	2	5	2	6	15
Bereavement	1				1
Care leaver		3	1	7	11
Current accommodation is detrimental to health	3	1	3	8	15
Discharge from Psychiatric Unit	3	2	5	6	16
Emergency (Fire/Flood/Disaster)	4		1	4	9
Evicted (NOT s21 or s8 notice)	15	14	4	14	47
Eviction from supported housing	10	12	6	10	38
Fleeing domestic abuse	19	16	23	32	90
Fleeing Harassment	10	10	9	7	36
Friend no longer willing to accommodate	28	24	28	17	97
Hospital Discharge (Home not suitable to return to)	6	9	6	3	24
Landlord harassment/unlawful eviction			1	1	2
Leaving bail hostel		3	3	14	20
Leaving prison	11	8	12	13	44
Looking to downsize due to bedroom tax			1		1
Loss of Benefits					0
Loss of employment		1			1
Loss of private rented - other reason	3	3	4	11	21
Loss of tied accommodation		1	2		3
Medical discharge from HM Forces			1		1
Mortgage Repossession- Applicant	1		1		2
Mortgage Repossession- Landlord	1		1	1	3
Mortgage repossession proceedings	1				1
Overcrowding - asked to leave			8	12	20
Perpetrator of ASB		1			1
Property not fit for habitation	2	4	2	8	16
Racially motivated violence or harassment			1		1

Homelessness Reasons	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Total
Rehousing options	8	8	4	11	31
Relationship Breakdown	21	31	31	31	114
Removed from home by police	1	1	1	3	6
Rent arrear – local authority			1	1	2
Rent arrears- Private Sector	1		2	4	7
Rent arrears- Registered Provider			3	1	4
Requires adaptations/ground floor			1	1	2
Rough Sleeping	4	9	15	28	56
Section 21 notice	42	33	55	86	216
Section 8 notice	4	6	7	7	24
Sofa surfing	13	17	34	41	105
Supported housing - ready for move-on	4		1	3	8
Threatened with eviction from a Privately Rented Tenancy but not homeless within 56 days		1			1
Victim of ASB	1	3	1	3	8
Violent breakdown of relationship		3	4	2	9
Mortgage repossession or sale of owner occupier property			1	5	6
End of Homes for Ukraine scheme accommodation			2		2
Housing register enquiry				3	3
Granted asylum through the Streamlined Asylum Process (SAP)					0
Loss of tied accommodation (not HM Forces)		1			1
Property condition - other					0
Requires financial assistance				1	1
Severe Weather Emergency Protocol			1		1
End of Ukraine Family Scheme accommodation			2		2
93-day notice (Armed Forces, cessation of entitlement)					0
Total with Reasons	289	310	396	508	1503
Blank	292	292	292	292	292
Grand Total	336	364	260	290	1250

Most common reasons for homelessness in 2022/2023:

- Asked to leave by families (281),
- Section 21 Notice (216)
- Relationship Breakdown (114),

13 Case File Audits

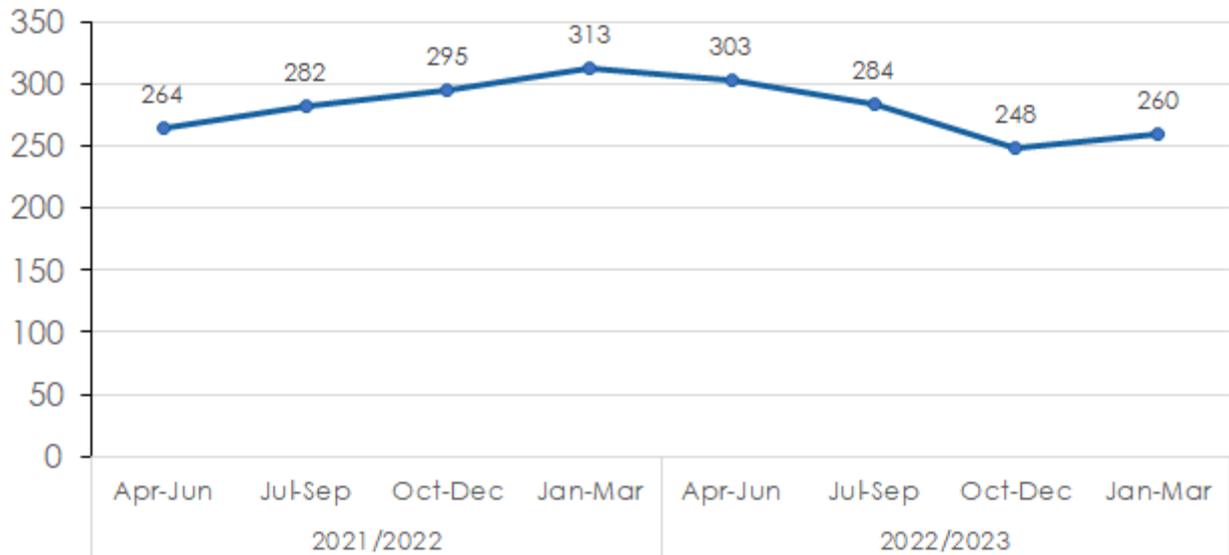
One of the recommendations within Sefton's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy is that Sefton must carry out case file audit of homelessness cases to learn what more could be done to prevent homelessness and ensure adherence to public law. These case file reviews will check the rationality, legality and adherence to public law procedural requirements. In May 2020, National Practitioner Support Service (NPSS) were commissioned to deliver case file reviews on Housing Options cases and deliver training packages to staff to help ensure compliance with the Homeless Reduction Act. Sefton have recently commissioned Shelter to carry out 30 case file reviews, staff observations and Mystery Shopping, which they will be carrying out in early 2024.

14 Duty To Refer

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

The Duty to Refer effectively commenced from 1st October 2018 onwards. The number of referrals in 2019/2020 was 646. The number of Duty to Refers in 2020/2021 was 876, this was an increase of 35.6%. The number of Duty to Refers in 2021/2022 was 1154 an increase of 31.7% on the previous year.

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

Figure 18: Duty to Refer

As the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) does not use the Alert portal for Duty to Refers, the Council records them separately and can report a total of **345** in 2022/23 (compared to 265 in 2021/2022).

Breakdown of Duty to Refers by Quarter.

	2021/2022					2022/2023				
	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Total	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Total
Jigsaw Alert Duty to Refer	209	224	222	234	889	187	196	188	179	750
DWP Duty to Refer	55	58	73	79	265	116	88	60	81	345
Total	264	282	295	313	1154	303	284	248	260	1095

15 Use of Discretionary Housing Payments

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

The DHP funding is allocated annually by the Department of Work & Pensions (DWP):

Year	DWP DHP Funding
2019/2020	£659,531
2020/2021	£925,029
2021/2022	£698,914
2022/2023	£495,361
2023/2024	£495,361

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

The DHP position for 2022/2023 is that £496,303 has been paid; resulting an overspend of £942.

There has been a total of 1,618 DHP made awards during 2022/2023 with nearly 80% of awards supporting claimants affected by the social sector size criteria (bedroom tax); the majority of awards are now made to Universal Credit claimants.

The DWP have announced that the DHP fund for 2023/24 is £495,361 the same amount as previous year.

The forecast is that the demand on the DHP fund will remain high due to the ongoing cost-of-living crisis.

16 Domestic Abuse Target Hardening

In 2022/2023 the Council's Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA) service supported 31 victims of Domestic Abuse with target hardening to their existing property costing £16,744.

All victims reported feeling safer as a result.

Given the average annual local authority expenditure for each Homelessness application is £3,189, which is the average one-off and on-going costs associated with statutory homelessness, then the total estimated saving by carrying out this target hardening work to the 31 victims' properties is £98,859. The £3,189 cost is from The Greater Manchester Combined Authorities Unit Cost Database.

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

Sefton is due to commission as specialist service for complex women with a history of domestic abuse using New Burdens funding.

17 Sefton's Commissioned Temporary Accommodation for single people

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

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

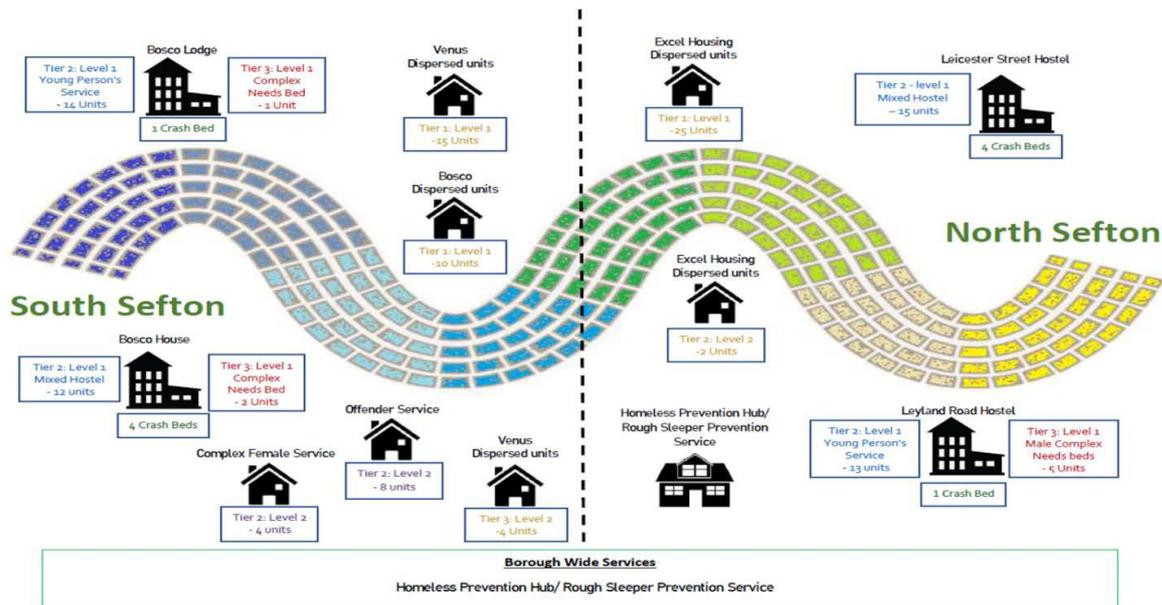
Sefton Integrated Homeless Service

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

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

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

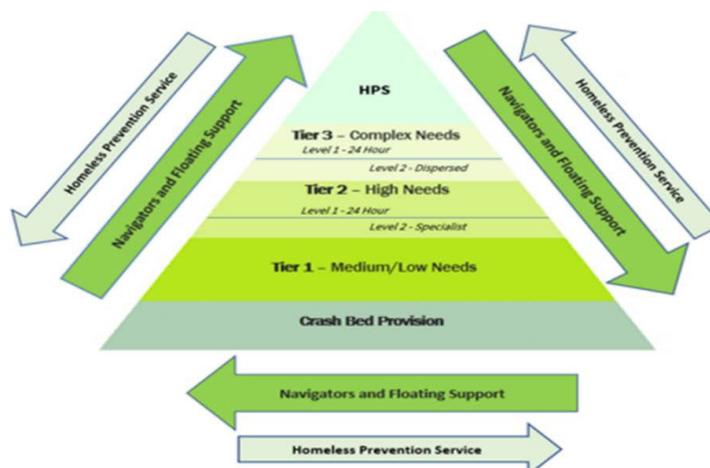
The new Integrated Homeless Service is a range of Accommodation Options and Support Services that aim to work together to help people move away from rough sleeping, access accommodation, gain



improved well-being, and eventually recover from homelessness.

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

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



Strengths Based Practice

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

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

Nine Areas of Wellbeing

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

A visit by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing & Communities' Homelessness & Rough Sleeper Advisor, Alastair Reeves, to Sefton to inspect the Homeless Providers was particularly successful, with Alastair providing the following comments on Sefton's commissioned homeless services:

'Overall, I was so impressed with all the services and people I met. Clearly it is no accident that you have managed such a significant reduction in the number of rough sleepers seen out regularly in recent years and it felt to me that there was a real commitment to making sure the interventions were as sustainable as possible, which should mean that entrenched rough sleeping can be a thing of the past in Sefton.

The two hostels in Bootle run by Bosco were both impressive resources I thought, and the new crash bed area in Bosco House particularly is looking good and is exactly the sort of change that we are supportive of. As a wannabe gardener I was super impressed with the garden area as well, which is the best maintained one I have seen!

It was really good to sit and chat with the staff at the Venus Centre, which is such a fantastic project and takes such a forward looking, psychologically informed approach that is exactly the sort of thing we try and encourage more of across the country. I know from talking to my colleague how impressed he was with the way in which the Everyone In project was run which applied those principles during such a challenging time and it is fantastic to hear some of the positive stories that resulted from that period, especially given the challenging winter that it feels like is ahead of us.

The two New Start projects were also excellent, really smart, high quality and forward-looking projects that are a credit to the managers, staff and commissioners. Part of my job is to highlight good practice across the country and all the Sefton accommodation projects I saw would be great examples for others to follow.

I thought the Excel project we visited in Southport was also a great example of dispersed accommodation for vulnerable adults and the staff were really impressive.

Finally, I thought the staff at the Light for Life Hub were really impressive and clearly take a holistic and preventative approach to working with rough sleepers as is possible. Having all the services that are delivered out of that building in the one place is, I think, the best way to offer a joined-up service and it clearly works.'

18 Social Housing Allocations

Sefton Council has been part of the Merseyside sub regional social housing allocations scheme known as Property Pool Plus since 2012 and in order to ensure that the scheme remains rational, legal and follows public law procedural requirements, and compliant with statute, statutory guidance, regulations, orders, court ruling and ombudsman decisions a review of the current policy was undertaken with a new draft policy produced which addresses these issues. This new policy was approved by Council in 2022.

At the end of 2022/23 there were a total of 3,310 applicants waiting for social housing in Sefton. This number is broken down by priority banding and bedroom need in the below table.

Priority Banding	Number	Bedroom Need					
		1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed	5 bed	6+ bed
Band A	203	88	68	30	12	5	0
Band B	1165	531	357	185	90	2	0
Band C	654	428	160	59	7	0	0
Band D	351	140	153	56	2	0	0
Band E	872	472	262	124	12	2	0
Band F	65	21	28	15	1	0	0
TOTAL	3310	1680	1028	469	124	9	0

The impact of the scarcity of affordable housing on the homelessness system can be seen in the above table as supply is not meeting demand. More detailed analysis will be carried out on waiting times that applicants are waiting to secure social housing. The limited availability of private rented sector accommodation at Local Housing Allowance rates is also having a huge impact on Sefton's ability to discharge its homeless duty.

19 Council Housing Programme

In January 2021, Cabinet agreed the strategic case for Sefton Council re-entering the social housing market through the provision of Council Housing for rent. The programme sets out an initial acquisition in 2024 of 18 homes for social rent from Sandway Homes at the Buckley Hill Lane development in Netherton.

Work is also underway to develop related operational requirements including, the development of policies relating to the management and maintenance of socially rented housing, tenancy agreements for the letting of homes and future Governance arrangements.

20 Rough Sleeper Initiative Funding 2022/25

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

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

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

One of the initiatives that Sefton received Rough Sleeper Initiative funding for was the Hospital In-Reach service. This service will look to deliver a borough wide model that works across the two major hospitals that cover the borough and provide support to those people.

The aim of this service is to provide support to clients placed within hospitals in order to:

- engage with and assess those patients who have presented as homeless and ensure that there is accommodation wherever they need to return to, whether that is Sefton, or elsewhere.
- training for key hospital staff in Homeless Reduction Act and what local homeless resources exist (to make the hospital staff Homeless Champions).
- ensure that follow-up appointments are kept, which therefore reduces further presentations at Accident & Emergency (A&E), where there are further clinical needs on discharge.
- attend Frequent Attenders meetings across Southport and Aintree hospitals with the aim of reducing volume of presentations from our client group.

This service is delivered by Light for Life and the overall success of the health model used by Light for Life is due to the 'physical' presence of Light for Life services in the hospital. This is a service not delivered by email or telephone, as with some other services who use the same title, but in person.

Feedback from Southport hospital is that the service has been extremely well received as hospital staff aren't caught dealing with people's homelessness issues and the service prevents future presentations at A&E.

21 Rough Sleeper Count

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

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

The 'typical night' chosen for the estimate was the evening of the 9th November to the morning of the 10th November 2022, and was done by doing an Estimate Count based on a snapshot count, which is a physical count on the chosen typical night followed up with a multi-partnership data sharing meeting at which partners bring their evidence of people who are known to have slept rough on the chosen typical night.

Sefton's Rough Sleeper Count (people found to be rough sleeping) in November 2021 was zero (0) and was done using only a Verification Meeting, due to the restricted movement caused by Covid.

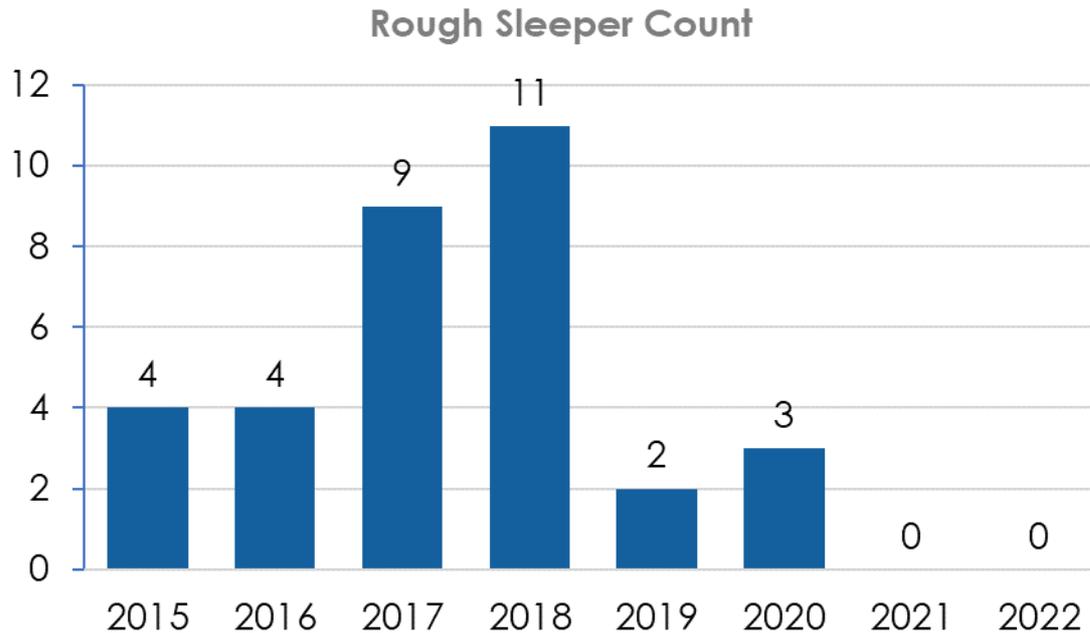
In comparison to previous years, the below table shows the previous numbers of Rough Sleeping in Sefton on the chosen typical night over the past ten years.

2022 was the second consecutive year that zero (0) Rough Sleepers were found in Sefton over that period, showing the positive impact of the Rough Sleeper Initiative funding and projects on that particular group of people.

This is a remarkable achievement given that nationally the 2022 rough sleeping snapshot found that 3,069 people were estimated to be sleeping rough on a given night, and that every region in the country saw an increase in rough sleeping compared to 2021 (statistics from Homeless Link Annual Review 2022).

The numbers of rough sleepers in Sefton in the years prior to 2022 were:

2012 (4), 2013 (7), 2014 (11), 2015 (4), 2016 (4), 2017 (9), 2018 (11), 2019 (2), 2020 (3), 2021 (0), 2022 (0).

Figure 19: Rough sleeper count

22 Use of Sit-Up Services/Crash Beds

Within the accommodation contract for “generic homeless people” is the requirement to provide a Sit-Up service.

This service provides an emergency overnight shelter to provide an alternative to Rough Sleeping. The provision of the Sit-Up service helps the Council to reduce the numbers sleeping rough and to offer a No First Night Out to our service users.

The number of people approaching the Council's Housing Options Team and then being placed into a Crash Bed to prevent rough sleeping has continued to increase over the last two years since the pandemic.

The number of individuals accessing either Sit-Up services or nightly crash-beds in Sefton from 1st July 2022 to 30th June 2023 was 361 with the average length of stay being 7 nights.

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

Given the average annual local authority expenditure per individual rough sleeping is £10,074 (Figure from The Greater Manchester Combined Authorities Unit Cost Database), the **361** clients accessing Sit-Up rather than rough sleeping will have **saved the Sefton purse an estimated £3,636,714** over the year.

Steps have been taken to convert our communal Sit-Up areas into self-contained en-suite units, also known as Crash-Beds. Examples of this can be seen below of the conversions in Bosco House.



23 Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy Action Plan

The Homelessness Act 2002 requires every Local Authority to carry out a homelessness review in its Borough every 5 years, to develop and publish a Homelessness Strategy based on this review and to consult with other statutory and voluntary organisations. The scope of the review includes a comprehensive review of current and projected levels of homelessness in the Borough and a review of current homelessness services.

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

In early 2023, Sefton Council commissioned Imogen Blood & Associates to carry out the Homeless Review which will inform the Homelessness Strategy for 2024-2029.

24 Homeless Prevention Trailblazers

The Trailblazer programme has been supporting households to prevent homelessness since 2019. Due to the successful implementation for the first phase of programme across the City Region, continuation funding was granted for 2 officers for a further 3 years from 2022/23. These staff help to improve the range of pre- statutory prevention work, including developing and improving current prevention initiatives and developing rehousing relationships in the private rented sector (PRS).

Agreed outcomes included:

- Criminal Justice
- Drug and Alcohol Services
- Education Support
- Financial Support
- Health or mental health support

- Housing Related Support Services
- Mediation Services
- Tenancy Sustained

Due to the success of this initiative, additional, thematic Prevention Officers have been recruited to. These include working with Care Experienced young people and Refugees in a targeted way, in order to prevent homelessness for these groups.

25 Housing First

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

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

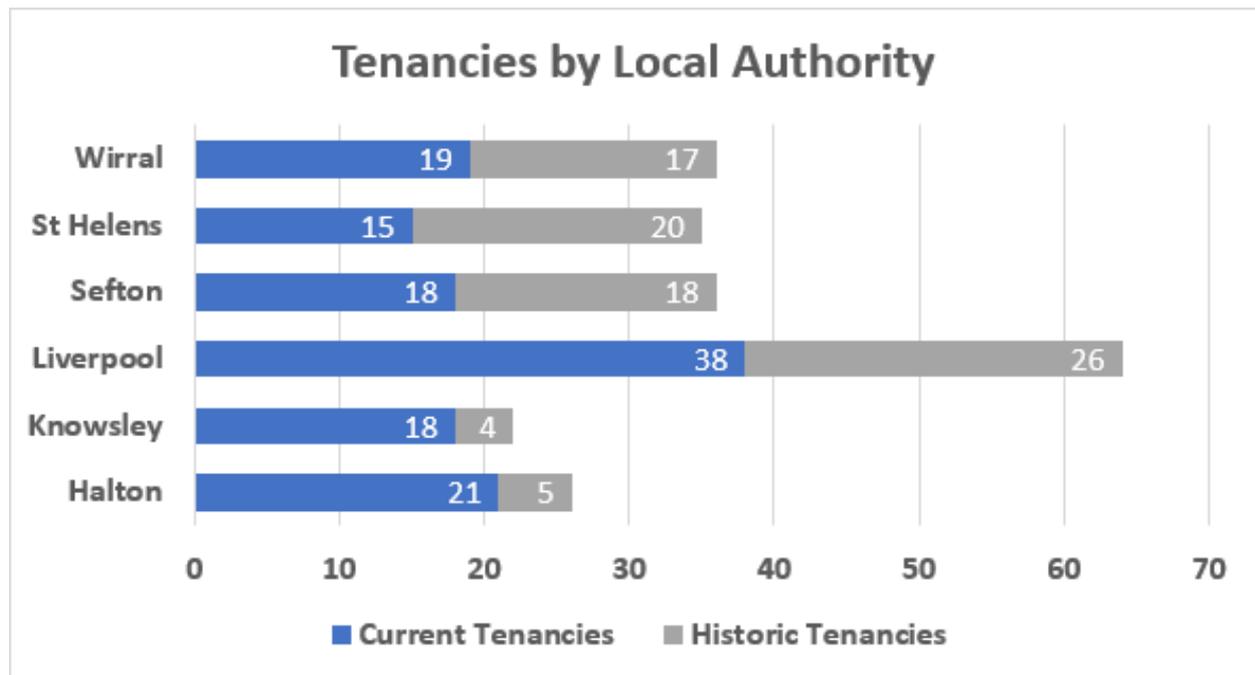
Both the Housing First team and Local Authority staff hold a pre-panel meeting where they are able to ensure all referral information is correct, this prevents any delays from occurring. Key to the success of the service within Sefton has been the willingness and response from Local Authority colleagues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

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

Tenancies by Local Authority

As of December 2023, there has been a total of 36 people provided with their own tenancy in Sefton, with 18 of those people still in their accommodation.

Figure 20: Housing First tenancies by Local Authority



26 Riverside Dispersed Accommodation

Following a successful two-year pilot, Sefton commissioned Riverside Housing Association to provide a model of temporary accommodation provision which is dispersed across the borough, rather than being based in one location, such as a hostel. This commissioned service went live in September 2022 and provides support for 20 families placed into Riverside properties over a two-year period.

The homeless families placed into the service are those who require a support service to establish and sustain a tenancy. Those accessing this service include families with a history of failed tenancies. When such families become homeless it is more difficult to find alternative accommodation and landlords willing to accommodate them. Hence, they would risk being in our temporary hostel, or Bed & Breakfast properties, for longer periods.

Families will also be referred/signposted to specialist agencies e.g., substance misuse, mental health, within the community. Each family will have a designated support worker who visits regularly, and dependent upon their person-centred support plan will attend meetings/case conferences, where needed.

Savings

An evaluation of the initial two-year period concluded that without this service, customers' progression to living in independent accommodation would have been much slower. This could have consequences relating to health, wellbeing, family cohesion, etc. The Council believe that customers would, eventually, have secured private rented accommodation if the service had not been available.

However, it concluded that customers would have experienced an extended stay in temporary accommodation and not received the intensive support that has been so transformational.

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

Outcomes

Since the pilot finished and the service was commissioned in 2022, a total of 63 families have been assisted through this project.

Remarkably there has only been one of the families that has left the service due to receiving another property from a Registered Provider.

Northern Housing Awards Success

Sefton Council won the Best Initiative for Tackling Homelessness category at the 2023 Northern Housing Awards for its Riverside Dispersed Accommodation Service.



The Northern Housing Awards judges said:

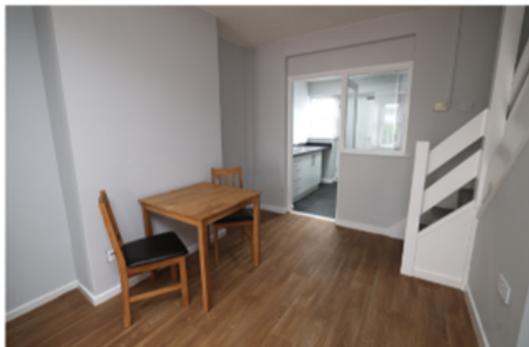
“The success of this scheme is unquestionable, with a 100% success rate in terms of families remaining in homes. The well-thought-through approach to resolving outmoded practices is impressive. A super example and well evidenced throughout.”

27 Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme Units

In June 2021, Riverside Housing supported by Sefton Council to submit a bid for Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme funding and were subsequently granted the funding by the Department of Levelling Up Housing & Communities to provide seven properties exclusively for rough sleepers or those at risk of rough sleeping.

The funding was a mix of capital and revenue in order to convert low-demand 2-bedroom properties into furnished 1-bedroom properties, and to provide three years of revenue funding to provide the support to these clients.





These seven units of accommodation have been extremely successful in being able to support some of Sefton's most entrenched rough sleepers into accommodation.

People are able to stay for a maximum of three years and are supported whilst in this accommodation by Riverside staff.

Case Study

'This person suffered from severe identity crisis, no culture awareness, severe self-harm, depriving themselves of sleep which led to hallucinations, missed collecting their medication and which would lead to multiple issues. Non engagement, lack of self-worth, feeling of being lost, random buying which leads to extreme hoarding, loneliness, randomly befriending people to feel wanted, questioning suicide daily.'

After months of cognitive behaviour therapy tactics and building their self-esteem and their worth, they have now been able to deal with their triggers more affectively and has enjoyed learning about their culture. Due to this the following has now been tackled but they still need support.'

28 Conclusions

2022 was a year marked by the increase in cost of living that increased pressure on people at risk of homelessness and people already experiencing homelessness. As the homelessness sector emerged from the last of the pandemic related interventions, concerning trends started to emerge, with increases in people experiencing homelessness, rough sleeping increasing across the country and in numbers accessing temporary accommodation (Homeless Link Annual Report 2022).

Further, the data shows the marked increase in presentations to Sefton's Housing Options Team in 2022/2023 of 2,755 representing a **152% increase in new homeless cases compared to 2018/19.**

Some key points to highlight:

- The total number of new households who have contacted the Housing Options Service for advice in 2022/2023 is 2,755.
- Sefton has seen a year-on-year increase in numbers of presentations prior to 2022/23, which represents a **152% increase** in cases compared to 2018/19 numbers and shows the stark increase in homelessness within the borough since Covid and the **increase in cost of living.**

Below shows the year- on-year increase in new presentations to Sefton's Housing Options Team:

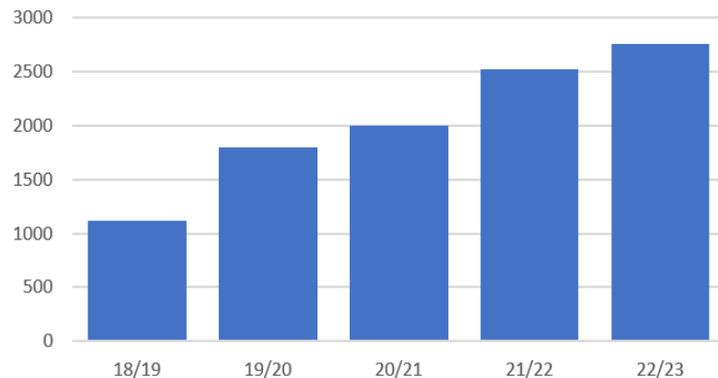
2018/2019 – 1,095

2019/2020 – 1,796

2020/2021 – 2,003

2021/2022 – 2,525

2022/2023 – 2,755



- Of the 2,755 homeless cases, 259 were resolved at the Prevention stage, 802 at the relief stage, with 233 at the Main Duty stage. 1,461 cases either gave No Reason or had their case closed on approach.
- **Of the 2,525 cases, 561 (24%) were assisted to secure accommodation.**
- 561 clients were assisted to secure accommodation, 281 (50%) in social housing and 50 (8%) in the private rented sector, 54 (9%) in other **(the levels moved into social housing in 2019 report was 67%).**
- 277 service users were provided with temporary supported accommodation and 197 service users provided with floating support services via the Council's commissioned homeless services.

- **The fact that Sefton maintained having no rough sleepers for a second successive year on its annual count is a testament to the work done by Housing Options and Sefton's commissioned Homeless Providers that work across Sefton.**

