

Royal Borough of Greenwich Homelessness Review and Homelessness Strategy 2014-19

Foreword

I am pleased to be introducing the Royal Borough of Greenwich Homelessness Strategy for 2014-19. Despite the significant financial challenges which the Royal Borough faces, we remain firmly committed to doing all we can to prevent homelessness through early intervention and targeted support.

Working closely with our partners, we have a good track record in minimising homelessness and the use of temporary accommodation, and in developing innovative services to tackle the wider causes of homelessness. From our unique integrated service centre for young people 'The Point', to our multi agency Welfare Reform Team, the Royal Borough has invested in new, exciting and innovative services that prevent both the human and financial costs of homelessness.

We can be proud to have reduced the number of households in temporary accommodation by almost 60 per cent between 2008 and 2013. We have ended the use of temporary accommodation for 16-17 year olds, and limited the placement of families into shared accommodation to below 6 weeks.

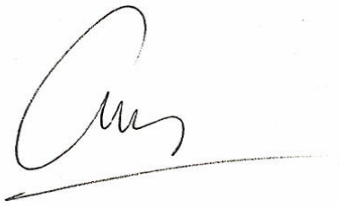
There are of course many causes of homelessness, and effective prevention requires a range of solutions that are not just about providing accommodation. We are also aware that investment in services that prevent homelessness has benefits for the health and well-being of our residents, and the prospects of our children and young people. This Homelessness Review has demonstrated the breadth of services, activities and partners involved in preventing homelessness in Royal Greenwich, and the value of this work to our residents and wider community.

The 2014-19 Homelessness Strategy is published at a challenging time for the Royal Borough. Homelessness is rising, particularly from the private rented sector. House prices for sale and for rent are increasing, whilst welfare reforms have reduced the amount that low income households can pay, pushing many out of the private housing market. It's within this tough environment that we set ourselves the challenge of improving the quality of private rented and temporary accommodation, tackling rogue landlords, reducing rough sleeping, and continuing to prevent homelessness through early intervention and support.

These are also very exciting times as we experience record levels of regeneration, new homes, jobs and huge transport infrastructure schemes such as Crossrail coming to the Royal Borough. We want to ensure that we maximise the delivery of affordable homes, through the developments taking place in major new growth areas at Woolwich Arsenal and the Town Centre, the Greenwich Peninsula, Kidbrooke Village and elsewhere.

We are also involved in a significant programme of building high quality bespoke homes for older residents, combined with schemes providing support for downsizing; we are also increasing the number of much needed larger families' homes.

Over the coming five years of this strategy Royal Greenwich will continue to put our energy and resources into preventing homelessness. This commitment has local people at its heart and we will work closely with our partners to continue improving the standard of accommodation and to achieving a truly Gold Standard homelessness service.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Kirby', with a long horizontal line underneath it.

Councillor Chris Kirby,
Cabinet Member for Housing
Royal Borough of Greenwich

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I Introduction

The Homelessness Act (2002) places a statutory duty on each local authority to carry out a review of homelessness and to develop a new Homelessness Strategy every five years.

The **Homelessness Review** provides a comprehensive assessment of:

- The levels and likely future levels of homelessness in the borough
- Activities that are carried out which prevent homelessness, secure accommodation for homeless people, and provide support to people who are or may become homeless
- Resources available to carry out these activities.

The **Homelessness Strategy** must set out how the Council will prevent homelessness and provide support to people who are homeless, or at risk of becoming homeless during the coming five years.

The Royal Borough of Greenwich produced its first Homelessness Strategy in November 2003 and continues to review homelessness, responding to any identified needs or gaps within local homelessness service provision and wider factors which may be of significant impact.

The last Homelessness Strategy was published in 2008 and the key objectives of this were:

- Improving the delivery of homelessness services, and providing an Enhanced Housing Options Service for Greenwich residents
- Preventing homelessness and reducing the use of temporary accommodation
- Providing support for vulnerable people and preventing rough sleeping
- Tackling the wider causes and symptoms of homelessness
- Providing more settled homes.

Over the years there has been considerable progress to develop timely and relevant services which are aimed at preventing homelessness and providing realistic solutions to those in housing need.

The Homelessness Forum, launched in April 2005, continues to be a culmination of partners, statutory agencies and housing services working together to tackle homelessness. It has recently reviewed and updated its terms of reference to ensure that it is fit for purpose. The Forum has been integral and supportive to the undertaking of this review, providing challenging and positive feedback to inform the review and the new Homelessness Forum strategy and action plan.

This document is divided into two parts:

Part 1 contains the findings of the homelessness review, including data on homelessness and a picture of existing services and initiatives to prevent homelessness and support vulnerable people.

Part 2 sets out the objectives and priority actions for the Royal Borough of Greenwich Homelessness Strategy 2014-19.

2 National Context

The Royal Borough of Greenwich Homelessness Strategy is developed in the context of national policy and legislative developments, as well as identified local needs.

A number of policy documents and legislative changes have been introduced since the formulation of the last homelessness strategy and will continue to influence the response to current and future homelessness within the Royal Borough of Greenwich.

2.1 Making Every Contact Count

As a follow up report to a 'Vision to end rough sleeping: No second Night Out' and the 'Cost of Homelessness' published in 2011, the Government's Ministerial working group for Homelessness also introduced a range of changes as set out in the report 'Making Every Contact Count: A joint approach to preventing homelessness', published in August 2012.

The report sets out the Government's approach 'To tackle the complex causes of homelessness focusing on prevention and early intervention and on locally designed integrated services that step in when things go wrong, to give people another chance.' This steers local authorities and partners to adopt a cross-cutting approach, promoting joint working across services and partners which prevent homelessness for households in their locality.

The 'Making Every Contact Count' report contains five Government commitments:

- Tackling troubled childhoods and adolescence
- Improving health
- Reducing Involvement in crime
- Improving access to financial advice, skills and employment services
- Pioneering innovative social funding mechanisms for homelessness.

The report also includes ten local challenges for local authorities to meet as necessary, to achieve the highest homelessness service standards (*these 10 challenges are detailed in part 2: The RBG Homelessness Strategy*).

The challenges have been adopted and developed into a framework by the National Practitioner Support Service (NPSS), who support local authorities to deliver improved housing options services. The NPSS have developed the framework for the Gold Standard, which is a 10 step continuous improvement approach that begins with a pledge from local authorities aspiring to strive for continuous improvement in front line housing services and culminates in an application for the Gold Standard. An application for Gold Standard allows Housing Options Services to robustly review their services through quality assurance and benchmarking processes.

2.2 No Second Night Out

A strategy for rough sleeping was set out by a Ministerial working group in a 'Vision to end rough sleeping: No Second Night Out Nationwide', published in July 2011. No Second Night Out (NSNO) has five standards:

1. New rough sleepers can be identified and helped off the streets immediately
2. The public can alert services if they see anyone sleeping rough so they get help
3. Rough sleepers can go to a place of safety, where their needs can be assessed and they can get help
4. Rough sleepers are able to get emergency accommodation and other services they need
5. Rough sleepers from outside their area can be reconnected with their community.

The Royal Borough of Greenwich actively seeks to tackle rough sleeping and has developed a NSNO pathway which supports the Government's vision. (Please see Rough Sleeping, page 38).

2.3 Welfare Reform

Welfare Reform has affected access to housing, particularly in London and the South East. Welfare reforms with the most significant implications for housing and homelessness include:

- Local Housing Allowance (LHA) reductions including total LHA caps and the limiting of LHA to the 30th percentile of market rents
- The Total Benefit Cap limiting maximum benefits that a family can receive to £500 per week, with the benefit removed from housing benefit payment towards rent
- Spare Room Subsidy (popularly known as 'Bedroom Tax') reducing housing benefit entitlement to social housing tenants considered to be under occupying their homes
- The Single Accommodation Rate limit applied to young people up to the age of 34
- Transfer of responsibility for Social Fund payments to local authorities and to Council budgets
- Disability Benefit changes and the replacement of Council Tax Benefit with local Council Tax support, reducing benefit income to a wide range of working age adults
- Introduction of the Universal Credit to provide a single stream-lined benefit paid to residents directly rather than to their landlords.

The Royal Borough has implemented a particularly robust response to prevent homelessness resulting from welfare reforms, with a particular focus on providing residents access to employment. (Please see responding to Welfare Reform page 48).

2.4 The Localism Act 2011

The Act introduced significant changes to the Housing Act 1996. The stated policy objective is to enable local authorities to better manage housing demand and access to housing within the context of local circumstances.

The key changes introduced by the Localism Act include:

- Local authorities are given the power to end their homelessness duty with an offer of accommodation in the private rented sector
- Social housing tenure reform to allow social landlords to grant fixed term tenancies with limited security of tenure
- The requirement for local authorities to set out their approach and response in a Tenancy Strategy
- Social Housing allocation reform which allows local authorities to set allocation policies appropriate to the local area.

The Government introduced the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2012 as a guidance to respond to concerns about the standards of accommodation that may be used by local authorities as temporary accommodation, and to end the homelessness duty. The statutory guidance includes requirements about the quality of accommodation and of landlords, as well as the suitability of the location for a household's needs and circumstances.

3 The Local Context

3.1 The Greenwich Strategy 2006-15

The strategy sets out a vision for Royal Greenwich and everyone who visits or lives and works in the Royal Borough towards 2015. This includes that Royal Greenwich will have a vibrant mix of communities supported by quality housing, accessible transport links, vibrant open spaces, strong cultural attractions and a prosperous local economy.

The strategy is built on six main themes:

- The place to live - a safer and healthier Greenwich
- The place to work
- The place to learn
- The place to visit - a place of culture
- Greener Greenwich
- Olympic and Paralympic host borough.

3.2 The Core Strategy 2013 – 2028

This has been developed to guide future development in the Royal Borough to ensure that everyone who lives in, works in, learns in or visits Greenwich will benefit from future planning decisions. The Council's new plan, which is currently under consultation, aims to guide decisions about the developments that will take place in the Royal Borough over the next 15 years. It sets out the long term aspirations for Greenwich and indicates the broad locations for future housing, employment, retail, infrastructure and other land uses as well as providing detailed policies that will be used to assess planning applications.

3.3 Royal Greenwich Housing Strategy

The Draft Royal Greenwich Housing Strategy 2013-2018 sets out the strategic objectives for addressing housing need and housing related services and support across the borough over the next five years. The approach is strategic, meaning that it provides a broad overview of the housing issues, challenges and solutions. It has been developed in the context of considerable changes to the political and financial environment which will have a significant impact on how RBG deliver housing services as well as on communities themselves.

The vision remains that: *“We want Greenwich to be a place where everyone is able to afford a decent home of their choice, and where people feel proud, safe and able to contribute to the life of their local community”*.

The Housing Strategy has an integral role to play in supporting the borough’s strategic priorities of supporting growth and tackling poverty.

Table 1: Royal Greenwich – Housing Strategy Strategic priorities:

| | |
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| <p>Promoting Growth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Creating the conditions for economic growth and attracting inward investment ▪ Improving access to the wider jobs market ▪ Master Plan vision for key areas | <p>Tackling Poverty:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tackling worklessness ▪ Helping parents and families with complex needs ▪ Measures to address fuel poverty |
|---|--|

3.4 Royal Borough of Greenwich Anti-Poverty Strategy

The updated draft of the Anti-Poverty Strategy (June 2014) contains the vision: *“To reduce poverty and improve the life opportunities of people living in the borough, with an emphasis on supporting communities and individuals to raise their own aspirations to become more resilient and better equipped to overcome the barriers to success and prosperity that they face”*.

According to the 2010 indices of deprivation, Greenwich ranked as the 28th most deprived local authority district in England and 8th most deprived in London. (The next national set of indices of deprivation is due to be published in 2015.)

In November 2013 there were 21,100 people in Greenwich receiving out of work benefits (12.0% of the working age population). This compares with 10.2% for London and 10.6% for Great Britain. Greenwich also has a higher than average JSA claimant count rate. In April 2014, 5,703 people (3.2% of the working age population) were claiming compared with 2.8% in London and 2.7% in Great Britain.

The Anti-Poverty Strategy outlines the Council’s commitment to tackling poverty, supporting people into work and affordable housing. Priority groups within the Greenwich community are:

- Unemployed young people
- Families experiencing poverty
- Households living in fuel poverty.

The strategy contains planned actions to tackle poverty for these priority groups, including around the provision of affordable housing for 18-25 year olds and strong support to access education, employment and training. The Anti-Poverty Strategy also highlights the Council’s strong commitment to minimising the negative impact of welfare reforms on families and continuing to promote access to education, training and work opportunities as a way out of poverty.

3.5 The Greenwich Affordable Housing Partnership

The work of the partnership is delivered through a partnership review group (PRG) and topic-based groups as required. Registered Providers meet to share good practice and find a common approach to a number of issues including the prevention of homelessness.

Topics covered include:

- Dealing with emergencies
- Tackling anti-social behaviour
- Developing homelessness protocol
- Good public area management.

A homelessness protocol between the Council and Registered Social landlords drafted in 2007 informed the South East London RSL Homelessness Prevention Protocol published in 2008. The protocol is currently under review with the aim that it will reflect and respond to changes in recent policy, including Welfare Reform measures, to ensure it is embedded in future service delivery.

3.6 The Royal Borough of Greenwich Tenancy Strategy

The Tenancy Strategy sets out the type of social rented housing tenancies that the Royal Borough expects Registered Providers to provide in the borough. The Council has not adopted powers to reduce security of tenure for its tenants and the strategy sets out concerns about an approach that creates disincentives for tenants to increase their income for fear of losing their home.

The Tenancy Strategy contains the following objectives:

1. Making the best use of existing social housing stock
2. Achieving sustainable balanced communities, with a mix of residents from a range of income levels, ages, household sizes, needs and aspirations
3. Offering vulnerable tenants tenancies with the security to meet their needs
4. Ensuring social rented housing is provided and managed in an efficient and cost effective way
5. Providing the necessary advice and options to tenants who may need to move on from a fixed term tenancy
6. Meeting Greenwich's responsibilities to prevent and deal with homelessness and their obligations to support employment and training opportunities for residents
7. Support the use of tenancies with rents that are affordable and remain within the Universal Credit limit.

4. Royal Borough of Greenwich Homelessness Services

4.1 Review of Achievements – Homelessness Strategy 2008-13

The Royal Borough of Greenwich has made considerable progress in developing services and partnerships to tackle homelessness since the publication of the 2008-13 strategy. The achievements against the objectives of the previous strategy are summarised below.

Objective One: Improving Homeless Services and providing Enhanced Housing Options

We have:

- Achieved Enhanced Housing Options Trailblazer status and implemented services built around a holistic assessment of needs, and partnership responses to meet those needs.
- Developed integrated youth services at The Point, within which our 1st Base Housing Options and Support Team assists young people at risk of homelessness, to avoid becoming homeless and to access all of the services they need to, to improve health, safety and education, employment and training outcomes
- Established a Housing Options and Support Service organised according to client needs and partnership arrangements, rather than service functions
- Improved customer care and access to advice and assistance by creation of a Customer Access Team and a Casework Customer Care service
- Implemented a new 'Housing Advice' case management IT system to improve case recording and management
- Maintained information sharing and dialogue with stakeholders through the Homelessness Forum and strengthened partnership arrangements
- Completed a Member led Best Value Review of youth homelessness during 2008-09.

Objective Two: Preventing homelessness and reducing the use of temporary accommodation

We have:

- Reduced the numbers of households in temporary accommodation by 57% between 2008 and 2013. Greenwich achieved the previous Government's 2010 Temporary Accommodation Target in 2009, and reduced households in temporary accommodation by 77% between 2006 - 2010
- Ended the use of temporary accommodation for 16-17 year olds, and limited the placement of families into accommodation with shared facilities to below 6 weeks
- Continued to implement interventions to prevent homelessness. During 2013-14, 1427 households were prevented from becoming homeless
- Built awareness of prevention strategies with key partners and service users and utilised homelessness prevention funding where needed to prevent homelessness
- Ensured access to appropriate advice to prevent homelessness and continued to fund independent advice services

- Achieved the Decent Homes standard for temporary accommodation owned by the Royal Borough of Greenwich, and ensured that some accommodation continues to be available at affordable rents.

Objective Three: Improving support to people who are vulnerable and preventing rough sleeping

For young people we have:

- Implemented a 'Positive Pathway' to prevent homelessness and provide appropriate accommodation and support, for which RBG has received national recognition and runner up prize in the London Council's Andy Ludlow Awards
- Implemented highly effective shared procedures with Children's Services, to assess the needs of 16-17 year olds and to manage the transition for Looked After Children leaving care
- Developed a young people's supported housing pathway to meet local identified needs and to incorporate some Looked After Children placement
- Expanded our peer education programme to neighbouring boroughs, and supported St Christopher's Fellowship to obtain additional funding
- Worked with key partners to reduce youth offending and gang related activity, including through active participation in the Safe and Secure project assisting families to move to a place of safety
- Established data collection and information sharing on the health, education and training needs of young homeless people and used this to maximise resources and inform service development
- Improved support to teenage parents through a supported move on arrangement from home and effective joint working with health and social care partners at The Point.

For people experiencing domestic violence we have:

- Developed a new Domestic Violence and Abuse Strategy 2013 - 2017
- Commissioned a refuge accommodation service consisting of 30 units in 5 refuges for all communities of women and their children. Within the service (4 units are reserved for Asian women, and there is a specialist refuge for women who have substance misuse issues and who are Greenwich residents¹)
- Commissioned new housing related support services including advice and referral line, floating support and refuge placements
- Delivered Sanctuary services for victims who want to stay in their own home from within the Council's Handyperson Service
- Implemented move on arrangements for women placed in RBG refuges
- Operational managers in Royal Greenwich Housing Service are authorised to approve urgent re-housing for victims of DV (and their families) who are council tenants
- Through the South East London Housing Partnership (SELHP) established a sub-regional domestic violence protocol
- Established a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) in April 2009.

¹ These 4 units are reserved only for Royal Greenwich residents, whereas the other 26 units are available to residents from other boroughs. Because victims of DV often need to be accommodated in refuges a long way from their home for safety reasons, refuge provision is shared by local authority areas across the country.

To improve support for single vulnerable adults and families we have:

- Combined Housing Options and floating support services to deliver client based Housing Options and Support Teams linked to key partnerships
- Procured private rented accommodation for single people with additional needs through our Newtrac scheme, and through South East London Housing Partnership (SELHP) commissioned services
- Developed a successful shared housing scheme with Thames Reach to provide shared housing to single people under the age of 35. The scheme housed 125 people from 2011-14
- Piloted an intensive support service to meet the needs of adults with chaotic lifestyles
- Established resettlement pathways to assist people with mental health needs to move from residential services, supported housing and in patient care into the community, through a joint Housing/Oxleas NHS Trust staffed Mental Health Housing Options and Support Team
- Commissioned a supported housing pathway for people with an offending and/or substance misuse history, linked to treatment services and with move on arrangements into the community
- Provided housing related support to ex-offenders and people with substance abuse issues through a Moving On Support Team, including officers co-located with the Probation Service and Drug Intervention Programme and a specialist Domestic Violence and Substance Misuse Project Officer
- Provided move on support to the Reunite initiative to enable Greenwich women prisoners to return to accommodation where they can be reunited with their children
- Built working relationship with agencies supporting army personnel requiring accommodation on leaving the services
- Established the successful Families First Service for 'troubled families' set within Community Housing Service, with strong partnership arrangements and access to employment support
- Developed joint Housing/Children's Services working arrangements to assist families who are found intentionally homeless and those that are ineligible for housing assistance.

To prevent rough sleeping we have:

- Implemented a No Second Night Out (NSNO) pathway to assist rough sleepers to move on from the NSNO hubs
- Agreed a Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) with partners to respond to winter conditions
- Involved partner agencies to identify rough sleepers, and carry out rough sleeper counts. In November 2013 one rough sleeper was identified via the count
- Worked with key partners through Task and Targeting meetings to find and implement interventions to support rough sleepers with complex needs into housing and other essential services.

Objective Four: Tackling the wider causes and symptoms of homelessness

Through the Enhanced Housing Options programme Housing Services built partnerships with key providers and developed joint interventions to tackle the causes of homelessness, and to build sustainable communities. This included a focus on tackling worklessness, and improving health and lifetime opportunities. To tackle the causes of homelessness we have:

- Established a Welfare Reform Team to proactively contact residents affected by the Total Benefit Cap and Spare Room Subsidy and to provide appropriate interventions to prevent homelessness, including through providing access to employment. By July 2014 the team had assisted 121 families affected by the benefit cap, into work
- Implemented shared holistic assessments of the needs of young people at risk of homelessness and a Team Around the Young Person model of action planning to meet needs
- Ensured all young people at risk of homelessness are offered education, employment and training support and reduced the proportion of young homeless people who remain not in education, employment and training (NEET)
- Established domestic abuse services to respond to the complex health and support needs of people experiencing domestic abuse, and to provide support to children
- Ensured awareness of housing needs and the causes of homelessness are included in needs assessments and commissioning arrangements for services to vulnerable people
- Worked in partnership with criminal justice and other agencies to tackle offending behaviour, particularly through the youth offending panel arrangements, and provided housing related support and accommodation pathways to offenders
- Established a successful Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC).

Objective Five: Providing more settled homes

To provide more settled homes we have:

- Provided 3395 affordable homes for rent and sale within RBG, between 2008-2014, of which 1100 are intermediate home and 2295 are rented
- Managed the annual lettings plan to provide a fair share of lettings to people who are homeless and for vulnerable adults moving on from supported accommodation
- Provided priority re-housing for families who are severely overcrowded, as well as assistance through a 'Breathing Space' private sector access scheme
- Improved choice and mobility for tenants by joining and promoting the House Exchange mutual exchange service
- Converted temporary accommodation into permanent homes for working people through Meridian Homes
- Provided access into private sector homes through our Hactrac and Newtrac schemes and our partnership with Hyde Housing Association.

4.2 Housing Options & Support Services and Partnerships

Following a restructure in 2013, the Council established a new service to manage homelessness and provide support to residents at risk of homelessness. The Housing Options and Support Service (HOSS) combined the housing advice, housing options and prevention, statutory assessment and floating support functions and created teams based upon client needs and partnerships.

The HOSS ethos is to prevent homelessness through early intervention and support, and is reliant on strong and effective partnership arrangements. As well as working alongside colleagues within Community Housing Services, particularly the Temporary Accommodation, Procurement and Allocations Services, HOSS has developed protocols and working practises with Council and external services that interact with residents at risk of homelessness.

4.3 Co-location and Integrated Services

The Royal Borough of Greenwich has a strong commitment to developing co-located and integrated service models, and the HOSS makes a significant contribution to this. Over the lifetime of the last Homelessness Strategy we have implemented:

- The Point: a unique integrated service model for young people. Led by Children's Services, the young people's service hub has implemented integrated assessments and shared working around the needs of young people, that involve Social Care, Housing, Health and third sector partners
- The Welfare Reform Team includes housing, employment support and Job Centre Plus working together to minimise the negative impact of benefit changes and assist people into work
- The Moving On Support Team (MOST) supports the needs of offenders and people with a substance misuse need, and has staff co-located with the Probation Service and the Drug Intervention Programme
- The Mental Health Housing Options and Support Team includes two mental health service professionals from Oxleas NHS Trust, and delivers services within the ward and recovery services
- Thames Reach delivers our shared housing procurement service through co-location within the Council's team.

The HOSS will continue to find ways to improve outcomes for customers through better partnership and service integration. Table 2 (Page 18), illustrates the teams within HOSS, their customer focus and the key partnerships the service is engaged with.

Table 2: Royal Borough of Greenwich Housing Options and Support Service

| HOSS Teams | Customers | Key Partnerships and Protocols |
|--|---|--|
| Customer Access Team | All customers contacting HOSS for advice, information and assistance | Referral arrangements with Children and Adult Social Care Services for customers not-eligible for housing assistance |
| The Private Sector Team (Housing Aid Centre) | Private sector residents (tenants and home owner) who are at risk of homelessness | Court Service Duty Rota Environmental Health Service Independent Advice Services |
| Welfare Reform Team | Residents affected by Welfare Reform (Total Benefit Cap and Spare Room Subsidy) | Revenue and Benefits (Housing Benefits) DWP/Job Centre Plus Greenwich Local Labour and Business (GLLaB) Greenwich Local Labour Programme (GLLP) Tenancy Services referrals |
| Family Housing Options and Support Team | Families at risk of homelessness | Joint Procedures: Housing and Children's Services Greenwich Children's Safeguarding Board Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub Joint Commissioning Group Young People and Families Families First (Troubled Families) Service Tenancy Services: Procedures to prevent eviction Refuge Move On Protocol South East London Housing Partnership Domestic Violence Protocol |
| 1 st Base Housing Options and Support Service | Young People 16-24 at risk of homelessness | Integrated Services at The Point – including health, social care and third sector services Joint Protocols: Housing and Children's Services for 16-17 year olds, Looked After Children and Care Leavers Youth Offending Service and Housing Protocol Supported Housing Pathway: Referral and Move On Protocols DePaul UK – Supported Housing Pathway Family Mosaic – Floating Support Service CAYSH- Supported Lodgings Service Ekaya, Catch-22 – Teenage Parents Supported Housing Providers Money House Project (Hyde Plus) Youth Crime Prevention Partnerships and Panels Safe And Secure (gang exit programme) |
| Single Peoples Housing Options and Support Team | Single People (households without children) who are at risk of homelessness | Tenancy Services – Procedures to prevent eviction Department of Adult and Older Peoples Services Safeguarding Adults Multi Agency Group Hospital Discharge Teams No Second Night Out Protocol London Street Rescue (rough sleeper outreach) Oxleas NHS Trust – Hospital Discharge Protocol Oxleas/RBG Supported Housing Move On Protocol Mental Health Joint Commissioning Group Mental Health Resettlement Strategy Group |
| The Mental Health Options and Support Team | People linked to mental health services who are at risk of homelessness or are require support to move home | Joint Commissioning Group Adult Substance Misuse Community Safety and Police Vulnerable Victims Panel Greenwich Probation Service Substance Misuse Treatment Services Drug Intervention Programme Thames Reach Supported Housing Pathway |
| The Moving On Options and Support Team (MOST) | People with a history of substance misuse and/or offending, including specialist DV work | Joint Commissioning Group Adult Substance Misuse Community Safety and Police Vulnerable Victims Panel Greenwich Probation Service Substance Misuse Treatment Services Drug Intervention Programme Thames Reach Supported Housing Pathway |
| Older Peoples Housing Support Service | People aged 55+ who require housing support to maintain independence in their home | RBG Health and Social Care Teams DAOPs Sheltered Housing Services London and Quadrant Housing Trust |
| Performance and Development Team | All HOSS customers and stakeholders | Homelessness Forum and Steering Group Strategy and Partnerships Team |

4.4 Demand for Housing Options and Support Services

The HOSS is an extremely busy Council service and is responding to growing demand for housing advice and assistance from residents in need.

On average, approximately 1000 customers are served by the Customer Access Team at the Woolwich Service Centre per month. There have been fluctuations in the numbers seen between months, but the overall footfall remains steady. Most of these customers will receive advice and information to assist them in looking for accommodation, and some will be passed through to one of the HOSS casework teams for further assessment and assistance.

Table 3: HOSS Casework Numbers 2010 - 2014

| Housing Options and Support Services Casework | |
|---|--------------------------|
| Year | Number of customer cases |
| 2009-10 | 2095 |
| 2010-11 | 2239 |
| 2011-12 | 2433 |
| 2012-13 | 2647 |
| 2013-14 | 3249 |

The number of clients receiving a housing options and/or housing support casework service has increased annually over the last 5 years. Clients receiving a casework service include those who have approached via the Customer Access Team and clients referred from partner agencies. In 2013-14, 37% of HOSS customers approached the service directly, whilst 12% of clients were referred by RBG Tenancy Services and 7% contacted by the Welfare Reform Team. During the same year there was an increase of 23% in customer casework compared to the previous year and a 55% increase compared to 4 years ago. This increase is partly attributable to improved casework recording, but also reflects growing demand for support with housing problems and homelessness.

The HOSS structure is regularly reviewed to ensure the service is both responsive and effective, focusing on prevention and early intervention. In alignment with national and local policy, it is tailored to meet local need, and support is provided to respond to individual need.

5 Homelessness in Royal Borough of Greenwich

5.1 Homelessness and Council Duties

Homelessness is a term that is used to describe various situations of housing need, and it is important to be clear about the different circumstances in which people are considered to be homeless. To summarise:

- **Statutory homelessness** refers to those people who have made a homeless application and have met the criteria in legislation (Housing Act 1996, Homelessness Act 2002) to be accepted by the Council as eligible for assistance (according to immigration status), homeless and in **priority need**. This includes families, pregnant women and single people who are particularly vulnerable. A household may be accepted as 'homeless' because they are going to be evicted or are living in accommodation so unsuitable that it is not 'reasonable' for them to remain there. The Council has a duty to provide temporary accommodation to statutory homeless households.
- **Non-statutory/non-priority homeless** people are primarily single people/childless couples who are not assessed as being in 'priority need' and are only entitled to 'advice and assistance' if homeless. These residents are offered advice about looking for private rented accommodation, accommodation agency lists, assistance to apply for rent in advance from the Emergency Support Scheme. Some non-priority homeless people are offered supported housing or access to our shared housing scheme managed through Thames Reach.
- **Rough sleepers** are people who are literally roofless and are bedded down on the streets, parks or other places where they may or may not be seen by the public. This group are a tiny minority of the much larger group of non-priority homeless people, as most single homeless people are 'sofa surfing' and are described as the 'hidden homeless' because we have no means to calculate their numbers. Housing legislation does not set out specific statutory duties to people sleeping rough, but there is a strong policy and funding focus on this group particularly in London where the numbers sleeping rough are growing.

5.2 Statutory homelessness in Greenwich

This section provides a profile of homelessness and housing need in RBG, demonstrating changes in the profile of statutory homelessness, reductions in the number of households in temporary accommodation and achievements in homelessness prevention.

5.3 Main causes of homelessness

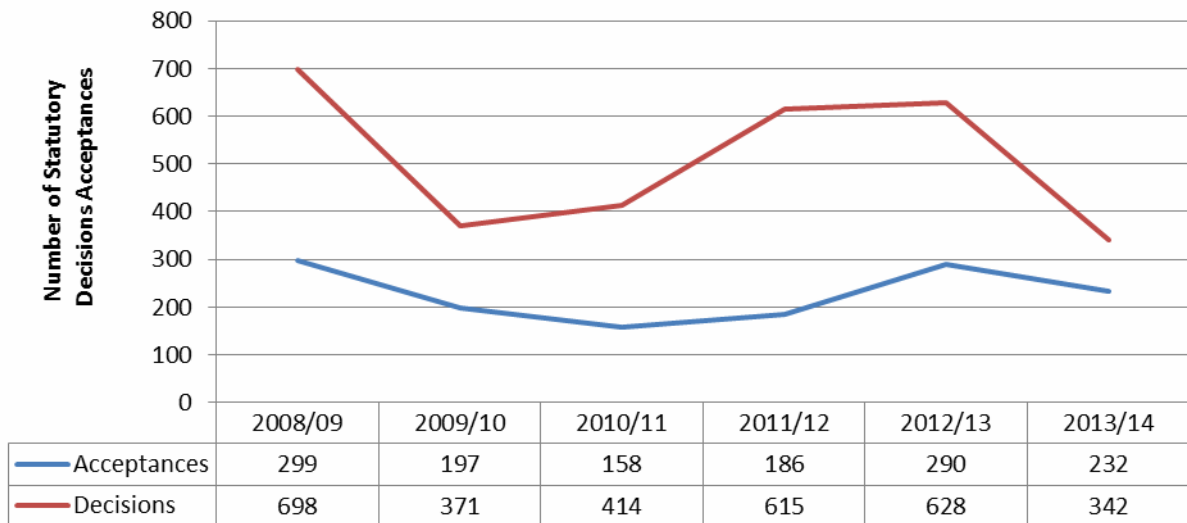


Figure 1: Statutory homelessness decisions made by RBG in comparison to acceptances 2008-14

The Council has continued to provide an effective response to prevent and reduce homelessness over the last five years and the number of statutory homelessness acceptances has fluctuated over this period. In 2010/11, there were 158 homelessness acceptances; a 53% reduction on acceptance figures reported in 2008/9. Both the economic downturn in the last 3-4 years and changing housing market, which includes lack of affordable housing, are contributing factors to the increased number of homelessness acceptances between 2010 and 2013, rising 83.5%. In comparison to our partner boroughs in the South East London sub-region and across London boroughs (Figure 2), RBG has maintained a relatively low level of statutory homelessness acceptances which reflects our success in actively preventing homelessness.

Figure 2: RBG homelessness acceptances by year in comparison to London and SELHP Borough averages 2008-14

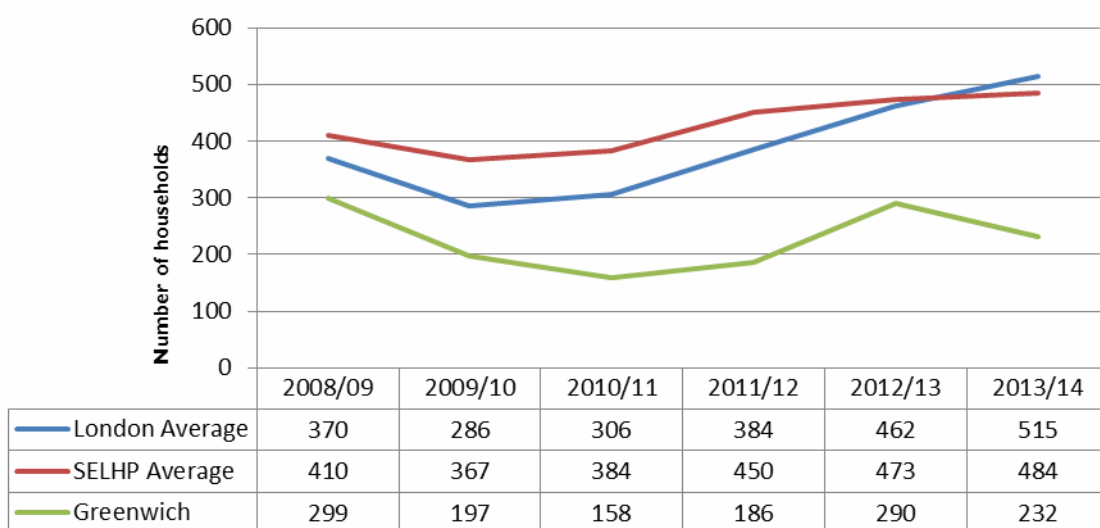


Table 4 shows homelessness applications, acceptances and percentage accepted for the London Region (sorted by borough). Of the London boroughs, Greenwich ranks 8th for the lowest number of acceptances for 2013/14, alongside boroughs with significantly less housing need and deprivation.

Table 4: London Borough applications and acceptances

| London Borough | 2013/14 | | | |
|------------------------|--------------|-------------|-----|--------|
| | Applications | Acceptances | % | Rating |
| City of London | 20 | 12 | 60% | 1 |
| Camden | 113 | 77 | 68% | 2 |
| Merton | 286 | 103 | 36% | 3 |
| Havering | 779 | 163 | 21% | 4 |
| Harrow | 389 | 180 | 46% | 5 |
| Sutton | 378 | 197 | 52% | 6 |
| Kingston upon Thames | 397 | 204 | 51% | 7 |
| Greenwich | 342 | 232 | 68% | 8 |
| Richmond upon Thames | 506 | 279 | 55% | 9 |
| Hillingdon | 584 | 301 | 52% | 10 |
| Hammersmith and Fulham | 538 | 385 | 72% | 11 |
| Islington | 914 | 399 | 44% | 12 |
| Bexley | 591 | 420 | 71% | 13 |
| Redbridge | 1146 | 444 | 39% | 14 |
| Bromley | 1146 | 503 | 44% | 15 |
| Kensington and Chelsea | 1494 | 539 | 36% | 16 |
| Southwark | 943 | 555 | 59% | 17 |
| Hounslow | 855 | 624 | 73% | 18 |
| Enfield | 874 | 627 | 72% | 19 |
| Barnet | 1066 | 674 | 63% | 20 |
| Lambeth | 977 | 708 | 72% | 21 |
| Lewisham* | 885 | 710 | 80% | 22 |
| Westminster | 1205 | 716 | 59% | 23 |
| Wandsworth | 1234 | 723 | 59% | 24 |
| Brent | 1347 | 731 | 54% | 25 |
| Croydon | 2593 | 762 | 29% | 26 |
| Haringey | 1128 | 762 | 68% | 27 |
| Waltham Forest | 1993 | 804 | 40% | 28 |
| Barking and Dagenham | 1790 | 853 | 48% | 29 |
| Hackney | 1751 | 906 | 52% | 30 |
| Ealing | N/A | N/A | N/A | 31 |
| Newham* | N/A | N/A | N/A | 32 |
| Tower Hamlets | N/A | N/A | N/A | 33 |

(*NB: Lewisham did not complete the whole PIE form in Q4 2012 or Q1 2013. Newham did not complete the form in Q1 2013).

Figure 3: Reason for loss of last settled accommodation for those cases accepted 2013-14

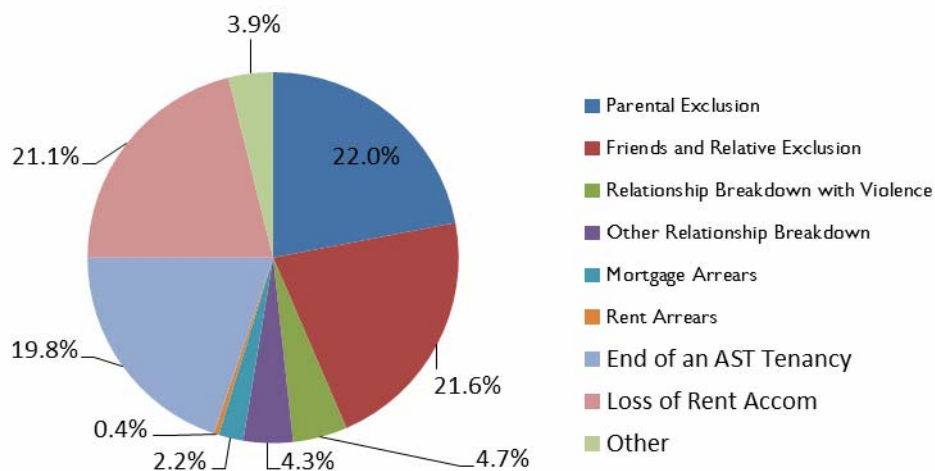


Table 5: Statutory Homelessness – Main Reasons for Homelessness

| Year | Parental Exclusion | Friends and Relative Exclusion | Relationship Breakdown and domestic Violence | Mortgage Arrears | Rent Arrears | Loss of rented accommodation | Other | TOTAL |
|--------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|--|------------------|--------------|------------------------------|-------|-------|
| 2008/09 | 74 | 82 | 33 | 1 | 3 | 52 | 54 | 299 |
| 2009/10 | 66 | 45 | 29 | 2 | 1 | 13 | 41 | 197 |
| 2010/11 | 26 | 50 | 19 | 1 | 5 | 25 | 32 | 158 |
| 2011/12 | 39 | 67 | 24 | 0 | 1 | 32 | 23 | 186 |
| 2012/13 | 49 | 92 | 27 | 6 | 4 | 98 | 14 | 290 |
| 2013/14 | 51 | 50 | 21 | 5 | 1 | 95 | 9 | 232 |
| Total | 305 | 386 | 153 | 15 | 15 | 315 | 173 | 1362 |

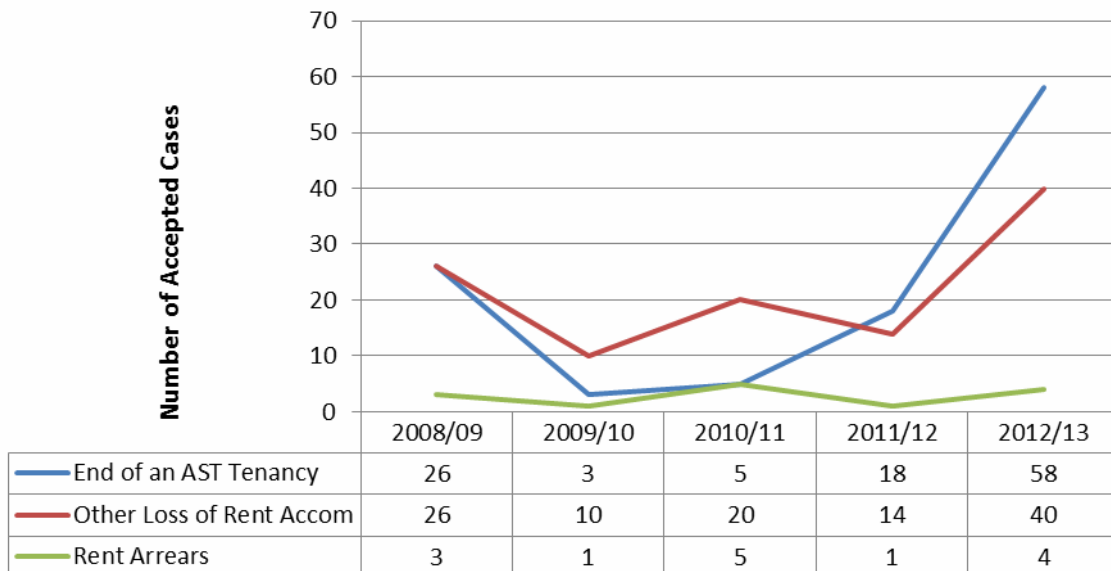
5.4 Levels and Nature of Statutory Homelessness

There have been some variances in the number of acceptances within the main homelessness categories over the years, due to both levels of homelessness approaches and other mitigating factors:

- People approaching the Council for assistance due to exclusion from ‘family and friends’ continues to constitute the major cause of homelessness in RBG. Although the presenting reason for homelessness is that the family have been excluded from the home where they have been living, these households will have a variety of histories or routes into homelessness and some may have been living with a family member or with friends for a relatively short period of time after becoming homeless from a previous address.
- Parental exclusions also continue to account for a relatively high proportion of homelessness acceptances in RBG in comparison to other London boroughs. Typically, family exclusions arise where young adults remain in the home and start a family of their own and as a result the household becomes overcrowded and tensions inevitably arise. The Council’s means to prevent this cause of homelessness are generally limited to the offer of private rented accommodation or rehousing through the Allocations scheme. However, the increasing demand for private rented and social housing limits the availability of alternative accommodation to young families living with parents, and the number of parental exclusions will inevitably increase.
- There has been a 45% overall increase in the number of households accepted as homeless due to end of assured shorthold tenancy between 2008 and 2013, sharply rising in 2011/12 and again in 2012/13. In 2013/14, 41% of households accepted as homeless had lost rented accommodation, compared to 20% of those accepted as homeless in the previous 3 years. Evictions from the private sector are a fast growing cause of homelessness, reflecting the changes in the private sector market. Many landlords report that they intend to sell their properties rather than let them, whilst others are wishing to let to professional people and are evicting residents reliant on increasingly limited housing benefit levels.
- Overall figures reveal that very few of those accepted as homeless have lost tenancies due to rent arrears, and an even smaller number are homeless as a result of repossession due to mortgage arrears.

- Only one person from the armed forces has been accepted as homeless in the last year and changes to the Allocations Scheme should prevent future homelessness from these residents.

Figure 4: Increase in Loss of Rented Accommodation



5.5 Households Not Accepted as Homeless

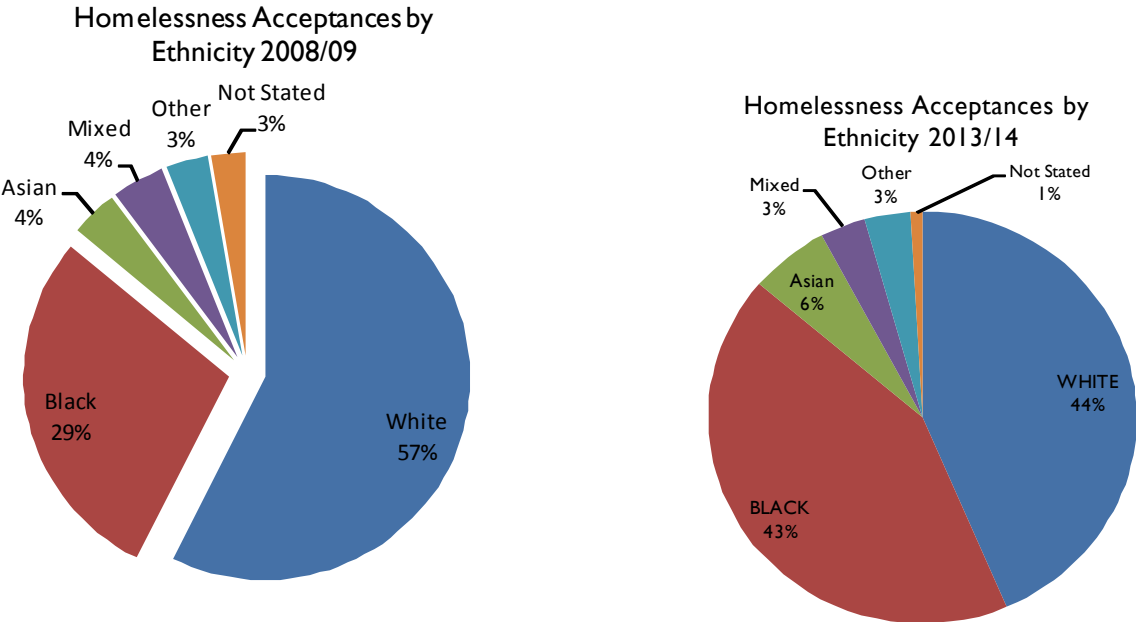
Most customers assisted through the HOSS are prevented from becoming homeless without the need for a statutory assessment and so the number of statutory applications and decisions does not reflect levels of potential homelessness in the borough. Of those who do make a statutory application, some may be refused as not meeting the criteria laid down in legislation. In 2012/13, 8.9% of housing applicants were found to be intentionally homeless as were 5.1% in 2013/14. During 2013/14, 15.3% of applicants were found not to be in 'priority need' if homeless, which means that they were not assessed as being less able to fend for themselves if homeless than other homeless people. The proportion of single people found not to be in priority need has increased over recent years, reflecting current case law and practise. The number of households approaching who were found 'not eligible' for housing assistance increased from 1.9% in 2008/09 to 6.0% in 2013/14 reflecting the increase in residents from EEA countries who are not 'workers' and so are not entitled to homelessness assistance.

5.6 Black Minority Ethnic (BME) Households

The Council monitors the ethnicity and compositions of households of those making homelessness applications, to ensure equality in delivering services to those seeking assistance. The proportion of the borough's population from a Black or Minority Ethnic background has increased since the census in 2001. The 2011 census indicates 37.5% of Royal Greenwich's population is from a BME group. The number of BME households accepted as homeless has fluctuated between 2008 and 2013 however there has been an overall proportional increase as of 2012/13. Some sections of the BME community continue to be over represented amongst homeless households and amongst those applying for re-housing from the Council.

The number of BME households recorded in 2008/9 accounted for 40% of the overall acceptance figures, this rose to 53% by 2012/13 and 55% in 2013/14.

Figure 5: Homelessness Acceptances by Ethnicity



| Ethnicity | Total number of decisions | Total number of acceptances | Percentage of homeless applicants | Percentage of applicant accepted as homeless |
|-----------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| White | 1663 | 661 | 54% | 49% |
| Black | 1081 | 530 | 35% | 39% |
| Asian | 112 | 57 | 4% | 4% |
| Mixed | 113 | 55 | 4% | 4% |
| Other | 66 | 41 | 2% | 3% |
| ALL BME | 1372 | 683 | 45% | 50% |
| Not known | 33 | 18 | 1% | 1% |
| Total | 3068 | 1362 | 100% | 100% |

Table 8 indicates that BME households are more like to be accepted as homeless than White households when assessed according to the statutory requirements. This largely reflects differences in the nature of homelessness for different sections of the community and the Council’s ability to prevent homeless, or to decide that the full homelessness duty is not owed.

Table 7: Accepted Households by Ethnicity and Reason for Homelessness 2008-2014

| | Parental eviction | Friends and relative eviction | Relationship breakdown with violence | Other relationship breakdown | Mortgage arrears | Rent arrears | End of an AST tenancy | Loss of rented accom | Other | Total |
|-------|-------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------|--------------|-----------------------|----------------------|-------|--------|
| BME | 11.6% | 30.8% | 11.5% | 3.2% | 1.8% | 1.6% | 14.2% | 13.3% | 12.0% | 100.0% |
| White | 33.4% | 25.6% | 5.9% | 1.6% | 1.0% | 0.8% | 9.8% | 8.2% | 13.5% | 100.0% |
| Total | 21.8% | 28.4% | 8.9% | 2.5% | 1.4% | 1.2% | 12.1% | 10.9% | 12.7% | 100.0% |

BME households are over represented amongst those becoming homelessness from the least secure and sustainable form of accommodation, which is staying with family and friends. White households are similarly highly represented amongst those evicted from family and friends where there is also a lack of housing rights to remain. However, the Council has more scope to prevent homelessness from parents seeking to exclude their grown up 'children' than is available to prevent extended family or friends from excluding their guests.

5.7 Homelessness Acceptances by Household Type and Age

Table 8: Gender Breakdown/Family Composition 2008-14

| | 2008/09 | | 2009/10 | | 2010/11 | | 2011/12 | | 2012/13 | | 2013/14 | | Total | |
|----------------------|------------|-------|------------|-------|------------|-------|------------|-------|------------|-------|------------|-------|-------------|---------------|
| Couple with Children | 57 | 19.1% | 20 | 10.2% | 20 | 12.7% | 20 | 10.8% | 46 | 15.9% | 61 | 26.3% | 224 | 16.4% |
| Single Parent Male | 45 | 15.1% | 4 | 2.0% | 10 | 6.3% | 7 | 3.8% | 12 | 4.1% | 9 | 3.9% | 87 | 6.4% |
| Single Parent Female | 124 | 41.5% | 89 | 45.2% | 78 | 49.4% | 115 | 61.8% | 210 | 72.4% | 140 | 60.3% | 756 | 55.5% |
| Single Male | 48 | 16.1% | 49 | 24.9% | 32 | 20.3% | 23 | 12.4% | 11 | 3.8% | 16 | 6.9% | 179 | 13.1% |
| Single Female | 22 | 7.4% | 31 | 15.7% | 17 | 10.8% | 19 | 10.2% | 10 | 3.4% | 6 | 2.6% | 105 | 7.7% |
| Childless Couples | 3 | 1.0% | 4 | 2.0% | 1 | 0.6% | 2 | 1.1% | 1 | 0.3% | 0 | 0.0% | 11 | 0.8% |
| Total | 299 | | 197 | | 158 | | 186 | | 290 | | 232 | | 1362 | 100.0% |

Although there is fluctuation in the profile of households accepted as homeless in the borough, the overall picture is that single parent female households constitute more than half of accepted homeless households. Single (childless) people, who are homeless and in priority need make up 21.8% of accepted households, of which 13.1% are single male.

The number of 16-17 year olds accepted as statutorily homeless or placed in temporary accommodation has reduced to zero, following the Council's proactive strategy to prevent youth homelessness. The 64-74 and 75+ age groups collectively account for approximately only 1% of total homelessness acceptance figures.

The number of homelessness acceptances for 18-24 years in priority need has decreased over the years from 43.7% to 29.7%, whilst there has been an increase in the number of 25-44 years accepted as homeless, which accounted for 56% of the total number of acceptances in 2013/14.

Part of this increase may reflect lack of opportunities to prevent homelessness through the private rented sector for single people affected by housing benefit restrictions for under 35s, which were implemented in April 2012. However, as the majority of accepted applicants are not single (childless) households, the shift in homelessness acceptances to a slightly older age group is also likely to reflect greater emphasis and resources targeted at homelessness prevention for those under the age of 25.

Table 9: Homelessness acceptances by age*

| Age Range | 2009/10 | | 2010/11 | | 2011/12 | | 2012/13 | | 2013/14 | | Total | |
|--------------|------------|---------------|------------|---------------|------------|---------------|------------|---------------|------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|
| 16-17 | 14 | 7.1% | 10 | 6.3% | 1 | 0.5% | 3 | 1.0% | 0 | 0.0% | 28 | 2.6% |
| 18-24 | 86 | 43.7% | 53 | 33.5% | 67 | 36.0% | 84 | 29.0% | 69 | 29.7% | 359 | 33.8% |
| 25-44 | 73 | 37.1% | 75 | 47.5% | 92 | 49.5% | 173 | 59.7% | 130 | 56.0% | 543 | 51.1% |
| 45-59 | 18 | 9.1% | 14 | 8.9% | 18 | 9.7% | 26 | 9.0% | 31 | 13.4% | 107 | 10.1% |
| 60-64 | 2 | 1.0% | 2 | 1.3% | 5 | 2.7% | 1 | 0.3% | 0 | 0.0% | 10 | 0.9% |
| 65-74 | 3 | 1.5% | 4 | 2.5% | 0 | 0.0% | 3 | 1.0% | 2 | 0.9% | 12 | 1.1% |
| 75+ | 1 | 0.5% | 0 | 0.0% | 3 | 1.6% | 0 | 0.0% | 0 | 0.0% | 4 | 0.4% |
| Total | 197 | 100.0% | 158 | 100.0% | 186 | 100.0% | 290 | 100.0% | 232 | 100.0% | 1063 | 100.0% |

*The age of the lead or sole applicant in the accepted homeless household would be recorded.

6. Prevention of Homelessness

Table 10a: Homelessness Preventions through Assistance to Remain in Accommodation 2011-14

| RBG Homelessness Preventions 2011-14 | 2011-12 | 2012-13 | 2013-14 | Total |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|
| Prevention through assistance to remain in accommodation | | | | |
| Mediation/conciliation | 213 | 59 | 36 | 308 |
| Debt Advice | 85 | 156 | 172 | 413 |
| Resolving Housing Benefit problems | 57 | 174 | 158 | 389 |
| Resolving rent/service charge arrears in social housing or PRS | 69 | 169 | 106 | 344 |
| Negotiation/advocacy to remain in accommodation in the private rented sector | 90 | 106 | 115 | 311 |
| Other assistance to remain in accommodation | 15 | 15 | 15 | 45 |
| Financial payments from a homeless prevention fund | 1 | 4 | 8 | 13 |
| Mortgage arrears interventions or mortgage rescue | 99 | 55 | 53 | 207 |
| Sanctuary scheme measures for domestic violence | 42 | 70 | 81 | 193 |
| Other measures assisting applicant to remain in their accommodation | 61 | 73 | 8 | 142 |

The HOSS Housing Aid centre (HAC) team attend the court duty desk at Woolwich Crown Court to provide advice and information to households facing mortgage repossession. During 2012/13 they responded to 48 cases and during 2013/14 a further 40 cases at the court duty desk and assisted households with interventions to prevent homelessness. Debt advice and mortgage arrears interventions continue to be available to households to prevent them from losing accommodation following the close of the Government's Mortgage Rescue Scheme in March 2014. HAC continue to provide realistic help and housing options advice to private rented tenants and owner-occupiers which includes maximising income related benefits, budgeting/debt management, negotiations with mortgage lenders and court representation.

Table 10b: Homelessness Preventions through Alternative Accommodation 2011-14

| Prevention through alternative accommodation | | | | |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Any form of hostel or House in Multiple Occupation | 18 | 18 | 83 | 119 |
| PRS accommodation with landlord incentive scheme | 275 | 241 | 160 | 676 |
| PRS accommodation without landlord incentive scheme | 83 | 80 | 81 | 244 |
| Accommodation arranged with friends or relatives | 11 | 23 | 104 | 138 |
| Supported accommodation | 162 | 145 | 168 | 475 |
| Social Housing – management move of existing LA tenant | 37 | 11 | 6 | 54 |
| Social Housing- Part 6 Re-housing | 60 | 46 | 73 | 179 |
| Social Housing – negotiation with RP outside nomination agreement | 5 | 4 | 0 | 9 |
| Other form of accommodation | 44 | 34 | 0 | 78 |
| TOTALS | 1427 | 1483 | 1427 | 4337 |

RBG has continued to report a high level of cases where homelessness has been prevented through casework intervention and support. For a case to be counted towards this performance measure there must be a clear threat of homelessness, which has been prevented through an intervention by the local authority or a partner agency funded by the local authority.

7. Supporting vulnerable people

Homelessness services in the Royal Borough of Greenwich are not limited to our statutory responsibilities. The Council aims to prevent homelessness through proactive interventions and support to customers, whether or not they are owed a full homelessness duty under housing legislation. The safeguarding and support needs of vulnerable groups are recognised within the HOSS, with specialist teams for families and other groups linked to the relevant partnerships.

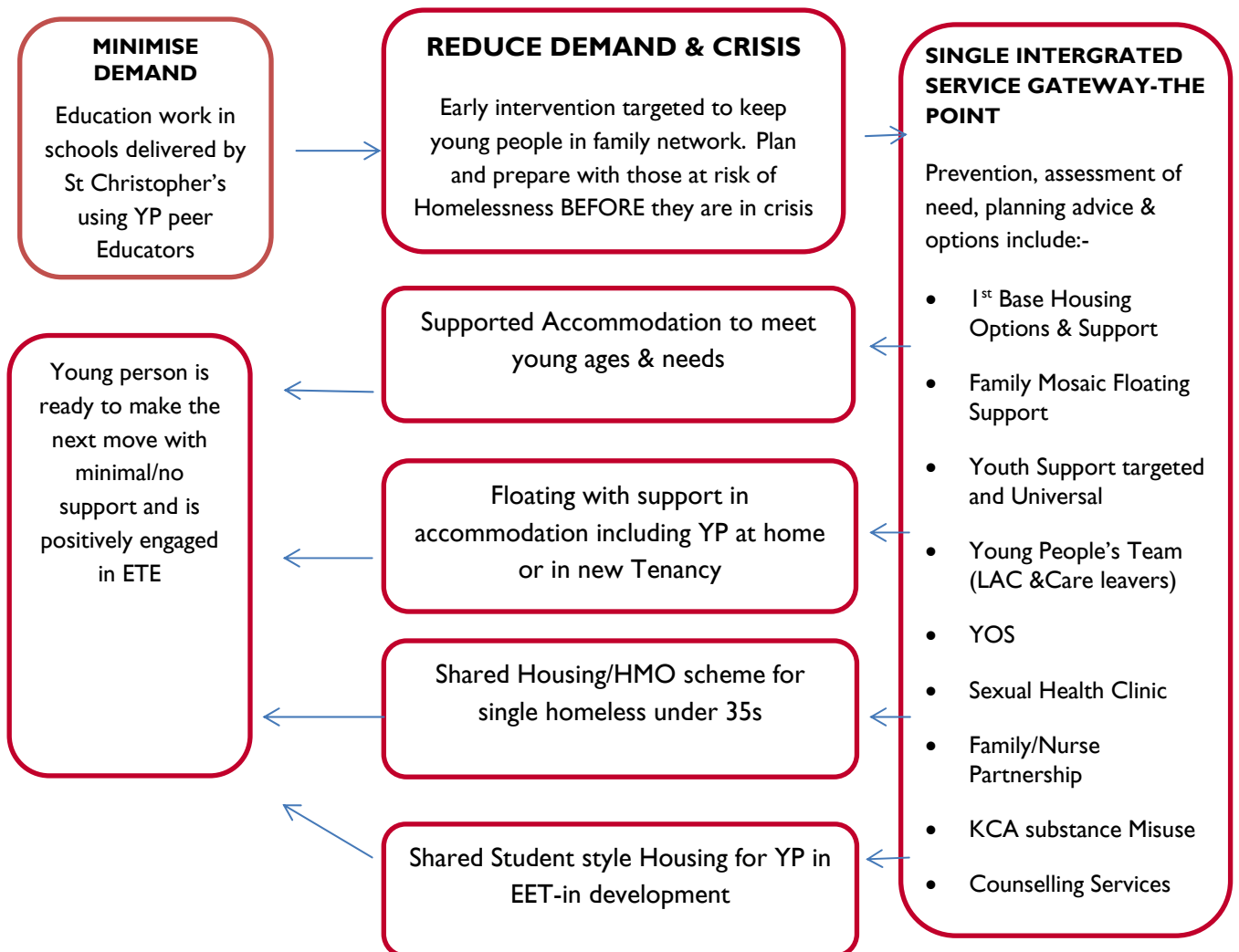
7.1.1. Youth Homelessness

The Royal Borough of Greenwich has a particular strong track record in tackling youth homelessness and has developed a comprehensive service response to meet the needs of vulnerable young people at risk of homelessness. 1st Base is the housing options and support service for young people and care leavers, and is located in The Point which is a one stop shop for young people's services. 1st Base helps young people and their families by providing support to address their needs, reduce risks and promote independence. The Council has achieved significant improvements in services to young people at risk of homelessness and has ended the use of temporary accommodation for 16-17 year olds. Joint Housing and Children's Services assessment and support services have reduced statutory homelessness, as well as the number of 16-17 year olds becoming looked after due to homelessness.

7.1.2 Royal Borough of Greenwich 'Positive Pathway'

RBG has greatly reduced youth homelessness by implementing services and interventions to identify those at risk of homelessness at the earliest stage. Our 'Positive Pathway' for young people has been recognised as a best practice model and RBG is now part of a national programme led by government offices aimed at improving integration of services to support 'positive transitions' for young people at risk of homelessness.

Figure 6: Positive Pathway for Young People at risk of Homelessness



The RBG positive pathway begins with a peer education programme which has been delivered in Greenwich schools since 2006 by St Christopher's Trust. The schools project employs and trains young people who have been through homelessness to deliver sessions to school children, and has been targeted at schools from which the Council has identified higher levels of youth homelessness.

Young people are actively prevented from becoming homeless in Greenwich through our partnership arrangements with young people services, working with housing staff to identify and respond to threatened homelessness. Any young people aged 16-17 years who become homeless are assisted through integrated services at The Point, led by our 1st Base team of housing and social care staff. 1st Base ensures young people access all of the services available to meet their various needs, and acts as the gateway into all supported housing for young people in the borough.

7.1.3. Looked After Children and Care Leavers

RBG provides social housing to young people leaving care, as part of our responsibilities under the Leaving Care Act. Some looked after young people have been in stable long term placements prior to their 18th birthday, and move on when they are ready with the help and support of their personal advisers, and housing support services. For many other young people the transition is not so smooth, and joint HOSS and Children's Services management arrangements have been established to identify these young people leading up to their leaving care date, and identify supported housing or other solutions to assist them in transition to independent living. Move on into permanent accommodation is only arranged when the young person is assessed as ready and able to manage a tenancy, and at this point they are supported to bid for suitable properties through the Council's choice based lettings scheme.

If supported housing arrangements break down, or if there is a crisis in a young person's life that requires alternative housing to be provided, a care leaver may be placed in temporary accommodation. It is a mark of the success of joint planning around care leavers that only 3 required temporary accommodation to be provided at any point throughout 2013-14.

7.1.4. Outcomes for Young People

In 2013-14 the Council prevented homelessness for all young people aged 16-17 who approached for assistance, and did not place any in temporary accommodation. As we have built an understanding and awareness of our preventative approach, fewer young people have presented for assistance at the point of crisis.

Table 11: 16 and 17 year olds approached as homeless or at risk of homelessness

| 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 |
|------|------|------|------|------|
| 205 | 221 | 224 | 195 | 135 |

Table 12: 16 and 17 year olds, who made homelessness applications, were accepted as homeless and accommodated by the Housing Department:

| 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 25 | 15 | 8 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Table 13: 16 and 17 year olds accommodated in B&Bs by Children's Services

| 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

7.1.5. Supported Housing Services

In 2013-14, RBG commissioned new Young People's Housing Related Support Services, in response to the changing needs that had been identified. The new services provide a pathway to meet different levels of need for young people aged 16-24, and include placements for Looked After Children aged 16-17. Delivered by DePaul UK, the supported housing pathway offers high support hubs in three locations as well as lower support services as the step down provision.

All housing support services for young people are required to provide mediation services, advice and assistance around education, employment and training and support to access appropriate health services. Young people who are living in supported accommodation or have a floating support service have priority for apprenticeships provided through our Greenwich Local Labour Project (GLLP).

7.1.6 Greenwich Money House

In 2013, Hyde Plus launched the Money House project in partnership with RBG, My Bank, Citizens Advice Bureau, Meridian Advice Service and others. Funded by Big Lottery and based upon a ‘Big Brother’ concept, the project provides Financial Confidence training to young people preparing for their first tenancy. Young people in supported housing, in care, or in temporary accommodation are referred to the project to attend the training and it is part of the move on requirement from supported housing that they attend.

Although some young people are reluctant to attend a one week training course on financial confidence and management, those that do attend are hugely positive about the experience and the learning. A recent independent evaluation of the project looked at a snapshot of young tenants who had attended Money House prior to moving into their tenancies, and compared their rent accounts to other young tenants. Whilst the average arrears level for tenants aged 16-25 was £650, for those that had attended the training the average was £78. Landlords of the properties let to the Money House young people also reported different behaviour from the norm, with young people making contact where problems with payment arose to try and resolve the problem at the earliest stage.

7.1.7 Teenage Parents

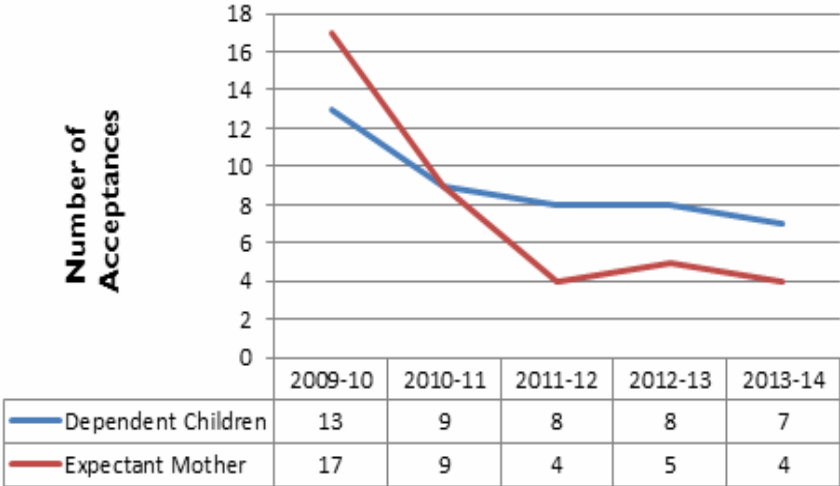


Figure 7: Teenage Parents accepted as homeless between 2009-2014

In addition to the reduction in the number of 16/17 year olds accepted as homeless, there has also been a decrease in the total number of teenage parents accepted as homeless with an overall 62% reduction between 2010 and 2014. The number of teenage expectant mothers accepted as homeless has reduced although the provision to support this client group continues to be available.

Teenage parents are prevented from becoming homeless through support and mediation to remain at home. In circumstances where the family will become overcrowded after the birth of a baby to the extent that there will be a continuing threat of homelessness, 1st Base provides support to move on from home in a planned way. For those young women who cannot remain in the family home, supported accommodation is provided. It has been a long term aim of the Council to increase the number of supported housing placements for teenage parents, and this continues to be a priority despite the reduction in teenage conceptions.

7.1.8 Homelessness due to Gang Violence

There have been concerns around the level of gang activity in the borough and the number of young people involved in gang-related crime. The borough funded Violent and Organised Crime Unit (VOCU), established in 2008, is an intelligence-led police unit dedicated to targeting known gang members, criminal networks and the most serious offenders. The focus of the VOCU has evolved over time to co-ordinate with the work of a serious youth violence panel, established in 2010 to manage those at the highest risk of causing, or being victim of, serious youth violence (SYV) in the borough.

The arrest and prosecution of perpetrators is key to ensuring the safety of others, however for those gang members wishing to exit gang life and those fleeing gang violence, re-housing is key to their safety. RBG is an active participant in the Safe & Secure project which supports young people to exit gang activity and to stay safe. Through Safe and Secure the young person and his/her family are provided with interim accommodation through a Registered Provider and receive mentoring and support from St Giles. If the placement is successful in extricating the young person from gang contacts and offending, the Council facilitates a permanent move away from RBG through the Pan London Inter-borough Reciprocal Agreement. A new area of work for Greenwich is the link between DV and young women involved in gangs and peer on peer abuse, and this information is slowly being collated.

7.2 Domestic Violence

The RBG Domestic Violence and Abuse Strategy was published in 2013, with an emphasis on keeping victims and their families safe as well as holding perpetrators to account for the violence/abuse they inflict. Whilst other forms of crime in the Borough have recently been dropping, levels of domestic violence has remained constant. Domestic violence impacts upon the emotional, physical and psychological well-being of both adults and children. Reducing domestic violence and abuse is therefore a key priority of the Safer Greenwich Partnership, the Greenwich Safeguarding Children's Board and the Health and Well-Being Board. It is also a priority in the Greenwich Community Safety Plan.

The strategy is closely related to work in Royal Greenwich to tackle Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and is informed by the following facts:

- Men as well as women are victims of domestic violence, but to a lesser extent
- Domestic abuse includes behaviours that are not physically violent but can be as equally damaging
- Compared to other forms of VAWG; domestic violence remains the volume crime in RBG

- Compared to other forms of VAWG, much more research has been carried out into domestic violence; there is a much more substantial knowledge base about what needs to be done to tackle domestic violence
- Compared to other forms of VAWG, there is a much greater range of services and arrangements in place in RBG to respond to domestic violence and to provide support to children and victims.

7.1.6 Local need

There were 4,442 DV related crimes in RBG in 2012/13. Around half of these (2016) were DV related offences, and of these around 80% came under the broad category of violence against the person.

In 2012/13, DV was a factor in 19% of all crimes in RBG and 31% of all violence against the person offences. Compared to other London boroughs, RBG had the 6th highest number of DV offences and the 8th highest sanction and detection rate which is effectively the police clear up rate. The repeat referral rate for the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) was 16% in 2011/12 but increased to 23% in 2012/13.

DV was identified as present in 28% of cases referred to Royal Greenwich Children's Services Safeguarding and Social Care between 1st April 2012 and January 24th 2013. Around 500 children were involved in these cases. DV was the second most frequent need at the point of referral and almost one in five referrals where DV was present also involved parental drug and alcohol abuse (18%).

The Royal Greenwich Strategy for tackling Domestic Violence and Abuse is focused on four key strategic aims:

- 1 Protection, reducing re-victimisation and mitigation: helping protect victims and their families, reducing repeat victimisation and mitigating the impact that domestic violence and abuse has on their lives;
- 2 Deploying the powers of the Criminal Justice System and Civil Courts to deal with abusers and further protect victims;
- 3 Preventing domestic violence and abuse from happening in the first place; and
- 4 Tackling social tolerance and blindness of domestic violence and abuse by individuals and organisations.

The HOSS continues to work with partners and customers to protect and support survivors of domestic violence. A specialist DV and Substance Misuse Project Officer attends the MARAC and provides support to victims at risk of homelessness, particularly where there are also substance misuse needs.

The Royal Borough of Greenwich Housing Department leads on commissioning of refuge services and funds 30 refuge spaces delivered by Housing For Women. Refuges provide transitional accommodation to some victims escaping an abusive partner before they move to longer term alternative housing options. For those victims who are able to stay safely in their home, and to exclude the perpetrator, RBG provides a Sanctuary Scheme which is now delivered in house with referrals coordinated by Housing for Women. The scheme provides high level security measures at the customer's address which will prevent perpetrators from

entering the home and enable the police to attend. Sanctuary is offered to victims of all tenures and is successful in preventing homelessness due to domestic abuse. In 2012-14, 151 victims of DV were enabled to remain in their home through installation of security improvements via the scheme.

Experience and data about women most at risk of domestic violence indicates that drugs and/or alcohol often contribute to the incidence of abuse and sometimes to the continuation of abusive relationships. In response to identified need the Royal Borough of Greenwich commissioned a new refuge service for women experiencing domestic abuse, that were also in need of substance misuse treatment and willing to engage with services to address their drug and alcohol misuse. The new refuge, delivered by Housing for Women in partnership with Thames Reach provides a safe place for women to receive support around domestic abuse and the impact of addiction.

7.3 Troubled Families

The Families 1st Team is based within the Community Housing Service and leads on the Troubled Families Programme. This service provides intensive interventions for eligible families with multiple needs, including where children or young people are not attending school or are involved in offending and/or antisocial behaviour, and where adults are not in employment or training. As a service it takes the lead in the co-ordination and planning to address all the problems faced by the family and working with the whole family within their home. Families 1st offers intensive family intervention through a key worker who works alongside them, offering practical support, guidance and challenge in order to bring about lasting change. Families 1st aim to build resilience in a family and enable them to access universal services.

The service is committed to the wider ‘Early Help’ agenda by undertaking assessments, identifying unmet needs and using multi-agency approaches, such as Team Around the Family. Families 1st is participating in the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub and is identifying families whose outcomes could be improved by making an offer of early help and support. They are co-located with HOSS and with identification of any housing issues work together to prevent homelessness or find tailored housing solutions.

Table 15: Families First Targets 2014-15

| Target | Outcome | Targets | Deadlines |
|---|--|---|-----------|
| Meet Payment by Results targets | Risks to finances, performance and sustainment of the programme | June (100), October (100), January 2015 (100) | March 15 |
| The number of families where Families 1 st intervention has stopped or reduced ASB incidents | Increase in ASB and court action | 120 | March 15 |
| Secure employment for families through the Families 1 st Service | Performance requirement and responding to impact of Welfare Reform | 50 | March 15 |
| Number families worked with | Quarterly | 500 | March 15 |
| Families who have entered volunteering, education or training | Quarterly | 50 | March 15 |
| Improved school attendance | Quarterly | 100 | March 15 |

7.4 People without Recourse to Public Funds

London boroughs are facing demands for assistance from people who are homeless and 'not eligible' for assistance due to their immigration status. People who have applied for asylum are assisted through the National Accommodation and Support Service (NASS) and will only seek housing from the Council when they gain a positive decision about their application for leave to remain. Apart from asylum seekers, there are other groups who are not eligible for homelessness assistance according to the legislation. This includes some people from the European Economic Community who are not exercising their treaty rights in the UK because they are not in employment, and people who have applied for leave to remain on other grounds than asylum.

Although housing legislation excludes certain people from abroad from accessing services, families and single vulnerable people may be entitled to some assistance with accommodation and support under the Children Act or National Assistance Act. It is therefore essential that housing and social care staff work together to prevent homelessness and provide appropriate support to these households. A new Nil Recourse Team has been established within the Department of Adults and Older People, and will collaborate with partners and colleagues in housing and other key services to provide services to families and single adults who are particularly vulnerable.

7.5 Mental Health and Homelessness

People with mental health needs are known to be at higher risk of homelessness, and to have greater difficulty in sustaining a tenancy. Of those residents who will be homeless on discharge from mental health in-patient services, many have lost accommodation with partners or family as a result of being unwell. The HOSS has strong partnership arrangements with Oxleas NHS Trust, and has two Oxleas professionals based within the Mental Health Housing Options and Support Team. The Council's protocol with Oxleas provides that patients will not be discharged from the ward when homeless, without prior referral and assessment by HOSS to try and prevent homelessness.

The majority of clients who have a mental health need are assisted by the Mental Health Housing Options and Support Team. Some clients of the HOSS disclose mental health needs in addition to other presenting needs and may be assisted by another team within the HOSS, particularly if they are not receiving a care service for their mental health.

From January's 2013 and 2014, 628 (16.5%) clients of the 3817 who approached HOSS identified mental health as a support need. The table below indicates the most significant support needs identified by clients with a mental health need approaching the HOSS during 2013/14.

Table 16: Support Needs of Clients with Mental Health Needs

| Primary Support Need of Clients with Mental Health Needs | Number | % |
|--|------------|------------|
| Mental Health | 480 | 76 |
| Alcohol and Drugs | 55 | 9 |
| Physical Health/Disability | 19 | 3 |
| Family with support needs/Parenting Issues | 20 | 3 |
| Domestic Violence | 13 | 2 |
| Other | 41 | 7 |
| Grand Total | 628 | 100 |

Of the clients identifying mental health as their primary support need, 68 also had a drug/alcohol misuse need and 49 needed support due to physical ill health or disability. Over 21% (215) of clients with a mental health need were referred through the joint HOSS/Oxleas protocol. 16% were referred through the Hospital Discharge Protocol and a further 5% were referred through the Supported Accommodation Move On Protocol. HOSS also receives a significant number of referrals from Tenancy Services (127) as well as self-referrals (130).

Table 17: Reason for approach

| Reason for approach for all those identified with a mental health need | Number | % |
|--|------------|-------------|
| Rent arrears / rent related | 96 | 15% |
| Other | 94 | 15% |
| Hospital discharge (mental health) | 83 | 13% |
| Friends / relatives eviction | 83 | 13% |
| Supported accommodation move on | 40 | 6% |
| Landlord eviction/landlord problems | 43 | 7% |
| Tenancy sustainment general | 35 | 6% |
| Welfare reform under occupier / total benefit cap cases | 31 | 5% |
| Break up of Relationship no violence | 26 | 4% |
| Domestic violence partner / associate | 22 | 4% |
| Housing benefit issue | 16 | 3% |
| Harassment - non racial | 15 | 2% |
| Prison discharge | 13 | 2% |
| Rough sleeping | 8 | 1% |
| Overcrowding | 8 | 1% |
| Mortgage arrears | 5 | 1% |
| Neighbour dispute | 5 | 1% |
| Care leaver | 5 | 1% |
| TOTAL | 628 | 100% |

Rent arrears are the largest cause for approach/referral for clients with mental health needs, partly reflecting the number of referrals from Tenancy Services within the Council. It is likely that the impact of welfare reform will increase the demand for support due to rent arrears for clients with mental health needs, who may be directly affected by disability benefit changes as well as being more likely to be 'sanctioned' (had their benefits stopped) under new arrangements implemented by the DWP.

7.6 People with an Offending and/or Substance Misuse Need

The Move On Options and Support Team (MOST) within the HOSS, provides specialist advice and support to people with an offending and/or substance misuse history. During 2013, 348 clients of the 3817 who received HOSS services identified substance misuse as a support need.

Table 18: Primary Support Needs

| Primary Support Need | No. of cases |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Alcohol Use | 81 |
| Mental Health | 69 |
| Drug Use | 61 |
| Alcohol and Drug use | 60 |
| Offending History | 32 |
| Domestic Abuse | 14 |
| Physical and Sensory Disability | 12 |
| Rough Sleeper | 5 |
| Mentally disordered offender | 4 |
| Family requiring Support | 4 |
| Older Person | 2 |
| Other | 5 |
| Grand Total | 348 |

Of the clients with a substance misuse support need 80% identified 2 or more support needs, and 38% identified a need for support with their mental health. Other significant support needs recorded across the 348 clients include offending history (59), physical disability (36), rough sleeping (11) and domestic abuse (25). For the 202 cases where substance misuse was the primary need, a third of clients were referred by Substance Misuse Treatment Services.

The MOST provides services to assist people with an offending history, whether or not they have problems with drug or alcohol misuse. Probation Service data indicates that 11% of offenders managed within Greenwich (July 2014) have an accommodation need. The MOST has Housing Options and Support Officers based within the Probation Service and the Drug Intervention Programme, and has informal referral arrangements with prisons across the country. The HOSS is represented at senior level in the Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA), and has a staff member providing housing options and support to high risk offenders with the aim of preventing homelessness and protecting the community.

The MOST provides the gateway into the Royal Borough of Greenwich supported housing pathway for people with a substance misuse and/or offending history, delivered by Thames Reach. The pathway includes an assessment centre of 7 units providing high level 24 hour support and a further 14 second stage units in 4 shared houses, one of which is divided into 2 flats for residents from which move on into private sector accommodation can be facilitated. Customers who have a drug or alcohol misuse problem will only be referred into the supported housing pathway if they are willing to engage with treatment services to address their substance misuse and are provided with support to do so. For those that maintain or complete treatment and are able to manage independently in the community, the HOSS aims to assist with moving on into shared or self-contained private rented housing.

7.7 Resolving Chaos

Although the Royal Borough of Greenwich takes pride in providing more comprehensive support services to vulnerable adults at risk of homelessness, we recognise that there are individuals with complex needs who are continually at risk of homelessness. These clients are frequently known to other agencies because of repeat homelessness, A&E or mental health service admissions, arrests and detention in custody etc. Central Government funded initiatives to provide more cost-effective responses to these 'chaotic' individuals have found that

partnership and shared action planning are essential components of any interventions to change behaviour and lifestyles.

In 2012 the six Olympic Growth Boroughs agreed to undertake a piece of research with Resolving Chaos, a newly established social enterprise. This analysis work, funded by the Department of Health, looked at the numbers and profile of individuals who were presenting most cost to a range of public agencies (e.g. local authority, NHS, the police, the ambulance service, mental health services and drug and alcohol agencies) through using services in a crisis and unplanned way. In many of the cases highlighted by the research, the outcomes had been poor with a tendency towards a revolving door aspect to many people's patterns of service use.

As part of the research, Resolving Chaos analysed the costs to services of 53 individuals identified as 'chaotic' by partners providing housing, mental health, and substance misuse treatment services. Headlines from the report show that:

- the approximate cost to the public purse of supporting the 53 individual cases is over £2.2 million
- the cost of the 20 individuals that are most expensive to support is roughly half of this, at £1.1 million

Although the costs are high, the outcomes for the individuals were not good. Learning from this research, RBG considered ways to intervene more effectively to assist individuals with chaotic lifestyles culminating in a proposal for a local Chaos Project, which received match funding from DCLG for one year. The pilot project, implemented from November 2013, aimed to deliver better outcomes through a combination of multi-agency case management, accommodation and intensive floating support. The Council and partners will learn from the Chaos Project pilot and the independent evaluation to be completed by Resolving Chaos Ltd.

7.8 Rough Sleeping

7.8.1 Rough Sleeping in London

The Government's target to end street homelessness by 2012 was not achieved and the number of rough sleepers has increased over the last few years, particularly in London. Greenwich like other outer London Boroughs had traditionally identified low numbers but has witnessed a significant rise in reported rough sleeping since the last homelessness strategy was developed. The Council works with partners on initiatives to prevent rough sleeping:

- **No Second Night Out (NSNO)** is the GLA led initiative to prevent rough sleeping, by early intervention to assist new rough sleepers off the street.

The first NSNO Hub opened in London in April 2011 and there are now three hubs across the capital, including one in Lewisham that was opened in October 2013. The aim is for outreach services to locate people sleeping rough and accompany them to a NSNO hub to avoid further nights on the street, which can lead to entrenched rough sleeping. Following an assessment at the hub the client would be given a single service offer (SSO) detailing the best possible option to resolve their homelessness, often with reconnection to their home borough or 'social capital' to access housing and appropriate support and services.

- **No-One Living On the Streets (NLOS)** service launched in 2012, provides a 24/7 rapid assessment hub for those who are not new to the streets, linking them to short term accommodation. The emphasis of the service is to reconnect individuals into appropriate services as rapidly as possible, with short term accommodation being accessed where circumstances are more complex or an interim stay is agreed.
- **London Street Rescue (LSR)** provides the outreach service of staff and volunteers who find and verify people bedded down in the borough, and take them to a hub for assessment and further assistance. LSR follow up on notifications of rough sleepers by individuals contacting themselves or via reports by local authorities or members of the public to their phone lines or website. LSR attend the site where the person is reported to be bedded down and identify who they are and how they can be assisted, as well as verifying the rough sleeper for records.

7.8.2 Rough Sleeping in Greenwich

There has been an increase in the flow of verified rough sleepers since the introduction of these initiatives, partly due to increased awareness of services available and a mechanism for reporting and verifying rough sleepers. The NSNO provision enables rough sleepers to be assisted at an early stage, and ‘reconnected’ to their borough of origin where the local authority is expected to provide assistance with accommodation. The HOSS manages referrals from NSNO and finds placements, usually in private rented accommodation, for rough sleepers new to the street, that have a Greenwich connection.

Greenwich has never had a significant number of longer term or ‘entrenched’ rough sleepers, and this continues to be the case. The vast majority of identified rough sleepers are new to the streets and are assisted through the NSNO pathway.

Table 19: Verified Rough Sleepers in Greenwich

| Year | Total |
|-----------|-------|
| 2008/2009 | 10 |
| 2009/2010 | 4 |
| 2010/2011 | 29 |
| 2011/2012 | 65 |
| 2012/2013 | 56 |
| 2013/2014 | 64 |

Of the 64 found rough sleeping in RBG during 2013/14, 50 were new to the streets and were offered services through the NSNO service. Of these, 26 people attended the NSNO Hub and 60% agreed to take up the ‘Single Service Offer’ of move on into private rented accommodation. Of the 64 rough sleepers, 26 were identified as having a local connection with Greenwich.

Most recent information about residents accessing services indicates that there is an increase in the numbers of rough sleepers with complex or multiple needs. This presents the Council with a number of challenges, particularly as there is no ‘hostel’ type accommodation providing a direct access service for rough sleepers. As all funding sources for rough sleeping provision were historically targeted at areas of high numbers of rough sleepers, particularly Central

London, boroughs such as Greenwich have not had the need or the resources to invest in high support hostels. More recent policy developments that focus on reconnection to borough of origin do not bring with them the funding to invest in high support accommodation and the Housing Options and Support Service must find alternative routes to accommodate and support rough sleepers with additional needs.

7.8.3 Rough Sleeper Counts

An annual rough sleeper count is organised across London in November each year. On the same night boroughs across the capital carry out a search of all known or possible rough sleeping sites and submit data on the results. Local authorities without significant rough sleeping are invited to submit estimates rather than conduct a physical count if preferred, and RBG chose this option in 2011 and 2012. In November 2013, the Royal Borough organised a rough sleeper count in which volunteers spent the night looking for rough sleepers at all known hot spots, and found one person sleeping rough. The previous count was conducted in 2010, and one person was identified.

7.8.4 South East London Housing Partnership Action Plan

The SELHP Boroughs & partner agencies agreed to work together to deliver a robust response to the flow of rough sleepers into and across the sub-region. This action plan seeks to tackle rough sleeping through a partnership approach in providing good quality advice, access to accommodation and support including tenancy sustainment.

The key objectives of the SELHP Responding to Rough Sleeping Strategy 2012-2014 are to:

- 1 Increase access to provision of assessment beds and other accommodation and services for rough sleepers
- 2 Increase access to accommodation in the private rented sector to reduce rough sleeping
- 3 Continue to inform and develop multi-agency approach to tackling rough sleeping
- 4 Monitor levels of rough sleeping in the sub-region to inform planning and future delivery of services
- 5 Enable non-UK nationals to access advice and support to resolve their homelessness

7.8.5 Community Response to Rough Sleeping

The HOSS regularly receives enquiries about people who have been seen sleeping rough, and if the resident is not known to the service the information is passed on to London Street Rescue so that they can look for the rough sleeper and offer assistance. Residents who alert the Council to rough sleepers generally appear to do so out of a genuine desire to help address their situation. In 2014 the Borough Deans in RBG approached the Council with a proposal to establish night shelters in the borough during the cold winter months of January to March 2015. It is currently proposed that night shelters are 'piloted' during 2015 to try and measure the level of demand for this service and the resource implications for those churches that support the initiative by providing premises and/or volunteers to staff the shelters. The Council is also anxious to measure the impact of shelters on local communities and the level of uptake from Greenwich residents.

7.9 Single Homelessness

The vast majority of people who are homeless and not entitled to be provided with temporary accommodation by the Council are single or childless people who are not in 'priority need'. The number of residents that are in the 'single' or 'non-priority' homeless categories are largely unknown, precisely because local authorities do not owe them a statutory homelessness duty. Single homeless people may be 'sofa surfing' with friends or relatives, or literally roofless and sleeping rough.

RBG aims to provide housing support services to single people whether or not they are in 'priority need', and has assisted many single people into supported or private sector accommodation to prevent their homelessness. Most single people who are under 35 and reliant on housing benefit are only entitled to find a room in a shared house. The Thames Reach shared housing scheme is funded through Crisis and the RBG has created shared housing opportunities for this group.

Between Januarys 2011-12, DCLG allocated funding to each London sub-region to address single homelessness. Following a procurement process, the SELHP Single Homelessness Panel in consultation with the Directors Group designated the £965,000 grant funding to the following services:

Table 20: SELHP - Single Homelessness Schemes

| SELHP Single Homelessness Schemes | Funding | End date | Outputs due | Sub-regional Outputs to 31/03/14 |
|---|-----------------|-----------|----------------|----------------------------------|
| St Mungo's PRS | £177,232 | May 14 | 112 units | 86 units |
| St Mungo's - Out of area (jointly funded by Crisis) | £69,848 | Dec 14 | 45 units | 32 units |
| St Giles - PRS scheme | £173,135 | June 14 | 100 units | 84 units |
| St Giles - Through the Gates | £139,029 | June 14 | 105 units | TBC |
| CAYSH Emergency Lodging Scheme | £188,227 | Nov 14 | 132 placements | 117 placements |
| Kairos – Drug rehabilitation | £19,017 | Ended | Scheme closed | |
| Staging Post (Lewisham) | £82,000 | Jan 15 | 200 | 48 |
| Greenwich & Bexley Credit Union | £35,000 | Jan 15 | 30 | 1 |
| Negotiation Training - Front line staff | £5,000 | Delivered | 32 staff | 32 staff |
| Rent deposits for PRS schemes | £66,650 | N/A | N/A | |
| Contingency | £9,862 | N/A | N/A | |
| TOTAL | £965,000 | | | |

The approach to the use of the funding has allowed for collaborative working across the sub-region to tackle single non-priority homelessness and rough sleeping. This funding has been important to create diverse services that respond to need across borough boundaries. Regular SELHP monitoring and borough meetings with each provider have allowed the funding to be used creatively and help meet the needs of non-statutory homeless households.

7.10 Older people

In the past, housing options for older people with additional support needs were very limited. Choices were mainly restricted to sheltered housing or residential care, which sometimes meant moving away from family and friends. The lack of choice meant that some people stayed in their homes and became isolated. There is now a greater emphasis on offering a range of solutions to the housing requirements of older people, some of which can enable people to remain in their own home if they wish and it is safe to do so.

The Homes Improvement Agency also supports older and disabled people with the installation of major disabled adaptations in their homes. Over the winters of 2011/12 and 2012/13 the Handyperson Service worked in partnership with Adults and Older People's Services and third sector agencies to deliver the 'Stay Warm, Stay Safe' project. Approximately 500 households each year across all tenures received energy efficiency advice and energy saving minor improvements.

From April 2014 the Housing Options and Support Service took on a new service providing floating support to older people aged 55+. The team is involved in supporting older people to remain in their homes or to move to more appropriate accommodation, to maximise independence and avoid becoming homeless. The team also provides an enhanced floating support and drop in service at some housing association run sheltered housing schemes which do not have a warden service.

8 Households in Temporary Accommodation

Local authorities have a statutory duty to provide temporary accommodation for eligible homeless families, until such time as the homelessness duty ends. Accommodation should be suitable to the needs of the family, and families should not be placed in accommodation with shared facilities for any longer than 6 weeks.

RBG was successful in meeting the Government target to reduce the number of households in temporary accommodation by 50% before March 2010, and achieved a 77% reduction in the number of households in temporary accommodation between 2006 -10. During the last year the numbers in temporary accommodation have begun to rise again due to the increase in homelessness and lack of private sector housing options available to actively prevent homelessness.

Whilst continuing to find ways to prevent homelessness, the Council recognises that the highly expensive and competitive London housing market is resulting in growing levels of homelessness, and a corresponding growth in requests for temporary accommodation to be provided. To prepare for growing demand the Council is looking to provide good quality temporary accommodation and to minimise the impact of rising rental costs on homeless families and Council budgets.

Table 21: Number of Households in Temporary Accommodation

| Type of Accommodation | Numbers in Accommodation at 31 st March 2014 | | | | | |
|---|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 |
| Nightly paid accommodation with shared facilities | 6 | 2 | 17 | 47 | 18 | 23 |
| Nightly paid self-contained accommodation | 52 | 28 | 38 | 76 | 85 | 115 |
| Hostels | 13 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Women's Refuge | 0 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Council leased accommodation | 75 | 76 | 78 | 80 | 64 | 73 |
| RSL provided accommodation | 8 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Council owned temporary accommodation | 109 | 50 | 38 | 32 | 44 | 82 |
| Any Other Accommodation | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total at Year End | 265 | 163 | 174 | 235 | 211 | 293 |

Table 22: Households Placed in Temporary Accommodation – Reason for Approach

| REASON FOR APPROACH | 2010/11 | 2011/ 12 | 2012/13 | % 2010/13 | 2013/14 | % | % Change 2013-14 |
|-------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------|------------|-----|------------------------|
| Parental Eviction | 74 | 63 | 49 | 15% | 40 | 8% | -7% |
| Friends or Relatives Eviction | 55 | 95 | 129 | 23% | 106 | 22% | 0% |
| Relationship breakdown and DV | 47 | 55 | 58 | 13% | 50 | 10% | -2% |
| Mortgage Arrears | 2 | 8 | 5 | 1% | 11 | 2% | 1% |
| Social Housing Rent arrears | 12 | 10 | 3 | 2% | 2 | 0% | -2% |
| Loss of rented accommodation | 46 | 76 | 122 | 20% | 163 | 34% | 14% |
| Hospital | 46 | 59 | 38 | 12% | 20 | 4% | -7% |
| All other reasons | 63 | 56 | 67 | 15% | 85 | 18% | 3% |
| Total Admissions | 345 | 422 | 471 | | 477 | | 0% |

The numbers of household requiring temporary accommodation (TA) has increased annually over the last 4 years. There was a 14% increase in the proportion of households requiring TA due to the loss of rented accommodation during 2013-14, compared to the previous 3 years. The number and proportion of households placed in temporary accommodation following discharge from hospital reduced during 2013-14, compared to the previous 3 years. This reflects improvements in interventions to prevent homelessness since the establishment of the combined Mental Health Housing Options and Support Team.

RBG uses Council owned housing stock as temporary accommodation, as well as leasing properties from private landlords for this use. On first approach households are usually placed in 'Emergency Overnight Accommodation' which is nightly paid privately owned accommodation. If the placement involves sharing facilities, the Temporary Accommodation Team will start looking for alternative placements to move the family at the earliest opportunity, and within the 6 week maximum.

9 Housing Supply

9.1 Allocation of Social Housing

9.1.1 Greenwich Homes Lettings

Greenwich Homes is the Council's choice-based lettings (CBL) scheme. It allows those on the housing register to search and bid for a council or housing association homes of their choice in Greenwich. The scheme is managed by the Access and Allocations Service according to the Council's Allocations Policy, which is regularly reviewed.

The current RBG Allocation Scheme has a three tier banding system with priority Band A attributed to those who the Council has an urgent need to rehouse (tenants to be decanted, or giving up properties too large for their needs) and Band B for others who have 'reasonable preference' according to legislation and local policy. Households who are accepted as homeless and who meet the eligibility for joining the housing register are awarded Band B priority.

Applicants in Band C of the register have no priority for rehousing, but can bid for properties advertised each week. If a property is to be let to a Band C applicant, they are prioritised by the date they joined the Council's register.

In May 2014 there were **14,994** households on the RBG Housing Register, including 1,211 priority applicants. During 2013/14 there were **1784** permanent lettings, including 707 Registered Housing Provider (RP) properties and a further **103** lettings to sheltered flats. Although there has been a consistent level of lettings over the last three years, there are specific pressure points due to the scarcity of certain property types and sizes. In 2013/14, 446 of the properties that became available were 3 beds or larger when there were 3127 households on the housing register requiring properties of this size.

The Council rehoused 707 applicants through nominations to RP properties during 2013/14. However, 163 of these properties were let at 'affordable' rent levels, which are up to 80% of market rent. As a result, 44 of these affordable rent properties were refused by the applicant or the nomination was not accepted by the RP as the rent was considered to be unaffordable. This is a particular concern for working households on relatively low incomes, or those on benefits seeking work. This factor is creating additional demand for RBG properties which are let at significantly lower rent levels.

In 2013/14:

- 64 % of Council lettings were to households in Bands A & B
- 36% to Band C (These lettings tend to in high rise blocks or areas of lower demand).

Size and type of properties available to let in 2013/14:

- 82% were flats and maisonettes
- 18% were houses of which only 4.5% were 2 bed houses
- 36% were 1 beds and a further 36% were 2 beds
- 30% of the total lettings were third floor and above.

Table 23: Ethnicity of Housing Register applicants

| Ethnicity April 2014 | Total housing register | | Priority bands A & B | |
|----------------------|------------------------|-------|----------------------|--------|
| Black | 5260 | 35 % | 412 | 33 % |
| Asian | 899 | 6 % | 78 | 6.2 % |
| Chinese and other | 396 | 3 % | 36 | 3 % |
| Mixed | 646 | 4.3 % | 52 | 4 % |
| White | 7219 | 48 % | 623 | 49.8 % |
| Ethnicity not given | 547 | 3.7 % | 49 | 4 % |
| Total | 14967 | 100% | 1250 | 100% |

9.1.2 Rehousing Homeless Households

When the Council accepts a duty to assist a homeless household, the responsibility is to provide suitable temporary accommodation until such time as the duty ends. Typically the duty ends through the offer of permanent accommodation through the Council's housing register. However, in response to the new freedoms and powers provided through the Localism Act and local circumstance the Royal Borough of Greenwich has implemented two policy changes which have significant impact on homelessness and delivery of services to homeless people:

- **A residency criterion** was introduced in June 2012, requiring applicants to have been resident in the borough for 5 years before becoming eligible to join the housing register. There are some exceptions to this policy, including for existing tenants and those already on the housing register, people nominated through some partnership arrangements, armed forces personnel and others. Since implementation of the 5 year residency criteria, the HOSS has advised households who are unable to join the housing register about their option to find private sector accommodation until such time as they are able to apply for social housing. Households who are owed a homelessness duty but are ineligible to join the housing register because they have not lived in RBG for the last 5 years, are provided with temporary accommodation and/or offered private rented accommodation to prevent homelessness.
- **The power to end the homelessness duty by an offer of suitable private rented sector accommodation** was adopted by the Council in November 2013, primarily to broaden the range of available housing options to reduce the length of time that families spend in temporary accommodation. If statutory homelessness cannot be prevented and the applicant is unable to join the housing register, they can be made an offer of an Assured Shorthold Tenancy of suitable accommodation to end the homelessness duty.

The annual lettings plan is a tool for managing the allocation of properties to ensure that the Council's priorities are met. Historically the target for lettings to homeless households has equated to the target for homelessness acceptances, with the intention of ensuring movement on from temporary accommodation for homeless households. However, the 2014-15 lettings target for homeless households is set at 250, which is 50 below the target for accepted homeless households. It is anticipated that a further 50 households will be assisted out of homelessness through an offer of suitable privately rented accommodation

9.1.3 Preventing Homelessness through Allocations

RBG cannot award rehousing priority to every household that is in insecure housing or is at risk of homelessness, but the policy does provide alternatives to making a homeless approach for households in need. The Allocations Scheme gives priority for households that are severely overcrowded, living with significant disrepair or in need of a management transfer due to risk. Move on priority enables planned moves from home or from supported housing for young people and for young parents, from mental health supported housing schemes and from properties provided through a Hyde leasing scheme where the lease is due to end. HOSS and the Allocations Service work very closely together on complex cases and are able to find creative solutions to prevent homelessness through an allocation, within the constraints of the Allocations Policy.

9.1.4 Overcrowding and Under Occupation

London has the highest incidence of households living in overcrowded conditions. The Mayor of London Housing Strategy states that there are 106,000 families living in overcrowded affordable housing in London, of which 12,000 endure severe overcrowding. The strategy aims to reduce severe overcrowding by half by 2016.

Overcrowding can impact on people’s health, education and wellbeing and it is therefore necessary for households to have access to larger accommodation. RBG continue to see a rise in the number of overcrowded households but works to resolve overcrowding through allocations policies and activities, as well as strategic planning for future housing supply. Although many households may not have the living space they want or need, the Council can only give re-housing priority in cases of severe overcrowding, where households lack two or more bedrooms.

Table 24: Overcrowded households on the RBG housing register

| Overcrowded households on the housing register | | | April 2013 | April 2014 |
|---|---------|-----------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Number of bedrooms occupied by overcrowded households | 1 bed | total overcrowded | 774 | 920 |
| | | severely overcrowded | 116 | 126 |
| | 2 bed | total overcrowded | 958 | 1032 |
| | | severely overcrowded | 125 | 133 |
| | 3 bed | total overcrowded | 421 | 363 |
| | | severely overcrowded | 119 | 108 |
| | 4 bed + | total overcrowded | 83 | 49 |
| | | severely overcrowded | 37 | 24 |
| Total overcrowded | | | 2236 | 2364 |
| Severely overcrowded | | | 397 | 391 |

Families who are severely overcrowded are living alongside others who are **under occupying** their homes due to changes in the household composition, usually because children have grown up and left the family home. RBG has for many years taken a proactive response to reducing under occupation, and awards highest re-housing priority as well as financial incentives and personal support to residents seeking to downsize by 2+ bedrooms.

In response to the introduction of the ‘spare room subsidy’ known as the ‘bedroom tax’ the Council has put resources into identifying those most affected and assisting them to exchange

homes or to rehoused to a smaller property. Reducing overcrowding, including through supporting tenants to downsize and free up larger homes, will continue to form a key part of the Council’s approach to preventing homelessness and housing need.

9.2 Private Rented Sector Housing

The economic downturn had an impact on the housing sales market in London, with a corresponding rise in private rented sector accommodation. More recently rising house price values and reducing housing benefit levels have resulted in landlords moving out of lettings to low income households, either because they are selling their properties or taking advantage of increased demand from working households who cannot afford to buy.

RBG understand that sufficient supply of good quality accommodation in the private rented sector is vital in order to meet housing need and prevent homelessness for both statutory and non-statutory clients. The development of both the RBG Landlord Accreditation and Licensing schemes is part of the bid to drive up standards in the private rented sector, and to attract landlords into working with the Council to accommodate people at risk of homelessness.

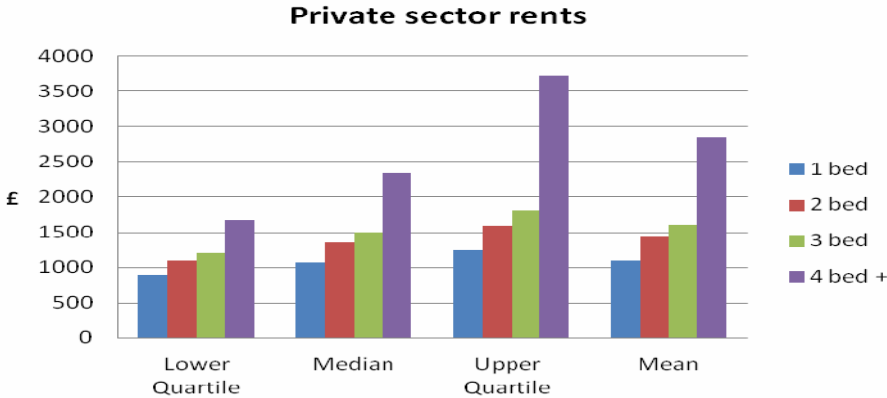
The Mayor of London published his Housing Covenant for private renters in 2012. At the Centre was the London Rental Standard published in July 2013, which was developed in collaboration with accrediting organisations and boroughs and it sets the benchmark for the standards that are expected of landlords and letting agents and the framework for other accreditation schemes in London.

The RBG Homelessness Prevention data (Table 12 and Table 25) indicates that preventions through provision of private rented accommodation are declining, which reflects the withdrawal of landlords from this market.

Table 25: No of PRS Lets to Prevent Homelessness

| Year | 2009-10 | 2010-11 | 2011-12 | 2012-13 | 2013-14 |
|----------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| No of PRS Lets | 206 | 170 | 104 | 228 | 166 |

Figure 8: RBG Rent Levels



- The lower quartile rent for a 1 bedroom property in Royal Greenwich in October 2013 was £900 a month.
- Lower quartile 3 bedroom properties, a typical family sized property was £1207 a month.
- For larger family sized accommodation of 4 plus bedrooms, lower quartile rents were £1679.

Alongside efforts to attract and incentivise professional landlords to provide housing options for homeless households, the Council has embarked on an enforcement programme to tackle poor standards in the private rented sector and to ensure properties are fit to occupy. The HOSS works in collaboration with Environmental Health and enforcement services to identify bad landlords and tackle poor conditions, whilst supporting tenants to avoid becoming homeless.

9.3 Affordable Housing for Working People

Meridian Home Start was set up by the Council to provide high quality homes for local working families to rent. The homes are available at intermediate rents (20% below local market levels) with the intention of helping working families who would otherwise find it hard to buy or rent on the open market but who are not a priority for a social housing tenancy. The two and three bedroom houses are in various locations around the borough and have all been refurbished to a high standard. The Council will continue to develop similar models of accommodation with RP's to enable working people to access affordable housing.

9.4 Future Supply of Affordable Housing

RBG are projecting that c.1300 new affordable homes will be built by 2015 and an opportunity for a further 1500 homes to be built between 2015-2018. There has been additional funding released for more homes to be built called "building the pipeline" scheme. It is to increase affordable housing supply and the GLA requires that all schemes are completed by 2015. In RBG the number of units to be delivered in 2015 will be further increased. Including the "Building the pipeline" scheme, the total number of Affordable Housing expected to be delivered for 2014/15 is 1,024 units.

10. Responding to Welfare Reform

10.1 Impact of Welfare Reform

The Welfare Reform Act 2012 introduced a wide range of reforms aimed at reducing public expenditure on benefits and using the welfare system to incentive people toward employment and to 'make work pay'. One of the stated aims of reform is to ensure that families on benefits should not be better off than the average working family. Welfare reforms also aim to reduce the costs of housing benefit to the public purse.

The key elements of reform include:

- A Total Benefits Cap (TBC) limiting benefits for families to £500 per week, and for single people to £350 per week. Any excess (over £500) is deducted from Housing Benefit entitlement from April 2013, and from Universal Credit when this new benefit is implemented

- Spare Room Subsidy (popularly referred to as 'Bedroom Tax') reduces eligible rent for social housing tenants by 14% for one spare bedroom, and by 25% for 2+ spare bedrooms
- Universal Credit will combine a wide range of existing benefits into one with the stated aim of simplifying the system. The benefit will include the contribution to the rent, but will be paid to the applicant rather than his/her landlord
- Disability Living Allowance (DLA) replaced with Personal Independence Payment (PIP)
- Reductions in housing benefit in advance of universal credit, including limiting the 'Local Housing Allowance' level to the bottom 35 percentile of market rents. This means that residents reliant on housing benefit towards their rent are restricted to the 'lower end' of the housing market, and in the context of growing demand for private lettings, may be priced out altogether
- Transfer of funding for 'community care grant' and 'crisis loans/grants' from the DWP to local authorities, which has been followed by removal of funding for the replacement services which respond to emergency need and assist with additional costs that households reliant on benefit may face.

Welfare reforms that reduce or remove housing benefit entitlement are likely to increase homelessness as affected households will be less able to pay their rent, leading to eviction. Positive action to minimise the impact of reforms will also reduce homelessness.

10.2 The Welfare Reform Team

The Council implemented an approach to minimising the impact of welfare reform in advance of these major policy changes, including establishing a Welfare Reform Team (WRT) within the HOSS in 2012 and setting up an in house 'Emergency Support Scheme' to replace community care grants and loans. The approach that the Royal Borough takes to welfare reform which is consistent with our Anti-Poverty Strategy is to provide support and assistance to residents to access employment opportunities and to prevent homelessness.

The WRT was established to:

- Meet, assess and advise all tenants affected by the £500 Total Benefit Cap and Council tenants affected by the under occupiers cap, who request additional support
- Help reduce the impact of the reforms on families through support with benefit entitlement, money management, and a focus on employment
- Create a profile of the groups affected in this borough, their main barriers to employment, family make-up; help to identify need for services in the borough.

Table 26: Household Affected by Under Occupation Benefit Reductions

| Affected households - profile | | As at Apr 13 | As at Apr 14 | As at Jul 14 |
|--------------------------------------|---|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1.1 | Total number of households affected | 3665 | 2683 | 2603 |
| 1.2 | Number under-occupying by one bedroom | 2685 | 2140 | 2087 |
| 1.3 | Number under-occupying by two or more bedrooms | 980 | 543 | 516 |
| 1.4 | Council tenants affected | 2302 | 1663 | 1602 |
| 1.5 | RSL tenants affected | 1363 | 1020 | 1001 |
| 1.6 | Number of households with dependent children | 1218 | 698 | 730 |
| 1.7 | Total number of dependent children in affected households | 2060 | 1142 | 1194 |

The WRT actively engages households affected by Total Benefit Cap or Under Occupation benefit reductions, to support them in finding ways to alleviate or remove the impact of the reform. Interventions include:

- Providing employment support and access into employment; GLLab employment support workers and a Job Centre Plus officer are part of the team
- Identifying those that should be exempt from the benefit changes and helping them to obtain an exemption
- Enabling access to Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) depending on circumstances, and in some cases linked to activity to work toward gaining employment
- Negotiating with landlords to prevent homelessness, and assisting people to move in a planned way where necessary
- Supporting tenants to downsize to smaller homes, including through mutual exchange.

Table 27: Households Assessed by the Welfare Reform Team

| Households assessed by the WRT | As at Sep 13 | As at Apr 14 | As at Jul 14 |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Total number of TBC cases cumulative since September 2013 [go live date] | 207 | 329 | 403 |
| Number of TBC cases assessed by the WRT who have had the cap applied since September 2013 [go live date] | 152 | 261 | 297 |
| Number referred or linked to GLLaB/JCP for dedicated employment advice/support | 101 | 163 | 204 |
| Number engaging with GLLaB programmes | 55 | 76 | 88 |
| Number of individuals assessed by the WRT who have had the cap applied since September [go live date] supported into work | | 70 | 102 |
| Number who disclose debt, including rent arrears and are referred/ signposted to advice or support service | 90 | 143 | 150 |

10.3 Achievements in Minimising the Impact of Welfare Reform

The Council's employment brokerage service Greenwich Local labour and Business (GLlab) are also key partners in activity to mitigate the impact of welfare reform by assisting residents into work. In addition, RBG has established an employment project Greenwich Local Labour Project (GLLP) to provide 6 month paid work placements to residents affected by the welfare reforms. Residents are able to access various roles such as refuse collection, parks and open spaces, caretaking, street wardens etc. Whilst on placement, residents are given support to create CV's, improve interview skills and develop language skills where needed. The GLLP will accept residents with low literacy skills and without qualifications into first entry employment. While on the scheme, clients will be able to claim Working Tax Credits, which will exempt them from the Total Benefit Cap, whilst they are also gaining skills and work experience. Residents are supported to find permanent employment after the six month scheme ends.

RBG achievements in assisting residents affected by Welfare Reform:

- The WRT has provided advice and information to 1515 residents, has completed holistic assessments with 74% of those affected by the Total Benefit Cap since September 2013 and has succeeded in supporting 121 individuals into work as of 30 September 2014. No household affected has been made homeless as a direct result of the benefit cap
- From April 2013-July 2014, 151 RBG tenants affected by the under occupation benefit reduction were been rehoused into smaller accommodation, 71 moved through mutual exchange and a total of 1032 RBG tenants have been assisted with Discretionary Housing payment
- GLLaB has received 576 referrals of individuals affected by the welfare reforms or Families 1st clients. Of those referred since April 2013, 64% have actively engaged and of these 197 [54%] have been helped into work. 50 employers have committed to providing guaranteed interviews or jobs for the welfare reform/Families 1st cohort
- As at July 2014 GLLP has provided work placements to 184 individuals, of which 53% were affected by the Total Benefit Cap before coming on the scheme. Participants in the scheme would have lost an average of £91 per week if they had not secured a placement, and just over 72% of participants left the scheme securing onward employment
- The RBG Emergency Support Service has received 6,799 applications since the scheme commenced in April 2013 including, 694 since April 2014. Just over 3,000 awards have been made.

11. Resources Available to Tackle Homelessness

The Royal Borough has invested resources from a range of funding streams into activity which have wholly or partly contributed to preventing homelessness and supporting vulnerable residents in housing need. Our approach to tackling homeless is based upon an **'Invest to save'** programme, through which services that actively prevent homelessness are provided with funding, with the clear intention of reducing expenditure on temporary accommodation and statutory homelessness services. The following is a summary of the most significant funding sources.

11.1 Homelessness Prevention Grant

Local authorities receive an annual Homelessness Prevention Grant from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), which is now rolled into the Business Rate Retention Scheme (BRRS). There is no transparent formula for assessing the amount of grant allocated to each authority and there are quite wide differentials in the amounts that boroughs receive.

In RBG the grant is used entirely on funding for homelessness services, and primarily funds activities to prevent homelessness by assisting residents into private rented accommodation. This includes funding for our 'Hactrac' Procurement Service, Landlord Accreditation Scheme, landlord incentives and prevention fund payments.

Table 28: Homelessness Grant payments to Royal Borough of Greenwich

| Financial Year | Homelessness Grant to RBG | Comparison to previous year |
|----------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 2011-12 | £575 000 | - |
| 2012-13 | £549,500 | 4.4% reduction |
| 2013-14 | £400,000 | 27% reduction |
| 2014-15 | £394,020 | 1.5% reduction |

11.2 Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP)

The Council has a strong track record in utilising DHP to prevent homelessness, and has effective joint working arrangements between Housing and Advice & Benefits teams. Two Housing Benefit Officers are based within the housing teams, and there are regular management meetings between the services to ensure effective information sharing and cooperation. If a household is identified as being at risk of homelessness due to rent problems for which a DHP might be payable, housing officers request payment and are treated as trusted referrers.

For 2012-13, RBG awarded £579,408 in DHP, mostly as payments to private sector residents at risk of homelessness due to arrears. The government increased DHP grant as part of the introduction of welfare reforms and in 2013-14, RBG awarded payments totalling £1,352,034. The majority of expenditure was to assist tenants affected by the 'bedroom tax' (£1,063,479) but DHP was also used to assist private tenants affected by Local Housing Allowance restrictions (£148,825) and others in need of assistance with meeting rental costs.

11.3 Former Supporting People Funding

Prior to April 2011, local authorities had an annual grant to provide 'housing related support' known as Supporting People (SP) funding. Removal of the ring fence on SP funding coincided with reductions in central government grant to local authorities, which impacted on this budget as well as others. RBG Housing Services employed SP funding to greatly improve housing

related support available to vulnerable clients at risk of homelessness, and used SP resources to increase in house floating support service provision to:

- Young people
- People with mental health needs
- People with a substance misuse and/or offending history
- Vulnerable homeless families
- Vulnerable single people placed in private rented housing

In addition, Housing Managers successfully obtained SP funding to engage external providers in delivering new services that contributed to prevention of homelessness and supporting the most vulnerable clients. When SP funding was disaggregated, Greenwich Housing Services took responsibility and the available funding for commissioning services to homeless young people, offenders, substance misuse and people experiencing domestic violence. The HOSS continues to influence commissioning priorities to ensure the best use of available resources to meet identified need.

11.4 Voluntary Sector Grant Budget

RBG continues to provide funding to voluntary sector organisations to deliver services in the borough, as part of the Council's commitment to the local sector. The Housing Directorate contribution to voluntary sector funding has for several years been directed toward services that prevent homelessness, including the Sanctuary Service, Peer Education Programme, Night Stop Scheme and a debt and money management service provided by Greenwich CAB. For 2015-19 the Council has committed £133000 in grant funding for services around housing and homelessness prevention, and will commission services to:

- Prevent homelessness through debt and money management advice
- Provide Peer Education in Greenwich schools
- Procure shared housing for single people to prevent homelessness.

In addition the Housing Department has committed to deliver the Sanctuary Scheme in house and as part of our successful Handy Person Service.

11.5 Anti-Poverty and Welfare Reform Funding

In response to the government's reforms to welfare benefits, and particularly reductions in housing benefits to under occupying social housing tenants and to large families, RBG set up a programme to identify those affected and minimise the impact on their lives and well-being. Council funding for the HOSS Welfare Reform Team, the Greenwich Local Labour Project and for other additional services assisting residents affected by reforms into work and out of poverty, was to prevent approaches based upon the estimated impact of welfare reform on homelessness and debt. This investment is also indicative of the Council's firm commitment to tackling and reducing poverty in the borough.

11.6 Accessing External Funding Sources

RBG is proactive in identifying funding sources that will add to our homelessness prevention toolkit and improve outcomes for people in housing need. Our successful partnerships which have brought in additional resources include:

- The Money House Project - led by Hyde Plus with RBG support, funded by Big Lottery
- Hospital Discharge Service - led by Thames Reach with RBG support, funded by the Department of Health
- Private Sector Access Scheme - led by Thames Reach with RBG support, obtained Crisis funding in 2011-13, and again in 2014-15
- Chaos Project - led by RBG and Thames Reach obtained DCLG funding in 2013-14.

In addition RBG has been successful in attracting government funding due to our positive performance and innovative approaches to tackling homelessness. For example:

- RBG was one of 12 Enhanced Housing Options Trailblazers funded by DCLG from 2009-12
- RBG receives funding through the 'Positive Transitions' programme at DCLG, because of our excellent work on youth homelessness
- RBG is supporting DePaul in a bid for Fair Chance Funding to assist hard to reach 18-25 year olds, and is anticipating that we will be part of a successful programme
- RBG is preparing a bid for Platform for Life funding to the GLA, in partnership with YMCA. If successful we will be recycling a decanted two sheltered housing blocks to provide affordable housing for young working people.

12. Summary of Homelessness Review Findings

The preceding sections have set out the context, and identified trends in homelessness and the emerging needs to be addressed through a new Homelessness Strategy. The review findings can be summarised as follows:

- RBG has a strong track record in tackling and preventing homelessness through delivering holistic services through partnership, and integrated services
- RBG has achieved high numbers of homelessness preventions and minimised the use of temporary accommodation, particularly in comparison with other London boroughs with a similar level of deprivation and need
- Homelessness is increasing in Greenwich as across London, as access to private rented accommodation declines and the supply of social housing remains insufficient to meet need
- The number of private sector residents facing eviction is increasing as landlords exit the 'housing benefit market', due to the impact of welfare reform that has reduced benefit available to rent alongside increasing demand from professional renters and a buoyant sales market
- The Council is firmly committed to tackling poverty, minimising the negative impact of welfare reform, and improving standards in private rented sector housing. The new Homelessness Strategy must incorporate these priorities into an effective plan of action.

Royal Greenwich Homelessness Strategy 2014-19

Objective I: Prevent homelessness and minimise the use of temporary accommodation

Our priorities:

- I.1 Develop a Gold Standard Housing Options service available to all Greenwich residents at risk of homelessness
- I.2 Prevent homelessness through housing support for vulnerable adults and for families
- I.3 Provide housing advice to minimise tenancy loss and repossession for private tenants and home owners

Priority I.1 Develop a Gold Standard Housing Options service available to all Greenwich residents at risk of homelessness

The Council intends to provide the highest standard in homelessness services, and to achieve the Gold Standard accreditation during the first year of the strategy. The Gold Standard provides a toolkit for self-assessment and a framework for change which the Royal Borough of Greenwich has adopted as a means to achieve continuous improvement in our services. A Diagnostic Peer Review has been completed in April 2014, and the feedback from this review as well as our strategy consultation will inform future actions and developments in service improvement.

To achieve the Gold Standard, the Royal Borough must have excellent services and partnerships in place and demonstrate that we have met the 10 corporate local challenges:

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Local Challenge 1: | <i>“To adopt a corporate commitment to prevent homelessness which has buy in across all local authority services”</i> |
| Local Challenge 2: | <i>“To actively work in partnership with voluntary sector and other local partners to address support, education, employment and training needs”</i> |
| Local Challenge 3: | <i>“To offer a Housing Options prevention service to all clients including written advice”</i> |
| Local Challenge 4: | <i>“To adopt a No Second Night Out model or an effective local alternative”</i> |
| Local Challenge 5: | <i>“To have housing pathways agreed or in development with each key partner and client group that include appropriate accommodation and support”</i> |
| Local Challenge 6: | <i>“To develop a suitable private rented sector offer for all client groups, including advice and support to both client and landlord”</i> |
| Local Challenge 7: | <i>“To actively engage in preventing mortgage repossessions including through the Mortgage Rescue Scheme”</i> |
| Local Challenge 8: | <i>“To have a homelessness strategy which sets out a proactive approach to preventing homelessness and is reviewed annually to be responsive to emerging needs”</i> |
| Local Challenge 9: | <i>“To not place any young person aged 16 or 17 in Bed and Breakfast accommodation”</i> |
| Local Challenge 10: | <i>“To not place any families in Bed and Breakfast accommodation unless in an emergency and for no longer than 6 weeks”</i> |

| |
|--|
| Priority 1.1 Strategic Actions: |
|--|

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop the Gold Standard Action Plan to improve homelessness services, with learning from the Diagnostic Peer Review and feedback from strategy consultation. |
|--|

Priority 1.2 Prevent homelessness through housing support for vulnerable adults and for families

During 2013, the Royal Borough of Greenwich reorganised homelessness services to create a new 'Housing Options and Support Service' (HOSS), based upon our experience and learning as an Enhanced Housing Options Trailblazer authority. The HOSS combines the homelessness prevention, statutory assessment, housing advice and floating support functions with the aim of preventing homelessness through support. HOSS carries out holistic assessments of need and attempts to address these, rather than to act as gate keepers to statutory functions.

As an Enhanced Housing Options borough, RBG created the integrated youth service at The Point, within which our dedicated Housing Options and Support Service for young people has achieved significantly improved services and outcomes for young people at risk of homelessness. More recently the HOSS has established a Welfare Reform Team to carry out holistic assessments of needs and find appropriate solutions to prevent households affected by welfare reform from becoming homeless. The focus of the team is to ensure families who should be exempt from the Total Benefit Cap or Under Occupation charges are assisted to gain an exemption, whilst those that could become or are able to work are supported into employment.

The **Families First** service has been developed to provide a holistic service to 'troubled families' with a history of anti-social behaviour, worklessness and poor school attendance. Many of these families have a history of poor tenancy sustainment and may be at risk from eviction and/or be affected by welfare reform measures. The project aims to work with a least 700 families.

In future HOSS needs to build partnerships with agencies that contribute to meeting the needs of people at risk of homelessness, particularly in the health and social care sector.

The Allocations Policy has been reviewed and consultation is underway to consider amendments, including changes intended to prevent homelessness. The review has identified that homeless residents affected by the 5 year residency criteria will spend long periods of time in temporary accommodation if there is insufficient supply of good quality private rented sector housing to offer them. Some relaxation of the criteria in respect of households who have lived in the borough for 3 years plus, and have not been assisted with a private sector offer is under consideration.

A further proposed change to the Allocations Policy seeks to reassure families prevented from becoming homeless through a private sector offer, that they will obtain additional priority for rehousing if made homeless through no fault of their own in subsequent years.

Priority 1.2 Strategic Actions:

- Consult on amendments to the Allocations Policy that will support prevention and alleviation of homelessness
- Review protocols and joint procedures with Adults and Older Peoples to agree pathways for vulnerable people and families without recourse to public funds
- Develop housing input into the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) decision making process and further build effective cooperation to safeguard children and young people in housing need
- Families First Project to work with 500 families during 2014-15, securing 50 into employment and reducing ASB for 120 families.
- Achieve annual targets to prevent homelessness: 1400 during 2014-15.

Priority 1.3 Provide housing advice to minimise tenancy loss and repossession for private tenants and home owners

As homelessness from the Private Rented Sector increases, and in the context of a particularly challenging housing market, the Royal Borough considers it a priority to provide pro-active advice and assistance to prevent tenants and home owners from losing their homes.

The Housing Aid Centre (HAC) provides a dedicated private sector advice team for the Housing Options and Support Service. The team provide housing advice for residents in privately owned or privately rented housing, as well as tenants of Registered Providers who are at risk of homelessness. Customers are assisted to avoid mortgage debt and repossession, to exercise their rights and responsibilities as tenants and to avoid both legal and illegal eviction. RBG is unusual in retaining a dedicated Private Sector Team despite budget pressures, and will continue to organise court representation and assistance to private sector residents to prevent homelessness.

In recent years the borough's private rented housing sector has grown significantly. However the combination of the recent economic downturn, welfare reforms and rising housing costs have placed increasing pressure on both private renters and mortgaged owner occupiers alike. Given this combination of circumstances, the housing advice service has an integral role to play in homelessness prevention.

Priority 1.3 Strategic Actions:

- Increase resources in the Private Sector Team in response to increase in homelessness from the sector and impact of Welfare Reform
- Improve the response to harassment and illegal eviction to include implementing a protocol with Greenwich Police to prevent illegal evictions and assist tenants to return home
- Coordinate and support agencies to deliver the Court Duty Representation Scheme to assist home owners and tenants at risk of repossession.

OBJECTIVE 2

Increase the supply of good quality private rented sector accommodation available to people at risk of homelessness.

Our priorities:

- 2.1** Increase numbers and quality of accommodation made available to prevent homelessness and to discharge the homelessness duty
- 2.2** End the use of temporary accommodation with shared facilities for families
- 2.3** Increase the supply of good quality shared and HMO accommodation available to young people
- 2.4** Develop partnerships with private landlords and ensure a good supply of affordable accommodation available to homeless people
- 2.5** Complete a high intensity enforcement programme to bring HMO properties up to standard and implement additional licensing arrangements.

The availability of good quality private sector housing is vital in order to manage the level of housing demand and prevent homelessness. Welfare reforms have made it more difficult for households on benefits to secure and sustain private sector housing, and are expected to increase demand for affordable private rented accommodation further, particularly the need and demand for good quality shared accommodation and Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO's). Given the increased level of demand for private sector housing and rising rent levels, the Royal Borough has to improve incentives in order to procure good quality, affordable private sector accommodation for households in housing need. We are also taking measures to drive up standards in the sector through enforcement and partnership working with landlords.

During the coming years RBG will increasingly need to find innovative ways to improve accommodation options within an increasingly challenging housing market. As the demand for, and costs of temporary accommodation increase, the Council will invest in services that prevent homelessness and provide better quality and more affordable housing. Plans to invest in grants and loans to reputable landlords and in enforcement of private accommodation standards will contribute to improving the quality of accommodation available.

Priority 2.1 Increase numbers and quality of accommodation made available to prevent homelessness and to discharge the homelessness duty.

The Localism Act 2013 introduced a new power for local authorities to discharge homelessness duty by the offer of suitable private rented accommodation, rather than social housing. The intention is to give local authorities greater flexibility in responding to homelessness and housing, for example by reducing the time households spend in expensive temporary accommodation. However, the power can only be effective providing there is an adequate supply of good quality private rented sector accommodation and households receive the support they need in accessing and sustaining accommodation in the sector.

A key priority of the Council's Housing Service is the development of **the Royal Greenwich Landlord Lettings Scheme** through which landlords will be offered incentives to meet good standards of accommodation and work with the Council. Currently the quality of housing in the

private sector is variable, with some properties failing to meet basic standards. While there is already a well-established role within Environmental Health to tackle poor quality homes and take enforcement action against bad landlords, there is a need to encourage landlords to work with the Council to provide a supply of good quality accommodation to meet local housing need.

The Council is also undertaking a significant programme of activity in an effort to rapidly impact on standards in the private rented sector. A high intensity enforcement programme is being undertaken by Community Safety and Environment to drive up standards (see priority 2.5 below). In addition we will continue to work with the neighbouring boroughs through the South East London Housing Partnership (SELHP), to improve private sector housing conditions for vulnerable residents across the sub-region.

Priority 2.1 Strategic Actions:

- License all HMO’s in Royal Greenwich.
- Develop the landlord Business Club in partnership with NLA and LLAS as a forum to promote the development and high standards in the sector
- Development of the Royal Greenwich Landlord Lettings Scheme including training and accreditation
- Continuation of housing support interventions for vulnerable homeowners including provision of Home Improvement and Handyperson Services for older and disabled people.

Priority 2.2 End the use of temporary accommodation with shared facilities for families.

The Council continues with efforts to minimise the use of nightly paid accommodation and is now committed to ending the use of accommodation with shared facilities. In recent years our Temporary Accommodation Targets have been significant drivers for improving performance in the prevention of homelessness and in reducing the use of temporary accommodation. The number of households living in TA was significantly reduced through a Temporary Accommodation Reduction Plan between 2006-10. However recent external factors, particularly the rising cost of homes to buy and to rent in London, alongside the impact of welfare reforms on housing benefit levels has led to increasing numbers of households in TA. The reduction of temporary accommodation and particularly of unsuitable accommodation is therefore a key objective for this strategy.

The Council is aware that ending the use of temporary accommodation with shared facilities is extremely challenging and can only be achieved through a phased reduction in its use over coming years. Investment in prevention strategies to minimise the need for TA, and in alternative accommodation options to replace unsuitable TA will be essential. During 2014-15, the Council will invest additional funding into our Leasing Scheme in order to attract landlords able to provide good quality housing for use as temporary accommodation, as an alternative to non-self-contained units. We are also developing alternative temporary accommodation options on the Woolwich estates utilising properties that are being decanted for the redevelopment programme. During 2014, RBG is re-launching our procurement initiatives to attract more landlords to work with us, alongside our activity to identify and tackle ‘rogue’

landlords. We will also be working collaboratively with colleagues across the Council, and in other London boroughs, to prevent the inflation of temporary accommodation prices by landlords operating in a highly competitive market.

Priority 2.2 Strategic Actions:

- Maintain RBG position amongst the lowest users of temporary accommodation through effective prevention of homelessness and effective management of homelessness services
- Invest in alternative temporary accommodation options
- Plan for a phased reduction in the use of temporary accommodation with shared facilities throughout the lifetime of the strategy
- Develop access to settled homes in the private sector

Priority 2.3 Increase the supply of good quality shared and HMO accommodation available to young people

The Royal Greenwich Shared Housing Scheme is a partnership initiative with Thames Reach, finding shared housing for single people in the private sector. The scheme is aimed at young single people (under 35) who are not in ‘priority need’ according to legislation, but require additional support to access and maintain housing. Currently the service is delivered by a Thames Reach officer working within the Housing Options and Support Service and has been funded by Crisis UK, most recently with match funding from the Royal Borough of Greenwich. As the service has consistently met and exceeded performance targets for procurement and tenancy sustainment, it is important that the borough finds the means to continue the project.

Priority 2.3 Strategic Actions:

- Identify future funding for the shared housing scheme and continue to identify shared housing opportunities for young people.

Priority 2.4 Develop partnerships with private landlords and ensure a good supply of affordable accommodation available to homeless people

The private rented sector has a critical role to play in meeting housing need and preventing homelessness. A key part of our strategy is to improve the level of accountability and support for landlords in the private rented sector. The Council has developed a **Private Sector Landlord Lettings Scheme** through which the Council offers to improve access to the sector for households in housing need and improve standards (property and management) by offering incentives and providing support, which includes grants and interest free loans. The project will compliment and support the enforcement and licensing programme discussed above. It will also provide a greater opportunity for the **Business Support Team** to work with a more identifiable group of residential property portfolio holders, in developing their businesses.

In order to maximise the supply of private sector properties and influence landlords in improving standards the Housing Service will offer:

- **Rent Guarantee:** We recognise the need to make a similar offer as letting agents to maintain the supply of good quality affordable private rented properties.
- **Handyperson Service:** The Council provides a Handyperson service for repairs required by vulnerable tenants and homeowners free of charge or at a subsidised rate. We are extending the service to private rented sector landlords for minor repairs.
- **Grants and Loans:** The Disability and Home Improvements service offer loans and grants to vulnerable homeowners for essential repairs and improvements. We are now extending the service to private sector landlords. Grants and loans would be provided on condition that on completion of works the property meets the RBLAS standard and is offered to the Council, in order to accommodate households in housing need or on a lease for temporary accommodation.
- **Energy Efficiency Offers:** We will work with private landlords to increase awareness of funding available for energy efficiency improvements, including the Green Deal and the Energy Company Obligation.

Priority 2.4 Strategic Actions:

- Ensure the Council offers a rent guarantee scheme which is attractive to landlords in a changing competitive market, and that rents for properties are within Local Housing Allowance levels
- Open up access to the Handypersons' Service for minor repairs for private rented sector landlords
- Explore an 'opt in' arrangement to enable private landlords to opt into Council managed energy efficiency schemes and receive funding towards energy efficiency improvements, such as insulation and heating system upgrades
- Offer grants and loans to landlords in the private sector via the Disability and Home Improvements service, on condition properties are subsequently made available for council lease for use to rehouse households in housing need for an agreed period.
- Provide a repairs service for landlords to increase and sustain the supply of leased accommodation.

Priority 2.5 Complete a high intensity enforcement programme to bring HMO properties up to standard and implement additional licensing arrangements

The Council has put in place a specialist team to inspect 1,000 properties in the first year of a **high intensity enforcement programme**. This equates to 5% of the Private Rented market. The expectation is that standards will be driven up in each of the properties whilst also sending out a clear message to the rest of the market to improve. The initial focus will be on known HMO's, areas where we know there are high levels of multiple occupation, premises subject to complaint and residential property above shops.

The specialist team will assess the options for the development of both a **Selective Licensing Scheme** for all private rented dwellings and a more specific **Additional Licensing Scheme**, which provides for greater control of low rise HMO's across the Borough. This model of good practice has recently been put in place by the London Borough of Newham and early indications suggest that 84% of the Private Rented Sector had applied to be licensed within 6 months of introducing both licensing schemes.

Priority 2.5 Strategic Actions:

- Undertake a high intensity enforcement programme and inspect 1000 properties in the first year.
- Develop options for considering Selective Licensing for all private rented dwellings and a more specific **Additional Licensing Scheme** to drive up standards in low rise HMO's across the Borough.

OBJECTIVE 3

Develop partnerships and integrate services to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping, and better support people in housing need.

Our priorities:

- 3.1** Complete joint commissioning of services that provide effective housing and support pathways for vulnerable people in housing need.
- 3.2** Continue to develop pathways and integrated services to support homeless families and children, older adults, people with mental health needs, ex-offenders, people with a substance misuse and women at risk of domestic violence.
- 3.3** Build and develop partnerships to deliver intensive support to vulnerable adults with multiple complex needs.
- 3.4** Minimise rough sleeping through partnership interventions to ensure there is 'No Second Night Out' for single homeless people.

The reasons for homelessness can be complex and multifaceted; to tackle it requires a broad alliance of statutory and non-statutory partners working together. We are committed to developing a framework that all our partners can actively support. Where possible we will seek to integrate statutory and non-statutory, voluntary sector support to develop a holistic approach to tackling homelessness in Royal Greenwich. We have consulted widely with our statutory and third sector partners in the development of this strategy

Priority 3.1 Complete joint commissioning of services that provide effective housing and support pathways for vulnerable people in housing need.

People can become homeless, or be threatened with homelessness for a variety of complex reasons that often require specialist accommodation and support to resolve their housing problems. Following the disaggregation of Supporting People Funding and development of joint commissioning arrangements, the Council and partners are commissioning new housing related support services for vulnerable people that better address identified need.

The Royal Borough of Greenwich Housing and Children's Services departments have completed joint commissioning of a new supported housing pathway, and floating support service for young people, including Looked After Children (16-17) and care leavers. Two further contracts are to be commissioned in 2014-15. These are for:-

- Accommodation based and floating support services that increase the provision for teenage parents
- Supported lodgings for young people

The services will identify the individual support needs of Service Users, address immediate needs and establish links to other services that can provide longer term support.

The Council has also commissioned new housing related supported service to people with a mental health need, with the aim of implementing more effective pathways to resettle clients into the community. The Housing Options and Support Service will contribute to the commissioning plan and will support the resettlement pathway established with new providers.

Priority 3.1 Strategic Actions:

- Commission new provision of Supported Accommodation and Floating Support for Teenage Parents (16-19 year olds)
- Commission new provision of a minimum of 15 units of supported lodgings for young people within homes in Greenwich
- Commission new supported accommodation and intensive floating support services for people with mental health needs, which prevent homelessness and promote independence.
-

Priority 3.2 Continue to develop pathways and integrated services to support homeless families and children, older adults, people with mental health needs, ex-offenders, people with a substance misuse and women at risk of domestic violence.

RBG has developed pathways and referral arrangements around all key client groups but we recognise that as organisations, service providers and resources change, there is a need to review our joint working arrangements regularly.

Following the implementation of the Health and Social Care Act from April 2013, our partners in health and social care are engaged in a major transformation of the way services are delivered, which includes the transfer of responsibilities to the Greenwich Clinical Commissioning Group led by GPs. Oxleas NHS Trust, our key partner for joint working on clients with a mental health need, is undergoing a major reorganisation through which more services will be delivered through GP practices in future. The Housing Options and Support Service must respond to changes in the structure and delivery of health services, and develop new partnership arrangements to meet these changing needs.

The Royal Borough of Greenwich is one of the first London boroughs to move towards integration between health and social care. The Greenwich Coordinated Care Project has brought together health and social care into integrated services and demonstrated improvements for patients and service users. The key features of the new model include a coordination of care around GP practises, a focus on the most at risk patients/service users and the development of multidisciplinary meetings to problem solve cases and develop a joint shared care plan and support. A 'Test and Learn' project based around Eltham GP practises uses 'Care Navigators' to coordinate professionals to agree a shared plan for the health and care of most complex individuals. The project has named Housing Managers acting as liaison points so that housing staff can be involved in action planning to assist clients with an identified housing issue, including a risk of homelessness.

As well as adapting and developing services to meet the changing face of health and social care, the HOSS must update existing protocols and procedures to reflect new priorities and resources. This includes reviewing all move-on protocols and arrangements with our providers of refuge, mental health, ex-offender, substance misuse and young people's services.

Priority 3.2 Strategic Actions:

- Establish a partnership with Greenwich Coordinated Care to improve liaison and joint working to assist people with health and social care needs
- **Ensure that the needs of homeless people are understood by the Health and Well Being Board and partners involved in commissioning health and social care services**
- Review move on protocols with refuges and supported accommodation providers and incorporate move on provision within the Allocations Scheme
- Build multi agency cooperation to prevent homelessness and provide appropriate support to people who have nil recourse to public funds.

Priority 3.3 Build and develop partnerships to deliver intensive support to vulnerable adults with multiple complex needs.

The proportion of households accepted as homeless and in priority need because they are 'vulnerable' has reduced from 25% in 2008-13, to 10% during 2013-14. Applicants who do not have children in their care may be assessed as 'vulnerable' if they are less able to fend for themselves than other homeless people would be. These 'vulnerable' adults include those with physical or learning disability, mental or physical ill health, old age, a history of institutional living (in care, the armed forces or prison), or because they are vulnerable as a result of violence and abuse.

The reduction in homelessness acceptances of single people largely reflects improvements in activity to prevent homelessness through proactive support, and access to our 'Newtrac' private rented accommodation service and to supported housing. The HOSS does not determine access to housing and support based upon the statutory definition of 'priority need' and has dedicated teams to support individuals typically excluded from housing assistance, include people with an offending and/or substance misuse history.

Although the Royal Borough of Greenwich takes pride in providing more comprehensive support services to vulnerable adults at risk of homelessness, we recognise that there continues to be individuals with complex needs who are continually at risk of homelessness. These clients are frequently known to other agencies because of repeat homelessness, A&E or mental health service admissions, arrests and detention in custody etc. Central government funded initiatives to provide more cost-effective responses to these 'chaotic' individuals have found that partnership and shared action planning are essential components of any interventions to change behaviour and lifestyles.

In 2012 the six Olympic Growth Boroughs agreed to undertake a piece of research with Resolving Chaos, a newly established social enterprise. This analysis work, funded by the Department of Health, looked at the numbers and profile of individuals who were presenting most cost to a range of public agencies (e.g. local authority, NHS, the police, the ambulance

service, mental health services and drug and alcohol agencies) through using services in a crisis and unplanned way. In many of the cases highlighted by the research the outcomes had been poor with a tendency towards a revolving door aspect to many people's patterns of service use.

As part of the research, Resolving Chaos analysed the costs to services of 53 individuals identified as 'chaotic' by partners providing housing, mental health, and substance misuse treatment services.

Headlines from the report show that:

- the approximate cost to the public purse of supporting the 53 individual cases is over £2.2 million
- the cost of the 20 individuals that are most expensive to support is roughly half of this, at £1.1 million

Although the costs are high, the outcomes for the individuals were not good.

Learning from this research, RBG considered ways to intervene more effectively to assist individuals with chaotic lifestyles culminating in a proposal for a local Chaos Project, which received match funding from DCLG for one year. The pilot project, implemented from November 2013, aimed to deliver better outcomes through a combination of multi-agency case management, accommodation and intensive floating support. The Council and partners will learn from the Chaos Project pilot and the independent evaluation to be completed by Resolving Chaos Ltd.

In March 2014 the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and Cabinet Office launched a £15million funding programme the 'Fair Chance Fund'. The fund aims to improve outcomes for homeless young people (18-24) *'whose needs are difficult to address using existing services but, if not addressed, are likely to lead to long term benefit dependency, health problems and increased crime'*.

RBG is supporting an Expression of Interest for delivery of a Fair Chance Fund intervention in the borough, to provide housing and employment to homeless young people and set them on an alternative and more positive path. The Fair Chance Fund is particularly challenging as payment is entirely by results, with the expectation that the provider will obtain social investment toward the initial outlay.

RBG is very well placed to host a Fair Chance Fund initiative given our track record of multi-agency interventions and partnerships around young people, homelessness and facilitating access to employment. If funding is obtained for a Greenwich project, it will contribute to our strategic priority to better support vulnerable adults with complex needs as well as Anti-Poverty Strategy objectives for young adults, and the borough's commitment to reduce youth offending.

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| Priority 3.3 Strategic Actions: |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete the Chaos Project supporting vulnerable adults, and implement learning from the pilot and evaluation• Support the delivery of the Fair Chance Fund service 'My Chance' to assist young homeless people with complex needs into housing and employment. |

Priority 3.4 Minimise rough sleeping through partnership interventions to ensure there is 'No Second Night Out' for single homeless people.

The Council works in partnership with the other South East London borough's and partner agencies in the sub region to deliver a robust response to the flow of rough sleepers into and across the sub-region. By working in partnership we are able to offer good quality advice, access to accommodation and the support that former rough sleepers need to sustain a tenancy when settled accommodation is found.

The Council is currently engaged with a number of initiatives in partnership to address rough sleeping. This includes the following:

SELHP Single Homelessness Programme: The partnership with London Street Rescue outreach services has been significant in developing and delivering a robust response to tackling rough sleeping. They engage with the most entrenched rough sleepers and work with a range of agencies, such as NSNO (see below) and Health practitioners (physical and mental) to establish the most effective way to get people off the streets and into suitable accommodation.

No Second Night Out: The NSNO project provides a swift response for first time rough sleepers in central London. A third facility was opened in Lewisham in October 2013, primarily for South London Boroughs including Royal Greenwich.

No-one Living On the Streets (NLOS): The emphasis of the service is to reconnect individuals into appropriate services as rapidly as possible, with short term accommodation being used where circumstances are more complex or an interim stay is agreed.

Recent data about those accessing No Second Night Out indicates increasing numbers of rough sleepers with complex or multiple needs. Targeting meetings are specifically held to look at ways to engage with clients who are considered to have 'chaotic lifestyles'. The multi-disciplinary meeting agrees a plan specifically aimed at moving the person off the street and to the most appropriate services. The rough sleeping count carried out in RBG during November 2013 found only one person bedded down. However, the numbers verified as sleeping rough in the borough have increased and it is essential that the Council continues to work with all relevant partners to minimise rough sleeping going forward.

In June 2014, the Borough Deans of the Royal Borough of Greenwich launched a plan to provide winter night shelters in Greenwich churches during January to March 2015. If the project obtains sufficient support to establish night shelters, the Housing Options and Support Service will work with local churches to pilot their delivery. We will ensure a robust process for referral and move on, to measure the impact for Greenwich residents. Depending on the outcome of the pilot for both the church and the Council, the project may be repeated in future years.

Priority 3.4 Strategic Actions:

- To work with colleagues in South East London boroughs to identify resources to assist rough sleepers into accommodation
- To carry out annual reviews of arrangements to assist rough sleepers to ensure effective partnerships and resources are in place to prevent rough sleeping
- To work with the Borough Deans to pilot winter night shelters for rough sleepers during 2015.

OBJECTIVE 4

Minimise the impact of welfare reform on Greenwich residents, and improve access to employment opportunities for people in housing need or at risk of becoming homeless

Our priorities:

- 4.1** Deliver multi agency interventions to assist residents affected by welfare reform to maximise access to employment and prevent homelessness
- 4.2** Prepare for the implementation of Universal Credit, working with partners to develop support for vulnerable residents affected
- 4.3** Develop accommodation options for young people that prevent homelessness and support engagement in education employment and training
- 4.4** Increase access to employment support for families and vulnerable adults who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

As part of its deficit reduction programme, the government has embarked on an extensive programme of welfare reforms. This has had a significant impact on the ability of many residents in Greenwich to meet their housing costs, and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. The most significant reforms include the new size criteria or bedroom 'tax' and the Total Benefit Cap. In response the Council has put in place a Welfare Reform Team providing housing options and support on an outreach basis, to affected families. The team has a strong focus on helping people to find employment as the most sustainable way for most clients to manage and reduce the financial impact of the caps.

Priority 4.1 Deliver multi agency interventions to assist residents affected by welfare reform to maximise access to employment and prevent homelessness.

The Welfare Reform team is a multi-disciplinary team, including staff from Greenwich Local Labour and Business (GLLaB), Job Centre Plus and Housing. The team proactively contacts families significantly affected by welfare reforms. Individuals are offered a holistic assessment, including employment advice and a casework service to support them into work:

This aims to:

- Mitigate the worst effects of the welfare reforms
- Help overcome barriers to employment for the long-term unemployed
- Help make long-term unemployed residents 'work-ready'
- Improve pathways to jobs for families with complex problems and young unemployed people
- Tackle the issue of providing adequate and affordable childcare to enable parents to take up employment
- Make a positive impact on the public realm and environment
- Ensure that families are given the support they need to stay in their local communities and not face relocation to other parts of the country

By 30 September 2014, the Welfare Reform Team had assisted 121 families affected by the Total Benefit Cap into employment, and has prevented families from becoming homeless as a direct result of welfare reform. It will be a considerable challenge to maintain this level of performance in future years.

Priority 4.1 Strategic Actions:

- Identify resources to continue interventions that prevent homelessness linked to welfare reform, and actively assist households into employment
- Minimise homelessness arising from welfare reform.

Priority 4.2 Prepare for the implementation of Universal Credit, working with partners to develop support for vulnerable residents affected

As detailed under priority 1.2 above, we have undertaken a variety of activities to help households manage the impact of welfare reforms. Under Universal Credit, which is expected to be fully implemented by October 2017, working-age tenants will receive a single monthly payment directly from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). This will include their support for housing costs, but unlike the current system housing payments will not be paid directly to landlords unless categorized as 'vulnerable'. There is concern that some working-age people will not be capable of managing a monthly payment and will be in danger of falling into rent arrears as a result. Payments of benefit can be made direct to the landlord once someone is identified as vulnerable but as yet it is unclear how vulnerability will be defined. An additional concern is financial exclusion; a significant percentage of tenants do not have a bank account and therefore would not be able to pay rent by direct debit.

Priority 4.2 Strategic Actions:

- Housing services to participate in development of Local Support Service arrangements for implementation of Universal Credit, to minimise the risk of homelessness arising from the benefit change.

Priority 4.3 Develop accommodation options for young people that prevent homelessness and support engagement in education employment and training

The Housing Options and Support Service and Children Services (CS) work in partnership at The Point to provide an integrated one stop shop service to young people around advice, assessment and support to meet their various needs.

The young people's housing service 1st Base @ The Point also acts as a gateway to all supported housing in the borough, and participated in designing and commissioning new services to best meet identified needs. All commissioned services are required to prioritise support to access education employment and training within their service model.

The Royal Borough Greenwich is developing a new initiative to provide affordable shared accommodation for young people in employment and training. The proposal is to recycle sheltered housing blocks that were no longer fit for purpose for older people due to the shared washing facilities, to instead provide student-style accommodation for young working people under 35, as well as teenage parents. Two blocks have been identified in the Woolwich area and RBG are working with a young people's provider to develop a scheme and access funding. As well as offering affordable housing to young working people moving on from home or from supported accommodation, the new service will provide accommodation with support to

homeless teenage parents in an environment where training, development and accessing employment is positively supported.

Priority 4.3 Strategic Actions:

- Ensure that all commissioned housing services for young people assist residents to access and maintain education, employment and training
- Develop a 'student style' accommodation service for young people to provide good quality affordable housing linked to education employment and training.

Priority 4.4 Increase access to employment support for families and vulnerable adults who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Housing services work closely with partners providing employment support to families and single people, including those at risk of homelessness. Local partnership arrangements have been strengthened by cooperation around the Total Benefit Cap implementation and we will build on this going forward, to ensure residents at risk of homelessness are advised and assisted on employment support.

The Housing Options and Support Service has worked with Greenwich Local Labour and Business service (GLLaB) to assist service users into education, employment and training.

GLLaB provides:

- Job search support, including help and advice with creating or updating CVs
- Work Clubs, providing the chance for jobseekers to network whilst they job search
- A high quality recruitment service, matching skilled workers to job opportunities
- Onsite offices/accommodation on major development sites, e.g., Greenwich Peninsula and Kidbrooke
- Development of employer-led, customised, pre-employment training
- High volume recruitment campaigns for employers, and a sustainable brokerage service to address on-going recruitment needs
- Outreach services across the borough, including on construction sites in East Greenwich and Kidbrooke, and in the Eltham Centre

The Greenwich Families Programme offers support to families facing a range of barriers to the labour market who want help to overcome this and support with returning to work. The programme is voluntary and open to all eligible families with one or more family member receiving an out-of-work benefit, but who are not on the Government's Work Programme. Families do not have to live in the same household to qualify for support.

Priority 4.4 Strategic Actions:

- Continue to identify opportunities to access and to improve employment support available to people at risk of homelessness.

5. Equalities Impact Assessment

An Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken of the RBG Homelessness Review and draft Homelessness strategy 2014-2019 to ensure that there are no adverse effects for any particular group. The strategy in itself sets out the strategic priorities which will be delivered to prevent homelessness and respond to those in housing need. It has relevance to equality because it impacts on the boroughs most vulnerable people, who are over represented amongst the 'equality groups'. As the overarching aim of the strategy is to prevent homelessness and to support vulnerable people, the delivery of the actions identified will have positive impact for BME, disabled and vulnerable, young people and women, all of who are over represented amongst those who are at risk of homelessness.

6. Consultation

As part of the formulation of this strategy we took the opportunity to consult with HOSS staff and colleagues from across the Council. A consultation event was held in April 2014 for key stakeholders, which included Homelessness Forum members. A questionnaire was also sent to service users that had been involved with the service during the last year. The feedback has been used to develop our response to future homelessness and the consultation summary will be published along with the strategy. Those involved in the consultation are listed below:

Bridge 86
CAYSH
CRI
Depaul Uk
DWP
Greenwich Housing Rights
HER Centre
Housing for Women
Hyde Housing
Landlords Business Club (7 Landlords)
Look Ahead
Moat Housing
RBG - Housing Options and Support Service
RBG - Housing Strategy Team
RBG - Allocations
RELATE
Service User - Refuge
SLAM NHS
Somali Parents Network
St Christopher's
ThamesReach
Twenty Fifth Avenue
Mental Health Joint Commissioning Group
RBG - Housing Options and Support Service Staff
Greenwich Registered Provider Partnership.