

Homeless Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-28

"Working in partnership to
end homelessness in Barnsley"



Barnsley – the place
of possibilities.



BARNLSLEY
Metropolitan Borough Council

Foreword

I am pleased to introduce Barnsley Council's Homeless Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy for 2023 to 2028. This strategy is an opportunity to celebrate our successes over the past five years and make sure our plans reflect the challenges we face and how we all need to work together to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping in the borough.

The causes of homelessness can be complex and multi-faceted, but what's clear is the impact it has on those who experience it. Homelessness is much more than rough sleeping. Although this is the most visible and harmful, many people live in unstable or precarious housing situations, which can easily lead to homelessness.

This strategy sets out our approach to tackling homelessness in Barnsley, taking a preventative, multi-agency partnership approach to help those who are homeless become more resilient and build a better future.

Significant progress has been made over the past five years despite unprecedented challenges, such as Covid-19. Successes include:

- Fully implementing the Homeless Prevention Act 2017.
- Our focus on preventative work, bringing in additional resources, especially around rough sleeping and supporting those with complex needs.
- Strengthening partnership working.

Despite this, we still face significant challenges. Homelessness is increasing again, both locally and nationally, as we start to feel the impact of the cost of living crisis and deal with a shortage of affordable housing options.

We know that preventing homelessness is key to tackling inequality and creating sustainable communities. People who do not have access to good quality, affordable housing may find it more difficult to stay in education, take part in training or maintain employment. Therefore, this must remain our focus.

As budgets get smaller and the demand for specialist services grows, it's important that we work together and pool our resources to make sure people in our communities get the right support, at the right time.

No single organisation can solve homelessness alone; we must proactively work together to intervene earlier and prevent it from happening in the first place.

I look forward to working with you all to deliver this strategy and make our vision a reality.

Introduction and purpose

This strategy builds on the successes and learning from the Homeless Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy from 2018 to 2023, especially through Covid-19.

We want our new strategy to build on the good work of partners, stakeholders, communities and those with lived experience. It also sets out our vision, strategic direction and priorities for Barnsley over the next five years.

This strategy supports and builds on the strategic ambitions of our Barnsley 2030 vision: the place of possibilities. We know access to an affordable, safe and sustainable home is the foundation for many of the corporate priorities outlined below.

It promotes good health and wellbeing, learning and employment opportunities and helps us to build strong, resilient communities. This strategy strongly aligns with the Healthy, Growing and Learning Barnsley themes:

- **Healthy** – Everyone is able to enjoy a life in good physical and mental health.
- **Healthy** – Fewer people live in poverty, and everyone has the resources they need to look after themselves and their families.
- **Healthy** - People can access the right support, at the right time and place and are able to tackle problems early.
- **Healthy** - Our diverse communities are welcoming, supportive and resilient.
- **Learning** – Everyone has the opportunity to create wider social connections and enjoy cultural experiences.
- **Learning** - Lifelong learning is promoted and encouraged, with an increase in opportunities that will enable people to get into, progress and stay in work.
- **Growing** – People have a wider choice of quality, affordable and sustainable housing to suit their needs and lifestyle.
- **Growing** – Barnsley has significantly increased the number of people, businesses and organisations who are able to access and use digital resources, benefiting all aspects of daily life.
- **Sustainable** – People are proud and look after their local area.

Barnsley - the place of possibilities

Healthy Barnsley	Learning Barnsley	Growing Barnsley	Sustainable Barnsley
People are safe and feel safe.	People have the opportunities for lifelong learning and developing new skills including access to apprenticeships.	Business start ups and existing local businesses are supported to grow and attract new investment, providing opportunities for all.	People live in great places, are recycling more and wasting less, feel connected and valued in their community.
People live independently with good physical and mental health for as long as possible.	Children and young people achieve the best outcomes through improved educational achievement and attainment.	People have a welcoming, safe and enjoyable town centre and principal towns as destinations for work, shopping, leisure and culture.	Our heritage and green spaces are promoted for all people to enjoy.
We have reduced inequalities in health and income across the borough.	People have access to early help and support.	People are supported to have safe, warm, sustainable homes.	Fossil fuels are being replaced by affordable and sustainable energy and people are able to enjoy more cycling and walking.

Enabling Barnsley We are a modern, inclusive, efficient, productive and high-performing council

There are also clear links and interdependencies with the following strategies, which you can read more about in Appendix 1:

- Ending Rough Sleeping for Good, September 2022, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
- Our Housing Strategy 2023-28
- Our Domestic Abuse Strategy 2022-2027
- Our Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2026
- Our Substance Misuse Needs Assessment and Plan 2023-2025
- Our Children and Young People Early Help Strategy 2022-2027
- Our Private Sector Housing Plan 2030

In 2017, the Homeless Reduction Act gave us new duties to prevent homelessness. Work was progressing well on implementing these changes before Covid-19 hit and changed the way we worked. The pandemic impacted on communities and the economy, putting more pressure on the system.

This has now been compounded by the economic climate, rising inflation, increased cost of living and a challenging housing market. All this would suggest that there will be more pressure on homeless services over the coming years, which this strategy seeks to address.

The cost of living crisis is one of the greatest challenges currently facing our communities, with rising costs for fuel, food products and housing. Deprivation, poverty and low incomes are key barriers to accessing and maintaining affordable or suitable housing. The impact of the crisis will be disproportionality felt by those who are already struggling financially and who are therefore at greater risk of homelessness. We also expect to see a rise in mortgage payments and renting prices in the private sector market.

Despite these challenges, we remain committed to working in partnership to prevent homelessness and support those who experience it to build a better future.

Progress since 2018

Considerable progress has been made over the lifetime of the last strategy, with many of the actions having already been achieved. Learning from the Covid-19 pandemic enabled us to strengthen our partnership approach and assess the way we work, especially with rough sleepers and those with complex needs.

The table below summarises some of the key successes and identifies where work needs to continue to develop over the next five years.

Priority from 2018 to 2023	Progress
<p>Priority One: To maximise homeless prevention options, activities and outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Housing Options team was restructured, introducing more job roles focussing on prevention. • We’ve worked closely with partners to raise awareness of the Housing Options team and the importance of early referrals, including the Duty to Refer. • Creative use of homeless prevention funding pots, including actively working with the Credit Union. • Full implementation of the Homeless Reduction Act 2017. • Appointment of a joint young person’s social worker post.
<p>Priority Two: Supporting those with complex needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We developed our Housing Led Support Team and created 14 units of directly managed 24-hour accommodation to help rough sleepers. • Through the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme, we

	<p>created five units of dispersed, self-contained accommodation for rough sleepers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We created Rough Sleeping Initiative-funded posts, including outreach, specialist support, prison/hospital, discharge and a housing advisor. • Better data and monitoring of people with complex needs and rough sleepers. • Regular rough sleeper outreach with key partners, such as substance misuse and community safety. • Better multi-agency working to help people who need extra support to stay safe, including through safeguarding.
<p>Priority Three: Reduce the demand for temporary accommodation and eliminate the use of B&B</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct management of 25 dispersed units of council housing for temporary accommodation with a dedicated support worker. • With our Housing Led Support Team, we're providing 14 additional units of temporary accommodation for rough sleepers. • We've started developing housing pathways to move people through the process quicker. This area remains a challenge, but we're committed to working with partners on a solution.
<p>Priority Four: Protect and increase local housing options</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building positive relationships with housing providers to increase options for the people we support. This includes Humankind (empty homes and women's properties) and Target Housing. • Successful Accommodation for Ex-Offenders (AFEO) funding to incentivise private landlords to work with this group.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We're reviewing the Lettings Policy to make sure social housing is targeted at those most in need of our support. • Working with private landlords to increase housing supply. • Working with non-commissioned providers to develop housing pathways and prevent evictions.
<p>Priority Five: Maximise and maintain partnership working</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building on our already strong partnerships and formalising some of these through regular meetings. This includes the Directions Panel, supporting adults and children with complex needs. • Attending key operational and strategic partnership meetings to give advice and work in a more preventative way. • Developing the Homeless Alliance • Working in a more collaborative way with Adult Social Care, Children's Social Care and Probation, co-locating staff.

Our challenges



Our vision and priorities

Our vision in Barnsley is “**Working in partnership to end homelessness in Barnsley**”. This is underpinned by several key priorities and principles.

- 1 Homeless prevention and early intervention
- 2 Supporting those with complex needs
- 3 Improving access to a range of housing options
- 4 Reducing the use and cost of temporary accommodation
- 5 Develop a system-wide approach to housing and health

The Homeless Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy is based on the following principles:

- **Collaboration and partnership** - working together to end homelessness.
- **A whole system approach** – joined-up processes that focus on people.
- **Innovation and good practice** – sharing and learning together.

Ambition of our Homeless Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy

- To make sure no one sleeps rough, and any time spent on the streets is rare, brief and non-recurring.
- That any stays in temporary accommodation are minimised by developing rehousing pathways, helping us make sure housing is suitable and affordable and support is provided where required.
- Early and effective upstream prevention, reducing homelessness by intervening and educating before homelessness occurs.
- Reducing and stopping the cycle of homelessness. Where this does occur, we will work to make it a one-off event.
- Providing good quality housing advice and support so people can resolve their housing problems in a resilient and long-lasting way.

- Tackling health inequalities through fair access to housing and health services that meet the needs of our communities.
- Supporting people through the cost of living crisis, providing information and support to help our communities.



Priority One – Homeless prevention and early intervention, including youth homelessness

We have a legal duty to prevent homelessness, but still, too many people come to us in ‘crisis’ when they’re already homeless. As the demand for housing is high and the turnover of stock is slow, this can lead to people having to stay in temporary

accommodation for long periods and having little choice about where they will live. Those who are not eligible for temporary accommodation may also be at risk of rough sleeping or staying in unsuitable housing or situations.

People are often in touch with other services before they reach crisis point and we need to identify these organisations and work together to offer early advice and support. This includes early intervention with families and young people who may be at risk of homelessness. The focus will be on helping the family stay together and enabling a smooth transition to independent living.

Joint working with Children’s Services and Early Help staff is essential to making sure that homelessness is prevented for 16 to 17-year-olds, including care leavers. Where this is not possible, we will work together to support a positive transition into independent living.

We want to work towards a target of 70% of cases being opened at the prevention stage, with 65% of these cases being successfully prevented. Over the last few years, 40% of cases were opened at the prevention stage and successful preventions are running at around 25%.

We need to make sure we embed a preventive approach across the system, facilitating early access to advice and support. We also need to make information easier to access for those who can self-serve, targeting high-risk areas of homelessness including:

- Those leaving prison or youth detention accommodation.
- Those leaving care from Children’s Services.
- Those leaving hospital.
- Victims of domestic abuse.
- People living with mental illness.

- Armed forces veterans.

While the numbers presenting in these categories vary in Barnsley, and some of the numbers can be quite small, we need to make sure we have effective and targeted support, advice and accommodation pathways in place.

Homelessness cannot always be prevented, and where this is the case, the focus needs to be on stopping repeat presentations.



Priority Two - Supporting those with complex needs and reducing the cycle of homelessness and rough sleeping

Supporting people with complex needs remains a key priority of this strategy. While our rough sleeping numbers are relatively low, we want to end it all together. Early intervention will be key to this as well as having options for people as soon as they start rough sleeping.

Those who experience rough sleeping are often in the ‘revolving door’ of homelessness. They can suffer from poor mental or physical health and substance misuse, while some are caught in a cycle between prison and a life on the streets. Societal problems as long-standing as rough sleeping demand long-term solutions.

There needs to be a whole system approach to tackle rough sleeping, both at a government and local level. People rarely fall into a life on the streets overnight, often being driven by a range of factors including unemployment, housing affordability, poor mental health, drug misuse and alcohol dependency. Rough sleeping can also perpetuate existing health needs or problems. In line with the government’s strategy, any rough sleeping needs to be rare, brief and non-recurring.

Rough sleeping

The Department of Levelling Up Housing, and Communities (DLUHC) defines rough sleeping as: ‘People sleeping in open air (such as on the streets, in tents, doorways, parks, bus shelters, encampments or other places not designed for habitation (such as stairwells, barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations or “bashes”, which are makeshift shelters, often comprised of cardboard boxes)’.

The annual rough sleeping snapshot measures the number of people sleeping rough on a single night in the autumn. This has been slowly decreasing in Barnsley during the lifetime of the last strategy, as detailed in the table below:

2018	17
2019	2

2020	10
2021	7
2022	5

Rough sleeping can be difficult to address for a host of reasons, especially when those impacted feel disenfranchised and have never had a settled home of their own. There can also be background circumstances, such as trauma and mental health issues, which can lead to self-medicating with substances.

An initial intervention to get someone off the streets will not always be enough. People need stable, safe and supportive accommodation they can call home, physical and mental health support and viable routes into employment to sustain a life off the streets for good.

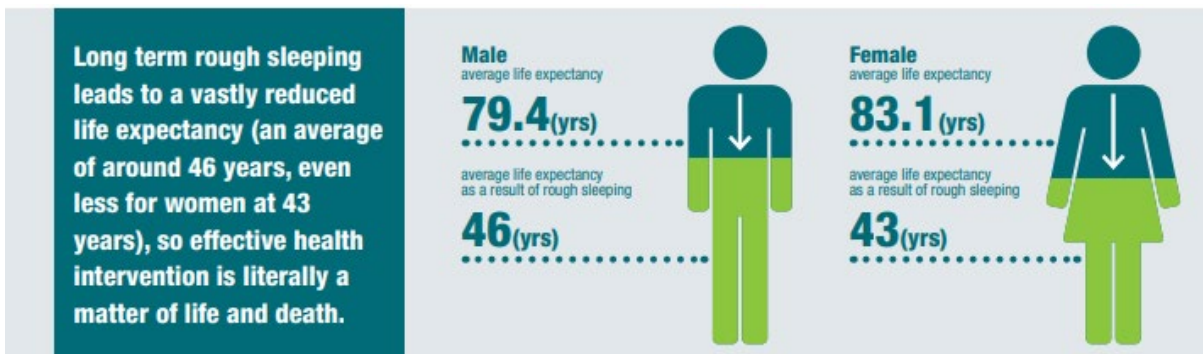
Addressing this needs to be unique to each person, focusing on their strengths and aspirations. Often there is too much focus on negative aspects, such as needs and risk, and while these are important, the focus needs to shift to a more positive outlook. We need to move towards a more asset-based approach to address their housing and support needs.

Rough sleeping is not just a housing issue and to tackle it, there needs to be strong partnership and commitment across the system. This includes health and social care services, the criminal justice system, immigration and enforcement, welfare, employment, support for care leavers and housing.

Preventing rough sleeping is at the heart of this strategy. While the numbers are relatively low, we estimate that 60% of rough sleeping is new to the streets in Barnsley each month. Understanding the routes into rough sleeping is essential, including high-risk transitional areas like prison release, hospital discharge and those leaving care.

Preventing rough sleeping needs to be at the heart of any work we do. The graphic below demonstrates the sad consequences of longer-term rough sleeping, so we need to make sure the right support is in place for anyone found rough sleeping.

The causes and solutions to rough sleeping are about more than just housing and there is no one size fits all approach. Our ambition is to have a range of accommodation options, including housing-led models, which are safe, secure and comfortable.



Priority Three

Improving access to a range of housing options, especially in the private rented sector, and improving housing and support pathways



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The private rented sector is not used enough for temporary accommodation, prevention, relief and discharge of the full housing duty and is an area for development. This is a challenging area with rent levels increasing,

Local Housing Allowance (LHA) levels remaining static for several years and landlords exiting the market. A recent report by Crisis and Zoopla found that only 4% of all private rents were affordable to those on benefits and in Barnsley, this figure is 0.9%. We're committed to working alongside private landlords to access properties for those who are homeless, offering support and incentives.

While we always try to minimise the number of times homeless people and families have to move, some movement is an inevitable part of the housing pathway. As outlined in this strategy, there are several challenges in the housing market, leading to limited move-on options and people staying in temporary accommodation, especially B&B, for longer than we would like. We will continue to develop a range of housing options with landlords, especially registered providers, and those who deliver supported exempt accommodation.

We will also work to improve our affordable housing supply through new builds, acquiring empty homes and renovating properties. A key focus for us will be on making sure the right housing pathways are available to meet people's needs at the right time.

Priority Four

Reducing the use and cost of temporary accommodation



Priority Four - Reducing the use and cost of temporary accommodation

At the time of writing this strategy, there were 55 temporary accommodation placements in Barnsley. Approximately 64% of all homeless applications were offered temporary accommodation in 2022/23, with an average of 44% over the last five years.

In July 2023, 53 children were living in temporary accommodation as part of a household. The current range of self-contained, dispersed temporary accommodation is not enough to meet demand, meaning B&B accommodation still must be used, some of it out of area, to meet our statutory duties. This creates significant funding pressures on the council and is often not the best option for those placed there.

The use and cost of temporary accommodation have been rising over the last few years, especially since the Covid-19 pandemic. There has been an increase in families placed in

B&B accommodation, more than doubling in the last few years. Options are being explored to sure there is more suitable temporary accommodation available, cutting down our reliance on B&Bs. This needs to be balanced alongside successful prevention work and multi-agency working to reduce placements and costs.



Priority Five - Develop a system-wide approach to housing and health, including physical and mental health

Of the people who have presented to us over the last three years, around 23% listed mental health as one of their support needs, with 16% listing their physical health. Drug and alcohol use featured in 19% of complex homeless cases, with dual diagnosis featuring highly in the cohort we

support. This is an area we want to address throughout the lifetime of the strategy, removing barriers to accessing services.

We're working closely with partners to address these wider needs, but more work needs to be undertaken to ensure a joined-up, system-wide approach. Links to the Integrated Care Board and their priorities are being made to make sure that homelessness is featured highly in their future strategies and plans. We're also working alongside Public Health colleagues to address the health inequalities homeless people often face.

Homeless review – what is the data telling us?

A homeless review was undertaken to provide an evidence base for this strategy. Its purpose was to identify:

- The reasons for homelessness.
- Future levels of homelessness and housing need in the borough
- Services that contribute towards preventing homelessness.
- Gaps in provision and emerging pressures and trends.

The housing market is more challenging than ever, with a lack of affordable social housing and low turnover. Over 9,000 people are on the waiting list for a council house, with over 300 of these being in band 1 with an urgent housing need.

Turnover of council stock is less than 1,000 per year and Right to Buy is reducing the stock by an average of 150 per year. We're facing a shortfall of 190 affordable homes¹ per year in

¹ <https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/media/18806/barnsley-shma-final-report-2021.pdf>

the borough. Private rents are also increasing, often due to the landlord having increased mortgage payments and Local Housing Allowance remaining static in the last few years. This is leading to more and more private renters paying a top-up.

Below is a summary of the key data over the last three to four years, with a full analysis included in Appendix 2:

- Homeless approaches and applications have remained reasonably static over the last couple of years, with 1,763 approaches in 2022/23 and 636 homeless applications. However, we have started to see applications and assessments starting to rise again over the last couple of quarters.
- The biggest age range owed a duty is 25-34, around 40% of all applicants.
- Over 90% of applicants are white British.
- 68% of applications are from single people with 26% from families.
- 48% of people coming to us in 2021/22 were owed a prevention duty. Compared to Q2 and Q3 of 2022/23, this figure is now 41% (7% lower), meaning fewer people are presenting early.
- In 2021/22, 52% of people we assessed were deemed to be already homeless. In Q2 and 3 of 2022/23, this figure rose to 59%. The percentage of people owed a relief duty on initial assessment has risen, meaning we are reaching fewer people at the prevention stage.
- Over the last couple of years, an average of 25% of cases ended in a successful prevention and 39% in successful relief.
- Prevention stats show we are good at finding alternative homes, an average of 75% compared to 16% remaining in their own homes (based on the last three years of data).
- The main causes of homelessness:
 - Section 21 notices.
 - Family and friends unwilling to accommodate.
 - People leaving institutions.
 - Evictions from supported housing.
 - Domestic abuse.
- We are heavily reliant on social housing to discharge duties. Over 70% owed a duty move into social housing.
- There are clear links between homelessness and poor health. The data shows that the most common factors in homeless cases are mental and physical health problems, appearing in 39% of cases (based on the last three years of data).

- Average placements into B&Bs over the last five years are 229 per year.
- Average placements into all temporary accommodation over the last five years is 309 per year.
- In 2022/23, 139 single people, 87 families and 16 couples were placed in B&B.
- Spend on B&Bs in 2022/23 was £518,000.
- An average of 10% of people we support experienced repeat homelessness.
- 139 unique rough sleepers were found and offered support in 2022/23, a slight increase on the 124 in 2021/22.
- Over the last two years, an average of 17 rough sleepers have been found every month, of which only two are classed as long-term.

Stakeholder questionnaire

A stakeholder questionnaire was distributed to a range of partners and 50 were completed. You can find a summary below, with a full analysis included in Appendix 3:

- 84% thought that supporting those with complex needs and partnership working were joint top priorities.
- 64% of respondents thought there had been good or some progress with the delivery of the priorities over the last five years and 26% answered that they didn't know.
- The lack of affordable housing, especially privately rented, with no uplift on Local Housing Allowance was cited as the top challenges, closely followed by access to social housing due to high waiting lists and low turnover.
- When asked what things we could do to respond to the challenges, here are some of the responses:
 - *Raise awareness of the service, especially around the potential for early intervention rather than approaching a crisis point. Better multi-agency working to avoid any unnecessary duplication or conflicts of work. Look at a TA to AST model for rehousing some of the more complex clients which would take the initial risk away from the landlord.*
 - *Develop an 'in-house' provision for vulnerable young people aged 16 to 19 years who are homeless or at risk of being homeless. Review social housing provision. Early Intervention for families at risk of homelessness or those who struggle to maintain a tenancy.*
 - *More council housing and increase Housing Benefit Allowance to make private lets more affordable.*

- *I would say the priority on prevention is key, with early intervention in and by people working in communities. I would also think that working 'upstream' would be useful, such as partnership working, perhaps identifying key risk factors such as school absenteeism or contact with social services. Also working to provide support to those in low-paid jobs to help them progress in work and prevent rent arrears or possible homelessness.*
- The majority of respondents thought that the leading causes of homelessness in Barnsley were:
 - Difficulties in managing and sustaining a tenancy (72%)
 - Friends and family no longer willing to accommodate (58%)
 - Domestic abuse (46%)
- 50% of respondents thought that rough sleeping had increased or vastly increased over the last twelve months.
- Only 66% of respondents didn't know where to direct people at risk of homelessness for advice.

You can also find the government's homelessness data on [their website](#).

Summary

This strategy demonstrates that real progress has been made in Barnsley to tackle homelessness and its causes. It recognises the value of partnership working and early intervention, giving advice and assistance to prevent homelessness.

There are many structural issues that impact on homelessness, and it is often a reflection of how well the economy is doing. There's no doubt that the next five years will prove challenging for the housing and homeless sector, not least due to the cost of living crisis, rising interest rates and inflation, and access to affordable housing at the right time.

There are still key areas to focus on, especially women with complex needs, young people and people from ethnic minority backgrounds. We will learn from good practice and try new models of support, such as Housing First, to address some of these needs, making sure a range of accommodation options are available to meet the needs of our communities.

However, Barnsley has a solid foundation to work from and will continue to strive to end homelessness by strengthening partnerships and improving systems. We will also take into account the voice of people with lived experience when designing and delivering services.

Glossary of terms and definitions

AST – Assured shorthold tenancies

AFEO – Accommodation for Ex-Offenders

TA – Temporary accommodation

LHA – Local Housing Allowance

RSI – Rough Sleeping initiative

DLUHC- Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

DHP – Discretionary Housing Benefit

HRA 2017 – Homeless Reduction Act

DTR – Duty to refer

RSAP – Rough Sleeper Accommodation programme

Definition of homelessness

Homelessness is a very broad definition. In simple terms, it means not having a home or sleeping rough. However, people can be homeless even if they have a roof over their heads. For example, if they're staying temporarily with family or friends, sofa-surfing, staying in a hostel, squatting, at risk of violence at home, living in such poor or unsuitable conditions that it's unreasonable to occupy or have no legal right to where they live.

Prevention duty

Local authorities may deliver their prevention duty through any activities aimed at preventing a household threatened with homelessness from becoming homeless within 56 days. This includes activities to enable an applicant to remain in their current home or find alternative accommodation to prevent them from becoming homeless. The duty lasts for up to 56 days but may be extended if the local authority is continuing with its efforts to prevent homelessness.

Relief Duty

The relief duty is owed to households that are already homeless upon approaching a local authority and therefore require help to secure settled accommodation. This duty lasts 56 days and can only be extended by a local authority if the household is not owed the 'main' homelessness duty.

Section 21 notice

A Section 21 notice is the form a landlord must give a tenant to start the process of ending an assured shorthold tenancy. This is recorded alongside initial assessments.

Duty to Refer

Since 1 October 2018, the duty to refer has required specified public bodies to refer, with consent, users of their service who they think may be homeless or threatened with homelessness to a local housing authority of the person's choice.

Main duty

The 'main' homelessness duty describes the duty a local authority has towards an applicant who is unintentionally homeless, eligible for assistance and has priority needs. These households are only owed a main duty if they do not secure accommodation in the prevention or relief stage. It is therefore not owed to those 'threatened with homelessness'. A minimum of 56 days of assistance must also be offered to a household after they approach the local authority before being owed this duty.

Temporary accommodation

Temporary accommodation is the term used to describe accommodation secured by a local housing authority under their statutory homelessness functions. Most households in temporary accommodation have been placed under the main homelessness duty. However, temporary accommodation is also provided during the relief stage to households who the local authority has reason to believe may have priority need, or on an interim basis in other circumstances, such as pending the outcome of a review on a homelessness decision. Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 and the Homeless Reduction Act (HRA) 2017 remain the foundation of homelessness legislation.

Housing Act 1996

Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 legally defines homelessness and provides the statutory framework for action to prevent and relieve homelessness.

Homeless Reduction Act 2017

The Homeless Reduction Act was the most significant change to existing legislation in decades and placed new responsibilities on local authorities to tackle homelessness, including an enhanced prevention duty. The main aim is to help more people sooner to

prevent homelessness. Councils must provide services for all those affected by homelessness and changes included:

- A duty to help people secure accommodation for 56 days before they are at risk of losing their current home.
- Anyone who has been served with a valid Section 21 notice of the Housing Act 1988 that the landlord requires possession that expires in 56 days or less is now classed as 'threatened with homelessness'.
- A duty to help people for 56 days following homelessness occurring.
- Specified public authorities must now notify the council of people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.
- The duty to provide advisory services was expanded and should cater for all eligible applicants, agreeing personal housing plans to help them secure accommodation.
- Councils need to take responsible steps to prevent homelessness for all eligible applicants.
- If people do not co-operate or refuse an offer of accommodation from the council to relieve homelessness, then the main housing duty no longer applies. If an applicant does not take the reasonable steps agreed upon in their plan, this can also end the duty.
- New rights to review are also in the legislation.

Homeless Code of Guidance for Local Authorities 2018

The Code of Guidance provides advice on how local authorities should exercise their homeless functions under the Homeless Reduction Act 2017.

Other key legislation includes:

- The Children Act 1989.
- The Care Act 2014.
- The Domestic Abuse Act 2021.
- The Equality Act 2010.
- The Renters Reform Bill.

Appendix 1 – Aligned strategies and interdependencies

Ending Rough Sleeping for Good, September 2022, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC)

In September 2022, the government published its ²'Ending Rough Sleeping for Good' Strategy. This strategy builds on the government's commitment to end rough sleeping within this parliament. The vision is that ***'rough sleeping should be prevented wherever possible, but where it does occur, it must be rare, brief and non-recurring'***.

The priorities in the strategy are:

- Better prevention to reduce the number of people that reach the streets in the first place.
- Swift and effective intervention for those who do sleep rough.
- Additional targeted support for those who need it for their recovery, including specialist accommodation.
- A more transparent and joined-up system to ensure everyone is working together to end rough sleeping.

Housing Strategy

Barnsley Council's Housing Strategy is currently under review and a revised version will be available this summer. The strategy aligns with our Barnsley 2030 vision by seeking to provide quality, affordable, inclusive and sustainable housing that suits resident needs and lifestyles. The strategy includes four pillars of success that will focus and guide our collective efforts over the next five years, with clear links to supporting temporary accommodation and preventing homelessness. The pillars of success include:

- Enabling sustainable housing growth to meet need.
- Maximising existing housing stock.
- Supporting strong and resilient communities.
- Supporting people to live healthy independent lives.

Domestic Abuse Strategy 2022-2027³

This strategy outlines how we will work together with partners, tackling and preventing domestic abuse in Barnsley. It outlines how we will achieve our strategic priorities of:

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ending-rough-sleeping-for-good>

³ <https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/our-council/our-strategies/domestic-abuse-strategy/>

- Providing victims of domestic abuse with the right support.
- Preventing domestic abuse.
- Ensuring a strong multi-agency response to domestic abuse.
- Holding perpetrators to account and supporting them to change their behaviour.

The strategy aims to improve the lives of victims, survivors and their children, helping to make Barnsley a place where people are safe from domestic abuse. There needs to be clear and joined-up pathways between both strategies as domestic abuse is a significant contributor to homelessness.

Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-26⁴

This strategy aims to ensure we have the conditions and culture to enable everyone within our communities to achieve their potential. This means that all our residents will be able to enjoy those things that help them feel positive about their lives and access high-quality support and compassionate services when they need it.

The prevalence of mental health is high amongst the homeless population and access to support is key to recovery and sustaining accommodation.

Substance Misuse Needs Assessment 2022 and Substance Misuse Plan 2023-25

This work outlines our vision to work collaboratively to prevent and reduce the harm caused by drug and alcohol use to individuals, families and communities so that:

- Everyone can have the best start in life, live well and age well in safe, strong, resilient communities.
- People who need help with their drug or alcohol use can access the right support at the right time and place to recover and live fulfilling lives.
- People who drink alcohol choose to do so responsibly and safely.
- Children, young people and families have the best start in life and future generations grow up protected from the impact of drug and alcohol misuse.
- Local communities experience less crime and disorder related to drugs and alcohol.

⁴ <https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/media/22000/barnsley-mental-health-and-wellbeing-strategy-2022-26.pdf>

Children and Young People’s Early Help Strategy 2022-2027⁵

Early help in Barnsley is used to describe our approach to a whole range of social, health and educational issues when providing support to children, young people and their families as soon as problems emerge or re-emerge. It’s about providing the right support, in the right place and at the right time.

Barnsley Health and Care Plan Refresh

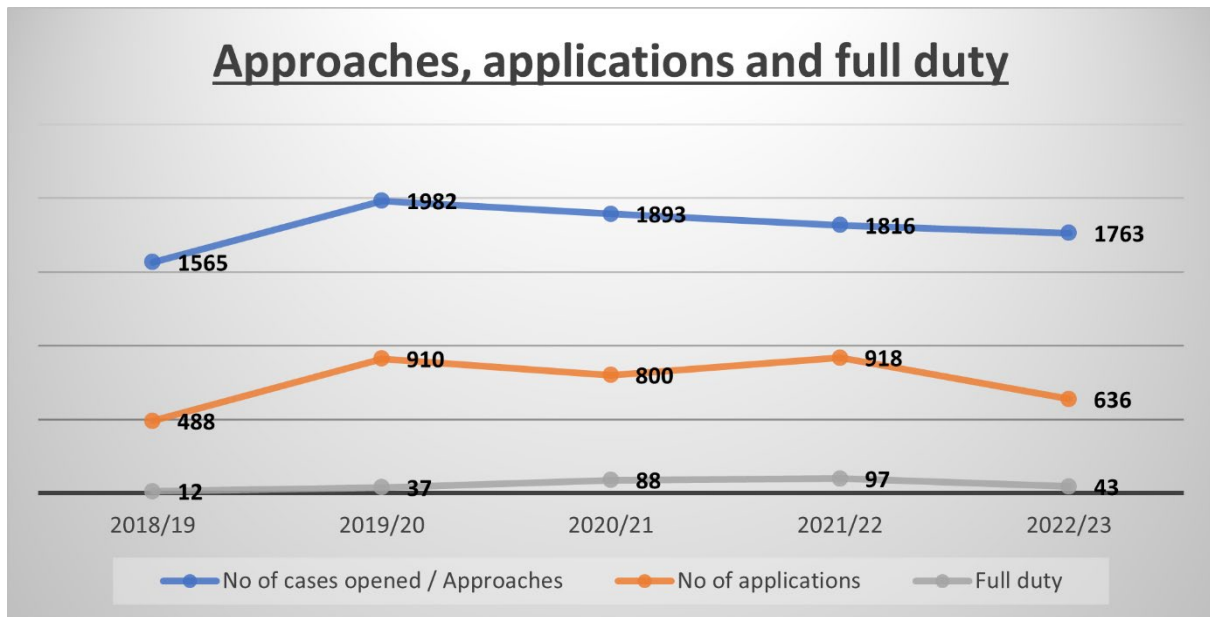
This plan sets out how the Barnsley Place Partnership will continue to drive forward change, prioritising action on improving health and health outcomes, tackling health inequalities and delivering value for money. The Plan has four priorities:

- Growing our workforce.
- Strengthening our joint approach to prevention.
- Improving equity of access.
- Joining care and support for those with the greatest needs.

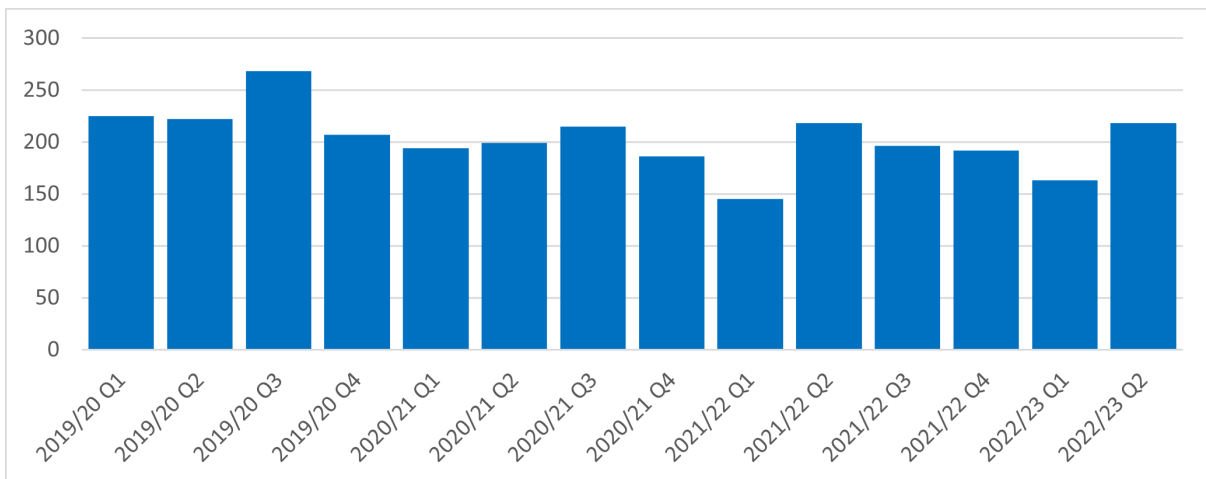
⁵ <https://barnsleybc.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s100555/Appendix%201%20-%20Strategy.pdf>

Appendix 2 – Analysis of the data

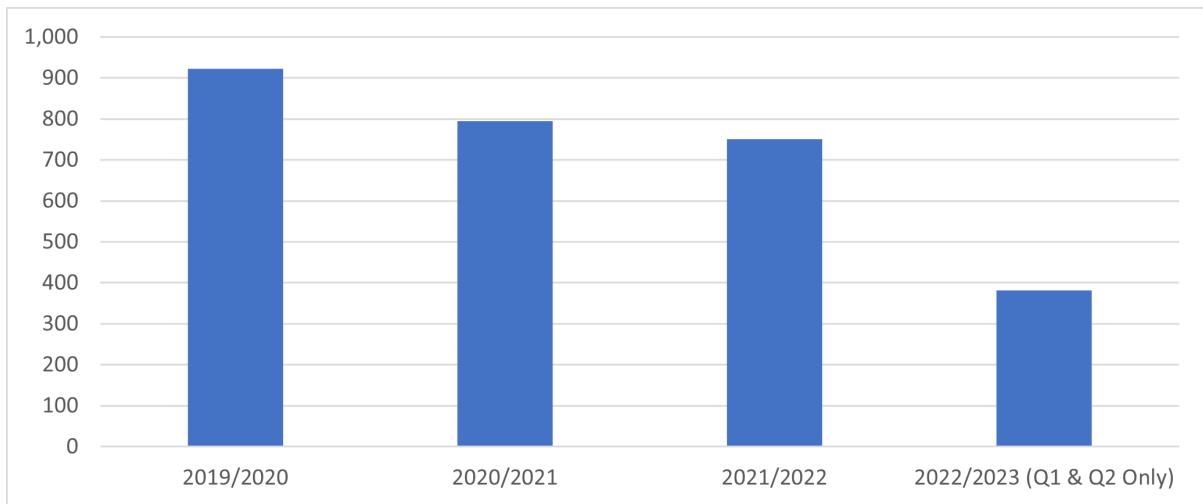
Approaches and assessments



Total initial assessments (homeless applications) since 2019 (quarterly)

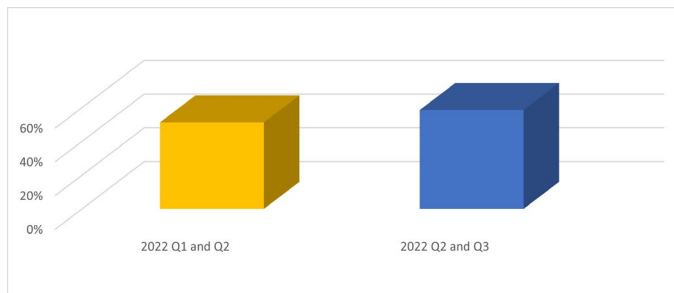


Total initial assessments (homeless applications) since 2019 (annually)

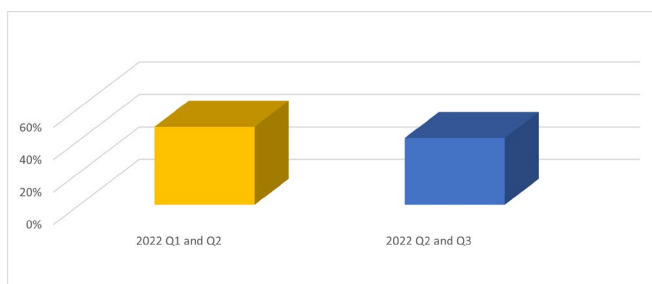


Applications, assessments, approaches and full duty cases have remained pretty static over the last few years. However, they have started to rise again in the last few quarters, potentially reflecting some of the cost of living challenges.

Circumstances upon initial assessment

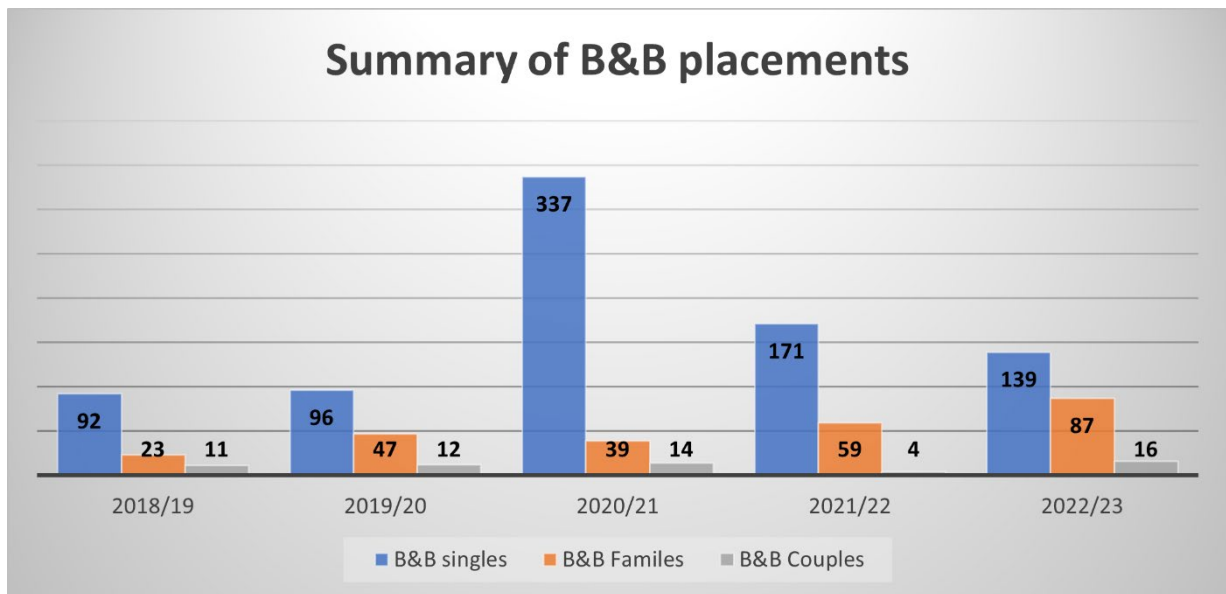


In 2021, 52% of people we assessed were deemed to already be homeless. In Q2 and Q3 of 2022, this figure rose to 59%. The percentage of people owed a relief duty on initial assessment has risen, meaning we are reaching fewer people at the preventative stages.

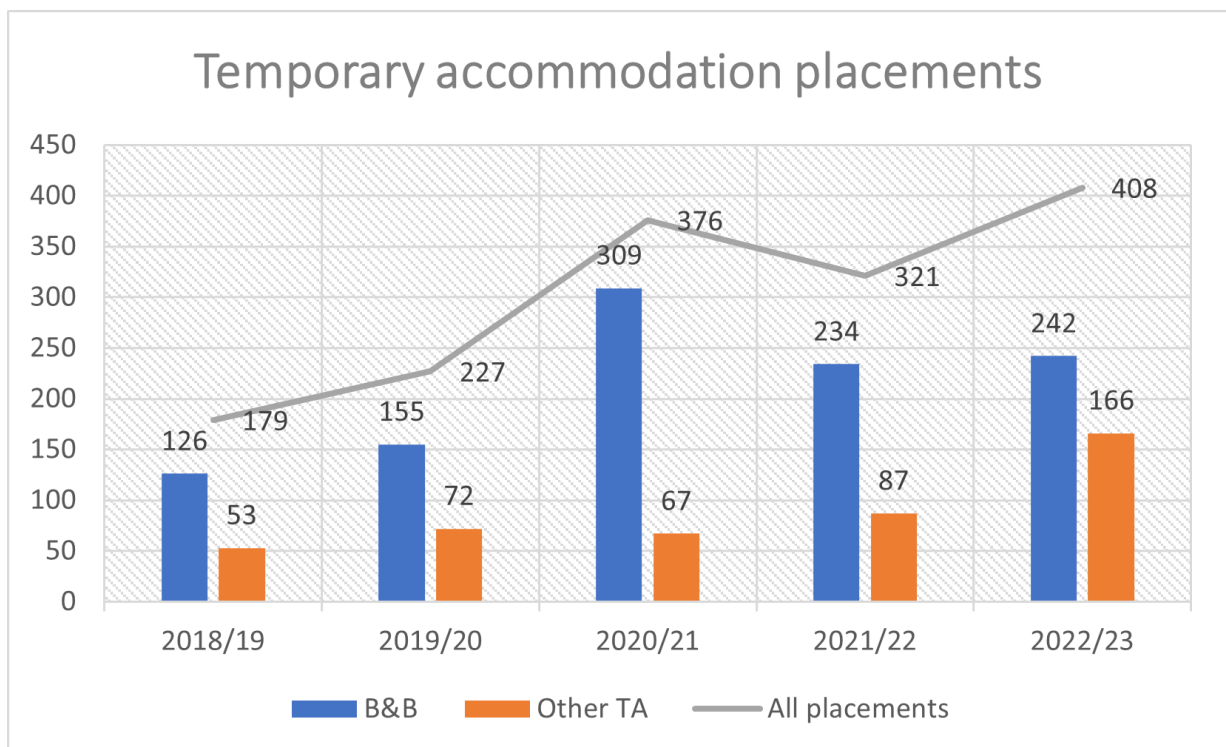


48% of people we assessed were owed a prevention duty in 2021. Comparing this figure to Q2 and Q3 of 2022/23, the number has fallen by 7% (now at 41%). This means fewer people are presenting before they are actually homeless.

B&B and temporary accommodation

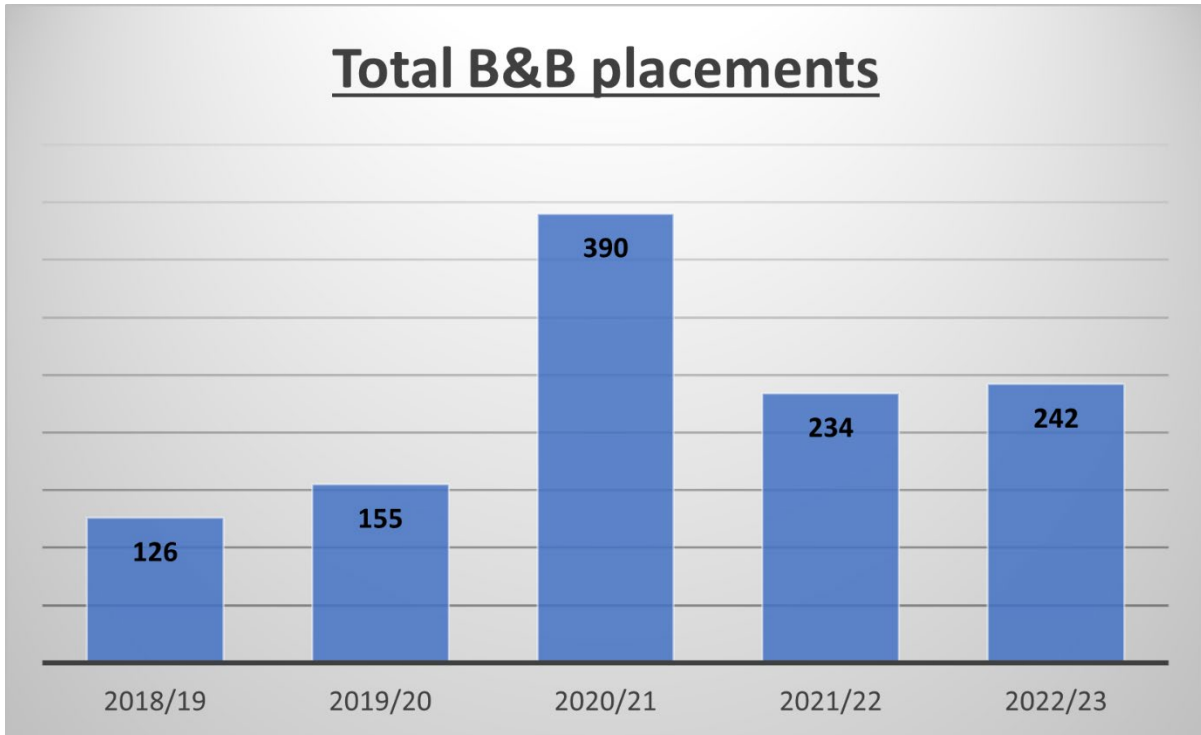


B&B placements peaked in Covid-19, due to the government's 'Everyone in' mandate. They have started to reduce over the following years but there has been an increase in family placements more recently.

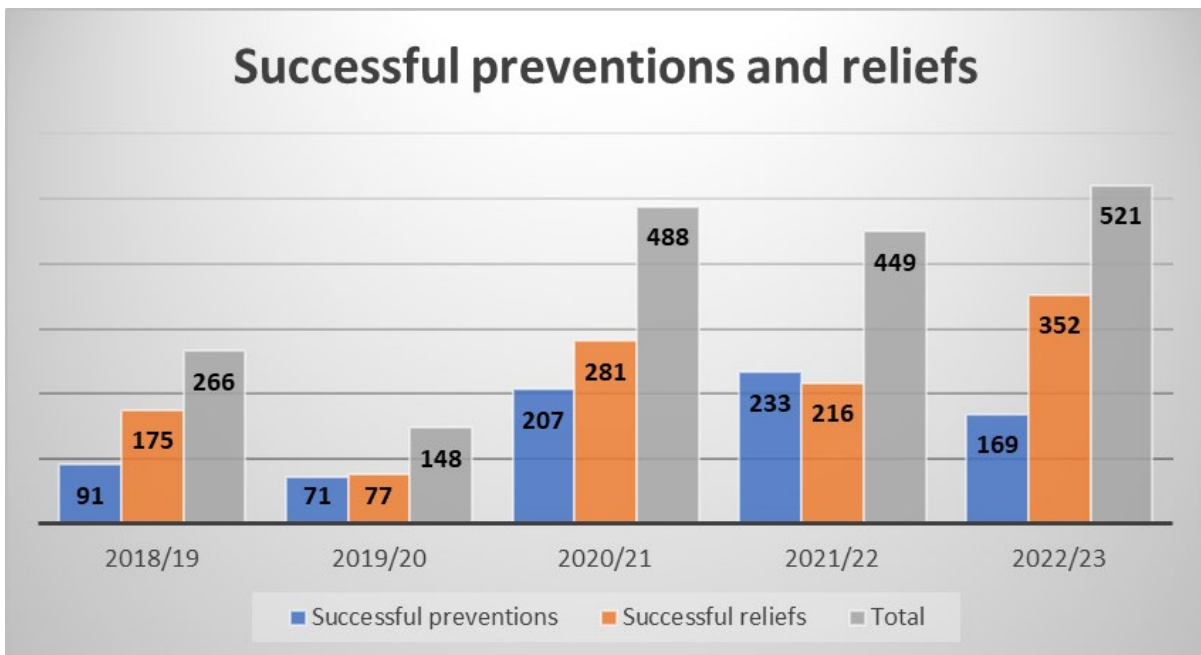


Generally, all temporary accommodation placements have increased. However, some of this can be attributed to the increase in temporary accommodation stock available to us through council housing and the opening of our directly managed provision for rough sleepers.

Total B&B placements



Preventions and reliefs

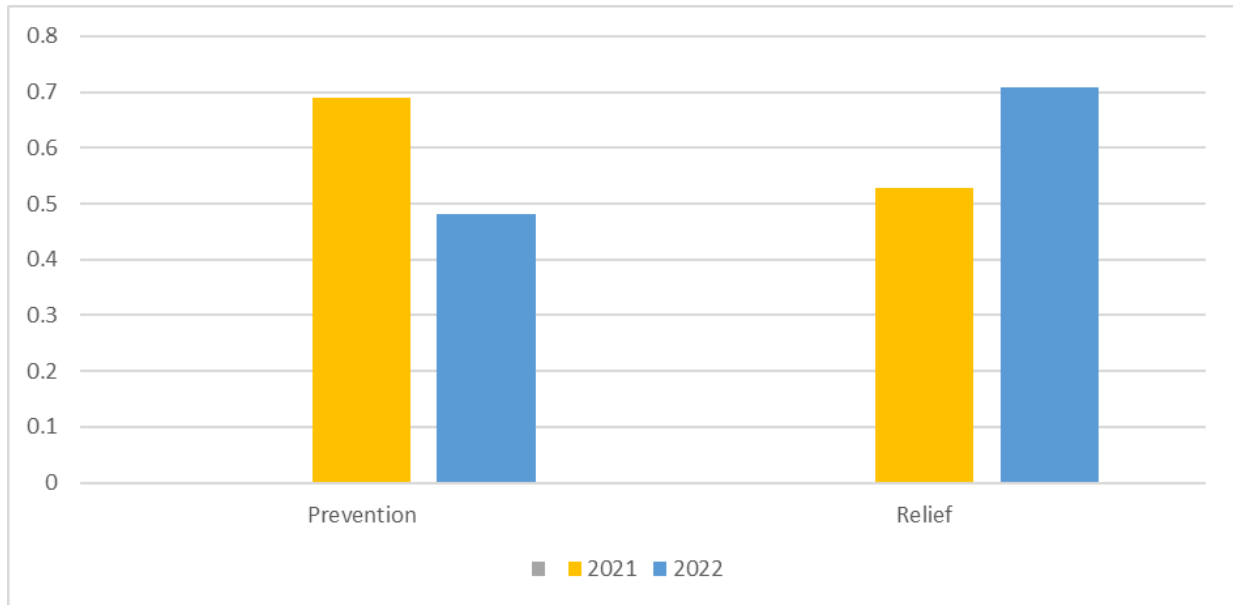


Reliefs are still higher than preventions, meaning that people are presenting when they're already homeless, leaving less time to work with them to prevent homelessness. In terms of successful outcomes, we're good at securing alternative accommodation but the focus needs to be on keeping people in accommodation wherever this is feasible.

Securing accommodation for six-plus months

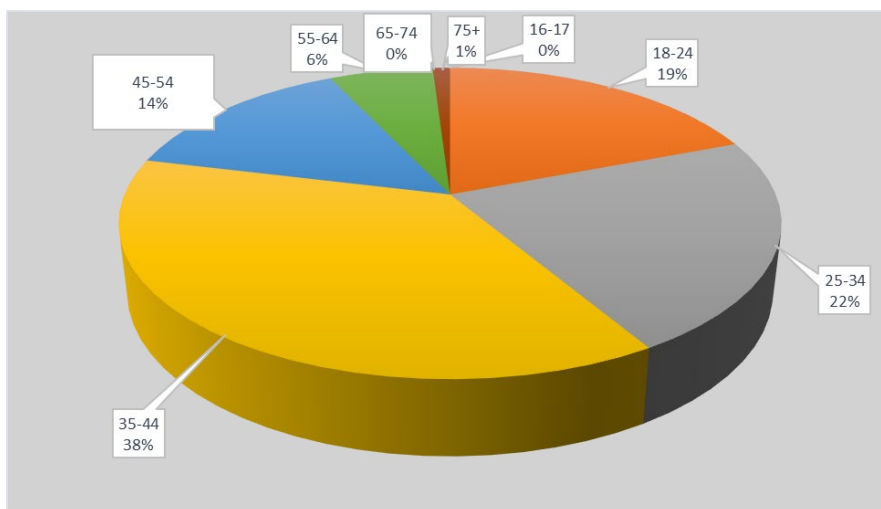
The percentage of prevention and relief cases that ended with accommodation being secured was:

	Prevention	Relief
2021	69%	53%
2022 (Q2 & Q3 data)	48%	71%



The age profile of applicants

16-17	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
0%	19%	22%	37%	14%	6%	0%	1%

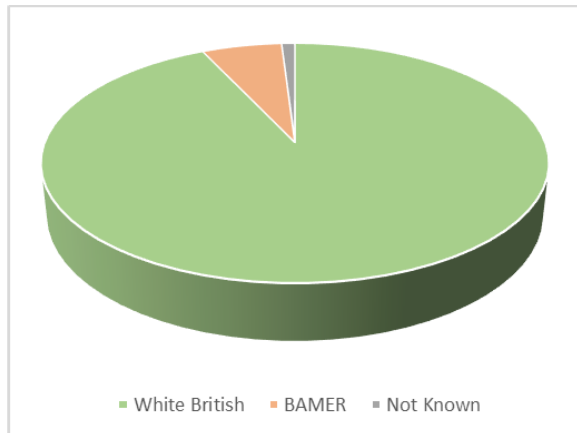


41% of household applications were aged 34 and under.

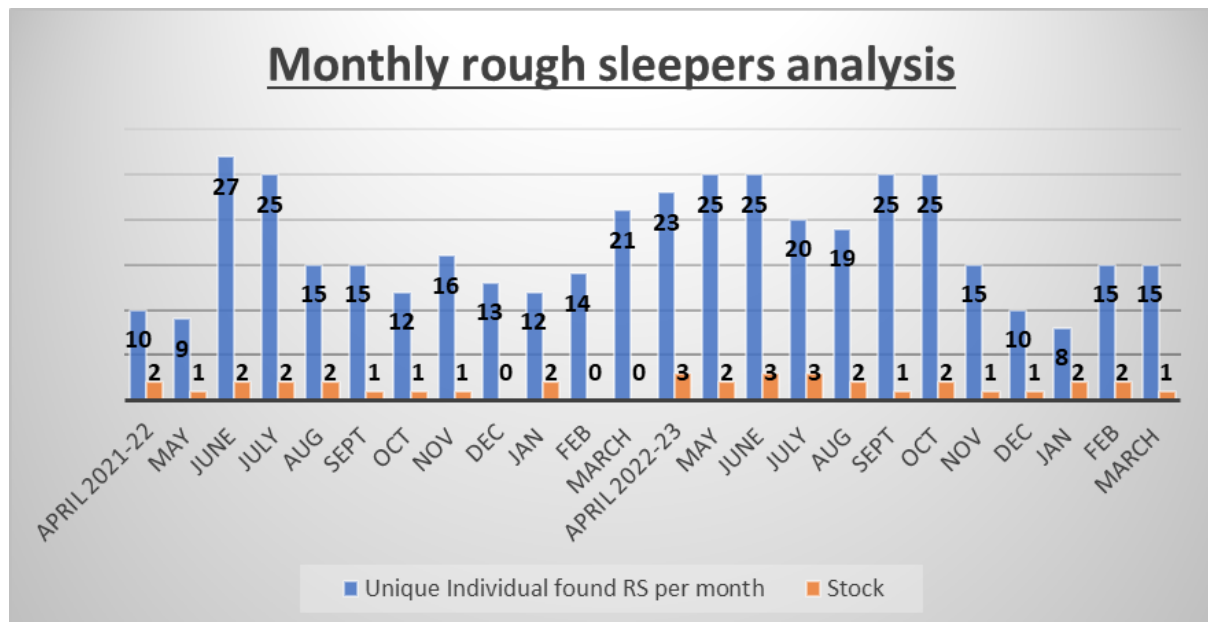
Ethnicity of applicants

- 93% of households self-defined as White British with 6% from Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and Refugee communities.
- The largest Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and Refugee community is Black or Black British, which accounted for 3%.
- Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and Refugee communities account for 3.1% of Barnsley's population, meaning they're disproportionately represented in homelessness.

White British	Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and Refugee	Not known
93%	6%	1%

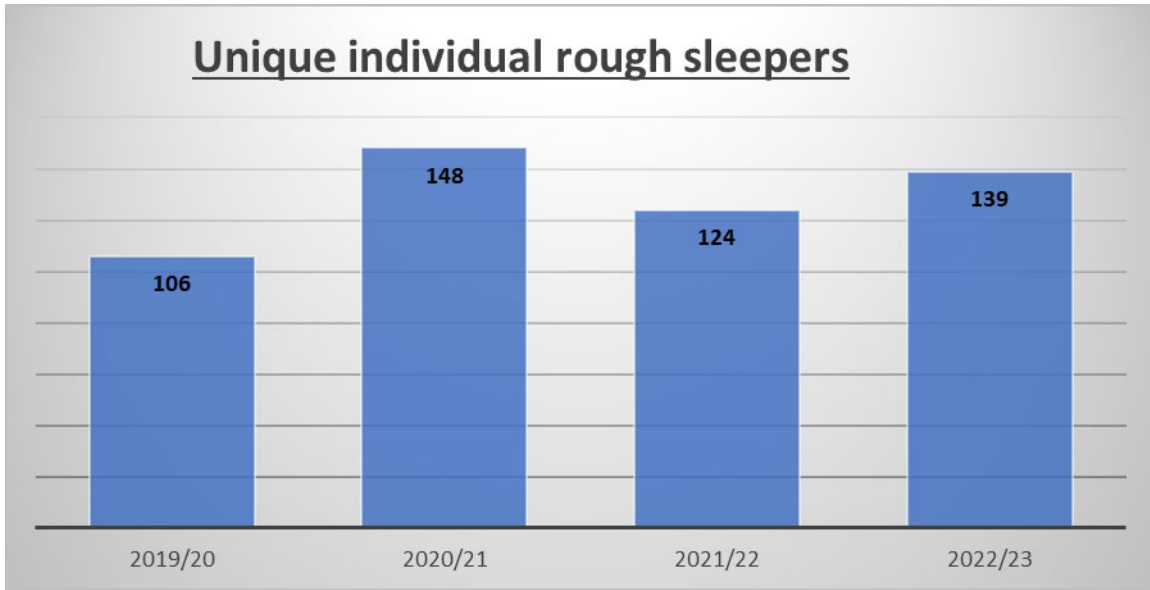


Rough sleepers

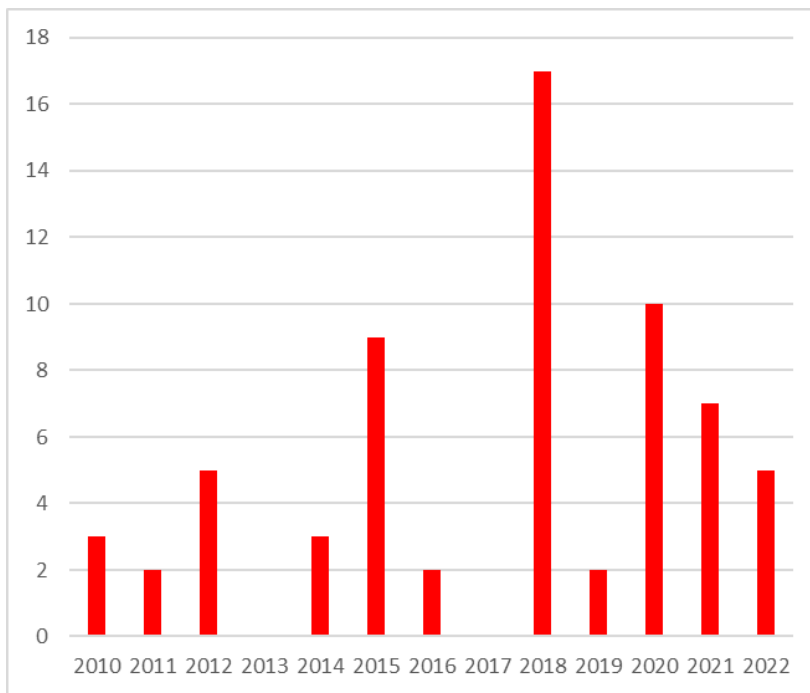


This graph shows the number of individual rough sleepers found each month. It should be noted that some people may be counted across a number of months if they are still sleeping rough. The average found each month was 17 and we're working to analyse this data further. This includes understanding where they are coming from before the streets, how long they have been on the streets, whether they are returning and what support they need. The number of long-term rough sleepers remains low, sitting at one or two.

Unique individual rough sleepers



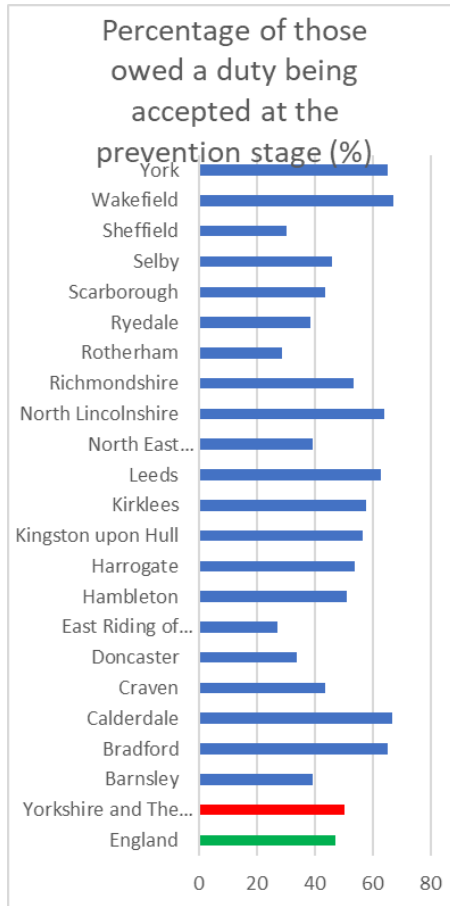
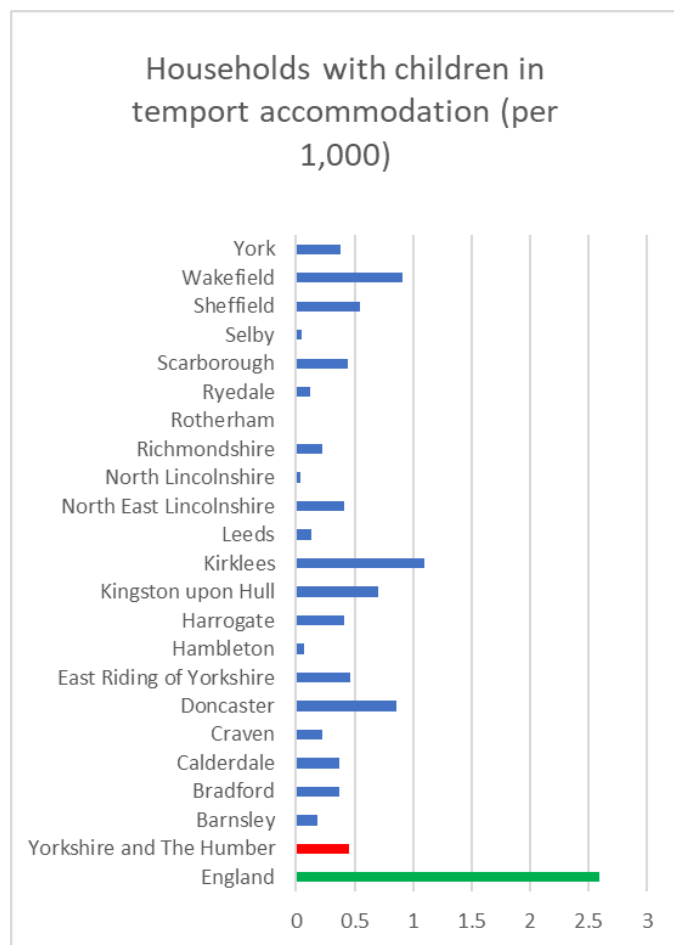
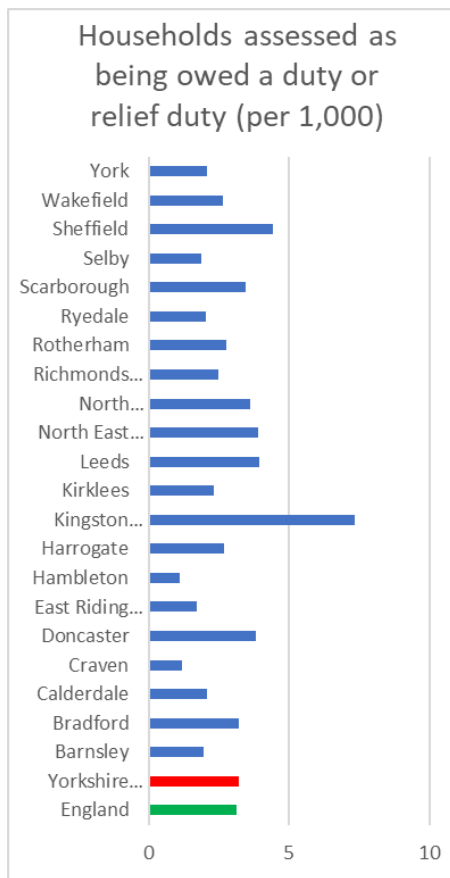
Number of people sleeping rough on a single night in autumn – official government figures



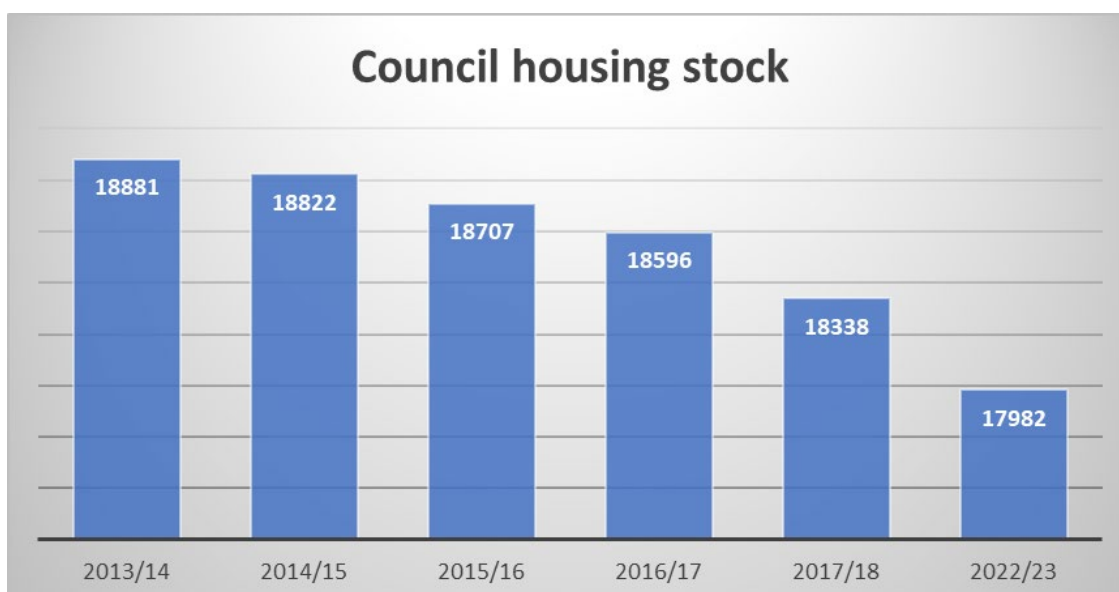
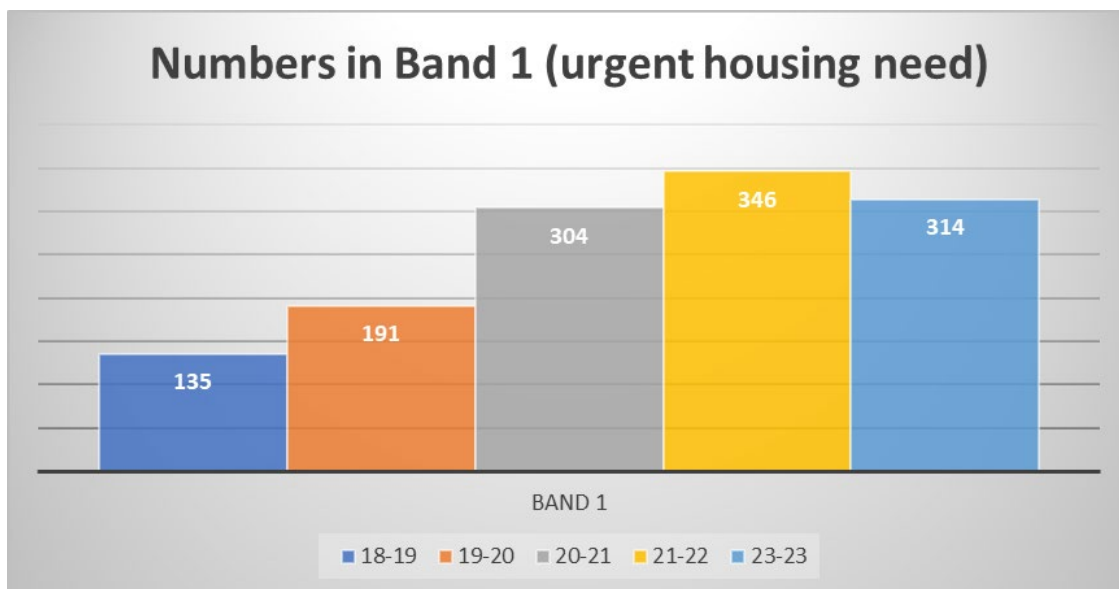
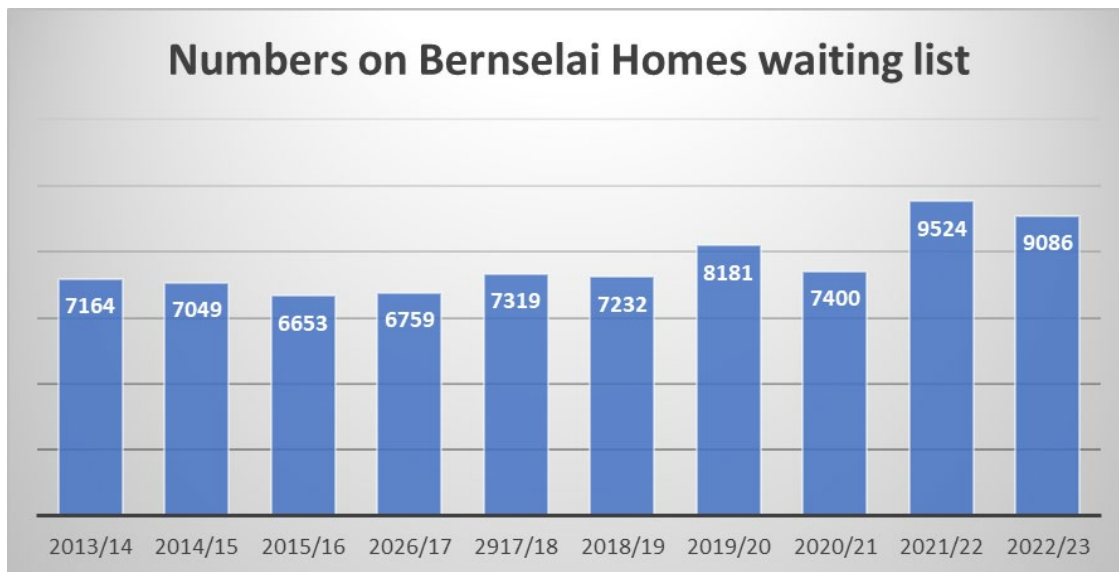
Year	Number
2010	3
2011	2
2012	5
2013	0
2014	3
2015	9
2016	2
2017	0
2018	17
2019	2
2020	10
2021	7
2022	5

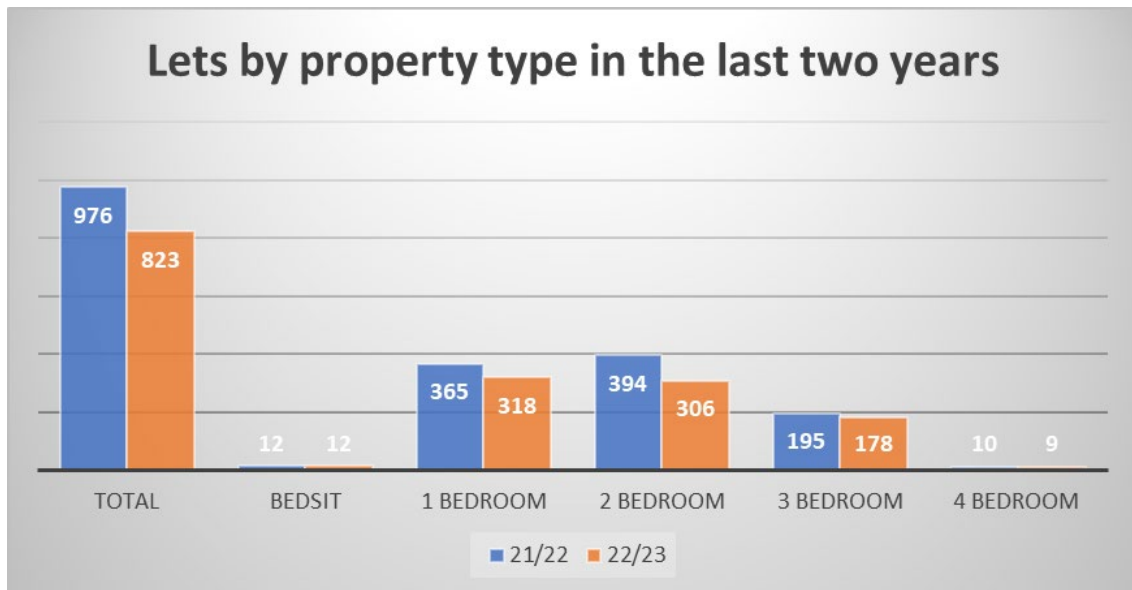
This graph shows the number of rough sleepers found on a single night in autumn as verified by the government. This has been reducing year-on-year since 2018, which coincided with the funding of a dedicated outreach worker to support people off the streets.

Comparison data



Berneslai Homes council housing data





Council housing stock has reduced over the last few years and is now under 18,000. Right to Buy takes an average of 150 properties from the stock every year, with 183 being sold in 2021/22 and 130 in 2022/23. These are slow to be replaced due to the lack of government investment in social housing.

Turnover of stock is decreasing, with under 1,000 units becoming available last year. There is also a growing number of applicants in Band 1 (requiring urgent housing need) at over 300, with over 9,000 in total on the waiting list.

Appendix 3

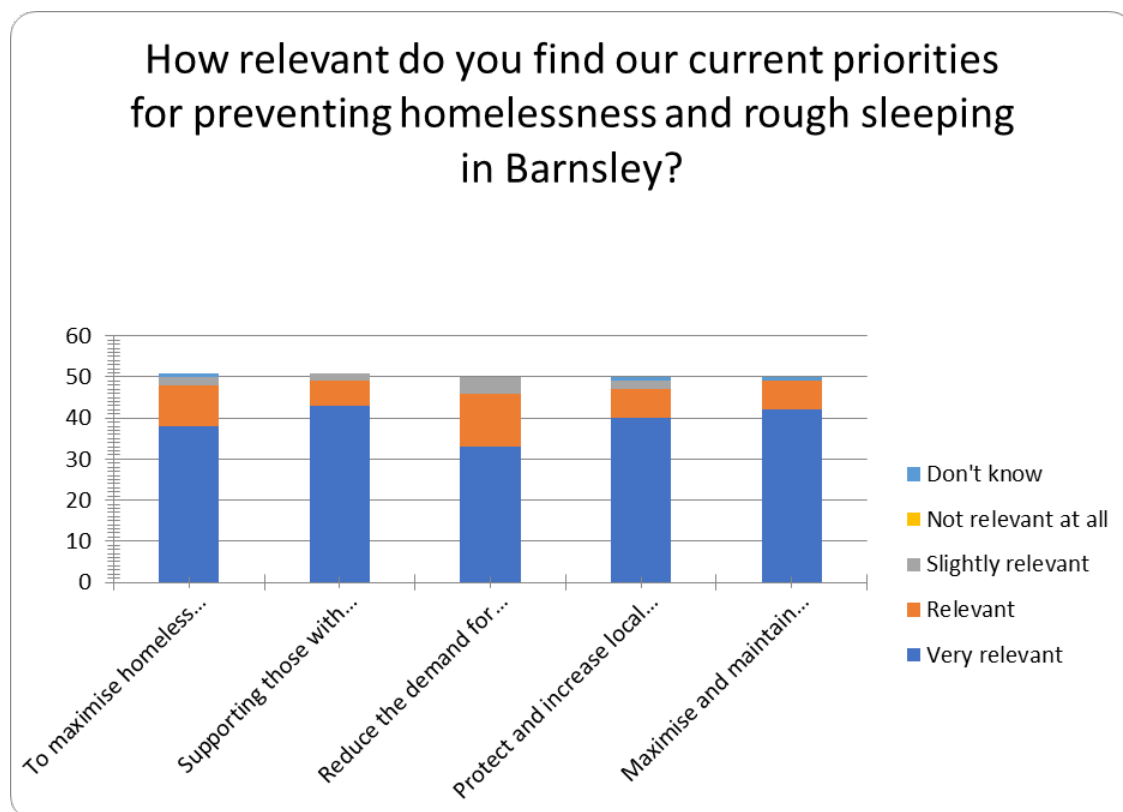
Stakeholder questionnaire results and analysis

Partners and stakeholders assisted in developing this strategy through presentations at meetings, our stakeholder questionnaire and the development of other aligned strategies. Although we're responsible for writing this strategy, it needs to be supported and owned by all our partners to achieve our aims of reducing all types of homelessness.

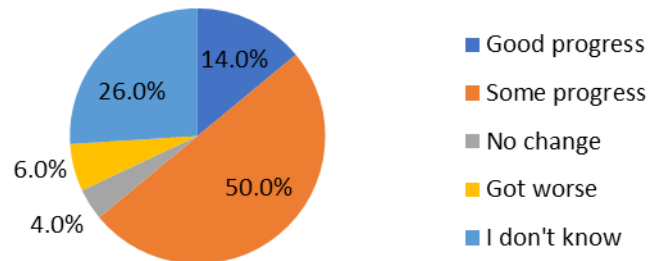
Consultation took place with the following groups alongside our stakeholder questionnaire, which had fifty responses:

- The Mental Health Delivery Group.
- Barnsley Homeless Alliance.
- Barnsley Place Committee and Partnership Board.
- The Housing and Energy Board.
- The Town Centre Business Forum.
- Adult Social Care extended management team.
- Armed Forces Covenant.

A summary of the results of the stakeholder questionnaire is detailed below and we're working to respond to some of the concerns and feedback received.



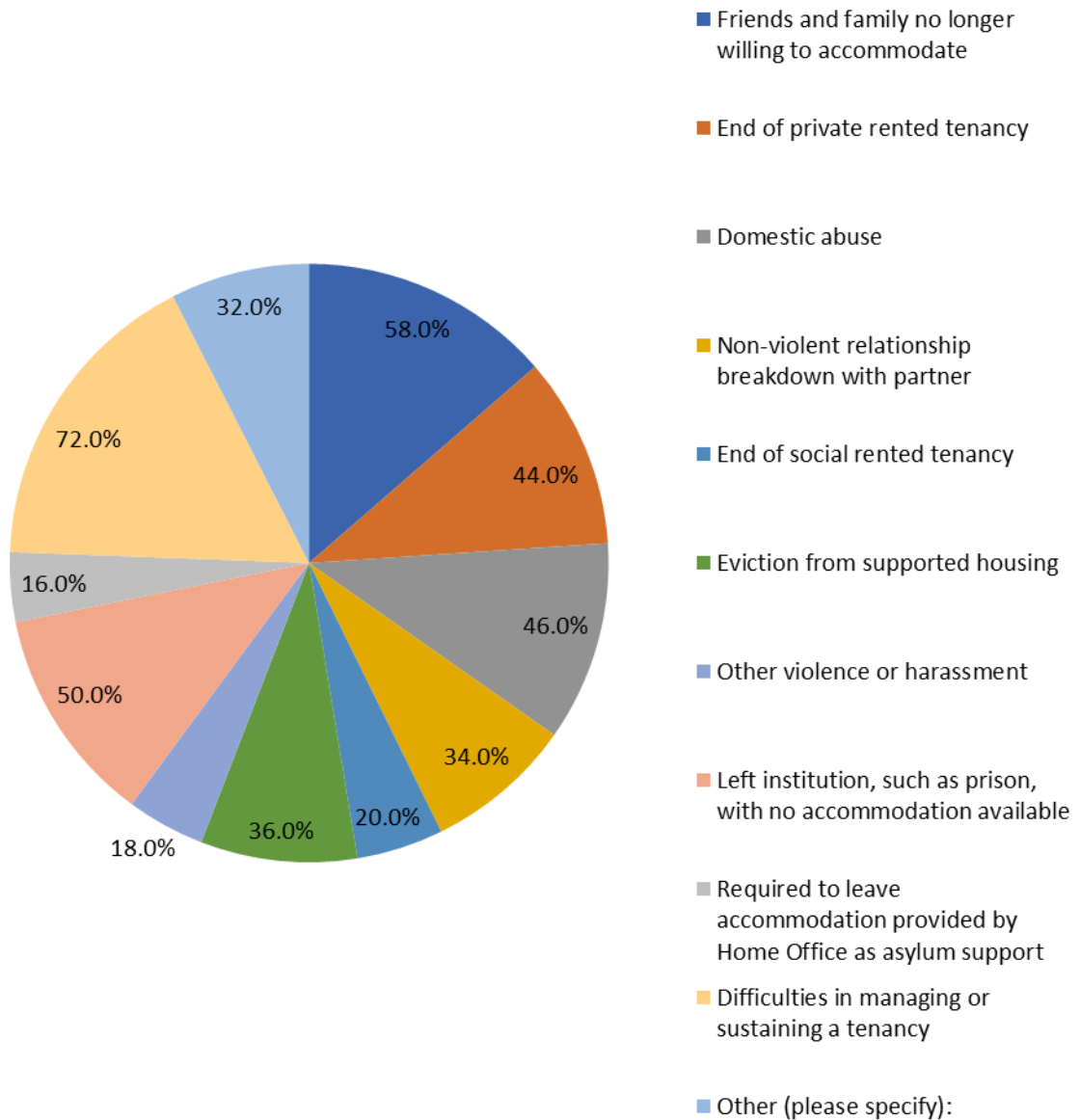
Do you think progress has been made on these priorities since 2018?



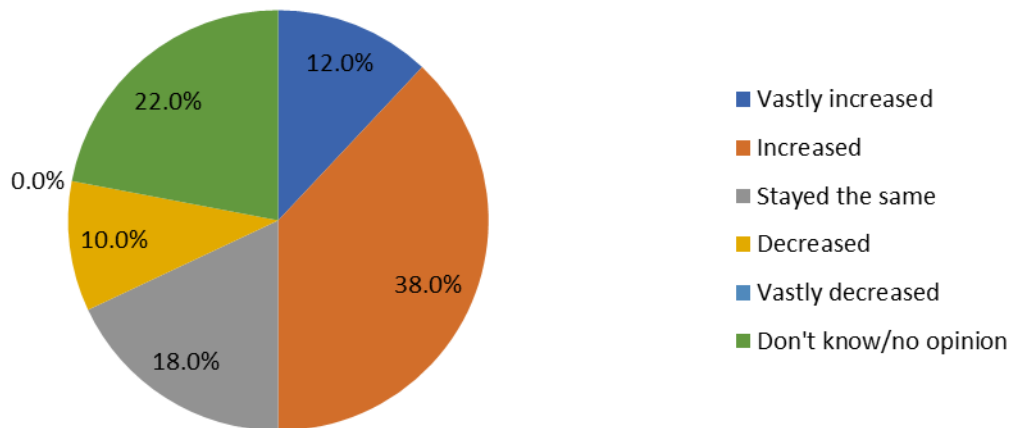
Some of the comments in the questionnaire:

- “Extremely limited housing options for move-on for more complex clients. Landlords exiting the market or substantially increasing rents to cover increased mortgage costs. Increase in interest rates impacting as fixed-term mortgages come to an end. Other services fail to manage expectations and have little or no knowledge of the challenges around homelessness.”
- “Despite new incentives, most new-built affordable housing is not affordable or accessible by the people most likely to be homeless, likely to become homeless or those living in poor standards of accommodation.”
- “The rental market is bad, with no affordable housing, and the cost of living will mean more homeless people.”
- “I suspect there is a correlation to unemployment so ensuring Barnsley’s population has good employment opportunities and are supported to gain employment will be key. It may be a myth, but my understanding is that addiction is part of the homelessness problem and so having supportive mental health and recovery services will be helpful.”
- ‘Priorities are more affordable housing, more support to maintain clients in their current properties and more awareness of what support is available.’

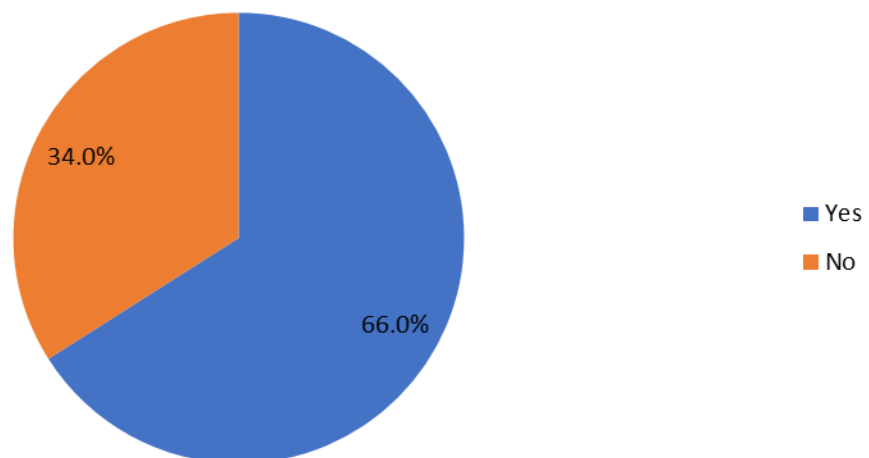
Thinking of the people you support, what do you feel are the leading causes of homelessness in Barnsley?



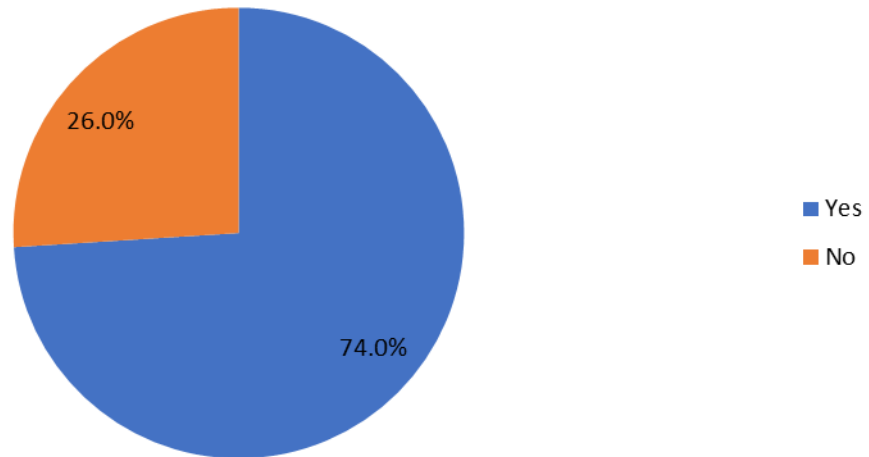
How do you think rough sleeping has changed over the last twelve months? We define rough sleeping as people sleeping in outdoor spaces, such as the streets, in tents, doorways, parks, bus shelters or encampments.



Do you know where to direct people if they are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless? If you do, please tell us where you would direct them in the comments box below.



Do you believe there are gaps in the current provision of homelessness services and advice?
If you do, please tell us where you feel the gaps are in the comments box below.



References

¹ https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/248340/zoopla_briefingv8-1.pdf

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<https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/media/22372/barnsley-health-and-care-plan-refresh-22-23.pdf>