

Re-Commissioning of Housing Related Support Contracts April 2024

Gap Analysis and Options for use of funding

1. Introduction

The 2023//2024 budget for Housing Related Support (HRS) contracts is £1,198,642.12 and provides 194 supported housing units over three main services:

Scheme	Total Units	Hours of Support 1,311	Total funding 23/24 £1,198,642.12
Single Homeless	120	Low 36 Medium 64 High 688	£713,506.56
Young People	60	Medium 32 High 432	£430,801.28
Young Parents	14	Medium 59	£54,334.28

The current contracts were commissioned from 2018: initially for a three-year period, followed by two contracted one-year extensions and a further one-year extension due to exceptional circumstances. The current services may not reflect the current need of the Wiltshire Local Authority and those accessing supported housing services in the area.

Services have also significantly changed since the last commissioning round. Floating Support moved in house and is now provided by the Property and Support team. The High-Risk Offender provision was not successfully tendered during the 2018 commissioning process and the last remaining non-commissioned provision at The Halve has recently ceased. Some providers included in the HRS budget prior to the last tender lost funding due to budgetary cutbacks but have remained and continued to provide services through a mixture of Housing Benefit, personal service charge and charitable donations.

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUPHC) has also targeted funds for Rough Sleepers, resulting in the creation of additional single homeless spaces as well as several dedicated officers who offer support and advice. The Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI) created 16 bedspaces across 2 projects, offering quick intervention off the streets through short term placements. In addition, NSAP and RSAP funded 14 longer term housing-lead placements. The current budget will remain the same which, due to inflationary pressures on staff wages leading to an increase in the cost of hourly support, will likely result in a reduction of support hours. This re-commissioning exercise aims to identify current demand and ensure good quality services which meet the needs of those who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness, across Wiltshire.

2. Current Provision of Services

2.1 Non-Commissioned Services

There are several non-commissioned housing support services available across Wiltshire: Salisbury Trust for the Homeless, The Amber Project, Alabaré Parent and Baby and the Petra Project. The services are funded by a mixture of Housing Benefit, Personal Service Charge and Charitable Donation.

Service	Service Type	Location	Units
Alabaré Parent and Baby	Young Parent	Salisbury	8
Amber Project	Young People	Trowbridge	30
Dennis House	Single Homeless	Salisbury	12
Salisbury Trust for the Homeless	Single Homeless	Salisbury	29
Peta Project	Young Parent	Trowbridge	6
Salisbury Refuge	Domestic Abuse	Salisbury	12

While non-commissioned services accept referrals directly from the Housing Solutions team (amongst others), they are not funded by the Council and therefore cannot be fully considered during the Housing Supported Needs Assessment. It is possible that any of these services may bid on tendered lots and therefore the services may not exist independently beyond the next commissioning round or that the service may cease to exist for any other reasons.

2.2 Service Type

Table 1 below shows the current budget allocation by service type, and Table 2 shows the number of units being provided per service type. This shows that single homeless has the highest spend and the most bed spaces available but this coincides with the high demands of single homeless clients which continues to increase.

Table 1: Current % Spend Allocation by Service Types 2023-24

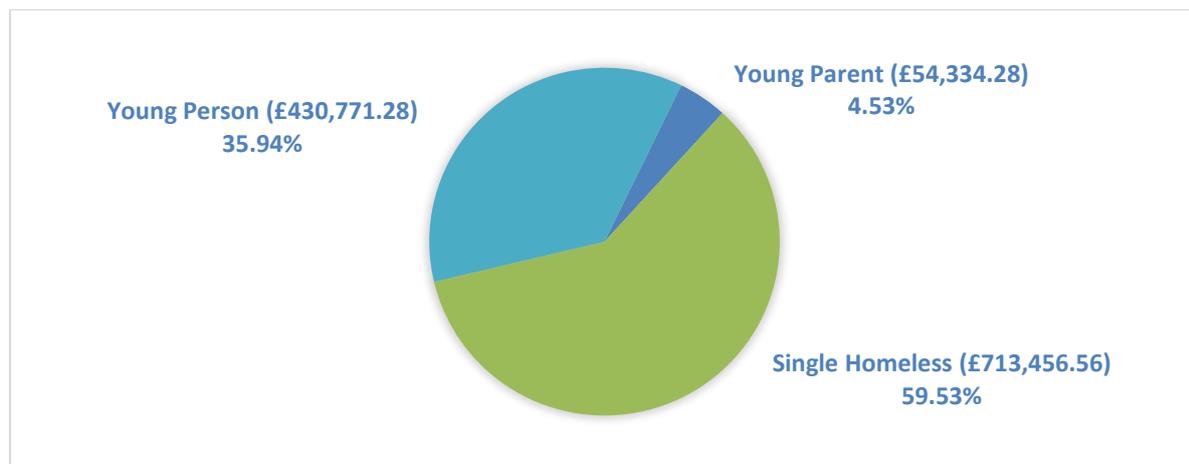
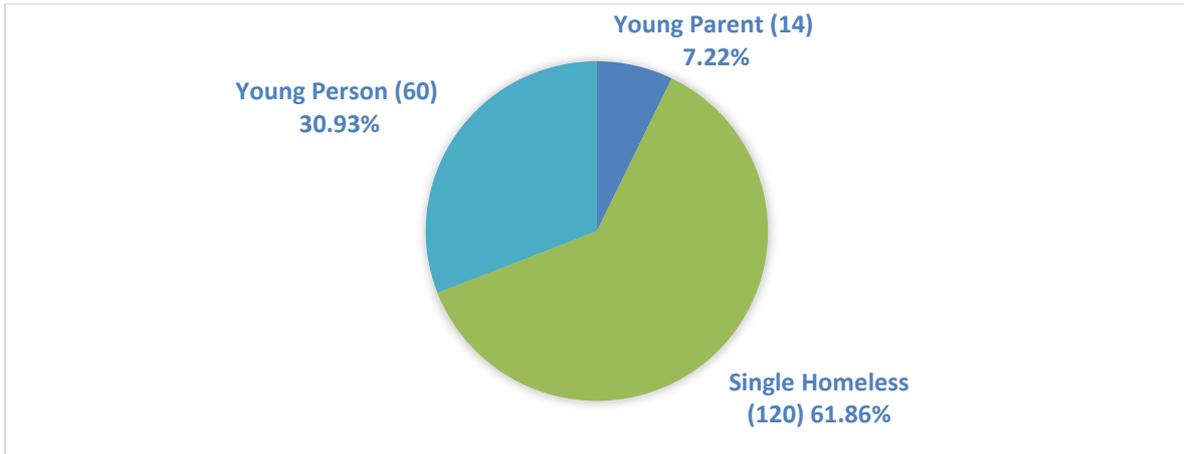


Table 2: % Units by Service Types 2023-24



2.3 Geographical Location

Table 3 below shows the breakdown of the current budget by location and Table 4 shows the percentage units provided by location.

When considering HRS provision across all service types, there is a clearly concentrated provision in Salisbury. In part, this is due to an inherited legacy from the former Salisbury District Council which continued through the last recommissioning process due to established providers and unit availability.

It also worth noting the location of related support which service users may need to access. The National Probation Services have offices in Salisbury and Chippenham; Turning Point in Trowbridge, Salisbury and with a drop-in available in Chippenham; the Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership are based in Devizes and Salisbury. We also have Homeless Drop In provision in Salisbury, Trowbridge, Chippenham and Devizes

Table 3: Current Supported Housing Spend Breakdown by Location

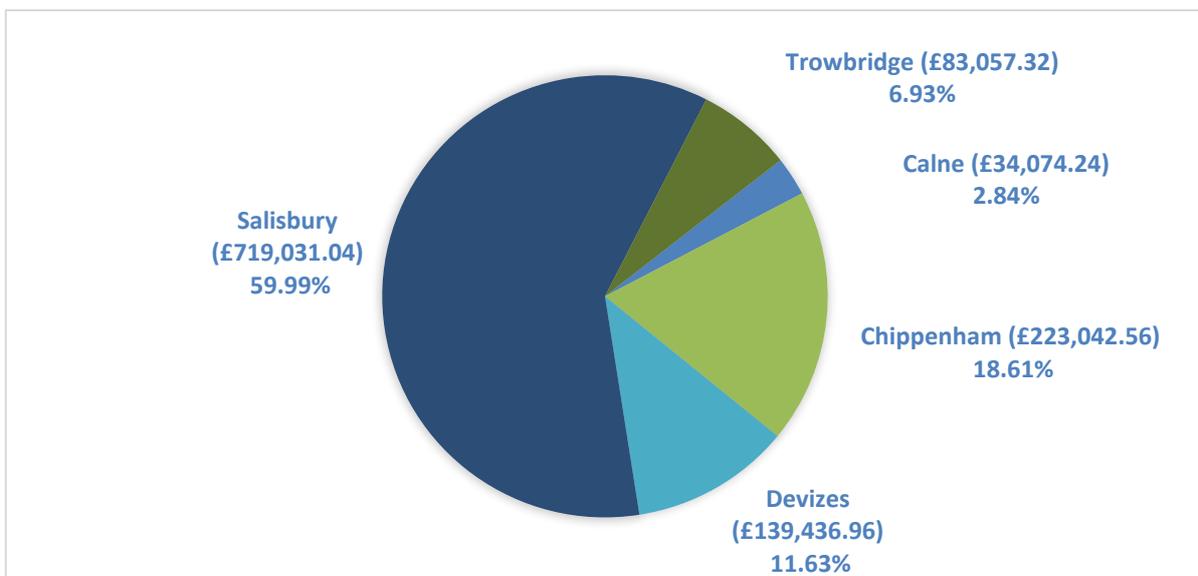


Table 4: Current Supported Housing Units Breakdown by Location

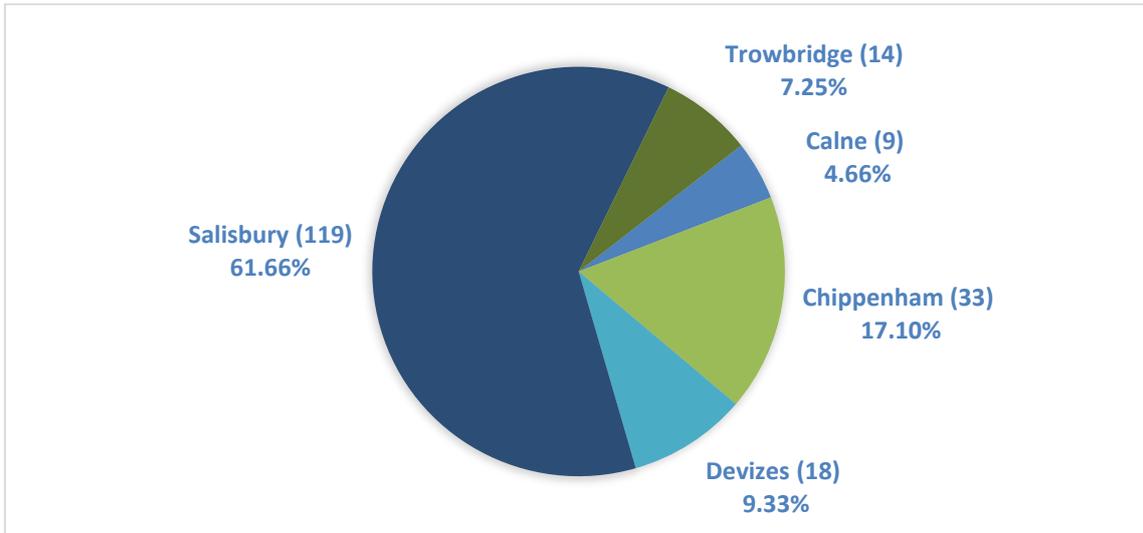


Table 5, 6 and 7 gives a closer analysis of provision by service type. Single Homeless is the most skewed toward the South of the County, with just over 75% of the units available in Salisbury. Currently, there is no Single Homeless provision in some of the larger community areas in Wiltshire, including Calne, Trowbridge and Warminster.

Young Person provision is also skewed towards Salisbury, but to a lesser extent than Single Homeless. There is accommodation available in 4 main community areas, with provision in Trowbridge, Chippenham, Devizes and Salisbury all fairly evenly spread.

Young Parent services are only available in Trowbridge and Calne, with the services provided in Calne accounting entirely for the SP provision available in the community area.

Table 5: Current No. of Single Homeless Units Provided by Location by %

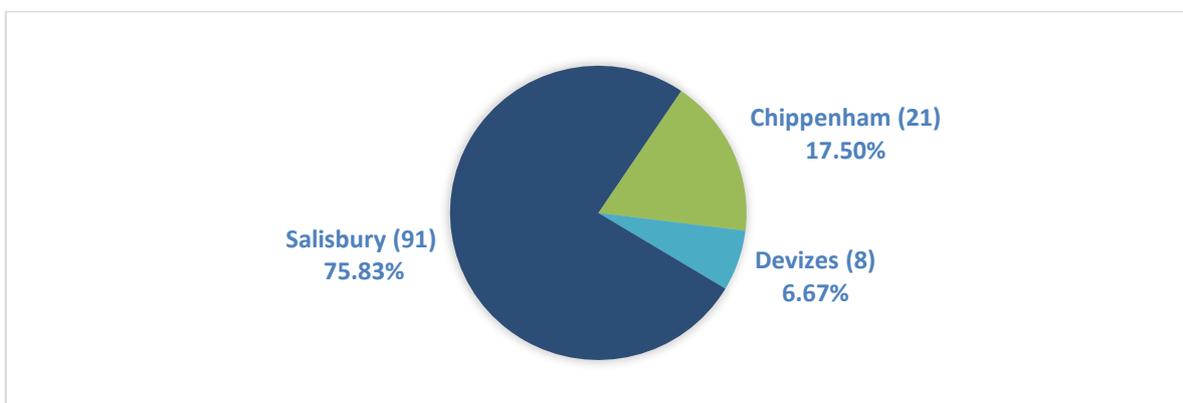


Table 6: Current No. of Young Person Units Provided by Location by %

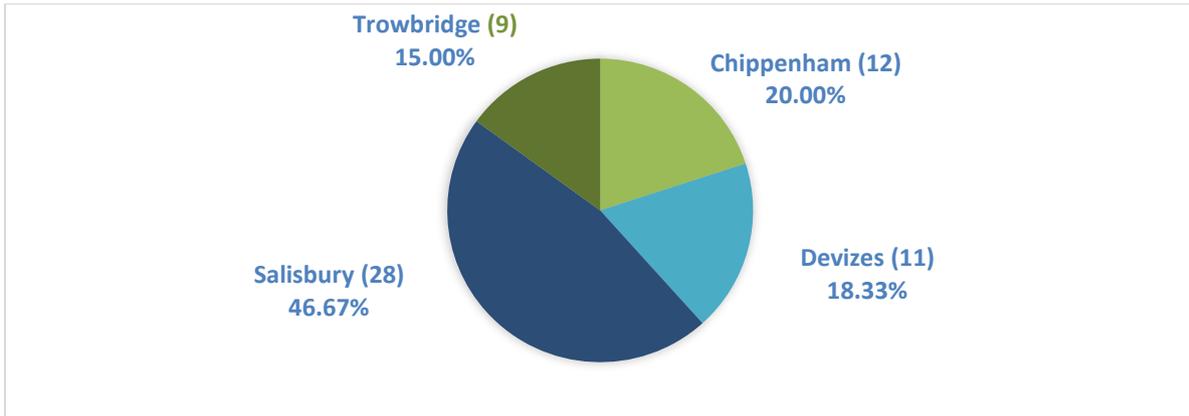
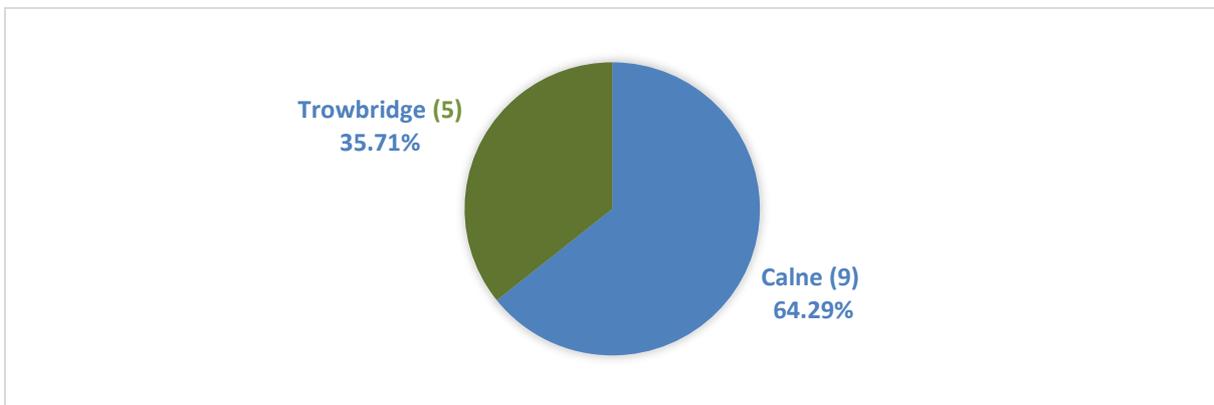


Table 7: Current No. of Young Parent Units Provided by Location by %



In addition to the above, Salisbury Trust for the Homeless operates 29 units in Salisbury. When this service is also taken into consideration, the percentage of available Single Homeless units in the Salisbury rises even further. The Amber Project currently provides up to 30 units in Trowbridge for Young People up to 30 years old, which balances out the provision by area. As Amber’s definition of Young Person is different to the HRS accommodation, there is a crossover, and the accommodation is also shared rooms which are not self-contained. For Young Parent, Petra (Mother and Baby) and Alabaré Parent and Baby operate in Trowbridge (6 beds) and Salisbury (8 beds), allowing access to services where there is no commissioned provision.

2.4 Support Hours

In 2018, the services were commissioned by support hours as follows:

High	8 hours of weekly support
Medium	4-6 hours of weekly support
Low	2 hours of weekly support

The current provision funds **1311** hours of support a week across **194** units at an average cost of **£17.58** per support hour. Table 8 shows the percentage of units by support level, and table 9 a breakdown of weekly support hours by service type. Most units are funded as high support, except for Young Parent which is exclusively funded as medium support.

Table 8: No. of HRS Units Provided by Support Level

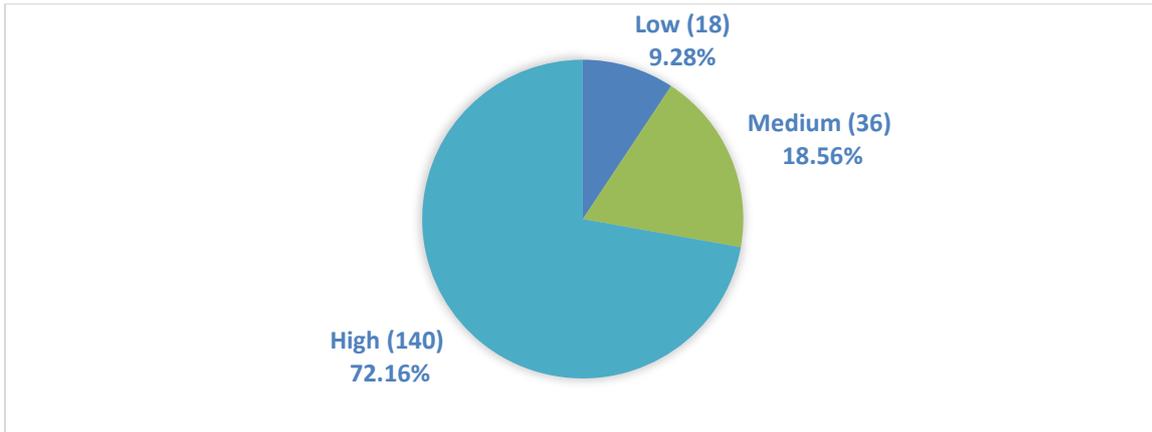
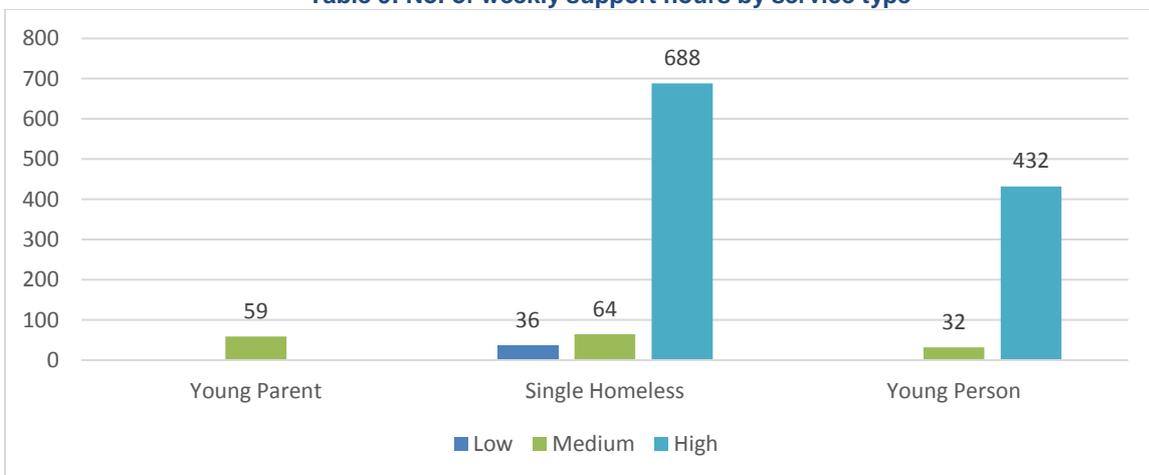


Table 9: No. of weekly support hours by service type



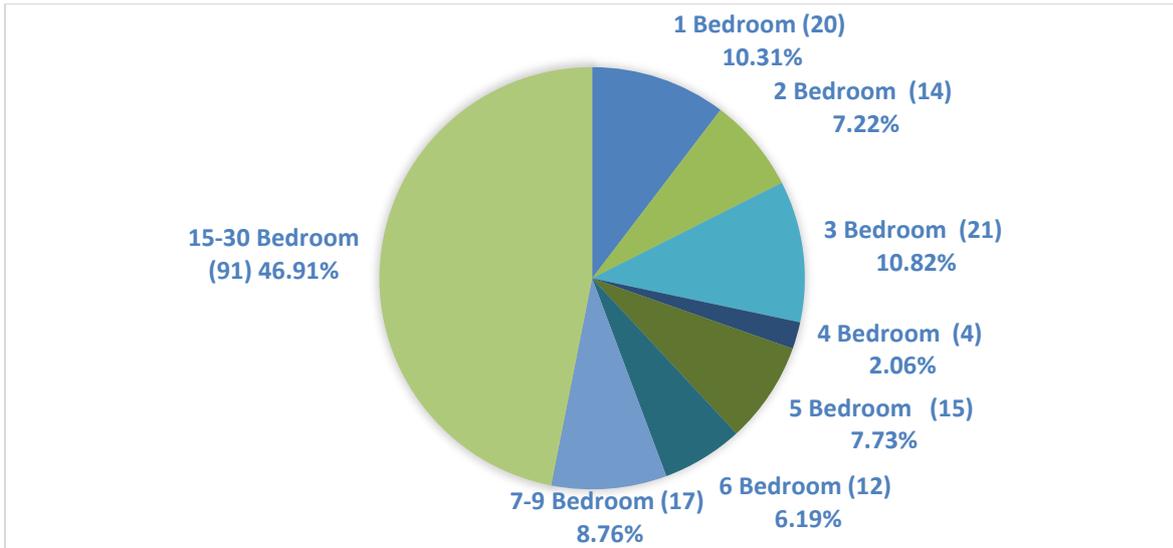
2.4 Accommodation Type

There are varying accommodation types in the current provision, ranging from 1-bedroom flats up to 30-unit multi occupancy buildings.

Table 10 shows the number of units available by building occupancy level. Whilst some of the larger buildings are broken down into smaller blocks ('flats' or 'corridors') with separate cooking facilities, they have been labelled as large occupancy buildings if service users share facilities including communal living spaces, beyond entrance doors and corridors and laundry facilities.

Where smaller blocks are available within the same building, they have been considered at smaller occupancy where the service user can live independently within the individual block by accessing private cooking, laundry and living facilities without sharing with users from other blocks within the same building. It illustrates that most of the current provision across service types is in shared accommodation with a 15 + person plus occupancy, at 46.91%.

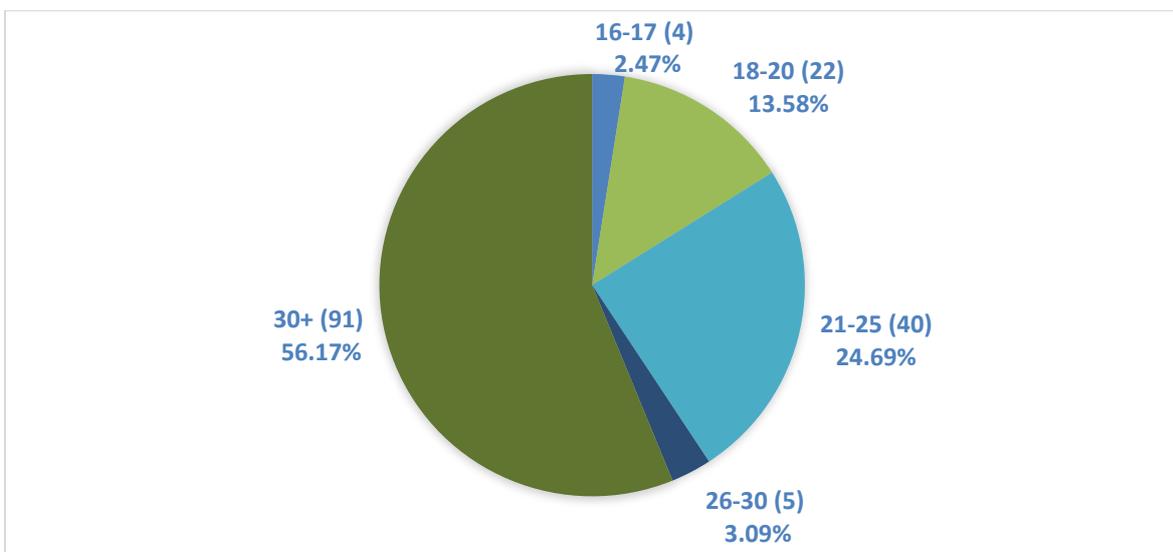
Table 10: % Units Available by total building occupancy level



2.5 Age of Service Users

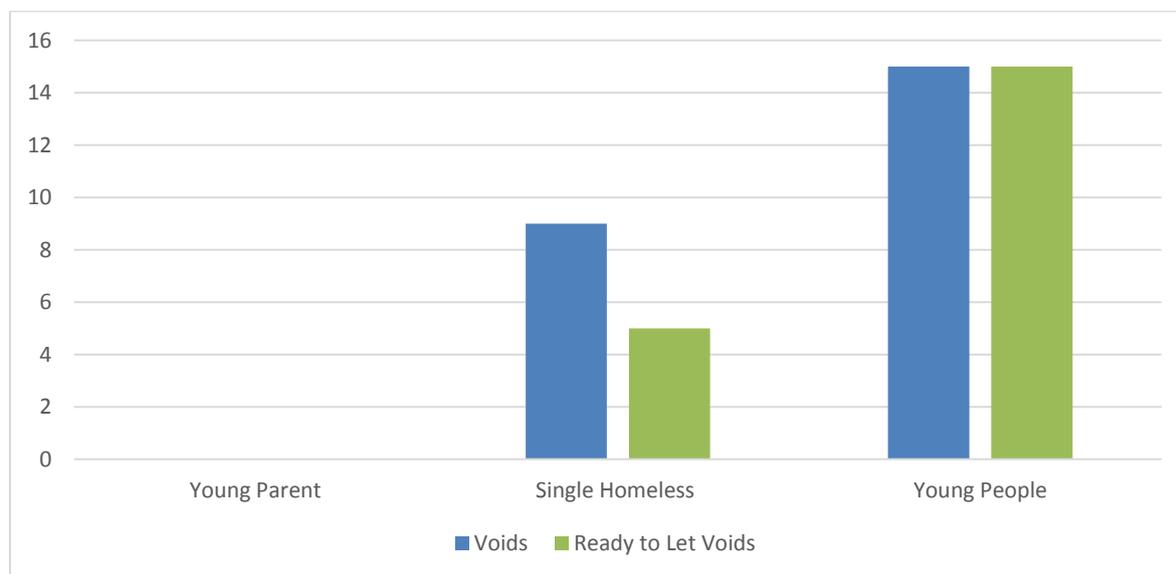
Table 11 provides a snapshot of the age group of clients in projects on a given day. The chart shows that 40.74% of the snapshot are aged 16-25 and therefore eligible for Young Person or Young Parent Services

Table 11: Age of clients in housing related support services on 27^h February 2023



However, there are limitations to of the snapshot as data source. Table 12 shows the voids available and ready to let voids across each service on the same day. Despite 18–25-year-olds making up 40.74% of the SP population on the given day, ready-to-let voids are significantly higher on the same day across Young Person services. Of the five ready-to-let Single Homeless units, 4 became available in the week preceding the snapshot. In contrast, a significant proportion the Young Person units were available for over a month.

Table 12: Voids Across Supporting People Services on the 27^h February 2023



3 Analysis of Current Provision

The above information raises the following key points:

- Almost 60% of the current budget is allocated to single homeless.
- The current budget is allocated to HRS services in Salisbury at a rate of 61.86%, with 21.76% of the budget being used on services in the North and 16.58% of the local authority.
- There is not currently HRS provision in some of larger community areas including Melksham and Warminster.
- Single Homeless provision is especially geographically skewed, with just over 75% of the commissioned units based in Salisbury.
- There is not any Single Homeless provision in Trowbridge, one of the most populated towns in Wiltshire.
- There is not any Young Parent Provision in Salisbury, Chippenham or Trowbridge.
- Just over 72% of the units are funded as high support at 8 hours a week.
- On the given day, just over 40% of the current residents living in supported were in the 16–25-year-old bracket.

4. Options for Re-Commissioning

Option 1 – Recommission using the same percentage allocations of budget across the three service areas.

The table below displays the current breakdown of spending.

Client Group	Contract Value 2022/23	No. of Units	% Units of Total
Young Parent	£54,334.28	14	7.22%
Single Homeless	£713,506.56	120	61.86%
Young Person	£430,801.28	60	30.93%
Totals	£1,198,642.12	194	

Advantages	Disadvantages
Simple to justify to current housing related support providers	Lacks strategic thinking. The last commissioning round completed in 2018 and this option does consider changes in those accessing services. There is a potential mismatch between identified needs and where resources are targeted, for example a mismatch between needs or geographical locations and supply. There may also be a need for new services or levels of support that did not exist at the last commissioning round.
A level of funding for all current customer groups will be maintained.	Risk of Providers not bidding for contracts if funding seen as insufficient to retain current service levels.
Utilises current staff and units already available.	As budgets are reduced in real terms, some of those schemes may not be sustainable and may close. They are also under threat from other changes e.g., increased housing benefit scrutiny for eligible service charges in supported.
	As the budget has decreased in real terms, the providers will not be able offer the same amount of support hours per unit.

Option 2 – Revision of Service Allocations

Option 2 is to review the grant allocation for each service type, location, age group and support levels against the current and medium-term priorities of the local authority, taking into consideration potential increased costs in support hours. The current allocations have not been reviewed since the last recommissioning process completed in 2018.

Advantages and disadvantage of a review of service allocations are set out below:

Advantages	Disadvantages
Strategic approach – once services are prioritised, individual schemes and locations can be identified drawing on data already held, and in consultation with stakeholders	Disruption to existing schemes, including possible scheme closures resulting in providers needing to make staff redundant and/or transfer staff to an alternative provider.
Updates contracts in line with current requirements of supported housing and enables gaps to be filled	Disruption to existing schemes resulting in loss of building usage for providers causing possible financial implications.
Would potentially allow higher levels of grant to fewer schemes making	Disruption to existing service users, with closures increasing risk of homelessness.

them more sustainable and enabling better quality services	
Transparency	Disruption to existing schemes, possibly resulting in the loss of related services including Homeless Drop In and Sit up Services.
	More complex to administer with further work required.

5. Recommendation

With the budget remaining the same, representing a reduction in real terms, an element of disruption to the current services is inevitable. It is recommended that Option 2 is pursued, and all services are reviewed to ensure balanced level of service provision across client groups and locations. The changes can then be tailored to minimise the disruption to the most at risk or vulnerable service users. This will also provide the opportunity to review the value for money being delivered across the different services and ensure that there is a consistent approach to the cost of support services across the board.

6. Recommissioning

6.1 Service Type

To establish which services may need prioritising when re-commissioning, we can consider the referral data obtained from the supported housing providers. Data was collected for the year 2022.

Service Type	Actual Spend	% of Spend	Number of units	% of units	No. of referrals 2022	% of referrals 2022
Young Parent	£54,344.28	4.53%	14	7.22%	24	5.39%
Single Homeless	£713,506.56	59.53%	120	61.86%	348	78.20%
Young Person	£430,801.28	35.94%	60	30.92%	73	16.40%

Note 1: One provider of Young Person accommodation was unable to accept referrals for a 2-month period due to operational issues; however, during the same period a competing provider ran with voids.

Note 2: Referrals can be sent to more than one scheme and therefore will be counted more than once.

Note 3: There is an overlap between the Young Persons and Single Homeless schemes, with referrals sent to both.

The table suggests that a disproportionate amount of the spend is being used on Young Person accommodation when compared to the referrals received: 35.94% of spend against 16.40% of referrals received in 2022. Conversely, Single Homeless referrals are high in comparison to spend: 59.53% of spend against 78.20% of referrals.

Demand can also be captured by considering those who have approached the Housing

Service Type	Actual Spend	% of Spend	Number of units	% of units	Owed Prevention or Relief	Owed Duty as a % group
Young Parent	£54,344.28	4.53%	14	7.22%	47	6.67%
Single Homeless	£713,506.56	59.53%	120	61.86%	504	71.08%
Young Person	£430,801.28	35.94%	60	30.92%	158	22.28%

Solutions Team for assistance and owed a duty.

The data above also supports that a disproportionate amount is being spent on Young Person accommodation: 35.94% of the total budget against 22.28% owed a prevention or relief duty. Single Homeless services are underfunded by the same measurement: 59.53% of the spend compared to 71.08% owed a prevention or relief duty.

Appendix 1: Effect of Increasing Costs on Purchasable Support Hours

There is no national data on HRS rates, and costs per support hour vary between providers and units. Staffing makes up a substantial portion of the providers costs, with overheads and provision of surplus added on.

During the last procurement round in 2017, research into wages in the housing support sector in Wiltshire and neighbouring authorities indicated an average wage of **£9.59 per hour**. Investigation into advertised rates across 10 providers in 2023 gives an estimated average wage of **£12.11 per hour**. This represents an increase of **24.2%**.

The chart below displays the impact that increases in the cost of a support hour will have on the total purchasable support hours based on the current budget of £1,187,543.12. If the increase in support hour price is roughly proportional to that of the estimated hourly wage and increases by 25%, the decrease in purchase power would be equivalent to the loss of 15,724 support hours per annum.

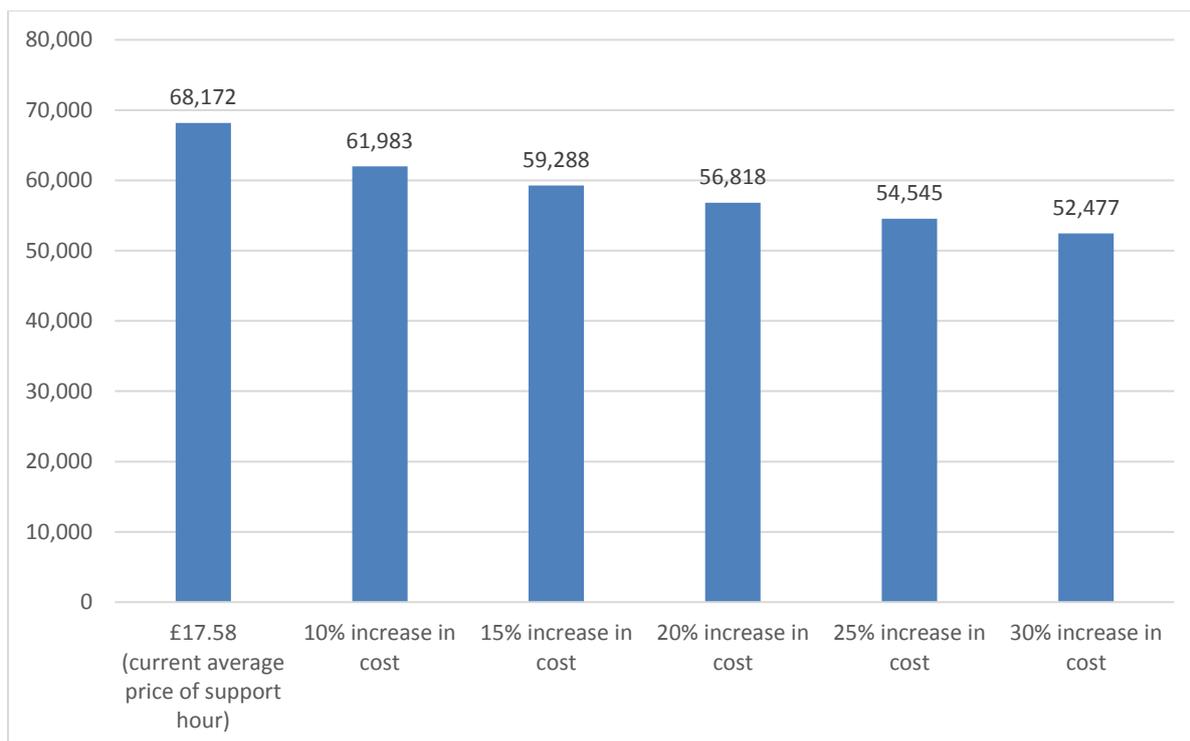


Table 12 Impact of increases in Support Hour Rate on the Number of Hours Purchasable from current HRS Budget

Year	Estimated average wage	Average Support Hour Cost	Total hours of support Budget £1,198,642.12
2017	£9.75	£17.58	68,182
2023	£12.11	£21.84	54,882

Appendix 2: Geographical Review

The two main geographic areas of supported housing provision and expenditure are:

Salisbury (59.99%)
Chippenham (18.61%)

There is substantially more provision in Salisbury per head of population than in any other area which includes a large volume of the Single Homeless units. Areas including Calne, Warminster and Devizes are currently under served.

Town	Population (Census 2021)	% of total Wiltshire Population	Current % SP Budget	Current % Units	Current SP Spend
Salisbury	41,819	8.19%	59.99%	59.20%	£719,031.04
Chippenham	36,545	7.16%	18.61%	16.42%	£223,042.56
Trowbridge	31,585	6.19%	6.93%	10.45%	£83,027.32
Calne	25,518	5.00%	2.84%	4.48%	£34,074.24
Warminster	20,528	4.02%	NIL	NIL	NIL

Devizes	19,895	3.90%	11.63%	9.45%	£139,436.96
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Appendix 3: Support Levels

As the HRS budget is to remain the same, there will be a reduction of support hours across the services. A review offers budgeting options and the possibility of protecting unit availability by reducing levels of support offered per unit. There is also the opportunity to create new levels of support that do not currently exist.

In 2018, the services were commissioned by support hours as follows:

High	8 hours of weekly support
Medium	4-6 hours of weekly support
Low	2 hours of weekly support

The 2018 HRS Specification defined the support needs as follows:

Low level support: No significant risks or needs are identified, and Service Users may be successfully managing some areas of their life but have a need for some additional help which may be short term in nature e.g. support with benefits and employment.

Medium level support: Service Users will present more complex support needs and risks such as a problematic mental or physical health condition, self-harming behaviours, substance abuse or a prior history that could include evictions, crime, aggressive or anti-social behaviour, significant rent arrears and non-engagement.

High level support: Service Users in medium and high-level support services may evidence many of the same needs and risks and the distinction between the two will relate to the degree of support required. Service Users in high Support services are likely to have more complex inter-related needs e.g. substance abuse/mental and physical health needs and to display chaotic behaviour or pose risks to others.

Service Type	Total Units	High Units	Medium Units	Low Units
Young Parent	14	0	14	0
Single Homeless	120	86	16	18
Young Person	60	54	6	0
Totals	194	140	36	18